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Hi gang,

GREETING:

*I want to thank all of you who offered feedback on the Hollywood Insider Annual Report issue. A few of you noted that I did not include expenses like rent and food in the AROL financial statements. That's true. It was supposed to be a simple exercise to see how much money I made strictly from my acting and how much capital outlay was directly related to acting. What can I say? Arthur Anderson audited my books! Another reader, commenting on my headshot mailing campaign, mentioned how amusing and weird it is that I send my picture out to complete strangers. Well, it never occurred to me that this was strange, but I guess that just shows the narcissistic nature of this business. Seriously, it is no stranger for an actor to do this than it is for a banker or consultant to send out his/her business resume to strangers. We just do it more often.....although in this market it may be about even. Lastly, one of my friends sent me a quote that I believe is one of those profundities that you think sounds silly until you really let it sink in. Then you realize how.....well, profound it is.*

***“If you never give up, you will never fail”***

True that.

## **THIS ISSUE'S HIGHLIGHTS**

- [www.aroljahns.com](http://www.aroljahns.com) website updated.....finally!
- As Arol Turns – A bit part on a CBS soap
- Enjoys a highly successful run of THE DINER PLAYS in NJ
- Saturday Night Fever - Arol takes a dance class!

## **WHAT I HAVE DONE:**

### ***As The World Turns:***

In keeping with my fiscal new years' resolution to do less low-budget, low-quality work and more film and network television, I wrangled an audition/meeting with the casting director for background and Under Five (under five lines) roles on AS THE WORLD TURNS. I thought it went well and sure enough he called me back the next day to have me appear on an episode that shoots July 31<sup>st</sup>.

Currently it is a background role, which means its not a speaking part, but in the soap world, unlike being an extra on a film set, there are far less people involved (I am one of six) and therefore, the chances of being upgraded to a speaking role are far greater. Even if the director decides to have you say “a-hem, excuse me” to a waiter, bang, that’s an upgrade to U-5 status which means not only a pay raise (from about \$100 to around \$400 for the day), but an actor can also legitimately put it on his or her resume as a TV credit. Hey, that is how it starts for many soap stars. At least I am moving in the right direction. More on the soap set in a future Insider.

### ***The Diner Plays:***

Well, I just finished up a 4-show run as “Norman” in THE DINER PLAYS in Morristown, NJ. It went very well – thanks to all of you who came out in support. Based on my experience with THE DINER PLAYS I had planned to make this Insider all about the “Anatomy of the Performance” and what happens from audition to curtain call. However, I have decided to send out this shorter (thank god, right?!) and hopefully more humorous account of my new life as a dancer. But don’t worry, for all of you who may actually be interested in the process that an actor goes through in bringing a role to the stage, it will be in the next HWI.

### ***Shall We Dance?***

The past year has been chock full of “firsts” for me. Wonderful things that I never even dreamed of (like hanging out on a set with Joan Jett (see HWI#2)).....and some opportunities that I was hoping would never present themselves. Well, this past month, not only did such an opportunity present itself, but it rather forced itself upon me. As part of “LIL’ RED – GIRL FROM THE HOOD”, a hip-hop version of the classic fairy tale, in which I play the Big Bad Wolf, all the performers were required to sing.....AND DANCE! At first I thought they just meant we needed to be able to “move well”....or fake it. But as we began to rehearse it became horrifically apparent that much more was being required of us. That’s right, the director was requiring us all to go to dance class! In fact, included in the production budget was enough to pay for three sessions each with a well-known dance instructor. What follows is the humiliating account of those sessions.

I know I have changed a lot since my days as an investment banker. I have certainly tapped my more creative side and one could even argue I have gotten more in touch with my emotional side.....but I always thought it would be a cold day in hell before I set foot in a dance studio. But there I was, 11am on a very hot Monday morning, waiting for Luigi’s Jazz Style Class to begin.

Naturally, I was apprehensive. I had never taken a dance class – aside from the Barclay’s ballroom dance I took in grade school. You know the one where the boys stand on one side of the room and the girls stand on the other wearing white gloves, lest they touch our pre-pubescent, clammy palms. But this was definitely a step in the wrong direction. This was jazz dancing – hip swivelin’, shoulder shimmyin’ jazz dancing. Then again, I was

comforted somewhat in that it was my first time so there were no expectations of me. Except, of course, those I put on myself. It was in my competitive nature to want to be the best dancer in that damn class on day one!

