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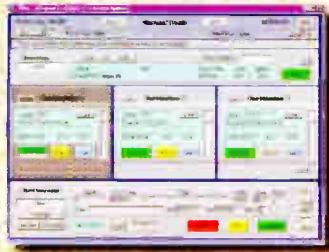
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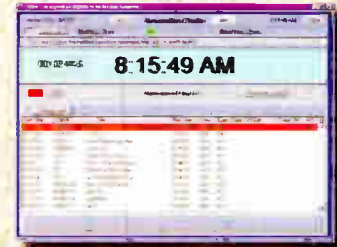
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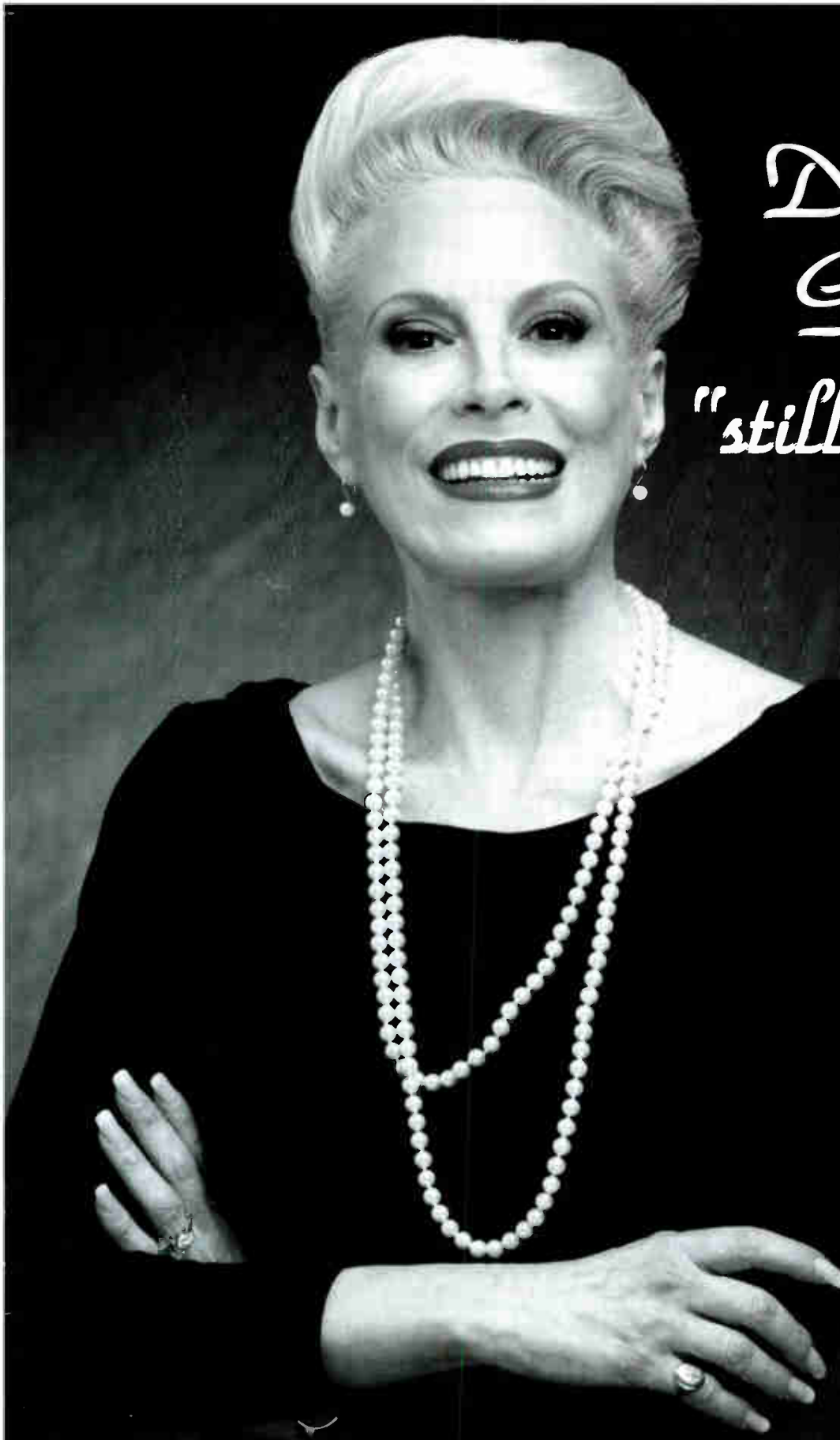
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Tuned In

Editor in Chief

Alan Haber, (703) 329-0980

Consultant

Mark Lapidus

Editorial Assistants

Stephanie Muller, ext. 130

Linda Sultan, ext. 141

Publisher/CEO

Stevan B. Dana

Chief Operating Officer

Carmel King, ext. 157

Editorial Director

Marlene Lane, ext. 128

Sales Manager

Skip Tash, ext. 160

Sales/West

Dale Tucker, (916) 721-3410

Sales/Midwest

Sandra Harvey, (765) 966-0669

Sales/West

Christopher Rucas, (415) 922-5595

Production Director

Lisa Stafford, ext. 114

Production Manager

Lisa Hoagland, ext. 125

Publication Mgr./Graphic Designer

Heather K. Nicholson, ext. 118

Ad Traffic Coordinator

Anastacia Stornetta, ext. 124

Promotions Mgr.

Madhavi Pethe, ext. 118

Classified/Showcase Coordinator

Vicky Baron, ext. 318

Marketing Manager

Heather Harris, ext. 158

Advertising Coordinator

Simone Mullins, ext. 154

Circulation Director

Sheryl Unangst, ext. 164

Fulfillment Manager

Eric B. Blake, ext. 169

Accounts Receivable

Steve Berto, ext. 168

Tuned In (ISSN: 1096-363X) is published monthly by IMAS Publishing, (USA), Inc. PO. Box 1214, Third Floor, Falls Church, VA 22041. Phone: 703-998-7600. FAX: 703-993-2966. IMAS e-mail: 74103.2435@compuserve.com. See bottom of page 6 for editorial contact information. Periodicals postage paid at Falls Church, VA 22046 and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send 3573 forms and address changes to Tuned In, PO. Box 1214, Falls Church, VA 22041. Copyright 1998 by IMAS Inc. All rights reserved. For reprints contact: Geelle Hirtenfeld, ext. 159, Tuned In.



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Time Spent Listening



Alan Haber



Photo by Alan R. Peterson

My Great Pleasure

This is the last issue of *Tuned In*.

When things you have loved come to an end, there is sometimes a tendency to allude to favorite song lyrics that illustrate how you feel. A few come to mind, but I won't quote them here; they'll seem obvious and put frowns on the faces of the audience.

Tuned In's time has, unfortunately, come, but the lack of movement on our second hand, owing to market conditions and other forces of nature, should not be a cause for mourning. Instead, I invite you to sing our praises and celebrate our vision and commitment to radio. I assure you we never gave anything less than our very best.

Which is why we're not actually saying goodbye. Well, in a physical sense, we are; the publication that started out as *The Radio World Magazine* in September 1994 and was reborn as *Tuned In* in January 1996 will be no more after this issue. The managerial spirit of this magazine will live on, however, in the pages of our sister publication, *Radio World*, in the form of an expanded and enhanced *Running Radio* section. Look for our popular *Market Watch* corner, and some of your favorite *Tuned In* writers, to appear there beginning in *RW's* May 27 issue.

Until then, treasure, if you will, our last offering. It has been my great pleasure to have been at the helm of this magazine for the last seven months. It's not always been an easy road, but we have certainly arrived at our destination with very few bumps or bruises and lived to tell the tale.

It has been my good fortune to have been able to draw from a talented pool of writers to fill these pages. Our efforts have been of the team variety; if we'd been in baseball, the last seven months would have been like the World Series and we would have come out on top together. So, in no particular order, Frank Montero, Doug Hyde, Sandy Wells, Kim Komando, Doug Burton, Flip Michaels, Bob Rusk, Vincent M. Ditingo and Harry Cole, take a well-deserved bow. And Lucia Cobo, who welcomed me with open arms to *Radio World* four years ago, please accept with my heartiest appreciation a dozen virtual roses.

To all the freelance writers who gave their full dedication and helped make *Tuned In* the best magazine resource for radio management, thanks from the bottom of my heart. Thanks also to some of radio's greatest voices and hearts, from Gary Owens to Casey Kasem and Cousin Bruce Morrow, for a boatload of support and encouragement. And many sincere thanks to Heather K. Nicholson, who made these pages look like nothing less than a million dollars.

As for me, well, it's been my experience that you can't keep a good man down, so in the future I will continue to move forward and be found by you, dear readers, waxing poetic about AM, FM and cyberspace in the pages of *Radio World*.

Until then, I bid you a fond adieu. The sound you hear in the distance is not a tear materializing, but radio itself, its heart beating steadily, touching listeners with the sounds of the world's most magical medium. ▼

Be sure to keep "Tuned In" ... to the expanded and enhanced *Running Radio* management section in *Radio World*. Simply fill in the handy card included with this issue. That's all there is to it!

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“WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO MAKE A HIT?”

A SPECIAL TUNED IN SECTION

It's like what any songwriter with a couple of hits under his or her belt will tell you: “If I knew how the magic happened, I'd bottle it and sell it!” The person who gets his musical mitts on such a product will be able to bottle and sell us all. The rest of us will continue to wonder just what makes one song memorable and another simply a memory.

Is making hits a guessing game? Your guess is as good as ours, but we're going to try to provide some answers, at least, in the following pages.

We take a look at the hit-making process with three stories. The first, spun by regular *Tuned In* writer Sandy Wells, tells why making hits is such hard work. The second, also by Wells, looks at the phenomenal hit-making prowess of the British band, Chumbawamba. The third, by pop music journalist David Bash, chronicles the blood, sweat and tears expended by Ray Paul and his Permanent Press Recordings, a small California pop music label that works closely with radio to — what else? — make hits.

It's doubtful that anybody could come up with the one and only true answer to the question, “What does it take to make a hit?” But you can bet the now-and-forever stacks of wax that more than a few people are going to keep trying.



Illustrations by Elaine Crowell

Spinning the Hits:

HOW MANY RPMs DOES IT TAKE?

What does it take to make a hit in 1998? How much has the relationship between radio and record companies changed since the early days of top 40? Or has it changed at all?

Pop music radio stations are more eager to serve and accurately reflect the tastes and desires of core audiences than ever before. But that doesn't mean the process is any simpler than it has been in years past.

"(Radio) people can't decide hits anymore," says Damion Young, music director at Los Angeles station KPWR(FM), Power 106. "You can't take a record and shove it down people's throats. You can't play a record and let repetition handle it."

Just ask the group of Norfolk, Va., DJs who, at the height of the payola scandals around 1960, played a song called "Pahalockaka" 320 times in a row to prove that a hit could not be made by repetition, as noted in Wes Smith's book, "The Pied Pipers of Rock 'n' Roll." The DJs proved their point and, perhaps not coincidentally, lost their jobs, so maybe they're not the ones to ask after all.

Instead, today's radio decision makers should be queried about how records become hits. In 1998, radio travels down many different paths on the way to identifying the hits that will keep listeners tuned to their frequencies. For some stations, it's as simple as playing songs that sound good and deserve airplay.

Take KPWR(FM), for example — the Los Angeles station is arguably the most influential hip hop or rhythmic CHR station in the western United States. To have a record played on the Power 106 airwaves is any record promoter or artist's dream. The streetwise approach the station takes suggests that hip hop is in many respects the heir to the grassroots spirit that rock 'n' roll once exhibited.

"We let the streets break (songs)," says Young. "At the clubs and at the record stores a kid will come up to the mixer and say, 'You played that new record. Will you play it again?' 'Ain't No Fun' by Snoop Doggy Dog was the hottest record on the street (and) at parties, but it got no airplay. Power

MAKING HITS IS HARD WORK. SANDY WELLS IS YOUR DJ DU JOUR

106's philosophy is that if a record is hot on the streets, Power 106 will take a chance on it."

