



Frame by Frame

NEWSLETTER OF

ASIFA CENTRAL

WINTER



edition



ASIFA MidWest Animator's RETREAT

Saturday & Sunday, April 24 & 25, at the Starved Rock Lodge in Illinois.

Meet & get to know other Midwest ASIFA animators & their work. We already have commitments from cel, stop-motion, & computer animators & teachers. Attend a Saturday morning brunch to meet & get to know the other members. Participate in the creation of a progressive animation to be created using computers & software provided at the conference. This may be an entirely new experience for you or simply provide you with an opportunity to try new software or hardware. If you have any particular requests in this area or would like to know what's been arranged so far, call Marla Schweppe at (708) 933.0356 in the evenings or on the weekend, or send e-mail anytime to marlak@nwu.edu, or Marie Cenker at (708) 432.7834.

We will provide a 16mm projector & 3/4" & VHS video decks & monitors, so bring your tapes & films along with you. We would also encourage you to bring any other animation materials or information which you feel other animators might enjoy seeing or learning about. If you have any particular questions which you would like other animators to answer, send them with your retreat application & we will include them in the next newsletter so that other attendees can come prepared with responses. These questions could be technical or philosophical in nature.

If you prefer to spend some of your time outside enjoying the hopefully cooperative weather, Starved Rock is a beautiful natural area located near the Fox River waterway. The lodge is located in a large state park. You may enjoy watching barge traffic go thru the locks located nearby. Hiking is great, too! You may also enjoy the watery splendors of the fabulous indoor pool & whirlpool. A dining room is available in the lodge for the purchase of other meals.

Rooms:

Double rooms are \$61.95/person for Sat. & Sun. night. Please specify one or two beds (one will be assumed if no specification is made).

Single rooms (for one person with a king-sized bed) are \$109.90 for Sat. & Sun. night.

Room fees are payable upon arrival.

Conference fee is \$40. Registration should take place prior to March 1, 1993. Mail registrations to:

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Marla Schweppe
ASIFA Midwest Animator's Retreat
8614 N. Trumbull
Skokie, IL 60076-2458

Make checks payable to: ASIFA Central

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Questions/Comments _____

Single _____ Double Sharing with _____

Letter *from the* **PRESIDENT**

We have many projects in the works for 1993. The **Anijammers** are continuing on their segments for our ASIFA film "It's a Funny World." This project will be a 5-8 minute 16mm film around a common theme where individual animators each make their own sequences, linked to each other through a common image of the planet Earth. For more info, contact coordinators & board members Jim Richardson (312) 728.2241, or Dan Cascardo (312) 868.4493.

We are gathering materials for a **membership directory**, to be published in our 3rd newsletter of 1993. Send your info right away, using the form on page 12 of this newsletter. Send us graphics, too, for the directory or the newsletter.

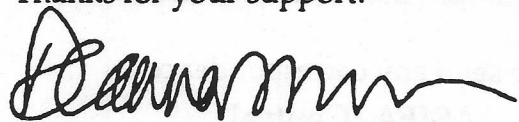
Plans are underway for our ASIFA retreat. Look on page one for details.

We have begun work on **Animathon!**, our program that features the works of midwest animators. If you would like to be involved, contact Dave Daruzska (312) 233.8788, or Deanna Morse (616) 895.3668.

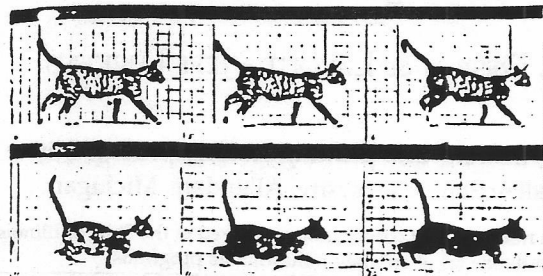
It looks to be an exciting year. Thanks again for your input & involvement in ASIFA. As you know, we are an all-volunteer organization. Therefore, we rely on members for energy, input, & enthusiasm to keep us going.

The **deadline** to get articles, info, & much-needed graphics for the Spring edition of *Frame by Frame* is March 15.

Thanks for your support!



Deanna Morse
ASIFA/Central President



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PUBLICATIONS

Women & Animation: A Compendium, edited by Jayne Pilling, is an 'exceptional effort' that covers the contributions of independent animators from the US, Canada, UK, Europe, Russia, Australia, & India. In addition to the well-researched articles in the book, there is also an international biography/filmography which lists hundreds of women that are not included in the main sections of the book. Some artists include: Jane Aaron, ASIFA/Central's Mary Beams, Mary Ellen Bute, Sally Cruikshank, Faith Hubley, Caroline Leaf, Joanna Priestley, Lotte Reiniger, Kathy Rose...& many more. The book is oversized & well illustrated, & contains 145 pages of info. Send credit card #, exp. date, address, to Sally Doowden, British Film Institute Publications, 21 Stephen Street, London, W1P 1PL, United Kingdom. Price (including s&h) should be about \$20 (£8.95 + overseas s&h). Checks will not be accepted.

Hey! Get the new **Directory of Computer Animation Producers**, which contains over 700 separate listings from 42 countries. Listings give a complete profile of the computer animation & graphics production companies, including personnel names by job functions, software/systems/hardware used, specialty items, area of expertise, list of recent clients or jobs. Students will want the special listing of schools that offer computer animation/graphics courses. The companies are listed by geographic region, country, state, city, and cross-referenced alphabetically. \$64 + \$4 s&h. Contact PIXEL, PO Box 1674, 5325 Sheridan Dr, Williamsville NY 14231-1674.

Sporn-o-Graphics is a free newsletter from Michael Sporn Animation, Inc. It has very good info on anything pertaining to animation, with insightful philosophical & industrial articles. Latest issue: Recent poorly-written cartoon feature releases flop; Saturday morning role models; Scripting strong women in animation (or lack of); Storyboards of upcoming releases; The scoop on the Cartoon Network. Contact Michael Sporn Animation, Inc., 632 Broadway, NY NY 10012.

