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Editor

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Homecoming 2023: reunions, alumni shows

Two days of fun

CCSU's Homecoming is set for Friday, Oct. 6, and Saturday, Oct.7, and Radio Club alumni are once again playing a big part in the event.



Friday evening starting at 7 p.m., Radio Club alumni can mix and mingle at the traditional CCSU reunion event. This year the reunions have moved back to campus and take place in the Student Center at what was once known as Semester's pub. Look for the WFCS table or, weather permitting, gathering outside by the fire pits.

Saturday morning Radio Club alumni and current WFCS staff are welcomed to the station even before the eggs are scrambled at the alumni brunch, starting at 8:30 a.m. Stop by, grab a cup of coffee and connect or reconnect with the WFCS community. The tradition of alumni shows continues thanks to the generous support of WFCS's management. You're invited to schedule a half hour show between 8:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. by contacting Paul Koscak at (571) 278-0984 or at raydiopk@aim.com No need to worry about working the equipment. Just have fun. There's technical assistance available.

Don't forget the ever popular alumni brunch, which also returns to campus. This year it's at the new C.J. Huang Recreation Center next to the Kaiser gym. Just like back in the day, stop by the station first if you'd like since there's always someone ready to walk to the brunch, but be sure to return as other alumni keep arriving.

Visit <https://www.ccsu.edu/homecoming> for more homecoming details and tickets.

After the football game Radio Club alumni will meet up at Elmer's at 3:30 p.m. Look for the table with the WFCS logo.

Reflections from WCCS's first female DJ

By Eileen Keefer '71

Joining the college radio station was the highlight of my college days. Everyone there was welcoming, fun loving, helpful and friendly. It was like one big happy social club. I started by helping to type up PSAs (public service announcements) and campus events on index cards during mornings and between classes. Also, I helped reshelving and locating albums in the music library.



Eileen wrote a variety of announcements and other promotions that aired on WCCS, pictured here in the record library.

Dave Landry was the program director and I vividly remember having an informal meeting to fill and schedule staff for on-air times. Early morning times were still available so I asked for one and was thrilled to be the first female DJ on WCCS! My radio name was Eileen Karen and I loved to play what was then called progressive rock. The freedom to play music you liked was very exciting.

Some of my favorite songs were "*Smoke on the Water*" by Deep Purple; "*Fresh Air*" by Quicksilver Messenger Service; and "*I'm Eighteen*" by Alice Cooper – not exactly soft wake-up music for those in the dorms, for that's as far as the broadcast signal went.

WCCS 670 AM broadcasted through small transmitters placed in some of the campus buildings, connected to the studio by telephone lines. The system, called carrier

current, radiated the WCCS signal hundreds of yards from each transmitter, covering the campus and a little bit beyond. The station also was played throughout the Student Center.

Another memory involved the song "*All Right Now*" by Free. It became an anthem when the campus parking lots suddenly had coin operated gates at each entrance. There were student protests in quick response. Eventually this caused the college to reconsider and the gates were removed. Student victory was celebrated by that memorable song.

Because my time at the radio station was such an enjoyable experience, I even obtained my FCC Third Class Radio Telephone license to broadcast on commercial radio stations. However, I accepted an elementary school teaching position after I graduated and this absorbed all my time, not even enough time to pet my husband and our dog as I would say to friends.



I still love going to concerts. One of my favorite sayings is I may be older, but I got to see all the cool bands – Jimi Hendrix, The Doors, Cream, Pink Floyd and so many more.

Eileen Kiefer is a retired elementary school teacher who indulges in photography, travel, playing many musical instruments, enjoying Renaissance fairs and teaching adult Bible studies.

WCCS listeners in the dorms or arriving on campus in 1971 started their day with Eileen Karen's early morning progressive rock show.

WFCS launched path to local radio career

By Paul Bourque '96

I have always loved radio as a young boy and spent countless hours listening to my favorite programs. What I listened to in those early days was mostly Top-40 music on AM stations, and I had visions of becoming a disk jockey. My sisters and I set up a "radio station" in the rec room in our basement, and would record our "shows" onto cassette tapes.



Paul Bourque at the controls of his amateur radio array. Amateur radio, or ham radio as it's called, is a popular hobby and service that connects people across town, around the world, or even to the International Space Station. Operators share a basic knowledge of radio technology and operating principles and can earn an FCC license to broadcast on radio frequencies known as the "amateur bands."

I soon started expanding my musical listening beyond Top-40 stations. When I discovered "album rock" and non-commercial radio in the early 1980's, it opened up a whole new world of many different genres for me to discover. My passion for musical exploration has never ceased. Hearing all that great music led me into becoming an active record collector, and I have built a personal collection of music spanning many genres.