And what about the DJ spinning that record? How does the DJ figure into the hit making process? The image of the DJ as impresario-at-large — a "pied piper" willing and able to "influence" his following to buy a certain record — still lives on in legend. But the reality today is that listeners are also lead down the

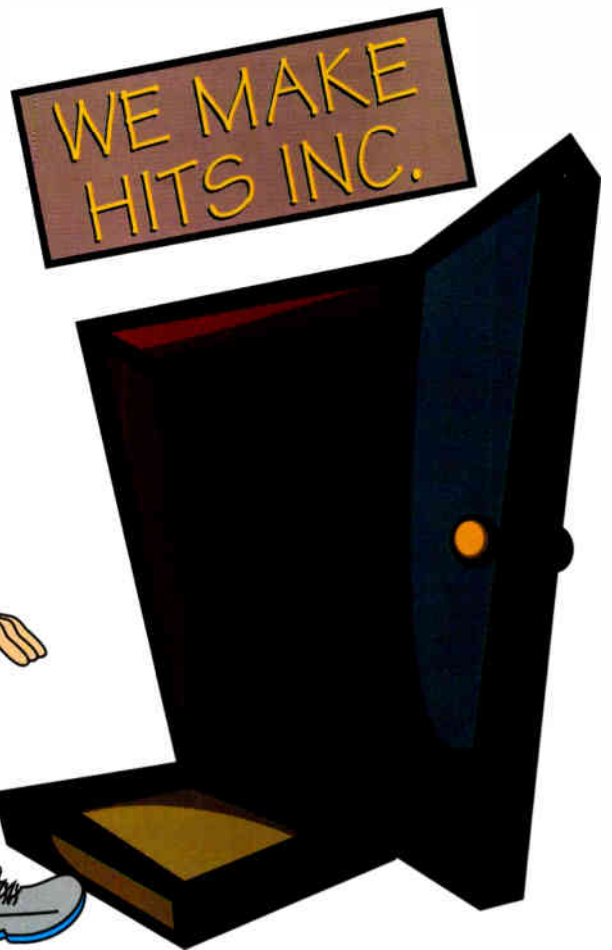
path to retail by the efforts of record companies and radio stations that monitor the likes, dislikes, passions and passing fads of the day.

No dinosaur

Competition has played a strong hand in forcing record companies and radio stations to pay closer attention to societal benchmarks. For example, the stylistic influences of rap are assimilated into the work of white artists such as Beck, Sugar Ray and Alanis Morissette. These artists' offerings are unimaginable without the element of the streetwise music form.

It's hard to say just where the key commonalities of hit radio lie, but a few things are certain. The early 1990s fragmentation of radio put up walls between different kinds of pop artists, tossing out allusions to the pre-rock 'n' roll era. Few black artists make it onto

It's not as easy
as visiting the
local hit-making
store ...



alternative radio and fewer whites are heard on urban radio. And, as recently as two years ago, top 40 was widely considered to be a dinosaur, doomed to extinction as specialty formats continued to win the ratings wars.

"CHR had bottomed out," explains Dominic Theodore, also known as "Domino," assistant program director and a music director at Tampa CHR WFLZ-FM. "Music is always cyclical. You had the rap phase a few years ago. Now it's coming back to top 40."

Today, as in yesteryear, it is in top 40 that the crosscurrents of different styles and genres come together. "CHR has always been a format of crossovers," says Domino. "You have to know if a song fits. We've gone deep into album cuts from Janet Jackson. The record company isn't picking them, but we play them because they're hits. But you have to do that sparingly. The music still has to be mass appeal. It's a careful balance."

The abundance of formats in radio today makes the cozy consensus of the old days of AM top 40 an impossibility. These days, just about anything goes whether an artist is known or unknown. A hit record that begins life spinning within a specific format may go on to crossover success, as artists like Boyz II Men ("I'll Make Love To You"), Chumbawamba ("Tubthumping") (see sidebar) and Bob Carlisle ("Butterfly Kisses") can attest.

Radio may function as a more fertile hit-friendly landscape than ever before, especially given the current resurgence of top 40. "Mainstream top 40 is on the rise again, if you look at the number of top 40 stations in major markets," says Chuck Field, assistant director of promotion for 550 Music, which handles artists like Celine Dion and Ben Folds Five.

"At this point, top 40 has made a major comeback with the rise of modern AC and rhythmic CHR. Top 40 has more to draw from — alternative sort of warms up the hits for top 40."

Consider top 40 as a kind of musical melting pot. "The great thing about top 40 is (stations) can pick off the best music from all these formats," says Monte Lipman, product director for radio promotion at Universal Records.

Crossover smash potential

What gives a record crossover smash-potential? The Spice Girls — like them or not — certainly took advantage of their 15 minutes of fame: the group is big enough to have made a lengthy appearance on "Oprah" and appeared in their own feature film, "Spice World." And, let us not forget, the group has racked up a fair share of hits in a very short period of time.

Of course, star power on *any* level never hurts when hit status — format specific or crossover — is desired.

"Celine Dion, in every sense of the word, transcends formats," says Field.

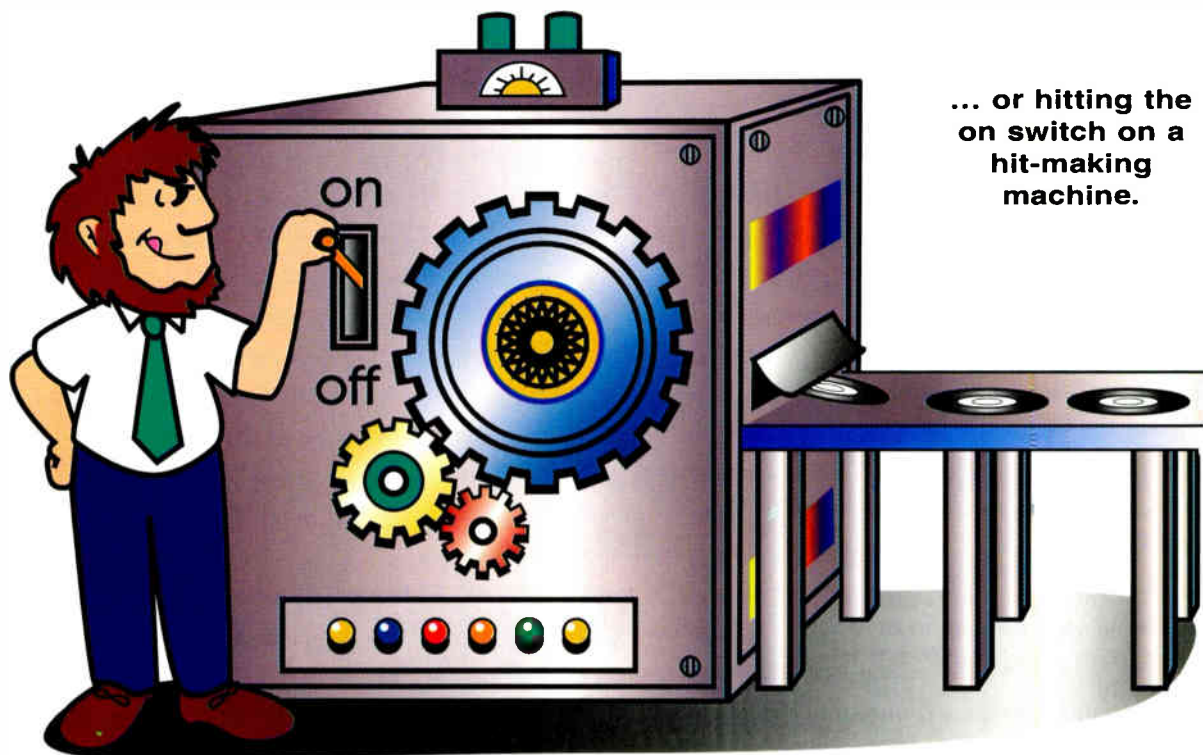
"Celine would be a hit artist in any day and age. She's so talented with such an amazing voice. She would be huge anytime."

Dion is no stranger to the smash hit single, and neither is hit radio. But is hit radio biased toward the smash single at the expense of risk-taking, even when established artists are concerned? And what about genre format stations? They may be guilty of overexposing accepted artists that have nothing new to say or digging a little too deep for cuts by proven core artists in order to keep their sound consistent.

Sometimes, familiarity breeds more of the same and that's not always a good thing. But who is to say who should be the judge? Take the appearance on the alternative scene of countless Alanis Morissette clones. One thing is for sure — nothing succeeds like success.

Some industry folks don't think this is a bad thing ... I think we're going through a kind of Joni Mitchell phase," says John Dimick, program director at Columbus, Ohio station WNCI(FM). "Paula Cole, Sarah McLachlan, Lisa Loeb, Shawn Colvin ... I think it's good."

At some point, however, a particular format may take on a new significance. Take alternative: Many programmers were forced to pull back on playing cuts from Morissette's "Jagged Little Pill" album after pop/CHR, Hot AC, AC and AAA sta-



... or hitting the on switch on a hit-making machine.



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tions started coming along for the ride.

"Somebody has killed pop radio (in the United States)," says Doug Smith, business manager for English pop stars Chumbawamba (see sidebar). "I get so sad when I hear (Chumbawamba's song) 'Amnesia.' We can't get alternative (radio) because we're going top 40."

Success has not significantly softened the identity of genre formats such as alternative, which rely on an image of separateness and a cutting edge reputation to maintain credibility with core listeners. "You have to have some gut instincts to do this format," says Steven Strick, music director at Boston station WBCN(FM). "The whole (alternative) format depends on getting things on first. We were the first station in the country to play (Chumbawamba's) 'Tubthumping' and Alanis Morissette. We heard them and added them before they were released and the record companies started working them."

Today, the legendary Boston rocker is very different than it was in the early "free form" days, when station honchos went out of their way to avoid a commercial hit radio image and allowed DJs to play what they wished. Today's alternative WBCN makes no pretense of such free-form latitude. "Hits sell records and hits make money and (they) get people to listen to radio,"



says Strick. "We like hits."

The same can be said for all music radio stations, of course — formats be damned. "Radio still has emotion," says Dimick. "I don't think you'll ever get away from that. It's hard to detect emotion on the 'net or on MTV. You can tell when one of our DJs feels a record is hot. They have a good time."

A kid's dream

DJs may even be having a *great* time on the air today, but perhaps no one is having a better time than the younger demographic tuned to their stations. But are these future key demographic-types being super-served or underserved?

"A kid's dream station is all new music," Kelly Nash, program director at New Haven pop/CHR station WKCI(FM), points out. "Once (kids) know the title (of a song), they want to hear something new. They keep the numbers up at night, but we can't sell them to advertisers."

And then there are the over-21 listeners. To keep them from straying to other stations, Nash programs plenty of recurrents during the day, a practice deemed essential by virtually all programmers.

Popular stations stay popular by knowing as much as they can about their marketplace. "The marketplace dictates what people want to hear," says Strick. "If a certain kind of music is

Chumbawamba: Hit Bound -

It may have been the best 250 pounds ever spent by someone in the British record business.

Certainly Chumbawamba was not in anyone's pick-to-click file before the British group's smash breakout single "Tubthumping" burst onto the global record scene in 1997 and dominated chart after chart (in the United States, the song hit number one on the Billboard Modern Adult Contemporary, Top 40 Mainstream, Adult Top 40, Hot 100 Airplay and Modern Rock Tracks charts).

"(Tubthumping) had been turned down by various record companies," says Doug Smith of London-based Doug Smith and Associates, which handles Chumbawamba's business affairs. "One (record) person who disagreed called The Tip Sheet." An influential compilation CD of "songs to watch" that is circulated among British and European record executives, The Tip Sheet featured "Tubthumping" (Smith took a shot and paid the 250 pounds necessary to secure a spot on the disc) and the rest is history.

It wasn't long after appearing on The Tip Sheet that "Tubthumping" caught the attention of Helmut Fest, a top executive with EMI Germany. Fest quickly passed the disc onto his boss Rupert Perry of EMI Europe.

Smith recalls that Fest "put together a European deal" for Chumbawamba "in 48 hours," leaving the lucrative American market open for a separate deal, which turned out to be not very far down the road.

72 hours

"Lee Chestnut, who worked at VH-1, heard 'Tubthumping' off (The Tip Sheet) CD," says Monte Lipman, then with Republic Records and now product director at Universal Records in New York. "(Chestnut) called me up and played it over the phone. According to the (The Tip Sheet), (Chumbawamba) was unsigned. We did a little research (and) contacted their managers. Within 72 hours of hearing the song for the first time, we put together a deal with Republic Records — my brother's label — and now it's on Republic/Universal."

But before signing the deal, Lipman flew to Switzerland in May 1997 to hear the eight-member group perform outdoors at the Swiss Festival in Zurich. EMI Germany representatives were there, too. The band, at the time signed to One Little Indian, a small label in London, had built a cult following in Britain and Europe.

"Everyone sat down (and) had dinner at the hotel," says Smith. "The band performed and everybody with the company said, 'They are fantastic live performers!'" After being released in late July 1997, "Tubthumping" bounded to the top of Billboard's U.K. charts. A month later, the song started making waves in America.

"Tubthumping" refers to radical sixteenth century religious protesters who literally banged on tubs at street corners and spoke out against hypocrisy and social injustice. The record's social message — acknowledging the universal little guy standing at a bar and spouting his views to local clientele — may be missed by young people around the globe picking up the CD at their local record stores, but the message influ-

not being played, it doesn't take long before someone figures it out and starts playing it."

The local angle is key. "There's tremendous success where people look to the locality," says Domino. "I look forward to the day when I can drive across the country and hear different kinds of stations — where after listening for an hour you get a sense of the town (and) where the hip places are."