The recent **Animato!** #23 has an in-depth interview with John Musker, who directed *Aladdin*. Also an article on *FernGully*; a guide to *Tiny Toon Adventures*; an interview with Walter Clinton, who worked with Tex Avery; a filmography of Yogi Bear; reviews of features & video releases. You can get 4 issues for \$12 by writing 17 Spruce St, Springfield MA 01105.



California -

The **Global Africa International Film & Video Festival** will be held in June. There is a March 1 deadline, with a \$20 fee. Accepting works on 3/4" or 1/2" which capture experiences of people of African descent. Qualifiers will be cablecast in the SF Bay area & at Oakland Museum. Contact Peralta Colleges TV, GAIF, 900 Fallon St, 9th floor, Oakland CA 94607. ☎ (510) 464.3253.

Illinois -

The **18th Festival of Illinois Film & Video Artists** is currently having a call for entries until March 1. 3/4", 1/2", VHS, or 16mm will be accepted. There is no particular theme, but you must be a resident of the state of Illinois in order to participate. Fee is \$10 for students, \$15 for anyone else. Prizes totalling \$1,000, in narrative, animated, experimental, & documentary categories. For registration form & info, contact Lisa Formosa at (312) 663.1600 x434, between 9:30am & 5pm.

The **International Health & Medical Film Festival** will be held in July, & is the largest competition dedicated entirely to medical & health-related films, videos, & interactive videodiscs. Over 1,000 entries from 21 countries are expected. It's not all scientific, either: they're accepting films on the environment & how it affects health. Hefty entry fee: \$75-\$200 (time to break that piggy bank!). Deadline is March 30. Contact Edith Nielsen, IHMFF, Academy of Medical Films, 4020 Palos Verdes Dr. North, suite 120, Rolling Hills Estates CA 90274. ☎ (310) 544.5899.

Michigan -

The **31st Ann Arbor Film Festival** will be held March 16-21, & the deadline for getting works in is Feb. 15. Only 16mm will be accepted. There is a \$30 entry fee, & there are \$7,000 in prizes! PO Box 8232, Ann Arbor MI 48107. ☎ (313) 995.5356.

New Jersey -

The **19th Newark Black Film Festival** will occur in July. Accepting 16mm or 1/2" works by black filmmakers, or works about the culture of blacks throughout the world. \$25 entry fee, March 1 deadline. Contact Jane Rappaport, NBFF, Newark Museum, 49 Washington St, Box 540, Newark NJ 07101. ☎ (201) 596.6550.

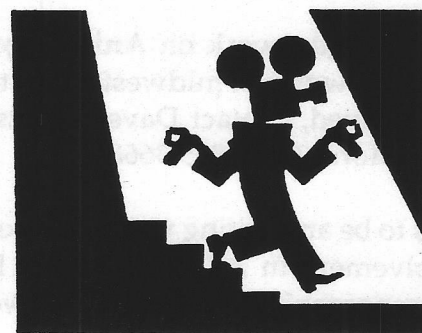
New York -

The **Asian-American International Film Festival** will be held in July. Eligible works are films that are produced, directed, &/or written by artists of Asian heritage. All categories. 35mm or 16mm, preview on video. Get going: March 1 deadline! Contact Minne Hong, AAIFF, Asian CineVision, 32 E. Broadway, 4th floor, NY NY 10002. ☎ (212) 925.8685.

The **New York International Festival of Lesbian & Gay Film: The New Festival**, will be held in June. All films & videos by, for, or about gay men & lesbians, including dramatic features & shorts, docs, experimental works. \$5 entry fee, March 15 deadline. 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", super8. Contact Jeffrey Lunger/Sande Zeig, 80 8th Ave, suite 902, NY NY 10011. ☎ (212) 807.1820.

France -

The **Annecy International Animated Film Festival** will be held June 1-6, and is the "world's largest animation event." Go for the special 'ASIFA Prize.' Attendees estimated at 55,000 (bigger than Cannes!). Accepting 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline is March 15. Contact Annecy '93 at BP 399, 74013 Annecy Cedex, France. ☎ 33.50.57.41.72.



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Please send any correspondence to:

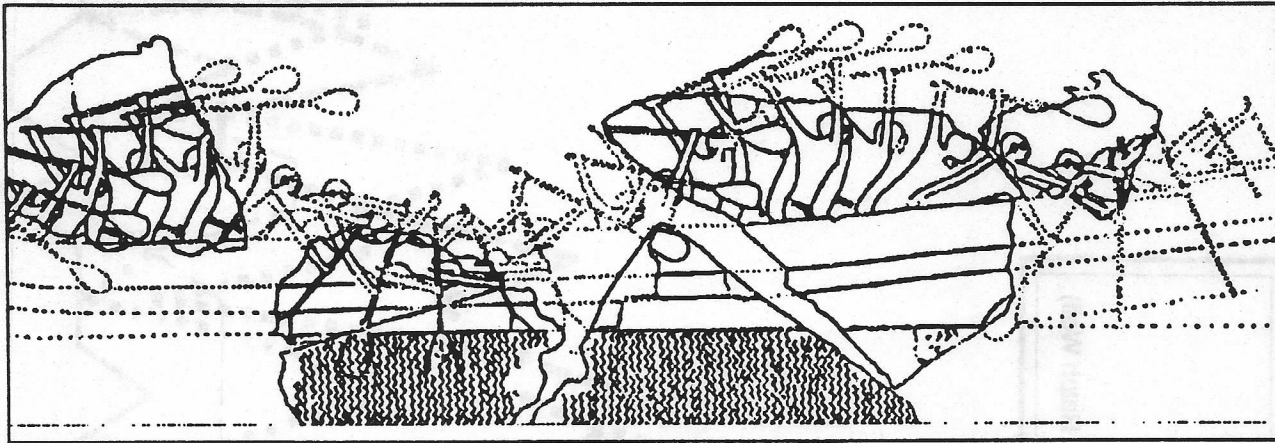
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Is This The World's Oldest Animation?



The above image is taken from Lionel Casson's *Ships and Seamanship in the Ancient World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971). It is a reconstruction of an image from Egyptian stone carvings: the solid sections are the existing carvings while the dotted lines are the reconstruction. This series of sketches demonstrates the method of paddling a boat from the period of about 2550 BC.

