

COUNTRY AIRCHECK WEEKLY

START YOUR NEW YEAR OFF WITH A BANG!!
JOSH THOMPSON "WON'T BE LONELY LONG"!!!



December 28, 2010

Issue 223

While You Were Away...

Here's a recap of the news that transpired since our last regularly schedule publication (CAT 12/17):

WKDF PD Sought: Citadel's WKDF/Nashville is looking for its next PD. Eligible candidates must have a working knowledge of MusicMaster; experience with Scotts is a plus. Resumes and cover letters must be submitted by Jan. 7, 2011 [here](#). The station is currently being programmed by Dave Kelly, who also oversees KSCS/Dallas and WGFX/Memphis for Citadel.

Journal Promotes Two: As we reported via Twitter and Facebook, **Journal Broadcast Group** upped Dir./Radio Programming **Tom Land** to VP/Radio Programming Dec. 20. The 10-year company vet started as OM in Omaha, rising to his most recent post in 2006. He added OM oversight of Milwaukee in 2008 and will continue in that role. "I've had the chance to work closely with Tom over the last 10 years and have seen how his passion for radio, his touch with our people and his strategic focus have helped create successful radio brands in our markets," EVP/TV & Radio Ops **Steve Wexler** says. Adds Land, "We have a terrific team of programmers in our local markets, and it's a real honor to work with them every day."

Putting his company's money where his mouth is, Land promoted KFDI/Wichita OM/PD **Beverlee Brannigan** to the new post of Journal Dir./Country Programming the very next day (12/21). Brannigan joined Journal/Omaha in 2001, later transferring to Wichita. "Journal's Country stations are all vital in their communities.

(continued on page 2)



Assemble The Titans: Known for giving a number of future leaders their start in the business, then-Warner Bros. exec **Nick Hunter** (far right) assembles his troops for a junket promoting the 1989 film *Pink Cadillac*. Pictured (l-r) are **Bob Saporiti, George Briner, Rick Baumgartner, Clint Eastwood, Bernadette Peters, Rick Moxley, Bill Mayne, Bruce Adelman, Jack Purcell** and **Hunter**. A tribute to Nick featuring stories from friends in the music and sports worlds begins on page 12.

Dec. PPM Ratings

Here is the first group of **Arbitron** December 2010 PPM ratings for the period of Nov. 11-Dec. 8, listed by metro size. All figures are persons 6+, Monday-Sunday, 6am-midnight, with rankings in parentheses. Got a story beyond your boxcar numbers? Email us [here](#) with details. Tomorrow (12/29) and Thursday (12/30), you'll find ratings for newly released markets on our [website](#) starting at around 5pm CT. In Monday evening's **Country Aircheck Weekly**, we'll have a full recap of all markets including the first-time currency reports from Greensboro, Hartford, Jacksonville, Memphis and West Palm Beach.

(continued on page 2)

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Ashton Shepherd

LOOK IT UP

“It has been a long while since we’ve had new music from Ashton and I was concerned that this might be a disappointment. In fact, “Look It Up” is one of my five favorite songs of 2010 - and I’ll be very surprised if anything comes along in the next three weeks that can match it. It is a well-produced, perfectly delivered classic cheating song made without any vehicles being vandalized in the process. Ashton Shepherd is a talent that our format needs to recognize and reward.”

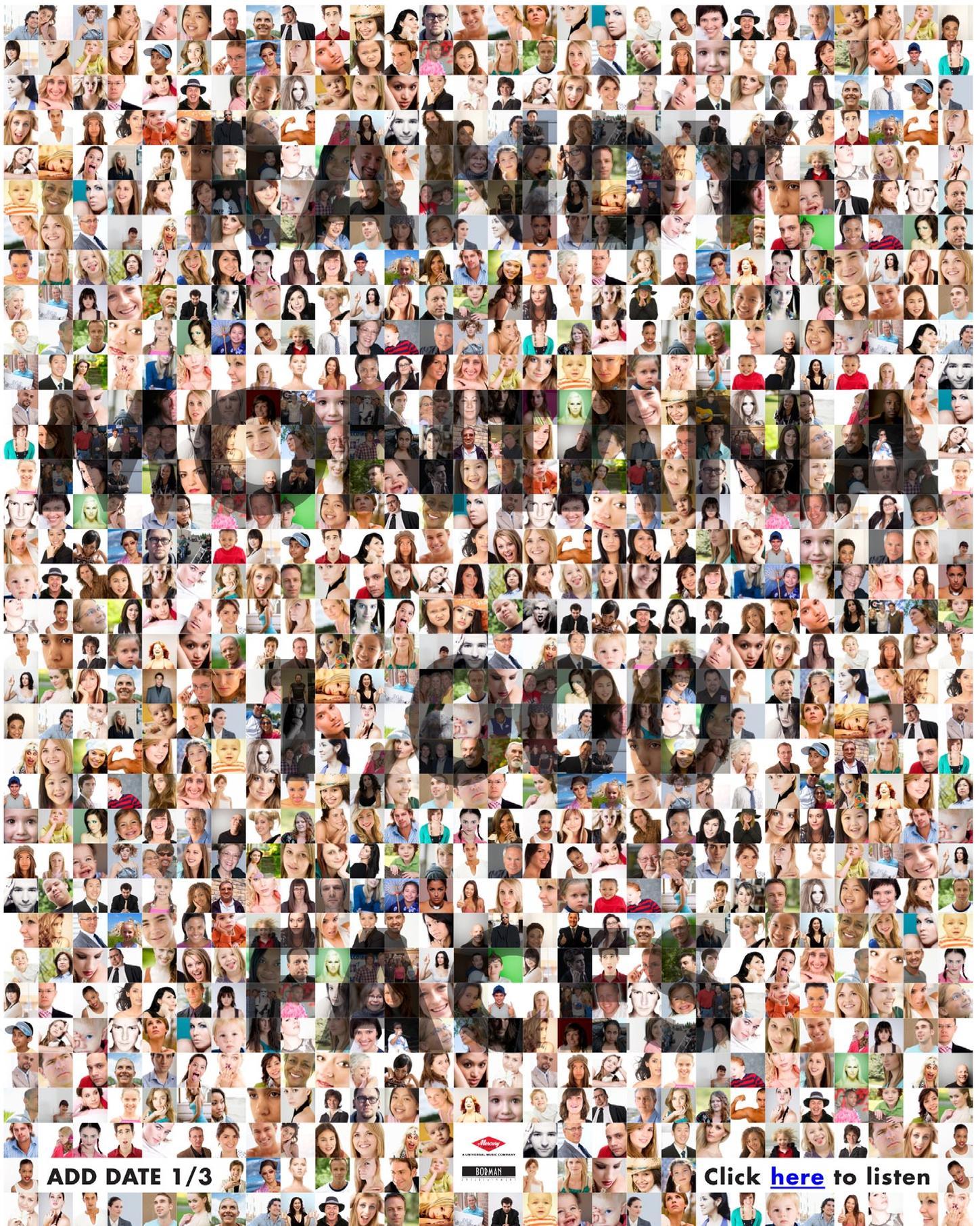
-Bob Moody
VP of Programming,
Town Square Media

