

for file

WPSC - A RETROSPECTIVE MEMORY -

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FALL 1965- ITS GENESIS...Phase One

Academic offerings in the Speech Communication Department piqued and motivated students to seek outlets in order to meet their "broadcasting" interests.

Encouraged by independent study and extra credit opportunities several Speech Communication majors took the creation of a radio station on campus as a challenge. They carried a record player and about two dozen records to the student Center Snack Bar. It was a place centrally located on campus where students and faculty frequently gathered for sandwiches, sodas, coffee and noteworthy chatter among friends. This was not the college dining hall and was informal. (Eventually this building became known as The Coach House and later it housed the Computer Center.)

At the Snack Bar, the speech students hooked the record player into the loud speaker system and with an in-house microphone introduced each record they played. This "broadcast" was sent throughout the Snack Bar speaker system. Indeed for the speech students this was their form of "radio" as they "broadcast" to all the "snackers". Other students at the snack bar began to ask for their favorite records.. Luckily, audience requests were, at times, accommodated. Student not involved in the project would often bring their own records with them and have written introductions to the selection. They gave their record and intro to the Disc Jockey to use. As noted, students active in this project sometimes received extra credit for Audio Production, Announcing or were involved in an Independent Study project. This was the genesis of "radio" on campus.

The project grows.....

The initial effort of "broadcasting" in the Student Center Snack Bar was enhanced by mid semester. Students, with faculty approval, went across the street to Hunziker Hall where the AV center was located and signed out a better record player and microphone thereby making the operation sound better. (AV Coordinator Ernie Siegel worked together with Prof. Maltese to encourage the students in this venture.)

During the course of that first semester it was decided that the AV Center, located in the basement of Hunziker Hall could be used as a studio location. That building was diagonally across from the Student Center Snack Bar. In the latter part of Fall 1965 students set up a modified radio studio in a small portion of the AV center control room. Using two permanently mounted turntables they could cross fade and incorporate a much better microphone system in their "broadcasts". With a direct audio line strung from the AV Center across the road to the Snack Bar, a more formal Disc Jockey enterprise ensued. This continued for the remainder of the semester and moved into

Spring 1966.

What a step up this was for these students who were bitten by the broadcasting bug. They began to think and feel "radio" and soon sought to remove themselves from the cramped space in the small control room. The intensity to "play radio" increased and so did their desire to create a more professional operation. They requested, but were unable to get more space in the AV Center.

At this time in the Speech Department academic offerings in radio, media and communication were blossoming. Many of the majors were now involved in the make shift radio operation. The Speech Department with its burgeoning Theater program was located in a relatively new building, Shea Auditorium. The radio students' need for space was known. They were offered a large office space in Shea to use as a control room-studio. Thus, in the summer of 1966 the "radio" operation located a home in Shea Auditorium. College wide interest in developing a radio station was awakened across the campus. Not only were Speech Communication majors involved but other students from departments in Speech Correction, Physics, and Music were taking an active role.

After the move to Shea, the students and staff began to make inquiries to the FCC for frequency allocation. No frequencies were available. The educational frequency for the college's location was held by the Franklin Lakes Board of Education. The lack of a license, however, did not deter student and staff interest. The next step was to investigate the formation of a Carrier Current station. That summer, 1966, with initial start up funds from a faculty member for rental use of telephone lines and spot ads that the students mustered, Paterson State's Carrier Current Radio Station, **WPSC** began its operations. The **VOICE OF PATERSON STATE COLLEGE** was heard on **590 AM**, transmitting from Shea Auditorium.

The station operated out of office room #170 in Shea Auditorium. The studio was linked via phone lines to the two dormitories, Heritage Hall and Pioneer Hall, the Student Center Snack Bar, Wayne Hall Dining Room, and Morrison Hall the college administration building. Amplifiers, located where phone lines entered the buildings, received the 590AM radio station signal. From the amplifiers the radio station signal was transmitted to dormitory rooms and those other campus locations. Recipients were able to receive the transmitted signals by tuning radio receivers to **590AM**.

Because of the cost of equipment and, monthly telephone line charges, funding was necessary. Consequently a Radio Club was formed, called WPSC Radio. Officers were elected, a Constitution was written, and with a faculty advisor The Student Government Association was approached for funding. The Student Government Association (SGA) approved the formation of the Radio Club and granted a start up budget to the organization. Having developed a list of equipment needs the Club moved quickly in the Fall of 1966. Three Professional Turntables, an audio mixing board, microphones and modest furniture were purchased immediately. Installation was handled by the students themselves. Additional funds were allocated by the SGA.

for phone line costs, postage and miscellaneous supplies. Students made contact with major record companies, and shortly thereafter a flow of free records arrived and broadened the scope of music offerings. This "radio" operation continued from Shea Auditorium for at least five years, before a major move to Hobart Hall was made.

With an on going budget the club members began to think of the station as a replica of other professional radio operations. The station broadened and varied the scope of programming, setting up major departments of music, news, sports, publicity and public information and business. Students who wanted on-air assignments had to take and pass voice tests. These were supervised by the students themselves.