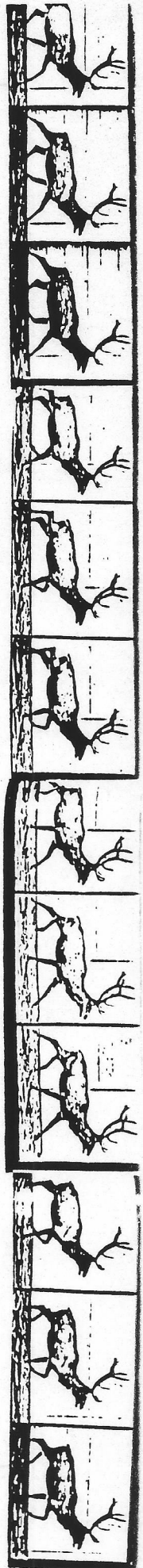
Looking at the image, it is striking how much it looks like a replacement series, reminiscent of a set of George Pal's puppets or the great shots of the replacement series of the Pillsbury doughboy taken at Phil Kelliher's Cascade Productions which appeared in the old *Cinemagic* magazine. But, of course, it outdates either of those by about 4500 years!

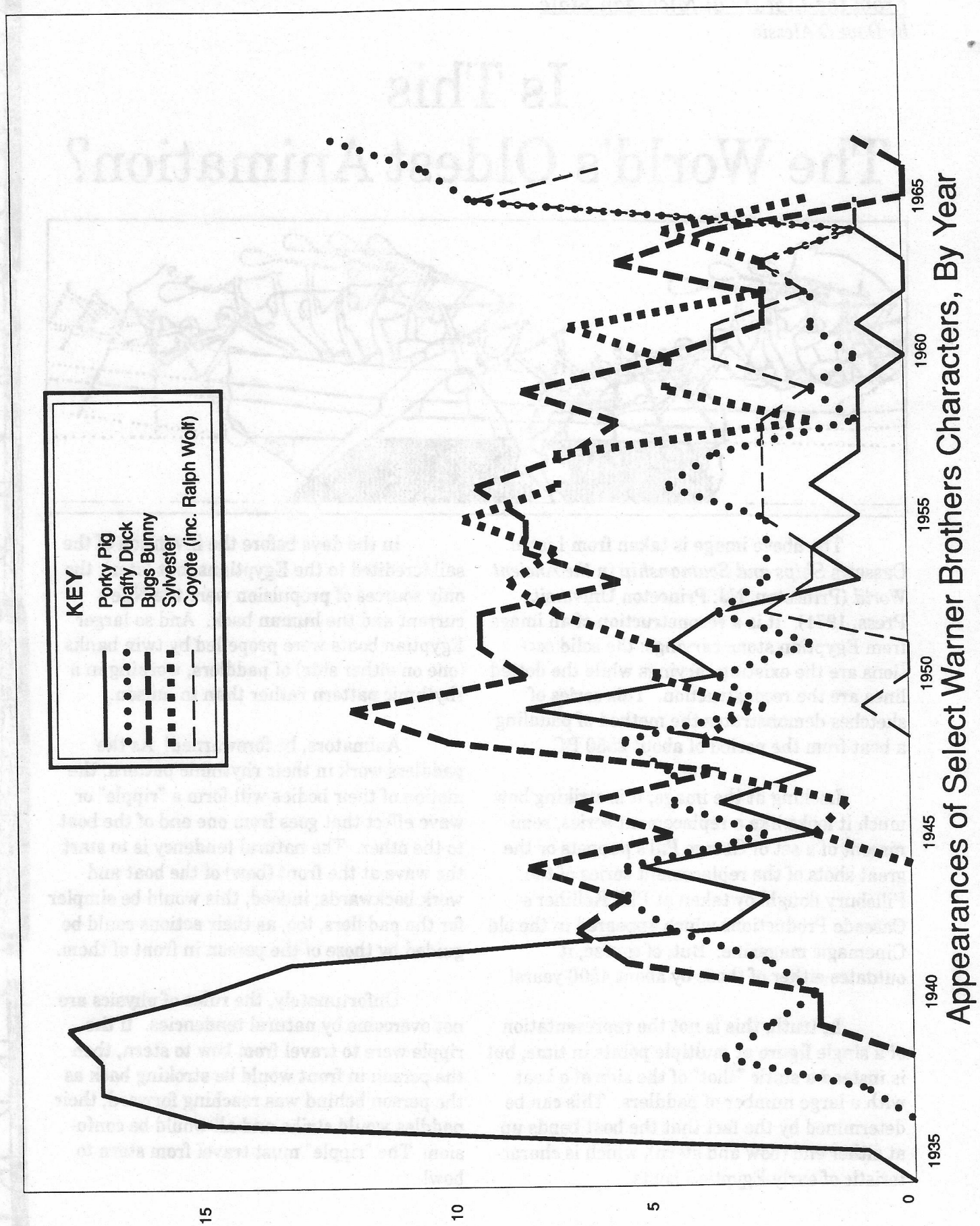
In truth, this is not the representation of a single figure at multiple points in time, but is instead a static "shot" of the side of a boat with a large number of paddlers. This can be determined by the fact that the boat bends up at either end (bow and stern), which is characteristic of early Egyptian boats.

In the days before the invention of the sail (credited to the Egyptians, but later), the only sources of propulsion were the Nile's current and the human back. And so larger Egyptian boats were propelled by twin banks (one on either side) of paddlers, working in a rhythmic pattern rather than in unison.

Animators, be forewarned! As the paddlers work in their rhythmic pattern, the motion of their bodies will form a "ripple" or wave effect that goes from one end of the boat to the other. The natural tendency is to start the wave at the front (bow) of the boat and work backwards; indeed, this would be simpler for the paddlers, too, as their actions could be guided by those of the person in front of them.

Unfortunately, the rules of physics are not overcome by natural tendencies. If the ripple were to travel from bow to stern, then the person in front would be stroking back as the person behind was reaching forward; their paddles would strike and all would be confusion! The "ripple" must travel from stern to bow!





