

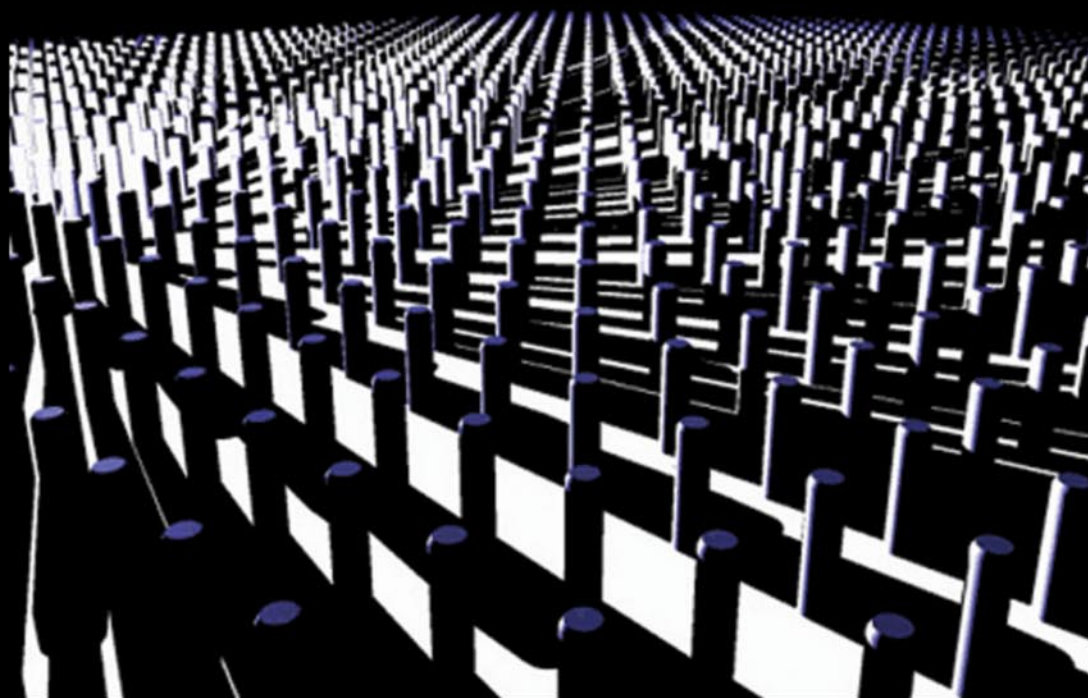
ANIMATION WORLD

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August 2002

From Grand Prix to Features to Wireless...



Computer Animation Is Everywhere

Software Piracy, **Annecy** Winners, Zagreb Film and More

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Software Piracy Sails Despite Rough Seas Ahead

By Brett Rogers

Editor's note: Recently Claudio Mattei, managing director of Digital Video, alerted Animation World Network of a very serious problem facing many animation software and production companies – the issue of software piracy. Fed by his passion for the subject, AWN decided to investigate a little further.



Knowing the difference between fakes and the real McCoy is getting harder and harder. BSA's Website offers advice, information and tutorials. Image courtesy of and © BSA.

Your company needs software, but times are tough. In search of a bargain, you run a quick search online and find a sealed copy of Macromedia Studio MX, an \$800 package of software, selling for \$200. A few more clicks and Electric Image's \$995 Universe 4 software is yours for \$350. Too good to be true? It's all happening on a popular online auction site.

How can software sell for such bargain basement prices? It's simple. A high percentage of software for sale on auction sites is

pirated. Some of the operators are sophisticated businesses that sell painstakingly forged software packages. Others are small outfits selling garbage bootleg copies that don't work at all. They've long been a thorn in the side of software giants like Microsoft, but increasingly pirates are harming smaller companies that create software for specialized fields like animation.

Victimizing Developers

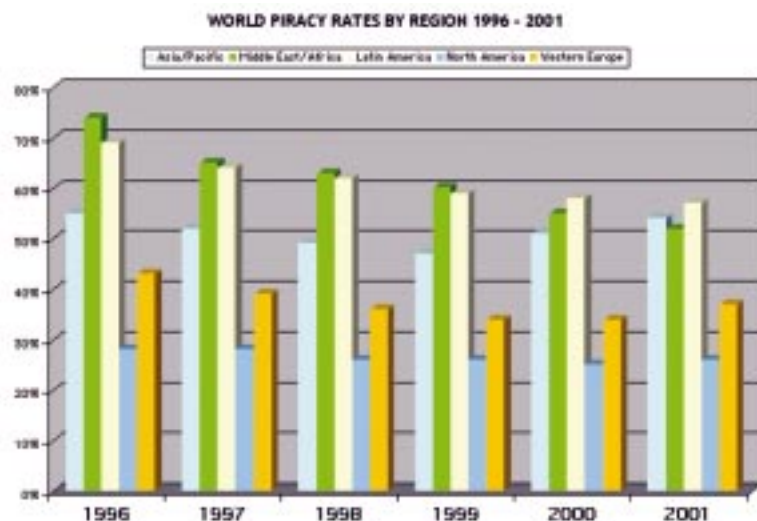
When you buy software, you are almost always buying a

Letter to the Editor about Software Piracy

Dear AWN Editor,

This letter hopes to cast some light on the software piracy issue and its devastating effects on the animation industry. The company I manage, Digital Video, develops and sells through authorised distributors Toonz, a digital ink and paint and camera package that is very popular in the animation industry.

As a matter of fact it happens that Toonz is very popular not only among honest professionals in the animation industry, but also among pirates! Moreover, the problem has a magnitude much bigger than most people might imagine. I'm not referring here to young people hacking the software and using it for their personal projects (action that — although illegal and to be condemned without hesitation — doesn't have a real impact on the industry);



Information courtesy of BSA.

license to use the software, not the copyright itself. Usually this means you can install the software on one computer and create a backup copy. Any further installations, copying, swapping or distribution of the software is a violation of federal copyright law.

Are a few extra installations of software on your animation company's computers really such a big deal? It's not a victimless crime. The intellectual and creative cost of developing software is extremely high. Programmers, writers, graphic artists and a host of other talent work as a team to create software, and just like a work of art, writing or music, software is protected. By denying software publishers their rightful income, you cost legitimate consumers money and take funding away from the development of better versions of software and more powerful software tools.

"Software theft is a major problem not only for our company but for everyone, since it affects jobs, wages, tax revenues and funds available for research and development," explains Sandra Boulton, director of Autodesk's anti-theft department, in a release that followed a six-figure piracy

settlement with a customer who had installed software without the proper licenses.

A Global Problem

According to the Business Software Alliance (BSA), a non-profit anti-piracy organization and trade group, the worldwide piracy rate was 40% last year. Legitimate software publishers lost \$10.97 billion due to piracy. It's estimated that the United States lost 118,000 jobs and \$5.7 billion in wages due to piracy in 2001. California alone lost \$1.5 billion in retail sales.

The Asia and Pacific regions by far suffer the highest dollar losses due to piracy. In 2001, its loss topped over \$4.7 billion. Western Europe was second with \$2.7 billion and North America was third, with \$2 billion in losses.

Eastern Europe and Latin America are perennial hotbeds of piracy, with rates of 67% and 57% respectively. Within the Eastern European region, Russia and the former Soviet states have an astoundingly high piracy rate of 87%. In other words, if you're purchasing your software from a distributor in Moscow there's almost a nine in ten chance the

I refer instead to large companies using illegal software copies in commercial projects.

What I need to point out here is that the damage they cause to the animation industry as a whole goes beyond the losses suffered by the software vendors, and in fact hit the honest professionals that compete in the market using legal software copies hardest.

The ripple effect goes even further, as it might be argued that some indirect responsibility may also be cast on those subcontracting work to pirate companies, regardless if they're informed or not that their product has been made using illegal software copies. This line of action is currently being investigated by our legal department.

While "professional" piracy is wide spread in Asia, the latter legal risk is especially relevant to American and European companies as they both subcontract large amounts of work to Asia.

You might believe that pirates are cautiously working in silence to avoid being discovered, but — believe me — this is definitely not the case! To give you a sense of what I'm saying, let me site some examples from one of the markets where piracy is most prevelant: Korea.

We've recently been told by one of our major Japanese clients that has released several blockbusters, that work has been subcontracted and diligently executed by a company in Korea called JEM ... it's a pity that JEM has never been a Toonz client! Here's another case that might be funny if not so harmful to our industry: every month or so *Animation Magazine* publishes



Popular bootlegs range from desktop productivity to high-end graphics utilities.
Image courtesy of and © BSA.

software copyright holder is not getting its fair share.

Saving a Buck?

Studies indicate that software piracy rose recently in response to cost cutting and pressure caused by the global economic downturn. Paying for legitimate software and keeping track of software licenses is seemingly considered an indulgence to be freely abandoned in difficult business climates. In competitive sectors like the animation industry there are indications that software piracy is used as a competitive advantage, allowing smaller companies to cut costs by ignoring software license restrictions or by seeking pirated software.

Even for companies struggling to stay afloat in difficult economic times, using unlicensed or pirated software isn't the bargain it seems. Pirated copies of software is a major source of destructive viruses, often avoiding detection by anti-virus programs designed to prevent infected files downloaded from the Internet. Illegal software is also much more

likely to fail than legitimate software and when it does, there won't be any customer service or warranties to bail you out. Try explaining that to a client that wants to know why the animation you promised has been delayed or destroyed.

Smaller firms often consider themselves "under the radar" of software publishers, leading some to believe that the use of pirated software is a low risk, high reward practice. In reality, it's quite common for disgruntled employees to tip off software publishers to piracy. Often, publishers like Autodesk or Adobe will go after even the smallest firms with gusto to protect its software.

Zero Tolerance

"It's not uncommon in both the 3D graphics world and the computer software industry to find companies and individuals using pirated software," reads Zkad Production's piracy policy, "They do it to reduce their costs. This is both unnecessary and simply unacceptable."

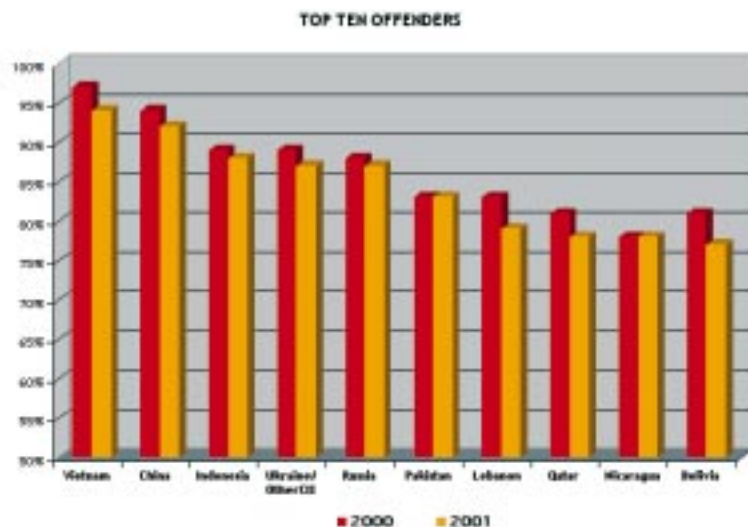
Vynny Ward, a co-owner

an advertisement from Saerom Animation in which Saerom states that it owns 26 copies of Toonz. If you go to their Website they even tell you the location of this technology (the 7th floor of their beautiful building)! However, once again, Saerom has never bought a copy of Toonz. And the story goes on and on: Dr. Movie (and its affiliated company Dr. & Moi), P & P, Mago 21, Sunmin Image Pictures, etc.

Then there's the second type of pirates — those trying to legitimize themselves with the purchase of a minimal amount of software copies but then executing the bulk of their work with illegal copies. Also in this case the damage to the industry is profound as honest companies in the same market have to face very unfair competition.

Sometimes reality goes beyond imagination. We have a very honest and professional North American customer that — being aware of the problem — decided to purchase the software to be used overseas. You could not believe that our support received from the Korean subcontractor files that were indubitably produced from pirate copies! Funny? Not at all, as of course the pirate copies used were from an older version of the software. Another example that this problem costs companies very real dollars.

I've used Korea as an example but I could produce a list of similar cases for China, India, the Philippines and beyond. I also want to express publicly my solidarity for the many honest users we have in Korea. We owe them our respect and support and we're willing to help them fight as hard as possible against their



Information courtesy of BSA.

and executive producer at Zkad, says, "We have a clear 'no pirate software' rule to the point where it's publicly stated on our Website (http://www.zkad.com/anti_piracy.htm). Unfortunately, I'm aware that other animation houses may not have such a rigorous policy in force."

All of Zkad's employees are told of the company's piracy policy when they're hired and software audits are conducted regularly. Zkad has even terminated an employee upon discovering "illegitimate software." "To make matters worse...the pirate software that person installed on four of our systems came with a virus," recalls Ward.

Doing the right thing doesn't come cheap, however. Can small animation companies survive when competitors cut costs by illegally using software? "[We] try to do the best job we can for the lowest price using legitimate registered purchased software," says Ward.

Ward continues, "Naturally [avoiding pirated software] can sometimes result in getting underbid by other firms due to their lower production costs caused by lax attitudes to piracy. We're a

small outfit, and this issue becomes especially true of jobs that require specific, often expensive, plugins and software — where the job itself wouldn't even cover the cost of the additional tools. Unless we can envisage the re-use of the plugin(s) for different commissions, we simply can't afford to consider taking the project on. Others, who turn a blind eye to piracy, wouldn't have such concerns."

Tackling the Problem

North America enjoys the lowest piracy rate on Earth at 26%, perhaps due to increased education efforts and the threat of legal repercussions. Software publishers are trying to educate computer users about software copyrights and the risks of using pirated software through groups like the Business Software Alliance, which operates piracy hotlines in over 65 countries and investigates over 500 companies in the United States for piracy each year.

A few extra unlicensed copies of your favorite animation software around the studio can cost you dearly. Statutory damages can be as much as \$150,000 for each program copied if you're

unfair competitors. To do that, we must "follow the money" (as in a police investigation...) and knock on the culprits' doors. American and European companies need to know about the risk of being involved with the unfair business practices of their subcontractors. They have to raise their level of attention to this topic, always requesting that their subcontractors only use legal software copies.

If AWN can contribute to make this happen, the whole animation industry will win a battle: software companies will regain a share of the market that is currently lost, honest Asian companies will finally face fair competition and big U.S. and European players in the animation industry will not expose themselves to the risk of indirect involvement in a criminal act, which is what software piracy is.

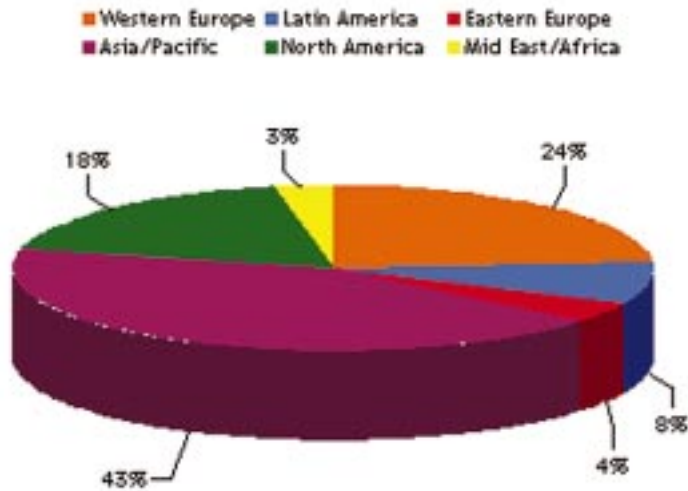
Sincerely,
Claudio Mattei
Managing Director
Digital Video

sued in a civil action. The recent passage of the Net Act allows for criminal prosecution of software copyright infringement, whether you make any money from the activity or not. Bolstered with new federal sentencing guidelines that make it more likely abusing software licenses will land you behind bars, the government is stepping up actions to curtail piracy.

Consumers Suffer

If the threat of criminal prosecutions that can bring fines of \$250,000, five years behind bars, or both doesn't do the trick, there are other, more severe remedies on the drawing board.

DOLLAR LOSSES BY REGION - 2001



Information courtesy of BSA.

Congressman Howard Berman, a California Democrat, has introduced a bill that would allow copyright holders to use hacking practices to enter peer-to-peer file-sharing networks and halt illegal trading of their copyrighted materials. No files could be deleted or changed on your computer, but the copyright holder could use denial-of-service or other attacks to prevent the exchange of pirated software.

Whether the flurry of new anti-piracy tactics used by software publishers will lower piracy rates further remains to be seen. Undoubtedly, software users will suffer some inconveniences as the battle continues. For companies that meticulously follow software licenses and shun pirates, increased precautions taken by software publishers can be annoying. Says Ward, "Naturally [piracy] pushes the price of legitimate software up for us all, but software piracy can also 'punish' those legitimate users since developers are increasingly introducing more and more complex registration methods to attempt to protect

their products. Whilst I can appreciate why they do it, some of these policies and procedures seem overly convoluted and time consuming for the genuine licensee, and don't particularly seem to be stemming the problem any way."

As long as high piracy rates persist, legitimate consumers and software users will be exposed to increased cost...

Unfortunately, as long as high piracy rates persist, legitimate consumers and software users will be exposed to increased cost, scrutiny and nuisance. Software publishers, law enforcement and governments are resolute in their

efforts. "[Piracy] is not a sport. This is a serious crime. These people should do some hard time," U.S. Department of Commerce under-secretary Phil Bond said after an international anti-piracy bust that shut down an operation that spanned over 20 countries. Included in the software discovered were copies of a high-end animation program that costs over \$10,000 per legitimate copy.

The success of these efforts will depend in part on the willingness of businesses to manage their software use responsively. As competition increases in the animation industry, competitors will have less tolerance for rivals who are able to win business through illegal software use. At the same time, developers of software are lashing out with greater frequency at loyal customers who misuse their licenses. It may take more time and money to keep your company piracy-free, but it's increasingly worth the effort to avoid the difficulties of ignoring the problem.

Brett Rogers is a freelance writer based in Baltimore.

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an e-mail to editor@awn.com.

Sparx*

A Rising Studio

by Annick Teninge

Animation and digital visual effects studio Sparx* was founded in 1995 by colleagues Jean-Christophe Bernard, trained as an architect, and Guillaume Hellouin, a businessman. Today a major studio in Europe, Sparx* has gathered many awards for its work in the motion picture industry: the opening sequence for *Crying Freeman* (Christophe Gans), a 5-minute full 3D sequence for *Thomas in Love* (Pierre-Paul Renders), CGI effects for *My Life in Pink* (Alain Berliner), and the credits and trailer of *Gangsters* (Olivier Marchal). Known for its high quality effects using "transparent technologies" (3D photo-realism, compositing), the studio has completed over 1,000 TV commercials that have aired on five continents. Among their latest creations are two commercials for prestigious perfume brands. "Miracle" by Lancôme, with Mathieu Kassovitz as actor and director, was shot almost entirely in 35mm in a natural setting in the Canadian wilderness. Several natural elements, such as the bridge and water, were entirely recreated at Sparx* and added in post-production. In "The Perfume for Men by Hugo Boss," featuring two young men in a cavern, the entire background was digitally

reworked to create a monochromatic metal effect with emerald overtones.

Last year, the company widened its sphere of activity and Sparkling* produced its first animated short...

Sparx* produces TV idents (TF1, France 3, 13th Street, Teletoon, Cartoon Network, Euro Sport) and title sequences (TF1 evening news, TF1 weather report and Euro Sport). The studio also works on television series (*Rolie Polie Olie*, *Bob & Scot*, *Molly Star Racer* and the recent *Youri The Spaceman*), representing a total of one hundred 26-minute episodes. Sparkling*, Sparx*' wholly-owned subsidiary, is currently co-producing with Egmont Zoé Kézako, a 26 x 13 3D animation TV series, based on the children's book by Véronique Sauquère. The series is directed by award-winning director Serge Elissalde (*Raoul et Jocelyne*), who has been working



Sparx* co-founders and studio heads, Jean-Christophe Bernard (top) and Guillaume Hellouin (bottom). Photos courtesy of and © Sparx*.

with Sparx* for many years.

Last year, the company widened its sphere of activity and Sparkling* produced its first animated short: *Les Filles, L'Ane Et Les Boeufs* (Red-Light Christmas), a 13-minute 3D animation short film written and directed by Francine Chassagnac. The film was selected at many festivals and received a special mention at Cartoons on the Bay 2002 for "a sophisticated story told with powerful production design." It recently got the "Court Premier" award at Paris'



Rolie Polie Olie, one of the studio's most popular projects, led them to increased recognition as a production company. © 2002 Nelvana Ltd./Sparkling*/France 5. All rights reserved.

Short Film Festival 2002 and the Jury special prize at the 25th Grenoble Festival. Following this animated short, *Le Cirque Bougie* (*The Candlelight Circus*) by Jérôme Estienne, currently in pre-production, will be the first feature-length 3D animated film produced by Sparkling*. The pilot of this \$10 million film was presented at Cartoon Movie in 2000.

