

people

These are four 'wild and crazy' guys

by Maria Barry
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The United States has Phil Donahue and Anoka County has Hang Loose Live.

Like Donahue, the host of Hang Loose Live conducts interviews with guests and spend much of their on-air time talking with callers. Unlike Donahue, they disconnect callers who are boring and throw eggs at the camera.

Hang Loose Live, a North Central Cable TV live talk show, is different,

its producers admit.

"This is just a great chance to be strange!" Matt Whittier, a student at Anoka Vocational Technical Institute, explained.

"This" is Hang Loose Live, a live talk show which airs on North Central Cable TV's community access channel every Friday night, 6 p.m. Produced by local college students Tony Knoss, Scott Jorgenson, Matt Whittier and St. Francis High School junior Jim Whittier, the show is a mixture of on-air conversations with callers, interviews and an occa-

sional video.

On-air conversations, interviews and videos may not sound much stranger than Music Television or the Tonight Show, but anyone watching it will realize it is a show for anyone who has ever had to suppress a laugh or snicker at an aspect of a situation most people would consider bizarre.

"What is Christmas all about?" Whittier asked during last year's Christmas special.

"Well, most people like to rip and

tear paper off the presents. But I like to cut neat straight lines and make as little a mess as possible." He brandishes a pair of scissors in the air.

"Isn't that what Christmas is all about?" Whittier grins fiendishly at the camera.

Is he serious? You decide.

Not all of Loose Live's content is what most people would consider strange; it is all quiet, tongue-in-cheek humour.

"Like my skullcap?" Jim Whittier asks viewers during the same Christmas special. He is wearing a Nordic-patterned wool hat.

"It keeps my head in," he answers calmly.

"What does Christmas mean to you?" Scott Jorgenson, a student at the University of Minnesota, asks a caller.

"Gettin' drunk," the caller answers. Hang Loose Live usually receives more than 20 calls per show, according to cast members.

Short pause. "Right," Jorgenson says. "Jesus Christ was born in a



We're normal, really. Although they may look like the average student, cast member Scott Jorgenson, Matt Whittier, Tony Knoss and Jim Whittier like to think of themselves like their talk show Hang Loose Live—a little strange.

"Ha! The bar of Bethlehem," an off-screen Hang Loose Live member shouts.

this is just an extension of that," he explained.

During the special, entitled "What Christmas means to the cast of Hang Loose Live," he and two of the four actor-producers wander on and off the set answering viewer calls, picking up props and saying whatever seems right for the moment. Freddy Krueger, the horror of Nightmare on Elm Street, and Christmas music play in the background.

It may not sound like a normal Christmas special, but Hang Loose Live cast members aren't interested in being normal.

"It's a fun way to be strange," Jorgenson said.

"It's a good excuse for acting strange in front of other people," Matt Whittier agreed.

A lack of stage fright is natural for the members of Hang Loose Live, according to Jim Whittier.

"We were all kind of the class clowns in high school and I guess

Producing provides entertainment for all four students; but it is a more serious activity for Anoka-Ramsey Community College student Knoss, who is looking for a career in TV production. All four of the producers have taken the technical classes offered and required by North Central Cable TV to operate the studio's facilities, but Knoss is the most knowledgeable in shooting, editing and studio production.

While they all work on producing the show, it is Knoss who spends most of his time behind the camera.

"They (North Central Cable TV staff) have tried to get Tony to take over people's jobs when they leave," Jorgenson said.

Hang Loose Live recently celebrated its one-year anniversary with a three hour special; a special which introduced the first episode of a new series, The Elite. A satire of science-fiction, The Elite will star Jorgenson and Matt and Jim Whittier.



The Elite. Members of Hang Loose Live Tony Knoss, special guest Ronnie Regan, Matt Whittier, Scott Jorgenson and Jim Whittier on the set of their new science-fiction satire, The Elite.