

His creations lend humor to the air waves

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While growing up in Detroit, he started taking clarinet lessons at age 8, which evolved into learning to play the piano and saxophone. When he was 15, he began to write music and songs.

In addition to playing in the Cody High School band, Yessian put together a jazz group that played at school parties. Since they did not play rock and roll, they were not always popular, he said.

BUT YESSIAN said he was, and has remained, a jazz and classical, rather than a rock-and-roll fan.

As a teen, he preferred to listen to Miles Davis and John Coltrane. He said he was not even intrigued by the Beatles, although, "I probably should have been. They were ahead of their time."

Yessian received a communica-

tions degree from Wayne State. Although he did not give up the idea of parlaying his writing and composing skills into a career, he studied communications because it was a more marketable degree.

"Music is still one of those professions that is good to a select few," he said.

"I really didn't have the academic knowledge to pursue music in college," he added.

For instance, he said, reading and writing music on paper is not his strong point. "My abilities come from the fact that I have a good ear, and that I'm able to play sax, clarinet, and piano, and then translate my ideas over to an arrangement."

AFTER GRADUATING in 1967, Yessian taught at Redford High School in Detroit for four years. While teaching, he nearly completed

a master's degree in radio and television. He continued to play with his group on weekends at company functions, parties, and weddings — an activity that he has since given up.

In 1971, he resigned from his teaching job. Shortly after, he attained the music career he had always wanted by taking the plunge into the business world and starting his company.

Initially, the move meant reorienting as he combined music and business.

"It was rough going at first. I had to really divide myself between being an artist, and being a business person," he said. "Being in music, you almost need to maintain a business attitude with what you are doing."

The company has grown to nine employees and produces about 100 commercials a year.

Jingles and sound tracks have been produced for both local and national clients, including the top three automobile companies, the Detroit Tigers, Little Caesar Pizza, and Whirlpool.

Commercials composed and produced by Yessian include "Whirlpool - Making Your World a Little Easier," and "Dodge Boys Have More Fun," which is up for a Cleo advertising award.

HIS BACKGROUND in education served him in writing music for nationally syndicated children's shows. Producing music for the Hot Fudge Show, no longer being produced, was one of the company's first accounts.

He has also created music for the past Academy Award winner, The "Crunch Bird," and TV shows, including "Hanna Barbara Cartoons."

"Sesame Street" and "The Electric Company."

"I love it. I think that's the whole key to it," Yessian said. "I feel I'm very fortunate."

In addition to writing and producing, Yessian often takes a place in the studio, playing instruments for the songs he produces.

His favorite place is the studio. "It's a whole new world," he said.

"You can let your mind go in directions that don't have to conform with the status quo."

The creative aspect is what he enjoys best about the business. "We probably get more of a charge out of it than the public does," he said. "You are watching something evolve and take form."

YESSIAN AND his wife, Kathy, have two sons, Brian, 9, and Michael, 7.

"I have a very supportive wife," he said. "My wife has a great sense of humor. She understands music is time-consuming."

Although Yessian does not work weekends, saying, "Weekends are for my family," the muse does sometimes strike while he is at home.

For that reason, "we've got tape recorders all over the house. It's very helpful."

In fact, sometimes a melody will pop into his head in the middle of the night, and he will start singing into one of tape recorders. Although, he said, "My wife thinks I'm nuts," she has also grown accustomed to it.

In his spare time, Yessian enjoys fishing trips.

Yessian plans to expand his business to cover the Midwest. But in general, he said, his company will do "more of the same."

Kiwanis will vote on allowing women into clubs

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We're right in the middle of a hard place and a rock."

"It will be a hot floor fight," pre-

dicted Smith, who will attend the convention. "It will be very interesting to see what will happen in Houston."

AT LEAST one local Kiwanis club is in favor of admitting women.

"I don't know if they've ever taken a formal stand," said Michael Fab-

ian, president of the 20-member Kiwanis Club of Farmington Hills North.

"But I think the general feeling among our club members is that they would like to see the proposal passed."

Fabian, who voted for women membership at last year's convention, noted that admission of women has been "a perpetual issue" and voted on for many years.