The Building of the Studio

Building Sparx* was like bringing together a family. Prior to its founding, Guillaume and Jean-Christophe had already worked together in several companies, including one they created together in 1990, which failed. They also had long-term business relationships with many of the people who are now key figures in the company, including the executive producer, Corinne Kouper. Guillaume's role models are the producers that put their hearts and souls into their projects. His passion is infectious and resonates with his staff; he says that his young, motivated team feels like they are in the same

world as the *Nine Old Men*! Sparx* started with five people, equipped with five Silicon Graphics stations and one Flame, and worked eighty hours a week. The studio was mainly producing

**Sparx*
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low-end commercials. Guillaume recalls now, "It was good schooling. When you have a small budget, you have to be creative. It developed in us the culture of ambition and rigor." Recognition came early with their work on *Pierre et le Loup* (*Peter and the*

Wolf), a 26-minute TV special which, in 1996, won a 7 d'Or (the most prestigious award for French TV programs) for best animation. This award brought new projects to Sparx*. It also encouraged the studio to come up to the mark.

Today, Sparx* owns two studios, one in Paris, and one in Saigon. They can handle simultaneously over 40 commercials, one feature film and one TV series. The company has three production lines and can produce 26 minutes of animation per week per line. It employs 250 people spread out over the two locations: 150 people in Saigon, 100 in Paris. The series are produced half in France, half in Vietnam. Both studios have R&D departments and production facilities. They do the same work, except for the compositing and Flame work for commercials, and special effects for live-action films, which are only done at the Paris-based studio. The two studios run in perfect synergy, and thanks to their proprietary software and Internet-based asset management tools, Sparx* can operate as if the two studios were on two separate floors of the same building. Guillaume insists on this aspect of the operations, which doesn't stand for reason. Over the years, they have worked on winning the trust of their Vietnamese employees, by using top-level translators and developing the same management/house style as in the French studio. He admits that salaries are lower there than in France, it's quite evident, but adds: "We put an emphasis on human values and strong artistic skills, and we reward talent. Employees are actors in the economic development and we, as a company, have a moral responsibility



Scenes from *Thomas in Love*'s 5-minute full 3D sequence.
© 2000 Entre Chien et Loup/JBA/RTBF.

toward the country and its economy." The Vietnamese studio was bought in 1997 from Pixibox, Sparx's sister company within The Humanoids group. When Pixibox originally moved into Ho Chi Minh City in 1994, it was the largest 2D digital animation studio in Europe, hiring 600 people; 250 of whom were working in Vietnam. Sparx* developed a method in France to convert traditional 2D pencil animators into 3D animators. They applied it to Vietnam exactly as they had done in Paris and over two years

trained over a hundred people. It represented a huge investment for the company, but they were able to finance it with the highly profitable commercials they were producing in France. And as Guillaume puts it: Sparx* struggled for ten years before 3D animation became an industry, so it was okay to struggle for two years to set up a studio in Vietnam!

In 2000, the development of Sparx* led them to create a new entity, a production company. Headed by Corinne Kouper, Sparkling* is Sparx*'s whol-

ly-owned subsidiary, which works exclusively with the studio for the production of its films, while Sparx* continues to work for other production companies. Guillaume explains that Sparkling* was created to clearly differentiate the various activities of the company, which sometimes are contradictory. The production company's goal is to develop projects. A studio's goal is to always be under a full load. If the studio is also the production company, it might be tempted to launch a new project, even if it's not ready yet. Another advantage is to facilitate the collaboration between the studio and other production companies that would not want to have a production company as their negotiator.

Technology to the Core

Sparx*'s original vision was to have an artistic approach through the use of digital technology. Apparently, they have succeeded in creating an innovative fully-digital animation and visual effects studio that puts itself at the service of the artists. With *Zoé Kézako*, the 26 x 13-minute TV series currently in production, one of the challenges was to respect the author's original drawing style, thereby having a 2D look masking the 3D process. Véronique Saüquère had always pictured Zoé as a 2D cartoon but was curious about 3D. She was delighted to see that Sparx* was adapting to her drawings and not the other way around. Guillaume comments that today, from a technical standpoint, every tool can answer a production's needs, however, each project has its own specificity and needs its own pipeline. Sparx* devotes



Sparkling* produced its first animated short, *Les Filles, L'Ane Et Les Boeufs* (Red-Light Christmas), which has been selected at several festivals since its release.
© 2002 Avalon/Sparkling*.

itself to bringing technical solutions to each artists request and maximizing visual impact through technological solutions. They feel very strongly about this demand for accuracy. Besides, adds Guillaume, it's worth it: a few more points in the quality means dozens of more points in terms of market shares. He is giving this same speech to his investors (the Humanoids Group and private investors), emphasizing that success will bring money and asking them to

keep this in mind when making strategic decisions. Guillaume, who likes proverbs, mentions the Chinese saying: "When one points to the moon, only the fool looks at the finger."

On Brand-Building

Why did this established digital effects company take the risk of launching into the decidedly non-commercial world of animated shorts? While *Les Filles, L'Ane Et Les Boeufs* is a nice calling card for Sparx*, they

will never recoup costs through distribution and this 3D animated short supposedly cost the company a fortune. Guillaume Hellouin agrees: "The company image is important but not essential. The main goal is that a project meets the expectations of its creators. First, we look at the artistic value of the project, and its potential, then we study what Sparx* could bring to it from a technical standpoint. Another goal is to establish a relationship with an artist with the perspective of developing other projects with him in the future. Another important aspect is the possibility for us to experiment with new methods, new techniques and new teams. Something we cannot afford to do when we work as a service company on heavy projects. Finally, it establishes the company name as a full production company. After *Polie Olie*, we felt we needed recognition as a production company. We had received numerous awards for our technical performances, but still were not recognized enough in the industry to be able to cut a deal for a 3D animation feature film. We had to create various experiences to develop the company's brand image and producing a 3D animation short film was one of them."

With *Les Filles, L'Ane Et Les Boeufs*, the company tested its new production structure. According to Guillaume, this short film was a real technical challenge. In order to respect the director's artistic vision, Sparx* had to test new creative processes, textures and colour techniques. The R&D team developed a new technique to obtain a watercolour-style rendering, fundamentally different from

what had previously been done in 3D animation. Depending on each shot's requirements, they combined several techniques, from simple mapping to the most cutting-edge. It is worth noting that, for this film, the company benefited from a grant from the CNC (National Cinematography Center) as part of a government initiative to support short films and new production technologies. A pre-sale to France 2 Television network also gave the company comfortable means for R&D and pre-production, giving the film the opportunity to achieve its full potential. Building on this research, an original software program has been developed and implemented on the feature film now in production. It will help fine-tune the lighting and give Jérôme Estienne's film an original visual atmosphere.

A Bright Future

Guillaume feels very confident. Sparx* is a leading animation and digital FX studio in Europe. They do not really have competitors there for 3D series or 3D animation feature films. In the U.S., they are faced up against majors such as Pixar, DreamWorks and Blue Sky. Guillaume feels closest to Blue Sky, which developed a true expertise in technology through the production of high-end commercials, made an Oscar-winning short and then made a brilliant move into the feature film business. Today, the market is going through a huge shift, like it did at the end of the silent film era, or with the arrival of Technicolor. The day has come for 3D companies to reposition themselves on the market. And



The Sparkling* and Egmont co-production, Zoé Kézako, is based on a children's book by Véronique Sauquère. © 2001 Sparx*.

hopefully, Sparx* will find its place. Guillaume finishes by saying: "The budget for *Monsters, Inc.* was over 200 million dollars. We feel we can produce the same film with 10% of this budget." A joke? Typical French arrogance? Let's wait and see... *Le Cirque Bougie* awaits its green light and then Sparx* will be able to put this new paradigm into motion.

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an e-mail to editor@awn.com.

After five years as AWN's general manager Annick Teninge returned to France, where she is now in charge of production and distribution at La Poudrière in Valence, an animation school offering a 2-year program where students study the process of film-making and develop their own film projects. She is also heading AWN's marketing and public relations efforts in Europe. Annick began her animation career as assistant director at the Annecy International Animation Festival, a post she held for six years.

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Animation Gets Un-Wired And Cuts Loose

by Christopher Harz



Nokia's titanium-encased 8910 takes advantage of new technologies and answers to consumer demands for style. © Nokia 2002.

You hear a lot about animated content for the booming new wireless medium nowadays, and the reason for that is simple — the display screens for most wireless devices such as cell phones or Palm-style PDAs are tiny, often with only 100 lines of resolution. This is not the place to see a video of *Titanic*, but animation shows up just fine. Another resounding reason for animation is that wireless typically has low data rates (with American phones it's at around 10Kbps), which can support animation but not bandwidth-hungry video.

Finally, animation travels well internationally, and many or even most of the customers for wireless content are outside the U.S., in Europe and Asia. As a result, animated content for wireless is growing by leaps and bounds, with major studios such as Disney and game producers like THQ getting on board.

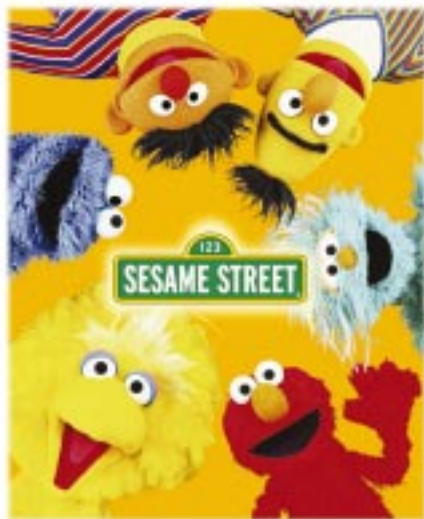
Cell Phones

Many of the gee-whiz stories you hear these days would lead you to believe that the main market for multimedia wireless content is for PDAs (in either Palm

or PocketPC flavors) or laptops, with content being delivered by online connection to the Internet. The reality is far different. The number of such devices that are online worldwide is still relatively small. The largest market right now for multimedia transmission is — the cell phone. Cell phones can transmit multimedia in one of two ways: via text messaging (which goes through the phone company network like a normal voice call would) or by online connection to the Internet (which involves both a special type of cell phone and connection to a separate Internet Service Provider, which is not available for many areas in the world). Text messaging is by far the more common format — students in Europe and Asia are almost as adept at quick-thumbing the buttons on their cell phones to send messages and graphics as they are at reading their textbooks.

"There are over 600 million cell phones worldwide, and customers are used to paying for extra features," says Randy Boyer, VP of business development at Fun Mail (www.funmail.com), which enables cell phone users to add animated characters to their text messages. Text messaging, based on SMS (Short Message Service) and other formats, is huge worldwide — over 10 billion such messages were sent last year, at costs of up to 15 cents per message. Companies that provide ani-

mated applications for such messaging share a percentage of these revenues. One application is for enhancing messages. "Why just send a text message inviting someone for pizza, when you can send an animated Garfield or *South Park* character munching pizza slices?" asks Boyer, whose company has a technology that automatically adds appropriate animation sequences to messages. An even bigger application for this type of phone transmission is gaming. Telcos love SMS games because they mean extra revenue from existing cell phones. The introduction of SMS games by Cellcom in Israel led to a 20% increase in SMS messaging in the first month alone.



Sesame Street characters get tech-savvy through digitized media found on i-mode phones producing instant popularity with female users in Japan. © 2002 Sesame Workshop. All rights reserved.

The most advanced form of messaging is the new MMS (Multimedia Messaging Service) format. Adobe recently announced that its version of Flash-type animation, called GoLive 6.0, would enable authoring applications for the MMS format for Nokia mobile phones; developers can now create ser-

vices that include audio, images and video with what was originally a purely text-based telephone application.

Whereas messaging is by far the most common form of delivering graphics on cell phones, some companies have been very successful in delivering via modified Internet protocols. One of the most financially successful telcos is NTT DoCoMo, whose i-mode phones provide always-on online connection for over 20 million Japanese. Thousands of developers supply content such as cartoons to DoCoMo, which supplies them to its users for additional monthly fees. DoCoMo found that mobile entertainment was the reason for 52% of its wireless revenues. Recently, the Sesame Workshop started supplying content on i-mode phones that features *Sesame Street* characters such as Big Bird and Elmo. "The show's engaging characters and universal messages translate seamlessly into this digitized media," says Martha Van Gelder, group vice president at Sesame Workshop. As soon as this animated content debuted it became the 8th most popular service among female users in Japan.

Gaming is huge on cell phones, whether delivered by SMS or Internet-type protocols. Research firm DataMonitor says that one in six U.S. cell phone subscribers, or 21.6 million people, will play games on mobile phones this year, and forecasts that 93 million people will be playing wireless games in 2006. One of the best known companies specializing in cell phone games is JAMDAT Mobile (www.jamdatgames.com), supposedly so named because it's easy to dial "JAMDAT" with your

thumb on a cell phone (try it!). JAMDAT's founders used to work for Activision, so the company's love for gaming runs deep. Its *Gladiator* game has been played by over a million players, who have generated 15 million minutes of usage, making it the most successful wireless game to date. JAMDAT has developed a suite of software tools that speeds the development of mobile games. It also functions as a typical game publisher, paying advances to developers before a game launches, and then royalties against those advances after the game is published. In addition to game titles it controls, JAMDAT also licenses branded characters from other sources. It has teamed with Electronic Arts, THQ, Hasbro and



Tiger Woods PGA Tour® Wireless Golf and 2002 FIFA World Cup On the Break are two popular offerings available in the mobile gaming arena. © EA SPORTS™.



Sony Ericsson Mobile Communications' recent release of their P800 plays the part of phone, PDA, digital camera, music player and Internet access point all in one.
© Sony Ericsson Mobil Communications AB. All rights reserved.

other major publishers to offer mobile versions of their games, such as *EA Sports PGA Tour*, *Sports FIFA World Cup 2002* and *Tiger Woods Golf*.

Walt Disney Internet Group (WDIG) is also providing games for phones. It recently announced a partnership with Sprint to provide three games — *Disney/Pixar's Monsters, Inc.*, *Disney's Atlantis: The Lost Empire* and ESPN's *2-Minute Drill* — on Sprint's PCS Wireless Web. *Monsters, Inc.* features a mobile maze in which players catch screams and achieve status as professional *Monsters, Inc.* kid scarers. The game offers 20 levels of play. For *Atlantis*, players must reveal the faces and talents of potential team members and then set off on a quest. *2-Minute Drill* throws rapid-fire questions from a variety of sports categories at players, similar to the eponymous show on ESPN television.

Personal Digital Assistants

PDAs, although not as common as cell phones, have an advantage over their smaller wireless cousins: they have much better processing power and storage, allowing much more complex

games and other graphic presentations. Basic animation authoring tools and players such as Adobe's GoLive and Acrobat Reader as well as Macromedia's Flash have long been available for various kinds of PDA. PDA's also have larger screens, up to 400 lines of resolution, with concise colors. Finally, some PDA's can accept removable media such as Compact Flash cards, which allow large amounts of store-and-forward content, where detailed content or game characters and terrains can be downloaded to the card from a desktop PC, and then uploaded into the PDA; companies such as CinemaElectric (www.cinemaelectric.com) provide content that can be downloaded and played on certain PDA's in this manner. PDA users can also purchase animated content including games from new services such as nReach (www.nreach.com), which is setting up Mobile Content Kiosks at airports and other high-traffic locations around the U.S.; the customer inserts his Compact Flash or other media card, downloads the content that he wants after paying for it, and inserts it into his PDA (cell phones will also have media

cards in the near future).

Games have been a staple of PDA's from the earliest models that Palm came out with. New forms of entertainment include Eruptor Entertainment's (www.eruptor.com) PortaPets, which are animated characters such as pet fish and cats that can be downloaded and interacted with. Eruptor's latest offerings include PortaPam, based on Pamela Anderson, and PortaBush, which allows the user to interact with a highly animated form of the American President.

Portable Computers

In theory, portable PCs, with their powerful graphics cards and fast processors, should be able to play the same online higher-resolution videos and games that desktop PCs can. In practice, however, the data rates available over wireless networks limit this considerably. Several companies are working on getting around the limitations of bandwidth. face2face (www.fwfanimation.com) is one of several companies with technology that models human faces, enabling high-quality videoconferencing with perfect lip sync even with low connectivity rates by showing a high-res 3D model of a person's face to the viewer, rather than a video of the person.

The nirvana for laptop users is access to WI-FI. With Bluetooth or similarly enabled WLANs (Wireless Local Area Networks), users can access entertainment content and games at full broadband speeds in places where WI-FI is available, such as airports or coffee shops.

In addition to general-purpose laptops there are several special-purpose portable computers

on the market that are smaller in form and lower in price than the typical Compaq or Dell offering. Cybiko (www.cybiko.com), with funding from AOL Time Warner, has launched its CyX2 handheld computer that enables wireless chat and interactive multi-player gaming, and comes with interchangeable face plates and game pads. The CyX2 weighs only about a third of a pound and measures 5.6 x 3.2 x .07 inches, yet offers a QWERTY keyboard and 2.5 MB of storage onboard. Teenagers are the targeted market for this device, which lets users share games with others by transmitting them wirelessly from one CyX2 to another.

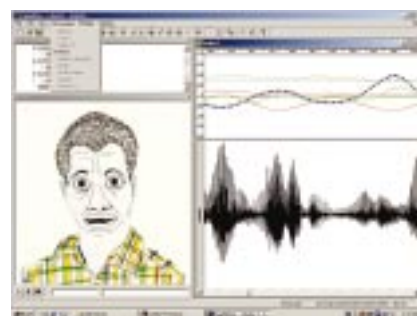
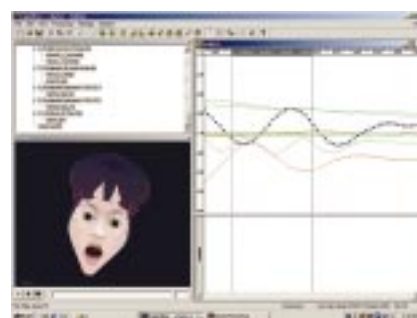
The Future Looks Bright...

There are a number of other applications that are starting up slowly but promise to become huge markets. Location-Based Gaming (LBG) is a specialized form of gaming that takes advantage of the fact that cell phone networks know where a particular user is located to within a few hundred feet. That makes it possible to play games that depend upon a specific real-world location. Ludigame's *GeoQuest*, for instance, forces the gamer to visit five places in Marseilles, France, and solve five puzzles in order to find a fictional kidnapped girlfriend. Solving a puzzle quickly yields points and clues to the location of the next puzzle. *Orbital*, by Infracore, is a multi-player game that assigns missions in different city areas called "planets," each with markets and drop zones to pick up and deliver information and supplies. The wildly popular wireless game *BotFighters* in Sweden allows a player to create a customized "robot" that's housed in one's mobile handset. When a player's

"radar" notifies him that an enemy robot is within range, he can zap him with an electronic bullet; the unlucky victim is notified that he's been bushwhacked by a series of electronic beeps. Serious players of *BotFighters* play half an hour a day and pay \$5 to \$10 a month on top of regular cellular phone charges, which warms the hearts of both game developers and cell phone carriers.

Another new application is interactive outdoor advertising, in which animated displays in airports, supermarkets and other venues react to customers with targeted advertising. A futuristic form of this is shown in the film *Minority Report*. Near-future versions involve flat-panel displays on various surfaces that are triggered off by a specially keyed item that has been given to a customer, such as a shopping cart or a "smart" admission ticket. Advertisers are anxious to use wireless technology to reach potential customers and get feedback from them, but there is benefit to the customer as well. "Interactive ads can give a customer useful information instead of just flooding him with clutter," says Wolfgang Kratzenberg, COO of Expresso, a company which is developing interactive ad delivery technology.

One sign of the future potential of wireless is the size of the companies that are committing to it. Microsoft and Qualcomm have formed a joint venture named Wireless Knowledge to create next-generation wireless gaming applications. Motorola teamed with Sega to develop games for its handsets. Ericsson formed a joint venture with Sony to develop cell phone entertainment. A few years ago it would have seemed preposterous



Specializing in modeling human faces, face2face has been one of the key developers in high-end video conferencing. Images courtesy of face2face. FACE MODEL: © Ralph Lemon/Cori Haveson; FAP SOURCE: © Lipsynch by Cori Haveson; AUDIO SOURCE: © James Baldwin, 1973; DESIGN: © Wayne Ashley/Ralph Lemon.

that a phone company would have an entertainment division. But recently the cell phone giant Nokia formed Club Nokia, an online community that allows Nokia handset users to download games from the Web.

In summary, if you are a customer buying a wireless device, you can look toward a future filled with numerous animated games and other entertainment offerings to pass the time during increasingly long commuting periods. If you are an animated content developer, you may want to consider producing for the cell phone market. Cramming compelling content into a 2-inch screen may not be as glamorous as producing high-res games for a PlayStation 2, but the demand for such content is growing by leaps and bounds. Although a develop-

er's take may only be a penny from each minute of cell phone usage, remember the number 600 million. DataMonitor estimates that just wireless gaming will be worth \$6 billion in the U.S. and Europe by 2005, with Asia even bigger. Now, that's a lot of pennies.

Christopher Harz is a program and business development executive for new media enterprises, working with digital animation companies around the world. He is a technical editor at Animation Magazine, and writes extensively for trade magazines on topics including Internet animation, visual effects for films and television, video games and wireless media. Mr. Harz was previously VP of marketing and production at Hollyworlds,

producing 3D Websites and video games for films such as Spawn, The 5th Element, Titanic and Lost in Space, and for TV shows such as Xena, Warrior Princess. At Perceptronics as SVP of marketing and program development, Mr. Harz helped build the first massive-scale online animated game worlds, including production of the \$240 million 3D animation virtual world, Simnet. He also worked on combat robots and war gaming at the Rand Corporation, the American military think tank.

