

Business

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He records natural sound

By Tom Henderson
staff writer

The sounds of the woods are sweet to Wayne Smith's ears.

So sweet that Smith, a Redford resident, taped them — the chirping of birds, the whispering of leaves, the rustling of deer hooves, the murmur of a creek — and convinced the Muszak music company to distribute the forest sounds nationwide.

The company says you'll be able to hear its new "Natural Sounds" format in office atria, outfitters and camping shops, florists and maybe even an elevator or two.

While the company doesn't expect the sounds of the birds and the bees to approach in sales the ubiquitous dentist (and newspaper) office background music that has made Muszak famous — or infamous — it does expect Smith's format will do better than its "Sunset Inspirational," which is what the Seattle-based company sells to funeral homes.

BY DAY, Smith is a production manager at WJR. He writes and produces station promos, writes a few commercials, and is responsible for the quality of all recorded material that goes out over the airwaves from the tower of the Fisher building.

In his spare time, he markets a non-Muszak version of his woods sounds, a business he plans to expand with a seashore version of crashing waves and blowing wind.

"I've always had an interest in nature. I wondered if there was a way to combine my skills in recording with an interest in nature. The two fields could hardly be further apart," said Smith.

About three years ago, the idea came to him: He and his wife, Kathy, who helped design some of his equipment, trooped off into the woods near Buffalo, N.Y., with 40 pounds of

machinery and spent two weeks taping some 35 hours of background noise.

Then came the hard part: trying to convince Muszak that there was a market for such a thing, and that he was the one to provide it. That was especially difficult since Jeff Cifka, marketing director for the company, already had heard and rejected several similar proposals.

But Cifka was impressed.

"He is by far the best in the business at what he does. It was a good product," said Cifka, who signed Smith to a royalty agreement based on the number of tapes Muszak distributes.

Fewer than 100 clients have taken the four-hour tape Muszak began distributing in September, "but ultimately it will be in the thousands," said Cifka.

The tape is a real-time slice of woods noise, said Smith, not a condensed version of one sound pushed up against another. The way it happened in New York is the way you hear it.

MUSZAK DISTRIBUTES its five wide-area formats by satellite, and 35 more narrowly focused formats like Smith's by tape. The satellite versions include the elevator music we have come to know and love (or hate), top-40, classical, new-age contemporary and soft rock.

The company has about 150,000 customers nationwide.

Of Smith's tape, Cifka said: "It's pretty subtle. It's not up front at all."

Smith has talked with Cifka about Muszak marketing his seashore tape, too, which was recorded at Point Pelee. Smith said he thought Muszak was interested.

Cifka went him one further. "I'm sure we'll release a seashore program, and we'll purchase it from Wayne."



JOHN STROMZAND/staff photographer

Wayne Smith plans to expand his recordings with a seashore version of crashing waves and blowing wind when he's not on duty at WJR.

In the meantime, Smith sells a non-Muszak version of woods sounds, \$10 for a one-hour cassette and \$12 for compact disc. Write: Natural Sound, P.O. Box 40450, Redford 48240.

"I'm not getting rich. It's a ques-

tion of whether I'll get my original investment back at this point. It (the deal with Muszak) is a meager arrangement," said Smith. "But if I can get people to appreciate nature, no matter how they're exposed to it — that means more to me than any profit."

Discounts for health services

By Mary Rodrigue
staff writer

Imagine getting health care benefits without an insurance company — no paperwork, no time consuming wait for reimbursement — just up-front cash discounts for some basic medical services.

That's the idea behind SuppleMed, a West Bloomfield company founded by two health care industry veterans.

SuppleMed is aimed at small employers who can't afford to pay comprehensive health benefits for their staffs. But anyone, including the self-employed and retirees, can join by paying the \$40 annual membership fee.

For the cost, members get a discount card good for:

- Dental work from about 35 participating dentists in the tri-county area, with savings of up to 30 percent for basic cleaning, exam and X-ray; 10 percent discount for fillings.

- Save-More Drug Stores, Concord-Wrigley and other pharmacies — 100 in all — discounting 10 to 15 percent off prescription drugs and a 15 percent savings on over-the-counter drugs.

- DOC Optical Centers and 1st Optometry will offer members a 20 to 25 percent savings on eyeglasses, also offering discounts on the eye examination and contact lenses.

"The health care industry has always been directed at the larger employer," said Seltzer of Birmingham. "Smaller employers have stayed away from the benefits my program offers because of the expense."

Seltzer was marketing manager for Health Alliance Plan of Michigan and vice president of mar-

keting for Medcost Services, a Southfield prescription drug preferred provider organization, before his solo venture.

His partner, Ronald Feinberg of Farmington Hills, held planning and development jobs for three local health maintenance organizations: Independence Health Plan in Southfield, Health Plus of Michigan and Michigan HMO in Detroit.

"We have 25 years combined experience in the health care industry," said Seltzer.

SuppleMed was conceived about six months ago. It has been in the marketplace less than three months.

Clients include Fantastic Sam's haircutting franchise, Jax Car Wash and the Teamsters Union Health and Welfare Fund, which is offering the discount to retirees.

CareLinks, a senior citizen group affiliated with St. Joseph's Hospital in Pontiac, is offering SuppleMed to 3,000 seniors. United Health Services in Detroit is considering it.

