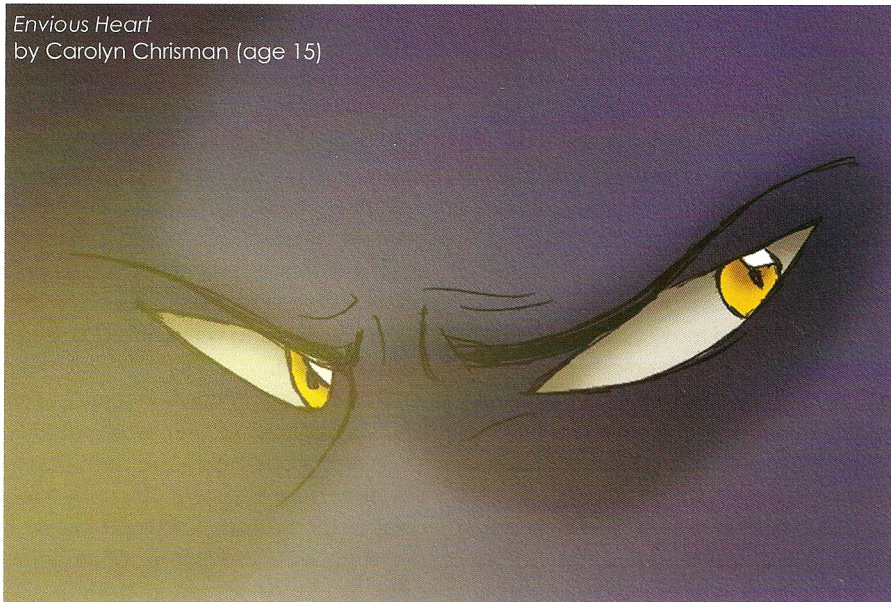


Envious Heart
by Carolyn Chrisman (age 15)



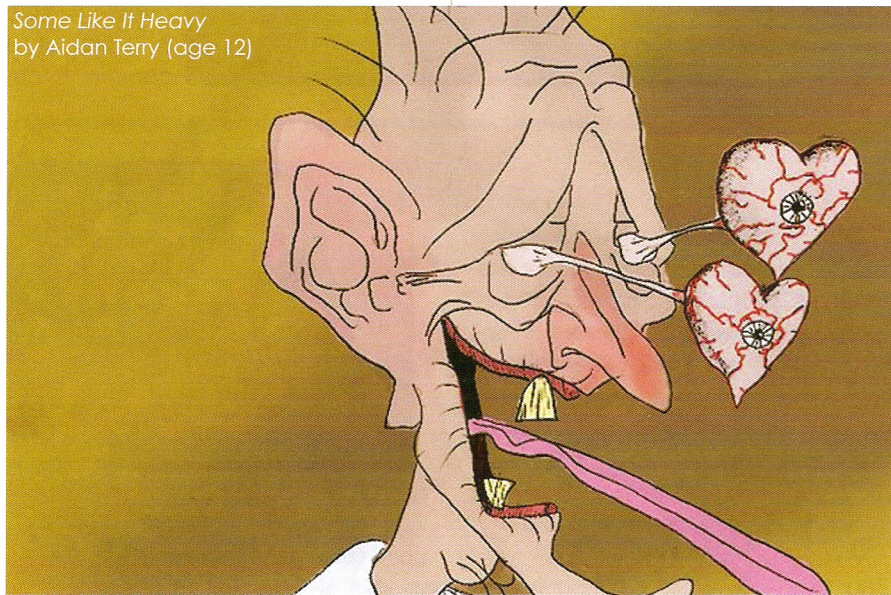
Toon Titans: The Next Generation!

Earthlight's online program is emerging as an incredibly practical way of training animation prodigies around the country. by Ellen Wolff

We always hear about musical prodigies who play concertos while other kids are playing softball. Less common is news of animation prodigies, but one teacher who's mentored more than one fledgling animator now has launched an Internet-based training program that could help nurture other new talents wherever they may be. Through Earthlight Animation Teletraining, closed-circuit, real-time video classes are available to students at their desktop computers. It's an approach that teacher John Teton hopes "will open the door to aspiring animators, regardless of age. We want it to be affordable for students under 18—or even under 14 or younger."

Teton, a writer/filmmaker who has taught animation to students in both high schools and at colleges like San Francisco State and L.A.'s Otis College of Art & Design, has cause for optimism. When he began working with teenage animators 10 years ago at Santa Barbara's Anacapa High School, he wound up inspiring students who are

Some Like It Heavy
by Aidan Terry (age 12)



now pursuing animation careers. J.J. Villard (who at age 16 became what he calls "John Teton's test case") is now an award-winning animator who worked on *Shrek the Third*, while Carolyn Chrisman began studying animation at age 12 with Teton and is now in USC's animation B.A. program.

It was after Teton moved from California to Oregon in 2005 that he thought about creating a "virtual" animation training program. He then developed Earthlight's TelAnimate program in concert with I.T. specialist Michael Ray Allison. "We worked with a number of manufacturers to get a stable signal that was smooth enough for our purposes," Teton explains. "It's not just a videoconference; I screen examples from films, and I have to be able to go down to a fraction of a second. While videoconferencing technology has been around for a long time, to do it economically—at sufficient quality—took quite a bit of work." The system is configured using a combination of commercially available software programs, Teton explains, "so very little code writing was done."

The Earthlight approach was designed to be a virtual classroom in which students watch and discuss film clips that illustrate motion design, squash & stretch and other classic animation principles. "Students can stream films from our website, or—with a single click—download them to their computers." But Teton stresses that it's

hardly a solitary exercise. "I can see all of the students and they can see their classmates. Just as in a live class, everyone is present. We simply use the web cam to show them somebody's drawings. It's very flexible."

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