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Interview with Jim Richardson by Carolyn Shaffer

Editors note: Jim Richardson is a former ASIFA/Central board member who relocated to Seattle.

Over the course of about five months, I was introduced to Jim Richardson, Will Vinton Studio's animator extraordinaire, and corresponded with him, via email, in order to learn about his background and animation projects. During this busy time, Jim completed a number of M&M commercials (you know the ones...) as well as their German and British versions. We exchanged jokes and some graphics files. Through his answers to my many questions, his stories, his demo tape and his sketches, this funny, ambitious, talented and former Midwestern animator is revealed.

Background

CS: How would you describe your former experiences as an animator in the Midwest? Did you have specific problems or pleasures?

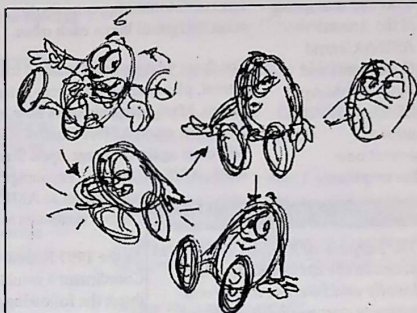
JR: I grew up in Florida with warm winters and no snow. I came to Chicago in 1982 and after college I had finished an animated film called, "Cat and Rat." I just had a sample portfolio of school projects, a brief resume and a rough workprint of "Cat and Rat." I managed to find work painting cels on various commercial projects around Chicago. In those days, they were still painting cels in the US and usually got anyone who could operate a paint brush and cel vinyl.

While hopping from studio to studio, I was finishing up sound work on "Cat & Rat." I knew I could get a job animating if I had a film that I could also use as a demo reel. I had a lot of unrelated animation samples from titles to rotoscoping, but I discovered on many job interviews, that they wanted to see something interesting and if they did, they might remember to call me in for the next job.

When I finally began animating professionally, I was given a few scenes here and there. Usually inbetweening or animating shadows on Capt'n Crunch's face and body. This went on for a while, freelancing here and there to pay the rent and bills. Then I had a change of job direction. I got an opportunity to see how commercials begin as an idea in an advertising agency. I became a freelance Art Director of sorts at Leo Burnett in Chicago. I was there almost a year and got a chance to create a :15 second tag spot for McDonald's Halloween Happy Meal Pals. I also learned a

lot about storyboarding an idea and telling a story panel by panel. When I finally left Burnett, I was ready to get back into the world of animation.

I started to work freelancing for StarToons and eventually became a member of their growing staff. At the time they were working on several Warner



M&M thumbnail sketches

Bros. projects. I also would take on a few freelance jobs on the side as long as it didn't interfere with my full time job. I worked hard at StarToons and became very good at inbetweening and cleanup. After working on tons of forgotten commercials over the years, it was good to work on something that people would see and know about, plus I would finally get

screen credit on a few of the shows.

At StarToons, most of us were laid off after the last Animaniacs show was finished. I joined some friends from Columbia College, who had their own production studio and had been producing a lot of sales and industrial video projects. At the time, I had a project that came to me to produce a ten minute animated educational film about, of all things, spinal safety (StreetSmart).

As things turned out, we put together a budget, treatment and presentation and got the job. Months later, cursing and swearing all the way, we got it done on time and on budget and had a 10 minute animated educational film.

We all learned a lot on "StreetSmart" and I soon discovered that I would have to go elsewhere if I wanted to work in animation full time. A lot of projects came and went that we would bid on and never would get because the clients didn't have a budget, didn't know how much it costs, how long it takes or got scared by our numbers and ran away.

Richardson continued on page 4

In this Issue

• An Interview w/ Jim Richardson	1
• Member News	2
• Animation on the Web	6
• Buying Back Rights to a Character	9
• Classified Ads	9



Letter from the Editor...
by Jennifer Eldred

New and renewing friendships bloomed this spring at the Annual ASIFA/Central Conference and Retreat held April 25-27, 1997. This

year's retreat proved fruitful as ASIFA/Central gained several new members and continued to emphasize its commitment to bringing animators from the Midwest together.

Events kicked-off Friday evening over cake and goodies as attendees

introduced each other to the group. There was a wonderful mix of animators and animation enthusiasts in attendance, with many traveling several hundred miles to attend.

After breaking the ice events quickly turned to screening animations starting with the UNICEF reel which detailed the plight of children in third world countries. Saturday morning started off with presentations which ranged from tips on how to break into the animation industry to web animation (see page 6) and even some techniques for children's animation. Screenings of the ASIFA/East and

graduate school reels filled the remainder of the weekend along with under the camera sand animating and software demos.

One of this year's highlights was the return of the animators gathering and picnic Saturday evening. The picnic gave us all a fun and informal opportunity to relax and get to know each other.

For those who couldn't make it to this retreat, planning for next year has already begun. Mark your calendars now for April 3-5, 1998 when ASIFA/Central members will once again converge upon Starved Rock. ASIFA/Central is encouraging early registration as ASIFA/Central continues to grow!

ASIFA/Central Mission Statement

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

As the 1997 Retreat Coordinator I would like to thank the following people for their commitment and participation in making this retreat the best one yet!
Melissa Bouwman, Assistant

Retreat Coordinator; Deanna Morse, ASIFA/Central President; Mary Lou Haynes, World Peace Storyboard Contest Coordinator; Adwoa Muwzea, Under the Camera Sand Workshop and Phillip Simoncelli, 1996 World Peace Storyboard Contest Winner. In addition there were several volunteers who assisted in setting up and taking down equipment making my weekend even more pleasant. My thanks to all who attended. I look forward to renewing acquaintances and seeing new faces at next year's conference. Call 1.800.868.ROCK for lodging.

