

Poster business a snap for pair

University grads turn cheesecake into cash

By DAWN GARCIA
Of the Emerald

It's your basic Horatio Alger success story.

What was started by two University graduates as a small, 1960s-ish poster company in Eugene has grown into the second largest poster company in the United States — Western Graphics.

The staff deals with celebrities from Los Angeles and New York, travels across the country for poster ideas and contracts the best photographers in the business.

But people still mistake their company for a radical operation and their people for leftovers from the 1960s, says company president Randy Antik.

"People on the outside tend

to think of us as a flake business," Antik says. "But we're not."

Western Graphics' posters are sold through "credible chains," such as K-Mart and other mass merchants, Antik explains, and the company refuses to do "drug posters."

Still, some poster subjects are a little controversial. Antik justifies them by saying they appeal to what the younger public — poster consumers — want.

"The religious movement, war, anti-war, hippies, conservatives — that's all poster material," Antik says. "Our biggest concern is 'are we getting out of touch?' If you're not careful, you can become paranoid about it."

Western Graphics apparently has nothing to worry about in that area. The company has developed some of the best-selling posters in America, such as National Lampoon's "Are you a nurd?" humor poster and TV star Lonnie Anderson's pin-up.

Other poster subjects are sensitivity, fantasy, rock stars and a general areas such as nature scenes, food and animals. Thirty-five to 40 new posters are developed each year.

Many of these glossy, colorful posters line the walls of Western Graphics' office on West 1st Avenue with sentimental sayings, giant juicy hamburgers, blazing sunsets and the shiny white smiles of TV stars.

Although only a quarter of their poster business involves celebrities, much time and energy is spent developing celebrity poster contracts, Antik says.

Every celebrity poster requires developing a good working relationship with the star's agent or company, signing a license to produce a poster of that celebrity and setting up the shooting session with one of the "big-name photographers" in Los Angeles.

And even then, some stars decide they don't want to be photographed.

"Personalities have the right to reject a shooting, and they do," Antik says.

The photograph that results from the shooting isn't necessarily complimentary to the star — often, the poster requires touching up before the celebrity will approve, Antik says.

The Lonnie Anderson poster, for example, was airbrushed to make her teeth whiter, her arms smoother and she was given what's called a "tummy tuck" — some touching up to make her stomach appear flatter. Only then was Anderson pleased with the poster.

Rock stars are even more difficult to deal with, Antik says.

"We haven't been heavy on rock group posters because the groups are impossible to deal with," Antik says. "They're juvenile delinquents, they make loads of money and they don't care."

Whatever the hassles and headaches, the company is planning more celebrity posters for next year, including Pat Benatar, Tanya Roberts from Charlie's Angels and REO Speedwagon.

With the faces, trends and tastes in posters changing every year, Antik hesitates to say what the future will bring for the poster industry.

"There's always the question of 'Will the poster business die?' But as long as people want to put something on their walls and there's walls, we'll be in business."

Correction

The University Assembly passed the University Curriculum and College Course Committees' guidelines for course requirements for graduation rather than defeat them, as was reported in Thursday's Emerald. The assembly defeated a motion by voice vote to delay acceptance of the guidelines, which cover course cluster and group-satisfying requirements.

City needs positions filled

By RICHARD WAGONER
Of the Emerald

Eugene is looking for residents to serve on a handful of advisory boards, commissions and committees — including various human rights commissions and parks and housing committees.

Mid-year vacancies are open on the Eugene Urban Renewal Agency, Eugene Economic Development Committee, Eugene Citizen Involvement Committee, Metropolitan Area Planning Advisory Committee, and the human rights commissions.

New positions also have been created on the Joint Parks Committee and the Joint Housing Committee.

There are three openings on the Eugene Urban Renewal Agency.

The agency administers redevelopment projects outlined in the urban renewal plan and meets the first Tuesday of each month.

For information on the agency, call the Eugene Housing and Community Conservation Department at 687-5443.

One position is available on

the Eugene Economic Development Committee. The committee develops strategies to improve or enhance development in Eugene and meets on the second Tuesday of each month.

For more information call the planning department at 687-5481.

City residents interested in any of the committees can pick up applications at the city manager's office, Room 105, Eugene City Hall, 777 Pearl St. All applications must be returned to the city manager's office by June 25.



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