

## NEWS RELEASE

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### SALINAS STORIES EXAMINES STORYTELLING THROUGH GRAPHIC NOVELS

July 8, 2009 – July is Graphic Novels Month at the Salinas Public Library! Salinas Stories' summer programs focus on ways of telling stories and the Library invites people of all ages to spend July exploring the storytelling form known as the graphic novel. Programs enable people to explore, discover & talk about graphic novels (in person and online), meet graphic novel artists, and learn to tell their own story through this exciting art form through free workshops. All events are FREE. Copies of these graphic novels are available now at all branches of the Salinas Public Library.







A graphic novel is a book that takes the form of a long comic strip or heavily illustrated story. The Salinas Public Library's Graphic Novel series explores some of the most popular, mind-bending graphic novels available, from new twists on old classics like Batman to works by new artists. Several programs invite participants to explore the expression of cultural identity through the graphic novel. On July 17, the series explores Asian-American cultural identities in the Secret Identities: Asian American Superheroes program, which is presented in partnership with Asian Cultural Encounter of Salinas and will feature two of the creators of this new anthology. During the last week of July, two programs explore stories of Latino culture and identity at Cesar Chavez Library. On July 28, the Library will host a book discussion on *Heartbreak Soup, a Love and Rockets* book by Gilbert Hernandez, which tells the tales of the imaginary Central American town of Palomar and its colorful cast of characters. On July 31<sup>st</sup>, artist Rhode Montijo will speak at Cesar Chavez Library about his graphic novel, *Pablo's Inferno*, and take the audience through an imaginary romp through a pre-Columbian hell—and the making of a graphic novel. (See below for bio)

Salinas Public Library Program Manager Garland Thompson, himself a graphic novel aficionado, says, "If Salinas is to thrive, the stories this community holds dear must be told in fresh and exciting ways that entice people to learn more about the place so many people have come to cherish. These talks and workshops will help people tell their story in new and different ways."

### **INTERACTIVE BLOG: *BATMAN: THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS* by Frank Miller.**

Throughout July, the Library hosts an online conversation on one of the most popular and genre-busting graphic novels ever: *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*, by Frank Miller. Everyone is welcome to the online discussion to hear what others have to say and express their thoughts about one of the most popular mythical characters in our culture today. See [www.salinasstories.wordpress.com](http://www.salinasstories.wordpress.com)

### **GRAPHIC NOVELS MONTH CALENDAR:**

-  **JULY 1–31 ONLINE CONVERSATION – *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*, by Frank Miller.** One of the best-selling graphic novels of all time, this black comedy version of Batman's latter days masterfully combines satire and superhero antics without betraying its central character's core of danger. Go to [salinasstories.wordpress.com](http://salinasstories.wordpress.com) to talk about it!
-  **WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 6:30–8:00 pm *Watchmen*, by Alan Moore, drawn by Dave Gibbons.** Considered the quintessential graphic novel by fans and critics alike, it is a dark and complex tale of superheroes and vigilante justice. **John Steinbeck Library**
-  **FRIDAY, JULY 17, 7–8:30 pm *Secret Identities: Asian American Superheroes*** The makers of *Secret Identities*, the first-ever anthology of Asian American superhero comics, present a unique multimedia workshop featuring video adaptations of stories from the book, an interactive discussion of the collection's key themes and issues, and the opportunity to collaborate in the creation of an original superhero, from origin to finished character sketch! A workshop for everyone! Featuring Jeff Yang, the anthology's Editor-in-Chief, and well-known inker Walden Wong. Presented in partnership with Asian Cultural Encounter (ACE) of Salinas. **John Steinbeck Library**
-  **TUESDAY, JULY 21, 6:30–8:00 pm *Jimmy Corrigan: The Smartest Kid on Earth*, by Chris Ware.** Neither smart nor a kid, Jimmy reunites with his long-lost Dad, finds him a great disappointment, and discovers an African-American sister he never knew about. **El Gabilan Library**
-  **SUNDAY, JULY 26, 2–4:00 pm *Your Life As A Hero: Telling Your Story through the Graphic Novel*** Arts Workshop for all ages and skill levels. **El Gabilan Library**
-  **TUESDAY, JULY 28, 6:30–8:00 pm *Heartbreak Soup, a Love and Rockets Book*, by Gilbert Hernandez.** The first half of the acclaimed magical-realist tales of "Palomar," the small Central American town, beginning with the groundbreaking story, "Sopa de Gran Pena." **Cesar Chavez Library**

- 🦋 **FRIDAY, JULY 31, 7–8:30 pm** **Hero in the Underworld: *Pablo's Inferno*** Meet artist Rhode Montijo and hear about his hero's journey through the underworld in his graphic novel, *Pablo's Inferno*, where young Pablo gets run over by a milk truck and triumphs in his adventures through a pre-Columbian hell. Learn about the process of comic book production, from sketches to final artwork. **Cesar Chavez Library**
- 🌟 **SUNDAY, AUGUST 16, 2–4:00 pm** **Your Life As A Hero: Telling Your Story through the Graphic Novel** Arts Workshop for all ages and skill levels. **John Steinbeck Library**
- 🌟 **SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2–4:00 pm** **Your Life As A Hero: Telling Your Story through the Graphic Novel** Arts Workshop for all ages and skill levels. **Cesar Chavez Library**

## PROGRAM DETAILS

**The July 17 Secret Identities workshop is presented in partnership with Asian Cultural Encounter (ACE) of Salinas.** ACE is an action team of the Salinas downtown community board for the Salinas Chinatown Renewal Project. ACE is charged with preserving the cultural heritage of the Salinas Chinatown area.

