

# Radio Free Columbus

Zach Henkel is all about living simply. He rides his bike everywhere and lives on \$866 a month as an AmeriCorps VISTA. So it makes sense that his one-year Volunteers in Service to America stint would be with local sustainable-living group Simply Living, where he works as one of more than 50 volunteers for the group's new community radio station, WCRS.

Henkel talked last week about his work as a producer and talent scout with the station and how you can get involved.

**It seems like before I ask about what WCRS is all about, I should ask about what Simply Living is all about.**

WCRS is a service of Simply Living. It's one of its many community projects. This one maybe just is the most recent and most attention-gaining of our projects. The Local Matters that we share our office with is one of their projects that they incubated. It now has the green grocer at the North Market, and they're now an independent, nonprofit organization focusing on food issues here in Central Ohio.

So Simply Living has multiple purposes to fulfill a sustainability agenda. Greening the Earth, healing toward wholeness and things like that. But at the same time, WCRS, though we share the same values, we're also moving in another way toward a community forum via low-power FM radio.

**What is low-power FM radio?**

Low-power FM is sort of a regional thing. It can only be held by nonprofit organizations. A single group can't own multiple stations. So it's sort of a media reform issue to fight things like Clear Channel and media consolidation.

**As a VISTA, what are your duties here?**

My job here is to replace myself within one year, to make myself replaceable — the station is up and running and self-sufficient, sustainable, going at it without me. And I have until the end of November to do that, and I think we're going along great.

**What are the goals of WCRS?**

It'd probably be better if I read them verbatim.

"WCRS LPFM is a noncommercial, listener-supported community radio station serving Central Ohioans, providing quality programming to (1) promote personal and civic responsibility, informed action and thoughtful living, (2) challenge cultural and intellectual assumptions, (3) celebrate local cultures, (4) air alternative points of view and facilitate understanding through dialogue, (5) foster community empowerment and participation."

Those are the five things we're trying to get done here. But even more is accomplished.

**How does the station achieve those goals?**

Celebrate local cultures is one. My *Cranksters* show is about local bike culture in Columbus. It's sort of a lighthearted, more irreverent look at it. It's almost sort of an inside joke of shows.

There'll be a lot of topics discussed on there — most things discussed — that the general public won't even have any clue what that's about because they're not in that culture. One of the things we're doing here is giving a forum for underrepresented communities.

We also have a show on gay-lesbian-transsexual issues. We have a Native American show on Saturdays at 3. Women's show. Cynthia's show highlights a lot of things that are not



reported in the mainstream media.

Her show today was extremely nice. She and Eugene went to the Democratic debates that occurred ... between Barack and Hillary up in Cleveland. They interviewed protestors and people rallying, and they were the only news media interviewing people inside this protest, this gathering.

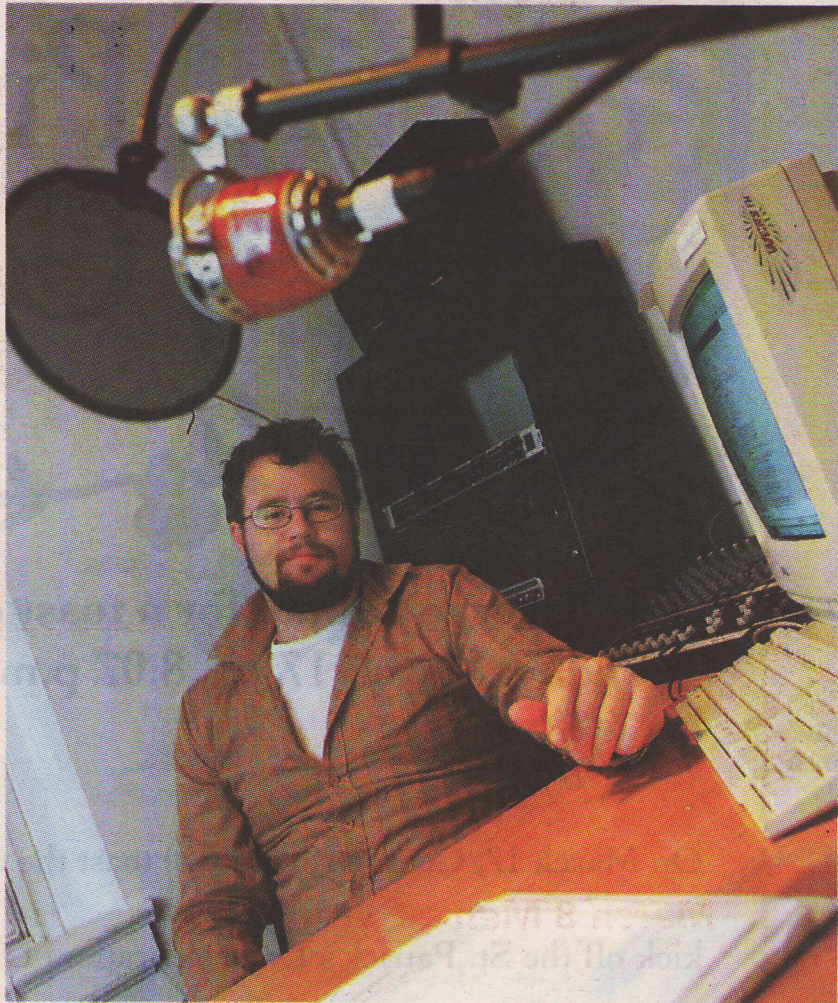
Another thing that's local culture: We have three local music shows.

**How can people get involved?**

They can contact me. My e-mail is zachhenkel@hotmail.com. They can call me at the station, 614-447-0296. Check out our website, wcrsfm.org. Walk into the studios here in Clintonville.

And we take volunteers in multiple capacities. We have a tech committee if you're computer savvy, like to build





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websites, podcasts. I can train you to be a DJ. You can do a weekly broadcast. You can sit here and get on the mic. We accept applications for broadcast shows; get those from me at the office.

We also have an outreach community if you're interested in fundraising, marketing, underwriting, sponsorships.

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