

# THE LOCAL SIGNAL

# WRIR 97.3FM

## What's Inside?

This issue of The Local Signal celebrates WRIR's volunteers during a very busy winter into spring season. We are making it a priority to meet people face-to-face. The newsletter also honors the legacies of founder Christopher Maxwell and most recent board president Melissa Vaughn; cancer really sucks! Readers can also learn more about our annual Spring Fund Drive and the new shows that just started broadcasting.

As Richmond's independent voice, we're excited to keep you tuned in to everything happening both on and off the airwaves. Thanks for being part of the WRIR family — let's dive in!

Edited by: Rian Moses-Hedrick



We will miss, Melissa Vaughn, WRIR champion and radio host.

”  
page 7



## Spring Fund Drive!

WRIR is in their new home and we get to celebrate our first Spring Fund Drive. We love being in Shockoe Bottom and appreciate our kind neighbors. Help our volunteer run station cover operations costs to keep giving you ALT airwaves. Your support is most appreciated.

Check out this year's premiums for donating!  
*Continued on page 2*



# 2026 SPRING FUND DRIVE

Just three months ago, we flipped the switch on our brand-new studio home. Thanks to your support, we moved from our old studios on Broad Street into a space designed for the future of community radio—with new studio setups and an open space for live performances.

Our Spring Fund Drive kicked off on Friday, April 17 and will end May 1.

Your contribution to this fund drive ensures that our new studio isn't just a building, but a hub of creativity, talk and music that belongs to you.

- For \$11/month or \$65 one-time, you can sport this shirt to show off your great taste in radio.
- For \$21/month or \$125 one-time, you will receive our Spring shirt and a new WRIR waterproof picnic blanket you can use at a park, camping and more.
- For \$61/month or \$365 one-time, a non-profit of your choice will receive free underwriting on our station. That means your gift counts twice! You'll also receive our shirt and blanket.

We're inviting donors to stop by our new station to pick up your premiums and maybe take a tour of the studios.

**DONATE ONCE** or **DONATE MONTHLY**



Our Spring T-Shirt artist is Richmond's own Silly Genius.

HELP US REACH \$50,000



1965-2026

# REMEMBERING CHRISTOPHER MAXWELL

WRIR Founder

The Richmond community—and the world of independent media—has lost a true pioneer. Christopher “Max” Maxwell, the co-founder of local radio stations WRIR and WRWK, passed away recently, leaving behind a legacy defined by environmentalism, DIY activism, and a relentless commitment to community voices.

A self-described “Florida man” who evolved into one of Richmond’s most beloved progressive leaders, Max’s life was a testament to the power of grassroots change.

Max didn’t just wait for systems to change; he built new ones. His contributions spanned decades and industries:

- **Democratic Media:** After being told “no one wants to hear” environmental programming on mainstream radio, Max co-founded WRIR and WRWK. His advocacy, supported by Senator Tim Kaine, helped pass national legislation making low-power FM (LPFM) radio available to communities across the country.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** From co-founding the recycling program at VCU to establishing an international youth hostel, Max focused on sustainable, street-level solutions.
- **Systemic Change:** He was a firm believer that “the more we are the media, the less likely we will fall for false narratives.” He championed the use of local video and independent reporting to hold institutions accountable.

In his final days, Max remained a “brainy realist.” His last project focused on a technology using cerium oxide to extract carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and convert it into syngas.

His dream was to simplify this complex science into a comic book that could teach a twelve-year-old how to create fuel from thin air. He believed that to save our environment, we had to take the future into our own hands.

This is a summary from the **North of the James** article written by Jack R. Johnson. Read it [HERE](#)



## Remembering Christopher Maxwell (Max)

You always think that you’ll have more time - and that there will be another opportunity to connect. I first met Christopher Maxwell — affectionately known as Max — in 2018 at WRWK 93.9 FM in Midlothian, VA. It was there that I started hosting a talk show, which aims to support female entrepreneurs.