### **RHODE MONTIJO, ARTIST/AUTHOR of *PABLO'S INFERNO* (July 31)**

Rhode Montijo received his BFA in Illustration from California College of Arts and Crafts in 1996. Thanks to a grant from the [Xeric Foundation](#), Montijo was able to release his comic, *Pablo's Inferno* to a wider audience. He has also worked for many [Mondo Media](#) shows like *Thugs on Film* and [The God & Devil Show](#). It was while working on Mondo that he meet [Kenn Navarro](#) and [Aubrey Ankrum](#), and created the popular [dark-humored flash cartoon](#) series, [Happy Tree Friends](#). Rhode worked as writer, director and art director, and also did the voices of [Lumpy](#) and [Splendid](#). After five years working on the show, he officially left Happy Tree Friends in 2005 to focus more on his comic-book works and to rustle buffalo in Brazil. [David Winn](#) replaced him as the voices Lumpy and Splendid. According to writer [Warren Graff](#) he still remains friends with the whole HTF team. Montijo enjoys working on various multimedia projects and has had an expressed interest in creating children's books, which led to the creation of the acclaimed [Cloud Boy](#). More information on Rhode Montijo and *Pablo's Inferno* is available at [www.pablosinferno.com](http://www.pablosinferno.com)

## **SALINAS STORIES EXPLORES WAYS OF TELLING STORIES FROM JULY- SEPTEMBER**

From July through September, Salinas Stories explores themes in the history of Salinas from 1986 to today, and celebrate the way we tell our stories. The past 25 years have been a time of Rejuvenation and Rebirth. The Cominos Hotel (and the Iron Curtain) came down and the Salinas Auto Mall (and the Hubble Telescope) went up. Salinas' population diversified and almost doubled. Computers came home to stay. The National Steinbeck Center was founded and has just turned ten. The Salinas Public Library was saved by public outcry and now turns 100. We're wired, linked in, *friend*ed, and connected in ways we never imagined before. Technology advances so quickly there is no time to predict what is next. However, through the Salinas Stories program, we can all tell the next chapter of our story and forge the future of Salinas and our world. Explore this era. Explore Salinas' Stories.

**This program is part of “Salinas Stories: Cultivating Knowledge, Life & Literature,”** a two-year program beginning in fall 2008, presented by the National Steinbeck Center and the Salinas Public Library. “Salinas Stories” is funded by a National Leadership Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and will include the Centennial year of the Salinas Public Library, founded in 1909, and celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in fall 2009. This program, “Rejuvenation & Rebirth”: 1986-2009 (July-Sept 2009) represents the fourth of four broad periods in Salinas' history that “Salinas Stories” will have explored over the past year.

[www.salinas.lib.ca.us](http://www.salinas.lib.ca.us)

[www.salinasstories.blogspot.com](http://www.salinasstories.blogspot.com)

**This project is made possible by a grant** from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). IMLS is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 122,500 libraries and 17,500 museums. The Institute's mission is to create strong libraries and museums that connect people to information and ideas. For

more information, visit <http://www.ims.gov>.

**About the Salinas Public Library:** The Salinas Public Library (SPL) serves the City of Salinas and surrounding region with a mission to contribute to a community in which people enjoy continuing opportunities to broaden their knowledge, heighten their imagination, expand their global awareness and enrich their cultural values. Services are provided through three library facilities as well as an online catalog and a variety of databases available on the website. Besides providing the traditional services, SPL also offers a Digital Arts Lab, Teen Lounge, Chicano Cultural Resource collection, free Internet access, Wi-Fi, multiple audio and video formats, Spanish language materials, and literacy programs. For more information, call (831) 758-7311 or visit <http://www.salinan.lib.ca.us>.

**About the National Steinbeck Center:** The National Steinbeck Center is a museum and cultural institution whose mission is to tell the story of John Steinbeck's rich legacy, and to present, create and explore stories of the human condition. The Center offers three visitor experiences. The John Steinbeck Exhibition Hall houses seven themed theaters with film clips and interactive exhibits from the Nobel prize-winning author's works. The Rabobank Agriculture Museum explores the stories of the Salinas Valley "from field to fork." And the Center offers its own changing art and cultural exhibits and a variety of educational and public programs. To learn more about the National Steinbeck Center, call 831-796-3833 or visit <http://www.steinbeck.org>

John Steinbeck Library  
350 Lincoln Ave.  
758-7311

Cesar Chavez Library  
615 Williams Road  
758-7345

El Gabilan Library  
1400 N. Main  
758-7302