Note: Readers may contact any Animation World Magazine contributor by sending an e-mail to editor@awn.com.

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As children we all watched cartoons and fell in love with characters who, in our innocence, we assumed to be real. Later we discovered, with the same disappointment that comes with shedding our belief in Santa Claus, that they were not.

Beyond childhood, many continue to enjoy the art and fantasy that can only be achieved through animation. As we enter adulthood, a growing number of us are discovering anime. With its more mature themes, intricate story lines and varied genres, anime provides us with a whole new level of animation and its popularity is growing strongly in our own culture.

As adults, though, we are more aware of things that escaped our attention as children. Foremost is an understanding of the creativity that comes to bear when creating anime. Additionally, we know that there are careers to be had in the North American anime industry.

In bringing anime titles to an audience that predominantly lacks mastery of the Japanese language, one career stands out as a dream-job to many — voice acting.

In this article you will discover the ins and outs of breaking into this career field as well as many insider tips that you can use to make your move. You will also find other helpful information in preparing for success as an anime voice actor. But be advised: show business is a fickle thing. There's no guarantee that you will be a success no matter how talented they are.

When considering the potential of a career as a voice actor, it perhaps does one well to understand that voice acting is

Make A Break Into Anime Voice Acting

by Gerry Poulos



Yutaka Maseba, president of ZRO Limit Productions, produced the English dubbed and subtitled versions of *Akira*, 2001. © 1987 Akira Committee. Licensed by Kodansha Ltd. All rights reserved.

far more than just talking.

To gain an insight into this line of work and the most important assets needed to succeed in getting that first audition, we've gone directly to the source. We surveyed six of the most influential directors and producers casting roles in anime today, including: Joel Baral of TOKYOPOP; Peter Bavaro of Skypilot Entertainment; Amanda Winn Lee of Gaijin Productions; Yutaka Maseba of ZRO Limit Productions; Jeff Thompson of The Right Stuff International, Inc.; and Tom Wayland of Central Park Media.

Prepare To Succeed

Preparing to pursue a career as a voice actor generally involves more than being able to mimic your favorite character. You need to be prepared to succeed.

Though most successful voice actors working in anime today began their careers as voice actors without any specific training in the field, almost all of them did begin their careers with certain things in common. Among these are acting experience, vocal range and the ability to assume and maintain a character. A voice actor is first and foremost an actor.

The vast majority of voice actors working today come from the theater. It is the acting skills possessed by these folks that make them so desirable by anime studios. It is also those same skills that you should work to acquire if you want to be taken seriously and get that audition.

While few and far between, voice-acting courses are available, mostly in the form of workshops. Some of these are better than others with the most common criticism being that they teach only the intricacies of the equipment and techniques used in dubbing work, but do little in teaching one how to act, develop characters or even to read a script.



Amanda Winn Lee, producer for Gaijin Productions, recommends that actors develop interesting character voices instead of doing impersonations of famous people. Photo by Gregg James.

While there are valid pluses to taking voice-over courses, the best path to success is to first establish your skills as an actor, then take voice-acting courses and workshops. Remember: voice actors are first and foremost actors.

Assuming you are still in school, you can begin to shape your career by joining your school theater and/or glee club. These activities can give you a

much-needed head start. Additionally, a history of acting or singing (or both) looks exceptionally good on a resume and, depending on the studio, may be key in getting an audition.

Should you attend college, your opportunities to develop your skills will increase greatly. Most schools offer courses in acting, script reading, character development, etc. that can be of great use. Most colleges today have full theater companies. There are few other opportunities where you will be able to gain professional-level experience and still have an educational institution right there to help you hone your skills even further.

Another opportunity that might be available to you at any age are theater groups that may be performing at local community theaters. Quite often these organizations also conduct their own workshops and can help you develop your acting abilities. They can also give you much-needed experience in script reading and the various styles and methods of acting.

Trying your hand in full-fledged theater productions, be they at school or a local theater, can be an exceptional opportunity. The benefits come not only in terms of experience and education but in establishing connections and friendships that may in fact lead to an invitation to audition.

Another option that you may find attractive is taking a correspondence or on-line acting course. While it is difficult to state the value of such courses accurately, they will always beat no training but stand little to no chance of equaling actual experience acting in a group

or company.

One additional use for these types of distance-learning programs is to perform a self-evaluation. By taking these relatively-inexpensive courses, you might be able to determine if you really have the drive and desire to become a successful voice actor. Voice acting isn't all interviews and convention appearances before adoring fans. It takes a lot of hard work and self-discipline to succeed — or just to get an audition.

Though this may seem obvious, having some form of experience will set you apart from the hundreds of resumes and demos anime studios receive every week.

Local theater companies or singing clubs, choirs, extracurricular school activities, such as plays and musicals, college-level courses, acting workshops, voice training, even work at a college radio station, can all be used to create an impressive resume.

Every step you take in the acquisition, development and honing of your skills helps you prepare to succeed. They demonstrate that you are not only serious about voice acting but that you come with an arsenal of skills.

Plainly put, they show that you are ready to begin work as a productive member of a studio's team. To a studio this translates to not only getting a good performance from you but to a savings in production time. It also greatly increases the chances that you will be called in for the all-important first audition.

Studios And Resumes And Demos — Oh My!

Once you feel you're ready, you'll find yourself faced with what can appear to be an impos-

sible task — getting noticed. The first thing you should realize about voice acting is that all — I mean all — voice actors, regardless of their popularity or resume, get rejected for roles. It is simply part of the job.

While not required by all studios, some will make their decision as to whether or not to grant an audition based on your resume. Of our six casting gurus, one, ZRO Limit Productions, reviews resumes prior to requesting a demo reel. (Actually, the term “demo reel” is a hold-over from the days of magnetic tape. Usually what is submitted, and expected, is a CD.)

Even though a resume is not the primary concern of most studios, it is a valuable tool for you to get noticed. The studio will most likely make their decisions based on the demo, but, depending on your experience and qualifications, your resume can call out to the person screening them, “Check out my demo!”

Virtually all of the studios we surveyed said they really like to see some sort of acting experience on a resume and that it does have an impact on their decisions to grant auditions. Given a good demo versus a good demo with a good resume, the resume addition will win every time.

You should take note that the studio will most likely not care to spend their time reading about every aspect of your life or even what you look like. Things like hair color, eye color, etc., are a definite no-no. In fact, not one studio said they require or even want to see head-shots.

About head-shots Peter Bavaro comments, “Hey, I’m glad you spent \$300 to get a professional head-shot; you’re trying to do it right. And I’m sure you have

a nice smile and a killer body. But I want your voice — eat as many Cheetos as you want!”

By the way, sloppy, hand-written resumes will signal to the screener that you are a sloppy and unprofessional person and will greatly detract from your chances. Use good quality paper (no neon; use white, light gray or ivory), an easy-to-read font and keep it to one clear, concise page outlining your experience and talent.

Once you have your resume in order, the next task is your demo. A demo should be short (from one to three minutes long), of high quality and demonstrate your talent.

There are two ways to get a demo made. First, you could go to a professional recording studio, drop a few hundred dollars (or more), and record your bit. This will not guarantee a good demo, just one of a high quality without background sounds or breaks.

The second option is to record your demo yourself. If you choose to do this, don’t use a hand-held portable tape recorder. Those days are gone forever. The medium of choice now is digital, as in CDs.

Many home computers today come equipped with high-quality sound cards and CD burners. When recording your own demo, don’t use a cheesy little microphone that comes included with many computers. It would be a wise investment in your career to buy a higher quality mic that is compatible with your equipment.

A pitfall of recording your own demo is that there may be background noises. Little things that normally go unnoticed, like a squeaky desk chair, an air conditioner, the refrigerator, or even traffic outside, can ruin an otherwise

good demo. Remember, the studio wants to hear you clearly so they can decide whether or not to spend hundreds of dollars by calling you in for an audition.

As silly as it may seem, a roomy closet may be your best choice for sound isolation. Hanging blankets on the walls of the closet can even improve it by killing the slight echoes that can occur in a small space. Remember this when you get a microphone and make sure you have one with a long enough cord.



Don’t make a pest of yourself when pursuing a callback says Tom Wayland, video production manager and casting director of Central Park Media. Courtesy of Central Park Media.

Another caution of home recording and burning your own demo CDs is to make sure you label them professionally. Another good investment might be to purchase a CD-labeling kit available at most department stores. Make sure your name, address, phone number and email address are clearly presented on the CD.

Whether you record your own or go into a booth, you will have to decide what to record. Virtually all of the studios said they want to hear as wide a range as possible so they can get a good idea of your skills and the roles to which you may be best suited.

Perhaps the best way to demonstrate what exactly screeners look for in a demo is to let a few of our experts speak for themselves. So let's hear what our six experts have to say.

Gerry Poulos: What would make a demo stand out?

Peter Bavaro: People without demos have asked what to do. I tell them get the *New York Times* and read a few different parts; a straight news item, a funny blurb, a sexy ad. Whatever. Just make it short and sweet. You don't have to blow \$1000 at a studio adding music and sound effects. If your voice works for a role, you're in. No big deal.



Don't cop an attitude at the audition warns Peter Bavaro, president of Skypilot Entertainment. Courtesy of Sharky's Photobooth.

Amanda Winn Lee: A good range and a great sense of humor.

Yutaka Maseba: A brief demo reel — 1 to 2 minutes — showcasing the actor's range. What I mean by range is the ability to sound like several different characters we're auditioning for.

Tom Wayland: A wide range with good coherent reads. I hate it when I get a demo where some

kid rattles through 30 different voices in 60 seconds. I need to hear the person act with each character, not just spout some catch phrase or one-liner.

Gerry Poulos: What on a demo would guarantee that you would not give them an audition?

Peter Bavaro: Don't try too hard. Short and sweet works wonders.

Amanda Winn Lee: If someone tries to do an impersonation on a demo reel and they sound *nothing* like the person they're imitating, that's a huge red flag for me. You wouldn't believe how often that happens. This tells me that the person doesn't have a good ear, so they may be difficult to direct in the studio.

Yutaka Maseba: Unprofessionalism: sloppy hand-written resumes accompanied with poorly labeled demo reels.

Tom Wayland: I don't want to hear reading. I want to hear acting. It's not enough that you can do a silly little kid voice or an evil demon voice. I need to hear this character in a scene or conveying some sort of emotion. Nothing is worse than a flat demo.

Gerry Poulos: What are the most common mistakes people make?

Joel Baral: Including their height, weight and hair color... unnecessary. Less is more.

Peter Bavaro: Faxing headshots. We tell them not to — we say it on the phone — we put it in the ads, "Please do not fax headshots..." — but they come; big black squares of barely dis-

cernible images that suck up all our toner.

Amanda Winn Lee: Doing impersonations of famous people, rather than just doing interesting character voices. If I wanted to use the voice of some one famous, I'd contact them directly.

Yutaka Maseba: Sending the wrong type of demo reels. Know what type of product the person you are sending the demo creates. We're not looking for cartoony voices; in fact, natural voices are preferred.

Tom Wayland: Showing up in person is bad. Calling and e-mailing constantly is bad. Mail in your stuff and I will listen to it. I love to listen to new demos. Feel free to send a follow up to make sure that the package was received, but after that, let it go.

Playing The Waiting Game

So now you have your training. You've gotten some expe-



Joel Baral, producer for TOKYOPOP, feels that actors who can take direction well and quickly are the ones to hire. Courtesy of TOKYOPOP.

rience. You've done your resume. You've cut your demo. You've sent it all in to every studio in your geographical region. Now what?

You wait. Though this is extremely difficult, it is one of the things that virtually every single studio agrees on. The people at these studios have hundreds of resumes and demos coming in every week. If the person screening them has to talk to every person who sent in a demo in the last few months, he would be taking literally thousands of calls a week and not listening to demos.

Letters, postcards and patience are definitely the way to go.

What's more, if you make a nuisance of yourself, they may simply say, "I'm sorry. We're not interested," even though they might have been. They might consider you very unprofessional and decide that the time you cost them on the phone is better spent somewhere else and cut their losses by cutting you. They do have other jobs, like actually producing anime.

Most studios will let you know from a few days to a few weeks if they want you to come in for an audition. You might be thinking that if they haven't called you after a few weeks that you've got nothing to lose by constantly calling them. You'd be wrong.

They may not have a part suited for you at the moment but loved your demo. They may be considering you for something else they're not ready to start auditions for yet. They may be

planning on calling you in for audition in a few days. They may be willing to throw all of that out the window if you start calling and emailing them everyday too.

Most studios don't mind a brief letter or postcard from you to follow-up on if your demo has arrived. They also, for the most part, don't mind you contacting them every few months to let them know you're still out there. But remember, they do mind having to drop whatever they're doing to take your call. Letters, postcards and patience are definitely the way to go.

Finally, A Phone Call

If a studio liked your demo, you may well receive a phone call asking if you can come in for an audition. Say yes. If you don't have time to come in, then they'll decide that you don't have time to be a voice actor.

There are exceptions of course. If you're getting married that day or have a death in the family, they will most likely simply schedule another day. But short of those circumstances — and they had better be real — you have to always be ready to come in for an audition.

There are five things you have to "be" when the day of your audition arrives: Be early, fifteen to thirty minutes is good; Be ready, have your voice warmed-up and your acting underwear on; Be confident, directors hate having a shy person who can't get their "sides" (lines) out; Be prepared, they might ask you to be practically anything from an elf to a dragon; Be friendly, you're there to make friends and win a role. Attitude and posturing will get you nothing but gone.

I asked our friends, "What do you look for from an aspiring voice actor during an audition?"

Joel Baral: That they can receive direction and adjust immediately.

Peter Bavaro: Step one...show up. Then try a clear voice, respond to direction and make an effort to please. If you want to try it once more, ask us. Auditions are hard, no question. You have very little to go on, so listen to what the director is asking you to do. If you need a little more info, ask for it.

Attitude and posturing will get you nothing but gone.

Amanda Winn Lee: First of all, talent, of course. Other than that: range, enthusiasm, sense of humor. Basically, if I cast them, I will be spending 4-8 hours a day in a small room with them. I want to make sure they're pleasant to work with.

Yutaka Maseba: A good performance by an actor who can lip synch to the picture.

Jeff Thompson: It is a potential actor's job to convince a casting director/producer/director that they are perfect for a project.

Tom Wayland: Be on time. Be relaxed and cooperative. Take direction well. Have fun.

When asked, "What preparations would make an aspiring voice actor's audition really shine?" our group of industry pros responded:

Joel Baral: Get to know the property... the character [you're auditioning for. They'll let you know beforehand what it is].

Peter Bavaro: Get warmed up outside the booth. Sign in and get your head together in the lobby. Focus on the roles that are listed and be confident in your *natural* voice. I'll ask you for any variations once we're rolling.

Amanda Winn Lee: A wide range of character voices really helps. Also, warn the sound engineer if you are going to drastically change volume (i.e. go from speaking to screaming). This allows the engineer to adjust the input levels so the take doesn't get distorted. This also shows that you know what you're doing.

Yutaka Maseba: Find out what role you are auditioning for. Ask if the auditioning role requires a special accent or characteristic. Do your homework based on the information given to you. For example, if they ask for a Southern accent, find someone with an authentic accent and observe their speech. Come in early and ask the casting director for your side. Study it and get familiar with your lines.

Jeff Thompson: Arrive at any audition on time or even early and have completed your vocal warm-ups. Take a course — offered at most college acting programs — on auditioning.

Tom Wayland: Take direction well. Be vocally warmed up just in case you have to read for a

10 year-old kid — and then we ask you to read for a tentacled beast 3 minutes later.

Finally, I asked, "What would definitely make an aspiring voice actor's audition an utter failure?"

"What would definitely make an aspiring voice actor's audition an utter failure?"

Joel Baral: If they can't hit the note.

Peter Bavaro: Any type of attitude or distracted nature won't help. Hey, we understand if you've got to be somewhere else in 20 minutes, but you came to audition so we like to feel you're interested.

With rare exception you should never turn down a part, however small.

Amanda Winn Lee: If they get "mike shy" — meaning they freeze up in front of the microphone. That doesn't help us or them. I have seen veteran actors who have been on stage for years just clam up and get nervous once they set foot in the studio. If an actor is nervous or holding back, we can hear it in their voice. Also, if they act like a diva or are rude to the sound engineer. I fired an actor

in the middle of a session once for being snippy with the sound guy. I don't care how many VO projects you've done — the world is crawling with voice actors, but it's really hard to find a good sound tech.

Yutaka Maseba: Showing up late.

Jeff Thompson: Being late to an audition is typically fatal. Having a schedule that does not lend itself to the production environment means that many roles will not be available. Living far away from the studio is also difficult to overcome.

Tom Wayland: Lack of confidence. In this business you need to have confidence. It is just you and a microphone in there, so if you get all self-conscious emoting to this piece of machinery, you won't get the part.

Waiting — Again

Now that you've gotten your first audition, there are a few things you should know. First, be patient. All casting directors handle things a little differently. Some will pull you aside and say, "Yes," on the spot. Some will say nothing, and call the winners of the parts at home later. Still others will narrow their choices to a few actors and have them come in again. All the same rules for waiting on a response from your demo apply.

To give just a little more insight into what to expect following an audition, I asked our experts, "How soon does it usually take for you to let an aspiring voice actor know the results of an audition?"

Joel Baral: A week.

Peter Bavaro: Sometimes we give a basic response right away if someone is very good. I'll tell them they did a great job and even if they don't land something from us on this show they should keep in touch. We can't confirm anything until we've had time to really live with the reads and run them by our clients and/or associated producers. If someone does land a role, we'll be in touch over the next two weeks.

Amanda Winn Lee: Anywhere from one day to a week, depending on how long we are holding the auditions.

Yutaka Maseba: We tell the actors that we will call them within a week if they are cast for the role.

Jeff Thompson: Due to the sheer volume of people being auditioned, calls are made to the people who actually land the roles and not to the people who are not chosen for a project.

Tom Wayland: Around 2 days from the end of all auditions.

Gathering more info for you, I asked, "How long after an audition should an aspiring voice actor wait before contacting your studio regarding their audition?"

Joel Baral: Sorry, but we will call you, meaning we are generally in a rush to fill the roles, and finalizing actors is incredibly important. Calling us will not move the process forward. How

about a quick follow-up postcard or note? Then, as you get other roles, keep the people you hit it off with updated on your career progress.

Peter Bavaro: Give us two weeks before you follow up.

Amanda Winn Lee: Actually, they shouldn't contact us at all. If I'm going to cast them, I will call and let them know. Our schedule is so crazy busy these days, I don't really have time to sit and chat with someone about why they didn't get a role, but someone else did. (Sorry.) Also, just because they don't hear from us then, that doesn't mean they won't still be considered for future projects.

Yutaka Maseba: We tell the actors that we will call them within a week if they are cast for the role.

Jeff Thompson: If the factors warrant a call to an actor, then someone will make this call; contacting the production staff more than a few times will not improve the odds of being cast.

Tom Wayland: If you don't get the call within a week or so, you didn't get it. If you really feel you had a great audition but maybe just weren't right for the part and you'd like to inquire about future auditions, give it a couple of weeks and then drop an email.

Finally, I asked, "How often should aspiring voice actors contact your studio to keep in the running for future parts?"

Joel Baral: Every few months.

Peter Bavaro: The best time to contact us is when you have something to tell us — such as you're in a show, you read at some other audition, change of address, etc. Faxes are better than calls or emails. And ALWAYS put your contact information on any correspondence. We sometimes can't reach talent because their contact information has changed. This is frustrating for us and unfortunate for the talent.

Amanda Winn Lee: Different studios have different policies. Personally, I keep all auditions/demo reels that I find promising, even if they aren't right for a role in the current project we're doing. As a result, I often request that actors *not* keep sending post cards, updates, etc. If I'm interested, I'll definitely call you.

Yutaka Maseba: Generally, when there is a new "demo" reel created [by the aspiring voice actor]. Make sure the demo reel is updated not just a rehash of a previous reel.

Tom Wayland: Not too often. Pushy actors don't get work. We are on top of what we're doing here. If we want to work with you, you will get called. Just so you know, we audition for shows about once a month, but certain shows have more roles than others. That being said there may be a few months where we don't need too many people, but there may be other times when we're casting 20-30 people in a month.

In Parting

Aside from what I've already offered by way of guidance, advice and giving you a peek at what happens from the inside to give you an edge on the competition, there are some final pieces of advice to offer.

Persevere!

Most successful voice actors working today didn't get the first role they sought or even auditioned for. Some didn't even get the first six.

Never say no!

With rare exception you should never turn down a part, however small. The studio will interpret this as "prima donna syndrome," i.e. you think you're too good for the part and may be difficult to work with in

other, more significant roles. Most successful voice actors' first parts were small roles that didn't show in the credits. Others just did background noises. Some have made a career of doing these small "bit" parts.

Continue to improve yourself!

If you felt that you lacked a certain something in your demo or audition, find it, fix it and try again. Besides, continuing to perform in other areas, such as theater or taking some extra acting classes, gives you a reason to submit a new "updated" resume and demo.

