ARISTA NASHVILLE

LABEL OF THE YEAR

Joe Galante & Skip Bishop: "We Believe" The Top 10 Labels

PAGE 6

TOP 6 OF '06

Mergers, payola, LA – oh my! The top news of the year with added perspective from industry leaders.

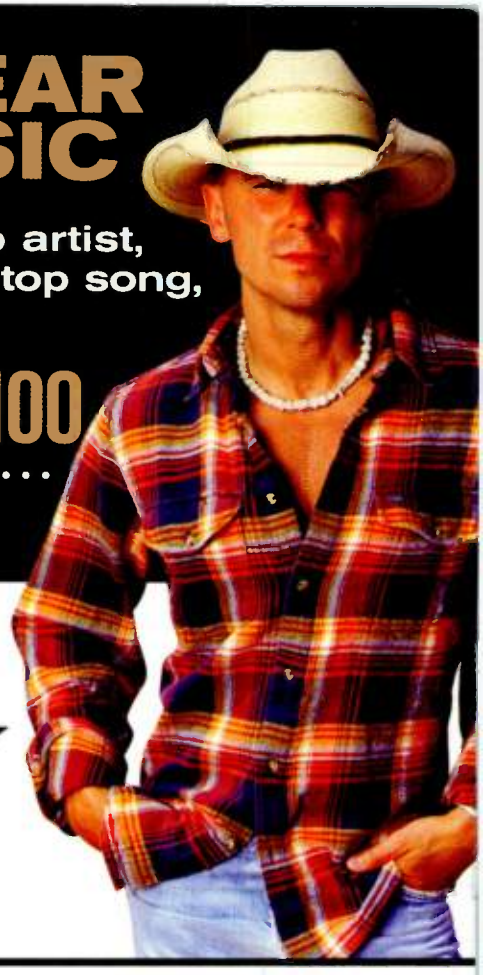
PAGE 3

THE YEAR IN MUSIC

Kenny's the top artist, Flatts' have the top song, and inside . . .

THE TOP 100

PAGE 9



COUNTRY AIRCHECK

DECEMBER 2006

THE BIGGEST HITS OF 2006

THE WORLD
SUMMERTIME
DON'T FORGET TO REMEMBER ME
SHE'S EVERYTHING
NOBODY GONNA TELL ME WHAT TO DO
WHO YOU'D BE TODAY
THE DOLLAR
BEFORE HE CHEATS
LIVING IN FAST FORWARD
KEROSENE
NEW STRINGS
WHEN I GET WHERE I'M GOING
CHEATIN'
MOUNTAINS
JESUS, TAKE THE WHEEL
BELIEVE
LAST DAY OF MY LIFE
LIKE RED ON A ROSE
POLITICALLY UNCORRECT
BUILDING BRIDGES
EVERY TIME I HEAR YOUR NAME
FEELS JUST LIKE IT SHOULD
ON AGAIN TONIGHT
SHE DON'T TELL ME TO
YOU SAVE ME
YEE HAW
CALIFORNIA GIRLS
I DON'T FEEL LIKE LOVING YOU TODAY
SOME PEOPLE CHANGE
I DON'T KNOW WHAT SHE SAID

THANK YOU

ARTISTS, COUNTRY RADIO, AND SONGWRITERS...
"THERE'S TRUTH IN THE WORDS WRITTEN IN RED"

ARISTA NASHVILLE · RCA RECORDS LABEL NASHVILLE · SONY BMG NASHVILLE · BNA RECORDS LABEL · BMG

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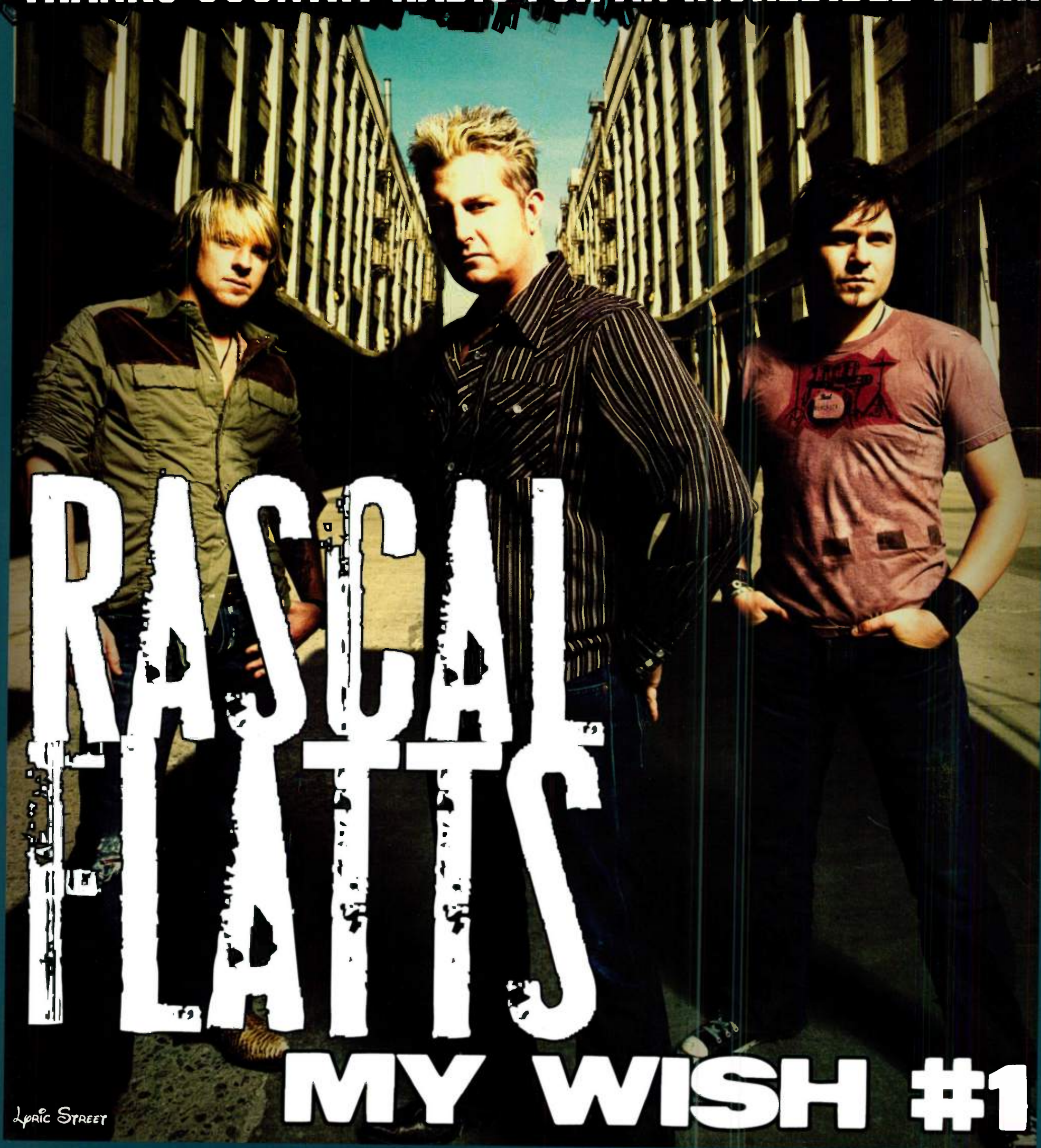
RASCAL FLATTS' 2006 WISH LIST

- ☑ Best Selling Artist Album Of 2006, All Genres
- ☑ Me & My Gang – Only Triple Platinum Artist Album Of 2006, All Genres
- ☑ Mediabase/Country Aircheck Top Group/Duo Of The Year
- ☑ "What Hurts The Most" – #1 Most Heard Song Of The Year
- ☑ AMA Group Of The Year
- ☑ AMA T-Mobile Text-In Award, All Genres
- ☑ CMA Group Of The Year
- ☑ ACM Group Of The Year
- ☑ CMT Group Of The Year Video

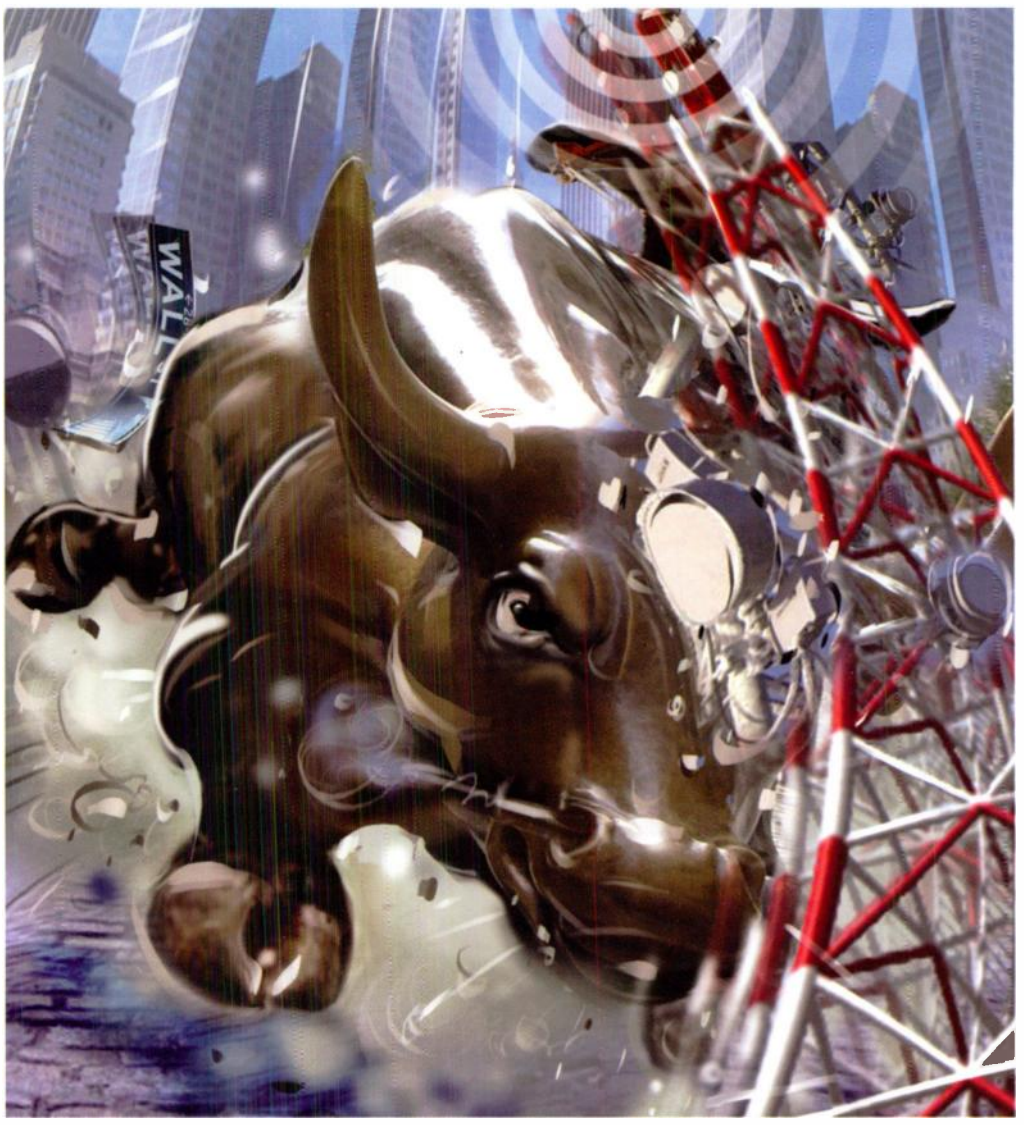
THANKS COUNTRY RADIO FOR AN INCREDIBLE YEAR!



THE TOP SIX OF '06

The year's six biggest news makers

When they write the history of the country radio and record industries – if anyone actually did that – the chapter on 2006 will likely focus on changes that affected the very underpinnings of the business. Intense legal scrutiny influenced the daily interaction of labels and stations, another massive consolidation of the record business occurred as independents experienced unprecedented success and radio underwent the most dramatic ownership upheaval since the post-Telecom heyday. And that's just for starters. Here's a look back at six of the year's biggest stories, with some added perspective from industry leaders.



1 Deja Vu All Over Again
Mergers, Acquisitions & Spinoffs: 2006 or 1996?

Wall Street shook the radio industry again this year, a full decade after the buying frenzy began with the passage of the Telecom Act of 1996. Some of the world's largest private equity firms funded blockbuster deals that shook the very foundations of the broadcast world.

The largest, announced just a few weeks ago, stars a group led by Thomas H. Lee Partners and Bain Capital Partners which won an auction to take **Clear Channel** private. The deal totaled $26.7 billion and is expected to take nine months to close.

Those two capital companies joined with Blackstone Group and **Cumulus** to purchase **Susquehanna** for $1.2 billion, which closed in May. In a more complicated transaction, **Disney** agreed in February to sell assets including 22 stations to **Citadel** for $2.7 billion in deal that would give Disney shareholders a majority stake in the new company. That deal should close in May '07. An April merger saw **Jefferson-Pilot** become **Lincoln Financial Media**. In May, **CBS Radio** announced its intentions to sell 39 stations it owns in 10 markets.

Among the major Country stations with new owners are: KPLX/Dallas and WFMS/Indianapolis, Cumulus; WYGY& WUBE/Cincinnati and WMC-AM/Memphis, Entercom; KYGO/Denver and KSON/San Diego, Lincoln Financial; WYRK/Buffalo, Regent; WHOK/Columbus and KBEQ & KFKF/Kansas City, Wilks; KSKS/Fresno, Peak. And the Disney/Citadel deal will send ABC Country outlets WKHX & WYAY/Atlanta and KCSC & KTYS/Dallas to Citadel.

Major transactions this year also portend an active 2007, as Clear Channel has announced plans to sell 448 radio stations outside of the Top 100 markets, as well as its entire television division. About 90 CC Country stations are expected to be sold.

And, Citadel has also said it plans to divest about $150 million worth of its smaller market stations.

2 Spitzer's Hole-y Crusade
Settlements Create Bureaucracy, Confusion

New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer's campaign to curb pay for play practices between radio and record companies shook the business with the July 2005 Sony settlement. Warner Music followed in November of that year, and 2006 saw settlements with Universal, EMI and CBS Radio.

While the agreements did set compliance parameters, the AG's limited jurisdiction, combined with continuing silence from the FCC, left plenty of gray area. If nothing else, the settlements have raised more than $32 million for New York State music education and appreciation programs.

Here's what some industry executives had to say about how Spitzer's campaign has affected them:

"The paperwork is mind boggling. Record companies now have compliance officers. Most of the biggest [radio] chains do too, and it's all based on the Spitzer/Sony agreement. [Spitzer] created a success prevention department. The good news is a hit will stand out no matter what."
–Curb senior VP/Promotion Carson James

"Labels are a little gun shy to do things that are considered legal that would really help their artists, mainly out of fear it could be construed as something else."
–WFUS Tampa, Fla., PD Travis Daily

"There have been a few labels which have used the consent decrees as an excuse not to provide tour support and win-it-before-you-can-buy-its, [but] the fact is that we still have no problem getting both major and emerging indie labels involved to promote once someone presents a creative plan that works as a win-win."
–Radio consultant Jaye Albright

3 Getting Nippered
Sony Music Nashville Merges With RCA Label Group

While the corporate merger of Sony Music and BMG actually happened in 2005, its impact wasn't widely felt on Music Row until April of this year when the combined company finally turned its eyes to Nashville. By the time the dust settled, Sony Music Nashville and RCA Label Group (RLG) had been joined into a single entity called Sony BMG Nashville. Former RLG chairman Joe Galante was in charge, Sony Music Nashville president John Grady and about 20 other employees were out and the venerable Epic country imprint was no more. Epic's newly installed VP/National Promotion Tom Moran was among the casualties.

On the artist side, the roster cuts included Jessi Alexander, Jace Everett, Susan Haynes, Jamey Johnson, Brice Long and Jon Randall.

While many of the moves were painful to watch, the assimilated company appeared to gain both strength and momentum from its streamlining and remained the dominant player on Music Row.

FROM THE PUBLISHER

Lon Helton

Welcome to Country Aircheck's first printed issue!

This company was formed just a few short months ago because we think you deserve a trade publication that is informed and passionate about country radio and the country music industry. Years of experience have given us strong beliefs about what information is important to the country community and how that information should be presented. You'll find that philosophy reflected in this issue.

Starting on this page, we offer a comprehensive overview of 2006, from the year's top news stories, to a complete analysis of the year in music utilizing our Mediabase-powered charts, to more personal remembrances as we move through the issue. We close with a preview of the new music coming in the first quarter of 2007. After all, when we all get back from the holidays we're just eight weeks away from CRS-38.

If you're reading this and are not receiving our daily e-mail and weekly Music Edition, I encourage you to visit www.countryaircheck.com and sign up. For those of you who are already in our loop, I hope you find this issue meets the high standards we strive for with all of our publications. As always, we welcome your feedback and deeply appreciate your support.

We're glad you're with us.

Sincerely,

Lon Helton

Lon Helton
lon@countryaircheck.com

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COUNTRY AIRCHECK

THE TOP SIX OF '06

4 DUMPING NO. 2
KZLA's Demise Shakes Country

The country industry suffered a body blow in August when Emmis flipped 26-year-old country outlet KZLA to "Movin' 93.9." The loss was especially devastating to an industry already suffering from the lack of country outlets in New York and San Francisco.

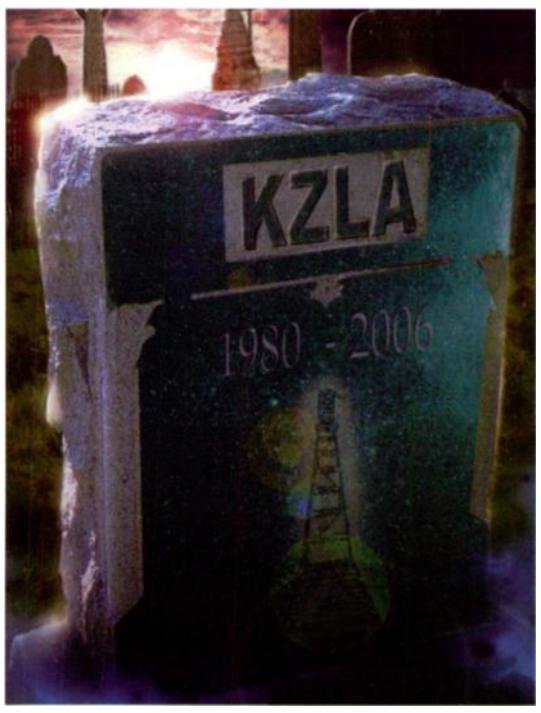
Equally damaging was the slim prospect of a major operator adopting the format on one of its FMs. There was a glimmer of hope last September when Clear Channel regional execs spoke to a group of ACM board members, seeking their support for a new FM country outlet. But an L.A. FM country option – Clear Channel or otherwise – has yet to materialize.

Country did return to the L.A. airwaves – on AM – when Mt. Wilson Broadcasting flipped XSUR/Tijuana and added simulcast KKGO late in '06.

"There was no immediate affect, as most shows had played or were on sale at the time of the [KZLA] format switch. Plans for 2007 have absolutely not been affected by the radio situation. The market is too good to pass up. We just have to be more creative in marketing our shows."
–Live Nation Executive Director Brian O'Connell

"There isn't a void for country in L.A. if you have satellite radio. The real void is for a local kind of country radio that activates and perpetuates the country marketplace. My concern is that the two AMs will be just enough of a deterrent to discourage anyone from [flipping] a big signal FM to country."
–The Gary Group Chairman Dick Gary

"Country is still alive and well in Los Angeles and [fans] will look for non-traditional ways to listen to country. The biggest loss of KZLA flipping formats was losing our many friends who worked there. I truly miss not visiting with these people as much as we did when the station was on the air."
–ACM Exec. Director Bob Romeo



Heartland

5 INDIE APPRECIATION
Independent Labels Make A Strong Showing

Lofton Creek's out-of-left-field No. 1 hit with **Heartland**'s "I Loved Her First" may be the most tangible proof, but 2006 was a good year for Nashville independent labels in general.

Show Dog and Big Machine, which launched as sister labels in 2005, may have publicly in split in 2006, but that didn't stop either label from having a very successful year. That's particularly true of Big Machine, which scored with **Jack Ingram**, **Taylor Swift** and **Danielle Peck**.

Many new labels launched or ramped up in Nashville this year, including Montage Music, Category 5 Records, Rust Records and **Tim McGraw**'s StyleSonic Records.

Another good sign for indies is that many former major label artists found new homes in the independent ranks this year, including **Mark Wills** (Equity), **Travis Tritt** (Category 5), **Sammy Kershaw** (Category 5), **Darryl Worley** (903 Music), **Ty Herndon** (Titan Pyramid), **Billy Ray Cyrus** (New Door) and **Carolyn Dawn Johnson** (Equity). Also, **Tracy Byrd** (Blind Mule), **Tracy Lawrence** (Rocky Comfort Records) and **Aaron Tippin** (Nippit) were among the artists going the DIY route by starting their own labels, all of which bodes well for a plethora of new music to choose from in 2007.

6 CHART APPRECIATION
VNU's R&R Purchase Alters Trade Biz . . . Or Does It?

A *Hollywood Reporter* story on the morning of July 6, 2006 (not that the date is seared in our memories or anything) brought the merger and acquisition gremlins to the doorstep of venerable trades *Billboard* and *R&R*. Expected synergies, layoffs on both sides and industry confusion grabbed headlines, but the subtext was the expiration of R&R's deal with Mediabase, allowing the 33-year-old trade's venture capitalist owner to unload the pub to the only logical suitor. And that move only made sense if VNU could insert its Nielsen BDS-based charts into the successful, radio-focused trade, as it soon did. Four months later, the acquisition's tangible impact on the chart and trade dynamic is still up for debate.

"What we tried to impress upon our staff is that the old Billboard chart is now called R&R and the old R&R chart is now called Mediabase or Country Aircheck. The overall methodologies haven't changed, just the names associated with them."
–Broken Bow Records VP/Promotion Jon Loba

"I'm not sure VNU's purchase of R&R makes that much difference. Alternative voices and opinions are available all over the Internet on blogs and Web sites as communication rapidly changes. As far as I'm concerned, the more voices the merrier."
–Radio consultant Joel Raab

"Charts are a good tool, but I don't take them at face value. If Lonestar is at No. 10, it doesn't mean they're No. 10 in Providence. To me, a chart is more of a confirmation that we're right on, or a flag that we need to take another look at something. The merger hasn't changed that."
–WCTK/Providence, PD Steve Giuttari

SEVEN FOR '07

1. Sale Of The Century
Clear Channel is selling 450 stations, and an industry-wide re-distribution of radio properties doesn't seem farfetched. Groups might be selling sticks on the Home Shopping Network before it's all said and done.

2. Spitzerola Rolls On
The Entercom lawsuit is still on the books. Could more settlements be in the offing? And will the FCC ever weigh in?

3. And Then There Were Two
Universal buys Warner and Sony BMG buys EMI. Okay, we're kidding. Sort of. Hey, we kinda like the sound of SBMGEMI.

4. Fortress ABC
Citadel's purchase of ABC Radio will close, barring something unforeseen. And the alphabet net's assimilation will likely have significant fallout.

5. Hooray For Hollywood
Country will be back in Los Angeles . . . and on FM. Just watch the labels and artists fall all over themselves to help prop country back up in market No. 2.

6. Look For The Newbie Label
Capitol Nashville and Warner Bros. are both expected to launch new imprints, and who knows where the next "I Loved Her First" surprise will come from.

7. Country Aircheck Takes Pulitzer
Okay, now we're really kidding. We'll just be happy if we get to publish a year-end issue in '07.

THE IDOL EFFECT

Television has created a new reality when it comes to finding country artists and developing careers. *American Idol* and, to a lesser extent, *Nashville Star*, have offered nationally televised platforms from which have sprung some fairly remarkable success stories. None more so than quadruple-platinum CMA female vocalist and Horizon Award winner Carrie Underwood, who took the *AI* title in May of '05. Kellie Pickler finished sixth in '06, yet scored a No. 1 album debut in October. Even Sara Evans' run on ABC's *Dancing with the Stars* seemed to be a positive vehicle for exposure until, well, reality set in.

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JOHN MELLENCAMP

"OUR COUNTRY" IS THEIR COUNTRY.....

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SOME OF THE BEST RADIO STATIONS IN THE WORLD ARE MAKING
"OUR COUNTRY".... THEIR COUNTRY! JOIN US TODAY!

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LABEL OF THE YEAR

Arista returns to the top: "We Believe"

The numbers speak for themselves. Arista has 11 of the Top 100 songs of the year, three of the top 10, five of the top 20 and nine of the top 50. Market share is a doubt-destroying 14.8%. And then there are the individual success stories – like CMA and ACM Song of the Year "Believe" by Brooks & Dunn, another No. 1 for Phil Vassar, a gold record on Keith Anderson, Brad Paisley's Album of the Year, Alan Jackson's record breaking Precious Memories, mercurial newcomer Jason Michael Carroll and, oh yeah, the quadruple platinum supernova named Carrie Underwood.

the year in music

But charts, awards and other milestones don't tell the whole story. Because this may look like a simple return to the top for the label that led Mediabase-powered chart share from 2001 through 2004 (bumped out by Capitol in '05). The truth, however, is that the Arista promotion staff, which opened the year under new management, had a number of questions to answer about itself. And after a whirlwind year with its share of struggle, this group seems to have come through, if anything, even stronger.

Joe Galante

Arista's biggest question mark, to put it bluntly, was VP/Promotion **Skip Bishop**, who joined the label in October of 2005. "We had a new VP, a new National, we went from six regionals to five and we had a lot of new music at one time," says Sony BMG Chairman **Joe Galante** of the challenges Arista faced.

There's also the not so small matter of the Sony merger with BMG, which included the integration of Sony/Nashville into the RCA Label Group. "There's no doubt in my mind Skip's team performed way beyond because there were a lot of things Butch and Joe were occupied with," Galante says, referencing his No. 2, Exec. VP Butch Waugh.

"It's like jumping in a car that's already rolling," Bishop says. "It takes a minute to find the gear shift. These guys didn't know what I was about, and I needed to learn them. I found out very quickly it is an amazing team of strategists."

The Arista staff eventually shaped up with **Bryan Frasher** as Director/National Promotion, **Jeri Detweiler Cooper** in the Southeast, **David Friedman** working Northeast, **Lori Hartigan** in the West, **Lesly Somerville** handling Mid-South, **Alex Valentine** doing Southwest and **Alicia Butler** serving as Coordinator. They weren't afforded a lot of time to get comfortable with their new captain.

"To give Skip credit, he was following Bobby [Kraig]," Galante says. "That was not an easy thing to do both from an emotional standpoint for the staff, and also for the roster. We talk about the promotion guys, but you kind of forget about the artists and he didn't know anybody. All of a sudden he's got their careers in his hands. He did an amazing job in both areas. What he's done in the last year normally takes a lot longer."

Bishop, recommended for the job by Waugh, immersed himself in the music. "I don't think I've listened to another format since Butch first called me and planted the seed," he says. "From that day I started listening to all the artists' catalog, researching their stats and got to know them that way."

Next, he had to develop the personal relationships with the artists. "I called them up and told them I had zero credibility, but I like to learn," he says. "I found out it is an extremely accepting format and an extremely accepting group of people."

As for the staff, the cohesion was formed with the struggle involved in promoting "Believe," which Galante terms "a slugfest."

"That made us gel as a team," Bishop says. "Every day we came in and that was the first thing we talked about. There would be a new leak in the bucket we had to fix and a new hill to take. We rolled up our sleeves and got to know each other through that record. It was a long haul."

"People will write histories at some point in the future and tell us it was a No. 1 record, and it wasn't," Galante says. "It wasn't an easy record. It never researched and we went through a lot of crap, but the power of that record at the consumer level was incredible. We sold 700,000 albums on that single...[and it] is still driving that album."

The disappointments include Jackson's "Like Red On A Rose," which also struggled at radio but has outperformed itself sales-wise, according to Galante. "This is the beginning of the life of this record," Bishop says. "It will not follow the typical path."

But the tussles were vastly overshadowed by the triumphs: Like seeing Paisley "raise his game," in Galante's words, to join the genre's top entertainers, and watching Underwood transcend her Idol status to become a bona fide superstar.

For Bishop, 2006 was encapsulated in an Arista-only meeting recently held in a local bed and breakfast. "We looked at everything that happened this year," he explains. "The great things, the things that didn't work so great, the heartbreaks, the joyous moments. It was very intense.

"Afterward we had dinner, just us," he continues. "And we dressed for dinner. We sat in the dining room of this house and told stories about who our heroes are, our biggest disappointments in life, what we like best about our jobs. It was one of the most moving family moments I've ever experienced in an employment situation. I came out of there knowing this team loves music, and I think we came out tighter, meaner, happier and more focused. We came out like, 'Okay show me the door to '07 because we're going to do it again'." CAC

Propelling Arista to its lofty heights were 17 charted records, 11 of which are in the Top 100. Arista notched 11 Top 15 hits and six No. 1s that occupied the top spot for 14 weeks. Leading the way was Carrie Underwood, who posted three hits that spent an incredible 10 weeks at No.1 and Brad Paisley, whose pair of chart-toppers were on top a total of three weeks.

Capitol, last year's top imprint, follows-up an 11.5% chart share in 2005 with this year's 10.6%. Sr. VP Jimmy Harnen and his crew posted 16 charted records, nine Top 15 hits, 11 in the Top 100 and three No. 1s – all by Dierks Bentley.

MCA moved from fourth last year to third in 2006 on the strength of 15 charted tunes, 10 Top 15s and four smashes that spent nine weeks at No. 1.

PICTURE IN PICTURE:
The Arista promotion staff (l-r) includes Alicia Butler, Skip Bishop, Lesly Somerville, Bryan Frasher, Jeri Detweiler Cooper and David Friedman.
In absentia: Alex Valentine and Lori Hartigan.

2006 TOP TEN LABELS

1 ARISTA NASHVILLE 14.8%
2 Capitol 10.6%
3 MCA NASHVILLE 9.1%
4 BNA RECORDS LABEL 7.9%
5 LYRIC STREET RECORDS 7.5%
6 CURB RECORDS curb.com 7.4%
7 Mercury RECORDS 7.3%
8 WB 6.5%
9 COLUMBIA NASHVILLE 3.9%
10 SHOW DOG NASHVILLE 3.8%

IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN....

The Academy of Country Music will begin accepting submissions for

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for the

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Country Radio

Thank you For Another Amazing Year!!

We truly appreciate all your support and

can't wait for you to hear what's coming in 2007!

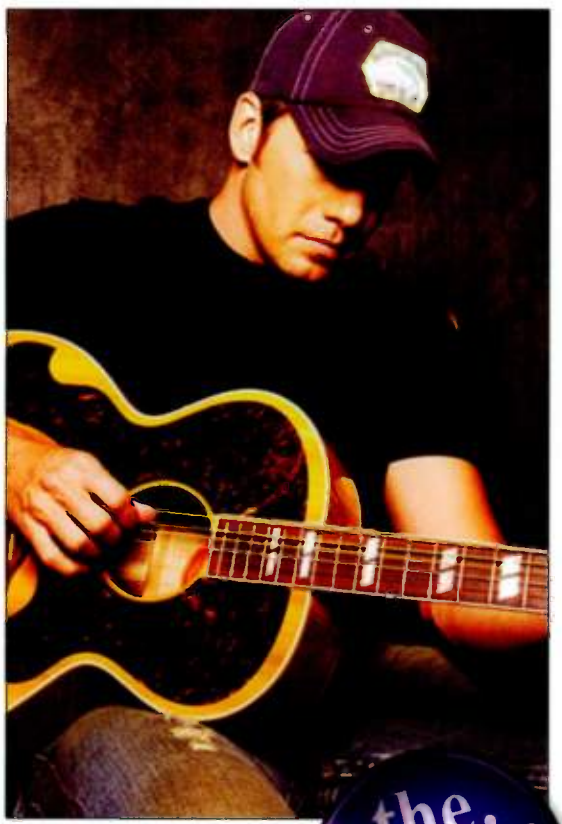
TOP 100 OF 2006

MEDIABASE

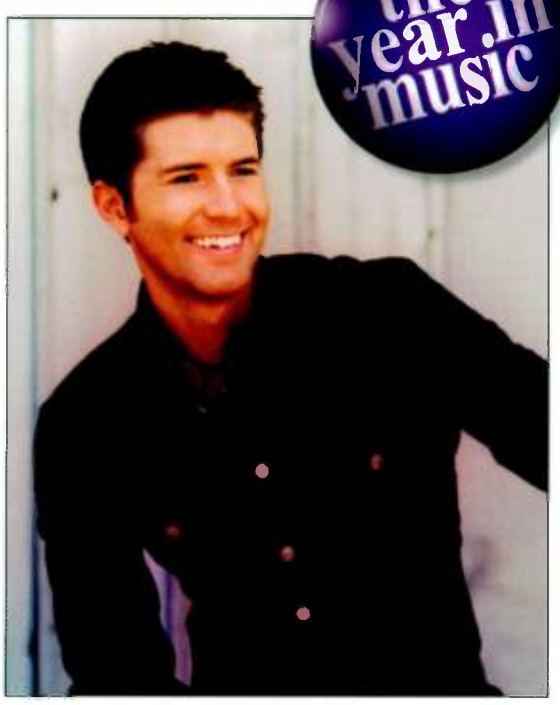
the year in music

1	RASCAL FLATTS	*What Hurts The Most*	(Lyric Street)
2	JOSH TURNER	*Your Man*	(MCA)
3	RODNEY ATKINS	*If You're Going Through Hell*	(Curb)
4	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	*Jesus, Take The Wheel*	(Arista)
5	BON JOVI w/ J. NETTLES	*Who Says You Can't Go Home*	(Mercury/IDJMG)
6	BRAD PAISLEY	*When I Get Where I'm Going*	(Arista)
7	BRAD PAISLEY	*The World*	(Arista)
8	BILLY CURRINGTON	*Must Be Doin' Somethin' Right*	(Mercury)
9	KEITH URBAN	*Tonight I Wanna Cry*	(Capitol)
10	JASON ALDEAN	*Why*	(BBR)
11	KENNY CHESNEY	*Summertime*	(BNA)
12	PHIL VASSAR	*Last Day Of My Life*	(Arista)
13	LEANN RIMES	*Something's Gotta Give*	(Curb/Asylum)
14	KENNY CHESNEY	*Living In Fast Forward*	(BNA)
15	GEORGE STRAIT	*She Let Herself Go*	(MCA)
16	JACK INGRAM	*Wherever You Are*	(Big Machine)
17	WRECKERS	*Leave The Pieces*	(Warner Bros.)
18	TRACE ADKINS	*Honky Tonk Badonkadonk*	(Capitol)
19	BLAKE SHELTON	*Nobody But Me*	(Warner Bros.)
20	KEITH ANDERSON	*Every Time I Hear Your Name*	(Arista)
21	MONTGOMERY GENTRY	*She Don't Tell Me To*	(Columbia)
22	DIERKS BENTLEY	*Settle For A Slowdown*	(Capitol)
23	LITTLE BIG TOWN	*Bring It On Home*	(Equity)
24	STEVE HOLY	*Brand New Girlfriend*	(Curb)
25	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	*Don't Forget To Remember Me*	(Arista)
26	TOBY KEITH	*Get Drunk And Be Somebody*	(Show Dog)
27	BROOKS & DUNN	*Believe*	(Arista)
28	JOSH TURNER	*Would You Go With Me*	(MCA)
29	TOBY KEITH	*A Little Too Late*	(Show Dog)
30	GARY ALLAN	*Life Ain't Always Beautiful*	(MCA)
31	TIM MCGRAW	*When The Stars Go Blue*	(Curb)
32	JOE NICHOLS	*Size Matters (Someday)*	(Universal South)
33	GEORGE STRAIT	*Give It Away*	(MCA)
34	DIERKS BENTLEY	*Come A Little Closer*	(Capitol)
35	LITTLE BIG TOWN	*Boondocks*	(Equity)
36	BROOKS & DUNN	*Building Bridges*	(Arista)
37	JOE NICHOLS	*Tequila Makes Her Clothes ...*	(Universal South)
38	RASCAL FLATTS	*Me And My Gang*	(Lyric Street)
39	FAITH HILL	*Like We Never Loved At All*	(Warner Bros./Curb)
40	HEARTLAND	*I Loved Her First*	(Lofton Creek)
41	DIERKS BENTLEY	*Every Mile A Memory*	(Capitol)
42	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	*Before He Cheats*	(Arista)
43	SUGARLAND	*Just Might (Make Me Believe)*	(Mercury)
44	SARA EVANS	*Cheatin'*	(RCA)
45	KENNY CHESNEY	*You Save Me*	(BNA)
46	TIM MCGRAW	*My Old Friend*	(Curb)
47	FAITH HILL	*The Lucky One*	(Warner Bros.)
48	SUGARLAND	*Want To*	(Mercury)
49	KENNY CHESNEY	*Who You'd Be Today*	(BNA)
50	CRAIG MORGAN	*I Got You*	(BBR)
51	BILLY CURRINGTON	*Why, Why, Why*	(Mercury)
52	KEITH URBAN	*Once In A Lifetime*	(Capitol)
53	FAITH HILL	*Sunshine & Summertime*	(Warner Bros.)
54	GARTH BROOKS	*Good Ride Cowboy*	(Pearl/Lyric Street)
55	RASCAL FLATTS	*My Wish*	(Lyric Street)
56	JAMEY JOHNSON	*The Dollar*	(BNA)
57	PAT GREEN	*Feels Just Like It Should*	(BNA)
58	MIRANDA LAMBERT	*Kerosene*	(Epic)
59	JAKE OWEN	*Yee Haw*	(RCA)
60	DANIELLE PECK	*Findin' A Good Man*	(Big Machine)
61	ERIC CHURCH	*How 'Bout You*	(Capitol)
62	TIM MCGRAW	*My Little Girl*	(Curb)
63	GEORGE STRAIT	*Seashores Of Old Mexico*	(MCA)
64	MONTGOMERY GENTRY	*Some People Change*	(Columbia)
65	KENNY ROGERS	*I Can't Unlove You*	(Capitol)
66	LONESTAR	*Mountains*	(BNA)
67	JACK INGRAM	*Love You*	(Big Machine)
68	VAN ZANT	*Nobody Gonna Tell Me What To Do*	(Columbia)
69	TAYLOR SWIFT	*Tim McGraw*	(Big Machine)
70	ALAN JACKSON	*Like Red On A Rose*	(Arista)
71	JOSH GRACIN	*Favorite State Of Mind*	(Lyric Street)
72	BIG & RICH	*8th Of November*	(Warner Bros.)
73	BLAINE LARSEN	*I Don't Know What She Said*	(Giantslayer/BNA)
74	TRENT TOMLINSON	*Drunker Than Me*	(Lyric Street)
75	CHRIS CAGLE	*Miss Me Baby*	(Capitol)
76	JASON ALDEAN	*Amarillo Sky*	(BBR)
77	EMERSON DRIVE	*A Good Man*	(Midas)
78	TOBY KEITH	*Big Blue Note*	(Show Dog/DreamWorks)
79	SUGARLAND	*Down In Mississippi (Up To...)*	(Mercury)
80	TOBY KEITH	*Crash Here Tonight*	(Show Dog)
81	RASCAL FLATTS	*Life Is A Highway*	(Walt Disney)
82	TRACE ADKINS	*Swing*	(Capitol)
83	BRAD PAISLEY	*She's Everything*	(Arista)
84	GARY ALLAN	*Best I Ever Had*	(MCA)
85	TRENT WILLMON	*On Again Tonight*	(Columbia)
86	SHEDAISY	*I'm Taking The Wheel*	(Lyric Street)
87	TRENT TOMLINSON	*One Wing In The Fire*	(Lyric Street)
88	CRAIG MORGAN	*Little Bit Of Life*	(BBR)
89	GEORGE STRAIT	*It Just Comes Natural*	(MCA)
90	GRETCHEN WILSON	*I Don't Feel Like Loving You...*	(Epic)
91	CAROLINA RAIN	*Get Outta My Way*	(Equity)
92	MIRANDA LAMBERT	*New Strings*	(Columbia)
93	GRETCHEN WILSON	*Politically Uncorrect*	(Epic)
94	ROCKIE LYNNE	*Lipstick*	(Universal South)
95	RODNEY ATKINS	*Watching You*	(Curb)
96	GRETCHEN WILSON	*California Girls*	(Columbia)
97	ERIC CHURCH	*Two Pink Lines*	(Capitol)
98	MEGAN MULLINS	*Ain't What It Used To Be*	(BBR)
99	BIG & RICH	*Comin' To Your City*	(Warner Bros.)
100	JOE NICHOLS	*I'll Wait For You*	(Universal South)

TOP 15s OF 2006



the year in music



	Artist	Title	Label	Peak Position (Wks. At No. 1)	Peak Date	Wks. on Chart	2006 Position
A	TRACE ADKINS	*Honky Tonk Badonkadonk*	(Capitol)	2	1/30/06	11	18
	JASON ALDEAN	*Why*	(BBR)	1 (1)	5/15/06	26	10
	JASON ALDEAN	*Amarillo Sky*	(BBR)	12	11/27/06	21	76
	GARY ALLAN	*Best I Ever Had*	(MCA)	10	12/05/05	2	84
	GARY ALLAN	*Life Ain't Always Beautiful*	(MCA)	5	8/07/06	31	30
	KEITH ANDERSON	*Every Time I Hear Your Name*	(Arista)	6	6/19/06	32	20
	RODNEY ATKINS	*If You're Going Through Hell*	(Curb)	1 (3)	8/21/06	34	3
	RODNEY ATKINS	*Watching You*	(Curb)	11	11/27/06	10	95
B	DIERKS BENTLEY	*Come A Little Closer*	(Capitol)	1 (1)	12/12/05	7	34
	DIERKS BENTLEY	*Settle For A Slowdown*	(Capitol)	1 (2)	5/30/06	22	22
	DIERKS BENTLEY	*Every Mile A Memory*	(Capitol)	1 (1)	10/23/06	19	41
	BIG & RICH	*8th Of November*	(Warner Bros.)	15	8/28/06	16	72
	BON JOVI w/ J. NETTLES	*Who Says You Can't Go Home*	(Mercury/IDJMG)	1(2)	5/02/06	24	5
	GARTH BROOKS	*Good Ride Cowboy*	(Pearl/Lyric Street)	1 (1)	12/19/05	7	54
	BROOKS & DUNN	*Believe*	(Arista)	6	4/17/06	22	27
	BROOKS & DUNN	*Building Bridges*	(Arista)	4	10/02/06	21	36
C	CHRIS CAGLE	*Miss Me Baby*	(Capitol)	13	1/09/06	9	75
	KENNY CHESNEY	*Who You'd Be Today*	(BNA)	3	12/05/05	5	45
	KENNY CHESNEY	*Living In Fast Forward*	(BNA)	1 (1)	3/13/06	18	14
	KENNY CHESNEY	*Summertime*	(BNA)	1 (3)	7/05/06	17	11
	KENNY CHESNEY	*You Save Me*	(BNA)	3	11/27/06	16	45
	ERIC CHURCH	*How 'Bout You*	(Capitol)	12	7/17/06	25	61
	BILLY CURRINGTON	*Must Be Doin' Somethin' Right*	(Mercury)	3	1/18/06	9	8
	BILLY CURRINGTON	*Why, Why, Why*	(Mercury)	11	8/28/06	29	51
E	EMERSON DRIVE	*A Good Man*	(Midas)	16	11/11/06	32	77
	SARA EVANS	*Cheatin'*	(RCA)	9	3/27/06	18	44
G	PAT GREEN	*Feels Just Like It Should*	(BNA)	9	8/28/06	21	57
H	HEARTLAND	*I Loved Her First*	(Lofton Creek)	1(1)	10/16/06	18	40
	FAITH HILL	*Like We Never Loved At All*	(Warner Bros./Curb)	4	2/06/06	12	39
	FAITH HILL	*The Lucky One*	(Warner Bros.)	5	4/24/06	14	47
	FAITH HILL	*Sunshine & Summertime*	(Warner Bros.)	7	9/11/06	15	53
	STEVE HOLY	*Brand New Girlfriend*	(Curb)	1 (1)	9/11/06	33	24
I	JACK INGRAM	*Wherever You Are*	(Big Machine)	1 (1)	5/08/06	25	16
	JACK INGRAM	*Love You*	(Big Machine)	10	11/13/06	25	67
J	ALAN JACKSON	*Like Red On A Rose*	(Arista)	12	10/09/06	15	70
	JAMEY JOHNSON	*The Dollar*	(BNA)	12	3/13/06	16	56
K	TOBY KEITH	*Big Blue Note*	(Show Dog/DreamWorks)	5	12/12/05	5	78
	TOBY KEITH	*Get Drunk And Be Somebody*	(Show Dog)	3	4/17/06	19	26
	TOBY KEITH	*A Little Too Late*	(Show Dog)	1 (1)	7/31/06	18	29
	TOBY KEITH	*Crash Here Tonight*	(Show Dog)	13	10/23/06	14	80
L	MIRANDA LAMBERT	*Kerosene*	(Epic)	12	2/06/06	14	58
	LITTLE BIG TOWN	*Boondocks*	(Equity)	9	1/09/06	9	35
	LITTLE BIG TOWN	*Bring It On Home*	(Equity)	4	8/21/06	32	23
	LONESTAR	*Mountains*	(BNA)	10	11/27/06	23	66
M	TIM MCGRAW	*My Old Friend*	(Curb)	5	2/13/06	13	46
	TIM MCGRAW	*When The Stars Go Blue*	(Curb)	3	6/12/06	19	31
	TIM MCGRAW	*My Little Girl*	(Curb)	5	11/27/06	16	62
	MONTGOMERY GENTRY	*She Don't Tell Me To*	(Columbia)	5	3/20/06	19	21
	MONTGOMERY GENTRY	*Some People Change*	(Columbia)	6	11/27/06	20	64
	CRAIG MORGAN	*I Got You*	(BBR)	12	6/05/06	29	50
	CRAIG MORGAN	*Little Bit Of Life*	(BBR)	13	11/27/06	16	88
N	JOE NICHOLS	*Tequila Makes Her Clothes Fall Off*	(Universal South)	1 (1)	12/05/05	5	37
	JOE NICHOLS	*Size Matters*	(Universal South)	7	6/05/06	23	32
O	JAKE OWEN	*Yee Haw*	(RCA)	14	8/21/06	25	59
P	BRAD PAISLEY	*When I Get Where I'm Going*	(Arista)	1 (1)	2/21/06	14	6
	BRAD PAISLEY	*The World*	(Arista)	1 (2)	7/17/06	20	7
	BRAD PAISLEY	*She's Everything*	(Arista)	6	11/27/06	13	83
	DANIELLE PECK	*Findin' A Good Man*	(Big Machine)	11	9/25/06	28	60
R	RASCAL FLATTS	*What Hurts The Most*	(Lyric Street)	1(5)	4/17/06	19	1
	RASCAL FLATTS	*Me And My Gang*	(Lyric Street)	4	8/07/06	19	38
	RASCAL FLATTS	*My Wish*	(Lyric Street)	1 (1)	11/27/06	15	55
	LEANN RIMES	*Something's Gotta Give*	(Curb/Asylum)	1 (1)	6/05/06	27	13
	KENNY ROGERS	*I Can't Unlove You*	(Capitol)	14	6/26/06	27	65
S	BLAKE SHELTON	*Nobody But Me*	(Warner Bros.)	4	3/27/06	20	19
	GEORGE STRAIT	*She Let Herself Go*	(MCA)	1 (1)	1/09/06	9	15
	GEORGE STRAIT	*Seashores Of Old Mexico*	(MCA)	11	5/30/06	17	63
	GEORGE STRAIT	*Give It Away*	(MCA)	1 (2)	9/25/06	16	33
	GEORGE STRAIT	*It Just Comes Natural*	(MCA)	8	11/27/06	9	89
	SUGARLAND	*Just Might (Make Me Believe)*	(Mercury)	7	2/21/06	14	43
	SUGARLAND	*Want To*	(Mercury)	3	11/27/06	18	48
	TAYLOR SWIFT	*Tim McGraw*	(Big Machine)	9	11/27/06	22	69
T	TRENT TOMLINSON	*Drunker Than Me*	(Lyric Street)	14	3/13/06	18	76
	TRENT TOMLINSON	*One Wing In The Fire*	(Lyric Street)	14	11/27/06	22	87
	JOSH TURNER	*Your Man*	(MCA)	1 (2)	3/06/06	16	2
	JOSH TURNER	*Would You Go With Me*	(MCA)	1 (2)	10/09/06	26	28
U	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	*Jesus, Take The Wheel*	(Arista)	1 (5)	2/13/06	13	4
	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	*Don't Forget To Remember Me*	(Arista)	1 (1)	7/24/06	22	25
	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	*Before He Cheats*	(Arista)	1 (4)	11/20/06	9	42
	KEITH URBAN	*Tonight I Wanna Cry*	(Capitol)	2	4/03/06	20	9
	KEITH URBAN	*Once In A Lifetime*	(Capitol)	5	11/07/06	14	52
V	VAN ZANT	*Nobody Gonna Tell Me What To Do*	(Columbia)	15	3/13/06	17	68
	PHIL VASSAR	*Last Day Of My Life*	(Arista)	1 (1)	6/19/06	22	12
W	WRECKERS	*Leave The Pieces*	(Warner Bros.)	1 (2)	9/05/06	24	17
	WRECKERS	*My, Oh My*	(Warner Bros.)	15	11/27/06	11	–

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TRACE ADKINS

- *Dangerous Man* certified Gold® (debuted at #1 on *Billboard*'s Country Chart)
- *Songs About Me* certified 2X Platinum®
- Nominated for "Favorite Male Singer" at the 2007 People's Choice Awards
- Named one of *People* Magazine's "25 Hottest Stars in Country Music"

DIERKS BENTLEY

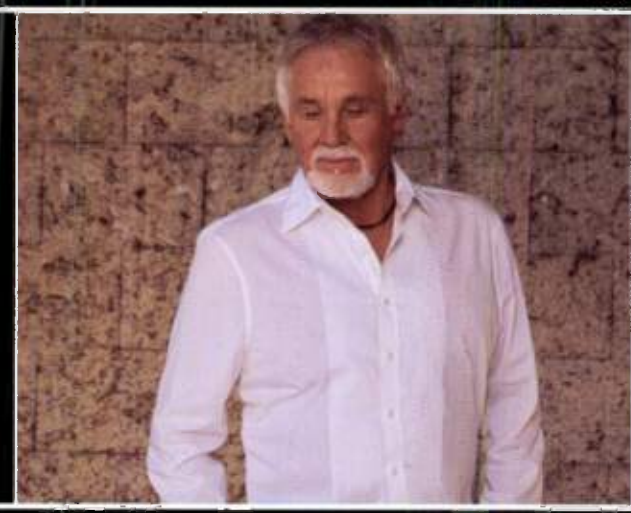
- *Long Trip Alone* certified Gold® (debuted at #1 on *Billboard*'s Country Chart)
- *Modern Day Drifter* certified Platinum®
- The only male solo artist to have three #1 singles in 2006
- 2006 CMA and ACM "Male Vocalist of the Year" nominee

ERIC CHURCH

- One of the highest debuting new male artists in 2006
- #1 CMT video for "How 'Bout You"
- *Rolling Stone* gives *Sinners Like Me* ★★★½ stars
- Played for over half a million fans in 2006

KENNY ROGERS

- "I Can't Unlove You" hits Top 20
- The only artist to chart a record in each of the last six decades
- Ranked #8 on the R.I.A.A.'s list of Top Selling Male Artists of all time



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- *Love, Pain & the whole crazy thing* certified *Platinum*® (debuted at #1 on *Billboard*'s Country Chart)
- *Be Here* certified 4x Platinum®
- 2006 CMA and ACM "Male Vocalist of the Year" winner

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Kenny, Carrie, The Flatts & Jack Lead 2006 Pack

Kenny Chesney is once again king of Country radio and is the format's Most Heard artist and Top Male Performer of 2006. Following closely behind are Rascal Flatts, Carrie Underwood and Brad Paisley, signaling that the changing of country's guard is almost complete. In fact, the only bastion of the old guard in this year's Top 10 Country Performers is George Strait, who had one of his strongest years with four top 15 hits, including a pair of No. 1s.

Underwood soared from nowhere a year ago to this year's Top Female Performer. Rascal Flatts repeats as the Top Duo/Group and Jack Ingram leads the list of New Artists scoring top 15 hits for the first time in 2006.

This year's Top 10 Performers lists are also populated by a number of recent additions to the national country scene. Scaling the heights of the Top 10 Males are Josh Turner, Billy Currington and Joe Nichols. In addition to Underwood, who tops the ladies list, Miranda Lambert, Danielle Peck and Taylor Swift are among the Top Female Performers for the first time. Newcomers are also heavily entwined on the Top Duo/Groups list, with the Wreckers and Heartland making the Top 10 for the first time and Little Big Town, Big & Rich and Van Zant making the list for the second year.

Nineteen different artists notched No. 1 hits in 2006. Leading the pack with an amazing 10 weeks on top of the charts was Underwood, who posted three chart-toppers. Next came Rascal Flatts with two No. 1s that occupied the peak for six weeks. Racking up four weeks worth of No. 1s each were Chesney and Turner, both of whom had a pair of No. 1 singles, and Dierks Bentley, who had three singles hit the pinnacle.

The year's biggest Cinderella story belongs to Lofton Creek's Heartland, which had a monster hit with "I Loved Her First." The story of a band that had toiled in clubs for more than a decade hitting a great lick with a super song is what keeps artists coming to Music City with guitars strapped to their backs. CAC

TOP 15 1st TIMERS

These artists had top 15 hits for the first time in 2006. Heartland, Jack Ingram and the Wreckers all notched No. 1 hits, with the latter's "Leave The Pieces" staying at No. 1 for two weeks.

Eric Church (Capitol)
Heartland (Lofton Creek)
Jack Ingram (2) (Big Machine)
Jamey Johnson (BNA)
Miranda Lambert (Columbia)
Jake Owen (RCA)
Danielle Peck (Big Machine)
Taylor Swift (Big Machine)
Trent Tomlinson (2) (Lyric Street)
Wreckers (2) (Warner Bros.)

Country Radio's Top 2006 Performers

OVERALL

1. Kenny Chesney (BNA)
2. Rascal Flatts (Lyric Street)
3. Carrie Underwood (Arista)
4. Brad Paisley (Arista)
5. George Strait (MCA)
6. Toby Keith (Show Dog)
7. Dierks Bentley (Capitol)
8. Josh Turner (MCA)
9. Sugarland (Mercury)
10. Tim McGraw (Curb)

MALE

1. Kenny Chesney (BNA)
2. Brad Paisley (Arista)
3. George Strait (MCA)
4. Toby Keith (Show Dog)
5. Dierks Bentley (Capitol)
6. Josh Turner (MCA)
7. Tim McGraw (Curb)
8. Billy Currington (Mercury)
9. Keith Urban (Capitol)
10. Joe Nichols (Universal South)

FEMALE

1. Carrie Underwood (Arista)
2. Faith Hill (Warner Bros.)
3. LeAnn Rimes (Curb/Asylum)
4. Sara Evans (RCA)
5. Miranda Lambert (Columbia)
6. Danielle Peck (Big Machine)
7. Gretchen Wilson (Columbia)
8. Taylor Swift (Big Machine)
9. Jo Dee Messina (Curb)
10. Lee Ann Womack (Mercury)

DUO/GROUP

1. Rascal Flatts (Lyric Street)
2. Sugarland (Mercury)
3. Little Big Town (Equity)
4. Brooks & Dunn (Arista)
5. Montgomery Gentry (Columbia)
6. Wreckers (Warner Bros.)
7. Heartland (Lofton Creek)
8. Big & Rich (Warner Bros.)
9. Lonestar (BNA)
10. Van Zant (Columbia)

NEW ARTISTS

1. Jack Ingram (Big Machine)
2. Wreckers (Warner Bros.)
3. Heartland (Lofton Creek)
4. Miranda Lambert (Columbia)
5. Eric Church (Capitol)
6. Danielle Peck (Big Machine)
7. Trent Tomlinson (Lyric Street)
8. Jake Owen (RCA)
9. Jamey Johnson (BNA)
10. Taylor Swift (Big Machine)

Congratulations Lon, Chuck,
Mary Forest and Kelley...

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Here's a toast to the future!

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Clint Higham and the entire team
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KENNY CHESNEY

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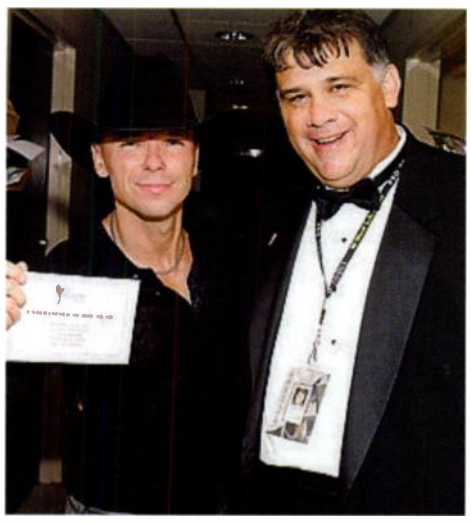
MY FAVORITE MEMORY

Industry Execs Share The Best And Worst Of 2006

Anyone who was bored following the developments in the country music industry this year clearly wasn't paying attention. It was a year of significant changes, upheaval and disappointments as well as some shining successes for the country format and the emergence of several bright new stars. Country Aircheck caught up with 15 key industry executives and asked them to share their favorite memories of 2006. From the loss of KZLA to some interesting cross-genre pairings, their answers cover the spectrum of the year that was in country music.

Bob Romeo, ACM

"ACM had numerous memorable moments from **Big & Rich** performing '8th of November' with the purple-heart veterans, **Brooks & Dunn** performance of 'Believe,' to



Carrie Underwood winning her first nationally-televised country music award for Top New Female Vocalist. Even with such powerful and emotional moments, the one that really stuck out for me was when **Barbara Mandrell** announced that the Entertainer of the Year was once again **Kenny Chesney**.

"I happened to be backstage when they made the announcement and caught Kenny as he was walking off the stage. He said to me, 'Bob, the ACM Awards was the first award show to give me a shot and put me on national TV, they were also the place I won my very first award back in 1997 for Top New Male Vocalist. And now I am holding the Entertainer award for the second time. To win it once is big but to win it twice is awesome. Thank you. You guys have been here with me every step of the way.'

"Wow. I was speechless. I love the picture our photographer captured backstage because it was right after our discussion and Kenny is still holding the card that Barbara had just read his name from."

Adrian Michaels, Curb/Asylum

"Both [Curb Senior VP] **Carson James** and I got the news about KZLA at 1 p.m. while we were at a layover in Minneapolis on our way to have a 4 p.m. meeting with [OM] **R.J. Curtis**. We were going in to do dinner with R.J. right before the Tim and Faith show that night in L.A. [and were going] to play him the new **Clay Walker** single as well as other new songs. R.J. was going to help me pitch an idea for the CRB board to Tim that night.

"Later that day we were in L.A. with the No. 1 tour in the nation and our singles in our hand, but no station to present them to. We were there in person the day they turned the lights out in L.A.

"Also, Clay Walker has a duet with **Freddy Fender** on his upcoming record to be released this January. The duet is 'When the Last Teardrop Falls.' I was on a bus ride from San Antonio to Nashville with [KAJA/San Antonio PD] **Clayton Allen** and the morning show from KAJA on their way to the CMAs. Freddy had passed away about a week or two before that. **Randy Carroll** had heard that Clay recorded the song with Freddy and asked me if I had the single and if I could play it. Being from South Texas they were fond of Freddy. After [hearing] Freddy's part singing on the song, there wasn't a dry eye on the bus. Four grown men on a road trip crying to a Freddy Fender song."

Skip Bishop, Arista

"We were having a very successful set-up for **Jason Michael Carroll**'s original first single, 'Looking At You,' but something remarkable and unexpected happened when we ran down to WUSY/Chattanooga to visit **Bill Poindexter** and **Big Al** on the air. They played the single on the air and then asked Jason to perform another song live. He decided to go with 'Alyssa Lies,' which is the first time it had ever been performed on radio.

"Once he did, Dex and Al were speechless and immediately every phone line in the control room lit up. It looked to be 30 incoming lines. We were dumfounded. They started taking calls, which ranged from people in tears to people saying, 'That song is my life.'

"We said goodbye and within 30 minutes they were calling us back saying, 'They're still calling.' I've never in my long career seen such an immediate reaction. We were all just stunned. This is a record company fantasy, a promotion guy's dream.

"As we were driving home, the night jock called and said 'Every call I'm getting is for Alyssa.' I had left them with rough versions that I had no intention of them airing, but they did and it created absolute bedlam.

"In all my corporate wisdom I called [OM] **Kris Van Dyke** and Dex the next day and said 'We need to put a cap on this 'cause we're working another single.' Within three days the exact same thing happened in Detroit . . . We eventually decided to change singles."

Pete Fisher, Grand Ole Opry

"This was an interesting year for Opry debuts. We had a very eclectic mix of artists from **Big & Rich, Cowboy Troy, the Wreckers** and **Kellie Pickler** to the more traditional **Eric Church** and **Chris Young** to others known nationally for their work in other genres including **Michael McDonald** and **Elvis Costello**.

"One of the most memorable debuts was

when **Vince Gill** was joined by jazz vocalist **Diana Krall** for an absolutely magical performance of 'Faint of Heart,' which they recorded together on Vince's new four-CD set. Diana was in town recording with Vince at the same time her husband, Elvis Costello, was making his Opry debut alongside **Emmylou**

"Big & Rich performing '8th of November' on the ACM show."

Gator Michaels, Warner Bros.

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WRH

The Year In Memories

Harris. That moment not only reflected the magic and spontaneity of the Opry, but also made one of [this] generation's most renowned jazz vocalists absolutely glow with enthusiasm after her performance.

"The Opry's newly-introduced Signature Show Series seems to put all the pieces in place for those unique 'Opry Moments' we love. Most vivid are **Carrie Underwood** earning a well-deserved standing ovation for her performance of Tammy Wynette's 'Stand By Your Man' during our 'Women of Country' Signature Show and **Travis Tritt** tearing the house down with 'Georgia On My Mind' during our Ray Charles Tribute Signature Show, which also featured Michael McDonald, **Martina McBride**, Vince Gill and **Ronnie Milsap**, among others."

Blair Garner, After MidNite

"I was so happy the week of the KZLA format flip because [OM] **R.J. Curtis** had asked me if I'd fill in for **Peter Tilden** doing the morning show. I didn't even need caffeine that week I was so amped up.

"Every day after doing the show I'd go into R.J.'s office and talk about the show and refine the game plan. That Thursday morning I walked by R.J.'s office and I could tell he didn't really have time. So I left and was looking forward to coming back the next day.

"I drove over to the Premiere studios. It took me 12 minutes, and as I came in, one of our senior VPs, **Trevor Oliver**, asked if I'd heard about KZLA. He pulled me into his office and they were playing a rap song. I looked at the dial and it said 93.9. I'm a world-class prankster and thought he'd rigged someone in engineering to play a prank on me. 'Then I hear 'You're listening to the new Movin' 93.9.' My heart just sank. I felt angry for the staff at KZLA. There are ways you can handle things, and I don't believe that was handled a good way. The listeners felt such a sense of betrayal.

"But the way that R.J. conducted himself and continued to be the team leader even though he knew it was no more, that's the definition of a class act."

Ed Hardy, GAC

"There are quite a few meaningful events that leap to mind for me. At the GAC taping of the **Alan Jackson** *Precious Memories* special at the Ryman, it was very touching to watch the expressions and responses of his mother and aunt in the front row, since the album was a present to his mom, then to see the album go platinum mainly due to the GAC special.

"As the year waned, we taped our special *Songs of the Year* event that brought such incredible country talent to perform some of the greatest songs of the past in our beautiful new Schermerhorn [Symphony Center] building.

"Of course, [another favorite memory is] the **Barbara Mandrell** special and the opportunity to stand and visit with her backstage at the tribute to her on the *GAC Opry Live*."

Kevin Herring, Lyric Street

"Our biggest moment of the year is not really behind the scenes, but a lot went into the No. 1 debut of **Rascal Flatts'** *Me and My Gang*: the radio jet tour, the fourth straight ACM and CMA vocal group wins and the sell-out arena tour. Their 721,747 first week units is the biggest debut all-genre this year, and the album looks to be the biggest selling single artist CD of 2006, second overall behind the multi-artist *High School Musical*."

Clay Hunnicutt, Clear Channel

"My favorite was when **Keith Urban** stopped by unannounced at WSIX to play his

new single, 'Once in a Lifetime,' for the first time on the radio on the **Gerry House** show. He stayed about an hour and was absolutely fantastic."

Charlie Monk, Monk Family Music

"Being a music publisher, the neatest, best, nicest, thing for me in '06 was having the honor to induct my friend **Jim Weatherly** into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame. Not only did he write 'Midnight Train To Georgia,' 'You're the Best Thing (That Ever Happened To Me),' "Neither One Of Us (Wants To Be the First To Say Goodbye)' all by himself, but he co-wrote 'Someone Else's Star' and 'A Lady Like You.' That night I said he was boring because he didn't smoke, drink, chew or chase women, but I also said he was the most honorable man I know.

"Now don't ever say I haven't said something nice about somebody."

GENERAL CONSENSUS Pictured backstage at CRS-37 are (l-r) Neal McCoy, Bob Kingsley, General Tommy Franks, Ed Salamon, and Darryl Worley.

Brian Philips, CMT

"We'd spent about four years trying to hook up with **Bon Jovi** for a *CMT Crossroads*. The timing never worked out. Jon handed us a rough of 'Who Says You Can't Go Home' last year. We all heard the song as an obvious hit, but knew the right duet partner would put it over the top. [UMG Nashville chairman] **Luke Lewis** brilliantly connected the dots with **Sugarland**.

"After a smash *Crossroads*, Bon Jovi had a No. 1 country song in 2006 and even won a CMT Music Award for the crossover hit, making it a significant moment across genres."

Royce Risser, MCA

"**George Strait** being inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame. I don't think there has ever been a person inducted that is still delivering hits to Country radio."

Ed Salamon, CRB

"General **Tommy Franks'** keynote address at CRS-37 provided inspiration in leadership, character and the value of democracy that I will never forget. His examples of dealing with the real world challenges in Iraq and Afghanistan have corollaries in how we can succeed in our format. Although most of CRS is about 'growth through sharing' with the best and brightest from our own industry, we can learn a lot from those outside our business as well. Sometimes it's the nontraditional speakers at CRS that provide the most relevant and lasting input."

Bruce Shindler, UMG

"**Vince Gill** putting out a four CD set of 43 stylistically diverse original songs was a phenomenal achievement. In all my years of promoting artists I have never seen one do this, and do it so well. It gave me faith that our format still has artists that think outside the box and are willing to push the envelope no matter what the consequences. A great moment for our industry!"

Scott Siman, RPM Management/RPM Music

"**Tony Bennett** joining **Tim McGraw** at Madison Square Garden during Soul 2 Soul II. They sang the Hank Williams' song 'Cold Cold Heart,' which is on Tony's duets project. A tour this big always has many moments, but that was a special one. When Tony came up on the center lift to a sold-out, in the round, standing ovation, it gave you the chill bumps. It was the connection of the generations through that moment. You had, arguably, the most influential country writer/artist ever in Hank Sr.'s words and music, Tony Bennett, an American icon who made the song a worldwide hit, and the quintessential modern country superstar Tim McGraw. It just doesn't get any better than that.

"The other moment that stands out is Tim and Faith returning to New Orleans and being the first major concert since Katrina. The crowd was amazing. We were able to bring in major media in the person of [CNN's] **Anderson Cooper** to continue to highlight the needs, and donate the proceeds to the artists' 'Neighbor's Keeper Foundation' to do good works in Mississippi and Louisiana. We did a special luncheon with **Emeril [Lagasse]** earlier that day to raise more funds and we had fun showing him backstage catering prior to the show." CAC

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CRS 38

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Jon Bon Jovi
INTERVIEWED BY GERRY HOUSE

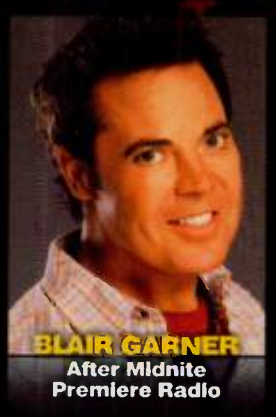
MUSIC CITY JAM

Toby Keith

LIFE OF A LEGEND

Ronnie Milsap

PANELISTS FROM BOTH RADIO AND RECORDS INCLUDING



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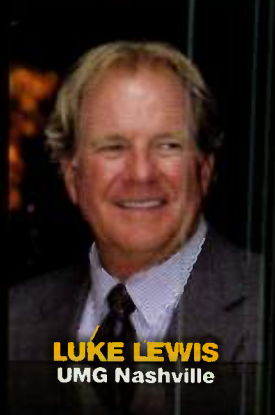
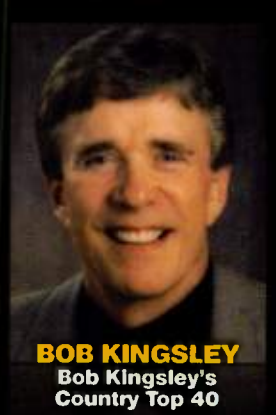


LUKE LEWIS
UMG Nashville



BOB KINGSLEY
Bob Kingsley's
Country Top 40

JIM CANTORE
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WRH

HERE'S A QUARTER

An Early Look At '07's New Music

Now that we've thoroughly papered the year that was, it's time for a preview of the year to be. While fourth quarter is when country labels like to shake their moneymakers, Q1 is typically the time for getting a groove on – particularly when it comes to new artists. So with an eye on Country Radio Seminar, we rounded up all the music stories Nashville's promotion teams will be telling . . . once the champagne subsides, that is.

ARISTA

The first quarter brings new singles from **Alan Jackson** ("A Woman's Love"), **Brad Paisley** ("Waitin' On a Woman") and **Carrie Underwood** ("Wasted"). In March, Arista will be introducing new artist **Crystal Shawanda**.

ALBUM RELEASE:

- **Jason Michael Carroll**, title TBA, early February

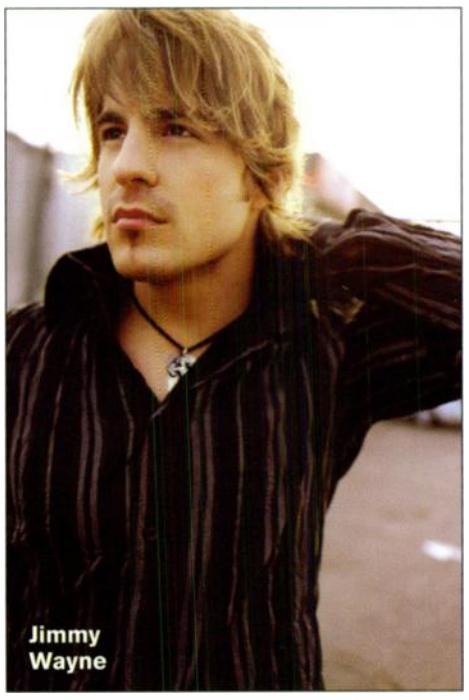
ASPIRION

The label's **Joe Kelly** tags **Cody McCarver's** "Red Flag" as a continuing priority into the spring, saying the cut's video is getting great support from CMT. Other singles on tap include "If The Road Runs Out" from **Tom Wurth**, **Russell Walker's** "Talkin' Dirty," **the Roys'** "Workin' Girl Blues" and **Zack Hunter's** next single, "Something Big."

BIG MACHINE

Promoveep **Jack Purcell** and Natdirpromo-n-newmeed **John Zarling** (it just doesn't have the ring of "promoveep") collaborated on the finely-crafted missive excerpted below:

"This year has been a whirlwind, and we will be kicking off ['07] with the same intensity. **Jack Ingram** continues his career-building momentum with 'Lips Of An Angel' (impacting 12/11), a song that is already a multi-format smash with stellar callout scores. That single is the lead track from Ingram's long-awaited studio release, *This Is It*, due in March, which will also include his No. 1 breakthrough 'Wherever You Are' and the top 10 hit 'Love You.' Look for news about a big album launch event in January.


Jimmy Wayne

"Already a top 10 single, **Taylor Swift's** 'Tim McGraw' will be worked to its full potential through January, with a follow-up single from the self-titled debut disc (which debuted at No. 3 on the country Nielsen SoundScan charts) sometime in February.

"**Danielle Peck** graced the upper-reaches of the singles charts in 2006 with 'I Don't' and the top 15 girl's night out anthem 'Findin' a Good Man.' She continues the climb with the third single from her self-titled debut album, 'Isn't That Everything,' which will remain a priority throughout Q1.

"**Jimmy Wayne** has been putting final touches on his Big Machine debut album, and that new music will be presented to radio throughout early 2007. Also coming in Q1 will be the launch of **Dusty Drake**, with a single TBD."

Jerrod Neimann

BNA

Opening '07 are new singles from **Blaine Larsen** ("Spoken Like a Man"), **Kenny Chesney** ("Beer In Mexico"), **Kellie Pickler** ("I Wonder"), a **Lonestar** single still to be determined and new music from **the Lost Trailers**.

BROKEN BOW

BBR's radio successes rolled on in 2006, and **Jon Loba** and company have no reason to expect any less in the new year. Look for a second single, "Tough," from **Craig Morgan's** latest album sometime in the first quarter. A debut single from **Jason Aldean's** sophomore offering is also expected.

As is the label's custom, BBR is launching one new act in 2007, a Mississippi band called **Crossin Dixon**. "They've got great harmonies, but it's not a boy band thing," Loba says. "They're muscular and mainstream enough to get country radio airplay."

CAPITOL

"All My Friends Say," the debut single from **Luke Bryan**, is up for a January launch. And a new single from **Jamie O'Neal** is expected in March.

ALBUM RELEASES INCLUDE:

- **Rodney Carrington**, TBA, March 20
- **Various Artists**, *Greatest Kids Country Hits*, Feb. 20

CATEGORY 5

"We have our promotion team in place and we're going to make a major impact in 2007," says promotion captain **Bill Macky**. **Donovan Chapman's** "House Like That" will carry over into the new year, and the label will be introducing new artist **Jerrod Niemann**. "He is the co-writer of Garth Brooks' No. 1 hit 'Good Ride Cowboy' and co-writer of [Brooks'] 'That Girl Is a Cowboy,'" Macky says of Niemann. "We have several exciting songs already cut on Jerrod and I can't wait for country radio to hear them."

Macky reports the label is also setting up the Category 5 debut from flagship artist **Travis Tritt**. "This album is being produced by **Randy Jackson** and they go into the studio in January. Look for his first single in April."

ALBUM RELEASE:

- **Donovan Chapman**, TBA, March

COLUMBIA

Miranda Lambert's "Crazy Ex-Girlfriend" is a first quarter priority, and the next single from **Montgomery Gentry** is also expected. New music from **Van Zant** and the debut single from **Cole Deggs & the Lonesome** will be priorities as well.

ALBUM RELEASES INCLUDE:

- **Ashley Monroe**, TBA, March
- **Gretchen Wilson**, *The Girl I Am*, March

CUPIT

The label's **Billy Holland** is hoping to fire up some love for **Memarie's** "Cry Like Memphis" from her forthcoming album, due in January.

CURB

Curb's senior (VP) statesman **Carson James** says to look for **Bomshel's**

Bomshel

"Bomshel Stomp" as January draws to a close. "It's the biggest club record of '06," James says. "It was used in 30 major dance competitions."

A third **Rodney Atkins** single will likely see action in the quarter, and **Steve Holy's** "Come On Rain" will continue its push at radio. **Jo Dee Messina** is in the studio, with **Dann Huff** and Rascal Flatts' **Jay DeMarcus** producing. James says a single from that project could land in Q1, too.

CURB/ASYLUM

While we're visiting with Mr. Carson, he's got the Curb/Asylum scoop as well, including a Jan. 9 impact date for **Rio Grand's** "Anybody But Me." Also, **Chuck Howard** has produced "When You Said You Loved Me," which James calls a "great, fun, uptempo record" from **Jeff Carson**.

Beginning in December, the Curb/Asylum crew will begin setting up the 25th anniversary of the **Hank Williams, Jr.** classic "A Country Boy Can Survive" with the release of a remixed version that's been brought up to contemporary standards and "sounds phenomenal," according to James.

ALBUM RELEASE:

- **LeAnn Rimes**, *Family*, TBA

EQUITY

Promo pro **David Haley**, in the interest of being equitable, first offers an updated roster for the label: **Clint Black, Laura Bryna, Carolina Rain, Carolyn Dawn Johnson, Little Big Town** and **Mark Wills**. "We've got three singles out that are still active and we're close to platinum with Little Big Town's *The Road To Here*," Haley says of Equity's early '07 focus.

Carolina Rain's next single from the group's debut album is called "Isn't She." Haley says, "We've really had fantastic

HERE'S A QUARTER

feedback on this cut from stations that have spent some time with this album."

The label plans to build momentum for Wills with the single "Take it All Out On Me," from a late spring album release. A radio tour is now underway for newcomer Bryna. Her first single is "I Don't Have a Thing To Wear," which is set for a Jan. 29 impact date. CDJ's next single is "Good Day," set to ship to radio in February.

LOFTON CREEK

Mike Borchetta's crew will follow their recent chart-topping success with a new **Heartland** single called "Built To Last," impacting in January. In February, the label brings **Doug Stone's** "Tell It Like It Is" to radio.

LYRIC STREET

The house of mouse plans to continue its artist development of **Sarah Buxton**,

Sarah Buxton

and will remain focused on **Josh Gracin's** "I Keep Coming Back." Both acts are looking toward Q1 album releases.

Veep **Dale Turner** says a fourth single from *Me & My Gang* will kick off **Rascal Flatts'** new year, by which time the album will have passed three million scans, making it "the best selling album of 2006," Turner says.

A third single is expected from **Trent Tomlinson**, who Turner says is "the best selling debut solo country artist of '06 to date." And finally, "Lyric Street will be introducing a new brand to radio in the first quarter," Turner says, "but don't be surprised if this new artist isn't already a known entity to everyone."

ALBUM RELEASES:

- **Sarah Buxton**, *Sarah Buxton*, TBA
- **Josh Gracin**, TBA, March

MCA

According to veep **Royce Risser**, the MCA bunch will roll with **George Strait's** current single into early January, which means you can expect a new single from Strait at the end of the month, or possibly early February.

Also due in February is another single from **Vince Gill**, although the title is still TBD. MCA has one album release planned.

ALBUM RELEASE:

- **Gary Allan**, TBA, February

MERCURY

January brings "Settlin'," **Sugarland's** second single from the duo's recently released second album. VP **John Ettinger** calls the single "a straight ahead tempo record – the kind of Sugarland music people fell in love with."

A radio tour of key markets is planned for **Billy Currington** in February in advance of new music from his upcoming third album. And, Ettinger says, "Keep an eye [out] for a new band named **Halfway To Hazzard**. We expect this raucous duo will be knocking people on their butts by CRS in Nashville." **Tim McGraw** and **Byron Gallimore** are producing the band.

Gary Nichols will continue to be a Mercury priority, **Lee Ann Womack** will have a new single from her forthcoming new album and a second single from the **Randy Rogers Band** will have a Jan. 22 impact date.

MIDAS

Rob Dalton and the gang are hoping for another **Emerson Drive** hit in '07 to go with "A Good Man." The group's next single, probably out sometime in Q1, will be "Moments" from the current album.

QUARTERBACK

Denny Mosesman is calling the plays, and **Lucy Angel** is in the game. He calls the group, "A trio of strong, bold, sassy women with a distinctive musical attitude that's 10 feet tall, [with] harmonies that sound like they are related (they are) [and] songs that burn up the radio." **Al Anderson** wrote or co-wrote much of the project. The lead single "How Long?" was written by Anderson and **Jeffrey Steele** and is already at radio.

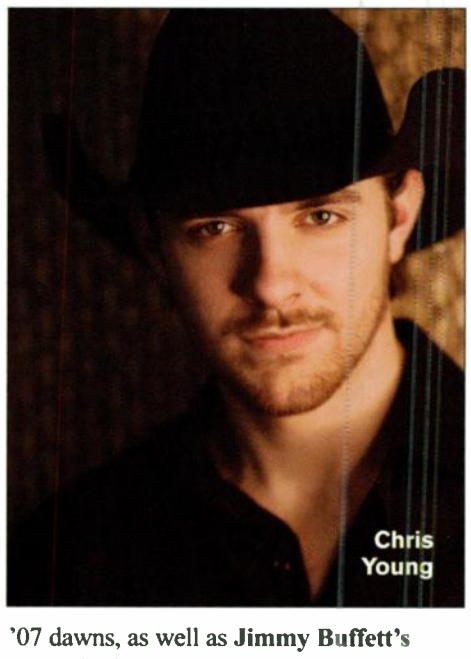
Also in the starting rotation: **Ty Herndon**. "Remember this guy's electric live performances and top 10 radio hits? Well, he's back and it's worth listening to," says Mosesman. "It's his first album in five years and his maturity – both in terms of voice and music – is evident. Who says you can't bottle lightning twice?" Single "Right About Now" is at radio.

ALBUM RELEASES INCLUDE:

- **Ty Herndon**, *Right About Now*, Jan. 9
- **Lucy Angel**, *A Girl's Gotta Do What A Girl's Gotta Do*, mid-January

RCA

Nipper promises to keep **Martina McBride's** "Anyway" front and center as


Chris Young

'07 dawns, as well as **Jimmy Buffett's** "Everybody's On the Phone," **Chris Young's** "You're Gonna Love Me" and **Catherine Britt's** "What I Did Last Night."

RUST

No rest for Rust or promo domo **Rick Baumgartner** as the recently released "He Believed" from **Aaron Tippin** will be a Q1 priority. Looking forward, Feb. 19 is the impact date for Rust's debut single from **BlackHawk**, titled "Brighter."

Before December's out, programmers can expect a copy of **PovertyNeck Hillbillies'** "One Night In New Orleans" on their desks. A complete re-working of the album track by producers **Bob**

PovertyNeck Hillbillies

Corbin and **Jason Deere**, the song will be added to future pressings of the album and has a Jan. 22 impact date.

Baumgartner also hints at a very special project to be associated with the Hillbillies tune that involves band sponsor 84 Lumber and Habitat for Humanity, and will include a nationwide radio promotion. Need a hint? Check the song title again.

SHOW DOG

Performing puppy promotion poobah **Tony Morreale** doesn't have a lot of specifics when it comes to releases, but there's little doubt that new music – and lots of it – is on the way. "We've got a lot of artists in the studio," he says. "**Toby Keith, Rushlow Harris**, new trio **Carter's Chord**, new group **Flynnville Train** and **Lindsey Haun** are all working on new albums. A new single from Toby's next album will probably hit in the first quarter, and we could have music from all of them."

Morreale won't reveal details on the top dog's new project, but he did give up that **Randy Scruggs** is involved as a band-leader in the studio. So could Scruggs and Toby be co-producing the record, much as they did the "Broken Bridges" soundtrack and Toby's planned 2007 Christmas album? We'll see. The two are definitely working with Haun on her album debut. But before the floodgates open on Show Dog's '07 releases, the label remains focused on carrying Rushlow Harris' "Bagpipes Cryin'" into the new year.

UNIVERSAL SOUTH

The new year will likely bring a new single from a new album by **Joe Nichols**, as well as the next single from **Katrina Elam**. Also, **Rockie Lynne's** "More" remains a priority for Q1. CAC

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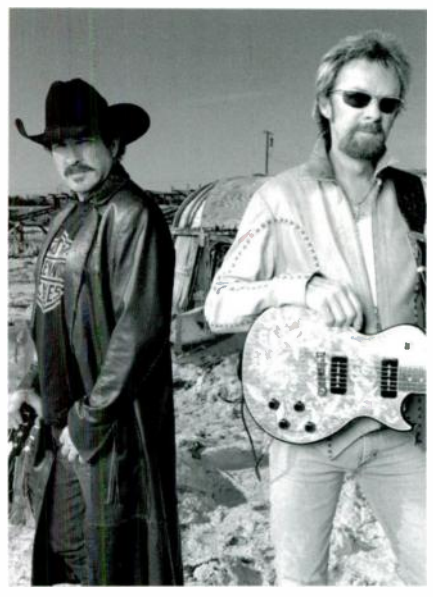
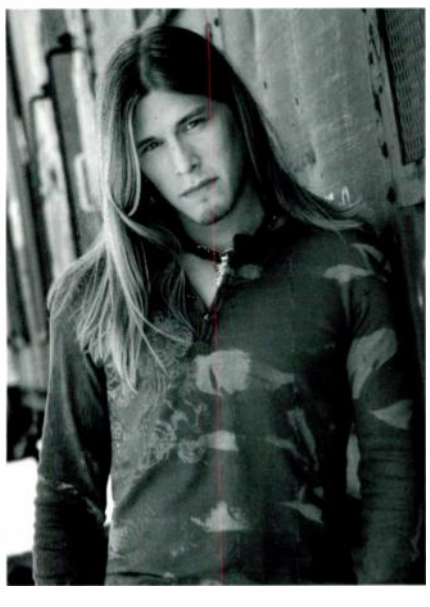
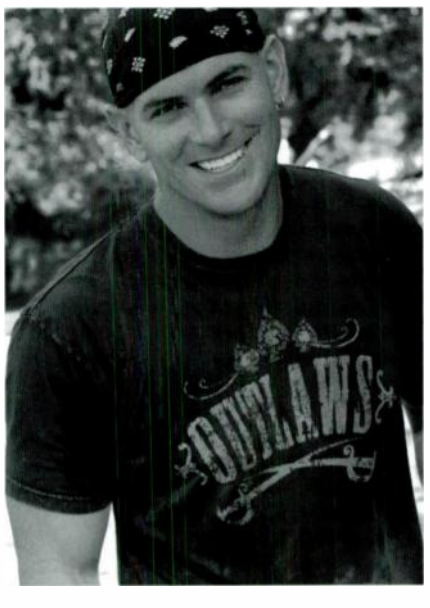
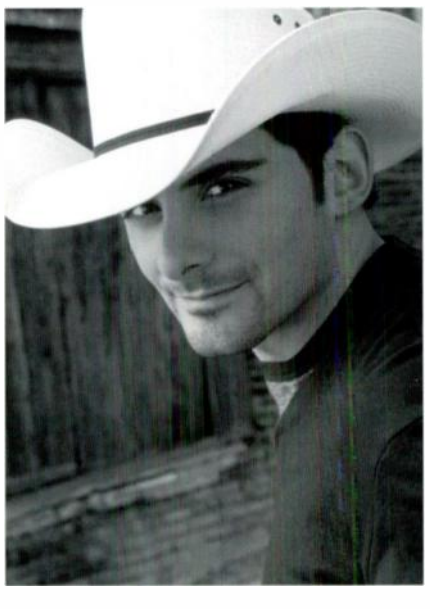

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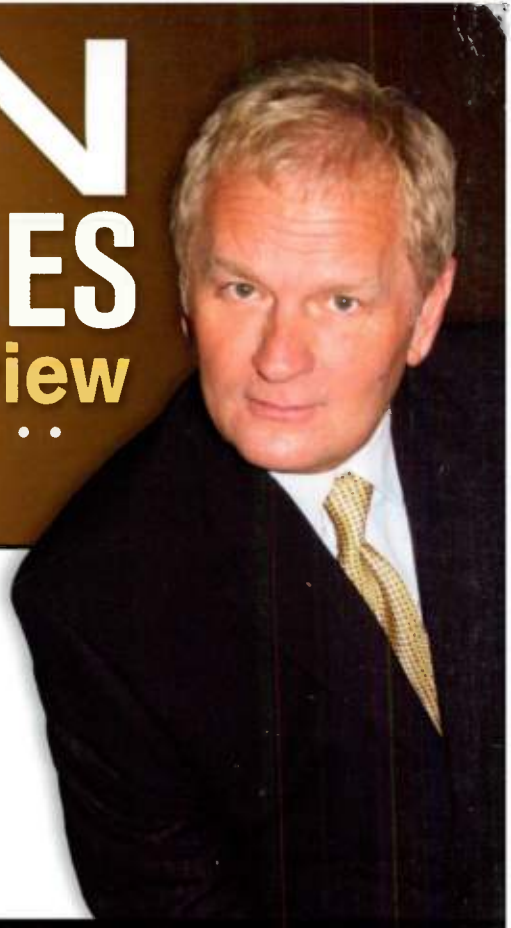

COUNTRY
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SEPTEMBER 2009

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COWGIRLS DON'T CRY · EVERY RIVER
IT'S GETTING BETTER ALL THE TIME
IF YOU SEE HIM/ IF YOU SEE HER
PUT A GIRL IN IT
RED DIRT ROAD
HOW LONG GONE
THAT'S WHAT SHE GETS FOR LOVING ME
HONKY TONK TRUTH
HILLBILLY DELUXE
BRAND NEW MAN
I AM THAT MAN
PLAY SOMETHING COUNTRY · NEON MOON
SOUTH OF SANTA FE · ROCK MY WORLD
I AIN'T MISSIN' YOU
THAT AIN'T NO

LAST RODEO
HUSBANDS AND WIVES
LITTLE MISS HONKY TONK
I'LL NEVER FORGIVE MY HEART
GOD MUST BE BUSY · HE'S GOT YOU
LOST AND FOUND · THE LONG GOODBYE
LOST AND FOUND YOU'LL ALWAYS BE LOVED BY ME
CAN'T TAKE THE HONKY TONK
MAMA DON'T GET DRESSED UP FOR NOTHING · THAT'S WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT · MY NEXT BROKEN HEART
WHISKEY UNDER THE BRIDGE
PROUD OF THE HOUSE WE BUILT
SHE'S NOT THE CHEATIN' KIND
TEMPTATION #9
WHY SHOULD I SAY GOODBYE · I CAN'T GET OVER YOU · AIN'T NOTHING 'BOUT YOU · DAYS OF THUNDER ·

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TURNING TWENTY

The "good ol' days" typically get a lot better press than they deserve. Unless, of course, you're talking about 1989, country music and Country radio. The NFL may have the quarterback class of '83 – Elway, Marino, Kelly, et al. – but Nashville's "Class of '89" tops even that illustrious group.

"I remember this kind of stocky kid who kept coming into the station because he had nothing else to do during the day," says former KPLX/Dallas GM **Dan Halyburton**. "Garth Brooks would literally just hang out before he played at a little honkytonk that night. I can remember him sitting, talking to one of our sales secretaries just like he was talking to his cousin. It wasn't an organized artist visit; he just kind of showed up."

Dan Halyburton

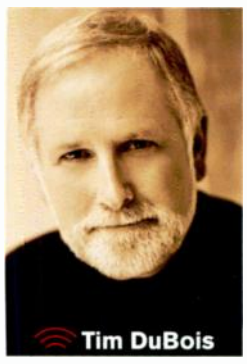
An astounding two-dozen artists saw their first chart action in 1989, with six scoring top 15 hits: Clint Black, Suzy Bogguss, Brooks, Mary Chapin Carpenter, Lorrie Morgan and Travis Tritt. Alan Jackson, who charted in '89, had his first hit in the spring of 1990. Jackson recorded for Arista/Nashville, which almost deserves membership in the Class of '89. "I think we were the only label launch that year," recalls former President **Tim DuBois**, who remembers those days fondly.

DuBois says. "I'd never run a record label so I can't say it changed all of a sudden, but radio was just so open to new music. I used to call it the giant flush. All of a sudden there in '89 and '90 there were a ton of artists, who had previously been occupying chart positions, that just went away. When that happened there was room for all this new stuff."

Halyburton remembers the shift, though not quite as all-encompassing. "Mac Daniels [then KPLX MD] and I were talking in [PD] Bobby Kraig's office," he says. "All these acts were coming out, and there was an intensity to all of them that was compelling. I remember saying to Mac, 'It's really changing.' Young Country (KYNG) had just come on the air and we were talking along the lines of, 'I don't think we've gone far enough.'

"Young Country pretended like the past didn't exist. For KPLX, it was a little bit 'right now' and also hanging on to what we had known. People had expectations in that way, too, so I don't want to say we all embraced [the new artists] like crazy. There were certain artists we did that with: Garth Brooks, Clint Black, Mark Chesnutt, Suzy Bogguss. But Nashville was still very much invested in its core artists because those new guys weren't the core yet. So I remember a lot of pressure about how to fit it all in."

"CLIVE DAVIS SAID TO ME, 'WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO GET GARTH OUT OF NO. 1 SO I CAN GET WHITNEY HOUSTON IN THERE?'" –JOE MANSFIELD


Tim DuBois

"We budgeted about $200,000 to try to break an act," he says. "All those early albums cost less than $100,000. I think we spent less than $50,000 on that first Alan record. Marketing consisted of getting it played at radio. There wasn't much beyond that. There were key accounts at retail, but it wasn't nearly as concentrated as it is today."

Then as now, airplay was the deciding factor. "There was an openness at radio to new artists,"

Joe Mansfield worked for Capitol's pop and rock division in Los Angeles before taking over as Capitol/Nashville VP/Marketing in March 1990. "The branch manager in Dallas told me there's an act we've got down here, Garth Brooks, who's really starting to happen," Mansfield recalls. "I pulled it up on the computer and thought there wasn't a whole lot going on compared to Poison, Heart, MC Hammer, Vanilla Ice, Bonnie Raitt, etc. But he came out to visit in L.A. with his managers, Pam Lewis and Bob Doyle, and I thought he was a pretty neat guy."

Brooks' performance at a subsequent sales meeting in Atlanta won Mansfield over. "He just blew me away," he says. "So when I came to Nashville and looked at the budget I had, which by rock and roll standards was nothing, it was pretty easy to see where the potential on the roster was. Nobody knew big numbers here. I marketed the first album right along with the second one, which was what nobody got. When a new record comes out you force them to do catalog and market them side-by-side. I was getting reorders of a million units from one account. Amazing. You made them, you shipped them and they disappeared."

The balloon was on the way up. "That Class of '89 morphed into the 'New Country' explosion," DuBois says. "I remember going from doing country fan rag interviews to taking calls from *Forbes* and doing interviews with *Business Week*. You have to remember that we got so spoiled there as an industry that we quit celebrating gold records."

Mansfield recalls a telling moment: "I was in New York on business, standing on Fifth Avenue waiting to cross the street. Clive Davis, who was my boss back at CBS, was standing next to me carrying a bag that looked like he was going to the airport, but it was filled with contracts and songs. He said to me, 'When are you going to get Garth out of No. 1 so I can get Whitney Houston in there?'"

Joe Mansfield

In Dallas, the mood was euphoric. "All that music really spoke to Texans and to the lifestyle," Halyburton says. "The lyrics just fit. It was probably like driving around Miami during the disco era and playing the Bee Gees. Perfect music for that city at that time.

"It was an embarrassment of riches," he adds. "If you go back and look at the ratings, the Country stations were all top 5. There never were before and probably never will be again so many Country stations in one city driving such incredible numbers. All three stations were making a lot of money. There were tons of western wear stores, and they were all on the radio. The truck dealers. The nightclubs. There were major country venues on every corner, and they were always jammed. It was hard just to get all the calendar info to people about what was going to be in town on a weekend. It wasn't unusual to have three or four name acts playing in Dallas/Ft. Worth.

"It was an amazing time to be in Texas. It was the perfect alignment of the planets. I keep thinking when I'm really old and get Alzheimer's or something, I'm not going to remember that I just took a leak, but I'm going to remember the color shirt Garth Brooks wore to the station that day." CAC

RADIOTHON REBOUND

PPM Begins To Reveal Event's Impact

Since Randy Owen helped form *Country Cares For St. Jude Kids* 20 years ago, Country radio has raised more than $300 million for the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, thanks to radiothons by nearly 200 radio stations in at least 100 markets. More than 100 country artists have also participated, making this event a national cornerstone of Country radio and music's continuing collaborations for charity.

However, in recent years there's been a growing concern that programming radiothons in general – whether they benefit Country Cares, Children's Miracle Network, Make-A-Wish Foundation or others – may sometimes negatively affect station ratings for an unspecified period of time.

Because **Arbitron**'s Portable People Meter methodology and analysis tools can reveal audience ratings on a day-by-day or even hourly basis, **Country Aircheck** asked Arbitron for data that could illuminate what really happens to station audiences during a radiothon. Ratings (in average-quarter-hour persons, or AQHP) were examined before, during and after *Country Cares* radiothons over the past nine months at **WUSN/Chicago, KBWF/San Francisco, KILT/Houston** (two events worth), **WKHX/Atlanta, WKLB/Boston** and **WMZQ/Washington, DC**. For both broadcasters and these important organizations, the results are quite encouraging.

Rapid Recovery

While WMZQ actually saw a significant increase in average persons listening during its radiothon, most stations experienced a small decline. That would be expected, the shift in programming taking place during the two pledge days. In some cases, the drop-off from the daily quarter-hour audience ranged from a few percentage points to more than 50%. However, regardless of geography, time of year, days of the week or years of experience conducting these events, the stations' audiences quickly rebounded to their original size. In some cases, the "recovery" occurred the next business day or even during the radiothon itself; for others, it took an extra day or two before the station's AQHP returned to its weekday average for that month.

Moreover, *the impact of that audience loss during those two days on the stations' overall monthly average was relatively small* – from -0.4% to -4.5%. While "average time exposed" per day during the radiothons (the PPM equivalent of time spent listening), also declined in most cases, the drop-off was usually only 15 minutes per day.

Forces Be With You

It's important to note that outside factors also can have an effect on the average number of listeners to a station during a radiothon:

Local events: Two days prior to WUSN's *Country Cares* effort began last December, Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich and his chief of staff were arrested on federal corruption charges. The next day, just before the radiothon began, President-elect Barack Obama urged the governor to resign. One can imagine radio listening in Chicago did not follow typical patterns that week.

Other major events also likely shifted listening behavior. The day before KILT's radiothon in late January, the local "Baby Grace" murder story became public. On the first day of WKLB's radiothon, convicted swindler Bernie Madoff was sentenced to prison. And in Washington, DC during WMZQ's fundraiser, there was a standoff with a gunman involving an evacuation, along with a big Georgetown basketball game.

The competition: If a Country station faces a direct rival, would their competitor gain listeners during the radiothon? Very possibly. During the two days of KILT's 2008 event, crosstown **KKBQ** experienced a 34% increase in AQHP and a 25% uptick in TSL. But Classic Country **KTHT** actually lost 15% of its average audience and 25% of its TSL. During KILT's 2009 campaign, KKBQ's AQHP rose 28% with no TSL increase, while KTHT was up a whopping 67% in average persons and a 24% jump in TSL. And while WKHX's campaign was underway earlier this year, competitor **WUBL** enjoyed a 70% AQHP jump and a 31% bump in TSL.

However, the gains noted above by the competitors actually far outpaced the temporary losses by the radiothon stations; these were not zero-sum trade-offs. And with only three examples across two markets, it's far too early to determine the real impact of one station's actions on another's.

The economy: The U.S. economy, already struggling throughout Q4 of 2008, continued to decline in early 2009, with the stock market falling sharply. It would seem reasonable that consumers facing difficult budget concerns might listen differently to a charity drive than they would in better times. In short, there could be a tune-out factor among those listeners who can't afford to pledge. While audience and TSL declined in most markets during the radiothons, the hard-hit metro of Washington, DC actually saw its AQHP and TSL increase substantially. This goes to show that there is no hard-and-fast rule about any potential variable.

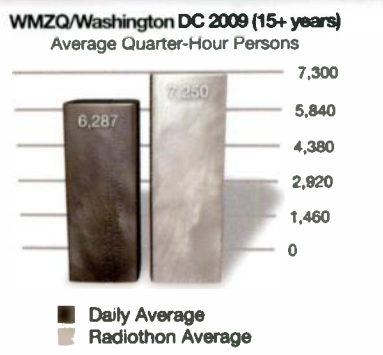
More Than Numbers

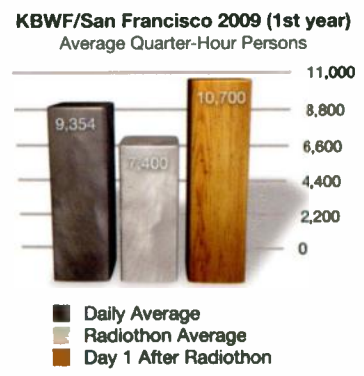
The overall point for broadcasters concerned about the effect of a radiothon is that they should not look strictly at the PPM ratings afterwards. As part of a station's ongoing PPM analysis, Arbitron recommends maintaining a daily log of local and national events, weather and other factors in order to better compare listening patterns on a weekly, monthly or even annual basis.

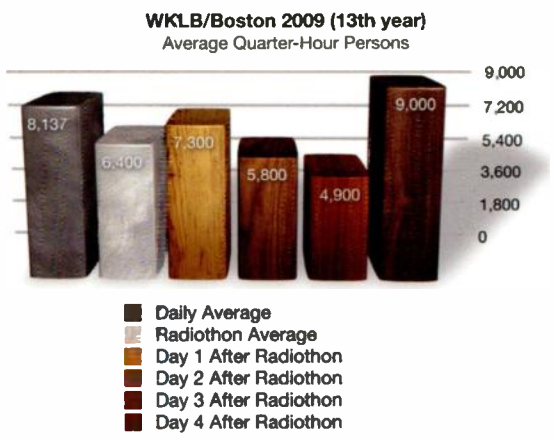
Ratings aside, it goes without saying that one must consider the overall goodwill (and revenues!) generated for the participating station and its advertisers by conducting these fundraising efforts, which can provide many lasting benefits, both tangible and intrinsic. Even more, there are the countless lives saved and changed when a station and community do something truly selfless.

The bottom line is that the findings from these seven *Country Cares* radiothons show an average short-term loss of about 20% AQHP, but stations recover almost immediately, and in some cases, even gain during the process. The results can and sometimes do vary significantly from one market to the next depending on a variety of outside factors. But ultimately, it's how a station and its competitors approach their own programming during these events that makes the biggest difference.

> "REGARDLESS OF GEOGRAPHY, TIME OF YEAR, DAYS OF THE WEEK OR YEARS OF EXPERIENCE CONDUCTING THESE EVENTS, THE STATIONS' AUDIENCES QUICKLY REBOUNDED TO THEIR ORIGINAL SIZE."







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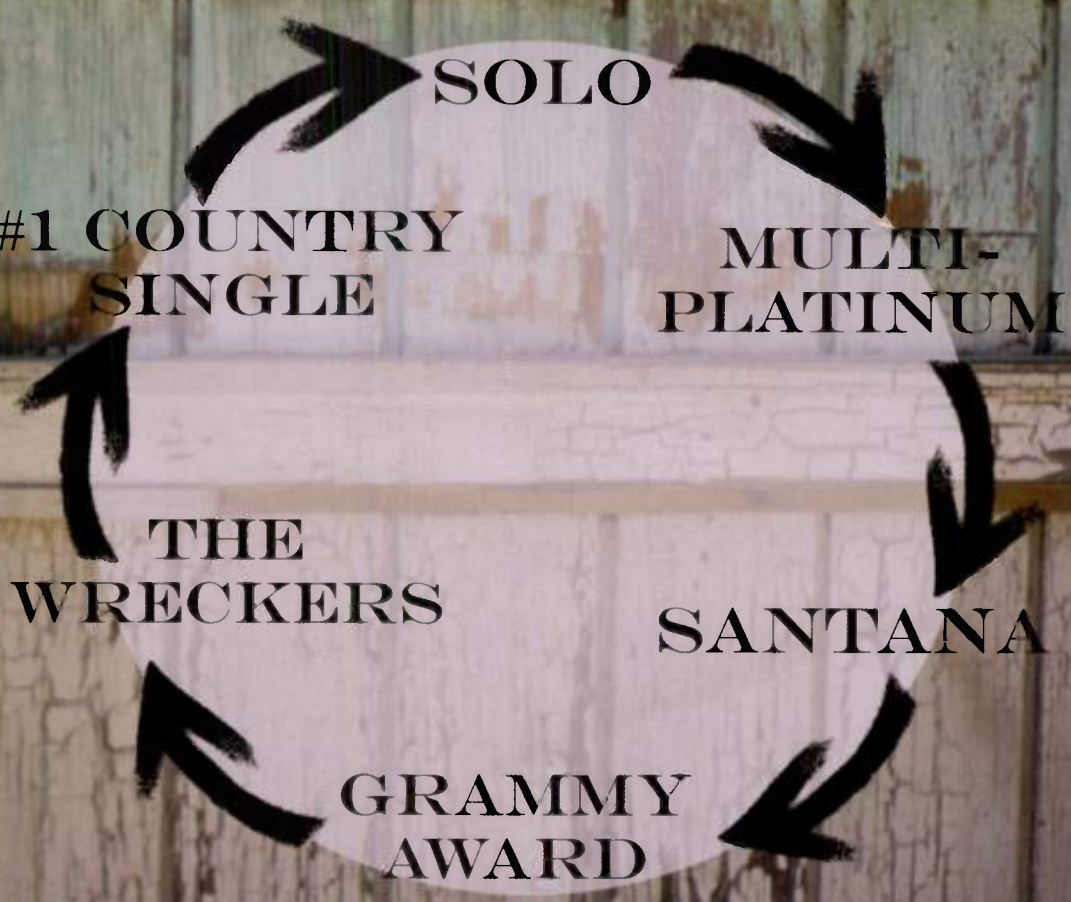

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REPRESENT

Country's Marconi Nominees

The National Association of Broadcasters' prestigious Marconi Awards process assesses potential finalists on criteria including ratings, awards won, community involvement and promotions. In short, anything that demonstrates how a station has excelled in the past year. And it's no surprise at all that Country radio stations and personalities are among the most excellent stations in the nation. Here's a look at this year's Country and national finalists:

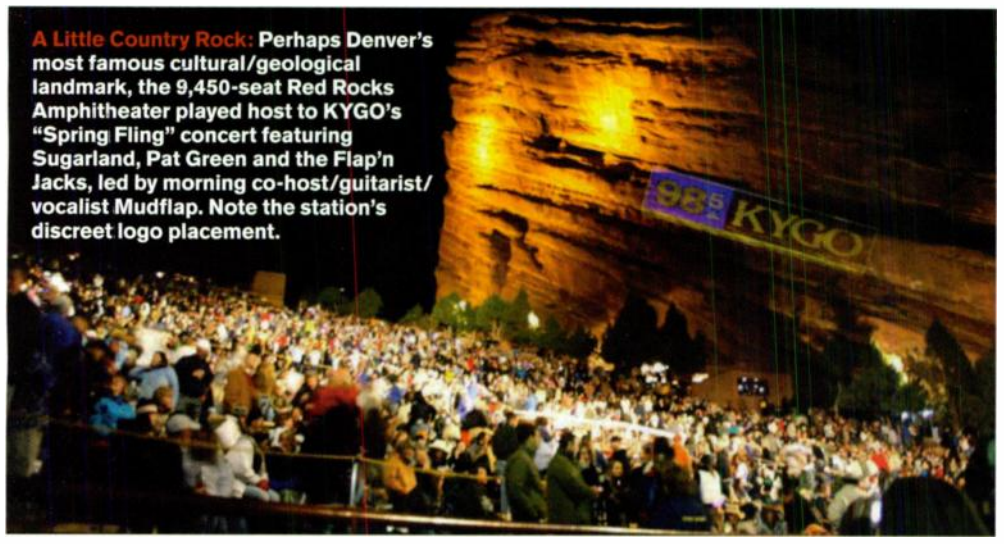
Climbing Every Challenge

Large Market Station of the Year; Country Station of the Year: KYGO/Denver

Lincoln Financial's **KYGO/Denver** is hoping to reprise its twin wins in 2004, thanks to its programming excellence and daily involvement in the Mile High City. **Joel Burke**, who serves as much as a coach as he does as PD, compares his team's success and survival to three traits of a tiger: the will to win; carrying on a commitment to excellence; and having a collaborative expectation. He says, "I usually set aside 15-20 minutes of airstaff meetings for things that have nothing to do with radio; they have to do with life. If you help people become more well-rounded, it has a direct influence and impact on their approach to their jobs." To other programmers, Burke advises, "Don't lose your passion and love for radio. We still have a platform to make a difference in a very unusual place that very few others have the opportunity to do in life."

Soldier With Fortune: KYGO's "CDs For Troops" campaigns have helped deliver thousands of music recordings to America's fighting finest in the Middle East and around the world. A local flag supplier called on KYGO to help collect music for the military, and station listeners responded enthusiastically via a "CDs For My Country" campaign offering tickets to a Martina McBride concert. As troop locations and personnel IDs are guarded, here's an anonymously furnished photo of one happy recipient.

Mr. Smith Goes To Denver: Celebrity appearances are frequent at KYGO/Denver, but Will Smith's hilarious on-air visit with morning personalities Kelly & Mudflap is already stuff of legend. In town last November for a special screening of *Seven Pounds*, Smith also helped KYGO execute a successful fundraiser for local food banks.



A Little Country Rock: Perhaps Denver's most famous cultural/geological landmark, the 9,450-seat Red Rocks Amphitheater played host to KYGO's "Spring Fling" concert featuring Sugarland, Pat Green and the Flap'n Jacks, led by morning co-host/guitarist/vocalist Mudflap. Note the station's discreet logo placement.

Unsung Hero: Garret Doll

PD Burke Says: "He's been here 13 years. When I first came to KYGO, Garret was the Promotions Director, and over the years has worn many hats. He's now our MD, does an enormous amount of our imaging and for the past nine months has been our board op in mornings, which means he has to get here at 4am. He does whatever is asked and does it with a smile on his face. Garret's a great soldier."

Doll Adds: "I enjoy all three jobs so much. I love listening to new music, hearing the stuff coming from Nashville, and the relationships I've built with the labels and individuals. I love the creativity of the imaging and be able to express myself, and it's great to be creative with ***Kelly & Mudflap***, too. It's funny: I grew up just 90 miles east of here, listening to KYGO, and I always said, even through high school, "I'm going to work there one day. You wait and see." It's tough to find a job with the right people, where you have that camaraderie and interaction, both on and off the air. That's a big part of why I enjoy coming to work here each morning – the people and amazing talent I get to work with, getting to learn something new from them and from Joel every day."

A Sense Of Belonging

Medium Market Station of the Year: KTTS/Springfield, MO

Severe weather, news, traffic, music and personalities – these anchor tenets made **KTTS/Springfield, MO** a Marconi finalist in 2007 and a winner several years ago, so this nomination is no fluke. Journal/Springfield cluster OM **Valorie Knight** explains, "KTTS is known for is its 24/7 news department and its severe weather coverage. I believe we have the largest radio station news staff in the state [eight people], and they've received numerous awards. We have the ***St. Jude Radiothon*** every March and other events throughout the year. A new community drive this past year was called ***Shoeboxes For Soldiers***, and the response was just overwhelming. We also have our two-week ***Christmas Crusade***, taking donations to provide hundreds of Christmases for families and kids.

