



# Upsala Gazette

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## WFMU STAFFERS DISMISSED

by Louis Gonnella

On February 26, WFMU station manager Alan Fritch suspended David Selvin, production manager, and staff member Peter Tonks. This action prompted a split in the station's staff and the formation of a WFMU strike committee, consisting of several of the staff's members.

Fritch indicated that both Selvin and Tonks had been released on "disciplinary grounds." He explained that for precautionary reasons, security head Ed Leuchs had advised him to give keys to the building to only a few persons. "It was my decision to distribute just two keys—one to Dave Selvin, the other to Bill Collins," he said. Collins is the assistant station manager. He also noted that he had specifically told both of them that copies were not to be made for anyone else. Yet on February 26, while Fritch was working in his office in the WFMU building, Peter Tonks entered the locked building. When Fritch questioned Tonks about his possession of the key, Tonks answered that Selvin had given him a copy. Shortly thereafter, Tonks and Selvin were suspended. According to an unsigned statement circulated at the next Radio Board meeting, Selvin and Tonks entered the WFMU building that night through a window and attempted to enter the station proper through an inner door which was bolted. "They apparently kicked the door until the

bottom latch broke. Before the upper latch could be broken, a staff member on duty went down and let them in.

"Mr. Lundgren was called at home and informed of what was happening. He immediately called the station and spoke first to Tonks and then to Selvin. When asked how they had gotten into the building, Mr. Selvin said the security guard had let them in. Mr. Lundgren went to the station, got the security guard and confronted Mr. Selvin. Mr. Selvin then admitted that he had inappropriately entered the station." On the following Monday, posters were set up in the Student Center by the strike committee, denouncing the alleged censorship and purging of staff members by Fritch.

Fritch denied the validity of the posters. "I set policy through the Radio Board on the first of September," he stated. He held that the dismissals of Selvin and Tonks were justified. He then noted that a group of students on the staff felt that he couldn't make policy and thus decided to test him. "I am the manager," he said, "and I have the power given me by the board. I personally am very sorry that all of this has happened. I am merely going by policy that I have established and that which the Radio Board has established. There had been no indication that I am doing a rotten job." He also denied that he

was "purging" or "persecuting" any of the staff members because of their liberal views. "I do not care how liberal they want to be," he said. "They just have to do it under management of the station. You can have two sides; the people were dismissed on log violations of blatantly refusing to cut out certain expressions on the air." Fritch then noted that certain staff members met as a group after regular staff meetings to discuss policy. He charged that Selvin had wanted him fired and that some of those on the strike committee were not students at all. He also said that a majority of the staff was loyal and that only six members of the staff were involved in the committee's activities. At this time Fritch brought out a petition signed by seven of the staff members which reads:

To: The Student Senate and the Radio Board  
From: The Undersigned  
Re: The election of Peter Tonks to the Radio Board

We, the undersigned, submit that the election of Peter Tonks to the Radio Board was invalid. Bill Collins was nominated as well, and David



Students wait in the Chapel's Swenson Room to be admitted to the Radio Board meeting.

Selvin stated that Bill's nomination was invalid because he was ineligible. We have since found out that this statement was a falsehood, and we are thereby prevented from selecting a candidate of our choice. We submit this statement on the basis that every member of the staff is eligible for election to the Radio Board.

Signed,  
Martin G. Bernacki  
Joe J. McCusker  
Thomas K. Lanieri  
Bernie F. Shimansk  
Jan Michalsen  
Kerry P. Wojack  
Dennis DeLeonard

After being informed of the nature of Fritch's statements, two WFMU staff members stated that three weeks prior to February 26, Selvin had made a key for Tonks and that Fritch had known about it. They claimed that he had waited until Selvin's "Marathon," the reading of *Lord of the Rings*, was over and then, "using the key as an excuse, fired Dave." They also believed that Fritch was "slowly getting rid of long-hairs" and was either using "some excuse to hassle them" or "giving them a warning and putting a black mark near their names which he has on file." Each denied ever having

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## Board Discusses Grievances

by Alicia Schudt

The open meeting of the Radio Board resumed in the Chapel on Friday afternoon at 2:10 p.m. More than fifty interested persons attended, some wearing costumes or painted faces.

