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Terrestrial Titans

What Radio Groups' Country Focus Means For Nashville

Clear Channel has Bobby Bones, its Artist Integration programs, a new deal with CMT and the upcoming iHeartRadio Country Festival. CBS Radio brought its top execs to Nashville last year to tout its commitment and the Amplified initiative. Townsquare has Taste Of Country. Journal has Nashville Edge. And Cumulus, of course, has Nash [see story page 31]. The latter's multifaceted vision is even touted by CEO Lew Dickey in calls with Wall Street analysts.

How and why country music and Country radio became a "content vertical" may have as much to do with consolidation as it does with timing and the genre's resurgence. Radio groups, after all, aren't the only large entertainment entities investing in country and its stars. But the impact on Nashville is undeniable. Competition, sensitivity over superstar access, opportunities for new artists and many other issues continue to shape these rapidly evolving relationships.

Come One, Come All

"This is something those of us on the inside have been saying for years," says UMG/Nashville Chairman/CEO **Mike Dungan**. "We are really America's music. We somewhat knew and certainly suspected it for a long time, but now we see it in the attendance at our shows and in PPM. People are bouncing around, listening to all kinds of stuff and Country is a large part of peoples' listening habits."

Warner Music Nashville President/CEO **John Esposito** says conglomerates can't help but notice. "And not just the radio companies, but the music companies," he says. "The success of the past few years has people in corporations having more discussions about country, which is great. They finally woke up to this stuff, you know?"

"Things like Blake being a coach on *The Voice* makes country more accessible," he continues. "I'm sure Keith Urban is having a similar effect with *American Idol*. You start having things like that happen and I'm sure it's helping the sales departments at radio stations. There's a snowball effect and if I were an owner of a cluster of radio stations, I'd be making the investment, too."

And country may be the best bet out there, "especially if you compare it against some of the other genres at radio," says Sony/Nashville Chairman/CEO **Gary Overton**. "Ours is focused, very broad and pulling in millions of people. Programming on the other formats



Mike Dungan

seems a little fragmented. I think groups see the opportunity to invest and focus even further in country."

From radio's perspective, there are many reasons to like the genre. "You've got a litany of stars putting out great music," says Clear Channel EVP/Programming **Clay Hunnicutt**. "We're back to being a good, mass appeal format where young and old are enjoying the music. Country music is still ages eight to 80. It's a highly accepted format for advertisers – something a lot of companies want to have large footprints in because it's very sellable. It's not vulgar. There are a lot of aspects that really work in country's favor."

Flavor In Favor

Good music has been aided by market forces, as well. "The climate has really identified that, predominantly, there are only two ubiquitous music formats – Country and Top 40," says BMLG President/CEO **Scott Borchetta**. "So [groups] see that they have to be in this business. They see the continued longevity, the continued artist development, the continued cultural effects it's having on all media. They're smart for not only paying attention, but also having a vision on how they can take their assets and add to the mix."

For Cumulus' part, Co-COO **John Dickey** agrees. "I can't speak for why others feel it's important, I can

only speak for why we do. It's a very viable long-term business [because] 70 to 100 million people is a very large, addressable market. And Cumulus has a very unique and advantageous position that we want to continue to leverage and get better at. If the rest of the radio community sees it that way and wants to take advantage of it or participate with us in that, I think that's a good thing."

Rather than a sudden pivot, Hunnicutt calls Clear Channel's efforts in Country "a mindset adjustment. When you have the platforms and opportunities we have, you think about how to really make an impact. That can come in different forms. The world premiere programs we do can really get a record out of the gates with higher familiarity more quickly. That's important for the artist, the listener and our radio stations. We're here to play the hits and the more hits we can create, the better it fuels the machine for all of us."

Like Clear Channel, CBS Radio's efforts are more evolution than revolution. "We have always been focused on Country," says VP/Country **Jeff Kapugi**. "While our Amplify program was new last year, it's more about organizing some things that we had been doing across our Country enterprise for a while."

With a long view of the format, Borchetta sees several shifts. "Not too terribly long ago, people didn't bet on Boston, for instance," he says. "People who don't follow what we do on a daily basis are consistently surprised how well our stations do in Chicago, Philadelphia and so many other top markets. National formats are more a function of radio's business and continued adjustments to make their business make sense, post-mega mergers."

Country's youth movement is also a factor. "The investment [in Country] is also a result of identifying that they need to be there to see continued growth in all demos," Borchetta says. "As much as some of the older PDs don't want to chase the 18-34 demo, they can't run from it. There's a fear that we're a little bit more flavor-of-the-month with that demo – when they see something else shiny, they'll run toward it."

We haven't seen anything that says that they will, but it just goes to show you how deep the format is."

Metrics System

Whatever the causes, there's no doubt that national platforms are changing way the way Nashville does



Gary Overton



John Esposito

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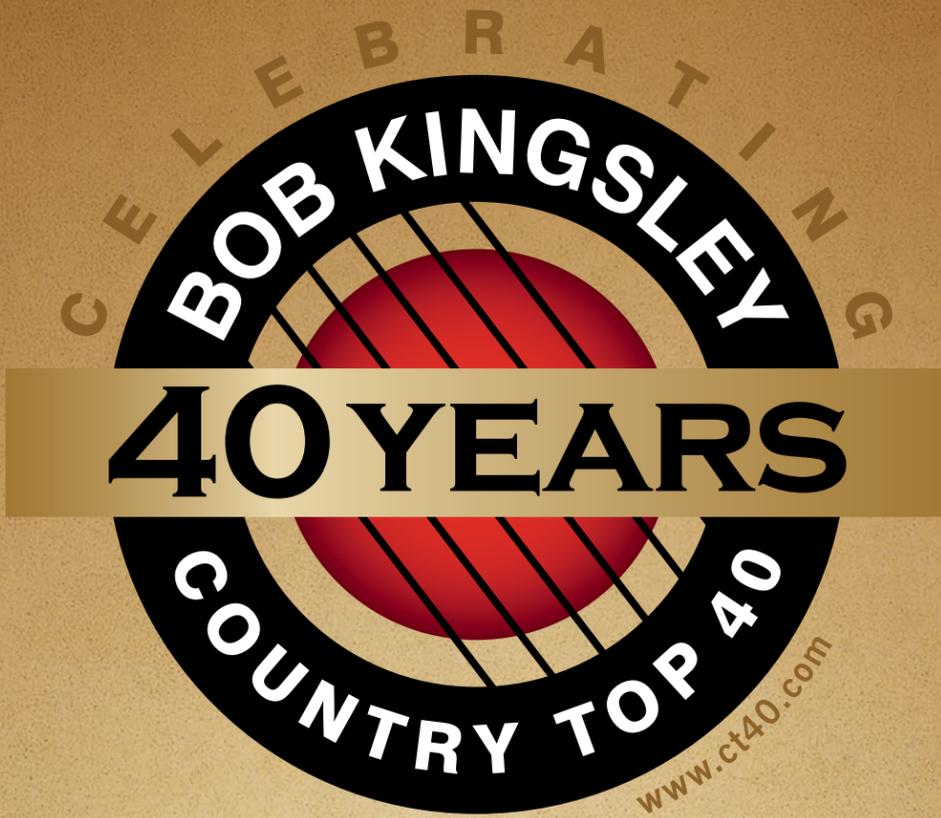


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business. "It's certainly one-stop shopping for the artists and, to a broader extent, the labels and the people that service those artists," Dungan says. "It's nice to be able to go to one place, do one great interview and know that you're reaching people across the country. But it's still too early to tell the full impact."

A boom-or-bust aspect accompanies centralization. "If you've got the goods and the guy calling the shots – Bobby Bones, Blair Garner or whoever – is totally into it and wants to become a proponent, then it's great," Dungan continues. "But if they don't, it can be very difficult because this used to be a much more laborious task of going market to market, station to station, personality to personality and with varying results. If you limit the number of players, you're going to increase the odds that it could go one way or another."



Clay Hunnicutt

Big Machine is adapting through a general philosophy of adaptation. "Our approach is to take the new playbook, the new rules and let's play to win," Borchetta says. "Regardless of what year it is, I don't think anything changes from our strategy of making sure we understand the rules and exploit them to the fullest. Figure out how to continue to be [radio's] best partner and make sure that we're maximizing all of our efforts. There's always going to be change. This is just this year's model."

Hunnicutt says the changes are clearly beneficial to the music business. "The difference is scale – that we actually have the platforms to showcase their artists and deliver a great return on their time investment," he says. "Having the metrics to really show how many times spots ran and how much impact they've had has been a big difference maker."

Exclusively Inclusive

Keeping an eye on the guy across the street is longstanding radio SOP, and it's no different on a national scale. "We're all very aware," Hunnicutt says. "I know they're aware of what we're doing and we're aware of what they're doing or working on. We all hear bits and pieces; we all sit on boards and things like that together, so it's not that tight-lipped of a community."

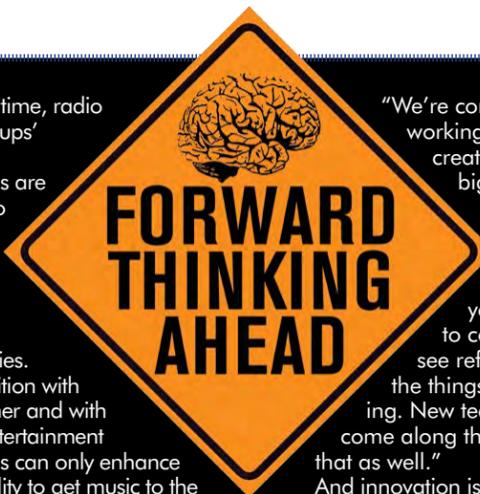
Nevertheless, the competitive balance is a consideration for all involved. "I don't think there's a hyper-sensitivity, but we always try to think, 'If we do this, what are the other guys going to think?'" Overton says. "Because you've got the big chains, Townsquare and SiriusXM carving their niche, among others. So it's just about being sure about how you're doing business. It's just like dealing with Walmart and Target on the retail side."

"It's starting to develop into something that certainly has the potential to create tension if one party does not get an exclusive or one party does not get the first of something," Dungan adds. "But all parties right now seem to be playing pretty fairly. Let's hope it continues that way."

Over time, radio groups' Country platforms are bound to become more deeply rooted in their companies.

Competition with each other and with other entertainment platforms can only enhance their ability to get music to the fans. "Amplify will continue to grow, with our goal being to continue to help sell music for the artists and labels while building the brands of our Country stations," says CBS Radio's **Jeff Kapugi**. "We are constantly coming up with new ideas that we discuss internally and with the labels. The evolution never stops."

Same with Clear Channel, which is gearing up for its first *iHeartRadio Country Festival*.



"We're constantly working on new, creative and bigger ideas," says **Clay Hunnicutt**. "And you're going to continue to see refinements of the things we're doing. New technology will come along that will help that as well."

And innovation isn't limited to the biggest companies. "All of these groups are getting better at developing mobile platforms," says UMG/Nashville's **Mike Dungan**. "We recently saw a piece about the Cox station in Houston, which has come up with this very inventive, really fan-interactive way to keep those listeners and make them feel like they're a part of the equation and part of the decisions. It's just a matter of time before all these big groups develop things that are similar."

It's going to be one more step to one-stop shopping and the ability to spread your message very quickly and very efficiently."

Not to be forgotten are the back-room structures that make all the whiz-bang go. "We continue to make ground with performance rights," says BMLG's **Scott Borchetta**. "With all the attention that the digital dashboard is getting, I have had a couple more of these serious conversations with radio groups. You're wanting to flip the switch, but you haven't dealt with what has held you back from doing it – the digital rates."

"We're going to get to that moment where you're just broadcasting and it doesn't matter where or when or what they're listening to. If they're listening digitally, we're going to have to get to a moment where we have a performance rights agreement. More and more, people are understanding the partnership that we all have to have as content creators."

Should competitiveness lead groups to ask labels and artists to play favorites? "I don't view it that way," Dickey says. "This is part of being close, spending time and counting a lot of Nashville decision-makers as associates and friends. I get their job and responsibility, so I would never ask them to do something that would be unfair to them, or something that I wouldn't want to do if I was in their shoes."

"A lot of people play those games," he continues. "That's still part of staking out turf on the playground like we're in high school. But that's missing the bigger picture. Quite frankly, looking at relationships in these content partnerships and respecting what the artists have to do and need to do with their time and their allotted bandwidth – I don't think that's a fair request. For the artists and the label community, the Switzerland approach is fair and lets everybody else be smart around that, or not smart around that."

Situational play-calling can make sense, however. "We find unique and important qualities in each relationship," Esposito says. "It's the collective job of me and my competitors to be smart about how you balance that. You can't give it all to one – just because you're the biggest doesn't mean that you get everything. In the heyday of record stores it was the same thing, but there's a way to balance it. And I'm not saying there aren't occasional challenges because people sometimes don't see the big picture. But you get into the discussion, explain why something went another

direction and usually they understand. It's an interesting juggling act, but it's frankly a fun juggling act."

Dungan points to ways groups can win without putting labels in uncomfortable spots. "Clear Channel has proven that they create their own exclusives," he says. "They'll take an event and turn it into something that makes it look and feel like they are right in the center of it. And that's a wonderful thing."



Jeff Kapugi

Hunnicutt adds, "We really don't ask for exclusives on world premieres. We aren't getting the record before anybody else. We just go to the label and say, 'Here's what we would like to do, would you guys like to do it with us? We're going to make it really

big, put all of our full efforts behind it and our radio stations are all in.' We want to make sure that we're good partners in that aspect. Our 'Ultimate Contests' – if the label wants to do one with CBS Radio, they can. That's up to them. We do our own thing and try not to worry about anybody else."

Loco Locals

The national level conversation doesn't necessarily mean those crosstown battles have gotten any less heated. "It definitely has changed that part of the landscape," Borchetta says. "If you're having a challenge in one market, that can reverberate across the entire broadcast company. For some of those on-the-spot decisions, it makes you kind of step back and consider the repercussions. There are more ripples in the pond now. Not that long ago when you had a big market battle, you might say, 'Well, I'm going to go with that guy, because that's more aligned with the support I need for



Scott Borchetta

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our artists.' You got to decide. It's a lot more difficult to choose sides now, because we've got so many great partners with different companies. When you have a Clear Channel up against a CBS or what have you, it's not nearly as simple as it used to be."

"The station versus station battles still exist – they're fighting every day for every listener, piece of ground, concert and ticket," Hunnicutt explains. "At the higher level, it's not quite that cutthroat with the album specials and world premieres. No artist wants to cut off their nose to spite their face. If they do something for us, they're going to do something with Cumulus and they're going to do something with CBS. It's naive to think otherwise because those are the second and third most powerful Country operators. The ripple effect is much smaller as well, because even if one local radio station gets mad, that doesn't impact the entire chain."

Put another way, Hunnicutt says, "We have national activation, but local radio stations do their own business, as well. Local PDs are making their decisions to defend their radio stations and to get their ratings as high as they can. So I don't call radio stations and tell them to play nicey-nice because I'm trying to get a world premiere done."

Dickey leans toward judicious application of national influence. "Scale is helpful," he says. "Everybody's got to make decisions based on resource allocation and return on those resources. If you've got more scale and size, those decisions oftentimes fall your way. Those are tie-breakers. There's a responsibility to understand what your scale is and use it smartly, but it's unfair to use that to conscript the artist and label community into a competitive battle."

But in a contentious situation, working up the chain can be helpful. "It definitely benefits to have a creative conversation," Borchetta says. "If you really run into a trouble spot, you might have to say alright, let's get on a conference call with Clay Hunnicutt to make sure we have a proper understanding. So, it's a longer tail to get to the right answer and make sure we're not doing any long-term damage."

Draw Back To The Future

Big asks from big companies seem to have the greatest impact on big artists. "There's no question about it," Dungan says. "It makes it very difficult for these guys that are in high demand to strategically place themselves where they can do the most good for themselves, but also not burn a relationship."

"Access to our artists, especially superstars, is becoming a bit of an issue just because everybody wants them," Esposito agrees. "Everybody's putting on festivals and we love that, but there's only so many hours in a day. There is a balancing act that we have to all be aware of. But that's a high-class problem, as far

as I'm concerned. We all just figure out how to make the ecosystem work. I don't see a single downside."

