

September 8, 2001

Hi again all,

GREETING:

"Thank you" to everyone who commented and offered feedback on the first HW Insider - it was greatly appreciated. Some were very constructive....others were very amusing. One decidedly helpful chap wrote that I should keep statistics of "number of sexual favors" I have had to perform in my quest for stardom. While I do not think that I will be keeping a running tally of that statistic going forward, I can say with confidence, that as of this issue it would be a big fat zero.....unless, of course, you count kissing ass as a sexual favor of sorts. Then we would have to have a recount.

CAREER MILESTONES:

Okay. I went and did it! Yup, I got that one piece of wardrobe that truly defines the quintessential actor. That's right....the white, all-cotton, ribbed, wife beater t-shirt*. Now I think people will really start to take me seriously. Truthfully, I don't really understand the sleeveless undershirt. I mean, the functional purpose of these things is to stop sweat so you don't have big 'ol pit stains showing through the under arm area of your nice blue business shirt - "never let 'em see ya sweat". So I would think the one place where you would actually WANT material would be the under arms. Where are these guys perspiring, that two inch band between the collarbone and shoulder? And lets make sure it scoops down low around the neck so as not to impede chest hair sweat from poking through. Is this just me? Anyone? Bueller?

* No offense intended to battered wives or wife beaters.

ACTING:

Monologues: In order to audition (particularly for theater) an actor must have at least two monologues prepared. Usually one comedy and one drama. What I have come to learn is that every actor/teacher/coach/agent tells you a different thing, a different way of performing the monologue. By the time you are done listening to these people you are so confused that your monologue sucks. What the actor must realize is that there is no "right" answer. There are, of course, choices that are more appropriate than others, but really each actor must make decisions on what seems most real to him or her and go with it.

It is not like finance where there is a correct way to do a Discounted Cash Flow analysis or a Common Stock Comparison. Whether you are trained at Goldman Sachs or Morgan Stanley or Merrill Lynch you will have the same tools and methods. Sure there may be some stylistic nuances, but there are not many creative ways to discount cash flow (Chicago MBAs put your heads together with the Kellogg guys and check that for me will ya). Stating the obvious, finance is more cerebral ("in the head") while acting is more emotional ("in the soul"). Right now I'm sort of in the middle with my head up my ass.

Training: After spending the summer taking intro courses at the Herbert Berghof Studio (see HWI #1), I focused on finding an acting coach who would take an interest in the development of my career and not just crank out carbon copy actors as if from a factory. I audited and participated in over a dozen classes with several different instructors until I finally decided on someone.

There are several things that I needed to consider when making this decision. First of all, there is the issue of technique or school. There are several and they overlap and intertwine so much that it is hard to make sense of it all for the new actor. First, there is the granddaddy of them all, Stanislavsky, then there is Method and Meisner and offshoots of Meisner, like Stella Adler, Uta Hagen and Wynn Handmann. They all offer different ways or nuances that allow the actor to bring up emotions on cue. For me though, I didn't want to subscribe to one particular school, but rather I wanted an appropriate mix of these different techniques that suit me personally. I found a couple, but some of them had such esoteric teaching styles that it freaked out this ex-investment banker. I'll give you an example of what I am talking about. One teacher had the entire class spend the first hour (I am not exaggerating) lying on top of small rubber balls, rolling around while making orgasmic sounds. I was told this was "bio-energetics", a part of the Alexander technique aligning the spine and the breathing. This teacher said we had to "breathe into the area" to create that "emotional tinderbox". Okay, whatever. Next!

I finally decided on The Penny Templeton Studio. I connected well with Penny and her husband, I like her process which combines aspects of different techniques based on each individual student, and, perhaps most importantly, their philosophy holds the appropriate balance of acting as a craft and as a business. Oh, and no orgasm balls! Actual classes start this Monday, so we will see how things go. Stay tuned.

Headshots: I have chosen a couple of headshots for reproduction and have been using them for auditions, soliciting agents, etc. They will be enshrined on my website when it is up and running, but in the meantime, for the curious, you can view them at:

http://www.backstage.com/backstage/resume/resume_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1000005705

You will notice it says Arol Jahns. I am using my middle name as a stage name - another pretentious actor thing. It seems to be working. People like it. Although most folks think I'm a bit slow as I'm not quite used to responding to that name, yet.

