

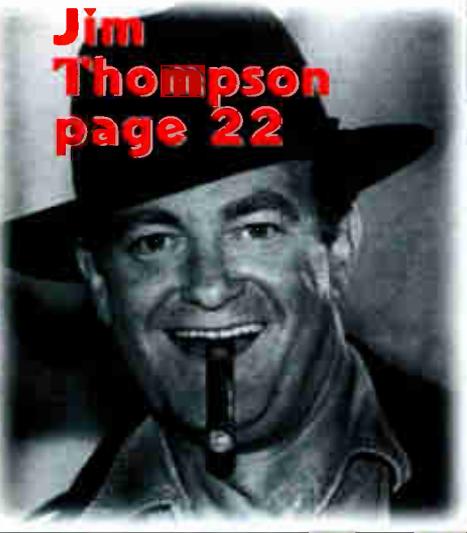
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vol. 4 no. 3  
March 1997

**RADIO WORLD'S MANAGEMENT MAGAZINE**

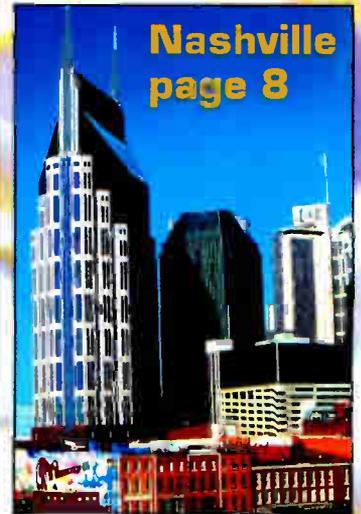
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## Audio Consoles

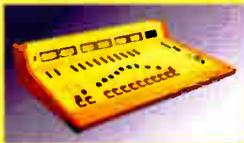
The standout #1 leader in reliable, high performance, digital ready consoles for radio, Arrakis has several console lines to meet your every application. The 1200 series is ideal for compact installations. The modular 12,000 series is available in 8, 18, & 28 channel mainframes. The 22000 Gemini series features optional video monitors and switchers for digital workstation control.

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With over 1,000 studios in the field, Arrakis is #1 in studio furniture sales for radio.

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As illustrated in the Sony Worldwide Networks master control studio on the right (one of seven Arrakis studios in the Manhattan, New York complex), Arrakis can provide complete major market studios with Arrakis consoles, digital workstations, video-audio switchers, furniture, and system wiring.

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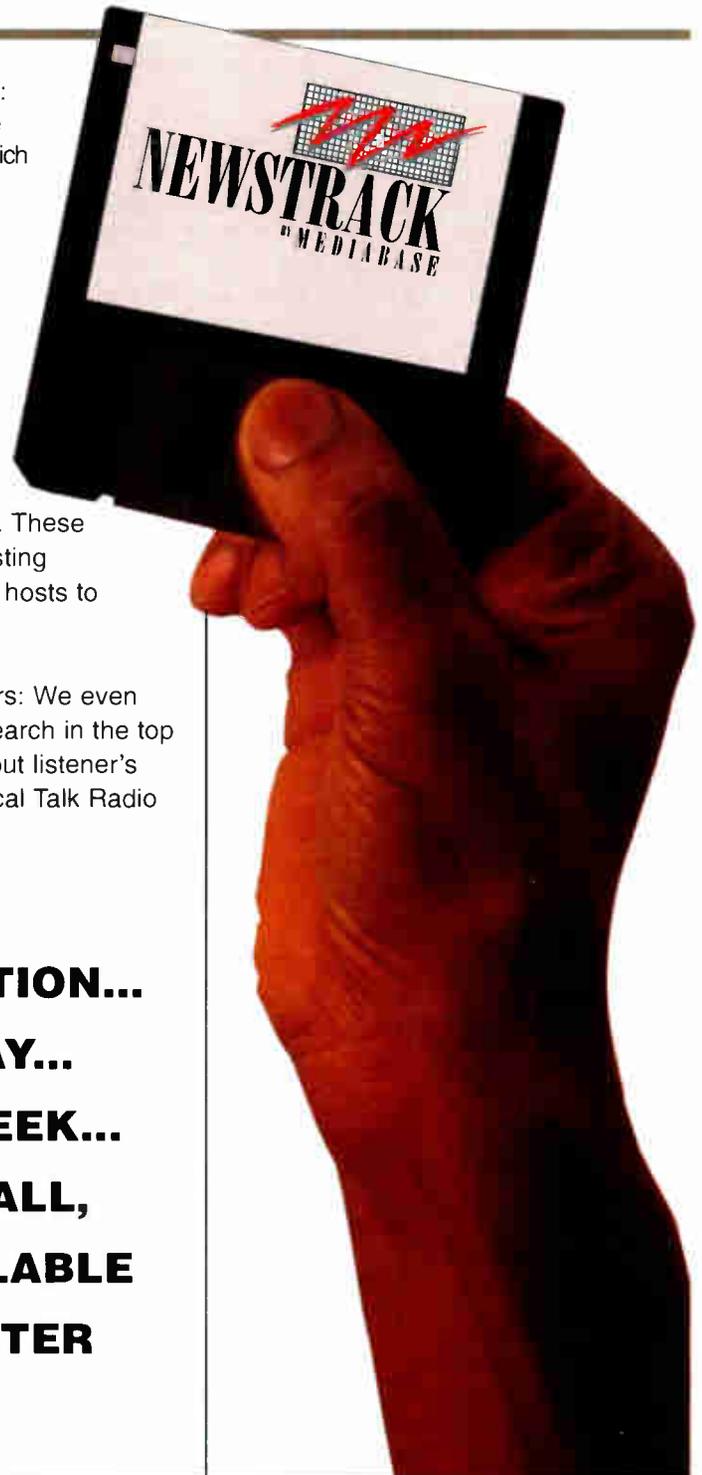
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# Radio Whole Greater Than Sum of Its Parts



I was amazed at the response to the January installment of "Station to Station," when I referred to the Roanoke-Lynchburg radio market. Thanks to everyone who called or dropped me a line. Vince "The Prince" Miller, who was on the air at WXLK(FM) (K92) when I was listening regularly 10 or more years ago, wrote to tell me that soon after our January issue was published, K92 was sold to rival station WSLQ(FM) (Q99).

For those of you unfamiliar with the market, this is a major transaction. I can't imagine the staffs of these two former competitors sitting around a table and working in a cooperative fashion. Yet this scenario is not uncommon today in radio markets of all sizes across the country — one-time competitors become step-siblings united by a common parent.

What makes a cooperative effort so difficult is that for years, radio stations within the same market have been using ratings and other competitive measurements to clobber each other on the air and in sales pitches. Rather than selling radio as a medium to advertisers, radio salespeople have been undercutting other stations in an effort to sell their own. These short-sighted tactics have served to weaken radio as a whole for the sake of a few ad dollars.

The Radio Advertising Bureau wants the industry to break these hurtful habits. At its annual conference in February, President/CEO Gary Fries announced that the RAB would assume the mammoth project of compiling 1,000 radio success stories — tales of radio producing results for its advertisers — within the next year.

But much more needs to be done to repair the damage and set radio on a new course. RAB is taking the lead in rethinking every aspect of the way radio markets and sells itself. The industry should take note and follow the RAB lead. It is always difficult to unlearn old ways of conducting business, harmful as they may be.

It's time to sell radio as a whole rather than as its individual parts. Such a strategy is imperative for the growth, perhaps even the survival, of the industry.

\*\*\*

To say that radio today is a dynamic medium is a gross understatement. Every month we take a risk when we publish our well-known Market Watch features. Between the time we edit the last word of copy and the issue hits the streets, any number of features of a market may have changed, rendering the article at least somewhat outdated.

While putting the finishing touches on his overview of the West Palm Beach market, conscientious writer Doug Hyde called to say that, according to a radio exec he had just spoken with, the story could be obsolete by the time it rolled off the press. Knowing that we couldn't hold the article in anticipation of a major announcement, we published it as an accurate portrayal of West Palm Beach at that moment.

Though the flavor of the market probably will not change dramatically as a result of a transaction, you may notice as you read the article that some of the players' names may have changed. And change is the single constant feature of the radio game these days.

*Whitney*



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Road Show System



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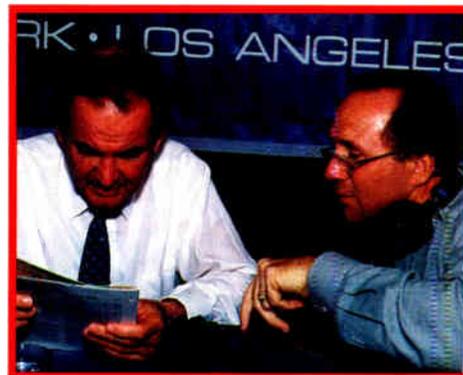
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## double take

"I like radio even more today because of the business that it has become."

— Jim Thompson

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# NASHVILLE

## Radio Thrives in Nashville

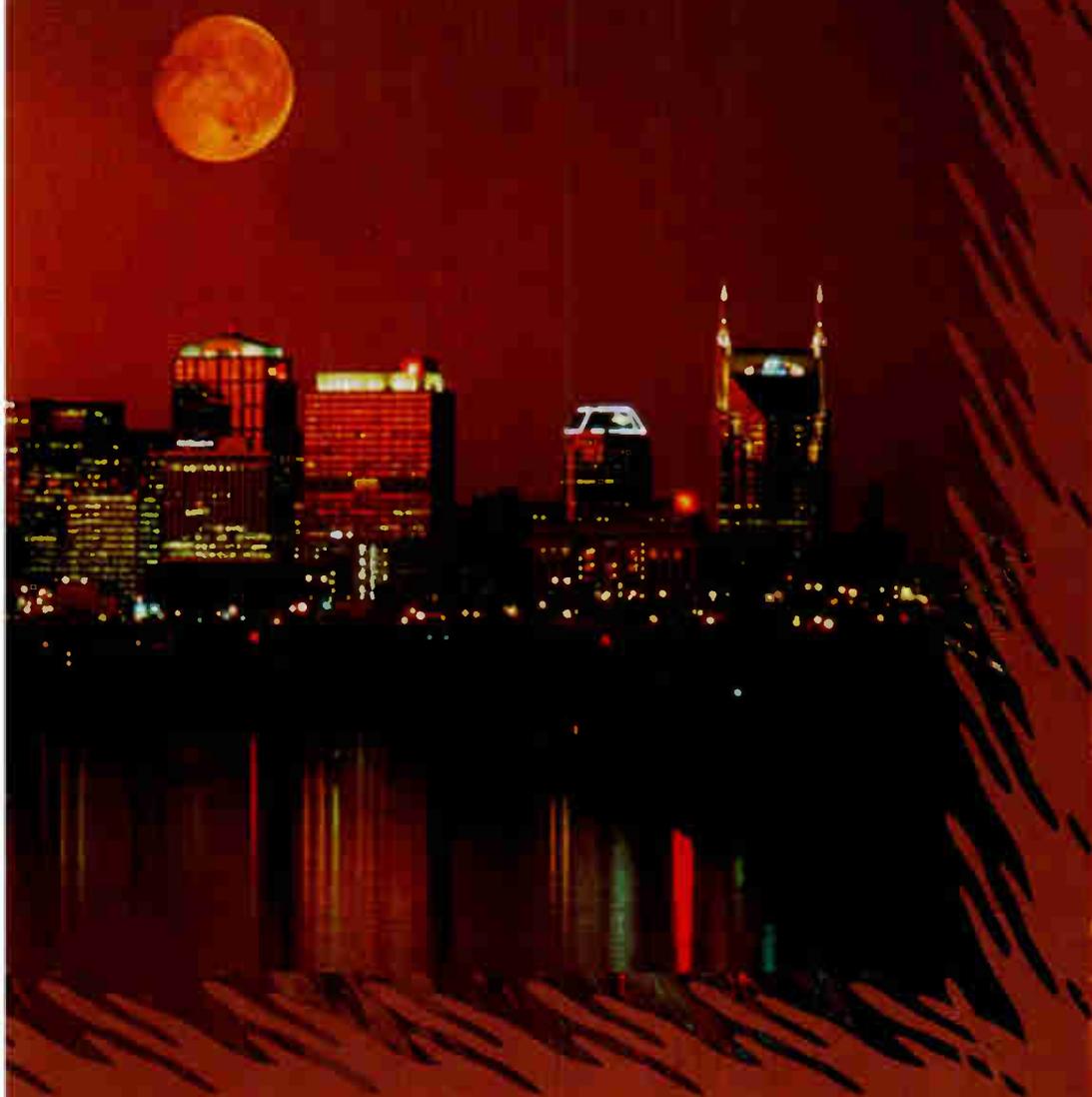
Nashville is a city of glorious contrasts. It is soul-stirring blues, a classical symphony, heartfelt gospel, alternative rock, the sweet sound of bluegrass and a country extravaganza. It is a city of time-honored traditions and cutting-edge innovations. Nashville is the embodiment of many elements, and for this reason, it defies stereotype.



by Bria

# KNOXVILLE

Music City, USA



by John Holmes

# Eliminate Carts for \$7,000

## Scott Studios' Spot Box

At last! A commercial player that *works just like carts*, but with digital audio that *sounds like compact discs*.

It's Scott Studios' new *Spot Box*. It's the *first* hard disk "cart" replacement that jocks *really like!*

It's *easy to use*: You get four Start buttons for four recordings, just like a quadruple deck "cart" player.

