

The Capital Top Stories

17-year-old DJ turns it up at WRYY radio

By VANESSA FRANKO, Staff Writer

Rob Steinberg is willing to sign autographs for adoring fans. Maybe someday he'll even use his own signature.

The Dunkirk 17-year-old, who bears more than a passing resemblance to comic Adam Sandler, recently started a twice-weekly show on south county's low-power radio station, WRYY 97.5, and hopes to be a big name in the industry someday.

In the meantime, he settles for signing autographs for people who refuse to believe he's not Mr. Sandler - and honing his skills as a deejay.



Rob Steinberg talks to listeners on his radio show "Teen Radio!"
By Alison Harbaugh -- *The Capital*

Every Wednesday and Friday afternoon he arrives at the WRYY studio on the second floor of a small strip plaza above a Domino's Pizza in Churchton to broadcast his show, "Teen Radio!"

Mr. Steinberg scribbles a playlist consisting of mostly '90s rock music on a sheet of paper, being sure to pick songs without profanity. Sure, he feels bad when listeners call in and request rap songs that aren't allowed on the air, but he's not looking for any trouble from the Federal Communications Commission.

The Southern High School senior selects from a modest collection of CDs

he brings with him, including titles by artists like Sublime, Stone Temple Pilots and 311. He prefers to play '90s artists on the show.

"They're really angst-filled," he said.

Every day, when the digital clock in the studio changes to 2:00, signaling the start of his show, he plays the same song, Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit."

"It's the theme of the teens," Mr. Steinberg said.

He cites Conan O'Brien, Dave Chappelle, Will Ferrell and Sirius Radio's Jason Ellis among his influences. With the help of his guitar teacher, Nick Garrett from the Garrett Music Academy in Owings, he's working on perfecting his own on-air voice.

"We're working on developing him as a DJ," Mr. Garrett said.

They've been listening to other DJs, and spent Monday in the academy's recording studio, getting the teen to infuse excitement into boring-sounding book excerpts.

"He's doing a good thing and working hard," Mr. Garrett said.

He's only been on the air at WRYY for a month, part of an internship program with Southern High School, organized by the Career Connections coordinator, Marilyn Harmon. She said internship students have to be seniors



Radio DJ Rob Steinberg, a senior at Southern High School, talks to listeners on his radio show "Teen Radio" on WRYY in Churchton. Rob is doing the show as part of an internship program at his high school.

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and meet eligibility with their grade-point average.

"It takes a special person to step out of the pack," Ms. Harmon said.

Mr. Steinberg attended a meeting about the program at the end of the last school year and thought he would like a radio internship. He expected to help out and learn the basics of radio.

"I never thought I would end up hosting my own show," he said.

Chris Pokorski, station manager at WRYY, said the station had unofficial interns in the past, but Mr. Steinberg is the first official one.

"That's part of our mission in getting the community together," he said. "We think getting the high school involved is really the next step."



(Looking from the outside in) Radio DJ Rob Steinberg, a senior at Southern High School, sits in the WRYY studio as he talks to listeners on his radio show "Teen Radio". Rob is doing the show as part of an internship program at his high school.

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The show is a combination of music, sports and talk about teen issues - he invites listeners to call in and share whatever they want to talk about.

"Rob's just a great kid. He's been enthusiastic from the beginning," Mr. Pokorski said.

Mr. Steinberg hopes to continue the show next semester and balance a behind-the-scenes internship at WNAV. He also enjoys swimming, shooting pool and playing the guitar. He wants to attend the University of Maryland next year and major in communications.

"He's quiet and shy at home," said Linda Steinberg, his mother. But even as a little boy he loved to perform for others, breaking into song and dance upon

request.

"He's a natural. He's very entertaining and he loves entertaining," she said.

Mr. Steinberg's dry, self-deprecating sense of humor comes through over the airwaves.

"Let's get to a song now-I talk too much," he said into the microphone after running down the week's NFL scores.

He also talks about Southern High sports on the air, but admitted that talking about sports to the masses is not his strong suit.

Despite getting more comfortable behind the mike every week, Mr. Steinberg said there's a lot of pressure being on the air.

"It's a lot of stuff to worry about," he said. "If something goes wrong I just start panicking and turning up the dials."

Fans can listen to Rob Steinberg and call in to "Teen Radio!" from 2 to 3 p.m. every Wednesday and Friday on 97.5 WRYR or at www.wryr.org.

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