The Logic of Character:

Warner Brothers Characters in the post-Boskonian Era

Animators may think of animation, but when people think of cartoons they think of Warner Brothers. Afficiandos may cite Droopy or Fritz the Cat, but the history of popular cartoon character actors, once the public realized the horrible limitations of Mickey Mouse, reads as a who's who of characters created by Bob Clampett, Friz Freling, Tex Avery, and Chuck Jones.

Attached is a graph that shows how many films certain of the Warner Brothers characters made on a year-by-year basis. It certainly can be revealing, especially in the face of "received" history . . .

1936-1941: The Porcine Epoch

Fascists and communists were killing each other in Spain; the Italian Army was poison gassing Ethiopian tribesmen even as the League of Nations watched impotently. Warner Brothers had tried out Beans the Cat, and the twin pups Ham and Ex as stars, but only one of the Old "I Haven't Got a Hat" (1935) gang made it big: Porky Pig.

Make no mistake about it, Porky was a *star*. No Warner Brothers character, not Bugs, not Tweety, not even Bosko, reached the heights Porky briefly reached. The 18 films he made in 1939 is an all-time Warner's record; and no other character would make 80 films in five years. Any time. Any where.

What can that kind of load do to an actor? Stress was certainly enormous; Porky lost weight rapidly, and, despite years of voice coaching, he couldn't lose the stutter. Porky was never the same again, but he managed to keep himself working, and to keep himself smiling, right to the end.

1941-1947: Triple Entente

Interviews and reminiscences suggest that Bugs Bunny was the most vital character of the war era, and indeed, Bugs is making more films that anyone during these years. But he isn't winning by a lot, not yet he isn't, and in fact, in 1947 he's surpassed by Daffy Duck.

I don't know. A lot of the adulation for Bugs Bunny stems from his 50th birthday, only a few years ago. What are the old timers going to say about Bugs on his birthday . . . that he was neck-and-neck with Daffy and Porky?

In baseball research we find a phenomenon called "fogeyism"; the player who played long ago were much better than today's . . . ask any old fogey. If Bugs was so much better, how come Daffy and Porky were working just

as hard as he was?

Some critics have one-sidedly pointed out Bugs' role in the war effort, and indeed he fought in the Pacific theater ("Bugs Bunny Nips the Nips") and raised funds ("Any Bonds Today?"). I do not mean to demean the rabbit. But to read these comments one might suspect that ONLY Bugs contributed to the war effort. Who was it fighting Hitler in Europe ("Daffy the Commando") and in the U.S. ("Scrap Happy Daffy"). Were those people Porky Pig and Elmer Fudd backing Bugs in "Any Bonds Today?", or were they just two other identical twins of the same name?

(The only real question about the war years is where did Porky Pig serve? The answer, as we now know, is that Porky first enlisted in 1936! ("Plane Dippy"). Sucklers who watch this film suggest that Porky's World War II contributions were stunted by the fact that he appears to desert the Air Force in favor of the Army at the end of this film. In reality, the Air Corps was part of the Army until 1947; Porky was simply transferring between branches, albeit informally.) Bugs and Daffy hadn't even been born yet! The combination of his pre-war service, his war years non-service, and his heavy pre-war workload strongly suggest that Porky suffered a serious nervous breakdown in early 1942, which is further supported by his substantially reduced workload at Warners. It's good to know the old Porkerino is still doing okay.)

1948-1952 Rabbit's Feat

If Bugs Bunny does dominate American films screens, it happens after World War II, following the post-war depression. Only Porky creeps close to Bugs in working during these years, and Bugs made a number of films which were regarded as among his best.

This is the Bugs Bunny we know and love, not the primordial Bunny of "Presto-Changeo" (produced 1940) or the strangely miscast victim of "Rabbit Rampage" (produced 1955), but the vintage Bugs.

You don't need me to tell you about Bugs Bunny. Let's go on.

1953-1957 Rodent, and Rodent-not

After Korea (a horrible situation noted in the cartoon world for the previous wounding of draftee Mickey Mouse), arose a challenger to the throne, and even if Sylvester never quite managed to digest even when he did manage to swallow Tweety, he did somehow arrange to be the first Warner

Brothers character to make more films than Bugs, in 1953 and again in 1955.

Fat, sloppy, and li-th-ping, it's strange to think of Sylvester as being a harder working star than Bugs, but then, Bugs never worked that hard at being a star. Maybe (*gasp*) the Big Bunny was slipping in his arrogance. Or maybe he was just turning down a script here and there. Lord knows, it's obvious from his work that Sylvester NEVER, not even once, passed up the opportunity to be working.

1958-1964 All together now . . . And-a one, and-a two . . .

Although Bugs returns to push Sylvester aside in 1958, the fact is that all the characters are hitting on all the cylinders by these days. Wile E. Coyote is proving that he can take a licking and keep on ticking, Sylvester comes back to outwork Bugs (together with Wile E.) in 1961, Daffy and Porky are still cranking out hits in their advanced ages, and a gang of actors not shown on the chart (especially Foghorn Leghorn and Yosemite Sam) are doing their bits as well.

It's during this era (1958) that Bugs finally wins his Oscar ("Knighy Knight Bugs"), but the screens of American moviehouses are filled with a cacophany of characters. (Editor's note: A "cacophany" is the correct collective of cartoon characters in the same way that a "pride" is that of lions.)

1965-1967 The Chase Catches Up

The financial problems of Warners' animation in the mid-'60's are well documented, and the financial advantage of "chase" films lead to their dominance, as well as the dominance of characters (Daffy, Wile E., Speedy Gonzales) better suited to the chase than the debonair Bugs Bunny. Bugs and Porky finally yielded the stage to the characters who never learned to discipline their talents; from a critical standpoint, the studio couldn't have folded a second sooner. No, I take that back . . . if the studio had folded BEFORE Cool Cat became a "star" the world would have been a better place.

To end on a serious, film-related if not animation-related note, it's easy to have fun and talk about the "work load" of animated characters. Let's put all of this in perspective: Are we aware that Bugs Bunny, who made more films than any other Warner Brothers character, made fewer cartoons than Henry Fonda or John Wayne made *feature length films*? Just thought I'd mention it . . .

by Dave D'Alessio

The Story Problem from Hell! or Physics Never Made a Lot of Sense to Me Either

by "Crazy" Dave D'Alessio

I own two Roadrunner tee-shirts and a technical education from one of the nation's most prestigious engineering schools. What follows is an attempt to reconcile this schizophrenia . . .

