

**Marconi
& Cheese**
Radio Finalists Smiling

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COUNTRY
AIRCHECK
SEPTEMBER 2011

**KENNY
CHESNEY**

- 45** BILLION PLUS AUDIENCE IMPRESSIONS
- 30** MILLION PLUS ALBUMS SOLD
- 17** MILLION PLUS DIGITAL TRACKS SOLD
- 10** MILLION PLUS TICKETS SOLD IN THE PAST 10 YEARS
- 47** TOTAL STADIUM PLAYS
- 22** #1 SINGLES

SONIC BOOM

Radio Pros Are Gushing Over Nashville's New Music



Monthly after monthly, book after book, the message was clear – Country ratings were growing. And as Country Aircheck spoke with programmers in all regions, the same refrain came back: It's the music, stupid. Well, maybe not that bluntly, but the general idea was the same. Throw in a few network television star turns and some big album debuts and, suddenly, whispers of a new Country boom are becoming open conversation. Undeniably, something is happening in country music. Something good.

Consultant Gerry McCracken, who until recently spent more than 14 years as Format Coordinator for Cox, sees the phenomenon on two levels. "Personally, I feel the music is much stronger, but my feelings really don't play into it," he says. "The research shows the music is stronger."

One of the best empirical arguments for this surge comes through analysis of current music percentages at Cox stations since 2009. In early September two years ago, WKHK/Richmond was 8% current. By late August 2011, it had doubled to 16%. Across the same time frame, KWEN/Tulsa expanded from 9% to 17%, WHKO/Dayton jumped from 12% to 29%, and WZZK/Birmingham grew from 19% to 30% current.

Testing Positive

What makes those shifts so remarkable in the context of a music discussion is that they were prompted by nothing beyond the research. "Our goal is to play the best-testing music," McCracken says. "We haven't really changed anything within Cox as far as what we do musically. The only difference is we're seeing new music testing better, and it's testing better more quickly."

"What you're seeing in those 2009 numbers is that our currents weren't necessarily currents at that time; they were classified as recurrences. When we add a song now, it's not unusual for it to take [just] two or three weeks to be testing through the roof. We're running the rats through the snake faster. What's changing is that the listeners are accepting new music faster. The snake is hungrier."

"All I can do is second what he said," consultant **Rusty Walker** adds. "It's all based on consumer feedback. And looking back over a couple of these waves from the past several decades, I've found that every time the format makes a decided



Rusty Walker

lean toward the contemporary, we see growth. Not that there's anything wrong with good, traditional country, but the ability to reach younger listeners makes come go up. Conversion to partisanship increases. And if you keep the older folks, which we're doing, an aggregation takes place and we have something great. We're seeing a convergence of consumer demand and producer innovation. And in this sense, producer means everyone in the chain who is creating the music."

Rethinking Everything

So what would a programmer do with music in a zero-base rethinking of his or her station? We asked **WTQR/Greensboro PD Bruce Logan** that very question, since he's recently done just that. "The station was in desperate need of a re-branding," Logan says of the August re-launch as Q104.1 New Country.

"We went jockless in late June, and began to rebuild from that moment on. We kept some music from the '90s, but predominantly focused on 2000 forward."

"We also launched a new name, logo, jingles, voice guy, imaging, attitude and lineup," he says. "Other than Jeff Roper, Angie Ward, Jeff Wicker and country music, everything is new."

And nothing is fresher than the music. "This is probably the newest Country station I've programmed since 1992," Logan asserts. "We've got a larger percentage of currents and recurrences than I have played in a long time. The music is much better than it's been, top to bottom."

Logan says he's been feeling heat in the 18-34 demo for awhile, going back to his days programming **WKKT/Charlotte**. "Kat had the No. 3 spot in that demo behind an Urban and a CHR, and stayed there," Logan says. "Quite honestly, that was a bit of problem in



Bruce Logan

SONIC BOOM

the cluster because we had two stations that were actually targeting that demo, and Kat was beating them both. There's something going on with the 18-34s, and it's connected to all these artists who have clearly moved to the next level in their careers – Jason Aldean, Eric Church, Miranda Lambert, Blake Shelton and Luke Bryan.”

The traditional notions of the format's core artists seem to be changing, as well, as Albright & O'Malley partner **Jaye Albright** explains: “A&O's *Roadmap* study certainly showed this happening. We had a similar forward thrust with a few artists in 2006 that kind of petered out after a year,” Albright says. “Every public bit of research, including the Coleman study at CRS, has been seeing this wave forming. And it's interesting to see the number of artists from previous generations trying to get on playlists now, too. It's probably too early to tell if the wave has turned so much that they'll all be left behind.”

Not So Fast

Bullseye Marketing Research's John Hart offers a dissenting opinion on the notion of a new boom. “It's surprising to hear that *everyone* feels this is the best music in years,”

he says. “I can tell you that mainstream Country listeners who make up more than 85% of Country radio's cume don't feel that way. In fact, among mainstream listeners reached by random-dial callout, positive scoring is down about 18% and Like-A-Lot scores are off about 45% over the last five years, especially with our biggest demo, 35-54. Listeners 35+ also contribute the largest chunk of TSL and TE.

Country TSL is off more than 30% on a wide scale.

“As a result, we have seen quarter-hour shares decrease over that time frame, even with dominant stations. Male passion scores are down 60% in some cases, especially 35+. Female passion scores 35+ are down more than 40%. Listeners tolerate the product but are not in love with the product.”

(Editor's note: As it is with nearly every format, Country radio's TSL nationally is lower than five years ago, owing significantly to the implementation of PPM measurement methodology. Nationally, Country (excluding "New Country" stations) had a 12.8 share 12+ in fall 2010, compared to a 12.5 in spring 2005, according to Arbitron.)

Albright responds, “Indeed, the best of the best is testing incredibly well, but, there's the usual plethora of average material out there, too, and I always worry about steering people in a dangerous direction of adding too much new. The trends are up because we're doing the right things now.” In other words, if what we're doing is working, why mess with a good thing?

That's the point **KEEY/Minneapolis PD Gregg Swedberg** wants to drive home. “Our format's music is real good right now,” he says. “We have a great blend of new superstars, A-listers and



John Hart



Gregg Swedberg

new artists giving us uptempo, fun, yet meaningful songs. And we're celebrating that. We have the most success when we get uptempo, even danceable music you can crank up and have fun with. This was the case in the early '90s, and it's the case now.”

Here's the kicker, says Swedberg: “We tend to lag when we slow it down and try to super-serve one piece of our audience, which traditionally has been women 40+. The music slows down, the lyrics get wimpier and, while it works great in that one demo, you end up blowing off men and young women. Our music has been so good that we're doing well in all demos now – No. 1 W25-54, No. 2 W18-34, No. 2 M25-54, No. 1 M18-34. I've made my speech to all the

“I WISH I COULD SAY THROW AWAY THE LIBRARY, BUT IT'S NOT THAT EASY. –JAYE ALBRIGHT”

Nashville record companies: Do not slow the music down!

“There's a belief that ballads sell records. Maybe. What sells records are good songs. ‘Dirt Road Anthem’ isn't a ballad, yet it's sold a ton. Please resist the temptation to release that ballad because you're convinced it's a career record. I've had four ballads touted as ‘career records’ to me this year. None of them has been. Unless it's *really* a career record, just give us good uptempo songs we can dance to or sing along with. Turns out that 40-year-old women don't want to shrivel up and never hear a drum or bass line again, nor do they never want to go out and have fun.”

Triple Treat

Cautionary notes aside, radio pros are overwhelmingly positive. “It's a wonderful time,” Walker says, offering his theory for booming test scores and ratings. “I call it the country music trifecta. We have developing singers coming of age, superstars getting even bigger and, right now, nobody is really dying off. So the performers are the first part of the trifecta. The second part, obviously, is that we have fantastic songs. The third part, where everything is coming together, is that there are producers out there knocking it out of the park. We've gone through this evolution where the music sounds more contemporary, but is still accessible and rootsy. It may be country, but it sounds as good as the pop songs.”

“Jon Randall Stewart, Frank Rogers, Paul Worley, Buddy Cannon, what Keith Stegall is doing with Zac Brown and the guy who started it all, Dann Huff, have spearheaded this contemporary sound,” he continues. “You can have great songs and performers, but the vibe comes from the producers. If a song is honest and plain, a 54-year-old will have no problem with it. If it's honest and plain and resonates with a cool feel and a great beat, 18-34s like it a lot better.”

Generational issues are a top concern of Albright's. “What we're seeing is something we've felt for a couple of years,” she says. “The Millennial generation fans are a tremendous opportunity for Country. I just hope the music they like will resonate with the upper demos and core, as well.”

“While there are some very exciting new artists and songs out now that sure do drive preference, there's also more junk that will never go anywhere. This week's Rate The Music national average has six songs with 45% or greater “like a lot,” and that seems to me to be what has always been a fairly good

power rotation. There are 10 more that 35%-45% of listeners call “a favorite.” That seems like a solid secondary category. Then there are 7-10 songs with less than 25% of listeners nationally giving the song their highest rating. These songs rank even lower within individual narrow gender and demo cells, and it's doubtful that they'll improve with more airplay because all of them are already at least 75% familiar. In short, the more things change, the more they stay the same. Yes, new country is hot – the best of it. The rest of it, as always, is *not*.”

Albright also urges her compatriots not to get ahead of themselves. “The spring quarter is normally the best of the year

for the format,” she says. “I always remember what Jim Seiler, the inventor of Arbitron, always said: ‘Don't believe anything in Arbitron until you see it three times.’ One good book, even nationally, isn't a trend.”

Easy On The Knee, Jerk

Walker and Albright caution those who would reflexively tilt their stations newer in response to the trend. “It's not that simple,” Albright says. “The trouble with moving new is there are markets like Spokane, Wichita and Topeka where there are four or five Country stations. If you're alone in your market and have no competition, yes, it's a good time to move newer. Especially if you've been playing stuff from the '90s, you might be skewing older than you need to. But for most situations outside of the largest markets, it's better to understand the matrix of the market before you decide to make a change.”

“For instance, music of the early '90s is still popular and, in fact, the definition of Classic Country may be moving forward. The mid-'90s and back might be that in some markets. Some stations are playing classics and real country variety and holding their own doing it. Musical discovery drives the bus in a lot of cases, and if you're the station doing that, that's great. But if you're in an older-skewing market in the heartland where folks graduate from school and leave, it's more complicated. I wish I could say throw away the library, but it's not that easy.”

Even stations doing well on the cutting edge need to take other factors into account. “What goes along with a new group of artists and music is that old production values, imaging, promotions and other ways of doing things need to be looked at,” Albright says. “Everything should be in sync with reaching the target, and the smartest stations are doing that.”

Walker agrees that a blind assertion to play more new music is dangerous. “It depends on the individual station and its competitive situation, but on the whole, stations are leaning positively toward newer current material,” he says. “If we get waves

of research in the other direction, we'll change as quickly as the consumer, hopefully. But for now, that's what the consumer wants and that's what we're going to give them.” **CAC**



Jaye Albright

Volume 6, Issue 3, September 2011

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MARCONI & CHEESE

Country's Finalists Have Reason To Smile

Country is always well-represented when the National Association of Broadcasters choose the annual Marconi Awards finalists. As competitive as any format when it comes to criteria that include ratings success and awards, Country stations shine even brighter when it comes to community involvement ... as you're about to read.

Personality finalists Chuck Edwards and Linda Lee (WYCD/Detroit), Mark Ericson and Karen Kiley (WOKQ/Portsmouth, NH), Bill Poindexter (WUSY/Chattanooga) and Kelly Wayne (KMOK/Lewiston, ID) will be profiled in an upcoming issue of Country Aircheck Weekly. (Ed. Note: Small Market finalist KBHP/Bemidji, MN was profiled in this issue last year.)

Must Be Present To Win

Country Station of the Year: **KCLR/Columbia, MO**

Zimmer Radio's **KCLR** decided it was finally the right time to enter the running for a Marconi nomination. Their effort immediately paid off, signaling that the steady No. 1-rated station should have been recognized by now. An original station talent since **KCLR** went on the air in 1990, longtime PD/midday personality **Teresa Davis** discusses the station's balance between entertainment and service.

"We're very honored to be nominated. We've had tremendous ratings, dominating the market since **KCLR** came on board. With our community involvement, we're focused so much on children. We're blessed to have a wonderful **University of Missouri Children's Hospital**, which is part of the **Children's Miracle Network**, so we're proud to be a part of that family. We've also had a fantastic relationship over the years with the **Food Bank of Central and Northeast Missouri**, one of the best in the country. If ever they give us a call to say the shelves are bare, we put the word out, and the response is just overwhelming.

"Immediately after the Joplin tornadoes this spring, we had a donation drive with a local **American Red Cross** and, of course, supplies also were donated. It was such a critical period because they had shut down the Joplin area and only certain trucks were able to get in, so the food bank came on board with a couple of their semi-trucks.

"Our listeners know we're a family-friendly station. Our on-air people are extremely fun. We still keep the phones open, but also make sure our Facebook friends get the latest videos and entertaining YouTube-type clips we post, and we encourage them to post things, as well. We do a lot of fun contesting and give away a lot of money. Our listeners expect that from us, and it's part of being the fun station in town.



Faces For Radio: Hard to tell there are any adults in the room during a station "field trip" to Rockbridge Elementary, but somewhere in the middle you'll find **KCLR** morning co-hosts **Scotty (Cox)** and **Carissa (Loethen)**.

"We're extremely proud of the accomplishments of this station. We've always known Clear 99 is special for what we do in the community and the response we get; obviously, the ratings are reflective of that. But we've never patted ourselves on the back that much, and it's only over the last couple of years that we've started to enter the Marconis and CMAs and ACMS. It's fulfilling to know that not only do we and our listeners feel that way, but also that the people on the national level now do, too."

