

# How show biz adds to world of commercials

By Carol Anahid Azizian  
Staff writer

**NO DOUBT, YOU'VE** seen this commercial: two Highland Appliance truck drivers — an Indiana Jones look-alike and his partner — bravely overcome a series of obstacles en route to making a delivery.

Neither dynamite explosions nor gunfire nor attacks by a gorilla can stop the servicemen from reaching their destination.

The scenario, reminiscent of "Raiders of the Lost Ark," is created with special effects similar to those used in big-time movie productions.

"The look techniques common to feature films and used there to create a commercial," said producer Robert Dyke, owner of Magic Lantern Productions, a Southfield live-action and animation company.

"The whole approach is like making a movie." Dyke, who spent 14 years producing films for other firms before starting his own company six years ago, draws from his background to make commercials which have all the makings of a feature film production.

## Construction courses are taught at Wayne

Two non-credit building construction courses will be offered by Wayne State University's College of Lifelong Learning. Scheduled to begin the week of Feb. 1 and to run for 10 weeks, both will be held at Birmingham Groves High School, 20500 W. 13 Mile Road, near Evergreen Road.

Construction blueprint reading on Tuesdays, 7-9:30 p.m. (Feb. 1 to April 5), will be taught by Erwin Siporin, Harley Ellington, Pierce, Yee Associates. It will cover reading and interpreting building plans, specifications and contract documents.

Estimating construction procedures and costs on Wednesdays, 6-9:30 p.m. (Feb. 2 to April 6), will be taught by Stuart A. Rodgers, Eberle Smith Architects. It will cover techniques for estimating quantities and costs of materials accurately, how to use price quotations, how to prepare bids and how to get the best price from contractors.

For registration or course information, call 577-4710.

And, he was able to get a gun used in the movie "The Godfather" for the scene where the truck's windshield appears to be nearly shattered by (war) bullets.

The commercial was shot at a studio called Producers Color Service in Southfield. Two sequences — one showing a woman calling Highland and another in front of her house — were shot in Farmington Hills.

This commercial, along with two others, are candidates for Caddy Awards, to be given in April by the Creative Advertising Club of Detroit.

Both were created by the Southfield-based W.B. Doner for Highland Appliance. One shows spacemen discovering appliances in a dark forest ("the things the Thing left behind at all Highland stores") and another is a takeoff of an Alfred Hitchcock movie introduction complete with a look-alike and dubbed-in voice reminiscent of Hitchcock's.

For the Hitchcock ad, Dyke recruited a trained crow from New York.

"There aren't any trained crows in Michigan and the one I got from New York wasn't very well trained. We spent most of the time trying to get it down from the rafters."

Among Magic Lantern's other credits are WRIF commercials with Dick the Bruiser, filmed at a bar in Highland Park; a public service announcement for Detroit Institute of Arts' current show "The Golden Age of Naples;" and the opening for PBS Late Night.

"The Bruiser spots are a good example of our philosophy," Dyke said. "We put so much detail (characters that look like Dick Jagger, the Blues Brothers, Aretha Franklin and Frank Zappa) in the frame that every time the audience sees it, they find something new."

"It's a way of encouraging audience participation."

## Learn energy conservation

Energy audits and thermography be the topic of a presentation at Lawrence Institute of Technology in Southfield. Robert Veresan from Consumers Power Co. will speak at noon on Wednesday on energy auditing findings, such as common heating and cooling problems, and talk about future energy auditing. He will discuss the infrared photography process of thermography, which he says holds a prominent position in future energy conservation, and a thermography project in Farmington Hills, dubbed "Van Sean," which has been made possible through a grant from the Energy Administration.

A roving van will scan residential Farmington Hills neighborhoods and "thermograph" homes. The prints will divulge heating and cooling losses, and residents will then be advised as to prevention procedures.

The presentations will take place in the School of Architecture auditorium, room A-200, on LIT's campus, 21000 West Ten Mile Road (near Northwestern).

For further information contact James Abernethy in the School of Architecture at LIT, 358-0200.

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"I hire crews, find locations, and design costumes. In short, I do everything it takes to make a mini-movie."

Dyke believes a lot of commercials are following in the footsteps of popular movies which use a multitude of special effects.

"STAR WARS" first created an awareness and appreciation of special effects," Dyke said. "Commercials reflect the taste of the times by getting the message across in an entertaining fashion."

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