

## Clambake Animation in Watertown keeps it local with new cartoons

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**GateHouse News Service**

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WATERTOWN — Clambake Animation will never be mistaken for the Walt Disney Company.

Though they've done animation for children's programming from "Between the Lions" to "The Electric Company," the Watertown-based studio on is better known for a show about a crime-fighting set of talking buttocks that ran for two seasons on the Cartoon Network's Adult Swim block.

That's not likely to change with their new projects under development, which include such locally-inspired titles as "Southies" and "Lower Allston."

"Lower Allston" is a sort of animated reality television, an attempt to create programming for the sort of teen girls who are watching MTV these days. Clambake co-owner and Brighton resident Carl Adams, 42, explained the genesis of the pilot episode.

"We did this experiment where we went out by Emerson and found four girls walking down the street and said, 'If we can put little [microphones] on you, and we'll just leave you alone. We're just going to record you talking. We'll pick up your tab of beer and pizza or whatever,'" Adams said.

The resulting audio recordings were then edited, recombined and animated. The result is a program that captures the way young women really talk but juxtaposes the dialogue with imagery that heightens the comedy.

Adams plans to pitch the pilot and some other shows in development in Los Angeles this fall.

The use of unscripted dialogue on "Lower Allston" isn't typical for a Clambake project, but what is typical is developing the visuals based on the audio.

"We're really audio-focused here," Adams said. "We do the audio first, and then we'll spend hours in the booth — we have our own [recording] booth here — and then our audio editors are almost like writers, in a sense."

Having their own recording studio in their offices on Water Street helps Clambake work more efficiently, but it also allows them to give back to the community, as when they recently worked with students from the Perkins School for the Blind to record a song the students had written for the school's gala.

Adams got his start in animation at Watertown-based Tom Snyder Productions, where he was originally hired to develop educational software. He came together with Clambake partners Andre Lyman and Carrie Snyder when Adams began work on "Assy McGee."

At the time, Adams and Lyman were working at Scholastic, the children's publishing and media company, which had bought Tom Snyder Productions. When he told his employers he had interest from Adult Swim for an idea about talking buns, they were taken aback.

"That's when Scholastic was like, 'What?'" Adams recalled. "They were like, 'We just can't do the show. It's just not what we do. We'll have people out front picketing.' And I understood that."

With the support of Turner Broadcasting System, the parent company of the Cartoon Network, Adams and Lyman, who handles logistics and hiring, struck out on their own. They brought in Carrie Snyder as managing director on the recommendation of their old boss, her brother Tom Snyder.

The partners say the pool of local talent makes Watertown an ideal place to base their business.

Easy access to schools like MassArt, the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, the Art Institute of Boston, UMass Dartmouth and the Rhode Island School of Design makes recruiting talented young artists no problem.

"What Andre does is meet with the animators and artists even when we're not hiring," Adams said. "It's good to know who's out there because these things drop out of the sky, some of these projects. You've to pull together a team real fast, so to be able to go back and know five great artists is fantastic."

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