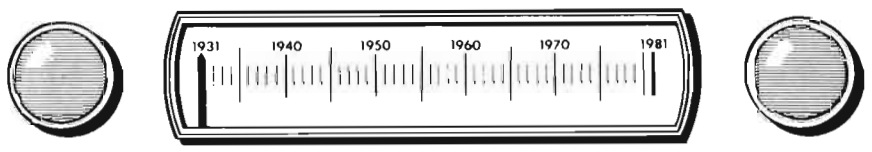
The First 50 Years Of Broadcasting

THE FIRST 50 YEARS OF BROADCASTING



In the summer of 1915, an assistant manager of Marconi Wireless Telegraph proposed a "radio music box" and described the possibilities of broadcasting to the public. That vision—of David Sarnoff, the future chairman of RCA—was but one in the chronology of events that determined the course of radio before 1931. The more tangible history began to materialize in the early 1920's. There was the coverage of the Harding-Cox election in November 1920 as KDKA Pittsburgh and WWJ Detroit provided crackling reports to a limited number of crystal set owners. The decade that followed became a blur of events with the proliferation of stations by pioneer broadcasters—to such a degree that, in 1927, the Federal Radio Commission was created to bring order out of chaos. The Zworykins, DeForests and Armstrongs were already hard at work in their laboratories, not only advancing AM radio's state of the art but laying the groundwork for FM and television. "Amos 'n' Andy" and "The Rise of the Goldbergs" were among the programs that came on the American scene to help the nation weather the hard times. And then came BROADCASTING, *on Oct. 15, 1931. The rest, as they say, is history.*

The year 1931 might well be regarded as the end of the beginning for American broadcasting. Order had been restored to the spectrum in the years since the Radio Act of 1927. The number of radio stations had stabilized at 608 and, abetted by expanding network operations, broadcasting was attracting an ever growing share of the advertising dollar. By the end of 1930, the Census Bureau had found radio sets in more than 12 million of the country's 30 million homes.

Small wonder that a nation mired in the Depression had at least this area in which to feel a sense of accomplishment. One such sentiment came in October 1931 from Major General Charles McKinley Saltzman, then chairman of the Federal Radio Commission. Saltzman, retired as the U.S.'s chief signal officer, called the American broadcasting industry "the best in the world."

But Walter J. Damm, the elected president of the National Association of Broadcasters, almost simultaneously had words of caution. Damm, general manager of WTMJ Milwaukee, warned: "Broadcasting in the United States today stands in grave jeopardy. Politically powerful and efficiently organized groups, actuated by selfishness and with a mania for power, are now busily at work plotting the complete destruction of the industry we have pioneered and developed . . . In other words, American broadcasting is given its choice between organization or destruction."

Far from being contradictory, each had evidence for his point of view. Together, their statements delineated the status of broadcasting in the 1930's. All of the elements and factions that shaped broadcasting were present—including the Depression. As the medium grew in power and influence, advertisers, educators, newspaper publishers, legislators and critics took particular notice by creating special interest groups, voicing concerns and proposing legislation.

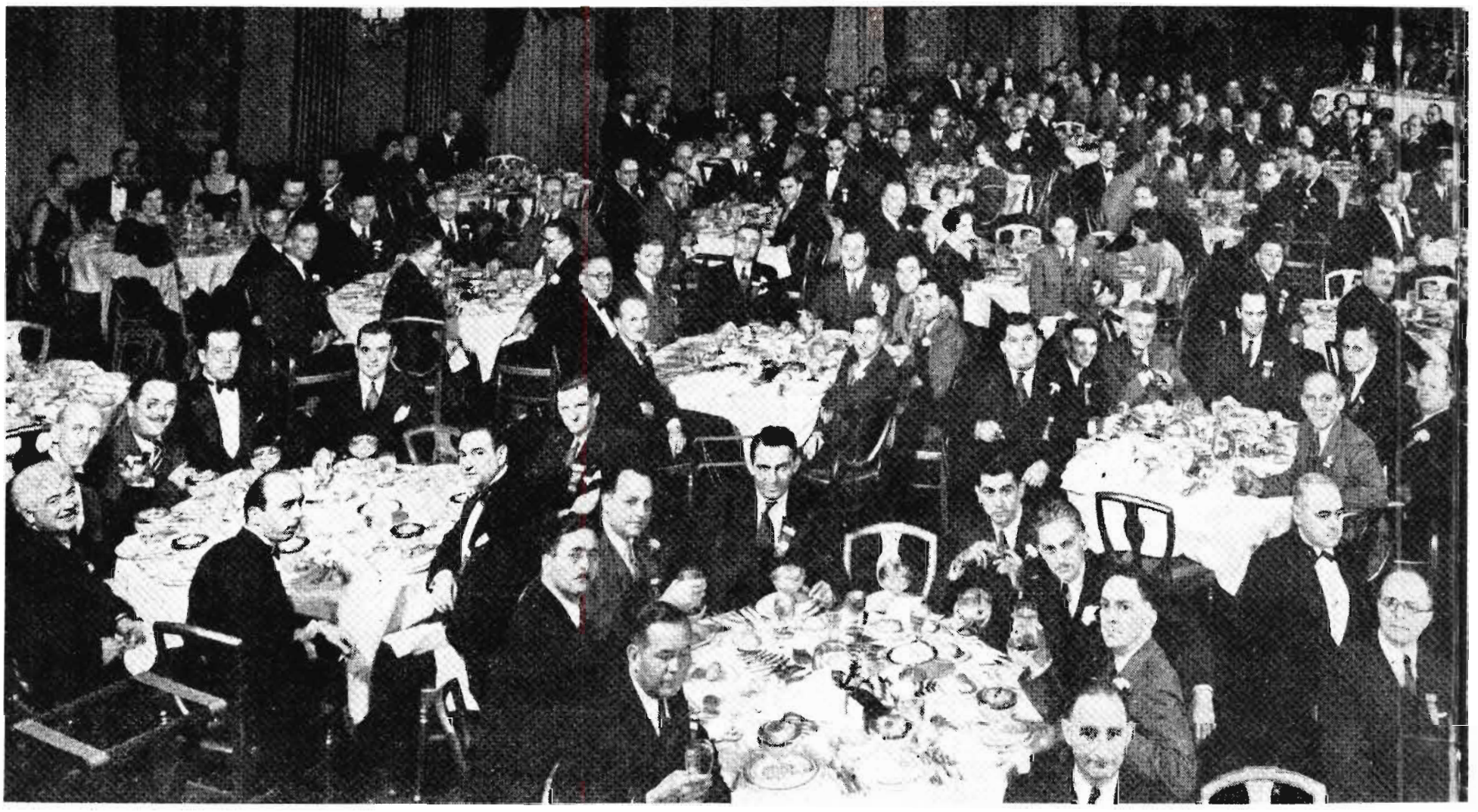
BROADCASTING magazine appeared on Oct. 15 in 1931. Chairman Saltzman greeted the new semi-monthly publication by expressing interest "in all agencies or instrumentalities operating to advance or improve radio . . . The commission therefore welcomes the entrance of BROADCASTING into the national radio field . . . and hopes that it may be a means for great good in the development and advancement of the art. An ideal trade journal is not only a forum wherein the problems of the art may be discussed but also an agency which assumes a responsibility for asserting a leadership in advancing the art or profession in which it is interested."

BROADCASTING, which dedicated itself "to the American system of free, competitive and self-sustaining radio enterprise," accepted this challenge with the resolve "to report, fairly and accurately, the thoughts and the activities that motivate the field of broadcasting and the men who are guiding and administering broadcasting." If, as Damm suggested, radio faced problems of survival, and if, as Saltzman contended, U.S. radio remained the most advanced in the world, then BROADCASTING as the trade journal for this promising but still evolving "Fifth Estate" had work to do.

BROADCASTING's opening editorial declared: "And now, Radio! Who is there to gainsay its rightful status as the Fifth Estate? . . . Radio as the mouthpiece of all the other Estates* occupies a peculiar position of its own in American life. It furnishes all of man's other high Estates voices that reach far beyond their cloistered chambers, their social circles, their sectional constituencies and their circulation areas. But beyond all that, it brings new cheer, new intelligence, new light to the many and diversified forms of education and entertainment that the human ear can convey to the mind."

In the course of providing all this, broadcasters faced the

* BROADCASTING's first issue traced the four other estates back to Edmund Burke by way of Thomas Carlyle: "Burke said there were Three Estates in Parliament; but, in the Reporters' Gallery yonder, there sat a Fourth Estate more important far than they all." The three earlier parliamentary estates: the Lords Spiritual, the Lords Temporal and the Commons.



practical reality of needing commercial support—and meeting the frequent hostility of critics who demanded little or no advertising on radio. In a time of increasing economic turmoil, radio's 89% gain in advertising revenues from 1929 to the end of 1931 alarmed many, especially newspapers. Measuring that 1929-31 interval, the *U.S. Department of Commerce Yearbook* noted that newspapers lost $55 million in advertising revenues (21%), magazines lost $37 million (18%), outdoor advertising lost $30 million (50%) and car cards (transit advertising) lost $5 million (50%). Radio, on the other hand, had captured $36 million in advertising revenues by the end of 1931, according to a J. Walter Thompson study.

Despite some cooperative ventures between newspapers and radio, many newspapermen blamed radio for a loss in advertising. Perhaps the most vocal of radio's opponents was H.O. Davis, publisher of the *Ventura* (Calif.) *Free Press*. Davis, in collaboration with 500 other newspapers, distributed literature alleging a radio monopoly on advertising and arguing that ads should be restricted from the air in order to make room, in Davis's words, "in the overcrowded ether for education, information, the public service, and to protect the country's publishers against unfair competition."

Besides Davis and his colleagues, two other groups interested in educational radio developed in 1930. One, Joy Elmer Morgan's National Committee on Education by Radio, wanted a "fair share," or 15%, of the channels allocated for educational institutions and government agencies. In 1931 this group was instrumental in the introduction of the Fess Bill (sponsored by Representative Simeon D. Fess [R-Ohio]), that would have achieved that end. A less demanding group was Robert A. Millikan's and Levering Tyson's National Advisory Council on Radio in Education, established with funds from John D. Rockefeller and the Carnegie Corporation. As Tyson was quoted in BROADCASTING's inaugural issue: "It is almost impossible to chase a satisfactory definition of 'education' into a corner, let alone a satisfactory definition of 'educational broadcasting.' There are very few educational stations adequately financed—and broadcasting is, if anything, expensive ... no one can state with any degree of confidence just what the American people will listen to ... There are economic questions, and political questions, and engineering questions, and legislative questions—and any one of these questions is puzzling enough to keep the educational world, the broadcasting industry and the lawmakers of the land occupied for many years to come."

With some publishers mounting anti-radio campaigns, and educators promoting reform, broadcasters realized the need for "Brass Tacks," as the Nov. 1 editorial was entitled. "The era of reckless development is over," the editors wrote. "Henceforth, American broadcasting must build along sound social as well as economic lines ... This country's broadcasting must be maintained at a high level with a maximum of self-regulation and a minimum of outside intervention."

Besides the controversy over educational radio, one threatened intervention was a redefinition of the Interstate Commerce Commission's authority to regulate advertising rates. The test case: a suit by the Sta-Shine Products Co. against NBC and WGBB Freeport, N.Y.

Other tests included the validity of the

Farnsworth is Working on Television for Philco

IN A penthouse laboratory atop the plant of the Philadelphia Storage Battery Co., Philadelphia, manufacturers of Philco radios, Philo T. Farnsworth, young radio engineer of Salt Lake City and San Francisco, for the last few months has been conducting experiments with his new cathode ray system of television. Claims have been made for this system that it narrows the regulation frequency band for visual transmission from the regulation 100 kilocycles down to as low as 10 kilocycles and that, operating without mechanical parts, it builds up images of 40 to 400 lines.

The Philco makers are now the exclusive licensees of the Farnsworth system. Though James M. Skinner, president of the company, and W. E. Holland, chief engineer, say they have no definite plans made yet for the manufacture of receivers, they have applied to the Federal Radio Commission for authority to erect an experimental transmitter at the Philadelphia plant, asking for 1,500 watts and the 1,500-3,000 and 2,750-2,850 kc. bands.

Broadcasting, Oct. 15

The First 50 Years Of Broadcasting

The Running Story of the Fifth Estate

by the Editors of BROADCASTING Magazine

Broadcasting Publications Inc.

1982

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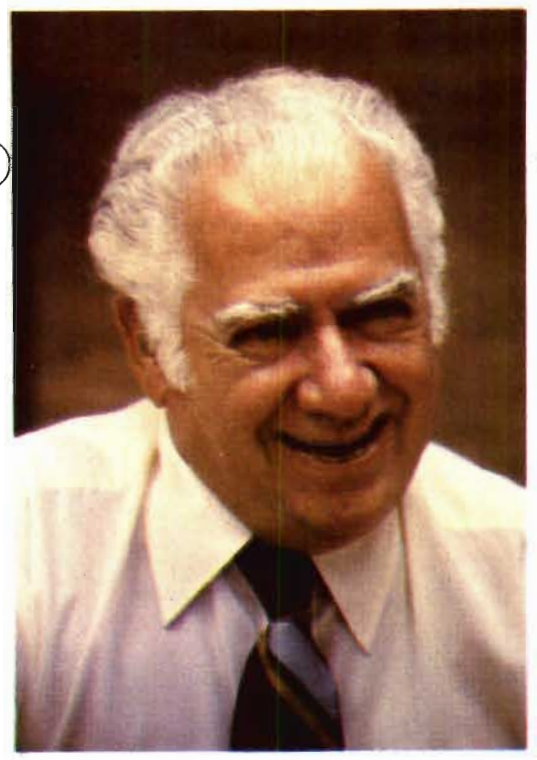


It seems like only yesterday that we put the first issue of BROADCASTING to bed. Now, over 50 years later, we're putting to bed an entire history of the broadcast media, as seen through the pages of more than 2,000 issues of BROADCASTING. That's a lot of printer's ink for anyone's lifetime, and I count myself lucky to have been able to spend so much of it at work and play with the business and the people I love best.