Where Passion's In Fashion

Country Station of the Year: **KSD/St. Louis**



Up With People: **KSD's** morning team **Mason And Remy** welcome a huge downtown crowd for a **Montgomery Gentry** show.

Enjoying its first Marconi nomination, **Clear Channel's KSD** has been gaining strength over the past 18 months. The station nearly doubled its 6+ share from a 2.8 in Holiday 2009 to a 5.5 by July 2011 and became the Country cum leader during the summer of 2011. Cluster OM **Jeff McHugh** shares details of **KSD's** energetic presence in the Gateway City.

"This nomination is so great because this is a relatively young staff. They are just so excited about the radio station and were literally leaping for joy to get the recognition for their hard work. It's very cool, and we're all pretty excited.

"I think the Marconi nominating committee saw this passion the staff has for the format and the community. We have **Mason And Remy**, who came to us from the Top 40 world; **Billy Greenwood** in middays; **Dusty**, who does afternoons and is Music Director; **Boxer** in the evenings; and **Barbie Weis**, a former cheerleader and our unbelievably positive Promotions Manager. They're just so spirited and fun, and that's the way they pursue all of our events and promotions. And the entire staff chose **The Bull's** new PD **Steve Stewart** as their boss. They interviewed him individually. It wasn't exactly a democracy where people voted, but we went through that process with several great programmers, and the one who connected best was Steve.

"One of our signature events is **The Bull Float Trip**, where 3,000 listeners meet at a campground an hour away and float down the river together, with country artists performing two nights. It's a giant mass of wall-to-wall inner tubes, country music, beer and fun with **Gloriana**, **Whiskey Dixon** and **Brett Eldredge** this year.

"Last year we started working with **Children's Miracle Network**. The whole staff broadcast 24 hours a day and raised \$123,000. We have six radio stations here, and I have to give **The Bull** the award for the most passion and excitement about what they do every day. They're really outstanding in their drive for making **The Bull** successful.

"After becoming OM a few months ago, the only thing I've changed is that I've removed a lot of rules and barriers. There's a great Country station across the street in **WIL**, but there's definitely a passion for a younger, more vibrant, more fun version of Country that we do on **The Bull**. We're onto something here!"

Servin' On The Mount

Country Station of the Year: **KSSN/Little Rock**

Led by 32-year station veteran and Country DJ Hall of Fame morning personality **Bob Robbins** with **Jennifer Trafford**, **Clear Channel's** market-leading **KSSN** is already a two-time Marconi recipient (1990, 1996). The station has been generating strong ratings in recent years, including four straight gains (7.2-7.6-8.2-9.4-9.5) throughout 2010, and holding steady since. **PD Chad Heritage** tells why **Kissin' 96 FM** could be in line for its third statuette.

"We've been trying to get nominated for one of these for awhile, and finally did, which is pretty cool. Getting out in the community with our listeners and helping those who need it is among the most rewarding stuff we do. One of the standout programs we've done for years is **Toys For Tots** for the Marine Corps Reserve. Per capita, ours is the largest in the country. Out by War Memorial Stadium at War Memorial Park, there's a place that was dedicated years ago with a monument as 'Toy Hill.' We call it **Toy Hill Weekend**, and broadcast live for an entire weekend.

"Our station went on the air in 1979 and Bob's been spearheading that since the early '80s. It gets bigger and bigger every year, with more volunteers, raising a lot of money and semi-truckloads of toys. The Fraternal Order of Police and firefighters get involved, and there are parades with the F.O.P. and the ABATE motorcycle club, who kind of compete to see who can raise the most toys. They roll into Toy Hill, with lines and lines of police cars and hundreds of motorcycles all bringing toys.

"This year, unfortunately, we had the tornadoes that ripped through Arkansas and really devastated the town of Vilonia. We broadcast from there to help pull that community back together, collecting food and water, asking for volunteers, getting people to shelters and assisting any way we can.

"We also just did our annual **Blacktop Boogie** listener appreciation concert, featuring local artist **Justin Moore**, **Brett Eldredge**, **Edens Edge** (who are from Arkansas, too) and **David St. Romain**.



Toy Story: Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Scout leaders and additional friends in the Christmas spirit surround **KSSN's** **Bob Robbins** atop **Toy Hill** for the station's annual **Toys For Tots** campaign.

"KSSN has solid on-air talent, and our entire team is passionate about what they do when it comes to being involved with the station on-air, with country music and with the community. We really take pride in the strong **Kissin'** brand, and have the greatest listeners in the world. We couldn't do it without them."

MARCONI & CHEESE

Revolving Around Evolving

Country Station of the Year

Large Market Station: **KYGO/Denver**

Lincoln Financial's **KYGO** has been Denver's No. 1 broadcaster twice in PPM this past summer and is usually among the top three stations in town. That steady excellence helps explain why it's won four station Marconis, including both Large Market and Country Station in 2004. As America's only dual Country finalist, could **KYGO** do it again? PD **John Thomas** describes the Mile High magic.

"The heritage of these call letters and this station is something we're very proud of. We've got a staff that understands the scope of how big this station is and the large part it plays in the community.

"For example, we've partnered with **St. Jude** for a long time and have an additional partnership with **Children's Hospital**. And each December, we have our **KYGO Christmas Crusade For Children**, a phenomenal campaign that's designed for kids to see the positive side of police officers. There's a toy drive and the police officers are the ones who deliver them. It's a huge deal. From a charity standpoint, one of the great things about being a heritage radio station is that everything comes your way. **KYGO** has been very good at making sure they maintain a great relationship with the city of Denver.

"When I arrived here about 10 months ago, I became just the fifth PD at **KYGO** in 30 years. Our first PD was the man who's now our SVP/GM, **Bob Call**. After him, it was **Rick Jackson**, now GM at **KSON/San Diego**. Then came **John St. John** and **Joel Burke**. Those four guys are tough acts to follow. You must respect these call letters and understand that a majority of the people in Denver have had some type of emotional experience with **KYGO** at one point. It's more than a radio station; it's become part of their family. I just try to take them to that next evolution in their relationship. But we learned early on that **KYGO** is about the music we play from the artists listeners love and the people who bring it to them. That's been the success this year: staying true to what the listeners really expect from our station.

"The beauty of working for Lincoln Financial Media is that I've got all the tools to do the job. I really believe I have the best programming job in America, bar none."



We Will Rock You: **KYGO** fans pose near the station's oversized logo at the famed Red Rocks Amphitheater before the station presented three sold-out Kenny Chesney concerts.



In The Pink: Morning co-host **Mel Fisher** (left) and producer **Ron Fisher** receive the "Hats For Hope Heroes" Award from chairperson **Nadine Brewer** for their work benefiting the American Cancer Society.

Scoring Big On Public Service

Country Station of the Year: **WAMZ/Louisville**

Take three straight increases from an 8.2 to an 11.6 share between Fall 2009 and Summer 2010, add market leadership across numerous key demos, and you've got the makings of Clear Channel **WAMZ's** first-ever Marconi station nomination. But the not-so-secret ingredient is **WAMZ's** all-out community commitment, as 32-year station veteran, PD and two-time Marconi Personality of the Year **Coyote Calhoun** explains.

"We're the official radio sponsor of the Louisville **Susan G. Komen Race For The Cure**. Morning co-host **Mel Fisher** is a breast cancer survivor, and each year she broadcasts live on-site before the race and calls out survivor names during it. Every year afterwards we do fundraisers for her "Mel's Angels" team including a **Pink Day At Work**, an online auction and various appearances. We have also hosted **Komen's Pink Tie Ball** and regularly host **Hats For Hope** to raise money for the **American Cancer Society's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer**. We also promote and host the **Tuxes And Tails Gala** to benefit the **Kentucky Humane Society**, as well as events for **Kentucky Harvest** and **Blessings In A Backpack**.

"We also do the **Lung Association Walk** every year, we participated in the food drive when **Brad Paisley** played here and did an event at Ft. Knox to support the soldiers and their families. I personally get involved in the **Alzheimer's Association** and their annual walk every year because my father passed away from Alzheimer's about six years ago, so I am the emcee of that event every September. We also partner with **St. Jude Children's Research Hospital**, which includes their annual radiothon. We have a softball team involved in projects including a dream house, and overall we have raised more than \$6.9 million in 22 years. So public service at **WAMZ** is very high.

"A couple of years ago, we changed directions as to how we wanted to present the morning show. We hired **Chris Randolph**, who had been in Tampa, but is from here and wanted to come back home. He and **Mel** have really gelled. Everybody's rejuvenated, motivated and we're having a great time. No matter what happens on the Marconi nomination, which we feel is a huge honor, we're just tickled to death that we're still successful, having a lot of fun and that **WAMZ** is an asset to the community of everybody here in Kentuckiana."

Real Help For Real People

Medium Market Station of the Year: **KRST/Albuquerque**

Seeking its first Marconi, Citadel's **KRST** has had a strong year ratings-wise, rising 12+ in a highly competitive market from a 3.7 in fall 2010 to a 4.0 in winter '11 and again to a 4.2 in spring. But beyond the numbers, PD **Eddie Haskell** discusses how the strength of the station impacts the local community.

"I got into radio at 17, and all I wanted to do was be the guy talking on the radio, but pretty quickly you learn the power of it. One of the things I like most about this job is when you meet somebody and they thank you for something you did. That's when you realize that you're really making a difference. It's more than an abstract charity drive. We have the ability to help actual people, and we owe it to the community. So that's why I was really excited for us to get the Marconi nomination.

"Last year, we did a holiday drive called **Christmas Wish**. People send in a letter for something they need, and we partnered with our clients to help them out. Those are always just so heart-wrenching because we call the people and tell them we're going to help them. One was as simple as an elderly woman who needed new glasses and couldn't afford the doctor's appointment or the glasses. We were able to partner with an optometrist and get her the glasses. When we called to tell her about it, she cried. These are things we take for granted, but they're such a big deal. All we had to do was ask a client if they would do something for us.

"I love being in this format because it gives me the opportunity to do these things that in another genre might be corny. I can walk in this afternoon, open the mic and just ask for something, and people will give. That's what's so cool about Country listeners and the artists.

"And so much of our community involvement is disguised as promotion. Every Thursday, we bring in Nashville artists for a concert series with **County Line Bar-B-Q**, and it's free to our listeners



Line Dancing: **KRST/Albuquerque** PD **Eddie Haskell**, the station's **Kenneth Kirtley** and **Steel Magnolia** hang with listeners at a **County Line** concert. Pictured (l-r) are **Mikael Ann Lamonde**; **Alex Stojanovski Valentine**; **SM's Joshua Scott Jones**; **Haskell**; **SM's Meghan Linsey**; **Antoinette Denay**; **April Aday**; and **Kirtley**.

with a food donation. We just hosted **Steel Magnolia** and **Eli Young Band**. Last year, we raised more than 4,000 pounds of food. It's one of those things where it's great for the listener because it's a free concert, and it's great for Nashville because we're exposing up-and-coming artists. I stayed late one time and admired the five huge barrels overflowing with food. I thought, "We did that!" And we do that all the time."

MARCONI & CHEESE

Tears To You

Medium Market Station: **KUAD/Fort Collins, CO**

It's hard to remember the last time **KUAD** wasn't No. 1 in the market, and the station's 6.9 share in Spring '11 was its highest 12+ in two years and was one of the largest one-book increases in Country radio. Charity events like 28 Hours Of Hope show PD **Mark Callaghan** the compassion of country fans and artists, and he explains how they make a difference through **KUAD** for the local area.

"I was in the Philadelphia airport when I started getting messages on my iPhone congratulating me on the Marconi nomination – 10 of them in a row. I emailed all our staff, and I was thrilled.



Signed, Sealed, Delivered: Brian Gary and Todd Harding put their John Hancock on proceeds from 28 Hours Of Hope.

"However, I was not surprised. **KUAD** has always been No. 1 in community involvement; that's always been a big ingredient for our success. It's part of what we do and why we are winning. We have 21 people who are out on the street all the time.

"One of our big events is the *28 Hours Of Hope*, which benefits several charities to fight child abuse. Every March, my morning team **Brian Gary** and **Todd Harding** broadcast 28 consecutive hours to raise money. They have community leaders come in, and big artists like Kenny Chesney call to support the event and encourage people to donate.

"This year, they raised more than \$61,000. Even with the sluggish economy, people throw tons of money at the cause. There are a lot of testimonials from listeners about how they were abused as children, so it's very emotional for our listeners and for our staff, too. I walk down the hall and see tears streaming down the faces of both women and men. I hide in my

office because I'm a little embarrassed, but I've shed a lot of tears listening to the event. A lot of radio stations won't sacrifice their everyday schedule to do something like that because it totally interrupts programming, but it's so worth



Country Big Check: Brian Gary, Todd Harding and **KUAD/Ft. Collins** Market Manager Pete Hanson (l-r) present a big check earned from the station's *28 Hours Of Hope*.

it. It's about local radio and the community. By the end, we're exhausted. Besides being physically tired, the staff is mentally drained, too.

"I oversee an AC station, a Hot AC station, a Shreveport, LA station and one in Montana. I'm lucky to have such a diverse opportunity, but the country artists are beyond great to work with. They're always friendly and willing to go the extra mile. I also think the country fans are more passionate about giving."



Prom Entertainment On Crack: Uncle Kracker performs during the Millard South High School prom.

Priceless Pull

Medium Market Station: **KXKT/Omaha**

While donations help fund a lot of local charities, **KXKT/Omaha** PD **Erik Johnson** finds satisfaction in spearheading charitable initiatives that demonstrate the kind of love that money simply can't buy. And his station's hometown voices really fit the bill.