But will all of those stations be playing the hits of the day? Breaking hits still requires much of the same old-fashioned legwork and hustle it used to. But some things are different: the obstacles to national mass appeal, for example, are more complex. Record promoters have to use more skill and persuasive power to demonstrate why a new record will help a station.

In other words, is a record exciting? Does it have a good hook? Does it have something to offer to listeners that will trigger a reflection of their everyday lives and emotions?

Welcome to the world of hit radio — a format that just will not die.

"People have been trying to kill top 40, (but) it's a very new format," says Domino. "You've got to use research as a tool. You can't spend too much time testing a new record, otherwise by the time you get the results, the trend's all over."

In the end, whether or not a record is a hit comes down to the goose-bump factor. Do listeners get goose-bumps when they hear a particular song? Do they want to hear that song again and again? Are they talking about that song to friends?

"We even see on AOL chat rooms where people will talk about what they're hearing on the radio," says Dimick. "They'll write, 'Hey, hurry up and listen to this!' People still want to know what everybody's favorite music is. Radio is a common ground." ▼

Sandy Wells, editorial coordinator for the Los Angeles Radio Guide, also reports on traffic for Metro Networks and is a host on Personal Achievement Radio. He can be reached via e-mail at : KPWR14a@prodigy.com



SMALL LABEL, BIG GOALS

Ray Paul's Permanent Press targets radio with passion and conviction, says David Bash

In the high tech, corporate-oriented 1990s, the owner of a small record company must feel like a guppy in an ocean full of barracuda. However, by being selective about the artists he signs, judicious in targeting media for promotional purposes and zealous in the pursuit of his goals, an owner can not only survive but also become a mainstay in the industry.

Take Ray Paul, owner of Sherman Oaks, Calif.-based

continued on page 37 ➤



Ray Paul

— And Then Some

ences Chumbawamba's music.

"The members of the band are anti-establishment," says Smith. "They have a lot to say and they are very politically motivated. Their beliefs come before commercial success. Halfway through an appearance on (the David) Letterman (Show), they interrupted (their performance) to advocate for the release of an American political prisoner (on death row in Pennsylvania)."

It's a hit!

Why is "Tubthumping" such a hit? Jay Taylor, program director at alternative station KOME(FM) in San Jose, Calif., saw the writing on the wall. "We went on ('Tubthumping') really early because we felt it would be a big record for the format."

Pop/CHR stations were also sensing something big. "Monte Lipman called me and played me the cut from (The Tip Sheet)," says John Peake, program director for



Houston CHR KRBE-FM. "He said, 'I think I have a number one record for you.' It had tempo, a fresh sound for the format and a hook that repeats and repeats.

"We were really excited about it. We knew it would probably go alternative first and we wondered how it would fit in, (but) some records you know will be big regardless of what format it comes from. We thought it would burn earlier, but it's not even showing any signs of that now."

In Florida, it was much the same story. "It reminded me of when I was a little kid," says Dominic Theodore, also known as "Domino," assistant program director and a music director at Tampa CHR station WFLZ-FM. "I'd be listening to the radio on my Fisher stereo and jumping up and down on the bed. ('Tubthumping') has an exceptional hook and it struck me as having a new sound. I listened to that song over and over again for a week and then I brought it in and everyone agreed to give it a try." ▼

— Sandy Wells

Chumbawamba takes five

Down by the Old Cyber-audio Stream

Doug Hyde casts a line into the increasingly radio-packed streaming audio waters



Radio in the 1990s: Just when it seems as though you have the edge on your competition, the competitive landscape changes, and in a completely different way than you may have imagined. Signals from markets all over the United States and overseas are becoming available to your listeners. Suddenly you are competing with WQAM(AM) in Miami, WGRR(FM) in Cincinnati, WNNX(FM) in Atlanta and Virgin Radio in London.

Just when you thought fragmentation had reached its peak, more new formats are appearing. How do "The Algorithmic Stream" (algorithmic music) and Orange Sunshine Web Radio (1960s psychedelic music) sound? There are even formats devoted exclusively to artists such as the Grateful Dead, Phish, Jimmy Buffett and Pink Floyd.

For some stations, this scenario may well seem unbelievable, but for many modern PC owners, it is a fast-growing reality and it's all taking place in cyberspace. Like it or not, Webcasting is here to stay.

According to a report published by BRS Media, a San Francisco-based consulting firm, 1,183 providers are webcasting live audio streams on the Internet (more than 21 times the number doing so only two years ago). This programming can be heard by using such players as RealNetworks' RealAudio, Telos's AudioActive and Microsoft's NetShow.

Roughly 1,100 of these 1,183 webcasters are over-the-air radio stations. Webcasts can be accessed through AudioNet, the BRS Web Radio site and individual station sites. AudioNet and the BRS site feature links to stations beaming into cyberspace everything from adult alternative to adult standards, from markets as diverse as New York and Cullowhee, N.C.

Increasing steadily

The number of webcasting stations — both over-the-air and Internet-only — is increasing steadily. And look which quadrant is gaining steam. "There are more commercial stations

streaming now, where two years ago it was mainly college stations," says George Bundy, president of BRS Media. Bundy says that there has been explosive growth in the number of Web sites that stream audio over the Internet. "Two years ago, there were only 56 sites with streams," he observes. "Now there are (over) 1,100. It's a part of radio that's taking on a life of its own."

Adding an audio stream to a radio station's Web site carries several important benefits, according to Brian Burns, director of programming for SFX Broadcasting in Raleigh, N.C. Burns added audio streams to enhance the Web sites of CHR/alternative WDCG(FM), AOR WRDU(FM), oldies WTRG(FM) and AC WRSN(FM).

"We developed Web sites for our four stations, so it was only natural to provide a live audio stream," says Burns. A specific advantage of streaming, he adds, is the opportunity to augment a station's midday daypart. "It's an opportunity to reach at-work listeners, as there is so much multitasking on computers these days," he says.

Reaching listeners at work is important to the New York country Y-107 trimulcast, according to Jason Steinberg, director of marketing and promotions for Odyssey Communications stations WWXY(FM), WWZY(FM) and WWVY(FM). "A lot of stations can't reach the skyscrapers, and in some offices the boss chooses the station," he says. "Now, you can just plug in your (computer) soundcard at the office and hear Y-107."

Susquehanna Radio Corp.'s KRBE-FM in Houston joined AudioNet as part of the station's efforts to be on the cutting edge of technology, according to Nancy Vaeth, vice president and general manager. "It's an emerging technology that has potential," she says of webcasting. "It is yet another way that you can listen to the radio, so we wanted to be a part of it."

Webcasting is a natural fit, Vaeth notes, with the younger demographics of KRBE's CHR format. "In the age group that we

target," she offers, "we have more people interested in the Internet than those formats with older demos."

Listeners is one thing, but pumping up the bottom line is another. Can webcasting help bring in extra income for stations? Bundy offers some cautious words: "It's a situation where we need to crawl before we can walk." Nevertheless, he adds, stations should be proactive and look "out of the box" to find ways of making money with their sites. "You can't create a Web site and an audio stream and have (them) just sit there," he says. "You wouldn't do that with a radio station. Why do that with your Web site?"

Finding new ways to help radio stations make money from their Web activities is a specialty of the Chicago-based Magnitude Network. One brainchild of this operation is WEBX(FM) in Champaign-Urbana, Ill., an over-the-air station that streams its signal on the Internet and operates a Web site that includes links to station advertisers.

According to Bob Saldeen, vice president of Web development for Magnitude, there is a substantial opportunity for radio stations to use their Web sites to augment revenue. "It's a great way to build relationships with advertisers," he says, explaining that adding an audio stream to a radio station's Web site increases the effectiveness of the site as a whole. "An audio stream increases traffic and time spent on the site. You not only get more visitors, but they stick around longer," he says.

Magnitude Network President Todd Schmidt says that his company utilizes the Web to "increase listening, enhance listener loyalty, become a destination site and provide nontraditional revenue sources for our stations." Schmidt notes that these sources can include standard banner ads and Web page links, as well as "e-commerce" opportunities like on-line music and book sales.

Reach beyond

Just who is listening to audio on the Internet? According to a report published by AudioNet, 80 percent of listeners are male; 50 percent of the total number are in the 35-54 demographic. And where are they listening? Is the Internet a tool for over-the-air radio stations to reach beyond their local markets? And should it be?

Although WDCG(FM) has reported webcast listeners emanating from the local Raleigh-Durham market and all the way to Saskatchewan, Canada, Burns claims that it is premature to expect a high level of listening to an audio stream in a foreign market. "It's impor-

tant to remember radio's strength as a local medium," he says.

According to Bundy's studies at BRS Media, "Fifty to 70 percent of listeners to radio station audio streams are actually local listeners (who) don't happen to be near a radio. This offers a tremendous advantage to local stations, as they have the opportunity to grab a section of another station's cume and recycle them."

The localized nature of Internet listening is also present on AudioNet, according to Andy Collins, the company's affiliate relations manager. "Users can't often access the local programming they like on their radio at work, so they turn to AudioNet on their PCs," he says. As far as out-of-town listening is concerned, Collins notes that sports and news programming attract the most listeners. "During national news stories, those cities where the breaking news is happening tend to experience a surge in listenership," he says.

But what about Internet-only webcasters? It appears that over-the-air stations may not have the webcasting market sewn up. Internet-only webcasters are providing a growing alternative to programming available from over-the-air outlets. BRS Media lists 99 Internet-only webcasters, many of which feature pro-

gramming aimed at a more focused group of listeners than over-the-air stations may be able to satisfy.

Consider, for example, "Glossy Radio," aimed at preteen girls and featuring "fashion, beauty, boy talk, etc." and "Virtually Canadian," which offers only Canadian programming.

"It's very similar to what FM was like in the '60s and '70s," says Bundy, stating that Web-only casters serve listeners seeking an alternative.

One such webcaster is Tracy Barnes, who along with other former "Z-Rock" hard rock network employees launched "HardRadio," a 24-hour hard rock/heavy metal Internet-only outlet. Barnes created HardRadio in large part to serve the niche that exists for 1980s heavy metal artists such as Judas Priest, Def Leppard and Motley Crue — artists who Barnes claims are underserved in commercial radio. "There is a substantial audience that grew up listening to Motley Crue, while rock stations today are playing The Toadies," says Barnes.

Another Internet-only webcaster catering to an audience not reached by stations on the commercial dial is "GoGaGa Radio," which evolved from the college and free-form community

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airwaves. "The station appeals specifically to an upscale, sophisticated, educated audience that is turned off by the mind-numbing repetition and low-brow antics of most commercial radio stations," says Joe Petrillo, general manager of The Eclectic Radio Company, GoGaGa's parent. With a playlist featuring artists such as Buffalo Daughter and Fatal Mambo who by and large have not yet hit the mainstream, Petrillo serves the "large and loyal audience for the kinds of programming that mainstream radio, by definition, cannot offer."

An Internet-only webcaster that tries to appeal to a wide variety of listeners is NetRadio, which offers more than 150 audio streams for both broad and narrow tastes. David Witzig, the Minneapolis-based outlet's vice president of content and commerce development, says that NetRadio started in October 1995 with such traditional formats as modern rock, country, hot AC, jazz and classical. The provider has since grown to offer more-focused music brands.

"When AudioNet came on, we found that the traditional formats were no longer different enough," says Witzig. "We wanted to offer every format that traditional radio could never offer." To that end, NetRadio now offers more-focused musical choices such as ska, trip-hop and Celtic. "Who else would have 'Gregorian Chant' as part of their lineup?," he asks.

Radio stations?

But are listeners on the Internet embracing niche formats, or are they sticking with their tried and true traditional brethren? According to Bundy, the top formats on the World Wide Web are country, news/talk and rock — formats that are especially strong on over-the-air stations. Witzig notes that the top formats offered by NetRadio in terms of audience are pop hits and modern rock.

Even though they feature music, such "radio stations" rarely feature air personalities. So, can they be considered radio stations? Barnes considers HardRadio to be a radio station, saying that the outlet "does everything that a normal station does and more." HardRadio even reports to music trade publications. Barnes maintains that while HardRadio does not have voices introducing the music, the visual aspects of the station's Web site take the place of air personalities.

"We have a third dimension that radio does not have," he says, adding that the visual information on the HardRadio site is an appropriate substitute for air personalities. "What do you need a jock for

when you have information on the artists and the title of the current song available on your computer screen?," he asks.

GoGaGa is one Internet-only webcaster that does feature air personalities introducing the music. "We have intentionally tried to create a 'radio' product ... that has several important characteristics including personality, shared experience, editorial authority and point-of-view," says Petrillo. Air personalities, he notes, add an integral element to GoGaGa's free-form style. "The (air personalities) ... have both a good ear for and deep knowledge of a diverse range of music, have a natural-sounding on-air style and, per our free-form, eclectic format, understand segues."

