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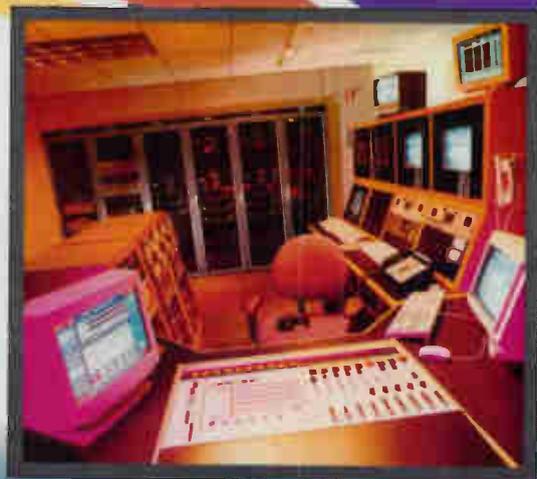
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A Message To the FCC: Protect AM

To all the things you have to worry about in operating your AM facilities add one more: the news that the Federal Communications Commission rule intended to prevent cellular, paging and other similar services from distorting AM patterns when erecting towers does not apply to the new Personal Communications Services.

Many of you were involved in the years-long effort to help improve the AM band. The end result was a dramatic overhaul of the AM band enacted by the FCC with an eye toward cleaning up interference on the AM dial. With a three-pronged attack on interference that incorporated technical improvements, migration to the expanded band and consolidation of the existing band, the commission hoped to ensure the longevity of AM operators. Revised calculations and rules meant that, for the greater good, many stations subsequently had to accept a power cutback at some point and yet others were to make the move to the expanded band (a process just now beginning). The idea was and remains: Shore up AM so that it too can benefit from the oncoming digital audio broadcasting technology.

Yet after all this effort and labor, we now find out that the nation's pioneer band is facing an alarming crisis.

As it stands, the FCC has two weaknesses, which means you have two problems. First, the commission has no rule to enforce if a PCS tower disrupts an AM pattern. Second, the rule that does exist to protect AM patterns from cellular and other Public Mobile Service towers is vague and ineffective.

Couple all this with an FCC bent on downsizing its staff and closing many of its field offices, and you are faced with PCS operators that can wreak havoc on AM signals with impunity.

I understand a cash-strapped government agency wanting to welcome the infusion of millions of dollars from PCS auctions — but disrupting such an established service as the AM broadcast band to do so is short-sighted.

Claims of serving the public by making the best in modern technical service available to them is a laudable aim, but in the long run, the public it claims to serve will not have much of a choice between interference-riddled services if the FCC does not protect these services from each other.

If all this is as alarming to you as it is to me, pick up the phone and call your NAB board representative. Let him or her know what you think before these PCS towers start going up and blocking out your signals.

Lucia

Safe



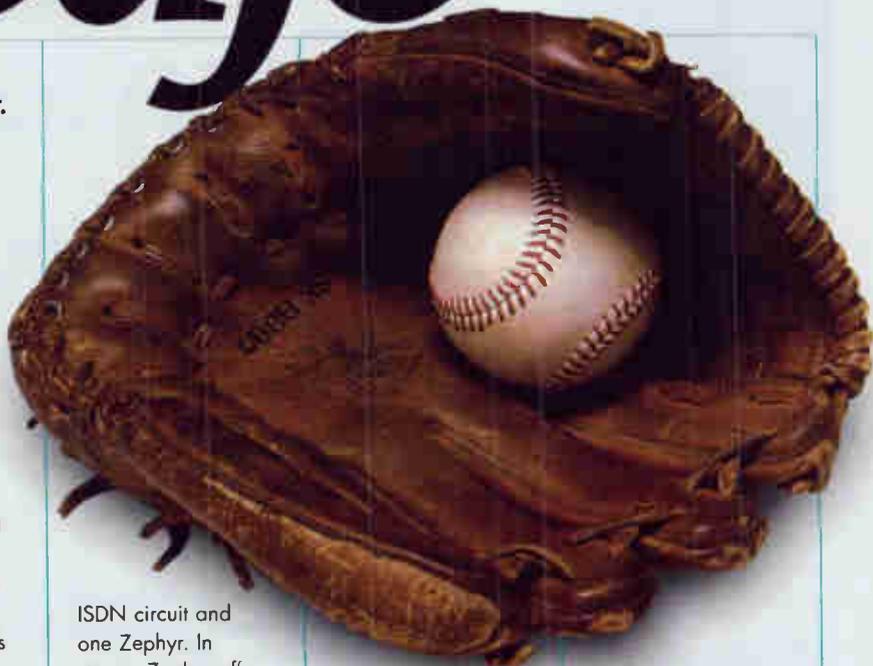
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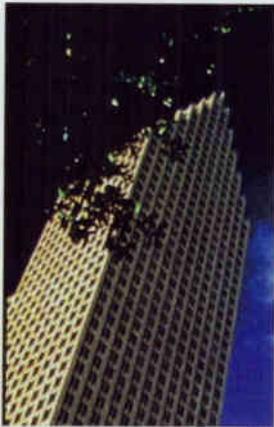
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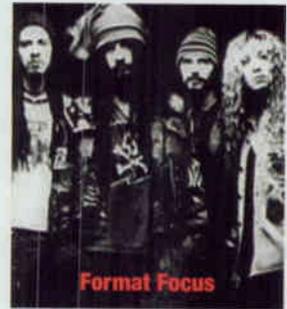
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Market Watch: Houston



Tom Leykis



double take

"Stations frankly don't care if you come on (the air) and say 'I'm here to change America.' This is a business, and we're here to sell advertising."

— Tom Leykis

See page 16.

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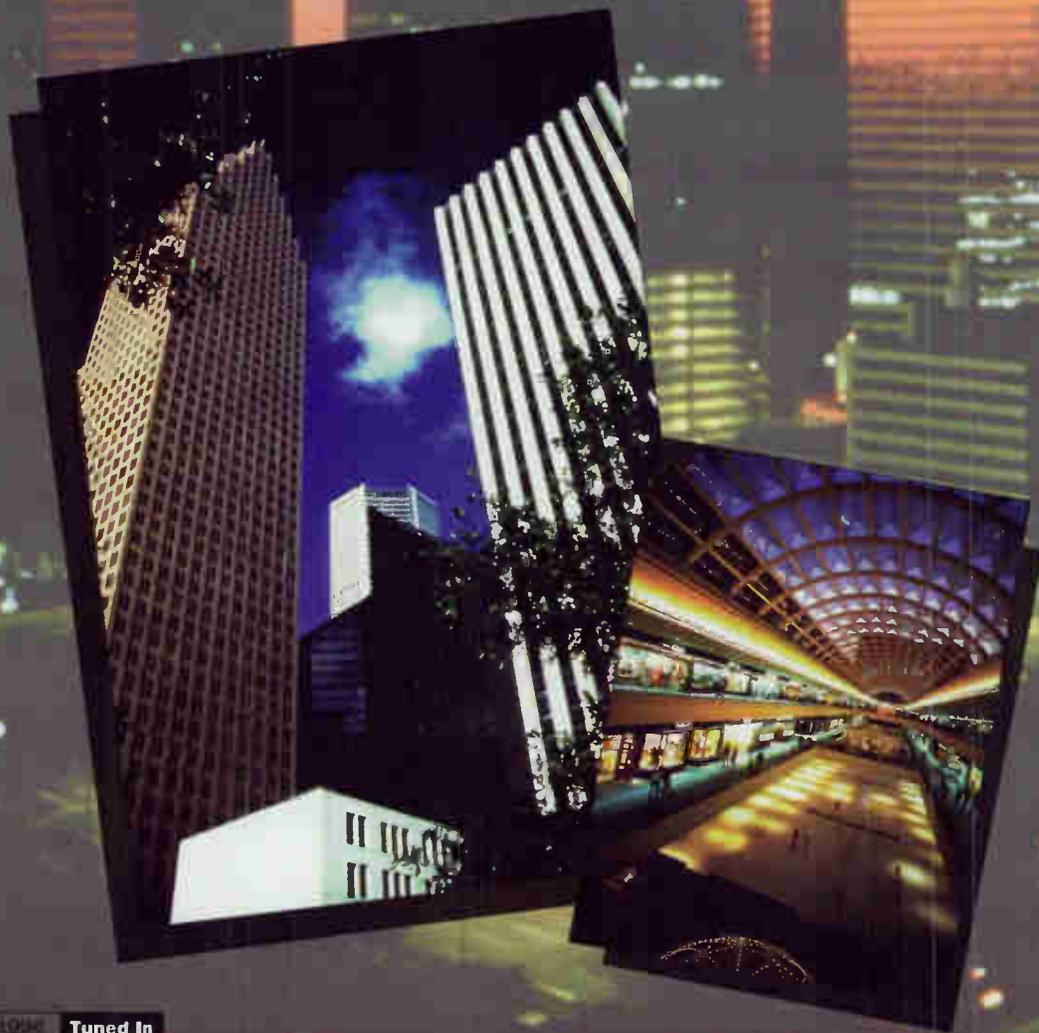


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Houston

The Recession Blues Are
Making Way for Radio Fun and





Profit

The year 1986 was a Houston radiophile's delight.

The Q Morning Zoo on KKBQ, led by "zoopervisor" John Lander, was sizzling in the ratings. James "Moby" Carney, known for exhorting listeners to "git yer lazy asses out of bed," was ending his long, local run. Meanwhile, dreaded bad boys Stevens and Pruett were back for another go-round in the market.

Elsewhere, Hudson and Harrigan on KILT were roughhousing on the country dial with Pam Ivey of KIKK-FM. Urban contemporary KMJQ(FM) continued weaving its "Majic" with listeners. And KFMK(FM)'s classic hits kept on coming up big in the Arbitrons.

A decade later, after numerous format changes and duopoly deals, only Stevens and Pruett and Hudson and Harrigan have stayed essentially the same.

These days in the Bayou City, KKBQ — with Ivey in morning drive — is challenging KILT-FM as country king. Moby's station now is adult contemporary KHM(X)FM. KIKK has been booted out of the Top 10. KMJQ saw many of its faithful desert to the incarnation of KFMK — now KBXX(FM). "The Box" — but currently it joins KBXX under the Clear Channel banner.

And KODA(FM) isn't "Coma" anymore; it's "Sunny 99.1" and clearly doing well. Along with KKBQ, it leads the market in revenue (about \$17 million each in 1995, according to BIA).

Tamer market

For now, the competition in the nation's No. 9 radio market remains keen, although many of the big on-air names and salaries of the past decade are gone. The emphasis has shifted from personality to profitability. According to consultant Ed Shane of Shane Media Services, the oil crash killed some of the fun in the market.

"We're still catching up from the recession," says Shane, whose company is based in Houston. "The market is tamer; there's been more attention to the bottom line. And let's face it: It's difficult to find someone to come up behind a John Lander or a Moby. But they're out there. Radio cannot survive without personalities."

One of the biggest of them all, Howard Stern, is waiting on the sidelines and is ready to enter the fray. The question is: Where will he wind up? The Westinghouse CBS megamerger with Infinity has prompted speculation that KIKK will end the bleeding with a Stern dose of morning talk and a change from its country format. The theory is that CBS won't want Stern on a competing station. But KIKK has been as inexorably linked to country as Houston is to heat and humidity, and Owen Weber, general manager of the KIKK/KILT combo, says it will stay that way.

"Do I expect Howard Stern to turn up in Houston? Probably. Do I expect him to turn up on KIKK or KILT? Definitely not," Weber declares. "Our mission is to return to the stations' market-leadership positions and sustain that. Some people are promoting the concept that Westinghouse/CBS will give up on one or the other (and change the format). But it isn't gonna happen. They'll remain country stations."

by Jay Frank



The "sunny" morning duo at KODA(FM)

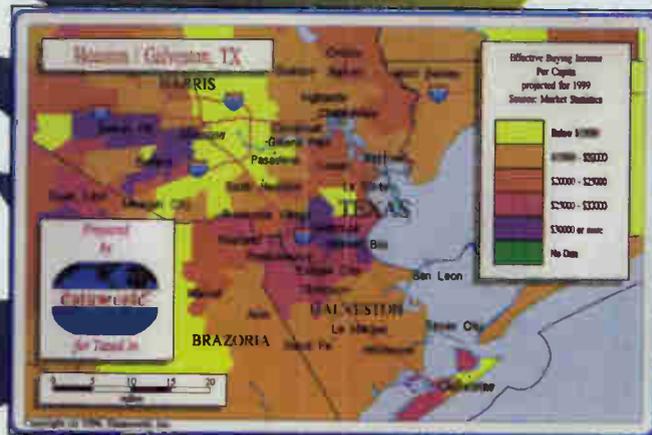
SUNNY 99.1

Despite the slip of KILT and the prolonged slide of KIKK, the stations are the No. 1 billing group in the market, with combined revenues of \$31.4 million for 1995, according to BIA. KILT accounts for nearly \$18 million of that. The strong morning-drive team of Hudson and Harrigan, which seldom drops below No. 2 in its time period, gives the station a solid foundation. Started in the 1960s, the fictitious characters of Mac Hudson and Irv Harrigan have survived several personnel turnovers. The current duo, Fred Olson and Randy Hames, have been together for 16 years.