"All but one member of our airstaff was born and raised in this area, and even the one who wasn't has been a resident for 20 years. So, this is home to all of us, and our listeners recognize that. The biggest impact we have on our community is that the listeners understand our commitment. They show up and help us when we ask them to, whether it's with their time, money or other donations. They're there for us. We try to get involved any way possible to help make our community better and grow country music at the same time.

"We do a lot with big organizations like **Susan G. Komen**, **Boys Town National Research Hospital** and the **Children's Miracle Network**. Last year, we raised roughly \$286,000 for the local **Children's Hospital & Medical Center** and nearly \$300,000 for **Food Bank For The Heartland**. Then we do things that aren't really monetized, such as our book tour. We work with the University of Nebraska's athletic department, read to schools and give books to all the children to promote literacy.

"One of the coolest things we did this year was get Uncle Kracker to play the Millard South High School prom. In January, a student named Robert Butler, Jr. was suspended and returned to school with a gun, shot the principal, killed the assistant principal and then killed himself. The principal was in the hospital for a week.

"Later this past spring, the school's prom was the same night as the Kenny Chesney and Uncle Kracker concert in the convention area near the downtown arena. We worked with the label ahead of time and asked if there was any chance Uncle Kracker might be able to perform a short set at the prom. When the record label pitched it to management, they responded, 'Wait a minute, you want Uncle Kracker to play a prom?' The label was like, 'No, no, you don't understand.' He ended up playing three songs and the kids loved it. It was just a really cool way to give back to them after such a hard year. That's just not something you can put a dollar on."



Kids In The Haul: **KXKT/Omaha's** Steve & Gina meet a family during the 2011 **Children's Hospital Radiothon**, which raised nearly \$290,000.

Rally Good People

Medium Market Station: **WUSY/Chattanooga, TN**

PD **Gator Harrison**, Dex & Mo's **Bill Poindexter** (a Marconi winner himself) and BS At Night's **Brian Stewart** lead *US101 Country's* efforts to support the Chattanooga area through a series of charity events including the *After The Storm: Coming Together Benefit Concert With Josh Turner for Ringgold, GA's Ringgold High School*. No wonder **WUSY** is the market's perennial ratings leader, up 11.6-14.9 between spring '10 and '11.

BP: "All I ever wanted to be was a disc jockey in this area and to be the guy who informed the public about what's going on, whether the news was good, bad or indifferent. So, just to be nominated for this award is huge. But it's a total team effort. Three of us have been here for 20 years or more. You don't see that at very many radio stations."



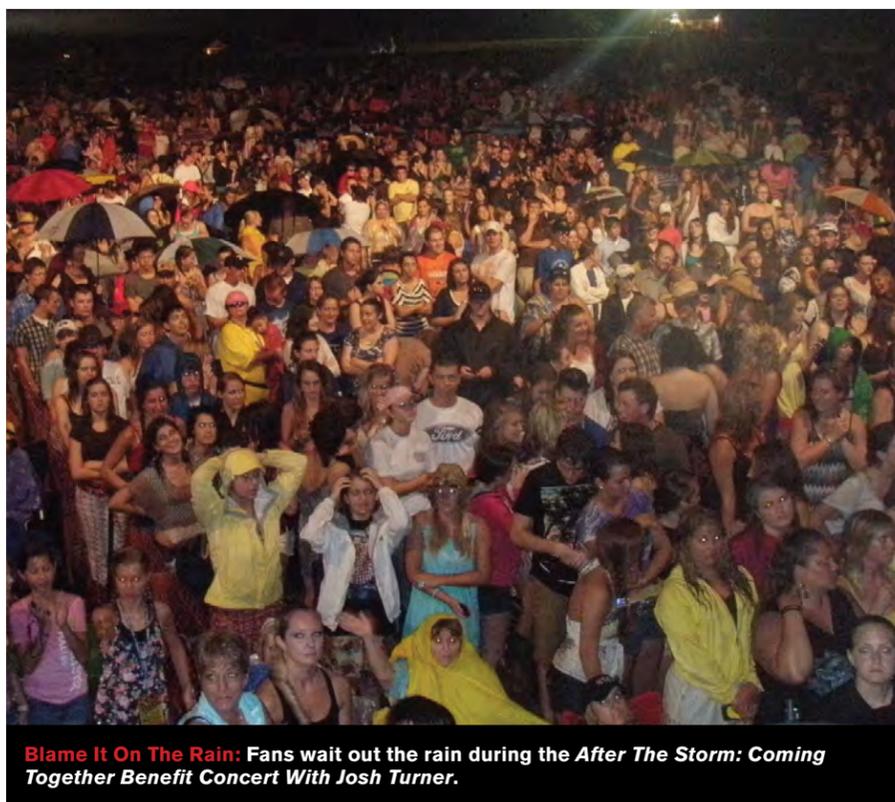
Make Like A Tree And Turn A New Leaf: **WUSY/Chattanooga's** Gator Harrison, **UMGN's** Royce Risser, the station's Melissa Turner Wagner, Josh Turner and **MCA's** Joe Putnam (l-r) hang during *After The Storm: Coming Together Benefit Concert With Josh Turner*.

GH: "It's all about family here, and you check your ego at the door. I don't care if you're the receptionist or the janitor, I'm all ears if you've got an idea that would make the station better. When you've got that family feel, it's kind of like iron sharpening iron. And, working together, to be able to impact another Chattanooga's life makes you feel good."

BS: "I was born in Chattanooga and won prizes from this station as a child, so I know what heritage means and what **WUSY** means to the community. I'm really proud of that. When the recent tornadoes came through Ringgold and our surrounding areas, the listeners were able to use the station as a help service to get supplies, to donate supplies and to rally as a community."

GH: "A couple days after the storms, we packed semis and organized a Josh Turner concert for Ringgold High School. Dex was key in putting that together."

BP: "Basically, the high school's athletic and band programs were wiped out by the storm. The football equipment, their practice field and football field were destroyed. And all of the instruments in the band room were gone. We raised right at about \$120,000 at the show even though the rain was unforgiving that day."



Blame It On The Rain: Fans wait out the rain during the *After The Storm: Coming Together Benefit Concert With Josh Turner*.

GH: "We were all huddled around with Josh's manager deciding whether to cancel the show. It would have been so disappointing for all those people who waited in the rain after experiencing a devastating tornado. But a good 30- to 45-minute window opened, and Josh went on. It was an incredible night. It's that kind of not-going-to-give-up spirit you find not only in this area, but also at **US101**. We might go through some tough times, but if we do, we're going to all go through it together."

CAC



THE ART OF THE PPM INTERVIEW

A compelling and effective interview segment on a PPM-measured station can be a masterpiece, but perfecting the craft is still something of a work in progress for air personalities. During CRS in March, a session titled “Compelling On-Air Interviews,” moderated by Country Aircheck’s Lon Helton, helped paint a vivid picture of what does and doesn’t work when trying to hold listeners attention. Deeply compelling and vital for anyone doing radio interviews, we thought the information rated retelling in this abridged transcript.

The panelists are talent coach Tommy Kramer, WUBE/Cincinnati morning host Chris Carr, Renegade Radio Nashville partner and former WKMK/Monmouth PD/afternoon host “Captain” Jack Aponte and Media Monitors’ Philippe Generali.

Generali started by showing several graphs comparing a specific event with a weekly average – data that allows programmers to track how station benchmarks, events and interviews perform. But it gets even more granular, as Generali explained: “You can also look at a little bit of what’s happening on a minute-by-minute basis. Any bar which is red is a minute when the station is losing one listener. If it’s a big red bar, they lose two or three or four listeners. If it’s a big green bar, they gain a listener. Green is good.”

Generali’s first clip was an interview with Top 40 KIIS/Los Angeles morning host **Ryan Seacrest** talking with TV and movie star **Ashton Kutcher**:

RS: (Backsell, intro Ashton Kutcher) What’s happening? Do you think it’s weird that I texted you from bed last night watching your movie?

AK: I didn’t think it was weird, I appreciated that. It was actually a good place for you to be watching that movie.

RS: *No Strings Attached* with Natalie Portman is the movie, it’s really cute. When you work so much with another woman like Natalie, what chemistry has to happen, did you know her before?

AK: We’d met three times before but you’re in that situation doing really sexy stuff and you have like 40 dudes watching you and you’re getting all this direction.

RS: Was she pregnant when you made this movie?

AK: No she wasn’t, it would’ve been really weird. I would have been afraid that I’d hurt the baby.

RS: Where are you right now, are you working?

AK: I’m in New York ... have a bunch of technology people I’m meeting for a company I’m involved with

CC: We can stop it right there because it’s a commercial.

TK: He gets a reaction out of him he didn’t expect by saying, “What do you think of my texting you from my bed while I’m watching your movie?” So, when you ask something unusual like that, it causes them to respond emotionally. Then Kutcher goes into the part where he does a commercial for the technology thing he’s going to do. And that’s where we cut it off. But I think what works for Seacrest is he gets responses like that for out-of-the-box types of questions and he always resets every 30 seconds. That’s so important because somebody’s tuning in right now for the first time and they don’t know what went on one second before now.



Chris Carr

Generali pointed out that Seacrest gained three meters during the Kutcher interview because a competitor had started a song with a poor M score, driving them to KIIS-FM. It was a key factor in that morning’s individual segment performing so well against the weekly average for that time.



Tommy Kramer

Next up, **WSOC/Charlotte’s Tanner In the Morning**:

Tanner: We just played Brooks & Dunn. Ronnie Dunn has new music out and we had a chance to talk to him. We’ll let you hear what he has to say when I asked him a question that kind of threw him. I don’t know why, but it did ... that’s on the way in less than seven, 103-7, WSOC.

<break>

Tanner: Ronnie Dunn, Brooks & Dunn, that’s all done ... he’s got a new song out called “Bleed Red” and we were talking with Ronnie and the question I think threw him, I thought for sure he’d heard it before. I asked if he’d ever team up with anyone else.

RD: No. No.

Tanner: If you did, who would it be? If somebody said, Ronnie Dunn, you have to team up with somebody.

Co-Host: I think that Kenny Chesney kid needs some help.

RD: Good question. Maybe Clapton would do a country record.

Tanner: I think Ronnie has had enough of having a partner.

RD: I’ve been married and the divorce is barely over.

Tanner: I suppose Clay Aiken is out of the question.

RD: Probably.

Tanner: Congrats, the new record is fantastic.

RD: Thanks for putting up with me.

Tanner: You can hear the entire interview on WSOC.com. (Intros next song)

TK: I mean, this is a really good interview. First of all,

THE ART OF THE PPM INTERVIEW

it gets a response out of Ronnie right off the bat. So you're off and running, right? And then, "Who would you team up with?" Ronnie Dunn thinks about Eric Clapton? Anybody tuning in right this second and hearing two guys laughing like that and something being said that's interesting, they're going to stay with you.

CC: Notice he plays "Boot Scootin' Boogie" and then he plays Blake Shelton and [the graph] goes down. The interview comes back and it goes back up. Now, he did everything great, he's ahead of the game. But had he played "Boot Scootin' Boogie," the set-up and then gone into the interview, he would have had more than five minutes of a complete, way above average graph.

JA: The set-up, to me, was great. He sparked the interest early on.

PG: We took the average for the week so this (showing graph) is what the audience usually does on his show for that week. You can see the audience pops, a significant pop in the morning probably because of this interview. So that day he's gaining more listeners than he normally has during the week.

LR: Obviously I've had to approach what happened and ... (interview is cut).

JA: I notice that particular dip there at that time in the morning, every morning. The interview wasn't bad, but there's something going on at that quarter-hour. You have to look at the numbers and I guess any PD is going to do that [to find out] why are we dipping at that particular point in time?

CC: Where I got a little lost, is unless it happened before - I didn't know who they were talking to. I didn't know if it was Lee Ann Womack or LeAnn Rimes.

TK: Because she didn't say her last name.

CC: And they didn't bring it up.

And I know that they move fast and they're a great morning show ... very off the cuff and they kind of slid into it. I kind of felt a little in the dark at the beginning.

TK: That's a real important point. Somebody's just joining you right now and they didn't hear you tease that you're going to talk to LeAnn Rimes. Plus, the sound quality is not good on the phone call. You could do one of two things. You can say, "Let me call you back from another phone." Or you can get editing software. I'm not blaming LeAnn or the guys, I thought



Jack Aponte

THERE'S ALWAYS THAT BALANCE OF HOW MUCH NEW PRODUCT CAN GET IN, GIVEN THAT PEOPLE WANT TO HEAR THEIR FAVORITE SONGS OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

Generali next played an interview conducted by **KNIX/Phoenix** morning team **Ben & Matt**. He set up the clip by pointing out there was no increase or "pop" as he calls it in listening during this segment:

Matt: (Backsells Rascal Flatts.) We are 15 minutes away from your shot at \$1,000. Good morning, it's Ben & Matt, who's this?



Philippe Generali

LeAnn Rimes: Good morning, it's LeAnn.

Matt: Congratulations on your engagement. You tweet so much it's almost like we know you like a friend.

LR: It's the one way to keep in touch with my fans; I love doing it and it's the only

reason I do, actually.

Matt: Have you set a date for the wedding?

LR: Not yet, but we're figuring out what to do.

Matt: All the women want to know, did he do it right?

LR: Yeah, he did it right. It's actually something I'm going to keep to myself. He designed my ring with a friend. We've been talking about it for a while. I knew it was going to happen.

Ben: How sick are you of having to take a defensive stance on this whole thing?

they did as well as they could. But you just can't understand it very well. This is one of the greatest things about this technology because you can get down to the word of what happened and why people went away. Bad sound quality will chase people away. Just call her back on another line.