The Start button clearly counts down the remaining time of each cut. Every deck shows "bar graph" VU levels.

When a "cart" finishes, the label and buttons turn grey to lock out accidental re-play. It can air again with a touch of the Replay button (at the lower right). If there are more than four "carts" in the set, the "on deck" spot moves from the fifth line (at the right of the time and date) to the grey deck that had played. The Spot Box can also remote start CD players.

The Manual-Auto button (at the right of each label) lets you start each spot manually or have the Spot Box smoothly start the next one itself.

Automatic sequencing can also be turned on or off globally, by categories or shifts.

Pause buttons can stop (and resume) playback of any cut. During a Pause, the Start button can replay that recording from the beginning.

Each deck has a Fade button. It helps if you need to fade something out gracefully with one touch.



Start Button  
Actual Size

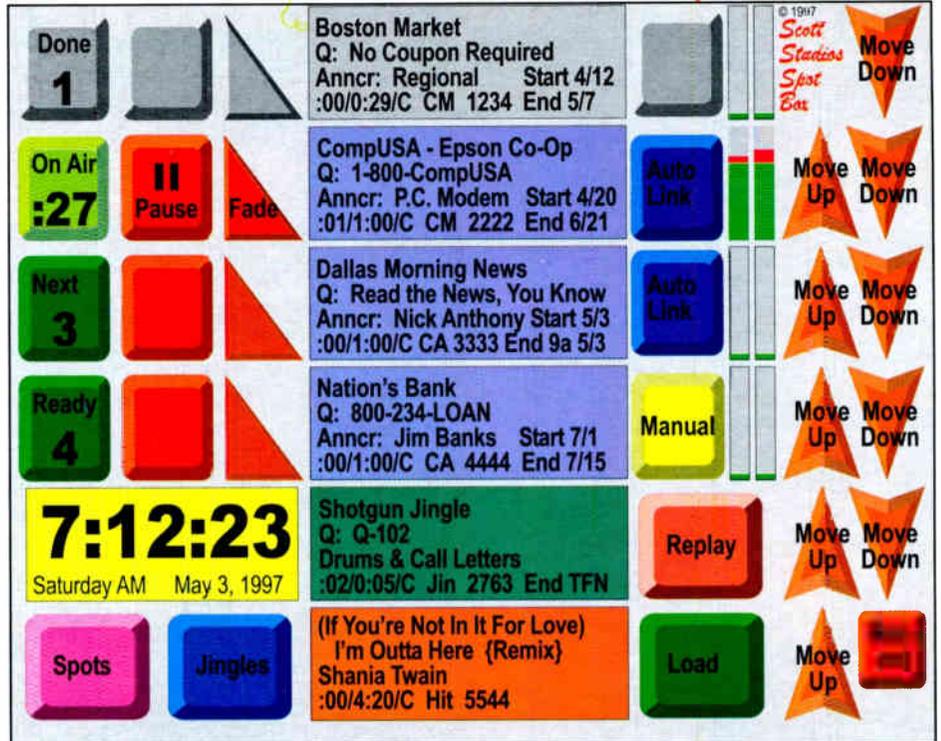
The Spots and Jingles buttons at the lower left take you to a "Wall of Carts" screen that shows *all* of your hundreds of recordings. You can jump immediately to whatever you want by touching the first letter of its name on the large alphabet at the top of that screen. Pick and play it quickly in any "cart" deck.

As an option, we can automatically bring logs into the Spot Box from your traffic computer. Then, after the spot set has finished, the Load button at the lower right automatically brings in the next break.

You can quickly rearrange the order of any recordings with the Up and Down Arrows.

Scott Studios' Spot Box not only *sounds better* than any "carts" you've ever heard, its labels *look better* and are easier to read than any "carts" you've ever seen!

You get four legible lines of useful label information: Names, numbers, out-cues, announcers, intros, lengths,



Here's a reduced size view of Scott Studios' 5"x8 1/4" Spot Box. You get easy access to hundreds of commercials, jingles, sounders, comedy and other recordings. All audio is CD quality digital from hard drives.

endings, copy info, start and end dates and times, schedule times, and anything else you want. Labels are even color coded. When you have several cuts rotating as one number, you see exact lengths. Both the name and out cue match the exact cut that plays. The Spot Box even rotates recorded tags.

If you have several stations in one building, record each spot only once. It's instantly playable in *every* desired studios' Spot Box, without re-dubbing or retyping labels. Cuts can be locked so they only play on designated stations or shifts.

You also get printouts showing *exactly* when each spot plays!

Best of all, Scott Studios' digital audio is *affordable*. A "four-deck" Spot Box player storing 600 minutes in stereo starts at \$6,000. You can record and edit spots or phone calls in the air studio during songs for only \$1,000 more. A production studio recorder-editor is \$5,000, and it can even go on-the-air if needed. 600 additional minutes of stereo storage is only \$250. Larger screens and a variety of backup options are available. At Scott's low prices, you can afford as much storage and redundancy as you want.

Also check out Scott Studios' Hot Box. It plays *any* of 62 "Hot Keys" *instantly* at the touch of a finger. You get 52 sets of 62 clearly labeled Hot Keys: 3,224 digital cuts for only \$5,000.

Scott Studios also offers other digital systems for satellite formats, music on hard drive and voice track automation. Call 800-SCOTT-77 for details, or a no-obligation trial in *your* station.

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**Scott Studios Corp.**  
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# NASHVILLE

The city's best-known moniker is "Music City USA." For countless musicians, Nashville has long been the mecca of creative energy and opportunity needed to spark a career. From country to bluegrass to blues to rock 'n' roll, Music City has had a hand in anointing those talented folks who have become legends.

Radio legends are no stranger to the 44th largest radio market either. Nashville is home to the legendary, long-running Grand Ole Opry, which has broadcast on Gaylord country gold station WSM(AM) since 1925. The Opry's Saturday night time slot is ranked No. 1 both 12+ and 35-64. Surprisingly, visitors to the Opry are shocked to discover it is actually a radio show.

"If you ever go to the Grand Ole Opry, you're treated to the commercials and station breaks and everything else you'd expect on a radio show because that's what it is," says Opry announcer and WSM-AM-FM and WWTN(FM) Operations Manager Kyle Cantrell. "A lot of people are astounded to find that out. They hear about the Grand Ole Opry, and they don't know what it is. They go and they're saying, 'Why are they doing these commercials?' It's a radio show — it always has been. We still have to educate people about that."

WSM-FM (Nashville 95) and WSM(AM) have undergone some pretty extreme line-up changes in an attempt to better their position in their longtime country battle with SFX-owned WSIX-FM and morning legend Gerry House and his House Foundation.

In order to accomplish this, last summer WSM(AM)'s Bill Cody and Crew morning show was moved to WSM-FM. As a result, Cathy Martindale was moved from mornings to middays on WSM-FM followed by Bruce Sherman and Amy Harper teamed together for the drive home. The new Ron and Ritter morning show was then installed on WSM(AM), with Denny Ray moving from nights to overnights, and 25-year station veteran Hairl Hensley sitting in afternoons.

The changes have helped WSM-FM jump from 8.4 to 9.7 12+ in the Fall '96 Arbitrons. WSM(AM) also made a healthy 4.1 to 4.4 gain, while WSIX-FM tumbled 14.8 to 11.9, though maintaining its top spot.

## Country powerhouses

So what is the difference between the two country FM powerhouses? "None essentially," Cantrell says. "In reality, there's a great deal of similarity between the two stations."

WSIX Operations Manager Charlie Quinn disagrees slightly. "Musically, WSM-FM has a reputation for being more traditional and is looked upon by the audience as being more likely to play music older than five or ten years," Quinn says.

"WSIX, to some degree, is looked at as the station that is the birthplace of young country. Ultimately it comes down to

personalities in listeners' minds."

In addition to these three country stations, another station has decided it wants a piece of the pie as well. Last November, the former WMMU(FM) ("Moo 102") was flipped



## Nashville

### Radio Market Overview

Station	Freq.	Format	1996 Est. Rev. in \$ Mil.	Owner	Arbitron 12+ Fall '96
WSIX-FM	97.9	Country	12.2	SFX Broadcasting	11.9
WSM-FM	95.5	Country	6.9	Gaylord Broadcasting Co.	9.7
WQQK(FM)	92.1	Urban	3.0	Phoenix Comm. Corp.	6.4
WRVW(FM)	107.5	Hot AC	2.9	SFX Broadcasting	6.4
WGFX(FM)	104.5	Oldies	3.7	Dick Broadcasting Co. Inc.	6.3
WJXA(FM)	92.9	Scft AC	3.6	South Central Comm. Corp.	5.7
WKDF(FM)	103.3	ACR	5.0	Dick Broadcasting Co. Inc.	4.7
WWTN(FM)	99.7	News/Talk/ Sports	1.45	Gaylord Broadcasting Co.	4.5
WSM(AM)	650	Country	2.5	Gaylord Broadcasting Co.	4.4
WRMX(FM)	96.3	Oldies	2.4	South Central Comm. Corp.	4.2
WLAC-FM	105.9	AC	2.65	Sinclair Communications	3.8
WLAC(AM)	1510	News/Talk/ Sports	2.35	Sinclair Communications	3.3
WJ CZ(FM)	101.1	Urban	1.2	Sinclair Communications	2.9
WRLT-FM	100.1	AAA	1.0	Tuned In Broadcasting	2.2
WAMB(AM)	1160	Nostalgia	—	Great Southern Brcdstng	1.6
WRLG(FM)	94.1	Alternative	0.5	Tuned In Broadcasting	1.3
WMDB(AM)	880	Urban	0.5	Babb Broadcasting Co.	1.2
WZPC(FM)	102.9	Country	0.6	The Cromwell Group Inc.	1.0

— No information available



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

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- WEJT/Decatur, IL – \$115,000 in 4 days
- KHUT/Hutchinson, KS – \$65,000 in 2 days
- KSYZ/Grand Island, NE – \$108,000 in 2 days

**Call 1-800-950-5787 for a CD demo and Sales Kit, then let us SHOW YOU THE MONEY!**

READER SERVICE 129



# NASHVILLE

to WZPC(FM) ("PC103") under the direction of new General Manager Bob Reich and Program Director Brian Krysz. Reich and Krysz's resumes include launching such stations as CHR WEZB(FM) in New Orleans, WBZZ(FM) in Pittsburgh and rock WGTR(FM) in Miami.

They have assembled a lineup for PC103 that can hold its own. The syndicated Bob and Tom show has been inked to do mornings through 1999, former WSIX staffer Dianna Lynn handles middays and market legend and former Y-107 Morning Zoo keeper Coyote McCloud in afternoons.

"I don't know that we'll ever have a chance at beating WSIX," says Reich. "They're a great radio station. Financially, you can make money with a country station, even if you're the number three country station."

"We feel we are somewhat of an alternative to them in the fact that we're just playin' the hits," Krysz says. He adds that PC103 is more conservative when it comes to new music and that it rotates its currents the same way a Top 40 station would.

## What a party

PC103 owner The Cromwell Group also debuted WQZQ(FM) ("The Party 102.5") recently. The Party is a music-intensive, upbeat CHR targeting 18- to 34-year-olds. The only downfalls for PC103 and The Party now are their signals. Although each is a 100 kilowatt station, the sticks are somewhat out of the market. But Reich says the PC103 tower will be raised 200 feet soon and that The Party is not at full power as of yet. Once this project is completed, he says the stations will cover 80 to 85 percent of the market.

The Party may gain from numbers that the new "107.5 The River" may have let go. SFX flipped its CHR WYHY(FM) ("Y-107") to its new moniker last year.

"The flip from Y-107 to The River was brought on by several years of declining numbers," says OM/PD Charlie Quinn. "The station was going through the same thing that Top 40 and CHR formats across the country were going through. There was so much fragmentation of the music, there were no longer really artists that were viable to the format as core. Everything was a new artist with a new

song that was not able to be backed up with second or a third single."

So is The River CHR or Hot AC? "We decided we needed to make an image change," Quinn continues. "We looked at the market and there was really not an opening or an opportunity to make a massive format change, but there most



**Open mic night at The Bluebird Cafe**

certainly was an opportunity to make a marketing change and to position the radio station as more adult." However, the station does report to the trade press as a CHR outlet.

The River has shown strong growth in the market, placing third 12+ with a 6.4, second 18-34 with a 10.7 and fifth 25-54 with a 6.3. Quinn attributes the success of the station mostly to morning driver Mary Glen Lassiter. Lassiter had been handling mornings at WGFX until the station added the syndicated John Boy & Billy show, and she was assigned to news only. Lassiter was unhappy and crossed over to The River.

Dick Broadcasting outlet WGFX(FM) ("Arrow 104.5") has seen consistent success with its classic hits format, most recently garnering an 8.3 25-54 in the Fall '96 good for third in that demo. It also places third 18-34 with a 9.9, with its combo partner, AOR WKDF(FM), following closely with an 8.2 in the same demo.

Another format battle in the market is that between AC outlets WJXA(FM), owned by South Central, and WLAC-FM, a Sinclair station. WJXA is clearly winning the battle right now (6.3 vs. 4.8, 25-54) and has done so for 23 out of the last 27 books, according to General

Manager Steve Edwards.

The two companies have excellent adult combos, as South Central also owns oldies WRMX(FM) ("Oldies 96.3") and Sinclair owns news/talk WLAC(AM) and the new WJZC-FM ("Jazzy 101.1").

