

Swelling client rolls good sign for ad firms

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The region's advertising firms are winning new business, a harbinger of an improving economy and increasing employment.

"Things are really picking up," said Laura Herold, art director for Wagner Design and president of the 125-member Ann Arbor Ad Club. "We keep in touch with printers. They are (a barometer) of what the rest of the ad community is doing. It has been tight for printers in the last 18 months but things are picking up for them."

The other winning is happening in the marketplace where local agencies are winning new clients and winning more work from existing clients, said Jill Wagner, head creative director of Wagner Design.

"We are starting to boom in the last three or four months," she said, adding that her firm has captured four clients since the beginning of the year. That's on top of the three clients it won at the end of 2003.

Wagner's biggest catch is the Denny's restaurant franchise headquarters in Spartanburg, S.C. The restaurant company hired Wagner to

create marketing materials to pitch to potential franchisees. The agency is creating direct-mail and four-color advertising pieces for trade and franchise publications.

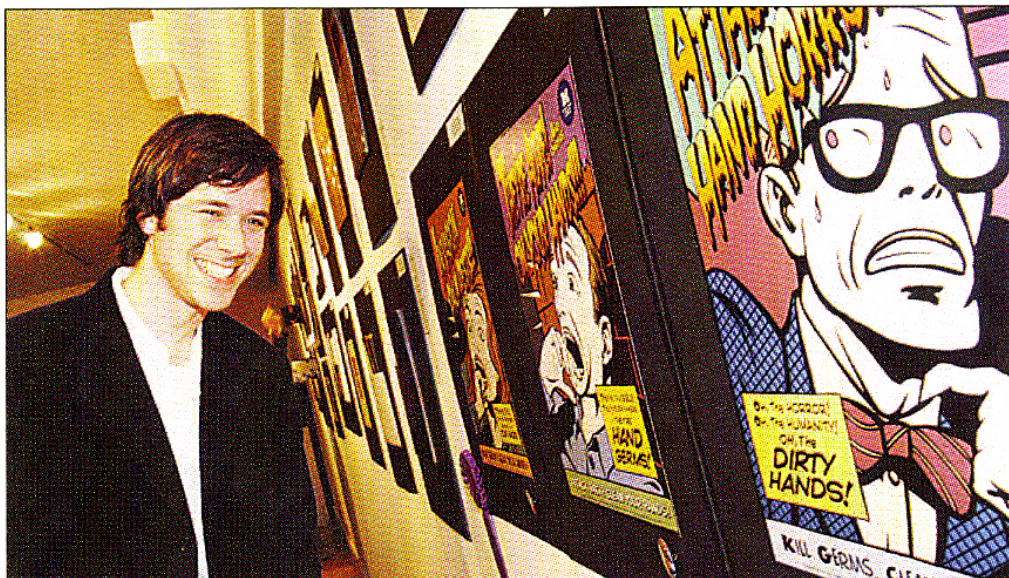
Wagner Design's revenue will grow 20 percent-30 percent this year, compared to 10 percent and 15 percent in each of the last three years, Wagner said. The agency will hire a new art director and production person this year, she said.

Other ad firms also are bringing in more business.

• Design Hub of Saline developed a new advertising and direct marketing campaign to promote the Bank of Washtenaw's business banking services. The marketing communications company developed the campaign theme "Hometown Favorites," featuring three bank customers touting customer service.

• Moore Power Marketing of Ann Arbor won two projects.

MidWest Financial Credit Union's advertising campaign to promote its certificate of deposit program — titled "Dividends with Drive" — includes posters, direct mail inserts, postcards, and billboards. Plus, the Washtenaw Coun-



ROBERT RAMEY

Re:group's Kyle Feliks oversaw the firm's award-winning work for University of Michigan Health System.

ty Department of Planning and Environment hired Moore to develop a brochure for the Waste Knot waste reduction and energy conservation awards program.

• Plymouth-based Morton Marketing Inc. added two new clients and moved to larger offices to han-

dle its growth.

System Integrators Inc., a West Bloomfield company that develops products that track software licenses and hardware, hired Morton to develop qualified sales leads through an e-mail marketing campaign, and Farmington Hills-based

Metro-West/World Appraisal hired Morton to develop an Internet search marketing system.

Morton moved to a 2,000-square-foot office on General Drive, doubling the size of its former office in

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Canton Township.

• General Motors Corp.'s fleet and commercial operations chose Perich + Partners of Ann Arbor as its agency of record. The agency will develop print ads, direct mail and collateral materials. Perich + Partners also is the ad agency for GM fleet and commercial's alternative fuel vehicles operation.

• Five Sparrows LLC of Hartland recently signed a one-year market-

ing services agreement with Ann Arbor-based hobby and collectibles supplier Fun Properties Inc. It will attempt to improve Fun Properties' web presence with web-based user forums, ad campaigns and targeted e-newsletters to more than 30,000 people.

Meanwhile, the Ad Club honored the best work of its members at its annual gathering Feb. 27 — 17 ADDY award winners and 39 silver citation winners.

The ADDY honors creative excellence in more than 65 advertising-related categories, including

brochures, print ad campaigns, logo/trademark design, TV and radio mass media and web design.

The next step for the 17 winners is district competition March 19-20 at Northwood University in Midland. The 17 will compete against ad agencies from Indiana and Illinois clubs. The national competition is June 14 in Houston.

The citation winners can compete, too, but they must submit their work on their own.

Last year, the Ad Club submitted 45 entrees to regional competition, with two local companies —

Re:group Inc. and Steam Advertising and Design LLC, both of Ann Arbor — ultimately winning national ADDYs.

In its 13 years, Ann Arbor Ad Club members have won 10 national ADDYs.

In addition to the judged works at the gathering, Ad Club members voted for their favorite entry in the People's Choice category. Re:group won for "Hand Hygiene," a poster campaign for the University of Michigan Health System.

Steve Raphael covers the advertising industry for Business Direct Weekly. ■