LH: I'm not talking about her in particular, but do you think in a PPM world, do you have to be more judicious, more careful about who you put on the air?

TK: Yes, it's just like the music. There's always that balance of how much new product can get in, given that people want to hear their favorite songs over and over again. It's hard to put interviews on with all but the biggest stars. We all struggle with that. But what you can do is a series of things that are all related to one concert and get a little bit of a lesser artist in and concentrate on the major artist for most of the time.

CC: Yes, if the lesser artist is really entertaining and funny and eye-opening then man, I'd put it on. That's the beauty of taping it, too.

CAC

To download this entire session for \$8, go to crb.org and click on archives.

INTERVIEW TIPS & TRICKS

Consistently resetting during an interview will hold listeners' attention. Asking "the big question" right away guarantees a payoff answer. Live interviews should only be done when the artist is in the studio. The personality should control the environment and everyone should abide by the "one question, one answer" per segment rule. Break six-minute satellite tours into segments that could be carried over to the next day. These suggestions were consensus favorites during the CRS panel, and here are some additional ideas, lifted straight from the session:

CC: Play a game with them or something that's within the identity of your show. People listen to you for a reason. You're a personality, incorporate that with the guest and make it fun.

JA: I like to find a spot in a song. You can get this out of research where something personal happened as a result of one of the lines. They will always be able to respond to you with something funny that happened in their life.

TK: If it's good, it's good. If it's live and sucks, it isn't good.

CC: Try to give them something that the Internet can't give them because you're up against that, your competition and everything else.

JA: Interviews should never last longer than a song.

TK: Nobody wants to hear about when the album is coming out anymore, or when the tour starts. No one cares. The purpose for being on is for people to know them.

JA: That Ronnie Dunn interview is a great way to do it. Chop it up in sentences and just throw a line here and there and let him be your punch line. If you want to add humor to it, that makes it entertaining.

PG: The difference between PPM and diary is that technically, you just need five minutes. All you need is two minutes of interview and a song that's acceptable to your listener to hang around for those five minutes. So after an interview, throw in a good song every quarter hour. You don't need a 15 minutes interview to get 15 minutes.

BROTHER TROUBLE

Thank you for continuing to play "Summer's Little Angel!" We're excited to be working with Michael Knox on our forthcoming debut album.



BLASTER RECORDS

NEAL MCCOY

Be on the lookout for a new single from Neal McCoy this fall!





Power 31

Heads Of The Class

Say what you will about our admittedly unscientific Power 31, but the Country Aircheck readers whose rankings create this list do a creditable job. Certainly the universe of those with great influence over airplay decisions (our formal criterion) is much broader than 31 professionals from the world of Nashville record companies and Country radio. An entire issue could be devoted to them, to be sure. But there's no doubt that the individuals who earn a bit of recognition on this list work and lead at the very nexus of music and radio.

And because the ranking is in its fifth year and many of those pictured have been profiled before, Country Aircheck compiled something a little bit different this time: A montage of images that reflect the more personal pursuits – hobbies, interests, family – beyond the professional accomplishments and obvious esteem for which each is well known. We hope you'll have as much fun perusing it as we did putting it together.



1 Scott Borchetta
Big Machine Label Group President CEO

Power 31



2 Mike Dungan

Capitol/Nashville and EMI Nashville
President/CEO



"I like camping, but I hate packing up. For unexplained reasons, the combination of animal instinct and alcohol has often inspired/caused me to just throw my gear on the fire. It's good primal relief. Plus, the folks at Sports Academy love a guy who re-ups on a regular basis. Does that make me a bad guy?"

3 Luke Lewis

Universal Music Group
Nashville Chairman

With then six-month-old son Griffin



On the soccer field with twin daughters Amanda (l) and Bailey.



4 Doug Montgomery

Clear Channel Premium Choice PD
CC/Grand Rapids OM



In Palermo, Italy

5 Jaye Albright

Albright & O'Malley Consulting Partner



6 Gary Overton

Sony Music Nashville Chairman/CEO



Whipping up something tasty in the family kitchen with (l-r) Elizabeth, Miles, Diane and Bernadette.

7 Skip Bishop

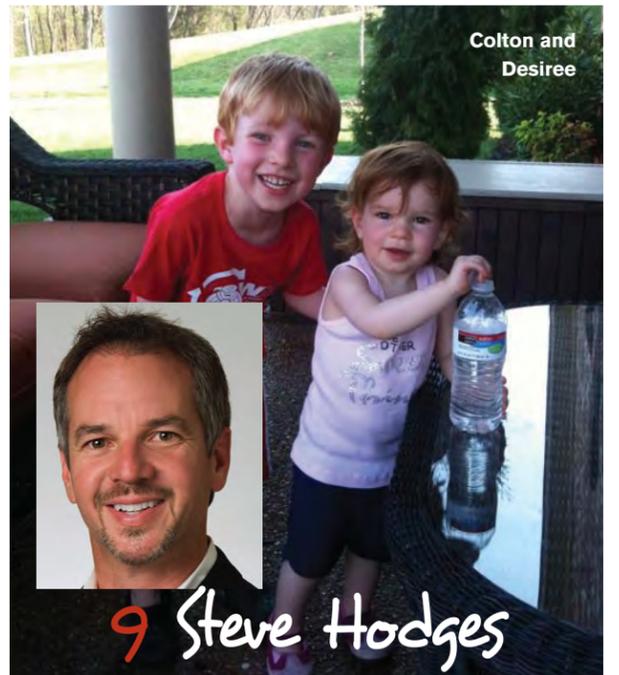
Sony Music Nashville SVP/Promotion



At the PGA Championship with Austin (11) and Alyssa (13). Wife Wendy is taking the picture.

8 Clay Hurnicutt

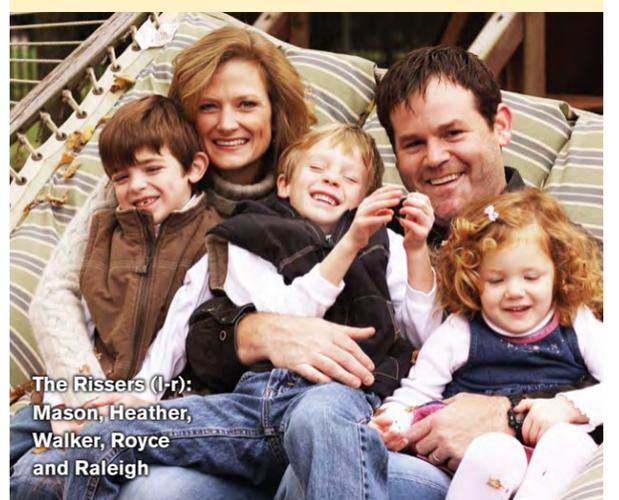
Clear Channel RVP/Programming



Colton and Desiree

9 Steve Hodges

Capitol/Nashville SVP/Promotion



The Risser (l-r): Mason, Heather, Walker, Royce and Raleigh

10 Royce Risser

UMG/Nashville SVP/Promotion

Power 31

11 Rusty Walker

Rusty Walker & Assoc
Programming Consultant

On the Tennessee River with Rustie, who was named by his daughter. "I'm known as 'Sammy' at home," he explains.



12 Mike Curb

CBS Records Chairman

In the Indy 500 winner's circle with fellow winning-car sponsor Scott Borchetta.



15 Gregg Swedberg

Clear Channel
Minneapolis OM
KEYY PD



With one of the many of his daughter's teams (volleyball, soccer, softball, hockey) he's coached.

16 Jeff Garrison

CBS Radio VP/Country CBS Radio
Phoenix OM KMLE/Phoenix PD

"I thought my passions in life were always going to be work, golf and cigars, but then I met Becky in 2006 and Luke joined us in 2008. If this picture has the illusion that Luke is walking on water, make no mistake, he thinks he does!"



"Our crazy rescue dog Roxy."

18 Joel Raab

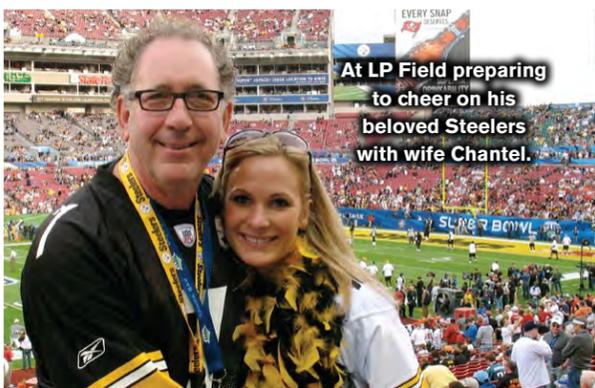
Joel Raab Associates Country
Programming Consultant



With Stephanie and Madison. "Nothing is more important to me than my family, and I have been a lifelong Yankees fan!"

13 Mike Moore

Entercom VP/Country
KWJ/Portland PD



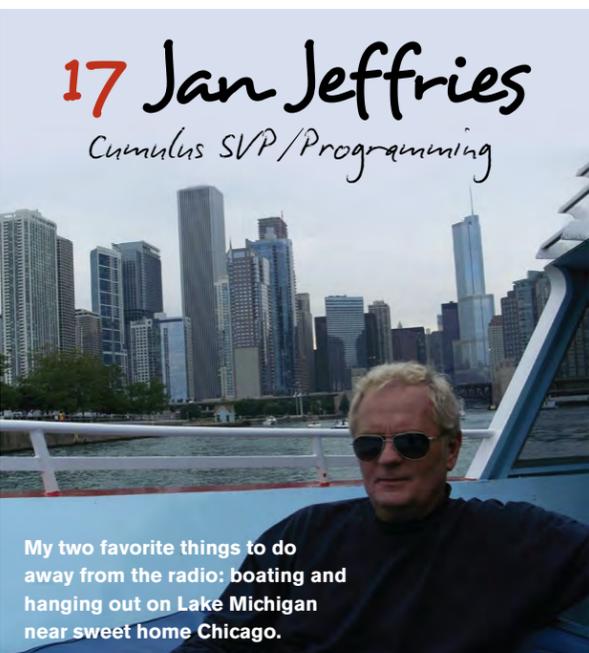
At LP Field preparing to cheer on his beloved Steelers with wife Chantel.

14 John Esposito

Warner Music Nashville President

17 Jan Jeffries

Cumulus SVP/Programming



My two favorite things to do away from the radio: boating and hanging out on Lake Michigan near sweet home Chicago.



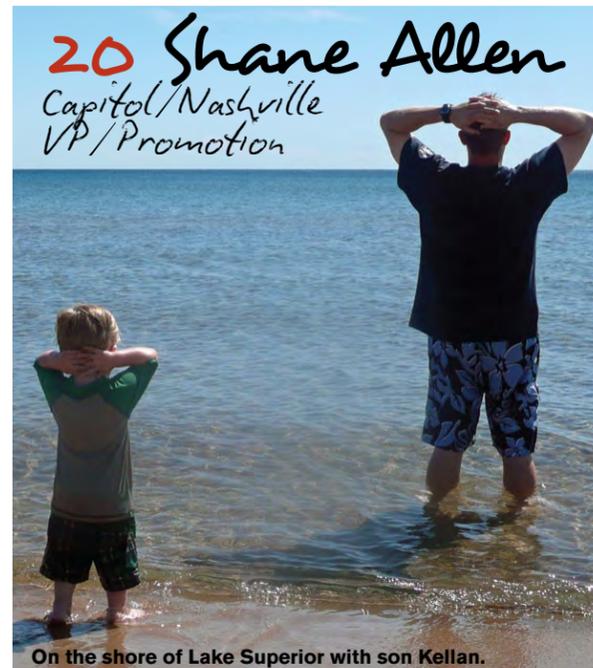
With girlfriend Kim Trosdahl. "Turns out my baby loves to fish!"

19 Michael Powers

Bigger Picture Group Co-President/
Promotion

20 Shane Allen

Capitol/Nashville
VP/Promotion



On the shore of Lake Superior with son Kellan.

Power 31

21 Meg Stevens

Clear Channel/Washington & Baltimore OM, WMZQ/Washington PD



At the Baltimore Women's Classic run with daughter Julia. "We raised over \$2,000 together!"



25 Johnny Chiang

KKBQ/Houston PD

"Here I am with my youngest, George, who's the real brains behind KKBQ. And, yes, I named him after the King!"

26 Jon Loba

Broken Bow/Stoney Creek SVP/Label Group

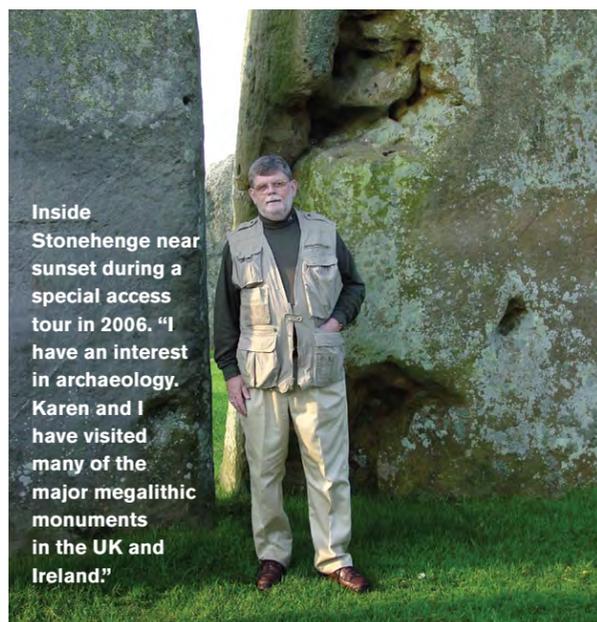
At CMA Music Festival with son Kaleb and wife Tara as Thompson Square perform.



