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## Q&A with Steve Orsinelli: From Hollywood to the classroom

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For the last 13 years, Steven Orsinelli has been a digital film teacher at the Lewis Center for Educational Research in Apple Valley. He instructs young students in the art of motion picture and all aspects of basic filmmaking. He also is a contributing writer for a Disney web site [DLDDHistory.com](http://DLDDHistory.com) and still perform music most weekends with my Rockabilly/Jump Blues band Big Fat Steve.

Orsinelli was born in Providence, R.I. in 1958 and raised in an all-Italian family. When he was 3 the family moved to Garden Grove, then a small town full of Orange groves and continuous warm weather.

His father was a bartender and restaurant manager, and his mother was a homemaker and worked part-time in an Italian deli. Most all of his schooling was done in Orange County, except for his teaching credential from Cal State San Bernardino.

Orsinelli has had many crazy careers over the years. He started making films when he was about 8 years old and then moved on to acting in various venues. He then began playing music and created various bands singing lead and playing lead guitar and fiddle.

He performed all over the country including most of the biggest country music nightclubs in the U.S. as well as in California. He also performed at Disneyland at the Golden Horseshoe and the El Capitan Theatre in Los Angeles. Orsinelli played Knott's Berry farm many times as well as every major county fair and rodeo across the nation and Canada. He and his band performed shows with Johnny Cash, Meryl Haggard, Asleep at the Wheel, Mel Tillis, Ricky Nelson and others.

After a time he entered the film business and worked on many films and TV shows in and out of Hollywood. He worked as an actor, musician sideman, set builder, off line/ on line editor, video playback, cameraman and director. He also started and ran his own video production company making commercials and event productions.

Fed up with the commute to Los Angeles, he left Orange County in the late 1990s and moved to Apple Valley to breathe some fresh air and marry his soon-to be-wife, Kelly.

Q: Describe a special memory you have of Apple Valley.

A: I lived off of Deep Creek road when I moved here to the desert and loved the fresh smell of the alfalfa fields growing around us. I loved the dirt roads and the simple living that Apple Valley afforded us. My wife and I used to ride our horses through the drive thru at the old Olympic Flame hamburger restaurant on the corner of Apple Valley road and Bear Valley (now Niki's)

Q: What do you do in your free time?

A: I play and record music with my band Big Fat Steve. I am a filmmaker, I love working on my hot rod and I roll with a bunch of buddies in an Apple Valley car club named "The Black Jacks." I also dig hanging out with my 12-year-old son, Blake, and enjoy working in the shop doing metal sculpture and various other art forms. I love to build things and collect antiques.

Q: Tell us one thing that most people don't know about you.

A: I love the ocean and I was an avid surfer most of my life with exception of the last 10 years or so. I also was a horseman and worked with cattle performing brandings, cutting, roping and other cowboy-like duties over the years. I have always admired and felt at home around horses.

Q: What is your passion?

A: I have many passions. I love teaching my craft of film and seeing my students flourish in this art. I am passionate about art of any kind, film, classic film, hot rods, writing songs, entertaining, and meeting new people and spending time with my family and friends. I am a total Disney freak

and love the park as well as most new and classic Disney films. I love life and take it one day at a time.

Q: What person, living or from history, would you most like to have dinner with and why?

A: Charlie Sheen ... to choke him! I guess Jesus, I would just like to hang with him and ask why there is so much suffering and ask him to change some stuff.

Q: Who is someone who had a big influence on your life?

A: Many people, but first and foremost my father and mother. They always instilled in me to follow my passion for a chosen career no matter what it paid. My dad said "follow your dreams" and the money will come. He was right, I very rarely ever worked a job I did not love, and the money always followed. They also taught me to love people, and be empathetic and live a simple life. Others include people at the school I teach at like Rick Piercy and Gordon Soholt as well as early filmmakers, Charlie Chaplin, D.W. Griffith, Walt Disney and Martin Scorsese.

