
Hampden design company works with a variety of clients

Peter and Kathy Lehdorff build logos, brochures, CD covers

By Douglas Farmer
Staff Writer

HAMPDEN – For the last seven years, Lehdorff Design has tried to build its image around working on that of others. From hospitals to folk and country artists, owners Peter and Kathy Lehdorff have used their graphic design experience and ability to produce products ranging from compact disc packaging for Signature Sounds of Whately to trade show signs for Spalding Sports in Springfield.

Variety of Clients

Residing since 1988 in a converted general store on Main Street in Hampden, the couple met while working with a student newspaper in Gainesville, Fla. They moved to Colorado, where they lived for 10 years – Peter as a graphic designer and Kathy in marketing for area colleges.

It was Peter's job at Milton Bradley that ultimately drew them here, but they said it wasn't that much of a leap to start their own design business in 1997 – they had, in fact, been working for a variety of clients for many years.

Not only have they worked with such diverse employers as Holyoke Medical Center and Mousetrap Advertising Agency in South Windsor, Conn. but they have become involved at all stages of the creative process, from brainstorming to working with finished artwork.

Recently, they worked with Signature Sounds to produce the packaging of its "10th Anniversary Collection" including a variety of folk artists as well as an old fashioned letterpress poster announcing related concerts.

Also, the Lehdorffs just completed projects for New York's Artemis Records such as "Two Hands" by pianist Leon Fleisher (appropriately featuring two hands on piano keys) and the "What Makes It Great?" series by Rob Kapilow, a humorous look at the importance of classical music.

"We had already worked for Darby O'Brien Advertising and served as consultants when we came here so we were kind of running our own business already," said Peter. "Most of our clients don't come here, but we build copy using Macintosh computers and are in frequent

communication by e-mail. And we are willing to go out and meet customers where they are."

Winning Image

He said that some clients come to them knowing exactly what size – such as in advertising design – they are looking for and how much money they are willing to spend.

But the process of generating a winning image works best, said both Peter and Kathy, when all involved let their creative juices flow.

For example, Lehdorff Design worked with Baystate Health Systems in Springfield producing a cookbook for diabetics with recipes in both English and Spanish, interspersed with photographs of how the various meals were intended to look. For Holyoke Medical Center, they put together the "Heart and Soul" calendars that featured upcoming health-related events.

"They gave us all the copy we just put it together in a way we thought would be visually the best," said Peter.

The couple has also traveled to Hartford, Conn. to help put together presentations and slide shows about saving energy with Northeast Utilities. And in this case, the company has stayed loyal to Lehdorff Design.

"I don't think Northeast Utilities had changed their slide show in 10 years," said Kathy. "They said they liked it so much."

Peter acknowledged that competition exists from other design companies and various in-house programs aimed at making graphic presentations easier. But he said the advantage of working with them was not just their ability but the depth of their experience, having worked with construction companies and large retail establishments to smaller businesses and localized events.

And with the development of their Web site at www.Lehdorff.info, he said they felt the time was right to expand their client base.

"We've spent so much time marketing other businesses that we almost forgot to market our own," he said. "But we have a lot of repeat customers and referrals."

Lehdorff Design can be reached at 566-8345.