



# CARTOONING TIPS

## "I can't draw," you say?

Well, that may be an advantage. Out of proportion drawing -- or exaggeration -- is what cartooning is all about.

Have fun, and create cartoons to please *yourself*. Your cartooning style should be *you*, unique - like your handwriting.

Keep your cartoon drawings *simple*. The fewer lines, the better.

Brainstorm ideas, and jot down funny ideas and situations from daily life - when you see or experience them. How do you imagine the face of that cranky voice you hear over the phone? Exaggerate the overdressed, blow-dried person you see, walking as if on display. Make a cartoon of your pet: happy, lazy or silly; what is the furry little creature saying to you?

Use cartooning to share your sense of humor; perhaps to vent anger; as a way to turn your imagination loose.

### **If the cartooning bug bites you seriously, here's some first aid:**

It's okay to copy other cartoonists -- in order to improve. Almost all artists do it when starting out. Practice, practice, and practice some more.

Stay loose. Draw roughs first with blue pencil or light pencil; finish with a black felt pen. Then photocopy your humorous masterpiece; the blue lines should disappear on the copy. The seemingly effortless cartoons you chuckle and marvel at in *The New Yorker* were probably redrawn and refined many times.

To avoid an aimless rut (drawing the same face or character over and over again) write down some goals for yourself. For instance: expressions; males; females; trees; houses; color accents; funny idea list; etc. Maintain a happy balance between spontaneous doodling and discipline.

For an effective gag cartoon, the *idea* is most important -- not the elegance of the drawing (see Callahan's cartoons in [Willamette Week](#) and elsewhere).

Try various papers and pens/pencils, even crayons. Draw very **large** and teeny, weeny. Or use a photocopier to enlarge and reduce your work. Fill in the copies with color, or with patterns (solids, checkered, stripes, polka-dots, and crosshatched).

Borrow cartooning books from your local library. One of the most entertaining, thorough, and easy-to-follow books I've read is Syd Hoff's [The Art of Cartooning](#) (may be out of print).