



the dirt

Driftless Community Radio Newsletter
Spring 2026



*Pictured: Jennie Ross, WDRT producer and host of *The Pause*, is one of our pivotal volunteers who ensures all music donations get properly catalogued. She sorted through thousands of vinyl records in preparation for Vinylthon.*

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**WDRT
91.9FM**

**One Day
SPRING
PLEDGE
Drive**

Wednesday 5/6 • 6am-6pm

- 6 Driftless Morning -Jim Hallberg**
- 8 Live Music -Farmers Market Buskers**
- 830 All Terrain Tonic -Kevin Mattson**
- 9 Quiz Show -Ed Holahan**
- 10 HerSong -Variety of Hosts**
- 11 Driftless Wknd -G.Man + Pauly**
- 12 Democracy Now**
- 1 Eclectic Wonderland -DJ Tea + Mr... Man**
- 2 DJ SMiLeY SaM + MC SLiM**
- 3 Juice & Snack -Andrew Spayde**
- 4 Global Beat -DJ Kirsten + DJ Root**
- 5 Mister Koppa's Neighborhood**

**\$1,000 CHALLENGE MATCH FROM
SOCIALY RESPONSIBLE RETIREMENT STRATEGIES**



Scan to Learn More!



WDRT.ORG/DONATE

ONE-DAY PLEDGE DRIVE ON MAY 6TH



It's officially springtime, which is when we ask for your support during our one-day Spring Pledge Drive 6am to 6pm on Wednesday, May 6th. Your financial support not only funds our programming, it does one better by ensuring this kind of community-powered radio can exist in the Driftless Region, and across the globe on wdrt.org!

Whether you started listening to WDRT for the eclectic music options, as an alternative to corporate media, or because a local friend told you they were hosting their very own on-air show, you've stuck with us because we connect you to the surrounding community in a unique way.

WDRT broadcasts 24/7/365 - intentionally creating an on-air space to share independent voices, alternative music & news, and as a free network to amplify community resources. Listener support gives us editorial freedom and musical independence in ways other funding models don't. We aren't beholden to shareholders or algorithms, and we like it that way!

To sweeten the deal, we have a \$1,000 Challenge Match from *Socially Responsible Retirement Strategies* as well as a \$250 Match from *Driftless Provisions*. Any donation amount is welcome, so tune in Wednesday and listen for your chance to double your contribution! Scan the QR code to the left to learn more about our one-day pledge drive.

VOLUNTEER DJ SPOTLIGHT: MATT SCHOCH OF SHOCK THERAPY



WDRT: You play such an eclectic selection of music on your show - what role has music played in your life?

Matt: I absolutely love music! I grew up in the Cleveland area, supposedly the birthplace of the term Rock 'n' Roll, made popular by a DJ in the 50's. Whether driving around in my parents' cars listening to the "oldies" or sifting through my older brothers rock albums, I recognized that music moved me. My mom took me to a Rush concert when I was 12 and it blew my mind. I nerded out on Rush albums after that and one band would lead to another. At some point I got turned onto bands like The Grateful Dead and Phish. For a kid growing up in the suburbs - those bands are an introduction to blues, jazz, soul, classic country, bluegrass, reggae, etc. In turn I think my show is a reflection of the music I've stumbled onto and continue to pick up.

WDRT: What motivated you to kick off the start of your show with a random song from a vinyl record?

Matt: I've started a tradition of pulling a random record off the shelf in the studio for background music during the set breaks. Listening to Mr. Koppa turned me onto the idea of giving life to records that may never be played otherwise. Grabbing a random one is always fun because I don't know what it will sound like until I press the button and I'm live on the radio. It's a fun surprise and mostly turns out well.

WDRT: What message do you have for anyone who hasn't yet caught your show? Why should folks tune in to Shock Therapy on WDRT 91.9FM?

Matt: Each week is an opportunity for me to find 30 new songs. I will repeat artists often but work to keep each show new. In any show, I play music from the 30's to the present day. The shows have a common thread of folk, americana, rock, blues, and country but nothing is off limits. I'll play reggae, ska, rap, jugband, bluegrass, jazz, and even some polkas.

You're bound to hear something you like and maybe something new. That's what I love about WDRT. I tune in each day and always hear music that's new to me. If you tune in and don't hear anything that catches your ear, email me with a request you'd like to hear for next week's show at drshock@wdrt.org!