Jennifer Eldred

Mike Allore's silent film "The Hunter" opened at the Redford Theater in Detroit.

Jim Duesing has accepted a position as Associate Professor of Computer Animation in the School of Art at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh.

Jennifer Eldred is currently producing and animating an opening ceremony piece for the 1998 National Science Olympiad Competition.

Our chapter president, **Deanna Morse**, was recently elected to the International ASIFA board as 1 of only 2 U.S. representatives.

Jim Schaub is currently producing several films for Knoll, Inc.

Carolyn Shaffer has taken the job of editor for the SAS (Society for Animation Studies) newsletter.

Congratulations to All!

Please send your member news to: ASIFA/Central c/o Deanna Morse School of Communications Lake Superior Hall Grand Valley State University Allendale, MI 49401 email: morsed@gvsu.edu or asifa@asifa.org

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To contribute or volunteer contact:

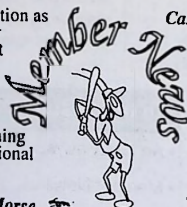
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To join ASIFA/Central:
Send a check payable to ASIFA/Central to the address above.



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Ready to Volunteer?

Do You Have the Experience, Leadership Skills, Time and Energy to Contribute to ASIFA/Central? Or do you know someone who does? We are looking for a core of interested people who want to help maintain and expand the activities of our all-volunteer organization. We are also looking for a few good board members.

Listed below are some ideas for areas we have targeted as needing support. Perhaps you have other ideas for activities our organization could undertake. There are three ways you can be involved:

- 1) Consider nominating yourself as a board member - select an area where you would like to be involved. If we have more nominations than board slots, we will print nomination statements in the next newsletter and hold an election.
- 2) If you want to be involved, but do not want to serve on the board, nominate yourself as a project leader for an activity you identify.
- 3) If you want to volunteer, but do not want to be "in charge", let us know your area of interest and we will have the project leader contact you.

Correspondents - write a regular column or at least three articles a year for the newsletter/web page

Outreach Publications - work with us to create an informational

brochure and other printed support materials

Membership/Outreach - solicit new memberships for our organization

Marketing Coordinator - coordinate general promotion and marketing of ASIFA/Central, retreat, and storyboard competition

Editor - Quarterly Publications - Gather materials and edit Frame by Frame Quarterly Newsletter

Digital Communications - Update and expand our Web site

Retreat Coordinator - Coordinate activities for our Annual Midwest Animator's Retreat

Midwest Animator's Reel Coordinator - Edit materials for the reel, produce supporting materials, distribute reel

Midwest Animator's Directory Coordinator - gather information on members and studios in the midwest for a directory of resources.

Create your own position!

To indicate your interest in volunteering please send us the following by August 1st, 1997:

name, address, and statement of interest (area you want to work whether you want to be a board member, project leader or volunteer) and mail it to: Deanna Morse, School of Communications, Lake Superior Hall, Grand Valley State University, Allendale, MI 49401

Funding Denied

Canyon Cinema, A Film Collective that Distributes Outstanding Animated Shorts, Lost \$15,000 NEA Grant Due to an Attack by a Republican- Private Funds Needed. The film distribution group has had small NEA grants for the last 15 years and has been renting films to schools and the public since the 1960's. They distribute work by Oskar Fischinger, Len Lye, Susan Pitt, Robert and Emily Breer, Larry Jordan, Pat O'Neill, Gunvor Nelson, Paul Glabicki, Dirk DeBruyn, Barry Spinello, Bruce Connor, Stan Brackage and others.

The \$15,000 grant was to help the organization publish their next catalog that will list over 3,000 avant-garde and experimental film and video titles. The grant had been approved by the NEA, but it was cancelled when Representative Peter Hoekstra (R-Michigan), who heads the House Committee on Education and the Workforce's Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, complained that the NEA funded 4 distributors that include some gay and lesbian material in their catalogs (the other groups are Brava! for Woman in the Arts, Fiction Collective 2 and Women Make Movies). An article in the *SF Bay Guardian* (April 16, 1997) said Hoekstra "has put the dismantling of the NEA at the top of his agenda this year."

Canyon's staff is shocked that Hoekstra is using their catalog as

an example of indecency in the arts. Dominic Angerame, Executive Director of Canyon Cinema, told the Guardian, "I don't think there are any films in our catalog that would justify our not getting money from the NEA... The NEA is not even funding these films, their just supporting a catalog that advertises their distribution" (along with the films of Len Lye, Fischinger, and dozens of other artists whose work does not have gay or lesbian content).

Canyon is seeking donations so they can publish their 8th catalog. Once published it will remain in use for several years. They mail out small annual updates to the catalog to keep their costs down.

Tax deductible donations can be made through Film Arts Foundation. Checks should be made payable to Film Arts Foundation and mailed to Canyon Cinema. Mark check for catalog #8, 2325 3rd St., Suite 338, San Francisco, CA 94107 (415) 626-2255.