On the coin's other side, the upside may best benefit new acts, particularly when a chain finds something to champion. "It's encouraging in the same way as when Walmart or Target says they're really into an artist, will buy a certain quantity and give it a lot of visibility," Dungan says. "You go, 'Wow. We've got the whole country covered.' It's really encouraging to feel that from a broadcast standpoint. It's dangerous for all the reasons we just discussed, but we're not going to change the way we do business. We've always been focused on the highest possible quality and the only time we ever feel like we get in trouble is when we push the envelope. We maintain a high level of quality, but sometimes it's hard to convince the person on the other side of the desk that you haven't moved too far out of the box."

Where new artists can feel the pinch is the traditional label aversion to national playlists. "Clear Channel

“ Everybody's putting on festivals and we love that, but there's only so many hours in a day. There is a balancing act ... but that's a high-class problem. ”

—John Esposito

has not done that in the current era with the current executives, so the biggest has not gone to a national playlist," Borchetta says. "Cumulus has opened up a lot more, especially in the last 12 months, to understanding some of the ebbs and flows. They're finding ways to get more new music on the air and having more of a positive effect. You don't have [a national list] at CBS. Townsquare has a list that goes out, but there's room for the programmers to program. We're always going to fight for individuality and, right now, it feels a lot better than it did a year ago."

He echoes Dungan's comments: "We're the risk-taker for the most part in this mathematic equation, so we're always going to hope that you have those people with a vision to be the first one to play Florida Georgia Line. You hope you get the same thing for The Cadillac Three – that person who will embrace a new artist. You just always want the opportunity for leaders to be able to lead."

Not surprisingly, Esposito adds his voice to the chorus. "We still love local programming, because our job is to break new artists and keep this ecosystem going," he says. "So we don't focus solely on massive campaigns. When you're doing a Blake or Hunter Hayes album launch, we have to be looking at that. But when we're trying to get people to pay attention to Brett Eldredge, it's a good thing that they're given some freedom locally to make sure we can impact the artist development process."

All Bets Are In

Across the board, this titanic investment in country is seen in a positive light. "There are a lot of Country radio stations that are doing amazingly well," Hunnicutt says. "Ours, Cumulus, CBS and other guys are having great success in the format right now. A lot of people ask me, 'Hey, what's going on at Country? Why are they all of a sudden popping up into the top three 25-54?' I get those questions a lot. And it's just the format is really great right now. All the pieces are working well together. We've got great radio stations and the product is really there, so it's a match made in heaven."

Borchetta takes a long view. "When you see these huge broadcast companies doubling down, it's not just because they love the music," he says. "They're seeing a lot of other things that they really like in their research. They're seeing a lot of demographic and psychographic information that says this is a good bet. And a good future bet. It's not things they can put a dollar in now and take out two dollars tomorrow. They're betting on the future of country music, which I just love."

"They're investing in the format and we're building together," Overton adds. "We are working hand-in-hand and in the near-term there will be a refining of these relationships. Over the longer term, other formats will have resurgences at some point and some attention may be shifted. But the important thing is that country will have grown to a new level."

Esposito points to one of country's big advantages for anyone investing in it. "Part of what's attracting these major players is realizing that when you truly develop an artist in this format, that artist can be a multi-decade artist," he says. "George Strait is the greatest example, and I know they see the economic opportunity around all that those artists do."

"I want to implore them to never forget that. This format's hotter than it ever was. If you stay deeply invested – especially in artist development so that we can continue to feed that ecosystem – we all can benefit for decades. Long past the time you and I will be working in this business. I just want them to stay their course and understand it really is different. We are not a disposable artist format. The fans' loyalty has CMA Music Festival damn near sold out and they haven't announced a single artist. You don't really get that in any other format."

CAC

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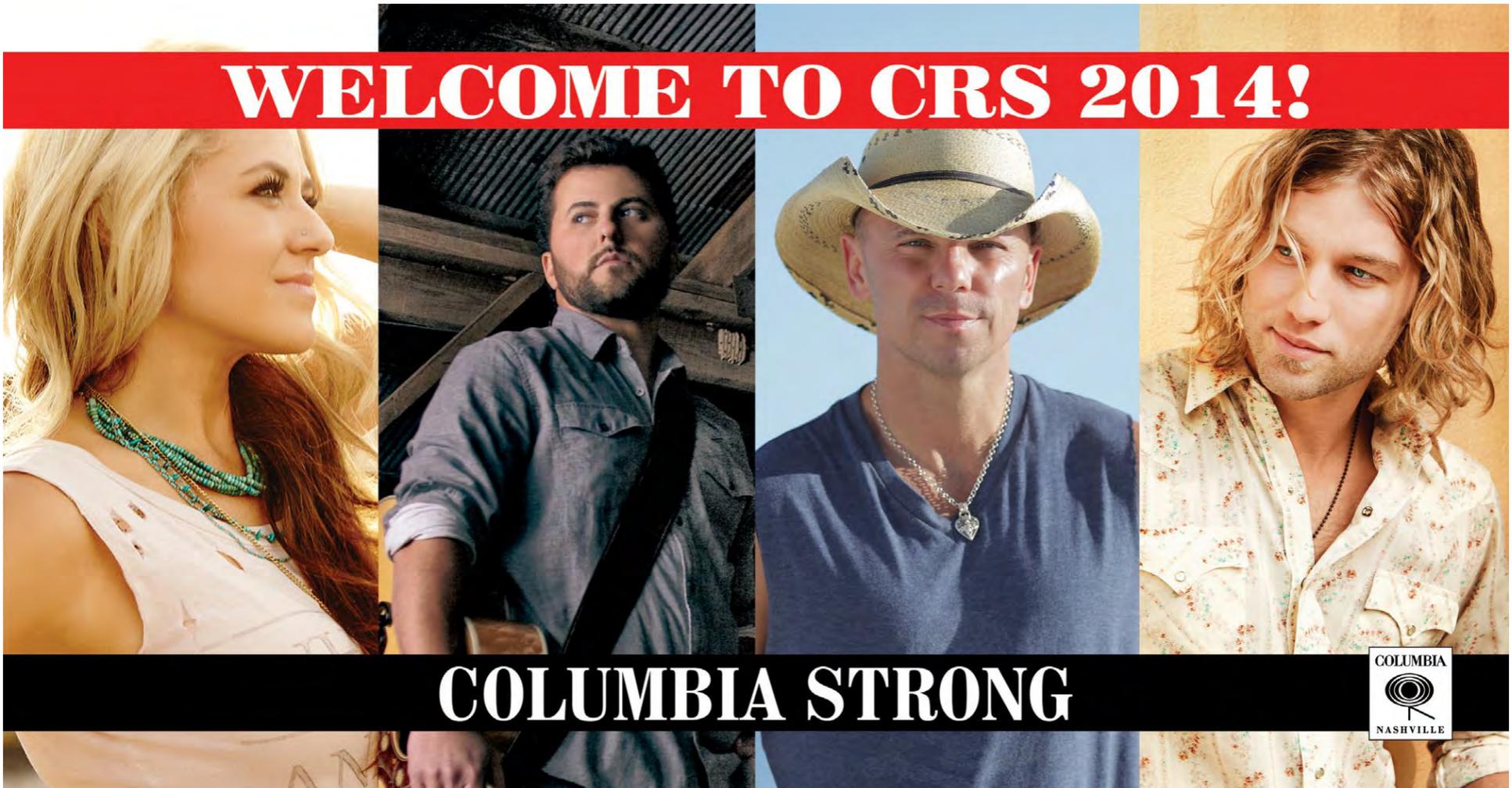
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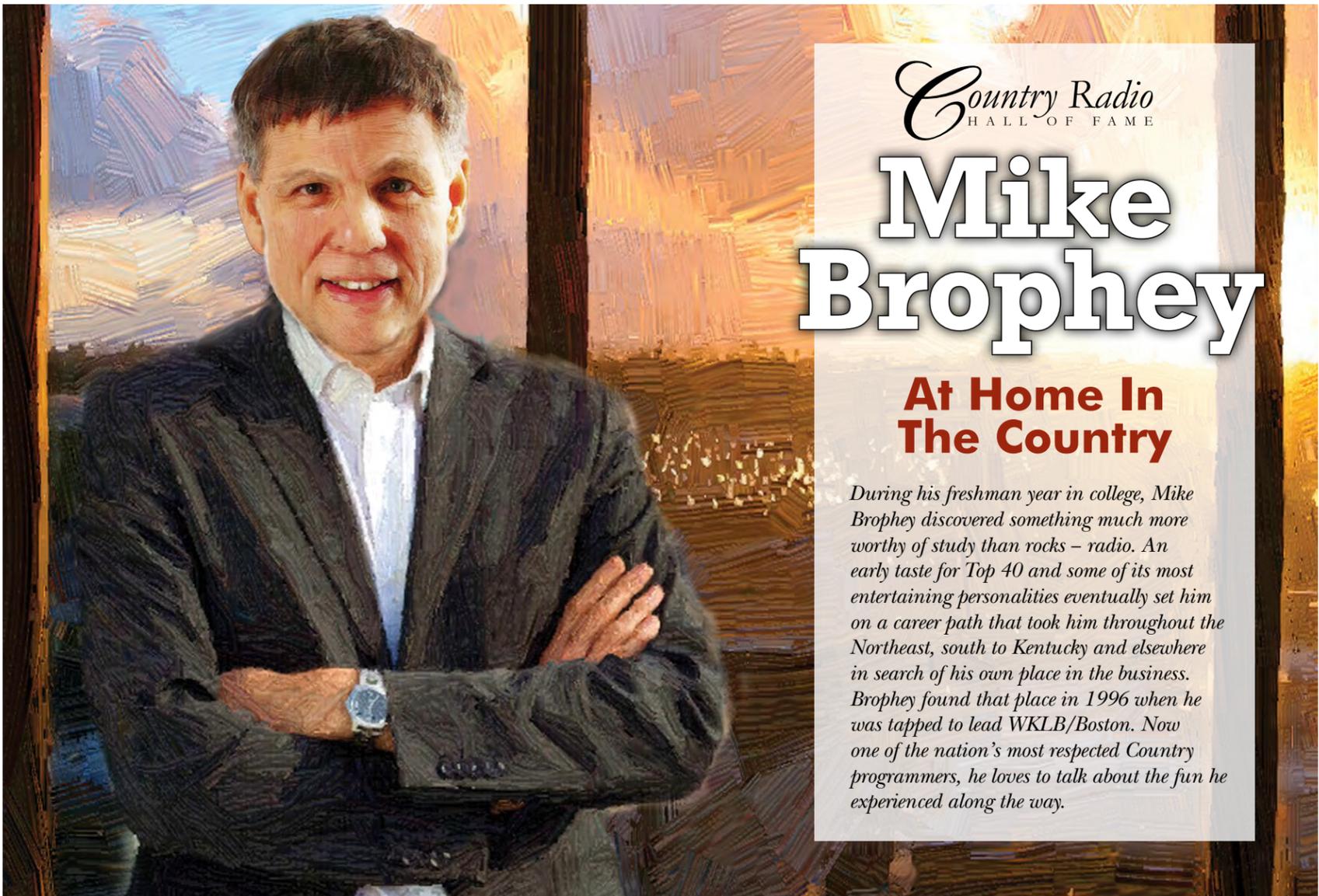


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Mike Brophrey

At Home In The Country

During his freshman year in college, Mike Brophrey discovered something much more worthy of study than rocks – radio. An early taste for Top 40 and some of its most entertaining personalities eventually set him on a career path that took him throughout the Northeast, south to Kentucky and elsewhere in search of his own place in the business. Brophrey found that place in 1996 when he was tapped to lead WKLB/Boston. Now one of the nation’s most respected Country programmers, he loves to talk about the fun he experienced along the way.

The first station I ever really heard was Top 40 WACK-AM/Newark, NJ in the late '50s. It was a high-energy AM. I gravitated to Top 40 primarily because of the pace, and because a lot of the personalities were true entertainers. Beyond WACK and except for a brief hippie phase, it was all [Top 40] WABC-AM/New York for me. I loved listening to Ron Lundy, Dan Ingram, and Cousin Brucie. In '74 or '75, I had the chance to tour WABC and meet Ron Lundy, which was quite a thrill. And seeing WABC's studios was eye-opening. A little later I became more involved with the Philadelphia market, and was really influenced by [Top 40] WFIL-AM, with the late Jay Cook and the late Jim O'Brien. To some extent I was also influenced by [Top 40] WIBG-AM, and later, WIFI-FM, which was one of the

it was my first hour of spots! I had to fit in all the spots, plus do live reads and hit the network, all while trying to fight first-day nervousness. It was a challenge. The highlight of the day was a perfect back-time into the network news. I was so proud I was able to do that. Then I realized I was exactly five minutes early!

My first on-air job in Philly happened in 1981 at [Beautiful Music WEAZ-FM] Eazy 101. I was hired a year later at crosstown Hot AC WIFI-FM "I-92" [now WXTU]. It was also where I was introduced to Country – four formats later! I remember when we flipped in 1984. It was a big secret, of course, but I was asked to help carry in a bunch of Fidelipac boxes. I peeked inside and spotted a Barbara Mandrell cart, so the cat was out of the bag!

of laughs, which translated into great on-air work. I remember sneaking into the production room before my on-air shift at one station and calling the guy in the studio that I was going to relieve. In the background, I put on a loud sound effect record of a train station and told him I couldn't get in because the train had been delayed. I was about 10 feet away from him and could see him through the window just steaming. It was great!

I recall running Yankee baseball early in my career at WBNR-AM/Beacon, NY. The games were sponsored by a beer company, and somehow I missed one of the spots. I wanted to make it good, but I didn't have the spot or patch cords. So, the next time the spot came on, I held a cassette recorder up to the studio monitor and recorded it. Then I ran

which I desperately needed, and brought me into a new way of thinking about country music and Country radio. John Hart, who at the time was one of my PDs in Philly, gave me a lot of hands-on experience. I learned the importance of protecting your people, fairness and a lot of positive things that are now part of who I am.

I would tell young broadcasters to be open-minded. Be eager to learn and to adopt new technology. Emulate those you respect while developing your own style. Network – less to get the next job, and more to learn in the present one. Do not be afraid of mid-course career adjustments. Create goals and a timeline to accomplish them. Stick with it and absolutely give it your all, finding ways to stand out from the crowd along



Cow Men: Talking (c) with Chris LeDoux (l) and Tim McGraw around 1990.

“ I learned more than radio and music; I learned the importance of protecting your people, fairness and a lot of positive things that are now part of who I am. ”



Reel World: Manning the board in Philly at WIFI 92 in 1982.

first FM Tops 40s and a dream station. I was on the air there in the '80s.

My initial interest in radio came when I was a Geology major at Susquehanna University in Selingsgrove, PA. My first mineralogy exam was a big round table full of red rocks that we had to identify. I switched to Communications as soon as possible.

My first commercial radio job was technically part-time at Beautiful Music WSPK/Poughkeepsie, NY. It was 1973, and I was a jack of all trades. Although I had experience spinning on the air at college, we didn't run spots. So when the guy before me set up my first hour and came in with about 25 carts, I asked him what they were all for. He told me

One of my most memorable brushes with stardom was during a show at the Philadelphia Civic Center with Conway Twitty, George Jones and Randy Travis. We weren't on the Conway song at the time, and Conway was marching around backstage obviously in a snit. He walked up to me and said, "Is it you not playing my song?" Our PD was on the other side of the stage at that moment and I pointed to him and told Conway, "It's him!" I threw him right under the bus. Conway walked away mumbling, "I just want to see the face of the man who won't play my music!"

I remember radio being less complicated back then. There seemed to be more time for creativity, hanging out, working on the perfect promo, and a whole lot

downstairs to the production studio, held the recorder up to the mic and recorded it. I dubbed it to cart and got it on the air. It sounded awful, but we didn't miss the spot! It ran as an adjacency.

One of the people who helped me launch this incredible career was Larry Augustine, the Chairman of the Communications Department at Susquehanna University. He gave me a lot of advice. When I was in Kentucky, I sent a tape to the late Jay Cook at WFIL/Philadelphia. Within a few days he sent my tape and letter back, with about five notes on it. His comments completely changed my on air delivery and my career. I still have that letter.

I've had some great PDs in Country. Bob Young in Philly gave me structure,

the way. Make the necessary sacrifices of time. Roll up your sleeves and be in the trenches. Celebrate your successes. Be genuine, and apply The Golden Rule.