After switching from Top 40 to country, Gannett-owned KKBQ has been

breathing down KILT's neck. When the change was made, observers questioned whether there was a place for a third country crooner. That was borne out by disastrous early results for KKBQ's "Easy Country" concept. But once the playlist was modernized and the pace energized, the format took off. Ronnie Milsap, Conway Twitty and Don Gibson were out; George Strait, Garth Brooks and Reba McEntire were in.

"We've become Top 40 for country music," General Manager Don Troutt says. "The first format was oldies-based, and it just wasn't working. We did a lot of research and went contemporary. Now, we're one of the prototype country stations in the nation."



In recent books, the top stations in the market have been KBXX (12+) and KODA (25-54). Not unlike the format change of KKBQ, the move from KFMK to KBXX ("The Box") in 1991 was questioned by radio types. Urban competitor KMJQ was too strong too long to be vulnerable, they reasoned. But after scaring away most of KFMK's listeners and advertisers, The Box has plugged away and is now a fixture atop the Arbitron heap.

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challenges," says KBXX General Manager Carl Hamilton. "It was no different for us. Watching (ad) money fly away wasn't easy. But it's been a fun ride. We've consistently positioned ourselves as Houston's mass-appeal radio station. If you look at our youth demos, the breakdown is almost exactly a third white, a third black and a third Hispanic. Our revenues have improved every year," he says. In '95, KBXX pulled in \$8 million, according to BIA.

"I like to think of The Box as Madonna: We keep creating and re-creating ourselves," Hamilton adds.

The same might also be said of KODA. For many years it was the city's foremost purveyor of elevator music. But starting in the mid-1980s, the station made a series of changes and has



Midday personality Harley Colt on parade

undergone a complete transformation to AC. A major shift occurred in 1991 when General Manager Dusty Black and Program Director Dave Dillon axed the leftover instrumentals and nonpop vocals.

The station received a generous "gift" two and a half years ago when its chief competitor at the time, light rock

KLTR(FM), became rock oldies KKRW(FM), "The Arrow." KODA's parent company, SFX, has since acquired KKRW, as well as easy listening KQUE(FM) and news talk KNUZ(AM).

"I feel like we have a pretty good handle on what makes us successful," says Dusty Black, KODA's general manager and likely chief of its new sister stations. "We spend a ton of money on research, try to keep egos out of it and play the music that people want to hear. It's been a gradual process. We've done nothing drastic."

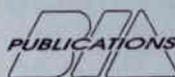
A Stern 'no'

Which means Howard Stern's entry into Houston — one of the few major markets where he isn't heard — won't be on The Arrow. Black gives a stern "no" when asked if he is considering putting the colorful and controversial host on KKRW.

"But I think you'll eventually see him (on the Houston airwaves)," Black says. "I'm surprised we haven't at this point. The price tag is huge and the risk is

Houston Radio Market Overview

Station	Freq.	Format	1995 Est. Rev. in \$ Mil.	Owner	Arbitron 12+ Winter '96
KODA(FM)	99.1	AC	17.2	SFX Broadcasting Inc.	7.5
KBXX(FM)	97.9	Urban	8.0	Clear Channel Comm.	7.2
KILT-FM	100.3	Country	16.8	CBS Radio Station Group	5.6
KKBQ-AM-FM	92.9	Country	17.1	Gannett Company Inc.	5.4
KMJQ(FM)	102.1	Urban AC	9.0	Clear Channel Comm.	5.2
KQUE(FM)	102.9	Easy Listening	4.5	SFX Broadcasting Inc.	5.0
KTRH(AM)	740	News/Sports	15.9	Evergreen Media Corp.	4.9
KHMX(FM)	96.5	Hot AC	10.9	Nationwide Comm. Inc.	4.6
KRBE-FM	104.1	CHR/Pop	10.2	Susquehanna Radio Corp.	4.2
KLDE(FM)	94.4	Oldies	10.4	Entercom	4.0
KKRW(FM)	93.7	'70s Rock	8.0	SFX Broadcasting Inc.	3.5
KLOL(FM)	101.1	AOR	12.6	Evergreen Media Corp.	3.4
KIKK-FM	95.7	Country	12.6	CBS Radio Station Group	3.3
KPRC(AM)	950	News/Talk	6.7	Clear Channel Comm.	2.8
KTBZ-FM	107.5	Alternative	4.4	Secret Communications	2.8
KLTN(FM)	93.3	Spanish	3.3	Tichenor Media	2.7
KLTO(FM)	104.9	Spanish	3.3	Roy E. Henderson	2.7
KQQK(FM)	106.5	Tejano	1.8	El Dorado Comm. Inc.	2.5
KHYS(FM)	98.5	NAC	3.0	Faith Broadcasting LP	1.8
KLAT(AM)	1010	Spanish	2.1	Tichenor Media	1.7
KXTJ(FM)	107.9	Tejano	2.0	El Dorado Comm. Inc.	1.2



Stations are ranked in order of Arbitron Winter 1996 12+ ratings. Information provided by BIA Publications Inc. through its MasterAccess Radio Analyzer Database software.

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Houston Financial Snapshot

Market Rank: 9
 Revenue Rank: 8
 Number of FMs: 24
 Number of AMs: 23

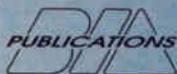
Revenue 1992: \$133 mil.
 Revenue 1993: \$149 mil.
 Revenue 1994: \$168.6 mil.
 Revenue 1995: \$188.1 mil.
 Revenue 1996: \$202.2 mil. est.

Revenue Growth
 '88-'94: 6.5%
 '95-'99: 7.1%

Local Revenue: 75%
 National Revenue: 25%

1994 Population: 1,469,500
 Per Capita Income: \$18,311
 Median Income: \$40,859
 Average Household
 Income: \$51,518

Source:



KQK

Tejano 106

KQK staffers putt-putt around with young listeners.

high, so it has to be just the right time and place."

The right place may well be new rock KBZZ, "The Buzz," for months thought to be the logical Houston home for Stern. General Manager Pat Fant would

love to air a morning show that would put some pressure on Stevens and Pruett and KLOL, his longtime former employer and a key competitor. He says he believes that Stevens and Pruett, whose audience has shrunk markedly in the past year, are vulnerable. The ratings for "the radio gods" have hardly been godlike, falling from a 6.6 (12+) in Winter '95 to a 5.0 in Winter '96.

But three ownership changes at The Buzz in a year and a half have delayed Fant's plans. He acknowledges having had discussions with a representative for Stern's show. The cost to the station could be as high as \$700,000 a year, a hefty price for new — or rather, newest — owner Nationwide to absorb.

"Things slow down when you go through so many owners in so short a period of time," Fant explains. "But we're here to provide competition. It's what we're all about. From that standpoint, Stern would fit."

Fant and others in the market are aware of the initial PR fallout that would greet the station pushing the button on Stern. And the situation in Houston is heightened considerably. That's due to the intense, Hispanic-led reaction to Stern's comments following the slaying of Tejano singing star Selena last year.

Even though the show wasn't heard in the city, remarks including "Spanish people have the worst taste in music" were publicized in the media. Spanish stations such as KQK(FM) and KXTJ(FM) took up the cause against Stern, as did area politicians. Houston City Council passed a resolution asking one of the city's main cable companies to pull the plug on the E! Entertainment channel, which rebroadcasts parts of Stern's radio show. The company

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declined. A Harlingen, Texas, justice of the peace went so far as to issue a warrant for Stern's arrest on disorderly conduct charges.

"Whoever takes him will know what they're getting into," Ed Shane says. "They'll probably figure any PR is good PR. There's no gray area with (Stern); people either love him or hate him."

Success story

Sort of like Rush Limbaugh. One of the biggest success stories in the Houston market in recent years was the way Sunbelt Broadcasting, comprised of local investors, parlayed an investment of less than \$4 million into a sale of nearly \$27 million. The deal sprang from three very good decisions: 1) the 1988 purchase of a small, failing station on the outskirts of town for pennies on the dollar; 2) putting a then-little-known Limbaugh on this station (renamed KSEV(AM)); and 3) the 1993 purchase of KPRC(AM), Houston's oldest radio station, for the amazingly low price of \$3.5 million.

Less than two years later, Sunbelt sold an 80-percent stake in the news-talk stations to Clear Channel for \$26.8 million. Today, KSEV and 70-year-old KPRC continue to revolve around Limbaugh's program — both live and repeated — with some sports call-in shows and conservative-to-far-right talk mixed in. The afternoon-drive Sports Page on KPRC is regularly the most popular of the now six weekday sports-gabbers in the city.

However, the market's No. 1 news station and top AM outlet is KTRH. The station is carried largely by fat Arbitrons in morning and afternoon drive. Radio home of the NBA's Rockets and the NFL's Tennessee-bound Oilers, the station has daily gardening and sports shows but no equivalent in the areas of general or issue-oriented talk.

Talk is the watchword at KILT(AM), which in 1994 became the city's first all-sports station. A music powerhouse in the '60s, its numbers dwindled to nearly nothing when management decided to go the sports route. Overseeing the change is Dickie Rosenfeld, KILT's former chief and the dean of Houston radio executives. The ratings have gradually improved, and Rosenfeld says he believes the acquisition of Astros baseball broadcasts will keep the numbers pointed upward. KILT signed a three-year deal with the team, wresting the rights from KPRC. A few months earlier, KILT hired Houston Chronicle columnist Ed Fowler, who exited KPRC, and made

him morning co-host with Program Director Mike Edmonds.

The afternoon-drive talker is anchored by Rich Lord, who jumped from KTRH, and by Kenny Hand, a longtime columnist with the now-defunct Houston Post. "Star 610" has stuck with syndicated fare from Dallas-based Prime Sports Radio to fill the gaps, but the station is being regularly pitched by reps for everyone from the Fabulous Sports Babe — dropped by KSEV in March — to Don Imus. All in all, Rosenfeld is encouraged by the early Arbitron returns.

"We started off billing zero, and it goes up every month," says Rosenfeld, who has spent 44 years at KILT, mostly as GM. "The (ad) agencies are starting to buy us, which is a great sign."

Fast food?

"Great" is how some execs would describe the effects of the numerous duopoly deals that have taken place in Houston the past few years. Clear Channel went from no local stations to six, Tichenor from one to five, Westinghouse/CBS Infinity from two to five, SFX from one to four and El Dorado from zero to three.

But Jamie Clark, general manager of the KKHT(FM)-KENR(AM) combo, wonders if fewer owners controlling a big part of the medium is good for the industry.

"My concern is mainly from a programming standpoint," Clark says. "When large corporations get involved, the diversity of programming suffers. I'd hate to see radio adopt the fast-food mentality. Regional 'cuisine' is very distinctive. Now, with fast food, it's the



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Mark
Stevens
(of Stevens
and Pruett)
at the Dogs
on Hogs
Motorcycle
Parade.**

**Bottom:
The KLOL
Kool bus.**

same everyplace. I don't want that to happen to radio."

Ed Shane says not to worry. He believes radio will continue "to connect with its public" despite the mergers and "duopolizing."

"What's more local than Howard Stern speaking directly to me?" Shane asks. "What's more local than Dr. Laura pulling me up by my psychic bootstraps? What's more local than a news-cast that affects my side of town or a traffic report that gets me to the airport in one of Houston's frog-strangling downpours?"

"I understand (Clark's) concern, but I don't think large companies buying local stations will make those stations any less local."

Jay Frank is a Houston-based writer, businessman and occasional charm teacher for Oilers owner Bud Adams. Frank was a radio/TV columnist and reporter for the Houston Post and Houston Chronicle for a combined 12 years. He plays tapes of the old Q Morning Zoo show for inspiration.