Riding with wife Kim Madden.

28 Adrian Michaels

Curbs VP/Promotion



Inside Stonehenge near sunset during a special access tour in 2006. "I have an interest in archaeology. Karen and I have visited many of the major megalithic monuments in the UK and Ireland."



At Cooperstown with his 12-year-old son's baseball team during the Field of Dreams tournament.

22 Tim Roberts

WYCD/Detroit PD



23 Jack Purcell

Big Machine VP/Promotion

27 Jimmy Harnen

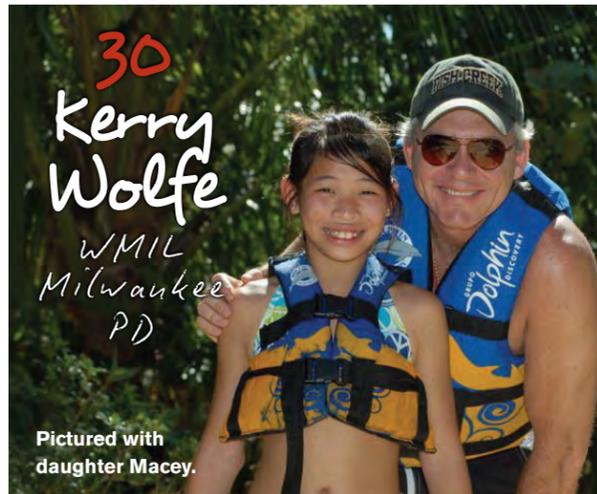
Republic Nashville President

"Katie's first time playing golf, but she probably had more fun watching ducks swim and looking at the plants and flowers. Luke drove the golf cart ... like Kyle Busch."



29 Bob Moody

Townsquare VP/Programming



Pictured with daughter Macey.

30 Kerry Wolfe

WMIL Milwaukee PD



With son Hayden in the Bahamas.

31 Jeff Solima

Bigger Picture Group Co-President/Promotion New Revolution Partner

24 Chris Stacey

Warner Music Nashville SVP/Promotion

Free-diving in the Bahamas.





Hali Hicks

9 NORTH RECORDS/ TURNPIKE

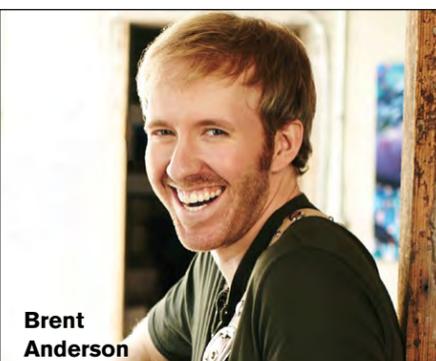
Label Lombardi **Larry Pareigis** calls the plays his team will be running: "**Billy Ray Cyrus** is on tap to celebrate his 50th birthday with us with a special release. 'Nineteen' (Buena Vista/Nine North) is a real stunner of a single." **Crystal Shawanda** is radio-touring behind "Love Enough" (New Sun/Nine North), which is on your desks and via Play MPE. **Hali Hicks**' "Last Night of Spring" (Phull/Jeff McClusky/Nine North) is what Pareigis calls "a charming debut from this Georgia peach." The pride of Odessa, TX and Permian High School, **Brian Milson**, is out on the road promoting his debut single "The Man I'm Not" (Permian/Nine North), while Long Island's own **Lisa Matassa** brings "Me Time" (It Is What It Is/Nine North).

Want more? Pareigis says, "A charismatic, black-hatted **DJ Miller** is on 40+ stations at press time with his latest single 'Between Sundays' (Evergreen/Spinville/Nine North). A **St. Jude** survivor who's dedicated his life to assisting that cause is **Darren Warren**; his debut single "Cowboy Up And Party Down" (NuCorp/Nine North) is on the radio now. "**Jessica Ridley**, who's relocating from Canada to Nashville, returns soon with 'Fit To Be Tied' (EMG/Universal/Nine North). It'll be on your desks and Play MPE shortly. Last but not least, **Risa Binder** is back with a gorgeous Country radio remix of her new single 'You Made It Rain' (Warehouse/Turnpike). Let's have some awesome Fall books with some great new music and artists along for the ride!"

ARISTA

It's been a strong year for VP/Promotion **Lesly Tyson**'s lineup, and her top-notch coaches have cued up a dramatic fourth quarter finish. "**Brad Paisley** has had an amazing year as the reigning CMA Entertainer of the Year," she says. "'Remind Me' has been a massive sales and airplay smash for Brad and **Carrie Underwood** – two superstars on one powerhouse duet. This is a single that will stand the test of time." Look for single No. 4 from Brad's No. 1-selling *This Is Country Music* this fall.

As for rookies, Tyson says, "We are so proud to introduce the world to **Brent Anderson**. He is a brilliant musician, a wonderfully clever songwriter and a



Brent Anderson



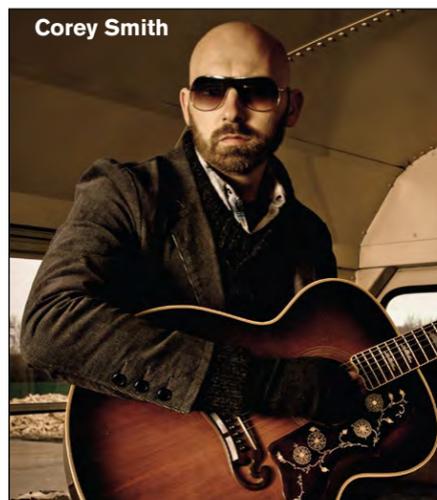
Instant Pre-Play On Q4 Music

From the culmination of year-long plans and economic impact to a convergence of superstar talent and general morale boost for all concerned, the next few months have tremendous impact. It is, quite literally, the most wonderful time of the year. And we're not just talking about football.

On the music biz gridiron, fourth quarter is where the pigskin meets the FieldTurf. And as we do each year, Country Aircheck surveyed Nashville's promotion execs for their year-end single and album game plans. Game on.

refreshingly unique voice all rolled into one incredibly talented artist." Anderson's debut single "Amy's Song" is on PD desks now.

"**Ronnie Dunn**'s self-titled solo debut has been one of the most critically acclaimed albums of the year," Tyson continues. "His profound 'Cost Of Livin' is much more than a song; it is a real-life story that gives hope to so many Americans."



Corey Smith

Also riding high is **Jerrod Niemann**, whose *Judge Jerrod and the Hung Jury* debuted at No. 1. A CRS New Face and CMA and ACA nominated newcomer, Niemann has his chart-climbing "One More Drinkin' Song" heralded by Tyson as the "party anthem of the fall."

AVERAGE JOES ENTERTAINMENT

Tom Baldrice's group is chasing gridiron glory for releases including **Montgomery Gentry**'s current single "Where I Come From," the lead track from *Rebels On The Run*, out Oct. 4. Meanwhile, **Kevin Fowler** has a Sept. 12 impact date with "That Girl"; the track is from his new album *Chippin' Away*, available now. And **Corey Smith**'s second single to Country radio, "Maybe Next Year," from his album, *The Broken Record*, will ship to radio this month and impacts Oct. 3.

BIGGER PICTURE

Michael Powers draws up the offense, which starts with **Chris Cagle**'s "Got My Country On," blocked for an Aug. 29 impact. Hitting Sept. 12 is **Zac Brown Band**'s "Keep

Rascal Flatts, who Purcell reports as the most-played Country group of the past 12 months, continue with "Easy" featuring **Natasha Bedingfield**, from the No. 1, platinum-selling *Nothing Like This*. Jack says it's a top 10 callout tester, with sales increasing weekly.

"Amen" by **Edens Edge** is drawing scouting reports of accelerating research, sales, live performances and social engagement. The band will be opening for three major artists this fall including on **Brad Paisley**'s *H2O II Tour*, **Reba**'s *All The Women I Am Tour* and **Lady Antebellum**'s *Own The Night Tour*.

Steel Magnolia's fourth single "Bulletproof," from their self-titled debut album, will remain a contender throughout the fall, during which time the duo will also perform as part of **Reba**'s *All The Women I Am Tour*.



Wade Bowen

BIG RIDE

In a world of singles, it's literally a singular focus for **Big Ride**, according to consultant **Teddi Bonadies**. Canada-born songstress **Marlee Scott** and "Beautiful Maybe" will be going long all season, with a new album touching down in 2012.

BNA

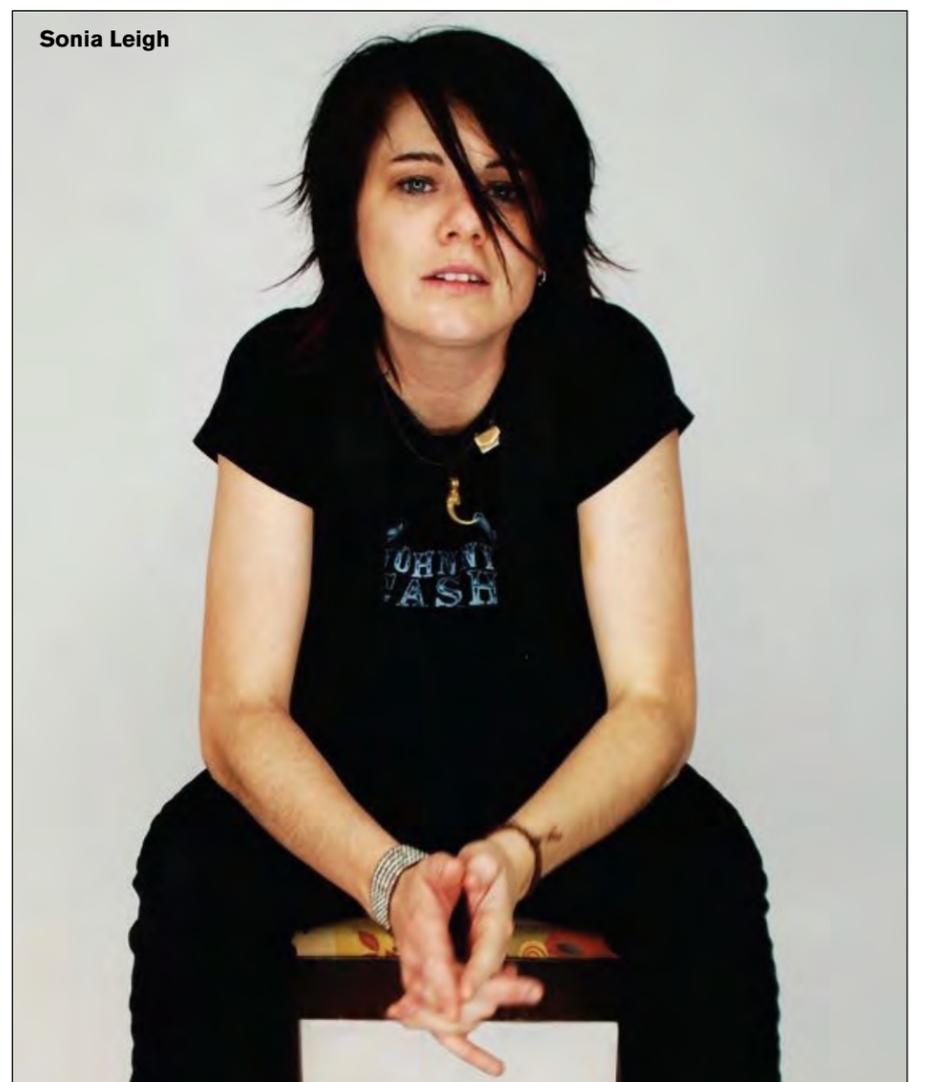
VP **Bryan Frasher** has a quartet of artists for fourth-quarter consideration, starting with the first single from seasoned veteran **Casey James**, "Let's Don't Call It A Night." He says, "Listeners can look forward to the depth and musicianship Casey brings to the format. His 13 years of playing every gig imaginable will shine through for this already-familiar face." Another first single called "Saturday Night" is en route this fall from singer/songwriter **Wade Bowen**, who already has a large touring base.

Me In Mind," which hopes to step right into the No.1 cleats of its many predecessors.

Sonia Leigh's debut album for the label "1978 December" is also out Q4, and carryovers **Craig Campbell** ("Fish") and **Christian Kane** ("Let Me Go") will remain promotion priorities until the final whistle blows.

BIG MACHINE

Quarterback **Jack Purcell** says his line of heavy lifters are pushing four singles into the fourth quarter. **Taylor Swift**'s "Sparks Fly" is posting "power research across callout and online platforms," he says, and will lead to a fifth single to start the new year.



Sonia Leigh

Frasher says that with **Kellie Pickler** heading toward to the top of the charts, the label is looking ahead to the release of her third album. "She's singing better than ever, looks incredible, and is ready to break new ground for females in the Country format." As for **Kenny Chesney**, fifth single "Reality" from the platinum *Hemingway's Whiskey* is coming soon.

BROKEN BOW

SVP **Carson James** reports that the big goal line push is on for red-hot **Jason Aldean's** "Tattoos On This Town." There's a new **Blake Wise** single coming called "Can't Live Without," which James says has a "great hook with an interesting twist." He's also excited about the rollout for **Dustin Lynch**, whom he calls "a very unique voice, great songwriter and a workaholic. He's one of those special guys who understands and well-executes everything you tell him the first time. Look for him on his radio tour this fall."

CAPITOL

Nashville's back-to-back Label of the Year will be focused on at least five singles from some of the biggest names in the format. **Lady Antebellum's** "We Owned The Night" is the second single from their third album, *Own The Night*. VP **Shane Allen** says "It'll be charging fast toward the top of the chart as Q4 begins." **Luke Bryan's** "I Don't Want This Night To End" will be the second single from his third album, *Tailgates & Tanlines*, which recently debuted at No. 1.

