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JAILED FOR NONSUPPORT

The iron gates close more often these days on men who refuse to make support payments to their ex-wives and children.

By SUE REINERT

They took away his Brooks Brothers suit, his watch, his ring, his belt and his money. They gave him a white T-shirt, a pair of wrinkled khaki pants, and a cell to live in.

The cell has a bed and a plastic bucket, which serves as a toilet. He has to ask around every day for toilet paper — like everyone else.

He's 64 years old. He has resided in the Salem Jail since July 23, when they took him straight to jail from Probate Court because he hasn't paid alimony to his ex-wife since last November.

He's never been in jail before. He's a pillar of the community, a professional man with his own business, a Mason, a member of town government; one year his family was Family of the Year. Don't use his name, please. "Some of my clients would die if they knew I was in jail."

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IT'S NOT WHETHER YOU WIN OR LOSE ...



Maxey's Canadians softball team knows better than most that it's how you play the game that counts. They're in the running for the honor of holding the worst record in the annals of Lynn Park League softball.

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THE BIG SCOOP



You'll undoubtedly have your own firm opinion about where the best ice cream can be found on the North Shore, but **North Shore:Sunday** couldn't resist sampling "homemade" ice cream at area parlors and pointing our readers in the direction of some great scoops.

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RETRIEVING THEIR HONOR



Military veterans who feel they got a raw deal when they received a less than honorable discharge now have a way to go after an honorable discharge. The time is running out for Vietnam veterans to apply, and a Lynn lawyer has a dozen cases in the works.

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Animation comes back

Computers now join the art that Walt Disney made famous

By LESLIE H. ABRAMSON

Walt Disney's *Steamboat Willie* was released in 1928, and the animated star of the film, a character named Mickey Mouse, held the childlike fascination of audiences for generations. Animated films like *Bambi* and *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* followed, providing parables for children in a style they would not see again until they took their own children to the movies.

However, when *Yellow Submarine* floated across our screens in 1968, one might say that the world of animation grew up.

"That was the first time that a large number of people saw animation for kids and adults," commented David Kleiler, former film teacher at Babson College and current president of The Rear Window, the company that is presenting an ongoing film series of animation and shorts at Barton Square Playhouse in Salem.

"I think there is a real renaissance in animation awareness. In a sense, those films (*Yellow Submarine* and *Fritz the Cat*, released in 1971) broke through territory in feature animation," said Ken Brown, film teacher at Boston College and creator of *Stampede*, an animated film recently shown as part of the Barton Square Playhouse series. "When I was first doing it (animation) in the 60s, it was very isolated. Now there's a small community of animators who are essentially

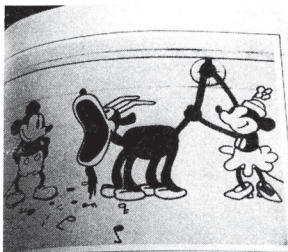
carving out their own private niche," noted Brown.

The recent trend among mainstream, independent animators is towards individual expression. "American independent animation tends to be very personal. These are done by individuals laboring in their homes. Something of an autobiographical, personal style. Very experimental and highly individualistic," said Brown.

Lately, a second breed of animator is springing up in increasing numbers — the computer animator. The sets of Disney's latest movie *TRON* have been drawn and manipulated by a computer, and many animators are punching codes into a keyboard these days rather than dabbing a paintbrush into a palette.

The only local showing of animation on the order of what Walt Disney originally had in mind can be found at Salem's Essex Institute. The current Summer Animated Classics Fest there features films from major studios, including *Robinson Crusoe*. Or, the *Bambi* tradition can be found at movie theaters showing *The Secret of NIMH*, a story of resourceful rats created by animators who left the Disney studios that created *TRON*.

"It's going through an explosion right now," said computer animator Larry Cuba, who taught a computer animation workshop at the recent Summer Institute for Media Arts at Endicott College in Be-



MICKEY MOUSE making his debut in *Steamboat Willie* in 1924.

verly, Cuba, who is among the vanguard of independent computer animators, has won numerous awards for his abstract films.

Larry Cuba's work has been seen by millions all over the world in the form of a moving computer diagram of the Death Star watched by rebel pilots in *Star Wars*. However, working independently as a computer animator, he has a painfully small audience for his contemporary art.

"I'm not going to say anymore about it than you see on the screen," said Cuba. The work he was referring to, unlike the computer diagrams in *Star Wars*, is not an elaborate picture of something else; it is an experiment with patterns. Cuba's films *3/78 (Objects and Transformations)* and *Two Space*, shown at Endicott College's media institute, are screens full of white dots streaming in and out of geometric forms against a black background.

"What I try to do," said Cuba, "is produce things which are essentially non-verbal experiences."

The film *3/78 (Objects and Transformations)* consists of 1600 white dots computer programmed to move along triangles, form a series of squares that

become circles, turn from diamonds into squares into spirals. In the same basic style, Cuba's *Two Space* is more an experiment in design, with curving, kaleidoscopic patterns. The film is accompanied by flute music.

Two Space won the award for Best Animated Film at the Athens (Ohio) International Film Festival in 1980.

"I have no interest in telling stories, I don't use film as a storytelling unit in the same sense that music is not in general used to tell a story. We don't have a comparable form in the visual world. The experiments have to do with visual perception, especially in the area of motion," explained Cuba.

Computers create animation by drawing each frame of film, or animation cel, individually upon the command of the programmer. The computer can rotate objects, color in frames, and simulate three-dimensional forms, among other things. The guiding intelligence is a computer program written by the animator.

