The Story of WTIP

20th Anniversary Edition

2018
ARE YOU LISTENING?

WTIP
90.7 FM
North Shore Radio
Deb might be the first person to admit that WTIP has seen a lot of changes over the years. She’s been here for most of them, and for 17 years, has led the station through natural disasters, power outages, random expansions of dead air, the addition of news reporters, program directors, music directors, a high-profile change of venue, an annual music festival, and a changing roster of staff, community partners, business underwriters and board members. Under her leadership WTIP has evolved our programming from one hour a day to radio independence. The station now originates all programming locally with the help of 50 volunteers, and listeners tune in from all over the world through WTIP’s stream at www.wtip.org. With Deb as executive director, WTIP has become the trusted source for news, information and entertainment for the North Shore, with a staff of ten, two additional broadcasting transmitters, its own building and over 1,200 members.

In 2006, when the Corporation for Public Broadcasting excluded WTIP from federal grant funding, Deb persuaded them to change their guidelines so WTIP could qualify. In 2009, when she was elected board chair of the National Federation of Community Broadcasters, she took Cook County Community radio to the national stage. Working closely with the NFCB and the Ampers network, Deb’s representation and dedication kept WTIP plugged-in to the national network of radio stations. Said Joel Glaser, chief executive officer of Ampers, in his retirement message to Deb, “What you have done with WTIP is absolutely incredible. You harnessed the enthusiasm of the community and created a powerhouse community radio station that is pointed to as an amazing example of community radio not only statewide but nationwide.”

So, thank you Deb. For your generous and infectious spirit. And for every time you charged into a studio to ask for “just one more” member to renew. For tending to the flower boxes and laboring over the future of community radio. Perhaps that’s the thing we’ll miss the most about you. The way you approach leadership like you approach family; with motherly attentiveness, enthusiasm, humor and affection. You have carefully tended WTIP’s growth from the ground up; nurturing this tiny radio station like a handful of seeds, and watching it sprout into the thriving community asset that it is today.

Here’s to the Radio Diva! We will miss you.
Welcome!
This is a wonderful time at WTIP as we celebrate twenty years of broadcasting community radio in Cook County. It is a privilege to bring our community’s stories, issues, concerns, events and entertainment to you. We can’t thank our listener members enough for the support you have given us in 2017 and over the past twenty years.

2018 is a year of change, as Deb Benedict, the Radio Diva, is retiring after being executive director for the past seventeen years. She has worked tirelessly to bring high-quality programs to our airwaves, formed an award winning news department and was instrumental in making WTIP the community asset that it is today. Matthew Brown is phasing into the position of director over this spring and summer, and is proud to be leading a radio station that is a vibrant part of this wonderful community.

We are pleased with the transition process and believe responsive leadership will ensure the continuity of great and inclusive programming and services to our listeners.

Whether you listen over the air, or stream us on-line, WTIP is so proud to serve our county, Lake Superior and our region.

A 501(c)(3) public radio station, WTIP Community Radio welcomes charitable contributions that support its mission and vision. Gifts can be annual sponsorships, memorials, in-kind donations, gifts of stock and planned giving. For more information please contact Staci Drouillard, 218-387-1070 or email staci@wtip.org.
Radio enthusiasts Bill & Joan Burkhardt, Cheryl Champion, Todd Nelson, Peter and Mary Igoe, Roger Bromander, Bud Severeid, Leslie Pederson, Ann Cervenka, Scott Beatty, Micky Schell, Susan Maijala, Vicki Biggs-Anderson, Nathan Cristenson, Elmer Harvey, Bill Hansen, Scott & Gena Sales, Doug Seim, Jeff Nemitz and Mike Raymond meet to brainstorm ways to bring radio to Cook County. The first membership mailing yielded over 200 members and $10,000.00 in contributions.

Volunteer engineers Jeff Nemitz and Kirk Kersten of KUMD help decide what equipment to purchase and how to best install it, while Bill Burkhardt, Mike Raymond and others attend Ampers meetings and visit other stations, to learn how to create live radio.

WTIP goes live, broadcasting for one hour each weekday at 200 watts. Later that year, the WTIP transmitter goes full power at 25,000 watts effective radiated power. Early volunteers include Bob Carter, Al Hedstrom, Timothy Young, Randy Eastlund, Paula Sundet Wolf, Mike Carlson and Nancy Persons. Paul Damberg of KUMD offers his expertise & support throughout the early years.
Bill Burkhardt & Scott Sales host the very first A.M. Community Calendar. Cathy Quinn, Howard Mackenzie, CJ Heithoff, and Debbie Benedict all get involved in early broadcasting. Dick Powell, Yafa Napadensky, Brian Sherburne, Bill Burkhardt, Buck Benson, Gena Sales and others comprise the first board of directors.

