

# Business

## Sound track glamor

### Studio banks on home-grown talent

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

#### market place

**TOTAL PETROLEUM, Inc.** has begun marketing gasoline at 22 stations in 17 Michigan communities. It's the first time that gasoline will be widely available to motorists in the metropolitan area. Gasoline is a blend of 90 percent unleaded and 10 percent ethanol, 200 proof alcohol derived from agricultural products. Many industry and government sources believe gasoline will contribute to reducing the nation's dependence on foreign oil. Because gasoline is a higher-octane fuel, it is expected to be more expensive than unleaded gas but Total expects it to sell below competitive premium unleaded gasolines available. It will be available at the Total stations at Avon at Rochester, 14 Mile at Crooks, 12 Mile Road at Southfield and 12 Mile Road at Campbell among other stations around the state.

**THE DETROIT** Chapter of the American Marketing Association will conduct a workshop on the availability and use of quantitative data for marketing research at the Holiday Inn in Southfield March 27. The session is 1-5 p.m. at the Telegraph and 11 Mile hotel. Reservations should be made by calling Dana Blackwell at 569-7182. Fees are \$25 for members and \$30 for guests.

**POLICYHOLDERS** of Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Co. will be offered a chance to have more insurance for the same premium if they want beginning April 1. The firm claims to be the first in the nation to go back to its existing policyholders and offer them such an opportunity. The average increase will be almost 15 percent and will make an additional \$54.6 million of coverage available to more than 16,000 pre-1978 policyholders. To increase coverage, policyholders need only accept an offer to amend their contracts to reflect the modern pricing assumption used for the company's newest products. The offer will be made during a 12-month period based on policy anniversary dates.

**MICHIGAN HOUSE** Speaker Bobby Crim will discuss legislative priorities for 1980 Friday in the Federal Mogul auditorium, 26555 Northwestern Highway in Southfield. The briefing, sponsored by the Detroit Chamber of Commerce, begins at 8 a.m.

**THE DETROIT** Chapter of the National Association of Accountants will host Howard Swartz, principal member of Basse, Selesko, Couzens and Murphy, P.C. speaking on tax advocacy at its March 20 meeting at Carl's Chop House beginning at 6:30 p.m. Members and guests are invited. For reservations call Anne Beck at 354-4600.

**THE U.S.** House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee is considering a bill which could have significant adverse consequences for thousands of persons in metropolitan Detroit. Among other things, the proposal would extend a flat 10 percent income tax withholding rate on independent contractors (self-employed persons). The Internal Revenue Service has been trying for years to make independent contractors in the real estate, direct sales, insurance, construction, trucking and other industries into employees of corporations. The bill has been rejected these attempts and IRS is seeking to change the law. The IRS is taking its position on the IRS study which shows that 47 percent of independent contractors failed to report their earnings.

**ROSS MILLHISER**, vice chairman of the board and Hans G. Stutz, vice president, finance and chief financial officer of Philip Morris Inc., will discuss their company's current situation and future prospects with the Financial Analysts Society of Detroit at its March 19 noon luncheon at the Veterans Memorial Building in Detroit next to Cobo Hall. Reservations are required by calling Bob Swaney at 993-0660 until noon Monday.

**BUSINESSES** wishing to submit items for Marketplace should send them to Ron Garbanski, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 1225 Bowers, Birmingham 48012. Notices of meetings must be received by the Monday preceding our Thursday publication date. Please include a contact person and telephone number.

During the '60s Berry Gordy tackled a sign on his Motown Studios in Detroit that designated the house on West Grand Boulevard as "Hitsville USA."

Gordy's gamble on home grown talent paid off.

Almost 20 years later on the other side of town, Jerry Silecchia is banking on home grown talent and creativity to make his studio a success.

Instead of Gordy's renovated frame house, Silecchia's Ambience studios is a meticulously constructed shrine to the advertising sound track and demonstration records.

Silecchia and his partner, Charles Schenck, are trying to lure businesses away from recording their commercial spots in New York or California. They offer their Farmington Hills studios as an alternative to traveling in a time of inflation and fuel shortages.

"There is a lot of glamor in going there," said Silecchia of commuting to either coast.

"People think the facilities are better in New York. That's not true. People claim there's no talent in Detroit. We intend to prove them wrong," he said.

**AS THE AREA** becomes a larger part of national productions, such as in the films, "The Betsy" and "Jimmy B and Andre," recording business will increase in the city, the partners said.

"Detroit's climbing out of some bad times," said Schenck.

"It's a business town. There's a lot of money in this town. We might as well stay in Detroit. There's a surprising amount of musical talent in town."

"We want to keep the talent in the city," he said.

Since it's opening in January, the studio has recorded one record gaining national popularity. The recording to Shelby Longmy reading a letter of thanks to Canada for rescuing six American from Iran has been distributed by A&M Records in Canada and Mercury Records in the U.S.

The recording was made at Ambience after Johnny Williams of CKLW-AM brought the idea to the studio.

