

WTCC, WCCS and now WFCS at 107.7-- and anywhere at wfcsradio.com

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Editor

Paul Koscak '73

Contributors

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Features

■ WFCS homecoming & shows ■ Living the Boston broadcast scene ■ Box of memories

Former engineer recalls station without restrictions

By Carmine Iannace '88

WFCS was a great experience. I was program director (PD) from 1985 – 1987 and chief engineer from 1984 – 1987. I held both positions most of that time allowing me to develop a lot of management and people skills that later helped me in my career. But what I remember most was the ability to do whatever we wanted in running the station.

The university administration was very hands off regarding station operations, but also very supportive. For instance, they backed us during our Save FCS campaign when a station in Enfield booted us off our 97.9 frequency because they were a commercial station. In 1987 I did the ground work for the application that eventually allowed WFCS to continue broadcasting since 1990 at 107.7.

I also wrote the application to move the WFCS antenna to the WTIC tower which is located on Rattlesnake Mountain in Farmington. Station staff met with WTIC management and negotiated a lease of \$12,000 per year. Being on the tower would immensely increase the station's range.

While we couldn't increase our wattage because of the license we operated under, you were allowed to raise the antenna as high as possible provided it wasn't causing any interference with other stations. It was a loophole in the regulation. Unfortunately, the FCC denied the application.

I always had a technical background even before joining the Radio Club, starting with ham radio.

Later I worked with several WFCS contract broadcast engineers including Tom Ray from WDRC, Mike LeClair from WRTC and WFCS's current engineer, John Ramsey. I also had the privilege of working with a retired WTIC engineer, Harold Dorschug, a legend in his field, who once operated the



Carmine Iannace joined the WFCS crew in studio A for this April 1987 photo. Clockwise: Carmine Iannace (wearing the Boston shirt); Scott Munroe, Karen Armillei, Doug Turek, Jon Eastman '88, Dave Burke '88.

control board for the famously disruptive CBS broadcast “War of the Worlds” in 1938. He taught me all there is to know about starting an FM station. These were people who visited the station three or four hours per week to make sure everything was humming along. We did a number of improvement projects, like upgrading the reel-to-reel recorders and installing an audio router for the production room.



We had tremendous freedom in operating WFCS, but we had a really good team of students and community volunteers dedicated to creating a unique alternative to commercial radio. We went very far, very quickly. While we made some mistakes, we had a lot of success and a lot of fun along the way.

After Central I went to grad school in New York to learn information technology and afterwards, in 1993, I started an FM station in Windham, N.Y. on, it just so happened, 97.9. It's WRIP, as in Rip Van Winkle, to uphold the legend of that area.

Carmine is a retired technology CIO (chief information officer) and continues his passion for radio. He's now involved with establishing an FM radio station in Ludlow Vermont, WLUD, and he runs an internet radio station from his home, "Alternative Alt Vintage" on Live 365, featuring 1980s classic alternative music.

Homecoming 2026, Oct. 9 & 10

Radio Club reunions, alumni shows

See you there!

Visit <https://HOCO2026.givesmart.com> for all homecoming events

Friday, Oct. 9: from 6 – 9:30 p.m.

Grab a drink and some food and meet up with Radio Club alumni at the Alumni Pavilion. This traditional reunion event is a great way for WFCS alumni to meet and catch up on things but, better yet, a good opportunity to meet Radio Club members from other eras.

Saturday, Oct. 10: from 8:30 a.m. – 12 noon.

Radio Club alumni and current WFCS staff are welcomed to the station. Stop by, enjoy some coffee and pastry and reconnect.



The traditional alumni shows continue, thanks to the generous support of WFCS's management. You're invited to schedule any half-hour show between 8:30 a.m. and 12 noon 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.

Please plan on being on hand for a group photo at 11 a.m.

The radio bug bit before freshman year

By Mike Gioscia '88

During the summer before my freshman year began in 1982, I visited WFCS several times and was completely hooked. I could "do radio!" I was eager to get started and met Bob Mastronardi the general manager at the time. That's when I learned there was an urgent need for someone to fill in for a Saturday morning jazz show. I jumped at the job even though I knew nothing about jazz or working the board. But Bob provided some great on-the-job training and soon I was doing a show even before I started classes! Since then, mixing two songs into each other has been the non-stop part of my life.

I started the first WFCS metal show as part of the station's "7 o'clock Special." Each weekday evening at 7 p.m. there was a special genre of music scheduled. I remember getting some pushback from the punk rockers. WFCS was at 97.9 then.

All of the training and station operations were student run, which I look back at in awe. We really ran the place with little guidance from faculty, but we took it very seriously.

