

# CHESHIRE CT 250 GRAPHIC HISTORY PROJECT

## MAKING CHESHIRE GRAPHIC HISTORY COMICS FOR YOUNG ADULTS

The Town of Cheshire's celebration of the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Signing of the Declaration of Independence is going to tell Cheshire stories in a special way - NOT another history book – our town's *graphic history* – a comic book format of our history. This workbook is designed for young adults to make their own comics, express their creativity, develop storytelling skills, and have fun building their artistic abilities as they tell a Cheshire story – either their own story or something from our town's history.

Why Make a Graphic History Comic? Anything that encourages creativity is good. This project allows you to invent characters, develop plots, and create dialogue. You can express your feelings and imagination freely (however, we have been instructed that this project is PG-13). You can combine both artwork and writing as you make a history comic. If your skills are better on the writing side, then write more. If your skills are better on the drawing side, than do that. Convey your stories in any way that seems most comfortable to you.

By participating in Cheshire CT 250 Graphic History project, you will become or improve your ability as a comic creator. Your work will be shown on the Town of Cheshire Website as well as being published in our planned Cheshire CT 250 Graphic History book (expected to be printed in January 2027).

FINISHED COMICS CAN BE BROUGHT TO  
**CHESHIRE TOWN HALL**  
 TOWN CLERKS OFFICE  
 (ATTN: SUSANNAH),  
**CHESHIRE PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
 (ATTN: SANDRA HERNANDEZ)  
 OR  
**ARTSPACE**  
 (ATTN: EMILY)

**SWEET CLAUDE'S**

*Sweet Claude's Menu*

- Heathbar - Death by Chocolate - Cookie
- Mississippi Mud Re - Toasted Almond
- Mint Chip - Caramel Cashew - Vanilla - R
- Coffee - Black Raspberry - Coconut - C
- Maple Walnut - Smurf - Ram Trax - Kai
- Reese's Cup - Strawberry - Chocolate
- Lemon Ice - Mango Sorbet - Rum Raisin - B

THEY WERE AT THE RED BUILDING ON THE HILL AT 828 SOUTH MAIN STREET (THIS WAS GALT TOY COMPANY)

OPENED IN 1988

BEST ICE CREAM!

"SMURF" IS ONE OF THE STORE'S MOST POPULAR FLAVORS - BLUE-COLORED RASPBERRY ICE CREAM WITH MARSHMALLOWS.

PERFECT FRONT PORCH FOR AN ICE CREAM PARLOR!

FRED & DIANE CLASON

WHO IS SWEET CLAUDE? FRED CLASON FOUND A BOOK AT U-CONN, "MURDER AT SWEET CLAUDE'S." THE HOUSE ON THE COVER WAS IDENTICAL TO THE RED HOUSE ON THE HILL.

I REMEMBER CLIMBING THE TREE OUT FRONT. BUT THEN IT GOT CUT DOWN AND IT TURNED INTO TWO ICE CREAM CONES.

I'VE BEEN EATING SWEET CLAUDE'S ICE CREAM FOR 37 YEARS!

ONCE I BOUGHT A RAM TRAX CONE, A LEMON ICE, AND A VANILLA CONE. FRED LOOKED OUT AT MY WIFE WITH OUR DOG.

PLEASE DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE GETTING THAT VANILLA CONE FOR YOUR DOG?

I AM. HE ONLY EATS YOUR ICE CREAM.

YOU'RE KILLING ME.

