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Happy New Year Insiders! (I like having a name for you all. It makes me feel like I've got a cult following, rather than a group of one or two who read this and the rest who hit 'delete' when it hits their inbox).

GREETING:

Well, a new year is a time for reflection and so I thought I would take the opportunity in the first Hollywood Insider of 2002 to BREIFLY look back on my fledgling little acting career to see what I have accomplished in the past 7 months. I stopped short of presenting an income statement knowing full well that I am still severely in the red still. However, I plan to do just that at the conclusion of my first year as an actor (my accounting books close May 28th). It may not be much prettier then, but hopefully I can claw some back in the Actor's Income column.

STATE OF THE ACTOR ADDRESS:

As I re-read some of the early HWIs I cringe at how sarcastic and irreverent I sound. I think that my general ignorance of the industry led me to cop this cavalier attitude to make up for my lack of experience. Now, 7 months on, I am just beginning to find an identity for myself as an actor. I see now what this business is like but, far from being daunted, I am more excited and determined than ever to succeed. I just realize that there are a lot of things I want to accomplish and they will take time.

For example, getting involved in Summer Stock Theater is an immediate goal. That will take me into August/Sept. of 2002. I also want to take private singing lessons so I can audition for musicals. I want to join an improv troupe, making my way up through the ranks to a point where I am performing semi-regularly. These things will all take time. While I am still interested in being a huge star on the big screen I am also realizing that there can be fun along the way exploring all these other avenues. The trick is not to wake up 15 years from now penniless saying "what the heck did I do with the last 15 years? Why didn't I focus?" I will have to manage that. The art, I think, is concentrating on being the best actor you can be (in terms of technique) while at the same the time being ever vigilant for opportunities, be they performance, or

networking or what have you. Get yourself into a position to take advantage of that “big break”. Don’t just sit around and wait for it to come to you. Cause likely it won’t.

However, I am still very much the “showbusinessman” and do not have ANY interest in being a “struggling actor”. In my opinion, actors don’t struggle. They act! Dilettantes struggle. The waiters, bartenders (and other professions that actors do when they are not “working”) who claim they are too tired, too poor, too disadvantaged to “make it” are not making it happen for themselves. It’s not easy and I’m not saying that I’ll make it. But if I don’t make it, it will be because I didn’t want to put in the supreme effort required to win. It will mean I didn’t want to send follow up cards to agents and casting directors every few weeks/months, I didn’t make time to go to this or that audition, I didn’t feel like sending my headshots/resume in to the casting calls in the trades on a regular basis and it will mean that I just didn’t want it badly enough.

Being an actor takes a modicum of talent, but more than talent, it takes tenacity. Be relentless, be a self-promoter, know yourself as an actor. This is my 2002 advice to myself. Stay tuned baby!

ACTING:

Headshots/resume: I think I have done pretty well in this area. I got some great headshots (although one LA casting director commented that I look stiff) and very quickly got a few credits to fill out the resume and make it look somewhat respectable (for an new actor).

Training: Given that I have decided not to pursue an MFA or other two year acting program, I think I have done quit well in this category as well. I spent the time to do some research and have found a few teachers that I am comfortable with. I auditioned and got accepted into Austin Pendleton’s class – one of 30 out of 300+ who auditioned. However, I still haven’t found the teacher that I love, someone that I want to act for. The search continues.

Agents/Unions: While getting signed with my former manager from my days as a child actor seemed like a coup at the time, the truth is that she has not sent me out on much in the three months that I have been signed with her. This is due in part to the state of the industry (it is very quiet right now), but also because she is admittedly only sending me out for 32-year-old businessman roles until I she sees evidence of my acting ability. Therefore the ball is

in my court to land a principal role on stage or screen that she can see and feel confident that her reputation will not be sullied by sending me out for auditions. So I religiously scour the trades for casting calls that appeal to me.

Being SAG certainly helps and I am grateful to my mother for having the foresight to freeze my membership for X amount of dollars in 1979. I have also discovered that as a SAG member in good standing I can join the Actor's Equity Association (the union for stage actors). Any actor can also join AFTRA (union covering soaps and voice-overs) by simply paying the initiation fee and annual dues. While it is tempting to be a member of all three unions, I don't see any real benefit to joining them and paying dues before I get paying work. As a SAG member I can audition for AEA and AFTRA roles and join if I get the part.

