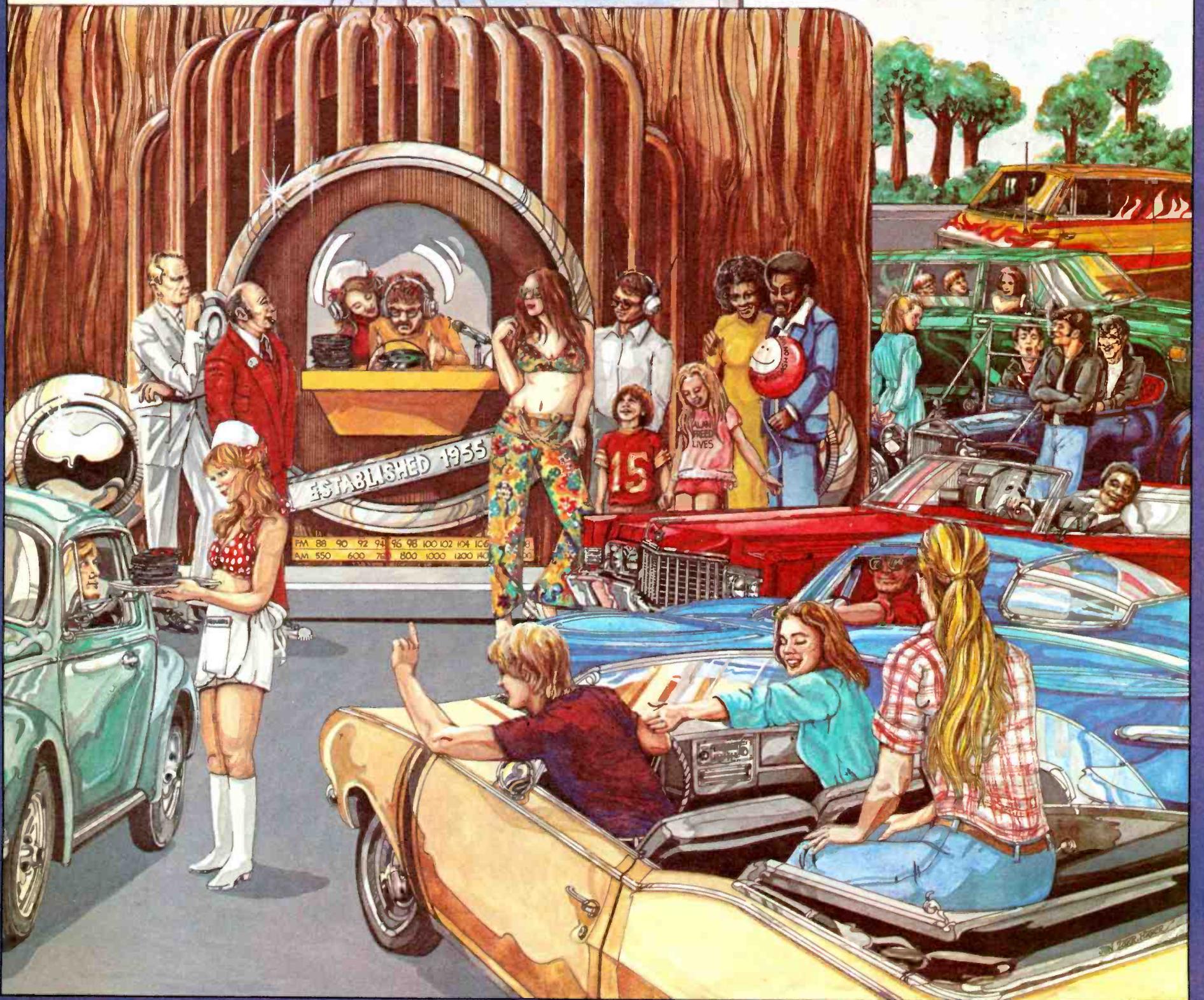
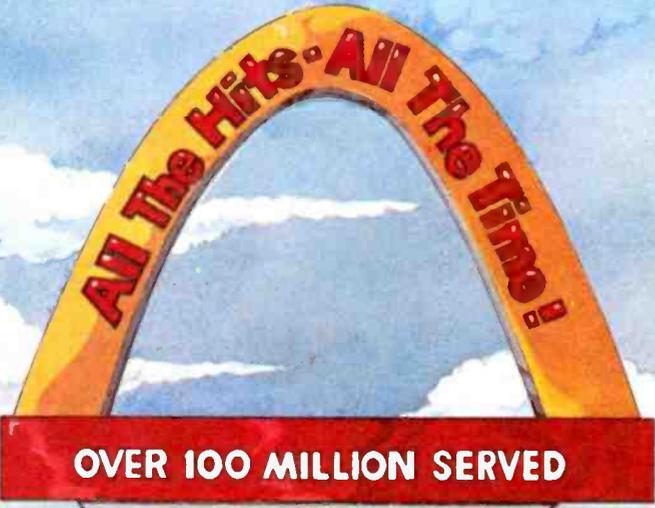


**Radio &  
Records**

Presents

# THE TOP-40 STORY



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# Radio & Records

THE INDUSTRY'S NEWSPAPER

## Inside THE TOP 40 STORY

### A Message From The Publisher

In today's radio world, very few Top 40 stations are actually living up to the name of their format. Most record executives are quick to point out the shrunken playlists of recent years. Top 40 has gone through many, many changes. Some have stated the format is almost dead.

Top 40 radio isn't dying...it's evolving.

To understand the continuing patterns of evolution, one must first understand the history of the format. It was with this premise in mind that we at R&R created THE TOP 40 STORY.

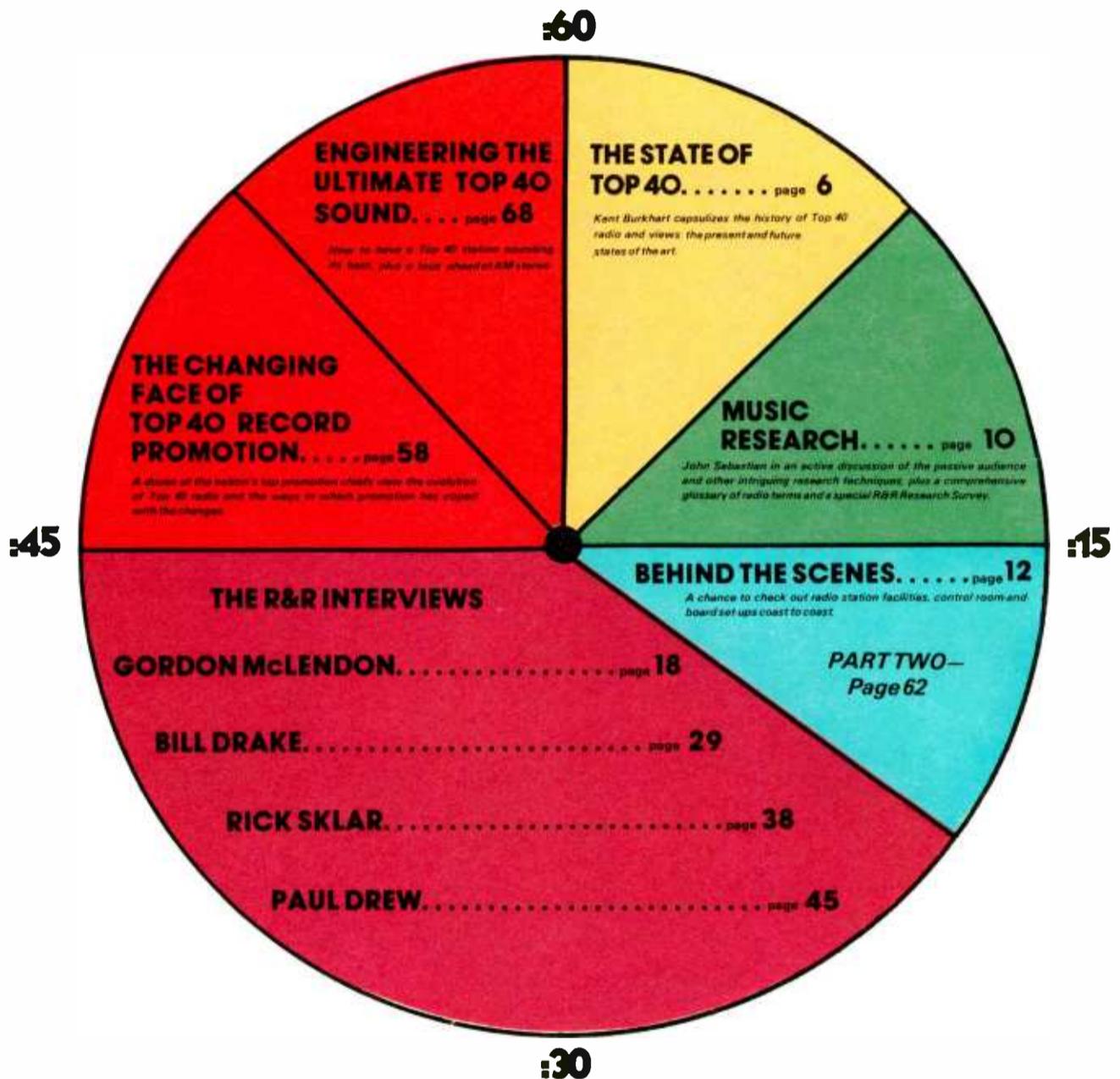
Many of today's youthful Top 40 programmers have never experienced the early days of the format's sound. They've never been able to talk to the originators of the format, and more importantly, there was no place to go to find the answers to the many questions.

In this special edition we have interviewed the key programmers that helped shape the direction of the format to its present state. Our sincere thanks to Gordon McLendon, respected as the most creative radio programmer in history. Almost every format heard on the radio today has been influenced by this man. We are also indebted to Rick Sklar, VP ABC Radio, who has guided the ABC stations to dominant market positions, Bill Drake, who had the most dramatic effect on the format and is still today the most successful programmer with over 200 stations currently under his guidance. Paul Drew, who until recently was VP Programming for RKO, and Kent Burkhart, a man who has been taught by the best and has since added quite a bit to the format himself.

If it were not for these people and the many others involved in the creation of this publication, taking the time to share their knowledge, the opportunity to learn from history might still not exist.

What you as a reader get from the pages of this special edition is truly up to you. If you are able to more clearly understand the reasons for success and failure, it will allow you to create rather than imitate... and the format will continue to evolve.

*Bob Wilson*



## Radio & Records

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# A DECADE OF GREAT MUSIC BEGAN LAST YEAR ON RSO



To all our friends  
in Radio...  
Thank You!

*The RSO Family*



Records, Inc.

# The State Of Top-40

by Kent Burkhardt

When Top 40 radio first emerged in the 50's, it was a mass radio programming pitch. There was very little popular rock & roll; therefore, radio stations who were aggressively playing soft "Hit parade" music had strong listening habits from women, males and teens...possibly of all ages. Storz Broadcasting, then known as Mid Continent Broadcasting, was one of the early pioneers in Top 40. That company had a major decision to make when Elvis Presley and Jerry Lee Lewis "Rock" came along. There was strong resistance to playing Rock songs, simply because it was Todd Storz' personal view that this would alienate listeners about 30 years of age and up. Unfortunately, there were no demographics in those days to grade the audience make up of a radio station. It was a

meter to program more toward a mass audience. Therefore, Top 40, at this time, moved out of the mass radio approach. It certainly could not be considered general radio anymore. Instead, it specialized for those phone callers who liked harder music...the younger group.

This left mass oriented stations such as WCCO and WSB, as the only good competitive stations looking for a more mature, older audience.

The excitement of Top 40 on the air grew to a frenzy by the mid 60's. For example, there were stations playing as many as eight to ten jingles between records. Then, in the mid 60's, demographics were born. To quiet their critics, Top 40 scored very well in teens, but extremely strong 18-24 and 25-34. There

Top 40 stations were basically sounding the same as in the mid 60's, with some modifications and advancements. For the most part, frenzied and hyper.

Amazingly, while all this was occurring, national, regional, and retail revenues continued to increase for Top 40 stations...probably because there was more radio money budgeted.

Heightened by demographic and revenue successes, more broadcasters started looking for their particular programming and revenue niche. So, during 1971 through 1976, many new formats were created, and many old formats were improved, creating more havoc with AM Top 40, so far as listener loyalty was concerned.

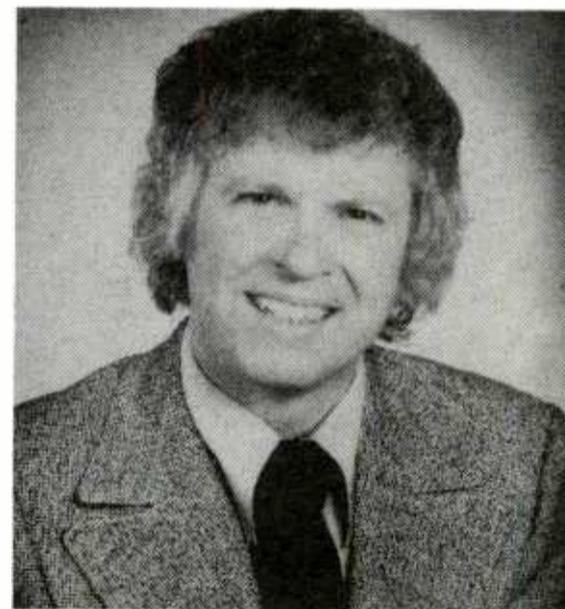
Top 40 operators responded to this new competition by becoming even more rigid with

the music was basically the same, but without all of the "hard teen Rock records." In fact, contemporary MOR's, as we know them now, are amazingly close in music approach to the original Top 40 stations of the mid 50's. News concepts are also similar, along with disc jockey pace.

Yet...due to heavy "tune in" or "cumes" during the week, Top 40 not only continued to survive, but because of new management sales techniques, actually increased in revenues as their percentage of audience sagged from fragmentation.

As rating battles continued, "research" became a word often used by Top 40 broadcasters. Most of it was ignored. (For example, research projects from 1968 through last year

**"It's up to you to decide the future. For every nine programming copy-cats, there is one tiger...an innovator in finding new ways to please the audience..."**



fact that the two recognized rating services (Pulse and Hooper) showed that the young Top 40 was a fierce competitor to the older, established stations; it was concluded that the music mix was really the reason. For example, in Minneapolis WDGY tied with WCCO in some periods for first place...both with about 25% of the audience. In Atlanta, WAKE was ahead of WSB. Since WCCO and WSB were at this time, in the truest sense, old line stations carrying a lot of network broadcasts, it was assumed that the more music flow from a WDGY or WAKE was the number one attraction, with disc jockeys secondary and news third.

As music got harder in the late 50's, there was evidence of audience deterioration at the new Top 40 stations. The erosion was slight, perhaps 10 or 15%, but definitely there.

Broadcasters all over the country were eyeing the rating success of Top 40, and many jumped on the bandwagon, some in cities where there was already a Top 40 competitor. Thus, Top 40 wars developed.

As has been the case pretty much throughout the years, the Top 40 stations began ignoring other possible competitors with other formats. Instead, they accelerated their own energies into promotion and presentation. The main competitive edge came in music selection and Top 40 broadcasters noted that when a harder Rock record was played, there was more telephone response from the youth. They incorrectly took this phone response as a baro-

were many Top 40 stations that were without competition (in their market) that showed Top 40 shares to be very heavy 35 plus. These demographics were reflected by Pulse before the beginning of Arbitron.

#### DEMOGRAPHICS COME TO TOP 40

Good radio businessmen began realizing that the "new demographic" rating guides meant a fresh approach to make money...perhaps on a smaller scale than Top 40, but nevertheless, a fact. These broadcasters searched for a new "product" (format) that would build substantial audience for certain demographics. This aggressive move was first felt in San Francisco by an "album" station playing album Rock music (acid) designed for the Flower Children and their followers. The results were immediate with males 18-24 as they found a new listening home...deserting Top 40.

By 1968, wall-to-wall Beautiful Music formats were beginning to rate high 35 plus, taking what audience Top 40 had from that demographic,

In 1971, a more mass appeal "Progressive" format of album music which was an outgrowth of the Acid Rock days of San Francisco became popular. This new format not only took males 18-24, but many females as well. The strength in upper teens was strong.

At this time, females under age 35 for the most part were still loyal to Top 40. The 12-15 year old set was also still loyal to Top 40.

their formats, believing that formatic discipline was the answer to combat "fragmentation" (a new radio term then describing competitive thrusts that created demographic erosion to Top 40 stations).

Top 40 also attempted promotional "tricks" to increase average quarter hour shares. Average quarter hour extension became a very "in" expression, referring to ways in which listeners could be extended due to Arbitron methodology.

Generally, it can be said that most AM Top 40 programmers became very defensive because of pure frustration...being shot at from all sides.

But, it was just beginning.

#### ONE DAY EVERYONE BEGAN PLAYING TOP 40'S MUSIC

Country stations suddenly awakened to become "commercial sounding." They borrowed Top 40 gimmicks and tricks such as the "Country Top 40" and Top 40 type promotions. This fragmented many Top 40 stations in the 25-34 male and female area. (These Country listeners had been happy with Top 40 stations because Country songs were played occasionally as reflected in Top 40 record sales).

The old Middle-Of-The-Road stations suddenly awakened with a more aggressive and contemporary approach to programming and promotion. This was yet another blow to Top 40 because 25-34 males and females began moving to these "contemporary MOR's." After all,

stated that AM Top 40 played "too many commercials," was too boisterous, and there was generally too much conversation on it).

But, some broadcasters read the research well. As early as 1968, but for the most part since 1973, FM operators decided to take advantage of the research facts. They began what turned out to be a powerful blow to over-commercialized AM Top 40's. In short, it was 18 spots an hour on Top 40 vs. none for the new Top 40 FM. Teens flocked to the new Top 40 FM's. As the FM Top 40's became more popular, they became more commercial, but the FM broadcasters remembered the research...and for the most part, stopped the money machine at eight spots an hour, with many "music sweeps" (three or four selections played back to back with no disc jockey conversation in between).

It should be noted that many AM Top 40's had a serious signal problem. Most had peculiar nighttime directional antenna problems with a limited coverage area. The FM Top 40 competitors had perfect 100% signals. Therefore, heavy nighttime teen listening moved from AM to FM Top 40's to a clean signal. Over a period of years, a lot of women 18-34 joined the teens in daytime listenership to FM Top 40's. This was another crippling 18-34 blow to AM Top 40.

A few years ago, a "mellow Rock" album station in Los Angeles startled all by competing just for 25-34 year old demographics. The

theory was that 25-34's would allow good 18-34 and 25-49 year old demographics. This "mellow" sound, also known as "soft" or "easy" Rock has scored strongly in several metropolitan areas, and is growing through syndication. This format is a demographic outgrowth of what was commercial progressive, album-oriented Rock stations. These stations succeeded in carving a place in the market for those who didn't want the screams of Top 40, or the hard guitars of progressive AOR, yet before entering Beautiful Music listening patterns. In a sense, "mellow" was a direct competitor to contemporary MOR, but it became more than that. It is the latest to strip 25-34's from AM Top 40.

In heavily populated metropolitan markets, all news and all talk stations created even more tune-in havoc for AM Top 40's that had a new image.

#### PAST COUNTER PROGRAMMING

During this competitive programming avalanche against AM Top 40, there were programming experiments and research statements regarding the past and present. Expertise coupled with the research was needed to view the future.

Counter programming the "fragmentation" problem followed several popular forms. There were a limited few who had the courage of their convictions, who actually stepped forward to preserve AM Top 40.

For example, the counter attack of dwindling nighttime teen numbers to FM teen competitors created a reversal in promotional activity...to another time of the day...specifically morning drive. Follow the research! Hire a warm, sincere, humorous, but lively, and sometimes controversial morning man...and promote him with a class news image. The objective was to win the morning, and the rest of the station would have a good "image" and therefore be tuned in more often. This approach has worked successfully with the now gorilla-priced personalities.

Year round station promotion and advertising was used instead of just during a rating time.

It was discovered through research that the visibility of television spots and the reborn rear-window stickers (a rip off of the 50's) worked effectively in raising cumes, image, and thus quarter hours.

Also, the air presentation of Top 40 DJ's was reduced in intensity by some 30%...the presentation "moved" but without screams, whistles, or yells. One exception to the rule... was 6-10 at night, where it was quickly discovered that the 1960 style of personality best counter-attacked FM Top 40 stations. In other words, the right personality at night seemed to attract a 12-15 year old audience, whether AM or FM. **This is still pretty much the case.**

Giant money-war counter-attacks quickly died (such as Cash Call) for the AM Top 40 listener, while "exotics" such as "The Last Contest" or the "Devil's Triangle" seemed most effective in promoting a station.

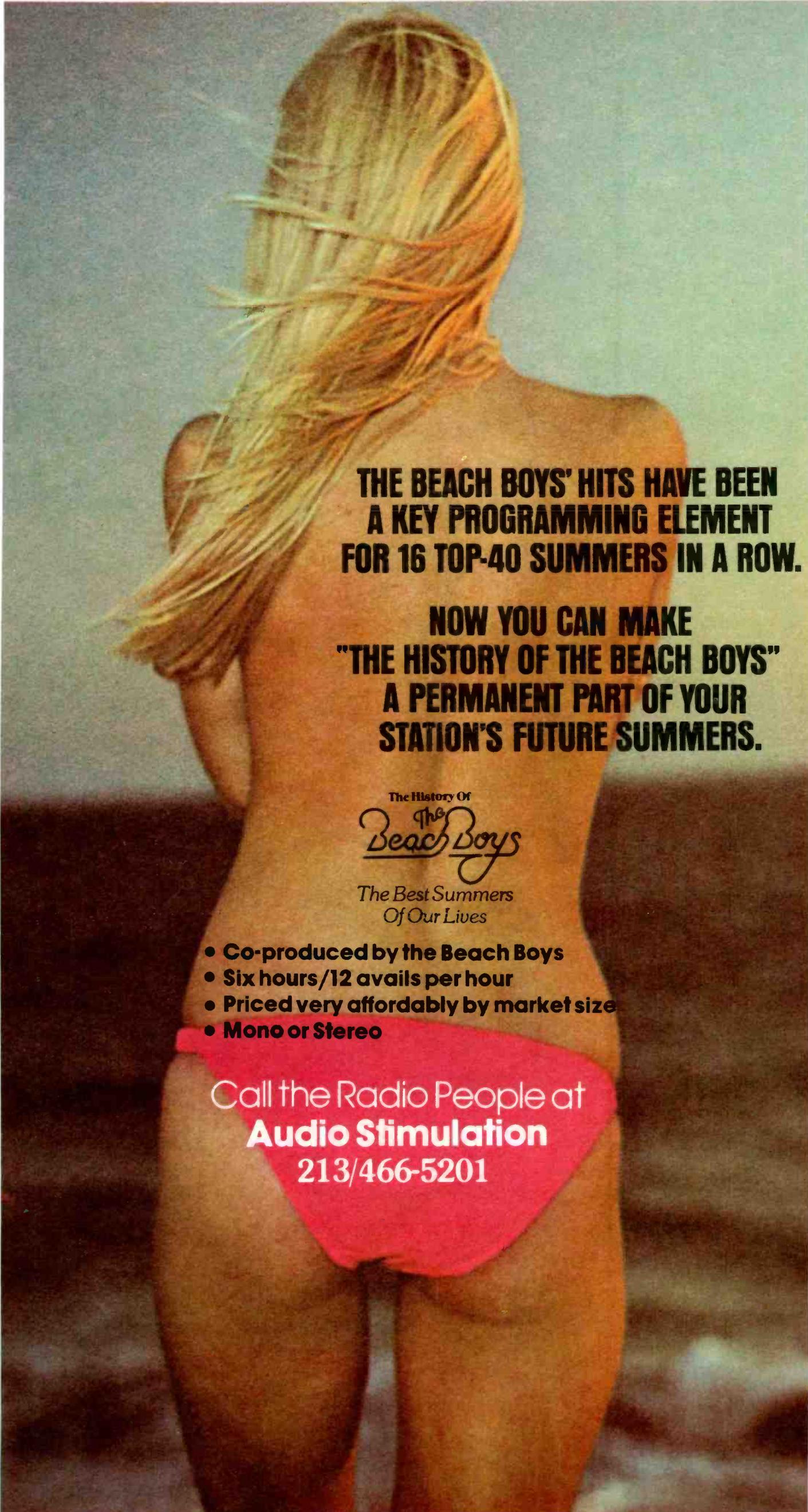
Many other past counter programming approaches worked, and many failed. One of the failures, for example, appears to have been "dayparting" music. Even though there was a positive move in that direction, it was not aggressive enough to retain mass listenership.

#### FURTHER AM TOP 40 COUNTER PROGRAMMING AND NORMAL PROGRAMMING

It's up to you to decide the future. For every nine programming copy-cats, there is one tiger...an innovator in finding new ways to please the listening audience.

Our research shows that AM Top 40 is changing for the better...some changes will be dramatic, some minor.

Two years from now, we'll all know more.



**THE BEACH BOYS' HITS HAVE BEEN  
A KEY PROGRAMMING ELEMENT  
FOR 16 TOP-40 SUMMERS IN A ROW.**

**NOW YOU CAN MAKE  
"THE HISTORY OF THE BEACH BOYS"  
A PERMANENT PART OF YOUR  
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The History Of  
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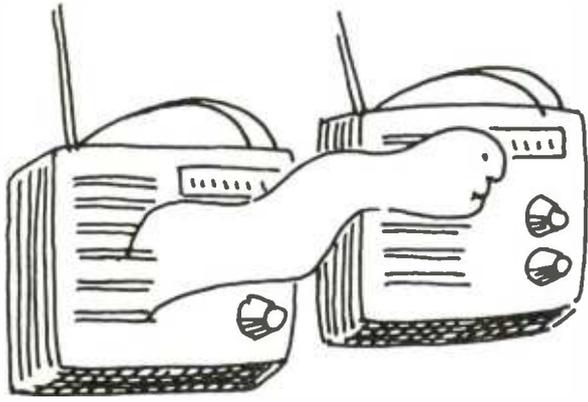
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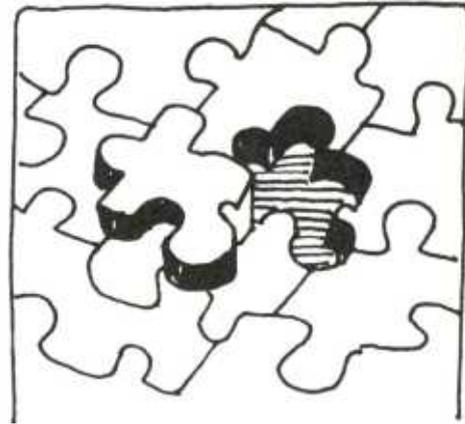
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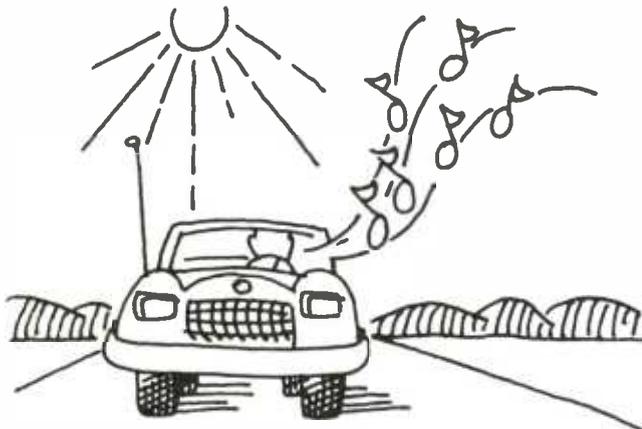
**and now  
Arbitron  
Radio AID can.**



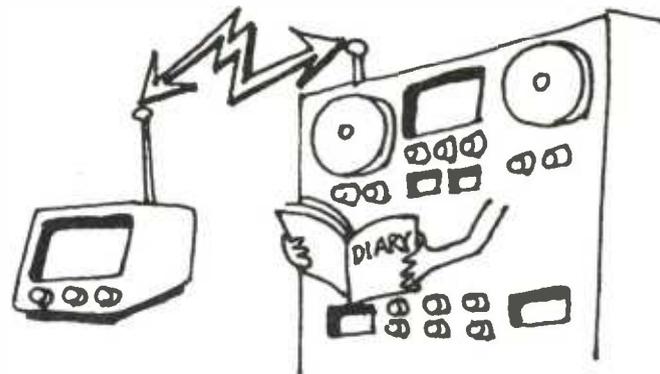
**What percentage of your audience also listens to your competition?** AID gives you the information to calculate how many listeners you are sharing with your competitors — the actual duplication and time spent listening between stations — regardless of formats.



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**AID's unique advantage.** AID offers you the opportunity to examine radio's true reach and frequency capabilities because it's based on the real thing — Arbitron Radio diaries. There are no mathematical models or assumptions with AID.

**The choice is yours.** You can access AID through your own or your station represen-

tative's terminal and you get information you can act on within hours, or overnight. Or you can give your request to Arbitron to be processed at Arbitron's computer installation. You get your answers in a few days.

Contact your Arbitron Radio representative now and put AID to work for you. It's another way for you to take advantage of...

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# Music Research

by John Sebastian

I thank God that I've been fortunate enough to work for some of the most brilliant people in the industry—Don Burdon, Todd Wallace, Buzz Bennett and Gary Stevens. Without these opportunities and the help of my father, instilling open-mindedness in my spirit, I don't think I would be in a position to participate in the level of music research that KDWB-AM and FM is involved in currently.

I believe that just as Bill Drake took a concept (Top 40) and researched an area (presentation) and found success, so, too, researchers now are finally delving into an area of much greater importance and ultimately with much greater impact on the industry. Music! If all programmers were to begin emulating what KDWB is doing for instance, I believe the entire industry would be improved. There are far too many albums and 45's saturating the marketplace; and at the same time, not enough real quality. However, with increasing sophistication of what I call "reach the people" methodology, the standard of excellence would be substantially uplifted. This method of research is commonly grouped under the heading of "call out research." Depending on how accurate the sample base and how carefully worded the questions are asked, this methodology is 100 times more accurate than traditional research.

However, the biggest pitfall involved in a programmer using almost

any type of research has to be relying solely on the research and either closing his mind to common sense and street awareness or unfortunately being put into a position of authority without having the experience to fall back on to carry him through the other important areas of programming.

For some time now, my experience has told me the terms 45 and album cut, as far as programming is concerned, are outdated. We play favorite songs, and as long as the public (individuals) have favorite songs, there will be a market for our kind of radio. In the very near future I see radio stations having the resources to set up systems that could continually test every song played on their station—oldies, recurrents and currents. Then, instead of using guesswork such as singles, albums and request research on at least 50 per cent of the music, we could actually be relatively positive about every song played over our airwaves. This potential for improvement in ratings and ultimately station revenues is awesome.

The most important quality a programmer can possess is the ability and maybe the knowledge to change with the times. I pray we all change, rearrange and hopefully, improve our industry constantly. This is an exciting business, and I hope to run the full race! I don't have too much patience with people that have less than this attitude. To borrow a phrase from a great, new song by Peter McCann, "Take it seriously or take it somewhere else!"



## Today's Sophisticated Research:

As Top 40 radio's struggle for a significant share of the total audience becomes increasingly more hard-fought, greater sophistication in every aspect of a station's operation is demanded. The area of research, determining the listening audience's musical likes and dislikes, is obviously one of the most crucial facets of a Top 40 station's approach, but methods vary drastically, from asking the kids on the jock's home block what they like to computerized demographic profiles.

John Sebastian, Program Director of KDWB/Minneapolis, is widely regarded as one of radio's most innovative and thorough researchers. Sebastian, working in a highly competitive market with two other (formerly three) AM Top 40 stations, has centered his research efforts on what he calls "passive research."

What is "passive research?" Simply the examination of the musical preferences of passive listeners. According to Sebastian, "the average passive person, 70 or 80% of the people, is radically different" than their more active counterparts. "Most passive people don't buy singles, they don't request records, they don't partici-

pate in contests, they don't go to see the Who in concert, they don't do the traditional things that most programmers think the majority of people do. They stay at home and listen to the radio a lot, but they don't do the things that we're able to get a barometer on in the traditional way."

Gauging the preferences of this substantial bloc of the listening population is a vital concern for any Top 40 station desiring a mass audience. Sebastian was understandably reluctant to divulge detailed research procedures for publication in R&R. "Nobody else in town, and indeed, in the country is doing too much along those lines. I don't mind letting people know I'm doing it and that it's successful, but as far as the details go, I don't necessarily want to broadcast that all across the country for nothing. I consider it a revolutionary process that's worth a lot of money."

Respecting Sebastian's wishes, R&R Top 40 Editor, J.J. Jordan, confined his methodology questions to generalities, to which Sebastian responded openly. "Our passive research is call-out research to people that listen to Top 40

radio, not necessarily KDWB. We obtain the names through the phone book. Everything is done the same way ARB does it, so it's the same kind of individual that fills out a diary."

Sebastian uses a weekly sample base of 25 people in each demographic group (12-14 female, 15-17 male, 18-24, etc.) he decides to test. "We always do several demographics weekly," he says. "Sometimes we get up into the 25-pluses but generally its 12-34. We do every demographic 12-24 every week, and sometimes we do 12-34."

Sebastian employs one full-time researcher, with the station's weekend jock making research calls from 3 o'clock to 8 Monday-Thursday. Additional calls are made by Sebastian's secretary and another female employee.

When calling, "we identify ourselves as a research company. That way it doesn't set them off one way or the other to be biased by that information. We don't want to bias them either positively or negatively that we're KDWB. We ask them what their favorite radio station is, and what other radio stations they listen to. Obviously, if they say WDGY or KSTP or KDWB,

## Glossary of Top-40 Terminology

There are any number of methods for setting up a music rotation system. One of the most popular is the color code system. Below is a widespread and generally accepted color-coded category system:

**Reds:** The top eight or ten songs on your current playlist. These are not necessarily the Top 10, but the 10 hottest songs by sales, requests, or a combination of both. The fewer the songs in the red category the faster your turnover.

**Yellows:** All uptempo songs on your current playlist, whether on their way up or down. Your total number of yellows will vary according to the total size of your playlist. As for your repeat factor, a yellow list of 10 songs, if played at the rate of four yellows per hour, will give you a turnover 2½ hours.

**Blues:** All down-tempo songs on your current list.

**Recurrents/Stash/Greens:** Records still on your printed list but too old and tired for regular heavy rotation. These songs are still getting requests but not as many as new current records. The total for this category should be either five or ten, depending on how many recurrents you schedule per hour.

**Power Gold/Blacks/Mothers/Kickers:** Uptempo gold with a kick to the intro. These

are usually played on the hour or out of newscasts. Examples: "Brown Sugar," "Fox On The Run."

**Super Gold/Purples/Image Gold/Dynamite:** Goldens designed to give a Top 40 station appeal in two categories: Adult and Progressive. Most adult-appeal image gold records seem to be Grammy winners, such as "The Way We Were." Another example: "We've Only Just Begun." Examples of hip or progressive-appeal image gold are "Stairway To Heaven," "Bitch" by the Stones, etc.

**Bopper Gold:** Goldens with teen appeal, primarily used at night. A high percentage of novelties, bubblegum-type records: "Disco Duck," "Billy Don't Be A Hero," etc.

**Letter Codes For Gold:** Most stations group oldies by year into ABCD categories. The generally accepted breakdown is: A equals 1977 back to 1974

Bequals 1973-70

Cequals 1969-66

Dequals 1965 on back

For most stations, Gold begins around 1964 with early Beatles and other British Invasion era hits. Recently, thanks to the 50's revival spawned by "Happy Days," "American Graffiti," etc., some stations have added records by earlier Rock artists, Elvis, Chuck Berry, and well-known 50's hits like "At The Hop" or "Rock Around The Clock" for occasional play.

Stations using the ABCD system usually

have definite ratios for golden play, pre-slotting them according to dayparts. Generally the formula is:

Mornings: A B

Middays: A B C D

Later parts of the day, including nights: A B C

As a generalized rule of thumb in terms of research, we've added definitions for "Passive" and "Active" listenership.

**Passive:** The overwhelming percentage of the audience who listen to the radio but take little or no part in contests, phone requests, and (essentially) record-buying and concert-going.

**Active:** A much smaller percentage of the audience (as low as 5% or less in some estimates) who actively participate in contests, make requests, buy significant amounts of records and attend concerts frequently.

### Radio & Records Reporter Research

Over the past few months, R&R has surveyed its reporting stations on the subject of research methodology, asking them three questions.

**Do you use any call-out music research?**  
Results: 34% of our total reporters use it.

Broken down, 18% of Parallel 3 stations use it, 24% of Parallel 2's, and 42% of Parallel 1's.

**Do you use jukebox information to compile your music survey?**

14% of our total reporters use some kind of jukebox-related information—8% using jukebox reports, and another 6% taking information from one-stops. Highest incidence of jukebox info use was Parallel 3 (20%), with 11% in Parallel 2 and 12% in Parallel 1.

**What type of system do you use to compile your weekly music survey?**

**Parallel 1**

Inverted System (see below for explanation): 39%

Point System (see below for explanation): 39%

Both Systems Incorporated: 6%

Other: 16%

**Parallel 2**

Inverted: 44%

Point: 36%

Both: 5%

Other: 15%

**Parallel 3**

Inverted: 56%

Point: 28%

Both: 8%

Other: 8%

**Total Reporters**

Inverted: 47%

Point: 34%

Both: 7%

Other: 12%

In the Inverted System, stations call stores, who then read to the station their Top 20 or 30 records. The station then assigns each record points in inverse value to its position—i.e., if the store reads off 20 records, number 20 gets 1 point, 19 gets 2, on up to 1, which gets 20 points. This is repeated for every store the station surveys, and finally the total points are added up. If requests are considered, the same basic system is employed. Some stations weight certain store reports, so that a particular store might have double the value of a smaller one.

In the Point System, the station calls stores and reads to the store on a point scale, usually 5=excellent sales, 4=good sales, 3=fair, 1=very little action, or no stock but some inquiries, and 0=no action. The number 2 is not used in this system, generally speaking. Then once again totals are added up to compile the survey. Again, certain stores may be weighted differently.

Other systems naturally vary widely, but one fairly prevalent one is stations with excellent working relationships with certain stores will use actual piece counts in determining their weekly surveys.

then they're a Top 40 listener. If they say WCCO and their other stations include KSTP and WDGY, then they're to some degree a Top 40 listener. If they never sample any Top 40, then we pass."

Sebastian places a greater reliance on his passive research than on traditional forms of research (request tabulations, store reports, etc.). According to his estimates, less than 10% of the population actually buys records (with the percentage for singles buyers being much lower), so that tapping the preferences of the inactive masses is a much more reliable indicator of acceptable programming. This belief had led to a significantly different approach to making up KDWB's playlist—Sebastian by his own admission is "usually after WABC. I'm usually the last station in the country to add songs, unless I can personally hear it and am convinced that it's going to be a smash." Explaining further, he states, "If it's just a regular record that comes up through the mainstream of research, then I'd rather let someone else break it and take the negatives that happen when a song is unfamiliar. I'll go on it when it develops to the point where I'm sure it's going to be a mass-accepted song."

Sebastian tests "between 30 and 60" records weekly in his research efforts, "playing parts of each song down the line to them, and asking them to respond to it." With Minneapolis/St. Paul's unique ethnic distribution ("the whitest in the country, less than 1%" according to Sebastian) taken into account, Sebastian's findings dictate a more cautious attitude towards adding R&B or disco-flavored records than is taken elsewhere.

An example was Johnnie Taylor's two-million selling "Disco Lady" in 1976. "I think it was either number two or number one when I went on that," says Sebastian. "I found people were reacting negatively to the song. Why they were reacting negatively would just be my opinion against someone else's, but my opinion is that we either have a bias up here or for some reason people haven't been exposed to enough Black product to really get into it. There's some problem that makes people react negatively to a lot of Black songs that are very big nationally. On the other hand, some disco songs like KC & the Sunshine Band have done very well."

"When there were three other Rockers on AM, all three of them got into more Black product than I did, because they all went by traditional means of research. They used the trades and tipsheets, and they looked at their sales sheets, and Black records do sell here, better than they are passively accepted. Therefore, occasionally Johnnie Taylor, who sells tremendously at certain Black stores, may not necessarily reach the masses."

On the other hand, Sebastian's research (or his personal ear) sometimes causes him to make an unusual playlist addition. Recent examples include the Beatles' reissued "Ob La Di Ob La Da" (months after both radio elsewhere and the record company had given up on it), the near-bubblegum Rubinoos record, and "Daydream Believer" by the Monkees.

"That came about through research," says Sebastian. "The TV show came back here, and therefore, probably like several cities where it came back, we started getting Monkees requests on the phone for all their things. It seemed as if 'Daydream Believer' was getting more than any of them, so just off this alone I decided to test that particular song in my research. I do oldies at the same time I do currents, so it wasn't any problem. I wasn't playing it as an oldie, but I played it just to see how it came out and it came out like gangbusters. So I decided there was no way it could hurt me. I wasn't in a ratings period at that time, and if it was a fluke in the research, it was an awfully big fluke, so I gave it light play, like risking a new record. It became the number one requested song overnight. It did surprisingly well with 18-24 males and females. Passively it did very well. I personally believed it had the potential to be a hit again—at least in those areas where there was the TV show to start fanning the fire again."

Sebastian watches TV trends closely. "I'm

convinced it influences the audience a great deal. That's how I broke 'Welcome Back Kotter,' incidentally. No one in the market was playing it—it was very early, the record had just been released a week or so. Like everyone else I was tuning in that show occasionally, and I kept hearing that song and it sounded very good to me. My passive research can actually break a record off TV, so again on a whim I tested the song, and this one helped me a great deal in the book, because I was the only station in this market that really started concentrating on that record. Everybody else thought I was taking a huge risk, but I knew in my own research that I was taking no risk at all."

Sebastian uses traditional forms of research, such as calls to about 35 stores in the area weekly. He weights album sales more heavily than singles, but recognizes the problem of determining whether the track singled out as a 45 is actually selling the album. "It's important to collaborate the findings of your passive research, and that's the reason I'm thankful I have that, too, because then I can pretty well determine which cut is doing it."

He also employs Jack McCoy's research tools to aid in day-parting, and the Todd Wallace service as well ("We use it on a week-to-week basis. We're probably his biggest customer. We buy it every single week of the year and therefore get a detailed analysis of just how well we're doing in each demographic").

But his chief reliance is on passive research, which he considers to be the core of what psychographic research techniques are attempting to determine. As far as actual laboratory psychographic record-testing, as practiced by firms like ASI or Dr. Tom Turicchi's company, Sebastian is skeptical. "I don't believe that's valid for radio. They're testing new songs that haven't been played. I find that new songs that haven't been played not only turn out very unfamiliar to people, obviously, but also turn out very negative. It takes people on most songs several listens before they'll make up their minds, and if you really pin them down, for lack of a better idea of what to say they will say they don't like it. A lot of songs may become very big that initially my research has been negative about, because they just weren't very familiar with it."

Interesting, Sebastian still believes firmly that there is a place in modern Top 40 radio for the personal ear of a programmer. "I was at a convention in San Francisco, on a panel talking about trends towards further use of research, and a lot of people are afraid of that, especially when they hear me talk about it.

"Most passive people don't buy singles, they don't request records, they don't participate in contests, they don't go to see The Who in concert, they don't do the traditional things that most programmers think the majority of people do..."

So I thought it was interesting that I was the one that brought up the point that I hoped things never got to the point where a programmer could not use his own experience and ear and knowledge to get the lead over someone else. I'm not one to say we should go totally automated, or totally computerized. Another thing I've found from my research is that after doing it for a while it's actually enhanced my ear. I can now listen to a song and because of the way things like it have been researched in the past, I can pretty well predict how it's

going to do."

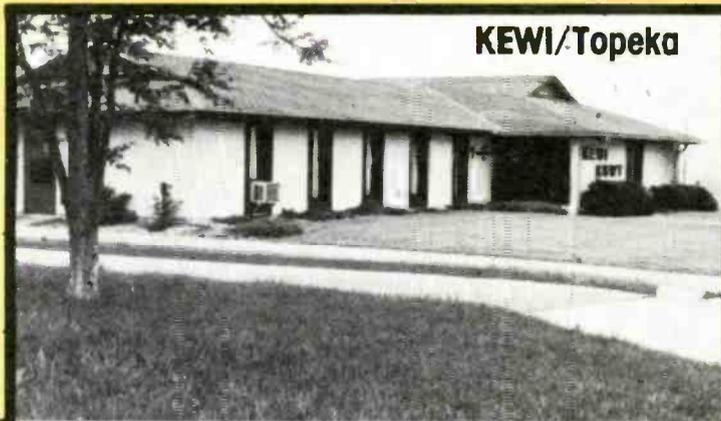
But in the long run, Sebastian sees an increasing utilization of research techniques in Top 40 radio, particularly the kind of passive research he has helped to pioneer. "Five years from now, I would predict that all major stations are going to be doing similar types of research," he says. "If they don't, I'd sure like to be the one that's in against a major market radio station that didn't, because I think I'd wipe them off the face of the Earth."



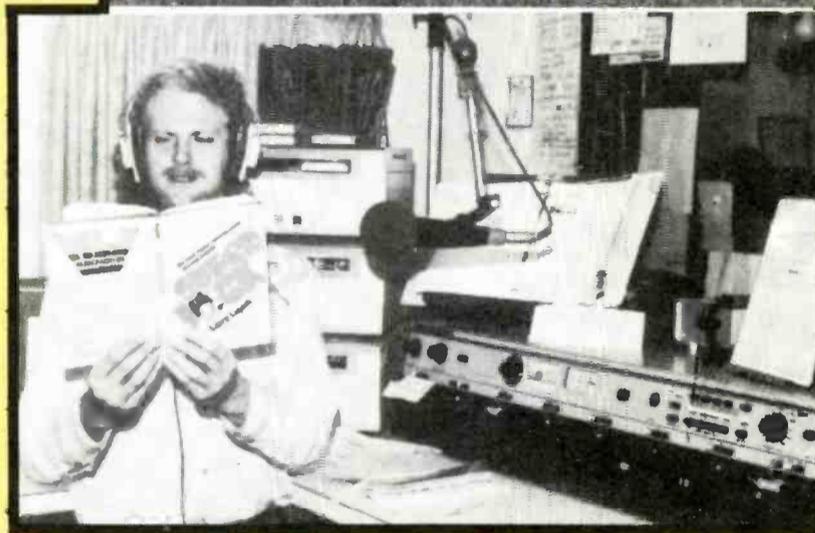
KDWB's CRT Desktop Communications Terminal for their computer research.



