The Guide
Your Connection to Spokane Public Radio
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My Romp Through Public Radio, Continued
by Verne Windham, Music Director

I came to Spokane in 1971 to play in the Spokane Symphony. Returned, actually, having played in it as a senior in high school. As sweet as the town (and my new job) was, there was a lot missing. Cuisine ranged from burgers to steak. Movies from the Fox to the drive-in. Nat Park had closed down and Silverwood was far in the future. And radio hadn’t gotten much farther than my childhood listening to KNEW.

It took a while, but finally, in January of 1980, an NPR station, KPXB burst on the scene. Or at least modestly slid into our consciousness. It had a lot of music, especially classical, folk and jazz. Also a few public affairs programs, and one evening news program, All Things Considered. Then strange things on the weekend, such as some guy doing commercials about cat boutiques and shops for fear-mongers.

But they seemed open to ideas, so I walked in with one. Something about scat-singing contemporary music to make it more palatable. They didn’t go for that idea, but they heard something in me, tried me out in a couple of pledge drives, and offered me a part time job playing classical music on the air. They even trained me with lessons which I remember to this day.

Around 1988, just I was leaving the Spokane Symphony, the radio station invited me in to a full-time job playing music on the air and working as the music librarian. I fell into this great world of warm, open and committed people making radio. Suddenly whole vistas opened up: interviews, live radio performances, concerts recorded and re-purposed for radio. A performance studio was built into that funky Hoban Building second floor space. Live music radio could happen in Spokane. A permanent piano was needed, a terrific one was found, and funded by an extraordinary one-day piano pledge drive.

From the beginning the station sought ways to go into the community. The ideas which came along were the result of the collective spirit in the air in that old building. (Even included collective soup-making.) As they extended out they included Kids’ Concerts and public concerts at the newly re-furbished State Theatre, which became the Met and later became the Bing. They included wonderful community relationship events such as bike rides and beer festivals. At one point the station even had an ad hoc Blues Band.

-Verne Windham, Music Director
**Coming Up with Spokane Public Radio**

**September KPBX Kids’ Concert**
September 17 at River Park Square 1 p.m. - 2 p.m.
Live Kids’ Concerts return this September for a special performance at River Park Square. Join in-person in the mall at 808 W. Main Ave. in Spokane to dance, hear great music, and celebrate at this all-ages concert.

**SPR Media Partnerships**

Art on the Green
August 5, 6, & 7 at North Idaho College
Art on the Green will bring together artists and performers for three days of free entertainment, handcrafted works of art for purchase, a beer garden, food court, an outdoor juried art show, and a children’s art garden. The 45th year of this celebration will take place on the grounds of North Idaho College, 1000 W. Garden Ave, Coeur d’Alene, ID.

**Blue Waters Bluegrass Festival**
August 12, 13, & 14 at Medical Lake Waterfront Park
With its pristine location, warm Eastern Washington summer weather, and a lineup of world-class and regional bands, the Blue Waters Bluegrass Festival is a wonderful Northwest summertime bluegrass experience. Hear John Reischman & the Jaybirds, Lonesome Ace Stringband, Eli West, and more at the 20th anniversary of the festival.

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**Check Out Our Community Calendar for Local Event Information at SpokanePublicRadio.org**

**PMJA Reporting Awards**

Spokane Public Radio won two awards in the recent Public Media Journalists Association contest for local public radio news departments.

*On Asian America*, an hour-long program that explored violence against Asian-American people in Washington, placed second in the long documentary category for small news departments, It was produced by Rebecca White, Doug Nadvornick and Cary Boyce and was one of three programs in a series produced in partnership with KUOW, Northwest Public Broadcasting and Humanities Washington.

The second entry looked at 2021 changes in minor league baseball, including for the Spokane Indians baseball club. It also featured part of an interview with Jim McCurdy, the commissioner of the Pioneer League, a minor league comprised of teams from the Inland West. Doug Nadvornick’s feature took second place in the sports feature category for small news departments.

It was the fifth consecutive year SPR has won at least one national PMJA award.