

New club is full of animation

Two members plan to spend the year working on an independent, animated short film

By Teri Meeuwse
Higher Education Reporter

Watching the cartoon show *Earthworm Jim* is just part of the fun and research involved in belonging to a club created by a group of fine arts students.

Earlier this summer, a core group of seven students formed an animation club for members who are interested in the world of animation. The club is a place where they can research, learn and practice their skills, fine and applied, said arts major and co-founder Danny Ngan.

The club meets every Thursday at one of the members' houses to discuss various ideas, including how to design and animate characters, the artistic abstract element of animation and work done by corporations, which range from multi-million dollar companies such as Disney and Warner Bros. to smaller experimental companies such as the Brothers Quay.

With classes beginning this term, there is not a lot of time for members to work on individual projects, but Ngan said there are ideas in the works.

"Joe Maruschak [a fine and ap-

plied arts major and club co-founder] has a great idea for a short animated film about a disgruntled repairman, or rabbit in this case, that has a really bad encounter with a group of little robotic aliens," Ngan said. "Joe and I are probably going to work on this throughout the year as an independent project."

Maruschak said the 3-D film will be a minute to a minute and a half long, but will take more than a year to create.

"We set very high standards for ourselves because we want to do this right," he said. "We're just now in the planning stages." Funding for the club comes straight from the members, who use their own supplies and ideas to drive the club's research and projects, Maruschak said. The members have discussed asking for University funding, but Maruschak said they don't have the time to talk to anyone about it.

"We are all really, really, really busy with our own work and projects and school and keeping up the club's mailing list that it would be really hard to find time to even start talking to the ASUO," Maruschak said. There is no prerequisite for membership in the club.

Fine arts Professor Ken O'Connell said the classes are always full because the use of computers has

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Ken O'Connell
Fine Arts Professor

led to animation's growing popularity.

"There has always been a strong interest in animation, but now it is easily twice to three times what I have seen in the past," he said. "Computers have made work in animation more accessible and have helped it become a major element in which we communicate."

O'Connell also said he is impressed that there are students who enjoy animation so much that they have taken an extra step in learning about it and practicing their own skills.

"Most people love animation," he said. "It's universally popular, but it's very complex. It's like people like to read novels, but how many of us actually write them? It's nice to see students who have enough individual motivation to work outside of class."

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Safety: Care required when cooking food

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fire detector.

In short, don't take chances with fire. Residence halls enforce strict fire safety regulations. Apartment fires caused by student negligence can cost more than \$10,000.

"It's like having their student loan debt doubled," said John Davidson, staff attorney for ASUO Legal Services. "And mostly it is common sense."

Residence hall laws regulate what students can have in their rooms. The main categories are flammable materials, such as candles and incense, and dangerous devices, including firearms and explosives.

The halls also prohibit halogen lights. Students can use lights designed for halogen bulbs if they replace the bulb, said Kelly Matchett-Morris, assistant director of area desks.

That's a good policy, according to Holly. A 500-watt halogen bulb can reach 1,200 degrees. That can cause the bulb to explode, show-

ering the room with scalding glass shards.

Apartment dwellers usually aren't so restricted as to what they can put in their rooms. Some landlords prohibit candles or smoking, Davidson said. But apartment residents usually have more freedom — and have to use more common sense — than their counterparts in the residence halls.

Apartment also have stoves and ranges: major fire hazards. Cooking causes most apartment fires, Davidson said.

Students might leave their stoves on or forget to clean their stove vents. Frying and sauteing food can also spark a fire when the grease hits the burner.

Apartment also tend to be small, and students might start a fire by cramming too many of their belongings into their rooms. Beds pushed against heaters and newspapers stacked against radiators are sure fire hazards, Holly said.

Two students caused a fire last

year when they covered their heater with a bed mattress. Heaters often will come on even if they've been turned off, she said. Students must turn them off at the electrical source.

But students aren't always at fault for fires. Landlords have definite responsibilities under Oregon's Residential Landlord and Tenant laws.

Most importantly, landlords must provide a working fire detector. The law orders landlords to provide "safety from the hazards of fire." ASUO Legal Services has tried, with limited success, to argue that the provision also forces the landlord to provide fire extinguishers.

But the only way to stay away from fire liability and property loss is common sense, Holly said. A fire will destroy property, no matter whose fault it is.

"Be careful," Davidson said. "When it is caused by tenant negligence, it's hard for me to bail them out."

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