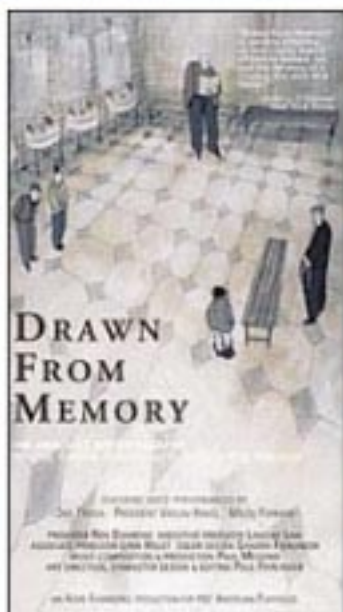
Well, we hope you've found some useful information for pursuing your dreams of becoming an anime voice actor. Good luck. We look forward to seeing you in the credits soon!

For a ton of other articles regarding voice acting, casting and voice over, visit <http://mag.awn.com> and use key words in the search function to access AWN's past articles.

Gerry Poulos is an anime fan and engineer specializing in three dimensional design and animation that switched to a career as a well connected freelance writer on all things anime. Gerry's hobbies include working (which means watching lots of anime) and other things we won't go into here. If you want to know more about Gerry (hey, it could happen) visit <http://www.animefreelance.com>.

Note: Readers may contact any Animation World Magazine contributor by sending an e-mail to editor@awn.com.

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--Carrie Rickey
The Philadelphia Inquirer



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The World, The Fresh, and The Devil

by Martin "Dr. Toon" Goodman

(Some random thoughts about animation and culture in the midst of a hectic summer.)



Captain Planet And The Planeteers premiered on TBS on September 10, 1990. Later re-titled *The New Adventures of Captain Planet*, the show delivered four seasons of eco-friendly entertainment. © 2001 Captain Planet Foundation, Inc. An AOL Time Warner Company. All rights reserved.

The World

I am normally the first to applaud any effort, however hackneyed, that offers praise and glory to the Brotherhood of Man. No, wait...the Great Diverse Salad Bowl of Multicultural Appreciation: Three cheers for the betterment of each gender, race, religion, and all myriad proliferation thereof. Still, before I burst into an alto rendition

of "I'd Like To Give The World A Home," I do want to make one exception. I'm just a little tired of seeing animated series that push the much-belated point. The origins of animated diversity stretch back to at least the early 1960s but the shows were so much more innocuous then. The first minority characters who were not stereotypical buffoons provided a realistic balance to cartoons; their inclusion came across as more natural than forced.

Insistence on full-blown diversity arrived in animation during the 1980s, and by the end of the next decade there were no casts of any predominant gender or racial group in any given series. Educators, psychologists and sundry experts anointed this process and meticulous balances were seemingly agreed upon before a show hit the air. If integration had gone as well in the actual world as in the animated one, what a world we would see! There would be no genocide in Africa; Palestinians would not be exploding in unexpected places while Israeli tanks put shells into their villages; women would not

be sold as sex slaves in shady corners of the Third World, and...well, there really wouldn't *be* a Third World, would there? We would all cooperate just like the multiracial, multi-gendered cast of *Captain Planet* (The power is YOURS!) and do great things. Black hand in brown hand in yellow hand in white hand performing in harmony, bringing into reality the New Jerusalem (equitably shared by all, I might add).

Or maybe not. If the widely quoted research is correct and watching violent cartoons predisposes children to violence, why hasn't the steady flow of politically correct, cooperative-minded cartoons incited children to peace? Why does racism remain such a pervasive problem? Is it saddening that the term "ethnic cleansing" gained widespread use during a time when animated series were straining hardest to please the minions of PC? I am not against the representation of all genders and races in our animated fare; what I tire of is the painfully obvious attempts to convince us that such seamless and perfect integration exists at all times in all circumstances while ignoring reality in the most Panglossian terms. In the past eleven months the World Trade Center has been reduced to a neatly groomed patch of bare earth while America's avengers draw up maps to Saddam's heavily reinforced doorstep. The hope that children are actually absorbing lessons about acceptance and cooperation from animated cartoons seems fainter than a far-distant gunshot echoing in the hills of Bosnia; they are not blind to the rest of this world.

The latest example is Jacques Cousteau's *Ocean Tales*, a recent product of the distin-

guished French animation studio Dargaud-Marina. Jacques Cousteau, as you may recall, was a notable scientist/sailor who roamed the seas in his high-tech rig *Calypso* exploring the wonders of the deep. Cousteau perfected both the aqualung and the riveting TV special, his kindly, weather-beaten face familiar to millions. The *Calypso* sank off Singapore in 1996 and Cousteau passed away the following year, but both have been restored to animated life for this new series. More's the pity; Captain Planet — er, Cousteau — has been appointed as maritime baby-sitter for a team of racially diverse, gender-balanced young'uns gathered from each of the world's continents.

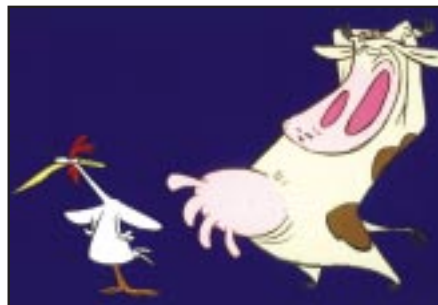
Ah, frere! Where do these kids come from? Are they manufactured and prepackaged by the lot in some multicultural version of Acme, Inc.? I have watched countless Cousteau specials and I don't particularly recall his crew being all that diverse. Most of them seemed to be intense, bearded males in wet suits with nary a Hispanic pre-teen female amongst them. Aren't these child spawn supposed to be in school? Who carries the liability for their perilous adventures, and do their parents and siblings (if they indeed exist) miss them at all? Do they do their chores and make their bunks with the same precision and alacrity that most children do? I can hear the Captain now, his lilting accent wafting down the ship's corridors: "Who has left all zees lights on, eh, do you think I am made of francs? Just wait unteel you haff bills of your own to pay!!"

Well, so much for this deep-sea doo-doo. I have a feeling that the kids will vote with their flippers and pass on this one, just

as they do on most politically correct, pro-social programs pushed under their finicky noses. Just wait until they find out that Jacques Cousteau has no super powers mutant or otherwise, nor any notable robotic or extra-terrestrial enemies (I do concede that I might have missed those parts of his TV specials during fridge and potty breaks). Bah. Let's have cartoons simply be entertaining and bereft of any other agendas, and maybe we can all just get along.



French series Jacques Cousteau's *Ocean Tales*, follows the famous captain in exciting marine adventures. © 2002 Dargaud-Marina.



Cow and Chicken's lineup is an udder buffet of stars, but devoid of devilled characters. © Cartoon Network, Inc. An AOL Time Warner Company.

The Fresh

Among the more disconcerting generalizations I have been hearing of late is that American animation is stuck in a rut, that everything appears similar at best and undifferentiated at worst, that studios and buyers are looking for more of the same old

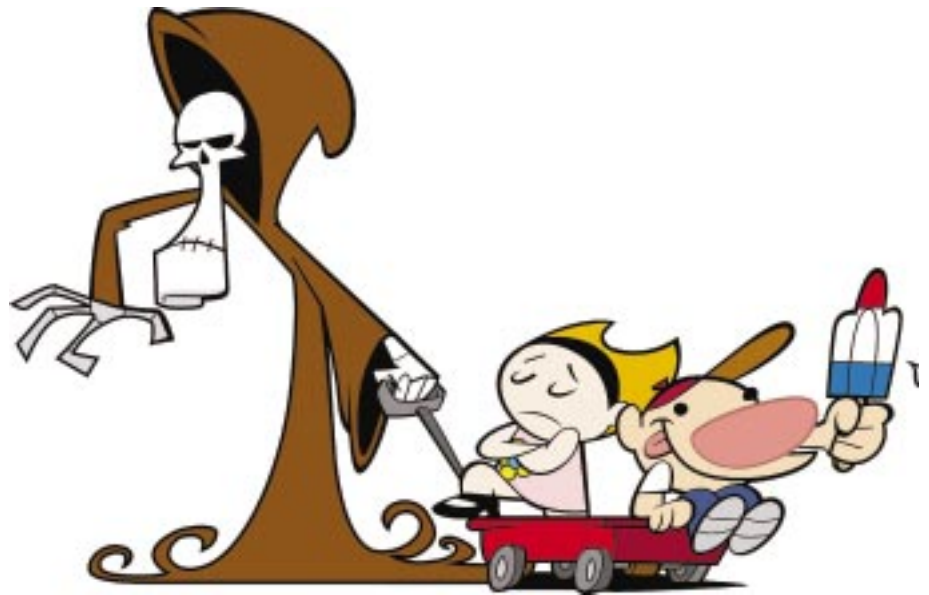
thing, and that nothing really creative has come along in a long while. The first thing I wonder about when hearing these complaints is the relative meaning of "a long while." My next thought is a succinct, "Huh?" It seems rather that we are experiencing exciting times in animation, not stale ones. Even with the employment picture waffling and hundreds of projects in want of angels and buyers, 2002 is a great year for fans of the genre.

Well. Let's see, here. From the beginnings of American animation in the late 1890s there were probably three major innovations up until 1928: The switch from rice paper to acetate cels, the combination of live-action and animation, and the adoption of industrialized methodology to animation production. One could argue for the rotoscope, but this was an extension of live-action. This period of roughly forty years in which animation poised itself for the future was also its least interesting period in an aesthetic sense. Sure, there were master innovators, clever ideas, and exciting glimpses of what was to come, but let's face it — this was a black and white landscape of humanized animals, nearly all of them poorly drawn and all far too similar to each other. The many men and few women who would bring anatomic accuracy and realistic movement to animated cartoons were finishing middle school. Most animated series were lucky to last five episodes if not backed by newspaper magnates promoting their own syndicated comic strips. With the exception of Max and Dave Fleischer's technical experiments and Otto Messmer's work on *Felix the Cat*, there was not much of interest

to anyone but future historians. Perhaps this would have been a better time? After all, this is nearly half of American animation's history...

How about the limited animation and the neck-tied animals that came to television and stayed for decades after the studios ceased making shorts? How about the endless, dreary variations of superheroes of the past, present and future that battled some of the most inane and ludicrous villains ever to infest a storyboard? Perhaps you would prefer the "Night of the Living Toy Commercials" that followed FCC deregulation under Ronald Reagan? Might those who complain recall a time when Disney animation was virtually defunct and the only animated characters seen in theaters were little kids banging past your knees to get out to the popcorn stand? It wasn't all that long ago.

The honest truth is, this is perhaps the most creative and vital time in the field. There are more features, more series, more animators, more women in animating and executive positions, and more entertaining and offbeat ideas than there were even twenty years ago. I would love to have seen Maxwell Atoms, in just one example, trying to pitch *Grim and Evil* to one of the big three networks back in the 1980s. "Well, see, I've got these two kids who become pals with Death. And in the second part of my show, a criminal madman with his brain and guts transplanted into a decorticated bear tries to destroy the world." Uh-huh. Shall I go into the vast amount of cartoons that have run, are running, or getting ready to run via the Web, giving voice to a multitude of hopeful independ-



Maxwell Atoms successfully managed to usher this unlikely story, *Grim and Evil*, to the small screen. © Cartoon Network, Inc. An AOL Time Warner Company.

ents? Nothing new? All the same? There's no pleasing some people (especially, I suspect, the ones who can't get their projects sold), but don't let them spit in your latte. American animation is by no means moribund; it's alive and doing quite well. Let's enjoy what we have.

The Devil

"Pleased to meet you, hope you guess my name"

— The Rolling Stones, "Sympathy for the Devil"

The Stones' 1968 tune has as much meaning today as it did back then, even though Mick, Keith and company had no way of foreseeing entertainment policies of the 2000s. Even though the Prince of Lies appears today in several cartoons, you must guess his name. Well, sometimes you do and sometimes you don't. Devilish conundrum? No more puzzling than, say, the recent Supreme Court decision to excise the words "under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance. Dr. Toon leans neither Right nor Left on

these issues; they are in fact risible when examined closely, and reflect less on our morals and values than on the tiresome culture wars that only Americans can inflict upon each other.

In my last column I quoted an interview with Craig McCracken in *Toon Zone* dated February 24, 2002. McCracken talked not only about his new Powerpuff Girls movie, but also about changes he had to make in the show. According to McCracken, the Powerpuffs nemesis "Him" was originally the Devil, but this idea had to be abandoned because, "We're not allowed to have any religious references on the show." The Devil thus became an androgynous antagonist, taunting the Girls with polyphonic sneers. Far more obvious is David Feiss' "Red Guy," who makes life Hell for Cow and Chicken. Feiss' classic satanic design utilizes horns, a forked tail and carmine complexion; it is next to impossible to mistake this character for anyone but Old Scratch, but to name him as such would be a "religious reference" and thus taboo. Was it



In the tiny community of Townsville, resident heroines the Powerpuff Girls combat a non-denominational evil fella donning something that looks like a devil suit.
© Cartoon Network, Inc. An AOL Time Warner Company.

only last year that we witnessed a prime-time offering called *God, the Devil, and Bob* in which Lucifer took no refuge at all behind veiled references? The inconsistency is interesting indeed.

The eccentricity is compounded when one regards the Toon Disney series *Hercules* in which we get jocular representations of all the gods of antiquity including Hades, who sports a sulfurous mane and commands two miscreant imps. Are these religious references, or has enough water gone under the aqueduct in this case? Is the Devil in fact a religious reference? Although every major faith seems to have an equivalent figure, he is usually feared and abhorred; his worship, when present, tends to be underground. There is much less proselytizing and missionary work on behalf of Old Nick relative to that done for the other side, and absolutely none done by the cartoon characters mentioned above. There have been cartoons in the past that clearly featured Satan, and the character has appeared in shorts by Warner, Fleischer and Disney. What is the confusion over calling

him by name today?

It appears that in these times one must be careful not to offend representatives of many various faiths and groups by making specific religious references tied to any one belief. As with the Pledge of Allegiance, it is far safer to legislate, politicize and regulate individual thought than to risk the wrath of polemic-minded interests with an ideological axe to grind. It is unknown why those who prefer to say, "One nation under God," those who choose to substitute another deity, and those who prefer to dispense with a Supreme Being altogether cannot all have their way; the only thing gained would be tolerance and the only thing lost would be laughter at the Supreme Court. Now that the Pledge is unconstitutional, then I suppose that makes public mention of the Devil unconstitutional as well. Thus, the "Red Guy" — except for one little fact; if it looks like the devil, acts like the devil, and has a butt crack like the devil, it must be...but let's not go there again.

If the Powerpuff Girls want to have it out with Satan personi-

fied, or Cow and Chicken wish to match wits against the flagrant Prince of Darkness, why (the hell) not? The Devil has been part of our folk tales for centuries, appearing as trickster, tempter and architect of shady, soul-snatching deals. Imagine how *Faust* or *Paradise Lost* might have read under the recent injunctions. What if the Charlie Daniels Band had to sing *The Red Guy Went Down to Georgia?*, or we were made to say: "The Him you know is better than the Him you don't know"? In the usual crackdown for political correctness, we are again forced into ever-tighter conformity in the crusade to promote diversity. Diversity is a dish that tastes best when not forced down one's throat; tolerance ought to come about as the result of an open mind and the courage to undertake exploration of one's self and others. As for the entire controversy, a simple, unconstitutional "Go to the Devil!" will suffice.

But of course, the Red Guy made me say that.

This column marks my third year with the great people at Animation World Network. Tons of thanks are due to my wonderful and patient editor Heather Kenyon, my respected publisher Dan Sarto, and also to Darlene Chan, the most imaginative image wrangler ever to wrangle an image. As always, warmest thanks to you, my fans and readers. Keep reading and keep in touch!

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an e-mail to editor@awn.com.



Illustration by Andreas Hykade.
Courtesy of Chris Robinson.

Via Slug's Saloon

by Chris Robinson

One will be the more learned, the more one knows that one is ignorant. — Nicholas of Cusa

Oh my god No phukking way Good story but same ol' same ol' Ginger can kiss my green grass ass Self-conscious hip Speaking of enemas Technique is unique but this is phukking boring Narration is weird disjointed intense Hey these animals are really cute Pushing the Canadian accents to extremes Fairly Hey a freak dog with three legs Cow cud with big balls Been there seen that Blah blah Bangles Eat me! I would like to sock someone I'm feeling violent the clichés never end Disney has redefined bland nice bosom though pro-girl but of course she's umm...hot I like tea biscuits I smell monkey poo We are talking about blueberry chocolate confusions sometimes I think it's chocolate but it's blueberry Nice design Jerry Stiller bird I like blueberry tea biscuits I've had 2 cups of coffee Disney's answer to Powerpuff Design=Burton Jokes=lame I'd rather eat rice Pretty phukking obscure Really a series? Pretty funny Cleaning rooms is a no-go Winking is a no-no One bite of a cabbage and his wish will come true Suck my cake-

hole ya bad acting bitch Pretty original but I dunno kinda boring too There's that dog again A fart joke multiple orgasms hand in pants vomiting little hairy muffin Every lame idea becomes a TV concept it's like a phukking receptacle looks like an early '80s cartoon but would look bad even then A meccano dream here we go again first Elvis reference Belongs in heaven lame jokes poor dialogue Nathan Lane!? I've had better tales in my ass Cereal company doesn't but toys in box Igor's 'character' influence Not on tape Blow me! Annecy can keep it! Decent design mediocre script Pre Dickable Holy phuk. See "mimi"

Now THAT's animation! This music is making me thirsty No way Nice Mexican accent ya skinny phuck is a dog aware of his existence? Don't be greedy come and get it no it's wrong here try some ge ya goin' real big fat albert

#1
*my nose runs on occasion
there is a no in nose
I am a no*

I hate elves and for dum-mie books die please light green has that 'overbeck' look red while circle dancers in circle I was nice

ONCE not again Stay there you're more boring than your boring city Ruined by coupling duck hunt They're shooting ducks s'like a fortune teller...eh HA HA HA Reindeers drinking stupid old broad Sometimes when I crap it's poignant Phuck U That rough raw style Fresh towels are fine Flutes should be banned Elastic band MAYBE just because there are three people and I am but one who said NON! Make the pain go away Great gag Bugs can't play drums 9-11 reference #1 How come the Penguin? I wanna work for Don Bluth but Don Bluth doesn't work anymore either He's phukkin' dreamin' in pencil Hey...fran/will Krause influenced! Thick line drawings slavery bit of Larkin influence Elderly schmelderly RRRRRRRRRRRRRR Why is this animated? So much realistic detail Just shoot it LIVE! Maybe Can. Panorama It's NEVER Jules Verne? Character design is just silly Clitoris? It belongs in a hole St. inspector Nein This is one of the WORST entries ever cheese burger amiga man I feel like sleeping too A lo ghostbuster with a halo/belly button De la A La Nice bits poor pace at times not always clear something familiar Woody Allen Big eyed guy in cub sketchy style

even worse then the Quays Nails
cotton and things that don't move
Great voice actors! I was out-voted
so its maybe for panorama
Frankenstein created turns on cre-
ator? I'm losing my mind on Day 2
I don't like my mummy bunny
honey huuney strange atmospher-
ic not THAT bad woman as oven
max schrek that damn 2d look
hey...that guy has no nose but he
does have a trailer Oh dear now
he's a bird Why? The new King!
Softfocus No...but I do! Preachy
but nice design so-so so-so
mmmm...hp sauce [I made a
drawing too] I don't like red land-
scape First we drink

#2
*Frogs are green
limes are green
go away*

Beeter and course think
evrythink nothink sumthink 'nd
ow...my arm une piece de
poopoo another floating man priit
parn 'hommage' bingo deformed
media pressure The whistle no
whistling big squirrels Puking gar-
goyles dumala RRRREDDDDD pur-
ple blue cue yr tape asshole saw
this in Estonia are the pauses the
dvd? Forget it! S'ok but kinda
sloppy even a Mexican wrestler
hmm....RRRRRRR LONG well
animated designed

#3
*Sleep
I need Sleep
Dreams are good
Does Anyone sleep WELL?
I can photocopy my hand too.*

Genital issues hysteria is
caused by wanking but what is
caused by crying? Tape phukked
and it's 11 min. Nein death sex
birth go work at NFB we don't

need to hear this song if they DO
IT its in looks like found footage bla
SWANSBBBBITTS Time frozen?
We're into the 3d shit Raoul Servais
is still alive big hats umbrellas
tom tina maybe/no I say NO they
say PANORAMA maybe for kids
category? Very stylish it is done
fat people bolero b/w subway
NO NO NO NO NO NO NO NO
NO NO NO NO NO NO do not
enter test film credits longer than
movie The loving was comin'
WEEEEEEEEEE....I'm floating Fea-
thers, canes and cello Lighten Up!
Curtain rises Please let us stop Fuck
off creep I like RED!!! I like Red
Sumo river phukker my stomach is
beeping Soviet anthem! Yippee!!!
Oi my head Already showed at
Ottawa 76 Don't like lighting
framing or the phukking dolls
finger puppets suck I want to
dance he's right Life is hard espe-
cially when I must watch preten-
tious stuff like this finale-mother-
son Winks! No waste a No
Speaking of Pärn Seven Sins and
into the void it goes 2 men shoot
their dogs "oh for something to
eat" This one won't be on the
menu Miles Davis robot Capture
filmmaker and remove computer
Pixar pool balls not enuff 'balls'
Bosom Wacky Unintended parody
of surrealism Jesus Christ germans
doin' Japanese robots This is
phukking weird like snowshoes
Nox3 ugly scary powdered film?
They go dark Shadowplay Chuck
Gamble black this/that Pärn/
Krause "I'd like to take a crap on
the tv screen" Spoons are good for
big fuls of cereal wank

#4
*Starlight
Starbright
Please be the last Star
Like This
I see this life*

Sparse single character it
sure is! Hmmmmmmmmmmmm
mmmmmmmmmmmm what a won-
derful woild "a baby monkey
maybe" how much are we paying
this education handcuffed to your
dick poe was American I've seen
toys in my nightmares...and then
the scream came... Margaret
rewind the tape please Whose
Sam? Look MA! Sand on glass!
Drink your tea and shed up No
seeds! The horror! No classical gui-
tars please Tumpkins I am not of
the same opinion Baden has great
hot springs but tuscania was
much better by starlight Smut U
my friend are an idiot Spiderman
Whose to say what is not objective
Whose to say what is objective Isnt
objective subjective? Is my reality
objective or subjective? I like bugs!
No! I LOVE bugs!

