

# kidScreen

About reaching children through entertainment  
A Publication of Brunico Communications Inc.

## FEATURES

Strategy déjà-vu plays out on the international fall TV dial

International Introspective—merch market reconnaissance in Japan

# Forum Forecast: New toons to shine in Varese

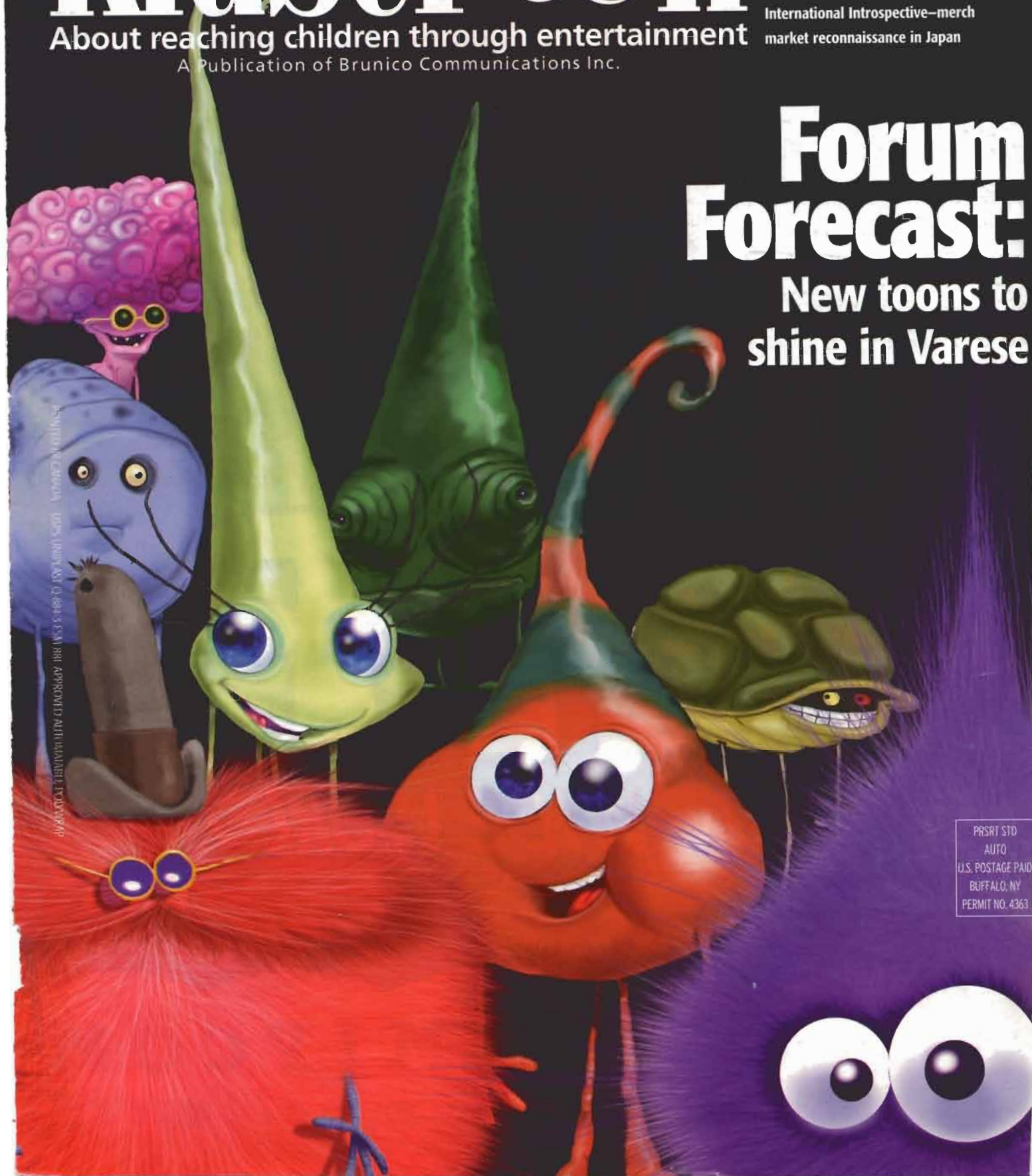


Illustration by Greg Miller. © 2003, Turner and Co. All rights reserved. All trademarks and service marks are the property of their respective owners.