SuppleMed is already looking at expanding services. Bell Tote Hearing Centers has been added, offering discounts on hearing aids.

One health care specialist urged consumers to be more aggressive in questioning the cost of health care services.

"It sounds like the Entertainment Book of medicine," said Franklin Elias, a Southfield-based health care consultant.

"My real concern is what is the real discount? It's not like walking into a restaurant and seeing the prices on the menu, knowing you're paying \$16 for one dinner and half price for the second," he said. "Walking into a doctor's office is like ordering a blind item off the menu. Is the discount off the full insurance rate? The Blue Cross/Blue Shield rate? There are many levels of pricing."

"I'm not familiar with the particulars of this program. I don't know if it's good or bad."

BASM honors builders

John Scaccia, president of Poliselli-Scaccia Building Co. in Rochester Hills, has been named Builder of the Year by the Builders Association of Southeastern Michigan (BASM).

Scaccia, who has been in the construction business since 1963, received the association's top honor earlier this month at the organization's awards banquet at the Novi Hilton.

BASM has some 1,450 members, including suppliers, in Oakland, Wayne, Macomb and St. Clair counties.

Other builders recognized for individual professionalism and service to the association are: Rex Rosenhaus, corporate secretary of Uniland Construction in Farmington Hills named Young Builder of the Year; Frank "Bud" Dunford, contract sales manager for Whirlpool Corp., named Associate Member of the Year; and Herbert Lawson, president of Herbert Lawson Inc., Southfield, who received an award for service as president of the association in 1988.

Three builders were inducted into the association's Hall of Fame in recognition of exceptional leadership qualities and devotion to the building industry. They are: Gilbert B. Silverman, chairman of Holtzman & Silverman, Farmington Hills; the late Bert L. Smokler, co-founder of the Smokler Co.; and the late John D. Harrison, a former Birmingham contractor and past president of the association.

SCACCIA was born in Broccostella, Italy, and moved to the Detroit area in 1954. He and his brother-in-law, Vittorio Poliselli, started a brick business in 1963 and eventually expanded into construction of single-family homes.

Poliselli-Scaccia builds single-family homes and subdivisions in Sterling Heights, Rochester Hills and Clinton and Macomb townships.

Scaccia has been a member of BASM since 1974 and has been co-chairman for Homearama programs, during which builders showcase individual homes. He lives in Oakland Township.

ROSENHAUS, a 1978 graduate of Michigan State University, has been with Uniland Construction for almost 10 years, and has been involved in numerous phases of commercial and residential construction and building management.

He is currently working on "senior independent living" projects that emphasize individual living accommodations with common, or shared, facilities for dining, recreation and other group activities. He is a West



Rex Rosenhaus receives congratulations from BASM president Herbert Lawson. Rosenhaus was named Young Builder of the Year.



John Scaccia earned the Builder of the Year award.

Bloomfield resident.

Dunford received the Associate of the Year award, customarily given to the associate who provides "exemplary support" to the objectives of the BASM and the housing industry. As contract sales manager, Dunford provides appliances for single-family and apartment construction. He lives in Birmingham.

Lawson and his wife, Carol, started Herbert Lawson Inc. more than 20 years ago, specializing in office buildings, commercial development and multi-family dwellings. Today

the company is known for condominiums and land development.

As president of BASM, Lawson of Birmingham was involved in numerous issues including labor negotiations with trade unions.

SILVERMAN is a 1947 graduate of the University of Michigan. In 1968 he founded Village Green Management to operate residential income properties developed exclusively by Holtzman & Silverman.

Village Green operates 53 projects, containing some 14,000 apartment units in eight states, and manages some 500,000 square feet of commercial space in office buildings and shopping centers.

Silverman is a past president and director of BASM and a life director of the National Association of Home Builders. In 1988 he was appointed by Gov. James Blanchard to fill the Republican seat on the Michigan State Housing Development Authority.

A Southfield resident, he is also treasurer and a trustee of the Founders Society of the Detroit Institute of Arts.

SMOKLER, who graduated from the Detroit College of Law during the Depression, initially earned a living by collecting rent for a property management company.

He started building houses in the Detroit area in 1938. In 1946 he and his brother-in-law, Mandell "Bill" Berman, formed the Smokler Co.

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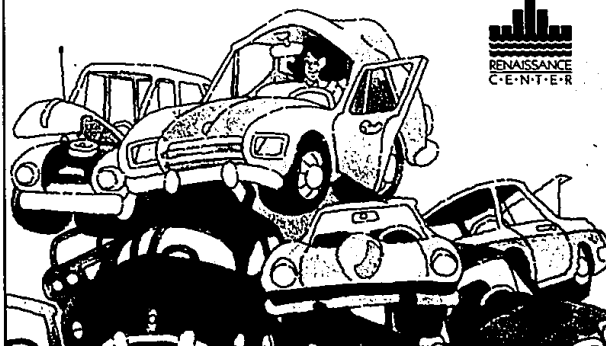
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\$2 Weekend rate.*	Weekends	Up to 12 hours of parking.
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*These programs available for lots A & B. Enter from Beaubien Street east of Renaissance Center.



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