After about a year of broadcasting, my show was in jeopardy of cancelling due to the lack of producers available to commit to a live, weekly, mid-day schedule. Max graciously stepped in to save the day. Little did I know that my producer was an icon of Richmond Community Radio!

Instead of Tuesdays with Morrie, it was Thursdays with Max. I realized during our weekly interactions that Max was not only skilled and intelligent, but he was funny and sweet. By the end of 2019, he became involved in other projects, plans and travel. Our paths rarely crossed again until last year when he popped into the station.

Fortunately, I had the opportunity to make a final connection when he returned as a surprise guest on my March 5 show. He recalled the heady days of WRWK and WRIR radio and optimistically looked forward to his future endeavors regarding the environment.

Max will be remembered by me, and by so many, as a creative, humble and generous soul. God Bless You, Max... and Thank You.

— Lisa Linnell  
Richmond Business Babes is on Thursdays at WRIR. It is originally broadcast on WRWK (sister station in Midlothian)

Photos courtesy of Rain Burroughs and Patricia Stansbury



# BE IN THE KNOW!

## UPDATES FOR THE PUBLIC

### VCU MASC 410 Media Entrepreneurship Class

WRIR was asked to be part of a test case for the MASC 410 Media Entrepreneurship Class at VCU. The goal was that a group from the class would, after consulting with us, discover an unmet media need that WRIR has related to the business of the organization and present a solution to.

The group discovered that we have a need for more volunteers and pitched a spread feature in their zine that would highlight WRIR.

It was great hearing not only their pitch but the other groups as well!

### Upcoming WRIR Tabling Events

- First Friday on May 1st @ Gallery 5
- Church Hill Spring Fest on May 9th @ Libbie Hill Park

### Kroger Community Rewards

Did you know there's an easy way to support WRIR, Richmond's all-volunteer radio station every time you shop for groceries—at no extra cost to you?

By enrolling in the Kroger Rewards Program and selecting The Virginia Center for Public Press, a portion of your regular Kroger purchases will go directly to supporting our station's music, news, and community programming.

How to sign up:

Go to **Community Rewards**

Log in to your Kroger account online.

Search for **The Virginia Center for Public Press (#NQ873)** and select it as your nonprofit.

Shop as usual—Kroger does the rest!



Stay Tuned In For More Information  
[www.wrir.org](http://www.wrir.org)

# SHOUT OUTS!

WRIR in San Juan



- Thank you to volunteer, David Noyes, for bringing construction knowledge to our WRIR as we wrapped things up at our old station.
- Thank you Charles Monnich, Mark Guncheon, Janet Lundy, David Noyes and grandson Henry, Erik Lineberry, Tanner Magnusdal, and other helpers who rolled up their sleeves to remove the antenna from the old building and putting up CD shelves. You get Gold Stars on your hard hats!
- Thank you Jesse Oremland, Mark Guncheon and Sean Lovelace for climbing the 12 flights of stairs at Faye Towers and troubleshooting our connection issues.
- WRIR is sending rays of sunshine to former volunteer and major player in the LGBTQ community, Judd Proctor. Listen to previous recorded shows of **The Rainbow Minute**.
- WRIR tabled at so many events in April: Fringe Fest, Richmond Ren Faire, Moon Market Mania, RVA Swap Meet, First Fridays at Gallery 5! Thank you to our community volunteers: Taylor Rumbley, Victoria Graves, Bride' Baker, Janet Lundy, Mike Spurlock, Chanelle Vigue, Jacob Rosen, Deb Butterworth, Rian Moses-Hedrick, Zoe Brezezinski, Charles Monnich, Liz Stout, Chuck Styles, Mikey, and Vicki Yeroian.