Newton's Laws of Charactational Force (Fig Newton's, that is . . .)

As motion in physical reality is governed by gravitational forces, motion in virtual reality is governed by charactational forces. The characteristics of charactational motion are:

Theorum 1. The less dense a falling object, the greater its charactational attraction.

Theorum 2. In any given event, the number of charactational forces present is equal to the number of Characters present plus the number of Objects present.

Corollary 2a: Charactational forces are applied in the order Objects, then Characters.

Theorum 3. Charactational forces are delayed if the Character is physically, rather than intellectually, unaware of them. If a Character becomes physically aware of a charactational force, i.e. by looking down or feeling the ground at his feet, the force will take effect immediately.

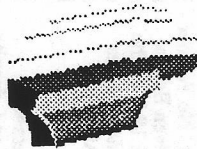
Theorum 4. Charactational forces can be negated or delayed by application of humorous humours, a substance generated by characters when they engage in "funny business". As humours are exhausted, charactational forces resume effect.

Corollary 4a: Charactational forces can only be negated by Characters who have read the script.

Theorum 5: Charactational forces attract to the Earth. (It's not nice to fool Mother Nature!)

Theorum 6: Charactational forces continue to exist until all charactational forces are exhausted.

Review example: Wile E. Coyote, carrying an anvil and a knife, chases Bugs Bunny and the Roadrunner over a cliff. What happens? Be precise, and show your reasoning. (The answer is upside down at the bottom of the page!)



As the characters go over the cliff edge, five charactational forces are created (Th. 2), but are delayed (Th. 3) until the Roadrunner calls them to a halt and points down. Still, nothing happens until the Coyote and Bugs Bunny look down. The forces are applied to the knife, the anvil, the Coyote, and the rabbit (Co. 2a; the Roadrunner has not looked down; Th. 3). The knife and the anvil, unable to generate humorous humours, fall; Wile E. Coyote and Bugs Bunny, by generating humours (eyes bulge, "take" reactions, holding up small signs stating "Yipe!") delay the onset of fall until humours are exhausted (Th. 4).

While falling, the Coyote and rabbit, being less dense, fall more rapidly than the knife and the anvil (Th. 1). Having read the script, Bugs Bunny again applies humorous humours (by consuming the contents of a bottle labelled "Stops falling here") and halts his fall (Co. 4a). The Coyote impacts on the desert floor, creating an impact crater. He holds up a sign saying "Can we stop the example now?" Alas, the answer is 'no'; the knife falls into the crater (after Th. 5 and 6), stabbing the Coyote in the Gluteus Maximus Dexter (his right buttock), causing him to leap up in pain just in time to have the anvil fall onto his head. Bugs Bunny, having halted his fall by applying humorous humours, chews on a carrot, peers into the crater created above, and asks "Is there a Doctor in the house?" End of example.

Self grading: If you predicted all four fallers, 3 points. Two more points if you correctly predicted the order of falling. Bonus of 2 points if you correctly identified both statements e.g. "Can we stop this example now" and "Is there a Doctor in the house?". No partial credit.



the SAS Conference

The 1992 Society for Animation Studies Conference
by Byron Grush

On October 23rd through the 25th of 1992, the Society for Animation Studies held its annual conference at the California Institute of the Arts. The Society, founded in 1987, promotes the study of animation history, theory and criticism. It publishes a newsletter five times a year and holds academic conferences yearly. Conference locations have included Los Angeles, Ottawa, and Rochester. Next year's conference may be held in England.

The setting this year, The California Institute of the Arts, is a private school founded by an endowment from the Walt Disney estate. Cal Arts has schools of Dance, Music, Art, Theater and Film and Video. Of the nearly 1000 students, about 200 are animation majors studying character animation or experimental animation. Cal Arts is about 30 miles north of LA, in the hilly suburb of Valencia.

Three ASIFA/Central members presented papers at the conference. Mary Beams offered "Subverting Time: A Woman's Perspective" as part of the panel on Women and Animation. She showed clips from her work from the past and present and talked about issues facing independent animators such as disappearing audiences, emerging new technologies and the relationship of film time to our perception of "real" time and the process of aging. Her presentation struck a cord with many of the independents.

Susan Van Baerle presented "An Expanded Definition for Animation for the Virtual Reality Era" which she illustrated with examples from her own work. As part of the panel on Animation Theory, Susan's explanation of how the computer fits into a definition of animation was clearly stated and supported by demonstrations using state of the art software. It was rewarding to see how much personal control an animator can bring to a sophisticated process like computer animation.

Byron Grush (me) talked about "Digital Technology and Teaching Animation" as part of the panel on Teaching Animation. He showed clips of student work from his classes, spanning a time starting with his first encounter with personal computers in the classroom, and ending with present-day attempts to integrate "desktop" computer animation software into a Media curriculum. He attempted to answer the question of whether it was now possible to teach animation by using computers.

The three day conference, organized by William Moritz, was arranged in panel sessions and special film screenings with no overlaps so that it was possible to see everything. There was a reception for former U.P.A. animators and a screening of U.P.A. cartoons complete with a lively panel discussion with the animators, who included Jules Engel and Bill Melendez. A screening of Cal Art student and faculty work showcased films by Kathy Rose, Adam Beckett, Jules Engel, Christine Panushka, Ruth Hayes, Pat O'Neill and many others, testifying to the wealth of animation art coming out of Cal Arts. Another screening, compiled by Jerry Beck, consisted of very rare prints of lost, unknown or unusual animation from the twenties through the forties. These included an Oswald by Ising and Freleng, a Kool cigarettes promotional film complete with penguins, and the obscure and fascinating "Simon the Monk" by Les Elton.

Barbara Mones-Hattal and Ken O'Connell showed the computer animation "jam" video they recently completed called "Figure to Field." This was a three-year project involving a number of college art schools world-wide in which students in each school were given a Muybridge sequence and a tiled pattern and then produced a transitional sequence using computer animation. The compiled results showed a wide range of techniques and a creative elegance. The film was shown at this year's Siggraph Video Theater.