Licensed radio was but 11 years old when BROADCASTING, The News Magazine of the Fifth Estate, made its bow on Oct. 15, 1931. The late Harry Shaw, then owner of WMT(AM) in Waterloo, Iowa, had agreed to back this new venture by a couple of Washington newsmen who had specialized in covering the very new world of radio for publications of general circulation. The newsmen had decided that broadcasters needed their own trade paper—a counterpart of *Editor & Publisher,* which served the Fourth Estate. Those newsmen were the late Martin Codel, originally of Hibbing, Minn., and I, a Washingtonian. Both had worked for the late David Lawrence's *U.S. Daily* (now *U.S. News and World Report).*

Shaw agreed to advance $52,000 (a heap in those days) for 52% of the stock in Broadcasting Publications Inc., with the balance divided between Codel and me. But the first installment of 10% ($5,200) was all that ever got into the kitty. Shaw's bank in Waterloo closed, a year before the bank holiday decreed by the new President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Suffice to say we weathered the storm and in due course paid back Harry Shaw double his investment. Shaw, incidentally, was elected president, then an honorary post, of the National Association of Broadcasters two weeks after Vol. 1, No. 1 of BROADCASTING appeared. Thus, Martin Codel, at 30, and Sol Taishoff, at 27, became co-owners of BROADCASTING, and saw their dream come to life.

In the succeeding years BROADCASTING has undergone many changes to

keep abreast of the times and the enterprises it has served, but it has never veered editorially from its initial goal of "radio as free as the press." More and more "the press" is defined nowadays to mean radio, television, cable, publications—all the means of delivery of journalism.

The public's affection for what it sees and hears on the air—or on the wired services—transcends its relationship with any other medium, print included. The Fifth Estate that it is our joy to serve embraces not only all existing information and entertainment services—whether transmitted by radio, TV, cable or satellites—but is also broad enough to comprehend all the electronic media there ever will be beyond the printed page.

Looking back at that first half-century, we realize how fortunate we were to have been at the right place at the right time. It took more than an idea and the money to back it to succeed. It took dedication and perseverance—and helping hands from many in private as well as in public life.

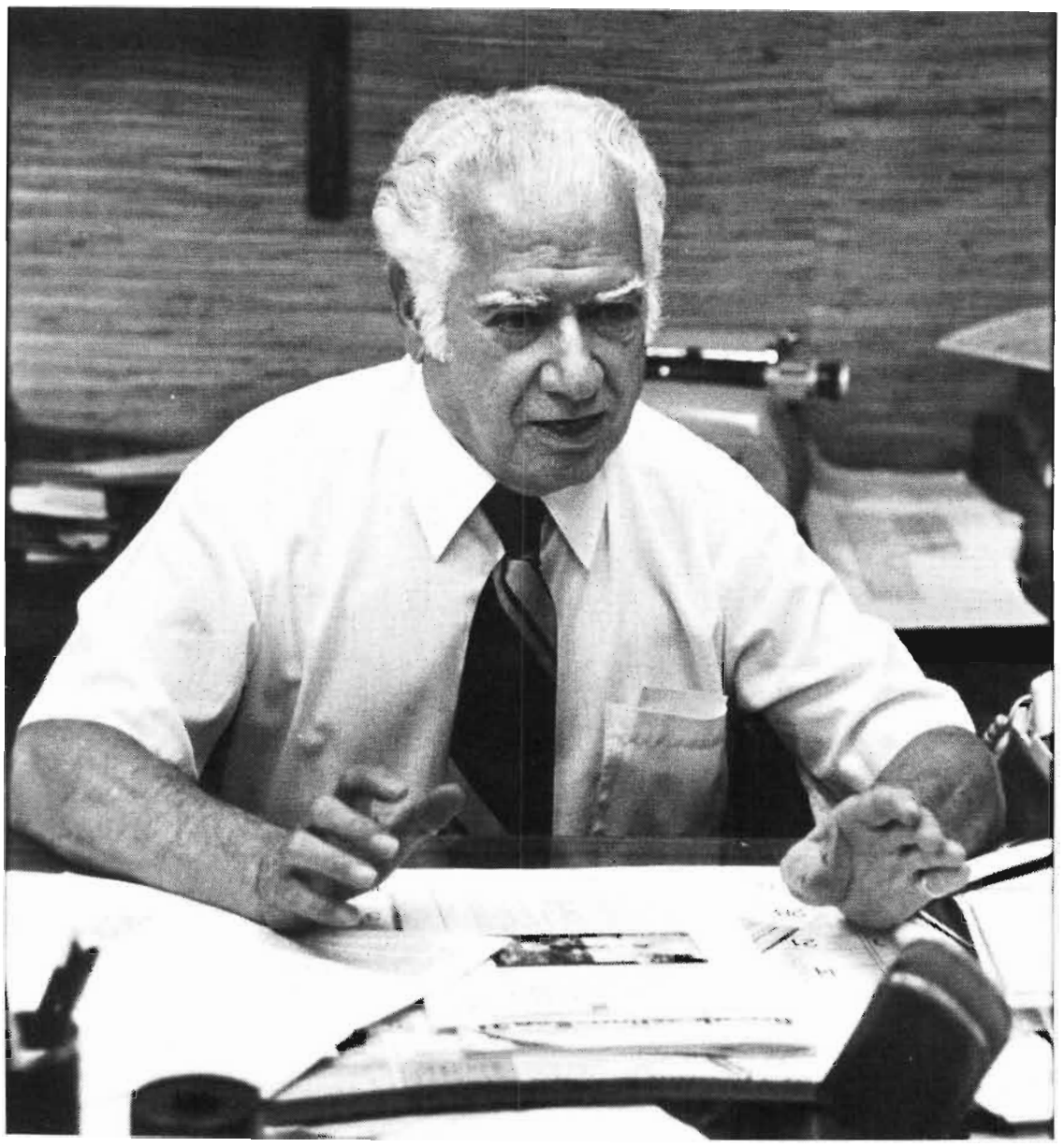
As we enter the next 50 we thank our many benefactors, over the years, who took time out to guide us and to help when we stumbled. We have rubbed elbows with genius—in technology, in business, in programing. Our capable and dedicated staff, under our president and publisher, Larry Taishoff, will carry on after I'm out of play. For the nonce, the Almighty willing, we'll do our job—giving everyone in the Fifth Estate our best shots for absolute freedom of the press—all of it.

73.

Sol Taishoff

CHAIRMAN and EDITOR in CHIEF

Washington, D.C.



Broadcasting Chairman and Editor in Chief Sol Taishoff

"The First 50 Years Were the Hardest"

When did you get your start in broadcasting?

I wrote my first radio story probably around 1925, when I was at the Associated Press doing offbeat things and radio wasn't assigned to anyone. The Department of Commerce licensed radio on ships at sea—the old safety of life, SOS thing. It wasn't until 1927 that you got a Federal Radio Commission.

When did the idea of BROADCASTING magazine first germinate?

It probably started when Martin Codel and I were on the staff of the *U.S. Daily* for David Lawrence, probably in 1928 or '29. He was writing the Robert Mack radio dispatch for the Consolidated Press. I spelled him when he was on other assignments, and I also wrote the Mack dispatch. I've forgotten precisely when Codel left the *United States Daily,* which was the predecessor of the *U.S. News & World Report,* but when he left, I immediately began to write the Robert Mack dispatch on what amounted to a full-time basis, five days a week. When I had a story that was hot or timely over Saturday or Sunday, I would write it for my own byline and distribute it on the Consolidated Press Association wire, which David Lawrence also owned.

After Codel left and went to work writing a column for the North American Newspaper Alliance we became competitors but we remained friends. He was not married then and had very few ties here, and occasionally I would take him home with me on Friday for a kosher meal. We started talking about radio needing its own *Editor and Publisher.* The idea of BROADCASTING germinated from those discussions. That was in the late 1920's.

By that time Codel had left the North American Newspaper Alliance to run something he labeled the Radio News Bureau in Washington—special coverage for radio stations and a weekly newsletter. I was still writing the Robert Mack dispatch and working for David Lawrence. And the newsletter business wasn't doing very well.

How much were you making with Lawrence?

I was making $45 a week on the *U.S. Daily,* $35 a week for writing the column. But on the side, whenever I covered a hearing or something like that, I might furnish a black sheet [carbon copy] for the *New York Times* or the *New York Herald-Tribune.* It was nothing to work 12 or 14 hours a day on these things. I was doing pretty well. I was probably averaging over $100 a week, which was much better than most news guys in town were doing.

The Robert Mack dispatch was a pseudonym owned by David

Lawrence. I was Robert Mack number three, and Codel was number two. Lawrence also had another specialized column on business way ahead of the press associations. I remember he had another columnist whose name was Hardin Colfax, which spelled out "hard and cold facts." He also was one of the early European dispatch distributors, and, if I remember correctly, he had a byline man named Paritonatti. Don't ask me how to spell it, but any guy that came along that had come back from Europe and had a good feature story got the Paritonatti byline. And this was Lawrence's genius.

Who was Robert Mack number one?

A fellow named Bill Sweetzer, who was an announcer on WRC here and who was assigned to something else. Most of Lawrence's people doubled in brass.

Well, then Codel and I decided that radio should have its own trade paper because it was a journalism medium, not a jukebox. We began looking around for an angel. But we couldn't get anybody to put up the money. This was the bottom of the Depression now—1930.

Then along came a fellow named Philip Geiselman Loucks, who was a lawyer and a good friend of mine—a former United Press guy. Phil became the managing director of the National Association of Broadcasters. He was elected to the post, and was given the assignment of raising the money to sustain an office—drawing $10,000 in pay, if he could raise that much. Phil started this thing with two offices in the National Press Building. The NAB itself was not located in Washington at the time. It was a speakeasy in New York. True story. There was a guy named Hap Baker who ran the New York office. It was in the downtown area, and it was a place you could get a drink during Prohibition, and that was the NAB headquarters. Originally it had been formed in Chicago.

What did it do besides providing a drinking service?

Baker worked for one of the nonexclusive brokers in New York, and the NAB was an avocation. Phil was the first full-time person in Washington. There was another man named Paul W. Morency, who was also identified with the NAB in some way in New York. He used to call on WTIC, the Travelers Insurance station in Hartford, and wound up managing the station.

Phil became the managing director in Washington. He had a few clients, one of whom was a fellow named Harry Shaw in Waterloo, Iowa—WMT, now Cedar Rapids. Harry was a dapper guy who once had been in the trade paper business. He ran a paper in Chicago that had to do with refrigeration, *Refrigeration News* or something like that. And he was a bit of a promoter; he owned half of WMT and half of a newspaper in Waterloo. The newspaper was sold, and he had some money, and it was at that time that Phil Loucks said, "You know, if you want to get into a new venture and you know the trade paper field, why don't you back these boys in a trade paper? They've got a format, a dummy made up." And so Phil told us, "This is it. I think the man has money and will back you in a monthly publication."

When all the details were straightened out, Shaw had 52% and Codel and I each had 24%. My wife, Betty, thought I was crazy going into the thing. I had a good job with Lawrence, although this was a bad time; The *U.S. Daily* was about to go under. We'd taken cuts in pay. I was still writing the Robert Mack dispatch. Codel's newsletter had disappeared by that time.

Shaw put in a man of his own, a fellow named F. Gaither Taylor, who had worked for him on the newspaper in Waterloo, which had been sold. Gate was a nice enough, corn-fed country guy. He at least knew what make-up was. He knew what a rate card was. And he knew things that we'd never learned because we'd never been in the publishing business. We'd been news guys. Gate worked with us pretty well.

And Shaw did all right. Phil Loucks had promised him the presidency of the NAB within a year after he backed the paper. It was an honorary job; the managing director ran the thing. As things turned out, Shaw was elected president one week after BROADCASTING began publication on Oct. 15, 1931, as a semimonthly.

Were there many broadcasters in the NAB at that time?

Quite a few. I think there were probably 250 or 300 people at the 1931 convention that elected Shaw.

How long did he retain his 52%?

On March 4, 1932, the first bank in the country to close its doors—ahead of the bank holiday—was the First National Bank of Waterloo, where Harry Shaw had his money. Harry had put up $5,200 as a 10% down payment on $52,000 for 52% of the stock, so there'd be no problems about what went where when it finally worked out. He told us that his assets were frozen and that we would have to forage for ourselves, and that he would regard his $5,200 as a loss.

We went out to our key accounts after a few issues of the magazine had been published and asked them whether they thought it was worthwhile, whether radio really needed a trade paper. The three networks were included. There were a couple of station representatives. There were some manufacturers. All agreed that it was desirable, and we gave them a 15% discount on their advertising under a one-year contract, which was the balance of 24 issues. We raised another $6,000, and that is all the money that originally went into the magazine. And that was the way things went until I bought out Codel in 1944.