Edwards says that South Central is still making improvements on WRMX to better compete in the market. "When we took over Oldies, the station had been languishing in 10th or 11th place with an occasional spike up, then back down to 10," he says. "That told us that there were probably signal problems." The current WRMX 52-kilowatt tower is in

Murfreesboro, 25 miles southeast of town. Edwards says that after three years of negotiating, WRMX will begin broadcasting in April from Channel 30's UHF tower five miles north of Nashville, which should give the station a boost.

Sinclair recently dumped the urban AC format it was programming on its 101.1 FM frequency for jazz, a move that thrilled cross-town urban WQQK(FM) and urban gold WVOL(AM) General Manager Scott Peters.

"As far as the streets were concerned, we had that battle won, I believe, six months after they came on the air," Peters says.

There has been much talk that a new urban FM will soon surface at 106.7 FM and will pick up the syndicated Tom Joyner morning show that 101.1 left without a home.

## A difficult proposition

"It really looks good on paper, but trying to make a dollar in 'Country Music City USA' with an urban station is a difficult proposition," Peter says. Just because our numbers are in third place doesn't mean we're the third highest biller." About his possible new competitor, he says, "I'm looking forward to it. We're a heritage station and we've been superserving our core audience for a long time. They're going to have to empty their pockets to take us on."

WQQK(FM), or "92Q," has had a consistent lineup for the last few years, with OM/PD/MD Tony Wright wakin' up Nashville, Tessa Spencer in middays and Porscha Stevens in afternoons. Sister station, WVOL(AM) has been serving Nashville's African-American community for more than 40 years. The bulk of that time, market vet Clarence Kilcrease has served the community in mornings and currently handles a daily gospel

# NASHVILLE

program for the station. WVOL programs the ABC/SMN Urban Gold format the rest of the day.

## Leaps and bounds

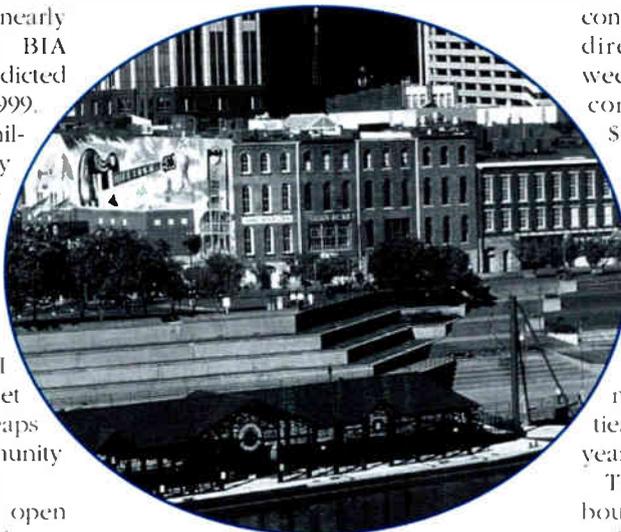
Even though Nashville ranks No. 44 in market size, it ranks No. 33 in revenue. In 1996, Nashville radio took in nearly \$52 million, according to BIA Publications, and that figure is predicted to jump to nearly \$63 million by 1999.

Peters says he thinks the \$11 million jump in two years is partly due to the progressive government in the area. "They're trying to make Nashville grow. They brought new sports and things to the market and the new businesses will follow."

Cantrell of Gaylord agrees. "I think it's the growth of the market in general. We are growing by leaps and bounds here. This is a community on the move."

Peters adds that Nashville is an open and progressive group of merchants who understand his stations' urban audience better than a lot of other cities. "They (merchants) love their country music, but they also love to move merchandise and increase their cash flow, and they use us to do that."

Nashville was named one of the 15 best U.S. cities for work and family by Fortune magazine and also was named by Forbes magazine one of the 25 cities likely to have the county's greatest job growth over the next five years.



**Nashville's Riverfront buildings**

With the various format battles taking place, promotions play a large role in a station's success.

Perhaps the most visible stations in the market are Gaylord's WSM-AM-FM. Gaylord also owns the Opryland Hotel where the WSM(AM) studios may be viewed by passersby. The company also owns the Wild Horse Saloon where WSM-FM broadcasts live every night from its own studio built within the club. In addition, the live Grand Ole Opry is viewed every week by a large audience. All of these elements give the stations visibility in high traffic locations seven days a week.

"We are just a part of this large company (Gaylord)," says Cantrell, "but we are a very important piece of that puzzle because we act as the mouthpiece for the company."

WSIX OM Quinn says the station will continue its benchmark "Birthday Bucks" promotion, an easy-to-win contest that starts with morning man Gerry House simply calling out a birthday. Listeners need only be the first caller, with the correct birthday, to win cash from the station.

WSIX also holds its annual "Parade of Pennies" show every year to benefit local charities. Collin Raye, Brian White

and Pam Tillis are a few of the country artists who have played in this show in the past.

Quinn says The River has been successful as well with its "One Million Dollar Free Money Lottery" because there is no official lottery in the state of Tennessee.

For the past three years, oldies WRMX has given away totally restored classic convertibles. The contest begins with a direct-mail piece, followed by two weeks of television, a song-of-the-day contest in which listeners win both \$100 for calling in and a key that could start one of the cars. GM Edwards says that WRMX also throws a party for all the people who won keys, which is a great way to get 500 P1 listeners in the same room having a good time. He adds that the WRMX \$40,000 Suburban vehicle racked up so many miles doing promotional activities that its warranty was out in the first year.

The musical-intensive WJXA simply bought bookend TV spots on Sunday night only. The spots said, "Tomorrow morning at 7:10 a.m., someone's going to win \$5,000 on Soft Rock 92.9." At 7:10 a.m., listeners were given the song of the day to listen for. Edwards says the morning show numbers doubled immediately.

Although new to the scene, both PC103 and The Party 102.5 are also hitting the streets as much as possible. GM Reich says the stations purchased outdoor boards throughout the city and on every side of the interloop that circles the city, as well as ad space on the sides of buses.

The Party was the station of choice for promotion (along with urban 92Q) for the recent Blackstreet/New Edition concert. And the station has reinstated an old Y-107 tradition — Friday Night Whistle Parties that are live broadcasts during Friday happy hours.

Promotions, air staff and formats aside, Edwards has the ultimate solution to winning in a conservative Nashville. "I think the whole difference in radio stations is people," he says. "We can all buy the same transmitters, the same CD players and play the same music in the same rotation. The difference is attitude and the desire to win."

*Brian Holmes is the PD/afternoon guy of active rock WTBB(FM) "97X" and weekend schmuck for CHIR WILN(FM) "Island 106" in Panama City, Fla. He can be reached at 904-233-6606, or via e-mail at raydiodude@aol.com*

## Nashville Financial Snapshot

Market Rank: 44  
Revenue Rank: 33  
Number of FMs: 21  
Number of AMs: 24

Revenue 1993: \$38.2 mil.  
Revenue 1994: \$43.8 mil.  
Revenue 1995: \$48.4 mil.  
Revenue 1996: \$52.0 mil.  
Revenue 1997: \$55.4 mil. est.

Revenue Growth  
'89-'94: 4.1%  
'95-'99: 7.0%

Local Revenue: 80%  
National Revenue: 20%

1994 Population: 1,082,200  
Per Capita Income: \$17,995  
Median Income: \$38,512  
Average Household  
Income: \$46,960

Source: **PUBLICATIONS**

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WSBT, South Bend, IN

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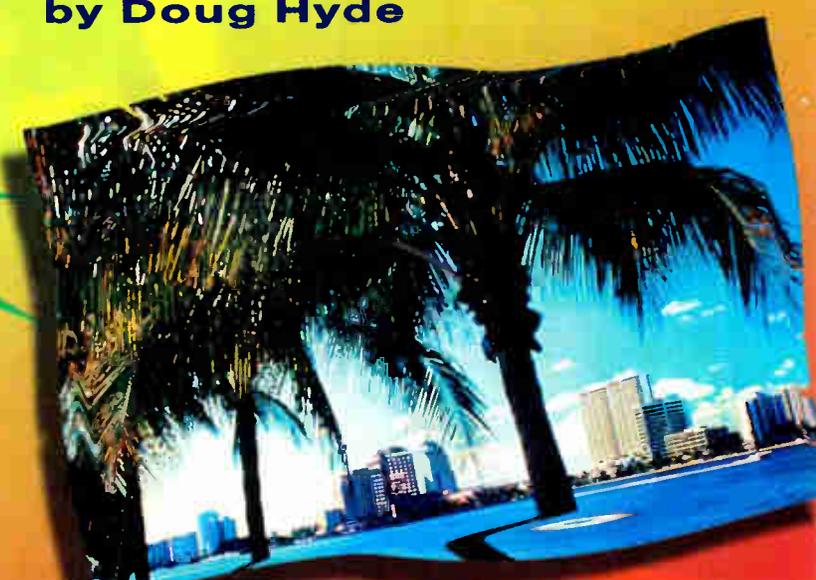
# West Palm Beach

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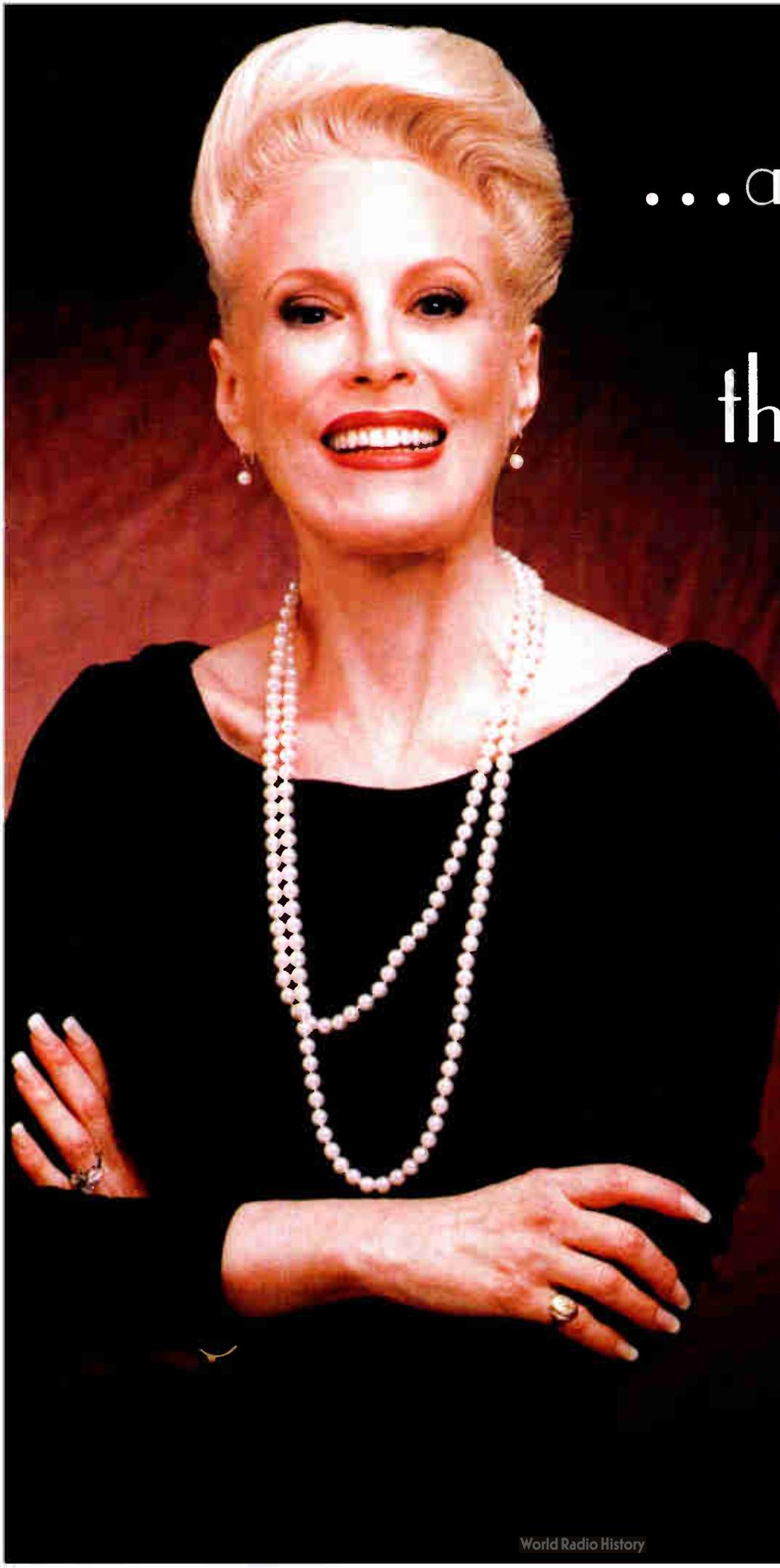


by Doug Hyde



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# West Palm Beach - Boca Raton

While the area received widespread media attention with the 1991 rape trial of William Kennedy Smith, Palm Beach and Martin counties (like the rest of the state) have enjoyed an influx of both young adults and senior citizens, and a booming business environment.

Radio along the Gold Coast of Florida is no exception, as revenues for the medium have more than kept pace with the area's population growth. According to BIA Publications, radio in the country's 47th-largest market is a \$38.5 million industry. That's a 57 percent increase from market revenues of \$24.5 million in 1992, speaking to the area's favorable business climate.