News, music and sports programming flourished. While music remained the major thrust of programming, news and especially sports gained in interest. On site radio for basketball instilled interest in sports reporting. Telephone line cost for these events made the WPSC budget burgeon.. Also, throughout the early years the station became an important source for news and information about the college community, which fostered good natured competition with the college newspaper, **The Beacon**. The two campus media entities complemented each other in their endeavors, since many of the students active in **WPSC** participated in **The Beacon** as editors and reporters.

Phase Three....coming of age...

During the latter part of the 60's the college, like many others across the nation, was stressed with Viet Nam protests, student power demonstrations, union strikes, political assassinations, anti war marches, etc. As these tumultuous times pervaded the college atmosphere, WPSC 590AM was influential on campus. Students leading the college radio operations maintained a professional attitude. The station remained on the air and broadcast even when the college was not functioning because of unrest. Frequently the college President James Karge Olsen spoke to the students and campus community over the carrier current station. Frequent discussions about campus concerns were heard, also. Board of Trustees meetings were broadcast. The significance of the radio facility to engender understanding and communication with all of the college constituencies was evident. Indeed, WPSC came of age.

In the early 70's the the Campus School operated by the Education Department as a Demonstration School was to be closed down. Dr. Maiese and graduate and undergraduate students from Communication had been assisting the Education Department with taping and viewing student teachers over the video facilities there. Since modest television facilities were there, WPSC students and Communication faculty petitioned administration for the use of the stage area by the radio station. The administration granted this petition and allowed the students to construct a radio station. Proudly, students did just that.

With permission from advisor, Dr. Maltese, they gathered used lumber from the Pioneer Players, and prevailed upon carpentry sources on campus for other lumber and proceeded to build the station. Two control rooms, an engineering room, appropriate offices, and a supply and storage location were constructed on the stage. **WPSC students took the major responsibility** and were extremely gratified when building and electrical inspectors from Haledon and Wayne approved the construction with high praise.

At this time several faculty had offices in the building. Shortly thereafter the Communication Department, growing rapidly, moved all faculty offices to the campus school, called Hobart Hall, even though the department still produced major theater productions in Shea Auditorium.

During the 70's the station continued to offer music and a varied programming schedule for its college audience. A contractual arrangement was made with United Artists Columbia, a cable television franchiser, serving a large portion of New Jersey. WPSC linked with UA Columbia and provided its programming for use on the UA Columbia channel. (The first college radio station in NJ to do so.) The audience for WPSC increased to include more than nineteen thousand subscribers of UA Columbia cable. WPSC college music and information programming could be heard over the whole cable network system which covered northern New Jersey communities. Indeed, the station was coming of age. Local sports, political news and a strong music format was featured. News and information programs, interviews including national personalities, speakers and guest star performers, appearing on campus were added and became the source for a more exciting and varied programming day. Responses and feedback came from individuals from many communities. Needless to say because of the station's importance and coverage the budget of the station was enhanced by the SGA. It became the largest club budget on campus. Also, since it was a non licensed entity, commercial copy and advertising sales were permissible and enhanced the funds available to WPSC.

The William Paterson College of New Jersey, renamed in 1971, and WPSC continued to vie for Federal Communications approval for a license. Three applications were filed in the 70's. The license applications did not prevail. One application called for using an experimental antenna system. The experimental antenna system was granted by the FCC, but the college at that time did not agree to grant funding for this experimental system.

The search for a broadcasting AM or FM frequency throughout the years proved fruitless. The frequency, 88.7 FM was allocated to the Franklin Lakes Board of Education. There was no desire on their part to share their Ten WATT operation with the college. In the late seventies, the high school programming became wanting and there were many times when they were not on the air at all. When it became evident that outside commercial entities planned to petition the FCC for that frequency WPSC college students volunteered to assist the local high school station. Several of the WPSC students were graduates from the Franklin Lakes system (Ramapo High

School) and had worked on that station as high school students. These and other WPSC students assisted the high school by covering school board and town council meetings, high school sporting events, etc. In turn the college station was given eight hours a week to do their own programming.

A connection between the college and the high school ensued. WPSC students did the bulk of the work establishing a working relationship with the high school. As a result, many of those high school students eventually enrolled at William Paterson and became active in the college radio operation. Unfortunately, the Franklin Lakes Board began to charge WPSC, four thousand dollars per semester to continue the eight hours per week on their frequency. Campus personnel were perplexed as to the legality of this non-commercial educational station charging for air time. This left a sour taste in the mouths of students, especially those graduates of Ramapo High School. Of course, during this period ongoing WPSC endeavors on the 590 AM signal to campus and cable subscribers continued to show promise. It grew. Through its contacts with UA Columbia the WPSC was able to link with other cable TV companies and was heard all over the state on cable TV.

