At these prices, don't call them 'cartoons'

AP — The best news for fans of animated movies came with last week's box-office report that showed big grosses for "The Land Before Time" and "Oliver and Company." Revival of animation, the most tedious and expensive kind of filmmaking, has been predicted every few years. Until recently, though, economies made animation features risky. But in their first weeken risky and animate and animation in a subject with the risk of the risky to grow through the holiday season. That's encouraging for the animation trade, which has been hampered not only by the heavy expense of production but the nature of the audience.

"A large number of tickets we sell go for a lower admission price," said on Butth, who produced "The Land before Time."

"If we make a boffo with a pic-

before Time."
"If we make a boffo with a pic-

ture, it's because we sold more tickets." Bluth, who formerly worked for
the Disney Co, cautiously predicts reremissance of animation.

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"We were finishing up "The Black Cauldron," which had been an enor-mous seven-year effort, with the kind of strange idea of doing an epic or making a masterpiece and not having any strong sense of what the

story was. There were a lot of people who thought we just weren't going forward with the animation department. There was even talk of getting out of the movie business entirely."

Disney was faced with the task of educating new company heads, who were trained in live-action films, to the uniqueness of the animation process.

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"First of all, it's a matter of time;

cess.
"First of all, it's a matter of time; Oliver," for example, took four years to complete," he said. His campaign was aided by having "The Great Mouse Detective" in good story form. When the have readed, "Oliver and Company," resulted from a "Gong Show" session in which 20 illm executives appeared with at least three story ideas. Most were shot down, but an updated "Oliver Twist," survived. Members of Fagin's gang became dogs, as was the newcomer, Oliver. But during story development Oliver became a kitten.

The young animators worked at a fast clip, inspired by the castling of

the voices, including Bette Midler, Billy Joel, Dorn DeLuise and Robert Loggia. Many of the new artists have come from the Dinney-endowed California Institute of the Arts, but Jidler of the Midler of the Arts, but Jidler of Arts, but Jidler of Arts, and January in pencil, I think will never change, be said.

Bluth, who produced "The Land Bedore Time" for \$12 million, found a way to reduce animation expense: He moved his entire studio to Ire-ind because of the labor cost of animation. The Irish government of fered a 10-year commitment for tax

mation. The Irish government of-fered a 10-year commitment for tax breaks, grants for Irish artists who would be trained and access to bank loans, he said.

was like Moses leading the

children of Israel out of Egypt," said Bluth. "The artists had to pull up all their stakes; many of them sold their

Bloth. "The artists had to pull up all their stakes; many of them sold their homes.

"Many of them have bought hems there, they all have Irish acceptable hems there, they all have Irish accepts, his a more standard to a superior of the Irish society."

Bluth led an earlier exodus of Dispersion of NIMH," a failure. Then he combined with Steven Spielberg on "An American Tail," a rousing success. "The Land Before Time" also result-drom a superior of the Irish society. "It can't understand why no one has made a film about dinosaurs," Bluth recalled Spielberg telling him. "It's a natural. There is a great interest in dinosaurs. George Lucas and myself have wanted to do such a movie for some time, but we didn't want to do it with puppers, we tried that and it didn't work."

With Spielberg and Lucas as executive producers, Bluth could hardy miss. He admitted his ignorance of

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dinosaurs, but he said Spielberg told him: "You can learn."
Bluth and his artists soon recognized the difficulty of animating dinosaurs: "For instance, the brootlog-saurus with the long neck. It has a little head, like a bail on a stick. It doesn't have the shoulders and the hands to give you gestures. It all hasny to be done with facial expressions." of: But how to make the beasts move/sn'i Bluth and company reasoned that the prehistoric creatures were reptiles, and birds evolved from reptile and forms. So the artists copied, and forms. So the artists copied and forms. So the artists copied with the sound of the sound of

moves from films of chickens and the turkeys.

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IT'S THE GREAT

Parodies poke fun at holiday humbug

AP — These are not your typical Christmas songs: Santa gets stuck in the chimney. The patient pooch flower eagerly awaits the used Christmas tree. Even the vocal group is unorthodox: the Bah Humbug Singers. The songs and the singers are all elements of a cassette tape recording being distributed nationwide, "Bah Humbug," a parody of four farmus Christmas songs. The songs, on Playback Records based in Miami, are also being played on many radio stations and several radio networks. The tune to "Jingle Delis" is sung to new lyries of a song tilled "Discount Sales." For example: "Discount sales. Discount sales. Discount sales. Discount sales.

Discount all the way. This is how we can afford

Christmas gifts today." The parody of "O Christmas Tree"

goes: "O Christmas tree. O Christmas

tree.
The season is now over.
O Christmas tree. O Christmas

You mean a lot to Rover."
The parcolles are the work of Dick and Lee Ann Loftlin of Tulsa, Okla. Daughter April, 15 when the recording was done, joins them as the Bah

ing was done, joins them as the Bah Humbug Singers.

"This is the human experience of what happens at Christmas." Loftin said in a telephone interview from Tulsa, where he is a disc jockey for radio station KVOO.
"It's humor that everyone can enjoy and at no one's expense," he said. Another song on the cassette is "Up on the Root," a parody of "Up

DINING & ENTERTAINMENT

on the Housetop."

Poor Santa:
"Up on the roof there was a
thump.
I was awakened with a jump.
It came from outside the chimney

It seems that Santa Claus was

stuck."

This is the third Christmas since
Loftin wrote the parodles and made
them available to the public. He says
the songs are getting more popular

frenzies. We just captured that by setting it to words and music."
"We are making fun of everything everyone has gone through: the un-Christmas merriment."
The fourth song is "We Wish You a Debt-Free Christmas," a parody of "We Wish You a Merry Christmas the serves is: "And no interest charge!"
Somehow "Frosty the Soowman" escaped the treatment.

"We didn't get into this to become famous or stars," Lee Ann Loftin said, "We just wanted to have fun."

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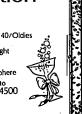
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