

THE RADIO WAVE  
"Keeping Radio People in Touch"

24th.November 2002

Issue #12

Ian MacRae, Editor, [ian@allaboutradio.net](mailto:ian@allaboutradio.net)

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THE RADIO WAVE  
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"The Beginners' Guide To Becoming A Radio Star".  
is a far reaching e-book for radio beginners or people who  
want to make radio their career. All the information you'll  
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anywhere in the world where professional commercial radio  
is established.

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G'DAY.

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Welcome to issue 12 of the Radio Wave newsletter.

Firstly a huge thank you to all those subscribers who have  
forwarded The Radio Wave to others in the industry. I've had  
a whole heap more people signing on to our newsletter.

For our first-timers let me explain that this e-letter is

designed for people who'd like to be in radio, newbies who've just started and full-time professionals.

If there's anything you read in it on which you'd like to comment ...feel free.

Anything you need help or advice with...ask. If I can't provide the answer I'll find someone who can.

Anything you want to market or promote (even yourself)...go ahead.

If you'd like to contribute an article...do it.

Through THE RADIO WAVE we can keep in touch with each other regardless of where we are in the world.

You can reach me at [ian@allaboutradio.net](mailto:ian@allaboutradio.net)

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### RADIO PEOPLE BEHAVING BADLY

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Stunts done well are always ratings grabbers. (I've proven THAT a few times!)

But they can go wrong. Big time. Or simply not meet with the management's approval.

Such was the case at WRVW - 107.5 The River in Nashville.

Morning show (breakfast) hosts Woody and Jim were taken off the air with an indefinite suspension. Seems an intern named Paul was sent to crash a vehicle into a wall to see how fast he had to go before the airbag deployed.

Management of the station said they were very concerned over the lack of judgement and potential for serious injury.

Especially considering that there was no airbag in the vehicle!

Meantime in New York at WHTZ (Z100)their MD and afternoon personality Paul "Cubby" Bryant found an old fog machine at his house. So he brought it into the studio where the Z100 Morning Zoo's Elvis Duran thought it would be good to get a party atmosphere going so he turned it on.

He told listeners to go to [www.z100.com](http://www.z100.com) and check out their

in-studio web cam.

What a party! The fog was pumping out, the overhead lights were strobing and the Village People were singing YMCA.

That's when the fire alarms all through the building went off.

Of course it wasn't real smoke but that's how the optical sensors saw it and the fire brigade turned up in full gear.

The station escaped with a warning and a threat of major fines if it happened again.

Apart from all that...what if the sprinkler system (which was on standby and set to go any moment)...had gone off? Over all the equipment?

The smoke has now cleared and there are a few people who are breathing a sigh of relief that they've still got their jobs.

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#### SATELLITE RADIO IN WOBBLY ORBIT?

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Obviously all is not well in the newest broadcast incarnation in the U.S.- satellite radio.

XM Satellite is "downsizing" (geez I hate that word. Why don't they just say "firing" or "sacking" and be honest) it's staff across the board.

This includes one of the original members of XM and the guy who helped launch the programming department Dave Logan.

Meantime XM has gone ahead (as far as I know) with a demonstration of a traffic data delivery system in Chicago. The demo involved driving through traffic a specially equipped car and showing how real-time traffic information can be sent via satellite to the car's navigation system.

Well, there goes another feature that land-based radio had exclusively up till now. There's no doubt that terrestrial stations are under attack from this new technology.

That's if the new technology can stay afloat financially.

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#### THE LAST RADIO STATION

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This station came on line some time ago. The blurb on their web site really got me interested and I've been extra keen to hear what they're doing.

However, as many times as I've tried, the "Listen" link doesn't seem to work. I've taken into account the time difference and their on-air hours.

But I still get the message that the page is unavailable.

Anyway, here is the URL for The Last Radio Station

<http://home.nc.rr.com/gttyson/lastradio.html>

And this is the link you'll be given to get some audio.

<http://24.25.7.17/:8000/>

If YOU can make it work please let me know what local time it was and how the station sounds.

Here's the rave on their site:

Turn on your speakers and we guarantee you'll be saying "what the hell is THAT?" before three or four songs have played.

The Last Radio Station deliberately avoids any semblance to anything resembling a format and we have gotten positive feedback from listeners all over the world. Why don't you become one of them? The only thing that is required is a decent net connection and an open mind.

We broadcast to the world from a Pepsi cooler in a rustic country store just a few miles west of Greenville NC. The folks around here know all about it. If you manage to find the store, mention the Last Radio Station and you'll get a discount on RC Colas and Moon Pies. You can get some live bait there too.

