

Lassman from front



PHOTO BY TOM FENTON

John Lassman's voice is plenty deep and loud for the airwaves, but he was not afraid to use a megaphone during the live broadcast of "The Johnny Rock Show" July 20 at the Tri-County Broadcasting studios in Sauk Rapids. Lassman started as Rockin' 101's morning host March 1.

want to stay in Minnesota.

"We were all dealing with COVID-19 and layoffs, and I watched Brit's Pub burning below my condo," Lassman said. "I didn't want to move to Louisville (Kentucky) or someplace like that to just do radio. Things were up in the air until Tri-County Broadcasting called me. I knew about Rockin' 101 because I had some friends work here. I was curious and tried a few weekend shifts, and here I am. I love the job, the people and the area."

Lassman's radio career has taken him all over the country, which is common in the business that can have high turnover. Minnesotans know him from his time at KQRS, where he served numerous roles from 1985 to 1999. He returned as executive producer of that station's morning show from 2014 to 2020.

It was his first stint at KQRS that led to the creation of The Chucker, who makes a daily appearance on Rockin' 101. After a year-long bit known as "The Call of the Day" was tempered by the Federal Communications Commission after some stations took their pranks too far, Lassman had an idea for a replacement.

"A lot of times in order to do interviews with

rock star A, you have to chat with rock star Z first," Lassman said. "I thought that if these guys are agreeing to go on the radio, why not get a really bad DJ to interview them? They were normally one-and-done interviews. Shirley MacLaine is one who never came back to Chucker's Playhouse."

The Chucker, you see, thought MacLaine was Shirley Jones of "The Partridge Family" fame. MacLaine and her publicist were not amused.

"I think she was done when I started playing 'I Think I Love you,'" Lassman said.

Woody Harrelson also did not appreciate the bit. He joined The Chucker to talk about an upcoming music appearance in Minneapolis but became increasingly annoyed with the constant playing of the theme song from "Cheers" in the background.

One of the better sports in The Chucker era was Fred Savage, who was a teenager at the time and starring in "The Wonder Years." Chucker first called him Ed and mentioned how he loved him in "Growing Pains."

The Chucker clips remain popular clicks on the Rockin' 101 website. The fact Lassman can do it daily only adds to his love for the job.

When it comes to a career highlight, Lassman admits it will be tough to top the Bon Jovi moment. They met in New York when the future megastar dropped off a cassette to be entered into a contest involving local bands.

The song was "Run-away," which was among Bon Jovi's first hits. After his first two records had moderate success, Bon Jovi exploded on the rock scene when the album "Slippery When Wet" was released.

"My first thought when I met him was I don't know if he can sing, but he sure is pretty," Lassman said. "He went on to win the contest but didn't accept the grand prize because he already had signed a record deal."

Lassman remains humbled by the recognition while having a sense of humor about the moment.

"It was very nice of him," Lassman said. "He didn't have to do that. But if it was Elvis, he would've given me a Cadillac."

Lassman hopes the show has staying power, though he admits it will be tough to judge its popularity in the early stages. The first station ratings since he began will be released in August, but a new show often takes around three years to achieve big numbers.

However, Lassman felt a connection with the audience at the opening of The Ledge Amphitheatre July 16 in Waite Park, which he hopes translates into popularity for the show.

"The place was packed, and I brought the band on stage," Lassman said. "To my dismay, I got a great reception when I introduced myself. And when I got off stage, I got mobbed like I haven't been mobbed at an event since the state fair in 1990. It felt humbling and great. People are into the show. It sure was better than if they started booing. People are very nice here."

What's Happening

Saturday, July 24, 9 a.m. – **Overeaters Anonymous.** Whitney Senior Center, 1527 Northway Drive, St. Cloud. For more information, call Joyce at 320-761-2275, Donna at 320-291-7251 or visit oa.org.

Monday, July 26, 12:30-6:30 p.m. – **American Red Cross Blood Donation Drive.** New Life Church, 931 Norman Ave., Foley. Schedule an appointment at redcrossblood.org or call 1-800-733-2767.

Monday, July 26, 6 p.m. – **Sauk Rapids City Council Meeting.** Sauk Rapids Government Center, 250 Summit Ave. N., Sauk Rapids.

Tuesday, July 27, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. – **American Red Cross Blood Donation Drive.** Rice City Hall, 205 Main St. E., Rice. Schedule an appointment at redcrossblood.org or call 1-800-733-2767.