So Internet-only webcasters are aiming their product at specific, target audiences. But are they also making a buck in the process? GoGaGa's programming is sponsored by K-Swiss athletic shoes, Silicon Graphics and Sprint. Petrillo aims to use GoGaGa to "combine the editorial model of public broadcasting with the commercial mode of the Internet. We want to make on-air advertising work, so that's where we're focusing our efforts."

Barnes says that regular advertisers on HardRadio's Web site include US Robotics, Discover, Guitar Center and Seiko. He notes that the banner ads on the site are particularly effective in producing results. For example, he points out that a test ad for a stockbroker yielded a 15 percent "click through" (the percentage of viewers who click on an ad banner and are then transported to an advertiser's site). NetRadio's revenue streams include "CDPoint," which links songs playing on a NetRadio stream to an on-line store where corresponding CDs can be purchased.

Success?

Both over-the-air stations simulcasting their signals on the Internet and Internet-only webcasters are working hard to make webcasting a way of life. But, with so many more radio stations in the United States alone still not webcasting their signals, can webcasting be considered a success? The answer depends largely on whom you ask.

Proponents of Internet radio boast large listening figures — AudioNet claims more than 325,000 unique listeners per day; Barnes estimates that 350,000 people listen to HardRadio in a month's time. But while these numbers appear to be substantial, they have yet to show up on Arbitron's doorstep. Only then, perhaps, will webcasting really be considered successful to some observers.

According to Arbitron Vice President of Communications Thom Mocarsky, a

Summer '97 study of more than 80,000 diaries in varying market sizes commissioned by the company found that only 10 diaries featured entries that could be credited to the Internet, including those that mentioned listening to out-of-market signals.

Mocarsky says that such entries were characterized by low levels of listening, mostly at under 30 quarter-hours a week. "We don't have enough information to know what's going on yet," he notes. A similar Arbitron study is scheduled for this summer.

So where is webcasting headed? In the future, Bundy says that Internet-only webcasters "will be able to provide programming that is unique, yet broad-based enough to draw attention away from over-the-air stations." He forecasts that the nature of Internet-only webcasting will become more competitive as more stations vie for top-of-mind awareness.

"While (the RealAudio PlayerPlus) allows you to set 40 preset buttons," he says, "most Internet listeners, like most over-the-air listeners, only set five or six stations, so stations will consider how they can be one of those six buttons."

Doug Hyde, a media writer and Internet junkie living in Tampa, Fla., is a regular contributor to Tuned In. He can be reached via e-mail at Doug601@aol.com



Surf on over to the cyber-entities mentioned in this article. Here is a select list:

Various

BRS Media <http://www.brsradio.com>
AudioNet <http://www.audionet.com>
BRS Web Radio <http://www.web-radio.com>

Over-the-air webcasters

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Virgin Radio <http://www.virginradio.co.uk>
WDCG(FM)
http://www.radio.audionet.com/radio/Top_40/WDCG
WEBX(FM) <http://www.webxfm.com>
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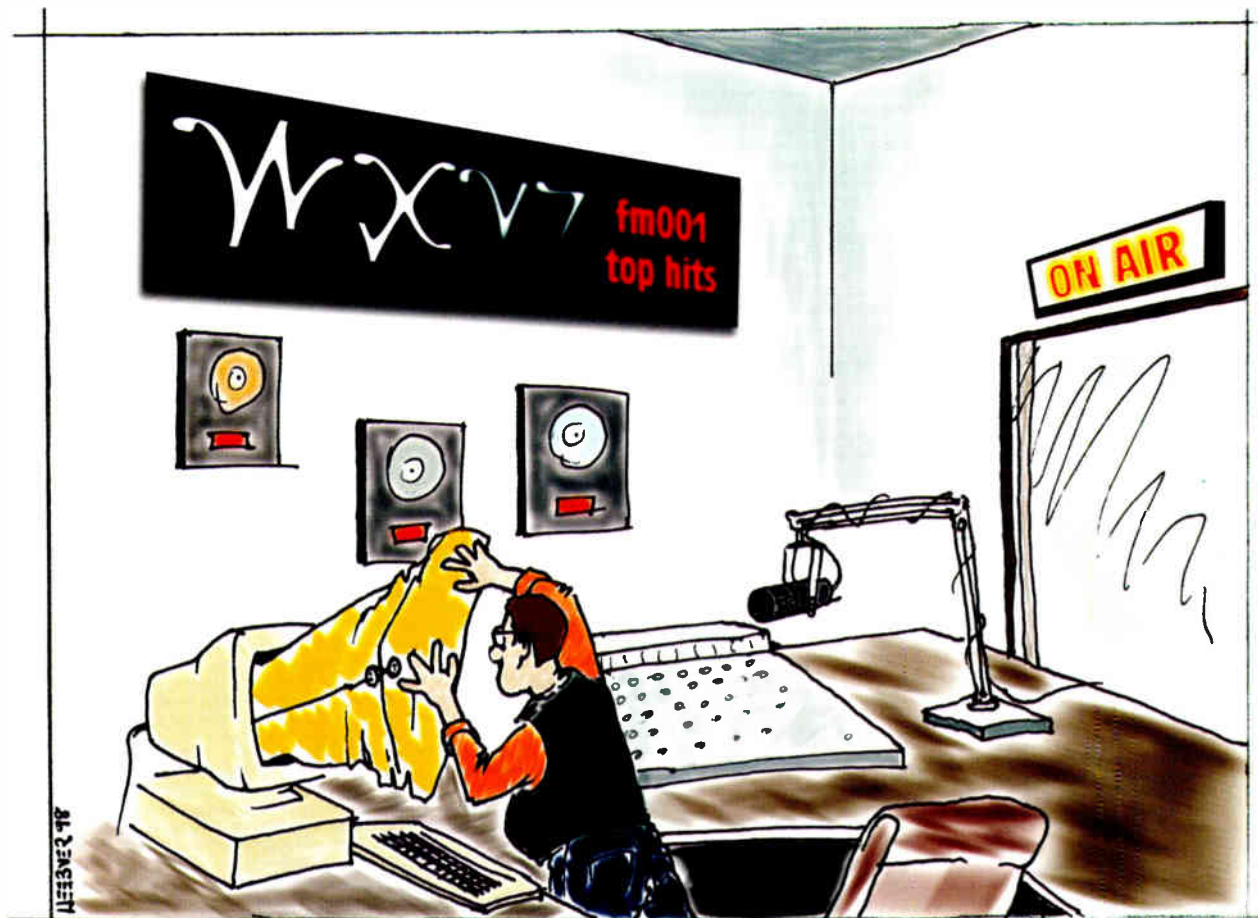
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Pushing the Envelope



Kim Komando



Web sites are like opinions. Everybody's got one. And just like many opinions, some radio Web sites aren't worth the disk space they occupy. Slap up a few DJ or program host photos, throw in some programming schedules, add the obligatory e-mail link, and they're done. Big deal.

On the other hand, more and more radio stations across the country are pushing their Web sites toward the cutting edge. In the process they are creating sites with some real value for their listeners. I hope that the trend will continue.

Morning jokesters Jeff and Jer at San Diego station KFMB-FM (Star 100.7) have implemented a wide variety of Internet technologies on their site (<http://www.jeffandjer.com>) to accommodate their listeners. The site is available in both a "regular" and an

"enhanced" multimedia version.

In addition to all the normal stuff — photos, archived best-of clips, e-mail links, etc. — listeners have the option to hear the Jeff and Jer Show live, participate in real-time chat (which sometimes includes the hosts themselves), post messages on a bulletin board, send Internet postcards and, of course, buy Jeff and Jer paraphernalia. The duo is quite popular in San Diego and they take advantage of every opportunity to plug their Web site on their show.

The downside to this great technology is that to take advantage of all that the site has to offer, your Web browser may come down with a case of plug-in overdose. You need Macromedia's Shockwave plug-in for the multimedia, the iChat plug-in to participate in the live chats and the RealPlayer plug-in to listen to the live show feeds. And

because of all of this, connecting with a mere 28.8 kbps modem can sometimes be an exercise in extreme patience. Nevertheless, this site, like its hosts, seems to enjoy a considerable amount of popularity.

The voice

For years, KNAC(FM) was the voice of hard-core, heavy metal rock music in Los Angeles. Then one day in 1995, the station was sold to a Spanish-language broadcaster and both KNAC and Los Angeles heavy metal radio seemed doomed to oblivion. Enter the World Wide Web some two-plus years later.

Just a few weeks ago, KNAC (<http://knac.demonet.com>) (don't bother with <http://www.knac.com>, which is simply a fan site masquerading as an "official" site) reemerged as an Internet-only radio station intent on picking up where it left off. You can now listen to

live KNAC feeds via numerous "reflector" sites around the country.

The good news is that as long as you have a Java-enabled Web browser (i.e., version 3.x and preferably version 4.x of either Netscape Navigator or Internet Explorer), you can hear these feeds with no additional browser plug-in required. The bad news is that even in the wee hours when Internet traffic is relatively low, a standard 28.8 kbps connection produces enough breaks in the sound to push the broadcast quality well beyond the irritating level.

A number of Internet-only live sports "radio" programs are available through outfits like ESPN and Sportsline. From what I've seen, local sports stations seem to think this means there is no room for them. Well, it just ain't so.

One sports-only station that has included live feeds (in addition to the usual stuff) on its Web site is WEEI(AM) in Boston (<http://www.weei.com>). What I especially like about this site is that you don't have to click your way through a multitude of Web pages to get where you're going. One mouse click from the home page and you're listening to the live station feed via your RealPlayer plug-in. If you don't have the RealPlayer, the site offers an

easy link to the RealAudio Web site where you can pick up your free copy. RealPlayer offers a reasonably break-free audio feed even at 28.8 kbps.

If you're looking for a real kick in the britches, try KPLX(FM) (<http://www.kplx.com>). This Dallas-based country station offers its live program feeds via AudioNet (<http://www.audionet.com>). From a listener standpoint, the thing I don't like about AudioNet feeds is that before you hear the live broadcast, you're forced to listen to a commercial and view the Web site of that advertiser. The flip side is that AudioNet generally supplies a very reliable RealPlayer feed.

KPLX seems to recognize the fact that most people turn to the Internet for information, not to listen to country music. In addition to e-mail links, message boards, contest details, etc., this site offers a scrolling news ticker that displays headlines from a wide variety of Internet sources. If you spot a headline that interests you, just give the ticker a clicker to take you right to that news source. In case you can't find what you're looking for there, the site also provides search forms for AltaVista, InfoSeek and Yahoo.

I've noticed that quite a few sites offer both high-bandwidth and low-

bandwidth versions, while others force a multimedia extravaganza on anyone who dares type in their URL. My advice: If you want to add multimedia, go the two-version route.

Some Internet users have fast connections and want to see just how much sizzle you can dish out. Others want to cut to the chase now. If you accommodate both types, you stand a good chance of pleasing everyone. (Who says it couldn't be done?)

While none of the sites I've mentioned is perfect by any means, and I undoubtedly have overlooked many other sites that are as good or better, all these sites are pushing the edge of the envelope and using the Web for something more than a digital billboard. As more stations follow and the technology is further refined, I see a day when a top-notch Web site will be every bit as common as the revered "be the 10th caller" contest. ▼

Copyright 1998, The Komando Corporation. All rights reserved. Kim Komando is a talk radio host (her show is syndicated by WestStar TalkRadio Network to more than 180 stations), TV host, Los Angeles Times syndicated columnist and best-selling author. Her Web site can be found at <http://www.komando.com>