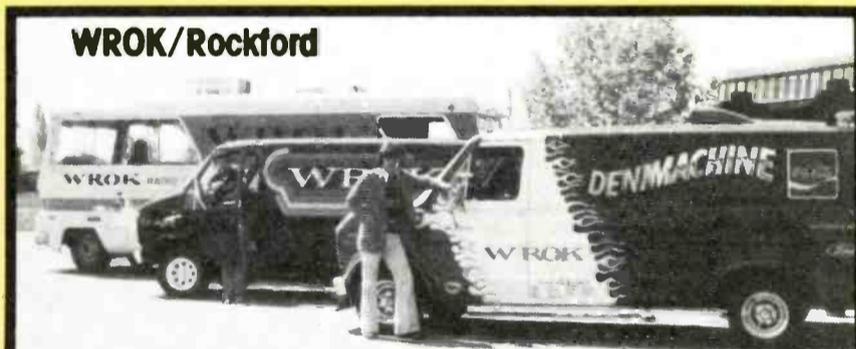
# TOP-40 RADIO: Behind The Scenes



**KEWI/Topeka**



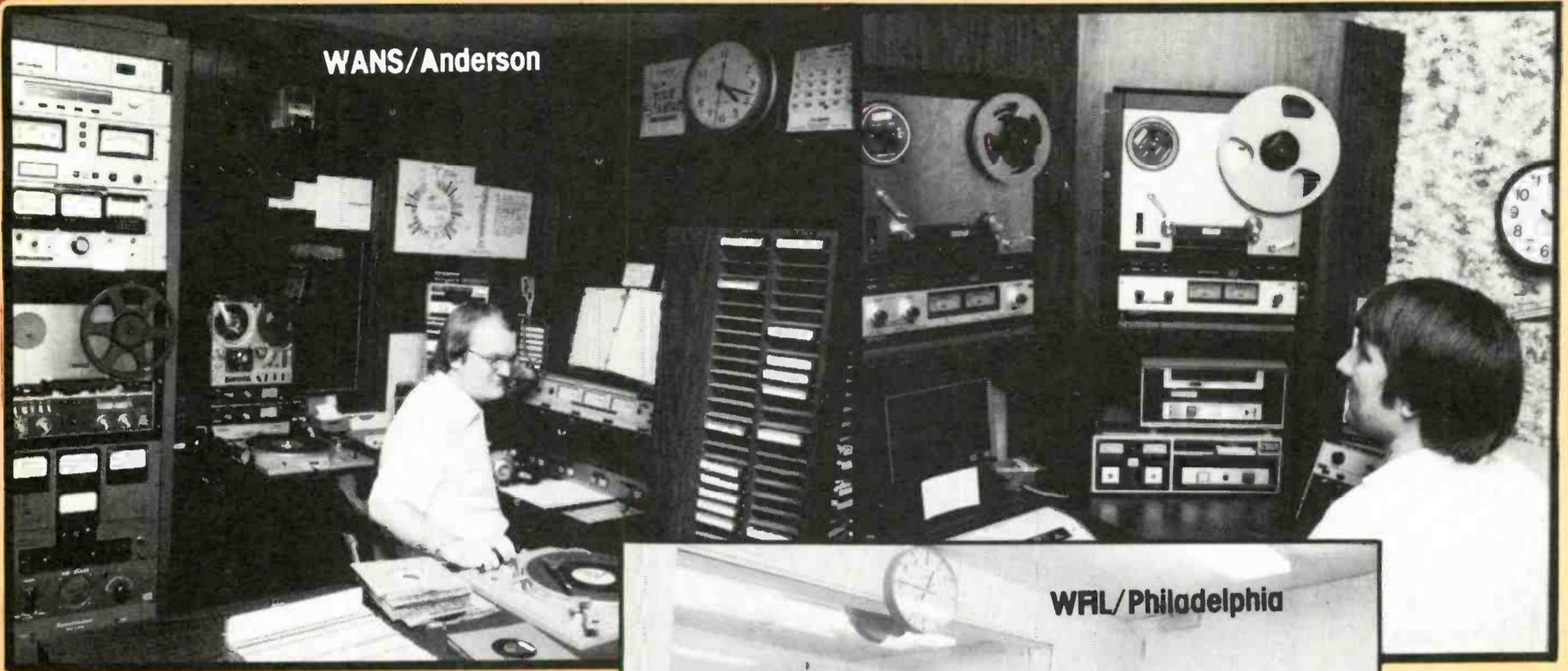
**KHJ/Los Angeles**



**WROK/Rockford**



**WPRO-FM/Providence**



WANS/Anderson



WFL/Philadelphia



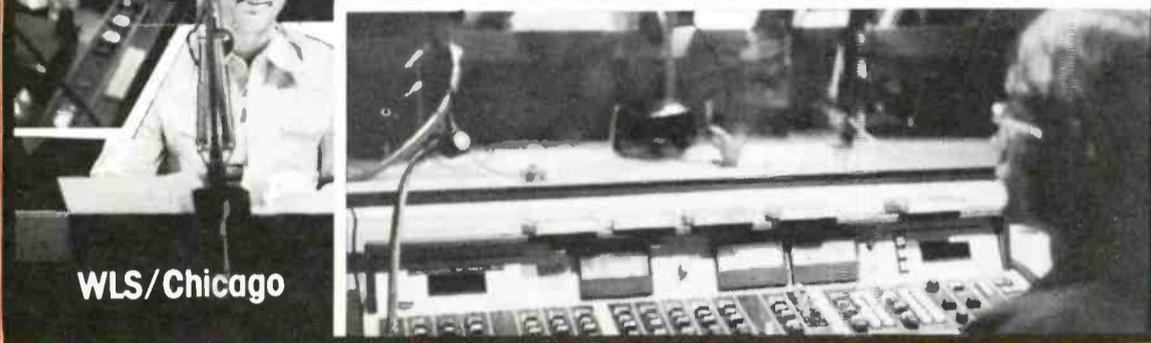
WRBQ/Tampa

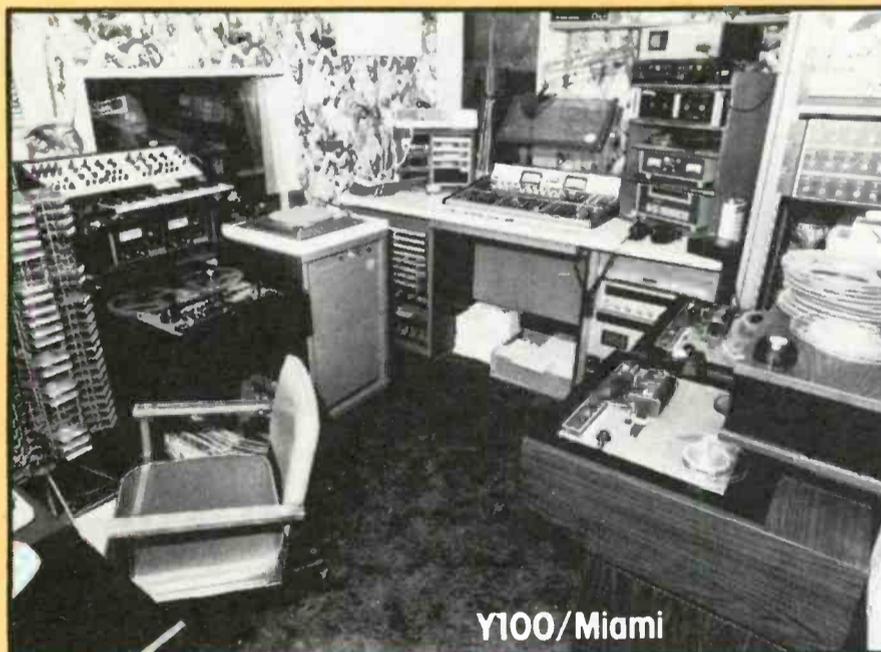
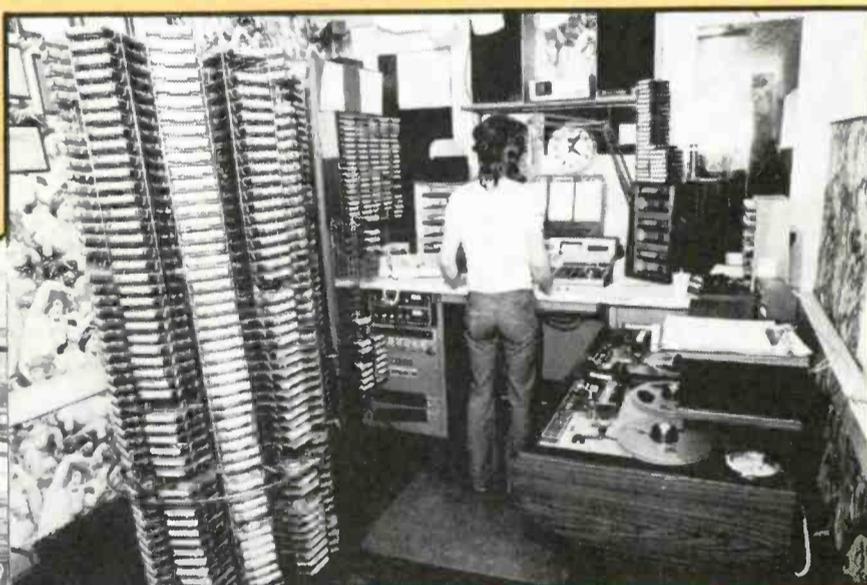
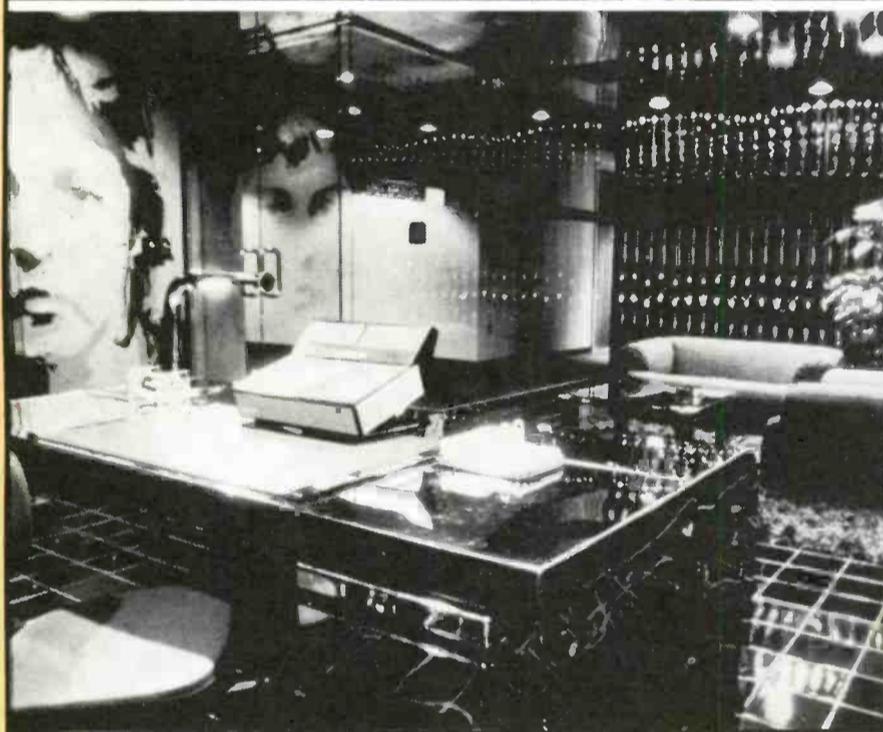
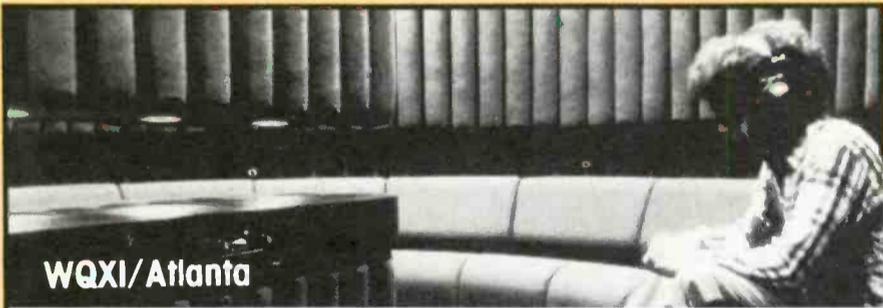
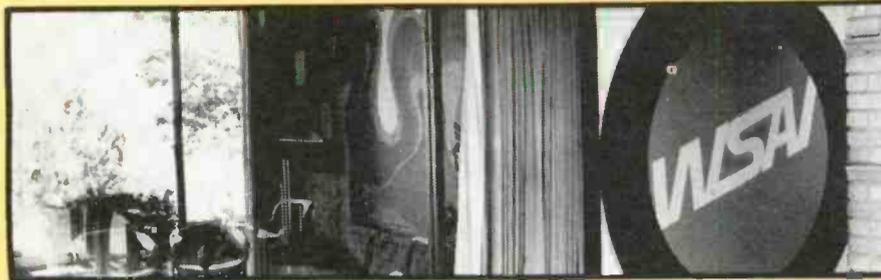


WCVS/Springfield

# TOP-40 RADIO: Behind The Scenes

# TOP-40 RADIO: Behind The Scenes

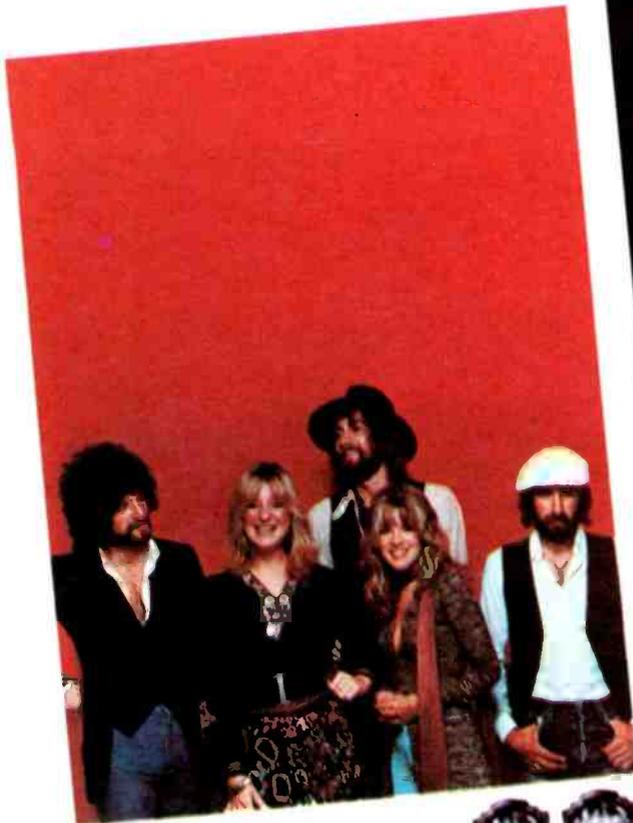




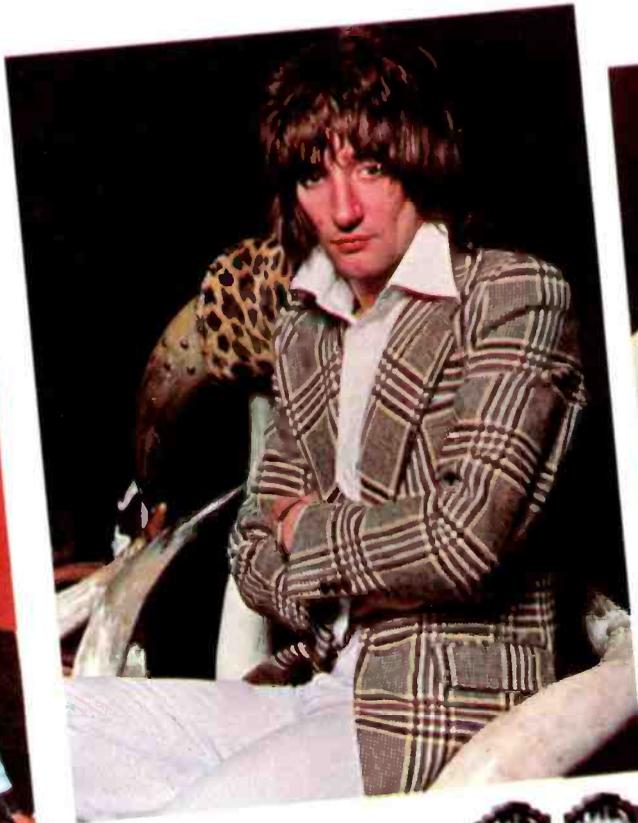
*For a further look  
'Behind The Scenes,'  
see page 62.*

# TOP-40 RADIO: Behind The Scenes

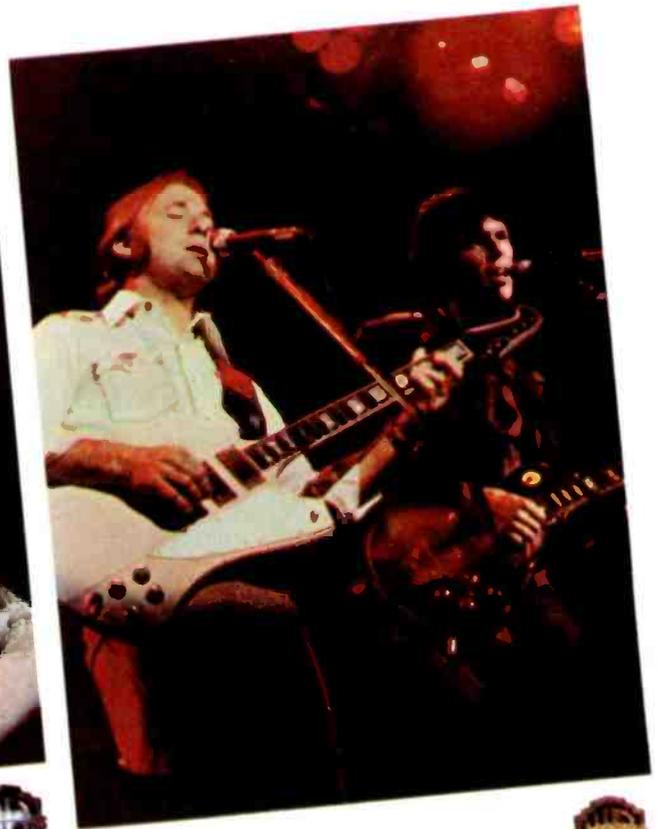
# These artists have always made great music.



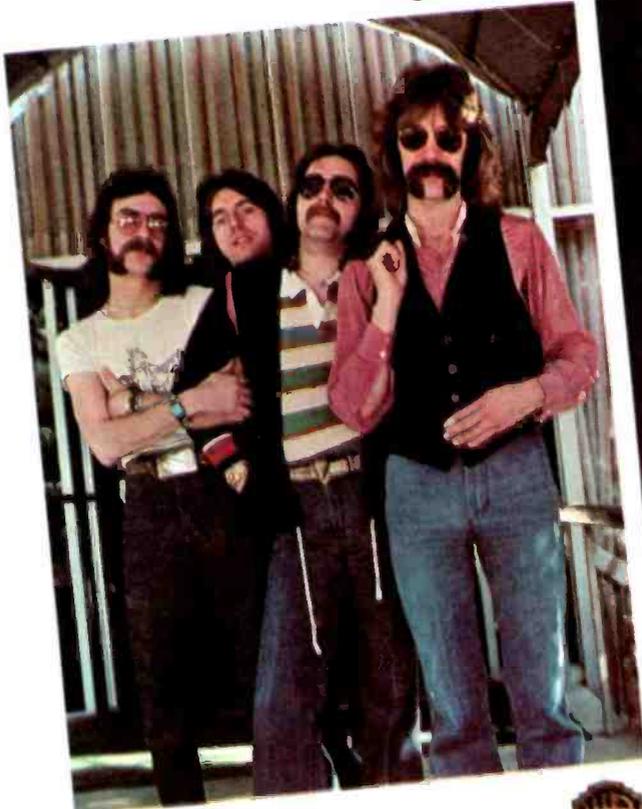
Quadruple Platinum by  
Fleetwood Mac  
*Rumours*  
Produced by Fleetwood Mac  
with Richard Dashut and Ken Caillat



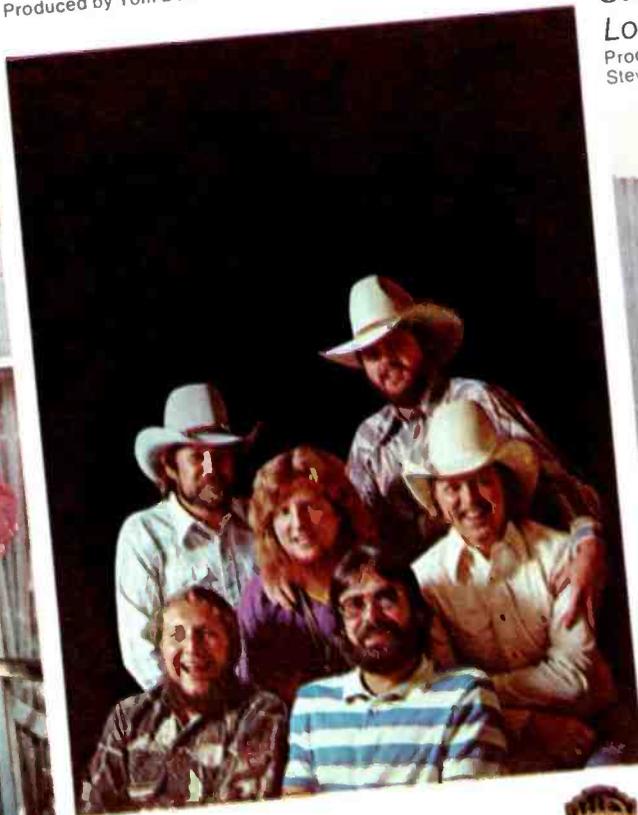
Double Platinum by  
Rod Stewart  
*A Night On The Town*  
Produced by Tom Dowd



Gold by  
The  
Stills-Young Band  
*Long May You Run*  
Produced by  
Steven Stills-Neil Young-Don Gehman



Gold by  
Foghat  
and Bearsville Records  
*Night Shift*  
Produced by Dan Hartman  
Distributed by Warner Bros. Records



Gold by  
The Marshall Tucker Band  
and Capricorn Records  
*Carolina Dreams*  
Produced by Paul Hornsby  
Distributed by Warner Bros. Records



Gold by  
Manfred Mann's Earth Band  
and Bronze Records  
*The Roaring Silence*  
Produced by Manfred Mann  
and The Earth Band  
Distributed by Warner Bros. Records

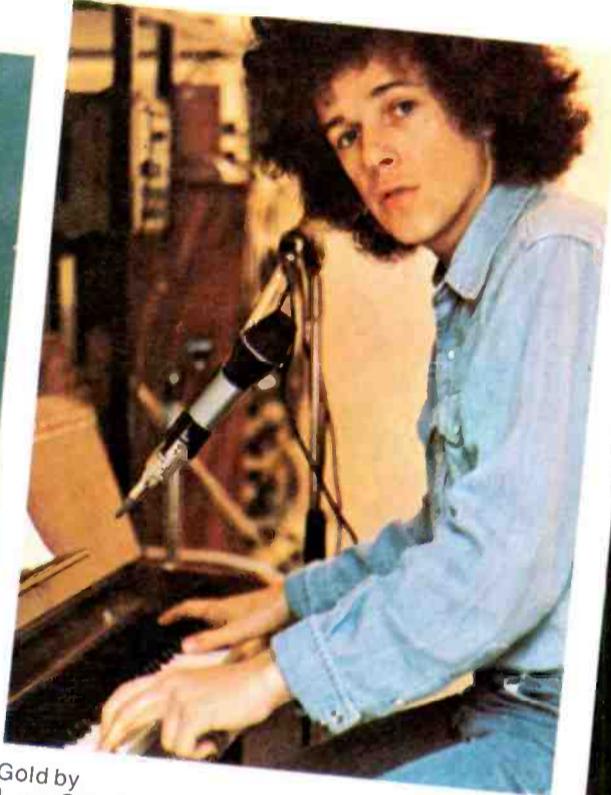


Warner Bros. Records and affiliated labels have earned  
It could never have happened without the musical  
Stations that know a hit when they

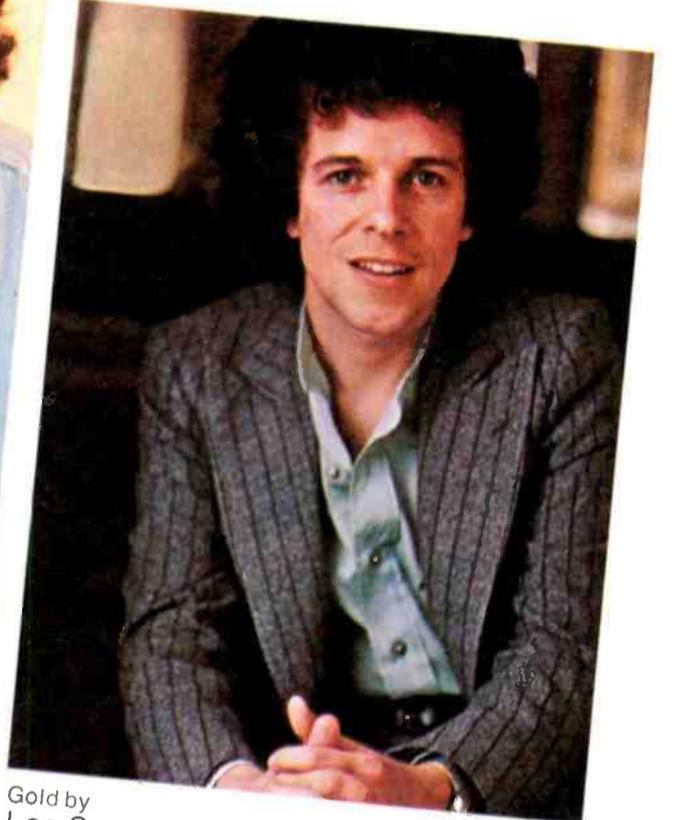
# But Top 40 radio made them Gold and Platinum!



Gold by  
Alice Cooper  
*Go To Hell*  
Produced by Bob Ezrin  
for Migration Records, Inc.



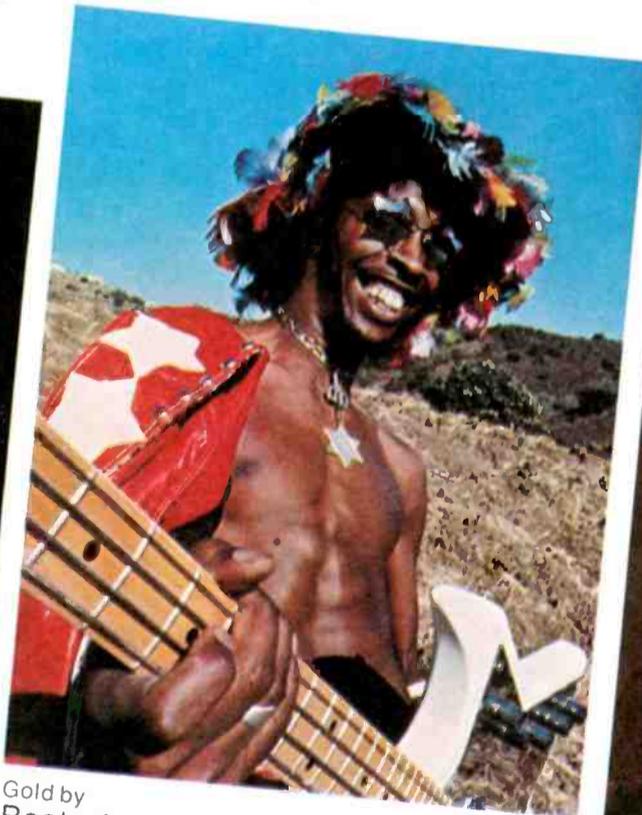
Gold by  
Leo Sayer  
the single  
*When I Need You*  
and the album *Endless Flight*  
Produced by Richard Perry



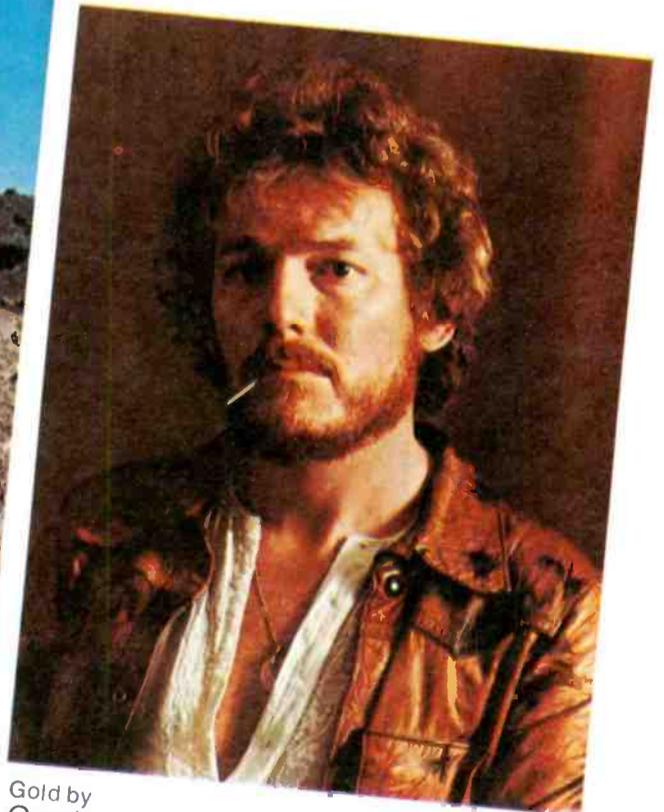
Gold by  
Leo Sayer  
*You Make Me  
Feel Like Dancing*  
from the album *Endless Flight*  
Produced by Richard Perry



Gold by  
George Harrison and  
Dark Horse Records  
*Thirty Three & 1/3*  
Distributed by Warner Bros. Records



Gold by  
Bootsy's  
Rubber Band  
*Ahh...The Name  
Is Bootsy, Baby*  
Produced by  
George Clinton and William Collins



Gold by  
Gordon Lightfoot  
*Gord's Gold*  
Produced by Lenny Waronker  
and Joe Wissert



17 Gold and Platinum album certifications so far in 1977.  
enthusiasm of Top 40 stations across the country.  
hear one. And can make it happen.

**THE  
TOP-40  
STORY**

# Gordon McLendon

R&R: How did you decide to get into broadcasting?

McLendon: Well I was just entranced with radio from the time I was maybe 10 or 11 years of age, I'm 55 now...I used to drive up and down the highway between the small town where I lived called Atlanta, Texas and Texarcana, and I used to try to imitate my boyhood idol on the radio, Ted Husey. I always thought well, boy if I could ever get before a microphone, that would be the biggest thing that ever happened to me. If I could ever do it. I saw no real chance at that point. Then when I went to Yale, the campus radio station had an opening for a play-by-play announcer and oddly enough, the two guys who ended up with that job were a team. They were Gordon McLendon and James Whitmore. I think that fellow may have a future too. A lot of people think he's a character.

R&R: did you work at or own any other stations before KLIF? Outside of the campus one?

McLendon: Oh yes. When I went to Harvard Law School, I just hated it, cause I went there because my father and my grandfather before them had been lawyers, and I wanted to try and please them, but I didn't like it. While I was in Harvard Law School, I called Dad and told him I just had to get out of there. So I was fortunate enough that Dad was willing to advance \$17,000 to back me in a half interest in KNET in Palastine, Texas. We're perhaps skipping a more interesting part of the thing, when I was in the Pacific, after I had left Yale, I majored in Oriental languages, so they kind of wanted me when World War II broke out. I fell further in love with radio at that point because I did a program for the Armed Forces Radio Service in which I called myself Lowell Graham Cultonheater, which was obviously a compound of Lowell Thomas, Raymond Graham, H.V. Cultonborn, and Gabriel Heater. I would do satires on the news of the world, and that was fun too. All the soldiers and the sailors were tense about the events of the day and they'd get the news, and my five minute report every night, to me it just sounded like the greatest program that ever existed, it was...at least it was all over the South Pacific. I would report the news as follows: And today, there is news. There is news from near Berlin, in the fast shrinking hub of the black Mercedes, the Allies are making unusual strides, perhaps not progressing, perhaps progressing; but that we will wait to see, under any circumstances, as the moves go on here today. If the Allies succeed in the present project which I have earlier outlined, momentous events will take place. If they do not succeed, momentous events will not take place.

R&R: Let's go back to your first owned station, that you bought half interest in for \$17,000.

McLendon: My partner was a fellow named Johnny Long. He owned some theaters in Bay City, Texas. He was such a great guy, he put up with all my eccentricities and about the only thing good about my management of that radio station was my broadcast of the Palastine High School Tigers.

R&R: You like calling the color. You did that later, when you did a lot of imaginative sports broadcasting.

McLendon: Yeah, well, from that point on, I went to Dallas, there was really no kidding around any longer.

R&R: Did you make money with it?

McLendon: I think we about broke even on it, maybe made a little money. When I got to Dallas the situation was considerably more critical because there wasn't anything I could learn, no fooling around, because there were very resourceful competitors in Dallas, not in Palastine. So I had to do something with this poor little daytime only radio station. I thought well, why don't you do what you heard in the South Pacific, all those soldiers and sailors loved every afternoon to hear major league baseball broadcasts and now on Sunday they used to hear professional football broadcasts and the only time they get them now is on weekends or, not even on weekends. At the time of the All Star game, or the World Series they didn't broadcast around the



A TEXAS BROADCASTER'S MAP OF THE U.S.A.  
May 20, 1960



The broadcaster is Gordon McLendon, "the capital of his McLendon Corporation empire, Station KLIF, Dallas.

When it was operating, his Liberty Broadcasting System was the second largest radio network in America. Known as the "old Scotchman" for his own widely-distributed radio program, this young radio pioneer has swept the medium in the last fifteen years.

His subject? "Revolutions in Radio"—what else?

EXECUTIVE OFFICES  
THE McLENDON STATIONS - DALLAS

To ALL MANAGERS Date Feb 2, 1963

From Gordon McLendon Subject

Bill Morgan and Stan Richards at KLIF have come up with a fine new idea for evenings or, for that matter, for any other time period. They are using it on the evening show. The first two records of every hour are to be in this order: "King of KLIF" and The Challenger. The idea here is that the first record in every hour would be one of the top rated records from our survey, and the Challenger would be simply a new record that might or might not become a corner. Having played the two records, the station then takes a vote for the remainder of the hour--continuing to announce totals as the hour goes along. Thus you develop suspense throughout an hour. At the beginning of the next hour an entirely new contest starts. If the "King" has been dethroned, the Challenger is the number one record and not the King, and now there is a new Challenger. And, during the next 50 minutes, or so, there is a vote between these two records. We haven't started it yet, but it sounds like a good idea to me and should be one that would work.

Gordon McLendon

O.R.P.B.

1st  
by far  
in LOUISVILLE

WAKY

From 10.1% to 37.5%  
in just 10 days!!\*

Not even Tim Tam set a pace in Louisville like WAKY, the newest of the McLendon and John Blair stations... a 274% increase in audience in just ten days! On Wednesday, July 9th, Louisville's WCBC became WAKY and Louisville simply went wacky over WAKY. Incidentally, that's the way we promote it on the air... wacky. In July 10th, just ten days after WAKY began broadcasting, Hooper completed its survey showing WAKY with... 37.5% of Louisville listeners... next highest station... 13.8%... a new world's record in Louisville! With 5,000 log wags at the check seven thirty spot, WAKY is the first station on Louisville dial... chosen of all Louisville frequencies, with resultant remarkable coverage of 41 counties in Kentucky. *Warning to listeners:* Don't accept old rating figures... demand to see surveys made after July 9th... the date WAKY roared into Louisville. WAKY has run away with Herbytown's radio day!

\*C. E. Hooper, Inc. July 14-18, 1958

WAKY

IN McLENDON OWNERSHIP WITH

KLIF  
DALLAS

KILT  
HOUSTON

KTSA  
SAN ANTONIO

KEEL  
SHREVEPORT

all five represented by...

JOHN BLAIR & CO.

Note the 1963 date on the above memo that spread the original "Champ/Challenger" battle of the hits promotion.



# Gordon McLendon

country regular league baseball or Sunday football games, people in the Southwest part of the country at least, and I think also in the Southeast on the Atlantic coast, they'd never heard a professional game, they didn't know what the hell it was all about. Yet many of the great stars of professional football were from their area.

R&R: This is in Dallas?

McLENDON: Right, and they gave it no chance, it was called KLIF and it was at 1190 and it had 1000 watts daytime only. I simply had to do something to get an audience with it. Luckily I was right.

R&R: You didn't actually broadcast them live, you re-created the games, didn't you?

McLENDON: Had to re-create them because the major league baseball clubs would not grant me permission to go into the park.

R&R: How did you do it?

McLENDON: It was quite difficult. We thought about it a long time but finally hired a fellow for I think \$300 a week, which was big, that was a lot of money in those days. He would listen to the stations in New York and we only needed New York, because New York at that time had three baseball teams, they had the Yankees, the Dodgers, and the Giants. They were always active, every afternoon because if they weren't in New York playing, they were away, so actually what you've got is the availability of six baseball teams, since they were playing opponents every day. He would listen to the broadcast we got him a teletype and he would type down; strike, ball, fly out to right field, and it was up to me at that point to dramatize it.

R&R: Isn't there a story somewhere along the line where the teletype or something failed and you had to fill for several hours describing the day, or whatever it was?

McLENDON: Well it happened more than just once, as with anything human, the teletype line did fail once in a while and we would have some various things happen. Number one and this was most often, we'd have a dog loose on the field and there would be long chases where this dog was being pursued by various policemen and some of the players would be involved.

R&R: Did the audience know that it was being re-created, or did they accept these things?

McLENDON: We said at the beginning and the end, I now realize that it wasn't adequate, but we said at the beginning and

“The only thing that matters in radio and ever did is what comes out over the air, is your programming. Nothing else is important, forget your call letters or anything else...”

the end, and once in the middle, that the following broadcast comes to you by wire re-creation. Well hell, nobody in those days knew what that meant. So that all went over their heads. So presumably they thought it was coming directly from the park. And then at another time when the wire would go out, I would have the batter foul off balls interminably. There was a guy playing for the Chicago White Socks at that point called Lou Galling, we used to call him old aches and pains. I once had him foul off 109 straight pitches while waiting. But oddly enough, since I was the only game in town, you know, the people would hang loose for it, no great problem. I recall that right after I started broadcasting, again, because I was the only game in town, we had a game from Ebbett's Field, I did the last half inning in Japanese. I was a Japanese language officer in the war, and I decided it would be fun, so the score of the game was about 9 to 1, it was terribly boring, I thought well, why not make it even more boring?

R&R: Did you ever get write-ups in the paper on some of the things you did? Did they cover you?

McLENDON: In all papers outside of Dallas. But you would never get any publicity there because the newspapers also own their own radio stations.

R&R: How did you get the crowd noise, and the sound and the wind if there was any, and all those kind of things?

McLENDON: At the start I just went to the Dallas baseball park and I took the extreme crowd noise and I took the gentle crowd noise, and we blended them. Later on, I got very sophisticated, we had the crowd noise from the park itself, the national anthem as it was at the park, we played the national anthem from Ebbett's Field, it was with Gladys Gooding singing the national anthem. But at the start it was very elementary, we just had make-do crowd noises.

R&R: Any story behind the selection of the KLIF call letters?

McLENDON: Well that one was rather easy because the sixth largest community in Texas is Oak Cliff, which is a part of Dallas. I just chose KLIF.

R&R: I know you tried to always tie your call letters to something, I've heard an embarrassing call letter problem in San Antonio.

McLENDON: No, that's not embarrassing, that was just awful. It was a pile of shit. Things weren't going all that well in San Antonio and I thought well, we're having problems now with this other station, let's give ourselves a shot in the arm, let's change the call letters from KTSA to KAKI. To me that was a master's stroke, because KAKI was easy to say. After all San Antonio was the home of hundreds of thousands of servicemen, it was just great, everything fit. And within days our ratings went down like 40%. Couldn't figure it out at all. But it developed that the reason for it was that it meant shit in Spanish. And being so close to the Mexican border the word was well known, apparently.

R&R: Could you just change call letters then, or did you have to go through FCC approval?

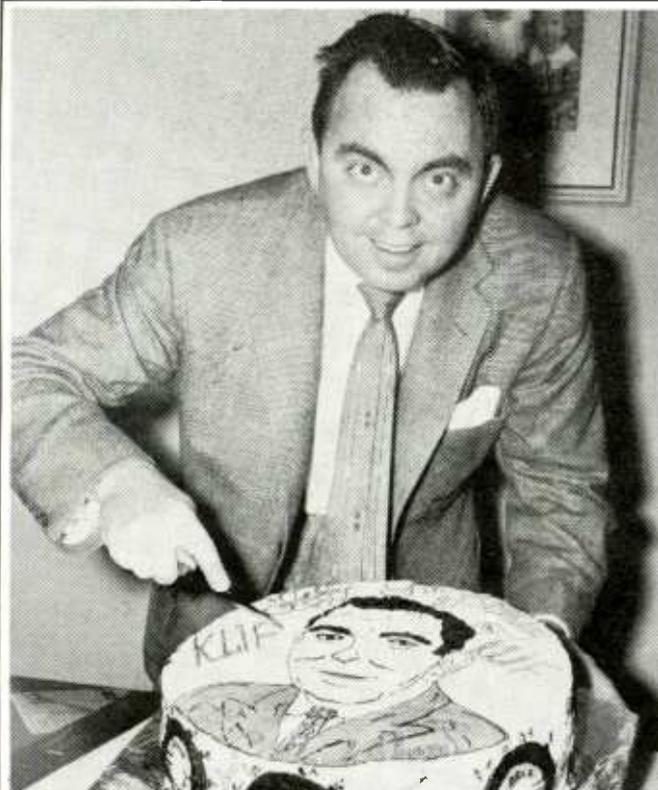
McLENDON: Oh yeah, you had to go through FCC approval, you didn't have to write other stations, changing call letters was a matter of a couple of days if you wanted to do it.

R&R: Who actually created the Top 40 concept, you or Todd Storz?

McLENDON: Todd and I were together so many times, I loved him like a brother. But I think Todd deserves credit for the Top 40. What he did in Omaha was start it off in the most basic fashion, he was just playing Top 40 numbers and seeing what would happen. He died too shortly thereafter to really have developed the format. I guess if I take any credit at all on Top 40 it would not be in originating it. But in having developed it into a more modern day version. But I'd have to give the origin of it to Todd.

R&R: There's also talk that you two had, because I guess of your relationship and mutual respect, agreed never to compete with each other.

McLENDON: That's true. Never. One of the most unhappy days I recall that I ever had was when I bought a station in Houston,



McLendon cutting the 9th KLIF birthday cake. Jocks listed on the cake include Bruce Hays and Ken Knox.



One of the first tower sitting radio promotions—this one at WAKY/Louisville when McLendon owned it.



McLendon posing for a publicity shot for "Bridge At Toko-Ri." McLendon produced over 250 major national advertising campaigns for all the top motion picture studios.

and someone carried me a rumor that Todd had bought one the same day. I called him, and I said, "Todd, this cannot be true." He put me on for quite a while, and he said yeah I bought one. But actually it wasn't true. No, we would never go in to the same market together. At that time, everything was open. There were no closed markets. The world was your oyster, go into anything. The easiest market that I ever had to tackle in the United

States, ever, was Los Angeles. Very few people know that story. But back I guess about 1956 or 1957, '58, somewhere in there, Bill Crowell, the head of Crowell-Collier called me and said I got this radio station out in Los Angeles called KFWB, could you tell me what I can do with it? And so I listened to it, and L.A. had absolutely nothing that resembled a Top 40 station. It was a sitting duck. So I put the first Top 40 station in Los Angeles on KFWB.

R&R: Who were some of your jocks?

McLENDON: Bruce Hayes was a guy I brought out. I took him directly off the air in Dallas, brought him out here, and then Chuck Blore, and then Gary Owens was another one, and Art Nelson was there and I think, Frank Stisser of the Hooper Organization called me within a month, he said, I don't believe this, I don't believe any station could go from 2% to 25% in one month. That's what happened at KFWB.

R&R: How long did you stay associated with it?

McLENDON: Only about, I guess, 2 months. I had a major falling out with the board of directors of Crowell-Collier, I wanted to run it my way, and what I didn't understand was, there was a corporation. I had never worked for anybody before and never have since. Always been a lone wolf. What I wanted to do is tell everybody THIS is the way it's done, and not be interfered with. I didn't understand that in a big corporation you've got...

R&R: Too many toes there.

McLENDON: You can't quite do that, so I just told them in essence, to put it in very polite term, what they could do with their station. And so...

R&R: And Chuck Blore ending up being the Program Director after that, right?

McLENDON: I'm not even sure that we didn't appoint him Program Director at that time. I've forgotten, we brought him out here as a disc jockey. May have appointed him Program Director from the start.

R&R: You made a statement at the R&R Convention about facilities, one of the key things you said was always get the best facility.

McLENDON: Oh absolutely.

R&R: Well, when did you learn that? Because if you tell me you had a daytimer in Dallas with 1000 watts, obviously you didn't learn it in the early days of KLIF.

McLENDON: No, and this is another thing Todd and I used to talk about, and Todd made a speech on this a long time ago. Ultimately the top facilities will prevail. If you go into Chicago right now take a good look at your ratings. You're going to see that WGN stacks up pretty good, no matter what the competition is. If you go into Minneapolis, take a look at what your best facility is, you're going to see WCCO, I imagine coming along pretty good.

