

# WPSH begins to take shape after many tries

Angelo Martarano, another station advisor, explained the condition of the radio station and answered many questions.

The greatest obstacle in the way of WPSH was getting the signal to broadcast out of the building. "Basically, Olmsted is one big resistor," said Martarano. "The trick is leaking out the signal, which requires extra equipment, especially a modulator."

Marturano said that 3 years ago, there was "something that resembled a radio station," but the sound waves did not reach the dorms. The following year WPSH was dormant, and last year the club attempted to launch again. After the attempted launch, the radio station failed once more, because all of the equipment needed to reach the new dorms was unavailable.

Eventually, the much-needed equipment came in, including a modulator to help the sound waves reach the entire campus. It looked like a breakthrough, but the worst pitfall was yet to come.

Last summer, an electrical storm broke the modulator, leaving WPSH silent once again. Working with Janet Widoff, director of student affairs, the radio club brought in an engineering consultant to evaluate the damage. To get the equipment running again and ready for broadcast will cost approximately \$10,000. Martarano said that this money would be used to fix the modulator and ensure that a radio signal will broadcast to the entire campus, including the inside of all dorms, the CUB, Library, Olmsted, and the Science and Technology Building.

The club has since put in a request for a grant through the Student Activities Fund (SAF), and is anticipating a response within the next two to four weeks. If a grant is not available, the club plans to seek alternate funding from the administration, alumni, or anywhere else.

"If it comes down to a bake sale, so be it," said Rios. "We'll even put on music videos with sock puppets behind the glass WPSH wall until students get so annoyed that someone makes

sure we get on the air... I'm not joking. Whatever it takes."

The radio club intends to use WPSH to combine different personalities, majors, and experiences and apply these traits to the ins and outs of broadcasting, recording, editing, and promoting from a frequency that will be heard by their peers. WPSH will not be licensed by the Federal Communication Commission (FCC), which allows for more creativity and does not require the station to broadcast 24 hours

a day, seven days a week.

Rios supported a separation between the FCC and WPSH. "This will truly be a student station," said Rios. "I will give no editorial influence."

"We definitely want to keep it professional, but this way we have freedom to play different genres of music," said Martarano. "The club won't be tied down to one generic style, it can be as diverse as everyone here is."

Although the station will not be operational by the end of this

semester, the club is confident that WPSH will be ready by the end of 2005 at the latest. The group is aiming to be broadcasting by the end of Spring semester if the SAF grant is available.

Daryl Wiest, computer engineering major, has been working behind the scenes of the station since last year. He said he spent about 5 hours a day in the station, and sometimes did not leave the room until 2 or 3 in the morning. "I don't need to sleep. Sleep is optional," he said, laughing. Over the summer, Wiest sorted thousands of CDs, and he said he is looking forward to seeing his hard work pay off when WPSH is heard on the air.

There are two studios the radio station uses. Studio A has a computer, phone, 50-CD player, turntable and mixer board, and is considered the "main room" because usually whatever is sent from that room is what is heard on the air. Studio B has a CD writer, and is mainly used for recording purposes, but can be used in tangent with studio A to incorporate material from both studios into the live broadcast.

The current radio club members and interested students are excited about working in the studios. "I just hate to see something go to waste," said Dougherty. "We have something here that could be good - no, great - but unless it's used it's just another room taking up space."

Students and faculty interested in learning more about the radio station can contact professor Catherine Rios, faculty advisor, at car33@psu.edu.



Photo by Dan Berger

Angelo Martarano (L), radio station advisor, and professor Catherine Rios, faculty advisor, answered many students' questions about the condition of WPSH at a meeting last Thursday in the auditorium, Olmsted. They discussed the future of the radio club and encouraged student involvement.

**Tarnhelm,  
the art magazine,  
is now accepting  
fall submissions.**

Contact Student Activities or Cindy Leach in W-356 to receive a copy of the guidelines.

**AMERICAN  
ART HISTORY  
EVENT**

**Friday, November 19  
12-1:30 in the  
Gallery Lounge,  
Olmsted Building**

Video lecture by Dr. Wendy Katz, University of Nebraska, on "The Theatre of Genre," to be followed by a discussion with Dr. Robin Veder, PSH. This event is brought to you by a Student Activity Fee grant. Questions? Call 948-6330.

# Prank calls offer old-fashioned fun



Photo courtesy of John Fox

**John Fox relaxes after a long day of fun.**

By John Fox  
Staff Reporter  
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This issue I've decided to take a break from interviewing famous bands and politicians and write about a side of entertainment that is accessible to all of our readers: pranks and crank phone calls.

With the success of shows like Jackass and Viva La Bam, it seems everybody enjoys a good prank and I'm sure all of you have indulged in the occasional crank phone call from time to time. In my life, I must have made a million crank phone calls and have orchestrated an equal number of devious pranks.

