

*"The radio craze will die out in time."  
– Thomas Edison (1847-1931)*

Dave Graham. Island Radio's man of the morning on 88.5FM The Beach, transmitting from Parksville, BC Photo: Dave Graham

(97.3FM) – covering North-Central Vancouver Island, and Oceanside's The Beach (88.5FM) and The Lounge (99.9FM), Island Radio is an undeniably community-driven alliance, highly visible in the areas it serves.

A prime example of the community foundations on which Island Radio builds its overall programming can be heard on The Beach on the first Thursday of every month, when The Beacon's own Linda Tenney guests on Dave Graham's 'Beach Mornings' show.

"You might say it's a verbal extension of the magazine, another way to celebrate and promote our community," she tells me. Linda's been

"There's one stance that any kind of competition is good because it keeps everybody up on their game," says Dave. "Our ultimate saviour and greatest strength is the fact that we do our best to represent the communities that we serve." Carla, also co-host of The Wolf's Sunday night punk and indie rock show, 'Mixtape,' concurs, stating: "People can get all the music they want there (on the Internet), but we offer local content. We're who people turn to to find out anything from traffic conditions to what the weather's like, to what's going on to which schools are closed when it snows!"

As expectedly clarified by Dave and Carla, it's as clear as the perfect signal that the future of 'local' radio lies with the level of its service to the community. That comes as no great surprise, but both feel the relationship could be intensified yet further.

"I see a direction towards smaller radio stations serving very specific community needs," Dave predicts. "I think the smaller market stations that really deliver and are strongly connected to the community are the future."

Again, Carla is in complete agreement. "I think the goal is to become more local, and I personally hope it is, because that really is the key," she tells me, eager to point out that her job sees local businesses practically falling over themselves to advertise on Island Radio. You couldn't really hope for more of a ratification of its validity than that.

It's easy when considering community broadcasting to entertain a romantic vision of a lone presenter in the studio at all hours, casting out news bulletins and meditations on life between spins of his personal record collection, much like Northern Exposure's Chris "In The Morning" Stevens at KBHR in Cicely, Alaska. An idealized image, perhaps, but there really is more than a grain of truth in it: such a portrayal of a station's intimacy with its community is a great illustration of the role Island Radio strives to accomplish on Vancouver Island. From what I hear, it seems to be up to the task. ~

*For more information:*  
ISLAND RADIO: [www.islandradio.bc.ca](http://www.islandradio.bc.ca)



## ISLAND RADIO: A SOUND SALVATION

BY DAVID MORRISON

I'm of the opinion that most of us take the medium of radio for granted. By this I mean that if the airwaves were suddenly to go silent, we would quickly recognize radio's true worth as an invaluable resource of entertainment, education and information. Consider also that radio is the only real-time commentary available when on the move – you can't access the Internet from behind a steering wheel – and its usefulness to our communities should come through loud and clear.

Fortunately, we are endowed with some great radio in our neck of the woods. Surely sating most tastes, there are campus-based alternatives such as CHLY in Nanaimo and Victoria's CFUV, then mainstream choices such as the six-station Island Radio network – part of the Jim Pattison Broadcast Group.

Consisting of Nanaimo's The Wave (102.3FM) and The Wolf (106.9FM); The Peak (93.3FM) in Port Alberni; The Eagle

appearing with Dave for two-and-a-half years now, highlighting everything of note going on in Lighthouse Country for the listenership. Being one who regards community radio as vital, the value of the opportunity to do so is certainly not lost on Linda.

"Island Radio has the same 'engage with the community' mandate that we do; we're complementary media doing the same job," she confirms. Dave echoes this, extolling the virtues of Island Radio over, say, Internet Radio, in saying: "When people want to know what's going on in their community, they have to go to local radio."

Maybe so, but what of the future of community-centred radio stations? Are Internet or satellite radio proving to be threats to their terrestrial counterparts? Is it still a medium with room for growth and development in the face of such competition? I questioned Dave and Island Radio's Creative Director, Carla Johnson, for their thoughts on these issues.