Originally he wanted to read the letter himself but eventually had his neighbor's daughter come in and read the patriotic thank-you.

"Four weeks ago in the studio, we

spoon-fed her the single," Silecchia recalled.

**WILLIAMS** would read a line and Shelly would repeat it. After two complete runs, the spliced together the best phrases into one record.

In the one minute and 33 seconds of the recorded letter there are about 55 instances of editing or an average of one splice per second.

The reel was so patched together that there was a little apprehension over its chances of staying glued together during the final recording process.

The building itself followed almost the same careful process to completion. The partners looked at about 100 sites before settling on the one at 27920 Orchard Lake Road near Twelve Mile. The catalpa trees shading the building and space for parking made the site appealing to them.

Set back from the road, the building is

Each studio has a separate foundation to prevent vibration and jarring from ruining a recording. The wiring is engineered to avoid interference from citizen's band radios and car radios.

"We researched it for two years," said Schenck. "We drew up plans of our own, talked to architects and audio consultants."

A couple of sets of plans later, Ambience was born.

**THE PERSONAL** ROADS the partners took to the studio are characterized not by a single-minded purpose but by a search for a satisfying life-style.

Silecchia switched from studying accounting to architecture.

"I learned to print well," he said of the experience.

Finally, the Army intervened and he learned Morse Code and radio teletype.

He spent his time in the force as a radio teletype interceptor.

He enjoyed it so much and learned it with relative ease that he began to think "there must be something to this business."

Once out of the army, he worked for his FCC license to broadcast but almost struck out when it came to finding a job.

After applying to what seemed to him 1,000 radio stations, one called back and offered him a shot at a job. Within two months he was the morning engineer for WHLI in Long Island, New York.

He eventually left for CBS and became one of their youngest production directors.

At CBS he sold himself as "the greatest thing to happen to radio. And they believed it."

**WHEN THE COMPANY** imposed a five year freeze on promotions to allow

them to hire and promote minorities, Silecchia left for CKLW.

"People thought I was crazy to go to Detroit," he said.

After a stint at CKLW and an even shorter stint at the now bankrupt Video Group in Detroit, Silecchia decided to chase after his dream of owning his own studio.

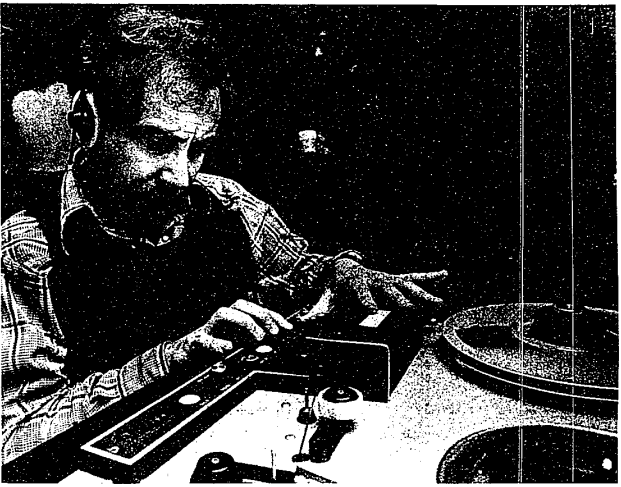
Along the way he met Schenck, who had taken a similar meandering path to the recording business.

At 32-years-old, Schenck sat down one day and asked himself if he wanted to continue as an insurance agent for the next 33 years.

He didn't.

He began to flirt with the idea of advertising but realized that entry level positions were good for students leaving college. He began looking around anyway and met Silecchia.

"Everything fit together in the proper way," he said of his business arrangement with Silecchia.



"People think the facilities are better in New York. That's not true. People claim there's no talent in Detroit. We intend to prove them wrong," says Jerry Silecchia, president of Ambience studios of Farmington Hills.

#### business people

Sperry Vickers named **JANICE FELDBAUER** training and communications specialist at the company's world headquarters in Troy. She will be head of the development and implementation of training programs and management-employee communications program.



FELDBAUER HOLLANDER

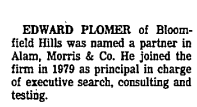
Ranco Controls Division appointed **BURTON HOLLANDER** director of management information services. His responsibility is supervising the data processing system for the division. He is a Birmingham resident.

American Federal Savings of Southfield has made several staff changes: **PATRICIA ATENCIO** was assigned to assistant branch manager branch operations from senior auditor; **ELIZABETH BURNETTE**, from mortgage servicing officer to assistant vice president, collection department; **RICHARD CLACK**, from management trainee, branch office, to acting communications manager, branch operations; **PAUL HORTON**, from mortgage originator to mortgage processing manager; **JUDITH McNEILLY**, from associate accountant to senior accountant, accounting division; **CELINE PULITANI**, from manager to accounting officer, accounting division; **CATHERINE SHANKS**, from assistant manager, Clawson office, to regional operations manager; **DOROTHY SMITH**, from assistant manager, main office, to regional operations manager; **MARY STEWART**, from assistant manager, Greenfield office; **SHIRLEY TERRY**, from employment officer to assistant vice president, personnel.

