



PRESENTS



# THE LAST CHRISTMAS

*This Christmas Eve, connection is only a phone call away.*



DECEMBER 7-22, 2024

# WNCP History Overview



**1938**

**WNCP is Founded:** Freddie Filmore wins a radio tower in a poker game and decides to start a radio station, dubbing it WNCP. Despite initial struggles with programming, Freddie begins experimenting with different show formats (variety shows, music programming, news, etc.), drawing on his love for the theatre.

**1940**

**The Great Format Pivot:** After numerous failed attempts at news broadcasts, music shows, and weather reports, Freddie switches the station's focus to radio dramas. He enlists old friends from his local theatre troupe, and the plays become an unexpected hit in the community, and their broadcast range grows.



**1941**

**First Annual Holiday Broadcast:** WNCP airs its first holiday radio play, a whimsical adaptation of *The Life & Adventures of Santa Claus*. It's only a moderate success, but Freddie and his friends make a promise to one another that as long as WNCP stands, they will always celebrate the Christmas season.



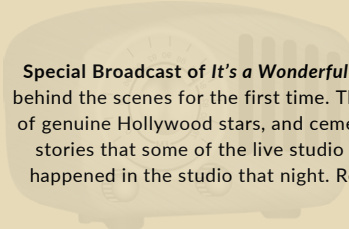
**1942**

**First Broadcast of *A Christmas Carol*:** WNCP airs their second Christmas radio play: *A Christmas Carol*, with Freddie as Scrooge. Finally, WNCP has a hit! This officially cements a beloved tradition, and the station broadcasts a holiday show every year, alternating between *A Christmas Carol* and other holiday classics.



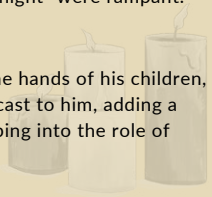
**1947**

**Special Broadcast of *It's a Wonderful Life*:** Freddie's children, Alastair and Frances, join the station behind the scenes for the first time. The broadcast is notable for attracting a large audience, its cast of genuine Hollywood stars, and cementing WNCP as a holiday favorite. Local papers would report stories that some of the live studio audience would go on record to say that something strange happened in the studio that night. Reports that "the story came to life that night" were rampant.



**1952**

**Freddie Filmore's Passing:** Freddie dies unexpectedly, leaving the station in the hands of his children, Alastair and Frances. In his honor, they dedicate the next Christmas broadcast to him, adding a touching tribute at the end of *A Christmas Carol*, and his son Alastair stepping into the role of Scrooge.



**1954**

**Transition to New Programming:** With the rise of television, WNCP struggles to maintain listeners. Alastair and Frances experiment with talk shows, music blocks, and call-in segments. A *War of the Worlds*-style broadcast about a mosquito invasion across South Florida gets them in hot water with the FCC. Though the new shows have limited success, they continue to produce a live holiday play each Christmas.



## 1961

**Holiday Broadcast Features Guest Stars:** No longer able to secure Hollywood-level talent, Alastair and Frances invite notable local celebrities to perform in their annual radio play. This sparks some renewed interest in the tradition, but not much.

## 1969

**Apollo 11 Moon Landing Broadcast:** To celebrate the historic moon landing, WNCN hosts a special broadcast. Walter R. Booth narrates a dramatic retelling of the Apollo 11 mission, weaving in actual radio transmissions from NASA's heroic lunar expedition.

This event captures the imaginations of WNCN's listeners, inspiring a new wave of interest in science fiction radio plays, which become a staple of their programming in the early '70s.



## 1971

**A Christmas Carol Comes to Life:** During a live performance of *A Christmas Carol*, Alastair once again plays Scrooge while Frances directs. It is revealed right before the broadcast that Alastair plans on cutting his losses and selling the station. That night, Alastair experiences his own "ghostly" Christmas journey, leading to a change of heart and saving the station from being sold.



## 1978

**Greased Lightnin' Dance Marathon:** In response to the *Grease* movie sensation, WNCN hosts a 1950s-themed dance marathon with a grand prize of \$5,000. DJs played doo-wop and rock 'n' roll hits from the era, while listeners called in to share their memories of the '50s. This dance marathon made headlines across the country when the contest lasted three consecutive days before a winner was finally crowned.

## 1980

**New Era of Talk Radio:** With the rise of talk radio, Frances pitches new programs to keep WNCN relevant. Though their listener base remains small, they continue to find unique programming to set them apart. They also upgrade their equipment for the first time in over 20 years.

## 1984

**Mistress Morgana Owns the Night:** Looking to capitalize on the 80s horror-slasher trend, WNCN starts to rebroadcast old horror radio programs from their early days as a station. Each broadcast is hosted by Mistress Morgana (Frances Magon in a rare performance role), a ghoul from beyond the pale who cracks terrible jokes and gives fun facts about the original show. Each broadcast famously ended with a unique and grandiose staging of her own death. The broadcast is a moderate hit, but finds an audience in the horror convention circuits when bootleg tapes of broadcasts become coveted collectibles.