R&R: 30 shares, not bad.

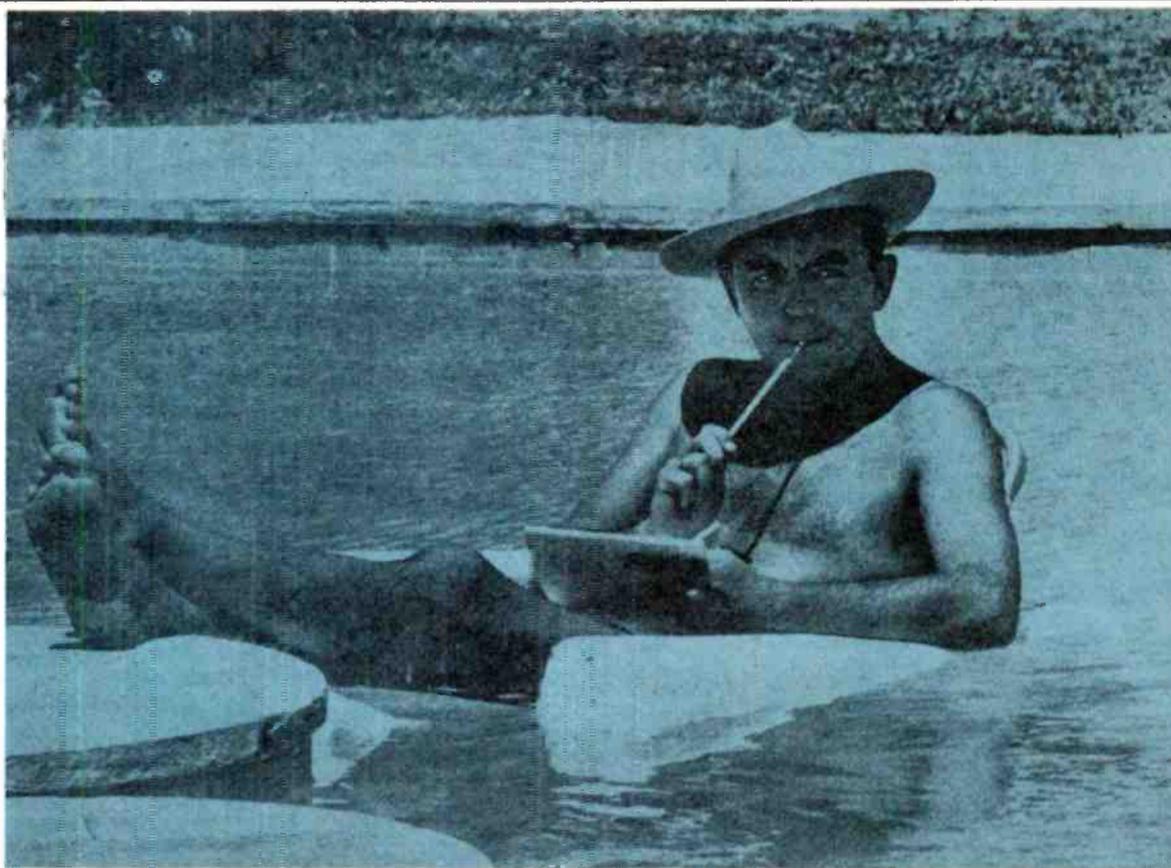
McLENDON: Right.

R&R: But you were able to do it without the facility.

McLENDON: Well it was only because there was no real basic Top 40 competition. When I was starting, I didn't even have Todd's advantage. I had to go into these markets and make do with the best thing that was available. I couldn't afford to buy the top facility in the market. I had to take a bunch of sticks and stones, as Kevin Sweeney used to call them, and try to beat everybody with it. It was rare that I went into a market with anything decent in the way of a physical facility. But that was all right at that point. Because there was no Top 40 competition. Today, you've got a different ball of wax.

R&R: Let's take the early Top 40, how did you do music research in those days, what was it, how did you get the 40 best selling records?

McLENDON: Well, in a very unscientific way. The very first way I remember was we just called the local record stores and asked them what their top sellers were and would they number them. From that we came up with a consensus Top 40 and we weighed that against Billboard, which was the big magazine



McLendon relaxing in the pool.



(Center): To promote FCC Ware at KTSA, McLendon installed him at the San Antonio Zoo to broadcast live as a rare baboon species, "Jockey Flannel Mouthus."



(Above): Streetwalker in downtown San Antonio. (Lower left): One of the first radio station parade floats. The barrel around the young lady carries the words, "I have nothing on but 1190-KLIF."



# THE M

RCA PROMOTION-BUILDING



**NATIONAL  
STAFF:**

Ray Anderson  
Michael Abramson  
Mike Becce  
Niles Siegel  
Joe Galante  
Ray Harris  
Don Wright  
Georgeann Cifarelli  
David Todd

**REGIONAL  
MANAGERS:**

David Newmark  
Dan Conger  
Alan Meis  
John Betancourt  
Eddie Mascolo  
Carson Schreiber  
Wayne Edwards  
Alan Resler  
Gaylen Adams  
Jackie Dean  
John Young  
Leroy Phillips  
Lygia Brown

# MACHINE

YOUR TOMORROWS... TODAY

## LOCAL MANAGERS:

Burt Baumgärtner	Peter Price
Doree Berg	Peter Schwartz
Jay Brooks	Steve Seibe
Earl Sellers	Larry VanDruff
Rich Cervino	Ken VanDurand
Mike Craft	Frank West
Mary DeCioccio	Noble Womble
Don DeLacy	Hank Zarembski
Dave Forman	Margo Morse
Ron Geslin	Bob Walker
Vicki Leben	Charlie Ross
John Lingel	Stephanie McCoy
Al Mathias	Larry Farmer
Jeff Nauman	Dave Loncao
Mike Williams	

RCA



# Gordon McLendon

in the field at that time. Later on I kind of created I guess a small sensation when I started to do a daily Top 40. I still think it was more a gimmick than anything else, but we had the survey from the record stores every day.

R&R: Did you count it down on the air every day?

McLENDON: Oh yeah.

R&R: I've got to go back and summarize a little bit. Why did you stop your broadcasts, the re-creations of sports? Was there a reason for that?

McLENDON: We didn't stop them, the major league baseball clubs stopped them. We started off in a pirate fashion, as I just told you. And then the baseball club, seeing that they couldn't stop us legally, gave us the rights to broadcast live from the field. Or re-create it. Then, after it had been on for 5 years, the baseball clubs came to the conclusion that this was killing the attendance at their minor league baseball parks. Because they said my versions of the games were so much more colorful than their broadcasts that made the minor league baseball clubs look kind of pale by comparison, and they denied us the rights and so I sued them, but in the meantime we were out of business. We won the suit though.

R&R: For the right to re-create the baseball games?

McLENDON: No, we were out of business by that time, but we won the suit and they made an out of court settlement for what seemed like to me at that time an enormous sum of money, \$250,000.

R&R: You were the first to begin mobil news, were you not?

McLENDON: Yeah, we started off, in order to create this vast impression we had mobil unit number 1, and we had mobil unit number 8, and we only had about 3 actual units, but we kept changing the numbers so it seemed that we had vast numbers of cars running around the streets.

R&R: Different people just calling them in?

McLENDON: Oh yeah. But, you know, after 7 or 8 years it got rather old because basically it was a matter of reporting a fender-bender.

R&R: Where did all the new ideas come from, the sports broadcasts, promotions, mobile units...?

McLENDON: Why would you start major league baseball broadcasts? It comes basically from a demented mind.

R&R: How did you look at your audience? You were re-creating baseball, and playing Top 40 music and putting treasure hunts on the air, I mean what was your impression of the audience? What you were doing was definitely not geared to a typical quick-hit at a 13 year old's philosophy.

McLENDON: No, I didn't gear it toward anything, I geared it toward what I would like to hear. I assumed the audience to be interested in what I would like to hear.

R&R: You made them come up. When did you build the famous Liberty Network?

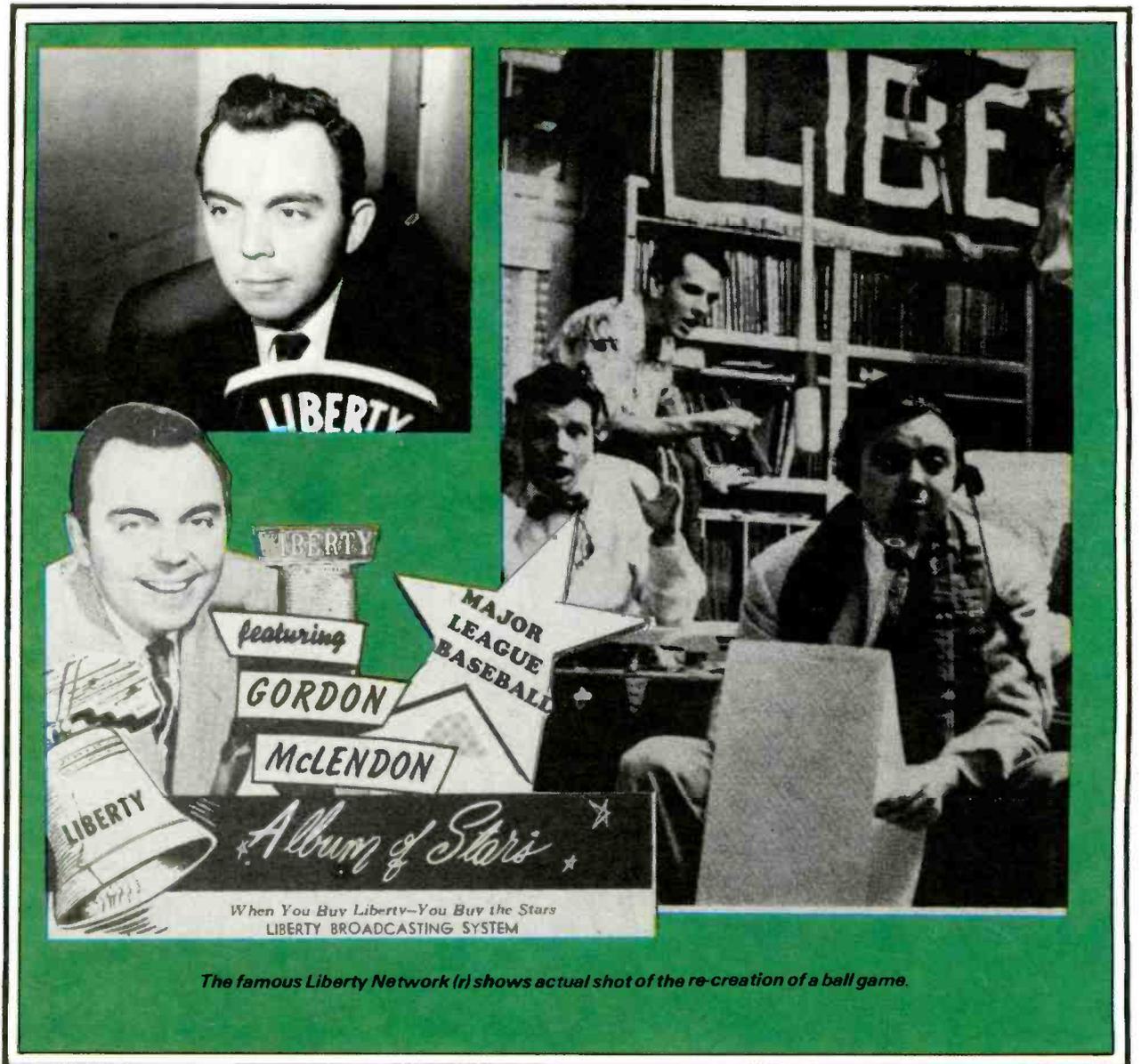
McLENDON: It started in November, 1947, and ran until the Spring of 1952. The Liberty Network was the world's second largest network, it was 458 stations.

R&R: You ran it out of where, KLIF?

McLENDON: Right, out of KLIF. From the basement of the Cliff Towers Hotel, a suburban hotel in Dallas. We were providing certain essential features for them, professional basketball game in the night, a pro football game of the week. Game of the day on baseball.

R&R: Were those your creations?

McLENDON: Some were, but as we grew, I couldn't do it all. We did some live. I would say on the Liberty Network we had the following features which were very basic: One, during it's season, was the major league baseball game of the day, during it's season, professional football's game of the week, which was on Sunday afternoon, then we took over the Saturday night audience because we had the rights to the Louisiana State games, they were the only team in the country playing all their games on Saturday night. Then we got the rights to the Miami University games, they were the only team in this country playing all their games on



Friday night. And then we, pretty much became THE sports network. There wasn't anybody in very close competition. But the major league baseball clubs, to go back to the question you asked earlier, thought that we were interfering with minor league attendance, and they withdrew our rights, and that was a financial blow we couldn't stand.

R&R: Were you paying them?

McLENDON: Yeah, we were paying them. It would be very small compared to today's rights, but we were paying them. But we couldn't stand the loss of baseball, the rest of the sports we had wouldn't carry it all alone.

R&R: Was there a dramatic end to it or did it just fade?

McLENDON: There was a very dramatic end to it. I made a kind of a closing dramatic speech about the end of the network, at least I thought it was dramatic. I don't know.

R&R: We started to touch on your flamboyance before, about promotions and everything, you were the first one to spend a lot of money, you had a \$50,000 treasure hunt, didn't you?

McLENDON: Everything worked well with the treasure hunts we started, the first one we tried was in Dallas. There, the \$50,000

was found. I never will forget the terrible moment, I was in bed on Sunday afternoon and the phone rang. It was the very last day of the Treasure Hunt, it was an awful day, bad clouds, thunder in the skies, and I figured nobody's going to go out hunting for this treasure. Then the phone rang.

R&R: They just found the \$50,000?

McLENDON: I said, oh, you've got to be kidding.

R&R: Who were you fighting at the time you gave this away, was there really a big battle that made you give away \$50,000?

McLENDON: No. It was part of what C.E. Hooper said, and this was just before Todd died. Hooper, who was some other type of brilliant man, said, Gordon, you're doing things right, you're playing the right music, and you've got your news, that's right, so forth, but he said, you're not doing the one thing that really is important. You're not promoting correctly. You've really got to keep promotions going all the time. This is very important, and this is what I was alluding to awhile ago. Todd had the basics of the Top 40, he had the music right, and he had the news five minutes before the hour, but except for something called "Lucky House Number", Todd really had no big promotions. So we were not promoting against anybody, in the sense of another competitor, but we were just trying to increase our share of audience from 40 to 45%.

**"I guess if I take any credit at all on Top 40 it would not be in originating it but in having developed it into a more modern day version. But I'd have to give the origin of it to Todd Storz."**

11-7-57

CHECK LIST FOR PROMOTIONS

When you launch a new promotion, contest or other gimmick designed to attract attention to the station, it is not enough merely to start the promotion. Promotions are, at best, less effective, and sometimes worthless, without proper follow-through before, after and during the promotion. Too many times, good promotions have failed through poor execution. Proper preparation for any promotion should mean two or three hours at least. In the interest of avoiding any repetition of this, the following check list is offered to you.

- 1.) Have I issued a complete fact sheet for disc jockeys and other personnel?
- 2.) Have I instructed deejays in how to handle ad-lib promos and how often?
- 3.) Have I recorded production promos for the promotion?
- 4.) Have I logged enough of this each day before the promotion? (On big promotions, 2 an hour for 7 days before the promotion is not too much; on smaller promotions, an intensive 2 or 3 day buildup can be enough.)
- 5.) Am I using my i. d. 's to promote the contest before, after and during?
- 6.) Have I written stories for my newscasts which will hype the promotion?
- 7.) Have I sent stories to trade publications?
- 8.) Have I tied the contest in to any other possible media available to me: newspaper trade-out, spectacular, taxi backs, etc.?
- 9.) Have I set up a heavy enough schedule on the actual promotion itself?
- 10.) Have I written the actual promotion format?
- 11.) Have I scheduled follow-up new promos after promotion has started? What about follow-up i. d. 's and newscasts?
- 12.) Have I instructed staff in how to handle telephone calls, mail etc. . . pertinent to the contest?

*A 1957 promotion checklist that is still up to date 20 years later.*

The Dallas Morning News

The  
**NAKED**  
truth is that Dallas men,  
**WOMEN**  
and children prefer  
**KLIF**  
1190 on Everybody's Dial  
Official June, 1954 Hooper Audience Report for Dallas  
KLIF IS  
AHEAD OF ALL OTHER DALLAS  
RADIO STATIONS IN THE  
MORNINGS: 29.5  
AFTERNOONS: 19.9  
NIGHTS: 25.4  
SATURDAYS: 31.3  
SUNDAYS 22.0  
**KLIF HAS DALLAS' LARGEST RADIO  
AUDIENCE IN EVERY TIME  
PERIOD OF THE DAY AND NIGHT!**  
KLIF—Now America's Top-Ranking Independent Station!

THE TRICK OF PROPER PHRASING

Proper phrasing is fresh phrasing.

- a. Avoid trite, hackneyed, overworked expressions.
- b. Avoid "elegant" or pompous phrasing.

Proper phrasing is picture phrasing.

- a. Use figures of speech.

Similes: Comparing objects of some resemblance.  
Metaphors: Implied comparisons.  
Antithesis: Expressed contrasts.  
Personifications: Giving quality of life to inanimate objects.

- b. Use mental imagery that appeals to the seven senses.

Visual: Recollection of things seen--shapes, colors, sizes, glares, movements.

Auditory: Recollection of sounds heard--hisses, roars, hoots, toots, shrieks, cries, mumblings.

Olfactory: Recollection of things smelled--as the stench of rotten eggs, the perfume of roses, the sinister odor of escaping gas.

Tactile: Recollection of things touched or felt--hardness, softness, roundness, squareness, roughness, smoothness.

Gustatory: Recollection of things tasted--sweet, sour, bitter, tangy, salty.

Thermic: Recollection of sensations of heat and cold--warmth of a fire, a chilling fear.

Motor: Recollection of muscle sensations--contact in a crowded elevator, the strain of lifting a box of books.

Proper phrasing is friendly phrasing.

- a. Plain, friendly words make listeners comfortable, like old shoes.
- b. Don't develop favorite words that are noticeable to your audience by your over-use.
- c. Don't use technical language unless you are talking to specialists.
- d. Don't use words that are over most people's heads.

Be sure statistics are explained in terms your audience can understand.

- a. If you describe physical characteristics, liken your subject to someone your audience knows.
- b. If you describe a place, talk about it in terms of a place the audience already knows.
- c. If you describe an object, do so in language that lets the listener compare it with an object familiar to him in everyday life.

*Note the technique in the layout of this "Naked Women" classic ad.*

R&R: Were you running promotions every week? Every day? What was the plan at that time?

McLENDON: There was no plan, we ran them as fast as we thought of them. That was like two or three times a week.

R&R: Who were the Magnificent Seven?

McLENDON: That was not a promotion. We wanted to show that you could take a minority group with no previous experience in radio and in six weeks train them to be useful radio people.

R&R: How did it work?

McLENDON: There was really two Magnificent Seven groups, neither of them numbered seven people. The first one was not minority, if I recall correctly, but young people who were interested in radio and who were being trained to go directly into executive positions if they made it through the Magnificent Seven course. It was pretty grueling. Because none of them had any radio experience.

R&R: Who was their teacher?

McLENDON: Well, I was the main teacher, but I used all of the McLendon home office staff to come and help me.

R&R: How did you find the people, were they working for you somewhere, at one of your radio stations, something like that, and you said, well I think you've got the executive capabilities.

McLENDON: We put an ad in all the trade papers. It had a selfish motive, very selfish. We were trying to develop people for our stations.

R&R: Did you charge them for it?

McLENDON: No, no, we paid all expenses from living, to everything else, and, we paid them during the time they were in school too.

R&R: You definitely do believe in giving back, don't you?

McLENDON: I don't know any other way in life that makes sense.

R&R: You hired apparently some very unique people, with strange personality traits and strange backgrounds. What do you

look for when you hire people?

McLENDON: Educational background first. And then I'd like to be sure that they're legitimately crazy. I hired a magician, a Mexican Congressman, and a stripper.

R&R: You created several formats including the All-News.

McLENDON: XTRA was the first All-News station. It was Rock when the owners down in Mexico City bought it. And they asked me to consult for them. I told them you can't really make it the number one Rock station in L.A. because you're shooting at this market from 125 miles away, and the signal isn't that great, so you'd better choose some very specific programming that hasn't been done here. They said, what, and I said, well I recommend All-News. Which was kind of an unheard of thing. They put that on the air and it went fairly well.

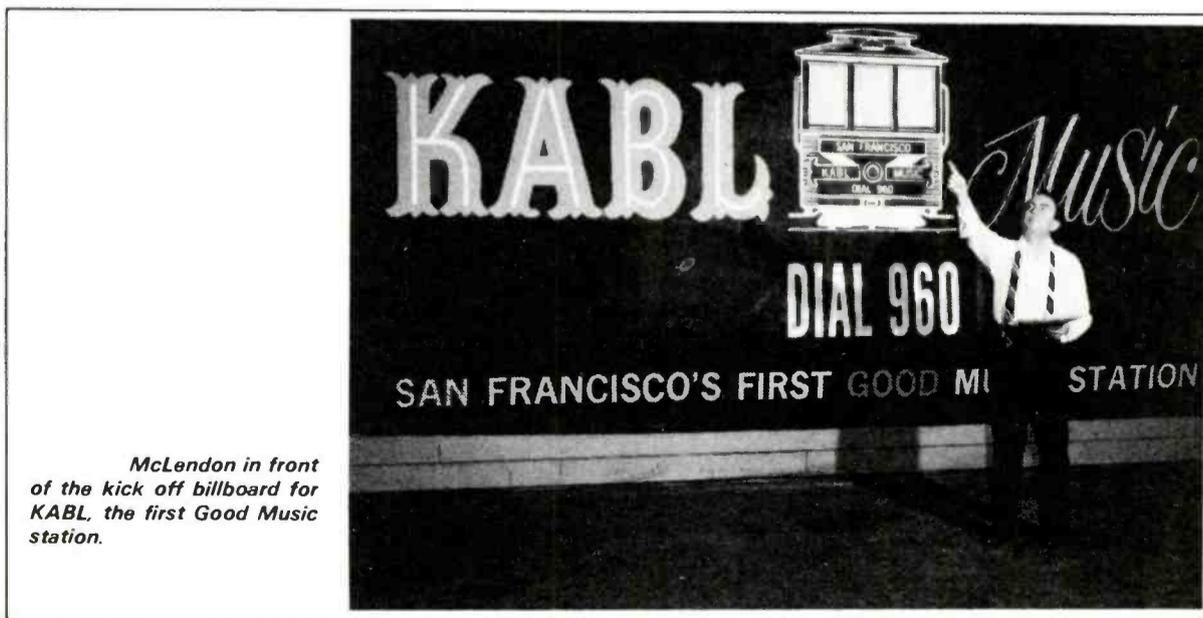
R&R: You did very well.

McLENDON: Yes, it may even turn out to be one of the new formats.

R&R: What about KABL? That was also a very unique situation too.

McLENDON: I kind of think that was my pride and joy of all of them. That's the one I really love the most. We went into San Francisco, there was just no room for another station. You talk about somebody that didn't know anything about good music, it was me. My musical education runs up to and through the Blue Danube. I could listen to the music and I could tell that this poor little pitiful thing I had just bought up there, an example of a bad facility, one-kilowatt in Oakland, which was just reasonably hearable in San Francisco. I could tell that unless I did something very unusual on it, we weren't gonna have much audience. All of a sudden I listened around on the dial, and noticed there's no "shmaltz" music on it. And we put it on and then I thought, well as long as I'm gonna go this far, let's really make it a good shmaltz music station. Then came the mood intros, and all of the...

R&R: Harps, the strings, all of those things, right?



*McLendon in front of the kick off billboard for KABL, the first Good Music station.*

McLENDON: Right, and for the first time, it hadn't been done before, for the first time you began to have promotions on a Good music station.

R&R: Didn't you also run exotics there?

McLENDON: That's where exotics really got going.

R&R: Now were those super produced exotics true, or were they all fabricated?

McLENDON: A few of them were true. My old assistant Don Keys would fare through various government publications, as Will Roger's said there's only one true source of humor and that's the government. He would find things we could have fun with on the air.

R&R: When did Chicago come in? After KABL?

McLENDON: Yeah, it was after KABL, it was after XTRA. XTRA kind of proved the point that All-News would work.

R&R: What did you do to promote that?

McLENDON: I went into Chicago and I had bought such a lousy facility, just horrible.

R&R: Didn't you go with, it was R&B first, wasn't it, WYNR?

McLENDON: It was the first all-Black station in Chicago, and we were number-one in the market. In I think about 3 weeks we were number-one. But then we ran into problems with the FCC, we couldn't do any promotions, we were in a hearing, and I thought oh well, heck, forget it, we'll change and we went to All-News. And that was also a new format in the market.

R&R: How did you promote XTRA, obviously you have tied all your local call letters together as pronounceable names, for "news" and KABL for cable cars, do you really believe that helps? Giving a radio station a name?

McLENDON: I just think it's an added filler to a radio station's personality to have something that's pronounceable, and even indiginous to that area, I don't think that makes it successful. The only thing that matters in radio and ever did is what comes out over the air, is your programming. Nothing else is important, forget your call letters or anything else.

R&R: Ok. Let's take on the most challenging one, when you had K-ADS in Los Angeles, where did you come up with the entire classifieds format, and how did you get it through the FCC? You didn't have any news, public affairs, nothing. You were a 24-hour a day classified station.

McLENDON: Right, we had an FCC at that point which was, well, I think they were sort of afraid to turn me down, I've raised so much hell on so many things, that they were kind of afraid to turn me down. That's the way we got the K-ADS format through. How anybody can do that again I don't know. I hope they do because I still insist it's a highly viable format. In order to make it work, I found, I would have to have stayed out there. At that time, I had 13 stations, there was no way for me to sit in L.A. and live with it.

R&R: People would have to call in and buy the classified ad, right?

McLENDON: Right.

R&R: And you were selling them very cheap at that time.

McLENDON: Right. There were a number of problems that existed at that time, today they would not exist. You couldn't call in and charge it to a credit card for example. And today you could. Let's take the advantages of oral want ads over newspapers. If you, right now, just to choose something out of the blue, if you wanted servants for this evening, you needed help for this evening, what are you going to do, put a want ad in?

R&R: Probably you would either call a domestic service, look it up in the yellow pages, whatever.

McLENDON: Or even better, suppose you decided you wanted to move to St. Louis tomorrow morning, and you really had to make the change. For a want ad, the deadline's already passed for a newspaper....but it's that sort of thinking that will make the all want ad thing exist.

R&R: But how do you get people to listen to it?

McLENDON: How do you get people to read the want ads? How many people do you know here that read the want ads, a lot of people spend an awful lot of time reading them. The L.A. Times' want ad section is the biggest in the world. There are

“Ultimately the top facilities will prevail. If you go into Chicago right now and take a good look at your ratings, you're going to see that WGN stacks up pretty good, no matter what the competition is. If you go into Minneapolis, take a look at what your best facility is, you're going to see WCCO...”

people who, maybe not to the exclusion of every part, but there are people who spend more time on their want ad section in the Times than the remainder of it.

R&R: So you do think it would work, if they did it again today?

McLENDON: Absolutely positive it would work. An imaginative owner is going to have to sit right on top of it to make the first one go.

R&R: You were also into, with your promotions, you were into remotes a lot, weren't you?

McLENDON: Yeah, sure was. Anytime anything important happens, we would abandon all other programming and go to that event. A major disaster, an explosion in a school that killed a number of students or something like that, we would abandon all other programming and just report that.

R&R: How about commercial remotes, didn't you also do those?

McLENDON: Yes we did some remotes, but I do not believe in commercial remotes, except as one or two time promotions. I think they're dead.

R&R: Are you pretty active at KNUS?

McLENDON: Oh no. My son Bart's the guy.

R&R: In listening to radio today, obviously many of your formats are still successful, what would you change? If you were to come back, it was 20 years ago today, again, what would you do now? Are there any major voids open that you would fill, is there anything wrong?

McLENDON: Absolutely, there sure are, and I have no intention of answering you. There's the one most obvious format in the whole world. Mutual Broadcasting System has



Another successful promotion was having KABL picketed as if they were on strike to get local press coverage. Read the signs carefully.

Powerful Radio Uses The Power Of Newspapers!

**X-TRA! X-TRA! WORLD'S FIRST  
ALL NEWS RADIO  
DIAL 69**

WHENEVER YOU WANT NEWS, LISTEN TO X-TRA NEWS!  
ALL THE NEWS! ALL THE TIME! 24 HOURS A DAY!

This is a newspaper ad. It's part of a giant campaign to introduce a new radio giant, X-TRA NEWS. It repeats more than 100 times over a five-week period in the Los Angeles Times, Examiner, Herald-Express and Mirror-News plus the Long Beach Independent Press Telegram. Yes, sir, X-TRA NEWS uses the power of newspapers, plus the power of outdoor, television, direct mail! You name it. We use it. They all add power to powerful X-TRA NEWS.

A couple more of McLendon's advertising approaches.



**X-TRA Hasn't Sold One Yet!**

**ADMITTED: Because NEWS is our ONLY interest.**

Record pluggers are flat unhappy with us. And rightly so. We don't even own a turntable. News—and only news—news from 11 different wire services—news continually, 24 hours a day—that's X-TRA policy. But, Stan, drop by any time. Just for a cup of coffee, though.

ATTRACTING THE ADULT AUDIENCE IN LOS ANGELES  
FIRST, ONLY ALL-NEWS RADIO IN THE U.S.

**X-TRA NEWS**

ALL-NEWS/24 HOURS-A-DAY □ 50,000 WATTS AT 690 KC



**W-NUS Won't Decode Cap'n Andy's message!**

**ADMITTED: Because NEWS is our ONLY interest.**

W-NUS just doesn't "kid around". We present news, nothing but news, 24 hours a day. News from all over the world, all over the state, all over Chicago—any and every moment. Direct, concise, factual news written and produced by 16 skilled, experienced newsmen. On W-NUS, no one ever needs a decoder.

ATTRACTING THE ADULT AUDIENCE IN CHICAGO  
FIRST, ONLY ALL-NEWS RADIO IN THE U.S.

**W-NUS**

ALL-NEWS/24 HOURS-A-DAY □ W-NUS/1390 AM/107.5 FM

been struggling along for many years. I've said many times that I could make the Mutual Broadcasting System number-one within 2 or 3 days, and if they ever paid me enough money, I would. There's a format that would sweep the network radio field overnight.

R&R: Do you want to be President of NBC?

McLendon: Oh absolutely. You know I'll do anything for a price that's honorable.

R&R: I wanted to get into your editorials, because you were one of the first people to really do editorials.

McLendon: I think we were the first. I may be wrong, but I think we were the first. Right after the FCC's historic Mayflower decision. I would like to say this about editorials; to an extent, radio editorials and television editorials, take Severeid, take all the rest of them, they are a sham. I can be frank only within certain perimeters. Let me ask you, how many times have you heard Severeid, or any other network commentator attack the FCC?

R&R: They don't usually attack anybody, they're all very plastic editorials.

McLendon: Exactly. But where the plastic part came in is the fact that, look, I'm a government licensee, what am I going to do? Am I going to start attacking Senators, I might attack one who might be on the joint subcommittee on Communications, or am I going to start knocking individual members of the FCC and there have been a number of them who weren't as good as some others. This is why they sound plastic.

R&R: But you did knock somebody. You had the shortest editorial, the one about Lyndon Johnson.

McLendon: Oh yeah, sometimes your temper runs away with you.

R&R: Would you tell that story?

McLendon: I think if I remember correctly, Lyndon Johnson announced that he would not be a candidate for President, and we ran the shortest editorial in history, we said "We'd like to compliment Mr. Johnson on his decision."

R&R: I think the opening and the disclaimer were longer than the entire editorial.

McLendon: Right.

R&R: Do you still do the ones for KNUS, or does Bart do them?

McLendon: No, I do the national and international editorials, and we syndicate those and Bart does the local editorials.

R&R: You were also instrumental in putting jingles on Top 40.

McLendon: As far as I know, we started the first package of them, with Tom Merriman in Dallas.

R&R: Any stories about that, I mean how did that come about?

McLendon: Sounded like a good idea.

R&R: Nobody came in and pitched it to you, anything like that?

McLendon: No, in point of fact, I called Tom Merriman and told him I wanted to make all these musical identifications based on Dallas at sunset, Dallas at dawn, and so forth, and Tom made a package, believe it or not, of our first jingles, some of which ran a minute and a half, some of them half

a minute, but I think we had one five minute jingle. I think we made a package of 40 jingles maybe 50 for about \$200. Just unbelievable. Both Tom and I listened to them at the end and we thought they were pretty good.

R&R: Can I go back into why you're divesting yourself of all your stations?

McLendon: Sure.

R&R: I mean you do profess a great love, and why are you getting out of it?

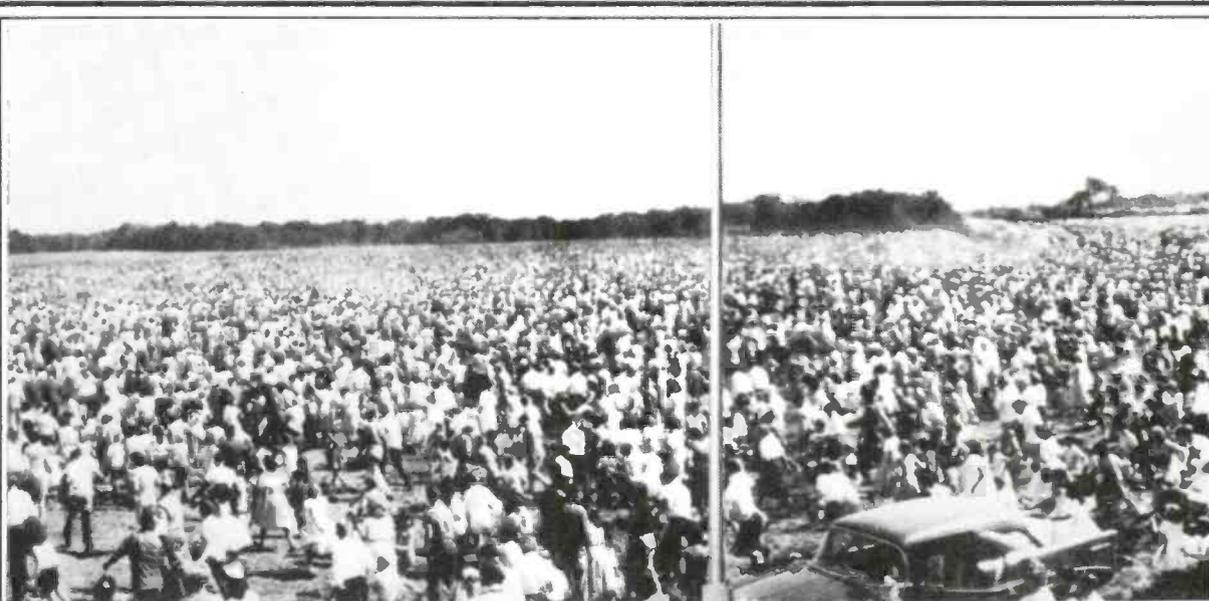
McLendon: Well I've been around the business now for, KLIF started in 1947, November 9th, so we're coming up nearly 30 years, and I'm kind of tired of painting on that canvas. How many inventive things can you think of to do between records? Motion pictures, to me, represent a broader canvas, they have the element, they have the visual. I'm just kind of tired of painting on a smaller canvas. I've done most of the things you can do in radio.

R&R: Are you going into movies now?

McLendon: Oh yeah, I've already made 3 pictures.

R&R: I remember the Giant Gila Monster.

McLendon: Right, we just put together three low budget pictures, oddly enough all of them came out in the black. I wanted to go into it full time, but I didn't realize it took a lot more time than I had to spare. We made the 3 to see if we could determine what I shouldn't do, and I found all those things out. And then I didn't really have time to pursue it until now. But I've got time now.



The 1961 KILT/Houston Easter Egg Hunt which drew 70,000 participants.



Picture of the broadcast family: Bart, Gordon, and B.R. McLendon.

Bill Drake.  
When your radio career took off, we were flying, too.



CLINT HOLMES/ANDY WILLIAMS/JOHNNY CASH/EARTH,WIND AND FIRE/KRIS KRISTOFFERSON/TONY BENNETT/GARY PUCKETT AND THE UNION GAP  
THE CYRKLE/BLOOD.SWEAT AND TEARS/MARTY ROBBINS/JOHNNIE TAYLOR/THE BYRDS/LYNN ANDERSON/ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK

# THE TOP-40 STORY

# Bill Drake

**R&R:** Let's go back to the very beginning, where you were born and raised, and what kind of radio you grew up to.

**DRAKE:** Well, I was born in Waycross, Georgia. But I grew up in a small town called Donalsonville, which is in the Southwest corner of Georgia. I was always interested in radio, and got into it more or less by accident. A friend of mine was approached to do a Teen-time disc jockey show, for an hour a week on Saturday. The station was a daytimer, WMGR in Bainbridge, but they also had a studio in Danalsonville, so they could sell advertising in both places. My friend didn't want to do the show, so I said what the hell, I'll do it.

**R&R:** Is the station still around today?

**DRAKE:** Yes. Owned by the same guy, I believe, Toby Dowdy.

**R&R:** When you were growing up, did you listen to any jocks that made an impression on you?

**DRAKE:** There were several. First of all, you have to understand that radio itself in that area was pretty bleak, and there was no such thing as a Top 40 or a total music station, because most stations around that area of the South were very small, and most of them daytimers. At night you really could get only about two stations. One was WCKY out of Cincinnati, which at that time, I guess, was sort of MOR'ish during the day and then they had a one hour show called the "daily Hitparade" at night. They played the top 10, or something like that on a countdown.

**R&R:** What period is this?

**DRAKE:** This would have been '54, '55. I remember we used to ride around and listen to them on a car radio, because those were the only stations where you could hear any hits at all.

**R&R:** I've heard you have a very strong R&B base.

**DRAKE:** That comes really from the other station that we could get. Donalsonville, Georgia is 8 miles from Florida, and WCKY is in Cincinnati, Ohio. The other one was WLAC in Nashville.

**R&R:** It was a big 50kw powerhouse, right?

**DRAKE:** They had Rhythm & Blues at night, with Gene Nobles, Hoss Allen, and John R. They were playing Fats Domino and Chuck Willis, and such. That was really the only place we could hear that stuff, 'cause there were no stations. None of the Atlanta stations came in, and at that time, they weren't playing any of that anyhow.

**R&R:** What happened after high school?

**DRAKE:** When I left WMGR, I went to college on a basketball scholarship. I was playing basketball and working at the radio station at night in Statesboro. It was Georgia Southern, a teacher's college, and I was going to be a basketball coach. I hurt my knee at the end of my freshman year, and instead of finishing school on the scholarship, I said to hell with it. I decided to go home and go back to work at making \$115 a week in Bainbridge, which I thought was a lot of money. I went to Atlanta for \$85 a week doing the all night show, on a three month trial basis.

**R&R:** What station did you go to work for? And when did you change your name from Philip Yarbrough? Bill Drake is obviously one of the most famous names in radio...

**DRAKE:** That's how the name came about. The station in Atlanta was WAKE, it was a Bartell station, and they wanted a name that rhymed with WAKE. They were going to name me Blake to go with WAKE. I said what about Drake? "Same thing," they said. I said, well, at least that's my mother's side of the family. That's how Bill Drake came about.

**R&R:** Could have been a morning name, "Wake up to Drake." What shift did you do?

**DRAKE:** Midnight to 6.

**R&R:** And then where did you go from WAKE?

**DRAKE:** I was there several years, I went in the Army at Fort Jackson, South Carolina for 6 months. Then came

back to WAKE in Atlanta. That's where I first hired Paul Drew. And from there I went to KYA in San Francisco, which was also a Bartell station.

**R&R:** Had you worked any major market drive shift yet?

**DRAKE:** Oh yes, well, I did in Atlanta, I started on the all night show, then went midday, became Production Director. After that, did afternoon drive, and then became Program Director. It was a 250 watt which did extremely well, except against WSB in the morning. In the meantime, the Bartells sold WAKE. The condition of sale was that nobody who worked at WAKE at that time could go to work for any Bartell station for a period of one year. Obviously, the new owners didn't want the whole staff bailing out. So Bartell came down and said look, this is something that we've got to do, but if you'll stay here for a year, then we'll take you out to San Francisco as Program Director. I said fine, stayed there for a year, and then came out to San Francisco to KYA.

**R&R:** Who was there at the time?

**DRAKE:** At that time, there was Tom Donahue, Peter Tripp, Les Crane, Bobby Mitchell, who later became Bobby Tripp at KHJ. Anyway, the station came from 5th or 6th to first most of the time, but overall behind KSFO in totals.

**R&R:** You were a jock then, right?

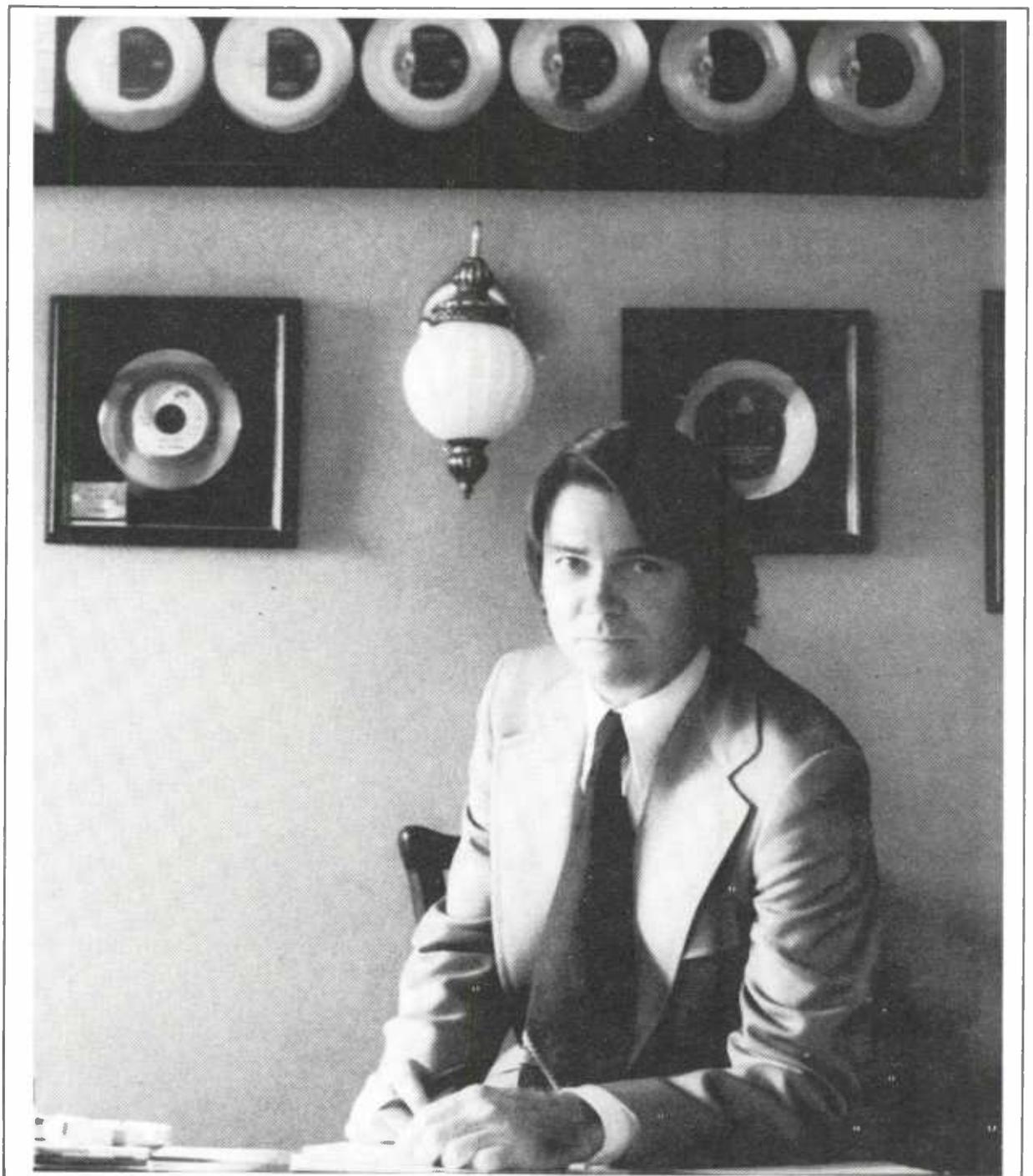
**DRAKE:** And Program Director. The morning show if you can believe that. Getting up every morning at 4 o'clock.