#5
*Burton, Tim
Elfman, Danny
Festival, no*

Whoass me Is that gum?
Pretentious git is that a NO I smell?
That best not be a tightrope
meanwhile at the bar? Areba si
signor I'm beggin you to SHUT UP
I invented the door bell this child
has the voice of a thirty year old
Remove this 2 Kaks Was that a
handjob? How many ways can I
spell stooped. No whistling no
whistling no ninjas either I don't
mind her ass but the other 2
say "no" Not working umm...
gosh stupido city as jungle flying
turtles statues pyramids turtles fly-
ing around why me smile? HAHA-
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA-
HAHAHAHAHA WHY? There must
be a way to stop it What's with
this accent? Atmospheric non-
sense 1-2-3- NO! 3 mins of colour
bars culture.

Oh god.... I protest I protest aint disqualified Timmy
 Title sequence its lame
 Je crash Pierre t'amitay I loved it just in case someone from Roman reads this Last minute is weak Disq Richard condie comp animation Touch each other in funny ways NO! [I added a drawing] Sorry Pal but once again... This is not for tom and tina school...miscellaneous porn noo-kaleedookalee [drawings of spheres, tunnels, cubes] Do beans get gas? Tape damaged uses the ACTUAL Python track I like to like it more than I did I'm sad Best Acting! Entered before? Gak gak no spend less time on you logo This is really depressing Aussie narration must stop Make a film without dialogue and stop reminiscing about your damn cousins brothers uncles aunts nieces dogs cats cities and dads Accordians and fake French accents w/love are and have always been OUT The stupidest why even bother yet most truthful STOP OINKING! Speaking of nightmares disqualified parn/driessen most copied I just wanna say Bl heh heh Does this mean that if I reject your film I am intolerant? Poor singing if ya gee...asks me beetlejuice beetlejuice beetlejuice I'm running too! Speaking of sinking ships! Tina thinks its cheese another stork what a waste of a FINE poet disqualified. Childrens categories not today! Everyone hopes that each tape is damaged now. [drawing of a smiling face] Jarvis laughed when she ate the whole chicken
 [one facial drawing]
 Disc jockey no I want to forget it all cut together
 FOR kids does not mean BY kids Life is about leaving Bear in schoolyard very little animation but tree with golden apples STOP IT!

[many incoherent scribbles and various drawings] oops Neither SEEN nor HEARD Damn shame 8 year old Good soundtrack 2 min. in and no animation good screen saver NOPE usual imagery single character alienated blah fuggin blah blah nonfigurative figurative They WILL never know wankadoodledo some people think that non-narrative means no narration airport London melting ice kinda ol school collage trace its a narrative! Bad mood tired easy to irritate always find someone to accommodate me my dad on a bender but with a rabbit narrative? I am to put an end to this...escape slow unclear not sure how interesting to caricature the faces of statues yikes another non-narration piece? OH GOD Please make this end. I was wish I was who was that blinded guy in lear? Gloucester... oh hell...Oedipus'll do too. So umm...what is it with woman and cats why not dogs or birdies or vibrators Estonians should travel to the U.S. and stop reducing Americans to cultural stereotypes. Must be their peasant roots igors work structured as a narrative but n.n. to me is something impression/expression but figure or non-figure grainy paint brush atmosphere/ecliptic/hints holes are usually empty or filled with STUFF cue yr tape! Seconds minutes hours days wasted by rewind wasn't bad but..... every film brought excitement hope potential now its just an ache an arrogance "PROOVE IT BUDDY" impatience....films gone in seconds but how else? How much of the limited scenes are painted over how funny paist vs life logic/reason goes out the window senses take over Nah seen better peaceful simple sparse FREEDOM go go go go go go go colourbars on on on black cue it

kill me NOW! Maybe u should focus harder on one film rather than submit 4-5 another girl-cat film She aint no proust of course maybe thats good synth leaves water 2d are the ingredients of cheese s'ugly disqualified don't tell US you're an experimental film TAPE SMASHED saw it... speaking of gas pipes...where is the engraving pallice? Narrative Nooo ooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo Friday [drawing of a head with a hat that then serves a boat in a drawing above with the sun and seagulls above] ONE OF US CAN-NOT BE WRONG oh yes...that is true and it is I who is not wrong this time made it awkward and ugly repetitive actions flow chaos no sound make sure we are all prepared check all dvds/cdroms in advance to ensure that they work I should call SAFO SOFA What with the 'Stephen Hawking' voices?

Lego head as a bowling ball beating up al roker is good effective anti-smoking using who is the careless neighbour funny [more drawings] disqualified 'ite [drawing of spider] newspaper town matrix references are very annoying salt hahahahahaha Looting is the best dude

Damaged.

I don't get it.

Unedited Selection Notes

Written July 9-17, 2002

Ottawa, Canada

1670 films were entered

90 something were accepted

very few squirrels or goats were involved

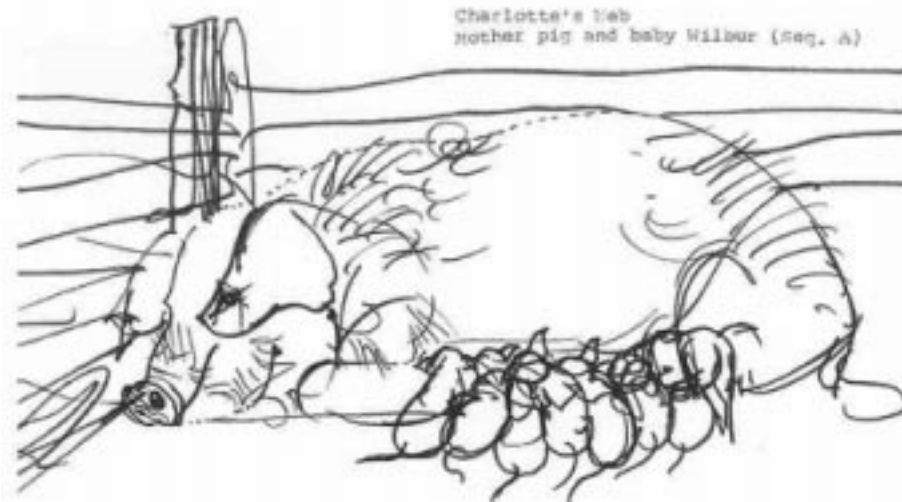
Chris Robinson is but a man.

His hobbies include squirrel taunting, goat thumping, meat dancing and elderly peeping.

You can find the results at <http://asifa.net/robinson>

A Tangled Web

by Gene Deitch



Mirko Hanák's model of Baby Wilbur. Courtesy of Gene Deitch.

An excerpt from Gene Deitch's book, *How To Succeed In Animation* (Don't Let A Little Thing Like Failure Stop You!) available online exclusively at <http://genedeitch.awn.com>.

*O' what a tangled web we weave,
when first we practise to deceive!*

- Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832)

The great writer, E.B. White became my friend and regular correspondent until his death. That was my main reward from a spidery web of deceit that squashed a literary spider. Here you can read the never-before published letters that reveal the true story.

The story of our non-production of *Charlotte's Web* is about as good an example of producer chicanery as you're going to find. The fact that I was

contracted by Sagittarius Pictures to produce this movie seemed to indicate the pinnacle of my career. *Charlotte's Web* was one of my favorite stories, and E.B. White one of my favorite writers, not least for his wonderful work on *The New Yorker* magazine. Out of the experience I gained something more valuable than the production itself: the personal friendship with E.B. "Andy" White. We carried on a steady personal correspondence for ten years, until just before his death.

E.B. White was one of the most-loved writers of his time. His work for *The New Yorker* magazine regaled us for years, and his books, especially *Stuart Little* and *Charlotte's Web*, are "forever" classics. His English language textbook, *The Elements Of Style*, revised from a slim volume originally written by his

old professor, William Strunk, is a writers' bible.

I suppose that there were many animators who dreamed of an assignment to adapt *Charlotte's Web*. The most important among them was John Hubley. Hubley had been my own personal inspiration. I was once his protégé at UPA. Doubtless, he would have created a poem of a film.

But when Henry White, president of Sagittarius Pictures, and his assigned producer Mike Campus showed up in Prague in the fall of 1970, offering me, out-of-the-blue, this dream project, I had no idea of what had gone before, or what would follow. Sagittarius was owned by the Seagrams whiskey magnate, Edgar Bronfman, so I had every reason to believe I was dealing with a solid outfit. What I didn't know was that the project was already second hand, having first been attempted by none other than my idol and original animation master, John Hubley!

In 1967 the team of John and Faith Hubley became interested in acquiring the motion picture rights to *Charlotte's Web*. E.B. White, who liked to be called "Andy," knew and liked the Hubleys and was inclined to favor their proposal. Alexander Lindey was the lawyer who represented Andy in the negotiations, along with Jap Gude, who had become Andy's agent for film rights during

the '50s. From the correspondence it is evident that Andy wanted more control over the material than movie companies are disposed to grant. A contract was signed, but in the end the Hubleys were unable to get financial backing and the project fell through.

◆◆◆◆

Thirty years after the event I am ready to tell the untold story. I have saved all of the documentation and correspondence, the script and storyboard, so nothing that follows relies on foggy memory. I will mainly let the authentic letters between E.B. White and me tell the story, but first a few paragraphs of background information:

Andy White was 70 years old at the time and ailing. He had been in a car crash the year before and suffered head and neck injuries, and was in constant pain. Additionally, he was in need of money. To protect him from high annual taxation, he had a "maximum payment" clause built into his *Charlotte's Web* book contract with Harpers, limiting him to a maximum yearly royalty payment of \$7,500. But *Charlotte* was a huge success and the royalties were far greater. A great deal of money had piled up, and was locked in Harper's safe, as it were. In order to free the money, Andy's lawyer, John "Jap" Gude, suggested that if Andy would write a new children's book, a contract could be made to join its royalties with that of *Charlotte*. Andy told me personally, on my first visit, that he was forced to write *A Trumpet and the Swan*, expressly for the purpose of freeing up his backlog of royalties for *Charlotte's Web*! But it was a complex legal maneuver,

and Andy needed to gain quick cash. He was thus vulnerable to the deal offered by the Seagrams likker combine.

Edgar Bronfman, and his subsidiary film production company, Sagittarius, headed by a Henry White (absolutely no relation to Andy!), paid Andy enough to get him to agree to the following minimal creative rights:

The story of
our non-production
of *Charlotte's Web*
is about as good
an example
of producer
chicanery as
you're going to find.

Andy would have the right of approval of the model of Charlotte and her voice. PERIOD.

That was it; no adaptation approval, no characterization approval, no screenplay approval, and no approval of the assigned adapter/director. In other words, E.B. White, the author of *Charlotte's Web*, was left with no approval rights of anything that really mattered. The model of Charlotte and her voice were important, but only a gumdrop in the creative ocean.

Poor Andy White: from Hubley-to-Deitch-to-Hanna-Barbera... Downhill all the way, I suppose...

As I look back through these old letters, I now plainly see that I had zero chance to realize the project. Andy White was sick. So was his wife Katharine, who had suffered a series of heart attacks. There was gloom in the

room. And brilliant as he was, Andy had no real conception of the problems and limitations of adapting a book to the technical and marketing conditions of feature filmmaking. I was in the stupid position of having to lecture this great man on the basics of film language.

Though a man of great integrity and humanity, he was at the time in great need of money. Sagittarius paid him a large fee for the film rights, much of it conditional on the completion of the film. So Andy was ultimately their pawn. As you will read, he was strongly against turning *Charlotte's Web* into a song and dance musical, but that is exactly what Hanna-Barbera did with it.

There was also the basic trepidation of the Money Men to invest in a production behind the Iron Curtain. Mike Campus, who recruited me to direct the film, was in hot water with Sagittarius! I was sucking a dry teat, and I knew it. Yet, once chosen for this golden project, I plunged recklessly ahead. As with my earlier attempt at an impossible situation at Terrytoons, I leapt at this offer to work on a dream project with an author I so much admired. The resulting experience was painful, but after all these years, I feel that my relationship with Andy White was well worth the foolhardy risk. I did reserve just enough reason to insist on a contract from Sagittarius that would pay me double if they decided NOT to use me or my storyboard in actual production.

◆◆◆◆

October 4, 1978

Dear Gene:

The whole episode, the attempt to make a film of Charlotte's Web, is one of my nightmares. The only good thing to come out of it for me was that I learned never to try anything like that again...

I got in over my depth when I got involved with Sagittarius, and I'm still trying to surface. About all I know about Bronfman is that he flew in here in his private jet and made off with some rhubarb pie to take back to his pilot — or maybe himself, as he seemed to have a good appetite..."

Bronfman had taken his biggest bite out of Andy White's most precious possession, his creative integrity. I will quote that entire letter at the end...

♦♦♦♦♦

To read the remaining letters or to find out more on Gene's career in the world of animation, read his book *How To Succeed In Animation (Don't Let A Little Thing Like Failure Stop You!)*. An AWN exclusive online at: <http://genedeitch.awn.com/index.php3?ltype=chapter&chapter=27>.

Gene Deitch is one of the last surviving members of the original Hollywood UPA studio of 1946 and the instigator of the CBS-Terrytoon "renaissance" of 1956-1958. He was also: Animation Department Chief of the Detroit Jam Handy Organization, 1949-1951, Creative Chief of UPA-New York,

1951-1954, Director at John Hubley's Storyboard, Inc. New York, 1955, President of Gene Deitch Associates, Inc. New York, 1958-1960, Creative Director for Rembrandt Films, 1960-1968, and star director for Weston Woods Studios, Inc., Weston, Connecticut, 1968-1993. He has worked for over 40 years with the Prague animation studio, "Bratři v Triku."

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Everything About Animation



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Zagreb Film's New Beginning

by Heather Kenyon

Centered in the heart of the Croatian capital, the once mighty and influential Zagreb Film has fallen into the doldrums. The once creative hotspot and winner of an Oscar for 1961's *Substitute* (*Surogat*, Dusan Vukotic), Zagreb Film was a victim of not only the Balkan crisis but also over the past twenty or so years a general petering out or loss of energy. Well, enter Damir Demonja, Zagreb Film's new 35 year-old general manager, who took his post in December of 2001 and is bringing sweeping changes to the sleepy organization. Not afraid of work, Demonja has a list of projects both economic and cultural for the studio. While in Zagreb for the International Film Festival, I toured the studio and sat down with Damir to discuss his

plans for the future and his already significant actions. It was a hectic week for the Zagreb Film team who are, of course, very involved in the festival, all the while holding tours and meetings with the visiting professionals.

Officially founded in 1956, Zagreb Film pulled together a team of artists that would go on to make the small studio an international award-winning powerhouse and be known as the Zagreb School of design and style. Beginning in the early Fifties these artists made films however they could, developing a limited animation technique that saved time and money in order to complete their films. They however combined this technique with a very stylized design sense, much in the fashion of the U.S.' UPA studio, to



Damir Demonja. All images © AWN, Inc.

create striking shorts that captured the animation world's attention. However this great spark slowly grew less bright until Zagreb Film completely collapsed after finishing the production of *Little Flying Bears* with Canada's Cinegroupe.

Zagreb Film is currently owned by the city of Zagreb, where it is one of thirty such companies that even includes the local public transportation! While the company is supported by the city and Ministry of Culture currently, within the next four years the studio must be privatized. It is now Demonja's difficult job to steer the studio toward co-productions, commercial and other service work, and the full exploitation of



The gates leading to Zagreb Film's newer building.



The school on Zagreb Film's property which teaches a new generation animation.

Zagreb's significant film library, in order to carve a niche in the crowded animation marketplace. While commercials will play a key role in earning the studio money, short art films will remain on Zagreb's production slate. As Demonja explains, "You have to diversify. It is necessary if you want to stay in business, but we have a history," he says pointing to the Oscar in the glass case behind his desk, "that we cannot forget."

Progress Made

Even in his short few months Demonja has had a significant impact. He has a unique background which is a mix of art history and distribution. His first move was to license the beloved *Professor Balthazar* cartoons to Croatian Airlines. The Professor is to the Balkan region what Bugs Bunny is to the U.S. Everyone in the region knows and loves the character. Again capitalizing on Zagreb's amazing library of films, his next move was to strike a deal with Issa Film & Video, a regional distributor (Croatia, Macedonia and Bosnia) that also handles Warner Bros. products. "Now Professor Balthazar will be on the same shelf as Scooby Doo and available in the markets that he is best known," Demonja explains. Internally, he has started a marketing and promotions department and, while the company began to delve into CG two years ago, a new media department has been added which is charged with adding Flash to the company's repertoire. Zagreb Film has long worked on everything from artistic shorts, to advertisements, to service work, but now it is a goal of Demonja's to make sure they can take on projects in all of these areas using a number of different

animation tools. "We are revitalizing our staff," Demonja goes on to say, "We will be making a number of changes in the coming months." Demonja is focused on bringing in new, young, educated and creative staff members that can match his energy.

Over the course of our tour, Damir outlined his plan for Zagreb Film's rebirth: "I have to increase production, keep up good, strong relations with the Ministry of Culture, international festivals, ASIFA and international companies, and find new ways of revenue growth by concentrating on new media, new animators and new ideas." To these ends Demonja is hitting the international markets to establish connections to not only get involved in co-productions but also to license the library and increase Zagreb Film's profile. To begin to build business, Demonja attended the American Film Market in Santa Monica, California in February, then went to Budapest's DISCOP in June. Of course, MIPTV and MIPCOM are on his schedule as well as a special trip to this month's Hiroshima Animation Festival. "I am very honored to be screening our work at Hiroshima," says Demonja. "I was very surprised and happy when Sayoko Kinoshita, the festival director, contacted me." At the festival eleven animated films were screened as well as a presentation by Demonja about the animated films which were shown, their authors, the Zagreb School of Animated Films' history and the studio's new direction. Over one thousand people attended and he was even interviewed by the Japanese press, including NHK!

A Platform to Build From

Zagreb Films owns a mas-

sive library that includes its shorts and series but also the educational films of Filmoteka 16. Assumed in 1996, these educational, government sponsored films from the former Yugoslavia, are distributed to Croatian speaking populations around the globe. "Sure, Canada, Australia — Croats are spread far and wide," Demonja replies when I ask him about the demand for such product. The archive is kept in one of Zagreb Film's two buildings in the center of the city. In addition to the archive, this "newer" building, houses the administrative offices, animation school, editing bays and production facilities, while the older, larger building is Zagreb Film's complete production facility complete with cameras and screening rooms. In this older building is where history was made.

While walking the creaking wooden floors of this building, Demonja unveils another project: "Yes, this building will be renovated. We have already started." He then takes me to the screening room and describes his plan for a new 100 seat theater with Dolby Digital sound, which will be an art cinema and present special screenings in association with ASIFA's very active local chapter. Currently in conjunction with ASIFA, public animation screenings are being held, but with this new theater, and a museum, which is also in the planning stages, an animation center will be created. Not only a fitting spot for such a facility, paying homage to the past, but also to increase awareness of animation and promote it among the public. Behind the building, in a nice shaded grassy yard, a meeting place will be built, complete with snacks and refreshments, so that the venue will be fitting for all sorts

of public events. Vesna Dovnikovic helms the local ASIFA chapter, serves as vice president on the ASIFA International board and is also providing Demonja with consulting services regarding the rejuvenation of the studio. "She has been a great help," he says.

With all this taking momentum, Demonja's goals remain clear cut. The studio currently employs 32 full-time employees that are working on a television co-production, several commercials and art films. In 2002, nine short films will have been made and numerous commercials. Many of these commercials are for the biggest Croatian companies, selling such staples as fruit juice and milk. The television series co-production, *Lilos Lesewelt*, is with the Austrian company Helbling and is a series of 26 X 5-minute episodes teaching

pre-schoolers German. A crew of twelve is currently working on the series, which is on episode number 16. All production steps are done in-house using Toonz and editing is done on a Matrox DigiSuite system.

"I want everyone to know that Zagreb Film is alive!" he finishes, standing in front of the first, original building. "It is going to take some work, but we have a lot of directions to take and a lot to work with."

Special thanks to Zdravko Virovec, a Zagreb Film animator/director, for driving me on my tour and fearlessly double parking in the narrow streets of Zagreb!

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an e-mail to editor@awn.com.