There were all levels of experience represented in Luigi's jazz style class, but I was the only pure greenhorn. As nonchalant as I tried to be, it was my dance outfit that betrayed my inexperience. Since I didn't own the requisite Danskin tight pants, ballet shoes and lycra top, I had to carefully select something from my existing wardrobe that would be a close approximation. Biking shorts crept into my mind briefly, but then I thought better of it and went with a pair of baggy sweats. If some guy was going to be looking at my ass, I was certainly not going to make it easy for him! On top I selected a plain black t-shirt. It wasn't really that tight so I toyed with the idea of tying a knot at one side like the kids from "Fame" used to do, but I couldn't remember which side was the gay side and which was the straight side, so I opted to let it hang down. On my feet, I chose to go barefoot – hairy, knarled toes and all.

I was relieved to find my director, Melba, in the class that day, but I was floored when Liza Minnelli made her grand entrance letting out that boisterous laugh that she has "HAH!" Apparently she (and many other celebs) take classes regularly with Luigi. Luigi, né Eugene Louis Faccuito, has been the dance teacher to the stars for over 40 years. When Melba introduced me, the octogenarian with a lazy eye grabbed my hand in an innocent, grandfatherly way and kept holding it while he talked – absent mindedly as if he was not aware that he was still holding it. He looked me in the eye (well with one of them anyway) and said, "Arol, I have taught dance to many famous people" and he proceeded to list several celebs that have been under his tutelage over the years. I have included a partial list here for your admiration: Alvin Ailey, Richard Chamberlain, Peggy Flemming, Elliott Gould, Goldie Hawn, Bette Midler (that, I would have liked to see! I have this image of a hippo in a tutu in my head for some reason), Barbara Streisand and Christopher Walken. When he concluded he looked at me for some reaction. I didn't know what to say so I made some lame joke about some day he will be telling his new students that he once taught Arol. He didn't seem like he would be holding his breath.

Luigi's Jazz Centre is a classic studio with mirrors on three walls and a ballet bar encircling the perimeter. I saw all the dancers limbering up so I started doing my soccer stretches. Then I made the mistake of trying to put my leg up on the bar. Big mistake! Not only did I not quite reach the bar, but I ripped my hamstring in the process, calling attention to the fact that I was a complete novice – that is assuming they hadn't seen my outfit first.

So while I was feeling totally like a goldfish in the Gobi, I took stock of my fellow classmates. Perhaps the one fringe benefit of dance class is that it is almost 98% female and about 75% of those have nice, lean dancer physiques and wear skimpy leotards and stuff. I think they thought I was cute (in that demeaning way) and the fact that I couldn't dance at all seemed to make me cuter in their eyes.....or maybe it was because I was the only heterosexual male present. I got to know some of them during the breaks. There

was Kana and Tomoka, a dance teacher and her student from Osaka, Japan here for two weeks to study with “Luigi Sensei”. Of course, I busted out with the Japanese which never ceases to impress any Japanese person....especially in an unexpected setting – like a dance studio.

Then there was Karen, a 14-year-old Hollywood High student, out east with her mother in tow taking several dance classes over the summer. In the far corner, more than a few middle-aged women in various degrees of out-of-shape gabbed incessantly to one another about the dance steps they were learning. As I was surveying the class I inadvertently caught eyes with Craig, one of the two other males in the class and we exchanged a nod that, in any other setting (say at an auto show or at game five of the world series) would have been innocuously macho, but there in Luigi’s dance studio, made for an uncomfortable moment, for me anyway.

So, here we go. Luigi starts the class out with some stretches. So far, so good. I can do this. He goes through the upper body positions; “first position, second position” and then combinations of positions “first to fifth, to tenth to second to fourth.....and.....relax.” He hardly stops talking and, indeed, at one point Liza chimes in with some witty remark or another and Luigi talked right through it, not even taking notice.

Then, the real stuff started. Luigi moved to the side and let his younger assistant Francis take over. The jazz music was cued up and all of a sudden the entire class was moving in sync. They all seemed to know what the moves were. It was like the time I came back from living overseas and everyone had mastered the *Macarena* in my absence and I felt totally inadequate and alone. Soon though, I was moving and grooving. I actually wasn’t doing that badly. I busted through my *pas de bras* and my *demi-plié* with considerable aplomb and the *ball change* (I’m not joking!) came rather easy to me. The problem I had was with my upper body. Luigi told us that if you get the footwork, it shows you “like” dance, but if you get the upper body, the means you “feel” dance. Well, I was likin’ it, but I wasn’t feelin’ it. My upper body choreography looked like the scarecrow from the “Wizard of Oz”. A graceful man, I am not.