Country radio has especially afforded me a role in helping to raise millions of dollars for charity over the years. The award for CMA Major Market Station Of The Year for WKLB was a big honor in 2012, and the CRS/Country Aircheck award for Major Market Program Director stood out last year. It took a long while to accept the idea that I would be inducted into the Country Radio Hall Of Fame, though. It truly is unbelievable. Not in my wildest dreams could I have anticipated this honor. I am thankful and very proud. **CAC**

Country Radio
HALL OF FAME

Jim Denny

Hometown Boy

It's not just that Jim Denny has been in Indianapolis for his entire radio career, or that he's been doing mornings at WFMS for 25 years. It's that no matter what else has tried to pull his focus away, radio has always been the thing that kept his attention. And even better is that the woman who's been by his side for 25 years will share this honor with him in a very special way.



I always liked radio and listened to the disc jockeys – some guys were really strong. A friend's dad was in TV and I asked him one time how to get in radio. He told me to just go find a small station somewhere, get on part-time and work your way up. I was going to college for psychology and got a part-time gig at a little station in Danville, IN. Within three or four weeks they offered me middays. I thought I'd try to do both radio and school, but I really fell in love with radio, so school became secondary. So did the grades at that point. There was just something about one person talking to and entertaining all these people.

I'd been interested in going to 'FMS for a while and got a call from PD Russ Schell inviting me to lunch. So I dressed up, bought his lunch and didn't hear anything for a while. I inquired again, and he invited me for lunch again. So I bought lunch again. The third time I paid for lunch I thought, "I don't think this is working right." Finally I saw him at an Alabama concert and mentioned I was thinking about moving down to WKIS/Miami and he said, "See me Monday morning." I showed up, he gave me the midday deal and I've been here 25 years. I did middays for about three months, they moved me to afternoons for a year-and-a-half, and then I moved

But it's kind of neat that thousands and thousands of people grew up hearing you every morning. And you get to hear how you made a difference in their life.

Maybe you comforted them during tough times, or made them laugh, or just said something that stuck with them. It makes you realize it's a big responsibility. But when you're doing it you don't really think of it that way. So watching this town grow and being able to be a part of it – that's very cool to me.

My longevity is due to luck. And changing with the times. Deb [Honeycutt] and Kevin [Freeman] and I have been working together for

important, but it's about the great fish fry going on down at the church this weekend, you know? That kind of stuff you can't get anywhere else.

I'm way too young to be inducted into the Hall of Fame. It was really very exciting and I'm still just shocked. When I got the call, my wife and I were down in Florida and it was the culmination of a great day. The weather was beautiful and we got to walk the beach. I got the call in the evening as the sun was setting. They told me and I knew it doesn't get any better than this. One of those perfect days.



LBT Sandwich: Kevin Freeman, Deb Honeycutt and Denny (center, l-r) are the meat in a Little Big Town greet.

“ Instead of wanting to pump my hand in the air, it makes me want to sit back and reflect, like Sally Field – they must like me! ”



Famous In A Small Town: Denny (l) and the team get some hang time with Miranda Lambert.

I was at the Danville station two or three years. Then I went to a little station in Crawfordsville and then back into Indianapolis. I worked at a couple of Big Band stations, which I loved: Glenn Miller and Tommy Dorsey and stuff like that. My grandparents played a lot of that, so I knew it.

I'm also a bluegrass musician and played for a year-and-a-half or two years with Alison Krauss. We were trying to do gigs on the weekends while I was working full-time. The problem we had was we'd have a gig in Pennsylvania and then one up in Wisconsin, so it was mostly on the road. And I just got a little older and you can't really have much of a life that way. In '86 or '87 I said, "I've got to do it just regionally or not at all." Alison was on her way up and it was time for her to separate from the guys who can't do it anymore. And she did pretty well!

to mornings with Charlie Morgan for about six years.

During an early interview with Wynonna as her solo career was taking off, I said, "You are huge." She just looked at me and said, "Huge, huh?" I had to backtrack. "No, no ... I don't mean ... " Oh, God, what have I done? She laughed it off and said, "I know you're talking about the career." I was so relieved! My face was red, and I knew she was just going to mess with me at that point. She probably felt sorry for me.

I'm the most proud of the fact that I was born in Indianapolis, raised here most of my life, started in radio here and have been able to stay this long. People come up and say, "Man, I was just a little kid when I started listening to you." It's only 25 years, give me a little bit of a break on that! I'm not that horribly old.

15 years. We're really good friends, which makes a difference. You can't just force relationships so the fact that we became friends almost before we were put together helps. And sometimes you just get lucky. Most people don't stay in a market that long, but both Kevin and Deb are from here, so it's very unusual for all of us. We know we're blessed.

There are so many entertainment outlets. Everything we do is faster now. You have to be shorter and get the point across a little quicker. The one thing radio still has that you can't get from other mediums is the local angle. I can get on the air and talk about the great high school game last night in Broderville or that great interception by Tommy Jones, or the local Girl Scout group. That's what keeps radio alive is that when people listen, they're hearing about their hometown. The music's very

We've been lucky enough on the show to get two CMA awards and an ACM, so it's neat that as a team we've been honored. It seems kind of weird to get an individual award like this. That's the thing that threw me. Instead of wanting to pump my hand in the air, it makes me want to sit back and reflect, like Sally Field – they must like me! I can't think of a bigger honor, it's the most exciting thing I've ever had.

The biggest blessing is that my wife of 18 years has been a traffic reporter at 'FMS for years. She was there before me, so I have worked continuously with her for 25 years. And she's going to do the induction. No one else has worked with me that long and no one knows me as well, so I'm excited about that. Obviously because she's my wife, but also because we've been together on the air every single morning.

CAC

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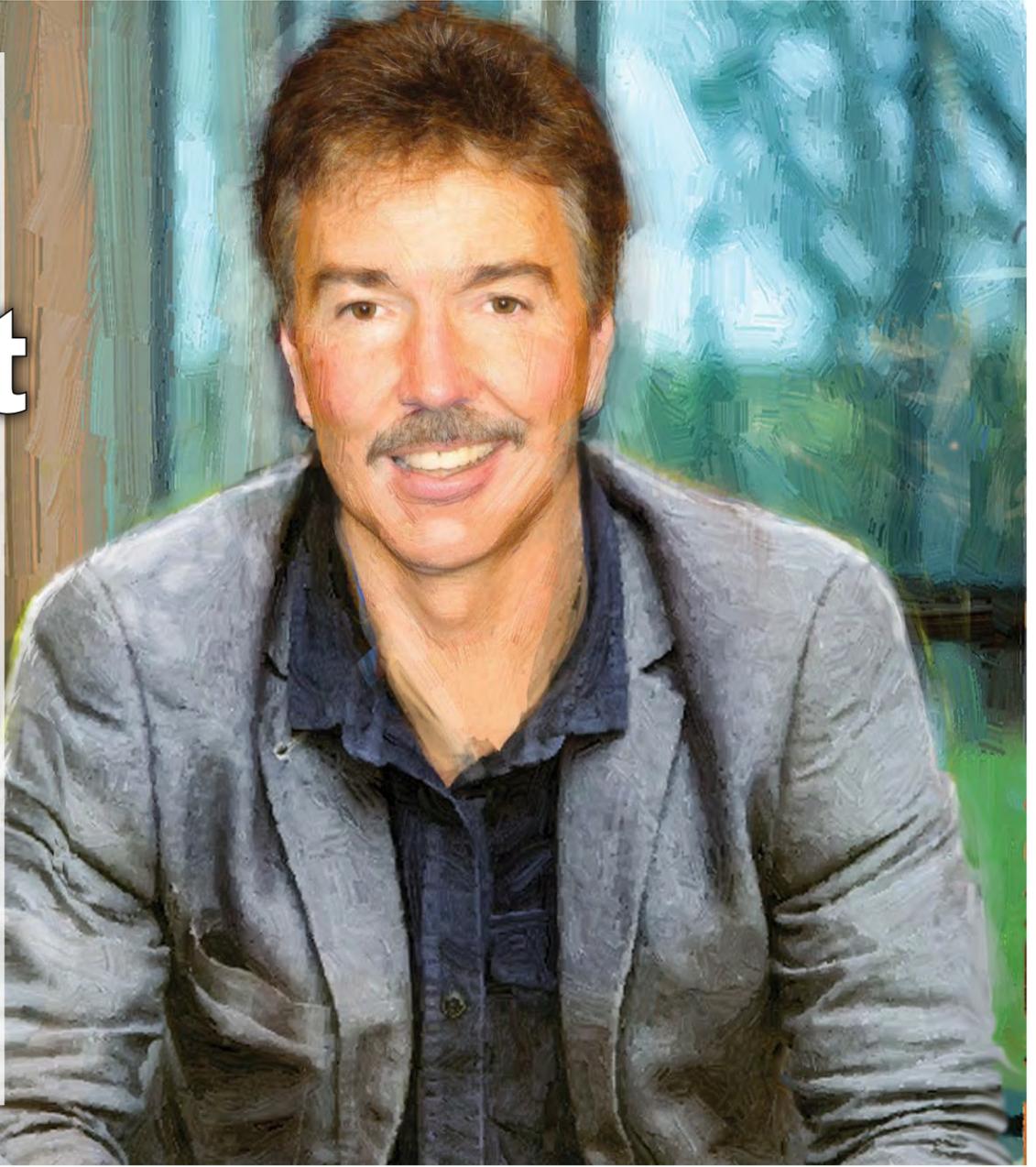
MUSIC OF NASHVILLE

Country Radio
HALL OF FAME

Paul Schadt

Nice Guy Finishes First

He might have ended up delivering your mail if things had gone a little differently, but Paul Schadt has been on the air in Charlotte for more than 30 years, calling WKKT's morning show home since 1997. For the last two decades, he's also hosted the nationally syndicated Racing Country USA, so he's not only a household name in Charlotte, he's known by Country fans everywhere. And while he prides himself on being easy to get along with, no matter who's asking, the word that keeps coming up to explain his success and longevity in radio, in the market and on the station is luck.



Growing up, I always thought it would be fun to do something like this, but radio was probably not what I was thinking. I was driving one day in January of 1981 and stopped at a phone booth (they still had those back then) to call the radio station I was listening to. I asked the guy, "How'd you get into radio?" He told me his path and I then basically did exactly what he did. He had volunteered at the UNCC radio station in Charlotte, then got a part-time job at a radio station. So I volunteered and learned how to do all the different things, and got a part time job at WSOC that spring. They had an AM station at the time and I was running Braves baseball. From there I went to the FM, where I was running the Bob Kingsley countdown and doing weather breaks. Then I did some part-time weekend stuff and worked my way

think that you've got a future in radio." He opened up a two-hour midday shift. Things just got better from there.

If I was talking to a young person thinking about radio, I would suggest getting into Country because it's your best chance at longevity. The people aren't as fickle.

Things always change, whether it's new management or corporate ideas making their way down. Even if you think that's not the way we've done it or the way we've been successful, as you get older you realize that it's always going to be changing ... and you'll always get through it. The latest changes have been PPM. You have to play a certain amount of commercials, and you've got a certain amount of songs that they want you to play. What you do in between

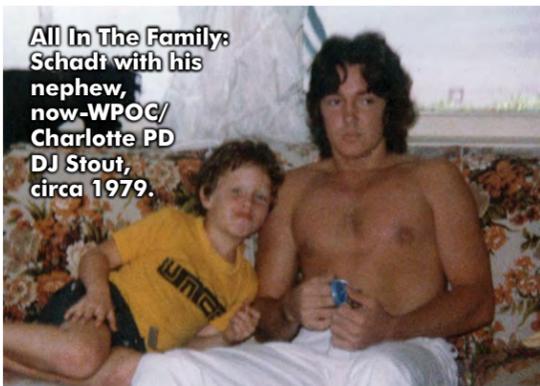
It's been great getting to meet so many stars and becoming friendly with them. If you see people three or four times a year I don't what kind of friendships they really are, but you feel like you're friends. I've also been doing the NASCAR show for over 20 years, so I've had friendships with some of the drivers. I was pretty friendly with Dale Earnhardt and Junior, the Allisons, Gordon, and since we're right in the middle of NASCAR country here, that's been fun.

Most of the people I've worked with would say I'm a pretty decent guy, whether it's PDs, coworkers, GMs or the people who listen to the radio station. I always thought that being nice is really easy and being the other way takes a little bit more work, so I always tried to be as nice as I could and do a good job for folks that I work for. I'm proud of that.

A big part of my success has to do with the people I've been lucky enough to work with over the years. My partner Meg has been a part of the show for over four years and the producer Geof Knight for the last 17 years. I wouldn't have been able to achieve all I have with out such a great team!

I have been the luckiest guy ever. I've got a great family, kids, my wife is perfect. It's really like I keep looking over my shoulder, I'm waiting for something, an anvil, to fall on my head.

If I could be lucky enough to go another eight-10 years on the radio I would be tickled to death. I'm hoping something close to that is in the cards, but it's radio and you never know. No matter how successful you are, I don't think you ever feel overly secure.



All In The Family: Schadt with his nephew, now-WPOC/Charlotte PD DJ Stout, circa 1979.

“ I always thought that being nice is really easy and being the other way takes a little bit more work, so I always tried to be as nice as I could and do a good job for folks that I work for. ”

up. In the beginning you really don't have any idea what radio is all about so you may think that will be your career, but I never dreamed I'd still be here more than 32 years later.

I did overnights for about three years, and, at the time, nobody moved – WSOC was a perennial No. 1 and the guys had all worked there for years. But I wasn't sure how many more years I wanted to do overnights, so I took the Post Office test and scored high. I told the PD at the time, Don Bell, that I did really well and could make a career out of that. He said, "I know that there hasn't been any room, but I really

has to be something that catches a listener, whether it's through comedy, some sort of interesting story or an emotion. You just might have to do it in a little less time. Everything changes, but it's still the same.

I got to meet Johnny Cash one time. It was probably 20 years ago. Johnny was still pretty vibrant and barrel-chested, and he was all dressed in black and he put his hand out and said, "Hi, I'm Johnny Cash." Seeing him on TV growing up, that was a thrill – something I'll always remember. Might be silly to some, but that made a big impression on me.

It's not just a job, it's your lifestyle. I'm really not much different than the people who listen to the radio station. I shop at Walmart and I drive a pickup truck that I love, and I love going to the lake or the beach. I'm lucky I get certain perks with the job and that aspect of it might be a little bit different from the folks who listen, but otherwise I'm pretty close to the same person I was 32 years ago. I grew up with very moderate means, lived in a very small house, probably in a smaller house than most people who listen to the radio station, and my mom and dad brought me up with manners and all the rest that goes along with that. I think people relate to that.

It's really hard to pull one over on me. I can count on one hand the number of times I've been really surprised. I thought we were just doing a Tim McGraw interview, and Tim just kind of blurred out, "How does it feel to be inducted into the Country Radio Hall of Fame?" I thought he had seen someplace that I was nominated and had just misinterpreted what he read. I thought, "This is gonna be awkward." And there were people in the room and they were all looking at me, and then it clicked. It was very exciting. The highlight of my professional career.

CAC

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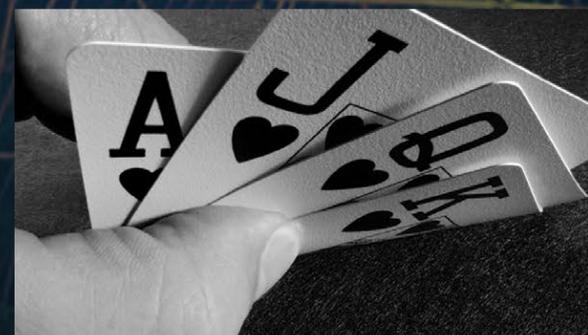
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Country Radio
HALL OF FAME

Larry Wilson

Community Service

Starting with two stations in Tucson, Larry Wilson and a couple of partners built Citadel Broadcasting into a 205-station behemoth they sold for \$2.1 billion in 2001. He stepped down as CEO to care for his wife Claire, who passed in 2008, but a steady itch and some prodding by a partner led to the 2009 formation of Alpha Broadcasting and, in 2012, L&L Broadcasting. The two now operate more than 40 stations from the Dakotas to Mississippi. Country Aircheck caught up with Wilson at his Montana ranch to reflect on a career that will soon make him a Country Radio Hall Of Famer.



I grew up with country music. My mom and dad were big country fans and I've listened to it since I was a little boy growing up in Arizona. It's just been my lifestyle. I raise horses and cows, and I love all of it. I love the artists in the genre; they're the best bunch of people. We've had tons of concerts here at my ranch as part of the annual meetings for our employees over the years, with everyone from Kenny Rogers to Clay Walker to Neal McCoy – name 'em. I don't want to give the wrong impression because I like the other formats, too, like News/Talk for example. But Country was my first love.

