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Romeoville's Radio Station

Did you know Romeoville is home to a fully functioning radio station? The next time you're driving around town, tune your radio to 88.1 FM. You'll hear Lewis University broadcasting students honing their skills with talk shows, music programming, and Lewis University sports broadcasts. The station's call letters are WLRA, the last three letters of which stand for Lewis Radio. The university has had a radio station since 1949, but the current FM signal first went on air in 1972 and has been broadcasting ever since.



WLRA is completely student run, from the choosing of the music to the on air talent.

Listeners will hear classic and alternative rock as well as hip hop and R&B during the week. On Saturdays, the station flips to The Island (think Jimmy Buffett) and then goes all country on Sundays. Interspersed is live coverage of Lewis sports like volleyball, softball, baseball, soccer and more.

Through the efforts of the professors, WLRA is equipped with the latest technology, sometimes topping the gear at professional stations. Students learn practical skills quickly through a hands on approach. "You're thrown in and get a radio show immediately," explains the station's general manager Meaghan Glavic. "If you dive into the program, you'll get a feel for how every aspect is run. I've been able to learn

not just the on air element, but the technical side too.” This makes for a great training ground for future broadcasters and WLRA has produced many. Doug Bobrowski, half of the Stylz & Roman morning show on US 99, started at WLRA, as did Ryan Arnold (WXRT, Chicago), Jay Zawaski (670 The Score, Chicago), and Bret Mega (Hot 93.3 FM, Dallas).

The radio station has also produced a number of students who ended up working with cameras instead of microphones. These include 3-time Daytime Emmy winner John Kilpatrick and 7-time Daytime Emmy winner John Strolia, earning their awards for editing the Oprah Winfrey Show. Josh Bowen, another editor, works on the CNBC show American Greed. Kylene Mills (LEX, Lexington), Courtney Everett (WEAU, Eau Claire), and Shane Gustafson (WGBA, Green Bay) are all WLRA alumni who now report the news on TV.

The station also participates in many charity projects throughout the year. When the holidays come around, WLRA changes to all Christmas music in support of the United Way of Will County. Additionally, the station raises money for the Advocate Children’s Hospital Family Assistance Fund through the bi-annual event, “To Kill A DJ.” Students raise money through pledges based on how long they broadcast for. All broadcasting students are required to go non-stop for six hours, but some students like to push the limits. Previous marathon records have included non-stop broadcasts for 48, 55, and 76 hours by an individual and 72 and 80 hours by teams of two. In fact, Meaghan and program director Ashley Bihun are currently in the midst of a 100 hour marathon. WLRA has raised over \$100,000 to date for the fund.

Romeoville’s radio station can be heard on 88.1 FM and streaming live on wlraradio.com.