Resume: Fudging the resume. I do not have many acting credits to date so I was looking to pump up the old resume a bit. Well, it is not like the business resume where you can embellish your particular role at a particular firm (which you can be sure I will do with Goldman if the need ever arises). With the acting resume it's pretty cut-and-dried. You were either in a play or film...or you were NOT in a play or film. Nonetheless I squeezed as much credit as I could from my past experiences....mom, remember the tree I played in my high school production of Oklahoma?!

Agent: As I mentioned in the last issue, my agent Ann Steele agreed to sign me for TV, Film and Theater provided I fulfill some requirements. Well, I did what was asked of me and now I have three contracts (SAG (TV & Film), AFTRA (TV & Radio) and Equity (Theater)) on my desk waiting to be signed. As soon as I do, she says she has a couple of auditions she wants to send me out on. Here we go baby!

I am still looking for a commercial agent though. I have sent resumes and headshots to five of the top agents in NYC so we will see what happens. It's like applying to colleges, if I get rejected from the top tier, I will apply to my safety agents. Hopefully I won't need to. I have become accustomed to getting the top. :)

WRITING:

I have completed my Gotham Writers Workshop(GWW)online writing course. It was fantastic. I feel that I now have a working knowledge of the necessary tools of good fiction writing. I also read Stephen King's book " On Writing" which I highly recommend for all of you accidental writers out there - even if you don't particularly enjoy Mr. King's novels. I hope to have chapters of my novel "Shangri-La" and some short stories posted on my web site when it, and the stories, are completed.

MUSIC:

The band is back up and running after taking most of the summer off. I have been tasked with the job of manager and promoter for the NYC area and thus I have been visiting live music houses in the city and sending out demo CDs. This process normally takes a few weeks to bear fruit (if at all), but I will let you all know when we have our first NYC gig. Of course, I expect you all to show up!

STUFF I 'VE DONE: (hopefully this section will be more meaty in the next issue)

Acting:

"Spontaneous Combustion"

My advanced improv group from HB Studio. We put on a show (like Drew Carey's "Whose Line Is It Anyway"). By all accounts it went very well. Okay, it was a class performance and we did not charge the public, but I was still performing on stage with no net. Very exhilarating.

I got a speaking part in an upcoming independent feature film. It is a psychological thriller entitled "Fabled". It is a great screenplay written by a young director out of San Diego. I play the protagonists' boss and it will shoot in late Sept./early Oct. in Westchester, NY.

Filmography:

"The Last Goodbye" - Independent short film - Bob Marcus

"Sweet Memories" - Independent feature film - "wedding guest"

Theater:

"Spontaneous Combustion" - improv troupe performance

RUBBING ELBOWS WITH THE RICH & FAMOUS: (this section will mention any famous people I have come in contact with)

*Nothing new here. no famous folks this time.

From Past Issues:

MARY STUART MASTERSON

JOAN JETT

THIS ISSUE'S STATISTICS:

Days since becoming an "actor": 102

Number of Films: 2 (I'm being generous to myself here)

Number of TV shows: 0

Number of Theater shows: 1 (again, being generous)

Number of Subscribers to the Insider: 106

Website Hits: 0 (www.aroljahns.com is still in the development stage.

Hey, I bought Microsoft's "Front Page". Baby steps, man. cut me some slack!)

Mood Meter: Very High. Although I am beginning to realize that this is going to take a lot of work, I am still very encouraged by people in the industry that matter. I have my agent all signed up and should be going for those paid jobs now. The financial situation is beginning to sneak up on my shoulder and I know I will have to get some kind of day job soon. Don't want to wait tables or bartend. If anyone has any suggestions, I am listening.

LAST ISSUE'S STATISTICS:

Days since becoming an "actor": 66

Number of Films: 2 (I'm being generous to myself here)

Number of TV shows: 0

Number of Theater shows: 0

Number of Subscribers to the Insider: 95

Website Hits: 0 (the Dan Jahns web site is in the works - this is a must to complete the pretentious actor persona)

Mood Meter: Very High. So far the people I have come in contact with (agents, photographers, etc.) have it in their best interests to build up my confidence and so far it's working. I'm sure I will be on soaps or prime time TV in no time.