At one point in the middle of class with the music going and everyone sweating to the oldies, Luigi yells out in full voice “Arol! How’re doing?” Startled I replied “Uh....I’m hanging in there Luigi”. At this point I believe I was in the middle of my *glissade*. Then Luigi pipes up with “Arol! Do you like me?”

“Huh?”

Everyone in the class laughed, but I wasn’t sure if he meant “like him” like him or some sarcastic reference to his being a sadistic, strict teacher, so I didn’t say anything. I just stood there with this dumb grin on my face.

When the 1 ½ hour class ended Luigi came up to me and complimented me on my work. “You’re a natural,” he offered. I bet he says that to all of the first timers, but my ego let

me believe he meant it sincerely. He's a good salesman, I'll give him that.....I actually entertained the notion of buying more classes.....for about 5 seconds.

Then all of a sudden we heard some commotion and we turned to see Karen's mother comforting her as she balled. She had just taken a photo with Liza Minnelli and apparently broke down in tears, overwhelmed at being next to her idol – Karen, we were informed, was a huge fan of the movie “Cabaret”. She'd seen it over 10 times in her short lifetime.

Well, I couldn't let the opportunity go by without saying something to Liza myself. But what to say? When I really thought about it, I didn't really know all that much about her or her career. I considered “Hey Liza, you light up my life!” followed by a little Isaac (from The Love Boat) two finger point, but then I couldn't recall if that was her or Debbie Boone (it was the latter). Or maybe I would say something about her affection for that freak Jacko the Wacko? Or maybe “Hey, you look great after that stroke, nice work!” No, that wouldn't be appropriate either. In the end I just went up to her and said:

“Hi Liza. I'm Arol.”

“You're what?” She said.

“No, not what. Who. I'm Arol. My name is Arol.”

“Oh, nice to meet ya, Arol” she said and turned away from me to grab Luigi in a full body embrace.

And that was that. My first dance class experience. I went twice more over the next few weeks and sort of became “one of the gals”. All the regulars would offer me advice and say what a great job I was doing.....leaving out, but implying, “for a big oaf!” Liza would show up again on the third day and do battle for attention with Pia Lindstrom, Ingrid Bergman's daughter. By my third class I had already become a dance snob. There were some first timers in that class and of course I would turn my nose up, stand with my feet in fifth position, hands on hips, looking impatient while Francis attempted to untangle them. Then I would bask in the warm glow of Luigi's praise while I danced, feeling like Fred Astaire, but no doubt looking more like Fred Flintstone. It really wasn't that bad overall and while I'm not saying I'm a Billy Elliot in training, I'm glad to have had the experience. Plus, more importantly, I can now put “Dance” on my acting résumé's “Training” section. Hey, acting, singing AND dancing? I'm a triple threat! As long as no one asks to hear me sing or see me dance, we're in good shape.

## **MUSIC & WRITING:**

Sadly, nothing new to report here.

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**THIS ISSUE'S STATISTICS:**

Days since becoming an "actor": 431  
Number of Films: 3  
Number of TV shows: 1  
Number of Theater shows: 6  
Number of Subscribers to the Insider: 157  
Website Hits: 2,211

**Mood Meter:** Mixed. While I am excited about moving on and concentrating on film and TV, I know that it will be a hard road, especially without an agent with strong relationships with casting directors of soaps, commercials and primetime TV. I am also dealing with the very real concern of finances and making a living. The time is drawing nigh where I will have to get some kind of steady paying job to finance my acting classes, headshot printing, etc. not to mention food and rent. I know that this is something that every actor has to face, but I had very much enjoyed acting full time – looking through the trades for casting calls, mailing out headshots, going to auditions, seeing plays, etc. But mostly I am excited about stepping it up a notch.

**LAST ISSUE'S STATISTICS:**

Days since becoming an "actor": 407  
Number of Films: 3  
Number of TV shows: 1  
Number of Theater shows: 4  
Number of Subscribers to the Insider: 156  
Website Hits: 2,183

**Overall Mood Meter:** I have had an incredible year in terms of acting, performing and have truly enjoyed what I have been doing day-to-day. The thought of returning to investment banking leaves me completely cold. That said, the living hand-to-mouth thing has also gotten a bit stale and therefore I am anxious to ratchet things up a bit and make some money. At some point, getting a job (even a non-entertainment related job) would not be out of the question. Nor would I consider it a sellout or a failure. I think a year of full time acting has done a lot for me and I could make the hunt for acting work a full time role, but the truth is I am not currently auditioning all day, five days per week. In fact, the auditions I do have mostly take place in the evenings or on weekends so some kind of 9-5er would definitely be doable. Having some financial peace of mind does a lot for one's confidence as an actor (indeed, as a human being). Stay tuned.