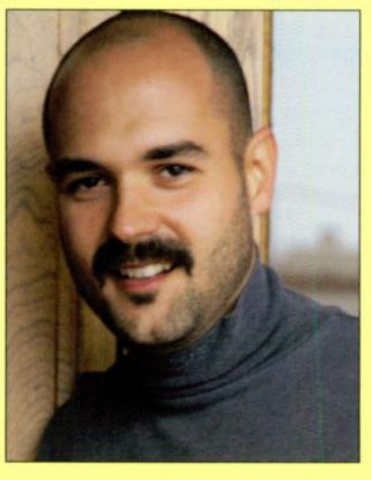
"The community feels an ownership of this radio station. When we do something, it's like, '***We*** did it.' We actually hear that back from the listeners, and it's a pretty rare thing to find a station that actually belongs to them. Everyone's excited about the Marconi nomination, but humbled because they work very hard. They realize that it's not really going to make any difference in their day-to-day business; it's still nose to the grindstone. They were excited for five minutes, then it was, 'OK, time to get back to work!'"

I Really "Love" My Job: KTTS's "unsung hero" Andy Taylor handles a lot of announcing duties on the tennis circuit, so one of his grueling assignments in July was interviewing star player Anna Kournakova at a World Team Tennis exhibition at Springfield's Mediacom Stadium Cooper Tennis Complex.

Lads & Lassos: While in Springfield, MO recently for a KTTS listener appreciation show at PFI's Saddle City & Diamond Ridge Market, RCA artist Chuck Wicks found himself at the end of his rope with (l-r) KTTS Promotions Manager Kelly Kramer, morning co-hosts Andy Taylor and Sherry Farmer, RCA Midwest Regional Matt Galvin and midday personality Curly Clark.

Unsung Hero: Andy Taylor

OM Knight Says: "[Eight-year] morning personality Andy Taylor is one of those guys who's so humble that he would be the last person who would want to be known for this. When severe weather comes in during the night, he's the one in the studio at 3am throwing the news guy on. He doesn't think twice about it; it's just part of his job. Andy's the one who organizes the ***Shoeboxes for Soldiers***, and is one of those internal leaders who really drives the station. Andy sets the bar very high for everybody else."



Taylor Adds: "To me, the unsung hero is News Director **Don Louzader**. He works so hard and is so trusted. But the reason KTTS is successful is because there are a lot of people who work in the mix. Everybody understands that it's not just another broadcasting job. Because of the station's image and how people rely on it every day, working here is a huge responsibility. We never take for granted the trust the listener has in us. Two fans we sent to the CMA Music Festival gave us a framed T-shirt signed by Rodney Atkins. We have a lot of awards on our walls around the building, but that one really means the most because they valued the relationship they have with the station so much that they thought enough to do that. To me, that tops everything."

Our Hours Of Commitment

Medium Market Station Of The Year: KUAD/Ft. Collins, CO

Then And Wow: The Greeley Independent Stampede is described by station staff as the area's biggest summertime event, drawing nearly half-a-million people. This past year KUAD secured exclusive Country station sponsorship of the event. KUAD broadcast live weekdays 3pm-midnight and weekends 10am-midnight from an RV (pictured) a client had traded. Karen Baumgartner tells us she started at the station when the studios where in an old double-decker English-style bus (inset).

Up All Night: OM/PD Mark Callaghan credits morning team Brian Gary and Todd Harding's 28 Hour of Hope event with this year's Marconi nod. He also notes Promotions Assistant Karen Baumgartner spent 30 non-stop hours at the station assisting with the execution of the broadcast this year. (Left) Middayer D Dennison (r) and a volunteer man the phone banks. (Right) Hosts Todd Harding (l) and Brian Gary present the fruits of their labor: $57, 517.72 for the fight against child abuse.

Unsung Hero: Karen Baumgartner

Title: Promotions Assistant
Years With Station: 15
Favorite Event: "The best is our '28 Hours of Hope' because of the cause it supports and the fact everyone puts so much into it."
What Sets KUAD Apart: "It's our commitment; everyone has a commitment to the community, the stations and making sure we put out the best product with whatever we are doing. It's great to work for a group that will let you work with the community."
New & Improved: "We've been allowed to do more events over the years and that's from management seeing what we've done and what we can do. When I started we had one station, now we have five. To see everything grow up over the years has been an experience."

Doing It Their Owners' Way

Small Market Station Of The Year: KBHP/Bemidji, MN

The vision that Paul Bunyan Broadcasting owners **Mary Campbell** and **Lou Buron, Jr.** share of what constitutes a successful radio station can be seen in each of their employees. Live and local, community involvement and charitable giving are all present. With four Crystal awards and two Marconi nominations, it's obvious the PBB approach works.

Some Serious Talking: The 24 Hour Radiothon To End Child Abuse is an annual cluster event that raised $48,358.60 in 2008. From noon Thursday to noon Friday personalities and child abuse prevention teams from four area counties discuss different ways to end child abuse. Pictured (l-r) are sister Classic Rock KLLZ's Jack Hucks and Melissa Carlson, cluster personalities Mark Anderson and Kevin Jackson, owners Mary Campbell and Lou Buron Jr., Sales Mgr. Peggy Hanson, KBHP's Todd Haugen and Heidi Boyd, bookkeeper Kris Jacobson and News Dir./morning co-host Mardy Karger.

Gunning For A Cure: KBHP OM/PD Todd Haugen (r) gets a pep talk from Conservation Office Mike Hruza before the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life. One of the station's many ways of supporting the event is a Fish Fry in which they cook tournament fish that would have otherwise been disposed of, then offering them to Relay participants for a suggested donation.

Unsung Hero: Kevin Jackson

Title: Sports Dir. & sister KBUN PD
Years With Station: 22
Favorite Memory: "We have a client appreciation party every year. One year we had a band, and the personalities came up and sang a song. I did a wicked Bob Dylan impression. What was really fun for me was that they needed a bass player and my son is a professional musician, so he joined in. I remember him looking over at me doing the impression like, 'I can't believe you are my dad.'"
What Sets Us Apart: "Lou and Mary, our owners, are very concerned about having real radio stations. No matter how many new signals the FCC throws in the market they want live people on all our stations. They want to be involved."
What's Changed: "When I got here we had the advantage of being the two oldest stations, but each was just *one* of the stations in town. Then Lou and Mary came in, brought top-level talent and started playing a great mix of whatever format we're doing. Now we're *the* stations in town."

All Four One, One For All

Country Station Of The Year: KZKX/Lincoln

A Marconi nominee for the second straight year, Three Eagles' KZKX (96 Kix)/Lincoln, NE relies on a fulltime staff of just four. "Our job is to talk, but we do a lot of listening, as well," says veteran PD/PM driver **Hoss Michaels**. "Our listeners help guide us about what where we need to go and what we need to do. It truly is a lot about the listeners and being a part of what they have going on. Kix has been around for 30-some years, and we've done Country music since day one. It's about being out in the streets, whether at a remote or charity event. We'll hear about ways we can help, and we'll take the ball and run with it to see what we can get done."

KZKX has built its reputation for community service on localized events more than "national brand" efforts. Says Michaels, "The one thing we really tried to focus on this last year was doing stuff we know is going to affect not only our listeners' lives, but *our* lives. Especially with our Cure Kids Cancer radiothon, which benefits Children's Hospital in Omaha, it's amazing how many tears we end up shedding as we talk with parents whose children have been diagnosed. It moves us to work harder, and to do it again.

"Our Santa Cop program with the Lincoln Police in November is a day-long auction of food certificates, autographed guitars and other items. It's neat to see people get excited about it, knowing that money goes right back into the community to help out families with toys for Christmas, as well as getting them food. It seems like this year, more than ever, that the need has definitely

Best Money Ever Spent: 96KX/Lincoln, NE morning co-host Carol Turner (in back) and PD/PM driver Hoss Michaels greet the Kildare family at the station's Cure Kids Cancer Radiothon. James Kildare (in his mother's lap) is now cancer-free. The Radiothon raised more than $63,000 for Children's Miracle Network and Children's Hospital in Omaha, the area's leading treatment center. Says Michaels, "It's a three-day event, and we get families on the air with us from Lincoln and small towns around it. It's amazing to hear the stories."

A Real Cause For Celebration: KZKX/Lincoln, NE PD/afternoon personality Hoss Michaels and Promotions Director Kelly Garrett do a little celebrity bartending at Uncle Ron's Wild West Saloon during a Jason Boland show. As one of many events that added up, the duo donated hundreds of dollars in tips, matched dollar-for-dollar by bar owner Ron Tegtmeier, to Children's Hospital in Omaha, as part of the station's annual 96KX Cure Kids Cancer Radiothon.

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It's The Little Things That Count

Country Station Of The Year: WUBE/Cincinnati

From Walk For Wishes to a 9,300-square-foot flag made by listeners in a huge swimming pool, Bonneville's WUBE/Cincinnati is renowned for its public service and engaging its audience. There's a prevailing mindset within B-105 that everyone at the station has ownership in the events, and it's common for station personalities from different dayparts to collaborate.

Former PD **Travis Moon** says, "Looking at the breadth of all the work we've done over the year, we tried hard to find ways to get involved and in the trenches with our listeners on what's important to them and the community. Besides providing entertainment musically, our charter is to use our power and ability to give back, leaving no stone unturned. Even the weirdest, wackiest idea is productive if it gets your mind going.

"It could be something as simple as going out and serving up hot dogs and drinks to listeners at our *Chris Carr & Company* picnics. Sometimes it's those little things like that we cherish the most and are the most memorable.

"There was a gentleman in the Cincinnati market who for years put together an incredible Christmas light show at his house. Generations of people would drive past his home, and he'd be sitting on the porch in a Santa Claus outfit, waving. Our morning show became aware that he was diagnosed with cancer and would not be able to play Santa, so they went out to his house and raised money to pay his electric bill. It was something to watch listeners stop by to drop off money, telling stories about seeing him ever since they were kids."

Check It Out: WUBE held its fourth annual B-105 Cares For St. Jude's Kids Radiothon at Newport On The Levee in February, raising more than $400,000. Former PD Travis Moon said, "With the economy, it was a tough year for charities. We provided the information and the urgency, but it's our listeners who fought really hard for the cause and actually raised more in 2009 than in 2008. They made it happen." Shown (l-r): WUBE Promotion Coordinator Danny Mac, Moon, morning co-host Chris Carr, PM driver Big Dave, overnight personality Dana Ryan and promotions staffer/part-time personality Kent Farrell.

They Mustard Up Support: Here's a bevy of University of Cincinnati Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority sisters, who joined forces with WUBE to stage a "Wiener Night" benefiting the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Unsung Hero Former PD Ron James

Moon Says: "Most promotions directors have a thankless job. You'll have a success, and it's on to the next one before anyone can even say 'thanks' for what you did. It's a lot of work and moving pieces, but Ron pulls things together. He's unbelievably organized and also has a very creative mind. Our chances of being nominated for a Marconi Award would not have been as high had Ron James not been involved."

James Adds: "The three-legged theory of a great promotion is that it satisfies the listener, the client and the station. I like to add a fourth leg: Does it help somebody? If I look back all these years, those are the ones that most come to mind. For example, last year during the gas crunch, we worked with the local chapter of Project Connect to help homeless children. We gave away gas cards every hour, asking people to come out and stuff a bus full of school supplies. The client got all kinds of traffic, not to mention a bump in sales, and we got a buy for the promotion."

We Are Family

Country Station Of The Year: KITX/Hugo, OK

A family-run station with three generations at work, **William Payne**'s KITX has garnered three Small Market Station Of The Year Marconi nominations and now its first Country Station Of The Year nod. As the nation slipped into recession, the staff resolved to band together to improve everything at the station. GM/PD/morning co-host Will Payne gives one example. "Our receptionist even started coming in on Friday nights to Tweet local football scores." Payne is proud to say there have been no layoffs in the last year, and the station has even hired a

Be A Payne, Blake: Owner Bill Payne (l) is active with the station, even attending CRS-40, where he said hello to Blake Shelton.

Show Me: KITX brings in 30 shows a year by themselves, and partner with local casinos. GM/PD Will Payne brings the kids out for a Zac Brown Band stop. Pictured (l-r) are ZBB's Jimmy De Martini, Chris Fryar, Clay Cook, McKinley Payne, KITX's Will Payne, Jarred Payne, ZBB's Zac Brown, Tucker Reese and ZBB's John Hopkins and Coy Bowles.

Hunting For A Marconi: Staffers take their first Country Station Of The Year Marconi nomination very seriously. Back row (l-r) are Will Payne, Rachel Moody, Joey "The Show" Renfro and Jarred Payne. Front (l-r) are Jessica Gann, Lisa D., Barry Diamond, Doris, Jo Ann Matthews and Chad Lindsey.

Unsung Heroes: Spouses & Families

Embracing The Lifestyle: "So many great folks work here, but their families go above and beyond for the station and really allow them to do the job, which is more of a lifestyle. It's Saturday, Sunday, Monday-Friday, after-hours, Friday night football," explains Payne. Morning co-host Barry Diamond adds, "The spouses pick up the slack. They see something that needs to be done and they just do it. The kids help, out too, reading parts for commercials, liners, whatever."

High-Class Community Servants

Country Station Of The Year: WKDQ/Evansville, IN

"Our goal is to get involved with as many things as possible," explains PD/morning co-host **Jon Prell**. "If it's about the community, the bottom-line is we are going to be there." The station's best promotions of the year centered around Taylor Swift's *Fearless* tour kick-off in Evansville. From "Taylor-oke," where fans as young as three submitted YouTube videos of their best impressions to, "Taylor Tuesday" live remotes with 200-400 attendees each week, every event heavily involved children. "We've got a quite a young following," says Prell. "It was nice to be able to cater to them and, more important, their parents."

Phone It In: Morning co-host Lori Mae and PM driver/Promotions Dir. Eric Cornish (third and second from right, respectively) lend a hand to the Easter Seals Telethon. The station raised $25,250 directly for the organization in 2009.

Taylor Made It: PM driver/Promotions Dir. Eric Cornish embraces the listener voted "Taylor-oke" winner, who coincidentally is also named Taylor, backstage after meeting Taylor Swift.

Seals The Deal: As part of Easter Seals' fundraising efforts, 'KDQ holds "Golfing Fore Kids," which raised more than $44,000 for the organization in 2008. Here morning co-host Lori Mae interviews Owen George, who suffers from Spina Bifida. At last year's event, George took his first steps without the support of arm braces and canes (inset).

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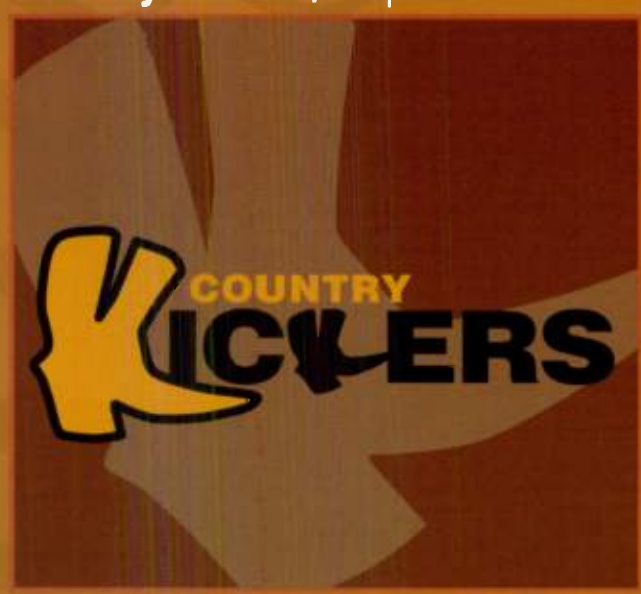

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Living La Vida Local

Large Market Personality: Jim Denny, Deborah Honeycutt & Kevin Freeman (WFMS/Indianapolis)

Um, Was That Stage Left, Or Right? WFMS/Indianapolis' morning team of Jim Denny, Deborah Honeycutt and Kevin Freeman plot their exit strategy after accepting their first CMA Award for Large Market Personality of the Year in 2007, the fourth time WFMS personalities have won a CMA honor. WFMS is a six-time CMA Large Market Station of the Year recipient, most recently in 2008.

In 2008, WFMS/Indianapolis won the Marconi for Country Station of the Year, and now the station's celebrated ***Jim Denny & Friends*** morning show featuring Jim Denny, Deborah Honeycutt and Kevin Freeman has earned its first Marconi nomination. Jim and Kevin call Deb "the kid sister we never had." Honeycutt says, "They're the brothers I never wanted." But after working together 16 years, she adds, "If we ever split up, we'll need therapy."

Denny says Exec. Producer **Roland Norio** is an important part of the team as well. "He does characters, the voices that you need, and he's hilarious." Adds Freeman, "He's not right mentally, but that's good. Deb and Roland work together really well in writing our parody songs, which Jim sings." Norio says, "I came from another morning show where they put on that fake smile and 'Hey, buddy' when the mics were on, but they didn't even like each other. Here, we truly enjoy each other's company, and look forward to laughing with each other on- and off-mic."

The three co-hosts are Indy locals, and their dedication to issues close to home is reflected in their countless charitable activities. Says Denny, "We're not just doing it to try to get kudos. It's actually important to us, because this is our hometown. One of my favorites is for the Wheeler Mission. We spend all year getting all this country music stuff and other things, too. We auction it all off, and everything goes to the Mission. Not only is it a good cause, it's also fun to listen to."

Honeycutt says, "I'm a volunteer for Child Advocates, which helps children of neglect or abuse. So I took it to the next level and was trained several years ago. I visit foster kids, and am their 'voice in court' since these kids are under age and can't really voice what their needs might be. Whether it's glasses, or maybe they're not in a good foster home, then I kind of speak up."

Freeman adds, "One boy Deb did a case study with had never had a birthday cake. So she went out and got him one. There are kids who live right here in our town where we would never think there'd be problems, but there are. We do the Riley Children's Hospital Radiothon each February, and some of the parents will say, "We never thought we'd have to come here." All three of us have children, so it's easy for us to relate to those families."

We Hammered In The Morning: Among *Jim Denny & Friends'* many civic initiatives is being a "house captain" the past eight years for "Rebuilding Together Indianapolis." Each April, the trio works among 850 volunteers to rehabilitate 26 homes, emcee the kickoff, then gather listeners to renovate homes for those with a physical limitation or low income. Shown (l-r) are Jim Denny, a rep from Hagerman Construction, one of the beneficiary homeowners, and co-hosts Deborah Honeycutt and Porta-Poytty guard Kevin Freeman.

The Odd Couple

Medium Market Personality: Brian Gary & Todd Harding (KUAD/Ft. Collins, CO)

Brian Gary got a strong impression from his co-host when they started working together: "I could not stand Todd," he says. "He was the kind of guy I would have beat up in high school, and nothing's changed. I still want to kick his ass." But two decades later, and with a CMA Award, this year's Marconi nomination, two ACM nods and two consecutive Colorado Broadcasters awards, something about these opposites resonates with listeners.

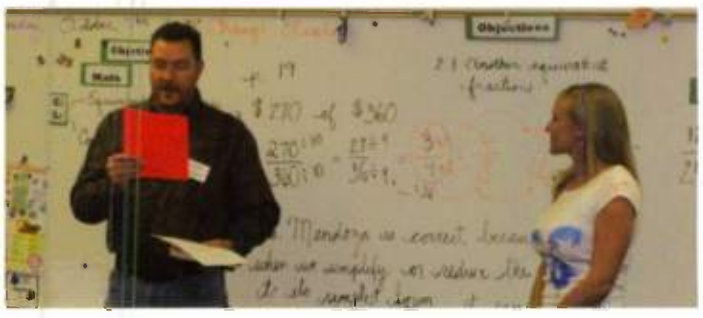
"I don't think it's a coincidence I did 60 extra appearances last year. We do these things because we want to help out the community," explains Harding. The morning show's cornerstone event, "28 Hours Of Hope" is in its 12th year, and in the last two raised more than $170,000 to fight child abuse in Northern Colorado.

"As for the show, we have a school bus rule," Gary says. "Whatever we do has to be acceptable for the kids on the bus, their parents and their parents." After 21 years at the same station, the duo has in some ways grown up with their audience. "It's always intimidating when a guy, probably college age, comes up and says 'I've listened to you my whole life.' It makes us feel kind of old," says Harding. Gary interjects, "Well you *are*. It makes me feel great. I love that."

Award Cleaver: Brian Gary (l) and Todd Harding celebrate their first CMA Small Market Broadcast Personality award.

Hog Wild: Gary (l) and Harding (r) receive a donation straight from this young listener's piggy bank during their "28 Hours Of Hope" broadcast.

Back To School: Harding (l) presents an Outstanding Northern Colorado Teacher award during the morning show's "Teacher Tuesday." The promotion includes gifts, chocolates or flowers for the teachers, and talking to students about having a positive outlook.



Bust A Gut

Small Market Personality Will Payne & Barry Diamond (KITX/Hugo, OK)

Up for their fifth nomination in the Marconi Small Market Personality category, morning teamers Will Payne and Barry Diamond really are just glad to make the team. As in years past, the duo has continued their work in the community with Diamond sitting on the Big Brothers and Big Sisters Board Of Directors and being recognized by the local school district.

The biggest change to the show's strategy in the past year comes with their involvement with social networking. "We've got some offices that won't let folks listen, so we'll give them another way to win via the Internet," Diamond explains. Seeing as Payne wasn't able to fulfill last year's promise to wake up Jack Ingram if they won the Marconi in Austin, what's this year's plan? "If we win, we promise to 'Rock The Beer Gut' in Philadelphia," he says.

Diamond And The Rough: On their fifth nomination, co-hosts Barry Diamond (l) and Will Payne might just take matters into their own hands.

Red Headed Strangers: While visiting CRS-40 this year, Payne and Diamond claim to have accidentally gotten off at the wrong stop, which just happened to house Reba's album listening party. Pictured (l-r) are Valory Pres. Scott Borchetta, KAIR/Atchison, KS PD Jason Drake, Reba, Will Payne and Barry Diamond.

There And Back Again: GM/PD/morning co-host Will Payne poses with last year's Country Aircheck exposé for the duo's Marconi nod. "We took about 50 Airchecks from NAB last year and almost got in trouble at the airport because the staple count was so high," he says.

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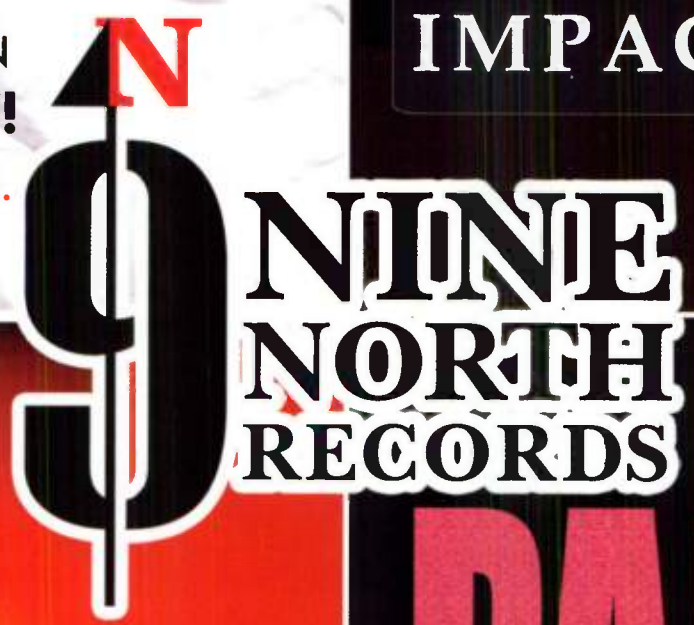

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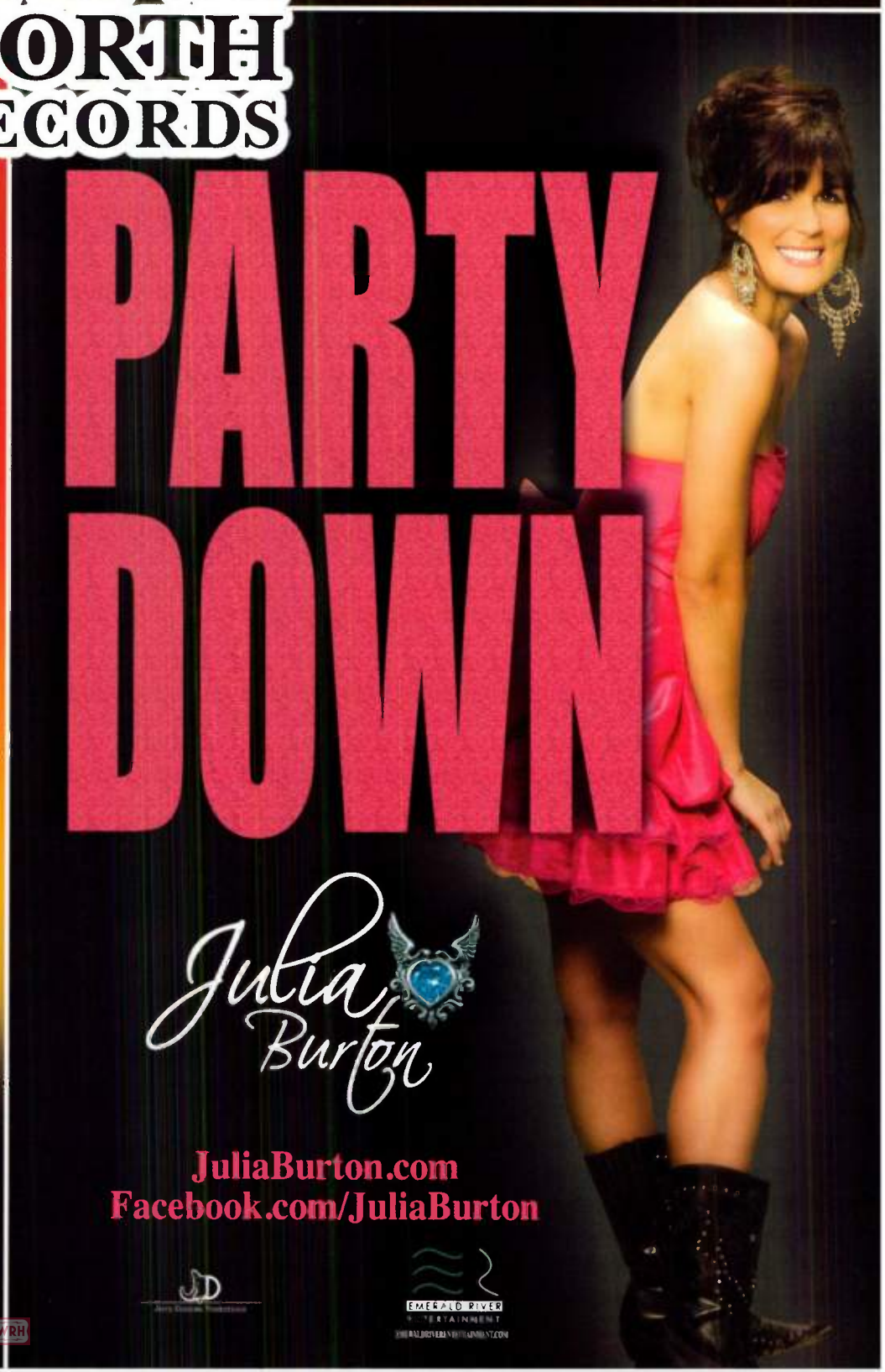

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"Josh and Meghan (Steel Magnolia) really lit up our morning show! 'Keep On Lovin' You' is a really powerful song and their vocals are killer!"
-Ken Boesen, PD, WKIS-Miami

"True story: first time I heard Steel Magnolia play I asked them to please not go to a foreign country and say something derogatory about the President of the United States. Not that I thought they sounded like the Chicks, but they are going to be just that big and matter that much to this format!"
-Julie Stevens, PD, KRTY-San Jose

"Those looks, those voices and those harmonies are SUPER!"
-Bobcat Brown, PD, KHEY-El Paso

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-Michele Chase, PD, WGNE-Jacksonville

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POWER 31

Our Annual Ranking of Country's Airplay Leaders

The executives with the greatest influence over the music played on Country radio all bring unique histories, perspectives and strategies to their roles in the industry. You might even say they come in 31 flavors. What they have in common, according to the industry professionals polled for this survey, is a crucial function at the intersection of music and airplay. With two exceptions, they all fall into one of five categories: radio group programmer, station programmer, consultant, label head or promotion executive. (The leading vote-getter in each category is pictured above.)

Rankings are tallied under the premise that airplay is currency for Country radio as well as the music business, so those with the greatest influence over airplay decisions receive the highest rankings from those polled. These are folks who directly control airplay or have the influence to obtain airplay on behalf of artists.

This year, we asked a close associate of each ranked executive to describe or illustrate anecdotally what makes this person so effective in their job. As you might expect, the responses are, quite simply, tasty.

1 | Scott Borchetta
Big Machine/Valory President
Republic Nashville CEO

"One of my favorite memories of working with Scott is when we would do dinners with radio personalities and their spouses before a concert," says **Reba McEntire**, who's worked with Borchetta at MCA/Universal and is currently on the Valory roster. "He's great at putting events together and making them lots of fun.

"Scott is good at what he does because he's hungry! He's very smart and never quits. He works hard at getting the artist with the radio folks in a fun and personable atmosphere."

McEntire's manager and husband **Narvel Blackstock** adds, "Scott is so good at what he does because he always has a plan. Once that plan has been determined, I've never seen anyone work as hard as Scott making sure the plan is successful. He leaves nothing to chance."

2 | Joe Galante
Sony Music/Nashville Chairman

"Joe and I have never had a relationship that an artist and a record label head should have," **Kenny Chesney** says. "It's always been a partnership. Joe is very pro-artist. He understands the pressures an artist goes through at different levels, and responds accordingly. I believe that chemistry has benefited both of us where it might not have worked for someone else."

3 | Jaye Albright
Country Consultant

"Jaye is not only good at what she does, she is heads and shoulders above all when it comes to understanding the Country format, its present and future," says KSON/San Diego PD **John Marks**. "She understands listener behavior and how to communicate across generational lines. Jaye is tireless, always listening, reading and seeking understanding. She is the consummate student and teacher about not only country music, but all of radio. We jokingly wonder if Jaye ever does sleep! I've never caught her sleeping, but she did catch me nodding during a morning show meeting once. Oops!"

4 | Mike Dungan
Capitol/Nashville President/CEO

"Mike and I met when he was still in Arista's Pop division in Minneapolis," says former Arista/Nashville President/CEO **Tim DuBois**. "Mike tells the story that he went home after that convention and said, 'I just met a guy I'm going to work for someday.' That was a year-and-a-half prior to me offering him the job.

"Mike is an incredibly hard worker. No one loves music more, and he's a risk taker. Always has been. Absolutely the hardest day in my career was when I got the phone call that they weren't going to let him run Arista. I never would have left.

"He is a use-your-head, trust-your-gut guy. Mike's sense of humor is always a big part of what he does. He's one of the funniest human beings in the world, and that's what's let him survive in the pressure-cooker he's put himself in. He's got a crazy, sick sense of humor. At the most inopportune times he will embarrass you to death and make you laugh about it."

5 | Luke Lewis
UMG/Nashville Chairman

"What I go back to is the launch of Shania Twain's *Come On Over*," says UMG/Nashville EVP/GM **Ken Robold**. "We're coming off a huge record in *The Woman In Me*, which was 12-times platinum. Mutt Lange and Shania hand us a phenomenal record with 16 songs and a ton of singles. So the pressure is on and we feel like we've got it, but the key is sequencing it correctly. And Shania's going to tour for the first time, as she didn't tour off *The Woman In Me* because she wanted to wait until she had a full show's worth of material. So they're about to launch this whole worldwide tour ... it was a lot of pressure. I remember Luke getting into some heavy, pretty intense discussions with Mutt and Shania, and then you've got the clout of [manager] Jon Landau in the mix – all with very strong, powerful and different opinions. Ultimately, the sequencing had to be worked out among that group. Luke just stood his ground with these heavyweights, and ultimately you can't argue with what we did, as *Come On Over* is now one of the top sellers of all time – 20 times platinum."

6 | Skip Bishop
Sony/Nashville VP/Promotion
Arista/Nashville VP/Promotion

"Skip's a visionary strategist in realizing the potential of singles," says Arista Northeast rep **John Sigler**, who's worked with Bishop since their pop days at RCA and MCA. "He's very creative in coming up with promotions that are unique to the single and the artist, and building different layers of visibility around music through radio touring and marketing. He's also clearly a family man, and met his wife when she did promotion for RCA/New York. So it's a family business and he tries to connect the dots. Not only spending as much time with them and being involved with the kids' schools and music lessons, but whenever we fly everyone in for staff meetings, we'll get together at his house."

7 | Becky Brenner
KMPS/Seattle PD

"Becky lives the lifestyle of her listeners and truly cares about Country radio, country music and everyone she works with – staff, labels and other stations," says industry vet **Denise Roberts**. "She treats everyone like a star. Even with her duties expanding, she returns calls and has time not only for her station, but also being CRB President.

"Obviously, if she adds your record, it's a huge statement to the rest of Country radio. In June, she came to CMA Music Festival as a 'fan' - and brought her family as a vacation! We are talking the side stages, the humidity, the killer downpours ... she went to it all and loved it. Now, name another PD who is willing to get in the 'trenches' with her listeners like that."

8 | Clay Hunnicutt
Clear Channel SVP/Programming, VP/Country

"I had been with Clear Channel in Atlanta for only a month when Clay approached me and said he was going to set up a home office," says CC/Atlanta Dir. Ops. and WUBL/Atlanta PD **Scott Lindy**. "He planned to work from there much of the time while home in Atlanta, as he wanted me to truly take control of the operations position here. What impressed and pleased me the most was that Clay not only trusted me with the operation after guiding me through the nuances of the building, people, history, etc., but that he also understood that if I were to be truly effective he needed to remove himself somewhat from the day-to-day. That meant tons in terms of my boss having confidence in me, but also in how he understands that being here less would signal a transition as to who the director of operations was in this facility.

"Clay's got more memory than the world's biggest computer. I love when Clay analyzes something through the possible future, but he gets there through what worked and didn't in the past. That kind of thinking brings out the options for setting up a strategy or better developing tactics. Having Clay in the room when you're creating or planning brings power to the final idea."

COUNTRY AIRCHECK'S POWER 31 AIRPLAY LEADERS

9 | Rusty Walker
Country Consultant

"Some of my favorite memories I have of working with Rusty come from the time we were building Y100 in San Antonio back in 1986," says Rusty Walker Programming Associates consultant **Scott Huskey**. "The days and nights spent sitting in a hotel room throwing ideas around – watching Rusty get really 'hopping' excited when you got a good idea is something everyone needs to see at least once. We wrote all the liners, birthed Bossy the Cash Cow and developed the on-air persona of the air staff over the course of two days in the Courtyard by Marriott in San Antonio.

"Rusty has the ability to quickly distill a large amount of data or information into an easily digestable amount, usually with a bit of NE Mississippi humor thrown in. He is a great facilitator of ideas and genuinely gets excited when someone else in the group succeeds."

10 | Royce Risser
UMG/Nashville SVP/Promotion

"On my first road trip with Royce, 10 years ago, we were in Rochester and it was like 20-below," says Mercury VP/Promotion **Damon Moberly**. "Royce was with MCA at the time and I was with Mercury. We'd had dinner with Coyote Calhoun and were walking from the restaurant to the venue when we saw two guys working on a car pulled over with its hood up. Royce, you know how he loves to double-talk people, sticks his head in under the hood, looks around and tells the guys they need a Yammerhammen timer belt. He had these guys convinced. They were asking him where to get one. Total promo guy move – sell them something whether they need it or not.

"In all seriousness, Royce talks to more radio people than anybody I've ever seen. And he's always ultimately prepared. I've never seen him lose his train of thought when he's making an argument for a record. He's fair and honest about it, it's not a super high-pressure approach, but he's completely focused."

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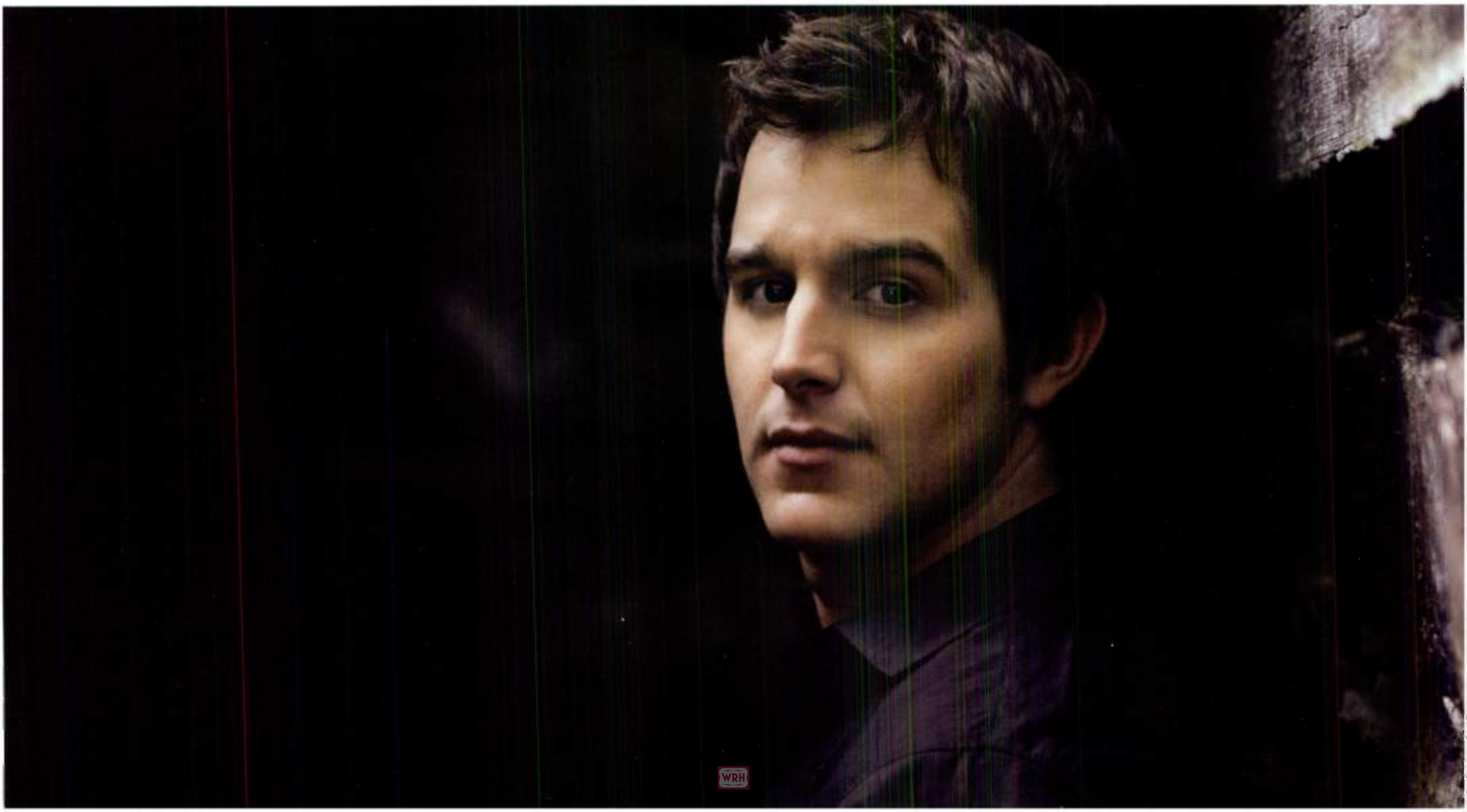


11 | Jimmy Harnen
Republic Nashville President

"Jimmy's really good at observing, witnessing, listening and absorbing a lot of great information from other people and making himself into a better person," says Valory Co-National **George Briner**, who worked with Harnen at DreamWorks. "I can't think of many people who have gone from being an artist to selling for a music publication, to getting into promotion, to heading up a department to being a label president. Jimmy brings an artist's perspective into how to work records, how to negotiate deals.

"At Curb Universal and DreamWorks, every holiday Jimmy would dress up in a costume: a turkey, as Uncle Sam or Cupid, even a leprechaun. From the very get-go, Jimmy always said, 'I need to get people's attention; I need for them to be able to talk about something.' And he'd send out these pictures. And people would pick up the phone and go, 'What are you doing wearing that stupid turkey outfit? Quit sending me those stupid pictures.' It always comes down to the music, but to get to the music, how do you get people's attention? Jimmy's been one of the best."

12 | Charlie Cook
KKGO/Los Angeles Sr. Mgr./Programming

"Charlie scored a 30+ share at WWVA/Wheeling, WV at a time when everyone thought AM was dead," says McVay Media President **Mike McVay**. "He scored huge ratings when he programmed WMXJ/Miami, and that station wasn't even Country. Three of us – Charlie, Doris McVay and I sat in my backyard in 1984 and designed what would become McVay Media. He works harder than just about anyone I know. He has a unique ability to employ both the right side and the left side of his brain. He's humble and genuine, never getting caught up in 'playing the role.'

"Being a part of the Country radio platform in the No. 2 market in America is influential. The team at Go Country has touched as many as three million people in one week. That sells music. Charlie's opinion is respected around the world, and I'm very proud of what he's been able to do in LA. Some pretty smart people said that Country didn't work there. I wonder when someone will make that move in NYC."

13 | Randy Goodman
Lyric Street & Carolwood President

"When I met Randy in college, he was a musician and played in several bands," says Lyric Street Sr. VP/A&R **Doug Howard**. "After graduation he went out as a road manager, so he had those experiences of what it was like to be young musician trying to make it work. One time his band played a club and everyone was treated horribly. Several years into his career at RCA, that club was booked for a showcase featuring the label's artists. It was a pretty big venue. Randy cancelled the booking, and the owner called him to find out why. Randy said, 'Because I played your club and I know how you treat the musicians who play there. We don't want our artists treated that way.' And that speaks to Randy's motivation, which has always been about the music. I don't think any of those experiences have ever been forgotten. And that's a gift."

14 | Gregg Swedberg
KEEY/Minneapolis PD

"I remember when we were announced as the CMA Major Market Station of the Year, something we had set as a goal early on when he started with K102," says CBS/Radio Minneapolis SVP/Market Manager **Mick Anselmo**, who held the same role in oversight of Clear Channel and KEEY for decades. "Interestingly enough, his pride was for me because he knew how much I wanted it for the station. Gregg is intelligent, creative and, for the good of the music, he listens to the music. He believed in acts like Little Big Town, Montgomery Gentry, Big & Rich and so many others, and didn't let anyone sway his commitment."

15 | Doug Montgomery
Premium Choice PD
WBCT/Grand Rapids PD

"The first day I worked with Doug, WCUZ/Grand Rapids had just been bought by Clear Channel and I got a message that the PD wanted to see me first thing Monday morning," says WBCT APD/MD **Dave Taft**. "I thought for sure I was done. The first thing he asked was what I wanted to accomplish in life. What were my career aspirations? I gave my answers, and he told me, 'OK, that's what we are going to work for.' I thought I was getting canned, and instead he gave me the direction I had been lacking up until that point. I am 100% sure that if that day had never happened, I would not still be in radio.

"His motor is always running, and he's always looking for the next opportunity. It's commonplace to get a 2am email or a late-night phone call. His catchphrase is, 'I had an epiphany last night.'

"Twice in the past month artists have talked to me about Doug's influence. One said he had spoken with Doug about his new song and re-cut a lyric that could be misconstrued as offensive. Another told me they were second-guessing a single choice until they got a call from management telling them that Doug loved the song."

16 | Jeff Garrison
CBS Radio VP/Country; KILT/Houston PD

"Jeff applied to work at KKBQ/Houston when I was PD and he was in McAllen, TX, which is really Mexico," **Dene Hallam** says. "I hired him because he was very enthusiastic, which sounds like a left-handed compliment – 'Yeah, she's got a nice personality.' But he was very positive and excited, and loved music and programming. One of his phrases was, 'This is the Super Bowl, man!' Someone would say something couldn't be done, and he'd have this attitude that we're in Houston, a top 10 market. This is the Super Bowl, man!

"Plus, he's good at golf. That helps. All kidding aside, he's very presidential, carries himself well and has that big smile. He'd slap you on the back, which works with the Texas 'good ole boy' thing. That's not a negative. He's always been good at getting people to do what he needs them to do. They'll go fight in the trenches for him."

17 | Butch Waugh
Sony Music/Nashville EVP

"I'll always remember back in the 'RLG days' when Bobby Kraig, Mike Wilson and I would gather in Butch's office at the end of the day for an impromptu 'jam session,'" says SMN VP/Marketing **Tom Baldrica**. "We would listen to new music, talk strategy, tackle an issue that had come up during the day or just laugh and tell stories. We always left that office with something that made us better as a company, a label, or as an executive – and often all three! It was the epitome of teamwork and the apex of the dominating run we had as promotion teams."

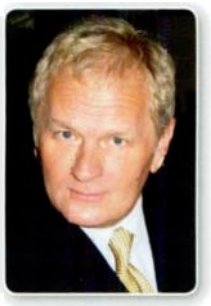
18 | Mike Curb
Curb Records Chairman

"Mike is good at what he does for many reasons, the first of which is his continuing passion for the music," says Curb EVP/GM **Dennis Hannon**. "Mike's decisions are guided by the music and little else. He listens to music constantly, and involves as many people as possible in the music process: artists, managers, producers, employees, friends and family members. With Mike, music is a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week passion. I also believe he succeeds where others may fail because he strives to treat people the way he would like to be treated – fairly. Mike is, above all, a gentleman."

19 | Brian Philips
CMT President

"Brian and I were in the Opry House's Studio A for the second episode of *Crossroads* about 10 years ago," says Spalding Entertainment's **Chris Parr**, who worked at CMT for a decade. "We heard the first thunderous strokes of Kid Rock's 'Cowboy' with Hank, Jr. delivering lines you had only heard Kid sing until that night. Compared to everything taped before it in that studio it was so in your face that we looked at each other and agreed: CMT will never be the same again. Brian was convinced you could absolutely capture a young, vibrant audience, but you had to be willing to take some chances."

20 | Jan Jeffries
Cumulus SVP/Programming



"A good recent example of Jan's influence in music is Darius Rucker," says Cumulus Country Format Dir. **Bill Jones**. "It is easy to look back now, after three big hits, and think that playing his debut, 'Don't Think I Don't Think About It' was no brilliant move. However, I can remember that, at least early on, there were basically no Country programmers willing to jump out quickly and play the song. Jan was the exception. He called me raving about it and said, 'Let's make a statement ... Cumulus believes this is a smash!' I can even remember a few of my own PDs having doubt when we jumped so early. Do I think Jan's initiative played a role in others adding the song and Darius' Country career getting off to big start? Absolutely!"

21 | Mike Moore
Entercom VP/Country
KWJJ/Portland PD

"Entercom President/CEO David Field and I are huge Red Sox fans," says Entercom SVPP **Pat Paxton**. "The Sox and Yankees were playing game seven of the d'03 ALCS during company meetings after Mike was hired. We rented a ballroom to watch, and in comes this guy in a Yankees cap. He was oblivious that we were huge Sox fans and not at all happy about the game. There were some colorful comments exchanged, but we decided to let Mike keep working for us anyway. In all seriousness, he's good at what he does because he's passionate about everything he does, both at work and at home."

Dance With The One That Brought You

So many of **YOU** have the same reaction when he performs it live.

So many of **YOU** have asked for it to be cut and released as a single.

Today I walked into Scott Borchetta's office to play him some of my music. One song in particular sealed the deal. When I played it, his eyes lit up and a huge smile came across his face. His next words were, "You're not leaving this office without signing a record deal."

Jimmy Wayne Journal Entry

JIMMY WAYNE

Sara Smile

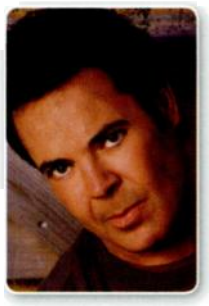
Produced by Dann Huff

The wait is over.

A SMASH single with FAMILIARITY built in for the FALL BOOK.

TheValoryMusicCo.com JimmyWayne.com

22 | Blair Garner
After Midnight and *Blair Garner Show* Host



"I'll always remember a great heart-to-heart conversation Blair and I had within the first few days of my arrival at *After MidNite*, says Albright & O'Malley's **Sam Thompson**, formerly with *AM*. "Without sounding too corny, that conversation was all about the power of radio and its ability to have a real impact on the lives of real people. Blair took (and still takes) that responsibility seriously, and I think it shows.

"That attitude, and the belief that 'good enough' is never good enough, is why I think Blair is so good at what he does. He sets the bar for hard work and dedication, and his co-workers can't help but follow his lead.

"I remember an interview with Keith Urban that Blair did right when 'But For The Grace Of God' came out. Blair gave a little explanation of the song, Keith smiled and nodded, then Blair played the song. But when the song was over, Blair apologized to Keith and admitted that he hadn't really understood what the song was about up until that moment. It's not that I think Keith would have held against Blair the fact that he got it wrong, but I think the fact that Blair realized – and owned up to – his mistake helped forge a bond between the two of them that has only grown as time has passed."

23 | Joel Burke
KYGO/Denver PD

"KYGO had its 25th anniversary as a Country station four years ago, and Joel was instrumental in helping secure George Strait for our 25th Anniversary Concert," says SVP/Market Manager **Bob Call**. "Being here for our 25th and having this Country icon perform was pretty special. The fact that both are from Texas probably added to the moment (for Joel anyway!)

"He's truly a pro, providing all the positive feedback and coaching, but at the same time can be tough and demanding when necessary. Joel rarely misses a local concert, even with emerging artists who appear at the Grizzly Rose. He is a PD first, but he loves Country music and realizes our future success lies with new artists! Judging from the pile of CDs in Joel's office, I know he listens to the music."

24 | Joel Raab
Country Consultant

"The first time I recall meeting Joel was when he showed up at WHN/New York during his college break and asked for a tour of the station," says CRB Exec. Dir. **Ed Salamon**. "I was very impressed by his programming knowledge and the questions he asked, and we kept in touch. Later, when I was consulting WEEP/Pittsburgh, we had a PD vacancy and I knew Joel was the man for the job. He had a clear vision of a radio stations, took advantage of the opportunities specific to the market and paid attention to the nuances of air talent and music at a very young age."

25 | Kevin Herring
Lyric Street & Carolwood VP/Promotion

"I was appointed VP/Promotion at Mercury and got a call from a promotion exec at another label," says Turner Nichols Management's **Eddie Mascolo**. "He says to me, 'Hey, I don't know all your regionals, but the one I really do know is Kevin Herring. And if I were you, I'd fire that son-of-a-bitch immediately. He was a terrible music director in Detroit, and he's probably an even worse promo man.' I waited about a month, got to know Kevin and called the guy back to tell him he was really wrong. He was the best promo rep we had.

"I actually used to go down the hall, stand outside his door and listen to him promoting records. He had an answer for everything. Whatever a radio guy said to him, he had a response. Of course, [Lyric Street and Carolwood President] Randy Goodman tells the story about Carson James wanting to hire Kevin, and Randy said, 'Over my dead body.' And Kevin's been there, what, more than 10 years?"

26 | Coyote Calhoun
WAMZ/Louisville PD

"When Coyote and I worked together at WAKY/Louisville, he told me that he 'would break a leg for a good ratings book,'" says Regent VP/Programming **Bob Moody**. "I figured that could be arranged and managed to talk him into a professional wrestling match with Southern heavyweight champion Jerry 'The King' Lawler. Let's just say that Calhoun did not win. And it was one of our worst ratings books ever.

"Because he is such an extravagant character, too many people don't give Coyote credit for being a smart and shrewd programmer. Nobody has a better understanding of the Louisville market, partly because of his tenure in that city, but also because he spends so much of his time with the country life group in that region. He is the walking personification of country music in Louisville."

27 | Scott Mahalick
Alpha Broadcasting Dir./Music Programming KUPL/Portland PD

"Citadel bought a beautiful music station in Modesto that everyone now knows as Country KATM," says consultant **Bob Glasco**. "Scott was the first PD, and his number one skill is getting a radio station noticed in a market. He does that better than just about anybody I've ever seen. As a close second, he also has a way of getting everybody at the station, from the secretary to the weekender, excited. And that's a gift.

"The only problem in Modesto is there are no billboards or local television in that market. But there is a water tower along the 101 between Stockton and Modesto. So Scott made a deal with the owner of the tower to hang a banner, which everybody in the area saw. He also made a deal with a local truck driving school to pull a trailer wrapped with the station logo as they were doing their training every day. The station flipped the third week of August, and when the fall book came out he'd beaten the other two Country stations with a number in the mid-nines. When it comes to PT Barnum, he gets it."

28 | Gator Michaels
Warner Bros./Nashville SVP/Promotion

"Gator is the ultimate professional, from the suits he wears to the business he conducts day after day," says WB ND/Promotion **Bob Reeves**. "Gator has a very analytical mind; he thinks things through and makes sensible decisions. This is a knee-jerk business, where virtually everyone's jumping to conclusions on both sides of the record and radio industries these days. But no matter how quickly it seems that Gator has arrived at a decision, I know it's been well thought out and reasoned. That is a true rarity in any business, let alone the record biz."

29 | Keith Kaufman
WSIX/Nashville PD

"As simple as it sounds, Keith's number one attribute beyond his obvious talent is that he cares," says Clear Channel/Nashville VP/Market Mgr. **Tom English**. "He cares about the listeners, the artists, WSIX and his team. Heck, sometimes I think he even cares about me!

"Here are three recent examples of Keith's influence: He was way out front on Randy Houser's 'Anything Goes.' I think we have played it more than any other station. Keith was also early and heavy on Jamey Johnson's 'In Color.' Only two stations have played the ACM Song of the Year more. And now we're hammering 'Red Light' by David Nail, giving it the second-most plays of any station."

30 | Mike Kennedy
Wilks/Kansas City VP/Programming KBEQ/Kansas City PD

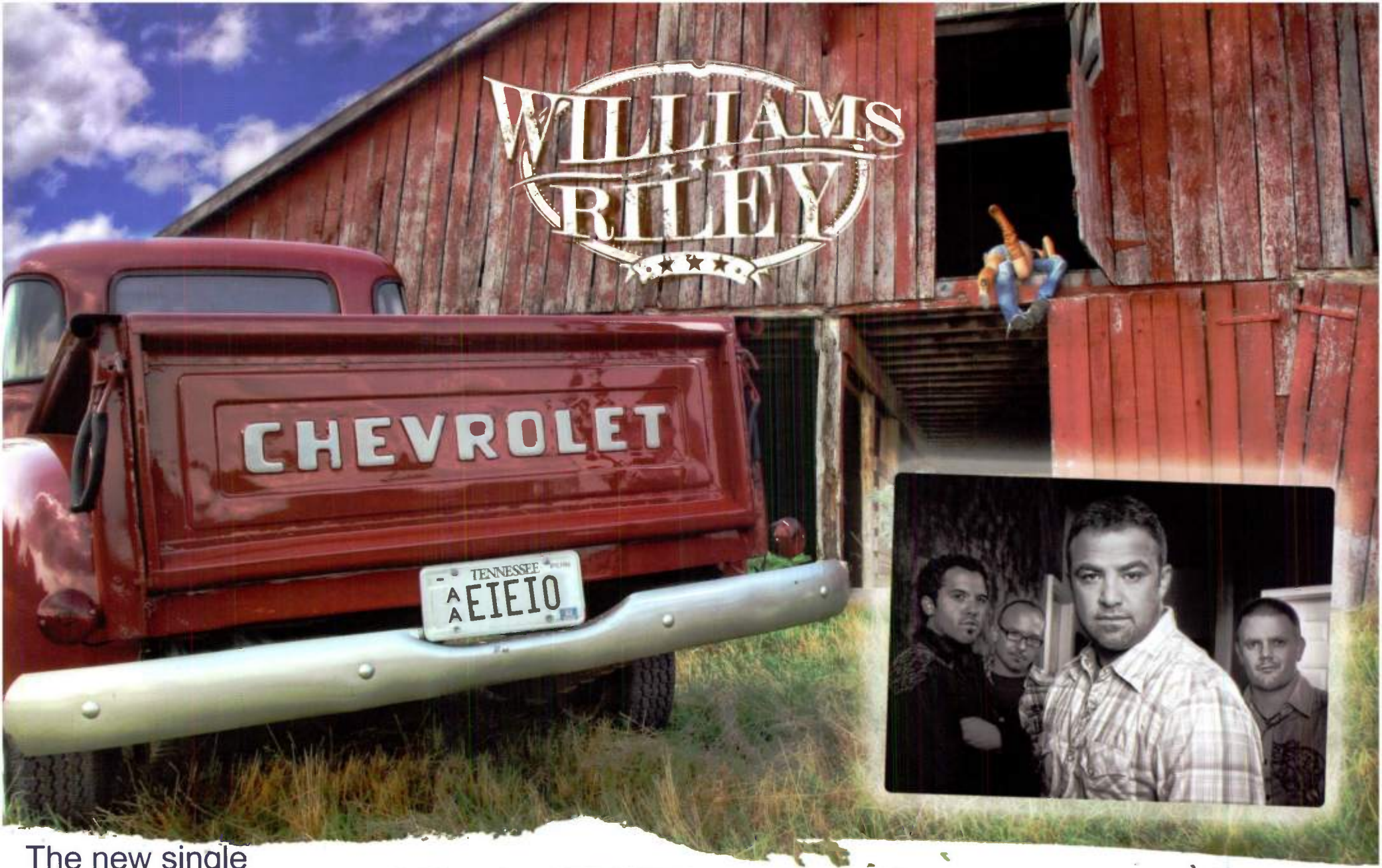
"I called Mike as I was writing the plan around the first Sugarland single, 'Baby Girl,'" says Carolwood Sr. Dir./National Promotion **John Ettinger**, who was at Mercury at the time. "It was a late-year single release, so there weren't many opportunities remaining for radio shows, and Mike had already locked up his show. But he trusted me, they played the show and had a huge response behind their single that hadn't yet gone for adds. I have similar stories about Toby Keith, Terri Clark, Shania, Billy Currington, Love And Theft – all of them.

"Mike has calm, strong passion. He has a way of battling for artists, singles or his station that never comes off as insecure or rude. He believes in music and backs it up. It does not matter what's going on with charts or the buzz of Nashville. I remember times when Mike worked harder getting me to like music than I worked him. He once played me a Miranda Lambert single seven straight times in a car. He tracked the entire Big & Rich debut at me three times on the deck of his house. On my last trip to Kansas City, he pulled out his iPod and put headphones on me to hear 'Beer Gut' from Trailer Choir. I'm like, 'I give, Mike. I'll add it!'"

31 | Michael O'Malley
Country Consultant

"Mike is the major market PD between the two of us, having programmed successfully for NBC at WYNY/New York, as well in Baltimore, Washington, and numerous other markets," says his consulting partner **Jaye Albright**. "He also is our 'real' research expert, and has a Masters in marketing research. He's a terrific teacher and compelling storyteller. He's creative tactically, and also an excellent strategic thinker.

"A gourmet chef, Mike understands that, just like a great restaurant, radio is all about providing more than just music and talk. It's about creating a larger than life, multi-sensory experience. With our weekly 'AccuTest' research reports on music, there's no one more hands-on with both the individual station, as well as regional and national data, than Mike. He knows what's working where and why, yet is always open to seeing and hearing something new and exciting, and offering his sage advice to music promotion executives and artists. That's especially true if the event or activity involves cooking!"



The new single

COUNTRY LIVIN'

"What a fun new band! These guys sound great and they've got great songs. This is some country fun!"
- Ken Boesen, WKIS/Miami

"Williams Riley is an exciting band with great songs! Listen to it. You won't be disappointed."
- Steve Geofferies, WSSL & WESC/Greenville, SC

"Easily one of the most compelling groups I've heard in a long time. Terrific writers, dynamic vocals, and first class production! That's why they're the American Country Countdown Superstar."
- Bryan Switzer, VP Programming, Citadel Media Networks

"It's refreshing to hear from a new band that's ready to roll with the whole package, great songs and an awesome live show! These guys have what it takes!"
- Brooks O'Brian, KSON/San Diego

"Polished, Fun and a welcome addition to country music! *COUNTRY LOVIN' IT, BABY!*"
- Cadillac Jack, KCYE/Las Vegas

"'Country Livin'' is better than Biscuits-n-Gravy. One listen and you'll want a second helpin'..."
- Dave Dunaway, WYPY/Baton Rouge

"This is just a hit! Young, fun, straight-ahead country. Williams Riley will ring the phones with this tune!"
- Joe Patrick, Consultant

"This is a great country song and Williams Riley delivers it ... this is ear candy!"
- Keith Hill, The Unconsultant

"Great song, exceptional harmonies, and an amazing band that delivers...both on record and on stage. I was drawn in immediately."
- Rob Beckham, William Morris Endeavor

"Williams Riley is loaded with great singers, accomplished musicians and hit songwriters! And I love this song!!!"
- Tim Owens, Co-Writer of "Country Livin" and the #1 Hits, "Ticks" and "Settlin"

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SEASONS CHANGE.

GREAT MUSIC NEVER DOES.

Good One Comin' On

Blackberry SMOKE

Emailing Is Easy. Texting Is Fast.
But Sometimes You Just Need To Make The Call.

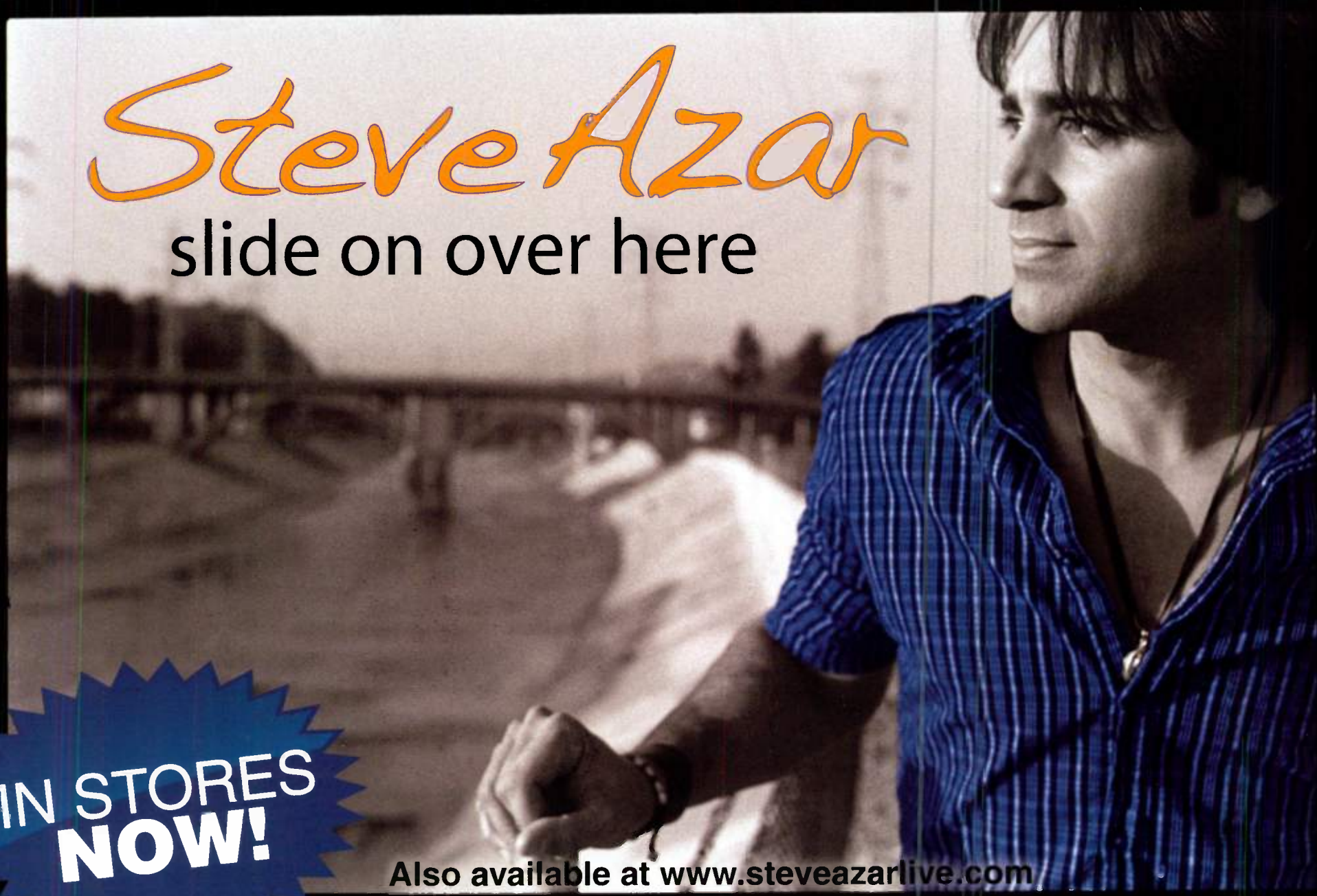
THE CALL

The compelling debut single from

MATT KENNON

COMING SOON!

BamaJam RECORDS™
A DIVISON OF RONNIE GILLEY ENTERTAINMENT



Country Weekly Gives *Slide On Over Here*

OUTSTANDING ★★★★ 4 STARS

Featuring the HIT Single... **"MOO LA MOO"**

NOW PLAYING ON COUNTRY RADIO!!

MOOVIN' BIG CITIES & SMALL TOWNS COAST TO COAST:

"WMIL listeners are really relating to & requesting this song...a humorous take on tough times. They love the fun of MOO LA MOO...and you will too."
-Kerry Wolfe, PD, WMIL/Milwaukee

"It is great to have Steve Azar back on the radio. 'Moo La Moo' is the perfect fit for the audience today. Who doesn't run out of money before we run out of month?"
– Charlie Cook, Sr. Manager of Programming, KKGO/Los Angeles

"MISS 103 here in Jackson has the MOOVES goin' on! We added the Azar a couple weeks back and it's already moved up to Medium Rotation. This song is a smash, and it rocks like no udder! Mooosick to our ears!"
- Steve Kelly, OM, WMSI-MISS 103/Jackson, MS

"Steve Azar hits the nail on the head with 'Moo La Moo!' Everyone in their life has been in the place that we all seem to be right now, 'Too Much Month At The End Of The Money!' All listeners can gravitate to this tune…we all are living it!"
- Scott D. Soderberg, OM/PD, U-S Country 99.9 KAUS/Austin, MN

PLAY IT...AND THEN PLAY IT SOME MORE!! RIDE RECORDS

WRH

BELL OF THE FALL

Fourth Quarter Music Preview

Five out of five advertisers, retailers, radio and record labels agree: fourth quarter is a big deal. From the holiday shopping season to the Fall book, there's no more crucial time for the businesses that comprise our industries. And, as in years past, Country Aircheck rings and Nashville promotion teams answer with their plans for the album and single releases that will have the potential to make, or break, 2009. Read on.

9 North

Nine North and Emerald River/JDP are releasing a new single from **Julia Burton** called "Party Down." Label President **Larry Pareigis** says, "I'm sure you already got the deeply cool cards with the single inside that plays the hook of the song when you open 'em!" Coming Oct. 5 is the single

Jason Crabb

"Somebody Like Me" from the three-time Grammy-nominated and 10-time Dove winner **Jason Crabb** on Springhill/Slanted. Also, expect to see **Bridgette Tatum** on the road in preparation of her January 2010 single "Cowboys Dirty." Tatum is the co-writer of Jason Aldean's No. 1 "She's Country." Last, but certainly not least, Nine North continues to focus on current singles from **Due West** ("I Get That All The Time"), **Matt Stillwell** ("Sweet Sun Angel"), **Darren Kozelsky** ("Seven Vern Gosdins Ago"), **Brady Seals** ("Ho Down"), **Song Trust** ("Choose Me") and **Nathan Lee Jackson** ("Desperate Man").

Arista

"Cowboy Casanova" is advancing **Carrie Underwood**'s new album *Play On*, which streets Nov. 3, according to Dir./Nat'l Promotion **Lesly Tyson**. Veep **Skip Bishop** adds, "The excitement from fans and radio for **Brad Paisley**'s 'Welcome To The Future' has been awesome. It was amazing to hear from our radio partners about the power of the single's video. It became one of the most successful campaigns using a superstar video to drive listeners to station websites."

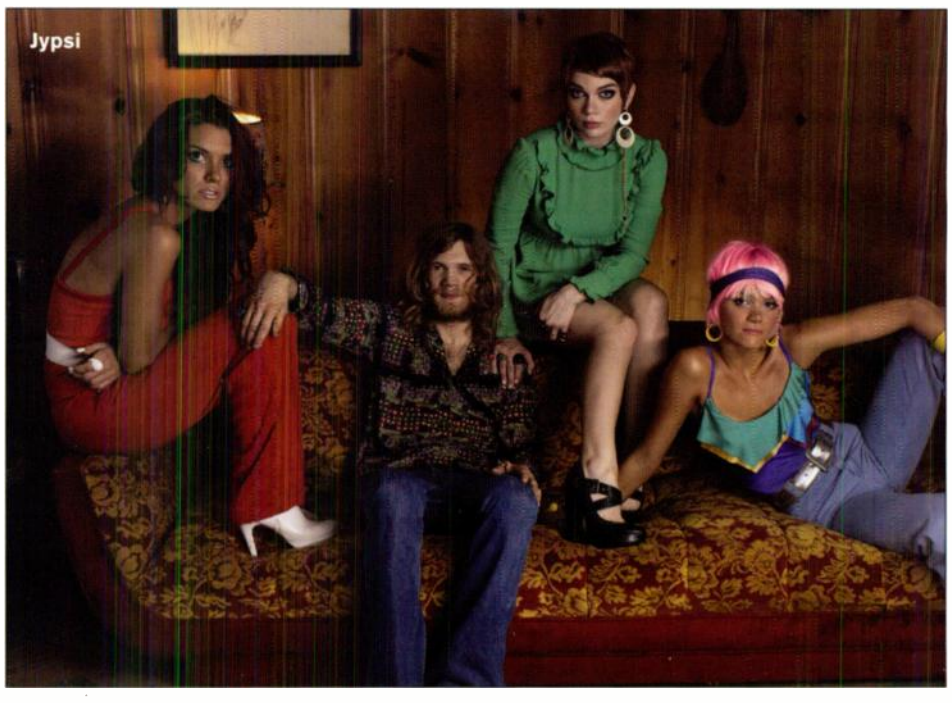
"**Jypsi** has just launched the first single 'Mister Officer,' co-written by Josh Kear ("Before He Cheats"), from their new project due in early 2010," Tyson says. "This wonderfully talented sibling crew has teamed up with award-winning producer Nathan Chapman, and the result is fresh, exciting country music that only the perfect chemistry of this artist/producer pairing could give us.

"**Jason Michael Carroll**'s second single 'Hurry Home' is on the rise with an instant reaction at radio," Tyson continues. "The follow-up to three huge radio hits, this song hits straight to the heart and again shows Jason's outstanding ability to connect in a powerful way with listeners.

"**Brooks and Dunn** are riding to the *Last Rodeo Tour* with one of the fastest-rising hits of their 20-year career. 'Honky Tonk Stomp' leaped onto radio organically and has continued to climb the charts in the same way. They couldn't have a more perfect song to launch their *#1s...And Then Some* album, in stores now."

BamaJam Records

BamaJam Records kicks off the fall with **Blackberry Smoke**'s debut single "Good One Comin' On." Their Dann Huff-produced *Little Piece of Dixie* is in stores now. "Blackberry Smoke has built a dedicated, active fan base over the last several years through touring, the Internet and mass media exposure," VP/


Jypsi

Promotion **Bill Macky** says. "'Up In Smoke' popped up in EA Sports' NASCAR '08, and 'Good One Comin' On' was featured prominently in the Kevin Costner political comedy *Swing Vote*." The imprint's second release is "The Call" from **Matt Kennon**. "We're getting very strong, positive reaction to this single, so much so that we've accelerated its release. In an age of texting and e-mailing, this song will remind all of us that the sound of someone's voice can make a huge difference in a person's life," promises Macky.

Big Machine

"Big Machine rolls full force into the fourth quarter with **Taylor Swift**'s new single 'Fifteen,' the follow-up to four consecutive No. 1 hits," reports Sr. Dir./Nat'l Promotion Strategy/New Media **John Zarling**. "The track is supported with an awareness campaign targeted to Country radio's youth audience, in conjunction with Best Buy's @15 Foundation. Taylor-voiced TSAs (Teen Service Announcements) are available to support the single. An enhanced edition of *Fearless* is due in late October with promotional opportunities available for country radio.

"**Jack Ingram**'s long-awaited *Big Dreams & High Hopes* release already features the hit 'That's A Man' and the current smash 'Barefoot And Crazy.' The third single from the album is expected to be released in late September. Jack will be on the road this fall performing with Gary Allan on his *Get Off On The Pain* tour.

"Big Machine's newest artists **Steel Magnolia** took home the top prize on CMT's top-rated *Can You Duet?* show this summer. The boyfriend/girlfriend duo come scorching into the fall with their debut single 'Keep On Lovin' You.'" Zarling says the Dan Huff-produced track is impacting now, and will lead their debut album, set for Q1 release.

Bigger Picture

Michael Powers checks in with the fall priorities for his team. Partnering with RoadRunner/Loud & Proud, **Lynyrd Skynyrd** goes for adds with "Simple Life" Sept. 14, followed by their album release *God And Guns* Sept. 29. At radio now is "Long After I'm Gone" from Glotown/Love Everybody's **Big Kenny**, with his solo album *The Quiet Times Of A Rock And Roll Farmboy* out Oct. 27. "Highway 20 Ride" will be the follow-up to Atlantic/Home Grown's **Zac Brown Band**'s "Toes," which is currently in the Top 20 on the Mediabase/**Country Aircheck** chart. A TBD single and album are also expected from Atlantic's **Jesse Lee**.

Jesse Lee

BELL OF THE FALL

BNA

VP/Promotion **Bryan Frasher** and staff continue to work their current records: **Kenny Chesney**'s "I'm Alive" featuring Dave Matthews, **Kellie Pickler**'s "Didn't You Know How Much I Loved You," **The Lost Trailers**' "Country Folks (Livin' Loud)" and **Craig Morgan**'s "Bonfire."

BROKEN BOW

SVP **Carson James** and crew are prepping for "Tomboy," the latest from Holeshot's **Krista Marie.** And, "The Truth" will come from **Jason Aldean** this quarter, following his multi-week No. 1, 'Big Green Tractor.'"

CAPITOL

"It's truly been 'History In The Making' for **Darius Rucker**," says SVP/Promotion **Steve Hodges**. "And that aptly named title is now the fourth single from his debut platinum album. **Luke Bryan**'s sophomore album, featuring the powerful hit 'Do I,' is titled *Doin' My Thing*, and that will be out Oct. 6. Coming in early October is **Eric Church**'s 'Hell On The Heart' as the follow-up single to his hit 'Love Your Love The Most.'" Hodges also pledges a special present for Country radio just in time for Christmas: "Expect a new single late in Q4 from superstar **Keith Urban**!"

CAROLWOOD

"We're so excited about **Love And Theft**'s second single, 'Dancing In Circles,' which will be out before the holidays," says Sr. Dir./National Promotion **John Ettinger**. "This is a song radio has begged for – one we believe showcases LnT's unique mesh of adult, family songwriting with a sound and presentation that speaks to the growing younger country audience. Over the next five years these guys will become a musical force dear to the hearts of this fresh generation of country fans. We all truly believe this."

Next out of the gate are **The Parks**. "This father-son duo have been playing and hosting a party around the single 'The Party's Right Here,' an uptempo romp. We came to a very important conclusion on The Parks: they are best first experienced in the element of the honky-tonk, mentally or actually."

The label also boasts a new single from **Trent Tomlinson**. "'Angels Like Her' is set to go for airplay in mid-fall," says Ettinger. "Trent calls this 'the best song I've ever written,' and it showcases his passionate ability to capture relationships and feeling with simple, poetic lyrics." VP/Promotion **Kevin Herring** calls the first line "an epic unto itself."

CO5

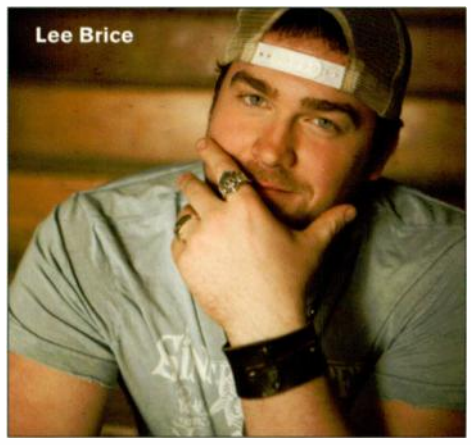
VP/Promotion **David Newmark**'s big push is The **McClymonts**' "My Life Again." "They're from Australia, won the CMAA Best Group or Duo award for the last three years, and blew everyone away at the Global Artist Showcase during CMA Music Fest," Newmark tells us. "They're finishing up their U.S. promo tour, and you'll see they are as beautiful and as talented as you get." During the fourth quarter, CO5 continues to work **Billy Ray Cyrus**' "A Good Day" and **Joey + Rory**'s "Just Say Goodbye."

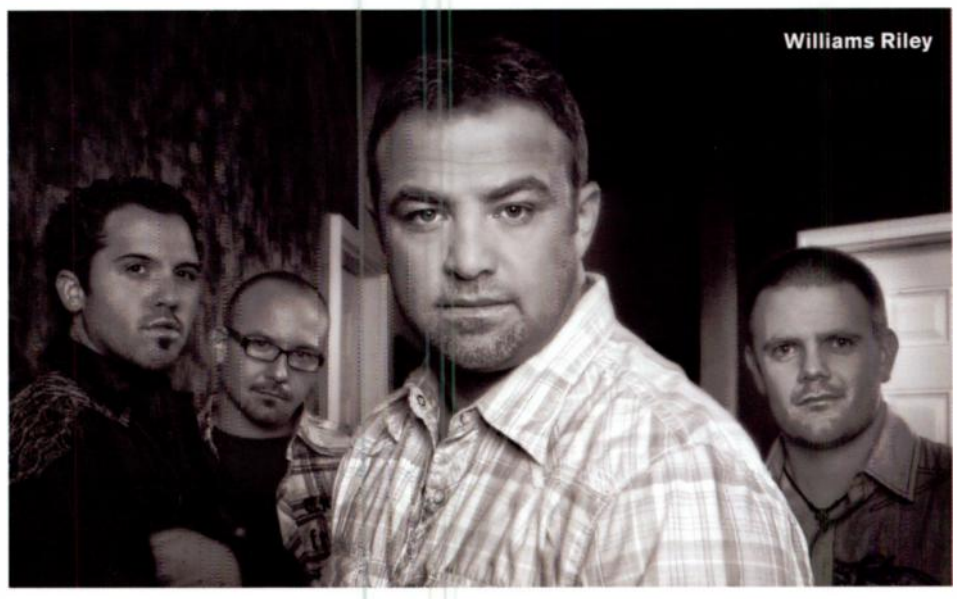
COLD RIVER

What's the latest on **Katie Armiger**? According to label honcho **Pete O'Heeron**, "Katie is busy finishing up the writing for her third album and will then head to the studio to record. Her first single will hit the streets sometime in November."

COLUMBIA

VP/National Promotion **Jimmy Rector** affirms that "Beer On The Table," the debut single by **Josh Thompson**, and "White Liar" by gold-certified **Miranda Lambert** are top priorities through Q4. He says, "'Long Line Of Losers' will be followed up by new music from **Montgomery Gentry**, and take my word for it: it will be great."


Lee Brice


Williams Riley

COUNTRY CROSSING

VP/Promotion **Bill Macky** says, "Named after the company's entertainment complexes, Country Crossing Records is home to some of the most beloved artists in our format. Look for new releases this fall from **John Anderson** ('Bigger Hands'), **Lorrie Morgan** ('Leaving On Your Mind') and **Lee Greenwood** ('Why Lie')."

CUPIT

It's a prolific fourth quarter for VP/Marketing & Promotions **Dan Hagar**, who says, "We're thrilled to be delivering two strong new releases to radio this fall: **Mustang Creek**'s *Love Makes The World Go Round*, featuring the title track and 'He Drinks Tequila.'" This fall holds the premiere of Pacific Northwest newcomer **Ben Gregg**, who has as many as three singles ready to go: "From Lonely To Love," "Gifts" and "She Saves The Slow Ones For Me."

CURB

Curb kicks off the fourth quarter with the re-launching of **Bomshel** as "19 & Crazy" goes for adds Sept. 21. The girls follow with their *Fight Like A Girl* album release Oct. 20. Also in September, expect a song from **Hank Williams, Jr.** featuring the Grascals called "All The Roads." October brings a new single from **Clay Walker**, the first from his TBA album, and **Tim McGraw**'s *Southern Voice*, in stores Oct. 20. VP/Promotion **Adrian Michaels** and crew will also be working the current singles – McGraw's "It's A Business Doing Pleasure With You," **Rodney Atkins**' "15 Minutes" and **Lee Brice**'s "Love Like Crazy" – into the fall.

GOLDEN MUSIC

"We could not be more proud and excited about our first release with **Williams Riley**," Nat'l Dir./Promotion **Darlene Starr** says. "The new single 'Country Livin'' was written the first week of June (yes, 2009) by Williams Riley's Steve Williams and Derek George with Tim Owens ('Ticks', 'Settlin''). This song is the anthem for why women and men, girls and boys, love country. Williams Riley will be on the road solid through the end of the year, doing radio shows and visits, and meeting consumers and listeners!" Hitting the road before the end of the year is Golden's second artist, **Benton Blount**, whom Starr describes as "a North Carolina native with a big voice full of country soul."

LOFTON CREEK

Label chief **Mike Borchetta** alerts us that a new **Mark Chesnutt** CD is in the works, while both **Hoyt Hughes** and new group **Soul Circus Cowboys** are busy in the studio, with singles TBA.

LYRIC STREET

"We are chomping at the bit for the fourth quarter at Lyric Street," says Sr. Dir./Nat'l Promotion **Renee' Leymon**. "The new single from **Rascal Flatts** is on your desk and, like the title of the CD and name of their tour, *Unstoppable*, these guys are just that.

"**Bucky Covington**'s sophomore CD, *Alright*, is due out this fall. The current single 'I Want My Life Back' continues to ascend the charts and connect with listeners everywhere.

The Parks

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WRH

BELL OF THE FALL

As his first album approaches gold, Bucky's fans are anxious for the new release, and so are we! There are some great new songs on the new album and some surprises, too, including a Nickelback remake that Bucky nails. Next thing you know, he'll cover Lionel Richie!

"**Sarah Buxton**'s 'Outside My Window' is starting kick down some doors. This girl oozes 'happy' out of the radio speakers! Her video is also creating a stir – it's the best 80 bucks ever spent, featuring cameo appearances from super-songwriters Gary Burr, Victoria Shaw, and a big bag of Skittles. Sarah's new CD is slated for early 2010."

MCA

"Fresh on the heels of delivering 'King' **George Strait** his 58th No. 1, there will be aw second single TBD from *Twang*," assures VP/Radio Marketing **Katie Dean.** "We've had huge reaction to the **Mallary Hope** single 'Love Lives On,' so much so that a digital EP is available now. Her full-length album is slated for early 2010. **Josh Turner** returns to radio airwaves with 'Why Don't We Just Dance,' the first single from his forthcoming album *Haywire*. **Gary Allan** is also back with a new single from an upcoming project, as 'Today' climbs the chart. And **David Nail**'s 'Red Light' is still a *go* this fall, as we're inside the top 20 and growing strong."

"**Billy Currington** follows No. 1 hits 'Don't' and 'People Are Crazy' with 'That's How Country Boys Roll,' impacting radio in September. **Jamey Johnson** is currently on the chart with 'My Way To You,' his first single from the as-yet-untitled sophomore album on Mercury.

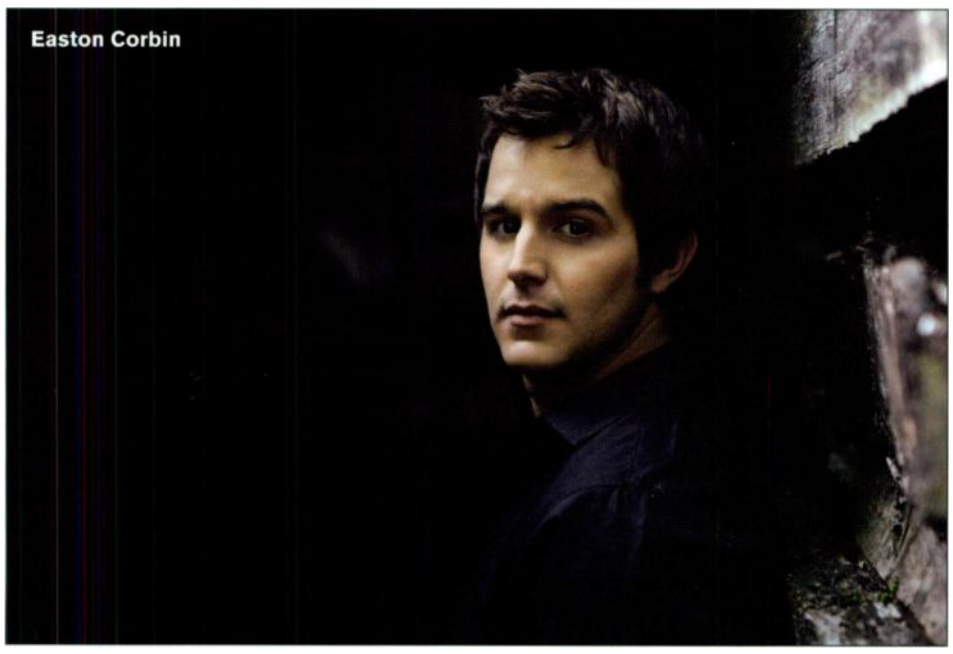
"The current **Sugarland** single 'Joey' appears on two of the duo's album-chart-topping releases, *Love On The Inside* and *Live On The Inside*. They will also be releasing a full-length Christmas album, *Gold And Green*, in October. **Julianne Hough** is back in the studio working on her second release. The first single is expected late 2009 or early 2010."

QUARTERBACK

President **Chris Allums** says his company is pushing hard for the current single from Cold River's **Katie Armiger**, "Gone." He tips us that American Root's **Telluride**'s follow-up to their debut single, "Pencil Marks," will be "Stay" from their *Four Square Miles* album, adding "We've got a new **Stephen Cochran** record on deck, and more great music for a big first quarter of '10."

RCA

Radio can look forward to new music from a new album by **Chuck Wicks**, says VP/Promotion **Keith Gale**. "We'll be impacting with that in the fourth quarter, and we'll have a follow-up single to **Chris Young**'s current hit 'Gettin' You Home (The Black Dress Song)'; a follow-up from **Jake Owen** after his latest hit 'Eight Second Ride'; and something new from **Martina McBride** after her current hit 'I Just Call You Mine' runs its course."


Easton Corbin

MERCURY

UMG's Katie Dean also shares sister label Mercury's fourth quarter plans: "We'll continue to capitalize on the early momentum of new artist **Easton Corbin** with his debut single 'A Little More Country Than That.' A four-song digital EP is available on iTunes now, with a full album release scheduled for early 2010.

REPUBLIC NASHVILLE

Preaching the gospel from one of Nashville's newest labels is Dir./Nat'l Promotion **Bobby Young**: "Look for the debut single from the newly signed **The Band Perry** in the fourth quarter. TBP cut its teeth in the dusty roadhouses of Mobile, AL and soon graduated to national tours, including the 2005 *Coca-Cola's New Faces of Country* tour, followed by *TGI Friday's Friday Night Concerts* tour in 2006. Kimberly, Reid and Neil Perry inherited a cross-pollinated love of country and rock and roll from their parents; Daddy rocked them to sleep with the Rolling Stones, while Mama woke them up with Loretta Lynn. A radio tour will already be underway by the time you're reading this, and I promise you are going to fall in love with The Band Perry and their music!"

At press time, **Fast Ryde** had wrapped up their radio promotion tour with their debut single "That Thang" already at radio. Look for a first-quarter album release.

SHOW DOG

"**Toby Keith**'s *American Ride* rumbles into stores Oct. 6," says VP/Promotion **Rick Moxley** as he dons his riding gear. Around the corner for the Big Dawg is "Days You Live For" from **Mica Roberts**, who co-wrote the song with Regie Hamm (David Cook's "Time Of My Life") and Lee Thomas Miller ("You're Gonna Miss This," "In Color"). The sisters of **Carter's Chord** are also back with "You Knock Me Out," produced by Keith and written by Josh Kear ("Before He Cheats").

STONEY CREEK

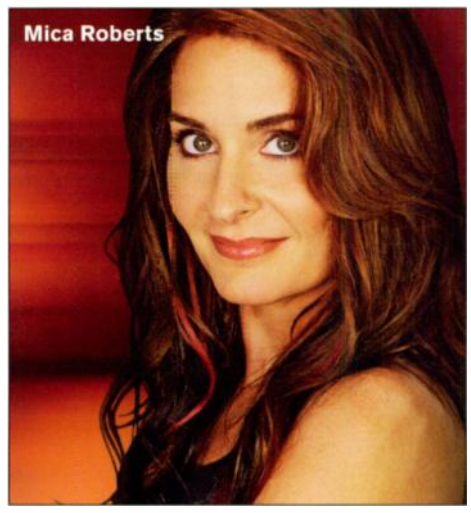
SVP/Promotion **Carson James** tells us to expect a TBA follow up single to **Megan Mullins**' "Long Past Gone," sometime in the fourth quarter.

STROUDAVARIOUS

"Both **Bill Catino** and I have to send a huge 'thank you' to Country radio for their continued support of **Darryl Worley**'s 'Sounds Like Life To Me,'" starts VP/Promotion **Bill Macky**. "We're heading for Top 10 with this single, and I don't know that I've seen an artist work harder for it than Darryl.

"We couldn't be more excited about the new music we have coming in the quarter," he continues. "Hit songwriter **Anthony Smith** is off and running with his debut single 'Bringing Back The Sunshine.' Anthony co-produced the album with **James Stroud** and the result is really special. We can't wait to share it. We are also ready to launch our new group **Houston County** with 'I Can't Make It Rain,' which is going for adds now. We've seen incredibly strong test results on this single already. They had a hand in writing every song on their debut CD, which will be out early next year and is being produced by Stroud.

"Next up are the **LoCash Cowboys**. These guys are going to surprise a lot of people in a really good way. This duo has been working on the road together for the last five or six years, doing nearly 200 paid dates a year. Their Stroudavarious debut was produced by Jeffrey Steele, who co-wrote songs with LoCash that will connect with the listeners in so many different ways."


Mica Roberts

TREEHOUSE

Treehouse VP/Promotion **Tony Benken** and staff continue to work **Blaine Larsen**'s single "It Did." His album *Not Too Bad* will be released before the end of the year.

UNIVERSAL SOUTH

Randy Houser's "My Kind Of Country" is up next for Universal South VP/Promotion **Teddi Bonadies** with an Oct. 5 add date. At press time Houser's second single "Boots On" had already cracked the Top 5, as Bonadies points out, "the only new male artist to go this far on the chart this year.

"We have a new **Joe Nichols** album coming out in October. His single 'Believers' is currently a top 25 record from that album. Also, we have a new **Phil Vassar** track 'Everywhere I Go,' co-written with Jeffrey Steele and impacted Sept. 8. His next CD is due in November. Last up, **Jonathan Singleton And The Grove** will release 'Look Who's Back In Love' in November from their upcoming 2010 release."

VALORY

"The new artist development story of 2009 has been **Justin Moore**," declares Dir./Nat'l Promotion **Chris Loss**. "After a killer sales debut from a 'baby act' (over 34k) and the Top 5 airplay of 'Small Town USA', we'll be coming out guns blazing with two-and-a-half minutes of tempo known as 'Backwoods'!

"The evolution of the **Reba**-lution continues in late 2009 with a smash from this gem of our format, 'Consider Me Gone.' Fresh off her record-setting No. 1 country CD debut and No. 1 Top 200 CD debut, this superstar is ready, set, go for airplay. After numerous requests from our partners at Country radio, **Jimmy Wayne** has cut 'Sara Smile.' Dann Huff is putting the finishing touches on this piece of audio magic that will be Jimmy's next hit!" CAC

The Band Perry

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JAN JEFFRIES

Gold-Standard Radio

Cumulus Media Sr. VP/Programming Jan Jeffries oversees 372 stations across several formats and is hands-on with 51 properties, including Country KPLX (The Wolf)/Dallas, WFMS/Indianapolis and WSM-FM/Nashville. Prior to joining the company 12 years ago, Jeffries spent almost 30 years as a highly regarded major market personality and programmer in Chicago, Atlanta, Tampa and Baltimore, among other markets. Jeffries was Cumulus' Format Dir./Pop in June 2005 when he was promoted to Sr. Format Dir./Pop, rising to VP/Programming in June 2006 and SVP/Programming in April 2007.

What is your role as Cumulus' top programmer?
It's my job to make sure all Cumulus stations are executing the strategy daily. My responsibilities include all formats: Country, Top 40, Rhythmic Top 40, Hot AC, Mainstream AC, AAA, Rock, Urban AC and Mainstream Urban. We have very talented VPs and Format Directors in Atlanta who are trusted implicitly with programming and music decisions on a daily basis. They are the best in the business and work in tandem with some of America's great PDs at our Cumulus properties. For sake of discussion and assurance of maintaining pinpoint focus, the VPs and I discuss and sign off on the weekly music lists and rotation updates prior to presenting them to our PDs for discussion. It's a check-and-balance system within the centralized culture of the company.

The music is the fun element of programming. The most gratifying element is developing new air talent and growing veteran talent. I have long maintained a keen interest in authoring and presenting the Morning Show War College on a regular basis to our talent throughout the company across the formats. It focuses on personality development, case histories, disclosure of a morning show's Q score, strengths and vulnerabilities and listener expectations, among other proprietary difference makers. CEO/President Lew Dickey and COO John Dickey set the Cumulus gold standard and raise the bar consistently, providing us with the tools we need to differentiate with excellence in our markets. The proof is exhibited in our ratings across the formats and markets.

How many stations do you personally oversee?
I keep a finger on the pulse and direction of 372 properties and am personally hands-on with 51 stations. The majority of those 51 are made up of CHR, Rhythmic CHR and AC. Among the Country stations, I work directly with WFMS/Indianapolis, WSM-FM/Nashville and, of course, my pride and joy, KPLX (The Wolf), where I temporarily moved my Atlanta corporate office to Dallas for almost a year, doing double duty as the Wolf's PD. The special place in my heart for The Wolf in Dallas is due to victory over naysayers, that a CHR guy could not drive in to Dallas and turn it around. Turn it around we did, from worst to first – No. 13 to No. 1 – before I returned to Atlanta.

We changed everything at KPLX, ranging from a complete reload of the morning show, midday talent, PM drive and night talent, imaging voice-over, music library, current rotations, slogan, logo and a deliberate retooling of talent show prep requirements and presentation. We also changed out the kitchen sink! KPLX remains No. 1 25-54 Adults, 6+ and 12+. It is closely watched and guided as one of our major company achievements operating on the Cumulus gold-standard of executing strategy.

With so many stations, how do you manage your time in order to attend to every one?
As with all our corporate programmers, we have hopefully developed skills not only as master strategists, but equally as important, as masters at time management and at prioritizing the attack list. Being organized and loving what you do is a great contributor to achieving the art of relatively stress-free productivity. A checklist of consistently changing priorities daily is advised. The late, legendary broadcaster Jay Cook told me years ago that each evening just before leaving the station he would make a priority list of things to attack the next morning. I still do it daily.

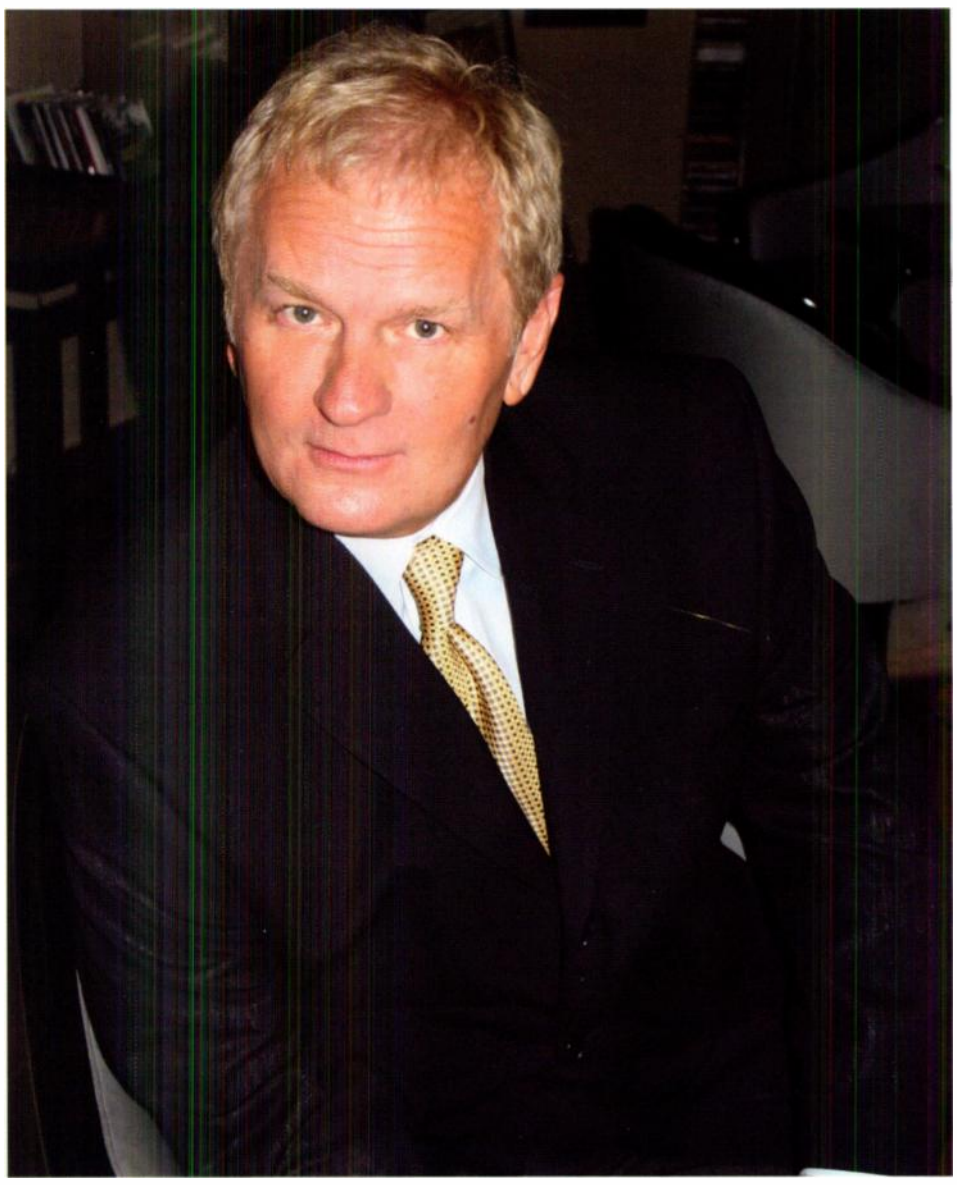
Earlier you said that part of your job is to make sure people follow the strategy. What is the strategy? How much of a station strategy is local, and how much is a national overview of the way a particular format should be executed?
A little background first: Most of our markets have individual market research, and it's not research that's farmed out. Lew and John Dickey ran Stratford Research, a formidable consulting company based on *research*, not on campfire stories by PDs who became consultants (and I know because I used to be one of them!) telling what worked somewhere else, saying, "We're going to put it in, and it's gonna work *here*, too." Sometimes we were right, sometimes we were not. Stratford, on the other hand, would research a market, and then, in common radio terms instead of research lingo, present the executive summary of what needed to be done. When Lew became President of Cumulus, he promoted me to President of Stratford Research. That was the beginning of me really finding out that a PD without a very accurate map of what needs to be done can end up being a music director on steroids; that is, [thinking] it's just all about the music. But it's *not* just all about the music, because several stations in your market have the same songs you have. The strategy comes from the studies and it's about the nuances – things not always obvious to the listener or the competition. The nuances are what you're really paying for, and they really make the difference.

The research yields a road map that turns MDs on steroids into strategists. And then, hopefully, with corporate help, they become master strategists. At that point, they are able to read the market, listen for the differentiation, listen for the superlatives, use the tools they have and use the information to turn their stations into winners. For instance, fixing KPLX was not that hard. We changed every single thing, and people were looking at me like, "Jan, what is going on?" And I said, "The research points [out] that we need to do things a little differently. Voila! We followed the strategy. Prior to me taking the KPLX PD reins, the station was not really following the strategy. They were doing things that they thought, as radio people, were right, but the whole thing is doing what the *audience* wants you to do, not what we want.

What are your overall thoughts on the state of Country radio today?
It's growing in appeal across the masses with the influx of new and very talented artists. The big winner is Country radio. It's a pleasure to listen to a well-programmed Country station that achieves a perfect music balance of country greats like George Strait, Alan Jackson and Brooks & Dunn with fresh new talent like Lady Antebellum, Taylor Swift, Carrie Underwood and Jason Aldean, among others. Country radio is the only radio format that legitimately and successfully mixes the heritage artists with new artists. CHR, AC, Rock and Urban stations struggle to make it work.

You've had a long career in Top 40. What differences and similarities are there in other formats where you have spent most of your career? Are there some things in Top 40 radio formatics that don't work in Country radio?
The one commonality that allows a historically pop programmer like myself to spread his wings and grow in other formats is that great radio is great radio, regardless of format. Yes, we made distinctive musical changes at KPLX that helped catapult it back into the game. However, there was one major initiative across the dayparts that helped make a difference. The difference came from every day – yes, *every day* – meetings with the morning show and several times a week with the personalities in middays, PM drive and nights. I knew the good winds of change were blowing when the morning show would hang around past noon some days to voluntarily meet about today's and tomorrow's show.

There are many basics that work for both Country and pop. In the "not so good" column, the one thing I picked up on, as opposed to pop radio, Country listeners are not quick to accept crossover songs from rock and pop. While Darius Rucker comes from pop, he has more than successfully shown his love for country music and the fans. In my opinion, Darius and his writing partners are prolific writers, and he is simply a great artist delivering on expectations to country fans.



I'm always curious to talk to programmers with long histories in other formats about their impressions of Nashville, the way Country music is and how it works – especially the relationships between the labels and Country radio. How have you found it to be different or similar to the pop world? Any surprises?
No surprises, just variations of the same thing. The pop world has some great SVPs and VPs who do a great job of serving their artists, first and foremost, and their labels, and who also work well with broadcasters. It's the same thing in Country, although things here seem a little bit more closely knit, if you will, between the labels and the people who work with each other. Label people have strong opinions. Maybe the opinions aren't any stronger than the pop side, but the Country label folks seem

> WE'RE ALL IN THIS BUSINESS BECAUSE WE LOVE IT. AT THE SAME TIME -- NOT "HOWEVER" OR "BUT" – WE WANT PEOPLE TO REACH A NEW LEVEL: SET THE BAR HIGH, ACHIEVE THAT BAR AND RAISE THE BAR AGAIN. THAT'S THE CUMULUS GOLD STANDARD.

to be a little bit more verbal. They'll tell you right to your face what they think about what you're doing. And you know what? That's absolutely fine. I would almost prefer that.

One of my strengths in fixing KPLX was that I wasn't biased about the format or the expectations. I had no sense of how the Nashville labels worked. I understand it is a game, I totally get it, and I've learned to work with it. I won't always agree with it, but there are some great people in Nashville who have reached out and have helped us come up with some really good ideas for our radio stations. And there's not any problem with Nashville and Dallas, believe me.

Do you have an overall programming philosophy?

I love this question because it reminds me of the majority of resumes that I receive including the applicant's "programming philosophy." I have never read anyone's predetermined, programming philosophy. The best programming philosophy is to execute the station's strategy with attention to fine details. It varies widely from market to market and station to station, making it impossible for a one-size-fits-all philosophy.

Focusing on Cumulus' Country stations, is there an overall programming philosophy for them?

Each station has a personality and listener expectation unique to its market. There is not a general philosophy for all of our Country stations. We strive to deliver a "local" radio station in music preferences, talent content presentation and imaging. That is achieved by the PD and staff knowing their market better than anyone and relating to it through every programming element.

How much autonomy is granted local PDs with music, promotions and talent hiring and firings?

Each week we listen to new product. If we believe a new release is a hit, we play it. It's really that simple. Our PDs may call me anytime and request a change of rotation or add to the playlist if it is for the improvement of the station and comes with valid reasoning. Promotions and contests are largely dependent on our PDs and promotion directors. Once the specifics are determined, we discuss it in detail with the intent of maximizing the promotion to the fullest using our resources in Atlanta.

With regards to hiring and firing, the PD will discuss the need for the personnel change. If everything is in order, the PD follows through. We help our PDs place talent through the Cumulus Talent Bench. We also like to promote from within the company.

What's your process and criteria for recruiting PDs and air talent? What skill sets are you looking for that you might not have looked for 5-10 years ago?

We look for team players who are capable and willing to embrace the culture of our company. We are centralized, with programming experts contributing 24/7 back to our markets. On the flip side, we have brilliant PDs providing great ideas and feedback. The successful candidate for a Cumulus PD post is ideally multi-faceted and multi-tasking as well as multi-talented. We hire people who have the drive and desire to become master strategists.

KPLX and KKGO/Los Angeles go back and forth for the title as Country's No. 1-cuming station. Obviously, you've learned a few things about PPM.

It is nice to have bragging rights. However, the big achievement is conversion of over a million cume to healthy ATE (Average Time Exposed) and ultimately share percentage. We do the same thing with over a million cume with our CHRs in Atlanta and Houston. We have learned that PPM does not always favor the incumbent or the "in" station at the moment. PPM gives credit for actual listening. What a concept! It is also unforgiving to less than gold-standard programming.

You've referred to the Cumulus "gold-standard" a number of times. What exactly do you mean by that?

It's staying on target, following and embellishing the plan, polishing the stone every single day. If we do that, these stations grow. It's amazing; it's like magic. When you're not doing gold-standard work, you're off target and not operating at the level we expect of our PDs. I think I can speak for Lew and John in saying that they expect all of us, every day, to come in and enjoy our job. We're all in this business because we love it. So love it and enjoy it. At the same time – not "however" or "but" – we want people to reach a new level, set the bar high, achieve that bar and raise the bar again. That's the gold-standard.

You've also mentioned Cumulus' "centralized culture" a couple of times. Can you give me a deeper feel for what exactly that means?

People have this misconception of Cumulus as one-size-fits-all. That's the farthest thing from the truth because of our research and our individualism of each radio station.

We're centralized from the standpoint that things come through Atlanta. But what's wrong with that? We're able to put the icing and the cherry on top of good ideas. If someone has a good idea for a promotion, I may have something that would make that absolutely, over-the-top the best promotion they've done in a long time. And I've just been saving it to tack it onto something. It's the unity of their idea with something that I've got that makes it a sensational promotion, contest, new format clock or whatever. It's all about working together.

This is truly a team effort. When people talk about us being very hands-on with our PDs, there's one thing that seems to be forgotten. When Cumulus was started, it acquired a lot of small- and medium-market radio stations that were mom-and-pop shops operating on a certain level that worked for them, and it was fine. We were mostly major-market people. That's not any better than being in any other size market, but you are exposed to a different level of doing things. So we would implement things and would try to teach people. Those who wanted to learn, flourished. And those who didn't, left – they quit or whatever.

So we were the big, bad wolf, because the perception was we came in and changed the party. But that's not what we did. We improved what they were doing and helped them grow. We didn't see anything wrong with that. So, are we hands-on? Yes. Is it one-size-fits-all? No. We encourage input from our PDs because we want them to have a sense of ownership. At the same time, my responsibility is making sure that each of our stations is absolutely optimized. And sometimes that requires change or modification.

PDs have the absolute freedom to call me and say, "Jan, as you know from our market study, this station leans a particular way. And this record flies in the face of the strategy that we're adding across the board. What if I wait on that one and put in this other song that's on the discussion list? Maybe we add it a week early because we're probably going to add it anyway, right?" And I'll say, "You know what? You're right. Do it. Good thinking." It is *not*. "Here's the list."

When we hire PDs – and it's probably true of other department heads, too – we ask that we not get surprised, because we will not surprise them. We look for input from our PDs because it's a two-way street. And, we have a lot to offer them. It's amazing how people come in and think – just like I did when I joined the company – "I am *really* good at this." You learn real fast that you are pretty good at some things, but there are so many good things to learn based on the gold-standard – and I say this in complete sincerity – that is set by Lew and John Dickey. It spreads throughout the company to those who want to learn and grow in their career.

We look for input from our PDs because you know what it does? It makes me better. And it continually grows not only my knowledge and my overview, but it increases my enthusiasm knowing that I, too, continue to grow, and that's what it's all about. It also lets me know that my guys and gals out there are working and thinking, not just scheduling music, putting out fires, going to meetings and doing the weekend schedule. They are hopefully learning through example. And we ask them to prioritize their time, look at the day and week, to take time to listen to the market and to markets outside of their own through the Internet, and get ideas and expand their thinking. People who do that make the company stronger.

What are some of the misconceptions people have about you? About Cumulus?

I do not know of any specific misconceptions. However, I am sure there are some, as there are with any successful company that strives for excellence and will not settle for anything less. It is a company started by two broadcasters, Lew and John Dickey, who work to achieve excellence and expect their key people to do likewise and make a difference every day. The gold-standard of Cumulus is trumped only by the interpersonal skills and caring for its valued employees by our executive leaders.

Who have been your mentors, and why? What's some of the best advice you've ever been given?