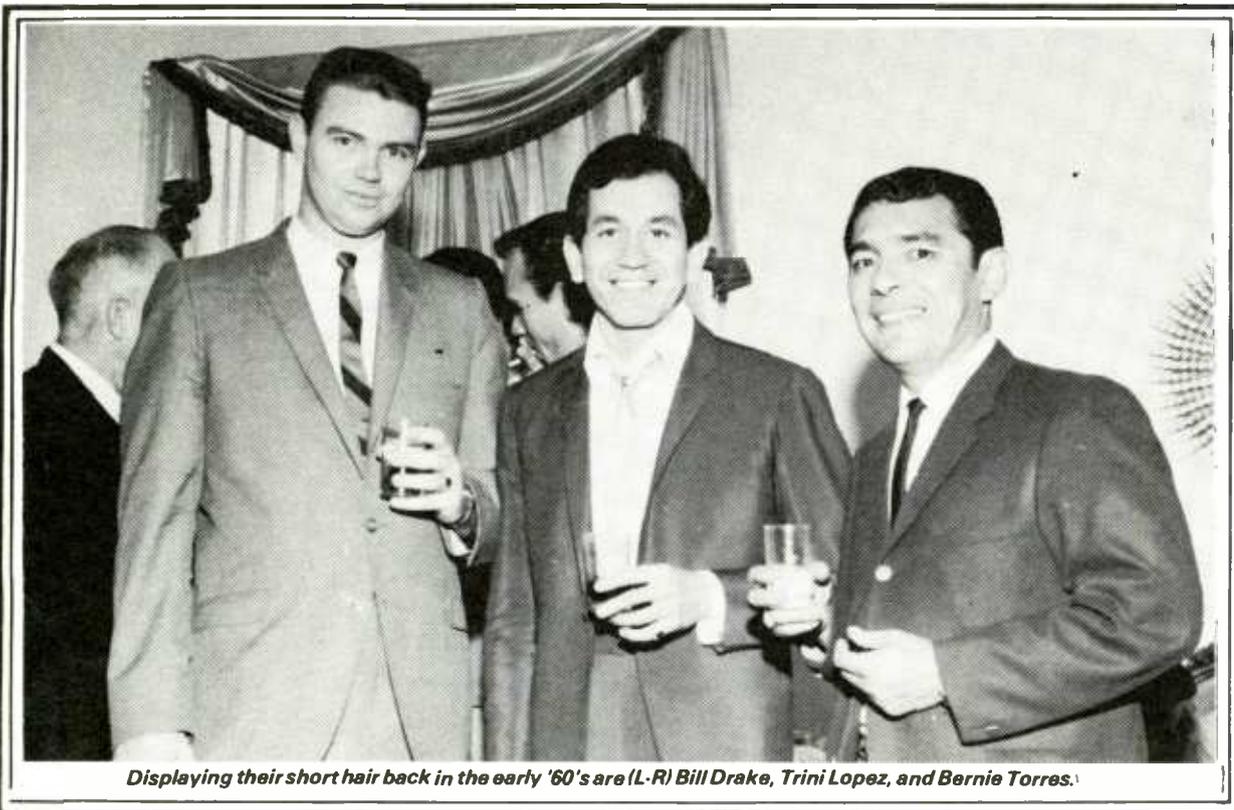
**R&R:** Was this your first PD job?

**DRAKE:** No I was Program Director of WAKE, and I had been Program Director of WMGR, too.

**R&R:** Where did you learn how to be a Program Director?

**Drake:** I guess I just picked it up. Initially, my concept in South Georgia was that in a very Country area, we were fortunate that a lot of hits then were country. There was Marty Robbins, Ferlin Husky, Don Gibson, The Everly Brothers...A lot of records in 1956 or 1957 were pop-oriented. So you could pick those and play them most anytime. Before that, it was a block type of programming. You'd have real bluegrass hillbilly in the morning and a little something else midday, the noon-time local news, do all the obituaries, then a little more pop music, then a few hits in the afternoon, and then into smooth music before you signed off, which was at dusk. I finally talked them into consistent music all day, because it did blend with the Country influence of the area. I really just put it together on the basis of what I liked to listen to. Without all the garbage.





Displaying their short hair back in the early '60's are (L-R) Bill Drake, Trini Lopez, and Bernie Torres.

R&R: That's the characteristic of what you've done everywhere, you've taken the garbage off the air.

DRAKE: I guess I just picked it up. Initially, my concept when I was setting up a commercial policy, it was pretty much unheard of. Stations would sell everything they could, because most all General Managers were sales oriented. It seems simple now, but then it was different. A lot of the commercials would be recorded by the owner or the Sales Manager who were in tight with the account and the account wanted them to do the commercials. As it turned out, you'd have what were supposed to be one minute commercials and by the time they got through ad-libbing and recording the damned things, they were 2 minutes and 15 seconds long, which I guess was why the accounts loved them.

R&R: How did you convince them to change?

DRAKE: Well, they didn't change the commercial policy. At that time, I didn't have the influence to do that. Eventually, I did get the music on somewhat of a cohesive basis. Whenever there was enough time to play any.

R&R: We're back to KYA. Program Director, top ratings, is that about the time you met with Chenault?

DRAKE: It was after that. The station turned around and did well. At that point, the Bartells, as they explained it to me, had taken over McFadden publications, and there were lawsuits, so they had to sell KYA. Bartell came back and said, well, we had to sell this, however, if you'll just hang in there for a bit...I said well, it seems like a year or so ago I heard the same thing. No thank you very much. So I just stayed at KYA, and eventually got into a hassle with Clint Churchill, whose father had bought it. I never did really agree with Churchill on a whole lot of things.

R&R: What made you leave?

DRAKE: He did. The hassle that blew it was when he demanded that I fire Tom Donahue. I said why? Now understand that Donahue was big, a dominating personality, and impressive. Clint was not. I said when the ratings come in, I think you're going to find that Donahue will probably have the highest ratings on the damned station, I mean are you crazy? But he wanted him out. I said if you want him out, then you fire him. I'm not going to fire him. Well, that was the end of Bill Drake and Clint Churchill. When the rating books came in, Donahue did have the highest rating on the station. And, of course, later he was so important in starting AOR or progressive radio.

R&R: Did he fire him anyway?

DRAKE: No, that's what I mean. The ratings had come in, and so he didn't. In the meantime, I met Chenault through a mutual friend. He had been in and out of San Francisco and heard KYA and liked the way it sounded. I'd always wanted to do a multiple station thing, and he said I could do that with Fresno and Stockton. He had a friend that owned a station in Stockton. So as it turned out, I came out better financially with the two salaries combined than I would have with the offers from larger markets. The reason that Chenault wanted me to come in was that he had KYNO in Fresno, which is a pretty damned good market. The station had always made money, and KYNO had been the only real game in town. But

Ron Jacobs and Colgreen had come in, and switched KMAK, which they called "K-Make" to Top 40 and was giving them a fit in like 6-8 months. They had Robert W. Morgan, Frank Terry, Ron Jacobs, Steve Jay (Jay Stevens) and a lot of other guys.

R&R: I remember the battle.

DRAKE: I went in to KYNO and kept basically the same staff and turned it around. I guess, at the end of another 6-10 months, KYNO was running 40's and KMAK was running 20's. At one time, about a year and a half after that battle started, KYNO had more audience than all other 13 stations in the market combined.

R&R: That was really the only time you and Jacobs went on head to head, and you beat him. What were some of the things you used against him?

DRAKE: A lot of things. I used jingles differently, for one. KMAK would use them coming OUT of a record. They'd back announce a record and hit "K-MAKE 134." That indelible jingle would jump out, but subconsciously that indicated that they were going into commercials. Whereas I would use jingles only going into music. Our jocks talked less. I put lines on the

DRAKE: Well, there were a lot of different contests. In retrospect, I can't remember what came from where. But yes, the Millionaire ran in Fresno.

R&R: Wasn't the Millionaire also the Big Kahuna?

DRAKE: Yes...the "Big Kahuna" was a total take off of the "KYNO Millionaire." There are a lot of stories on how the Big Kahuna occurred at KHJ. Actually, I had been in Miami listening for jocks, and they had this guy on the air, that called himself the Big Kahuna. The Big Kahuna was actually a character in a Gidget movie. I was thinking why not take the KYNO Millionaire thing...that was when the Beach Boys and all the surf stuff was going on...and use that, designed after the Millionaire promotion, but use a beach or surfing approach.

R&R: It just took L.A. by storm, it was a great promotion. Anyway, back to San Diego...

DRAKE: In the meantime, KGB had done very well and Tom O'Neil who was Chairman of the Board of General Tire that owns RKO was an old friend of Willet Brown, who owned KGB. KGB had come from last to first, so O'Neil said I'd like to talk to this guy. RKO had KHJ here, and I guess KHJ at the time was losing about three quarters of a million dollars a year, and they were losing about a half million a year at KFRC in San Francisco. KHJ was a hodge-podge of Steve Allen and Jayne Meadows, Robert Q. Lewis, Michael Jackson, who now does a talk show here on KABC, and some music segments. I said that I didn't think that I would fit very well into a corporate situation, because my lifestyle is a little different, and I'm sure that the people involved would not understand my concepts at all. So he set up a situation that spared me from corporate politics. At the time, I was reporting to other people. Ross Taber was brought in at that point, and we reported directly to Ross at headquarters in New York, so that everything was legal. I think Hathaway Watson was President of the RKO Broadcast Division at that time, and he let it be known in front that he wiped his hands of the whole affair and what was about to occur was certainly not his fault, and that things would return to normal shortly. Well, of course, when KHJ happened, they wanted to do KFRC next. So later Hathaway was removed and Ross Taber was put in charge of all RKO radio stations.

R&R: Did you take each station on an individual basis, or all of them together?

DRAKE: The stations were all done on a percentage basis. When somebody's losing 3/4 of a million dollars a year at ONE station, and you say to them, well, you take the first million profit here and I want...

R&R: X percent over.

DRAKE: Yes. They looked at me sitting there with my crew

**BOSS 30**  
FROM 93/KHJ

*The first KHJ 'Boss 30,' July 9, 1965.*

**THE BOSS 30 RECORDS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA!**

Last Week	This Week	TITLE	ARTIST	LABEL	Weeks on survey
(1)	1	SATISFACTION	The Balling Stones	London	1
(2)	2	HOLD ME, TELL ME, KISS ME	Neil Carter	Imperial	1
(3)	3	ALL I REALLY WANT TO DO	Char	Imperial	1
(4)	4	I CAN'T HELP MYSELF	Four Tops	Motown	1
(5)	5	I GOT YOU BABE	Sonny & Cher	Atco	1
(6)	6	YES, I'M READY	Barbara Mason	Arctic	1
(7)	7	I'M HENRY VIII, I AM	Herman's Hermits	MGM	1
(8)	8	WHAT'S NEW PUSSYCAT?	Tom Jones	Parrot	1
(9)	9	WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS NOW IS LOVE	Jackie DeShannon	Imperial	1
(10)	10	I'M A POOL	Olivia Newton-John	Reprise	1
(11)	11	THIS LITTLE BIRD	Marvin Gaye	London	1
(12)	12	OO WEE BABY, I LOVE YOU	Dickey Lee	TCF	1
(13)	13	CRYING IN THE CHAPEL	Fred Hughes	V2	1
(14)	14	WHITTIER BLVD	Elys Presley	RCA Victor	1
(15)	15	SEVENTH SON	The Midnights	Charahoochee	1
(16)	16	CARA MIA	Johnny Rivers	Imperial	1
(17)	17	SAVE YOUR HEART FOR ME	Jay & The Americans	United Artists	1
(18)	18	WONDERFUL WORLD	Gary Lewis	Liberty	1
(19)	19	SUNSHINE, LOLLIPOPS AND RAINBOWS	Herman's Hermits	MGM	1
(20)	20	YOU'D BETTER COME HOME	Leslie Gore	Mercury	1
(21)	21	HEY TAMBOURINE MAN	Patula Clark	Warner Bros	1
(22)	22	I'LL FEEL A WHOLE LOT BETTER	The Byrds	Columbia	1
(23)	23	WOOLY BULLY	The Byrds	Columbia	1
(24)	24	HUNG ON YOU UNCHAINED MELODY	Sam The Sham & Pharoahs	MGM	1
(25)	25	PAPA'S GOT A BRAND NEW BAG	The Righteous Brothers	Philly	1
(26)	26	LET HER DANCE	James Brown	King	1
(27)	27	BABY I'M YOURS	Bobby Fuller Four	Mustang	1
(28)	28	EASY QUESTION	Barbara Lewis	Atlantic	1
(29)	29	ONE DYN' AND A BURYIN'	Elys Presley	RCA Victor	1
(30)	30	THEME FROM "A SUMMER PLACE"	Roger Miller	Smash	1
(31)			The Lettermen	Capitol	1

**HIT BOUNDS**  
(ON THE WAY UP)

LET THE WATER RUN DOWN  
P. J. Proby  
Liberty

IF I AIN'T ME BABE  
The Surftones  
White Whale

YOU KNOW YOU IS TO LOVE YOU  
Peter and Gordon  
Capitol

YOU WERE ON MY MIND  
The Five  
A & M

WHO LL BE THE NEXT IN LINE  
The Bells  
Reprise

A LITTLE TON  
Freddie & The Dreamers  
Imperial

SUMMERTIME GEL  
The Trade Winds  
Bad Bird

COLOURS  
Dunson  
Mercury

CALIFORNIA DREAMS  
Beach Boys  
Capitol

LITTLE FANNING ANGER  
Engelmann  
Wand

WIN WIN WIN EVERY HOUR  
ON KHJ THE MISSING WORD CONTEST  
PHONE TO WIN HONDA MOTORCYCLES  
MOBIE SURFBOARDS TRANSISTOR RA-  
DIOS BOSS T-SHIRTS KHJ CASH!  
SPOT THE MISSING WORD IN A RECORD  
AND WIN WITH KHJ!

**93 KHJ**  
BOSS RADIO  
IN LOS ANGELES

air, directly combating KMAK. They'd do a treasure hunt, we'd do a treasure hunt. Statements back and forth on the air. We would go at it pretty strong right on the radio. I baited Jacobs a lot on the air...anything to rattle them. I ran a tighter playlist. And a lot of other things.

R&R: How about KGB? How did that come about?

DRAKE: Well, Chenault, with the success of Fresno and Stockton, figured it would be a very good idea to buy another station. San Diego was a good market, and KGB was dead last. Chenault knew Willet Brown who owned KGB, and the idea was to buy that, and I was to get a piece of it. Turned out Willet wouldn't sell, but he said why are you guys interested? I'll make the same deal with you that you've got there, so the KGB thing came about.

R&R: Where did you dream up the contests at that time, I mean did you have a braintrust then...the Millionaire, I think, was probably one of the best that ever came out of Fresno, if I'm correct.

cut, and they thought I was some sort of a lunatic. Of course, they looked around later and they say it's costing us millions, all things considered, and at that point, they forgot how much they're making.

R&R: You said one thing that you did at KYNO is that you went in and you kept basically the same staff. At the RKO stations, you brought in all new people, but what did you do when you walked into KYNO? I mean, how did you motivate those people? Were you running the same basic format at KYNO and KGB as you did at KHJ?

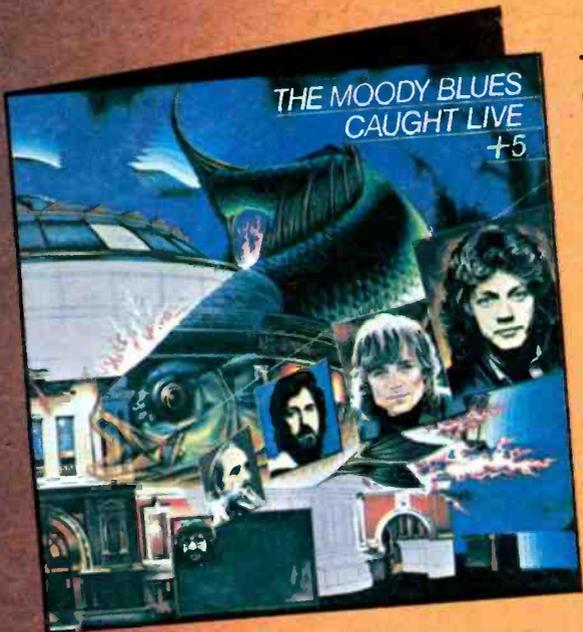
DRAKE: Yes, basically the same format, I think that during the Fresno battle between me and Jacobs, and I said so then, that either one of those radio stations, either KYNO or KMAK, could have come into Los Angeles and kicked hell out of KFWD and KRLA.

R&R: Were you looking for personalities when you hired jocks?

DRAKE: Well, you're always looking, but...

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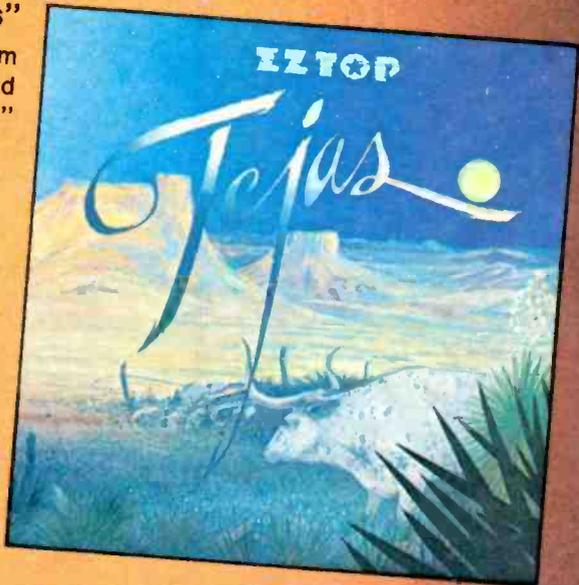
**30**  
**GOLDEN & PLATINUM**  
**YEARS**  
*LONDON*<sup>®</sup>  
 RECORDS & TAPES



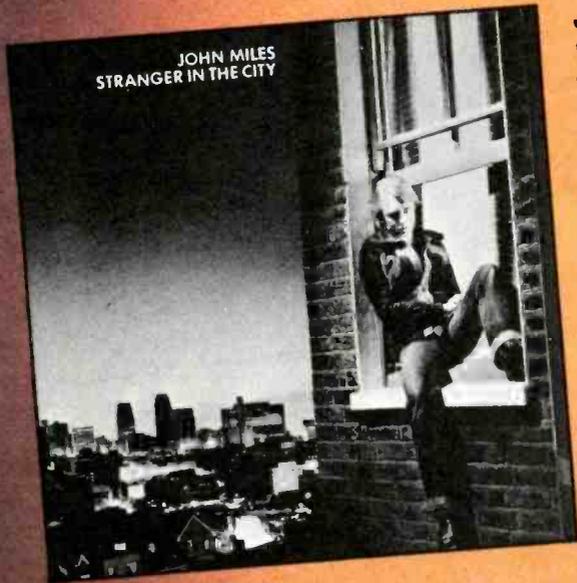
**The Moody Blues—  
 “The Moody Blues  
 Caught Live + 5”**  
 Sensational! All the excitement of a LIVE concert by the Moodies + 5 studio tracks you’ve never heard before

2PS 690/1

**ZZ Top—“Tejas”**  
 The fifth success from “That little ol’ band from Texas”



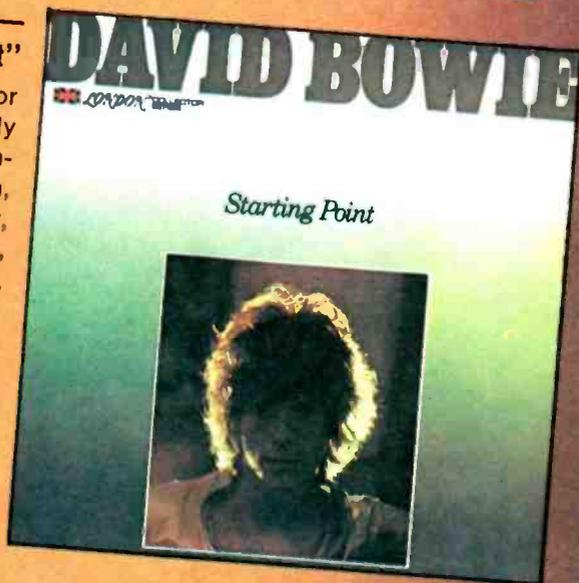
PS 680



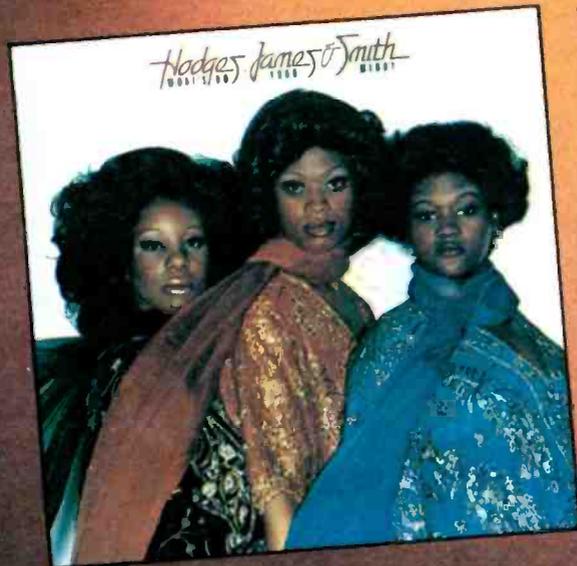
**John Miles—  
 “Stranger In  
 The City”**  
 John Miles . . . one of the brightest, freshest forces in rock today. Includes his “Manhattan Skyline” single . . . (LP arranged and produced by Rupert Holmes)

PS 682

**David Bowie—  
 “Starting Point”**  
 The London Collector Series . . . a specially priced series that includes Savoy Brown, Them, Thin Lizzy, Genesis, Tom Jones, Ten Years After, John Mayall



LC 50007



**Hodges, James &  
 Smith—“What’s On  
 Your Mind?”**  
 Just voted “Most Promising New R&B Vocal Group of ’77. Meet Hodges, James & Smith . . . they’re HOT!”

PS 685

**Al Green—“Al  
 Green’s Greatest  
 Hits—Volume II”**  
 9 golden winners from Al . . . including “Love and Happiness”, “Sha La La”, and “Full of Fire”



SHL 32105

**We’re having a wonderful 30th birthday!**

# Bill Drake

R&R: But you had what you wanted in your head, right?

DRAKE: Yes, but I don't think that you can really go out and force that type of thing. You can't go out and hire somebody and say they're going to be a personality, because some jocks can't do it. I thought at that point that there were maybe a half dozen true personalities in the entire radio business. There were a lot of guys that talked a lot. A lot of people think that they can only be personalities if they talk a lot. And they don't take into consideration what they're saying. I took the attitude that there's a vast difference between personality and somebody who just talks a lot. I think that when you find a jock that has something to say, then you allow him to say it. But if a guy is going to say nothing, anyhow, I'd rather he say it in a few words as possible.

R&R: Was the 7 second thing true, I mean did you have lights that glared after 7 seconds?



Pictured in Atlanta during the WAKE reign Paul Drew (L), Cadence artist Don Carroll, Bid Causey and Drake toasting to the successful single by Carroll "Tup and Ice Cream Soda."

WAKE Golden Album—(L-R): Bill Drake, Danny Daye, Stan Richards, Mr. Sandman, (kneeling) Bid Causey and Bob McKee.

(Top) The "KYA Twist" album jocks pictured (L-R) Tom Donahue, Peter Tripp, Bill Drake, Norm Davis, Bob Brennan, Bobby Mitchell.

## WAKE Hitparaders

## GOLDEN GASSERS



had a super morning man or super afternoon man, he just happened to float a little bit higher?

DRAKE: We tried to maintain things so that the station itself was like a stage or a backdrop. The format would maintain things at a certain level, it couldn't drop below that. It couldn't go into the pits, but it could be expanded upwards.

R&R: You tried not to have negatives.

DRAKE: Yes, but there was plenty of room on top of that foundation to do things. If a jock didn't have the ability to expand that, it still couldn't fall apart. The stage, the backdrop, the station itself would maintain things at a certain level. There was enough momentum and design of the station itself to carry it under most circumstances.

R&R: How involved were you in the beginning when you went to all the stations, including all the consulted radio stations outside of RKO. I'm talking about right down to OK'ing the jocks being hired, you ran promotions that ran on all the stations at the same time, etc.

DRAKE: Yes, a lot of times we would have to run contests at the same time because it got to a point where we'd run something here and if it leaked out beforehand, somebody in Detroit or Boston, the competition, the day after it hit on KHJ, would have it on the air. As far as jocks or anything else,

But it would be the exception. That would totally undermine the PD, the guy in charge.

R&R: How about the PD's, did you have weekly conference calls with all of them, did you have weekly or monthly brain sessions, did they ever get together and see each other?

DRAKE: Oh, they did sometimes. There wasn't anything really scheduled. It was a simple thing of just being in contact constantly.

R&R: How did you keep the egos under control?

DRAKE: Well, I figured that was their problem more than mine. There's no way that I can keep anybody's ego under control, except mine. Everybody has to deal with their own.

R&R: What about promotions? Where were they created?

DRAKE: Generally, they'd be written on bar napkins someplace. Sitting around...me, Watson, Jacobs, Sebastian Stone...kicking things around. Ideas sometimes wouldn't even surface until a long time later. They occurred a lot of different ways, different PD's, jocks, everybody.

R&R: To get the promotions ready, the promos lined out, the one-liners, the prizes, everything. It must have taken a lot of work.

DRAKE: No, well, the lights wouldn't stop them, just probably throw them off whatever they were doing, and make it sound even worse. But I believe very heavily in personalities...I mean, there are a lot of guys that are personalities and we've always tried to nurture and encourage that. We would make allowances within the format, but you can't force it. So we allowed some people to do it, and we didn't allow others to do it. We would allow it if a jock demonstrated that he was capable of handling it. But if they weren't capable of doing it, what do you accomplish by allowing them to keep talking...I was always accused of having robots, and yet when you look at PD's of the year, or jocks of the year, we've had as many or more than anybody else you can think of. Really good people.

R&R: You had the finest jocks available. Were you paying them well then?

DRAKE: Yes, but I've never believed in going in and trying to buy jocks in a market. KHJ was put together with everybody starting for scale.

R&R: But it changed as it grew.

DRAKE: Oh sure, those that contributed, were making a hell of a lot of money, and those that didn't, didn't. But everybody was paid well. Sometimes it got out of proportion because of a lot of things maybe, but not because of specific individuals.

R&R: Did you gear for the middle range jocks, and if you

sure, I wanted to hear tapes, even if they were just played down the line, of everything and everybody. You have to do that, to maintain any kind of quality. However, I've always done those things, from sort of a removed position. I had an office at KHJ, and I think I only went in there maybe half a dozen times...

R&R: Were you the overseer?

DRAKE: Yes, but I do it by phone from my house. I've never had a good idea in an office in my life.

R&R: Great stories about how you used to have the lines in your house where you could listen to all the radio stations, and it wasn't unusual for you to be calling the midnight to 6 man in Detroit and talking to him at 3 o'clock in the morning.

DRAKE: Well, that's not true. I still have those lines in my house, I listen to the stations...but I never called jocks in Detroit at 3 in the morning to talk to them, period. Even at KHJ, locally, if something was wrong, I didn't call them unless it was a case of last resort. I tried first of all to find Jacobs. If I couldn't reach Jacobs, then I would call Bill Watson... Then I might call a jock and talk to him. But some of those bizarre stories are ridiculous. I've read articles about me that I don't even recognize as being me at all...not even the same person.

R&R: That's what I'm asking, I can't picture you calling up and screaming at a guy at 3 o'clock in the morning.

DRAKE: Oh, I may have talked to a jock as a last resort.

DRAKE: Most prizes, you well know, are lined up by either the Sales Manager or the General Manager. It's a matter of Programming indicating what the needs are, what the requirements are going to be. And Bill Watson is a damned good radio man. He handled most of that.

R&R: Let's take the Boss Garage. Did you have the autonomy to say OK, this is the new promotion, this is the Boss Garage, and you will go out and trade out, or buy X amount of cars?

DRAKE: I would say I strongly suggest, I didn't say "You will do this."

R&R: What I'm saying, in other words, the Drake-Chenault entity was also concerned with the budgets of the individual radio stations.

DRAKE: Of course. And different things were tailored specifically for different types of markets. Obviously, Memphis couldn't always do the same kind of thing that Boston could, or Los Angeles or San Francisco, or New York. It would be impossible. Things were utilized as much as we could at every station. But markets are different.

R&R: Let's talk about the the most famous jingle package ever, the Drake jingles. There's a story that circulated around that you had cut tracks for the KHJ jingles and that you cut the Johnny Mann singers separately. You heard it back and it sounded so good you just let it go that way.

# “People have always thought I was crazy...Initially — which very few people remember — KHJ was called ‘Drake’s Folly.’...”

**DRAKE:** No, not true at all. First of all, I used acapella jingles at WMGR in Bainbridge, Georgia in 1956, and later in San Francisco. WMGR had these pre-cut jingle packages, and at the end of them, they would just cut the call letters of your station. The rest of the jingles was a thing that you'd lay those over. I wound up just using the acapella INSERT, rather than playing the whole jingle. Originally, KHJ's jingles with the Johnny Mann singers were patterned after the KYNO and KGB jingles. When we were going to switch KHJ, I was in town getting transition music together. Chuck Blore called and said that he was interested in creating a jingle package for us, and that he would like to meet and talk to me about it. Of course, I have a great amount of respect for Chuck. So I met with him and he said here's what I have in mind, and he started talking about some of the things that he'd done at KFVB. They had 20, 30 second jingles, you know, good but long. I said I'm not going to do any of that, I just want frequency and call letters, and I want them acapella. So he said well, the jingles build the image of your radio station, that's why you have to say all those things. Chuck said something about acapellas might be fine for Fresno, or San Diego, but this was Los Angeles. I said well, that's what I'm going to do. I remember that Winston cigarettes, when they were allowed to have commercials on the radio, had some great 60 second jingles. But when it comes right down to it, I remember one thing out of those jingles. "Winston tastes good like a cigarette should." The other 57 seconds was horseshit. Chuck said well, if you want short acapellas, I can cut them. I said no, I think that what I'll do is cut them myself.

**R&R:** How did that feel saying that to Chuck Blore? Did it bother you at all?



**DRAKE:** I have great respect for Chuck — We just had different ideas on jingles. I didn't think about it. It felt very honest and that's about as far as I got in analyzing it. When this happened, I asked Don Otis, the old KHJ PD, if he knew anybody that we could get to cut some acapella jingles. He said he knew Johnny Mann. I talked to Johnny and I told him what I wanted, and I think the session was set for 4 or 5 days later. That was right during the transition when we were bringing Ron Jacobs in...I think that was one of Ron's first functions, coming down there with me during that session. It didn't take more than an hour or two.

**R&R:** Boss radio was a commitment, that's like the first name, now you have 13Q, Y100, all that...

**DRAKE:** I've maintained that it didn't make any damned difference what you call it, you could have called it "crap" radio if you could have gotten away with it. We knocked around a lot of ideas about what we were going to call it. There were a lot of things people had suggested, but "Boss" was considered an outdated term. It originally was a Black term, and it had been picked up from the Black vocabulary and transposed into some of the surfing terms in certain records. In 1965, Boss was considered over. Maybe that was one of the reasons we decided on Boss, because I don't think it makes any difference what you call it, as long as you do it well enough. I don't remember where it came from...as far as who brought it up. We called KYA in San Francisco "The Boss Of The Bay" in 1961 or so.

**R&R:** A lot of it had to do with the way "Boss" was inflected, and a lot of the inflection, your ID spots, the promos, the way you said "ladies and gentleman," just the idea of saying "ladies and gentleman," they way you said "much" more music, where did all those come from?

**DRAKE:** From the mind of a 9 year old child. That whole thing about "ladies and gentlemen, you're listening to this..." was something I did when I was a kid. My parents had bought me an old 78rpm record player, and some records. I would play those records and announce them, and I thought the "ladies and gentlemen" indicated a certain amount of class. I would simulate my own little disc jockey show just fading the record and announcing. I would say "Ladies and gentlemen, this is YBC, the Yarbrough Broadcasting Company, Donalsonville, Georgia." That's where the "ladies and gentlemen" thing came from.

**R&R:** A lot of it had to do with the inflections. I'm sure you listened to the duplications around the country at Top 40's and no one matched the inflection correctly. They either had the voice or the inflection, they never had the combination of bigness and clarity and the inflection all together. When OR-FM came on, you were dropping the W. Calling it OR-FM.

**DRAKE:** Sebastian Stone did a hell of a job at that station. As far as OR-FM, dropping the W, that was done to differentiate between WOR-AM, which was the number one station in town, and it had a Talk format. We didn't want to go with WOR-FM, we didn't want the connotation of being an "FM." There was going to be no call letter change, so we said let's just call it OR-FM, because it's different from any of the other stuff that anybody's doing. But it was really designed to get away from WOR-AM identity.

**R&R:** It sure worked.

**DRAKE:** Well, OR-FM just felt good, you know. We were lucky.

**R&R:** What about Cincinnati, you weren't lucky there.

**DRAKE:** No.

**R&R:** That was probably your biggest failure, wasn't it?

**DRAKE:** Probably. We've all had a few.

**R&R:** WUBE? I think the statement came out at that point, "Drake said never take a shitty signal."

**DRAKE:** There were problems there. One was the signal. I had never been to Cincinnati, and I had been lead to believe certain things about the facility and several other situations. But it's my fault. I took it on that basis and it didn't work. I don't have any excuses. My fault. Period.

**R&R:** All the different terms, "Golden" those things had never been done before, what I'm looking for is where did they come from, did they just pop in your head?

**DRAKE:** Some of those just happened because of the jingle concept. A lot of stations had weather jingles, but most of them were 30 seconds long. I cut it down to just "KHJ Weather." As far as "Golden," I didn't want "Gold Record," "Golden Oldie" or any of the longer terms. I wanted to say just "93/KHJ Golden" and cut it like the weather jingle.

**R&R:** Where did you decide that?

**DRAKE:** When I first came to L.A., I'd taken an apartment for 6 months 'til I could find a place, and one night I was pacing back and forth up there. We had the jingle session the next day. In the meantime, Jacobs had come in since I'd talked to Johnny Mann. Gary Mack was in one area typing logs and filling Ron in on what slots were what as far as the :03 and :06, etc., and what went where, and what the commercial policy was. Gary, of course, knew all that having worked at KYNO. He was giving Ron sort of a cram course, because time was short. It suddenly dawned on me that here I am, with Ron Jacobs who had been my fiercest competitor. I said if anybody had told me a year ago that I'd be walking back and forth looking at a view of Los Angeles from the 14th floor of this damned place, spilling my guts, explaining the entire format to Ron Jacobs, I would have told them they were out of their mind. I said when you think about it, this whole thing is really bizarre.

**R&R:** You weren't necessarily programming to Arbitron or to Pulse or anything, were you? I feel you were programming the total concept at that time.

**DRAKE:** Well, I think everybody still is, realistically. I think a lot of the gobbly-gook that you get about this is sheer bull-shit. If you've got all the components going, if you've got the signal, the money, the staff, and of course, it also depends on the competitive factors. The decision is inevitably made in the marketplace. All ARB can do, hopefully, is reflect what the market is like. If they do anything else, they would be out of business. There are certain tricks and gimmicks that are used, but those change from time to time. Basics, generally, hold up. A lot of fringe, and a lot of the glossing changes. A lot of people have "researched" themselves out of the radio business.

**R&R:** One of the things that you did for radio was that you put programming in the forefront, you got it away from the Sales Department.

**DRAKE:** That was my concept from the beginning. One thing that I felt was wrong with the business was that everywhere you went, product was always secondary. I took the attitude that the salesman at a Cadillac dealership didn't tell Cadillac how to design Cadillacs. If they called up General Motors and said, "I want your car to be like this next year," GM would say "go screw yourself." I think that people who sell should sell, people who program should program. I just believe that the product is the most important thing. I don't think that Kellogg's Corn Flakes is going to let some guy who may be their most brilliant salesman tell them how to MAKE their Corn Flakes. That's not his area of expertise. I don't think disc jockeys should mess with sales either.

**R&R:** You also did things on the air. You formatted the spots, short before long, live before produced, etc. Not only did you alter how many they could run and what was going on, you also said in what area it would go in the sets.

**DRAKE:** Well, corporate headquarters, who later forgot how all that occurred, was behind it. Now you have to understand that KHJ was not full commercially. I mean, they weren't doing any \$400,000, \$500,000 a month at that time, they were doing maybe \$18,000 a month. So the commercial policy was insignificant. No salesman or sales manager was able to alter that. However, had it been a thing of it costing RKO General money, at that point, it may not have happened. None of it may have happened.

**R&R:** What did you do as far as your programming of commercials? You definitely had a flow on the radio station.

**DRAKE:** Well, we had fewer of them and we design for flow. It's killing the goose that laid the golden egg, you know, if you don't do that. Main thing is the product, and you don't want it all junked up. If sales can go out and sell 36 units an hour, they're gonna sell them. Nobody wants to listen to that. I saw the KFVB's do that. You just have fewer commercials and you eventually charge more for them. You wind up with more revenue. RKO went along with it, but they had nothing to lose. When you're doing \$18,000 a month on a Los Angeles radio station, you ain't got that many commercials, so you don't have to be brave at that point. And, of course, it never occurred that it was a financial factor, except in a positive sense later.

**R&R:** Did you really get off and get thrills from going into each market and taking on the challenge?

# Bill Drake

**DRAKE:** Not necessarily that. I've never related to it as a challenge. The idea is just trying to put together the best product that you can put together. And of course, it's always pleasing when it works out. Just like anything else, it doesn't always work out, but the percentage of what has worked is damned good. Probably one of the most important was the Fresno situation. Because of that we wound up eventually, with a hell of a staff. I think that Jacobs is by far the best competitor that I was ever up against myself.

**R&R:** Well, you were lucky you didn't have to play too many corporate games at that time.

**DRAKE:** Well, yes, but here's what happened. I'm not a corporate person, and yet, in my life now I have become corporate. Today we've got a lot of different companies, we've got different formats, we've got a couple of hundred radio stations, so I've become corporate. I still maintain the same attitude, but my emphasis is in more areas now. I think everybody forgets how they got there and they start stepping on values that got them there in the first place, so I've tried to never whore my values and integrity and concept as far as product is concerned. It is disconcerting sometimes when you realize that you've become a corporation within yourself. But you can never forsake your values. I think that one of the tragedies of business, whether it be radio, publishing, music, TV or movies, is that a lot of people forget how they got there. They get to a certain point and they say, well, I'm certainly glad I don't have to do that crap anymore. And they change, and forget the very values that got them there in the first place, and they go right down the tube. You see it happen a million times.

**R&R:** You're no longer in the forefront of Rock Top 40 programming, yet you are to this date the largest radio station programmer in the world. You've got 200 and some-odd radio stations that your programming is on now.

**DRAKE:** They're not all Rock, though.

**R&R:** Is it a true statement that you are more successful today than you were in the RKO days?

**DRAKE:** Very much so.

**R&R:** Let's get to the beginning of your FM automated programming, when you created Hit Parade.

**DRAKE:** Latter part of '67 was when I originally went into FM full bore. People have always thought I was crazy. KHJ was going to be a disaster for me. Initially, which very few people will remember at this point, KHJ was called "Drake's Folly." Years later, of course, KHJ became everybody else's success, to hear them tell it, at least. After KHJ, people said well, San Francisco is a hell of a lot different from Los Angeles. Then after KFRC, they said, well, that's the West Coast, the East Coast is a whole different thing. Boston and Detroit is a different thing, and Drake is West Coast Radio. After that, they said Drake's really lost his mind with OR-FM, taking an FM station and trying to do his type of thing. But OR-FM was the reason we switched into an emphasis on FM programming. After the success of OR-FM, it was obvious to me that it could be done, and that technically, it was inevitable. Billboard Magazine, for the only time that I can remember, actually wrote an editorial damning a radio station. I couldn't believe it. They said I ruined OR-FM. So later OR-FM became brilliant, but at the time, it was considered insane. There was a party once and I took Chenault into another room, I played a stereo tape and said, "Gene, this is where it's going to go, and this is what we've got to get into. This is the way records are cut, and this is the way radio is eventually going to sound. AM is going to be sports and talk." Look at a lot of the big powers now, you've got KNX, All News; KFVB All News; KABC All News and Talk... I said "Stereo is the future." It was simultaneous with the OR-FM thing. Particularly with the RKO FM's. They were just "there," and they were just filling up the time and there was nothing done with it. That's how our first syndicated package came about. It was called "Hit Parade," but now it's called "Contempo 300." It's in close to 90 markets today.

**R&R:** Monstrous successful package, I mean, it changed FM. You were Vice-President of RKO at one point?

**DRAKE:** I never wanted to do that. It was done so that it would no longer be a consultant situation, because of the "experts" coming out of the walls.

**R&R:** The FCC?

**DRAKE:** It wasn't the FCC. It was the "experts" within RKO itself. When a station starts making money, all of a sudden, there's an "expert" behind every coffee cup.

**R&R:** You had no failures at RKO and suddenly you exited.

**DRAKE:** Well, it happened for a very simple reason. You get into a situation where there are a lot of egos, you have a lot of ambitious people, which is fine, but then comes all kinds of politics. I was approached one day with what had been building for a long time. It had come to their attention that this whole operation was costing RKO one hell of a lot of money. Now they never stopped to think about how much money they were making, and what they were losing before, or why they lost before. They suggested that Drake was the key to RKO, and that I should stay, but they felt that some of the other people weren't necessary. I told them no. That I wouldn't go for that.

**R&R:** You backed your people.

**DRAKE:** Yes...I told them that was not the basis on which RKO was created, and that it was not the terms of our agreement. They said, well, you think about it, because we can make things better for you personally. I told him I had to make a phone call, and I went back into my office and called Chenault and then Alvin Midler, who is our corporate attorney. From the moment I said "I've got to make a phone call," I never went back to RKO again. Finally, Chenault was asked, "Well, what does Bill Drake say about all this?" and Chenault said, "Mr. Drake said to relay to you that he defers."

**"We tried to maintain things so that the station itself was like a stage or a backdrop. The format would maintain things at a certain level, it couldn't drop below that. It couldn't go into the pits, but it could be expanded upwards..."**

**R&R:** You own K100 now, in L.A. The station has made a mark, but not near a number one mark. You've changed it a few times, you had Robert W. Morgan and Don Steele, then it went from a semi-automated sound, to a non-automated sound to what it's doing now, which is the Billy Pearl/Tom Greenleigh consulted format, which is a very human format, of almost an AOR Top-40 approach.

**DRAKE:** When you consider the number of stations in the L.A. market today, it's very different than it was. People used to think that three Rockers in a market was a lot. Now there are probably 15 or 16 playing some variation of Rock music. With over 70 stations in the Los Angeles market, we will experiment with a different approach from time to time. All stations do. With 70 stations here, we don't have to be number one to be successful. But we will try different approaches. I always have. And I'm not sole owner, either. There are other people who are involved. But look at KHJ, KMET, KLOS, KTNQ, KNX-FM, KRTH, KIIS, KBIG, KFI and on and on. ALL of them are owned by huge corporations. We are individuals. We don't have that huge corporate money where you just go out and spend \$400,000 or \$500,000 in an advertising blitz, all the busses, \$200,000 worth of television and God knows what else. Then those managers who do that disappear, and since it's a public corporation, what's a few million...the corporate thing can take care of a few million. Well, we can't afford to make those mistakes. We have to maximize as much as we can, but we don't go out and throw money away. Not if you want to show a profit.

**R&R:** Do you think that the AM Top 40's that you once programmed can come back up?

**DRAKE:** I don't think that those stations will ever achieve that dominance again. I don't know whether I would be able to create those particular radio stations that we've been talking about again. That many at one time for one company. But I think it's significant that no one else has either. And they're not likely to. But it's somebody else's turn. I think that stations like WABC in New York, WLS in Chicago, or some of those real powerhouse AM stations have maintained well. They've got tremendous signals. I think that FM and stereo, as far as music goes, is inevitable. That was the thing that I was talking about earlier. It's like the difference between color TV and black and white. If you've got a program on in color on one channel and the same program on in black and white on another channel, you've got a color set, and it's the same program, which one are you going to watch? Color is stereo, and black and white is mono.

**R&R:** Still, you've got the in car problem.

**DRAKE:** Well, you had the same thing with color television, too. The only reason color happened as quickly as it did is

because of NBC. RCA owned the patent on the color picture tube or something like that. That's the reason CBS and ABC sat back until NBC forced color programming. The only reason RCA could afford to do it is because once they did force it, they owned the patent on the color tube. You wouldn't have any color sets out there unless you had color programming.

**R&R:** Maybe that's the reason why we've seen the slow transition of FM.

**DRAKE:** Absolutely.

**R&R:** Obviously, the automotive dealers don't want to put it in the cars as stock, unless they're motivated to do so.

**DRAKE:** They're available there, but nobody was going to buy FM sets until there was programming on it. You look at the sales of FM sets now. It's because radio is putting programming on FM. And the sets are now being forced.

**R&R:** Let's talk about where Bill Drake is today. What does your day to day, week to week schedule consist of?

**DRAKE:** I do the same thing now that I've always done. I'm involved in our syndication, and our other operations, Drake-Chenault itself. That's where the future is. At this point, I can't afford to be totally consumed by two or three stations, and I do rely heavily on the Drake-Chenault staff. I spend a lot of time thinking, going over ideas.

**R&R:** You have the new "History of Rock & Roll" coming out, too?

**DRAKE:** Yes. We're re-editing and re-writing the History now. I think this is going to be the special of all radio specials. It's being re-designed, re-written, updated...A lot of better interviews. I'm knocked out by it. It could very well be the best thing Drake-Chenault has ever done. It'll probably run in just about every market in the country, and a lot of others around the world. It's good.

**R&R:** Do you want to be active in radio for the rest of your life?

**DRAKE:** Well, I enjoy radio. I enjoy the business.

**R&R:** How many kinds of stations does Drake-Chenault program now?

**DRAKE:** A lot of different kinds. We have Country stations, Black stations, Soft Contemporary, All Oldies, Top 40, FM AOR Rock, Beautiful Music, etc. We're in big markets, small markets, and medium markets. You name it, we've got it. The key is how it's done. Drake-Chenault has a lot of talented people. Bert Kleinman, Lee Bayley, Mark Ford, Cal Casey, Denny Adkins, Bob Kingsley, Don Mac, Art Astor, and so many other people that make it all work. I'm very proud of our staff. I think we're in about 48 of the 50 states. And Puerto Rico, Spain, Bermuda, and a lot of places.

**R&R:** You've got to be the highest paid programmer in the history of radio. And the most successful.

**DRAKE:** Well, I've been smart enough to delve into other areas. Probably the key is that I'm one of the few people who ever started out as a disc jockey and built it into the type of thing that Drake-Chenault Enterprises is today. That is the significance of it. It's not necessarily being the most successful. Financially, of course, it's been very rewarding. But I've always done the things I liked to do.

