

FALL 2001



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QUARTERLY
PUBLICATION
OF
ASIFA/Central

FALL 2001

ASIFA/Central Election Results

by Deanna Morse

I have to say that I was very excited when I saw the list of candidates who came forward for this election to the ASIFA Central board. I think I actually said "Yee Haw!" out loud.

We have two brand new board members: Our new president, Jim Middleton, and our new Webmaster, Charles Wilson. We have three returning board members: Jennifer Eldred continues our newsletter, Randy Rockafellow continues with membership, and I continue as treasurer. And a former board member who has always been active with the organization, Mary Lou Haynes, has jumped back "on board".

It is a tribute to the strength of our chapter to have member involvement like this: we have sustained and returning, mixed with the new!

Not all chapters have such fortune in finding eager volunteers. One international chapter had trouble getting someone to commit to be President, so they made it a

rotating position, where it just moves from member to member - each year a new leader, determined by your alphabetical order. Your last name starts with the letter A?, then you're in charge! (I haven't heard how well this worked out...)

Every time I travel to international festivals, other ASIFA members tell me how envious they are of our yearly retreat. I was just at SAFO and SAS, and three separate people told me, on three different days, how they wished their chapter could organize a similar event. For us, it provides an opportunity to reconnect, to party, to share ideas, animations, sit around the campfire and tell scary stories, and meet new animators, to make new friends. We have fun doing it, and our reputation precedes us. OK. We have a chapter that knows how to party. I'll celebrate that!

Thanks to all the new board members, and all the animators and friends of animation in ASIFA for your continued support!

Some Random Thoughts Regarding the Legality of Animation

by Charles Wilson

Working as an independent animator, I hold down a day job as a software engineer. This allows me the freedom to work as a forensic animator and produce my own films during my spare time. In the rough and tumble world of the software industry, it becomes extremely important to protect yourself and your outside interests. This fact was driven home when I was introduced to "The Contract." Contracts go by many names: employee agreement, statement of expectations, etc. However you spell it, it's a contract that can allow people access to all your hard work even if it is performed on

your own time with your own equipment.

When I was planning to move back to Michigan, I happened to interview at three software companies in one day. At the second company, I knew that the interview was over when I asked this question:

"I work on personal projects in my spare time. Right now I'm working on a short animated film and a video game. I also write technical articles for trade publications. I work on these projects with my own equipment and on my own time. When the project is finished, who does it belong to?"

"It belongs to us," he said. The meaning was clear. All my work was company property.

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Letter from the Editor by Jennifer Eldred



Congratulations to the new and returning ASIFA/Central leadership and board. Once again it was great to see so many people interested in helping the association thrive!

On a personal note, thank you for allowing me to continue as Vice President and Newsletter editor through 2002. To submit articles, reviews, project updates and artwork for the 2002 newsletters, please send them via email to eldredjb@hotmail.com

With 2002 we welcome a new President in Jim Middleton. Jim has

been a visible and memorable face in the ASIFA/Central family for several years and it is great to see him at the helm. With Jim's guidance and spirit, it should be a very productive year for ASIFA/Central.

Aside from the election and quarterly newsletter, your next chance to share your input will be at our Annual Conference and Retreat. It is the 10th Annual and will be held from April 26-28, 2002. We welcome all animator's and animation enthusiasts to attend. See page 5 for details.

If you are interested in submitting an article for the Fall 2002 edition the deadline is **January 15**.

Happy Holidays!

Jennifer Eldred

Animation Scholarship Available

Each year, the Haynes Storyboard & Animation Scholarship program awards a \$1,000 grant to one qualified student attending an accredited college or university by sponsoring a Storyboard Competition.

The money, contributed by the family & friends of the late Helen Victoria Haynes - former bilingual teacher, musician and church activist - defrays the cost of producing an animated PSA based on the theme 'How We Can Achieve World Peace'. College students anywhere in the

world are eligible. The deadline for applying with a Storyboard is **March 15, 2002**.

Winner will be announced in April. Winner is required to complete the PSA for screening at the 11th Annual Midwest Animators Conference in April 2003.