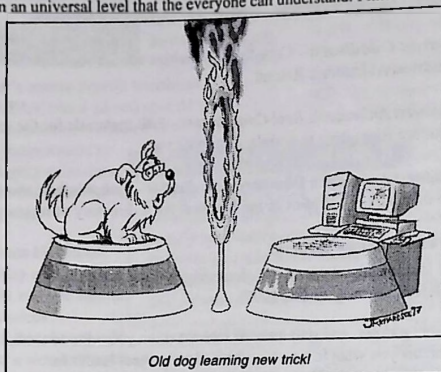
-reprinted from ASIFA/San Francisco thanks to Karl Cohen

If members wish to phone their opinion, the capitol switchboard (202) 224-3121, can connect any call to to any lawmaker.

Continued from Richardson on page 1
Also with the change in technology, I would have to learn computer animation sooner or later...

CS: The demo reel which you thoughtfully supplied me showcases a mastery of quite a variety of techniques. Aside from commercial/job-related considerations, which of these styles do you feel is optimal for your creative expression?

JR: For me, I like drawn animation that allows you to move the view around in any direction in order to tell a story. I like stories that work on an universal level that the everyone can understand. I like Frederick



Bach's film, CRAC!. It works on many levels, tells many stories and you can watch it again and again and always see something new. I like his style of drawing as well as Mark Baker's "The Hill Farm." When you work as an animator for a studio, you don't have much choice of what you work on. You are there to bring the thing to life one drawing or render at a time. I haven't had any time to work on my own film since "Cat and Rat." This is something I had feared would happen long ago, but only now am I starting to consider making a film again. I have written a lot of ideas and kept lots of sketch books, but only recently have I started to write some children's books for friends that could eventually be turned into an animated film.

I am currently working on a book about a boy who wins a contest and his prize turns out to be a very large animal. I have one called, "Bruce the Blue Spruce" which I did for a friend of mine. Its about a tiny blue tree who is teased by the big Green Trees. I'd like to rework the names of the characters and try to get it published.

Technology & Animation

CS: Can you tell me how your traditional animation skills have been incorporated into the 3D computer world?

JR: I use my drawing skills to work out how I want something to act or move. Usually rough thumbnail sketches that focus on different key positions. This helps me get it in my head, so I can think about it all the time.

CS: And the 3D part? Is it very different, like doing something more akin to sculpture?

JR: I have been working on learning how to animate on the computer

all last year. I hope to begin learning how to build an animated character in the modeling program. I have discovered that it was very frustrating at first dealing with learning the software and then moving it around using a keyboard and a mouse. But after a while, I began to get the hang of it. Like anything new, it just takes time and patience, more patience for me.

Work Environment

CS: Have you typically had to work ungodly hours at your jobs so that you didn't have the time to pursue your own projects? Or was there a conflict of interest with the employer? Or did it take all your energy away? Other obligations? I wonder how you got to the point now where you are able to overcome these obstacles.

JR: Well, so far, when its getting closer to the deadline, I usually have to stay later. If I don't have to work the weekend, I will usually see a movie or do something else, not computer related. For a while there, last year, I was here and my wife Gina and our 5 cats were in Chicago. I was living in a hotel two blocks from work. I was stuck in the hotel with only cable TV for one long year! But now, we moved here finally and got a house. I even have a studio space upstairs and I plan to start working as soon as I am motivated, hopefully this weekend!!!

CS: It's really a major time of transition in the animation industry. Does management at your workplace (or any other animation houses you know of) take this human element into consideration and provide stress management or whatever kinds of things might help? Flex time, additional training?

JR: I was lucky that I got in here during the beginning of M&Ms, because Vinton allowed us to do training first and then we got a scene or two to work on as we learned at the same time. I came in with no computer animation experience and I feel that I am still learning a lot with each scene I get. Inbetween projects, I used spare time to work on learning how to make the character walk for an upcoming spot which featured a lot of walking.

CS: The M&M commercials are so appealing. The M&Ms themselves are the stars, but the human stars add some of the attraction too. Do you ever meet celebs?

JR: The directors and TDs do, but the animators rarely.

CS: For spots like these, do you work with the writers?

JR: The Ad agency is in New York and they sell the storyboard ideas to the client months in advance.

CS: Do you work strictly from the storyboards? Or do the animators contribute to the script, staging, details?

JR: We have a storyboard, an exposure sheet with lip sync and sometimes reference footage of the actors or the agency people showing us how a certain gesture should be handled. Usually as we are blocking out each scene with rough action, we can sometimes add our ideas as long as it doesn't alter the idea's direction in a totally different one. Sometimes we can come up with a way of doing something that feels more natural, something that the character would do.

CS: As working with Vinton is not your first venture into advertising.
Richardson continued on page 5

Continued from Richardson on page 4

I'd be interested in hearing your take on advertising vs. Saturday morning cartoons vs. independent vs. education...or whatever other categories of animation I'm omitting!

JR: Oh you would, would you?! Well in Advertising it works like this. The Client (for example let's call it, Yummy Pops) has a whole company working away and one division of it say "We want to sell 'Yummy Gummy'". (A brand new gum and toy for kids.) They work with the "BIG INC. Advertising" to create advertising! A Creative Director (CD) is called in and they are in charge of a group of creatives. Usually teams of two, a Art Director (AD) and a Copywriter (CW). The CD gets a few teams to bounce ideas off each other as long as it stays within the selling guidelines provided by the Client. Briefly, the Customer/Client is always Right or the Committee is always Right depending if you are in Advertising or Saturday Morning Biz.

