

***Only in Houston:* Party Atmosphere Entices, Invites, Excites Creative Crowd**

By Joe Fournet

Amidst a party atmosphere complete with balloons, special T-shirts and buttons sporting the OiH logo, the near standing room only crowd of 301 passionate, creative professionals witnessed the formal unveiling of the *Only in Houston* (OiH) web site and heard the latest news on the Movement's strategy and plans.

The OiH Movement was set afoot in February, arising from a meeting of the Houston Advertising Federation last September. *Only In Houston* was formed to present the positive side of Houston's creative communications industry and reverse the trend of accounts and budgets lost.

This July meeting was history in the making of sorts. Representatives from the three largest advertising agencies in Houston shared the stage to voice their support of keeping local business in Houston and to reinforce the fact that this was of utmost importance.

Bill Fogarty and Rich Klein of FogartyKleinMonroe stressed the need to keep business in Houston. As Fogarty remarked, "(The *Only in Houston* movement) is all about keeping the flame alive. We firmly believe in keeping business in Houston."

Rich Klein observed that the Houston creative community continues to "pull together as no community can," and called for additional support and involvement from other agencies and creative resources alike.

Chuck Carlberg of Rives Carlberg stated he thinks "our business is at a tipping point. OiH allows us to survive and hang tough together."

Javier Gonzalez-Herba of Lopez-Negrete, emphasized that the agency "passionately believes in the OiH effort. You'd be surprised at the creative talent available in this city. Viva Only in Houston!"

Following these remarks, Lou Congelio of StanandLou, and the person who has been spearheading the OiH movement, talked of taking control of our future which is what OiH is all about. "Houston advertising has lost its Mojo," said Lou. "*Only in Houston* is an attempt to get it back and get it better."

Years ago, major agencies like McCann, J. Walter Thompson, Ogilvy, etc. had a significant presence in Houston. But that time has come and gone. The perception has been that all the good creative people had left town. While some had indeed gone elsewhere, others have stayed but have been *doing work* elsewhere.

Houston is also home to an infusion of new talent. Unfortunately, the work is not here like it once was. Most of this local talent is available but is not widely known. Thus, the *Only in Houston* Mission Statement: to promote the undeniable creative forces found within the city of Houston . . . and through the spirit of community that fosters cooperation among all entities involved in . . . advertising, marketing, communications and entertainment.

The most effective, efficient, and fastest way of communicating the vast amount of talent here in Houston was unveiled with OnlyinHouston.com. One simply visits the site and registers (it's free) to become an "OiHer." Just as the Movement is evolving, so is the Web presence.

OnlyinHouston.com is a one-stop shop for creative resources in Houston. The extensive site showcases a Featured Video, Print-Radio-TV Gallery, and a Creative Directory. It's easy to navigate and to submit information and work samples.

Rich Klein was very impressed with the site and the significance of easily being able to locate various types of talent within a minimal timeframe. "I'm sure there's talent out there of which we are not aware," said Rich. "This (site) makes it easier to identify."

The OiH steering committee, of which there are now about 30 (those wearing the special OiH T-shirts) and growing, will begin educating the various market segments of Houston's creative community as to what's available and how the resources can be utilized. An advertising and public relations campaign is in the works, along with the establishment of working relationships with the city's various professional communications organizations as well as the Greater Houston Partnership. The goal is to become partners, not adversaries.

So now, when someone asks, "What's going on in Houston?," the answer is simple. "It's OiH, baby!"

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