WDRT: What motivated you to settle in Viroqua?

Matt: We never had plans to move to Viroqua. We moved from Southern Oregon and put all our belongings in storage in Duluth thinking we would settle there. While in transition we were visiting my inlaws in this area we found out we were going to have a baby. Being jobless, homeless, without insurance, and a dwindling savings we realized we needed to be somewhere... Almost 11 years later, here we are, grateful to be here.

WDRT: What motivated you to start "Shock Therapy"?

Matt: As soon as we moved here we became regular listeners to WDRT. I would hear commercials asking for volunteers and I always had it in the back of my mind that I would like to have a music program. Once I felt like I could dedicate some time to it I emailed Jim. A few weeks later I was in the studio pushing buttons and turning knobs.

I have no prior experience with radio. The most applicable experience may be from performing as a musician. Similar to playing in bars, coffee shops, pizza joints, or busking on the streets - being a DJ is a performance art whether anyone is listening or not.

VOLUNTEERS ARE THE LIFEBLOOD OF WDRT!



Just as listener financial support is essential for business operations, we could not do what we do without our volunteers - they are our lifeblood! WDRT is host to nearly 140 local & regional volunteers and we want to encourage you to join us. We welcome all skill levels and do our best to support your ideas.

for being volunteer hosts, producers, as well as sound engineers for other co-hosts of their respective programs. **NOTE: We are actively seeking volunteers to help with Show Engineering. You get to record, edit, and/or produce shows for on-air broadcasting.**

WDRT Music Library: Help us



Podcast Hosts, Music DJs, Sound Engineers, and Audio Producers: No experience? No problem! We offer training to those who want to share music, arts, and culture over the airwaves. Pictured left to right in the photo above are four WDRT volunteers: Maggie Jones of the *Natural Wonders* show, Steve Brandl of *Conversations*, Laura Erickson who offers *For the Birds* program clips from Duluth, Minnesota, and David Krier of *VSN Conservation Connections*. Both Steve and David are known

build the best music library in the Driftless! Mike of *Mister Koppa's Neighborhood* is pictured below hovering over a ridiculously large stash of Billy Vaughn records. Also check out Jennie Ross featured on the cover. They are two pivotal volunteers who ensure our vinyl collection is properly screened before being shelved. If music sifting and cataloging is your thing, do let us know. Side note: we rarely turn down music donations!

Technical Operations: Anyone with skills in live sound and technical engineering experience are invited to pitch in. Consider this a great opportunity to share your skillset while contributing to the station. As always, training is provided.



DJ Smiley Sam, a rotating volunteer dj of *Reggae Pon Yard* and pictured above, lent us his lighting set up for the past two Vinylthon inhouse dance parties. Without his

(VOLUNTEERS... CONTINUED)



flashy offerings, our party vibes would not have been the same!

Facilities & Maintenance: Often this list covers basic cleaning and station repairs. But our very own Paul Fairchild pictured above, volunteer dj of *The Train*, took it upon himself to plant a tree on our southside lawn. We caught him this spring as he was pruning it. If you've got any skills or passions that would help with the upkeep of our station, please check in with us to see what needs to be done.

Other Offerings: From tabling at outreach events, to phone answering during our pledge drives, all the way down to those who show up when we are ready to start ripping off our roof to build a



brand new studio, there's always a need for volunteers.

This is your station, so come by and help out! Contact us by email at volunteer@wdrt.org, give us a call at (608) 638-9378, x3, or visit us at the station on Main Street!

Below, L-to-R: Dale Zimmerman, host of *Come On In My Kitchen* is also our interim weekly cleaner and recent sink-unclogging hero; Ed Holahan, the writer/producer of *The View from Here*, is also the mastermind writer and host behind the *WDRT Quiz Show* and one of WDRT's Board Members; Donna Smith of *Garden Goddess* is often the pleasant voice you hear over the phone when you call to make a pledge!



Top-right, L-to-R: Terry O'Connor, WDRT Programming & Operations Coordinator, plus Mark King, Evan Blattner, and Jeff Miller.



Above: Mike Welsh of *Shelved Dreams* is holding obscure vinyl and cookies. If fellow djs get their sugar kick from the station, it's quite often thanks to this guy!

WHAT'S UP WITH STUDIO C?