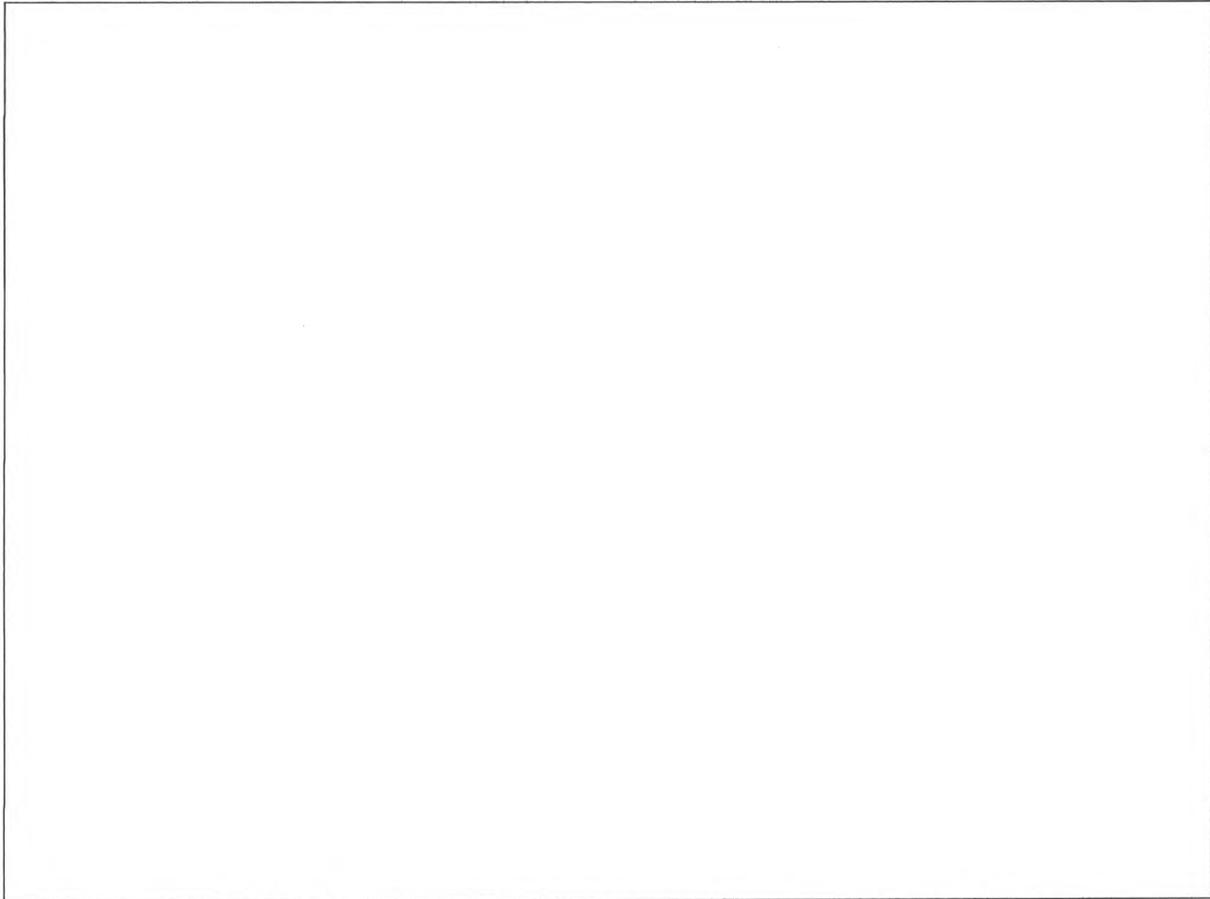
YUM!

THE BIGGEST KEY TO OUR SUCCESS IS THAT EVERYTHING IS HOME MADE. EVEN OUR BROWNIES IN THE ICE CREAM ARE ALL HOME MADE!

BEST ICE CREAM

I'M STILL GOING TO SWEET CLAUDE'S, NOW AT 493 WEST MAIN STREET AT BALL & SOCKET ARTS. STILL GETTING VANILLA CONES FOR MY DOG.

## WARM UP – YOU ARE GOING TO DRAW A CHESHIRE CAT



Completed Cat drawings can be brought to **Cheshire Library**, Attn: Sandra  
or to **Town Hall Clerk's Office**, Attn: Susannah; or to **Artsplace**, Attn: Emily

*These Cheshire Cat drawings will be reduced to the size of a postage stamp and used as borders and section breaks in the upcoming Cheshire CT 250 Graphic History Book*

## MAKING YOUR CHESHIRE HISTORY COMIC

### WHAT STORY DO YOU WANT TO TELL ABOUT CHESHIRE?

There are so many stories! You can do a story about school, your favorite Cheshire places, having fun in Cheshire, sports you like to play and where do you play these. You might want to do a story about your family and what it's like to live in Cheshire. Maybe you want to do a story about how you or your family first came to Cheshire. These should be true stories, true in the sense that you interpret the events, and involve things that really happened. You should research this so there is some basis in fact. If you tell the story of when your family came to Cheshire, interview family members and ask what year did your family come here? Where did we live? [or] Did we always live here? Listen for any stories that might resonate, that might be a good story to tell in a comic format. See if you can locate photographs if that might help as reference for your drawings.



