

Outlook

Purple Pirate adds colour to TV fest

STUART GRADON - REPORTER

The Banff Television Festival attracts visitors from around the world, some of whom are as unique as the festival itself.

However, it's unlikely any of them will be any more unique than Dustin Anderson, a.k.a. the Purple Pirate.

The children's entertainer from Vancouver has been navigating the Coquihalla Highway by bicycle with a treasure chest in tow for the last three days, travelling an average of 100 km per day.

Anderson is chasing his dream of moving out of the birthday party circuit and transporting himself into living rooms across North America by successfully pitching a program idea at the festival.

"I have no idea what I'm getting myself into," says Anderson. "I want to generate a buzz. I think I want to talk to the networks."

Anderson admits to being slightly naïve, but the pedalling privateer's enthusiasm for his program might make up for not knowing what awaits him on this side of the Rockies.

Speaking by phone from Salmon Arm B.C. Tuesday (June 3), where he took a much-deserved break from cycling, Anderson had time to illustrate his concept.

The idea: a half-hour children's program dedicated to keeping children active and naturally curious by travelling the world via the television set with a group of pirates in search of the elusive "Nurple".

"The Nurple is a little bit of the spirit in everyone," explains Anderson.

Perhaps it's slightly different from regular television viewing, but Anderson's confident the idea will sell.

"It's just a matter of time," said the ex-logger and commercial fisherman.

Anderson is the perfect example of many of the folks who'll be attending the Banff Television Festival this year.

Motivated by the promise of bright



The Purple Pirate will be pitching his story ideas at this year's TV festival.

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lights and success and armed with only an idea, hundreds of visitors will be trying to pitch their programs to the powers that be in TV, June 8-13.

The pitching of story ideas by television hopefuls is only one of the elements that provide the popular Banff festival with an air of singular occurrence.

While fledgling television writers try to sway the interests of television producers with their show concepts, the festival will be rewarding the efforts of those already developing quality television.

Some of the over 1,800 delegates attending the festival will be able to attend the Banff Rockie Awards Show Monday (June 9), where awards will be dished out to the top television programs from around the world.

Monday's awards show will also be the venue where the likes of world-renowned filmmaker Sir David Attenborough, *Soprano's* creator

David Chase, and Canada's Rick Mercer are to be presented special awards for their contribution to television.

While the award shows will be closed to non-pass holders, The State of Television: Students Speak! session on Thursday (June 12) will give Bow Valley residents the opportunity to get a taste for the festival.

Free to the public, the session will allow the Bow Valley Student Jury to explain their choices for their top choices in the children's and animation categories.

The Purple Pirate would be well advised to attend this session due to its obvious relevance. But for the moment, he ought to concentrate on steering through the mountains and making sure he makes it to Banff on Saturday (June 8) as planned.

"It can get pretty gusty in the old mountains," admitted the bicycling buccaneer.