Dierks Bentley will follow his eighth No. 1 ("Am I The Only One") with what Allen describes as a "typically authentic and powerfully nostalgic" song called "Home." Nearing the end of another world tour, **Keith Urban** will have a new single rolling out in October, while there just might be a new one from **Darius Rucker** before year's end.

CO5

The **Lost Trailers** are hitching up to a new single called "Underdog" (Stokes Tunes /HRT/CO5), which will impact Sept. 19.

COLD RIVER

Coming off of her national summer tour, **Katie Armiger** has been enjoying the success of having a No. 1 video with "I Do, But Do I," according to label honcho **Pete O'Heeron**. Katie's momentum continues with her debut on the *Grand Ole Opry* and release of a double-disc deluxe version of her album *Confessions Of A Nice Girl*.



CURB

There's a steady stream of new singles on the way from **Steve Holy** (Sept. 13), **LeAnn Rimes** (Sept. 27) and **Rodney Atkins** (Oct. 14). Atkins' is his second from his new album *Take A Back Road*. Also coming this fall are **Ashley Gearing's** "Me, Myself And I" and a new single from **Lee Brice**, who will be on the CMT tour.

EMI NASHVILLE

It's fourth and "Long" for VP **Angela Lange**, whose three-single scope begins with no less than **Alan Jackson's** current single "Long Way To Go" from a new album due this fall. "We're very excited to have this country legend on our roster," she says, "and we have some exciting new music coming from him."

Fueled by the No. 1 debut of *Chief*, **Eric Church** is the toast of the industry with his just-shipped single "Drink In My Hand." After writing Jake Owen's latest hit "Barefoot Blue Jean Night," **Eric Paslay** is standing tall on his own with "Never Really Wanted." Lange hails the 6-foot-4-inch Paslay as "an amazing artist and prolific songwriter."

FLYING ISLAND

Label consultant **Nancy Tunick** tunes in to report that **Amber Hayes** will be continuing her radio tour in support of "Wait." She'll be picking up tens of thousands of new impressions this fall from singing the national anthem prior to NFL contests in Tampa Bay and Cleveland, supported by online station promotions. (We didn't even have to get creative for that football reference.)

The company will also be introducing new artist **Coy Taylor** with his debut single, "Fall For You." Taylor has been building a regional following in Ohio and Kentucky before arriving in Nashville, and an aptly named autumn radio tour called "Fall For Coy" will keep him on the road throughout

the season. Meanwhile, **Gwen Sebastian** will be in the studio during Q4 in preparation for a Q1 single from her new project.

MERCURY

VP/Radio Marketing **Katie Dean** tells us that **Sugarland** and **Easton Corbin** are working on new material, with single dates

up recording his own new project. **Ashton Shepherd's** title track from *Where Country Grows* is getting airplay now, while **Kip Moore's** latest, "Somethin' Bout A Truck" impacts radio this month. Hall of Famer **Vince Gill** is back with his first new material in four years, starting with "Threaten Me With Heaven" from *Guitar Slinger*, which streets Oct. 24.



TBD. October brings the back-to-back album releases by *American Idol* stars **Scotty McCreery** (Oct. 4) and **Lauren Alaina** (Oct. 11). The autumn will also herald the release of **Lionel Richie's** *Tuskegee*. Named after his hometown, it's a collection of his biggest hits redone as duets with country superstars.

MCA

Here For A Good Time is the name of **George Strait's** 39th (!) album, out in September, with a second single likely in the late fall. **David Nail** is putting the finishing touches on his sophomore MCA album, while **Josh Turner** just wrapped

NEW REVOLUTION

Co-owner **Rob Dalton** says he's excited to add **The Farm** to their team and looks forward to revealing new music from that trio, comprised of **Damien Horne**, **Krista Marie** and **Nick Hoffman**. NR is continuing to spread the word on **Jason Jones'** "Ferris Wheel" and **Ty Stone's** debut, "American Style."

QUARTERBACK

The references write themselves and **John Ettinger** says, "The staff has grown at QB, and so has the variety of great music." He



must be referring to the ladies of **Lucy Angel**, who are traveling to away games across the country to introduce radio to their new single, "Serious." **Matt Gary** is also on the road in support of "Beautiful Life," the follow-up to his debut "I'm Just Sayin'."

QB is still pounding the rock on **Mark Cooke's** "I Love I," and introducing Texan **Jason Cassidy** with his debut, "Honky Tonk Heaven." And then there's **Sawyer Brown**, back with "Smokin' Hot Wife." Some more surprises are expected, perhaps even a new one from **Emerson Drive**, who Ettinger says "are on the road prepping for a big 2012."

R&J

New head coach **Tim McFadden** is grooming future star **Andy Gibson** for radio greatness with "Wanna Make You Love Me." "He actually doesn't really need an intro," says McFadden, "as he co-wrote the multi-week No. 1 'Don't You Wanna Stay' for Jason Aldean and Kelly Clarkson. He's the real deal and has been blowing everyone away on his radio tour this summer. The early response from radio has been fantastic."

New music from **Margaret Durante** is also in passing formation. "Radio has told us that they love her voice and her personality, and they're just waiting for the right song," McFadden says, noting that new tracks cut with James Stroud should end that wait.

There also will be a fresh single from **Aaron Lewis**, whose debut solo EP, *Town Line*, debuted at No. 1 on the Country Albums chart. His "Country Boy" single

is nearing gold certification, and the video reportedly has been viewed a whopping 10 million times.

RCA

The Dawg Pound's **Keith Gale** says, "We will continue to work **Sara Evans'** 'My Heart Can't Tell You No' and **Danny Gokey's** 'Second Hand Heart,' as both songs are doing well at radio." With hits under their belts from their respective current albums, **Chris Young** and **Jake Owen** will see follow-up releases headed radio's way this fall. "Both are poised to move to the next level," Gale says.

"We also welcome **Love And Theft** to the RCA family, and will be setting up their debut single for a fourth-quarter release. These guys have so many friends and supporters at Country radio, the music is great and they are ready to go." Gale also is pumped about new band **Bush Hawg**. "The project is produced by Michael Knox, and it is amazing."

Miranda Lambert's fourth album *Four The Record* hits with fourth quarter fortitude for Ford drivers, foreigners and forever fans, including the aforementioned. The Nov. 1 release is led by the fast-rising lead single "Baggage Claim." **Josh Thompson's** debut single, "Change," from his sophomore album will go for adds Sept. 26, and he will be out on the CMT tour with Luke Bryan and Lee Brice this fall.

REPUBLIC NASHVILLE

Wearing jersey No. 11, **Matthew Hargis** checks at the line with "the format's most played female artist of the past 11 years, **Martina McBride**." Studio album 11 comes out Oct. 11 and features 11 new tracks. You'll never guess the title. The Top 20-charting "Teenage Daughters" and current "I'm Gonna Love You Through It" are included.

The Band Perry's "All Your Life" is "already flying up the charts" and Hargis points out their album is approaching platinum and single downloads are at 3.5 million. Currently on tour with Keith Urban in Canada, the Perrys are out with Reba in Q4. The **Eli Young Band's** *Life At Best* was a No. 3 country debut and "more than doubled" first week sales of

their previous album. Single "Crazy Girl" is certified gold on the way to platinum. **Sunny Sweeney** is wrapping up summer touring with Brad Paisley. Her label debut *Concrete* is in stores and receiving "major critical acclaim," Hargis says, citing *Billboard*, *USA Today*, *American Songwriter* and the *Washington Post*.

RIDE

President **Bill "BT" Twyman** checks in to say that early November will bring *Delta Soul Volume 1*, the new release by **Steve Azar**.

RODEOWAVE

Phil Vassar's single "Lets Get Together" is a priority through Q4. Company partner **Teddi Bonadies** says Vassar has a live hits CD called *Live On Broadway* recorded last New Year's Eve at Nashville's Riverfront Park that is selling "very well" on the road. While new cuts are being recorded, there's a Christmas album release planned for October. Distribution deals are in the works, along with availability via philvassar.com.

SHOW DOG- UNIVERSAL

Clipboard carrier **Rick Moxley** reminds everyone to get ready for *Clancy's Tavern*, the new album from **Toby Keith**, which streets Oct. 24. That release will be preceded by another single to follow his latest hit "Made In America," though the title track is already confirmed as the single in Europe to support tour dates on the Continent.

Joe Nichols' "Take It Off" will continue as a focal point through the rest of the year, with a new album scheduled Nov. 1. **Trace Adkins** will have "Million Dollar View" as his next single. **JT Hodges'** "Hunt You Down" is still in the hunt and an album is expected Q1.

SKYVILLE

Prez **Kevin Herring** says, "Back in January, a Facebook post from WSOC/Charlotte PD **DJ Stout** alerted me that **Trent Tomlinson** had made some amazing new music. I asked Trent to come play it for me and was floored! There are 11 new songs written and produced by Trent that I've been obsessed with figuring out how to get to radio. Everyone I've been able to play this album for says the same thing: 'Wow!' First up is a new single called 'Man Without A Woman.'"

Stealing Angels have just returned from entertaining U.S. troops in Iraq and have completed their album. Herring says next single "Little Blue Sky" is up tempo, positive "and as hooky a song as you will ever hear. One or two listens and you'll be singing along and smiling!" It will be on programmer desks in the next few weeks.

STONEY CREEK

Carson James gets back in the game with the lineup for BBR's sister label. A new **Ash Bowers** single will be out this fall, joined by music from new North Carolina band **Parmalee**. James calls them "a great aggressive band in the same way Jason, Luke and Eric are. They don't sound like those artists, but they've got that same forward lean." James also points out the Stoney Creek staff is still coaching up a top 20 record on **Thompson Square**, as well as the current **James Wesley**.

VALORY

VP **Chris Loss** says **Brantley Gilbert's** 'Country Must Be Country Wide' is continuing its "explosive growth" at Country radio. He's already predicting a follow-up smash, but adds, "We have miles to go before we sleep on this current hit." Gilbert's *Halfway To Heaven* deluxe and regular CDs are online and now in stores.

After a successful run on *Flatts Fest*, a No. 1 single with "If Heaven Wasn't So Far Away" and No. 1 Country album with *Outlaws Like Me*, **Justin Moore** will wrap up the year in the middle slot on the road with Miranda Lambert. On the airplay front, "Bait A Hook" continues its upward trajectory.

Meanwhile, Loss points out that **Reba** is one of only four solo females to have a No. 1 Country single in the past 12 months, noting, "She is playing to her strength with an amazing ballad, 'Somebody's Chelsea.' Reba co-wrote it, and the song idea hit her while watching the movie *P.S. I Love You*." She will be touring the country starting in early October with The Band Perry, Steel

Magnolia and Edens Edge on her *All The Women I Am* Tour.

WMN

VP **Bob Reeves** reports, "We expect to be celebrating **Blake Shelton's** fifth consecutive No. 1 single soon, as 'God Gave Me You' nears the upper echelon of the chart." No decision yet on Shelton's next single.

Reinforced by an aggressive touring schedule, including 11 Taylor Swift shows, **Hunter Hayes** continues to connect with his first single, "Storm Warning." On his first album, out Oct. 11, Hayes gets the Jim Thorpe nod for writing or co-writing every song, playing every instrument, singing every vocal and co-producing with Dann Huff.

The **JaneDear girls** just got "their party started" this month with "Merry Go Round" from their eponymous debut album. Reeves says the single, produced by John Rich, is the "overwhelming choice" according to fans on social media sites, digital track sales, his promo staff and, "most important, our radio partners."

The **Dirt Drifters** are out hitting the road, playing shows and giving away nearly 30,000 copies of their album *This Is My Blood*, which features a dual tear-away sleeve so recipients can gift the second copy to a friend. Reeves says "We are looking for real champions on 'Always A Reason.' Come on, Country radio: Give a little blood because I guarantee you the Dirt Drifters will back up your good deed!"

Randy Travis is celebrating his silver anniversary in the country music biz with a new single from his *25th Celebration* project. WMN is just starting with "Everything And All," with early airplay already underway. "The legend is back," says Reeves, "and 'Everything' is thoroughly modern Randy!"