Norman Moe and Dick Dorr team up for the first, live coverage of CCHS Vikings sports.

Tuesday Classics and Dr. Big Ears’ Medicine Show debut.

Ragamuffin Radio, the PM Calendar, evening music shows and Small Change are added to the program roster.

Doug Seim and Dennis Peterson (with cameos by Scott Sales) bring us the weekly Sports Wrapala.

Mike Raymond’s Wednesday Night Jazz is added to the program schedule.

After the 1999 Blowdown, WTIP raises funds to install a translator on the Gunflint Trail. Ann Possis reads the weather on the air for the very first time.

The Roadhouse with Walt Rasmussen, Bob Carter and Buck Benson debuts. “Community radio is so functional in a county as geographically large as ours,” said Benson, “it holds us together.”
Ladies and gentlemen, introducing Rainbow Trout.

Sounds of the Spirit with BJ Muus.

Remember When, with hosts Bruce MacDonald and Steve Forsberg airs on Friday evenings. That summer, Swing Session with Bill Burkhardt makes its debut.

Cameron Norman hosts Women in Music & Billie Foster launches First Nation’s Time.

The spring membership drive sets a goal of $8,500. “Let’s get radioactive,” says Deb Benedict.

At The Tip of the Arrowhead
(On Top of Old Smokey)
At the tip of the Arrowhead
Local radio is sweet
We love WTIP
Just ask anyone you meet

If you value our programs
Small Change, music, pop quiz
Call now with your membership
Support North Shore show biz

It’s so easy to join us
We’re just a phone call away
Click on line or stop by please
A new pledge makes our day

When you turn on the radio
Tune in 90.7
What a treat for your eardrums
You’ll think you went to heaven

Now this song’s almost over
And we won’t take a bow
As long as you do your part and
Become a member right now
THE STORY OF WTIP

FEB. 28, 2004
Carl Solander brings Classic Country to Sunday evenings.

MOLLY HOFFMAN

SPRING 2004
Molly Hoffman’s Bird Songs of the Northern Woods Vol. 1 (of three) is released.

2004
Summer intern Ada Igoe leads the Youth Radio Project. WTIP broadcasts live from the harbor at the first Dragon Boat Festival.

FALL 2004
A WTIP endowment fund is established at the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation.

Carl Solander

Molly Hoffman signs “Bird Songs” CD’s on the Harbor.

Ada Igoe

Dragon boats in competition.

Mark Abrahamson and Dragon
2005
The AM Community Calendar broadcasts live from Grand Portage Elementary.

Pumpkin carving contest attracts artists of all ages during the fall membership drive.

Father and daughter duo Doug & Dehlia Seim bring Soul Survivor to Sunday morning.

2006
Sidetracks with Cathy Quinn adds eclectic music programming to each weekday. Northern Gardening with Paula Sundet airs Friday mornings, inviting listeners to call in.

Northern Gardening

WTIP receives funding through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting Radio Community Service program. After two years of groundbreaking work by Station Manager Deb Benedict and volunteer Bill Burkhardt, and with help from the National Federation of Community Broadcasters, the coalition of local broadcasters successfully lobbies the CPB to expand grant availability to 11 U.S. community stations.

Music Director’s Report from Will Moore
2017 strengthened the ties WTIP had to local and regional musicians more than ever before. With 55 unique interviews and performances on Scenic Route in addition to all the guest performances set up by Ann Possis and Jeff Nemitz on Roadhouse, it’s amazing how a small radio station is able to reach and become endeared by great artists as well as dedicated listeners. We were treated to memorable live on-air performances by notable artists like Charlie Parr, Jeremy Messersmith, Dom Flemons, and The Sea The Sea, as well as a stellar 10th Radio Waves festival featuring an outer-limits homecoming performance from Step Rockets! We extended live music programming to Sidetracks, Saturday music blocks, and other programs, ensuring that our airwaves are packed full of exclusive shows unique to our station. Even after 4 years working at WTIP, I’m constantly surprised and impressed with the level of knowledge and depth our hosts have in their musical tastes and appreciation of each other’s shows. Thanks so much to all local musicians for continuing to support this station, and thanks the volunteers for staying interested in new music and broadening your musical horizons!
THE STORY OF WTIP

2006

www.wtip.org adds live streaming capability.

The Luge!

2007

It’s Polka Time with Rainbow Trout!

Melanie Steele, Roger Linehan and Jana Berka all join the WTIP team. That same year, Bob Carter wins Independent Public Radio Broadcaster of the Year award.

WTIP adds 200 online streaming ports during coverage of the Ham Lake Fire.

AUG. 2007

The station receives the DNR Fire Media Award. “The voice of Program Director Kristy Johnson was ‘the voice I listened to on the way out of the evacuation,’ said a woman displaced by the fire.”