Who were the leaders in the industry at the time you started the magazine?

There was Alfred J. McCosker of WOR in New York. They called him "Hollywood Al" because of his fancy dress. He always wore cuffs on his clothes, you know. His best friend was Mayor Jimmy Walker. McCosker was a surprisingly articulate guy, and he served two terms as NAB president. There was a guy named Henry Adams Bellows who came from General Mills, who had a byline in our first issue. He was the CBS Washington lobbyist at the time. He also was a former member of the Federal Radio Commission.

There were other leaders, too. Take John Shepard 3d. He was of the Shepard Stores in Boston and New England—a very bright man who ran the Yankee Network and wore the loudest clothes. McCosker wore the fanciest. In the South, at WSM in Nashville, there was Edwin W. Craig of the National Life and Accident Insurance Co., who had working for him a guy named Ed Kirby. In Atlanta there was Lambdin Kay, the great pioneer announcer at WSB who covered Dixie like the dew. Later on there was John Elmer in Baltimore, who was instrumental in founding Broadcast Music Inc.

Then there was Walter Damm of WTMJ Milwaukee. They called him "The Great God Damm"—a nickname I gave him. He was a mean, sour guy, but he didn't mean it. He was a Dutchman who was meticulous as he could be. He put in the finest radio station you ever saw. All the walls were tile, so you could take a wet rag and wash the walls, never have to paint them. He had his own kitchen on the mezzanine floor, so he could have lunch and watch what was going on in the studios. He had no children, but he had the damnedest hobbies you ever saw. He liked to knit, and he'd make fancy stuff with beads and shells. A very organized guy. I gave him the nickname because he was always griping and bitching.

Wasn't he the president of the NAB at the time the magazine started?

Yes. As a matter of fact, you'll find a quote in the first issue of the magazine which is still applicable today. It's a hell of a quote. I confess that I wrote it.

"Broadcasting in the United States today stands in grave jeopardy. Politically powerful and efficiently organized groups actuated by selfishness and with a mania for power are now busily at work planning the complete destruction of the industry we have pioneered and developed. These groups give no thought to the efforts and the monies which we

have expended, nor the services which we have rendered the American public in the development of the greatest broadcasting system in the world. They speak of our business as if it could be cut down and destroyed by the mere wave of a wand or legislative fiat. To protect the present system of broadcasting is a definite obligation which we as broadcasters owe to ourselves and to the millions of the public whom we serve. And adequate protection can be achieved only through efficient organization. In other words, American broadcasting today is given its choice between organization or destruction."

Where was he in the succession of NAB presidents?

He was probably number five or six.

Who was first?

The first was Eugene F. McDonald of Zenith, who owned WJAZ, a 100 watter in Chicago. The NAB started in Chicago. A fellow named Paul Kluge, who was a public relations man for radio set manufacturers, organized it. The main thrust of radio in those days was to sell radio sets. This was the first wave of receivers following the old improvised cat's whiskers, the vacuum tube set. There were a number of important manufacturers. Majestic, the mighty monarch of the air, was one of them. Zenith was another. Kolster was the one I had, and it was a big set. It cost $400 or $500 even in those days. Kolster was a radio inspector in the ship service of the Department of Commerce and then went into the set manufacturing business in that first wave, and the Kolster was a fine set.

A. Atwater Kent was a set manufacturer. That was a gooseneck set. And Atwater Kent made a tremendous fortune in the business. As I recall, he was manufacturing sets at the time the NAB had one of its early conventions in Los Angeles, and held a reception at his house, which was a showplace. He had the driveway up to the house strewn with beautiful flowers, orchids, all planted just for the occasion. He was making that kind of money even then, with a gooseneck speaker and the three-dial tuner.

That was before John V.L. Hogan invented the gang condenser, which made it possible to tune your radio with just one dial. The gang condenser made a lot of money. Hogan was a bachelor and a brilliant engineer, one of Louis Caldwell's favorite witnesses in anything that came along. Louis Caldwell was the first general counsel of the Federal Radio Commission. He came right out of the Colonel McCormick law firm in Chicago as the first big-time communications lawyer in Washington, and after having been general counsel of the radio commission—I think in 1927 or 1928—left to open up the practice of Kirkland, Fleming, Green & Martin. Caldwell was the resident partner.

But Louis was a brilliant guy. He should have been a law school dean. He had a house just off the Shoreham hotel on Calvert Street, standing right in the middle of two streets; it's still there. During World War II the house became an R&R place for anybody in communications who happened to come through on leave. Caldwell called it the Malay Club. Why the Malay Club, no one knows, but the District of Columbia government wanted to assess him a tax because he was running a boarding house. And he insisted it was not a boarding house—it was a recreation center for colleagues. It went through the courts, and the briefs that were filed are now legendary in the field of law. I don't know how many man-hours were spent by lawyers in trying this case, and they finally got it settled that it wasn't a boarding house.

Caldwell later became the first counsel for the Clear Channel Broadcasting Service.

Was Caldwell a bachelor?

No, he was separated. His wife, Irene, was a socialite. As a matter of fact, she was the niece of Colonel McCormick of the *Chicago Tribune*. Both Caldwell and Irene were white-headed, absolutely white-headed and a very charming couple. Louis was a smoker and a drinker. And he was told by his doctor he could not smoke but he could have one drink a day before dinner. So Louis got himself a 16-ounce glass, and he would fill it with scotch and ice, and that was his one drink a day. He had constant parties at his place, and he would go around with the girls who smoked and have them blow cigarette smoke in his mouth. He was another of that Paul Moses Segal school, brilliant guys who thought they had fun and thought they were kidding their doctors and doing it their way. Segal was another lawyer-friend of mine. He was a radio ham as well as a gifted attorney. He became a connoisseur of wine and knew the best French vintners whom he cultivated on visits to France. He died before his time.

Did Caldwell have more of an impact on the FCC than some of the commissioners?

He did most of the implementation of the original Radio Act. Yes, he was brighter than most commissioners. There are not many people around who would remember Louis's contributions. In the early days of the commission it was a very, very small operation, and everybody knew everybody else. There was empire building up to a point—there always is—but this was a temporary outfit. It wasn't until you got the Communications Act of 1934 that things really began to happen. The early days were pioneering—they were breaking new ground everywhere. There was very little known about shortwaves, for example. The shortwaves were opened by the radio hams, by the amateurs, who probably contributed more to broadening the spectrum than any other group—not the big scientists in the laboratories but those hams just playing around and improvising equipment.

Herbert Hoover, as secretary of commerce, had a lot to do with the formulation of an allocations policy after the so-called breakdown of the law, when there was no licensing, and radio stations would just occupy one of the two frequencies and cause devasting interference.

There were only two frequencies?

Yes. They called them meters, and I don't know what the translation into kilohertz would be. There was a two-meter band and a four-meter band, and then they went to kilocycles, which later came to be called kilohertz.

There's an interesting story about one of the early chairmen of the FCC—Anning Prall. He had been a congressman from Staten Island who was defeated in the 1934 elections. So here was a lame duck from President Roosevelt's own state who had to be taken care of.

So FDR called in Prall and said: "Anning, I'm going to give you the second most important job in Washington. I have the most important. But we have created a Federal Communications Commission which is going to include radio, the remarkable invention, the telephone, telegraph, cable—you can't imagine how much power will be involved and what influence you'd have in this job."

And so word got out that Anning Prall was going to be named chairman of this Federal Communications Commission. And I called up Prall and said: "Congressman, I understand you're going to be the chairman of this new Federal Communications Commission. When do you plan to take office?"

"Immediately," he said.

I said, "I'm afraid you can't under the law. You cannot serve on a commission which was created while you were a member of Congress. You have to be out of Congress; this session of Congress would have to adjourn *sine die.*" He said: "Well, I don't think you know what you're saying." And I said: "Why don't you check with Lou Deschler, the parliamentarian of the House?" And he called me back after a couple of hours and said: "Young man, you are right. I cannot do this until after this Congress quits. Come to see me."

And so I went to see this very affable, handsome fellow. And he said: "Mr. Deschler says you're right. How do I do this now?" I said: "Well, there's a lawyer named Hampson Gary who is going to be your general counsel, although the President hasn't designated him yet. Why don't you suggest that he be named acting commissioner—not chairman but acting commissioner—until you qualify, and then he moves over to general counsel." Prall called me the next day and said "That is being worked out," and that's what happened. Hampson Gary was temporary commis-

sioner for about 15 minutes or whatever it was. He moved over, and that became the commission that included Anning Prall as chairman.

It also had George Henry Payne, who was William Randolph Hearst's designee. He was the tax commissioner of New York and was Hearst's man. He had worked for Hearst in the newspaper office section, and he was a dandy and one of the worst phonies that ever hit the FCC. But there's a long story on that.

What's the story?

The story is that the commission originally was set up under the law as a seven-man agency with three two-man divisions with the chairman sitting ex officio in each division, so there couldn't be a tie. Each division had a degree of autonomy that way. But the full commission had to handle matters that affected allocations. Payne was a publicity seeker. So he sat in on the hearings involving the Powel Crosley WLW 500 kilowatt experimental station in Cincinnati. And without asking permission or anything else, sitting at the table with this panel, he began asking questions that were designed to make headlines. This wasn't cricket; Payne was a member of the staid telegraph division.

Well, I was indignant. Everybody was indignant about those things. So I wrote an editorial calling Payne a "publicity-seeking politician." I called one of our lawyers, Duke Patrick, and said I wanted to make sure I wasn't libeling the so-and-so by saying that. And Patrick said: "Oh, you can make it stronger. Why don't you make it a 'publicity-seeking politician who has a manner that is hardly that of a gentleman?' "

We ran it that way, and Payne sued us. It seems that under common law or something you can't say someone is not a gentleman—even if he's a horse thief. Well, here we were in 1934, about three years old, and this was a hell of a thing. We didn't have any money. And so Payne got a guy in town named Roger Whiteford, who was a society lawyer—you know, the Metropolitan Club, that sort of thing—and Whiteford sued us for $100,000. We finally settled out of court but it cost us $11,000 in fees. It really hurt.

But that isn't the end of the story. The terms of the first commissioners were staggered for the first seven years. Payne was up for reappointment that year, and he was reappointed, and he had a victory party at the Metropolitan Club gloating about his victory over BROADCASTING. The next day the appointment was withdrawn. Don't ask me how.

After the 1934 act was passed, we had a number of common carrier people come to us and ask us whether we were going to broaden the scope of BROADCASTING to cover these other functions of the FCC.

Our answer was no—we operated on the premise that radio was analogous to the newspaper and not to the telephone or telegraph—but we said we'd see that they were served. So I drafted a letter and took it over to Judge Eugene Octave Sykes, who had been chairman of the radio commission and was serving as interim chairman of the new FCC before Prall's appointment. In effect, the letter said: "We are pleased to hear that the editors and publishers of BROADCASTING magazine are going to inaugurate a newsletter—*Tele-Communications Reports*—to serve the common carrier field, telephone, telegraph, cable, nonbroadcast services. If they do as good a job in this newsletter as they have done in the broadcast field, its customers will be well served."

So then I had to get somebody to run it. Codel and I each agreed we would put up $500 to hire a guy to be the editor. This, of course, was in the Depression. I got a man named Roland Davies, who used to work for the AP; he came in just about the time I left. Good reporter; he knew Herbert Hoover very well, and that appeared to me to be important. Davies was a ticket seller for the C&O Railroad in between jobs. Roland protested that he didn't know a thing about the field, but I said that a good reporter doesn't have to know anything about a field; he'll learn. Then I said: "Now, what we've got to do is to sell some subscriptions, and AT&T has got to be a big customer." And Davies said: "Oh, my mother went to school with Walter Gifford." He was the president of AT&T at the time, and Davies went up to New York and sold him 50 subscriptions. And that was the beginning of the Yellow Peril.

But the point I was making was that until the time I wrote out "tele-communications" there had been no such word in the lexicon, insofar as I am aware.

Well, by 1934 radio was doing pretty well, and it was beginning to knock the dickens out of the theater business. In one of the early issues of BROADCASTING there's a quote from a theater operator, who said, "You can get Eddie Cantor on the air for nothing. It costs you 50 cents or more to get into a theater." That was L.B. Wilson who was complaining about the damage being done to the theater.

Yes, but his own radio station—WCKY Cincinnati—was doing pretty well. L.B. was a figure of some interest in those days—all 4 feet 11 inches of him.

L.B. Wilson was a theater operator, a banker and owned a boiler factory in Covington, Ky. He owned some motion picture houses—not first runs—in Covington and across the river in Cincinnati. He also owned a very small piece of Churchill Downs. He owned a piece of the Gibson hotel in Cincinnati and was one of the brightest guys and one of the best story tellers you ever heard. He called me up very early on and asked me about a radio station; he wanted to get one.

So I recommended a lawyer to him—Paul Moses Segal, who was about the same height. Wilson wanted Cincinnati, which was the market, but the Ohio quota was full, and Kentucky was under quota. In the early days there were five radio zones, and each zone could have equivalent facilities, so he applied for a high frequency—1490, top of the band, highly undesirable in Covington.

I went to see him after he got this thing in Covington. Walked up four flights of stairs, got to the top of the steps, and his secretary said: "Oh, yes, Mr. Wilson's been expecting you." I went in and saw this cherubic little man behind this big desk. Double chin, expensive clothes. I was all out of breath, and he said: "Hi, young fellow. That's the reason I'm up here. I want to do the talking."