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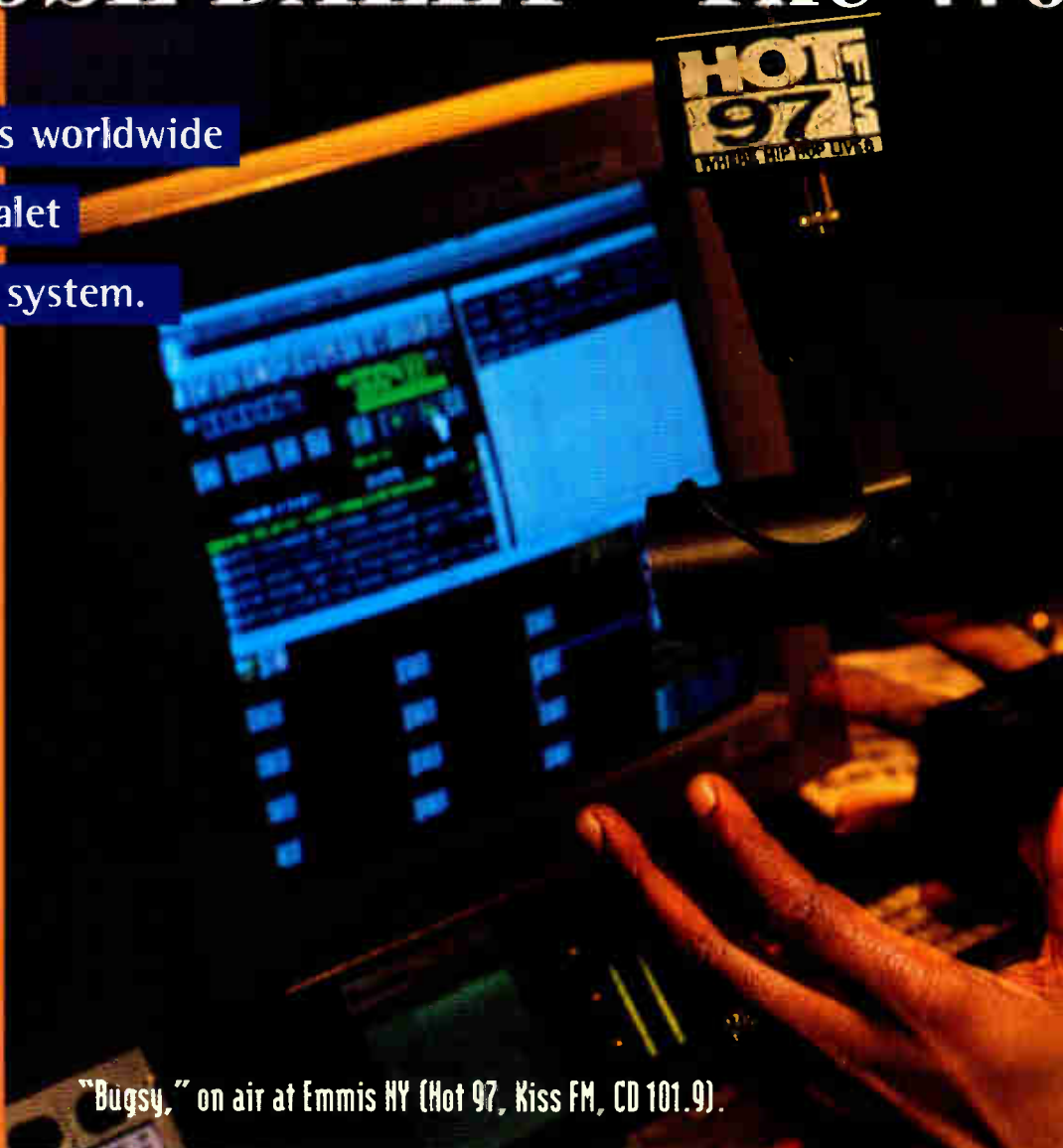
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Station Manager
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"We offer an audience that is not being reached by the people button flipping between the news/talk stations."

Tony Salvadore
Vice President/Market Manager
KNBR(AM)
San Francisco

KNBR 68

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08:21:51.2	BED-26	Disco Returns Music Bed	00:26:30	02.0	01.0					
08:22:16.5	MU508102	Jessie's Girl	03:13:00	04.0	04.0					
08:25:25.5	VO85	Roxette Music Promo	00:02:68	09.9	01.5					
08:25:27.1	101	WBZ-TV (The Uninformed)	00:44:74	01.0	01.0					
08:26:10.8	102	Clothesline-Flat Sweater	00:54:30	01.0	01.0					
08:27:04.1	103-1	Nick @ Nite(Bob Newhart)	01:02:00	01.0	01.0					
08:28:05.1	MU500108	When We Get Married	02:25:32	04.0	04.0					
08:30:26.4	MU500109	Alley Oop	02:40:52	04.0	04.0					
08:33:02.9	MU500110	Angel Baby	03:14:64	04.0	04.0					
08:36:13.5	MU500111	Denise	01:59:44	04.0	04.0					

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Some Thoughts on Low-power Radio



Harry Cole

As you have almost certainly heard by now, the FCC is seriously considering one or more proposals to create a new low-power radio (LPR) broadcasting service. The specifics of what the commission may be thinking about have been addressed elsewhere, so I won't replot that particular ground. What I will offer, however, is a practical timetable for what might happen and some insight into how the FCC might have been motivated to think positive thoughts about LPR.

First, let's look at the timetable. What the commission has in front of it are two petitions for rulemaking — one filed in July, 1997, the other filed in February, 1998. The first was filed by Nikolaus and Judith Leggett and Donald Schellhardt, the second by J. Rodger Skinner, Jr. You can download the Leggett/Schellhardt opus from the FCC's Web site at http://www.fcc.gov/Bureaus/Mass_Media/Filings/rm9208.pdf. The Skinner proposal can be downloaded from the proponent's Web site at <http://www.concentric.net/~radiotv>.

The FCC has issued a public notice advising the public of the filing of the Leggett/Schellhardt petition and inviting comment on it. Comments are due to be filed by April 27, replies by May 26.

Crash course

Here is a crash course in FCC procedures that will help you to understand what this means. The commission makes rules (such as those that pertain to the creation of a new radio service) through the rulemaking process. That process requires the commission to first issue a notice of proposed rulemaking that advises the public of at least the general outline of what is proposed. The public can then submit comments and reply comments; the agency reviews and cogitates on these comments and replies. The upshot to all of this is a Report and Order in which the commission decides whether to adopt new rules and what those new rules should be.

This process can be initiated by the FCC on its own motion, or it can be jump-started by members of the public who submit their own "petitions for rulemaking" in which they lay out their ideas for new rules. This is what has happened with low-power radio — the Leggett/Schellhardt folks sat down, wrote up a petition for rulemaking and shipped it on in.

Just because somebody files such a petition does not mean that the commission has to put it out for public comment. The FCC can ignore such petitions. The fact that the Leggett/Schellhardt petition has been given its own public notice is a clear indication that its proposals are under active

consideration. And sure enough, I have learned that Chairman Kennard himself has indicated a desire to explore the possibilities of LPR on a relatively fast track.

Let's assume that the LPR train is in fact already on the move. What is the likely schedule? As noted above, the comment/reply period won't close until the end of May at the earliest. After that, FCC staff will have to review everything that gets submitted and undertake at least some critical analysis of the proposals in light of the comments. That process is likely to take at least several months and could theoretically result in a decision in which the commission concludes that LPR is not a good idea. Alternatively, the commission could also put the whole thing on the back burner and not issue any decision at all.

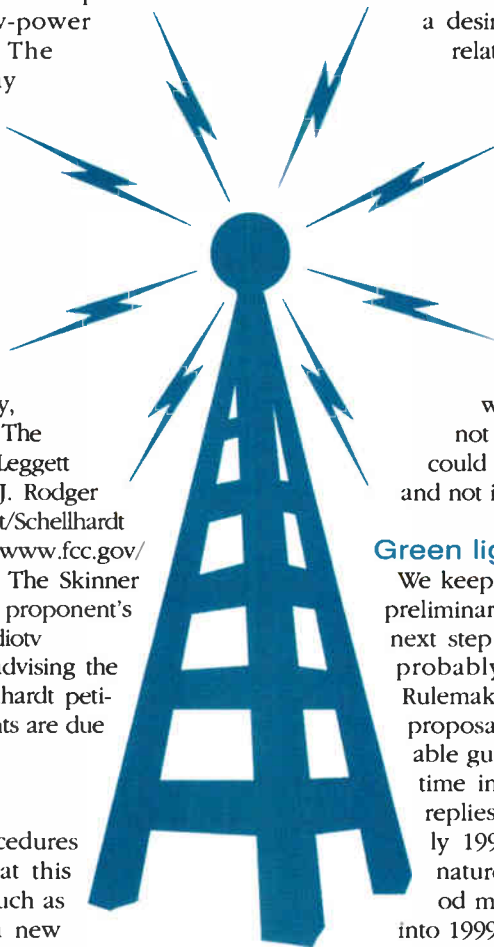
Green light?

We keep hearing that LPR has been given at least a preliminary green light. If that remains the case, the next step after FCC staff reviews the comments will probably be issuance of a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking laying out the commission's own LPR proposal and inviting comments on it. A reasonable guess is that the NPRM could be issued sometime in the fall of this year, with comments and replies due to be filed by the end of 1998 or early 1999. In view of the obviously controversial nature of the proposal, the comment/reply period might ultimately be extended several months into 1999.

At this point, FCC staff would again dig into the submitted comments. If the commission were truly committed to creation of an LPR service, it would then be in a position legally to adopt it. The staff would prepare an R&O setting forth all the new rules, the commission would vote on it and, voila, LPR! But if the comment/reply period were to close in, say, January, 1999, it would be extremely unlikely to see such an R&O before early to midsummer 1999, and possibly not even until the end of that year.

Once the R&O is out, petitions for reconsideration almost invariably will come in, as will judicial appeals. The reconsideration process normally takes at least six to nine months, and often longer. The judicial appeal process normally doesn't get started until the reconsideration process has wrapped up at the FCC; once begun, an appeal usually can be resolved in approximately 12 months.

If these guesstimates are anywhere close to reality, it would appear that low-power radio is not likely to be in place until early in the 21st century, and that's assuming that the momentum behind LPR is not derailed or otherwise countered.



(The process could get drawn out even more if, instead of issuing an NPRM, the commission were at first to issue a Notice of Inquiry in which it seeks comments on specific aspects of the proposal. An NOI is a tentative first step in the rulemaking process, which could lead either nowhere or to the issuance of an NPRM. Remember that before the commission can adopt new substantive rules, it must first issue an NPRM, so issuance of an NOI merely adds one more preliminary procedural step to the process.)

To be sure, once the commission issues an R&O adopting a new LPR service, it could begin to accept applications for that service. But the near certainty of extensive reconsideration and appellate review would ideally lead the FCC not to go too far in that direction until it knew for sure that the LPR service would not be overturned down the line. Otherwise, the commission would be risking chaos.

Two phenomena

It looks like we may be a couple of years away from any new service the commission may want to create. It is nevertheless important to focus on the opportunities presented right now to comment on the proposed LPR service, particularly if you think that the idea is ill conceived. You therefore should be prepared to submit comments at each opportunity to tell the FCC what you think of the proposal, and to analyze and critique the proposal's details. In doing so, you may wish to bear in mind not only the nuts and bolts of the particular proposal, but also the source(s) of the commission's new-found interest in the possibility of LPR.

I strongly suspect that two separate but related phenomena may underlie this interest. The first is the incredible consolidation of radio ownership in the wake of the Telecommunications Act of 1996; the second is the perceived difficulty (arising in part from, but also predating, the consolidation of ownership) of minorities and women to acquire radio station licenses.

While rampant consolidation was a foregone conclusion even before the ink was dry on the Telecom Act, a number of officials, including members of Congress, now claim that it has all been a big surprise to them. Consolidation of radio ownership? How could it happen? Who would have thought?

But despite the occasional disingenuous expressions of surprise from the folks in Washington, the likelihood that the relaxation of ownership limits could be reversed is near zero, so don't expect it to happen. The radio ownership dereg horse left the barn long ago and is now well beyond recapture.

That being the case, how better to deflect the critics of consolidation than by offering a whole new service designed (theoretically, at least) to expand the ranks of broadcast ownership by the thousands? Think blue smoke and mirrors. The LPR proposal could be seen as the flamboyant waving of the magician's wand, the distraction of the magician's free hand while the other, less obvious, hand accomplishes the actual "magic" — in this case the unabated continuation of consolidation while everyone fixates, at least temporarily, on the supposed panacea of an LPR service.

Constitutional muster

The same observation could be made about minority ownership. The commission may be concerned that so few broadcast stations are owned or controlled by minorities or women. And certainly consolidation is not helping those statistics at all. Again, what better way to deflect attention than to create a new service designed in large part to allow minorities and women access to broadcast licenses?

A major problem here is that, even if some minority/female

preference scheme could be devised that would pass constitutional muster, and I strongly believe that no such scheme could be devised, the most the commission could hope for would be a lot of LPR stations owned by minorities and women.

In other words, you would end up with minorities and women in an RF ghetto, confined to extremely limited, low-power facilities and subject to various regulatory constraints not imposed on "real" broadcasters.

Is this what minorities and women really want? I suspect that much of the official impetus for LPR derives from politics and public relations. While there are a whole lot of practical problems with the notion of LPR, these problems can be easily overlooked simply by focusing on the grandiose notions of a new broadcast service affording tremendous opportunities for locally responsive programming presented by owners of all races, ethnic backgrounds and sexes. It all sounds real nice and, in the context of speeches and press releases, is not subject to effective challenge.