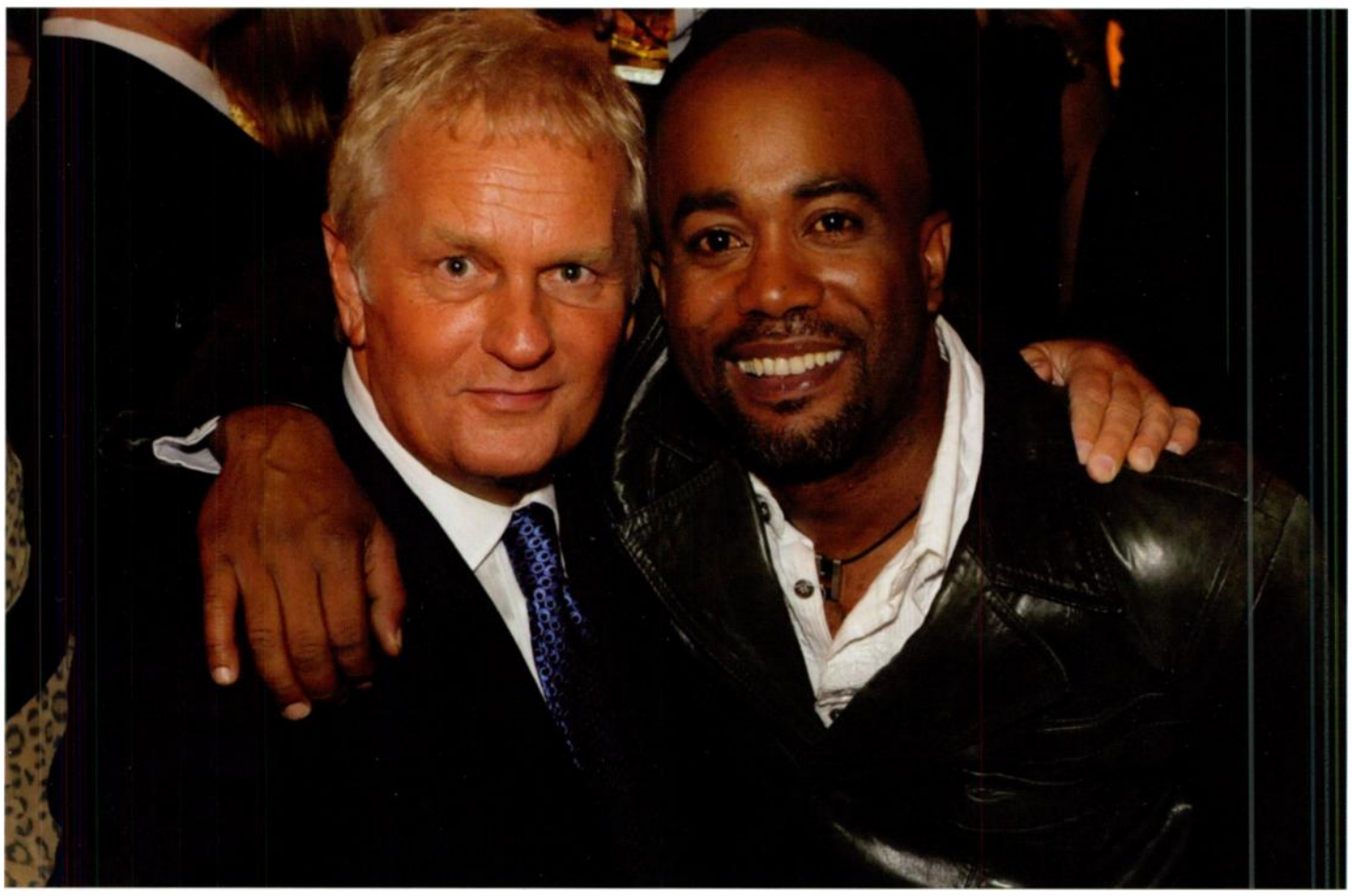
First and foremost, my dad was the most influential person and my mentor no matter what career path I took. He passed away in '95. But he was the man. His work ethic was second to none, driven for perfection and always caring for those around him. The things he loved more than his career were my mom, my sister and me and his faith in God. The best advice from my dad was to be myself and do my best in all that I do.

I'd still like to know who you consider as your radio heroes.

In the '80s, it was John Gehron while we were at WLS/Chicago and Jay Cook during his programming years at WFIL/Philadelphia and overseeing KIIS/Los Angeles. From the mid-'90s to now, it's John Dickey. He's had the biggest influence on me, my knowledge of this business and my ability to execute it, and I think we execute it as well, if not better, than everybody else out there. It ain't bragging when you can back it up with numbers, right? But I owe it to him. I've worked for some fabulous broadcasters in Baltimore, Chicago, Washington, Tampa, Atlanta and on the West coast. But if I had to say who really got me into being smart and operating on that kind of level and being a strategist – a master strategist – it would be John Dickey and John Dickey alone.

What has been the effect of the economy on your day-to-day business?

Like most businesses, Cumulus has been affected by the downturn. We have cut back on part-time hours and have added extra responsibilities to our PDs and OMs as a means to maintaining quality with fewer people. Better days are ahead. The company mission statement for Cumulus is to be "the best-run radio company in the world." We persevere daily to validate that statement. Cumulus will get through this storm standing tall. CAC



"We're centralized from the standpoint that things come through Atlanta. But what's wrong with that? We're able to put the icing and the cherry on top of good ideas."

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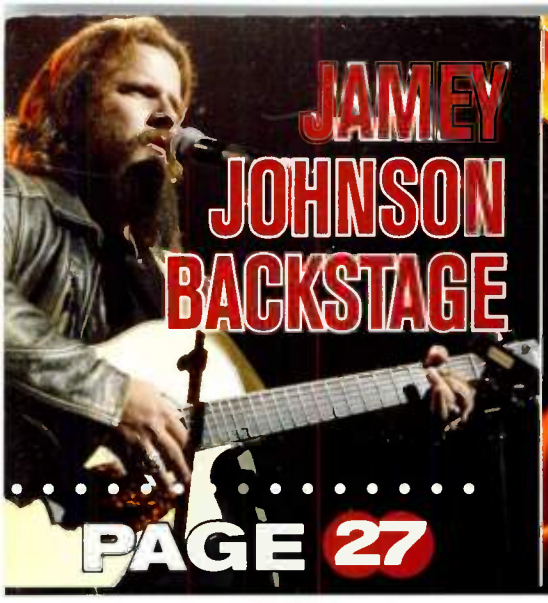

JAMEY JOHNSON BACKSTAGE

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You're ~~Fired~~ Hired!

Great Stories From (un) Employment's Front Lines

PAGE 3

Exclusive First Interview

BORCHETTA & HARNEN

Republic/Nashville

PAGE 29

COUNTRY AIRCHECK

JUNE 2009

CAPITOL RECORDS NASHVILLE

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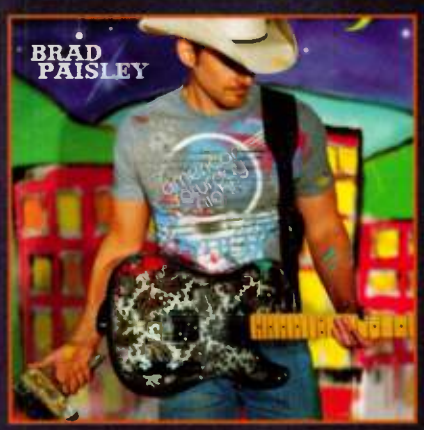

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Fire In The Whole

Great Firing (And Hiring) Stories

At last check, this was still the entertainment business (right?), which means creativity is at a premium. Sometimes, for better or worse, that particular trait finds its way into much more serious employment issues. And since the radio and music industries seem to be in as much upheaval as ever, Country Aircheck asked around for those classic stories that might just bring a smile, draw a groan, spark an idea or elicit a wee bit of gratefulness for the matter-of-fact approach of that severance-toting HR rep.

The Walk Of Shame

WUBL/Atlanta's **Scott Lindy** has a cautionary tale for all those late-risers out there. "An old-school PD pulled this in the '90s," he says. "A jock showed up late for his show, and when he walked into the station's lobby that was adorned with gold records, DJ pictures and awards, the receptionist told him the PD wanted to see him immediately.

"The jock went to the PD's office, which had a smaller room you had to pass through to get to the programmer's door. The assistant who sat in that room told the DJ that the PD wanted him to go back to the lobby, take his picture off the wall and come back to his office. The poor bastard walked the whole length of the station, took his picture down off the lobby wall and made the walk of shame back through the offices to the PD's waiting room.

He then sat there for 20 minutes waiting for the PD, holding his own 13x10 framed picture in his hands as office staff, other jocks and salespeople walked by. Then the PD called him in and yelled at him without closing the door, allowing all to hear.

"The jock didn't actually get fired, but got put on probation and was told to walk his picture back up to the lobby and re-hang it. A thorough and walloping embarrassment to the DJ. Moral of the story: If you go to work for a station with DJ pictures in the lobby, make sure they're permanently affixed to the wall. Or find a sane PD."

Board Of Direction

WGH-FM/Norfolk's **John Shomby** didn't have to be hit in the head with lumber to choose a job candidate. "I was PD of 'live and local' Talk KLIF/Dallas in the '90s and always needed board operators for shows," he says. "A kid who wanted a job sent me, yes, a 2x4 in a package with his resume inscribed on it to show how much in sync he was with a 'board.' Got my attention, and I gave him a shot."

Isn't This My Office?

Veteran label exec **Nick Hunter** was three days into a new job as part of a regime change when he realized something was amiss. "I got a call in the middle of the week from the head of promotion I had replaced," Hunter explains. "He was out of town and wanted to know what I was doing in Nashville. I kind of stammered and said, 'Let me call you back.'

"I immediately got the new label president out of a meeting he was in and told him what was going on. 'Could [corporate] have forgotten to fire him?' I asked. He said, 'There's another guy they were supposed to let go. Lets call him and see what's up.' So we called and the guy was sitting at his desk, completely unaware. The home office got it straightened out by the end of that day, but that was still four days after we'd started."

Cart Before The Hoarse

Hunter has another communication breakdown story from Denver. "The PD at Top 40 KLZ-FM was a friend of mine, Max Floyd," Hunter says. "I was in town and stopped by his office to see him. He wasn't in, but was due back in a little while, so I sat in the office waiting for him. While I'm in there, one of the jocks comes in and starts looking through this big stack of carts piled up on Max's desk. After a few minutes he goes, 'I'll be a motherf----,' knocks all the carts off the desk and storms out.

"Max comes in a little while later, sees this big mess on the floor of his office and says, 'What happened here?' I told him about the jock, and he explained that he'd just had new imaging and promotion done for the station. 'He didn't see his name on any of the carts,' Max said. "So he figured out he was about to be fired.'"

Picture To Burn

KBEQ/Kansas City's **Mike Kennedy** has a trio of harsh dismissal stories. "The first one is from my Rock days in the '80s," he says. "Programmer called a jock into his

> THEN HE FLICKED ONE OF THE SOLDIERS DOWN WITH HIS FINGER. 'THAT'S YOU. YOU'RE NOT IN MY ARMY ANYMORE.'
>
> —MIKE KENNEDY

Fire In The Whole

office and took a picture of him with a Polaroid camera. He hands it to the DJ, who says, 'What's this?' PD says, 'It's a picture of you on your last day.'

"I've heard a modern version of this, could be a myth, where a PD calls a jock while he's on-air and says, 'Look into the studio webcam. I want the listeners to get a good look at you on your last day.'

"The other one that was told to me by a rock guy was about a PD who set a bunch of plastic toy soldiers up on his desk. He called a guy in and said, 'Look at this. This is my army.' Then he flicked one of the soldiers down with his finger. 'That's you. You're not in my army anymore.'

"Hey, they're mean, but they're creative."

Welcome To The Jungle

Softdrive recording artist **Tommy Joe Wilson** has a full bladder to thank for his gig. "It was a Monday night in Nashville, and my band and I were playing the 10pm-2am slot at the Second Fiddle Bar on Broadway," he says. "About halfway into our set, two leather-clad, scarf-wielding guys walked in with two other people (I learned later they're called assistants). I had no idea who these guys were, but my bass player had the perfect way to find out. He raised his hand and asked the audience, 'Are there any bass players in the house? I gotta go pee!' One of the four out-of-place guys, a long-haired blonde guy, said he would play. So he made his way to the stage and told his buddy to join him.

"When they stepped onstage, they introduced themselves as Duff and Scott. Almost immediately it clicked, and we realized we were sharing the stage with rock 'n' roll royalty. These guys were Duff McKagan (Gun N' Roses/Velvet Revolver) and Scott Weiland (Stone Temple Pilots/Velvet Revolver). They were in town to be the celebrity judges on *Nashville Star* and had wandered into the bar to hear, as Scott calls it, 'real honky-tonk music.' A few minutes after playing 'Honky Tonk Women' with us, Scott waved me down from the stage. He asked me to give him all my contact info, and said he would give me his because he really liked what he'd heard. We finished the night about 5am, hanging out in Scott's rental car and exchanging songs we'd written. He said, 'A lady is going to call you tomorrow and offer you a deal with my new label called Softdrive Records? The next day, I got a call from Los Angeles and ended up accepting the craziest job I ever landed!"

Dishonesty Policy

Warner Bros. promotion exec **Bob Reeves** got a gig the old-fashioned way. "I completely lied my way into my first-ever radio gig. I was hired as assistant production director at an AM/FM combo, and the first time I walked into the production studio I thought the carts were weird-looking eight-tracks!"

What, Gonna Dock My Pay?

WLWI-FM/Montgomery, AL's **Bill Dollar** turned a reprimand on its ear by landing a sweeter job. "I was working at the college campus station (an AM on carrier-current to the dorms) as PD, and happened to be in the studio when a 'paying' customer from a department at the college (with money in hand) walked in and wanted to buy some advertising," he says. "I told him that I would take the information and have a member of the sales staff contact him regarding when the spots would be scheduled.

"I then received a phone call from the station manager and operations director, who asked me to meet with them about what I did wrong. The station manager proceeded to tell me that I was overstepping my bounds and trying to do somebody else's job. He said the salespeople would never learn how to do their job because I was doing it for them. Keep in mind that this was an entirely volunteer organization at the time.

"I was so mad at the two supervisors that I did not attend a talk (and possible interview opportunity) with Gary Sandy (aka Andy Travis from *WKRP In Cincinnati*) that afternoon. I really wanted to meet the guy and tell him he was a role model, but I went back to my dorm and fumed instead.

"I guess I got the last laugh when the 50,000-watt commercial FM (also on our campus) hired me the next week to do nights. It was rather humbling to have to walk by their studios to go down the hallway in the student union to go the 'real' radio station."

Performance Unrelated

Veteran programmer **Randy Hill** has been a victim of his own success.

"A few years ago, a market manager let me go because the station, as he put it, 'wasn't performing the way they expected.' The station had been No. 1 for four of the past five books, and had received national recognition for its success. I was a little dumbfounded, and mentioned if they didn't want a top-rated station they should have mentioned it when we created the yearly strategic plan. He didn't think that was funny, but neither was the fact that I was fired the day before the ratings book came out (again No. 1) so they wouldn't have to pay me a bonus."

Car & Driver

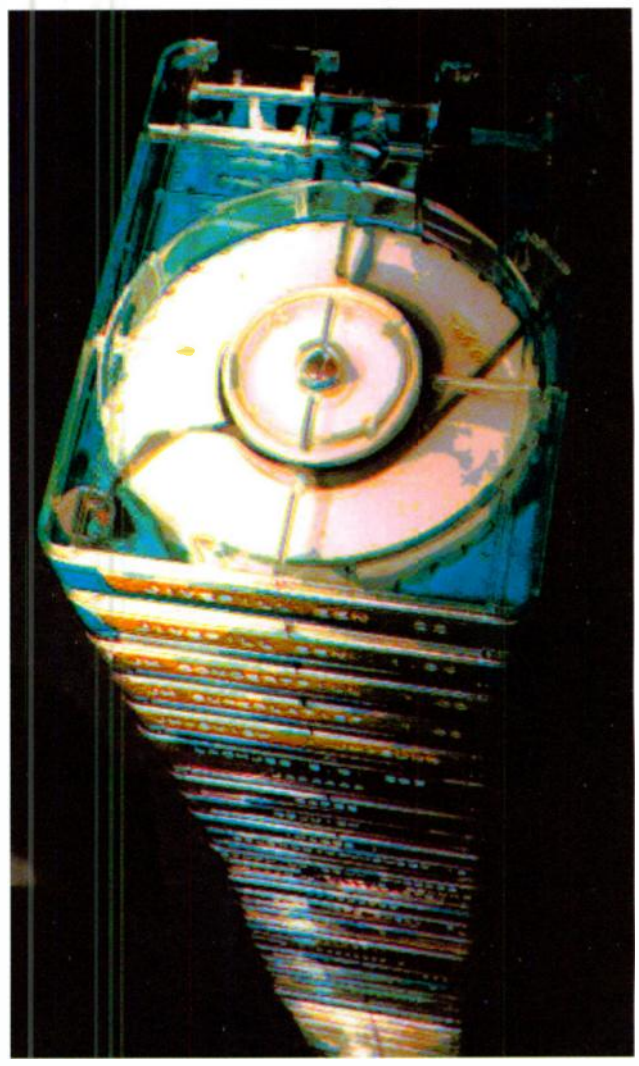
Casey Carter, of KXKC/Lafayette, LA fame, tells how an auto parted the obstacles between her and a new job. "Back in 2001, I really wanted the APD/MD/afternoon drive job at WNOE/New Orleans, so to get then-PD Les Acree's attention, I sent him a toy car that I had personalized myself. I bought it at Wal-Mart for a buck, and it was about a foot long. I NASCAR-ed the thing up really good! It had my phone number on the door and on top where the car number would be. There was not a speck on the rest of it that didn't have some kind of little phrase written on it: sayings like, 'Hire Casey CAR-ter,' 'Casey has the 'drive' to be your next MD/APD,' 'Give Casey a 'brake' and hire her for afternoons' – the thing was hideous! It must've worked, though, because Les hired me. On my first day on the job, he gave me that car as a 'welcome' gift. He told me he figured I'd want to keep it, and he was right. I still have it!"

All My Rowdy Friends

Trade journalist **Ken Tucker** discovered it takes a village to get from West Virginia to Nashville. "I was MD/night jock at WXKX/Parkersburg, WV and had been telling people I was interested in moving to Nashville," he says. "Sharon Allen, who was doing independent promotion for Stan Byrd back then, called me in late 1989 to tell me that R&R Associate Editor Debe Fennell had resigned. 'Maybe this is your chance to get to Nashville,' she said. 'Lon's looking for someone.'

"I sent Lon a resume and followed with a phone call a week later. We had a nice conversation, but he said, basically, thanks for your interest but I'm really looking for someone who knows people here in Nashville and really has a lot of connections. I told him I did, but could tell he wasn't convinced.

"To prove to him I knew more people in Nashville than he thought, I had postcards printed that said, 'I know Ken Tucker' on one side, and had Lon's name and address on the other. I had about 150 printed up, put stamps on them, dropped them in envelopes and sent them out to record reps, managers, artists – everyone I knew, basically. I asked them



to sign the card and drop it in the mail.

"So over the course of the next week or two, Lon received all these postcards in the mail saying, 'I know Ken Tucker.' Charlie Daniels did one. Marty Stuart. Various people at record labels. Ed Mascolo.

"He finally hired me in February of 1990. I don't think that's what ultimately got me the job, but it proved a point. Getting hired probably had more to do with the fact that I think he offered the job to three people before me and all of them turned it down."

(Editor's Note: Tucker was the first to be offered the position. And the credit goes to the postcards.) CAC

COUNTRY AIRCHECK

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-Johnny Chiang, OM, KKBQ-Houston

"I like these girls. There's a lot of energy in that song. I love the way their voices blend together."

-Bobcat Brown, PD, KHEY-El Paso

"Love it, love it, love it! They sound great. I think it's one of those songs that the teenage girls will love for the summertime."

-Weslea, APD/MD, WBEE-Rochester

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ACM Small Market Station Of The Year

WYCT/Pensacola

Where Live & Local Pays Off

*A true start-up station that began five years ago with a laptop on a cardboard table, ADX's **WYCT/Pensacola, FL** now occupies a remodeled Daryl's Restaurant with its own separate "bunker" facility to serve the area during heavy weather. The station has already won the ACM Station of the Year twice and this year for its morning show, as well. OM/PD **Kevin King** talks about his Vegas ACM experience and what makes Cat Country special.*

If we had one more day in Vegas, it'd be great … just a pool day to kick back because every time you go, there's so much new and you want to see it all. The best thing about our experience was just spending time together. Being able to see the show live and up close is special, and we'd walk through the MGM Grand, saying, "Look! There's so-and-so, and there's so-and-so!" One of the most fun moments is when we actually got to pose with the trophy. Our morning team did prom shots with Sugarland, who are wonderful. They could not have picked a better artist.

Our morning show [**Brent Lane** and **Dana Cervantes**] have been nominated for ACMs and CMAs, but they'd never won, and they had a blast. Hearing their voices on the bumpers was a thrill for everyone, and very deserving. And it was a thrill for folks back in Pensacola, too.

We had a mostly local National Guard unit deployed to Iraq before Thanksgiving. Our morning team spent time with these soldiers before they went over. Local schoolchildren wrote 20,000 "letters from home" to our soldiers, and Dana went over there for the second straight year to deliver them and bring their stories home so we could air them. Our guys are out doing stuff constantly, and we truly do put community service first; it's not just lip service.

We've got a big-league team here – a crew of dedicated people who love what they do, and it shows. Working for a true independent station is hard, but it's very rewarding; you can look back and see what you've done. The vibe here is that people work to *do* a good job, as opposed to work to *keeping* their job. The "catalyst" is our owner **Dave Hoxeng**, who has always wanted to do this. This is his hobby and business, and he's living the dream here with this radio station.

Soldier On: Here's WYCT morning co-host Dana Cervantes posing with grateful Pensacola-based U.S. National Guard troops stationed in Iraq. For the second straight year, Cervantes delivered thousands of appreciative letters from local listeners, friends and families.

ACM Medium Market Station Of The Year

WIVK/Knoxville

Excellence Never Gets Old

With its fifth *Station of the Year award, Citadel's **WIVK/Knoxville** is ensconced as one of America's greatest Country broadcasters. But what also made PD **Mike Hammond** particularly proud was seeing 10-year morning team **Andy and Alison** receive their first ACM honor.*

I've been to a lot of CMAs and ACMs, and I thought this one ranked right up there as one of the best I've ever seen. I thought the bumpers were a great way to recognize your personalities of the year. I was sitting beside Andy and Alison when it came on, and of course, they were listening for it, too. That was a special moment, to have their voice on national TV. This was their first ACM Award, and they were all excited about being in Las Vegas.

Going to see Toby Keith perform impromptu at his bar at Harrah's –you just don't get to see that very often. At the Westwood One remotes, there was Faith Hill, Taylor Swift, Carrie Underwood, Heidi Newfield and many others going from table to table, where you can say hello, wish them well and do interviews. Las Vegas is fun because people are gambling, and you get to talk to them about being at the tables. It was also interesting to hear John Rich say he's thinking about running for the U.S. Senate from Tennessee. He told Andy and Alison that he's serious about it. I told him, "Well, let us know when you make up your mind!"

This past year we held a canned food drive, where we said, "*Can* we get Garth Brooks to Knoxville?" We raised 20,000 cans of food – one for every seat in Thompson-Boling Arena. Garth surprised us later: he sent a tractor-trailer with another 20,000 cans of food, and said if he did more free concerts in the future, Knoxville would definitely be in the plans.

In our "Kids On The Go" campaign for Regal Cinemas' "Variety of Tennessee" charity arm, we raised $80,000 for special-needs children. And last summer, a man walked into a church here and shot and killed several people. Randy Owen … what a humanitarian. He agreed to do a benefit concert, and we raised over $10,000. Many church members met with him on his bus for some private time afterwards. I think that really touched him, too. Of course, it was just great for the community, a healing thing.

"Rockette" Top: One of the highlights of the Knoxville holiday season is the annual WIVK/Fowler's Furniture Christmas Parade, featuring dancers, majorettes, marching bands, holiday floats and Santa. Mercury's Julianne Hough was the 2008 Grand Marshal.

ACM Large Market Station Of The Year

WSIX/Nashville

Making Memories Every Day

*WSIX/Nashville picked up its second ACM Award under PD **Keith Kaufman.** His recollections of Vegas ranged from the humorous to exciting to poignant – indeed, a lot like what listeners experience when they tune in to the Big 98.*

There were so many things – from seeing Kellie Pickler pulling a can of Skoal out of her purse and looking around to see if anybody saw it – to watching Jamey Johnson win Song of the Year. The night after he did his show on the street at CRS, Jamey told me, "Last year I was swinging a hammer. This year they shut the road down for me." To see him win was very emotional, as we were really champions of that record. I couldn't get it into the studio fast enough.

I went to Toby Keith's I Love This Bar & Grill. As Toby was walking up to me, I reached over to my belt loop and realized I didn't have my phone; I had left it in a cab. So Toby's walking over to me, and sticks his hand out. I shake his hand, and his lips are moving, but all I'm hearing is, "Where's your phone? You're an idiot! You're screwed!" So I don't have any idea what Toby and I talked about. It's funny now because I did get my phone back, but it was two hours of sheer terror.

I was quite proud that in 2008 we got the **St. Jude** President's Award for having the largest St. Jude Dream Home program; we raised $2.1 million through that and our Radiothon.

WSIX is a perfect balance of artist and lifestyle information – just being real and relatable. And the guys on the air do a great job with that from a content standpoint. Promotionally, we turned a Kenny Chesney ticket giveaway into a four-week event with fly-aways tied to LeAnn Rimes, Keith Urban and Gary Allan, featuring each one for an entire week, culminating with being onstage in front of 60,000 to fly winners to see Kenny at a show of their choice.

Overall, it's all about creating absolute entertainment on the air and taking things up a level, to be memorable, just to cut through. I wake up every morning, [listening to *Gerry House & The House Foundation*] and within five minutes I'm laughing. And that's where I get to go to work!

Owen The Moment: WSIX PD Keith Kaufman and Randy Owen kick-start the first Big 98 WSIX "Make A Difference Day" with volunteer Tyler Dotts. Participants helped spruce up areas around nonprofits and public schools, and were treated afterwards with a concert by Owen at Nashville's Hall of Fame Park.

ACM Radio Winners

ACM Major Market Station Of The Year

WSOC/Charlotte

A Station Team That 'Gets It'

*Outside the studios of CBS Radio's **WSOC/Charlotte** hangs a shadow-box display featuring patches from appreciative local police and fire departments, along with an American flag from soldiers in Iraq. PD **DJ Stout** and Promotion Director **Chele Fassig** plan to build another one next to it for their first-ever ACM Award so that, as Stout puts it, "anyone who comes in will see what we've accomplished and the product we continue to expect from ourselves."*

DJS: I'd never been to the ACMs before, and it was great hanging out with people we don't normally get to see. I saw Keith Anderson, the Lost Trailers, LeAnn Rimes, a brunch showcase with Jonathan Singleton & The Grove and Joe Nichols, and got to talk with several more: Darius Rucker, [Lady A's] Charles Kelley and John Rich. Luke Bryan and I talked about going catfishin', and Darius and I talked about golf and Tiger Woods. Eric Church is a good friend of the station, so we caught up on a lot of things. That's what was cool about it – there was always something going on. I've been lucky enough to know Sugarland since their first single, so it was pretty cool that they were the ones who took the time to give us our award because they certainly didn't have to. It goes to show how much they appreciate what radio has done for them.

CHARLOTTE'S #1 COUNTRY! WSOC 103.7

CF: We're very big on supporting our troops, veterans and families and children, from **Autism Speaks** to **Juvenile Diabetes** to the **Paralyzed Veterans of America**. We really try to give back because we feel like we're here because of our listeners and the community. They're the reason we're here, and are really an inspiration to us.

DJS: For the past two years we've done a guitar pull called the *Stout Pull* for **Loaves & Fishes**, the local food bank. It sold out and we had to turn away 600 people this year. Even though it's a free show, they collected $5,000. In a day and age when many on-air personalities don't like leaving their house unless there's a check involved, we're lucky enough to have a staff that, when I ask them to be part of something that ties them into the community, never turns one down, ever. They completely get it, and that's what makes WSOC different from any other station I've been a part of.

Middle Man: WSOC's DJ Stout gets a pair of Sugarland bookends as he accepts the station's ACM trophy.

Trail Of Cheers: WSOC staffers got together with The Lost Trailers at Coyote Joe's in Charlotte after their show. Shown (l-r) are LT's Andrew Nielson, PD DJ Stout, LT's Manny Medina, morning personality Rob Tanner, Promotion Director Chele E. Fassig, LT's Stokes Nielson and Ryder Lee, overnight personality Big Sexy and LT's Jeff Potter.

ACM Small Market On-Air Personality Of The Year

Brent Lane and Dana Cervantes, WYCT/ Pensacola, FL

City Knights

A duo that considered their first-ever nomination to be a victory in itself discusses the thrill of the awards show and their dedication to the Pensacola community.

Brent Lane: Before Sugarland presented us with the ACM award, we were watching Faith Hill rehearse for the show. To watch her sit there and take questions from the crowd while they're getting her set-up done was hysterical. She was talking about the George Strait *Artist Of The Decade* show and busted into "The Fireman." Then her band picked it up. When she got to a part where she didn't necessarily remember all the words, she just kind of did a little jig. It was killer.

Dana Cervantes: On the telecast voiceover, we we got to promote the special Trace Adkins performance. That was the performance of the night, and people are still talking about it.

Brent: It was a childhood dream of mine to do some voice work on a national TV show. I totally TiVo'd it.

Dana: My big moment from the year happened in November. I've gone to Iraq the last two Thanksgivings to spend the holidays with our local troops stationed there. First, we gathered 21,000 letters from the community. Then I hopped on a military charter flight to Al Asad, Iraq, where they train more than 5,000 of our Pensacola service members. It was overwhelming: I was welcomed with open arms, and they were very protective of me. I had enough letters to give to everybody that I came in contact with, and they took the time to read each one. Many of them sat down right there and wrote back to the people who had written them. It was very touching.

Brent Lane: I had the opportunity to be part of the first Emerald Coast Honor flight. It's an organization that is working to get all the World War II veterans to Washington, DC to see their WWII memorial this year. I think spending that time with the vets was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. I was able to bring a recorder and really translate some of the testimonies of those veterans to our listeners. One gentleman on the trip said it best: "This is the greatest generation, because if you asked us to fight, we'd do it again right now." That was a huge experience.

Have You Forgotten? Brent Lane (standing) takes a trip of lifetime with World War II Vets to see their Memorial in Washington, DC.

Sweet Satisfaction: Brent Lane (l) and Dana Cervantes (r) receive their ACM trophies from Sugarland's Jennifer Nettles and Kristian Bush.

ACM Medium Market On-Air Personality Of The Year

Andy Ritchie, Alison West and Jimmy Holt, WIVK/Knoxville

Three Of A Kind

*Four-time CMA Personality Of The Year winners, WIVK/ Knoxville morning teamers **Andy Ritchie, Alison West** and **Jimmy Holt** relish their first ACM win. From mingling with stars in Vegas to the late wakeup calls, the crew reminisces on their trip west to receive their trophy:*

JH: Getting Carrie Underwood to do celebrity gargling was probably one of my highlights of the trip to Vegas. I was intimidated, but I just sucked it up, went up to her and asked. Out of the 10 we got, she turned out to be the best because she started gargling one of her songs. That was pretty funny.

AW: John Rich made a lot of friends by passing out Bud Light to everybody at the radio remotes. He told us he's going to run someday for US Senate in TN, and wants to do it the right way. He *was* drinking Bud Light at the time.

AR: All the radio winners met Sugarland after their rehearsal for the show in a backstage room. They presented us with the awards, which was special because Kristian Bush is from Knoxville. He told us he used to listen to the station at his grandfather's house when he was a kid, so that was a nice touch.

AW: And Andy actually gave credit to Faith Hill for our win.

AR: Yeah, I did. One of the things in our ACM entry was Faith Hill on the air with us. We asked her what kind of ringtone she had, and she demonstrated it for us. It was a voice thing she does that goes, "Hey, your phone's ringin'" over and over. When we talked to Faith in Vegas, I credited her for the win, whether or not it was. I was trying to suck up to Faith Hill, and it worked pretty good.

AW: Before the trip, Taylor Swift sent us a good-luck letter and a good-luck penny when we were nominated.

JH: It says: "Congratulation on your ACM nomination. How cool is that? You guys are on a roll." And it has little smiley faces and the penny taped to it.

AR: It was even wax-sealed, scarlet-letter-type stuff.

JH: She's a classy lady.

Stand By Me: Sugarland's Jennifer Nettles (l) and Kristian Bush (c) present Alison West, Andy Ritchie and Jimmy Holt (r) their ACM Awards.

Pop A Top: Jimmy Holt (r) and John Rich have a serious discussion about the "Shuttin' Detroit Down" writer's political aspirations.

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NEW SINGLE ARRIVING THIS SUMMER

ACM Radio Winners

ACM Large Market On-Air Personality Of The Year

JD Cannon, WFMS/Indianapolis

Money Where His Mouth Is

JD Cannon may have two CMA trophies, but he was presented his first ACM twice. Station staffers, with the help of Blake Shelton, surprised the radio vet onstage during an event, and gave him the opportunity to make the acceptance speech he wasn't able to give in Las Vegas.

I was at our HHGregg Country Music Expo, and it was my turn to emcee. The last act was Blake Shelton, and I was going to do a little Q&A with him before his performance. He comes out carrying a box, takes the mic, and says, "This is my part of the show; you don't make the rules." He told the crowd about my award, presented me with the station's trophy and let me say a few words. I was totally surprised; it was pretty cool.

Our Public Affairs Dir., Karyn Sullivan, told me she wanted to enter me for the award and I said, "Don't bother, I'm too old. I'm over all that stuff." She convinced me to enter, so that's when I told her if I won I would take her to Vegas. And by golly, I had to pony up air and hotel for her, too. I couldn't believe it when I won. I gave Karyn my ticket to the show, and she sat down front in the broadcast section. She'd never been to Vegas, so she had the time of the life. She was one tickled little girl.

I loved the award show, but the George Strait *Artist Of The Decade* special just blew it away. I got to sit in on it and Oh. My. Gosh. Every single performance was just, wow. The three highlights for me were Jamie Foxx singing "You Look So Good In Love," Miranda Lambert and Blake Shelton (first time I'd seen them duet) sing "It Ain't Cool To Be Crazy About You," and Alan Jackson came out and did "The Fireman." Sometimes you felt like crying; it was wonderful. They'd sing, then go over and pay their respects. I wouldn't trade that for anything.

Being on a national broadcast was a big deal for me, because I've never gotten to do that before. I've done regional stuff but never, "Coming up on CBS." That gives me chills to think about. I've got my script taped up on my refrigerator at home just to remind me I really did get to do that.

Two To One: JD Cannon (c) is flanked by Sugarland's Jennifer Nettles and Kristian Bush as he accepts his ACM Award.

Stage A Coup: Blake Shelton (l) surprises JD Cannon onstage at the Country Expo for an impromptu ACM Radio Award acceptance speech.

ACM Major Market On-Air Personality Of The Year

Terry Dorsey and Hawkeye, *Dorsey Gang*, KSCS/Dallas

Long Time Coming

Terry Dorsey and Hawkeye look back at their 20th year at KSCS to discern what set it apart and garnered their first ACM Award.

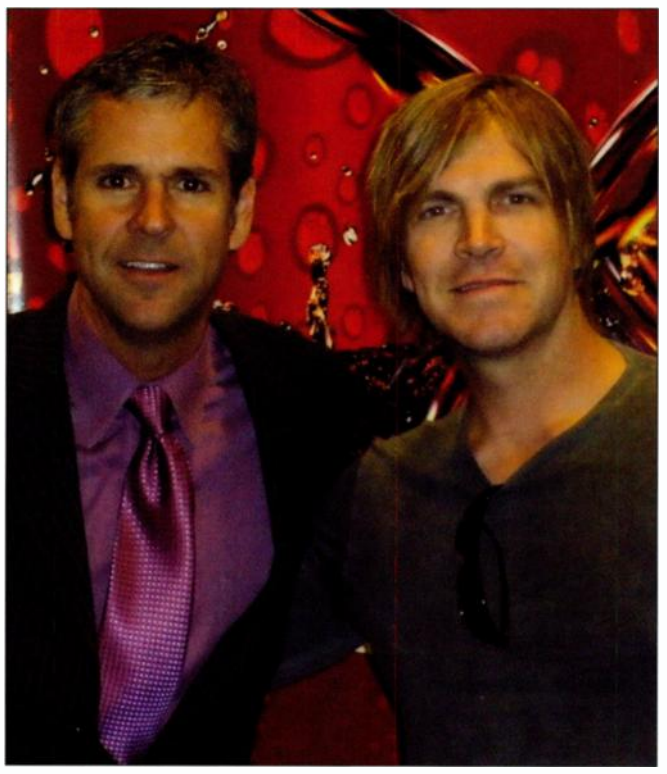
Hawkeye: A big thing for us this past year was the huge fundraiser we had for the American Red Cross. We wanted to do something special for our 5,000th show. Pat Green performed for free and we collected donations for the Red Cross.

TD: It was at Billy Bob's, and there were around 5,000 people there. It was an incredible night.

H: On another note, I got married last year. I had been a big bachelor guy, so the fact that I got married that was a huge deal here. When I announced my engagement on the air, Brother Van went out to a senior citizen's home to get marriage advice for me. It was hilarious. They gave me advice on sex, money and all sorts of things. Senior citizens can say anything and people won't question it. One man said, "Never let her know how much money you have," and then a woman said the same thing. They were great.

TD: It was great just to win the ACM and be a part of the award show. Granted, my wife won a lot of money, too. Just to be at the show and be that close to the stage was great. Seeing all the stars walking by and accepting their awards was really neat for me.

H: After the show, my wife and I were going back to our room. We were dressed kind of nice for the award show. When we got to the elevators, there was this well-dressed man standing next to them. He asked us, "Are you going to the party in loft 96?" So I said, "Yes, I am." He opened the doors to a private elevator and next thing I know I'm at a party with Reba McEntire. It was very cool for me because she is one of the few people I've never had the chance to meet. I chatted with her for a long time. Who knows, maybe she crashed the party, too. I guess since I was wearing a tie, the guy thought for sure I must be going to that party.



Knew Jack City: Hawkeye with Jack Ingram at the ACM Awards.

You're How Old? *The Dorsey Gang* celebrates their 5,000th show at Billy Bob's Texas with the help of friends and family. Pictured (l-r) are Hawkeye and wife Rebecca Carrell, Pat Green and Libby & Terry Dorsey.

ACM National On-Air Personality of The Year

Lon Helton

CMT Country Countdown USA

17 Years Of Teamwork

*A four-time CMA Award recipient, **Lon Helton** received his first ACM Radio Award this April in Las Vegas.*

I was hanging with WSIX/Nashville PD Keith Kaufman at the *All-Star Jam* after the awards show, and Keith saw several of the West Point Glee Club cadets who had appeared on the telecast. He said, "We should get a picture taken with those guys." So we went over and thanked them for their service to our country, and for singing with Trace Adkins, which had created one of the more magical moments that night. As we were talking, one cadet said to me, "I understand you were one of the award winners tonight." I said, "Yeah," and explained what the Broadcast Awards were about. As we said goodbye, he shook my hand, and I felt a little something in there. He explained it was a West Point single-leaf recognition pin (see inset). I didn't really feel very worthy of receiving something from a soldier, but he just said, "Congratulations." In the middle of all the music and the afterglow of a great TV show and all the awards, it was a sober, goose-bump moment that was pretty amazing.

It's always very special to be acknowledged by your peers. Making this even more meaningful is the number of tremendous national talents, from satellite radio to daily shows to weekly syndication. To be judged as being among the outstanding shows in this format is, for me, a pretty big deal.

What also made this award special was that the ACMs took place on the 17th anniversary of our first show. Just as gratifying as winning the ACM award is that we've still got the same team who started together 17 years ago: Jo Hunt, who works at High Five Entertainment, and books our talent. And, Westwood One's George Achaves is our writer, producer and engineer. George loves this show as much as I do because it's pretty cool to sit with a different artist every week and just chat your way through the top 30. George then figures out how to make that into a three-hour show. It's our small, but great team who get the show out every week with tons of help from Jim Reyland, Travis Turk and their crew at Audio Productions. And, of course, we wouldn't be here without our parent of 17 years, Westwood One, and the great folks there. Our thanks to Norm Pattiz, Max Krasny, Donny Walker, Todd Alan and the entire WW1 team.

Corps Training: According to Major Will Freds (Class of '97), this commemorative pin bearing the U.S. Military Academy at West Point admissions motto, "The Corps starts here," is reserved strictly for its officer graduates, current Cadets and those they regard as trusted individuals who reflect positively on the storied school. Each year 11,000 West Point applicants compete for just 1,300 openings.

Chicken Dinner: Westwood One's Pam Green and Todd Alan, Sugarland's Jennifer Nettles, Lon Helton, Sugarland's Kristian Bush, and WW1's Donny Walker celebrate Helton's first ACM honor.

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Operations Manager, Clear Channel Radio San Antonio

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SOCIAL-ISH PARTY

How Stations Use Internet Networking

Can 140 characters help a Country station drive listening? Will a Facebook page deepen a radio station audience's sense of community? One would think that the potential is there for radio, given the explosive growth of online social networks.

According to Alexa.com and Comscore, Facebook is now the No. 3 site in America, MySpace ranks fifth and fast-growing Twitter is No. 15. Impressively, Facebook's TSL is 25 minutes a day, while MySpace users average 20 minutes. And contrary to public perception, Twitter's audience indexes strongly among 25-44s and is highly educated.

Country Aircheck asked several programmers how they're using social networking sites, and found that their approaches are evolving along with the growth and usage of the tools themselves.

Tweet Treats

Despite its relatively small reach compared to Facebook and MySpace, Twitter is capturing much of Country radio's attention today. **KKGO/Los Angeles** Sr. Manager/Country Programming **Charlie Cook** says his station's website has links to Facebook, MySpace and recommendation engine StumbleUpon. Still, Twitter is the focus for Go Country, particularly for promotions. "You go right to [listeners'] cell phones," he explains. "The jocks tweet every hour while they're on the air. We tweet about contesting and we set appointments [for listening]."

Charlie Cook

Brevity is forced upon Twitter users by a 140-character limit. One 134-character liner reads, "If you tweet, join us at twitter.com/gocountry105 or find it on our web page. Follow us, and we'll keep you up to date about cool stuff, like what and when to win."

A recent shorter one: "Welcome to Wednesday, this is Tonya, I have Toby Keith tickets at 11:15," from KKGO PD/midday host **Tonya Campos**. A tweet from morning man **Sean Parr** was similarly compact: "Yes, Toby tickets at 6:10, Jimmy Buffet at 7:10 and more Toby tickets in the 8am hour."

"There's no question the 18-34s and 25-44s are overwhelmingly into it," Cook says of texting and social networking. "According to the recent CMA study, only 50% of the core country audience has Internet access at home. But we know they all have cell phones. That's why we've decided to do texting and Twitter."

KKGO tweeted from the recent Stagecoach music festival and sent pictures to listeners. "It's another way for them to get in touch with the station, and that's what we like the most," Cook says. "Any way you can stay in contact with the listeners and entice them to go and spend five or 10 minutes with the radio station, that has impact."

To say that **KKWF/Seattle** and **KBWF/San Francisco** PD **Scott Mahalick** is a fan of social networks, particularly Twitter, is an understatement. "We have gone to a new level of interactivity," he says. "We are hyper-enhancing the participation."

KKWF's "Twitter For Taylor" campaign, which was keyed around morning man **Fitz** and an upcoming Taylor Swift concert, drove the station's combined MySpace, Facebook and Twitter database to 20,000 participants in its first 72 hours. "It's the first time we said, 'Let's go where the people are,'" Mahalick says of the strategy. "I've never seen anything blow up so hot."

Scott Mahalick

Initially, listeners were encouraged to simply sign up for tweets from Fitz (@followFitz). One such communication found the morning host soliciting questions for an upcoming interview with Swift. After building the audience, Mahalick changed his focus. "Now it's about asking for tune-in," he says. "You get your unfair advantage by being part of Twitter and Facebook. We'll tell them to tune in tomorrow morning at 8:22am to win tickets."

Beverlee Brannigan

KFDI/Wichita OM/PD **Beverlee Brannigan** started her station's Twitter account for its 'Listener Appreciation Show' (@KFDILAS), but says she has continued to update it. "Now there are tweets about the 'KFDI Big Money Mystery Voice Game'— how big the jackpot is, who won how much – that kind of thing."

In a cross-promotion with the local CBS-TV affiliate, **KYGO/Denver** morning cohosts **Kelly Ford** and **Mudflap** tweeted from the *Academy of Country Music Awards*.

Social-ish Party

"Kelly was in one part of the venue and Mudflap was in another, and they were tweeting all night," PD **Joel Burke** says. "It was a live diary of what was happening."

Facebook Flavor

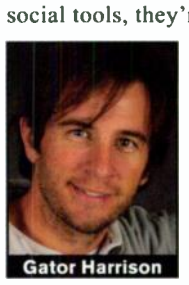
Beyond tactical tweets, Facebook provides stations with opportunities for more strategic imaging. **WSIX (The Big 98)/Nashville** PD **Keith Kaufman**, who maintains the station's Facebook page, says posting updates has "absolutely become part of my daily routine." He uses Facebook (and MySpace) to drive traffic to *WSIX.com*. "We have website goals, and it's certainly a huge advantage to have a Facebook page with a lot of friends. We're still growing this thing, but it takes time. A couple of months ago we had 300 friends on Facebook; now we have 940."

Keith Kaufman

KYGO's Burke also is a fan of Facebook. "It's a big part of the communication with our morning show," he says. "They'll put a topic out there and get comments back. Kelly Ford will respond and get [listeners who posted comments] to call in at particular time. We're using Facebook to not only feed the show from a topic standpoint, but also actually plot it out. " Burke adds that his talent are usually online while they are on-air. "We talk about how to use that to our advantage in terms of being one more way to reach out and touch our listeners. It allows us to sound connected."

The Personal Personality

While programmers are enthusiastic about the promotional and positioning attributes of social tools, they're more guarded when it comes to what is expected from their air talent. **WGSQ/Cookeville, TN** PD **Gator Harrison** encourages his jocks to actively update their blogs and pages, but doesn't force them to do it. "It's got to be sincere to be effective," he says. "It's the same things you do on your show: talk about your personal life, talk about country music and the things that the listeners care about."


Gator Harrison

WGH-FM/Norfolk OM **John Shomby** says he gives his jocks "some direction," adding, "I want to make sure that with blogs, tweets and Facebook updates they are being themselves and not just a marketing machine. It gives the listeners who follow us a chance to get to know each of us on a more personal level."

John Shomby

The situation is similar at **KSCS/Dallas**, where The Big 96.3's social network pages are updated primarily by the promotions department, while jocks maintain their own pages. "This tends to allow their Facebook and Twitter updates to remain more personal," says APD/MD **Chris Huff**. "We don't want their pages to feel like impersonal, mandated marketing tools for the station. That kind of thing pretty much flies against the nature of these sites."

Chris Huff

KFDI's Brannigan agrees, "I encourage everyone to post something on Facebook daily. The trick is to say stuff people want to know about – not just hype the station promotion du jour. We try not to lapse into 'liner-speak,' but work to keep it real."

Cook says, "We don't have hard-and-fast rules other than that I remind people they shouldn't post anything they wouldn't say on the air." He warns his jocks not to share too much information. "I don't want you guys telling listeners, 'I'm going to be away from the phone because I'm going to the bathroom,'" he counsels. "We don't want them turning [the radio] off."

Akin to a personality's profile, Keith Kaufman takes The Big 98's overall responsibility as an online "friend" seriously. "I'm friends with someone only because people have asked me to be theirs," he says. "I want people to reach out to me; I don't want to be spam, or to sell anybody anything. I'll just find something cool on our site and post that link. Just like on the air, you can't be 'hypey.' People will call bullshit."

Managing The Workload

How much extra work does being active online require? Scott Mahalick says updating Twitter and Facebook isn't a chore for his Wolf jocks. "With today's digital technology, they don't have to pull spots or music anymore," he says. "I've got them re-engaged in communication with our audience again, rather than being bored in the studio. It's not overload. If you do three good tweets a day, you're good to grow your followers. If you do more than 15, people start to un-follow you. "

Kaufman asks his personalities to tweet and/or post on Facebook, but hasn't specified how often. "**Big D and Bubba** do it; they're way into it," he says. "**Billy Greenwood** is taking requests for noontime via Twitter." (Greenwood voice-tracks middays from sister station KSD/St. Louis.) Kaufman points out what you post is as important, if not more important, than how often. "Your subject line is critical, just like an e-mail. I want to grab their attention with a headline and then hit them with a link."

While some jocks may drag their feet when it comes to social networking, Cook says they come around quickly. "You have to coach them, but once they start doing it they enjoy it."

Mahalick concurs, "They get instant gratification; there's a lot of positive feedback." And while he believes social networking updating is "easily manageable," Mahalick knows on which side his bread is buttered. "I don't want to dilute the content that's coming out of the speakers."

> **Any way you can stay in contact with the listeners and entice them to go and spend five or 10 minutes with the radio station, that has impact.**
> —Charlie Cook

Visit Our Spacebook

Not all stations are aggressive about promoting their social networking on-air. KSCS's Huff says his station keeps a lower profile. "Mention of our social networking sites on-air is strictly left to casual conversation and is not part of any organized marketing effort." While KSCS hasn't done any contesting strictly on Facebook or Twitter, Huff notes, "We have altered our contesting to include texting and solicits via video blogs on our main station website. We tend to allow the social network sites to remain as organic as possible."

KFDI mentions its social network destinations, "but we don't hype them," Brannigan says. "That defeats the purpose." And WGSQ's Harrison, who says he's exploring the concept of using social networks for contesting, says jocks are free to mention their MySpace or Facebook pages on-air if there is "a purpose to send them there. If you can make it make sense, then certainly."

KYGO's staff will congratulate contest winners on the station's Facebook page. Night jock **Flip** has even created a Facebook KYGO point system, which will soon be used to reward listeners. "At a certain level of points, you're in the running to win tickets to concerts," PD Burke says. "It's completely off the air."

KKWF is also using social networking to recycle audience between databases. "Once we are engaged with these people on Twitter, if they are not a Wolf P1 Pack member, we ask them to join," Mahalick says. "We've seen a tremendous spike ...we're communicating with them in their space."

Joel Burke

The Bottom Line

There's an important advantage to social networking that can't be found anywhere else, Mahalick believes. "Unlike a website, which is just a one-way push-out of e-mail or vice-versa, or a chat room – you might or might not be there – this is live, interactive and right now," he says. "There's tremendous communication going on across those platforms."

Social networking adds flexibility to communication with listeners that wouldn't otherwise exist, explains WGH-FM's Shomby, who reports that his station uses Facebook, MySpace and Twitter. "It connects us with our audience on a more personal level. We can create listening instances for spur-of-the-moment special things – a guest drops by, we get a special pair of tickets to something. Putting it on a website would be too late."

Although Country listeners lag those of most other formats in their online activity, KSCS's Huff takes the long view, observing, "We realize it may be a very small percentage of our audience that is truly active on social networking sites, but anyone who's seen the sites' growth curves has to take notice and realize it's probably better to be involved with them earlier than later."

WGSQ's Harrison puts it simply: "It's another way to reach your listeners. It's important to them; it's a part of their lives."

CAC

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6/23 - Coddingtown Mall - San Francisco/Oakland/San Jose/Santa Rosa
6/25 - Shops @ Mission Viejo - Los Angeles/Orange County
6/26 - Laguna Hills Mall - Los Angeles/Orange County
6/27 - Fashion Valley - San Diego
6/30 - Arizona Mills - Phoenix
7/2 - Colorado Mills - Denver
7/7 - Penn Square Mall - Oklahoma City
7/8 - North East Mall - Dallas/Ft.Worth/Arlington
7/9 - Lakeline Mall - Austin/San Marcos
7/10 - Ingram Park Mall - San Antonio
7/11 - Katy Mills - Houston
7/15 - Opry Mills - Nashville
7/17 - Town Center @ Cobb - Atlanta
7/18 - Orange Park Mall - Jacksonville
7/21 - The Florida Mall - Orlando
7/25 - Montgomery Mall - Philadelphia
7/30 - Ocean County Mall - New Jersey/New York
8/1 - Emerald Square Mall - Providence/Fall River/Warwick/New Bedford
8/4 - Great Lakes Mall - Cleveland/Akron
8/5 - Briarwood Mall - Detroit
8/6 - Castleton Square Mall - Indianapolis
8/7 - Gurnee Mills - Chicago
8/13 - Southridge Mall - Milwaukee
8/16 - Maplewood Mall - Minneapolis/St. Paul

Visit katiearmiger.com for more information on tour dates

COLD RIVER RECORDS

Note: Dates Are Subject To Change

WRH

Dare Ye Take the
Currington's Coconut Plantation
N
W
S
Go Easton South
Beware Weird Beard The Pirate
Sea Dog Luke's Castle
TEAM UMG
MCA NASHVILLE
Mercury
Mills of Gill
Treasure These Coins...
For they will multiply in value in the days to come:
Easton Corbin
Mallary Hope
Laura Bell Bundy
Mough Harbor
Take heed of the great Williams Whale

COUNTRY'S TOP RATINGS & REVENUE COMPANIES

Eighteen companies made $10 million or more from their Country outlets in 2008, one fewer than last year. Clear Channel once again led the pack with more than $379 million in Country revenues. Clear Channel also led the way in listeners, with a cume that topped 11 million Country listeners per week.

Country Aircheck's overview of Country's top revenue and audience companies features year-to-year trends in both categories, plus ratings comparisons from Fall '08 to Fall '07, for every Country station owned by the top operators.

You'll note that Clear Channel's revenue and cume numbers jumped significantly from last year, as a number of Country outlets that had been placed in the Aloha Station Trust were repatriated into the Clear Channel family. Four Country outlets remain in the AST, which is a privately owned company that operates radio and TV stations previously owned by Clear Channel. Stations were placed in that trust as part of CC's plans to take the company private.

It's impossible to present all 2000+ Country stations in the USA, so this list is confined to companies with at least $10 million in revenue from their Country outlets. If your company or station has inadvertently been omitted, please let us know.

LEGEND: Following each station's call letters and market are its Arbitron 12+ shares from Fall 2008 and Fall 207. Next comes the Fall '08 Arbitron metro cume, followed by the Fall '07 figures. After that are the station's 2008 and 2007 revenues, listed in millions, except in "Totals," where actual figures for cume and revenue are shown.

Note that share and cume figures for Atlanta, Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Philadelphia, Riverside, San Francisco and Washington, DC are based on PPM data, 6+.

A note of "na" means a figure was either not available or not applicable. A "+" indicates a Classic Country outlet.

BIA is the source for all revenue and ownership data; all ratings information comes from Arbitron. The first set of figures under "Totals" shows the number of Country stations owned by the operator at the end of 2008. All totals for previous years also came from BIA and represent the totals for the stations owned that year. Some previous-year revenue figures have been adjusted to match updates made by BIA.

COUNTRY COMPANIES REVENUE RANKER

Here's how the companies listed on these pages rank by 2008 revenue (in millions of dollars). The data is compiled from individual station revenues for each year as provided by BIA. For comparison purposes, previous years' total company revenues and revenue rankings follow, with the company's rank for that year following the revenue figure.

Owner	2008	2007	2005	2003	1996
1. Clear Channel	$379.1	$365.6/1	$440.6/1	$416.7/1	$76.3/4
2. CBS Radio	$147.9	$172.0/2	$218.7/2	$225.4/2	$167.0/1
3. Citadel	$138.0	$167.0/3	$104.5/3	$97.5/3	$32.2/7
4. Cumulus	$106.7	$112.6/4	$66.9/5	$67.2/5	--
5. Cox	$71.0	$71.6/5	$70.1/4	$69.8/4	$35.5/6
6. Entercom	$36.7	$39.9/8	$22.5/12	$21.9/12	--
7. Beasley	$34.9	$40.1/7	$34.9/8	$28.5/10	$21.8/11
8. Regent	$32.0	$33.1/9	$26.1/11	$26.4/11	--
9. Lincoln Fin. Media	$29.0	$30.7/10	$33.1/10	$35.3/8	--
10. Gap	$22.8	$24.2/12	--	--	--
11. Bonneville	$21.6	$24.4/11	--	--	--
12. Max Media	$17.3	$14.3/16	$12.9/16	--	--
13. Wilks	$15.6	$18.1/13	--	--	--
14. Journal	$15.0	$16.2/14	$16.4/13	$16.3/14	--
15. Hall	$14.4	$15.9/15	$14.4/14	$13.1/15	--
16. Saga	$14.1	$14.2/17	$13.1/15	$12.5/17	--
17. Mt. Wilson	$12.5	$13.5/18	--	--	--
18. Greater Media	$9.9	$11.7/18	$10.7/19	--	--

COUNTRY COMPANIES AUDIENCE RANKER

Here's how the companies listed on these pages rank by 2008 metro weekly cume audience, according to BIA. Previous years' cume and cume rankings follow, with the company's rank for that year following the cume figure. Please note that share and cume figures for Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Riverside and Philadelphia are based on PPM data, 6+.

Owner	2008	2007	2005	2003	1997
1. Clear Channel	11,091,600	9,258,500/1	10,917,000/1	10,156,500/1	2,796,800/3
2. CBS Radio	5,044,100	4,213,400/2	5,035,900/2	4,976,300/2	5,226,600/1
3. Citadel	3,399,900	3,846,500/3	2,466,400/3	1,988,800/3	961,800/10
4. Cumulus	3,196,700	2,397,400/5	1,565,800/6	1,660,800/5	983,900/8
5. Cox	2,927,700	2,871,100/4	1,854,900/4	1,798,400/4	989,100/7
6. Entercom	1,642,600	1,444,170/7	733,400/10	697,300/10	--
7. Beasley	1,255,600	1,384,100/8	1,039,300/8	791,800/8	761,700/11
8. Mt. Wilson	1,037,200	444,700/14	--	--	--
9. Bonneville	705,700	765,700/9	--	581,200/13	--
10. Regent	703,600	730,100/10	580,100/12	687,600/11	--
11. Lincoln Fin. Md	564,300	545,500/12	625,300/11	631,800/12	755,400/12
12. Wilks	536,900	635,700/11	--	--	--
13. Gap	495,600	534,600/13	--	--	--
14. Hall	448,300	424,400/16	414,300/14	382,800/16	--
15. Journal	415,100	429,900/15	470,100/13	391,800/15	--
16. Greater Media	354,000	331,200/17	314,100/13	--	--
17. Max Media	243,100	260,200/18	281,700/14	259,400/15	--
18. Saga	159,100	151,100/19	163,400/17	133,800/18	--

Calls/City	12+ Share		Cume (00)		Revenue (in millions)	
Beasley	Fa '08	Fa '07	Fa '08	Fa '07	2008	2007
WKXC/Augusta, GA	7.4	8.6	716	824	$2.4	$2.4
WKML/Fayetteville, NC	8.2	9.3	714	623	$4.4	$4.7
KBET-AM/Las Vegas+	0.6	--	180	--	$.1	--
KCYE/Las Vegas	2.6	3.4	1,235	1,369	$3.0	$5.0
WKIS/Miami	2.4	3.3	2,819	2,764	$10.5	$12.1
WXTU/Philadelphia*	3.9	5.4	6,892	8,170	$14.5	$16.0

TOTALS:	Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
	2008	6	25.1	1,255,600	$34,900,000
	2007	5	30.0	1,384,100	$40,100,000
	2005	5	33.4	1,039,300	$37,580,000
	2003	4	25.9	791,800	$28,550,000

**2008 and 2007 share and cume figures for Philadelphia are based on Nov. PPM data, 6+.*

Calls/City	12+ Share		Cume (00)		Revenue (in millions)	
Bonneville	Fa '08	Fa '07	Fa '08	Fa '07	2008	2007
WUBE/Cincinnati	7.1	7.6	2,675	2,963	$12.4	$11.7
WYGY/Cincinnati	1.2	2.0	834	1,036	$1.0	$2.2
WIL/St. Louis	5.2	6.0	3,548	3,658	$8.2	$8.6

TOTALS:	Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
	2008	3	13.5	705,700	$21,600,000
	2007	3	15.6	765,700	$24,400,000

Calls/City	12+ Share		Cume (00)		Revenue (in millions)	
CBS	Fa '08	Fa '07	Fa '08	Fa '07	2008	2007
WSOC/Charlotte	5.3	5.9	2,532	2,453	$8.2	$8.4
WUSN/Chicago*	4.0	2.8	10,946	6,329	$19.6	$27.1
KWLI/Denver	1.7	1.4	1,301	1,008	$2.4	$3.5
WYCD/Detroit*	4.8	3.4	8,175	4,370	$9.9	$11.0
KILT/Houston*	2.9	4.0	8,337	8,756	$23.9	$23.8
KMLE/Phoenix	2.4	3.4	2,748	3,182	$14.3	$15.7
WDSY/Pittsburgh	5.4	6.0	2,686	2,664	$7.3	$9.4
KUPL/Portland	4.2	4.3	1,936	2,003	$7.3	$8.5
KFRG/Riverside*	4.0	3.9	2,748	1,858	$10.0	$14.5
KNCI/Sacramento	3.7	3.9	1,821	2,006	$7.6	$10.0
KMPS/Seattle	3.7	4.9	3,417	3,535	$17.2	$17.0
WQYK/Tampa	4.2	5.5	2,622	2,813	$13.2	$15.0
KVFG/Victor Valley, CA	2.5	1.0	206	156	$.5	$.7
WIRK/West Palm Beach	4.0	5.1	966	1,001	$6.5	$6.5

TOTALS:	Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
	2008*	15	52.8	5,044,100	$147,900,000
	2007*	15	55.5	4,213,400	$172,025,000
	2005	20	99.8	5,035,900	$218,650,000
	2003	23	97.5	4,976,300	$224,975,000

**2008 share and cume figures for Chicago, Detroit and Riverside are based on Nov. 2008 PPM data, 6+. 2008 and 2007 share and cume figures for Houston are based on Nov. 2008 and 2007 PPM data, 6+.*

In addition to the 14 stations listed above, CBS Radio also owns one Country station in a non-rated market, according to BIA data. The station contributed to station and revenue totals, but not to ratings totals.

Calls/City	12+ Share		Cume (00)		Revenue (in millions)	
Citadel	Fa '08	Fa '07	Fa '08	Fa '07	2008	2007
KRST/Albuquerque	3.1	3.2	824	774	$3.5	$3.8
WCTO/Allentown, PA	12.1	11.7	1,599	1,530	$5.3	$5.5
WKHX/Atlanta*	5.9	4.0	7,343	4,132	$17.0	$22.6
WEBB/Augusta, ME	6.9	7.5	166	198	$.7	$1.2
WHWK/Binghamton, NY	15.0	14.1	536	539	$2.0	$2.4
KQFC/Boise, ID	4.7	5.4	424	516	$2.3	$2.2
KIZN/Boise, ID	5.4	6.3	490	638	$2.7	$3.2
WIWF/Charleston, SC	3.3	3.0	529	552	$1.2	$1.3
WOGT/Chattanooga	2.1	3.9	292	390	$.8	$.8
KATC/Colorado Springs	4.7	6.5	574	671	$1.7	$1.7
WPKQ/Concord, NH	1.4	1.6	97	116	$1.0	$1.0
KSCS/Dallas*	4.0	2.9	9,417	4,550	$14.2	$17.2
KHKI/Des Moines	5.4	5.3	636	666	$2.1	$2.4
KJJY/Des Moines	4.5	6.4	512	716	$2.4	$2.4
WXTA/Erie, PA	6.0	6.7	372	369	$1.1	$.9
WFBE/Flint, MI	4.3	6.5	420	542	$1.4	$2.2
WTNR/Grand Rapids	2.4	3.3	542	798	$1.7	$2.1
WCAT/Harrisburg	2.6	2.4	352	322	$1.4	$1.4
WGOC/Johnson City, TN+	0.6	1.1	78	107	$.1	$.2
WIVK/Knoxville	22.9	18.2	2,591	2,479	$11.3	$13.5
KXKC/Lafayette, LA	3.7	6.3	659	733	$2.4	$2.8
WIOV/Lancaster, PA	6.5	8.1	697	705	$4.4	$4.9
WITL/Lansing, MI	12.0	11.0	773	821	$3.1	$3.3
WGKX/Memphis	6.0	6.2	1,498	1,406	$4.4	$5.6
KATM/Modesto, CA	10.5	8.3	859	859	$6.0	$7.5
WMDH/Muncie, IN	8.9	10.4	326	338	$1.5	$1.8
WLAW/Muskegon, MI	4.1	2.7	98	86	$.4	$.4
WKDF/Nashville	4.8	5.0	2,178	1,888	$7.3	$7.5
WOKQ/Portsmouth, NH	7.2	9.6	680	665	$5.9	$6.1
KBUL/Reno	5.0	5.5	521	503	$2.0	$2.0
KKAT/Salt Lake City+	1.9	3.5	817	705	$3.8	$3.9
KUBL/Salt Lake City	4.1	3.5	2,007	1,934	$5.3	$6.5
KIIM/Tucson	7.7	8.8	1,495	1,383	$7.2	$7.7
WFFN/Tuscaloosa, AL	3.2	4.0	159	133	$.3	$.3
WSJR/Wilkes Barre	3.1	1.9	431	408	$.9	$.9

TOTALS:	Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
	2008	37	206.0	3,399,900	$138,000,000
	2007	41	219.1	3,846,500	$167,030,000
	2005	37	222.0	2,466,400	$104,200,000
	2003	29	197.9	1,998,900	$88,760,000

**2008 share and cume figures for Atlanta and Dallas are based on Nov. 2008 PPM data, 6+.*

In addition to the 35 stations listed above, Citadel also owns two Country stations in non-rated markets, according to BIA data. Those stations contribute to station and revenue totals, but not to ratings totals.

Calls/City	12+ Share		Cume (00)		Revenue (in millions)	
Clear Channel	Fa '08	Fa '07	Fa '08	Fa '07	2008	2007
WOBB/Albany, GA	5.1	3.6	145	115	$.6	$.7
KBQI/Albuquerque	3.6	3.7	812	791	$1.2	$1.3
KASH/Anchorage, AK	3.6	5.3	251	371	$1.1	$1.3
WKSF/Asheville, NC	16.5	15.0	742	796	$5.5	$5.5
WCOH/Atlanta*	0	0	0	0	$.2	$.2
WWLG/Atlanta*+	1.0	--	1,384	--	$4.0	--
WUBL/Atlanta*	1.8	2.3	5,288	3,248	$11.4	$16.0
KASE/Austin	4.8	5.3	1,905	1,719	$8.5	$9.4
KVET/Austin	5.1	6.0	1,759	1,933	$7.5	$7.6
WPOC/Baltimore	7.3	6.9	3,539	3,702	$15.1	$17.6
WYNK/Baton Rouge	3.8	5.9	778	921	$4.0	$5.3
KYKR/Beaumont, TX	7.1	5.0	553	458	$1.1	$1.5
WKNN/Biloxi, MS	5.7	6.8	433	547	$1.3	$1.6
WDXB/Birmingham	6.2	4.7	1,209	968	$1.6	$1.7
KBMR/Bismarck, ND	13.1	9.9	138	124	$.4	$.6
KQDY/Bismarck, ND	9.8	12.2	215	226	$.9	$1.2
KAGG/Bryan, TX	5.5	7.6	215	222	$.9	$.9
WEZL/Charleston, SC	6.1	7.1	730	905	$2.7	$2.8
WKKT/Charlotte	5.9	5.6	2,799	2,831	$7.2	$7.2
WUSY/Chattanooga, TN	13.4	15.4	1,051	1,215	$5.2	$5.7
WLND/Chattanooga, TN	5.7	3.6	512	374	$.4	$.3
KOLZ/Cheyenne, WY	11.1	12.1	152	146	$.7	$.8
WGAR/Cleveland	6.7	6.5	2,694	2,890	$9.0	$9.8
KCCY/Colorado Springs	4.9	5.2	661	705	$2.5	$2.9
WCOS/Columbia, SC	5.2	5.6	642	788	$3.4	$3.6
WSTH/Columbus, GA	4.9	3.7	211	183	$.8	$1.2
WCOL/Columbus, OH	7.1	7.0	2,229	2,293	$8.7	$9.2
KRYS/Corpus Christi, TX	4.6	6.4	419	524	$1.6	$1.9
KFXR/Dallas*	0	0.5	0	873	$.8	$1.2
WDTW/Detroit*	2.6	2.2	5,777	2,796	$4.8	$5.9
WQRB/Eau Claire, WI	10.4	11.2	316	330	$2.2	$2.1
WATQ/Eau Claire, WI	6.7	7.0	184	210	$.5	$.5
KHEY/El Paso, TX	3.9	3.9	693	615	$1.3	$1.8
KKIX/Fayetteville, AR	10.2	12.9	672	703	$2.8	$2.9
KHGE/Fresno	2.1	1.6	506	387	$1.3	$1.3
WCKT/Ft. Myers, FL	2.9	2.0	610	512	$.7	$.9
WAVW/Ft. Pierce, FL	5.4	5.3	680	658	$2.1	$2.4
KMAG/Ft. Smith, AR	9.3	7.7	533	485	$1.3	$1.5
KSNR/Grand Forks, ND-MN	6.3	6.0	150	117	$.6	$.6
WBCT/Grand Rapids	5.9	7.5	1,146	1,409	$5.4	$6.4
WTQR/Greensboro, NC	6.4	5.7	2,067	1,756	$5.1	$7.0
WESC/Greenville, SC	6.3	6.8	1,393	1,280	$4.1	$4.3
WSSL/Greenville, SC	5.6	10.0	1,440	1,614	$5.1	$6.1
WRBT/Harrisburg	6.9	8.0	861	896	$3.3	$3.8
WKCY/Harrisonburg, VA	10.9	15.9	212	293	$2.3	$2.5
WWYZ/Hartford	7.0	7.7	1,855	1,849	$8.8	$10.4
WTCR/Huntington, WV	11.6	10.6	592	646	$2.1	$2.1
WDRM/Huntsville, AL	12.0	11.0	1,111	1,062	$4.8	$4.9
WMSI/Jackson, MS	6.9	4.7	599	553	$3.4	$3.7
WQIK/Jacksonville, FL	7.2	6.6	1,954	1,874	$5.1	$5.5
KWNR/Las Vegas	4.7	4.8	1,671	1,910	$8.8	$9.0
WBUL/Lexington, KY	9.3	9.3	1,221	1,129	$3.5	$3.8
WIMT/Lima, OH	13.8	15.8	384	352	$1.3	$1.4
KMJX/Little Rock	4.8	1.6	513	na	$2.0	$1.7
KSSN/Little Rock	8.0	10.1	936	1,018	$4.9	$5.1
WAMZ/Louisville	7.8	9.2	1,834	1,940	$8.0	$8.5
WMAD/Madison, WI	4.7	4.5	539	497	$2.1	$2.0
KTEX/McAllen, TX	7.5	5.8	1,138	1,220	$2.9	$3.0
WMSO/Meridian, MS	6.2	8.1	88	106	$.5	$.5
WMIL/Milwaukee	6.6	5.8	2,196	2,250	$7.0	$8.0
KEEY/Minneapolis	6.8	6.4	4,058	4,254	$15.0	$17.2
WKSJ/Mobile	7.8	7.9	982	912	$4.4	$4.6
KTOM/Monterey	2.5	3.4	417	484	$1.5	$1.7
WMUS/Muskegon, MI	12.9	10.3	332	360	$1.3	$1.4
WSIX/Nashville	5.8	6.4	1,827	1,728	$5.0	$6.7
WRWC/Newburgh, NY	0	0	0	0	$.3	$.3
WNOE/New Orleans	6.1	6.7	1,538	1,589	$5.1	$6.2
KTST/Oklahoma City	5.7	6.6	1,464	1,539	$2.7	$2.7
KXXY/Oklahoma City	4.2	5.0	1,189	1,423	$4.4	$4.6
KXKT/Omaha	6.3	8.4	841	1,040	$5.1	$5.2
KTWI/Omaha	1.1	2.6	373	472	$1.0	$1.3
WPAP/Panama City, FL	10.5	13.9	319	353	$1.4	$2.0
WNUS/Parkersburg, WV	11.9	12.2	336	331	$.7	$.6
KNIX/Phoenix	3.6	4.3	3,289	3,898	$15.8	$18.8
WRWD/Poughkeepsie, NY	4.9	7.3	287	339	$2.7	$2.6
WLLR/Quad Cities, IA-IL	15.9	17.6	861	899	$3.8	$4.4
WRDU/Raleigh	1.8	2.4	877	902	$5.2	$5.2
KTDD/Riverside	0.2	0.9	261	322	$.6	$.8
WYYD/Roanoke, VA	4.6	5.8	527	527	$2.5	$2.4
KMFX-FM/Rochester, MN	6.8	4.8	249	225	$1.3	$1.3
WROO/Rochester, NY	0.5	0.5	229	185	$.5	$.4
WWFG/Salisbury, MD	10.1	8.1	783	629	$1.7	$1.6
KTMY/Salt Lake City	0.9	0.8	546	na	$1.6	$1.7
KAJA/San Antonio	4.7	5.2	2,354	2,711	$8.2	$8.2
KRPT/San Antonio	0	0	0	0	$.9	$1.0
KUSS/San Diego	2.0	1.9	1,554	1,645	$2.0	$2.7
WCTQ/Sarasota	5.0	5.3	831	691	$1.8	$1.8
KNBQ/Seattle	0.6	0.6	837	724	$1.7	$1.9
KIXZ/Spokane	4.3	5.6	666	838	$1.4	$1.5
WPKX/Springfield, MA	6.3	5.4	668	702	$1.7	$2.3
KSWF/Springfield, MO	3.0	4.8	328	497	$1.4	$1.5
KSD/St. Louis	3.7	3.6	2,825	2,855	$5.2	$5.6
WBLJ/Sunbury, PA	0.9	0.5	47	42	0	0
WBBS/Syracuse	11.3	13.0	1,176	1,235	$5.2	$5.6
WTNT/Tallahassee, FL	6.2	5.4	450	450	$1.7	$2.0
WFUS/Tampa	3.6	2.9	2,246	2,602	$5.9	$7.0
WCKY/Toledo	1.4	1.7	262	na	$1.1	$1.2
WWZD/Tupelo, MS	9.8	9.5	443	463	$.7	$.9
WTXT/Tuscaloosa, AL	5.4	6.3	228	na	$1.2	$1.2
WACO/Waco	15.9	14.0	502	482	$2.1	$2.5
WMZQ/Washington, DC*	3.5	3.1	6,220	3,767	$12.6	$13.8
WOVK/Wheeling, WV	14.6	16.8	415	461	$1.0	$1.7
KZSN/Wichita	5.2	8.0	520	829	$2.7	$3.1
WBYL/Williamsport, PA	4.6	5.1	107	125	$.4	$.4
WDSD/Wilmington, DE	2.2	1.8	381	433	$3.2	$2.9
WUSQ/Winchester, VA	17.8	16.4	534	553	$2.7	$2.8

TOTALS:	Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
	2008*	125	658.4	11,091,600	$379,050,000
	2007	111	571.2	9,258,500	$365,595,000
	2005	181	1,075.0	10,917,900	$440,600,000
	2003	183	1,052.0	10,156,500	$412,335,000

**2008 share and cume figures for Atlanta, Dallas, Detroit and Washington, DC are based on Nov. 2008 PPM data, 6+. Clear Channel placed more than 100 stations in the Aloha Station Trust in July 2007 as part of taking the company private. Of those stations, 27 were Country. There are four Country stations remaining in the AST, with many of them returning to the CC fold in the last year.*

In addition to the 106 stations listed above, Clear Channel also owns 19 Country stations in non-rated markets, according to BIA data. Those stations contribute to station and revenue totals, but not to ratings totals.

Calls/City	12+ Share		Cume (00)		Revenue (in millions)	
Cox	Fa '08	Fa '07	Fa '08	Fa '07	2008	2007
WZZK/Birmingham	7.7	8.1	1,856	1,696	$6.4	$6.0
WNCB/Birmingham	1.2	1.3	593	602	$1.3	$1.3
WHKO/Dayton	8.3	10.5	1,815	1,829	$5.6	$5.7
KKBQ/Houston*	4.3	3.7	9,158	9,865	$18.0	$17.8
KTHT/Houston*	2.1	3.2	5,671	6,469	$4.5	$4.6
WQNU/Louisville	3.6	--	959	--	$1.8	--
WRKA/Louisville+	4.8	2.8	1,201	813	$.6	$.9
WWKA/Orlando	6.3	4.6	2,067	1,831	$11.4	$11.6
WKHK/Richmond	7.5	6.5	1,560	1,421	$7.0	$7.9
KKYX/San Antonio+	1.1	1.0	464	456	$1.2	$1.2
KCYY/San Antonio	5.0	4.5	2,467	2,245	$8.2	$8.2
KWEN/Tulsa	8.1	7.2	1,436	1,484	$5.0	$5.3

TOTALS:	Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
	2008*	13	60.0	2,924,700	$71,000,000
	2007*	13	53.4	2,871,100	$71,575,000
	2005	11	49.3	1,854,900	$70,100,000
	2003	9	53.3	1,798,400	$68,350,000

**2008 and 2007 share and cume figures for Houston are based on Nov. PPM data, 6+, for those years.*
In addition to the 12 stations listed above, Cox also owns one Country station in a non-rated market, according to BIA data. Those stations contribute to station and revenue totals, but not to ratings totals.

Calls/City	12+ Share		Cume (00)		Revenue (in millions)	
Cumulus	Fa '08	Fa '07	Fa '08	Fa '07	2008	2007
KBCY/Abilene, TX	11.3	11.1	239	305	$1.1	$1.3
WKAK/Albany, GA	5.8	6.5	138	143	$.7	$.7
WWWW/Ann Arbor, MI	5.2	5.2	325	411	$2.3	$2.5
WPKR/Appleton, WI	3.9	4.1	321	388	$1.4	$1.5
WQCB/Bangor, ME	13.7	16.4	430	454	$2.1	$2.3
KAYD/Beaumont, TX	4.7	4.8	330	326	$1.2	$1.1
KHAK/Cedar Rapids, IA	16.8	15.7	510	432	$3.5	$3.8
WKOR/Columbus, MS	9.1	7.1	178	175	$.7	$.7
KPLX/Dallas*	4.7	3.1	12,640	5,110	$22.0	$23.0
WJOD/Dubuque, IA	7.7	8.7	307	281	$.9	$1.8
KAMO/Fayetteville, AR	3.1	4.3	233	267	$.4	$.6
KQSM/Fayetteville, AR	2.1	3.2	293	294	$.4	$.5
KOMS/Ft. Smith, AR	8.5	9.6	360	368	$.7	$.7
KEKB/Grand Junction, CO	9.4	8.0	249	209	$1.1	$1.0
WPCK/Green Bay, WI	6.3	4.2	305	287	$.7	$1.0
WWFF/Huntsville	1.7	--	255	--	$.4	---

Shea Fisher

FROM BARREL RACER TO DREAM CHASER

STROUDAVARIOUS
RECORDS

Shea & Skippy's

Amazing American Adventures Radio Tour 2009

STROUDAVARIOUS
RECORDS

Ant's pants: *the ultimate in style or cleverness*

Knackered: *totally exhausted*

Hey guys,

Thank you SO MUCH for all your support! Our radio tour in the U.S. has been so much fun. I am having a blast! A BIG THANKS to all of you for being so lovely and welcoming.

You rock!
Shea XXX

Rellies: *family*

Waggin' school: *playing hooky*

Chuck a sickie: *to take a sick day from work*

Calls/City	12+ Share		Cume (00)		Revenue (in millions)	
Cumulus (continued)	Fa '08	Fa '07	Fa '08	Fa '07	2008	2007
WFMS/Indianapolis	8.8	8.5	2,737	2,417	$12.1	$12.2
KUSJ/Killeen, TX	8.5	8.3	431	374	$2.0	$1.8
KYKZ/Lake Charles, LA	13.9	14.5	423	388	$2.5	$2.2
WLXX/Lexington	7.8	6.7	803	699	$2.0	$2.1
WDEN/Macon, GA	9.3	10.3	558	538	$2.1	$2.5
WHKR/Melbourne	6.0	6.8	668	688	$1.6	$2.1
WYOK/Mobile	2.0	3.3	384	423	$.5	$.9
WLWI/Montgomery, AL	9.2	8.4	624	635	$2.8	$3.2
WLFF/Myrtle Beach	3.8	4.4	299	297	$.6	$.5
WSM-FM/Nashville	3.5	4.1	1,579	1,601	$4.2	$5.1
WZAD/Newburgh, NY	1.0	2.4	117	149	$.6	$.3
KNFM/Odessa, TX	6.4	7.0	331	348	$1.4	$1.3
KHAY/Oxnard, CA	5.1	4.8	477	343	$3.2	$3.7
WKXP/Poughkeepsie, NY	1.5	1.8	157	141	$1.0	$1.3
KWWK/Rochester, MN	9.7	8.0	266	276	$1.2	$1.2
WXXQ/Rockford, IL	11.7	11.1	692	646	$2.7	$3.0
WJCL/Savannah	6.5	7.0	443	359	$2.3	$2.4
KRMD/Shreveport	6.4	6.5	606	546	$2.0	$2.0
WKKO/Toledo	12.3	14.5	1,097	1,301	$5.6	$6.1
KQTP/Topeka, KS	3.7	5.0	179	230	$.7	$.7
KOEL/Waterloo, IA	13.8	16.4	341	362	$1.3	$1.3
KLUR/Wichita Falls, TX	12.1	15.6	256	291	$1.4	$1.3
KOLI/Wichita Falls, TX+	3.0	3.7	70	69	$.4	$.4
WWQQ/Wilmington, NC	7.7	10.6	395	475	$2.1	$2.3
WQXK/Youngstown, OH	10.0	10.7	921	882	$3.7	$3.6

TOTALS:

Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
2008*	52	297.7	3,196,700	$106,700,000
2007	52	308.5	2,397,400	$112,600,000
2005	52	301.0	1,565,800	$66,860,000
2003	58	339.8	1,660,800	$62,260,000

**2008 share and cume figures for Dallas are based on Nov. 2008 PPM data, 6+.*

In addition to the 41 stations listed above, Cumulus also owns 11 Country stations in non-rated markets, according to BIA data. Those stations contribute to station and revenue totals, but not to ratings totals.

Calls/City	12+ Share		Cume (00)		Revenue (in millions)	
Entercom	Fa '08	Fa '07	Fa '08	Fa '07	2008	2007
WPAW/Greensboro, NC	5.1	5.6	1,708	1,553	$3.8	$3.9
WDAF/Kansas City	3.3	3.8	1,546	1,873	$3.6	$4.3
WMC-AM/Memphis+	0.4	--	130	--	$1.1	--
KWJJ/Portland	5.0	4.9	2,333	2,338	$6.5	$7.1
WBEE/Rochester, NY	9.4	10.1	1,679	1,839	$6.3	$6.9
KBWF/San Francisco*	2.0	1.7	5,521	2,980	$6.8	$7.0
KKWF/Seattle	2.7	3.3	2,358	2,658	$6.3	$7.4
WGGY/Wilkes Barre	6.7	7.9	1,151	1,176	$3.4	$3.4
WGGI/Wilkes Barre	0	0	0	0	0	0

TOTALS:

Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
2008	9	34.6	1,642,600	$36,700,000
2007	8	37.3	1,444,170	$39,900,000
2005	5	28.3	733,400	$22,525,000
2003	6	31.6	697,300	$20,700,000

Calls/City	12+ Share		Cume (00)		Revenue (in millions)	
Gap	Fa '08	Fa '07	Fa '08	Fa '07	2008	2007
KEAN/Abilene, TX	9.6	9.9	270	310	$1.1	$1.2
KYYW/Abilene, TX	2.3	2.3	81	66	$.1	$.1
KATP/Amarillo, TX	4.1	6.3	233	228	$.3	$.3
KCTR/Billings, MT	15.2	13.8	321	287	$1.8	$2.1
KWYY/Casper, WY	8.6	7.9	112	103	$.4	$.4
KCGY/Cheyenne, WY	1.0	1.1	25	33	$.4	$.5
KKCB/Duluth, MN	9.1	9.7	363	392	$.8	$.9
KNGT/Lake Charles, LA	6.0	6.5	216	222	$1.4	$1.5
KLAW/Lawton, OK	17.6	18.8	256	270	$1.4	$1.3
KQBR/Lubbock, TX	4.4	5.1	268	278	$.8	$.9
KYKS/Lufkin, TX	17.3	16.0	377	357	$1.8	$2.0
KORD/Richland, WA	7.5	7.0	282	289	$1.6	$1.5
KXKS/Shreveport, LA	3.9	4.8	400	437	$1.7	$1.6
KWKH/Shreveport, LA	1.8	1.7	168	233	$.3	$.4
KKYR/Texarkana, TX-AR	17.2	16.2	370	308	$1.9	$2.0
KEZJ/Twin Falls, ID	8.0	9.5	222	238	$.6	$.7
KNUE/Tyler, TX	7.0	7.2	507	545	$2.0	$2.1
KWFS/Wichita Falls, TX	6.1	8.9	161	216	$.4	$.5
KUTI/Yakima, WA	2.5	2.3	100	113	$.1	$.1
KDBL/Yakima, WA	4.9	2.7	224	166	$.4	$.6

TOTALS:

Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
2008	25	154.1	495,600	$22,800,000
2007	26	161.6	534,600	$24,180,000

In addition to the 20 stations listed above, Gap also owns five Country stations in non-rated markets, according to BIA data. Those stations contribute to station and revenue totals, but not to ratings totals.

Calls/City	12+ Share		Cume (00)		Revenue (in millions)	
Greater Media	Fa '08	Fa '07	Fa '08	Fa '07	2008	2007
WKLB/Boston	4.0	3.7	3,540	3,312	$9.9	$11.7

TOTALS:

Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
2008	1	4.0	354,000	$9,900,000
2007	1	3.7	331,200	$11,700,000
2006	1	3.8	314,100	$10,700,000
2005	1	4.2	na	$8,500,000

Calls/City	12+ Share		Cume (00)		Revenue (in millions)	
Hall	Fa '08	Fa '07	Fa '08	Fa '07	2008	2007
WOKO/Burlington, VT	16.4	17.3	856	928	$3.7	$3.7
WPCV/Lakeland, FL	13.4	13.9	1,136	1,002	$4.6	$5.0
WCTY/New London, CT	10.7	12.4	527	496	$2.2	$2.3
WCTK/Providence	6.4	5.5	1,964	1,818	$3.9	$4.9

TOTALS:

Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
2008	4	46.9	448,300	$14,400,000
2007	4	49.1	424,400	$15,925,000
2005	4	50.2	414,300	$14,400,000
2003	4	47.0	382,800	$11,200,000

Calls/City	12+ Share		Cume (00)		Revenue (in millions)	
Journal	Fa '08	Fa '07	Fa '08	Fa '07	2008	2007
KTTS/Springfield, MO	13.8	15.9	927	971	$3.8	$3.7
KVOO/Tulsa	6.7	5.0	1,036	880	$3.6	$3.8
KXBL/Tulsa	4.0	4.2	653	688	$1.9	$2.1
KFDI/Wichita	8.9	12.7	978	1,122	$4.1	$4.6
KFTI-AM/Wichita	3.0	3.2	249	331	$1.2	$1.5
KFTI/Wichita	2.7	2.7	308	307	$.4	$.4

TOTALS:

Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
2008	6	39.1	415,100	$15,000,000
2007	6	43.7	429,900	$16,155,000
2005	5	48.1	470,100	$16,425,000
2003	5	44.2	391,800	$15,950,000

Calls/City	12+ Share		Cume (00)		Revenue (in millions)	
Lincoln Financial	Fa '08	Fa '07	Fa '08	Fa '07	2008	2007
KYGO/Denver	4.7	5.4	2,948	2,959	$19.2	$19.9
KSOQ/San Diego	0	0	0	0	0	0
KSON/San Diego	4.6	5.2	2,695	2,496	$9.8	$10.8

TOTALS:

Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
2008	3	9.3	564,300	$29,000,000
2007	3	10.6	545,500	$30,675,000
2005	5	10.7	625,300	$33,050,000
2003	4	12.2	631,800	$35,300,000

Calls/City	12+ Share		Cume (00)		Revenue (in millions)	
Max Media	Fa '08	Fa '07	Fa '08	Fa '07	2008	2007
WOOZ/Marion, IL	10.4	12.0	318	350	$1.2	$1.2
WGH-FM/Norfolk	5.5	6.9	1,757	1,896	$7.1	$8.2
WWBE/Sunbury, PA	11.4	10.0	356	323	$.6	$.6
WYGL/Sunbury, PA	0	0	0	0	0	0
WLGL/Sunbury, PA	0	0	0	0	0	0

TOTALS:

Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
2008	11	27.3	243,100	$17,300,000
2007	12	29.4	260,200	$14,250,000
2006	12	27.5	281,700	$12,670,000
2005	12	28.5	259,400	$12,900,000

In addition to the five stations listed above, Max Media also owns six Country stations in non-rated markets, according to BIA data. Those stations contribute to station and revenue totals, but not to ratings totals.

Calls/City	12+ Share		Cume (00)		Revenue (in millions)	
Mt. Wilson	Fa '08	Fa '07	Fa '08	Fa '07	2008	2007
KKGO/Los Angeles*	2.4	1.5	10,372	4,447	$12.5	$13.0

TOTALS:

Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
2008	1	2.4	1,037,200	$12.5
2007	2	1.5	444,700	$13.5

**2008 share and cume figures for Los Angeles are based on Nov. 2008 PPM data, 6+.*

Calls/City	12+ Share		Cume (00)		Revenue (in millions)	
Regent	Fa '08	Fa '07	Fa '08	Fa '07	2008	2007
WGNA/Albany, NY	9.8	9.7	1,459	1,442	$6.5	$7.2
WBWN/Bloomington, IL	10.3	9.5	297	279	$2.4	$2.4
WYRK/Buffalo	9.9	9.6	1,865	1,897	$8.7	$8.9
WKDQ/Evansville, IN	10.6	11.7	542	556	$2.4	$2.6
KUAD/Ft. Collins, CO	7.6	8.1	633	744	$3.9	$3.7
KMDL/Lafayette, LA	6.4	8.2	809	976	$3.1	$2.8
WFYR/Peoria, IL	6.1	6.2	435	408	$1.3	$1.6
WWJO/St. Cloud, MN	7.8	8.6	357	384	$1.6	$1.8
WFRG/Utica-Rome, NY	12.2	12.1	639	615	$2.1	$2.2

TOTALS:

Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
2008	10	80.7	703,600	$32,000,000
2007	10	83.7	730,100	$33,100,000
2005	11	115.3	580,100	$26,100,000
2003	13	128.6	687,600	$31,415,000

In addition to the nine stations listed above, Regent also owns one Country station in a non-rated market, according to BIA data. That station contributes to station and revenue totals, but not to ratings totals.

Calls/City	12+ Share		Cume (00)		Revenue (in millions)	
Saga	Fa '08	Fa '07	Fa '08	Fa '07	2008	2007
WIXY/Champaign, IL	8.6	10.3	343	350	$2.5	$2.6
WVVR/Clarksville, TN	12.3	9.8	421	316	$2.0	$2.1
WQNY/Ithaca, NY	14.7	21.9	213	245	$1.6	$1.5
KDXY/Jonesboro, AR	14.6	15.7	237	191	$1.6	$1.5
WPOR/Portland, ME	4.7	6.2	310	367	$2.4	$2.8
WNAX/Sioux City, IA	1.6	1.5	67	41	$.5	$.4

TOTALS:

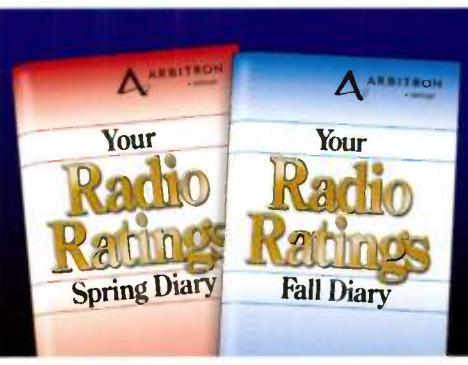
Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
2008	10	56.5	159,100	$14,100,000
2007	10	65.4	151,100	$14,175,000
2005	10	62.7	163,400	$13,075,000
2003	9	50.5	133,800	$9,875,000

In addition to the six stations listed above, Saga also owns four Country stations in non-rated markets, according to BIA data. Those stations contribute to station and revenue totals, but not to ratings totals.

Calls/City	12+ Share		Cume (00)		Revenue (in millions)	
Wilks	Fa '08	Fa '07	Fa '08	Fa '07	2008	2007
WHOK/Columbus, OH	3.0	3.9	1,169	1,226	$1.8	$1.9
WNKK/Columbus, OH	0.7	1.2	410	571	$.4	$.5
KBEQ/Kansas City	4.3	3.7	1,706	1,952	$4.5	$5.5
KFKF/Kansas City	4.1	5.3	1,613	2,170	$7.0	$7.1
KLLL/Lubbock, TX	9.3	9.8	471	438	$1.9	$2.1

TOTALS:

Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
2008	5	21.4	536,900	$15,600,000
2007	5	23.9	635,700	$18,100,000



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ACM Week With...

Jamey Johnson

Las Vegas. April, 2009. **Jamey Johnson** ascends to the ACM stage to accept Song of the Year for "In Color." He is planning a little-known emotional tribute for his upcoming performance on the show. And the next day, he'll pay tribute to a man who, in many respects, made it all possible.

Two years earlier at the same event, George Strait's "Give It Away" won Song of the Year, and co-writer Johnson took heart. "That's the song that in many ways revived my will to keep doing this," he says. "Not that I decided I was going to quit, but him cutting that straight, traditional-type song showed me there's an audience out there. It instilled hope in me that people were looking for that kind of music."

And for Johnson, unquestionably, the music is everything. Strait's cut starts a chain of events that eventually results in Mercury picking up Johnson's self-released *That Lonesome Song*, now a gold record and one of the most widely praised country albums in years. And an amazing weekend in Las Vegas helps show Johnson just how far that music has taken him. "It's like being welcomed into a family," Johnson says of his full-circle journey. "It's just a huge honor."

Music First: Performing for two national television broadcasts, one live and one taped, is the entirety of Johnson's focus leading up to the shows. "I brought my band and I'm playing live," he tells **Country Aircheck** two days before the awards. He's not interested in singing to track, a fairly common practice on live telecasts.

Johnson's decision is complicated by the set producers have chosen for him. "There's a strange delay because I'm on a small stage in the audience that's like a football field away from the band. You expect a delay in a stadium, but I get done here and sit there for a half-second to hear the end of the song."

At rehearsal, Johnson's reps and show producers discuss trying to get a shot of a red road case the singer always keeps close by. The case is stenciled with the name Randy Hardison. "Randy and I met onstage at a writer's night neither one of us was booked for," Johnson says. "We were friends from the start, and

GEORGE HAS AFFECTED SO MANY LIVES OVER THE YEARS, MINE IN PARTICULAR. HE KEPT ME AFLOAT IN A PERIOD WHEN I DIDN'T HAVE A DEAL OR A WAY TO GET MY MUSIC OUT THERE.

he introduced me to ['Give It Away' co-writer] Buddy Cannon. And then a month after we met, he was murdered.

"It tore a lot of people up," Johnson says of the death that shook the Nashville music community in 2002. "He was one of the best studio drummers in town, and was right on the verge of hitting the next level as a songwriter. All my friends in my band today were his friends then. And not a night goes by with these guys playing behind me that I don't think about him.

"I've got his snare case and we use it to hold straps and strings. It was supposed to be his job to be right behind me every night on that drum kit, so I keep his case right behind me onstage."

A boom shot during rehearsals prominently features the case, but, ultimately, the moment never makes the telecast. For Johnson, the meaning is unchanged. "He is very much the reason I'm even at the ACMs, so it's fitting."

Between rehearsals, a full run in the Westwood One radio remotes and the actual performances, Johnson has some downtime. But he can't be found in the MGM Grand casino. "What I do for a living is already gambling," he smiles. "And I'm winning. Why would I want to give it all back?"

Hail The King: For the *George Strait: Artist Of The Decade* taping, Johnson plans a duet arrangement of "Give It Away" with Lee Ann Womack. "There are very few things that are as humbling as to get that opportunity," he says of honoring Strait. "George has affected so many lives over the years, mine in particular. He kept me afloat in a period when I didn't have deal or a way to get my music out there."

And Johnson is beyond thrilled to share the stage with Womack for the performance. "She's incredible," he says. "She brings a tear to my eye, no matter what song she's singing. It's almost hard to sing standing next to her."

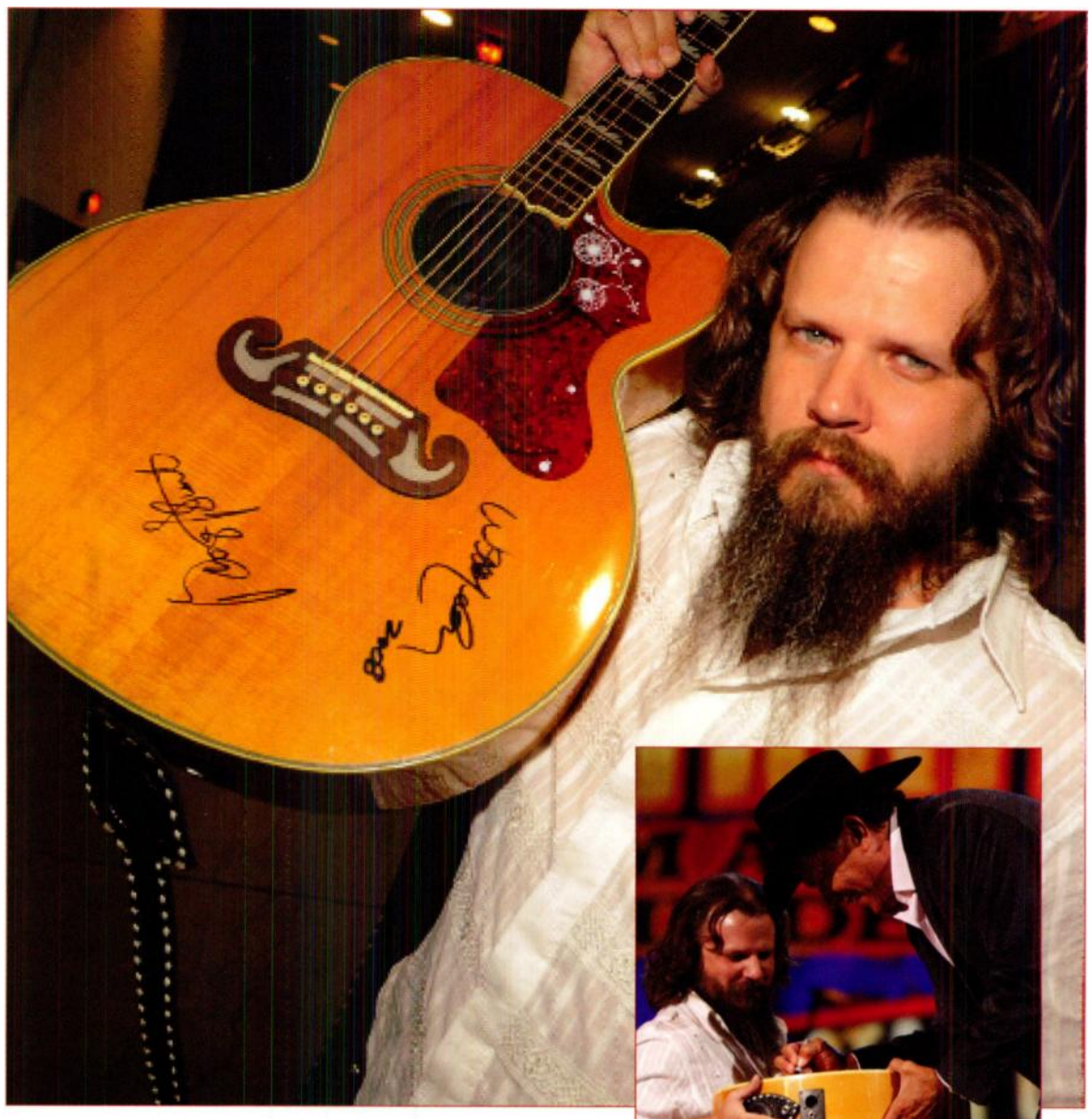
After the performance, Johnson takes his guitar over to Strait and pulls out a pen. "I've been wanting him to sign Ol' Maple for the longest time, and never had George and the guitar in the same place. I felt like kind of a redneck fan, and probably am, but I handed up that Sharpie and just got it done."

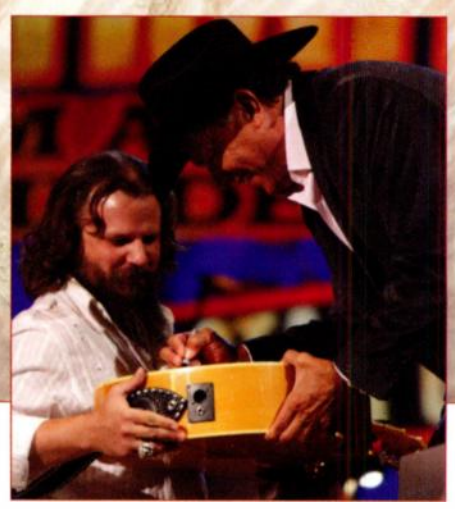
Strait and Hardison are joined by Trace Adkins on Johnson's list of biggest "thank yous." Adkins had recorded and planned to release "In Color," but gave it up so Johnson could use it as a single. "I really loved seeing him win Single of the Year for 'You're Gonna Miss This,'" Johnson says. "When I was accepting my award, I forgot to thank Trace, but I'm eternally grateful."

The NashVegas confab also gives many a chance to thank Johnson for his music. Alan Jackson, Tim McGraw, Faith Hill, Matthew McConaughy and others all made a point to show their appreciation for *That Lonesome Song*.

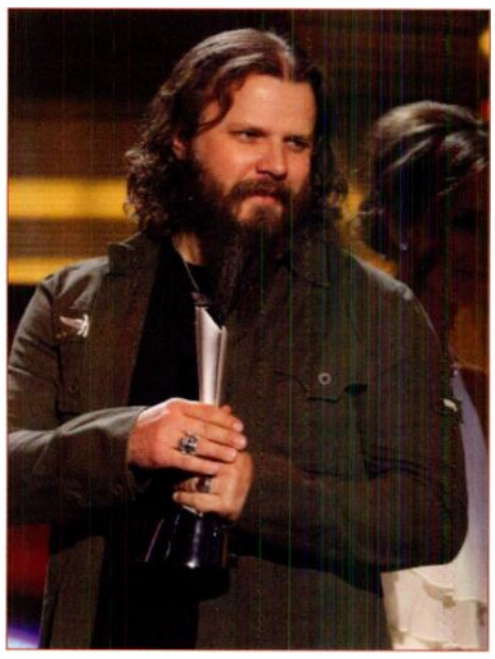
"Getting to hear Jamie Foxx sing at the Strait tribute was incredible," Johnson says of the indelible memories he carried away. "I met Garth Brooks for the first time. I also got to hug Jennifer Love Hewitt's neck. That was pretty cool. Right after I hugged her, she said, 'Oh, by the way, here's my boyfriend.' No offense, buddy, but I wasn't going to get that close to her and not hug her."

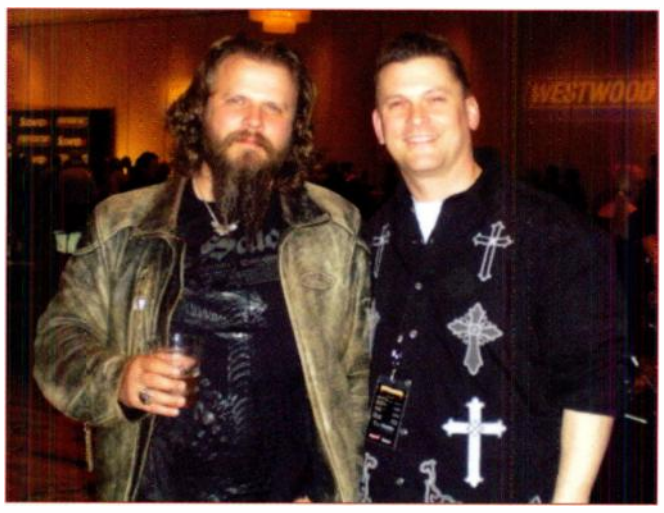
The contrast with 2007 isn't lost on Jamey Johnson. "We're in a different place now than we were then. And two years from now, we'll be in a very different situation than we are now. That's just part of life and living past the obstacles that stand in your way." CAC





Ol' Maple: Jamey shows off his recently signed guitar (above), which now has ink from George Strait in addition to Willie Nelson. And (right), the act itself.





Two Fisted: Johnson holds his second Song of the Year trophy, this one for "In Color" at left. He also spent the better part of a day visiting with radio stations at the Westwood One remotes (above). He's pictured with WCTK/Providence morning personality Tim Leary.

In Color: Jamey rehearses his ACM Awards performance of "In Color" (left). Pictured above is the snare case that once belonged to the late Randy Hardison, whom Johnson counted a friend.

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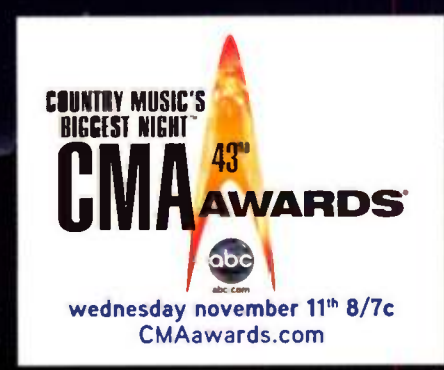

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SCOTT BORCHETTA
JIMMY HARNEN

The Republic For Which They Stand

Capitol/Nashville Sr. VP/Promotion Jimmy Harnen watched his promotion crew place second in label chart share each of the last three years. Earning that elusive Label of the Year title almost became a personal obsession over that time, and at midpoint 2009, Capitol led all Nashville labels in chart share. That potential achievement made Harnen's decision to suddenly depart for a mysterious new post with Scott Borchetta and the Big Machine/Valory Music Co. team all the more intriguing.

Wild speculation about the nature of the new job preceded the June 1 announcement of a joint venture with Monty Lipman's New York-based Republic Records. The new Republic/Nashville label, with Borchetta as CEO and Harnen as President, will join Big Machine and Valory when the companies move into the former Oasis Center next door to their current offices. Country Aircheck sat down with the two executives in the original compound for an exclusive first interview about their history together, the way their new venture is being assembled and their plans for the future of country music.

CA: So, do either of you guys read the newspapers? We're in a worldwide recession, the music business is in the tank for a variety of reasons, and you guys think it's a good idea to start a new label!
SB: C'mon, Lon, you asked me this question five years ago! But I think it's a timely question because it's still valid. The music doesn't stop, and the music business doesn't stop. I think we've proved so far – in what we've done, what we continue to do and what we look to do – that this is still a very viable business. We just have to continue to understand how to monetize it. This is also about the opportunity to work with Jimmy again.

When we wrote about the launch of Valory, you said you needed a second label because you had so much music you needed to get out. So why a *third?*
SB: Because for our strategy, we've proved that one team, with a hyper-focus on a small number of acts, is bringing the desired results. It's still about getting to these next things that we want to sign. It's to build another branding team with this other great music that's right out there under our nose.
JH: Change presents opportunity, and there's a lot of stuff going on right now that the next generation of executives can really capitalize on. Someone told me that more successful businesses and millionaires come out of recessions and depressions than at any other time in American history. So I think this is a time when you dive in and just go at it.
SB: As others are receding, we are strategically marching forward. If they're going to retreat and leave this land open, then we're going to take it.

In our Dec. '07 interview, Scott, you said Big Machine was in "very beautiful black" in its first year. Some might say, however, that at this point you haven't broken anybody new since Taylor. So, again, why the need for a new label?
SB: Look at where Jack Ingram is now from where he was three-and-a-half years ago. He has a national career. And we're in the Jack Ingram business, not just in the Jack Ingram *record* business. So on several levels, Jack Ingram has broken through. Jimmy Wayne is a work in progress that is working. And with what we're doing digitally with him and the way we're building his touring career, *that* is working. With Jewel, that record actually did very well, and it introduced her to a brand-new audience. We're getting ready to do a second record. As far as the new things, we're not going to be stale. We're going to keep taking quality at-bats. And to give quality at-bats, we need a quality team.

What can you do with a third that you couldn't do with two?
SB: Taylor takes up a lot of air at Big Machine. There's no room for error. The *last* thing I need to do with the Big Machine team is to take their eye off the ball. You're not going to see – and this goes back to our very first conversation about Big Machine – more than three to five artists on that label. We need to make sure that second, third and fourth positions earn it. We've had some turnover now with that roster. Now, with Valory, look at what Reba's doing. This is the first time Reba's been the No. 1 artist at a label. During her entire career at MCA, she was in the shadow of George Strait. Well, look what happens when you give her 100%. You haven't even seen what's going to happen. The things that we'll be doing are going to blow you away. But that's because I have a whole team absolutely, 100% focused on Reba McEntire.

And that doesn't take anything away from Jimmy Wayne, where he is in his build; they don't compete with each other. It doesn't take anything away from Justin Moore. So it's very balanced. We're probably going to sign an act we saw earlier today. But if I didn't have Jimmy and this opportunity, it might be 18 months before we could get there. And I never liked that situation of falling in love with something, having a great record – and then having to wait to get it out there.

What will be Monty's level of involvement?
SB: Monty's wanted a greater presence in Nashville for quite awhile. He originally brought Pat Green to Universal South, and has always loved country music. Republic, which was Gene Autry's label, is a name Monty actually purchased. He'll be checking in, but he's not running it. We are.

How did this partnership with Republic and Monty come about?
SB: Monty and Republic/New York are our pop partners for Taylor Swift. So our relationship, in a working manner with Monty, started almost two years ago with "Teardrops On My Guitar." And Monty and I have known each other for about 15 years. He was a promotion guy, so the three of us really have a lot in common, though ironically, he hasn't ever met Jimmy. The relationship grew to the point of, "How can we do more business with you?" And in the same space, "Are you interested in selling?" I said, "No, I'm not."

Were you even tempted?
SB: The number wasn't big enough. *(Laughs)* You can't be tempted unless the number's a lot bigger. So then it became a question of whether we could do more business together. I personally don't need more on my plate. So I looked at it as, "Who could I get? Who would want to do this? Who's ready to do this? Who do I know that I could bring in and trust and have a similar A&R vision and a similar future vision?" And there was one guy. So if this one guy wasn't available, we probably don't do this. I've been trying to get Jimmy back since he left DreamWorks. I talked to him about Big Machine from the beginning, so we've always been brothers from a distance.
JH: He was the first guy to call me when Refugee Management broke up and I was out of work – even way back then. He was at UMG, and asked me to work the Sugarland project.