Papers ranged from historical investigations to monographs on animators to methodology and propaganda. Mark Langer gave an insightful perspective on Ren and Stimpy and the Trash Aesthetic. Phenakistoscopes were the subject of Richard Leskosky's talk. Mikhael Gureyvich spoke about animation in Russia and also showed work from "The Overcoat." There was a presentation of the work of Jules Engel by Jane Dill, the work of Frederic Back by Gene Walz, the work of Sylvia Holland by Robin Allan, the work of Faith Hubley by Joanna Priestley and the work of Lotte Reiniger by William Moritz. These and many many other interesting papers made for a stimulating and reaffirming experience.

As Prescott Wright pointed out in his talk, the official ASIFA definition of animation is "not live-action." The importance of human interaction and control in the process was stressed in the many discussions of this definition, yet there seemed to be general acceptance of the role of the computer in animation today. Computerphobia seemed to be absent from this conference. However, far from being seduced by technology, the prevailing attitude of SAS is a deep love for the "non live-action" and an acknowledgement of animation as an integral part of international culture.

People who are interested in the Society for Animation Studies should address correspondence to

Society for Animation Studies
4729 Lankershim Blvd
North Hollywood, CA 91602-1864
(818) 346.2782 fax: (818) 506.4805

Virtual Reality for the Masses

book review by Eric Oehrl

Virtual Reality by Howard Rheingold is an incredible documentary of practically all the significant areas encompassed by this relatively new technology. Rheingold does a very thorough job of explaining things in terms that the average Joe can understand, and no background knowledge is needed aside from perhaps a basic idea of what is meant by virtual reality. Only the dedicated reader will finish quickly though, because Rheingold packs an amazing amount of information into his writing (no pictures unfortunately!). *Virtual Reality* is not a one-nighter by any means; this 415-page book, however, is a ripe fruit ready for eager devouring by hungry minds.

This book review is not meant to be an explanation of what virtual reality is, and there is no substitute for reading the book. Rheingold does an exceptional job of linking seemingly unrelated topics and also of providing insight into relevant cultural movements and happenings. I highly recommend this book to anyone who is interested what changes will take place in society at a national and global level in the immediate, as well as the distant, future.

Join
ASIFA

Rheingold's book is a progression that follows his personal quest around the world for information about virtual reality. He starts his journey at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he experiences molecular docking, a way for scientists to try to find drug cures through a virtual experience involving a force-feedback mechanical arm. Rheingold does an excellent job of weaving a tale that pulls the curious reader in; a chapter always ends with a foretaste of what is coming, and most will find it difficult to put the book down. Rheingold delves into the subjects of artificial intelligence and parallelism, the linking of many computers to increase the speed of the millions of calculations it takes each second to support a virtual experience. From there he goes on to talk about head mounted displays (hardware that allows

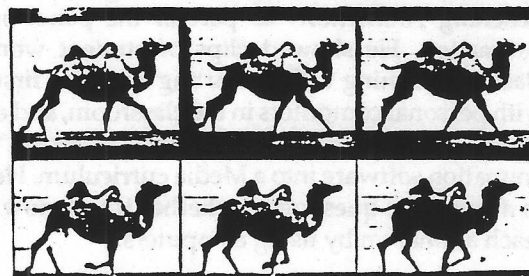
the user to see and hear the virtual world) and how humans have progressed in simulating perspective and sound. From VPL's DataGlove to Autodesk, from NASA to Japan, Rheingold covers all the significant happenings in the virtual reality movement. He writes of telepresence, which is the use of virtual reality by humans to operate robots and machines from remote locations. He covers controversial issues of teledildonics (the hot issue of virtual sex) and using virtual worlds as a form of escapism or electronic LSD. Furthermore, he discusses fringe technologies such as simulated touch, and hints at other things to come. If it's relevant, it's in there.

This book also opens the mind up to other applications of virtual reality, particularly where animation is involved. Some possibilities might be a virtual world animation package where three dimensional characters (virtual puppets if you will) could be created and then animated, manipulated, and edited. Full body data input suits already exist, as well as 3D rendering programs. As technology advances, computers become faster, and prices fall, a desktop version of a virtual animation package will become a reality.

Rheingold is extremely well qualified. He is the editor of the *Whole Earth Review* journal. He has authored numerous books, such as: *Tools for Thought*, *Excursions to the Far Side of the Mind*, and *They Have a Word for It: A Lighthearted Lexicon of Untranslatable Words and Phrases*. He has written articles for *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *Omni*, *Playboy*, *The New York Times*, *Esquire*, *Publish*, and *Psychology Today*. He also has been a consultant to the Office of Technology Assessment of the United States Congress. Furthermore, he has been a key player in organizing virtual reality conferences on the Usenet and WELL computer networks.

In conclusion, *Virtual Reality* by Howard Rheingold is a comprehensive guide in learning about this new technology and its potential benefits as well as the possible abuses of it. I strongly urge all who are interested to read this book, because virtual reality will affect our world greatly, probably more than sliced bread or television.

Virtual Reality by Howard Rheingold is available from Summit Books for \$22.95 in hardcover, and was first published in 1991.



member NEWS

MidWest UPdate

by Deanna Morse

Ed Counts, Bowling Green Kentucky, completed Joey Learns to Fly, a lightly colored hand drawn animation based on a contemporary Appalachian folk tale. In the film, Joey remembers, or imagines that he remembers flying as a child. One night as he is walking in the mountains with his young daughter, a bear approaches. He picks her up and runs. But the bear gets closer and closer, until Joey remembers his childhood, and he flies! Joey and daughter rise into the air and escape — confirming the power and importance of childhood's imagination. The animation has some beautifully drawn flying sequences that clearly animate a fantasy which many will remember from their childhood, or their dreams. The story, originally an improvised tale told by writer Errol Hess to his young children is retold for the film by storyteller Tom Bledsoe.