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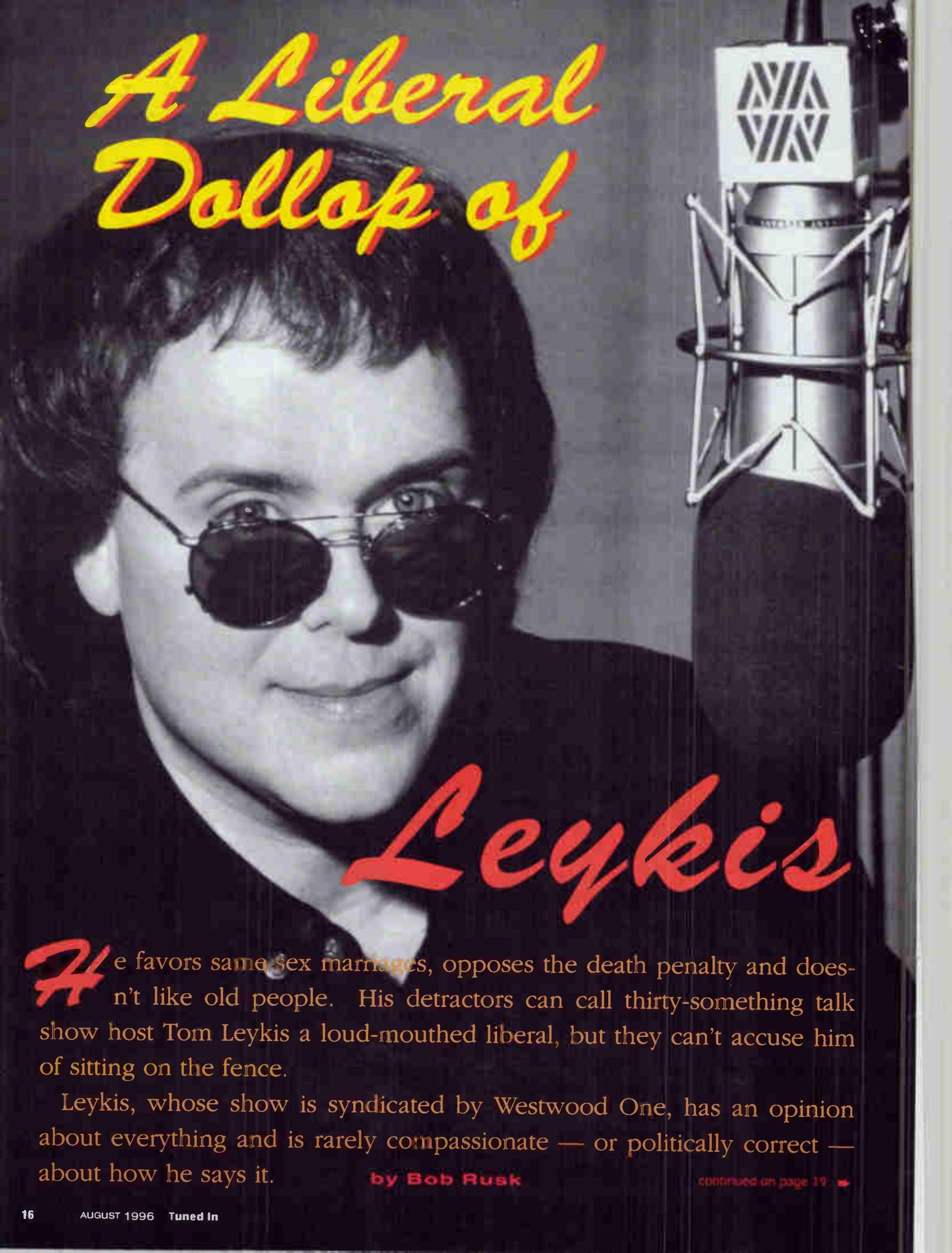
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A Liberal Dollop of

Leykis

He favors same-sex marriages, opposes the death penalty and doesn't like old people. His detractors can call thirty-something talk show host Tom Leykis a loud-mouthed liberal, but they can't accuse him of sitting on the fence.

Leykis, whose show is syndicated by Westwood One, has an opinion about everything and is rarely compassionate — or politically correct — about how he says it.

by Bob Rusk

continued on page 19. ➤

DDS Has It All!



Schedule Editor

Cut Number: 99999
Title: TEST SCHEDULE

INSERT CUT DELETE CUT MOVE CUT TOGGLE START CODE EXIT

CUT #	ALIAS	AIR TIME	LENGTH	TITLE	START CODE	TYPE
Top Of Schedule						
1	0101-03	00:00:00	0:04:31	I STILL HAVEN'T	@SEC	HD
2	0101-05	00:00:00	0:03:18	GOOD THING	@SEC	HD
3	0101-08					
4	0101-11					
5	0101-13					
6	0101-16					
7	0111-09					
8	0102-03					
9	0105-15					
10	0106-06					
11	0106-09					
12	0107-07					
13	0107-10					
14	0108-13					
15	0111-14					
16	0109-07					
17	0109-11					
18	0110-02					
19	0110-08					
20	0110-13					

Audio Category Editor

Hard Disk Compact Disk Schedule Note/Comment Feed

Text Script Rotation Voice Trigger Clock

SFX SPOTS LINER MUSIC

40000

Log Import and Editing

Total System Configuration

Cut Number: 1
Cut Title: I STILL HAVEN'T

Classification: SFX SPOTS LINER MUSIC

Length of Cut: 4:31:41
Cut Group:
Bill Date:
Comment:
Out Cue:

Additional Data Settings

Record Screen Cue Editor

INTRO ON LINE

Fader Control

Current Mode: Mode # 1
Peripheral Interface: Device # 2
Sort By: PI Port Number

Fader Control Inputs	Fader Control Outputs
Input # 1: Fader-On-Button#1	Output # 1: Fader-On#1
Input # 2: Fader-On-Button#2	Output # 2: Fader-On#2
Input # 3: Fader-On-Button#3	Output # 3: Fader-On#3
Input # 4: Fader-On-Button#4	Output # 4: Fader-On#4
Input # 5: Fader-On-Button#5	Output # 5: Fader-On#5
Input # 6: Fader-Off-Button#1	Output # 6: Fader-Off#1
Input # 7: Fader-Off-Button#2	Output # 7: Fader-Off#2
Input # 8: Fader-Off-Button#3	Output # 8: Fader-Off#3
Input # 9: Fader-Off-Button#4	Output # 9: Fader-Off#4
Input # 10: Fader-Off-Button#5	Output # 10: Fader-Off#5

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START 00021 UNCL

11:15:43 LOCAL TIME

Queue	Time	Title	Start	End	Length	Type
1	12:00 PM BREAK	*Comment	114	0:00:00	0:00:00	MAN
1	11:15:43	ASSPRESS	114	0:00:59	0:00:59	@SEC
1	11:15:43	ARIZONA	108	0:00:59	0:00:59	@SEC
1	11:15:43	CORUNA	202	0:01:00	0:01:00	@SEC
1	11:15:43	COORS LITE	219	0:00:59	0:00:59	@SEC

SPOT SCHEDULE

Queue	Time	Title	Start	End	Length	Type
1	12:00 PM BREAK	*Comment	114	0:00:00	0:00:00	MAN
1	12:23:00	QUAMSTED NEIDEXEN	330	0:01:00	0:01:00	@SEC
1	12:23:00	QUAMSTED NEIDEXEN	331	0:01:00	0:01:00	@SEC
1	12:23:00	QUAMSTED NEIDEXEN	332	0:01:00	0:01:00	@SEC
1	12:23:00	QUAMSTED NEIDEXEN	333	0:01:00	0:01:00	@SEC
1	12:23:00	QUAMSTED NEIDEXEN	334	0:01:00	0:01:00	@SEC
1	12:23:00	QUAMSTED NEIDEXEN	335	0:01:00	0:01:00	@SEC
1	12:23:00	QUAMSTED NEIDEXEN	336	0:01:00	0:01:00	@SEC
1	12:23:00	QUAMSTED NEIDEXEN	337	0:01:00	0:01:00	@SEC
1	12:23:00	QUAMSTED NEIDEXEN	338	0:01:00	0:01:00	@SEC
1	12:23:00	QUAMSTED NEIDEXEN	339	0:01:00	0:01:00	@SEC
1	12:23:00	QUAMSTED NEIDEXEN	340	0:01:00	0:01:00	@SEC

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"A model who used to work on 'The Price is Right,' Holly Hallstrom, is suing (host) Bob Barker," Leykis told his audience on a recent show. "She said she was fired from 'The Price is Right' after 19 years for being overweight. I don't know if that's the reason or it's not. But if it was the reason, what is there to sue over? If you're overweight — boom — 'bye, 'bye."

That was soft-peddled compared to a comment earlier in the show that outraged some listeners.

"We should all be like Bob Barker when we're Bob's age ... He's my idol, for God's sake," Leykis proclaimed. "I wanna be like Bob Barker. Sexual harassment suits and women claiming I got my hands all over them. My God!"

In an interview the previous day with Tuned In, Leykis defended his attitude. "I'm not an act. I'm not just blunt on the air," he said. "I'm a blunt person. I never pretend to be something I'm not."

While some talk hosts describe themselves as entertainers or news analysts, Leykis said, "I am, number one, in the advertising business."

When asked if that meant he's on the air just to make money, he replied, "Bingo. That's what I'm there for. Let me tell you something. I'm in the business of getting radio stations to carry my show. Stations frankly don't care if you come on and say, 'I'm here to tell the truth. I'm here to change America.' This is a business and we're here to sell advertising."

Leykis, however, stressed that the opinions he expounds on the air are his actual views. "But," he continued, "I happen to believe that my opinion is irrelevant. It is provided for your edification, for entertainment purposes. It is provided to start a conversation, a

conversation that will hopefully be compelling enough to keep you listening long enough to get the ratings high enough so we can raise our advertising rates."

Any discussion of talk radio invariably turns to Rush Limbaugh. Just as Leykis feels his own opinions do not influence listeners, he thinks the same holds true with Limbaugh.

"If people talk about the influence of Limbaugh, I say look who the president is — and look who he's gonna be after the fall election," Leykis said. "If Rush is so influential, why do most Americans have a favorable impression of Bill Clinton?"

Leykis added that "we'd all go into a

coma" if Bob Dole were elected president. "He does not have a vision and people don't believe he understands their problems."

One of the biggest topics on talk shows this election year is family values, a term Leykis called "ludicrous."

"Everybody has a different system of values," he said. "There's no such thing as 'family values.' My family's values are different than your family's values. Who defines family values?"

"This was a term created by Bible-thumping right-wingers. The idea is to categorize and pigeonhole the rest of us into thinking we're a bunch of immoral slime bags."

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Leykis credit for being lively — which is something he also demands from callers. He hangs up on people who don't make the grade on his fast-paced show, with the sound of an explosion rattling listeners' radios. It's rare when an older person gets on the air with him. When it happens, Leykis usually has a field day, as he mocks them by slipping into a crotchety-sounding voice.

"It's not just older people I make fun of," he explained. "I make fun of anyone who calls up and acts infirm. That can be anybody from a stoner to someone who sounds like the equivalent of a 'baby on board' sign. They say, 'I'm a widow.' That means don't hit me, don't yell at me, don't challenge anything I'm about to say."

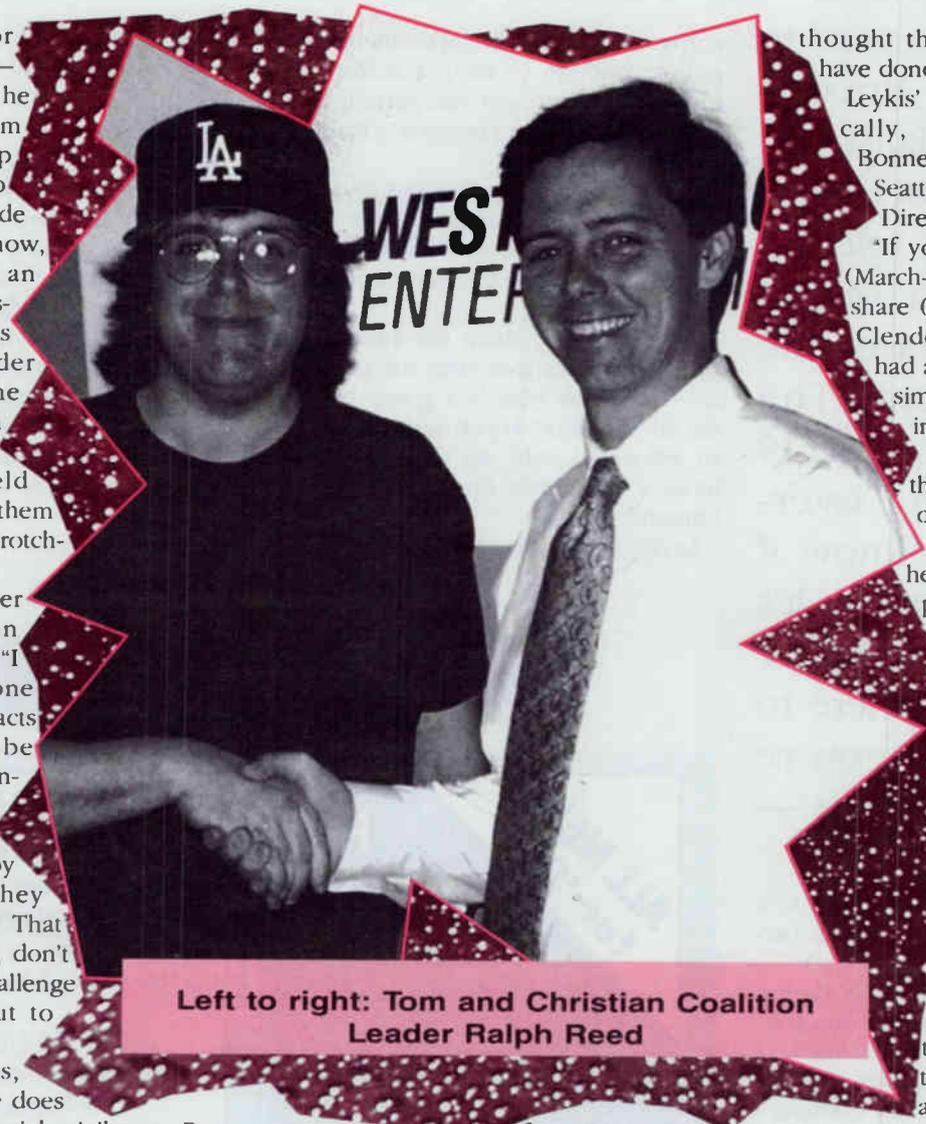
Continued Leykis, "I'm sorry. Your age does not give you any special privileges. Part of my job is to attract a certain demographic to the radio. Nobody complains when KIIS-FM in Los Angeles doesn't play a Frank Sinatra record. Why do

'I'm sorry. Your age does not give you any special privileges. Part of my job is to attract a certain demographic to the radio.'

people complain when you demographically target a talk show?

