

# Why public radio is a big part of my day

A very good thing happened a couple of years ago. WRNI, the local National Public Radio station, got a new slot on the FM dial, which expanded its signal to all of South County. Prior to that, NPR fans had to choose between a faint, tinny signal on 1290 AM—if you could get it, or listen to WGBH in Boston.

Boston had a good signal, but the daytime programming was limited to classical music. Evenings were strictly jazz. If you wanted to hear some news, you had to wait for those precious hours between 3 and 7 p.m. In those days, before you could listen to radio on the computer, I used to put my dog in the car and go for a ride so we could listen to the afternoon news

program "All Things Considered." I got a mid-day news fix, the dog got to hang his head out the window and slobber down the glass – it was a win-win adventure.

Enter 102.7, with its steady stream of topical news programs. The day begins with "Morning Edition," gives listeners a taste of what's going on in the world with BBC World News, and then offers a number of shows on up-to-the-minute subjects discussed by an array of people at the top of their respective fields.

For a news junkie, this is pure nirvana.

My favorite program begins at 10 a.m. "On Point" with Tom Ashbrook devotes an entire hour to a single subject. In this world



**Flotsam and Jetsam**

By Donna Drago

of sound bytes and short attention spans, the format is a welcome relief – a chance to hear from people who know what they are talking about, debating an issue intelligently. Callers who have something to say on the topic are welcome, too. What I like most about this, and other NPR news programs, is that the host, the experts and the callers all manage to discuss what are often emotional, politically charged topics, without shouting or name calling. There is no insulting of the person with the opposite opinion. No one cuts off the other speaker or talks louder to give his opinion. I bring this up because many news programs today – on both radio and TV – feel the way to get ratings is to be more like the Jerry Springer show. That's not news – it's a headache!

When "On Point" is over, I feel like I am very much informed

about the day's topics and I often find myself, later in the week, telling somebody about what I learned on that program.

I also enjoy Michel Martin's program "Tell Me More," which delves deep into issues of race and diversity in this melting pot of a world we live in. Because I am a white, middle-class woman, I do not always think about topics that affect people of other cultures. "Tell Me More" informs me about issues I may not have known about, or clues me in that maybe I don't know as much as I think I do about certain issues. It's often an eye-opener, and I appreciate that.

On Saturday mornings, "Car Talk" is just a hoot! Tom and Ray Magliozzi, MIT grads turned car aficionados, take calls from listeners who are having trouble with their vehicles and try to solve the problems over the phone. The callers have to resort to imitating the various problem noises that emanate from the engines and the brothers are just hysterical. I couldn't care less about cars, but this show is funny and I look forward to it each week.

Now the thing about public radio is this: It is listener supported. That means in order to continue broadcasting quality programs, the

station depends on the donations of listeners, like me, who must reach into our pockets and hand over some money. I do this at least twice a year because public radio provides me with so much quality information that I would feel guilty not doing it. Now, if you are an NPR fan, you know that there are "pledge weeks" a few times a year. This is when the quality programming is interrupted and local station employees get on the radio and tell you, and tell you again, how important it is that you give money to them.

I hate pledge weeks! They are annoying and they prevent me from enjoying my favorite programs. The only solution to getting rid of pledge weeks is to send them money before they have to ask for it.

WRNI's winter fundraiser runs from today through Nov. 20. There are many ways to give – including volunteering at the call center or stuffing envelopes. I will be answering the phones on Tuesday. Brie Berry, who grew up in Jamestown, is WRNI's membership director. Email her at [bberry@wrni.org](mailto:bberry@wrni.org) to find out how you can help support this wonderful station, or just visit the website to make a pledge.



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## Islander named to college sailing All-Academic team

David Marshall of Jamestown has been named to the 2009 Intercollegiate Sailing Association's 2009 All Academic Sailing Team. Marshall has been honored as a first team selection for the Connecticut College sailing program.

Student-athletes must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.5, be a key starter or reserve member of their school's sailing team, and have reached junior standing at their institution of learning in order to be considered eligible for this distinction.

Marshall earned high marks for his academic and athletic excellence at Connecticut College. This past year, Marshall was named a Winthrop Scholar, the College's highest academic honor awarded

to members of the senior class who demonstrate exceptional scholarship, personal fitness and promise.

During commencement weekend, Marshall was recognized by the athletic department as the co-recipient of the prestigious Brown/Brooks award. Established by the class of 1984, the award is given to the outstanding male and female student-athletes who best represent the graduating class in scholarship, leadership and sportsmanship.

On the water, Marshall helped

lead the Camels to a pair of New England Sloop Championships. Marshall contributed to the Camels' fifth place finish in the 2007 Sloop National Championship. In the spring of 2008, Marshall returned to Rhode Island to play an integral role in the Camels' fifth place showing at the ICSA National Dinghy Championship in Newport.

He received his degree in biology and anthropology this past May.



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