ADD IT UP
January 3rd!

MCA
NASHVILLE

© 2010 MCA Nashville

Power up George Strait's "The Breath You Take." Heading for #1!



ADD DATE 1/3



Click [here](#) to listen

Power up George Strait's "The Breath You Take," heading for #1!

While You Were Away... (continued from page 1)

And it's because of the dedicated people at each of our stations," Brannigan says. Journal has six Country stations in four markets: **KVOO & KXBL/Tulsa, WCYQ/Knoxville, KFDI & KFTI/Wichita** and **KTTS/Springfield, MO**.

Big '98 Sets Lineup: As reported in a News Update (12/20), Clear Channel's **WSIX/Nashville** has finalized its post-Gerry House talent lineup. The new, as-yet unnamed morning show will feature current WSIX midday personality **Billy Greenwood** partnered with nine-year station traffic reporter **Karla Lawson**. Joining them as producer will be **Zak Becker**, who has been handling weekends for the last couple of years. Greenwood moved to Nashville when he joined WSIX in July 2001. He continued voice-tracking middays when he departed for KSD/St. Louis in Sept. 2003 and has already moved back to Nashville. Returning to the Big 98 for middays is **Dean Warfield**, who had a 10-year run with WSIX for afternoons and middays starting in the mid-'90s.

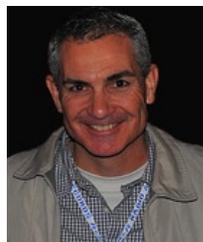
Dec. PPM Ratings (continued from page 1)

Los Angeles: Posting its best book since June, Mt. Wilson's **KKGO** improved in share and came for the second straight month, up 1.8-1.9 (26-25), with its reach rising 3.2% (26-25), edging above 1 million for the first time since July. Last December, Go Country logged a 2.0 (22).

Chicago: Despite AC WLIT's huge 3.6-8.9 Christmas book, CBS Radio's **WUSN** edged ahead 3.7-3.8 (7t-6), while its cume declined 2.4% (13-12); that cume rank is its highest since July. A year ago, US99 delivered a 4.1 (6).

San Francisco: Entercom's **KBWF** held steady at a 1.4 (25t-25t), with its audience up for the second consecutive session, gaining 2.8% (27-25). Twelve months back, The Wolf notched a 1.7 (23t). Empire's **KRTY/San Jose** pulled closer, 0.9-1.1 (30t-29), picking up 6.2% more cume (32-31), and beating its 1.0 (27t) from Dec. '09.

MY TUNES: MUSIC THAT SHAPED MY LIFE



RJ Curtis

Arista/Nashville Midwest rep **RJ Curtis** discusses his most influential songs, albums or concerts:

1. Queen, Fabulous Forum, Los Angeles, 1977:

I was a recent fan of the band and had worn out the *Night At The Opera* album, quickly acquiring all their music. To this day, Freddie Mercury remains one of the two most captivating live performers I have ever seen. I was lucky enough to see Queen's *Jazz* tour, as well. Amazing. They are still my all-time favorite band.

2. Merle Haggard, Universal Amphitheatre, Los Angeles, 1982:

I was 23, two years into this format and still not completely convinced about it. That night and that artist proved pivotal. I walked away from that show deciding to marry country music, in terms of a career choice.

3. Garth Brooks, CRS, 1990: He played one of the luncheons that year and debuted "Friends In Low Places," which would kick off his *No Fences* album. He was already gaining huge momentum with "The Dance" from his first release. It sounds easy to claim now, but afterwards, I honestly remember saying on the air at KNIX/Phoenix, "This guy is a star and will change this format." Along with Freddie Mercury, he's the most dynamic, exciting live performer ever. Also at that luncheon was Alan Jackson. And unfortunately for them, a group called Billy Hill played last, as everyone left.