"Why is it assumed that talk radio is always going to be the domain of elderly people whose kids don't call them often enough? There's a niche for that. But I don't do that kind of show. I don't do windows and I don't care for the elderly. If I wanted to care for the elderly, I would've bought a nursing home."

"The Tom Leykis Show," which broadcasts live from the Westwood One Studios in Los Angeles, airs weekdays



Left to right: Tom and Christian Coalition Leader Ralph Reed

from 3:00 - 7:00 p.m. Pacific time. When it launched two years ago, the show was heard on 22 stations. Now there are more than 200 affiliates.

The show has recently been pulled off the air in some major markets, however. KMPC(AM) in Los Angeles and KCMO(AM) in Kansas City, Mo., have replaced Leykis with the conservative Michael Reagan.

"We're disappointed that the show didn't do better," said John Butler, program director at Bonneville International-owned KCMO. "Tom does a very entertaining show. But unfortunately over the past 12 months, he had the lowest share (1.8, adults 25-54) of any weekday daypart on the station."

"This is a mystery to me," confided Butler. "There are very few liberal talk show hosts on the air. I would have

thought that Tom's show would have done better in Kansas City."

Leykis' numbers are up dramatically, though, at another Bonneville station, KIRO-FM in Seattle, according to Program Director Tom Clendening.

"If you look at the last trend (March-May 1996), Tom had 3.1 share (adults, 18-34)," reported Clendening. "A year ago, he had a 1.1 share." There was a similar increase (1.5 to 3.9) in adults 25-54.

Clendening, who said that Leykis' show is sold out "most of the time" at KIRO-FM, offered that he had never heard complaints about Leykis from advertisers.

"If they're running commercials and the commercials work, which they do, I don't think they're concerned with his political views," said Clendening.

Hip parties

Not one to stay strictly behind the microphone, Leykis travels throughout the country to host listener parties about once a month.

Usually held at a popular restaurant, these parties give the audience a chance to put a face to the voice they hear on the radio.

"Most talk stations will do something that's blatantly sales-oriented, like sitting two guys in front of a used car dealer," Leykis said. "Or they'll do a promotion where the issues are debated, with a conservative and a liberal speaker."

"Our audience is younger than that. They grew up hearing about 99-cent beer night on the radio. That's who we're talking to. Our listeners are active and like to go out at night. They like to meet people and do things."

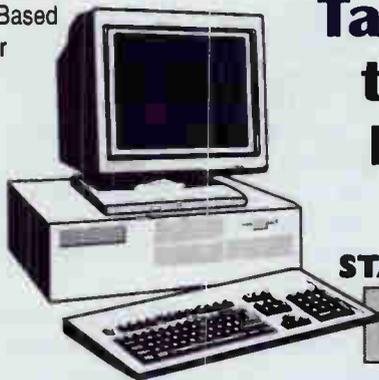
"We find hip places," Leykis said. "People play pool and listen to loud music. I hang out with them, have a few drinks, and get loud and obnoxious!"

Leykis described a recent listener party in Sacramento, Calif., for affiliate KSTE(AM) as "amazing" because the supply of beer ran dry.

"Have you ever been to a restaurant and they just didn't have any beer?" he



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shouted. "Every drop was sold. The party was so huge that people had to be turned away."

According to KSTE General Manager David Burke, "When Tom starts to tease listeners about an appearance, we're flooded with calls. He enjoys meeting the listeners. Tom's a good friend of ours."

Leykis got into radio when, at 14, he entered a contest at WBAB-FM in Babylon, N.Y., and won an hour of airtime. "After I did my hour, they asked me to come back," he recalled. "I had no idea that I was getting into the business, or even wanted to."

He was a DJ for nearly 10 years before developing an interest in talk radio while working at WPIX-FM (now WQCD(FM)) in New York.

"They let us take phone calls between the records," Leykis said. "We were taking more and more calls and playing fewer records."

Soon Leykis was off to other stations in Boston, Phoenix and Los Angeles, which took a toll on his personal life. Now 39, he has been married four times.

"If I wanted to work in radio, there was no other choice," he stated. "Radio is a medium that requires you to be itin-

erant. It's like the military; you go where the work is. It's tough finding a woman who is willing to say, 'I'll just drop my job and move to Hartford, honey.'"

Leykis has no regrets about the choices he has made and offers no apologies for his blunt attitude.

"In order to reach your highest income potential, your highest success ratio, you've got to be ready to move," he concluded. "I'm thrilled that I've been able to ride the roller coaster and still be standing."

Bob Rusk spent 20 years in radio. He is a regular contributor to Tuned In.



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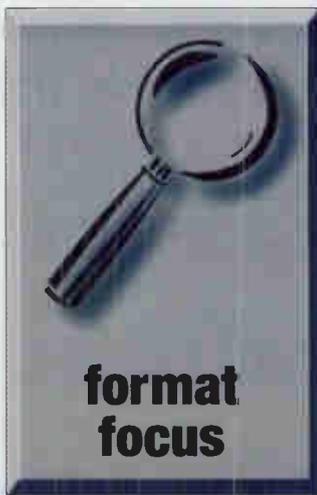
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WHAT'S THE ALTERNATIVE



by
Cara Jepsen

There are nearly 250 stations in the United States calling themselves alternative, including AAA, according to Robert Unmacht at M Street Journal. With Metallica headlining the once-alterna-

tive Lollapalooza music festival and no fewer than four radio formats playing

so-called alternative artists, it's no wonder there's some confusion as to what the term means these days.

Non-alternative stations have started dipping heavily into the territory that was formerly considered alternative. Hot AC formats have been successfully mixing softer-end alternative acts like Erasure, Alanis Morissette and Dave Matthews with Whitney Houston to attract a largely female audience. And active rock stations often have as much as an 80 percent overlap of artists with alternative; harder songs by groups such as Pearl Jam, Smashing Pumpkins, Soundgarden, Green Day and White Zombie typically get airplay on both formats. In some markets, there are up to five stations playing the same artists.

"Alternative has become so popular in its various permutations that the format is on most broadcasters' wheel of formats," says Fred Jacobs of Jacobs Media. "A couple of years ago that was not the case. And it's forcing a lot of



Photo by Heather Huebner

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With at least four radio formats playing so-called alternative artists, s

alternative stations to grow up pretty quickly."

That means that stations now have to work harder to distinguish themselves to listeners.

"They have to do a lot more than play music," says Jacobs. "In many cases alternative had a pretty easy ride because they tapped into a music pool a couple of years ago that was pretty empty. Now they have to get serious about how they operate. They need to attract a morning show and an actual promotions director, not make it the secondary duties of the midday jock.

"It's been a wakeup call for a lot of stations. Success begets more competition," he says.

Chicago's WKQX(FM) Program Director Bill Gamble, who consults about 10 stations nationwide, says Q-101 concentrates on playing new music by new bands, new music by old bands, but not old music by old bands. His station's closest competitor is mainstream rock WRCX(FM); the stations' playlists overlap over 50 percent. WKQX recently chose to play cuts from "Load," the new album from mainstream rock stalwarts Metallica. DJs have tempered the decision by telling listeners that the new Metallica record is not like the band's earlier releases, which carry a heavy metal stigma — and are played on WRCX.

Tough calls

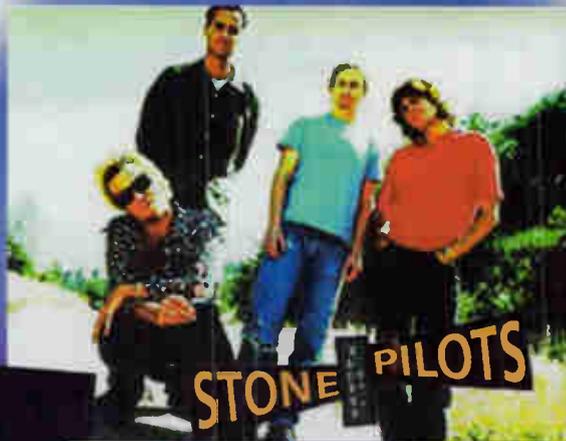
"Every station has tough calls, either with artists or songs," says Jacobs. "Now that the (Metallica) album is out, most stations have made the decision as to whether they'll incorporate the decision or not. A lot of stations played it and dumped it. In markets where there are no active rock stations, we have a lot of stations that have successfully integrated (the album)."

Q-101 also regularly plays a promo that differentiates it from mainstream rock WRCX-FM: "This is Q101 music," a

voice booms, and fragments of songs from Nirvana, Green Day, Alanis Morissette and Alice in Chains are heard.

The promo continues: "This is Blaze music" (before turning active rock, WRCX was a Guns 'n' Roses/Aerosmith rocker with the call letters WWBZ), and pieces of old songs by AC/DC and Queen are heard. The tongue-in-cheek approach does, indeed, differentiate the two stations.

No fewer than five stations play alternative bands in the Detroit/Windsor market. The ratings winner is The Planet, WHYT-FM. The ABC/Cap Cities station went from top 40 to a mainstream alternative two and a half years ago, and recently



tations now have to work harder to distinguish themselves to listeners.

hired Program Director Garrett Michaels from WPLY(FM) — Y100 — in Philadelphia. The playlist leans toward the pop end of alternative, specializing in superstar artists like REM, U2, Dave Matthews and Blues Traveler. But the station isn't AAA, either; the market already has one of those.

"If you could take a hybrid of AAA and alternative and a little bit of the top 40 format and mix it all up in

a blender, that's what this station is," Michaels says. "We're hit-driven. But the main difference between us and other stations is that we don't discard our artists when they become popular."

Michaels says the station is going for a broader audience than its two chief rivals: Chum Ltd.'s 89X (CIMX(FM)), a hard-edged, Bill Gamble-consulted alternative station, and The River (CIDR(FM)), a AAA station. The two Chum stations have about a 25 to 35 percent duplication in playlist. But they're "two entirely different stations musically," says Wayne Stafford, general manager of both stations.

The stations target two different markets: 89X, which has been alternative since 1991, is aimed at 17- to 30-year-olds, and The River, which went AAA in late 1994, targets 27- to 42-year-olds. The stations share a van and do co-promotions. The ratings are growing slowly, and together rank what The Planet does.

"We play fewer songs and have a tighter playlist," says Stafford. "We're on the songs first. We go out on records before The Planet does. We're not really playing the poppy stuff unless it's a big pop hit. We have a harder edge. We wouldn't play the Dave Matthews Band. We'll play Rage against the Machine; (WHYT) won't."

89X shares about two-thirds of its audience with The Planet, which suits Michaels fine. By wedging The Planet's format between the two Chum stations, it's been able to borrow listeners from both. Michaels says The Planet is positioned to be a first, second or third choice with listeners of the Windsor stations. "Many people say we're their favorite radio station," he says. "At the same

time, if you like 89X, your second-favorite is probably the Planet. If you like the River, your second or third favorite will be the Planet. We just happen to be people's second favorite a lot more than others."