Ideally, the commission's current interest in LPR is a passing fancy, intended to distract attention from other phenomena — for instance, concerns about overconsolidation or "underrepresentation" of minorities and women — which the politicians and bureaucrats are unwilling or unable to do anything about. It would be unfortunate indeed if a proposal so fraught with potential practical and conceptual problems were to be embraced by the government because of the proposal's momentary ability to distract the public from problems that the government can't or won't fix. ▼

Harry Cole is a principal in the Washington-based law firm of Bechtel & Cole, Chartered. He can be reached at 202-833-4190 or coleslaw@erols.com



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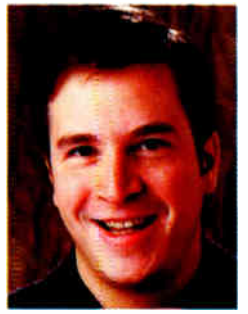


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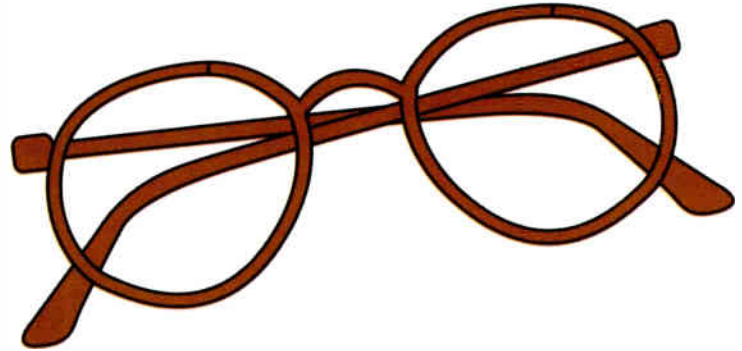
most common marketing problem among local direct clients today.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the business trend was toward diversification — “not putting all your eggs in one basket.” To survive in business today, your client needs a laser-sharp focus and some very unique marketing to cut through the clutter of an overcrowded marketplace.

Coffee shops used to be the place to go to get a cup of coffee, a sandwich and maybe a bagel. Today, you may go to Starbucks for your morning coffee, Subway for a sandwich at lunchtime, and, for breakfast, to Bagelrama to choose from more than 25 different kinds of bagels.

This type of specialization is a classic reaction to overexpansion in the marketplace. The general rule is that companies that focus and specialize, prosper. Unfortunately, many radio clients have held onto the diversification theory when it comes to their ads. The practice of running ads that cover too many different ideas results in a weak brand and confusion in the mind of the consumer. These days, ineffective radio ads blanket the dial in pandemic proportions.

Here is the good news. We are starting to see the evolution of the radio sales rep. The days of selling exclusively off a rate card and writing up an order have given way to helping the client



with many different aspects of marketing his or her business.

Today's radio rep must be able to research the client's industry and help the client plan a marketing strategy that sharpens the focus. Many sales reps are now incorporating a client needs analysis or marketing strategy analysis into their sales presentations. The goal is to develop effective strategies to help the client focus his or her marketing and get better results from the ad dollars invested.

Focused concept

Al Ries, author of the book, “Focus: The Future of Your Company Depends on It,” says the larger the company, the harder it is to get a focused concept for advertising. “You take a particular brand and you'll have a lot of people with a lot of different ideas,” he says. “So guess what? The advertising tends to be a mishmash of everybody's ideas all put together with a nice red bow.”

Ries says that often the result is a very diluted form of advertising that leads to a weak brand and lackluster results from the advertising dollars spent. He believes the best advertising employs a simple idea simply expressed to the listener. “If the advertising message focuses on a single word or concept,” he suggests, “it's going to be effective and it's going to work on radio.”

Still, Ries says some clients may be

skeptical about narrowing their focus. “What you have to do is give the client a few examples of companies that are focused and what they achieved by that,” he says, suggesting the use of Volvo's strong focus on “safety” as an example. Other examples of clients with highly focused positions include BMW and its “driving” position, and the use of the word “thick” in advertising for Prego Spaghetti Sauce.

The problem with many radio commercials today is that they don't start with the basic principle of focus, which is “owning a word in the mind.” Chances are you've encountered a client who is still diversifying, trying to get a tiny share of a lot of different markets. Often, the result is poor sales in every market in which the diversified company is involved. In the movie “City Slickers,” Jack Palance asks, “Do you know what the secret to life is?” His answer? “One thing, just one thing.” As he explains later in the film, the real challenge is finding out what that one thing is.

This is where the radio rep comes in. By taking a look at the big picture from an outsider's point of view, he or she can be instrumental in helping focus the client's business or product. Say, for instance, that Ted, the owner of Ted's Bagels, Soup and More, is seeing lackluster sales across the board. Ted would probably do well to specialize in either the bagel or soup mar-

ket. Shortening his store's name to Ted's Bagels or Ted's Soup may be just the kind of focus needed to supercharge sales. If there are 50 other bagel shops in town, Ted's Cinnabagel, a shop specializing in cinnamon bagels, would probably be a huge success. Creating a new category worked for Starbucks, after all.

Now, you might be saying, "Sure. All these ideas are great, but isn't suggesting that my client change the name of his business going too far?" Not if his business is failing. In fact, if business is that bad, your client is probably eager for suggestions. If the client has a vague or misplaced focus or tries to be all things to all people, chances are that running a heavy schedule on every station in town won't save his bacon.

Strategic plan

Many of your client's national counterparts probably have a great strategic plan and a laser-sharp focus. If you can help your client focus his or her marketing to effectively compete, you will be gaining a client who really believes in radio and will use it extensively. Obviously, someone at Motel 6 realized long ago that radio was the most effective

medium for the product — now the company invests more than 70 percent of its advertising dollars in the medium. Many radio reps are now searching out those companies that have the potential to be a Motel 6-level business and are developing promotional opportunities and advertising that focus the product.

Today, marketing strategies are paramount in the sales process, and the more focused the strategy, the better.

An important thing to remember is that change takes time. Completely refocusing a business may take many months and quite a few presentations to board members.

But the benefits can be many. With a carefully planned focus, your client will see better results from the advertising dollars spent and will most likely become a long-term radio investor. The client's product then has the chance to gain the much-sought-after household name status that products such as Band-Aid and Kleenex have attained over the years.

Every football coach knows the importance of strategy. Even with the best players, if the coach's strategy is lacking, failure is imminent. That is why it is really exciting to see sales reps expanding their sales repertoire to include more than just ratings and rate card presentations. Today, marketing strategies are paramount in the sales process, and the more focused the strategy, the better. True, many diversified companies are able to prosper in the short term, but when pitted against the company with a laser-sharp strategy, focus wins every time. ▼

Doug Burton is creative services director for Trumper Communications stations KISN(FM), KRKR(FM), KUMT(FM) and KOSY(FM) in Salt Lake City. He can be reached at (801) 262-9797.

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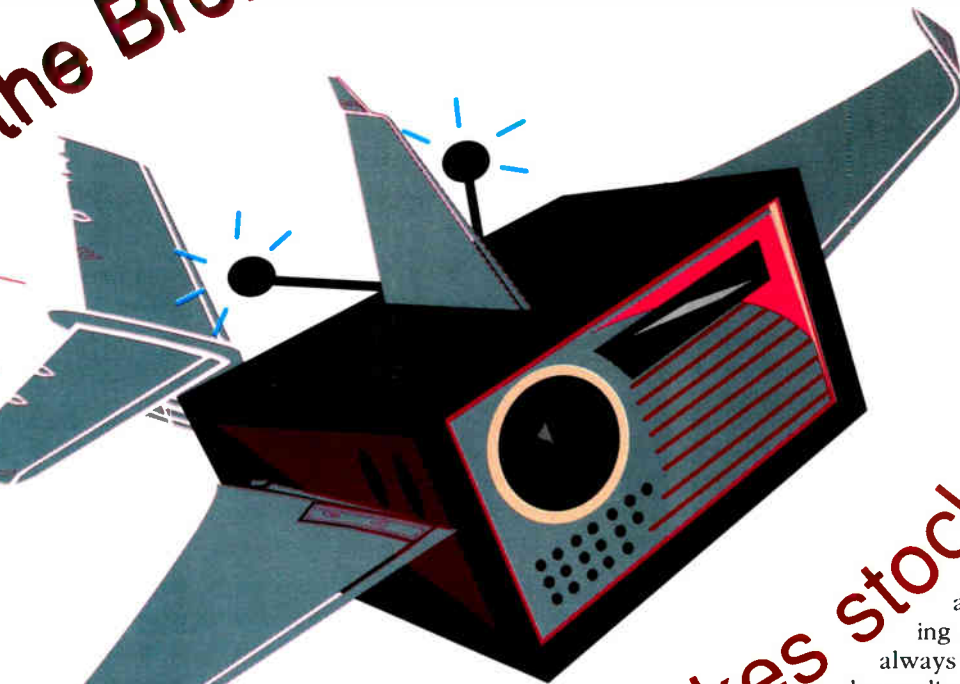
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Radio Stations Take Flight

Is this the Bronze Age of radio?



Sandy Wells takes stock

Perhaps future historians will refer to the 1990s as the beginning of radio's Bronze Age, a time preceded by the Silver Age of local programming achievement and the Golden Age of networks. In the last few years, Wall Street has grown to appreciate radio's profit potential, and Washington has learned to stop sneering at its pundits who successfully orchestrate the fuming of today's disenfranchised Information Age citizens.

What constitutes a top-flight radio station in this new age of mega-mergers and national talkshow stars, of centralized ownership and syndication growth? Is radio inventing its own corporate culture or is it falling victim to an impersonal, paint-by-numbers managerial style often associated — in most cases mistakenly — with big American corporations?

Perhaps radio is simply evolving into a sort of prototype of 21st century business by virtue of its Information Age, combining corporate and national dollar power with local marketing agility and service. Not since the days of Jack Benny and The Lone Ranger has interest in radio been greater.

Or more deserved, especially as the Information Age continues to shape the future path for radio. The local/national hybrid structure of the medium may be in the back of a lot people's minds as they try to puzzle together a conceptual framework for the Internet. Let's face it — radio is the godfather of the Information Age and there is a future for it in cyberspace.

In the here and now, however, radio's influence rests on an invisible foundation. Radio is a business of intangibles.

Achieving and maintaining credibility has always been one of the medium's most difficult tasks in this visually biased culture. Yet, time and again, radio's magical power has been acknowledged by sponsors. The

numbers have been believed, the listeners have shown up at the remotes and the dealerships have been swamped with prospects.

Somewhat, the miracle of radio delivers again and again, and top-flight radio stations set the standards by which all AM and FM outlets live.

Sometimes, a top-flight radio station wears its heart on its sleeve. "I can almost tell a successful station when I walk in the door," says analyst David Schutz, vice president of New Jersey-based Hoffman, Schutz Media Capital. "It is essential to have an esprit de corps. It is the benchmark of a successful station to feel part of a team."

Schutz's company has evaluated more than 900 broadcasting operations — 75 percent of those in radio — in his 31-year career. He believes that it is essential for radio companies to avoid getting bogged down with standardized operating procedures. "Broadcasters must never lose sight of local programming and community events," he says. "If they do that, and do it in a consistent manner, it's the best assurance of maintaining their franchise with advertisers and listeners."

Belief in public trust

It takes hard work to attain and subsequently maintain top-flight status. Stability, for example, goes a long way toward explaining the success that some stations exhibit and celebrate. WJAG(AM) and sister station KEXL(FM) in Norfolk, Neb.,

have been owned by the same family for 75 years. These are arguably the oldest family-owned radio stations in the United States.

"I was at the (NAB Radio Show) last fall and I met a GM from Texas who told me (that) he was the third GM in six months at his station," recalls General Manager Robert G. "Robb" Thomas. "I told him I was the third GM in 75 years at my station."

Granted, Thomas operates small-market stations that fly well below Wall Street's acquisition radar, but there is that stability factor in play. And there is also the feeling that Big Brother is still ultimately in charge.

"The abandonment of ownership restriction has done a grave disservice to our industry and the people we serve," Thomas says. "I believe it is more Wall Street than Main Street."

Paying attention to the nitty-gritty details helps keep a station top flight. Serving a rural community of 21,000, Thomas realizes that his stations stand as a major source of a sense of community for his area.

For him, the benefits of radio's new age of conglomeration are largely illusory.

"It's seemingly different than it used to be, but what goes around comes around," he says. "Every station has a license and obligation to serve the public. There has been a shifting away from those points.

"The realization that you can only go so far is beginning to appear on the horizon. Gambling on a one share in a major market is no more profitable than serving the local community, local businesses. I think some of these owners are rethinking this. How can I best serve the people under this umbrella and not just after the Rodeo Drive audience?"

Personal accountability

Everything a station does resonates in the collective eye of its local community. Without that resonance, a station cannot maintain top-flight status. The success of Dallas powerhouse KVIL-FM flies in the face of today's seemingly exponential growth in adult contemporary formats.

The station sticks to the basics. "Most AC stations want to buy a TV commercial and buy the 400 GRPs and consider that as marketing a station," says Program Director Bill Curtis. "We are extremely active on the street, participating in area events, functions and promotions. We shake the hands, kiss the babies and press the flesh."

Curtis credits his boss of six years,

CBS CEO Mel Karmazin, with setting the pace for success at the station, one of eight CBS-owned radio properties in the market and winner of both the 1997 NAB Marconi Legendary Station of the Year and AC Station of the Year awards.

Karmazin is "probably the single best radio executive I've ever had the pleasure to work with," says Curtis. "His commitment to the product is unparalleled."

