

MEDIATRIX MONTHLY MEMO

VOLUME 1 NUMBER 6

MEDIATRIX MONTHLY MEMO

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MEDIATRIX, INC

600 W. Ninth St. Suite 502 • Los Angeles, CA 90015 • (213)623-2750

Rollye Bornstein
President

Dear Radio Friends:

Good to see many of you at the NAB, and even better to get your feedback on what I've been doing. Beginning with next month's issue (Vol.7-- New Orleans), you'll notice quite a few changes that will take into account your suggestions.

This volume follows the original format, and I think you'll find Tampa Bay to be interesting reading. None of you seem to be bothered by the fact that these issues have been running late, but it is my intention to attempt to catch up to schedule over the next few months.

Regardless of issue date, the information contained is current at the time of mailing. Rest assured you will get all 11 issues (and the annual) before you are asked to renew. However, several of you have indicated that for tax reasons you would prefer to be invoiced for 1987 this year. Because of that, next month's issue will contain all the information you'll need (and a discount offer for early payment).

Again, allow me to urge you to mention this publication to your friends. And as a reminder to you who already subscribe, don't forget about the telephone retrieval network-- if there's anything you need to know-- just ask!

Over the last few months, we've helped three individuals looking to acquire new or additional radio properties, aided several personalities seeking work-- and uncovered specific facts for a number of people wanting information but needing anonymity. It works rather well, and it's totally free to paid subscribers.

I look forward to chatting with many of you personally and hope to have Vol 7 in your hands within the month.

Thanks, as always, for your support.



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TAMPA BAY

THEN

WINQ

50,000 WATTS



CBS RADIO

10-10 ON YOUR DIA

Serving TAMPA/ST. PETERSBURG
CLEARWATER/CENTRAL FLORIDA

THE TALK OF FLORIDA'S WEST COAST

radio broadcasting company
tampa - st. petersburg • florida



WFLA 97
NEWS RADIO

WPDS
PARADISE 93.3 FM

Q105
TAMPA BAY

TODAY

W-Lite **95.7** FM
LITE ROCK • LESS TALK

CLASSIC ROCK
97.9 FM
WKRL



WTAN
1340 AM

WXCR
Classical 92 FM



WLUV
106.3 FM

Current Tampa Bay Arbitron Ratings
 (Mon.-Sun. 6AM-Mid., 12+ AQH Shares)

Station	Spring '86	Winter '86	Fall '85
WRBQ-FM	14.8	12.5	12.2
WWBA	10.6	13.0	11.7
WQYK	8.5	7.9	8.2
WUSA	5.7	6.1	7.6
WYNF	5.2	5.5	6.3
WKRL	5.0	4.5	4.8
WDAE	4.7	4.5	5.1
WFLA	4.1	3.6	3.3
WGUL	3.9	3.9	3.7
WPDS	3.9	3.0	2.1
WNLT	3.6	3.4	3.8
WSUN	3.6	4.9	5.8
WPLP	2.7	1.7	2.9
WTMP	2.5	2.0	1.9
WDUV	2.2	2.8	1.8
WHBO	1.5	1.8	1.0
WHVE	1.3	1.7	1.1
WXCR	1.2	.6	.6
WRXB	1.0	2.1	1.6
WLFF	1.0	1.3	.9
WRBQ-AM	.9	1.1	.9
WPAS	.8		.6
WPCV	.7		
WCBF	.7		
WLUV	.5	.5	
WTAN	.4	.6	.4
WHLY	.4		

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Rated Outlets In The Tampa Bay Metro By Format Classification

Adult Contemporary

WHVE-FM
WLVU-FM
WNLT-FM
WPDS-FM
WUSA-FM

AOR

WKRL (Classic Rock)
WYNF

Classical

WXCR

Contemporary Hits

WHLY-FM
WRBQ-AM-FM

Country

WSUN-AM
WPCV-FM
WQYK-FM

Easy Listening

WDUV-FM
WWBA-FM

MOR/Nostalgia

WDAE-AM
WGUL-FM
WLFF-AM
WPAS-AM
WTAN-AM

News/Talk

WFLA-AM
WPLP-AM

Oldies

WHBO-AM

Religion/Gospel

WCBF-AM

Urban/Black

WRXB-AM
WTMP-AM

Rated Outlets In The Tampa Bay Metro By Dial Position

AM

570	WPLP	1 kw		DA-2
620	WSUN	10 kw		DA-N
680	WLFF	1 kw-D		
970	WFLA	5 kw		DA-2
1010	WCBF	50 kw/	5 kw	DA-2
1040	WHBO	5 kw-D		
1150	WTMP	5 kw/	2.5 kw	DA-2
1250	WDAE	5 kw		DA-2
1340	WTAN	1 kw		DA-N
1380	WRBQ	5 kw		DA-N
1400	WPAS	1 kw		
1590	WRXB	5 kw/	1 kw	DA-2

FM

92.1	WXCR	3 kw/	400 ft.
93.3	WPDS	100 kw/	930 ft.
94.9	WYNF	100 kw/	1360 ft.
95.7	WNLN	100 kw/	450 ft.
97.5	WPCV	100 kw/	499 ft.
97.9	WKRL	100 kw/	639 ft.
99.5	WQYK	100 kw/	550 ft.
100.7	WUSA	100 kw/	503 ft.
102.5	WHVE	100 kw/	570 ft.
103.3	WDUV	100 kw/	576 ft.
104.7	WRBQ	100 kw/	555 ft.
105.5	WGUL	3 kw/	300 ft.
106.3	WLVU	3 kw/	300 ft.
106.7	WHLN	100 kw/	875 ft.
107.3	WWBA	100 kw/	649 ft.

Alphabetical Listing Of Rated Outlets In The Tampa Bay Metro

WCBF-AM (Seffner)
17185 Route 574 Box 1010
Seffner, FL 33584
(813) 689-8185
GM Wes Howard
PD John Newman
Group Owner Sudbrink

WDAE-AM (Tampa)
504 Reo Street
Tampa, FL 33609
(813) 876-0455
VP/GM Jim Mulla
PD Jim Nettleton
Group Owner Gannett

WDUV-FM (Bradenton)
2148 26th Avenue East
Bradenton, FL 33508
(813) 749-1420
Pres./GM Robert W. Nelson
OM Ross Martin

WFLA-AM (Tampa)
801 Jackson Street
Tampa, FL 33602
(813) 228-9797
VP/GM E. Michael Gaier
OM Jed Duvall
Group Owner Blair

WGUL-FM (New Port Richey)
7212 US Hwy 19 North
New Port Richey, FL 33552
(813) 849-2285
Pres./GM Carl J. Marcocci
OM Les Fouerster

WHBO-AM (Pinellas Park)
51 South Main Avenue #957
Clearwater, FL 33575
(813) 446-0957
Pres./GM Jonathan Pinch
OM Al Casey
PD Scott Robbins
Group Owner Metroplex

WHLY-FM (Leesburg)
233 North Lake Boulevard #1024
Altamonte Spring, FL 32701
(305) 339-1067
VP/GM Jim Tillery
PD Gerry Cagle

WHVE-FM (Sarasota)
4306 North Tamiami Trail
Sarasota, FL 33580
(813) 355-7131
GM Joseph Ademy
PD Steve Huntington
Group Owner Susquehanna

WKRL-FM (Clearwater)
8320 Starkey Road
Seminole, FL 33543
(813) 391-9988
VP/GM Don Hibbitts
PD Beau Raines
Group Owner Sandusky

WLFF-AM (St. Petersburg)
9549 Koger Boulevard #200
St. Petersburg, FL 33702
(813) 576-6868
GM Ted Wolfe
PD Dan Summerfield
Group Owner Century

WLVU-FM (Holiday)
1473 Springer Drive
Port Richey, FL 33568
(813) 447-0571
VP/GM Greg Cohane
PD Skip Willis

WNLT-FM (Clearwater)
51 South Main Avenue
Clearwater, FL 33571
(813) 446-0975
Pres./GM Jonathan Pinch
OM/PD Al Casey
Group Owner Metroplex

WPAS-AM (Zephyrhills)
Box 2009
Zephyrhills, FL 34283
(813) 782-1418
Pres./GM Charles F. Wister
PD Bruce Brodie

WPDS-FM (Tampa)
801 Jackson Street
Tampa, FL 33602
(813) 228-9797
VP/GM E. Michael Gaier
OM Jed Duvall
Group Owner Blair

WPLP-AM (Pinellas Park)
Box 48579
St. Petersburg, FL 33743
(813) 392-2215
GM George Joachim
PD Don Richards
Group Owner Guy Gannett

WPCV-FM (Winter Haven)
404 West Lime Street
Lakeland, FL 33806
(813) 682-8184
VP/GM Arthur J. Rowbotham
PD Dave Wright

WQYK-FM (St. Petersburg)
Box 20087
St. Petersburg, FL 33742
(813) 576-6055
VP/GM Bill Hill
PD Bill Jenkins
Group Owner Infinity

WRBQ-AM-FM (AM, St. Pete/ FM Tampa)
5510 Gray Street #130
Tampa, FL 33609
(813) 879-1420
Exec. VP/GM Michael D. Osterhout
OM Mason Dixon
PD Randy Kabrich
Group Owner Edens

WRXB-AM (St. Petersburg Beach)
3000 34th Street South #206 B
St. Petersburg Beach, FL 33712
(813) 864-1515
Pres./GM J. Eugene Danzey
PD El Mongo Stubbs

WSUN-AM (St. Petersburg)
9720 Executive Center #200
St. Petersburg, FL 33702
(813) 228-6090
VP/GM George Sosson
PD Kevin Murphy
Group Owner CBS

WTAN-FM (Clearwater)
200 Pierce Boulevard
Clearwater, FL 33516
(813) 461-1341
Pres./GM Rod Brosig
PD Rod Brosig

WTMP-AM (Temple Terrace)
Box 1101
Tampa, FL 33601
(813) 626-4108
Pres./GM Paul C. Major
PD Chris Turner

WUSA-FM (Tampa)
504 Reo Street
Tampa, FL 33609
(813) 876-0455
Pres./GM Jim Mulla
VP/OM Bob DeCarlo
Group Owner Gannett

WWBA-FM (St. Petersburg)
Koger Executive Center #200
Box 22000
St. Petersburg, FL 33742
(813) 576-1073
VP/GM Bill Burns
OM Vance Dillard
Group Owner Metromedia

WXCR-FM (Safety Harbor)
Box 8
Safety Harbor, FL 33572
(813) 797-9927
GM Tom Shealy
PD George Preston

WYNF-FM (Tampa)
9720 Executive Center #200
Tampa, FL 33702
(813) 228-6090
VP/GM George Sosson
PD Carey Curelop
Group Owner CBS

Market Profile: TAMPA BAY

A first glance at Florida turns up what looks like a well designed attempt at sectionalization: Miami, the haven for the colorful ethnic minorities of the Eastern Seaboard (see Vol.1 No.5-- Miami Profile), and Tampa boasting a populus largely of homogenous Midwestern descent. It's as if the tourist bureau of days gone by divided the state, promoting Tampa Bay to Illinois and Michigan while luring New Yorkers and the like to "Come On Down!" to Miami.

"We know our market," laughs one Chamber of Commerce executive from St. Petersburg who admits the target for Tampa Bay is definitely the Midwest. But what is less known is that the segregation of Florida has little to do with social intent and everything to do with the road department. Those who migrated to the Sunshine State during the first half of the century did so without the aid of Interstate travel. Left to US Highways, the choices were obvious-- Route 1 traveled the Atlantic Coastline bringing with it New England, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, terminating in Miami. Routes 27 and 41 emanated directly from the Midwest (27, traversing Michigan and eastern Indiana, into Ohio; 41 cutting through Wisconsin, Illinois and western Indiana) bringing travelers easily to Tampa Bay, hours before a Miami destination could be reached.

(Until the coming of Walt Disney World in 1971, Orlando was viewed as less desirable than either coast due to its land locked location. Consequently it became haven for the lower middle class seeking sunshine on a budget. Today that area holds its own with an enviable growth pattern and desirable location connecting the east coast cities of Daytona and Cocoa with the west coast populus in Tampa Bay and the Sarasota-Bradenton area.)

These days, the developed Interstate Highway system coupled with the affordability of air travel make any area accessible, but once a migration pattern emerges, it's likely to remain. Not only do Midwesterners seek to join their friends and family members who relocated previously, but the overblown horror stories about the current state of Miami further support their choice.

For whatever reason, Tampa Bay is currently among the top choices of places to live as evidenced by its overwhelming growth (said by some sources to be the fastest growing metropolitan area in the country). And even though Tampa faces newcomers daily, the area is marked by a staid conservatism-- a blend of its still evident Southern roots, and complimentary Midwestern influence.

Like Miami/Ft. Lauderdale, Tampa Bay is a market that can be divided into two distinct areas (in this case housing three cities): Hillsborough County, inland from the Bay to the east embracing Tampa; and Pinellas County lying between the Bay and the Gulf of Mexico including St. Petersburg to the south and Clearwater, north.

The Bay in question-- a massive body of water spanned by three major causeways, is more than a geographic gulf, becoming symbolic of the differing natures of the two counties-- Hillsborough, somewhat smaller though more significant from an industrial, business point of view, home to a younger, less affluent crowd; Pinellas, somewhat larger than Hillsborough, thriving on a service based economy including an emphasis on tourism, with a decidedly older (jokes about the median age are legendary) more affluent populus.

One long time resident described the difference as Pinellas being a relatively pretty county with a few ugly spots and Hillsborough being a relatively ugly county with a few pretty spots. An exaggeration at best, especially today with Tampa continually sprucing itself up in preparation for more and more corporations seeking a move to the Bay Area. In addition to the obvious desirability of a sunbelt location, Florida offers a favorable tax base (including no state income tax for individuals) and other inducements to relocation.

Here again, the difference between Hillsborough and Pinellas appears, with Pinellas, St. Petersburg in particular, rejecting change and Hillsborough, courting it. The philosophy is pragmatic on both sides. Change is a positive influence on Hillsborough where the effects of Tampa's growth are exhibited throughout the county (including the location of the International Airport-- offered first to Pinellas as was Busch Gardens, Tampa Stadium and the University of South Florida; its increasing role in the banking world; and the modernistic and attractive business complexes such as Westshore with its 700,000 square feet of office space comprising the new skyline). Change in Pinellas, on the other hand is a distinct threat to the lifestyle developed by the overwhelming percentage of retirees living on a fixed income, fearing anything that might disturb their favorable tax base.

While Tampa is the banking and business center, it is not the case that St. Petersburg or Clearwater react as bedroom communities. Each remain self contained entities and though St. Petersburg residents will trade in Clearwater (and vice versa), rarely with either view Tampa as a place to shop on any kind of regular basis. Again, the size of the bay alone prohibits frivolous drives (confirmed by a warning sign on one of the causeways "Next Gas 17 Miles").

The predominantly WASP populus on both sides of the Bay is interspersed with a somewhat significant black head count both in areas. Behind blacks, come Hispanics and while their influence is felt throughout the area (particularly in Tampa's "Ybor City" devoted to the Spanish culture of days gone by from quaint restaurants and shops to the yell heard round the world "Have A Tampa" (cigar, of course).), not one of the three Spanish language radio stations devoted to their needs (WTYM, WYOU, WAMA) managed to crack the Spring Arbitron. (Neither ethnic group is large enough to merit special weighting considerations.)

But it is far from the case that a civil war is being fought on domestic shores (our first impression of what sounded like the "Tampa verses St. Pete" battle based on news items and the like during our week long stay). A closer inspection turns up two differing peoples who somewhat distainfully tolerate each other.

Until the growth in popularity of FM and with it, the bandwidth's blanketing signals, the general rule of thumb was 'you could get a St. Petersburg listener to cume a Tampa radio station, but not the other way around.' The reasons for this division were two fold. Not only was St. Petersburg viewed as inferior by Tampa residents (much like Ft. Lauderdale was viewed by Miamian's in the '60s), but signal limitations of most AMs alone made it difficult for full market penetration.

But there is yet another symbolic point inherent in the great Tampa Bay from radio's perspective: It is as if the vacant waters represent the demographic void traditionally found here. It seems the area has been a haven for the young and the old--with little middle ground until recently. Regardless of age group however, the market as whole mirrors the typical adult contemporary listener-- white, upwardly mobile, decidedly slow to react-- one of radio's most coveted but toughest targets. It takes a unique radio station to span that gulf and entice this crowd-- and we'll begin our profile with Q105 which is nothing, if not that.

CONTEMPORARY HITS

Q-105 (WRBQ-AM-FM) is alone in this approach-- though it's arguable that they're in this approach at all. The top of the hour ID states it to be "Tampa Bay's Radio Station", and narrowing it down beyond that is somewhat tough.

Dayparted? It's almost block programmed. Take the Q Morning Zoo, for instance. The morning we caught them, co-hosts Cleveland Wheeler and Terrence McKeever were discussing the rezoning of the area of Hillsborough County in which Wheeler resides. Phone in guests included experts on the topic (one of which was Wheeler's neighbor) and the show would have been just as topical on WFLA as it was on Q-105.

Minutes later the conversation swung around to another "expert", this one playing the part (and very convincingly) of a well-into-middle-age Dr. Robert Larkin, allegedly a USC professor. Studying the sociological effects of trends and fads, the good doctor had happened upon a piece of research worth sharing. He demonstrated clearly with a number of examples that it was true: Michael Jackson and Latoya Jackson were one and the same. Surprised callers seemed to go for it hook line and sinker, but just as quickly, the conversation changed again. This time to Florida's new advertising slogan: "Florida. The Rules Are Different." The topic was legit, and the duo's parody of the farce of spending \$880,000 on that slogan was marked with insight and hilarity. The rules of the show seem somewhat like the state's weather. 'You don't like it now? Stick around a few minutes, it'll change.'

The feel of the Zoo is definitely mass appeal. It carries that 'something for everyone' aura created only through years of tenure. In Tampa, "America's most imitated morning show, the original Q Morning Zoo" (as the promos tout), is the mainstay. Even WWBA admits that it's likely that all day easy listening addicts are Q-105 converts in morning drive.

In addition to the long running tenure of Wheeler who dates back to the '70s on this particular station alone (McKeever joined in '83 to fill the void left by Shannon), the newest Zoo member, Jack Harris, has been around for nearly two decades, and ironically his former employer, WFLA, gave him up as old and tired several months ago. (The decidedly younger targeting Q-105 would have snapped him up immediately had it not been for contractual problems, see page 81.)

Musically the hour we caught was as varied as the topics from the mass appeal sounds of Steve Winwood's "Higher Love"; Mike & The Mechanic's "Taken In"; "Sweet Freedom" by Michael McDonald; and the Miami Sound Machine's "Words Get In The Way", to the novelty, "I'm My Own Grandpa" (by request) and the take off of Mick Jagger's current hit, "Toothless People", as well as a contest instrumental which was recognized as "The Lonely Bull" by Herb Alpert.

As if by magic, the show managed to include the topics and titles above along with a good dose of traffic, sports, news and weather without ever appearing rushed. It's the ideal morning show. Suitable for any format. Guaranteed to drag 'em in from 8 to 80. No wonder it's copied coast to coast (The station has the concept service marked and advertises it as available for license but for the most part, the imitations are just that --though we've got to admit, the element that ties it together in our estimation above all others is the same one found in most ultra successful morning offerings, one which can not be licensed or duplicated--longevity.).

Following the simulcast Zoo (which also includes Roger Schulman and Pat Brooks with news as well as Alan Archer's weather--the syndicated Archer is from the area) the stations separate with middays done by Bobby Rich on the FM and Chuck Bear on the AM. A listen to Rich's show during the 11:00 a.m. hour provided Phil Collins' "Against All Odds"; Belinda Carlyle's "Mad About You"; "Heart and Soul" by Huey Lewis; "Friends And Lovers" by Carl Anderson and Gloria Loring; Naked Eyes' "Always Something There To Remind Me"; Lionel Richie's "Dancin' On The Ceilin'"; "Holding Back The Years" by Simply Red; Billy Ocean's "They'll Be Sad Songs"; Laura Branigan's "Self Control"; and Howard Jones' "No One Is To Blame"; just prior to the weekly Wednesday "All Request Lunch Hour" noon feature ("Today it's your chance to hear your favorite song on the radio. The all request lunch hour less than an hour away starts at 12 noon. One solid hour of non stop requests. Start dialing that phone trying to get through now.").

Afternoons are again simulcast with another Q-105 fixture, Mason Dixon. If anything typifies Tampa Bay's young working population on Friday afternoon, it's Dixon's weekly offering. Reliable as clockwork, Dixon's relaxed southern style is interspersed with a frantic energy level as he kicks off the "Friday Festivities" with Alabama's "Forty Hour Week", and a rap including (the week we caught it): "Hello there bunky. Is it been one of them rough rough weeks for you? Say the raise you got was a platform to put yer chair on at the office? Then you went down and tried to have a banana breakfast with the Q-Zoo this morning and found out it didn't have any appeal to you whatsoever? That's enough to get you goin' ain't it bunky? You been lookin for King Kong, the big gorilla down at the Harbor Island Hotel, you been driving around the Interstate for three days trying to see it from there like they told you you could and that new building they just put up down there got in the way. Is that what's bugging you bunky? Is that what's got you by your BVD's? Well push it all aside for a little while and get ready. We're about to do Friday Festivities on Q-105, WRBQ-FM Tampa, WRBQ-AM St. Petersburg. Here we go, I want to hear some car horns blaring out there."

And sure enough, car horns could be heard, as well as the "Friday Friday" chant, leaving no room for doubt that it was 5:00 p.m. Friday afternoon, and all was well with the Easybeat's "Friday On My Mind", followed by more chanting interspersed with Huey Lewis' "Workin' For A Livin'"; "Party Town" by Glen Frey; Johnny Paycheck's "Take This Job and Shove it" (along with the attendant dedications from the working force to specific employers which were phoned in earlier and read with furvor by Dixon); "American Weekend" by Downes and Price (a local group now on Atlantic); and of course the perverbial Animal House number, "Shout" by Otis Day and the Nights which led directly into Jon Powers' news.

Powers', a holdover from the top 40 news of days gone by, has been gracing the Bay area with his uptempo energetic delivery since his arrival from Miami's WQAM in the '60s. (His move to Q-105 in the latter '70s was really not a move at all-- he came with the WLCY purchase (described below) and has never left.)

Evenings see the stations once more split into two separate entities with the FM presenting Jon Anthony from 7 to 10 followed by Brian Christopher 10 to 2 and Shauna Stevens 2 to 6. On the AM side, it's Night Trane Lane from 7 to midnight. (Simulcasting resumes midnight to 6.)

To be sure, Q-105 like all phenomenal successes is a team effort. Everyone from clerical workers to chief engineer Ralph Beaver display a pride and professionalism that spawns greatness. But in its present incarnation, if one person had to be singled out for the current success of Q-105, our hands down choice would be PD Randy Kabrich.

Aside from his previous track record (Kabrich first came to national prominence when he took an also ran Durham radio station and made it a runaway number one in the market (the only time a Durham outlet has ever been known to defeat the Raleigh mainstays-- it did so well, it even garnered shares in the Winston-Salem book, over 50 miles away). From there he moved to Doubleday's WAVA where he became the only PD to ever gain dominance over reigning Q-107. His move to Charlotte's WROQ-AM-FM produced still more success prior to joining Q-105); a look at Q-105's ratings history aptly demonstrates his abilities.

Though the complete history of Q-105 AM and FM is delineated below, suffice it to say that the station came on hot and remained as such throughout the seventies. But by the Fall of '80 (when Scott Shannon was brought in), the station's position had dropped to eighth place with a 5.5 overall. Shannon is credited, and rightly so, with an amazing turnaround. The Spring '81 numbers showed Q-105 in third place with an 8.8, and by the Fall (1981) the station was squarely on top with a 9.7.

Though the actual ranking vacillated between first and third throughout the remainder of Shannon's tenure (between easy listening WWBA and country WQYK), Q-105's numbers continued to climb: 10.3, 10.5, 11.6, 11.3 and upon Shannon exit after the Spring '83 book, an unprecedented 12.7-- a share that would represent Q's peak until Kabrich's arrival.

Between Shannon and Kabrich, from the Fall of '83 through the Spring of '85, the station assumed a comfortable, consistent number two role behind WWBA (trend: 11.7, 11.2, 11.2, 12.4). And though the shares were enviable, it was as if Q had fallen into a highly successful rut. Kabrich has pushed it beyond anyone's expectations to its current status-- a 15.9 in the summer book. (That's the FM alone, the combined share is just shy of a 17).

But the real numbers tale is found in the demographics. Q-105 is the only contemporary hits station in America to be number one in every demo from teens to 35-64. "Would you call us a contemporary hits station?", laughs Kabrich who admits the station defies all format categories, filling specific voids in specific dayparts.

To the listener though, it's cohesive and as one fellow PD noted, "Kabrich is the best programming technician in the country. I don't care when I turn (Q-105) on. I never hear a wrong record." That ability coupled with a feverish desire to win, make him a formidable programming enemy. Another PD unveiled his present plans to us but added-- "Don't tell Kabrich what we're up to, he doesn't need the help." Meant as humor, the underlying fact remains that everyone-- even old line easy listening WWBA, cited Q-105 as their main competition.

Ask Kabrich why Q is so successful and he'll defer the credit. One factor is longevity. Since Shannon's arrival six years ago, the station has remained strong and has become an accepted factor. People don't view it as a flash in the pan, they've come to rely on it as a part of their lifestyle. Another important ingredient is personality and Kabrich admits that over a half a million dollars annually goes to talent in morning drive alone-- and the bucks don't stop there. Dixon in afternoons is every bit as recognizable as Wheeler and McKeever in mornings. And of course, sleight of hand dayparting helps create the impossible, as the station is one of the rare facilities that truly is everything to everybody.

Kabrich's role here, as in his past positions, is taken very personally. Sublimating any personal desires, he focuses his entire being on guiding a station to success. He's interesting to watch as he portrays a spiritual devotion to winning coupled with the emotional earthiness of a childlike delight in doing so.

When one competing general manager called him unethical, Kabrich saw red. Ethics are a touchy subject, as Kabrich's track record will attest. More than once he has walked away from a coveted programming position over such an issue. A devout Christian, it is his belief that the key to success will be found in programming a family station-- something anyone can listen to without objection. Hence he will not allow advertisements for such entities as abortion clinics. But it is not that Kabrich is forcing his morality on the audience. He is just as quick to veto a "Right To Life" spot feeling the issue itself, be it pro or con, is unsuitable for family entertainment.

Consequently, being called unethical is something Kabrich did not appreciate --and he vowed to prove the guy right (within acceptable parameters of course). Hearing that the general manager in question was about to hire a morning team ("John Boy and Billy" from Charlotte), he began to plot. The duo's contract would not allow them to arrive before Christmas (1985), so Kabrich decided the best plan was the simple addition of a few characters to the morning Zoo immediately. Service marking both names, thus reserving their use in the state of Florida, John Boy was portrayed as a dumb redneck window washer with his sidekick Billy equally vapid. Unfortunately the fruit of his labor was never fully ripened. The station which had signed the duo was sold and the new owners' plans did not include the team.

The fact that Q 105 has no direct competition is a mixed blessing. If anything, it makes Kabrich's job tougher. Q is winning by being broad based, and while that strategy might have to be somewhat ammended if new competition aimed straight at them should evolve, it now is the case that everyone is out for a piece of the Q-- and with such wide appeal, if the station is not a finely honed entity, everyone could succeed just enough to do major damage.