In the Baltimore/Washington market, three stations duke it out for the 18-34 demo. Jacobs-consulted cutting edge WHFS(FM), which has been alternative since 1984, has recently been taking on a more top 40 flavor by increasing repetition.

Active rock WIYY(FM) in Baltimore has been a rock station for 19 years; for most of that time it has been aimed at 18-34's with a lot of current/intensives and active rock.

Program Director Rick Strauss says while his station's playlist often overlaps with WHFS, there are significant differences between the two.

Less pop

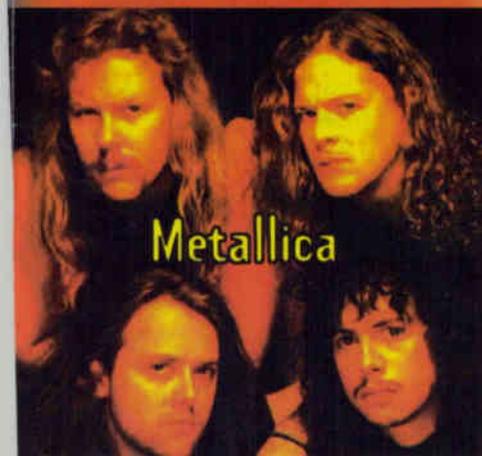
"We stay away from some of the poppier things that our modern rock competitors may be playing," Strauss says. "We try to differentiate ourselves by being Baltimore's radio station, not Washington's station. It's all the things we do day in and day out. Our morning show does a good job for us."

A set of TV ads that ran this spring also helped distinguish WIYY. One featured text over a music bed and video of an X-ray of a tooth. "I once had a filling that picked up radio waves," said the text. "It was great. Then it began picking up country and western. It's amazing how much you bleed when you pull a tooth yourself."

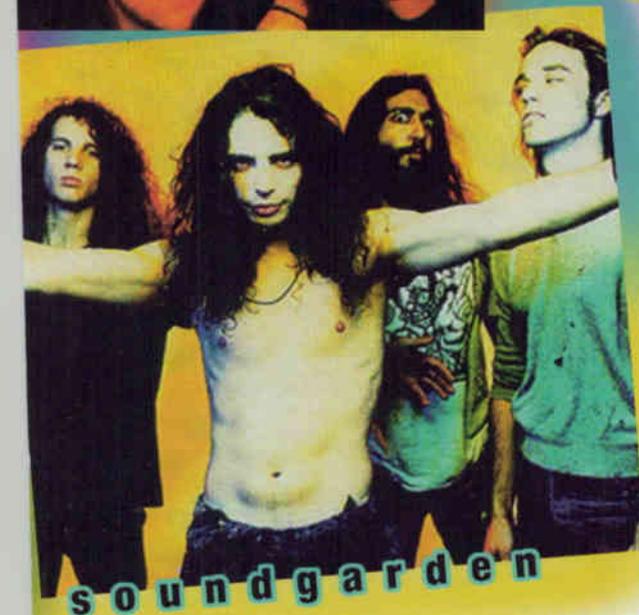
With so many stations playing the same artists, is there such thing as alternative?

"I guess the question I would ask is, did alternative ever mean anything?" says Gamble. "Alternative used to mean unpopular. It certainly doesn't mean that anymore. Right now it's mainstream. Alternative is Beck and the Primitive Radio Gods. It's also Gravity Kills, Dave Matthews and Rage Against the Machine. It's a pretty wide path there."

Cara Jepsen is media editor of the Illinois Entertainer and a contributor to the Chicago Reader and Crain's Small Business in Chicago. She is a regular features writer for Tuned In.



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W

hen you hear about something that is too good to be true, you are naturally skeptical. You have probably

Listen Up

More to ISDN Than Meets the Ear

by Sue Jones

heard a fair amount about the new digital technology that uses fiber optics for voice and data transmission. The trail-blazing stations and broadcast groups that have implemented this new type of transmission are reporting amazing results in speed, quality, cost and other areas. It may be time that you evaluate the advantages Integrated Services Digital Networks (ISDN) may offer for your station operations.

Speed

The transmission speed and signal delays of ISDN are the same as that of satellite. Talk show hosts working from home studios with a computer linked by ISDN have the ability to select the next call from their location instead of telling the engineer at the station to take the next caller. It is a more natural transition and transmission on the air.

ISDN technology delivers CD quality over regular telephone lines. There is excellent stereo separation without the noises often associated with dedicated analog lines.

This technology is a telephone-based, two-way, stereo, studio-quality, point-to-point device, with national or worldwide connectivity capability. Unlike one-way satellite, ISDN feeds superior audio back and forth, for cues, communication, data or a two-city remote. It has bidirectional transmission paths that are isolated, meaning that you can split voices on the same line so that listeners cannot hear the engineer and on-air talent talking through the talkback system.

In most large cities ISDN is available when you want it, without the need to book weeks in advance. Satellites and dedicated phone lines usually cannot be provided at a moment's notice.

This technology offers the capability of linking two stereo studios and two computers all over a single digital phone line.

Moreover, stations around the country report less downtime with the digital ISDN connections compared with the satellite transmissions.

Cost

The cost of satellite broadcasts have been prohibitive for some stations. The reduced cost of ISDN opens long-distance and multiple-location transmissions

at budget-pleasing prices.

Before ISDN, transmissions to multiple locations required satellite. Now the same multiple-location transmissions can occur using ISDN capability. Some users report that it is dramatically less expensive than a satellite link after the initial equipment purchases and telephone installation charges.

ISDN line costs vary around the country but are significantly less than dedicated lines. The distance of the signal transmission and number of transmission points affect costs. However, it is often less expensive than satellite. In long-distance applications, dedicated analog lines cost approximately 75¢ per minute. Fiber-optic ISDN lines cost about 18-25¢ per minute.

In addition, a single ISDN line can connect two stereo studios and link two computers for logs, news, call screening and talkback. There is no need for the added expense of separate lines for support services.

ISDN also provides more efficient use of talent and equipment. Group buy-outs are using ISDN to improve efficiency, increase production and editing to studio level, and cut costs. Rather than having the finest production equipment at every station, the groups are investing in one high-quality production studio, placing top-notch talent and equipment in that one studio and transmitting the results to the group members.

Craig Kopcho of WKQL(FM) in Jacksonville, Fla., says, "The impact on phone costs has been dramatic, on the order of 75 percent."

"Since the installation, contract pricing

of our telecommunication circuits went down 15 percent. The switch to ISDN lines saves WLS more than \$47,000 per year," explains Warren Shulz of WLS Radio in Chicago.

In addition to the savings compared with analog lines, supplementary revenue is possible. Some stations are distributing popular station features to other outlets, such as syndicating full-length programs.

Increased revenue can be generated by renting the equipment and studio facilities to out-of-town stations that need to originate a special event in your city. A current example is the ISDN broadcasts from Atlanta for the Olympics.

More flexibility, creativity

In addition to the speed, quality and cost advantages, ISDN improves flexibility and fuels creativity.

Users are discovering they can broadcast from locations where other transmitters will not work. Some stations are originating their highest-rated shows (in morning and afternoon drive) from unusual locations such as Disney World, Las Vegas, New York or anywhere something noteworthy is happening.

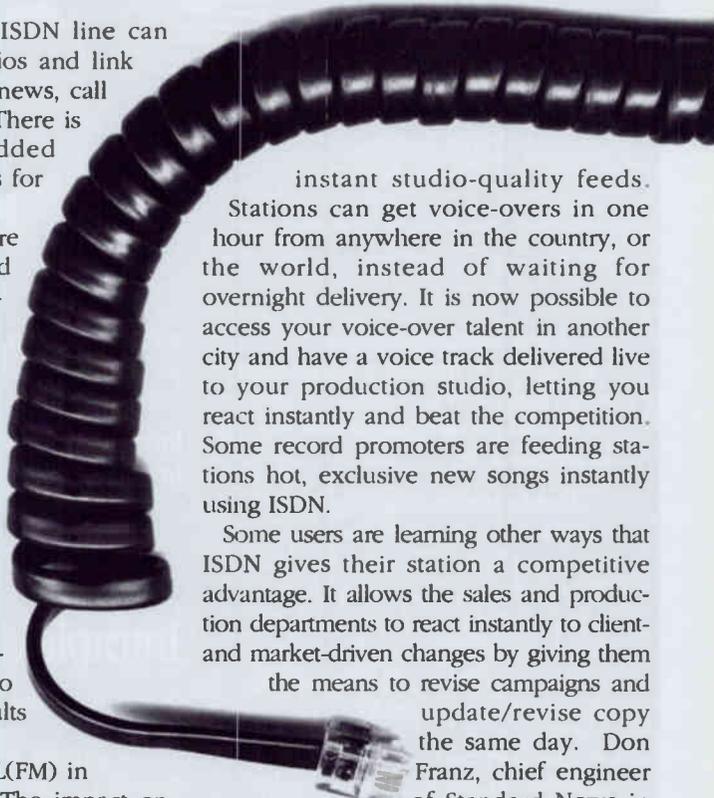
Voice talent suppliers can now produce

instant studio-quality feeds.

Stations can get voice-overs in one hour from anywhere in the country, or the world, instead of waiting for overnight delivery. It is now possible to access your voice-over talent in another city and have a voice track delivered live to your production studio, letting you react instantly and beat the competition. Some record promoters are feeding stations hot, exclusive new songs instantly using ISDN.

Some users are learning other ways that ISDN gives their station a competitive advantage. It allows the sales and production departments to react instantly to client- and market-driven changes by giving them

the means to revise campaigns and update/revise copy the same day. Don Franz, chief engineer of Standard News in Washington, says, "It gives us the ability to change and expand to meet future needs."



With ISDN, it is now possible for the country's best production talent to produce liners, jingles or other production pieces from their home

studio and transmit them directly to the station. These same elements can also be placed on a host storage system, to be downloaded by any stations that desire it when they want it.

Uses

Remotes, sports broadcasts and sponsor remotes are typical uses. Syndicated shows, comedy bits, record company feeds and news are also becoming common.

ISDN can provide simultaneous interchanges with interview subjects. This use of ISDN is especially helpful when dealing celebrities, as well as enhancing your coverage of breaking news by obtaining actualities from a sister station.

Some stations are installing ISDN lines in the homes of highly paid on-air talent

so that their shows can be broadcast even in the most adverse weather conditions that previously may have prevented the on-air talent from reaching the station. The portable nature of this equipment, as well as ease of setup, makes it a natural for non-traditional applications.

Ken Van Prooyen, producer of Sports Spectrum, says he links a talk show talent who lives in Florida with the studio in Grand Rapids, Mich., using an ISDN hookup with the studio and the talent's home studio for a weekly broadcast. Prior to the ISDN connection, the station had to pay the travel costs (air fare, lodging and food) for the talk show host's weekly trip from Florida to Michigan.

Problems

Something this good must have some drawbacks, and there are a couple of which you should be aware. The initial cost of the equipment is greater than that of traditional analog hookups. In addition to the ISDN line, a terminal adaptor, which may be built into the ISDN equipment, and the basic ISDN interfacing equipment are required on each end of the line.

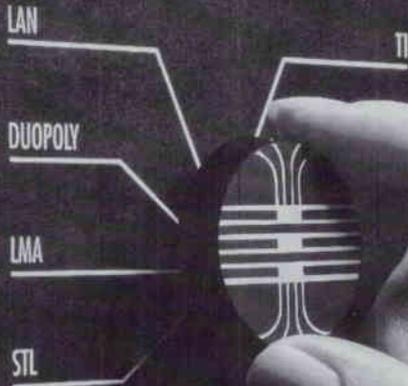
Some stations report that they recoup the additional cost within one to two years. However, the other advantages have provided unmeasurable benefits. There are several types of equipment available in the market to support ISDN, with various features and at different prices. A station broadcasting sports events may not need the high-quality sound transmission that a classical music station broadcasting a symphony performance would require. It is best to shop the market to find the equipment that suits your needs and your budget.

This four-year-old technology is still new enough that many telecommunication companies are often in a catch-up or training mode. If you are linking into ISDN for the first time, be sure your engineer seeks out an experienced ISDN staff member to enter the order. Although this was a bigger problem a couple of years ago, staff training has improved. However, keep in mind this is new technology.

ISDN offers significantly improved technology, and incredible savings, while opening enormous creative opportunities. It is time to consider it for your operations if you want to be technically current and remain competitive.

Sue Jones is principal in Bisset Communications, a communications management firm located in the Washington metro area. She can be reached at 703-503-4999.