Radio Board chairman Charles Lundgren began the meeting by reading an outline of Board policies before dealing with what he termed "the broad base of dis-sension" evidenced by the large turnout. Suspended WFMU production manager David Selvin, a Radio Board member, asked that a background to the grievances be given so that those present could understand the proceedings better. Other Board members questioned the validity of the meeting itself and thought the issue might be handled better by the Educational Policies Council, since it concerned a faculty member. Dean Harry Keith advised that the Personnel Policies Council might be a more appropriate place to deal with the issue.

Professor Robert Wharton then stated he thought that the Radio Board should ask the EPC "to give a definitive statement of the nature of WFMU as an activity on campus;" that is, whether the station is a faculty-run public relations enterprise or a student-run activity. He also wondered whether it was the Board's job to deal with station personnel problems.

The Board then decided to examine a few of the grievances: that Alan Fritch has no creative ideas for programming, that he is unconcerned with the station and its equipment, that he has specifically forbidden non-Upsala stu-

dents to operate the station, that he banned narcotics from the station premises but did nothing when someone was found to have them, and that he forced staff members who were having a private meeting to leave the station. Fritch denied all these allegations, stating "you can put me on the spot all you want to."

Lundgren then proposed an adjournment because he had to leave to attend another meeting, but the students demanded that he appoint a temporary chairman so the meeting could continue. Dean Keith was asked to preside, and the meeting continued.

Another discussion of whether

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## Meeting Opened

by Maureen Doyle

After several unsuccessful attempts to gain entry to a "closed" Radio Board meeting on Wednesday, March 3, approximately forty students were admitted to the tiny Nicholas Collin conference room in the Chapel. Included in the group permitted to enter the meeting were WFMU staff members, former staff members, and *Gazette* reporters.

The Board met to discuss the grievances issued by WFMU staff members against station manager Alan Fritch. The students were protesting the dismissal of eight WFMU staff members: Dick Einhorn, Elliott Hague, Jeff Heilbrun, Bob Lowe, Don Merzcz, Eric Rosen, and especially David Selvin and Peter Tonks. A number of other staff members, including Tom Cullum, Richard Dufty, Dave Fisher, Steve Gladstone, Gary Govelitz, Debbie Kanter, and Mary Keaney, had gone on strike over the weekend in support of the grievances and to protest the Tonks-Selvin dismissals.

Before the Board began its discussion of the grievances, Mr. Charles Lundgren noted for the minutes of the Board that this list of grievances was issued by "some of the staff," not all of its members, as had been implied by the copies passed around campus.

Only two of the fifteen grievances were considered in the sixty-five minute "open" meeting: first, the accusation that Fritch

was acting as a policeman, and second, that he discriminates against critics of his policies.

In answer to the first allegation, Fritch explained that while he did not necessarily intend to be a policeman, he came to regard himself as one in order to control parties, hangouts, and visitors. A few students charged Fritch with repressing the discussion of politics and "other controversy." This led to a discussion of the role of the administrator. One student thought many of WFMU's problems arose from Fritch's "arbitrary decisions" and pointed that "Al doesn't get along with the kids." Lundgren pointed out the necessity of clearing up the thirty-one violations of the previous management, and that anyone taking such a job would need authority. As some of these violations had to do with improper and incomplete log entries, Fritch stated "I have the authority to police the logs."

The problem of censorship was brought up again. Staff members stated they were instructed to make no mention of the strike on the air. The question was then raised by Lundgren: "Is this good radio?" This was in reference to telling the listening audience about the station's strike.

When the subject of phone-tapping was raised, the allegation was dismissed as "a misunderstanding."