"It's a growth market" says Chet Tart, vice president/general manager of Fairbanks Communications outlets WJNO(AM) and WRMF(FM). "The population is exploding — soon Martin and Palm Beach counties will be bigger than all of Miami. It's a great place to live and a great place to run a business."

Steve Lapa, general manager of Fairbanks stations WCLB-FM and WRLX(FM), adds, "We have very consistent business growth. You don't get the wobbles of other Florida markets." Lapa adds that the transplants that flock to the market view the area as a destination. "Our research shows that most of the people who are in Palm Beach county want to be in Palm Beach County. They view it as a destination, so the population is less transient than that of Miami-Fort Lauderdale."

Tart adds that radio, like the market in general, is in a state of constant progress. "Every time I turn around, there is a new business under construction. It's just a forward-thinking market. Not one thing here is stagnant," Tart says.

Although WRMF has been a fixture in the market and a cash cow for Fairbanks, the heritage mainstream AC at 97.9 FM was knocked from its familiar No. 1 spot 12+ in the Fall '96 Arbitrons. Ironically, WRMF was unseated by its sister FM station, easy listening WRLX(FM), "The Place to Relax."

Rick Peters, president of Peters Communications, a Fort Lauderdale-based consulting firm, comments on the Fairbanks strategy in the West Palm Beach-Boca Raton market: "Five years ago as a jazz station, WRLX couldn't get out of its own way. Then Fairbanks bought it and turned it into an upper-demo station to take the pressure off

WRMF, and it has worked well."

The rise of WRLX from a 7.3 to a 9.0 12+ between the summer and fall books gives credence to the nature of the population that typically migrates to the market. According to Duncan's Radio Market Guide, 39.4 percent of the market's population is over the age of 55.

"It's an older-skewing population," Tart says. "The bulk of the population is 35-plus rather than 25 to 54."

Along with the tourists and retirees typical of most Florida markets, West Palm Beach attracts its fair share of "snowbirds" from the Midwest and Northeast who flock to Florida during the winter months, resulting in a population boom and a sales windfall in the traditionally slower first quarter. "In

January and February we thrive," Tart says. "The first and second quarters are almost like Christmas because the population swells so much."

Locally owned Fairbanks Communications is one of two major group owners in the market, owning WJNO (simulcast in Fort Pierce, Fla., on AM station WJNX), WRMF, WRLX and country station WCLB-FM.

Boston-based American Radio Systems made its first acquisitions in the market in 1994 with country WIRK-FM and news/talk WBZT(AM). Then in 1995 ARS purchased classic rock WKGR(FM) ("Gater") and entered into an LMA with Palm Beach Broadcasting alternative outlet "The Buzz," WPBZ(FM). Finally, in June 1996, ARS purchased the former OmniAmerica stations in the market:

## West Palm Beach Radio Market Overview

Station	Freq.	Format	1996 Est. Rev. in \$ Mil.	Owner	Arbitron 12+ Fall '96
WRLX-FM	92.1	Easy	1.8	Fairbanks Comm. Inc.	9.0
WEAT-FM	104.3	Soft AC	5.0	American Radio Systems	8.3
WRMF(FM)	97.9	AC	9.0	Fairbanks Comm. Inc.	7.4
WIRK-FM	107.9	Country	6.0	American Radio Systems	7.1
WPBZ(FM)	103.1	Modern Rock	1.2	P.B. Radio Brdcstng Inc.	5.4
WJNO(AM)	1230	News/Talk	3.2	Fairbanks Comm. Inc.	4.2
WKGR(FM)	98.7	Classic Rock	3.8	American Radio Systems	4.2
WBZT(AM)	1290	News/Talk/ Sports	1.3	American Radio Systems	3.3
WJBW(FM)	99.5	Variety Hits	0.7	Howard & Susan Goldsmith	3.7
*WPOW-FM	96.5	CHR/Dance	9.8	Beasley Broadcast Group	2.7
*WEDR-FM	99.1	Urban AC	10.0	Evergreen Media Corp.	2.5
*WLVE-FM	93.9	NAC	7.0	Paxson Comm. Corp.	2.3
WCLB-FM	95.5	Country	1.6	Fairbanks Comm. Inc.	2.0
*WMXJ(FM)	102.7	Oldies	8.1	Jefferson-Pilot Comm.	1.9
WOLL(FM)	94.3	Oldies	2.7	American Radio Systems	1.9
*WBGQ-FM	105.9	Classic Rock	4.6	Clear Channel Comm.	1.7
*WIOD(AM)	610	News/Talk/ Sports	8.7	Paxson Comm. Corp.	1.6
WEAT(AM)	850	News/Talk	0.4	American Radio Systems	1.5
WKIS(FM)	99.9	Country	7.5	Beasley Broadcast Group	1.5
WHYI(FM)	100.7	CHR	9.0	Clear Channel Comm.	1.3
*WLYF(FM)	101.5	Soft AC	8.4	Jefferson-Pilot Comm.	1.3
WPLL-FM	103.5	AC	7.0	Paxson Comm. Corp.	1.3
*WQAM(AM)	560	Sports	4.3	Beasley Broadcast Group	1.3
WPOM(AM)	1600	Urban/Gospel	0.4	WPOM Radio Inc.	1.0
WHQT(FM)	105.1	Urban AC	6.8	Cox Enterprises	1.0
WZZR(FM)	92.7	AOR	1.7	Commodore Media Inc.	1.0

\*Miami-Ft. Lauderdale station



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

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## West Palm Beach - Boca Raton

former easy listening-turned-soft AC WEAT-FM (now called "Sunny 104.3"), all-news sister WEAT(AM) and oldies outlet WOLL(FM), "Beach 94.3."

The six ARS properties take the largest share of the West Palm Beach revenue pie, garnering \$19.2 million — nearly 50 percent of the total revenue dollars, according to BIA. The four Fairbanks stations are not far behind, with a total of \$18.1 million, or 41.9 percent of the revenue in the market.

Independently owned stations like the big band "Jukebox" WJBW(FM), WDBF(AM), urban/gospel WPOM(AM) and business news WSBR(AM) round out the pack.

While ARS and Fairbanks are competitive as groups for advertising dollars in the market, Fairbanks property WRMF is the clear individual winner in the revenue race, with 1996 station revenues of \$9 million, or 23.4 percent of all market dollars. Following WRMF's commanding lead are the top three ARS properties: WIRK with \$6 million, WEAT-FM with \$5 million, and WKGR with \$3.8 million. These three stations combined, in addition to \$2.7 million from oldies WOLL, secure 45.5 percent of revenue in the market. Ratings leader WRLX is not to be forgotten here — it secured \$1.8 million in 1996 for 4.7 percent of total revenues.

While the financial race in the market is competitive between the two major radio groups, the contest for listeners is even more heated, with several ARS stations in direct format competition with Fairbanks-owned outlets.

The most competitive of these contests is the race for the lucrative AC mar-

ket. WRMF and WEAT-FM have battled near the top of the market for several years. Positioning itself as "Continuous Soft Hits," WEAT-FM enjoyed a 7.2 to 8.3 surge 12+ in the Fall '96 book, taking it to second place in the market, while WRMF held steady at a 7.4 with its more current-based and up-tempo approach.



**The annual SunFest draws huge crowds to the beaches.**

On the AM dial, traditional news/talk breadwinner WJNO is challenged by ARS-owned WBZT, which carries nationally syndicated personalities such as Don Imus and Rush Limbaugh, as well as coverage of NBA team the Miami Heat. While WBZT still trails the more locally-oriented programming on WJNO, WBZT is making some inroads. WJNO dropped from a 4.4 to a 4.2 12+ in the Fall '96 Arbitrons, while WBZT rose from a 2.4 to a 3.3.

Country radio is the source of yet another clash between ARS and Fairbanks, as ARS-owned WIRK, formerly the lone ranger in the West Palm Beach country music scene, was challenged by Fort Pierce-licensed

WOVV(FM). WOVM changed its calls to WCLB-FM and flipped from dance CHR-formatted "Star 95.5" to "Country 95.5," hoping to tap WIRK's 8.1 share in the Fall 1995 book. While WIRK did erode to a 5.5 in the Summer '96 book, the station utilized a hot country approach and bounced back to a 7.1 in Fall '96, while WCLB, now owned by Fairbanks, slipped from a 3.0 to a 2.0 during the same period.

WCLB has recently utilized an unlikely product to woo the market's country audience, with the September addition of the "King of All Media," Howard Stern, in mornings. Lapa says that the move is part of a new persona for WCLB. "The concept was to reposition the station and its perception in the minds of listeners and advertisers. We are up against a heritage country station, and our strategy was to develop a different and better way of representing the lifestyles of people who enjoy country music. Our theme is 'Outlaw Country,' with America's biggest outlaw, Howard Stern," Lapa says.

Peters calls the WCLB strategy "definitely out-of-the-box thinking," and it appears to be working with younger demos. "The results have been awesome," Lapa says.

While ARS competes with Fairbanks in news/talk, country and AC, ARS has a monopoly in the lucrative AOR market through its ownership of classic rock WKGR(FM), which prominently features guitar-driven cuts from artists such as Lynyrd Skynyrd and ZZ Top. And, through its LMA with WPBZ, which prominently features modern rock acts such as Soundgarden, Pearl Jam and Stone Temple Pilots, ARS caters to the

continued on page 37 ➤

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Circle 5 On Reader Service Card

# Jim Thompson

by Lucia Cobo

The "wonder kids" of radio have been making headlines lately in magazines as diverse as Time, Forbes and Inc. The venerable Wall Street Journal is following radio's executives as if they haven't been around for 77 years.

It's an enviable position for radio — one it reached through the efforts of a group of business-savvy operators who spent the last decade steering the pioneer medium toward its new shape.

Among those radio entrepreneurs is a man who currently doesn't even own a radio station. As co-CEO of Craven-Thompson Communications, he "plans to own again at some time in the future."

With co-CEO and Liberty Broadcasting Partner, Mike Craven, he has "spent a lot of time brainstorming on where we should go as partners. And there are a precious three or four directions," he says.

James Thompson is known for being in the thick of the action. As chairman of this year's RAB Marketing &



W and Legacy/Metropolitan Broadcasting.

At its helm, Thompson would instigate action and excitement for radio. He persuaded Group W to plunk down \$1 million over a period of 10 years to reward excellence in radio creative: The Radio Mercury Awards.

The industry reaction was phenomenal, and the RAB

The new structure is healthy for the business because it forced people to understand that radio is a business. A very big business. Radio is not a hobby.

Leadership Conference, he and his team oversaw the most successful RAB MLC ever. But don't look for a reprieve. "It is time to double down," says Thompson. "We have momentum and when you are doing well, that is the time for everyone to re-buck up again — this is when we double our efforts because we are in a great position of strength."

Although Thompson's career has as much to do with television as it does radio, his passion for radio dates back to 1973, when he and Bill Selwood formed Sel-Thom Communications, and bought WMVB(AM)-WREY(FM) in Vineland, N.J.

The appeal: the action. Prior to that he worked for Westinghouse at KYW-TV Philadelphia (his hometown). In 1982, personal reasons convinced Thompson to leave Sel-Thom and rejoin KYW-TV as national sales manager. In 1984 he was named vice president and general manager.

Radio would beckon again.

In 1989, Group W tapped him to take charge of what would then become the largest independently owned radio group in the country: the recently merged Group

and every major radio group put money on the table, turning into a truly cooperative (and ongoing) success.

"I love this business ... in radio you can make change tomorrow," he says. "And I like radio even more today because of the business that it has become."

The new patina of professionalism, believes Thompson, means the sky is the limit for radio.

"You now have business people who happen to be in radio; good operators who understand this is a business." That will only enhance the opportunity for radio.

"We now have a true mission in the industry, thanks in large part to RAB," he says.

And how does an entrepreneur get back into a leaner, bigger, more consolidated radio arena? "We will get back into it," says Thompson. "It won't be the same way we were into it before, but what we do will make sense for us in this price environment."

"The new structure is healthy for the business because it forced people to understand that radio is a business. A very big business. Radio is not a hobby. And it will get bigger."

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# Internet Resources: A Guide to Cyberspace

**A**fter your station has made a commitment to building a site on the World Wide Web, the inevitable question is, "What's next?"

The answer lies among the wide variety of cyber-resources that can help publicize your station's site and increase its presence on the Internet (and help you in the day-to-day business your station conducts). Simply erecting a Web site is not enough; if you build one, listeners won't necessarily come. Right from the start, you've got to keep up on the latest trends and technologies so you can stay ahead of your competition and insure that listeners will come — and come back often.

## Staying on top

One way to stay on top is to do a bit of cyber-networking every once in awhile. For such an exercise, you can point your browser to the MIT List of Radio Stations on the Internet (<http://wmbt.mit.edu/stations/list.htm>) and Gebbie Press's "Blue Ribbon" List of USA Radio Stations on the Web (<http://www.gebbieinc.com/radiintro.htm>).

Both of these resources are comprehensive and helpful; from either, you can link to station sites around the country and see for yourself what works and what doesn't work.

As soon as your site is up-and-running, you'll want to make sure that a link to it is included on lists such as MIT's and Gebbie Press's. And, if your station is broadcasting on the Net, you'll want to be listed on sites that offer links to cyber-broadcasters, like MIT's Timecast: The RealAudio Guide (<http://www.timecast.com>), Yahoo! (<http://www.yahoo.com>), On the Air (<http://www.ontheair.com>) and AudioNet (<http://www.audionet.com>). Such sites are becoming more important as jumping-off points for prospective listeners. They act as "advertising" for a station's cyber-signal.

