

# Production company shoots for something new

BY EMILY KENNARD  
STAFF WRITER

Drive down Weaver Street in Carrboro and you might miss it. Hidden far back from the road, the production company Figure 8 Films is run in a mundane yellow house, with only a small sign indicating its existence.

But that's how president Bill Hayes wants it.

"We're not about being pretentious and fancy," he said. "It's not about us, it's about our subjects."

From this small, ordinary building have come more than 200 not-so-ordinary nonfiction human interest shows for Discovery Channel, TLC, Discovery Health, Animal Planet and National Geographic. Figure 8 Films is the creative force behind these shows, hiring camera crews, sending producers to sets

and overseeing direction, said production coordinator Maggie West. "It's a hands-on, time-consuming and stressful job, but when it all comes together, it's very satisfying," West said. "We're making good TV that people respond to."

Their newest show, "Six for the Road," follows a family who sold their house and now travels around the country in an RV. The show premiered last week on TLC.

"We really like our lifestyle," said Vernon Loud, father of the traveling family. "We needed to share our story."

Figure 8 Films showcases people in unusual or unconventional situations, like the Loud family, in hopes of reaching out to viewers.

"Anytime someone breaks the mold it encourages people to come out of their comfort zone," Loud

said. "We're letting people know that they don't have to do what everyone else does."

One of Figure 8 Films' most popular shows, "Jon & Kate + 8," which chronicles parents raising sextuplets and twins, has become one of the most-watched shows on cable. The company regularly receives gifts and letters for the family from viewers.

"People see our shows and remark that it had an influence on their life," Hayes said. "That is the purpose of our documentaries, to make people think about their life and how they treat others."

West is grateful that she has had the opportunity to be involved with the famous program.

"It blows my mind that I had a part of it. The work we do reaches so many people," she said. "It is now a part of the pop culture conscious."

West, a 2007 UNC graduate, interned with the company her senior year. Hayes continues to employ college interns, but looks beyond majors for hiring purposes.

"It doesn't matter what you study as much as what kind of person you are. Studying filmmaking doesn't help you do this," said Hayes, who received degrees in economics and history from Duke University. "It's about having an insatiable curiosity for life and people."

Past projects have included documentaries on a Brazilian spiritual surgeon, a 43-year-old pair of twins that are conjoined at the head and Marty Ravellette, an armless landscaper from Chapel Hill. Each story is treated to more than just a news report, Hayes said.

"We're caretakers of other people's stories," he said. "We need to

be accurate, but we also need to tell their story in meaningful way."

Hayes has kept in touch with dozens of past subjects, spoken at funeral services and visited some.

"We not only get to meet interesting people, but we really get to know them and form friendships," he said. Future projects include documentaries on a gator farm in Colorado, a family in Georgia that catches dangerous snakes and a family that acts in a circus for a living.

With many diverse topics and stories, the company keeps one goal in mind: to break down prejudices.

"Learning about other ways of life builds acceptance," West said. "We get to touch lives in ways you can't otherwise."

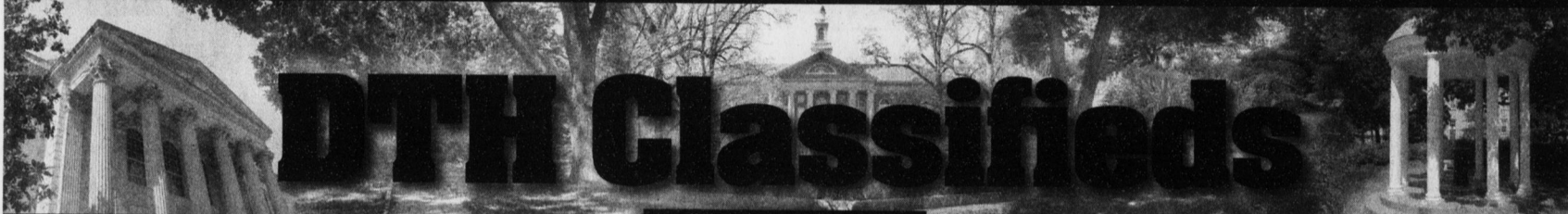
Contact the Features Editor at [features@unc.edu](mailto:features@unc.edu).

## Some shows produced by Figure 8 Films in Carrboro

Figure 8 Films has produced more than 200 human-interest shows for Discovery Channel, TLC, Discovery Health, Animal Planet and National Geographic.

- Jon & Kate + 8
- 17 Kids and Counting
- Then Came Six
- The Flying Wallendas
- Joined for Life
- Six for the Road
- Discovery Health CME
- 627 Lb Woman: Jackie's Story
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### DO YOU HAVE DEPRESSION?