"...even with computers doing more and more, I think people still like to see great stop motion."

-Jim Richardson

any more without a.) software expertise or b.) a ton of traditional experience which would make it worthwhile to train a person?

JR: Today's student should have a demo reel that not only shows traditional animation, but have some sample of computer animation as well. If they can show that they have a strong ability to make their characters act, react and tell a story, that's what a lot of places are looking for. As long as you can show traditional animation techniques like squash and stretch, anticipation, good timing etc.

CS: Do you think that Vinton Studios will phase out Claymation™ in favor of Lightwave or other 3D computer animation techniques, such as those used in the M&M spots?

JR: I think that Claymation™ will still be around. Looking back at the last year of spots, the stop motion department turned out a lot of work including the very popular spot for Nissan called "Toys". I think they are a bunch of talented people who have been here during the days of Clay, and even with computers doing more and more, I think people still like to see great stop motion.

For questions about his animation projects, Jim Richardson can be reached via e-mail at jimr@vinton.com. - Carolyn Shaffer

Future Trends

CS: We've alluded to a lot of complex technology, intense work schedules and rapid changes. It makes me wonder about the aspiring animator. It seems like now, a student has a couple of layers of stuff to learn. Do you think it'd be possible to work in the animation industry

Frame by Frame is a quarterly publication of ASIFA/Central. Send articles, materials, artwork, comments and suggestions to:

*Frame by Frame
Jennifer Eldred
c/o ASIFA/Central*

*See back cover for
ASIFA/Central mailing address.*

ASIFA/Central Web Opportunity!

The ASIFA Central Web Site is <http://www.asifa.org/animate> and our email is asifa@asifa.org. Byron Grush, our webmaster, is looking for volunteers to assist with maintenance of our website. We are also looking for a few Corporate Sponsors to be listed on our website. Byron has donated his time to keep the site running and to construct web pages for our Corporate Sponsors which will be installed on our site. We feel that by providing pages on the web we can acknowledge the generosity of our Corporate Sponsors \$300 per year membership dues. Sponsors will be getting a pretty darn good deal for their money, as advertising on the web can run thousands of dollars. We are also providing "business card" listings for our regular members on the Members' Directory page. Individuals and businesses with home pages who would like us to link to them can get a listing on this page by becoming a regular member (only \$20 per year).

International Student Animation Festival of Ottawa

The first International Student Animation Festival of Ottawa (SAFO) will run from September 18-21 at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. The festival is organized by the Canadian Film Institute which is dedicated to the promotion, dedication and recognition of excellence in animation produced by students.

SAFO 97 will have an Official Competition in which they will accept any animated production which fits the definition of animation as formulated by ASIFA. Works completed, copyrighted, or first shown to an audience before July 31, 1994 are not eligible. Productions entered in previous Ottawa Festivals, with the exception of Ottawa 96, are not eligible. Films will be judged by an international jury. Prizes will be awarded for a variety of media and craft categories. A cash prize will be awarded to the Grand Prize Winner. Unfinished films and/or pencil tests will also be accepted but will be judged in a special category. There will be a cash prize in this category awarded to the winner for the completion of the work.

Entries should not be over 30 minutes and must be received by July 1, 1997. Entry forms, rules and regulations are available from the 1997 International Student Animation Festival of Ottawa, 2 Daly Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1N 6E2. Phone: 613.232.8769 or 232.6315. Email oiar@ottawa.com or visit the website: <http://www.awn.com/safo> -reprinted from SAS Newsletter

TVS Validia

TVS Validia is an animation studio located in Minsk, the capital of the Republic of Belarus. They are looking for partners for production of cartoon serials. They use SGI computers with US Animation Software and provides full services for animation production. For demo cassette please E-mail tvsv.validia@usa.net or inspector@valid.minsk.by or send your questions to address: 220034, 5 Chapayev str., Minsk Republic of Belarus. Fax (375) 172 36 40 39, Phone (375) 172 36 30 55 http://css.minsk.by/partners/VALIDIA/new_val_index.html. S.Goncharov-President TVS Validia.

Animation on the Web by Melissa Boucman

Animation on the web has seen some amazing developments over the past few years. I remember when I first explored the World Wide Web (which I am ashamed to say was only one and a half years ago) I was excited to come across a web page that had nice graphics that didn't take an eon to download. I saw very little animation and the ones I did come across were simple gif animations that were no longer than a few frames.

Now animation is everywhere on the web, from the vast amount of gif animations, to fully interactive web pages loaded with sound and animation. What I intend to cover is a few of the most common types of animation formats for the web, a brief description of some of the programs used to create animation, and list some of the resources and sites of interest for animators.

Types of Web animation

Obviously the most common format of animation on the web is Gif Animation. Some of the reasons for their popularity are that Gif animations are usually small files, with minimal download time, and they can be seen by everyone...no plug-ins are necessary to view them. Gif animations require no special program for their creation, however, if you are not familiar with HTML programming there are a number of programs out there that can assist you in the creation of your animation. One such program is GifBuilder, a freeware program on the web which assembles graphics that you create in another program into gif animation sequences. To see a demo or to download this software, go to the GifBuilder site at <http://iawwww.epfl.ch/Staff/Yves.Piguet/clip2gif-home/GifBuilder.html>.