But Q 105 is a finely tuned entity. A fortress of teamwork-- and though Kabrich threatened death and mutilation if we mentioned this guy and he left for a better offer, we'd like to single out yet another player: production director Mike Reeves. We've never met him, but his brilliance and dedication are evident. The promos we heard nearly stopped our breath. In fact, if crass commercialism had prevailed, the "Space Shuttle Salute" could have been pressed to disk and sold. Sorry Randy, we had to do it. But the way we see it, Reeves isn't going to get a "better" job. With seven years of tenure at one of America's hottest radio stations and Kabrich's loyalty to his talents, it's hard to imagine what could entice him.

The history of WRBQ-AM-FM is virtually the history of top 40 radio in Tampa, since WRBQ-AM at 1380 is the former WLCY, the top 40 mainstay of Tampa for well over a decade. Actually, the first outlet to devote its entire programming to the format was WALT, a daytimer which today is unrated WTIS (but for a number of years was WQYK-AM, see page 57 for its history). Briefly though, WALT signed on in 1958 with Roy E. Nilson as PD. For two years it provided the only local top 40 vehicle. Then in 1958, WLCY made the full time move.

Taking it back even further, to the sign on of 1380 in 1939, the original call letters were WTSP, which stood for "Welcome To St. Petersburg" and like most stations in the area back then, was founded in part by Walter Tison. (Tison came to the area in 1925 to put what would later become WFLA on the air (see page 47) and is and is considered by many to be the most influential pioneer of radio in the Bay Area with his hand in WSUN, WLAK, WTSP, WALT (the call letters bore his name), WCLE (today WLFW), WTAN, WTVT-13, and WWTB (today WHBO).

WTSP was operated from its 1939 sign on until its 1957 sale to the Rahall Brothers by the St. Petersburg Times. In fact, until the Rahall's completed construction for new studios on Gandy Boulevard, the station remained in the Times Building. Then on July 17, 1959 WLCY emerged and by 1960 there was no doubt that Tampa Bay had a 24 hour rock and roll voice.

Programmed by WALT's former PD, Roy Nilson (who remained in that position until 1971), WLCY's initial lineup included the late Dick Starr (then using his real last name, Stambaugh-- a very influential moniker in the area with his uncle being mayor of St. Petersburg Beach for instance); Frank Lynn in middays; Nilson in afternoons; Rock Robbins, evenings (real name Robert Bernstein, Robbins worked at WALT as a weekender while in high school as Robert B., and later went on to fame as Scotty Reagan); and Ralph Hughes, overnights.

It took four months to defeat WALT, one book (Hooper, back then); and in addition to the obvious advantage of a fulltimer verses a daytime only operation, WLCY was also armed with a promotion budget. Nilson laughingly recalls that back then it was a pretty major deal to give away a television set (black and white, of course) and by comparison, WLCY was offering automobiles to listeners (at the rate of a car a year), but in 1960 that created quite a stir.

WLCY's approach to music then and throughout Nilson's tenure could best be described as conservative. It was the station's policy to follow the charts, and the resultant MORish sound (by comparison to other top 40s of the day) left room for WALT's existence (with its aggressive philosophy of leading the charts airing the hits (and misses on occasion) first)-- and exist it did, straight into the mid '60s.

Obviously WLCY's conservative stance left room for plenty of competition. But strangely, virtually none existed in the '60s, save a brief attempt in 1963 by WFLA. Consequently it was often the case that teens would occasionally cume neighboring outlets for a new music fix. Among two that routinely registered a glimmer of audience were Cypress Springs' WGTO ("From the Gulf To the Ocean, this is WGTO-- Gainesville, Tampa, Orlando") and Sarasota's WYND (which even boasted Johnny Dark, today of Boston's CBS-FM.) And to be sure, some marginal local outlets (including Rex Rand's WINQ, "Wink"-- see Religion, WCBF page 67) took a seldom remembered stab at the format, but only WFLA came close to giving Nilson a problem. And for one brief moment (WFLA went back to its MOR fare within a year, see pages 48/49), it looked like the beginnings of a top 40 battle were shaping up.

As Nilson recalls, WFLA was attempting to raid his staff. They hired morning man Al Dunnaway and began promoting his arrival while waiting out his contractual obligations to LCY. In the meantime, Nilson convinced Dunnaway to stay, and in the midst of a flurry of promos for Dunnaway on WFLA came April Fools Day with WLCY's announcement that the joke was on WFLA-- Dunnaway wasn't going anywhere. And neither was WLCY. Not until the '70s when it was dethroned once and for all by WRBQ.

WRBQ's 104.7 dial position sprang to life in 1954 as WPKM which stood for Porter Knorr McBraswell-- Frank Knorr being the first owner, Porter his wife's maiden name and McBraswell the financier of the deal. Actually Knorr's desire to own a radio station had less to do with broadcasting than cost cutting measures. He had previously been running a background music service via telephone lines to all the businesses he was serving and the price of putting the station on the air roughly equalled one month's phone bill (approximately \$3,000). And until the FCC deemed it illegal to operate an over the air SCA, they did just that.

Operating on a shoestring (with an antenna not much larger), WPKM was known as "Medallion Radio". At the time, Florida Power and Light had a massive campaign to encourage the building of all electric homes. Such houses were called "Medallion Homes", a fact advertised widely in cross plugs involving the utility company and the construction firm. Knorr adopted the slogan and used it on the air.

The under utilized facility was subsequently sold to FTC (Frank) Brewer out of Pensacola, who held it until its 1971 purchase by Southern Broadcasting. Actually, the purchase was not approved until 1973 and as the story goes it was beautiful music impresario Ed Winton who slowed the deal. Seemingly Winton felt the Bay Area had more than enough easy listening as it was (and he would know, owning WPIN-AM-FM which became WWBA-AM-FM). WPKM had never been a major player but the word was out that the station's new call letters-- WEZX were chosen in accordance with Southern's plans to air Schulke's highly successful syndicated format which often bore the EZ calls.

By the time it was all settled Winton lost-- and won. The FCC saw no problem in awarding the license to Southern, but by then Southern saw more future in another format-- thanks in part to chief engineer Ralph Beaver. Beaver had been sent down in June of '73 to rebuild what would become WRBQ. (The station signed off in September, coming back on with the new approach in December.)

Beaver who previously had put on Southern's WRVQ in Richmond was quick to notice that Tampa had an abundance of easy listening outlets and a total void of top 40, save WLCY's stance which was described by more than one radiophile as 'having invented clutter. They sounded like a 1962 radio station in 1969.' While Nilson was an able programmer, by 1971 he was gone and it was clear that WLCY was resting on its laurels.

Beaver invited general manager Pete Schulte to his apartment, sat him down and played Paul Simon's Kodachrome album on his Garard turntable. Listening to "Loves Me Like A Rock" on Koss headphones, Schulte began to understand what Beaver was trying to tell him. Top 40 on FM did not have to sound like mono WDAE-FM, or worse yet, like the out of phase automation blaring Drake Chenault's "Hitparade" on WLCY-FM.

WRBQ's state of the art engineering coupled with the good programming sense of Bill Garcia (the station's first PD who doubled as afternoon personality) made an instant impression. Within a year they surpassed WLCY once and for all, and by 1978 they swallowed them whole, buying the station in what at the date may well have been the largest single transfer of licenses at one time.

Southern Broadcasting was in the process of being acquired by Harte Hanks which had agreed to purchase WLCY-AM-FM from Gulf United. (Gulf had just purchased WLCY-AM-FM-TV from the Rahall Brothers and had to spin off the AM-FM combo to comply with FCC regulations.) Since Southern owned WRBQ, it was necessary for Harte Hanks to spin off WLCY-FM, which it did to Taft.

In other words, WLCY-AM-FM-TV was previously owned by the Rahall's, WRBQ was previously owned by Southern. After the dust settled WLCY-WRBQ was owned by Harte Hanks; WLCY-TV was owned by Gulf United; and WLCY-FM (which previously changed calls to WYNF-- see AOR, page 38) was owned by Taft. (To make matters more confusing, WYNF was paired first with WDAE and later with WSUN-- we've done a graph of major transitions on page 68 .)

The Rahall's exit from Tampa radio ownership marked the end of one of the more colorful ownership reigns as the three West Virginia boys, Sam G., Farris and Joe, were often good for local copy. Few remember that the trio bought WTSP AM AND FM from the Times, but following the infinite wisdom of the day, they returned the "worthless" FM license to the commission only to engage in a fight for another FM frequency a decade later. (WTSP-FM at 101.5 today is Moody Bible's WKES).

As it turned out their fight was successful and 94.9 was awarded to the Rahalls by 1970. (The boys also applied for-- and received, Channel 10 which became the ABC affiliate. But the way we hear it, they would have gotten it alot sooner if they left the matter to their Washington lawyers. As it was, the fight lasted for about eight years-- so long that when first applied for, the call letters were WTSP-TV to match the radio calls. When awarded in 1965, it went on as WLCY-TV.)

Accounts sprinkled with exaggeration and lore show the Rahall boys with their hands full just deciding matters amongst themselves, let alone interacting with outsiders. More than one story revolves around a jock hired by one Rahall, only to find as he drove his U-Haul up to the front door that his talents were not appreciated by the others. These guys were made to order for top 40 ownership, and by comparison to today's somewhat cold and decidedly business like manner, their style, though often exasperating, is remembered fondly.

As for WLCY, Harte Hanks continued to operate the outlet as such for over a year before dropping the top 40 format and WLCY calls in favor of a news and information approach as WNSI. In 1982, it became WRBQ-AM, roughly mirroring the FM fare. (And in 1985, in a leveraged buy out, Harte Hanks radio head Gary Edens purchased the Tampa properties as well as combos in Richmond and Phoenix forming the basis for Edens Broadcasting. Harte Hanks' Houston combo KKBQ-AM-FM was sold to Gannett, and Birmingham's WSGN-AM subsequently went to Katz.)

The '70s saw WRBQ-FM ready for all comers-- and come they did from progressive 98 Rock (then WQXM, today WKRL, see page 39), top 40 and later AOR WYNF (see page 38) to disco WOKF (owned then by Ragan Henry, today Metroplex's WNLN, see page 32). To be sure, a number of other players emerged, but Q-105 (as the station was known from its inception) was tough-- and lucky.

Perhaps its closest call came in 1980 with Metroplex's first out of the box effort, WCKX (see page 32). But as the Metroplex outlet was undoing itself internally, Scott Shannon was rebuilding the sound of the Q. The rest, as they say, is history. -- A history which would be incomplete without the mention of another local boy, John Lander.

Lander first graced the Bay Area airwaves using the name Tom Clark on overnights at WFLA. Moving to Orlando in the advertising business, he returned to radio there as PD of WLOF in 1974. In '77 he came to WLCY as the PD/morning man, a post that lasted two years. '79 found him briefly teamed up with Ron Parker (a former co worker from WLCY) as the morning duo on Ragan Henry's WOKF (96 Fever).

Shortly thereafter, Lander left for KGB, San Diego and Parker headed for Miami's Zeta 4 (WINZ-FM). In 1981 both guys found themselves at Metroplex-- Parker still in Miami at Y-100 and Lander, back in Tampa as GM/PD of WCKX (96 Kicks). But by '82 all that had changed as both were out of work. Lander briefly did mornings at I-95 (WINZ-FM) in Miami while Parker moved to Tallahassee's WGLF as PD and within months (July of '82) both found themselves at KKBQ where they remain today.

To the folks at Orlando's Y-106 (WHLY, licensed to Leesburg and located in Altamonte Spring) making the Tampa book is not only a by-product of signal penetration, it's a downright shock. In the first place, Y-106 doesn't penetrate but the smallest portion of Tampa, but that portion (northeast of town past the University of South Florida) apparently had a diary holder, and so it is that we come to mention them and their .4 (which by the way was not duplicated in the recently released summer numbers).

Actually it gave us an excuse to hear a bit of Gerry Cagle's handiwork and the drive was well worth it. Cagle's flamboyance, as usual, translates into a compelling radio station. Who else would have a contest where listeners were asked to "send a postcard to Y-106, Payola". "Legal payola" explained the promo which added, "no selling gimics, no phrases. Y-106, where we pay you to play our songs." And paying they were, as listening at work would net you \$106 the first time they caught you, \$1,000 for the second offense, and \$5,000 if it happened thrice.

Living up to the jingle "Rockin' at the speed of light, Y-106", Cagle's outlet is decidedly more top 40 in approach than "Q" (with which of course it does not compete-- the two markets do not overlap) and that may account for why somebody most likely northeast of Temple Terrace strained to listen. What we caught on "Hot Rockin' Y-106" was pure excitement aimed at the young-- or at the very least the young at heart. Consider us prejudiced as we have always enjoyed Cagle's brand of radio (in evidence musically during our July listen from seldom played oldies ("She Blinded Me With Science") to new releases not yet heard elsewhere ("Walk Like A Man")).

But how does it do in Orlando, you ask? According to the spring numbers they've got a 10.6-- and at number one 12+, you can't do better than that. (Teen numbers? Try a 43.8! Finally, a radio station that may give a kid a reason to turn off MTV.)

ADULT CONTEMPORARY

According to the Spring numbers, five rated outlets fall into this category, and among the major contenders, Gannett's WUSA has the most tenure-- though you'd never know it from the call letter variations.

Purchased in 1980 as WJYW (Joy), Gannett dropped the Bonneville easy listening fare and the call letters in favor of adult contemporary WIQI (W-101). Earlier this year (on June 2nd), the current WUSA handle was adopted (in keeping with Gannett's USA Today and KUSA in St. Louis, ostensibly).

The current slogan, "The Best Oldies And The Best Of Today", pretty well sums up the approach which indeed does give AC listeners a steady fix of oldies while occasionally keeping them in touch with what's out there now. Afternoon drive, for instance, turned up "First Time Ever I Saw Your Face" by Roberta Flack; Elvis' "Teddy Bear"; "Say You Say Me" by Lionel Richie (which, by the way, skipped-- leaving us to wonder whether we were hearing it on cart, disc or CD); "These Eyes" by the Guess Who; Johnny Rivers' "Baby I Need Your Lovin"; "If You Leave Me Now" by Chicago; "Baby It's You" by the Shirelles; Simply Red's "Holding Back The Years"; Aretha Franklin's "Respect"; Hall & Oates, "Your Kiss Is On My List"; and Harold Melvin's "If You Don't Know Me By Now".

Though the top of the hour ID proclaimed, "And now more of the best oldies and the latest hits with Charlie Davis on W-101, a member of the Gannett Broadcasting Company", it turned out Johnny Williams was holding down the fort that day, which he did most adequately including some brief artist information interspersed with the required liners: "W-101 in the middle of 30 minutes of Continuous Music. Coming up ahead this hour great oldies from The Shirelles, Aretha Franklin, Creedence Clearwater Revival and more." -- "Yesterday's greatest, Today's latest. It's all put together the way you like it on W-101."

We were also touted on an upcoming promotion ("Fab Fifties Rock Around The Clock Cruise"-- a 7 day trip to the Caribbean); and advised that we could "Relax away those problems of the day with Pillow Talk, six nights a week, nine to midnight, three hours of incredible love songs. Tell a special friend and join Jerry Walker tonight on W-101."

Mornings found half of the "Bob and Judd" show on vacation. (Operations manager Bob DeCarlo, true to the Gannett credo was off golfing.) What remained (Judd Otis) was a pleasant surprise, with a style we'll fondly call 'relatably smart mouthed'. "Comin' up next hour we got Lionel Richie, the Chiffons, Neil Diamond, the Supremes, Kenny Rogers, Olivia Newton John, James Taylor, George Benson-- boy those are good-- somethin' wrong with the computer?"

Otis' lines were on target, and nicely tied the elements together (after one spot mentioning the prime rate, he confided he never concerned himself with that. "It's only important to those of you who plan to pay the loans back.") and when things didn't go so well he was quick to move along ("We've got hundreds of more lines just like that. We paid \$19 bucks for a book of 'em over the weekend.")

Making fun of himself, Bob (in absentia), and even the audience in an affable Southern style that bordered at times on mumbling, we found ourselves genuinely liking him-- and the stuff he played, particularly the Adlib's "Boy From New York City"; Mary Wells' "You Beat Me To The Punch"; the Chiffons' "He's So Fine"; "Come See About Me" by the Supremes; and Len Barry's "1-2-3". (The hour was rounded out with Neil Diamond's "September Morn"; Simply Red's "Holding Back The Years"; Lionel Richie's "Say You Say Me"; Olivia Newton John's "If You Love Me Let Me Know"; and "Heaven" by the BeeGees.)

We were also pleased to hear a good amount of creative local spots including a two voicer (featuring Bob and Judd) for a New Port Richey car dealer; and though DeCarlo was absent, it was truly his handiwork we were hearing as he has been the guiding force of the station since it's 1982 AC inception. (As for Otis, his background includes work at Houston's KULF). Following their morning offering is Scott Farrell, a market fixture for more than a decade (WFLA-FM, for instance) in the 9 to noon slot. Johnny Williams (alias Johnny Vee of the local "Dreams" disco) does noon to 2. Charlie Davis handles 2 to 7 with Jerry Walker on 7 to midnight. (Walker, a former TMP PD and long time local personality is actually Andrew Manning, the first black to be bussed in Tampa years ago). Mickey Stone does overnights.

If for nothing else, the history of WUSA's 100.7 dial position should be significant as it may well be the oldest commercial FM in town. Signing on in 1947 as WDAE, it was owned by the Tampa Times in combination with it's AM counterpart bearing the same calls. (For further details, see page 52.) It's safe to assume that the FM outlet did not enter the consciousness of most contemporary listeners until well into its ownership by Robert W. Rounsaville-- and even then there may be some question, considering the station was in mono, and in mono it would remain.

It was not that the Rounsaville folks had anything against stereo mind you. It was simply a matter of economics. So much of the sideband was sold that there was no room for stereo. And so mono WDAE-FM tried a number of approaches, none with much commitment and few with any success-- among them a preemptive fling at top 40. As the story goes, the folks at Rounsaville got wind of the fact that Southern would be taking WRBQ in that approach. PD Ed Ripley convinced GM Don Clark to act. And so it was that the ten inch tape reels housing an automated playlist mimicking that of WDAE-AM were replaced with a live 7 to midnight personality on "FM 101", as the station became known-- or unknown considering its lack of any processing and mono sound.

By the mid '70s the call letters were changed to WAVV as the "waves" of beautiful music rushed over the frequency where they remained (with a call letter change from "Wave" to "Joy"(WJYW)) until the December '82 switch to the first variation of AC.

A considerable amount of fine tuning has gone on since that point with the current emphasis on oldies being perhaps the farthest departure from what might be considered standard adult contemporary fare, leading a number of competitors to wonder what DeCarlo is up to. According to the numbers, he's up to first place in the AC race, and even though the Summer book shows the station dropping from a 5.7 to a 4.4, it still leads that arena by a two point margin.

Coming in at a 2.4 in the Summer book are two very different sounding AC stations, Blair's WPDS (down from a 3.9) and Metroplex's WNLT (down from a 3.6). "Paradise 93.3" as WPDS is known can perhaps best be described as a "Format 41" clone, and from our observation the station is perfectly poised to be a major player in the future.

Like most Format 41's, the competition is really not the AC crowd, but the easy listening purveyors; and here in Tampa, the runaway beautiful music winner is WWBA, a station that sounds like it's appealing to listeners 80 to dead. (See pages 42-44.)

Positioned between WUSA and WWBA, as time goes on it's a good bet that "Paradise 93.3" will emerge as WWBA's successor. Not only is WWBA's crowd threatened by extinction, but as newcomers continue to arrive (and continue they will-- Tampa, currently ranking 21st, is perhaps the fastest growing Metro in the country), it's likely that they'll perceive WPDS as a logical first choice in the soft AC/easy listening arena.

Programmed in house by Jed Duvall, the sound we heard was on target including, in morning drive, the Commodores; Hollies; Rita Coolidge; Three Degrees; Freddie Jackson; Frankie Valli; Jim Croce; Association; and even a little Frank Sinatra (Witchcraft).

Afternoons turned up James Taylor; Jeffrey Osborne; Barbra Streisand; ChiLites; Dan Fogelberg; Gloria Loring & Carl Anderson; and Phil Collins with Tre' Connor sitting in for R.J. Reynolds. Consistency is the rule of thumb here and the station flows evenly enough to be used as a background service while still maintaining a foreground approach as evidenced by such promotions as the summer long beach patrol which handed out Klondike bars and 7-Up to sun worshippers.

The current slogan (in addition to the much used "Paradise 93.3") is "Songs You Can Sing Along With"; and the delivery is much as you'd expect, with a personable, friendly embellishment of a number of basic liners including: "More of your favorite music for listening at home and at work, we're Paradise 93.3 WPDS"-- "We're played on the classiest stereos in the Tampa Bay area, just like the one in the offices of the Sperry Corporation, One Corporate Drive in Clearwater."-- "When traffic's got you all tied up, you can relax and unwind with the music from Paradise 93.3, WPDS"-- and the perennial weather close "...it's 92 in Tampa, 90 in St. Petersburg and Clearwater and in stereo it's always 93. Paradise 93.3, WPDS."

The line up at present includes Les Howard (formerly with WSUN) in mornings; Mark Larson (a former WYNF PD) middays; R.J. Reynolds (veteran of a number of formats here, coming from Los Angeles' KPOL in 1979) in afternoons; Tre' Connor nights; and Frank Shannon, overnights.

Utilizing tv, boards and community events to spread the word, it would appear that "Paradise" is here to stay. Duvall and his superiors understand that this is an approach that will take a number of years to properly ferment and it seems that they are willing to age it slowly. We're using a lot of qualifiers like "would appear" and "seems" because it's anyone's guess what will happen when the new owners take over. (It's also anyone's guess who the "new owners" will be, but it's a safe bet that there will be new owners in light of the fact that Reliance has taken over Blair and from most published accounts seems primed to sell the radio properties. Exactly what will happen could fill the pages of this volume and even the conjectures we might have now moment would most likely be altered by the time we went to press.)

But the way we see it, Duvall is on to something here. There seems to be a big hole between the WUSA's of the market and WWBA's geriatric approach, and though it can be argued that the weakest head count among the various demo groups exists in that hole, those figures will change in the future and WPDS will be primed to attract them.

The history of WPDS' 93.3 dial position is a relatively stable one. Signed on in 1948 as the FM counterpart of WFLA, the AM/FM combo existed for years as an MOR/easy listening pair run by Media General (which also owned the Tampa Tribune and WXFL TV-- see news/talk, WFLA page 48).

In December of '82, Blair acquired the properties which then were far from money machines. It would be fair to call this a turn around situation in so far as the bottom line was concerned. And so it was that Blair dropped the Schulke approach (number three in the format here) in favor of WOJC (Orange Juice Country?). Three in a row and say hello, so to speak, as it were-- your basic Burns-Somerset type approach to country which garnered your basic three shares (1983 trend (Winter, Spring, Fall: 5.3, 3.5, 3.1), not bad but no WQYK (comparative trend: 7.2, 8.0, 5.3).

Consequently the WFLA-FM calls returned, this time around with an uptempo AC approach under GM Al Brady Law, fresh from a brief stint at L.A.'s KLAC. (It should also be noted that it was in late '83 that Jim Hilliard assumed Blair Owned Stations helm.) Law brought with him PD Phil Hall and together they built a fine sounding AC station-- to everyone but the folks from Tampa. As Hall recalls, it was positioned between Q-105 and WIQI and while it was a first choice among newcomers, for long time residents it simply did not reflect the feel of the market.

Tampans, as previously pointed out, are very slow to react. (Hall likens it to a Southern town with the feel of, say, an Oklahoma City, as opposed to the Northern feel of Florida's other major market, Miami. And he thinks that one of radio's biggest problems here is the desire for immediate results instead of taking the time to build success.) The actual numbers, think many PDs, trail about six months behind what is really going on. If that be the case, we'll never know the results of Hall's efforts for in October of '84, Law transferred to Blair's Boston outlets.

Incoming GM Ken Clifford had new ideas that didn't include Hall's approach. (Hall laughingly recalls that this was the first time in his career a GM actually told him he was being blown out for "philosophical differences".) Under PD Ron Eric Taylor the station assumed a quasi top 40 stance, said by detractors to be the worst radio station ever heard in a major market. We can't comment as we didn't hear it, but we've heard all about it, in four part harmony from a number of sources which all seem to agree that this was not a stellar moment in broadcasting. Luckily for all concerned, it was little more than a moment as January of '85 brought with it one of Hilliard's trusted programmers: Jed Duvall.

Duvall cut his teeth on Indianapolis' WIBC, learning the Fairbanks' philosophy well. From there he headed to Memphis' WHBQ, and Des Moines' KMGK and KIOA before returning to WIBC only to emerge once more in Des Moines at WHO before coming to Tampa. What he faced upon his arrival was two stations in trouble. In March of '85, he changed the FM to the current soft AC stance with the WPDS call letters surfacing on September 26, 1985. (WPDS had previously been used by TV 59 in Indianapolis with no hint of the "Paradise" alliteration-- P stood for Palmera, D for Duffy and S for Simon, principals in that property.)

Present soft book aside, it's been uphill in paradise, with WPDS debuting in it's first partial book (Spring '85) with a 2.1 (up from a previous 1.4) followed by a 3.0 in the Fall of '85; and a 3.9 in the Spring '86 numbers. It's current 2.4 should be viewed as a minor setback, and one would hope that should the ownership soon change, the wisdom of waiting it out will prevail.

Across town at Metroplex's WNLТ, the drop to a 2.4 in the Summer book came as no surprise to PD Al Casey who had been watching the Arbitrends steadily decline after the Spring numbers. To counteract that trend, Casey looked for a clear cut hole-- and found one, in the fact that urban product has been virtually ignored by mass appeal stations here for a number of years.

At present two AM outlets serve the black populus sufficiently (see pages 61 - 64), but on the FM band, rhythmic product is decidedly lacking. Some would argue that the market complexion would dictate less black product, but Casey has worked well with a limited infusion of the stuff in a number of "lilly white" markets.

If nothing else, Casey has the competition wondering what he's up to. Said one competing PD, "How can you play that stuff and still call yourself 'Lite Rock'?" ("That stuff", incidently is hardly true urban product, rather a flavoring of such contained in a number of cross over tunes aired.) We can't claim it will mirror Tampa, (or work, for that matter) but we certainly agree the void exists-- about the size of the Grand Canyon, actually.

What does it sound like? We can't begin to tell you since the playlist revisions came after our visit. What we heard included (in morning drive) "Please Come To Boston" by Dave Loggins; "Easy Lover" by Philip Bailey and Phil Collins; the Manhattans' "Kiss And Say Goodbye"; "My Life" by Billy Joel; and a Billy Ocean threefer including "Suddenly", "They'll Be Sad Songs", and "Caribbean Queen".

(Afternoons turned up Whitney Houston's "Greatest Love"; Mike & The Mechanics' "All I Need Is A Miracle"; a threefer from Simon and Garfunkel including "Scarborough Faire", "A Hazy Shade Of Winter", and "Bridge Over Troubled Water" (along with the attendant reminder that WNLТ was the "Bay Area's original and official threefer station"); Patti Austin and James Ingram's "Come To Me"; "Holding Back The Years" by Simply Red; Firefall's "Just Remember I Love You"; Atlantic Star's "Secret Lovers"; "Words Get In The Way" by the Miami Sound Machine; and Bruce Springsteen's "Hungry Heart".)

