



# FRAME

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF ASIFA/Central

## Who's There? Why, "It's Knock Knock Cartoons"

by T.L. Champion



*Knock Knock Cartoons Ltd., LLC a traditional animation house out of Cleveland, Ohio is currently developing a very unique project as a pilot for the Cartoon Network. Quickly*

*becoming a highly sought-after animation design house, Knock Knock's client list is beginning to read like a veritable "Who's Who" of the corporate world, including names such as Coca-Cola, America Online, Hot Wheels, and The Minnesota Timber Wolves, among others.*

*I recently had the good fortune to speak with Gav Gnatovich, owner of Knock Knock Cartoons Ltd., regarding his passion for the business, and his years of experience as an independent animator. He and his longtime associate, Todd Myers, are the two creative gurus that started the company in 1988. Now they are enjoying*

*the rewards of years of hard work and dedication toward growing the business, which has become a winning business strategy for the company. Following are several questions asked of Gav during our interview:*

**Question:** Could you give us a little background on the super secret project that you are working on for the Cartoon Network?

**Gav:** Yes. The concept involves two characters from the Cro-Magnon and Neanderthal era. The names of the two male characters are 'Longhair' and 'Doubledome' (two slang words used to describe intellectuals). The short features Longhair, a fastidiously sophisticated and self-serving Cro-Magnon, and his charmingly earnest yet irksome friend, Doubledome, as they endeavor to evolve alongside their oafish neighbors, the Neanderthals.

*Knock Knock continued on page 3*

## "Skywalking Music for an Animation": The Steven Webber Interview by M. L. Haynes

*Writers Note: Emmy award-winner Stephen Webber was the composer/conductor for Ed Counts' animation 'ZOETROBICS' which was profiled in last quarter's Newsletter. Stephen and Ed were presenters at the '99 ASIFA/Central Conference & Retreat.*

**MLH:** Stephen, what is your musical background?

**SW:** Unusual, I guess. I've played in rock, folk and bluegrass bands all my life. I play guitar, lute, keyboards, mandolin, banjo, bass, percussion, and a little bit of everything else. My folks made me take piano lessons for a decade from a very strict piano guild teacher who used to hit my hands with a pencil if I screwed up. My folks said I'd thank them someday, and they were right. I did learn a lot from her,

though it was kind of painful. I did my Bachelors in jazz studies and composition at North Texas State. I later did a Master's in Classical Guitar performance at Western Kentucky University. I also studied classical guitar with Sharon Isbin who runs the program at Julliard, and with John Johns who runs the program at Vanderbilt. After recording with my own band for a few years in Texas, I decided to move into producing and composing, so I built my own studio north of Nashville. For the next decade I produced and engineered about 60 albums, and did the soundtracks to two dozen films and TV shows. During this time I got way into electronic music, MIDI, sampling, all that. Then Berklee recruited me five years ago.

*Skywalking continued on page 7*

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## Letter from the Editor *by Jennifer Eldred*



The summer months are quickly slipping away, so grab your Frame by Frame issue and head outside to enjoy the last fading days.

This quarter features articles

on Knock Knock Cartoons, musician Steven Webber and Finding Animation Jobs. Thank you to T.L. Champion, M.L. Haynes and Randy Rockafellow for taking time during the summer months to write the interesting and informative articles you'll find in this issue.

ASIFA/Central is putting together a

Second ASIFA/Central Reel. Check out page 6 to learn how you can be a part of it.

Reminder: If you are interested in attending or volunteering during ASIFA/Central's 2000 Conference and Retreat the conference will be April 21 - April 23, 2000. It will once again be chaired by Mary Lou Haynes and Dave Daruszka who did a great job at the '99 event. Presenters are being accepted. If you would like to be considered, please contact Mary Lou at [morgpk@oal.com](mailto:morgpk@oal.com). To reserve lodging call 1.800.868.7625.

If you are interested in submitting an article for the Fall 1999 Frame by Frame edition the deadline is **October 1st**.