My first experience with WFCS was in the late 1980s, where my friend Tom had co-hosted a psychedelic and progressive rock show called the "Anderson Council Freakout." I would visit the station from time to time and the

show turned me on to many artists that I never heard before. That really inspired me to eventually produce my own radio show.

I became a student at CCSU several years later and in 1991 joined the staff at WFCS. Before I had earned my stripes to get an air shift I was on the committee that listened to new music and decided what would be placed into rotation. Finally, in late 1991, I did my first air shift. I was nervous, but really excited at being given the opportunity to present to the public my own radio show.

My experiences at WFCS and, more importantly, the people who I met during that time really had a tremendous impact on the course of my life. While on the station's executive committee (ECOM), I was one of the folks charged with hiring a new chief engineer. During that process I was introduced to John Ramsey, who was not only a contract engineer for many of the commercial stations in the greater Hartford area, but also the general manager of University of Hartford's WWUH.

Through my relationship with John, I became interested in the engineering side of broadcasting, and unofficially became his assistant at WFCS. John took me under his wing and taught me quite a bit about that side of the broadcast industry. I eventually, under his encouragement, joined the staff at WWUH, where I produced shows for many years after leaving WFCS.

"My experiences at WFCS and the people who I met really had a tremendous impact on the course of my life."

John had also recommended me for several employment opportunities after my tenure at WFCS. That led to me having a brief stint in commercial radio, where I had the opportunity to be running the board during a Hartford station's format change to modern rock, and also an engineering job for many years at Trinity College's WRTC. John also encouraged me to become an amateur (ham) radio operator, which eventually led to my current career at the American Radio Relay League in Newington.

Not only have the experiences at WFCS set a course for much of my life, many of the folks who I was on staff with at WFCS have become lifelong friends, and I continue to keep in touch with several of them to this day.

Paul Bourque has remained involved in non-commercial radio in the Hartford area, volunteering at several stations, including producing programs at WWUH in West Hartford, and was the former chief engineer at Trinity College's WRTC. Paul is an avid amateur radio operator, and currently is employed in Newington by the American Radio Relay League (ARRL), The National Association for Amateur Radio. Paul and his partner, Natalie, currently reside in East Hampton along with their four cats and his large record collection.

Editor's note: Why hams? When the wireless telegraph evolved in the late 19th century, operators many times blocked out other stations because their signals were so powerful. Government stations, ships, coastal stations and the increasingly numerous amateur operators all competed to get their signals transmitted. Two amateurs communicating across town could effectively jam all the other operators in the area. Frustrated commercial operators called them "hams." Other amateurs, unfamiliar with the slight embraced it and over the years its original pejorative meaning disappeared.

Making room for podcasts

Hey there, radio family! Exciting news to share: Our podcast room has undergone a major upgrade. Recognizing the growing passion and dedication of our podcast creators, we've relocated the podcast room to a larger space within our facility. This new room is equipped to accommodate bigger production teams and offers enhanced acoustics for even better sound quality. We're thrilled about this expansion and can't wait to hear the fresh and innovative content that will emerge from this updated space. As always, keep those creative juices flowing, and let's continue to make waves together!

-- A.J. Zulkeski, '24, WFCS general manager



Of Note...



WFCS alumni Keith Hall, '78, takes the requisite walk across the now legendary Abbey Road made famous by the Beatles just outside the Abbey Road recording studios in London. The stop was part of a bicycle tour of Scotland and England that Keith took in August.

Final Note...

Recalling Homecoming 1966

Central traditionally featured bands with national recognition during major campus events including homecoming: The Animals in 1968; The Buckingham in 1968; The First Edition with Kenny Rogers in 1970; Mountain in 1971; and Chicago in 1974 to name just a few. Homecoming 1966 with the Four Seasons was truly one for the records. This Hartford Times article tells the story and captures the campus as it once was (In View, 225 % makes for easy reading). *Article courtesy of Deborah (Intravia) Wilson CCSC/WCCS '70*

8 B THE HARTFORD TIMES, Friday, October 21, 1966



FOUR SEASONS at Central Connecticut State College. —[Times Photos by Ellery G. Kington]

Trousers on 'Time'

Laugh with the 'Seasons'

By KATHY FLEET

The Four Seasons is a singing group. Everybody knows that. But they've also got their own little offstage comedy routine—which continues onstage to a lesser degree.

Offstage this time was the Student Center at Central Connecticut State College where the four munched on pumpkin pie with coffee for a 1 p.m. breakfast last Sunday. Frankie Valli ate a hot dog.