# CURRENT SHOWS



## CHECK IT OUT! NEW SHOWS!

- Welcome Boy Lichenstein to WRIR. His show, Twilight Dispatch, has joined Friday nights at 11PM! He'll be going biweekly with The Lunar Orbit, and it's awesome to welcome him aboard the station!
- On March 2nd at 1pm, WRIR launched a show called From the Vault, which is a selection of shows from anywhere within our 21 years of broadcasting. Go back in time with us!
- Mondays at 5PM, With Love, a spiritual companion to French Kiss, this show, hosted by DJ Breedlove, will spotlight various blends of electronic music and other genres, and feature guest spotlights from local Richmond DJs and artists!

## NEW SPOT OPENINGS

- A year after Mr. Jazz stepped down we retired his show Bebop & Beyond and now the Sunday Morning Jazz show is a 4 hour block which features a rotating cast of hosts including but not limited to Ken Holman, Dj Woody'N You, Michael Murphy, current jazz director me (sean the disco cat) AND POSSIBLY YOUUUUUUUUU (or you!)
- Do you have an idea for a radio show? Hurry and start volunteering at WRIR so you can pitch your ideas.

Stay up to date on current shows by viewing our schedule online.

[www.wrir.org/schedule](http://www.wrir.org/schedule)

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
12am	<u>House Music Sessions</u>	<u>Just Cause / Double Dream</u>	<u>Richmond Cryptoids</u>	<u>Dog Germs / PND (punk's not dead)</u>	<u>The Church of the Ecstatic</u>	<u>The Mix Room / OPEN</u>	<u>The Lunar Orbit / Twilight Dispatch</u>
1am	<u>Hip-Hop for the Rest of Us</u>	<u>Encore Music and Local Talk Shows</u> <i>encore airing</i>	<u>Metal Box</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u> <i>encore airing</i>	<u>A Drone's Life</u>	<u>Neighborhood Wide Web</u>	<u>Encore Music and Local Talk Shows</u> <i>encore airing</i>
2am							
3am	<u>Encore Music and Local Talk Shows</u> <i>encore airing</i>		<u>Encore Music and Local Talk Shows</u> <i>encore airing</i>	<u>Encore Music and Local Talk Shows</u> <i>encore airing</i>	<u>Encore Music and Local Talk Shows</u> <i>encore airing</i>	<u>Unicorn Power</u>	<u>Live from the Audience</u>
4am							
5am							
6am	<u>The Jagar Morning Show</u>	<u>Biscuits 'n' Groovy w/ Bee Gee</u>	<u>Where The Bears Sing</u>	<u>Wednesday Breakfast Blend</u>	<u>Breakfast Blend w/ Galaxy Girl &amp; Friends</u>	<u>Life is a Mixtape / MIDI Mornings</u>	<u>Encore Music and Local Talk Shows</u> <i>encore airing</i>
7am							<u>Clean House / Half Awake</u>
8am		<u>Democracy Now!</u>	<u>Democracy Now!</u>	<u>Democracy Now!</u>	<u>Democracy Now!</u>	<u>Democracy Now!</u>	
9am	<u>The Sunday Morning Jazz Show</u>	<u>Big Picture Science</u>	<u>With Good Reason</u>	<u>Black Agenda Report</u>	<u>Sprouts / Building Bridges</u>	<u>Sound Opinions</u>	<u>The British Breakfast</u>
10am		<u>Radio Ecoshock</u>	<u>The Children's Hour</u>	<u>Civic Cipher</u>	<u>Embrace Matters of Richmond</u>	<u>WRIR Presents This Way Out</u>	
11am		<u>Food Sleuth Growing Greener</u>	<u>Mr. Dad's Storytime</u>	<u>How 2 Human/Rising Up with Sonali</u>	<u>Richmond Business Babes</u>	<u>Bumps N Banter SIFTER for the Ear</u>	<u>Paul's Boutique / Alley Oop's Nolde Oldies</u>
12pm		<u>Scholars' Circle &amp; the Insighters</u>	<u>Confetti Park A Grain of Sand</u>	<u>What Wakes Me Up/Moccasin Tracks</u>	<u>Women &amp; Politics</u>	<u>Bossa Brazil</u>	
1pm	<u>Stop the Madness Latino</u>	<u>From the Vault</u>	<u>OPEN (1st &amp; 3rd) / Outer Focus (2nd &amp; 4th)</u>	<u>Daily Courtship / Left Field with Duncan</u>	<u>Alternative Milestones</u>		<u>Cause and Effect</u>
2pm							
3pm	<u>Ambiance Congo / The Other Black Music</u>	<u>Richmond Counterculture / Shockoe Sessions</u>	<u>OPEN (1st &amp; 3rd) / Single Use (2nd &amp; 4th)</u>	<u>Dream Girl Radio / EXT SRC</u>	<u>Higher Consciousness</u>	<u>POP Goes The World! / What the Fontaine?!</u>	<u>End Of The Century</u>
4pm							
5pm	<u>The Motherland Influence</u>	<u>French Kiss / With Love</u>	<u>Wide Ear Folk</u>	<u>The Lotus Land Show</u>	<u>The Young Professional / Mid-Atlantic Jams</u>	<u>Friday Clock Out / Commonwealth of Notions</u>	<u>River City Limits</u>
6pm							
7pm	<u>If Music Could Talk</u>	<u>The Edge of Americana / Time Again Radio</u>	<u>Handful Of Brains</u>	<u>Midtown Swing</u>	<u>Quantum Live Radio / Whatever I Want</u>	<u>Deutscher Jam</u>	<u>Panoramic / Club Unity</u>
8pm							
9pm	<u>House of SWE (1st &amp; 3rd) / Otherworlds (2nd &amp; 4th)</u>	<u>The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit / Soul II Soul</u>	<u>Kaleidoscope Soul / Interstellar Elevator</u>	<u>Mercury Falls</u>	<u>Sunrise Ocean Bender (1st, 3rd) / Altered Circuitry: ReWired (2nd, 4th) / Various (5th)</u>	<u>Guitar Inferno</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>
10pm							
11pm	<u>Just Cause / Double Dream</u>	<u>Richmond Cryptoids</u>	<u>Dog Germs / PND (punk's not dead)</u>	<u>The Church of the Ecstatic</u>	<u>The Mix Room / OPEN</u>	<u>The Lunar Orbit / Twilight Dispatch</u>	<u>House Music Sessions</u>