According to Curtis, Karmazin looks to his local managers to handle local problems. What if that other AC clobbered KVIL in the last book? "He's not going to do anything," says Curtis. "He's going to expect us to fix it. Since the audience and competition is unique, the answers are in your market. It's a local market business."

Sense of mission

Sometimes, a sense of mission and faith is what it takes for a radio station to maintain top-flight status.

Commercial classical radio has taken it on the chin in the past year, losing major stations in Detroit and Philadelphia. *The New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times* ran nearly concurrent articles last year describing the dwindling appeal of western civilization's 500-year heritage, which used to be called simply "good music." All is certainly not lost, however.

Thomas Bartunek, program director of New York classical station WQXR-FM, sees himself as a fortunate man.

"We have benefited enormously by our corporate ownership," he says. "It is stable and the corporate expectations of us have always been consistent with the station's sense of mission."

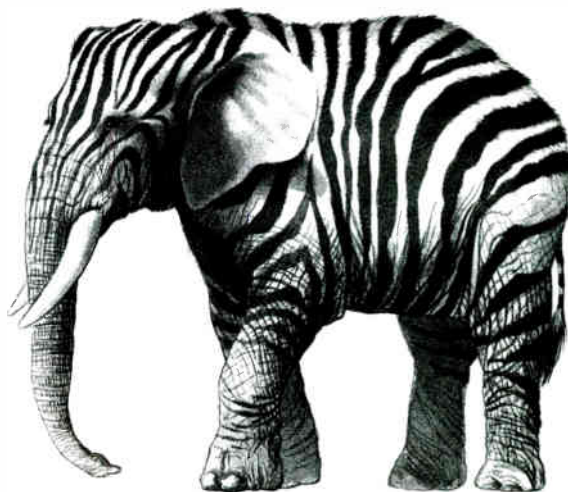
Owned and operated by *The New York Times* for the majority of its 60-year history as a classical music station, WQXR's mission is defined in part by its location in the hub of the nation's cultural life — The Big Apple.

"Your New York Starts Here' is our slogan," says Bartunek. "It reflects a particular set of experiences ... (This is a) city overflowing with opportunities. We keep (listeners) aware of what's going on with artist interviews on the air and tie-ins with what's going on in the city."

The station's hard work pays off. WQXR has been favored by respectable Arbitron numbers and dubbed the 1997 NAB Classical Station of the Year. Nevertheless, Bartunek is willing to look at the downside of classical music radio's future and embrace new ways of thinking.

"Classical music radio has to look at ways to reach people in ways other than over-the-air radio, because in some places it is no longer economically feasible," he says.

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Consistency rules

Keep it simple, and be consistent about it. That could be the motto of many successful, top-flight radio stations.

Take Los Angeles oldies giant KRTH(FM), for example. The station thrives like few other stations in America. According to BIA Research, it was the nation's number-three-billing music station in 1997, with estimated revenues of \$34.3 million.

KRTH is "a giant vanilla radio station that has mass appeal," says General Manager Patrick Duffy. "The music is well-presented. Consistency is what buyers look for. You have fluctuations from book to book, but the advertisers know that you are consistently delivering the audience."

Playing oldies since 1972 hasn't hurt KRTH's success in building brand loyal-

ty. Nor has the station's signal, which reaches from Santa Barbara to San Diego and into the desert to the east. Since 1992, KRTH has added big names to its roster of on-air talent: the late Real Don Steele, the recently retired Robert W. Morgan and Johnny Hayes.

"Personalities on an oldies station are the spice," says Duffy. "People like to hear the names. Because of the reputation of the station, we're able to attract good people. Recently, we were able to hire a tremendous disc jockey like 'Shotgun Tom' Kelly, someone who's been a household name in San Diego for years. People want to be on a winning team."

Duffy allows lots of freedom for his department heads to run their affairs as they see fit. "People will work harder when they feel that they can make a difference," he points out.

"Everybody knows the business of the station," he says, reflecting on his open-door management style. "I'm not hoarding information. I don't hide from anyone. I tell them the good news and the bad news. When I make a decision, they have to know the 'why.' You try to get them to see the big picture so it's not just 'no.'"

Serving the heartland with heart

It pays to have a heart if a station wants to attain and maintain top-flight status.

Ironically, in this age of multiple big-market ownership, Tribune Broadcasting, which owns WGN(AM) in Chicago, can't buy another station in the city it serves so well. It's not for lack of cash — in 1997, WGN was the number-five-billing station in the country, according to BIA Research. Last year, WGN rang up \$34.5 million in billing. But the 50,000 watt clear channel station is owned by the venerable Chicago Tribune, and FCC regulations strictly limit cross-ownership between print and electronic media.

WGN Vice President and General Manager Wayne Vriesman had just finished discussing funeral arrangements on the phone with the widow of veteran Chicago Cubs sportscaster Harry Carey when interviewed for this article.

Carey, says Vriesman, "was a (Chicago) Cub ambassador, a city ambassador, a station ambassador, and he did it with his own unique style. He will be missed tremendously." Vriesman spoke with a huskiness in his voice that barely hid the emotion he felt for the baseball-broadcasting icon, who was also a personal friend.

"There's not a lot of emotion left in radio," says Vriesman. "Our personalities make the listeners a part of the family. The biggest thing lacking in radio since radio conglomeration is long-term planning. There's a lot of short-term thinking in radio now. It takes a long time to make a great radio station. (The Tribune) gave us (a) long time to develop. You don't grow a WGN in a short time. It's impossible to do that."

According to Vriesman, WGN trades mostly on its reputation as a great radio station and a reliable, friendly source of information. "It's a well-liked, well-respected talk station," he notes. "Image, tradition and promotion get the (local) sales. Most of our selling is not based on ratings. It's very creative."

WGN occupies a unique position, straddling the intensely urban world of Chicago and the vast farm belt that surrounds the city. WGN has three farm reporters and devotes a half-hour at noon to its farm report.

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It's the people

And when the job is the thing, nothing can stop a top-flight radio station from its appointed rounds.

When Hurricane Hugo reared its head in 1989, Charlotte, N.C. station WSOC-FM's employees lived up to what the station's call letters stand for, literally: We Serve Our Community. They rolled up their sleeves, boarded the sleek station vans and, armed with chain saws and other rescue paraphernalia, helped the overtaxed National Guard troops direct traffic. In short, they showed the local community they care.

Once owned by EZ Communications and American Radio Systems, and now about to be absorbed by CBS, this 1997 NAB Country Station of the Year has been at the top of the ratings for more than a decade. General Manager Gary Brobst says success boils down to a simple ingredient.

"It's just people," he proclaims. "Really good people in every area. In my experience, it's who's got the good people — people who are really passionate about what they do and do more than what's expected. If they're really fired up about coming to work every day and they're good solid citizens, you'll have no problems to begin with."

Brobst says that he strives to build an atmosphere of mutual trust and cooperation at his station.

"Every station has its own culture," he points out. "We have a certain culture. It's a kind of unity feeling. (The staff handles) problems with each other. You don't see people down the hall talking. Your better people want to go out and make a sale or be brilliant on the air. They don't get caught up in the gossipy stuff."

Now part of a family of seven stations in the nation's 36th largest market, certain efficiencies have been implemented at WSOC.

"When we were owned by EZ, we had two people in the business department for three stations. Now we have four people for seven stations. It isn't putting undue workloads on people — it's just working smarter, with each person directed toward one goal."

Embracing the future

Working toward one goal, hand in hand, can spell success for a top-flight

radio station. Suzanne McDonald, Vice President and General Manager of American Radio Systems in Hartford, Conn., describes her company's mercurial rise as a "Cinderella" story.

American, which went public in 1995, was created four years ago by the merger of Stoner Broadcasting, Atlantic Radio and Multi Market Communications. The company currently owns about 100 stations, including WTIC-AM-FM. This spring, ARS will merge with CBS.

WTIC-AM-FM, previously family-owned, built a very respectable reputation in Hartford over the years. The station's current ownership seeks to capitalize on that respect and take it even further.

"WTIC(AM) was a beautiful, fine piece of silver that needed to be polished," says McDonald. "It needed to be made more relevant to today's market. The FM station was a struggling CHR. We hired back Craig and Company, (who) had been with the station before, and changed the format to Hot AC. (WTIC) is now a major performer." The station ranked number one in the mornings, adults 25-54, in the Fall '97 Arbitrons.

Sitting on the cutting edge of today's merger mania, McDonald finds herself barely able to contain her enthusiasm and excitement about the future of radio as she manages WTIC-AM-FM and oversees WRCH(FM) and WZMX(FM). For her, there is no doom and gloom about downsizing.

"We have more people working here than we had four years ago," she points out. "It's just that now people are working differently, more efficiently, more effectively. Our business office can serve four stations. But we have Web sites, we have a Webmaster, we have different marketing needs. We have more bodies doing different jobs that didn't exist before."

Ready to be absorbed into the CBS empire, McDonald sees the Internet as a good opportunity for radio. The Internet, however, is only one element in a top-flight radio station's success story.

Building on well-deserved trust, a coherent mission statement, hiring and developing employees who can get behind the team effort, letting the person on the spot achieve greatness with acknowledgment and support, constructing a consistently excellent product with a feel and dedication for the station's locality and remaining open to innovation will continue to help stations clear the hurdles and land in the hearts and minds of listeners, top-flight style. ▼

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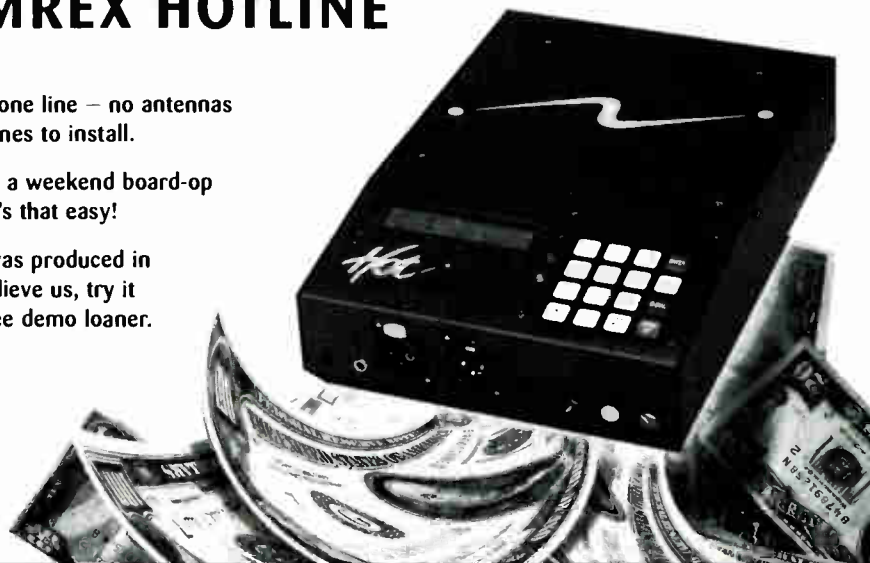
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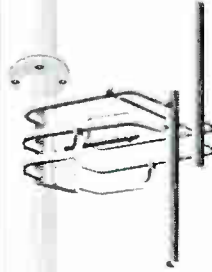
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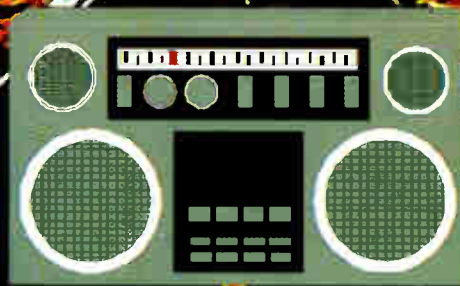
Oklahoma City, with a metro population of just over 1 million, is situated in the middle of the state that bears half its name. In Oklahoma City, listeners can tune in to everything from smooth jazz to classic country — nothing too cutting edge or too controversial.

Oklahoma Citians like their radio dependable and safe.

Three companies

Today, three companies — Clear Channel, Diamond and Caribou — collectively own just over half of the radio stations in Oklahoma City and, perhaps not coincidentally, are represented by eight of the 10 stations ranked in the Fall '97 Arbitrons (12-plus).

Clear Channel's radio stable includes news/talker KTOK(AM), contemporary hits station KJYO(FM), country station KXXY-FM, new country KTST(FM), soft rocker KQSR-FM (formerly KEBC-FM and most recently alternative rocker



KNRX(FM)) and sports/urban station KEBC(AM). The company leases WKY(AM) from Gaylord Broadcasting.

Diamond's Oklahoma City stations include oldies simulcasters KOMA-AM-FM and classic rocker KRXO(FM). In 1993, the company purchased KKNF-FM, an adult contemporary station, and dropped it in favor of KOMA-FM, which was installed on the same frequency.

Caribou is at the helm of KATT-FM, the oldest rock station in the area; adult contemporary outlet KYIS(FM) and smooth jazz KTNT-FM were added to the company's stable in 1996. Early this year, the company took the reigns of KNTL, an FM Christian talker.