4. A two-way tie — Steve Earle's *Guitar Town* and Randy Travis' debut *Storms Of Life*: To this day, I'd list them in my top five albums of any genre.

5. U2's *Joshua Tree*: This one makes my top five album list, too. "Running To Stand Still" never gets old.

• **A highly regarded song or album you've never heard:** George Harrison's *All Things Must Pass*. I should be ashamed of myself for that one.

• **An "important" piece of music you just don't get:** I don't know if we could consider him "important" yet, but Justin Bieber. Disposable.

• **An album you played or listened to incessantly:** Another tie - Elton John's *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road* and Pink Floyd's *The Wall*. Both are double albums. Does that actually count as four?

• **One obscure or non-country song everyone should listen to right now:** Well, it's certainly not obscure, but given the recent 30th anniversary of John Lennon's death, "In My Life" is resonating big-time with me right now.

Reach Curtis at rj.curtis@sonymusic.com.

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The Band Perry
"YOU LIE"
 The follow up to their #1 and platinum plus selling single, "If I Die Young" ...
 On your desk NOW
IMPACT DATE 1/18



Good Tidings: Bonneville's WIL/St. Louis' "Cornbread's Kids Crusade" raised more than \$260,000 to purchase a Mobile Intensive Care Unit for the St. Louis Children's Hospital. Morning host Cornbread and WIL are still accepting donations here. Volunteers are pictured here with the tote board.

Dallas: America's most-heard Country station for the second month in a row, Cumulus' **KPLX** stayed level at a 5.2 (4-4), though its cume declined 4.8% (4-5). A year ago, The Wolf also turned in a 5.2 (3). Citadel's **KSCS** decreased for the fourth straight month, 3.1-2.9 (11t-12t), recording its lowest 6+ share in PPM. However, 'SCS added 9.4% more listeners (15-13) to generate its highest cume since June.

Houston: Cox's **KKBQ** carded its best book since May 2008, 4.6-4.9 (7-6), registering its third straight increase. Its share rank is its highest since Oct. '08. That performance easily beat

BIRTHDAYS

Wednesday (12/29) - Jessica Andrews, Steve Casey, Ken Robold (ken.robold@umusic.com)

Thursday (12/30) - Suzy Bogguss, Cathy Woods, Dave Logan, Bo Martinovich (bo.martinovich@sonybm.com), Larry Neal (larryneal@clearchannel.com)

Friday (12/31) - Sam Harrell (smagee1@sbcglobal.net), Lynette Garbonola, Memarie, Joe Kelly (jkelly@aspirionrecords.com)

Saturday (1/1) - Steve Ripley (The Tractors)

Sunday (1/2) - the late Roger Miller; Stan Byrd (stabyr@aol.com); Chris Hartman, Luke Lewis (luke.lewis@umusic.com); Bruce Shindler (bruce.shindler@umusic.com); Kara Wiggins

Monday (1/3) - Nikki Nelson

Tuesday (1/4) - Patty Loveless, Deana Carter, Kathy Forester

last December's 3.4 (12). Its cume fell 7.6% (7-8). CBS Radio's **KILT-FM** grew 3.1-3.3 (16-14), with its audience down 3.2% (12-12). Last year, the station scored a 3.0 (14t). Cox's Classic Country **KTHT** was up 1.7-1.9 (22-20), its highest share rank since Nov. '09, and beating its 1.8 (21) from a year ago. Its cume was down incrementally.

Atlanta: This 6+ battle is the closest it's been since PPM started here in Oct. '08. Citadel's **WKHX** held firm at a 5.2 (5-6),

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#5 Passion
#6: 35-44 Females and building every day (Bullseye Callout)
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"KEEP IN MIND" WRITTEN BY JEFFREY STEELE AND SHANE MINOR PRODUCED BY JEFFREY STEELE FOR 3 RING CIRCUS MUSIC

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though its reach retreated 5.8% (11-10). In Dec. '09, 'KHX had a 5.6 (5). Clear Channel's **WUBL** set a new 6+ record for the fifth time in six months, up 4.6-5.0 (9-7), while its cume declined 3.9% (12-12). A year ago, The Bull earned a 3.1 (16). 'UBL APD/MD **Lance Houston** tells **Country Aircheck**, "WUBL beat WKHX for the fourth month in a row 25-54, and beat them by 1.0 share when you average out the Oct.-Dec. books. In December, we ranked seventh, and WKHX was tied for No. 11. Among 18-34s, WUBL has now beat WKHX three of the last four months, ranking fifth in December, while WKHX ranked seventh."

Philadelphia: At a time when Christmas-formatted AC WBEB nearly doubles its nearest competitor (up 7.1-11.7), Beasley's **WXTU** fell 4.3-3.8 (7-8) to its lowest share since Holiday '09, as its cume declined 78,800 (-10.8%) (14-15). However, that still was better than Dec. '09's 3.6 (8t).

Washington: CC's **WMZQ** was stable at a 3.6 (10t-10), with cume down 3.2% (13-13). That share topped Dec. '09's 3.3 (12).

Riverside: CBS Radio's **KFRG** turned in its strongest showing since March, rising 4.5-4.9 (5t-5), adding 6.5% more listeners (7-7) to set a new cume record, while outperforming last year's 4.1 (6t). Mt. Wilson's **KKGO/Los Angeles** grew 1.2-1.5 (30t-26t), attracting 23,100 additional cume (+15.5%) (27-25). Go Country beat Dec. '09's 1.3 (24t).