Are there any Big Machine/Valory partners that are part of this?
SB: This will look a little bit different than the Big Machine and Valory relationship. This isn't adding another promotion department and using all of our backroom. I'm the CEO for Republic/Nashville. Jimmy is the President. We will have some coordination with A&R and marketing, but we will be utilizing publicity, creative services, A&R admin, royalty accounting, etc. through Universal. We're going to have the best of both worlds. We have the heart of an independent – it's still an independent – and the power of the big machines, so to speak.

What is Republic/Nashville responsible for?
SB: Promotion, A&R and some shared marketing. Kelly Rich, our VP/Sales & Marketing, will oversee that because even though we have fewer accounts, it's still a specialty. You still have to know the country plays, and Kelly has the playbook.

What is the A&R process? Will Monty be signing some people that he gives to you guys? What kind of input will you have on what he signs, or does he have carte blanche?
SB: If we don't love it, we don't sign it. Will they present opportunities to us? Yeah. But it's not, "Here's a record. Put it out." They're buying into our vision. I expect they will call Jimmy or me and say, "Hey, check this out."

How will you decide which acts are signed to which labels?
SB: Republic is going to be geared a little bit more aggressive and a little bit younger. So when we look across the platform of the three labels, we'll ask where an artist best fits. If there's something I love and Jimmy's not into it, then we won't put it on Republic.

Will you have your own A&R person or staff?
JH: We're going to share [Big Machine/Valory VP A&R] Allison Jones. And Scott's doing it, and I will, too. I always say, "Everybody is an A&R person."
SB: If you go back to how Big Machine started, I was the A&R person. So the head of A&R is sitting right here. Either Jimmy or I will be the head, with Allison. We hear different things, too. So it's almost adding to our A&R repertoire of understanding hits because one person never gets all of them. So with Allison and Jimmy, I think we've tripled our A&R prowess, I really do.
JH: Scott and I grew up listening to a lot of the same music, but I think we liked different bands. So we balance each other really well.
SB: I credit Jimmy with helping me develop the blueprint for Taylor with what we did at DreamWorks with Jessica Andrews. We all were aware of LeAnn Rimes, obviously. And Jessica was arguably the next one in line. Jimmy continually put that youth thing in

my face with, "Man, look at what happened when we did this high school promotion in Roanoke." By the time we got to Taylor, our experience working with Jessica helped me.

You said Republic would be aggressive and young. What's the vision?
SB: It doesn't mean we're going to sign embryos. Anytime you have a movement the size of Taylor Swift, there's a reciprocal wave that goes through music. We saw it with all the different incarnations of the last 15 or 20 years. And even with what Big & Rich did with MuzikMafia. Taylor's the next MuzikMafia, if you will. So you've got a lot of young talent – male, female, bands – coming to town. We just saw something right before this meeting that blew us away. It has youth to it, but absolutely, it's dead on for the format.
JH: The idea is to be young at heart, too, not just youthful. A lot of people who are 60 are young at heart, and they like to hear music that reflects that.
SB: Jimmy once said, "Nobody likes to think they're old."

When did you get into this mix, Jimmy, and how did Scott approach you?
JH: My Capitol contract was going to be up at the end of June. I wasn't looking, but Scott and I are friends and always talking music. We share a common vision. It's funny because when I was a regional for Scott, I wondered why he was in the office so late all the time. I can't count how many times I called him from Capitol saying, "Okay, I get it. I know why you're working so late." So we talked many times over the years, and I think it was just a natural progression of an ongoing conversation.

What attributes does Jimmy have that will make him a good label president?
SB: Vision. And he's very methodical in getting to success – identifying success and working backwards from there. Back in our DreamWorks days, Jimmy would ask the question, "How do I become a leader?" Not only did we have these discussions, but he also went to school and got another degree. He studied, read and put it into practice. I watched how he did it at Capitol. He's been a great student ever since we met.

Jimmy, you went from artist to trade magazine sales rep at *Gavin* to record promotion, then management, then back to promotion again ...
JH: Scott actually offered me a job when I was at *Gavin*. He was at MCA and was going to bump Royce Risser up from secondary, and I was going to get the job. Then Scott got fired.
SB: That's right.
JH: When I came to town, I asked everybody who the best promotion man in town was. And they all said Scott. I literally became a stalker. I actually walked up to him at an MCA party, nervous as shit. I don't even know what I said, but I think I did all the corniest, stupidest lines, and he walked away.
SB: It couldn't have been that bad because I obviously offered you a job.

When Scott first approached you for this job, were you in right away?
JH: We had dinner. I don't even remember how we got to it, but Scott mentioned the new label, and I told him I was interested. It was always my goal to be the president of a record company. Most kids grew up following Mickey Mantle and other baseball players. I read the *Yellow Pages of Rock* and watched Mo Ostin and Ahmet Ertegun. I was like a moth to flame. I just couldn't say no. When I told Mike Dungan, he said, "How can I stop you? I had my shot. This is your shot."
SB: There always were a handful of people I wanted to be part of this family, maybe somewhat selfishly. Jimmy was absolutely one of those people, and I'm so proud to be able to give Jimmy the shot. It's a shot that I had no problem creating for myself, which is something I'm very proud of. But I'm equally as proud to be able to help the people in this building with *their* dreams.
JH: There was kind of an emotional moment on the phone where he said, "I want this to be the best experience of your life." That was just really cool to hear.

What makes you think you're ready to head a label?
JH: I have trained for this position all my life, and have had the good fortune of seeing this business from many sides: songwriter, artist, musician, producer, manager, regional, national and senior VP of promotion. I was also the promotion director for a radio station in my hometown called Rebel Radio 102, in 1990. I know what it's like from a personal standpoint to be signed, to be dropped, to have success, to lose success.
SB: What Jimmy just said is really critical because he can explain to an artist, from an artist's perspective, what the business is, what it means, and what all these hours can become, what the return on investment can be. You have a different level of understanding and communication with your artist.

You've worked for several different label presidents. What will you incorporate from each, and what will you try to leave behind?
JH: Mike Dungan really is a great human being. When he hired me, I said, "People like him are in short supply in this world." And when I left, I said the same thing. He's a great leader, a great friend and a good coach. He has a great ability to put the right people on the bus, let them get in the right seat and let them go. During my entire time at Capitol, I don't think he walked in one time and corrected the way we were doing something. And yet the entire time I was there, he coached me. He has a really charming, father-like way of coaching people to the next level. He had bumper stickers made that read, "Do the right thing." I brought one with me because I think that's really important. He always does the right thing. And Scott's the same way. I've been blessed to work with, I think, two of the best in town. They're very different, and yet, in many ways, they're very much the same. They're both real musical, and I'm impressed with that.

And what will you stay away from?
JH: I've seen people who motivate with fear, and I think that's awful. A nervous golfer standing over the ball on the first tee is going to slice. If you're relaxed, you're going to crush it down the middle. You have to provide that comfortable atmosphere, and you've got to coach people. The whole fear, intimidation and yelling thing – I think that's really counterproductive.

Have any artists been signed?
SB: The first act on the label is called Fast Ryde.

Is that their name, or is that *your* name?
SB: Ironically, their name! Isn't that perfect?
JH: That never hit me until right now!
SB: As Jimmy and I were finalizing this conversation, I sent him an email, and said, "I have something you have *got* to hear." He came over to my house, I put their CD in and we both sat on the floor amazed.

> "It was always my goal to be the president of a record company. Most kids grew up following Mickey Mantle. I watched Mo Ostin and Ahmet Ertegun."
> –Jimmy Harnen

JH: It's gigantic. It's fresh, it's young ... young at heart.

Who are they? Where are they from?
JH: Two guys from Nashville.
SB: James Harrison and Jody Stevens. Jody is the son of Jeff Stevens, who produces Luke Bryan. Steve Bogard is producing. We've actually teased a couple of our radio friends with it and we're going to come screaming. It's exciting.

When will the single be out?
JH: Early June.
SB: We're hoping for June.

Scott has built the Big Machine and Valory promotion teams in his image. What is your vision, Jimmy, for the Republic/Nashville promotion team?
JH: I think it's the same thing. Up at dawn, go to bed real late. Capitol was in a No. 1 battle between Keith Urban and Big Machine's Taylor Swift not long ago. At 12:01am, Scott sent me an email that said, "Next time, let's try not to go after the same week." And, of course, I was there to receive it in real time just as he was sending it.

What kind of staff are you going to look for?
JH: Desk pounders. Apes. People who want to fight like apes. It's about refusing to lose, and always getting to yes. The artists deserve nothing less.

What's the working structure between you two?
SB: It's really a partnership. The day-to-day is going to be Jimmy. I'll be involved with the big-picture elements and to be there when he gets into situations and places where he needs some experience and assistance. But I don't look at Jimmy as working for me, I see him as working with me.

In 2007, you said, "I look around and see major labels trying to figure out how to get smaller. It's up to me and my executive team to make sure we stay small." How does this new label fit in with that philosophy?
SB: This is a continuation of us staying small. As crazy as it sounds, it fits in perfectly. Because Big Machine isn't overflowing – it's still this small little combat unit, as Valory is, as Republic shall be. So we don't have 15 people in marketing or nine people in online. We're still very small. And we have the heart of an indie. Our overhead is still remarkably small for the number of artists and releases we have.
JH: One label can only work so many records. It gets to the point where you're so diffused that you never sleep. So it's staying small by going a little wider.

You both relish that underdog mentality to motivate people -- "Us against the world." Scott, when Valory launched you said, "We're going to continue this same underdog mentality of being giant-slayers." Well, at some point, you're becoming the giant. How do you keep that underdog spirit?
SB: Even in the heyday at MCA, I always kept that team fighting like we were No. 2, like Avis: "We try harder." The moment that you think you've cleared the mountain, and there's not another mountain, that is the beginning of the end, as far as momentum goes. Keith Richards has this great quote: "I wish I could just keep the band on the road because we keep getting better." That's how I've always felt. There are moments where you lift your head up, but more often than not, keep your head down.
JH: Clive Davis said that every day he went into work, he thought he was going to get fired. And that was after some 60 great years of being in the record business. Being hungry just becomes part of who you are. Some people have it, and some folks don't.

You talked earlier about not being in the Jack Ingram record business, but that you are in the Jack Ingram business. So what are the deal structures for artists?
SB: Big Machine may have been one of the first Nashville labels to really partner with our artists. If you look across the whole platform, everybody's partnering in different elements of potential income. It has evolved, and this is evolving as well. We participate in a lot of areas, but we also try to make sure that it's not just a financial participation. If we take on a piece of management or something like that, we spend a lot of time with the strategic management vision for what the artist should be. The more we get into this, you're going to see our company look as much like a management company as Red Light or what Irving Azoff was doing pre-Ticketmaster. What can you do for your artist? Do you have the services to make them a big star in every world where they want to be a big star? Do you have anything to add?

What's your biggest emotion with this new adventure? What excites you in your own private moments thinking about this?
JH: Being closer to the music. I'll always be a promotion guy; everybody in life is a promotion person. But we had a moment before you got here where we saw a trio that was just frickin' great. To watch that and know that I could be part of developing and marketing that, taking it out and blowing it up, there's no better feeling. CAC

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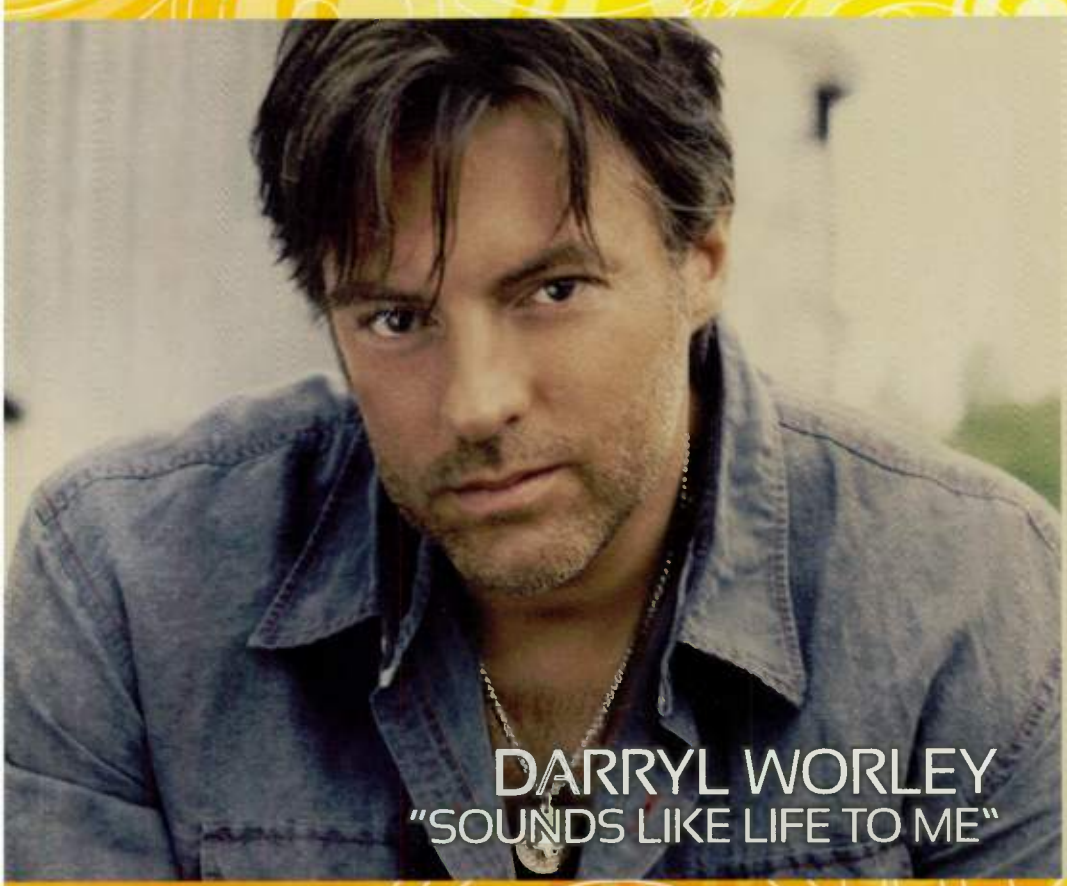
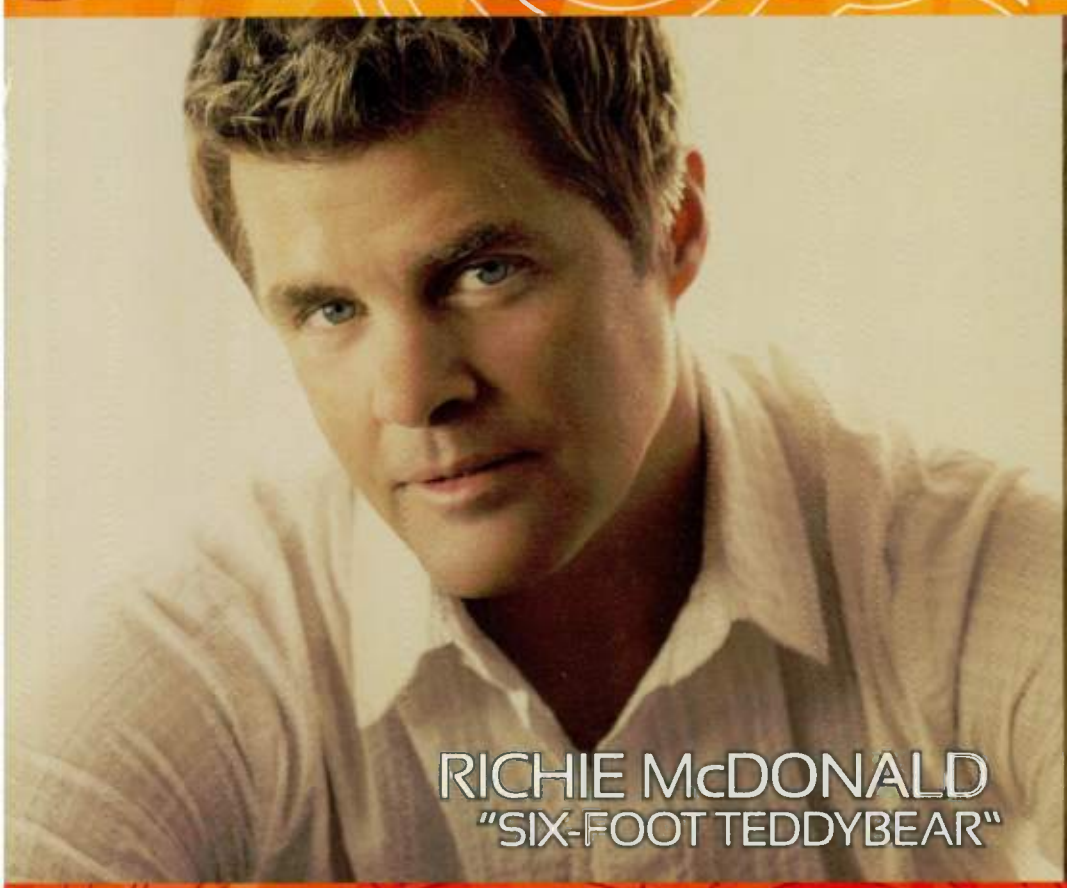


DARRYL WORLEY
"SOUNDS LIKE LIFE TO ME"

SHEA FISHER
"DON'T CHASE ME"

STROUDAVARIOUS



RICHIE McDONALD
"SIX-FOOT TEDDYBEAR"

ANTHONY SMITH
"BRINGIN' BACK THE SUNSHINE"

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NEW FACES

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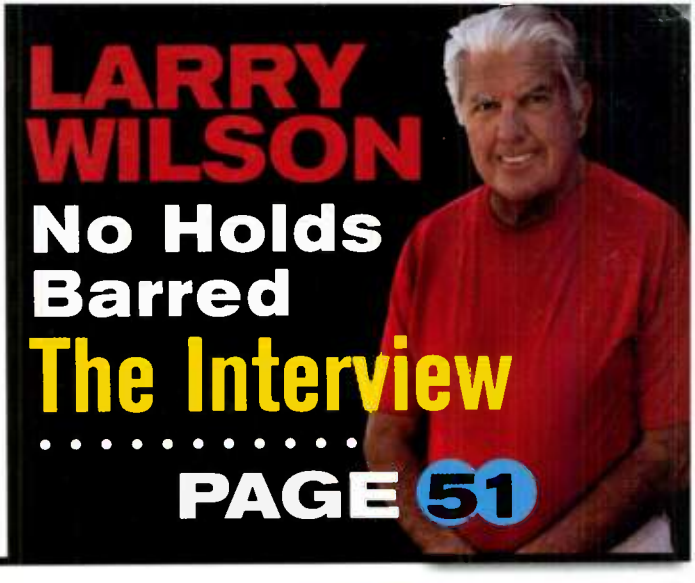

LARRY WILSON

No Holds Barred

The Interview

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COUNTRY

AIRCHECK

MARCH 2009

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40 Years of CRS
Memories, Milestones & Music

More than a nice, round number or cause for cake and balloons, Country Radio Seminar's 40th anniversary is a testament to the professional triumph of an entire industry and genre. Actually passing the milestone – that moment – isn't nearly as significant as each and every one of those years – the planning, devotion, work, knowledge, networking and, yes, fun packed into each.

That's because the history of CRS is really the history of Country radio and, by extension, the last 40 years of country music. Does history credit the incredible growth of the country genre with the corresponding surge in the number and popularity of Country radio stations? Does it credit Country radio's growth with the unique education and industry cohesiveness CRS instills? Or is the seminar's success a credit to the swelling popularity of country music and its radio stations? The answer to all these questions is, emphatically, yes.

The chicken-or-egg debate is rendered moot, but only to the extent that history acknowledges the inarguable symbiosis among radio, the music community and the event that brings them together each year. Remove CRS from the equation, and Country radio is unquestionably diminished. A weaker radio platform is a poorer foundation for country artists and their music. And so it goes.

Is it any coincidence that country music's early '90s explosion came at a time when Country radio was at its most vibrant, robust and creative? Or was it the other way around? And through it all, the seminar thread is indisputable: "Growth Through Sharing." The seminar's official mantra is more than apt when considering the sheer volume of information, ideas and opportunities that has passed through the sessions, showcases and hallways over 40 years.

Large market to small market. Radio to records. Industry vet to wide-eyed kid. And, of course, vice-versa. How ironic, then, that for a genre and format too often stereotyped as backward, the fact remains that no other radio and label community puts more energy into education, relationships and dialogue. And those benefits can't begin to be measured.

And as astounding as the event's growth has been, it also has contributed to the professional and personal growth of so many. In a sense, the story of CRS is simply a compilation of thousands of individual stories each attendee carries away, only the tiniest fraction of which grace these pages or, for that matter, have ever been written down. But they are no less significant. No less representative. In fact, it's mind-boggling to consider the lives changed, the jobs acquired, the scholarships granted, the friendships formed and the children healed. And to be able to look back on four decades that have accomplished so much and say, with a smile, "We had a lot of fun along the way...," well, it just doesn't get any better than that.

Founding Board: The "cabinet" of early contributors (l-r) Jerry Seabolt, Tom McEntee, Barbara Starling, Charlie Monk and the late Biff Collie.

Genesis: 1970s

"It was over after the first seminar," says CRS founder **Tom McEntee**, then-editor of the *Country Music Survey* tip sheet, the platform from which he launched and operated the first CRS. The event lost money, drew fewer than 70 people and actually received notification from its host hotel that they would not be welcomed back the following year.

Harsh empirical feedback aside, McEntee and his "cabinet" of volunteers had sparked a response that would ultimately prove much more important than money. Attendees at the first **Country Music Survey Radio Seminar** left Nashville doing something that has been the unbudgeted backbone of CRS marketing ever since...they left *talking* about the experience.

Understanding the importance of this phenomenon requires a bit of context. Following the 1969 Grand Ole Opry Birthday celebration, many in the industry began expressing discontent with the associated DJ Convention. Staged by the CMA, that event had devolved into a nonstop party. "We didn't want to be connected to the CMA because they were doing nothing for radio," McEntee says. "Their DJ Convention was just a big drunk."

Collar Me Bad: The 1978 CRS Board and Agenda Committee.

Assembling a like-minded group that included the late **Biff Collie, Charlie Monk, Dave Olson, Ralph Paul, Jerry Seabolt** and **Barbara Starling**, McEntee began developing the idea for some kind of get-together. "I wasn't looking to create a schoolroom atmosphere where people came to be lectured," McEntee explains. "I was more focused on creating a 'space' – a place for people of similar interests and goals to gather and build something in common. I would simply provide the framework and the context, and they would eventually create their own content. And though it was impossible for me to imagine what might happen using that same principle with dozens or even hundreds of people in the same room, one thing was apparent: It could change the world of Country radio."

Seriously Committed: The 1983 Agenda Committee.

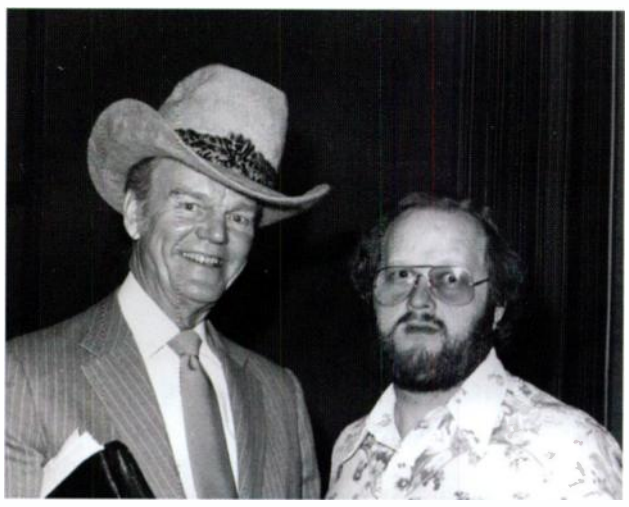
And so the 1970 seminar, which charged a $35 registration fee, engaged close to 70 people – 43 from radio – in that context of self-directed content. Held at the Sheraton Motor Inn on Broadway, the event lost $4,500 and put McEntee's tip sheet out of business. Adding insult to injury, the Sheraton told him the seminar was no longer welcome. "Everyone had billed their drinks back to Jerry Seabolt's room, and he wouldn't pay," McEntee says. "So the hotel asked us not to come back."

But the colossal personal disappointment was mitigated as the years went by. "CRS-1 had appealed merely to those few dozen people tallied on the registration list," McEntee would later write. "But to those few dozen, it lived and breathed. Over 80% of the broadcasters present were back the next year, some with friends in tow, and about 90% of those in the 'other' categories returned. I learned, among other things, that what was offered up on the podium or in the panels was only a portion of the event's significance. Of equal or greater consequence was the fact that the attendees were provided an opportunity to speak with and be with their peers and to broaden their awareness and understanding of the business. They had an opportunity to communicate one-on-one, face-to-face. They were given an occasion to express themselves – and to be heard."

Those sentiments are echoed in comments later noted from those who had attended that first seminar. "It was the first thing I attended that was serious about country music," said the late **Bill Ward**, KKBQ/Burbank, CA GM. "Everything didn't have an 'Opry' tinge to it. You could be in Country radio and hold your head up. We were standing on our own feet; we were first-class citizens, as opposed to being in the back of the bus."

Artist manager **Dale Morris**, then a label radio rep, saw the seminar's advantages from an entirely different perspective. "I could get a year's work done in one day, it seemed, seeing the deejays, exchanging ideas and just putting faces to the names."

In its second year, CRS needed more than the sprouting seeds of word-of-mouth appeal to survive, and help came in the form



Hat Camp: Paul Harvey (l) with Frank Mull, 1980.

Memories
RUBBING ELBOWS

WCOW/La Crosse, WI MD/afternooner ***Arnie Andrews*** *remembers his first CRS experience.*

"It was about five years ago, and I was a bit naive about how close to the industry the conference brings you. Day one at the DJ & Radio Hall of Fame dinner, I was standing behind **Radney Foster** in the bar line. I got my drink and stopped off to use the restroom, where **Rhett Akins** ran right into me. I made it back to my table to sit down for dinner, and a gentleman asked who I was and where I was from. He then introduced himself as **Mike Borchetta**. I had to go out in the hall and call a buddy to say, 'You're not going to believe this place!'"

DJ & Radio Hall Of Fame

In 1974, Chuck Chellman and the late Georgia Twitty formed the Country Music DJ Hall of Fame, recognizing individuals who have made significant contributions to Country radio. The following year, Eddie Hill, Nelson King and Grant Turner became the inaugural inductees. Except for 1986, 1987 and 1997, at least two personalities have become immortalized each year. With the 2009 ceremonies, the DJ Hall of Fame now encompasses 95 of the best voices and talents Country radio has ever created.

After support for the Hall of Fame dinner waned, Country Radio Broadcasters revitalized the event in 1998 as the official trustee. At that time, CRB created the President's Award, recognizing contributions to CRB, as well as the Career Achievement Award to artists contributing greatly to country music and Country radio. Fittingly, Chellman and Chet Atkins, respectively, were those awards' first honorees.

In 2000, the DJ Hall of Fame was expanded to include Radio Hall of Fame broadcasters, recognizing outstanding career achievement in programming, operations, ownership and management. Former Great Empire executive the late Mike Lynch was the first honoree in 2001, and 15 more have since joined.

The plaques commemorating each inductee were originally showcased at the Opryland Hotel. However, in November 2003, then-Nashville Mayor Bill Purcell dedicated the present "wall of fame" along the downtown interior walkway between the Renaissance Hotel and the Nashville Convention Center.

Now, as then, the dinner features heartfelt and often highly entertaining speeches by the inductees and friends. Many who have attended will tell you the night is, for them, the best part of CRS.

Fame Show Contestant: Hairl Hensley accepts his DJ Hall of Fame plaque in 1995. Pictured (l-r) Paul Allen, Hensley, Chuck Chellman and Ed Salamon.

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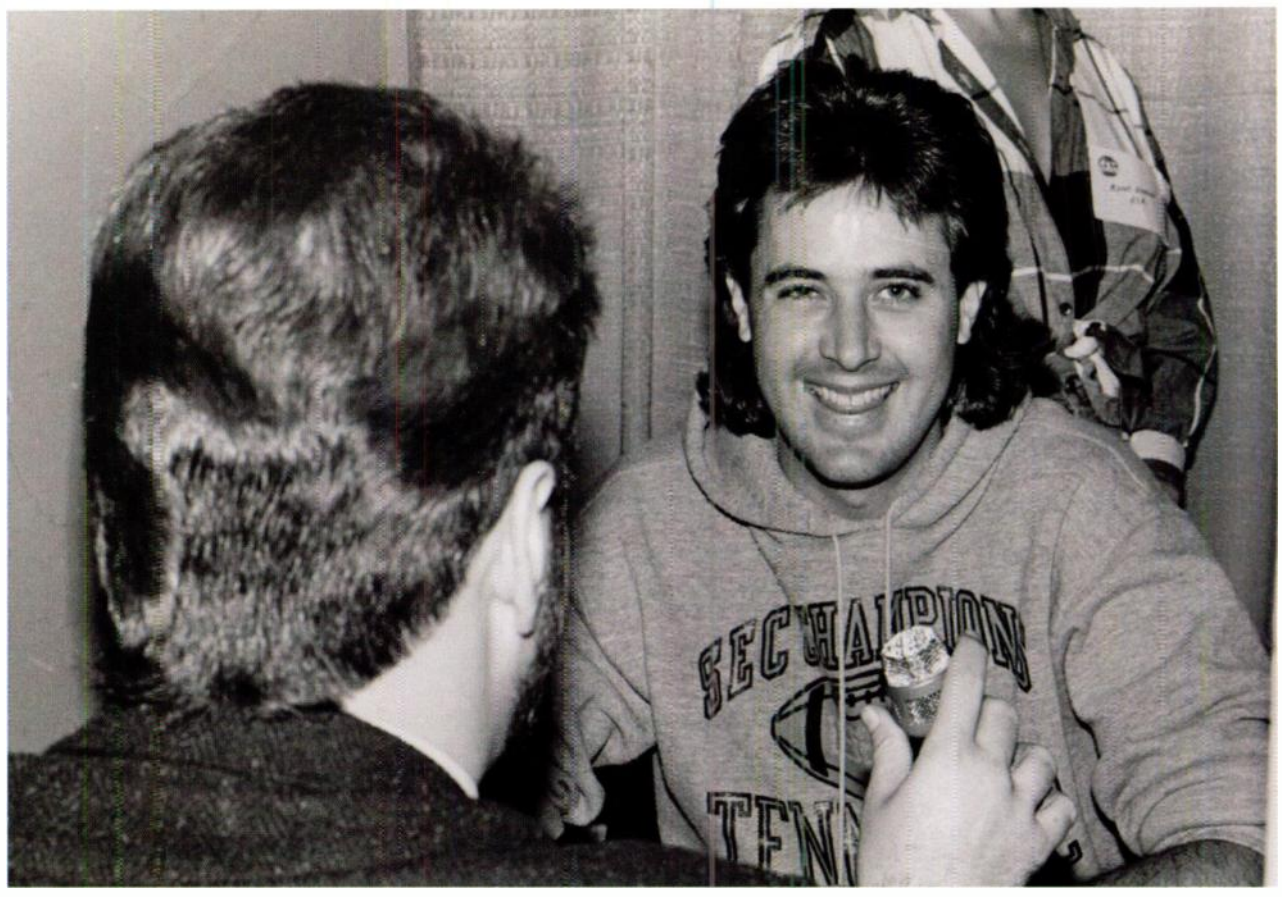
Study Hall

One of the earliest goals of CRS founders was to award scholarships to deserving students, but it took a few years before revenues surpassed expenditures. What started as a couple thousand dollars a year in the mid-'70s grew into five figures by the '90s.

Since 2000, the annual figure has regularly exceeded $20,000 with the hope that institutions receiving the funds would create endowments to perpetuate the giving. All told, seminar registrants have helped underwrite more than $330,000 in scholarships. Kind of gives a deeper meaning to the CRS catchphrase, "Growth Through Sharing."



Number One With A Mullet: **Vince Gill at the Artist Radio Taping Session.**

Group Mug: **Pictured in 1994 (l-r) are Jack Purcell, Susan Turner, Jeff Garrison, Bruce Shindler and Greg Rambin.**

Mane Event: **Scott Borchetta addresses a panel.**

CRS Through The Years Continued...

of college professors Dr. **Will Miles** and Dr. **Jerry Prock**. Experienced at running conventions, Miles and Prock billed the event as the "Nashville Country Radio Seminar," moved to the Holiday Inn Vanderbilt, got the record labels involved as sponsors...and still lost money. But the following year, 1972, the seminar turned its first profit. Attendance had climbed to 150 people representing 55 stations. Now held at the King Of The Road Motor Inn, the event was ready, in 1973, to institute its first agenda committee.

Officially adopting the "Country Radio Seminar" title once and for all in 1974, the event moved to the Airport Hilton and seemed to have found firm footing. And that stability was cemented when, in 1975, Miles and Prock were bought out and the event was organized as a non-profit organization that we now call Country Radio Broadcasters.

"What about the guy from Ardmore?" became a rallying cry in board and agenda meetings. The saying referenced a small-town Oklahoma programmer who was a regular attendee and quick to grab a mic to ask questions with a small market station focus. CRS planners leaned on the phrase to remind themselves of the breadth and depth of their constituency. And it worked.

Big issues of the day included the time-honored tradition of complaining about record service and, more specifically to the era, whether stations would go country-politan. Panels addressed programming, promotions and sales, as well as explained functions of the music industry for the radio attendees. The Rap Room session was developed as a forum for interacting face-to-face with top programmers and executives and, at least in part, to steer people away from constantly asking about how to get record service. The idea was to have people ask those questions in that setting, rather than interrupting panels. Then-WHN/New York PD **Ed Salamon** created a stir with his panel on research. "I remember **Jay Diamond** stood up and said, 'If you can't pick songs with your ears, you have no business in this format!'" Salamon says.

By the end of the decade, attendance crested 400 delegates, who paid $80 in advance or $100 for late registration. Attendees also received the first-ever program book in 1979. But what those participants weren't doing, at least not during session times, was any sort of imbibing. "If you were in a bar while a panel was going on, Biff Collie would drag your ass out of there," **Charlie Monk** explains. "You were supposed to be in that room and we typically had maximum attendance at every panel."

And, of course, music was an important aspect of the seminar from the very beginning. Having new artists perform at the convention's close was much more by necessity than design, however. Established stars wouldn't play the fledgling event, though **Don Gibson** agreed to close the first seminar's show as a surprise guest. The New Faces name was coined by publicist **Betty Hofer**, who issued a press release early in the '70s describing the seminar-closing performance by "the new faces of country music." And the name stuck. The next year, the two words earned capital letters, and an institution was born.

Numbers: 1980s

As the decade turned, Country radio's legions of professionals probably couldn't envision the transitions ahead: from AM to "Continuous Country" FM and, later, from that sound to a more personality-driven approach. But many of them were beginning to have an awareness of where they could prepare themselves for the future of Country radio: CRS was building undeniable momentum.

The early part of the decade saw the institution of the Artist/Attendee Cocktail Reception and the establishment of a permanent, though unpaid, executive director. **Frank Mull** took the Organization of Country Radio Broadcasters' reins in 1981, but wasn't added to the full-time payroll until 1989. WKIX/Raleigh's **Kim Pyle** became CRB's first female agenda chair, also in 1981. And the issue of outside activities remained a sensitive topic.

"[CRS] was instituted to give Country broadcasters a forum for the betterment of Country radio," read a statement in the 1981 program book. "We feel that, collectively, the broadcasters are here for that purpose and not be exploited at this same time of year. (There is ample time at other events throughout the year for the exposure and exploitation of product!)" Attendees were told that hospitality suites and other "marketing" activities not expressly approved by the OCRB board were prohibited.

In 1982, CRS moved to the Opryland Hotel, and attendance grew to 580. Exhibitors were sanctioned for the first time, as well, setting up in suites at the hotel. The following year OCRB dropped the "O," becoming, simply, Country Radio Broadcasters. A full Exhibitor's Hall bowed in 1984 with 20 vendors, and that year's New Faces show was taped for television – eventually reaching 8.5 million viewers in syndication. As TV tapings tend to do, this one lasted into the early hours of the morning and secured its place as the first and last televised New Faces.

Many agree that CRS really came into its own in the mid-'80s. The Urban Cowboy craze was bringing new fans – in appropriate attire – to country, and probably new stations, as well. And more stations meant more CRS registrants. The Artist Radio Taping Session (ARTS) was launched in 1986, and the seminar expanded to three days in '88. And the controversy surrounding off-site events finally came to a head.

Not that exceptions hadn't been made before, of course. Organizers looked the other way in the mid-'70s when **RCA** took a busload of radio folks to nearby Murfreesboro to see Elvis in concert. But at the same time, label exec **John Brown** was issuing stern warnings, including this one: "There will be no outside parties, hype display material or any other bullshit we industry people are so good at coming up with whenever we have a captive audience of DJs, PDs, MDs, managers, etc. Since the inception of the seminar, each year's respective committee chairmen have made it emphatically clear about this matter and seen to it that we have not turned our seminar into a complete 'crap-out.' We have a super thing going in this, and we mean to see it continue for the good of everyone, and not be sacrificed by individual finger-poppin', jive-ass, ditty-boppin' industry or radio types."

Memories STRAIT, DENE & MCGRAW

*Veteran programmer **Mark Lindow** has a long string of CRS memories to draw from since his first seminar in 1982.*

"A true highlight from that first seminar was bumping into **George Strait** and his wife **Norma** as they came out of the elevator at the Opryland Hotel. I couldn't believe it. He was a New Faces artist that year and none of us knew what was to come in the next 25 years. And he was as gracious during that encounter as he's been throughout his career.

"That same year, I was in the second year of my first PD job at **WILQ/Williamsport, PA.** I was in the hotel's Pickin' Parlor when **Dene Hallam**, then the PD at **WHN/New York**, introduced himself. Dene told me he'd heard our station and thought it sounded great. You have no idea what it meant, as a young, impressionable PD, to have the PD of the Country station in market No. 1 come up and say that! Years later, I'd brainstorm with Dene at company meetings when we both ended up working for CBS. What a business.

"The most amazing musical moment I've ever experienced, and I know I'm not alone in saying it, was **Tim McGraw**'s New Faces performance. The feeling in the room during 'Don't Take The Girl' is something I'll never forget. I know it's been written about many times, and everything you read or hear from someone who was there is absolutely true."

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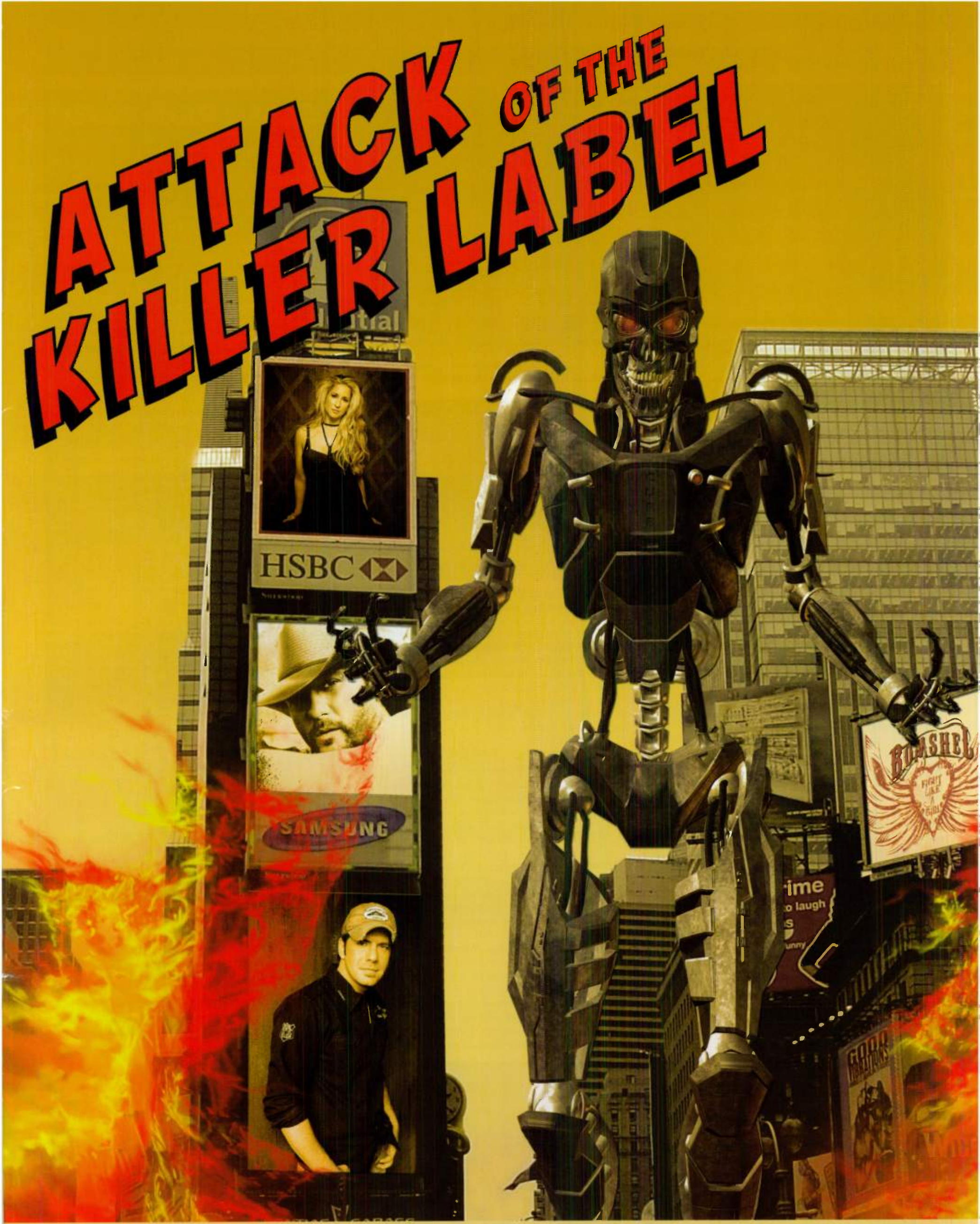

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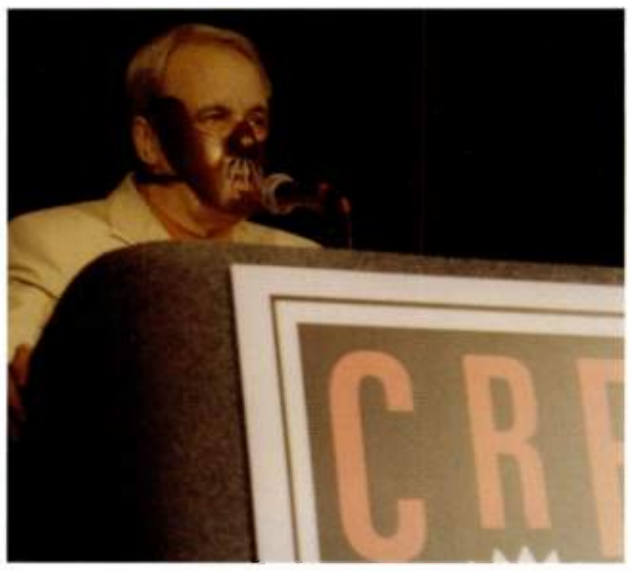
I Love Country Radio This Much: NFL broadcaster, former player and keynoter Terry Bradshaw in 1996.



Mask What You Can Do For Your Country: New Faces host Charlie Monk in his industry-preferred attire.

Generation Next: Brad Paisley, Eddy Arnold and Garth Brooks at the 1999 DJ & Radio Hall of Fame Dinner.

CRS Through The Years Continued...

The capitulation didn't come in a grand battle or debate, however. As with most such changes, the wall crumbled bit by bit. Salamon, a board member at the time, recalls one telling incident: "Someone was holding an offsite party, which were still officially banned," he says. "But I broke down and went to the show at the Exit Inn. I walked in the door and saw Charlie Monk [also a board member] and he said, 'Oh, you too?'"

Label hospitality suites were officially sanctioned in 1987. But the academic-tinged, professional foundation of CRS was too firmly rooted to be swayed by the winds of after-hours showcases and glad-handing. In fact, the argument can be made, rather persuasively, that striking a balance between serious discourse by day and music-soaked high life by night created a whole-is-greater-than-the-sum-of-its-parts appeal that was almost irresistible.

Veteran promotion exec and broadcaster **Bill Mayne**, who came to the format from pop and rock, saw the difference immediately. "There was so much candor and passion," he says. "Not as much posturing as at the party conventions. Plus, all the other gatherings were multiple formats. CRS was format-specific. That really gave Country people an advantage the other formats didn't have."

Every CRS is an important CRS, but if you have to pick a pivot point on which the whole business turned – not just the seminar but Country radio and country music – it has to be 1989. Attendance topped 900. Certainly the famed Class of '89 artists were about to figure prominently – though registrants wouldn't see **Travis Tritt, Mary Chapin Carpenter, Kentucky HeadHunters** and others until the following year's New Faces.

And 1989 was also the year a young artist named **Garth Brooks** shook every hand he could find, and spent every night of the seminar trying to win over radio programmers in the Unistar suite (see sidebar). Even more significantly, at least in human terms, 1989 was the year one of country's biggest stars took the CRS keynote platform with a simple plea. Alabama's **Randy Owen** asked for radio's help in making sick kids well. And the response was, and continues to be, extraordinary (see sidebar).

Acts: 1990s

The '90s were heady times for Country radio and the music industry. The business was exploding on all fronts: CD sales were skyrocketing, venues were filling to capacity and Country stations increasingly found themselves in competitive situations. That meant intensive marketing and promotions, new "Young Country" music positions and an entire industry working as intensely and creatively as possible. As the decade wore on, significant changes would begin to reshape both labels and broadcasters. And the word of the moment became "consolidation."

Alabama received the CRB's first-ever Artist Humanitarian Award at the decade's first seminar. **Warner/Reprise** started a tradition in '92, hosting an annual showcase for its roster, first at the Opry House, and subsequently, the Ryman Auditorium. The great **Roger Miller** was slated to speak that year, but backed out due to illness. A year later, he lost his struggle with cancer.

By the middle of the decade, both the number of Country stations nationwide and the number of attendees at CRS were easily clearing 2,000. And the changes cut through seminar agendas easily. The 1990 seminar straddled two worlds with panel titles including "New Technology," featuring **Jimmy Bowen** and the RIAA's **Hilary Rosen**, and "Razorblade Road," a production workshop. Growing competitiveness at radio spawned the 1991 panels "Programming War Games" and "Caught In The Crossfire: How the Music Industry Copes with Radio Range Wars." While country's popularity was at an all-time high in 1995, format and genre thoughts turned to panels titled, "Protecting The Franchise." Consolidation began to raise

Country Really Cares

"Because of our visibility, we have an opportunity to do a tremendous amount of good for organizations like St. Jude that really help. For me, it's more than an opportunity – it's an obligation." Or, the words that sparked a movement.

Randy Owen's impassioned 1989 CRS keynote address launched the single most important and worthy endeavor in the history of Country radio. Twenty years later, more than 200 Country radio stations have collectively raised $345 million for **St. Jude Children's Research Hospital**. And the good that has resulted, in human terms, is immeasurable.

The first "Country Cares For St. Jude Kids" radiothon in 1989 collected $1.2 million, a benchmark that has grown to $34 million last year.

And that's money well spent. Since the hospital's inception in 1962, the survival rate for children with acute lymphoblastic leukemia has jumped from 4% to 94%. Operating the facility for a single day costs $1.4 million, which means Country radio and its listeners alone keep the doors open 24 days a year. And then there's the copycat effect. After the tremendous success seen from Country radio, "Radio Cares For St. Jude Kids" was implemented to reach AC, Oldies, Urban, Gospel and Rock formats, as well as Spanish-language-format program Promesa Y Esperanza (Promise and Hope) in 1997.

Heading Over To The Y: The MCA promo team, with friends, took being rejected by the Navy pretty hard. Pictured (l-r) are Charlie Monk, Doug Baker, David Haley, Pat Payne, Royce Risser, Mike Severson and Scott Borchetta.

Memories
BOSTON POPS

WLWI/Montgomery, AL PD ***Bill Dollar*** *recalls Rascal Flatts' most recent CRS performance.*

"They were doing their last song and about to ride the elevator down below the stage when they switched gears. They jumped into Boston's 'Long Time' and it was great! And from a group of guys who really have it together."

JOHN RICH

SHUTTIN' DETROIT DOWN

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—Tim Roberts PD, WYCD/Detroit

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Band & Others: RCA's Lonestar win friends and influence people during an early trip to CRS.

Let Them Eat Cake: The Oak Ridge Boys, Reba McEntire, Dick Clark and a host of others celebrate seminar's 30th anniversary with a platter of processed carbs.

CRS Through The Years Continued...

its head with "The New Telecom World: How To Survive And Prosper" (1997), and "The Career Effects of Consolidation" (1999). Pay-for-play discussions were held in 1998 and 1999.

The songwriter showcase WCRS Live! evolved in the mid-'90s (see sidebar), and *R&R's* **Erica Farber** became CRB's first female board president in 1993. That same year, CRS functions were declared "smoke-free" for the first time.

Outside the parameters of Nashville's Country Radio Seminar, CRB began to experiment with regional gatherings. CRS/Southwest was staged in Dallas in 1994. The following year, CRS/Southeast was held in Charlotte. CRS-West met in Sacramento in 1997, and the next year's regional event was in Cleveland.

Years before it would be incorporated with CRS, the Country DJ & Radio Hall of Fame Induction and Banquet became associated with CRB in June of 1998 (see sidebar). DJ Hall committee chair **Gaylon Christie** praised founder **Chuck Chellman**, saying, "Chuck carried it as far as he could. He needed help and CRB was the perfect organization to take over." Monk called the inaugural event, "The nicest thing I've ever been part of in all my years in the business. It was a superb ceremony that gave dignity to all the nominees and certainly enhanced our efforts to honor radio." And for once, he was serious.

The seminar's first comprehensive listener research study was presented by **Richard Wimmer** and **Matt Hudson** in 1996. Three years later, Edison's **Larry Rosin** became a lightning rod for controversy with his "A Statistician's Look At Country." Depending who was asked, Rosin had either single-handedly dammed up the singles charts, or had prophetically pointed out a slowing that was attributable to a number of factors, all well beyond his influence.

Finally, and not insignificantly, CRS came home. Having housed itself in a number of different hotels before moving to Opryland in 1982, the seminar returned to downtown Nashville in 1998. Instead of having to share space with Opryland neighbors like the Liquid Waste Haulers Convention, CRS had

Memories
WAVE YER HANDS IN THE AYER

Valory's ***Miranda Williams*** *was impressed by Pat Green's New Faces performance:*

"He was amazing, but the best memory is when he said how everyone told him to not try to get radio involved with the performance. And he did the opposite. He had the entire room on their feet, singing and dancing to 'Wave On Wave.' It was a pretty bad-ass moment!"

Memories
RUNNING THE GAUNTLET

AristoMedia's ***Jeff Walker*** *has been deeply involved in CRS since 1977, and among his many memories is a standout from the headiest days of* ***Garth Brooks*** *fervor.*

"Back when we were at Opryland, Garth was doing the Artist Radio Taping Session. This was when we did the Artist-DJ Attendee Reception on Wednesday night. Characteristically, Garth stayed an hour and a half afterwards signing autographs. So when it was time to move from one end of the building to the other, there was such a crowd; fans and attendees were all crowding around. The only way we could get him through was to round up the college interns and form two human chains about 100 yards long for Garth to walk through. It was incredible."

You The Man: Even interns couldn't keep Billy Ray Cyrus away from Garth Brooks.

Y2K Survivors: The 2000 CRB Board.

Steaming Into History

The Boat. Anyone who has ever been to the Country Radio Seminar knows exactly what you're talking about when you say those two words. The General Jackson Showboat has been the scene for countless plaque presentations and special musical moments through the years. Long one of the most coveted invites at CRS, the event that begat the "The Boat" celebrates its 24th anniversary this year, while the cruise itself turns 22.

The tradition actually began on land. Sony Chairman **Joe Galante** first held a pre-CRS dinner at his Nashville home in 1985. A few programmers were invited to dine and mingle with the RCA/Nashville staff and a number of artists. In year two, Galante erected a giant tent in his backyard to accommodate the growing group. Come year three, Galante realized it had outgrown his home. "We knew we had to move it somewhere, but there wasn't a restaurant in Nashville big enough to hold us all," he recalls. "It had become so popular, everybody wanted to come. The idea of the General Jackson came out of a group of us trying to figure out where we could go."

The untold story reveals there was one other driving force that made the General Jackson the best – if not only – alternative. That year, 1987, was the first time CRB "legalized" label hospitality suites. And, in an effort to keep all of the CRS registrants focused on officially sanctioned CRS events, the CRB also instituted a policy prohibiting labels from taking attendees "off campus." All events had to take place on Opryland property. RCA found the loophole: Opryland *owns* the General Jackson, so taking the party on-board fulfilled the letter of the law, if not the spirit.

Nevertheless, the event's raison d'etre remained the same, whether on land or river: "We wanted to separate ourselves from everybody else," Galante says. "We were just trying to be different. None of our artists performed when we held the event at my house. But the boat gave us the opportunity to inject some music into the party."

Indeed, the musical portion of the program has evolved over the years. "At one point we decided to change the show and make it more of an 'unplugged' type of thing," Galante says. "We invited some special guests, debuted some new songs and created some amazing pairings. We didn't want to just put people out there to replicate the record; we wanted to create a unique musical evening."

Galante's Top 5 "Boat" Moments

Top Sign: Kenny Chesney (l) with ZZ Top's Dusty Hill (c) and Billy Gibbons.

1. **"Eddy Arnold** walking out and saying his name. The room erupted in a standing ovation, and then he sang acoustically.
2. **"ZZ Top** came aboard as the 'house band,' with most of our label's stars jamming with them. At one point, **Billy Gibbons** (famed ZZ Top guitarist) turned and asked me if they could play one more. I told him, 'It's your boat.'
3. **"Huey Lewis with Phil Vassar** and several other acts on the first and only 'boat on land.' The Cumberland River was too high that year for boat traffic, so we had to find somewhere else to go. I was amazed by the staff swinging into action in just one day. They found a space and converted it, and kept it all quiet.
4. **"Lonestar** debuted 'I'm Already There,' and when it was over, folks got up and called their families. What an emotional response.
5. **"Waylon with Andy Griggs**. That was Waylon's only boat show appearance, and it rocked. Another magical moment was **Brad Paisley** and **Alison Krauss** singing 'Whiskey Lullaby' for the first time live."

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Memories
OWN THE ROOM

WTHI/Terre Haute, IN OM ***Barry Kent*** *taps the CRS memory bank:*

"I'll never forget the year **Charlie Monk** was sick and **Mike Chapman** was pressed into service as the New Faces emcee. Mike used to hold court at the Pickin' Parlor and never felt any pain. He'd been there all day before agreeing to emcee the show, and that night was a hoot.

"I also remember the year our GM and I met Arista's **Bobby Kraig** and decided to go to the Grand Ole Opry. We piled in our GM's big ol' Cadillac and pulled up to the back gate at the Opry House. The guard glanced at Bobby in the back seat and waved us in. I assume he thought Bobby was one of the performers. We parked, found a door and just walked in. We wandered around for a few minutes and were eventually escorted to seats on the stage behind the band."

CRS Through The Years Continued...

the Nashville Convention Center and, for the most part, the Renaissance Hotel all to itself. Plus, all of downtown became venue for the rapidly growing number of night activities. Talk about urban sprawl.

Revelation: 2000s

The dawn of the 21st century brought with it the looming consequences of the previous years' seismic shifts. Brave new world or bare cupboard? One way or another, there would be a reckoning as broadcasters transitioned from acquisition to operations. The growing influence of digital media, satellite radio, the impact of 9/11 and, later, plunging stock values would all present challenges.

On the music front, the Super Faces show – later renamed Music City Jam – presented many top artists (see sidebar). The CMA staged a 2001 salute to every Single of The Year winner, and followed up with a Female Vocalist of the Year extravaganza. Following an interview with **Gerry House**, **Garth Brooks** stunned the 2008 crowd by bringing WTHO/Thompson, GA MD **Steve Ferguson** onstage to sing "Friends In Low Places," revealing his full band as the curtain dropped after the first verse. And everyone in attendance remembers **Reba McEntire's** lunchtime performance, at which she saluted many of radio's late broadcasters – a tribute that left nary a dry eye in the house.

The CRS 2000 roundtables included the now-nearly quaint "Satellite Radio: Is It A New Opportunity?" and the prophetic "Promotions On A Zero Budget" and "Career Survival In A Consolidated World." By 2001, digital media were addressed head-on with satcasters and Internet execs sitting on panels. PPM also made its CRS debut that year, as Arbitron presented findings from beta testing in New England and Philadelphia. Pop vs. traditional, a time-honored topic dating back to the '70s, also surfaced.

Paul Allen served his final year as Executive Director in 2002, replaced by **Ed Salamon** in 2003. Citadel's **Larry Wilson** delivered the keynote that year (see The Interview, page 51), and was at the time overseeing a group more than 200 stations strong.

On a less serious note, the delegate viewed, um, entertaining himself in his room as Bridge Bar patrons watched through reflected glass made immediate history as one of seminars most infamous characters. Even if you didn't see it, **Blake Shelton** immortalized the moment in his New Faces video clip the following year.

In 2002, with 9/11 fresh in everyone's minds, CRB wasted no time organizing a meeting called "America At War: Country In Crisis" to address the tragedy's effects on Country radio sales, programming and news, along with a contemplative look at the "Future Of The Industry."

CRS-34 came to terms with the fact that the post-9/11 economy had lasting effects. The iPod was already having an impact on consumer behavior with music, and HD Radio was

Reba Rocks Lunch: **Pictured backstage at Reba McEntire's 2000 luncheon performance are (top row, l-r) Paul Allen, Ed Benson, Alan Sledge, Ed Salamon and Lon Helton; (bottom row, l-r) Tony Brown, McEntire and Bruce Hinton.**

Memories
THE DOMINO EFFECT

Lyric Street VP ***Dale Turner*** *credits CRS with, uh, his entire existence.*

"My first CRS was in 1974 when I was at WTHI/Terre Haute, IN. Had I not taken time off and paid my own way (I admit, the drive was only four hours and the registration was much cheaper), I never would have met many of my peers. That includes **Les Acree**, who eventually gave me a job at WKDA/Nashville. Without that opportunity, I never would have met **Joe Galante, Norro Wilson, Rick Blackburn, Roy Wunsch, Jerry Seabolt, Frank Leffel, Jack Pride** and others. And those relationships led me to the record side of the business. Further, while in Nashville and Cincinnati radio, I still paid my own way to CRS until 1983. I always rationalized it as a personal investment in my career, like taking evening courses in business management at the University of Cincinnati. No regrets."

The Glasses Full: **Dale Turner (l) at the 1976 seminar with Tom Bootle (second from left), artist Lois Johnson (second from right) and Jack Pride (r).**

Write As Radio

Songwriter showcase **WCRS Live!** is one of the most popular seminar events, and it evolved quickly into its current performance-centered format. Though CRS had presented writer shows earlier in its history, the 1993 agenda guide finds the first mention of WCRS Live!, which was billed "An Industry Talk/Industry Show." **Ralph Emery** hosted in a variety show setting, with CMA's **Ed Benson**, Liberty's **Jimmy Bowen**, KNIX's **Larry Daniels, Kenny Rogers** and **Travis Tritt** on the slate. The following year followed the same format before giving way to nothing but A-list Nashville writers in 1995.

Performing rights organization BMI picked up sponsorship in 2004, embracing the session's convergence of its two most important constituencies. "Broadcasters never understood where the money they pay us goes," says BMI Asst. VP/Corporate Marketing **Mark Barron**. "And this is a perfect way for us to show them that the majority of the people we represent are behind the scenes. It's really the perfect vehicle to show the separation between writer and artist."

Barron says one of the event's strongest appeals is its ability to give attendees an insider's look at how songs come to life. "One of my favorite memories was when **Sarah Buxton** turned to **Jeffrey Steele** after he played 'What Hurts The Most,' which he wrote for Rascal Flatts. Sarah said, 'I really like the way you changed the last verse.' And Jeffrey said, 'That's the way I wrote it, darling. Rascal Flatts are the ones who changed it.'"

Big Mac: **Pictured at the 2007 WCRS Live! are (l-r) BMI's Dan Spears, Pat Green, Mac Davis, Sarah Buxton, Jeffrey Steele and BMI's Jody Williams.**

The Suite Life

Conceived as a counter to the **Disc Jockey Convention**, which was little more than an alcohol binge, **CRS** pushed into the late '80s before officially sanctioning after-hours events. Like that era's popular hairstyle, the mullet (business in the front, party in the back), the seminar quickly adapted to its now-familiar education-meets-recreation balance. The setting at the time, the **Opryland Hotel**, proved a perfect incubator for this newfound nightlife, and suite-hopping was born.

One of the most popular destinations was the hotel's Presidential Suite, where **United Stations**, later **Unistar**, hosted after-hours artist performances, including a 1989 late addition. "**Garth Brooks**' managers **Bob Doyle** and **Pam Lewis** asked if Artist Relations Director **Pam Green** and I would make room for him to play solo-acoustic during the set-ups between the artists already booked," explains **Ed Salamon**, who was master of ceremonies for his company's suite at the time.

"His first single 'Much Too Young To Feel This Damn Old' had not yet been released, and when I first introduced him I flubbed the words, saying 'darn' instead of 'damn.' Garth was in our suite all three nights it was open that year and played between every act. When we weren't introducing him to our radio friends, or he wasn't watching the other performers, he was by the buffet table talking with my son Eddie, who attended CRS that year.

"By the next CRS, Garth had already broken through. He signed his first album to me, 'Ed, thanks for the start, I'll always owe you.' He performed in our suite for four straight years. The last year, it was such a security problem getting him in and out that we all knew it was no longer possible for him to attend."

Just Duet: **Trisha Yearwood (l) and Garth Brooks in their first public performance at the Unistar suite, 1991.**

Nice Chaps: **Ed Salamon introduces Garth Brooks at the '92 Unistar suite.**

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MONTGOMERY GENTRY

CARRIE UNDERWOOD

TIM McGRAW

TOBY KEITH

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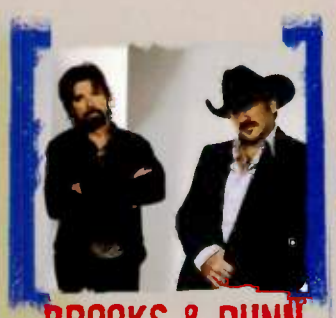
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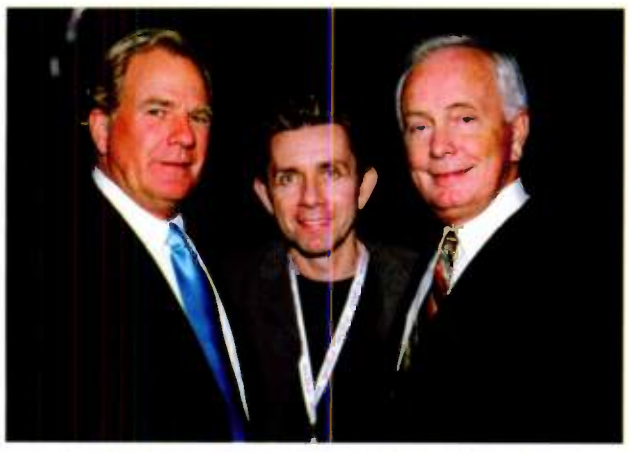
Hello, Dolly: Keith Urban brought Dolly Parton onstage during his Music City Jam performance.



Presidential Appointment: Luke Lewis, Joe Galante and Bruce Hinton (l-r) at the DJ & Radio Hall of Fame dinner in 2004, where Hinton received the President's Award.

still being called IBOC and wouldn't be on the front burner for a few more years.

Once upon a time, off-site events were assailed for exploiting a serious and purposeful event, but with the first **Albright & O'Malley** Pre-CRS Seminar in '04, an off-site event actually extended the week's educational opportunities. Drilling deeper, CRB worked hard to help broadcasters explore new constituencies with Edison research presentations on appealing to younger demos, shattering stereotypes, as well as others about building buzz through viral marketing. CRB also commissioned its first studies of Hispanic consumers and the potential for Country radio to win them over.

The FCC was levying fines for indecency, to which CRS responded with educational sessions on "Stunts That Go Too Far" and how "What You Say Can Hurt You." The Seminar also presented panels on payola and regulatory guidelines. Broadcasters were so consumed by increasing workloads that CRS organizers decided to include a 2006 panel about not neglecting your website. That year also featured a memorable "Life Of A Legend" session with **Kenny Rogers**, followed in subsequent years with **Ronnie Milsap** and **George Jones**.

HD Radio buzz began in earnest in 2007, and a landmark Coleman/Arbitron/Media Monitors session showing the impact of new music on radio listeners. By 2008, the issues of streaming media alternatives, texting and social networking were being discussed everywhere. So were the "Are You Smarter Than A..." New Faces video bits featuring industry folks quizzed on a variety of subjects.

As CRS-40 approached, hundreds of radio professionals were being downsized, and a sour economy and radio's disfavor on Wall Street pushed a constricted business even deeper into a hole. Bad news was omnipresent and the dour outlook extended to debate about the prospects for the upcoming seminar. But those who've seen the event through good times and bad have learned not to doubt its resiliency.

"For 20 years now, people love to get on the naysayer bandwagon about how nobody's coming to CRS this year," Bill Mayne says. "Every single year this happens. And yet we have been able to continue to maintain the level of attendance. The reason we do is that this is an event that people, even in the toughest of times, feel they can't afford to miss. The opportunity to gather with your peers and talk about what the hell is going on is a magical thing that the original group tapped into."

So they return. This year, as last year. Fewer, most likely. With tighter grips on their expense accounts...if they're lucky enough to have them. But they come because they know the good that will result. Has resulted. For their careers. For their companies. For these industries. For the greater good, if that's not too corny.

And who know? They might even have a little bit of fun. CAC

Super Jam

The CRS New Faces show has become one of the most prestigious events in country music, but it wasn't exactly conceived with that intent. Focusing on new artists was mere happenstance in the seminar's early days, when it was difficult to convince established stars to perform.

As the seminar grew – in attendance, respect and importance – getting A-list acts became much easier and, in 1988, Super Faces was born. Hank Williams, Jr. performed and the **Academy of Country Music** signed on as a sponsor. Over the years, George Strait, Reba McEntire, Toby Keith, Martina McBride and Garth Brooks headlined the Wednesday or Thursday night event. Various co-sponsors have come and gone, but ACM has remained – even as the event was reborn in 2005 as the Music City Jam.

Named to reflect its sister event, the All Star Jam, which follows the ACM Awards, the newly formatted show aimed for a new level of spontaneity. "We wanted to give programmers a different experience than they received in their home cities, and give artists the opportunity to take their performance in a unique direction," says ACM Executive Director **Bob Romeo**. "I thought it was really cool to see Keith Urban on stage with Dolly Parton. Where else do you see that? And I'm wondering how he's going to top that, when Ronnie Dunn walks out. I walked away thinking we really did the right thing by creating more of the jam atmosphere." Tim McGraw, who played the Super Faces show in '99, headlines this year's Music City Jam.

On The Big Screen: Tim McGraw brought wife Faith Hill along for his 1999 Super Faces performance.

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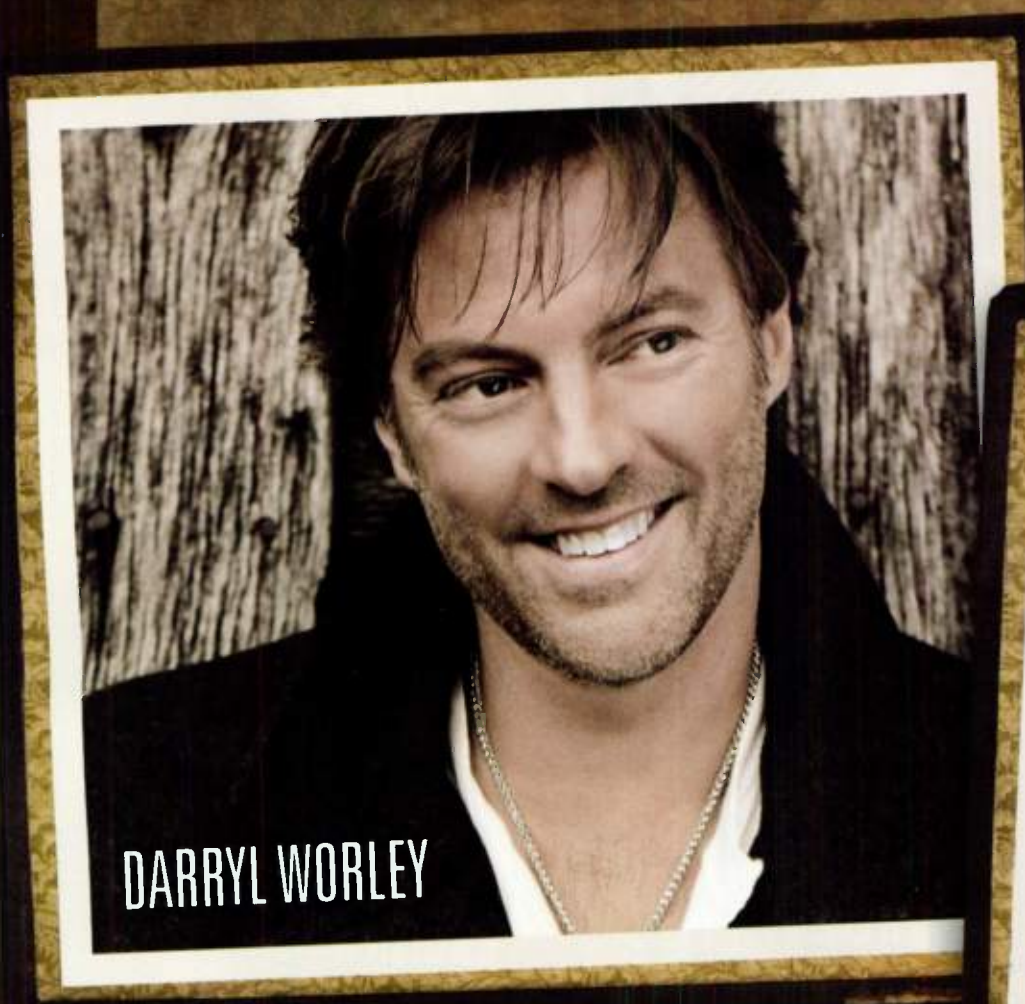
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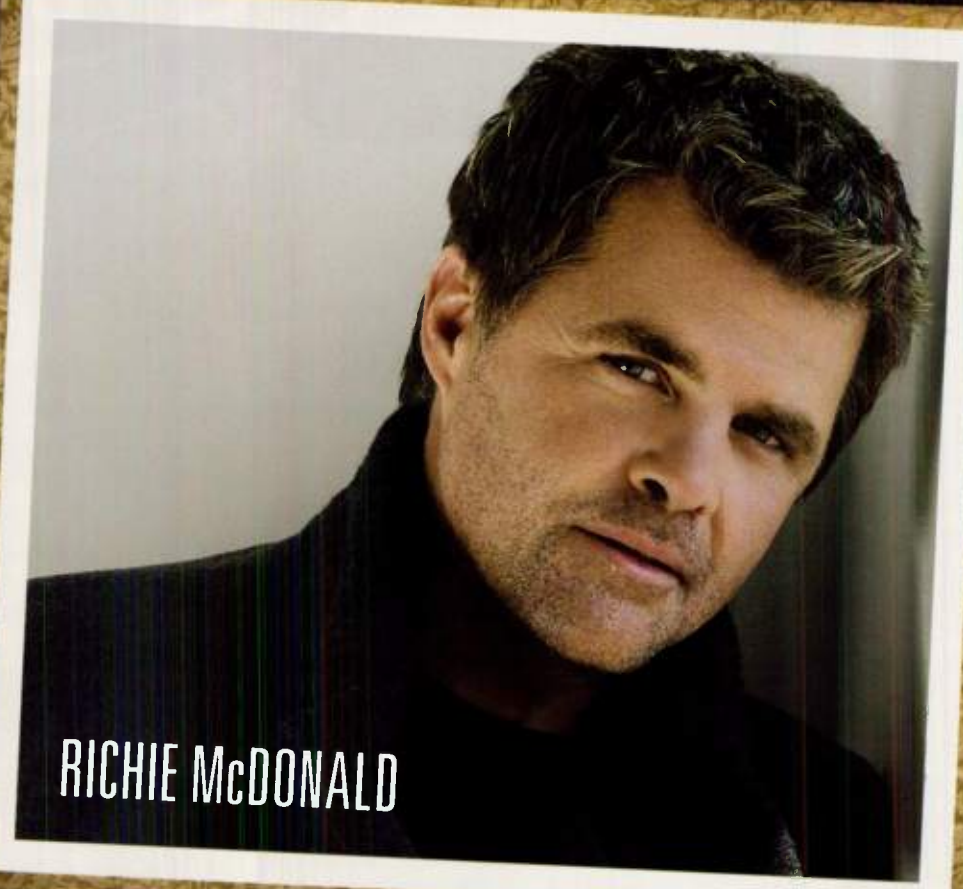
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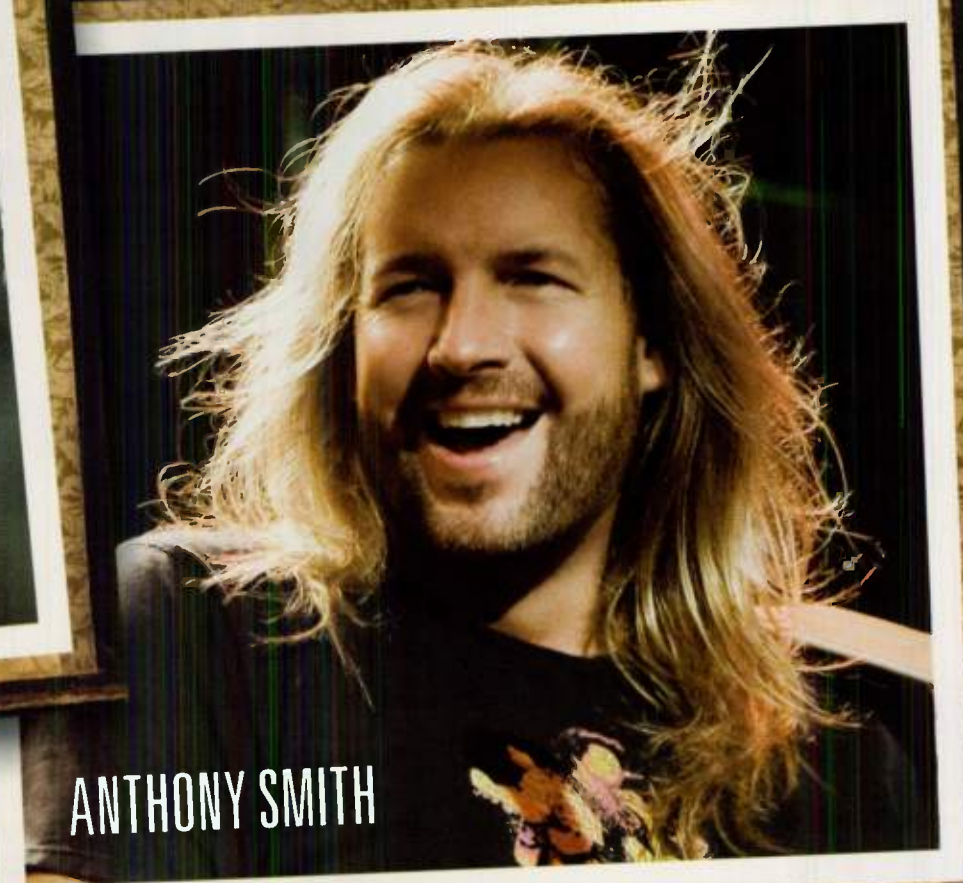
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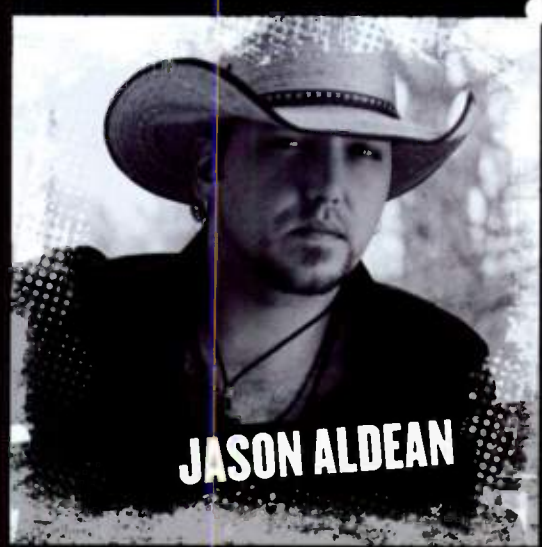

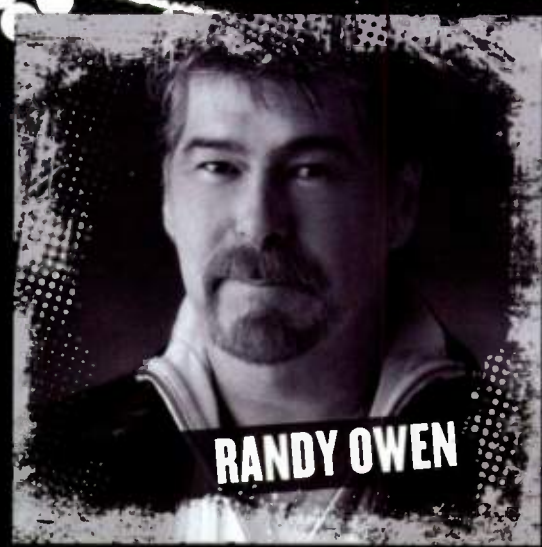

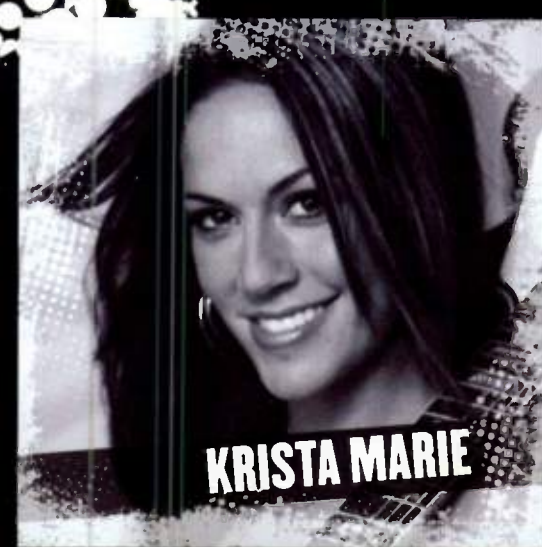

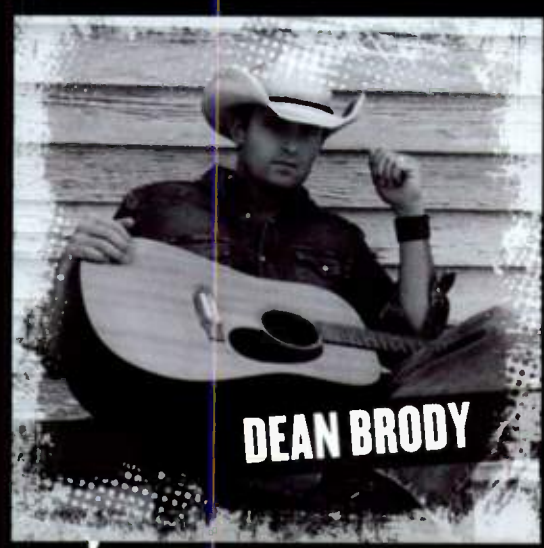

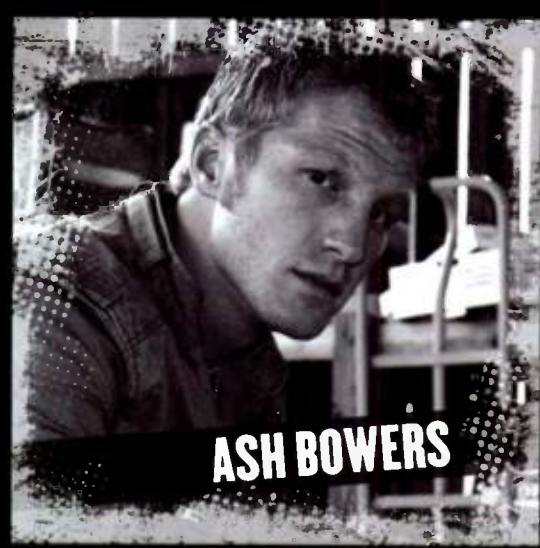

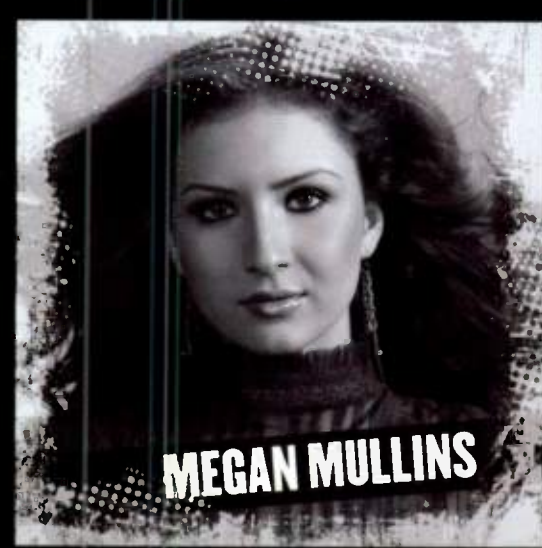

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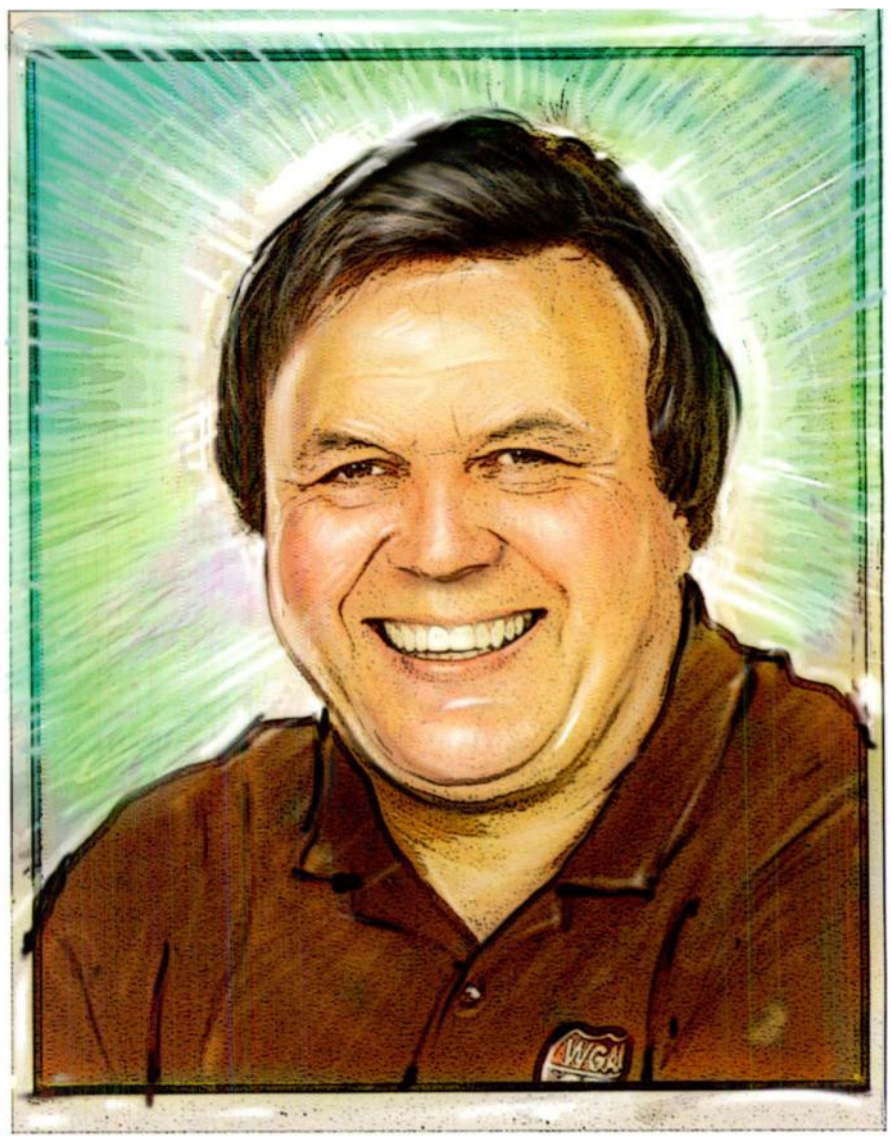
Country Music DJ AND RADIO HALL OF FAME

CHUCK COLLIER

Big Dreams Do Come True

If there ever were a broadcaster who was truly passionate about radio and musical artistry, it would be Chuck Collier. "All my life I've wanted to be on the radio," he says. "Even if I win the lottery tomorrow, I don't think I could walk away from it." As WGAR/Cleveland's 38-year Music Director and afternoon personality, Chuck is renowned for his interviewing skills, preparation and especially making artists feel at home with his listeners.

That skill comes naturally, as Chuck was raised on country and bluegrass in rural south central Ohio, playing piano and accordion in a musical family, watching the Ozark Jubilee and the Midwestern Hayride on television and listening to the Grand Ole Opry. His experience spans WSRW/Hillsborough (at $1.40 an hour) and WMWM/Wilmington (OH), WSAI/Cincinnati, WONE/Dayton and WCBS-FM/New York, but Chuck's career has been dedicated to WGAR. The 46-year personality's consistent professional excellence and enduring commitment to charity have already earned Chuck a Marconi Award and induction into the Ohio Radio & Television Broadcasters Hall of Fame.



I got my first three-speed record player in 1956, and I listened to music nonstop – an eight-year-old playing disc jockey in the garage. The radio in our car beat anything we had in the house, so I would get in and listen to it in the driveway. I can still remember my mother saying, "Charles, don't run the battery down!"

I wouldn't be in radio if it weren't for my childhood friend, Gary West. When I was 16, Gary told me, "I'm doing news on WSRW." This was back in the days when you could walk in and be given a chance to read a newscast for the disc jockey. I began to listen to Gary, and thought, "I can do that too." My father's boss at the bank, **Bob Hodson**, did a community bulletin board on the station, and he told him, "Bob, Charles is into radio now and taping himself. Could you take him out to WSRW and just show him around?" He said, "Sure."

I thought that maybe afterwards I could call to ask if I could come empty the trash cans. Bob introduced me to everybody and before I knew it, my mentor, morning guy **Will Parr**, stuck some news headlines in my hand, and told me, "Go in there and read 'em." So I did. Then they gave me a 60-second live commercial. Then Will said, "OK, you're going to read these headlines on the air at 9:30." And I'm going, "What?" But I knew if Gary could do it, I could, too. Not to brag, but I knocked it out, just perfect. I got out of the little news booth, and Will said, "You mean to tell me you've never been on the radio before?" I said, "Sir, I've never been in a *radio station* before." He said, "My goodness, boy, you're better than *I* am right now." What a great piece of confidence to give to a kid.

Because of that opportunity, I never turn down a chance to let any young person come in and shadow me. And when I hear talent, I always build them up as high as I can. By the way, Will is still doing mornings at WSRW, 53 years later.

> "I'VE ALWAYS HAD PRIDE IN MY WORK, BUT NEVER REALLY GOT INTO THE BUSINESS TO WIN AWARDS; I DID IT JUST TO HAVE FUN."

You listened to everything the summer of '65 because you didn't get that much record service and you might find something you liked. I was 18 and working at WMWM/Wilmington, OH, a 1-kw station in a town of less than 10,000 people. One day, a copy of "Flowers On The Wall" by this group called the Statler Brothers came in. I put that thing on, and was taken by the incredible harmony of Lew DeWitt and Don Reid. I played it the whole summer.

When September came and I went off to college, I tossed it in the back, thinking it would never amount to anything. But that December, I turned the radio on, and there was the song I had played back in June! *[Ed. note: "Flowers" charted September 25, 1965.]* Of course, the rest is history: not only did it became a No. 1 country hit, but a huge Top 40 hit, too. All I can say is that I was for sure one of the first DJs, and could have been the first, to ever play a Statler Brothers song in the U.S.

Rick Rockhill brought Kenny Chesney to see us back when he was on Capricorn. I always roll out the red carpet for the artists, no matter who they are. I know I would be scared out of my mind going to see radio people because you don't know how they're going to treat you, so I always try to put people at ease and give them encouragement. We weren't the first, but we were one of the first to play Kenny's records, and he's never forgotten that. When Capricorn went belly up, I remember thinking, "Aw, that nice little fella from down there in Tennessee. I'll bet that's the last we hear from him."

I wish I could get to know every listener. One of the good things about WGAR is that we're all over the place with personal appearances. When I do go out, I treat my listeners like they're gods. My mom and dad raised my sister and me to treat everybody nicely. It's the simple Golden Rule; that's all there is to it. When it comes to the charities, I can't be guilt-free and turn something down. If somebody asks, I'm there, and I feel good doing it. Bill Anderson once told me, "If you're lucky enough to do something you love so much that you'd do it for free, and by honing your craft somebody pays you a decent paycheck for it, you've really never worked a day in your life." Doing charity work is sort of a way of being thankful for the blessings I've had.

Winning the Marconi was special, but...I think they looked at the longevity factor and said, "Oh, my goodness. This guy has been there a long time. Maybe we ought to give it to him before he dies."

My all-time favorite on-air memory was when Lon Helton called last October 17 on a Friday afternoon and told me I was going into the Country Disc Jockey Hall of Fame. I'm pretty naïve, and Lon called to supposedly talk about the Reba concert coming to town. PD **Brian Jennings** and Lon really pulled one on me.

Being inducted is the highlight of my career. On my refrigerator, held by a little magnet, is the official invite that the CRB sent over. Last night, I took it out and read it again. I still can't believe it, after all these years in the business. I've always had pride in my work, but never really got into the business to win awards; I did it just to have fun. But I really appreciate it so much. It's like, is that a typo or what? It's been somewhat euphoric, to be honest. I've never been to the Hall of Fame induction dinner — this will be my first. I can only imagine what it's like. CAC

I Hear You Singing In The Wire: In 1973, with Glen Campbell. Note the handy comb in Chuck's pocket.

A Few More Years In Radio, And Your Hair Will Be Grey, Too: Kenny Rogers compares beauty secrets with Chuck in October 1989.

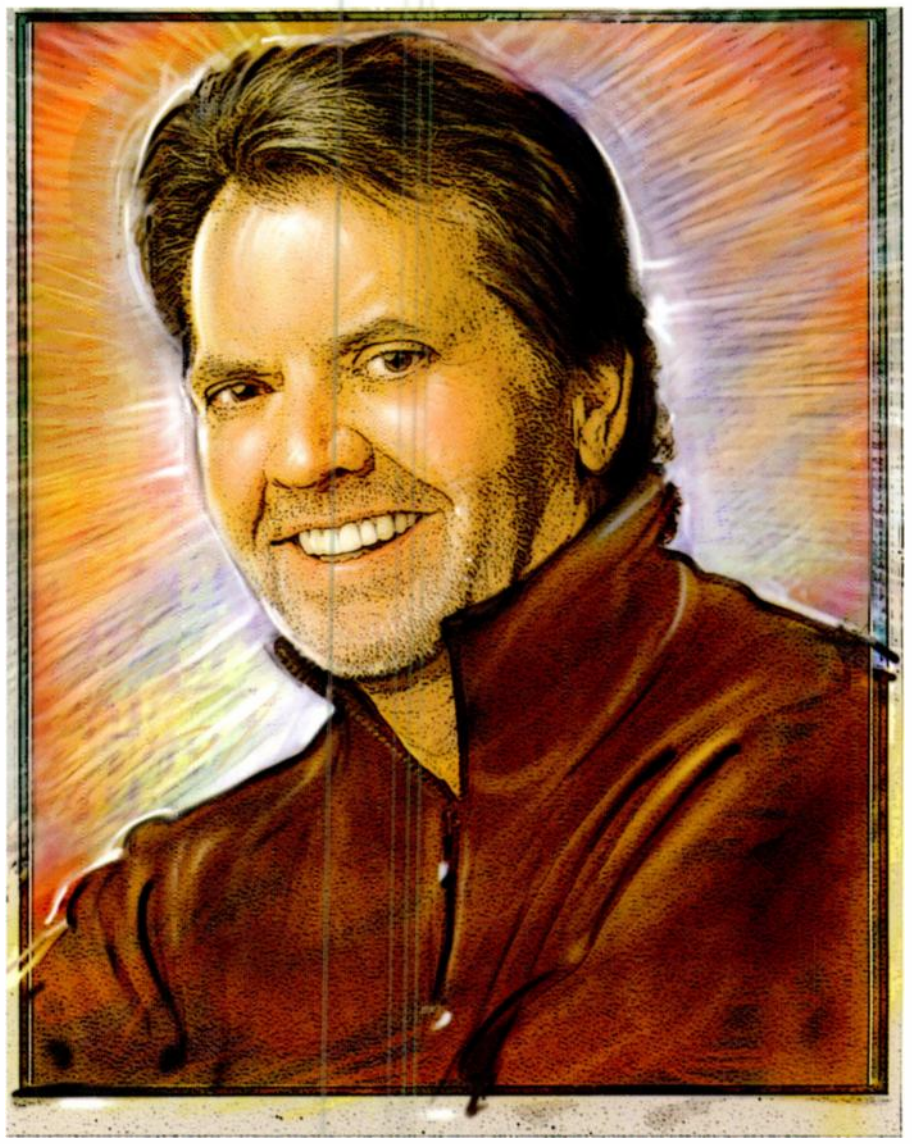
Love That Two-Tone Denim: Nothing could keep Reba from stopping by WGAR to see Chuck in the mid-'80s.

Country Music DJ AND RADIO HALL OF FAME

GERRY HOUSE

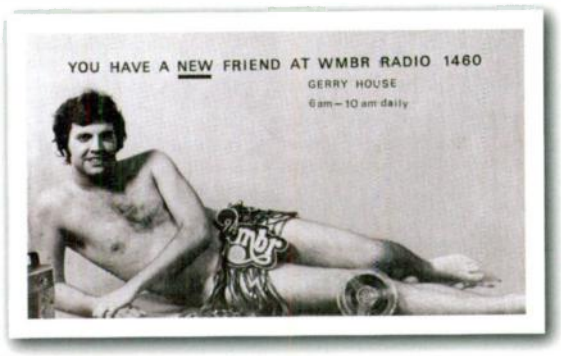
More Than Meets The Ear

Songwriter, musician, television writer and iconic morning personality Gerry House is a creative and complex man who almost defies description. Influenced by Cincinnati's many great DJs and supported through the years by colleagues including Geoff Armstrong, Randy Bongarten, John Cullen, Steve Hicks, John King, college instructor Jim Ridings and Dr. Bob Singer, House has anchored the multiple-award-winning House Foundation on WSIX/Nashville for nearly three decades. While working with Mike Bohan, Al Voecks, Duncan Stewart and producer Richard Falklen, House also responds to the instincts and insights of his wife and childhood sweetheart, Allyson, and daughter, Autumn, a VP at Capitol/Nashville. He experienced a major health scare several years ago, but today is unquestionably at the top of his game.

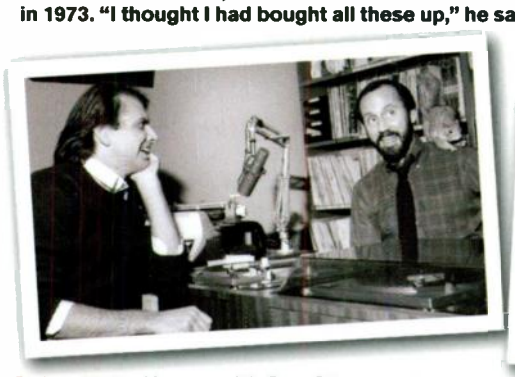


I was a real radical in college. At the time, I wanted to burn down all the buildings. My first time in a radio station was as a junior reading an editorial on the air. I asked, "What'd you think?" The guy said, "I think your editorial sucked, but I like the way you read." I immediately threw all my politics out the window and said, "Great! What can I do?"

My dad looked at my college courses: Western Civilization, French, Political Science. He was an electrician, didn't graduate from high school and had no idea what that stuff was. "Son," he said, "do you realize you're not taking *one* electricity course?" And I said, "Yeah, they don't teach electricity." He said, "They don't teach *electricity*?! Well, how are you *ever* going to make a living?"



Barely Getting By: Inspired by Burt Reynolds' centerfold in *Cosmo*, House released his own version in 1973. "I thought I had bought all these up," he says.



Going Nuts: House with Ray Stevens and rodent friend plugging the song "Mississippi Squirrel Revival." "One of the most talented people I ever met," House says. "He also has one of the worst golf swings in America."

My first job in radio lasted one day. I was in mornings at **WPFB/Middletown, OH** and got a call from **WCBR/Richmond, KY**, which would allow Allyson and me to be together while she was in school. WCBR was a 250-watt daytimer paying $105 a week. The owner, a minister, would ask each week I needed my check or if I wanted to give it to the Lord. And I'd say, "I think I need the check more than the Lord does." We were just broke. I used to take promotional copies and walk around Richmond trying to sell them to make money.

"These are the weirdest songs I've ever heard." When I came to Nashville, I played my songs for a publisher who said that to me. I left, kind of dejected, and walked down to MCA Music. I went in and played them for what turned out to be **Ray Stevens**'s brother, **John Ragsdale.** He said, "These are great!" and I signed with them. Right after that I wrote a song the **Oak Ridge Boys** recorded, and got an advance. Allyson and I lived in this little house out in Hermitage, and we opened the envelope on the porch. It was for $1,500, and we were jumping up and down ... I'd never seen that kind of money in one check.

What you hear on *The House Foundation* is very much what our relationships and conversations are like before, during and after being on the air. Everybody has their role. Al's a curmudgeon and drinks too much. Duncan's kind of disoriented, Bohan's very cheap and Richard's very nailed down. And it's all based on reality. I always envision people sort of eavesdropping. Allyson's vet actually said the greatest thing: "I love listening to those guys. They sound like brothers. They fight and they don't agree, and they love each other." That's what I want.

Whoever's In Nashville: Autumn House, Allyson House, Reba and House on Labor Day 1999 at Reba's place. Splashing in the pool (not shown) was Hillary Scott, later of Lady Antebellum, who was about 12 at the time.

> "PEOPLE DO A LOT OF WEIRD THINGS. THEY MAY BE CALLING FROM A HOSPITAL BED OR STANDING KNEE-DEEP IN A SEPTIC TANK."

My best experiences have just been with normal people who call in – prodding them. People do a lot of weird things, and the funniest things pop out. When they're calling on a cell phone, they may be in a hospital bed or standing knee-deep in a septic tank.

I used to get political on the air, and have a degree in political science. About five years ago a guy called me up, and said, "You know, dude, I don't listen to you to hear CNN. If I want that, I'll turn it on." At first, it kind of upset me. And then I thought, "You know, he's right." It's one of the best programming calls I ever got. Leading up to the election I had a call from a woman who said, "You're such a Republican. I'm so sick of hearing that crap, I wish you'd stop it." And the very next caller said, "You're such a Democrat. Why are you that way?" I thought, "Hmm, I've done my job. They were *both* upset with me."

The luck involved with my brain thing was unbelievable. I had about 20 minutes left ... I was right down against it. I just happened to call Allyson, she happened to answer the phone. She never answers it, and doesn't even have it turned on half the time. She called 911 or I would have laid on the floor and died.

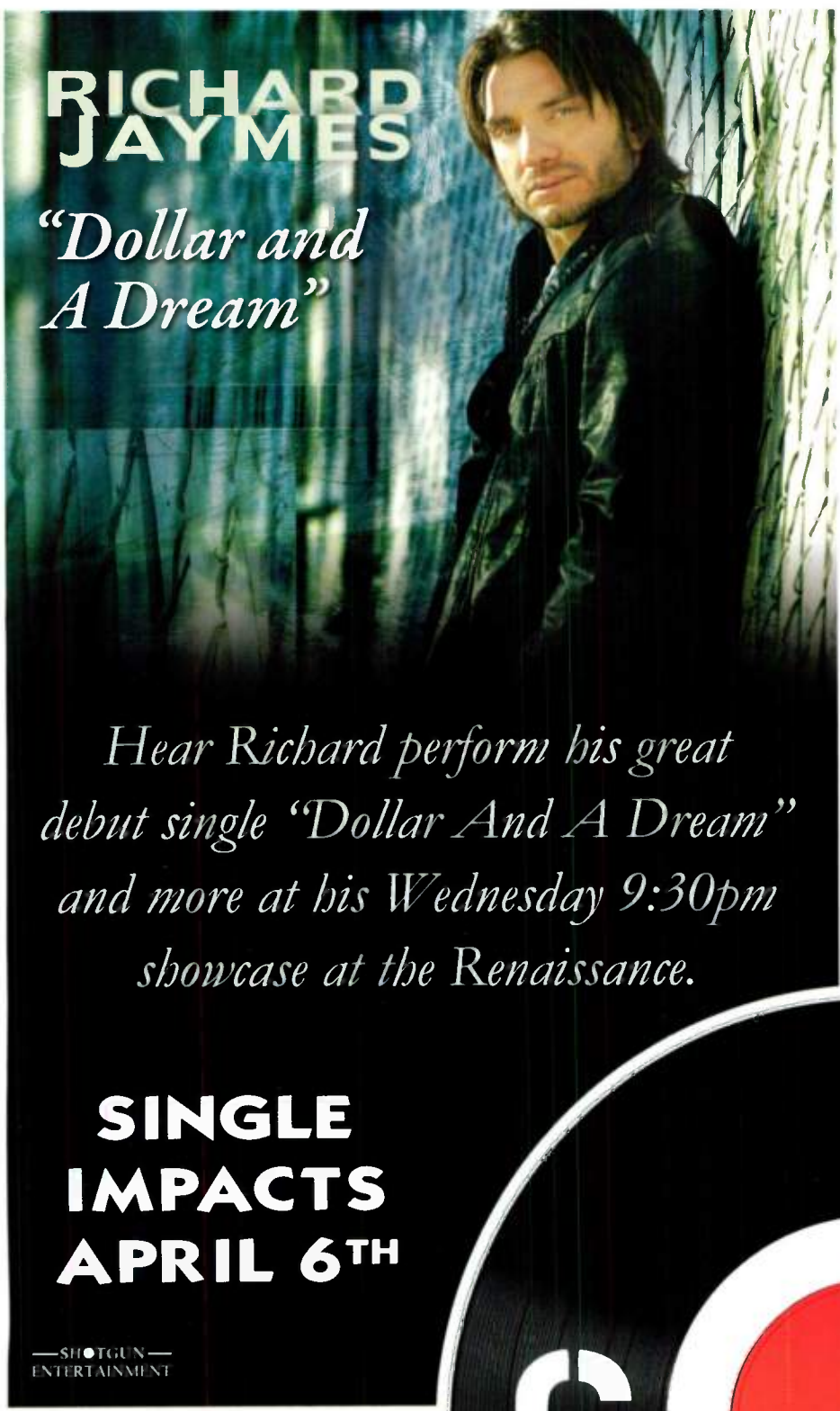
I quit doing my Maurice character after that because it took so much to do — about an hour to 90 minutes a day for 90 seconds – and I wanted that time back. I thought, "The world's not going to end if I don't do this character anymore," and I was right, it didn't. In fact, the ratings went up afterwards.

I'm interested in finance, movies, world affairs, cultural things and I'm a big fan of Eastern religions. **Taylor Swift** made me a painting of a little heart flying away. On it, it said, "I want you to know that you made a difference." I wrote her back, "Don't be afraid to change. There's a Hindu proverb that says, 'If nothing ever changed, there'd be no butterflies.'" Well, apparently that just knocked her out. It was [only] because I read some Hindu poets — a lot of times looking for song ideas — but it surfaced there.

The night my father died, I decided to do my show the next day. People were kind of mystified about it. They said, "You know, I would have fallen apart." But I needed that structure of seeing the guys, doing the show and then saying, "I have to go up to my father's funeral now." I needed to compartmentalize it, to get up and just go do it. It's an odd dynamic, but it really helped me.

My mom lived near Cincinnati. When I was on **WSM-AM**, a 50-kw clear channel station, it was the only time in my career that she was ever able to hear me, weather conditions being correct. I'd call her and say, "Did you hear the show? What'd you think?" She was on my show a lot in the '80s. And she said, "No, honey, it faded out. It just kept getting weaker and weaker. I guess a lot of people were listening to the show today between you and me." She thought that too many people were listening, and all the radios sucked the signal out of the sky by the time it got to her. She said, "There were a lot of people tuned in today because I could barely hear you."

Being inducted is fabulous. I had some trepidation about it because it makes you kind of feel like you're *done*. But Allyson said, "No, dummy, it means that people really like what you did, so go down there and accept it with grace," which I will do. It's a grand moment and hopefully a grand night, and is something I'll feel good about forever. CAC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"Dollar and A Dream"
Hear Richard perform his great debut single "Dollar And A Dream" and more at his Wednesday 9:30pm showcase at the Renaissance.
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CARTER TWINS
"HEART LIKE MEMPHIS"
· NEW ARTIST FEATURES IN YAHOO!, AOL, COUNTRY WEEKLY AND MORE!
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SPIN THE SONG CMT HAS ALREADY MADE FAMILIAR TO YOUR AUDIENCE!
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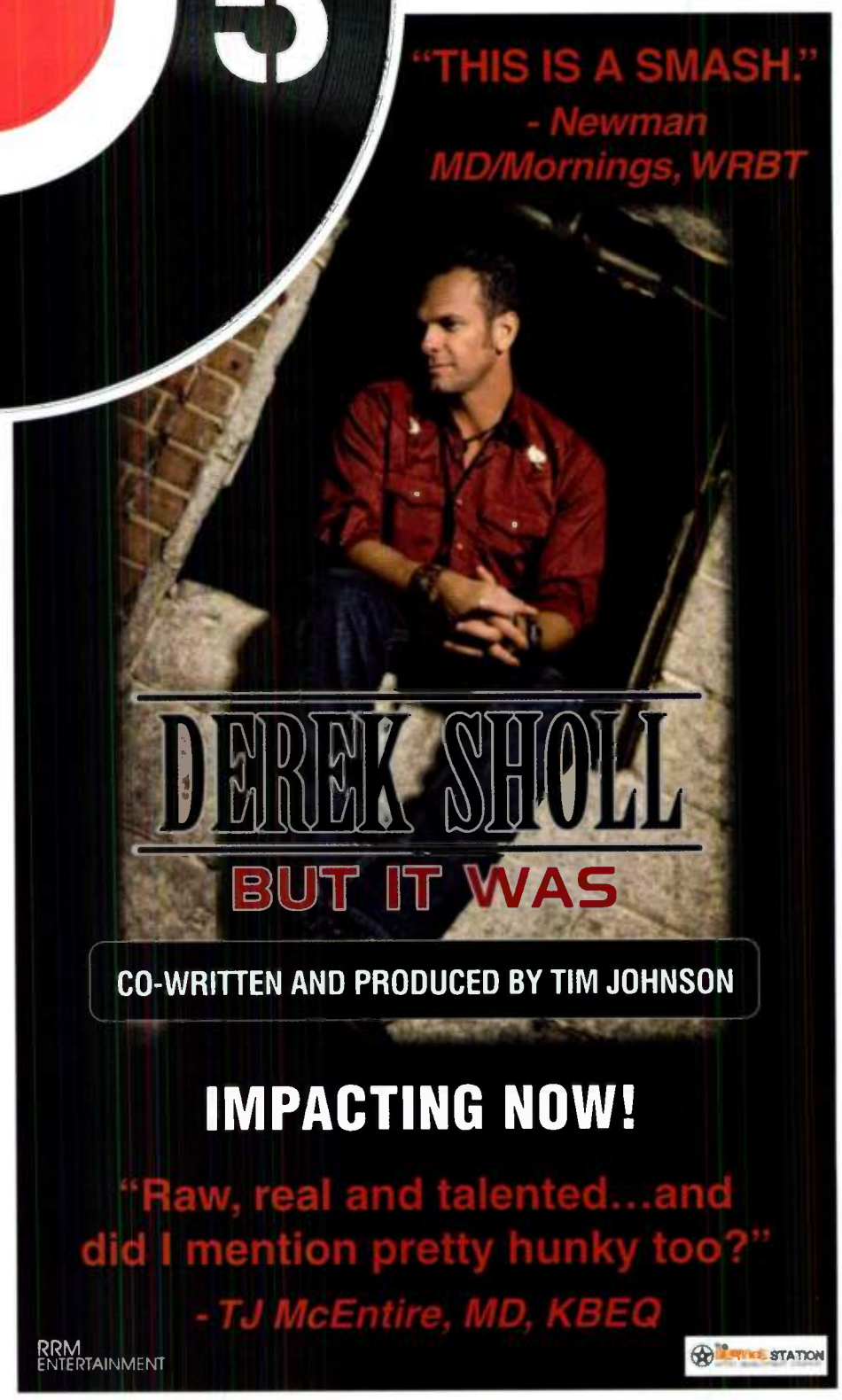
C 5

Nathan Lee Jackson
Small Town Rain
Honest Country Music
Your audience will totally relate to this song.
IMPACTING MARCH 23RD!
StarCity


"THIS IS A SMASH."
- Newman
MD/Mornings, WRBT
DEREK SHOLL
BUT IT WAS
CO-WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY TIM JOHNSON
IMPACTING NOW!
"Raw, real and talented...and did I mention pretty hunky too?"
- TJ McEntire, MD, KBEQ
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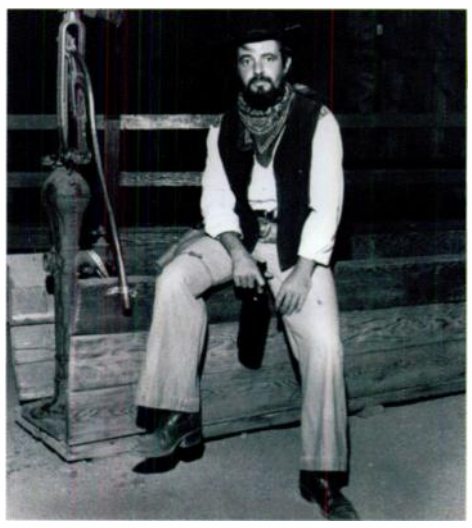
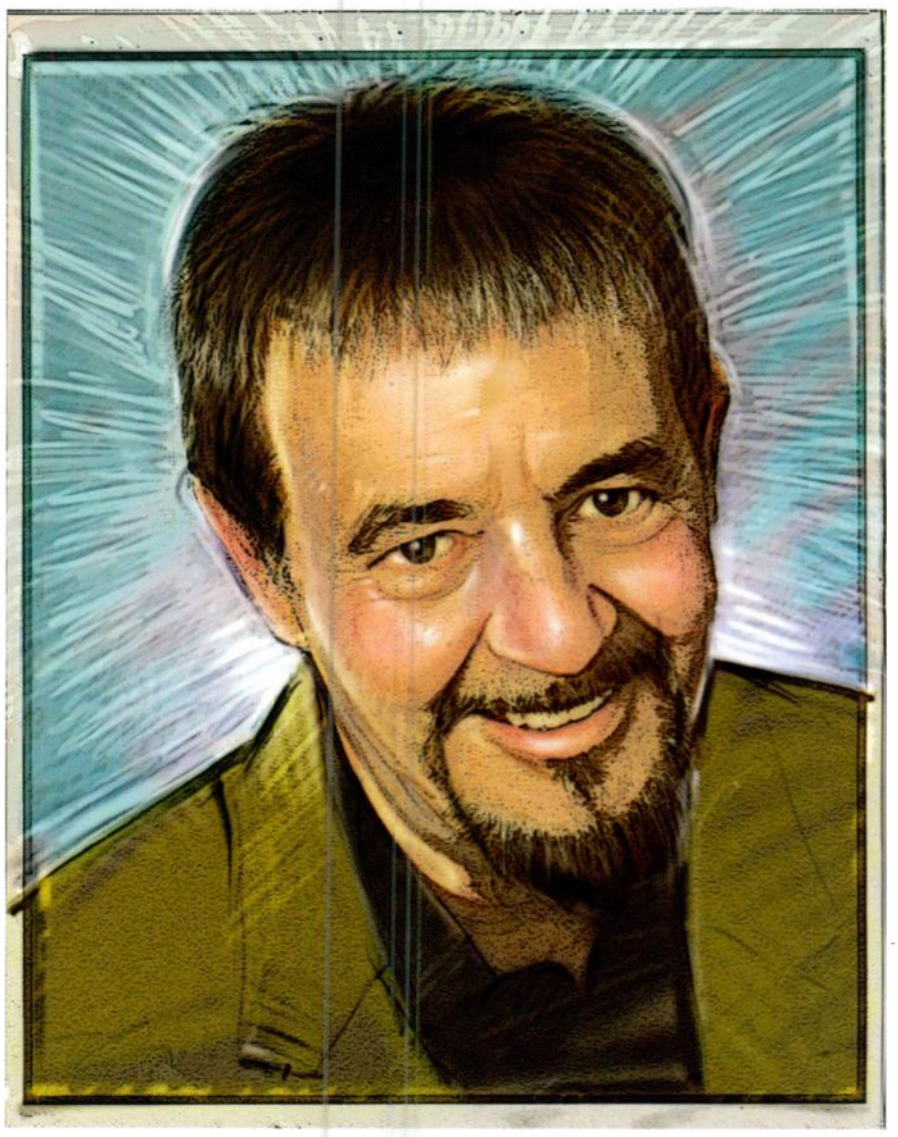
Country Music DJ AND RADIO HALL OF FAME

BOB McKAY

Making Radio Larger Than Life



Country Radio Hall of Famer Bob McKay may be "retiring" at the end of this year, but don't look for him in the bingo parlor. He'll be sought after for his trailblazing knowledge of PPM, for keeping Beasley's WXTU/Philadelphia on the cutting edge of contemporary Country radio since 2000, as well as prior triumphs at WBCS/Milwaukee, KCBQ/San Diego and WKIS/Miami, among others. Talk about work ethic: Bob lives by the words of his late mentor, John Bayliss, who told him, "Bobby, my boy, these paychecks don't come gift-wrapped." Tech-savvy, always evolving, community-driven and competitive, the East Liverpool, Ohio native personifies the modern-day programmer, even after more than 40 years in the business.