Do you have depression or another mental disorder? Do you want a plan in place in case your symptoms come back? An Advance Directive for Mental Health (ADMH) may be for you! An ADMH is a legal document that lets you say what mental health care you want if your symptoms increase and you can't clearly express your wishes. The UNC School of Social Work is doing research on ADMHs. If you participate in this study you will be assisted in making an ADMH. For more information on this research study contact Anna Scheyett: [ADMH@unc.edu](mailto:ADMH@unc.edu) or 962-4372.

### Child Care Services

THAT KIDS PLACE: Preschool and afterschool program now enrolling. Day, night and weekend shifts. [www.freewebs.com/thatkidsplace](http://www.freewebs.com/thatkidsplace). 919-960-6165.

### Child Care Wanted

SEEKING PART-TIME SITTER. Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 2-6pm for 2 girls, 6 and 8. Must be fun, energetic with own, safe car and excellent references. Call Beth, 419-9242 or email [bdavis2004@nc.rr.com](mailto:bdavis2004@nc.rr.com).

PART-TIME BABYSITTER needed Monday and Wednesday 12:30-5:30pm starting in January for 2 girls ages 4 and 7 in Carrboro. Previous child care experience required. Non-smoker with good driving record. Email references to [julie.decampalmer@gmail.com](mailto:julie.decampalmer@gmail.com).

### Announcements

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AFTERSCHOOL CHILD CARE: Seeking Spring semester (January thru May) babysitter for a SUPER 2nd grade daughter, M-F 2:45-5pm, in our Chapel Hill home! Please send your experience and references to [jenniferf2468@yahoo.com](mailto:jenniferf2468@yahoo.com). 919-932-8525.

AFTERSCHOOL CHILD CARE 2 wks/mo. M-F, 12:30-5:30pm. 2 cool kids, girl 7, boy 11. Close to campus. Trampoline, tree fort, walk to new Chapel Hill park! Please send experience and references to [buddy@ceparts.com](mailto:buddy@ceparts.com) or call 919-548-1506.

CHILD CARE NEEDED: In town during the Christmas holidays? Seeking child care for 5 year-old from 12/23 thru 1/2, 8am-6pm. Additional hours available other days if interested. Email [lynnbrody@hotmail.com](mailto:lynnbrody@hotmail.com).

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FOR RENT EXCHANGE: OBX, Corolla, NC Tar Heel has lovely 4BR/2BA home 150 yards from ocean. Available spring semester or less time for comparable exchange, trade or rent with Chapel Hill, Carrboro residence. Perfect for PhD candidate seeking solitude. Wireless internet, beautifully furnished, view, decks, Wende, 252-453-0924, [wendestw2149@unc.edu](mailto:wendestw2149@unc.edu).

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### For Rent

MULTIPLE RENTAL PROPERTIES. Mill Creek Apartments: Airport Road, 4BR/2BA, excellent condition, W/D, \$1,900/mo. 116 North Street: right off Franklin Street, 1BR/1BA, fireplace, small covered front porch, W/D, water included, \$800/mo. 611 Hillsborough Street: building completely remodeled in 2007, hardwoods throughout, new appliances, W/D, tile in bath and kitchen, next to bus stop, 2BR/1BA, \$850/mo AND 5BR/2BA \$2,500/mo. All rentals available August 2009. 919-685-0287 or [marredic@carolina.rr.com](mailto:marredic@carolina.rr.com).

APARTMENT FOR RENT: 1BR combination living room, big kitchen, bathroom. Furnished, all utilities included. On busline, off street parking. Prefer non-smoking student. \$425/mo. Call 967-8115.

ONE MONTH FREE RENT: 2BR/2.5BA townhouse for rent in quiet neighborhood in Carrboro. Available December or January 1st. \$775/mo. 919-933-6867.

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CENTER FOR DRUG DISCOVERY AT DUMC is seeking an electrophysiology with experience utilizing patch clamp techniques to join our Huntington's Disease project. Contact McLean Bolton, [bolton@neuro.duke.edu](mailto:bolton@neuro.duke.edu).

CARE PROVIDER WANTED to help disabled female professional with personal care and other daily living tasks. \$12/hr. Perfect job for students. For information email [deliza05@gmail.com](mailto:deliza05@gmail.com).

### Announcements

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#### PART-TIME UNC STUDENT. Retired professor seeks help with maintenance and renovation of house near Village Plaza. \$12/hr. Time to be arranged. Call 969-7690.

YOUTH BASKETBALL. Part-time staff officials and volunteer coaches are needed at the YMCA! Season begins January 10th, but preparations are already underway. Opportunities abound, so work or volunteer with a friend! Contact Mike Meyer, [mmyer@chcymca.org](mailto:mmyer@chcymca.org), 919-442-9622, for additional information.

### Announcements

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### Announcements

#### Interested?

Anyone can sign up. Email Sam at [cuab.comedy@unc.edu](mailto:cuab.comedy@unc.edu). For more info: [www.unc.edu/cuab](http://www.unc.edu/cuab)

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### Help Wanted

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