KTNT scored a 2.7, good enough for 12th place in the Fall '97 Arbitrons. KTNT is "a boutique station," says Caribou General Manager Larry Bastida. "It has a funky little niche. It's not a cash cow for us, but it appeals to advertisers. With the success of the other Caribou stations, we can be more selective with the advertisers on KTNT."

Among the other stations in the Oklahoma City market are two that are independently owned — urban KVSP(AM) and adult contemporary KMGL(FM) — and the latest independent to emerge on the local dial, a brand-new classic country outlet (it emerged on the scene in February) that has adopted a familiar set of call letters, KKNF-FM. The station is owned by Ty and Tony Tyler, who run Tyler Outdoor Advertising and also own two stations in rural Oklahoma.

Merry-go-round

The music radio station scene in Oklahoma City went through a merry-go-round of staff changes in the last half of 1997. The effects are still being felt today.

Bob and Josh, the morning team at number-two-rated KJYO(FM) (Fall '97 Arbitrons, 12-plus), saw their contracts bought out last August when the station decided to change what some people thought was a shock jock-y tone on the morning show. Mark Shannon and Ron Spinozi, longtime morning DJs at KRXO(FM), were taken off the air last October when their contract negotiations broke down.

(At press time, Vance Harrison Jr., general manager of KRXO(FM), was still looking

for a team to replace Shannon and Spinozi. Longtime afternoon-drive DJ Lisa Mirick is currently filling the slot. Bob and Josh were replaced last August by (former) fellow KJYO jocks Ronnie Rocket and Teresa Maxwell.)



All this movement paled in comparison to the wholesale changes instituted last October at 95X, KNRX(FM), then

Oklahoma City's only alternative radio station (today the market is without an alternative outlet).

The entire staff was laid off when owner Clear Channel decided to change the station's format to soft rock and the call letters to KQSR.

"There were a lot of things that led to the demise of 95X," says John Moen, general manager for Clear Channel in Oklahoma. "We were disappointed with (the station's) activity level ... and the fact that other stations in the market were playing the same songs started eroding the share."

The loss of 95X, notes Moen, was not pleasant for anyone. "A lot of people were involved at 95X (who) were

Oklahoma City Radio Market Overview

Station	Freq.	Format	1997 Est. Rev. in \$ Mil.	Owner	Arbitron 12+ Fall '97
KXXY-FM	96.1	Country	6.8	Clear Channel	11.1
KJYO(FM)	102.7	CHR	2.9	Clear Channel	10.3
KTST(FM)	101.9	Country	2.0	Clear Channel	8.5
KOMA-FM	92.5	Oldies	4.1	Diamond	7.9
KATT-FM	100.5	AOR	3.85	Caribou	7.2
KRXO(FM)	107.7	Classic Rock	3.7	Diamond	7.2
KMGL(FM)	104.1	AC	4.0	Renda	7.1
KTOK(AM)	1000	News/Talk	3.1	Clear Channel	5.6
KYIS(FM)	98.9	AC	1.9	Caribou	5.0
* KVSP(AM)	1140	Urban	1.0	Perry	3.8
+KQSR-FM	94.7	Soft AC	1.1	Clear Channel	3.7
KTNT-FM	97.9	Smooth Jazz	1.1	Caribou	2.7
KOMA(AM)	1520	Oldies	.800	Diamond	2.0
WWLS(AM)	640	Sports	.750	Fox Family	1.9
KEBC(AM)	1340	Sports/Urban	.400	Clear Channel	1.4
KNTL(FM)	104.9	Christian Talk	.350	Caribou	0.6
WKY(AM)	930	Christian Talk	.500	Gaylord	0.6
KQCV(AM)	800	Christian	.350	Bott	0.5
KIRC-FM	105.9	Country	n/a	One Ten	0.4
* KTLV(AM)	1220	Black Gospel	.200	First Choice	0.4

+ Station changed call letters from KNRX-FM to KQSR-FM during December, 1997

* Station's audience estimates adjusted for actual broadcast schedule



Stations are ranked in order of Arbitron Fall '97 12+ ratings. Copyright 1998 The Arbitron Company. May not be quoted or reproduced without the prior written permission of Arbitron. Other information provided by BIA Research through its MasterAccess Radio Analyzer Database software.

impassioned about that music," he says. But, he adds, "When the music was first introduced, alternative stations were the only place to hear (it) ... now it's kind of a lost franchise and the music is played on other stations."

With a mix of soft rock from the 1970s and 1980s, KQSR has quickly taken off, says Moen (the station came in at number 11 12-plus in the Fall '97 Arbitrons). "We are ... music-intensive and we've brought another choice or option for listeners," says Moen.

Choices are everything where the Oklahoma City radio dial is concerned, and there is plenty of choice here.

Clear Channel news/talker KTOK(AM), for example, serves listeners with a combination of local and syndicated programming. The station's local news shows are popular, as are programs hosted by Rush Limbaugh and Dr. Laura.

But nothing is coming to local radio players on a silver platter. Bastida says the growth of his company has kept him busy.

"Everyone thinks the radio business is a big power game, but what you really have is four mortgages," he says, referring to Caribou's quartet of Oklahoma



City radio properties.

Things must be going strong at Caribou, because the company relocated its offices a year ago, increasing space from 8,000 square feet to 14,000 square feet.

The significantly larger home includes a state-of-the-art recording studio from which touring bands can broadcast live or be recorded for later airplay on KATT, KYIS or KTNT.

Heart

What lies at the heart of the dependable and safe Oklahoma City radio market? For one thing, the aging of the Baby Boomer population.

What does this mean for the local radio dial? "In the future, the dynamics of graying boomers will dictate more

format choices," says Harrison.

Moen concurs. "The aging of America dictates what kind of product will showcase ads," he says. "I think stations will become more narrow and definitive in their formats" in Oklahoma City.

Bastida, however, takes a different stance on the issue. "We don't look at the population getting older," he says. "We look at our available market."

In Oklahoma City, where the wind does indeed sweep down the plains, the available market is safe and secure, happy in the knowledge that despite the recent changes across the local dial, changes don't sweep through very often and all things radio will remain safe and dependable. ▼

Sandi Davis, a native Oklahoma Citian, is an entertainment writer for The Daily Oklahoman.



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Oklahoma City Financial Snapshot

Market Rank: 53
Revenue Rank: 52
Number of FMs: 12
Number of AMs: 12

Revenue 1994: \$30,900 mil.
Revenue 1995: \$33,600 mil.
Revenue 1996: \$36,600 mil.
Revenue 1997: \$39,000 mil.
Revenue 1998: \$41,700 mil. est.

Revenue Growth
'91-'96: 8.8 %
'97-'01: 7.0 %

Local Revenue: 85%
National Revenue: 15%

1996 Population: 1,030,000
Per Capita Income: \$14,290
Median Income: \$29,756
Avg. Household Income: \$37,558

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independent pop music label Permanent Press Recordings. Since re-launching the label in 1994 (it existed briefly in the early 1980s), Paul has released nine CDs by artists as familiar to pop fans as they are unfamiliar to the mass audience most record companies strive to reach, but Paul hopes that will change.

Paul's artists, from Los Angeles-based band Chewy Marble and singer Walter Clevenger to New York City-based Richard X. Heyman and Everly Brothers-meets-The-Beatles duo The Van DeLecki's from North Carolina, have been selling steadily, in large measure due to Paul's promotional diligence and his desire to get the job done at radio.

Making things happen

Paul devotes his long days to making things happen for his label.

"When you're on your own you work every day," he says, noting that he rises at 6:30 every morning to review contracts, write proposals and design ads and marketing plans. He must pinpoint key times for dealing with radio.

"I always abide by radio's schedules,"

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he points out. "I call (stations) only during 'call times'." Paul works mostly with the AAA format because, he says, "With most of the projects we release, it's the only format we can go to, although some (projects) have crossed into modern rock."

Given that Permanent Press is a small label with a limited budget, Paul must be very prudent in his selection of AAA stations — he will only contact those that are reported by trades such as The Album Network. He only occasionally



uses lists provided by independent promoters.

The key for Paul is the building of relationships with the radio stations he contacts. "If a station knows us, when we release a new record they're likely to give it more of a chance than they would to an unknown quantity," he says. "But these days, it's getting more and more difficult to get your record played. AAA (stations are) becoming less flexible because major labels are really banging away at them."

This situation occurs most often in major markets, so Paul pushes harder at the secondary tier. However, even success there hardly guarantees breaking through on major stations.

"Major market stations have tighter

playlists and are not as open to playing independent product, even though we had two number ones at WXRC(FM) in Charlotte (N.C.) ... and 24 spins a week for around 10 weeks at WEBX(FM) in Champaign, Ill. ... with the Van DeLecki's," he says.

With many stations, major market or otherwise, it is simply a matter of establishing a label and its artists as viable entities. "Sometimes stations aren't sure whether a new artist will be around for another album," says Paul. But he has a theory about turning that way of thinking around. "Lay a foundation," he says, "and if you don't get 'em with the first album, you'll get 'em with the next one."

Paul's successes are a direct result of the passion he has for the music he releases on Permanent Press. "I really get excited about the artists on my label," he notes. "I really care about any record I'm working. When I deal with radio, I just be myself and I hope my passion comes through."

"I will not release any artist I wouldn't go out and buy myself and I'll always stick with that. It's the old fashioned ethic of the music being the most important thing. I have a vision for Permanent Press and I follow it. I know what I want to do." ▼

David Bash is a Los Angeles-based pop music journalist.



Famous

Last words

Oldies Special!

The First Time, Way Back When

Do you remember the first time you went on the air — the first time you flipped the switch on a microphone and uttered those immortal words, “Gooooood mornin’, everybody, I’m —”?

That first time has to be the most exciting moment in every DJ’s career.

But did you ever wonder how those oldies but goodies recording artists you’ve been playing all these years felt the first time they heard somebody like you play their records? Interviewed in October, 1995, a number of artists, spun their tales.

Take, for example, Johnny Maestro, lead singer of The Brooklyn Bridge (“Worst That Could Happen” took the number three spot on the Billboard Hot 100 chart). “The first time I heard my record,” he remembered. “I was sitting in the living room of my parents’ home and Alan Freed was playing ‘Sweetest One.’”

Radio was important to Maestro and his group. “I would say the radio had to be the reason why I started singing,” he said. “Of course, I had to hear the music first, and I heard it first on radio.”

Lenny Welch, who hit number four on the Billboard Hot 100 chart in 1963 with “Since I Fell For You,” got a real charge out of hearing himself on the air for the first time. “When I first heard ‘Since I Fell For You’ on the radio, I just couldn’t believe it,” he said. “Then they started playing it like it was going out of style. I just was elated ... I was just thrilled to hear my voice on the radio so often ... I said, ‘Oh goodness, I’ve finally made it. I’m a star now, what do you know?’”

Original Coasters member Carl Gardner stresses the importance of radio.

“Without the radio,” he noted, “you couldn’t get a career. I have to say that when I heard my first record, I was more than thrilled.”

Freddy “Boom Boom” Cannon, who hit number three twice on the Billboard Hot 100 chart (with “Way Down Yonder in New Orleans” in 1959 and “Palisades Park,” written by Chuck Barris of TV’s “Gong Show” fame, in 1962), remembered the first time he heard himself on the radio singing “Tallahassee Lassie.”

He was in Revere, Mass., where he was growing up. “A radio station called WMEX was playing me very, very heavy — (it was) the local station in Boston, so it was a real treat,” he said.

Cannon noted that he was “very, very excited. I didn’t believe that any city I would go to, that they would be playing Freddy Cannon ... To this day, it’s just nice to hear yourself on the radio, knowing that so many people have tried to make it in this business and I was one of the lucky ones.”

Radio, in fact, was very important to Cannon’s career. “It’s the only thing,” he said.

“I don’t think you can do too much without (radio). You need those jocks and those program directors and music directors to help you.”

Sam the Sham who, with The Pharaohs, rose to number two on the Billboard Hot 100 chart twice (with “Wooly Bully” in 1965 and “Lil’ Red Riding Hood” in 1966), said he wouldn’t have made it without radio.

And the late LaVern Baker, whose biggest hit was “I Cried a Tear” (it hit number six on the Billboard Hot 100 chart in 1958), remembered hearing a song of hers on the radio in the early 1950s.

“I just screamed,” she said. “It was just wonderful. It wasn’t a big hit, but it was something that I accomplished, you know. I was very young then and I was just excited.”

Son of like you, the DJ, the first time you connected with listeners, way back when.

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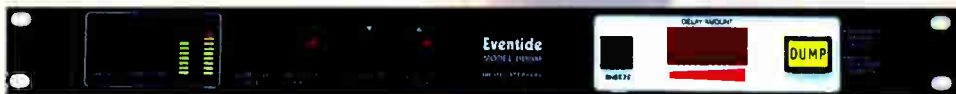
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