

Northern Colorado BUSINESS REPORT

5/21/2010 - 10:52:33 AM

Linda Joy gives voice to cast of characters

By Maryjo Morgan

We hear voices all the time. From instructional videos and website vignettes to the messages delivered while we wait on hold. These voices seem to be everywhere. But they are not random.

What we hear are the voices of highly trained professionals speaking ad copy, dubbing movie dialog and bringing cartoon characters to life. Thanks to technology that allows these professionals to do their jobs anywhere in the world, one such international voice celebrity works from Loveland.

Linda Joy was born in England to American missionary parents. She took classes at the Alliance Francaise and Paris American Academy, studied acting and audiovisual media at the Universitat Mozarteum in Austria, and completed her bachelor's degree in Salzburg in 1974. After five years in repertory theater in Germany, she found a niche in automated dialogue replacement, also called looping.



Joy said the Germans have an expression about trying to get a job. "It's called 'Turklinken putzen.' which means 'to polish doorknobs'."

Here we call it "paying your dues." By whatever name, getting that first "in" can be an agonizingly slow process. Joy built her network in Germany cold call by cold call. She persisted, asking casting directors to at least let her be a voice in the crowd, or the third lady on the right who says, "Hmmm."

"I went about 'polishing doorknobs' for over a year until I got my first real sentence to say," she recalled. "I was a marmot of sorts - it was a cartoon, after all - and my character said something like 'Wait for me, I am trying to catch up!'"

"Mind you, I had been polishing my character voices," she continued. "Each imaginary character voice I created had its own intonation, a laugh and a cry to match, and different ad lib sounds to go with all of that. So while I was only voicing a second-string marmot, I just knew my little character had the potential of being the big-string finish."

International flavor

Even after she relocated to Colorado in 1992, Joy's successful career in film and TV voiceovers in Munich allowed her to commute to Europe for five years, compiling a sizable portfolio. She especially enjoyed being the German voice of Baby Miss Piggy in "Jim Henson's Muppet Babies" for 12 years.

Her light British accent gives an international flavor to anything from medical scripts to commercials, and Joy practices different voices, to match the sound to the message.

"I take text or a script and make it sound logical, smooth, intelligent, fun, exciting, interesting, content rich, and whatever else is required," she explained.

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"I am the voice that makes your product sell."

When a video game company wanted a deep, raspy, monotone, she jumped at the opportunity to audition.

"I wanted to be able to do that - just loved the challenge," she said. "I practiced for hours - actually, for days. I discovered that my 'morning voice' without breakfast, and careful on the coffee, could get the best results, but only for about 30 minutes. After that, my voice was too 'oiled' and normal again. I gave it all that I had in my new silky-raspy-something voice. I got the job. I was elated!"

The catch? Joy had to record everything in that early morning 30-minute window. "I just couldn't risk getting my normal voice back before my work was done."

Her task was further complicated by having two directors; they were all in different time zones. Although seven-hour time differences turned her workflow upside down, Joy is proud of the final product. "It became one of my most prized little pieces of work," she said.

Joy's second degree in communications/digital video production, from Aims Community College in Greeley, enables her to edit her own work from an in-home sound studio equipped with industry-specific software.

On the business side, Joy currently networks and markets largely online. She launched her website LindaJoyStudios.com last year, where potential clients can hear samples of her work in both English and German. She is also represented by Denver voice talent agent Carol Rathe. Rathe said she is intrigued by the constantly varied projects she lands for her voice talent clients, and she enjoys working with Joy.

"I know if I have a job for Linda, she'll be there on time and prepared," she said. "She brings added value to each job, she is so skilled and professional."