Another common web animation format is Java script. Creating a Java animation requires knowledge of writing Java script code. Again, there are programs that assist with the creation of animations to be exported in the Java format, but according to the software reviews I've read, the best results are achieved if you can write Java script code. Java is also capable of producing interactive stacks with sound. I have seen a number of different Java applets that allow you to play simulations of old video games such as Pong, Asteroids, Space Invaders, and even Pac Man, right on your browser.

To view Java script animations and applets, one must have a browser that supports Java—most current versions of web browsers have that capability. Quicktime or AVI movies allow you to see examples of longer animations on the web, but, you will have to download the movie in order to see the animation. The only problems that exist with this option is of course the download time, which can be extremely long depending on the size of the file, and that viewers will need to have the proper plug-in installed in order to download it in the first place. A nice feature about quicktime clips is that users can save the quicktime

or AVI movie to their hard drive and view it again later without having to suffer through a second download.

Among the many types of animation formats that require their own software and viewer plug-in to be seen are the Macromedia formats of Shockwave and Shockwave Flash animation. Shockwave files can be created by Macromedia Director, Macromedia Authorware, or Macromedia Flash. Shockwave allows you to either create entirely interactive web pages, or place a shockwave document to be downloaded like a quicktime movie. The shockwave file will usually be of higher quality than a quicktime file and they aren't available to be saved to your hard drive. Macromedia Flash creates vector based animations and multimedia stacks that load very quickly. The animation and sound is streaming, so it plays as it loads. Also, because graphics are vector based one can zoom into graphics indefinitely with no quality loss (examples of zoom capabilities can be seen on WebTrips pages at <http://www.webtrips.com>. To see some examples of work created with Macromedia's Shockwave and Flash, go to their site at <http://www.macromedia.com/shockzone>.

Another site that has a number of fun activities created with Shockwave, such as pumpkin carving (my personal favorite) and a spook show, is the Colossal Pictures home page at <http://www.colossal.com>.

Great Animation Web Sites

If you've ever typed the word "animation" into search engine on the web, I'm sure you've come up with an unmanageable amount of sites listed. Excites search engine lists 228,912 sites that supposedly contain something to do with animation, which is far too many to weed through. Unless you have a specific company, person, or site in mind, it is very difficult to find great animation sites on the web via a search engine. So how do you find some of the best animation sites out there? Luck, word of mouth, and a few animation resource pages with tons of links to fabulous sites have been my most successful methods. There is obviously incredible amounts of information on the web for animators, from schools with programs in animation, to job connections, to pages about your favorite animators, the possibilities are endless. The following are a few of the sites that I've found to be particularly interesting and useful. A great place to start your web journey would be the Animation World Network (<http://www.awn.com>). The Animation World Network posts an on-line magazine every month with fun and informative articles, software reviews, and even a Dirty Birdie comic strip by John Dilworth. In addition to the magazine the site hosts the Virtual Village, the Gallery, the Vault, a chat room, and Career Connection. The Virtual Village has links to web sites for a number of animation companies, galleries, festivals, schools, nonprofit organizations, unions and individuals. The Gallery features work done by a new animator, independent or professional, every month. The Vault contains archives of past issues of Animation World Magazine, as well as a

Continued from Web Animation on page 6

couple of searchable databases of companies, films, events, awards, people, and downloadable items. Career Connections is an on-line job fair that posts jobs in the industry, and allows you to post a resume in the database for employers to explore. In all, it is a wonderful site...I've spent hours there.

Along the same lines as AWN's career connections, the Interactive Talent Network (<http://www.talnet.com>) allows animators to register free for one year in the Toonscouts database. In the database, an animator can list the various job experiences he/she has had like Character Animation or Special Effects as well as post a resume and work samples. The database is used by animation companies (Hanna Barbara being on of the key users) and searched under the various categories to find the people that meet their needs. I spoke with the primary caretaker of the network, Jess Wall, and he told me that the network hopes to expand so that employers will list jobs available and that animators looking for work will be able to browse the jobs database. In addition to Career Connection and Toonscout, companies like Pixar, PDI, and ILM, post current job openings and internship opportunities on their sites along with information on how to apply to their company.

Finally, a site that should not be missed by anyone who loves animation, is the Absolute Panushka site, (<http://www.absolutvodka.com>) a comprehensive site of experimental animation. When you enter into the site you are presented with an animated Absolut bottle, clicking on it will get you to the animated map of the site (an example of gif animation). The map can bring you to a number of areas in the site including the on-line animation festival, history of experimental animation, a Question and Answer section, and a tool for creating virtual scratch on film animations (a Java applet). Since the animated map changes every week, you can also access the previous maps along with information on the animator. The Absolut Panushka online festival was commissioned by Absolut Vodka and curated by Christine Panushka. It showcases 24 experimental animations featuring the Absolut bottle. Be prepared for long download times to view the animations with either quicktime or shockwave, but the animation is worth the wait. You can also access a bio on all of the animators featured in the festival.

I hope you've found this article of some use in understanding the various types of animation on the web, and I hope you enjoy the sites listed. If anyone has any additional information on Web animation or knows of any other wonderful sites that I've missed (and I'm sure there is many) please e-mail me at mbouwman@remc7.k12.mi.us. -Melissa Bouwman

Coming in the Fall Issue:

- Interview with Kim White Technical Director for PIXAR Animation
- 1998 International HVH World Peace Storyboard Contest Details
- Deadline for articles and images for the Fall Issue is August 15, 1997

The drawings featured in this issue were from a



couple of "works in progress," most notably "Fugue It," from animator Jim Middleton's "Animating the Apothecary" which he said he hopes to finish by the turn of THIS century. Others are for opening credits on his public access program.

