

Radio-TV programming

WBBQ Makes Key Changes in Programming—'Flashbacks' Used

By CLAUDE HALL

AUGUSTA, Ga. — WBBQ, considered one of the most important radio stations in the nation record industry for breaking new records, has made some important programming changes. Under the new policy of the radio station, a record from the top 20 on the playlist will be followed by a new record, then by another top 20 record. The air personality on duty will then play a chart record which might be a record leveling off in popularity in the market or one not climbing the playlist very fast. After that, a "flashback" record will be played.

The former policy of the Top 40 radio station, programmed by Harley Drew, largely hinged on what many radio people call

a "salt and pepper" theory. A record by a white artist or pop-sounding in nature from the top of the playlist was followed by a record by a black artist from the top of the list, then a white artist from near the bottom of the list was followed by a soul artist from the bottom of the list. The ratio of white and black was loosely maintained. Music director Mike Randell pointed out that the station was not abandoning any black listeners it might have; but as a rule, no two black artists would be programmed back-to-back.

Randell, who started in radio at WDXY in Sumter, S.C., working under Dick Reus, then music director of that station, said that WBBQ now plays 40-

to-45 records. Its pattern of five categories allows all of the records on its playlist to get repeated about every three-and-a-half hours.

Flashbacks, or oldies, are very important in adult time periods. Randell, who started on the station in the all-night slot a little less than six years ago but now does the housewife show, said that he might go as far back as "Jailhouse Rock" by Elvis Presley on his show, but that Buddy Carr, who does the morning show would probably go no further back than 1964 in his flashback records. In afternoon drive, the air personality on duty—Harley Drew—stays pretty current in his records and his oldies are "encores" (records that just dropped off the chart) under the theory that kids are home from school and listening. At 5:30 p.m., however, Drew may reach back for an older record occasionally under the theory that adults are getting off work and either heading home or just getting home. Regarding using oldies as a programming tool, Randell said that recently on a ratings survey, the station came up weak in the 11-noon period and installed a "golden hour," which helped immensely in bringing back strength in listeners.

Randell, after working a year at WDXY, went to Augusta to work at WFNL, but joined WBBQ shortly thereafter, working the all-night show three-weeks before moving into the morning show for three-and-a-half years. He said that

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ART PAGE, left, air personality at WEXT, West Hartford, Conn., receives an award for most popular country disk jockey in Connecticut. In center is his wife, giving him the award is Dick Curless, country artist.

Petry Exec: Stations Adverse to Change

NEW YORK — The major problem with advising most stations about their programming "is that most radio stations don't like to change," said Bill Steese, vice president of sales and pro-

motion at Edward Petry & Co., a national advertising representative firm. Petry, because better programming equates to stronger ratings and thus a more-attractive lure for advertising buys, is vitally interested in the programming of all the radio stations it represents. Steese, over the years, has advised many radio stations on programming, but confesses that many of them also never followed the advice. "However, the last two stations certainly did . . ." and with good results.

KSO in Des Moines, for example, put on an evening request show at Steese's bidding. Glenn Bell, the general manager, told him that he had the office girls and all of the deejays not on the air handling the telephone calls and all of them finally staggered out of the office at 10 p.m. totally exhausted, Steese said. "And this was a radio station who'd never had an audience reaction like that before."

Petry offers programming advice strictly as a service to its stations. In the case of KSO, Steese found that the station was a "modified contemporary" station that also played easy listening records and oldies. "But the oldies were hits like 'Unicorn' by the Irish Rovers . . . the deejays were counteracting the effect of Top 40 hits with oldies of an easy listening nature that just didn't blend in. Then the station also added country records because they felt country music was popular."

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WEXI-FM Swings To MOR Format

CHICAGO — WEXI-FM, in Arlington Heights, has changed its format from Top 40 to middle of the road to try and gain an audience in the 24-50-year-old bracket, according to Bob Norland, program director.

The station is calling the format change a switch to "clean air." The music will be basically instrumental versions of contemporary songs. Norland also said it was an attempt to break away from suggestive lyrics in certain popular songs.

Oldies Are Foundation for Format of WGOE in Va.

RICHMOND, Va. — Oldies, not necessarily hit oldies either, provide the foundation for the format of WGOE, an easy listening station here. Program director Bill Cox said the format consists of 50 percent oldies, including some "though they were never No. 1 on any chart . . . just as long as they were well-

known or performed by a well-known artist."

This way, he said, listeners hear a lot of the middle-of-the-road tunes that they grew up on "that the rockers won't play because the songs are considered too slow for their programming."