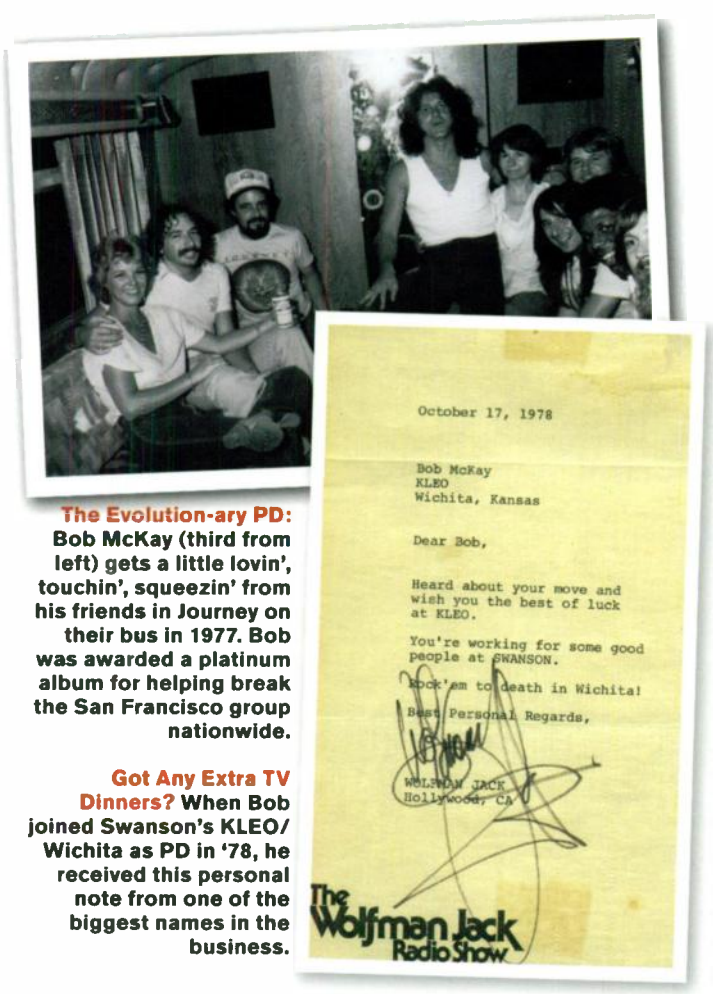
In high school I used to drive to the highest point in our area to listen to **WKYC/Cleveland, WLS/Chicago**, Philadelphia stations and, on a good night, **WABC/New York**. I loved everything about the magic coming out of that radio, but never envisioned doing it until **Armed Forces Radio** in 1965. I was stationed in Guam with the Air Force, decrypting messages as a communications specialist during the Vietnam War. AFR was great because you experienced all the different music formats, learned to read PSAs and re-enlistment promos; you learned about everything. That's when I fell in love with radio and never looked back.

> "I'VE HAD A REALLY WONDERFUL CAREER, MADE GREAT FRIENDSHIPS, WORKED FOR GREAT COMPANIES AND AM VERY FORTUNATE."

In 1967, I was sent to Minot, ND, a place I didn't know even existed. I applied for a job at the local AM Top 40 radio station, **KCJB**, and they told me to get my third-class FCC license. I did and got hired for $1.25 an hour, but I would have worked for nothing. We had news, weather and farm reports, and between all of that we played rock and roll music.

I became totally consumed by the radio business and, after a year doing 7-midnight, I answered an ad for the 9pm-midnight shift at **WKY/Oklahoma City**. I got the job, and for someone with only a year's experience, that was really a monster leap at the time.

WKY PD **Danny Williams** changed my name to Tripp Summers; I became "The Night Tripper." About 30 years later, I'm backstage at a **Garth Brooks** concert in Miami. One of the record guys said, "You need to tell Garth you were The Night Tripper at WKY. I think he might remember you." So I said to Garth, "I don't think this means anything, but back in 1969 and 1970 I was The Night Tripper on WKY in Oklahoma City." He said, "You're kidding me! You're The Night Tripper? Tripp Summers?" I said, "Yeah, man." He gave me a big hug, a high-five, then another hug, and said he used to listen to us every night with his little earpiece on his transistor radio when he was eight years old. That moment made me feel 10,000 feet high.



October 17, 1978

Bob McKay
KLEO
Wichita, Kansas

Dear Bob,

Heard about your move and wish you the best of luck at KLEO.

You're working for some good people at SWANSON.

Rock'em to death in Wichita!

Best Personal Regards,

WOLFMAN JACK
Hollywood, CA

The Wolfman Jack Radio Show

The Evolution-ary PD: **Bob McKay (third from left) gets a little lovin', touchin', squeezin' from his friends in Journey on their bus in 1977. Bob was awarded a platinum album for helping break the San Francisco group nationwide.**

Got Any Extra TV Dinners? **When Bob joined Swanson's KLEO/Wichita as PD in '78, he received this personal note from one of the biggest names in the business.**

Kevin Metheny replaced me at WKY, and through him I got to know is dad, **Terrell Metheny**, who ran WBCS/Milwaukee. I always had a great fondness and appreciation for Country. I had just never done it, as I had come up through the apex of so much great popular music. It was now 1978, and disco was coming on, and I wasn't seeing much future doing that. But Terrell had the same concerns anybody would: "Are you sure you really want this?" I said, "Absolutely. I want to experience this, I want to make this work and I want to really work for you." It was Terrell who gave me my first entrée into Country.

I enjoyed going up against market-dominant KSON/San Diego while at KCBQ because I had a great airstaff: **Charlie & Harrigan, Bill Moffat, Shotgun Tom Kelly, Ed Chandler** and **Bozo** from Miami. We gave KSON all they could handle, and beat them three out of four books.

Lon Helton, Charlie Cook, Rusty Walker – we all went to school on **Bob Pittman**, as what he did at **WMAQ/Chicago** in the mid-'70s was pretty phenomenal. Most of us were in contemporary radio, and back then, Country radio was really lazy, kind of like a *Hee Haw* station. At different points in time, we all put structure on Country radio with bigger-than-life promotions and promos.

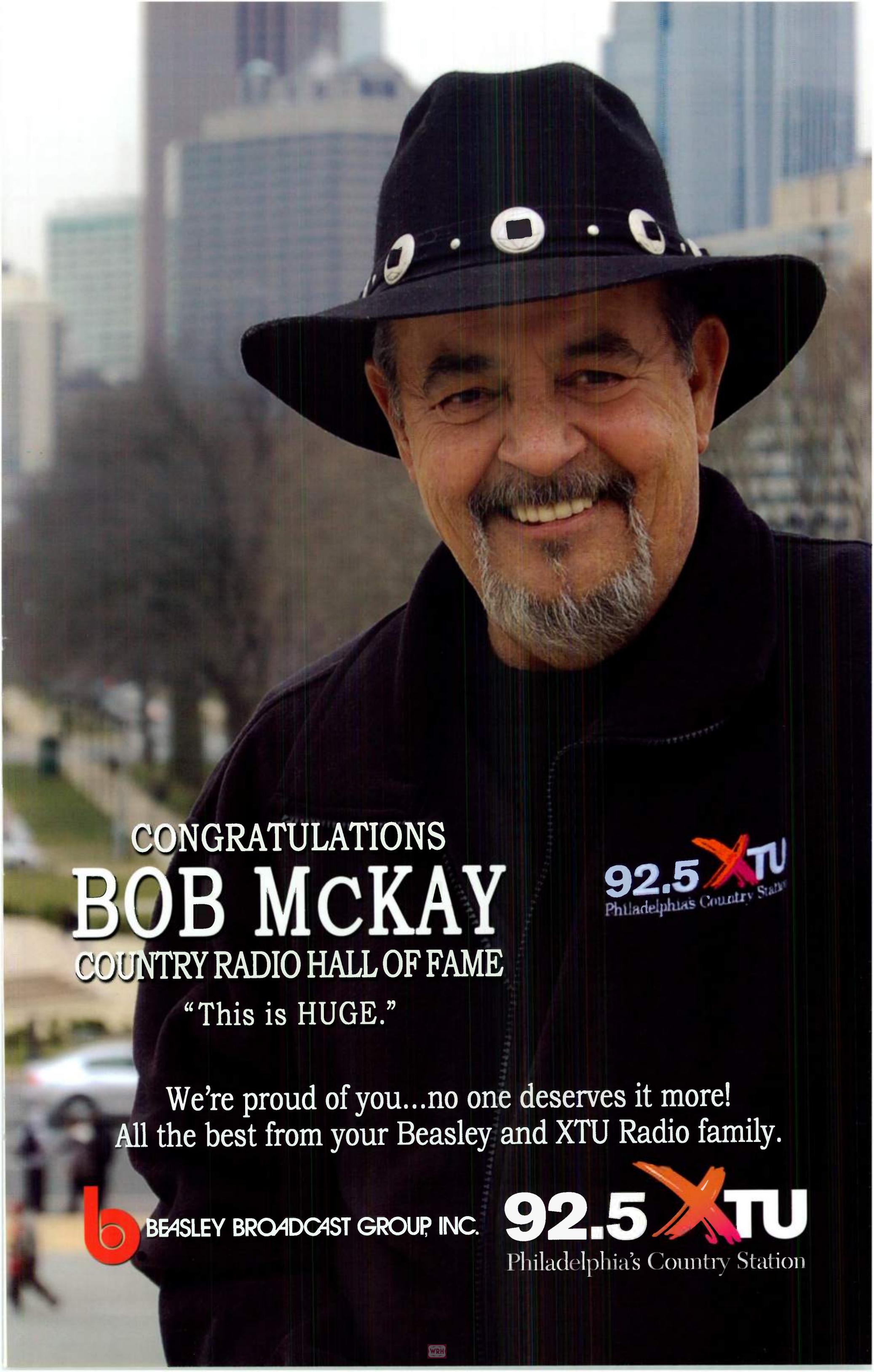
Those tighter, consistent formatics and Bill Drake philosophies came right from the bedrock of Top 40. Executing the Country format at KCBQ with those personalities, who were predisposed with those instincts anyway, made it a lot better and much easier.

Marc and Greg Oswald were volunteer firemen in San Diego, and they first went to KSON with a concert promotion but couldn't get past the receptionist. Then they came to us. We didn't really have to give these guys the time of day, but something about them was good; you could feel that vibe. We agreed they'd take all the risk on paying talent, and we'd give the promotional support. We put together a concert on the U.S.S. Kitty Hawk with **Hank, Jr.**, and [for Marc and Greg], the rest is history.

In 1992, Hurricane Andrew wiped out Dade County; it looked like a war zone. Within two weeks, we put together a concert at the Miami Arena with all the proceeds benefiting the Red Cross. **Sawyer Brown, Alabama, Pam Tillis, Mark Chesnutt, Randy Travis** and others couldn't say yes fast enough. **Alabama**, who were in Colorado Springs for a gig that night, chartered a plane, flew to Miami, opened the show, did an hour and 10 minutes, and then flew back – all at their own expense. Everyone pulled together for free – the city, the police, the security, the artists – and we raised about $150,000. It was just amazing, and you can't ever forget that.

Our 2001 WXTU Chili Cook-off took place right after 9/11, on October 4, and the lineup was as good as it gets: **Keith Urban, Montgomery Gentry, Phil Vassar, Brooks & Dunn** and **Martina McBride**. Normally, when an act finishes performing, they do a meet-and-greet, take some pictures and leave. But I asked everybody if they'd stay to the end because we were going to have onstage three firemen coming down from New York, plus five from Philadelphia who were there on 9/11. The artists didn't even bat an eye; they all agreed to stay all day. By the end of Brooks & Dunn's second encore, the place was going crazy. And then, right at sunset, Martina walked out and starts to sing "God Bless America" a capella. Montgomery Gentry came out, then Phil Vassar, and then they all came out, singing in unison. Kix jumped into the audience with the flag, with people holding him up, and he then was returned to the stage with the flag and the firemen. It was magic, absolutely exquisite and literally brought tears to your eyes. It was probably the best moment of my career.

Speechless, stunned and exhilarated. Those are the emotions I ran through when I was told I was going into the Country Radio Hall of Fame. I still can't kind of believe it. I've had a really wonderful career, made great friendships, worked for great companies and am very fortunate. The biggest thing is that our kids are well adjusted, despite all the moving around that we did. I couldn't be happier. CAC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We're proud of you...no one deserves it more!
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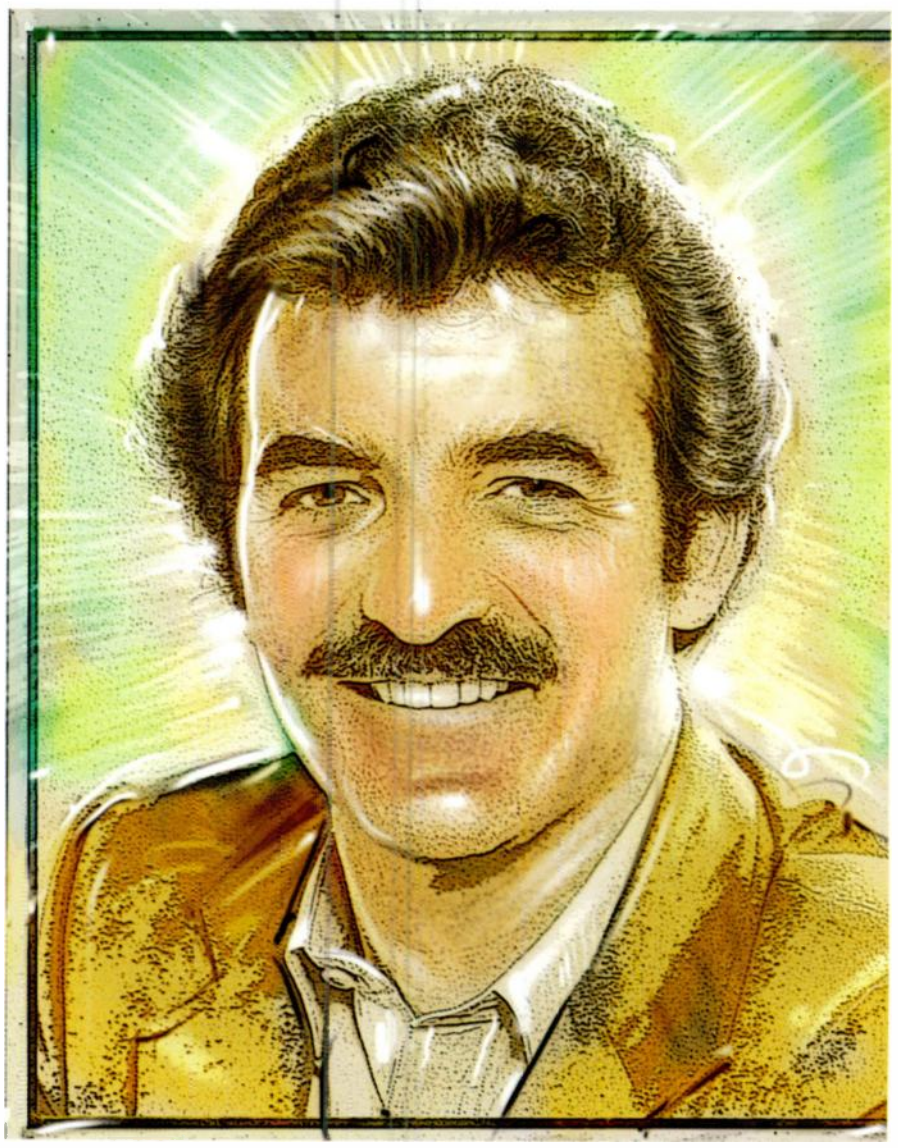
Philadelphia's Country Station
92.5 XTU
Philadelphia's Country Station

Country Music DJ AND RADIO HALL OF FAME

MOON MULLINS

Shining In Power Rotation



Growing up in Lubbock, Emmett "Moon" Mullins thought he'd either be in radio, a psychiatrist or in a funeral home. "That's why I did so well as a music director -- I could really recognize a stiff," he quips. Fortunately for all of us, Moon, who took his air name from a comic strip, chose broadcasting. Starting at a small-market daytimer in rural Texas that led to his hometown KLLL, Moon advanced to PD at KCKN (now KFKF)/Kansas City, KFDI/Wichita, WINN/Louisville, WDAF/Kansas City and, eventually, WHN/New York. He subsequently formed an eight-year consulting partnership with Jeff Pollack in 1988, based in Nashville.

After recovering from a near-fatal heart attack in 1994, Moon maintained a steady pace consulting, later becoming Group Format PD for Journal in 1999. He observes, "When I started there, we had 13 stations. When I left, we had five, so I did a great job." One of a handful of people who've attended every CRS, Moon moved back to small market radio in 2005 as OM/PD and morning co-host for Regent's Country WBKR/Owensboro, KY and News/Talk WOMI. And if you ask him, Moon would say he's happier than ever.

Mullins with Linda Ronstadt

My first recollection of being interested in radio came through my older brother, **Don**. He used to sit and talk into a wire recorder (before tape recorders became available) and I would watch him, intrigued. When he went into the Air Force, he left me his recorder, and I would play with it. Eventually he sent me a tape recorder from Germany, and I still have some of those tapes.

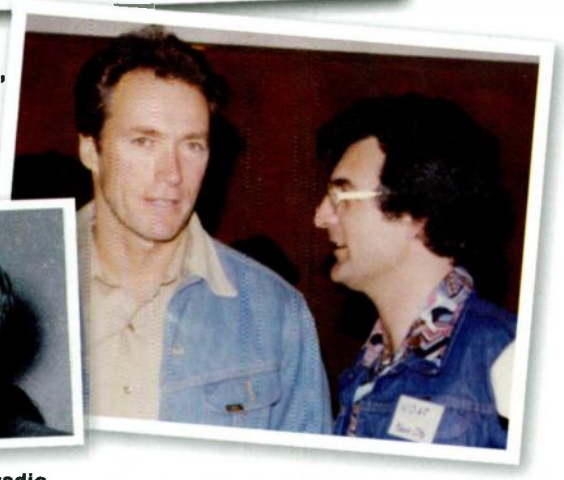
I used to make my friends sit outside with their ear to one end of a garden hose, while I talked into the other end. Of course, I listened to the great Lubbock DJs like **Snuff Garrett, Don Bowman, Gene Price, Sam Riddle** and **Terry Belyeu**, and would go watch them through a showcase window at KLLL. Terry and Snuff would come out to talk with me and give me records. I took speech courses in junior high, entered an Optimists Club speaking contest and won the Texas State Championship. There was an ad in the paper for a radio announcer at **KKAL/Denver City, TX**, about 55 miles from Lubbock, for $1.25 an hour. I went on at 9am and worked until we went off the air at sunset, however long it was.

Owner **Cal McAdams** later told his wife about me, "He's only 15, but something just tells me to hire him anyway." I dropped out of school in 10th grade to take the job, and my folks didn't like it. My father had told my mother, "Don't you be lettin' him go off down there and interview for that job." But she couldn't stop me; I knew radio was what I wanted to do.

> "BEING ON THE TOP OF A 20-STORY BUILDING, LOOKING OUT OVER THE FLAT PLAINS OF LUBBOCK, TEXAS ... IT WAS LIKE BEING A KING."

I'll Do Right Bayou: Enjoying the Big Easy are T.G. Sheppard, Tammy Wynette, Moon, WDAF/Kansas City Promotion Director Denise Galvin and Eddie Rabbitt at the 1983 World's Fair in New Orleans.

Is This Thing On? Six-year-old radio pro Mullins takes an interview on hometown KSEL/Lubbock by "Hi-Pockets" Duncan.



Go Ahead, Make My Day: And Clint Eastwood did, hanging with Moon at the 1978 premiere of *Every Which Way But Loose* in Dallas.

I got fired from both **KDST/Big Spring** and **KECK/Odessa**, but the people firing me helped me get on KLLL, the favorite hometown station of my family. And it was Country. I believe that I was the guy who replaced **Cherokee Dave Orrell**, who replaced **Waylon Jennings** on-air. It was really the first station of any consequence I'd worked for. Being on the top of a 20-story building, looking out over the flat plains of Lubbock, Texas ... it was like being a king.

By then I had gotten up to maybe $90 a week. On February 22, 1966, I was watching *Dr. Kildare*, and **Ted Cramer** called, wanting to know if I would come do the night show for him at KCKN/Kansas City. He said, "It'll be one-eight-five and we pay twice a month." My wife and I were jumping and dancing for joy, and then she said, "Well, is that an hour or a week?" So I called him back, and I said, "This one-eighty-five...is that, uh, paid every week or every two weeks?" He said, "That's every week." Oh, God, that was wonderful.

Ted mentored me more in the major market ways in production and microphone technique, and the ability to communicate naturally, being nice to listeners and not taking any kind of attitude. I taught him some things I'd learned from **Sky Corbin** at KLLL, such as how country music should be sequentially played in rotation to keep listeners from becoming fatigued. Most stations back then didn't care, they just played whatever showed up.

I was the first to play "Harper Valley PTA" and "Folsom Prison Blues" as MD in 1967. The first time I heard them, I knew they were hits. It was fun talking with the label people and helping them choose singles. We were maybe the only station taking a pro-active approach with them to break records. We worked with the distributors, record shops and labels to coordinate releases so they'd break out of Kansas City, and a lot of tunes did. Producer **Bob Johnston** sent me two acetates: one was "The Folk Singer," a darn good song. The other side was "Folsom Prison Blues," which he sent as kind of a fluke because it was going to be the B-side. But I thought, "Oh, man, this is just great" – a live version of what we played at KLLL when it was on Sun. So they put "Folsom Prison Blues" out and, of course, it was huge.

Olivia Newton-John came to Louisville in '74 for a concert. A bunch of the WINN jocks wanted to get together to go meet her. I said, "She doesn't want to meet *us*." But in a newspaper interview that came out the next day, she had said, "While I'm in America one of the many things I want to do is be sure to talk to all the Country disk jockeys who have played my songs!" So I missed out on that, huh? Never did meet her.

We were almost always No. 1 at WDAF, so whenever the book came out, I just wanted to rub it in everybody's face, just for one day. So a fellow that worked for me, **Richard Ward Fatherly**, came into my office one day and said, "How's everything at the Flatland Godzilla?" I thought, "That's it!" So I sent the line off to **Charlie Van Dyke**, who we used in later years, and he just delivered a beautiful rendering on it. And every time the advance numbers would come out and we'd be No. 1, we'd run that for 24 hours.

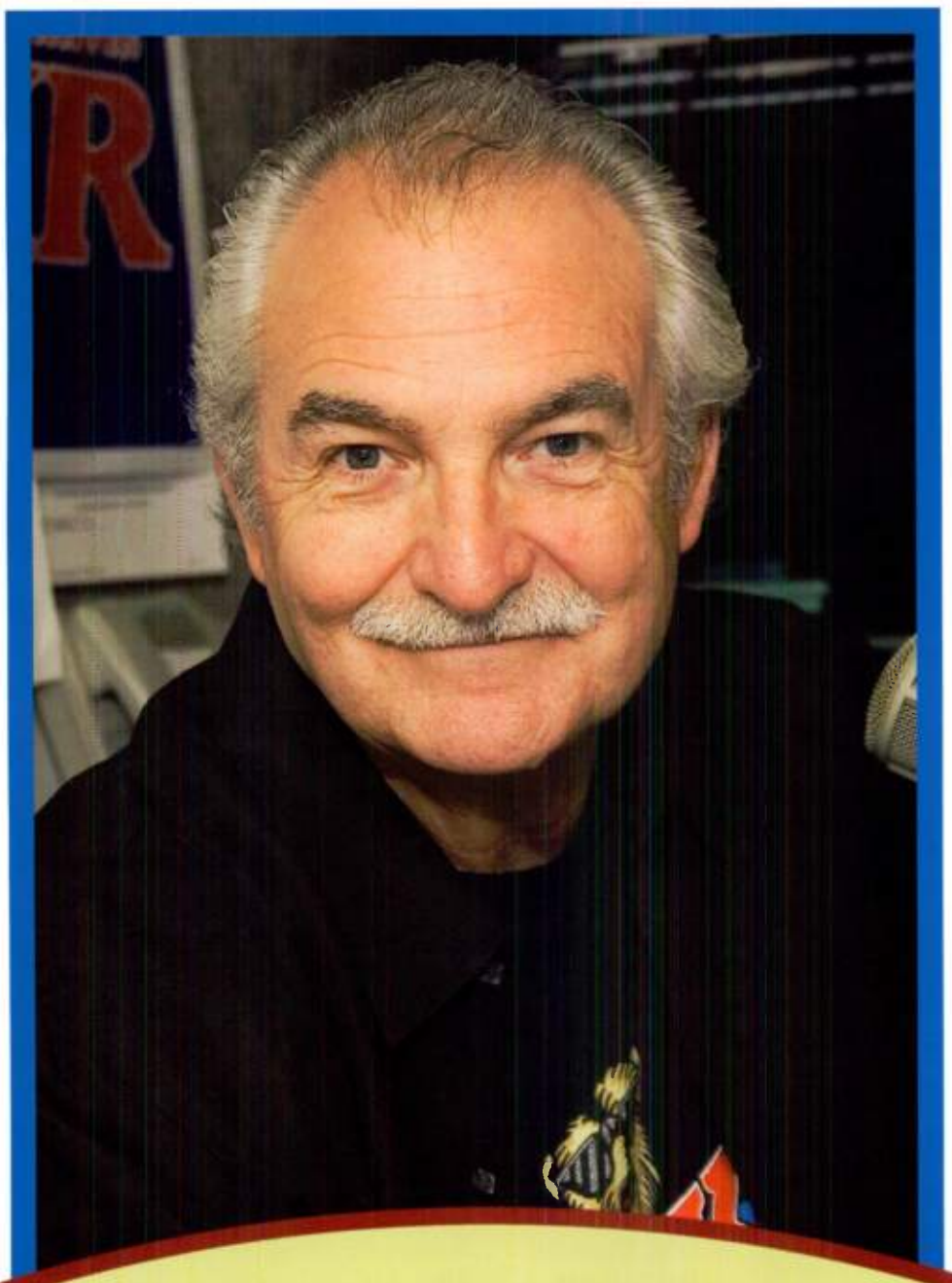
At WHN, I was told to critique Gary Thorne by GM **Ruth Meyer**. He was our color guy covering the Mets and she wanted me to call and assess a couple of things she wanted him to do. It was just silly because he was great. So I called him, introduced myself, and told him I was to evaluate the job he's doing. He said, "Fine! Well, Moon, what do you think?" I just said, "You're doing a great job, man. Keep it up." That was the end of the critique. Of course, Gary's still going strong.

Going into the Hall of Fame is going to be an emotional night. My mother passed away in August '06, so she won't see it happen. But I think she knows it, and I think what means more to me than anything else is what it would have meant to her. CAC

ATTA BOY, BUBB!

Congratulations on your Induction to the Country Music Radio Hall of Fame

CountryMusic
DJ AND RADIO HALL OF FAME



MOON MULLINS

FROM YOUR ENTIRE RADIO FAMILY AT

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Passion + Compassion = Leadership

PRESIDENT'S AWARD

One of the industry's most respected executives, Shipley Biddy was the first woman to head a Nashville-based record company as SVP/GM of Decca Records. Her five-year run at Decca followed a decade at MCA Nashville, where she rose through the ranks to SVP/National Promotion working for Bruce Hinton, and an earlier stint at RCA Nashville, where she considered Joe Galante a mentor. She brings a thoughtful, big-picture perspective to every project, and most don't know she is a poet who also has been working on an autobiography she intends to see published someday. With a career overflowing with leadership and community service achievements, Shipley Biddy today dedicates her estimable experience and business skills as manager of artist management firm Hallmark Direction Co. and President of Stringtown Records.

I should have died, and almost did, during a gall bladder operation at 25. I'm a very spiritual person, and my prayer was that if there were something God still wanted me to do, He would let me live. I think that prayer was answered. I look back at this industry and the lives I've influenced, and hopefully not just professionally – people I've counseled about a broken marriage, problems with children and their spirituality. That's what you get when you work with me. It's a full-service friendship.

I didn't like the record, and didn't think it was a hit. This was when I was at RCA, and I had called **Barry Mardit**. He asked if I liked this record I was promoting. I'm thinking, "What do I say?" So I said, "Well, you know what? Honestly, I don't. But I hear a lot of things on the radio that I don't personally care for. It's my job to get them exposed to the public and then see if they'll work. So if you were to play it and you got phones on it and it worked, we'd build a story and we'd break the record. If it doesn't work, then I have done my job by trying to get you to give it a chance."

And Barry added it! He said, "I have never had a promotion person be that honest with me. I'm going to put it on and give it a week."

MCA was looking for a new VP in 1985. I was talking to regionals kind of "underground," giving them direction on how to work things. A few months go by and Bruce Hinton walks into my office and says, "Which would you rather do, retail promotion or radio promotion?" I said, "Definitely radio promotion. I love radio guys, and connect with them." He said, "Then why don't you consider taking this job?" And I said, "You don't want a woman in this position. There's never been one who's ever been successful. The guys will give you a lot of grief for working for a woman. He said, "You don't understand. They *want* you in this job." I said, "*All* of them?" He said, "Yeah."

So many young executives who worked with me have gone to better positions. That's one of the things I'm most proud of. **David Haley, Scott Borchetta, Larry Hughes, Denise Roberts, Rick Baumgartner, John Lytle, Lee Adams, Jimmy Rector**, and there are more. If you were to ask what I looked for in all these people, it's that they *cared*. This was not just a job; this was their *life*.

I'll promote somebody's else's record if it's a hit. On conference calls I'd ask the staff, "What are you hearing a buzz on?" Once they started telling me about this **Doug Stone** record, "I'd Be Better Off (In A Pine Box)." I said, "If you hear a great song that deserves to be heard, say good things about it, whether it's yours or somebody else's." About a week passed and [then-Epic executive] **Joe Casey** calls [then-MCA/Nashville President **Jimmy] Bowen** and says, "What is Shelia up to?" Bowen says, "What do you mean?" He says, "Her staff is saying stuff about this Doug Stone record. She's *up* to something!"

Rides Of Passage: MCA's Tony Brown, Bruce Hinton, Scott Borchetta, Shelia and manager Erv Woolsey commemorate the re-signing of George Strait by presenting him with a handsome monogrammed saddle. They also gave him a horse to go with it, delivered later to his ranch in Texas.

If you're out on the road and you've got Reba or George, and there's a young act backstage standing by themselves like a deer in the headlights, walk over and see if you can help. I can't tell you how many times I've told regionals that. Introduce them to a radio station. You never know where that act is going to be; one day they may come to you, and they'll always remember that kindness.

> "IF YOU HEAR A GREAT SONG THAT DESERVES TO BE HEARD, SAY GOOD THINGS ABOUT IT, WHETHER IT'S YOUR RECORD OR SOMEBODY ELSE'S."

Gary Allan and Lee Ann Womack have to be my most satisfying artist development successes. Bruce, **Mark Wright** and I flew to L.A. to see Gary play. [Curb's] **Dick Whitehouse** was there, and Mark asked me to talk to Gary to keep Dick away from him; he was afraid Dick would offer a deal. So Gary asks, "If I sign with Decca, what would you change about me?" I said, "Why would I want to change you? Labels do too much of that. You'll change yourself through the years as you transition with your music and have success. A label's job is to buy into who you are, and use its talent, expertise and relationships to expose that to the public. I don't want to change anything. I love what I see." He later said that was one of the reasons he signed with us.

With Lee Ann, it was specifically against the thoughts of other people at the label because she was so traditional, but we saw something. I watched her grow so much, and people like Ronnie Dunn and Alan Jackson called to say they loved this girl. To me, the vision for Decca was that it needed to carry the heritage of what it had been before. **Owen Bradley** paid me a high compliment, saying, "If anyone is going to reactivate Decca Records, I'm glad it's you."

MCA and Decca were the best 15 years of my life. I never went home before 8pm. The merger was just a business decision that had to be made, and for a number of years it was very difficult to watch the ACM or CMA Awards. I'd cry every time I saw George, Reba, Trisha, Lee Ann or Vince – it was just gut-wrenching to watch because I wasn't part of it anymore.

Lip Service: "I worked with Waylon at RCA and he was always so wonderful to me. I used to hold Shooter in my arms and he would grab my chest. Waylon would always say, 'A man after my own heart.' In 1985, I promoted his "Rose In Paradise." It lost its bullet twice, and we still took it to No. 1 – Waylon's first No. 1 single in 10 years." This photo is from the No. 1 party.

I was overwhelmed when I was told CRB wanted to present me with the President's Award. It is probably the biggest honor anyone has ever paid me, and came at a point where I really needed it. The last 10 years have been filled with a lot of doubt...you question your worth. But this award is a benchmark for me to say, "Well, I *did* contribute, and there are others outside those who worked with me who know I was involved and tried to further the interests of both radio and records."It is a huge honor. CAC

CONGRATULATIONS SHELIA!

THE CRB'S 2009 RECIPIENT OF THE PRESIDENT'S AWARD

WE ARE SO PROUD OF YOU!

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HALLMARK DIRECTION COMPANY & STRINGTOWN RECORDS

GLORIANA

"WILD AT HEART"

THE DEBUT SINGLE

EXPLODING COAST TO COAST

"Fresh sound, amazing production, fun song! WKKT is not an 'out of the box' station, but we were early on Gloriana!"
- Bruce Logan, WKKT

"Genuine to the bone and perfect harmonies...could be the breakout group of 2009."
- Steve Stewart, WTNR

"Gloriana is mind blowing! Within the first 3 seconds of them singing I was totally stunned! We've had others come thru and perform for us, and very good performances too. However, these four have a very, very special bond. You can see it, you can feel it, and you can hear it."
- Tom Jordan, KSKS

"The real thing. Gloriana has the total package! The best music I have heard in a long time. I didn't want them to stop singing when they stopped by KICKS 99. LOVE, LOVE, LOVE this group! Did I mention we added it right after they left the building?"
- T. Gentry, WKXC

Opening the Taylor Swift, *Fearless 2009 Tour*

Welcome to CRS-40 and Thank You for an AMAZING Start!

emblem

WRH

new face book

314 performers, 39 years, 1 stage

Hundreds of country artists have graced the New Faces stage. Some of them twice. An accounting of every one sounds like an enormous task...until you actually do it and realize the word "enormous" doesn't quite measure up.

Still, the Country Aircheck team dug in and tracked down as many as possible. We asked a few for their memories of the experience. For others, we were barely able to find biographical information. And we skipped the details on artists who are still active. (If you need us to explain George Strait, for instance, you're probably reading the wrong publication.) Enjoy.

Requests

3 friend requests

1970

Jack Barlow: He charted with hits like "Baby, Ain't That Love" and "Birmingham Blues," but by the mid-'70s Barlow had become the nationally famous voice of Big Red chewing gum. He went on to do countless jingles and voiceovers for Dollar General, Bob Evans, Kraft and even Billy Beer. These days the Ohio native is living in Linden, TN.

Jamie Kaye: Kaye was still in high school when she performed at New Faces. After signing with Mercury and failing to chart, she resurfaced as a member of Dave & Sugar in 1979 and left the group in late 1980.

Karen Kelly: "Let Me Go, Lover" on Capitol was her only charting single, peaking in 1970.

Wayne Kemp: His biggest hit as an artist was 1973's "Honky Tonk Wine," but Kemp, who's still going strong, went on to become a Songwriters Hall of Fame member, writing classics including George Strait's "The Fireman" and Johnny Paycheck's "The Only Hell (My Momma Ever Raised)." He lives in Lafayette, TN.

Lynda K. Lance: She toured Vietnam and the late, great Dottie West was her maid of honor, but the Pennsylvania native only managed to reach the lower regions of the chart.

LaWanda Lindsey: Florida native Lindsey began recording at 14 and was only 17 when she performed at New Faces. That same year, she enjoyed her biggest hit, "Pickin' Wild Mountain Berries." She retired from the business in 1979.

Dee Mullins: The Texas native responded to Jeannie C. Riley's biggest hit with "The Continuing Story Of Harper Valley PTA." She passed away in 1991.

Norro Wilson: Long before he started writing timeless country songs like "The Most Beautiful Girl" and "The Grand Tour" and producing hits for everyone from John Anderson to Kenny Chesney, Wilson had his heart set on being a star. And as the first artist on the bill at the first-ever New Faces Show back in 1970, Wilson *was* the star. "I was the first one, and I was chosen to be the favorite that first year," Wilson recalls. "When I did that show I'd already been on Hickory Records, Monument Records, Decca, MGM, Smash, Capitol and RCA, damn near every label in the city."

Now semi-retired and living in Nashville, the much-loved Music Row figure offers the kind of perspective that only time can provide. "After having been a producer over the years, I realized I didn't have that fabulous vocal sound or that unique vocal quality," he says. "Then again, I don't think it's ever been about the artists; it's always been about the hits."

1971

Crystal Gayle: She was a regular presence on Country – and pop – radio from the '70s right through the '80s. Gayle resides in Nashville, still tours and will receive a star in the Hollywood Walk of Fame in October, 2009.

Bobby Harden: Starting out with his two sisters as the pop-singing Harden Trio, Harden cracked the country Top 50 back in 1975 with "One Step" before going on to write many hits, including Mark Chesnutt's "Too Cold at Home." Harden passed away in 2006. He was 70.

Murry Kellum: The Jackson, TN native's highest-charting country effort was a 1971 cover of Three Dog Night's "Joy to the World." In 1990, the 47-year-old singer was killed in a plane crash.

Peggy Little: Raised in Waco, TX, Little is best known for her sophomore single from 1969, "Sweet Baby Girl."

Bill Rice: Before he teamed up with Jerry Foster to write the long string of hits that would land them both in the Songwriters Hall of Fame, Bill Rice broke through to the Top 40 with "Travelin' Minstrel Man." These days, Rice lives in Cocoa Beach, FL and travels to Nashville regularly. Among the hists he wrote are "Someone To Give My Love To," "I'm Not That Lonely Yet" and "'Til A Tear Becomes A Rose."

Bobby G. Rice: Rice is best known for his 1972 Top 5 single, "You Lay So Easy On My Mind."

Earl Richards: By the time he hit the New Faces stage back in 1971, Texas native Richards had already played with Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys and the late, great Buddy Holly.

Known around Nashville as "Snake" Richards, the singer/songwriter was one busy guy back in the late '60s and early '70s, writing hit songs, working on his own major label career, acting in TV dramas like *Cheyenne*, *Sugarfoot* and *Surfside Six*, and starring in B movies like *The Girl From Tobacco Row*. These days the 69-year-old is enjoying semi-retirement with his wife, children and grandchildren in Goodlettsville, TN.

"I've always been as much of a homebody as I could be, especially raising kids," Richards says. "I'm still involved in the publishing and the writers. I started a song this week called 'Dreams Never Die.' To still be enjoying life this much, what greater attribute could there be. Life is good in Goodlettsville."

Little David Wilkins: As the writer of Brenda Lee's "Coming On Strong," portly piano-pounding powerhouse Wilkins already had a big hit under his belt when he performed as a Playboy recording artist at New Faces. Over the course of his career, the Tennessee native enjoyed a few hits of own, including "One Monkey Don't Stop No Show" and "Butter Beans," while his songs were cut by hit artists including Percy Sledge, Barbara Mandrell and Charley Pride. He was inducted into the International Rockabilly Hall of Fame in 2007. "We didn't have the Internet back then, so radio was the only way we could get the music out there," Wilkins recalls from his home in Nashville. "The New Faces Show had all those radio people, and I made a lot of friends. I do remember they had me use the staff band, and I was suffering some anxiety over not being able to use my band."

1972

Connie Eaton: The Nashville native started her country career as a teenager and hit the country Top 40 with her cover of the Merilee Rush pop hit, "Angel Of The Morning." Eaton retired from the industry in the late '70s and succumbed to cancer in 1999. She was 49.

Jerry Foster: He charted four singles as an artist, but Foster's biggest contribution has been his songwriting. With partner Bill Rice, this Songwriters Hall of Fame member wrote hits for countless country artists. He's still writing and performing in Nashville. Among the hits he wrote are "Here Comes the Hurt Again," "I'll Think of Something" and "When Your Good Love Was Mine."

Dicky Lee: A longtime familiar face along Music Row, Lee's artist career took off with melodramatic teenage love song "Patches" and had huge Country hits with "Rocky" and "9,999,999 Tears." The Songwriters Hall of Fame member wrote the George Jones classic, "She Thinks I Still Care."

Jim Mundy: Oklahoma's Mundy went all the way No. 13 with his debut single, "The River's Too Wide," but it was all downhill for the rest of his chart run. He went on to big success, however, writing and singing commercial jingles for Nestea, Miller Beer, Pizza Hut and Union 76, among others.

Jeanne Pruett: Alabama native Pruett enjoyed a solid string of hits from the early '70s right into the '80s including the No. 1 smash, "Satin Sheets." Pruett is based outside of Nashville and is still active as a performer and as a member of the Grand Ole Opry.

Mel Street: West Virginian Street racked up a long string of hits throughout the '70s, including the classic, "Borrowed Angel," before taking his own life in 1978.

1973

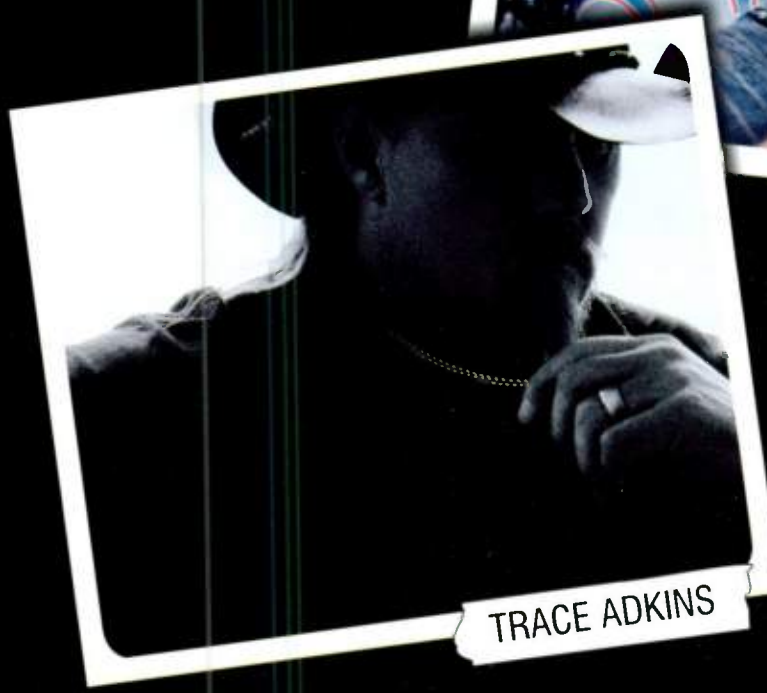
O.B. McClinton: He used to call himself the "Chocolate Cowboy," but the groundbreaking African-American artist got his start as a songwriter on the R&B side of the fence. When he appeared at New Faces, the Mississippi native was riding high with "Don't Let the Green Grass Fool You." McClinton died of cancer in 1987.

Pat Roberts: Seattle native Roberts enjoyed a Top 40 single with his debut, a remake of the pop hit, "Rhythm of the Rain."

Johnny Rodriguez: Texan Rodriguez enjoyed six No. 1 singles over the course of his long career, including "Ridin' My Thumb To Mexico." He's still in Texas recording and touring.

Johnny Russell: Singer/songwriter/comedian/entertainer Russell wrote "Act Naturally," recorded by Buck Owens and the Beatles, and became a fan favorite, a Grand Ole Opry fixture and a member of the Songwriters Hall of Fame before his passing in 2001.

Little David Wilkins



TRACE ADKINS

JIMMY HARNEN
SVP PROMOTION

STEVE HODGES
VP PROMOTION

ANGELA LANGE
REGIONAL DIRECTOR-SOUTHEAST

MIKE KRINIK
REGIONAL DIRECTOR-WEST COAST

DIANE LOCKNER
REGIONAL DIRECTOR- NORTHEAST

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CAROLYN DROSEY
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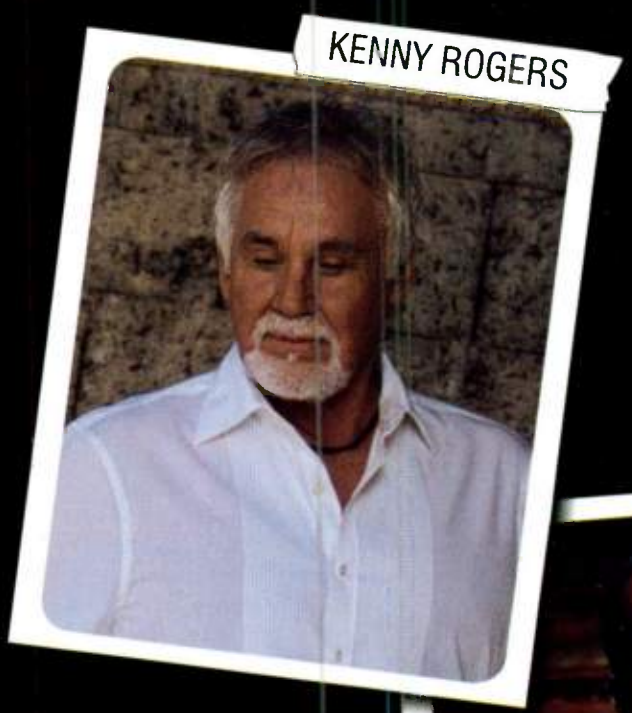
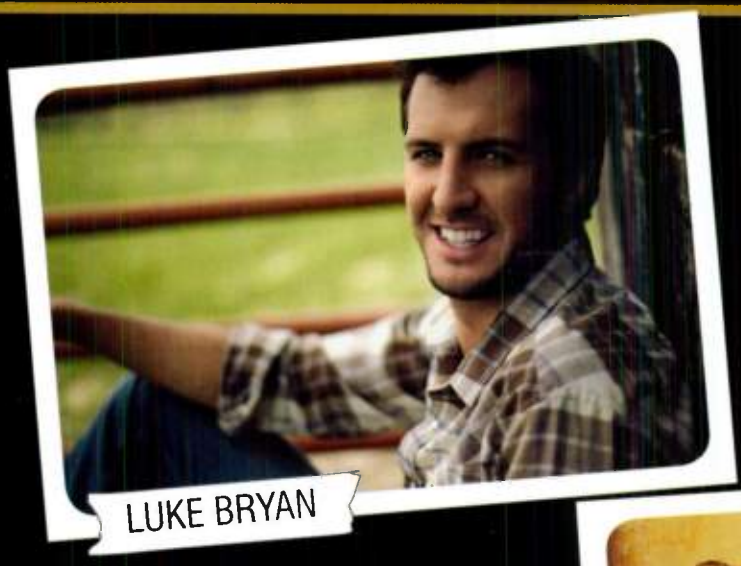


KENNY ROGERS

DARIUS RUCKER

DIERKS BENTLEY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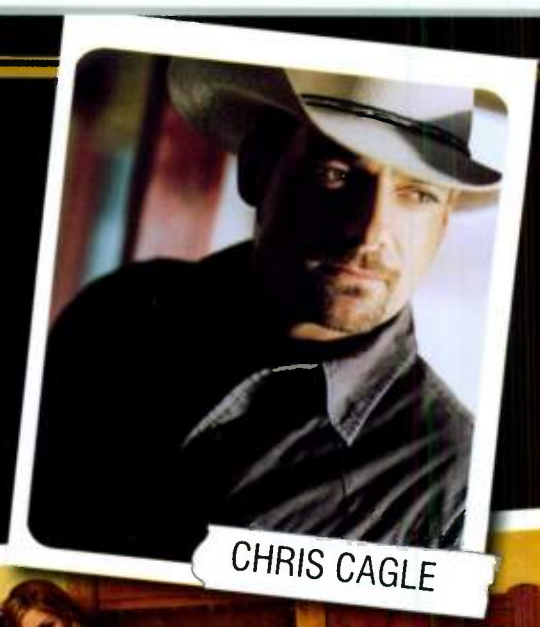
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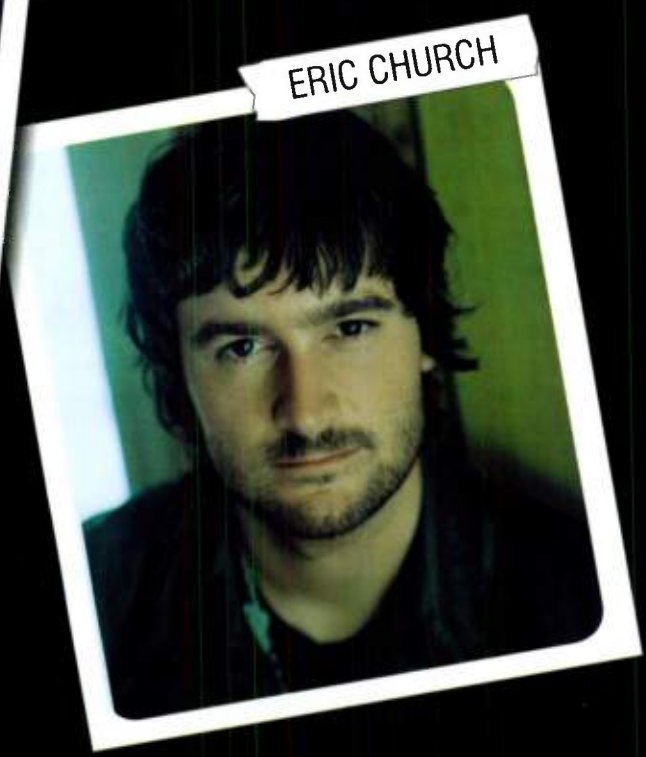
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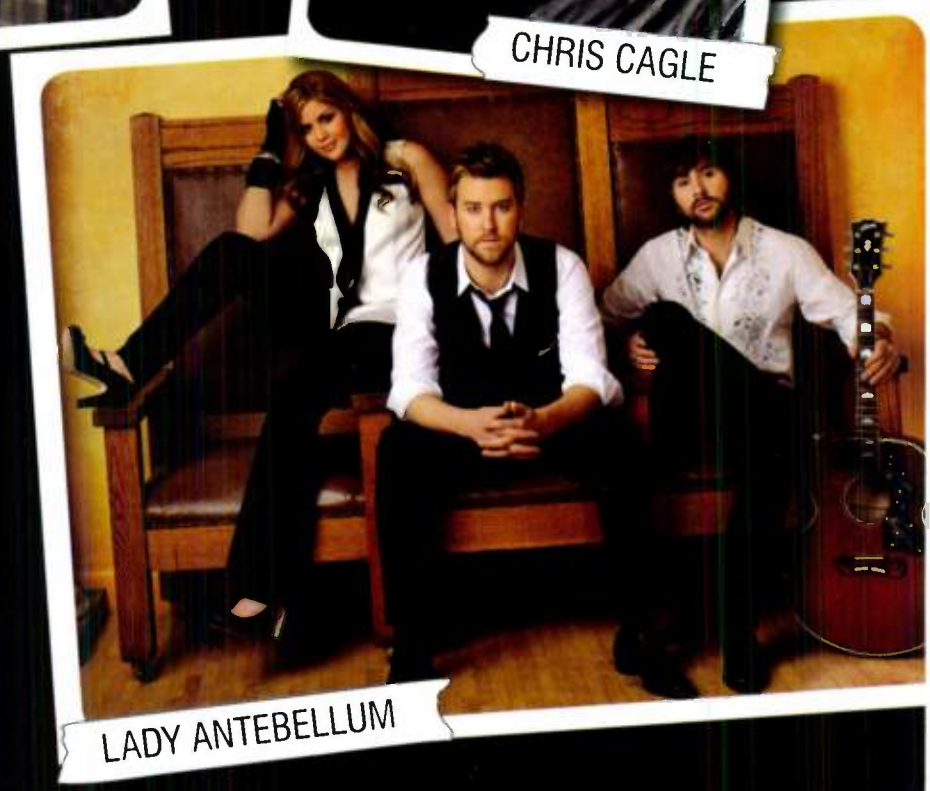
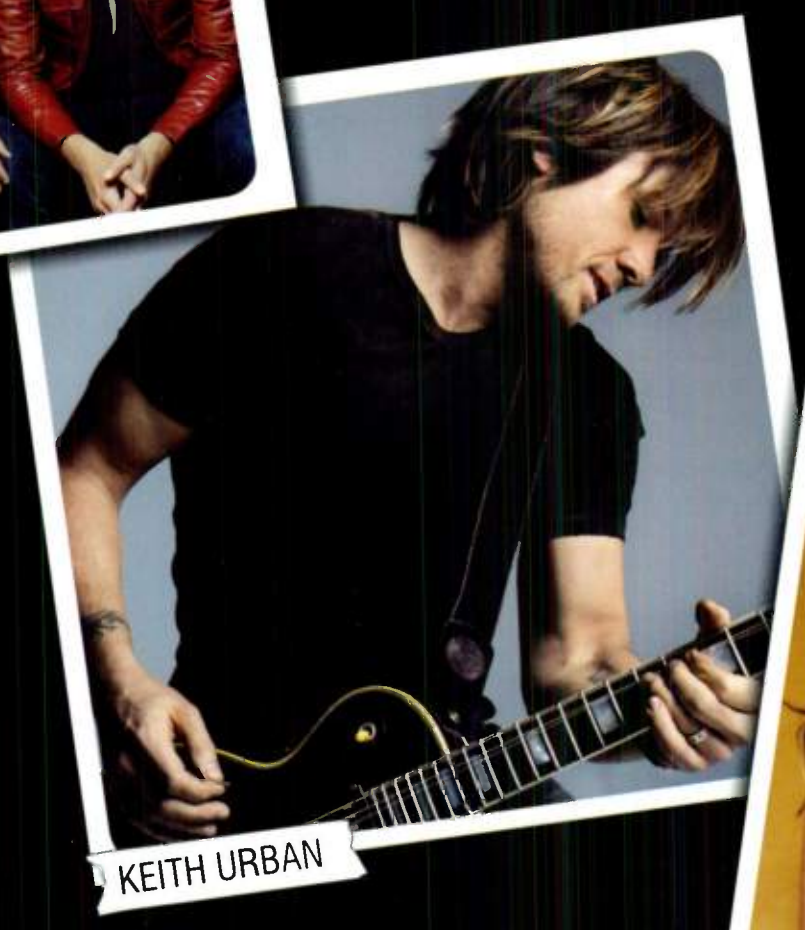

LADY ANTEBELLUM

40

We're Bringin' It!

LITTLE BIG TOWN


KEITH URBAN

EMILY WEST

Red Steagall: These days he's known as "America's Favorite Cowboy Poet," but back in the '70s, with hits "Lone Star Beer and Bob Wills Music" and "Party Dolls and Wine," Steagall was a country star. "I remember all of it," he says from his Texas ranch. "The world of country music was different in those days, and we all came into Nashville for the DJ convention. When I had a new release, I'd be at the record company office for three days just calling stations. The world of radio was our family."

Leona Williams: Like her former husband and collaborator Merle Haggard, Williams is still going strong. She had several hits back in the day, including "The Bull and the Beaver," a Top 10 duet with Haggard. These days she's living back in her native Vienna, MO, playing dates as close as Branson and as far away as Ireland and Scotland. "As long as I can carry a guitar," Williams says, "I'm going to keep trying."

1974

Josie Brown: Hailing from Corning, NY, Brown released three singles on RCA, including, "Satisfy Me and I'll Satisfy You." She died in 1998.

Marti Brown: The Chattanooga, TN native sang "Let Me Love Shine," which peaked in 1973.

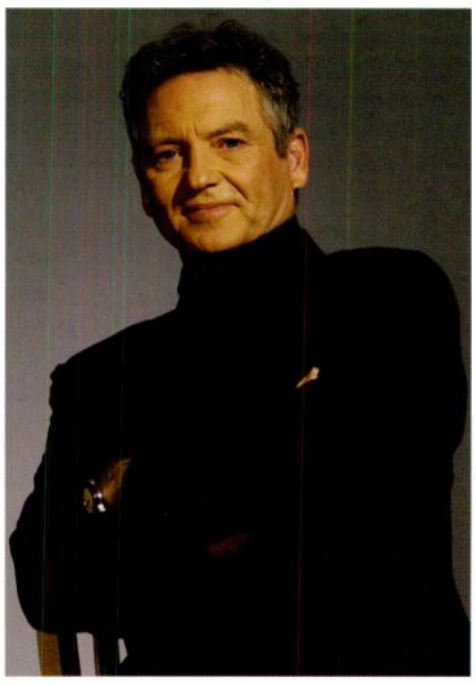
Dick Feller: A longtime Jerry Reed associate, Missouri native Dick Feller wrote the trucker's classic, "East Bound And Down," among many other hits. As an artist, he earned his way onto the New Faces show with 1973's "Biff, The Friendly Purple Bear." He hit the Top 10 with "The Credit Card Song" in 1974.

Narvel Felts: One of the original artists on Sam Phillips' Sun Records, Felts moved from rockabilly to country with his 1973 cover of Dobie Gray's "Drift Away." Backed for a time by the band Wild Country, who subsequently changed their name to Alabama, he enjoyed a long career with over 40 charting singles. Based out of his native Missouri, Felts is still actively touring and recording.

Lefty Frizzell: The Country Music Hall of Fame member had already left his mark on the music with classics like "If You've Got The Money I've Got The Time" and "I Love You A Thousand Ways" back in the early '50s, so his New Faces appearance was his last effort. He died of a stroke one year later.

Larry Gatlin: Encouraged by his friend Dottie West, Texas native Gatlin moved to Nashville in 1971 and, by the time he appeared at CRS, had already released *The Pilgrim*, his critically acclaimed debut. These days, the Austin, TX resident has been spending more time in Nashville, working with top songwriters and readying a comeback album for Curb Records.

Larry Gatlin



Eddy Raven: Raven enjoyed close to two decades on the country charts and scored six No. 1's in that time, including "I'm Gonna Get You" and "Joe Knows How To Live" in 1988. Raven, based out of Gallatin, TN, is still busy writing and performing. He and Toby Keith wrote "Cabo San Lucas" for Keith's new album.

1975

Connie Cato: Now living with her husband Jim and two Springer Spaniels in a "beautiful log cabin in the mountains of north Georgia," Cato doesn't do a lot of professional singing, but she still writes a song now and then. The Missouri-born singer, who charted with hits like "Superskirt" and "Super Kitten," still remembers her New Faces appearance. "The show was very fun," she recalls. "I enjoyed meeting all the entertainers and listening to them tell about their new careers."

Brian Collins: In a decade on the country charts, his biggest hit was a cover of Jack Greene's "Statue of a Fool" in 1974. Jimmy Buffet sang Collins' "Hello Texas" on the *Urban Cowboy* soundtrack. He left country music in 1983 and spent four years on the road preaching and singing gospel music. Recently a regional sales manager for Genworth Financial, he's about to re-start his music career.

Billy Larkin: The brother of successful Music Row producer Nelson Larkin, Billy managed to put 10 songs on the chart between 1975 and 1981. His highest-charting single was his debut, "Leave It Up To Me." Larkin is still active out of his home base in Alabama.

Kenny O'Dell: The prolific writer of timeless classics like "Behind Closed Doors" and "Mama He's Crazy," O'Dell's artist career peaked in 1978 with "Let's Shake Hands and Come Out Lovin'." He was inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1996.

Eddie Rabbitt: With 17 No. 1 singles, Rabbitt was one of the major success stories of the '70s and '80s. He wrote Elvis' smash "Kentucky Rain" and Ronnie Milsap's "Pure Love." He penned many of his own hits, including "Drivin' My Life Away" and "I Love A Rainy Night." He died of lung cancer in 1998 at 56.

Betty Jean Robinson: Kentucky native Robinson wrote "What's He Doing In My World" for Eddy Arnold and enjoyed brief success as a country artist in the early '70s before turning to gospel music. She's currently singing for the Lord from her Betty Jean Robinson Ministries in Brentwood, TN.

Ronnie Sessions: After growing up under the tutelage of California country greats like Buck Owens and Merle Haggard, Sessions moved to Music City and had his biggest country hit in 1977 with "Me and Millie (Stompin' Grapes and Gettin' Silly)." Sessions retired from the business in 1987.

Sunday Sharpe: When she took the stage, Sharpe had only recently signed with United Artists and was not what you'd call a seasoned performer. "I was brand new," she says, "I knew nothing at all about the music business, so I was nervous and basically in a fog." The Florida native went on to chart several hit songs, starting with "I'm Having Your Baby," the answer song to the similarly titled Paul Anka hit.

Brian Shaw: Pennsylvania native Brian Shaw worked on both the WWVA/Wheeling Jamboree and the Grand Ole Opry, charting six singles during the '70s, the most successful of which was "Here We Go Again."

David Wills: He's still on Music Row, cranking out the hits as an award-winning songwriter with "Wild Horses" and "If You're Thinking You Want A Stranger" among them. The Tennessee native was just getting started as a country artist with the 1975 top 10, "From Barooms to Bedrooms." "I was pretty much scared out of my mind," Wills recalls. "This was all the radio guys, and I wanted to make a good impression." He made a good enough impression to launch a 13-year run of charting singles before leaving the road to pursue his writing career.

1976

Rex Allen, Jr: The son of country singer Rex Allen, he spent his entire life in the business. The biggest of his 32 charting songs between 1973 and 1987 was "Two Less Lonely People." Today, he continues to write and perform from his home base in Las Vegas.

Ed Bruce: A familiar presence in film, on television and on the radio, Bruce, enjoyed a multi-faceted career. In addition to his 35 charting singles, this co-writer of "Mamas Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to Be Cowboys" and many other classics moonlighted as an actor in movies like *Fire Down Below* and in TV shows like *Walker, Texas Ranger*. His son Trey Bruce is a successful songwriter, as well.

Ed Bruce

Earl Thomas Conley: The Ohio native's country success story started in the '70s and ran right through to the '90s, yielding 18 No. 1 hits along the way. ETC co-wrote Blake Shelton's 2002 single "All Over Me." He lives in Nashville and continues to tour.

Dottsy: The Texas Country Music Hall of Famer had a respectable chart run in the '70s, peaking with the Top 10 hit, "(After Sweet Memories) Play Born To Lose Again." She continues to perform regularly in her native Texas.

Ruby Falls: Jackson, TN native Falls blazed a trail and broke down barriers as an African-American woman in country music. Nine of her single releases in the '70s reached the lower end of the charts. Falls passed away in 1986.

Linda Hargrove: Billed as the "Blue Jean Country Queen," Hargrove brought a straightforward feminist spin to her country career. She'd already broken into the male-dominated scene as a session player and songwriter when she played New Faces. A cancer survivor, Hargrove continues to write and perform from her home base near Tallahassee, FL, where she grew up.

Joni Lee: The eldest daughter of country superstar Conway Twitty, Joni's first hit was "Don't Cry Joni," a Top 5 duet with her dad in 1975. She had her biggest solo hit, "I'm Sorry Charlie," that same year. She continues to be intimately involved in managing her late father's estate, including development of *Conway Twitty: The Musical*.

Darrell McCall: He was born in Ohio, but this singer/songwriter will forever be associated with Texas, where he still lives, writes and performs. His biggest country hit was "A Stranger Was Here" from 1963, the same year he sang the theme to the Paul Newman movie, *Hud*.

Nick Nixon: The co-writer of Barbara Fairchild's "Teddy Bear Song," Nixon charted the Top 30 hit, "Rocking In Rosalee's Boat" in 1976. In the late '80s he returned to his native Missouri, where he's selling real estate in St. Louis and still writing songs. His latest is, "You Caught My Eye When Your Husband Knocked It Out."

Chuck Price: Signed to Playboy Records in the early '70s, Price managed to put six songs on the lower reaches of the chart.

Even Stevens: Ohio native Even Stevens was a frequent cowriter of Eddie Rabbitt's. Steven's hits with Rabbitt included "Suspicions," "Drivin' My Life Away" and "I Love A Rainy Night." He enjoyed brief chart success in the mid-'70s and continues to write and perform.

1977

Kathy Barnes: Kentucky beauty Barnes began singing at seven and worked with Gene Autry before signing with MGM in 1975. Her biggest hit was "Good 'N' Country," released on the Republic label in 1977.

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WESTWOOD ONE CMT

Bobby Borchers: A hit songwriter ("Texas (When I Die)," "I'm the Only Hell My Mama Ever Raised") who made the leap to country artist, Borchers' biggest hit was 1977's "Cheap Perfume and Candlelight." He was involved in the music production for the 1980 film, *Resurrection*. Borchers eventually moved to Santa Barbara, CA.

Randy Cornor: The Houston native and guitar virtuoso scored a Top 10 with "Sometimes I Talk In My Sleep." He's still an active session player and live performer.

Mike Lunsford: Oklahoman Lunsford's version of "Sugar Sugar" was released on Starday Records in 1975. A fixture in Nashville clubs in the '70s, Lunsford passed away in 2006.

Dale McBride: The father of McBride and the Ride's Terry McBride, Dale's biggest hit, "Ordinary Man," was released in 1976, but he performed right up until his death from a brain tumor in 1992.

Charly McClain: Memphis native McClain's career was just getting started in 1977. By 1980, she'd scored her first No. 1, "Who's Cheatin' Who," later covered by Alan Jackson. McClain left the business in the late '80s.

Vernon Oxford: An unrepentant honky-tonker in a sea of pop-country singers, Arkansas native Oxford became popular in Europe, but had a short run on the US country charts with 1976's "Redneck! (The Redneck National Anthem)." He still tours, largely in Europe, and combines a little preaching and gospel music in his shows.

Margo Smith: "Don't Break the Heart that Loves You" was one of Smith's three No. 1's and many Top 10 hits through late '70s and into the '80s. She appeared in the TNN show *I-40 Paradise* and her most recent album was released in 2005. She continues to tour and makes her home in Brentwood, TN.

Unable to Find: Geoff Morgan.

1978

Janie Fricke: Indianan Fricke evolved from a successful background and advertising jingle singer to one of the era's major female artists. Her biggest hit, one of eight No. 1 singles, was "He's A Heartache (Looking For A Place To Happen)." She continues to record and tour from her Texas home base.

Vern Gosdin: "The Voice" set the standard for deep traditional country singing standards including "Set 'Em Up Joe" and "Chiseled In Stone." At New Faces in 1978, his current single was a cover of the Association's "Never My Love." Gosdin still lives in the Nashville area.

Reba McEntire

Con Hunley: Lutrell, TN native Hunley's blue-eyed soulful brand of country distinguished him as an artist back in the '70s. Based out of Knoxville, Hunley is still active as a performer and recording artist.

Don King: King came to Nashville in 1974 from Nebraska and released a string of 19 charting singles. "I've Got You To Come Home To" went to No. 16 in 1977. These days King is still singing and playing, and works for the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency.

Ronnie McDowell: His debut single, "The King Is Gone," was a tribute to Elvis, and the Portland, TN native earned several Top 10 singles, including the No. 1, "You're Gonna Ruin My Bad Reputation" in 1983. Still based in Portland, McDowell stays busy on the road and in the studio.

Peggy Sue: The sister of country superstar Loretta Lynn, Peggy Sue enjoyed a high-profile career back in the '70s, her biggest hit being her debut single, "I'm Dynamite." These days, the singer is living in Hendersonville, TN and singing background for her other sister, Crystal Gayle.

Kenny Starr: Kansan Kenny Starr knocked one – and only one – out of the park with his No. 2 1975 single, "The Blind Man In The Bleachers." As of at least two years ago, he was still performing.

Gene Watson: Country's all-around nice guy and one of the best singers alive, Watson has enjoyed a multi-decade career that is still going strong today. He has always lived in Texas and still does.

1979

Susie Allanson: Actress/singer Allanson appeared in the film version of *Hair* before making her move to country. In 1978, she released the No. 2 single, "We Belong Together," her biggest hit. A Minnesota native, Allanson eventually devoted herself to motherhood and Christianity, and left the business.

John Anderson: Anderson is a resident of Smithville, TN and is still writing, recording and touring. His most recent release was the 2007 Warner Bros./ Raybaw album *Easy Money*.

Razzy Bailey: Having spent more than a decade playing clubs in the Southeast, Bailey was a seasoned performer and successful songwriter when he took the stage as a "new" artist in 1979. He remains in the Nashville area, working with young artists and working on his own new CD *I'm a Damn Good Time*, which hit the streets in February.

Randy Barlow: A former road manager for Herman's Hermits, Detroit native Barlow headed to Nashville in the early '70s, racking up four Top 10 singles between 1974 and 1979. He still resides in Nashville.

John Conlee: The "Rose Colored Glasses" hitmaker lives outside Nashville and is still a Grand Ole Opry regular.

Gail Davies: Oklahoma native Davies had her biggest hit with "I'll Be There (If You Ever Want Me)," from 1980. A respected producer, Davies is still active and living in Nashville.

Mundo Earwood: Among his 23 single releases was "Things I'd Do For You," which peaked at No. 13. At last report, Earwood was living in the Humble, TX area.

Cristy Lane: Illinois native Lane was "positive country" before they had a name for it. She performed more than 100 shows for troops during the Vietnam War, and survived when a chopper she was riding in was shot down. Lane charted some 22 singles along the way, but will always be remembered for her 1980 No. 1 "One Day At A Time." Lane opened a theater in Branson, MO in the '80s, and was injured in a fall from the stage in 1995, halting her career for a time. She eventually returned to performing and, at last report, lived in Madison, TN. Highly active in veterans' affairs, Lane was inducted into the VFW Hall of Fame in 2003.

Mary K. Miller: Houston, TX native Miller scored a Top 20 hit with "Next Best Feeling."

1980

Alabama: The boys from Ft. Payne were on MDJ Records and got on the New Faces show via "I Wanna Come Over," which peaked at No. 33, and a Top 20 hit with "My Home's In Alabama." In what may well be the New Faces show most famous story, RCA's Joe Galante signed the guys after seeing their CRS performance.

Alabama

Carol Chase: North Dakota native Chase came to Nashville via L.A., where she was a successful singer of advertising jingles. Her country career was brief, but she carried on as a successful background vocalist and songwriter. Still based in Nashville, Chase is currently touring as a background singer with Lynyrd Skynyrd.

Lacy J. Dalton: The Pennsylvania native enjoyed a decade of hits including her signature song, 1982's "16th Avenue." Still very active, Dalton lives outside of Virginia City, NV.

Big Al Downing: A multi-faceted talent, keyboardist/singer Downing charted 15 singles from 1978 to 1989, with "Touch Me (I'll Be Your Fool Once More)" hitting the Top 20. Downing performed right up until his death in 2005.

Leon Everette: With a bit of independent-label success under his belt, including the Top 10 hit, "Over," South Carolina native Everette was signed by RCA on the strength of his New Faces performance. Based in South Carolina, Everette retired from the music business in 1988. He was born again in the late '90s and has gospel music available on his website.

Reba McEntire: "I had a room at the hotel and offered to share it with Sylvia so she could get ready," Reba recalls. "That's when I first got to know her. I also met Randy Owen's wife, Kelly, that night, and we became friends. Lacy J. was the last to perform. Leon Everette wore a blue tuxedo shirt and Big Al Downing was a sweetheart. It was a really big lineup and I wondered where we would all be in 20 years. I really appreciate all the folks in radio. Without them, my music would never have gotten out to the millions of people who have heard it over the years."

Juice Newton: California country queen Newton was one year away from her first No. 1, "The Sweetest Thing (I've Ever Known)," when she played at New Faces. She still performs from her home base in California.

Sylvia: Indiana native Sylvia made her biggest impact with her chart-topping single, "Nobody," in 1982. Now known as Sylvia Hutton, the singer is a successful life coach scheduled to speak at this year's CRS.

Jim Weatherly: A native of Mississippi, Weatherly had already written big pop hits "Midnight Train To Georgia" and "Best Thing That Ever Happened To Me" when he played at New Faces. His biggest country hit was the Top 10 single, "I'll Still Love You," from 1975. Weatherly lives in Nashville, is still writing, and was inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2006.

1981

Deborah Allen: Memphis native Allen scored the top 5 "Baby I Lied," and has also penned hits for a number of other artists. She recalls her New Faces performance like it was yesterday: "I still remember exactly what I had on that night; it was an ivory-colored, to-the-floor, real romantic off-the-shoulder dress, and it made me feel real special. I sang 'Next To You,' from my *Trouble In Paradise* album. I was real excited when I came off the stage and ran right into Rodney Crowell. I remember just giving him a big hug."

Sheila Andrews: Big-voiced Andrews' career was short-lived, and she's best remembered for her hit single, "Too Fast For Rapid City." Disenchanted with the music business, Andrews soon called it a day, and headed home to Ohio.

Roger Bowling: The writer of "Lucille" for Kenny Rogers and "Blanket On The Ground" for Billie Jo Spears, Kentuckian Bowling placed seven songs on the lower reaches of the chart before his star faded. Bowling died in 1982 at age 38.

The Capitals: The Columbus, OH quartet came and went quickly, charting three songs including the Top 30 single, "A Little Ground In Texas," before calling it quits. Lead singer Arti Portilla found success as a songwriter.

Sonny Curtis: Playing with Buddy Holly and writing the classic "I Fought The Law" was enough to cement his place in history, but Texan Sonny Curtis released charting singles for 20 years. His biggest country hit was 1981's "Good Ol' Girls." Curtis resides in Nashville.

THE ARTISTS, SONGWRITERS & STAFF AT
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Frizzell & West: While both enjoyed their own successful careers, David Frizzell and Shelly West also hit the top as a duo in 1981 with "You're The Reason God Made Oklahoma."

Terri Gibbs: Blind pianist Gibbs debuted with the Top 10 "Somebody's Knockin'." She eventually turned to Christian music and returned to her native Augusta, GA, where she continues to write and perform.

Gary Morris: His soaring voice and big personality earned Morris a decade of country hits back in the '80s, in addition to an operatic role on Broadway opposite Linda Ronstadt. Today, native Texan Morris splits his time between Music City and "Mountain Spirit," his hunting lodge in southern Colorado.

Orion: There's room for everybody in country music, even a masked Elvis impersonator like Alabama native Orion. He charted 11 singles, and in 1981 scored his biggest hit (#63) with "Rockabilly Rebel." Orion (aka Jimmy Ellis) passed away in 1998.

Steve Wariner: He continues to write and record, and just won a Grammy for his work on Brad Paisley's instrumental album *Play*.

Karen Taylor-Good

1982

Rodney Crowell: Singer/songwriter Crowell rose to country stardom in the mid-'80s, racking up five chart-topping singles in a row, including "She's Crazy For Leaving" in 1988. With his band still in Los Angeles, he made the decision to play New Faces solo, and regretted it almost immediately.

"I remember very clearly thinking, 'Oops, I didn't turn this into the intimate occasion that I'm capable of by myself in a folk club,'" Crowell recalls. "I do remember meeting George Strait that night. He played a song – 'The woman that I had wrapped around my finger just come unwound' – and I remember talking to him and saying, 'Gee man, that is as cool as anything I've ever heard.' And he was so sweet and unassuming. God had a plan for that boy."

Diana: Cincinnati's Diana kicked off her career with a cover of Randy Van Warmer's "Just When I Needed You Most."

Terry Gregory: West Virginian Gregory's highest charting single was 1981's "Just Like Me."

Donna Hazard: Donna Hazard's career yielded four singles, including her debut, "My Turn," which peaked at No. 45 in 1981.

Kieran Kane: Before establishing the successful duo The O'Kanes a few years later, the New York native took a shot at solo stardom, releasing eight singles between 1981 and 1984. His biggest solo chart success was 1981's "You're The Best." Today, Kane is one of Nashville's most respected singer/songwriters.

Ronnie Rogers: The songwriter behind Alabama's "Dixieland Delight," Nashville native Rogers enjoyed a brief period in the spotlight, charting eight singles during the '80s, including his debut, "Gonna Take My Angel Out Tonight." He remains a successful Nashville songwriter.

Ricky Skaggs: The Kentucky native brought years of bluegrass experience and virtuosity to his country stardom, bringing hard country tradition back to the radio with 10 No. 1 singles before forming the band Kentucky Thunder and returning to the bluegrass format.

Bobby Smith: Texas native Bobby Smith came and went quickly, charting five singles including the 1981 Top 30, "Just Enough Love (For One Woman)."

Tennessee Express: Before they sang backup vocals on John Anderson's "Swingin'," vocal group Tennessee Express had a Top 40 single with "Big Like A River."

Still On The Charts: George Strait.

1983

Karen Brooks: Texan cowgirl Brooks was a veteran of Rodney Crowell's band when she hit the top of the charts with "Faking Love," a duet with T.G. Sheppard, in 1982.

Tom Carlile: Carlile's brief shot at stardom included his highest entry, "Green Eyes." He still performs in his native Florida.

Karen Taylor-Good: She went on to big success as a songwriter in the '90s ("How Can I Help You Say Goodbye"), but in 1983, Texas native Taylor-Good released two singles on the tiny Mesa label. Taylor-Good is still working as a songwriter, performer and motivational speaker out of Nashville.

"Not only was I *seriously* pregnant, but I also sang a cappella with a big chorus," Taylor-Good recalls. "I sang a song called 'Tenderness Place,' and to this day, I have people searching for copies of that song. But I don't think anybody forgot the pregnant girl singing with the choir. It was pretty wonderful."

Cindy Hurt: Hurt sang commercial jingles in Chicago before taking her stab at country in '82 with "Talk To Me Loneliness."

Tommy St. John: One year, three single releases and that was it for Tommy St. John. The Oak Ridge, TN native left the business without a trace.

Skip and Linda: Before her turn at country stardom in the '90s, Linda Davis joined up with singer/songwriter Skip Eaton, and released three singles in 1982. These days Eaton is still performing in the Las Vegas area. Davis is still singing in Nashville, and her daughter, Hillary Scott, is currently finding stardom as a member of Lady Antebellum.

Keith Stegall: Alan Jackson's longtime producer Stegall was the successful writer of hits like "Sexy Eyes" and "We're In This Love Together." His shot at country

Keith Stegall and Jerry Lee Lewis

included the Top 10 "Pretty Lady." He continues to work as a producer and songwriter, and his memories of New Faces pretty much confirm the choices he made along the way.

"I can't remember too much about the show except that I was very nervous in front of all those broadcasters," Stegall says. "I wasn't good at the public relation side of things. Some people are wired to do that, but I was always more comfortable in the recording studio."

The Whites: Now known as an award-winning bluegrass family band, back in 1982, the Whites enjoyed a Top 10 country hit with "Hangin' Around." Daughter/band member Sharon White went on to marry Ricky Skaggs, and the family is still based in the Nashville area.

Gary Wolf: Kentuckian Wolf's highest charting single was "Love Never Dies."

Younger Brothers: Texans James and Michael Younger released the 1982 Top 20 single "Nothing But The Radio On."

Unable to Find: Channel.

1984

Atlanta: Former members of pop group The Vogues came together in this group, which landed the Top 5 hit "Sweet Country Music."

Bandana: The band that included future hit songwriter/session drummer Lonnie Wilson and songwriter Tim Mensy had their biggest hit with "The Killin' Kind."

Lane Brody: Illinois native Brody found success as an actress and a jingle singer, in addition to her country hits during the '80s. "The Yellow Rose" was a chart-topping duet with Johnny Lee. Brody lives in Nashville with her husband, drummer Eddie Bayers, and is still busy recording and performing.

Rick and Janis Carnes: The married couple released four singles for two different labels in the early '80s. "Does He Ever Mention My Name" peaked at No. 32 in 1983. Rick has written hits for scores of artists, including Garth Brooks' "Long Neck Bottle." Rick is President of the Songwriters Guild of America, and he and Janis still live in Nashville.

Exile: From their pop beginnings ("Kiss You All Over"), Exile grew into a runaway success story in the '80s, going to No. 1 right out of the gate with 1983's "Woke Up In Love." Exile reunited recently and the band is back to recording and touring.

Jim Glaser: The youngest of country siblings the Glaser Brothers, Nebraska native Jim had his biggest hit – and his only No. 1 – with "You're Gettin' To Me Again." His songwriting successes include Gary Puckett & the Union Gap's huge pop hit, "Woman, Woman." Glaser lives in Tennessee.

Jan Gray: After her seven singles languished at the bottom of the charts, Gray disappeared from music history.

Gus Hardin: Tulsa native Hardin's highest-charting song was the 1984 Top 10, "All Tangled Up In Love," a duet with Earl Thomas Conley. She was killed in an auto accident in 1996.

Kathy Mattea: She recently independently released the acclaimed album *Coal*.

Dan Seals: As half of the duo England Dan & John Ford Coley, Seals got a taste of pop success. On the country side, beginning in the mid-'80s, that success would explode. Seals' 10-year run yielded 11 chart-topping singles, including 1985's CMA Single of the Year, "Bop." Most recently, Seals was battling lymphoma and at last report was residing in Hendersonville, TN.

1985

Craig Dillingham: Brownwood, Texas native Dillingham's most successful single was "Have You Loved Your Woman Today." He eventually returned to his home state and establishing himself as a regional favorite. He recently released the Frank Liddell-produced album, *Almost Yesterday*.

Mark Gray: Pianist Gray spent time working with the Oak Ridge Boys and was one of many revolving members of Exile. Gray also penned "The Closer You Get" for Alabama. His biggest success as an artist came in 1985 with "Sometimes When We Touch," a cover of the Dan Hill pop hit and a duet with Tammy Wynette.

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Becky Hobbs: Known as the "Beckaroo," piano-playing singer/songwriter Hobbs charted her honky tonk songs for a decade. Her biggest hit was the 1983 duet, "Let's Get Over Them Together," with Moe Bandy. Hobbs is also the writer of the perennial holiday favorite/Alabama hit, "Angels Among Us." She's still in Nashville, writing and performing.

Ed Hunnicutt: Raised in Columbia, SC, Hunnicutt had a short life on the country charts, but enjoyed some success as a songwriter for Reba McEntire and others. He's now back in South Carolina.

Carl Jackson: The Mississippi native spent years on the road with Glen Campbell before being signed to Columbia in 1984. His highest-charting of four singles for the label was "She's Gone, Gone, Gone." He went on to great success as a background vocalist, writer and picker/producer, and still lives in Nashville. "I do remember that I played 'Dixie Train,'" he says. "With Glen, I rarely stood out front and played guitar, so that was the nervous part of it for me."

Mason Dixon: The Beaumont, TX, vocal trio covered the Police hit "Every Breath You Take" in 1983. After a series of indie releases, they signed with Capitol in 1988. They disbanded in 1990.

Pinkard & Bowden: Encouraged to work together by longtime Warner Bros./Nashville chief Jim Ed Norman, accomplished guitar player Richard Bowden and successful songwriter Sandy Pinkard quickly realized that everything they wrote had a comedic edge, and an act was born. They cracked the Top 40 with the parody "Mama, He's Lazy." Bowden lives in Texas. Pinkard stays out of the limelight these days.

John Schneider: Singer and *Dukes of Hazzard* star Schneider enjoyed three No. 1 hits, including his biggest, "I've Been Around Enough To Know." He lives in California.

Wright Brothers: This Indiana trio charted nine singles between 1981 and 1988. They continue to perform and have added a second generation of Wrights to the band, while continuing to be very successful regionally.

Still On The Charts: Vince Gill.

1986

T. Graham Brown: T. got his start singing jingle, and signed with Capitol in 1985. He scored three chart-toppers including, "Don't Go To Strangers," and mounted a comeback with "Wine Into Water" in the late '90s. Brown is still hard at work writing and performing out of Nashville.

The Forester Sisters: Christy, Kim, June and Kathy landed three No. 1s, including 1985's "Just In Case." They still perform occasionally from their Lookout Mountain, GA home.

Nicolette Larson: The Montana native worked as a successful background singer for artists from Linda Ronstadt to Neil Young. She enjoyed a short but fruitful country career, culminating with the Top 10, "That's How You Know When Love's Right." She passed away in 1997.

Robin Lee: Nashville native Lee persevered through eight low-charting singles before breaking through with a cover of the pop hit "Black Velvet." As a songwriter, she's had cuts by LeAnn Rimes, Jo Dee Messina, and Tracy Lawrence. She is married to songwriter/producer Trey Bruce.

Maines Brothers Band: Texas born and bred, the Maines Brothers came up as a family band and hit with one Top 25 single, "Everybody Needs Love On A Saturday Night." They continue to perform occasionally, though will only bill themselves as the Maines Brothers Band if all seven members are present. Steel guitarist Lloyd Maines is the father of Natalie Maines of The Dixie Chicks.

Restless Heart: The accomplished band recently reunited for a 25th anniversary project.

Judy Rodman: Her Top 5 version of Bob Dylan's "I'll Be Your Baby Tonight" caught the attention of the man himself, and the California native's unique way with a country song kept her on the charts for three years and one No. 1, "Until I Met You." Today, Rodman is an acclaimed vocal coach based in Nashville.

"The thing about that show that makes it fascinating to me is that you can't predict which of those new faces is really going to make it," Rodman says. "One of the people on my show was Randy Travis, and I would have put money on any of them *except* Randy. And the reason was I just thought he was kind of dorky. Then I crossed paths with him on the road and the audiences were going nuts. And the rest, as they say, is history."

Billy Joe Royal: Georgia native Royal's biggest hit was his chart-topping country version of Aaron Neville's "Tell It Like It Is." Royal lives in Nashville and maintains a steady touring schedule.

Marty Stuart: He currently lives in Hendersonville, TN and tours with his band The Fabulous Superlatives. "I was stepping out of Johnny Cash's band and had just gotten a recording contract with Columbia," he says. "In reality, I felt that I didn't really have my act together the way I wish I'd had, but hindsight's 20-20. The main thing I remember is the result of that show – hearing my song on the radio for the first time."

Randy Travis: He still records for Word/Warner Bros.

1987

Adam Baker: Born and raised in the Oklahoma City area, Baker saw minor chart success and turned to fulltime songwriting before returning to his hometown, where he works in marketing and still plays the occasional gig.

Larry Boone: The writer of hit songs for George Strait, Kathy Mattea, Tracy Lawrence and others, Florida native Boone's artist career lasted seven years and produced one Top 10 hit, "Don't Give Candy To A Stranger."

Holly Dunn: Dunn broke through as an artist with "Daddy's Hands" before retiring in 1993, moving to Santa Fe, NM and pursuing painting.

Girls Next Door: Coming together as entertainers at Nashville's Opryland amusement park, Girls Next Door put out the Top 10 single, "Slow Boat To China."

A.J. Masters: Masters turned to fulltime songwriting after a short-lived artist career, penning hits for artists including Faith Hill, Diamond Rio and Jennifer Hanson. Living outside of Nashville, Masters also tours as a bassist with Hanson, Ray Scott, Steve Azar and others.

Sweethearts of the Rodeo: California-bred sisters, Janis and Christine Oliver's biggest hit was "Midnight Girl/Sunset Town." They recently recorded a reunion album in Nashville.

Keith Whitley: Whitley brought years of bluegrass experience to his too-brief country career, hitting the top for the first time with "Don't Close Your Eyes." Whitley died of alcohol poisoning in 1989. He was 34.

Tom Wopat: Wopat, who played Luke in *The Dukes Of Hazzard,* hit with "The Rock And Roll Of Love" in 1986. He went on to have success on Broadway and in films.

Look For The Label: Lyle Lovett released his most recent album on Lost Highway in 2007. Dwight Yoakam's most recent album was released on New West in 2007.

1988

Foster & Lloyd: Their first single, "Crazy Over You" in 1987, was also their most successful. It was recently covered by Keith Anderson, which led to a riveting and rousing stage reunion at CRS-39. Radney Foster and Bill Lloyd have enjoyed success as writers, artists and musicians since disbanding as a duo in 1990.

"I remember a lot of pressure," Lloyd says of their New Faces performance. "Our label and management made no bones about how important that show was. But they also gave us enough rope to hang ourselves from day one. So all we could do was go out there and be ourselves."

David Lynn Jones: Arkansan Jones wrote the Willie Nelson No. 1, "Living In The Promiseland," and with his own first single, "Bonnie Jean (Little Sister)," hit the Top 10 right out of the gate.

Tim Malchak: Malchak brought a folkie's sensibility to singles like "Some of Shelly's Blues," written by former Monkee Michael Nesmith. He now heads up Tim Malchak Ministries in Bluffton, SC.

New Grass Revival: Guitarist Pat Flynn, bassist/vocalist John Cowan, banjo wiz Bela Fleck, and mandolin man Sam Bush broke a lot of new ground. Their highest-charting single was "Callin' Baton Rouge," later covered by Garth Brooks.

K.T. Oslin: With self-penned, hit attitude songs like "80's Ladies" and "Do Ya'," Oklahoman K.T. Oslin became one of the breakthrough artists of the decade. Oslin is still writing and recording in Nashville.

Ride the River: Fronted by guitarist singer Danny Stockard, Ride the River charted four middling singles, including a cover of Cat Stevens' "The First Cut is the Deepest."

Ricky Van Shelton: His biggest hit was "I'll Leave This World Loving You." Van Shelton retired from touring in 2006 and lives on his farm outside of Nashville.

Schuyler, Knobloch & Bickhardt: Hit songwriters Thom Schuyler, J. Fred Knobloch and Craig Bickhardt followed an earlier version of the band, Schuyler, Knobloch & (Paul) Overstreet, which hit the No. 1 spot in 1986 with "Baby's Got A New Baby." The reconstituted group put four Top 20 singles on the charts. All are still in Nashville and continue successful careers writing and recording.

Knobloch, who'd had success in pop and rock with L.A. based Scotti Brothers Records, says, "Our performance was perfect and we got a standing ovation, although I remember thinking, 'You guys aren't even going to play our records.' But it was always good to go out there [to CRS] and see the radio guys. I knew a lot of radio folks from the Scotti Brothers days, and in the intervening years many of them had migrated from Pop stations to Country. The worst part was having to drive out to Opryland."

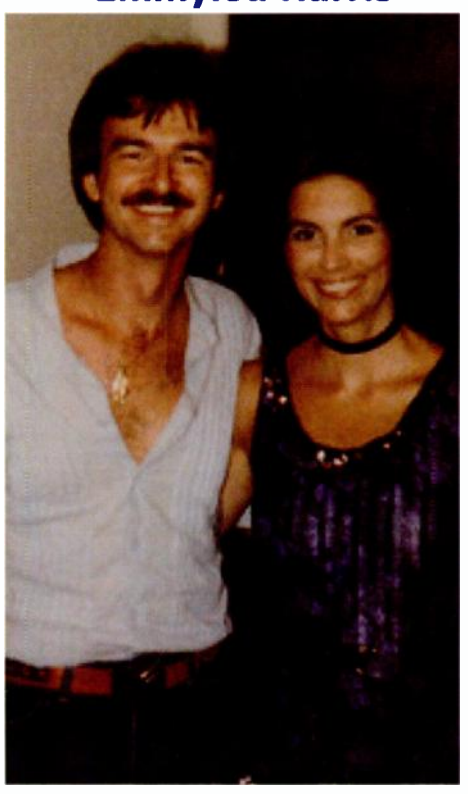
Look For The Label: Nanci Griffith went on to develop a substantial following overseas, where she still tours, and released *Ruby's Torch* on Rounder in 2006. Patty Loveless, who lives in Georgia with husband Emory Gordy, Jr., released *Sleepless Nights* last year on the Saguaro Road label.

1989

Baillie & the Boys: Of their 10 charting singles, 1989's "(I Wish I Had A) Heart Of Stone" was their biggest, peaking at No. 4. A version of the band still performs in the Nashville area.

The Wright Brothers with Dolly Parton

Carl Jackson and Emmylou Harris



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The Burch Sisters: This trio of redheaded sisters' highest-charting single was their 1988 debut, "Everytime You Go Outside I Hope It Rains." Cathy, Charlene and Cindy made one album, *New Fire*, on Mercury in 1988. After four singles, the trio disappeared from the musical landscape.

Jeff Chance: A native of El Campo, TX, Chance fronted his own band before striking out on his own. He returned to El Campo, and in Dec. 2008 took his own life.

The Desert Rose Band: Fronted by former Byrd Chris Hillman and featuring harmony-singing guitarist Herb Pederson and six-string virtuoso John Jorgenson, Desert Rose's biggest hit was 1988's "I Still Believe In You." They reunited briefly in 2008.

Skip Ewing: A prolific writer of hits for other artists, Ewing's hit's include "I Believe," "Love, Me," "Every Other Weekend," "Something That We Do," "You Had Me From Hello" and "Burnin' A Hole In My Heart." He remains one of Nashville's top tunesmiths.

Donna Meade: Virginia native Meade was a lounge singer at Nashville's Stockyard restaurant for years before signing with Mercury and releasing six low-charting singles. She married country star Jimmy Dean in 1991.

Paul Overstreet: Already a successful songwriter with hits that included "On The Other Hand," Overstreet had hits as part of Schuyler, Knobloch & Overstreet before heading out on this own in 1987. Solo hits included 1990's "Daddy's Come Around." He's still active as a writer in Nashville.

Shenandoah: They hit the top of the charts four times, including their biggest hit, "Next To You, Next To Me." A reconstituted band continues to tour and record. Lead singer Marty Raybon has a career in gospel music and has just re-released his album, "What I Came Here To Do."

Shenandoah

The Shooters: Formed by hit songwriters Walt Aldridge and Gary Baker, the Shooters took their shot and hit the Top 20 with "Borderline." Most recently, Aldridge produced the Heartland band for Lofton Creek and wrote their No. 1, "I Loved Her First." Recent hits from the pen of Baker include "I'm Already There" and the title track to the Back Street Boys CD, "Never Gone." He lives in the Muscle Shoals, AL area.

David Slater: *Star Search* winner Slater covered the Little River Band's No. 1 pop hit, "The Other Guy." A piano player, Slater is still entertaining in his native Dallas, Texas.

1990

Daniele Alexander: Texas native Alexander is best known for her 1989 Top 20 single, "She's There." She is now a real estate professional in the Dallas/Fort Worth area.

Suzy Bogguss: Bogguss is still in Nashville; her most recent record, *Sweet Danger,* was issued in 2007. "I remember it clear as day," she says of her New Faces performance. "There were a lot of women, and I knew a lot of the folks on the show with me – Daniele Alexander, Jann Browne, Lorrie Morgan, Mary Chapin Carpenter. So we had a fun time backstage. We were all nervous, but the HeadHunters had us in stitches."

Jann Browne: Browne enjoyed some mainstream success with her two Curb albums in the early '90s, before returning to the West Coast and a more blues/rock-oriented sound.

Lionel Cartwright: Ohio native Cartwright's four-year chart run culminated with the No. 1 single, "Leap Of Faith." He continues to write and perform in Nashville.

The Lonesome Strangers: This California-based quartet scored a couple of minor country hits in 1989. Band member Randy Weeks went on to write "Can't Let Go" for Lucinda Williams, and bassist Lorne Rall is still a fixture on the touring scene.

Travis Tritt: Still touring, Tritt's most recent album, *The Storm,* was released in 2007.

Wild Rose: A five-piece band of female picker/singers, Wild Rose's biggest hit was their debut single, "Breaking New Ground." They recorded three studio albums for Universal and Liberty, earning Grammy and ACM nominations and one Top 15 hit "Breakin' New Ground" in 1989. The group disbanded in 1991, though founder and multi-instrumentalist Wanda Vick has worked as a session musician since then.

Look For The Label: Lorrie Morgan recently signed to James Stroud's Country Crossing label. Mary Chapin Carpenter, who lives in Virginia and continues to write and record, released her most recent album on an imprint of Rounder. The Kentucky HeadHunters' last two releases came on the CBuJ label.

1991

Corbin/Hanner: Bob Corbin and Dave Hanner, whose singles included "Work Song" and "I Will Stand By You," continue to perform as a duo. Their most recent album, *And the Road Goes On,* was released independently in 2008.

Billy Dean: Dean's debut album, *Young Man,* was certified gold, and he scored a top 10 in 2005 with "Let Them Be Little." Based in Nashville, he continues to write, record and perform.

Joe Diffie: After a successful run in Branson last fall, Diffie returned to Nashville and wil soon begin working on his first bluegrass album, to be released on Rounder. He has a full schedule of concert dates in 2009.

Ray Kennedy: Following the release of his third album, *Guitar Man*, in 1992, Kennedy pursued a career as a record producer. His New Faces performance is lost in a blur of touring. "I do remember that show being a good experience, but I was also out touring with Alabama and doing about 180 shows in all the domes and stadiums," he says. "So the nights sort of run together. I remember we all knew each other because we were all just getting started. So there were a lot of familiar faces."

Chris LeDoux: A prolific career in music had its roots in his run as a rodeo champion. His final album was released in 2003 and he succumbed to cancer in 2005.

Shelby Lynne: Lynne continues to be a musical chameleon, and her most recent album is last year's Dusty Springfield tribute record, *Just A Little Lovin'*.

Pirates of the Mississippi: Formed in 1987, this quintet of Nashville session men released 11 singles and six albums – the first one went gold—and parted ways in 1996. Bandmates Rich Alves and Bill McCorvey reunited in 2000, and recorded the CD *Heaven And A Dixie Night* in 2006 on the CBuJ Entertainment label. They continue to perform as Pirates Of The Missisippi.

Aaron Tippin: His most recent album, the trucker tribute *In Overdrive*, was released on his own Nippit label, in conjunction with Country Crossing.

Kevin Welch: After the initial success of his single "Till I See You Again," Welch veered from mainstream country, co-founding the label Dead Reckoning in 1994. His most recent record was a 2007 joint release with label mates Kieran Kane and Fats Kaplin.

Michelle Wright: Wright has enjoyed great success in her native Canada, where she continues to record and perform.

1992

Clinton Gregory: Best known as a talented fiddle player, Gregory continued to record as a solo artist through the 2000 release of *Play Ruby Play*, named for his most successful single.

Eddie London: One of the most memorable of New Faces performers, we have been unable to determine his current whereabouts.

Sammy Kershaw: After successfully navigating the country market for the better part of the '90s, Kershaw ran unsuccessfully for the lieutenant governor post in his native Louisiana in 2007.

McBride & the Ride: Terry McBride, Ray Herndon and Billy Thomas had a string of hits in the early '90s, including the No. 1 "Sacred Ground." Herndon and Thomas left in 1994, and McBride continued on with a series of new "riders." Today, McBride has a successul songwriting career that includes a number of Brooks & Dunn hits, including the current "Cowgirls Don't Cry." After a stint in L.A., Herndon has returned to his hometown of Phoenix and continues to write and play five nights a week at his family's club, The Handle Bar J. Thomas is a highly-sought after studio percussionist and tours with Vince Gill.

Pam Tillis

Pam Tillis: Tillis continues to garner critical acclaim and released her latest album, *Rhinestoned*, in 2007. "I was on my third record deal and I'd yet to make a splash so I was pretty amused that I was still a new face," she says. "But I learned early in my career that it's all about momentum. The dominoes all have to fall, and that was an important domino because if you did great you had an immediate connection nationwide with all these programmers. And we *rocked* the place!"

Look For The Label Now living in Utah and still touring, Collin Raye is expected to release a new album on Saguaro Road Records in 2009. A reunited Little Texas, without original members Tim Rushlow and Brady Seals, records for Montage. Hal Ketchum remains on Curb.

Still On The Charts: Brooks & Dunn, Tracy Lawrence.

1993

Boy Howdy: Best known for "She'd Give Anything" and "They Don't Make Them Like That Anymore," Boy Howdy disbanded in 1996. Brothers Cary and Larry Park pursued careers as studio musicians. Jeffrey Steele has established himself as one of Nashville's preeminent songwriters.

Confederate Railroad: The Railroad continue to tour and make music. The band's sixth studio album, *Cheap Thrills,* was released in 2007 on Shanachie.

Radney Foster: (see 1988)

Matthews Wright & King: The trio disbanded shortly after the release of their second album. Tony King joined Brooks & Dunn's backing band in 1995. Woody Wright went on to a career in gospel music. Raymond Matthews continues to work in the music industry as a vocalist and engineer.

Ronna Reeves: The Texas native released four country albums in the early '90s, and attempted to cross to pop with 1998's *Day 14*. She was diagnosed with cancer in 2002 and shifted her career focus to songwriting at that point.

The Remingtons: Jimmy Griffin, Richard Maingera and Rick Yancey released two albums in the early '90s. Maingera and Yancey subsequently enjoyed great success as songwriters. Bread alumnus Griffin lost his battle with cancer in 2005. He was 61.

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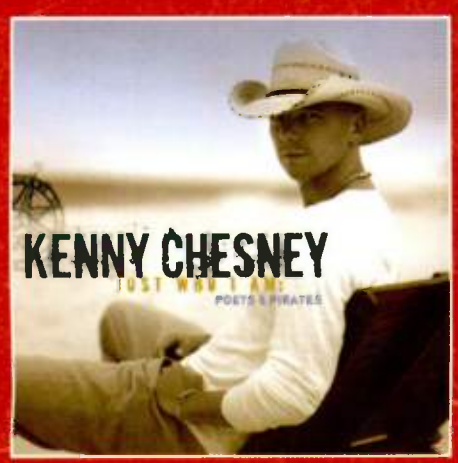
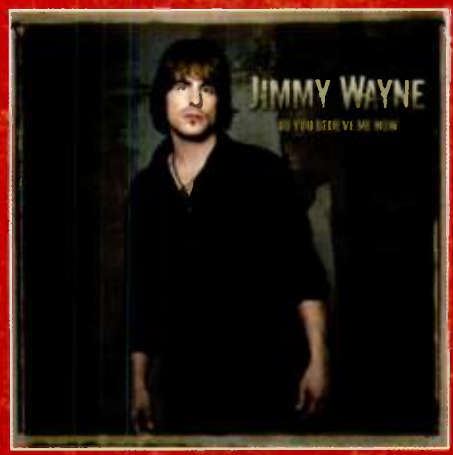
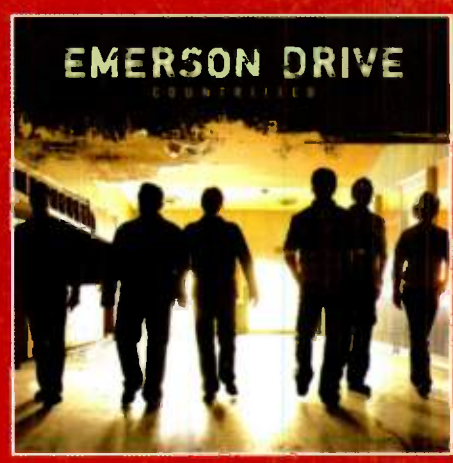


"Better As A Memory"
by SCOOTER CARUSOE



"Do You Believe Me Now"
by TIM JOHNSON

"Sweet Thing"
by MONTY POWELL



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Dennis Robbins: Robbins' artist career gave way to notable songwriting success, including "Two of a Kind, Working' on a Full House".

Michael White: The Knoxville native scored in the mid-30s with his song "Professional Fool," and followed his artist career with success as a songwriter.

Still On The Charts: Martina McBride, Tracy Byrd.

1994

John Berry: Berry continues to make music on his independently owned record label Clear Sky Records.

Brother Phelps: Brothers Doug and Ricky Lee Phelps disbanded in 1995 following the release of their second album, *Any Way The Wind Blows*. Doug returned to the brothers' former band, the Kentucky HeadHunters.

Gibson/Miller Band: Dave Gibson and Blue Miller disbanded the group in 1995.

David Ball

Both went on to songwriting success. Among Gibson's compositions are "Daddy Never Was The Cadillac Kind" and "Jukebox In My Mind."

Tim McGraw: Distraught over the house band's handling of "Indian Outlaw," McGraw seriously considered calling in "sick" that night. Without a change of heart, the New Faces show would have missed one of its all-time great performances when McGraw sang, "Don't Take The Girl." Many think that night, and that performance, launched his career. That night was also the first time he ever met wife Faith Hill.

Doug Supernaw: While his single "I Don't Call Him Daddy" topped the country charts, Supernaw's personal life was plagued with bad luck. He broke his neck while surfing and, while recovering, was in a hideous car accident. In summer 2007, he was committed to a mental hospital.

Joy Lynn White: Currently makes music independently. In 2005, she released *On Her Own*, which received critical acclaim in Europe and in Americana.

Lari White: Best known for "Now I Know," White continues to write songs and release music independently. Her most recent studio album, *Green Eyed Soul*, was released in 2004. She co-produced Toby Keith's 2005 album *White Trash With Money*, and lives near Nashville with her husband, songwriter Chuck Cannon, and children.

Still On The Charts: Faith Hill, Toby Keith, Clay Walker.

1995

Archer Park: Randy Archer and Johnny Park disbanded after releasing *We Got A Lot in Common*. Today, Archer records Christian music on his 55-acre ranch outside Nashville.

David Ball: Ball's chart success spanned from 1994's "Thinkin' Problem" to 2002's "Riding With Private Malone." He first experienced New Faces as an audience member. "I remember going to a few of them and just sitting out front," Ball says. "I saw Dwight Yoakam, Marty Stuart and I think I saw Randy Travis, too. But the show I played, it was just band after band and I remember just trying to get through it."

Lisa Brokop: Brokop's singles included "Give Me a Ring Sometime" and "Take That." She continues to be a presence in Canadian country music.

George Ducas: Most recently, Ducas conducted a radio tour in support of an album project he hopes to release in 2009. At the time of his New Faces performance, he was promoting his self-titled debut, which spawned the Top 10 "Lipstick Promises." He has spent the intervening years building a notable songwriting career. "What I remember most is Jeff Foxworthy," Ducas says. "I had to follow him, and he just had everybody rolling. I felt like I needed to come up there and start telling jokes, which is not my forte. I'm more the sidekick, straight-man type, so I just stuck to the music."

Steve Kolander: Kolander continues to release music independently. By day, he's the Executive VP of the marketing and advertising firm Small Army. He's best known for the single "Black Dresses."

Ken Mellons: Following the Top 10 success of "Jukebox Junkie," Mellons went on to release music independently. In 2004, his album *Sweet* featured a version of "Paint Me A Birmingham," which became a Top 5 hit for Tracy Lawrence. He co-wrote "The Shoes" for Dierks Bentley's debut album, and will be appearing at CRS this year.

Rick Trevino: He is best known in country for "Running Out of Reasons To Run," and continues to record and perform. The Texas native lives in Austin with his wife and children.

Western Flyer: After disbanding in 1997, vocalist Danny Myrick went on to write songs for Craig Morgan, Randy Houser and Big & Rich. Keyboardist Chris Marion has a successful career in Christian music, and is a member of the Little River Band.

Bryan White: White went on to win some of country music's top awards following the success of "Someone Else's Star" and "Rebecca Lynn." He still works and plays in Nashville.

John & Audrey Wiggins: Brother and sister duo John & Audrey Wiggins split after the release of their second album in 1998. John writes songs for some of today's top artists.

1996

Jeff Carson: Best known for his hit "Not on Your Love," Carson continued to make music through 2005. According to his MySpace page, Carson was set to graduate from the Tennessee State Police Academy in December 2008 and begin fulltime work as a police officer.