# SCAM



# ALERT

1

## PRETENDERS ON THE LOOSE



People are pretending to be WRIR staff.

2

## THE SCAM OFFER



They offer a “**PREMIUM PROMOTIONAL MEDIA PACKAGE**” with a “**PARTICIPATION FEE**”.

3

## THE TRUTH

**WRIR DOES NOT ASK FOR PAYMENT** to be interviewed on any of our shows.



4

## VERIFY OFFICIAL EMAILS

Official emails from WRIR will include **@wrir.org** in the email address.

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## UNSURE?

Reach out to **info@wrir.org** for confirmation.

1979-2026

# REMEMBERING MELISSA VAUGHN

WRIR President 2020-2025

Written by:  
Charles McGuigan



On January 29, the bells of Richmond's psyche tolled loud and long for the passing of one of her most beloved daughters, Melissa Vaughn. After a valiant battle with cancer, she was plucked from life after just 46 years, but each day she lived, from birth onward, was full to the brim.

Melissa was an inexplicable force of nature, the likes of which the world has seldom seen. She stood firm against injustice of every kind and defended the marginalized, could not abide a punk-ass bully. These traits were with her from a very early age. As she recalled, not long ago, "I went for the bully. That was my thing. I had a really strong sense of justice. So I would get in trouble for that, but my parents didn't get me in trouble for that. They were proud of me for sticking up for the little guy. I even stood up against teachers and I got punished for standing up, but I didn't give a rat's patoot."

At a very early age, Melissa began a life long infatuation with politics. When she was just eleven years old she discovered channel 57 which airs live Richmond City Council meetings. These broadcasts would become the young Melissa's "soap operas," which she would follow from week to week.