PRST STD  
AUTO  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
BUFFALO, NY  
PERMIT NO. 4363

# UP NEXT

## What's developing in kids production

BY SIMON ASHDOWN

As a Euros-only affair, Cartoon Forum may not draw the same mix of international players as MIPCOM does. But where content variety is concerned, it takes a backseat to no other industry event. From sentient antibodies, to crime-fighting sandwiches, to revolutionary trolls, this year's Cartoon Forum pitches should give distributors, buyers and other financiers plenty to ponder. To help expedite the tire-kicking process, here's a preview of some promising projects that will be making the rounds at Forum this year.

### TV-Loonland spreads the yuks thick in *Sam Hamwich*

Hoping to replicate the success of its hit show *The Cramp Twins*, Munich, Germany's TV-Loonland is back with another slyly quirky toon designed to tickle the funny



Hold the mayo: TV-L's *Sam Hamwich* brings real meaning to the deli term hero sandwich

bones of eight- to 12-year-old boys. Based on an original concept from the San Francisco, California-based creative duo of Stephen Holman and Josephine Huang

(*Phantom Investigators*), *Sam Hamwich: Superhero Sandwich* stars a superhero on rye who is trying to keep peace in Millennium City. Along with his trusty sidekick Chip, Sam subdues mutant fries that spray citizens with messy chili sauce (driving up the rates at local laundromats), as well as solving the mystery of suspicious accidents that start occurring on the film set of his biopic. To give the US\$4.1-million, 2-D animated series a contemporary action feel, TV-L plans to lean on the styles of Ang Lee and the Wachowski Brothers, so don't be surprised if you see a sandwich suspended mid-air in a ninja crouch.

**Status:** TV-Loonland is in discussions to co-produce the 26 x 11-minute series with a Canadian producer, and is seeking additional partners.

### Cartoon Saloon's *Skunk* sniffs out action comedy

For its first original kids show, Kilkenny, Ireland-based animation studio The Cartoon Saloon is shooting for the heart of the boys action/comedy genre. Targeting the six to 12 set, *Skunk* is a 26 x 13-minute, Flash-animated toon that concerns the hero-quest of a young animal trying to learn the art of kung-fu from a wise old panda bear. It turns out that Skunk was mistakenly dropped in China at birth by a stork, who thought he was a baby panda. Episodes will alternate between exploring the Luke-and-Yoda-esque relationship between the two characters as

Cartoon Saloon's Flash-animated *Skunk* tackles a classic ninja-in-training editorial line



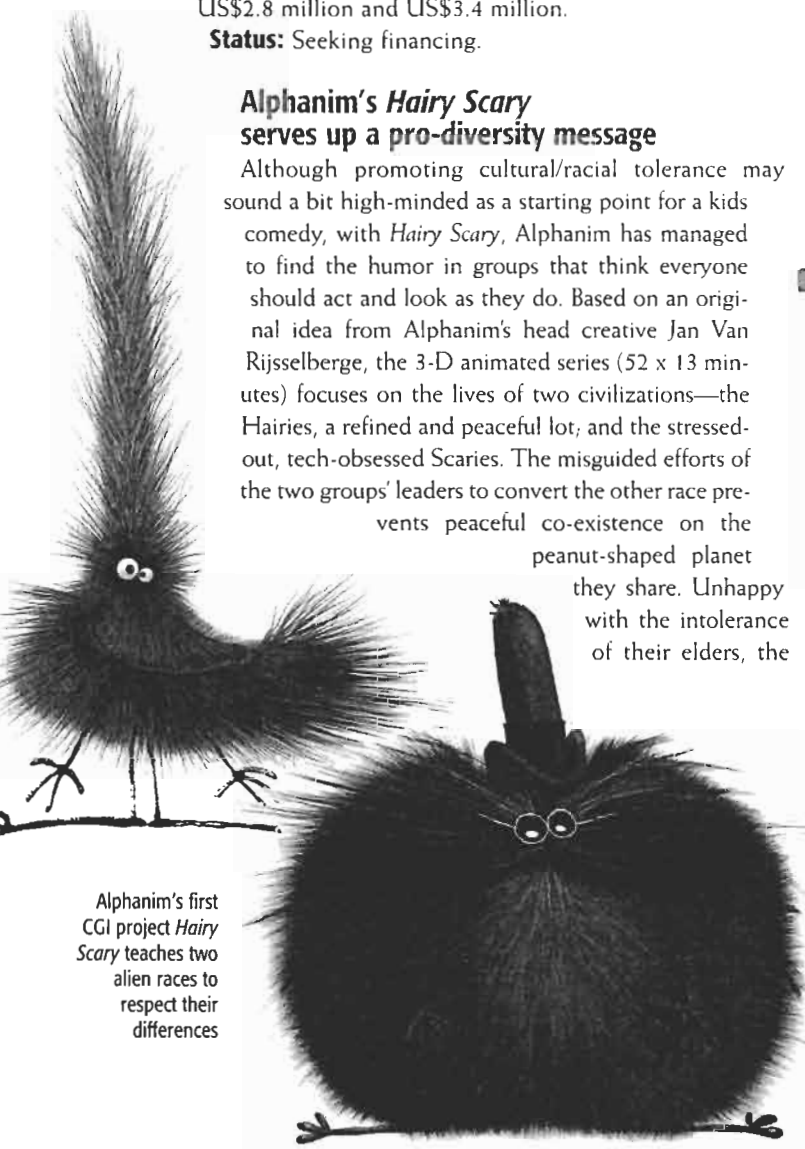
Panda tries to tame Skunk's rambunctious ways, and recounting their battles to save the enchanted forest from the villain Dragon and his army of ninja monkeys. Though the series has obvious boy appeal, the simple design of the lead character is reminiscent of Hello Kitty, and Cartoon Saloon producer Paul Young hopes that will endear it to girls. *Skunk* is budgeted at between US\$2.8 million and US\$3.4 million.