If that sounds like alot of music, that's the impression Casey wants you to have. He describes the station as low profile and music intensive and views WIOI, Q-105, WPDS and WKRL as competitors. (Narrowing that down, he sees the station positioned between 101 and 105-- less talky than either, more mellow than 105, more uptempo than 101.)

The current slogan is "Lite Rock, Less Talk" and it's used repeatedly on "Tampa Bay's new W-Lite 95.7" as the station is identified. Mornings feature Jeff Lawrence with news anchor Mary Ruth Austin; Marvelous Marvin does middays; Casey himself handles 3 to 6; Parti Marti does nights; and overnights feature Steve Michaels.

A listen to Lawrence's morning drive slot turns up the basics you'd expect done with plenty of warmth and a smattering of personality, aided and abetted by some interesting interaction with Austin. The remainder of the day enforces the "less talk" concept. (The liners we caught predominantly revolved around plugs for the station's first birthday: "Thanks for listening during our first year. We sure do appreciate it. As we enter our second year we'd like to know how we can make 95.7 better for you. Write or call. We just want to be your favorite radio station. We're the new 95.7, W-Lite". Also relating to the topic were a number of pre recorded drops featuring listeners: "Hi This is Carl at First Florida in Tampa. I want to wish W-Lite 95.7 a Happy Birthday."

There's a theory that says radio stations sound like their program directors look. There's more than a hint of truth in that, you know. Actually, it's not how the PD looks per se. Rather it is often the case that a radio station will adopt the persona of the person in charge. (Usually it's a PD, though it can be the GM, or anyone else of sufficient consequence.) In the case of WNLT, "W-Lite 95.7" is pure Al Casey. It's up, friendly, brief and to the point-- it's nice. Not overly exciting, but well, nice.

Ironically, the void Casey sees in urban product was the same one noted by 95.7 a decade ago. While Casey is preserving his AC sound and tempering it with rhythm, the mid '70s saw Ragan Henry's BENI Broadcasting taking the station disco as WOKF. (Previously it had been easy listening WTAN-AM-FM, see page 54.)

Actually, BENI tried a number of contemporary approaches, none of which were able to claim the market (or capture the likes of Q-105), and in 1980, the FM facility was acquired by Norman Wain and Bob Weiss' Metroplex. "Fever 96" gave way to "Kicks 96" (WCKX) and the initial top 40 approach was an instant hit.

Debuting with a 5.8 in the Spring of '80 (behind Q-105's 6.5) by the Fall of '80, Kicks surpassed Q (a 5.9 to a 5.5). Jumping to an 8.2 in the Winter of '81 to Q's 6.1, the good news ends there. (Q, under Shannon came back strong in the Spring with an 8.8 while Kicks fell to a 6.0.)

Not only was Shannon good, but Kicks was internally experiencing troubles and so it was that Robert W. Walker, brought in to program Kicks from Metroplex's Y-100, returned to Miami. The ensuing John Lander reign was not among his more memorable (the fall '81 numbers had the station down to a 4.6 while Q was number one with a 9.7), and though Lander went on to incredible success in Houston, Kicks remained lackluster, switching in 1982 to adult contemporary "Magic", WMGG.

Everything short of a magician was tried to bolster WMGG, but little worked. After an encouraging Fall '82 debut of a 5.8, the station began to slip (trend: 5.8, 5.1, 3.9, 2.9, 2.7, 3.2, 3.5, 2.9, 2.6). After the all time low 2.6 in the Spring of '85, the station was revamped once more, remaining AC but bearing the WNLN calls.

Again, a first promising book. The Fall '85 figures showed it up to a 3.8. Winter '86 showed a slight drop to a 3.4, with the station rising to a 3.6 in the Spring. The current 2.4 is of course a blow, but as mentioned previously, not an unexpected one. Casey feels he's stopped the slippage and is primed to turn the outlet around.

Also penetrating the market are Sarasota's WHVE and Holiday's WLVU, and though WHVE is home to another metro and WLVU at best covers a small part of Tampa Bay, both cracked the Spring book and thus deserve our attention.

If for no other reason, we are compelled to discuss WHVE (which does pretty well here, actually) because of its historical significance of providing Tampa teens with some of the first glimmers of a fulltime "underground" format on FM. (Unusual though it is, "underground" started on AM here, see News/Talk WPLP, Pages 49/50.)

At 102.5, emanating from Sarasota (the city of license), what is now WHVE reappeared as WQSR in the early '70s-- and we mean reappeared. Seems as WYAK, the FM counterpart to WSAF in the '60s, the station was struck by lightning and blown off the air.

Off the air it remained (amidst heavy teeth gnashing and a flurry of allegations that the owner was lying to the FCC about the outlet's status) until it was sold. (Chuck Stewart sold it to Ted Rogers' Sarasota Radio Corporation.) Under Rogers' ownership the FM was reactivated with the combo being WQSA/WQSR. (WQSA is still around today, serving Sarasota with a talk format.)

As for WQSR, the initial approach was MOR, but it wasn't long before the staff was dabbling in "progressive" music at night, and by the end of '72, WQSR became THE progressive outlet. (WFSO (today WPLP) was an AM daytimer, and WUSF (owned by the University of South Florida) had just abandoned its night time "Underground Railroad".)

The folks at WQSR should have sent a thank you note to the University administration. Their timing was perfect. Many casual listeners simply believed that the next stop on the Underground Railroad was Sarasota and seemed contented to come "Quad 102 and a half" as the station was known for a time.

Of course as the '70s unfolded, WQSR faced tougher competition from Tampa (most notably in the form of Burkhart Abrams consulted WQXM, today WKRL-- see page 39). But rather than weakening 'QSR, WQXM's arrival caused the Sarasota outlet to take stock of itself, abandoning its free form approach in favor of a more formatted style headed by Steve Huntington. (Huntington who previously served as a jock on the outlet is back again today as PD.)

The AOR approach remained intact until Labor Day, 1979 when the station was purchased by Cosmos Broadcasting (the family run Greenville, SC based firm which then owned Louisville's WAVE among others). Cosmos' first act was to drop the calls-- and format, in favor of WSRZ, which as Huntington recalls might best be termed adult urban.

The details are sketchy because the approach was so brief. Huntington, then in Miami, recalls that the backlash was so great that within days the stance was re-evaluated with the outcome leaning once more toward an AOR sound, though not termed as such. Since that time the station has been straddling the fence, and though today's presentation includes a significant amount of albums, the artists you're likely to hear are decidedly mainstream, evidenced by the station's AC reporting status in the national trades.

Along with the evolution of the format, though not related to it, came two more call letter changes. On March 20, 1983, Cosmos took advantage of the FCC's loosened regulations by applying for WAVE. (Having previously sold WAVE-AM to the Hensons, Cosmos retained WAVE-TV, and under the new regulations it was permissible for the Sarasota radio outlet to bear the same calls.) On July 20, 1986, the calls were amended to WHVE (reflecting the sale of the outlet-- Cosmos, which still owns WAVE-TV, sold the station to Susquehanna for \$7 million).

Huntington, who has been back at the station for the past four years, says the plan is to continue to appeal to adults, including the recent use of jazz-- and he laughs at all the rumors of impending change. He jokingly says it's come full circle. The first rumors had the station going top 40. Then it was urban, followed by country and now top 40 once more. Replying to a recent inquiry as to why they were going top 40 he calmly explained 'that's 'cause country didn't work.'

Having a sense of humor is integral to this post which is somewhat of a juggling act at best-- superserving the home metro of Sarasota-Bradenton, while trying to pacify Tampa Bay. Since the station does cover Pinellas county and significant revenue is generated from it, the area can not be ignored. On the other hand, "102 and a half" as the station repeatedly calls itself, is faced with spotty coverage at best in Tampa.

It's likely that the "102 and a half" slogan will remain, though talk exists about amending it to "102.5" for digital reasons (though with a .5 frequency designation, little confusion exists). It's also likely that the outlet will continued to be referred to as "The Wave". (What is going is the seldom used "Gourmet Radio" slogan to describe the station's more avant garde fare which would be positioned somewhere between WUSA and "Classic Rock", WKRL.)

Musically we caught Bette Midler's "Do You Wanna Dance"; "Higher Love" by Steve Winwood; "New Girl In Town" by the Eagles; Dave Mason's "Only You Know and I Know"; Gordon Lightfoot's "Sundown"; "The Other Side Of Life" by the Moody Blues; and Chuck Mangione's "Journey To A Rainbow" in morning drive.

Afternoons gave us John Martin's "Lonely Love"; "When You're Only Lonely" by J.D. Souther; "Do It Again" by the Beach Boys; "When You Walk Into The Room" by the Searchers; as well as tunes from the Dire Straits (including the "Name It And Claim It" designated song, "So Far Away"); Arthur, Hurley And Gottlieb (It was Jeff Arthur's birthday); Boz Scaggs; and Anita Baker.

The lineup includes Carson Cooper and Norm Hale in mornings (Hale is a market mainstay, coming to WQSR direct from the Underground Railroad lending credence to the previously mentioned thought that the railroad merely stopped beyond the Tampa station one night in '72) with Sandy Stepp in middays. Huntington handles afternoons with John Brooks while Al Santana does nights. Mike Allen holds down the overnight fort.

A listen to Huntington turns up a likeable fellow, with a delivery reminiscent of a stand up comic confiding he's always wanted to be a jock-- just to read the liners. Speaking of which we were told that we'd hear "A touch of jazz between 9 and midnight on Gourmet Radio, the Wave".

Meanwhile, on the opposite end of Pinellas County, a listen to WLVU (licensed to Holiday) turned up Sade's "Sweetest Taboo"; Gary Puckett's "Young Girl"; Carly Simon's "You Belong To Me"; "Take My Breath Away" by Berlin; Dionne Warwick's "I Know I'll Never Love This Way Again"; "Little Darlin'" by the Diamonds; DeBarge's "Rhythm Of The Night"; "Front Page Story" by Neil Diamond; and Wham's "Careless Whisper".

Programmed by morning man Skip Willis with the help of TM (which actually is no longer TM having been bought by Wagon Train, a la Drake Chenault and moved to Albuquerque), the station also features Vince Collins in middays; Jeff Donovan, afternoons; Matt Ternes, evenings and Mike Culp, overnights. And while there's no mistaking the sound of a suburban outlet (or perhaps, exurban in this case), it's evident these guys are trying to sound better than their market location would dictate. The format held up (including a number of credible liners) even when the execution was shaky.

If the current AC format doesn't put the "all new WLVU" on the map, it may not matter. Historically speaking it has already achieved a place in the hall of fame by virtue of former owner Lowell Paxson.

Taking things back a few steps further, the FM had previously been WHBS which stood for "Holiday Broadcasting Service". To say the least, this class A outlet went unnoticed by Tampa Bay listeners. Meanwhile a class IV AM outlet at 1470 also graced the Holiday-Dunedin area. (Originally 1470 was licensed to Tarpon Springs and the owners wanted to "walk" it to Clearwater. They got as far as Dunedin before they realized the bulk of the signal difficulties were due to a ground system that was never hooked up. For a while the outlet tried rock (as WCWR) and oldies and finally resorted to bankruptcy.)

In the latter '70s Lowell Paxson purchased both 1470 and the class A FM at 106.3. Operating the AM as an all news outlet needless to say did not produce windfall profits. In order to bring in some capital and cut his losses, Paxson, always alert, happened upon the idea that formed the basis for "Home Shopping Network", the growing video service he operates out of Clearwater to this day.

As for the AM-FM combo, it became WVTY (as in new owners "Variety Broadcasters") in 1983, and the ensuing country format remained in place until the combo's sale in February, 1986 to Erie based Times Publishing. It was then that WLVU, "All New Love FM" debuted with an approach not wholly unlike "Format 41", positioned closest to WPDS-- though signal limitations alone, not to mention the resources of Blair, make this not a contest-- in fact, the recently released Summer figures show WLVU unranked.

In this arena we find two outlets: CBS' album oriented WYNF, and Sandusky's Classic Rock, WKRL. And the Spring ratings show them neck and neck (YNF in fifth place with a 5.2, and Classic Rock just behind in sixth place with a 5.0). (The Summer figures show WYNF and WKRL fourth and fifth respectively but the margin has somewhat widened: YNF has a 5.8, KRL a 4.7.)

If you were looking for the one outstanding thing to say about WYNF, its signal would win hands down. It's the envy of the market, perched on channel 13's tower (the CBS affiliate here) at 1350 feet. What's on that signal however, is not as noteworthy.

We can't claim there's anything wrong with WYNF. The basics are done. The titles you'd expect to hear are played. In fact just about everything you'd expect is here. But it's the unexpected, those moments of brilliance that make the difference between a competent station and a winner, that are missing.

The morning team of Nick Van Cleve and Jeff Jensen-- "Nick and Jeff, two four letter words in the morning"-- lived up to that summation, delving into bathroom humor (literally bodily function jokes) for two breaks running, so to speak. To their credit, they were trying-- perhaps too hard, to be topical and relatable mentioning a number of local happenings and reference to the fact that management was in town (funny to anyone working at a branch office, and Tampa has a number of those). Their interaction with news anchor Becky Gordon was natural, though her laugh was at best an irritant, and overall the show was adequate.

Musically, mornings featured Steve Winwood's "While You See A Chance"; "Dreamtime" by Daryl Hall; "Long Cool Woman" by the Hollies; GTR's "When The Heart Rules The Mind"; "Getting Better" by the Beatles; Boston's "Peace Of Mind"; Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers' "Don't Do Me Like That"; "Dust In The Wind" by Kansas; "Satisfaction" by the Stones; and the Hooter's "And We Danced.

Afternoons gave us the Doors' "Hello I Love You"; "Higher Love" by Steve Winwood; ELO's "Sweet Talkin' Woman"; "Look Away" by Big Country; Kim Mitchell's "Patio Lantern"; and Elton John's "Benny And The Jets". Personality Ron Diaz was also predictable, as were the liners-- "Tampa Bay's first choice for Rock and Roll, 95 WYNF, Tampa, St. Petersburg, Clearwater. The home of rock and roll," proclaimed the top of the hour ID. "95 YNF, Tampa Bay's rock and roll address."-- "95 YNF, always first with the best new rock and roll.-- and so forth.

Middays find Russ Albums (including his noontime "Hot Lunch" from noon to 1 which each day selects a listener's letter, airs his or her favorite titles and awards them with concert tickets and the like), while evenings are done by Charlie Logan. Logan, too, relies on listener input, particularly in the 9 to 10 p.m. all request hour (Known as 'the most radical hour in radio', Logan's listeners are bound to come up with all sorts of seldom played cuts as well as the usual fare.). Scott Phillips hosts the "All Night Party" from 10 to 2; and Dana Brown handles 2 to 6.

We agree that "95 YNF" is "Tampa Bay's Home Of Rock And Roll", and with no direct competition, it's likely to remain as such. But outstanding it is not. Then again, its 94.9 dial position is decidedly lacking in outstanding moments.

As previously mentioned (pages 23/24), it was signed on by the Rahall's around 1970 as the FM counterpart to WLCY. Former WLCY-AM-FM PD Roy Nilson recalls it "as one of the mysteries of the marketplace, why WLCY never got wise to FM." The initial offering was Drake Chenault's "Hitparade", but even when Nilson returned to Rahall (he left as PD in '71 and came back as national PD in '75 and '76), the outlet was still an automated after thought (including a good amount of simulcasting of the AM fare such as Ron Parker's night show).

Called "Rock 95", the station remained a WLCY-AM clone until 1977 when it became WYNF. Little else changed. WLCY-AM triumphed over its FM step child throughout the remainder of the reign of Rahall. (As previously noted (page 23), the station was sold in 1978, as part of a larger transaction. Gulf United bought the Rahall's local holdings (the AM/FM combo and a VHF network affiliate). In order to keep their intended purchase, the television outlet, radio was spun off. The end result was WLCY-AM going to Harte Hanks, and WYNF to Taft.)

It was under Taft's leadership that WYNF came into its own. Infact, the Taft people can be credited with WYNF's two greatest accomplishments-- format and signal dominance. It was they who engineered both the tower move, and the highly competitive stance which eventually claimed the life of WQXM (see WKRL, below).

Turning to an AOR approach in 1981, the station's first book (Fall '81), shows it ahead of former AOR leader WQXM, if only by a tenth of a point (5.0 to a 4.9). Victory, however, was not quite that clear cut. The following book shows that tenth lead reversed, with WQXM at a 4.2 and YNF, a 4.1. But by the Fall of '82, it was all over but the shouting-- WYNF had a 5.0 to QXM's 3.0. From then on there was no looking back, and in 1983, WQXM became WZNE, seguing to a top 40 approach.

What happened since then has been more of a function of ownership change than format ammendments. In 1985, Taft acquired (among other things) Gulf's television outlet in Tampa. (Ironic, in that Taft was able to acquire WYNF because of Gulf's purchase in the first place.) Now it was Taft's turn to do some spinning off. And so it was that WYNF (and its AM counterpart WSUN) was sold to CBS.

(Oh, and it should also be noted, if for no other reason than to muddy up the waters further that Taft had first paired WYNF with WDAE-AM which it purchased from Rounsaville in the latter '70s. Plough's sale to DKM (described below) paved the way for Taft to acquire WSUN, which it did (by spinning off WDAE-AM to Gannett, which once again paired WDAE-AM with the former WDAE-FM, which today as WUSA. Confused? You should be, see the graph on page 68).)

Conveniently, the history of WKRL is the history of WQXM, so before we return to the present, we'll delineate the high points. Signed on the air in December of '67, WQXM stood for "Quality and Excellence in Music", and with a mouthful like that, it's obvious that classical was the choice-- and an emotional one at that. Owned by a group of ten local people (workers at Honeywell), the Clearwater outlet was most likely doomed from the start due to infighting, so we hear. (And worse yet, we hear they sold the whole thing for about \$35,000.)

The lucky buyers were West Palm Beach based Joe Field and John Rutledge, who fared significantly better, taking the station in an easy listening vein until its 1975 sale to Plough. (Plough had previously bought WSUN in 1973, see country, page 58 .)

The latter '70s saw the station sensibly move to AOR. Not only was the easy listening arena thoroughly cluttered, but at that time, the only AOR facilities were Dan Johnson's daytimer (WFSO, see page 50) and Sarasota's WQSR, making them a winner-- if nothing else, by default.

The ensuing few years were kind to WQXM, with WFSO leaving the format and WQSR making its previously described changes (as WSRZ, see page 34). But in 1981, when WYNF made its move, the handwriting was on the wall. The market would not support two AOR outlets. 'YNF becoming the clearcut victor, WQXM gave up the stance becoming top 40 WZNE two years later in the fall of '83.

Timing was not on Plough's side. Moving away from AOR made sense on a number of levels, but by going top 40 they placed themselves head to head with WRBQ which was at an all time high. Though it had been more than a year since Metroplex's WCKX had given up the approach, Shannon and the "Q" were quick to fill any void that may have been created by CKX's move.

Consequently, WZNE's two year top 40 tenure was less than stellar. Their first book, (Fall '83) showed them at a 4.9, well ahead of their previous 3.3 as WQXM, but woefully behind WRBQ's 11.7. And their ensuing trend (6.0, 5.6, 4.3, 4.9, to a 4.8 in the Fall of '85) was lackluster. Though credible, this was hardly the sign of a winner, and so it was, that upon Sandusky's takeover in January of '86, WZNE became "Classic Rock", WKRL.

(For the record, it should be noted that Plough sold its radio properties in 1984. DKM, a group headed by Jim Wesley bought a number of them, including WZNE. Plough's Tampa Bay AM facility, WSUN, was sold to Taft. Sandusky, in late '85 purchased WZNE from DKM.)

Under the direction of veteran programmer Beau Raines, WKRL debuted "Classic Rock 97.9" with a broad based sound ranging from AC cross over material to traditional AOR mainstays. As the name implies, "Classic Rock" does rely on songs from the past, but Raines is quick to point out that at least 15% of the playlist is culled from currents and recurrents. Mixed right, Raines feels he can dispell any notion that the format is a short lived phenomenon.

It's somewhat of a juggling act, keeping the station sounding fresh while reflecting the past-- and even more so when you take into account the various tastes of the potential target. In this case, WKRL is positioned between WYNF and WRBQ-- to the left of "Q" and the right of YNF. As with most Classic Rock formats, WKRL's narrow target would be the upper demo male portion of traditional AOR numbers. A look at the Spring book shows the outlet to be on track: ahead of WYNF in men 18+ (more than double their numbers in men 25-49, for instance). (While WKRL is down somewhat in the Summer numbers, they continue to edge out YNF in male adults.)

The current slogans include the often used "Classic Rock 97.9" in addition to "Best rock of the '60s, '70s and '80s"; "The rock and roll you grew up with"; "Where all the great songs have gone"; and "Tampa Bay's best from yesterday and today". And the line up during our listens sounded like "All Beau Raines, All The Time". We not only caught him subbing for afternoon talent Mark Kessler, but also filling the morning vacancy (which has since been solved with the addition of Ted Cannarozzi).

A listen to him in both dayparts turned up a likeable enough fellow, and if we didn't know better, we would have been unaware of the fatigue he was experiencing. As it was, he excelled at holding all the elements together with a delivery that was brief and warm. The titles we heard (in mornings) included Boston's "More Than A Feelin'"; Stevie Nicks' "Leather and Lace"; "Couldn't Get It Right" by Climax Blues Band; "Fun Fun Fun" by the Beach Boys; Steve Miller Band's "Rock Me Baby"; "Throwin It All Away" from Genesis; "Sultans of Swing" by the Dire Straits and Jim Croce's "Time In A Bottle".

In addition to a number of liners (based on the above slogans) we were well informed as to the happenings in the area through such features as the "classic concert update" (the five times daily feature told us in this instance that Foghat, 38 Special, Ted Nugent, Eddie Murphy, James Taylor, the Moody Blues, and Fixx would all soon be performing) and Roger Christy's news. Christy's cast was a pleasant change from the abbreviated fare--infact he clocked in at over six minutes (including the spot), but he was both entertaining and informative, aiding the station's overall positioning nicely.

Raines also relies on a number of syndicated shorts and network offerings to round out the day, such as Dan Formento's "Today In Rock History" which we heard in the 8 a.m. hour. (Also aired are Global's "Reelin' In The Years"; CBS' "Rock Connections" and such local features as the Classic album of the day, Classic album battles, and the self descriptive "Classic Cafe At Noon". (Listeners submit their seven favorite songs. If their letter is chosen, they are treated to lunch and the airing of all seven titles.))

Following Raines (and now Cannarozzi) in middays is Cynthia Clarke; with Mark Kessler on afternoons. Brian Logan does 6 to 10; CJ McKay, 10 to 2; and Gary Ballinger, overnights. Checking out Raines' (in for Kessler) afternoon show, we were treated to the conclusion of "a half hour of continuous music. We've got another ten in a row comin' up real soon", told that "the classic battle albums tonight are Paul McCartney's 'Ram' against John Lennon's 'Walls and Bridges'" and urged to call to vote for our fave (on the Pinellas, Hillsborough or toll free Florida 800 numbers) which would be "played back in its entirety at 10 tonite."

We didn't stick around to see who won, but we did jot down the titles we heard in the 5 p.m. hour including "With A Little Help From My Friends" by the Beatles; "17" by Stevie Nicks; "Ride Captain Ride" by the Blues Image; ZZ Top's "Tush"; "Amy" by Pure Prairie League; CCR's "Bad Moon Risin'"; Don Henley's "Drivin' With Your Eyes Closed" (from the laser digital disc); Supertramp's "Goodbye Stranger"; "Sympathy For The Devil" by the Rolling Stones; and Brewer and Shipley's "One Toke Over The Line".

Raines' varied background is evidenced in his musical choices, having worked at a number of outlets ranging from top 40 96X (WMJX, Miami) to AOR KWK, St. Louis, to his most recent AC PD gig at Miami's "Love 94" (WWWL). And it's this background that greatly enhances WKRL's approach. These days Classic Rock can stand for anything from almost pure AOR to almost pure oldies. Many very different sounding radio stations are using this banner. Some are successful, others not. The difference lies in the ability to produce the right mix-- and from our brief listens, it sounds like Beau Raines is the guy for the job in Tampa. (See this month's "Find File" for more on the programming of "Classic Rock"-- pages 98-103).

EASY LISTENING

You can't argue with success, and there is no denying the success of WWBA. From a ratings standpoint, this outlet is one of the format's standouts. Routinely in the top 3 stations for over two decades (dating back to a time when the market was resplendent with "good music" stations including among others-- WFLA-FM, WGUL-AM-FM, WJYW), WWBA has long done away with all direct competition and remains on top today (number two to WRBQ in the Spring and Summer numbers, leading the market last Winter).

The master architect is former WWBA-AM-FM owner Ed Winton, who remains the station's consultant today. While many easy listening outlets, such as those serviced by Bonneville, are attempting to lure a younger crowd with a more contemporary sound, WWBA seems targeted to the senior citizen set. Obviously in a market where retirees predominate, there is wisdom in capturing this aging crowd but to an outsider, Winton's sound is somewhat surprising.

A listen to the station's 1 to 2 p.m. "Escape Hour" (which also airs mornings from 9 to 10 a.m) for instance, pours on the syrup full force. We admit more than a bit of prejudice in judging the sincerity of host Dave Mann since our knowledge of him is as a high energy rock jock, a far cry from his current role: "It's one o'clock and its time for an hour that best represents your great escape, FM 107, WWBA's afternoon escape hour. Whatever you're doing, relax, enjoy music like your favorites from "Barbra Streisand"; "Perry Como"; "Peter, Paul and Mary"; and when you hear the Christopher Cross song this hour, "Think Of Laura", simply be the first caller, to pick up Busch Gardens tickets. So enjoy and escape with WWBA."

Actually, on paper that sounds rather reasonable. But delivered behind harp music (yes harp music-- a continuous loop of the last few seconds of a Bing Crosby record) it takes on new meaning. Hard as we tried, we couldn't keep a straight face when Mann intoned, "FM 107, WWBA. It's our afternoon escape hour. The "Sound of Music" from the film starring Julie Andrews-- an endearing classic. Coming up later this hour, a fella who still performs concerts on a limited schedule basis and should be making an appearance right here in the Bay Area soon. We'll hear Perry Como sing, "And I Love You So" Somehow we found it all too ingenuous, and the few titles we heard didn't help matters much. (Included were instrumentals of "Are You Lonesome Tonight"; and "All Of Me" in addition to the forementioned tunes.)

What are they trying to do, you ask. WE did. And operations manager Vance Dillard explained that the "Escape Hour" was a vehicle to showcase the format. It's a relatively new addition to the lineup designed to draw attention to the station-- particularly from all day listeners such as office workers. In addition to the two "Escape Hours", the station also features oldies at noon (within the format range, of course), and "Music Until Midnight" from 10 to 12. The emphasis is on romance and the music is toned down. But Dillard went on to say that the emphasis is really on packaging and that the content of all these features is not much of a departure from WWBA's standard fare.