The way things are going, we might actually BE the last radio station, at least online, after a while. Give us a listen and witness the radio equivalent of full frontal nudity.

G.T. Tyson  
PD, CE, OM, MD and a whole bunch of other acronyms  
The Last Radio Station  
<http://home.nc.rr.com/gttyson/lastradio.html>  
[gtyson@nc.rr.com](mailto:gtyson@nc.rr.com)

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WE HAVE MAIL  
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Hi Ian

Couldn't agree more with your comments about commercials needing to be of better quality and more entertaining.

I have been teaching radio for 15 years and have been in the business for 33 - and I lament daily the "sausage factory" mentality of most "creative" departments.

The dreaded voice-over-music, lamely written, and even more lamely produced 30 seconders - and as I tell my students daily - they are still using the same tired old clichés we used more than 30 years ago! Here are some of the classics:

"It's our birthday but YOU get the presents...." How hackneyed is that - but we still hear it.

"Our sale was such a success - we've decided to extend it..." What crap!! It didn't work, so they're trying to revive it!

"Come and see our friendly staff ..." What else would be they have - UNfriendly staff?" (My experience is most retail assistants are not unfriendly, they just don't give a solitary toss if you are there or not!!)

"You'd be crazy to miss our specials/bargains etc..." I do not need my mental status defined by a bloody retailer.

"Our once a year sale..." Even though they've had numerous reductions and store wide discounts all year.

And then there's the voice-over-music where the presenter speaks as if they are the retailer/business - "We" have this and "we" do that.....really bad.

But best of all is the client doing their own ad - who make all of the above sound like a million bucks. Clients are usually either deadly dull and flat - or so cheesy they make you barf.

Then stations will let the same crappy ad run for weeks and weeks - often shockingly produced, complete with bad grammar and pronunciation - and even AFTER the bloody event they are promoting!! In these days of fully computerised traffic and billing systems that is utterly unacceptable.

Unreal!! And they wonder why people turn 'em off.

Commercials should be as entertaining as the rest of the programme - and there is no shortage of good creative people to make them - they are just usually so over worked - one or

two where there used to be four or five - and stations pay 'em minimum wages.

And managers wonder why they leave - or worse, that they won't even look at radio as a career!!

The bean counters are truly in control!!

There's also a scary lack of experience in most creative departments.

So the 17 yr olds on \$10 an hour, with no life experience, are writing 30 or more ads a day, which, based on their poor general education, means we get banal, boring poorly constructed blandness, that then goes to the equally poor production side, where it is slapped together with the nearest semi-suitable music bed - usually too loud or the wrong "fit."

If they try and get creative and actually spend time on a script - they get hammered for not cranking out enough product.

Enough raving - I enjoy your newsletter. On Spamkillers - mine (McAfee Spamkiller) put yours into a holding pattern on my home PC, as it detected something about the senders address being different to the return address - or somesuch.

It didn't kill it - McAfee's lets you have the power to decide that yourself in its settings.

Cheers

Alan Wheatley  
NZ Radio Training School  
Wellington  
radio@xtra.co.nz

COMMENT

Well said Alan.

While the underlying problem here is money...or lack of it... you can't help but wonder what would happen if management took a risk and paid realistic wages to creatives thus attracting better and more experienced people thus getting better quality ads on air thus keeping listeners happy thus getting better results for sponsors.

Or is that too obvious?

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Hi there,

I thought I'd respond to your comment about commercials and recall.

We're a non-comm station, so we have underwriters, and it's extremely hard to do any creativity with the guidelines we're allowed by the FCC.

No calls to action, no quality or qualify statements.

Basically we do "this portion of music (programming, etc.) is made possible by a gift from" plus the name of the underwriter, address, phone & web address, their slogan, their product (what it is, not how great it is), and "our thanks to (name again) for their support of WCVK."

Variations on this theme, variations of music and voices, but that's about it.

**HOWEVER!**

Every year we do a benefit for the community food bank, that is sort of a fall festival, providing families with a safe alternative to trick or treating (admission is a canned good food item per person) and the boss lets me run wild on production.

Comedy parodies, wild music, whatever... stretching the boundaries of pun usage, credibility and good taste... we are a Christian based radio station so it's tame by current standards, but that forces me to be more creative within the boundaries that I have....

The results....

People REQUEST the promo spots!

Children actually think that by eating candy some of our DJ's turn into rampaging, looney toon (Warner Bros) Tasmanian Devils.

