

WBFH advisor Pete Bowers, with music director Kristin Sparschu, 17, and assistant music director Antoine Terrell, 17, both seniors at Andover.



Puttin' on the Biff

Bowers observes Ryan Fishman, 16, as he selects a playlist.

High school radio station gives students real-world experience

By Diana Lieberman
Photos by Daniel Lippitt

The scene was the 10th annual Woodward Dream Cruise, Aug. 21, 2004.

At the southeast corner of Square Lake and Woodward, Ryan Fishman was setting up equipment for the only high-school radio station on the scene, WBFH, 88.1 FM, the voice of the Bloomfield Hills School District.

"That's our big remote broadcast of the year," says Fishman, a junior at Andover High School and the station's operations manager.

WBFH – "The Biff" – puts students from Andover and Lahser high schools on the air 24 hours a day. The station can also be heard over the Internet at www.wbfh.fm.

When Biff staffers aren't cruising

Woodward with hand-held mics, they're likely at the Andover-based station headquarters.

"I'm there every day," Fishman says. "All the productions that aren't news go through me, and I assign or reject them. I make sure things are done by their deadlines."

He's also got his own show, playing oldies every Thursday, from 5-7 p.m.

Biff adviser Pete Bowers, a 1971 Andover graduate, chooses staff members from applicants who have finished his Fundamentals of Radio Broadcasting class. "We have 14 different students on staff, from two different schools," Bowers says. "All have one common goal – to run one really professional radio station."

The Biff staff walked away with more awards than any other member high school or college at last April's Michigan Association of Educational Broadcasters honors ceremony. And the station tied with Plymouth-Canton's as the Michigan Association of Broadcasters 2004 High School Station of the Year.

Many of this year's staffers want to make broadcasting their careers. They point to alumni Heather Catallo, Andover '94, reporter at WXYZ-TV Channel 7; and Scott Anderson, Andover '88, producer at WXYT-AM 1270.

Says Matt Dlugokinski, a junior at Andover: "Because of the responsibilities we have here, Biff students have an edge." ♦