

WRIP Celebrates 20 Years in Style



“Thank you” said hundreds of visitors to the 20th anniversary celebration for WRIP radio, many of whom gathered for a community photograph at Windham-Ashand-Jewett school, site of the party, last Saturday. Photo contributed by Francis X. Driscoll



Not to be left out, Fran Driscoll, another local treasure, climbed the stairs to the second floor at WAJ for the historic community snapshot.



The original voice and “Morning Man” of WRIP (right), the late Guy Patrick Garraghan on the occasion of his 60th birthday party with station founder and licensee Dennis Jackson.



Joining forces, members of the Windham Foundation and Community of Windham Foundation hosted the big bash (left to right): Phyllis Parrish (Windham Foundation), John Quinn, Annie Jakubowski, Jeri Miltenberger, Denise Meehan and Lynn Verrengia (Community of Windham Foundation).



WRIP family (front left to right) office manger and traffic director Patricia Morrow and president/general manager Jay Fink with (back) “Local Licks” show host Sonny Rock and “Morning Man” Joe Loverro.

WINDHAM - It was time for everyone else to talk, for a change, when WRIP radio celebrated its 20th Anniversary, this past weekend.

The usual voices for the mountaintop station are president and general manager Jay Fink, who is seemingly omnipresent, and Joe Loverro, his “Morning Man” sidekick and host of the popular Friday Night oldies show.

Fink and Loverro were onsite and broadcasting “live,” last Saturday, when hundreds of well-wishers showed up on the front lawn at Windham-Ashland-Jewett school for one simple reason.

Folks wanted to say “thank you for being here,” and they did so in sincere fashion, making Fink, Loverro and station founder Dennis Jackson

know and feel how much they mean to the mountaintop community.

A proclamation was sent by U.S. Congressman Antonio Delgado, praising WRIP for its tireless on-air efforts during Hurricane Irene, in the summer of 2011, when historic flooding virtually wiped out modern communications.

Fink and Loverro, putting in 40-hour days rather than 40-hour weeks, were “credited with saving people’s lives,” Delgado stated, thoughts echoed by New York State Assemblyman Christopher Tague.

“WRIP is recognized locally, statewide and nationally for exceptional community service,” Tague stated in an Assembly official Citation.

The government acco-

lades were appreciated but grassroots listeners in the mountains, throughout the Hudson Valley and far beyond have been well aware of what WRIP does every day for two decades and counting.

Things began with a bang, on August 5, 1999, after Jackson astutely hired the inimitable Guy Patrick Garraghan as the original voice of WRIP.

Garraghan, prior to his passing in 2010, rose to near legendary local status, setting the stage for Fink and Loverro who have not tried to match the unforgettable microphone musings and mischief of their predecessor.

Instead, they have formed their own niches, joined by a team of special programmers such as Sonny Rock, a native

son and talented drummer who made his mark on the rock ‘n roll scene before returning to his hometown, creating the Tuesday night “Local Licks” music show.

Those three dudes are kept in line by Patricia Morrow, the Windham town historian who doubles as WRIP office manager and traffic director.

When everything is said and done, however, Fink will be the first to tell you it’s the people who tune in to FM 97.9 on the radio dial who count the most.

One of them is Denise Meehan, a faithful follower and devoted member of the Community of Windham Foundation. It was Meehan, along with other CWF colleagues, who came up with the idea for the anniversary bash.

“Well, to be honest, this didn’t start out as any big deal,” Meehan said, smiling. “The Foundation regularly picks community projects to do so we thought it would

be nice to have a WRIP “Appreciation Day.”

“All of us remember Hurricane Irene and what the radio station meant to the community. It’s a big thing, having them in our town,” Meehan said.

“I asked Jay if that would be okay and he said ‘Sure,’ and then he asked, ‘Did you know 2019 is our twentieth year?’ and I said no,” Meehan said.

“It took off after that and became a big deal. It is amazing how many people feel the same way we do. The radio station is such a connection. Anywhere you go, you can hear Jay and Joe,” Meehan said.

“I could be coming up the mountain, going home, or coming down from Albany, and to hear Jay and Joe, it brings you home. It brings a smile to your face on any day,” Meehan said.

“There is no more noble a mission than dedicating oneself to keeping the public informed and at the same time provid-

ing an essential voice in our Democratic society,” CWF member John Quinn said.

“We congratulate Dennis, Jay, Joe, Patty and everyone connected with this crown jewel on the mountaintop,” Quinn said.

The Community of Windham Foundation teamed up with the Windham Foundation to help sponsor the shindig. Many local restaurants, area caterers and businesses owners gladly pitched in with food and festivities.

“Jay gives so much to our community,” said Windham Foundation member Phyllis Parrish. “Whenever you need him, he’s there. He helps the town in ways that go beyond the job and he asks for nothing back.

“Jay was one of those radio kids who grew up to do what he loves,” Parrish said. “What a blessing it is for him to be able to follow his passion and for us to have him expressing his passion on our behalf.”

Summer Movie Saturdays

SATURDAY MORNING
FREE




AUGUST 17 @ TEN AM FREE

August 17
Gulliver's Travels (1939, 1hr 16min)
This feature-length animated film from
Fleischer Studios is a very loose
musical adaptation of Jonathan Swift's
18th-Century novel.

Bridge Street Theatre
44 W. Bridge Street, Catskill, NY
BridgeStreetTheatre.org or 518-943-3818

Portraits of Nature

Paintings by Meryl Learnihan



Kaaterskill Gallery
Columbia Greene Community College
September 2nd to 28th, 2019
Opening - Thursday, September 5th from 5:00 to 7:00pm