GM NOTES
Since 2011, I’ve had the opportunity to be the General Manager of WUGA. The radio station strives to connect Athens and Northeast Georgia with the people, stories and news that matters. In this edition of the newsletter, you’ll get to know the team of dedicated staff who have kept our broadcast going through a pandemic, learn about our supportive Community Advisory Council, and meet the production staff of “Athens News Matters.”

Now more than ever, it’s critical that we keep talking with each other, and that we remember the shared concerns that bind us together as Athenians and Northeast Georgians. It is our community that gives us strength, and I am excited that WUGA is such a vibrant part of this community. It’s my hope that this newsletter will bring some of that energy and optimism to our listeners and keep you in touch with the WUGA family. Please enjoy reading, and, as always, thank you for your support.

–Jimmy Sanders, GM

CONNECTING THE STATION TO THE COMMUNITY
In 2014, station general manager Jimmy Sanders established the WUGA Community Advisory Council to act as community liaisons for WUGA. Each member serves on one or more standing committees to assist the station in developing resources, communicating with current and potential listeners and reaching out to the community. You may have met some of these members serving as volunteer hosts during events such as the Jazz Fest, campaign debates, and studio visits in the Artists in Residence series. These committed WUGA listeners are also financial supporters of the station. The council now has 19 members serving 3-year rotating terms. For additional information about the council, visit https://www.wuga.org/node/19

Meet our members:

Randall Abney
Timothy Adams, Jr
Courtney Adang
Valerie Bell
Brian Carney
Krystle Cobran
David Griffin
Ian Hardin
Pat Jarrett
Knowa Johnson

Nancy McDuff
Kent Middleton
Sylvia Hillyard Pannell
Erin Thompson Podvin
Diane Riley
Jim Smith
Roger Swagler
Grady Thrasher
Molly Williams
younger staff members who contribute significantly to the program’s success. Recent UGA Grady College graduates Jeanne Davis and Megan Wahn are assistant producers, and current students Jessica Wurst, Lora Yordanova, and Lucas Trevor are content producers. Sydney Spencer, a Grady College student, manages the website so listeners can access each program after it airs. Working alongside Matheny and hosts Chris Shupe and Alexia Ridley, the young professionals experience the realities of fast-paced radio production.

When the pandemic required that the staff shelter in place, the creative crew developed a contingency plan to continue reporting at the same level of excellence. Staff members quickly transitioned from working with professional equipment in the studio to producing the same amount of content from home. Interviews were conducted via Zoom, staff recorded audio with portable microphones, and stories were edited on personal laptops. In addition to the physical changes of the show, the format also pivoted to cover developing news such as government mandates and advice from local physicians. The WUGA team is dedicated to providing the news you need when you need it!

For over 15 years, “Athens News Matters” has told stories that matter from Athens and Northeast Georgia. In July 2019, the program was relaunched in a new, hour-long format, including more stories, features, interviews and a panel of commentators, which has been a mainstay of “Athens News Matters.”

The program began as a thirty-minute conversation about local government. The new 60-minute production, which is broadcast Friday, Saturday and Sunday, includes eight segments with topics ranging from government initiatives and scientific discoveries to the city’s robust arts, music and cultural scene. It covers important issues from a local perspective, such as homelessness, mental health and inequality.

The “Athens News Matters” team spends each week brainstorming story ideas, interviewing, scriptwriting, voice tracking, recording and editing. Each four-minute segment takes several hours to produce; thus much time and effort is required to create an hour of captivating news.

Senior producer Martin Matheny’s responsibilities include mentoring...
Riehm monitored the station transmitter, satellite feeds from GPB in Atlanta and national satellite feeds from a card table at his home. WUGA has some great tools for remote operations, but it’s still not possible to fully conduct business off site. Even though WUGA staff were able to conduct many broadcast tasks remotely, the nature of live radio made it necessary for personnel to rotate into the station periodically. The station has implemented intense sanitation protocols to keep everyone safe.

Soon after remote operations were working properly, our studio in the Georgia Center was hit by lightning, and then an unrelated water line leak caused a major power outage! As a result, staff upgraded engineering capability with an uninterruptable power supply to maintain operations if the power should go out or flicker. WUGA staff continue to look for ways to improve work processes to make sure listeners are receiving the best possible radio experience.
EPISODES

After many years on the air, some WUGA favorites are leaving. “Live From Here” and “Only a Game” have ended production, and we’ve added some incredible new programs to our schedule.

SATURDAY, 7AM
“Travel with Rick Steves”
Join travel guru Rick Steves as he inspires, informs and equips Americans for European trips that are fun, affordable and culturally broadening.
https://www.ricksteves.com/watch-read-listen

SATURDAY, 6PM
“It’s Been a Minute with Sam Sanders”
Each week, Sam Sanders interviews people in popular culture who deserve your attention and offers news insights with other journalists. Join Sam as he makes sense of the world through conversation.
https://www.npr.org/podcasts/510317/its-been-a-minute-with-sam-sanders

SATURDAY, 7PM
“Live Wire Radio”
From Portland, Oregon, host Luke Burbank artfully blends unpredictable conversation, live music and original comedy, featuring all types of cultural talents and creative minds, from emerging artists to established acts.
https://www.livewireradio.org/

We’ll miss our old favorites, but we hope you’ll enjoy our new lineup. Check the WUGA schedule for details.
https://www.wuga.org/schedule/week