Before I was in the position to go back to college full-time, I worked in several careers. In one of those careers, I worked as an Account Manager for a local rental chain called Rent World (real name withheld). Rent World is a true bottom feeder

that profits off of the poor. They target economically challenged people with bad credit and offer them merchandise with astronomical interest charges. The customers make small weekly payments so many are not aware of the overall cost. Some can end up spending \$5,000 over three years on a used coffee table.

At Rent World, I was responsible for making sure our clients paid on time, threatening them when they didn't pay, and the delivery and collection of merchandise.

We had one client in particular who habitually had a hard time paying his bill. He was a rather dim-witted individual so we felt bad for him. He was harmless in comparison to our other late paying clients who routinely threatened us with physical violence. I decided that he was the perfect target for a prank.

I called him up from our office, pretending to be Ed Coffey from 93.5. In spite of the fact the he hears my voice on his answering machine on a daily basis, he believed that I was Ed Coffey and that we were on the air. I played a game show with him which included very simple questions and help from the "listening audience." Once I was satisfied, I told him that he won \$500 and a chance for a Caribbean cruise. His wife cheered in the background. I told him that he would have to come down to our office the next day to claim his cash prize and register for the cruise. He was so excited he could hardly enunciate properly. He told me that he had never won anything before and that he was going to borrow gas money from his mom in order to make to drive down to the station. I only wish I could have been there when security hauled him away.

On another occasion, I called the same client and acted like a vacuum cleaner salesman. I told him that I would love to do a free

demo in his house and that I would clean an entire rug in the room of his choice. He decided on the living room and then we set up a time for me to come out. I informed him that in order for me to properly clean his carpet he would have to remove everything from his living room.

When the day came for me to come out and do the demo, I drove to his house in the Rent World van and acted like I was coming over to check on his account. When I noticed that his front lawn was littered with couches, tables, and lamps, I asked him if he was trying to skip out on us. He eagerly informed me that someone was on their way over to clean his living room carpet.

On another occasion, I went to a client's house on a service call. I was by myself and she asked where my coworker was. Off the top of my head, I said that he was in the hospital. Visibly concerned, she inquired why. I told her that we were delivering a big screen TV to a third floor apartment and he slipped, falling

down the steps with the big screen TV landing on top of him. I told her that he was at the hospital in intensive care and that only his family was permitted to visit. I then told her that if she wanted to do anything she should send a get well card to the store.

When I got back to the store from my day's deliveries, I had to answer to an angry boss. He said that the client came in with a fruit basket and card for my coworker and emotionally voiced her sentiments. My boss, who had no idea of my prank, was bewildered but played it off as cool as he could. I still have the get well card as a souvenir.

Probably one of my favorite pranks during my Rent World days is the time I quit someone else's job for them without that person even knowing. It was the middle of a hectic delivery day and a co-worker and I stopped at a local Wendy's for a quick lunch. As usual, the zit-ridden burger flippers completely destroyed our order and we began plotting ways to exact



One of Comedy Central's Crank Yankers characters makes a prank call.

revenge.

While we were eating our artery clogging meal, I took notice of the manager's name, Eric. I also noticed that one of the workers, Steve, was getting ready to go home from his shift. When we finished eating we went out to the Rent World truck and I immediately grabbed my cell phone. I called Wendy's and asked for the manager, Eric. When Eric got on the phone I pretended to be Steve, the worker who had just gone home.

"Eric this is Steve," I said in a vaguely disguised voice.

"Steve..." the manager was trying to place a face to a name.

"It's Steve. Come on man I just left my shift," I said.

"Oh yeah, Steve," says the manager. "What can I do for you, guy?"

"Well, I'm sorry I didn't tell you while I was there but I found another job," I said as I held back my laughter. "It pays a lot more and they need me to start tomorrow."

"Hey, you got to do what you got to do," says the manager. "So, was today your last day?"

"Yes. I'm real sorry for doing this to you," I said in mock sympathy. "Should I just hand in my uniform when I pick up my last check?"

"Sure," says the calm and professional manager. "Just make sure you bring in your uniform before we can give you your last check. I am going to have to go now and try to get someone to cover your hours. Anyway, I wish you luck."

Steve must not have been the best employee. Eric didn't even put up a fight about losing an employee. His tone even suggested that he was glad to see him go. I only wish I could have been there when Steve showed up the next day for his shift.

All the aforementioned pranks were conducted solely during my employment at Rent World. I have a million other stories like them. If you would like to hear more of my pranks or would like to share some of your own, please email me. Laughter is the best medicine. The fact that sometimes laughter has to occur at the expense of others is simply an illustration of natural selection at work.



Photos courtesy of Comedy Central

**Crank Yankers is a show on Comedy Central that uses puppets to give faces to the voices on prank calls.**