Speaking of which, the format has recently been amended to include four vocals an hour in an attempt to broaden the station's appeal. Dillard cites the target as 35-64, but to our ears, we see great appeal to those 65+. Watching the television news with one long time resident during our stay we noted an item about the closing of the "Orange Blossom Cafeteria". Apparently the St. Petersburg eatery was somewhat of a landmark, being the last vestige of a larger chain of restaurants. Looking at the aging clientele lined up for one last meal our friend noted, "There. You wanted to see WWBA's audience-- there they are."

The numbers, of course, show those comments to be an exaggeration but it is interesting to note that even in 35-64, the Spring book shows WWBA in third place, behind contemporary WRBQ and country WQYK. (Though the Summer book shows WWBA back on top 35-64, there is no question that this is a station appealing to an older crowd.)

From our way of thinking, all of this bodes well for Blair's WPDS. As mentioned previously (page 29), we feel they have the potential of being the easy listening alternative given enough time and nourishment. Not to mention promotion-- and at that WWBA excels.

In addition to the previously mentioned packaging of the format on the air; off the air too, WWBA is extremely visible. The current identifier "Easy 107" replaced "Bay" about a year and a half ago. ("Bay" it seems was seldom written in diaries and when it was, it was accompanied by the correct calls. Besides, the uniqueness of "Bay" when the station kicked off in the '60s, has long been usurped by the growing references to the three cities as the "Bay Area".)

Now "Easy 107" is called "Your Great Escape" and the theme is carried out both on and off the air. The current line up includes Ron Stauner from 6 to noon and Dave Mann from noon to 6. Mann, a long time market vet, was most recently with WKRL, and for those wondering about his appearance, you can see it for yourself on the Home Shopping Network where he also works. Leon Pettersen handles 6 to midnight; with Norm Swenson doing overnights.

Though musically WPDS is closest in sound, WWBA also views the two news talkers (WPLP and WFLA) as competitors since that format traditionally shares similar demos with easy listeners. With that in mind, WWBA-- unlike many of its counterparts across the country-- carries a full commitment of news and information including hourly casts, 24 hours a day, and such features as the Wall Street Journal report each hour from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Listening to an hour of morning drive turned up Sergio Mendes' "Pretty World"; an instrumental of "Sundown"; a cover of "California Dreamin'" (the announcer promoed it as the Mamas and Papas, but there is no doubt that it wasn't); "Misty" by Henry Mancini; and a number of instrumentals unknown to us.

The liners told us that we were listening to "A reflection of your good taste, the music of FM 107, WWBA", and assured us "You're listening to WWBA-- and for that we are grateful", but we had to admit that taken out of Tampa Bay and placed in any other market, they would have been even more grateful. But speculations that this approach wouldn't work elsewhere become superfluous in light of how well it works here.

It was 1958 when Arthur Mundorf signed the outlet on the air-- the FM counterpart to AM, WPIN. Licensed to St. Petersburg, like most FM's at the time, WPIN was less than noticed. In 1968 when Ed Winton purchased the combo, we can't help but believe it was the AM outlet (see nostalgia, WLFF page 55) that made the money. Changing the call letters to WWBA-AM-FM, "The Bay" debuted amidst serious fan fare-- to baseball fans at any rate.

Winton kicked the easy listening format off by continually replaying that famous ball game that went on forever, (Nine zillion innings or some such stuff. Old time baseball fans, of which Tampa has many, were quick to recognize it.) and it's been uphill ever since.

The Bay was a good sounding outlet from the moment it signed on (after the baseball game of course). Winton's trademark thematic sound was never more in evidence (Miami had the "Ocean", WOCN-- see Vol.1 No.5; Tampa had "Bay" complete with nautical sound effects) than in the cohesive sound of "The Bay". Well executed both on the air and off, Winton left no room for doubt that he would own the easy listening portion of the market.

And own it he did, right up until the station's sale to Metromedia in 1981 for \$7 million. Judging by its current status, (still on top, guided by Winton) and its current estimated value (taken from the Metromedia to Metropolitan transfer) of \$33 million-- it really doesn't matter what we thought of WWBA. The facts speak for themselves.

Though there is no question that WWBA dominates the easy listening category here, no analysis would be complete without the mention of Bradenton's WDUV. It may register a somewhat meager 2.2 in Tampa-- but in its home metro, Sarasota-Bradenton it rules the roost. Its 23.4 in the Spring book makes it the highest rated average quarter hour easy listening station in America. (It's closest competitor is Bridgeport's WEZN, far behind with a 16.5.) And disregarding format categories, it's the fourth ranking AQH station overall (In afternoon drive, it's ranked second in the nation-- all categories.).

Why? According to station staffers it was simply a case of being in the right place at the right time with the right format. We didn't want to break it to them that the previous sentence is far from simple. But looking deeper, there's really nothing better that explains this phenomenon.

Using Peters Productions, the station is automated with the exception of the live morning drive show hosted by Dick Ring. A brief listen to middays turned up exactly what one would expect: "You're listening to the easy sounds of Stereo 103, WDUV"-- "WDUV, easy listening, all the time." "WDUV is a beautiful listening experience"-- and so forth. Musically we caught an instrumental of "People"; a cover vocal of "Both Sides Now"; instrumentals of "If You Leave Me Now"; "Perfidia"; "Didn't We"; and "Michele"; a vocal cover of "I Honestly Love You"; and instrumentals of "Nobody Does It Better"; "Make It Easy On Yourself"; and "Daniel".

Nothing out of the ordinary here. Just the class C FM counterpart of Bradenton targeted WBRD-AM that just happened to be in the right place at the right time with the right format-- or did someone mention that already?

NEWS/TALK

Two outlets here presently devote their full attention to this format with Blair's WFLA outdistancing Guy Gannett's WPLP in both ratings and resources. In terms of tenure however, WPLP comes out on top with nearly a decade devoted to this non-music approach.

At WFLA, it's been a more recent conversion, commencing in April of '85 with the hiring of Mike Levine from West Palm Beach's WJNO and culminating in July of that year when the last record was aired. The transition, overseen by operations manager Jed Duvall has turned out to be a wise move for the outlet which enjoys a 4.1 (in both the Spring and Summer books).

The sound is major market all the way from the morning drive newswheel (known as "Good Morning Tampa Bay") to Tedd Webb's evening "Sports Huddle," heard 6 to 7 p.m. (Inbetween, the station features Jack Ellery (a former voice of NBC's "Monitor" among numerous other credits) from 9 to noon; Dr. Bob Moore (from the Institute of Rational Living doing your basic shrink rap), 12:15 to 1; consumer advocate Chuck Harder with "For The People", 1 to 2; and 18 year station vet Paul Gonzalez, 2 to 6.) Evenings and nights find the NBC affiliate running "Talknet".

Known as "Newsradio 97", "Tampa Bay's News And Information Leader" also carries a considerable amount of sports from play by play of the Miami Dolphins and Hurricanes to the nationally heard Monday Night Football. Listening to the morning drive offering turned up a well executed blend of local origination and network feeds, intersperced with a number of cross plugs for features run by the outlet throughout the day.

Anchored by Drew Vogel (the former WSUN news director), the show also features former ABC New York voice Martin Giles; Gary McHenry; Tedd Webb; and Courtney J. Campbell (yes that is the name of a local causeway, but this female entertainment director uses it as well). With a fast paced, no nonsense approach to news, in just a few days of listening we were convinced that should nuclear war break out, WFLA would be our choice-- if we were still around to hear about it.

But that is not to say that the show was dry. Though professionalism was always evident, it was sprinkled with sufficient personality to keep us interested. A close inspection turns up a carefully planned format including every possible basic, and the above mentioned group should be commended for carrying it off without aborting the human element. (We were especially fond of one locally produced spot we heard: Truly Nolen exterminators and WFLA co sponsored a contest looking for the world's longest cockroach-- the concept was great, the execution, even better.)

Afternoons showed us the versatility of Cuban born Paul Gonzalez. The day we caught him, the topic was "As a Christian what is the worst example of people giving God a bad name that you've seen." The subject was more than a mouthful (just to say, let alone debate), but Gonzalez kept it interesting and under control (a neat feat considering how volatile such topics can get). And we can honestly say that once more, WFLA is living up to its rich history.

It was back in 1925, that local developer George H. Bowles decided what Clearwater really needed was a radio station. Never one to waste any time he headed for New York to purchase equipment only to find that none was to be had on an immediate basis. Learning that Atlanta's WSB had a 500 watt used transmitter for sale, he snapped it up-- upon the condition that they'd send with it someone who could install it.

That someone was Walter Tison (see page 21), who as previously mentioned turned out to be one of the major influences in Bay Area radio. The initial call letters, of course were WGHB (George H. Bowles). Unfortunately, George's future did not turn out as well as his radio station's. Hurt by the ending of the real estate boom, it wasn't long before WGHB and the majority of Bowles' possessions (including the Fenway Hotel where the radio station was located) were up for sale. WGHB was rescued by another developer-- Ed Haley, who at that time was in the process of building the Ft. Harrison Hotel. Moving the station to City Park, he changed the calls to WFHH-- in honor of the hotel.

Haley, in turn sold the outlet to the City and Chamber of Clearwater, which adopted the WFLA calls. Where they were on the dial at this point is anyone's guess since frequency allocations were hardly set in granite. The operation began at 1100, but moved to 1240, 820, 590, 580, 900 and 620 before the split.

Split? Before we go any further, we'd better move down the road a piece to St. Petersburg where the 1925 bust was the impetus publisher Jack Dadswell needed to diversify. Buying some of George H. Bowles old equipment, he erected a radio station in the Jungle Hotel, owned by Walter Fuller who assumed the cost of construction (and eventually the station's license, which then was regulated by the Department of Commerce).

To say Fuller had little emotional interest in his property is an understatement. Infact, Fuller may well have been the only owner never to hear his own facility. He didn't possess a receiver (then largely experimental requiring a modicum of "scientific" knowledge) and didn't want one. So in 1926, he simply gave the radio station to the St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce. (Actually it wasn't that simple, Fuller had pledged \$5,000 to the chamber for the 26-27 season and couldn't come up with the money. Being a director, this was somewhat embarrassing so he offered to donate the station-- to his surprise, some members were thrilled.)

It was under the chamber's ownership that the call letters were changed to WSUN, but it wasn't long before the novelty wore off and expenses set in. The chamber turned it over to the City of St. Petersburg, and in 1927 they made a deal with Walter Tison. (By this time the Federal Radio Commission was around putting some order into the madness. The shakedown period ended several operations and created new ones-- with the understanding that there would be longer hours of operation. With that in mind, it made sense for Clearwater's WFLA and St. Petersburg's WSUN to join forces on 620.)

Like other split frequencies (see Vol.1, No.3, Dallas for the WFAA/WBAP arrangement), the operations truly were separate and distinct, so in 1930 when discussions for network affiliation with NBC were underway it became necessary for both owners to be represented by a common agency. It was then that the Florida West Coast Broadcasting Company was formed for that purpose headed by Clearwater mayor Ham Baskin and Walter Tison.

Baskin and Tison's biggest accomplishment though, was not the successful NBC negotiations. By far, it was their solution to the lawsuit filed by Milwaukee's WTMJ, upset over interference from WFLA/WSUN. British authority Raymond Wilmont was brought to the states to supervise the installation of what became the world's first directional antenna array, revolutionizing broadcasting and settling the WTMJ affair. (At this point, the station was moved from City Park to Bayview, and the Clearwater portion of ownership was subsequently acquired by the Florida West Coast Broadcasting Co.)

In '38, the Tampa Tribune purchased Florida West Coast Broadcasting and promptly applied for their own full time frequency. In January, 1941 WFLA became to sole occupant on 940, licensed to Tampa-- only to move to 970 two months later. (Students of history will recall that the big frequency shift set up by the FCC involving a large number of stations occurred in March, 1941.) In 1966, control of the Tampa Tribune (and with it WFLA) passed to Media General which in turn sold the radio portion (then WFLA-AM-FM) to Blair in 1982 for \$14 million.

From a programming standpoint, anything before the advent of television is ancient history. Since then however, and until the switch to News/Talk, WFLA has predominantly been considered an MOR outlet, save a brief fling with top 40 in 1963.

Until the success of WLCY (beginning in 1960), WFLA was the dominant Tampa outlet, your basic staid, old line MOR job. Dethroned in ratings by the Rahall rocker, revenue nonetheless remained, and most credit WFLA's rep firm (Blair) with that success. Either way, it was Blair who can be credited with the brief top 40 try, since it was through them that PD Dick Lawrence was secured.

Lawrence was colorful-- and so was his radio station including morning man Dave Hull (later of KRLA, Los Angeles); Deano Day (who went on to great fame as a country personality); Dale Kirby; Bobby Lyons; Johnny Dollar; and Hal Searl, the Electric Indian. It was an all star talent line up, but somehow the Tampa Tribune was not ready for Lawrence (who by today's standards would be relatively tame).

Rumors have his lifestyle questionable, but no doubt exists that he was hell bent on winning. Known for telling it straight, his philosophy was 'I have a job to do, get out of my way-- or help.' Often his biggest battles were not with WLCY, rather internal politics. The owners it seemed insisted on continuing to run such weekend features as NBC monitor on Saturdays and a healthy dose of religion on Sundays. It's said that Lawrence told the staff, 'I'm giving Saturday to NBC and Sunday to Jesus and his crowd, and I've got a Monday through Friday radio station to run.' (At least he had a 24 hour a day station to run-- prior to his arrival the outlet quit at midnight.)

Toward the end of his reign, the Beatles hit. The Trib wanted none of that, so Lawrence is said to have removed "Meet The Press" from the airwaves. When Trib exec.'s fumed for its return he struck a bargain-- they got "Meet The Press", he got The Beatles.

Initially, Lawrence was gaining good ground, especially with the post teen, upper demo top 40 crowd. Whether his approach could have done major damage to WLCY will never be known, for within a year he was out and the station was headed back to the safety of "mother music", the MOR with which the Tribune felt most comfortable.

The history of WFLA's current news/talk competitor WPLP, is also steeped in rock and roll-- all the way back to its humble beginnings as daytimer WFSO on March 12, 1966, signed on the air by former WFLA jock-turned-salesman Dan Johnson.

Johnson's initial approach was a big band/nostalgia mix, not wholly unlike the current Al Ham variety. Johnson recalls it as a "real tear jerker" format-- but more than one listener likened it to a "real ear jerker" approach. Seems Johnson, a stickler for no dead air and a crystal clear sound, decided to augment the AM outlet at 570 with enough echo to compensate for a pit of hissing snakes. Recalls one youthful listener: 'The sonics were unusual alright-- like nothing I've ever heard, before or since.' Under the circumstances, the jingle, "You're no more than a minute away from music" (a phrase used for years by WILZ, see page 64), represented a blessing as music fared considerably better than talk with this sound.

Always the innovator, Johnson dropped the aging approach in 1968 to target teens with a mix of top 40 and underground titles, not heard elsewhere in the Bay Area. (As previously pointed out, WLCY built its success on a very conservative stance, shying away from anything underground, and the University Of South Florida's "Underground Railroad" which started up around this time was decidedly limited in hours of operation among other problems inherent with an administration run non-commercial outlet.)

Johnson recounts the move as one of the best things he ever did. Within three months, the station was doing as much business as it had at the peak of its nostalgia presentation. Mindful that the format had its share of detractors, the slogans never included the word "underground". Referred to only as "The Big 57", jocks included Chuck Alton and Tedd Webb (who today is at WFLA).

WFSO, while successful, continued to be plagued with the lack of ratings and other drawbacks of daytime only operation until June of 1978 when full time status was awarded. (It may be recalled that on June 30, 1976 the commission announced that if a facility was the first or second aural service in its city of license, it could be possible to gain fulltime status. Needless to say, there was enough moving to keep Allied Van Lines solvent until 2010. --And so it was in this particular case that WFSO licensed to Tampa became WFSO licensed to Pinellas Park-- the first such outlet.)

The go ahead for full time status came while Johnson was under contract to sell the outlet-- which he did to a group including RKO programmer Michael Spears. A call letter change was announced and WPLP certainly had media observers talking. Many thought it stood for "LP 57" and insisted that the format would be AOR aimed at in car listeners sans FM receivers. Others thought it was an abbreviation for "Pinellas Park". As it turned out though, WPLP meant "People Listening to People"-- and the ensuing talk format was nothing, if not high budget.

The sound was professional-- perhaps too professional. With 52 employees (up from the 15 Johnson had), it was only a matter of time before economic reality ensued, and in January of '82 Johnson and 570 were reunited. (The bankruptcy court appointed a trustee, giving him orders to reinstate Johnson to insure the outlet's survival.)

Survive it did, almost to the point of thriving, though it was an uphill battle. Johnson borrowed \$25,000 to meet January payroll only to discover that it was for the first HALF of January. The blood letting was fierce. A nine member news department was cut to three. Amidst much criticism for his operating procedures, (compared to Spears' line up of such luminaries as Bob Dearborn, Johnson's crew sounded like shlock-- though a number of credible talents stayed including Tim Coles, who remains an outstanding member of the current line up), Johnson did the impossible, and within six months it was back on track financially-- and back on the block.

As he recalls, realistic operation may have been one factor in the turn around-- but luck played a part. Johnson chuckles as he recounts that six months after his return, Harte Hanks dropped WNSI (the former WLCY's news attempt before becoming WRBQ-AM), 'What they didn't realize is that I was close to giving it up myself.' But WNSI's demise (and \$75,000 of Johnson's personal money until that time) made the difference. Acquiring CBS and Mutual affiliations, it was in November of '82 that the station turned a profit.

Though Johnson continued to run the outlet, his future (or a brief portion of it, at any rate) was focused on the FM band. In October of '83, he signed on classical WXCR (see pages 65/66), and on April 1, 1984 WPLP was transferred to Guy Gannett.

Gannett enjoyed a year of isolation in the format before WFLA's switch. Listening to both outlets uncovers approaches that differ significantly-- possibly to the point of co-existence indefinitely. (And possibly not. Tampa may be growing phenomenally but it is still the 21st ranked market, and being second in a format such as this outside of the top 15 can be rough-- but Guy Gannett has considerable experience in the approach and can be counted upon to realistically appraise the situation and operate within that appraisal.)

Like WFLA, the emphasis in morning drive is on news, with news director Don Richards and Tracye Fox anchoring, joined by, in our opinion, the standout of the station: sports ace Nancy Donnellan. Donnellan is a breath of fresh air. She doesn't report the sports, she talks about them-- in a relatable, knowledgable, hip fashion with a delivery that implies she's letting her best buddy in on the secret of what's really going on out there. Often funny and decidedly pointed, we were hooked-- and we don't like sports.

Also like WFLA, mornings on WPLP display a solid meshing of a number of elements including local and national feeds linked by a consistent format which relies upon constant front selling of upcoming features. The team's interaction sounds natural enough, and the story count is extremely high-- but there is a "big time" quality that WFLA has which somehow is absent from "Newstalk 57", though we did find them to be an interesting local choice and more than once found ourselves wrapped up in Tim Coles' latest diatribe.

Coles, a British born right winger is on daily from 1 to 4, following generalist David Fowler who fills the 10 to 1 slot. But it's the juxtaposition of Coles and 4 to 7 p.m. personality Bob Lassiter that really creates the sparks. Lassiter is every bit as far to the left as Coles is to the right, making for a number of heated Tampa afternoons. Lassiter is followed by another liberal though Chris James seems middle of the road compared to Bob. And the remainder of the day comes courtesy of Mutual including our least favorite shrink rapper, Dr. Toni Grant followed by the ever popular Larry King.

NOSTALGIA

With the glut of retirees in the Tampa/St. Petersburg area, it comes as little surprise that this approach is well represented here with five stations adopting the sound of songs past. Leading the pack is Tampa's WDAE-AM (at a 4.7 in the Spring, dropping to a 4.1 in the Summer book); with the only FM in the group, Pasco County's WGUL in second place (at a 2.5 in the Summer, down from the Spring's 3.9). (St. Petersburg's WLFF, at a 1.0 in the Spring fell to a .5 this Summer while Clearwater's WTAN held steady at a .4. Pasco's WPAS-- a .8 in the Spring did not show in the Summer figures.)

In many ways, it's appropriate for WDAE to lean towards nostalgia considering it's the oldest continuous radio operation in the state. (Miami's WQAM signed on first, but ceased operation for a few years.) Hitting the airwaves on March 15, 1922 under the ownership of the Tampa Daily Times, WDAE originally stood for "Wonderful Days And Evenings" (though in tougher times it was rumored to mean "We Don't Always Eat"-- and their present approach has given rise to "We're Dead And Empty"-- sorry).

In 1964 WDAE (and it's FM counterpart which signed on in 1947) was sold to Rounsaville (which had to divest itself of WTMP, see page 61). The initial format, under GM William Selly, Jr. was "The Sound Of Music", your basic MOR approach. A year later Selly was replaced by WCIN Cincinnati's Carl Glicken. It was then that PD Ed Ripley came on board to fully revamp the outlet. Ripley had been a former Storz man, working in Minneapolis and New Orleans and under his direction the station emerged as the first uptempo full service adult contemporary outlet in the market. In '67, Don Clark came in as GM, having worked for Rounsaville's WCIN and WYLD, New Orleans.

The teaming of Clark and Ripley turned out to be the magic combination for WDAE which in no time began to sparkle. It's said that the model on which 'DAE was built was Miami's WIOD (see Vol.1, No.5) which in the '60s was one of the finest sounding contemporary MOR's around. In Tampa, WDAE gained that image sounding fresher than such old line institutions as WFLA and WSUN. Ripley can also be credited with integrating telephone talk to the music approach here. The latter '60s saw a 6:30 to 8 p.m. block known as "Point Of View" hosted by Ripley himself.

While Ripley was creating excitement on the programming end, Clark was blazing new trails in selling tactics. Demographic warfare, some called it. Clark was an early proponent of the philosophy well recognized today that AC demos are the choicest. Selling that concept (and pricing it equivalently), Clark (and WLCY's GM Pete Schulte) can be credited with raising the overall rate structure that radio was commanding at the time. (Though it must be said that some feel the market today is woefully underpriced.)

WDAE was not only modernized, but promoted as well with a big time sound including one of the earlier airborne traffic systems around. "1250 Sky Patrol" spawned one of the city's more recognizable personalities. "Sgt. Al Ford" became so well known that he ran for mayor. (We'll never know the outcome as he dropped out of the race after allegedly being caught for moral impropriety, so the story goes.)

The '70s saw several changes including the exit of Ripley and the outlet's sale to Taft (in March of '79 for \$5.5 million). About the only consistency was the format-- still AC, but the handwriting was on the wall. FM was coming. WDAE tried a number of tactics (including hiring Gary Burbank for a minute or so), finally segueing to nostalgia in the early '80s. When Taft had the opportunity to purchase WSUN in 1984, Gannett acquired WDAE, and along with it, "Primetime"-- the syndicated nostalgia service which originated here.

Since that time, "Primetime" has been spun off to Ed Winton (see WLFF, below) and after a stint of in house programming (including the talents of Jim Nettleton who oversaw the approach which featured a hybrid sound from the '40s to the '80s), WDAE-AM became the local affiliate of SMN's "Stardust" in September.

If you've heard "Stardust", you've heard WDAE. The local liners proclaim "The Best Music Show In Tampa Bay" and Nettleton fans can relax in the knowledge that he'll still be around in a new capacity-- that of traffic reporter.

The obvious advantage of WGUL is its FM dial position though some will argue that among these demos, that may not be an advantage at all. Either way, the disadvantage is location. This class A signal emanates from New Port Richey and its fate in the Tampa Bay ratings is often tied to diary placement in Pasco County.

The top of the hour ID proclaims, "Serving West Pasco, Hernando and Upper Pinnellas, this is WGUL, FM 105.5 Tampa Bay's 'Music Of Your Life Station'"-- which succinctly says everything we would have. (Before we move on though, we will note that the outlet first sprang to life in 1969, put on by Thad Lowrey and Don Armstrong in an AC vein. A decade later, in '79, former Rounsaville exec. Ralph Johnson bought the 3 kw facility, selling it to long time owner, Carl Marcozzi, in '85 (along with its AM counterpart, today WPSO at 1500).)

Serving East Pasco is WPAS. The fact that this AM outlet, licensed to Zephyrhills, did not make the Summer book (they had a .8 in the Spring) is of little consequence to the folks involved. Tampa is not the target and when this MOR outlet does show, egos may rise but billing remains constant.

Pasco County has become a factor in the Metro by virtue of its huge population growth. Consequently, outlets such as WGUL (or to a lesser degree, WPAS), routinely rate as the market moves toward them in linear fashion with major highways becoming strips of chain stores and independent merchants surrounded on both sides by burgeoning home developments.

Often it's the case that advertising for chain stores is done centrally-- with little consideration given to suburban outlets, while independent merchants are generally not in a position to spend copious sums on advertising. (And when "Ma and Pa" stores do budget for ads, suburban outlets in many areas of the country find themselves competing with the low prices and tangible nature of local newspapers.) So it is, that stations in this position tend to operate from a client list as if they were small town outlets, yet they are able to penetrate major market books.

WTAN-AM, Clearwater owner Rod Brosig is learning first hand about this phenomenon-- a change, indeed, from his former post as general manager of Tampa Bay's leading country outlet, WQYK. In April of '85, Brosig resigned that position to purchase WTAN from the Lykes Corporation.

The AM outlet dates back to 1948 when a couple of former airforce bomber pilots who flew in WW2 signed it on. They in turn sold it to a group of local investors including well known local broadcaster Denny Parker. In '63, Parker signed on WTAN-FM, which is said to be the area's first stereo FM (with 20 kw at 125 feet in the mid '60s). In 1976 he sold the underperforming (and underpowered) easy listening combo to Ragan Henry for \$850,000. In 1980, Henry sold the AM to the Lykes Corporation and the FM to Metroplex-- see page 32).

The format today is "Classic MOR", and Brosig feels he's found his niche by superserving Clearwater. Known as "Clearwater's Radio Station", Brosig punctuates that fact with such local offerings as high school football and basketball play by play; and a Saturday morning lawn and garden program that's been running consistantly for the past 26 years, not to mention the Sunday morning black gospel show featuring two fellas who have been hosting it since it s inception at the station's sign on-- 38 years ago.

But the nostalgia at 1340 isn't confined to music-- WTAN also airs a number of old radio shows evidenced in this promo: "The old radio shows are back at WTAN. Every Saturday afternoon following the news you'll hear great radio shows. Join your neighbors, It's great entertainment. Encourage the kids to enjoy the adventures of the imagination... So many wouderful hours of classic entertainment, each Saturday following the noon news right here on WTAN where you always find enjoyment with The Unforgettables."

What we can't reproduce here are some choice drops from a number of shows listeners are likely to hear-- everything from "Our Miss Brooks" to "Jack Armstrong, The All American Boy". And to fans in the demos that remember those offerings, the music was on target including Neil Diamond, the Weavers, Pat Boone, Tennessee Ernie Ford, Anita Bryant, James Taylor, Perry Como, Peggy Lee, and the Kirby Stone 4-- "the music you grew up with and love", according to one of many liners we caught on Brosig's morning show where "you'll hear more of The Unforgettables."

What you'll actually hear is all Brosig, all the time-- or close to it at any rate. The station is truly a family run business. In addition to serving as President, GM, PD and morning man, Brosig gets his son into the action (the younger Brosig does 8 to midnight) and keeps his wife occupied (she serves as business manager).