Performances: I feel I could have done more in this area. The two independent films and the one student film, while fun to do, amount to little more than extra work and cannot be used in making my "reel". And no stage work to speak of is deplorable. I have seen so much Off-Off Broadway theater where the acting was suspect, but I have not been hungry enough to get these roles. The remedy? Be more relentless in getting involved in theater. In addition, I have plans to team up with some of my acting friends to write and mount a showcase of scenes. This is somewhat ambitious, but hey, others are doing it and its what you need to do if you aren't getting any other parts.

WRITING:

Admittedly I have fallen behind in my writing. Despite my self-imposed writing hour I have not gotten past chapter one of my novel "Shangri-La" (HWI#1). I have written a couple of short stories, one of which I am currently adapting into a screenplay. I hope to film it together with my producer friend Dennis Cook (HWI#5). This project too is ambitious and will likely cost \$\$, but it will be a great experience having a hand in writing, directing, acting and producing a short film. I do hope to find the motivation to resume my novel, but truthfully it seems like a fairly daunting task at this point and I find more fulfillment in tackling different aspects of writing through my short stories.

MUSIC:

While this was always intended to be a hobby for me, I am happy to say that my efforts, however little they may have been, have started to bear fruit. As I mentioned in HWI# I was tasked by my Bucknell band friends (a.k.a. ZUZU) to promote the band and

source venues for them in New York City. After sending out their demo CD to several live music establishments in NYC and several patient follow-up calls and visits, I landed ZUZU a gig at The Bitter End in the Village as part of the NY Songwriters Circle. There were other venues that should have been easier to book, but the Bitter End was the top of my list. To draw a business school analogy, this was my reach – a Wharton of NYC live houses if you will.

ZUZU will play at 10:30pm on Monday, January 28th. It's a tough time slot I know, but if we impress the booking guy with our music and the turnout, we can then start appearing there regularly. Therefore, I ask that all of you who are in the NYC area to come out and support us on the 28th. I promise you a treat of some excellent music and if the opportunity to hear yours truly sing is not enough, Eric Bazillian (of Hooters fame) is playing that night as well. Here is a link to The Bitter End for address, phone, etc. <http://bitterend.com/> (note, no www is needed). I will send a reminder email out closer to the date, but I hope you all mark the date in your calendars.

WEBSITE:

In other big HWI news, I proudly announce the launching of my very own website! The URL is www.aroljahns.com. Check it out! As those of you who actually make it down to the "statistics" section of The Insider are aware, I have been procrastinating on putting this page up since issue #1. Well, a HWI reader came to the rescue. Shawn Gross, who owns and operates a fledgling web design firm called "iCrossing Designs" approached me about designing a website for me in exchange for plugging his company on my next HWI. I took a look at some of his sites and agreed on the spot. I love this barter thing! Won't be long now where the entire HWI will be made up of ads for other services!! Just kidding, I promise not to sell out, but this just seemed like a fair (and necessary) trade. Plus who knows when I would have gotten around to doing it myself. Anyway, check out my website and if you like it (I think it's awesome) tell your friends about iCrossing Designs. There is a link to their website (www.icrossingdesigns.com) from my home page which has rates and samples. Thanks Shawn!

LAST ISSUE'S STATISTICS:

Days since becoming an "actor": 218

Number of Films: 3

Number of TV shows: 0

Number of Theater shows: 1

Number of Subscribers to the Insider: 138

Website Hits: 0 (www.aroljahns.com). IT'S FINALLY UP AND RUNNIG!! Thanks to Shawn Gross and Icrossing Designs. Check it out!

Mood Meter: High. My juices start flowing every time I start thinking of potential projects (theater, film) and just getting out there and auditioning. Having the prospect of income (independent consulting) gives me a little financial security as well.

LAST ISSUE'S STATISTICS:

Days since becoming an "actor": 190

Number of Films: 3

Number of TV shows: 0

Number of Theater shows: 2 (I'm gonna count the TRU thing as theater)

Number of Subscribers to the Insider: 134

Website Hits: 0 (www.aroljahns.com). Ah....still working on it.

Mood Meter: Still Mixed. Nov-Dec is typically a slow time for the industry. That coupled with the poor economy means that there is not as much work right now. Therefore, I am not going on as many auditions as I would have hoped. However, I continue to meet people who inspire me and keep busy with several projects including starting a theater company, writing a one act play, learning about production, etc. Overall I am very excited about the entertainment industry, but hope the acting end of it picks up by early next year.