**SYLVIA BLACKMON** of Southfield has joined the staff of the Detroit-Macomb Hospitals Association as assistant administrator-operations. She was manager of services review for the Comprehensive Health Planning Council of Southeastern Michigan.

**LEONARD BARUCH** of Southfield was appointed executive director of operations and personnel for Ace Wiping Cloth Co. of Detroit.

**SANDE DREW** and **LYNNE DEUTCH** are partners in Diversified Public Relations, Inc. in Southfield. Drew was formerly anchorwoman at WDIV-TV for four years. Deutch of Birmingham has worked in public relations and retailing in New York.



PLOMER



FOOTE

**W. DAVID FOOTE** was appointed vice president, operations for the Packaging Systems Division of Ex-Cell-O Corp. He joined McCord Corp., a subsidiary of Ex-Cell-O in 1968 as controller. Prior to his present appointment, he was controller of the Automotive Components Group at the corporation's executive offices in Troy.

**RICHARD RANK** was named director of manufacturing services for the Axle International organization in Rockwell International's Automotive Operations.

**GERALDINE FREEMAN** was appointed manager of accounts receivable and **RICHARD SENEAL** to manager of credit and collections for Sperry Vickers in Troy.

**DOUG STRANAHAN** of Birmingham was named vice president for advanced sales development training of the Southfield-based Century 21 of Michigan, Inc., servicing all of the state's 280 independent local Century 21 brokers.



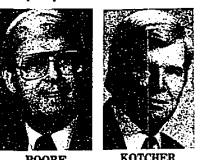
STRANAHAN

**GEORGE STEGGLES** of Birmingham has been elected group vice president-international of White Motors Corp. with responsibility for all international operations of the company's truck, farm equipment and lift trucks, consolidating functions previously assigned to three separate areas of the company. He was vice president-international for AM General Corp.

**KATALINA PETROV** was promoted to executive art director of Baker, Abbs Cunningham & Klepper Advertising and Public Relations, based in Birmingham. Petrov began in graphic and commercial art in 1969 after completing studies at Detroit's Society of Arts and Crafts.

**DAVID KERR** of Franklin was appointed management supervisor of the Chrysler corporate, service and parts division, fleet and lease, marine and high performance parts advertising accounts at Kenyon & Eckhardt Advertising, Inc. He joined K&E in 1970 as an account supervisor after 12 years with J. Walter Thompson Co. He is a K&E senior vice president.

**WILLIAM POORE** was named president of the Southfield-based Standard Fiduciary Corp. which manages the Southfield athletic-social complex, Hamilton Place. He was executive vice president of Sports Illustrated Court Clubs, a racquet sport chain.



POORE

**FREDERIC KOTCHER** of Rochester was named president of Republic Automotive Parts, Incorporated's Distribution Group, the firm's automotive parts warehouse distribution division. He will also serve as general manager of the distribution group and as a corporate vice president. He joined the firm in 1972 as internal auditor.

**ELMER JACKSON III**, was promoted to director of applications development for the General Motors Employee Information Project Center. Jackson began his GM career in the plant security department at the former Buick-Oldsmobile-Pontiac plant in Kansas City, later serving there as a labor relations representative. In 1971, he was appointed supervisor of labor relation. He is a Troy resident.

**ROBERT HUFF** has been named corporate internal auditor for the Kent-Moore Corp.

**VINCENT STYRNA** was promoted to the position of manager of dealer communication systems at GMC Truck & Coach Division of General Motors. He joined GMC in 1963 as a computer programmer trainee. He was general supervisor of data processing. He is a resident of West Bloomfield Township.

American Motors Corp. appointed **JOHN McCANDLESS** manager of sales and marketing communications for its public relations department. McCandleless joins AM from Chrysler Corp. where he was manager of public relations.

Schiller Industries, Inc., Birmingham, elected **JACK ALTHERR** to chairman of the board and chief executive officer and **J. CASEY WATSON** president and chief operating officer. Altherr joined the company as vice president finance/treasurer in 1976, after more than 25 years experience in financial, executive, and administrative positions with firms in the electronics, aerospace and metals industries. Watson has been with the company for more than 25 years and served in many supervisory and management positions in the company's Detroit-area plants before his assignment as assistant to the president in 1968. In 1976 he was elected vice president-industrial administration and to the board of directors in 1977.

**ERNEST GROVE** of Bloomfield Hills was elected vice chairman of the board for The Detroit Edison Co. He joined Edison as senior executive vice president-finance in 1975 and was elected director of the company in 1976. He will continue as principal financial officer of the utility.



GROVE

**JOHN DONNELLY** of Avon Township was appointed vice president-administration and planning for Lear Siegler's National Broach & Machine Division. He was assistant to the president at National Broach since 1974 and joined the company in 1968 as a buyer.



DONNELLY