*Jennifer Eldred*

### **Animator's Reel is Available for Purchase; Plans for next ASIFA/Central Reel begin**

The '98 ASIFA/Central Animators Retreat was the premiere showing of the first demo reel of ASIFA/Central members. The enthusiastic reception for the reel (also the request for a copy by a few conference attendees) prompted us to make a limited quantity of tapes available for purchase. The 17 members who entered work for the reel have received a free copy for their contribution.

The cost of the reel is \$22 for ASIFA members, \$32 for non-members. Shipping and handling

charges are included. To order, please send a check (payable to ASIFA/Central) to Deanna Morse at the address on the back of the newsletter.

What's in it for you? An hour of delightful animation for your viewing pleasure. Place your order today!

*See page 6 for details on how you can have your work be a part of the next ASIFA/Central Reel. Be sure to take advantage of this membership benefit.*

#### **ASIFA/Central Mission Statement** **ASIFA: Association Internationale du Film d'Animation**

*The purpose of ASIFA/Central is to promote the art of animation locally and internationally and to promote communication among animators and between animators and devotees. - adopted 3/92*

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April 21 - April 23, 2000

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Send a check (payable in US dollars to ASIFA/Central) to the address above.

Printed in the U.S. Aon recycled paper.





**Question:** When is the release date on this project?

**Gav:** The pilot is due in the fall of this year.

**Question:** Where did the idea of creating a story line from the Neanderthal /Cro-Magnon era come from?

**Gav:** I did an earlier piece of work called the "Prehysterical Daze" a number of years ago, which I finished in 1991. I was in Los Angeles at the time and became acquainted with Linda Simensky. We kept in contact over the years and she is now head of development at the Cartoon Network.

**Question:** How long does it take to put that type of project together?

**Gav:** About a year. There are several steps involved. The first step is the development stage, and it includes the premise of the show, a brief description of the characters, and about six episode ideas. When they buy off on that, you need to write a script. When they sign off on the script, the next step involves producing a storyboard. When they approve the storyboard, you can begin the necessary steps to create the animated pilot. That's where we are now.

**Question:** With the technological age upon us, why do you prefer to create animation utilizing traditional methods?

**Gav:** To me, everything that is produced digitally still has an unreal quality to it. There's a certain charm that goes into animation on film that is carried through, and it gives it a certain life. Although we've done entire jobs using only computer animation, I prefer the look and feel of traditional animation.

**Question:** Do you enjoy writing the story line, or do you strictly enjoy the artistic side of your projects?

**Gav:** I enjoy the whole process, including the development of the story line, creating the characters for the first

time . . . even developing the animation is very special, because that's when the characters come to life . . . but the animation itself it a ton of work.

**Question:** Has your staff grown over the years to accommodate the growth of the business?

**Gav:** Yes. Originally we started with a staff of two, just Todd and myself. But in the past several years, we have added five animators bringing our total staff up to seven. We also hire freelancers as needed.

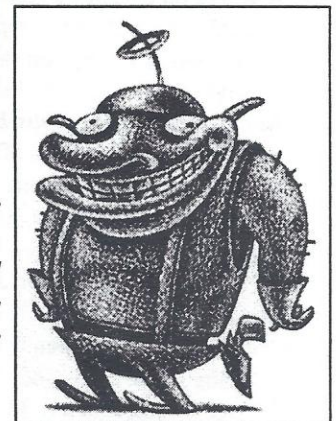
**Question:** Do you have any specific goals for the business as you continue to grow with each new project and each passing year?

**Gav:** Yes, I love nurturing new talent, bringing in respected artists, and working with them. We learn from each other. As a company, our goals change all the time. Six years ago, commercials were our main focus and we succeeded in that genre. Now we are focusing on television and featured series. The object, of course, is to make money and make the business successful, so that I can hire new people and go home and get some sleep.