Then he said: "You've got a pretty good magazine here. What's a double truck cost?" and I didn't know what the hell a double truck was! I really didn't. I said: "You mean two pages?" And he said: "Yeah, right." So I said it was twice the cost of a page, which then was $160. And he said: "Well, I mean every issue." So I said that would be at the minimum rate of $120 a page. And he said: "I'll take it. Every issue a double truck." That went on practically as long as he lived, although the rates went up.

Well, he became one of the greatest characters I ever met. One day I was down there and he had Senator Ernst of Kentucky, a Republican, in for some function, and Wilson said: "Senator, I want to make this presentation to you." And he gave him a gold watch inscribed, "To the next President of the United States." It wasn't six months later that he had Alben Barkley there, the Democratic senator, and gave him a watch inscribed the same way.

But the funniest story I remember about L.B. was at an NAB convention in Cincinnati, probably around 1935. It was at the Netherland Plaza Hotel, which had two-story suites in the penthouse apartment floor. And everybody was there, including Bill Paley of CBS and Deac Aylesworth of NBC. And L.B. came up to the two of them, who were standing there arguing about something, and said: "You know, if the two of you went over Niagara Falls in a barrel, and it went end over end, there would always be a bastard on top."

Who else was outstanding in the radio business back when the magazine was getting started?

Stanley Hubbard was one of the leaders in those days—and, even though semi-retired, still is on the leading edge of things, as witness his involvement with DBS. In the Northwest there were the Fisher's Blend stations—still there. A pioneer in Oregon was Charles W. Myers, who coined such call letters as "KOIN" and

"KALE," both in Portland. And in the Midwest there was Colonel B.J. Palmer of the Palmer School of Chiropractic, who founded WHO Des Moines and WOC Davenport—where a young announcer-sportscaster named Ronald Reagan got his start.

The Storer dynasty is legend: started in Toledo under George B. Storer, who became the foremost group owner in TV after pioneering in radio. Many other owners tried to emulate Storer and his brother-in-law, J. Harold Ryan, who was the figure man. Ryan also was an interim president of the NAB.

And take John Fetzer, an engineer who put together his own station group, contenting himself with middle-sized markets rather than going for the top 10. And he wound up owning the Detroit Tigers and becoming the leading statesman in baseball.

J. Leonard Reinsch is a must on any list of the industry's leaders. First he put the Cox Broadcasting organization together and then he had the vision to pioneer in cable. And Bill Daniels, out in Denver, did enough for the development and promotion of CATV to earn the unofficial sobriquet as "the father of cable." And Tom Murphy at Capcities. He added unique dimensions to the concept of group media ownerships initiated by the late Frank Smith.

I could go on and on. The records are replete with success stories of people with a will to be creative and successful in a new and potentially important field. It was before the actuaries took over with the rule of thumb that everything had to be a "profit center."

About the time you got started, ASCAP was beginning to cause a lot of trouble on the music copyright front.

ASCAP caused trouble almost from the start. E. Claude Mills—Eugene Claude, but he called himself E. Claude—was general manager. He was a nice enough little guy—tough, wiry. I guess he was Irish. But he put it on the line to broadcasters. Pay up or we'll throw you in jail. We'll sue you at $250 per infringement. He was affable about the damn thing, but he shook the guys down.

Then they elected a guy named Gene Buck, who had written for the Ziegfeld Follies. He was a big, handsome guy. That was about the time that the boys in Montana, Ed Craney and his cronies, decided to start an anti-ASCAP insurrection. Gene Buck went down to Arizona on a vacation and through connections that Craney and Burt Wheeler [Senator Burton K.] and others had they threw Buck in jail. We ran the picture. Buck never forgave them—and he shouldn't have, either.

But ASCAP went out to get its pound of flesh, and it socked the broadcasters. He would say to a station: "You've got 824 infringements. That'll cost you $206,000. Or you can pay us a $200 license." You know what they'd do. They got them all that way. Eventually, that resulted in Broadcast Music Inc., as a rival copyright clearance service for music.

And there were other fringe outfits like SESAC. Nobody ever knew what SESAC had, but they had some religious stuff, and they'd catch a station playing some obscure religious thing and an arrangement that they had copyrighted—they called themselves the Society of European Stage Authors and Composers. It wasn't European at all. But they were modest; they'd say: "Just pay us $75 or so."

Then came—and we'll skip a few years now—1938. NAB was torn apart on the copyright issue, and Ike Levy, the Philadelphia lawyer, and his brother, Leon Levy, who was Bill Paley's brother-in-law, got into a situation whereby they said there ought to be a paid president for the NAB. And so they picked Neville Miller, the "flood mayor" of Louisville in 1937. He was a hero. And they told Neville that if he could get them out of this copyright mess, that he'd have their undying faith and a lifetime job.

Where were the Sarnoffs and the Paleys back when the magazine got started? Were they the giants in those days?

Very much so. David Sarnoff by that time was president of RCA and chairman of NBC. One of my early experiences with him when we started the magazine involved another New England senator, Charles W. Tobey of New Hampshire I think. He had Sarnoff testifying up on the Hill and asked him: "Now, what about this publication you own?" Sarnoff said: "I don't own any publication." And Tobey said: "Well, what about this BROADCASTING magazine? Isn't that fellow Taishoff your nephew?" Sarnoff said: "No, but it would be all right with me. It's a good publication."

We were both born in Minsk, Russia.

Did Deac Aylesworth figure in things much then?

Merlin Hall (Deac) Aylesworth was NBC president and did most of the testifying here. He was great on the witness stand, and he always conditioned the committee by pointing out that he was reared in Denver and that his father was a preacher, and he was taught the good Christian ethic. In Denver he had been chief lobbyist for the National Electric Light Association, NELA. Aylesworth would testify before these committees and pretty soon he'd have them all crying.

Paley came into the picture in 1928, I believe, when he induced his uncle, his father and the Levys and a gent named Iglehart and a few others to invest their money in acquiring Major Andy White's Columbia Broadcasting System, 12 or 16 stations. Why? Because he'd been the advertising manager of La Palina cigars when he came out of the Wharton School, and he knew what it had done for the cigar business. He did it with the *La Palina Hour* and Kate Smith, and did she ever move that moon over that mountain.

Sarnoff had an apartment here at the Shoreham—with his own barber chair. He used to call me and say: "Sol, I'm going to be in tomorrow. Can you have breakfast with me?" This happened once every two or three months, something like that. And one day he was pacing up and down, and he said: "Sol, as between Bill Paley and myself, who has made the greatest contribution?" I said: "I guess you have. After all, you were there earlier, long before Bill got into the business. And you've been in the manufacturing end along with the broadcasting end."

He said: "Well, second question. Who do you think's worth more money?" I said: "Well, Paley, of course. He went in and invested in this thing." He said: "How much do you think Paley's worth?" I said: "I don't know—probably 10 or 15 or 20 million dollars." And he said: "What do you think I'm worth?" I said: "I haven't thought about it, but I assume you're a millionaire." He said: "I won't be until next week when they're going to give me a block of stock that I can buy. And I've got to borrow to buy that." It was one of the first of the stock options.

Sarnoff had a tremendous ego, and I guess justifiably so. The man had a great mind. At the drop of a hat he could make a speech that would just ring the rafters. You know, for a person who was perhaps 11 years old when he came over here, practically self-educated, he had become a world leader.

Paley, on the other hand, came from an affluent family and had the benefit of a college education. But he also was a person who was creative—he had a style, was a young man, and he capitalized on it. And he had the faculty of picking good men. The first person of real stature that he hired was Ed Klauber, the day managing editor for the *New York Times*. He figured the *New York Times* was a pretty good paper. And he sensed the value of news very early. And the next topper he hired was Paul Kesten. And Paul Kesten proved a great mind too, a genius.

Bill Paley had a circle of friends who went to school with him and were valued co-workers. One of them was the perennial secretary of CBS, Larry Lowman. Then there was his lawyer friend who was his outside counsel until he fired him over some dispute involving the Museum of Modern Art. Ralph Colin. He had a lot of confidence in a fellow named Mefford Runyon, who was a money man who came along later.

And then Frank Stanton was hired on the basis of a three-page, single-spaced letter on radio audience measurements. And Paul Kesten hired him on the basis of the letter as assistant director of research. And then, in Chicago, there were H. Leslie Atlass and his brother, Ralph. Those were back in the formative days—when

soap operas and big business centered in Chicago. They were always celebrating something on yacht parties. Ralph was a guy who always had a cigarette dangling from his lips; never saw him without one. Les stuttered. His two good friends were Bill Wrigley and Gene Autry, and he put them together, and got Gene Autry in the business.

Les trained Jack Van Volkenburg, Jimmy Shouse, Carl George, Merle Jones. He ran what they called the Western Division of CBS. That was his turf, there was no question about it.

In those days I had a lovely time. I covered a hell of a lot of territory. I got great satisfaction, for example, out of seeing a man like Walter Brown from South Carolina coming up here. He started out on the Hill for us, covering some hearings that I couldn't handle because there were just two or three of us on the staff. And I got him interested in broadcasting and he winds up a millionaire station owner. And I got a lot of satisfaction out of the Lyndon Johnson family doing what they did.

And the satisfaction of getting a professional like Bob Kintner in the business when he really didn't want to.

These things just happened. I didn't go out there to educate them; they came with the franchise, I guess.

The Johnson friendship came about because you were neighbors, were you not?

We became neighbors later on. It came about in a peculiar way. I received a call from Lyndon the year he came to Washington as the executive assistant to Congressman Richard Kleberg, who owned the King Ranch in Texas. Johnson said, in effect: "Taishoff, I'm told that if I want to know anything about radio, I should see you. And I want to know about radio." He was in his twenties at the time. And I said: "All right, why don't you come down and have lunch with me? I have a fellow sitting in my office who knows more than I'll ever know. His name is J. Leonard Reinsch." And Johnson said: "No, why don't you fellows come up here? I'll take you to the House dining room."

And sure enough, we went up there, and we went to the House dining room. That was the beginning of a friendship. Thereafter, he checked me on anything that happened with broadcasting. I recall one little incident. After he'd been elected to the House, I suggested to him that Lady Bird, who had inherited $40,000 or $50,000 from her father, a Mr. Taylor, buy the little radio station in Austin rather than the little newspaper that Lyndon wanted to buy, because he wanted to get some return on that money and not be entirely dependent on his $10,000 salary as a member of the House and on contributions.

Johnson said: "You know, my friends in the House who are lawyers get fees. Those that are publishers get revenue. I was just a country school teacher, and they won't pay me any more than a few dollars for a lecture."

So I suggested that he get the radio station, but he said: "Well, that's not making any money either." I said: "But it will." And they bought the little radio station, KTBC. And that is a romance in itself, how that developed, but I won't go into it here.

There came a time when Lyndon decided to run for the Senate. They still owned the radio station, and I ran an editorial saying it would be wonderful to have someone in the Senate who knows what it is to meet a radio station's payroll. And I received an indignant wire from the publisher of the *Dallas Morning News* and the owner of WFAA, who was supporting a chap named Coke Stevenson, who'd been governor. The telegram said: "Since when is it the province of a trade paper to delve into state politics?"

And I also received a telegram from a fellow named Harold Hough of the *Fort Worth Star Telegram* and WBAP, applauding our support of Lyndon Johnson for the Senate, and so there you are. Lyndon was elected, and he did know what it was to meet a radio station payroll.

When Lyndon Johnson became President of the United States, the family was pretty well into the broadcasting business and the cable business. They had ownership of one television station and a radio station. They had 50% of another television station, 50% of a big cable operation down there, 25% of a couple of other things.

Lyndon and I were talking about the political situation that arose. Sam Rayburn, the Speaker of the House, who had been his campaign manager, had a nephew named Robert T. Bartley, who was a member of the FCC. Everyone thought that Bartley would be named chairman. I told Lyndon: "Look, there's nothing wrong with your naming a Republican chairman of this commission. We've got a fellow named Rosel Hyde, who had been chairman; he's a Republican, but he's not very active in politics. If you name him then they can't point the finger at you." And he said: "That solves my problem," and he named Rosel Hyde chairman.

Lee deForest occurs early in the magazine's history, just as a figure in the manufacturing business, then selling tubes.

Well, he was the inventor of the audion tube, I believe. And, from that he went into the manufacturing business, although he was not a great promoter himself. But he was regarded as a genius of sorts. He regarded radio as his invention, which it was not. He made a very definite contribution as an inventor, and gave radio a better voice. But to say that he was on a level with Marconi would be stretching it, I think. And that's in the audio area alone.

DeForest was used by critics of radio, even in those early days, to inveigh against radio's development by the powers that were. I'm not sure if the quote is precise, but he was quoted as having said, "What have you done to my child?" Actually, he loved publicity, and he got plenty of it. Newspapers in those days were willing to carry practically anything that anybody of any importance had to say against radio. They were afraid of radio.

The more enlightened publishers got into the medium—not because they thought it had a tremendous future, but because they thought it would be competitive. Not all of them; there were some who went to town with it—the *Chicago Tribune* with WGN, the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* with KSD, the *Milwaukee Journal* with WTMJ, the *Kansas City Star* with WDAF. These were all pioneers in the field, and they were very dominant newspapers.