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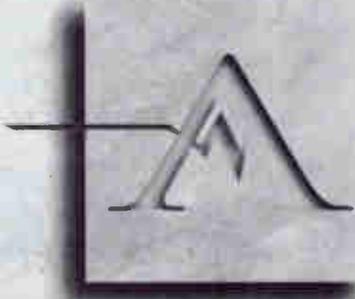
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READER SERVICE 164

'Prep Services' Compensate for Shrinking Staffs

Not so long ago, radio DJs used to "prep" their shows by scouring the local newspapers for interesting tidbits of information, setting up interviews with figures of local interest and producing beds and stingers for unique, one-of-kind show segments.

For the best on-air talent, this was a creative pursuit — a time to build the elements that made a radio show special to its listeners. It was the original stuff that could help a DJ break away from the rest of the pack.

But times are changing. The rapid consolidation of the radio broadcast industry into the hands of fewer and fewer large corporate owners has resulted in shrinking staffs with less time for creative brainstorming and pre-production pursuits.



Rolling Stones drummer Charlie Watts stops by to chat with Darren Davis of SW Networks.

"Today you have one general manager managing several stations and one program director in charge of several programming assets. They don't have the time to look at the niceties that they really need to keep their ratings up," says Susan Soloman, president and CEO of SW Networks, the radio programming enterprise owned by Sony Corp.

It was for this reason that last fall SW

Networks began offering a wide range of programming packages that support local on-air talent. SW offers seven format-specific services, each offering entertainment news items, celebrity sound-bites, artist biographies and even originally produced libraries that offer everything from format-specific production beds to show themes.

For talk show affiliates, SW Networks will now book guests and provide background material on them. For major market stations, SW will do direct studio hookups so on-air personalities can do one-to-one interviews with celebrities. "We've had everyone from Spin Doctors to former vice president Dan Quayle to Jackie Mason to Montel Williams to the hit band Stabbing Westward," says Soloman.

Broad selection

Such programming services are clearly an industry trend. Major players such as Westwood One, ABC and Premiere Radio Networks also offer their affiliates a broad selection of supplementary programming services.

"Stations have demanded more non-traditional services from the radio networks and the radio networks are responding," says Ed Salamon, programming president at Westwood One Radio Networks. "It's simply more economical for a network to do these things than it is for the station to do them alone."

Though Westwood One has begun

by Frank Beacham

four new prep services in the last year alone, Salamon traced the origin of such station services back to the Source Radio Network, which was started by NBC in 1979 and is now owned by Westwood One.

"The Source Network was conceived originally to service rock stations that didn't use a lot of traditional news," Salamon says. "The idea was to furnish information and material beyond what was commonly available from the news services. Today — as stations have specialized further and with most markets having at least one news station — it has become more and more important to provide format-distinct services for all affiliates."

At Westwood One, the prep services



consist of four daily format-specific text (via fax) and audio feeds. They are Alternative/Top 40, AOR/Classic Rock, Country and AC/Oldies. The groupings are made because the audiences in each category share similar demographic and lifestyle characteristics.



"Though a lot of the information for the four formats may be common, the selection of material,

the way it is edited and the voice in which it is written is very distinct," Salamon says. "The writers cull this material for specific audiences. In addition to demographics, they work from a lifestyle profile.

A country listener may be the same age as an AC or Oldies listener but have very different interests."

An average prep sheet might contain historic calendar items, birthdays and an interview clip that might be relevant to a calendar item that day. "Say it's the anniversary of the day John Lennon met Paul McCartney. We might have a clip of Paul remembering that day," Salamon says.

Big Westwood One staples are entertainment news, celebrity interviews and special coverage of entertainment-related events. "Because we do so much entertainment news at Westwood One and have so many artists coming in for various shows, we actually originate a lot of news," Salamon says. "Our affiliates get entertainment stories geared to their format that they won't be able to get anyplace else."

Event coverage

Entertainment event coverage is also popular. "For example, recently for our country service there was a Fan Fair in Nashville, and Cathy Martindale from WSM fed us daily reports," Salomon says.

Parody songs and commercials have long been a product of Premiere Radio Networks, which is headquartered in Sherman Oaks, Calif. Now Premiere offers extensive daily comedy prep services by text and audio for its more than 1,200 affiliates.

"We have writers and comedians who come in every day to do very topical,



SW Networks President and CEO Susan Solomon with Jackie Mason and celebrity divorce lawyer Raoul Feldman

fresh stuff that our stations can use the next day," says Tim Kelly, Premiere's executive vice president and director of programming. "It's like writing the monologue for Jay Leno and David Letterman."

In addition to scripted humor, Premiere develops characters, games, promotions, contests and "funny phone bits" that local talent can use in their programs. "We try to do the things our stations can't do because they are expensive, difficult and time-consuming," Kelly says. "We have this huge talent pool out here in Los Angeles, and we can produce really cool stuff for our affiliates."

A popular feature Premiere has provided since its founding in 1987 is "News from the Boonies." "It's basically all news stuff that's so stupid that it can't be true but it is," Kelly says.

More recently Premiere has begun using the Internet to provide a new service called Premiere Prep On-Line. The service attracted nearly 200 stations in its first 40 days of operation. Broadcasters can access the proprietary material through Premiere's Web site by

continued on page 38 ➤

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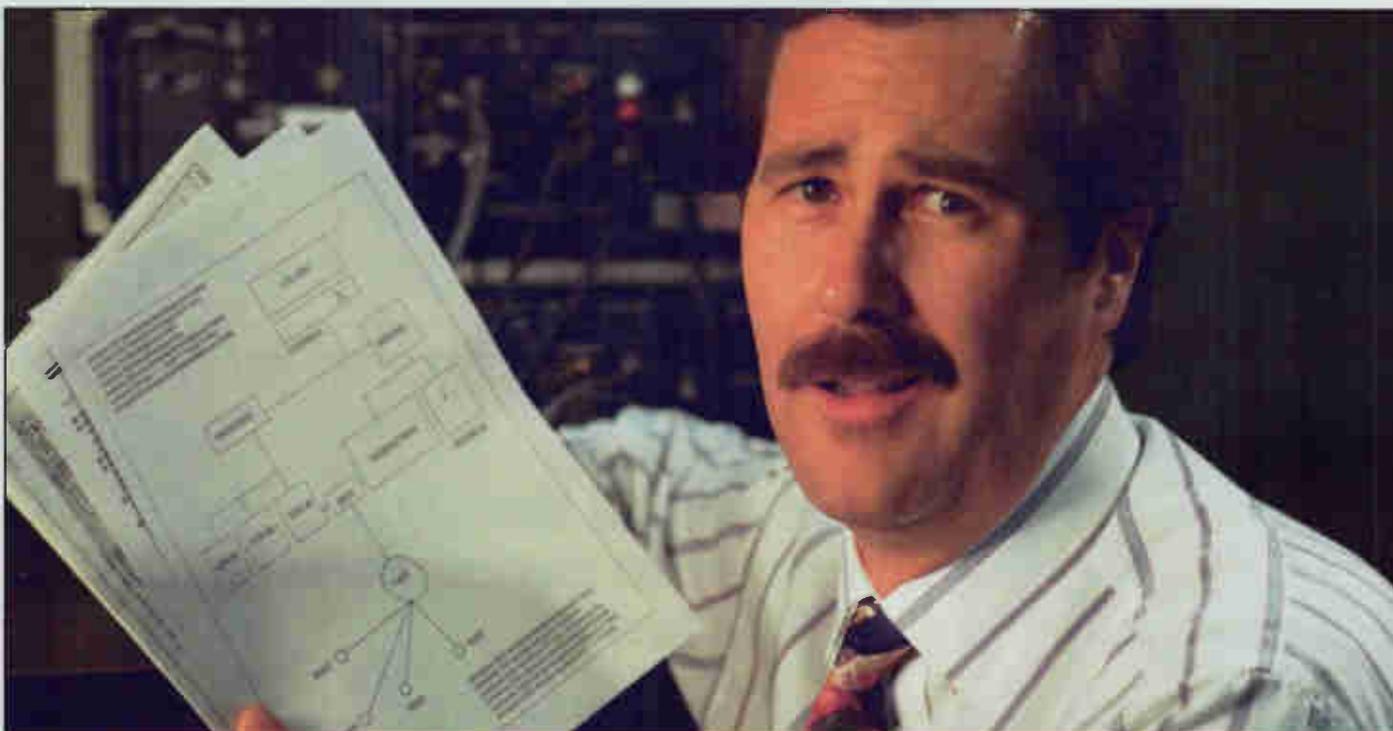
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RETHINKING TRADITIONAL NEWS

Zapnews was only slightly ahead of its time. In the late '80s, a former AP executive launched this no-frills newswire-by-fax service for stations that felt that the major wire services delivered more material than they needed and cost more than they could afford. During the previous decade (and the previous recession), NBC's News and Information Service had offered a long-form all-news format.

Fast-forward to 1996. Just when stations have revived from a staggering economic slump comes an all-bets-are-off industry consolidation. In more and more cities, the lion's share of the radio market is already controlled by a couple of duopolies. One company already owns more than 100 stations, and bombshell mega-mergers are announced every week.

To vendors, who will end up with exponentially fewer prospects, these are also — to quote the ancient Chinese curse — “interesting times.”

In retrospect, Zapnews and NIS were not just prescient, they were downright clairvoyant. Today, with both buyers and sellers working smarter than ever, the key word for stations is “resourceful”; for vendors, it’s “responsive.”

Computerized AP NewsDesk is the greatest thing that ever happened to Bob Hendricks, who doubles as program director and morning news anchor at AM talker KAIL in Salt Lake City. He sifts through AP show prep material and updates his newscasts on the fly, using one of two terminals shared with two FM sister stations.

Co-owned stations must also share the bill. AP Vice President and Director Jim Williams is firm about not providing single-station service to multistation locations. “If all stations aren’t licensed, they can’t use it directly or indirectly. If you’re using our material, pay us.”

Not all stations choose to. Rory O’Neill, news director and morning anchor at WNDB(AM) in Daytona Beach, Fla., says his station dropped AP for ABC NewsWire because “it was going to cost us a fortune to read

by Holland Cooke

headlines on FM.” ABC’s service, “at a fraction of AP’s cost,” says O’Neill, is also available to stations via barter.

That’s a major trend. In markets where it does not have cash-exclusive deals, AccuWeather is now available on a format-exclusive basis via barter, with inventory repped by Premiere Radio Networks. Yes, even outsources are outsourcing!

And how’s this for resourceful? Even though AccuWeather is heard elsewhere in Daytona Beach, O’Neill has access to its information and voices (but not its brand), because AccuWeather provides forecasts to Florida Radio Network, of which WNDB is an affiliate.

Even pluckier yet: When Phil Sirkin,

operations manager of Providence, R.I., stations WPRO(AM)/WLKW(AM), arrived at these stations two years ago, “everything was coming in on telephone lines,” he says. There was no ISDN or Switched 56 hardware.” Sirkin upgraded — at no cost — by assembling an audio chain from his various sources. “One of the station’s traffic services contributed the Switched 56 box.” The circuit he needed he obtained from a play-by-play syndicator who needed studio space. And Sirkin also uses the system for a weather service and ski reports — on two stations.

By the way, notice how many of today’s radio middle-managers have dual roles? Even major market stations that used to proudly “grow their own” now outsource.

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The second largest radio news department in Boston today is Metro Traffic. All-news WTOP(AM) in Washington, which previously used a local TV meteorologist and AccuWeather, now barter forecasts from The Weather Channel. WTOP News Director Michelle Komes considers it a reasonable economy because the station itself directs the talent its various outsources employ. And, she says, because "listeners don't care where information comes from as long as it's correct."

Stations are even becoming more receptive to importing morning shows, radio's primetime. And not just flamboyant acts like Howard Stern or "Imus in the Morning." USA Radio Networks' new Daybreak morning magazine program had 122 affiliates "out of the box," according to Vice President and General Manager David Reeder. Reeder, a long-time station manager, sees owners looking to the bottom line more and more with continued deregulation, "to cover the nut as they consolidate," as he puts it.

As chaotic as radio's new landscape has become, it has forced both buyers and sellers to become more disciplined. CBS Radio Networks Vice President of Affiliate Sales Nick Kiernan says, "We are very

focused, because stations themselves have become focused. Some are news stations, others talk, others news/talk." To respond, he says it is important that vendors "package (material) in a way that's appropriate to the marketplace."

And what are customers in the market-

Radio's chaotic new
landscape has forced both
buyers and sellers of news
to be more disciplined.

place looking for? For one, technical compatibility. KALL's Hendricks cites the need for more automation tones in network audio feeds so that the station's PC-based hardware can take in programming unattended.

Customers are also searching for more variety. Today, with fewer station owners as potential clients, WPRO/WLKW's Sirkin says he thinks it's smart that "providers are offering more goods, like

ABC's adding BusinessWeek reports."