I don't know of any business that's better than radio as far as cash flow and the good you can do in the communities, especially with Country. We had a big tornado hit near Peoria not long ago and I'm so proud of our guys. We really rallied to help. We were

Sure, I've been nervous. I live nervous! I assume if anything can go bad, it's going to go bad and I try to predict what that's going to be. In my last deal in Citadel, I spent \$290 million to buy Dick Broadcasting in Knoxville, TN. That was the highest price I had ever paid for anything, and I was nervous. But fortunately Ted Forstmann came along not too long after that and paid us 18 times cash flow and I went to the sidelines. It's not all my money, though. It's investors' money. I'm generally working seven days a week, mostly on strategic study of where we should expand and what might be the possibilities. But yeah, I stay nervous.

I'm pretty happy with the way things have gone in my career, but I'm most happy with the people I've been able to associate with and become friends with. The single most important driver in our industry is people, and we've been very fortunate at Citadel, at Alpha

since we got him away from Cumulus. We've got Mike Wild in Peoria, Gigi South in Savannah and Bill McElveen, who was also with us at Citadel and who's overseeing Columbia [SC] while we do a search for a new manager. We've got another great guy in Kevin Webb in Jackson, MS and in Danny Clemons in Bluefield, WV. These are go-to people. That's what I look for when I'm doing deals. "How much is here and how much is missing?" We have really great people all over the country and that's the key to me.

Things I like most about working in this business are seeing everything come together and become successful, for a client or for listeners, when we're putting on an event. I love it when the advertiser says, "Wow, you guys really did the job for us," because we take it very personally. This is not a commodity, it's a very personalized business.

time is right. Some folks say it's too late, but it's not. There's still a lot of stuff available. You could start out in a smaller market like I did. The first thing you need is to understand a balance sheet and profit and loss. That's kind of foreign to a lot of people in the business, but take some classes. Learn. We need people who can energize this business. To me it's still an 80% local business. In some markets, it's 90%. It's about getting up every morning and doing a good job for your advertisers and listeners, and building brands. And we need more young people doing that.

I was blown away, shocked, when I got the call from Bill Mayne telling me I'd been nominated and then that I'd gotten in to the Country Radio Hall Of Fame. I've had a lot of honors in my career in this little space that we're in. I got the National Radio Award from the NAB and I got Broadcaster Of The Year or



Friendliest Catch: Wilson trout fishing at his Sun River Ranch outside Augusta, MT.

“ I'm a big believer that the single most important driver in our industry is the people that you have. And we've been very fortunate at Citadel, at Alpha and now L&L to have some of the best radio people in America. ”



Take Me Where? Wilson celebrates Halloween 2009 with Rascal Flatts and KUPL/Portland's super scary Rick Taylor.

the only news guys left and decided to go all-news on all the stations with weather and damage reports. That just makes you feel good when you're able to do that.

When I started out in ownership, my biggest wish was that I could make my interest payments and never go into default with the bank, and we accomplished that. As we progressed, we did the first LMA to be approved by the FCC somewhere around 1989-91. We thought that was good, so we picked up a few more. Then in '94, the rules were relaxed and we could own more stations. It was in the late '90s that I realized we were going to need more capital, so we went public. We had a very good run.

and now L&L to have some of the best radio people in America. And that's our mantra. We want to attract the very best, give them the tools to do the job and stay out of their way.

We've got [Alpha Dir./ Programming] Scott Mahalick, who is a genius at programming. He can really make the stationality sing better than anybody I know. And [L&L] CEO Bob Proffitt is a guy that's constantly searching for best-practices and putting them in place. [L&L CFO] Donna Heffner is our CPA with 20 years experience in radio. She's my eyes and ears and partner in analysis related to all deals we want to do. It's all the way down to our market managers like Milt McConnell, who ran Albuquerque for us at Citadel and now runs Portland

There's not too much I don't like, but I don't like the bashing we're getting because we're losing a lot of localism in radio. I just read about somebody getting rid of talent because of the cost. That always disturbs me. Talent costs money because they produce results. We're at risk of deemphasizing the talent. We will not be the same industry if all we have are a bunch of board-ops. It's show business and that's what it's got to be. If we lose the talent, then we're not show business. We're a jukebox. If we develop and present compelling programming, we've got a great future ahead of us.

The thing I wish for the most is that we'd have more young people that wanted to get into ownership. The

something like that from *Radio Ink*, but this one is really special.

One of the people I respect most in the business is Dick Wiley and he's going to induct me. He used to be head of the FCC and now he's head of Wiley Rein law firm. He's helped me through my career many, many times. Anytime I get perplexed, he helps me sort through it. He's got a great mind and he's a great human being. When I asked him to do it, I said, "I know this is a pain that you've got to go to Nashville, but it's not a long speech and it'd mean a lot to me." I could hear his voice cracking over the phone. It was a big deal to him, too. I've got a lot of friends coming and we'll be able to have a little reunion. It's really one of the highest honors in this business. **CAC**

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We recently announced the first half of CMT's 2014 'Listen Up' program and Sundy Best were the only independent band chosen! We've proudly supported their music and videos for over a year and believe they are already superstars! -Leslie Fram

Senior Vice President of Music Strategy at CMT



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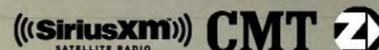
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Sundy Best





DAVE REYNOLDS 2014 CRS UPDATE



PROMOTION, SOCIAL MEDIA, ONLINE CHATS, MANAGEMENT, CONSULTING

TIMELINE & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



New York 1995

First promotion rep hired by Universal Records. Thanks to Daniel Glass, Monte Lipman, Steve Leeds, Pat Monaco, Andrew Kronfeld, Derek Simon, Sue Vellanti, and Mel Lewinter.

Nashville 1999

First Nashville trade picture. Thanks to Lee Ann Womack, Frank Liddell, Royce Risser, Chairman Emeritus Bruce Hinton, Mark Wright, David Haley, Tony Brown, Scott Kernahan, and Erv Woolsey.



Nashville 2002

Attended my first CRS and met Lon Helton. Thanks to the CRS, Lon Helton, Erica Farber, Jessica Harrell, Pat Green, Rascal Flatts, Carolyn Dawn Johnson, Blake Shelton, Cyndi Thompson, and Darryl Worley.

New York 2005/2006/2007

Set record for winning three consecutive R&R Pop Promotion VP Of The Year Awards. Thanks to Kevin Carter, Silvio Pietroluongo, and TEAM BIGGIE COKE: Paul Munsch, Kara Egber and Maddy Arons.



Canada/USA 2009-2011

The Bieber years. Thanks to Erik Olesen, Justin Bieber, Ryan Good, Pattie Mallette, Kenny Hamilton, Dan Kantor, Brad Haugen, Allison Kaye, and Scooter Braun.

Moved to Nashville 2013

Thanks to my wife, daughter, two sons, Jason Flom, Tim Herbster, Van Fletcher, Kris Bentley, Nick Jamerson, Chief, Paul Jessop, Bob Repko, Frank Bell, Leslie Fram, Joe Riccitelli, and Jennifer Leimgruber.



Ask Anything Online Chats 2014

Thanks to Romeo, Cody Alan, Anne Oakley, Dingo, Dustin Stout, Tony Molae, Colleen Shea, Bryan Switzer, and the labels that have supported Ask Anything Online Chats.
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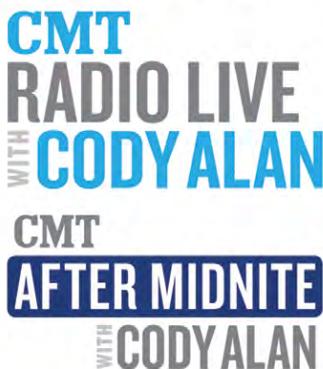
Dave Reynolds To Stay On Sundry Best Radio Promo Tour

NASHVILLE (02/18/14) Van Fletcher, manager of Kentucky duo Sundry Best announced today that Dave Reynolds will remain on the duo's radio promo tour for the remainder of 2014. The tour, which has already hit 15 states, began in October 2013 and will last 15 months. Sundry Best is currently promoting the March 4, 2014 release of their new CD "Bring Up The Sun." The duo's first single, "Until I Met You" has early airplay at SiriusXM The Highway.



Pictured from their recent visit to WCOL/Columbus, (l to r) Sundry Best's Kris Bentley, WCOL's Kayla Hanley, Dave Reynolds CBA, WCOL's Andy Clark, Sundry Best's Nick Jamerson and WCOL PD Dan E. Zuko

Ask Anything Signs Exclusive With Cody Alan



NASHVILLE (02/18/14) Ask Anything owner Dave Reynolds announced today that Ask Anything will be providing exclusive artist content for CMT Radio Live & CMT After MidNite. Host Cody Alan added, "Fans love the Ask Anything chats we've done on CMT Radio Live and CMT After MidNite! We always look for new ways to connect the stars with our audience, and Ask Anything gives us a fresh, unique angle to make that connection."

2013 Ask Anything artists included: Tim McGraw, Kelly Clarkson, Sheryl Crow, Hunter Hayes, Gary Allan, Darius Rucker, Randy Houser, Kellie Pickler, The Henningsens, Brett Eldredge, Charlie Worsham, Thompson Square, Randy Rogers, Billy Currington, Justin Moore, Joe Nichols, Scotty McCreery, and Thomas Rhett.

Ask Anything Signs Exclusive With Saturday Night Online



NASHVILLE (02/18/14) Ask Anything owner Dave Reynolds announced today that Ask Anything will be providing exclusive artist content for Saturday Night Online. Host Romeo added, "Since the start of SNOL, Ask Anything has been the central online engine for our exclusive artist content. The partnership between SNOL and Ask Anything continues to create a worldwide weekly trending platform that benefits the artist and their fanbase"

2013 Ask Anything SNOL artists included: Britney Spears, Kelly Clarkson, Demi Lovato, Selena Gomez, Ke\$ha, Paramore, Macklemore, Austin Mahone, Hunter Hayes, Linkin Park, Nelly, Cody Simpson, & Ariana Grande.

Dave Reynolds/Tim Fittler Invent Glow In The Dark Toilet Seat



NASHVILLE (02/18/14) Night Glow Seats announced today the worldwide release of their four different Glow In The Dark toilet seats. Night Glow owners Dave Reynolds & Tim Fittler unveiled the blue and green glowing seats in both regular and elongated sizes at www.NightGlowSeats.com. The company's motto will be, "If you gotta go, then it's gotta glow." To book a radio or TV interview, contact DaveReynolds@NightGlowSeats.com.

Congratulations Vince

COUNTRY RADIO HALL OF FAME
CAREER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



Larry, Mark, Terry and
all of us at Fitzgerald Hartley

Vince Gill

Career Achievement Award



Achievement might be Vince Gill's middle name, having sold more than 26 million copies of his 17 studio albums, earning more Grammy awards than any other male country artist (20) and collecting 18 CMA awards. He has been inducted into both the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame and the Country Music Hall of Fame. As a songwriter, a singer, a musician and a producer, he's certainly more than met the criteria of "making a significant contribution to the development and promotion of country music and Country radio," as his latest honor's criteria states. But what he's most proud of is the help he's given to other, newer artists and his consistent personality through it all.

I listened to everything on the radio growing up. There wasn't FM yet (laughs), but it was really fun because it was personality driven. You could call up and request songs – it had such a great local feel to it. There were two stations in Oklahoma City: KOMA and WKY, and they were big. You could hear them all over the state. I guess I don't remember thinking about it in terms of kinds of music back then, I just listened to whatever was on the radio and, if it was music, I liked it. I was just a sponge who loved anything, whether it was country, the Beatles or what have you.

For as long as I can remember, I wanted to play music. The first time I can remember carrying my guitar to play in front of people was second or third grade. They gathered the kids in the auditorium and I think I played "House of the Rising Sun." I'm singing songs about houses of ill repute in grade school. That would explain a lot about me (laughs). Back in those days, nobody said anything. But if you tried to do that now, I'm sure they'd put a hurtin' on you.

I never remember not playing music. I always loved playing an instrument; that came really early on. It wasn't like I was 15 and trying to get girls to like me. That happened, too, but I already had a lot of years practicing. I played in garage bands in junior high school and few bands in high school and played some school functions. We started playing the beer joints, festivals and things like that, and by the time I was in high school I was already out playing gigs.

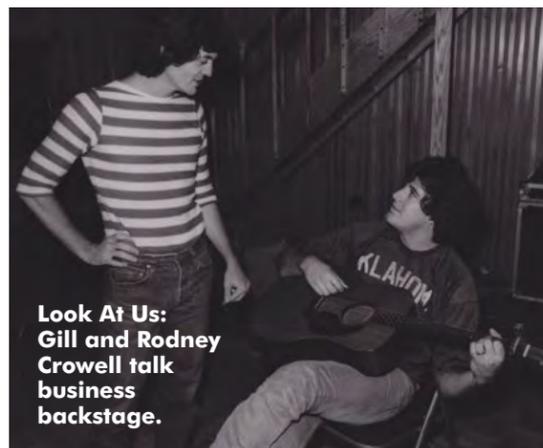
I remember making a record with a band I was in called Mountain Smoke. I was about 16 or 17 and they used to play it on the radio. I couldn't believe it when I heard myself singing on the radio for the first time. I was right there on I-40 near downtown Oklahoma City – I could drive you to the spot. I can't even describe that feeling other than I was just awestruck, and I had a CB radio in my pickup and I got on there and said, "Hey! Anybody that's listening, turn on the radio station, they're playing our song!" It became somewhat of a regional hit in that area.

I just remember what an impact that had for me, the hope it gave me just knowing I made a record and somebody played it. I am so grateful for that. I don't know that it could happen like that today. I don't think radio is quite so local and regional anymore. We had a regional hit and it was just an inspiration to go, "Hey, maybe I can do this."

The feeling you get the first time you hear your song on the radio never stops. Even today, it's the neatest

feeling. You can be as jaded as you want and pretend, but trust me, everybody is jazzed every time it happens. I know I am. Sometimes I'll get my feelings hurt, like if one of the satellite stations is only playing Christmas music, and I'll go, "Well, they haven't played one of mine in a long time (laughs)."

I've had so many periods of my life that wound up getting some attention on radio. My first record I ever made as a 17-year-old kid was a regional popular song, so I was spoiled right off the bat. Then I started



Look At Us: Gill and Rodney Crowell talk business backstage.

playing in some of the bluegrass bands and any time you got any kind of airplay it would be a bluegrass-driven show or a college radio station that might play some bluegrass. And then Pure Prairie League in my youth in the late '70s had a few hits that got a lot of radio play. Then I started my solo career and didn't get any for a while, and then I got a lot for a while, then I don't get any anymore. Whatever it is, it's okay.

I got good advice a long time ago to be gracious on the way up and gracious on the way down. That'll serve you well no matter what you do or what kind of business you're in. I've always tried to be really welcoming of young artists, and it might be fun to look back and see how many artists' first records I've played or sang on. It's pretty neat to look back and see I sang on Patty Loveless', Trisha Yearwood's and other artists' first records. And I'm flattered that I still get asked. I just worked on this kid Charlie Worsham's record and he's off-the-hook talented.

Whether they want me to sing or play on the record, that's kind of the reason I ever did it in the first place. I didn't aspire to be an artist so much as I aspired to be a great musician. I was more drawn to the process of who

was on the records in the supporting role than who was up front. And I wound up as an artist, but I never lost sight of the fact that I liked being part of the supporting cast, too. So I continue to do that and always will. Just because I hit a lick and had a nice career doesn't mean I want to stop doing what got me here, you know?

I'm way too young to get this award. I'm flattered. I've had an interesting history with radio, periods of time where it was a struggle to get my foot in the door, and a struggle to keep my foot in the door, and it's been all things. It hasn't all been perfect, and that's what makes it more interesting to me. I learned more in the years that I struggled than I did the years I was successful. So at the end of the day I've been grateful for any and all of it. I wouldn't trade places. I'm grateful that I had those years to struggle. It made me better. It made me try harder. And maybe I wouldn't have handled it as well if it had come easily. So I've been okay with all of it.

It's pretty heady that Rodney Crowell and Emmylou Harris are presenting the award. If it hadn't been for them inspiring me I don't know if I would have chosen the path that I chose. It was his songs and her singing and her first record that made me say, "I see my future."



Hair And There: Gill (and his hair) perform with Emmy Lou Harris.