That was in the Midwest. On the West Coast, the automotive dealers were the big operators. There was Don Lee with the Don Lee Network, the Cadillac-Oldsmobile distributor—and not only in Los Angeles, but through another name in the San Francisco Bay area. There was Earl Anthony, the Packard distributor and a substantial stockholder in Packard, who had KFI and KECA in Los Angeles. Those fellows battled as competitors not only in the automotive end but in the radio end as well.

In the number-one market, the *New York Times* did not get in until very, very late—and then in the specialized good music area with WQXR. And that came largely in partnership with John V.L. Hogan, whom we mentioned earlier (page 122). The *New York World,* which was very dominant, did not get into radio. The *New York Sun,* which probably had the best technical page on radio, with E.L. Bragdon as its editor for years, never got into it as far as I'm aware.

Hearst did. Have I related to you the only interview I had with William Randolph Hearst?

No. When did that happen?

It was probably about 1933. I met William Randolph Hearst Sr. at the Washington hotel. He had retained Elliott Roosevelt, the second son of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, as his vice president in charge of radio. And I asked him why he was going into radio—in Oklahoma, I believe—and he said: "People are getting too lazy to read, but they will listen. I have been in the forefront of using pictures in my newspapers for the same reason. Short text, pictures. Or they will listen." That was his philosophy.

If we can get back to the subject of the inventors, what about Zworykin?

Vladimir Zworykin was one of General Sarnoff's imports at RCA by way of Westinghouse. He was a fellow Russian. Zworykin was primarily television; he was the man who invented the iconoscope and the kinescope. He was given his head by Sarnoff;

he worked at the Princeton laboratories, which became the David Sarnoff Laboratories.

There were other television systems, but I think that Zworykin's invention transformed the medium from a mechanical to an electronic system, by developing these tubes. Zworykin was a very important factor in the development. Have we talked about Allen B. DuMont?

No. Where did he fit in?

Well, Allen DuMont was an authentic genius. He developed the oscilloscope, which became the heart of the picture tube. DuMont had had infantile paralysis, and to some degree he was self educated. He started the DuMont network, which began with stations in New York, Pittsburgh and Washington. The New York station—WABD—had his initials as call letters. It was later sold to what is now Metromedia, it's WNEW-TV now.

But there were a number of important projects that converged to make the television that you have today. RCA was very anxious to get under way in television because it was in the set manufacturing business. CBS wasn't too anxious to get started because it had such an investment in talent that it had raided from NBC, including the Jack Bennys and the Fred Allens and so forth.

What about Farnsworth?

Philo Farnsworth was an independent operator who developed a TV system of his own early on. He figured in the news, he was competitive, but he never really got off the ground.

Some accounts seem to credit him as being the father of television.

Well, there are so many fathers. There must be a lot of bastard offsprings, believe me. Farnsworth had a lot to do with it. There was E. Caldwell Jenkins who developed a mechanical TV system right outside Washington, in Wheaton, Md. He made his fortune with the Dixie cup, and then blew it in mechanical television early on. That would have been in the early thirties.

You haven't really gone into David Sarnoff at length. Is this as good a time as any to talk about perhaps the biggest giant of them all?

All right. Sarnoff was in his teens when he migrated from Minsk, Russia, to New York. He had to support his mother, who was a widow, and I think there were other children. He sold newspapers. And he also learned international code and became a "brass pounder" at an early age. At the time of the sinking of the Titanic he sat in the window of Wanamaker's department store and copied the list of survivors. President Hoover had ordered all other stations off the air.

When did you first meet Sarnoff?

I met him when he was assistant manager of the American Marconi Co. At that time he worked for a man named W.A. Winterbottom. Sarnoff never forgot him. When RCA was established, Winterbottom became the head of the Wireless Operating Co., their common carrier subsidiary.

My first recollection of a meeting with Sarnoff was with Owen Young, who was the head of General Electric and of the group assembling RCA. I recall that Young was a very impressive fellow—tall and handsome—and he said: "David is the man who is putting this together and David will be the head of it."

What were the components that formed RCA?

General Electric, Westinghouse, AT&T, American Marconi and United Fruit, which had its own communications system. The field was divided into a manufacturing business and a communications business, and RCA was just a wireless company at the start. What we call common carrier today. RCA was set up initially in 1919 at the request of the secretary of the Navy.

When they decided to create RCA as a manufacturing company, it was going to manufacture radio transmitters and radio receivers, but it didn't have the capital or the facilities. So although those early transmitters and receivers carried the RCA name, they were made by either Westinghouse or General Electric.

The telephone company at that time agreed to get out of the broadcasting business. It had WEAF in New York and WCAP (Chesapeake and Potomac) in Washington—that's WRC now. In any event, they got out of that business.

And that put RCA in the broadcasting business?

Yes, it put them in the broadcasting business and in 1926 was responsible for the creation of NBC. And then, as stations sprang up over the country, there were needs for additional service in the major markets. So they set up a Blue network as well. The Red and the Blue ostensibly were competitive, but the Red actually was the nationwide network and the Blue network had separate key stations in markets like New York, Chicago, Washington, Philadelphia and so forth but with the same supplementaries.

What kind of person was Sarnoff? What did he bring to the party?

He was an engineer—self taught, largely. A brilliant mind. An innovator and probably the world's foremost salesman of his day.

Really?

Yes, he was a tremendous salesman. He could inspire an audience of any kind. And, surprisingly, he had a great command of the language—ad lib or rehearsed—and he could just take over an audience.

I always had the impression that he was quite a distant figure, very Olympian, and difficult to deal with.

Well, he had a tremendous ego; there's no question about that. I can relate one experience with him. There was an antitrust suit, a criminal antitrust suit, against RCA naming Sarnoff and several other figures in RCA as defendants. Sarnoff was then chairman of the board and Frank Folsom, formerly of Montgomery Ward, was a new president of RCA. I had a date with Folsom, and Sarnoff stuck his head in and said: "Oh, Sol, I didn't know you were there. How are you doing?" And he came in and sat down.

This thing was on his mind, this antitrust suit, and he said: "Isn't it a sad commentary on a man as devoted as I am to this field to be confronted with a criminal prosecution?" And he said: "I think I've made a contribution here—certainly I'm not capable of a thing like this."

But he so impressed me, so swayed me that I went back to the Ambassador hotel, where I was staying, and wrote an editorial. And I said that if this thing is actionable, then it should be a civil suit, not a criminal suit. This man is not culpable; Folsom is not culpable. A week later, the Department of Justice changed it to a civil suit. And Sarnoff called me up and said: "Sol, I'm not putting this in writing, but now you know the power of the press, even the business press." And I've never forgotten that.

Was RCA the kind of company it was, and is, because of Sarnoff?

I would say Sarnoff wielded a great influence. Although he did not pick Merlin Hall Aylesworth to become the president of NBC. Owen Young had a lot to do with it because of the GE connection and the fact that Aylesworth was the lobbyist for the National Electric Light Association. Only Aylesworth surpassed Sarnoff in eloquence. He was a great president. He was the fellow who put together the deal with the Rockefellers that resulted in Radio City. If you look at the Nov. 1, 1931, issue of BROADCASTING you will see a mockup of Radio City. And when that thing was going up, he called me up one day—I went to New York quite frequently then—and he called me up and said, "I want to take you to see Radio City," and he took me out across those damn beams and I was scared to death.

What happened to Aylesworth?

Unfortunately, he moved from president to chairman to consultant, although he was still on the payroll. He lived at the St. Regis,

and my dates with him after that were at about 11 o'clock in the morning at the St. Regis bar. He was articulate, still good, but he began hitting it pretty hard, and so he burned out, I guess.

What about Niles Trammell? I noticed his name in an early issue when he was Chicago vice president for NBC, and the remark was made that one-third of all the network programs came out of Chicago in those days. Was that because of the soap operas?

Sure. Most of your agencies, particularly your spot agencies, were in Chicago—the Middle West. The soap operas came out of Chicago because it was about equidistant coast to coast, and—taking into account the time difference—it was regarded as the most economical way of setting up networks. And a lot of your advertising, your breadbasket stuff, your cereals—came out of that area. And mostly the soaps were there.

A good many of them were agency-owned in those days, were they not?

That's right. Frank Hummert of Blackett-Sample-Hummert, later Dancer-Fitzgerald-Sample, was the great soap writer; he'd write scripts all day long. And that was the farm belt—WLS was owned by the *Prairie Farmer,* originally by Sears, Roebuck and the *Prairie Farmer,* and WENR, which had half of WLS's time, was owned by the utility there. And WBBM was owned by the Atlass brothers, until CBS bought it.

So Chicago was really kind of a sub-capital of big-time radio in those days.

No question about it. It was the originating point, the soap operas were on all day long, and the West Coast was regarded only as a talent resource. Nothing originated there in the early days. And business on the West Coast was centered in San Francisco, not Los Angeles, which was regarded as tinsel and papier mache. And you went to New York for the hard business.

Niles Trammell was another figure who came in through the RCA Communications end. He had been in the military, and was hired as an RCA Communications salesman for the West Coast, and was brought into Chicago to head their WMAQ operation—which originally, incidentally, had been owned by the *Chicago Daily News,* while WGN was owned by the *Tribune.* WMAQ was a pioneer; I think the book will show it was probably set up in about 1922. The president of WMAQ Inc. was William S. Hedges, who also was the radio editor of the *Chicago Daily News*—which gave a banner headline to the Robert Mack dispatch every day.

Did he suffer from any conflict of interest in those dual roles?

Not in those days.

Did the *Chicago Daily News* carry any radio criticism at that time?

Oh, I don't think there was much criticism at all then. Very little. They couldn't fill the radio page. In those days there were probably a dozen basic stories in radio, and you kept rewriting them, putting a new lead on them. Hedges went with WMAQ when it was sold to NBC and, except for a short tenure at Crosley in Cincinnati, spent the rest of his career at NBC. He became station relations vice president for a while, and later retired.

Who were some of the other really dominant figures? Chicago used to have a reputation for being a pretty free-swinging town in those heydays of radio—I'm thinking of the Atlass brothers and so on.

Yes, Chicago was a fun town for broadcasters. They all had their favorite places. But you've got to keep in mind that these were pioneers, and they were younger people.

Take for example Harold Hough, who was circulation manager of the *Fort Worth Star Telegram* but president of their broadcast operations. And he operated in a business office out front at the newspaper, where he had a desk and a secretary. He was the head of WBAP, a clear channel station that was half time with WFAA in Dallas, with which they shared a regional station, too, for years.

Hough was a very influential fellow in the business, and a very wise old fellow. He was in the forefront of every activity, including the clear channel field. And he had a good friend named Glenn Snyder, who was vice president and general manager of WLS in Chicago, then owned by the *Prairie Farmer.* They had common interests—farm markets and that sort of thing.

WBAP never claimed to be a Dallas station; it was the frontier end of Texas, it was the longhorn country station, while WFAA was a metropolitan station. "The Old Hired Hand," as Hough called himself, would get on the air once in a while and ring a cow bell and philosophize. At one NAB conventiion, he and Glenn Snyder got a couple of overstuffed chairs placed out in front of the ballroom of the Conrad Hilton hotel in Chicago—then the Stevens hotel—and they had a little repartee that went something like this:

"Say, Glenn, there doesn't seem to be as much hell raising at these conventions as there used to be." And Glenn would say: "Harold, there's just as much—but other people are doing it!" And they'd just carry on that way.

Hough was originally from Oklahoma. His closest personal friend was Will Rogers, and he talked like Rogers. They owned a station together—KTOK—that they started in Oklahoma, even though Hough was in Texas.

Hough also had a wooden leg—no one knew how he lost his leg; he said it was run over by a train, but that wasn't it. And he had a penchant for taking a few drinks with the boys, playing cards. And he never took off his hat—big western hat—anywhere he went. Harold used to get a few drinks and sit in his hotel room with the boys, take off the wooden leg, get into his briefcase and take out an oil can and oil it. A lot of character, and a lot of fun.

What about Frank Stanton at CBS?

Well, to me, he made a major contribution to the evolution of broadcasting as we know it and has not been given enough credit. He was a man of ability. He had a touch of genius and exquisite taste. A perfectionist. And he had the faculty of picking good people. He achieved almost everything he wanted except the number-one spot at CBS; he never became the chief executive officer. Arthur Taylor was the first to whom Paley yielded the chief executive title. Then John Backe had the chief executive title, and now Thomas Wyman does. But it's just a title—Bill Paley is still the chief executive.

And why not? I mean, he owns the operation, and he hasn't fared badly. Any man who has the ability to call the right shots certainly has my applause. He's done it.

Paley is a little bit older than you, isn't he? He just turned 80. But he's perpetual youth.

Yes, and I was 77 on Oct. 8. About three years apart. Now it's not much, but in those days it was considerable.

Going back to Sarnoff. In 1953, in Chicago, [the late] Frank Beatty [a BROADCASTING writer and editor] and I went down to the Merchandise Mart, I think it was, to listen to Sarnoff address the Radio Manufacturers Association—the NAB also was meeting in Chicago at the same time. We were sitting at the press table when Sarnoff said: "You can write off radio. Television is the thing; write radio off."

I looked at Frank, and we did the old business of taking down every other sentence, so we had it damn near verbatim, and we wrote the story. And, boy, there were denials all over. But they couldn't deny it; there was a room full of people.

Over at the NAB it was a different story, because radio was still running the NAB. And there was hell to pay. But Sarnoff was impetuous and he was going with the ball. He was a promoter: "It's television, the hell with everything else." But he wasn't very happy about our reporting it.

Didn't he make a famous speech to affiliates that said essentially the same thing—get into television?