If your station is broadcasting on the Net, you'll want to be a part of the

by Alan Haber



Illustration by Vicky Baron

spectacular-looking and most useful BRS Radio Consultants' Webcasters Directory (<http://www.brsradio.com/webcasters>). Here, links to Net broadcasters are listed by format (you can also scroll through alphabetically-arranged lists of call letters). Links to international, network and Internet-only webcasters are also provided.

Keeping up on the latest information will help your site to continue shining brightly among the cyber-stars. For helpful know-how, InterVox Communications' Broadcast Reference Desk (<http://www.intervox.com/desk.htm>) can't be beat — it offers a wide array of information on topics of concern to cyber-minded broadcasters, including webcasting and telecommunications legislation. You'll also find FCC information, links to broadcasting-related industry associations and a list of Internet broadcasting "firsts."

When sales and marketing are the names of the game, the Radio Advertising Bureau's RadioLink site (<http://www.rab.com>) is a valuable, one-stop source. RadioLink, which has more than 1,000 commercials in RealAudio on hand, offers enough information to help any salesperson put together a dynamite sales presentation, with or without the Net in mind.

There are all kinds of information, of course, including the variety

referred to as "industry buzz." When you want to know what's happening in the radio industry, you can get the scoop from the authoritative sources at the National Association of Broadcasters (<http://www.nab.org>) and Federal Communications Commission (<http://www.fcc.gov>).

NAB's cyber-home contains information on the association's various radio-oriented activities, including the monthly Swap \$hop small-market newsletter. There is also information on NAB's broadcasting conventions. The FCC's site is the place to go to read the informational Daily Digest and, in general, find out what's happening that is of interest to broadcasters. It is also the place to link to live and recorded broadcasts of FCC events.

## Appetite for knowledge

If you're looking for information, you can find all you need and more within the various broadcasting-oriented newsgroups and mailing lists. For up-to-the-minute industry give-and-take newsgroup-style, spend some time at [rec.radio.broadcasting](http://rec.radio.broadcasting) (accessible through your Web browser), where all manner of broadcasting-related topicality is covered.

If you prefer to have broadcasting-type messages sent to you via e-mail, then mailing lists should satisfy your appetite for knowledge. The Webcasting mailing list is one of the new kids on the cyber-block, covering new technologies and the related activities of broadcasters, datacasters, marketers and advertisers.

The Webcasting mailing list is a worthy resource, especially if your station's goal is to create a buzz on the Net. To get on board, simply send an e-mail to [majordomo@broadcast.net](mailto:majordomo@broadcast.net). Leave the subject line blank and put "Subscribe webcasting," minus the quotation marks, in the body of your message.

The Internet can also be a source for the kind of information that helps your station find the perfect person to take

INTERNET continued on page 36 ➤

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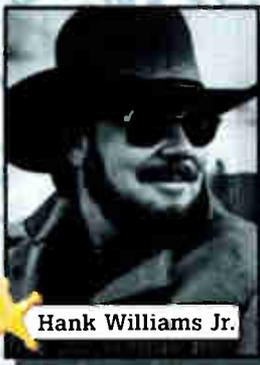


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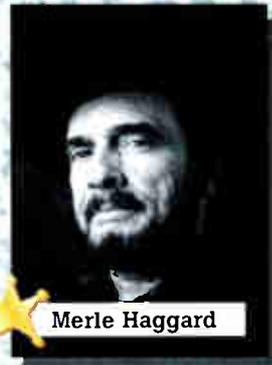
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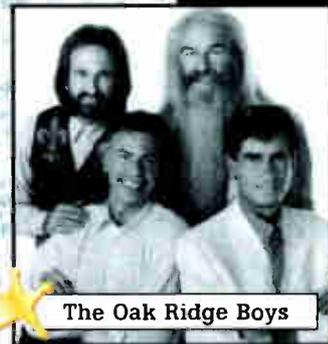
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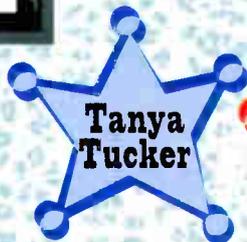


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by Vincent M. Ditingo

# R einventing Radio through Creative Technology

Are you a forward thinker trying to establish a long-term strategic marketing plan for your newly-acquired group of stations? If so, then the blueprint for staying ahead of radio's economic curve during the restructuring of the industry should center on steadily building and creatively using new technology, including various digital systems.

Aside from maximizing the inherent selling strengths that come from operating commonly-owned or "superduopoly" stations within a particular market, having an innovative, technology-based marketing strategy is the only way radio owners and managers will remain competitive well into the next century.

From a strict operational standpoint, digitizing all internal processes of a station will improve greatly the quality of service to both listeners and advertisers. The end result will be lasting loyalty among these key constituents.

As more and more local radio minigroups discover that they can digitally integrate virtually every sales and programming function of a station, including those of multiple stations in the same market, the economic performance for radio owners will significantly improve over time.

Remember, thinking in terms of creative technology is about being effective in day-to-day activities. It comes down to having a highly-organized plan in which your capital outlay for information and digital technology allows you to create new operating efficiencies. This will translate into your competitive advantage over other radio outlets as well as other local media.

For instance, today more than 5,000 stations in the United States and Canada can receive digital, CD-quality commercial spots, copy and accompanying instructions from their respective agencies or designated production houses via ISDN receiver technology implemented by DG Systems of San Francisco.

The same DG Systems receiver technology was adopted within the last 18 months to digitally transmit new album cuts or just-released singles from record labels to music stations, as well as live concert performances. The latter was the case on the morning of January 24th when, for the first time, subscribing DG Systems stations received a digitally-recorded live performance. It was Tori Amos performing her single "Silent All These Years," which was performed at the RAINN Benefit concert at Madison Square Garden in New York the previous night.

Meanwhile, major information technology software companies for radio are currently upgrading services. One such company, Radio Computing Services (RCS) of Scarsdale, N.Y., is modifying Master Control NT, its digitally-integrated automation system for all studio operations, making it compatible with Windows 95 technology.

The system, which is customized to fit a station's needs, now has a new standardized log feature in which log

changes appear on all station computers simultaneously. It also features voice tracking, satellite integration, background recording (automatically recording an incoming program for later editing), one-step switching between live-assist and satellite mode and Web access, among other tasks.

Establishing a long-range marketing strategy based upon information technology also means creatively engaging the listener "interactively," observes Scott Randall, president of Media Designs, a New York City-based multimedia/interac-

tive marketing company.

For radio stations with Web sites, and for those still pondering the creation of a site, Randall stresses that these sites should offer users "plenty of functionality." According to Randall, this would include a "search engine" feature. For example, more music station Web sites should be linked to a database for searching the title of new songs or artists when requested by the user. It is important to note that some station sites

do offer more functions than others. "Design of a Web site is important, but good, clever interactive devices will produce repeat users," Randall says.

Randall also warns stations to take a second look at Web site advertising ventures that induce the user to hyperlink from the station's site to the advertiser's site. The goal, notes Randall, is to create a Web site that gives users a reason to stay.

Radio's participation in PC technology can also be extended to CD-ROMs and/or floppy disks. Randall sees a new promotional/marketing avenue in customized CD-ROM games for radio stations that can involve, among other things, a station's morning team. Here the CDs can be sponsored by a major advertiser and offered to consumers by participating vendors. The promotion, which heightens the visibility and brand image of both station and advertiser, would be targeted for the PC user who is not an active player on the Internet.

## Generating new business leads

On the more conventional selling side, information technology is poised to play a key role in the recently formed Marketing Information Center. This center is part of the marketing strategy for Nationwide Communications of Columbus, Ohio, which, along with Creative Resources of Broken Arrow, Okla., and the Center for Sales Strategy in Tampa, Fla., formed the venture. Paul Talbot, former general manager for Nationwide's KZZP-FM, Phoenix, heads the project.

Gerry Tabio, president of Creative Resources, says the center will help facilitate the exchange of sales ideas, information and leads among all Nationwide stations. Through the resources of the center, more sales and marketing opportunities would be easily identified.

While still in the planning stages at press time, Tabio notes that the center will likely incorporate new database technology into its design.

*Vincent M. Ditingo is a business writer, media consultant and educator as well as president of Ditingo Media Enterprises, a New York City-based creative communications company.*

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# CRS: Annual Roundup

**T**ime to shine up the cowboy boots and pull out the Wranglers: This month, March 5-8, the 28th Annual Country Radio Seminar convenes at the Opryland Hotel in Nashville. CRS, with its focus on the number one radio format in the nation, may be the friendliest, liveliest gathering in radio. For four days the arteries of the Opryland pulse with camaraderie during this combination family reunion/high-energy concert.

The theme of CRS-28 is "Winning Through Learning: How to Keep Country Strong." How can country maintain its foothold as the largest, most pervasive radio format? How can radio stations and record labels work more cooperatively? Once again, the CRS brings together those in both the radio and record industries to answer these perennial questions.

CRS gets underway the evening of Wednesday, March 5, when the stars come out for the Super Faces Dinner and Performance, featuring Patty Loveless and Bryan White. Hospitality suites, many of which offer intimate jam sessions, open Wednesday night.

As its agenda testifies, this seminar is designed to accommodate all levels of radio station personnel, from general managers and programmers to salespeople and promotion directors.

No radio station, regardless of format, can escape the forces that are transforming the industry. In a general session called "Radio Vision," radio group heads share their view of the future of the business from their hands-on experience. On a similar note, a four-member panel offers concrete ideas for coping with post-Telecom radio in the session "Growth Management Training for a New Telecom World."

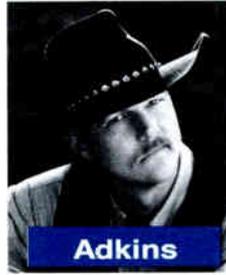
What is the lifestyle of the typical country listener today? During "The State of Country: Trend Report," researchers, country consultants and programmers examine trends in country radio listeners' lifestyles and their media-usage habits. During the "Industry Issues Forum," attendees have the chance to ask questions and talk to a panel of industry experts in a casual, town hall-type meeting. School's in session at "CRS-U: Country Radio Seminar University," a two-day, intensive course of programming basics for both the novice programmer and the seasoned veteran.

What does the future look like? Find out during the Friday morning keynote "The Future of Radio and the Country Music Industries," when author and management consultant Oren Harari shares his insights. In "The Future of Country Music," moderator Ray Massie joins such panelists as Tony Brown of MCA Records to discuss what lies ahead for both the industry and its professionals.

WCRS Live! hits the seminar again this year, as host Charlie Monk and songwriters/performers Matraca Berg, Clint Black, Bobby Braddock and Jim Weatherly explain the creative process from the artist's perspective.

Everyone gets dressed up Saturday evening for the legendary New Faces Banquet and Show, as rising artists get their chance to dazzle representatives of both the radio and record industries. Charlie Monk hosts as Trace Adkins, James Bonamy, Paul Brandt, Deana Carter, Deryl Dodd, David Kersh, Mila Mason, Jo Dee Messina, LeAnn Rimes and Kevin Sharp strut their stuff.

For more details, or for last-minute registration information, contact the CRB office at 615-327-4487, or fax: 615-329-4492. For publicity information, contact Jeff Walker or Angie Watson at AristoMedia at 615-269-7071, or fax: 615-269-0131.



Adkins



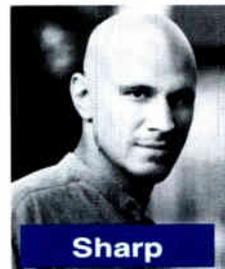
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## CRS Exhibitors

At press time, the following companies were confirmed as exhibitors at CRS-28.

- \$2.95 Guys
- 615 Music
- A-Ware Software Inc.
- ALSAC/St. Jude's Children's Research
- Anderson Merchandisers
- Bluegrass Radio Network
- Bona Fide Country Newspapers
- Branson Music Network
- Broadcast Electronics
- Burbank's Creations
- Capitol Management
- Carter Davis Creative Services
- CDA Group
- Communication Graphics Inc.
- Computer Concepts Corp.
- Country Music Association
- Cutting Edge Creations
- Dateline Marketing International (DMI)
- Direct Marketing Results (DMR)
- Doc Holliday's Hit Factory
- Entertainment Plus
- Fidelipac Corp.
- FirstCom Music
- Graw Baby Records
- Harris Corp.
- Higgins Music Group
- Jones Satellite Networks
- Ken Kittinger Awards
- McClain Enterprises
- MJI Broadcasting
- Montana Mountain Memories
- Music Awareness Promotions (MAP)
- NASCAR Country
- OMC Fishing Boat Group
- PB Unlimited
- PowerGold Music Scheduling Software
- Radio Computing Services Inc.
- Radio Concepts USA
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## High Profile

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Reagan  
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# Michael Reagan

**D**uring his eight years in the White House, Ronald Reagan knew how to get his point across. He perfected a gift of gab while working in Hollywood, starring in some 50 movies from the 1930s through 1950s.

When Reagan's two-term presidency came to an end in 1989, the Great Communicator largely retired from public life, leaving Americans hungry for his wit and wisdom.

Today, a few miles from the film studio where Reagan's acting career began, his son Michael sits at the microphone in a radio studio, hosting a talk show that attracts nearly 2 million listeners each week.