San Jose: Empire's **KRTY** stopped a four-month skid, gaining 2.9-3.2 (14-12), with its reach up 8.5% (19-16) for its best cume rank since July. In Dec. '09, 'RTY had a 3.5 (12).

Middlesex: Press' **WKMK/Monmouth** was unchanged at a 1.7 (25-25), but added 8.1% more listeners set new cume and cume rank records (24-22) for the third straight month.

News & Notes

KFDI/Wichita's Brian & Kellie morning team held its third annual "Christmas In A Box," collecting 1,000 boxes of gifts, letters and other items for troops deployed overseas. **Brian**

ADD DATES

JANUARY 3

ASHTON SHEPHERD/Look It Up (MCA)
RANDY MONTANA/1,000 Faces (Mercury)

JANUARY 10

MIRANDA LAMBERT/Heart Like Mine (Columbia)
RASCAL FLATTS/I Won't Let Go (Big Machine)
TRACE ADKINS/Brown Chicken Brown Cow (Show Dog-Universal)

JANUARY 18

BAND PERRY/You Lie (Republic Nashville)
DAVID ADAM BYRNES/Sweet Distraction (Better Angels/Ride)



Troops opening Christmas In A Box packages in Iraq

& Kellie's Troop Support Network packed the boxes while listeners and local sponsors raised \$15,000 to assure mail delivery.

Bonneville/St. Louis, including Country **WIL**, collected more than 6,000 toys in December for the **St. Louis Crisis Nursery**. **WIL** afternoon host **Bo Matthews** touted "Big Dawg Workshop" collection bins in local Shop 'n Save stores as part of the drive. Last year's effort collected 5,000 toys.

Nashville Mayor **Karl Dean** presented an autographed custom concert print to **Garth Brooks** and **Trisha Yearwood**

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On the power ballad "Don't You Wanna Stay" — a string-laden duet with Kelly Clarkson — Aldean shows what a **potent vocalist** he's become. Matching roof-shaking notes with his strong-lunged partner, Aldean proves he can **sing as solidly as he rocks.**

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jason Aldean with Kelly Clarkson "Don't You Wanna Stay"

Big Spins on **Big** Stations

Impacting **Now**

Thanks Radio and Happy New Year
from Broken Bow Records!



as a "Thank You" gift for staging the nine sold-out flood relief concerts. According to the Nashville Convention & Visitors Bureau, the economic impact of the concert series was up to \$15 million.

Registration growth has the **International Entertainment Buyers Association** moving to the newly renovated Sheraton Nashville Downtown for its Oct. 2-4, 2011 conference. Information on conference room rates will be sent to members in early 2011.

NFL alum **Ray Carolin** and Spalding Sporting Goods teamed to donate 14,000 toys to **Toys For Tots** last Sunday (12/19) during **Garth Brooks'** sold-out benefit concert run for **The Community Foundation Of Middle Tennessee**.

The RIAA issued gold certification for **Kenny Chesney's** "The Boys Of Fall."

According to the *Langley Advance*, Canada's **The Road Hammers** will disband to pursue other endeavors after their New Year's Eve concert at Langley, BC's Cascades Casino. Full article [here](#).

George Strait and redshirtfridays.org have partnered to make every Friday on his spring tour with **Reba** and **Lee Ann Womack**, wait for it, red shirt Friday to show support for servicemen and women. "I want to see a building full of red shirts, if possible," Strait says. Details [here](#).

Knopf will release **Rodney Crowell's** memoir *Chinaberry Sidewalks* Jan. 18. Several pre-order packages are available through his website [here](#).

GAC will host the *Top 50 Videos Of 2010* this week at 8pm ET. The No. 1 video will be revealed New Year's Eve. Complete schedule [here](#).

Dolly Parton and folk/country group the **Kingston Trio** are among the **Recording Academy's** Lifetime Achievement award recipients. The honorees will be celebrated during an invitation-only ceremony Feb. 12 leading up to the *53rd Annual Grammy Awards* Feb. 13. Complete list of recipients [here](#).

Chart Chat

While no official chart was published this week or last, we congratulate the **Valory** crew and **Reba** on earning the most

CHECK OUT

Jan. 11	Steel Magnolia <i>Steel Magnolia</i> (Big Machine)
Jan. 25	Joe Nichols <i>Greatest Hits</i> (Show Dog-Universal)
Feb. 8	Various Artists <i>The Music Inside: A Collaboration Dedicated To Waylon Jennings</i> (Scatter/Valory) Craig Campbell <i>Craig Campbell</i> (BPG)
Feb. 15	Jeff Bates <i>One Day Closer EP</i> (Black River) Sarah Darling <i>Angels & Devils</i> (Black River) Due West <i>Forget The Miles EP</i> (Black River)
March 8	Sara Evans <i>Stronger</i> (RCA)
March 29	Harters <i>TBA</i> (BPG)
April 19	Brad Paisley <i>This Is Country Music</i> (Arista)

Album release info to news@countryaircheck.com.

airplay last week with "Turn On The Radio," as recorded by Mediabase. We also tip our hats to the **Broken Bow** team and **Jason Aldean** for topping out this week with "My Kinda Party."

Life Notes

Best wishes to **LeAnn Rimes** and **Eddie Cibrian**, who got engaged over the weekend.

Best wishes for a speedy recovery go to **Kelly Parkes**, who has been in the hospital since Dec. 21 following an operation to remedy a cat bite on her wrist.

Crib Note

Congrats to **Dierks Bentley** and wife **Cassidy** on the birth of their second daughter **Jordan Catherine**, who was welcomed to the world Christmas Day. She joins older sister Evalyn Day.