**R&R:** Would you say you've changed? Are you still the same person you were when you walked into KHJ?

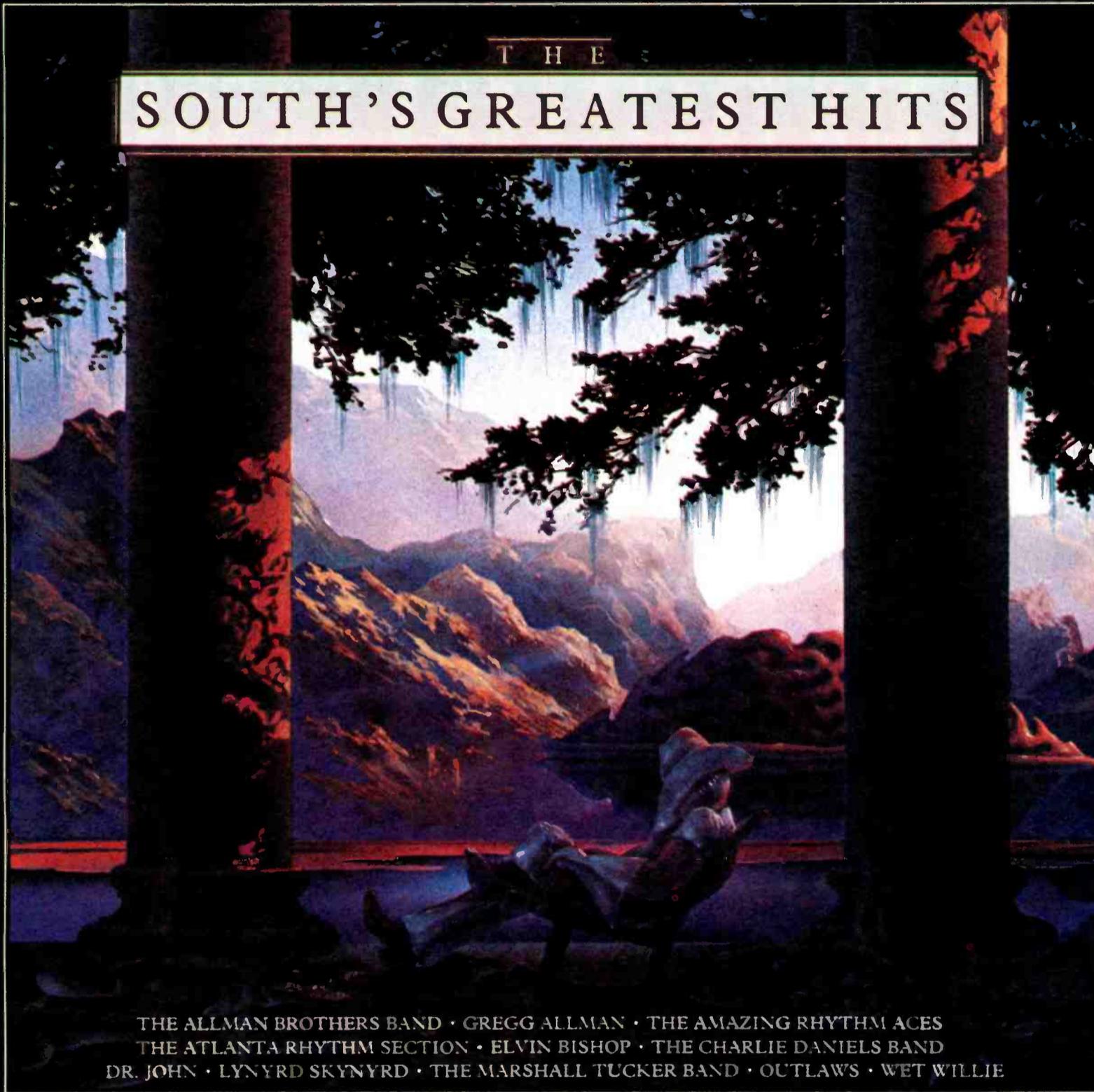
**DRAKE:** I've got the same ID. I don't have a crew cut. But of course, I'm different. I would like to think my ethics haven't changed. Overall we're all different, we're all affected by everything we go through. I'm sure as hell enjoying it all, but I never forget that actually I'm Philip Yarbrough from Donalsonville, Georgia.

**R&R:** This is the first time you've ever really given an in-depth interview.

**DRAKE:** Well, Bob, I've been burned too many times, and I eventually stopped doing interviews at all. I've been burned by some of the best. "Time" called me a monument to public tastelessness, and "Newsweek" called me a country bumpkin. Now that's a little hard for my dear mother to understand. I've been burned by a lot of things. We all are. I've certainly found a lot of people who have claimed to be "experts" on Bill Drake, although they've never even met me or talked to me. Maybe it's best I didn't meet them. Things might not have turned out this well. Let's stop this. Let's just all thank Gordon McLendon and get on now to a game of backgammon.

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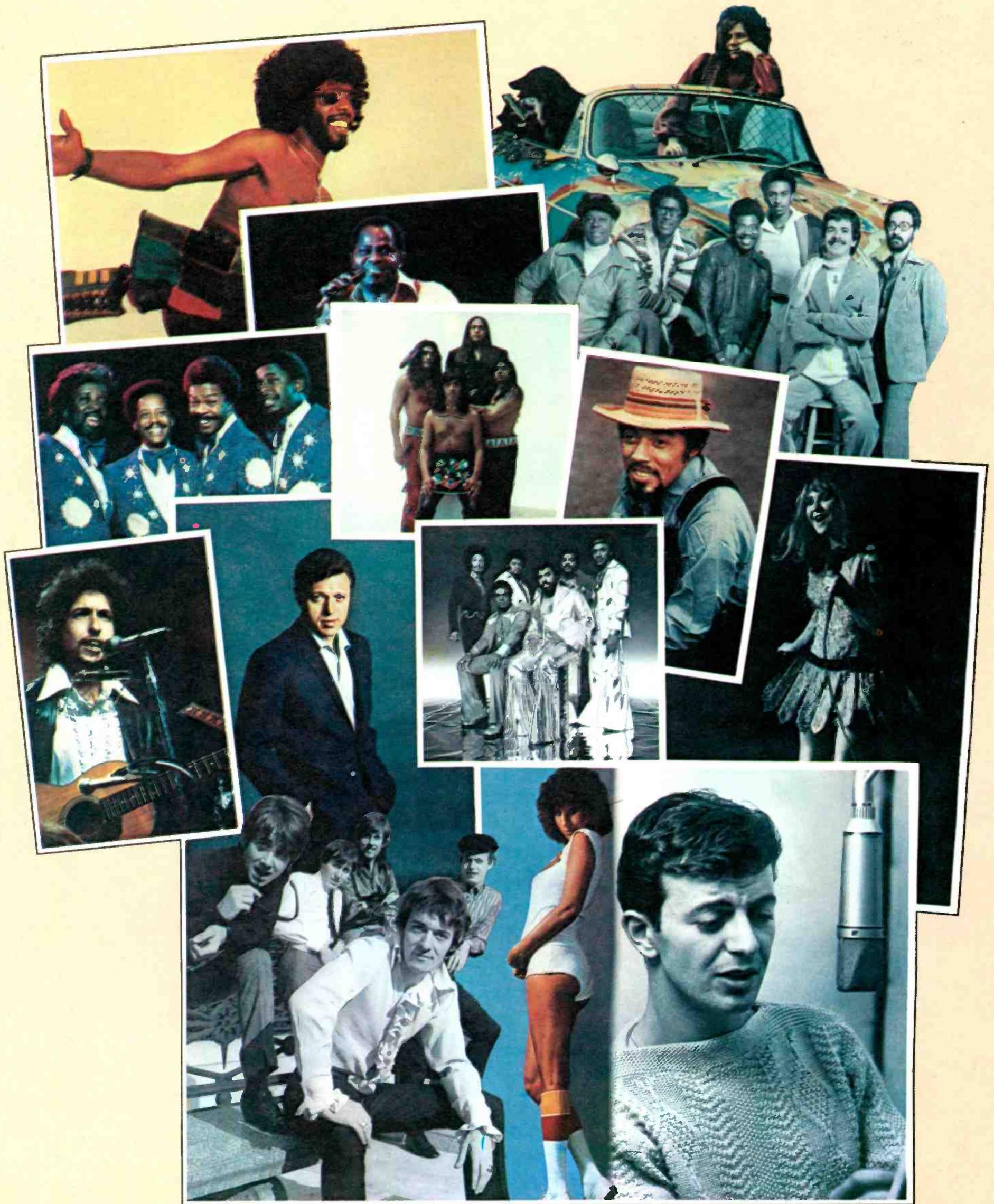
**Thanks, Top-40,  
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# WIRE



Rick Sklar.  
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# Rick Sklar

## THE TOP-40 STORY

R&R: What part of the country did you grow up in?

SKLAR: Northeast, Brooklyn, New York.

R&R: What did you grow up to? What kind of radio did you listen to when you were a kid, programs, disc jockeys, stations?

SKLAR: There were no disc jockeys. Radio in those days was the dramatic shows, the comedy shows. When you were a kid, you'd listen to the 15 minute kiddie adventure serials every afternoon. You'd listen at night to the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet, being announced by a guy named Hal Neal, a young announcer at WXYZ/Detroit, and Sunday night you listened to Jack Benny, Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, and Fred Allen. In the middle of the week there was the Lux Radio Theater, Mr. District Attorney. Some of the shows were on three nights a week, some were on once a week. It was a different kind of radio.

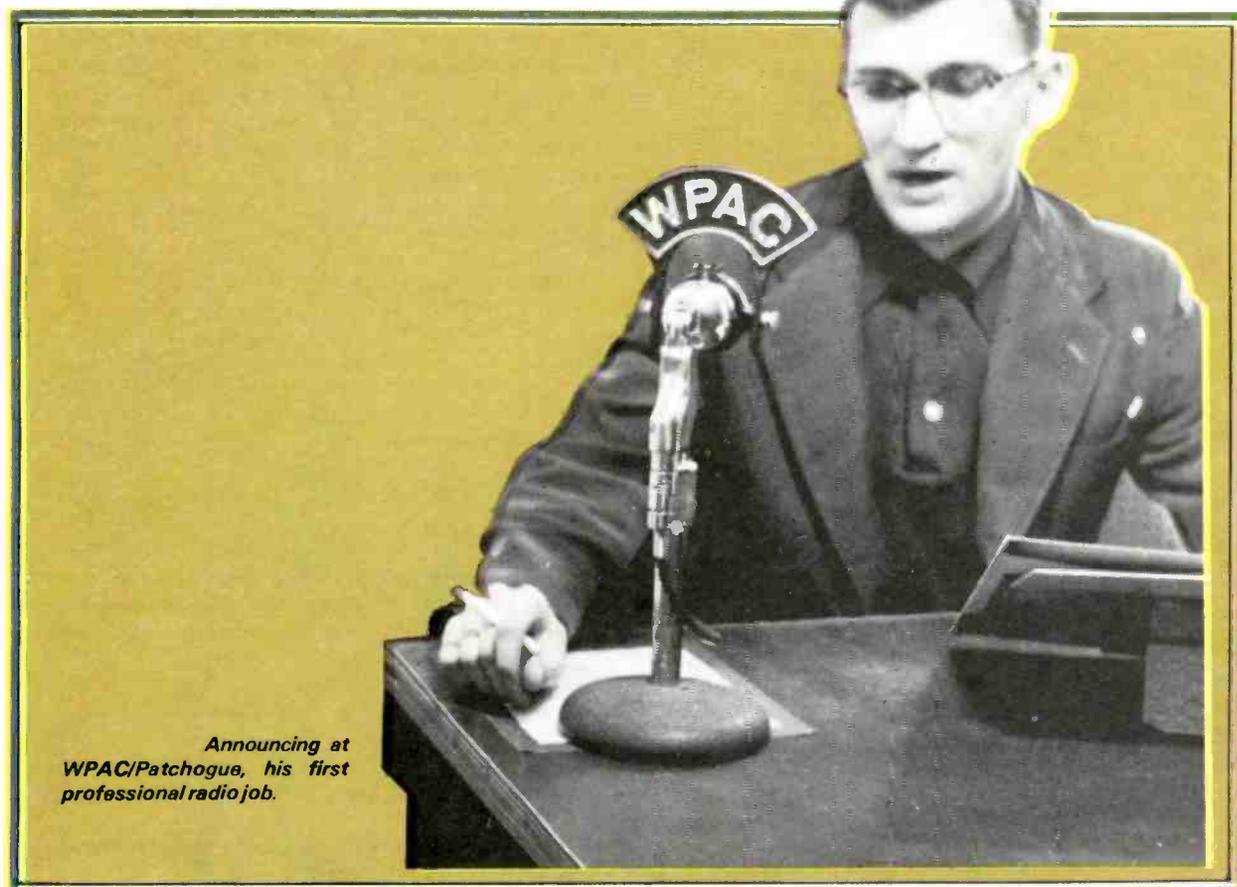
R&R: How did you get interested in radio?

SKLAR: Sound has always been an important sense to me. I "hear" my thoughts, I think in sound." For example, when I read an item in a newspaper I "hear" the words. A small number of people read that way. Just as a small percentage of people dream in color, some people think in sound. It's just the way the mind works.

R&R: How did you go about doing it?

SKLAR: I started writing radio scripts in grade school.

R&R: You say writing radio scripts, writing the dramatic ones?



*Announcing at WPAC/Patchogue, his first professional radio job.*

SKLAR: Yes. Then in high school I became president of the Erasmus Hall radio workshop. Some of us belonged to this extracurricular club. The really bright students belonged to "Arista," the honor society. One of them was a kid named Clive Davis. Another big man on campus at that time was Mike Hauptman, now Senior Vice President at ABC Radio. We were all there, but neither Mike, nor Clive nor I knew one another.

R&R: That's really interesting, way back in the beginning.

SKLAR: And I hung around radio stations. New York City has a radio station, I used to do volunteer work around WNYC just to get the feel of radio. You could also go to the commercial radio shows, because they had studio audiences, and they were all live, it was a very different kind of radio.

R&R: Where was your first professional job?

SKLAR: WPAC in Patchogue.

R&R: What did you do there?

SKLAR: Everything, turn on the transmitter, write the newscasts, write the copy for commercials, announce radio programs.

R&R: Did you end up going to college?

# Rick Sklar

SKLAR: NYU.

R&R: Well, give me your evolution, that's what I'm really looking for.

SKLAR: It was right after I graduated from NYU that I went to Patchogue. From there to the all night show at WINS.

R&R: Is that when WINS was Rock? Were there disc jockeys yet?

SKLAR: Well, at that point the station was evolving. WNEW was the first station into music and news format with Martin Block, who later moved to ABC. WINS at that time had Bob and Ray doing a morning show. The station also carried play by play sports. On the all night show where I worked, Stan Shaw spun records and was the announcer, and I wrote the copy. It was all retail copy. I'd go out and get the contract signed and usually get the cash in advance for the spots on that show.

R&R: Were you selling it too?

SKLAR: No, I wrote the copy, typed up the logs and put the show together. It was one little operation.

R&R: Any fun stories you can recall?

SKLAR: Many, I'll tell only one now. It was still old fashioned radio in a sense that there was a central control room and there were big studios in different parts of the building. There was no program feed from the news studio into the disc jockey's studio. Stan Shaw had just finished doing a commercial that ended "so for your health's sake, go to 'The (Sponsor) Turkish Baths,'" and they cut to the newsroom where the newsman came on with "so-and-so gangster has just been shot to death in The (Sponsor) Turkish Bath." At that time, we were working in a large open office space, it was a very large room, there were about 10 salesmen on the phones, it was a boiler room operation, selling this retail time. I was naive about radio. I was just keeping my eyes and ears open. One day they set aside two desks in the room and some cabinets because they were bringing in a disc jockey who was going to do a new type of show. He was going to share the room with our all night sales operation. His name was Alan Freed. He was playing Rhythm & Blues music in Cleveland. He was the first jock to play what was essentially black nightclub music and he was playing it to mostly white audiences. This later evolved into what became known as Rock & Roll. For a year working in that office, I observed this guy putting that show together and for the first

## "I trained myself. Observing failures and observing success, and asking why..."



*Sklar in High School at the Erasmus Hall Radio Workshop.*

time really began to learn about radio. We were watching radio history in the making. That was my kind of introduction to it.

R&R: Were you ever on the air?

SKLAR: Just briefly in Patchogue.

R&R: What happened after WINS?

SKLAR: While I was at WINS, I later worked in their promotion department, also produced a morning show with Bill Stern, called "Contact," which was his one attempt at being a morning man.

R&R: What year are we in, approximately?

SKLAR: This is the late 1950's, and into 1960.

R&R: Is that when WINS really kicked it out?

SKLAR: Yes.

R&R: You moved from there over to ABC?

SKLAR: No. While I was still writing at WINS the 1959-1960 payola investigations began and WINS suddenly found itself with no Program Director. The station was owned by a man who lived in Seattle, so I called him up and said that until they got a Program Director I'd look after the programming. I began to program the station. I stayed there until the station was up for sale. First they tried to sell it to Storer. Eventually they sold it to Westinghouse. Once they started maneuvering to sell the station, I moved over to WMGM. That station also went on the market and eventually became the station Storer bought (now called WHN). I had two stations kind of sold out from under me in one year, it was an interesting experience in survival. I resigned from WHN to join ABC.

R&R: What did you come to ABC as?

SKLAR: Director of Production and Community Service. I had begun talking with ABC two years earlier, when Hal Neal came into New York. ABC Radio was making money only in Detroit at WXYZ and the guy who was running it was Hal Neal, so they brought him to New York to run WABC. We talked periodically for two years. During that time I moved from WINS to WMGM and then to WABC.

R&R: What would you say your longevity and continued success is due to?

SKLAR: A deep-seated motivation to absolutely succeed under any circumstances. I backstop every operation my own ways so that there is very little chance for failure. People, systems, machinery, whatever.

R&R: Where did you get all the training for this?

SKLAR: I trained myself. Observing failure and observing success, and asking why. I ask a lot of questions, why? Why?

R&R: They gave you time to learn, didn't they? You weren't a giant success when they hired you.



*Erasmus Hall Radio Workshop*



FOREIGNER



ENGLAND DAN &  
JOHN FORD COLEY\*\*



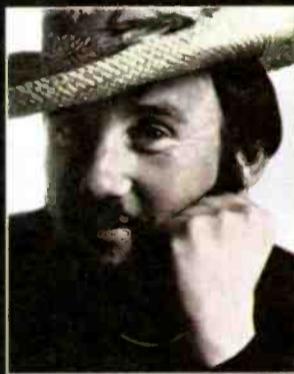
ABBA



FIREFALL



HOT\*\*



ALAN O'DAY\*



SLAVE\*

When a record turns gold, there's a lot to be proud of. Hit records don't just happen. There's no instant, fool-proof formula. No space age computer programming success. There's a lot of hard work and a lot of people

making it happen. And without Top 40 Radio, it wouldn't happen at all.

Thanks. From Atlantic Records and Custom Labels.



\*On Pacific Records  
\*\*On Big Top Records  
\*On Custom Records



# Rick Sklar

SKLAR: Nobody hired me for my first programming job, I walked in and took it. It was an empty office. I just walked in and sat down, at a New York radio station with an empty office. And I started to learn. The ratings didn't go up at first, they went down to begin with. They went down for about 10 months, and then they started to go up.

R&R: What did you learn in the first experience, if you can recall that, what did you do to change it and make you go back up after 10 months of going down?

SKLAR: My goal was to make sure that the station was being run honestly. So I disregarded almost everything that was told to me by promotion people. End result the ratings went up, and then, Art Tolchin who was managing WMGM was trying to hire me. I said no a couple of times. When it was obvious that WINS was going to be sold, I did move over to WMGM.

R&R: As a programmer?

SKLAR: Yes.

R&R: And what happened there?

SKLAR: They sold the thing to Storer, and changed the format.

R&R: Then to ABC as the Production Director.

SKLAR: Right. I moved on to ABC. Worked production, then as Program Director of the station and finally Operations Manager of the station and then Operations Manager and Director of Program Development for the AM Group, then Operations Manager and Vice President, Director of Program Development for the AM Group. And now, Vice President of Programming for Radio. So that was the progression.

R&R: You've really climbed the corporate ladder, are there any clues you care to give to working with a large corporation?

SKLAR: Be professional. Some programmers today just are not that professional in many approaches. For example, what other business do you know (and here, we're talking directly about your interviewing programmers in this publication), what other business do you know where somebody develops a new and better way of doing something and instead of doing it and making a profit at it, they immediately explain to their competitors what they're doing, so that the competitors can then do the same thing to them. Their egos do them in. It's not professional. What other business do people do that?

R&R: I don't know if they give away secrets. I remember back in '65 when KHJ went on the air, everybody ran to L.A. getting air checks, and then becoming "Boss" themselves. Whenever you put out a major promotion, your \$25,000 Button,

last year, it was copied by many stations around the country. You can't hide anything that's on the air.

SKLAR: But, actually, they copied the wrong things. The fact that somebody's putting out a button and you had put out a button, does not mean that it's going to work for them. They miss totally in the execution.

R&R: If you were going to go hire a Program Director today for one of your ABC stations, what kind of person would you be looking for?

SKLAR: A very intelligent, honest person who might or might not know that much about radio. I'd rather start with a clean slate, just train them from the beginning. Otherwise, it's a matter of trying to un-train and that doesn't work as well.

R&R: Let me touch on the philosophy of working with or for Rick Sklar. Do you hire people that motivate themselves, or do you guide them a great deal?

SKLAR: You guide where you have to. Each case is different. The more people can do for themselves, the better.

R&R: Is ABC Radio open to new ideas and concepts from its people?

SKLAR: Absolutely. Our people originate new successful concepts and ideas regularly. These ideas are exchanged in conference calls, newsletters, cassettes, tapes and, in emergency, even satellite feeds. A contest that Glenn Morgan and his promotion man, Pat Pantonini, devised that absolutely sent the ratings through the roof in New York, actually gets improved when Joe Bacarella explains it to Mike Waterkotte and they modify it and use it to demolish the competition in Detroit. John Gehron's pioneering Chicagoland work in the art of generating audience excitement that translates into ratings through painstakingly devised promotions—an area (one of many) of which he excels, is adapted for use in New York. Music concepts, both in the research and presentation areas, perfected by Larry Berger at WPLJ make their presence felt from coast to coast in our FM group. Improvements and market modifications such as those invented by Tom Bender have been largely responsible for the WRIF domination of the motor city FM scene. We're beginning to see the fruits of successful idea cross-fertilization in the two way infusion of new concepts between the WMAL AM & FM staffs and the staffs of other ABC stations. Our efforts are equally intensive in News and Talk. While we have only two News-Talk stations, Jerry Johnson at KGO and Bruce Marr at KABC come up with ideas that are usable throughout the chain when adapted to music formats and they are not beyond talking about the top twenty when it comes to talk topics and news stories.

“One day they set aside two desks in the room and some cabinets because they were bringing in a disc jockey who was going to do a new type of show. He was going to share the room with our all-night sales operation. His name was Alan Freed...”



Warwick Hotel, New York: Dan Ingram, Rick Sklar, Paul McCartney and "Cousin" Bruce Morrow



Script conference 1976 ABC Radio Network "Speaking Of Everything" show, left to right, Howard Cosell, Roone Arledge, Rick Sklar and John Lennon.

It's a super team and I'm very thankful for the rapport I have with the programmers, the promotion people, the engineering management and the General Managers. The cooperative spirit begins with the Presidents of our divisions, Chuck DeBarre for the AM Stations, Allen Shaw for the FM, and Ed McLaughlin for the Radio Network.

R&R: What do you do today, for all ABC Radio, is it all administrative, or do you still get involved in the programming?

SKLAR: Both. All the stations feed in here, so do all four networks. I also can listen to them at home.

R&R: Were you involved when they set up the four networks, years ago?

SKLAR: In some of the early conceptual thinking.

R&R: They've been very successful, are you involved with them now?

**“Our programmers are knowledgeable people...I look at each of them as a precious resource. We learn from one another's successes...”**

SKLAR: Well, today for example I'm working the new themes for the networks, we have competitive bidding from several companies.

R&R: If you had to describe the WABC and WLS audience, what would you describe it as?

SKLAR: They're still demographically broader than most stations.



*In his first major promotion for WABC, Rick Sklar awarded \$100 to the listener who painted the best copy of the Mona Lisa, \$100 for the biggest copy, \$100 for the smallest, and \$100 for the worst. Judge was Salvatore Dali.*

R&R: How do you do that, how are you able to keep it 12 to 49, solid ratings on both WABC and WLS?

SKLAR: Obviously all the elements appeal to most of the segments of the target audience groups most of the time. And that is the hardest thing to do in radio, because as you know a

particular record or particular disc jockey, any element, will turn off some of the groups and appeal to one or two of them. These stations manage to appeal to a great many target groups with what they do. So their decision making is tougher. That calls for exceptionally good people, making decisions all day long.

R&R: When you go into a market or if you listen to tapes, how do you approach a Program Director who is supposed to be a knowledgeable person, a person you have hired or ABC has hired, and you want to explain things, how do you do that?

SKLAR: Our programmers are knowledgeable people. We help provide data for them to figure out for themselves how they should do it. We have conference calls, meetings, monitoring sessions, and we talk to one another. I look at each of them as a precious resource. We learn from one another's successes.

R&R: What about your comments on radio today?

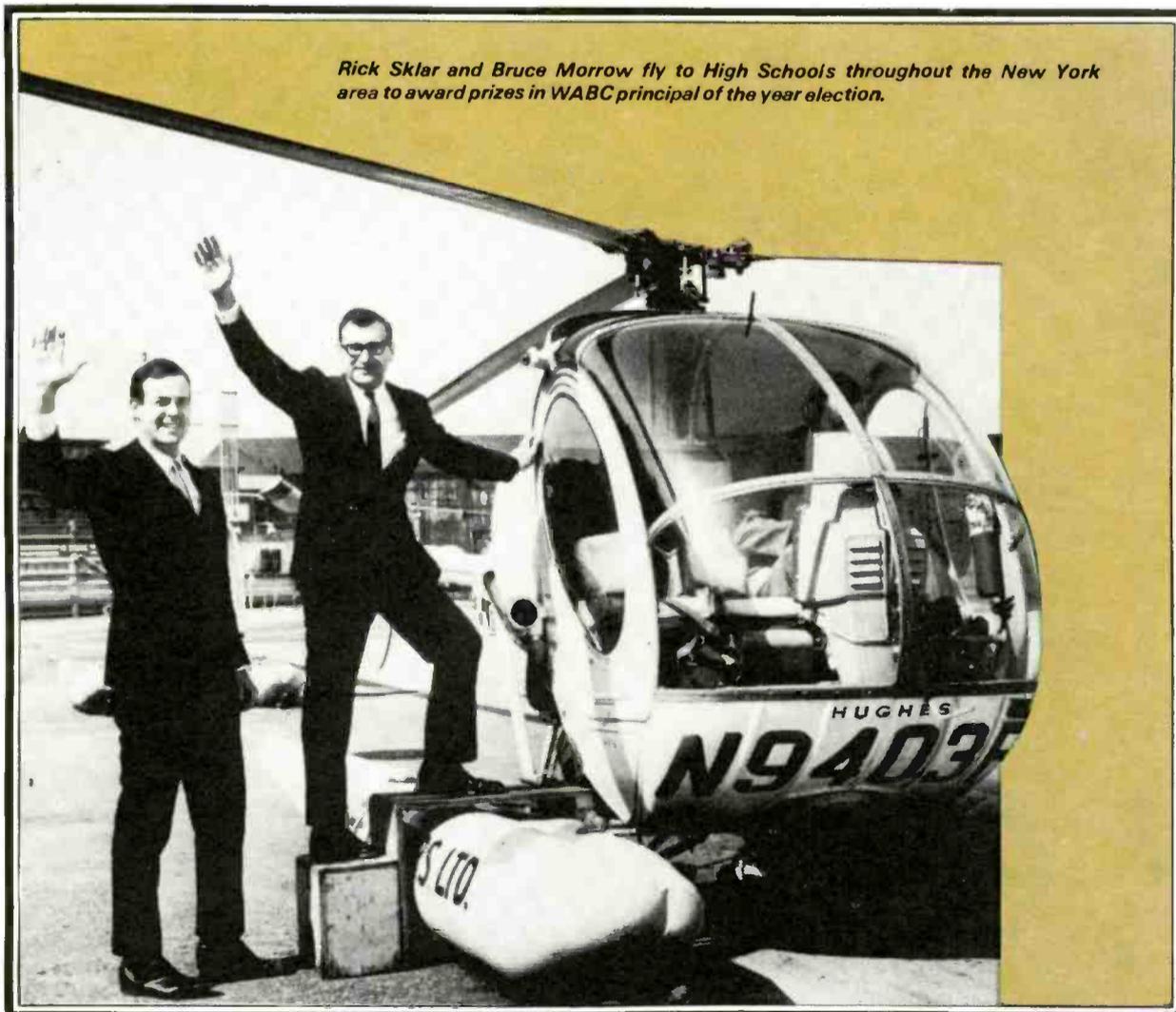
SKLAR: It's a great advertising medium. Under-priced, particularly in the New York market, and I think it has a great future. It's going up.

R&R: Would you consider ABC radio stations perfect?

SKLAR: We strive toward perfection. You come as close as you can. The ABC Radio division, primarily because of the people, does what it does, RADIO, better than anybody else does it. Look at the circulation figures. Hal Neal and Mike Hauptman have put together a super team.

R&R: ABC's finally done it in TV too. So you're now the number one TV network. Where does that motivation come from to keep everybody doing it?

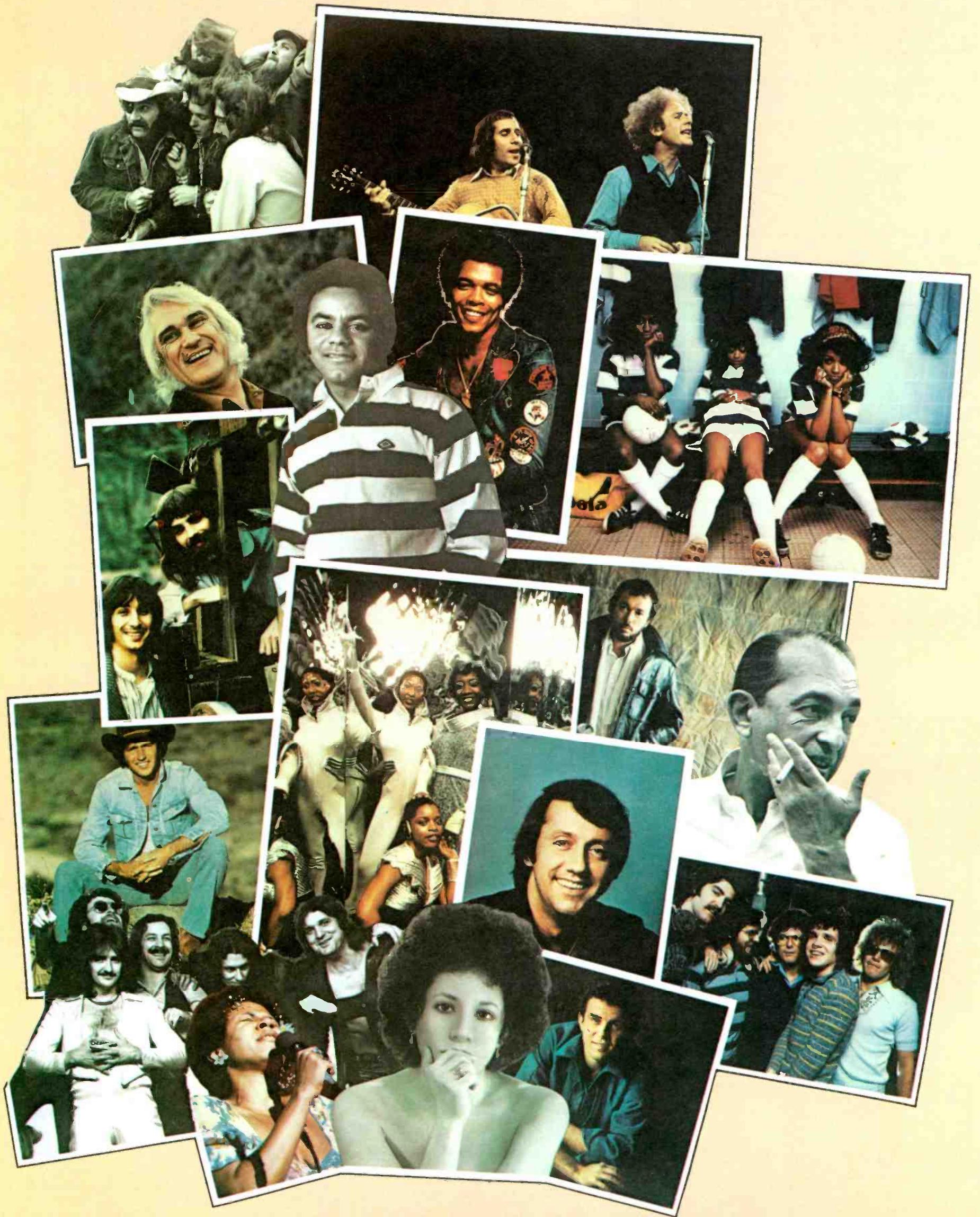
SKLAR: There certainly is a spirit. It's like a big family. In radio we call ourselves "The First Family of Radio." The inspiration goes back to the start of the company. Leonard Goldenson and the ABC management team had to battle their way up. That determination has been with the company throughout. People who feel that way have been drawn to ABC. Look at Elton Rule. You feel the excitement. It's a terribly exciting place to work. It really is. It's a company where, huge as it is today, people know one another from the very top and the circulation is throughout the company. People mingle and mix on every level in every area. It's a big company but it's still a family. ABC has the best of the small company and the best of the big.



*Rick Sklar and Bruce Morrow fly to High Schools throughout the New York area to award prizes in WABC principal of the year election.*

# Paul Drew.

When you were making your mark, we were building a legacy.



DR. HOOK / SIMON AND GARFUNKEL / CHARLIE RICH / JOHNNY MATHIS / JOHNNY NASH / THE THREE DEGREES / LOGGINS AND MESSINA / LABELLE / BILLY SWAN  
PERCY FAITH / MAC DAVIS / BLUE ÖYSTER CULT / MINNIE RIPERTON / JANIS IAN / RAY STEVENS / BOBBY VINTON / WILD CHERRY

R&R: I want to go back to the beginning and find out where you grew up and what kind of radio you grew up listening to.

DREW: I grew up in Detroit. I grew up listening mostly to WXYZ, which even then was owned by ABC. Hal Neal was an announcer on a program called the Radio Schoolhouse, which was broadcast from the Broadway Capitol Theater, in downtown Detroit. I remember going to see the broadcast a couple of times as a youngster. WXYZ was an ABC O&O even back then, and for a long time in my career I always wanted to work for ABC, because it was a good radio station.

R&R: They weren't the top station at that time, were they?

DREW: I don't know how the ratings were, but in those days it was disc jockeys, personalities, "Jack the Bellboy," who became famous on WJBK, was hired away by WXYZ, they always had the leading, the number one morning man in Detroit, Ross Mulholland, and he was followed by Fred Wolf, and they were the leading station in popular music.

R&R: What period in time was it?

DREW: The late 40's. I remember having a paper route as a kid, 10 or 11 years old and having a transistor radio with me whenever I delivered the papers, whether it was a morning paper route or an afternoon paper route, and I'd listen to mostly WXYZ. There was a time when I was very young I listened to WWJ, they had a program on in the morning that played semi-classical music, which my mother listened to, so that's how I was influenced on that.

R&R: What entranced you about radio and how did you get into it?

DREW: I was one of those people who was probably an introvert who wanted to be in front of people, and something fascinated me about the radio. I remember that my first experiences in radio would be prior to my teenage years. I can't remember the exact age, but I would say maybe I was 9 or 10 years old. I, through the Detroit Board of Education, got involved in one of the programs that they had. I did some acting on some dramatic shows. Back in those days they had those kinds of programs, and as part of the schooling program you could have various interests in other fields not just reading, writing and arithmetic. A couple of afternoons a week, also on Saturdays, I went to the Board of Education facility, which had studios and was also used by the commercial broadcasters for producing some shows. That was my first exposure to professional radio as such, where I would read scripts, create sound effects and learn a lot of the things about the inside of radio. After that, as I got into my teens, I remember buying my first recorder. It was one of those wire recorders. A friend of mine and I, either he'd come over to my place or I'd go over to his, and we'd do parody stuff. We'd pretend we were Arthur Godfrey and Tony Marvin and do the interviews and then we got into pretending we were disc jockeys.

R&R: What was your first job in radio?

DREW: I went to Wayne State University, I started school there in 1953. It was probably 1952 that the United Auto Workers Union gave a commercially licensed FM station to the school, it was one of the most powerful signals in Detroit. The University took the radio station, though they had no budget to operate a commercial radio station and they weren't going to go into the commercial radio business. Move the clock back some 20 years, how many people were listening to FM radio in those days. So just prior to my going to college, the school inherited this radio station, and they brought in a man from Wisconsin to be in charge and develop some student programs for credit. You could take various courses and be involved in the operation of the radio station. It was on the air from about 2:30 or 3 o'clock in the afternoon until just a little after midnight. When I got to school I found out about all of this. The first semester, I went over to the radio building and proceeded to sign up for all the courses I could possibly take and I did everything at that radio station. I did every job there was to do, other than what a first class engineer would do in the way of maintenance and construction. But I started out as a board engineer.

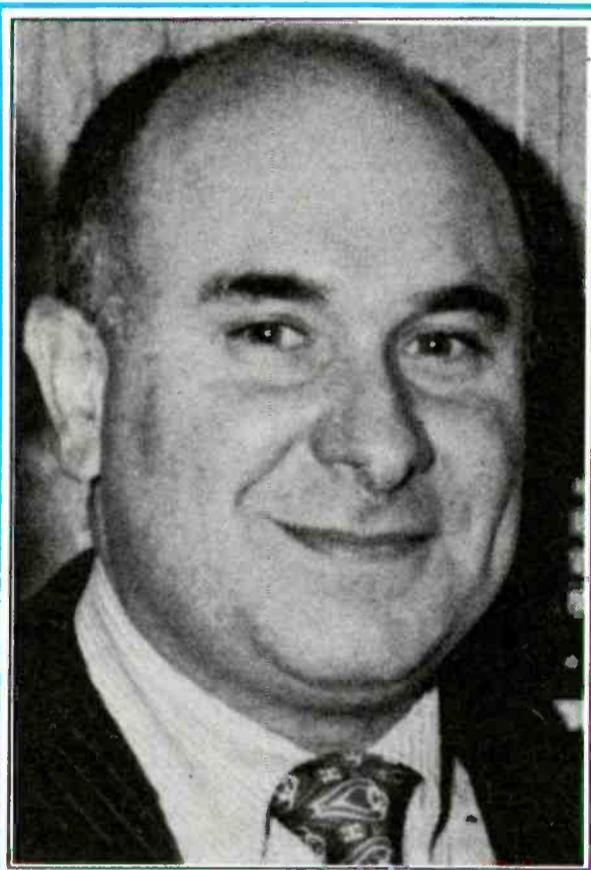
R&R: Who were the teachers, if they actually had teachers?

DREW: Well we were just down the street from WXYZ television. Wally Schwartz was part of the classes there, so was Soupy Sales. But we also had some of the other radio people in town that would come in and speak to our classes and then we'd go to their stations and so there was a good exchange. There was an opportunity to really learn things. I started out as an engineer. The school awards banquet was on a Friday night, and whoever the announcer was wanted to go to the awards banquet and had put all of his announcements on tape, except that something was wrong with the tape. And they weren't

## THE TOP-40 STORY

# Paul Drew

"The programming on a radio station is basically an extension of the personality of the Program Director..."



there. So I got a microphone and put it in the engineering booth and rigged it up so that it would go through the board, just jacked it in, and that was the beginning of my career...

R&R: The Paul Drew Show.

DREW: That was it. The next thing I became an announcer at the station, then I became a producer, I created some programs for the station. I had a man on the street show that we went out and interviewed the college kids. That was a first for the station. We asked them for their opinions on things.

R&R: Did you have any listeners? I mean did anybody have any FM radios at that time?

DREW: They did, but I was just having a good time at learning. There were actually more sets than you would think, as I learned when I did one of my all time goofs. One day I was looking at the back of the album cover from the selection I was playing. I hit a Jesus Marie Sanroma, but I had never known that J-e-s-u-s was pronounced any other way so I said "Jeezus" Marie Sanroma, so that brought in a deluge of complaints and mail to the station. So if there wasn't anybody listening all you had to do was screw up like that and you found out that the station did have listeners. I developed a second show which was also done outside of the radio station building where I would go to people and ask them about music. What songs they liked and what have you, and that show I called "Campus Rumpus," which was the name of a Ray Anthony album which came out at that time. And that featured popular music. Whatever music was popular, whether it was Rosemary Clooney or Mitch Miller or what have you, that was the first popular music show that was on this radio station. From being that kind of a producer I was then put in charge of producing of all remote broadcasts which included some drama because they had a drama department at Wayne State University.

R&R: Were you Paul Drew then?

DREW: Yes, by then I had already changed my name.

R&R: What made you change the name?

DREW: I remember listening to disc jockeys on the radio and they would always say "here." You know Don McCleod here, and Ed McKenzie here, and I figured "Here" was not their last name, so I wanted to avoid being somebody "here," so I became Paul Drew with "music for you." That was it. Something I'm extremely proud of is that in the symphony remotes that the station broadcast, as a producer I was the first one to put on a female announcer, the girl's name was Ernestine Pinkston, don't ask me why I still remember her name, but she was magnificent. She was the first female to do announcing on the station, she was also the first Black on the station.

"I don't believe broadcasting companies can afford the luxury of having each radio station individually designed..."

# Paul Drew

R&R: Was this your first programming job?

DREW: Well from that position I then became the Program Director of the radio station. After I was Program Director, for a semester I was the student Station Manager. You can learn an awful lot of radio by doing an awful lot of radio. It was the most marvelous learning opportunity for radio that I think anybody had ever had.

R&R: How about your first professional radio job?

DREW: My first paid job was while I was in school. One or two of the people on the school station also had a regular job in Detroit radio. I heard there was an opening for a disc jockey to do a night show at WHLS in Port Huron, which was 60 miles from Detroit. In those days that was a long distance. I drove up there and auditioned for the announcing job and got it. Then proceeded to say to them now that I have it, I have a problem. I'm going to school, and I really can't work every night and commute back and forth and so on and so forth. I guess I was just lucky, they said to me, can you work weekends? I said I sure can. They said fine. I used to either drive up or take a Greyhound up to Port Huron on Saturday morning. I was on the air from noon until 6 from the studios, and then from 6 to 7 there would be a news block. And then I would go from the studios to the transmitter and broadcast from there until 1 am. Then I'd go to the YMCA, I'd go to sleep and on Sunday I was on from, I believe, 10 in the morning until 6 o'clock, and then they went into their religious and other type of programming. But that was my weekend shift.

R&R: How long did you work that schedule?

DREW: I did that for a year, the last year that I was in college. Then I heard WCAR in Detroit was going 50,000 watts. They had been a Pontiac station. They were looking to hire someone to do the night show, and I auditioned. I got the job. I was WCAR's first night jock when they went 50,000 watts.

R&R: What kind of music were they playing then?

DREW: It was whatever was popular then was the music. There was nobody that said you can only play these records, you can't play these.

R&R: How did they do it, did they just have a bunch of records in the control room?

DREW: Seems to me as best I can remember that I had always pre-programmed my shows, even at WHLS I would always go in 2 to 3 hours before I went on the air and would pre-program all the music that I was going to play. I mean I would type up a list and I would stack the records, and everything would be organized as to how I was going to play it. But I only lasted 2 nights on WCAR. Working 'til 1 o'clock in the morning and then having to get up and be at 9 o'clock class the next day.

R&R: Where did you go from there?

DREW: Well I would like to give a lot of credit to Dr. Lee Dreyfus, who is now the Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point who is probably more responsible than anyone for guiding me and advising me in broadcasting. He was the one at Wayne State they brought in to handle the radio station and the Speech Department. He was a friend and advisor, I would go out to his house for dinner on weekends, and I guess knew some people, professional broadcasters, his father had been involved in broadcasting, there were some great stories. Just the advice and the guidance that he gave me, he many times would say that there's a lot of luck in this business. It's being at the right place at the right time. And that was impressed upon me.

R&R: How did he know. I remember when I went to college and worked at college radio stations, I had teachers that had never been in professional radio. They didn't really know what they were teaching. I felt it was really a waste.

DREW: Well that's maybe why he was the one in a million that came along that was in the right place and the right guy to teach young people radio from the ground up. And so I believed him. And when I got my college degree, I went up to WHLS in Port Huron and said now that I'm out of school, I will probably lose my deferment and will be drafted. They said in the meantime, how about working full time here for I don't remember what sum it was, it might have been \$120 a week or \$125 or something. And that sure sounded good.

It was a full time job and I said no I don't think so. Thank you, I've enjoyed working here but I have some things that I want to do in my life, and this chapter has ended. So I told my mother that what I was going to do was to pack a suitcase and I was going to get in the car and I was going to just drive to various cities and knock on doors and show up in peoples' offices and and say "Hi there, I'm from Detroit, I'm in radio and I want to work in your radio station." I figured if I said I was from Detroit, I didn't say I was in radio in Detroit, but I'm from Detroit, I'm in radio.

R&R: Well you worked at WCAR too.

DREW: Briefly. I hit Akron, Ohio, I hit some small towns, coal towns in Pennsylvania, I know I went to Pittsburgh. I'd been on the road for 5 or 6 days. I had a broadcasting yearbook, I don't remember how many doors I knocked on or how many stations I went into, but I went to Cincinnati for the weekend, the first weekend that I was out. My uncle and aunt live there. So I went in on Saturday afternoon and had dinner and my uncle asked me what I was doing, and I explained what my brain was up to. He said if I was a young man your age, he said, I was just reading here in Fortune magazine, he said, there's a big article on Atlanta. A city that's growing, an opportunity if I was a young guy, he said, I think that's the kind of place I'd want to go to get my foot in the door and get something. So I looked at the Fortune article and all that and had dinner, and I said well thank you, Uncle Max and Aunt Lila. And I said I've got to leave now, they said where are you going, I said to drive to Atlanta because I want to be there Monday morning so I can go see people and knock on doors and get a job. So I left and made the drive to Atlanta, got there in time to start knocking on doors Monday morning. And I remember the first station I went to was WQXI, it was in a house at that time. I mean I knew I wanted to go to that one, because I knew what their format was, it was popular music. And I could hear it. They said they didn't have anything but they said there was a brand new manager at WGST and they figured that he probably would be doing a little housecleaning, so that might not be a bad place to go to. So I went to WGST and George Oliviere was the new manager. A few years after that I saw his name, he ran some big government agency, and then I lost track of him. He also didn't last very long, but he was brand new and apparently he just wanted to hire somebody, you know, the new guy on the job. I'm in radio, I'm from Detroit, and I said, I'll tell you what, I'll work for you for \$75 a week if you let me be on the air. And I promise you I will make the station a success when I'm on the air. He said that's a deal.