Heather Kenyon is editor in chief of Animation World Network. After graduating magna cum laude with a BFA from the University of Southern California's School of Cinema-Television, Heather began her career in animation at Hanna-Barbera Cartoons, where she became manager of the Production Communications department. She has contributed a chapter to the book, Animation in Asia, published by John Libbey & Company, Ltd. Heather is also vice president of Women In Animation International and on the Board of Trustees of Trees for Life.

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Taking Animation to the Streets

by Heather Kenyon

At Zagreb 2002, the 15th World Festival of Animated Films, I had the opportunity to view *In Between*, a new short film from Zagreb Films by filmmaker Nicole Hewitt. We often think of animation as being a very controlled medium, but here, Hewitt takes to the streets in a form of "guerrilla animation," animating mounds of trash that has been left on the streets of Zagreb. From heavy washing machines and refrigerators to wicker baskets, couches and beyond, the film focuses on our displaced possessions.

Heather Kenyon: First off, why was all this trash out on the sidewalks and whatever gave you the idea to animate it?

Nicole Hewitt: The city of Zagreb organizes an annual clearance of large household refuse. This takes place every year starting in April on the outskirts of the city, making its way into the center by the summer and then moving out again toward September. Each borough or neighborhood is allocated a specific day to chuck their stuff out, so during that period piles and piles of rubbish appear all around town. This has been going on for years and has always been



Masses of debris mobilize in Hewitt's study of discarded possessions. © Zagreb Films.

a source of fascination to me. There's a kind of continuous choreography going on with the rubbish as people empty their garages, attics or whatever and other people look through the piles; some just perusing, others collecting toys or looking for antiques, the Romany gypsies [Editor's note: Romany gypsies are an ethnic group of wanderers that have been in Europe since before the 14th century. Originally from northwest India, they began their migration before the 9th century. Once in Europe, they suffered discrimination, and even torture and slavery. Prejudice continues to this day.] collecting metal, wood and plastic. It's like a whole archaeology of the city on public display.

HK: What point are you making with your film? Is it more a study of the trash items, their form and nature, or are you making an environmental point?

NH: Rubbish is to me a fascinating subject and I was initially interested in the identity status of these objects. The anthropologist Mary Douglas calls rubbish 'matter out of place' — discarded objects still retain traces of their previous identities, they have not yet disintegrated into an amorphous and unidentifiable mass, they are still recognizable objects, but in the wrong place and with traces of ownership still lingering. They are, to my mind in an *In Between* state of things, on their way to becoming



Nicole Hewitt. Image courtesy of Zagreb Films.

ing nothing, non-objects. In the Zagreb case, the matter is even more fascinating as other factors come into play — private vs. public space, bourgeois taboos of cleanliness are confronted with 'scavenging.' There is a whole alternative economy going on in the streets, with the Romany people sorting and reclassifying the rubbish according to material. There are also cases of people throwing their own junk on the pile and taking something their neighbor threw out...

HK: How did you come to make a film for Zagreb Film? Don't you usually live and work in the U.K.?

NH: This is the second film I made for Zagreb Film, and before the war I made two for Luna Film, a small company that folded. I have spent half of my life in Zagreb and half in London, and I can't see that changing in the near future. I am pursuing some university research in London at the moment but will be starting work on another film in

Zagreb some time next year.

HK: The sound track contains a number of voices but since most people don't speak Croatian... what is being said?

NH: I was toying with the idea of translating the sound track but in the end decided that it was so locally specific, that I would simply accept it having very different readings in Croatia than elsewhere. Most of the questions directed at the crew are people just wondering what the hell we are doing. There are also some exchanges between the Romany gypsies and the white citizens of Zagreb. I thought it was interesting to include a completely authentic location soundtrack to accompany the animation. As you said, an important feature of this film is that it does not have any of the common animation control devices. A lot of the work involved a certain amount of improvisation and collaboration. We could not predict what and how many

objects would appear on a pile, or what kind of interactions between people might occur. In the end we started going on location with a number of mini disc recorders and just recording everything that went on.

HK: Fascinating. So, it turned into an animated documentary of this neighborhood event. How did the people on the street react to you making an animated film on their sidewalk? Do they know about Zagreb's prestigious history of animation filmmaking?

NH: People were incredibly interested in what we were doing, sometimes too interested and either wanted to instruct me in the form of correct filmmaking or wanted to join in. Most people do know about Zagreb's past fame but are not sure that there is any animation still being made.

HK: What difficulties did you encounter in making your film? How much time did you have per shot and how long was your overall production schedule?

NH: One of the main difficulties was (apart from the sheer physical effort involved in moving around bits of washing machines, bathtubs and wardrobes) public relations — I was not aware of the power of the camera until this film. As soon as you're out on the streets with a camera, people think you're a TV crew and they give you such a hard time because it seems they think the minute the media get hold of a problem story the story will get solved. As we would take about 12 hours on average on a single location, we were a good target for all local grievances and feelings of despair. This I think

comes over more in the sound-track; a certain aggression that was directed toward us just for having a camera and daring to shoot something as innocuous as piles of rubbish. Interestingly enough we had the best of relationships with the Romanies. To them the trash is a source of income and deserves the respect we showed it, so that gave us a common ground of understanding and mutual support. Initially I thought I might have to give them some money to compensate for taking up a pile of rubbish, but we worked out a system where we would hold on to the pieces they had selected until the end of the shoot and they would then come and collect it after we had finished.

Editor's note: If you have the



Another sequence from *In Between*.
© Zagreb Films.

QuickTime plug-in you can view clips from *In Between* online at http://mag.awn.com/index.php3?type=pageone&article_no=1524

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the ANIMATION Script

by Jean Ann Wright

Before You Sit Down to Write

Writing an animation script is like directing a film. But SpongeBob doesn't demand that his trailer come complete with a hot tub and a giant rubber ruddy duck. And Marge Simpson doesn't keep the crew waiting while her makeup staff frantically camouflages the wrinkles she forgot to botox! In a live-action project the director decides what to shoot and later edits. There is no need for this kind of expensive editing process in animation. Animated scripts are usually written shot-by-shot with the writer listing each shot, or at minimum all the important ones: CLOSE SHOT ON GINGER, ANOTHER ANGLE ON ARTHUR. There are exceptions. Animated features and CGI shows are usually written in master scenes: INT. THE CASTLE - DAY, just as you'd write a live-action script without specific camera shots. A few studios use only master scenes in their animated TV scripts as well. No matter how it's done, the job of the storyboard person, who follows, is to improve upon your script in any way possible, so expect changes in your shots. Break up your dialogue with action. A standard animated script has no more than three blocks of dialogue at once. An average of two or three lines of dialogue per block is about normal. But each show is different. Ask for a sample script. Discuss formatting. You may be able to download a



Jean Ann Wright

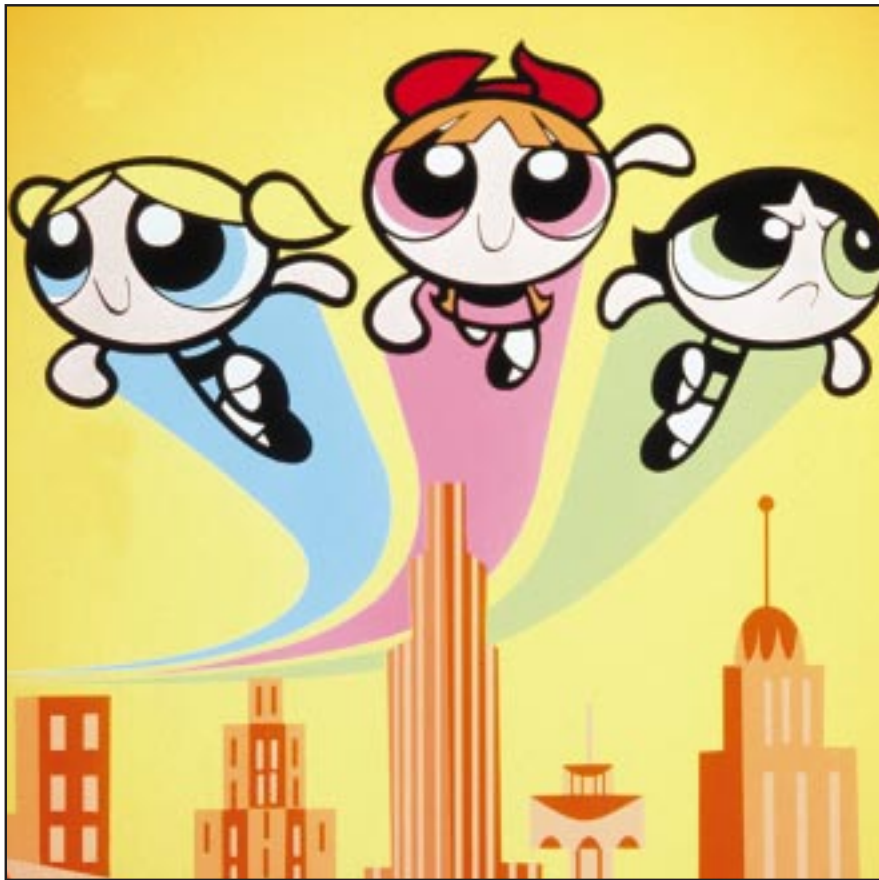
script template. In any case you must know technical requirements: whether your script needs to be submitted on disk, if you must use a specific word processing program like Microsoft Word, or a specific typeface. Follow the format of the sample script exactly. For example no story editor has the time to change all your character names from lower case to upper. Normal page format is about 52 lines of a standard 12-point font (like Courier), centered on the page top and bottom (with about three quarters of an inch more margin on the left). Pages are numbered in the upper right corner. Most studios want character names typed in caps when they first appear. Some studios want a character list on a separate page.

Working with the Story Editor
Follow all story notes

exactly. These notes could change your story substantially from the outline. Perhaps broadcast executives required changes, other subsequent stories have made these changes necessary, or your story editor has thought of something better. If you've had a fantastic idea that will improve your story, discuss it with the editor first. He wants the best story you can write, but you already have approvals for THIS story. If you're writing a script for a game, technical aspects have already been worked out. The story editor will have to weigh the improvement with the practicalities of a change. Get a page count for your completed script. Ask for a deadline and be sure you stick to it! You may have only about a week to write your script.



The fabulously low-maintenance star of Nickelodeon's *SpongeBob SquarePants* series. © Nickelodeon.



Even with regularly soiled smocks and scuffed shoes, the Powerpuff Girls manage to look good and stay under budget on wardrobe. © AOL Time Warner.

The First Draft

You'll want to write your first draft straight through. Keep length in mind as you write, estimating page count by the ratio of script to outline. It's better to write a little too long and cut to tighten, than not to write enough. Save the editing until the end. The first page has to hook you! Even descriptions should be interesting. The first scene must be strong, funny or high action, never exposition. Every scene should have a grabber opening, a middle, and an end. Each scene should have a purpose that's accomplished as simply and economically as possible, advancing the plot, adding to the pacing, telling your story in a way that's entertaining and unique, adding something that's fresh and unexpected. Write with magic and wonder. Set a mood.

Write with passion! Provide an emotional experience, putting the senses into play. Establish attitude, using dialogue, mannerisms, body language and stage business. Give your viewers a few moments that they'll remember...and they better belong to your star! Be sure to explain everything at the first opportunity for the executive readers and the artists that follow, even if it's to be a surprise for the audience. Design your set with style, using an economy of words. Add camera directions, picturing what the camera sees. Choreograph your action and your camera movement, but do it simply without breaking the budget. Know what can be done economically in a traditional 2D show and what can be done in a CGI show. Is there stock animation or stock backgrounds that

the producer wants used? Can complicated action happen off-stage and still be effective? To stage for the budget (Note: Not in standard script format.):

CLOSE ON MOUNTAIN PETE

MOUNTAIN PETE
Look out! It's an avalanche!

CLOSE ON FALLING ROCKS

A few rocks fall into the shot.

CLOSE ON CLUELESS CHUCK
One rock hits Clueless Chuck on the head.

In this low-budget version of an avalanche, little animation is needed. But our imaginations supply what we don't see.

Be Practical! Keep Up the Pace!

Set the stage well first. Know the room. Make the most of your props. The action must work for the layout people and the animators that follow. Break up the action and increase the pace with cuts. They keep the story moving. Individual scenes should be very short, especially for TV. Action. Reaction. Try to add only the kind of effects that show uses. Ask! Add sound effects, special wipes, special music, etc. as needed. Most studios want all sound effects written in caps for the sound editor. This is your first big use of dialogue. Every line should work to build the story. Use the essence. Keep sentences short. Use strong verbs. Make it flow, but don't make your sentences so smooth that they lull you to sleep. If there's a sign, be sure that one of the characters reads it out loud. Young kids can't read, and international viewers may not be able to read

English. Follow the gag ratio of that series, or ask if you can write more. Exaggerate! Visual, not audio, gags work best in animation, especially in an international marketplace. Or is this a series with lots of smart dialogue? Build your gags, milk them, and top them. Did you set up expectations...then spring a surprise? Repeat a gag only if you can do a twist. Timing is everything! Friz Freleng, one of the Bugs Bunny directors, is reported to have timed his gags to a beat. He'd get a rhythm going and then break it for the surprise. End with a bang and a gag!

Your Final Draft

Are your characters true to who they are? Are they likeable? Is your villain really bad? Are relationships true to the series?

Visual, not audio, gags work best in animation, especially in an international marketplace.

Is there plenty of action and suspense? Is everything crystal clear? Smooth transitions. Be sure that nothing is too subtle to animate or see on a small television screen. If something bothers you, then respect your instincts and cut it. Cut the extraneous. Cut the philosophy, then the adjectives. Tighten. If you still have too much, try cutting off the beginning or the end of a

scene. Check spelling and grammar. No typos? Nothing that standards and practices will cut? Then you're done!

Jean Ann Wright has been teaching animation writing and development since 1996 and currently teaches for Women In Animation and The Animation Academy. Recently, she started her own consulting business. She's sold her writing to DIC, Filmation and Hanna-Barbera. She enjoys serving on the Los Angeles board of Women In Animation and judging for the Emmys and the Annies.

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an e-mail to editor@awn.com.

Bonus HTML Features

Every on-line (HTML) issue of *Animation World Magazine* contains additional features not found in the download or print Acrobat version, such as QuickTime movies, links to Animation World Network sites, extended articles and special sections. Don't miss the following highlight that is showcased exclusively in this month's *Animation World Magazine* HTML version:

Annecy 2002: Loud, Proud and Crowded

Pat Raine Webb reviews the films at Annecy 2002, from the surprise Grand Prix to the delights of the student competition. Includes QuickTime clips at:
http://mag.awn.com/index.php3?ltype=pageone&article_no=1526

Taking Animation to the Streets

Nicole Hewitt proves that animation does not need to be done in the solitary confinement of a studio. With her film *In Between*, she took to the streets of Zagreb to animate the cast off possessions of hundreds. See the results online by watching our QuickTime movie clips at:
http://mag.awn.com/index.php3?ltype=pageone&article_no=1524

Fresh from the Festivals: August 2002's Film Reviews

Maureen Furniss reviews five short films fresh from the festival circuit: *Premammals* by Michal Zabka, Lisa Yu's *Vessel Wrestling*, *Bee Movie* by Gil Kenan, *Interstices* by Marina Estela Graça, and Nina Paley's *Fetch!* Our online version includes QuickTime movie clips at:
http://mag.awn.com/index.php3?ltype=pageone&article_no=1509

A Tangled Web

Gene Deitch shares his experiences with E.B. "Andy" White regarding the production of *Charlotte's Web*, a project White called, "one of my nightmares." Personal letters and more are online! Gene Deitch's entire book, *How To Succeed In Animation (Don't Let A Little Thing Like Failure Stop You!)* is available online exclusively through AWN at: <http://genedeitch.awn.com>.

Hot Career Tips

Pamela Kleibrink Thompson

It's summer in the northern hemisphere which means soaring temperatures. Here are some hot career tips that will keep your career cooking all year long.

Maintain a sunny outlook. When you work on any project you will be on a team with others. Maintain a professional positive attitude. Success comes to those who love what they do. If there are problems at work or on the project, figure out ways to solve them rather than complain about the situation.

Don't burn your bridges. It's a small industry. Make sure that you follow through on promises. Don't quit before your part in the project is complete. Deliver on time. Be early and be ready. Be reliable and professional. Don't argue and belabor a point or opinion with a supervisor if the decision has been made.

Make sure that you follow through on promises.

Avoid burn out. Reconnect with the reasons and the feelings you love animation. Take a course, teach a class, mentor a newcomer or make your own film (it's easier than ever with Flash and computers). Get in touch with those feelings and keep that love of animation alive. Pursuing a career in



Pamela Kleibrink Thompson

animation demands patience, persistence, determination and time. There are many easier ways to make a living, but if animation is your passion then pursue it every day. Maybe it's time to learn a few new tricks. Improve your skills, master new software. The more versatile you are, the more employable you are. Keep up to date on the latest trends and new companies by reading the trades, taking classes and networking. Keep skills up to date. Bring your sketch book to the ball game or the beach. There are many opportunities for figure drawing whether you go to the pool or the mall.

Generate heat. Make sure potential employers are aware of you. If you make a short film, enter it in festivals and competitions. Find opportunities for screenings and make sure potential employers get an invitation to view it. If

you are a computer animator, make sure to enter your project in the Electronic Theatre at SIGGRAPH (for more info see www.siggraph.org).

Create sizzling marketing materials. Customize your reel to the job and company you are applying to, if possible. Know what clients are looking for and customize your reel to what they want. Keep your portfolio up to date and ready to show at any time. Update your demo reel (VHS cassette) and resume every six months and submit it to the employers you are interested in. If you are looking for work, be sure others know it.

Put top priorities on the front burner. Don't put off your dreams. If you really want to work in animation, do it. Make a short film. Now it's possible to post a film on the Internet and have a world wide audience. Work on your dream every day and make it a priority.

Pursuing a career in anim- ation demands patience, persistence, determination and time.

Keep contacts warm. Networking is more than making connections. Networking is helping others to make connections too. Go to industry related events and speak to the speakers and to fellow audience members. You never know who might be sitting next to you. Get out and explore other interests as well to

expand your knowledge as well as your contacts.

Work like the blazes. While you work on your job, work on your career as well. When thinking about what job to take, consider what you can learn as well as what you might earn. Recognize that you never stop learning and try to find jobs where you can grow as an animator.

Stay fired up. Re-ignite your passion. Share your love of animation with someone who can really appreciate it — a child. Speak about animation at local libraries, summer camps and schools. Talk to children about how to make cartoons. Summer

is a great time to go to the movies and hey, theatres have air conditioning! Treat a child to some animation this summer and support the industry at the same time.

**When thinking
about what job
to take, consider
what you can
learn as well
as what you
might earn.**

Use these red hot tips to keep the flame alive.

Pamela Kleibrink Thompson is a career coach and recruiter. She also speaks about animation careers at colleges, universities and national conferences. As a career coach, she helps clients enjoy, enhance and energize their careers.

Note: Readers may contact any Animation World Magazine contributor by sending an e-mail to editor@awn.com.

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HOW TO DRAW ANIMATION: Sounding Out Words

by Christopher Hart

Last month we covered "Simplifying Characters for Animation." Now we are going to move on and tackle the difficult task of creating mouth movements.



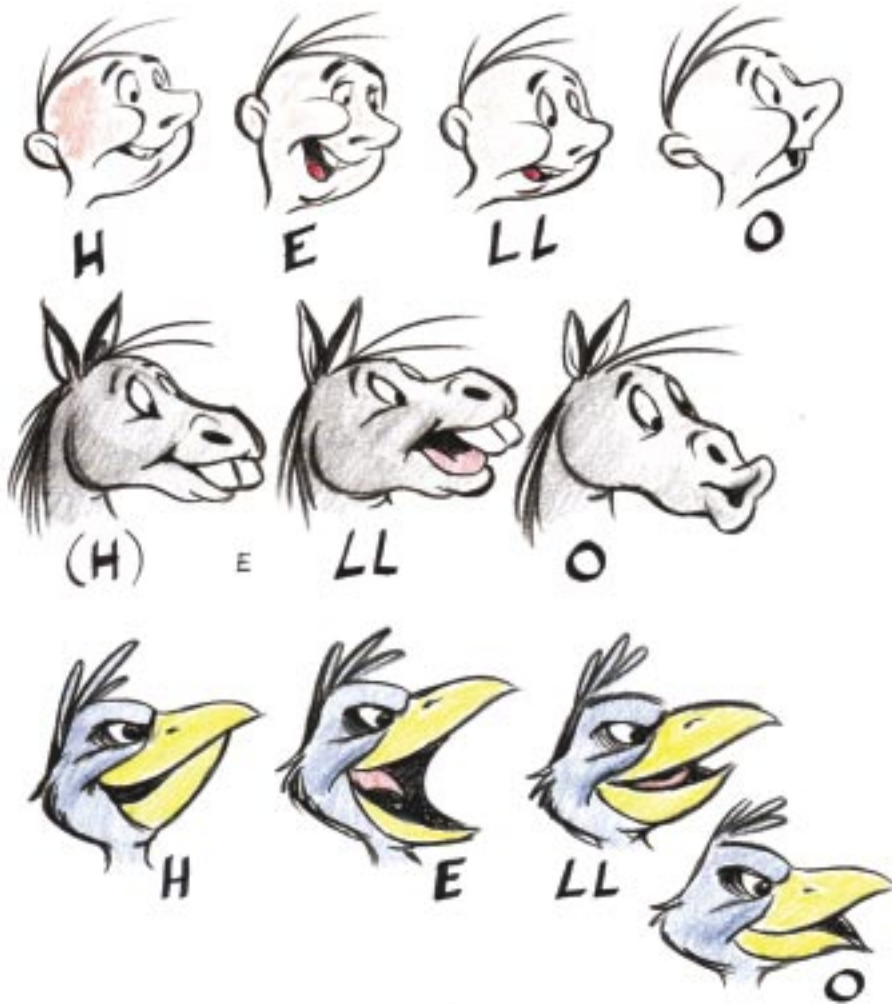
It's not what you say, it's how you say it. No two characters will say a line the same way; they can have physical differences that will affect the way they move their mouths. See how the mouth changes when a simple word is said by a man, a horse and a bird.

