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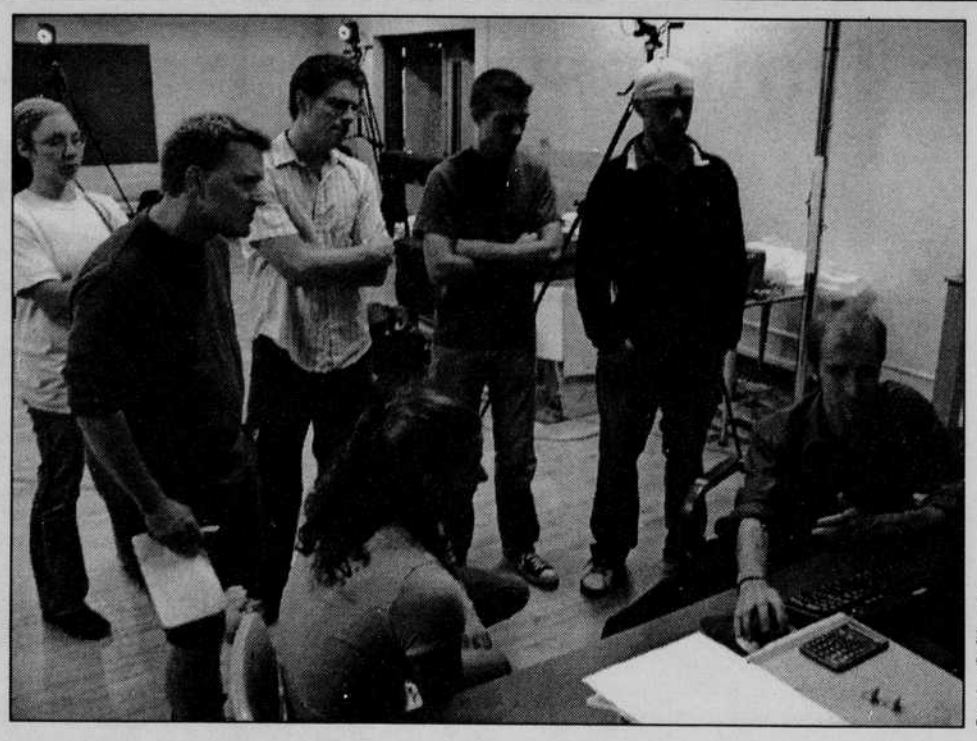

Project team members gather around the computer to work on a 3-D animated film.

Courtesy

Students bridge rivalries with digital film creativity

University and Oregon State University students find a common ground while pursuing similar art interests

BY NATASHA CHILINGERIAN
SENIOR PULSE REPORTER

A group of artists, including University and Oregon State University students, are combining their creative talents for a unique film-making project. Using up-to-date technology on the OSU campus, project team members are inventing a 3-D computer-animated film in the spirit of "Shrek" and "Finding Nemo."

The project grew out of the imagination of OSU new media communications instructor Todd Kesterson. As a young, aspiring animator, Kesterson contacted animation artist Ron Dias, whose resume includes artistic animation work on such Disney films as "Sleeping Beauty" and "Who Framed Roger Rabbit." After sending Dias work samples yearly, Kesterson enlisted Dias' help on his newest film, "The Story Pouch." Now, more than 35 people, including watercolor artists, dance choreographers, actors and computer specialists are bringing to life Kesterson's idea of a fantasy animation about a soul-searching gentleman. Kesterson, the project's director, said the story will appeal to children but will also touch on deeper topics, which adults will appreciate.

"It's about a man who is in a slump," art director Dias said. "He's a writer, and nothing he does seems to be working for him. Suddenly he has a vision and then he understands where he needs to go and how to make it better."

Work on "The Story Pouch" began in June, although Kesterson has been developing the idea for several years. Currently, workers are in the heavy stages of designing artistic elements, such as characters and music, and in the beginning stages of turning the conceptual art into a film.

OSU's modern animation technology allows participants to use the same techniques as the creators of big-budget animation films have used. Kesterson cites "motion capture" as one of the coolest methods, in which actors, wearing small reflective balls on their bodies, act out the film's scenes and cause the on-screen characters to move identically.

Kesterson said he thinks of the endeavor as a true community project, with participants from the Eugene and Corvallis areas of varying ages. Even children are contributing — Kesterson recently visited Corvallis' Linus Pauling Middle School and led a class in a mask-making assignment.

He plans to incorporate the students' mask designs in the film. He describes the rapport between University and OSU students as very cooperative. University student participants include eight multimedia design students and two University graduates.

"We have resources from two different campuses coming together," Kesterson said. "There's no diversion between University of Oregon and Oregon State students."

Dias, who works on "The Story

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"Best Meal for a Deal," 2nd Place, "Best Omelette, 2nd Place, "Best Breakfast" 2nd Place, "Best Vegetarian Fare" 2nd Place, Register-Guard Reader Poll, 1987. • "Best Breakfast," In Town Magazine 1994 • "Best Breakfast," In Town Magazine 1995 • Top Ten Choice, Oregon Daily Emerald, 1996 • "Best Entrée Before 9 a.m.," Comic News • "Best Dinner Under $8," Eugene Weekly, 1996 • "One of the Best Things About Register-Guard, 1998 • "Best Under $3," Best Place to Take Visitors When You Pay," 1st Place "Best Breakfast,"1st Place, "Best Sunday Brunch," 2nd Place "Best [illegible] Morning," 2nd Place, Eugene Weekly, 1999 • "Best Dinner Under $12, 1st Place, "Best Lunch Under $8, 1st Place, "Best Breakfast," 2nd Place, "Best Soup," 3rd Place Eugene Weekly, 2000 • "Best Breakfast," Best of Teen, Register-Guard, [illegible] Below, 2001 • "Best Breakfast," 2nd Place, "Best Cheap Eats," 2nd Place, "Best Soup," 2nd Place, Eugene Weekly, 2002 • "Best Coffee Food," [illegible] Place; "Best Soup," [illegible] 3rd Place; "Best Cheap Eats," [illegible] Place, Eugene Weekly 2003.
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