

Newspaper in Education Presents

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Would you want to star in a TV commercial?

School biz

Hectic But Electric: Lakewood Ranch's Live TV With Stedman & Crew

by Leslie Rowe

At www.ratemyteachers.com, students can freely rate teachers and post comments—and Bryon Stedman of Lakewood Ranch High School (LRHS) rates a 5.0 out of 5.0 on their public opinion scale. Comments include an enthusiastic, "awesome man you are stedarator" and the more serious, "Greatest Television Production Teacher in the world." Not too shabby! I visited Mr. Stedman during the production and airing of the first live morning news show of the school year—a daily dose of LRHS news, announcements, and commercial spoofs produced by students, for students.

"Do you get a flavor for the insanity that is my life?" Bryon asked, as student producer Kristen Howard brusquely called out, "If you're not critical to the show, SHUT THE DOOR ON YOUR WAY OUT!" Bryon enforced her request with, "Respect the producer." Extra students quietly left the studio for the adjoining classroom. "Ten seconds to LIVE, people!" Kristen announced. The pace was hectic and the air electric as the student team of camera crew, computer technicians, producer, assistants, and news anchors counted down the minutes then seconds to the live show. With the teleprompter blinking, last-minute voice checks, even a slight smell of smoke to cause concern—the scene reflected controlled chaos. And then—the live broadcast, viewed by the entire school, aired for the first time this year.

Even though news anchors Candace Paparodis and Brandon Tenney had only a few seconds to review the final script, their delivery was nearly flawless. The pre-recorded commercial promoting proper use of the on-campus computer center was hilarious. Official geek and technical director Mike Ovitz kept the computers running smoothly to transition between segments. And producer Kristin managed the entire process like a pro. Poised on a student-built set, Candace and Brandon covered local news about student IDs, the cafeteria menu, a Mustang sports segment, and a message from the principal about the status of Hurricane Charley—at that time still brewing in the Gulf.

It was creatively and technically brilliant. And it was produced live, right on campus at LRHS. Behind the scenes in his TV production classes, Bryon teaches the technical aspects of TV production; the creativity necessary for a quality show; and the fact that good character matters.

"I love the creative process," he said. "I love watching the students go from idea to final project. But even though we can teach what we know, we reproduce what we are. I can teach what is in my head but people will remember how I treated them—and will hopefully carry on that tradition."

Bryon started teaching after a career in broadcasting. "When the first student came up after class and said, 'thanks, I learned something today'—that sealed the deal!" His enthusiasm and skills have twice earned him Teacher of the Year—once in the fine arts category and once in the vocational category. Last year, his Technology Student Association (TSA) team took first place in State competition in Film Production for their short film, "Repentance," the story of a young boxer facing pressure to throw the fight. Directed and written by student Josh Henson, the five-minute film required an entire crew of casting, filming, editing, and production.

Bryon's focus remains on the students. Seniors in advance TV Production are already building their resumes for careers in film and broadcasting. Kristin plans to attend film school. Candace plans a career in television news broadcasting. And Brandon hopes to write, produce, and direct films. And when they succeed, Bryon Stedman will be cheering them on from behind the scenes.



LRHS TV Production teacher Bryon Stedman with camera.

Television Production

It takes a lot to shoot a 30 second commercial!

by Julie Gillies

Have you ever wondered what it takes to shoot a TV commercial? It's much more than just a camera, a director and gorgeous actors with nice teeth. Much of what you see is decided by budget. But most 30 to 60 second commercials have an entire production crew and require a minimum of 12 hours of shooting—and that does not include the pre-production phase.

The size of the work crew on even a small commercial is larger than you might expect. The **producer** is the person in charge of client relations, overseeing the budget, and handling many of the details involved with creating a commercial. Next you have the **production manager**, who is responsible for finding and hiring the entire crew, handling paper work, and assisting the producer as needed. But there's more! Here is a list of the people who may work on a T.V. commercial, and what their jobs involve.

Actors—Performers who play characters in the production

Director—Decides how shots should be done; determines the shooting schedule

Director of Photography—The person with their eye to the camera

Location Manager—Finds and secures the site for the commercial; handles paperwork

Sound Technician—Runs the sound mixer

Boom Operator—Holds the giant stick with a microphone on the end

Video Tech Recorder (VTR)—Records all that happens and handles video playbacks

Electric Technician—Handles the gas powered generator for the mega-watt lighting

Grip—Sets up all the stands for the lights

Production Assistants—Also known as *set gophers*—handle various tasks from stopping traffic, to setting up chairs and tents and even yelling "Quiet on the set!"