For an application with rules, send an email containing your postal address to: Program Director, HVH World Peace Storyboard & Animation Scholarship Competition morgpk@aol.com

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

ASIFA/Central Volunteers and Project Leaders

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Conference Chair 2002

Storyboard Contest

Mary Lou Haynes, morgpk@aol.com

Conference Co-Chair 2002

Dave Daruszka

Web site:

<http://www.asifa.org/animate>

E-mail: asifa@asifa.org

ASIFA/Central Conference:

April 26 - April 28, 2002

To join ASIFA/Central:

Send a check (payable in US dollars to ASIFA/Central) to the address on the back of this newsletter.

Printed in the U.S.A on recycled paper.

SAFO and SAS

by Deanna Morse

Writer's note: I recently attended the Teacher's Symposium at the Student Animation Festival of Ottawa (SAFO) and also the Society for Animation Studies (SAS) Conference in Montreal. Here's a report from those two events.

SAFO is scheduled on alternate years of the Ottawa Animation Festival, a festival that many ASIFA Central folks have attended. SAFO is held at the Archives, and is a much smaller event. Programming was similar to the Ottawa fests, but (of course) aimed at students. There were a number of school spotlight reels, late night competition screenings, several Panorama screenings, retrospectives, workshops.

Here are some highlights: a puppet seminar with Mike Belzer, an animator who worked on projects including: *Nightmare Before Christmas*, *James and the Giant Peach*, *Gumby*, and Pillsbury Doughboy Ads. He gave an excellent multimedia presentation with lots of details about the challenges and solutions to working on these shows. Wedding veils and spray starch were used to create ice floes in *James*, and we learned a lot about animation tie-downs: the screws through the characters' feet that keep them from falling over.

Maureen Furniss presented thoughtful opening comments at the Teacher's Symposium. Several of us asked her for a copy, and now they are published on the email list at www.animationjournal.com. It's a bit hard to find: go in the archive, it's message number 1201.

The competition films were strong and varied. For me, the programming started too late (9pm), and I was disappointed that I had seen several of the titles in the School Spotlight reels.

There were also several industry and education panels that I attended. I found some repetitive, and all a bit depressing as the animation industry is experiencing such a slump. The primary

message was that beginning animators should research the company they want to apply for and target their application with that company in mind. Start out as an intern, work your way up to production assistant. Most of the jobs now are in television: storyboard, and background artist. Many people recommended the new book *Producing for Animation* (from Focal Press).

The Society for Animation Studies Conference is held on different continents and locations. It's a small group, mostly animation historians. People present half hour papers, followed by usually lively and spirited questions and discussion. I previewed my new DVD and discussed some of the challenges of working in that platform.

There were site visits to the Cinematheque Quebecoise, where we toured facilities and had a private showing of an excellent exhibit on animation history.

The first day of the conference, we had an inspiring day at the National Film Board of Canada. In the afternoon, we toured animation studios and saw new films and works in progress from NFB animators. Our tour was supposed to last two hours, but we were still meeting and talking with people two hours after that.

Some of the exciting projects were: new puppet animation by Co Hoedman, new pinscreen work from Jacques Drouin, and a 3D animation requiring glasses by Munro Ferguson and Paul Morstad. The most unusual demonstration was by John Weldon. He constructed floppy puppets of just heads and clothing (no armatures) animated them flat on a black background, used a digital camera to take stills, and brought them into After Effects to add shadows and compositing.

Apparently every year the NFB offers such a tour day following the Ottawa Festival. Several folks said they plan to come back every year for this special event. It was definitely a day well spent.

- Deanna Morse
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There was a note of finality in his voice. One that I had heard before. I knew that arguing the point was a waste of time. Needless to say, I couldn't get out of that building fast enough.

I'm sure that everyone has heard horror stories (or maybe just rumors) about the restrictive contracts that Disney has used in the past in order to protect their trademarks and intellectual property. Or as Bill Plympton put it: "Years later after I had been nominated for an Oscar, the Disney company got back to me with a very generous offer. Unfortunately the contract was the sticking point. Negotiations with Disney is not so much good-cop, bad-cop. It's more like bad-cop, antichrist." No matter what the Disney corporation's intent was, it was a restrictive contract that helped spoil the deal.