**Status:** Seeking financing.

### Alphanim's *Hairy Scary* serves up a pro-diversity message

Although promoting cultural/racial tolerance may sound a bit high-minded as a starting point for a kids comedy, with *Hairy Scary*, Alphanim has managed to find the humor in groups that think everyone should act and look as they do. Based on an original idea from Alphanim's head creative Jan Van Rijsselberge, the 3-D animated series (52 x 13 minutes) focuses on the lives of two civilizations—the Hairies, a refined and peaceful lot, and the stressed-out, tech-obsessed Scaries. The misguided efforts of the two groups' leaders to convert the other race prevents peaceful co-existence on the peanut-shaped planet

they share. Unhappy with the intolerance of their elders, the



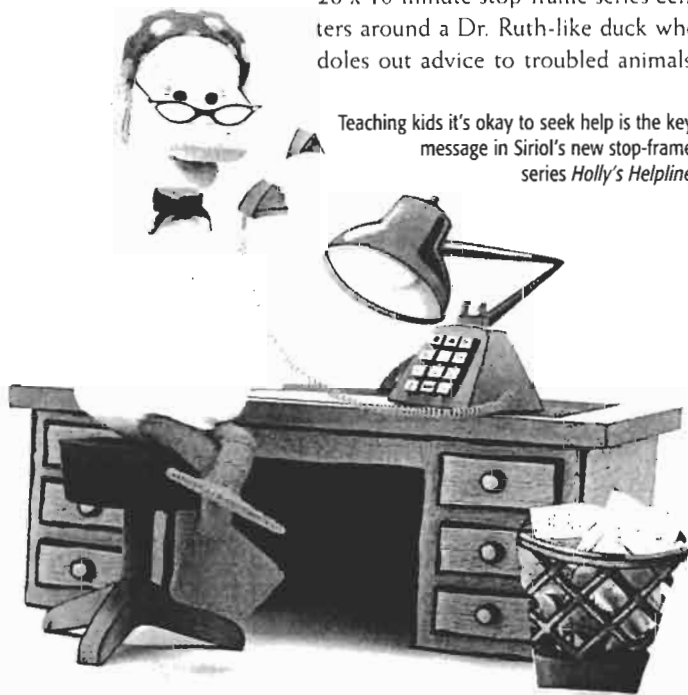
Alphanim's first CGI project *Hairy Scary* teaches two alien races to respect their differences

Hairy and Scary kids band together to launch a resistance that tries to block all homogenization attempts. Paris, France-based Alphanim has developed the *Hairy Scary* pilot with Sweden's Happy Life, and the series, which is aimed at six- to 10-year-olds, is budgeted at US\$10 million.

