

Lights, camera, action: Filming a minute movie

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

The interior looks more like someone's idea of a combination garage-family room than a studio.

Dampness from the concrete floor seeps into everyone's shoes and the noise of the sound crew setting up manages a flat echo through the rooms.

It's the beginning of another assignment for Artistic Studios, a Farmington Hills firm specializing in set designs. Under the direction of Artistic owner Gary Papierski, the crew works through the morning putting together a secretary's office for a Highland Appliance commercial.

Alongside persons from O'Dea Productions and W.B. Doner Advertising Agency, Papierski's crew labors to put up the blue curtains against the newly

painted blue wall in what used to be the front office.

Amid a cacophony of sound checks, pounding hammers, ringing phones and voices, Papierski manages to seem unhurried.

After 14 years of designing for J.L. Hudson's, a job which included a yearly chore of dealing with Thanksgiving parade floats, he left to design offices, sets, fashion shows and to decorate malls.

HIS CREDITS include offices for auto executives, white sale windows which look like Victorian bedrooms, a space capsule for an appliance store commercial and a walk-through newspaper for an Oakland county daily.

A few years ago when Jonathon Livingston Seagull was a bird to be reck-

oned with, Papierski delivered to Walt Disney studios a six-foot-high Jonathon float.

After four months in his Farmington Hills office and 1½ years in the set designing business, Papierski seems to have the knack of creating an orderly product out of chaos.

That chaos takes the shape of persons milling around, seemingly without an aim. Gradually, the office walls take shape and the film crew begins to set up shop.

Inside a partitioned-off office Carol Branstom makes up actress Darcy Dean, who'll play a bored secretary in the Highland commercial. It's a chore that Ms. Dean looks upon as a minute long movie.

Dressed in a blue print blouse and leaning against a desk, Ms. Dean and Ms. Branstom share a laugh over the secretary's frumpy hair style with flipped up bangs.

"I hope you don't recognize me on the street after this," Ms. Dean laughs. After trying New York, Ms. Dean came to Detroit to do commercials.

"THEATER ISN'T where the money is. Commercials are faster and more fun," she adds.

Ms. Branstom, another actress who turned to commercials from the theater, nods her head in agreement.

"I couldn't handle the rejection," Ms. Branstom says of her trip from the stage to a backstage role taking care of everyone's hair and makeup.

Too young to play the character parts she craved and too old to flap her eyes around ingenuit roles, Ms. Branstom decided to give it up.

"You're limited as to what you can do," she says.

That was about 20 years ago and on this morning she applies Ms. Dean's make-up much like any average working woman would — no fancy tricks, just putting the proper colors in the proper places.

Pacing around the set in a trench-coat and plaid suit, Detroit area radio-television veteran Rube Weiss of Oak Park waits for filming to begin.

Weiss, a veteran of radio shows such as "Hermit's Cave" and "Lone Ranger," wears a flat plaid cap with a visor.

"I don't know if I like you in the hat," producer Dea says to Weiss.

"TLL TAKE it off for you," offers Weiss.

He is among a number of radio per-



With eye to the camera, director Jim O'Dea makes a last-minute check before shooting the commercial. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

formers who slipped into television work during the early 1950s.

Detroiters also remember Weiss as a long-time Hudson's Santa Claus. Weiss received the keys to the city from Mayors Mariani and Cavanaugh.

He quit riding the Claus float down Woodward when he discovered to his dismay that some persons have a mind to lob a few rocks at old St. Nick.

In the Highland commercial Weiss plays the boss who waits until the end of the day to give his secretary a couple of dollys worth of paperwork.

He dubiously eyes the dolly stacked high with paperwork which he must wheel onto the set for the skit. A test wheeling of the dolly reveals that none of the papers and boxes will stay on the contraption.

A trio of production aides work with the prop, re-stacking boxes and stuffing papers in strategic places.

They are almost ready to begin when the wall behind the secretary's desk collapses in a pile of loosely attached bookcases.

After the wall is replaced, Ms. Dean goes through her tired secretary motions, rolling her eyes when her name is called on the intercom.

Soon all will be relatively quiet. Filming will begin.

Roll 'em.