By comparison, St. Petersburg's WLFF is big time-- at least in terms of ownership, as Century Broadcasting acquired this AM outlet from Ed Winton last year. Little has changed in the way of programming since then-- the station runs Winton's "Primetime" nostalgia offering and a listen to morning drive turns up Frank Sinatra; the Art Van Dam Quintet, Pearl Bailey, Tommy Dorsey and Connie Haines; Steve & Edye; Ray Anthony; Rosemary Clooney and Count Basie; Connie Francis; BJ Thomas; Artie Shaw; and Les Paul and Mary Ford-- and a chance to win \$78.

"Life 680's mystery voice is still a mystery. We started playing our mystery voice a couple of weeks ago, and so far no one has indentified her. Call me right now if you know who that is. If Your answer is correct, you'll win \$78 from the Life of Tampa Bay." --We didn't know, and worse yet, for \$78, we didn't care.

We had more interest in the afternoon drive talk show, and while "leg ulcers" may not be a broadbased topic, to "Life 680"s aging cume it could be fascinating. As it was, the physician/surgeon guest did nobly in keeping our attention.

The station's origin dates back to 1950, when much of the music it now plays was current (OK, recurrent). Owned by Arthur Mundorf, WPIN (and WPIN-FM) became WWBA-AM-FM when purchased by Ed Winton in 1968 (see page 44). When Winton sold easy listening WWBA-FM to Metromedia in '82, he hung on to big band WWBA-AM, changing the calls to WLFW. In January of '85, the calls were changed again, or one of them anyway, as the facility became WLFF when the license was transferred to Chicago based Century.

COUNTRY

In this format, two outlets can be found, with WQYK-FM considerably outdistancing WSUN-AM. Called "Florida's Country Tradition", WQYK is one of the more successful country outlets around, evidenced by its top three ranking, a position it has routinely held throughout the '80s.

A listen to morning drive turned up a youngish sounding jock named Tim Harper, sitting in for Randy Price, the station's usual morning talent. Harper, as would be expected, executed the basics, placing maximum accent on the station's main feature: music. In the hour we heard we caught "Stand A Little Rain" by the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band; "What Ever Happened To Old Fashioned Love" by B.J. Thomas; "Slow Boat To China" by The Girls Next Door; Deborah Allen's "Baby I Lied"; "Country State Of Mind" by Hank, Jr.; Elvis' "Don't Be Cruel"; "Brand New Heartache" by Ricky Scaggs; the Judds' "Why Not Me"; and "Since I Found You" by Sweethearts of The Rodeo."

Marshall Cleaver delivered the news in a big voiced, old line top 40 style, a bit reminiscent of the old CKLW days (though decidedly lacking in gore); and Harper promised us money and prizes-- including a new Isuzu truck: "WQYK 99's Isuzu Pump Truck. Guess how many cans of Dr. Petter are in the bed. If your guess is closest you win it all." (The money end featured \$3,639.99 in the cash call jackpot.)

Jeff Ryan handles 9 to noon with Bill Pyne, noon to 3. Ron McGuire follows from 3 to 7 with Allan Brady on 7 to midnight, and Joe Hager doing overnights. A listen to McGuire turned up a more traditional talent, fulfilling our expectations of what we hoped to find on "WQYK 99". McGuire exhibited a country charm without coming off as a hick-- a likeable sort to anyone with a preference for country radio. Among the titles we caught during his 3:30 to 4:30 hour included Hoyt Axton's "Della And The Dealer"; "Some Days Are Diamonds" by John Denver; the previously mentioned Sweethearts Of The Rodeo and Hank, Jr. tunes; Janie Fricke's "Always Have, Always Will" and George Jones' "The One I Loved Back Then."

Speaking of back then, WQYK's 99.5 frequency was put on the air in 1958 by a group of local investors, one of whom, Murray Carpenter took it over. Carpenter took WTCX, as it was known, classical. But before long, another outlet (WQXM, see page 39) adopted the format (with equally limited success). In any event, ten years after sign on it was more than up for sale-- Dan Johnson remembers it being offered to him for \$65,000. Johnson couldn't come up with the money since he was entrenched with WFSO (see pages 49-51). In 1971, Carpenter sold the outlet to the Jacksonville based Rowland Brothers for \$150,000.

Since they owned WQIK there, the new Tampa purchase became WQYK, parroting the country formula used in Jacksonville. And as an FM stand alone in 1971 was not exactly considered to be a prized possession, the Rowlands purchased WALT.

As previously mentioned, WALT is significant in that this AM daytimer was the first outlet here to devote its entire attention to top 40, dating back to 1958. Founded in 1946 by Walter Tison, the station back then was unique in that it was the area's first non network affiliate, adopting some type of consistant format.

After Tison, a number of owners ensued including Sun-Ray, the Philadelphia based drug store company; and The Jim Walter Corporation (Walter is a well known local homebuilder.). The Rowlands bought WALT from Jim Walter (and his partner Bob Weeks), and co located it with WQYK in St. Petersburg. The move may have been convenient-- but it was far from prudent. Taking WALT out of Temple Terrace (where it had been on West Kennedy Blvd.) necessitated a pattern change that put a null straight over Tampa.

Null or not, WQYK-AM-FM had little trouble dominating the country scene. Their brand of radio, while far from slick, was a favorable alternative to the market's WHBO (see oldies, page 59) or WYOU, for that matter. (WYOU, today is an unrated Spanish outlet.) Infact, the only real competition the Rowlands would ever face, WSUN (described below), would be tamed not by programming, rather band location, WSUN being on AM.

In 1977 the Rowlands sold the combo separately with Lake Huron purchasing the FM for \$989,000. (The AM became unrated religious outlet, WTIS.) Lake Huron brought in an able crew, headed by Houston's Rod Brosig (who today owns WTAN-- see page 54), and apart from FM dominance, WQYK may well have triumphed on sound alone. After a decade of success, it has been announced that Lake Huron is selling the facility to Infinity.

Listening to competing CBS outlet WSUN, there is no doubt what your hearing-- virtually every break opens with "Sun Country Music Radio, 62 WSUN"-- more than a mouthful, to be sure. What follows is an adult approach to country radio including a varied playlist from traditional oldies ("Still" by Bill Anderson) to the latest on CD (Roseanne Cash). (Morning drive also featured Mary MacGregor, Merle Haggard, Mickey Gilley, George Strait, and Roy Orbison.-- Afternoons turned up Dolly Parton, Waylon, TG Shepard, Elvis, the Oak Ridge Boys, and Crystal Gayle.)

It's your garden variety stuff to be sure-- "Thank you for picking the Bay Areas best music on 62, WSUN" says the typical liner. Here you'll also find the typical contest-- "Hi Lo", with cash jackpots ranging from \$600 to \$900. Thursdays, of course, feature "Double Hi Lo". The noon hour features lunchtime trivia, and the station's big event during one of our listens was the upcoming "Day In The Country", featuring Steve Warriner.

The lineup includes Jim Shafer in mornings; Jack Russell, middays; PD Kevin Murphy, afternoons; Jay Roberts, evenings and Bill Campbell, nights.

To our ears, WSUN's current ratings (flat at a 3.6 in both the Spring and Summer books) reflect the current sound. Credible, consistent, predictable-- a fine example of CBS Radio. The mark of a winner though-- that undercurrent of excitement, does not even appear as a ripple these days.

(The early part of WSUN's history is delineated on pages 47-48). In 1941, when WFLA gained its own frequency, WSUN (which stood for "Why Stay Up North"-- and was appropriately owned by the City of St. Petersburg) became the sole occupant of 620. In the early '60s, the city decided it was time to divest the old line institution. Being a city, the solution was found in a public auction.

As the story goes, Hy Levinson, who owned Detroit's WCAR, bid \$1,130,000-- a multiple of WCAR's 1130 dial position. As it turns out, his was the winning bid-- netting him WSUN and a UHF facility, Channel 38. (After unsuccessfully trying to sell the UHF outlet, he returned the license to the FCC.) Levinson sold the AM station to Plough in 1973-- and it was under Plough's auspices that the country format ensued in the MD '70s.

(As previously noted, Plough acquired an FM counterpart, WZNE, in 1975. When DKM purchased many of the Plough stations in 1984, the FM was among them. WSUN, however, went to Taft, which in turn was forced to sell it last year in order to purchase Gulf's Channel 10. So in August of '85, WSUN was acquired by CBS.)

Though Winter Haven's WPCV did not crack the Summer book, they did manage a .4 in the Spring and therefore deserved a listen. What we found was your basic small market country outlet-- including a wide variety of songs we couldn't hear elsewhere. We were entertained, though we weren't surprised that this outlet is not considered a factor in the Tampa metro.

Infact, the most memorable thing about WPCV is one of its former owners, Joe Garagiola. Signing on in 1962 as WINT-FM, Polk County's first FM facility, a number of ownerships and call letters ensued, resulting in WPCV by the early '70s when Garagiola bought this FM facility, and an AM (WONN) owned by John Gilman. (The FM offered country, the AM attempted top 40.) A few years later, Garagiola sold the combo to Steve Marks and Herb Stewart, who in 1981 sold the pair to current owner Robert Hall.

Hall would most likely be surprised at the Tampa showing. The target is "Central Florida" where "The Best Country, WPCV" thrives.

OLDIES

Though AC outlets such as WUSA place a heavy emphasis on this approach, only WHBO devotes its full attention to the format. "All Oldies, All The Time" is the slogan-- and that's exactly what you'll find on 1040.

A listen to mornings unearthed "The Great Pretender" by The Platters; "Time Won't Let Me" by The Outsiders; The Shirelles' "Mama Said"; "It's All Over Now" by the Stones; "Walk Away Renee" by the Left Banke; "Gypsy Woman" by Brian Hyland; "Ain't Too Proud To Beg" by The Temptations; Chuck Berry's "No Particular Place To Go"; "Sandy" by Dion; Paul Anka's "Diana"; and The Beatles' "Something".

A later midday check produced Santana's "Oye Como Va"; Dion's "Where Or When", "Bad To Me" by Billy J. Kramer; Smokey Robinson's "Tears Of A Clown"; "Sunshine Superman" by Donovan; "Friday On My Mind" by the Easybeats; Shirley and Lee's "Let The Good Times Roll"; the Kingsmen's "Louie Louie"; "Money" by Barrett Strong; "Reach Out" by the Four Tops; "Groovin'" by the Young Rascals; Paul Revere and the Raiders' "Kicks"; "Queen Of The Hop" by Bobby Darin; and Simon and Garfunkel's "Bridge Over Water".

The line up includes PD Scott Robbins in mornings; John Boswell in middays; and Howard Hewes, afternoons. Hewes, some may recall, was with WLCY a decade and a half ago. Checking out "Robbins In The Morning", we were treated to Mary Ruth Austin's "20-20 News" (Austin doubles as WNLN anchor since since it is WHBO's FM counterpart, both owned by Metroplex.), and a credible performance from Robbins.

The top of the hour ID sums it up nicely ("Covering the Sunshine Stae and the sparkling beaches from Tallahassee to Key West, 1040 WHBO; All oldies, All the time.") though we couldn't help but think that it should have been "All oldies while we're on the air"-- since our largest frustration came from discovering that the town's only all oldie outlet (and some darn good oldies at that) is a daytimer. (Why, we're not sure-- since we were under the impression that the reassignment of the station's license from Tampa to Pinellas Park made it the second aural service in that town, thus gaining it full time status.)

On the air since 1948, WHBO made a name for itself as the local country and bluegrass outlet-- during a time when neither meant big billing. Serving a small but loyal cume, the traditional sound was replaced with the tradition of rock and roll around 1980 when Bob Martin and Bob Ross sold the outlet to Doc Page.

(As a bit of trivia, one of the more interesting things about the Martin/Ross ownership centered around the fact that Ross was related to Col. Parker (of Elvis fame). Ross also owned an ad agency locally, and being kin, Parker used it to the exclusion of others. That meant all those ads (records, concert appearances, Las Vegas shows, you name it) were placed out of little ole Tampa, so the story goes.)

Under Page's ownership the oldies flourished-- nourished by an oldie himself-- former RKO personality Duke Roberts. Roberts (real name: Bob Stoehr) was brought in to run the facility, which he did as GM, GSM and PD until its sale to Metroplex earlier this year (January, 1986).

URBAN/BLACK

When you get right down to it, there are no urban outlets in the Tampa Bay metro, though two AM facilities do target the black community specifically, including Tampa's WTMP with over three decades in the format, and St. Petersburg's WRXB.

The roots of WTMP date back to 1954 when it signed on as WIOK. Two years later, Robert W. Rounsaville purchased this AM daytimer, holding it until 1964 when he spun it off to the Spidell's in order to purchase WDAE-AM-FM (see page 52). Alone in the format throughout the '60s (until 1976, in fact, when Gene Danzey put on WRXB described below), WTMP was not unlike most black outlets then. Rounsaville had a number of them-- and if you've heard one, you've basically heard them all.

Not only was WTMP alone in this approach-- but with WLCY as the only major top 40 outlet, WTMP was able to amass respectable ratings considering the relatively low black populus here. WLCY PD Roy Nilson remembers WTMP morning man Tom Hankerton as an able competitor, but the bottom line was that WTMP was an ethnic station serving an ethnic audience.

Today, little has changed, though it should be noted that in 1984, by moving the city of license from Tampa to Temple Terrace, WTMP was able to go full time. Known now as "Power Radio" the target is the black community in Hillsborough county, which it serves in a credible adult fashion.

7 a.m. to noon personality Jim Rhinehart was warm, polished, professional and mature. He gained our respect in an approach that is all too often low on formatics and long on jive. In this case though, all the basics were there, done in an unobtrusive entertaining manner. Rhinehart does black community oriented radio proud. The tunes we caught included Patti LaBelle's "Old People"; "Private Number" by the Jets; Stevie Wonder's "Land Of La La"; "Wrapped Around Your Finger" by Yarborough & Peoples; Me'lisa Morgan's "Do Me Baby"; James Ingram's "Always"; "I Didn't Mean To Turn You On" by Robert Palmer; Laverne's "Pop Pop Goes My Mind"; and Gwen Guthrie's "Rent".

The giveaway that morning included tickets to the Patti LaBelle concert, along with a couple of teeshirts and a Patti LaBelle cassette- touted by a liner repeatedly used throughout the day, "Power Radio, WTMP, your official Patti LaBelle, Luther Vandross and Atlantic Starr concert station."

Twanda Black handles noon to 4 with Mark Vann on 4 to 8; Jheri Lynn, 8 to midnight and RJ Moore with the "Quiet Storm" midnight to 5. (From 5 to 7 the station runs Gospel with Dave Brown.) Listening to Mark Vann we caught Heatwave's "Always And Forever" George Benson's "Kisses In The Moonlight"; Janet Jackson's "Nasty Boys"; "Always" by James Ingram; "Passion From a Woman" by Krystol; and kicking off the 5 o'clock hour, Martha and the Vandellas' "Heatwave".

News, courtesy of SBN (Sheridan), was a full five minute cast at 4:55 followed by none other than Tom Hankerton updating local weather. Vann, too, displayed discipline-- adhering to the basics while relating to his audience offering "Michelob Power Tee Shirts, an Atlantic Starr album and concert tickets when you hear the power tones next hour-- be the fifth caller and you can win."

Speaking of which, the summer book shows WTMP winning quite nicely. Considering the facility, jumping from a 2.5 in the Spring to a 3.9 is a formidable showing, demonstrating two facts-- WTMP, for a black adult radio station, is executed quite well; and perhaps more to the point, there is no mass appeal outlet dedicating a sizable portion of their playlist to urban cross over material. The lines are well drawn, and mainstream listeners wishing to cross over them are forced to seek WTMP. (This is the void that Al Casey at WNLT is now trying to address-- see page 31 .)

Then there's WRXB. Licensed to St. Petersburg Beach (ironic in that no black populus resides in this small community), WRXB serves Pinellas County blacks with a sound that's somehow reminiscent of ethnic radio from days gone by.

Have you ever wondered what happens to those AM signals that fade out each time you drive under an overpass? We've often had a recurring dream that they remain static, waiting for the right receiver to pick them up, and that one day, 25 years later, by a fluke in design, an AM radio would come out with the ability to pull them in. There we'd be in 1986 driving through Tampa when suddenly a blast from the past-- an AM black station with enough jive to drive an '80s programmer to drink-- would appear.

We never believed it would really happen, mind you. (And if we did, we'd be hanging around Chicago waiting to hear Dan Sorokin circa 1961 on WCFL.) But for a moment there, sweat formed as we caught 1590 WRXB at around 7 a.m. one morning-- complete with "The Hitman", who intersperced live phone calls with an instrumental dance tune. If this guy (D.C. Rogers, as we later found out when phoning the station) isn't taking it to the streets-- then St. Petersburg is unpaved.

"Everybody wants to know-- Hitman, when are you going to give away some tickets to Luther Vandross? The Hitman also wants to know when he's gonna be giving away some tickets to Luther Vandross. When I find out, I'll let you know. Good morning, you're on the air."

The first caller talks of sports. Hitman banters back and forth about the Bears, switching quickly to Dallas-- "Saw Dallas yesterday of course. I told you about those cowboys. They need to take off those pants and put on some skirts."

A woman wishes her neice a happy birthday. Another does likewise for a 9 year old nephew. One girl yells into the phone that it's time to wake up and get to work. Hitman replies: "Sweetheart, next time just open the back door and let that go. You don't need the radio."

"Give your Hitman a call. Give me the contract and I'll take care of the action. We're gonna play the hits back to back." Fulfilling that promise with a few dance tunes including Trinere and Maze with Frankie Beverly, we can only describe this act as 'stream of consciousness-- or lack of same'.

"Number seven on the studioline, call me up and give me a good enough reason why I should be escorting you to Luther Vandross and I just may do it. Only a couple of qualifications. You must be female and you gotta be between 22 and 40. I don't wanna cause no heart attacks and I don't wanna rob any cradles. Baby put you red dress on, let's strut your stuff."

Appropriately, Hitman followed with "Passion From A Woman", and later lamented, "I still haven't gotten a good enough reason. I got a chauffer driven limo, champagne and the whole works. You can go back stage, touch Luther, look at Patti, deal with Atlantic Starr..."

We were also treated to such mainstream acts as Michael McDonald and Prince, but what we missed was the call letters. We never heard them. The only identifier we could discern "Star 16" was mentioned just twice, and then in a throwaway fashion. The way we figure it, WRXB's current showing (up to a 1.6 in the Summer from the Spring's 1.0) is due to osmosis-- or some very tenacious listeners.

In so far as identifying themselves, WRXB fared a bit better in afternoons-- as well it should considering the 3 to 7 shift is occupied by PD Jim Murray-- who like the Hitman (but to a much lesser degree) sounded like the past.

We couldn't argue with the music, though it did tend to lean toward dance oriented tunes-- as if the station were looking at younger demos than WTMP. While 'TMP was flavoring with Motown oldies, 'RXB added spice to the approach with the latest club numbers, intersperced with the mainstream nature of Isley Jasper Isley; Jermaine Stewart; Timex Social Club; Patti LaBelle & Michael McDonald; and Melba Moore.

Between the Hitman and Murray is BJ Smith from 11 to 3. El Mongo Stubbs does 7 to midnight while Mike G. Cooper does overnights. The network affiliation is with NBN, which labors under poor technical quality. If we didn't know better, we'd say they phoned it in.

The current slogan is "The Difference" but comparing the current management structure to WTMP of a decade ago turns up surprising similarities-- owner/GM Gene Danzey and PD Jim Murray (who has been in that post since the '70s) are both former TMPers.

As for the 1590 facility-- it's the former WILZ-- "Radio Wilz on the Holiday Isles" rhymed the slogan from its 1957 sign on to its 1976 sale to Danzey. It was here that the "You're No More Than A Minute Away From Music" slogan first appeared-- with the station offering a prize to anyone who caught them violating that premise. (When promotion ace Bob Harris was a St. Petersburg high school student he remembers not only catching them-- but finding his picture in the paper, receiving his "prize", now long forgotten, from GM Jack Faulkner.)

CLASSICAL

Here we go again gang... We listened. We took notes. But we're not going to tell you much about what we heard on Tampa Bay's only commercial classical outlet, WXCR. It's one thing not to be able to pronounce these names (even mimicking the announcers). It's another to attempt to spell them.

We caught a Bach piece done by some guy on a certain organ from a given church in Leipzig (Leipzig, we could look up in the encyclopedia-- and when we did, we found significantly more interest in reading about this East German city than anything spawned from listening to classical music.).

Let's face it-- when the music sounds funeral, and the commercials become a blessed relief, you're in no position to evaluate this format. When the top of the hour ID was followed by what could best be described as the theme from Jaws, we quit listening. Not so for the rest of Tampa Bay-- this class A outlet licensed to Safety Harbor pulled a respectable 1.6 in the Summer book (up from a 1.2 in the Spring).

The history of "The Voice Of The Arts" as the station is known is a relatively brief one-- 92.1 sprang to life in September of '83, classical then and classical now. And, it comes as no great shock that local radio whiz Dan Johnson had more than a hand in its making. Earl Bradshear came up with the idea of licensing an outlet to Safety Harbor (based on the FCC's favorable distribution of frequencies to cities sans service). Hoping for a few extra brownie points, he proposed classical music.

Actually, it was before the outlet debuted that the FCC decided that format categories were not their domain, but Johnson (who by this time was entrenched in the deal) didn't see a viable alternative, so classical, WXCR became. Initially Bradshear served as GM, a post he vacated when it became obvious that his interest was in programming quality while the investors were concerned with the bottom line.

Johnson took over the station's operation, realistically evaluating its potential. Many folks involved viewed the offerings from non commercial classical outlets as competition. Johnson disagreed. 'How many spots do they sell?' he asked on more than one occasion, pointing out that from a revenue sharing perspective the primary competition was WWBA.

Taking that contention to the programming department, his choice for WXCR included "mellow, pretty pieces", leaning as close to easy listening as a classical outlet could. In August of '85, he sold the station to Entercom and began the physical construction of his current project-- Lakeland's Channel 32 (V 32), a UHF outlet dedicated largely to music videos which signed on in April of this year.

Entercom initially tried a purist approach, amending that more recently as evidenced by such promotions as the push to find out what Tampa Bay likes most. Sending in your fave raves could net you a CD player and library. (The station emphasizes the fact that it plays CDs exclusively through newspaper ads and such.)

Like most classical stations, weekends find the airing of major symphony orchestra performances, but as somewhat of a departure, WXCR also runs a weekend request program. The current line up includes Tom Irvin; Bob Steincamp; Joy Katzen-Guthrie; George Preston; Mark Krueger; and Patrick Wood.

The current rumors include talk of a major power increase (which would require a change of allocation-- and frequency, we assume, since 92.1's status is Class A) and format switch-- "Format 41" is the most often mentioned alternative. The way we hear it, contracts have been signed-- but talking to the Entercom folks turns up a group seemingly happy with the station's present direction. They indicate no immediate plans for any changes.

--Oh, and in case you're wondering what Tampa Bay classical fans choose as their favorite-- Mozart is winning hands down.

RELIGION

Actually the Summer Book turns up no rated outlets in this category, but since WCBF managed a .7 in the Spring, here they appear, worthy if nothing else, from a historical standpoint.

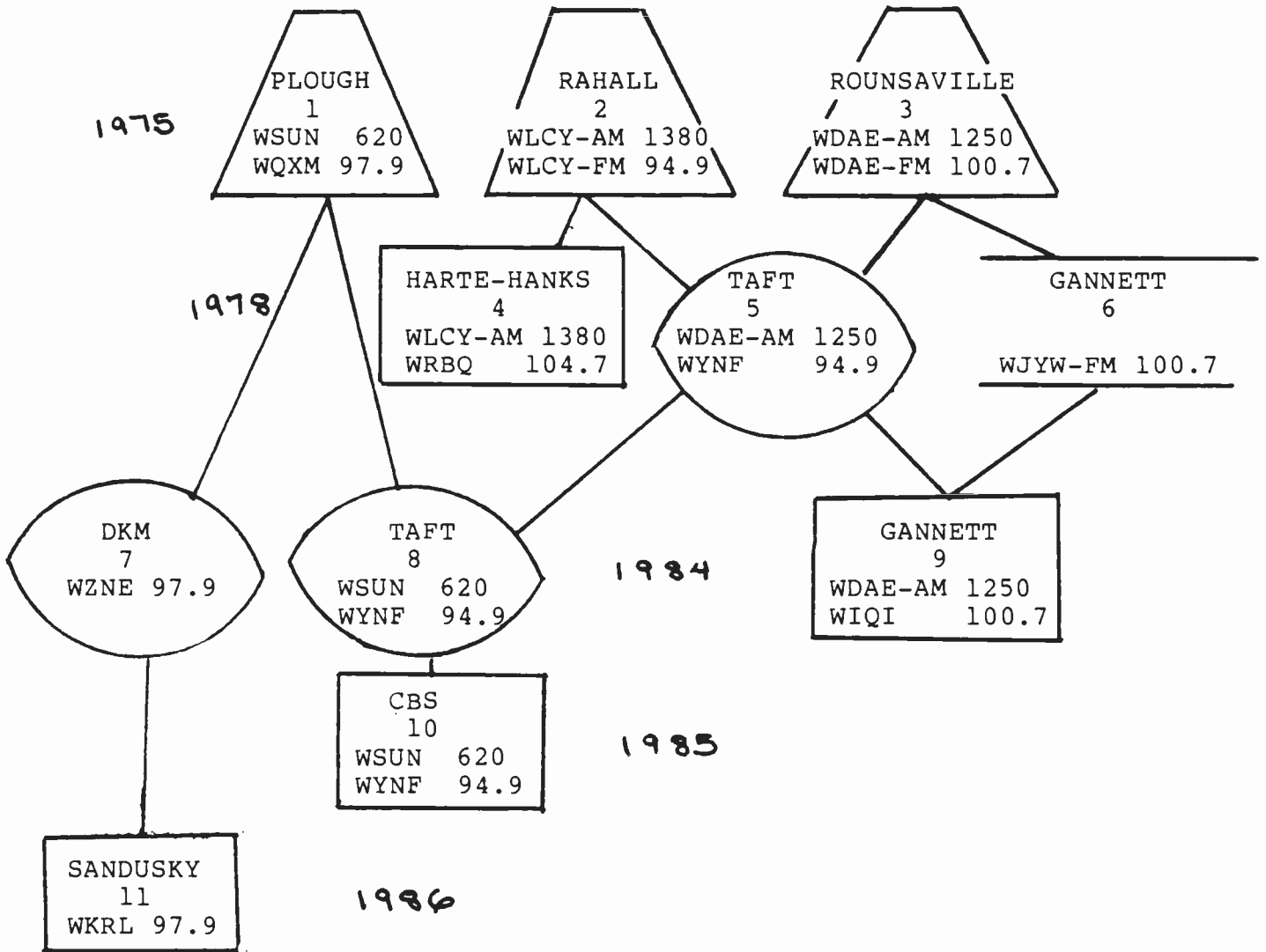
It was 1960 when Rex Rand was granted this AM daytimer at 1010, and a year later it debuted. Rand, the flamboyant owner of Miami's WINZ (complete with British accent, he was known as "Sexy Remy"), was hoping to duplicate the success of that outlet here, right down to the call letters he chose-- WINQ.

WINZ, was known as "Wins"-- WINQ here was "Wink". But WINZ was not a daytimer, which to say the least, made a difference in the fate of Winq. Rand pumped considerable time and effort into the facility and though much was tried-- everything from a brief fling at top 40, to a longer stint with news/talk-- nothing worked. In comparison to other outlets, WINQ operated on a shoestring-- not much wider than the station's signal. 50,000 watts straight up-- was the joke. As it was, the directional pattern might as well have been up, since it was aimed away from Tampa.