Q: Describe your worldview.

A: Lately my worldview has been a challenge. I think we as Americans have suffered from bad leadership for a number of years. Whether Republican or Democrat it does not seem to matter much anymore. We need leaders that do not care about public polls, being popular, and they need to do what they promised when they get into office. It seems that no one wants to take the hard line to put this country back where it should be. I also think that the injustices of Wall Street and the banks should have been handled differently by prosecuting those who abused the system for unjust profit. I am worried about the burden that our young men and women face in the armed services each day. I am not convinced that other countries appreciate the sacrifices these amazing, brave Americans give to fulfill political agendas that we as everyday Americans do not understand. I am honored of their commitment to excellence and their character and courage in the face of fire. I have been concerned for years about the growing push to move industry out of our country as well as selling foreign goods here when there is not enough jobs for men and women who want to work. America needs to stop trying to be like Europe and be ourselves. This is still the greatest country on the planet and we need to take better care of our own people and needs first before we can help others.

Q: What is your favorite quotation?

A: It's not about how you look, It's about how you see.

Q: Tell us about your faith.

A: I am a spiritual man believing in a higher power. I am a follower of the teachings of Jesus but believe that all faiths are connected. I think that if we love each other and treat each other like we would want to be treated, most problems in life and cultures could find a solution and a way to co-exist.

Q: What words of advice do you have for the next generation?

A: Follow your passion, and make a difference.

Q: What's your favorite sports team and why?

A: I don't have one, I do not watch sports.

Q: What is something you are particularly proud of.

A: My son, Blake, my wife Kelly and my teaching career.

Q: What's your favorite movie and why?

A: Too many. I don't have one. Some of my favorites are: "On Borrowed Time," 1930s; "The Four Sullivan's," 1940s; "Gone with the Wind," 1939; "Giant," 1956; "Red badge of Courage;" "Patton;" "Kelly's Heroes;" "Mary Poppins;" "Chitty Chitty Bang, Bang;" "Howe's Moving Castle;" "African Queen;" "Black Beards Ghost;" "It's a Wonderful Life;" "The Cowboys;" "Star Wars;" "Lord of the Rings;" "The Milagro Bean Field War;" "To Kill a Mockingbird;" and any Errol Flynn film.

Q: Tell us about your favorite thing about Apple Valley?

A: I love how the town is still rural and a small community while featuring new up-to-date stores. Even with the growth over the years many neighborhoods still have that old-time feel to them with big lots and a homey feel.

Q: What is the best thing about your job?

A: Being able to instruct something I am passionate about to young people of our generation, and passing on that ethic/passion.

Q: What book had a significant impact on you?

A: Chronicles of Narnia.

Q: Tell us about a special vacation.

A: I am a firm believer in waking up in the morning, packing a small bag, rousting the family and heading for somewhere new. No planning, just go. We have visited many cool states this way.

Q: What makes you tick?

A: Thrift stores, coffee houses, live music, cool-looking glasses, cool shoes, hollow body guitars, Palm Springs, a cool student film, an occasional cigar, and a great steak.

Q: Tell us about one thing you want to accomplish in life.

A: Win the Lotto.

Q: What's your favorite place to eat in the High Desert?

A: I like Di Naploi's, Mama Carpino's and Steer and Stein.

Q: Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

A: Hopefully doing the same thing I am now.

Q: What's your favorite guilty pleasure?

A: Fast food.

Q: Tell me about a happy memory in your first car.

A: I saved \$250 for my first truck (a 1958) Ford stepside. It was \$500. My dad came up with the

balance. As I was driving it off the lot the feeling of freedom was overwhelming. The first thing I did was change the oil. As I went to check the dip stick and there was no oil? I looked under the truck and I had forgot to put the drain plug back in, and five quarts of oil was all over the driveway. I had to smile, because I knew I had many things to learn.

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to say?

A: Thanks!

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