In order to protect myself from these situations, I've insisted that the following paragraph be included in every "employment agreement" that I sign. And if the employer won't agree to this paragraph, then I walk away from the job, no matter how good the opportunity appears to be. There are no exceptions.

ARTWORK: Any artistic ventures (animation, 2D/3D artwork, works of fiction/non-fiction, etc.) created by the employee shall not be bound by this employment agreement so long as said artistic ventures are not created for the employer or employer-related business. The employee understands that all artistic ventures shall be

performed during non-work hours. Furthermore, all artistic ventures shall be created without using any employer-owned equipment unless previously agreed upon by the employer and employee on a case-by-case basis.

It is airtight? Probably not. Would it hold up in a court of law? I really don't know since I've never had to rely upon it. But when you're standing in front of a judge and it's your word against your employer's, at least you can show the judge that there was a statement of understanding between you and your employer regarding the projects you work on outside of business hours. If I am facing a choice between using this paragraph to protect me and relying upon the honesty of employers then there is no decision. Not every employer out there is a crook but not every employer has your best interests at heart. Take the time to protect yourself from litigation. If you have the opportunity, find a lawyer who specializes in copyright law and talk to them. It may be an old cliché but it's true: "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

In the next issue of Frame-by-Frame, I'll discuss a little of what I have learned about American copyright law and more importantly where you can obtain more information about this important subject.

Charles Wilson is an independent animator and the owner of "Smudge Animation" an animation firm that specializes in forensic animation, accident simulation/reconstruction, and short films for legal cases.

The Animator's Survival Kit

by Deanna Morse

Richard Williams has been successfully animating for a lifetime, garnering an average of one award every month for 25 years, winning two Oscars, an Emmy, and other significant international awards. He is best known as the lead animator on "Roger Rabbit."

For the past 6 years, he has been sharing his knowledge in a series of traveling seminars, "The Richard Williams' Animation Masterclass".

I had heard about rave reviews of these seminars from other animators. Two springs ago, I traveled to L.A. to participate in the three day seminar, and to become another convert.

Lucky for you, Richard Williams is publishing a book including the seminar material. Here's the title: "The

Animator's Survival Kit: A Manual of Methods, Principles and Formulas for Classical, Computer, Games, Stop Motion and Internet Animators."

I've received an advance copy, and it looks great! There are chapters on Walks, Funs, Jumps and Skips, Anticipation, Weight, Flexibility, Directing.... and just a lot of nuts and bolts basics about basic problems that face character animators. It's beautifully illustrated, in fact at least half of the book is made up of examples, sketches, and illustrations.

It's published by Faber and Faber in the UK, and according to the ASIFA San Francisco newsletter, the tentative price is \$30 for paperback and \$50 for hardcover, and the tentative date for publication is next March.

Keep your eyes peeled at area bookstores for this wonderful resource!
- Deanna Morse

10th Annual Midwest Animators Conference

Friday Apr 26 - Sunday Apr 28, 2002

IMPORTANT REGISTRATION DATES

ADVANCE: Oct 1, 2001 - March 1, 2002

LATE: Apr 26 -27, 2002

REGISTER NOW TO ENSURE YOUR SEAT!

ANIMATION CONFERENCE BROCHURE,
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Contact: Mary Lou Haynes

e-mail: morgpk@aol.com

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Fax: 1-508-445-5924

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Letter from the New President for 2002

I wanted to pass on my thanks to the ASIFA
membership for so kindly placing its trust in me for
the ASIFA Central presidency. It is truly flattering to
be so honored by people for whom I feel such
respect. My association with this group has been
one of the most heartwarming and fulfilling I have
ever experienced, and I hope to do the role of
president justice.

I hope to do everything possible to promote student
activities and festivals for the area, and this
upcoming Spring Retreat will be followed with a
Kalamazoo-based animation festival that will offer
workshops and opportunities for ASIFA involvement.

And of course, there'll have to be door prizes at the
retreat! Warning to all planning to attend -- I've been
hitting garage sales again! Feel free to cattle prod me
at will, stop by if you're in the neighborhood, email or
call.

For the next year, you've got yourself a new puppy!
Thanks again for your kind thoughts and
encouragement.

- Jim Middleton

<http://homestead.juno.com/jimmiddleton>