According to Jim, "The Animating Apothecary" is his escape to reality that has produced illustrations, calendars, historical publication reconstructions, and, occasionally, even animation. His films have taken worldwide competition awards and have been broadcast on overseas television, when they aren't annoying the public access airways of his home base in Battle Creek,

Michigan. Current projects include a return of Billy

Bugg in "Fugue It" and a pair of those dreary

allegories (working titles "Side Effect" and

"Rush Job"). He has also recently

completed the reconstruction of Dr.

Kellogg's Health Ladder, a 1923 series

of exercise recordings by the originator

of corn flakes and "biologic living." In

the meantime, he continues to hide out

in his modest basement studio at 201

Arcadia Blvd, Battle Creek, MI 49017.



C o r r e c t i o n s :

In the Winter/ Spring Issue I misspelled the name of ASIFA/Central board member Byron Grush. This may have affected people trying to reach Byron by email. His correct email address is byron@swcp.com.

Entertainment attorney, Pamela Schechter's phone number was also listed incorrectly. She can be reached at 212.517.2572.

Web Sites of Interest

compiled Melissa Bouwman

ASIFA/Central- <http://www.asifa.org/animate>

Absolut Panushka- <http://www.absolutvodka.com>

Animation World Network- <http://www.awn.com>

Internet Talent Network- <http://www.talnet.com>

The Haunted House- <http://www.hauntedhome.com>

QUEST- <http://www.uni-kassel.de/fb22/quest/questhtml>

Macromedia's Shockzone- <http://www.macromedia.com/shockzone>

Bill Plympton- <http://www.awn.com/plympton/>

Caroline Leaf- <http://www.awn.com/leaf/>

Ruth Hayes- <http://www.halcyon.com/rhayes/html/ref.html>

Leandro Krukowski- <http://web.starlinx.com/soda>

Kenneth Feldman- <http://www.missouri.edu/~c512881>

1996 & 1997 International HVH World Peace Storyboard Contest Update

by Mary Lou Haynes

This year the judges did not select a winning storyboard for the International World Peace Storyboard Contest. The rules and application are in the process of being restructured to provide a Bigger and Better Contest and

3rd International

Helen Victoria Haynes
WORLD PEACE
Storyboard & Animation
Contest

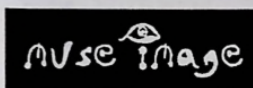
Prizes for the 1998 Conference & Retreat. Thank you to Phil Simoncelli for providing his winning 1996 Storyboard and screening his completed 1997 World Peace animation. This outstanding work was screened several times at the Spring Retreat. Phil did an incredible job and ASIFA Central is proud to have him as a member. Look for complete details for next year's Contest in a future issue of Frame by Frame.



SIGGRAPH '97 is being held in Los Angeles from August 3-8, 1997.



Festivals



ASIFA/Central board member Byron Grush has opened a new gallery called "Gallery of Intuitive Art" located at Forraleza Coyote, 1413

Second Street, Sante Fe, NM 87505, phone 505.988.9154. Visit him if you're ever in town!

Festival Internacional de Cortometrajes de Santiago (FICS) is looking for shortfilm-makers for the International Competition in their Short-Film Festival. Please visit their web site at <http://www.fics.cl> for more information. Deadline is July 14, 1997

Drawing Insight

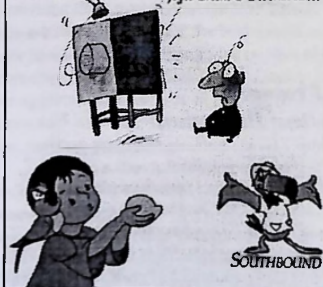
Communicating Development
Through Animation

WITH A FOREWORD BY

Roy Disney

EDITED BY

Joyce Greene & Deborah Rebar



Drawing Insight

UNICEF is offering the book, "Drawing Insight," to ASIFA members at a 40% discount. The paperback version is \$18 and the hardcover is \$30.

This book contains articles by John Canemaker, Geraldine Laybourne and has a foreword by Roy Disney. "Drawing Insight" focuses on the plight of children and how animation is being used to extend the reach of UNICEF's message of cooperation.

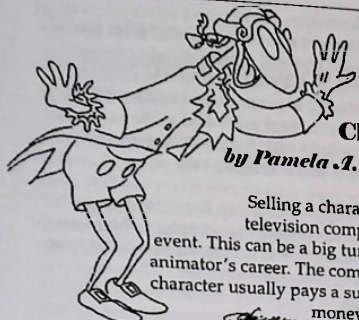
The video, "Drawing Insight," is also available. It is 30 minutes in length and is available in English, French, and Spanish. The VHS version is \$15 and a Beta version is \$75.

Contact ASIFA/Central for an order form.



Festival du Cinema International en Abitibi-Temiscamingue is looking for entries. Contact <http://www.telebec.qc.ca/fci> or email fciat@sympatico.ca or write Festival du Cinema International en Abitibi-Temiscamingue 215, Ave Mercier Rouyn-Noranda, Qc Canada

Editors Note: The video, "Drawing Insight," was screened at the Spring Retreat and several points from the book which focused on animating for children were discussed during presentations.



Buying Back Rights To A Character

by Pamela A. Schechter, Esq.