A personal goal of mine includes making an animated film that is artistically beautiful . . . a dramatic piece that is not character-based, but derived instead, from the true essence of real people. Animated

characters today bounce off walls and act silly. I'd like to create a dramatic piece that will transcend the characters, allowing them to evolve as the story line develops. Maybe I'll develop that film and several other concepts that I dream about working on, . . . someday . . . before I retire . . . . .

*T.L. Champion is a freelance writer who specializes in Internet marketing and animated features. T.L. lives in Cleveland, OH and can be reached by e-mail at: [champion38@aol.com](mailto:champion38@aol.com).*





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## Find those Animation Jobs by *Randall Rockafellow*

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Finding work in the animation field can be a daunting and frustrating task especially if you live in Michigan like me. Where do you look? If you've checked the classifieds or the yellow pages you've learned where not to look. Today the obvious answer is the Internet. The Internet does help animators with its wide range of resources, including job searches, but it isn't a "do all and be all" for getting an animation job. There are other widely available resources that can be more helpful to your own job hunting situation. Let me tell you how to do less and get more out of your internet job search as well as help you discover other resources you may never have thought to use.

Starting your job search on the Internet can be a quick way to collect some animation company contact information. The downside is that its very time consuming to harvest all of that available data and may yield few results. Your time is best spent researching a short list of companies or collecting contact information from a list of companies in a specific area or region. There are several web sites that host a database of animation industry contacts. These are helpful in quickly picking up some names and numbers in an area to get you started.

Many animation related companies use the Internet to announce job openings. These Internet job postings offer greater job getting potential yet carry their own downside. The problem with these job postings is that there are more than just one or two sites that have these job postings, and every day somewhere on the net a job is being posted. This would mean you'd have to be on the web surfing for job postings most of the day, every day. Which is not a very productive use of your job hunting time.

So how does someone keep up and sort through animation job offers on the web? Easy. Scrape together thirty-six dollars or, if you're on a tight budget, as little as three dollars and buy a monthly or yearly subscription to 3Dsites': *Jobs-by-mail*, a daily email subscription that collects recently posted jobs from several Internet sites and sends them to you in one nice email. My experience with *jobs-by-mail* is that you receive on average four or five job offers a day. However, some of the jobs are for programmers, some require specific skills or experience, some are positions located internationally. During a given month I can say there are about eight to ten jobs that I'd consider applying for. *Jobs-by-mail* may not be for you if your only looking for a local job. On the other hand if you're willing to relocate then this service could be a useful tool in tracking down an out-of-state animation job. Check out this service online at [www.3dsite.com](http://www.3dsite.com).

In addition to the Internet there are trade publications that

come in handy. *Animation Magazine* for example puts out a monthly magazine that almost always includes job opportunities even if they are mostly major animation studios. They also publish an annual *Animation Industry Directory*. It comes complete with an industry breakdown of Internet, game, production, post-production, special effects, and feature film companies. Be sure to also discover the local trade publications, for example *The Big Idea* and *Michigan Vue*, a couple of Michigan based trade magazines. They usually offer insights into what projects companies are working on and whether or not they need or use animators.

In your job hunting don't forget to check out local media organizations or special interest groups. They can be great places to network and learn about people, companies and jobs that you otherwise wouldn't have heard about. Some of these organizations put together a regional directory of companies and services. Those directories can become invaluable when job hunting in your area. When I started looking for work in Southeast Michigan I discovered the Detroit Producers Association. While I didn't get involved in the organization I did network and purchased a copy of their annual Michigan Production Guide. I kept finding myself turning to that guide while trying to get my next job.

Once you have gathered some animation contact information use it. Pickup the phone and call various animation facilities. In cold call situation remember that the secretary is your best friend. He or She has the power to put you through to someone important. If you aren't pleasant to the secretary then chances are that person isn't going to go out of their way to help you. Tell the secretary that you're looking for work as an animator and want to know if someone could help you out. Be sure to find out who their human resource contact is, what their direct number or extension is, and their fax number. Most people in the industry are very friendly and helpful. If the facility doesn't hire animators and doesn't have any job openings ask them if they know of any other companies who might use an animator. Be aware that your phone call might have caught someone at an extremely busy point in time so offer to call back at a more convenient time. These job-hunting tips are based mostly from my own experiences and I hope they can be helpful to you too. I'll be heading to SIGGRAPH this year in the pursuit of an animation job, an experience everyone can read in a future ASIFA/Central newsletter. If you find these helpful or have your own job hunting tips or discoveries drop me a line at [rrockafellow2@juno.com](mailto:rrockafellow2@juno.com).

