

Remembrance of Charles Shulz

By Mark Morelli, *Falls News-Press*

Just two weeks ago, my six-year-old daughter Olivia and I were reading from an old Peanuts cartoon book. It went like this: "You know what my best quality is?" Lucy asked.

"What's quality mean?" Olivia asked me.

"It's a characteristic. Like, what's the best thing you like about me?"

"I like how you take me to the library," she said.

"That's my good quality. Now, tell me a bad quality."

"That's easy," my daughter said. "When you play that annoying song."

She was referring to an old song, recorded way before both of our times, Mike Douglas singing the most saccharine of sentimental numbers, "The Men in My Little Girl's Life." It's so syrupy she hates it.

"You know it makes me so mad that I cry," she said. "And you still play it."

Then she got furious.

"Don't you know you're not supposed to make little girls cry!"

I felt like Schroeder sitting at the piano, getting hollered at by Lucy. That's one of Olivia's best qualities. She shares it with most first-graders. Extreme passion. This is the same little girl who grew sadly solemn one early morning listening to a Mozart flute concerto CD.

"What's wrong?" I had asked.

"The music is making me teary-eyed," she replied.

Reminding us that children are deeper than we think was Charles Schulz's best quality.

In the strip Olivia and I read, Lucy asked: "You know what my best quality is?"

Lucy answered herself. "I think I'm nice to be around." She paused and added, "I'd hate it if I weren't around."

Well, I'm sure we'll get by, but for awhile I am going to hate it not having Charles Schulz around.