It's somewhat fitting then that this would be Rand's Waterloo-- leaving the transmitter building in Seffner, he died in a helicopter crash. The station was eventually sold by his estate to Hal Gore in 1978. Gore was responsible for both the format switch and call letter change. Religion was known turf to Gore, who had previously been associated with Woody Sudbrink, well known in those circles. And as radio has always been a business of co-incidences, it turns out that in 1984, Sudbrink bought the outlet from Gore. "Victory Radio," it's now called. Largely brokered.

This profile would not have been possible without a lot of input. We are indebted to a number of people including staffers from every outlet represented in this profile. We'd like to also thank J.T. Anderton, Ralph Beaver, Rod Brosig, Al Casey, Bob DeCarlo, Jed Duvall, Bob Harris and Ron Parker. For the memories-- as well as information, it was a joy to talk with Roy E. Nilson. Randy Kabrich is mentioned here as a true friend and confidant-- as well as an inspiration. And finally, special recognition and sincere appreciation must go to Dan Johnson, the consummate entrepreneur whose love for Bay Area radio is infectious.

And the more things change-- the more they stay the same-- particularly in the case of WDAE-AM-FM.

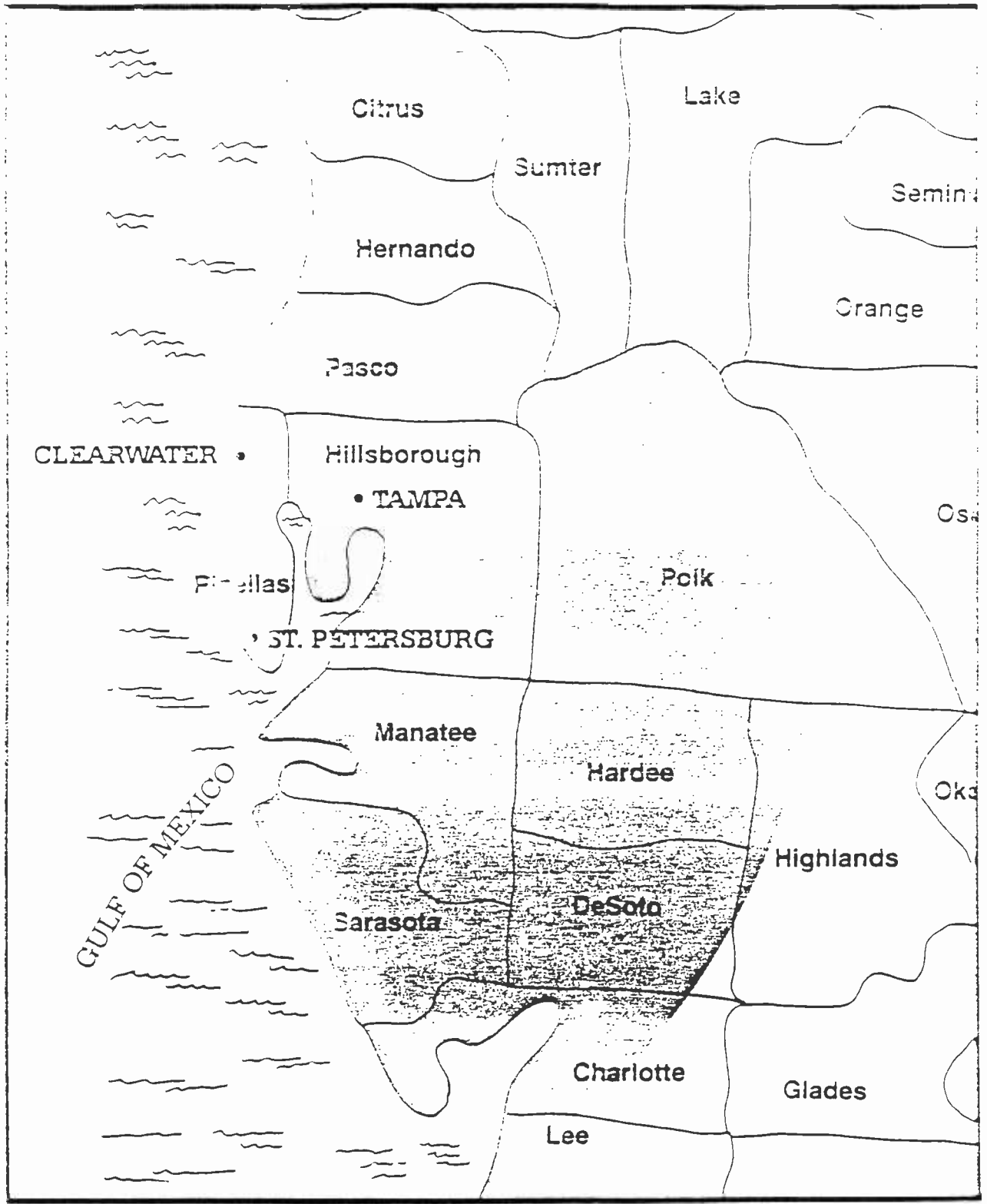


1. In 1973, Plough acquired WSUN. In 1975, Plough acquired WQXM.
2. In 1957, Rahall acquired WLCY-AM (then WTSP). In 1970, Rahall signed on WLCY-FM.
3. In 1964, Rounsaville purchased WDAE-AM-FM
4. In 1978, Harte Hanks purchased WLCY-AM. (Actually it purchased WLCY-AM-FM, but at the same time was acquiring the assets of Southern Broadcasting including WRBQ-FM, so WLCY-FM (then WYNF) was immediately spun off to Taft.)
5. Taft (in addition to the above mentioned WYNF), purchased WDAE-AM from Rounsaville.
6. Gannett bought WDAE-FM.
7. In 1984, DKM bought many of Plough's assets including WZNE (formerly WQXM).
8. In '84, Taft had a chance to pick up Plough's WSUN. It did so by spinning off WDAE-AM to Gannett. (It held on to WYNF.)
9. Gannett's purchase of WDAE-AM reunited this facility with its former counterpart, WDAE-FM (which by then was WIQI).
10. In 1985, Taft purchased Gulf's channel 10 in Tampa, necessitating the sale of WSUN/WYNF-- CBS bought the combo.
11. In 1986, Sandusky bought the DKM standalone.

Please note: Triangles indicate the original pairings, circles denote interim ownerships, and squares represent the current licensees.

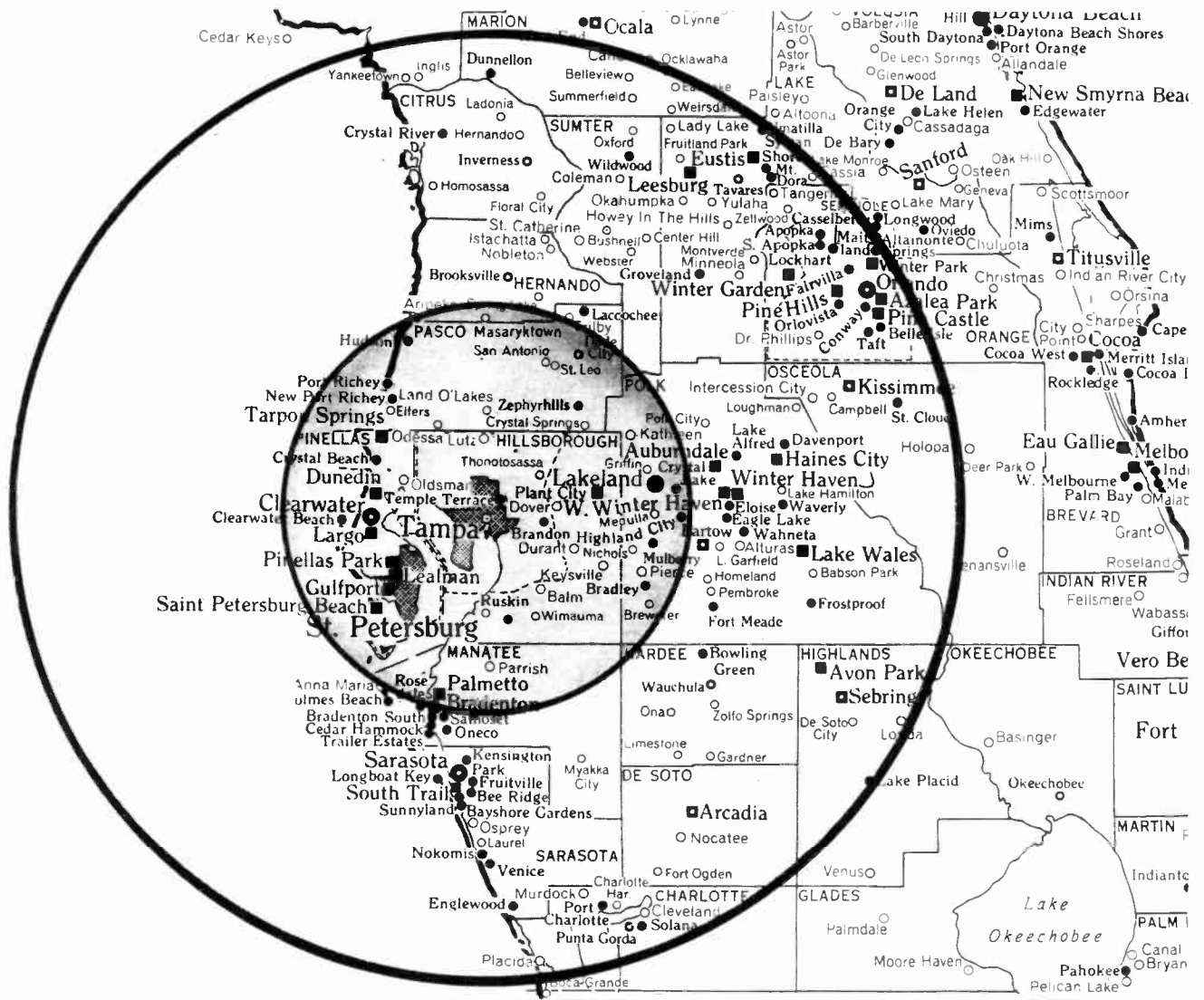
It should also be noted that the groupings on the preceding page are by no means the only pairings involved in ownership changes-- however, the intricacies of these transactions demanded illustration.

CLASSIC ROCK 97.9 FM WIKI



WKRL FM, Gulfcoast Radio, Inc. a division of Sandusky Newspapers, Inc. P.O. Box 4809 Clearwater, FL 33518
(813) 391-9988 St. Petersburg (813) 224-0742 Tampa

COVERAGE MAP



W-101 FM

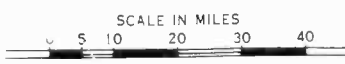
PREDICTED FM CONTOURS

WIQI 100 KW ERP 460 FT. 100.7 MHz

TAMPA, FLORIDA

Prepared by
Lohnes and Culver Washington, D.C.