Onstage was Kaiser Gymnasium at the college an hour later—where even a poor sound system failed to provoke them into much more than wisecracks. (They managed to get their own sound man in for the second half of the concert which was much the better half.)

The Seasons arrived after a Saturday night stint at the University of Connecticut and overnight at Howard Johnson's in East Hartford.

They make the trips from New Jersey, which all four call home, in a two-car black Cadillac limousine caravan. "Except when we fly; we can't get the cars in a plane," cracked Bob Gaudio, the songwriter, organist, second tenor and youngest of the group. He says he's 24.

Bob had a new look this time—a beard he says he's wearing because "I'm too lazy to shave." Fan reaction to the beard? "It's 6:50," says Bob.

Wearing a bright blue Perry Como sweater, black suede boots and a wedding ring, Bob got the group going from the moment they sauntered into the gymnasium a good hour and a half before the show.

They accepted the invitation for breakfast at the Student Center, and invited me along.

The Seasons make no attempt to keep away from the fans but Donald Mastriano, CCSC student and in charge of Homecoming Weekend, whisked them off to a private reception room for breakfast.

I held Frankie Valli's black leather jacket and cigarette as he and Joe Long, newest member of the group, leveled a few punches—playfully—at baritone Tommy DeVito outside the reception room.

"Is this the room?" joked Joey, as he pointed to a door with "WOMEN" inscribed on it.

Finally inside, the group talked a little about music but mostly about each other.

They quipped about their "insurance investments." Tommy, who states his age at 34, owns some garden apartments in Montclair, N. J., his home town.

Bob has a restaurant in Old Tappan, N. J., the "Tiki," which serves Polynesian food. He's had it eight months.

Joe says he owns a hi-fi. "I'll own my trousers in three, more months if I keep up the payments."

And Frankie's gold mine is in his vocal chords—the sweet high tenor voice which makes the Seasons inimitable.

But the group also invests in real estate as a group. They say they're interested in nursing homes. "That's where we'll go when we get old," laughs Bob.

The Seasons were introduced to one of the two Homecoming queens at Central, Chris MacDonald, and Bob immediately led the group in a refrain of "Miss MacDonald had a farm, ee yi, ee yi yo-o."

In a more serious vein, and they do get serious, the group talked about their records, and their success, which has been steady since 1962.

Bob, who writes most of the songs for the group, had this to say about "think" lyrics. "They have their place. But so does everything else."

Frankie indicates he's going to be doing more songs on his own—"The Proud One," not yet released for record sales, is his latest, and he is working on an album. By the way, Frankie says "The Proud One" was first played on WDRC here before other stations got it.

The group has also considered doing more "oldies." Their most recent hit, the Cole Porter song "I've Got You Under My Skin," has done well enough to make them consider doing an album of Cole Porter favorites. But nothing definite is in the works yet.

They still have two years left of their contract with Mercury where they record on the Phillips label.

After breakfast the group tricked back to the gym where they changed, so Iisen jackets, black bell bottom trousers, and patent leather shoes for the concert. But before that, Joe, who replaced Nick Massi in the group last year, stood at one end of the gym lobby and began quoting the Gettysburg Address and "Friends, Romans, Countrymen" from Julius Caesar.

Joe says he's 26, "single and available." Bob Gaudio challenges the "available" part.

While Joe gave forth with the oration, little Frankie sidled over to a cute long-haired coed and crooned, "Are you waiting for me?" Frankie says he is 28.

Onstage the group is professional all the way, although they were a bit peeved about the fact that they had to play to the sides of the audience because the center gymnasium floor is kept clear.

"You've got a nice gym floor here, — and I think you should use it!" quipped Frankie to the full house of CCSC students. They clapped approval.

The sound system also disturbed them, and rightfully so. Frankie offered to do the whole concert over that night, with good sound, but the Central students wanted the Seasons then and there. So they shortened the first half, waited for their own sound man, and they came back for a good second half.

Mostly they did the hits—"Sherry," "Bye Bye Baby," "Candy," "Ragdoll," "I've Got You Under My Skin." But they also did "Don't Think Twice," which they recorded as the "Wonder Who's"—"It was a gimmick," admits Frankie,—and a routine they've cooked up on "How To Make a Hit."

And between numbers Tommy came on with a little "stole song" routine with lyrics geared to the college crowd. He also made points when he congratulated Central on its football victory Saturday.

Other stops this year, aside from college concerts, will be at nightclubs including The Venus Club in Baltimore and Binstrub's in Boston.

Cheers to drummer Joey Cass, who first met Bob Gaudio when they were football rivals in high school.

James Malcom Associates of West Hartford were local promoters for the weekend concert.

Bob Gaudio

Frankie Valli

Joe Long

Tommy DeVito

Joey Cass