



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

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Editor

Paul Koscak '73

Contributors

John Sarra '73; Art Passaro '72; Peter Varhol

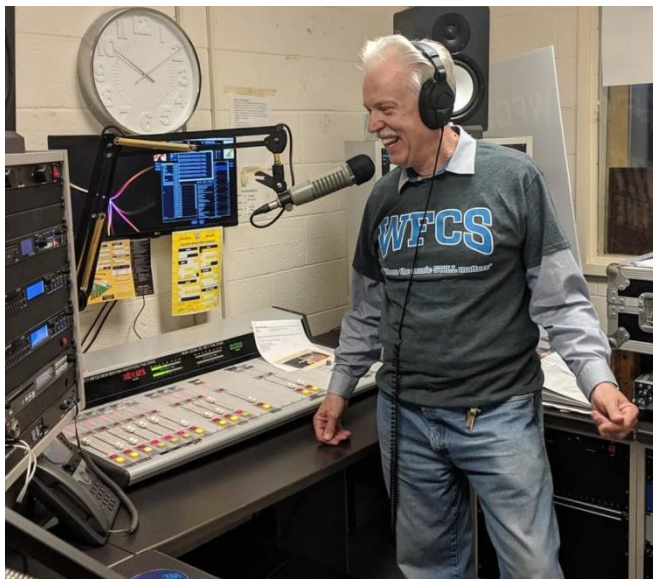
Features

■ *WFCS Love Connection* ■ *Keeping the Edge* ■ *Melanie Moment* ■ *Homecoming 2023*

Community volunteer keeps WFCS on 'The Edge'

By Peter Varhol

I've been a volunteer DJ now for 14 years and I'm loving the heck out of it. All my life I wanted to be a DJ. I followed the local stations back in the day, the WPOP Good Guys and WDRC. Looking back, I needed something productive to do after I retired from a career with the State of Connecticut. I worked in the state office building and later managed state surplus property. I also served in the Air Force for four years.



For more than 14 years Peter Varhol has been serving up WFCS listeners a diet of smooth jazz, funk, soul and Motown while keeping the station as its motto proclaims, on 'The Edge.'

on the air here almost 40 years.

I was retired only for about a month and one morning I was sitting across the kitchen table having coffee with my wife when she said "I don't like this!" I knew then we needed some space and I needed to get out of the house.

It just happened that my wife and me at times attended church services on campus and we kept walking by the radio station window. On one visit we stopped by with the entire family and the DJ on the air, CCSU alumni Steve Strinie, showed us around and explained how the station operated. I was in my element so I asked Steve what do I need to do to become a DJ? Steve became my mentor. "You can do this," he told me. There was required training and a test to pass. It was quite an honor to be taught by an expert who's been

Here at WFCS, The Edge, I'm grateful you can do your own thing. There's nobody telling you what to play so I can focus on educating listeners to some of the music I grew up with. My genre is smooth jazz, funk, R & B, soul and Motown, things like Tower of Power and the Isley Brothers. As a volunteer you've got to be flexible with your shift because students have

priority. I've gone from different days to different times. Right now I'm on Monday from 8 a.m to 10 a.m. It's been a blast.

Editor's Note: Until about 1978, WFCS operated almost entirely by student staff, but during the 1990s there was a substantial loss of student interest and large blocks of air time went unfilled. To close those gaps, the Radio Club welcomed community volunteers, many of which are station alumni. Today, WFCS is the largest campus organization with over 80 members including 11 community volunteers.

Radio Club alumni not fair weather visitors

Like Blue Devil sports fans, Radio Club alumni were not put off by the week-long gloomy weather predictions of a homecoming washout of heavy winds and rain – neither of which happened on Oct. 7. Instead, Homecoming 2023 brought a lot of Saturday morning energy and a lot of visitors to the station. The turnout was a great mix of both recent and first generation WFCS alumni.

Over coffee and pastry they caught up on the latest news and enjoyed the camaraderie that comes with sharing some of the highlights of radio days past while learning about current station happenings. Other Radio Club alumni took the homecoming festivities to the air and brought back the sound of familiar voices with alumni shows from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.



Catching up over coffee from left, Andrew Kelley '15; Shaine Frederick '18; and Nikita Khrenov '16

Many thanks to the station's staff and management for their support in making homecoming at WFCS a success. Thanks would not be complete without acknowledging the support of the CCSU Alumni Association and to Cathie Jost, former director of alumni affairs and CCSU alumni. Finally, a note of appreciation to everyone who visited.