Selling a character to a film or television company is a very exciting event. This can be a big turning point in an animator's career. The company purchasing the character usually pays a substantial sum of

money for all of the rights to the character. In addition, the animator is often asked to develop a treatment or a pilot consisting of several minutes of animation using the character. For these tasks, the animator is also compensated. At this point in time, both the company and the animator have great hope that eventually there will be several projects using the character which will be quite lucrative to all those involved.

However, not every character sale turns into the success story of Beavis and Butt-Head. After a treatment has been written or a pilot has been created, the company that now owns the character can decide it does not want to do anything further with it. It has the right to make this decision because it owns all the rights to the character and can either do or not do anything it wants with it.

This can be a very disappointing time for an animator who is attached to his character and wants to see it developed further. However, all is not lost. An animator who has sold all of his rights in his character to a company can offer to purchase it back. Negotiations begin with the company determining a buyback purchase price for the character. It is important that the animator be represented by an entertainment attorney during this process because it can be quite complicated.

In addition to the character, the animator wants to buy back any material created during the time of the agreement which can include any treatments or pilots. It is important for both the animator and his attorney to review all of the projects that have been worked on utilizing the character during the time of the original purchase agreement. The contract can be in place for a number of years and it is easy to forget what material has been created using the character during the time of the agreement.

Most companies determine the price for the buy-back of a character by adding together all of the money spent on the character. This amount includes the purchase price for the character, the amount spent on any treatments or pilots and any other money spent creating projects with the character during the time of the agreement.

Sometimes the animator has created animation prior to the sale of the character to the company. The company often buys the rights to this animation when it purchases the rights to the character. If this is the case, the animator will also want to buy back the rights to any animation he has sold to the company.

Once the animation company and the animator has agreed on the buyback purchase price, a letter agreement amending the original character sale agreement is drafted. This agreement states that the company will allow the animator to buy back all of the rights in the character and any other material the animator wants to purchase for a specific sum of money. Usually, the rights will only revert back to the animator when the company receives a signed copy of the letter agreement and the purchase price for the rights. Sometimes the company will keep the rights until the animator's check has cleared.

Once the company has received a signed agreement and the money, the rights revert to the animator and he is free and clear to do what he wants with the character. Usually, another company is interested in purchasing the rights to the character and a new negotiation process begins.

Pamela A. Schechter is an entertainment attorney working in New York. For questions and comments contact her at 212.517.2572.

More Websites...

Companies:

PIXAR- <http://www.pixar.com>

PDI- <http://www.pdi.com>

Rhythm and Hues- <http://www.rhythm.com>

Colleges:

Art Center College of Design- <http://www.artcenter.edu>

Art Institute of Chicago- <http://www.artic.edu/>

Cal Arts- <http://emsh.calarts.edu/index.html>

Cogswell- <http://www.cogswell.edu>

Mississippi State University- <http://www.msstate.edu/Dept/Art>

New York University- <http://found.cs.edu/animation/>

Ohio State (ACCAD)- <http://www.cgrg.ohio-state.edu/>

Pratt Institute- <http://www.pratt.edu>

RIT- <http://www.cs.rit.edu/~mks/CompAnim/>

San Jose State- <http://www.sjsu.edu>

School of Visual Arts- <http://www.sva.edu>

Sheridan- <http://www.sheridanc.on.ca/wwwtst/>

Texas A&M- <http://www.tamu.edu/>

USC- <http://www.usc.edu>

Columbus- <http://www.columbus.org>

Academy of Art College- <http://www.academyart.edu>

Rhode Island School of Design- <http://www.risd.edu>

Ringling School of Art and Design- <http://www.rsad.edu>

San Francisco State- <http://www.sfsu.edu>

UCLA- <http://animation.filmv.ucla.edu>

Vancouver School of Film- <http://www.multimedia.edu>

To access a huge list of other companies that work with animation and special effects, use Yahoo's search Engine under: Business and Economy: Companies: Entertainment: Production: Animation/Special Effects.

If you've found a website of interest pass it along to us. ASIFA/Central members send us your web address and we'll publish it in the next newsletter.

CALL FOR WORKS- ASIFA/Central to Create Sampler Reel

ASIFA/Central is looking for 3-5 minutes of sampler work from ASIFA/Central members. Your work can be precut or you can give us permission to edit several of your pieces together.

The ASIFA/Central reel would be offered to ASIFA chapters, others would be charged a small fee. Contact information will be included with the reel. Each participant included on the reel will receive a free copy.

To have your work included please send us a letter of permission. In the letter please include your name, the name of

the piece(s), contact information, background information about your work, an artist statement and the completed form below. ASIFA/Central will except material in the following formats: VHS, SVHS, 3/4 and Beta. Artist photographs and stills are optional but may be included in promotion materials. Please only include information you want published in the newsletter, on the ASIFA/Central website and in contact information released with the ASIFA/Central sampler reel.

ASIFA/Central sees this opportunity as a benefit of being a ASIFA/Central member. In creating this sampler reel it is our intent to spotlight the diversity and to increase the visibility of work being created by our midwest animators.

Deadline: October 1, 1997

Name: _____

Address: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Format: ☐ VHS ☐ SVHS ☐ 3/4 Inch ☐ Beta

☐ Precut-Please list title(s) and running times of animation(s) included (Note: 5 minute limit):

☐ Uncut, please edit segments from the following animations:

I hereby release the above clips of animation for ASIFA/Central's use in compiling an ASIFA/Central Sampler Reel. I am the contact person regarding all pertinent questions about the rights to the above film(s). ASIFA/Central is free to place my animation in any order on the reel and has my permission to edit work(s) together if I checked the Uncut box on the form above.