NOV. 2007

WTIP purchases the former Wilderness Waters building. “I think this building will help secure WTIP’s permanence in the community,” said Dehlia Seim, president of the board of directors.

Ham Lake Fire (photo by Angie Cook)
Matthew Brown joins the WTIP staff to host Sidetracks. Jay Andersen adds years of journalism experience to the news department and co-hosts Daybreak with Roger Linehan.

Frank Hansen shares his first segment of West End News.

**Metal Maniacs** becomes Rock Revived, with host Brandon Cole.

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**2008**

**News Director’s Report from Joe Friedrichs**

It was an exciting year in 2017 for the WTIP News Department! The most recent addition to the news team is Sterling Anderson, who started as a host on the Daybreak program in the summer of 2017. In addition, Sterling is producing features, posting content to the WTIP website and covering the local sports scene. A favorite for many listeners is Sterling’s weekly updates from the sports desk, which can be heard every Monday on the North Shore Morning program.

Among the programs and features produced by the WTIP News Department is Rhonda Silence’s ongoing partnership with the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa reporting on their CACHE Project, which stands for “Community Agriculture through Culture, Health and Education.” Rhonda will continue to report on this project in 2018 for WTIP.

In the summer of 2017, longtime WTIP newsman Jay Andersen passed the title of news director to Joe Friedrichs. Jay remains on staff, serving as a senior editor and advisor, while also continuing to host Daybreak five days per week.

Another noteworthy feature WTIP produced in 2017 was the Ham Lake Fire one-hour original production that aired in May. The feature was a detailed look back on the events that led up to, and unfolded as the Ham Lake Fire roared up the Gunflint Trail in 2007. The feature was among WTIP’s most listened to segments in 2017. And while officially launched in March 2018, the new WTIP Boundary Waters Podcast was created in the summer and fall of 2017. The podcast, in addition to several planned projects covering housing, fishing, climate change and renewable energy on the North Shore and throughout Cook County mean 2018 is going to be a great year for the WTIP News Department!
# The Story of WTIP

## 2008

Radio Waves Music Festival launches during the station’s 10th year. “There’s something for everyone,” said Music Director Cathy Quinn. *The North Shore Swing Band* kicks off the festival.

![Radio Waves fan](image1)

## 2009

WTIP breaks away from KUMD, broadcasting independently for the first time.

A *Home of Our Own* capital campaign raises $329,000 toward the $550,000 goal.

![Bump Blomberg & Jim Elverhoy](image2)

## June 2009

Deb Benedict is selected as Ampers Broadcaster of the Year.

## Oct. 9, 2009

Residents of Grand Portage can now listen at 90.1 FM, when a new transmitter goes live. “It’s been a long time coming and I’m very happy that we’ve finally been able to put this together to serve the Grand Portage village,” said engineer Jeff Nemitz.

![Radio Waves kids](image3)
2009
Deb Benedict is elected president of the National Federation of Community Broadcasters board, bringing her community-driven vision and leadership skills to the national organization.

The ground is officially overturned in the WTIP Community Garden.

2010
Fingerstyle Master’s Weekend at Bluefin Bay becomes an annual workshop.

News Director Barbara Jean Meyers receives AP awards for two stories: Battling Extinction with Furry Critters and Chanel No. 5, and The Blowdown: A 10 Year Remembrance.

Boomer Jam with Tyler Howell airs weekly.

2010 - 2011
Nine students form the first Youth Radio Project. “These students are pursuing topics that are of interest to them and they’re learning valuable skills,” said project coordinator Michael McHugh.

Youth Radio Project

Garden in Bloom

Tyler Howell

Jay Andersen and Debbie Benedict

Fingerstyle Master Gordon Thorne

Barbara Jean Meyers wins AP Award
A Birthday Message from Board President Dave Tersteeg

WTIP has gone platinum, and this is our year to celebrate, honor and reflect. Birthday parties are fun. After the presents are opened, marking ones age always brings a bit of introspection on the passing of time. Especially considering such a nice, round number of 20. Where did we come from? Where are we going? Twenty years makes me reflect on the How and Why, and What does the future hold?

How we made it this far includes: visionary founders, excellent leadership, loyal listener members, dedicated volunteers, empowered staff, technological prowess, and sustained financial support. Major attributes indeed, particularly considering our remote location and sparse population. Perhaps local passion sums up the How. Why community radio is thriving is harder to define, yet feels so natural. Great radio is an experience. Turning on WTIP feels like you are inviting friends into your life. Friends who are always up for entertaining, engaging and informing you, no matter the weather or the hour. You trust WTIP to be your friend on the
airwaves, and we honor this commitment daily. That’s a pretty deep Why. Now that we’re 20, what about tomorrow? Leadership changes are in motion, and the future looks bright. This past year the board was active in succession planning for that bittersweet day when our Radio Diva will no longer be at the helm (sigh). Three cheers for Deb, and congratulations on your retirement! The opportunity to promote from within and empower Matthew Brown to lead our organization promises smooth sailing ahead. We are also very fortunate to welcome Staci Drouillard and CJ Heithoff to our incredibly talented team of WTIP staff. Things are clicking in-house. As with any living organization, we’ve had to say aloha to co-workers and friends whose shows have ended—all the best to new chapters in their lives. We welcome new volunteers stepping up to the mic and behind the scenes. Fun-drives will always be Fun. Membership is strong. Our roots have grown deep.