Think phonetically. Don't literally articulate every letter unless it's called for. Sometimes a few letters in a word are bunched together; the word "probably" might be spoken as "probbly," with only two syllables.

How to Draw Animation by Christopher Hart. New York, New York: Watson-Guption Publications, a division of VNU Business Media, Inc., 1997. 144 pages. ISBN: 0-8230-2365-6 (US\$19.95)

Christopher Hart has written and illustrated many successful "how to" cartoon and animation books for Watson-Guption, in addition to writing for many studios and networks like NBC, Showtime, 20th Century Fox, MGM and others. He is also the author and on-screen host of a popular art instruction CD-ROM series. Hart has worked in animation, comic strips (Blondie), and magazines, including contributing regularly to Mad Magazine.

Note: Readers may contact any Animation World Magazine contributor by sending an e-mail to editor@awn.com.



© Christopher Hart; illustration by Nancy Beiman.

My book, *How to Draw Animation*, has found its way into many animation classrooms. So I was delighted when the people at Animation World, a Website I frequent, asked me if they could reproduce some of the art from the book. My aim in creating the book was to marry art instruction with appealing characters. Appealing characters lie at the heart of animation; and it always struck me that unless

you create great characters, it's pointless to put so much energy into making them move. If you are interested in learning more about character design (both cartoony and semi-realistic types), as well as in creating fluid, convincing motion based on fundamentals and more advanced techniques, then give these pages a look. Although the examples given are of 2D animation, the same principles may carry over to 3D.

Annecy 2002:

Loud, Proud and Crowded

by Pat Raine Webb

For some years many of us have felt that the Annecy festival had sacrificed quality for quantity and there are still too many competition programmes but the queues for tickets never lessen and it seems that no-one can get enough animation. Sadly much of it is destined for oblivion and few, if any, of the short films will be seen on television or in the cinema.

The juries had an unenviable task, especially in the short film category. Unusually for me, I agreed with almost all the decisions but the most difficult of all



Barcode is Adriaan Lokman's debut film as an independent animation director. For this film he has brought 3D computer animation back to its abstract essentials: 3D form, light and camera. Using only a rudimentary shape, he shows us an abstract road movie. © il Luster Productions / Adriaan Lokman.

must have been the Grand Prix. I did not once experience that heart-stopping moment when you realise that this is IT — when technique, virtuosity, narrative and pure delight overwhelm you. The winner *Barcode* by Adriaan

Lokman of The Netherlands was certainly an extremely competent and enjoyable piece of computer animation, and to the best of my knowledge a totally abstract work has never won a Grand Prix at Annecy, but was the jury unanimous in thinking it was worthy of this major award? Two of them use traditional drawn animation (Michaël Dudok de Wit, Holland; Wendy Tilby, Canada), one is a journalist (Bernard Génin, France), two work in television (Carole Bonneau, Canada; Hélène Vayssières, France); the only "digital" expert was Pete Docter (USA), who directed *Monsters, Inc.* Or was it that they felt they must give an award? I was unable to confirm this one way or the other and I could go on speculating ad infinitum.

The festival opened with a screening of *Ice Age* in the presence of its directors Chris Wedge



Audiences warmed up to the tale of a sloth, a woolly mammoth and a saber-toothed tiger coming together to return a human child to its father. TM and © 20th Century Fox Film Corp. All rights reserved.



Just one of this year's Aussie entries, the excellent *Looking for Horses* by Anthony Lawrence of Australia. © Anthony Lawrence.



The crowd roared after seeing Robert Bradbrook's *Home Road Movies*, a moving portrait of a man and the family memories he created by taking his family on road trip holidays. © a finetake production for Channel 4 in association with the Arts Council of England.

and Carlos Saldanha. I am not wild about animated features nor of computer animation, but this turned out to be a very entertaining film, full of charm and a warmth that belied its title.

Professional Films

The first programme of shorts in competition included several films that, although well made, were unpleasant or downright scary, particularly Ferenc Cako's *Psycho Parade*. Sound levels were ear-shattering. After this, *La Funambula* (*Tight Rope Walker*) by Italy's Roberto Catani was like a breath of fresh air. The technique used is gypsum on black paper producing soft colours and textures blending with lyrical movement. The film deserved its Special Mention for artistic quality.

I approached further programmes with trepidation but there were some good things. Australia entered a lot of films dealing with family problems and *Looking for Horses* by Anthony Lawrence was no exception. Two little girls on vacation try to understand what is going on between their parents who are on the point of separation. The puppet animation is excellent and the characters appealing. *Home Road Movies* by Robert Bradbrook (UK) is the real-life story of a shy father and a family car, in a film that really touches your heart. This has missed out so many times with awards but the Annecy audience gave it a great reception and the jury obviously agreed as it won the Special Jury Prize. *Roof Sex* by Pes (USA) was clever and hilariously funny. It lasted little over a minute and was about sex between two armchairs on a rooftop! Yes — two armchairs! This has to be seen to be believed. It deservedly won the prize for Best First Film. Surprisingly Suzie Templeton's *Dog* from the U.K. did not figure in the awards list. This is a harrowing tale of love and loss that is almost too affecting to watch. A small boy tries to cope with the death of his mother, the father cannot communicate his anguish and their pet dog is now dying. The model animation is amazingly detailed and expressive.

The audience prize went, almost inevitably, to *Bookashkis* (Mikhail Aldashin, Russia). This is the story of a family of bugs who, inspired by a visit from aliens and tired of being squashed by humans, decide to build their own space ship.

Perhaps not the greatest of films but the animation is excellent and after some tedious stuff this roused cheers from the audience.

The Grand Prix for Best TV Animation Programme went to Barry J C Purves of the U.K. for *Hamilton Mattress*. This delightful story of an aardvark and his adventures told with superb puppetry was a well-deserved winner and is sure to appeal to kids of all ages. Also among the TV films in competition was the very well produced *War Game* directed by Dave Unwin (UK) that uses traditional drawn animation in a true story of soldiers in the First World War.

The Student Films

The four student competition programmes were impressive with some exciting graduate work especially from Germany where the standard was exceptionally high. South Korea also had some excellent films in this category. Strangely — or maybe not — no matter where the films were made a basic theme seemed to prevail — an alienation from society: the lonely little orphan girl in *Love* (Inse Van Rossen, Belgium), the rejected and outdated robot in *Buckethead* (Dan Hartney, Australia) and the girl who grows up travelling on a train in *De Là à Là* (Elodie Bouedec, France). All these characters are imprisoned within the life that has been given to them with little or no chance to escape. Many different techniques and styles were employed, all of them well conceived.

There was no doubt that *Das Rad (Rocks)* by Heidi Wittlinger, Chris Stenner and Arvid Uibel (Germany) was going

to win Best Student Film. In a bleak post-ice age landscape two ancient rock figures sit and talk as civilisations rise and fall, as the rocks continue, unchanged. I was very impressed with *Man Hang (Ephemeral Epiphany)* by Hyunsuk Kim from the Korean School of Visual Arts. This was an intense work; a strange and terrifying look into our interior lives. I also loved *The Patchwork Queen* (Lars Henkel, Germany) for its surreal style using decoupage, cut-outs and 2D computer animation. A strange landscape is revealed where the Patchwork Queen mends broken hearts — but at a price! Superb computer animation is used to create *Buckethead* (Dan Hartney, Australia). A rusty old robot looks for shelter and finds a



Written in Chinese, the title, *Man Hang (Ephemeral Epiphany)*, means the way to reach true knowledge. Kim describes her work as an attempt to depict her own realization; the emptiness of meaning and the paralyzed salvation of life.

© Hyunsuk Kim / Korean School of Visual Arts.



In a surreal landscape with paper patterns and sewing utensils, Lars Henkel's *The Patchwork Queen* shows the mending of broken hearts in exchange for a special tribute. © Lars Henkel 2001.

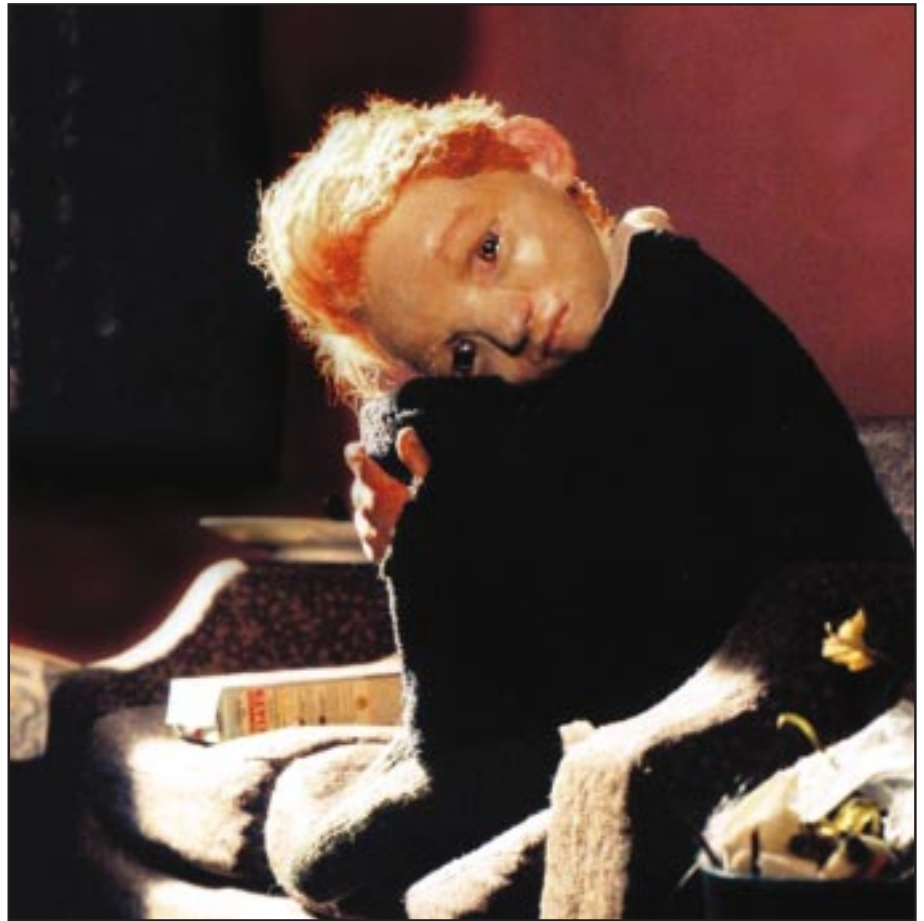
world of joy and happiness. And on and on...it is difficult to stop praising the graduation films when many were of such high quality.

The standard of student work I saw at Annecy troubles me to some extent. Where is all this amazing talent going? The industry is having a difficult time in many countries and I am concerned that so many brilliant young people will find it hard to continue the excellent start they have made.

Other Treats

Some good films that did not make it into competition appeared in Panorama. I especially loved *The Lucky Dip* (Emily Skinner, UK) about a small girl's adventures in a seaside arcade using beautifully designed puppets, and *The World of Interiors* (Bunny Schendler, UK) showing that drawing skills can still make a big impact in a computer-addicted world.

The screening of an enjoyable, documentary about Paul Driessen coincided with the publication of a new book about his work and an exhibition of original graphics. *Paul Driessen Inside Out* is a look at the artist and what makes him tick and at the strange and unique worlds he has created. Czech retrospectives were shown throughout the week with the work of all the greats from Jiri Trnka onwards and an exhibition of Svankmajer's work was mounted in the Chateau. Other special events included a series of programmes selected by leading animation artists, showing animated films that make us laugh and "Le Grand Sommeil" ("The Big Sleep")



Many felt *Dog* by Suzie Templeton from the U.K. was suspiciously missing from the winner's circle. © The Royal College of Art.

was a loving tribute to animators who had died in the past year: Faith Hubley, Chuck Jones, Jan Lenica, Paul Berry, Arcady and Yves Riffaux.

The closing ceremony was rather bizarre with the stage tarted up like a fairground but the prize giving went smoothly and this was followed by a screening of the winning films. Those who wanted to carry on partying — a few thousand of us it seemed — went to the Chateau for more celebrations.

If you want lots of action and don't mind crowds and queuing and more screenings then one human being can handle, then Annecy is the festival for you. But if you want to find the true spirit of animation you have to go to Zagreb!

If you have the QuickTime plug-in, you can view a clip from many of the films online at http://mag.awn.com/index.php3?type=pageone&article_no=1526

Pat Raine Webb is a freelance researcher, writer and programmer in animated film with 25 years experience in the animation industry. She is president of ASIFA UK and publishes the group's quarterly magazine *Dope Sheet*.

Note: Readers may contact any *Animation World Magazine* contributor by sending an e-mail to editor@awn.com.

Travels With My Film

by Iain Harvey

South Korea's recent successful progress in the football/soccer World Cup is perhaps reflective of their increasing presence in many fields. They have overcome economic setbacks, and just like their footballers, show a determination and spirit that you can only admire.



Koreans love films — and, especially, animation. Knowing their enthusiasm, I was delighted to be invited to the Jeonju International Film Festival (www.jiff.or.kr), which ran from April 26 - May 2, 2002. Two of my films were being screened in a program entitled “War and Animation” — Jimmy Murakami’s *When The Wind Blows*, which I executive produced, and *War Game*, directed by Dave Unwin.

Jeonju is a prosperous city in the mid-south of South Korea and in fact is an ideal location — being relatively compact, and in a

very attractive setting, surrounded as it is by wooded hills. It also has the most fantastic new media center, complete with concert hall, theatres, lecture rooms and natural outdoor amphitheater. The only disadvantage is its distance from the center: a 20 minute taxi ride though as it only costs the equivalent of a few dollars, and you could take the festival bus, the main concern (for some) is that of wasted energy.

**If you need
your love of,
and belief in,
animation to be
refreshed or
revived then
attending a
festival such as
Jeonju is just
the prescription.**

The festival is only in its third edition, with the animation being offered on a biannual basis. The animation program was extensive: as well as “War,” the festival included a Raoul Servais retrospective, a focus on Czech animation, Japanese shorts and independent Korean animation. Over 100 films in all, dating back to 1927 and including some wonderful Len Lye films.

But this is not the main reason I wanted to write about the

festival. If you need your love of, and belief in, animation to be refreshed or revived then attending a festival such as Jeonju is just the prescription. The programmers speak with both a knowledge of and interest in animation, and prioritized that festival essential — a good party (in fact, for animation, two!). The general interest in animation, the crowd's passion and knowledge all help to ensure you leave with a renewed confidence of the relevance of animation to people all round the globe and its universal nature.



Throngs of attendees flood the streets of Jeonju, host city of the self-titled film festival. © JIFF 2002.

Here are two examples: a six hour all night program on "Animation and War" filled a 1500 seat theatre and four screenings of Miyazaki's new masterpiece *Spirited Away* (another film to inspire filmmakers to new heights)

all sold out before the festival even started.

Korea is well known as a production source for much of the animation that appears on our television screens. As other countries undercut them in cost, their emphasis on quality has increased. Now a genuine creative circle of animators is growing. Somehow they are finding the resources to make their own shorts, not easy in a country without any financial base for such productions. Finally, the fact that a Korean film (*My Beautiful Girl*, Mari directed

by Sung-gang Lee) has just won the feature film award at Annecy is no coincidence.

Watch this space!

Following a career in publishing, Iain Harvey entered the world of animation as executive producer of *The Snowman* (1982). Subsequently, he went on to executive produce projects such as *When the Wind Blows* (1987), *Father Christmas* (1991) and the BBC television series *Spider* (1991). In 1993 he formed *The Illuminated Film*

Company going on to produce award-winning projects as *The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Stories*, *T.R.A.N.S.I.T.*, *Christmas Carol: The Movie* and *War Game*.

For information on *The Illuminated Film Company* and its productions, see: <http://www.illuminatedfilms.com>

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Within the world of animation, most experimentation occurs within short format productions, whether they be high budgeted commercials, low budgeted independent shorts, or something in between. The growing number of short film festivals around the world attest to the vitality of these works, but there are few other venues for exhibition of them or even written reviews. As a result, distribution tends to be difficult and irregular. On a regular basis, *Animation World Magazine* will highlight some of the most interesting with short descriptive overviews.

If you have the Quick-Time plug-in, you can go online and view a clip from each film by simply clicking the image.

This Month:

Prasavci (Premammals; Czech Republic, 2001). 9.5 min. Writ/Dir/Anim: Michal Zabka (Czech). Dir Phot: Tomas Sysel. Music: Ondrej Soukup. Sound: Jachym Dusbaba. Ed: Sarka Sklenarova. Produced at FAMU. Contact: Michal Podhradsky, Animation People, NA Doubkove 8, 1500 Prague 5, Czech Republic. Tel: +420 2 515 63 200. Fax: +420 2 515 65 203.

Vessel Wrestling (USA, 2001). 13 min. Dir: Lisa Yu (Chinese Amer). Voice: Yuki Terazawa (Japan). Produced at University of California, Los Angeles. Contact: Lisa Yu, tel: +1-310-313-4634, e-mail: lisayufreak@go.com.

Bee Movie (USA, 2001). 2.25 min. Dir: Gil Kenan (USA). Voice: J.J. Martinez (Spain). Produced at University of California, Los

Fresh from the Festivals:

August 2002's Film Reviews

by Maureen Furniss

Angeles. Contact: Gil Kenan, e-mail: gkenan@attbi.com.

Interstícios (Interstices; Portugal, 2001). 6 min. Dir: Marina Estela Graça (Portugal). Prod: Abi Feijó. Produced at Filmógrafo, Estúdio de Cinema de Animação do Porto. Contact: Marina Estela Graça (Professora Adjunta), ESE-Design de Comunicação, Universidade do Algarve, Campus da Pehna, 8000-117 Faro, Portugal. E-mail: mgraca@ualg.pt. Or contact Abi Feijó, tel: +351 226172747, fax: +351 22086861, email: abifeijo@ip.pt.

Fetch! (USA, 2001). 4.5 min. Dir: Nina Paley (USA). Music: Nik Phelps and the Sprocket Ensemble. Sound: The Stikman. Contact: Nina Paley, PO Box 460736, San Francisco CA 94146 USA. URL: <http://www.ninapaley.com/fetchhome.html>.

Premammals

The puppet-animated *Premammals* was created as Michal Zabka's graduation film from FAMU, in Prague. The almost ten-minute work tells the story of a family of rat-like 'premammals' who can barely exist in a world dominated by hungry dinosaurs out to get them. A combination of good writing, interesting character and set design, and nice cinematography work to make this a satisfying film to watch.

After a printed introduction in both Czech and English that sets the scene, the film moves on with English-language dialogue. Mother premammal tries to feed her four tiny babies but finds her milk going dry, so she shames her mate into returning outside to find grains to eat. When he returns with a series of serious wounds, such as a bitten-off tail, she finds a way to put a positive spin on things, all-too-cheerfully concluding, "We can patch this up!" The father's misadventures are told through an interesting first-person point-of-view shot, as well as the series of unhappy grunts he emits throughout the film. Mother premammal is the only character that is really developed (she is the only one who speaks) and it is her job to maintain the comic elements in this darkly humorous story.



Premammals. © Michal Zabka.

Premammals was completed with the assistance of a Kodak Student Fund grant. It has been screened in competition in animation festivals around the world and has won several prizes, including

the José Abel prize for best animation from Europe at Cinanima, in Espinho, Portugal. Zabka now works as director of the Animation People Studio in Prague.

Vessel Wrestling

And then there's *Vessel Wrestling*, from the other side of the planet in oh-so-many ways. During much of the time I spent watching this twelve-minute film, my mouth was slightly ajar and my eyes were fixed to the screen. Lisa Yu's thesis film from the University of California, Los Angeles is not your average clay animation.

Beautifully art-directed and shot throughout, the film begins with images of scratching on clay that is combined with sounds of squishy mud and something

else that falls somewhere between a roar of a beast and the moo of a very unhappy cow. The overall suggestion is that there is a raging creature lurking somewhere, trying to emerge. These images and sounds are intercut with animation of a nude sensuously-designed woman waiting for an unknown person to come to eat the food she has served, calling out, "Yoo-hoo," and peering around in an ambiguous way. Problems start when a hairball in the corner of the kitchen begins to grow. And grow. And grow. And then there's the sex — and plenty of it — with a nude man who eventually shows up in the kitchen.

