

MORNING SUN

10 questions with "School of Rock" hosts

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When the students are away, the professors get to play, on a radio show entitled, "the School of Rock" aired, for the fourth year, on WMHW FM 91.5, live from Central Michigan University.

Professors, 42-year-old Jeff Smith and 34-year-old Trey Stohlman, from the School of Broadcast and Cinematic Arts department, along with 37-year-old Marty Curry, reporter and photographer for the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe's newspaper the Tribal Observer, get together Tuesday nights during the summer months to indulge in "spinning the best in classic rock."

Q: How was the show name selected?

A: Stohlman, also known by the radio-name "the Sophomore", said: The show name, definitely predates Jack Black.

Smith, also known by the radio-name, "the Professor", said: It came from the idea that I was a professor here, and I was going on a modern rock radio station, and I was going to do classic rock. This is the stuff that the artists that modern rock bands listened to, to get their inspiration. This is rock history, for people who listen to modern rock. This is where their bands got their ideas from. It just seemed to fit.

Q: The format for the show '60s, '70s and '80s includes these three decades. Why these three?

A: Smith said: Actually, it's '60s, '70s, '80s and early '90s. We expanded it a little bit because according to the (radio) industry, classic rock is 15 years back from whatever the current time is. So, technically, classic rock starts in early '93. But we are actually including what would technically be oldies, at this point.

Curry, also known by the radio-name, "the Mad Man", said: Hughey Lewis is classic rock.

Q: Your web site states, "Classic rock from the people who lived it." How did you live rock?

A: Smith said: We lived through the era. I'm the '70s guy. I grew up listening to the Moody Blues and Led Zeppelin... these two are sort of the '80s people... they know the later '80s and the early '90s. Between the three of us, we pretty much lived all of it.

Q: Some people might say that the best of rock happened during the '90s. How would you respond to this?

A: Stohlman said: If it weren't for classic rock, it wouldn't have been. Grunge music developed out of the classic music from the '60s and the '70s. If you look at some of the inspirations that Kurt Cobain probably had, with the music that made them so popular, you could find the same roots in the music of the '60s and '70s.

Q: For the professors, do your students listen to the show, and if so, what's your favorite response, reaction or remark?

A: Smith said: Occasionally, most of my students are gone. The comment that I've gotten most is, 'Wow, you actually sound fun.'

Stohlman said: Earlier in the year, a student looked right at me and said, 'You listen to classic rock?' They found it really difficult to believe that somebody that teaches a class could like classic rock. Apparently, there's a stereotype that I'm missing. Like we're all supposed to listen to classical music, as professors were not allowed to listen to music that we actually like.

Q: What are your experiences with music? Any musicians, songwriters, roadies, groupies?

A: Curry said: I think all of us had a musical background in one form or another. I've stummed guitar, beat on drums, Groupie. Yeah, I think I'm a fanatic for some groups and we play our popular ones in our rotation.

Stohlman said: I've been listening to music my whole life. Before I came to work here at CMU, I was a club DJ in Florida, so I have a little bit of live experience versus the studio experience.

Smith said: I have musical theater experience as far back as high school. I did five years with the University of Michigan's Gilbert and Sullivan Society. I've been in a couple of bands. I've written music since I was in high school, and I had my first internship with radio when I was 15-years-old. I got my undergrad degree in Mass Media at Adrian College. I was on the air there, and that's where I met Marty. We were both on the radio together there. That's how we started doing this. I started teaching up here, and I was put in charge of the radio station for the summer. They had me take over, and I thought well, if I get to take over, I'm going to go back on the air, and that turned into this show.

Q: For Curry, how is being a disc jockey, is it better than being a reporter?

A: In my job at the Tribal Observer as a reporter and photographer for the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, I certainly have to mind my p's and q's. In here, it's definitely a letting go...of convention. It's great. I love being a disc jockey. I love hanging out with these guys. They're mentors, and I certainly look up to what they do in their profession. The work that they do, as far as inspiring new generations of people to get on the air waves. We're a society of electronic media, and these two steer the people through. Central Michigan

has one of the best programs in the United States for doing that.

Q: After four years of doing the show, is there a following?

A: Smith said: Yes, we do. Because the show is streamed online, we have friends and family all over the country that will tune in and listen. We've have Minnesota, New York, Florida, Texas, and we people from Canada last year. A lot of people from Michigan and Ohio.

Stohlman said: We get calls quite often from local businesses that are listening to the show. They call in and make requests.

Curry said: We get a lot of people who will log into our chat room, and we talk to them during the show.

Q: Of the three bands: the Rolling Stones, Led Zeppelin, Def Leppard. who is the best rock band?

A: Smith said: Zeppelin hands down. Jimmy Page, one of the best rock guitarists that has come on the scene, yet.

Stohlman said: You could argue that Def Leppard took a lot of what they put off as music from Led Zeppelin. There's a lot of similarities.

Q: Guitar Hero, do you guys play that video game?

A: Stohlman said: Nope. I haven't played it. Everybody that plays Guitar Hero thinks that they know how to play guitar.

Curry said: Guitar Hero is for people that don't know how to play guitar, like karaoke is for people who don't know how to rock n roll.

Stohlman said: If I hear one more rendition of "Friends in low places", I think I might hurt someone.

Stohlman said that because it is a student run station, and the students are not there during the summer, "it is their opportunity to get on the air and have a lot of fun."

Smith said that it is an all volunteer station, "no one gets paid for being on the air here."

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