Stations are also seeking more influence at the product design stage. WTOP's Komes says, "Vendors should come to us more often to say 'What could we do for you?' instead of 'Look what we did for you.'"

Today, vendors have no choice.

AP's Williams says, "Duopoly has only changed who owns and operates a radio station; it hasn't changed a provider's fundamental goal: providing content to radio stations so they can create programming that attracts listeners." That's why, in AP's case, he says, "it pays to have people in the field in every state. Our core product is state news."

CBS's Kiernan says vendors should be "glad to see the good broadcasters take over more stations. They know how to make it work."

But expect a bumpy ride in the meantime. The entire radio industry is clearly dizzy from deregulation.

Holland Cooke is a Washington-based radio programming consultant specializing in AM news/talk. He may be reached at (202) 333-8442; via e-mail at cookeh@aol.com, or on the Internet at www.getonthenet.com

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Management Journal

by Vincent M. Ditingo

Trends in Business Applications, Information Systems and Strategic Planning

Redefining Business Strategies for Radio's New Economy

The economic model that guided the marketing and business strategies of radio owners in recent years is poised to take on several new characteristics or managerial philosophies, leaving many in the industry wondering whether long-range planning will ever resurface as a mandatory practice.

Essentially, the continuing changes in station and program operations as well as in management and sales structures stem from a three-pronged, economic paradigm established during the early 1990s. As highlighted in my Focal Press book, "The Remaking of Radio," this paradigm consists of:

- Financially stronger companies as a result of local market expansion of common station ownership, which leads to competitive market positioning with other local media as well as a reprisal in active trading and group mergers.
- Business alliances among former competitors in the form of local market agreements (LMAs) or joint sales agreements (JSAs).
- Quality programming in the form of locally produced syndicated shows, which are delivered (to stations) primarily by satellite and feature nationally known or highly rated personalities, along with the availability of 24-hour (satellite) format networks.

As the industry enters the second half of the 1990s, these operating strategies are being refocused. The reason: Success in today's commercial radio business relies directly upon instantaneous results and advertiser responsiveness.

To that end, the dimensions of radio's three-pronged economic model have been extended to include digital and information technology, which offer greater efficiencies in advertising and programming and are now viewed as the competitive advantage in station operations.

Turning the page

Along with considering digital and information technology as performance improvements, radio executives are examining other new managerial philosophies for the workplace, including those that center on station staffing and family-friendly environments.

Here's a closer look at the developments:

- Digital technology: In recent months, radio has witnessed an explosion in instantaneous transmissions for advertising and station functions, from broadcast/advertiser networking to the reception of commercial inventory from an agency to the integration of major station operations. For instance, a joint venture between Digital Courier International (DCI) and Arbitron has been formed to develop a high-speed, on-line link between broadcasters and advertisers for the instantaneous access of information such as ratings, avails and traffic instructions, among other data.

Additionally, an Internet system that allows for the digital integration of major station operations, particularly for accessing

and storing hundreds of audio files, has been designed by Digital Generation Systems (DG Systems). It incorporates both Netscape Navigator and other new software. DG Systems also provides subscribing stations with satellite/high-speed landline delivery of advertising inventory (spots) and new music releases.

Meanwhile, the U.S. radio industry is still experimenting with in-band, on-channel digital audio broadcasting technology, which will send CD-quality signals directly from the station to a stationary receiver, complementing that station's main analog signal. This new delivery technology will give way to new promotional positioning campaigns.

(As of this writing, the FCC delayed a decision to authorize spectrum space for digital audio radio satellite services or DARS. The advantage to users of this technology is the transmission of digital programming via satellite from the source directly to small, mobile antennas. These nationally delivered services would particularly heighten competition for mobile listeners, causing local broadcast stations to devise new audience marketing tactics.)

- Downsizing versus personnel maintenance/retraining: Cost control has become the top management dilemma for the new breed of merger-minded radio group operators. The principal issue here is whether to quickly downsize personnel — especially after multiple same-market station acquisitions in which there are duplicate positions — as a means of cost reduction.

This issue also involves studying the potential economic benefits of retraining affected staffers in new computer-driven sales, research or program roles as well as for relocating key personnel to other cities.

In the previous installment of Management Journal we saw the results of a broadcast industry study showing a major decline in management responsibility as well as other work-related factors after cost reduction/downsizing practices were implemented, indicating that downsizing is not such a cut-and-dry tactic.

- Family-friendly environments: Adapting to the needs of the workplace of the late 1990s can take many forms, but the primary mission should be to foster effective employee performance. One such way is through Employee Assistance Programs. These are dedicated programs designed to address several immediate work-family situations, including stress management, working parents and greater employee motivation.

A new study at Xerox, funded by the Ford Foundation and highlighted in The Wall Street Journal (May 15, 1996), showed that 30 percent fewer absences as well as shorter customer response times can be achieved through business planning based upon work-family needs.

Interpublic, a large holding firm for several advertising agencies, and Interep are two media companies that currently offer EAP programs.

Vincent M. Ditingo is a business writer, media consultant and educator. He is also president of Ditingo Media Enterprises, a New York City-based corporate communications and strategic marketing company.

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► continued from page 31

using a preassigned password. "It's a bulletin board-style thing where people can share material," Kelly says. "It's almost like a chat line."

In a takeoff on the familiar black-striped yellow cover of Cliffs Notes study guide booklets, ABC Radio Networks offers a series of format-specific services to its affiliates. ABC's "Morning Show Prep" and "Wake Up Call" services combine celebrity news and gossip, jokes, trivia, quizzes and calendars with — as ABC touts in its brochure — "the weirdest, wackiest, most bizarre stories...all true, proving that reality is indeed stranger than fiction."

ABC Radio Networks also offers such format-specific packages as "Nashville Notes" for country stations and "411 Urban Show Prep" for broadcasters programming urban music. ABC's country package includes country event coverage, concert tour updates, celebrity gossip, birthdays, anniversaries and soundbites with various artists. 411 Urban offers gossip and celebrity news targeted

to African-American audiences. It includes "black facts" ("to generate phone calls") and features such as "Today in Black History."

Robbing radio

Though the boom in new prep services has proved popular to many staff-starved radio stations, critics of the trend see it as another step in the direction of robbing radio stations of their local diversity.

"It's a logical descent into more prefab radio," says media critic Norman Soloman, writer of the nationally syndicated "Media Beat" newspaper column. "Station independence becomes more and more scarce. Radio becomes less and less a craft and more and more servicing the assembly line."

This trend, says Soloman, further "homogenizes" radio and creates more and more of "a mass production mentality" that affects both the listeners and local producers of radio programming. "It's beating the life out of a vibrant medium," he says.

Soloman also notes that a common element in these prep services is news and gossip that celebrate the celebrity. "The implicit message is 'if you ain't rich and famous, you ain't important,'" he says. "That further defines the radio listener as a commodity."

SW Networks' Susan Soloman takes a different view. She sees the trend as a way her company can help local broadcasters who are under intense pressure to get better and better ratings. SW Networks, she says, is "committing enormous resources to providing services on a business-to-business basis that helps radio stations maintain and increase their ratings."

"With the exception of the on-air staff itself and the actual music cuts from the albums, we provide all the things that make a radio station sound terrific," Soloman says. "We can give a station its sound."

Frank Beacham is a New York City-based writer and producer. His e-mail address is frank@beacham.com. Web site: <http://www.beacham.com>

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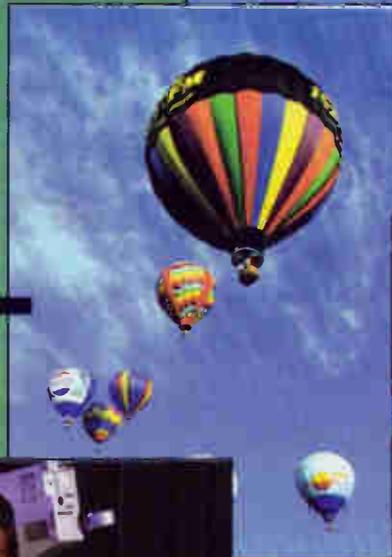
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HUNTSVILLE



WDRM-FM reaches potential listeners during the annual balloon races (above); an excited youngster gets suited up at the U.S. Space Camp (left); Big Spring Park in downtown Huntsville is the site of two major music festivals.



One of Radio's Best-kept Secrets

Economic prosperity is rapidly becoming synonymous with Huntsville, the country's 113th largest radio market.

The entrepreneurial spirit of this North Alabama community has given birth to such well-known companies as SCI Systems and Intergraph. More than 50 Fortune 500 companies, including Boeing, Chrysler and Motorola, have offices in Huntsville.

The Huntsville metropolitan area, consisting of Madison and Limestone counties, has experienced steady increases in both population and employment growth for the past several years. The area's diversified industry has helped to maintain a growing economy despite significant employment and spending cutbacks

in both NASA and the Department of Defense. "This is not a real, true Alabama town because of all the high-tech industry here," says WAHR(FM) General Manager Freida Jordan. This is a market in which nearly 30 percent of all of Bell South's ISDN lines are located and where McDonald's has to pay \$6.25 an hour just to get employees. The unemployment rate in Huntsville is always well under the state of Alabama's rate, as well as the national rates.

Where is Huntsville?

That's the response you get from most people, including major group radio owners, when you ask them about this city. All of Huntsville's stations are locally owned and operated and most hope it stays that way. In fact, in the case of Mack Bramlett at WDRM(FM) and Arnold

by Brian Holmes



Hornbuckle of WAHR, the owners are involved in the stations' day-to-day operations.

Bramlett is 50-percent owner of the market's ratings and revenue leader, Country 102, WDRM. Bramlett also serves as the station's general manager and program director, and his wearing so many big hats hasn't hurt the station one bit. WDRM's Winter '96 Arbitron ratings were an astronomical 24.5 12+, up from a 21.1 in the Fall '95 book.

According to Bramlett, Country 102 has been able to stay in the 20-share range since the Spring '89 book, a range that, according to BIA, added up to \$5.9 million in revenues in 1995 for the station, more than one-third of the market's total revenue dollars. That figure is impressive considering that the station will not accept any beer or bar advertisements.

"The key to WDRM's success has been good, consistent air personalities and strong promotions. I strongly believe in both of those," Bramlett says.

Country 102's morning show consists

of 10-year market veterans Bob and Elaine, with weatherman Jerral Miller, who came to them three years ago from the National Weather Service. Weather is something WDRM has invested in heavily.

Not only is Miller's salary paid by WDRM, but the station also has invested \$200,000 in a Doppler radar system.

Extensive weather reports air at 20 and 50 minutes

past every hour.

"This is a very weather-conscious market because we have so many tornadoes," says Bramlett. "Jerral even has remote capabilities from his home if he needs it."

WDRM currently simulcasts on two 1 kW AM stations in the market, WHOS(AM) and

WBHP(AM), and there are no plans to change that anytime soon.

Fast-paced market

"Huntsville is a young market, the youngest market in the southeast."

says Athens Broadcasting General Manager Bill Dunnivant. The median age of Huntsville residents is 33. Dunnivant adds that it is also a very fast-paced market, referring to the fact that it is continuously rated. In fact, it is one of only six markets ranked over 100 that are rated year-round.

Dunnivant oversees CHR WZYP(FM), country WPZM(FM), news/talk WVNN(AM) and sports/talk WUMP(AM), which, combined, are the second place revenue winners with a take of about \$4 million last year.

WZYP and WVNN have been passed down through Dunnivant's family since



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1958. WZYP touts itself as "Today's Best Music" and is one of the few CHRs in the country that held true to its roots through the so-called demise of CHR in the late '80s and early '90s. That move worked for the station, which has consistently placed slightly under or over double-digit shares throughout the '90s.

"With WZYP, our approach on the air is that of having fun. Our announcers are all upbeat, positive and entertaining," Dunnivant says. WZYP also differs from most CHRs by doing news updates throughout the day, not just in morning drive. Between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m., a 90-second news update airs at 55 minutes past each hour. Now, if that sounds expensive, it's not for Dunnivant. He simply has his news department from WVNN handle the duties.

Athens' other FM is WPZM, a station trying very hard to compete with country giant WDRM. Even though the latest 12+ Arbitron ratings show WPZM dropping from 2.6 to 1.8, the latest AccuRatings show its weekly come in

fifth place with 49,000. WDRM was in first with 128,400. AccuRatings also show WDRM and WZYP neck and neck with a 20.4 and a 17.3, respectively.

Dunnivant says he feels that if WPZM can pull country listeners away from WDRM, then WZYP can lead the pack.



The first step toward that goal was changing WPZM's positioning from "93 Country" to "93.3 FM, The Possum." The Possum's day leads off with "Early & Wilder" in mornings, middays are open, Program Director Tex Carter handles afternoons, Biscuit is on the air at night and the syndicated Blair Gardner runs in overnights. WPZM has recently added consultant Rusty Walker to its team to try to help as well.