*Randall Rockafellow is the ASIFA/Central webmaster and a free-lance animator currently seeking freelance and full-time art and animation work.*



I'm in the music technology division here, and am course coordinator for "Music Production for Visual Media" which includes TV, film, DVD, etc. The funny thing is, now I'm getting way back into recording and writing for acoustic instruments. I was just elected onto the Board of Overseers at New England Conservatory, to which I'm really looking forward. The diversity in my background comes in handy doing soundtracks. You need string quartet? No problem. With a Count Basie horn section? Great. And a hip hop beat? Gotcha covered. And a banjo playing over the top? Fine.

**MLH:** What are the top highlights of your career to date?

**SW:** • Winning an Emmy---from Montel Williams, of all people. Life is so surreal sometimes.

- Interviewing Beatles Producer George Martin at the royal opening of the Liverpool Institute for the Performing Arts where I got to hang out with Paul McCartney and the Queen of England---that was fun.

- Playing in Washington DC at the Capitol was interesting, meeting my hero John Glenn and realizing he had full make-up on. That was educational.

- The first time I heard myself playing on National Public Radio I'll always remember. I had just played two assemblies for school kids way out in the sticks in Kentucky. I got the van all loaded up and was driving off. The sun was setting, lots of reds and oranges, I was up on a ridge. I had 'All Things Considered' on the radio and Bailey White was telling a story about her mother and a bathtub. When she got through, the music came up and it sounded familiar. After about a minute, I realized it was me! They played the whole piece, which they almost never do. It was so weird---I was probably the only person for miles, and yet I was witnessing myself playing guitar for literally millions of people. I felt a strange connection to the collective consciousness.

**MLH:** How did you determine what music to write for ZOETROBICS? Did Ed Counts (Animator) provide requirements, specs, constraints? Or 'carte blanche'?

**SW:** Carte Blanche on this one, absolutely. Ed wanted

this to be a collaboration, and we only talked about it in philosophical and metaphysical terms. This was, of course, very unusual. I'm used to trying to get inside of the director's head and write the score from their point of view, but Ed didn't want that. It was especially rewarding to me that Ed said that the score was better than anything he could have imagined.

**MLH:** What assistance did you have? Who did what tasks?

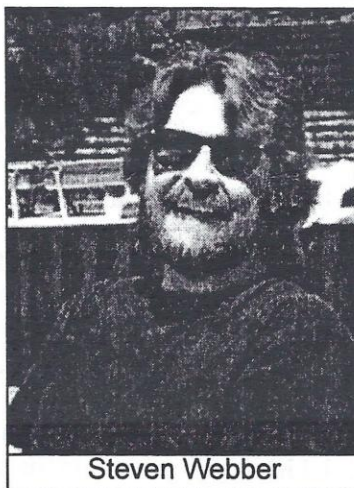
**SW:** Since I'm a professor at Berklee College of Music, I have a lot of talented students around. I had one of my students named Ted Speaker help out with the temp tracks - which is putting existing music up against the pictures to check out the vibe. A former student of mine named Jeanine Cowan helped out tons. She's a very talented composer in her own right, and even hires me these days to play guitar on the many films that she scores. She was of great help getting the score together, making the DA-88 transfers, we did the final mix at her place---she had a great deal to do with the success of the project.

