

Monday, March 8, 2004

City logo was a tall order to fill

There's a new city of Champaign logo edging its way into your consciousness.

The new logo, the symbol your city projects to the world, will gradually find its way into "Welcome to Champaign" signs, onto police cars, city

letterhead, advertising and business cards.

No, it's not Chief Illiniwek, but a stylized rendering of Champaign's classic art deco city hall, a building designed and built in 1936 and based on the Los Angeles City Hall.

The logo is the creation of Electric Pictures of Champaign, a firm owned

and operated by the husband-and-wife team of Bonnie Burgund and Paul Young, the one-time publisher of the now-defunct Octopus alternative weekly.

Electric Pictures was signed to do the job last October following a solicitation of proposals by a committee of city staffers.

"They were competitively priced



cost \$7,500.

One of the jobs they'd done before was the logo for the Virginia Theatre. Other clients stretch across the country as well as locally, from That's Rentertainment to the University of Illinois Library.

The Virginia job was two years ago and represented the closing of a career circle in a sense for Young.

A native of Taiwan, Young moved here as a youth and attended Uni High School, where he became a movie buff and after high school began work at the Virginia Theatre when it was still owned by the Keratoses chain.

As assistant manager, one of his jobs was to lay out movie ads for the newspaper.

"One of my favorites was an ad I did for 'The Rocky Horror Picture Show.' It resembled Time magazine, with excerpts showing what people did during the movie in other places, dressing up and yelling out the lines and stuff. Then when it came here, people started doing what the newspaper told them. I think that was my start in graphic design," Young said.

Young graduated from the UI in 1983, went on to teach graphic design at the Parsons School of Design in New York, then to Milwaukee to teach before moving back to town in 1995 to start the Optimist, later the

and we liked their presentation and what they'd done before," said Michelle Bailey-Hedgepeth, assistant to the city manager. The job

Octopus, alternative weekly newspaper.

He'd been involved in The Weekly here in the 1980s and saw no reason an alternative weekly couldn't succeed in a town this size.

Young got out of the Octopus after it was sold to Yesse! Publications. He's been teaching graphic design at Parkland College, where his wife also teaches part time, for four years. Meanwhile, the business has grown to the point they can be selective about the jobs they take, he said.

"I liked this job. It's our town, you know? And it was a very smooth process, even with a lot of people involved," Young said.

"Coming up with a design like this, it's like being a custom tailor. The suit has to be designed for you, but you have to realize you're going to be wearing it every day for the next five, 10 years, maybe longer."

Bailey said the city had a committee of about seven people who came up with a description of what they wanted, ideas and words to describe what the city should convey.

According to the project brief that Young and Burgund had to work with — and this is all comforting to know — the city's character "is classic, conservative, established, orderly, sincere and energetic. ... We believe a successful logo for the city should also convey responsibility, competence, integrity and trust. Ideally, the logo should also project honesty, credibility and a sense of caring."

That's a lot to ask of a little picture. But from this subjective point of view, it turned out pretty cool.

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REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

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