On a recent show, former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger talked about how long it took to turn out tanks instead of cars at the River Rouge automobile plant in Detroit during World War II.

"We were lucky. We have had time before, but I don't know that we'd have any such luck again," Weinberger said.

"With our luck," Reagan quipped to the listeners, "they'd put air bags in those tanks and that's what would kill the soldiers."

It's not easy to make a military man laugh, but Reagan did. Not only did Michael Reagan inherit his father's famous name, but it seems that he is also pretty good with the quick comeback.

"I quarterbacked my high school football team to a state championship in 1963 and on my helmet was the word 'Mouth,'" he says. "My nickname was Mouth Reagan."

Fast talking came in handy when Reagan, who once held five world records in boat racing, entered the boat sales business. That sales experience is critical to his success in talk radio.

"When you're doing talk, you're selling a product — whatever it is that you're putting on the air to discuss," Reagan says. "I think what really launched me was when I started the

national show and decided to talk about the things that I knew about, instead of letting program directors try and put me into an area that maybe I wasn't comfortable with."

### In the beginning

Reagan, who has just signed a new five-year contract for syndication with Premiere Radio Networks, began his talk show career in 1983. In a case of being in the right place at the right time, Reagan stopped by KABC(AM) in Los Angeles, where his wife was meeting a friend and was asked if he'd like to work on the air. His first assignment was as guest host for Michael Jackson — not the gloved one, but the debonair Englishman. Reagan subsequently landed his own Sunday show.

"The key was, I kept all of my tapes from those shows," recalls Reagan. "In 1988 when I was on tour promoting my first book — 'On the Outside Looking In' — I sent tapes to some of the stations I was going to be interviewed on. One of them happened to be KSDO(AM) in San Diego.

"I got a call from the program director, Jack Merker, who said, 'We're going to send you \$2,000 because we want first option to negotiate with you.'"

According to Merker, the word around town was that rival station KFMB(AM) also wanted Reagan. KSDO offered Reagan the money so they could have dibs on him. Reagan, who confides that he needed the cash, gladly took it and went on the air as a guest host in January 1989. He was then asked to anchor the morning news — a switch he was not prepared for.

"I had never done a news show in my life," he says. "Read the news? I thought they were nuts. I was told that I'd take to it like a duck to water, but I felt more like a drowning pigeon." Merker remembers it as a "dreadful" experience.

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I basically forced them to give me a weekend (talk) show because I was so terrible on the news.

"I basically forced them to give me a weekend (talk) show because I was so terrible on the news," Reagan says.

In January 1990 Reagan was given a daytime slot and all went well — until Rush Limbaugh became available in San Diego and a new program director decided to go with Limbaugh's national show.

"I was fired in February 1992," Reagan explains. "While in negotiations for a new contract with KSDO they said, 'Mike, instead of a three-year contract, this is Tuesday. On Thursday, Rush Limbaugh is going on the air. You've got 48 hours to pack your bags and get out of town.'

"I was living — as I still do — in Los Angeles," Reagan says. "The hard part was driving home and telling my wife, 'Honey, guess what? You were right. Radio isn't that good.'"

Reagan could have gone back to selling boats, or perhaps even entered politics. But he felt that his show should remain on the air and ultimately stuck with radio.

"I didn't get fired because the show was bad," he says. "I got fired because the station picked up Limbaugh. So I decided to do unto others before they could do it to me again."

Reagan signed on with the American Entertainment Network (AEN), which he describes as "a little company that had no money, but a lot of moxie."

He continued to do the show in San Diego, from a studio in the basement of a building under construction.

"We were surrounded by steel girders and wires hanging out of the ceiling," remembers Reagan. "There were mattresses — or something — around the metal desk where I sat and did the show. There was no heating, no air conditioning, no nothing.

"I would laugh about it, knowing that people thought I was sitting in some palatial building."



This incarnation of Reagan's show started with five stations. Four of them tape-delayed him and one ran the show live. But that affiliate preempted Reagan on Monday nights, which meant there were no listeners as he recorded the show.

"I was driving 200 miles round-trip to do three hours with nobody to talk to," Reagan says. He finally managed to get calls, thanks to quick-thinking American Entertainment staff members who started phoning in from the next room.

"One of them would get on the phone and say, 'Hi, this is Sam from Houston. How ya doin?'" Reagan says with a thick Southern accent.

"So I'd talk to Sam from Houston, who really was just four or five feet away from me. Then Henrietta from Atlanta would call in. We really faked the phone calls until we finally got another station to carry the show live."

Reagan, who insists that he has no plans to seek political office, says he wouldn't be where he is today without AEN, but "finally outgrew them."

His next stop was Major Talk Networks, before finally settling in at Premiere.

### Congressional Watchdog

"The Michael Reagan Talk Show" is now carried on nearly 150 stations, with national ad space routinely sold out, according to Premiere. The show's unique focus — concentrating on the U.S. Congress, proposed legislation and the issues facing America — is praised by affiliates.

"Michael's obsession with Congress and causing his listeners to influence Congress has tremendous appeal here in Washington," says Jim Gallant, operations manager at Disney/ABC-owned WMAL(AM). "He talks in great detail about legislation that may be pending, putting his spin on it."

Although WMAL(AM) runs Reagan at a time when most of the Washington power brokers are presumably asleep — from 1 to 5 a.m. — Gallant says that "he gets a good deal of mail" from people who listen to the show.

Disney/ABC-owned KSFO(AM) in San Francisco also runs Reagan on tape, from 7 – 10 p.m. (The show is live weekdays from 3 – 7 p.m., Pacific Time.)

In the Spring and Summer 1996 Arbitrons, Reagan scored a 2.0 share among persons 12+ at KSFO(AM), ranking him 17th in the market. In his key demographic — persons 35–64 — Reagan scored a 2.9 and 3.0 respectively, ranking him 11th.

Jack Merker, Reagan's program director at KSDO in San Diego nearly a decade ago, now programs cross-town talker KOGO(AM), which airs the Reagan show from 6 to 9 p.m.

While there has always been interest in Reagan simply because of his name, Merker points out that would never have been enough of a reason to put the president's son on the air.

"Michael has a lot of talent, which he brings to bear every time he opens the microphone," Merker says. "He communicates and connects with listeners, especially since he knows his stuff about Washington. People believe him. They trust him. If his last name were Smith, Michael would still be a very good talk show host."

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

# Station Services

over the coveted morning slot, and helps the out-of-work DJ and salesperson find a new station to call home. Searching for a job or filling a job vacancy on the Internet is not going to replace the more traditional sources of job listings anytime soon. Keep in mind, however, that the Net is a good way to go if your aim is to get your job listings to the right people as quickly as possible. Start at the Unemployed Radio DJs site (<http://204.251.230.2/users/wwhite/>) and link from there to other job search and posting sources.

## A steady stream

The Internet is a great place for your personalities to go if they're looking to pump up their show prep efforts. If your morning or afternoon team is in need of show prep ideas, sites such as InterPrep Online (<http://interprep.com>) and Radio Online (<http://www.radio-online.com>) can be invaluable. And if you're aiming to spruce up your station's Web site with cool content, a cyber-walk over to the ElectricVillage site (<http://www.electricvillage.com>) may be in order.

The Net is also the place to be if your station is looking to give something back to the radio industry and help keep its rich history alive. This country's two major broadcasting museums, both trying to preserve radio's past while pointing to its future, have cyber-homes that you can visit. The Museum of Television and Radio (<http://www.mtr.org>) offers virtual tours of its New York and Los Angeles buildings, among other information, and the Museum of Broadcast Communications in Chicago (<http://www.neog.com/nbc/>) offers information on its Radio Hall of Fame.

Keep in mind that one of the easiest ways to get from here to there is to peruse lists of favorite links (just about every site has one). You can also visit one of the many comprehensive search engines on the Net, such as Yahoo! and AltaVista (<http://www.altavista.com>), where you simply type in some words that describe what you're looking for to get where you're going.

However you go about looking for information in cyberspace, you'll likely find the Internet to be one of your most valued resources.

*Alan Haber is a free-lance writer who specializes in radio and a variety of popular culture topics. He writes on the Internet and radio personalities for Tuned In. He may be reached via e-mail at [zoogang@earthlink.net](mailto:zoogang@earthlink.net)*

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# West Palm Beach - Boca Raton

continued from page 21

younger rock listener. Combined, WKGR and WPBZ captured a hearty 9.6 share (12+) of the West Palm Beach audience in the Fall '96 Arbitrons.

Peters calls The Buzz "the most interesting thing about the West Palm Beach market. Here, you have an alternative radio station that does very well in West Palm Beach when you can't get an alternative station to do anything in Miami." According to Peters, the comparative success of The Buzz is characteristic of the difference between the West Palm Beach market and its neighbor to the South. "Dade County is 50 percent Hispanic, and that's not an issue in Palm Beach County," Peters says.

## Neighbor to the south

While the West Palm Beach-Boca Raton market is strong and profitable on its own, it is affected by its neighbor to the south — No. 11-ranked radio market Miami-Fort Lauderdale. There are four Miami AM signals and 16 Miami FM signals that effectively penetrate the West Palm Beach metro, taking a total 26 percent share of the West Palm Beach listening audience.

The most listened-to Miami stations in the West Palm Beach metro are dance CHR "Power 96" WPOW(FM), urban "99 Jamz" WEDR(FM) and NAC "Love 94" WJVE(FM) — all stations without counterparts in their respective formats in West Palm Beach. The highest ranked of the Miami stations is WPOW, ranked No. 10 with a 2.7 share 12+.

In the face of the strong signal presence of Miami properties, West Palm Beach stations generally far surpass Miami stations with similar formats, evidence of radio's strength as a local medium. The one exception to this rule is oldies WOLL, which tied Miami's "Majic" WMXJ(FM) at a 1.9 share 12+.

"The most unique thing about the market is that it is overshadowed by the Miami-Fort Lauderdale market. More than 20 percent of the market goes to Miami stations. You see Miami stations in the Palm Beach book but not Palm Beach stations in Miami. It suffers a little bit from the 'big market, little market syndrome,'" Peters says.

Still, the top nine stations in the market originate either from Palm Beach or neighboring Fort Pierce, a testament to the strength of radio as a local medium.

Experts agree that the one defining characteristic of the West Palm Beach market is that it is in a constant state of change. "The market changes on a regu-

lar basis. It's an aggressive business climate, and it's a wild ride," Tart says. One example of this change is the general sound of the radio stations, according to Lapa. "The caliber of performance has increased greatly. From 1990 to 1997 you can hear a real difference in quality. We sound a lot bigger than the number 47 market," Lapa says.

Consequently, Lapa notes that the business climate of the market is increasingly positive. "The automotive industry is healthy, the tourism business is positive," he says. "Home sales and construction are growing. There are very few businesses that are soft, and there is a lot of expansion of major companies." Lapa adds that while the market is growing rapidly, it still maintains a feel typical of most smaller markets. "The great part about Palm Beach is that it's big enough to attract good players, but small enough to allow us to meet with business decision-makers who will make the time to allow us to find out about their business. It is a world-class market."

*Doug Hyde is a free-lance writer based in Tampa, Fla., and a regular contributor to Tuned In. He can be reached at 813-225-0535, or via e-mail at radioguy22@aol.com*

## West Palm Beach Financial Snapshot

Market Rank: 47  
Revenue Rank: 41  
Number of FMs: 10  
Number of AMs: 14

Revenue 1993: \$31.5 mil.  
Revenue 1994: \$36.9mil.  
Revenue 1995: \$40.5 mil.  
Revenue 1996: \$43.3 mil.  
Revenue 1997: \$46.0 mil. est.

Revenue Growth  
'89-'94: 8.4%  
'95-'99: 6.6%

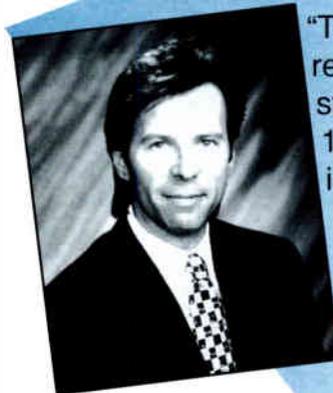
Local Revenue: 80%  
National Revenue: 20%

1994 Population: 965,900  
Per Capita Income: \$22,041  
Median Income: \$38,187  
Average Household  
Income: \$52,104

Source: 

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## Focus on Client, Not Bottom Line

Your latest commentary ("Radio's Changes Hit Home," January) touched on an issue central to radio's continued success. As the mega groups take over, the entire landscape of this business is changing. Some good, some not so good.

The company I left in 1995 to form The Radio Werks Inc. was a powerful family owned (for 50 years) business. The roots of the station were deep in the market and communities we served. We built our success on relationships and results. Consequently, the company was a consistent billings winner (No. 2 behind the country giant in the market) for 10 years. We were successful because we understood our market, we knew our clients and we were empathetic to their needs.

The station was sold to a large group shortly after my departure. Within months, the new group had managed to run off the senior account reps (arguably the best in the market) and reduce the monthly billing by almost half. The new group did not understand our partnership theory.

In short, they paid for a product they could not buy. The station was more than a frequency, announcers, music and promotions. The product was people. People who made a difference because they genuinely cared about their client's success. You bill more when the client is your focus, not the bottom line.

While many radio groups will

continue to foster these client-station partnerships, many more will not. If radio is to be successful in the new millennium, it won't happen with general managers and sales managers overseeing multiple properties and people. It will happen when radio understands that profits are driven by satisfied clients who perceive that their account reps and the station(s) genuinely care about their success.