R&R: What year was this?

DREW: It was 1957.

R&R: Did you have to audition for the job?

DREW: Oh yes. I cut an audition when I was there. What I really wanted to do was be a teenage idol type disc jockey at night. WGST's format was anything you wanted to play when you were on the air. Incidentally when I first got there they had engineers, they went combo when I was there because 3 of us just said it's ridiculous these engineers, it's too hard to do it with them. If you're going to play records you really have to do it yourself and all that. So it became combo while I was there. The guy who was on at night was a preacher, but I mean, he had a parish, but he didn't preach on the air, he was a disc jockey. His name was Forest Blunt. His wife had had a baby and I went to see him and I said Forest how would you like to work in the afternoon and swap shifts with me, and besides it's a shorter shift. I was looking to be on at night where I could play different kinds of records and get all the kids in town to listen to me. He loved the idea. We switched, I played whatever music I wanted to play.

R&R: Played Rock & Roll at that time?

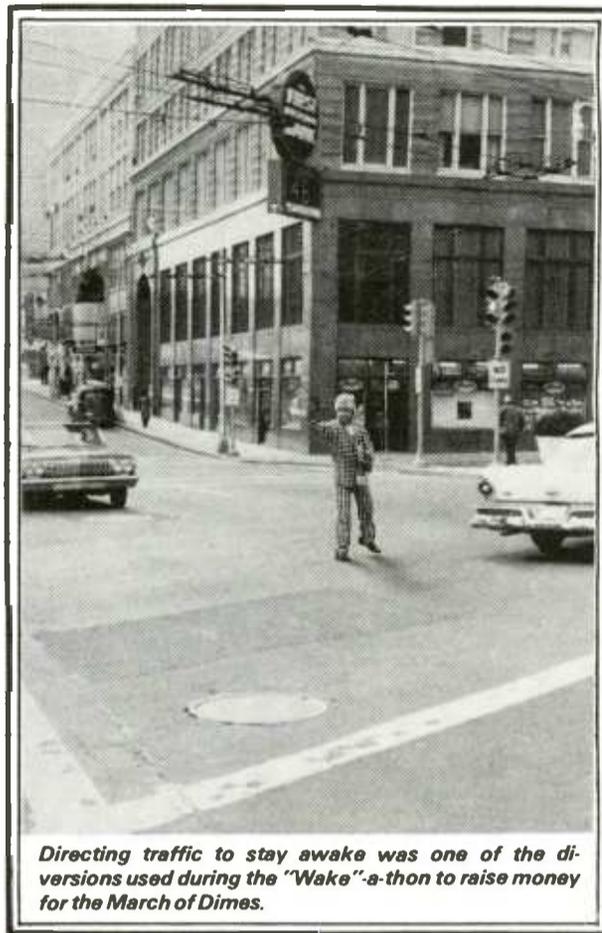
DREW: Oh yes, I played everything.

R&R: Were there jingles?

DREW: Yeah, I got the station to buy some jingles that were on WABC which were done by Eric Seday. They came on a big disc as opposed to jingles that come today on a tape.

R&R: Did you become very successful at night at WGST?

DREW: I had good ratings, but I couldn't beat WAKE which was the Bartell formatted station. They were Top 40 formatted. But the best numbers the station had were when I was on at night. I used to do requests and dedications, and the dedications were so bad, I mean I shudder to tell you this, some of them would last for two and a half minutes by the time I read them all. I had nobody to tell me what to do so I thought I was trying to make everybody happy by reading their names. I became the biggest personality in town through that radio show. On Friday and Saturday nights, my show was done remote



Directing traffic to stay awake was one of the diversions used during the "Wake"-a-thon to raise money for the March of Dimes.

from the YWCA and Coca Cola sponsored it, and we had about 600 or 700 kids, cause that's all we could get in there, and it was called the "Big Beat Hop." It would be like an American Bandstand on radio type thing. We had artists that the record companies would send into town and they'd come and they'd lip-sync the record there, sign autographs for the kids and all of that.

R&R: When did you go across the street to WAKE?

DREW: The year was 1961. I lived in the same apartment complex as did Bill Drake and his wife. So Bill and I, one morning, just the two of us in my apartment over probably the best cup of coffee I think either one of us have ever had, something in the water and something in the coffee that day, and we talked about it, and then I went to work at WAKE. I left WGST. In other words, I felt that I needed a good radio station, and I was willing to sacrifice the numbers that I had been doing in order to be a disc jockey on a successful radio station. I thought that was what I needed to do.

R&R: How was it to work for Drake then?

DREW: The list was 40 records plus each jock had a pick hit. We didn't get to pick our own pick hit, that was picked for us. You only played 4 records a half hour, that was the format.

R&R: Was the rest all commercials?

DREW: It wasn't all commercials, you had jingles and promotions and everything else that filled it up. They had stagings, you didn't introduce then, if you did it wasn't most of them. You know the oldies and the pickhits, and it's number one, and number two and that sort of thing. We did get into playing more records somewhere along the way at that station. I don't remember when it started but again the Bartell format was 4 records a half hour. We had baseball, the WAKE baseball scoreboard at :15 and :45, we had to go to the ticker and we had to read all the scores at :15 and :45. We had news every hour.

R&R: What shift did you do there?

DREW: Nights. I was on 8 to midnight.

R&R: Did you do very well?

DREW: Those were the best, I had good numbers there, yes I mean I was on a hot radio station. 250 watts at night in Atlanta, Georgia, against WSB, I beat them. Of course they didn't have demographics in 1961. So it was total shares. I think you will enjoy this, the guy that followed me on WAKE was Danny Day. He was from Macon, Georgia and Danny Day, you know today, as probably one of the great veterans of Los Angeles radio, who on a radio station that has seen them come and go, has been there since the 60's as Johnny Hayes at KRLA.

R&R: Where did you go from there?

DREW: Bill left, Bartell moved him out to San Francisco. Bartell had sold WAKE.



# "The TOP 40 Sounds of Young America..."

**"Sir Duke"** T-54281  
**STEVIE WONDER**  
 From the album



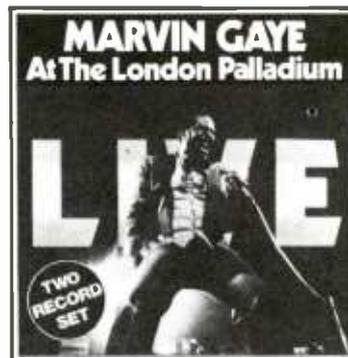
"Songs In The Key of Life"  
 T13-340C2

**"Easy"** M-1418  
**COMMODORES**  
 From the album



"Commodores"  
 M7-884R1

**"Got To Give It Up"** T-54280  
**MARVIN GAYE**  
 From the album



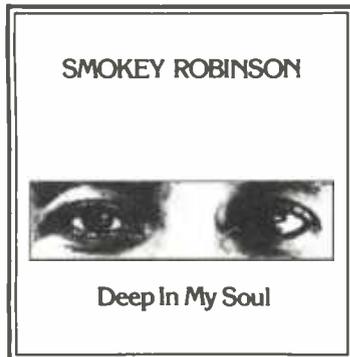
"Live At The London Palladium"  
 T7-352R2

**"It's A Lifetime Thing"**  
**THELMA HOUSTON & JERRY BUTLER** M-1422F  
 From the album



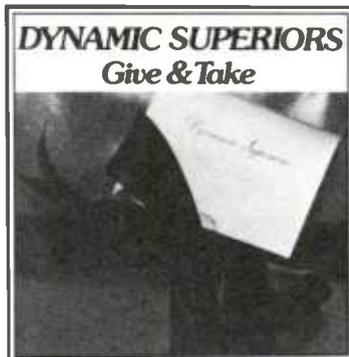
"Thelma & Jerry"  
 M6-887S1

**"Vitamin U"** T-54284  
**SMOKEY ROBINSON**  
 From the album



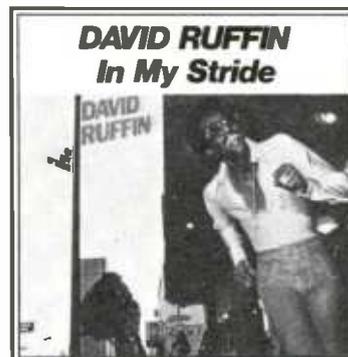
"Deep In My Soul"  
 T6-350S1

**"Nowhere to Run"** M-1419  
**DYNAMIC SUPERIORS**  
 From the album



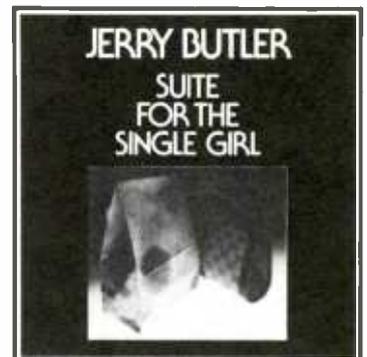
"Give & Take"  
 M6-879S1

**"Just Let Me Hold You For A Night"** M-1420  
**DAVID RUFFIN**  
 From the album



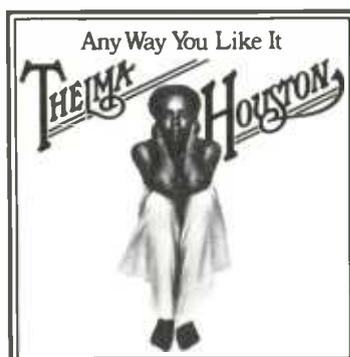
"In My Stride"  
 M6-885S1

**"Chalk It Up"** M-1421F  
**JERRY BUTLER**  
 From the album



"Suite For The Single Girl"  
 M6-878S1

**"Don't Leave Me This Way"** T-54278F  
**THELMA HOUSTON**  
 From the album

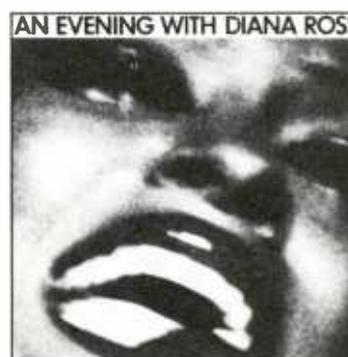


"Anyway You Like It"  
 T6-345S1

**"Mandre"** M6-886S1  
**MANDRE**



**"An Evening With Diana Ross"** M7-877R2  
**DIANA ROSS**



**"Rarearth"** P6-10019S1  
**RARE EARTH**



**...On Motown Records."**



# GOD BLESS TOP 40 RADIO



★ DAVID CARRICO   ★ JIM TAYLOR   ★ RON RAPHAEL

★ JERRY ARMOUR Philadelphia

★ WAYNE CORDRAY Seattle

★ DAN CURDY Detroit

★ DANNY DAVIS Washington

★ LARRY FERRIS Miami

★ DON GEORGE Cleveland

★ MIKE HOLMES St. Louis

★ DAVID KRA GSKOW Minneapolis

★ JOANIE LAWRENCE Nashville

★ TOM MAZZETTA Los Angeles

★ PAUL PIERETTI San Francisco

★ PAUL POWER Boston

★ AL PRIVETTE Houston

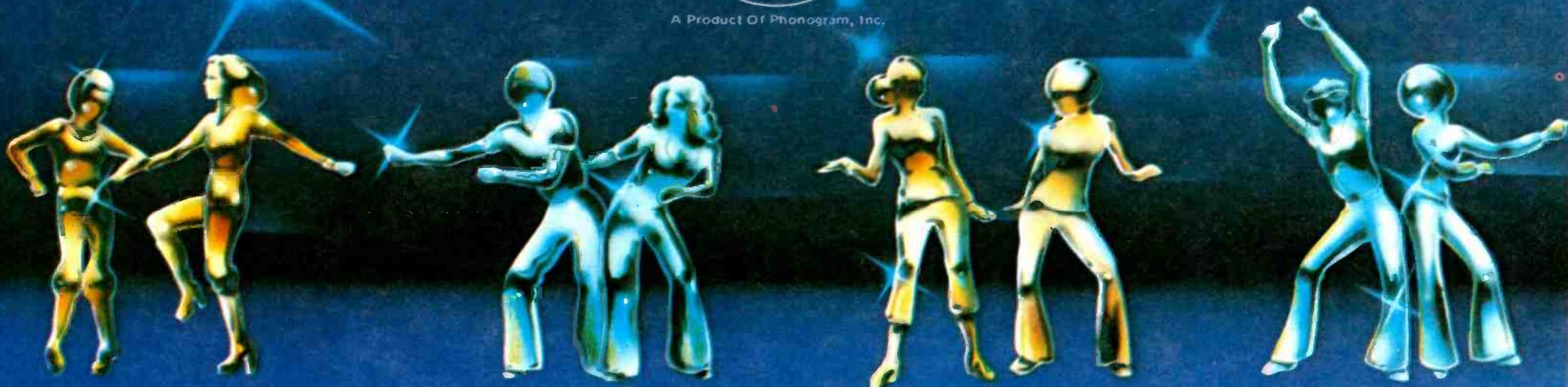
★ MIKE RIZK Cincinnati

★ ROY ROSENBERG New York

★ ROGER SAYLES Atlanta



A Product Of Phonogram, Inc.



DREW: The new owners had bought it as an investment and I think they made an error in judgement in who they had to manage the station. So the station just wasn't the station that it was when Bartell owned it and WQXI was doing better. It's an old story, knocked off WAKE. So then they decided to change the format. To a more Middle of the Road sound, or less Rock. That's when I was hired by Red Jones who was the Program Director at WQXI, Kent Burkhart was the Operations Director. Esquire magazine owned the station at that time.

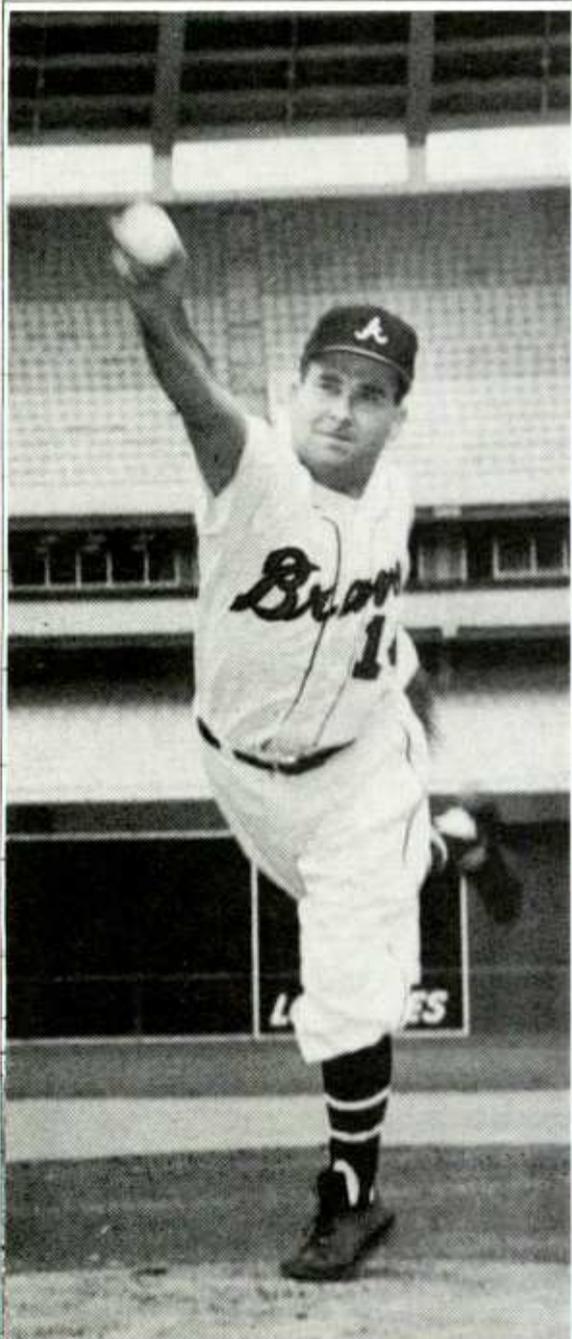
R&R: Let me stop you for a second and ask you when you went to work for WAKE, which was really the first format station, did you learn, I mean were there rules, regulations, even though it was only 4 records, was there a format to teach you basics?

DREW: Oh absolutely.

R&R: What was in the format then, what were some of the ingredients?

DREW: See the reason I liked WAKE was because all the shows I did on WGST I used to go in for 3 or 4 hours before I went on the air and put my show together, and plan everything. WAKE was the kind of radio station where the disc jockeys didn't have to do that as much because the Program Director had planned the whole radio station. I mean you do a jingle here, the weather goes here, and everything was on cards, the console was covered with cards that you say this here and you say that there. This is how you open the weather, and you close the weather. It didn't bother me at all, I mean having been a personality, left to my own devices, at WGST, I wrote all that stuff out for myself anyway. So I was reading what I had written. When I went to WAKE, I was reading what the Program Director had written, but I could still add certain things that would make it identifiable. It was Paul Drew, because they wanted to take advantage of my popularity in the market to put me on at night.

R&R: Were they doing station promotions at that time?



Drew helped welcome the Braves to Atlanta when he was PD of WQXI.

DREW: Yes, the first promotion was the WAKE Olympics. I remember we had to all go down to the Y, Bill took us all down there and we lifted weights and did all kinds of stuff that was recorded and the listeners had to guess various things as to who won in each category.

R&R: OK, you went to WQXI after WAKE changed format to MOR...

DREW: Before they changed, I got out just prior to that, I went to work for WQXI and they put me on at night. It was on Matheson Drive, an old house that the termites were eating away at. I mean you could sit there and do your show and go (slap), at the bugs in the control room. That's the first time I got to use cart machines, because everything at WAKE was on records. And the first night I was there lightning hit the building and knocked out all the cart machines.

R&R: This is still in the early 60's, right?

DREW: 1963. I did extremely well at WQXI, I was early to recognize what the Beatles were and became the first jock in Atlanta to call them on the phone and interview all of them. That immediately enhanced my popularity and standing in the Atlanta radio wars, so to speak.

R&R: Who was battling WQXI at that time?

DREW: WPLO, Plough. I had "Big Hugh Baby" on opposite me.

R&R: So at this time you had worked for Bill Drake and now Kent Burkhart.

DREW: That's right. Kent was the manager of the station. Somewhere along the way in 1966 around May or June, I had a meeting with Kent and he told me that he was going to make me the program director. I'd been music director for about a year or so. So I became Program Director. Dr. Don Rose was doing 9 to noon. I felt that he had too much talent for housewives' time, so Red was doing the morning show and I replaced Red with Dr. Don Rose, who went on to get the best morning numbers in Atlanta than anybody has ever had against WSB. Not necessarily while I was PD.

R&R: When you worked under Burkhart, were there great differences between what you had learned under Drake?

DREW: I learned a lot of things from Bill Drake, and I learned other things from Kent Burkhart. So what I could learn from working with them was extremely valuable, but it wasn't how to do things differently, there were great similarities. Kent was a Gordon McLendon student. Had been well trained in Top 40 radio. So Kent made me Program Director. I first started programming in July of '66 but I somehow thought to myself, well if I'm good and I'm making \$235 a week programming WQXI, then why can't I go somewhere else and program and make \$435 a week. So I went into Kent and said that... I want to leave. This was in November.

R&R: You have a history of this, you know.

DREW: I get bored. So I said I want to leave. He said why and I said well I just want to leave, I wanted to do something else. So Kent said well do you have a job and I said no, I'll find one. He said here's the air travel credit card, why don't you go out and see your friend Bill Drake. Anywhere you want to go, just relax, take it easy, listen to some radio and all that, but think about it. So I went out, I came out to the coast, and got in touch with Bill. Went back up to Atlanta and went back in and saw Kent and Kent said well what is it? And I said I feel better, OK I'm here. I said to Kent, I would either stay until the end of January or the end of February, whatever it was, because I started at CKLW sometime during the first or second week in March. But I quit, and I didn't have a job. I mean in other words I went in again and I said that this chapter is over.

R&R: You definitely had the philosophy of finding a job before you quit didn't you? You just made your mind up and did it?

DREW: I believe that security is your confidence in your own ability to do anything that you set your mind to doing. It's not a piece of paper, or you know, in other words security is something internal. To me, that's what security is. I got a telephone call in late February, like the gods up there that watch over you. Got a call from Perry Ury who said he had a friend that was running CKLW and he needs some help and I wonder if you would be interested in going and talking to him, and I said sure. But I had just done an interview with the General Manager of KYA in San Francisco. So I thought that I had a reasonable chance of going from WQXI to KYA. But I got on a plane and went up and met Bob Buss who was the General Manager of CKLW, went to the station, sat in his office. I

had done a little homework on the station from record people and anything I could find from anybody about it.

R&R: CKLW was not a factor when you lived there, I take it.

DREW: It hadn't been a factor for many many years.

R&R: What kind of radio station was it?

DREW: It was a bad radio station. A lot of Canadian programs, and it was poorly programmed.

R&R: In other words people in Detroit weren't really listening to it.

DREW: No, but there was a jock that had a television show named Bud Davies, who did have a pretty good following on the station. And Tom Clay, who was a night time jock prior to my arrival at the station, did exceptionally well in promoting things around, with the Beatles. I mean he did enjoy good popularity on CK, but he had been at JBK, or one of the other stations before he got to CK. He had a strong following.

R&R: Were they Rock?

DREW: Yes, it was popular music. And Canadian block programming.

R&R: When you were PD at WQXI, were you also doing a jock show?

DREW: I was on from 6 to 10, but then I hired Bob Todd to replace me on the air so I could get off the air. I remember, I had a 35 plus share in Pulse. And I remember saying to Bob Todd, who I thought was great, I think I heard him on a station in Fort Wayne, and I said I promise you you will have higher ratings than I had, because you are a very talented disc jockey. I think he had a 37 the first time out. The guy was just fantastic. Back to CKLW, I went up and met Bob Buss and had heard a lot of negatives about him and about the radio station and just was very frank with the guy. I said I heard you're a pain in the ass, which were the words I had quoted to me, I laid it all out. And he admitted everything. He said he had never had anybody with any balls that really would run the place and take charge and I said well I'll tell you what, you stay out of my way, I'll make you a hero. He became a Vice President. I got to tell you he did stay out of my way. He came through within about 120 days on everything that he said he would deliver on by the first of the year.

R&R: This was your first radio station that you really totally programmed by yourself.

DREW: That's right. And a guy like Claude Hall came along and would take some shots at me in Billboard and all that and I would call Claude and I'd say Claude, I'm not Bill Drake, I'm not Mike Joseph, I've only been programming less than a year. I'm not a great messiah, I'm just a guy here in Detroit who is doing what he's doing. That was it. I only agreed to work at CKLW for a year. I had programmed it in my own mind that I would take the job for only one year, and I explained that to Bob Buss. Then Drake made his deal in early July of '67 with RKO that encompassed all the stations. Including CKLW.

R&R: That's right, RKO owned it then.

DREW: I welcomed that arrangement because I figured I could only do better by having somebody who was the hottest, best programming mind in America. It was like somebody saying, now you don't have to sweat as much, or you can't lose...

R&R: He inherited you.

DREW: That's right.

R&R: What did you do when you took over at CKLW, and what did CKLW sound like when you programmed it?

DREW: I spent two weeks in the market before I set foot in the radio station. I grew up in Detroit and I'd been a record promoter. When I first started in college, before I got involved with this radio station, I worked for London Records as a promotion man. That got me into radio stations and that sort of thing. \$50 a week and expenses. Worked for Walt McGuire, who is still with London today. So I knew some of the old line record people in Detroit, and I had some people that I had gone to school with and some friends and all that. I did a combination of things, one is I had the secretary at the station get all kinds of statistics from the Chamber of Commerce, and the various

factories and the traffic flow figures, and all this and that. All the statistics you could imagine that would apply to Detroit as it was and where it was going and anything about the past, so it was all laid out like a big strategy so I could learn about it. Plus talking to all these record people, and just asking them questions and gathering information, various things about CK and other radio stations. What it all boiled down to in addition to the data that I had, was that basically people didn't like CKLW because it was a lousy Canadian station. So I thought very simply the easiest way to make them like it would be that I would make it better than the Detroit radio stations so they could say you know I wish our Detroit stations were as good as that Canadian station. Instead of trying to hide the fact that it was Canadian, I thought that I could make it a good radio station and not try and bury the fact that it was Canadian. We didn't have to play Canadian music in those days. You didn't have an FCC where you have so much news, so much public affairs, so much other. If there was too much news, it was too much so let's have less. Public Affairs was almost non-existent. Number of PSA's a week, just things that you don't have to concern yourself with. But you could not run more than 1500 minutes of commercials a week, in a seven day period between 6am and midnight. So I cut the commercial load, I cut a set of jingles with Pams. And called it initially for a short period of time, "Fun Radio 8."

R&R: What kind of things did you have on the air, what kind of jocks?

DREW: I hot-clocked, I made up my own hot clocks, counter-programmed against WKNR which was the leading Rock station. Also I'd benefited from the fact that WXYZ had made some programming adjustments at the beginning of March. They were going a little more mellow, a little less Top 40-ish with their music. So I had certain advantages at that time that I wouldn't have had, say, four months earlier. There was a certain timing element that was present there. I replaced the entire jock staff with the exception of the morning jock. I said to Dave Shaeffer, who was one of the later "Jack the Bellboys" in the market, you're not what I'm looking for in a morning jock, and I'm not sure he was doing mornings, but I put him on in the morning 'cause I figured it would take me awhile to find the right guy for the morning, and that wasn't the first area where I would acquire the audience I was looking for, a younger audience. To make the station number one in teens and then add on to that. I said to Dave I will put you on in the morning, but when I find the morning guy that I'm looking for, you won't have a job here. So if you want to go look for something now, that's up to you, or if you want to stay, I hope you understand that there will come a time when you will not have a position at this station. That guy made number one in the ratings, he actually even beat WJR, I mean it was incredible. I hired Chuck Browning from WFIL, The Chucker, who I thought would be my morning hot shot, very clever entertaining guy, it was a tough thing to do to Dave.

R&R: But why? If it was working?

DREW: I can't answer that question. If I had to do it all over again I probably would have done it differently. You know there's times when you say if I had it to do all over again, I would do exactly the same thing.

R&R: Do you feel that when you program a radio station, you hear what you want?

DREW: Oh yes. In my entire career, I've only had a radio station I actively programmed sound the way I really wanted it to sound oh, less than half a dozen times.

R&R: Can you describe what that sound is?

DREW: I could only give you a tape and say, this is it, this is a perfect picture of how it should have been back then, or this is the way it was. Just everything, it's the beauty of, it's like Joe Namath fading back to pass and throwing one for 60 yards and his receiver puts out his arms and runs faster than the guy who's trying to tackle him and goes into the end zone and scores a touchdown. Everybody blocks the right way.

R&R: Were you looking for content, looking for voice, excitement, what was the station sounding like? Was it a screaming radio station at the time?

DREW: No, we didn't scream. The first jock I hired at the station is someone you know as Kris Stevens. Who went on to become one of the greatest jocks in the history of WLS. I called him Billy Mack. We used to use a lot of those names back then. He did the all night show. I looked for guys who did have good pipes. Jim Davis worked for me, and a guy who's real name is Wendell Wright, he's in Dallas now, he was named Mike Rivers, did afternoon drive, he didn't have heavy pipes, but he had a fast paced delivery and he was a witty sort of a guy, not really smart-assed, but very clever. And so he did more than just play records in the afternoon, but he could do it in five seconds or four seconds. You remember

certain things jocks do. There was a spot for some drink or some suntan lotion that used to start out with a big deep voice that said "The Sedan." I remember he intro'd it once... "what kind of car has four doors," and then the spot would come on. He had a very clever way of putting everything together.

R&R: Did it win?

DREW: Yes, we took off in Hooper.

R&R: How did the Chucker do by the way, when he went in.

DREW: I left in March and Chucker just came in January, so I didn't have very long to work with the Chucker, though he did well, but then he had some problems and Ted Atkins replaced him with Charlie Van Dyke. Ted followed me in there. Now I did keep one jock, I kept Tommy Shannon, who had 8's and 9's shares at night on the station. Had a good following in town, and was a very likeable guy to listen to on the air. I felt he could be big. The station happening and his style and all that, I felt that it would happen. He doubled his shares and even more than that.

R&R: Had Drake taken over at that time?

DREW: Oh yes. Drake had taken over back in July. He wanted to know what I was going to do, and I said I hadn't yet firmed it up in my mind but I was in the process of trying to put it together. I think I flew out here because they thought I was a little funny or something. Why does he want to leave? What do you want? Do you want to come to the West Coast, and all this. I said no I just want to do something that I'm not doing now and I want to do it on my own and that sort of thing.

R&R: What happened after CKLW?

DREW: I remember having lunch in Chicago with Lionel Baxter who was the Vice President of Storer Broadcasting. I felt that if I walked out of that luncheon with a consulting deal that was anything more than a year, that it would be OK with me. I either pitched two or three years, I can't recall which, but what really shook me was when the guy wanted to know what it would cost for 7 years. I couldn't speak.

I said well I don't think I can get myself tied up for that long, with any one company and all that. So I made a deal with the Storer people, and it was either 2 or 3 years. They wound up selling the station and I got a settlement on the contract. At that time the Canadian government had passed a law which required that no foreign company could own more than a certain percentage of any broadcast property, and so RKO wanted to maintain some kind of order at CKLW. Ted had since gone on to KFRC, and the same guy that was the Program Director when I got there the first time, who I removed because they made him Promotion Director when I got there, Alden Diehl, had been brought back as Program Director again in this interim period while RKO was trying to sell the station. But they realized that the ratings were eroding and the operation was just not what it should be, so they talked with Ross Taber.

R&R: What stations were you consulting for Storer at this time?

DREW: Just WIBG. And then it would have been WJBK in Detroit.

R&R: You once told me you felt WIBG was your really great failure.

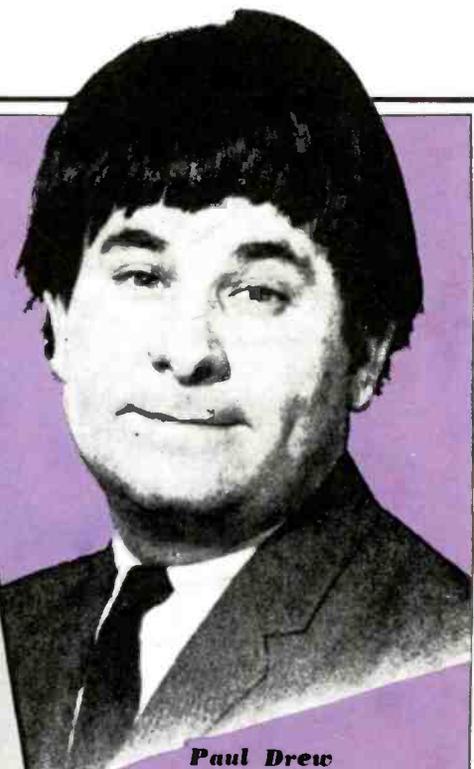
DREW: It was! It was failing when I got there and I should have saved, or I was supposed to help save it.

R&R: Have you analyzed up to now why it has failed, why you didn't save it?

DREW: There's probably a lot of reasons why it failed but I mean maybe funneling it all down to a couple of basics, one it failed because Jim Hilliard is damn good and he figured out what I might do and did it better on WFIL before I got there. He implemented things that I might have done even after I got there until I could get a housecleaning there and get things organized. So it's like you're always scrambling. In other words, by the time I got to Philadelphia I couldn't afford the luxury of two weeks of that kind of business that I had in Detroit because they were already off to the races. Second is I never really had a perspective or a yardstick by which to measure whatever it was that I thought WIBG should be doing. Not

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WQXI disc jockey wears the . . . "pudding basin" wigs . . .

the HAIRCUT that's sweeping the country . . . that was made famous in England! Guys and gals are wild about it . . . the haircut goes hand in hand with the fantastic popularity of the new rhythm blues/rock 'n' roll music, new dances that's raging across the country. Join the delicious swing . . . tell all your pals . . . and be among the first to get your "pudding basin" wigs . . . do it today — **2.99**

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W Q X I - ATLANTA, GEORGIA - AUDIO 79

# “Any service greater than self..”

Service is a funny word. It's used with ease when describing what you intend to do, but with great difficulty when explaining what you actually have done. There's often a great gap between the two.

At RKO Radio we don't claim to have any Albert Schweitzers among our managers, but we do have a concerned group of men and women who have successfully blended their radio stations into their markets in the spirit of service. We would like to salute them and their stations' efforts. They may not be Schweitzers, but they are operating in his memory.

**Jim Barker** WFYR Chicago

Raised over 50,000 dollars to help underprivileged children through the “Haunted House” program of Campus Life.

**Allan Chlowitz** KRTH Los Angeles

Staged a Variety Club Disco for Los Angeles Handicapped children through Tent 25 and raised funds to provide therapy and treatment.

**Rick Devlin** WOR New York

Served as the flagship station for the Leukemia Society of America's annual Radiothon. Live broadcasts from WOR raised over 90,000 dollars and made New York City #1 in the nation.

**Douglas Donoho** WAXY Miami/Ft. Lauderdale

Staged the Celebrity Fund-Raising dinner for the American Cancer Society's Doral Eastern Open Golf Tournament. WAXY supplied Helen Reddy and Jim Stafford as talent and raised 55,000 dollars.

**Erica Farber** 99X New York

Raised over 250,000 dollars by staging the third annual New York Superwalk for The March Of Dimes.

**Dick French** WHBQ Memphis

Broadcast live from Overton Park Zoo in conjunction with the American Cancer Society's Zoo Day with proceeds from admissions and concessions being turned over to the Cancer Society.

**Jack Hobbs** WRKO Boston

In cooperation with the Metropolitan District Commission, WRKO listeners are cleaning up four Massachusetts recreation areas saving taxpayers hundreds of thousands in costs.

**Jerry Lyman** WGMS AM/FM

Washington, D.C.

Staged a 60 hour live radiothon for the benefit of the National Symphony. This effort was responsible for raising over 125,000 dollars in funds for the orchestra.

**Pat Norman** KFRC San Francisco

Gathered a host of toys through the Marine Corps and the San Francisco Firefighters Toys For Tots campaign. Brought Christmas gifts to a great number of Bay Area children.

**Gerry Sperry** WROR Boston

Spearheaded the campaign for the passage of ocean saving legislation to prevent deadly oil spills off the vital New England coast. Produced the award winning documentary “Troubled Waters.”

**Tim Sullivan** KHJ Los Angeles

Staged the KHJ Cavalcade of Stars Christmas Concert which raised over 80,000 dollars for various Southern California Charities.

**RKORADIO**



Albert Schweitzer  
1875-1965

# Paul Drew

having Bill Drake and Betty Breneman and that...for somebody to say oh that really sucks, or that's really bad, or those jingles are distorted, and that sort of thing. Not having somebody to talk radio to that I respected and somebody that could exchange that sort of thing. That yardstick, that perspective, that contributed to it. So those two things alone as far as I'm concerned helped to do me in.

**R&R:** But you did it before Drake at CKLW, didn't you, by yourself?

**DREW:** Yes, but it's easy to blame a lot of it on the engineering, and that's true, the engineering was terrible at WIBG. I understand that some of it still is. I appreciate good engineering. But engineering is like the movies you see where the captain is up in the wheelhouse and there's the guy steering the ship and he picks up that thing that looks like it's on a tube and he cranks the handle and the bell rings and he says "give me full steam." As a PD, I'm on the bridge and I want to crank the handle and say to the Chief Engineer "I want full steam!" If I don't get full steam, then I'm going to get torpedoed. So I have a great appreciation for excellent engineering. I feel I'm going to do my best to provide excellent programming, I expect management to provide excellent engineering. But most management of radio fails in this area. They don't understand engineering and they fail to provide the best there is. The programming on a radio station is basically an extension of the personality of the Program Director.

**R&R:** You've been called a very cold, heartless person. Does that mean that your programming is cold and heartless, very matter of fact?

**DREW:** Maybe that's how people see me. But I believe that the radio station is an outgrowth, an extension of the Program Director's personality. I see that at KHJ with Michael Spears. KFRC will not sound the same with Les Garland as it did with Michael Spears. I believe that it has to have something to do with the personality makeup of the individual that is programming the radio station. It's not an exact science. There's ego. All kinds of things.

**R&R:** It's human. It had to be.

**DREW:** Now, we get down to engineering. I don't know whether it's ABC or NBC or RKO, but I have yet to go to two radio stations in the same company, same format and see any two that have engineering, the equipment, the turntables and the whole audio chain and what have you, and all of the stuff, that is the same. I don't believe broadcasting companies can afford the luxury of having each radio station individually designed, especially the large companies. To me, engineering is measurable. It's exact. You connect this wire to that wire and you know what to expect. You can look at a meter and you see it. I mean where's the human factor? Here is a plan for a Top 40 radio station in a major market. And company A owns Top 40 stations in 6 major markets. Why shouldn't the facilities all be the same? Do you realize that at United Airlines, all of the



Drew interviewing Jerry Lewis at a MD fund raiser.



747's are all the same. The same is true at American Airlines. When they teach the people in maintenance, when they teach the operating personnel, the stewardesses and the ground crew, everybody on how to handle them, they don't say oh here comes number 522, that's different than 523. They're all built basically the same. Why should it be any different for the components and the put-together of the materials that the talent has to work with at the radio station?

**R&R:** Excellent point. Now did you do that at RKO?

**DREW:** No. I was the Vice President of Programming.

**R&R:** How about dealing with jocks, did you have regular airchecking sessions and critique them?

**DREW:** Not regular, no. They were irregular and those that I felt needed more got it more frequently. To me every day was the Superbowl. In other words there were no exhibition games. Between rating periods is not the time to practice.

**R&R:** I have a copy of a memo you wrote, I think at KFRC, instructing the jocks that they were not allowed to go into the control room earlier than a certain time, and there would be no conversation, that kind of stuff. Did you really run that tight a station?

**DREW:** Yes. I believe that the jock who was going on the air, if his mind was free from any other pressures would be thinking only about the people he was going to entertain. It's like an Olympic participant, or a baseball pitcher, you can't go out to the mound and throw strikes if you're worried about what time you're going to get home and the argument you had with your wife.

**R&R:** You're also known for always wearing a business suit, even to concerts.

**DREW:** I made up my mind a long long time ago that I could be successful in radio at the time I got in, because it appeared to me, in those days, the people that owned radio stations were not large corporations, radio was something that people bought and talked about. The guy who owned a furniture store and also owned a radio station. It seemed to me that there was a lot of time wasted around radio stations. I thought that if I treat this as a business, then I will be successful, because most of the people that are in it didn't recognize that it's a business. Now today, it's a lot different, because of who owns the radio stations. That's why I wore the suit. It was a uniform, it was a badge that said...bankers wear suits, see, investors...I want you to know this is a business to me, and I mean business. And I'm wearing a suit.

**R&R:** Was the format at your radio stations so tightly controlled that jocks couldn't screw up, if you had cast it correctly?

**DREW:** There were people that as far as I was concerned did beautiful shows. Then there were other people that had problems you know, for one reason or another. Maybe couldn't absorb everything. I was known for making things too complicated. So not everybody can follow the road map that the Program Director sets out. I would always insist that jocks be at the station an hour before they went on the air. I want them to read the live copy that they had on their shows and the liners out loud even if everybody laughed at them if they walked by the jock office. Nobody makes a mistake when you read silently, you can't mispronounce words that way but if you

pick up the copy and you read it out loud and actually do it like you're going to do it on the air, it forces you to get the correct pronunciation and know where the punctuation goes and all the rest of the stuff. Those were the reasons I was tough on people. When they got on the stage, they were my performer, and I wanted them to dazzle everybody with their fancy footwork. We devised all kinds of things for the jocks so they would be better organized and prepared. Bill Drake is the guy who said that, when I first met him, first worked for him, is that I was good because I was prepared. And it sounded like I was prepared. People liked his radio station because WAKE sounded like it was prepared. In other words, here's the first of 7 in a row, whoever said that before? Most guys said I don't know what I'm gonna play, I'll see what I'm going to play, and all that.

**R&R:** One of the things that always amazes me, even in major markets, every time a station changes jocks, the PD seems to forget about the fact that jocks come from all over the country and they come to these strange cities that have new suburbs and street names. Did you have pronunciation guides, or go over them?

**DREW:** Absolutely. And I would call them carpetbaggers, I was a carpetbagger. We're all outsiders and everybody that's there knows more about the market than we do. Today, when we hire a new morning man somewhere, before he goes to work at the station he should get in the car and drive on the freeways a couple of mornings before he starts. He actually has to do what all of his listeners have to do. Jay Thomas spent a week getting oriented to New York City in the morning by riding the subway, and doing all the other things that happen during his shift. If you hire a guy to do 6 to 10 at night, then the jock should be able to go out and spend a week in the environment of what the listeners are doing. How else can you relate, since you've come in from out of town. I guess it's almost 2 years ago when I started talking to our PD's and picked up from them that kids were watching certain television shows. Kids were watching television more than they had since the times of the Monkees. I remember the Monkees had all the kids watching.

**R&R:** Now it seems like "Happy Days" time and all that kind of thing.

**DREW:** Yeah "77 Sunset Strip," these various cycles. So it occurred to me that if these kids are watching "Happy Days" and "Kotter," and the "Six Million Dollar Man" and that, we have a guy on our radio station who's on 6 to 10 at night who will never see these shows. And yet his audience is leaving him during the week to go watch these shows and they're going to talk about them at school. Here's a guy who's on the radio who doesn't know who the Fonz is. That's when I suggested to all of the General Managers and Program Directors that the station get video cassette machines for all the night time jocks, so these programs could be taped and when they went home after work or the next morning they could watch the shows.

**R&R:** What about news? What are your philosophies regarding news on Rock radio?

**DREW:** I want news to be the best news there is in the market for a station that plays music. I can't give the people all the news but defining the basics, who the target audience is, I want them to know everything that they need to know. So they don't have to go somewhere else and listen to news. I want it to be the very best.

R&R: When Drake took over KHJ, I remember that that was the first major Rock radio station that had a 24 hour a day news staff. There was a time when KHJ, and I'm sure that he did it in other cities, had the image of, if it happened, you could hear about it on CKLW, or KFRC, you didn't have to go away.

DREW: WQXI had a good reputation with the listenership for being reliable with news. We had mobile units. Again, that's part of Kent Burkhardt's background, from McLendon.

R&R: I don't know if it happened at the end of Drake, when you came in, but somewhere along the line, RKO Radio cut back in its news departments and cut back in its mobile unit operation.

DREW: They did that around 1968, 69, somewhere in there.

R&R: They had that great 20-20 news image, and they just cut it back.

DREW: Well in those days you didn't have all news stations either. Then you had 20-20 news.

R&R: All right, let's talk about today, would you pay a lot of attention to a news department?

DREW: Yes, the news must be as good quality as the rest of the programming. I think that the news, the amount of news and how it's being done on WRKO, WHBQ, KHJ, and KFRC is a true reflection of where my head is at in news today.

R&R: After WIBG you went back to CKLW, then to KFRC, then the WGMS-no format change debacle and then you went back to RKO as Program Director of KHJ, correct?

DREW: Yes. I had been contacted by Dwight Case who was the General Manager of KHJ at the time.

R&R: And then on to National Program Director and then Vice President of Programming.

DREW: That was all at the same time, I got a call one day from Bruce Johnson to come over and see him. I went over and he told me about the job that he had open that he wanted me to do. We put the deal together.

R&R: It all happened in a very short amount of time.

DREW: Well I replaced Bill Watson, who was a caretaker PD at the station. Ted had quit. Watson was there temporarily as the PD and Dwight Case had contacted me. I was allowed to keep my consultation business, in that in good faith I had negotiated contracts with clients that I had and I felt that it would be bad for me to not honor that.

R&R: As the Vice President of Programming for RKO, you had more Rock AM's than ABC. RKO was the most influential contemporary music chain in the country. You now had the opportunity to do what you wanted to do and what you believed in, which is the morning man and the news situation and whatever. Did you accomplish what you wanted to do?

DREW: I would say I accomplished most of what I wanted to do. I'm a perfectionist, so I couldn't have accomplished everything I wanted to do because there's always something else. That's why right now there's some things that I want to do that I can't do as a corporate Vice President for RKO. Things I want to do in the entertainment field; things that involve government. I need to grow. As far as what I did as the Vice President of Programming of RKO Radio, I had what I called a three year plan, that I put together for myself, when I took the job.

R&R: What were some of them?

DREW: The kind of morning men that we have on our properties I think that they're the greatest morning personalities in contemporary radio. Even in all of radio. From John Gambling to Dr. Don Rose, to Rick Dees. Also to have the best programming talent that there is available in America, work for RKO. I've always been an advocate that program directors should be paid above normal, so that when they do perform as expected someone doesn't come along and steal them away.

R&R: As an observer of program directors, you have done one interesting thing, rather than going after, let's say, a super successful program director you seemed to have gone and gotten a younger person with a little bit less experience and maybe more moldable. Which may sometimes take a little more time.

DREW: Bill Garcia is in his thirties. That's not old or young. Bill was a disc jockey at WKNR who I never met when I was in Detroit, never knew he was there back when I was at CKLW the first time. He was very successful down in Tampa

“...on a contemporary station, the star of the show is the music. So the personality must not do what he does in a way that interferes with the music. He has to compliment it.”

and Richmond. But if you go back to the beginning of the interview I said to you one of the things for which I am the most proud is that there was a girl named Ernestine Pinkston, a Black girl, who was the first girl to do a symphony remote on that radio station and she was also the first Black on the radio station. I have always tried to spot up and coming people who I feel that if I have anything to contribute, I can put them in an environment where they can be successful. Not because of me.