July, 1980



© Rand McNally & Co 80-Y-74

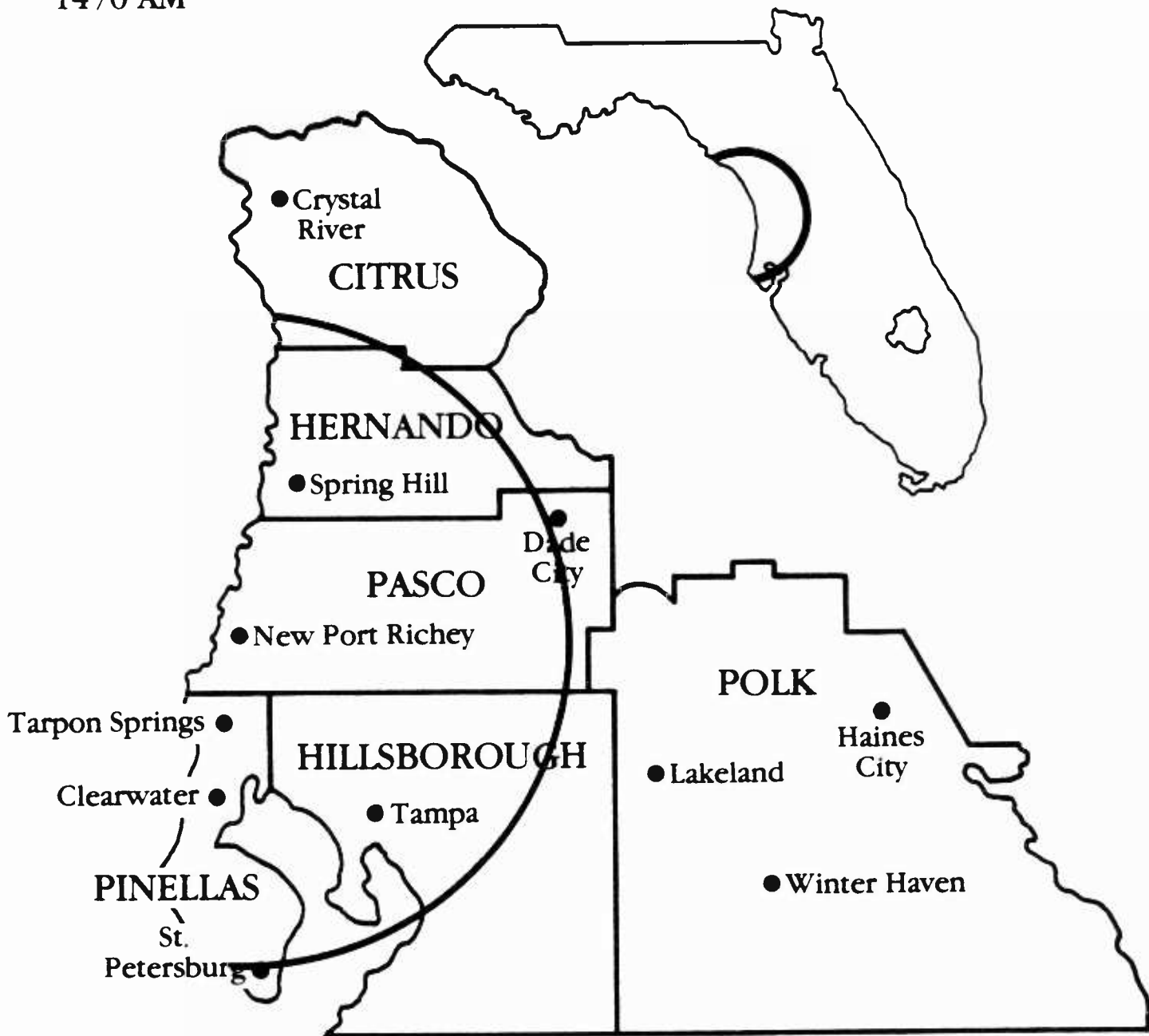


WLWU

106.3 FM

1470 AM

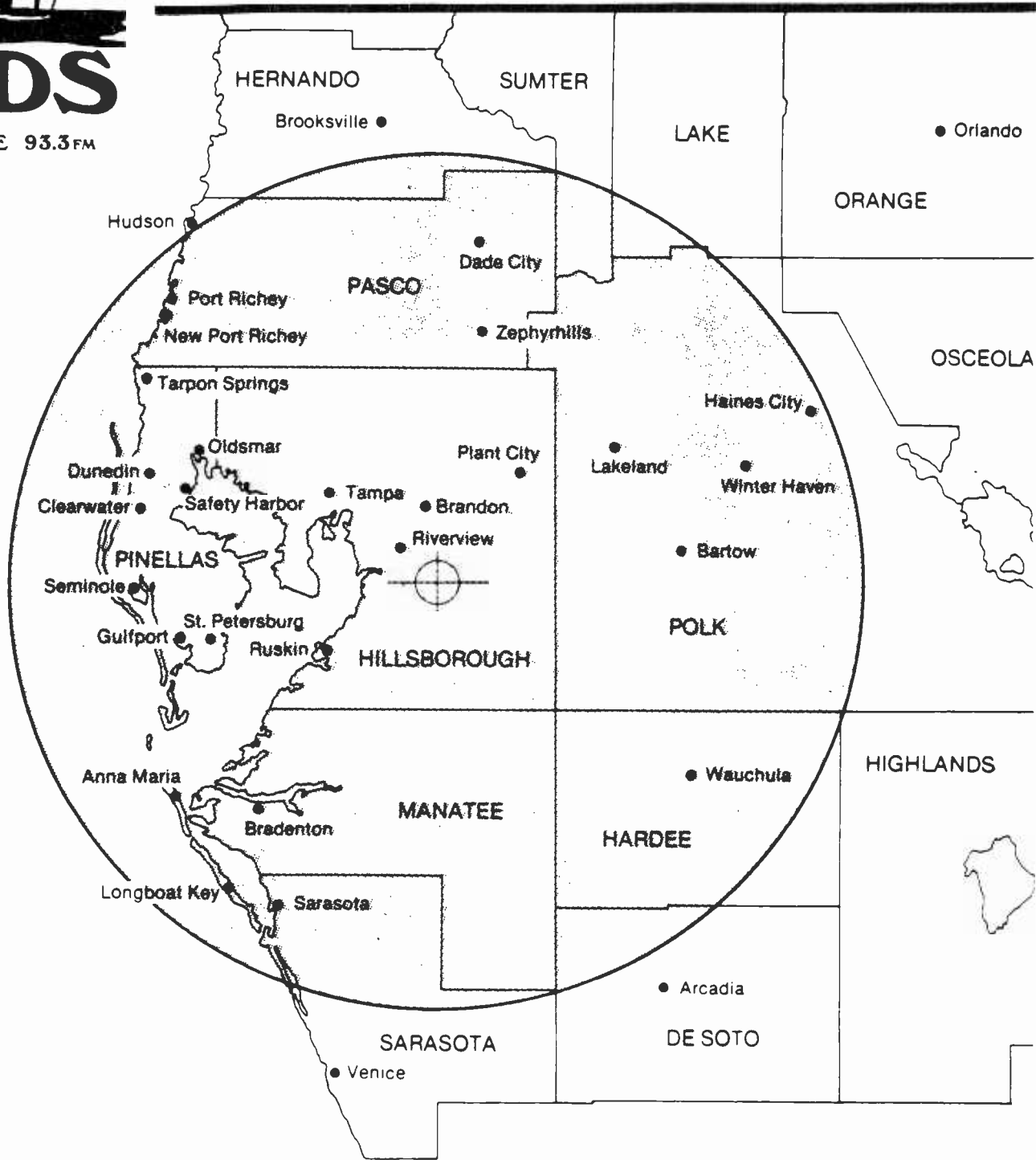
Coverage Map





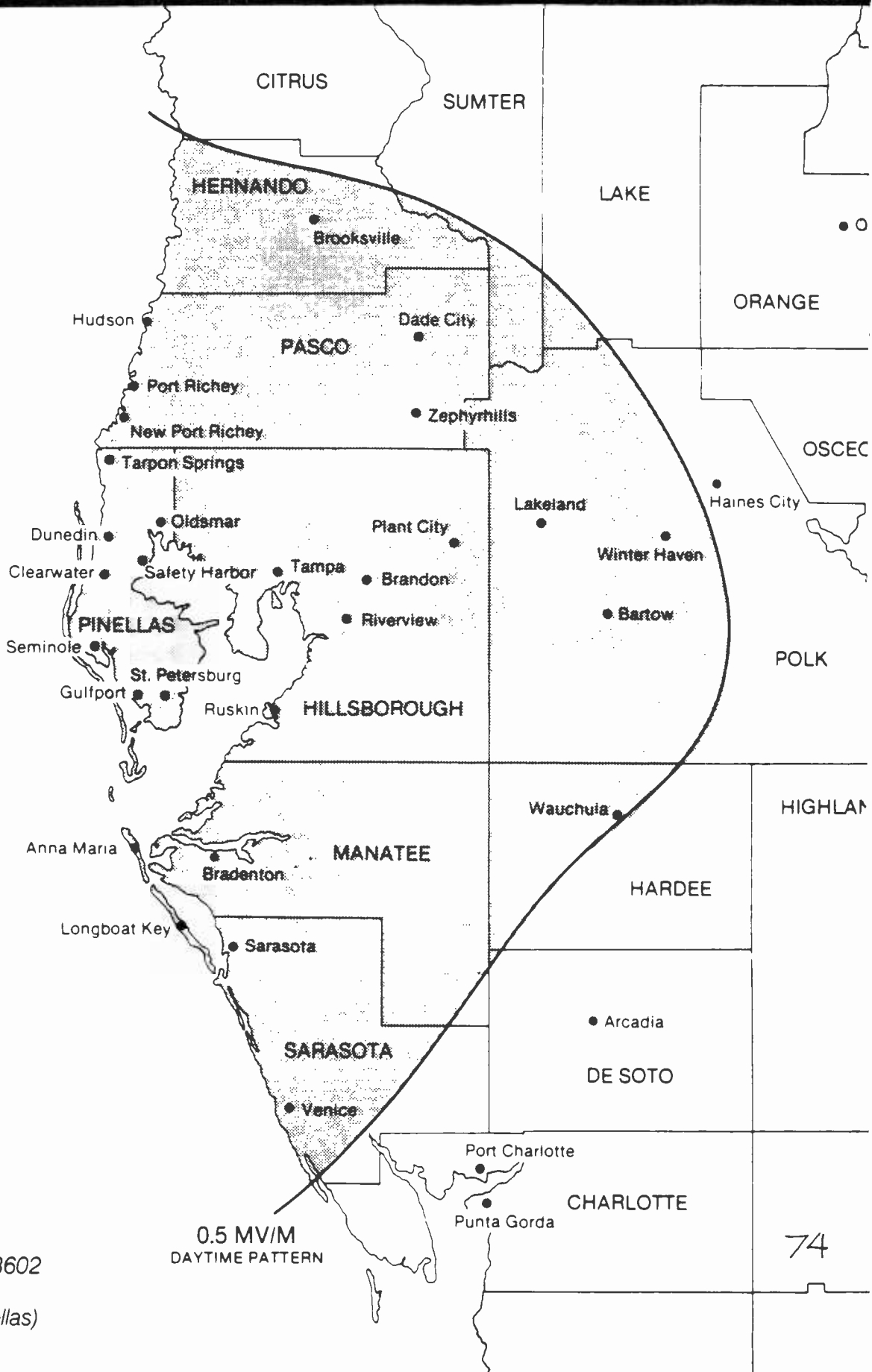
WPDS

PARADISE 93.3 FM



FM SERVICE AREA
 93.3 MHz 100KW ERP 925 FT. AAT

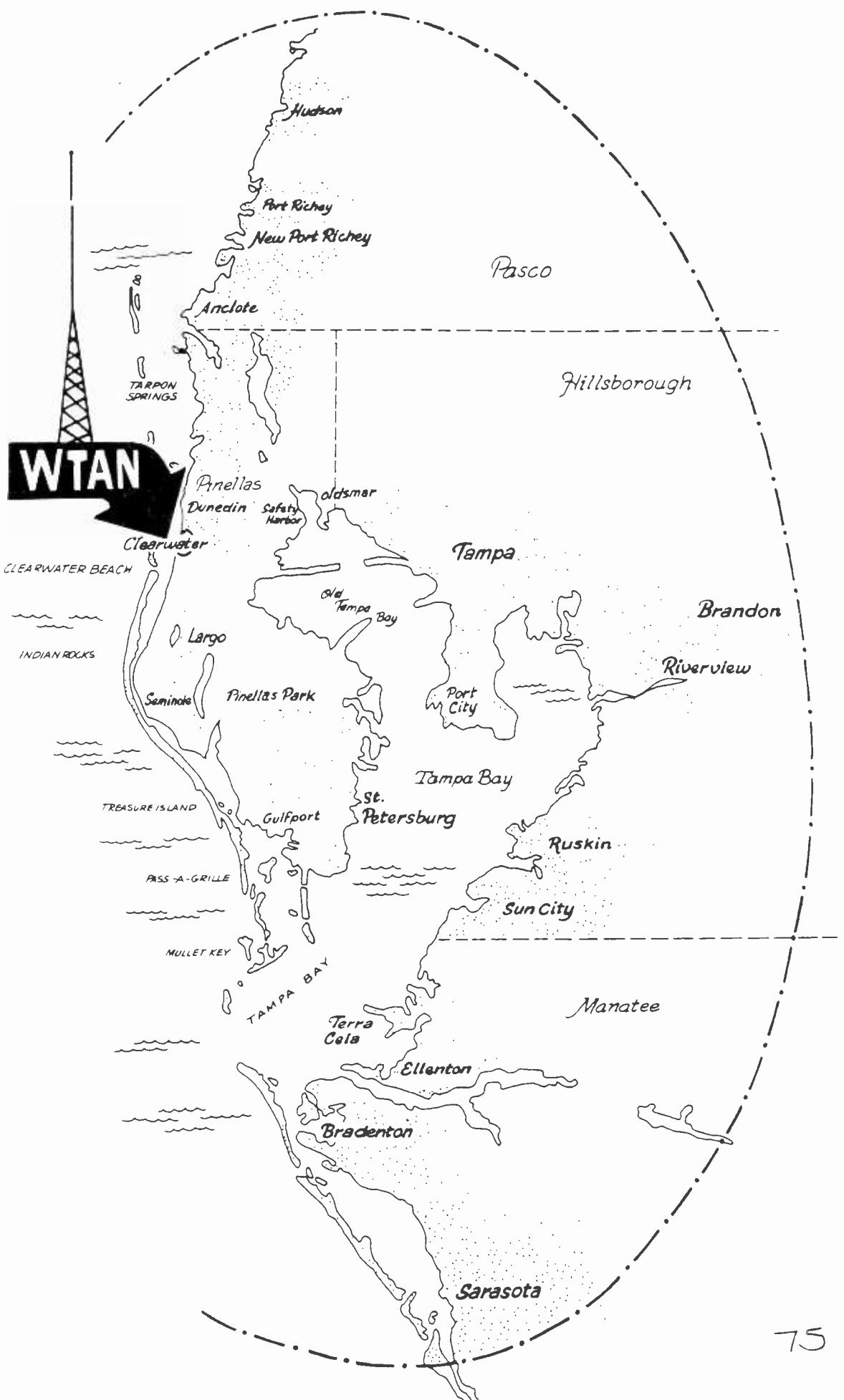
WFLA 97 NEWS RADIO

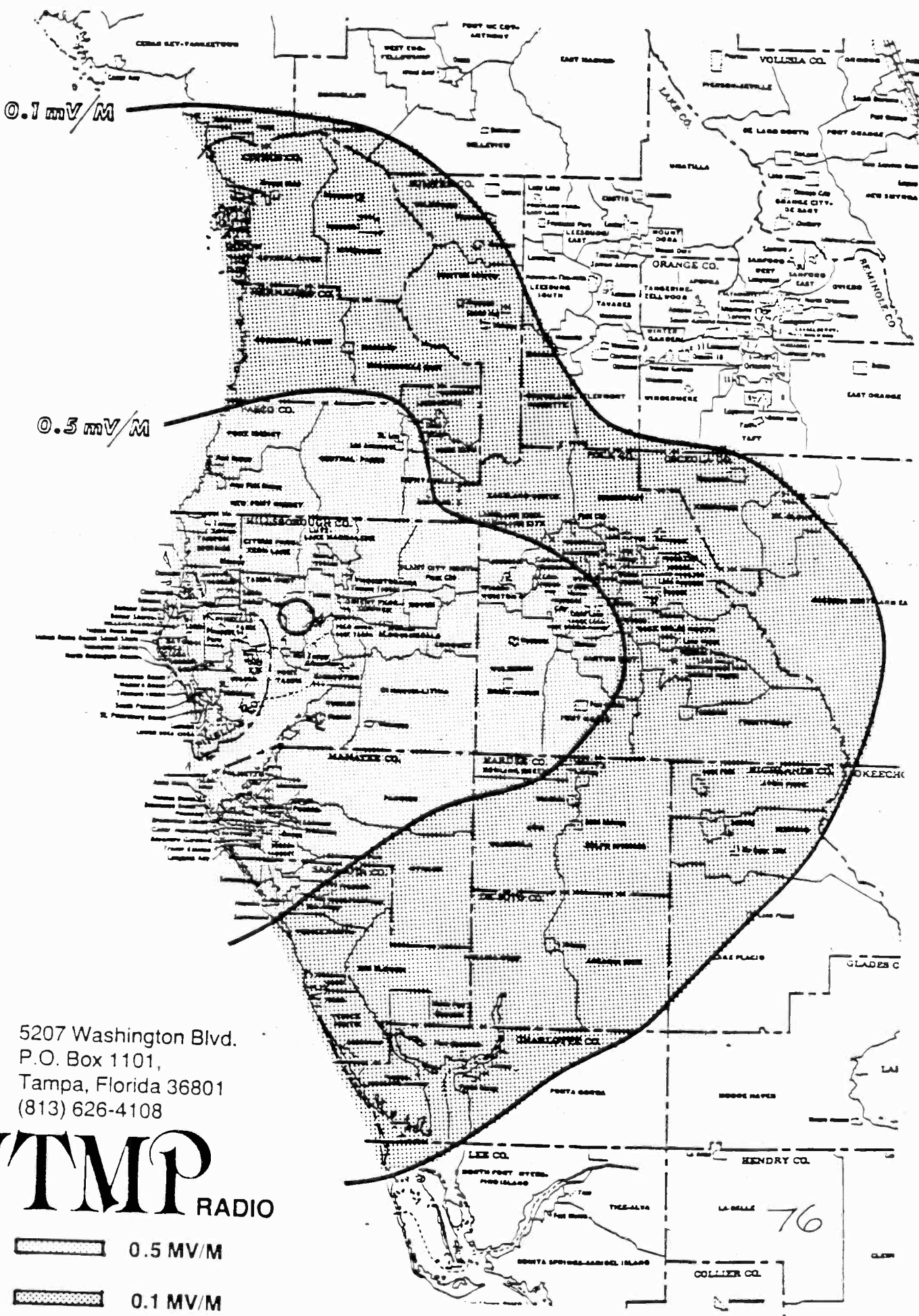


801 JACKSON ST.
TAMPA, FLORIDA 33602
(813) 228-9797
(813) 446-9352 (Pinellas)

0.5 MV/M
DAYTIME PATTERN

74






0.1 mV/M

0.5 mV/M

5207 Washington Blvd.
 P.O. Box 1101,
 Tampa, Florida 36801
 (813) 626-4108

WTMP RADIO

 0.5 MV/M

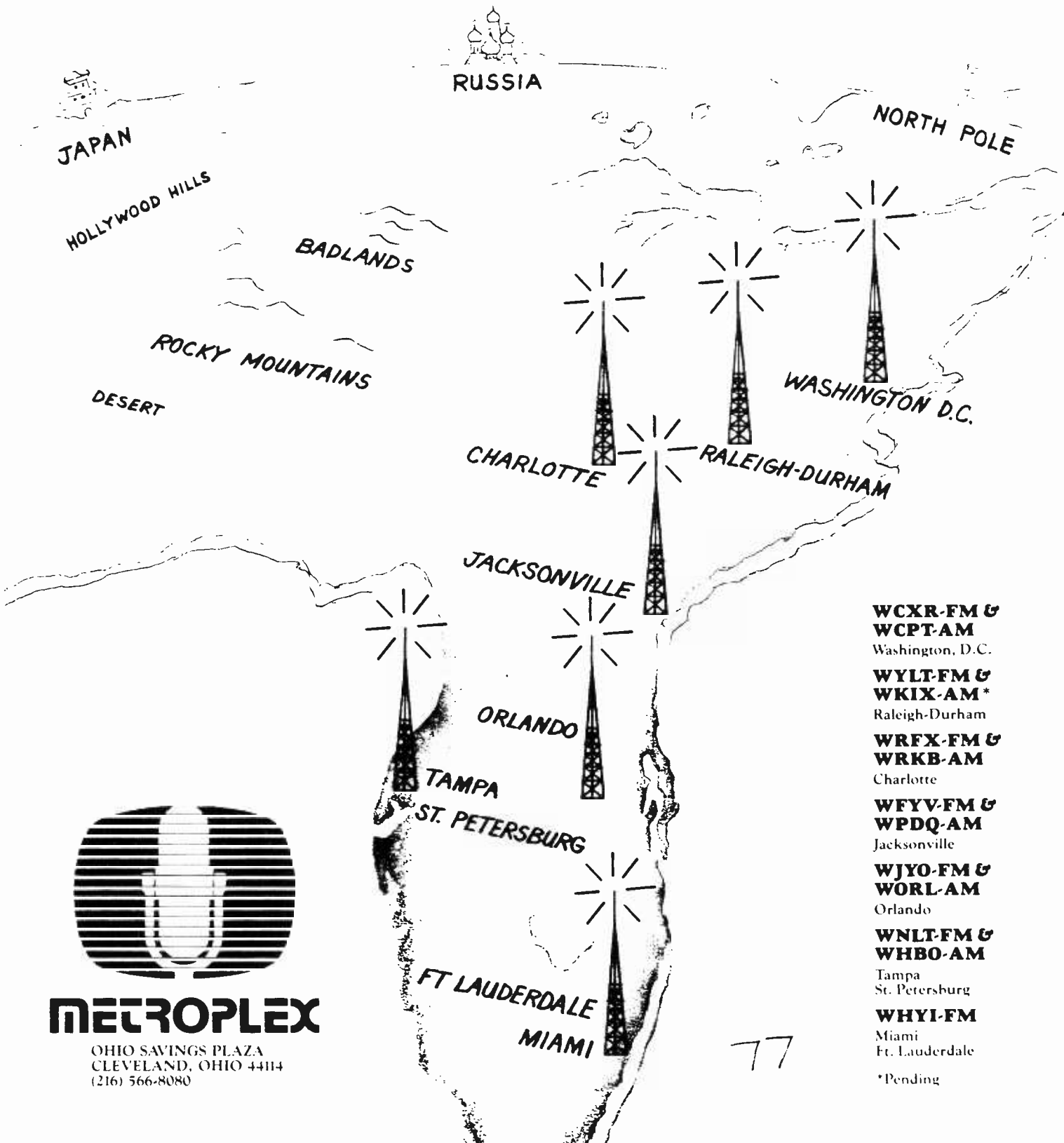
 0.1 MV/M

76

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WCXR-FM & WCPT-AM
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WYLT-FM & WKIX-AM*
Raleigh-Durham

WRFX-FM & WRKB-AM
Charlotte

WFYV-FM & WPDQ-AM
Jacksonville

WJYO-FM & WORL-AM
Orlando

WNLT-FM & WHBO-AM
Tampa
St. Petersburg

WHYI-FM
Miami
Ft. Lauderdale

*Pending



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77

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Tracy Hamilton
Valerie Hawkins
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Boy Jim
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Cleveland Wheeler
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Mike Osterhout
General Manager



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Cellular Communications

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Q105

Cellular phone users offer Q105 traffic reports

By PHYLLIS WINFIELD

Staff Writer

Radio station WRBQ (Q105), motivated by the theory that the best rush-hour traffic routes are just a telephone call away, has installed toll-free lines for cellular telephone owners in the Tampa Bay area.

As of Friday, motorists with cellular telephones began providing the latest information on traffic emergencies to the 24-hour Q105/GTE Mobilnet Cellular Traffic Force program, says Mason Dixon, the radio station's operations manager. To reach the traffic program, all callers have to do is punch in 105.

"What we want is to be able to give the Tampa Bay area the most up-to-the-second traffic report," says Dixon. "Not just up-to-the-minute, but instantaneous traffic news. They (area residents) can find out just about any time of the day where the traffic problems are," he says, and thus take a different route.

The cellular traffic-update system is the first of its kind in the nation, the program's sponsors say. GTE Mobilnet, which operates the cellular telephone system in the Tampa Bay area, and radio station Q105 are financing the traffic program.

"We started it to help people deal with their traffic problems," says Pat Brooks, the station's news director. "It gives the public the chance to help us help them with their traffic problems."

Diana L. Leonard, GTE's area sales manager, says cellular telephone owners also can use the toll-free number to report traffic emergencies to area police departments.

"If (the call-in system) will benefit the radio station and the police department," Leonard says, GTE may decide to expand this operation and

seek similar partnerships with other broadcast stations in the country, she adds.

The toll-free lines, which are funded by GTE, will encourage cellular system owners to make more traffic reports, Dixon said. The price of a call placed by cellular telephone systems normally is between 35 and 65 cents per call, he explains.

The voices of some callers will be broadcast live on Q105's traffic updates. But the disc jockey scheduled to work will decide whether to use the caller's broadcast, Dixon says.

He estimates there are between 5,000 and 7,000 motorists with cellular telephones in Pinellas, Hillsborough and Pasco counties.

"It's amazing the extra amount of information we've gotten since the system was started," Dixon says. "The Mobilnet incoming lines ring on the average of once every five minutes around the clock."

The number of calls to the station's three toll-free lines varies during different times of the day. As might be expected, more calls are received during rush-hour periods, Dixon says.

Before the new traffic reporting program began, the radio station relied on information from its one traffic airplane and reports called in on cellular systems by the station's reporters. The traffic airplane flies Monday through Friday from 6:15 to 9 a.m., and from 4:15 to 6:15 p.m. The station does not use the airplane on weekends, Dixon says.

Q105 has hired three telephone operators to handle incoming traffic reports from the cellular telephone callers, Dixon says.

The installation of three telephone lines for traffic reports will decrease the callers' chances

of not being able to reach a free line at the radio station. Q105 paid the installation charges for the extra telephone lines.

The traffic report system usually answers calls by the third ring. "It's bad enough to be sitting in a traffic jam and trying to make a phone call at the same time, without making a call to a busy number," says Dixon.

The station reports no abuses of the call-service. And the way GTE Mobilnet has designed the cellular system discourages people from calling in false information, he adds.

"Every call that's made can be traced back to the person who made the phone call and (to) their car just simply by noting the time of the call," Dixon says. "But I think that with people who have gone out of their way to buy a cellular phone, (a false call is) not going to happen. It hasn't happened yet."

If you listen to the traffic report called in to Q105, you will be getting your information from mostly sales representatives, construction workers, developers, plumbers and painters. Those are the folks, says Dan T. Bresnahan, sales director of Gulfcoast Cellular Telephone Inc., who are typical buyers of cellular telephones.

Prices for these telephones range from \$1,100 to \$2,850, depending on whether they are portable or are equipped with options such as built-in memory locators. Gulfcoast rents cellular telephones for \$39.95 per month, Bresnahan says.

Neither GTE Mobilnet nor Q105 could estimate the amount of money they have invested in the Cellular Traffic Force program. But neither company seems worried about the program's costs.

"If it had cost us a half-million dollars, it would have been worth it," Dixon says.

Jack Harris will become sportscaster for WRBQ radio



Jack Harris

By BOB ANDELMAN
Tribune Staff Writer

It was the worst-kept secret in Tampa Bay radio. "Finally, we can say it," announced Q105's Cleveland Wheeler. "Jack Harris is coming."

After months of denials and legal snags, former WFLA (970 AM) morning man Jack Harris has signed a contract to become the new sportscaster on WRBQ (105 FM, 1380 AM). Harris joins Wheeler and Terence McKeever on the "Q Morning Zoo" on Sept. 15. He will continue his weekday duties as host of WTVT, Channel 13's "Pulse Plus" program at noon.

Since Harris' WFLA contract expired March 31 he has made a few guest appearances on stations such as WRBQ and WHBO (1040 AM), but a one-year non-compete clause in his WFLA contract prevented him from signing on with anyone in the Bay area.

Harris was not available for comment. But according to WRBQ program director Randy Kabrich, the non-compete clause was invalidated in mid-August when a federal appeals court allowed Reliance Capital Group Inc. to complete its \$356.5 million acquisition of John Blair &

The former long-time morning man for WFLA is scheduled to begin his new duties Sept. 15, thanks to a change of ownership at WFLA, which made him a free agent.

Rowdies matches.

Several Bay area charities — particularly the Muscular Dystrophy Association — count on his support to lure donations and participation in fund-raising events.

And for a while, there was even a Jack Harris Sandwich — ham and bologna — served at an Olde World Cheese Shop.

Harris will be a full partner on the top-rated morning show, providing sports news and commentary, according to Wheeler.

Although Kabrich wouldn't disclose the value of Harris' contract, he hinted that the new sportscaster didn't come cheaply.

"The money at the end of the rainbow couldn't even come close to what Jack is getting, but he's worth every cent. I personally look a cut in pay, I said, 'if Jack would work here, I'd work for free.'"

Dick Crippen, the WXFL, Channel 8, sportscaster who currently

does live telephone sports reports from home each morning, will continue to be involved with Q105, although Wheeler said Crippen's broadcasts may switch to afternoons. Crippen was not available for comment.

Before Crippen, Q105 had another sportscaster, Tedd Webb. Webb was an original part of the "Morning Zoo" with Wheeler, Scott Shannon and Pat Brooks before leaving in 1983.

Webb, now sports director at WFLA, said he thinks Harris is a perfect match for his old pals.

"I think it's great," Webb said. "I've worked with those people over there — they're going to have a great time with him. ... I think the chemistry is going to be great."

At WUSA (101 FM), where Bob DeCarlo and Judd Ols are the morning men competing with Q105 for a 35-and-older audience, DeCarlo said he isn't sure Harris is going to make the "Morning Zoo" invincible.

"I'm kinda glad for Jack he managed to get out of the deal he had," DeCarlo said. "It'll be interesting to hear what happens over there. Having another body ... it might turn out to be too crowded. There's such a thing as too much of a good thing."

"If I sat around and worried about everybody Q105 hired ... My problems don't hinge on if Jack Harris is there," he continued. "I don't even know if it will strengthen that show. Where is there room for Jack to get on there? Whose role is going to be subverted?" DeCarlo wondered.

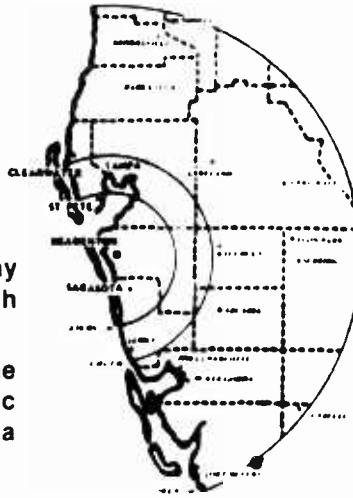
It won't be McKeever's, according to Wheeler.

"Talk about 'Paranormalia,'" he said, referring to a current pop song by Art of Noise. "He (McKeever) has been Max Headrooming around the radio station ever since we started talking about this."

"They're individual entities and add different things to the program," Wheeler explained of the roles to be played by McKeever and Harris. "It'll take the edge off Terence."

Kabrich said he's confident that when Harris arrives at Q105 in 12 days, he'll bring a lot of older listeners with him.

"Jack is probably, without a doubt, one of the top two or three personalities in this market," Kabrich said. "We already had the knockout punch in the ring, but this gives us dominance. ... We've got something for the kids to the grand-



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A COMBINED MULTIPART FEATURE:

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

and

ECONOMIC INSIGHT

Acquisition Made Easy, Part Two

In Vol. 1, No. 4, we looked at the following:

Pricing a Property

by Cash Flow

by Gross Revenues

by Comparable Pricing

The current economic climate

Why lenders are more receptive to radio today

Loan Criteria

Balance Sheet Borrowers vs. Cash Flow Borrowers

Debt

Senior Debt i.e. Banks

Insurance Companies

Government Backed Loans

Seller Financing

In this issue, we will continue and conclude our discussion with
Equity

Junior Debt / Subordinated Debentures

Convertible Debt

Mezzanine Financing

Acquiring equity partners

Venture Capital

Public Offerings

Leveraged Buy Outs

Limited Partnerships

Doing the deal

Negotiating with present owners

Convincing the lenders

Acquisition Made Easy, Part Two

In a broad sense, there are two methods of raising capital: debt and equity. Debt as previously discussed, is the borrowing of money with the promise to repay it under certain terms and conditions. Bonds issued by a corporation would usually be classified as debt (referred to as debentures) since they generally carry a fixed rate of return and expiration date regardless of the performance of that corporation. EQUITY includes all funds secured in return for a percentage of ownership of a particular business, both from outside investors and principals. Common stocks are typical equity instruments--with stockholders buying at the corporation's current rate and subsequently gaining or losing based on the corporation's fortunes.

Needless to say, in theory at any rate, debt is traditionally deemed to be "safer" in that all terms conditions and rates are pre-stated, with equity taking on a more speculative nature as participants stand to potentially gain (or lose) significantly greater sums. Obviously, both have advantages, depending on the venture in question. But often, the lines of debt and equity are not so clear cut.

(Of course, it's almost assured that the first time buyer will not be running around putting together public offerings but the combination of debt and equity on some level will be found in some form in all deals even if it is just down payment (equity) verses seller paper (debt) in the smallest of purchases. To digress even further a moment, the reason for incurring debt, or parting with equity, is of course to raise the funds necessary to purchase (or run) a property. But as bank loans are generally based on a multiple not to exceed five or six times cash flow, all but the very rich will be in search of additional financing in the form of some type of subordinated debt or equity, or a combination of both.)

SUBORDINATED DEBT (or JUNIOR DEBT) is as it sounds, money that is subordinate to senior debt in terms of repayment. In other words, if a business folds, the senior debtor is first in line to come in and take the firm's assets to satisfy the outstanding loans. After the senior debtor reclaims his capital, then junior debtors may do likewise with the remaining assets.

Since it's obvious that junior debtors are less likely to recoup their investment than their senior counterparts, it is generally going to cost more (in terms of interest) to borrow money in the form of junior debt. (Lenders are attracted to these less secure debentures because of their substantially higher interest rates. Particularly at a time like the present, when interest rates from more conventional instruments are quite low; higher yielding, albeit more speculative issues are appealing.-- A typical subordinated debenture, the "junk bond", is described fully in Vol 1, No 1, page 56.)

In addition to higher interest rates, more speculative junior debentures may also allow the lender to convert his investment from debt into equity at the lender's option as a sort of bonus for the risk involved. In this way, the lender will be able to share the riches, should extraordinary profits be made (not uncommon when a company later goes public). Such junior debt is generally referred to as CONVERTIBLE DEBT. (The broad category known as junior (or subordinated) debt is often referred to as MEZZANINE FINANCING, because of its role in filling the gap between debt and equity. Today mezzanine financing is a common component of larger deals, often comprising as much as 20% of the purchase money, with investors expecting a total rate of return of 18 to 21% at present.)

It's also possible (and likely in many instances) that the subordinated lender will try to hedge his bets by becoming somewhat a part of the decision making process. Just as senior lenders may impose certain financial practices upon a business during the life of a loan, junior lenders may ask for a seat on the board of directors, and often (especially when dealing with venture capitalists) will be allowed to take over the running of a firm when pre stated projections are not met. Here again, the riskier a venture is perceived, the more control and perks a lender (or investor) will require.

VENTURE CAPITAL, is self explanatory and is generally formed by a group of investors who pool their resources for the purpose of finding a significantly higher rate of return than traditional vehicles can provide. Thus venture capital companies make loans only to those businesses which can provide a bountiful return. (At present, it's not unusual for venture capitalists to look for a total rate of return as high 35%.) Because of this, it's often the case that venture capital money comes in exchange for a significant portion of equity in the business (sometimes as high as 75%).

In most cases, this lion's share of ownership will not be comprised of voting stock (more likely it will be convertible debentures, or preferred stock). (PREFERRED STOCK pays a fixed dividend and has a fixed value upon liquidation of the company. In that regard, and by the fact that preferred stock does not award the stockholder any voting power in the corporation's destiny, preferred stock is more closely allied to debt than equity as it guarantees a rate of return and does not lessen the principals' control of the corporation. (In smaller firms, the dividend rate awarded to preferred stockholders is somewhat academic as it is usually reinvested in the company.) Common stockholders, of course, share voting power and do have the opportunity to grow proportionately with the company should windfall profits be amassed, but in return, they receive no dividends until obligations to preferred shareholders are met.)

(Often the preferred stock held by venture capitalists will be convertible into common stock. The benefits of this plan to investors is three fold: 1. By being non-voting preferred stock holders, they are not evaluated by the FCC and thus can own more than the 12-12-12 rule would normally allow. 2. At the time of the property's sale, a conversion of preferred stock into common may yield significantly higher profits, and of course 3. If things aren't going so well, and the stock is not converted to common, the investor still holds a place high up in line when liquidation occurs.)

Though the amount of control a venture capital firm will have is limited in theory, it sometimes occurs that such is not the case. Referred to jokingly as "vulture capitalists", the money that such firms advance can be so costly in terms of ownership and potential control that the purchaser may be little more than a company president with a block of stock. But for the first time owner, venture capital may make the vital difference between doing a deal and not.

As previously mentioned, the odds of a first time owner being involved in the sale of his company's stock to the general public (known as an "IPO"-- INITIAL PUBLIC OFFERING) are incredibly slim. (In the economic world, a first time buyer financing a single station acquisition is a risk akin to a programmer's fear of taking a station "All Black Weather". If by some small chance the Securities and Exchange Commission should approve the offering, it will do so with the requirement that the prospectus bear heavy warnings about the speculative nature of the venture, hardly heartwarming to an investor. And even with the SEC's blessing it's highly likely that the dollars involved in such an acquisition are too small to interest an underwriter, essential to the success of an IPO.)

(An underwriter is traditionally an investment banking firm which will guarantee a corporation that it will sell an agreed to amount of shares (be it bonds or preferred stock, for example). For that guarantee, the underwriter will receive a fee which may well amount to ten percent of the money raised. (Investment bankers are involved in the arranging of financing of all types, from mergers to leveraged buy outs, and in the recent past, a few have become directly involved in financing an acquisition, thus taking the role of the venture capitalist in that regard.)

A leveraged buy out (LBO) has become an increasingly common way for a management team to purchase the chain they have been successfully running. (As stated in part one, the inclusion of a well known broadcaster with a successful track record, is one of the most important parts of a financing appeal. In the case of an LBO, it's often the case that the very individuals responsible for the company's growth will be asking for its financing, presenting a very convincing request.)

An LBO utilizes the profits gained by selling a portion of the assets being acquired in order to finance the remaining portion of the assets to be kept. It can simplistically be illustrated by the following example: Mr. Smith works for Nexus Corp, a privately held radio group with seven stations. He puts together a group of top executives who wish to join him in the purchase of Nexus from its present owners. The group will have to raise \$100 million. They will sell off three of the properties for \$45 million, using that money to finance a portion of the \$100 million debt. Now with \$45 million in the bank, the remaining \$55 million will be more easily acquired.

In the above scenario, the debt to equity ratio would be extremely high, and even in the average LBO these days, it is not uncommon to see a debt to equity ratio of 12 to 1. (In other words, for every 12 dollars of borrowed money, the company is putting up one dollar of existing capital.)

While a public offering is out of reach for the neophyte buyer, it is possible to raise funds through private placement, most likely in the form of LIMITED PARTNERSHIPS. Traditionally, a limited partnership involves one to three "general partners" who will actually run the company, and a number of "limited partners" who will fund the business. Of course, when profits begin to show, it is the limited partners who will receive the bulk of them (proportionate to their investment). But for the general partners, it is a way to amass capital without diluting control as the limited partners have no say in the running of the business (except, of course, when pre agreed to projections are not met). In many ways the arrangement is not unlike a venture capital deal).

From the standpoint of the limited partner, the advantages are various-- limited partners are protected in that they are not liable for debts incurred by the business (beyond, of course, their initial investment); unlike general partners, they are not evaluated by the FCC in its approval of the license transferrance (which allows a limited partner of foreign nationality to be involved in ownership, for instance); and their tax liability may be lessened. (In fact, some limited partnerships are set up specifically for tax gains with long term net losses offset by future appreciation-- initial deductions and later profits, in other words.)

From the general partners' perspective, a limited partnership among professional acquaintances may well net needed capital with relatively little effort. But worries over whether the money will actually "come through", especially when a number of limited partners are involved, may persist until the moment the deal is consummated. Often, though, the general partner is unaware of potential limited partners, thus complicating the deal further as the structuring of this type of financing is complex, and costly. Firms or individuals who put together such partnerships usually demand significant fees up front, as well as a portion of the profits when the station begins to make money.

For reasons discussed here and in Part One of this feature, it becomes clear that all but the smallest of transactions are going to be financed from combined sources. Since, as pointed out repeatedly, subordinated debt is significantly more costly than conventional financing, a borrower should amass as much senior debt as possible. Two dollars of senior debt for each dollar of junior debt (or equity) is thought of as ideal. But that is a generality at best. To be sure, banks (senior lenders) are happy to see significant subordinated debt (or of course, equity) as it further guarantees them that their note-- first in order of priority will be repaid in any eventuality.

In looking at the combination of subordinated debt verses equity, there are no hard rules. What will work best for one individual will be untenable to another. The sky is the limit in terms of creativity in the structuring of these deals (given certain financial parameters.). For instance, a subordinated debenture that does not carry with it stock warrants, may be more costly (in terms of interest rate) than one which does. On the other hand, a warrant (which is the option to buy a given amount of stock at a specified price) may be extremely costly if the price is significantly lower than the stock could otherwise bring (a strong possibility when a company's growth is extraordinary).

(Warrants (commonly referred to as "calls") generally have a fixed date of expiration. If the holder does not convert his warrant into stock by that date, the right to do so is relinquished.) Should a business wish to lower the price of subordinated debt by issuing warrants, but at the same time does not wish to risk losing a great deal of potential income if the extraordinary growth described above does occur, it may wish to reserve the right to redeem the warrants, also on a specified date at a specified price. This agreement, the reverse of a "call" is known as a "put".)

But by this point, the discussion has long become academic for the first time buyer, presented only to clarify terms he will encounter in the financial world. If in the rare instance he should become involved with, for instance, warrants, he will do so only with the help of those who have years of tenure in the investment field.

SO NOW I KNOW ALL THIS STUFF BUT HOW DO I GET THE MONEY?

First make sure that you've got a property. In addition to understanding the capital market and the radio business-- including the pricing methods described in part one, you've still got to strike a deal with the current owner of the property you wish to acquire. He may be a willing seller, but more likely he's got an emotional attachment to the property (remember this is an ego business). At the very least, these days, he's got an emotional attachment to getting the right price.

Act Fast. With relaxed FCC requirements, specifically the fact that it is no longer necessary for a potential owner to prove that the necessary capital is on hand to cover operating expenses for one year, he who hesitates is lost. Often, a delay of a week or two before making a firm offer may make the difference between a station bought and a deal lost. Granted, certain things take time-- for instance, the sale price may be based on the fact that the tower can be moved to a more advantageous site and the engineering study showing the feasibility of that move is not yet complete. When such is the case, make an offer contingent upon a favorable report.