A native of Mississippi, Walker knows the area well. He's also the former programmer of WZZK-AM-FM, the No. 1 country station in Birmingham, Ala.

When asked what it will take to beat WDRM, Dunnivant replies, "Just time and money." Is that something he has? "If I didn't, I'd be sellin'." Dunnivant does know how to run a successful country station, and he proves that with his No. 1 WTXT(FM) in Tuscaloosa,

Ala., which has been in the top spot for the last five years.

WVNN, also known as "The Talk Monster," uses mostly syndicated programming, including Barry Farber, G. Gordon Liddy, Rush Limbaugh, Ollie North, Dr. Dean Edell and

Bruce Williams. Local talk in afternoon drive is the duty of David Stone. National ABC news is found at the top

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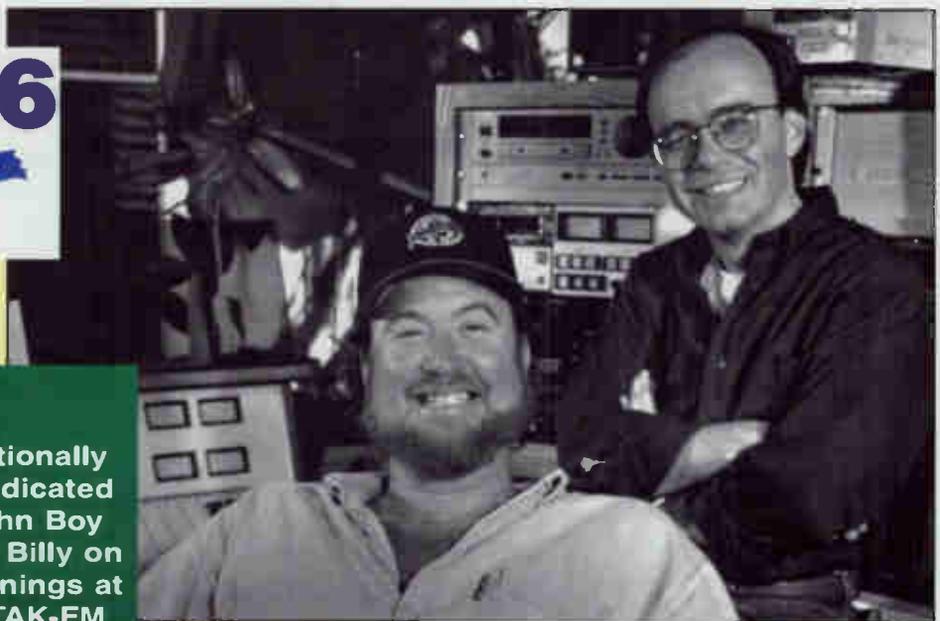
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of every hour with local news at the bottom.

Athens Broadcasting acquired WTUP, "The Ump," in August of last year, but its history goes back even farther than that. When WVNN originally came on the air, it was at 1010 AM, then later moved to 730 AM; later, WVNN moved again to 770 AM and sold 730 AM.

Then in late '95, Athens bought the frequency back and decided on the all-sports format. Dunnivant plans to begin a local morning show very soon, followed by The Fabulous Sports Babe and then Ben & Herb out of Birmingham. Programming from Prime Sports Network and Dr. Laura Schlessinger's show fill the nights.

Nationally syndicated John Boy and Billy on mornings at WTAK-FM

Going after the leaders

Dunnivant isn't the only station trying to topple WDRM from the top spot. Classic Rock WTAK-FM recently added the syndicated "John Boy & Billy" morning show to its lineup. General Manager Larry Crim says he expected

the show to take ratings from WZYP's Ace & T.J.

morning show, but instead it hurt WDRM's Bob & Elaine. The addition of the show propelled WTAK from a 5.2 in Fall '95 to a 7.4 in Winter '96 (12+), good for fourth place. AccuRatings show WTAK moving from 5.2 to 6.3 in the same period.

Crim is also taking on the No. 2 station in the market, adult contemporary WAHR, with his Hot AC stations WWXQ(FM) and WXQW(FM), known as "WXQ," on the air. Crim explains



why the stations are simulcast: "WWXQ is out of Meridianville, Ala., which covers the city of Huntsville, and WXQW is out of Trinity, Ala., which puts us in Athens and Decatur, Ala."

Huntsville's only urban station, WEUP-FM, has also had some problems covering the entire market. WEUP originally was only found at the 5 kW frequency 1600 AM. In early 1994, it added the 2 kW 92.1 FM, but its tower, located in Pulaski, Tenn., is quite a few miles northwest of Huntsville. WEUP General Manager Mike Rosen says that several local 10 W stations are using his station as their programming source, including stations 96.1 FM and 97.7 FM in Huntsville and 95.5 FM and 100.5 FM near Decatur. It's not known whether these stations are operating legally or not.

WEUP-AM-FM calls itself "The Magic of the Tennessee Valley," and as a combo, the stations earn very different ratings depending on the source you use — Arbitron places WEUP-AM-FM at fifth place with a 4.3, and AccuRatings ranks them fourth, with a much higher 6.4 share.

A promotional machine

Huntsville stations are not without their share of promotions. WDRM has five station vehicles that hit the streets as much as possible. Its 35-foot hot-air balloons make appearances at station remotes, according to Bramlett. Country 102 has its own race cars that appear at Huntsville and Nashville, Tenn., race tracks and frequently raises money for causes like Big

continued on page 44 ➔

Huntsville Radio Market Overview

Station	Freq.	Format	1995 Est Rev. in \$ Mil.	Owner	Arbitron 12+ Winter '96
WDRM-FM	102.1	Country	5.9	Mountain Lakes Brdcstng	24.5
WAHR(FM)	99.1	AC	1.6	WAHR Inc.	10.5
WZYP(FM)	104.3	Top 40	2.1	Athens Broadcasting Co.	10.0
WTAK-FM	106.1	Classic Rock	0.65	Griffith Broadcasting Inc.	7.4
WRS(A)FM	96.9	Easy Listening	0.65	NCA Inc.	6.7
WVNN(AM)	770	News/Talk	0.55	Athens Broadcasting Co.	4.2
WEUP(AM)	1600	Urban AC	0.30	H. Batts & V. Caples	2.5
W(L)OR(AM)	1550	Gospel	0.25	M. B. Associates	2.5
WEUP-FM	92.1	Urban AC	0.30	H. Batts & V. Caples	1.8
WPZM(FM)	93.3	Country	0.50	Athens Broadcasting Co.	1.8
WQLT(FM)	107.3	AC	0.65	Big River Brdcstng Corp.	1.8
WNDA(FM)	95.1	ChrsContemp.	0.30	Wells Brdcstng Co. Inc.	1.6
WXQW(FM)	94.1	Hot AC	—	Griffith Broadcasting Inc.	1.6
WWXQ(FM)	92.5	Hot AC	0.25	Griffith Broadcasting Inc.	1.3



Stations are ranked in order of Arbitron Winter 1996 12+ ratings. Information provided by BIA Publications Inc. through its MasterAccess Radio Analyzer Database software.

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WEUP has a "Thundercruiser," which it describes as a hospitality suite, community service and entertainment station on wheels. The Thundercruiser recently made an appearance at the station's annual Black Arts Festival, which this year attracted such national urban acts Monica, Darnell Jones and II D Extreme.

Dunnivant's WZYP could be considered the promotional leader. "We believe that our promotions have to have an entertainment value to them not just for the contestants but also for the people listening," Dunnivant says.

WZYP's giant boom box made 384 appearances last year. The most successful recent promotions for the station have been an adult kickball tournament during which more than 350 people came out to play, raising \$3,000 for a local battered- and abused-women's program, and a

homework hotline. Dunnivant says the hotline was the most fulfilling thing he's done. He hires three teachers to come into the station four nights a week and answer a toll-free number. He says the hotline gets about 60 calls a night and costs about \$4,000 a month.

The Possum's recent \$93,000 cash call also worked well. To win, listeners had to answer their home telephone, "I hit The Possum." Dunnivant says the promotion drew a lot of attention to the station but no one ever won the cash.



Technology

WZYP, WVNN, WPZM, WUMP and WDRM all have

Web sites on the Internet. The WZYP site receives nearly 3,000 hits a week.

"We tie in some of our giveaways to the site. We give away a lot of T-shirts and concert tickets that way," Dunnivant says. "We also require all of our personalities to spend 30 minutes a day answering e-mail."

Besides WDRM's in-depth, in-house

Huntsville Financial Snapshot

Market Rank: 113
Revenue Rank: 100
Number of FMs: 11
Number of AMs: 15

Revenue 1992: \$113 mil.
Revenue 1993: \$134 mil.
Revenue 1994: \$135 mil.
Revenue 1995: \$144 mil.
Revenue 1996: \$153 mil. est.

Revenue Growth

'89-'94: 73%
'95-'99: 63%

Local Revenue: 80%
National Revenue: 20%

1994 Population: 424,000
Per Capita Income: \$17,580
Median Income: \$39,618
Average Household Income: \$46,067

Source:



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weather center, another interesting aspect of the market is WTZT TV Channel 28, a low-power station also owned by Athens Broadcasting. WTZT rigs up a live camera in the WZYP studios during both morning and afternoon drive, and it stays on through the entire shifts so viewers can see what happens in a radio studio. WTZT currently makes it into the homes of about 15,000 cable subscribers.

It's a secret

WDRM's Bramlett is very proud of his station, but is even more proud to be a player in the Huntsville market. "This is a great radio market," he says. "We have good competitors, just normal competition, no mean stuff. It's good people who respect each other."

Athens' Dunnivant agrees. "It's a great place to live and work. There's a tremendous work ethic here, nice climate ... We call it the best-kept secret in America."

Brian Holmes is the evening air personality for oldies WSRZ-FM and OM of all-news WSPB(AM) in Sarasota, Fla. He's also an anchor for Metro Traffic-Tampa and a radio columnist for Music Forum Magazine in Tampa.

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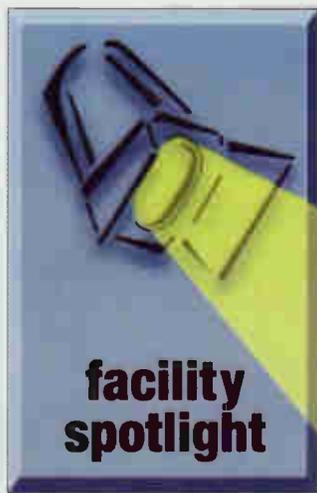
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WKCD(FM) Mystic, Connecticut



Owner: SaltAire Communications Inc.

Executive VP/General Manager: Gary Girard

Operations Manager: Dennis Bouchard

Format: New Adult Contemporary (NAC)

WKCD, a Class A FM licensed to Pawcatuk, Conn., was the brainchild of Gary and Lois Girard. The couple realized several years ago that in this market there existed a programming void between CHR and soft AC. After applying for an allocation and waiting out a lengthy comparative process, they embarked on the development of southern New England's final commercial station.

WKCD debuted with an NAC format late in 1995. It is the only station between New York and Boston with a "Smooth FM" format, combining the resources of SW Networks with live, local programming. CD 107.7, as it is called, serves New London County, Conn., and Washington County, R.I.

Co-owner Gary Girard connected and contracted with Bob Smith and Associates of New Hampshire to build the station. "Our objective was to develop the cleanest-sounding and most unique station in southern New England," Girard says. "Bob understood our desires and recommended we go all-digital — virtually tapeless."

WKCD's on-air sound is discernibly clean. The station uses a Computer Concepts Digital Commercial System (DCS) for satellite

automation and hard-disk commercial storage. The station has two studios, "C" and "D." The main on-air studio is equipped with an Audioarts R-60 board, a Sony MDS-B3 MiniDisc recorder, a Sony PCM 2600 DAT recorder and Technics CD players.

Production is handled with Software Audio Workshop (SAW) for four-track hard disk recording and precise editing. Operation Manager Dennis Bouchard says, "Our SAW software allows us to do sophisticated multitrack production in a totally digital, tapeless environment. Every point in our chain is digital, from SW's satellite signal to our digital STL, a Moseley PCL 6010, which clears natural obstacles that an analog shot simply couldn't. The sonic difference between us and other stations is obvious.

"When we carry SW Networks," Bouchard says, "the station runs itself, thanks to control times from the network that trigger our DCS, automatically loading stopsets and playing them on network command."

WKCD is located in an historic 100-year-old former soap factory building, now with a 12-foot perforated satellite dish on its roof.

Facility Spotlight offers a look at innovative radio facilities. Share your cutting edge with us. Contact Managing Editor Whitney Pinion at 703-998-7600.

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