R&R: You do have female jocks all over the chain. You were one of the first contemporary chains to do that.

DREW: Bruce Johnson said to me, we need to have a female Top 40 jock at one of our stations. He wanted to know how quick we could get one. I said August 1st, this was probably in June sometime. So I spoke to Michael Spears and discussed it with him and he said he'd come up with someone. He found Shana, she was the first.

R&R: He also had Jo Interrante as the News Director?

DREW: Jo worked for Michael Spears at KNUS. You know there's an interesting story that's told within the company and some people in the business know it, about Michael Spears. I inherited Michael at CKLW when I was there the second time. He was doing mid-days. And he talked too much. His humor wasn't extremely funny, and he always had these witty things and a lot of stuff to say so I moved him to 9 to midnight. Tried to shut him up. Didn't seem to work, but he came in and resigned on a Thursday, it happened to be the Thursday before the Friday when I was going to fire him. He came in and resigned because he had a PD job to go to work for Gordon McLendon, programming his station in Buffalo. When I first became involved, when I got to KHJ, the company was looking for a Program Director at KFRC and Pat Norman called me and said can you help me, I need a Program Director here. I said well, I'll see what I can do. I had just been in Dallas about three times in a short period of time. And I'd heard KNUS and on all three occasions the station just sounded sensational. I called Pat and I said there's a guy to talk to, his name is Michael Spears, KNUS, and he flew Michael in and the rest is all history. So, here's a guy I didn't want as a jock but I got to tell you he's a great Program Director.

R&R: In the position of VP of Programming, for a chain like RKO, what were your responsibilities?

DREW: Well, being involved in license renewal because you have a broad view of what's going on all over the country in that field. We don't have a contest clearance division or department or anything like that at RKO. The guidelines are well documented and the samples and examples of how to put together contests and rules are thick and they're there, and after you've been with us for even a short period of time, a person in a position of responsibility of that type doesn't really need to have a lawyer tell him that this contest is legal or that one is illegal, because these individuals have gotten to the point where they know when they've got something that's questionable and they'll call me, or they'll call one of our attorneys then at that point they'll get some work done but for the amount of contests that we do during the year on all of the stations, I'm fully satisfied that our people in that area are doing a totally responsible job. I sleep nights and the Program Directors know that I trust them in this area.

R&R: Did you have it set up so that they could make a major change in a structure of the format?

DREW: They would call and discuss it.

R&R: That's what I'm saying. They would do that. In other words, not every radio station has the same clock.

DREW: No. I want each station to have their own programming. I want the individual identity of that Program Director to be how that station is programmed. They are all not programmed the same. WRKO does not sound like KFRC, does not sound like KHJ, does not sound like 99X, does not sound like WHBQ. Each one is in a different market. Each one has

a different Program Director, and a different staff of personalities. I had a Program Director call this last week and said "We stop this many times an hour, and I'm thinking of re-doing my clocks in such and such a way to stop that many times an hour, and I'm wondering if that makes any sense, here's why." So on and so forth, and I said let me get a piece of paper here and I'll write this down and I said "Well, you know, if it makes sense to you, I don't see any problem with it. Let me give it some thought, and if you want to talk further tomorrow or the next day, or what have you, before you are ready to implement it, I'd be glad to. Other than that I don't see any problem in it." Then I found some additional information to support what he wanted to do and I sent it to him so he'd feel a little more comfortable in going ahead and making his move. But that's generally how it is. Michael has restructured things at KHJ and we've talked about it. The jock should not be on all the record intros and I frequently will say "Well go ahead and do it and let me know how it sounds."

R&R: That's good. They can always change it.

DREW: It's exactly the way I look at it.

R&R: Did you remain in an advisory capacity, rather than a dictator?

DREW: More so, yes.

R&R: Was that your design?

DREW: Bruce and I had discussed it, and Dwight and I discussed it. We felt that we could not get the right kind of people unless they had room in which to operate.

R&R: Drake also claims that he had most of the restrictions and there wasn't too much that a Program Director could do, left or right.

DREW: I think I went left and right, or I believed that I did. I never had any problem programming KFRC or CKLW when Bill was a consultant for the company. He would say, well that's an important decision and if you give it all the consideration it deserves, see what happens if you do it, or if you don't, what else are you going to do. I don't drink, I don't smoke, I don't have an ulcer, I'm 42 years old and I've survived in a business with tremendous pressures. So I felt that I could only succeed at this job if I gave everybody the same rope. The rope is either to help them climb or to hang. They make that decision. In order to have the kind of people that I feel are creative, self starters, and can dazzle the audiences with their fancy footwork, and...because I don't have all the answers, and can teach me and we can all be successful together, that there was no way that I could dictate and have that kind of environment.

R&R: RKO's and ABC's VP of Programming jobs are the most powerful positions in contemporary radio, and probably very desired from a young broadcaster's standpoint. Is it as good as what you had imagined, is the money good, is the respect level good, is it the top programming job in radio?

DREW: Oh I think it is. I think it's a good job and I think that people should aspire to it. I think that it's a marvelous experience, you meet a lot of fascinating people. I want to get back to something that you said before, you said about calling jocks on the hotline. As a Program Director of a station, I would listen to that radio station all the time that I was up. I would have it skimmed, or have it recorded when I wasn't up, and I would listen to that tape first thing in the morning. Now a lot of people think that I listen to that because I was listening for mistakes. That wasn't the only reason that I was listening. I was listening so I could encourage. I was listening for mistakes, yes, but I was also listening so I could encourage the talent by telling them that I heard him say "da da da" or I heard a little thing that they did, or I loved that intro, and all of that. So I could tell them about something...I could compliment them as well so they would know that the boss cared enough to listen to their show. I tell this to Program Directors today, that may have a problem with an all night disc jockey. I'll say well did you have a meeting with them, or are you going

# United Artists Records Salutes Top 40 Radio



# “Radio is a consumer product. It’s one of the few consumer products over which there is very little quality control...”

to meet with them. And they’ll say yeah, he’s coming in today to see me at 2. I said why can’t you come in and meet them tomorrow morning at 6:05 when they get off the air? Why do they have to be inconvenienced by your schedule? Program Directors don’t think in terms of that, but isn’t it an inconvenience to...usually the all night jock. The ones that work the bad hours, are the people that need the most attention. Their life is screwed up, and you’re asking them to make another sacrifice in order to conform to your schedule. I think that we don’t think in terms enough of how these people feel and think of things. And so I say to a Program Director, well maybe you ought to have a meeting with them at 10 o’clock at night, you go home and then you come back in. The thing is the inconvenience should be to the Program Director, not to the talent, because you meet with the morning jock when he gets off the air. Frequently I’ll ask a Program Director how somebody who’s on 10 to 2, or 2 to 6 is doing. They’ll say well I listened a little bit last night or so and so forth. I’d say isn’t it ironic that the afternoon drive disc jockey who is usually one of the best on the station gets listened to every day almost every set and really doesn’t need your attention, but the poor up and comer who is on 2 to 6 in the morning gets critiqued, maybe once every two weeks if he’s lucky. How is that person going to get any better with that lack of attention? So those are some of the things that I try and pass on to Program Directors as they deal with their talent, because they’re things that I would try and do when I was a Program Director. I would inconvenience myself before I would try and inconvenience the talent.

R&R: Let’s talk about talent. Do you find that it’s as good as it was?

DREW: There’s as much talent out there today as there was 10 years ago.

R&R: Are they any better because of the radio schools?

DREW: I don’t know that they’re any better, or any worse, but there’s as much talent, that has not had the opportunity to surface as much as it might have had, say in the 50’s or early 60’s. Boss Radio was a reminder, it reminded us that the stations got too cluttered, we had too much garbage in it, and it got it back to the basics. To the Gordon McLendon rules and basics that he had on the air. But most radio people listen to the radio, or as they talk about radio stations, they hear and interpret things as they hear them, and not necessarily as the guy who’s directing it, is directing it. What I’m saying is I’m sure that Bill Drake didn’t stand for writing a memo that said you must only talk 3 seconds on a back sell or what have you. I may have written some in order, for effect at one point or another, but basically I have never stood for, don’t say anything and just do time and temperature. It’s the people that criticize that kind of radio that I think created the environment that made people believe that that’s what you needed to do in order to be successful, is tell the disc jockeys not to talk and just tell them to do the time and temperature, and that was and that is. As all the people tried to copy that success, that’s what they heard. And so as they copied it and applied it in the Columbus, Georgia’s and the Akron, Ohio’s, they said to the program directors and the management said to the program director I don’t want to hear the guy talking, I want him to do this and that. And so it stifled all of that creative talent, because it didn’t have an opportunity to open up in contemporary radio. It wasn’t because of Bill Drake or Buzz Bennett, or anybody else, it was because of what people thought they heard, and as it was copied by the other people. And it’s only now where we have Les Garland, and Michael Spears and other people like that who are trying to find the type of talent that has that mind that can add that extra dimension to a radio station, that we’re going to come out of this thing.

R&R: Would you say then that for an aspiring Program Director, to do what he believes in rather than trying to copy what is working in major markets? Because probably the interpretation will never be exact.

DREW: Well I think it really requires a combination of both.

I think that you find what there is that someone else is doing that’s working and you say I like that, there’s some things about it that I don’t like, and you put your personal touches to it, and then it becomes you, as opposed to saying I’m just going to do whatever I want and not regard what anyone else is doing, win, lose or draw. I think that’s foolish. I think you have to look at what is succeeding. And then what is there that there’s a void of. Where is there an opening. I think that a young program director has to be able to program the radio station as he wants to hear it, but I don’t think he can afford to take the palette with all the colors on it and just splash them on in a way that is totally unrecognizable from what somebody else is doing. I think also that the program director should be aware of early on that most disc jockeys would like to be personalities. Being a personality does not mean how long you talk, it really is the affect of what you say and how you say it in the time that you’re saying it. If the greatest personality in the world, well the greatest radio personality can say it in one word. I don’t know who he is. The second greatest personality in the world can say it in two words, and I don’t know who he is.

R&R: John Gambling really talks a lot, he’s got to be one of the greatest radio personalities. Anybody that can carry that show on and just do nothing but talk all that time; every morning, has got to be one of the best.

DREW: John Gambling is the star of the show, but on a contemporary station, the star of the show is the music. So the personality must not do what he does in a way that interferes with the music, he has to compliment it.

R&R: But no one has tried it another way. Is that necessarily true?

DREW: It has been as long as music is as much a part of the way of life of the culture of this country as it has been for the last 20 years, it’s going to be that way. Music is an expression, and it’s an expression of basically the youth and young adults, so therefore, that is the star that’s on the stage.

R&R: Where do you see the format going? Do you see it changing a great deal?

DREW: Musically if it becomes a hit it’s because the public wants it to be a hit. If it doesn’t it was bad judgement in selection. But where is it going, it will change, or be modified slightly, but there will always be tin pan alley radio as long as there will be K-Mart’s and McDonalds and white socks and what have you, there will always be a tin pan alley radio. It’s a mass consumer item. It is not Jazz, it is not R&B, it is not Classical, it is not Country. It’s everything. It’s a blend, and it’s a basic, fairly simple form of music. Program Directors are the ones that label records and put them in categories. The public generally either likes them or they don’t. It’s hard to get inside someone’s brain and really get at that. The tin pan alley radio appeals to, and the record people sell the records to, the young ones, it’s under 25. Their big problem in the record industry is how to raise their demographics. Not only is it under 25, it’s probably mostly under 22. They’re selling to the mass market, and that mass market from age 0 when they first come out of the womb, until they discover radio and then they discover records and all of that, unless they happen to go to the Julliard School of Music or they happen to have a music teacher who teaches them a different particular form of music, the only exposure that they have is to this radio station that appeals to their young fertile mind with the “When Will I See You Again” and all of the other basic simple forms of music that are really designed to appeal.

R&R: How do you explain that Top 40 played the one and only hit Boston single so far and it’s probably sold a million, yet the album with all the other cuts has sold four times platinum, which is what, 4 to 4 1/2 million copies of the album at three times the dollar value. Is Top 40 really playing the mass appeal? Are there other things they should be doing? Is the expression of that much money by that many more people more valid as mass appeal?

DREW: Well you can’t hum a hit album.

R&R: OK, well, then what is Top 40 doing, what have you been doing to find out about albums, because you are playing some albums...

DREW: Top 40 should play hit songs, not hit albums. Songs. I don’t like the word record used on the radio. That’s mechanical. People write songs. People sing songs. People hear songs.

R&R: How do you find the songs on the albums to play?

DREW: I don’t look for them, but if Christy and the Music Directors and the Program Directors and the jocks, I mean, that’s up to them to find those things. In motion pictures it’s no different than it is in records. There’s three things that go in to making a hit record. One is material. Second most important is producer, and third is artist. In programming the hits, it’s the material that is the most important ingredient and second is how it is packaged. How is it produced? And third is the artist. Every year pick up your chart and anyone else’s and look into the Top 20 and tell me the names of those people who weren’t around a year ago. Or somebody who has been cold for 6 or 7 years. You mentioned Rod Stewart. He was a long time between hits. Barbra Streisand, a long time between this one and “The Way We Were” and then between “Stoney End” and then “People.” So it’s the ability to have good material and to have it well produced. Program Directors have a tendency to say “Well I think we should play it because it is the new Rod Stewart, and his last record was number one, or he’s had three number one records in a row, or it’s Paul McCartney.” I like to remind them that “One Flew Over The Cuckoo’s Nest” was a hit movie. Jack Nicholson starred in it, won an Oscar. Right, Big name? Right. He made three movies immediately after that. He made “The Passenger,” “The Fortune,” and “Missouri Breaks” with Marlon Brando. All three lost money at the box office. Not only did they lose money, they lost a hell of a lot of money. So, if you don’t have material, just big names, they can get you off to a false start, but you’re not going to get a home run. It’s not going to connect. When you asked me about the Top 40 form of radio and you’re talking about the sale of an album for 4 million copies, some of those albums have been sold because of the one hit song, or the big hit song that was in the album. A lot of others are sold because of the ability of the companies to merchandise like they’ve never done before. The youth as it is today, and has been for some time, which is into music, it’s the one form they do listen to the radio, they do know their music, they don’t read newspapers, they don’t watch television as much as the older public does. But by in large the Top 40 radio stands for tin pan alley. The basic form of records, that doesn’t mean that records who don’t fit the formula can’t happen, because nobody buys all the records that are hits. Nobody goes out and says, “I want all that are in the top 30.” For 2800 people that like this record that’s on the station at this moment, there’s probably another 1500 that it isn’t their favorite record, and yet they’re willing to be patiently waiting through it because the station is good enough that maybe the next record is one that they really like, and out of those 1500 maybe only 800 really like it, but some of the 2500 that like the previous one, also like it, but some of them don’t. You’re always going through those changes. That is Top 40. It’s a simple non-complicated type of musical presentation because those that it appeals to have not grown to the age of 30 or 35.

R&R: What about Top 40 facing the longer single?

DREW: I think 3 minute records would be great. I’m the guy, when I became the Program Director of KHJ had a sign in the Music Library that said “Think Short Records.” There’s a limit to how many commercials you can run on your radio station and economically survive. And most of the major corporations that own contemporary radio stations are spoiled. They want, you know General Motors or Ford or AT&T, what is AT&T, gross dollars, their net profit is in the billions, but the percentage of net profit versus gross income is something like 5% or 6%. The airlines, the CAB only wants them to make at most a 12% return on investment, we’re not even talking about net profit versus gross income. If you ask the public, surveys have been done as what percent of gross dollars in gross income General Motors makes profit on, the public thinks it’s 35, 40, 50% of, what have you. It’s less than 5%, 1%. To imagine that a market can do a million and a half dollars in volume and only 1% or less in profit. If they have a good year it might be 1 1/2%. Why do you think people want to buy radio and television stations, because they want to make 40 cents on every dollar. They’ve been spoiled because historically this is the way it’s been. Back in the days of early Top 40 everybody wanted to do Top 40 after it hit, it was because 50 cents on every dollar was profit. It was unheard of. It’s slowly whittled down now where you have people who are making 40 cents on a dollar as profit. How many businesses can you go into and make that kind of money. Not very many is absolutely true.

R&R: Plus you can usually make a hell of a profit when you sell a station.

“...there will always be tin pan alley radio as long as there will be K-Mart's and McDonalds and white socks and what have you...it's a mass consumer item. It is not Jazz, it is not R&B, it is not Classical, it is not Country. It's everything...”

DREW: So therefore, being a practical person, Bill Drake cut the commercial load to 12 minutes and 30 seconds when he went into KHJ. And the records then were about, on the average, 2 minutes and 40 seconds long. When Bill got to KHJ and put that format on you would listen and say “Where are all the commercials?” There's the first of seven in a row. You could play 21, 22 records an hour, and you had the long music sweeps. With 12 minutes of commercials an hour on KHJ a year ago, everybody said “Sounds like they have an awful lot of commercials.” Well, it was the length of records that did it. They weren't running any more minutes of commercials, they may have been running some 30's instead of 60's and then the FM's came in and they had a low overhead and many times no unions, they came in with 6 and 8 minute commercial hours. So they automatically said less commercials, more music. There's really only two things that I believe historically have worked for those who have been successful in Top 40 radio. I tell this to people, and I think you have to be faithful to this. It takes nothing away from the promotion, the news, the jocks and all the other things. What does it take to go into a market and you're going to knock off the other guy. It's either more music or less commercials. Show me the battles that have taken place in the last 15 years around the country where somebody has gone in and beaten someone else.

R&R: Do you want to discuss any general directions of where you're going and what you're going to do now that you've resigned corporately from RKO?

DREW: I need time in order to develop other areas of the entertainment business to include television and also government, and this provides me with a greater amount of time with which I can do that sort of thing. I will probably initially be spending a good deal of time in radio, but in the range of where I'm going, that's not the direction I'm heading in, ultimately.

R&R: So, most likely, even though you're remaining as a consultant, your truly active days in radio are really over.

DREW: My life will still be wrapped up in radio 30 days from today or 60 days from today. Five years from today radio will be somewhat less of a part of my life than it is today but for the short range it will be as much a part of my life as it has been for the last few years.

R&R: Do you have anything that you regret, anything that you feel that you didn't accomplish that you wanted to accomplish that was major. Like, you're now getting RKO radio stations into this computer assisted programming, yet you won't be there, on a day to day basis to make sure it works out.

DREW: I would say that I would like to have had it developed during the last couple of years, but because of dealing with day to day problems, you have to free yourself from that in order to be able to take steps forward. I feel confident that in the next year, maybe less, maybe slightly more, I will be involved in developing that with RKO, this is very near and dear to my heart.

R&R: Do you see that as the real future for radio, the computer assistance to make the jock function better, the station function better?

DREW: Yes. Radio is a consumer product. It's one of the few consumer products over which there is very little quality control. You cannot survive in business today unless you have some kind of quality standard that is maintained. I don't think that radio will lose any of its spontaneity but what I think this will provide, as I spoke to John Long the other day, and he said “Man I just can't wait to get something like that at the station, I'm so tired of having to police the jocks, dealing with, well he didn't play this power, or so on and so forth.” But, why it's going to come and it's time is that all of the major properties in the major markets have now been bought by large corporations. In the medium markets, corporations and chains own the good facilities. A company is in business to service its public, but it's also in business to make a profit. Radio is becoming more and more business every year. It has to be. The General Manager has his job on the line and has certain numbers he has to deliver, and the Program Director therefore, is committed to having to deliver certain numbers to the General Manager to be able to control the rates on the station. The days when a Program Director will have to be concerned with “Well, hey, this is my programming and this is my job and this is how I want it, this is the game plan.” It's not going to be a matter of critiquing

the guy the next day and say “How come you played three female vocals in a row,” or what have you. The Program Director wants to know that it's going to be his format and the music as he wants it on the station because he has a lot at stake. His job and career, so he's going to welcome it, and it's going to mean for the disc jockey, he doesn't have to get aggravated when the Program Director says “You goofed again Sam.” And that sort of thing. So I see it coming because television has controlled the quality of their product. Every once in awhile you see a live show, and it ain't the same as the taped variety shows. The only live television that there is are the news shows, “Saturday Night Live,” in the Eastern time and Central time zone it's tape for everywhere else in the country, and the sports. OK. So therefore, everything else on television is all polished. The blemishes are taken out and all this and that. Why shouldn't radio be that way? Why should it be any different. For the Program Director who reports to the General Manager who reports to the President or whoever it is in the company, that he reports to. There's a lot at stake here now. There has never been as much at stake.

R&R: We're talking about computer ASSISTED automation now, am I correct?

DREW: Right, you've still got a live disc jockey, but if he wants to play, I mean I saw a monitor on one of our stations the other day where a guy played a Four Seasons oldie two days in a row coming out of a newscast at the same time. The guy did that unconsciously. He didn't do that on purpose, but what about the people that are listening to that radio station? Do you think the Program Director wants a Four Seasons oldie every day at 12:58? Probably not. But I promise you that when the programs are finished and the computer assisted is installed, that disc jockey can't play a Four Seasons record two days in a row at the same time. That's where it will help the Program Director, because at last he will say “This is how I want the station to sound” and he knows reasonably well that at least everything but the jock has a sound as he wants it.

R&R: Did I miss anything?

DREW: Well, I'd like to say that I wouldn't be where I am today if it weren't for the people who are responsible for having done the things well that they did all along the way. People, I gave credit to Lee Dreyfus, but I mean people such as Mike Rivers at the time at CKLW, Tommy Shannon, Rosalie Trombley, the Mardi Nehrbass when she served me, Christy Wright, certainly even for the four months that we worked together, Robert W. Morgan, up in San Francisco Jim Carson. If I did well it was because these people all had something that they were trying to accomplish, and as they accomplished it, it helped me to accomplish whatever it was that I was trying to do. It's a thrill to have been involved over the years with

people like John Long, Jerry Clifton, Gerry Peterson, Dick Bozzi, Michael Spears, all of these people have taught me something. I have learned from all of these people and I thank them for having made it possible. Because while you may be somebody at a radio station who is a disc jockey or a Music Director and you want to aspire to be a National Program Director and say “I'm going to sit in my office and I'm going to tell everybody what to do,” I must tell you that ultimately that is not the best way to be, as far as having gone through my career, that is not the best way to go about it. It's not the way to acquire the very best talent. It's not the way to get the best and the most out of your people. You can only succeed if you get the best and the most out of these people. Michael Spears has done well because he has done what he has done to be successful. It's not me. It's Michael Spears. Les Garland did a fantastic job at WAVZ in New Haven when I put him there. He did that. I didn't do it. When John Long was there, John Long was fantastic. What did I do? Very little. It was John Long. I provided an environment so he wanted to do the very best he could and he did and he succeeded. John Long is doing absolutely fantastic at WHBQ in Memphis. It is really the ability to have, as you said, maybe not to go after some of the people who are in the headlines. I've made mistakes in people. If someone hasn't made it, it wasn't because they didn't have it, it was because my judgement was bad and I made a bad decision. It wasn't their fault, it was mine. I take the rap, and I deserve it.

R&R: How about your bosses and relationships with them?

DREW: I have been fortunate in that I have worked for people who provided me with the right environment for me to do my thing, or at least I felt like at least I was doing my thing.

R&R: But you seemed to have had the foresight to ask for it.

DREW: Not always. But at least, in later years, and I can't think of all the good people that I've worked for, but I must say and I've said this before, I think Bill Drake had tremendous confidence in me because of how he let me program CKLW and KFRC and briefly KHJ, but working for Dwight Case has been a truly wonderful experience that I wish everybody would have the opportunity to have one like it. I am my own person as Vice President of Programming and I have learned from him, but I have also been able to provide the environment in which I feel the most comfortable in working in and he structures it that way. Jerry Blum, who is General Manager at WQXI told me when I was there, if you make the guy who you're working for look good, then he'll take good care of you. I haven't forgotten that. Dwight has said more than once, responsibility is something he doesn't give. Responsibility is something that good people take.



The WAKE/Atlanta “Olympics” promotion Bill Drake (L) Paul Drew (second from Right).



# THE TOP-40 STORY

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## The Changing Face of Top-40 Record Promotion

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Top-40 promotion is still the front line of the record industry. Despite revolutions in both the programming of radio stations and the merchandising of records, the crucial campaigns are still waged by promotion people trying to get records played on Top-40 stations. *R&R* Top 40 Editor J.J. Jordan talked to a dozen of the top promotion executives in the country, covering a number of topics of interest to both radio programmers and record industry people. The following article incorporates the most thought-provoking and informative comments from the 12 participants: Harold Childs, A&M, Dick Kline, Atlantic, Bruce Wendell, Capitol, Bruce Bird, Casablanca, Bob Sherwood, Columbia, Steve Wax and Kenny Buttice, Elektra/Asylum, Russ Thyret, Dave Urso, and Don McGregor, Warner Brothers, Jim Jeffries, Epic, and Al Coury, RSO.

Each of the promotion executives interviewed has an extensive background in the field of promotion. They've seen countless changes in the past few years (detailed at the close of this article), and when asked whether the new promotion people of today were as well trained or grounded in the field as in the past, their answers were intriguing. Capitol's Wendell notes that the increased sophistication of radio programmers can be an intimidating factor for today's promotion man. "Most of your major power people programmers weed out quickly guys that can't give them any information. They want to talk to people that know (A) the area they're talking about and (B) the national picture." For that reason, Wendell believes that timely information is of the essence: "I'm not opposed to picking up a phone and telling a promotion man five times a day new additions,

late adds, updates, to keep him as informed as possible to the last moment." On the whole, though, he is a bit skeptical: "I don't think everybody's quite prepared."

Echoing those sentiments is Casablanca's Bruce Bird. "I see a handful of good promotion people with good backgrounds who are professional, and a lot of local people who haven't been trained. I think they should have a better knowledge of it before they go into it." Bird feels that companies should "train them before they put them on the streets, which I don't think is being done."

A&M's Childs agrees, "Most companies at this point, with the tremendous amount of pressure on them don't have the time to train a promotion man. We use our college program in a few markets as the minor leagues, where we can have a veteran promotion man with

a younger guy who can be taught how to deal with radio." At Warners, a crucial part of the training process, according to Don McGregor, is "teaching our people about radio and demographics, about how to read ratings services. When we have meetings we talk almost as much about radio programming as we talk about records, maybe even more."

Understanding radio seems to be a necessity for contemporary promotion people. Jim Jeffries of Epic goes so far as to name ex-radio people as his most preferred type to recruit for promotion jobs. "I am a very strong believer in finding the radio man who wants to leave radio for sound reasons and go on to the record business. I thank the Lord every day that I had a radio background. There's an immediate bond and understanding that happens so many times when I call on radio people for the first time.

Many radio people will get much more personal with me about their lives and professions and the problems of the radio station because they know I understand."

Jeffries also favors hiring experienced college reps—"when he walks in the door to that branch he's been dealing with it in his college area." Atlantic's Dickie Kline is of the opinion that the best promotion prospects are at other companies. "I would rather hire the best in the area, if there is a person available or willing to switch companies."

Summing up the problem of undertrained promotion personnel, RSO's Al Coury states: "Basically he's got to be out there and live through it, he's got to get to know everybody one-to-one, and that does take time. I don't think the local guy can ever be properly trained to start that job. He's got to learn. The one

thing I always follow, demand actually, is that he's allowed to make mistakes. They shouldn't make the same mistake twice, but they should learn from every mistake."

#### Independent Promotion?

Utilizing the services of independent promotion people to augment the efforts of a company's field force has always been a matter of some debate in promotion circles. The overwhelming sentiment among our respondents was that independents can often be very helpful and are definitely a constant part of their promotion efforts. Wendell expressed reservations: "We use independents occasionally, specifically in areas where we do not have a local man. I think it gives you added concentration on a record, but 95% of my promotion is done by my field men."

Elsewhere, independents are regarded as virtually indispensable. Warners' Urso says, "Since we have a lot of product out, I couldn't conceive of not doing everything we could for each one, so whenever we feel we need help we don't mind going to independents at all." Added promotion punch when the product flow is heavy is the main reason cited for using independents; Columbia's Sherwood uses "selected independents because we have a tremendous amount of product and it's difficult to be working a lot of different records at one time and get the maximum out of them. There's also been so much of a turn towards regionalization—whereas in the old days an addition of majors meant you were home, regional stations now look at each other a lot more. Certain independents are real strong regionally, and they can help us."

letter explaining the airplay that just came down, the reason we're sending the records." Warners has a "Singles Action Desk—when a record goes on a radio station, they know what retail accounts are in that area," says Urso. Warners ships singles in these cases on "sort of a consignment basis, so in case anything doesn't happen with it they don't sit there with a stack of records." A&M uses a Singles Sales Manager in similar cases, as does Casablanca, utilizing a list of 5000 stores around the country.

RSO sends records to stores directly or from the nearest promotion man's area, including a note informing the retailer of local airplay, that the accompanying records are courtesy of the record company, and reordering, if desired, should be handled through normal channels. Explaining, Coury says, "Dealers of any kind, whether they're rack dealers or even dealers who buy directly from the distributors and salesmen, are normally lazy about carrying singles, because there really isn't a lot of profit for them in singles. The less progressive retail accounts will not be able to see how important singles are in relation to his album sales and to the infusion of new blood into the music business that will ultimately wind up in sales of new albums for him." "Therefore," says Coury, "RSO finds it productive in the long run to service a small number of singles to the stores at the company's expense."

Putting the issue into perspective, Wendell asserts, "I feel a promotion staff of a record company is obligated to a radio station that adds a record, regardless. If it falls off, loses its bullet, is no longer a priority, if the record

"The caliber of promotion has improved. They don't deal from a shuck and jive kind of area, they deal with what a radio station needs..."

—Harold Childs

somebody that I control who only reacts to pressure from the home office." Similarly, Bruce Bird maintains, "When somebody's in their own business, they usually work harder to get the product out, not to lose that extra sale because it's coming out of their own pockets. It might be because of our size as an independent record company, but we haven't had a problem getting the product into the market at all."

On the side of the branches, Jim Jeffries cites the team spirit and his confidence of immediate cooperation, while Bruce Wendell mentions the absolute control Capitol has using their branch situation. Dickie Kline opines, "I don't think when you have the independent distribution system that you can attain the volume that records are selling at today. And you're never able to develop the overall impact of everyone moving together on a national basis. With the independents they're always under the

Russ Thyret cited three alternative approaches. "The most effective avenue outside of radio is to get the band out and working. We underwrite and help subsidize new bands all the time and it's been a very successful tool. Another basic area is some kind of on-the-spot merchandising, or doing a promotion based around the name of the album or the artist to get some retail action going. The third area is to get word of mouth action going. One of the most effective things we've found for new bands is to send them around to other promotion people at other labels, and they'll help you work your records. Usually with a really good unknown band, most promotion people like to talk about it before anybody else does."

Jim Jeffries comments, "Publicity. You need a very active publicity department. And a tour that would probably not make the group any money and would cost us a lot of money. When they



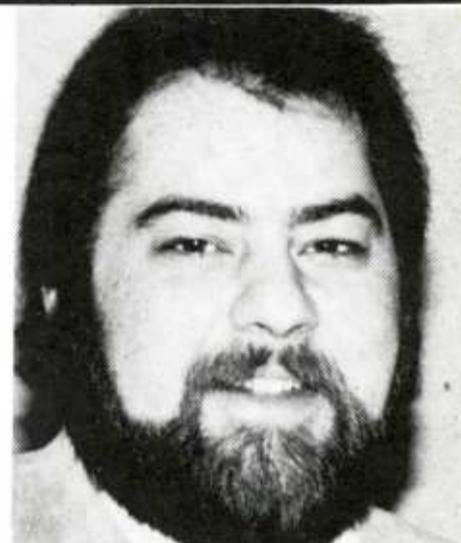
STEVE WAX  
President, Elektra/Asylum



DON MCGREGOR  
WB Promotion



AL COURY  
President RSO



BRUCE BIRD  
VP Promotion/Casablanca

Jim Jeffries adds that using independents "makes sense in a marketplace where you have a new person who doesn't have the long-range relationships with the programmers." And Elektra/Asylum's Kenny Buttice feels "it's a bonus having people work with you in a marketplace. Independents we use have been together with me and with Steve Wax for six or seven years. When you have people that have been loyal to you for that long, it's just hard to part, no matter how many promotion people you have."

#### Station Service

When radio stations add a company's records, it's obvious that the next step is to make sure there's ample stock in the market. For the companies covered here, supplying stock in major markets is a smooth, orderly process taking anywhere from overnight in certain cases to 3-4 days. A more challenging problem arises in the case of small stations (below secondary level; tertiary, quaternary, etc.) adding a record. Does a company bother to stock the market when there may be only two or three retail outlets in the area? And if so, how is it done, since most non-populous regions are racked from a larger central location which concentrates on a limited number of mostly-proven hit records?

All our interview participants agreed that it was important to service small markets with stock in support of local programmers taking the shot on a given record, and most had systems within the company set up to ship the records directly. At CBS it's called the "CBS Lube System," according to Jeffries. "We call the radio station and make them aware that we want to send records, which go with a

is for all intents and purposes over, it's still a promotion man's job, a sales staff's job, to back up the guy who adds the record that week, even if it's after the fact on the national game plan. The listeners don't know from R&R, they don't know from the charts—all they know is what they hear on their local favorite stations, and a good promotion man's job is not to say the record's over, who cares. It's our job to work just as hard as when the record is in its growth, because you're going to have to go back and see the people at that radio station, and that's where your credibility is built and you've got to back them in every way."

#### Branch Or Network?

A perennial debate in industry circles is the question of which system is more efficient, a unified, national branch apparatus or a network of independent distributors. Essentially, and not surprisingly, those promotion executives who work with a branch favored branches, while the others made a declaration of independents' superiority.

On the outnumbered independents behalf, Harold Childs said, "Independent distributors around the country seem to have more closeness to the account and to radio, with a lot more human contact than in a branch situation. Also, they're not like the independents of old; they know their growth has to come from independent record companies, and they can't just say 'let those guys promote their own records.' They have to be actively involved. I'd rather have an eager distributor go out there and bust his ass to break that product than

thumb of someone, where they're more obligated on one side or the other to one of the 50 lines they carry. You cannot rely 100% on the independent distribution system to fulfill the needs of what you are trying to carry out that particular week."

Warners' Russ Thyret states it boldly: "I don't think there's any question in anybody's mind that a branch system is the most effective system for distribution of phonograph records and tapes, period. The one argument I think is valid in some cases is that from time to time you see more excitement from an independent distributor on a specific record. But day in, day out, anyone affiliated with a huge group who's had experience with both methods will tell you without question that branch distribution is the best way."

#### So What's New?

As Top-40 radio has evolved into more restrictive formats and competition for the few available playlist spots intensifies, record companies are obviously searching for alternative methods of promoting new acts. The drawback is that few seem to work anywhere near as satisfactorily as concentrated Top 40 airplay. Wendell, Coury, Sherwood and Childs all cited in-store play as an effective alternative, but the latter two also commented on the increased competition among labels to secure it, while other comments revolved around the limited exposure generated by in-store play. Disco play was mentioned (when applicable for a particular record), as was the natural expedient of attempting to break records through more open formats like AOR, Country or R&B.

go on tour they are plugged into going to the radio stations. In-store appearances. Everything possible." At Casablanca, Bruce Bird says that with 'new artists with a lot of potential, we'll actually build them a show, a stage show. Then we'll back them with advertising. We have a rehearsal hall and we bring down the different agencies to look at the new acts so we can get them booked on tours. Then when they go into a market we'll do promotions with stations, time buys on the LP, and try to get as many people as possible down to see them. We basically don't start by running out and getting a record played. It starts long before that."

But Kenny Buttice seems to express the overriding sentiments of most promotion people when he says "You can put a brand new act out and an album out and get all the publicity in the world, all the press in the world, the best interviews, and you won't sell two records until you have that hit single. That's where most of the pressure lies. Everybody's always looking at the promotion department to break a single."

#### Album Giveaways

One alternative method that is widely employed is album giveaways coordinated with stations. Virtually all companies use them, most have formalized procedures whereby stations account for their use of promotional albums, and in general the idea is considered helpful, though to what degree is a matter of varying opinion.

Most positive on the subject was Dickie Kline. "I'm very much in favor of the radio station giveaway. It's a reminder to the public

"If we were to oblige every request we ever had from a radio station for a giveaway we could conceivably go platinum before we sold our first record."

—Al Coury

that the album is out, basically a free commercial for you. You're utilizing the most powerful radio stations, covering the greatest parts of the masses to alert the consumer that there is an album tied to that hit single which the Top 40 station is programming."

Bruce Wendell agrees: "I think it's very beneficial to both parties. The radio station has an exciting prize, and we get on our end a 60-second spot for a dollar and a half. Where it can be costly to a record company is catalog, which gets expensive and are records we're going to sell and really don't have to promote." Harold Childs says, "I think that any kind of radio talk or free advertising on any piece of your product is important. But I think it should be done sparingly."

Also enthusiastic is Jim Jeffries. "We're activating a group color photo inlayed into the vinyl—clear plastic vinyl with a beautiful color photo of the group showing through in a special wrapper with the center cut out so you can see. It can play on your stereo, and costs \$2.40

to produce, and we'll give that away with many things tied in with the radio station that they must do or they don't get the promotional item. We don't give away plastic just to give it away. I believe in giveaways if they're handled properly."

Others are less positive. Kenny Buttice believes in a highly selective approach to giveaways. Al Coury quips "If we were to oblige every request we ever had from a radio station for a giveaway we could conceivably go platinum before we sold our first record." Bruce Bird believes the simple giveaway is not sufficiently productive: "I think we can get a hell of a lot more out of our albums not just by giving away albums but with promotions, really utilizing television, radio advertising, print ads..."

Bob Sherwood says forthrightly, "I've always been rather negative about giveaways. On the air it's a good promotional tool, I guess; they're still using them. But the ones I resent are the quantity giveaway zip-off, rip-off, flip-offs where the mention is 'the tenth caller wins the new

such-and-such album.' Now that's going to motivate nobody into buying the album. From a company standpoint, it certainly didn't help us sell records. But I think selected giveaways where the station is doing something else besides just zipping off the album is a great benefit to us. It calls attention to that artist and that record for a moment or two and that's worthwhile."

#### Conclusion

Concluding, we asked our subjects to offer their comments on any changes in Top 40 promotion that have transpired over the past decade or so. Their comments were most interesting, largely centering around the drastically increased degree of professionalism on the part of radio stations and, in reaction, promotion people.

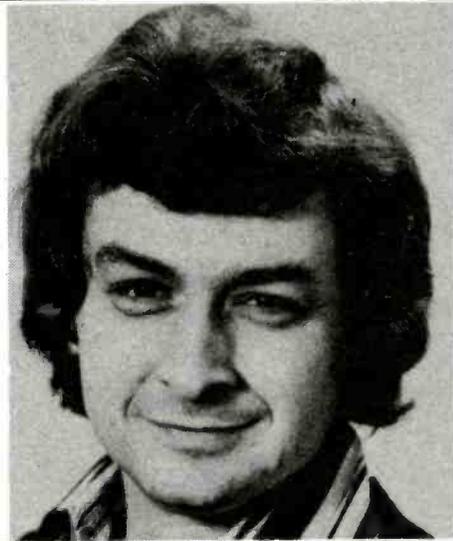
"It's more of a business now, more of a science than it was five years ago," says Don McGregor. "Through radio, we've learned a lot more about our own product from their research. We tend to deal with that information more now as a

business than we did five years ago, when promotion was basically still pretty much a personality contest."

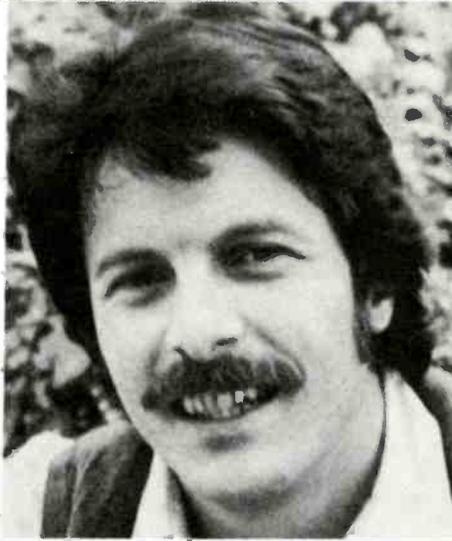
Amplifying, Bruce Wendell believes "the most obvious change is in radio stations becoming more sophisticated in their research. The day of the ear-pick is slowly dying. You can't work a record and live bullet to bullet any longer. Today the good programmers do thorough research, and you have to be prepared in your sales pitch on a record, you have to know when it's time to approach a PD on the record, you have to prove it's a hit, go out and get the jumps, with sales backing it up. Five years ago, if you picked up a whole slew of smaller markets and one got a bullet or an underline in the tip sheet they happened to look at, it was a lot easier then. Today they re-examine the chart themselves, they look at the jumps, the progress. Plus they're into their own markets more than they've ever been. You have to have their markets covered. Everything is specialized, every market is different, you have to know your



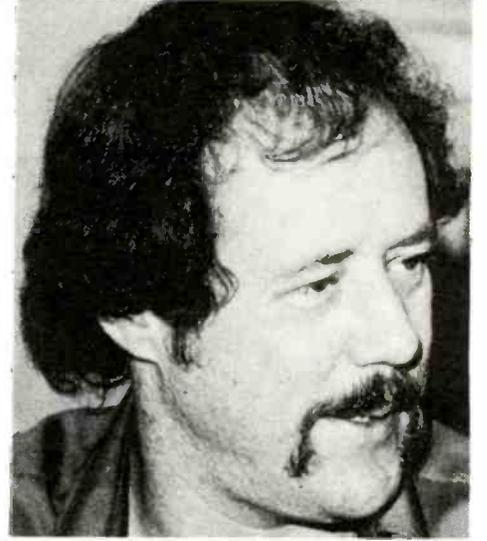
**BRUCE WENDELL**  
VP Promotion/Capitol



**DICK KLINE**  
Senior VP Promotion/Atlantic



**DAVE URSO**  
WB Promotion



**BOB SHERWOOD**  
VP Promotion/Columbia

**KLIF...is Dallas**

subject and what their rules are."

"Radio has become far more sophisticated at doing what it does better," says Bob Sherwood. "Radio has learned to know more about its audience and its learned to understand the marketing of records a little better. I think it's still a long way from understanding what happens to a record from the time it starts in the studio, before it gets to the consumer, but radio knows more of what they want. More than anything else I can see change from the emotion of music and the excitement of promotion; it's been turned around and made into a more businesslike thing. If you don't have a proper presentation of facts and figures for radio, all the screaming and yelling in the world won't get you a hit."

Dickie Kline recalls, "There were formerly no national offices to control music, no consultancies, no national Program Directors who had to clear records. The individual station had the ability to put the record on at the discretion of the Program Director. The most important thing I did was to go out there and see the Program Directors one-to-one. And I had the ability to get an answer, yes or no. Everyone has a Music Director today, who in turn submits their prescriptions to the Program Director. So you've automatically involved a second party in the decision. There is much more research today, whereas 10 years ago there was a lot more gut and ear picks. Playlists have gotten tighter, they were playing 40 records 10 years ago. People took more shots because competitively they weren't in the situation they're in today. With the coming of age of FM, the fragmentation of audiences has put these Program Directors in Top 40 stations on a much more

cautious basis as to the type of music they're going to program..."

The result, for promotion, is an increased professionalism, according to Harold Childs. "The caliber of promotion has improved. They don't deal from a shuck and jive kind of area, they deal with what a radio station needs. It's not like when I started doing promotion 12 years ago when you didn't have to have any knowledge of anything more than you could go out and sell a record to a radio station or take a guy out to dinner. Today, the guy has to come up with facts."

"It's not as if one person can do the whole country and be able to break a record like it used to be 10 years ago," says Bruce Bird. "The stations have changed quite a bit to the cut-back playlists of today. So you have to have the best people in the streets, working for the company, the best independents working for you, and you have to know how to work them. It's necessary to have very good secondary people, because records are coming out of secondaries, not off the major stations like they used to."

Jim Jeffries believes promotion has "Changed drastically in the last five years. I could use a specific station as an example—WQXI in Atlanta where I was Music Director. Until three months ago when they expanded their list, they had gone from 35 plus 5 extras three years ago to 20 plus 2—at one time, 18 plus 2. That's been the drastic change and the frustration of Top 40 radio. The multitude of product out and only half as many spots on a list in the past five years. Thankfully, some things have developed to counteract that in the last

**"I feel a promotion staff of a record company is obligated to a radio station that adds a record..."**

**—Bruce Wendell**

two years—the cycle of R&B crossovers being accepted at Top 40 radio; it seems to go in cycles. For two years it's accepted and then for a year you can't get arrested with a crossover record, and lately it's been very accepted."

Kenny Buttice comments, "It's changed to the point that everybody is a little more educated, and radio people along with record people have educated each other. Radio, with demographics and research and consultants and everyone going after ratings and Arbitron figures being the only concern, everyone's been getting educated, and nowadays the local promotion man understands that. When I was a local man, my only concern was breaking records. I think what's been missing a little bit nowadays is that old gut feeling, when you have that smash, running into that radio station and saying, 'God-dammit, man, I've got a record here that's such

a smash, you've got to add it!' But if you can take the education and demographics and learning what we've got today and put that along with the excitement, I think you've got the well-balanced promotion man of today."

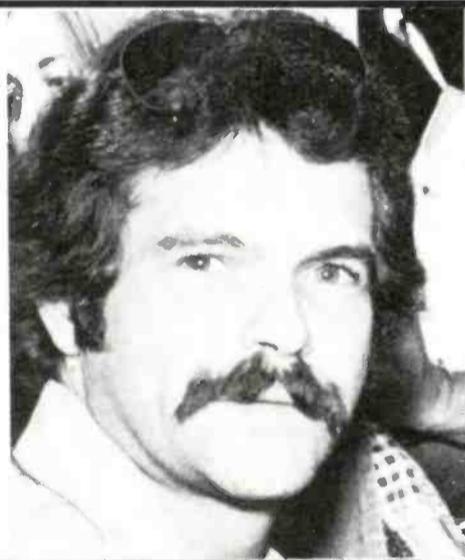
According to Steve Wax, the essentials of promotion have not changed. "It's still taking the best piece of product you have, having credibility, and convincing the Program Directors that it's a proper record to add, and then hoping it's a hit. People have become more professional, but the basics have not changed, although everybody wants to say they've changed. The fundamental thing a promotion man does is to convince a programmer that this is a good record for him to add."