CAC

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Bow Chicka Wow Wow!!

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Seek & Employ

While **Country Aircheck's** inability to follow in the footsteps of the federal government and print money limits the scope of our stimulus plan, we hope we can help put a few folks back to work with our annual listing of those wanting to start off the new year with a new gig.

RADIO

Rob Banks

Former KCYE/Las Vegas middayer
702-885-5841 or rob@onairrob.com

Katie Bright

Former WSIX/Nashville morning personality
615-788-2203 or ktbright@hotmail.com

Bob Domingo

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Richard Falken

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Lisa Manning

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Jon Robbins

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Jason Rufkahr

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Mary Villers

Broadcast Exec.
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Danny Wright

On-Air talent, 2000 CMA Major Market
Personality of the Year
360-394-1740 or goodbuddy@aol.com

RECORDS & INDUSTRY

Paige Altone

Former WKHX & WYAY/Atlanta Promo Assistant
seeking record label promo coordinator position
404-271-5707 or paigealtone@gmail.com

Ashley Anderson

Former Huskins-Harris Business Management
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Allen Mitchell

Former Mercury SW regional
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Chuck Rhodes

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Darlene Starr

Record promotion vet
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Anne Sarosdy-Yarbrough

Record promotion vet
615-298-8161 or anneyarbro@comcast.net

OPENINGS

KXEO Radio, Inc.'s Country-AC combo KWWR &
KXEO/Columbia, MO
Searching for PD
greg@radiogetsresults.net

Clear Channel's WKKT/Charlotte

Seeking midday personality
Airchecks and resumes to countryjobs@clearchannel.com

Riverbend Communications' KTHK/Idaho Falls, ID

Seeking fulltime air personality
Airchecks and resumes to hr@eiradio.com

Webster & Associates PR

Seeking senior-level publicist
resumes to billing@websterpr.com

Clear Channel's KXKT & KTWI/Omaha

Seeking MD/air personality
Airchecks and resumes to erikjohnson3@clearchannel.com

Clear Channel's WSTH/Columbus, GA and WOBB/Albany, GA

Seeking PD to handle both stations
Resume and info to jobs@mysouth1061.com

Sony Music Nashville

Seeking Dir./Syndicated & Satellite Radio
Search job board at www.sonymusic.com

Citadel's KSCS/Dallas

Seeking part-timers with three years' on-air
experience
Aircheck and resume to arradio.jobs@citcomm.com

Citadel's WKDF/Nashville

Seeking PD
Resumes and cover letters to nashville.job@citcomm.com by Jan. 7

Mt. Wilson's KKG0/Los Angeles

Seeking morning personality
Resumes to mlevine@mountwilsoninc.com

Midwest Communications/Sheboygan, WI

Seeking PD for Country WBRM & Rock WHBZ
Resumes and audio to john.schweitzer@mwcradio.com

Dial Global Radio Networks

Seeking part-timers in Denver and Los Angeles
Resume and demo to jpaul@dial-global.com

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NEW TEEN COUNTRY DUO...

Jenny & Ashley

Their debut record

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TALL TREE
LOFTON
CREEK
ENTERTAINMENT

JINGLE BALLS ROCK



Country Aircheck would like to thank everyone who participated in our Inaugural Country Aircheck Bowling Tournament, including some really poor bowlers from...



Happy New Year from everyone at
Country Aircheck...

SEE YOU IN 2011!

Friends Remember Nick

Capturing the essence of an individual as unique as **Nick Hunter** is perhaps best accomplished through stories told by his friends. We lost Nick Dec. 15, and our thoughts and prayers remain with his wife Margie and children Kate and Sam. We hope these reflections will bring a smile to their hearts, knowing how much he was loved.



The Hunters: Sam, Margie, Kate and Nick, celebrating Kate's graduation from Earlham College.

As for me, I'm most grateful for all of the people Nick brought into my life through the years. Many have become close friends – people I would never have met if not for Nick. These friends, many of whom you'll hear from below, and the stories we will tell about Nick for years to come, are and will be my favorite memories of Nick Hunter. – Lon Helton

Brian Hill, Paradigm Agency Talent Agent: Like the mountain of worn-out t-shirts that no doubt littered Nick's closet, I have dozens of stories. But my favorite isn't funny, nor does it involve insults or his trademark gruffness. It's simply sweet.

A client was about to sign to one of Nick's labels and called to ask my opinion of Nick: "Hunter doesn't really fit the model of the regular record guy," he said. "Is he okay? Should I do this? Do you like him?" I said Nick was great and that I loved working with him. Long after the deal was done, Nick called and said he wanted to do something for me as a thank-you for referring the client. The truth is that I was doing something nice for the client, not necessarily for Nick. When I wouldn't let him do anything for me, Nick called a co-worker for some help, and was told I was getting ready to build a fence around our property and that it would be expensive. My co-worker suggested maybe Nick could help out with that. Nick took it upon himself to track down the builder and find out the cost of the fence. Without saying a word to me, he paid for the fence *in full*. To this day, my wife and I refer to it as "The Fence That Nick Built." I miss my friend, but am so grateful to have known him.

Jimmy Bank, Chicago Cubs Traveling Secretary: About 20 years ago, Nick invited me to join him and Dwight Yoakam at the Grammy Awards in Los Angeles. He told me that it was formal, and as a huge music fan, I was, to say the least, very excited and willing to wear anything he told me to.

