



Why does New York come to Michigan in a radio battle for listeners?

By JACKIE KLEIN

"New York, New York, it's a Wonderful Town," but a radio station in the nation's communications capital looked to an Oakland-based design firm for its visual advertisements.

George N. Sepety & Associates, Inc., headquartered across from Southfield Civic Center on Evergreen created ads for WABC Musieradio's new "WABC Game," which, according to the New York station's officials, are drawing spectacular attention.

"WABC's task was obtaining audience participation in an on-air promotion through visual ads," said



Frank J. Knecht, a designer at George N. Sepety & Associates, Inc., works on a project for the National Football League. (Staff photos by Gary Friedman)

Skip Davis, senior vice president of Sepety. "The most listened to radio station in the country couldn't find what it was looking for in New York. Our presentation was enthusiastically accepted."

"The genesis of innovative thinking is here. We want to dispel the automotive myth that only car-related events happen in the Detroit area. Our company has a high degree of creativity, versatility and trend-setting talent. That's why WABC chose us."

Jim Frain, associate creative director for Sepety, provided the design approach WABC Musieradio was searching for. Ads for the "WABC Game" are based on a futuristic theme that keys off the public's continuing interest in space travel, he said.

CHROME-PLATED telephone dials shoot through starry space like flying saucers. The outer-space effect of the ads was achieved by Joe Oves, Sepety's staff illustrator. About 10,000 subway cards and 2,000 bus cards blanketed the New York metropolitan area to kick off the game.

Within hours after the transit cards were posted, Pat Pantolini, director of creative services for WABC Musieradio, was deluged with calls from advertising agencies, designers and other radio stations.

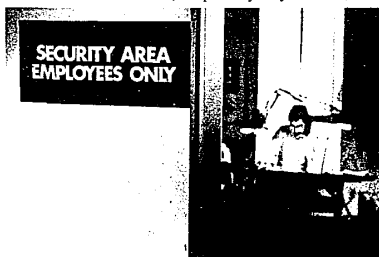
"When you do a good job, you usually hear about it," Pantolini said. "But the reaction to the WABC game has really been overwhelming. We have access to the best designers in New York, but the Sepety firm is energetic, creative and totally understands what WABC is trying to do."

Sepety also designed the station's spinoff promotion, "Great WABC Buick Give-Away," as well as the second phase of the "flying dial" ads. The firm, Davis said, provides design services to a variety of clients throughout the United States. With a style reminiscent of a 1940s ballroom, Davis recently won acclaim for his logo design.

The logo, an art deco 78 record label in gold and rust for Dance Unlimited, a Utica, Mich., dance studio, earned a place in "Design Michigan" and Art



The hands of Russell Cobane touch up a Jaguar design.



In the highly competitive world of advertising and graphics design, it's necessary that some areas of the agency are off limits so that certain projects do not leak out.



This is the bus placard that Sepety designed for WABC Musieradio in New York.

Directors Club of New York's "The One Show."

"Mr. and Mrs. John Thawley, owners of Dance Unlimited, inspired the logo design," Davis said. "They're outstanding ballroom dancers who have won national awards, and they have the aura of the grand ballroom and dance palace days."

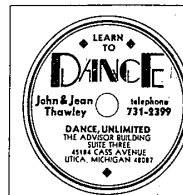
"Design Michigan" is a traveling exhibit of the best materials designed in Michigan in the past 10 years. The exhibit opens Oct. 15 at Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum in Bloomfield Hills.

Davis, a Southfield resident, joined the partnership 1971 and the Sepety staff has grown from six to 60 since then, he said. Sepety, a designer, formed the company 10 years ago in Detroit and is president of the corporation.

"The four partners heading up the firm include men in three-piece suits who are in finance, sales management and promotion," Davis said. "We also have creative directors, writers, artists and some of the best thinkers around."

"The genesis of innovative thinking is here. We want to dispel the automotive myth that only car-related events happen in the Detroit area."

—Skip Davis



This was designed for a area dance studio.

"The firm provides corporate identification programs, environmental design and signage programs and visual marketing services, including television and film capabilities. We've designed national advertising campaigns and for the second year, we're doing the promotion for the Detroit Auto Show in Cobo Hall."

DAVIS IS especially enthusiastic about the firm's new account, Mental Health Association of Michigan, which has an office in Lathrup Village.

"We're contributing to the human good, not just selling mufflers and transmissions," Davis observed. "We're all concerned with mental health, and we're excited about putting together a communications program for an effort that's taking place in Lathrup."

"Mental illness is still a closet disease, and we hope to promote mental health in a dynamic, high-energy, positive way. Mental health is a state of mind."

Economic decisions require a load of statistics

A builder considers launching an apartment project. The city ponders the advisability of giving him a permit. The school board looks at how the project would affect school population. A bank decides whether to help finance the project. And families ultimately may debate whether to sign a lease and move in.

Every segment of the economy faces key financial decisions like these daily. Solid information is available to help make the right decision, but often there is a question of where that information can be found.

The Michigan Assn. of Certified Public Accountants wrestles continually with such questions on behalf of business, government and individual clients. According to the CPAs, sources of information are available to answer these questions in the form of statistics known as economic indicators.

HOW MANY workers have been laid off this month? How many hired? How many freight cars were loaded with manufactured goods last week? What is the trend in interest rates? The response to such questions, and dozens

like them, tell a great deal about what is happening to the economy and its various sectors, the CPAs say.

They add that the indicators are even more useful when they track conditions in the state or region.

Local, regional, or national, the indicators with the greatest value for decision making are called leading indicators because these indicators precede other events, often signaling developments that lie ahead.

National leading indicators are reported in "Business Condition Digest," a monthly publication of the U.S. Dept. of Commerce. The 12 statistics

considered most often include: average workweek (overtime would suggest the economy is heating up), layoff rate in manufacturing, new orders in manufacturing, sales by vendors, contracts and orders signed for new plants and equipment, changes in total liquid assets, new business formations, Standard and Poor's Stock Index, "real" money in circulation, and changes in inventories both on hand and on order.

THE CPA group says that one of the roles of its members is to help decide how much such national trends affect

the local scene and uncover local indicators—unemployment rates, birth rates, regional agricultural production—that can supplement national figures.

In some cases, local indicators are assembled by the Chamber of Commerce, the regional Federal Reserve Board, or banks. In other cases the CPAs dig out the information from city or state records or from non-governmental sources.

However, the CPAs warn not to put complete trust in the indicators, which can be upset by seasonal, climatic or

other developments. Housing permits, issued are not equivalent to housing starts, and if the economy turns down sharply, housing starts may not be the same as houses completed.

The CPAs advise that the indicators are the greatest value when used in conjunction with all sorts of information, plus experience and common sense.

In this connection, CPAs often cite the case of a person who put full trust in an indicator and drowned in a river with an average depth of eight inches. The river happened to be several feet deep where the man stepped in.