Agreeing, Al Coury says, "There are some fundamentals that never change, the fundamentals of the record business—getting your

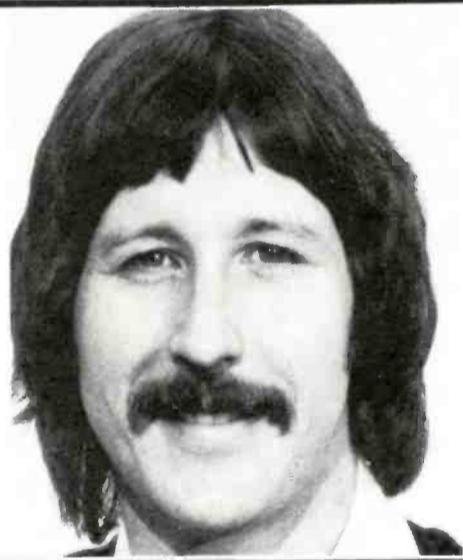
record played if it's a good record. When it does get played, make sure the records are in the stores. There have been changes in the way that radio is programmed and how radio views promotion people. When I was a salesman there were no promotion men. Each salesman had to do his own promotion, and we were allowed right into the broadcast studio. There were no Music Directors or Program Directors. Each disc jockey pulled his own show from the library and the most influential guide was the librarian, the kid who would log in all the new albums and make sure each DJ was aware that there was a new Frank Sinatra or Nat Cole or whatever. In that respect there's been a drastic change, when you see the formalities a promotion man has to go through now just to get somebody in a radio station of relative importance to hear his product.



**HAROLD CHILDS**  
VP Promotion A&M



**KEN BUTTICE**  
VP Promotion E/A



**JIM JEFFRIES**  
Epic Promotion Head



**RUSS THYRET**  
VP, WB Promotion

"I hate to see the end of someone at a radio station listening to a record and feeling good in his gut and wanting to put it on immediately," continues Coury, summing up. "I think radio loses a lot of excitement by not having that. It was exciting when a radio station had what they referred to as the 'pick hit'; they'd get on the record they thought was the best of the new records that week and they'd wail the hell out of it. They would participate in busting either a brand new group or a brand new record by an established group wide open. There's certainly a lack of that kind of excitement in radio and even to a certain extent in records, because it's become more stringent."

"But it's still exciting," says Coury. "The promotion man in the field is the man who takes all the creative juices of many people. The writers, the producers, the artists, the arrangers, the musicians, they all put it in the hands of that promotion man, ultimately. All those hundreds of thousands of dollars, all those wild dreams of success and wild aspirations of all those young creative people that went into making that record, writing that song, playing at that session, all of that winds up in the hands of the local promotion man, and he then faces the Program Director, the Music Director, or whoever in the radio station, one-on-one. It's what he says and how he says it, with the kind of enthusiasm that he can put behind his own product. It's that guy who really delivers the record. The promotion man in the field is really the front line of the record business. And I love that."

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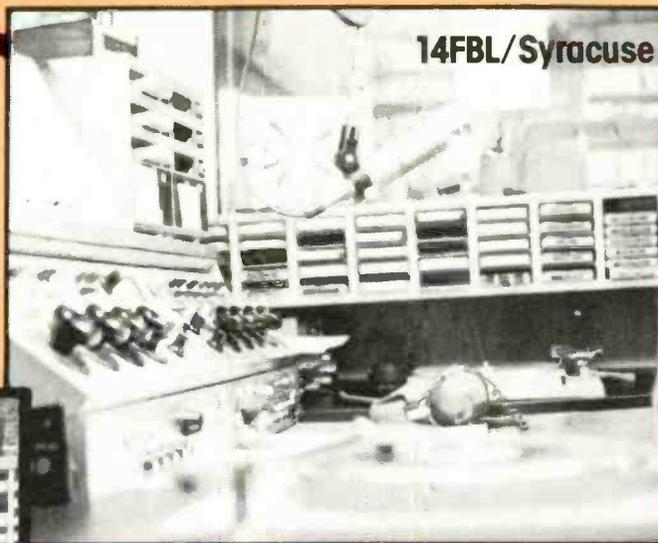
95

**Charlie Brown**  
**Ichabod Caine**  
**Gary Lockwood**  
**Tracy Mitchell**  
**Mark Jeffries**

**J.J. Jackson**  
**Klem Daniels**  
**Dave Yates**  
**Don Patrick**  
**Les Parsons**  
**Chet Rogers**

**WITH THE NORTHWEST'S GREATEST AIRSTAFF**

# TOP-40 RADIO: Behind The Scenes



14FBL/Syracuse



KFXD/Boise



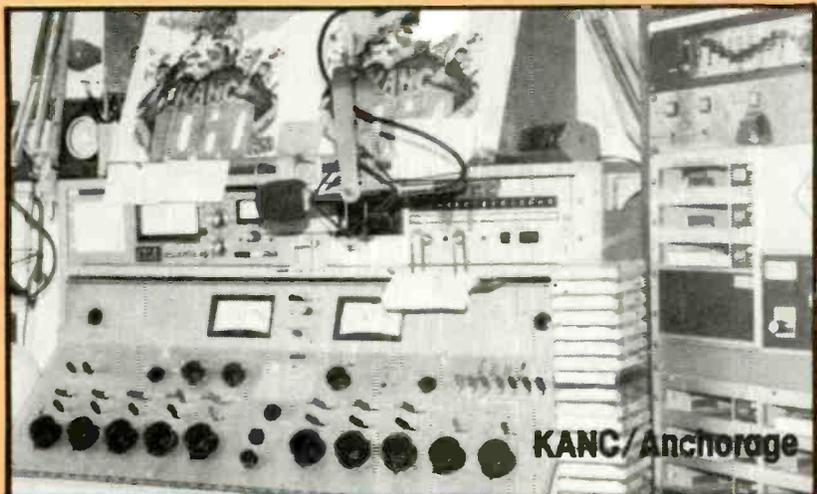
Q102/Cincinnati



KFXM/San Bernardino



WXXK/Pittsburgh

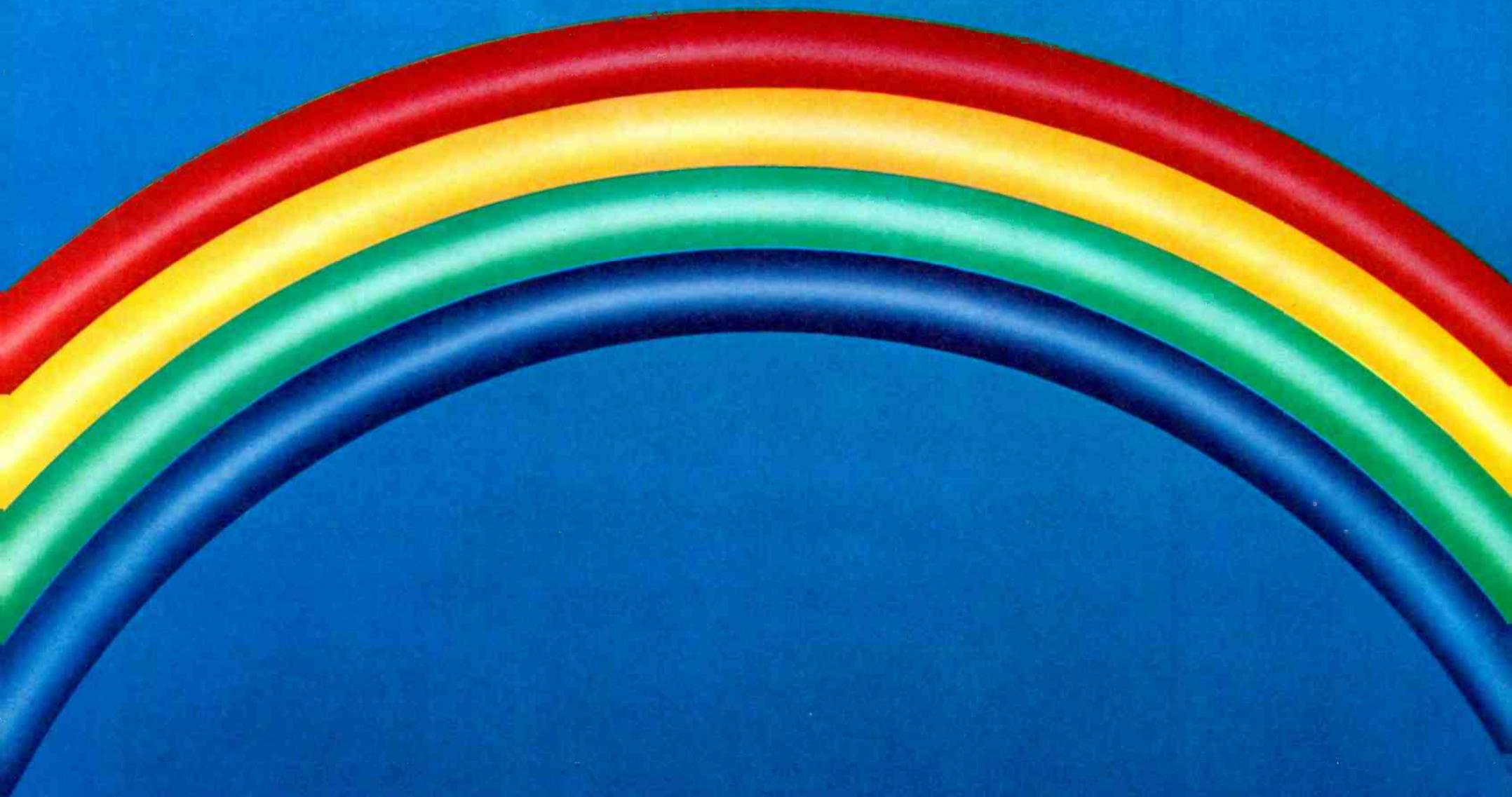


KANC/Anchorage



WAVZ/New Haven

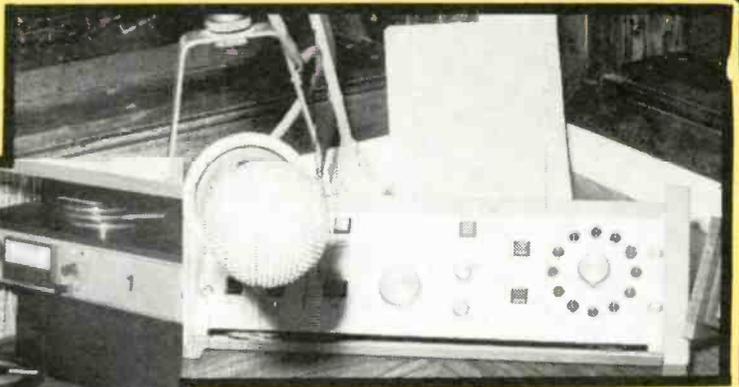
**TOP  
40**



# TOP-40 RADIO: Behind The Scenes



KFRC/San Francisco



WKY/Oklahoma City



K100/Los Angeles



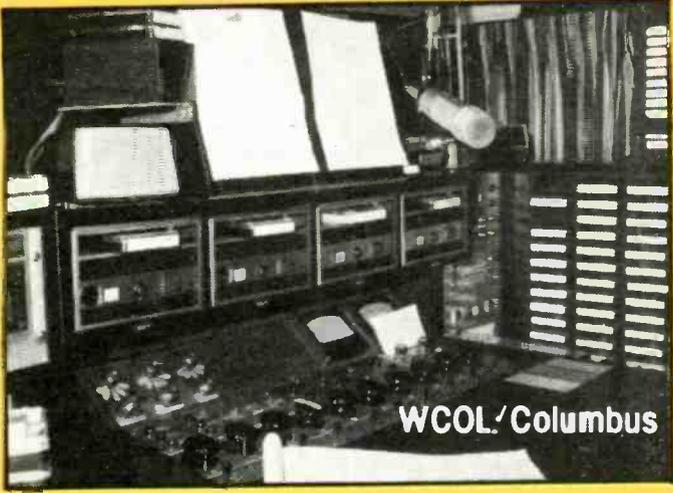
WBJW/Orlando



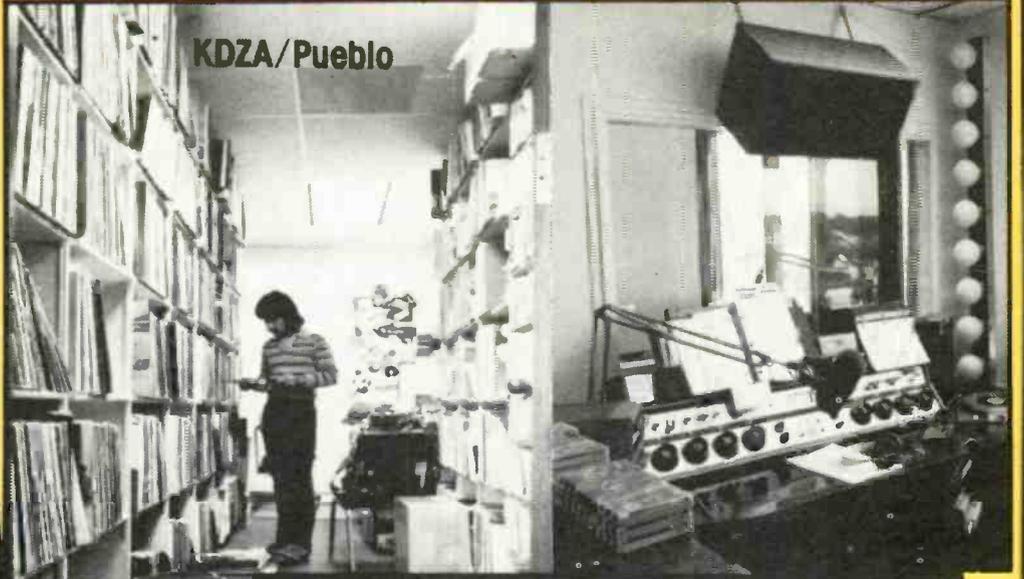
WGDF/Evansville



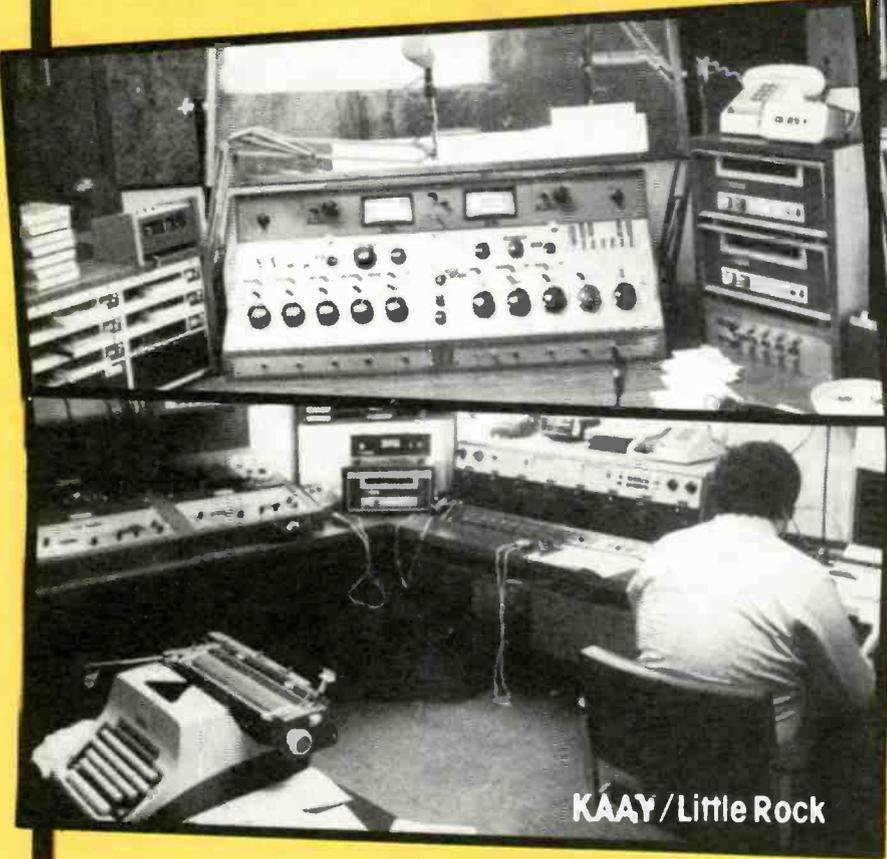
WHBQ/Memphis



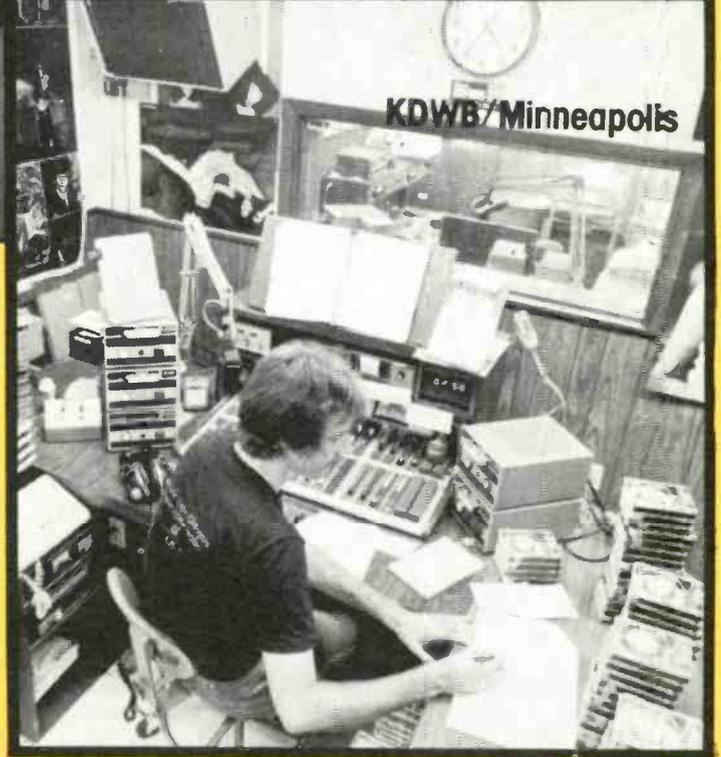
WCOL/Columbus



KDZA/Pueblo



KAAY/Little Rock



KDWB/Minneapolis



WHBQ/Memphis  
Production Room

# TOP-40 RADIO: Behind The Scenes

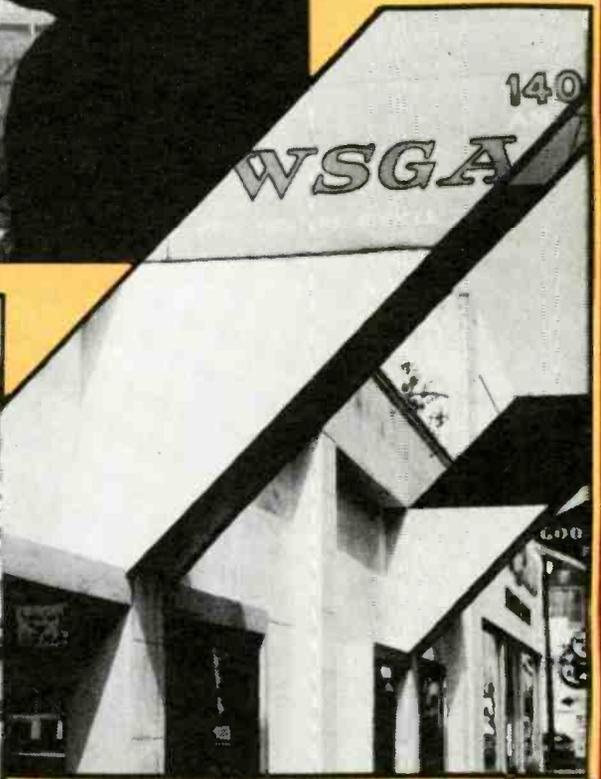




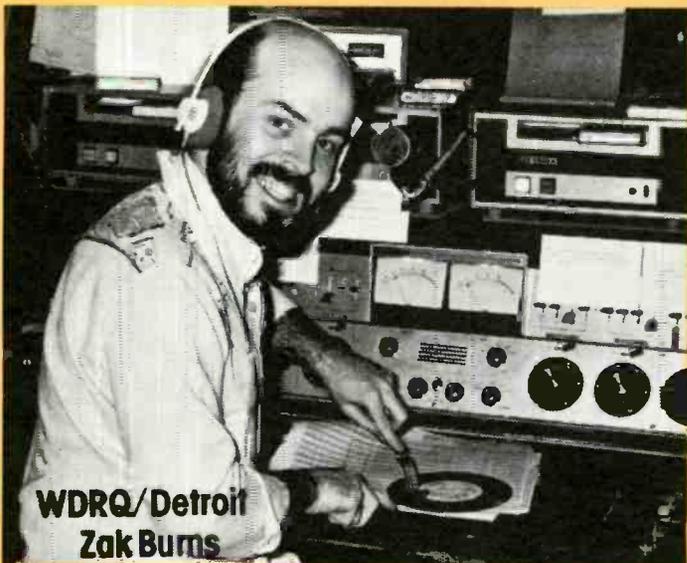
**WSAI/Cincinnati**  
View from  
Control Room



**WSGA/Savannah**



**KING/Seattle**



**WDRQ/Detroit**  
Zak Burns

# TOP-40 RADIO: Behind The Scenes



Chapter  
1

# CASABLANCA RECORD AND FILMWORKS' TOP FORTY STORY

## KISS



NBLP 7057

**Kiss is the opening chapter in the Casablanca story. Seven gold and four platinum albums later, the story keeps getting better. Latest and hottest installment:  
"Christine Sixteen" (NB 889)**

# Engineering The Ultimate Top-40 Sound

by Ed Buterbaugh, CKLW Vice President/Engineering



AM radio has a lot more to offer than it usually gets credit for. It has advanced technically more dramatically than any other media form. However, many people have simply accepted the fact that AM has to sound bad and that nothing can be done about it. This belief is not true. There are ways to improve the sound of your station. First, by showing ways to strengthen your audio chain. Second, what should be done as far as audio-preprocessing is concerned. Lastly, the potentiality of AM stereo in the improvement of your signal.

When I arrived at CKLW in 1972 it had a sound that was very good, however, I knew that it could be brought up to higher standards. The first thing I did was to go to the antenna system and worked my way backwards. The antenna system was in pretty bad shape. It was an older design and was made to have a very high Q at the carrier frequency. By high Q I mean that these antennas are designed to have a very narrow band pass and operate mainly at the carrier frequency. It tends to dilute the upper band frequencies in the 7-10,000 cycle range, and gives a muddier sound.

To correct this we added a form of discriminative audio processing—3 compressors and 3 amplifiers are used. Each is slightly different from the others. We've modified them in order to handle specific frequencies properly. We have one amplifier operating on the low frequencies, one operating at frequencies above 500 cycles and one operating at frequencies above 5,000 cycles. So, there are actually 3 different amplifiers or compressors that are operating independently of each other as far as frequency response is concerned.

An antenna system can be compared to a stereo system. If you have great components and you drive a very cheap speaker, despite your components, the sound is not going to be good. An antenna works somewhat in the same manner; the more critical areas are in the upper frequencies. If the audio chain, right up to the output of the transmitter, is perfect but the antenna system won't radiate those upper frequencies, the sound is still going to sound flat.

The system of three amplifiers or compressors allows the sound to be a bit more tailored, at the same time, it allows each band of frequencies to be processed independently.

For instance, a very loud bass note, when controlled by a normal amplifier, will suck down all of the audio in order to reproduce the note. With a discriminative audio process the mid-range and upper frequencies are not effected. The result is a much more consistent, and apparently louder sound.

A typical audio chain, when improved, should have a discriminative audio processor in the form of an automatic gain control amplifier. Then depending on whether the studios and transmitters are in the same building or not, an FTL microwave length. The particular system I use would be very difficult to put on the market because of its flexibility. People who aren't familiar with it could create more problems than they solve. However, there are several good discriminative audio processors available and they should be amply suited for the purpose.

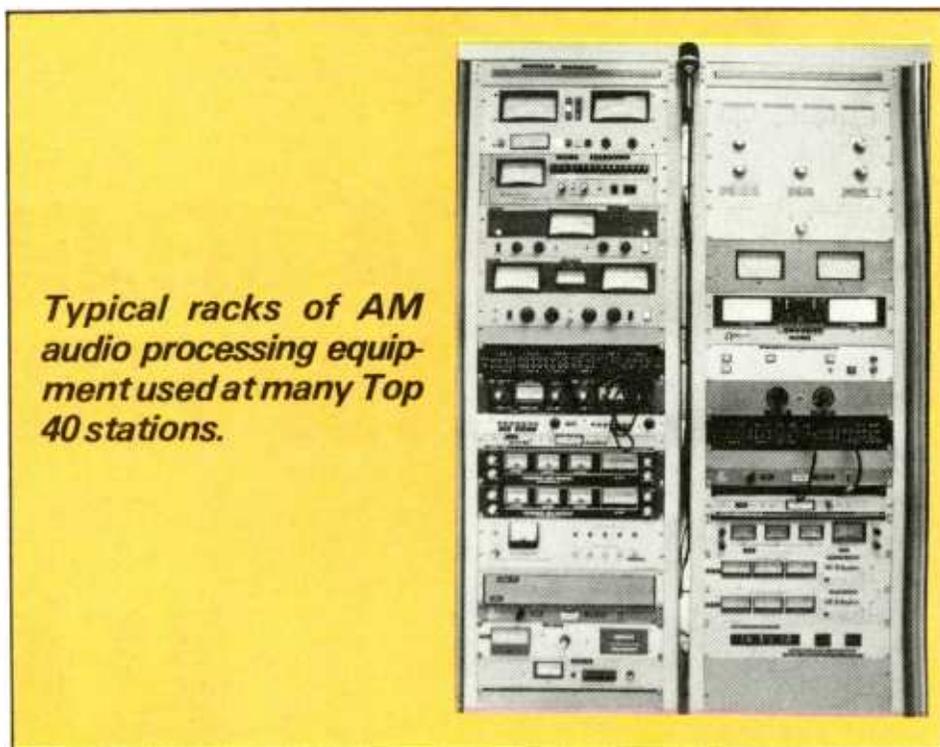
I also suggest a certain amount of equalization before the final limiter. This makes the signal give a perfectly flat response, thus compensating for losses in sound anywhere along the system.

As a summary of just the audio chain, the signal starts with a small amount of equalization before the limiter, then to a clipper circuit (which I designed), it then goes into the post-modulated transmitter and from there into the antenna system. At CKLW we've completely rebuilt our antenna system to handle the audio frequencies and modulation characteristics that the transmitter is capable of putting out.

#### What About Small Markets?

For the small market station that does not have the sophisticated equipment I have mentioned so far, there is an alternate way of making your station sound louder.

The audio-chain does not have to be expensive. The major expense in bringing an AM radio station up to today's standards generally involves redesigning of the facilities, such as the antenna system and the transmitter. Transmitters, designed as recently as four or five years



Typical racks of AM audio processing equipment used at many Top 40 stations.

However, the power supplies in older transmitters can be a very serious problem when it comes to rebuilding a transmitter. Make sure that the antenna system and transmitter are operating properly before any audio processing is attempted. If higher frequencies and higher modulation levels are added to an improperly working audio chain, you're bound to blow something up. If it doesn't blow up, the sound is going to be terrible.

Many stations that don't have the capabilities to rebuild their transmitter, have, in their search for loudness, turned to the technique of turning the volume-max up to where it's pumping pretty fast. You can make it pump even faster by chang-

audio to exceed a given level. You can actually turn up the input to the transmitter or the output of the limiter, with the clipper attached, and get an increase in loudness equivalent to 2db. You would also get an increase in distortion if the transmitter couldn't handle the clipper, or if the audio feeding into the clipper was not processed properly.

The clipper is a very critical device, which is the reason why no one has yet to mass produce an extremely effective device that allows an AM station to be louder.

A lot of new limiters have built-in clippers, but they only provide for a very small amount of clipping. The reason for this is that put into the hands of a person who had no respect for them, it could blow the transmitter up.

#### Techniques To Avoid

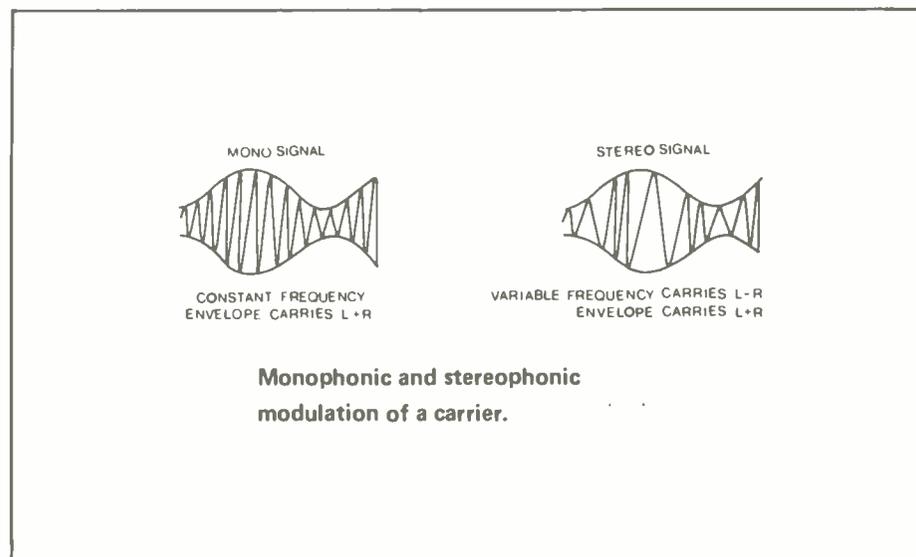
Two recent techniques I stress not employing are the reverb system and the graphic equalizer. As far as the reverb system is concerned, the best place for it would be on the headphones of the announcer and not on the air at all. No matter where you put the reverb system, it's going to foul something up. The reverb unit and the ringing it causes actually serves to reduce the apparent loudness, even if it may give out a sound that the Program Director likes. Echo doesn't add a thing as far as loudness is concerned. If an echo unit is going to be put in, put it just ahead of the final limiter and then reduce the compression on the final limiter. Do not put it just ahead of the transmitter, or in front of a compressor that is doing a lot of work.

A word that has recently come into the engineering/programming vocabulary is the graphic equalizer. The graphic equalizer is a very dangerous toy. Graphic equalizers are designed primarily to equalize rooms and to provide special effects. Much preferable is the shelf equalizer, which produces a very smooth curve. Graphic equalizers create problems such as phase-shift and ringing. I advise minimal use of even the shelf-equalizer.

#### Pre-Processing Audio

There are other ways of improving the sound of AM. One major concern should be the tape cartridges. The major problem with cartridges is warpage and improper travel of the tape. I suggest keeping a very close watch on all of your cartridges. At CKLW whenever a cartridge is taken out of service, we do a standard audio proof of it.

As far as tape is concerned, any standard, low-noise lubricated tape is good for cartridges. I stress again, however, to watch out for warpage.



ago, are not capable of equalling the sound of newer transmitters.

Up until a short time ago, frequency response and harmonic distortion used to be the only major concern in determining the characteristics of an AM transmitter. Because of the technical improvements in modulation and renewed interest in AM quality, the older over-plate modulated transmitters have a number of other problems, including: 1) inner-modulation distortion 2) phase shift of the lower frequencies 3) tilt in the wave form. Also add to this the fact that many of the older transmitters are incapable of handling the peaks in modulation that the newer models are capable of.

Be attuned to these above problems when going over your transmitter. If the transmitter is old and has a lot of problems, the best thing, besides replacing it, is to rebuild it.

ing the release and tack times on the volume-max.

However, this increasing of the release time gives a station loudness, only up to a point. If the release time gets too fast, the problem of low frequency distortion arises. It's really a case, especially with this method, of getting into more problems than you originally had if you don't know what you're doing.

#### After The Transmitter. Then What?

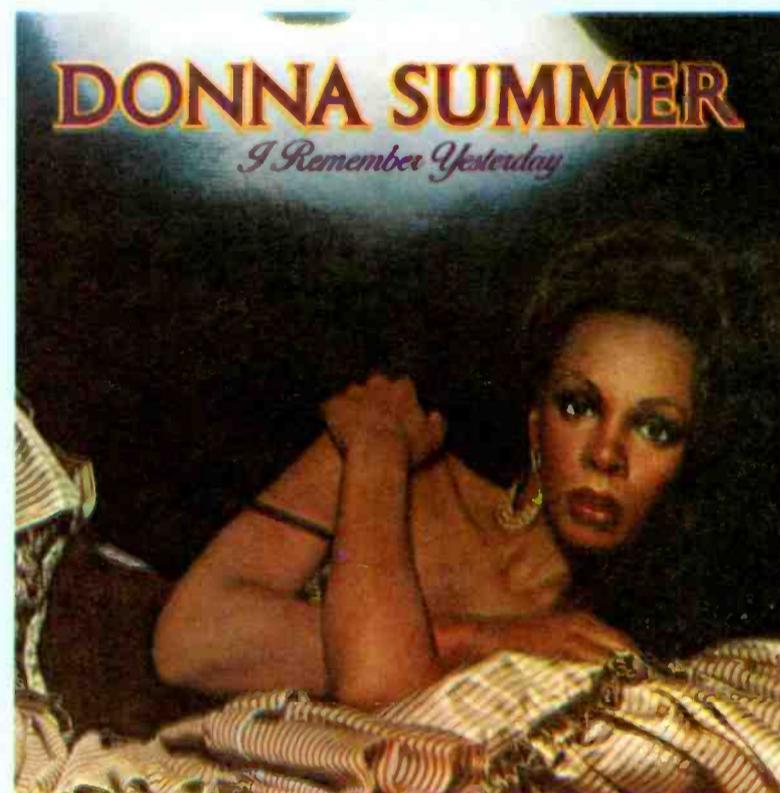
Let's assume that the transmitter is capable of handling any audio processing you get into. As far as loudness is concerned, you can go with a good fast attack and fast release limiter followed by a clipper.

A clipper is a device that stops the level of audio at a pre-determined point. It's very fast, it doesn't allow, if designed properly, the

Chapter  
2

# Donna Summer

Donna Summer began her phenomenal rise to worldwide stardom as "Love To Love You Baby" hit the top. With four gold albums in four releases, her latest single, "I Feel Love"<sup>(NB 884)</sup> adds a new dimension to the story.

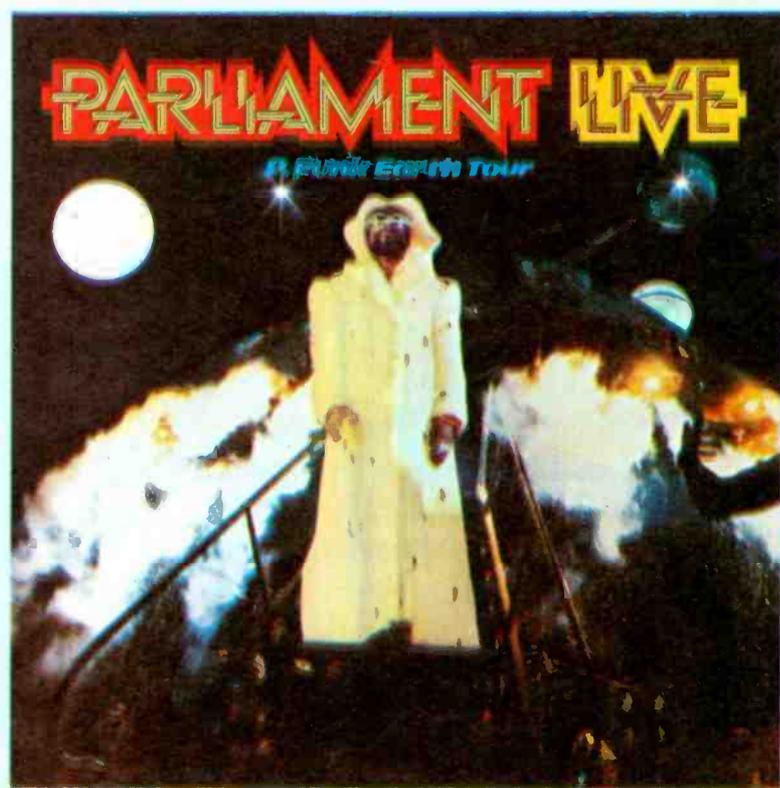


NBLP 7056

Chapter  
3

# PARLIAMENT

Parliament combined science fiction and funk for three straight gold albums and one platinum and one spectacular chapter of the Casablanca story. "Fantasy"<sup>(NB 892)</sup> carries their story further than ever before.



NBLP 7053

After a cartridge has been left on the machine awhile, it heats and then cools after use. You may not notice that this warpage has affected the tape. The damage may be done at 7-9 db at 10,000 cycles, a defect that would be overlooked if a proof wasn't run on the cartridge. I suggest that you don't let anyone record on a cartridge that shows a loss of more than 1 db at 10,000 cycles. That way, it is impossible to tell any difference between the tape and record.

It is at this time, putting the record on cartridge, that pre-processing should be done. First of all, play the whole record through from beginning to end and look at its average energy level on a spectrum analyzer. Then equalize that with a shelf-equalizer so that the average energy content of that record is perfectly flat. There are several reasons for this flatness. Initially, it tends to allow the compressors to operate more within their operating range. There are no severe frequency excursions, therefore allowing a consistent sound to be maintained. Consistency is very, very important in the sound of a radio station.

**Equalization**

Consistency, however, does not mean indiscriminate equalization. Besides the record to tape equalization previously mentioned, CKLW also does general equalization, just a little bit of it, in the production of spots. Actually, what it amounts to is a slight roll off on the low end and a slight boost around 5,000 cycles.

Some stations though, equalize records onto cartridge, equalize their commercials when recording them, and have a final equalizer in the line. Too much equalization can really foul up a radio station's sound. Equalization should be minimal. Equalization actually turns into an excuse for something else in the system not being right. You should never have equalization after the final limiter. Too much equalization or improper equalization will actually cause a loss in apparent loudness as well as actual loudness.

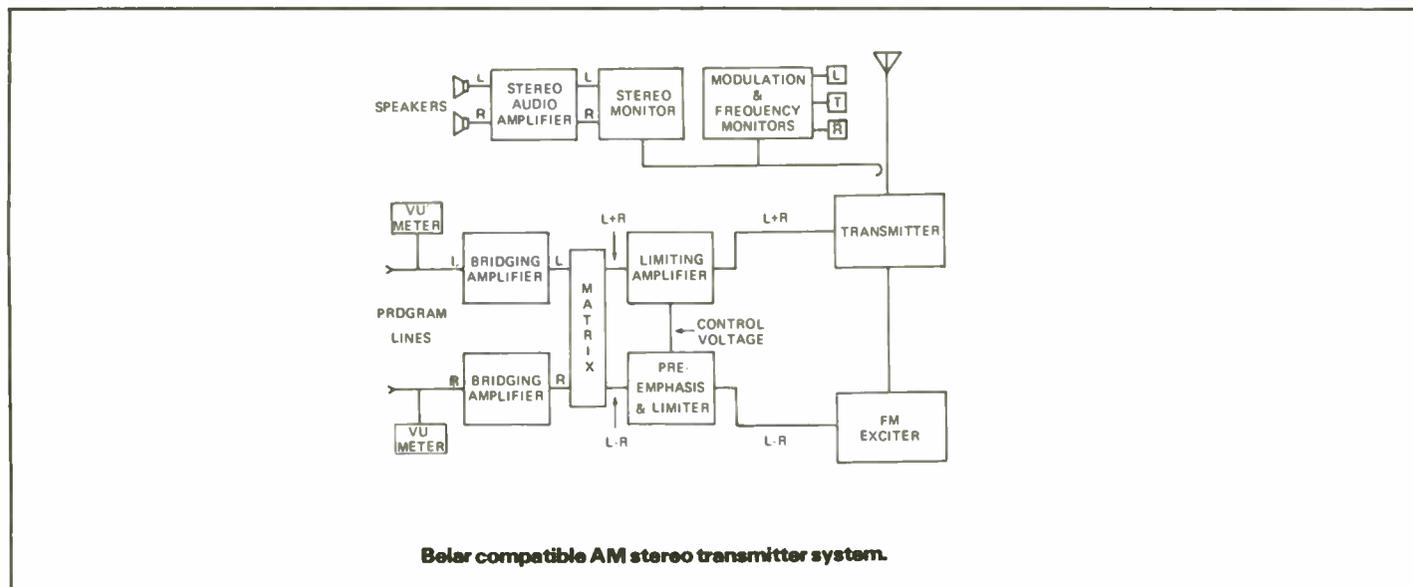
Another practice linked to equalization, a lot of radio stations are employing is the use of a compressor on the microphone of the announcer. Again, if the whole system is not up to what it should be, this technique can definitely lead to more problems than it solves. Generally, I'm against a separate compressor on the microphone.

**AM Stereo**

The newest technique for improving AM sound, is, of course, AM stereo. Several stations are applying to the FCC on a regular basis for permission to test different systems, these stations include K101/San Francisco, and WABC/New York.

The major concern of most stations at this point is what system the FCC is going to approve.

There are three manufacturers vying for the Commission's approval—Motorola, Belar, and Sansui. Up until the Motorola system came out, the major problem with AM stereo was compatibility. By compatibility I mean that the way



some of the other systems are designed, can cause some distortion in current AM receivers. Motorola's system has been designed to eliminate that problem. However, there are other problems. No one really knows what effect the stereo signal is going to have on the pattern, since it actually changes the phase of the signal in certain components of the signal. The skywave on high power stations could have some strange effects.

**How Does It Work?**

Briefly, AM stereo is the splitting of the phase of the carrier into two components that are 90 degrees out of phase. The signal or signals are then modulated into one of the separate components.

Even though the technology is already here, AM stereo will probably follow the same route

as FM stereo did. Once the decision by the FCC is made, probably within a year, all the studio equipment would have to be changed to stereo. Also, the receiver manufacturers have to start putting out stereo receivers. It's going to be awhile before it becomes a common entity, where everyone has an AM stereo receiver.

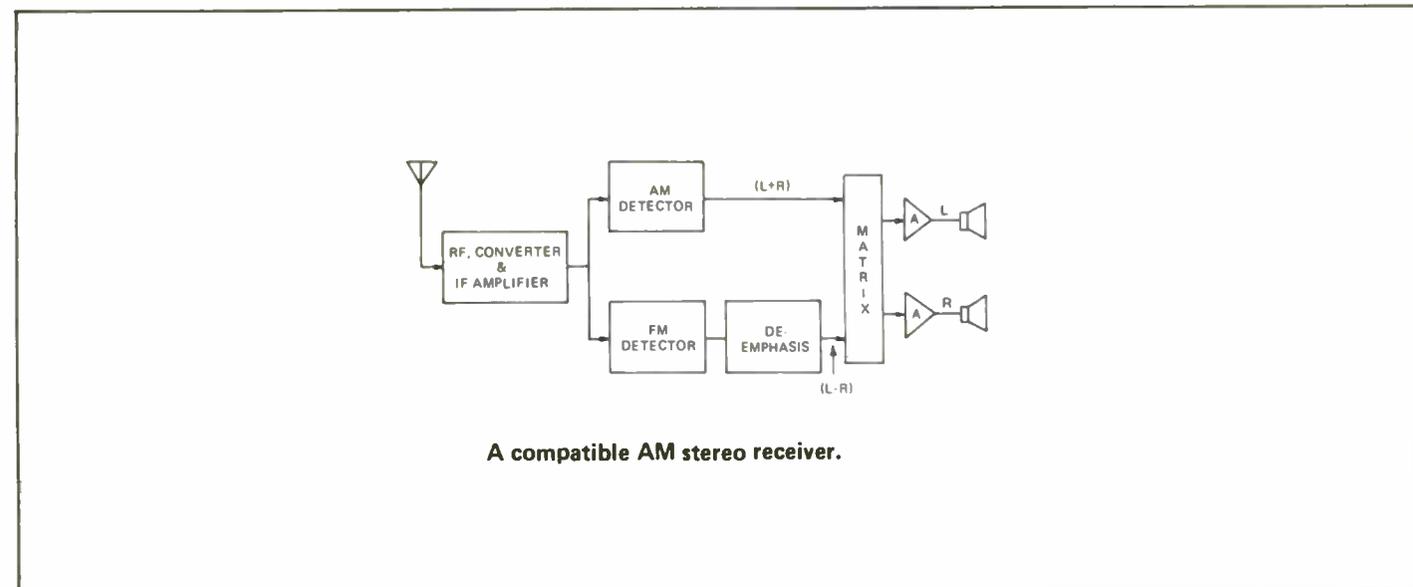
**AM Stereo Is Not The Only Answer**

Despite the fact that AM stereo is not going to be immediately implemented, there is a way to improve the sound of your station—externally. AM already has the capability of sounding almost as good as FM, and in some areas even better. The only thing that doesn't allow this sound to come through is the home receiver. I know of only three really good AM receivers in North America. This would be a perfect time for a receiver manufacturer

to completely review his receiver design and come up with a better quality product. No matter what you do to a transmitter at a radio station, it is only as good as the receiver it is heard on.

One of the most fantastic pieces of equipment I've ever seen is the McKay Dimac. It is the only true high fidelity AM receiver. On this receiver, which costs no more than a good FM receiver, CKLW sounds as good, if not better, than most FM stations. Other stations can sound just as good, if the receiver manufacturer would put out better equipment. I am even in favor of requiring legislation, if that's what it takes, to produce a better receiver.

People have just accepted the fact that AM radio can't sound good; they couldn't be further from the truth.





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AL MOINET  
Nat. Promotion Dir.



HAROLD CHILDS  
Vice Pres., Promotion



PETE MOLLICA  
Ass't. Nat. Promotion Dir.