Those great years at WCCS and WFCS happen only once but for the friendships,



Samantha Duncan '20 and Nick Brazil '19 returned to the WFCS airwaves with their alumni show. Joining in from left: community volunteer Peter Varhol; Shannon Kelly '15; and Kyle Miller '18.

Some first generation WFCS members share a few recollections. From left: Guy Esposito '85; Tom Larson '75; Art Passaro '72 Steve Mead '76.

memories and lasting anecdotes they produced, they're worth recalling for a lifetime.



Homecoming 2023



Front row, kneeling from left: Michael “Meesh” Coatta '17; Paul Koscak '73; Tony Augeri '73; Tom Larson '75; Steve Mead '76; Art Passaro '72; Samantha Duncan '20; Second row, standing from left: Gil Gigliotti, faculty adviser; Peter Varhol, volunteer DJ; Bill Pearse '75; Dianne Zareski '74; Elaine Miner '84; Guy Esposito '85; Third row standing from left: Perry Carpinella '73; Larry Mucci '01; Kyle Miller '18; Shaine Frederick '18; Nikita Khrenov '16; Andrew Kelley '15; Nick Brazil '19; Steve Strinie '86

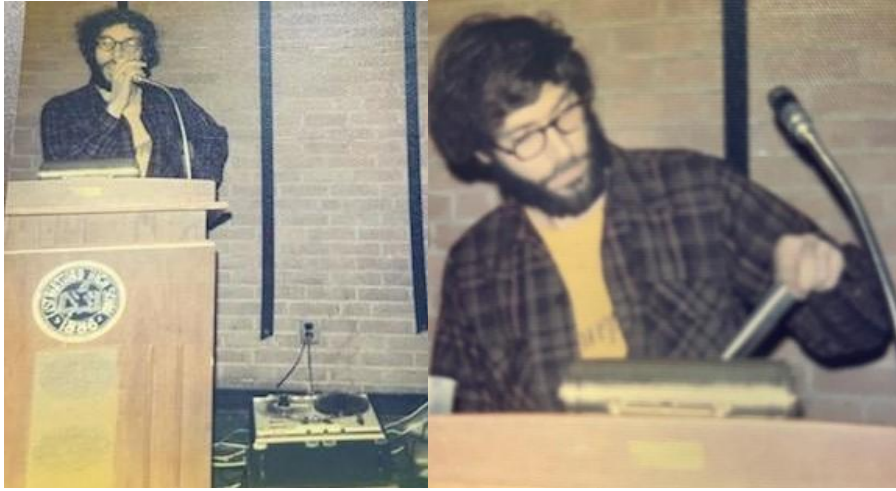
Editor’s Note: Melanie Safka, a 1970s singer and songwriter whose fame skyrocketed after her performance at the 1969 Woodstock Music & Art Fair, died Jan. 23 at age 76. Well known for her 1970 “Lay Down (Candles in the Rain)” and 1971 “Brand New Key” hits, Melanie appeared in Hartford in 1972 and took some time to help promote WFCS.



Recalling a Mellow and Gracious Meeting

By Art Passaro '72

The year was 1972. Melanie Safka, popularly known simply as Melanie, is at Hartford’s Bushnell Memorial Hall. It was a great concert and I was fortunate to be the only person allowed to interview her in the Bushnell’s Green Room, a private area where performers can relax and prepare for their shows.



Art Passaro exceeded numerous events such as this 1973 record hop when he worked as a DJ keeping the crowds on the dance floor.

With my tape recorder and a stack of her newest album "Gather Me," I made my way to the Green Room. Melanie was very accommodating and so gracious. She answered all of my questions and even recorded a few station identification announcements for me: "Hi, this is Melanie and you're listening to WFCS New Britain/Hartford at Central Connecticut State College."

During the interview, she autographed each and every album that I planned to give away on the air to random contest callers during my "Melanie Special" radio show.

In Melanie's words (1972) "My newer songs are where I am right now. They're present. They have a warm, harvesty feeling. I'm happy. I really like them."

And...WE really liked them too! That "harvesty" feeling she speaks of can be heard on her appropriately titled album "Gather Me." Her appearance at Woodstock (flying in by helicopter) introduced us to a folk artist whose music we would appreciate and love to this day. Thank you Melanie!

Art Passaro, broadcasted Tuesdays and Thursdays on WFCS and hosted a Friday night 7 p.m. to midnight progressive rock show. After graduating, Art continued his progressive rock format at New Haven's WPLR FM. He retired from a civil service career and now enjoys time with his grandchildren.