Silicon Arts, a one-year old computer graphic and animation studio based in Woodridge, IL created the ten second computer animated open and close for the "Ronald McDonald Family Theater", which aired nationally. The spot features a leather bound book of stories which lifts off the desk, settles next to an antique candle and opens to reveal the introduction to the special. The spots were constructed to be used as "bookends" for future McDonald's specials.

Millie Goldsholl, Northfield, Illinois, completed Rebellion of the Flowers, a 7 1/2 minute metaphor on the abuse of power. The piece uses full animation, with a dense line-drawn graphic style. The project was begun many years ago, but lay dormant for several years. Two years ago Millie revived it. She says "unfortunately, it was still timely. The abuse of power has not become passé."

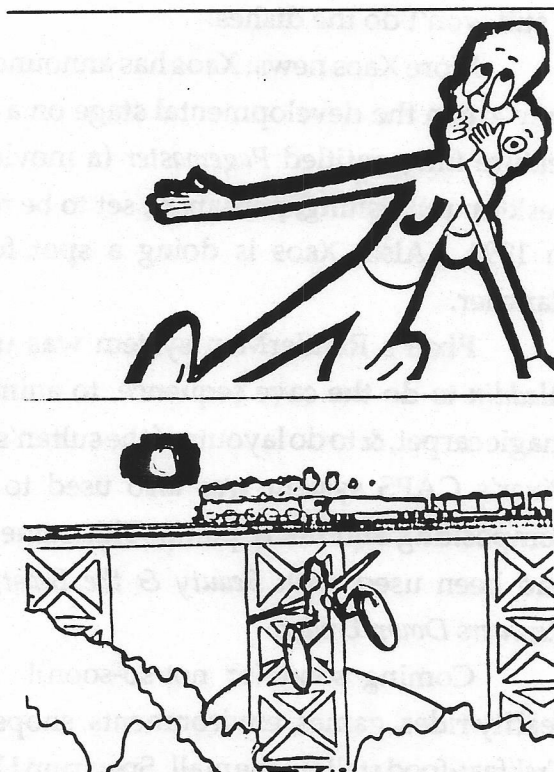
John Prusak and students at the William D. Ford Vocational Technical Center, Westland, Michigan completed Extinct, a 7 minute film which is part animation and part live-action. In the film, students visit a natural history museum, where they are told some theories on why dinosaurs became extinct. The newest theory, the "tobacco and nicotinous theory" is based on the cartoon by Gary Larson. In this theory, dinosaurs were chomping on tobacco trees which were struck by lightning and began to smoke... the dinosaurs, unfortunately became addicted to their newfound habit. There are some funny claymation sequences with many species of dinosaurs smoking, and suffering the con-

sequences from their discovery. The film was produced by a dozen animators at the school over a two year period.

Cimarron International, Denver, Colorado, won the 1992 Gold Pick Award from the Colorado Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America in the Film and Video Presentations category. The award was for a multi-media presentation which Cimarron produced for their client System One, a company providing reservations systems to the travel industry.

Oakland Community College, Michigan, hosted two visiting Czech animators as part of the Detroit/Prague International Film Festival. The animators were **Milan Klikar** who has animated over 300 films, and **Michaela Pavlatova**, a young animator best known for her film Words, Words, Words. Both teach at the FAMU School of Film in Prague. **Meredith Kadlec**, Rochester, Michigan, was one of the organizers of the event. She recently returned from Czechoslovakia where she studied at the FAMU film school. While there, she completed a documentary called Czech Made: Animation After the Velvet Revolution. The film details the economic difficulties of the Czech animators who have lost the state funding for their art as they have gained their political independence.

Please send information about your projects to: Deanna Morse, Associate Professor, School of Communications, Grand Valley State University, Allendale, MI 49401.



stills from Ed Counts' *Joey Learns to Fly*

NEWS

from ASIFA/SF:

A new Roger Rabbit short entitled *Trail Mix-up* will appear next year, in front of the feature film *A Far Off Place*.

The October 8th issue of *Variety* magazine gave Xaos' Pandemonium F/X software package a great review, saying it was "the hottest software for special effects shown at the recent SIGGRAPH conference." The \$4,000 package runs on Silicon Graphics workstations, with another version for IBM & Apple offered later for under \$1,000. The D-1 quality package resizes images, does reformatting, color correction & compositing. But it still won't do the dishes.

More Xaos news: Xaos has announced that they are in the developmental stage on a 'major' feature film, entitled *Pagemaster* (a movie about desktop publishing, perhaps?), set to be released in 1994. Also, Xaos is doing a spot for Jolly Rancher.

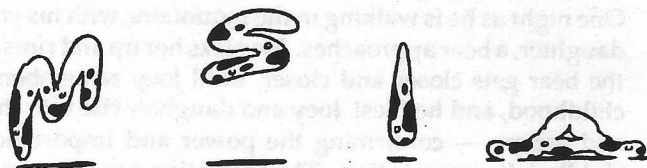
Pixar's RenderMan system was used for *Aladdin* to do the cave sequence, to animate the magic carpet, & to do layouts of the sultan's palace. Pixar's CAPS system was also used to do the compositing and ink & paint. This same system had been used with *Beauty & the Beast*, & *The Rescuers Down Under*.

Coming soon (or not-so-soon)! Virtual reality rides, games, environments, shops, & *Star Trek* fast-food stalls in the mall. Spectrum Holobyte is doing the computer animation for the *Star Trek* attractions, in which participants can wander

around the bridge, holodeck, and transport room of a *Star Trek* starship. I wonder how many quarters that will suck?

The Manitoba Society of Independent Animators -

MSIA is a non-profit organization whose goal is to promote & encourage the knowledge development & appreciation of animated films. They do this through courses, tours, workshops, film festivals, & production. They are located at 245 Main Street, in the offices of the National Film Board of Canada.



At their *Manitoba Animation Centre*, they have workspace for 16 animators, camera studio with animation stand, videolinetester, Bolex camera, & various A/V equipment. They also offer a basic animation course in traditional cel methods, a course for children, a claymation course, & an advanced animation workshop. Plans are currently underway to develop a computer animation course in conjunction with the University of Manitoba. MSIA also assists and gives grants for production of independent films. Their newsletter/magazine, *Peghead*, is quite the unusual publication. Contact Anne-Marie Thibert, Executive Director, 245 Main St, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3C 1A7. ☎ (204) 983.1276.