"The prevailing thought of those against it seems to be that the Kiwanis is a wonderful society. It has flourished all these years. If it's not broken, why fix it?"

"I personally feel that it's time for women to be part of the Kiwanis. To my way of thinking, I think now women are fully viewed as equals in all areas of our society. I don't see a real reason for them not becoming full and equal members of the Kiwanis and helping us in our community-oriented good works."

"I think they will be wonderful Kiwanians and help us to do what we do as Kiwanians in the community."

Fabian said it was not yet determined whether a member of his club would be attending the convention. But, he said, national issues are discussed with the club before a member attends.

THE KIWANIS Club of Farmington, which has 25 members, is main-

taining a more low-key approach.

"The Farmington club hasn't taken an official stand. We're thinking about it," said Carl Dahlstrom, president. "Ours is a low key, 'we'll wait and see what happens' approach."

"Some members join Kiwanis so they can have a night out with other men," he acknowledged.

But, he said, "We don't feel that Kiwanians are anti-women or anything like that. It's just one of those things that happens. That seems to be the spirit of the times."

Dahlstrom noted that Kiwanis clubs hold ladies' nights, and that some clubs have auxiliary groups for women.

As his club, Dahlstrom said he neither promotes nor opposes Kiwanis membership for women.

The club will be sending several delegates to the convention. "Who knows what will happen?" he said.

THE JAYCEES, which long had active women's auxiliary groups, made women full members in 1984. Currently, about 20 percent of Jaycees members are women.

Louise Coleman, newly elected president of the Farmington Area Jaycees, said, "I feel that I've been given an opportunity to do more for the community than I would have for any other outlet."

On that basis, she said, "Certainly, I agree with it. I think it's fair all the way around."

Coleman said that admission of women to the Jaycees has worked well. "It's quite a compliment. The group works very well together. We are far more flexible now. It just works well all the way around."

"There are organizations that are only men, or women, if you are looking for that," she added.

Referring to admission of women to the Kiwanis, she said, "With equality in the work place, and equality and so forth, why not?"

KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL is eager to resolve the issue, in part because public support of the Kiwanis is important.

"The success of Kiwanis depends on public approval and support," Williams said. "Numerous and lengthy legal actions will create the impression that Kiwanians are more concerned about keeping women out than in serving community needs."

During the past year, Kiwanis clubs raised \$50 million, and members volunteered millions of hours for community service projects.

"This outstanding record of volunteerism must not take a back seat to the question of women's membership," Williams said.

Views offered in final debate

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ditional social science at the high school level.

THE USE of school tax dollars for other purposes — specifically local roads — drew a variety of responses from the candidates, some of it heated.

"I don't know what education dollars are... I don't know what road dollars are," Blizman said. "What I do know is what taxpayer dollars are. We need to make the case for the schools as strongly as possible."

He called for a "tax mix" for civic and school needs.

Rolinick supported the use of impact fees on developers as "a very creative way to raise dollars" for roads.

"We can attract business — we don't have to go looking," he added.

On this topic, the candidates discussed the recent effort by the city of Farmington Hills to establish a tax increment financing authority district along a portion of 12 Mile Road to pay for road improvements.

This, in turn, prompted litigation by the school board to halt the TIFA's use, contending the money proposed to be captured was earmarked for local education.

Formation of the authority was eventually rescinded and the suit dropped.

"I'M SORRY, but I took great um-

brage at the TIFA," Inch said, noting that the Hills had not levied its full charter millage rate. "If that's deprived (12 Mile corridor), I want 40 acres of it — I'll buy it today."

Curriculum-related issues involving daylong kindergarten, increases in the district's latch-key program and enhancement of science and cultural programs were all applauded by the candidates.

The three candidates raised suggestions about the issue of public communication with the general public.

Rolinick and Blizman voiced strong support for a community council, involving 13 staff and community members at each school, as recently suggested by a local community group.

Inch supported the concept, but questioned the number of people involved.

Blizman said he "didn't" think the board is doing an adequate job" of informing the public, while Rolinick defended the current board, but suggested things could be better.

Inch said the board was dependent on the local newspaper and the quality of reporting.

Blizman suggested that board members and high-level administrators be available to speak to community groups and neighborhood associations, to educate them about the district.

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