We've had kids come by after the event to bring candy to the station just to see what would happen -- would I bounce off the ceiling or race around the station like a rocket.

The moral of this story.... I am a Production Guy, even more than I am a DJ or the PD. Do your best on every spot! Make every word count, every note of music "fit" every sound effect as great spices NOT TOO MUCH! just right!

Will the audience request the spot? maybe not. Will you feel the satisfaction of a job well done, and more importantly have fun? Only if you do your best....

Sorry for the rambling but that's how I feel!

Dale McCubbins,  
WCVK  
PD/PM  
dale@christianfamilyradio.com

#### COMMENT

There it is again. Creativity. If it's encouraged and allowed to blossom it's a win-win for both management, listeners and clients.

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#### AND MORE MAIL

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In the previous edition of The Radio Wave I ran emails from Nick Sarames - nicksarames@msn.com in the U.S. and Paul Bryce - bn403164@cr10m.staffs.ac.uk in the U.K.

Both Nick and Paul are blind but are keen to advance their careers in radio.

Thanks for everyone's comments and input on this. They include the following...

Ian, perhaps Paul and Nick would also like some information on Australia's RPH Print Radio network? In that case they could e-mail me directly at work where I coordinate one of the regional stations in the 3RPH network.

Albury.RPH@visionaustralia.org.au

Many of our volunteers are blind or have vision loss, or other disabilities.

(Incidentally, the term 'vision impaired' is more used in Australia than sight impaired and is about other losses not blindness).

Regards  
Joanne G.  
Station Coordinator, Albury RPH

dajomigo@tpg.com.au

Hello Ian,

In my time at 2RES-FM in Sydney (about ten year's worth) the

great Julian Lee presented a jazz programme every Friday morning - 9.30-12.00 - and, as many of the jazz fraternity know, Julian has been blind all his life.

Apart from being one of this country's national musical treasures, he is also an expert communicator and operator of his own panel. He would pre-programme his notes in Braille, noting the CD track numbers, and then "go for it", with several guests and barely a wrinkle in the seams of the show.

I am quite sure that the two blind correspondents, whose letters you published in the November issue of "The Radio Wave", could, if given the opportunity, perform in a like manner.

Come on, managements, there may be potential stars out there who just need a helping hand from you and a little understanding!

Bob Taylor (2VM, Moree)

P.S. Jules, we miss you! Happy retirement!  
taylorbob@bigpond.com

Thanks Joanne and Bob for those responses.

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Last issue I reported on the unfortunate timing of a U.S. jock who came out of a report of another shooting by the Washington sniper with "Another One Bites the Dust". I also mentioned my embarrassment after accidentally playing "Learning to Fly" on the day of the Twin Towers disaster.

It can happen to any of us. You get busy and don't check the next programmed track on the playout system and before you know it...!

Here's another example. Thanks Pete.

Hey Ian,

Love the newsletter. Good to see someone out there attempting to do something for the industry in a constructive manner.

I just want to add something to your piece about playing Tom Petty - Learning To Fly on Sept. 11.

We copped a caining after our brekky guys on the morning after the Twin Towers collapse, they were talking about how

people were jumping out of the buildings before playing Free Falling.

The local paper picked up on this the next day, and we copped it big time.

Cheers,

Pete Davidson  
Assistant Program Director  
Hot 100 & Mix 104.9 Darwin

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\*-----HOT TIP-----\*

A good PD can tell if a jock is right for the job within the first 30 seconds of a demo audition.

\*-----HOT TIP-----\*

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#### TOP RADIO PREP SITES

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The Funny Firm has been on line since 1996 and contains comedy, jokes and show prep. The "new jokes" section is updated 5 times a week. Dunno why it's called that because it's actually current news capsules with kickers. Usually quite good too.

There's also some Celebrity Phone Numbers that you can call up and be a nuisance and some interesting people you can contact such as Elvis imitators, psychic detectives, the first person to sell the "pig penis dog treat" (!), the bra company looking for the world's biggest breasts.you get the idea.

This site seems to disappear then re-appear at various times. Give it a try. You may pick a time when it's there!

<http://users.aol.com/funnyfirm/funny.htm>

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#### A FINAL NOTE FROM THE EDITOR.

Just a reminder. Please help grow this letter so we can make our voice louder in the industry.

If there is anyone you know either in or outside the radio industry who would like to receive THE RADIO WAVE they should

simply ask to be subscribed by sending a blank e-mail to:

radiowave@allaboutradio.net

As you know it's free and you can unsubscribe at any time.

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