When we met in the lobby the day of the awards show, I

arrived looking very formal in my rented tux. Unaware at the time of Nick's sartorial preferences, I was rather surprised to find him wearing a tuxedo jacket over an Oakland A's sweatshirt. When I questioned his attire, he gave me the very "Nick" reply of, "Let's go!" And we did.

Gregg Lindahl, Cox Media Group VP/Digital: One of the first conversations I had with Nick concerned a record he was working. He told me it was a p.o.s. and I shouldn't play it. Never had a record company executive been that candid; he earned my lasting respect with that one sentence. And when he said, "This is one you should play," it carried enormous weight. He made me hear Randy Travis in a way I had never heard Randy Ray before.

I remember telling Nick about a promotion person who threatened to erect a roadblock on I-40 so I would not make it to Nashville when I became PD of WSM-AM/FM. Instead of the comfort I was expecting, he laughed and said, "They're right."

Music brought us together, but baseball brought us closer. Nick was a fan of the game, but more than that, he was a fan of the people he met in the game. It was never the game or the music, it was the people. One need only have met Margie, Kate or Sam to know that Nick, despite the bluster, as a people person. Nick always began a story with "You know what's funny?" So, you know what's funny? He told me shortly before he died that I was one of his "five best friends." I said, "Nick, you have a thousand 'five best friends.'" And indeed he did. All of us who were fortunate enough to be in that multitude feel a huge sense of loss.

Chuck Woodling, childhood friend who had Nick stand-up as a groomsman at his wedding in 1964: You know Nick loved baseball. You probably didn't know that when he was in his pre-teens, he was a successful Little League pitcher who was often featured in a neighborhood magazine in Kansas City. Later, he transferred his love for baseball to the professional variety.

Nick's Dad was a traveling salesman and wasn't around much, so Nick and his friends often rode the bus to watch the Kansas City Blues, a Yankees farm team, and later the Kansas City Athletics when they came to town.

Nick also had an abiding love of APBA, the baseball board game. He and a friend once spent an entire summer playing half an American League season, rolling dice, keeping standings and recording statistics. Nick was also deep into baseball bubblegum cards for awhile, but that interest gave way to collecting records, mainly Elvis Presley records. He was an Elvis fan from the get-go.

Nick was a great boyhood chum who was a friend for more than half a century. I knew who he was because he lived in the neighborhood, but we didn't become friends until I found his grade card on the playground at J.C. Nichols School and returned it to him. If you knew Nick, you know he didn't have all that much interest in grade cards.



Nick as a groomsman in a friend's 1964 wedding, a week before Nick's 22nd birthday.

Bruce Adelman, childhood friend and former Warner Bros. promoter: If you knew Nick, you knew he had a great offbeat — and sometimes tasteless — sense of humor. A couple years after Elvis died, Nick, Al Cooley and I went to a world premiere in Nashville of a movie based on Elvis' life. The movie was awful, thus putting Nick in an even more feisty mood than usual.

At one point in the movie, Elvis is still alive and a scene opens with Priscilla lying in bed alone. There's not a sound from the screen for a few seconds, and then Nick yells, "THUMP!"

It took me a few seconds to realize Nick had made the sound of Elvis hitting the bathroom floor.

Elizabeth Hatcher Travis, Randy Travis' manager of 30 years: I will be forever grateful to Nick. He re-released "On The Other Hand," which went to No. 1 and was the ACM and CMA Song of the Year in 1986. Nick called to say, "Hatcher, you got your way." Love you, Nick.

David "Bubba" Berry, BNA Midwest promoter: Nick was great at bringing us all back to earth when we thought we were on top of it. More important, he was even better at picking us up when things were falling apart.

I keep thinking about the day he flew to Dallas to go see radio with me. I met him at the gate with a Whataburger Double/Double with Jalapeño (his favorite). He got onto me for doing it, but before we had even gotten to the car he had it half-eaten. But my favorite thing is that he gave me my nickname.

Bob Moody, Townsquare Media VP/Programming: One day in 1988, Nick called to ask why WPOC wasn't playing Dwight Yoakam's "Streets of Bakersfield." I explained that Baltimore was an accordion-free zone. The heated conversation that followed ended with me saying, "Nick, when you said you were going to shove that Dwight Yoakam CD up my ass, you still had a chance for an add. But when you said, 'sideways' ..."

Rick Baumgartner, Black River Ent. VP/Promotion: I was doing a Sports Talk radio show on WSIX-AM/Nashville when Nick hired me to do promotion for Warner Bros. in 1988. Six months or so into my new career as SW regional based in Dallas, the light had not yet gone on, and Nick was worried that he may have made a mistake and would have to make a change. So he contacted KSCS-FM & WBAP-AM/Dallas PD Ted Stecker to set up a "substitute host" opportunity for me on the WBAP weekend sports show. Needless to say, the light went on, and I have spent the last 23 years in the promo biz. It was five years later that Nick shared with me the story that he wasn't going to let me go without helping me have a back-up plan, even though I didn't know it.

It was also during my Dallas years we were going for adds on Dwight Yoakam's "Long White Cadillac." Nick had told me that if I didn't get at least 30 out-of-the-box adds (remember those days?) he would fire me. I was coming up a bit short and started telling my stations what Nick had said. I was able to get a few more adds, but I don't think I hit my 30. Apparently Nick got wind of what I was saying, and he called me up. In true Nick fashion (insert words that grown men and women don't need to hear), he told me if I ever did that &*&# again, he'd fire me.