Assume nothing. For instance, if you feel a certain employee is a large contributor to the station's success, request a private meeting with that person to discuss his or her desires. It's also wise to find out the local business community's opinion of the station. Especially in smaller markets, if there are problems, they may be unsurmountable for you. While the bottom line is quantitatively telling, a little qualitative research on your own will pay off.

Get to know the seller in person. It is his "baby" and he's likely to be more favorable during the negotiations if he likes you. To that end, expect a number of problems in the bargaining process. For one thing, several sellers are deep down inside unwilling to part with their property. On a subconscious level they go into the negotiations looking for problems, and generally they find them. (Much like the two kinds of attorneys-- deal makers and deal breakers.) Sizing up the seller as to his desire to sell is important.

More recently though, sellers have been quite motivated seeing the windfall profits made by others of their ranks. With dollar signs in their eyes, they appoint a broker (or in some cases an investment banking firm) to get the best possible price. Some of these folks are masters at creating bidding wars with prices escalating to the unreasonable range. Know what you are willing to pay for a property (top dollar) and stop there.

Understand what it will really cost. Remember, the price you will pay for the station includes BOTH the price paid to the present owner and the price paid for your financing. Assess it as a total package.

Your broker can be your best friend. While it's possible to structure a deal without a broker, he or she can greatly simplify the process. Beyond the data-- financial and otherwise that he can quickly supply, your broker may provide necessary insights into the situation. His experience with similar transactions may be a godsend, and at the very least he will serve as an excellent buffer between you and the seller in such matters as the initial on site inspection.

OK, NOW HOW DO I GET THE MONEY.

Finally. The answer in three words: Ask For It. Of course, exactly how you ask will determine whether you shall receive. Included on the next page is Susan Ness' checklist which is a definitive outline of what a written presentation should include.

The bottom line to all of this is that you've got to establish that the transaction makes sense financially. If it isn't apparent to the lender from your written presentation that the property can generate enough revenue to cover its debt and build its equity, you're dead in the water. That may sound simplistic, but many written presentations do everything but assure a lender that his loan will be easily repaid.

When preparing a presentation, do so from the lender's point of view remembering that the lender is overly concerned with the risk factor involved. He first wants to know that the loan can be repaid with ease. He also wants to be assured that in the worst case scenario-- should the borrower default-- that his money can be recovered. Convincing the lender of both these conditions is the heart of the presentation.

Once a proposal (also known as an OFFERING MEMORANDUM) has been written (exhaustively written, leaving no stone unturned, see part one), it is time to approach the lenders. Often finding the appropriate financiers will be the most time consuming task in station acquisition. By far it will be the most discouraging. Be prepared for a marked lack of enthusiasm. (To that end, the best time to get to know a lender (from the local bank to a venture capital firm) is before you need to borrow money. In that way, you will be a known commodity when the time comes.)

Be wary of anyone making it too easy. Like any business, the financial world has its share of frauds. Make sure that money paid up front for financing comes with the guarantee that such financing will materialize. Understand the "hidden" charges in loan origination and the like. Keep in mind that in a sense you are "buying" money-- be a bargain shopper realizing the terms will vary but remember, in the final analysis the banking world is quite conservative and consequently somewhat predictable. If the deal sounds too good to be true-- it probably is.

And finally, this timely message regarding unchecked emotions: No longer is it a buyer's hope that the deal will be do-able. In the current economic climate most deals can be done. The future will tell us whether many of them should have been done. Thus the question of "do-ability" must be replaced with one of "viability", a more precarious issue indeed. Living with a bad deal is by far more stressful than passing up a good one. Use extreme caution in financing.



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RADIO STATION ACQUISITION A CHECKLIST FOR WRITTEN PRESENTATION TO LENDER

- I. Summary of Proposal
- II. Background on Company
 - A. Statement of Purpose
 - B. Organizational Structure and History
 - C. Key Management Resumes and References
- III. Proposed Acquisition
 - A. Technical data on stations, including contour maps, description of technical facility, personnel, proposed improvements in facility, format, marketing, cost controls, etc.
 - B. Marketing data and competitive factor analysis, including ratings, demographic and economic data, other stations in market, discussion of competition, recent sales in market, C.P.A. market surveys, if available.
 - C. Historical financial performance and conservative projections, including financial statements for last three years and detailed discussion of assumptions.
- IV. Other Stations in Portfolio
 - A. If stations will not be part of the financing package: historical financial statements and ratings performance.
 - B. If stations may be included within the financing package: the information listed in Section III.
- V. Financing Plan
 - A. Loan Request - terms desired
 - B. Proposed capital structure, including equity and subordinated debt.
 - B. Proforma Projections (income statement & balance sheet) for life of loan (expected and conservative)

POSITIONING FOR PROFIT

Suburban Success

Put yourself in an all too common scenario. You operate a radio station on the fringe of a major market. You serve several million people but you don't have the coverage necessary to penetrate the rating book. What are you going to do?

All too often, owners give up and program the outlet strictly for dollars, catering solely to sponsor demand. Perhaps they go religion, or cater to little served splinter groups-- bartering time in all dayparts. Success may be evident in dollars (though it's a tough road requiring a lean staff and strict budgeting), but even listeners in the center of the station's coverage area will pass it up for the "big guys".

Is there another choice? Actually there are two of them, if mass appeal radio listeners are your target. You can do it cheaply, or you can spend some bucks. And in both cases you can win listeners and dollars, say owners of such profit centers.

In this feature we'll take the high road with what seems like the impossible: Talk in the suburbs.

Positioning For Profit: KGIL, spending money to make money.

Since its sign on in 1946, KGIL-AM has been promoted as a suburban outlet. Back then the San Fernando Valley was an entity all its own. Today, it's a central part of the Los Angeles sprawl. And though KGIL-AM covers an area significantly greater than "The Valley"; marketing, promotion and programming will continue to cater to this million plus populus.

KGIL-FM is limited to this region by signal alone. The class A FM is on the same frequency as KIKF, licensed to Orange County. Run efficiently and effectively, KGIL-FM's low cost adult contemporary fare is a profit center. KGIL-AM, on the other hand has an overhead that would rival any Los Angeles outlet.

In July of last year, the AM outlet dropped it's "Ballads, Blues And Big Bands" approach for an all talk format-- traditionally the most expensive to pull off with class. And true to its heritage as a Buckley station (Buckley also owns San Francisco's KKHI-AM-FM; Hartford's WDRG-AM-FM and WSEN-AM-FM Baldwinsville/Syracuse among others at present) KGIL not only sounds successful, it is successful-- a credit to the bottom line.

"We needed to grow," explains PD Mike Lundy about the abandonment of KGIL's nostalgia approach. "We first started doing "Ballads, Blues and Big Bands" in the late '70s (an outgrowth of the station's MOR fare that in the early '70s when AM was still the band of choice showed KGIL morning man Dick Wittington to be a considerable factor in the market, amassing 2.6 shares).

"But then KPRZ (today KIIS-AM) and KMPC went into the format and the competition was tough. Our revenues started getting lighter; our audience, older. We were looking for a new direction and last year we experimented with talk (an hour hosted by a local staffer followed by NBC's Talknet). The reaction was great and we concluded it was time to wake up and do something like that all the time."

The decision represented a major commitment, and to some extent Lundy waded into the approach. "We went fulltime talk on July 8, 1985 but we were only doing two local shows a day. We hired Stan Borman (a respected journalist from KNX) for mornings and Jim Simon for afternoons. Jim had been the original PD at KABC when they went talk." Between the two, the station relied primarily on taped replay of Talknet.

"And 'The Game Show'," says Lundy of the self explanatory hour program similar to KFRC San Francisco's ill fated attempt. Here the concept was good enough that KFI lured the show's creator/producer across town, pointing up what can be a major disadvantage of suburban success: When you do something well, you're likely to lose your people to larger facilities in the market. A fact, which surprisingly doesn't worry Lundy.

"Our pay scale is good. We're union-- IBEW and AFTRA. (The minimum KGIL can pay a talent is \$669 a week.) We overscale most of our people, so money is not a big problem. But if Jim Simon were to come to me tomorrow and say he'd been offered \$200,000-- I'd shake his hand, wish him luck and be on to the next level of development so fast that I'd be totally involved in that."

On the surface then it would seem that Lundy would be better off promoting the station as an entity as opposed to promoting individual talent, "and it sounds strange but we don't do that. Carol (Hemmingway, who joined the station in January) as a personality is one of a kind. It's important to promote her as such. If she left tomorrow, I wouldn't find another "Carol" to do her act, I'd use someone who stood out in another way, and we'd promote them accordingly."

While no local personality (with the exception of the Game Show host) has been "raided" as yet, there were a few moments when it looked like the Talknet anchor would be pulled in favor of a full fledged L.A. facility. "But that station only wanted to run it on overnights and Talknet refused. Had we lost it a year ago, I don't think we would have survived, but if we lost it now, I wouldn't be happy but I have no worry."

The current line up has lawyer/broadcaster John Swaney in mornings flanked by "Superfan" (Ed Bieler) with sports and a variety of support people (including customized reports by a local traffic service). Jim Simon handles middays with Hemmingway (like Simon, a KABC vet) in afternoons. "We figured if we were going to do this right, we had to commit to being live from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.," emphasizes Lundy who admits the budget is boggling.

"Our phone bills went from \$2,500 to \$12,000 a month, and our salaries---" his voice trails off as he computes the cost of talent plus engineers, and the addition of producers. "Each show comes with a producer who is a 40 hour a week employee."

"But we haven't lost money. Expenses are up, but our revenue has escalated accordingly," says Lundy. And to veteran sales manager Ed Krovitz, the format provides the opportunity he needs to successfully compete with newspapers.

"When you're selling a talk station," explains Krovitz, "you're in effect selling a newspaper. You've got a sports page, a lifestyle section, an editorial page. An advertiser who would have to spend \$5 to \$6 hundred dollars a week to cover the people he wanted to reach can now spend \$85 and do the same thing. Placed in the right segment, one spot a week can do the same job as a full schedule on a music station."

So the businesses which relied totally on newspaper or direct mail previously to get the most out of what generally is a small advertising budget can now look to radio for the same results.

That last fact is particularly important to stations like KGIL which have minimal radio competition. "A local retailer could advertise on a station such as KABC. They're an aggressive seller in the San Fernando Valley and they're a marvelous talk station. They have more listeners than us. Infact, they may even have more listeners in the Valley than we do, but the local retailer is going to pay to reach a lot of people who are not in the area and can not patronize his business."

Radio's high cost and high waste have made local newspapers the vehicle of choice. Stations like KGIL are in a position to negate that argument, "and it's true that the biggest portion of our ad dollars come from retailers," says Krovitz who finds himself selling the value of the medium itself to newer clients.

"We do that by providing results. When someone asks me for numbers, I show them 2,000 happy advertisers who are back year after year-- for five, ten, fifteen years. Many astute media people, even on the agency level will ask for a list of our local advertisers and the length of time they've been with us. Local retail advertisers do not stay on a station if they're not getting results," says Krovitz.

And getting results for the advertiser is directly related to listener interest. "As long as we can program for listeners, the advertiser will come around," says Krovitz. "Whatever you're doing, if you're doing it well, you'll outbill anyone concentrating only on the bottom line."

That philosophy rings true but tough. It's a difficult decision to expend the dollars and resources when a station is in a situation, such as the suburban location of KGIL, which will keep it from the kind of success enjoyed by comparable facilities in better locations.

To that end, compromise does occur. The overnight portion is bought and paid for by a local preacher, Dr. Gene Scott, and one weekend show, AMI Healthcall, is likewise sponsored. But Krovitz stresses that the addition of Healthcall was made by Lundy. "If it wasn't the kind of show he needed for that time slot, we wouldn't have run it. We could easily sell the entire station out on a brokered basis, but in the long run, we'd lose."

KGIL has never in its long history bought into the 'small must be schlock' theory. "It's the strangest suburban station in the world," recognizes Lundy. "The money we gross is amazing, and we do it because this is a station of pros. Dick McGeary our station manager is a former KHJ GM, has been in sales at ABC and CBS and was Western Regional VP for Mutual until he came to KGIL three years ago. Ed Krovitz is from KFI, but he's been here 15 years."

"The station has a mystique," says Krovitz. "It shouldn't work, but it does. People know we're doing well, but they don't know why." And it's so simple that it eludes most broadcasters. Gordon McLendon exposed the theory years ago. As Krovitz previously mentioned, if you give the listeners what they want, in turn the advertisers will get what they need. "One of our biggest strengths is our localization. When KNX or KFVB mentions it's flooding in the Valley, we give street locations. People who live here know that, and even if they don't listen regularly, they're here when an emergency arises.

"Years ago when I was selling for KFI, I'd get more questions about KGIL-- 'Do I need to buy them?' 'Do other signals get out there?'-- than I did about KFI. They recognized it as a factor, which it has been because it relates to the community it serves."

It's almost as if the respect and awe that staffers feel for this little giant is somehow translated to the listening public. "Our rates are considerably higher on AM," mentions Lundy in example. "We never tucked our heads behind our tails and said that AM isn't worth anything. The rates reflect our commitment."

While the rates may be somewhat lower on the FM side, the overhead too, is considerably less. Together, the stations before the switch to talk were billing in excess of two million dollars a year. "I'd like to find another radio station with zero Arbitron ratings in a top ten market which can duplicate that," says Krovitz proudly. The station's average rate, sold in combo is \$85.

Then why the move to the ultra expensive talk? "It was a gamble like anything else," admits Krovitz. "I don't know, if I owned the station, whether I would have done it, but I'm glad we did. Advertisers are seeing greater results. People listen more intently and as I said, there are more ways to sell it. We did it to be closer to making that annual total \$3 million-- or maybe \$4 million, which we are.

"But you know, the music may have changed to talk, and the personalities may be different, but our philosophy is the same as it always has been." Again he repeats the contention that the key to success is in luring the listener. "The sponsors will always follow."

Sums Lundy, "If that wasn't true, we'd have been a bowling alley a long time ago."

FIND FILE

This feature is designed to acquaint the industry with lesser known but highly talented broadcasters from all market sizes, focusing on those involved in the creative processes of radio.

Most of the individuals highlighted here are working. Their selection is not based upon their current availability. Some may be seeking new opportunities, others are not willing to make a move at present. All are dedicated professionals of whom you should be aware.

"Classic Hits", "Classic Rock", "The New AC", male oriented AC-- it's referred to by many names in the growing trade accounts of its surging popularity. John Sebastian, Gary Guthrie, even George Johns are talking about the approach-- and being talked about. All have theories, and some have success but there's one name that hasn't made the headlines though his current feat rivals any in recent programming history.

FIND FILE

featuring the unexpected talents of Sherman Cohen

On February 1, 1986 Sherman Cohen came to Las Vegas. He was hired to program KKLZ. Owned in combination with traditional country AM KRAM, KKLZ was born on New Years Day, 1986, in place of KITT. "It was on the air a month with a format called "Quality Rock of the '60s, '70s and '80s" which was anything but. You'd hear Kenny Rogers into Led Zeppelin. I'm not exaggerating. They had country tunes, hard rock, pop, AC, soul.

"In one day I changed the radio station. What was on the air was certain death, so I took 700 songs out the computer," remembers Cohen who found out that of the titles left in, virtually all were coded incorrectly. 'Nothing stayed the way it was-- except the promotion budget. We didn't have any when I got there, and we never got any throughout the book."

The results: KKLZ went from an also ran 2.3 (as KITT in the fall) to a record breaking 9.0. Never in the history of Las Vegas radio had any outlet changed so dramatically in less than five months. In addition to being #3 over all, KKLZ holds the top spot in town for adults 18-49 and 25-44; men 18-49 and 25-54 among others; and is an impressive number two in women 18-34. The book is like a dream come true for the station's national rep, Blair. "They're not having any trouble selling us now," laughs Cohen.

What went right? "There was a huge void in the market for adults that wasn't being addressed. The concept of "Quality Rock" was one that was needed here. But if I had to pick out one thing that caused the success of Z96 (as the station is known), it would have to be the music.

"If you asked me what I've learned since being here, the first thing would have to be the importance of "word of mouth" because that is the only form of promotion we had. But from a programming standpoint, I think we proved that music is everything. By far, at least with our demos, it's the most important reason why people turn the radio on." Cohen feels he has proven that contention. "During this book, everything else changed at this station. We went through a complete shift of personalities. The only stability that could account for our ratings was the music.

"This is an interesting format musically. I don't think we would have done as well if we relied on safe proven hits. To really work, it's got to grab listeners by the heart, and that requires a lot of gut programming. To tell you the truth, I did absolutely no research in putting the playlist together," says Cohen who is hesitant to admit that fact.

"You say something like that and the first thing people think, is 'Oh he's just a gut programmer', In this case I have been, but I've also done very researched formats. Research is a great tool, and I prefer to have it as a tool, but with this format you really can get by without it, if you know what you're doing. And if you rely on it totally in this approach, it's just not going to work.

"A lot of people are talking about consulting Classic Hits, and I've got to admit that right now that's a goal for me. What I've done here can work anywhere with variations, but it requires someone with a solid music background to handpick each title. It's not a case of sending the research in from Las Vegas.

"I believe in the "Quality Rock" format because it is filling a need right now. I had never done a format like it before, and I'm really enjoying it. But I liked top 40 and disco and oldies and I'm really beginning to get into country since our AM is traditional country. "Quality Rock" is exciting because it's still fresh. This format today (demographically) is what MOR was years ago. And as listeners get older, opportunities for new formats will continue to blossom. I'm not tied to the format so much as aware that it fills an important niche. Ten years from now, another format will serve the same purpose. I think my strongest point as a programmer is the ability to identify and fill those niches.

"But it's not the case, as some people might say, that KKLZ did well because we had no competition, that the void was so big. That's true, but the real reason is that "Quality Rock" is a concept and we were able to execute that concept. I like the phrase "quality rock" better than "classic rock". I think the word "classic" dates rock, while "quality" seems to buffer it." Some would claim semantics, and may be surprised to learn that to no small extent, semantics made the difference.

"I took the phrase "Quality Rock of the '60s, '70s and '80s" literally. The owners wanted to reach 30 to 40 year old males and 25-34 year old females. That gave me a clear idea of what to do. I studied the lifestyle of that group-- when they grew up, what they were exposed to, and what they'd probably want to hear now." Cohen listened to every title with the criteria being, "Is this a quality rock record? Some very good songs just don't fit that description. It was totally subjective. I started grouping songs together by sound-- it didn't matter whether they had been big hits-- or hits at all. They either fit or they didn't.

"I didn't add anything too psychedelic or too wimpy, and for currents, I just stuck to the charts of what was selling on a national basis. If it was doing well and sounded right, I'd play it. If it didn't fit the sound, I didn't care what it did." (Cohen's approach includes 25% current titles-- not counting recurrent.)

"But the sound of the music even at the beginning was not as bad as the sound of the station. The engineering problems were terrible. Calling it distorted is kind. As I look back on it, nothing was right with the air sound."

However, it was FM-- and programming an FM outlet was Sherman's number one objective when he left Tucson's 13 KHYT last September. The parting, after three years, was a good one. Under his leadership, the class IV outlet had its greatest success-- twice.

"When I got there in '82, CHR was still a bad word. I'm not even sure it was a word," says Cohen about the status of top 40 radio. "In Tucson in '82 everybody seemed downtempo. The FM's were dinosaur rock, or AC. Nobody was playing any black music. And nobody was playing any new wave. I came in and added "Mickey" and "You Dropped A Bomb On Me" and we went from a 3.4 to a 7.0."

It wasn't long before others picked up his cue. Higher powered, better sounding FM outlets began to realize the value of cross over music-- especially black product, and it wasn't long before Cohen was forced to reevaluate his position.

"The market was awakened beyond belief. Lilly white stations started adding black product. AORs updated. One station began using Rick Carroll as a consultant. It might have been timing but I think our 7.0 had a lot to do with it. We got that with no promotion budget and a lousy signal, so when everybody started making changes I had to lean on research heavily. The niche had been taken up by more than one outlet and nothing was obvious."

Cohen decided to target females 25-34 narrowly. "We relied on heavy call out research, targeted specifically and it worked. The book came out and we were top 3 in females across the board." When that position was usurped, he realized better days would be found with an outlet able to compete.

Not only was he lacking in promotion budget, but his allocation for personnel left him barely able to beat minimum wage. "I learned how to program a credible station with inexperienced underpaid staff. I got a lot of our jocks from the broadcast schools. But even with them, when you don't have bonuses to offer, you've got to learn how to motivate people by means other than money. That's where I really learned how to manage people. If you can help them sound better and reward them when they do, it may be as valuable as money."

"You've also got to recognize potential. One lady came from Lake Havasu City. She knocked on every door-- KRQ, KLPX, KWFM and only as a last resort came to us because she wanted to be in Tucson. I saw immediate potential. I loved her voice, she was just what I was looking for." Cohen's decision has been seconded. The lady, Lorna Dee went on to Portland's Z-100 and today is Rick Dees' news anchor on L.A.'s KIIS. "I found out I had an ear for more than music."

Music entered Sherman's ears initially through his dad's occupation. "He was a technician and he'd always bring home the latest equipment. He was into fixing it, but I was much more interested in what came out of it."

"My first influence was KFVB in the early '60s. It was the station that made me want to get into radio, and the first disc jockey who really left a lasting impression was Joe Yocum. KFVB was the kind of station that would leave me hanging on my chair wondering what was going to happen next."

At 15, fate had the Cohen family moving across the street from Loyola University, which just happened to have a radio station, where Sherman just happened to get a job--the first jock not attending the school. The college Sherman ultimately did attend, Santa Monica Community College, was chosen solely on the basis of KCRW. "It was the campus radio station and I wanted to work there but I had to be a student, so I was."

Two units short of graduation, KGBS-AM-FM offered him the MD and assistant PD (to Bob Kingsley) position-- worth more than any diploma at the time. "After six months, I thought the way to make real money in radio was to be a disc jockey so got a first class ticket and I went to Stockton. That cured me."

Returning to L.A., Cohen handled music ("Oldies, they didn't let me touch currents. It was years before I understood why," he chuckles) for the "Soul Express" (XPRS). Through that job, he joined Wolfman Jack, "producing his armed forces shows and helping him adjust to formatted radio which he had never really dealt with before. It was \$80 and all the records I needed." Cohen figured if he needed records he could work for a record distributor, "and learn the ins and outs of retail."

"I've always been curious about who buys what, so working at Nehi (the record distributor which spawned the Peaches chain) gave me first hand knowledge." Working up to head buyer, Cohen left when his own company, Nimrod Disco, was large enough to support him. (He supplied disco jocks with records for a fee and did numerous mobile appearances.)

"You learn a lot from working directly with the audience in that atmosphere. One day a guy came by and ask if I'd help him and his partner promote a disco record." His partner was Art Laboe, and when the record succeeded all expectations, Laboe asked Cohen to join him at KRLA.

"He had just gotten the programming rights to the station (still sans license at that time) but he hadn't run an outlet in years-- since the '50s. We agreed that a station that targeted Hispanics would do well as long as it stayed current. That pretty much was the basis for the "Hit Radio 11" format, and since I put the music together, I view it as my first major radio success."

Others were largely unaware of his involvement. Laboe kept Cohen somewhat sheltered from dealing with record people or the trades, and Cohen felt he was too busy to do any self promotion. "I didn't realize the importance of it. I was more concerned with titles-- cut by cut; and liners and such. I guess I figured everybody would know what I did."

As it turned out Rochelle Staab at KIIS did know. "KRLA had gone from a 1.2 to a 4.1 (trend: 1.2, 2.8, 3.4, 3.3, 4.1) and it became the number one contemporary music station in the market in February of '77. It was only beaten by talk and easy listening. It was the first contemporary station to beat KHJ in the ratings."

"Rochelle discovered I had done the music and she offered me more money and a title-- MD. We did well at first, but then Rochelle wanted to make some changes which ultimately led to the vulnerability which paved the way for the Burkhart Abrams disco format. Mike Wagner became PD, I was named assistant PD, and when Gannett later made cutbacks, I was one of them."

At that point, Cohen realized his programming future would best be enhanced by a move out of the market, and a station which he could control, but personal reasons (a divorce and a young son who lived in L.A.) led to his return to KRLA. "I didn't have a title. Rick Stancato and I did the music." His exit from that job two years later made him again face leaving.

"It was a tough decision, but I went to visit a friend in Tucson and I liked the feel of a medium market. I realized I could be in L.A. as a support person the rest of my life, but to get ahead I needed to have some credentials beyond that."

Now he's got them-- and already they've made a difference. "When the book came out I got several phone calls, some from top ten markets. Normally I wouldn't have been interested in making a move so quickly. I'm really a loyal person, and the freedom I was given at Z 96 was very important to me, but I never felt that KKLZ was as committed to winning as I was." (His point is punctuated by the fact that among other things such as lack of promotional support, his five month tenure saw two GMs exit. His loyalty is demonstrated by his actions upon his exit.)

"KOMP (Las Vegas' AOR outlet) offered me everything I was looking for-- the station had a successful track record, it was part of a well respected chain, had a great general manager, down the road there would be opportunities to work with other Lotus (the group that owns KOMP and it's AM counterpart, KENO which presently airs Transtar's "Oldies Channel") properties, and I wouldn't have to leave Las Vegas-- it was perfect."

Even so, Cohen delayed his departure from KKLZ until after the Labor Day weekend. "I had put together a weekend special and it was important to me that it was done right. I realized I'd be competing with what I was doing in less than a week, but that didn't matter. I still had a responsibility to Z 96."

Now the responsibility is KOMP, and the task at hand includes tearing down his former handiwork-- part of the lure of KOMP's offer. "I had created the sound of Z 96 to compete with a respected AOR. Now I think it will be interesting to combat that approach. Besides, it gives me a chance to work with a format I have less experience with."

Experience, or lack of it, Cohen is already displaying insight into the AOR arena-- KOMP in particular. "The station has had three down books in a row. It's been AOR since 1981 (alone in the format which it adopted when KFMS switched from it to country), but along the way it became stale. It sounded dated." Cohen played on that complacency while at Z 96. Now he will reverse the strategy.

"We'd like to reposition Z 96 in the listener's mind as the outdated, wimpy station-- with KOMP appearing as the happening, hip thing to listen to". And with the same fervor that he formerly described the successful sound of KKLZ based on the past, Cohen demonstrates his versatility, revealing his plans for KOMP to win by reflecting the feel of today.

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PART ONE: THE MONTHLY

Designed as a companion to the late breaking news style of the radio trade publications widely available, the Mediatrix Monthly brings readers over 75 pages of in-depth analysis and features every month. Each issue contains:

- Market Profile:** A detailed look at a top 100 market focusing on current programming and historical perspective.

- Economic Insight:** A candid interview with one of radio's "money men" exploring the financial facts behind today's transactions.

- Positioning For Profit:** Promotion ideas that build numbers in the book and on the bottom line.

- Find File:** A brief profile of a lesser known but highly talented personality, programmer or management candidate.

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- Networks/Syndicators.
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- Record Companies (including major oldies retailers and wholesalers as well as significant one stops and rack jobbers).
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Work will continue throughout the year on both the Monthly (published since February 1986) and the Annual (debuting January 1987) to revise their contents to meet reader's specific needs.

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