**MLH:** How long did it take to score the film?

**SW:** This was very strange for me---I'm usually under a lot more time pressure when I write for TV or film. Often I'll only have 3-4 weeks to write 30-40 minutes of music. For a full length film or documentary, I'll have 20-50 music cues all crying out for attention. On Zoetrobics, I had two months to come up with 5 minutes. THAT was scary! I write quickly, so actual writing time was probably just a few days, including orchestrations. BUT I took a lot of time getting inside of the animation, 'Nap storming' (watching the pictures and then taking a nap and trying to direct my sub conscience to manifest some ideas), and trying different pieces of music up against the picture. That was a luxury.

**MLH:** What would you do differently in scoring for an animated film?

**SW:** It seems as though animation lends itself to more "hits", that is, literal musical events taking place in exact



Steven Webber



synchronization with a visual event. We even call that "Mickey Mousing", not because it's considered dorky, but because in the first Mickey Mouse films the music tended to follow the animation very closely---every footstep or blink of the eye became a musical hit.

**MLH:** Tell us about how you were able to work at SKYWALKER SOUND. What was your process? Did you just call and book a session?

**SW:** I know Bob Levy, Chief Engineer on the scoring stage and Studio Manager, Leslie Ann Jones. Everyone there is top drawer, not just talent-wise, but also first-class people. Bob Levy and I had been talking about working together on a project for quite awhile. When Ed sent me 'Zoetrobics' and told me to do whatever I wanted, I said I wanted to record a live orchestra at Skywalker. We secured some additional funding, and we were off! Bob and I emailed each other for a while to find a date that worked for both of us. We actually came in right after James Cameron left from posting 'Titanic'.

**MLH:** Was the score completed when you and the musicians arrived?

**SW:** I had completed the score before I left Boston and had come out early to San Francisco for an intensive training session at Dolby Labs on surround sound, and music for DVD. [In the meantime] Jeanine was back in Boston cleaning up the score in a program called 'Finale', and faxing me her progress. I was making corrections during my breaks at Dolby and faxing her back. In true form, the FedEx of the score and all the parts arrived at the hotel the morning before the session. I did have an earlier version of all the parts just in case!

**MLH:** How long was the session? Is setup included? Or are there additional costs for musicians to setup?"

**SW:** The scoring stage usually books by the day, so yes, setup is included with that. A film session is three hours, and we just needed one session for Zoetrobics. Union musicians get a ten minute break for every hour, and you have to respect that. The setup is done by the crew at SKYWALKER SOUND. All the mics, headphones, chairs, stands, lights and video monitors are setup before the musicians arrive. I was in constant touch with Bob Levy about the instrumentation, so before I arrived he and his crew had everything pretty much set. We made a

couple alterations, but they had been working for at least a couple hours before we arrived so things were very smooth. It takes orchestral players much less time to set up than rock'n'rollers---the main thing is getting all the mics and chairs and stands setup.

**MLH:** Did you play 'live'?

**SW:** Sometimes we had the strings play by themselves and then did the brass and woodwinds while they were on break so the trumpet wouldn't bleed through onto the string tracks so much. That's why you need so many string players in an orchestra---to compete with the horns and percussion! We didn't have a big enough budget, so I had the group practice each cue all together, then recorded the sections separately. This also helped out with the break situation---the only person who didn't get a break was me!

**MLH:** How and why were the musicians selected that performed?

**SW:** Bob Levy put me in touch with Mario Guinneri, who served as our Musician Contractor. Mario also played trumpet---he plays on most of the sessions that go on at SKYWALKER SOUND, as well as lots of sessions that happen in LA. My kids were impressed because he plays first chair trumpet on all the Animaniacs stuff! [Also] I knew that I wanted to use as many of the Turtle Island String Quartet members as we could get, because the score had elements of rock and jazz, as well as classical. Evan Price, a recent Berklee alumni who I had played with in Boston, just happened to have gotten the first violin gig with them. I called him up, and had him get in touch with Mario. We had four current or former members of Turtle Island in the string section which was fantastic!