Occasionally, we got some direction from local stations. WPLR's morning DJ Rick Allison stopped by and DJ George Scheibner from WPLR taught me how to cut tape. Literally cutting and splicing tape was how you edited audio back then and today I'm still doing it except it's now done digitally, but the same guidelines apply.

I eventually became the production director as well as program director, and I recall being pestered by a communications professor for

"...playing records paid well along with the perks."

tickets to Toad's Place. He got the tickets but still gave me a D (That's not how the world works!).

I worked at WFNX in Boston from 1992-- 2000 as DJ, and production

director from 1996 – 2000. I also hosted a show "X-Night Live From Axis," a popular nightclub on Lansdowne Street. I also helped produce "Live @ Fort Apache," a lunchtime concert series at the Axis where I got to see Radiohead, Morphine, Bosstones, Letters to Cleo, Billy Bragg, Goo Goo Dolls, Buffalo Tom, and many more groups along with the 101 fans that the room could hold. What a ride!

I've been a DJ in the bar and nightclub scene forever, since realizing playing records paid well along with the perks. I've also done voice-over work for years, and still do. Another endeavor is independent film production.

Still, I've always stayed involved in Boston radio working at WZLX and being the "voice" of WXRV, "The River," for 20 years, where I do the station's IDs and other production. My weekly "Americanarama" show currently runs on WUMB, Boston, and WSDL Ocean City, Maryland, and soon more stations as the show becomes syndicated. "Americanarama" features an eclectic mix of past and present classic rock, classic country, folk and blues.



Mike Gioscia's syndicated show "Americanarama" originates from Boston's WUMB. Listen at WUMB.org; click the Weekend Archives tab, then scroll to "Americanarama."

Looking back, it all started with WFCS. Great friends. Great memories. Once the radio bug bites, you're hooked.

In addition to his broadcasting career, Mike wrote and directed "Captive Audience," a film about an overnight DJ which won awards at The Nashville Independent Film Festival, Woods Hole Film Festival and the Toronto Independent Film Festival. It also screened on WGBH-TV, Boston's Museum of Fine Arts and Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art. Mike stays close to the Boston music scene as a drummer in two bands: Roxy and the Crisis and Hey Blondie, a Blondie tribute band with his wife.

Small plastic box turns back the clock

By Bob Mastronardi '83

When I was asked if I could write some anecdotes about my time at WFCS, I hesitated. I had recently retired after 43 years working for major defense contractors, supporting all branches of the U.S. military and our allies. I had drifted rather quickly away from radio, music, and my time at CCSU, so many years ago.



Bob Mastronardi, or "Dr. Robert" during showtime, was part of the lineup on 98 FM, WFCS's new frequency in 1983.

I agreed, but didn't know where to start. Then, one day I headed down to the basement of the house we've lived in for 34 years in search of some clues -- a basement my wife has been steadfastly trying to declutter since our children grew up and moved out. I didn't expect to find anything from WFCS. I didn't even know my wife while I was at CCSU. We met after graduation. But, surprisingly, there was one small plastic container filled with pictures, newspaper articles, and program guides. Opening it took me down memory lane and opened a door I had closed pretty tightly some four decades ago.

I was at the station for two and a half years and served as GM (general manager) half of that time. What I remember most was the momentum we had built. We had recently gone from mono to stereo and, most importantly, secured a major frequency move from 90.1 FM to 97.9 FM that we called 98 FM for promotional purposes. That put us smack in the middle of the FM dial and made us the only non-commercial station there. It also gave us access to parts of the Hartford

market. In the winter of 1983, we hit the Arbitron ratings for the first time, at least the first time we were aware of.

Our station grew to approximately 60 members, and everyone was excited to get on the air and follow the format that previous GM Randy Borovsky had initiated and that our (executive) E-board continued to perfect. I was thrilled to help Glenn Conticello our sports announcer with remote basketball and football broadcasts. And because I loved being on the air, I often took the overnight shift, which started with the Midnight Bong.* I literally had a blast!

But the people at the station are by far my best memories. The support I received as we moved to 24-hour broadcasting and then stayed on the air through the summer was incredible. It was tough, but we pulled through.

Discipline and accountability were critical. We were committed to following the format and making sure

the music was the star, and everyone held each other accountable. I was particularly proud that we established a 12-week prerequisite broadcasting course required for anyone wanting to get on the air, as well as submitting a mandatory demo tape for evaluation by the E-board. The candidates were all better for it, and WFCS became a fertile place to learn the broadcasting craft and begin a career in radio.

We also had great relationships with the Student Senate, including President Anne West; the Central Recorder, with editor Tim Cosgrove; and CCSU leadership, including President F. Don James and Dean Richard Judd. We certainly could not have succeeded without their support, both financial and otherwise.