VOLUNTEER!

Volunteers are needed for the **Programming Committee**. Please attend the meeting at the Animation Plus! gallery, 790 N. Milwaukee Ave, on Sunday, Feb 21 at 2pm. This is your chance to organize, schedule, & take part in planning programs & events for ASIFA/Central members!

I N F O R M A T I O N
for
A S I F A / C e n t r a l
M E M B E R S H I P
D I R E C T O R Y

Name _____

Company or title _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ FAX/e-mail _____

General description of interests or business (animation techniques, intended audience, information on films, awards, honors, etc.):

Description of recent or current projects:

Are there services you could offer to other ASIFA members? Please indicate if there is a fee, reduced rate, or if you are offering voluntary support.

Support or networking areas. What would you like other ASIFA members to share with you?

Please return form, with any additional information or suggestions, to:

Deanna Morse
School of Communications
268 LSH
Grand Valley State University
Allendale, MI 49401

Thanks!

MEMBERSHIP in ASIFA Central

ASIFA, l'Association Internationale du Film d'Animation (the International Animated Film Association), is a unique organization dedicated to the artform of animation. With chapters in over 50 countries, ASIFA bridges the political and cultural barriers to encourage and promote animation to both industry professionals and the general public. ASIFA Central, the Midwest American Chapter, encourages the work of Midwestern animators by providing networking opportunities. Support animation in the Midwest and around the world by joining today!

☐

GENERAL - \$22 per year

- Subscription to **Frame by Frame**, chapter newsletter
- Free participation in ASIFA-sponsored programs
- Local voting rights

☐

INTERNATIONAL - \$42 (\$22 + \$20 Int'l fee) per year

- All General Membership benefits
- International membership and voting rights
- Discounts on international ASIFA festivals
- Subscription to **ASIFA News**, international newsletter

☐

CORPORATE SPONSOR - \$250 per year

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STUDENT - \$12 per year

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(you must provide proof of current enrollment)

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CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

TELEPHONE (work) _____

(home) _____

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NEW

☐

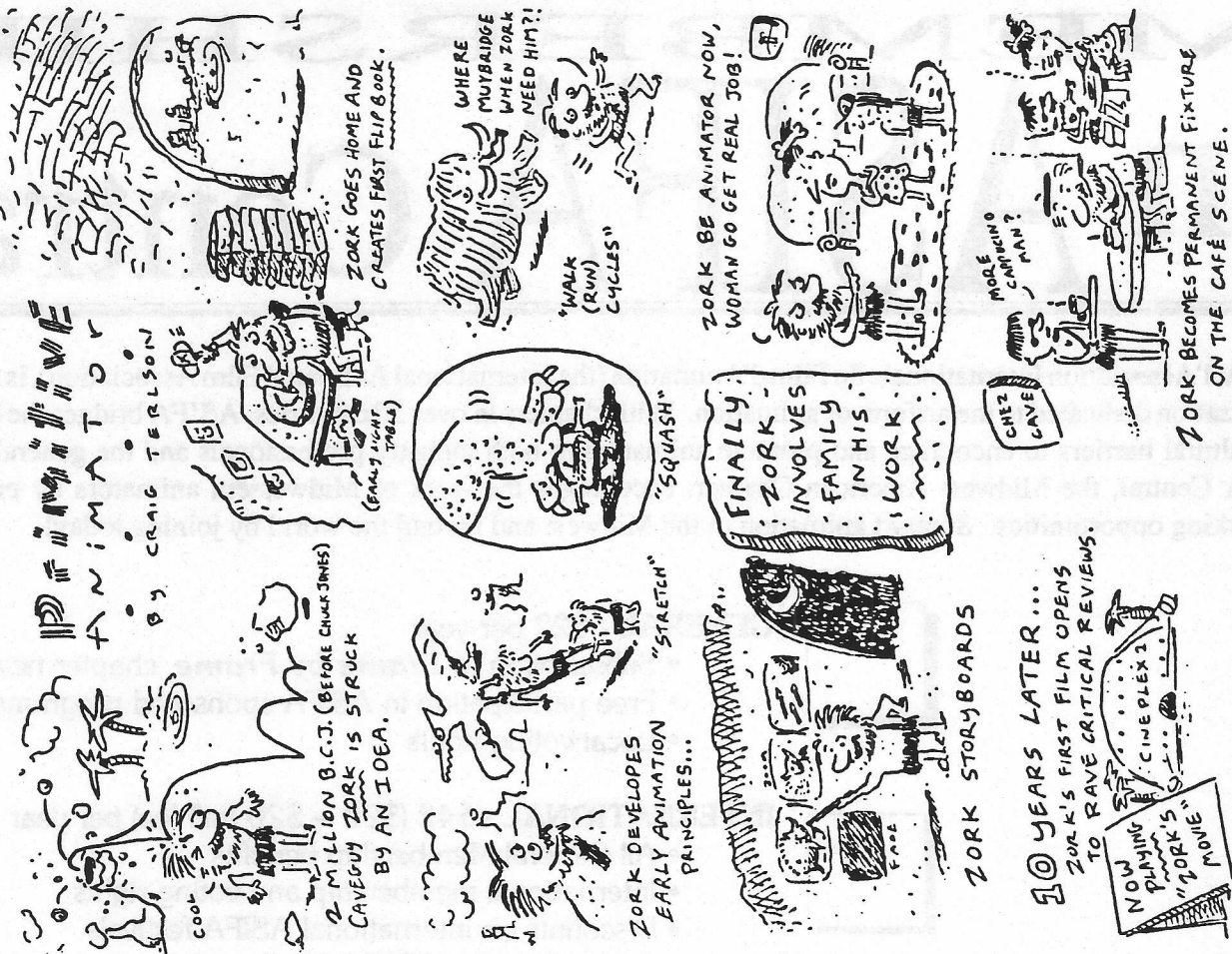
RENEWAL

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FRAME BY FRAME

NEWSLETTER OF
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CHICAGO, IL 60622



from Peghead, the MSIA newsletter (see page 11)