I see what I'd like to try to be like." I thought if I could write songs like that and sing that good and have those cool records, that'd be awesome. It gave me an inspiring place to point. It's so bizarre how I met them a couple years later. I think we opened for Guy Clark that night at the Troubadour and it's the first place I ever played in southern California, and they're both there. I sang one of Rodney's songs, not even knowing he was there. He came up to me after our set and he goes, "Who are you? Where do you get off singing my song better than me?" Emmy was there, too; it was probably 1976 and I made two great friends. And over the last 37 years, the friendship has just gotten deeper and deeper and kinder and kinder.

I'm proudest when somebody says I'm the same guy that they might have known 35 years ago. I've been traveling for 40 years and had a career of making records for 40 years now. Were they all big hits and top of the charts? No, but I've gotten to do it and it's all I've ever done and I've made a living doing it. If somebody were to say you're the same guy today that you were when I met you when you were 18, that would be the compliment. That's my favorite thing to hear. **CAC**



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Lisa Matassa

A NEW YEAR...

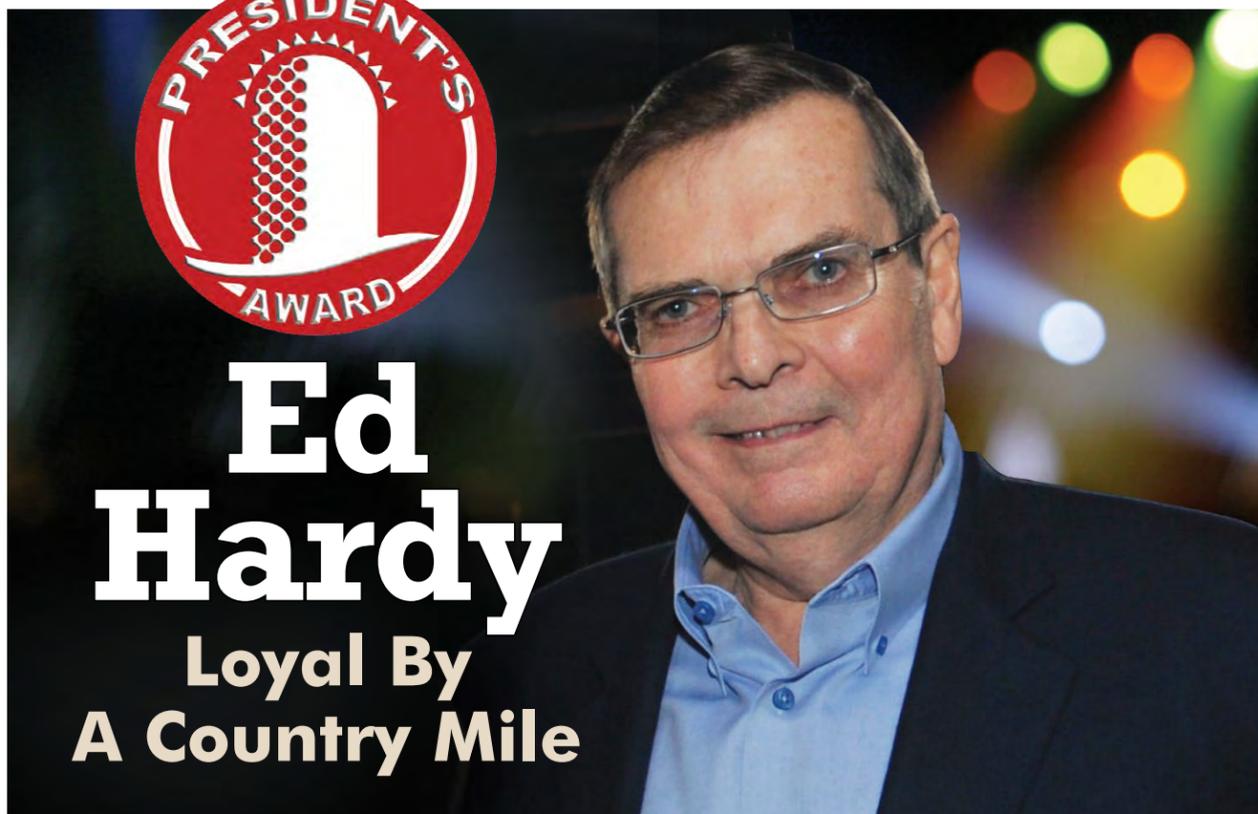
NEW MUSIC COMING...

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A fateful choice early in Ed Hardy's radio career led him to Country and charted a course for his entire professional life. By the '90s, Hardy had founded and was serving as President/CEO of his own radio company, 19-station strong Deschutes River Broadcasting, which eventually merged with Citadel. By 2004, he was at the helm of Great American Country (GAC), a position he held for eight years. Add Hardy's near-decade on the CMA board, which includes a year as President, a stint as interim CEO and the last month-and-a-half as Chairman, and a picture of one of the format's biggest advocates emerges.



Ed Hardy

Loyal By A Country Mile

My first interest in radio was listening to it as a teenager, but as far as engagement with the Country format, that came back in 1968. I was selling radio advertising for an AM station in Cleveland, Ohio. They had two stations and were playing Classical Music on the FM. They decided to flip it to Country, so I pitched them to go over and be the first salesperson on that staff. There was no Country radio stations in Cleveland at the time. The closest was about 30 miles away in Akron. It was my first exposure to Country and it was actually one of the first Country stations on FM.

The biggest difference in Country and other formats by far is the loyalty of the audience, and that's something that's been reinforced throughout my entire career. Country listeners will do just about anything a radio station or personality asks them to do, whether it be going to a client's place of business,

Country and became the No. 1 station in the market [Persons] 12+ and 25-54. I made a lot of friends there and we did one of the first, full-scale listener appreciation concerts. Back in those days, we actually paid the artist to do the free concert! It was so cool and it proved to me one of the best things about country – the power of it. Sure the tickets were free, but it was also a chance for people to see shows that never came to the market. [Those shows] are one of the things I miss from being involved in radio day-to-day, but I've kind of been able to stay in touch with that. I've obviously been on the board of the CMA for a number of years, but I've gotten to take part in that kind of thing during the last seven months operating the CMA day-to-day. CMA Music Festival and the awards show are good examples of how we touch so many people every year. It's cool to still be in that world.

moments came following Nashville's 2010 floods. In less than two weeks, we created, booked and aired a complete live telethon for flood relief on GAC. We raised \$2 million in about three hours. It showed the loyalty of country viewers all over the United States. Even though many of them didn't live here, they were country fans and big supporters of the cause. I'm also proud of the relationships and friendships I've made with so many people including artists. I was there when so many of them were starting – folks like Garth Brooks and Taylor Swift – who haven't forgotten about people they got to know early on in their careers.

CRS is immensely important to the format. From the very first time I attended back in the days when it was at Opryland, I learned so many new and interesting educational things at the panels. Most were

doing any fundraising for St. Jude with my radio station. He gave me a real tongue-lashing over it! We did get involved, though, and I've been heavily involved since then. Ironically, at KUPL, our promotions director was Teri Watson, who now heads Country Cares For St. Jude Kids. That's someone else I've stayed friends with over the years.

I found out I was going to be honored with the award when I got a call from Bill Mayne. I was shocked and thought he was kidding me, first of all. It's very humbling anytime you have an opportunity to be recognized by your peers and the people you kind of grew up with in this business. It's a great honor and one that's hard to describe in words. I can tell you that it's something that means a tremendous amount to me. Country's been such a big part of my life. To be part of



Burning Red: Reba spends part of 1987 (c) sampling the West Coast with (l-r) KUPL/Portland's Bill Bradley and Hardy.

“Country listeners will do just about anything a radio station or personality asks them to do, whether it be going to a client's place of business, showing up for a remote to meet an air talent or entering contests. Their loyalty is just undying.”



Awesome Possum: Vince Gill and The Possum visit KUPL/Portland. Pictured (l-r) are MCA's Scott Borchetta, Vince Gill, the late George Jones, the station's Bill Bradley, Hardy, MCA's Larry Hughes and KUPL's Keith Todd sometime in the '90s.

showing up for a remote to meet an air talent or entering contests. Their loyalty is just undying. Once they develop that for the station, they follow it endlessly.

After Country, I spent a couple of years working in other formats, but I always gravitated right back to it again. The loyalty drew me, but so did its consistency and how wide the demographics were. It appealed to a wide variety of people and I felt comfortable there, whether I was handling sales, management or in ownership. When I was in ownership, we had stations in nine markets. One of them in each market was always Country. When we went in and bought stations in a market, if there wasn't a Country already there we flipped one. The format was always a mainstay and part of the company culture.

Before I started my own company, I was GM of Scripps' KUPL/Portland. I was there for a long time and we took those stations from Beautiful Music to

When I went to GAC, I kind of saw an opportunity to apply my 35 years of Country radio experience to a different medium. It felt like a natural progression for me to apply a lot of the radio concepts, ideas and marketing – things that television people typically don't do. They're not as proactive and as in-touch with their fans as we are in Country radio. Radio's a very one-on-one medium, and television isn't quite perceived that way. So one of the first major things we did after I got there was to take a tour bus, wrap it and take it out to every major country music festival that we could find. We did activations and touched people. Television doesn't do that the way radio does. That's just a fact of life in radio. In that sense, it was a great natural transition for me.

The listener appreciation concerts earlier in my career and various fundraising things were always special, but one of my proudest career

things that I hadn't been exposed to in the single market that I worked in. Even compared to all the other big conventions in our industry, CRS has always been one from which I walked away with a great learning experience. And it didn't just come from the panels, but from the camaraderie of our peers, who were always talking about what they were doing right and what they were doing wrong. Learning from them was always something I looked forward to. And under Bill Mayne's leadership today, it's grown even more. It's just a great learning experience.

One memorable moment from CRS happened when it was still out at Opryland. We were getting on the General Jackson and, even though I'd never met Alabama's Randy Owen, he surprised and cornered me in the parking lot and gave me a chewing-out because I hadn't started

it and have it be part of me, and to be recognized in this way is really heartwarming.

Country and Country radio have always been a warm and friendly place for a large cross-section of the American population. It's something people have been able to call home, to use as an escape or to pass time. They get to hear country stars tell stories about things they or someone in their life might be living through right now. That's something to keep in mind whether you're doing business in the Country format, or reaching listeners and advertisers. One of the most important things to do is to find a way to be in places where you can actually touch the fan, and learn from and talk to them. Ask them why they're there and who their favorite artists are and so forth. Take the time to really learn how that passion is developed. Because if you get that figured out early on, then you will be successful. It's all about making that connection with the fans. **CAC**

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New York's Minute

The Big Apple's Year Of Country

Throw a pebble in a pond and the ripples it creates will eventually make it to every bank. Put a Country radio station on the air in New York City and, well, the ripples it creates will reach clear across the U.S. At least, that's what Cumulus expects. The company has been pumping country music into the world's biggest media market with **WNSH (Nash FM)/New York** for just over a year now, and **Country Aircheck** wanted to know where and to what degree the station's presence was being felt. From ratings to music sales to concert tickets and, yes, to people who will never so much as hear the radio station, we think Ol' Blue Eyes would be proud as, here, we get to the very heart of it ... New York, New York.

A Brand New Start Of It

"The station right now is sitting around a 2 share," says Cumulus Co-COO **John Dickey**. "And that's about what we expected. I always thought this radio station would be somewhere around a 1.5 and a 2.5, so a 2 is a good midpoint."

WNSH had its share of milestones in 2013. The station reached its highest 6+ share in June when it posted a 2.1 (19th), delivering a cume of 988,200. It held on to a 2.0 (18th) in July, breaking the million mark for the first time with a cume of 1,042,000.

By the time it reached its cume peak in September, WNSH was attracting 1,060,700 New Yorkers.

At the end of the year, its original music proportion had been turned exactly upside down. "We wanted to bring the audience to the format in a familiar way before we started stepping on the gas and making it more current and recurrent-based," says Dickey. A look at a recent week showed WNSH at 33% current, 35% recurrent and 32% gold. By comparison, KKKO/Los Angeles came in at 39-20-41, and WUSN/Chicago at 47-28-25.

"Stepping on the gas" is also attracting listeners outside of New York. Dickey specifically points to Morristown, NJ (119). "There's 600 to 650,000 people in that metro alone," he notes. "Inside of a year, we've become number two in that market [Persons] 12+,

Womack. Dickey says the morning competition is especially steep, but that's okay. "Morning shows that are one and two years old are brand new," he says. "So they're just getting their sea legs underneath them."

"You've got some well-established morning shows in New York like [Top 40 WHTZ's] Elvis Duran, [Hot AC WPLJ's] Scott Shannon and Todd [Pettengill], Don Imus and others. But Blair and company are brand new and getting better every day. We've got a great cast and I expect that show to continue to improve and ratings will follow." Not surprisingly, the addition of a personality-driven morning show had an effect on the new station's song count. Prior to the show's arrival, WNSH was averaging 14 songs an hour in morning drive; now it's averaging six. The station's daily average fell from 335 to just under 300.

For now, afternoons and nights lead the station, and weekends fare better than weekdays. "Quite frankly it always starts at nights and on weekends in current-based formats and works backwards," says Dickey. "And we operated the station for a long time – the last 10 or 11 months – without a night show. We added Shawn Parr and his co-host Elaina Smith January 6 [2014], and we feel like that's going to make a big difference."

Be A Part Of It

Cumulus isn't the only company with its eyes on

WNSH TIMELINE



Perhaps expectedly, the station's leading demo for the year was Persons 18-34, where it posted a 2.0 (15th) in March. June brought a 2.4 (13th) in the demo, and young people remained the station's most loyal audience for the remainder of the year. "Anytime you put a new product out, the younger people are going to sample first," says Dickey. "When you're 40 or 45 years old – and the median age for Country is about 40 in the United States – you're not waking up on Monday morning and saying, 'I want to go find a new radio station.' You're more apt to be aware of trends and trend-setting when you're 19, 20 and 25. So what we're seeing there makes perfect sense. Over time, you've obviously got to make your case to people 35 and up, and that's what we're doing."

The music makeup of the station reflects the effort. WNSH launched conservatively in that regard, and has very gradually opened the spicket on currents and recurrenents. In February 2013, the playlist was 39% current/recurrent and 61% gold. At its 2.1 share-peak in June, the playlist sat at an even at 50-50. And by No-

and top five [Persons] 25-54. And when you aggregate the cume from not just New York, but Long Island and elsewhere, the station is cuming north of a million-and-a-half people and is the largest cuming Country radio station in America. We obviously don't get credit for all of that cume, but it's significant. In New York alone the station is among the top three or four largest-cuming Country stations in America. It's an unbelievable story to have a radio station that's come on that strong in a market as noisy and as large as New York in a short amount of time."

I Want To Wakeup

Nash FM's on-air lineup has been coming together over the course of the year. After going jockless for its first month, Cumulus tapped former KYGO/Denver morning personality Kelly Ford and Hot AC WDVD/Detroit PM driver Jesse Addy for middays and afternoons, respectively. Four months later, mornings launched with hosts Blair Garner, Terri Clark, Chuck Wicks and, for a time, Sunny Sweeney and Lee Ann

WNSH. The music industry is practically staring. "I grew up up there, it's my hometown, so there's a bit of an emotional excitement as well as a professional excitement," says RCA SVP/Promotion **Keith Gale**. "From the RCA professional perspective, it's been extremely exciting because New York has always been a sales key, if not the biggest sales market for every artist we have. And that's when there hasn't been a radio station. So when you insert a radio station into such a fertile sales market, you can only assume the results are going to improve."

That said, before and after WNSH Country sales comparisons aren't easy to make. "You're talking about a couple of completely different market-places," Gale continues. "CD sales – sales of the plastic disc – continue to erode. So how do you measure that against the insertion of a New York radio station?"