Helen Darling: Darling went on to write songs for artists from Reba McEntire to Little Big Town. She now lives outside of Austin, TX, and has fond, if somewhat vague, memories of New Faces. "It's all very foggy, but I know it was such a prestigious thing to be asked to do," Darling says. "I do remember that the *Tennessean* reviewed my outfit rather than the music, which I thought was very strange."

David Lee Murphy: His "Party Crowd" was the No. 1 song of 1995 and his "Dust On The Bottle" from the same year remains a top Power Gold. He wrote recent hits "The More I Drink" and "A Feelin' Like That" while "Always the Love Songs" and "Somebody Needs A Hug" are curently on the charts.

Daryle Singletary: "Too Much Fun" and "Amen Kind of Love" helped propel Singletary into the spotlight. His latest record, *Straight from the Heart*, was released in 2007 on Shanachie Records.

Emilio: After releasing the English-speaking album *Life Is Good* in 1995, Emilio went back to his roots in Tejano music, and enjoyed much success. Last March he was severely injured when his tour bus, which he was driving, crashed into freeway barrels near Houston.

Ty Herndon: The "What Mattered Most" singer started out 2009 performing as part of the touring American Soul & Rock & Roll Choir.

Perfect Stranger: Best known for the title track from their debut album, *You Have the Right to Remain Silent*, the band continues to tour.

Chely Wright: The "Shut Up And Drive" and "Single White Female" singer now lives in New York City. Her next album, *Broken*, produced by Rodney Crowell, is due on Vanguard this year. She continues to promote music education through her Reading, Writing & Rhythm Foundation.

Russ Taff: Taff has a successful career in contemporary Christian music, where he has won five Grammys and nine Gospel Music Association awards.

Ricochet: Founding members Heath Wright and Greg Cook are still with the band. Original member Jeff Bryant was replaced in August 1999 after suffering from carpal tunnel. Shannon Farmer replaced Teddy Carr in 1999, and the band still tours and records.

1997

James Bonamy: The Floridian made two albums for Epic, with the single "I Don't Think I Will" cresting at No. 2 in 1996, the only hit among seven singles, though both CDs reached the Top 25. Although Bonamy was an ACM Top New Male Artist nominee in '96, he has not been active musically for more than a decade, and currently resides in Oklahoma City.

Deana Carter: The "Strawberry Wine" singer continues to write, record and perform. Her latest album was 2007's *The Chain*, released on Vanguard. She lives in California and has a four-year-old son.

Paul Brandt: Brandt topped the chart with "I Do" in 1996. He's since cemented himself as a musical force in his native Canada, winning six Juno Awards since 1997.

Deryl Dodd: Dodd's best known singles include "That's How I Got to Memphis" and "A Bitter End." He fought off life-threatening encephalitis in 1999 and 2000. The native Texan still tours in the region.

David Kersh: The Texan racked up four Top 10 singles between 1996-'98, including his debut "Goodnight Sweetheart," "Another You" (written by then-unknown Brad Paisley) and "If I Never Stop Loving You." His second album in '98 included "I Breathe In, I Breathe Out" which wasn't released as a single, but became a No. 1 for Chris Cagle in 2002. In 2005, citing the "BS in the industry," Kersh told his fans "my heart is just not in the music business anymore."

Mila Mason: Best known for "That's Enough of That" and "Closer to Heaven," Mason signed in '03 to the indie Twinbeat label and as a writer for parent Brumley Music Group. Nashville-based Mason participated in the "Dare The World" charity inspirational single in 2007.

Kevin Sharp: Known for his cover of Tony Rich's "Nobody Knows," Sharp now works as a motivational speaker for the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Still On The Charts: Trace Adkins, LeAnn Rimes, Jo Dee Messina.

1998

Sherrié Austin: Debuted at Country radio with the single, "Lucky In Love." Austin is still writing songs and among other cuts has the title cut to Blake Shelton's new CD, "Startin' Fires."

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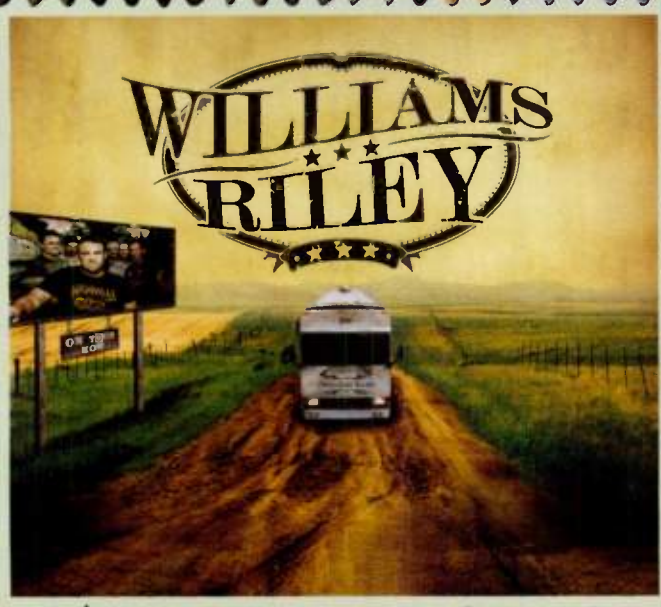

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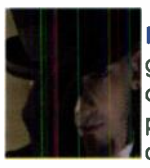
Big House: After initial success with "Cold Outside" and a gold debut album, the Bakersfield band took a long hiatus. They reunited in 2007 for *Never Ending Train*, which landed some Americana airplay.

Anita Cochran: Cochran's highest-charting single was the duet with Steve Wariner, "What If I Said." According to her MySpace page, she is currently working on a new album and landed the job as Music Director of *Conway Twitty: The Musical.*

Dixie Chicks: Their most recent album on Open Wide/Columbia was 2006's *Taking The Long Way*.



Matt King: "I remember getting a standing ovation," King says of his performance. "And not one of those slow, 'Oh, I guess we're all getting up' ones. It was immediate. As I walked off the stage someone grabbed me and said, 'Forget everything that just happened. It don't mean a thing.' Basically letting me know the response in no way meant radio would play my records. And they didn't. In fact, I remember The Ranch getting a big reaction, too. And they didn't get any airplay either."

King's Atlantic deal unwound a couple years later, but he persisted with his writing and recording. Burrowing through his colorfully dysfunctional Carolina hill country roots, he emerged with music that ultimately became the album project *Rube*, released last year. He continues to write and produce.

The Lynns: The youngest twin daughters of Loretta Lynn delivered singles "Woman to Woman" and "Nights Like These." They continue to tour with their mother, Loretta Lynn.

Lila McCann: The "Down Came A Blackbird" singer and her husband Mike Wolofsky welcomed the birth of their first child, Abraham Elliott Wolofsky, on Dec. 15, 2008. Her most recent single, "That's What Angels Do," was released by Broken Bow in January 2008.

The Ranch: Bassist Jerry Flowers still works with frontman Keith Urban, playing bass and singing background vocals. Drummer Peter Clarke returned to his native Australia.

Sons of the Desert: Starting out as a popular five-piece band in 1997, Sons of the Desert dwindled to brothers Tim and Drew Womack by 2003. Drew wrote Kenny Chesney's single "She's Got It All." Doug Virden went on to work with Ty Herndon and Joe Diffie. Keith Horne became a member of Hot Apple Pie.

Kris Tyler: Tyler broke out on the country chart in 1997 with the title track off her album *What a Woman Knows*.

1999

Chad Brock: Brock currently hosts mornings on WQYK/Tampa, but started in country with Warner Bros. His biggest hit was the chart-topper "Yes!"

Gil Grand: Grand is the president of his own song publishing company in Nashville. His 1998 debut album, *Famous First Words,* earned critical acclaim from the Canadian Country Music Association.

The Great Divide: The group disbanded in 2007. Lead singer Mike McClure is currently touring the Texas music circuit with the Mike McClure Band. He is also a songwriter and producer for Cross Canadian Ragweed. Drummer J.J. Lester produced the Eli Young Band's *Level.*

2005 New Faces

Keith Harling: Best known for his single "Papa Bear," the the Greenwood, SC-born multi-instrumentalist, singer and songwriter made his debut in 1998 with his album *Write It In Stone* that yielded four singles. His Giant release, *Bring It On* in '99, closed out his recording career.

Monty Holmes: Lubbock, TX native Holmes bowed with the album *All I Ever Wanted* on the Bang II label, but found his career as a songwriter with hits that include "Troubadour" and "I Know She Still Loves Me."

Allison Moorer: Moorer progressed to the Americana genre, releasing five more albums after her debut *Alabama Song.*

Mark Nesler: The Texas native wrote Tim McGraw's "Just To See You Smile" and bowed as an artist with the song "Used To The Pain." He's become an accomplished songwriter – "A Different World," "Living And Living Well" - and is married to singer/songwriter Jennifer Hanson.

Jon Randall: Randall continues to work as a songwriter in Nashville. His most famous hit was "Whiskey Lullabye."

Shane Stockton: The Texas native sang "What If I'm Right" and "Gonna Have To Fall." Stockton is now a preacher in Lubbock.

Trini Triggs: Triggs's self-titled debut offered singles "Straight Tequila" and "Horse To Mexico." The Natchitoches, LA, native keeps a MySpace following, and has had success in Christian country. He issued the video "We're Americans" last September.

2000

Still On The Charts: Montgomery Gentry, Andy Griggs, Brad Paisley, SheDaisy, Keith Urban.

2001

The Clark Family Experience: Three from the Family – Adam, Ashley and Austin – formed the Clark Brothers and went on to win the national television talent show *The Next Great American Band* in 2007. The brothers are currently signed to Universal South.

Trick Pony: Founding member Keith Burns has formed a new duo with Michelle Poe on Country Thunder Records. Bassist Ira Dean continues to write songs. Heidi Newfield is enjoying solo success.

Still On The Charts: Chris Cagle, Phil Vassar, Sara Evans.

2002

Carolyn Dawn Johnson: Her debut, *Room With A View*, included the singles "Georgia" and "Complicated." She has continued to have success as an artist in her native Canada. Johnson and her husband, Matt Fisher, welcomed their first child, Abigail Grace Fisher, in September.

Cyndi Thomson: Thomson's Capitol debut, *My World,* certified gold, largely on the strength of the single "What I Really Meant To Say." She walked away from her recording career in 2002. She returned to the label in 2006, but no music ever resulted and she was subsequently dropped.

Still On The Charts: Rascal Flatts, Blake Shelton, Darryl Worley.

2003

Tammy Cochran: Best known for her single "Angels in Waiting," Cochran released her latest album, *Where I Am,* on Shanachie Records in 2007.

Tammy Cochran

Kellie Coffey: Her BNA debut *When You Lie Next To Me* scored a Top 10 hit with the title track. Coffey is a now a mom of two, living in Los Angeles.

Still On The Charts: Steve Azar, Emerson Drive, Joe Nichols.

2004

Buddy Jewell: *Nashville Star* champion Jewell is still making music in Nashville. His current album, *Country Enough*, was released on his own imprint in 2008.

Still On The Charts: Dierks Bentley, Pat Green, Craig Morgan, Jimmy Wayne.

2005

Blue County: Though no longer on Curb, the duo's MySpace page notes plans for a new album in 2009.

Look For The Label: Mercury's Julie Roberts is working on new music for the label.

Still On The Charts: Billy Currington, Josh Gracin, Sugarland.

2006

Hot Apple Pie: According to the band's bassist Keith Horne, Hot Apple Pie are still together. Brady Seals is currently producing other acts in Nashville. He and his wife welcomed the birth of a son, Evan James, in September 2008. Guitarist Mark Matejka most recently lent his musical talent to The Lost Trailers for the band's self-titled debut album. Horne is touring with Luke Bryan.

Keith Anderson: "Pickin' Wildflowers" was Anderson's entrée onto the New Faces Show. "I remember being so freakin' excited to be picked for that show," he recalls. "I had already lived in Nashville for eight years, doing the whole 'networking my ass off' thang. And a *big* part of that was sneaking into the New Faces Show, just dreaming of being on that stage. To be there was a dream come true.

"But I came down with laryngitis, which sucked because I had to cancel *everything* that week – even the Sony/BMG boat event! But I was *determined* to get well so I could do the New Faces show. I was on total vocal rest all week and didn't know if I could actually sing until right before I walked on stage. Thank God I had *just enough* to make it through my set. I wouldn't have missed that night for the world."

Still On The Charts: Jason Aldean, Keith Anderson, Little Big Town, Jeff Bates.

2007

Still On The Charts: Rodney Atkins, Eric Church, Jack Ingram, Miranda Lambert, Trent Tomlinson.

2008

Still On The Charts: Luke Bryan, Jason Michael Carroll, Bucky Covington, Jake Owen, Taylor Swift. CAC

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Record Reps' Phones, Faxes & Emails

Here's the latest compilation of promo staffs and how to reach them.

Editor's Note: *An explanation of some of the abbreviations: "SVP" is Sr. Vice President; "VP" Vice President; "ND" is National Director; "SD" is Sr. Director; "D" is Director; "FP" is Field Promotion; "C" is Central; "MA" is Mid-Atlantic; "E" is East Coast; "MS" is Mid-South; "MW" is Midwest; "W" is West Coast; "NW" is Northwest; "SE" is Southeast; "MR" is Market Research; "NP" is National Promotion; "NPS" is National Promotion Strategy; "SP" is Special Projects; "RS" is Radio Strategies; "NM" is New Media; "M/P" is Marketing & Promotions; "MP" is Manager/Promotion; "Sec." is Secondary; "Asst" is Assistant; "Coor" is Coordinator;"FM" is Field Marketing; "RM" is Radio Marketing; "AR" is Artist and Repertoire; "R/IS" is Research & Information Systems; "TS" is Tour Support.*

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An Industry United

Congratulations to CRS on your 40th Anniversary!
We salute your dedication to country radio.

Country Radio Seminar provided the platform that launched Country Cares for St. Jude Kids®, one of the most successful radio fundraising programs in America.

As we celebrate our 20th Anniversary, we thank the Nashville music industry and our over 200 radio station partners and their volunteers for embracing the kids of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital® and making them their own. You have been instrumental in furthering the mission of St. Jude – to find cures for children with cancer and other catastrophic diseases through research and treatment.

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"THE FOUNDATION" ALBUM SALES

12,435 ALBUMS SCANNED THIS WEEK
254,573 ALBUMS SCANNED IN FIRST 10 WEEKS

#5 Billboard Country Chart - Current Week
#6 Amazon Top MP3 Country Albums
#8 iTunes Top Country Albums
#17 Billboard Top 200 Albums – Debut Week
#39 Billboard Top 200 Albums – Current Week

"CHICKEN FRIED" SINGLE SALES & AIRPLAY

37,579 DIGITAL SINGLE SALES SCANNED THIS WEEK
951,283 DIGITAL SINGLE SALES SCANNED IN 18 WEEKS (RIAA CERTIFIED GOLD)

#1 CA/Mediabase & R&R/BDS Hot Country Chart for 2 Weeks – November 2008
#1 R&R/BDS Country Chart – Top Recurrents
#1 iTunes Top Country Songs
#2 Amazon MP3 Downloads – Top Country Songs
#2 Year-End Top 10 Country Dance Chart 2008
#9 iTunes Top Ringtones – All Genres
#10 Billboard Hot Mastertone Chart with 317,804 Sales To Date
#20 BDS Canadian Country Chart
#21 Mediabase Canadian Country Chart
#25 Amazon MP3 Downloads – All Genres
#29 Billboard Hot Digital Tracks
#32 Billboard Hot Digital Songs
#38 Billboard Hot 100 Singles Chart
#45 iTunes Top Songs – All Genres
#52 Billboard Hot 100 Airplay

INTERNET/SOCIAL NETWORKS/VIDEO CHANNELS

#1 CMT.com Most Streamed Video – "Chicken Fried"
#2 CMT Top Twenty Countdown – "Chicken Fried" with 15 Weeks in the Top 20
#2 Digital Rodeo Top Artists
#3 Most Popular Song on Countrytabs.com
#7 MySpace Top Signed Country Artists
#17 Big Champagne Country Chart

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11/10/2008

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ZBB WINS 25 STRAIGHT CMT POWER PICKS

"Chicken Fried" has won an unprecedented 25 straight head-to-head battles on the fan-voted Power Picks defeating Taylor Swift, Kenny Chesney, Alan Jackson, Rascal Flatts, Montgomery Gentry, Kid Rock, Brooks & Dunn and many more.

ZBB TELEVISION APPEARANCES:

Oct. 18	Grand Ole Opry Live	GAC
Dec. 14	Southern Fried Flicks	CMT
Dec. 20	CMT Insider	CMT
Jan. 9	Jimmy Kimmel Live	ABC
Jan. 29	Headline Country	GAC
Feb. 3	Conan O'Brien	NBC
Feb. 11	Late, Late Show	CBS
Feb. 21	Paula Deen	FOOD NTWK

HOME GROWN MUSIC · BIG PICTURE · ATLANTIC · ROAR · CAA

All statistics and numbers listed herein as of the week of February 2nd, 2009.

Lady Antebellum

In little over a year Dave Haywood, Charles Kelley and Hillary Scott have gone from a label bidding war to CMA Award winners and Grammy nominees. Let's not forget their Top 5 hit "Love Don't Live Here" and Top 15 "Lookin' For A Good Time" as they set up their next single "I Run To You."

Did you listen to Country radio growing up?
HS: I grew up on every genre, but with my parents in the business and as much as we were in the car, I definitely did. Growing up in Nashville it was all about **WSM, WSIX** and **WKDF**.
DH: In middle school I started getting into John Michael Montgomery. I was in Augusta, GA, so I listened to **WKXC.**
CK: We're both from Augusta, so WKXC was the one. I didn't get into country music until I was 13 or 14. I worked as a bag boy at a golf course one time and all the guys listened to country music, and it just grew on me.

What is it like to actually visit the stations you just mentioned?
HS: I think it's really cool, especially being from Nashville and growing up listening to **Gerry House**. Being able to actually walk into the studio and talk to him after you've spent so much of your life hearing him interview other people.
CK: He put Hillary on the spot, and played a Christmas CD she had put out with her family when she 15 or 16. It was cool that he knew about her before Lady Antebellum.

Do you recall the first time you heard your song on the radio?
DH: Yes on **WBEE/Rochester, NY**. September 2007 is when "Love Don't Live Here" came out and we were on our radio tour. We went to dinner and about midnight all three of us were in the car and heard it together.

What is your most vivid memory from a radio tour?
DH: We played upstairs on a moving double-decker pontoon boat on Lake Travis for **KASE/Austin**. I'd never played at six miles per hour before.
CK: We tried to punk **Jimmy Harnen** by making a video with us asking **WUSN/Chicago's Mike Peterson** and **Marci Braun** for an add. He was all up in arms thinking it was real.

Has there been a real "wow" moment in the last year?
CK: Last week we visited the **St. Jude Children's Hospital**. The cool thing was that radio PDs were there and we got to go out to dinner with a bunch of them. To see all the support we've had is a great feeling.

What does CRS mean to you?
DH: I love it. Radio is what drives this industry. They're great people, and this is a way to say thank you to them and hang out.

FACE CADETS

CRS-40's New Faces of Country

Five of country music's most promising new artists, as determined by CRS attendees, will perform at the annual New Faces of Country Music show March 6. Country Aircheck tracked down each of this year's selected artists for their unique perspective on radio.

James Otto

This Muzik Mafia member had the most-heard song of 2008 with his two-week No. 1 "Just Got Started Lovin' You." He also happened to co-write Jamey Johnson's Top 15 "In Color." Otto's next single "These Are The Good Ole Days" has already broken the Top 40.

Did you listen to Country radio growing up?
I listened to all areas of country music, but in early grades I didn't think it was cool. About the time I turned 13, I moved to Alabama and that's when I found Hank, Jr. and Charlie Daniels Band and Waylon and Willie.

What was your hometown station?
I moved to Washington state when I was about 15 and brought country music with me. I listened to **KIOK/Tri-Cities**, which was Thunder Country.

Can you recall the first time you heard your song on the radio?
I had a single on Mercury years back, and the first time I heard it **Mitch Mahan** at **WIRK/West Palm Beach** played it. The first time I heard "Just Got Started Lovin' You," it was him again. Both times I had been there for a visit, and they played it as I left. Mitch has been a good friend and a big supporter. Nothing replaces hearing your song for the first time.

Does hearing your song ever get old?
I change the channel when my own song comes on. After awhile I just feel strange about listening to myself on the radio. It makes me smile, then I change the channel. It's one of those things. I don't like to watch myself on TV, either.

What's it like watching "In Color" have success?
People emotionally react to that song. I played it at a guitar pull for **WKXC/Augusta, GA,** and after I got through the second chorus there was a standing ovation. I couldn't even finish the song. It was an amazing response. That's the kind of thing that blows your mind. I was really proud to be a part of one of the best records of the year.

What does CRS mean to you?
I've always been told it meant "Can't Remember Shit." And if you've done it right, you probably can't. It's a big party for a lot of people, but for me it's a place to see those people I met out on the road. I've had a great year, so this is a chance to go back and thank them. My New Faces performance is a chance to show what I've learned over the last year. It's an important part of the process.

Kellie Pickler

After her *American Idol* stint, Kellie Pickler strutted into Nashville in "Red High Heels," which marched right into the Top 15. She followed up with consecutive Top 15s "I Wonder" and "Things That Never Cross A Man's Mind." She co-wrote her current single "Best Days Of Your Life" with BFF Taylor Swift.

Did you listen to Country radio growing up?
That's how I learned about country music. I remember calling and requesting different songs, and it felt so cool when I would hear my interview played back on the air.

What was your hometown station?
I grew up in Abemarle, NC and we were able to pick up **WSOC** and **WKKT** from Charlotte.

Do you recall the first time you heard your song on the radio?
I was on the *American Idol* tour in Atlanta and "Red High Heels" had just hit **WKHX**. All of us – **Bucky Covington, Chris Daughtry, Taylor Hicks, Katherine McPhee, Mandisa** – piled up on the bus. We knew that WKHX was about to play the song and it came on right after Rascal Flatts. I was over the moon.

Does it ever get old?
It's the greatest feeling in the world to hear, "Up next, Kellie Pickler." My car radio has a display, which shows the name of the artist and the song that's playing. The first time I saw my name on the radio screen I took a picture of it.

What is your most vivid memory from a radio tour?
I really like doing acoustic jams. It will just be me, two of my acoustic guitar players and radio winners that have come in. It really takes all the bells and whistles away, and it's just you and the song. It really lets you tell a story.

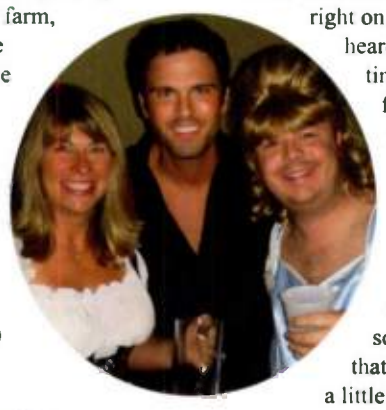
What does CRS mean to you?
I was really bummed my first year because I wasn't able to be a part of CRS. We had agreed to do *American Idol* that day and so there was no possible way, even if we flew private, to be a part of CRS. So, last year was my first time being there. I'm really excited about it. It's such a fun week to get to know the people that are playing your records and thank them.

How does the New Faces show compare to performing at the CMAs?
I think it's a lot more intimidating. The CMAs are scary because you're performing in front of your peers. But at New Faces, you don't want to disappoint anyone. I feel like a new artist; I'm still paying my dues. I really want the country industry to know this is the most important thing to me.

Chuck Wicks

With his self-penned Top 5 "Stealing Cinderella," Chuck Wicks melted hearts of fathers and daughters everywhere. His sophomore single "All I Ever Wanted" broke the Top 15, and now he's anticipating the launch of "Man Of The House."

Did you listen to Country radio growing up?
Yeah, that's all I listened to. I grew up in Smyrna, DE on a small farm, and every time I got in the truck with my dad or in the car with mom that was it, it was Country radio. Every once in awhile, my dad would throw in a Whitney Houston CD... or actually a tape, which was really embarrassing for me, especially when you're 10 years old.



What was your hometown station?
I remember it as 94.7 **WDSD/Dover, DE**. It has changed formats several times since then, but it's back to Country now.

Do you recall the first time you heard your song on the radio?
It was "Stealing Cinderella," and I was on my way to the Nashville airport listening to **WKDF**. I was going down Nolensville Pike and making a right on Harding Rd. I had heard the song a million times prior to that – from writing it and recording it – but it was so different when I heard it announced on the radio from the DJ. It just hit me like a ton of bricks. I was so caught off-guard that I started crying like a little girl.

Does hearing your songs on the radio ever get old?
I get excited when I hear myself on the radio. It's a partnership. As a singer/songwriter, Country radio is your voice. If it weren't for them, nobody would ever hear the song we sit in our little 10x12 rooms and write.

Any good road stories?
Josh Easler dressed up as Cinderella (pictured). It really brought out his eyes and was really refreshing.

Most memorable moment from the road?
Touring with **Brad Paisley** was amazing. Just being around him and watching his work ethic was fantastic. The most memorable thing for me was when he'd ask me to come run with him after his soundcheck. Everybody sees Brad Paisley, the superstar, but when I was running with him I got to know him as a person.

What does CRS mean to you?
It's a huge honor to be on the New Faces show. I went five years ago with my now-A&R guy and best friend **Jim Catino** and he said, "Just give it four or five years and you'll be up there. I promise you." I always had this hidden passion to play the New Faces show.

Zac Brown Band

A classic overnight success story of playing 200 dates a year and selling 30,000 CDs independently, these Georgia favorites took it national with the two-week No. 1 "Chicken Fried." Now they're geared up for second single "Whatever It Is" and first CRS appearance. Zac Brown spoke with Country Aircheck:

Did you listen to Country radio growing up?
I did. I remember the first thing that really got me into country music was Garth Brooks' "The Thunder Rolls." I had been really into a lot of '70s music; after hearing Brooks I really fell in love with country. I've been listening to it ever since.

What was your local station?
WKHX in Atlanta has been around forever, I think that's the one I listened to growing up.

When did you first hear your song on the radio?
I was at home in Atlanta with my wife and my friend Barry, who's in a band called Rollin' In The Hay. We were talking and it came on the radio. They were doing a spin-off between "Chicken Fried" and Taylor Swift.

Does it ever get old?
Nope. Some days go by that I'm really glad I don't have to sing "Chicken Fried," but it's all perspective. I worked at McDonald's in high school and at a fry house called the Wagon Wheel frying up hush puppies and catfish. Every night I would have to clean up the grease machine. After being on that end of it, the monotony is nothing compared to the blessings we've all been given by it. We're very honored and very blessed.

What is your most vivid radio tour memory?
Eating fried chicken everywhere we went for months. It was always there waiting on us. I was glad to finally see some pizza.

How is your relationship with your regional reps?
It's awesome. I'm close with pretty much everybody who works with me on all my stuff. I just went bird hunting with **Michael Powers** this weekend. We got to spend the whole day together. Everybody is close.

What does CRS mean to you?
I haven't been to a CRS. I'm excited to play, especially for people that are in the industry. I'm very eager to get to win people over in a live atmosphere. If they like the song on the radio, we have to prove it to them live that we're lifetime musicians and that we have chemistry.

Do you have any expectations about the New Faces show?
We do have a fan base, but the majority of the nation just now found out about us. It's an honor to get to play. My main goal is to try to get fans. We give it 110%, no matter when we're playing or who we're playing for. People are people.

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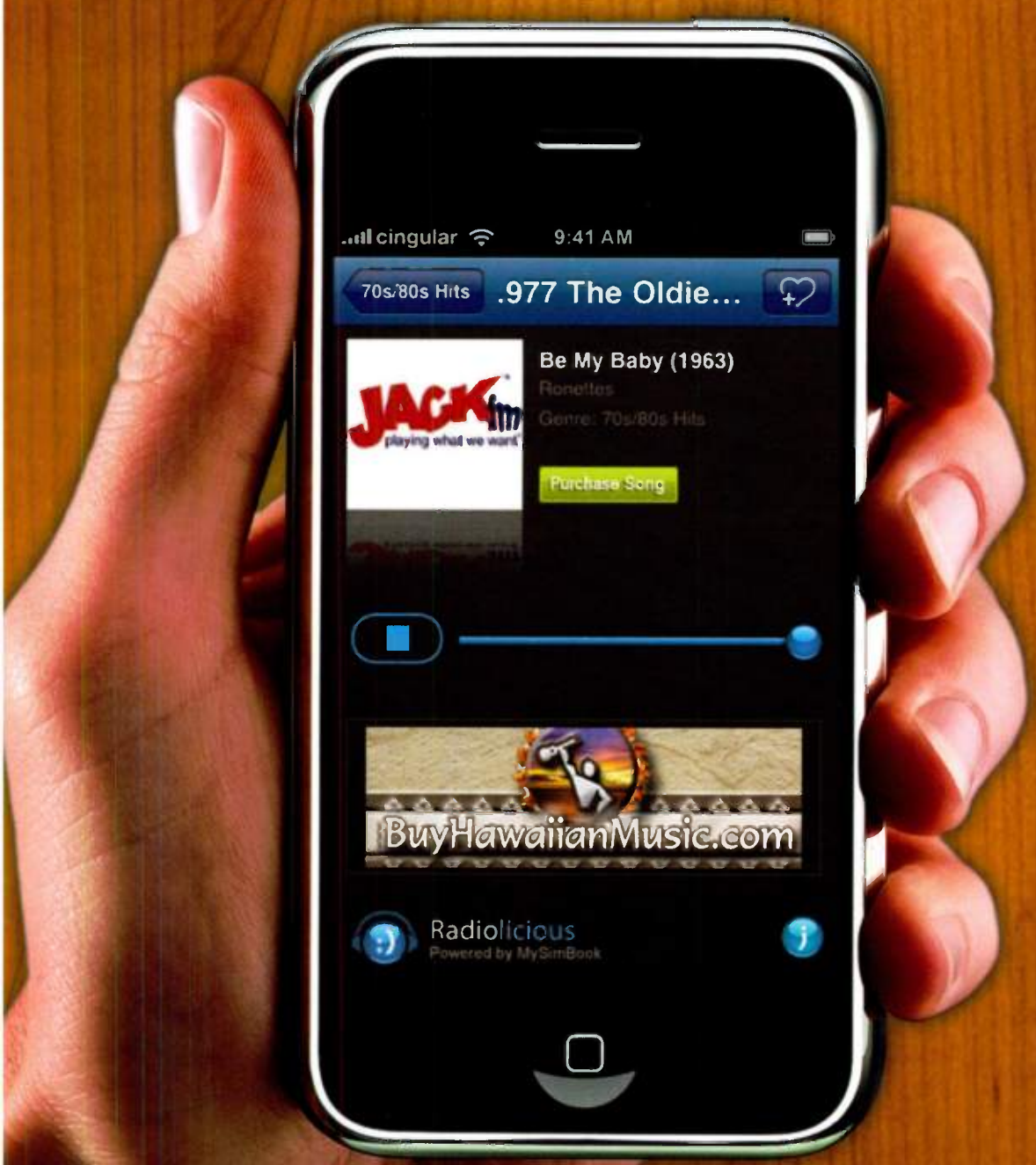

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LARRY WILSON

What Went Wrong

A broadcasting career spanning more than 30 years began when Larry Wilson was named General Counsel for Combined Communications. His foray into ownership came in 1984 with the purchase of KAIR-AM & KJYK-FM/Tucson, and Citadel Communications was born.

From those humble beginnings, Citadel grew into one of the world's largest broadcast chains. It boasted 205 stations in 42 markets when it was sold to Forstmann Little in the spring of 2001 for $2.1 billion. Throughout his professional life, Wilson was more than a broadcast owner; he was a champion of the Country format, serving on the boards of both the Country Music Association and the Country Radio Broadcasters. In 2007, the CRB honored Wilson with its prestigious Tom Rivers Humanitarian Award.

When the sale of Citadel closed in 2002, Wilson retired to the pair of Montana ranches where he raises cutting horses and Corriente cattle. For much of the winter you'll find him living and fishing in Cabo San Lucas, which is where we caught up with him – unfortunately, by phone.

Country Aircheck: You took a pretty nasty fall a few months ago, tumbling headlong into a bank of concrete steps. How are you feeling?
Larry Wilson: I'm feeling pretty good, actually, although I'm still recovering. It's going to be a long process. I've got to have a few more surgeries, but I'm just lucky to be alive. I'm a happy camper.

I didn't realize it was life-threatening.
It was brutal. There was a while that they didn't think I was going to make it. I fractured three vertebrae, broke some ribs, which is no big deal, but then my whole chin was totally floating, it was broken into 50 pieces, teeth were knocked out on the bottom, a big ol' hole through my face, which cut the main nerve to my face. The biggest problem was stopping the bleeding. My heart was going crazy.

It was pretty bizarre, and I was very lucky, because a doctor, who was working out at the athletic facility where it happened, was leaving for his office when he saw me. He tapped me on the shoulder and said, "I'm a doctor and I'm going to help you." I said, "Am I gonna die?" "And he says, "Well…" and there was a pause! And I said, "Hey, hey! You gotta work with me on this." And he started laughing, but said, "This is a very terrible situation, and we've got to get this blood stopped. Don't move, I'll be right back." I don't remember much after that. And, fortunately, I was three blocks from the hospital. The surgery went well, although it took a long time to put me back together. So, I'm doing OK and feeling very lucky.

What do you miss the most since leaving Citadel?
The people. I miss motivating people and sharing and celebrating their successes with them. That said, I'm glad I'm not in the business right now, because it's a disaster. The [low] stock prices and the financial situations of these companies are staggering to me.

What else don't you miss?
All the travel and the grind of Wall Street. It's all haywire. Everybody knows this, but it'll never be changed. This business of going from quarter to quarter to quarter, trying to make your little number, is nuts. The Japanese have it right. It's no wonder our car companies are screwed up. Toyota can have a bad quarter and it's no big deal. It's about the long-term health of the company. But an American company has a bad quarter, and they get hammered. I don't miss that. It's kind of been nice not working that much.

Staying on the Wall Street theme for a second, is the radio business really suited to be in the hands of publicly traded companies? The stock market wants growth, and despite radio's usually excellent margins, it just doesn't deliver that year-to-year, individual station revenue growth that drives stock prices. In the early days of consolidation, companies were able to grow because they were buying new properties. Going public made quite a few folks pretty rich, but ultimately, did it really hurt the radio business?
I think it really did. It was a phenomenal business when it was moms-and-pops. And I don't mean that as a hick term. It was about local entrepreneurs running a business, like Bob Fuller up in Maine and John Dick in Tennessee. It was a great business when there was a local entrepreneur paying attention to local issues.

Public companies that own radio stations today are so driven by cutting costs that they don't give anything back to the community, and therefore the community doesn't give them anything. What some of these companies are doing makes me cringe; it makes me cry. There are some great people at these companies, but they're trapped and treated like commodities. And what we're seeing in some of the former public companies that have been taken private is financial investors run amok. The radio executives at those companies have to do what they're told, of course. But the whole thing is a recipe for a major disaster.

If, as you said earlier, radio is a quarter-by-quarter business, if companies can't increase the top-line enough to benefit stockholders, they seem to have no choice but to cut costs. It would seem that makes it tough to do the right things.
Companies must fix the top-line, or say, "sayonara" and get out. This is a revenue-driven business, and you have to be in touch with your local customers. When I was at Citadel, we were in middle markets and 85% of our business was local. We didn't depend on national, which was just a commodities buy. But you go out and see a car dealer who's hurting, and say, "Well, what if we do this? What if we have this promotion? What if we put on a concert and everybody that takes a test drive gets tickets?" Nobody does that anymore. It's just a commodity sale today. And, if you can't fix the top-line, then this is a horrible business. I think it can be fixed, although it might be too late because these companies are so in debt, and so hampered by their capital structures. And that's very sad.

I might go out on a limb and suggest that private equity companies aren't really interested in running radio stations. They're probably more interested in cutting costs to the bone and at some point taking them public again for a big payday or selling them….
They *should* sell them! I think taking them public again is a thing of the past. It's never going to happen. I don't think in my lifetime the public will ever come back to saying, "I want to buy a share of a radio company." So, the only way to fix them is to fix the top-line. But the business plan has to be different than it was back when I did it. It's got to embrace the Internet and marry it to radio.

At some point, you can't cut costs any more. We seem to be in the perfect storm: Companies have all this debt and they've already fired so many people, there's not much else left to cut and still put a product on the air. Is the end game, at some point, that they're going to have to sell assets, which nobody really seems to have done?
That's what is going to have to happen. But the reason they haven't done it is they won't come to reality with what somebody can pay for these things. CBS made a big effort to sell a bunch of stuff. I was really in pursuit, but they wanted 10-11 times cash flow.

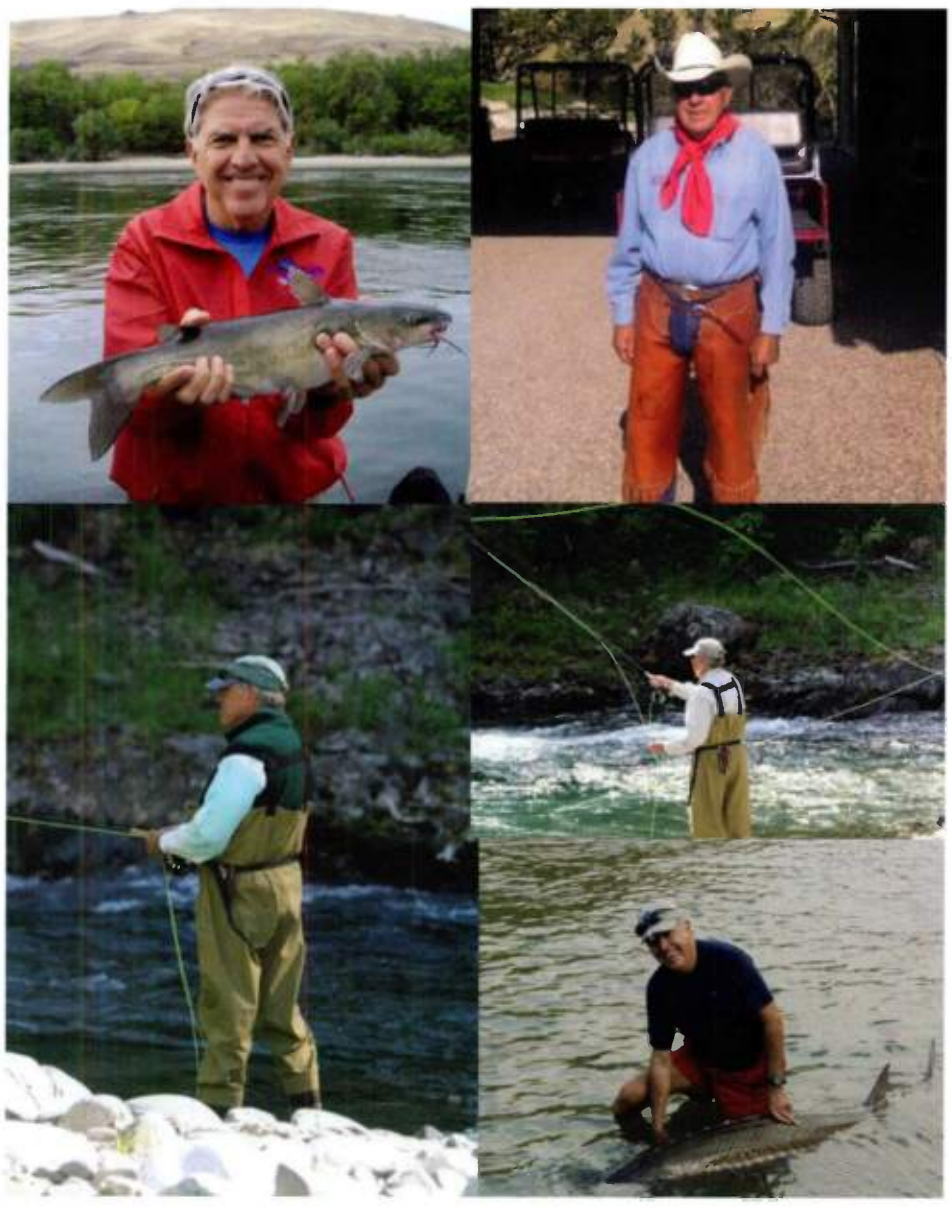
You were looking to get back in the game?
Yeah, I had a group of great investors, including some of my old partners, seriously looking at some stuff. But at 10-11 times cash flow, we could not possibly finance the deal. There was no way to put it together for the price CBS wanted.

The end game for some of them, not all, is that there are going to be some bankruptcies. Many of these companies have *huge* debt. And, in this economic environment, if they can't refinance, and they trip a covenant or two, they will go into bankruptcy. And that means whoever owns the debt will own the company. I don't know if that's good or bad, but I think that's what's almost inevitable.

Do you see a time when broadcasters who sold their companies would get back in the game?
That might happen. But the trouble is, it's been away from real broadcasting for so long and many of us are so old, I don't know who's going to be doing it [laughs]. But there's also a lot of young talent out there that might get an opportunity to go in and buy a couple of markets like the old days. If I had three or four markets right now, I have no doubt about how we can grow revenue.

> "OVER-THE-AIR RADIO IS A MONSTER INFLUENCE ON PEOPLE, AND IT DOES A HELL OF A SERVICE TO AMERICA. BUT NOT LIKE IT IS."

> PERHAPS THEY SHOULD HAVE HAD SOME CONCOMITANT REGULATIONS ALONG WITH OWNERSHIP CHANGES THAT SAID YOU MUST STAY LOCAL AND INVOLVED IN YOUR COMMUNITY.



How would you grow revenue?
It'd be *totally* local. We always felt that national money comes in over the transom and you don't have much control over it. But local, you get in your car and you go out and see the car dealer. Or you go out and see the bank president. Or you go out and see the guy who's running the theaters. And you *sell*. Like in the old days, it's salesmanship.

Even when I headed Citadel as a public company, I used to talk to Wall Street people about how important it was to be connected locally, how critical it was we went out and saw our customers. That was back in the '90s. They would look at me with a glazed-over look, like, "Why? Why would you do that?" And, that's what went wrong, nobody's doing that.

Part of the problem today is that the employees are so upset that they're frozen. They don't ever get any encouragement. The only calls they get are to say, "We need you to cut another $500,000 out of your budget." No one calls to say "Way to go! You got that new deal." I was once flying from New York to Las Vegas, and I got a call that we'd had our first $4 million month in Albuquerque. I diverted the plane to Albuquerque, called the station and said, "Get some pizzas in because we're going to have a party for lunch. And I'm going to tell everybody, 'Thank you.'" That is just gone from the business.

Given the economic climate, do broadcast companies have any choice but to operate the way they are, with one market manager for five stations, one PD over two or three or four, and voice-tracking?
Well, when I was looking at getting back in, I was totally convinced – and remain totally convinced – that they *do* have a choice. But it's about spending money to make money. If you want to completely give up and go the national programming route, as it looks like some companies are going to do judging by the number of people they're laying off, then you're going to sound just like satellite radio. Companies have a choice, but they and their investors must have the chutzpah to say, "We've got to reinvest in the product."

We used to be able to get on the air and make people laugh, go into the office and talk about us all day. And they'd tune us in on their radio in the office.

But you can't fire your morning team and pipe in a syndicated program for most of the day and still be heavily involved in your community. It takes a leap of faith to go back to live and local. I know, because I talked to some potential investors about it. But if you don't do that, if you can't do that, then don't get into the business, because the national thing will not work. And if I'm wrong, I'm wrong. But if I were a gambling man, I'd bet the ranch it won't work. I recognize that [private equity companies] have a lot of smart people and everything, but they don't have a clue about radio. Radio companies used to spend a lot of time searching for talent, developing talent and training salespeople. That stuff got cut a long time ago as some owners began to view it as just a "frivolous expense."

Isn't there also the little matter that comes with the license of serving the public interest?
Very few radio stations are serving the public interest the way they should. And that's wrong because these over-the-air licenses are still very precious, and they ought to come with responsibility. Over the last 15-16 years, we got so deregulation-oriented that nobody paid attention to what radio is needing to do. I hate to say this, but businesspeople need regulation because if they aren't regulated, they will abuse the system. Look at Lehman Brothers, AIG, Merrill Lynch, etc. and the atrocities that have happened. And everybody was saying, "Deregulate, deregulate. Take down the walls, and let people own these many radio stations and these many TV stations." It doesn't work. It's a self-destructing thing.

Serving the public interest has gone by the wayside. I fault the government for not paying attention to it. They just paid lip service to it and they let it go away, thinking that deregulation was just going to be wonderful. It didn't work. It worked great for *me*. I got out at the ultimate and perfect time, and it was wonderful. We built a great company we couldn't have had without deregulation. But it's totally self-destructing.

The Telecom Act of '96 set in motion many of the things the industry is dealing with today in terms of ownership and operation. In hindsight, was deregulation a bad thing or was it a good thing that was badly handled?
It was a good thing that was handled badly. Deregulation was a good thing that might have been better had it been regulated to say, "You can own more than two stations in a market, but you've still got to serve your community as broadcasters have been doing."

Perhaps they should have had some concomitant regulations along with ownership changes that said you must stay local and involved in your community, and that there must be a forum for public interest groups.

One of the things that consolidation was supposed to do was move that sales needle, to increase radio's share of the total advertising revenue pie. Why didn't that happen?
Station ownership was ramping up and showing great revenue growth right up until 2001. We were indeed increasing radio's share as newspapers, even back then, were struggling and falling apart. We were increasing share, and then the Internet came along and started making inroads in getting some of those dollars. We were slow in figuring out how to marry Internet and radio. Nobody's really figured it out to this day, but there's a way to make some progress on that.

But 9/11 was about as bad as it gets. It destroyed our confidence in a lot of things. For me personally, I don't think the Internet is as effective in delivering a message as radio is. It's getting a lot of dollars it shouldn't be because, in my experience on it, Internet advertising is a total nuisance. And it's invasive. Maybe I'm a dinosaur, but I just don't think the Internet advertising vehicle is all that's it's cracked up to be. We'll see; time will tell. But I really hope the radio business recovers and thrives, because over-the-air radio is a monster influence on people, and it does a hell of a service to America. But not like it is. CAC

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Country's Down Fall Book

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Sessions, Showcases, The Bridge Bar & Our Custom Door Hanger

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CBS RADIO'S

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COUNTRY AIRCHECK

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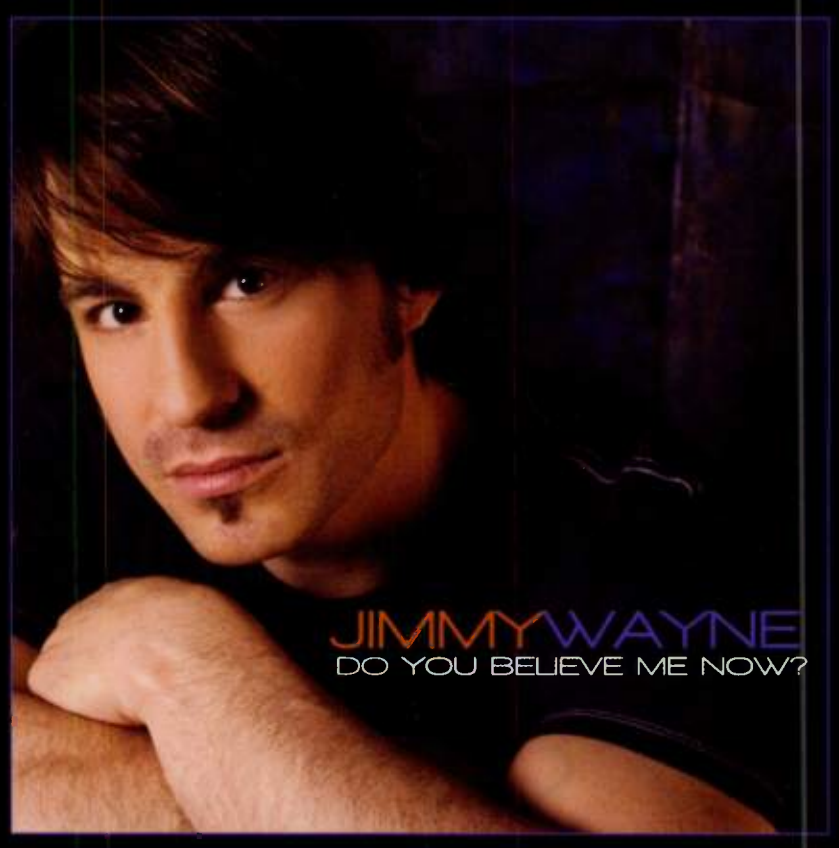

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CRS SURVIVAL GUIDE

Our Seminar Pros Answer Eight Big Questions

Maybe it's your first time at the biggest annual event for Country radio and the Nashville music biz. Or maybe you're a regular but somehow have trouble remembering key points through the haze of sleep deprivation and other self-inflicted impairments you endure each year. Either way, our panel of seasoned seminar experts is here to light your path through CRS-39.

1 What's this Bridge Bar I keep hearing about?

Mike Peterson

Mike Peterson, WUSN/Chicago PD: It's two things, depending who you are: A can't-get-a-drink cramp-fest full of shallow eye contact, meaningless hugs, and obnoxious yelling in an attempt to hold very forgettable conversations. Or, the world's most power networking vacuum that sucks in an amazing variety of socialites from every corner of the music and radio industry.

Charlie Monk: The temporary office of freelance executives and ex-promotion people who no longer have expense accounts. Ask, "Who's paying?"

JoJamie Hahr, Valory SE rep: A magical place high in the sky at the Renaissance where odd friendships are born, really bad records are added, and time stands still. Prepare for the magic by drinking heavily every day leading up to CRS, starting now.

Josh Brandon, WOWF/Crossville, TN PD: I got to meet Montgomery Gentry, Toby Keith, Gary LeVox and many more big artists just because I was hanging out there. Those are experiences you share with your listeners (leaving out the throwing-up-your-pancreas part of the story when telling it on air).

Annie Sandor, WKIS/Miami Dir./Mktg. & Promo: Dress is business casual, but "dress to impress" is a good rule of thumb. You should take a minimum of two weeks to get prepped. Light calisthenics and high reps with light weights should do the trick. I also suggest vitamin C. Lots of vitamin C.

Scott Lindy, Sirius Dir./Country Programming: It's where you meet people who will become lifelong friends and business associates. Plan to make a sweep before you head to dinner, when you get back from dinner and later at night. Tip: If Jimmy Rector tries to get you to ride the "School Bus" at the Bridge Bar, take him up on it. Once. If he offers a second ride, back away slowly.

Teddi Bonadies, Universal South VPP: It's a must-see experience, at least once in your life. Look for [Universal South Southwest rep] Allen Mitchell.

Keith Kaufman

Keith Kaufman, WSIX/Nashville PD: I'm not really familiar with it, but if I were I'd tell you to make friends with Brad the bartender. Ask him nicely to keep an eye on you because Brad, better than anyone, can tell when you've hit the magical point. That's how I'd plan for it if I were familiar with the place.

Christy Wilson, Premiere-Big D & Bubba Mgr./Affiliate Mtkg: It is a bridge – a bridge between you and your company, your career and your future. Plan very carefully and watch the business deals you make under the bridge, I mean, under the influence of the bridge.

Royce Risser, UMGN SVPP: All bets are off. The Bridge Bar has been renovated and looks a bit more New York than it's previous existence. So I would plan on wearing a suit for sure; like you just left work as a NYC attorney. Be very, very professional.

BRAD THE BARTENDER: "Keith Kaufman? Never heard of him."

Peterson: A cheeseburger at Browns. It's good, and a surefire cure for a hangover, according to one unnamed MD at WUSN.

Kaufman: White Castle, 2:30am. Cab it over and order from the back seat. No better way to network than walking back in to the Bridge Bar with a forty-bagger.

Lindy: Go to Brown's Diner. Get a double cheeseburger and a glass of milk so cold it almost freezes your hand. Then get to the gym.

Wilson: Loveless Cafe is wonderful. You will have to drive 30 miles and you will gain at least 100 pounds.

Risser: Morton's. Beautiful exhibit of John Crenshaw in his natural environment.

John Paul, KUPL/Portland PD: Hermitage Café. It's awesome. Just wash your hands after you leave.

2 What should I eat while I'm in Nashville?

Brandon: The Loveless. Period. Bobby Flay beat them on his Biscuit Throwdown on Food Network, but I think that's bogus. I have never once in my life put a better biscuit in my mouth.

Josh Brandon

Christie Matthews, KDXY/Jonesboro, AR PD: The Palm! It's like one giant meet-and-greet. Sit at the booth next to the restroom; you never know who you'll see.

Monk: Eat anything you want at the Pie Wagon because you can afford it.

Mike's Expert Eats

Montage's Mike Wilson gave us a tour of some of Nashville's best eats last summer, and we asked him to give it another go, with one caveat: We requested establishments that are walking distance from the Convention Center. He complied, for the most part.

Broadway Brewhouse (317 B'way): "Great wings I like to order naked with hot sauce on the side. The gumbo is great and they have more than 100 beers on tap."

Piranhas Bar & Grill (113 2nd Ave. N.): "They've got great Pittsburgh-style sandwiches. You can get a Philly cheese steak with the fries already on it, or one of their good chili-cheese dogs."

Rippy's (429 B'way): "The first of two barbecue places that is in walking distance. I love their slab of ribs."

Jack's Bar-b-Que (416 Broadway): "I always get the brisket sandwich and baked beans."

Monell's (1235 6th Ave. N.): "For a short cab ride, the original Monell's offers home cooking served family style. Spin the lazy susan and pass to the left. Great fried chicken and green beans."

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CRS SURVIVAL GUIDE

3 What's the secret to picking must-see sessions?

Christie Matthews

Matthews: I try to find a panel that fits a particular need I have as a programmer, or a panel that focuses on an area where I think my station could improve. CRS is not just a place to party, it's a great place to hear and learn from the best in our business. The Q&A session at the end of panels have helped me tremendously over the years.

Paul: Follow the guy who's in the hallway talking really loud about his research and radio philosophies. He's probably scoped out the best sessions.

Heidi Heinz, WQYK/Tampa Dir./Mktg. & Promo: I love the promotions brainstorming sessions and always leave with ideas I can immediately implement. Some sessions that should be on your list are the PPM and 10 Sales Ideas That Even a PD Would Love. Definitely bring a notepad, because you'll fill it with tons of ideas.

Lindy: Entertaining panels happen every year, but the real value in CRS is the applicable info and education you can take back to your radio station and apply immediately. Identify where you need to grow, what you don't understand and what you'd like to be better at or more informed about, then choose wisely.

Chris Huff, KSCS/Dallas APD/MD: There's no secret. It simply boils down to what interests you. Regardless of which sessions you attend, you're going to come away with new ideas and perspectives.

Kaufman: Bring three people from your station and cover them all. So says the vice-chair of the Agenda Committee.

Wilson: Clone yourself or buy the take-home session CDs. All the sessions are must-see.

Royce Risser

Risser: Corkboard and a dart. Or ask MCA's Joe Putnam. He is our resident expert on the best panels to see.

Brandon: Small Market Superstars is the must attend panel this year. I don't say that only because I'm the guy that put the thing together, but also because this panel is designed to showcase some real winners in small market radio. Is there any question you need to attend this panel after the Clear Channel smackdown covered in the Jan. 28 **Country Aircheck**? Things are only going to get tighter.

Sandor: Step out of your comfort zone. The best panels I've been to in the past have been those that might not be geared for a marketing director specifically.

Hahr: Squeeze into the rooms that have people standing along the walls with no empty chairs, or better yet, with folks fighting their way in. Those are sure signs of a killer panel.

4 How should I divide my day between sessions, music and sleep?

Paul: In this order: Beer. Sessions. Beer. Sessions. Beer. Music. Sessions. Beer. Sleep.

Brandon: First-timers are going to be tempted to hit all the suites and parties. Settle down, turbo. It's like college. You party too much your first semester, you're back home after Christmas slopping tacos. Remember that you can buy CDs of the panels you don't make. I usually go to bed by 2am and am up about 6:30. I can do that for four days.

Peterson: Sleep at CRS is like sleep the first week after having a baby. You may think you can navigate some rest, but it's just not going to happen. Once you take sleep out of the equation it's relatively simple to balance sessions and music.

Kaufman: Go to the sessions. There will still be eight hours to party and seven hours to sleep. It all works out; I've tested it for 10 years. I only got really good at it about two years ago, though.

JoJamie Hahr

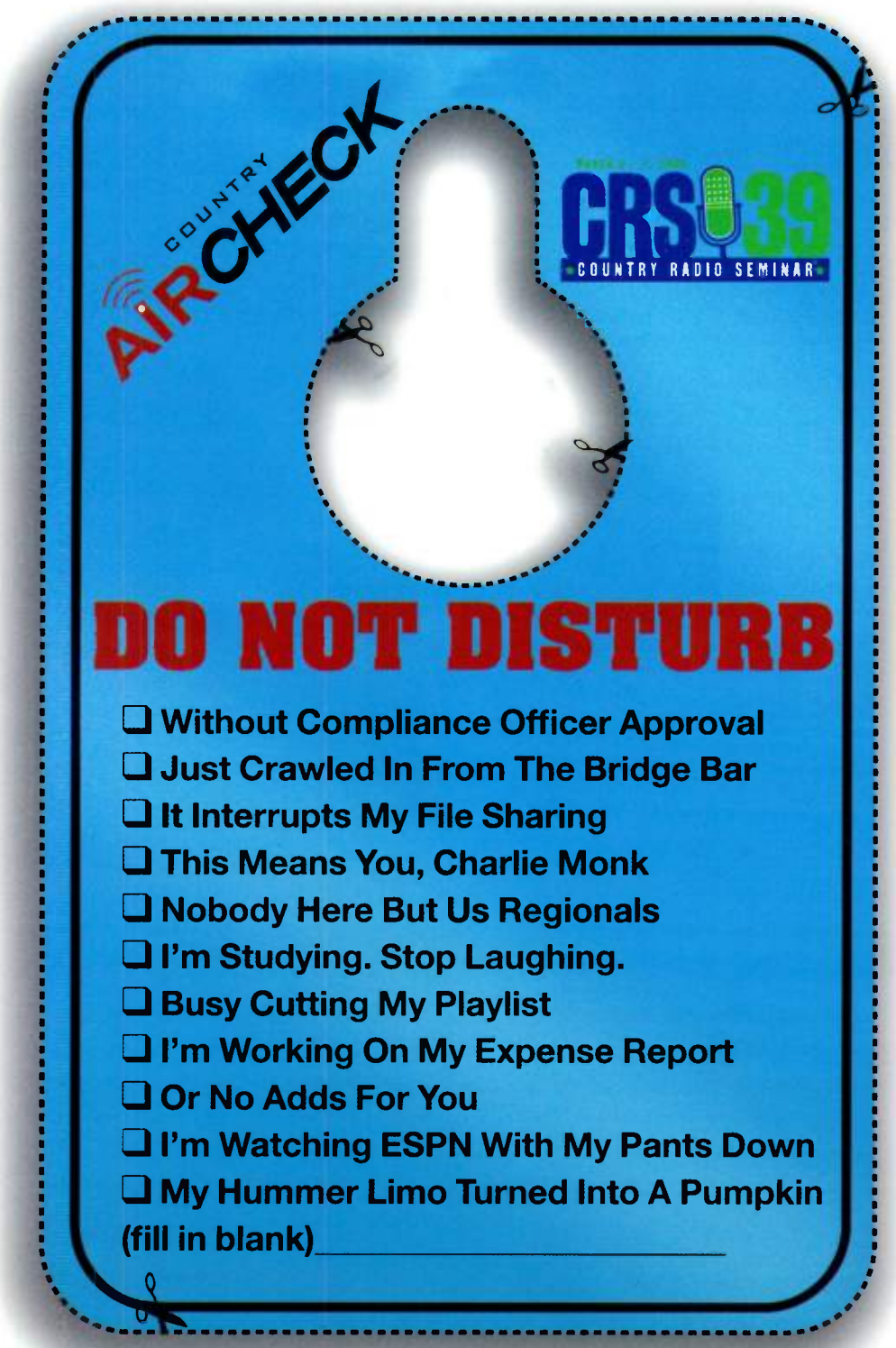
Hahr: See as much as you can, meet everyone you can and hear all the new music that you can. You never know who's the next big thing (like Justin Moore, The Valory Music Company). Don't sleep. None of the cool kids do.

John Paul

Lindy: Man up and get the total experience. You can recover when you get home.

Sandor: You can't. Don't try to. Sugar-Free Red Bull works for me!

Matthews: Sleep? What's that? To be honest, I come back totally exhausted because I don't want to miss a thing. But at the same time, I come back so rejuvenated and fired up about country music and our industry as a whole. CRS is like a big shot of B-12!



5 Where should I visit that's in walking distance of the hotel and why?

Kaufman: Sneak away to the Convention Center. Ask for directions when you check in. There are rooms in there where people share their expertise, thoughts, views and knowledge about a range of topics relating to the Country radio industry. It's actually become a highlight of my week.

Monk: The Schermerhorn Symphony Center so you can ask someone how to pronounce it.

Christy Wilson

Hahr: The Stage, if you can make it down the hill without falling.

Lindy: The Country Music Hall of Fame; they've done a spectacular job. Make a donation while you're there, even if it's a small one. And the Ryman is next door to the Convention Center. Being in the Ryman all by yourself and sitting quietly in one of the pews is a pretty cool experience too. It all happened, and continues to happen, right there.

Paul: The Rite Aid. They sell aspirin. You'll need them.

Heidi Heinz

Wilson: The honky tonks. Yes, I can say that, I'm a Nashville native. Nuuhthin's more fuuuhnnn than sangin' with the stahhrrrs.

Risser: Universal Music Group's new office is less than a block away. If you would like to come by and sign our new Add Board, we would love to have you.

Matthews: The Country Music Hall of Fame and The Ryman Auditorium. Every Country radio professional should be able to say, "I've been there." We have a format that is so rich in history. Being able to say you've stood on the stage of the Ryman and have seen the corn patch from Hee Haw, man, there's nothing else like it!

Heinz: My personal favorite is the Bourbon Street Blues & Boogie Bar in Printer's Alley.

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COUNTRY HQ

CRS SURVIVAL GUIDE

6 Who should I absolutely introduce myself to and why?

Chris Huff

Huff: The inimitable Mayor of Music Row himself, Charlie Monk. You haven't made it in this business until you've found yourself the subject of one of his zings.

Lindy: Charlie Monk. Be sure to compliment him on whatever consignment store clothes he's wearing that day.

Wilson: Christy Wilson with Premiere Radio. Have you *seen* her?!

Risser: Julianne Hough. She hugs almost everyone she meets.

Paul: Introduce yourself immediately to the first bartender who serves you. And by introduce, I mean a $20 bill or better. This will pay off.

Brandon: If you're a programmer, then you *must* make face time with your record rep. It's your one opportunity to "Shake & Howdy."

Teddi Bonadies

Sandor: Me! I'm all about hanging with new people! You should introduce yourself to everyone. CRS is the best place to network. You never know if the guy/girl in the stall next to you could be your next great hire.

Hahr: Scott Borchetta. You'll know why within 30 seconds of meeting him. I did.

Matthews: The first year I came to CRS, my goal was to meet as many movers and shakers as I could. If I saw a PD of a station I admired, I watched for an empty seat next to them and asked questions. Everyone who's anyone in this business comes to CRS. Give lots of cards, ask for cards and follow up when you get back. I have made so many wonderful contacts with lots of influential people in the business this way.

Kaufman: Garth. 'Cause he's the only one who will remember your name.

Bonadies: If female, Allen Mitchell. He is very charming.

Scott Lindy

Lindy: Anyone who looks at you as you're trying to get up off the floor and says, "Ready for another?" Reference Jimmy Rector and the aforementioned school bus.

Risser: Stay away from Julianne Hough...you know who you are, Mac.

Paul: Chris Loss. Especially if he wants to gamble. He's a bad, bad man.

Brandon: Erin Duvall. She has this sweet demeanor about her, then she drinks you under the table and as you're lying there in your own waste, she's standing over you with a high heel in your chest, cackling. It's one of the most embarrassing things that's ever happened to me in the Bridge Bar.

Sandor: Jeff Solima, Jay McCarthy and Jimmy Rector. Those boys *always* find a way to get me in trouble.

Matthews: People who complain about our industry, their position, their boss, and only focus on the negative. Don't get caught up in the doom-and-gloom gripe sessions. Be part of the solution.

7 Who or what should I stay away from and why?

Kaufman: Jeff Solima/Petrone Silver, chilled.

Bonadies: If female, Allen Mitchell. He's very charming.

Charlie Monk

Heinz: Anyone still at the Bridge Bar at or after 4am. But I think that's obvious.

Monk: Two drunk egomaniacal promo guys and one slutty promo gal

8 What should I take back to the spouse/kids?

Monk: If you didn't catch something from the three folks mentioned above, take Goo Goo bars.

Annie Sandor

Kaufman: Petrone Silver. Chilled. From Jeff Solima.

Peterson: Little airplanes and keychains from the Nashville airport have held my kids over. Once, I brought home a Tennessee Volunteers shirt and my daughter said the color of orange gave her a headache. Sorry, Vols fans!

Matthews: There are lots of gift shops on Broadway. Or you could just load up on all of the mini shampoo and conditioner bottles at the hotel.

Bonadies: A record or two from Ernest Tubb Record shop.

Lindy: Walk down to Lower Broadway or Second Ave. From really cool gift to Nashville kitsch, it's all down there in the gift shops. Or pick up a $12,000 12-string from Gruhn's Guitars on Broadway. Who wouldn't love that?

Brandon: Look in your room! Every year it seems I find some neat little goody. One year Brad Paisley signed a small poster from his suite and gave it to me. My 10-year-old is a major Brad fan.

Sandor: Anything left in your mini-bar?

CRS Essentials

Survey says: If you didn't bring it, buy it.

"A ton of business cards, 500 aspirin, an extra $50 tucked into your shoe, Visine (chilled if possible) and some breath mints." –Scott Lindy

"Comfortable shoes & aspirin." –Royce Risser

"Antacids, business cards and a parka. Nashville always gets cold during CRS." –Annie Sandor

"Your camera." –Christie Matthews

"Lyric Street's CRS Survival Kit. Brilliant!" –Keith Kaufman

"A very open mind." –JoJamie Hahr

"Tylenol & Airborne." –Teddi Bonadies

"Your camera, cold and headache medicine and a good heavy coat for nights you walk downtown." –Christie Matthews

"Audio recording apparatus. I have a recurring dream I'm standing in line for ARTS and have left my MiniDisc recorder at home. Cold sweats. Also, a digital camera, just remember no pictures or autographs at ARTS. And bring pens and a notepad to the panels. The most important thing of all is business cards." –Josh Brandon

"Your Bible. You'll probably need it." – John Paul

COUNTRY AIRCHECK

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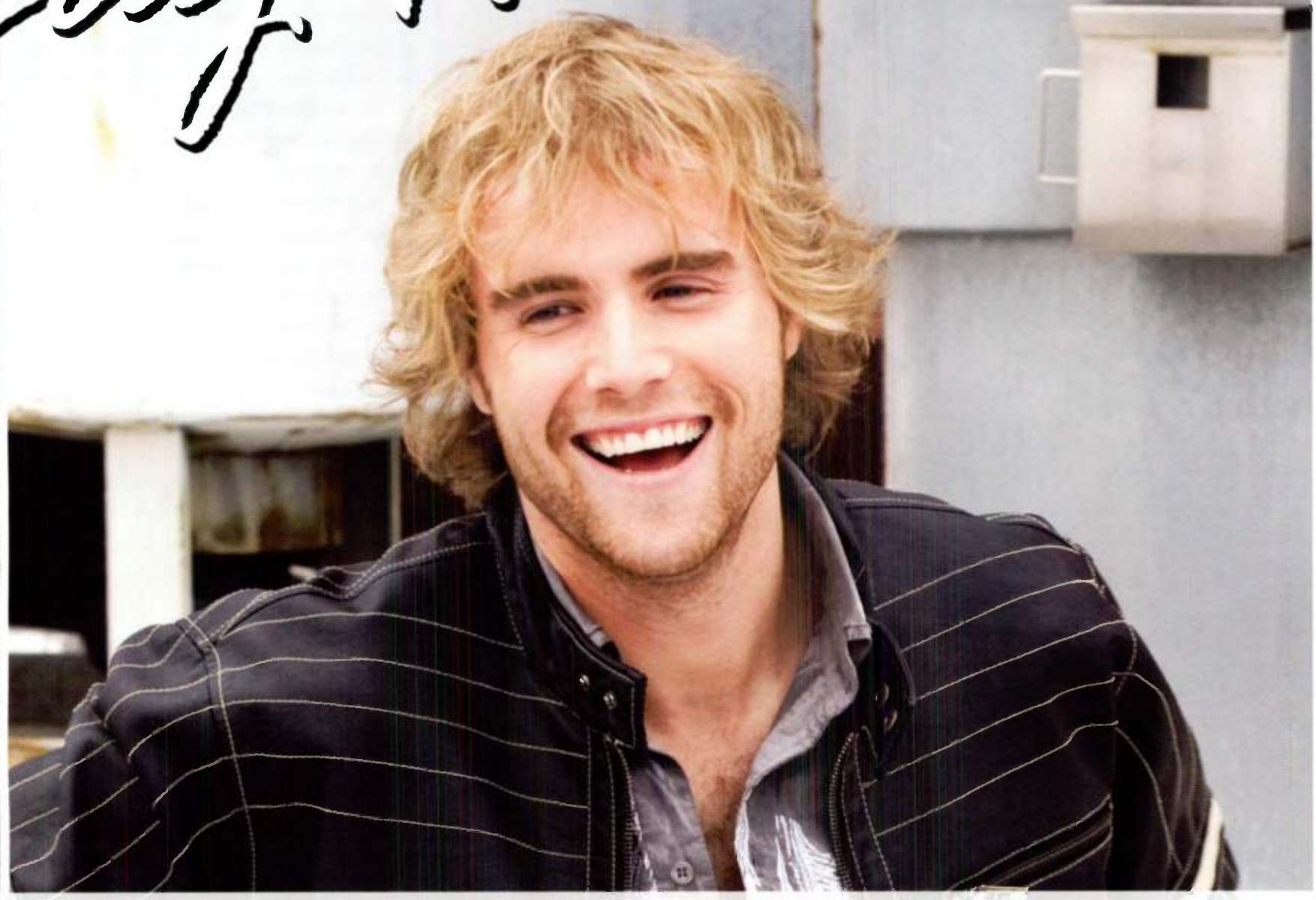

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WIRK-FM West Palm Beach	5.6	to	8.7	↑ 55%
KSON-FM San Diego	4.8	to	5.9	↑ 23%
KPLX-FM Dallas	2.6	to	4.7	↑ 81%
KFRG-FM Riverside/ San Bernardino	3.4	to	3.9	↑ 15%
WUSN-FM Chicago	2.2	to	3.8	↑ 73%

Source: Arbitron Metro, AQH Share, P25-54, SU 07 & FA 07, actual times.

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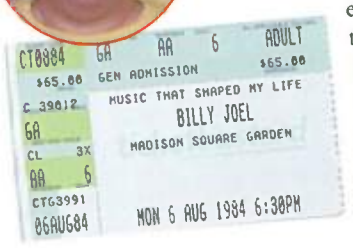
MY TUNES

Music That Shaped My Life

Radio and music industry pros discuss five of their most meaningful songs, albums or concerts. Look for this recurring feature in the next Country Aircheck Weekly.

Steve Giuttari, PD, WCTK/ Providence

1. Billy Joel, Madison Square Garden, 1984: He did six shows if memory serves, and I saw four. I was working at Z100 and covered three of them. "Piano Man" really shaped my life – lyrics that stood out and told a story.



2. Bruce Springsteen, Meadowlands, 1985: Having grown up on the Jersey Shore, it was all about The Boss. Driving down Highway Nine, "Born To Run" blasting on the radio. You could sit on the beach and hear Bruce coming out of every boom box from Belmar to Asbury Park. Seeing him in concert was a life-changing experience. The audience revered Bruce.

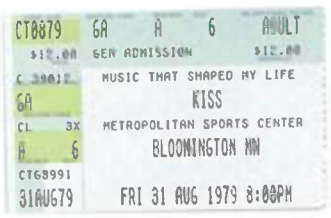
3. Jacksons Victory Tour, Meadowlands, 1984: I was working at Z100, which give away about 100 pairs of tickets to the concert. My job on the day of the show was to be in a hotel suite at the Meadowlands Hilton as listeners came to get their tickets. As a reward, my boss Scott Shannon gave me a pair of second-row seats. I was two rows away from Michael Jackson doing the Moon Walk when it was still semi-hip. That show was *the* event of the year.

4. George Strait Festival, Houston, 1998: Having started in Country radio in 1992, Id seen a few shows, but nothing like this. The lineup was incredible. Dixie Chicks, Kenny Chesney, Tim McGraw and George Strait, with more than 60,000 fans in the seats. When George came out it was like a space shuttle took off. The crowd went nuts! To this day I've never witnessed a concert where someone basically stood in the same spot for most of the show and drew that kind of ovation.

5. Garth Brooks, Houston, 1998: I'd just gotten to KKBQ and my first concert was five nights of Garth at the Summit. All five were sold out – 80,000 fans. And all five shows were incredible. Ask any radio programmer and they'll tell you who does the best meet-and-greet.

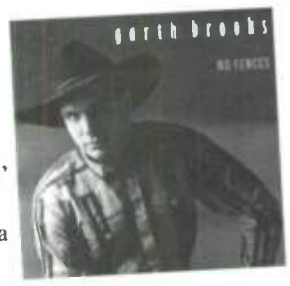
Tom Baldrica VP/Marketing Sony BMG

1. KISS, Bloomington, MN, 1979: Music, showmanship, spectacle, exhilaration, excitement, energy and friends – it was as if the whole world converged in the Metropolitan Sports Center that night. When the lights went down and the band came up out of the speaker cabinets, the energy level in the building took me to a place I'd never been – a place I have searched for ever since.



2. Styx *The Grand Illusion*: The first album I ever owned that felt like it was written just for me. "Come Sail Away" still sends a shiver up my spine. The lyrics have even more meaning now than ever.

3. Leader Of The Band/Dan Fogelberg: My father was a band director and this song just hit home hard. A life lesson learned early – tell the people in your life you love them every chance you get so there are no regrets when they pass. Even more poignant with Mr. Fogelberg's recent passing. I have a wonderful relationship with my dad and I am indeed "the living legacy of the leader of the band."



4. Friends In Low Places/ Garth Brooks: I was still working at "Alive & Kickin' Country K100" in northern Minnesota and will never forget the first time I played it. I flipped out! I knew this was the song that would come to define the attitude of my radio station and of a format. And, yes, I took it right from the production studio to the control room and put it on the air.

5. Kenny Chesney, West Palm Beach, 2002: It was his first night as a headliner! When the lights went down and Kenny came out on stage, the energy level and the emotions – not just of the sold-out crowd but of the BNA promotion staff – took me to my highest musical point ever. My friend had just entered the big time, and a record executive felt an overwhelming sense of pride and accomplishment.

A highly regarded song or album I've never heard: I have never listened to *Will The Circle Be Unbroken* in its entirety. I have heard a few tracks and they are quality works, but I guess the analogy would be "the preview didn't intrigue me enough to see the movie."

Bob Moody, Regent VP/Programming

1. She Loves You/The Beatles: In 2:19 my life changed forever.

2. Do The Freddie/Freddie & The Dreamers: As odd as it may seem, this was the song playing when I met my wife, Karen. Any woman who knew how to dance "The Freddie" was woman enough for me.

3. She Even Woke Me Up To Say Goodbye/ Jerry Lee Lewis: It made me realize that some of the world's best songwriters – Mickey Newbury, in this case – were writing country songs.

4. Amazing Grace/Lisa Brokop: When she sang this a capella on the 1995 New Faces Show – and again in the music library at WPOC – it gave me chills. It still does.

5. Runrig and Capercaillie: Two contemporary Celtic bands that sing primarily in Scots Gaelic. Even though I don't understand most of the words, their music takes me to my favorite place on Earth – the Highlands and islands of Scotland.

A highly regarded song or album I've never heard: *Fiddler On The Roof.* Once I found out that it wasn't about Mark O'Connor, I lost interest.

An "important" piece of music I just don't get: I wish I could like Robert Earl Keen's music. People whose opinions I respect tell me he's great, but I just don't get it.

John Sebastian, Veteran Programmer

1. Nights in White Satin/Moody Blues: The most extraordinary leap in musicality and lyric content I've witnessed.

2. Kashmir/Led Zeppelin: One of the most haunting pieces of music ever.

3. On a Bus to St. Cloud Trisha Yearwood : Her greatest vocal performance and she's had a lot of them. And the message of the song resonates in a huge way.

4. Please Come To Boston/Dave Loggins: It's practically the story of my life/career.

5. Bruce Springsteen Live at The Roxy, L.A.: This was when he first came out. He played for about a hundred of us for more than four hours. He played everything you can imagine and mesmerized us.

A highly regarded song or album I've never heard: None.

An "important" piece of music I just don't get: None.

Jimmy Harnen SVP/Promotion, Capitol

1. Imagine/John Lennon: Such a spiritual song. I actually had the opportunity to play the piano Lennon cut the track on at the Record Plant in New York. I was almost afraid to sit down and touch the keys.

2. Cheap Trick *Live At Budokan:* Tenth-grade album of the year! I remember standing in line at Joe Nardone's Gallery of Sound to get tickets for their Dream Police Tour with my Cheap Trick/Cheap Trick/Cheap Trick shirt on.

3 (tie). I Walk the Line/Johnny Cash: My mom and dad listened to a lot of great country music. Watching Johnny Cash on TV and seeing him turn around to the camera and say, "Hello, I'm Johnny Cash," then play this song...I sat there as a kid, jaw dropped and eyes wide open. He was and still is a such a rock star!

3. (tie) Behind Closed Doors/Charlie Rich: What a freaking great song. One of the best hooks ever written. The intro piano figure still kills me.

4. U2 *War:* "Sunday Bloody Sunday," the live video shot at Red Rocks with Bono planting the flag at the front of the stage. New Year's Day! Early MTV! I would skip class in college to go to the Union Center because that was the only place I could watch MTV in 1982-83.

5. Fool In The Rain/Led Zeppelin & Rosanna/Toto: Growing up playing the drums all I remember was trying to figure out how to play these two shuffles. Bonzo and Porcaro – Two of the very best to ever hit the skins.

A highly regarded song or album I've never heard: *Velvet Underground & Nico.* Not sure why...but I am going to buy it tonight!

An "important" piece of music I just don't get: I don't think any music is overrated. It's all great to someone. CAC

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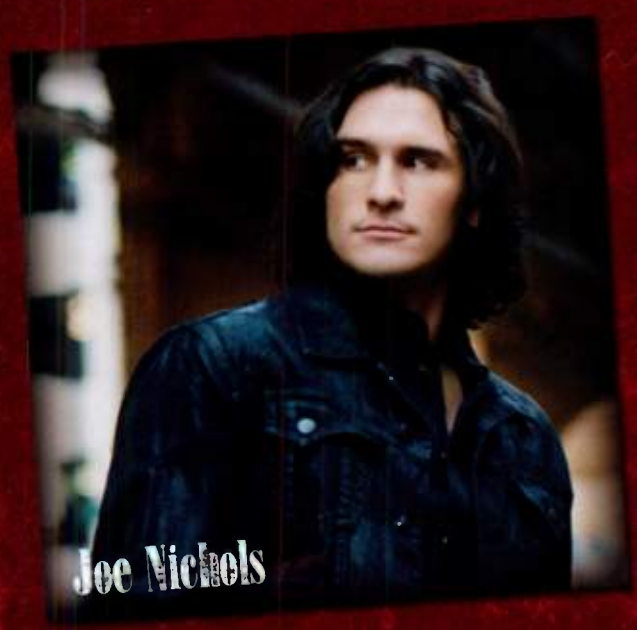
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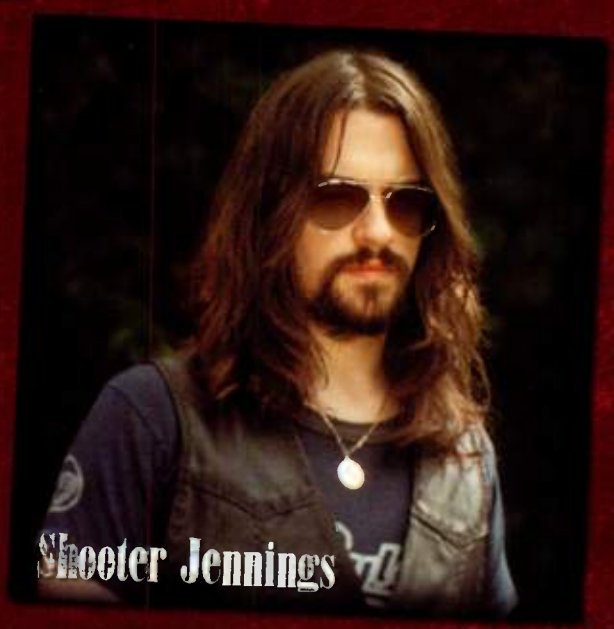
Jennifer Hanson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& Jennifer Hanson
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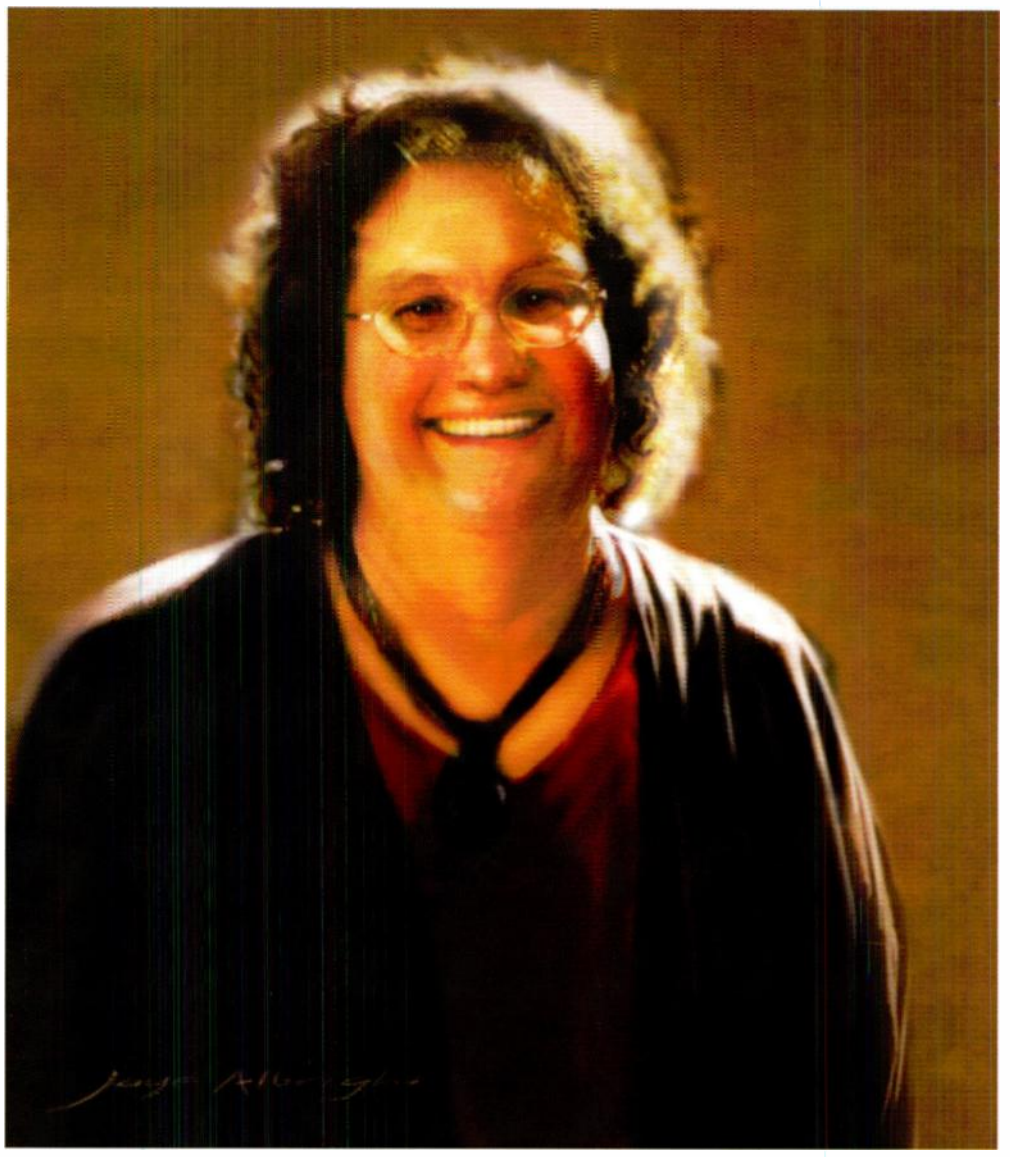
3/6 at 4:10PM

Country Music DJ AND RADIO HALL OF FAME

JAYE ALBRIGHT

Success Never Rests

With childhood DJ heroes like Cottonseed Clark, Johnny Kay and Hugh Downs, Jaye Albright's love for radio stretches back almost as far as she can remember. A perpetual student of the game, Albright parlayed her passion into prominence – first as a personality, then as a programmer and finally as one of America's pre-eminent consultants. Jaye's earned numerous awards and deserves credit for countless success stories. Her decision to pursue gender reassignment a decade ago was met with widespread industry support, and she is regarded as one of the top minds and mentors in radio.



I always wanted to be a disc jockey. Our local radio/TV repairman filed a license for an FM before anybody listened to it and built a station in my hometown of Salem, Ohio. The night guy made a deal that if I babysat for his kids, he'd let me run the board, cue up records and segue them. At 12, I built a phono-oscillator transmitter in our garage, got two Silvertone turntables from Allied Radio, bought microphones and equipment and ran a little radio station that broadcast around the neighborhood playing Top 40 music in the '50s. All the kids worked for me and were my staff. I'm sure there are kids today playing with the Internet in just the same way we did with radio at the time.

During the Vietnam War, I was in the Air Force working at Armed Forces Network in Thailand. When you get out of the service, they give you enough money to go back where you enlisted. For me that was Cleveland, but I was discharged in San Francisco. I got $800, and I thought, "I could use this money to drive back to Ohio or I could stay out here and spend $800!" So I worked in Berkeley, then Anaheim, Las Vegas and then got my first PD job at KHOS/Tucson. It was my first experience in Country and I loved it.

"Good, better, best. Never let it rest. When your good is better, make your better best." That's what my mother would say to me when I was young. It's that good old Midwestern work ethic, and I love to put everything I've got into what I'm doing. I don't know that I've ever been one to compete to beat somebody or to win; that's not what it's about for me. In radio, no one dies. The only one who either wins or loses is the listener, so it's my kind of competition. Because the better we all are, the better radio does.

> "CONSULTING IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO DO A LOT OF TEACHING AND MENTORING, AND IT'S WONDERFUL."

It All Runs In Cycles: KHOS/Tucson's Dan Gates and Jay Albright, KNIX PD Larry Daniels and morning personality W. Steven Martin (l-r) put the pedal to the metal as they near the Phoenix Zoo finish line after biking to kick off the American Cancer Society annual fund drive across Arizona.

Soldier On: Witnessed by WCUE/Akron Traffic Reporter Chick Watkins (in chopper), here's Albright (l) in 1965 enlisting in the U.S. Air Force to join American Forces Thailand Network for two tours in Southeast Asia as an air personality, member of the Network's news department and ultimately unit historian.

I owe my opportunity to be a consultant to Larry Daniels, who was our National PD when I was PD and doing mornings at KUZZ/Bakersfield. Later, while I was programming KEEN/San Jose, Drake-Chenault was looking to hire a consultant in Los Angeles and was recruiting Larry really hard. But Larry mentioned my name as someone they should talk to, and I got the job. I stayed late every night, reading the files and letters to clients and market analyses by all these great people that had been in the company over the years, and I learned a lot. I don't know that I ever chose to be a consultant, but once I started doing it I loved it. In college I was planning to be an English teacher as a backup plan, and there was a part of me that wanted to be a teacher even when I was going into radio. Consulting is an opportunity to do a lot of teaching and mentoring, and it's wonderful. I've always found that in sharing information, it flows back and you learn more than what you gave away. It's a little bit like love in that sense.

My dad was paymaster and treasurer for a manufacturing company in Salem, and was an impressive, organized numbers guy – very much a student of life. When he was 39, he suffered a stroke that pretty much left him paralyzed and bedridden. But he worked his butt off trying hard to regain his faculties as much as he could. He was one of those people who'd say, "I know what is needed to recover from one of these, and I'm going to work hard and do it." That incredible self-discipline – having to do a lot of physical and mental rehabilitation and relearn a lot of things – had a big impact on me.

One of my favorite turnaround clients was WBOB/Minneapolis, where we used the phrase, "Turn your knob to Bob." The station was named after the PD, Bob Wood, who is a crazy, unconventional programmer. When we were first getting ready to sign on, "BOB" wasn't going to have a great signal, but we decided not to wait until it was a full Class C and went with Country before someone else could. So Bob started an "aluminum drive," telling listeners, "We don't have a lot of money because we're a brand-new station. We're working really hard to improve our tower, and we need everybody to donate aluminum to help us to make it more powerful." People donated a lot of aluminum, and the culmination was to turn on the high power and say, "Listen *now*, because you've made us even stronger and better. Thanks for your help!"

When I was PD at KMPS/Seattle in the early '80s, one of my dearest friends, Lee Rogers [now a client at KUPL/Portland], was PD at crosstown Country KRPM. These were the days before monitored playlists, and Lee used to go through our trash at night at KMPS to try to find our music logs. Of course, I never let that stuff get to me, but I admit that we would occasionally put things in there, so if he was reacting to what he found in our dumpster, he was probably reacting to the wrong music.

Between Tucson and Bakersfield in the mid-'70s, I actually went to the University of Arizona as a woman for a semester and was considering sex-change surgery then. On one hand I regret that I didn't go ahead, but I got scared then because those were different times. I couldn't find a job and finally gave up, and that's when I went back. Just a week later I got hired at KUZZ, so it was sort of like God telling me, "You *could* do that if you want, or here's this really great job for you." So life kept kind of telling me, "You want to be normal, you want to be like everyone else."

You're not born with a card that tells you "Here's your identity." That's what life's about – we figure it out. It took 30 or 40 years of struggling with it and thinking about how I knew I wasn't like everyone else, but wanted to be like everyone else. Maybe I worked extra hard because there was this element of shame inside that if anybody found out what was going on inside my head it could ruin me. [Finally making the change] empowered me a lot.

Going into the Hall of Fame, I start thinking about all the people who have impacted me and whose shoulders I'm standing on. Maybe because Country wasn't as big a format when they were in the business, there was no such thing like this for them. But all these people live on in my memory, and I hope they're in a Hall of Fame somewhere because they sure are in mine. CAC

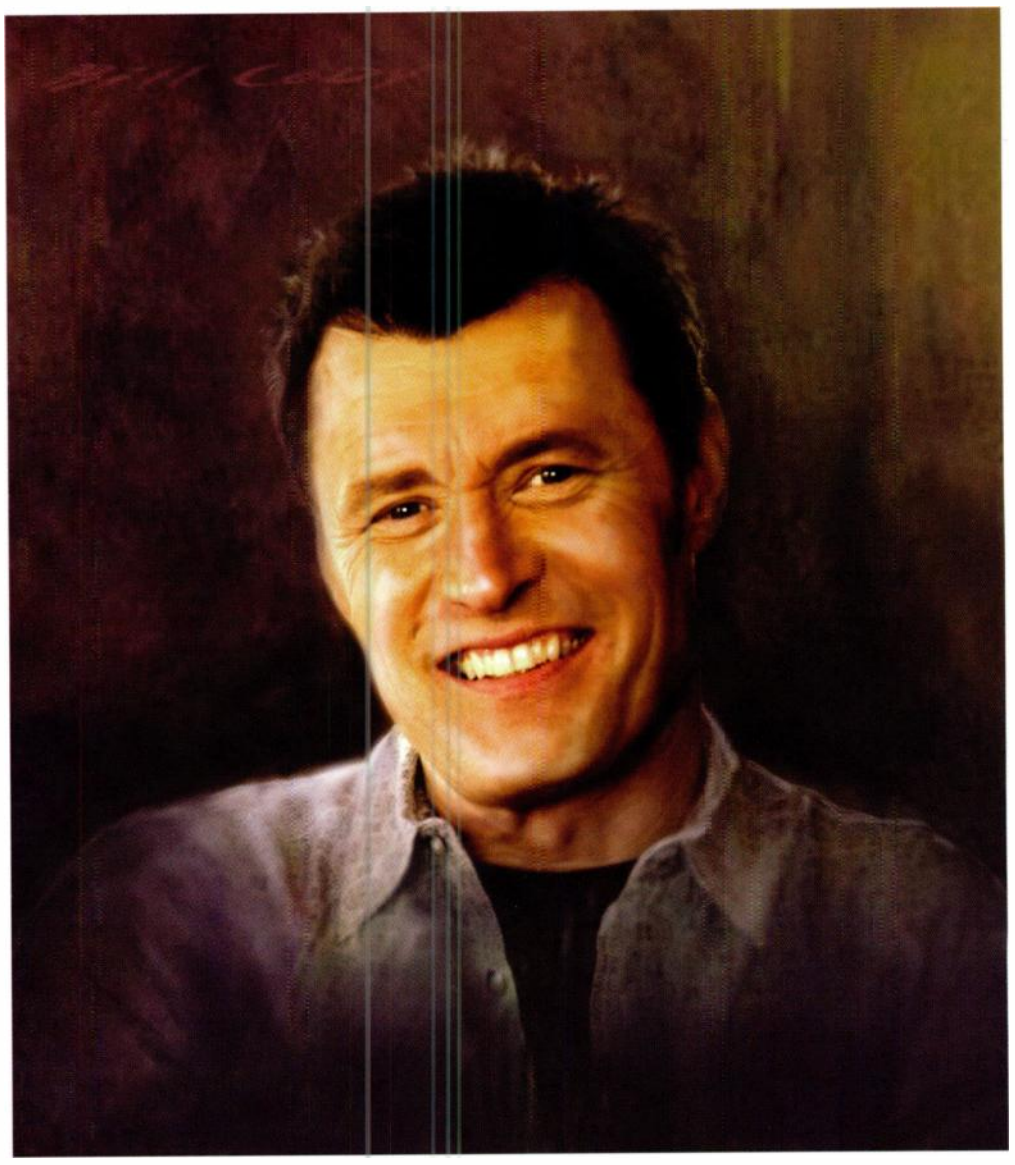
Country Music DJ AND RADIO HALL OF FAME

BILL CODY

Of the People, For The People

If ever someone was destined to work at WSM, it's Bill Cody. From his rural upbringing in Kentucky towns like Gravel Switch, Crab Orchard, Junction City and Lebanon, Cody carries early memories of listening to 650 AM in his dad's car. Exposed to local townspeople at their highest and lowest through his father's duties as a Southern Baptist pastor, Cody has remained close to his roots, keeping connected with common folks from all walks of life.

After marrying his high school sweetheart, Cody working his way up through WVLK/Lexington, WHAS and WCII in Louisville, WHOO/Orlando and had a strong run at KKYX/San Antonio. In 1993 – coincidentally on his birthday – Cody received word that his dream gig – mornings at WSM – had become available. Not only did he get the job, he's parlayed his talent into the GAC Classic TV show, the syndicated Classic Country Weekend, voiceovers and much more. One of Country radio's great storytellers, Cody still lives out in the country and, in a nod to his namesake and love of the West, might one day fulfill a fantasy of raising a few bison.



My dad took me to our local 1-kw daytimer, WLBN/Lebanon, KY, when I was 12. The station rebroadcast his 11am Sunday sermons at 1pm, and Dad was dropping off a record of a friend to Frank Kemp, the PD. I looked through that glass into the control room, and there was Frank, whom I listened to and who would teach me so much. He played the record, and just watching him I knew I had to do that. So I started hanging out, typing labels, anything I could to be around and soak it up. After Frank would sign off the station, he'd show me how to cue things up and work the mic.

A few weeks later, I got a call at school. Frank was sick and needed somebody to fill in at 4:30. We got there and Wanda Jackson's version of "We'll Sing In The Sunshine" was to be my first song. I cued up the track from the album, did my introduction, fired the record … and started Wanda off at 45 RPM! It just goes to show you can make it into the Country Music Disc Jockey Hall of Fame even with the inauspicious beginning of starting your first record at the wrong speed.

High school drama was huge for me – a great catalyst for self-confidence, working a live audience, thinking on your feet and interacting with other people – the kind of teamwork you have doing mornings.

One of my favorite high school teachers was actually a nun, Sister Joseph Marian. And she was just wonderful. She once said to me, "Don't always assume that the people who aren't laughing or responding to you aren't having a good time." I've remembered that, especially when speaking at a luncheon or another event.

Being in that showcase studio at the hotel gives me an advantage because there's an audience watching. There are more people visible to me for my radio show than when we tape the TV program because there's no seated audience for that. I can look out the window and there are all kinds of conventions going on – NCAA, Major League Baseball, cheerleaders. Last year the orthodox Russian and Greek churches were here, with men in black robes and Old Testament beards going by.

> "EVEN WITH ALL OF TODAY'S TECHNOLOGY, THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT LIVE RADIO THAT PEOPLE BECOME FIXATED WITH."

It's a great cross-section of people. And with that loudspeaker out there – no matter whether it's kids, cardiologists or hip-hoppers – they will invariably stop to watch and listen. I think it naturally warms me up on the air because I see them nodding, smiling or shaking their head. Even with all of today's technology, there's something about live radio that people become fixated with.

Growing up, I listened to a lot of people – Coyote Calhoun, Bob Moody, Wayne Perkey. I hope I've been able to or will be that spark for somebody out there. Gary Burbank, who was my biggest early influence, once told me, "Listen, it's as simple as this: Put the listener on the air. Let 'em tell their joke, do their thing, and laugh with 'em. Let them make you look good and you'll be surprised how quickly people will warm up to you." Boy, is that true.

When the WSM job came open, I sent my stuff in and was bold enough to say to then-PD Kyle Cantrell, "I don't know what you guys plan to do with WSM-AM (at that point there was some question what direction it would take), but if you do Country music, I am the man for the job." And I'm not like that, but I just said it, and later thought, Gosh, does Kyle think I'm a jerk, or what? "Who is this egotistical guy calling me from San Antonio and telling me, 'Hey, I'm the man for the job, buddy'?" But it turned out that way.

My first day they asked me who I wanted to have as my first-ever guest, and I said, "Charlie Daniels," who's been such a hero to me. Because the studio is in the Opryland Hotel, it provided the coffee, which turned out to be chocolate raspberry truffle-flavored. Charlie took one drink, and gave me this look. "What's the matter?" I asked. "Cody, you've come to Nashville and started drinkin' hippie coffee."

Your heart's just pounding out of your chest when you say those call letters the first time, and there was probably a quiver in my voice. To some people that sounds overly romantic, but to me it was real. There is a magic about WSM, knowing with the Internet that you're going around the world. I get mail from everywhere – the UK, Russia, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand, Slovakia.

I remember my mom saying in my early radio days, "Now, you can't be foolin' around with all that radio business because you have to advertise beer and cigarettes, and you can't do that with your daddy preachin' and all." She was serious, but wonderfully supportive. Now she's my biggest fan and is a frequent character on the show. Charlie Douglas called up after the first time and said, "You probably ought to stop having her on the air because she's a helluva lot funnier than you are."

We re-created WSM station coming on the air for the 75th anniversary. Among our phone guests were Presidents George H.W. Bush and George W. While talking with the Senior and setting up the Junior, we disconnected George Senior. Charlie Chase, who was up next, said, "I've done a lot of things, but I've never known anyone to hang up on a President!"

We did that re-creation on the Ryman stage. Sitting there in the darkness with only the stage lit, I looked out at that stained glass as the morning sun came in. And when we kicked that thing off, it hit me – the whole history, [legendary Opry announcer] Grant Turner and all the WSM guys, many who already are in the Hall of Fame. That was a moment when I really realized what an incredibly special place WSM is.

What is so emotional for me at times is that my dad didn't get to see my WSM dream come true. As we would travel to games or just be out at night, he would find whatever programming was on WSM, and he'd say, "Son, *that's* the one, right there." CAC

Home On LaGrange: Backstage at the Grand Ole Opry in 2002, Bill Cody, ZZ Top's Billy Gibbons and Cody's son Levi strike the famous panhandlin' pose.

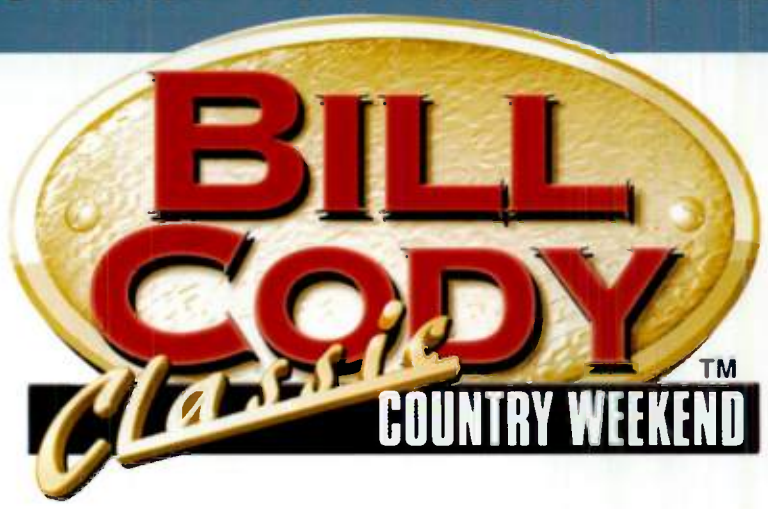
Rows Of San Antone: Here's KKYX/San Antonio PD Carl Becker, the late Waylon Jennings and KKYX morning ace Bill Cody in Nashville for a CMA Awards remote broadcast in 1992.

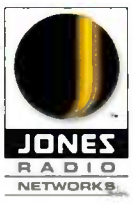
Our Tower: Gaylord CEO Bud Wendell, WSM morning maestro Bill Cody, Marty Stuart, MCA/Nashville Chairman Bruce Hinton and Country Music Hall of Fame & Museum's Executive Director Kyle Young (l-r) celebrate during WSM-AM/Nashville's broadcast of the installation of the WSM radio tower replica in the Hall's Rotunda in 2001.

Congratulations Bill!

From all of your friends at
Jones Radio Networks

2008 Country Music
DJ Hall of Fame Honoree





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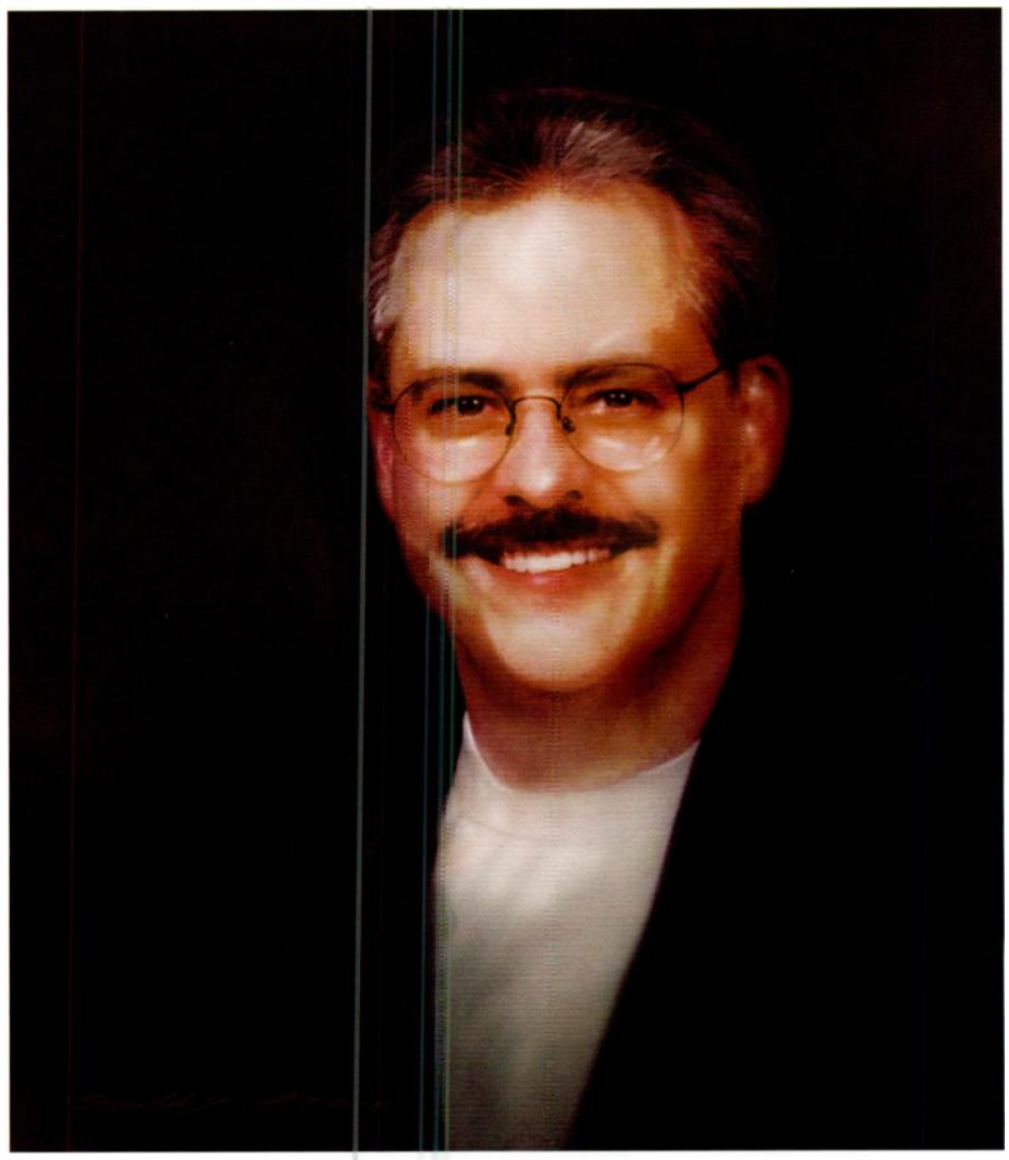
Country Music DJ AND RADIO HALL OF FAME

BOBBY KRAIG

Radio Leads To The Record Business

As a youngster, Bobby Kraig dreamed of a career in sports. When a spinal condition sidelined him, his father said, "You could always be a sports announcer," and his attention turned to radio. Having grown up on Twin Cities Top 40 radio, Kraig attended the highly-regarded Brown Institute to pursue a broadcast career, starting in Hayward, Wisconsin for $125 a week. He advanced to PD gigs at WONE/Dayton, WTHI/Terre Haute and KPLX/Dallas, where his skills was recognized with four Billboard *PD of the Year honors and a CMA award.*

Kraig then shifted successfully to the record side, helping build countless careers in national promotion at Arista/Nashville. When Arista was absorbed by Sony BMG/ Nashville, he continued to lead the label's promotion efforts before retiring in 2006. Kraig sees himself as having been blessed with the good fortune of being able to learn from and work with numerous talented people. His career is truly one of the Country industry's most admirable success stories.



My first job was working at a St. Paul pirate station. One day I was playing a record and a guy kicked open the door, showed me a badge, knocked the needle off the turntable and told me I was going to serve time in jail. As it turned out, he wasn't a federal agent at all; he was the dad of the guy who owned the place! It was their idea of doing a funny joke. Now, I had just gotten my First Class FCC license and knew the penalty he cited was incorrect, but I didn't know for sure and wasn't going to open my mouth until I heard the giggling from around the corner. That was the scariest moment I ever had in radio.

Another scary moment was when I got to WTHI/Terre Haute. I was on the air when we went from AOR to Country, and I got to play the first country record, which I think was Johnny Russell's "The Baptism of Jesse Taylor." That turned out to be a real milestone for me, as I didn't know it was going to go on to become such a great radio station. But the college students were pretty upset when we made the switch. Our studio had a big picture window facing the street, and people could see the guy on the air. I wanted to close the curtains, but we weren't allowed to do it. Some guy came up, pointed a pistol at me and fired. It turned out to be a pellet gun, but it made a hole in the glass. I'm not sure it was the first hole, either, but it was the first for us as Country.

> "I've been blessed with some great people as bosses. Circumstances have always been a friend of mine."

Kraig's List: Following his retirement, Bobby Kraig and his family were invited to join the RCA Label Group for its annual CRS Boat extravaganza. Alan Jackson stopped the show so that he, Sony BMG Chairman Joe Galante and EVP Butch Waugh could present a special plaque to Kraig. Pictured (l-r) are Jackson, Galante and Waugh.

A-Team: The Arista crew gathers around (standing l-r): Butch Waugh, David Friedman, Dawn Ferris, Bryan Frasher, Teddi Bonadies, Jeri Cooper, Lesly Tyson, Skip Bishop, Joe Galante; and (seated, l-r) Suzette Tucker, Lori Hartigan, Kraig and Alicia Butler.

I kept up with Dan Halyburton during my early years, hoping one day he'd give me a job. He had taken WDGY/Minneapolis Country. At CRS one year – nearly all my jobs happened through CRS – he drew me aside and said, "I've got a friend who's looking for somebody to program KLIF/Dallas. They're going to take it Country." His name was Herb Allen, and at the time he was programming Susquehanna's sister station WFMS/Indianapolis. I met with Herb and two weeks later got a call from WFMS GM and RVP Larry Grogan. He said he'd been listening to WTHI, really liked it and wanted me to go meet the GM of KLIF and KPLX.

All the while he was talking about KPLX. So I said, "This job's for KLIF, isn't it?" He said, "No, actually we're looking for somebody now for KPLX." Well, that was the job I really wanted. So I went down there for a meeting – it was my first commercial airplane ride. Two weeks later I got a call from the GM's secretary. She said, "I'm supposed to set you up with an apartment." That's who gave me the news, and she later became my wife.

About six months later, Dan came on to be my boss, and I never would have had the success I've had were it not for him, as well as for others. I've been blessed with some great people as bosses. Circumstances have always been a friend of mine, and Susquehanna was a great company.

Tim DuBois and I had a meeting talking about artist management. I wanted to get involved in the Country music industry in a capacity other than radio. I didn't know that it was going to be records. Tim said, "Mister, why would you want to do management? It's like winning the lottery. For God's sake, you've got a family, you've got a good job." So I was all depressed and thought maybe he was right.