Radio has always been a one-on-one medium with both listeners and customers. If we lose touch with either, 7 percent of the advertising pie will be radio's ceiling.

*Mark Storie, CRMC  
The Radio Werks Inc.  
New Bern, N.C.*

## Change Nothing New to Radio

I kind of liked the nostalgia trip you took back to your hometown of Roanoke ("Radio's Changes Hit Home," January), but your thoughts did strike a rather strange chord with me. It's always been one of radio's primary assets to be the most rapid delivery mass media system, and its immediacy still beats the pants off MTV when it comes to breaking a new record or CNN when it comes to breaking news.

However, the topic of music formats is rather different. The rapidly changing radio formats may appear to be somewhat cold, but it is simply a sign that tells us that our culture is changing faster than ever today. Or, perhaps

more accurately, that our cultural products are being turned over at a faster rate not only for greater corporate stabs at profits, but also because we want more and newer faster. The stations are doing more than "reflecting an industry trend" by doing what they have essentially been doing all along. Unfortunately, it's people who remain in a nostalgic loop who miss out on a lot of great new stuff that's happening.

As a young punk (rocker-type) growing up in a New Jersey suburb, I heard the exact same music you did on radio. The funny thing was that the old Top 40 AM powerhouse WABC that played the hits of the 1950s for my parents and the psychedelic Wolfman Jack in the 1960s for my cousins, played disco and other torturous music for me in the 1970s. The point here is that it isn't the radio stations that change — they're doing just what they've been doing all along.

Keep up the good work with Tuned In, and don't get bummed about station formats until you hear your music on an oldies station.

*Glen R. Weisman  
Bayonne, N.J.*

*All letters received become the property of Tuned In, to be used at our discretion and as space permits. Correspondence may be edited for clarity.*

*We want to hear from you! Address letters to Whitney Pinion, Editor, Tuned In, P.O. Box 1214, Falls Church, VA 22041; fax: 703-820-3245; or e-mail: 74103.2435@compuserve.com*

## On the Move

**Bruce Supovitz** has been promoted by Arbitron Radio Station Services to the position of manager, National Radio Sales.

Arbitron has also promoted **Bob Michaels** from team leader, Radio Programming Services, to manager, Radio Programming Services.

Additionally, Arbitron has regained **Bill Rose**, who will assume a managerial position in the Market Development and Research Communications Department.

**WBUX Radio**, Doylestown, Pa., has named **David S. Noll** president/general manager.

**SW Networks** has named **Dave Logan** its new vice president of programming. Logan replaces Corinne Baldassano.

Also from SW Networks, **Anita Parker-Brown** has been promoted to Director of Urban Radio for the Affiliate Marketing Department.

**SFX Broadcasting, Inc.** has named **Michael S. Crushman** vice president market general manager. Crushman will be responsible for stations KODA(FM), KKRW(FM) and KNUZ(AM), and later this year, KQUR(FM).

**Michael K. Nasser**, the general sales manager for KODA(FM), has been promoted to station manager.

KODA local sales manager **Frank J. Carter, Jr.** has also been promoted to station manager of KKRW(FM), Houston.

**Mike Davis** has been promoted from Director of Sales-Midwest to Vice President/Western Region Sales for **American Urban Radio Networks**.

AURN also announced that **J.D. MacKay** has joined the company as Director of Sales.

*Are you on the move? Mail, fax or e-mail job changes to Tuned In, P.O. Box 1214, Falls Church, VA 22041; fax: 703-820-3245; or e-mail: 74103.2435@compuserve.com*



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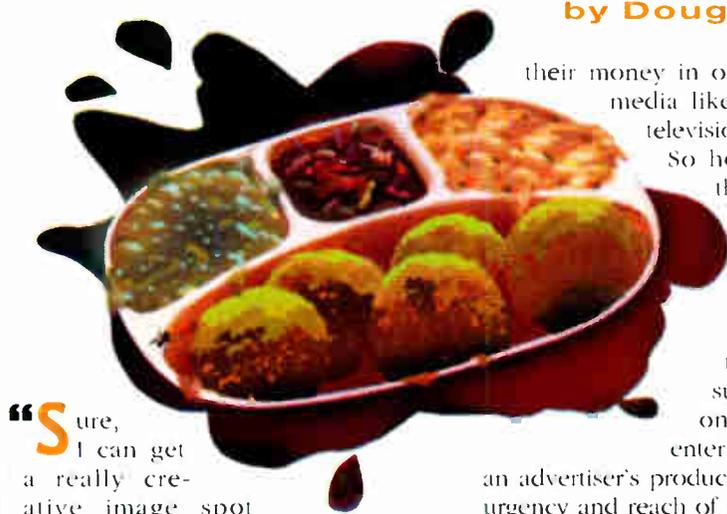
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READER SERVICE 102

# Radio: The Fast Food of Advertising?

by Doug Burton



**“S**ure, I can get a really creative image spot produced and on the air for you this afternoon. That’s the urgency of radio!”

This statement is spoken daily by radio salespeople who believe that instant responsiveness is radio’s best selling point. Meanwhile, the local direct advertiser is served up another costly helping of fast-food radio.

Today, with millions of advertisements bombarding the average consumer, it is more important than ever to invest in creative imaging for a client. Unfortunately, creation of the actual radio commercial is often upstaged by a big presentation on the station ratings and how well the station does with single-income, left-handed Lithuanians between 25 and 54.

Many local direct clients are now claiming that the numbers being presented to them are too confusing. After all, it is hard not to be the top-rated station in at least one demographic breakout. What most clients say they really want are new and creative ways to make the name of their business stick in the minds of consumers.

In reality, there are three things that the advertiser must have for the investment to pay off: a compelling commercial, the right frequency and placement of ads on the stations and in the dayparts that reach the target audience. Leave any of these things out, and the advertiser is not getting the most from his or her investment.

The problem is that if the ad schedule does not get results, most clients never complain. They simply invest

their money in other advertising media like newspaper or television.

So how do we win them back? First, we need to understand how radio works. It has the potential to reach consumers mere seconds before they enter a store and see an advertiser’s product. That’s the real urgency and reach of radio. Also, with the right creative director at your station, the ad saturates the mind of the consumer. How many times have you caught yourself singing along with a contagious radio jingle or laughing aloud in the car at a really funny spot?

The people at Motel 6 realized the importance of creativity early in the game. The Tom Bodett ads put Motel 6 on the map by building the brand strength with fun commercials that almost everyone can relate to. Eric Studer, director of marketing services for Motel 6, says, “The creative (director) has got to come first.” He adds that, from a creative aspect, radio is the most under-utilized advertising medium. “Good advertising reaches out to the listener and says, ‘We understand your problem. Here’s the answer.’” Today, more than 70 percent of Motel 6’s advertising is invested in radio.

Chances are, there are several dozen local direct clients in your market with the potential to be the next Motel 6. They just need the right marketing. If your station takes one of these clients to the next level, it may mean yearlong contracts and strong commitments to every station in your chain.

Four ways to build the value of your station are as follows:

▲ Take the time to properly market the client’s business. If your marketing skills are weak, bring along your station’s creative director or another sales rep who lives and breathes marketing.

▲ Develop a terrific script. Don’t forget that every great commercial has one central idea that sells the consumer on the product or service. Don’t do laundry-list ads that include everything the client sells. Most of all, make sure the commercial is compelling and strikes an emotional chord with the listener. Beware of cookie-cutter copywriting services and scripts that are cute but do absolutely nothing to sell the product.

▲ Get the right talent to voice the spot. The biggest problem with radio station-produced commercials is that every voice sounds like a DJ — the husband sounds like a DJ, the wife sounds like a DJ and, of course, the announcer sounds like a DJ.

The most compelling and credible commercials feature actors who sound like real people. It is relatively easy and inexpensive to recruit actors on a per-commercial basis for your station. Contact your local theater companies and audition interested candidates.

▲ Involve the client in the marketing and production process. Give the client a timeline detailing when the script will be finished, who will be cast in the commercial and when the actual production will take place. Involving the client may seem silly at first, but you will be surprised by how

FAST FOOD continued on page 45 ■



Illustrations by Vicky Barron

# Results in the Mind of the Beholder

Radio is in need of a makeover. That radio has to change its image may not be new, but last month at the RAB Marketing Leadership Conference, the Radio Advertising Bureau and Arbitron offered up further proof that radio still has a way to go to convince advertisers that it should be their medium of choice.

This year's conference, which drew a crowd of about 2,500, was full of recognizable radio executives, standing-room-only sessions and late-night parties, but the meat of the show was served up during Friday's luncheon.

Pierre Bouvard, general manager of radio for Arbitron, and Larry Rosin of Edison Media Research presented the findings of the highly publicized RAB/Arbitron perceptual study of major newspaper advertisers.

Bouvard and Rosin explained the methodology of the study — individual phone interviews were conducted with senior ad managers of 56 of the largest retail companies in the country, all of whom primarily advertise in newspaper. The companies surveyed included such household brand names as Macy's, Sears, Kmart and IGA.

The results were not totally disheartening, though they did suggest some areas on which radio could focus its efforts for changing its image. According to the study, 93 percent of those surveyed use radio, a healthy portion. And, to the pleasant surprise of many in the industry, radio is perceived as the best medium for delivering younger demographics.

The most important feature of any medium, according to advertisers, is its ability to get results. Unfortunately, of all advertising media, including broadcast television, newspapers, direct mail and magazines, radio was rated lowest — at a measly 9 percent — when participants were asked which medium gets the best results. Surprisingly, the medium perceived as getting top results was direct mail, not newspaper or TV.

So what is the next step for radio? Bouvard and Rosin recommended, among other things, that radio, specifically organizations such as the RAB, commit resources to major demonstration projects showing that radio gets results.

by Whitney Pinion

Gary Fries promised that, within a year, RAB would complete a compilation of at least 1,000 stories of radio getting results for its advertisers.

In the meantime, while the RAB is collecting success stories, radio salespeople can use the persuasive arguments presented by marketing expert Al Ries, who spoke during a breakfast gathering at the conference. Radio's "dirty little secret," Ries said, is that radio is not in the mind

The other way radio can draw more advertising dollars is to sell itself as an entire industry, not as an individual station or group of stations, an idea that was expressed at various times during the conference.

Gary Fries made reference to this idea during his State of the Industry address. Fries also urged radio people to get out of their offices and develop relationships with advertisers. He said he doesn't hear managers' commitment to new salespeople. Don't talk about sales goals; talk about leadership, he said.

At about the same time Fries was delivering his address, a group of media buyers and ad agency types were gathering in a room across the street learning how best to deal with the rapidly consolidating radio industry. By pure coincidence, the American Association of Advertising Agencies (AAAA) was holding its annual media conference and trade show at the Hyatt across the street. In fact, the Justice

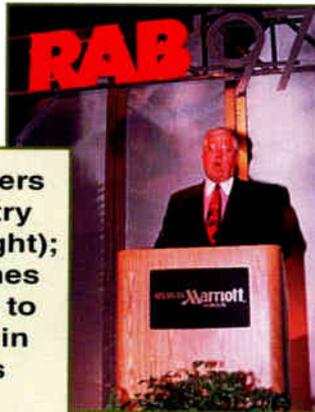
Department sent a representative to speak to media buyers' concerns about consolidation. Dando Cellini, senior trial attorney, media mergers, for the DOJ, explained the antitrust laws designed to protect ad agencies and their customers. The general feeling among media buyers is one of uneasiness, a wish for simpler, pre-Telecom Act days.

This uneasiness may be the result of a less-than-thorough understanding of the radio business, offered Mel Karmazin, CBS chief, who was a member of the panel for "Media Consolidation/LMAs," which followed Cellini's session. Karmazin asked that ad agencies in particular try not to be so negative about consolidation.

Jean Pool, executive VP, director of North American Media Buying Services, for J. Walter Thompson USA, would not be assuaged by Karmazin's arguments that radio would not become an oligopoly in which a handful of players control the majority of the country's radio properties.

Though Karmazin said he was honored that radio was included in the discussion at the AAAA conference, it was apparent that radio still has a ways to go in improving its image in the eyes of media buyers and advertisers alike.

**RAB'97**  
Atlanta, Georgia Feb. 6th - 8th, 1997



Fries delivers his industry address (right); Ries teaches attendees to put radio in people's minds.



— specifically, in the minds of advertisers, a fact that resounded loudly in the RAB/Arbitron perceptual study results. Although the average adult spends almost as much time each day with radio as with television — and even less time with newspapers and magazines — the top 100 national advertisers spend two-thirds of their ad budget on TV and only 3 percent on radio.

But the point that radio salespeople need to drive home, according to Ries, is that the most effective and memorable advertising has always been word-based, not image-based, though advertisers seem to be convinced otherwise. Radio, said Ries, can win by putting words, not pictures, in the mind.

# Branches of Urban Offer Diversity

**N**ot too long ago, urban radio was a one-stop shop. To hear black music, listeners tuned into their local mainstream urban station. Legendary full-service urban stations such as WGCI-AM-FM in Chicago, WVEE(FM) in Atlanta and WJLB(FM) in Detroit ruled the airwaves and ratings by playing the hits and appealing to the broadest demo possible.