Jana Kramer

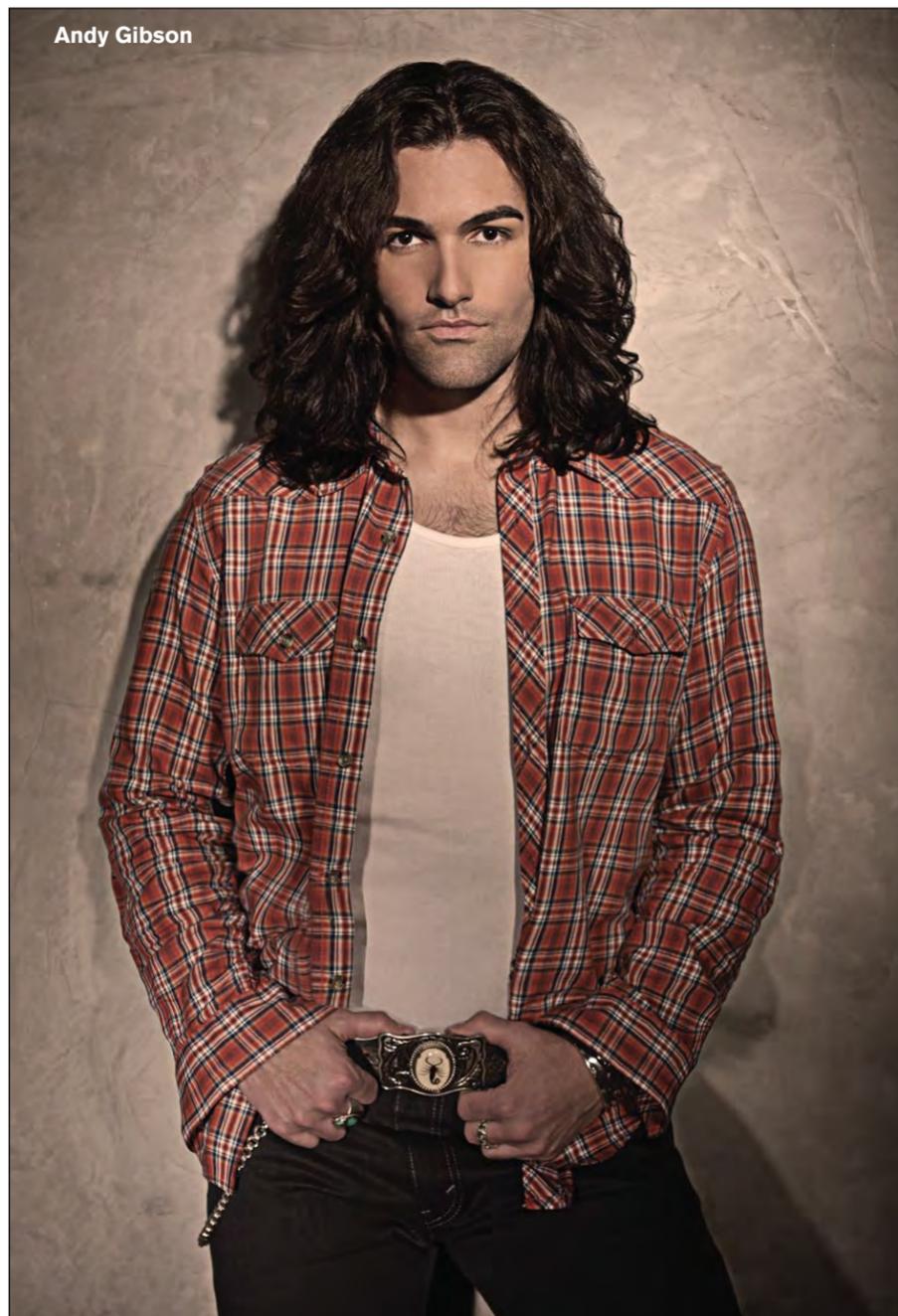
W.A.R.

VP **Chris Palmer** says, "The W.A.R. staff will be busy rocking in Q4." Among the highlight reel performers will be the second single from **Brett Eldredge**, "It Ain't Gotta Be Love." His first single was one of the highest-charting debut singles of 2010.

Palmer calls **Gloriana's** current single, "Wanna Take You Home," a "boot-stomping, dance-along mix that continues to be one of the best-researching songs on the chart." Backed by a No. 1 video, the single is off their forthcoming album, set for release in Q4.

Big & Rich are on the *Xtreme Muzik... The Tour* and have released "Fake ID," their first single in nearly three years. It will be featured in the upcoming remake of *Footloose*, and they will return to the studio soon.

Frankie Ballard will have new music on the way following his summer hit "A Buncha Girls," and will continue traveling the country, having toured with Bob Seger, Taylor Swift and Uncle Kracker. And singer/songwriter/actress **Jana Kramer** has already had success with three songs that were featured on the CW's *One Tree Hill*. Selling nearly 200,000 digital singles to date, Palmer & Co. are **SPAC**



Andy Gibson

POWER *to the* PEOPLE

AUDIENCE-BASED PROGRAMMING IN ACTION



I imagine a world where radio programmers surrender their usual iron-clad grip on playlists ... where listeners vote in real-time, deciding which songs air and in what sequence they'll play, minute by minute. Well, dream no more.

Say hello to programming via crowd-sourcing, a term the dictionary defines as: "labor contributed by the general public, often via the Internet and without compensation." If the two primary developers of this technology – Jelli ("100% User Controlled Radio") and Listener Driven Radio (LDR) – are right, what is now a mere groundswell of fewer than 120 stations will eventually become an industry standard.

Changing the very notion of radio and how it's consumed is intended to help terrestrial broadcasters not just remain viable, but actually thrive in the face of ever-increasing new media challenges. The respective brain trusts behind Jelli and LDR share this vision, yet their approaches are vastly different.

There's Always Room For Jelli

CEO **Michael Dougherty** and Chief Technology Officer **Jateen Parekh** co-founded Jelli 18 months ago and bring experience from Microsoft, Yahoo! and Amazon to their startup. Dougherty developed content pushed to mobile devices; Parekh was instrumental in developing the Kindle. Neither has any prior experience with radio.

"We saw a huge medium that for decades hasn't really changed how it operates," Dougherty says. "People forget how big radio is and how streaming is such an opportunity, though it's still in its early days. If we could combine [those forces] with the explosive growth in social web, perhaps we could create something new, exciting and different for radio. We designed it by asking first, 'How will it be fun?' and second, 'How will it work?'"

The fun commences when listeners vote on songs while listening to a station in a highly social environment. After logging on via the station website, Jelli users have access to a chat window. "They can talk to each other about whether they like a song and what should play next," Dougherty says. "That creates community."

Interactive song tags called "rockets" and "bombs" create a game-like experience. The former works to elevate your favorite song to the top of the playlist queue. The latter brings a song's score down. Each day that listeners visit Jelli they're issued three rockets and one bomb to use at their discretion.

If they wish, they can stockpile up to five bombs and 11 rockets. Inviting a friend to participate gets you a rocket pack. But wait, there's more!

As the voting process moves along, users can voice their approval of a selection by clicking a "Rocks" button while it plays. Conversely, there's also a self-explanatory "Sucks" button. If enough users simultaneously hit the "Sucks" button, the song is removed from the air immediately, even if it

hasn't finished. Dougherty says the aim is to "keep them coming back every day."

Although listeners are chatting, interacting on Facebook, voting for songs and slinging those rockets and bombs, it's not quite the wild, wild West. Programmers ultimately build the sandbox in which listeners play by choosing the overall pool of songs.

"It's like going into a bar with a jukebox and trying to find a song you'd really like to hear," Dougherty says.

Hey, You, Get Into Our Cloud

For a couple of neo-radio techno-geeks, the learning seems to be going both ways. "PDs have a robust and deep understanding of how to create one stream of music that's pleasing to a broad number of people," Dougherty says. "And that is not trivial. It's challenging in a world of personalization, fragmentation and instant gratification." And on the other side, "Web people have moved beyond traditional media and are discovering the power of simultaneous, live listening. More power to them, but more power to radio, too, because it's always been that."

As for Country radio specifically, Dougherty and his team quickly discovered the format's strong community orientation. There were also surprises. "When we started, the premise I heard about [Country] listeners not being connected or using Facebook is just not true. They use it a lot and are highly collaborative. They're also buying Android phones and laptops and trying to figure out cool things to do with them."

So far, Clear Channel's **KEYY/Minneapolis** is Jelli's only Country station among its 18 affiliates, but Dougherty says, "We've seen that their audience is just as active as any of our pop stations and more, in some cases."

He also believes the collaborative, community-building Jelli experience will make listeners with an already-high affinity for radio use the medium even more. Conversely, he asserts the technology's opportunity to bring new appeal to those who are, to one extent or another, disenfranchised with radio.

"Half our listeners are 18-34," Dougherty says. "Our average user is 27, and our proportion of teens have grown from 8-14% in the past year. Our 18-25 demo – that college age – is very strong. That's the age group most at risk to try other media. Jelli can educate them, keep them excited about radio and attach them to a station."



Jateen Parekh & Michael Dougherty



Post-Modern Radio

Listener Driven Radio comes at the concept from a much different angle. "We're not trying to reinvent the way radio does business," co-founder **Daniel Anstandig** says. "We're trying to help strong stations become even stronger."

Here's another distinction: He and co-founders **Lee Zapis** and **Mike McVay** have exemplary radio programming backgrounds and designed LDR with that mindset. Speaking the language has helped: Since launching in 2009, LDR has accumulated 100 affiliates in all formats and market sizes.

The LDR team asked itself, "Wouldn't it be interesting if radio were invented *after* the Internet instead of the other way around? How would we do programming differently?" The big idea was to invite listeners to control what airs on a minute-by-minute basis via web browser or smart phone, with the hope of getting them to spend more time with the station.

Whereas Jelli is cloud-based, LDR integrates its software with music scheduling systems and major automation companies, as well as with stations' websites. "We don't have to ship a separate server to the station, so they don't have to manage anything beyond what's already on-site," Anstandig says, adding that LDR is not building its own consumer brand name. "We treat it like RCS, a software service you buy via barter and call it whatever you want."

Building Cume, TSL

Stations can choose from two levels of LDR. One lets fans pick songs in specific parts of the hour, perhaps coming out of stopsets with a fan-voted tune or kicking off the hour. The other level, LDR Takeover, allows the audience to choose all the music played during an entire daypart in real time.

Like Jelli, the PD ultimately decides what songs the audience can select. "We call it LDR Takeover, not *hostile* takeover," Anstandig explains. Some programmers allow voting for selected categories; some opt for specific clock placement. A few PDs open the music envelope completely.

LDR's social media component allows users to share their voting via Facebook. The "dedication" button pulls up all of a listener's Facebook friends, posting to the selected friend's wall, as well as that of the air personality. "For every person who's made a dedication, four people come back from Facebook to the station site to try it," Anstandig says. "That's why we think social media is a cume builder."

And because listeners can now vote on what plays next, they have a horse in the race and will sit through the process longer. Hence, TSL. "We've seen people spend more time on the station's site," observes Anstandig. The average time on an LDR Takeover show's site is more than 20 minutes, contrasted to a two-minute average he cites for radio sites in general.

Could this be radio's answer to Pandora? Anstandig thinks so. "Instead of doing one-to-many programming, you're doing many-to-many, with listeners becoming the MD. It gives a more interactive hook to a station, versus an independent jukebox that doesn't respond to listeners' real-time opinions."

Speaking of those opinions, what about overzealous LDR participants who attempt to commandeer the playlist – a kind of programming "prize pig"? LDR has apparently taken that into consideration, too. "We can monitor every listener's voting and have a formula to curb abuse," Anstandig says. "If we see a situation where you're not contributing to the station's good, we screen you out."

Country Connected

Similar to the Jelli team, Anstandig and LDR have been pleasantly surprised at how adult listeners have embraced the crowd-sourcing concept. "We bought into the stereotype that only young listeners would use an interactive tool, but we quickly found out that was a myth."

When LDR analyzed who was voting, it closely mirrored each station's respective target demo. "I have to credit the industry for being willing to explode our illusions about which formats would pick this up. We thought it would be Rock and Top 40; in fact, it's everybody." Anstandig adds that Country is a natural fit, citing its "passionate, vocal and interactive" fans.

Most of LDR's affiliates are adult-targeted, with Country stations just starting to get into the game. Peak's KAWO/Boise, Oasis' WBTU/Ft. Wayne, IN and Clear Channel's WBCT/Grand Rapids are current users. "The PDs who really get this find a simple way of explaining it to the audience and the team inside the station," Anstandig says.

LDR and Jelli execs both believe real-time listener interaction is where radio programming is headed. Says Anstandig, "This is one way digital media and broadcast radio are merging."

CAC



THE PROGRAMMER'S TAKE

Two months ago, Clear Channel's **KEEY/Minneapolis PD Gregg Swedberg** began running the Jelli platform Sundays 7pm-midnight. Here, he explains his experience thus far:

"When we talked to the Jelli team, I really liked the social networking aspect where there's potential to create your own culture of people. I look at this almost like when we were all really young. You'd take your 45s over to somebody's house and say, 'Listen to this song! Jelli is like inviting 1,000 of my friends over to play music, and they all get a chance to vote. The plan is to expand it to lunchtime with a legends show where we play '70s and '80s classics."

"There are some things I'd change, like watching if someone has two user IDs or tracking IP addresses, or if somebody has too many rockets and bombs. There are people who know how to game the system and want to influence it."

"The music is all over the place, but it's okay for Country. You're talking about the music we normally play, just rearranged. The math isn't as good as what I can do, but the audience doesn't care about my stinking rules; they want what they want. You have to be in the room to feel the vibe. The mood swings all the time. Recently, Jason Aldean was owning the room, then the room decided it was tired of him for awhile."

"A lot of people will put their absolute worst programming on the air on a Sunday night, and this is way better than that, so it doesn't bother me so much."

In addition to his work with Alpha's **KUPL/Portland**, **Scott Mahalick** is involved in station ownership, serving as Managing Director for Aurora Media, operators of Alternative **KXLI** & Top 40 **KYLI/Las Vegas**. Both utilize the Jelli brand 24/7, the only affiliates to do so and going so far as to integrate "L" into their call letters.

"We wanted to throw out conventional rules and wondered what a technology company would do if they had a radio station attached to it, instead of a radio station with an add-on website. "It might be a bit of risk, but it's the highest level of listener engagement ever with the right kind of security blankets. We're migrating towards a closer, more intimate relationship with the audience. Jelli takes us there and jumps right into the deep end."

"In Las Vegas, there are six Top 40 stations. We needed to do something

to stand out, and it is creating a buzz. There's no greater city in the world to put a control room in everybody's hands. Sprinkle in a chat window and the Facebook interactivity, and you've connected all the dots and delivered more passion."

"Data collection is a complete profile of the listener, similar to the depth of information on Facebook. As we get the profile fully developed, we'll have a lot of interests, likes and tastes that will enable us to touch all of their passion buttons."

"The Jelli guys have been wide open to our feedback, and I'll be a better broadcaster and programmer just having this association."

