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‘Cowboy of Science’ cooks up diverse sounds

Western prof DJs for campus radio station

Caitlin Gleason
Special to the Times

Every Sunday morning, the Cowboy of Science plugs his iPod classic into the mixing desk of KWSB radio station located in Taylor Hall on the Western Colorado University Campus. By 11 a.m., his “Sunday Morning Coming Down” show is broadcast to listeners all over the Gunnison Valley.

But who is the Cowboy of Science? David Hyde — who teaches anthropology, archeology and in the master’s program — has two shows every week.

His Sunday show features old school country and honky-tonk. Thursday’s “Radio Shipwreck” focuses on the punk rock genre.

Hyde was hired by Western in 2011 and started doing his radio shows shortly thereafter.

“When I got to Western, I was at my new employee orientation and I made a comment that I always wanted to do a radio show,” said Hyde. “The faculty advisor of the radio station told me I could, and about a month later I was on the air.”

Hyde has come a long way since then. This past week marked his 182nd “Sunday Morning Coming Down” show and close to his 400th overall show with KWSB.

He is old school, in that he does not use Spotify, Pandora or any of the music sharing platforms many other radio DJs at KWSB use.

“I use the classic iPod,” said Hyde. “They do not make them anymore. What I like about it is, it has the capacity. Mine is the 160GB version. So it holds about 30,000 songs, which is



“We need more DJs, and anyone can do it. If you love music then you should do it.”

David Hyde

about one quarter of my music library. Nothing else even comes close.”

Many would argue that honky-tonk and punk rock are quite different genres, however Hyde says they are actually more similar that you might think.

“There is a connection between the two genres,” he said.

“My parents listened to a lot of honky-tonk music in the 1960s and 1970s, so when I was a little kid that was the kind of music playing in the house,” he explained.

During his teenage years, Hyde also listened to what was considered rebellious music, which included artists such as Black Sabbath and AC/DC.

Terry Schliesman, the faculty advisor and general manager for KWSB, explained his experience with Hyde.

“College radio is that outcrop of cutting-edge music and the kind of music that does not have to prove itself,” said Schliesman. “Hyde listened to

radio when he was younger. He understands that KWSB has a role to play in the valley and on the internet — bringing (the community) the kinds of bands and sounds that do not necessarily convert to big audiences or large for-profit companies.”

Typically, it takes about 45 minutes for Hyde to create a playlist for a two-hour show. He said it used to take him much longer in the beginning stages.

“As I am going about my day, throughout the week, and I am listening to music on my iPod, I will slide in songs I am grooving to on my iTunes playlist,” he explained of the process.

Hyde’s efforts on his radio shows have not gone unnoticed. He was awarded for his achievements at KWSB.

“The highlight of my time at KWSB is being awarded a certificate from the Colorado Broadcasters Association (CBA) for best morning show in the small market,” said Hyde. “I went with Professor Schliesman and a bunch of the student DJs and employees to Denver last spring for the CBA awards, which was a lot of fun.”

He encourages anybody who is interested in doing a radio show to do it.

“We need more DJs, and anyone can do it,” said Hyde. “If you love music then you should do it.”