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## Board Acts, Dissolves

The Radio Board voted to dissolve itself on Tuesday, March 9, after it was told that it had no authority to deal with WFMU personnel matters. This information was given to the Board after it had voted to reinstate David Selvin and Peter Tonks to the WFMU staff. Before dissolving, the Board changed their vote to a recommendation that the two be reinstated.

The Board also passed a "brief policy statement regarding the role of students at WFMU" which reads:

"The College encourages full student participation in the operation and programming of WFMU under the professional supervision of the Manager and the Director consistent with the rules and regulations of the FCC and the policies of the College

and the Radio Board."

The dissolution was in recognition of the Board's powerlessness to do anything except set policy and receive reports.

WFMU will now be governed by two Radio Board statements on policy: one on "image and audience" adopted earlier in the year and the other as stated above. Staff grievances will be handled by Radio Director Charles Lundgren and Dean of the College C. Alfred Perkins.

Some Radio Board members hope to propose an amendment to the Board's constitution that would give the Board power to deal with station personnel matters. Such an amendment would need the approval of the full faculty and the Board of Trustees.



## Dismissals

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tried to "test" Fritch's authority, and both stated that his charge of conducting private meetings was ridiculous.

When asked to comment on Fritch's statements and actions, Dave Selvin replied that Fritch had known about Tonk's copy of the key three weeks prior to the incident. According to Selvin, Fritch told him not to do it again. "I assumed then that he had taken Tonk's key," he said. "He didn't." Selvin added that Fritch called both Tonks and himself and suspended them. He added, "I have been program director and production manager at WFMU, and I feel that a permanent suspension is not justified. He merely should have taken my key." He also accused Fritch of purging staff members, noting that Fritch has a file of audition sheets and has placed marks next to the names of staff members and even next to the names of *Gazette* reporters who have been critical of his policies.

In reference to the petition which was brought against him, Selvin offered an explanation. "The staff is responsible for electing a senator and a Radio Board member. The first person elected to the Radio Board was fired from the staff and Arthur Anderson told me to call another election." He continued to explain that Bill Collins was ineligible for nomination since he was a member of the administration of the station. According to Selvin, Tonks was nominated and elected with only one dissenting vote. Selvin stated that the charges were being made to discredit him and the persons on the strike committee, which he described as a "loose organization of former staff members." He then said that several of the staff members were not striking because they were either afraid of suspension or they desired to work inside the station. When asked about the purpose of the posters, Selvin answered that they were set up by Peter Tonks and Don Merz in order to inform the people of the situation.

Selvin also claimed that some of Fritch's policies had been appealed to the Radio Board and overturned by them. Fritch later denied this, and in reference to his alleged file, he remarked, "I open my file to any Radio Board member. The only things I have in it are the staff's addresses, phone numbers, whether they have an FCC license, and when they can work."

The strike committee submitted a list of grievances to the Liaison Committee to be channeled to the Student Senate. Selvin stated that "if we don't achieve our aims through the Radio Board and the Senate, we will have to do something else." On March 4, the Senate passed a motion to present Fritch with the list and asking him to respond.

## Grievances

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WFMU exists as a publicity gimmick for Upsala began. Many staff members said they had come to Upsala because the station was the only "progressive" college station in the area. They said they were disappointed with the way the station was run and with the lack of training in radio techniques. Selvin stated, "I think the least we can ask for is an education." This disappointment was also blamed on Fritch's abandonment of "free form" programming for a more structured format. Selvin summed up the disappointment: "The best evidence that can be brought against Al Fritch is to listen to WFMU itself."

# Grievances Aired And Answered

Following is the list of fifteen grievances presented to the Radio Board by members and past members of the WFMU staff. They are accompanied by the responses of Bill Collins, Program Director for the station, also submitted to the Board.

