



Sponsor Highlight Tom Falco

Editor/Publisher of the Coconut Grove Grapevine discusses what makes him giddy, time travel wormholes, and the need to forgo vacations.

When did you get here? I was born in Brooklyn, raised in Miami, been in Coconut Grove since 1973.

When did you start the Coconut Grove Grapevine? May of 2005. I wanted to start blogging and writing about the neighborhood and it just took off. Today the Grapevine gets 160,000 visitors a month.

What stories get the most attention? When I write about a new restaurant, I'll get 40,000 hits on a single story. When I write about CocoWalk and their transformation, I get that amount of activity too. The biggest story this year was Old Joe passing.

What is your idea of a perfect day in Coconut Grove? Sunny, calm, and not a trace of construction work or workers.

How long have you been a cartoonist? As long as I could hold a pencil. As a kid I drew Fred Flintstone and Charlie Brown.

What are your own characters? I have four comic strips, but *Tomversation* is a gag-a-day strip. No main character, different characters and situations every day. It's been on hold for a few years because I keep getting the run-around from newspapers. They promise me a contract and then drag me along for months or years. I do have something in the works now and hopefully it will be publishing daily in the fall.

When and where, were you the happiest? I wake up happy and in a good mood every day. The 1980s was my favorite decade and I wish that I could whoosh... start on January 1, 1980 and live through Dec. 31, 1989 and just go back and redo it over and over again. Back then I use to take time to smell the roses. I would take in what was going on every day. I would appreciate what I did and enjoy so many friends. Every single day an adventure. Out every night of the week, on the beach daily. My family thought I was afraid to fly because I stopped travelling. I told them my life is a vacation. I don't need to escape anywhere. My life is the vacation.

Who is your favorite hero of fiction? Hmmm, that's a tossup between Harry Potter, Superman and Batman.

Will you be attending any of the ComicCon events this year? Which one? Every year I go to ComicCon in New York in October. My favorite time of the year is Fall in New York. The City is full of people dressed up as comic and sci-fi characters, and there is something so magical about it. I really love it more than anything. Entering the Jacob Javits Center the first day is incredible. There is so much energy. I've been to other ComicCons, but there is nothing like New York's ComicCon.

What do you consider your biggest achievement? If I get my comic's contract, which I'm hoping for any day now, it will go in syndication and start publishing every day, that would be it. Through the years, I would draw but not submit my work. It was the journey, and the result and the delight of taking a blank page and putting a gag and funny picture to go with it. I still get giddy when I complete each comic.

Do you believe Coconut Grove was the hippest in the late 1960s and 1970s? It was the best in the 1950s, a real Bohemian place and this lifestyle flowed into the 1960s. I only know it personally from the 1970s. Hippies selling tie dye on the streets and doing hippy-type things. Not over the top, and charming.

If you could wave a magic wand, and in one Harry- Potter moment change the Grove Village, what would it be? It would be the summer of 1925, and there would be no annexation into the City of Miami. The Grove would be its own city, and we would not be over-built or ruled by greed.

Do you tell people you are from Miami or New York? Miami. This is my home.

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