It's a good question and there's no easy answer. To Gale's point, all-genre album sales, both digital and hard copy, were down 5.8% in New York

2012 Track Sales Marketshare (%)

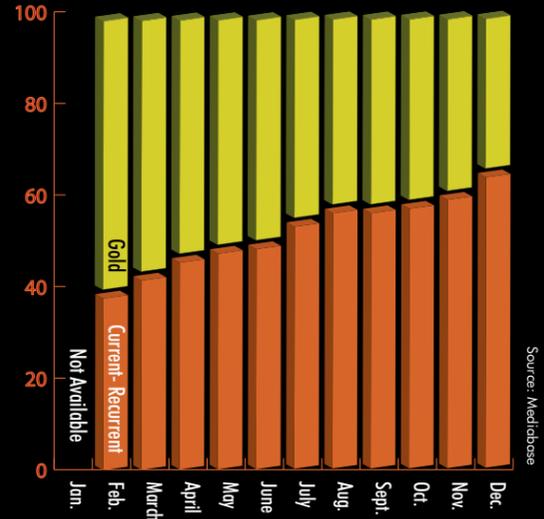
	COUNTRY	OVERALL
DALLAS	3.33	2.65
NEW YORK	3.32	7.63
LOS ANGELES	2.83	5.28
HOUSTON	2.67	2.17
CHICAGO	2.63	3.37
BOSTON	2.39	2.93
ATLANTA	2.17	2.07
WASHINGTON, DC	2.12	2.82
PHILADELPHIA	1.96	2.87
MINNEAPOLIS	1.95	1.64

2013 Track Sales Marketshare (%)

	COUNTRY	OVERALL
NEW YORK	3.42	7.54
DALLAS	3.13	2.61
LOS ANGELES	2.66	5.24
HOUSTON	2.63	2.22
CHICAGO	2.52	3.25
BOSTON	2.32	2.83
ATLANTA	2.19	2.14
WASHINGTON, DC	2.07	2.75
PHILADELPHIA	1.93	2.79
MINNEAPOLIS	1.89	1.63

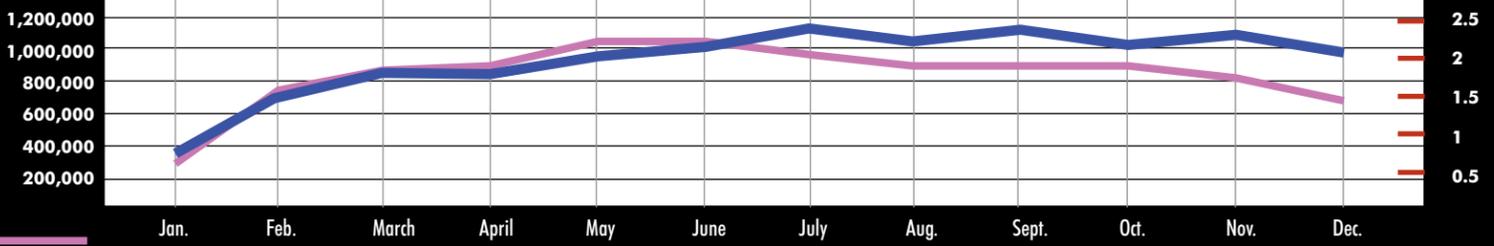
Source: UMG/Nashville

Current-Recurrent/Gold Percentage



Source: Mediabase

WNSH 6+ Share & Cume



Source: Nielsen Audio

New York's Minute

(-8.4% nationally) from 2012 to 2013, according to Nielsen SoundScan data. The same goes for country, with album sales down 12% in the market (-10.7% nationally). But albums aren't the only measure.

"It seems like the story is in country track sales," says UMG/Nashville SVP/Marketing **Cindy Mabe**. Track purchases increased 0.1% from 2012 to 2013. "It doesn't look like much until you compare this increase with the performance of the other top 10 country DMAs," Mabe explains.

From 2012 to 2013, New York was one of only two to see an increase in country track sales. (Atlanta grew .02%.) New York also moved from No. 2 to No. 1, unseating Dallas-Ft. Worth as the country track sales leader. More simply, while most other top 10 markets saw country track sales decline in the last year, New York indeed saw an increase and moved up a rank. "This is significant considering the overall market is trending towards increased track sales [over] album sales," Mabe adds.

Labels are buoyed by more than just the macro-view. For instance, Gale points more anecdotally at success stories he's been able to craft with the station. "WNSH, Cumulus and [PD] John Foxx were a huge part of the launch of our Jake Owen album," he says. "We're in discussion now on some things that we'll

do when we launch Miranda Lambert's new album. In terms of promotion opportunity, there's a willing partner and a thirsty audience. And that's a really good combination."

Come On, Come On Through

If increased country track sales and good promotion relationships are evidence of WNSH's impact, what do 2013's record-fast concert sellouts by Jason Aldean and Luke Bryan say about things? "A few years ago that probably wouldn't have been the case," says William Morris Endeavor/Nashville VP **Rob Beckham**. "Before WNSH, you had to really think carefully about what you could do in the market. If the artist was selling-out arenas all around America, you would most likely under-play Manhattan, or skip it altogether, because you were never really sure of what the business would be. You had to be very strategic."

Live Nation Nashville President **Brian O'Connell** explains why. "New York City is notoriously expensive, so the costs of putting on a show are expensive. Before you had a radio station there, there were ticket-price issues and things like that. That's why you wanted to go into New York City proper with white-hot, gigantic arena sellout acts. If you didn't, you diverted to the Meadowlands, the amphitheaters or Long Island. Now all kinds of venues in Manhattan are open because you're getting airplay inside the

city. Radio City Music Hall becomes a player with artists that can sell 4,000 tickets, for example. You don't have to do 15,000. Now we have another great tool in our toolbox to get our message out, to get our artists' music out and to give country fans in New York a place to go to gather information."

Beckham has also seen smaller venues come into play. "Chris Young sold-out the Best Buy Theater in Times Square in advance," he says. "Country has always had fans in Manhattan, but there was no way to hear what Nashville was putting out all around America. Now they can hear current hits by the biggest stars and the next wave of rising artists."

I'll Make It Anywhere

Of course, Cumulus execs are determined to see Nash's influence extend well beyond market No. 1. "We've got almost two dozen radio stations in our company that are now fully branded Nash," Dickey sums. "There will be twice that many in two or three months. And starting next month, Blair will be heard in more markets. As we build out Nash in our company, obviously New York will benefit from it as the flagship Nash brand, but so will the other Nash stations within our company or outside our company. We're excited about what all this means for the future, not only for New York, but for Nash the brand." **CAC**

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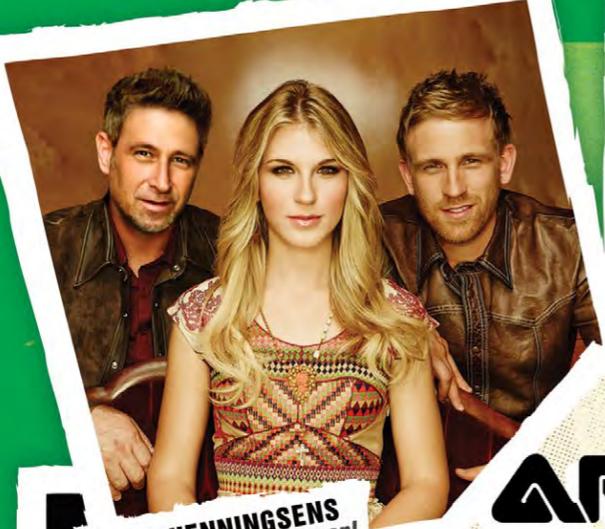
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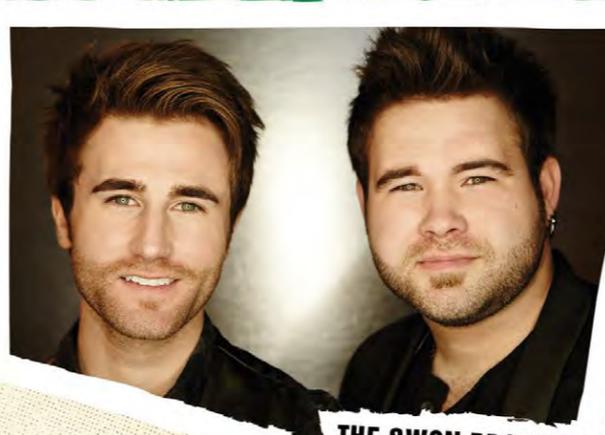
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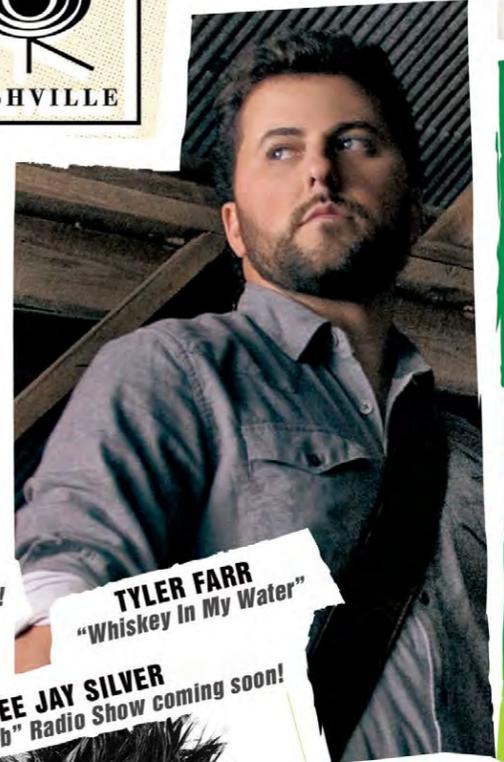
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IT'S GONNA BE A BIG

2014!



As voted by Country radio, the 2014 CRS New Faces are poised to showcase their talents for arguably their most important audience. Country Aircheck spoke with each of them about their plans, expectations and experiences.

Top Five

Brett Eldredge

In 2011, Brett Eldredge introduced himself to Country radio as a man who didn't mind being called "Raymond," and followed it up with the pick-up tune, "It Ain't Gotta Be Love," before topping the chart in 2013 with "Don't Ya." He's currently climbing the charts with "Beat Of The Music."

Country Aircheck: What does it mean to you to be voted a New Face by Country radio?

Brett Eldredge: Two years ago, I remember, standing outside the entrance to New Faces unable to even get in because I didn't have the right pass. I remember thinking, 'How cool would it be to get in there and how awesome would it be to play it?' Now, I actually get to be on that stage and play for a huge crowd. To be thought of as one of the New Faces is a huge step for my career.

What can we expect from your video?

I love putting together skits and videos. That's my favorite thing to do, come up with something witty and creative – I guess that's what we do as songwriters and artists. I'm probably going to go the funny route because I like to make people laugh. I want it to be a surprise, but I can't wait to make something that will hopefully make people remember me.

How would you describe CRS to your sweet, old, naive grandmother?

I made tons of contacts when I first started just by meeting people at CRS. It's a work conference and I'm trying to impress them with my beautiful – that's a strong word – with my music and what I do.

Describe your craziest CRS moment:

How did I wake up on my friends' couch?

What's the most you've eaten on a single day of your radio tour?

When I started my radio tour, I was going to these dinners that I'd never ever had in my life. I love food and, traveling to different places, I had to have BBQ in Kansas City. I'm in Texas, I have to have any kind of fajita. Radio dinners are always at steakhouses and those are the longest dinners ever. You will be there for three hours and every different thing is put in front of you. One time early on, I was almost falling asleep at the table because I was so full. I'm trying to tell them about my music and I'm having trouble surviving.

If you were a DJ at a Froggy station, what would your name be?

Frog Legs because I had frog legs like three months ago and I don't think I've ever heard that one.

Best Airport Food?

Airports are like the generic brand of your favorite food – you get a watered down version.

One famous landmark you've never seen, even though you've been to the city many times:
Hoover Dam.

Tyler Farr

At first, Tyler Farr was a "Hot Mess" at Country radio before releasing his second single "Hello Goodbye" in 2012. The next release "Redneck Crazy" cracked the Top 5 in 2013. He's currently working "Whiskey In My Water."

Country Aircheck: What does it mean to you to be voted a New Face?

Tyler Farr: Country radio doesn't have to play my music and for them to be accepting of me and to get to play the New Faces show means a lot. I've seen the show before and hoped to be playing it. I'm so blessed to be able to do it. To get their approval on my music, for them to like what I'm doing, means a whole lot.

Who played your first New Faces show?

My buddy Lee Brice. The year before last. I remember Lee's video. It was pretty funny. It was right after 'Love Like Crazy.' It was a video of him turning into an old man and his beard growing longer and longer.

What can we expect from your video?

I can't give it away but there's going to be some special guests in there.

Who would you have voted to be a New Face?

Parmalee. They just got their first No. 1. They're a great bunch of guys, very down-to-earth. I like seeing good stuff happening to good people.

How would you describe CRS to your sweet, old, naive grandmother?

That's a very good question. There is alcohol involved – a lot of people drink very heavily and are on IVs and Pedialite afterwards. Amongst all that, it's where country artists catch up with radio folks and friends – I can honestly say that I've become good friends with a lot of them – to hang in a less stressful environment.

Describe your craziest CRS moment:

The movie *The Hangover*. That's pretty much it.

What's the most you've eaten on a single day of your radio tour?

I didn't eat a whole lot because I'm not built like Hunter Hayes. I'm from Missouri – corn-fed and, I'll be honest, I was starving myself during the radio tour dates trying to compete with all these guys that look good and are in shape: Tyler Hubbard's biceps and Brett Eldredge's facial structure. I ate a lot of salad.

If you were a DJ at a Froggy station, what would your name be?

Sir Hops-A-Lot. That's just the first thing I thought of.

Best Airport Food?

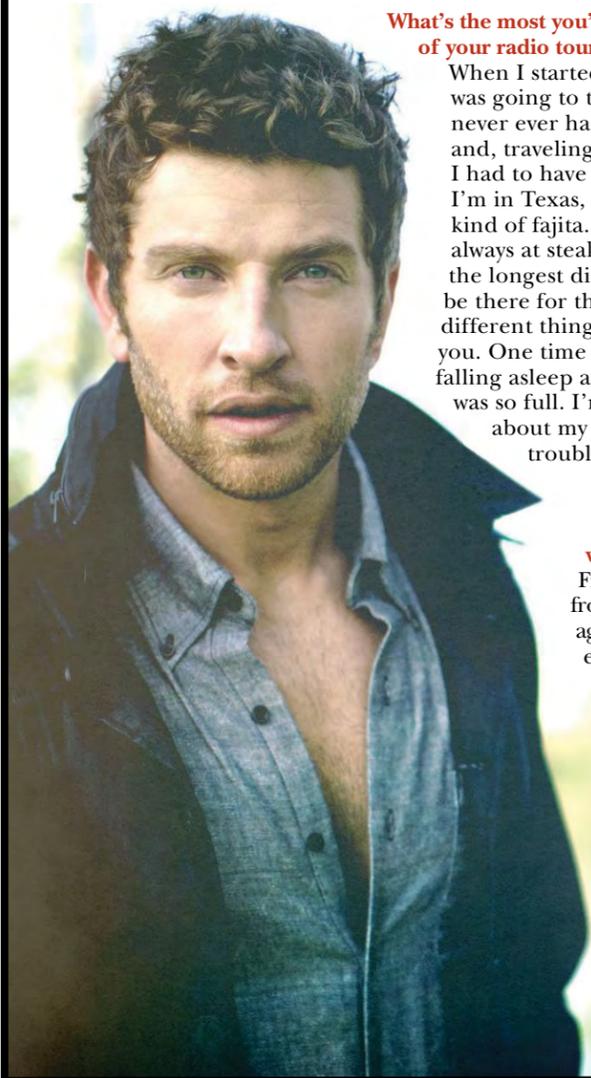
Chicago. I'm an Auntie Anne's guy myself. I like pretzel dogs. Helps with keeping my figure.