**Status:** Looking for co-pro partners and broadcasters.

### Siriol's *Holly's Helpline* rings up preschool problem-solving tips

Preschoolers may be young, but that doesn't mean they can't figure things out for themselves...with a little help. That's the message Cardiff, Wales-based Siriol Productions tries to underscore in *Holly's Helpline*. Budgeted at US\$3 million, the 26 x 10-minute stop-frame series centers around a Dr. Ruth-like duck who doles out advice to troubled animals.



Teaching kids it's okay to seek help is the key message in Siriol's new stop-frame series *Holly's Helpline*

Whether it's an ostrich who's frustrated because he can't fly or a skunk with a personal hygiene problem, Holly gently and subtly provides each of her patients with the tools they need to overcome their challenges. To pinpoint the types of problems kids in the show's four to seven target demo would face and how best to resolve them, Siriol (a division of Entertainment Rights) consulted with Childline, a U.K.-based telephone service that helps distressed kids.

**Status:** Siriol is co-producing *Holly* with Welsh broadcaster S4C, but the studio is also seeking other co-pro partners.

### Futurikon's *Germ*s takes a fantastic voyage into the depths of the human body

Although the idea of setting an action-adventure series inside the human body has been explored before (most recently in Warner Bros. film *Osmosis Jones* and its TV offshoot

*Ozzy and Drix*), Paris, France-based Futurikon's *Germ*s is nonetheless hoping to put a new spin on the premise. The series, which has a much darker sci-fi feel than *Ozzy and Drix*, follows the



odyssey of three characters (K-Bob, Poo and Hank) who used to be part of the immune system (called the Service), but were cast out after they were deemed to be germs. Each episode finds the three outsiders trying to ingratiate themselves to the Service by helping to fight pathogens and other viruses that are threatening to infect the body. Though the three protagonists admire the Service, they soon discover that its ranks are made up of automatons—cells predisposed to executing specific tasks and nothing more. As existential angst sets in, the trio sets out on a quest to locate the Service's mythical leader the General to see if he can provide meaning to their lives.

Created by Futurikon producer Norman LeBlanc, *Germ*s is budgeted at US\$6.9 million.

**Status:** Looking for partners.

**Dargaud-Marina's *The Trolls of Troy* conjures up a new fantasy tale**

With another *Lord of the Rings* film to go and multiple *Harry Potter* pics still in the works, it's clear that the fantasy genre will be working its magic with audiences for a couple of years yet. This fact isn't lost on Paris, France's Dargaud-Marina, which hopes kids will be drawn to the charms of *The Trolls of Troy*. Based on a same-name French comic book series by Jean-Louis Mourier and Scotch Arleston, the 26 x 24-minute show is set

Dargaud-Marina's *The Trolls of Troy* tracks the plight of persecuted creatures

in a faraway time and delves into the plight of trolls who are trying to escape enslavement at the hands of humans. Though the trolls are stronger, humans use their recently mastered magical powers to control them. Series protagonist Waha and his ilk must band together to vanquish the human leaders Rysta Fuquatou and Haplin, both of whom want to exploit the trolls' labor before exterminating the entire race. Targeted at the six to 12 set, the 2-D animated series is budgeted at US\$5.9 million.

**Status:** Dargaud-Marina is co-producing the series with French broadcaster M6, but is still seeking additional financing.

**TV-Animation spins an absurd animal tale with *The Crazy Barn***

What if George Orwell's *Animal Farm* was reworked as an animated sitcom by the subversive mind of Gary Larson? That's the question Copenhagen, Denmark-based TV-Animation has been contemplating, and the answer it's come up with is *The Crazy Barn*. Aimed at eight- to 12-year-olds, the 2-D animated series is set on a farm where the animals gab and kvetch just like humans. All is not well, though, as the livestock threatens to revolt against the dim-witted farmer Johan, who is forever trying to catch them in the act of conversation. Bridging the animal-human divide is the farmer's son



Making friends—animal or human—is the key theme in TV-Animation's *Crazy Barn*

Carl, who manages to fool the animals into communicating with him by dressing up in a rooster costume. Eventually, Carl and his newfound chums Lola the Turkey and Sir Richard the Rat put together a weekly TV show that becomes the talk of the farm. Life looks good for Carl—an outcast in the human world—as long as he can keep his real identity hidden from his animal friends. Based on TV-A's live animation gameshow format *The Crazy Barn Show*, this 26 x 24-minute series is being produced for US\$4.5 million.

**Status:** Looking for financing. ☒