Neal Spielberg, Spielberg Consulting: I moved to Nashville in 1983 as the new local WEA sales rep. Nick and I discovered we had a love for baseball in common and were both playing a baseball strategy game on a Commodore 64 computer. WB wanted to become a bigger force in country music, and Nick wanted to have a sales presence in Nashville. He was willing to give a local guy with little experience a shot and fought for me to get the gig. Most folks I talked to outside the company advised against it, saying WB didn't have a country division and I was making a big mistake. Nick convinced Jim Ed Norman, Mo Ostin and Vic Faraci to let me be part of this new country division.



A sojourn last summer to Busch Stadium found (clockwise, from top left) Bob Moody, Lon Helton, Mike Wilson, Mike Folan, Gregg Lindahl and Nick Hunter visiting St. Louis Cardinals catcher Jason LaRue and trainer Barry Wienberg in the Cards dugout.

At the time, I didn't know what a Lieberman or Handleman was, let alone the difference in the two. When I asked Nick what the job was and what he wanted me to do, I remember him saying, "Just sell our music. You make the position what you think it should be."

Early in my tenure I asked Nick how to handle managers who would get over the top about their artists. The first such manager I dealt with was Chuck Morris, who would try and intimidate me, since I was so new at this. Nick said to tell him, "Shut up and sit the fuck down or get the fuck out." Not long after that, Chuck came into my office and started in on me. I quickly followed Nick's advice, and there was Chuck Morris, sitting down in front of my desk, asking me in a calm manner how we

could work together on his artist. Nick always knew how to read people and get right to the heart of the matter.

Nick was my friend for 27 years. I have to admit there were moments I didn't like him. But I always loved him. We've shared laughs, disagreements, baseball, music, mutual friends, and crazy co-workers and artists.

Chuck Morris, AEG Live Rocky Mountains CEO/Pres.: The first club I opened was the Tulagi in Boulder, CO in 1970, and Nick was first record guy I ever met. The doors had only been open a month when I had the Earl Scruggs Revue coming in, and Nick called to buy 12 tickets for the show. He wanted to bring a bunch of radio guys up and was also buying a bunch of spots on KRNW/Boulder to support the show. Being the rookie, I said, "That's unreal. Why are you doing that?" In typical Nick fashion, he said, "That's what we do, you idiot." We were best friends for four decades, and I will miss him terribly. He always put me in my place and made me a better person.

Chuck Rhodes, VP/Country, E1 Entertainment Nashville: For more than 20 years Nick was my mentor, my teacher and my boss, but mainly my friend. The years with Nick have given me a wealth of memories and what I like to call "Nickisms."

- When someone from your past bestowed another bad experience in the present, out came: "Remember, people don't change!"
- When you celebrated a No. 1 record late on a Monday night after the charts came in, there was always, "Congratulations. Pat yourself on the back and celebrate for five minutes, and then let's get on to next week."
- The first time Nick hired me in the early '90s at Giant Records, I heard that reassuring line: "OK, you've got the job. But you weren't my first choice."

If you needed a job, needed to renegotiate a deal or needed tickets to the World Series, Nick was always there to help a friend. Twenty years later, just three weeks before we lost him, there he was again, from his hospital bed, negotiating/scamming/structuring me a new job for the future. I don't know what the hell I'm gonna do now.

Gary Greenberg, Black River Promotion: I always wondered who the real Nick Hunter was. To me and to everyone else I knew that knew Nick, there was no sacred ground. We were all fair game. I always thought he was Don Rickles' son, not that we didn't enjoy the abuse. To people he didn't know, he was the poster child for polite.

I'm thinking that Major League Baseball will have a glut of comp tickets this coming year; ticket sales might also go through the roof.

Coyote Calhoun, WAMZ/Louisville PD: I started going to spring training in Arizona with Nick 14 years ago when Nick's son Sam was just 7. A bunch of us kept going back every year. Last March, Sam turned 21, and Nick designated me to buy Sam his first legal beer at the ballpark that day. Nick said it was very important for someone with a lot of experience in drinking beer to be the one to make that purchase. I've never been so honored.

Maria Brunner, Insight Management: I was working with the band Southern Pacific and would not let Nick give up on "Honey I Dare You." He told me I was the most persistent management rep and that I was driving him crazy. He also said to keep doing it, and if he did not hear from me during the day he would call and give me hell and tell me to not let up. The song went No. 1, and he clearly taught me how to stay focused and on track. He told me that I taught him to *believe*, although I think it was he who taught me.

Rick Moxley, Show Dog-Universal VP/Promotion: In the spring of 1983, I was a young punk PR guy for the Oakland A's. One day, I answered a completely unsolicited call and heard, "You Rick Moxley? I'm Nick Hunter and work for Warner Bros. Records in Nashville and found your name in the media guide. You a country music fan?" Nick went on to say that, growing up in Kansas City, he had been a big fan of the Kansas City A's. He asked who my favorite country music act was, and I didn't hesitate to tell him it was Hank Williams, Jr. He quickly said, "I'll trade you some Bocephus stuff for some A's stuff." "Done," I said, and the game was on.

I went through my office and sent him everything A's that wasn't tied down: yearbooks, media guides, MLB guides,



A Right Of Spring: Each year, Nick and a large group of friends gathered in Phoenix for spring training. For more than a decade, the merry band descended on the home of Larry (fourth from left) and Marilyn Daniels for a great dinner the final night of the trip.

souvenirs, etc. A week later, I received a huge box of Hank, Jr. plunder, from boots to hats to panties! The relationship was starting, and our weekly, if not daily, calls began. Little did I know that phone call would change my life and, in essence, invent "Nick the Stick."

