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Life

Young Thespians: No experience? Make some!

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A "catch-22" is defined at Dictionary.com as "a frustrating situation in which one is trapped by contradictory regulations or conditions," or "any illogical or paradoxical problem or situation — a dilemma."

There used to be a day when I would reach for an actual, physical dictionary instead of looking a definition up online, but that's an observation that bears exploring another day.

Suffice it to say, a catch-22 happens when the solution to a situation is not possible because the solution is the situation. It is a concept that is hard to explain, but we have all been there.

For example, how many times has an employer turned you down for a job because of your lack of experience? The irony, of course, is that you can't gain experience if no one will hire you! How frustrating is that, especially in this economy?

Well, **Andrew Goldsworth** found himself in his own professional catch-22 and decided to do something about it. The 2003 Mentor High School graduate with a degree in electronic media production from Ashland University found himself unemployed last June, so he decided to create his own luck.

But first, some background.

"I always liked working with a video camera," Goldsworth says of his decision to pursue a degree in video work. "I guess I thought I would try to work for a news station."

He worked for a while producing the weekly news broadcast at Ashland. But he spent so much time working on his theater minor in productions such as "Romeo & Juliet" and "Cabaret" that his professors began to confuse him with a theater major.

He tried unsuccessfully to get into the NBC page program his senior year, but went to New York City after graduation anyway to work in freelance video production. Landing an internship for a post-production company and working for a studio specializing in satellite media tours eventually

flamed out, and he ended up with a full-time job editing video footage.

That was Goldsworth's last steady job. He got laid off in June, and hasn't worked consistently since — another victim of our struggling economy.

But don't think he hasn't been working, because he has. He just hasn't gotten paid for it yet.

"One good thing about working in Solon," Goldsworth says, "is that there were so many good people working there. **Matt Pallotta** was working there and had an idea for a movie kicking around. When half the staff got laid off, we kept in contact. The other guys who were left had less to do, so we started working on this movie. That's when Matt thought, 'Hey, this ought to be a Web series.' "

And so a film project was born — "The Road to Sundance (on a shoestring budget!)" This short film series, which can only be seen on the Web, can be viewed at www.roadtosundance.com/index.html.

The story follows the fictional Cleveland filmmaker George Palmer (**Bobby Thomas**) and his assistant, Parker, played by Goldsworth. Palmer wishes to make a hit movie, but finds that not everyone with whom he works shares the same passion.

Five episodes are online already, with several more already finished and more in the works. The entire process has been one gigantic learning experience, and a great networking and promotional opportunity.

"We started pre-casting in September," Andrew says. "Matt wrote much of the script, but when I say written, you need to keep in mind that a lot of it is created on the spot. There is a script, but it is meant to be a jumping-off point. The cast and crew will sit down and decide where they want to go with these characters."

The Web may be bad for dictionaries and newspapers, but the YouTube generation has been quick to make it own way online. In the vast hinterlands of the Internet when the nonvirtual world has failed to come calling, starving artists have found an outlet to make their own luck.

The catch is that no one can figure out how to make money off postings like these. Just like YouTube, anyone can post a video that anyone can watch. But on a free resource like the Internet, how is any money to be made?

"It is difficult when we don't have money to advertise," Goldsworth admits. "We hope to get some word of mouth going on. The first episode already has over 1,200 views. We just want people to see it and see what we've done."

Perhaps if the right one does, their Web site could be the equivalent of the old-time soda fountain discovery of the next big thing.

"I'm not sure what the final plan is," Andrew says. "Perhaps we'll have 16 to 20 episodes when we are done. We may even sell some DVDs later if people like it. Right now we are just doing it for fun, but everybody is putting it on their resume. We don't get any money, but it would be great if we got lucky and someone realized we've got some good people who like doing this."

Creating your own experience. It's that kind of gumption that will eventually pull this country out of the economic ditch. At the very least, Andrew has gotten out of that catch-22. He's making his own experience.