Lisa Yu describes the film as "a primordial passion play at supper time," which can be synopsized as: "A woman serves dinner. She waits. Stuff happens." And as it does, Yu demonstrates her indebtedness to Jan Svankmajer, whom she describes as a major influence. Indeed, it is hard not to think of Svankmajer's work when one sees her clay bodies metamorphosing into each other and shifting between liquid and solid states, along with individual strands of animated hair gyrating strangely before our eyes and real beans and jello glistening on the screen. However, Yu shows that she is a powerful artist in her own right. She controlled all aspects of the film, including story, production design, animation, cinematography and sound (voice was provided by Yuki Terazawa). *Vessel Wrestling* has garnered the Best Experimental Short at Slamdance, the Tom Berman Award for Most Promising Filmmaker at Ann Arbor, and numerous other awards and screenings world-wide. The film is

dedicated in part to her parents. All I can say about that is, "Wow."

Bee Movie

The University of California, Los Angeles has a tradition of holding weekend-long marathons, where students close themselves in a room, essentially, and at the end emerge with an animated film. UCLA student Gil Kenan did the same thing, though working solo on his home computer, to create *Bee Movie*. In this 2-minute work, Kenan uses original artwork, found newsreel (of demonstrations and other 1950s/1960s style images), and nature documentary to create a metaphor for the plight of immigrants. Creatures composed of bee heads 'pasted' onto human bodies tell of the inequities they face as they have difficulty assimilating into their new culture, being constantly driven to create more honey.



Vessel Wrestling. © Lisa Yu.



Bee Movie. © Gil Kenan.

Spanish animator J.J. Martinez provides the heavily accented voice of the bee, reminding me somewhat of the famous Brazilian big cat in Nick Park's film, *Creature Comforts*. Although Kenan is enrolled in the MFA Animation program, *Bee Movie* was created for a critical studies course. This film provides an interesting example of what can be



Interstícios. © Marina Estela Graça.

accomplished in a short time with such readily-available tools as a home computer, Adobe After Effects, and Strata Studio Pro, which Kenan describes as “beautifully primitive.”

Interstícios

Marina Estela Graça also used a range of new technologies and worked entirely at home to create her film *Interstícios*, yet she looked to considerably older traditions within her work. In terms of animation history, the film would seem to be connected to Oskar Fischinger, with his visualization of music through abstract imagery and exploration of process, and Larry Jordan, with a distinctly alchemical feel; however, neither of these filmmakers is referenced in her own description of the film. Rather, she theorizes her work as being between 2D and 3D, as well as between “two types of conceptual representation of movement . . .” the more representational method of a ‘Disneyan’ approach and a more subjective, physiological suggestion of movement found in the work of Norman McLaren, Len Lye and Pierre Hébert, for example.

Using 3D Studio Max, Adobe Photoshop and Adobe

Premiere, along with scanned images, Graça synchronized her visuals with the third and fourth movements of J.S. Bach’s *Magnificat*. The result is a poetic work she created to demonstrate that “a technically complex filmic production can happen within normal human living experience,” noting that production took place alongside her roles as wife and mother. She describes her biggest challenge as fully embracing the technology without letting it gain control over any aspect of her work. The film was created with financial support from the Portuguese state institute ICAM (Instituto do Cinema, Audiovisual e Multimédia) and the Portuguese public television network RTP (Radiotelevisão Portuguesa).

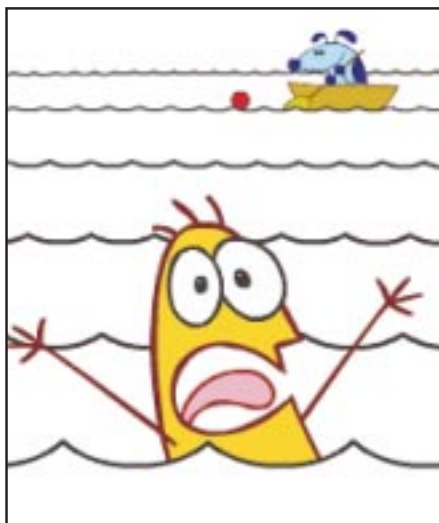
Graça studied Communication Design and enrolled in animation workshops before she received a grant to study at the Gobelins professional animation course in Paris, France, which was under the direction of Pierre Ayma. She continued her studies in animation through Semiotics and Filmology at the Università degli Studi di Bologna in Italy. She also completed an M. ph. in animation theory at Universidade Nova de Lisboa, in Portugal. She

later helped to found the first Portuguese degree with animation courses at Universidade do Algarve in Faro, Portugal. She is currently working toward her Ph.D. in animation poetics.

Fetch!

In *Fetch!*, Nina Paley demonstrates in her own way the creative potential for one of the most democratic of all animation techniques, Flash. This seemingly simple story of a man, his dog and a ball that it chases employs a lot of cycles and changes in perspective. As a result, it was a perfect project for Flash, which is vector-based and therefore allows for consistent resolution when image sizes are changed. Aside from that, Paley was attracted by the affordability and small file sizes that result from Flash animations. A self-taught animator, the animation for *Fetch!* was completed in three and a half months.

Many animators are using Flash these days, but the twist in Paley’s work is that she chose to finish it on 35mm film, soliciting donations on her Website to help finance lab costs. Paley speculates that this may be the first time a filmmaker has chosen this route, but in any case it is interesting to



Fetch! © Nina Paley.

see this combination of technologies paired together — Flash, the young 'quick and cheap' upstart Internet-related technology, with 35mm, the granddaddy 'complex and costly' traditional theatrical medium. Paley contends that she always envisioned it being

screened that way, on 35mm. A lively score by Nik Phelps and the Sprocket Ensemble, with sound design by The Stikman, accompanies the 4.5 minute exercise in optical illusion. Within the film, the man and his dog shift in size, walk in and out of the frame in unpredictable ways, and otherwise confound 'normal' perspectives of vision. An interesting plot point is that the illusions finally cease after the man begins to meditate, resulting in a mandala-like image in which many dogs appear. When the man has reached inner peace, presumably, the story is resolved.

Paley works in the San Francisco Bay area of California and has created a number of other animated works, including a short I reviewed last month, *The Stork* (2002), which deals with the topic of population control.

Maureen Furniss, Ph.D. is founding editor of Animation Journal and author of Art in Motion: Animation Aesthetics (1998). She teaches in the Department of Film and Digital Media at Savannah College of Art and Design, in Georgia, and is currently writing a book related to animation production.

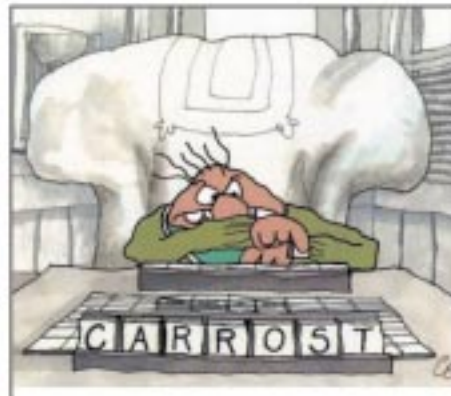
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Timing for Animation by Harold Whitaker and John Halas

book review by Scott Jenkins

Timing for Animation is a brilliant book whose size belies its usefulness. Originally published in 1981, this book was conceived as a learning tool for hand drawn animation. However, because of its comprehensive coverage of this fundamental aspect of animation, it is an invaluable tool for computer animators as well.

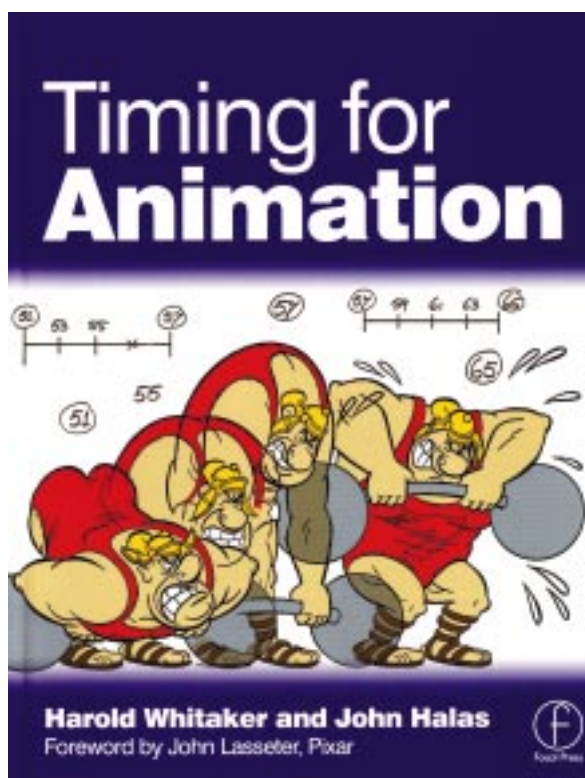
The original edition was published in the U.K. and generally only available in Europe. Now, this less expensive edition is published by Focal Press and available through their Website. According to the print dates, this book is getting more and more popular being reprinted five times in the past four years.

What makes this book so useful? As John Lasseter's (like I need to tell you who he is) new introduction to this edition, says, "Getting an object to have a sense of weight, size, scale, motion and humor has to do with how you move an object. The computers don't create animation for the animator — the animator still needs knowledge of the principles of timing in order to make the computer animation come alive."

This book covers it all and is presented in an animator friendly manner with concise text and clear sequential drawings. It starts with the basics of the dope sheet and continues on with physics and the way things move, from the basic bouncing ball to the timing of fire. If you come from a

background of drawing your work, there are sections such as animating in perspective which literally will bring depth to your work. If you come from a background of computer animation this book is an absolute necessity for you, as it shows the techniques to breathe life into your work.

Whether you are working on your character's acting, or the overall mood of a scene, one of the great secrets to making it work is the timing. Concentrating on the subject with a laser like intensity, yet managing to cover all aspects of the subject, *Timing for Animation* is an important book to have in any animator's reference library.



Timing for Animation by Harold Whitaker and John Halas. Oxford, U.K.: Focal Press, a division of Reed Educational and Professional Publishing, Ltd., 2002. 142 pages. ISBN: 0-240-51714-8.

Scott Jenkins started off animating by hand, until he discovered the Cubicomp system way back in 1987. He is the author of the upcoming book (digital)

Compositing, coming from New Riders in January of 2003.

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The *Trigun* anime series ran for 26 episodes in Japan, broadcast weekly from April 2 through September 30, 1998. It was released in America to the home video market by Pioneer Entertainment on eight volumes from February 2000 through May 2001, and has been especially popular with anime fans. Now Guardians of Order, a publisher that specializes in role-playing games, has issued an "everything you wanted to know about *Trigun*" reference book in two volumes. Volume 1 focuses upon the first 13 episodes; volume 2 upon the last half of the series.

This review is not just about an individual book, however, but about its type. The *Trigun Ultimate Fan Guide* is one of the first English-language anime complete reference books modeled upon the Japanese "perfect information" albums devoted to individual TV series and theatrical features. Unlike their American fan counterparts, which tend to be puff pieces filled with vapid articles with little serious reference information (such as "interviews" with the fictional characters), the Japanese albums present actual reference information. This was one of the factors that led to the creation of the anime fan cult in the late 1970s and 1980s; the discovery by American teens of these albums and the realization that in Japan animation productions were considered worthy of serious cinematic scholarship, not merely fare for a juvenile comic book.

The *Trigun Ultimate Fan Guide* opens with an introductory summary of *Trigun's* history in Japan, from the original comic-book serial by Yasuhiro Nightow through its licensing for TV animation by Victor Company of Japan



by Fred Patten

and its production by the Mad House studio. The main production credits are listed as they appear in the series' opening credits. (Complete ending credits and the translated theme song lyrics are elsewhere in the *Guide*.) A note explains that *Trigun* is one of the first examples of what seems to be developing as a new sub-genre of "space Westerns" in Japanese boys' adventure enter-

tainment, featuring traditional samurai and ninja plots in the imagery of the American frontier West in futuristic outer space settings; other examples include *Cowboy Bebop* and *Outlaw Star*.

The first half of the *Guide* is a 50-page detailed synopsis of the first thirteen episodes. Each episode is given a three- or four-page summary, illustrated with about two dozen small but clear

glossy color reproductions of key characters and scenes. Next comes a 19-page section of biographies, illustrated with many portrait cel reproductions. The main characters receive two pages each, diminishing to a quarter-page for minor characters who only appear in a single episode. All information is pertinent to the characters' personalities, motives and actions as seen in the serialized adventure, not "cute" invented data such as their favorite foods and birth signs. All art is actual production or publicity art from the original release, not new pictures drawn for this publication. There are pages that summarize the background history and technology of the desert planet upon which *Trigun* is set, which are only gradually revealed to the viewers throughout the series. In addition to the color portrait cel reproductions of the main characters, there are pages of line-art character poses from the animators' model sheets. Since Guardians of Order is a specialty publisher in role playing games, it has added a section of instructions on how to create a RPG based upon *Trigun*; this includes some additional details on minor topics such as individual towns, vehicles and weapons.

**Trigun Ultimate
Fan Guide is one
of the first of what
Guardians of Order
hopes becomes a series
of guides to popular
anime...**

In short, the serious anime fan who wants to know everything about the production of *Trigun*, its cast and its individual episodes, should be able to find

all the details here. Compare this with American TV animation from *Jonny Quest* to *Ren and Stimpy*, *South Park*, Disney's *TaleSpin*, *Spawn*, *Pinky and the Brain*, *Samurai Jack*, *ReBoot* or *Darla*. It is only recently that American TV animation has generated any publications more serious than coloring books and comic books. *Batman: The Animated Series* has been the subject of a very attractive and informative coffee-table art book, but not a reference guide to each episode. *Trigun Ultimate Fan Guide* is one of the first of what Guardians of Order hopes will become a series of guides to popular anime series. Others already available include *Serial Experiments Lain* and *Dual! Parallel Trouble Adventure* (doubtlessly not coincidentally, also Pioneer Entertainment video/DVD releases in America).

Trigun Ultimate Fan Guide
#1. Written by Michelle Lyons;
Edited by Lucien Soulban. Guelph,
Ontario: Guardians of Order, Inc.,
2002. 107 pages. ISBN: 1-894525-
36-1 (US\$24.95)

*Fred Patten has written on
anime for fan and professional
magazines since the late 1970s.
He wrote the liner notes for
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was a contributor to The World
Encyclopedia of Cartoons,
2nd Edition, ed. by Maurice
Horn (1999) and Animation in
Asia and the Pacific, ed. by
John A. Lent (2001).*

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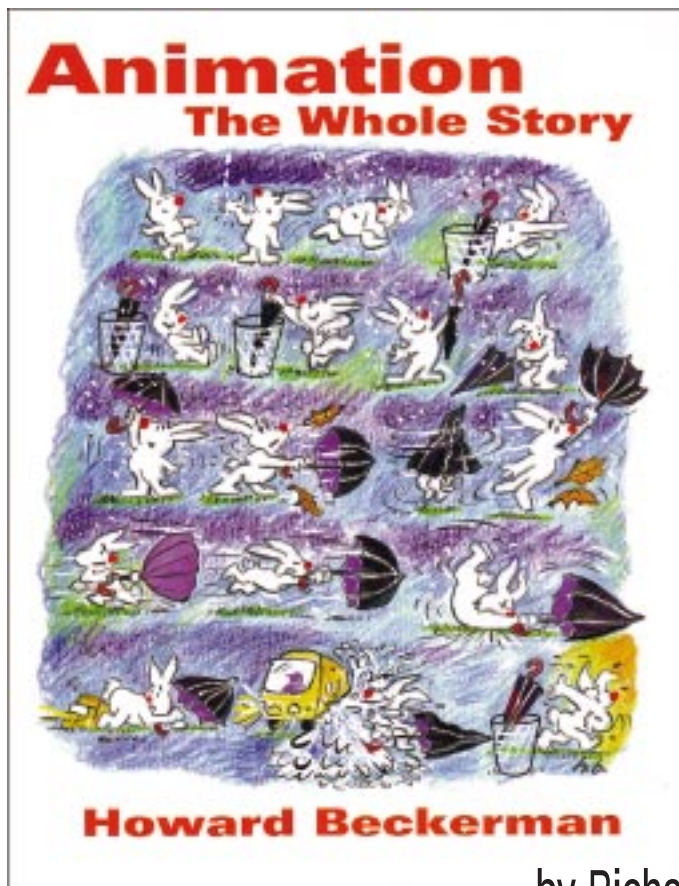
This year, Richard Williams' book *The Animation Survival Kit* arrived amid great fanfare, but at the same time, another animation textbook snuck in under the radar, and in its own way, it's as significant and worthwhile a work. Howard Beckerman, an independent New York animator, and teacher of animation for over thirty years, has essentially put his college course material into book form with his thorough, thoughtful and accessible book *Animation, The Whole Story*.

Like Williams' book, *Animation, The Whole Story* is more of an instructional book than a coffee table volume for fans. Beckerman's intention was to convey in written terms the material he covers in his college courses on animation drawing and theory. As a result, the book has an informal, low-tech feel that many young animators will find comforting, expansive and easy to follow. The book focuses on the mechanics and techniques of creating traditional, hand-drawn animation. It introduces the subject from the ground up, starting with such simple concepts as basic story construction and then getting into the practical concerns such as the importance of layout before actual animation begins.

A Different Point of View

The book is laid out in much the same way as Howard's course: it's broken into chapters which can stand on their own and serve as individual lessons for the reader. Each chapter, though dense, is written in a conversational style that makes the information easy to absorb. Technical terms and procedures are explained in simple, direct language and it's

Howard Beckerman's **Animation:** The Whole Story



by Richard Gorey

clear that Beckerman understands that the subject is an enormously complicated one, but that it needn't be presented as such.

The book will be of the most use to those new to animation: people who are curious to make an independent film of their own and need to know everything from script to camera. Though Beckerman worked for years at some of the major studios like Terrytoons and UPA, his most recognized and well-known films were created after he opened his

own studio in Manhattan. Accordingly, he approaches filmmaking from the point of view of an independent, and the book is tailored to those who want to work on their own.

Many film books have covered this ground before, and one might argue that Beckerman's focus on traditional hand-drawn animation will limit the book's appeal to those raised on sophisticated computer graphics. However, the need for strong storytelling and a background in tradi-

tional drawing skills are still essential tools for the modern animator to have, and I can think of no other recent book on animation that covers this in as thorough a manner. Even Richard Williams' impressive book doesn't spend much time on camera, layout and storyboarding. To those interested in shooting their own films, and in being the author of their work — through all stages of production — I believe Howard's book will be a valuable and exhaustive guide. It even has a final chapter on the business of animation, covering such subjects as copyright, a good portfolio, the pros and cons of partnerships, and a little about the uses and importance of the festival circuit to the independent animator.

The Low Down

What comes across most effectively in the book is Beckerman's love of the field, and his desire to share the affection he has for his career with those new to it. Those looking for a glossy, richly-illustrated Hyperion volume should be aware that Beckerman's book is structured and executed as a textbook, and its visual style reflects this: the artwork inside (mostly by the author himself) is simple and direct, but decidedly low-tech. The illustrations serve the same purpose as a teacher's sketches on a blackboard, and they are often as rough. The book's primary audience is young filmmakers at the college level: as such it looks and feels like a course guide, which is what it is. The difference between this and other college texts is that the written portions of Beckerman's book are witty, playful and easy to get through. What this book has that many others lack is the author's

trademark sense of gentle humor. Those who've known Howard will find his personality and affability intact within his chapters. This informality elevates what might have been something dry and intimidating. The course covers so much ground, but the book's structure dictates that information may be assimilated in individual chapters, much in the way a college education in animation is broken down into classes.

There's been much discussion lately about the longevity of traditional hand-drawn animation: many people have predicted that the recent failure of some traditional "cel"-animated films has sounded the death knell for this type of production. Howard's book comes at an interesting time for the industry, and for independent animators. Is there anyone out there who still has a passion and an interest in this kind of home-grown filmmaking? How many people are receiving an education in the kind of animation technique Howard offers in his book? Not enough, by the look of things. It might be argued that much of the animation in recent computer-generated films lacks the sensitivity, artistry and organic qualities that made the classics of twenty and thirty years ago such works of commercial art. In the race toward polished graphics and ever more sophisticated imagery, something of the art behind the art has been lost along the way. It's obvious Richard Williams has felt this as well: his book, it must be admitted, covers much the same material as does Beckerman's. Any serious student of animation should have both books, to my way of thinking. Williams' book focuses on the mechanics of drawing: walks, for instance, and the

principles of follow-through. It's a book for people who want to be animators. Beckerman's book is for those who want to make their own films, and want to know how, from concept to editing. Along the way, the author discusses animation drawing, but also examines issues of humor, taste, culture, mythology, history and commentary.

Animation, The Whole Story is an admirable attempt to put the art and the structure back into animation instruction. If you already know a lot about animation, and you're looking for something dramatic and colorful on the subject, I'd recommend Canemaker's *Walt Disney's Nine Old Men*, but if you're new to animation, and you want to know how it's done, Howard's book is the one. It's one of the best introductions to animation production and technique in a long while.

Animation, The Whole Story by Howard Beckerman. Mattituck, New York: Amereon House, 2001. 224 pages. ISBN: 848808673-3

Richard Gorey graduated with a degree in animation from the School of Visual Arts in Manhattan. He has written film comment for the ASIFA newsletter (east coast) and is the author of the book The Great Rabbit Rip-off, as well as several screenplays. During Gorey's career at Young & Rubicam, he was a creative director and animator for such clients as Johnson & Johnson, Citibank, Hallmark, and Philip Morris.

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