Tuesday, July 27, 11 a.m. to noon – **Living Waters Lutheran Church Food Shelf Distribution.** Living Waters Lutheran Church, 1911 Fourth Ave. N., Sauk Rapids. If in need of emergency food assistance, call 320-255-1135.

Tuesday, July 27, 1-3 p.m. – **Catholic Charities Senior Dining Frozen Meal Distribution.** For people age 60 and older. All clients must complete an annual registration form. There is no cost to participate, and meals are distributed through a contactless, drive-thru format. Catholic Charities Emergency Services, 157 Roosevelt Road, St. Cloud.

Tuesday, July 27, 4-6 p.m. – **Rice Area Farmers Market.** Sponsored by the Rice Area Women of Today. At the corner of Division Street North and East Main Street, Rice.

Tuesday, July 27, 6 p.m. – **Overeaters Anonymous.** Alano Club, 23805 County Road 2, Cold Spring. For more information, call Joyce at 320-761-2275, Donna at 320-291-7251 or visit oa.org.

Tuesday, July 27, 7 p.m. – **Free Grace Recovery Meeting.** Hosted by Free Grace United. All are welcome; everyone struggles with something. The ROC, 141 Fourth Ave. N., Foley.

Wednesday, July 28, 2-7 p.m. – **American Red Cross Blood Donation Drive.** St. Stephen Catholic Church Annex, 103 Central Ave. S., St. Stephen. Schedule an appointment at redcrossblood.org or call 1-800-733-2767.

Wednesday, July 28, 4:30-7:30 p.m. – **Car Show.** Sauk Rapids VFW Post 6992, 901 N. Benton Drive, Sauk Rapids.

Thursday, July 29, 10:30-11:30 a.m. – **Catholic Charities Senior Dining Frozen Meal Distribution.** For people age 60 and older. All clients must complete an annual registration form. There is no cost to participate, and meals are distributed through a contactless, drive-thru format. Resurrection Lutheran Church, 610 County Road 2, St. Joseph.

Thursday, July 29, noon to 6 p.m. – **American Red Cross Blood Donation Drive.** Riverside Church, 1702 Highview Drive W., Sauk Rapids. Schedule an appointment at redcrossblood.org or call 1-800-733-2767.

Thursday, July 29, 3-6 p.m. – **Sauk Rapids Market.** Coborn's parking lot, 110 First St. S., Sauk Rapids.

Thursday, July 29, 5:30-9:30 p.m. – **Rock the Riverside Music Nights.** Featuring Dave Lumley and Switch. Southside Park, 103 River Ave. S., Sauk Rapids.

Thursday, July 29, 6-7:30 p.m. – **Police Activities League.** For children ages 5-15. Participate in no-cost activities with members of law enforcement who are not in uniform. Westside Park Lion's Building, 101 Fourth Ave. N.W., Rice.

Friday, July 30, 11 a.m. to noon – **Living Waters Lutheran Church Food Shelf Distribution.** Living Waters Lutheran Church, 1911 Fourth Ave. N., Sauk Rapids. If in need of emergency food assistance, call 320-255-1135.

Saturday, July 31, 9 a.m. – **Overeaters Anonymous.** Whitney Senior Center, 1527 Northway Drive, St. Cloud. For more information, call Joyce at 320-761-2275, Donna at 320-291-7251 or visit oa.org.

Sauk Rapids LIQUOR Sale Starts Monday, July 19th - Sunday, August 1st

<p>Blue Moon All Available 12 & 15 pk. cans \$13.99</p> <p>Blue Moon All Available 12 pk. bottles \$13.99</p> <p>Gallo Wine All Varieties 1.5 Liter \$5.99</p>	<p>Sparkling Ice Spiked Seltzer 12 pack cans \$13.99</p> <p>Mr. Boston Five Star Brandy 1.75L \$11.99</p>	<p>Bud Light, Bud and Miller Lite 24 pack bottles & cans \$18.99</p> <p>Michelob Ultra 24 pack bottles & cans \$22.99</p> <p>Summit 12 pack bottles & cans \$13.99</p>	<p>WINE</p> <p>Ecco Domani Pinot Grigio 750 ml \$8.99</p> <p>Lamarca Prosecco 750 ml \$12.99</p> <p>Black Velvet Whisky 1.75L \$13.99</p> <p>Southern Comfort 1.75L \$20.99</p> <p>Phillips Vodka 1.75L \$12.99</p>
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