Oh, they were all making speeches to get into television, but not to write off radio. Radio had to pay the freight for television. But Sarnoff's enthusiasm was unbounded. In the early days of TV,

the ongoing wisecrack was that "you don't have to be crazy to go into television, but it helps." This was premised on the high start-up costs and low rates because of the paucity of sets and head counts. I'm reminded of this by a remark that crops up in our "2001" special report this week—something to the effect that a lot of money will be lost trying to find out which of the new technologies will work and which won't. It's ever been thus; that's the unfree part of the American system of free enterprise.

Let's get back to those early days in Washington. There are two figures that keep cropping up in the early thirties, Harry Butcher and Frank Russell, who were the CBS and NBC lobbyists, respectively.

Yes. It all started with a fellow named Milton Eisenhower. He was the younger brother of Ike, and he worked for the Department of Agriculture as secretary to William Jardine, the secretary of agriculture.

Mixing business with pleasure:

Early on. Changing of the guard at the National Association of Broadcasters on Aug. 8, 1938. L to r: Ed Kirby (WSM Nashville), who became public relations head of the trade association; Philip Loucks, Washington attorney and managing director of NAB; Gene O'Fallon, owner of KFEL Denver (whose call letters stood for "Kan't Find Enough Liquor"); Neville Miller, the NAB's first paid president; Herb Hollister, midwest broadcaster, and Sol Taishoff.

Studio tour. L to r: Victor A. Sholis, director of WHAS Louisville, escorted ST and Frank Silvernail, chief timebuyer for BBDO, and F. Ernest Lackey, president of the Kentucky Broadcasters Association, during the 1949 KBA convention in Louisville.

Family affair. Betty and Sol Taishoff were among the guests at this wedding party for the daughter of pioneer station representative Edward Petry (far right) in 1958. L to r: Herb Akerberg, chief engineer, CBS; ST; unidentified woman; Betty Taishoff; Lee J. Fitzpatrick of WJR Detroit. Others are unidentified.

Twosome. Betty and Sol Taishoff at Charles Farrell's Racquet Club in Palm Springs in 1961.

Shakespearean soiree. This motley crew of thwarted thespians performed at a Television Pioneers bacchanal written, staged and directed by Robert K. Richards, former editorial director of BROADCASTING. L to r: (seated) Clair R. McCollough, Steinman Stations, and Glenn Marshall, WJXT(TV) Jacksonville; (standing) Ernest Lee Jahncke, ex-NBC; Carl Haverlin, first president of the Broadcast Music Inc.; Ray Hamilton, station broker; "Dub" Rogers, KDUB-TV Lubbock, Tex., and TV Pioneer creator; John Fetzer of the Fetzer Stations, and cigar-smoking Sol Taishoff.

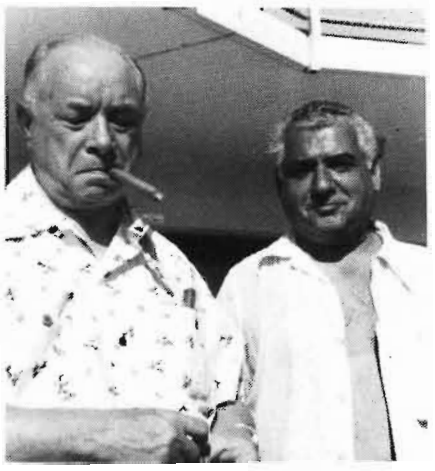
Birds of a feather. Radio Day at the Advertising Club of Washington, May 12, 1959. L to r: Sol Taishoff; Rosel H. Hyde, then acting chairman of the FCC; Robert H. Hinckley, vice president, ABC, and T.A.M. Craven, former chief engineer and twice a member of the FCC.

Milton started out as an educator of sorts, but he was a graduate of, I believe, the University of Iowa or Kansas or whatever, and he got to know Scoop Russell, who went to the same school. Russell became an assistant to Jardine—a lobbyist, I guess—and working with Milton. So when NBC needed a man here, Milton suggested Russell.

Then, when CBS needed a man here, Russell recommended Butcher, who had gone to school with him in Ames, Iowa. Butcher's wife went to Ames, too. So Butcher—who was then chief editor of the *Fertilizer Review*—became the CBS Washington representative. At first he was manager of WJSV, and from that he became the CBS vice president. And Butcher's wife became very friendly with Mamie Eisenhower; they lived at the Wardman Park hotel together. And they played bridge together with then Colonel Eisenhower.

Butcher became very close to Ike, and as Ike moved up, Ike

some snapshots taken along the way



The boys from Minsk. A 1956 photograph of ST (r) with David Sarnoff, chairman of RCA. Their shared birthplace—Minsk, in Belo (White) Russia—was pure coincidence.

Big leaguers. L to r: John Fetzer of the Fetzer Stations and owner of the Detroit Tigers; Frank Stanton, CBS vice chairman; Sol Taishoff; J. Leonard Reinsch, Cox Stations, and Herbert Klein, director of communications at the White House during President Nixon's tenure.

Honorees. In May 1981, Lowell Thomas (l), pioneer newscaster and one of the principals in Capital Cities Communications, was a recipient of the Peabody Award, as was BROADCASTING editor Sol Taishoff. Three months later, the venerated Thomas succumbed to a heart attack.

Spirit of '76. It was an NBC radio and TV affiliates convention, but the guests were ecumenical. L to r: Bob Hope; William S. Paley, chairman of CBS Inc.; Leonard Goldenson, chairman of ABC Inc.; Herbert S. Schlosser, then president of NBC (and now head of RCA's video-recording enterprises arm), and Sol Taishoff.

Heading for the barn. This member-guest tournament at Washington's Woodmont Country Club brought out (l to r) William P. Sims, Washington attorney; Charles F. Adams, executive vice president and director of the Washington office of the American Association of Advertising Agencies; Sol Taishoff, and Samuel Thurm, senior vice president of the Association of National Advertisers, Washington.

Present tense. This May 18, 1981, reception at the Capitol Hill Club brought together the immediate past and incumbent chairmen of FCC as guests of Broad Street Communications. L to r: Richard L. Geismar, chairman of Broad Street; ST; Fred E. Walker, Broad Street president; former FCC Chairman Robert E. Lee, and the incumbent chairman, Mark S. Fowler.

At ease. NAB President Vincent T. Wasilewski (l) and Sol Taishoff at the Kemper Open in Washington in June 1981.

probably suggested to him that he get in the service some way, and he went in the Navy; he was a lieutenant commander. When the war came along and Ike wanted a companion over there, since the ladies were companions here, Butch became a four-striper, a captain and an aide to Eisenhower.

Butcher never returned to CBS after the war, did he?

No. He went out to Santa Barbara and started a radio station and later a television station. He also got into cable and made a lot of money. Butch has lived a charmed life. The last I heard he was playing golf almost every day with the retired president of AP, Wes Gallagher, who lives there.

Did Russell stay with NBC until he retired?

Not exactly. Things got hot at NBC because Russell kept no records. When they had new treasurers of NBC come down to look at his expense accounts, he had none, and he'd say: "See General Sarnoff." Well, things got to the point where it was decided that Russell should no longer remain an officer with NBC. So he retired, but was hired back by RCA as a consultant, and not as an officer of the company. One provision was that he would have to have other clients—he couldn't just have RCA. So he sent out the alarm to me and to others—"I'll work for nothing; get me some clients." Well, he got to dealing with Bill Daniels, and got in on the ground floor of cable. He took no fees but took an interest in cable systems. He did very well.

It was a small fraternity then. But Russell was a very capable lobbyist. Sarnoff did some lobbying in his own right, and the report was that he'd hire anybody as a consultant at 25 G's if he felt he would do him some good. One of them was Oswald F. Schuette, who represented what he called the Radio Protective Association, which happened to be office space and a mimeograph in the National Press Building. And he would put out these releases inveighing against the RCA monopoly and the AT&T monopoly. Finally he was hired by RCA.

How did the "VIP-pers" trip come about?

That didn't take place until 1945, but its development began long before that. In 1941 or thereabouts, one Ed Kirby, director of public relations for the National Association of Broadcasters, had a reserve status. He was called into active duty at the Pentagon, in radio, as a major or possibly a lieutenant colonel. He was a graduate of Virginia Military Institute, the West Point of the South. Kirby—a very creative fellow who always had more balls in the air than he could ever catch—organized and headed a radio branch at the Pentagon.

Did he have anything to do with the 'Army Hour'?

Yes. I think he was instrumental in getting the *Army Hour* off the ground. He produced the *Big Picture* later on. He was very, very active in getting broadcasting cooperation down the line. Toward the end of the war there developed a need for broadcasters to take over radio stations as we—the allies—invaded the enemy countries. Radio, rather than newspapers, could get to the people immediately. It was the first target. But they needed people who knew what went on at radio stations, and they recruited.

A new reserve unit was created, to be called G-5. A Colonel Looker, probably at Kirby's suggestion, called me in and asked whether I would be available for possible service in recruitment of broadcasters for some engineering training, some on-the-air training—people who would know what to do. And I said, "Sure, I'd love to."

We cooked up the idea of getting a mission of broadcasters over there. We hand picked them. We went in uniform; it was 1945 and we had the assimilated rank of lieutenant colonels. This group of a dozen and a half went over after VE Day. We were in Piccadilly Circus on VJ Day.

We were in Unter den Linden at the Reichs Chancellery a couple of days later. We went all through Goebbel's files. This was the damnedest thing that ever happened. We had R&R at Bad Homburg. We hit damn near everywhere—even Cap d'Antibes was part of the phasing out.

Did you do any work?

A lot of work. We got to Radio Berlin and found the Russians in control. It was in the British sector, but the Russians had moved in—there was a little Russian in charge of the thing who was not authorized to be there. In our group there was a signal corps brigadier general whose name was Sam Ford; he was an RCA engineer. We go into this thing, look around, and I said, "Sam, what the hell is this? I've never seen anything like this before." I had found a machine that looked like a teleprinter, but there was a thin tape coming out of it. And Sam said, "How in the hell do you think I know? This is the first time I've been here, and I got in under your coattails. They wouldn't let us in here."

Well, we look at the strange stuff, and John Fetzer, who had a little engineering background, said, "Damn, they're playing music and voice with this stuff. I don't know what it is." We had come across the first oxydized tape and player. It was called the magnetiphone.

We took all this tape and stuffed it in our pockets, and we carried it back with us. It went into the hands of the alien property custodian, and it had to be released in the public domain. And that's the way tape got over here. 3-M was the first company to grab the ball—they just grabbed it and made a jillion dollars.

I recall going into what had been a concentration camp, and boy, it really hit me. Don Kearney was one of our conducting officers. He later became a broadcast executive with Corinthian and others, and he died just a few months ago (BROADCASTING, June 29).

We all took souvenirs; I have stuff at home now—pieces of the fireplace from Berchtesgaden; it was the most amazing place you ever saw, up in the clouds, in the Alps. John Fetzer came up with a telephone that had been torn off the wall, and he later made lectures all over, saying: "This was Hitler's telephone. With my own hands, I pulled it out of the rubble."

Well, the war was over now, and people were coming back home and there was a sudden demand to build radio. There was a big post-war rush for radio station applications, was there not?

There certainly was. That was when the daytimers were invented, and they were granting them almost at will. They hove onto the scene in great numbers; I would imagine the station population doubled in the course of a few years, and there were daytimers and limited timers—stations that went off the air at sunset, wherever they were, on dominant channels. Some of them made money, some of them lost money.

Charles Denny was chairman of the FCC then—from 1945 to 1947. He was succeeded by Wayne Coy, from 1947 to 1952.

Denny went to work for RCA. That's a story that can be told.

I happened to be having lunch or breakfast with General Sarnoff at the Shoreham hotel in Washington, and he was complaining about how difficult it was to get good executives who would make decisions. At that time a fellow named Joseph McConnell was president of NBC, and the general said that this fellow had a reputation of being a great salesman, a great executive, and he reported in glowing terms all the new business he sold, but failed to report the cancellations. And he had just arranged for this man to depart. I mentioned several friends of mine at NBC that I thought would make good presidents, and he said: "You're talking about administrators. I don't want administrators. I want dynamic leaders and decision makers."

I said: "Well, there's one guy that I don't get along with particularly, but he will make decisions, and that's Charlie Denny." And Sarnoff said: "I could buy that young man." And I said: "Well, you can't buy him now because he's chairman of the international telecommunications conference that's going on in Atlantic City—he's chairman of the conference and of the U.S. delegation."

It was after that conference was over that Denny resigned from

the FCC and joined RCA to become counsel for RCA or David Sarnoff Laboratories in Princeton. There was a training period and then he moved to NBC and became, I believe, executive vice president for station relations, or something of that kind. But it didn't work out too well. He transferred later on to RCA and became their new products head.

An interesting sidelight to that story is that when Denny went to RCA he took with him a fellow named David C. Adams, who was in the Common Carrier Branch of the FCC, and he knew nothing about broadcasting. And Adams became a star at NBC and Denny played out his career as the Washington vice president for RCA.

They've had an awful lot of trouble with NBC executives, up through today.

It's because of the RCA dominance, and the fact that NBC was one of the original breadwinners of RCA, and the head of RCA was also, at least nominally, the head of NBC. That was his prize operation and the glamour operation—the one they prided themselves on.

I wonder if RCA has ever gotten over David Sarnoff?

There's never been anyone who starred as Sarnoff did.