Oasis Radio Group's **WBTU/Ft. Wayne, IN** is the first Country station to become an LDR Takeover affiliate. The station uses LDR weekdays 6pm-midnight, branding the feature "Click It & Pick It." GM/Dir. Programming **Phil Becker** shares his thoughts:

"It's probably going to go through the adoption process with super-hyper P1s using it first. Over time, if we could get 10-20% of our weekly cume to participate, I'd be pretty happy. Right now we're at 6-7%, almost on par with our CHR station. We do lean young at WBTU, so the people that use it are the same ones who appreciate the younger, more contemporary approach."

"There are 378 songs active outside of *Pick It & Click It* and 622 titles at night. It is sizeable, but nothing out of the format because we still believe every song is a marketing decision. A lot of the songs we added were the kinds of songs that end up just south of the cut-off line in an auditorium test. We're starting to see titles the audience knows are out there, but we're not playing. Pistol Annies, for example."

"LDR sends us data on a weekly basis, and it shows last week vs. this week. You get positives, negatives, total votes and how many songs each typical user votes on per visit. This week, the average listener voted on 17 titles. You also get a list of songs you didn't have available that the audience suggested."



Scott Mahalick



Gregg Swedberg



Phil Becker

Katie Armiger

Deluxe Album,

"Confessions Of A Nice Girl (The True Confessional)"

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COLD RIVER RECORDS

JOHN DIMICK

Programming At The Fore

Newly-minted Lincoln Financial Media Sr. VP/Programming & Operations John Dimick is no stranger to Country, having programmed KQOL/Salt Lake City in the early '90s and KSON/San Diego from 1998-2004. Book-ending his time in San Diego were programming stints at Top 40 WNCI/Columbus and Top 40/Rhythmic WQHT/New York. Along the way, he programmed AC, Hot AC and Oldies as well, perhaps perfectly grooming him for his present role of overseeing 14 stations with a wide variety of formats in Atlanta, Denver, Miami and San Diego. LFM's holdings include two of this format's top outlets, KSON and KYGO/Denver. Dimick joined LFM as VP/Programming & Ops in March 2007 and was elevated to Sr. VP last month.

CA: What's your role as Lincoln Financial Media's top radio programmer?

JD: We've always believed we need to be best in show or best in breed. My job is to help our stations with everything they need to get there, whether it's on the air, interactive, digital or PPM strategies. That involves working with all our GMs, PDs, sales managers, interactive managers and webmasters to develop the best products we can.

What's your interaction with the sales departments?

Helping create ideas; helping sales better understand the products that we have and how they can best be matched to advertiser's needs. And to explain how the products we develop over the air attract listeners. We make money by selling an audience, so it's helping sales understand how we move an audience from point A to point B.

There's not a hard line in this company between programming and sales. If programming people can understand the objectives of our clients and our sales department, and if sales can understand the objectives of our programming department, everybody wins. There's a lot of money to be made when there's greater understanding and communication between sales and programming.

Throughout your career you've worked with some of radio's best operators, including Nationwide, Jefferson-Pilot and Emmis. What qualities do they share?

Considering how lucky I've been, you'd think I'd be buying lottery tickets. But those companies, and LFM, understand that this is a business of people. In a \$100 million radio station, you have \$3 million in equipment and \$97 million in people. That's what those companies get more than most. And they are led by patient people who understand that things don't get done in a day. They're not infinitely patient; but they're patient. Those are the type of people I want to work for.

What is the operational philosophy between LFM's Atlanta headquarters and each of the clusters?

Because we're small, we're able to develop much better relationships with each of our individual radio stations and clusters. We view ourselves as "customer service" – we're here to provide help and assistance. Each cluster and station knows what the goals and objectives are, they know best how to get from A to B. If you interviewed all the key players inside each cluster, I'd hope they would say we help them get where they need to go.

We don't get into their responsibilities on a granular level. We tell them what we expect them to do each year, and let them go do it. And they are to let us know if something doesn't work the way it's supposed to, or if they find something cool we can share with others. Sometimes that evil corporate guidance comes into play where we have to say, "Sorry, can't do that." Mainly, though, our job is to provide a comprehensive business unit for our parent company.

Even though LFM is a relatively small broadcast company, you oversee a rather wide array of formats.

Among our group we have three sports stations, two Country, a Soft AC, a Classic Hits, a couple ACs and an Alternative. We've geographically and formatically diversified. I like being formatically diverse. Not all formats are strong at the same time;

the music in each format isn't always great at the same time. So being diverse is a stabilizing factor for the company.

The good news is, I don't have to worry about knowing the intricacies of all those formats. It all starts at the top with CEO Don Benson's challenge to me, and the company's challenge to itself: Go out and hire great people. When you find great PDs, you hire them, let them do their jobs – we operate under "Your bat, your ball, your butt" – keep them happy and keep them in the company. So, I don't have to know everything about every format, which gives me time to investigate PPM and to find things that are working that we can share around the company.

LFM has two of the most prominent and heritage Country stations in the nation in KSON and KYGO. What are your overall thoughts on the state of Country radio today?

Looking at the big picture metrics that I deal with, Country today has this young-end swell that I haven't seen in a very long time. I'm not sure we've ever seen the 18-34 numbers we're currently seeing in San Diego and Denver. Country is enjoying an unbelievable swell. I see Zac Brown Band on the Today Show, Brad Paisley meeting with the Ambassador to France – that's crazy.

Our Country stations have always been good performers, but they're now performing at even higher levels. One of the things I've always admired about the format is the relationship between the artists and the radio stations. That makes the high tides higher and the downtrends not quite so bad.

Your AC stations are playing a handful of Country hits. In fact, I noticed thatWSTR (Star 94)/Atlanta is playing The Band Perry's "If I Die Young" in heavy. Is it good or bad for Country radio when AC plays a bunch of its hits and acts?

In some ways it's good for Country to have other formats expose its music to other groups of listeners who might not otherwise hear it. At times it may not be so good because the casual listener who wants a little bit of Country will get what they want on their favorite AC station and not have to go to the Country station to get it. But there's also a side benefit as the music tends to swing away from the center. At its extremes, Country tends to build its core audience a bit more when ACs, Hot ACs and Top 40 start swinging away from a country sound. People will miss that and seek it out. A lot of it has to do with the way Country stations are tweaking their product and taking care of their core, while not worrying about their cume. Stations must be careful to not violate the expectations of their core while trying to please their cume.

LFM's stations are all in PPM markets. What's your sense of PPM and Country?

Any station that can be readily identified by the music it plays has a distinct advantage. The music you play defines who you are, which gives Country a built-in advantage. If a listener hears a Train song, they could be on any number of stations. When you hear the vast majority of artists exclusive to Country radio, the listener knows exactly where they are.





ratings may tell us when we have a brand problem. But we never, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever use ratings as research. The sample size is just too low. Using PPM to program your music is like having 15 people participate in your next auditorium music test. Because that's how many meters you have listening to your radio station that you are using to make a music adjustment.

Arbitron is designed to, and does a good job of, generating ratings information. They are not a research company; that's not what they are designed to be. This is not at all meant to be disrespectful to Arbitron. They look at data. There are plenty enough data points to use for ratings. But there just aren't enough data points to use it as research.

I understand that I'm fortunate to work for the company I work for. We're not the biggest company in the world, but Bank of America or Wells Fargo or a private equity company is not knocking on my door saying if you don't make your payment we're going to take your stations away. Not a day goes by that I don't remember that. We get to spend money on focus groups, on perceptuals and weekly call-out. I don't know how long that's going to last; I hope it lasts forever.

And I don't want to sound like there is only one way to do things or that our way is the right way. There are different situations in different circumstances. I'm sure every broadcast owner in America would like to do more for their individual properties. I'm sure we would too. Hell, I'd love to have a million dollar campaign for each of our stations, but it's not realistic. But research is where this industry has taken it off the rails.

In his quote about your recent promotion, LFM President/CEO Don Benson said, "With the new title comes more responsibility for 'developing interactive and ratings strategies.'" We've talked PPM; what interactive strategies are you working on?

That said, radio stations in general could all do a better job moving things beyond the music. Music is one of the most difficult things to get right on a radio station, but it's also the easiest thing to duplicate. It's the thing that is least unique about any radio station in the country. I can track what you play and put the same songs on the air.

Country music can really help Country stations define and build that brand, but even they have to ask, "What is that thing that puts them beyond the music? What is that thing that someone's favorite Country station has that Pandora doesn't quite have? What is that thing that speaks directly to the listener in your city that satellite radio just can't do when it comes to connecting listeners with the community?" Each programmer must find what they do that separates their station from that automated or voice-tracked station across the street that's playing the same music.

That sounds great, but today's conventional wisdom is that PPM doesn't like all those things you say stations should be doing between the songs.

They're wrong. And we don't program our stations that way. Everyone certainly has their own philosophies. But instead of just assuming that what some people are saying about PPM is correct, I encourage people to find out the truth on their own. I believe making your station void of personality is wrong. It's certainly not what we do or how we choose to engage our listener.

Now, are we running three-minute promotional spots or are the jocks talking for five minutes without a bed in between songs? No. We've certainly clean-up our content. But we want to engage the audience, and when your audience is engaged they hear the commercials that you play.

Like everyone else, we're digging hard into social networking and social media and trying to figure out how people actually use our digital products, be it texting or engaging via our websites.

A lot of our growth in the interactive space has been organic. We've watched as Star 94 has developed a core of about 1,200 listeners who actually talk to one another on Facebook and help each other try to win contests. Direct Marketing Results has helped us put that all together. So, part of my new responsibilities are to see what's being done and how, in and out of our company, and figure how to share and make them work for our other stations.

One of the things I have to look at is where we can expect these ideas to work – and where they won't work. For instance, is it realistic to expect our Denver Oldies station to drive our social media strategy? It may not be a leader, but the challenge is figuring out what to do based on what we've learned.

So much of this is adapting strategies based on a station's audience and the way listeners are using these new tools.

It's become kind of a joke, but I'm not even sure we need phone lines at some stations anymore. Especially at 18-34 targeted stations where they just text, text, text. Part of the strategy there must be to let the jocks respond with texts. It's funny, I heard someone say they don't let jocks text, it distracts them and they're not focused on what's going on in the studio. But that same PD wouldn't have been angry watching a jock work the phones. Either way, they're doing their jobs. It's just engaging the listeners on the platform they prefer.

WE'RE CHARGING PEOPLE A LOT OF MONEY TO MOVE OUR AUDIENCE FROM THEIR HOME OR CAR TO THE CLIENT'S STORE. AND I DON'T THINK YOU DO THAT BY DEAD-SEGUEING INTO STOP SETS. YOU VIOLATE YOUR LISTENER'S CORE EXPECTATIONS IF YOU DO THAT.

And they go out and buy the products. Newsflash: That's what we're supposed to do.

We're charging people a lot of money to move our audience from their home or car to the client's store. And I don't think you do that by dead-seguing into stop sets. You violate your listener's core expectations if you do that.

How has PPM changed the programmer's role?

It's changed our job a lot and shined the spotlight more on what we do. And maybe even removed a little of the mystique and mystery from what we do. We always relied on scaring the hell out of the sales-focused GM who didn't know what we did "back there." It's far more collaborative today. We're all in the middle of this, together. In fact, the program director has had his job enhanced and elevated inside the building by PPM.

I'm excited about PPM. It has its pluses and minuses, just like the diary does, but PPM has brought programming back to the forefront. The diary was marketing. If you had a good product and marketed the hell out of it, you won. That doesn't work in PPM. You have to have a great product *and* tell people about it, or you don't win. And that great product is programming; it's what we do. PPM is a measure of how people consume your product. It's not what you can get them to *think* they did; it's a matter of how they used your radio station.

There's far more information available to programmers today than ever before. How do you handle the flood of data?

First, we don't pay much attention to weeklies. In fact, we use them for "what doesn't belong." If one of our stations surges ahead, or a competitor surges ahead, we just discount it.

But here is where our philosophy begins to diverge from others in the industry. To us, PPM is not research. PPM is ratings. And there is a fundamental difference. We don't use PPM data to help guide the direction of our radio stations. We don't use PPM data for song selection or promo placement or anything else like that. We use actual audience research to do that. We hire research companies to help us understand what's good and how listeners are viewing our brands. The

How important are radio station websites?

We need to continue to fine-tune them. It's important to understand that the cume doesn't go to our websites, only the core. That means we need to focus more on what we know our core listener wants from us. We need to understand we don't play on the big field. You could take all of our websites over the course of an entire year and all our pages added together don't come close to the power of Google. So even trying to play on that platform is like peeing on a forest fire. We've come a long way, but have a long way to go.

Given the huge number of content platforms available to listeners today, where do radio stations fit into consumer's lives as a content provider?

Funny you should ask that. I am sitting in a hotel room in San Diego watching CNN and Hurricane Irene coming up the coast. And I'm wondering how many news updates Pandora is running right now. Or if Sirius XM is telling people where the Red Cross shelters are.

I've never thought of radio as a national platform. I've always seen it as a local platform. We're every person's medium. We're not an early adopters medium, and we get in trouble when we try to be. And after Irene is over, you watch the number of radio stations and their listeners who come to the rescue. And then tell me how much water Pandora delivers to folks on the East Coast whose water systems are shut down.

You're obviously bullish on radio.

I love radio; I wouldn't want to do anything else. It's ours to screw up. We have the capacity to put 55,000 people into a football stadium to see a singer. We do Country Fest in San Diego where people can touch the artists. We do a summer jam in Denver which sells out in minutes and 20,000 people get to see their favorite artists under the stars. We touch people. We move people. That's what local radio does better than anybody. As long as we keep doing that, and as long as we do *more* of that while not trying to be something we're not, we'll be in great shape.

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