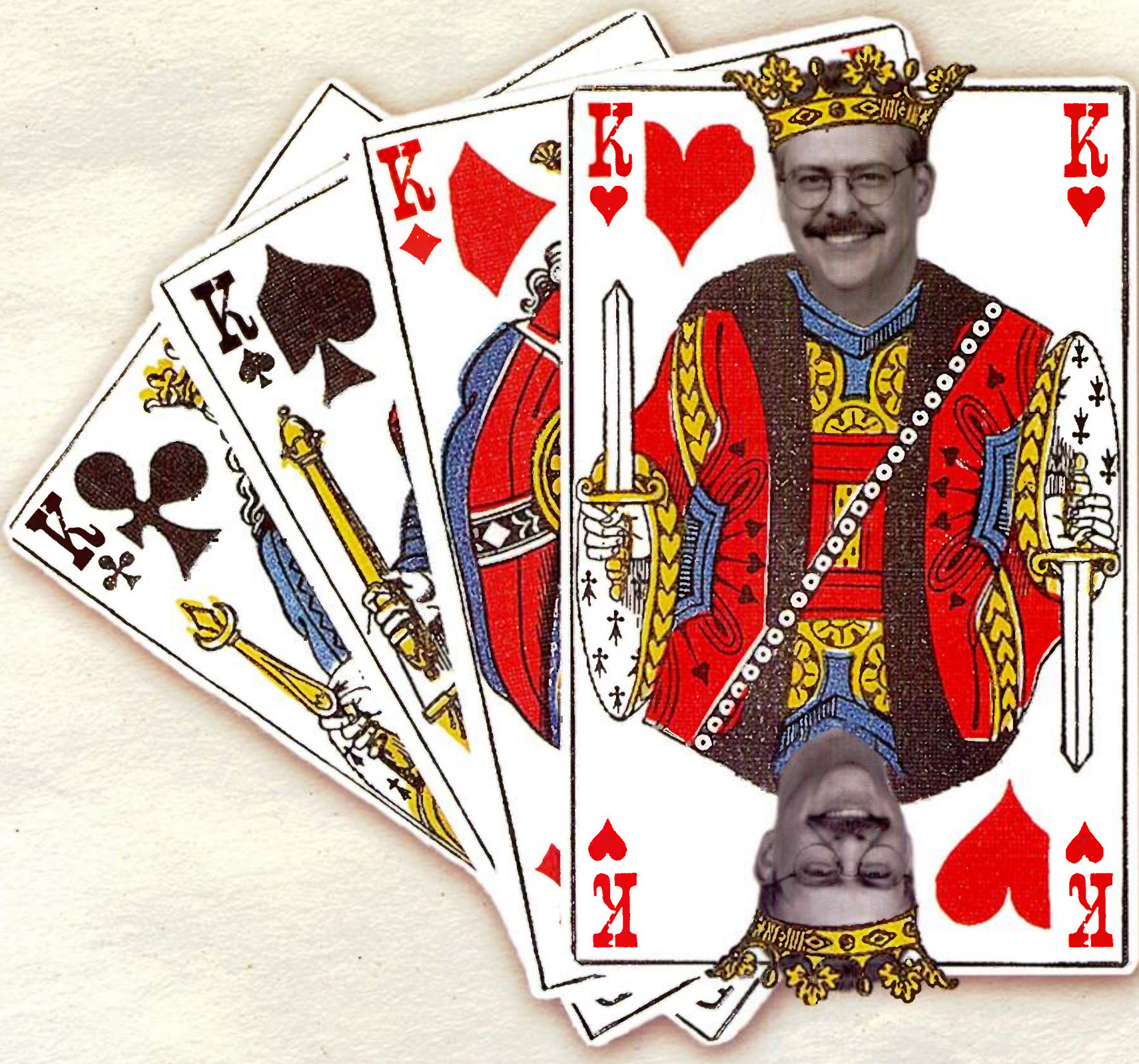
But as a result of that meeting, a year later when Arista opened, Allen Butler called and asked if I had any interest in doing national promotion for them. I said, "Give me 24 hours." My wife was fine with it, and although my contract wasn't up, I went in to see Dan and told him what I wanted to do. And he said, "You know, that doesn't surprise me. I knew it'd kind of end up here." Monetarily, it was a hard decision because I had to leave for less money. I knew very little about the record business other than how to pick up a phone and call somebody. But they taught me what I needed to know, and then I hopefully brought some things aboard that they could learn from. We had some great artists and I had a great staff. Those guys were superstars in my eyes.

I certainly owe a lot to Allen Butler and Tim DuBois for giving me a shot, and I owe an equal amount to Joe Galante and Butch Waugh. When they took on the label, they didn't have to take the promotion department. They trusted and believed in us and let me run the staff. I have so much respect for those guys.

One day I was driving with Bob Moody to the Vanderbilt Plaza Hotel from a CRB board event at Reba's house. My foot slipped off the brake and I hit one of those planters on the side of the building like an eight-ball in the side pocket. I thought, "Man, I just bought a hotel." The potting soil was up on the windshield like a plague of locusts. At first the hotel people thought I was drunk; thank God I wasn't. But as I'm sitting there, the bus with all the board members on it pulls in. Bob tried to get the concierge to find a neck brace for him to wear to the board meetings the next day. But I told everyone that Bob was the one driving, and I still do to this day.

The most emotional career moment for me was when I came to the realization I wouldn't be able to come back to work anymore. The lunch meeting with Butch Waugh to tell him was rough. But Joe Galante and the staff then invited me and my family on the RCA Boat in 2006, and Alan Jackson stopped the show that night so they could present me with a big plaque. That was the most special moment ever, and my biggest high. CAC

PICK A CARD, ANY CARD



YOU WILL ALWAYS BE OUR PICK...

Congratulations Bobby Kraig
on your induction into the Country Music Radio Hall of Fame.

We are so proud!

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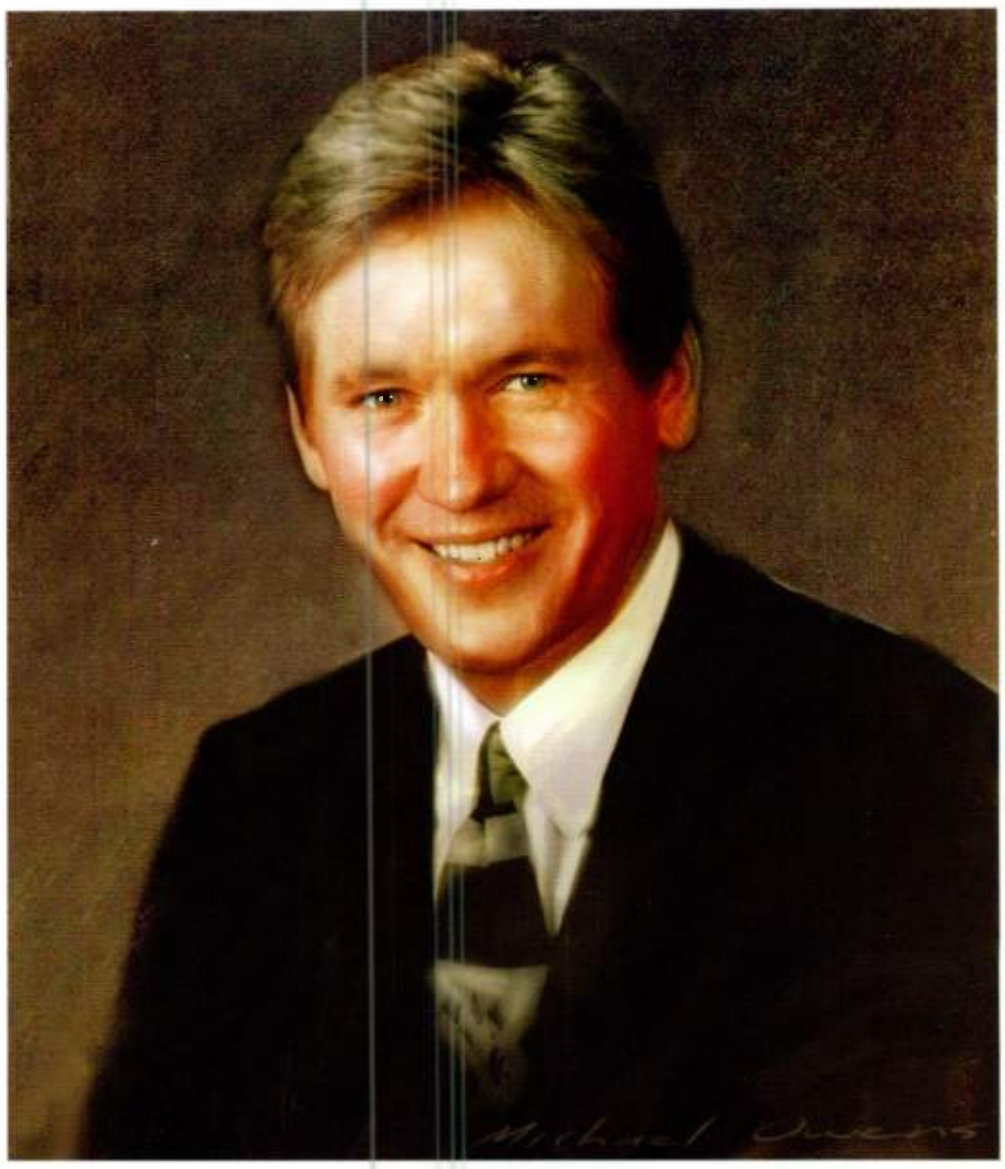
Country Music DJ AND RADIO HALL OF FAME

MICHAEL OWENS

Building A Dynasty In The Desert



Even if his father, Buck, had never gone into radio ownership (his investment counselors tried to talk him out of it), Michael Owens was destined to be a broadcaster. His management skills in Bakersfield set the stage for one of radio's greatest success stories. Under Michael's leadership as VP/GM of Owens Broadcasting and with an all-star team, KNIX/Phoenix was not only a perennial, award-winning market leader, it was a national trendsetter in branding, integrated marketing, promotion and community service. Its renowned commitment to its staff centered around business principles of "doing it right." That spawned an ancillary network, magazine, TV show and more stations before consolidation finally led to divestiture in 1999.

When I was six or seven years old, I used to go to sleep with a little transistor radio and always wait for the contest on KAFY/Bakersfield so I could call up and win a six-pack of 45s. But whenever we went down to the station to pick up our prize, it was always songs that you'd never heard of that they were giving away. But just being there was always of keen interest to me and I loved the music. Interestingly, KAFY, now KUZZ-AM, is now owned by our family and is run by my cousin, Mel Owens.

My first radio job was as janitor at KUZZ-AM in the summer when I was 15. Dad had just purchased the radio station, and I went in three times a week to clean up. I'd watch the personalities while they were on the air, and fell in love with the whole feel of being inside.

My aunt, Dorothy Owens, ran the company. She'd always grind it into my head, "You're just like everybody else. You do the job or else you'll get fired." And she told everybody else that, as well. There wasn't any favoritism. I did get to try different jobs at the station as they came open – everything except accounting. And that rounded me out in terms of how to make a product that people like to listen to. Since I had no musical talent to write or sing or perform, radio is what I gravitated to. It was just like, "Gee whiz, I get to do this and I get paid, too?" It was always just a real passion.

What I loved best was the creative aspect of putting together the product: the songs, the contests, the promotions – taking that sound and the ratings it made and getting into local sales and national sales. But it was always, "The product's gotta be good and produce listeners. Otherwise, this sales job isn't very much fun." When it was first purchased, KUZZ was a daytimer and didn't have ratings. When we got the FM [rocker KKXX] to go along with it, FM was just starting to catch on. But you're selling spots for ten bucks. You had to sell a lot of those, and about 30-40% of those that you sold never paid, so it was not that easy.

> "LOOK, YOU GUYS GET US A 20 SHARE 25-54 AND WE'LL BUILD A SWIMMING POOL."

March Of The Penguins: KNIX/Phoenix won the ACM Country Station of the Year in 1986, 1987, 1992 and 1993. Garth Brooks (center) stopped backstage to congratulate the happy tuxedo team of (l-r) MD Buddy Owens, GSM Bob Podolsky, VP/GM Michael Owens and PD Larry Daniels. Can you guess the year?

Dream Team: At the 1992 Phoenix Open Pro-Am, KNIX VP/GM Michael Owens offers some swing tips to Ping founder Karsten Solheim, Vince Gill, Buck Owens, KNIX MD Buddy Owens, KUZZ GM Mel Owens and Glen Campbell.

While working as GM of KUZZ and KKXX, I was given the opportunity to oversee our new Phoenix Country stations KTUF and KNIX as a company VP. I started going over there regularly, and Larry Daniels was there as PD. At the end of 1977, I met with Larry, who by now had gone through three GMs, and we had been sending money every month to cover payroll and expenses. Being so passionate about radio, he was despondent that we weren't making any progress and told me he had an offer to go to a competitor. I said, "No, Larry, don't do that. I'm going to come over here and run the stations." I had no idea I was going to *do* that; I'd just *said* it. But it also was just something I felt. I told Dad that it seemed like the right career move for me. Dad and I were very good friends and he probably thought, "Well, he'll come back here in a few months with his tail between his legs and we'll be doing things together again."

But I saw what needed to be done, and with Larry's desire and programming ideas we put together a good sales team. About six to eight months later, Bakersfield no longer needed to send money. Then we began to make a little money and give Larry the tools he needed, and in a couple of years we started sending money back the other way!

At the end of 1980, Buddy Owens became our MD in Phoenix. He was still in his career, out singing and recording. And it was a great relationship that we always had with the labels because Buddy knew them and what they needed, and got along with all the artists because he was one.

We had a "work hard, play hard" attitude: Put together the best people, product and facilities, find out what people wanted through research, and then just give them as much of it as you could. We also recognized mistakes the big companies made. I knew if we sincerely cared about the employees, the working conditions, their pay and their families, that we would win this thing. Vendors wanted to be a part of it, and our competitors wanted to be hired by us. It made us very human, and because we weren't a big corporation, we could move quickly and adjust to different market conditions.

What I was able to do was surround myself with all these talented people and to give *them* the tools to do *their* jobs, and really expose *their* talent and ability. I just benefited from all that.

In the mid-'80s, everything was on a roll. I always challenged the staff, and said, "Look, you guys get us a 20 share 25-54 and we'll build a swimming pool." Well, guess what? Two ratings periods later, we had a 22 share. But the insurance company said we couldn't do that, so we built a gym and brought in a fitness trainer. It was a great facility. We always felt if we could get them inside the building, we had a chance to close the deal, to win 'em over or to hire them.

Bob Podolsky, who was my GSM for about 22 years in Phoenix, was a real marketing genius in terms of marketing the station to the advertiser. I began taking him with Larry to CRS so he could get a feel for what was out there in the product line and he could use those ideas. He was really a partner, and I give him a lot of credit.

Selling was probably the toughest thing I've ever done. We sold KNIX, KESZ, the satellite network – everything. But I could see that we'd have to get several more stations in the marketplace to remain winners and that we'd have to go pretty far in debt. Quite frankly, it wasn't something Dad was willing to do, either. Financially, selling was a big reward, but personally a real tragedy to me. I didn't want it to happen, but realized it had to.

Being inducted is really a treasured honor. I lost both Mom and Dad in 2006, and I think it'd be something they'd be extremely proud of. I wish they were here to see it. I was so happy when it happened for W. Steven Martin, our morning man for so many years, and I was thrilled beyond belief when Larry was inducted last year. It was almost like *I* was being inducted because we had done everything together. I can't begin to tell you what that meant to me. CAC

HOME

the new smash single from

BLAKE SHELTON

"HOME is a homerun for Blake! Country radio will touch the female listeners with this tune."
-Joe Patrick/Patrick Broadcasting Consulting

"OH MY GOD!!! Blake hit it out of the park with this"
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"This is the one Blake's been waiting for. Gorilla!"
-Tom "Jake" Jacobsen-
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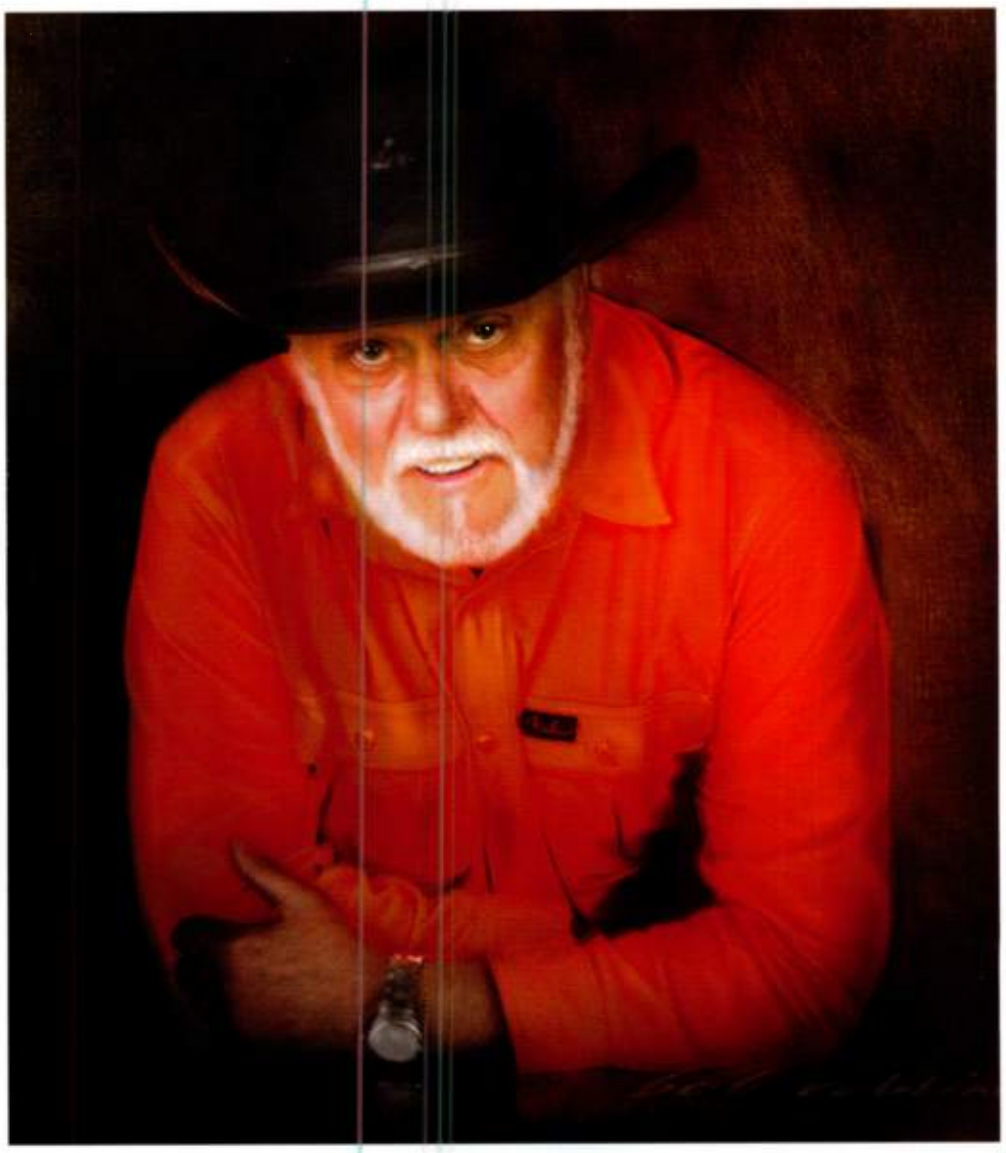
Country Music DJ AND RADIO HALL OF FAME

BOB ROBBINS

A Blessed Good Ole Boy

Having lost both of his parents by age 10, including his mother on Christmas Eve, Bob Robbins was adopted at 12 by an Air Force family and moved all around the world. His adoptive father was an air personality at KRMD/Shreveport, among other stations, and encouraged his son to pursue radio. The 45-year radio veteran has spent the past 29 years at KSSN/Little Rock, picking up Arkansas Citizen of the Year honors, a CMA Award and many other accolades. Robbins' life is steeped in his faith and his career can be characterized by his sense of community, commitment and compassion. While he will say he is the one who has been blessed with good fortune, Robbins' devoted generations of listeners would say they're the lucky ones.



I was about 14 when I got my first radio job, working at Armed Forces Radio at what was then Nouasseur Air Force Strategic Air Command base in Casablanca, Morocco, working for Sgt. Bill Miller. We didn't have television, but the audio acetates of *Gunsmoke* and other weekly shows would come in, and he let me start out playing those. My first music show was a polka program. As I grew older, Bill said, "Robbins, you're just too country. You gotta learn to talk better, like a radio person." But I never did, unlike my friend Bill Cody. Boy, he's got a helluva voice. I love to listen to Cody and am so honored to be in the 2008 Hall of Fame class with him.

My mom and I used to listen to WSM-AM a whole lot and try to get the Grand Ole Opry every Saturday night. I also used to listen to people like John R. and Wayne Moss, who was PD at KAAY and who I had worked for in Georgia. One morning he called and said, "You wanna come to Arkansas?" I said, "Hell, yeah!" So I came up here to 50,000-watt clear channel KAAY/Little Rock, and that's when I knew I'd be in radio for the rest of my life.

When I first moved to KSSN, my in-laws were not too happy that I was quitting a very good job in radio and taking less money. But it was just a move that I wanted to make ... I had that gut feeling that I've got to do this, it's Country radio – that's what I love. Of course, now they'll tell you it was the smartest, best thing I ever did in my life. I just knew we had a winning format and that we were going to do it. God has blessed us, and we did.

> "I HAD THAT GUT FEELING THAT I'VE GOT TO DO THIS, IT'S COUNTRY RADIO – THAT'S WHAT I LOVE."

The happy times are when people win tickets to see someone like George Strait – to hear them get so excited about going to a show when they've never been able to see a concert before. But one of the saddest things that's ever happened to me was years ago when the newspaper had a write-in DJ popularity contest going on here in Arkansas. A charity of each DJ would benefit if that DJ won, and mine was the Special Olympics. Cessna had agreed if I won, they would bring enough airplanes in to fly the Special Olympians and their chaperones to Notre Dame for the World Olympics. The newspaper published ballots, and you'd cut them out and send them in.

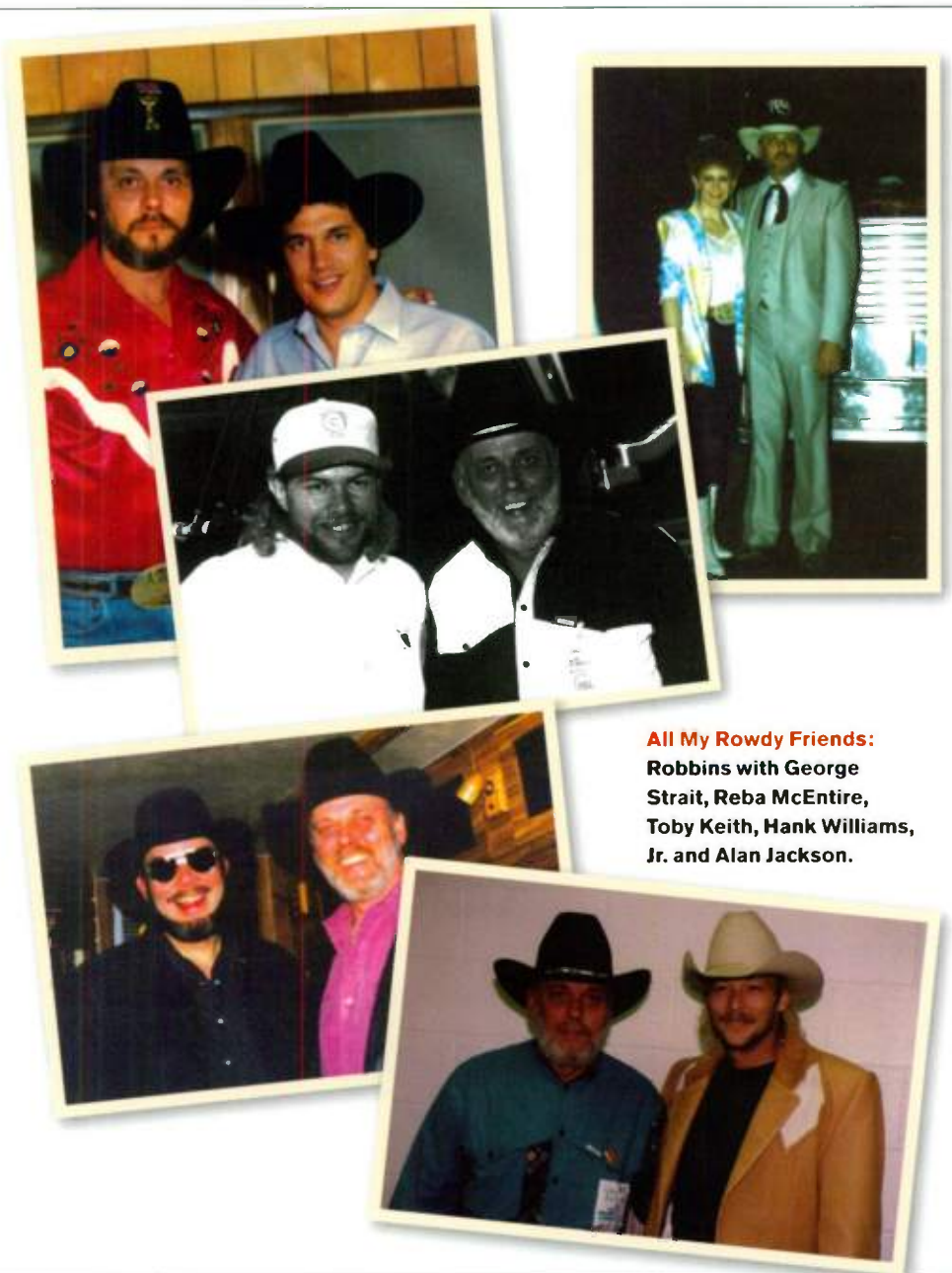
There was a gentleman named Bill who would call me every day. He had had throat cancer, and when he talked it was just a whisper. He was in the hospital, but the nurses would give him newspapers and he'd fill out all the ballots and send them in. When the deadline came the newspaper scheduled a news conference to announce the winner. I found out I had won so that I could dress accordingly the next day, but was asked not to tell anybody. Bill called me the day before they made the announcement and whispered, "Bob, do you know who won? Did we do it?" I said, "Bill, I don't know, but I feel really good."

Well, Bill passed away that night and never did know we won. I cried like a baby. I had never met this man in my life, but I went to the funeral home and I took a KSSN cap with me. It's one that I had worn, and was pretty soiled, to be honest with you, and I laid that in his casket with him and thanked him for all his support.

God, I hate to tell this. Right after KSSN came on the air, I was doing news, too, which was recorded and then given to the board operator. I went in and read, "It's 2 o'clock, KSSN/Little Rock. It's 49 degrees, and here's the news." I started into this story and it was a very simple name like Smith, but I said, "So and so Joe Schmidt. Schmidt?" And I went through a bunch of curse words. I took the cart out, stuck it in the eraser, hit it, it went around, stopped, I did the story again and took it to the board op. And he stuck it in, me thinking the first take had been erased. When I heard it on the monitor, I knew. I slid into the control room, but it had already happened. That's when we found out Country music and Kissin' Radio had a bunch of listeners.

Kirby Confer, who was one of the original owners, called me over into his office. I just knew I'd be fired. I walked in and said, "Kirby, I just want you to know I didn't do that on purpose." And I went through it, and Kirby was just as calm as could be. He said, "Bob I know it. We'll have to put something in the file and your file that you have done this, and I need you to write up a report and give it to Joanne," who was the business manager. Then he said, "I also want you to sit here and answer these phone calls." Two weeks later they were still calling! I went to denying it after about two days. There were only two women who complained. Everybody else said, "Hey, tell Bob he's all right. He's like us."

Garth Brooks, George Strait, Earl Thomas Conley – artists like those are so special. I'll never forget Trace Adkins the time they wouldn't add his record here years ago. He went on the air with me and after he finished he stood up – of course, he's as tall as a mountain – and said in that ol' deep voice of his, "I've done the interview with you. When the hell you gonna play my record?" If I had to pick one song that would be my favorite of all time, it'd have to be Don Williams' "Good Ole Boys Like Me," where he's talking about how "John R. and the Wolfman kept me company by the light of the radio by my bed." That's me. When you listen to that song, you hear Bob Robbins' life. CAC



All My Rowdy Friends: Robbins with George Strait, Reba McEntire, Toby Keith, Hank Williams, Jr. and Alan Jackson.

GOLD AND PLATINUM ALBUMS...

TOP 10'S AND #1 SINGLES...

NATIONAL MEDIA EXPOSURE...

AWARD NOMINATIONS AND WINS!

THANKS FOR MAKING OUR FIRST NINE YEARS MEMORABLE!

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VP OF PROMOTION

JIM MALITO
NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF PROMOTION/SOUTHWEST

LAYNA BUNT
WEST COAST DIRECTOR OF PROMOTION

NANCY JOHNSON
SOUTHEAST DIRECTOR OF PROMOTION

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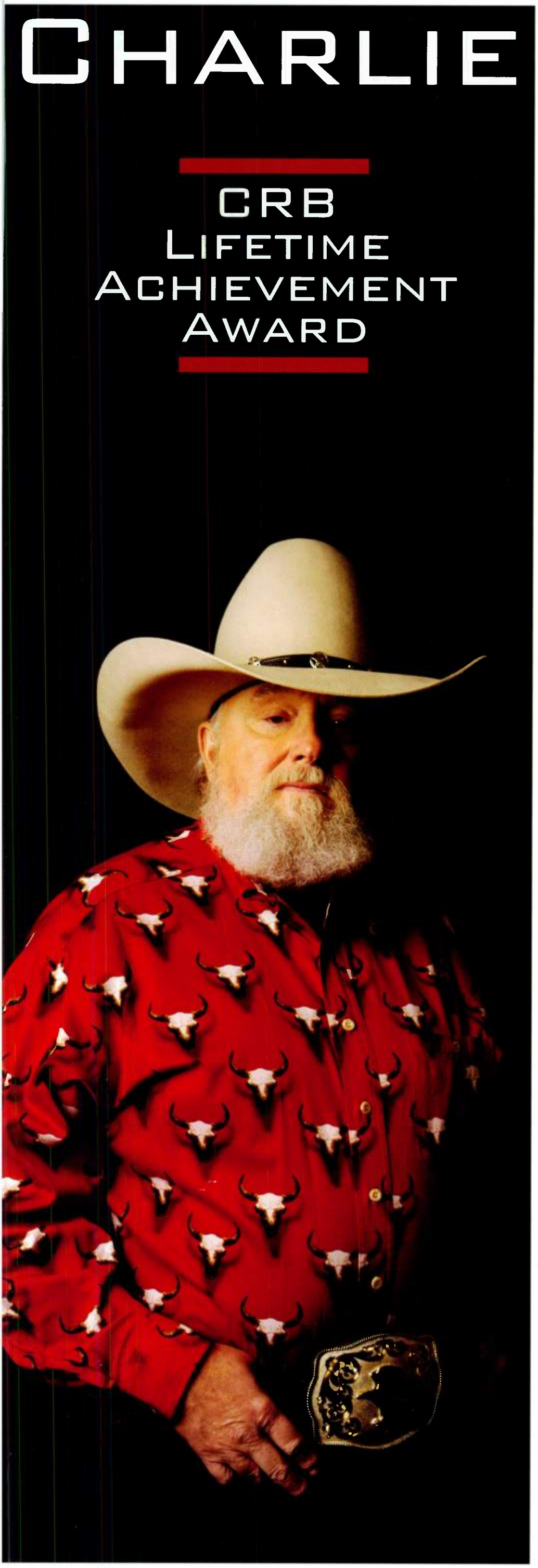
We couldn't do it without *you*!

CHARLIE DANIELS

A Country Original

CRB LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



The only label Charlie Daniels will apply to his life's work is "CDB Music." And even a cursory look at his career makes it easy to understand why. The rural North Carolina radio he was raised on featured local stations playing different music formats depending on the time of day. He's worked with everyone from Bob Dylan to the Beatles, and seen more of the world than most can imagine. Although Daniels remains one of the most versatile artists performing today, he still calls country music home. And that love shines through with unchecked excitement when he speaks of his recent induction into the Grand Ole Opry.

I am a child of radio. I didn't watch TV until I was 15 years old, so I grew up with radio. Usually in the small towns and rural areas there would only be one radio station and they were not formatted at the time for one particular kind of programming. I got to hear a lot of music, and then watched as radio grew into a business that was pretty strictly formatted. There are enough stations now that they can play one genre of music and service the community. I don't think anybody had the idea it would grow into what it has grown into, especially with the advent of television. That was suppose to be detrimental to radio, but radio is still there, always will be.

Growing up our last name was Daniel, not Daniels. My dad worked for several different companies in different locations and I went to a lot of different schools. It's kind of natural to just put an "S" on it, and between paymasters and school people we finally said, "Okay, our name is Daniels." My dad is buried in a family graveyard in North Carolina, and he's the only one in the cemetery with an "S."

Something weird happened the other day. I don't know why I was looking at my birth certificate, but believe it or not, the people who filled it out put "Daniels" on there, too. From the day I was born I didn't have a chance. I was going to be Charlie Daniels.

The Grand Ole Opry might as well have been Mars as far as I was concerned when I was a kid growing up in North Carolina. It's not a place I ever thought I would go to and observe, much less stand on the stage and play. It's a dream that has stayed with me many years, and God has blessed me with this induction.

When we started kicking up some nuggets we were a little on the hard side. I hesitate to say rock because I don't know if we play rock music. I don't know what we play, but it was a little wild for the Opry. Through the years the sounds on the Opry have changed. Saturday night you will hear things you wouldn't have heard 30 years ago. There were a lot of people that went to bat for us to be inducted. Maybe they were afraid we wouldn't be able to fulfill our quota of shows. We are a real hard-working band, but we're already making plans to play when we're in town.

I still have a great relationship with radio. I do interviews before we go into an area to do a show. What has changed in my relationship with radio over the years is that now I can't go to a station and get a record added anymore. It's harder now for a local guy to add a record because they don't have the power to do it. There's someone sitting somewhere else that makes a lot of those decisions. But people at the local stations are always happy to talk with me. I can always talk with you about music.

Watching a record grow is one of the most fascinating things I've ever done. I remember when *Fire On The Mountain* came out. We started out going to stations on the East Coast to promote the album and we really felt the energy rise as we crossed the country – going all the way to the West Coast and making stops along the way. We'd stop in at a station and find out they were having success with some cuts. The album started to get noticed and before long was beginning to sell.

Long Time Coming: Charlie Daniels (second from left) celebrates his Opry induction with (l-r) Manager/Blue Hat Records Pres. David Corlew, Opry members Marty Stuart and Connie Smith, Opry VP/GM Pete Fisher and Gaylord Ent. SVP Steve Buchanan.

"The Devil Went Down To Georgia" really surprised me. If you had told me when we recorded it in 1979 that it was going to be on a popular game called *Guitar Hero* in 2008, I'd have had a hard time believing it. I thought it would do well, but I had no idea it would be an international hit. And it's a song that transcends generations because it's easy to understand. The story is timeless, not something specific to one generation. I haven't heard the version on *Guitar Hero* yet, but people have told me about it.

Radio has been very good to me over the years. We have had somewhere in the neighborhood of 20 million records sold, and I can't knock that. Radio has changed over the years quite a bit and I understand that radio is in the business to make money. They play the music that makes them money. I totally understand that, but I don't necessarily agree with how that affects music. When it comes down to it, everyone is playing the same thing. They are all vying for one half-point in the book to get above everybody else. I've always strived to sound different from everybody else, so if I ran a radio station I would want to make it sound different. I'd take a winger on a new record by a new artist and try to beat somebody else to break a record. There is no pride in breaking a record anymore. And if a new record isn't working, they'll take it off after a few weeks. There is very little commitment.

There are niches out there that have not been filled. If you want to see the proof, look at satellite radio – they have everything in the world. I know local radio doesn't want to talk about satellite radio, but I think local radio stations that sound like local radio stations shouldn't be worried. They are supposed to service their community and play what those local people want to hear. Satellite radio won't kill local radio, but it might force radio back to sounding like a local station. I have a deep and abiding love for Country radio, I'd just like to see local stations come back and announce the Friday night football scores and take on the flavor of the community. CAC

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W. MICHAEL MILOM

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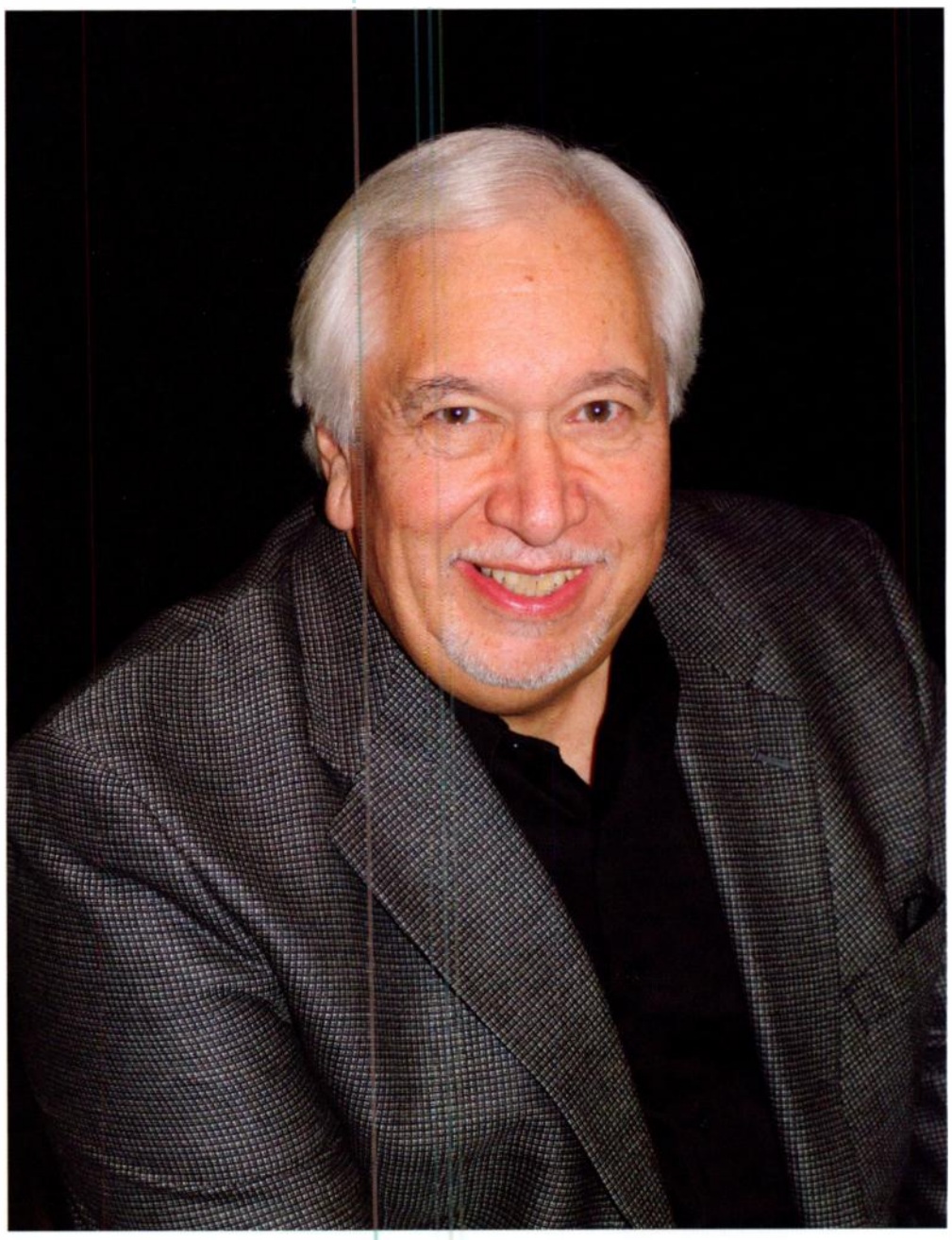


Entertainment attorneys have a unique view of creative industries, one informed by their work with many different aspects of the business – artists, producers, songwriters, publishing companies, record labels and more. Michael Milom, a partner of Milom Joyce Horsnell Crow PLC and graduate of Vanderbilt Law School, has seen all of these perspectives in a a career that spans country music history. His clientele has included Conway Twitty, Loretta Lynn, Chet Atkins, Ray Stevens, Ricky Skaggs and Alabama. His long-standing clients include Hank Williams, Jr., Emmylou Harris and Terri Clark, and he currently works with the newer artists Joe Nichols, Rascal Flatts and Taylor Swift. Milom has worked with Country Radio Broadcasters since 1975.

I was a singer back in the '60s and also played drums in a rock 'n' roll band. I didn't know or care much about country music at that time, but I realized pretty quickly I did not have the talent to make a living performing. I still maintained an interest in music, so it was just a very lucky turn of events that after law school I went to work for an entertainment business law firm.

That firm included the then-reigning dean of entertainment business law in Nashville, a man named Richard Frank. Dick represented the CMA and the Country Music Foundation, and a large number of folks in the country music industry. As a young lawyer that was something I aspired to do. He was my mentor and gave me the opportunity to work for those folks. That's the way I developed my practice and access to the country music industry.

The estate of Hank Williams was one of the first things I worked on, and actually Richard Frank represented the estate from an entertainment aspect. I learned a lot of my lawyer skills working in litigation and business matters related to that estate and his songs, owned by Acuff-Rose and so forth at the time. Ironically somewhat, some many years later, through Jimmy Bowen, I began to represent Hank Williams, Jr. He was signing, I believe, with Asylum Records and we negotiated the first million-dollar advance deal in Nashville. I have represented him consistently ever since that day. The continuity of representing his father as a brand new lawyer and becoming Hank Jr.'s lawyer later and continuing to represent him is a unique thing in most lawyers' experiences.

My love for creative people has made this such a rewarding venture. I really enjoy working with them. Their God-given talents set them apart from the rest of us, although sometimes they don't always honor those gifts in the way we would like for them to. I'm always in awe of an artist who does well with both the creative and business side of their career. This is one of the most difficult professions in our society in light of the demands that are placed on them and the number of people who want access to successful artists – even for legitimate purposes. If there is reincarnation and I could come back as a successful songwriter, I would have achieved the highest form of life in terms of an enjoyable profession.

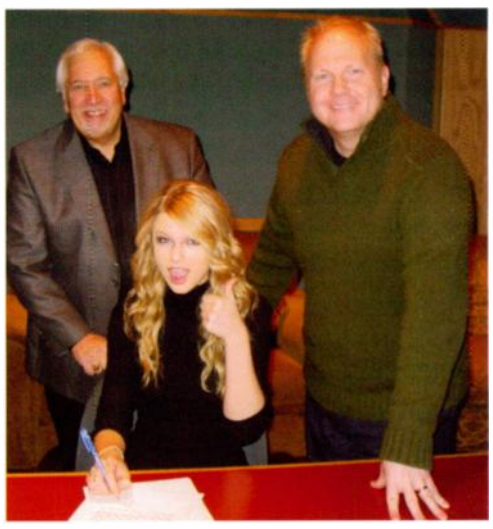
Name Dropping: Milom (second from left) with client Rascal Flatts members Joe Don Rooney, Jay DeMarcus and Gary LeVox celebrate the band's success.

> MANY PEOPLE WHO ARE EXTREMELY BUSY WITH THEIR JOBS HAVE DEDICATED AN INCREDIBLE NUMBER OF HOURS TO MAKE THE CRB EFFECTIVE AND IMPORTANT.

I have never wanted to have any relationship with clients other than being their lawyer. I have always felt that enabled me to be objective. There are not many people in the lives of successful creative people who are in a position to tell them the truth without fear of losing their livelihood. I'm in that unique position. I don't depend on any individual for my livelihood. I am one of the few independent and objective voices in their lives and they seem to appreciate that. I like being in that position.

As a young lawyer I began to work with the CMA and the Country Music Foundation, and I got to see a lot of not-for-profit organizations. I continue to represent only the CRB, and the Country Music Foundation because I've found both of them, in their own way, have people involved who selflessly work to advance the purposes and cause of the organization. They really truly represent the best of volunteer efforts, and in the case of the CRB, advancing professional education in the radio industry.

CRB has moved from an almost entirely volunteer organization in terms of administration and pretty basic legal and business approach to a highly sophisticated, well-run organization with a professional director and creative staff that achieve goals by really facilitating all the volunteer help. Many people who are extremely busy with their jobs have dedicated an incredible number of hours to make the CRB effective and important.

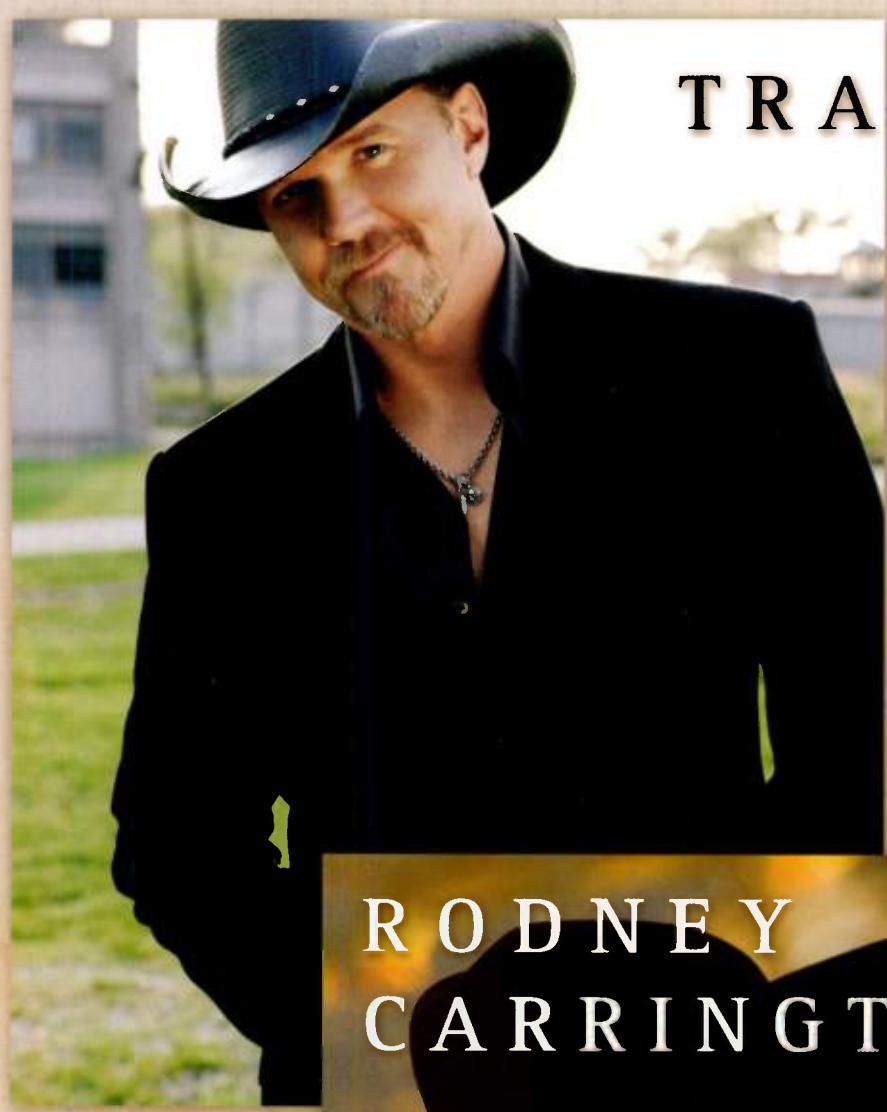


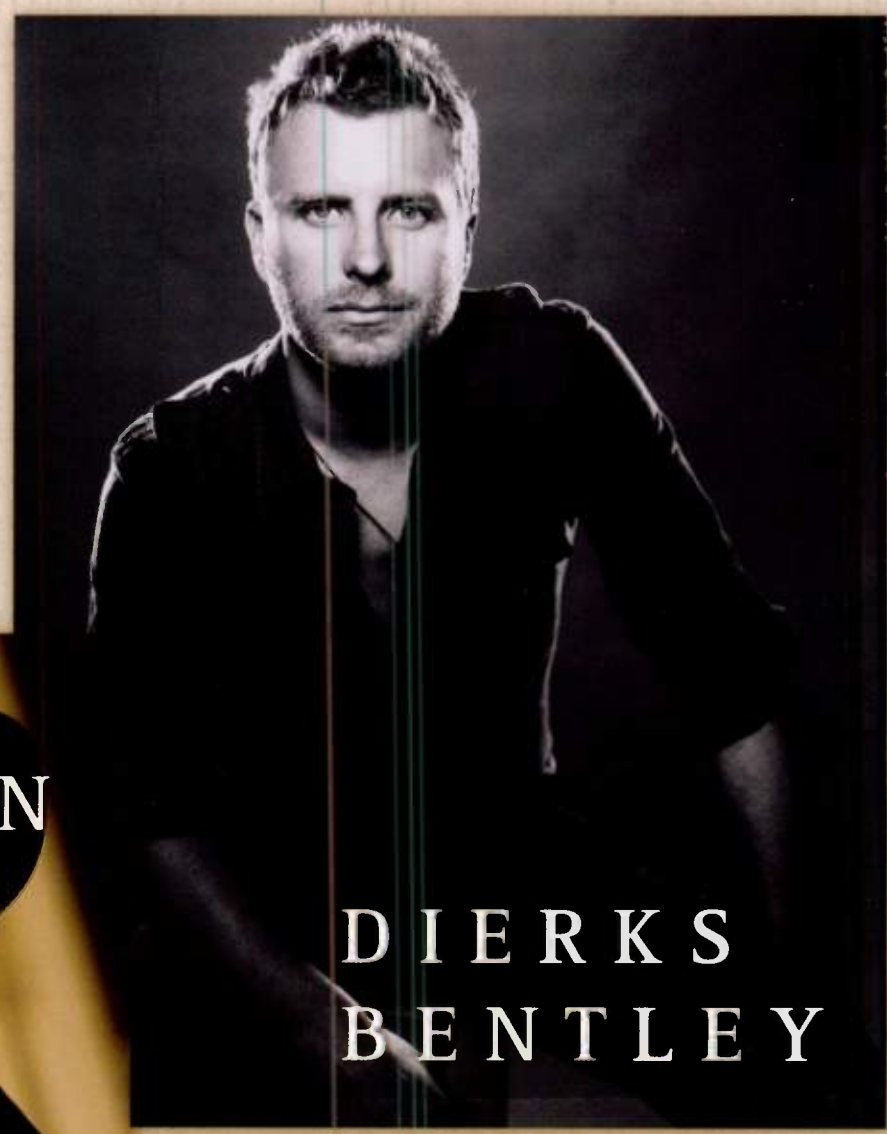
Pick Me: Mike Milom with client Taylor Swift as she renews her publishing contract with Sony/ATV/Nashville Pres./CEO Troy Tomlinson.

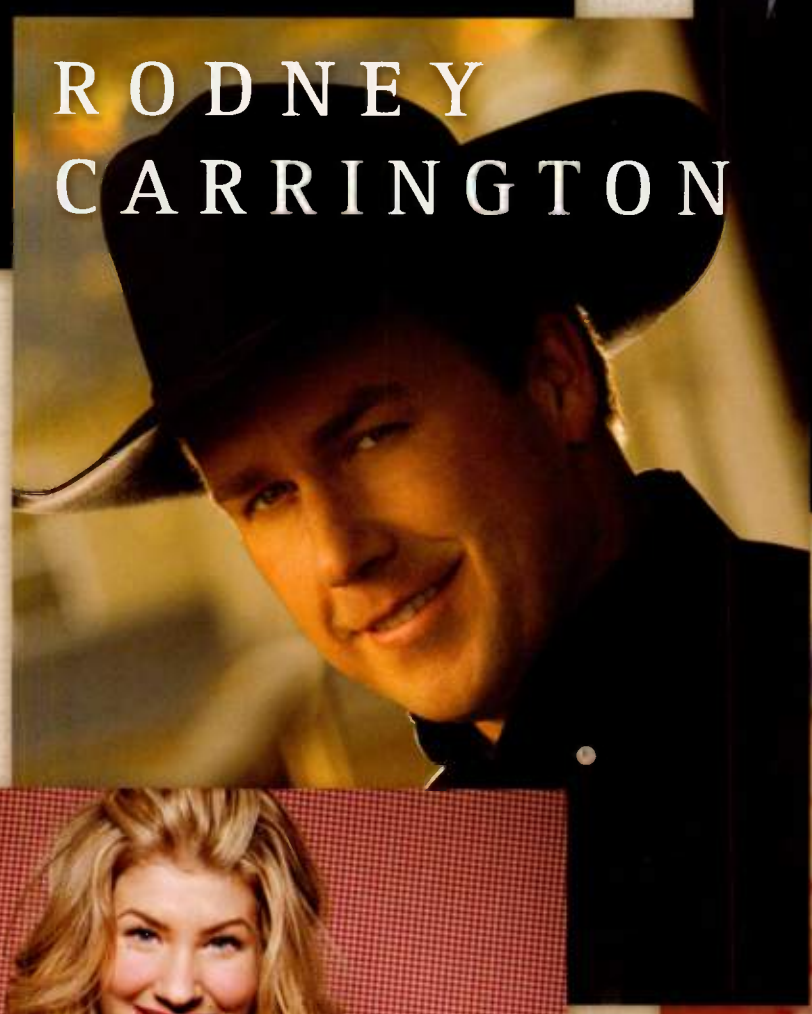
It never ever occurred to me that they would give me the President's Award. It means a great deal to be recognized for my work with the CRB. Lawyers don't get awards – they get to catch a lot of flak from people, but they don't get awards. CAC

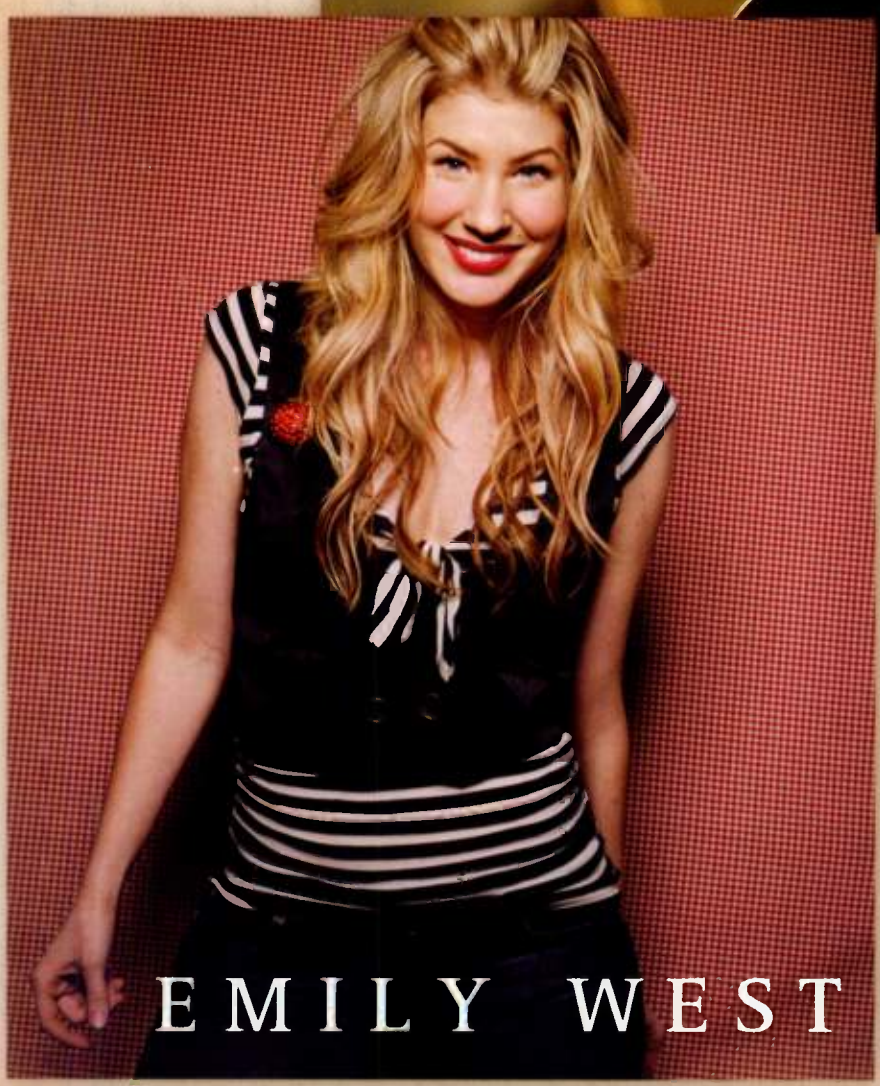
JEFF BATES
Black River
MUSIC GROUP
FEEL THE
ENERGY!
I'M JUST SAYIN'

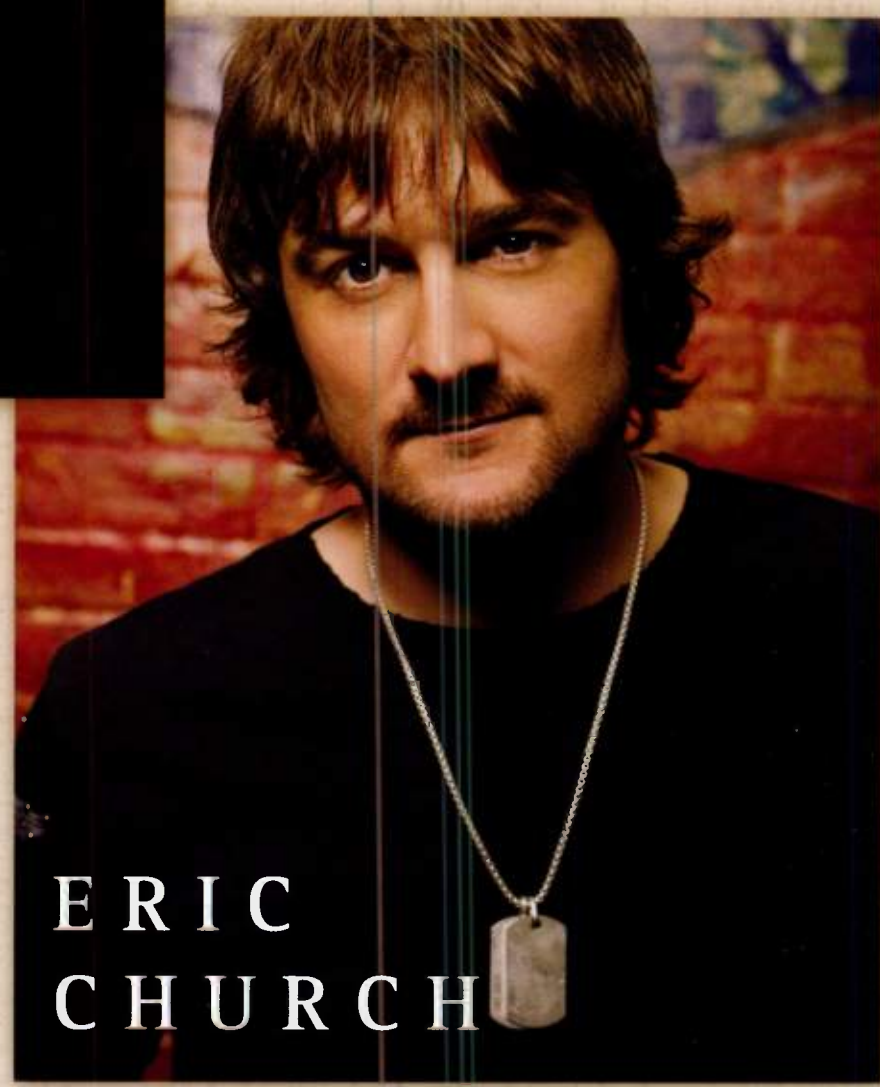
WELCOME T











From Your

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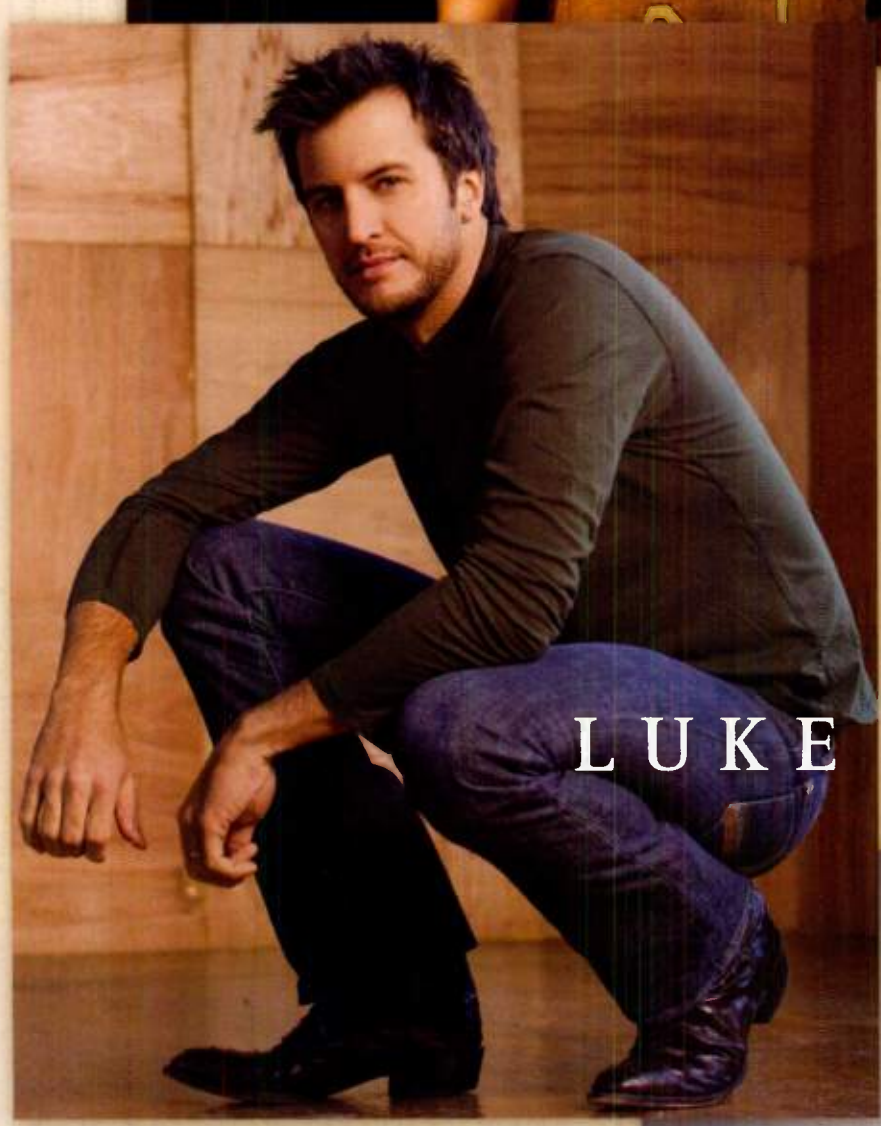

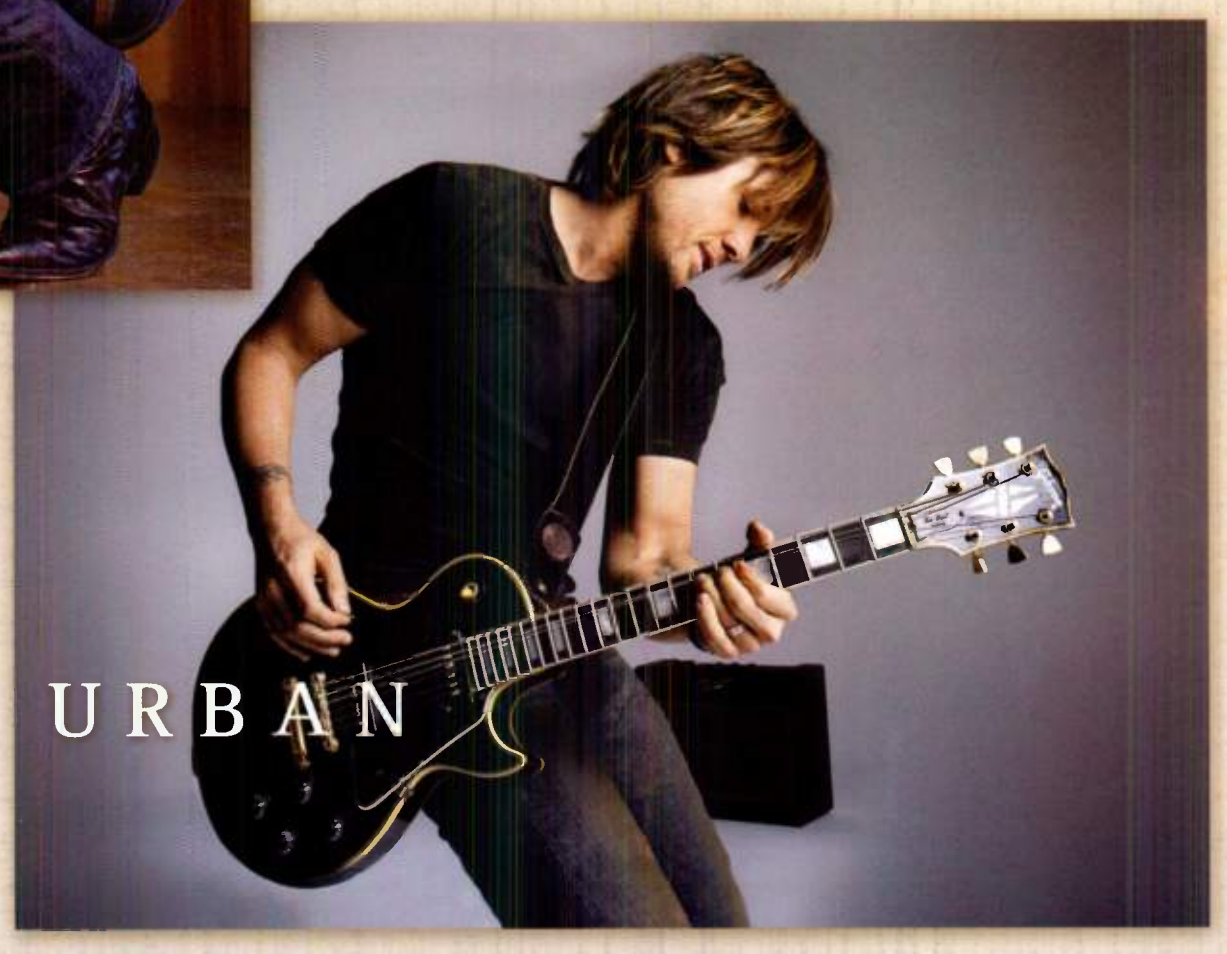

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We're Bringing Out The Big Guns

Carter's Chord

HIT debut single **"Young Love"**
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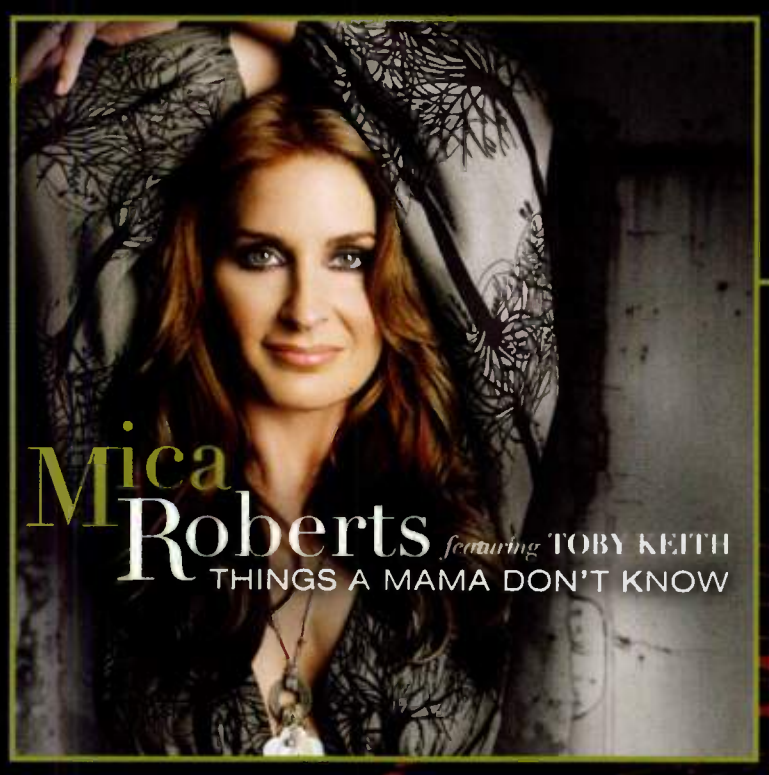
CARTER'S CHORD in stores May 13th!



Mica Roberts

The SMASH Single featuring Toby Keith
"Things A Mama Don't Know"

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On Your Desk NOW!

The only thing we take seriously is the music!

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Country's Fall(ing) Ratings

MOUNTAIN OR MOLEHILL?

The numbers are undeniable. An analysis of over 400 Country stations rated by Arbitron in the fall of 2007 shows that almost 55% suffered losses. Perhaps more alarming than the number of stations showing declines was the nature of those declines. Major market stations and many historically Country-dominant markets saw drops of a share point or more. Even more disturbing, a number of legendary Country outlets suffered their lowest 12+ shares in more than a decade. But what does that mean?

Any number of factors could have created an illusion that Country is hemorrhaging listeners or listening levels. Marketplace ratings compression, Arbitron sampling issues and even a loss of young listeners outside Country's 25-54 target demo are all contributors. (Note: Arbitron only allows trade publications to print 12+ shares.) Of course, there could be more ominous forces at work as well. Has AC's all-Christmas format become an intolerable poison for Country ratings? Has Country's playlist squeeze finally caught up with the format? Are we looking at a format stagnation similar to the trough that preceded the 1989 Country boom? Are budgetary assaults on programming, promotions and marketing marginalizing the format and the appeal of terrestrial radio in general?

Unfortunately, there are no easy answers to these questions. All of the above issues could be at work – or none of them. And it probably varies market by market. But with so many stations down, and many of them by such unexpected margins, we turned to local programmers on both sides of the ratings seesaw as well as national programming experts for their perspective on Country's fall(ing) ratings: Mountain or molehill?

MOUNTAIN OR MOLEHILL?

Polarizing The Audience

Albright & O'Malley's **Jaye Albright** is proud of the fact that 95% of their client stations with fall books did very well. She lays part of the responsibility for lackluster ratings on programmers who don't take enough care in music scheduling. "The polarity in tastes between male country music fans and female listeners is greater right now than it's ever been," she says. "Women like it newer and are more open to ballads and songs by females, whereas men want their country more familiar, more gold-based and are tolerant of only a very small number of songs by women artists. Careful song selection and scheduling plays a huge role in keeping all sides of the lifegroup tuned to your station, and it seems to me that the stations that didn't do as well may not have researched these issues, due to budget cuts.

Jaye Albright

As for new music integration, Albright notes, "Our research is showing that the right new music can work very well to create core passion when carefully mixed with the right balance in each carefully scheduled quarter-hour of recurrents and golds."

[Sample] Size Does Matter

Bob Glasco, a consultant with Rusty Walker & Associates, lays many of Country's woes directly on Arbitron's doorstep. "I don't see any particular pattern that would explain [declining ratings] other than market compression exaggerated by Arbitron's under-sampling, especially in markets 100+. [Under-sampling] has been going on for awhile, and Arbitron doesn't seem to be doing anything about it. Country is not usually the biggest-cuming format in a market. When you get under-sampling added to a compressing market, lower-cuming stations can easily be left out. I have clients that had success last fall, but there was no magic bullet in any of those cases. It was good diary placement and the stations getting back to doing good radio and playing the hits. Sorry it has to sound so basic, but it is what it is."

Bob Glasco

Another of Glasco's concerns centers on decimated budgets that are crippling stations in this ultra-competitive environment. "I worry as we go forward that the cuts taking place across our industry are siphoning the creativity and talent we need to combat all the audio sources radio must now compete with," he says.

Back To The Basics

Consultant **Joel Raab** is another voice for taking care of the basics. "Stations that grew took the time to hunker down on the basics and executed them well," he asserts. "The keys are having a great plan, great execution of the plan and having the discipline to stay on the plan. I wish I could say it was more sexy than that. That's tough sometimes with all the pressure stations are facing these days. Some stations get derailed when budgets get cut. In competitive situations, it was finding one or two things that made our stations stand out and be really different in a better way from competitors."

He adds that budget cuts are slicing more and more into muscle and bone. "Short-term thinking is catching up with some stations as companies are not investing in their product. Generally, if I'm involved, it means there's a commitment to the product and, thankfully, more often than not, good things happen when there is support for the product. Radio [companies] going private will cause short-term pain (firings, cutbacks), but long-term gains as radio can once again operate out of the public eye and make the investment needed to bring it into the 21st century."

Joel Raab

Casting an ear to stations' music, Raab says, "With so much of our music being shared on other formats, it's imperative that we embrace those great songs that can't be played on other formats. It will help if the 'next big thing' comes along that is Country format-exclusive (as was Garth, the Chicks and Gretchen when they hit the scene). Our newest stars are great, but they're shared with other formats."

Homogenous, Boring and Mechanical: Not Good

The Audience Development Group's **Brian Wright** admits, "It's no secret that Country radio had a difficult fall 2007. The question is, 'Is this a trend or a bump it the road?' I believe it can be both if we don't really take a look at what I believe is going on here.

"One of the elements that had a negative impact on Country radio this fall was the deeper impact that the All-Christmas AC stations had on Country. But it wasn't just the fact that they played All-Christmas music. Its was the way they captured the emotions of the holiday season, a time when the average person really wanted this it to be *the most wonderful time of the year!* It was their singular focus. PDs should take a look at their numbers to see what these types of stations cut out of their 25-34 demo, particularly females. In one market I saw the All-Christmas AC station go from a one share in October to a 13 share in November to a 17 share in December in this demo. Don't believe for a minute that a lot of those shares didn't come from the Country station(s). The good news here is that we know we have to do a better job at leading the way in holiday cheer and emotional content. There are ways of winning this image without playing All-Christmas music. If we do not improve in this area, the same thing will happen next fall – only worse."

Wright feels further harm is being done to Country radio because it's becoming homogenized and sounding too mechanical. "I'm not hearing as many innovative ideas coming from the format as I have in the past," he says. "We seem to be relying too much on 'This Date In History' and 'Entertainment Updates' and not trying to really connect with people on an emotional and relevant level. I hear far less audience interaction than in the past, as well. And, when I do hear it, it is so quick and impersonal that it seems like the goal of the personality was to get the phone call over with. We wouldn't speak like this to a real person at a restaurant or shopping mall, but for some reason we do on the radio. Part of the reason for this is the lack of talent-coaching the personalities are receiving. Many tell me they've gone several months – years, in some cases – since their last coaching session. Could you imagine how a basketball or football team would perform under this scenario? Even with strong coaching it isn't easy to connect with today's radio user."

If "live" talent is too homogenous and mechanical for Wright, you know he has some thoughts on voice-tracking. "A lot of the voice-tracking I hear on Country radio is very bland and mechanical. Most voice trackers sound like they are suffering badly from the negative byproducts of repetition – the things we say the most come out sounding bored and uninspired. Making matters worse, these things are usually the most important things we need to sell and communicate – like frequency and call-letters, important promotions, station events, weather, etc. The problem is compounded by the fact that they're recording their breaks all at the same time and not delivering them over the span of four to five hours as they did when they were live. This time-compression leads to a person sounding one particular way throughout their entire show with no mood variations. Not good. When a listener perceives that the personality they're listening to is bored and uninspired, they disconnect emotionally with them and eventually turn the radio off or go to another radio station."

Brian Wright

Wright also believes programmers can improve their station's sound by realigning the music rotations to fit actual audience usage patterns. "In our effort to not burn out a song, we often don't sufficiently burn it in," he says. "And, we rarely play it enough after it becomes an audience favorite. Many PDs and MDs think the audience is hearing their favorite songs often enough, when in fact they are not. If PDs and MDs laid out a grid that showed when a big hit song was played throughout the week and laid a transparency over it that showed the average listener's usage pattern, they'd be alarmed at how often listeners are *not* hearing that song. This, along with better catalog music management, would help in the music arena. The average person wants to hear their favorite song three-four times per day. Remember, they don't care how many times you played it. They only care about the number of times they *heard* it."

> "STATIONS TRYING TO COMPETE IN VERY FRAGMENTED AND HIGHLY-NICHED SITUATIONS WITHOUT MARKETING ARE GOING TO WAR WITH NO WEAPONS"

Marketing Matters, Too

Both Albright and Wright felt that marketing – or, perhaps more accurately, the lack of it – plays a major role in a station's success or failure. Says Wright, "It's disturbing to see how marketing and promotion budgets have been reduced over the years. This is really catching up to us now. There is no substitute for

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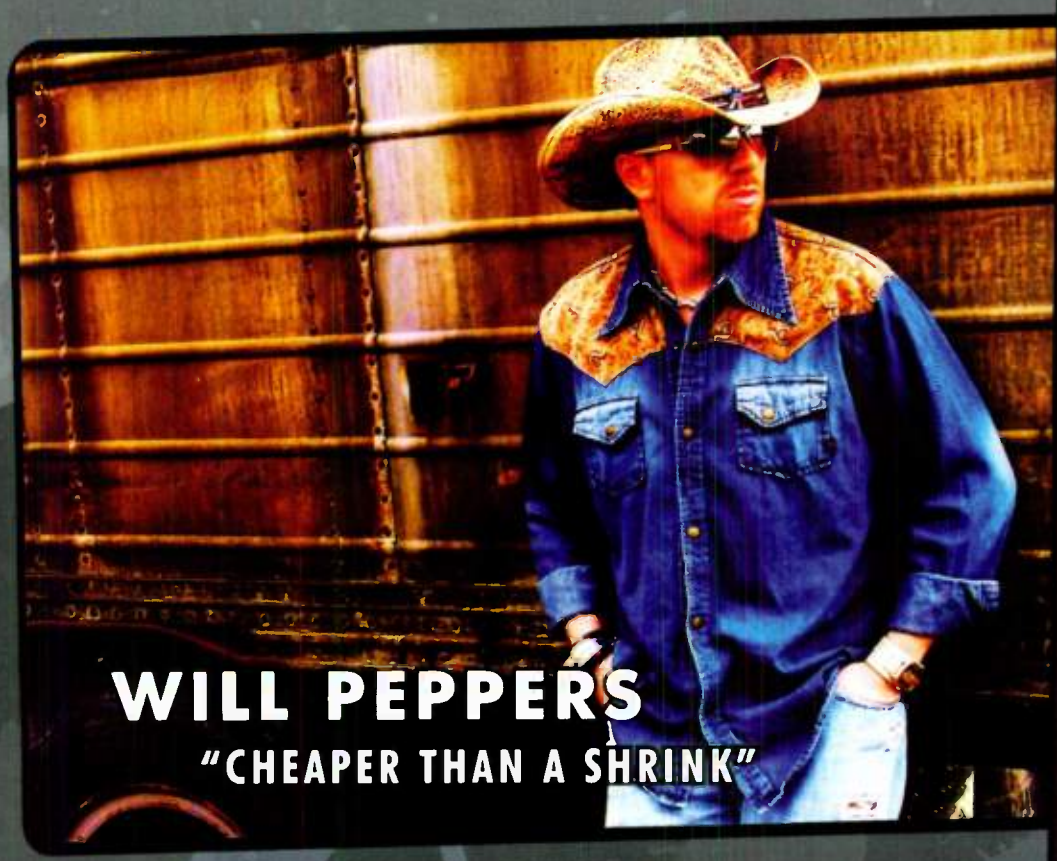
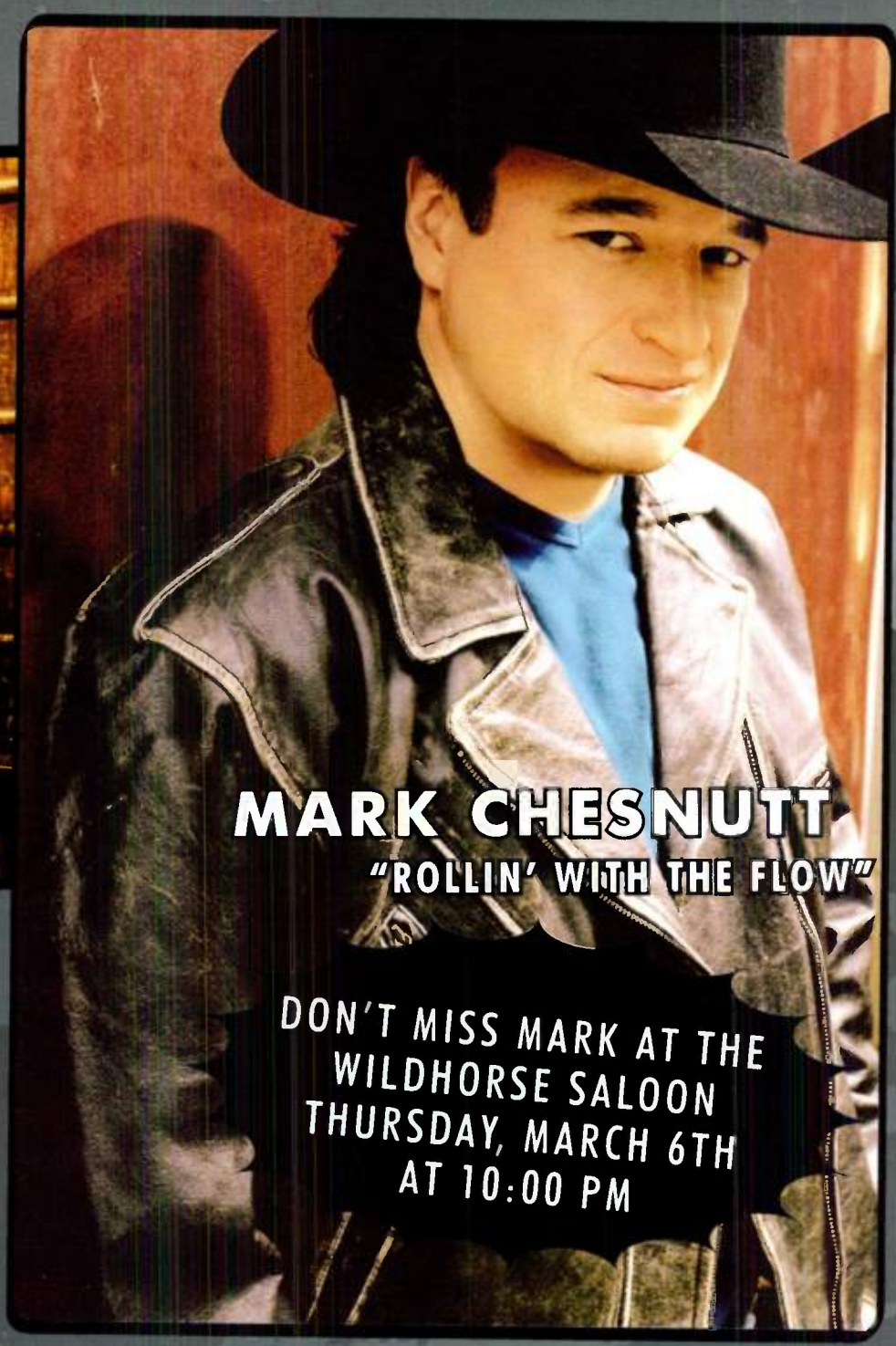
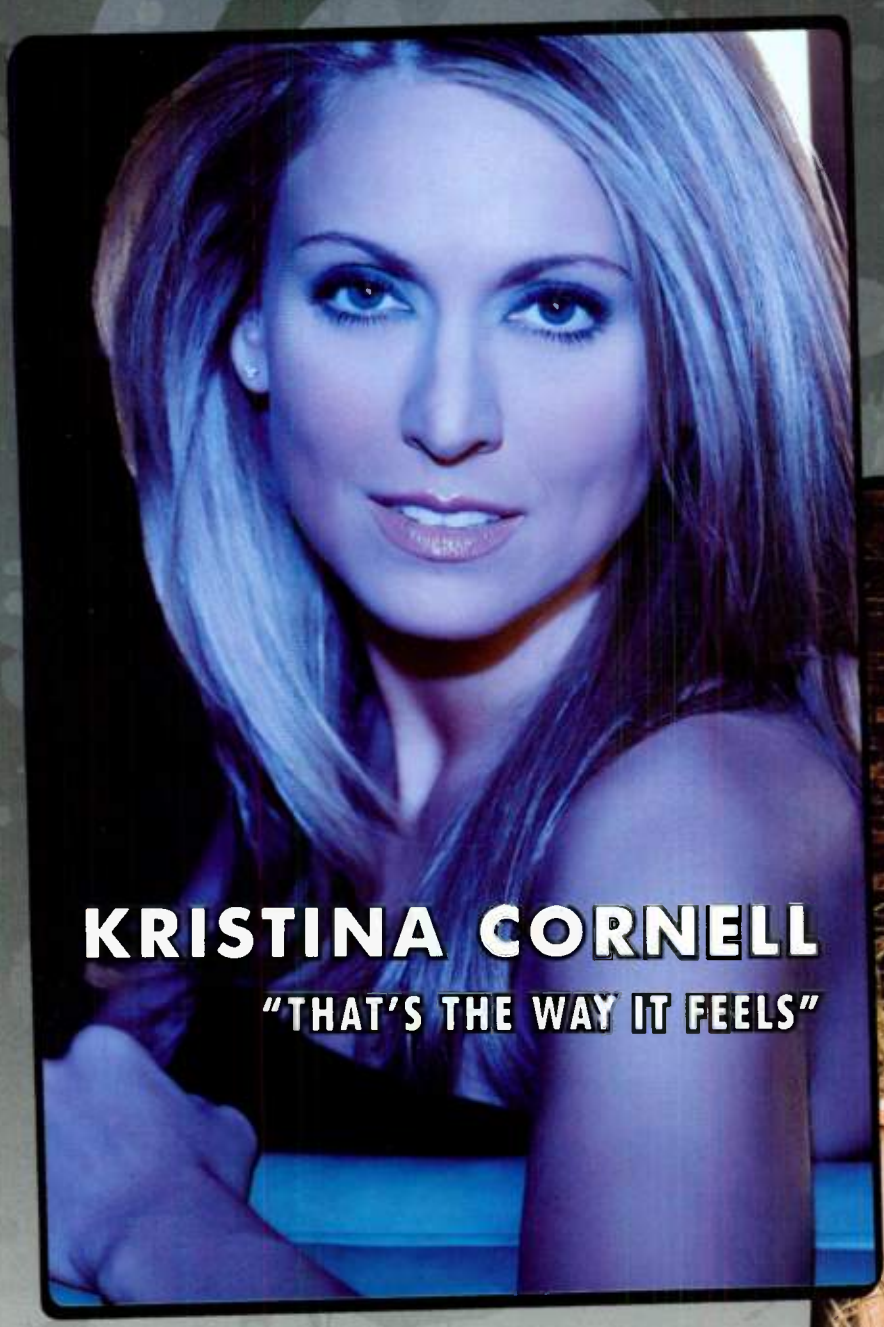


WILL PEPPERS
"CHEAPER THAN A SHRINK"

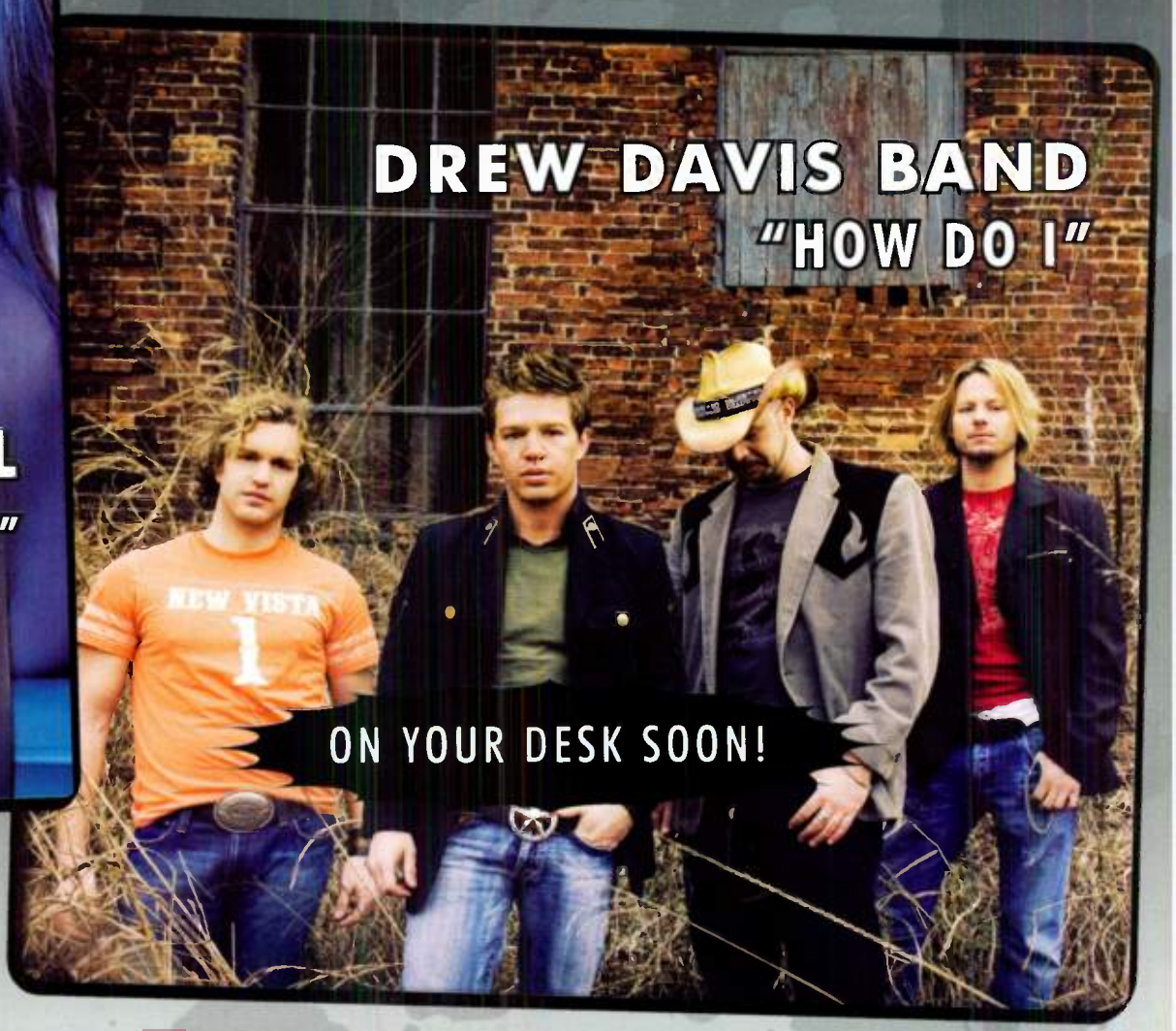


MARK CHESNUTT
"ROLLIN' WITH THE FLOW"

DON'T MISS MARK AT THE
WILDHORSE SALOON
THURSDAY, MARCH 6TH
AT 10:00 PM



KRISTINA CORNELL
"THAT'S THE WAY IT FEELS"



DREW DAVIS BAND
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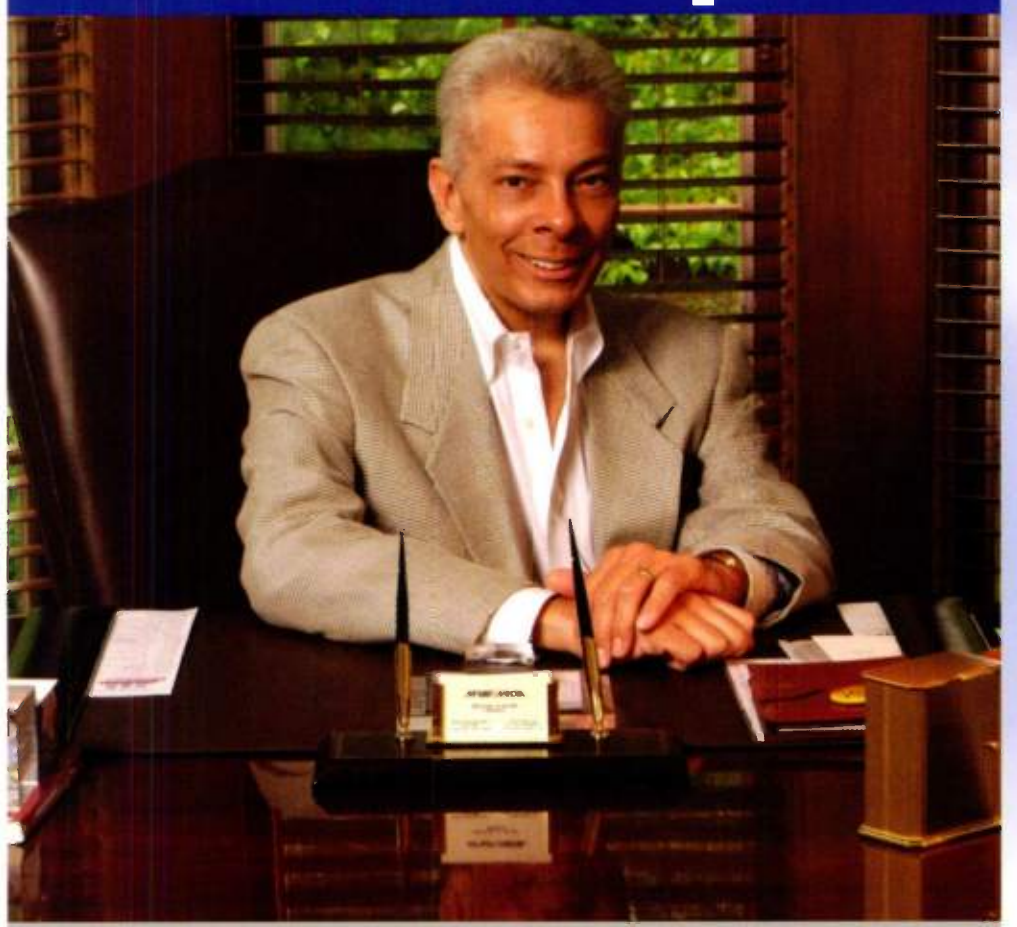
McVay Surveys Country's Fall Landscape



McVay Media President Mike McVay is perhaps best-known for his work with AC and Hot AC radio stations, artists and syndicators around the world. But he's also been a keen observer of the Country condition. We asked McVay if Country's troubles are of the "Mountain" or "Molehill" variety.

"I don't believe the Country format is in trouble, but rather is a victim of circumstances. The radio landscape has changed and Country needs to change with it.

"Country radio has become more female-leaning in the past few years. The sharing that I've been seeing with AC stations has been growing. This is mostly a direct result of the format now being the home of the singer/songwriter. AC is also no longer a format where you'll find new pop music. Carrie Underwood is this generation's Carly Simon. Tim McGraw is James Taylor. Country also has the 'middle America' version of pop-versus-Top 40 that leans urban. Gretchen Wilson is Pink with a party attitude. Taylor Swift is a better-balanced Christina Aguilera.

"The men have been abandoned, except for a few songs here and there. Consolidators remain reluctant to have one Country station target women and one target men, so the less-fair sex is being ignored. Add to that the fact Bon Jovi (one year ago) blew the doors open to make Country a Top 40-type of format for adults of all life-groups.

"So, given that Country is today a form of AC and Top 40 – and that we have evidence that sharing between Country and other formats has increased – there are several things that one can point to as interfering with Country in the fall 2007 Arbitron.

• All-Christmas stations hurt all-female formats for the last four-six weeks of the fall sweep.

• Men tend to be less loyal to the Country format today. They share their listening with the News/Talk stations. What happened in November to affect the male audience? Local elections? Bad weather? The troop surge in Iraq?

• The format is similar to being a Top 40. When pop formats like Top 40 lose TSL, it's usually because of current repetition (playing the same currents too frequently) or simply playing bad music.

"Country programmers should not panic, but be conscious of the fact that they're now programming a mass appeal format. They need to analyze everything they're doing. Make small adjustments to increase the core's TSL (more variety of their favorites). Increase the use of their station among P2 and P3 listeners (better music and better content). Steal a word from the Internet world and make your station "sticky" (contests and compelling stories) and you'll see a rebound in the spring."

Asked what he thinks of ever-tightening Country current playlists, McVay responded, "I'd say it's a bad thing for the tighter than normal current rotations. That's what I was referring to when I noted that Country has become a Top 40 format. In reality, it should be more like a Hot AC than a Top 40. Country is targeting adults, right? Country has a national TSL that's higher than that of Top 40 – almost double. So why would anyone think that turning over currents like a Top 40 makes sense?"

MOUNTAIN OR MOLEHILL?

marketing. It's as important as the electricity that powers the transmitter if you want long-term ratings success. Cume is down at many radio stations, and marketing is the engine that drives cume. Without marketing, you slowly lose the brand awareness that you've worked so hard for. If radio would reactivate their marketing and develop strong appointment listening campaigns, it would assure them of higher ratings. If you could convince just 30% of your weekly diaryholders to simply listen on three or four more occasions that week, it is a mathematical certainty that you'd see significant ratings increase in nearly all demos.

"Narrowing down the numbers like this really helps the personality focus on an achievable goal instead of thinking, 'Man, how am I going to convince all of these people (the station cume) to listen and listen more often.' Instead, they can focus on convincing 10-15 people to come back to the radio station on a few more occasions. Each time I share this with a personality, their eyes light up and they feel much more confident because they know it is something they can actually do."

Adds Albright, "Stations trying to compete in very fragmented and highly niched situations without marketing are going to war with no weapons."

Fall, By The Numbers

The newly released National Format Averages study done by Katz Media Group paints a disturbing picture when compared to Country's past. KMG's analysis of the fall 2007 Arbitron show Country TSL levels at 17-year lows for Men and Women 25-54. Men come in at seven hours 21 minutes per week, down from 11 hours 30 minutes in 1990. Among Adult Women, TSL is at six hours 33 minutes, down from 10 hours 29 minutes in fall 1990.

The fall 2007 Average Market Format Shares shows Country declining from a fall '06 14.9 to 14.3, the lowest since 2003. And, it's down from the high of 18.0 in 1992. The good news is, Country is still No. 1, leading Rock (14.1), AC (13.1), Urban (12.6) and News/Talk/Info (10.9) in the broad format categories that achieved double digits.

For the first time since KMG began compiling stats, the Average Age of the Country listener has reached 45 years old. This comes after eight years of being either 43 or 44 years old, and up from a 1993 and 1994 low of 38 years old. The format is now 55% Women, 45% Men.

Mountain Or Molehill?

So, which is it for Country – a ratings blip that can be fixed or an irreversible downward trend? The answer may depend on whether you're climbing the hill or sitting on top of it. An established brand, a heritage station that has been winning for years, might be able to remain atop the market, albeit with reduced shares as the 12+ is eaten away by market compression. Paying closer attention to the things you can control – music rotations, talent coaching, etc. – can help maintain TSL and stem the tide to a degree. But the budgetary restraints that are outside of a programmer's control may well, in time, prove to be insurmountable.

Also out of local PD's hands is the consolidation-driven repositioning of many Country stations. In particular, stations residing in a cluster have shifted to be more female-driven, rather than the traditional 25-54, 50/50 male/female-driven format Country has always been. That's made the format more vulnerable to one-offs like the All-Christmas Music format.

And, sadly, there are some things happening to great Country stations that are simply tragic. I look at a number of legendary Country outlets and wonder whether it's even possible to return to greatness when slashed budgets have left so many of them with two live personalities. And, if ratings are the product of how many people listen and how long they listen, how can you increase the cume part of the equation with no marketing and promotion budget?

The bottom-line is, most of the variables out of your control aren't going to change any time soon. In the end, whether it's a mountain or a molehill may indeed be up to you. It's all how you look at it. CAC

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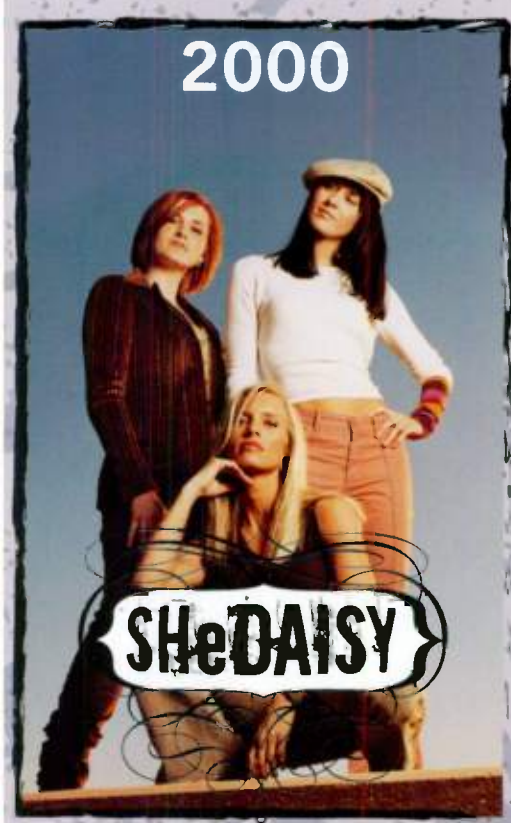

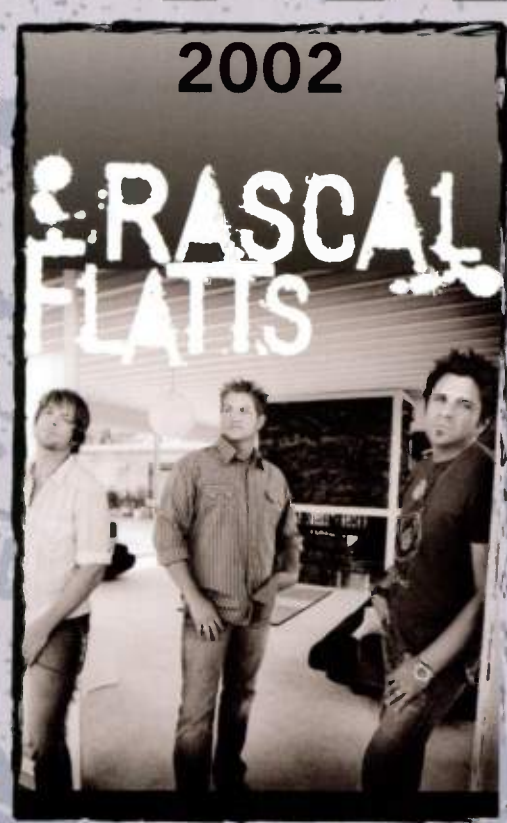

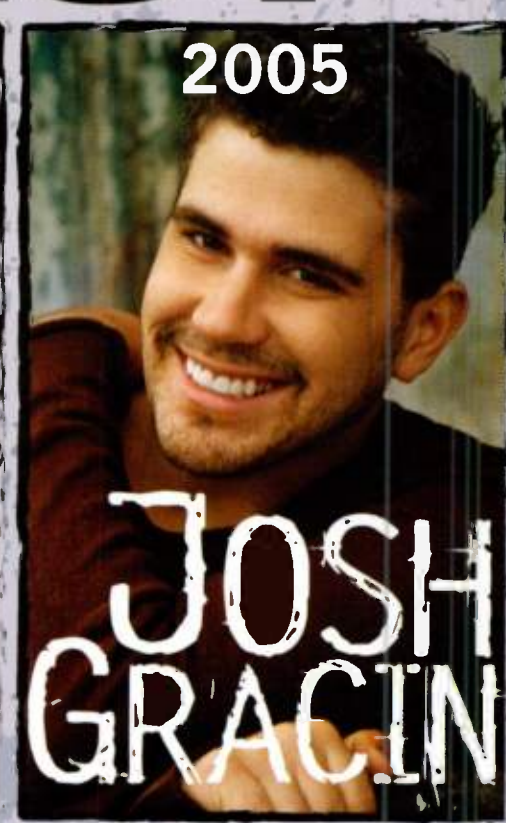

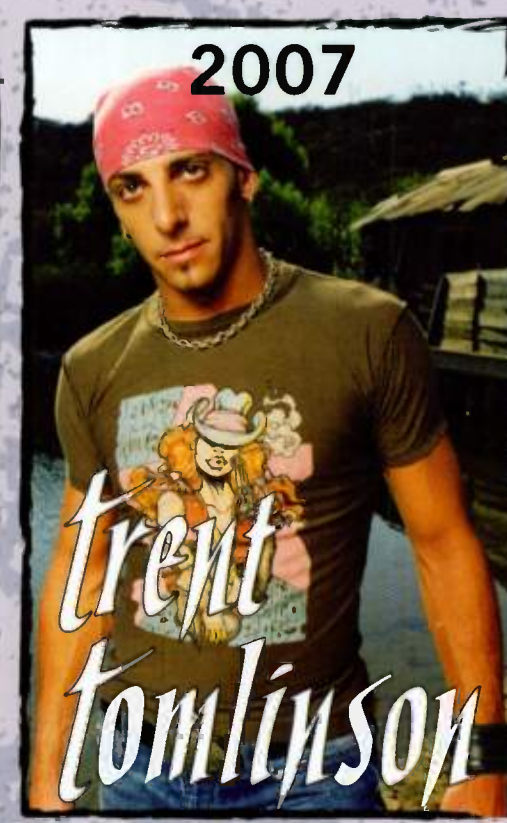

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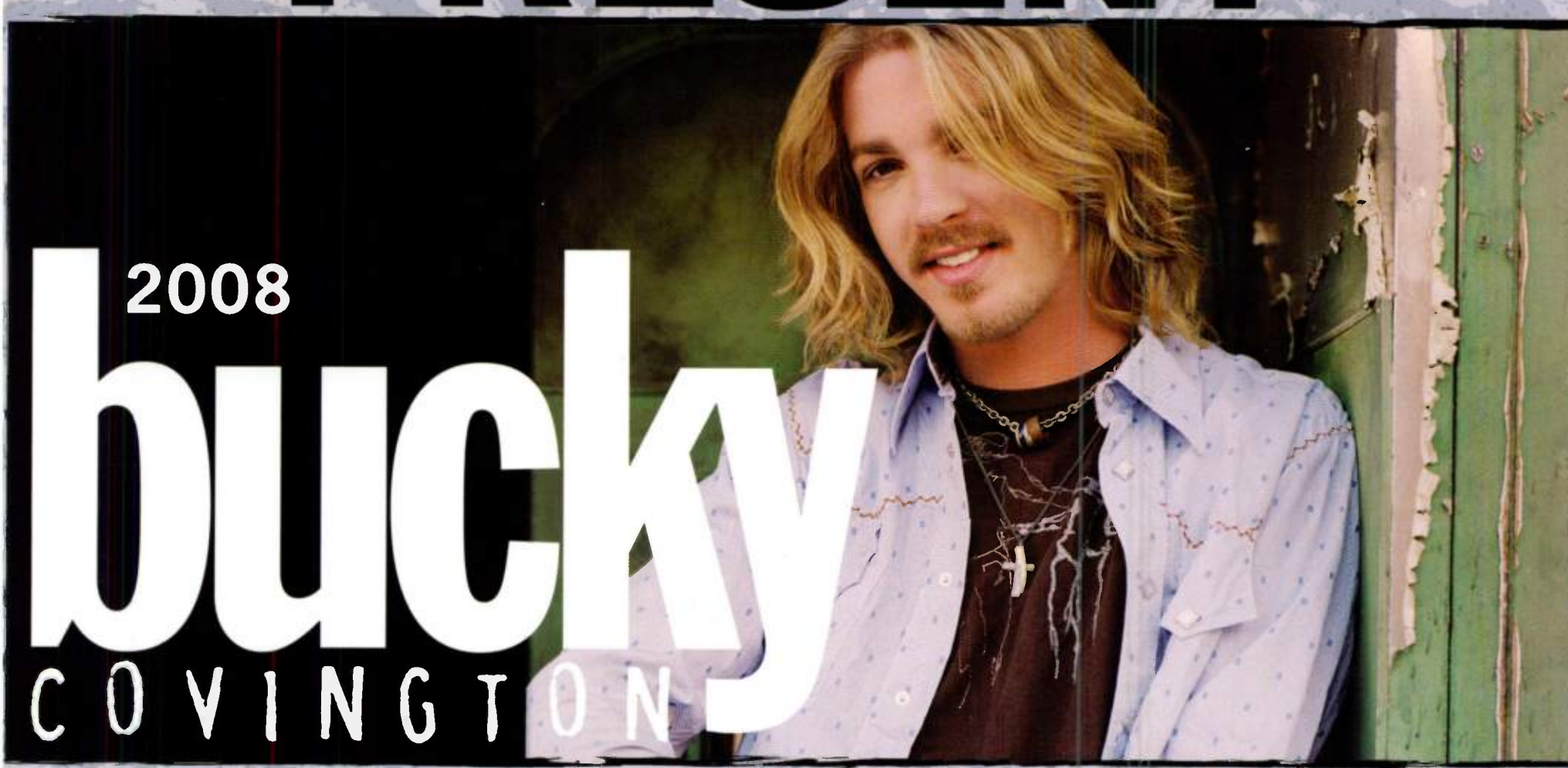
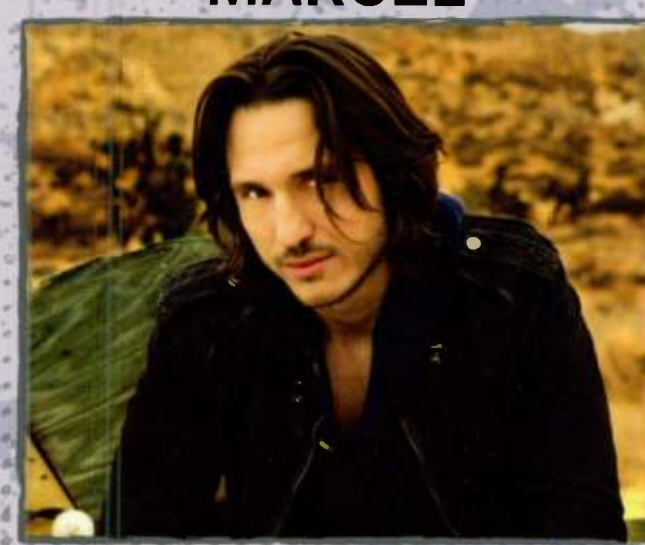


& FUTURE

PHIL STACEY

SARAH BUXTON

MARCEL



LUKE BRYAN

South Georgia's Luke Bryan delivered the singalong anthem of the summer with his debut single, "All My Friends Say." A singer/songwriter steeped in the traditional approach of Merle Haggard and Alan Jackson, he'll be out on the road with labelmate Dierks Bentley for most of '08. Bryan's richly autobiographical sophomore single, "We Rode in Trucks," has already cracked the Top 40.

