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Cartoonists drawn to ol' haunt

News' Gallo leads reunion at tavern

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DAILY NEWS WRITER

THE CARTOON network rides again.

A wall inside a hallowed hang-out for newsmen got a fresh look yesterday, when legendary cartoonists led by The News' Bill Gallo brought it to life with paint and ink.

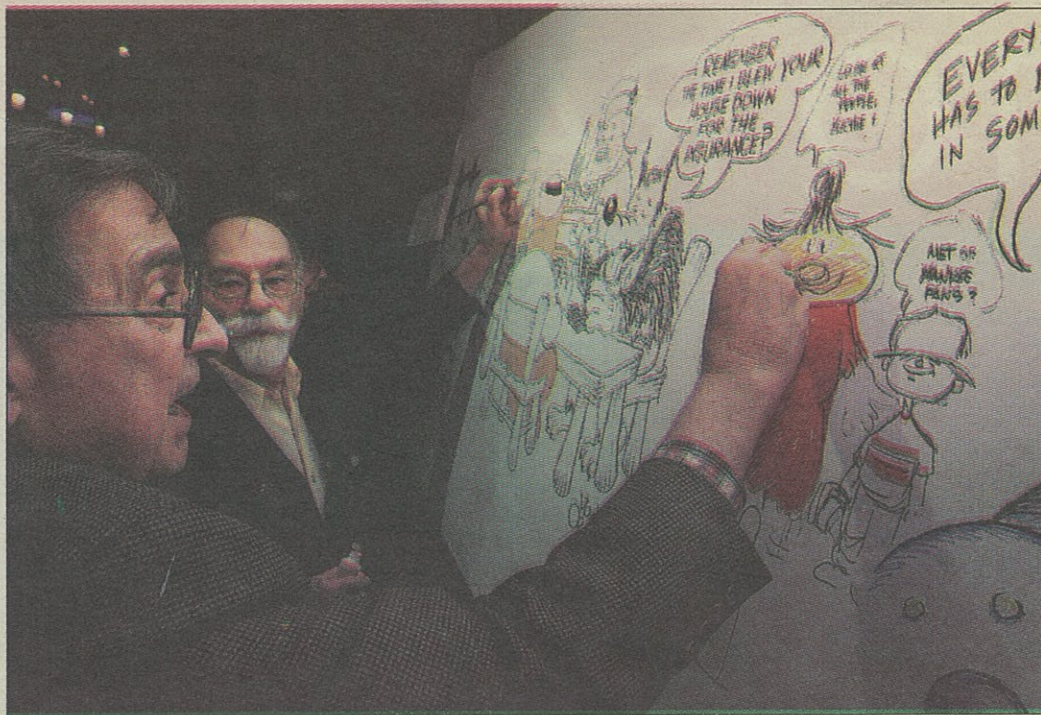
Gallo and more than a dozen old-school cartoonists met at the Overlook Lounge, an E. 44th St. bar once known as Costello's, to repeat some decorating they did 29 years ago.

"I feel honored being here with all these other cartoonists," said Joe Giella, who draws Mary Worth. "The best of them are in this room right now."

The room has a tradition of displaying the doodles of New York's funniest artists. In the 1930s, New Yorker writer and cartoonist James Thurber would scribble on a wall to pay his tab.

In 1976, while the joint was still called Costello's, Gallo was asked to decorate an adjacent wall. Gallo countered with an offer in the tradition of Thurber.

"You give us a party, I'll bring in cartoonists and we'll decorate this wall for you in 15 minutes," Gallo told Tim Costello.



MICHAEL APPLETON

News' Bill Gallo (l.) and Don Orehek, of Playboy fame, scribble on wall at Overlook Lounge.

Gallo made good on the promise, and although Thurber's wall has since been painted over, the mural Gallo helped organize stands, with characters from dozens of familiar comic strips peering out at customers.

Yesterday's effort also included Bill Kresse, who drew the old Dai-

ly News strip Super Duper.

"We all used to come and spend our lunch hour," said Kresse.

Bunny Hoest, who wrote the Lockhorns comic strip that her late husband Bill Hoest drew, said several artists offered to take

over when Bill died.

"That's the kind of support this group gives," said who frequented Costello's.

"It was a real newspaper place," recalled Gallo. "times you'd have to break a boxing match, but nobody was mad at each other in the c