

Letting the chicks chat

By George Rowand

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The logo reads, "Girls' night out every day," and the intention is to let "girls" talk -- and respond -- to pretty much any subject they want. The radio show called "Chick Chat" originates from studios in Middleburg and New York City. The local radio host for the Middleburg segment is Heidi Hanzel.



"We just started our fourth year," Hanzel stated. "The show is not caller-driven, but we do take calls from around the country."

The show runs from noon to 2 p.m., Monday through Friday, and it runs on a station on Sirius satellite radio.

"We talk about anything but politics," Hanzel said, "though we did run a poll last year on who was the hottest, George W. Bush or John Kerry. Bush won easily."

Heidi Hanzel of Middleburg is one half of the on-air team that produces 'Chick Chat' for Sirius satellite radio.

Complementary

Hanzel is married and the mother of two children. Her partner in New York, Lara Dyan, is single.

"She's single and she's doing Internet dating, regular dating. She's even done speed dating, where you meet about 20 people at one time," Hanzel explained. "I have two kids, ages 2 and 4, so we think that we can cover most of the subjects that women will want to discuss."

Hanzel said she doesn't intend to go too far when it comes to talking about her own life.

"Nobody wants to hear me say how wonderful my kids are, so I share all the bad stuff," she said. "You know, how hard it is to get anything done ... my son has bronchitis, and I can't get the Christmas tree up. We've missed holiday parties already."

The reaction to the show has been quite good, Hanzel said.

"Because this is such a new thing, most of what we hear is, 'I love this!'"

Because the show isn't so dependent on callers dominating the show and making it run, it is possible to re-run it.

"On Sirius network, we're replayed nights and on the weekends," Hanzel said.

"Chick Chat" is available in a couple of ways other than the radio.

"The show is produced in an MP3 format and as a podcast," Hanzel said. "The show is put up every afternoon as a demo on the Web site. You can get a short taste of the show there."

Hanzel said she and Dyan were working for the same company, though in different offices, when Hanzel's husband came up with the idea for the show.

"I have very outgoing friends, and when we get together, everybody's jumping into the conversation," Hanzel said. "My husband said that we should have a radio show like this, and it definitely sounded like a good idea."

"I was in my car, commuting to work an hour to Tysons, and it made a lot of sense to me," Hanzel continued. "There are scores of women who would like to participate in this. You don't always have time to talk with your girlfriends, but this is on, you're in your car, it's there for you. It made a lot of sense to me, and I'm glad that it makes such good sense to our target audience."

"It's the next big thing. Women control 80 percent of the spending in this country, and our target audience is women who are 25 to 54, but it turns out that we do have a lot of male listeners."

Recently interviewed on the show were Kate White, editor in chief of Cosmopolitan Magazine, and Greg Behrendt, author of "He's Just Not That Into You." Show titles have included "Dating a Metrosexual," "What would you spend 10 million dollars on?" and "Naked in the gym locker room."

Hanzel said she and Dyan are running the business side of the show as well as performing.

"We sell advertising, we're doing all the work on the show," she explained.

"Chick Chat" may be heard from 12-2 p.m. Monday through Friday on Sirius satellite radio. The show is repeated in the evenings and on the weekend. The Web site is <http://www.chickchatradio.com> and is available in MP3 format and as podcasts.

