



Photo By: Linda Leuzzi — Susan Gatti and Nick Karis of QUE Productions confer with TSC Direct marketing director Kathleen Casale.

## Shooting (a commercial) on Main Street

Story By: Linda Leuzzi, Staff Writer

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The 20-person film crew was already set up last Friday on West Main Street by 9 a.m. A huge 22-foot high mobile billboard stood in front of The Bank of New York facing the 30-foot crane, or Jib, for high camera angles. Gerry Avellino, chief constable for the Village of Patchogue, stood on the north side with two officers. "It's never happened since I've been here, and I've been here for 14 years."

The crew, QUE Productions of Babylon Village, was shooting a commercial for TSC Direct, a Long Island insurance company. "We had a story board that required a somewhat urban setting, with two- or three-story buildings," explained Susan Gatti, QUE Productions president. "Patchogue was very film-friendly."

According to Patchogue Village trustee Jack Krieger, QUE Productions called about two weeks ago. "They wanted to come down and heard Patchogue was a good place to shoot a commercial. "I gave (Gatti) a tour around the village and they selected this," he said. There was a bit of coordination. A nearby parking lot had to be cleared for the film crew. The Patchogue Chamber of Commerce was notified as well as Patchogue Village's Code Enforcement, the Patchogue Fire Department and the Suffolk County Police Department. West Main Street was closed between Ocean and Havens avenues from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. "I stayed around the whole time and it went very smoothly," Krieger said.

The star was Penny Hart, president of TSC Direct (Tri State Consumer Company), located in Nassau County. Kathleen Casale, TSC Direct's director of marketing, said that the company, which offers auto and homeowner's insurance, covered Nassau and Suffolk counties as well as the five boroughs. The commercial, she said, was six months in the making. "We wanted to represent the area we serve," Casale said, looking at the Bank of New York building. "Actually our building in Jericho is very representative of this."

Hart arrived direct from Fire Island, looking every inch a movie star, albeit a humble one with a sense of humor. "It was a genetic defect," she joked of how she started her business in 1985. "My grandfather was in the insurance business and my father owned an insurance agency," she said. Hart was offered the agency by her dad and turned it into her own vision. She started out of her home in Hicksville and remembers lean times. But in 1995, she bought her own building and now has 20,000 clients as well as 130 staff. "I don't do it for the money," she said candidly. "New Yorkers are paying too much for auto insurance and we come to work every day knowing we're helping people." The company also has, well, a heart. It donates \$2 from every application to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, among other things.

The commercial, TSC's first, will air on cable stations.