## 1985

**Claire Phillips Joins WNCN:** A regular performer with WNCN throughout the 70s, Claire Phillips returns from a Hollywood where she could never quite find her footing and pitches the idea for a call-in talk show focused on life's most difficult moments, where listeners can share stories of heartache, loneliness, and healing. The show, *Calling Claire*, premieres and quickly becomes a hit.





## 1989

**WNCN Celebrates 50 Years:** To commemorate this milestone, WNCN airs a week-long series of special broadcasts, including retrospectives, interviews with former performers, and reruns of classic holiday plays. For some unexplained reason, nobody is able to locate the 1971 broadcast of *A Christmas Carol*. It seems lost to time. The station organizes a community gala, and the event garners significant local media attention.

## 1992

**Expansion of *Calling Claire*:** Due to overwhelming popularity, *Calling Claire* expands to a nightly show. Claire becomes a beloved figure in the community, known for her warmth and understanding. WNCN finds financial stability again, thanks to advertising revenue from Claire's show.

## 1993

**Evelyn Hart joins on *Calling Claire*:** During the holiday broadcast of *Calling Claire*, intern Evelyn "Eve" Hart, unexpectedly steps in to read a heartfelt letter from a listener who couldn't call in. Eve's emotional reading strikes a chord with the audience, and listeners respond with overwhelming support. Her genuine warmth and empathy make her a fan favorite, setting the stage for her future role on the show.



## 1995

**Ruth Dillon Produces a Job:** Ruth Dillon arrives in South Florida, heads straight to the WNCN offices, and tells Claire that she needs to hire her as a new producer of the show. Claire is struck by the boldness of this move and offers her a job on a trial period. Her fresh ideas and strong background in radio breathe new life into the show, helping to expand its reach and refine its storytelling format. Ruth joins the team full-time that Christmas.



## 1998

**Eve Becomes Co-Anchor:** Eve is promoted to the second desk at *Calling Claire*, becoming a consistent and regular support figure on the show and very occasionally stepping in to act as lead anchor if Claire needs a break.

**Ruth Becomes Top Producer:** Ruth is promoted and now serves as the lead producer on *Calling Claire*.

**Behind-the-Scenes Documentary:** A local FAU student, Isabella Flores, produces a documentary about WNCN as her senior thesis, exploring its history and holiday broadcasts. The documentary airs on local public access television, reviving interest in the station among a new generation.



# Dramaturg's Note

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On December 24, 1999, America sat on a precipice, looking into the bright face of a new millennium (or the end of one, depending on who you asked). In the 90s, we'd seen the end of the Cold War. The tech boom created low unemployment and economic prosperity as the dot-com bubble drove a booming stock market. The nation was grappling with the aftermath of President Bill Clinton's impeachment, which had polarized opinions and sparked debates about morality in governance. Despite this, there was a strong sense of pride in national achievements. Cultural trends reflected a blend of nostalgia and innovation, as the rise of the internet transformed communication and media consumption. We were entering a new technological golden age. The approach to 2000 was arguably one of the last times Americans felt widespread, pure optimism about the future. The looming Y2K Bug was the first indication that the decade (and millennium) to come might not all be perfect.

If you aren't familiar, the Y2K Bug was a tech issue and social panic sparked by early computer programmers having used the last two digits for years, rather than all four, in order to save memory space. This meant that when we switched from "99" to "00", computers wouldn't be able to differentiate between 2000, 1900, 1800, and so on.

Y2K made the public suddenly aware that computer chips were in virtually everything around them: traffic lights, trains, planes, vending machines, etc. At this time, only 50% of the public had personal computers - they were common, but not yet in everyone's pocket. And no one definitively knew how much of a problem it would actually be; anything you could imagine wasn't totally out of the realm of possibility. Y2K confronted the public with an overwhelming number of known unknowns. And a conclusive countdown clock.

Technological leaps fundamentally change society. That change can be good or bad and, like any change, brings with it both optimism and anxiety. We're experiencing it again now with AI. While the technology is new, this pattern of change & social reaction is long-established. We experienced it with the telegraph, radios, cars, and TVs. Y2K took things up a notch, as the first time we experienced the cross-pollination of the internet, conspiracies, misinformation, rage-baiting, and capitalism; now a familiar intersection in every modern social panic. If we retain this history in our collective memory, we can take the changes to come with a grain of salt: knowing that things will change, some for the better, some for the worse, but that we will adapt and adjust, as we always have. At the heart of this show are the ideas that "goodwill towards all" is a choice that everyone is capable of making and that nothing matters more than the love we share with each other. My hope is that we can face the changes to come together, empowered by our history and our adaptability, guided by these principles of cooperation and compassion at all times, not just Christmas.



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