For example: When I talked to Dave about Sweet Claude's Ice Cream, Dave said, "I remember when they first opened. I remember Fred talking about how he worked at a nursing home and he would do an ice cream social once a month and the residents loved that day. Someone told him he should just make ice cream and open his own store. So he did. I remember he said that he would close Sweet Claude's after New Years so he could go to the Bahamas and go fishing for a few months. I remember when we would wait in long lines to get ice cream on hot summer nights." I thought this would be a good Cheshire history comic. I could add that Sweet Claude's cut down the tree in front of their building and made an ice cream cone out of it. Then they moved to West Main Street.

**WHAT WOULD YOU WRITE AS YOUR CHESHIRE STORY?  
OR WHAT YOU WOULD WRITE AS YOUR CHESHIRE HISTORY STORY?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**FACT CHECKING**

You want to do some verification for your story, if only to make it more authentic. Some stories might not need a whole lot of fact checking. If you tell a story about when you were ten years old, you know the year. It's you. If you're telling a story about when your grandparents moved to Cheshire, knowing the year and knowing where they came from will add depth to your story.

You can use the internet. You can check out the Cheshire section in the Reference Dept. in the Library. You can email Cheshire Historical Society [cheshirehistorical@gmail.com](mailto:cheshirehistorical@gmail.com) or the Cheshire Town Historian [townhistorian@cheshirect.org](mailto:townhistorian@cheshirect.org) for information. Really old history can be researched in the **History of Cheshire** by Joseph Perkins Beach [History of Cheshire, Connecticut, from 1649 to 1840, including Prospect, which, as Columbia parish, was a part of Cheshire until 1829; ; Beach, Joseph Perkins, 1828-1911. \[from old catalog\] : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](#)

**Example:** Fact Checking Sweet Claude's Ice Cream Shop. When I went to their website, I found this: "Sweet Claude's has been crafting delicious, homemade ice cream since 1988. Over three decades later, we're still using the finest ingredients to create the best flavors around. Welcome to the family." The Allbiz website added this to my research: "Sweet Claude's Ice Cream is a family-owned and operated gourmet ice cream parlor that has been in business since 1987. In addition to offering a variety of ice cream flavors in cones, cups, and sundaes, they also have Tofutti for non-dairy lovers. The parlor also offers a selection of specialty pies and cakes, including Death By Chocolate, Mississippi Mud Pie, Toasted Almond, Cookie, Heathbar, Mint Chip, and Caramel Cashew. Customers can also special order a cake to serve anywhere from 8 to 50 people with their choice of any two flavors. Sweet Claude's prides itself on exceptional service and quality and is located in the 'Big Red House On The Hill' in Cheshire, just off rte 10. Fred Clason (Owner) at Sweet Claude's Ice Cream. And 2 additional contacts: Kelly Anne Pearce & George Clason." There's an e-mail for George: [g.clason@sweetclaudes.com](mailto:g.clason@sweetclaudes.com) I don't know if I need to write to him. There are a lot of photos that I can use for reference. Then I found 2011 article from The Patch with a ton of information about Sweet Claudes:

"Fred and Diane Clason have been familiar faces in town since opening Sweet Claude's Ice Cream Parlor in 1988. Although they were not sure at first what type of business they wanted to open, after 24 years in business, the Clasons have found a sweet spot in the hearts of customers.

Before starting their business on South Street, Diane Clason worked as a special education teacher in New Haven, and worked in food services at Stamford Hospital. Despite their steady jobs, they decided to take a risk and start their own business.

