

# PLANO COURIER

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## Animation has big role in movie-making

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What animators call "visual effects," once a relatively small part of filmmaking, have become a significant and growing part of movies being produced today.

"The whole world of digital imaging is becoming universal," Hoyt Yeatman Jr. told a Plano audience last Saturday. "It's about the talent, not the equipment. Visual effects are becoming a big part of movies, often taking the leading role."

Yeatman, Jr., co-founder of a new animation company, Whamaphram Productions, compared visual effects to a fire department - "you never know what's going to be on your doorstep."

Yeatman was one of four animation-industry executives who spoke at an annual conference held in John Anthony Theatre at Collin County Community College about the techniques of modern animation, computer graphics and visual effects.

"Industry Giants 2004: Bringing Things to



DAVID JOHNSON/STAFF PHOTO

Scott Gordon of CaféFX describes mass illusions in "What Dreams May Come."

Life" was presented before an audience of technology-driven enthusiasts from the Dallas area.

"Everyone here is involved in animation," said Tom Ottinger, president of A Bunch of Short Guys and professor at Collin County Community College.

A Bunch of Short Guys partially sponsored the conference and is a non-profit organization that stresses education and career development

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for individuals interested in animation.

Scott Gordon, a visual effects supervisor with CaféFX in California, related creative solutions to visual effects, and explained the graphic design of movies he helped develop, such as "What Dreams May Come" and "The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen."

"My topic of conversation involved presenting technology in a creative way," Gordon said. "I did this by using visual effects, to bring things to life."

Bringing things to life was the focus of Saturday's conference.

Dan Kuenster, co-founder of Zoom Cartoons Entertainment and vice president of creative services with Imagination Station, brought many aspects to life with his visual storytelling techniques.

Kuenster is a storyboard artist, who uses pencil drawings to initially create loose ideas, character development, and situations for his audience. He recently won an Emmy Award in storyboard art for "Jakers! The Adventures of Piggley Winks."

Kuenster brought the Emmy to the conference and shared it with an applauding

audience of 200 supporters.

"The Emmy was a great honor which validated all the work I've done," said Kuenster. "I think people looked at the body of work I did before that, which was also a contributor."

Renato dos Anjos, senior character animator for Sony Pictures Animation, contributed to Kuenster's ideas of preliminary animation production. Anjos explained the early process of computer animation by actually showing the audience how he would start a project from his computer.

His success has landed him in animation production in films such as "The Haunted Mansion" and "Bad Boys 2."

Anjos won an Academy Award in 2002 for best animated short film, "The Chubb Chubbs."

Anjos recognized the large student turn-out at the conference, where some of them share the same passion for animation as he does.

"I would recommend starting in a small studio," Anjos said. "Learn as much as you can, aim high, and try to do the best you can."

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