As we celebrate the many years of talking and listening together, I’d like to thank you for your trust and friendship. It is an honor to serve you, and a privilege to work with such a talented group of individuals. WTIP is the local soundtrack of our lives. North Shore Community Radio will always be a friend indeed and a friend in need. Happy Birthday to all of us!

Will Moore
Ann Possis, Marcela & Nico Tersteeg Perez-Abreu

WTIP celebrates 15 years!

Thanks to generous support, WTIP’s Home of Our Own campaign reaches its goal.

Matthew Brown moves into the role of program director and Will Moore joins as music director.

Record audiences attend Radio Waves. “Seeing all the adults and children (and pets too) enjoying the music and the company of others was pretty wonderful,” said Development Director Jana Berka.

It’s “radio on a stick!” WTIP broadcasts live from the MN State Fair.

Bob Carter with Al Franken at the MN State Fair
The story of WTIP would not exist without the good work of our volunteers, many who have been volunteering their talents from the very beginning. As a community-powered, community-driven station, WTIP continues to welcome new volunteers, both on the air and behind the scenes.

The 2017 Volunteers (*indicates a 20 year commitment to WTIP)

- Mark Abrahamson
- Chel Anderson
- Eric Anderson
- Fred Anderson
- Paulette Anholm
- Andrew Beavers
- Ann Belleman
- Buck Benson*
- Tracy Benson
- Vicki Biggs-Anderson*
- Diane Booth
- Tom Bradovich
- Bill and Joan Burkhardt*
- Pat Campanaro
- Julie Carlson
- Mike Carlson*
- Bob Carter*
- Tom Christiansen
- Nancy Daley
- Tory Danielson
- Dick Dorr*
- Pam Dorris
- Sally Dunn
- Randy Eastlund*
- Miles and Rain Elfvin
- Pat Eliasen
- Joan Farnam
- Dean Farnum
- Steve Forsberg
- Evan Gates
- Diane Greeley
- Don Hammer
- Bill Hansen*
- Barb Heideman
- Molly Hoffman
- Tyler Howell
- Marcia Hyatt
- Mary & Peter Igoe*
- Holly Johnson
- Kent Jones
- Dennis Kaleta (Gus)
- Pete Kavanaugh
- Dale and Anna Klobuchar
- Jeannie Kloster
- Karen Kobey
- Tina Krauz
- Mike Kwaz
- Cheryl Larsen

North Shore News Hour with Joe Friedrichs makes its debut.

The Clean & Sustainable Waters Project, Lake Superior Project and A Year in the Wilderness strengthen WTIP’s mission to foster environmental awareness and stewardship through our programming.

www.wtip.org introduces a public service announcement link, making it easier than ever for our community to share public service and event announcements.

Journalist and WTIP fan Rhonda Silence joins the news team.
2017

CJ Heithoff, a volunteer since 1998, joins the staff as producer of the AM Community Calendar.

Hyla Napadensky

2018

The WTIP News Department wins the prestigious Edward R. Murrow Award for the Joe Friedrichs produced, “Ham Lake Fire” documentary.

Fred Smith grilling brats.

2018

WTIP Community Radio Celebrates 20 years on the air!

Kent Jones & Nick Vavrichek

Susie Maijala*
YOU ARE THE STORY OF WTIP

Sue Maijala & Beth Olson in the Parade

Jessa Frost plays live in the Studio

Donna Lunke & friend visit during a membership drive

Jeff Nemitz at Mt. Maud Transmitter

Tom Christiansen & Marcia Hyatt, long time volunteers & WTIP producers.

Veronica Weadock gets the scoop

AM Calendar Host Meeting

Cathy Quinn

Parade marchers ask, “are you listening?”

Timothy Young

Staci, Deb and Matthew live from the Hjordis
Roger Linehan

Sherrie and Donuts

Anna & Dale Klobuchar

Debbie with cake

Julie Carlson & BJ Meyers

Open House
April 29, 2011
Debbie with cake

Doug Seim

NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY RADIO
90.7 FM North Shore
90.1 FM Grand Portage
89.1 FM Gunflint Trail

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Thank you for your support!

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Grand Marais, Minnesota
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~ Since 1998 ~