After graduating in 1997 from Manchester High School in Chesterfield County, Melissa attended Longwood College in Farmville where she studied history and political science, but left after her freshman year and returned to the Richmond area.

It was just a year later that Melissa would meet her lifelong soulmate. "I met Melissa and instantly fell in love with her," said Jerry Vaughn. Six months later he proposed, and the pair were married on June 26, 1999. It was during one of Melissa's first full-time jobs where she served as office manager with a temp agency that some of her natural gifts began to emerge. She had the uncanny ability of directing people without imposing an air of superiority, and could steer them in ways that benefited themselves and others.

Some years ago, Melissa began volunteering with WRIR where she developed a program called RVA Dirt, which was a sort of watchdog of local politicians, some of whom were not pleased with what she had to say. And for six years she produced Municipal Mania which featured politicians, from local school board members all the way up to congressional representatives. She was a civic engagement activist and a fierce defender of the First Amendment.

Melissa was the volunteer of volunteers at an all-volunteer radio station, and she had the stamina of a lumberjill. She remained volunteer coordinator for five years, implementing many changes. At that time, as the sort of de facto station manager, she was working forty hours a week for free.

As volunteer coordinator, Melissa served on the board of the Virginia Center for Public Press (VCP) and began scrutinizing every aspect of the station, and came to several conclusions. One of those conclusions was that WRIR needed a permanent home that it owned. That new home would also have to be ADA compliant, and its studios would need to be properly outfitted. In January of 2020 she became president of the VCP, and hit the ground running. Two months later COVID-19 struck and changed the world as we all knew it. Melissa navigated the pandemic with unparalleled expertise. Following strict protocols that Melissa created there was not one outbreak of the virus at the station.

1979-2026

# REMEMBERING MELISSA VAUGHN

WRIR President 2020-2025



Hours after 2020 came to a close, on the very first morning of that new year, as Melissa stood in her shower, pelted by a warm rain, she performed a breast self-exam. Her fingers found a lump in the soft tissue of her right breast.

A couple weeks later, her gynecologist ordered a mammogram and an ultrasound, which was followed up with a biopsy. On February 11 Melissa learned that she had an aggressive form of breast cancer.

She had a bilateral mastectomy, along with rigorous chemo and radiation therapy, but through it all Melissa worked tirelessly for WRIR.

In early 2022, Melissa and her past vice president found a building in Shockoe Bottom that would be ideal for a permanent home for WRIR. Located at 1806 East Main Street, the three-story building was a shell, but just recently after a massive renovation and re-outfitting it is WRIR's new and permanent home, a lasting tribute to Melissa Vaughn.

After living most of her life in Richmond, Melissa was ready to get out of the city and put down roots in the country. Her hopes and plans for the next chapter of her life were to find the serenity she had always sought on a farm, surrounded by her beloved animals—Shetland ponies, miniature Highland cows, rescue dogs, and the like. On the farm Melissa also wanted to grow vegetables and make baked goods, maybe even sell them on the side of the road. She loved to bake, and in true Melissa style, she made cakes that were magical combinations of diverse flavors.

Melissa is survived by Jerry Vaughn III, her spouse; George Weistroffer, her partner; Kathleen and Michael Martin, her parents; Nancy Larder, her grandmother; Linda Williams, Betsy Huggins, and Chris Wellesley, her aunts; Emmett, Clover, Zelda, Tetra, and Orson, her dogs; and Momo, Gandalf, Mona (Saperstein), Elwood, and Sadie, her cats.

In lieu of flowers, please make donations to WRIR. Melissa gave so much of herself to the station and to our community, this is what she would have wanted. Flowers will wilt and die, but her legacy will live on through the station. To donate to Your Community Radio Station, please visit <https://www.wrircampaign.org/>



## Make sure to check out

**Charles McGuigan**

Here are links to the audio story Charles produced on Melissa, as well as the cover article they wrote on Melissa back in 2024, which won a feature writing award from the Virginia Press Association.