1. The station manager of WFMU, Mr. Alan Fritch, lacks the necessary qualifications to remain in his position. Specifically he lacks ability as an administrator and functions instead as, according to his own definition, a "policeman." Furthermore he lacks the creative force so necessary in making WFMU an educationally profitable experience for its student staff.

*Mr. Fritch has had to act, partially, as a "policeman." However, this portion of his functioning was created by the actions of some members of the staff rather than by his own volition.*

2. Mr. Fritch, since assuming the position of station manager, has suspended seven programmers, all of whom were at one time or another critics of Mr. Fritch's policies. Only critics of his policies have been dealt with in this manner.

*The seven programmers who were suspended not only criticized Mr. Fritch's policy, but also blatantly violated it. It might be pointed out that, among others, I have on occasion been critical of some station policy and I haven't been suspended.*

3. Mr. Fritch has created and enforced policy contrary to and without the knowledge of that body responsible for "the overall policy of WFMU;" namely the Radio Board.

*It is my understanding, from speaking with Mr. Charles Lundgren, that the Radio Board functions as an advisory group and sets only general policy. From there, Mr. Fritch is to set and maintain specific policies based on the broad guidelines set forth by the Board. I have seen nothing that violates in any way that procedure.*

4. A majority of the staff of WFMU are currently striking, despite warnings by Mr. Fritch that such action will result in their suspension, to protest the suspension of the production manager and another staff member. Both were suspended for duplicating a key to the front door of the station. This key was made for convenience and constituted no threat to the security of the station, since it only could be used during normal business hours. The discriminating policy of suspending his critics has earned for Mr. Fritch a student staff devoid of morale.

*First of all, I can't understand how six out of eighteen full-time staff members constitute a majority. And, as of this writing (3-2-71), only six of the full-time staff members are on strike. Also, Mr. Fritch never threatened any striker with suspension from the staff. For that matter, I was personally told that any of the strikers who wished to return after the strike would be welcome to do so.*

5. Mr. Fritch has actively stifled dissent. At one point he had the whole student staff evicted from the radio station while they attempted to meet for the purpose of drafting a resolution which they hoped to submit to the Radio Board.

*This is a complete falsehood. When the security guard came up to evict the portion of the staff that attended said meeting, he specifically stated that the request to lock the station came from Charles Lundgren.*

6. Although Mr. Fritch's policies were partially overturned by the Radio Board, those people suspended for violating those policies were not re-instated.

*In answer to this, I first refer you back to No. 3. Specific policy was meant to be set by the manager. All those suspended by him were suspended because of violations of specific policies set by the manager. The result of the Radio Board meeting concerning any policy was to define the audience segment desired, leaving Mr. Fritch the duty of deciding how best to reach this audience.*

The last grievances dealt with by the Board concerned Fritch's alleged threatening of a staff member with dismissal if her views appeared in the *Gazette*, maintaining a file on WFMU and *Gazette* staff members who had spoken or written against his policies, and denying the Black Student Organization air time. Fritch denied these allegations, but some WFMU staff members claimed to have heard the threats, seen the file, and heard the denial of time to the BSO.

Board member Peter Tonks introduced a motion to close the station down completely until the issue is settled and the strike over. Without a vote being taken, the Board decided to investigate the charges further before making a decision. The meeting adjourned at 4:15.

## Meeting Opened

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The alleged political censorship was explained by Fritch: "I didn't want political-type raps in an entertainment show." From this followed a discussion of what constituted "free form radio."

In considering the second grievance, that Fritch discriminates against critics of his policies, Gary Gowelitz brought up his own violations to demonstrate his claim that there existed, in Fritch's mind, two factions in the staff—the calm and the wild. He stated that "wild" violators were dismissed, while "calm" ones, himself included, were overlooked.

At 5:50 p.m., Prof. John Cummins moved for adjournment. Mr. Lundgren set Friday, March 5 at 2 p.m. as the next meeting time.