Well, after the post-World War II buildup of the radio system, then came television.

Actually, television began in the late 30's—there were perhaps 20 experimental stations authorized before the war. RCA immediately advertised sets, and the FCC cracked down on them and said, "You're exploiting experimental operations." And they put it back in the deep freeze. That stayed on through World War II, of course, and then they began authorizing permanent stations after the war.

By 1948 there were 108 stations on the air, and it had become apparent that the VHF spectrum wouldn't accommodate the demand. That's when the big freeze was put on, until 1952. Then the great gold rush was on.

But radio was still the dominant broadcast medium. We had very serious problems as a magazine. When television was emerging, we decided we had to get on the television bandwagon even though the radio guys hated hell out of television, which was poaching on their territory and getting its hands in their pockets—not unlike what has transpired in the past few years with cable.

We had changed our name from BROADCASTING and BROADCAST ADVERTISING to BROADCASTING • TELECASTING. The "TELECASTING" was very small. Gradually, as the medium grew, we increased the size of "TELECASTING." It got to the point where some of my very good friends—a fellow by the name of Ed Craney in Montana and a fellow in Tulsa whose name was Bill Way—sent out a letter to radio broadcasters saying that BROADCASTING had sold out to television, the enemy. They canceled their subscriptions and their advertising. But we kept increasing the size of "TELECASTING" until it equalled the size of "BROADCASTING" on the masthead.

What became of the Craney crusade?

It fell by the wayside. In the case of Craney, I told him on one occasion that he was cutting his own throat, that he would never be able to sell the three or four little radio stations he had in Montana for enough to retire on, but if he went into television, he could probably come out of it, and that's exactly what happened. In his case, Bill Way just evaporated. His station, KVOO, also became a television licensee, but not with Bill Way there.

The NAB was having problems, too. It changed its name to NARTB—the National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters—because of the protest of television people that they weren't being represented. But when television came to full bloom, we just dropped the "TELECASTING" because it was all broadcasting. And NARTB reverted to NAB.

What do you think of the future? What is your vision of the way things are going to go with all of the Fifth Estate media we cover?

Well, there are very interesting things developing in the field. Television seems to be the culprit—everybody points his finger at television for wasting our time, and for mediocrity. They don't talk about the good things.

My notion is that with all these developments in the field that generally fall under the label of technology, we are actually building a computerized information-entertainment center in the home: The television set in the future is not going to look anything like it does now. The tube will always give you the information, but it's going to come from many more sources. You're going to dial them in, just as we dial them on the telephone now.

And there will be great competition, and I would assume that when you have such competition, you're not worried about antitrust. But then the big ones will start eating the little ones. And after that some guy will come along with a new idea and knock the spots off some existing thing. And all these things will find a level.

And the public, whether we like it or not, is going to pay for these services one way or another. The one true thing that was said to me by a fellow early on in cable, when I made the argument, as we all did, that people are going to be paying for something they now get for free. And he said: "So what's wrong with that? Do you have a subscription price for your magazine? Do you sell advertising? You get both, don't you? You have a box office. Everything has a box office except television. And why shouldn't it have a box office?" And that's the philosophy of the thing.

Are you ready to buy that philosophy now?

Not all the way. I can't convince myself that the box office is the only way of getting it. If advertisers can get their return from sponsorship of the right sort of fare, why not? Why not give the public something? I don't see making the public pay for baseball games; yet that's what it's going to come to. That's what Walter O'Malley had in mind when he refused to sell baseball rights to television way back, when he moved to L.A. He told me so when I was with him. He said: "Why do that? We're going to get real money for that."

What is the best of all worlds? The public pays for damn near everything it gets, and it pays more than it ever paid before. And the people are earning more than they ever got before.

What's been your specialty in reporting, and the magazine's specialty?

I've always been in quest of that little tidbit, that little scoop, that little something that nobody else has. As for the magazine itself: The brick and mortar of this book are coverage of the events that happen, better than anyone else does it, and doing it honestly and without coloration. I think if you do an honest and sincere job of reporting, you will acquire a status that will be appreciated.

What do I do best? I don't know. I don't do anything as well as I used to. But I like people. I like to ferret out stuff. And I think that could be done more effectively if I got around a little more instead of sitting on my duff here. Maybe in this new life, I'll do it.

Could you give us your list of the five most memorable characters in and around this business? Or whatever number you choose to take. The people who had the greatest influence on the broadcast media?

You would have to begin with Sarnoff and Paley, and I don't see how you could leave Stanton out of it.

All three were associated with network operations. Does that say that the networks ran the business and/or were the primary influence on the business, up until now?

I think that's right. And I think I'd rank them one, two, three. After that it gets tough.

Who is number four?

Well, I'll give you a number four. If you're looking at innovators

or impact. I must go for Franklin D. Roosevelt. His "Fireside Chats" did more to alert the nation to what radio really was than anything that happened in the early days of this medium.

For number five, I'm going to get to a guy who falls in the network syndrome again. Pat Weaver. He was the most creative guy in those early days. I'm not going to the inventors, the Zworykins and the Farnsworths and the DuMonts.

And no overview of broadcasting development would be complete without the evolution of American Broadcasting Companies, under the inspired leadership of Leonard Goldenson. As president of United Paramount Theaters, he arranged to buy a bobtailed ABC Network from Edward J. Noble, the Lifesaver (candy with a hole in it) king for $25,500,000—if memory serves—in 1951, in what was characterized as a "merger."

Noble, who reportedly owned about 900 of the Thousand Islands in the St. Lawrence, as well as St. Catherine's in the Sea Island area of Georgia, was bailing out of the network business. He had acquired the Blue Network Co., which became ABC, from RCA for about $8 million cash in 1943 when RCA was under court mandate to dispose of one of its two networks.

What Noble and company acquired was a barebones operation having four clear-channel AM radio stations and construction permits for five major-market TV stations. A sagacious trader, Noble had sold WMCA(AM) New York to accommodate WJZ (now WABC[AM] New York), with the result that his acquisition of the Blue Network netted out at about $6.4 million. In 1948, Noble called me with the query, "What's my network worth?"

I replied, "I never regarded myself as an appraiser but I would put a value of $5 million on each of the five television station construction permits without regard to the lack of studios and other brick and mortar."

Later we learned that negotiations had been in progress for the sale of ABC to 20th Century-Fox but it wasn't until 1951 that Noble called me to advise me that he had made a deal with United Paramount (Mr. Goldenson as the negotiator) to "merge," involving a $25,500,000 figure. I asked him how come an additional $500,000. He replied "That was the interest I lost when Spyros Skouras, head of 20th Century-Fox, disagreed with your evaluation and made an offer of $23,500,000."

What Leonard Goldenson has done with ABC and its associated properties is now legend. He, like Bill Paley, had the ability to attract bright young people. But he worked alongside them, determined to put ABC-TV on top and to develop ABC Radio into a multiplicity of specialized networks. He succeeded ratings-wise and dollar-wise and even at this date, is still riding the crest.

Are there any station operators or station group owners who loom above all the rest?

One of the great modern success stories is Metromedia and its chairman, John Kluge, a former food broker, who parlayed a little AM station in the Washington area (WGAY Silver Spring, Md.) into the largest major-market group of independent television and radio stations as well as in the forefront of production and outdoor advertising and syndication.

I've already mentioned Storer and Cox and Capcities—on anyone's list of the foremost group broadcasters. And you certainly can't ignore Don McGannon of Westinghouse, although it's only fair to keep in mind that McGannon inherited something from a man named Walter Evans. Evans started out as an engineer working for Westinghouse. He was the chief engineer of KYW in Chicago, and was made the vice president in charge of radio for Westinghouse in the 30's. He bought the Fort Wayne stations—I was there celebrating with him during Prohibition, because we drank Old Rarity, the first time I'd ever seen it, in the Keenan Hotel. WOWO Fort Wayne. And they had WBZ in Boston, WBZA synchronized in Springfield, Mass. KDKA in Pittsburgh. Evans was head of the whole schmear. During the war, he was made head of their air arm, located in Baltimore, as well as the broadcast operation—again, a quiet engineering type.

He went to his board of directors and asked for five television stations—the maximum, five V's, and the board wouldn't give it to him. They said it was too experimental, and they gave him only one. They took Boston—WBZ-TV. They had to buy everything else they got in television.

But McGannon did make a great contribution. He was gutsy; he had courage. He had what amounted to a training school, too, and he developed a lot of other executives. There's almost a Don McGannon School of Broadcasting.

Right up there among the influentials you would have to put a guy who just lost his job—Fred Silverman. I think he took over in terms of network influence after Stanton retired. One of our editors used to say that Silverman was going to ruin the television networks of this country one at a time—he ruined CBS and then went over and ruined ABC and after he got through with NBC there was almost nothing left. But Fred Silverman ran television in this country for the last 15 years; he was THE most influential man in television. Almost everything on the air, in terms of program types and values, he put there.

Now, when it comes to the new generation of television, you have to rank Jerry Levin of HBO. There are similarities between his record and that of some of the early pioneers of the medium—there was no road map for them to follow. He started something new, with the satellite interconnection, that is changing all of our lives.

But if you're looking for heroes, there's no one man. Sarnoff happened to be the innovator, the American Marconi, whom Owen Young spotted as a comer. And Owen Young gave him a chance and Sarnoff delivered.

From time to time, I have been asked to evaluate members of the Federal Radio Commission and the FCC over the years. I have known every commissioner since the formation of the FRC in 1927 and its successor, the FCC, in 1934. The total is 64.

The FCC isn't and never was a popularity contest. Problems did not diminish, and competition for facilities burgeoned in every area. I would be disposed to rate Wayne Coy (1947-1952) as perhaps the most effective chairman. Rosel Hyde, a career success story, who began as a junior lawyer with the agency in 1927, served two tours as chairman and was admired without regard to political fealty as a conscientious and fair-minded head, immensely popular with the staff. He served as commissioner and twice as chairman from 1946 to 1969. Hyde, more than any other individual, was the savior of TV allocations. After the lifting of the deep freeze in 1952, he expedited authorization through "paper hearings" wherever possible, avoiding many tedious hearing encounters that might have run for months.

Frieda Hennock, a New York attorney (1948-1955), was the FCC's first distaff commissioner and used all her wiles and charm in getting results. More than anyone else, she was responsible for noncommercial, educational broadcast allocations—actually the fairy godmother of ETV.

The Kennedy administration brought in Newton N. Minow, who at 35 was one of the youngest chairmen ever. His maiden speech became the theme for the do-gooders everywhere—that, of course, was the catch-phrase "vast wasteland" as applied to TV.

Minow was—and still is—an activist. His law firm in Chicago numbers among its special clients such entities as CBS and AT&T—the latter he's representing in its quest for equal competitive footing in the volatile new world of telecommunications. AT&T alone, it should be remembered, has the nation "wired."

Dean Burch, the Arizona Republican (1969-1974), was regarded as efficient, even-tempered and judicial. He got things done in lawyer-like fashion. And his successor, Richard E. Wiley, was innovative, indefatigable, ubiquitous and always on the move, making speeches here, meetings there, with no regard for the clock or vacations.

And now, after some 54 years of communications regulation—I'm counting back to the Federal Radio Commission in 1927—we've got Mark Fowler. He came on board because the Reagan administration was trying to restore order out of the chaos precipitated in the three-year reign of Charles Ferris. Fowler's

"marketplace" approach, with minimal government snooping, epitomizes the Reagan mandate. And you have to remember that the President is himself familiar with broadcasting as a former news and sports commentator as well as an actor.

Fowler was never what you could call an establishment lawyer, although he too has at least some broadcaster credentials—he used to be a disk jockey. And, of course, he has endeared himself to the broadcast media by espousing repeal of Section 315 and its fairness doctrine. Now, I don't think he's likely to see fulfillment in this session of Congress, but it won't be for lack of trying. But Fowler does have a working majority of the FCC in place on critical issues. His "marketplace" approach and jettisoning of ascertainment and other hinder-and-delay devices seem possible, although some of the hard-liners in the Democrat-controlled House may block action. One thing is certain: The Ferris era of reckless disregard and punishment of the "ins" is over.

You often talk about the "American Plan of Broadcasting." What do you mean by that?

Well, at the time we started, there were two world systems. The so-called British plan, which was subsidized—the BBC—which had spread through Europe as it caught on. We were fighting for the American plan of free enterprise against the British plan.

There were a number of advocates of the other system, and they all stemmed from the so-called "Hoover Conferences" in the 1920's when Herbert Clark Hoover was secretary of commerce. These conferences were to formulate rules for the development of radio broadcasting. And Hoover said at these conferences: "Perish the thought that these services will ever be underwritten by the hawking of advertised products, or advertising of products."

But the Hoover conferences didn't get to that determination; they got to allocations, and the orderly allocation of facilities among various services—common carriers, ships, etc., and broadcast. Later, Hoover was to change his mind. And as president of the Broadcast Pioneers, I presented him an oak leaf cluster to an award that the Pioneers had given him for having been secretary of commerce at the time. In our first issue, we carried a speech—made by remote control to the NAB convention—by then President Hoover, in which he recognized broadcasting had made better progress here than under the British system—he ate his words on that.

The answer, of course, is that more and more of the world's broadcasting is now commercial to some degree. They may lump their commercials together, as in Britain, but you have a commercial system alongside the government system. And in television the costs are so great that they've almost had to go commercial. So the thing is almost academic now. Only in the very small countries where they couldn't sustain a private system do they have completely subsidized services. Except in your dictatorships, and even the Soviets have advertising on their television. They may be selling state commodities or state goods, but there are commercials.