Memorial Day weekend that year, I met Nick for the first time when he came to Oakland and we hosted the Yankees. I loaded him up with every A's and MLB credential possible, and he came on the field to watch batting practice for what was the first time. I had no idea what a huge baseball fan he was. We walked into the clubhouse and Nick met Barry Weinberg, Jackie Moore, Ron Schueler, Walt Jocketty, Mickey Morabito (A's traveling secretary), Wayne Hagin (current Mets broadcaster) and Jay Alves (current Rockies PR guy). "Nick the Stick" was in all his glory!

That Friday we went to lunch with the folks at KNEW. I remember like it was yesterday the ride back from Jack London Square to the ballpark. Nick dropped a very subtle hint: "If you ever get tired of this shit, you need to come to work for me."

Little did I know that, from that moment, he was grooming me to be one of his guys.

Fast-forward to the spring of 1985: After four seasons with the A's, I left to do PR for the NBA Seattle SuperSonics. Nick and I were becoming best phone friends, although his affection for the NBA paled in comparison with baseball. Miserable (not sleepless) in Seattle, I called Nick to inquire about possible job opportunities. His response was a warm and fuzzy, "You dumbshit, I told you not to leave baseball." He said to stick out the season and he'd make me a field guy later that summer. He had remembered our conversation from three years' prior, and it was really that simple. Now he was inventing me as a record guy.

So it all began on July 15, 1985. I vividly recall the first week Nick brought me to Nashville. That Thursday was his birthday and was also the day we headed out to the Country Palace to see a new artist WB had just signed by the name of Randy Travis. Not a bad first label showcase, I might add. A week later, I was headed to Atlanta with the Forester Sisters as the Warner Bros. "rookie" SE regional promotion person.

Nick and our staff had a great run: Hank Jr., Conway, Gary Morris, Crystal Gayle, the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band and the Foresters. Then came Randy, Dwight Yoakam, Highway 101 and Travis Tritt. It wasn't a bad way for a rookie to break into the business.

In January 1994, I joined Nick at Giant Records for a two-year run. When Giant folded into Reprise in January 1996, Nick and I never officially worked together again. But I can tell you that from 1985 until the day he passed away, I never made a move in this business with consulting him first. He was always my mentor.

Sadly, he's gone now. I visited with Nick the week before Thanksgiving. We had wanted to go out to lunch, but his failing health prevented that. I called and said I'd bring him something, and will now proudly remember that I most likely delivered him his last Brown's hamburger and chili – so Nick-esque!

As we chatted, we both laughed about all the crazy and fun things we had done and witnessed since he first walked into the ballpark in May 1983, in both the music and sports world. We probably even cried at a few things, too. As I was leaving, I noticed the new Mickey Mantle book on his stand. "Cool book," I said. "I'm thinking about getting it for my Dad for Christmas." In true Nick fashion, he insisted that I take his. "It's not like I can't get another one," he quipped. Well, I never saw Nick again, and my Dad got his book from Amazon instead.

It's been great therapy for me to actually put all this in writing. Nick Hunter was one of a kind. He was the only reason I am in this business today. As I told all "his" guys, he didn't just teach us the record business, he taught us about life. Rest in peace, Nick. Say hello to Mantle and Paycheck! P.S.: I never did get that haircut.

Jack Purcell, Big Machine VP/Promotion: Nick was a man of his word, a mentor and coach. He was intimidating. He scared the hell out of me in the early days at Warner Bros. He'd tell you the truth before he knew if you could handle it. Then he'd check back in and make sure that you were OK, talk some more, give you some advice and send you off again. He was a man of second chances. But a third chance would be tough with Nick. I always felt proud to say, "I'm a friend of Nick." His circle of friends is the essence of character. They're just good, good guys.



Nick Hunter (c) and Conway Twitty (second from right) visit the Music Country Network.



A 1979 St. Petersburg showcase that featured new MCA act Kim Charles (fourth from right). Radio programmers and MCA staffers surround a supine Nick Hunter in a rare instance where he's wearing a collared shirt.

Back in '87, I was behind Nick in the hallway of WB. He stopped, spun around and looked at me. There were times that he would stare at you before he would speak. He then said, "Do you want to call on *Gavin* stations?" I was working in the mailroom at the time and quickly said, "Yes." He turned around and started walking. I asked, "Nick, what do I do?" He turned around and stared at me a little longer before saying, "You do know how to dial a telephone, don't you? Shut up and listen. They (radio) will tell you everything you need to know." It was the best advice he could give me.

After the WB days, Nick hired me to help run the promo department at Audium/Koch. We had a blast. We worked hard and laughed way too much. As the industry shrunk, Nick would often say, "At least we get to work with the people we like."

Nick was the closest that I ever had to a second dad, and I know that I'm not alone. We talked often and texted way too much. His son Sam is the spitting image of his father's character and wit. Through our sadness on losing Nick, Sam was the one calling to make sure that his father's friends were OK. If you missed that line, please read it again. By understanding that, you will have an idea of what kind of guy Nick Hunter was and the legacy that he leaves behind. Margie, Kate and Sam are true treasures. My heart aches for them during this time. I take comfort in knowing their strength and support for each other will help heal the loss.

Editor's Note: Few people outside of Nashville know that for more than 20 years Nick talked baseball regularly on local sports talk radio. If you'd like to hear more great stories from his friends in the sports world, WGFX/Nashville's on-air tribute to Nick can be heard at <http://www.1045thezone.com/sectional.asp?id=23300>

Rest in peace, my friend.