Getting ready to star in yet another commercial is veteran actor Rube Weiss (right). Helping him out is Sam Mercurio. (Staff photo)



With all in readiness, the camera crew shoots a commercial with actress Darcy Dean at center stage. (Staff photo)

THE INSIDE * ANGLE

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

SANTA NEEDS SOME HELPERS to package and label 200 gifts for retarded adults housed in Northville Residence Training Center at 10:30 a.m., Dec. 11, in the Gathering Place, Mercy Center, 11 Mile Road near Middlebelt. Donations of candy, cologne, brushes, hair combs and similar small items are still being accepted at the center. This is the fifth year the folks at the Gathering Place have pulled together to share the holidays with others.

AND THEN there are the city of Farmington's administrators who may not believe in Santa Claus, but were recently caught believing in the Phantom Water Line.

READY TO CLIMB a tree in your search for the perfect Christmas evergreen? Get off of that limb and take a look at the trees the Jaycees are selling on the lot next to Burger King, Grand River east of Farmington Road. The lot is open from noon to 10 p.m. daily until Christmas Eve. Proceeds from the Jaycees' annual project will go toward the Farmington YMCA and the Farmington Area Advisory Council.

DURING THE EFFORTS to drain and remove the overturned tanker on the southbound ramp to I-275, this week, Angles noticed a decline in activity for a few moments as the Gulf Oil Co. rep took out his trusty Instamatic and took a few snaps of the proceedings. A few of the firefighters took time out to pose with the wreck in the background. (Now say "smoked cheese.")

THE OAKLAND COUNTY Lincoln Republican Club is sponsoring an essay contest based on the topic "Lincoln and his influence during the Civil War years." Essays must be between 500 and 800 words and mailed to Dorothy McIntosh, 5357 Wright Way West, West Bloomfield 48033. The contest is open to all senior high school students and entries will be judged for content, form and documentation. Winners will be determined by a panel of teachers and Oakland County judges. First place prize is \$100; second place, \$50 and third, \$25. Winner of the first three place awards will receive an engraved plaque to keep as a record. All entrants will receive a recognition certificate. Winners and their parents will be guests at the annual Lincoln Day Banquet conducted early in 1980.

THE OAKLAND COUNTY Health Division will offer a free immunization clinic from 9 a.m. to noon, Dec. 13, at the First United Methodist Church, Warner and Grand River in Farmington. Immunizations for measles, German measles, mumps, polio, diphtheria, tetanus and

whooping cough are available. A parent or legal guardian must accompany a child younger than 18 and take along any previous records of immunizations. If you plan to take children other than your own, a release form should be obtained from the Oakland County Health Division or from personnel at the immunization clinic.

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE, Orchard Lake offers interested persons a chance to earn college credit for knowledge gained outside the classroom. The College Level Examination Program tests are administered every third Saturday of the month at St. Mary's College, Orchard Lake. Credit received through the exam enables students to proceed immediately into more advanced courses. For more information or to make an appointment, call John M. Grondelski, CLEP test administrator at 682-1885. The college is at Commerce and Orchard Lake roads in Orchard Lake.

FOCUS ON LIVING with Cancer will meet at 7:30 p.m., Dec. 13, at Orchard United Methodist Church, 30450 Farmington Road. The group helps patients and family members cope with the disease.

MERCY CENTER'S FOOD Co-op still has memberships available for \$5. The program enables seniors to buy some foodstuffs at a reduced cost. There is one co-op day scheduled for December due to the holidays. This month's pick-up time is at 2:30 p.m., Dec. 12. The Gathering Place in Mercy Center is on Middlebelt near 11 Mile.

HALLELUJAH a performance of Handel's "Messiah" will be given at 7:30 p.m., Dec. 16, in the auditorium of North Farmington High School, 13 Mile near Farmington Road. The performance is open to the public and is free.

Soprano soloist will be Connie Grubaugh, a voice instructor at Oakland University. Cecelia Mack who has toured Europe with the Wayne State University Chamber Singers will be alto soloist. James Wilking of the WSU music department will be tenor soloist and Larry Schrock will be bass soloist. The choral portion of the program will be provided by the Faith Covenant Church under the direction of Gerald Jacoby, director of instrumental music at West Bloomfield High School. He is music director of Faith Covenant Church, which sponsors the concert. The church which has been in Detroit for 65 years is in the process of building new facilities at 14 Mile and Drake. In the interim, the congregation has been conducting Sunday services at North Farmington High School and maintains an office at 32910 13 Mile.

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