Students help teenagers air perspectives on radio

BY ALEXIS BASS THE GAMECOCK

USC student co-hosts are reaching out to the youth of America through Teen Forum, a weekly feature of America's Radio Show with Andy Thomas. Aired throughout the Carolinas on six radio stations and the Internet, this forum gives teens a chance to voice opinions on events and issues affecting them. Mike Thomas, a third-year marketing student and executive producer of the show, thought up the show.

Started after an offer from his father, Andy Thomas, in 2000, the concept of a "Real World" format became the initial building block for the forum.

"It's like Jerry Springer without the throwing of chairs," . Thomas said.

The show is produced, run and co-hosted by nine teenagers representing diverse ethnic groups, opinions and values.

"We try to appeal to every teenager," Thomas said.

The show's goal is to give teens a voice and provide exposure to a new form of self-expression. Broadcasts are held outside of the studio at high schools and colleges around the Carolinas. Presbyterian College recently held a broadcast from the campus PIKE fraternity house, and the S.C. Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities also held a forum talent show and debate on funding for the arts.

Today, the show will play host to a show from Richland Northeast High School. First-year theatre student and co-host Dan Fenner said he enjoys expressing himself on issues about substance abuse.

"I think the Teen Forum is a great experience. It makes you more aware of what is around you," Fenner said.

An aspiring actor, Fenner has been able to do voice-overs in promotional and public relations work for Teen Forum.

"I love to perform, and whether that's on a stage or radio it is still beneficial," he said.

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From left, Justin Turner, Chris Whitmire, Nic Stratton, Shantel Brown and Dan Fenner chat on the air during Teen Forum.

Assistant producer Justin Turner, a third-year electronic journalism student, has been involved with radio since his freshman year in high school.

"Being a producer is an everyday job. It is a great pleasure of mine to work here. It is something I would recommend to anyone interested in broadcast journalism," Turner said.

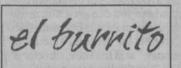
Second-year electronic journalism student and co-host Shantel Brown said he enjoys current issues and local government discussions.

"It always leaves an impact on me when co-hosts can't even get a word in," Brown said.

A segment of the radio show called Radio Star Search is looking for anyone interested in working with Teen Forum. Students looking for a summer internship or a fall job can contact Mike Thomas or Justin Turner at 255-8013.

The Teen Forum airs in Columbia on ESPN 1230 AM Wednesdays from 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. and can be heard online at www.teenforumshow.com.

Comments on this story? E-mail gamecocknews@gwm.sc.edu



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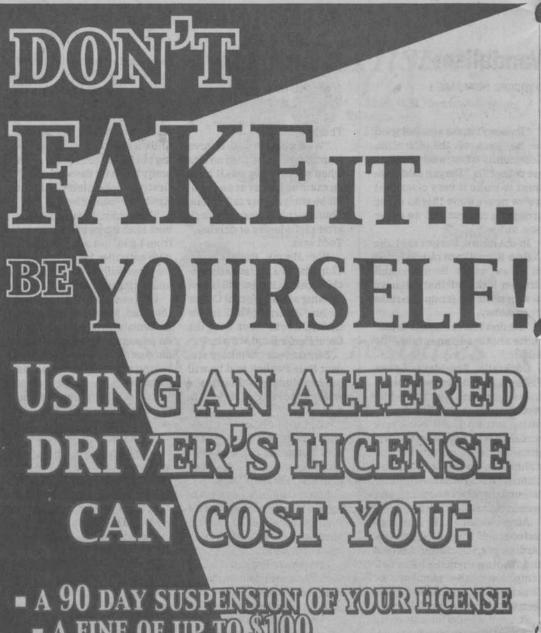
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