**MLH:** What tools and/or computer software and hardware did you use?

**SW:** I use Digital Performer which is made by Mark of the Unicorn. It's a great software package. I can do all my sequencing, record live instruments right into it, add effects, edit, write out parts, you name it. I highly recommend it. I also use Pro Tools quite a bit for editing. The new Plug-ins are great.

**MLH:** What would you have liked to use?



**SW:** Digital Performer Vers. 2.6 & their new 2408 interface.

**MLH:** What tools and gear etc. are in your home/project studio?

**SW:** I use a 266 MHz Power PC (Mac) with 128 Meg of Ram. I also have an analog 16 track machine which is seeing less and less use now that I'm into hard disc recording. I hate to get rid of it, though because it sounds so great. I use a SECK 1882 console which is a British board which is no longer made---again it sounds great, but I'm thinking about getting a couple digital boards to replace it. I've got lots of outboard gear from E-mu, Lexicon, Roland, Yamaha, Symetrix, Tascam---I don't discriminate. I've spent tons of dough on gear because with the budgets and time restraints of many of the projects I work on, the MIDI tracks wind up being a part of the score and I need them to sound GREAT. Unfortunately, you can't do that with cheap stuff.

**MLH:** How is your home/project studio insulated? What are your studio's dimensions?

**SW:** I must confess, I've got the best room in the house. Nice and big, 3 windows, chandelier - the works. This place is all I need for projects where I'm only recording a few musicians at a time. The other day I made a CD for a string quartet here and it sounded fabulous---they had never heard themselves sound so good. [But] for larger groups I like to go to bigger commercial facilities. There's a place up the road called Bluejay Studios where Pat Metheny and Amy Grant and YoYo Ma have recorded, and I get a great rate and a great sound there. I love to record at SKYWALKER SOUND, too of course. It's not as expensive as most people think, and the sound you get is worth every penny.

**MLH:** What types of musical projects would you recommend to musicians for SKYWALKER SOUND?

**SW:** Everything. SKYWALKER SOUND is a fantastic place to work. It costs more than local studios in Boston, but not that much more. If you have things together it can actually save money, because you can record a whole orchestra or chamber music group at once. It's a pleasure to conduct in a room that sounds so great! Hands down, it's the best sounding room in the country, if not the world. And it's just an inspiration to work there. I'm looking for an excuse to go back, so if any of your

readers have a film in the budgeting stage and need a composer and would like to record at Skywalker---I'm your man!

**MLH:** What technical tools or advances are on your WISH LIST?

**SW:** How much space do we have? I'd like a new digital mixing desk. I've been holding off for awhile, but a couple months ago I visited Hans Zimmer's writing studio, Media Ventures, so now I'll probably have to take the plunge. Probably the Yamaha 02/R. Maybe two. I'll probably spring for a new sampler soon as well.

**MLH:** What new projects are on your TO DO list?

**SW:** • I'm currently working on a PBS documentary soundtrack for an Emmy-winning director named Mike Lecher.

• [I'M] producing an album for a singer/songwriter in Nashville.

• I'm also writing a book on music production for Berklee Press which may also turn into a documentary and DVD.  
• Ed Counts and I are talking about another film.

• Deanna Morse (Animator) just contacted me about doing the soundtrack for a film of hers, which would be fun.

**MLH:** What advice would you give beginning animators? Seasoned animators?

**SW:** Hire me to do music for all your films. Especially if you have a decent budget!

Contact Stephen Webber at [swebber@ma.ultranet.com](mailto:swebber@ma.ultranet.com).

*M. L. Haynes, longtime member of ASIFA/Central, is a musician, Consultant & Developer of computer software. M.L. has coordinated numerous events, programs, ASIFA / Central's first COMPUTER ANIMATION program and the 7th Annual Midwest Animators Conference & Retreat with Dave Daruszka. They are now working on next year's Conference and the Helen Victoria Haynes WORLD PEACE Animation Scholarship Competition which M.L. founded and administers. They reside in Chicago with Terr, the cat, and a bunch of fish. Contact M. L. at [morgpk@aol.com](mailto:morgpk@aol.com).*

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FOR YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1999

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