Art Director—Works with director to determine the "look" of the set

Art Department Coordinator—Works with art director; finds needed items for set

Hair Stylist—Creates the desired hairstyle for the actors

Make-Up Artist—Applies make-up and gets the actors 'camera ready'

Wardrobe Person—Procures and fits the actors with the required clothing

Casting—Finds the actors or specialty people

Caterer—Handles preparing/serving meals for the cast and crew

Vendors—Set up tables with snacks and drinks

At the birth of a commercial, the producer and client meet. Once the producer understands exactly what the client desires, then the pre-production phase begins. This is when all the logistics of the commercial are determined, requiring several days of work and planning. The heads of all the different departments meet to decide camera positions, set design, what sort of lighting is required, and every other detail. The location is scouted and secured, the talent is hired, and lines are learned. The next step involves establishing a *predetermined shot list*. This chronological list is given to the heads of all the departments and is essentially a working blueprint for what happens when and where.

Finally, it's production day! On the shoot day, the blueprint is followed exactly as laid out. Each crew member is responsible for following the blueprint and then the actual filming begins. A simple five-second portion of the commercial may need multiple takes to be filmed from several different angles to get the desired effect. Actors may repeat their lines over and over again, each time striving for the perfect take. This continues on for an entire 12-hour work day, with breaks in between for lunch and dinner. Lower budget commercials may complete filming in one day, however higher budget commercials may take weeks to complete. Once the commercial is filmed in its entirety and the producer is happy with the playbacks, then the cast and crew are dismissed. That's when you'll hear, "It's a wrap!" The actors and crew are done, and the post-production phase begins.

explore it

What happens in between the TV shows that you watch? Commercials, right? Lakewood Ranch High School (LRHS) has a live TV news show called *Mustang Magazine* which features a commercial during the broadcast. Students write the script, then shoot and edit both original ideas and commercial spoofs of regular TV spots.

Here's your chance to promote *your* community, youth, or business organization. You can create a commercial that promotes 1) a community service (like hurricane relief or a blood drive), 2) your local youth organization, or 3) a business which offers a student benefit (like a student discount) in Manatee County. The TV Production Department at LRHS will choose the three best commercials, and air them to the entire LRHS student body.

The Challenge and Rules

- View:** Watch TV to find a commercial you like.
- Think:** *The Spoof*—how can this commercial be changed to advertise your community service organization, youth group, or student discounted business?
- Write:** Develop a script, complete with dialog and music.
- Produce:** Tape the video at home, church, school, business, or outdoors. Preference will be given to projects recorded in SP mode onto a Mini DV tape. Regular VHS is acceptable but not preferred.
- Edit:** Edit your footage into a 30- or 60-second commercial.
- Remember:** Your commercial must promote a community event or service, youth organization, or a business with direct benefits to Manatee county students.
- Contest deadline:** Entries must be received by **September 30, 2004**

The TV Production staff at Lakewood Ranch High School will choose three winners based on quality, creativity, and interest to students. These three commercials will be broadcast to LRHS students during live Mustang TV. Please note that all tapes become the property of WLRH-TV and will NOT be returned, so don't send us your only copy.

Show us your stuff! Send a completed 30- or 60-second commercial to:

Bryon Stedman
TV Production/Mustang Magazine
Lakewood Ranch High School
5500 Lakewood Ranch Blvd.
Bradenton, FL 34211

Questions? Email Mr. Stedman at: bryonstedman@aol.com and specify VIDEO CONTEST in the subject line. Good luck!

Discover the Future

Does TV Production sound like an interesting career field for you? Below are some of the jobs for you to consider.

- Actor
- Newscaster
- Producer
- Production Manager
- Director
- Director of Photography
- Location Manager
- Sound Technician
- Boom Operator
- Electric Technician
- Grip
- Production Assistant
- Art Director
- Hair Stylist
- Make-Up Artist
- Wardrobe Person
- Casting
- Caterer

For more career information see your school counselor and get information on-line at:

<http://jobstar.org/tools/career/spec-car.cfm>

OR

<http://www.acinet.org/acinet/default.asp>



Advanced TV Production crew, from left: Producer Kristen Howard, Anchors Brandon Tenney and Candace Paparodis, and Technical Director Michael Ovitz

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Lakewood Ranch High School

- Sugg Middle School
- Ballard Elementary Magnet
- Daughtrey Preparatory Magnet
- Harilee Middle Magnet
- Johnson Middle Magnet
- Lee Middle Magnet



- Haile Middle School
- Lincoln Middle Magnet
- Manatee Elementary Magnet
- Rowlett Elementary Magnet
- Tillman Elementary Magnet
- Wakeland Elementary Magnet

Schools listed in red offer instruction in the subject area featured in today's InquiziKidz

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