For the last couple years, we've been planning and fundraising to build a third broadcast studio at WDRT. The Studio C Project came about from a need to accommodate our growing cadre of DJs and show hosts who use our studios for broadcasting and audio production. Studio access has been getting tight!

The Studio C Project will not only meet our growing need for additional broadcast and production space, it will also be optimized to host musicians for in-studio performances. The Driftless Region is home to an amazing music scene, featuring talented local artists and some great bands that pass through on tour. As the area's only community radio station, WDRT is excited to expand its role in highlighting the burgeoning music scene by building a new broadcast studio with the ability to host live bands.

In addition to live on-air performances, the studio space will also double as a recording studio! Local musicians will have access to all the equipment and knowledge needed to learn how to record their own music. This is all part of our larger goal to develop WDRT as a community media hub.

Work has begun on planning and designing the studio space, with the hope of completing the project by the end of 2026. Incorporating local volunteers with expertise in construction and studio design has been a vital part of moving the project forward. If you'd like to volunteer with design or construction, or to help fund the project, please reach out to staff@wdrt.org or call 608-638-9378, x3.



Support Local Businesses that Support WDRT!

The following businesses provide ongoing financial support to WDRT through *Annual Underwriting*. Please stop in at these businesses - and do let them know you appreciate their continued support of your community radio station!

14 - 16 YEARS OF SUPPORT

- Organic Valley
- Quality of Life Chiropractic
- Socially Responsible Retirement Strategies
- Vernon Communications Cooperative
- Viroqua Food Co-op
- Wonderstate Coffee

10 - 13 YEARS OF SUPPORT

- Bank of Cashton
- Lind's Home Center
- Westby Cooperative Creamery

6 - 9 YEARS OF SUPPORT

- Ethos Green Power Cooperative
- Ewetopia Fiber Shop & Mill

3 - 5 YEARS OF SUPPORT

- Noble Rind
- Oakwood Realty
- Pump House Regional Art Center
- Soulful Saunas
- Woolly Bear Taphouse

1 - 2 YEARS OF SUPPORT

- Big River Magazine
- Fizeology Foods
- Forkash Electric
- GFL Environmental
- Historic Temple Theatre
- Popp Funeral & Cremation Service

WDRT IS NOW TWO STATIONS FOR THE PRICE OF ONE



a fast-moving conversation that appeals to anyone who wants to better understand the forces shaping everyday life in the United States.

The Final Straw is a weekly independent radio program that mixes compelling interviews, real-world stories, and provocative ideas from people challenging the way society works - making it an intriguing listen for anyone curious about voices you rarely hear on mainstream radio. You can hear it on Monday nights at 7PM.

The Skeptics' Guide to the Universe is a science show that combines fascinating discoveries, critical thinking, and engaging discussion to help listeners sort fact from fiction while making complex ideas entertaining and accessible. Catch it on Saturday nights at 7PM or Sunday mornings at 5AM.

Saturday mornings at 8AM brings *The People's Pharmacy*, hosted by Joe and Terry Graedon. This is a long-running call-in radio show that explores health, medicine, and consumer wellness topics through listener questions, expert insights, and practical advice for everyday living.

We've also been able to bring over many programs we currently air on WDRT, playing them at different days and times. These programs include *Democracy Now*, *The Ralph Nader Radio Hour*, *Peace Talks Radio* and other favorites.

Again, this new channel is exclusively available online. You can check out the full schedule and give it a listen at wdrt.org/news-talk.

Did you know WDRT now has a News & Talk station available online? That's right, you can now go to our website to listen to independent, noncommercial talk radio - twenty four hours a day, seven days a week.

We've curated a variety of programs covering topics that are consistently absent in the larger media landscape. You'll hear news and political analysis, nature and gardening programs, talk shows about music, science & technology, and so much more.

Some highlights include a Monday through Friday broadcast of *The Thom Hartmann Program*. This is a nationally syndicated talk show that blends sharp political analysis, lively debate, and listener calls into

other ways to support WDRT

car donation



visit wdrt.org for info

donor advised funds





WDRT - Driftless Community Radio
311 South Main St
Viroqua, WI 54665

608-638-9378
wdrt.org

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keep the
spirit of
community
radio alive

ask your financial advisor
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or call (608) 638-9378
for more info

91.9fm
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SPRING PLEDGE Drive

WEDNESDAY
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DAY!
6AM-6PM



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visit: 311 S. Main St.
pledge: wdrt.org/donate

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