Significantly, in the early 1980's the FCC changed its rules dealing with non commercial 10 WATT stations. These broadcast stations had to upgrade to a minimum of 100 watts or their license would not be protected. If the upgrade was not accomplished any one could apply for the license. To pay for their upgrade Franklin Lakes asked the college for thirty thousand dollars. In return it would not charge WPSC for air time. The college asked to share the license. Franklin Lakes refused the request to share the license with the college. Therefore, the college refused to fund the thirty thousand dollars for the upgrade. The FCC deadline passed. Franklin Lakes continued to operate their unprotected frequency in a minuscule fashion. They did not have the assistance of WPSC students. Outside groups began to show an interest in obtaining the allocation since the license at 88.7 FM. was not protected by the FCC. In essence it was up for grabs. WPSC decided to apply for this frequency in 1982.

The William Paterson students and faculty wanted their own FM station. This would complement academic courses in Radio an extremely popular segment of the Communication major. WPSC'S ability and potential to meet professional broadcast standards was proven. After much cajoling and pressure, the administration and the Board of Trustees approved the application transmitted to the FCC. The license was approved by the Federal Communications Commission and granted to William Paterson College in 1983. WPSC FM, 88.7. It has been functioning ever since.

Extensive student interest to participate in radio prevailed. To compensate for this need a dual radio operation was initiated. A radio club, funded by the SGA, called WCRN operating on the 590 AM frequency was used. Since this was a club it was open to all students and regulated by its constitution and by-laws, with officers and a budget provided by the SGA. As a carrier current operation using telephone lines it was heard in the dorms and other major facilities on campus. Commercials and other announcements were allowed in the operation. It was not regulated by FCC rules for

FM educational stations. The AM 590 service functioned side by side with FM station, WPSC-FM. This configuration of radio services was crucial to meet the demands of many students who desired to "try" radio. It provided an excellent training ground for students who soon "graduated" to the open circuit FM operation. More than seventy five students were active in the radio club. Many students stayed with WCRN because they had more freedom in their programming operation. Others gained experience on WCRN and chose to actively participate in the WPSC-FM operations station. It was the largest club on campus and received the largest budget from the SGA.

By 1988 the radio operation was upgraded and enhanced its power and coverage influencing many throughout the years. The station moved from the stage area and relocated to two large classrooms (C7 and C8) when Hobart Hall was undergoing major refurbishment. The station did not shut down. It functioned admirably.

Anecdotal comments regarding some memories:

"IN THE FIELD" --- This was a one hour interview program which brought on to the campus practicing professionals in the broadcasting field. Initially only radio personalities were included but later the program was simulcast and recorded in the adjoining television studios. This was an outstanding program coordinated and run by the students of WPSC F.M. Professionals learned about the college through this program and it brought much prestige to the campus and enriching the lives of the students and the college community. At times invited professionals eventually came back to teach specific classes on a given day. Some were invited back as visiting artists, notably Roland Smith, who taught here for one year.

(others to continue...)

FORMAT:

MOSTLY MUSIC GOING FROM TOP FORTY, TO GOLDEN OLDIES, TO NEWS, SPORTS AND POLITICS. IT HAS SPANNED THE GAMUT OF OPPORTUNITIES TO REACH OUT TO THE COMMUNITY AND BRING THE COMMUNITY TO THE CAMPUS.

LOTS OF NEWS - STATION BECAME KNOWN AS THE SPIRIT OF NORTH JERSEY. THE STUDENTS COVERED ELECTIONS IN THE COLLEGE COMMUNITY, COLLEGE SPORTING EVENTS INCLUDED, BASKETBALL, BASEBALL AND FOOTBALL.

INDIVIDUAL AND SPECIALIZED PROGRAMMING VARIED TO INCLUDE SPECIAL INTERESTS OF THE STUDENTS. MAJOR EMPHASIS IN PROGRAMMING HAS BEEN MUSIC.

OTHER SHOWS IN ADDITION TO MUSIC:

Wrestling Specials

Sports talk

Buddy shows (interviews, talk)

Special music shows - The Grateful Dead

Outside programmers - Bob Daniels Sunday AM Broadway plus

Father Lou

Hip-Hop

Big Bands

Jazz Coverage with TV

An anecdote:

FRANKIE VALLI AND THE FOUR SEASONS APPEARED IN SHEA AUDITORIUM. DR. MALTESE KNEW FRANKIE VALLI AND ARRANGED FOR A RADIO INTERVIEW AFTER THE SHEA PERFORMANCE. THE PROGRAMMING DIRECTOR, JOE WAS TO INTERVIEW HIM. JOE WAS AN ARDENT FAN OF THE FOUR SEASONS AND BEFORE THE SESSION, COMPLETELY FROZE. HE COULDN'T SPEAK COHERENTLY. CONSEQUENTLY, DR. MALTESE DID THE INTERVIEW OF FRANKIE VALLI. IT LASTED ABOUT AN HOUR. THE NEXT DAY AND THROUGH THE MAGIC OF EDITING, HIS VOICE WAS DELETED AND THE QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS POSED DURING THE INTERVIEW WERE NOW ASKED BY THE STUDENT, JOE..... NEEDLESS TO SAY WE WERE PLEASED WITH THE PROGRAMMING RESULT. AT THE STATION, EVERYONE JOKED AND LAUGHED ABOUT IT, DID SOME TEASING AND HAD A LOT OF FUN OVER THE EPISODE.