The Clasons moved to Cheshire in 1978 and always had an interest in the building on the corner where Sweet Claude's has now operated for more than two decades. When a friend told them the former owners, Galt Toy Company, were selling the building, the Clasons jumped at the chance to buy it. "At first, we were debating if it should be a deli, but we ultimately decided on ice cream because of the size of the building and the big porch area outside," said Diane Clason.

So, how did Sweet Claude's get its name since no one in the family is named Claude? It's the name of a book that Fred Clason found in his fraternity house at the University of Connecticut. One day Fred found an old book in his fraternity house called Murder at Sweet Claude's, and the house on the cover of the book looked just like the house

our business is in, so every time we drove by it, we would say 'there's the Sweet Claude's house,'" said Clason. A picture of the house that inspired Sweet Claude's name is hanging on the wall inside the store.

Owning a small business in today's economy can be challenging, but Clason thinks she knows why Sweet Claude's has been a success for so many years.

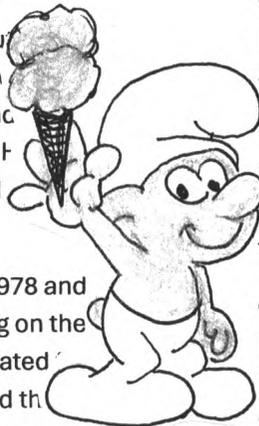
"I think the biggest key to our success is that everything is home made. Even our brownies in the ice cream are all home made," she said.

Customers like the atmosphere and the unique homemade flavors. "Personally, my favorite flavor is Smurf, I just can't get enough of it," said Jeremy Owings, of North Haven.

Clason said that "Smurf" is one of the store's most popular flavors. It is a blue-colored raspberry flavored ice cream with marshmallows in it.

"On the days that the Little Leaguers come in after their games, we often sell out of "Smurf" before all of the kids get theirs! That's how popular it is," said Clason.

Sweet Claude's has also been good about giving back to the community over the years. They help sponsor Cheshire High School sports teams and have often supplied the ice cream for the high



school's overnight graduation party. The store also sponsors a Cheshire Little League team each year, and supports charities such as the United Way, Muscular Dystrophy Association, and various local food banks.

The Clason's have also given jobs to Cheshire teenagers for nearly a quarter century.

"I love working here because it is a small business so it feels like one big family, and it is always a friendly environment," said Christina Toth, a Cheshire resident who has been a Sweet Claude's employee for five years.

Toth starting working at Sweet Claude's when she was 16 and she now returns each summer after her classes end at the University of Texas.

Dave was right about the vacations in Bahamas. I want reference photos so I started online first. I'm going to go to Sweet Claudes because they have a lot of photos in their hallway and I want a photo of the new location.

From the internet - I want a photo of the old store.



And a photo of their logo: This is a good photo because I want to draw the ice cream cone wood carving.



## HOW DOES THE STORY GO?

You are probably going to make four boxes or panels that tell your story. The first box is where your story starts and where you introduce your characters. So the first box is your beginning. Where does your story take place, meaning what is the setting?

Example: The story that I'm going to use is about Dave going to Sweet Claude's when he was a young guy and Dave still eating ice cream at Sweet Claude's as an old guy. Dave told me he bought vanilla ice cream in a cup along with his Ram Trax cone and Fred looked at Dave's wife holding the dog outside the building and he said, "Please don't tell me you're giving my ice cream to your dog!" Dave said, "Fred, it's the only ice cream my dog will eat." Fred said, "You're killing me." I think that would be good. The good old days. Dave and Fred are definitely characters in my comic. Then more about what's going on today in the new location.

Where does your story take place? \_\_\_\_\_

## WHO IS IN YOUR STORY?

Example: In the story Dave told me, there's Dave, Fred Clason the owner, the new manager at the West Main Street location. Maybe Dave goes to get ice cream with his current dog because you can bring dogs into the store.

## YOUR CHARACTERS:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

You can have more than five characters. Less than five is okay, too.

## WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN IN YOUR STORY?

This is called the plot. This is how the story goes.

