



## **As WDFB-Florida remains dark, Firefly is ready to shine!**

Following the recent closure of Disney's Florida animation studio and the announcement of both Legacy Animation and Funnypages Productions' goals to keep traditional animation alive, comes news of another exciting new animation studio that retains ties with an Orlando theme park.

Based on the Universal Studios backlot, "will draw on the partners' collective experience of over 50 years of artistic excellence and business savvy to produce quality, family friendly animated content embracing both traditional 2-D animation as well as cutting edge 3-D technology". Artists at the Studio were involved on such Disney films as Brother Bear, Lilo And Stitch, Treasure Planet, Tarzan, The Hunchback Of Notre Dame and The Lion King, among others. Read their full press release here:

### **Project Firefly Animation Studios Ready to Shine as Disney's Florida Studio Goes Dark**

ORLANDO, FL, March 22, 2004 — A core group of seasoned Disney character animators have announced the formation of Project Firefly Animation Studios. Based out of offices on the Universal Studios Florida back lot, Project Firefly will draw on the partners' collective experience of over 50 years of artistic excellence and business savvy to produce quality, family friendly animated content.

Embracing both traditional 2-D animation as well as cutting edge 3-D technology, Project Firefly will provide professional quality work at a competitive cost of a west coast film studio. "Orlando is a great city and is in a fantastic position to play a pivotal part in the future of animation filmmaking," said Dominic Carola, president of Project Firefly. Carola and the other co-founders of Project Firefly passed on job offers in Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco to stay in Orlando, choosing to pursue a life long dream of starting their own animation production studio in the city they love.

"We welcome this talented team as part of our on-lot vendor family," stated Paul Meena, Vice President/General Manager of Universal Studios Florida Production Group. "The work flowing through Firefly's studio will solidify the fact that Orlando and the State of Florida remain competitive in the entertainment industry."

Project Firefly has a slate of original projects in development for theatrical and video release, but is open to the opportunity to partner with other studios on their animated projects. Some major animation producers are already taking notice.

"Even before Project Firefly was officially announced, we were approached by some significant individuals in the animation industry," said Carola. "We are excited by the interest and look forward to building on those relationships."

"This venture is the beginning of a new era of animation in Orlando," states Glen Gagnon co-founder and Director of Business Development and Finance. "Due to the financial benefits; outsourcing has become more prevalent in the animation industry. The combination of our solid depth chart of talented artists and the economical

advantages of living in Florida makes Project Firefly Animation Studios an attractive outlet.”

Industry interest in Project Firefly is a direct result of the reputations of the talent it has to offer. Four of the co-founders of Project Firefly, Paulo Alvarado, Gregg Azzopardi, Dominic Carola and John Webber, are all veteran animators each with over 10 years of animating experience. Glen Gagnon, also a co-founder, brings with him over 15 years of experience in both film and television production finance and strategic planning. The partners' credits can be seen on such films as BROTHER BEAR, LILO AND STITCH, TREASURE PLANET, FANTASIA CONTINUED, TARZAN, MULAN, HERCULES, THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME, POCAHONTAS and THE LION KING.

Project Firefly is excited about what they have to offer. “This has been a dream of ours for a long time,” said Carola. “We’re grateful to Disney for the training and experience we had there. They honed our gifts as animators and skilled artisans, which prepared us for this tremendous opportunity. Now that the doors are officially closed at Walt Disney Feature Animation Florida, ours are open.”

Project Firefly is a full service animation studio providing 2-D and 3-D animation and artwork for theatrical and video releases, television series, commercials, interactive/ internet media, children’s books and educational films.



Group in Studio (left to right) Paulo Alvarado, Dominic Carola, Gregg Azzopardi, John Webber, Glen Gagnon.