So the American plan versus the British plan—or the European plan — was commercial versus noncommercial. And we contended that the British plan amounted to state control.

What do you think has been the result of the American plan versus the other?

Well, I think you've gotten a better product all down the line.

Does that explain the magazine's basic opposition to public broadcasting?

Yes, because we're for free enterprise. That's the American plan, a free competitive enterprise. Let him stand or fall on what he does. You now hear it as "marketplace," but they're talking about the same thing.

Do you think we'd be better off without public broadcasting?

That's a tough one. I think that public broadcasting should not be sustained by the government for a minority of the audience, using taxpayers' money to fill the needs of a very definite upper-middle-class minority of our people. Why? Let them contribute to the programs they want. Why should government funds be appropriated for the benefit of a minority of the people?

Would it have been better for public broadcasting to have been started as a pay television service?

Yes. Except that the techniques of collection weren't there at the start.

Basically, our argument against public television has been that it was using spectrum to supply a type of service that might possibly be used politically to the disadvantage of your populace or your electorate. That hasn't happened, although you have a sporadic complaint here or there.

Quite often I've defended our position against people who disagreed with it on the basis that, down deep in your heart, you fear totalitarianism, and that it comes out of your origins. That you don't want the government to have anything to do with the communication system.

That's essentially correct. I know that FDR was revered by many, many people as a great President, for a couple of terms. He did some pretty good things. But I know that he once called in his secretary of the interior, the old curmudgeon, Harold Ickes, and said: "You know, I get reaction when I make a fireside chat, but I'm beholden to the commercial networks to get the time. Why shouldn't there be a government network now? Look into the matter of putting together a network—perhaps for crop reports, weather reports and so forth for the farmers, through the Department of Agriculture. It would only take two or three clear channels to cover the country."

And Ickes did indeed make the study, and reported back that the commercial networks were too well entrenched, and that you could not do it with two or three clear channel stations, that you'd have to have a dozen or more, and you'd upset the balance. You just couldn't do it.

Well, what FDR had in mind was—without asking or being beholden to private interests—he could, any time he wanted, address the nation with any message that he had. Now that, to me, would have resulted in a dictatorship—you damn near had it by virtue of not two but first three and then four terms. The potential was always there. So, your answer is perfectly valid.

If you had it to do all over again, would you do it the same way?

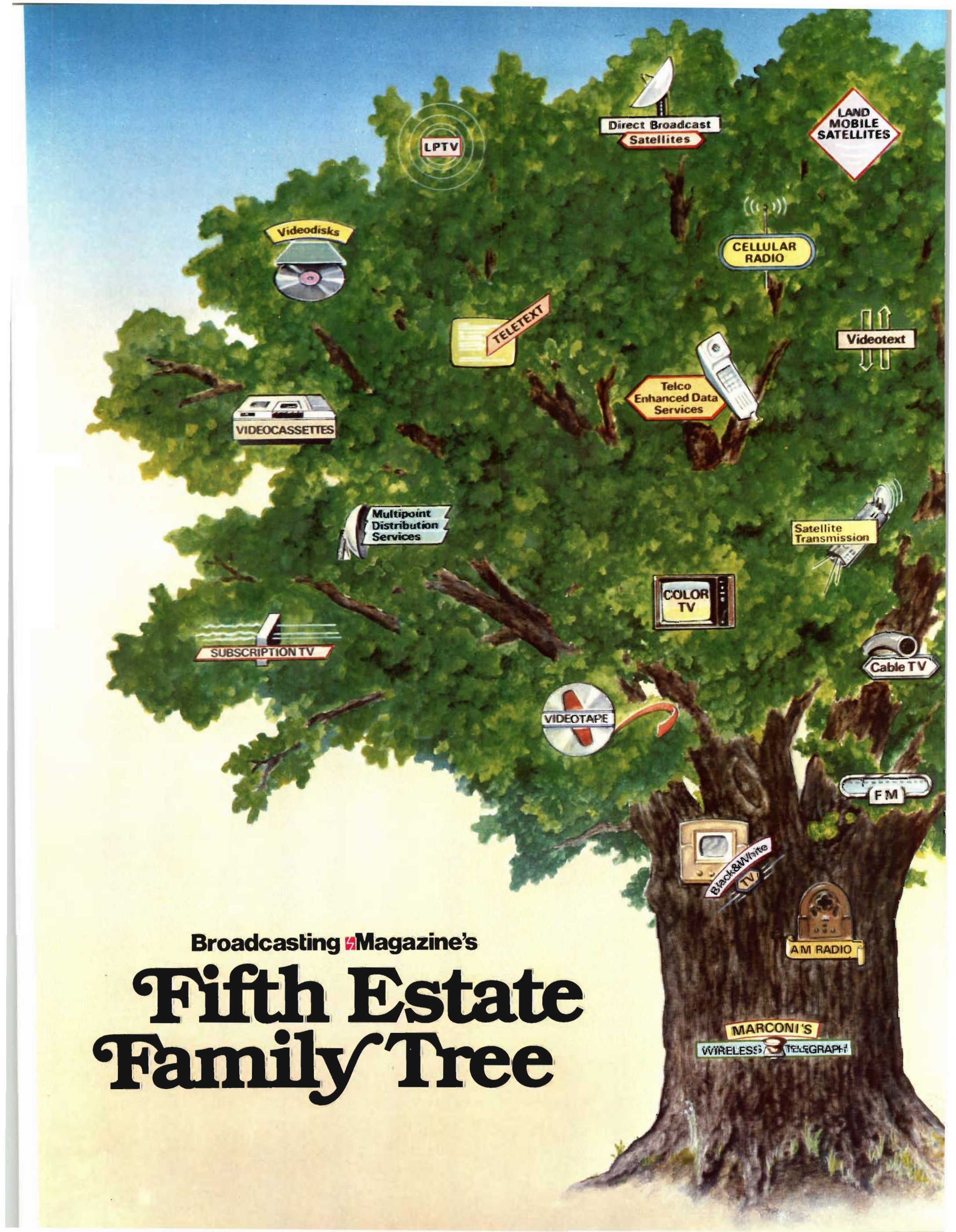
Perhaps not quite the same way. I'd spend more time with my family, for one thing. That was my greatest failing, and now it's my greatest regret.

Well, you can't go back. But in a sense we do get a chance to do it all over again every week at BROADCASTING. That's part of what makes the job so exciting. The trick is always to do it a little better the next time.

But the first 50 years were the hardest, there's no doubt about that. Yet we all have to acknowledge that they were only the beginning. We really haven't seen anything yet.

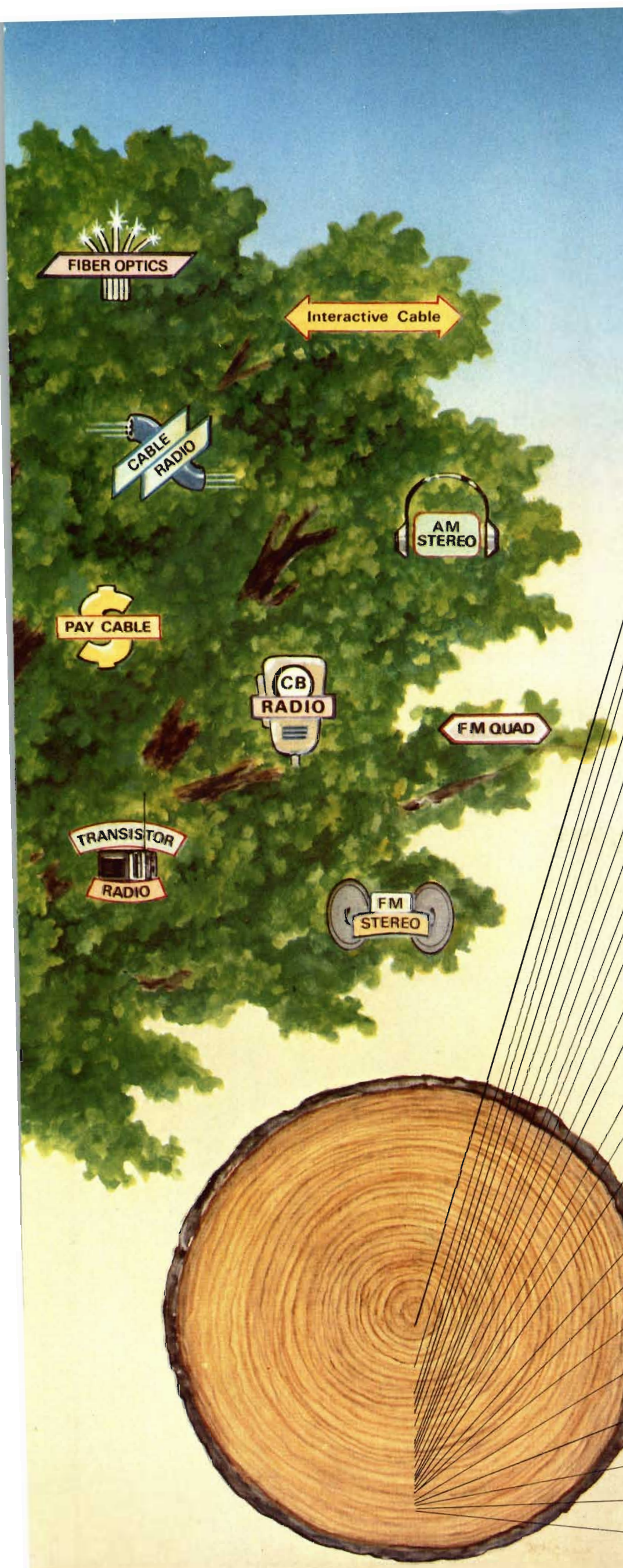
The great thing about it—as I mentioned a few weeks ago in talking to the Broadcast Financial Management Association [BROADCASTING, Sept. 28]—is that we're dealing with a magic medium: "wireless," if you want to settle for the old-fashioned term. But there's never been anything like broadcasting. "It flies through the air with the greatest of ease," I said to the financial people. And it does. And it's going to keep doing just that. Low-power TV. Direct broadcast satellites. Cellular radio we'll all be wearing around on our wrists. All part of the magic that belongs to no other communications media.

Truth to tell, I feel the same way about BROADCASTING, the magazine. I think it will continue to grow with the times. ■



Broadcasting Magazine's

Fifth Estate Family Tree



Genesis

1666 ☐ Sir Isaac Newton performs basic experiments on the spectrum.

1794 ☐ Allessandro Volta of Italy invents the voltaic cell.

1827 ☐ Sir Charles Wheatstone of England invents acoustic device to amplify sounds. He calls it a "microphone."

1844 ☐ Samuel F. B. Morse tests first telegraph with "What hath God wrought?" message sent on link between Washington and Baltimore.

1858 ☐ First transatlantic cable completed. President Buchanan and Queen Victoria exchange greetings.

1867 ☐ James Clerk Maxwell of Scotland develops electromagnetic theory.

1875 ☐ George R. Carey of Boston proposes system that would transmit and receive moving visual images electrically.

1876 ☐ Alexander Graham Bell invents the telephone.

1877 ☐ Thomas A. Edison applies for patent on a "phonograph or speaking machine."

1878 ☐ Sir William Cooke of England passes high voltage through a wire in a sealed glass tube causing a pinkish glow—evidence of cathode rays.

1884 ☐ Paul Nipkow of Germany patents a mechanical, rotating facsimile scanning disk.

1886 ☐ Heinrich Hertz of Germany proves that electromagnetic waves can be transmitted through space at the speed of light and can be reflected and refracted.

1895 ☐ Wilhelm Conrad Roentgen of Germany discovers X-rays.

1896 ☐ Guglielmo Marconi of Italy applies for British patent for wireless telegraphy. He receives American patent a year later.

1900 ☐ Arthur Kennelly and Sir Oliver Heaviside propose theory that radio waves will bounce off a reflective layer in the upper atmosphere (Kennelly-Heaviside layer) and cause them to carry great distances, especially at night.

1901 ☐ Marconi sends first transatlantic signal from England to Newfoundland.

1906 ☐ Lee deForest invents a three-element vacuum tube (the audion), which becomes the basis for amplication of radio signals.

1906 ☐ Reginald Fessenden transmits speech and phonograph music using a high-frequency generator.

1916 ☐ David Sarnoff, assistant traffic manager of Marconi Wireless Telegraph Co., proposes developing a "radio music box."

1920 ☐ Westinghouse's KDKA Pittsburgh is first licensed radio station; broadcasts Harding-Cox election returns.

1923 ☐ Vladimir Zworykin files for patent for all-electronic TV system.

1927 ☐ Philo T. Farnsworth applies for patent on image dissector camera tube.

1931 ☐ First issue of BROADCASTING is published on Oct. 15.

On Aug. 15, 1982, Sol Taishoff died. The last piece of copy to bear his mark was the foreword he had written for this 50th anniversary book, and which he approved on his hospital bed.

■

For years, Sol Taishoff had talked of writing a book about the art forms of radio and television, to which he had devoted his life. It was, in a way, an unrealized ambition; Sol Taishoff was always too fascinated with today and tomorrow to spend more than a few minutes at a time with yesterday. But, in another way, this is his book. It would not exist but for his vision, his energy and his love.

■

The pages that follow in this volume—and all the pages that will follow in subsequent issues of BROADCASTING magazine—are dedicated to his spirit and his memory.