Although the computer can draw cels faster than an artist, the computer animator never knows exactly what visual result his program will produce onscreen. Cuba considers the aspect a plus. "If I knew what the films were going to look like ahead of time, I wouldn't go through the process of making it. That's very different from traditional animation where everything's storyboarded ahead of time."

"There is only this process of pushing, struggling, discovering. Eventually, I give up and I have a film. It's just one continuing research project. Each film is one more step forwards. It's like I only have one project; the films just come out as progress reports."

Cuba allies his work with the abstract art and films that were first made in the 1920s. He feels that this style, although not entirely new, is still unaccepted. "There are a lot of contemporary young

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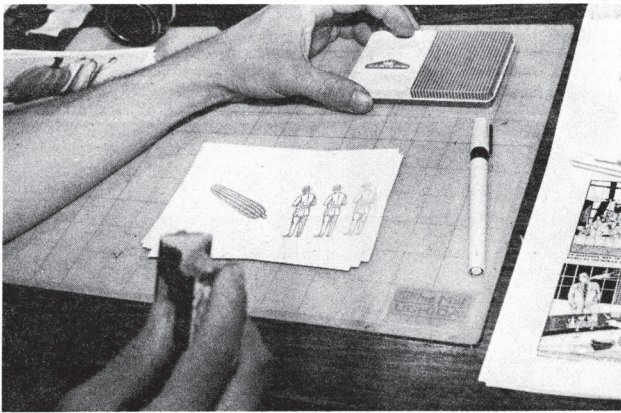
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ANIMATOR KEN BROWN, whose film "Stampede" was recently shown as part of Barton Square Playhouse's film series of animation and shorts.



THE METHOD to his madness: Ken Brown displays how rubber stamps pressed on white cards created his animated film *Stampede*.

animation artists. It's like a subculture. It's basically a cult of artists who work in a medium that is not sanctioned by the art world."

While Larry Cuba punches in computer programs to create his films, Ken Brown inks up his rubber stamp collection on a red ink pad and presses out graphics of cars, people and appliances from the 30s and 40s on squares of white paper. The animated film he created by this method in 1979, *Stampede*, is, by his own account, "a surrealist rubber stamp romp."

Brown's work has found an audience not only at Barton Square Playhouse's recent film series, but also Home Box Office.

"*Stampede* pretty much evolved as an experiment — something about long winters in New England and about 150 rubber stamps," said Brown. The result is a witty, offbeat animated film in which graphics slide and tumble across the screen, pieced together in surprising combinations.

A family sits at dinner during the 40s, a volcano appears and blows them up. A man's head appears, water floats at his neck; a fish cruises by; a cloud appears, rain begins to fall, and the man's head sinks down in the water.

"It was very free-form and experimental in nature," said Brown, "kind of like mental weaving, knitting a long scarf. It's really whimsical (with) little messages about ecological things or consumerism — a landscape comes along and a bulldozer plows it off the frame." Country swing music accompanies the film.

Brown's drawing board was four pads of paper, or about 4,000 sheets of paper. He created each frame of film by hand-stamping the rubber stamps on the paper.

Brown's fellow independent animators "tend to follow the trend of personal experience — odd visions, sometimes bizarre, sometimes surreal, sometimes socially aware — all of it very individualistic," he said.

Brown considers computer animated films like *TRON* "kind of groundbreaking films in a way. It's made possible for more animation to be seen. Overall, computers will definitely make it possible to produce more." However he admits that such films do not suit his taste. "I think it's something to be wary of. They have a certain look to them, a certain kind of mechanical movement, a coldness I don't think will ever replace the variety and lyrical touches that go with hand-drawn animation. You can't do those kinds of things with computers. There'll always be a place for the human touch in animation."

Mary Beth Santarelli, practitioner of both methods, favors computer animation, although she is presently working with paper cut-outs. *One Day On Longfellow Bridge*, shown recently as part of the

Barton Square Playhouse film series, introduces Captain Tuna, an assemblage of brightly colored cut-out shapes, wearing a bright yellow slicker and rain hat. As he walks across the bridge, Captain Tuna grabs a boat out of the water in the background. The other boats attack him. The film ends with a seagull flying off with Captain Tuna's head.

Santarelli's 40-second film took four months to make, and one of the major reasons she prefers computer animation is because it is quicker.

"Animation was a dying art, and now it's like you can go to the movies and see (animated) movies that aren't 30-40 years old," remarked Santarelli animatedly.

Move over, Mickey Mouse.

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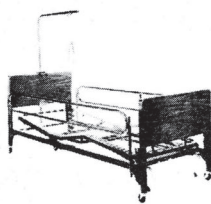
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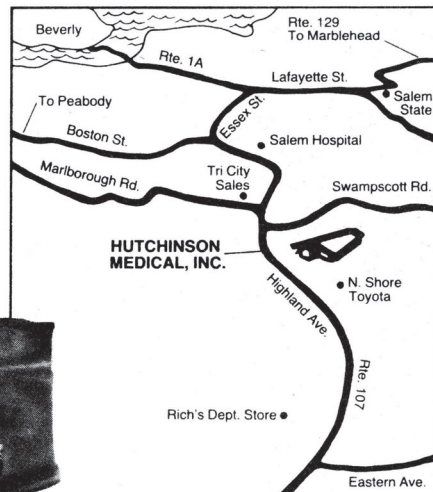
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