So my memories are full of high energy, great synergy, hard work, and plenty of sacrifices by everyone. But most of all, I loved every single minute of it.

Thanks to that small plastic container in the basement, I now remember it well.

Bob Mastronardi (alias Dr. Robert, who began his show playing the Beatles' "Dr. Robert."), is recently retired and lives in Madison with his wife, Lili, having just celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary. They have three grown children and four granddaughters to date.

**Editor's note: Midnight Bong was a weeknight hour-long feature artist show from midnight to 1 a.m. The Bongs for Feb. 18 - 22, 1984, for instance, were: Kiss; Simple Minds; Boomtown Rats; Traffic; and Johnny Winter.*

Flashback to 1947

Before the Radio Club had a radio station the club performed skits, dramas and other public interest programming on WDRC FM, WTIC and former WKNB in New Britain. Maybe that's why the club was officially called the Radio and Television Workshop during those years, before launching WTCC in November, 1949.

Those programs were taken quite seriously. Here, Teachers College of Connecticut President Herbert D. Welte asks the state commissioner of education to tune in an upcoming student-run show about the future of teaching. He added a handwritten post script about a New Britain station soon to carry Radio Club productions. Incidentally, President Welte's son, Herbert Jr. '55, was WTCC's play-by-play sports announcer.

Dr. Welte was Central's longest serving president, holding the office 39 years, from 1929 to 1968. His successor, Dr. F. Don James, also set a record. James was the youngest university president in the United States when he was hired in 1968 at age 40.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION STATE OF CONNECTICUT		MEMORANDUM
To: <u>Dr. Alonzo Grace, Commissioner of Education</u>	Date: <u>Dec. 16, 1947</u>	
From: <u>H. D. Welte, President, T.C.C.</u>	Subject: _____	
RECD DEC 18 1947		
The Radio Club of the Teachers College of Connecticut is sponsoring a series of weekly broadcasts on the topic, "Teachers for the Schools of Tomorrow". These weekly broadcasts are presented through the facilities of Station WDRC, Hartford from 6:15 to 6:30 on Saturday evening. The first broadcast, presented on Saturday, Dec. 13, was in the nature of a radio skit during which I talked for about four minutes on the current shortage of teachers. This was a direct broadcast. It is my understanding that some of the broadcasts in the future will be transcribed and will be so announced. The second broadcast this Saturday evening will deal with the services of the College. I hope it will be possible for you to listen in to some of these broadcasts. Sincerely yours, <i>H. D. Welte</i> HERBERT D. WELTE PRESIDENT HDW:VRL P.S. We are also negotiating with station WKNB (New Britain) for a weekly broadcast with FM service. H.D.W. August 19, 1947 I shall listen with interest. It sounds like a good program. <i>Alonzo G. Grace</i> Alonzo G. Grace Commissioner of Education		

Of Note



April 1983 marked one year of broadcasting on the new 98 FM frequency and this core group of broadcasters who were responsible for the station's success that year celebrated the milestone with some cake, refreshments and a photo. More serious celebrating took place off campus. Not everyone in the photo, unfortunately, could be identified.

Front row from left: Steve Zarella, Bob Blackburn, Brad Farley '84, Evan Kramer (Evan in the Evening) '85, Bob Mastronardi (Dr. Robert) '83, Susan Gifford (Sue Hamilton) '85. **Second Row from left:** Jon Daigle '85, unknown, Chris Moller (Mr. Charlie) '88, Jeri Lynn Chauvin, Mike Gioscia (Mike Joshua) '88, unknown. **Third row:** unknown. **Fourth row from left:** Carmine Iannace '88, Glenn Conticello '84, unknown, "Bungalow" Bill Walsh, community volunteer.

Final Note

Your Radio Club mementos need a home

WFCS is on track to having its own on-line archive. Radio Days caught the eye of the Digital Library of Amateur Radio and Communications (DLARC), a west coast based national organization, which maintains a College Radio Collection. The collection accepts just about any college radio memorabilia: photos, program guides, playlists, logos, audio and video files, ad copy, plugs for shows and much more.

Once WFCS's contribution reaches 50 items the station is given an exclusive digital archive, according to Jennifer Waits, the curator of DLARC's College Radio Collection. So check what WFCS, WCCS or WTCC memorabilia you may have stashed away; scan or photograph it and send it to Jennifer at Jenniferwaits@archive.org

Check out the DLARC College Radio Collection at <https://archive.org/details/collegeradio>

WFCS items in the collection: <https://archive.org/details/collegeradio?tab=collection&query=WFCS>