<https://exchange.prx.org/pieces/571938-melissa-vaughn-at-the-helm-at-wrir-part-1>

<https://exchange.prx.org/pieces/582753-melissa-vaughn-at-the-helm-of-wrir-part-2-concl>

<https://northofthejames.com/melissa-vaughn>

# THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS



Thank you for supporting community radio and local initiatives!

## SANCTUARY FAMILY MEDICINE

Support for WRIR comes from Sanctuary Family Medicine. Sanctuary Family Medicine will be opening in South Richmond, Virginia in Summer 2026. This Direct Primary Care practice will provide patient-centered, whole-person care with a focus on gender-affirming care and health justice.

Sanctuary Family Medicine es una clínica de atención primaria que abrirá sus puertas en Richmond VA en el verano del 2026. Esta clínica de modelo de membresía proveerá cuidado para todos pacientes con énfasis en justicia social y atención de afirmación de género.

[Learn More](#)

## UNDOING RUIN CONSERVATION LANDSCAPING

Support for WRIR is brought to you by Undoing Ruin - Conservation Landscaping.

WRIR and Undoing Ruin uplift the Richmond Eco-system, be it supporting diverse voices or stewarding resilient land use choices.

If you are interested in gardening as non-violent direct action visit Undoing Ruin, to read more about their available services and ecological philosophy.

[Learn More](#)

## NORTH OF THE JAMES

Support for WRIR 97.3FM comes from North of the James. They've been publishing real stories about real people for thirty years. From its inception, North of the James has been committed to authentic storytelling, forgoing canned content in favor of narratives that resonate with its readers. This dedication to quality journalism has earned the magazine numerous accolades from the Virginia Press Association for excellence in writing, photography, and design. The latest issue is available online at [northofthejames.com](http://northofthejames.com).

[Learn More](#)

## BECOME AN UNDERWRITER

Are you looking for a unique way to connect with a loyal, diverse, and hyper-local audience? Become an underwriter for WRIR 97.3FM! Underwriting is a non-commercial way to support Richmond's nonprofit community radio station while spreading the word about your business, organization, or events. Your customized on-air announcements will reach our dedicated listeners on broadcast radio, streaming, and archived programs—ensuring your message resonates far beyond a single moment. Plus, your contribution directly supports WRIR's mission to build an inclusive, community-driven radio station. Join us in amplifying Richmond's voice and become an underwriter today! [Learn More](#)

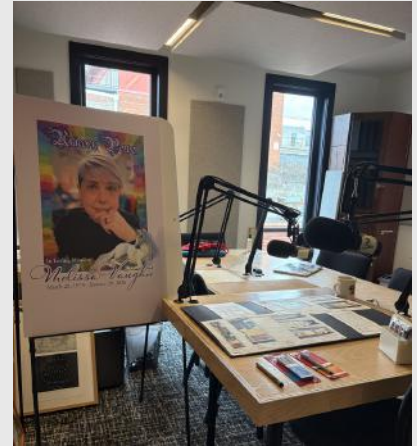
# WRIR Gallery

Our amazing WRIR volunteers are the heartbeat of Richmond's community radio! From hosting shows to running events, their passion and dedication keep the station alive and thriving. Huge thanks to everyone who helps us amplify RVA's voice! 📻❤️

Connect with us on our social media channels: [Instagram](#) / [Facebook](#)  
[@wrir97.3fm](#)

WRIR is 100% volunteer powered.  
Become a VOLUNTEER!  
We are currently looking for people who like the technical side of radio for our Operations Committee and people who enjoy connecting with others for our Volunteer and Events Committees. We also are looking for more on-air DJs and Talk Hosts.

[Learn More](#)



Next edition of "The Local Signal"  
coming July 2026

**DONATE** 

[www.wrircampaign.org](http://www.wrircampaign.org)