John & Eve's WFCS love connection

By John Sarra '73

In 1971, I was a DJ on WCCS the campus radio station. One Sunday afternoon when I was on the air, two young ladies came into the studio to hang out for awhile. One of the ladies left with another friend, leaving Eve alone, so we started chatting.

I had some production work to do after my show, so Eve stayed on and we discovered we had similar backgrounds. After work, we went together to a movie that the program council had sponsored. So I guess you could say that was our first date.

Two years later, I was supposed to pick

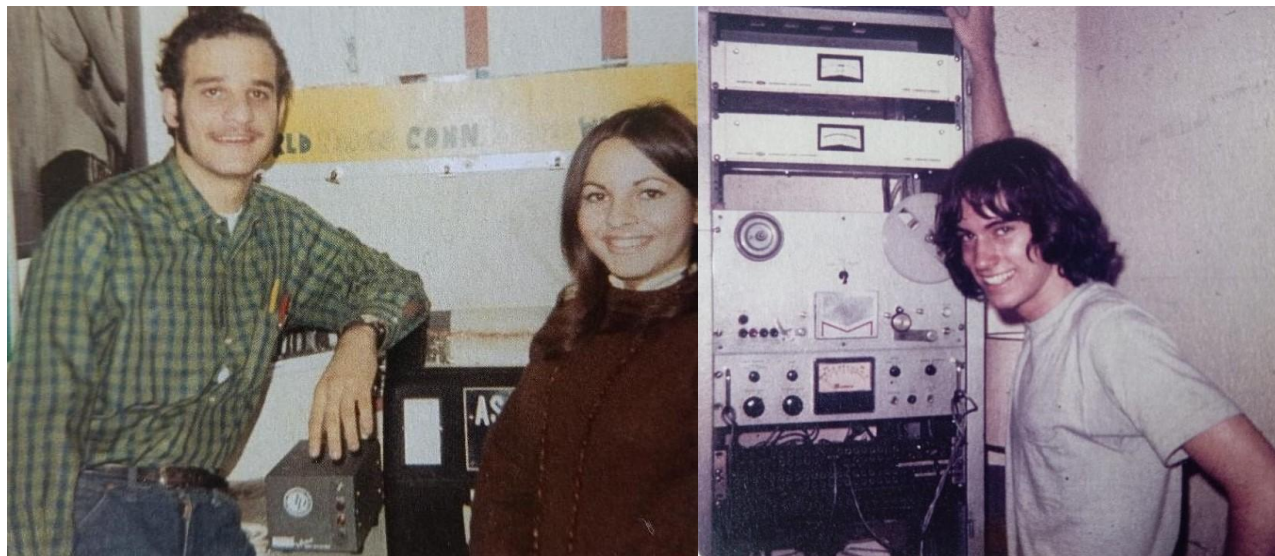


John Sarra '73 and Eve Sarra '74, were married August 24, 1974. Eve is standing on the far left and John is in the front row kneeling, second from left.

Eve up at her dorm to go out to dinner to celebrate our two-year anniversary. I made up an excuse that someone took ill and I had to fill in for them at the radio station, which was now WFCS. She was mad but came down to the radio station anyway, and that's when I proposed to her while on the air during which her favorite song, Cat Steven's "The Boy with the Moon and Star on His Head" was playing. Years later, I learned that the song was about infidelity, go figure!

It didn't seem to matter though, because we have been happily married for 47 years and have two wonderful children and a grandson who's at UConn in his junior year.

Flashback to 1971, WCCS 670 AM



Marvin Weil, '72, WCCS general manager, and newscaster Pat DeSorbo, '73, in the WCCS newsroom. Behind them is the Associated Press teletype machine along with the day's news stories clipped to the wall.

DJ Mike Goldberg poses next to "the rack" in the main studio. The rack held shelves of equipment such as connections for various audio patches, a Magnecord reel-to-reel tape recorder and an equalizer to prevent the WCCS signal from distorting.

Of Note...

Be sure to visit [WFCS/WCCS Central Connecticut State College Radio](#), a Facebook group where Radio Club alumni can meet virtually.

Final Note...



WCCS/WFCS alumni Paul Koscak hosts "The Rock You May Not Know" every Sunday at noon on 94.5 cable FM, Radio Fairfax, in Fairfax, Virginia. The show, which also streams on radiofairfax.org, delves into the facts behind the music and the artists. Radio Fairfax serves Washington, D.C. and cities throughout Northern Virginia through the Verizon, Comcast and Cox Communications cable network.