7. Mr. Fritch has condemned the Student Senate for its attempted intervention in WFMU's affairs, saying "it's none of their business."

*Mr. Fritch has not condemned the Student Senate in any way, nor has he ever said, "It's none of their business." Rather, Mr. Fritch has said he would welcome any inquiries by the Senate, but was skeptical of the value of the originally-conceived investigating committee as it was then to be structured.*

8. Mr. Fritch specifically forbade, with the threat of suspension certain staff members from expressing their opinion in the *Gazette*, as well as on the air.

*This accusation is so ridiculous as to be totally asinine.*

9. Mr. Fritch keeps a file on those people, including members of the *Gazette* staff, who have spoken against his policies. He has, furthermore, attempted to investigate the political inclinations of certain staff members.

*This accusation is so ridiculous as to be totally asinine.*

10. Mr. Fritch has excluded the Black Student Organization from participation in WFMU's programming. This despite a Radio Board ruling that WFMU should seek to represent the community and minority groups. The time which could have been allotted to such groups was instead given to outside professional promotional groups.

*Mr. Fritch has in no way prevented the Black viewpoint from being aired on WFMU. In fact, one of the responsibilities of the Production Director was to set up quality programming of this nature, as well as other outside educational and public affairs programs. We, therefore, had to use outside public affairs shows to make up for the lack of material from our own production department. Almost all of these shows were supplied by the Radio Advisory Board.*

11. Mr. Fritch's lack of interest in the well being of WFMU, witnessed by his conspicuous absence from the station ("I work when I want to") has led, among other things, to a considerable decline in the listening audience. It should be remembered that WFMU's audience has, in the past, been responsible for its upkeep. Furthermore, those people who programmed in accordance with the decision of the Radio Board, namely those advocates of "Free Form" programming, have all been suspended. WFMU owes its popularity to such programming and consequently its past financial support.

*Was it Mr. Fritch's supposed lack of interest in the station or the programming of many of those suspended that lost listeners? Secondly, no effort was made to find out if the time away from the station building was or was not spent on station business. Thirdly, the Radio Board did not specifically name a desired format, but rather a specific audience—one that could be, quite possibly, better served by some format other than "Free Form." Finally, couldn't the station get a larger income from educational grants than from listener donations, particularly in these times of tight money?*

12. Mr. Fritch has shown an especially discriminating attitude to the application of his policies. Despite his own ruling that drugs not be allowed in the station, upon being notified that the chief engineer was displaying a substantial quantity of drugs in the studios, he took no action.

*This accusation has already been (in reference to the chief engineer) admitted by its perpetrator to be a lie. Therefore, the charge against Mr. Fritch must also be a falsehood.*

13. Despite promises that he would organize workshops in radio, Mr. Fritch did not; he did in fact actively discourage students from organizing their own workshops.

*The truth about our workshops is that those arranged by some of the staff, in the beginning of the year, had very poor attendance. Those started by Mr. Fritch had better attendance, but, since the one individual familiar with "Free Form" work experience chose to talk only of what others did wrong and not discuss how to do it right, there was no progress gained there, either. Then, when another student-planned workshop was scheduled, no one came.*

14. Mr. Fritch has done nothing to upgrade the technical facilities of WFMU; in fact, the technical facilities of WFMU have severely deteriorated.

*If returning the transmitter to good working order, bringing the studio equipment from very poor to respectably good air quality, getting a chief engineer who could spend some time here to get things in top working condition are nothing, then allegation No. 14 might be true.*

15. Mr. Fritch has caused the station to seriously violate FCC regulations by ordering the termination of programs on the air. This was accomplished by shutting off the transmitter during the middle of a scheduled program, without allowing the programmer to read the required sign of procedures. Furthermore, he neglected to inform the FCC of this action: a violation of FCC rules.

*The program termination in question was logged by Dave Selvin as a carrier drop. If there was an illegal termination of programming, why did Mr. Selvin log it as a carrier drop?*