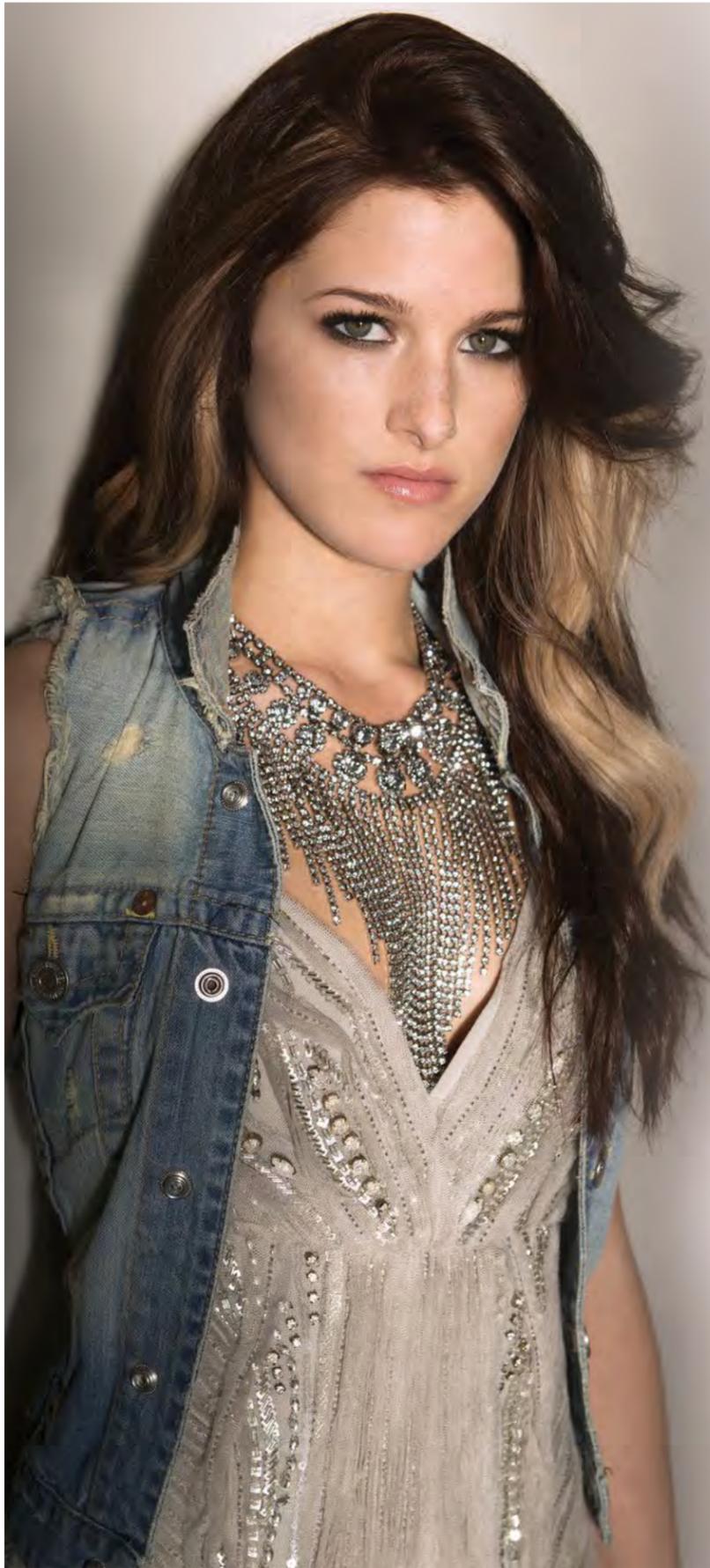
One famous landmark you've never seen, even though you've been in the area many times:

I've never seen the Grand Canyon or the Statue of Liberty.

One thing you've heard from every DJ in the country:

"So, who was the girl who you threw empty beer cans at her window? Have you ever really done that?"
"Oh, you're the stalker guy: you're Redneck Crazy." That was the topic of the year. And, no, I haven't. I don't enjoy jail time.





Cassadee Pope

Since winning *The Voice* in 2012 with the help of mentor Blake Shelton, Cassadee Pope has been introducing herself to Country radio. Her first single "Wasting All These Tears" marks her first Top 15 and continues to move up the chart.

Country Aircheck: What does it mean to you to be voted a New Face?

Cassadee Pope: I've been working so hard all year, schlepping across the country meeting these amazing radio people. The fact that they thought of bringing me into this amazing tradition is awesome. I remember being there last year and thinking, "Oh, my gosh! If I get to do this, ever, I'm doing well." It's a room full of radio people who believe in you. It's an honor.

Who would you have voted to be a New Face?

I love Maggie Rose. She is incredible, a really sweet girl. She definitely deserves recognition for all her hard work.

Who had your favorite pre-New Faces video?

I really loved Brantley Gilbert's video last year because it reminded me of a video trailer. It was really dramatic and serious and you could also see his goofy side backstage and on tour. I loved that they captured the live aspect because that's my favorite part of this whole career – playing live shows. It really shed some light on how a tour works.

What can we expect from your video?

I'm scared to try and be funny, but not be funny. Sitting in that room, I know it's painful if things don't translate the way you hoped. It's a hard crowd to impress, so you have to be really careful about trying to do something funny.

Did *The Voice* schedule prepare you for the craziness of visiting stations?

The radio tour is a whole other level. I didn't expect to do so much – four stations a day for four months straight. Probably the hardest schedule I've ever done. *The Voice* prepared me vocally because I was singing a lot on that show and it helped my endurance. It helped me to not lose my voice after a few performances because I was used to singing so much.

What's the most you've eaten on a single day of your radio tour?

The biggest struggle for me was eating healthy on the road. It still is. I try to eat before I do radio visits. Sometimes I don't have time and I'm starving and I'll eat whatever is there. For the most part I try to stay away from the goodies – not to be rude, it's a sweet gesture – but I've got to take care of myself.

Do you make PD flashcards for CRS?

When the label sends me people's information, they always have a picture, and that's something I really try hard to make sure I'm up to date on. I hate meeting someone and saying, "Nice to meet you," and they say, "Oh, we've met." It's not a good feeling. I learned really quickly on the radio tour that's a huge thing.

If you were a DJ at a Froggy station, what would your name be?

Pope Toad.

Best Airport Food?

JFK has this really cool cafeteria, Cibo Express. They have all these different stations and all these different kinds of food. Everything is right there, you don't have to walk to different terminals to find what you want.

One famous landmark you've never seen, even though you've been to the city many times:

I've never been to the Statue of Liberty. That would be cool to visit.

One thing you've heard from every DJ in the country:

Pope jokes. "What it was like being elected the new pope?" Things like that about my last name. I've gotten them since I was little, it's that old.



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Thomas Rhett

His first time out of the gate, Thomas Rhett impressed with "Something To Do With My Hands," earning his first Top 15 tune. He followed it up with "Beer With Jesus" before solidifying his place in country music with his first No. 1 "It Goes Like This." Rhett is currently working his way up the charts with "Get Me Some Of That."

Country Aircheck: What does it mean to you to be voted a New Face?

Thomas Rhett: It's one of the biggest honors you could ever have. I've gone to the New Faces show several times and watched all my peers. Getting to play New Faces makes you feel like all these pals you've made at radio have really done their part and played your music and voted on this show that every radio person in the country comes to. We're going to really try and prepare for the show and rock all their faces off. Sometimes being in there with a bunch of radio guys, they just sit down, but my goal is to make them stand up.

Who played your first New Faces show?

Lee Brice, and I remember his video. "Love Like Crazy" had just gone No. 1 and they all came onstage with long, gray beards. It was pretty hilarious.

What can we expect from your video?

My band is extremely creative. My management and my wife always have really great ideas. So we'll all try to incorporate all my past singles and my current singles. I think it might be like a *Saturday Night Live* skit.

Who would you have voted to be a New Face?

Cole Swindell. He's still working on his first single, but he's about to have a No. 1 song with "Chillin' It." He wrote my next single and has had like three or four cuts on Luke Bryan's record. He's playing sold-out shows all over the country.

Do you make PD flashcards for CRS?

I'm pretty bad with names but I always put a story to a face. Everybody at radio, I've learned about their families, if they like golf or if they like the Cowboys.

How would you describe CRS to your sweet, old, naive grandmother?

I would say, "Grandma, there is a bar on a bridge where everyone tries to see how late they can close it down and how high their tabs can get." It's just like a big, drunk family reunion.

Describe your craziest CRS moment:

It was a show that I did with the Warren Brothers for like 60 or 70 PDs and MDs. The Warren Brothers have no filter on their mouths. That's all I'm going to say.

What's the most you've eaten on a single day of your radio tour?

I was at KYGO/Denver when me, George Briner and the PD at the time went to Shanahan's Steakhouse. We ordered three bottles of wine, three-cheese macaroni, 12 oz. filet mignons, dessert, mashed potatoes, green beans and every appetizer on the menu. Not to mention what I had for lunch or breakfast.

If you were a DJ at a Froggy station, what would your name be?

Frog On a Log.

Best Airport Food?

LAX. It doesn't matter what terminal you're in, there's a nice restaurant and a McDonalds in each. You can eat nice or cheap in any terminal.

One famous landmark you've never seen, even though you've been to the city:

I've played in New York City so many times and I've yet to go to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. I feel like you have to go do that when you're in New York.

One thing you've heard from every DJ in the country:

"I was working your dad's records before you were even born." If I've heard that one time, I've heard that five million times.



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Charlie Worsham

Thrust into the spotlight in 2011 when he was selected to open for Taylor Swift's Speak Now Tour, Worsham followed up with his first single, "Could it Be," which made the Top 15. He's back on the charts now with "Want Me Too."

Country Aircheck: What does it mean to you to be voted a New Face?

Charlie Worsham: I saw my first New Faces show this past year from sitting in the audience, and as an artist you can't help but want to be on that stage. To get to be doing it this February is excellent. I'm very, very proud.

Who had your favorite pre-New Faces video?

I loved the videos. I wasn't aware the videos were apart of it until attending the show and they were great. I thought that Kip Moore's was great. It wasn't a funny video, but it wasn't too serious either. It represented him really well. The Florida Georgia Line one was funny.

What can we expect from your video?

I need to hire Steven Spielberg. There's a lot of pressure to go funny, but I don't know that we'll do that. If it's going to be funny, it's got to really be funny.

How would you describe CRS to your sweet, old, naive grandmother?

CRS is a marathon. It's somewhere between a family reunion, party, convention and summit. It's very much a family reunion for those of us who are in Nashville and on the artist side, and those who give us that window of opportunity in radio. I love having friends from radio in town that I don't normally get to see.

Other than New Faces, what are you looking forward to about CRS?

Carol Hughes from KFDI/Wichita and I have a Music Fest tradition of going to see The Time Jumpers, and that's something I hope to recreate with some other radio friends.

Describe your craziest CRS moment:

Graphic. Unfiltered. Amazeballs.

Do you make PD flashcards for CRS?

I've had my fair share of calling someone by the wrong name, but memory has served me fairly well. A lot of it has to do with how we as artists get introduced to radio over a long stretch of time. Also, the attitude and background that programmers have, it isn't too different from mine. They have a love for this music that comes from the same place and a passion for what they get up and do every day. When two people like that, from the same ilk, get to talking, you find yourself remembering more than you normally would without really trying.

What's the most you've eaten on a single day of your radio tour?

At least 17,000 calories! It was a whirlwind: airport breakfast; station visit breakfast; mid-morning doughnuts; sandwiches with a station; fast food, maybe a frosty from Wendy's as an afternoon pick-me-up; a massive steak dinner that would've been enough for the whole day in just that one meal.

If you were a DJ at a Froggy station, what would your name be?

Charles Jump 'Em. That's horrible. Exhibit A: why I shouldn't go for the funny.

One famous landmark you've never seen, even though you've been to the city many times:

I'm in Cleveland today and I've yet to go to the Rock 'N Roll Hall of Fame. I really want to do that.

CAC

WHAT'S ON YOUR CHECKLIST?

- STRATEGIC EVALUATION-STATION ACTION PLAN
- RESEARCH: MUSIC TESTING, PERCEPTUAL STUDIES, FOCUS GROUPS
- MUSIC SCHEDULING
- DIGITAL STRATEGY/SOCIAL MEDIA EXECUTION AND SALES ADVICE
- TURN KEY BRAND BUILDING & SELLABLE MARKETING AND PROMOTION IDEAS
- TALENT COACHING

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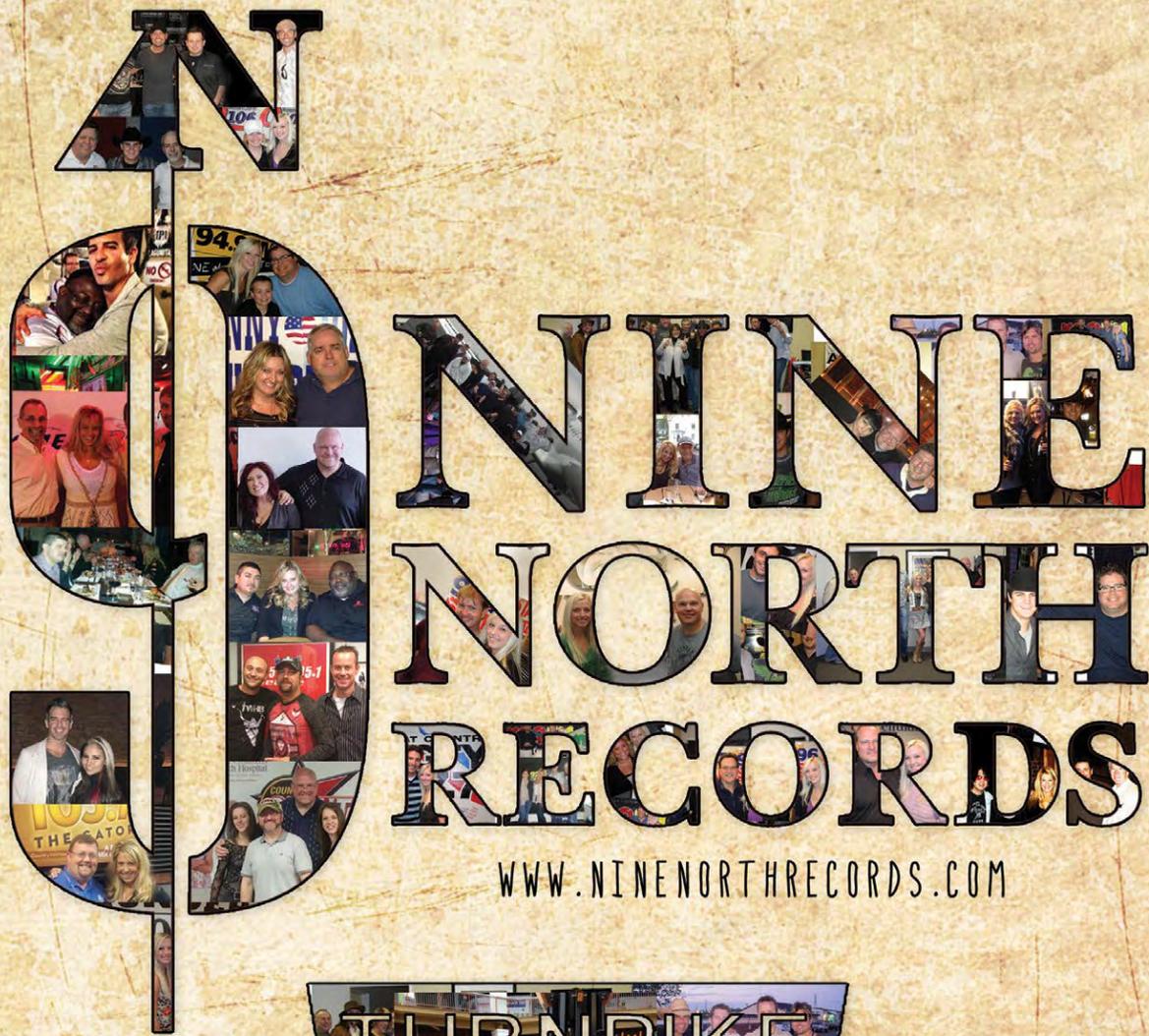
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ABBREVIATION KEY:

AD	Admin
BM	Business Manager
CEO	Chief Exec. Officer
CF	Co-Founder
CM	Classic Country Media Serv.
CO	Coordinator
D	Director
DOP	Director of Operations
DM	Digital Marketing
E	East
EVP	Exec. Vice President
GM	General Manager
H	Head
IMN	Interactive Marketing, Nat'l.
LO	Label Operations
M	Manager
MP	Managing Partner
MS	Media Strategy
MSM	Marketing & Social Media
MW	Mid West
N	National
NB	New Business
NE	North East
O	Owner
P	President
PA	Partner
PR	Promotion
PRA	Prom. & Acquisitions
PRF	Field Prom.
PRM	Prom. & Marketing
PRMS	Prom. & Media Strategy
PRN	Promotion, Nat'l.
PRNM	Nat'l. Prom., Maj. Market
PRNS	Nat'l. Prom. & Strategy
PRM	Secondary Promotions
RIM	Radio Interactive Marketing
RIS	Research & Info. Systems
RM	Radio Marketing
RMN	Radio Marketing Nat'l.
RP	Regional Promotion
RR	Revenue & Research
RS	Radio Syndication
RT	Radio Tour
SC	Secondary Charts
SD	Senior Director
SE	South East
SEC	Secondary
SM	Strategic Marketing
SO	Strategic Online
SSP	Syndication & Special Pro.
SPO	Special Ops
SP	Special Projects
SPC	Specialist
SEP	Secret Projects
STP	Strategic Partnerships
SWP	Senior Vice President
SW	South West
TS	Tour Support
VP	Vice President
W	West
WC	West Coast