WGOE had been a Top 40 station, but began the transition to an easy listening format some months back. Air personalities include Wayne Keyser, Vic Hines, and John Stevens. Cox does the morning drive show on the 5,000-watt daytime station.

Among the records being played by WGOE are "Flowers for My Pillow" by the Neon Philharmonic and "No Escape" done by a local group called the East Winds, but Cox said WGOE was also instrumental in breaking "I'll Paint You a Song" by Mac Davis and "The Song From MASH" by M.A.S.H.

The only problems arising in the format change, Cox said, was that "we found most music stores and one-stops in Richmond cater only to rock music. If a song isn't on the Top 40 charts, they don't stock it. We have requests from our listeners for such singles as the 'Wherefore and Why' by Johnny Mathis . . . they can't buy them . . . I don't know whether this is the fault of the distributor or the stores themselves."



RICK ELY, left, of ABC-TV's new series "The Young Rebels," talks with Larry Kane, after Ely made his debut as a recording artist for RCA Records on Kane's television show seen on KTRK-TV, Houston. The Kane show will soon be in syndication.

WKTC Sheds Country For 'Inspirational'

By RUTH CASTLEBERRY

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — WKTC has abandoned country music in favor of a "contemporary-inspirational" format which combines religious "talk" programs with inspirational music, according to Bill Hicks, station program director.

"Our purpose is to give folks something in this area they can listen to without objecting to the lyrics," explained Hicks.

When WKTC was a country music station, it programmed some religious broadcasts and music. "The calls from listeners thanking us for the religious programming led us to believe we were headed in the right direction," Hicks continued.

The station, on the air from sunrise to sunset seven days a week, averaged 200 calls and

35 pieces of mail a day the first two weeks as a "contemporary-inspirational" outlet, and all favorable, according to Hicks.

"The format encompasses something for every taste," Hicks said.

Inspirational music is programmed from 6 to 8:45 a.m. followed by a block of religious broadcasts, including "Back to the Bible," "Bright Spot Hour," and the "Jewish Voice Broadcast," from 8:45 a.m. till 1:15 p.m. The block of religious programming is broken twice, at 10:45 a.m. and 12:15 p.m., with 15-minute segments of inspirational music. Then from 1:15 p.m. until signoff inspirational music is broadcast.

Hicks programs his music on a ratio basis of the three types he categorizes as: contemporary, "young folks doing young sounds" (he cited Cliff Richard as an example); "the gutsey quartet sound"; and hymns by artists like George Beverly Shea and Tennessee Ernie Ford. Hicks programs three contemporary, two of the heavy quartet sounds and one hymn, in that order.

The reaction so far is favorable. "Some listeners don't like all the music but are pleased that we're offering something," said Hicks. "And the young people are surprised at the young modern sound they hear when they tune in."

"We have tried to follow the successful pattern of many stations who have done this throughout the country already. It's sort of like changing to a

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WIXZ Shifts Its Airplay

PITTSBURGH — After extensive research into the market, WIXZ here switched to a "Solid Rocking Gold" format Sunday (1), according to Norman Wain, president of Westchester Corp., which owns the 5,000-watt station. The format will consist mostly of oldies, with the major-selling 20 records weaved in.

Deejay talk will be cut to absolute minimum; there will be only four commercial interruptions an hour and only a total of 12 commercials during an hour. Wain said WIXZ program director, Chuck Dunaway, had researched the new format in depth and, in addition, an outside research firm had been hired to study the market before this new format. This format alteration leaves KQV as the major exposure medium of new records in the market.

WGAR Push On Deejay

CLEVELAND — WGAR, easy listening station here, has bought a half-hour on channel 5, local television station here, to broadcast a show focusing on promoting the station's morning air personality—Don Imus. The show will be broadcast at 11:30 p.m. Saturday (14). Herman Spero, producer of the syndicated "Upbeat" TV series, will produce the special. Artists appearing on the show will include Gene Chandler and Jay and the Americans. Imus will host. The show was the idea of WGAR general manager Jack Thayer and falls during a ratings survey period.

WJR-FM to 'Gold' Play

DETROIT — WJR-FM, 24-hour stereo operation here, will launch the Solid Gold Rock & Roll programming developed by Drake-Chenault Enterprises about Jan. 1. The syndicated programming service is based on the live programming theories of WOR-FM in New York.

Dick Booth has been named operations manager of the station. The format shift hinges on CKLW continuing on its present track toward being a "Canadian" station rather than programming for the Windsor-Detroit market.