Then rap came along and made a lot of older listeners head for the hills. New formats emerged, and these days, they can tune in to rap-free urban AC while their kids can check out the local hip-hop stations. Indeed, mostly major markets support three or more urban stations — mainstream, rhythmic urban and older-skewing urban AC, which mixes a healthy dose of oldies with laid-back currents.

According to M Street Journal, there were 284 urban (including oldies and AC) stations in 1989. That number increased by 20 to 40 stations a year, until the number leveled off last year at about 350.

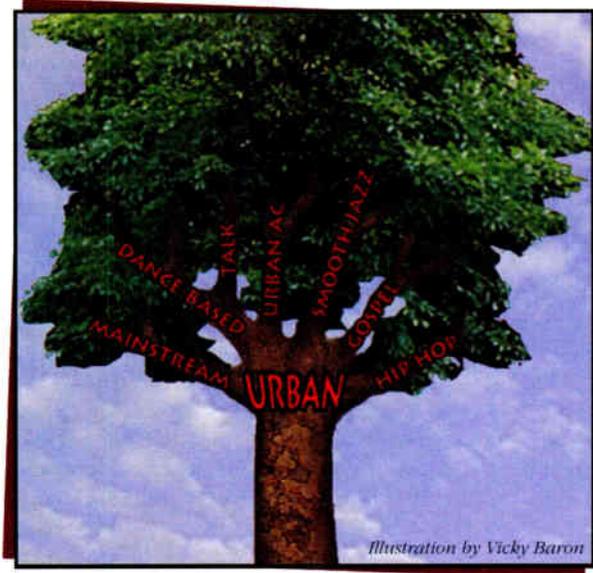
"It is pretty much a top-50 market phenomenon, or markets with 175,000 or more African-Americans," says Skip Finley, CEO of American Urban Radio Networks. "There are probably 25 or 30 markets that fit those characteristics."

## Something for everyone

Some larger markets have formats that only exist in their area. Chicago, for example, is the home of older-skewing, all-dusties WGCI(AM), which has loyal listeners but not much by way of wattage or ratings. New York City supports stations with such niche formats as dance-based, straight-ahead mainstream, black AC, smooth jazz, talk and gospel, as well as a Minneola-based traditional gospel station and multilingual WNJR(AM) out of Newark, N.J.

"Some things that you think will work in one market won't work in another," says Harry Lyles, president of Georgia-based Lyles Consultancy. "It's important to know the market and the hole in a

market. If you see an unsuccessful station and think you can flank it and take something away from it, you can get your butt whipped. There are a lot of legendary radio stations that have been urban that all of a sudden lost the top or bottom end of their demo. That's a problem. Urban used to mean all things



to all people. Those days are over, and thank God they are.

"It's what I call the concert theory. If you go to see a Luther (Vandross), Anita (Baker) or Patti LaBelle concert, there's going to be a certain type of person there. But if you go to a Bone Thugs-N-Harmony, Crucial Conflict or LL Cool J concert, the same people are not going to be there. I think that is an instant definition of what a lot of stations are doing today and where they should be positioned."

## One market's story

In 1988 former WGCI Program Director Barry Mayo and Broadcasting Partners Inc. purchased WBMX(FM), a WGCI clone. Mayo rechristened it WVAZ(FM) and turned it into one of the first successful urban adult AC stations in the country. Its heavy dose of dusties and lack of rap appealed to the 25-plus

crowd. It made a splash in the market after just two ratings books, and the idea spread to the rest of the country. In 1994, Mayo purchased WJPC-AM-FM and created hip-hop WEJM-AM-FM. "We-Jam" appealed to the younger demo, squeezing WGCI from the other side, and allowed BPI to sell the two stations as a combo.

BPI dissolved and sold the stations to Evergreen Media in February 1995. Former WGCI mainstay Doug Banks's syndicated show is on hip-hop WEJM, and former WGCI jock Tom Joyner is on WVAZ. Mayo is now a consultant for ABC.

That hasn't stopped mainstream WGCI from playing it all, from Foxy Brown and Dr. Dre — artists who also show up on the active urban playlists — to AC staples such as Whitney Houston, R. Kelly and En Vogue. It may have more to do with the station's legendary status than anything else, but the mix continues to pull in listeners. The station dominates the airwaves, seesawing back and forth with legendary, full-service WGN(AM) for first and second place among 12+ listeners.

"There are some so-called rhythmic stations being put together that are a joke," Lyles says. "They're playing Celine Dion, Seal and Keith Sweat, and then turning around and playing Luther, Johnny Gill or D'Angelo. The people who like the urban side of that station don't give a s— about Celine Dion. Even the white females don't like that."

WVAZ listeners know they won't hear any rap, but will get a tight playlist dotted with recurrenents by such artists as Curtis Mayfield, New Edition and Blackstreet as well as current urban AC staples. But it is not just about the music: V-103 listeners also know they won't be subjected to the between-songs chatter that goes on over at WGCI.

"A lot of time, the music doesn't change much," says Monica Starr, who programs Evergreen-owned urban AC WMXD(FM) in Detroit. Starr has also programmed mainstream and hip-hop stations.

"So the elements between the music become more important. I try to have good jocks that have tight boardwork and don't talk too much but who are not uptight, either. I want to make sure they're on point with everything."

by Cara Jepsen

# Hooked on Ebonics?

by  
**Lynn  
Meadows**

**T**he Oakland School Board found itself embroiled in a national controversy in December after announcing it would train its teachers to recognize Ebonics or Black English as a separate language and use that knowledge to teach students who spoke Ebonics standard English. Political leaders across the country and across racial lines denounced the idea as absurd.

Although they have since backed down from calling Ebonics a separate language, the Oakland board still insists that teachers familiar with the way their pupils speak will be able to teach and relate to them better. The idea is not new. Consciously or not, many urban- and churban-formatted stations have used Ebonics and street slang for years to reach and relate to their audience.

Take, for example, 103 JAMZ, WOWI(FM) in Norfolk, Va. Most advertisements and liners on the station use standard English. But when a listener calls up to chat, the language can quickly change from standard English to something else.

"I wanted to ax you a question," says a caller.

"Yeah, what up?" replies the afternoon-drive jock who slips easily between standard and jive English. The patter between host and caller is lively and entertaining. Later, the evening talent interviews the touring Snoop Doggy Dogg and praises one of his recent releases.

"You put it down, man. On the real. On the real," he tells the rap star.

How conscious is the decision to use Ebonics on the air in the programming department? An informal poll of program directors indicates that their main concern is that their DJs be able to relate to listeners whether through Ebonics or other means.

## Relate to the streets

"We want our announcers to enunciate as well as expected in any part of corporate America," says Vicki Preston, assistant program director for urban station WCHB-FM, Detroit. At the same time, she says, the talent needs to be able to relate to the streets. However, she says, the station does not hire its talent based on their knowledge of slang.

Michael Erickson, assistant program director for churban-formatted KMEL(FM), San Francisco, agrees that it is important for a DJ to be able to relate to the audience. He says a

couple KMEL DJs use a lot of street slang and some use little or none. What is important, he says, is that the talent understand what the audience is saying when someone calls and makes a request.

"We've all used it as a way to get a point across," says Gary Young, program director for Power 99, WUSL(FM), Philadelphia. Ebonics is used differently throughout the day, Young notes. While his morning jock jokes about Ebonics, a definitely different language is used after 6 p.m. Young jokes that Golden Boy, the WUSL evening man, "has his own slang manual."

Young says the use of Ebonics has never been banned or even discussed at his station and no one has ever given instructions to use or not use it. Likewise, Erickson says the KMEL programming staff never says "We're talking too much slang" or "We need to talk more slang."

"We try to get a feel for what the public wants and try to integrate ourselves into that vibe," says Erickson. Still, he says, the programming department does not set a standard among its DJs for how to talk.

"Language is an issue when writing liners," Erickson says. He adds that they write street slang into some liners, but the DJs are not required to read them word for word as long as they get the meaning across. Because the station targets the 18-34 demographic, Erickson says the station must use language that is perceived as contemporary and hip.

The use of Ebonics can be as controversial at a radio station as it is in a school district. Factors like age and socioeconomic background affect how the listener will react to slang, says Preston. She has received faxes from people upset after hearing Ebonics used on the air. It depends on who is listening, the time of day and what is said, Preston says.

Erickson says his station gets complaints on occasion as well, and the subject of Ebonics remains controversial. A couple people, for instance, took offense and complained after the station aired an Ebonics parody recently.

At one No. 1 urban station in the south, the programming director says he does not think about the use of Ebonics at all. He points out that with advertisers like Mercedes-Benz, "We'd be stupid to start (that commercial) with 'Hey yo.'"

He says the talent at his station must walk a "fine line" when a listener calls, between fitting in with that listener and not making fun. With a multicultural city, he adds, DJs need to be sensitive to the fact that their listeners speak many different dialects.

*Lynn Meadows is a free-lance writer who contributes regularly to Tuned In and sister publication Radio World newspaper.*

## Community involvement

Events that combine promotions with community service are one way for urban stations to cement themselves in the listener's mind. Earlier this year, on Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday, WMXD conducted a brown-bag seminar on racism and its effects on women in the business world. The free seminar, with beverages provided by Pepsi, drew a standing-room-only crowd. "We try to really empower our listeners," says Starr. "It's good to do fun events, too,

such as a Mix and Mingle we hold every Friday. But we also do things of significance. We program our station to fit the lifestyle of our listener."

WGCI's monthly Stop the Hits series suspends music programming for two hours. Hosts talk to experts and address issues that affect the African-American community. Subjects have included teen pregnancy and AIDS, and one recent broadcast featured a remote from inside Cook County Jail.

"There are still a lot of smaller owners

doing great, compelling radio for the African-American community," says Lyles. "But very few are black-owned. And the ones that are, are not true winners."

The big four players in urban radio (which are subject to change at any moment) are Evergreen Media, Clear Channel Communications, Emmis Broadcasting and CBS/Westinghouse. ABC is also a player via its Touch and Urban Gold networks and syndication of urban personalities Tom Joyner and Doug Banks.

"Clearly with the growth of the African-American audience and the popularity of rhythmic music extending to whites and Hispanics, there is a great passion for urban product," says Jim De Castro, president and COO of Evergreen Media Corp. "The format gives you the best ratings, which attracts advertisers and therefore profit."

"Whenever you have a product, you want to market it to people who would be best served by it, and then you super-serve them," Starr says. WMXD sister station in Detroit is mainstream WJLB(FM); both are owned by Evergreen. "As companies begin to take over different marketplaces and you have these conglomerates owning five stations in one city, the bottom line is how best to serve the listener. It takes a lot of strategy. If you buy into a market and know a format has not been working, you must determine through research what the hole is in that marketplace, and what position you want to take."

"Radio is a whole different animal now. You used to have two mainstream stations going head to head. Now you've got your eye on more than just one competitor."

### Not dead yet

That doesn't mean Starr sees already-established mainstream stations rolling over and playing dead just yet. "I don't think it will change much, because 'Hey, we're here for everybody! We love everybody,'" she says in an upbeat urban DJ voice.

Cologne agrees. "WGCI is a station you can listen to that your children can listen to, and your parents can listen to. We're a generation station. In a day and age when radio is supposed to be one thing or other, we've been able to balance what we do to continue to appeal to a massive audience. We're in the middle. We're a little hip and we're a little older, too."

*Cara Jepsen is media editor of the Illinois Entertainer and a contributor to the Chicago Reader and Crain's Small Business in Chicago. She last wrote a Format Focus on news/talk for Tuned In.*

### ► FAST FOOD, continued from page 41

excited the client gets. Also, give the client tours of the studios and let him or her watch while the actors voice the commercials. A live demonstration of how sound effects are made is also impressive. Let's not forget: this is show business.



Be sure to follow up with an evaluation of how well the creative worked. You may find that the client begins to respect your station for your creativity as much or more than they do for your numbers. You might even find you are included in a multistation buy even though your numbers are quite a bit lower than other stations at the cutoff line.

It is important to realize that most clients know how to recognize a great commercial when they hear one. So if the client has a commercial already written, and you really don't feel the commercial will work, suggest an alternative. Remember, if the schedule runs and the ads do not get results, the client may lose faith in radio. If the client experiences several failures in the radio arena, he will also lose faith in the reliability of the ratings that were originally presented.

So build a great commercial and go for the repeat customer. It's time to put out the white linen tablecloth, ditch the fast-food mentality and show clients that radio is still the magical "theater of the mind" medium that they have always been told it is.

*Doug Burton is creative services director at Trumper Communications stations KISN-AM-FM and KUMT(FM) in Salt Lake City. He welcomes your comments at 801-269-7135.*

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Although relocating the studio was an option, the station management and board of directors chose to remain in the existing location and expand. The complex conforms to the linear site and wraps around the existing studio and administration building. In order to limit down time, the old facility remained operational while the new structure was built around it. Only four hours elapsed during the switch from the old studios to the new.

John Allison, manager of computer and telephone systems, oversaw the radio construction project. "The original wooden buildings were never designed for audio or production of any kind," Allison says. "We are right along the flight path (of a nearby airport), and we'd have to stop production or session work until a jet passed."

The new facility boasts three new A6000 Wheatstone consoles, Panasonic SV3700 and SV3900 DAT decks for satellite program delay, a new Sierra Audio Systems analog routing switcher, a Musicam USA 2001 ISDN Layer II codec, new Benchmark 1000 series distribution amplifiers and a Digidesign Pro Tools digital audio workstation.

"We never had the capability to do what we wanted to do," Allison adds. "This building gives us the capability."

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