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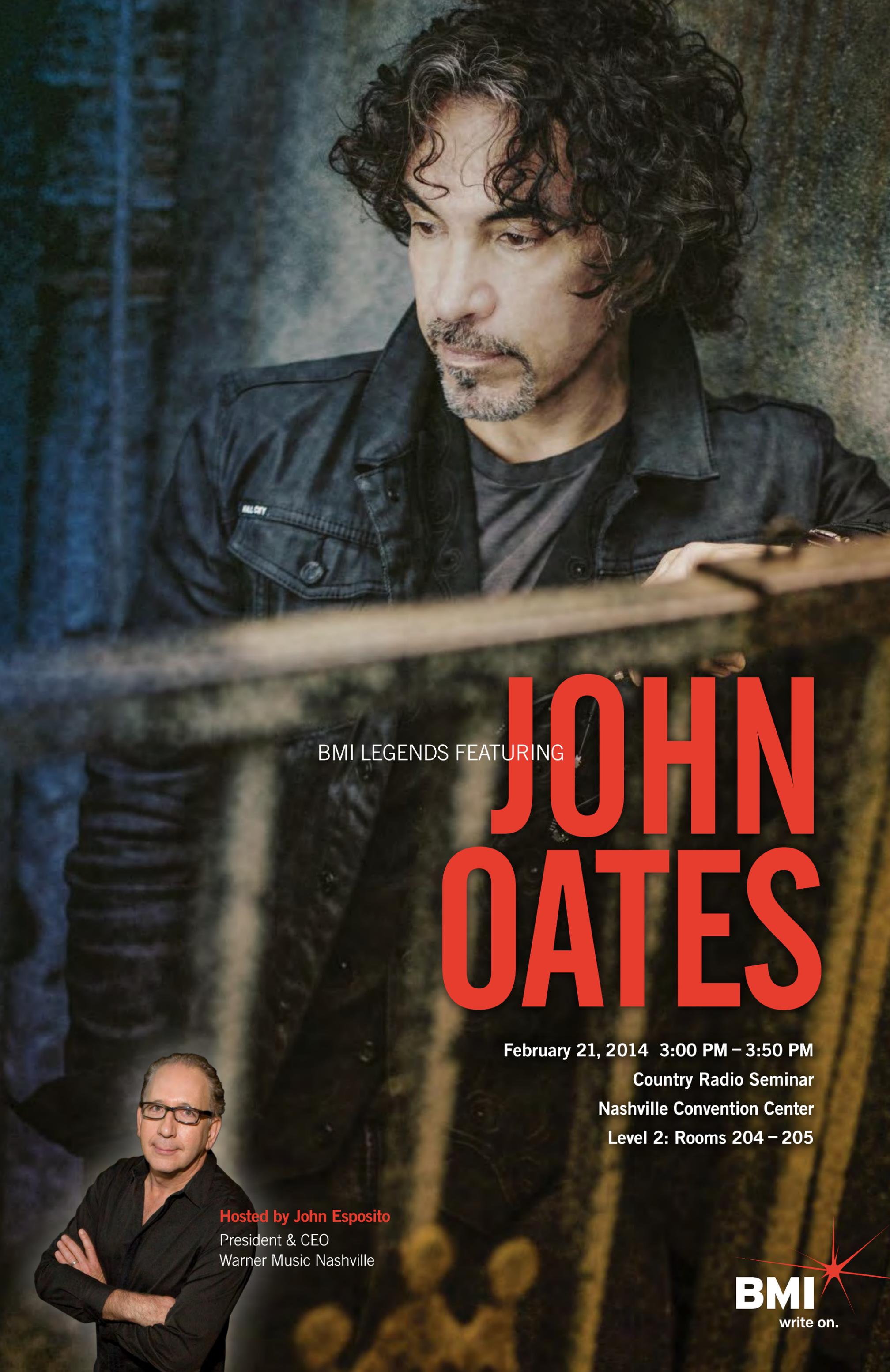


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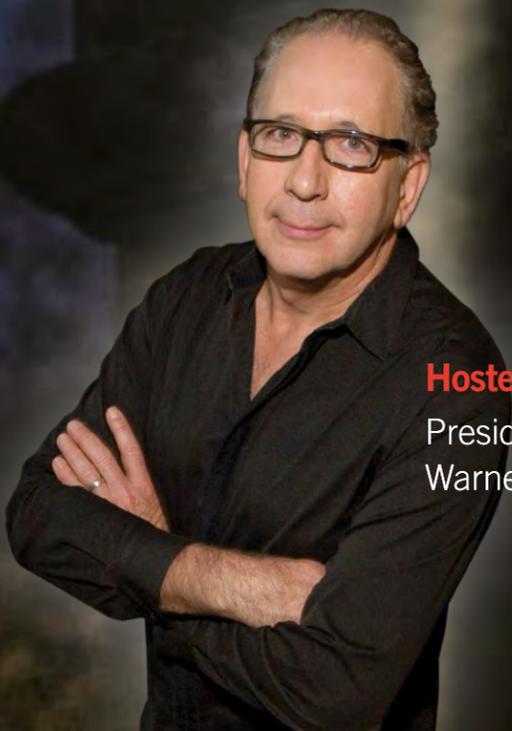
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Kim Guthrie

The Fun & Games Department

As Cox Media Group EVP/Radio, Kim Guthrie oversees 57 stations in 11 markets, including six Country outlets in five rated markets. Guthrie joined the company in 1998 as VP/GM of the Long Island, NY cluster, rising through Regional VP and Group VP roles to her current position. Her background includes sales and management, as well as work as a television news reporter and anchor. Today, she guides a team of A-list employees in a company with a long media tradition, and focuses on fundamentals that have a proven track record of success. She's also having some fun.

Country Aircheck: What is your view of radio today – both as a business and how it fits into people's lives?

Kim Guthrie: We have a big radio cluster in Atlanta and [the recent ice storm] was an incredible opportunity for radio to really shine – not just our News/Talk station WSB-AM, but all of them, including our music stations. Radio truly became a companion. People were freaked out – some were in

their car for 24 hours. Phones were dead and radio became a lifeline. The responsibility that comes with being a broadcaster is paramount. It was our duty to be a leader and step up as a lifeline and companion to people who needed to know what was happening. They had nowhere else to go except perhaps the fellow travelers stuck in the cars next to them.

You can't just mail it in with a voice-tracked personality. We had people sleeping on the floor overnight. [Atlanta radio icon] Clark Howard came in and did news for a few hours. Even Neal Boortz, who technically is retired, came in. That's effort we would have seen in any of the markets we're in. This is what we do. Someone has to provide hope and get the information out. Local radio provides the ultimate public service. Pandora, Spotify and the rest can't.

The day-to-day programming is where the arts and crafts come in – and that's also where the fun comes in. That's where the PD can really flex his or her muscle by breathing life in-between the records. "The war is won between the records" is an old adage, but I really believe it.

What is the industry doing right, and where is it coming up short?

Radio is doing well when we band together as an industry – whether it's the FM chip or broadcasters getting together on iHeart or other aggregated sites and not seeing it as competition, but as the place where we are stronger if we stand together. That wouldn't have happened five years ago.

The bad news is, we don't do a great job with our own public relations. Being a legacy medium that's been around forever doesn't make radio fun and sexy to write about. But the truth is, 92% of Americans were listening to the radio each week in 1975 and today that statistic is 92%. That's amazing when you think about it, but we do a pretty poor job of tooting our own horn. Maybe we've been too busy squabbling over this or that piece of business. We should stand stronger and link arms like we're doing now with industry initiatives like the FM chip. As an industry we'd be better for it. I hope there's more of that to come.

What is radio's place under the overall Cox Enterprises – which is a huge umbrella?

It is. Cox Enterprises owns Cox Communications, our cable company, a very, very big part of Cox Enterprises. Cox Enterprises also owns Manheim Auto Auctions, autotrader.com and the Cox Media Group, which includes TV, newspapers, radio and our direct mail business Val-Pak and Savings.com. Bill Hoffman is the President of CMG. Each of the three areas has an EVP: I basically run the radio group, Jane Williams is in charge of TV and Michael Joseph oversees our print products. Cox began 116 years ago as a newspaper in Dayton, OH. The second oldest part of Cox Enterprises is our radio group, which makes it a very important part of our heritage.

We're still run by the Cox family. We have third and fourth generations at the top of our business. That legacy piece of the portfolio is very important and very near and dear to their hearts. Radio has the advantage of being the fun part – I joke that

THE INTERVIEW

“
The goal has always been to be the best. And that starts with the focus Cox puts on its employees. If we can attract and build the best team, the best talent, we will win.
”



THE INTERVIEW

we're the fun and games department. But we are also a huge part of our communities and provide incredible community service.

I'm privileged to get to run Cox Radio. We may not be the biggest radio company around, but that's never been Cox's goal. It sounds cliché, but the goal has always been to be the best. And that starts with the focus Cox puts on its employees. If we can attract and build the best team, the best talent, we will win. When I recruit people, the fun part is telling them they will be working for Cox. We have a pension plan, incredible benefits and the resources to provide the tools they need to win. The company believes our employees are our most important resource. If you start by hiring the best and treating them well, you end up with great products. Great products ultimately turn into better revenue.

Having that much media concentration must provide some great synergies in the markets you're in.

The cool thing is we're able to do cross-platform things in news delivery, marketing and sales. We can do some really great stuff with our digital offerings that a lot of stations can't do because they don't have a TV or print partner in that market.

The other opportunity is to share best practices. We do some things with our radio research that had automatic applications for TV. And we found the same thing in TV.

The next real big stage will be sales and digital. We'll be learning how to go in as a cross platform team of sales people who understand how to sell digital and do a better job with reach and search.

In April 2013 Cox sold 27 radio stations in eight markets. That surprised a lot of people.

We got out of the smaller radio and television markets. It takes a lot of effort and money to run a small market and not a whole lot more to run a big market. But the return on investment is higher. We've drawn the line that we only want to be in markets 50 and above. It was a very tough decision. We're not traditionally known for selling stations and we don't want to be seen as sellers. But what we did was strengthen our portfolio. We doubled down in some markets that were really important to us by buying TV stations where we already had radio.

How does Cox Radio corporate interact locally?

Well, I guess "corporate" would be me and VP/Radio Programming Steve Smith. Plus, we have Format Leaders. San Antonio OM Jeff Garrison is our Country Format Leader, for example. We've removed regional management layers, allowing us to be nimble

times I can be a little more objective about things from the cheap seats. If someone goes down the wrong road, I can look at it and ask why are we doing that? I let the teams bring the ideas to the forefront and then I have a vote. I probably have the ultimate veto, but I don't know that I've used that.

I understand you're married to a programmer.

Yes, indeed. When we met, I was in TV and Todd was the PD/morning personality for a Top 40 station. We talk a lot of radio around the house. He's actually a stay-at-home dad who is "retired" now. When our first daughter was born we were both in radio and I had just been promoted to sales manager. We were trying to find a nanny when one of us said what if he stayed home for a few months, then we'd find the right nanny. It's now 24 years and three daughters later, and his work at home has allowed me to do what I do. He's been a terrific supporter. He's my main consultant, just with a bad paycheck.

Where's the intersection of art and commerce – that point where programming and sales meet?

I don't want sales driving the bus, necessarily. But it is



I don't know I always feel that same love from other formats. Country artists are very appreciative and not afraid to show it. Country is about artists versus one-hit wonders, and that makes for great radio. Country artists are people we can, and do, get behind.

Some companies have launched national morning, evening and overnight shows. What path is Cox Radio taking?

We debate this a lot. Doing a great job in one market doesn't necessarily mean that show or personality will translate to other markets. Often the very thing that made the show successful was its ability to be local, relevant and compelling in that market. You often lose that "secret sauce" when you try to take that show to other markets. That's not to say there aren't great morning shows or great talent that can be repurposed and be very successful in that. There just aren't a lot of people who can transcend a single marketplace. And syndicating a show just to save money really isn't the right reason.

Pandora, Spotify and other services will soon find their place in the car. What does that mean for radio?

There have always been choices in the car. Radio's only choice is to make our brands so relevant and so important and compelling that the listener needs and wants to seek them out. The DJ was the first content curator and that's exactly what our personalities do by weaving in their own stories or giving listeners the inside stuff. The air personality has never been more important than he or she is today.

How does streaming fit in Cox Radio's business model?

We provide great content; the delivery method should be irrelevant. Cox stations can be found on iHeartRadio and TuneIn. We recently launched a really awesome app for all of our music stations that allows people to take our stations with them on their smartphones. We are now measuring streams independently from our over-the-air ratings. We have a midday show doing 30% of its audience through streaming. And across the board, it's as high as 10%, so we have to be there with a quality product. The FM chip is another neat thing the industry has done and we're very involved in that. It doesn't drain your battery like a WiFi signal and, most importantly, it doesn't eat up your data plan.

What is Cox Radio's stance on performance royalties?

We have very strong concerns about any legislation that would create a performance right that would apply to terrestrial broadcasters. We're already in advanced discussions with some record labels on royalty deals that would have direct license opportunities that would cover terrestrial broadcasters as well as online streaming. The efforts of our industries along

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and quick in making decisions; a huge benefit.

Overall, it's a very traditional model. The GMs report to me. The PDs report to the GM. There's a little bit of a dotted line and plenty of interaction between Steve Smith and me on programming decisions. But the PD reports to the GM. I think that's the way it should be.

We're not constantly with the local teams, they don't report to us. We're part of the team; we all have a vote. But the local team has a lot of say.

Former CMG EVP/Radio Bob Neil came from programming, and most of your radio background is sales and management. Has that changed anything with the operation or the culture inside of Cox Radio?

I was a journalism major and my background includes TV news, so one might argue that we're still led by a programmer. I've been in all of these different departments over the years, but I come from a product background first. We are very product focused. If you have a great product, revenue tends to follow. You have to have an incredible sales staff, of course. But it's a lot easier when you have something terrific to sell.

The discipline that Bob Neil brought to the company remains. We still believe in building great brands and putting great sales managers and sales people in the field who know how to turn it into revenue.

What's your role with programming?

I'm very involved in programming decisions. I'm involved in every single format change. But the ideas generally come bottom-up from people in the field who are more dialed in to what the local market needs.

I don't micro-manage programming, but I have a pretty good bead on what's happening and some-

important to have a good partnership between programming and sales. We all know this is a for-profit business. We're not here to find out how many times we can say "no" to ideas. We're here to find solutions that don't make the station sound awful. There's a happy medium and our programmers and sales managers work nicely together.

Cox Radio owns Country stations WNGC/Athens, GA, WHKO/Dayton, KKBQ & KTHT/Houston, WWKA/Orlando, KKYX-AM & KCYY/San Antonio and KWEN/Tulsa. What is Country's place in Cox Radio?

We absolutely love Country, and so do I. I grew up in the Midwest, so I guess I have Country in my blood. Today's delivery of Country is very much a Top 40 delivery. It's active; it's passionate. People love it. It's very hot right now. We've got some incredible Country brands. And we've got some of the very best Country programmers in the business. I'd put our guys up against anyone.

What is Cox Radio's relationship with the country label community?

We enjoy excellent relationships with the labels and the artists. We approach it as a true partnership that's similar to the old days in that it doesn't have to be adversarial. Those decisions aren't being made by me, they're being made for each market, and that's important. We give our folks the autonomy to do the right thing for their market.

What I see in Country that might be different from the other formats is that the record labels really look long term. You always hear Country artists thanking radio for making their songs hits and giving them careers.

this line shows we are working to address it and that the government imposing legislation is not needed.

What else should we know about Cox Radio?

We're the fifth biggest radio broadcaster by revenue. We don't have a lot of stations, but we do really well with the stations that we have. You're going to see a little more innovation from the company than maybe we've been known for in the past. We have the best people, in my opinion. And we're going to continue to attract, hire and develop the best people.

Your focus on hiring top tier people is a recurring theme in interviews that you have done.

Yeah. I have a lot of people around me who know a lot more about a lot of stuff than I do. I certainly don't have all the answers. But I do think that "A" people want to work with "As" – they can't stand having "Cs" on the team. It's that "steel sharpens steel" mentality. If you can gather up the "As" in the same room and allow everybody to have their moment, you will come out with some great stuff. That's our goal.

Are you coming to CRS this year?

Last year was my first CRS and I was absolutely blown away at how big of a deal it was. And, not just the programming focus, but the sales focus. I wondered why more formats didn't do something like this? Then I realized how many of our own people had never been to CRS and felt like we needed to be there. Country is very important to Cox and we need to show our support and show our strength. So, this year, Cox will have a very big presence at CRS. It really is something special, and I wanted all of my PDs and all of my Country GMs to be there. So we'll all be there. **CAC**

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