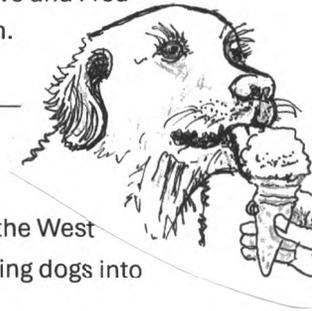
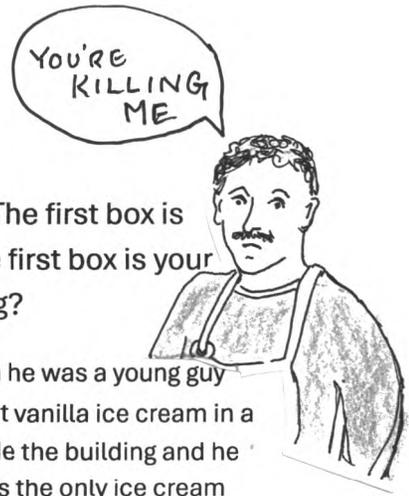
Example: Maybe Dave goes to Sweet Claude's for the first time and sees all the different kinds of ice cream. He tries a few and decides that he only wants Ram Trax. He gets the vanilla cup and Fred asks if that's for the dog. Dave asks Fred why did he call his shop Sweet Claudes? Fred answers with the story about the book from his dormitory. (The Patch article has a lot of great information about the history of the shop). Then move to the present day where Dave is still getting Ram Trax.

## WHAT IS YOUR PLOT?

\_\_\_\_\_  
[You can write this out on a separate sheet of paper]

\_\_\_\_\_  
WHAT IS THE TITLE OF YOUR COMIC?

\_\_\_\_\_  
WHAT IS YOUR BEGINNING DRAWING GOING TO BE? \_\_\_\_\_



WHAT ARE YOUR MIDDLE DRAWINGS (TWO OF THEM) GOING TO BE?

---

WHAT IS YOUR END DRAWING GOING TO BE?

---

You want your characters to say things that actually tell the story.

**WHAT ARE YOUR CHARACTERS GOING TO SAY?**

---

[You can write this out on a separate sheet of paper]

---

### **NOW IT'S TIME TO DRAW!**

Have fun drawing your story and writing in what the characters say to each other. Use your own paper if the next page is too small. You can use as many boxes as you want. Four is a good number, but maybe you only want to do one big box. Maybe you want to squeeze six on the page. Maybe you need to go to two or more pages. That's okay.

You can use the next page for your actual comic or you can use this to do a thumbnail or practice version of your comic. You can use a separate piece of paper perhaps larger size that can be reduced when you're finished.

For the Cheshire CT 250 Graphic History Book, we will use finished work that will be 8 1/2" x 11", black & white. You can use a black marker (Flair™ style) or any other materials or combination of materials (e.g., any variety of black markers from fine to brush, watercolor, washi tape, collage, etc.) – just be aware that this will be printed letter size (8.5x11) and displayed in black & white. Pencil doesn't copy or scan really well, *but* using a pencil (blue "non-photo" pencils are the best for this) is a good way to sketch out your comic before you ink them with the black markers.

Good luck and have fun!

*Note that we are offering free workshops to learn to do this type of comic book drawing. Please send a quick email to [townhistorian@cheshirect.org](mailto:townhistorian@cheshirect.org) for information about the next course being offered. These are likely Friday afternoon at Artsplace (above Sweet Claude's) or Saturday afternoons at Cheshire Public Library.*

**CHESHIRE CT 250 GRAPHIC HISTORY PROJECT**

[YOUR TITLE]	

BY: \_\_\_\_\_ YOUNG ADULT  
(WRITE YOUR NAME)

*Completed Comic drawings can be brought to **Cheshire Library**, Attn: Sandra or to **Town Hall Clerk's Office**, Attn: Susannah; or to **Artsplace**, Attn: Emily. These can also be sent as a jpeg from your phone for preliminary submission to [celebrate250@cheshirect.gov](mailto:celebrate250@cheshirect.gov) For actual printing and website display, we will require a scanned jpg or tif file 300 DPI minimum (Library has great flatbed scanners)*