

Gilbert Shelton Autograph Party at Oat Willie's

Gilbert Shelton, underground cartoonist and author of the *Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers*, *Fat Freddy's Cat*, *Wonder Warthog*, and *Not Quite Dead*, will autograph copies of his work at Oat Willie's Campaign Headquarters, 617 West 29th Street, beginning at noon on Friday, March 12, 2010.

No stranger to Austin, Shelton began his art career in the early sixties at UT's *Texas Ranger* student humor Magazine, where he was a frequent contributor and began the groundbreaking *Wonder Warthog* comic series. Later he briefly became editor of the *Ranger*, but Shelton and his coworkers often ran afoul of the university administration. During the 1962-63 academic year, the editorial staff was fired and replaced four times by the director of Texas Student Publications for breaches of UT dignity.

After graduation Shelton moved around the country searching for creative opportunities, stopping at Cleveland, New York, and back to Austin to attend graduate school. He tried various stints at humor and automotive magazines and a brief stay as Art Director for the Vulcan Gas Company, a psychedelic rock venue in Austin.

Finally, Shelton moved to San Francisco in 1968, hoping to join poster artists Victor Moscoso, Rick Griffin, Stanley Mouse, Alton Kelly, and Wes Wilson in creating posters for the exploding rock scene there. He and three other Texans pooled their resources, bought a printing press, and formed a company, Rip Off Press, to create, print, and publish rock posters.

But, as Shelton put it in a 2006 interview, "I wasn't as good (as a poster artist) as these guys, but I discovered I could do comic books. And, we discovered that our printing press wasn't good enough to print posters, but it was good enough to print comics." The rest is history.

Over forty years later, Shelton has produced 14 *Freak Brothers* titles, as well as several collections. They have been translated into so many languages that it is easier to list the exceptions: every language except Chinese, Arabic, Russian, and the African vernaculars. Over thirty million *Freak Brothers* books have been sold worldwide.

In addition to the *Freak Brothers*, Shelton is the author of the companion series *Fat Freddy's Cat*, and has coauthored five titles in the series *Not Quite Dead*, the peripatetic adventures of the "world's least famous rock band" with French cartoonist Pic . He was also a contributor to the *Zap!* Underground comic series, numerous fanzines and other publications, and was the creator of the drug dealing board game *Feds 'n Heads*. An animated feature of the *Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers* entitled *Grass Roots* is currently under development.

Old and new friends of the works of Gilbert can see him at the Oat Willie's autograph party on Friday, March 12 beginning at 12:00 P.M.; at his opening reception at the South Austin Museum of Popular Culture on March 13 at 7:09 P.M.; and at a panel discussion at SXSW on Monday, March 15 at 3:30 P.M.