Signature required.

Send tapes to: ASIFA/Central,
c/o Deanna Morse, School of Communications,
Lake Superior Hall,
Grand Valley State University,
Allendale, MI 49401.

ASIFA/Central is not responsible for misdirected, lost or damaged tapes.

Short Story: To Interview a Technical Director by Eric Oehl

The dial tone pierces the hiss in my headphones as I grab for the volume knob on the tape deck. I dial the number and regret that there isn't any easier way to tape the imminent interview. "AT&T. To place a call, press 1..." an automated female voice instructs me. I quickly press the 1 key and begin to admire the strange tangle of cords that literally cover my desk: a microphone that listens to the speakerphone and goes into the Macintosh, and another bunch of pieced-together stereo cords that go from the computer into the tape deck and headphones.

The voice pulls me back to reality just for a moment, "Please dial the area code and seven digit number that you are calling." I've heard this message a zillion times, but I let it go to see if my contraption will suffice for the interview. "Please enter..." I don't even let the automated attendant finish because I am running out of patience. I rapidly dial my card number, and the computer/woman retorts "Thank-you for using AT&T."

"Hello?" a very human sounding voice says to me. I answer with a hello as Kim's answering machine interrupts us, and she apologizes as she tends to the guilty equipment. Kim and I have written many emails trying to set up a time that would work for us both. I am grateful that she's taking time to talk, and I stumble through a brief explanation of my setup. I wish I had a old-fashioned tape recorder with a built-in microphone like I had when I was a kid.

Kim laughs as she remarks at how weird my voice sounds through the speakerphone. I stop the tape, and we then spend the next hour catching up. It's been months since we have

talked. Kim and I have been friends for years. She has recently relocated from Seattle to San Francisco where she now works for PIXAR as a technical director. I have the utmost respect for her, and try to hide the crackle in my voice. I am very happy for Kim, however, at the same time I am awestruck—she is working at a dream job.

The interview proceeds with less awkwardness, and we talk at length about her job and responsibilities. All this time, I am watching for the end of the tape, hoping that all these great nuggets are going on there and that I can sort through it all later. In what seems like barely minutes, the interview is over. We've talked nearly another hour. I thank Kim and promise to be in touch so that she can read the rough draft of my article.

It's nearly two months later and I've barely started transcribing the sound clips I digitized from the tape. I've been working long hours on a project that zapped the last month of my life away. I still hear the now faint din of the Chemical Brothers echoing in my head, "It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter..." It was a grueling time of frantically trying to learn to animate in AfterEffects. I have often thought of Kim and how I don't think that I could do what she does.

Kim's parting words that day are comforting to those who have recently graduated, are looking for a job, or who are just overwhelmed. She says with conviction, "I thoroughly believe that if you work really hard, and you remain kind of honest about where you are, and you are always striving to get better, that you'll make it. You know, I believe in that." Thanks Kim, I needed that!

-Eric Oehl is catching up on dishes, the lawn, and the cat box. His article on Kim White, a former ASIFA/Central member who recently accepted a job at PIXAR, will appear in the next issue of Frame by Frame.

Classified Ads

If you have an event, festival or inquire send it to us.

ASIFA/Central has the right to accept or reject submissions

Mindy Weisberger works for a production company that's looking for animated shorts to incorporate into a program aimed at kids 8-12. The theme is "things that are gross." They are looking for animated shorts that are, well, gross. Because of the age group, nothing too violent or graphically sexual. Interested? E-mail WEISBAKER@WORLDNET.ATT.NET for details.

Animators: Matt Compton would like to bring your work to computer animation fans throughout the world. Matt is looking for 15 to 20 films, running 2 to 6 minutes each. Everyone is welcome to participate. Genre is open to anything visually interesting. Payment in the form of royalties. Send a VHS copy of your film to: Matt Compton, Light Speed Entertainment 20616 Hartsbourne Way, Germantown, Maryland 20874, mcomp@erols.com or via the internet Formats MOV, AVI, MPG, FLI are accepted. Please contact him via e-mail to arrange a file transfer. There is no deadline for submissions. You may submit as many films as you want.

Ryan Chapin is looking to sell an animators pencil test machine: Panasonic AG-6040P. It's practically brand new, no more than 1,000 frames ever recorded. Comes with frame counter/controller, foot pedal, all cabling, and original packaging and documentation. Also have a Maxi-Repro 52" Bogen camera stand. Asking \$3,200/obo for whole package, all equipment in pristine condition. Will sell separately. Email him at rchapin@indigogroup.com

Walt Disney Feature Animation is accepting portfolios for review. Please call 818.560.8314 and leave your name/address to receive their list of portfolio requirements.

To mail in portfolios:	To FED-X or UPS portfolios
WDFSA	WDFSA
Attn: Artist Recruitment	Attn: Artist Recruitment
500 S. Buena Vista St.	3100 Thornton Ave.
Burbank, CA 91521-8934	Burbank, CA 91505-8934

Manga Entertainment is interested in licensing student work for theatrical distribution and video release. Please contact Jan Cox at 616.531.1696 or email JanCox@concentric.net for more information.