Did you grow up listening to Country radio?
That's all I ever listened to my whole life. I don't remember my mother or my father ever having anything on that radio but country music.

What was your hometown station?
When I was growing up, it was K Country 101 in Albany, GA, but now it's K Country 104.5 [WKAK]. A competitor came along later on, [WOBB] B100.

What is your most vivid memory from a radio tour?
One radio guy had me play his favorite song on my album, and right after I played it he played the cut on the album to A/B them. He was impressed and I was kind of impressed, like, "Hey, that does sound pretty good."

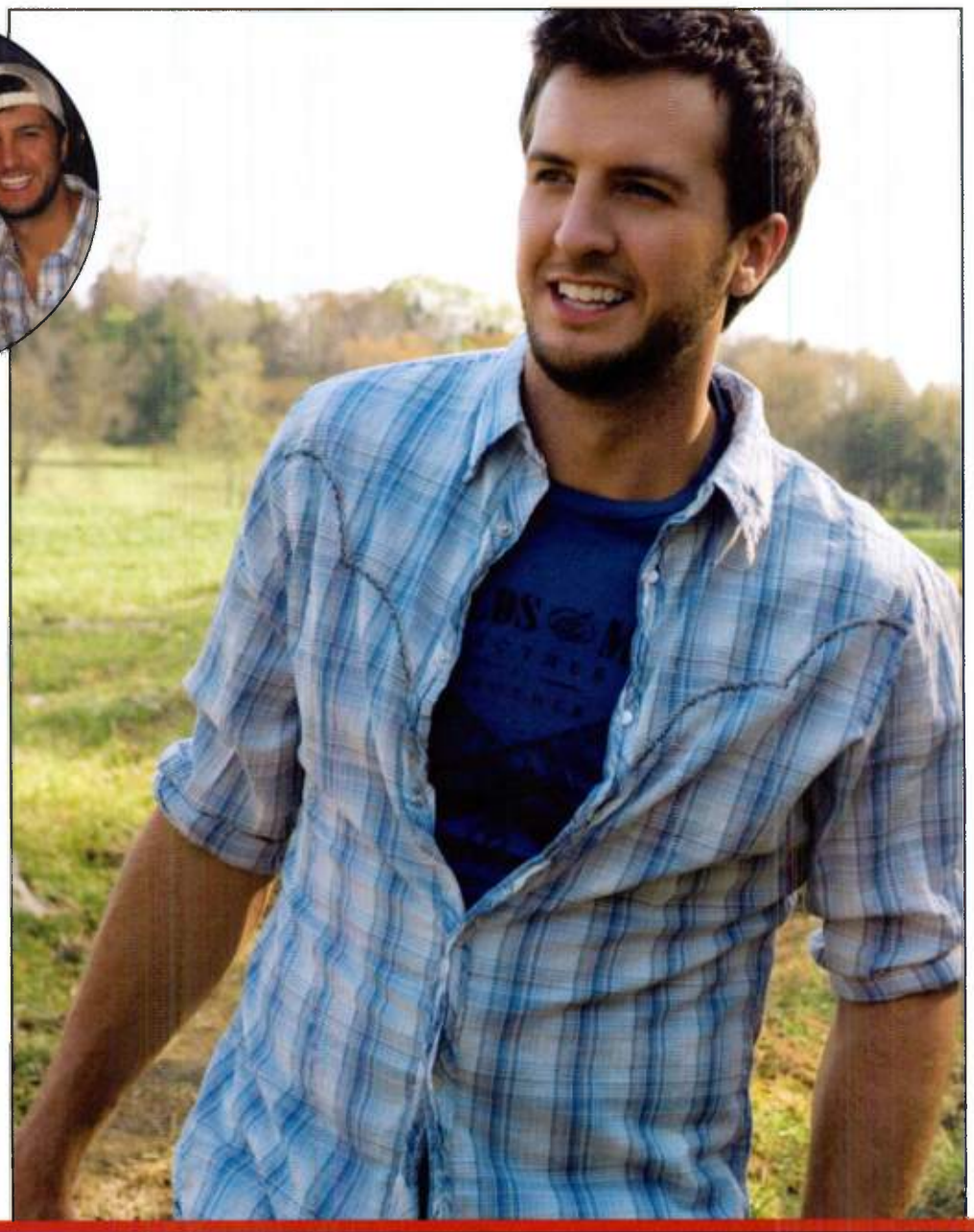
Did you hear any scary radio tour stories before you went out?
I think everybody sets you up for the worst with stories of PDs smashing CDs with sledgehammers, but I never encountered anything like that. Everybody was as nice as they could be, and nobody put lighter fluid on my CD and set it on fire.

Got any good stories from the road?
Billy Currington pulled the best prank on me. I was doing a show in Omaha, and Billy had swung by the local station. He called me and told me that all the advertising for my show had my name listed as Bryan Luke. I got to calling all my regionals and raising Cain. He got me pretty good.

Do you remember the first time you heard your song on the radio?
Yeah, it was down in Chattanooga, and Kris Van Dyke at US 101 played "All My Friends Say." Then there was Mike Culotta in Tampa. We had just left his station and we were going down the road and he played it. Little things like that put a smile on your face and brighten up your day.

Has that become somewhat routine?
'Coming up next, Toby Keith, Luke Bryan and George Strait.' I'm never going to get used to that.

Do you have any expectations about the New Faces show?
I just want to show Country radio that their intuition was right on this ol' boy from South Georgia.



PLAYING THE FACE CARD

Five of country music's brightest lights, as determined by CRS attendees, will perform at the annual New Faces of Country Music show on March 7. Country Aircheck tracked down each of this year's selected artists somewhere on the road to find out how radio looks from the artist side of the fence.

CRS-39's New Faces of Country

JASON MICHAEL CARROLL

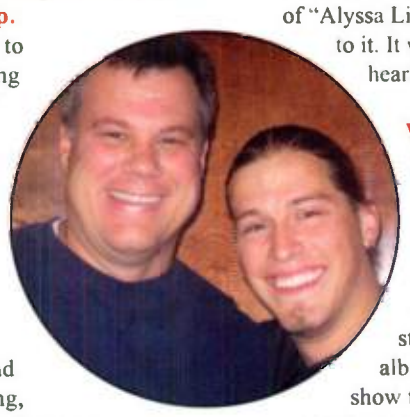
With the self-penned Top 5 smash, "Alyssa Lies," Jason Michael Carroll served up one of those unforgettable, once-in-a-lifetime debut singles. He hit the Top 5 again with "Livin' Our Love Song," and his latest, the blue-collar rocker, "I Can Sleep When I'm Dead," just launched. A latecomer to country, Carroll was raised on pure Gospel and blessed with an impossibly expressive baritone that was made for a country song.

Did you grow up listening to Country radio?
Oh, no. I had to grow up listening to gospel, because my dad was a Baptist preacher. But I would go to bed with a Walkman underneath my pillow and pray to God that I'd wake up before my mom came in to wake us up for school.

You've been traveling non-stop. Got any good stories from the road?
I'm a huge Aerosmith fan, and I have a green scarf that I tie to my microphone stand. We were out with Brooks & Dunn and Alan Jackson, and on the last night of the tour I go onstage and there is a pink boa zip-tied to my microphone stand so I couldn't get it off. I rocked it the whole show.

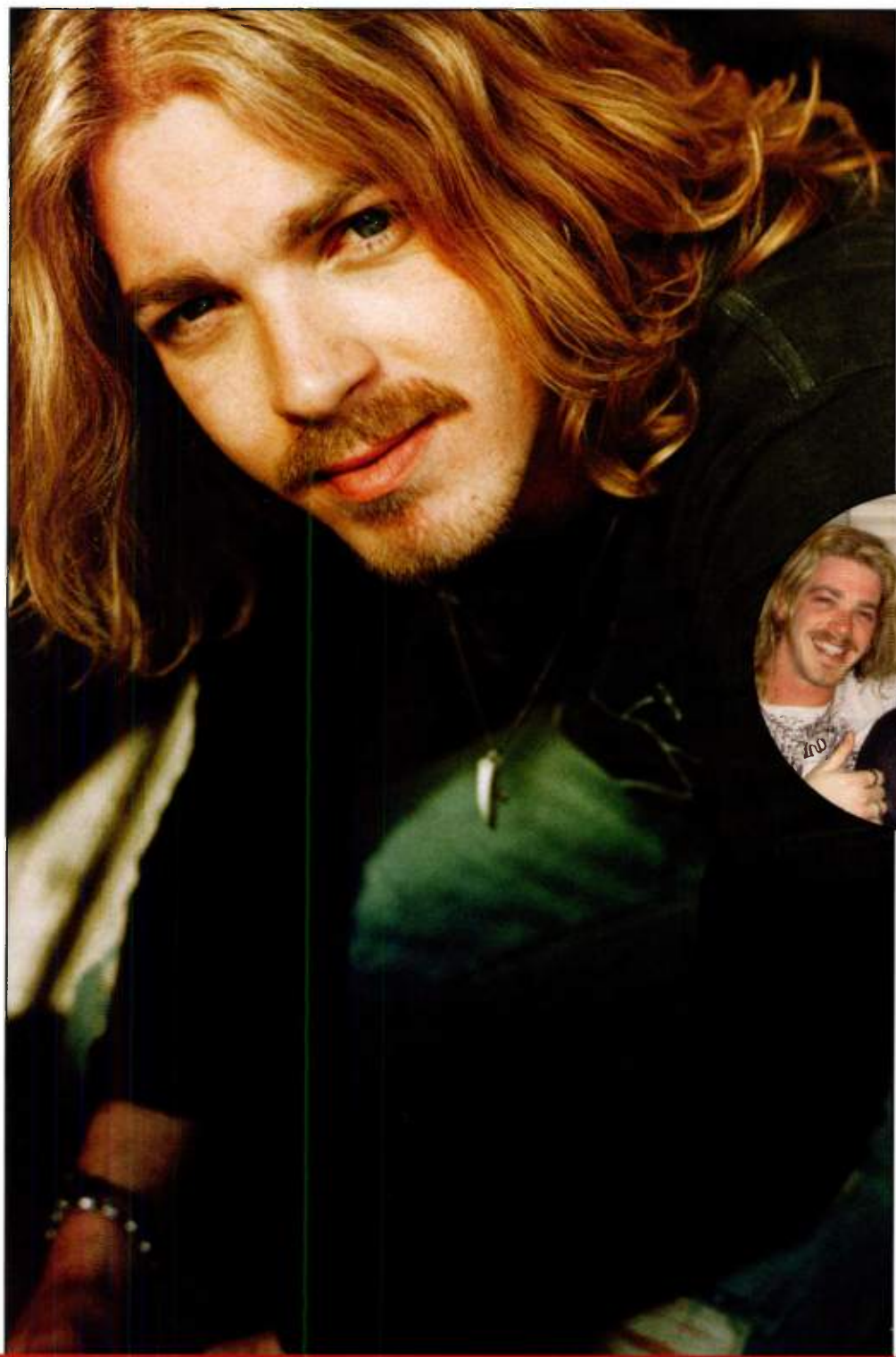
How is your relationship with your regional label reps?
They're awesome. From them building relationships with radio people, it's opened the doors for me to do the same thing. We were going to a radio station in Minnesota, the weather was terrible and my rep's flight was cancelled. When we got to the station I had to represent myself. But I'd seen them do their spiel so many times it worked out really well.

Having had an emotionally impactful debut single like "Alyssa Lies" had to help.
I remember going to stations and playing "Lookin' At You" and they'd say, "Can you play one live for us?" So I'd play "Alyssa Lies" and they'd get phone calls for a week. The label said, "We had a plan for this thing, but we're going to listen to Country radio and their listeners and go with 'Alyssa Lies.'" For me, it took the boardroom out of country music and put the heart back in it.



Do you remember hearing the song on the radio for the first time?
I remember going out to eat with my family, and as we were pulling into the Olive Garden I heard the very beginning of "Alyssa Lies." We just sat and listened to it. It was an interesting feeling hearing it and not expecting it.

What does CRS mean to you?
Oh my goodness, to rub elbows with the people who make the decisions about what gets played on radio? There's so much studio magic that goes into an album, so to have the chance to show them we can back up what we do on our album is really exciting



Bucky Covington

He finished eighth on American Idol, but Bucky Covington's self-titled Lyric Street debut album shot straight to No. 1, while its leadoff single, "Different World," sailed into the Top 5 and showcased the Rockingham, North Carolina native as a distinctive country stylist. His sophomore single, "It's Good to Be Us," is currently Top 20 and rising.

Did you listen to Country radio growing up?
I did, but I really started getting into country around the time of Pure Country. I thought Dusty was awesome!

What was your hometown station?
My station growing up was 95.7 WKML out of Fayetteville. I had no idea back then what call letters meant, but those call letters are imprinted in my head.

Got any good stories from your radio tour?
My most memorable moment from my radio tour is the crappy bus we were on. It wasn't really a tour bus, it was more like a day coach – a tour bus with no bunks. If you're in this bus for a long time, you want to lay down. I also put on 30 pounds and had to go on a diet after the tour.

Can you recall the first time you heard your song on the radio?
I was driving from Nashville to Rockingham to visit my brother for the weekend. For eight hours I was searching these stations for my song, and just when I pulled in my brother's driveway, my song came on. The first time I saw my video pop up was at CRS. It was down in the lobby with the big screen and I was like, "That's just priceless."

Are you used to hearing your music on the radio at this point?
I want to say yes, but it's only until I put out another song, and then it starts all over again. I've heard these songs a thousand times, but hearing a song come on the radio? That's a whole different thing.

What does CRS mean to you?
Man, it's an awesome time. You do the radio tour and go all over the country, and it's great for radio to come out of their element, come to Nashville and hang out. As an artist, I get to go all around the country in two to three hours, and you just can't beat that.

Got any good stories from the road?
Me and my brother take our street bikes on the road with us. I'm going 70 miles an hour down the Interstate in Ohio, and I run out of gas. By the time I got down to 60, I'd reached up and grabbed my brother's hand and he pulled me for five miles. I got to the gas station, but my arm was dead for a week.

Is it humbling to think of how much support you've gotten at Country radio?
It is awesome. I've heard Randy Goodman, the President of my label, say, "I'm old-fashioned, and I do it the way I've always done it, which is to get songs played on the radio and the rest takes care of itself."

PLAYING THE FACE CARD

Jake Owen

As co-writer of every song on his debut album, *Startin' With Me*, Florida native Jake Owen got things off to a rowdy start back in 2006 with his Top-20 debut single, "Yee Haw." Then, just when you thought you had him pegged, the RCA artist hit the Top 10 with the album's title song, a slice of true-to-life introspection that artfully showcased his thoughtful side. His latest single, "Something About a Woman," is currently Top 30 and climbing.

Did you listen to Country radio growing up?
Yes, I did. I've always been a fan of older country music and guys with big voices and baritones. Merle Haggard, Ray Price, Vern Gosdin, Charlie Rich, Don Williams, I could go on forever.

What was your local station?
It was WAVW (Wave 92.7)/Stuart, FL.

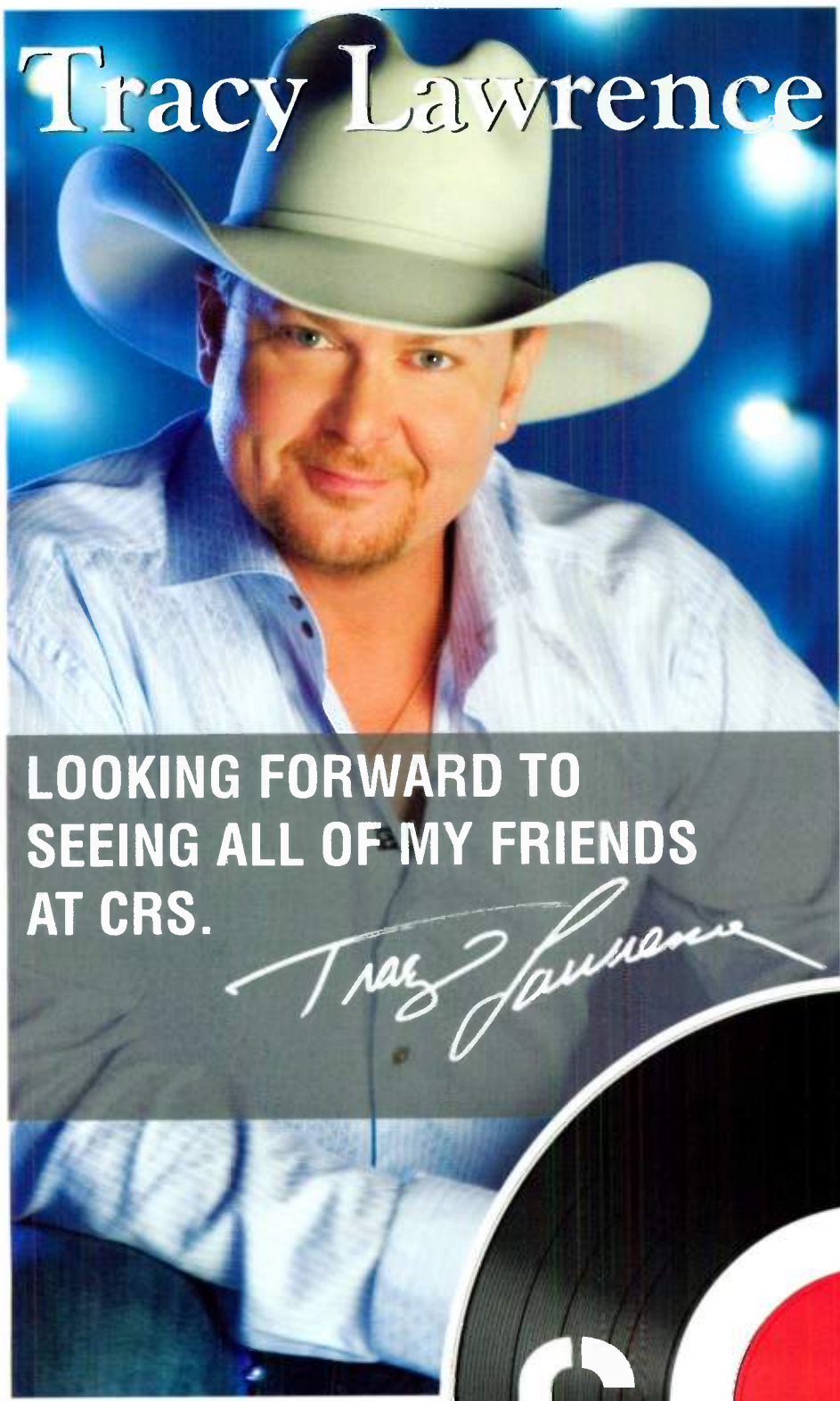
What is your most vivid radio tour memory?
My first visit to San Jose station KRTY. The GM is Nate Deaton, and before I could pull my guitar out he was like, "Don't even waste my time playing that 'Yee Haw' song, because it's terrible." We laugh about that now. Nate and I have become good friends, and he's become a big supporter. There's something to be said for someone who'll give you constructive criticism and who doesn't tell you they like everything you do.

Do you remember the first time you heard your song on the radio?
I'd just bought a new truck with one of those radios where the artist's name pops up on the screen. I was driving home and "Yee Haw" comes on. I grabbed my cell phone and took a picture of it. I still have that picture.

What does CRS mean to you?
I get to take time at CRS to talk to the people who have been so helpful in my career and to really show my appreciation. A lot of the relationships I have out on the road with these guys are ones that I think I'll have for a long, long time.

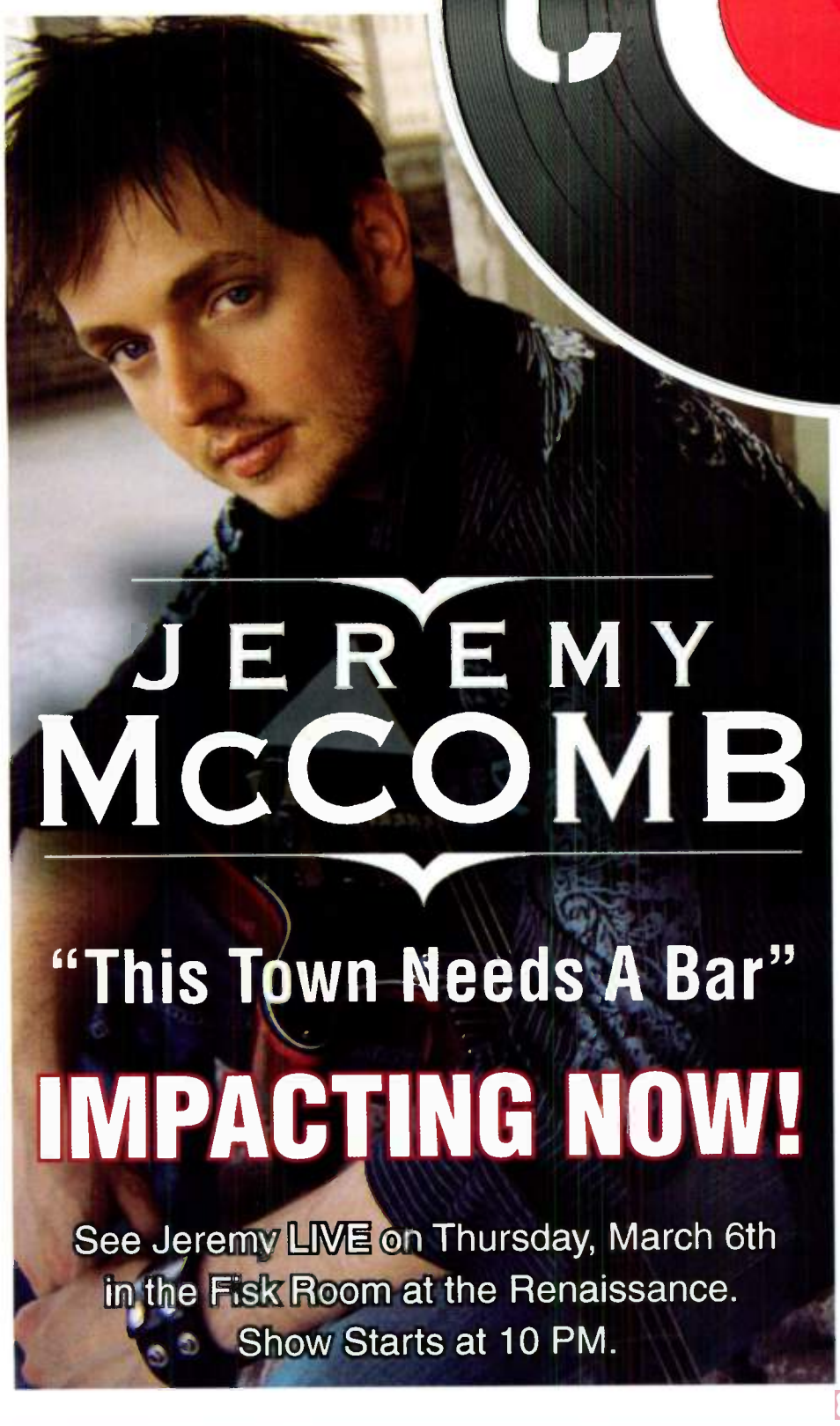
Is it humbling to think about the support you've received at Country radio?
Yes. It really is. I appreciate the fact that they all believe in me enough to play my music enough to let people start to understand who I am.

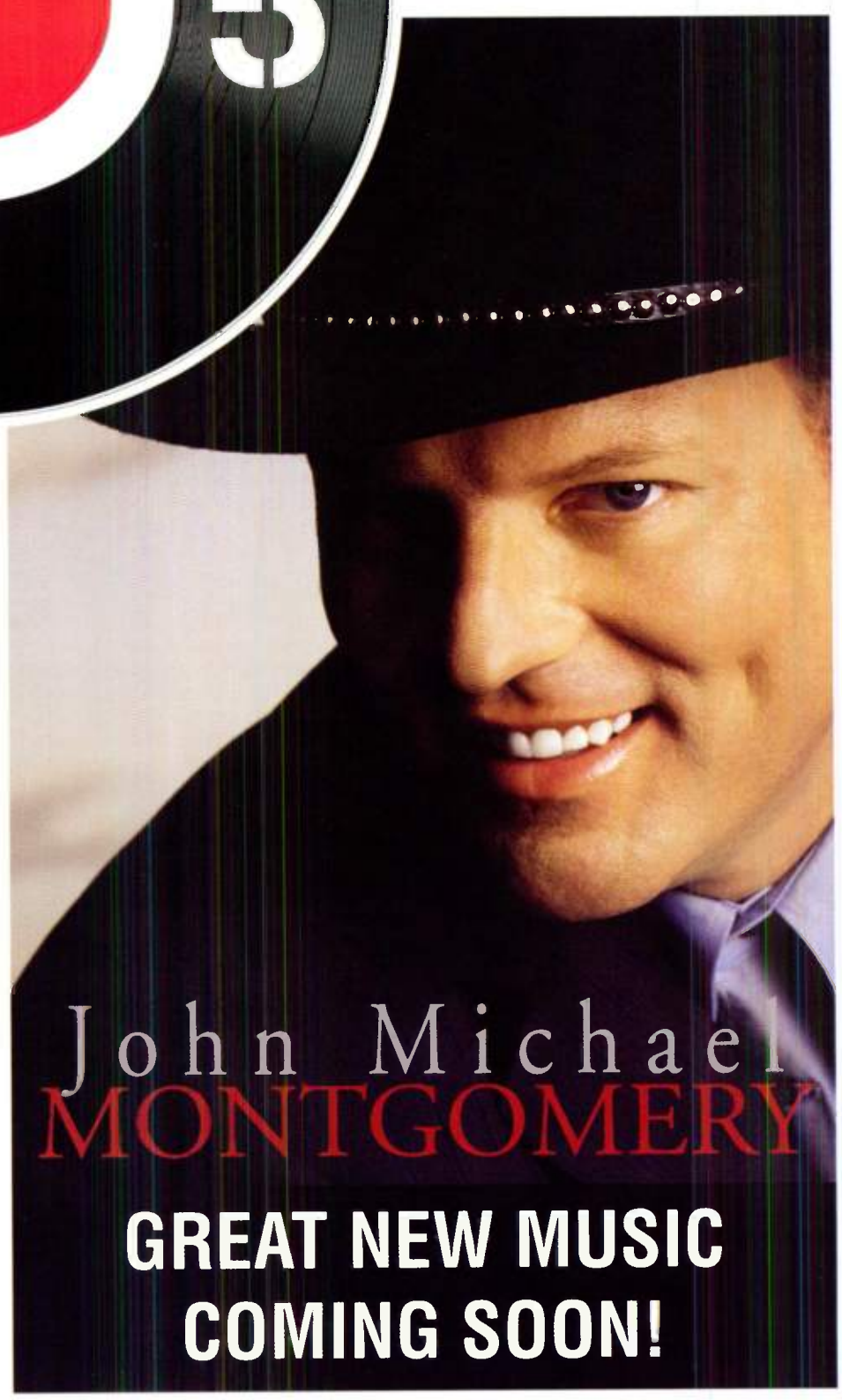
You were looking at a career as a pro golfer before you fell into the music business. Do you ever wonder what that road would have been like?
No, because there's something about music and the way that it connects with people. Now, I'm able to write a song in my house that could potentially travel all over the world. I don't think I ever could have done that with a golf club in my hand.


Tracy Lawrence
LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING ALL OF MY FRIENDS AT CRS.
Tracy Lawrence

LONESTAR
THE NEW SINGLE
"LET ME LOVE YOU"
ON YOUR DESK & ON THE AIR NOW!
OFFICIAL IMPACT DATE: 4/7
See Lonestar LIVE on Thursday, March 6th in the Fisk Room at the Renaissance. Show Starts at 10 PM.

C 5


JEREMY McCOMB
"This Town Needs A Bar"
IMPACTING NOW!
See Jeremy LIVE on Thursday, March 6th in the Fisk Room at the Renaissance. Show Starts at 10 PM.


John Michael MONTGOMERY
GREAT NEW MUSIC COMING SOON!

PLAYING THE FACE CARD

Taylor had to pass on last year's New Faces invitation due to touring obligations. In the ensuing 12 months, with two Top-5 singles and a multi-week #1, the singer/songwriter has gone from New Face to new sensation. Re-invited to participate in the New Faces show, Swift returns armed with her fourth chart entry, "Picture to Burn," and her New Faces performance promises to be a highlight of CRS week.

TAYLOR SWIFT

You were picked for New Faces last year, but had other obligations.
I cried because I couldn't play it! I was on the George Strait tour, and we were playing that night in Kansas City. I was so honored to have been voted to play, and I'm even more honored to be voted in again. I'm really stoked.

With a CMA Horizon Award and a Best New Artist Grammy nomination, your career has grown exponentially over the past year. Does that change your approach to this show?
The way that I'm wired, I'm never, ever going say that I've made it. Everything you do can get you to that next step, and that's how I'm approaching New Faces.

With all that's happened, is it challenging to maintain those radio relationships?
No. I consider a huge amount of programmers to be my personal friends, and radio is the reason I'm here.

That's why I want to do New Faces so bad. Any chance I get to thank the people who helped me get here is an amazing day.

Your label head, Scott Borchetta is a seasoned radio promotion guy. What advice did he give as you went to radio initially?
This isn't something he said to me, but this attitude came from Scott, and from day one it's the philosophy I've had in approaching radio. Radio isn't something I have to do, radio is something I get to do. At 6 a.m., when you're getting up to be on a morning show, that is a privilege and an honor, and it blows my mind that they've let me in.

You and Kellie Pickler have become friends touring together. Do you talk about your careers?
We really don't talk as much about our careers, but it's cool to have a friend that goes through the exact same

things you do. I spent New Year's Eve with her; we just sat on the couch and watched *Dick Clark's Rockin' New Year's Eve.*

Any good stories from the road?
While we were on the road, Kellie got this adorable kitten named Pickles, and I became the godmother. When she'd go to soundcheck, I'd take care of the cat. So I'm going to meet-and-greets with this little kitten. I am emotionally there for that cat.

As a young artist with a younger-leaning audience, have you worried that middle-aged radio folks might not get what you do?
In the beginning I did. I mean I was a 16-year-old girl with a song named "Tim McGraw." Find something weirder than that. CAC

FACE, THE FINAL FRONTIER

CRS New Faces performers since the show's 1970 inception.

2007
Rodney Atkins, Eric Church, Jack Ingram, Miranda Lambert, Trent Tomlinson

2006
Jason Aldean, Keith Anderson, Jeff Bates, Hot Apple Pie, Little Big Town

2005
Billy Currington, Blue County, Josh Gracin, Julie Roberts, Sugarland

2004
Dierks Bentley, Pat Green, Buddy Jewell, Craig Morgan, Jimmy Wayne

2003
Steve Azar, Tammy Cochran, Kellie Coffey, Emerson Drive, Joe Nichols

2002
Rascal Flatts, Carolyn Dawn Johnson, Blake Shelton, Cyndi Thomson, Darryl Worley

2001
Chris Cagle, Phil Vassar, Sara Evans, The Clark Family Experience, Trick Pony

2000
Andy Griggs, Montgomery Gentry, Brad Paisley, SheDaisy, Keith Urban

1999
Chad Brock, Gil Grand, The Great Divide, Keith Harling, Monty Holmes, Allison Moorer, Mark Nesler, Jon Randall, Shane Stockton, Trini Triggs

1998
Sherrié Austin, Big House, Anita Cochran, Dixie Chicks, Matt King, The Lynns, Lila McCann, The Ranch, Sons of the Desert, Kris Tyler

1997
Trace Adkins, James Bonamy, Paul Brandt, Deana Carter, Deryl Dodd, David Kersh, Mila Mason, Jo Dee Messina, LeAnn Rimes, Kevin Sharp

1996
David Lee Murphy, Jeff Carson, Daryle Singletary, Helen Darling, Emilio, Ty Herndon, Perfect Stranger, Chely Wright, Russ Taff, Ricochet

1995
Archer Park, David Ball, Lisa Brokop, George Ducas, Steve Kolander, Ken Mellons, Rick Trevino, Western Flyer, Bryan White, John & Audrey Wiggins

1994
John Berry, Brother Phelps, Gibson/Miller Band, Faith Hill, Toby Keith, Tim McGraw, Doug Supernaw, Clay Walker, Joy Lynn White, Lari White

1993
Boy Howdy, Tracy Byrd, Confederate Railroad, Radney Foster, Matthews, Wright & King, Martina McBride, Ronna Reeves, The Remingtons, Dennis Robbins, Michael White

1992
Brooks & Dunn, Clinton Gregory, Sammy Kershaw, Hal Ketchum, Tracy Lawrence, Little Texas, Eddie London, McBride and The Ride, Collin Raye, Pam Tillis

1991
Corbin/Hanner, Billy Dean, Joe Diffie, Ray Kennedy, Chris LeDoux, Shelby Lynne, Pirates of the Mississippi, Aaron Tippin, Kevin Welch, Michelle Wright

1990
Daniele Alexander, Suzy Bogguss, Jann Browne, Mary-Chapin Carpenter, Lionel Cartwright, The Kentucky HeadHunters, The Lonseome Strangers, Lorrie Morgan, Travis Tritt, Wild Rose

1989
Baillie and the Boys, The Burch Sisters, Jeff Chance, The Desert Rose Band, Skip Ewing, Donna Meade, Paul Overstreet, Shenandoah, The Shooters, David Slater

1988
Foster & Lloyd, Nanci Griffith, David Lynn Jones, Patty Loveless, Tim Malchak, New Grass Revival, K.T. Oslin, Ride The River, Ricky Van Shelton, Schuyler, Knobloch, & Bickhardt

1987
Adam Baker, Larry Boone, Holly Dunn, Girls Next Door, Lyle Lovett, A.J. Masters, Sweethearts of the Rodeo, Keith Whitley, Tom Wopat, Dwight Yoakam

1986
T. Graham Brown, The Forester Sisters, Nicolette Larson, Robin Lee, Maines Brothers Band, Restless Heart, Judy Rodman, BillyJoe Royal, Marty Stuart, Randy Travis

1985
Craig Dillingham, Mark Gray, Vince Gill, Becky Hobbs, Ed Hunnicutt, Carl Jackson, Mason-Dixon, Pinkard & Bowden, Jon Schneider, Wright Brothers

1984
Atlanta, Bandana, Lane Brody, Rick & Janis Carnes, Exile, Jim Glaser, Jan Gray, Gus Hardin, Kathy Mattea, Dan Seals

1983
Karen Brooks, Tom Carlile, Channel, Karen Taylor-Good, Cindy Hurt, Tommy St. John, Skip and Linda, Keith Stegall, The Whites, Gary Wolf, Younger Brothers

1982
Rodney Crowell, Diana, Terry Gregory, Donna Hazard, Kieran Kane, Ronnie Rogers, Ricky Skaggs, Bobby Smith, George Strait, Tennessee Express

1981
Deborah Allen, Sheila Andrews, Roger Bowling, The Capitols, Sonny Curtis, Frizzell & West, Terry Gibbs, Gary Morris, Orion, Steve Wariner

1980
Alabama, Carol Chase, Lacy J. Dalton, Big Al Downing, Leon Everette, Reba McEntire, Juice Newton, Sylvia, Jim Weatherly

1979
Susie Allanson, John Anderson, Razzy Bailey, Randy Barlow, John Conlee, Gail Davis, Mundo Earwood, Christy Lane, Mary K. Miller

1978
Janie Frickie, Vern Gosdin, Con Hunley, Don King, Zella Lehr, Ronnie McDowell, Peggy Sue, Kenny Starr, Gene Watson

1977
Kathy Barnes, Bobby Borchers, Randy Cornor, Mike Lunsford, Dale McBride, Charly McClain, Geoff Morgan, Vernon Oxford, Margo Smith

1976
Rex Allen, Jr., Ed Bruce, Earl Thomas Conley, Dottsy, Ruby Falls, Linda Hargrove, Joni Lee, Darrell McCall, Nick Nixon, Chuck Price, Even Stevens

1975
Connie Cato, Brian Collins, Billy Larkin, Kenny O'Dell, Eddie Rabbitt, Betty Jean Robinson, Ronnie Sessions, Sunday Sharpe, Brian Shaw, David Wills

1974
Josie Brown, Marti Brown, Dick Feller, Narvel Felts, Lefty Frizzell, Larry Gatlin, Eddy Raven

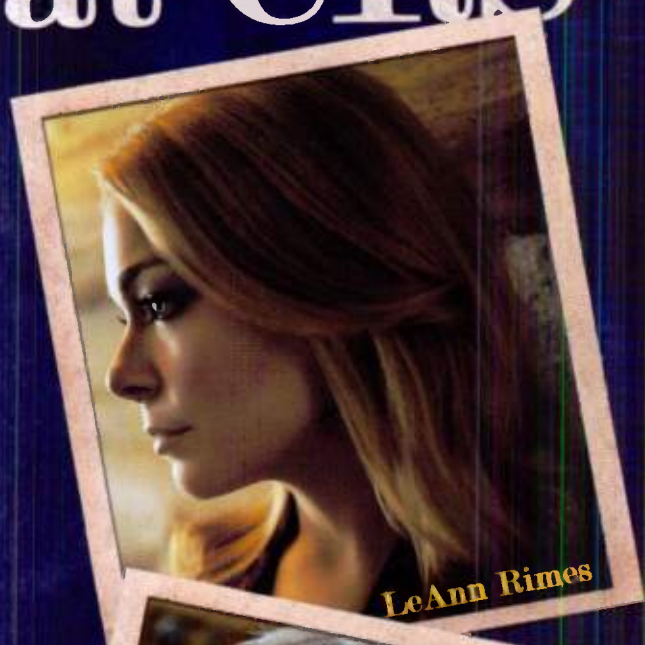
1973
Nashville Edition, Lloyd Green, O.B. McClinton, Pat Roberts, Johnny Rodriguez, Johnny Russell, Red Stegall, Leona Williams

1972
Connie Eaton, Nashville Edition, Jerry Foster, Dickey Lee, Charlie McCoy, Jim Mundy, Jeanne Pruett, Mel Street

1971
Crystal Gayle, Bobby Harden, Murray Kellum, Peggy Little, Bill Rice, Bobby G. Rice, Earl Richards, Little David Wilkins

1970
Jack Barlow, Jamie Kaye, Karen Kelly, Wayne Kemp, Lynda K. Lance, LaWanda Lindsey, Dee Mullins, Norro Wilson

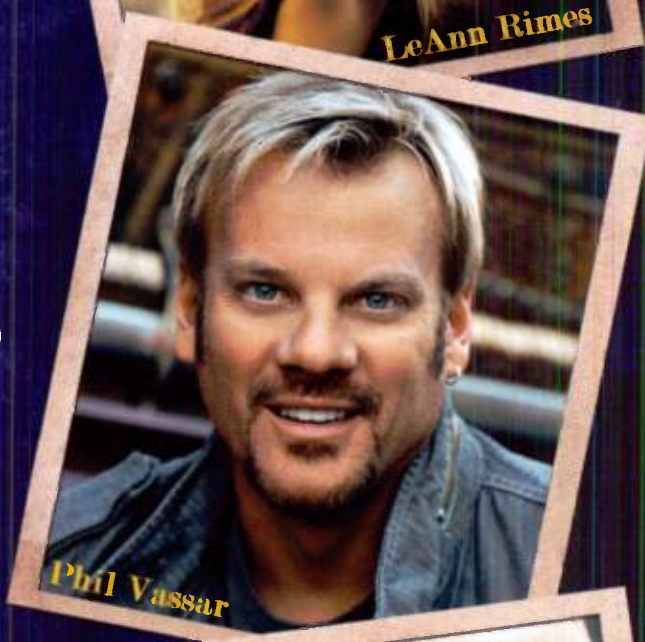
ASCAP at CRS

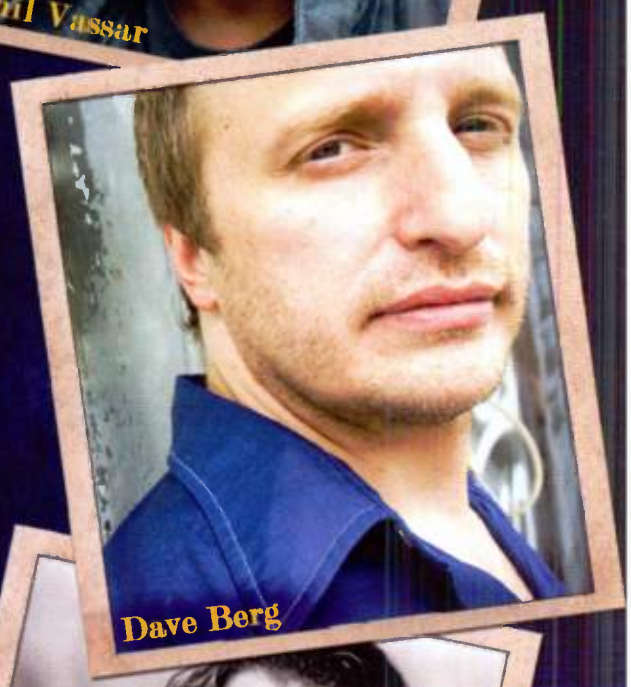

LeAnn Rimes

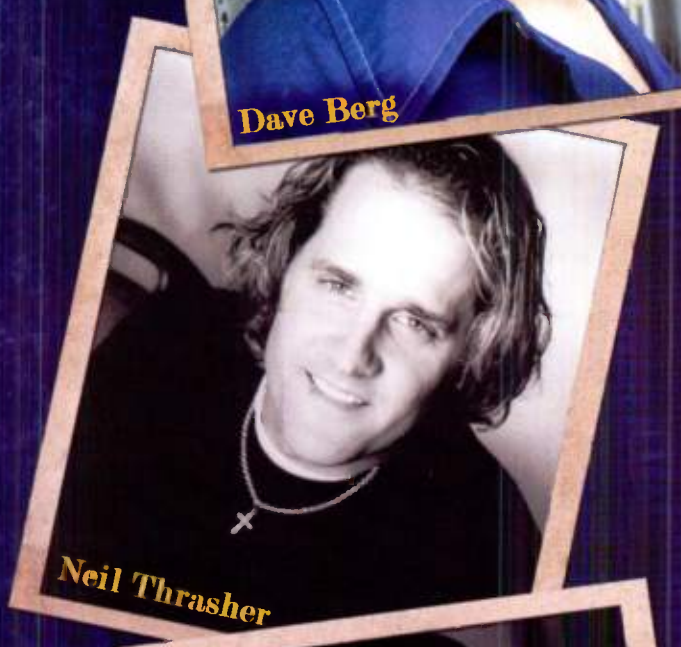
KCRS LIVE!

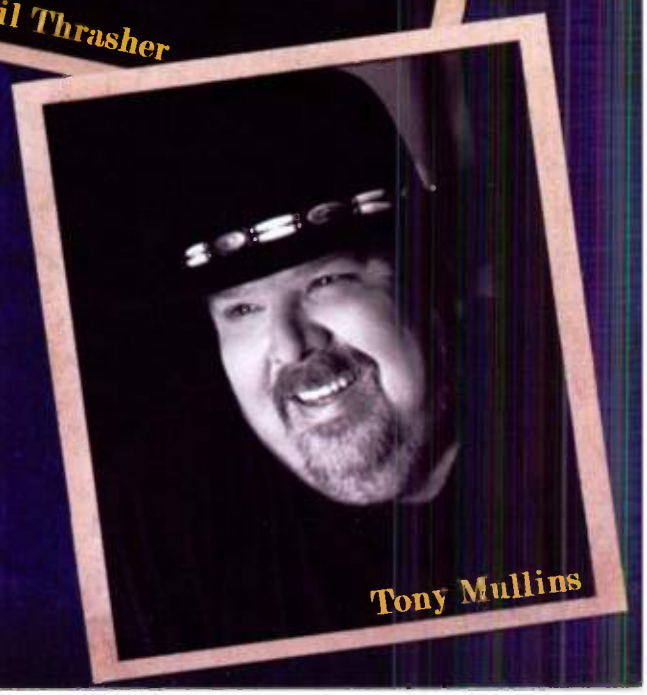
WEDNESDAY
march 5th, 2008
5:00-6:30 PM

featuring:

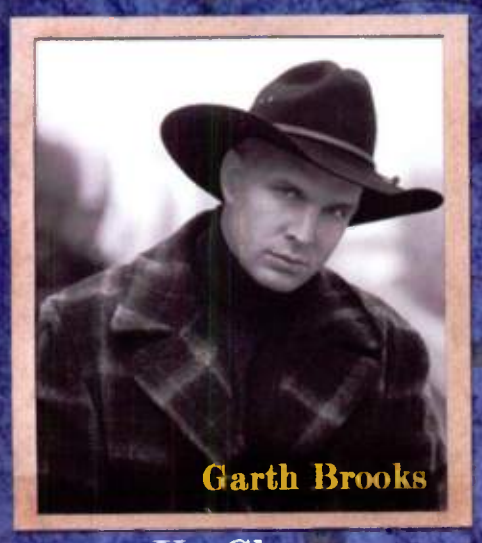

Phil Vassar


Dave Berg

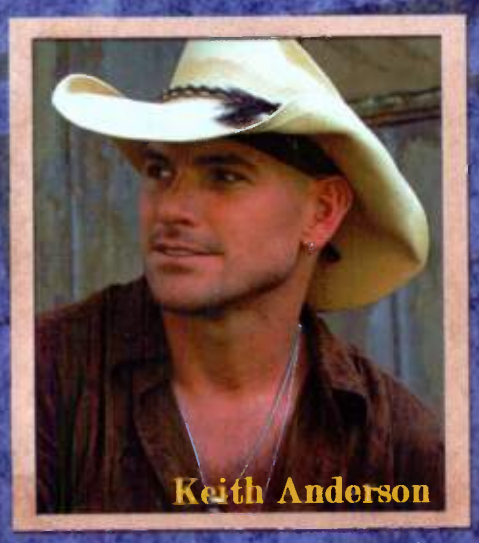

Neil Thrasher


Tony Mullins

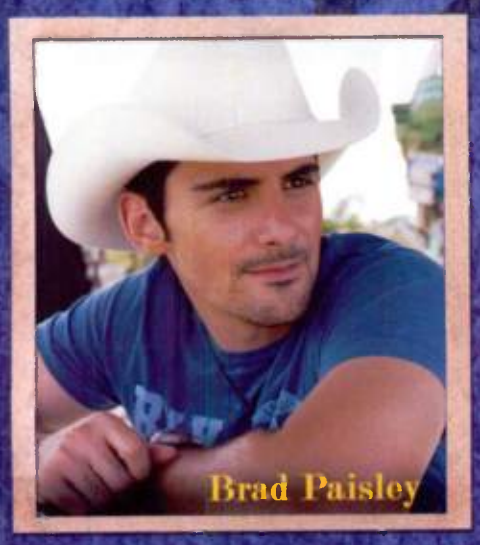
also at CRS:


Garth Brooks

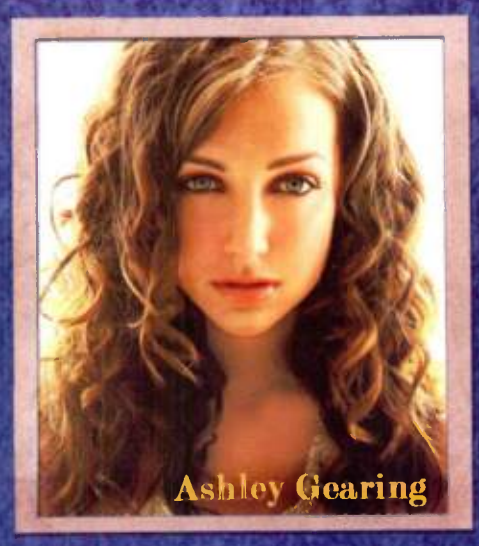
Up Close


Keith Anderson

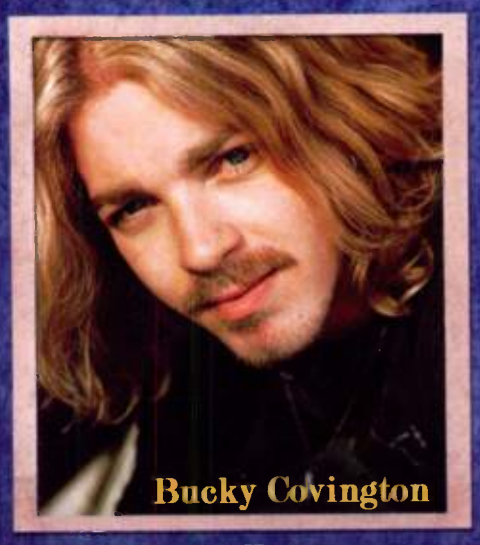
SonyBMG Lunch


Brad Paisley

Music City Jam


Ashley Gearing

Curb Lunch


Bucky Covington

New Faces

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- Jeff Wilks, President/Wilks Broadcasting, LLC

"Most every winning team has some sort of intangible edge; an X-FACTOR THE COMPETITION CAN'T TRUMP REGARDLESS OF THEIR RESOURCES. It may manifest itself in any number of ways, but for Curtis Media, it's Rusty Walker Programming. We would never–and I mean NEVER–want to be in a Country battle without him on our side."

- Phil Zachary, President/Curtis Media Group (Owners of WQDR/Raleigh)

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- Bob Call, VP/GM, KYGO/Denver

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- Pete Benedetti, President & CEO/New Northwest Broadcasters, LLC

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We Have Contacts | Record Reps, Phones, Faxes & Emails

Here's the latest compilation of country label promo staffs and how to reach them.

Editor's Note: *An explanation of some of the abbreviations: "NSD" is National Sr. Director; "ND" is National Director; "FD" is Field Director; "SD" is Sr. Director; "D" is Director; "FP" is Field Promotion; "C" is Central; "MA" is Mid-Atlantic; "MC" is Mid-Central; "MR" is Market Research; "MS" is Mid-South; "MW" is Midwest; "NC" is North-Central; "NP" is National Promotion; "Reg." is Regional; "RS" is Radio Strategies; "W" is West Coast; "NM" is New Media; "SP" is Specialty Programming; "M/P" is Marketing & Promotions; "RD" is Regional Director; "STP" is Strategic Planner; "Sec." is Secondary; "FM" is Field Marketing;"RM" is Radio Marketing.*

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NE/MW: Ryan Barnstead	615-414-4665	ryan@ninenorthmail.com
SE/SW: Lloyd Stark	770-335-4271	lloyd@ninenorthmail.com
SW/W: Greg Stevens	214-287-6606	greg@ninenorthmail.com
SP: Kevin Mason	615-974-1999	kevin@ninenorthmail.com

17·20 entertainment

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SW/C: Mandy McCormack	615-324-7762	mandy.mccormack@bigmachinemail.com
W: Larry Hughes	615-324-7785	larry.hughes@bigmachinemail.com
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NE: R.J. Meacham	615-301-4495	rj.meacham@sonybmg.com
MW: David Berry	972-234-5271	david.berry@sonybmg.com
SE: Vance Cobb	615-301-4494	vance.cobb@sonybmg.com
SW: Mark Janese	972-906-5773	mark.janese@sonybmg.com
W: Dave Dame	866-505-9410	dave.dame@sonybmg.com
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BBR

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c05

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SE: Trudie Richardson	770-253-1784	trudie@c05music.com
W: "Bubba" Wayne McManner	972-488-3513	bubbawayne@c05music.com
NE/MA: Karen Durkot	718-643-8033	karen@c05music.com

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MW: Bo Martinovich	615-858-1364	bo.martinovich@sonybmg.com
SE: Jennifer Thorpe	904-543-8034	jennifer.thorpe@sonybmg.com
SW: Jordan Pettit	615-858-1336	jordan.pettit@sonybmg.com
W: Larry Santiago	310-449-2412	larry.santiago@sonybmg.com
Coor: Stan Marczewski	615-858-1359	stan.marczewski@sonybmg.com

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NW/MW: Steve Pleshe	615-418-7509	SteveP@countrythunderrecords.com
Coor: Seth Necessary	615-327-2788	Seth@countrythunderrecords.com

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Cupit Records

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Sec: Glenda Lebeaux	615-731-0100x14	glenda@cupitmusic.com
M/P: Janie Brinkley	615-731-0100x10	janie@cupitmusic.com

Dept. Fax: 615-731-3005

Curb Records curb.com

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NE: Rick Rockhill	615-386-0323	rrockhill@curb.com
SE: Rocco Cosco	615-849-9608	rcosco@curb.com
MW: Karen McGuire	512-864-9984	kmcguire@curb.com
W: Joe O'Donnell	505-323-2925	jodonnell@curb.com
Sec: John Curb	800-949-2872	jcurb@curb.com

Dept. Fax: 615-327-3003

Curb Records / Asylum

Name	Phone	E-mail
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MW: Mark Westcott	847-397-6860	mwestcott@curb.com
NE: Jaymi Chernin	973-403-9656	labelgeek@aol.com
W: Eric Mellencamp	615-298-1586	emellencamp@curb.com
Sec: John Curb	800-949-2872	jcurb@curb.com
Coor: Abi Durham	615-690-4218	adurham@curb.com

Dept. Fax: 615-742-3157

Dolly

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W: Dave Kirth	916-351-1715	davek@dollypartonmanagement.com

Dept. Fax: 702-369-8768

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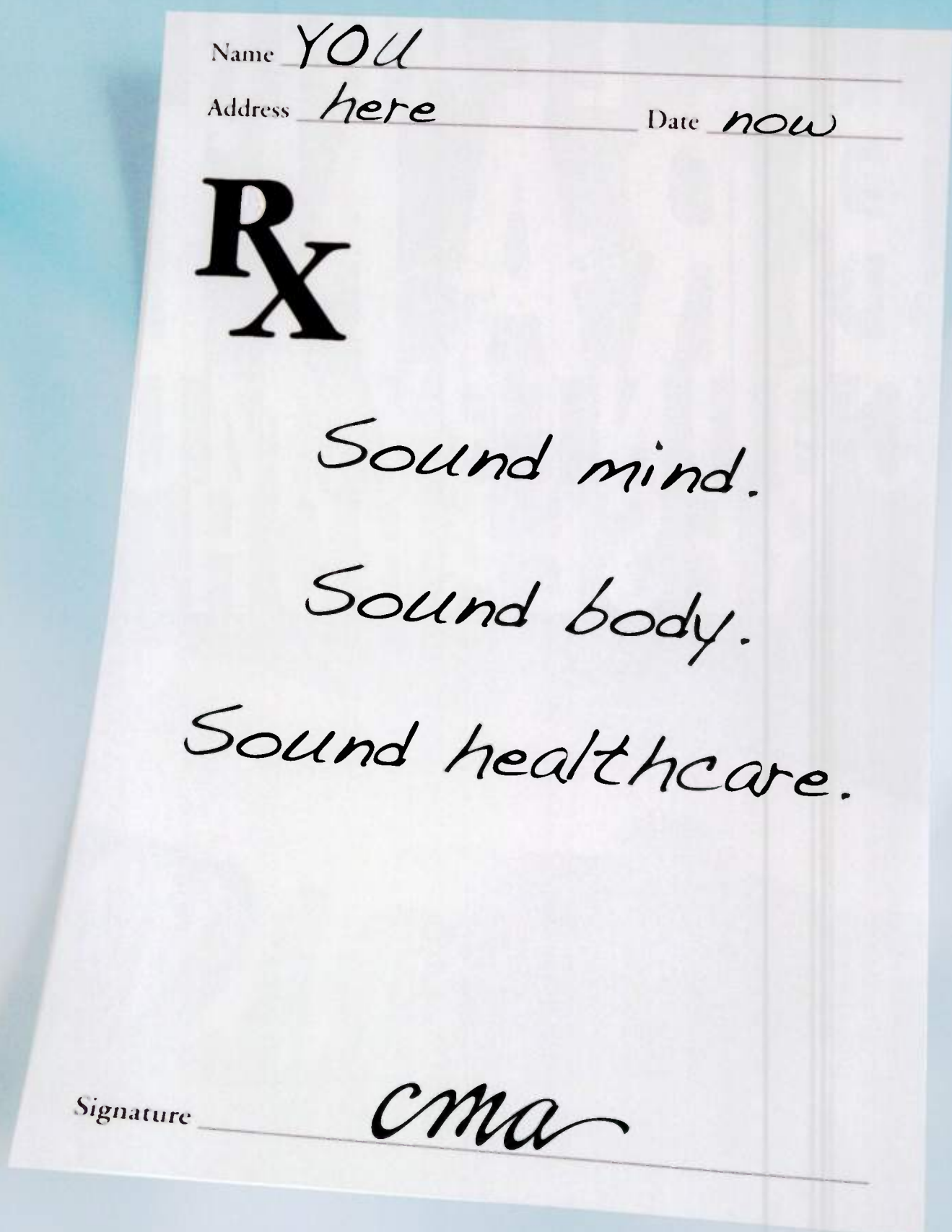

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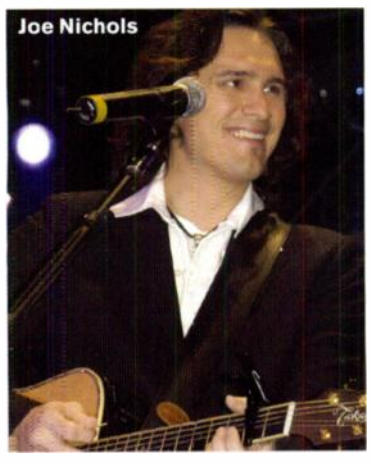
About Face

Artist Alumni Look Back At Their Big CRS Moment


Joe Nichols

Jason Aldean

Emerson Drive

Keith Urban (in The Ranch)

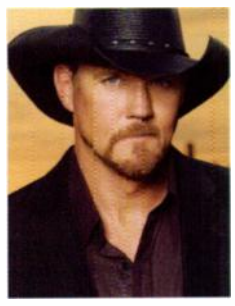
Craig Morgan

Five of country's most promising young performers will play for an imposing CRS crowd during the New Faces show on March 7, and all will worry their careers hang in the balance. Seeking a more mature perspective on the event, we asked successful artists who have moved on from that stage of their career to look back at their own New Faces performance.

Trace Adkins, 1997

What do you remember most about that night?
I remember somebody telling me, "Don't expect them to clap and stuff. It's a tough crowd." So you mentally prepare yourself for that before you go out there.

What did it mean to your career at the time?
I was nervous about it and remember feeling like it was the Super Bowl. Like it was a performance where I really need to be "on" and do my best. There was a lot of pressure.



What does it mean looking back?
It helped me get a No. 1 record. We were trying to go for No. 1 with "Thinkin' Thing" and that performance is probably the reason we got there.

Would you go back and change anything if you could?
Probably not. I didn't go out there trying to be anything other than who I was. Who's on it this year?

Luke Bryan, Jason Michael Carroll, Bucky Covington, Jake Owen and Taylor Swift.
Luke, Bucky and Jason have been on the road with me this tour.

Have they asked for any advice?
No, but I'm going to tell them some stuff now.

Jason Aldean, 2006

What do you remember about your New Faces performance?
Having the opportunity to play my live show in front of the programmers, who had only seen us play acoustically up to that point. That was a big deal because when you see my live show you really start to get what I'm all about.

What did that performance mean to your career at the time?
For the previous five or six years, I had gone and watched the show and seen guys like Rascal Flatts, so I knew how important it was. It put the pressure on. And to have a chance to play in front of the guys who decide to play your records was and still is a big deal. I was happy with my performance that night, and soon after, things started taking off a little bit for me. Looking back, I can definitely see how it helped get things off the ground.

Are there any aspects of that performance people might be surprised to know?
I remember being worried about whether my video would be as funny as the others.

If you could go back and give yourself some advice, what would it be?
I'd probably tell myself to do my thing and play the show like I normally would. A lot of times people try and treat industry shows differently from a regular show, but that's exactly what you should not do.

Sara Evans, 2001

What do you remember most about that night?
I remember it being a high-stress but great night. I so wanted to impress everyone at Country radio and I wanted to make my record label proud. It was awesome.

What did that performance mean to your career at the time?
Well. I remember just getting a lot of great feedback from radio that was relayed to me by my label guys. We felt like, "Yes, they got to see me do what I do best, and now they hopefully know that I'm here to stay!"

Would you change anything?
I would do things exactly the same, except maybe be a little more confident.

Jay DeMarcus, Rascal Flatts, 2002

What do you remember most about that night?
We were very nervous. No, we were scared to death! It was so important to make a good impression. Even though we had been out on our radio promo tour introducing ourselves and performing acoustically in conference rooms, this was a much bigger stage for us.

What did it mean to your career at the time?
We were building a relationship with Country radio and we knew radio would be an integral part of our success. Radio was there for us at the beginning with "Prayin' For Daylight" and by the time we did the New Faces Show we wanted to solidify our place with them.

Craig Morgan, 2004

What do you remember most about your New Faces performance?
I remember being extremely honored and nervous at the same time. Even though I had been doing this for awhile, it was still a tough stage to walk onto. Maybe the fact that I wasn't brand new made it even more so.

What did that performance mean to your career at the time?
It had a huge impact because it was my first opportunity to be in front of that size of a group of people that could have such a big and lasting impact on my career. There were some programmers there who had never seen my show, and it was a great chance to show them what my music was like live.

Are there any aspects of that performance people might be surprised to know?
Yes. About three minutes before we went on stage, I changed my set. The song list had been approved, everything was done, ready to go, everybody had agreed, but I decided at the last minute to throw in a really, really country song called "When A Man Can't Get A Woman Off His Mind."

If you could go back and give yourself some advice, what would it be?
Just do what you're gonna do [in your career], because you're going to have a long career ahead of you. I wouldn't change a single thing that happened that night.

Brad Mates, Emerson Drive, 2003

What do you remember most about that night?
I remember thinking to myself a year earlier that people across the country really didn't know much about Emerson Drive music. The reason we were asked to be a part of the show was that people were connecting with our songs.

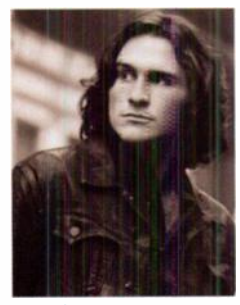
What did that performance mean to your career?
At the time it meant that we thought we were doing something right. It means a lot looking back, knowing our band is still going strong and continuing to make music that fans and radio want to hear.

Are there any aspects of that performance people might be surprised to know?
We all felt at the time, and still do, that four to five songs never gives an artist a chance to really showcase their music.

If you could send a note back in time to yourself, what would it say?
Treat it like any other show!

Joe Nichols, 2003

What do you remember most about that night?
Being scared to death. I wanted to perform well, but not come across as a guy who was just doing another show.



What did it mean to your career at the time?
It gave me instant credibility by letting everyone see that I was a "country singer."

Are there any aspects of that performance people might be surprised to know? Travel problems, rehearsal glitches or wardrobe malfunctions?
I did "Farewell Party" instead of all original songs, because I felt like it was a do-or-die moment, and that song is definitely do-or-die.

If you could go back and give yourself some advice, what would it be?
I would write a note to myself and simply say, "Relax."

Keith Urban, 1998 & 2000

What do you remember about your New Faces performance?
The first one I actually did was with The Ranch in 1998. We closed the show and I remember feeling amazed that we were even on the bill with new artists like the Dixie Chicks. It would be another two years before I got to play it in my own right. And if an artist says it's not the most nerve-wracking experience, then they don't really know who they're playing for. It's a tough room, but if you get the sense you're making a connection, it's the most amazing feeling. You can really feel it.

What did it mean to your career at the time?
For me, being a live performer, I felt grateful for the opportunity to finally play live with a full band to a lot of the same people that had only seen me with an acoustic guitar in a conference room full of pizzas.

Are there any aspects of that performance people might be surprised to know? Travel problems, rehearsal glitches or wardrobe malfunctions?
Well, not having Janet Jackson there did alleviate the potential for a wardrobe malfunction.

If you could go back and give yourself some advice, what would it be?
Just relax, have a blast and remember this is probably the single most important career-defining, make-or-break performance of your whole life. No pressure. Enjoy!

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JEFF GARRISON

Keeping An Eye On CBS Country

From the day Jeff Garrison's broadcast career began in his hometown of Nacogdoches, TX more than 25 years ago, his dream was to program a Houston radio station. It took a stop in Houston (as an APD/MD), and PD gigs in Greenville, SC and Phoenix for him to traverse the 141 miles down US59 to realize his dream. In addition to programming KILT-FM/ Houston, Garrison also serves as VP/Country for CBS Radio.

CA: What is your role as Vice President/ Country for CBS Radio?

JG: To be a sounding board and a resource. CBS Radio has some of the greatest program directors in the business and I'm proud to work with every one of them. We come together on a conference call once a month to share information and ideas. We talk about what's going on in our local markets, share our website initiatives and talk about how to create better interactive relationships with our listeners. We learn from each other by talking about what's working and the things that don't work.

I'm also a liaison between CBS Radio SVP/ Programming Greg Strassell and VP/Regional Programming Chris Oliviero and the local PDs, working closely on any needs they may have.

How do CBS Radio stations operate in terms of local vs. regional or national dictates, and how much freedom do local PDs have?

All our stations operate independently; they're managed and programmed locally. I'm very proud of CBS Radio and being a part of that process because we can be creative and local in our markets. We have the best PDs in the business and I trust them with their brands. They are responsible and accountable for the ratings, and do a great job. They operate their stations locally and make decisions locally that are in the best interests of the listeners and advertisers.

If you were dropped into an unknown city and could hear two Country stations, do you think you could tell which one was a CBS station?

If it didn't sound local and in tune with the market, you'd know it wasn't a CBS Radio Country station. But you could really tell a difference if you were dropped inside the radio station instead of the market. Programmers like to express themselves and be creative and be in tune with the market. Creative people have a hard time not being able to express themselves and that can hurt their ability to perform at a high level. When you stifle creativity, you take programmers out of what they love to do. It's important to create an environment in local markets that lets people be creative and think of new ideas. It's your next idea that's going to move the needle.

If people come up with ideas that are a little left of center, do you have to run it by Greg or Chris in New York, or do people have the freedom to implement ideas?

They have the freedom to implement. It's their radio station. They are responsible for the radio station. And, they are accountable.

If I listened to all 13 of your Country stations....

You'd hear 13 local radio stations that are connected to the Country lifegroup through their own heritage and current programming. We have some of the best brands in the country. And they are different; they are unique. You wouldn't hear the same things on all the stations; they're not cookie-cutter.

What are the most important skills for today's programmers to have?

Focus, prioritizing and putting the station and the relationship with the listener first. They need to have a vision of where the station is headed, know their audience's expectations and how they're going to meet those expectations. They also need to make sure everybody on staff is on the same page with that vision.

When I started, I had my vision and focused on what I thought. But I've come to understand it's much more beneficial to the station if everyone understands their job, the expectations and how to deliver within the PD's vision. They must stay focused, consistent and disciplined towards that target. And, I'm always looking for enthusiasm, passion and people who wake up every day wanting to be better at what they do.

What is a local program director's role in today's environment?

Today's PDs are brand managers. I'm not sure that the title of Program Director is really appropriate in 2008 because we're brand-managing on HD, on the Internet and on outside sources as each brand is extending. All of that is great for radio. The future for delivery of our brands across all platforms is excellent. What sometimes suffers is the ability to give each area the amount of time it deserves so you can be the most creative in each one.

What are you trying to accomplish with KILT-FM's sound?

To connect with the country life-group of Houston, Texas. To be the family station that connects to the communities in our market. We know that country music and the Country format is a family format that includes music, entertainment and events. I want KILT to be the most entertaining Country radio brand in Houston, Texas. I want it to be real and authentic. I want to make sure that we're doing everything we can to play the biggest country stars and the biggest country music hits that people love. And to create fun and exciting promotions and contests that fit that filter. Most of our listeners have kids who want to see Hannah Montana. We've got Hannah Montana coming to the rodeo and we're doing "Hannah Time" twice a day. You listen to KILT, you win tickets to see Hannah Montana. It's about being plugged into the country lifegroup.

Are there any basic laws of programming that you just do not violate? Or, are there certain things that have to be done on your radio station, no matter what?

Know your brand, know your audience's expectation of that brand and deliver it to them 120%. And, keep it simple and don't over-analyze or over-think the radio station.

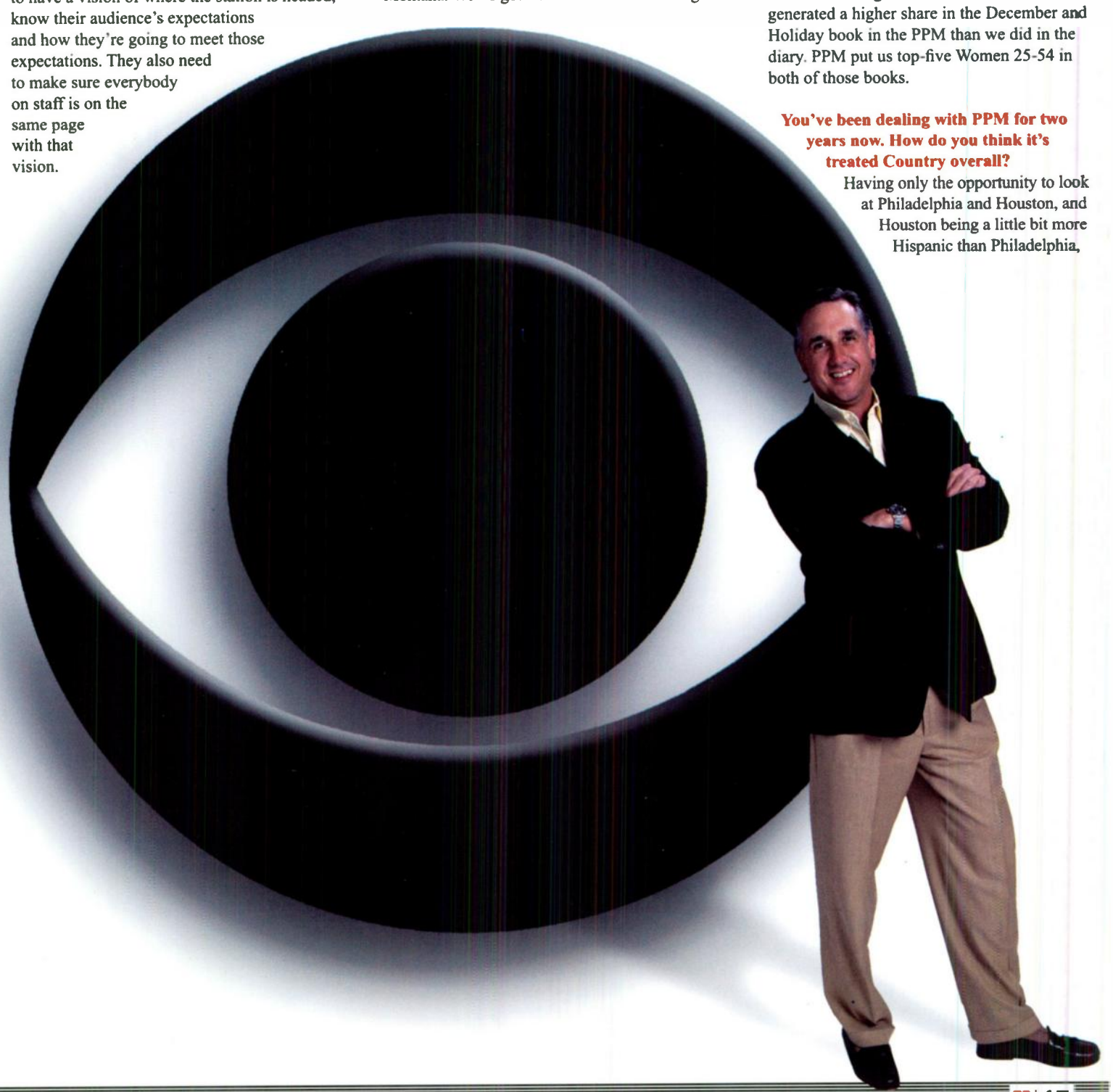
The fall 2007 ratings have been a little bit tough for a number of Country outlets, especially some of the perennial legendary stations of our format. Do you have a sense of Country radio fall ratings or what's going on with the music and the listeners?

CBS Country had some great stories in the fall of 2007 and some more challenging ones. It was a perfect storm, in some ways. Some stations may not have been as aggressive as they have been in past fall campaigns, and that hurt the TSL in October and November. Christmas music seems to be starting earlier and earlier every year, and in the diary world that is affecting Country's cume and TSL, particularly at work. Christmas music starting in early November means it's digging into two monthlies, and that really affects the overall fall 25-54 numbers. It's ironic, though, in the PPM world in Philadelphia and Houston, Country saw increases. In the PPM world of reality over recall, we did see cume deterioration for KILT-FM during the month of December and the Holiday book. But our P1s stayed with the station and gave us a lot of TSL, so we generated a higher share in the December and Holiday book in the PPM than we did in the diary. PPM put us top-five Women 25-54 in both of those books.

You've been dealing with PPM for two years now. How do you think it's treated Country overall?

Having only the opportunity to look at Philadelphia and Houston, and Houston being a little bit more Hispanic than Philadelphia,

> "When you stifle creativity, you take programmers out of what they love to do. It's important to create an environment in local markets that lets people be creative and think of new ideas."



"I'M NOT SURE THAT THE TITLE OF PROGRAM DIRECTOR IS REALLY APPROPRIATE IN 2008 BECAUSE WE'RE BRAND-MANAGING ON HD, ON THE INTERNET AND ON OUTSIDE SOURCES. ALL OF THAT IS GREAT FOR RADIO."

PPM has been very good to the Country format. That said, there's been a lot of learning as we go with the sample size and PPM, and that's been the biggest challenge: are we getting the consistent ratings that we were promised from Arbitron if we're not getting the consistent sample number? So, even though we've been looking at PPM data for two years, we know that for the first nine months or more that not all the radio stations were in the sample, weren't in the mix, so that was kind of shaded data. But in the year that PPM has been our currency, we've seen that cume is a great story. TSL is obviously less so. But, overall, Country performs very well in PPM and outperforms the diary.

Do you get the sense that enough programmers are paying attention right now to the coming changes with PPM? Are you getting calls from folks asking you what you're seeing?
It's like trying to explain Windows Vista to someone who's never used it and all you have is a couple of handouts. Until you use PPM on a daily basis, it's hard to discuss and really comprehend its focus on what really matters.

What have you learned about PPM?
PPM likes music. Let me rephrase that: PPM loves music. However, it does come back to the question of audience expectations. If your radio station is perceived and expected to be a jukebox but you do things that are counter-intuitive to what is expected of your brand, listeners may have a proclivity to tune out. However, if you're known as a personality station and you talk and interact with your audience a lot and you have interviews and more long-form programming, we've found that there's less of a chance your audience will leave your station during those elements because that is what they have come to expect from your brand.

Overall it's been interesting to see that most everything we as programmers have intuitively thought about audience behavior is true. The real surprise is there are no surprises. We've seen that Friday is indeed the biggest listening day, events do move the needle and people have a relationship with radio that you can very much get the pulse of through PPM.

Anything that the PPM doesn't love?
PPM has a tendency to expose clutter and useless content. PPM will make programmers better and more accountable because it takes an instant pulse of the radio station. It's "reality methodology" as opposed to "recall methodology." So, the key is not to over-think PPM and not to get into analysis paralysis. PDs need to take it for what it is and get the widest view of the data. You can see what gets your listeners excited about your radio station and some patterns where they aren't.

Are there things you used to think were important that you're finding aren't so important in a PPM world?
When you're dealing in reality, not recall, you don't have to over-deliver and over-pound your brand so much. "Listening reality" means you don't have to over-hype your brand to get through as you have to do in a recall diary world.

How well are you able to track likes and dislikes in music with the PPM?
You can see some patterns and there is some new technology coming out that's exciting. But the sample is small and I wouldn't over analyze it. In my opinion, it's not enough sample size on a minute-by-minute [basis] to gauge music testing.

What's the biggest challenge facing Country radio today?
Everybody wants to ask, "What's the problem?" I'm not sure we have a problem. Our biggest challenge is to be more proud of what we are and what we have. We have a great format that is family-friendly, doesn't have any baggage and presents a great opportunity to touch people through songs about real life. *American Idol* and other pop culture have brought a lot to the format and our biggest challenge is capitalizing on it. It makes no sense to take 40 weeks to create a hit record with artists breaking as fast as the Carrie Underwoods and the Taylor Swifts of the world. Why wait 40 weeks before capitalizing on making those type of artists big stars on our station? We simply have to embrace them much more quickly.

If Hannah Montana is the hottest thing going, blow out Hannah Montana. Or if Carrie is the biggest thing, play the Carrie Underwood records. I'm surprised when I look at the charts and see a new Carrie Underwood single get 13 adds out of 120 reporters. Perhaps, then, our biggest challenge is to have the radio station's level of excitement match the audience's level of excitement over these hot artists.

We need to program our radio stations with the most exciting music available. Everybody has to make their own decisions. The thing I'm most proud of is that CBS Radio Country PDs make decisions for their radio stations for their listeners; we don't wait for it to get to No. 10 so someone can tell us it's okay to play it. Country has always been a current-based format, but for some reason some programmers want to treat it like a very light AC.

Is that part of Country's problem with falling ratings?
I can't say that; I don't know that to be true. But I do know that we build and grow a bigger brand by creating bigger stars.

How do you decide for your station and market the proper mix of Current, Recurrent and Gold titles?
It varies. Some weeks there may be three powers that are the hottest records in Houston and some weeks there may be six. We have different grids that change the current mix based on the strength of the current music at any given time. Your music scheduling system shouldn't dictate what currents get played. It should be by the temperature or the excitement or what your research is telling you. Whatever research you're using or info you're getting that shows the hottest records – play them!

What do you think of the state of Country music today?
It's alive and well. This new influx of independent labels, along with the established labels, has created some exciting new artists, as well as allowing some artists to come back with huge songs. It's created a great environment for artists to be creative as they buy into a new way of doing business. The music coming out of Nashville now is better – and more consistently better – than I've heard in a long time.

What do you think of the radio/record relationship today?
It's as good as it ever was. Nothing much has changed, it's just the way that we do business. The only thing that's changed is paperwork.

Back to CBS Radio on the national level, how much voice-tracking is there on CBS Country radio stations?
It's minimal – it's mostly in overnights.

What is CBS Country doing right now with HD?
We've rolled out HD in all of our markets. We're very much behind HD2, and as new cars get the new radios, it's going to be a great opportunity for us to create more content and to do specialty-type radio stations that are in tune to the format and the lifegroup in the markets.

What about Internet? I've noticed in the last six-eight months or so that CBS Country stations have gotten more active. It looks as if there's been a little more on-air focus in driving people to your websites.
One of the CBS initiatives implemented in the last 18 months is to become a leader in Internet radio, mainly because we are the leader in content as CBS Radio Group. We have the content and we wanted to do it right. So New York, along with our special internet marketing group, have really done a great job of bringing CBS Radio up to date. We have a brand-new player coming out in the next month or so that we're really proud of. All our radio stations have redesigned their websites to make them very interactive.

Once again, going back to PDs as brand managers, this is a big extension of our brand locally in our markets. It's also an opportunity for advertisers to touch potential customers and an opportunity for us to create big stars in Country music.

CBS Radio has really stepped up our technology and the usage of our tools to make us one of the leading content providers in the United States. We're equipping our stations with video equipment to tape artist visits, behind-the-scenes footage of events like our 12-Man Jam, backstage interviews, etc., which they put on their own sites as well as distribute to other stations to use. Each PD can use the audio or video from other stations as they see fit. It provides great content to talk about when you play the Billy Ray Cyrus song on KILT-FM, and say, "Hey, go to our website to check out Studio KILT with Billy Ray Cyrus as he talks about Hannah Montana."

Are PDs accountable for website hits the same way that they are for ratings?
Yes. Just like we have ratings goals for the stations, we have goals for our websites.

So, you got married for the first time in June 2006 at age 41. And now you're about to become a dad. How is Becky and how are you feeling?
Becky is doing great. I feel like lightning has struck me. I never in my wildest dreams thought I would have a lovely person like Becky in my life, and I'm really grateful. God has blessed us with a baby boy due May 1. For a small-town, East Texas DJ who wanted more than anything to one day be a program director in Houston, I'm living the dream. As Dene Hallam used to tell me, "It's a long ways from Nacogdoches to where you're sittin', pal!" CAC

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The Year In Music

THE TOP 100

Top 15s, Top Performers

PAGE 15

TOP EIGHT OF '08

GAS & CRASH REHASH

PAGE 3

SONY/NASHVILLE'S

Joe Galante

THE INTERVIEW

PAGE 33

COUNTRY AIRCHECK

DECEMBER 2008

Congratulations to Sony Nashville's Gold Medalists!
Thanks Country Radio For a Great Year!

#2
MOST HEARD ARTIST
BRAD PAISLEY
2-Time CMA Male Vocalist of the Year
AMA Award for Favorite Male Artist
5th Gear - Platinum Seller
11 million albums sold

#1
MOST HEARD ARTIST
KENNY CHESNEY
3-Time Billboard Touring Award's "Best Package"
Billboard Touring Award's "Fan Choice Award"
4-Time CMA Entertainer of the Year
Just Who I Am - Platinum Seller
28 million albums sold

#3
MOST HEARD ARTIST
CARRIE UNDERWOOD
Most Heard Female Artist
3-Time CMA Female Vocalist of the Year
AMA Award for Favorite Album - *Carnival Ride*
Carnival Ride - Double Platinum Seller
10 million albums sold

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#1 Album - Jewel *Perfectly Clear*

#1 Radio Single (3 weeks) - Jimmy Wayne "Do You Believe Me Now"

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TOP 8 EIGHT OF '08

Gas & Crash Rehash

As for most businesses, an '08 country retrospective must be viewed in the context of economic tumult. Summer's skyrocketing gas prices posed multiple threats to touring, soaking up much of the country base's disposable income. The collapse of financial behemoths shook the economy's foundations and initiated wild stock market swings. By contrast, the record business and radio share steady, if undesirable, trajectories. The, uh, good news in declining CD sales is that they don't appear in danger of cratering as badly as Wall Street's opinion of radio. But on Main Street, Country radio is, happily, still the focal point for fans of the genre, and country artists continue to create vibrant, compelling music.

1 Penny For Your Stocks

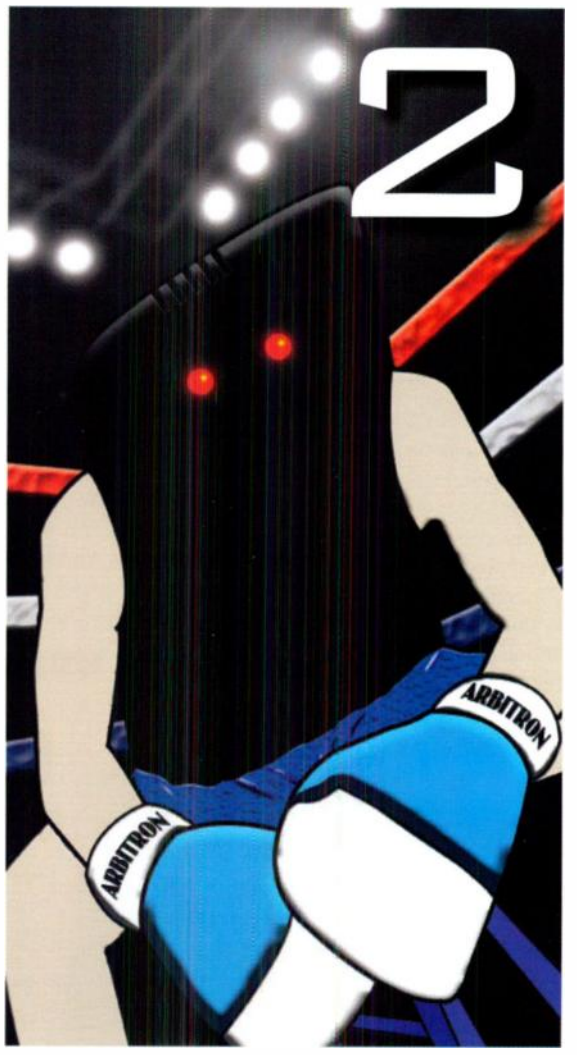
The Falling Economics Of Radio

Visions of high-flying stocks danced in the heads of major radio group owners who took the business public following ownership deregulation in 1996. But the clatter of acquisition and sugary stock market outlooks have plum dashed away, only to be replaced by penny stocks, plummeting ad revenues, layoffs, pay freezes and non-existent 401(k) contributions. **Clear Channel**'s departure from the public markets was a messy battle with investment banks that have lost faith in the medium. Other companies have eyed privatization as analysts downgraded stocks and the exchanges filed delisting notices. And so the radio industry's once sparkling prospects have been left tarnished with the ashes and soot of a model that has long since gone up in flames.

Legend of the Fall

How rough has the sector been? If you had invested $245 to buy one share of each of the following 12 companies when they went public, your portfolio on December 1, 2008 would have been worth less than $20.

	Opening	1/2/08	12/01/08	+/-Since Open
Beasley (2/11/00)	15.00	6.13	0.06	-94.9%
CBS (1/3/06)	25.60	26.42	5.83	-77.2%
Citadel (8/1/03)	20.75	2.06	0.15	-99.3%
Cox Radio (9/27/96)	20.87	11.89	5.06	-75.8%
Cumulus (4/9/02)	17.59	7.77	0.79	-95.5%
Emmis (2/23/94)	15.50	3.54	0.30	-98.1%
Entercom (1/29/99)	30.00	12.38	0.96	-96.8%
Journal (9/24/03)	16.10	8.80	2.15	-86.7%
Radio One (5/6/99)	28.00	2.35	0.30	-98.9%
Regent (1/25/00)	10.50	1.50	0.14	-98.7%
Saga (10/12/93)	19.75	5.99	2.61	-86.8%
Salem (7/1/99)	25.00	6.76	0.83	-96.7%



Would You Care To Meter?

PPM, Arbitron Challenged

Controversy dogged **Arbitron** and its Portable People Meter (PPM), which broadened its coverage from Houston and Philadelphia to include 12 more markets. The trouble came to a head in October when the **PPM Coalition**, a group of African-American and Hispanic station owners, successfully petitioned New York Attorney General **Andrew Cuomo** to threaten a lawsuit against Arbitron if it did not postpone the "currency" release of PPM ratings in New York. Charged with not accurately measuring minority listening, Arbitron vowed to fight and subsequently issued PPM figures for New York and Middlesex, NJ, among other metros. Cuomo and New Jersey AG **Anne Milgram** filed suit, and the issue remains unresolved.

Also pending is a Cuomo probe concerning whether seven Arbitron executives, including Chairman/President/CEO **Steve Morris**, may have improperly sold $8 million in company stock prior to the announcement of a delay in PPM's rollout. Legal challenges aside, Arbitron has continued to issue monthly PPM numbers, which in December expanded to Dallas, Atlanta, Detroit and Washington, D.C. Late in the year, Cumulus and Clear Channel signed on with **Nielsen** for ratings in 50 markets, giving Arbitron a hefty new competitor and sending its stock plummeting.

3 Cross Country

Redefining "New" Artist

Talent, chops and that elusive "it" quality might not have been the most preferred attributes for aspiring country artists in '08. Increasingly, successful chart entrants are spring-boarding into the format from some other platform of recognition.

Former pop singer/actress/reality star **Jessica Simpson** went back to her Texas roots and broke the Top 20 with "Come On Over." *Dancing With The Stars* twirler **Julianne Hough** gave country fans "That Song In My Head." **The Eagles** played the CMA Awards for the second year in a row, with **Kid Rock** earning one of the show's standing ovations for his Top 5 country hit "All Summer Long." Jewel was the flagship artist for Valory Music Co., taking "Stronger Woman" into the Top 10 and album *Perfectly Clear* to a No. 1 debut. *American Idol* brought another country hopeful in **Kristy Lee Cook**, while cowboy actor **Kevin Costner** sauntered into town late in the year with his band **Modern West**.

But the most notable addition to the genre was Hootie And The Blowfish lead singer **Darius Rucker**, who topped the chart with "Don't Think I Don't Think About It" as well as album *Learn To Live* in the same week. Rucker became the first African-American artist with a country No. 1 in 25 years. The degree to which Rucker and his previously experienced cohorts continue to succeed may know no bounds. After all, Conway Twitty was a rock act before reeling off 55 country No. 1s.

4 And Then There Was One

Sirius & XM Merge

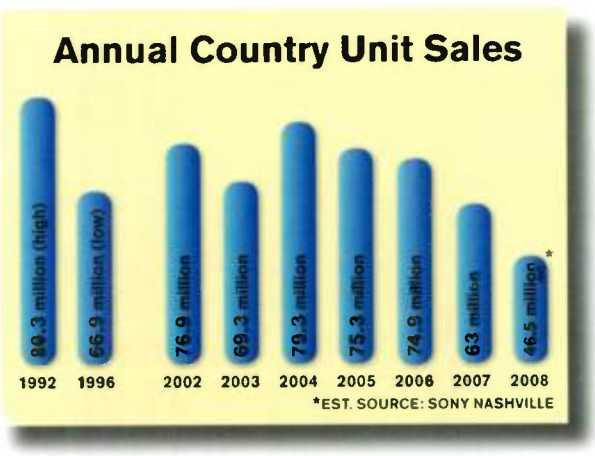
If the Guinness folks awarded a world record for longest merger approval, **Sirius XM** might find itself listed right next to those fat twins on motorcycles. The 18-month process, vigorously contested by the **NAB** and consumer groups, finally received the FCC's blessing in July. Almost immediately, the satcaster began offering "Best of" packages from both brands and a la carte programming options, required as one of many conditions of the sale's approval. As expected, the radio company also undertook a $425-million cost-savings initiative, consolidating channels and commencing personnel layoffs across all departments.

Former XM programmer **Jon Anthony** was named VP/Country as the dual platforms integrated into six primary Country channels: **The Highway, Prime Country, The Roadhouse, Outlaw Country, Willie's Place** and **Bluegrass Junction**. But by the time of the company's full integration, Wall Street had already lost much of its interest. By November, three shares of company stock could be purchased for less than the cost of a single day's subscription. There is hope, however, that a proposed reverse stock-split plan and efforts to shed more than $1 billion in debt due in 2009 can make the company, with its 18.6 million subscribers, profitable. And that would set a record worth noting for posterity.

5 There's A Hole In The Bucket

The CD's Not So Slow Leak Continues

Anyone hoping album sales' downward spiral would stabilize will be sorely disappointed with 2008's projected final number. For the fourth consecutive year, country unit sales declined, dipping below 50 million for the first time since the advent of SoundScan. And following last year's 16% sloughing with an expected 25% decline isn't music to anyone's ears.



Well, maybe all those folks ripping, burning and file-sharing aren't losing sleep, but that's only part of the recorded music industry's challenge. The new singles-driven paradigm means labels are either adjusting their benchmarks of success, or completely reworking their models. **Warner Bros.' Edgar Bronfman** recently told a tech seminar crowd he has mandated multiple-revenue-stream "360" deals for all future artist signings, adding that the company is already in that type of relationship with as many as a third of its acts.

Of course, several independent labels have already embraced, to differing degrees, aspects of the 360 deal. And whether other majors follow Warner Bros.' lead or develop alternate strategies, there is reason for hope. Many observers speculate that tighter household budgets will make music a more attractive gift this holiday season. And there's still ample evidence – awards ratings, ticket sales, media attention – of country music's continuing popularity, even in the face of flagging profitability.
Hey, it's something.

6 We're Gonna Need A Bigger Boat

No Shortage Of Promotion Jobs

We tried counting the number of significant label promotion department job changes over the last 12 months and gave up – even after taking off our shoes and socks. Suffice to say, it's a bajillion (technical term). During one two-month span, more than 30 regionals, nationals or veeps changed chairs. Fueling this frantic migration – aside from wanderlust, antsy pants and GGS (greener grass syndrome) – is the continuing emergence of new labels and growing ranks of independent promotion companies. Not to mention a few noteworthy closings.

Midas shuttered its promotion department and **Curb/Asylum** folded into **Curb**, but the contractions were more than made up for by prodigious expansion. **Country Thunder** ramped up under new veep **Bobby Young**. **Jeff Solima** and **Michael Powers** formed **Big Picture Promotions**, contracting to work with the **Zac Brown Band**, as well as **James Stroud**'s new **Stroudavarious** labels, where promotion guru **Bill Catino** directs efforts. **Nine North** expanded its independent promotion team with the addition of label vet **Tom Moran**. And **WhiteStar Entertainment**, the freshest face on the indie label scene, put together a full staff under the direction of **Carson James**. Even **Lyric Street** got into the act, adding the new **Carolwood** imprint and a promotion staff to boot. Didn't these people read No. 5?

7 Stand Elect

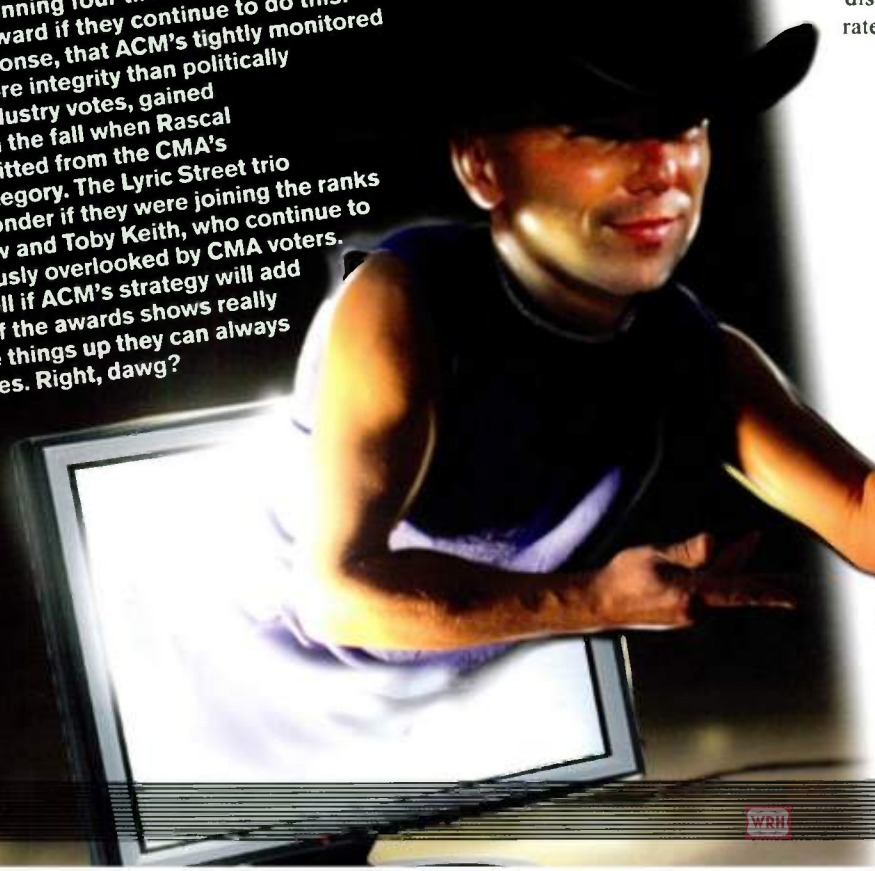
ACM Lets Fans Pick Entertainer

The fact that a show built around "pitchy" amateur performances easily outdraws three hours of country's superstars isn't lost on the ACM's Bob Romeo. So he and the ACM board made a bold play by making the Entertainer of the Year category a fan-voted award. The change acknowledges that at least part of the appeal of *American Idol* and other performance-based shows is the audience participation they encourage.

People's choice awards are certainly nothing new, but opening the top award to Internet voting created a stir, especially when winner Kenny Chesney said he opposed the shift in the backstage press room. "I'm proud of it and proud to say I'll go down in the history books with Garth for winning four times," Chesney said. "But it's a different award if they continue to do this."

Romeo's response, that ACM's tightly monitored fan-vote has more integrity than politically manipulated industry votes, gained some ground in the fall when Rascal Flatts were omitted from the CMA's Entertainer category. The Lyric Street trio were left to wonder if they were joining the ranks of Tim McGraw and Toby Keith, who continue to be conspicuously overlooked by CMA voters.

Time will tell if ACM's strategy will add viewers, but if the awards shows really want to spice things up they can always bring in judges. Right, dawg?



8 PayHear

Royalty Decisions In The News

Three out of four ain't bad. Or maybe, no news is good news – for radio, anyway. Three seemingly never-ending battles over Internet-based royalty payments were resolved this year, and one hotly contested debate over performance royalties went nowhere.

First, several key music and website organizations – the **RIAA, NMPA, NSAI, SGA** and **DiMA** – forged a landmark agreement regarding online mechanical/performance royalty rates. Companies including **Napster To Go** and **Rhapsody** will pay songwriters, publishers and musicians 10.5% of revenues (retroactive to Jan. 1, 2008), and 8.5% for the period between 2001-2007.

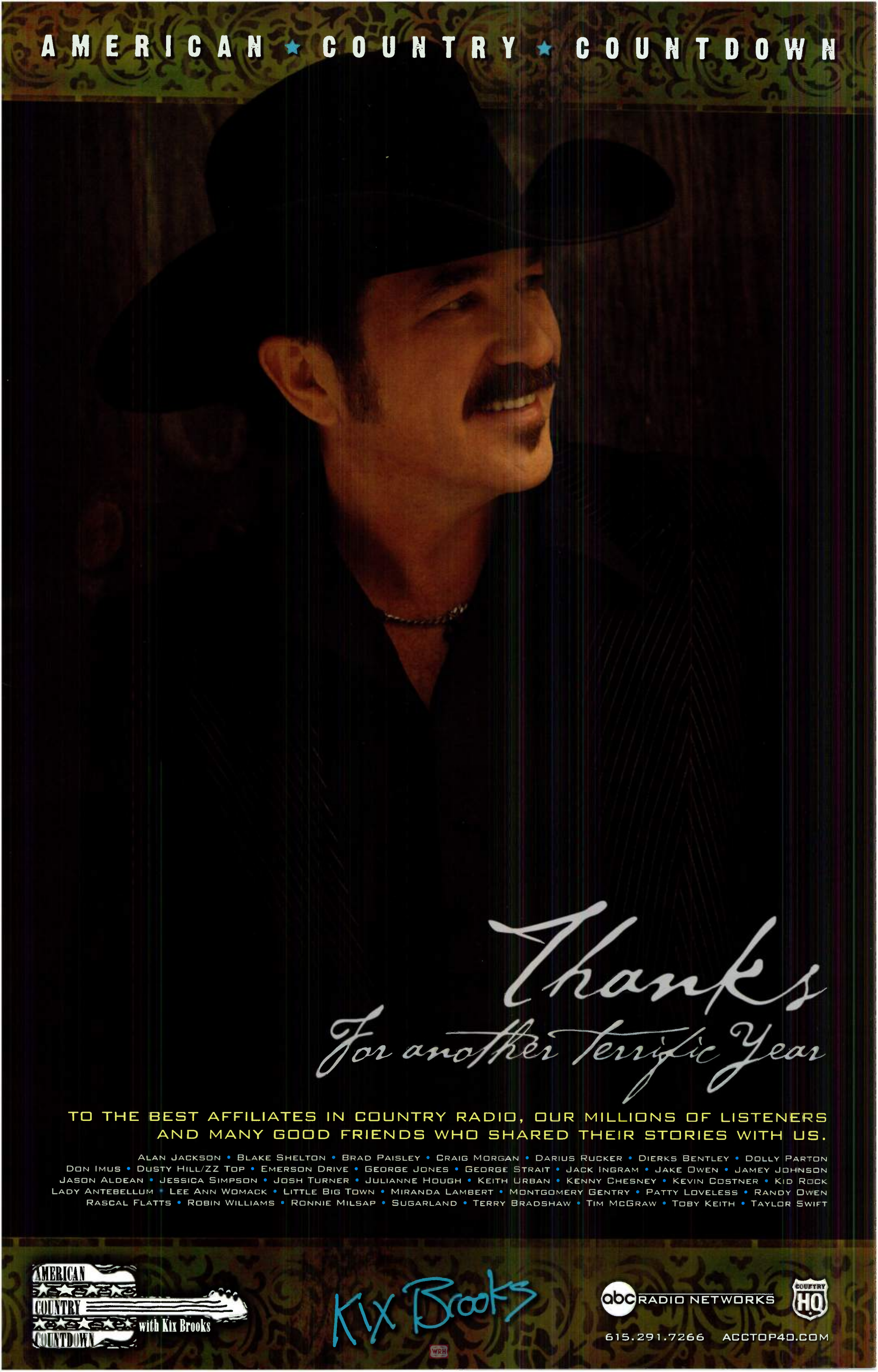
Congressional approval of the *Webcaster Settlement Act of 2008* gave streaming terrestrial broadcasters and pubcasters, as well as Internet music streamers, until Feb. 15, 2009 to negotiate new and more favorable performance royalty rates with **SoundExchange**. Also on the royalty front, the **Copyright Royalty Board** for the first time established mechanical royalty rates for songs distributed digitally. It locked in the existing 9.1-cent rate that digital music stores such as **iTunes, Rhapsody, Amazon** and **MySpace Music** must pay publishers for downloads. A new mechanical rate of 24 cents for ringtones was also established.

Generating the most sound and fury, especially with the music industry and radio, was the disagreement over master performance royalties, which would have broadcasters and other music licensees paying a royalty to record labels, artists and musicians, in addition to the songwriting royalties already paid through PROs ASCAP, BMI and SESAC. As badly as radio doesn't want to pay another license fee, the creative community is committed to getting paid when its recordings are played. Look for this battle to continue for some time.

In Memoriam

Jack Albert
Emmie Anderson Wisniewski
Glenn Barber
Mary "Katherine" Bradley
Ed Cearley III
Dr. James Coleman
Danny Davis
Chuck "Dees" Sagash
Phil Gernhard
Earle H. Hagen
Jim Hager
Buddy Harman
Leo Jackson
Hugh T. Jarrett
Jack D. Johnson
Dee Kilpatrick
Merlin Littlefield
Jay Miller
Ken Nelson
Dottie Rambo
Gary Smith
Jean Sopha
Natalie Tachuk
Lloyd Thaxton
Charlie Walker
Jerry Wallace
Jerry Wexler

AMERICAN ★ COUNTRY ★ COUNTDOWN



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After MidNite
WITH
BLAIR GARNER

12 MidNite - 6am

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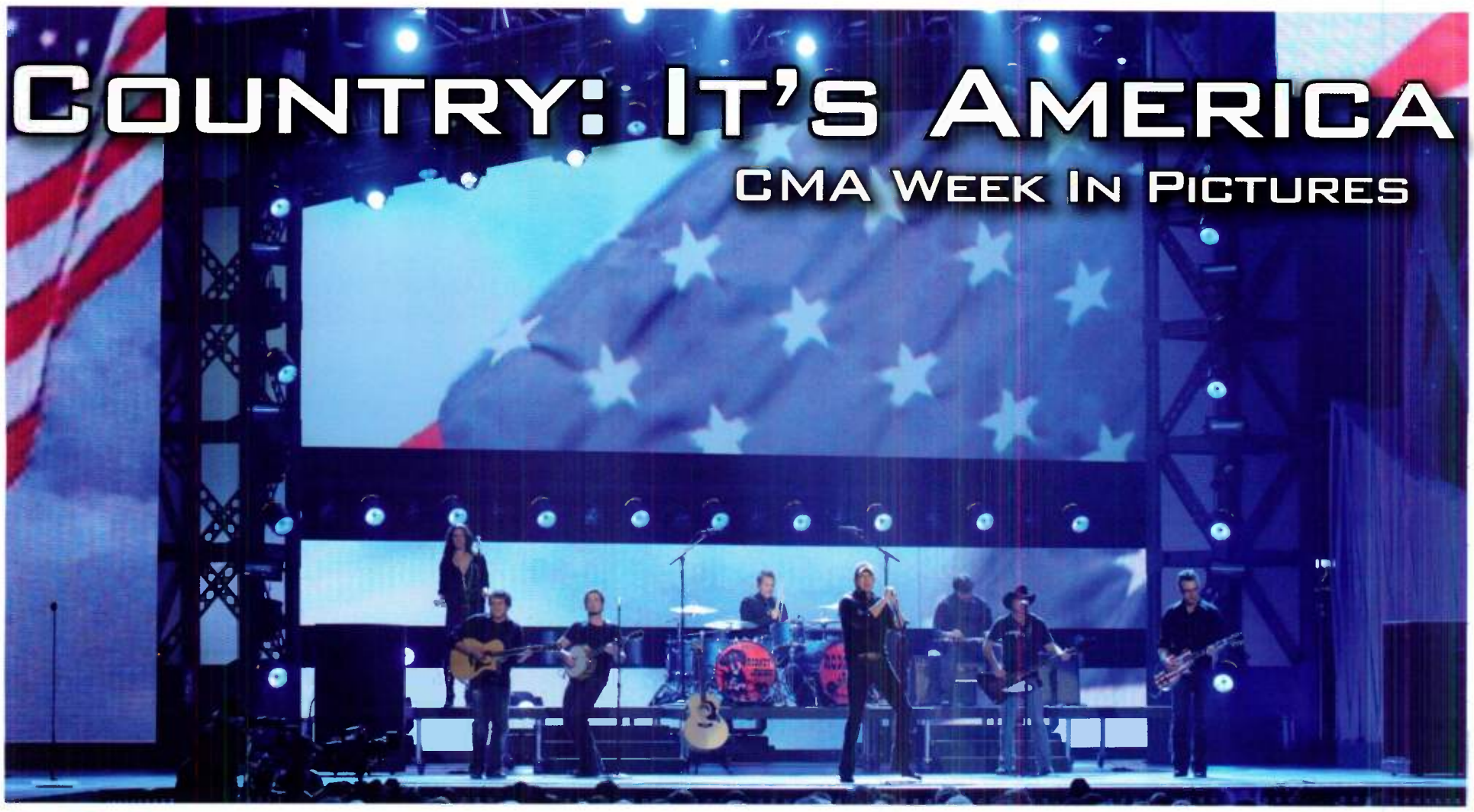
CMA Week In Pictures

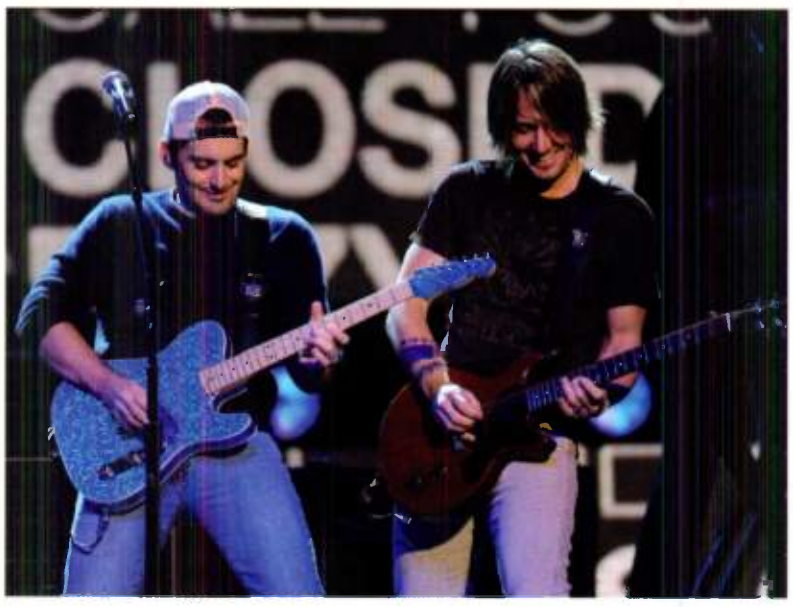


With apologies to Rodney Atkins, CMA Week 2008 proved that while America may be a Springsteen song, it's much more appropriately a Country song. Here's a look at just some of the week's most memorable festivities.

Zoom With A View: UMG/Nashville partied in its building, overlooking the Ryman Auditorium and Sommet Center. Pictured (l-r) are Bill Anderson, UMG's Luke Lewis, Jamey Johnson, Lee Ann Womack, Erv Woolsey Company's Dottie Oelhafen and UMG's Ken Robold.

Song Show: BMI honored publishers and songwriters during its annual awards dinner. Pictured (l-r) are BMI's Phil Graham, Sony/ATV's Troy Tomlinson (Publisher of the Year), Casey Beathard (Songwriter of the Year), BMI Icon honoree Hank Williams Jr., Taylor Swift and BMI's Del Bryant and Jody Williams.

I Think, Therefore I Jam: Darius Rucker celebrated his No. 1 single "Don't Think I Don't Think About It" at ASCAP. Pictured (l-r) are producer Frank Rogers, publisher Barbara Orbison, co-writer Clay Mills, Rucker, ASCAP's Mike Sistad and publisher Clay Myers.

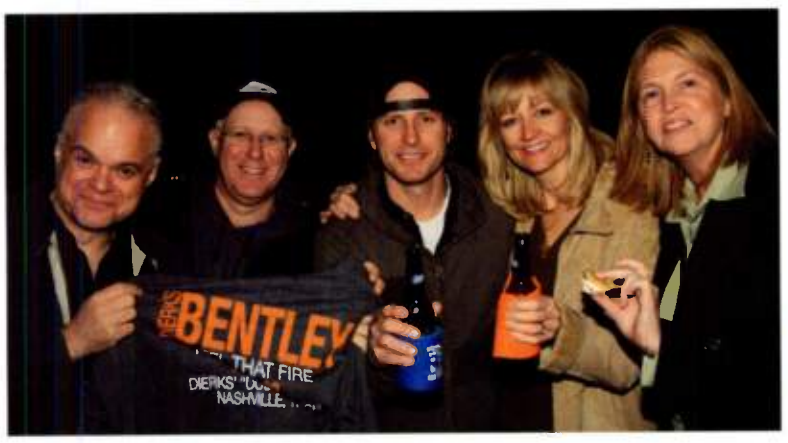


String-A-Long: Brad Paisley and Keith Urban rehearse their Awards-opening performance.

Let Down Your Hair: The Big Machine and Valory Music Co. troops hang on the balcony during their CMA Awards post-party. Pictured (l-r) are John Zarling, Jack Purcell, Jack Ingram, Kate Coppola, Sandy Spika Borchetta, Jayme Austin, Kacey Coppola, Madalyn Hankins, Jeff Davis, Lindsey Jackson, JoJamie Hahr, Whitney Sutton, Kelly Rich, Andrew Kautz, Scott Borchetta, David Beller, Jimmy Wayne, Justin Key, Allison Jones, Harry Lyons, Jon Loba, Chris Loss, Erik Powell, Mandy McCormack, Ray Pronto, Natalie Kilgore, Adam Gregory and Danick Dupelle.

CMA Week In Pictures

Rock The House: Kid Rock and Lil Wayne jam at the CMA Awards.



Fire In The Whole: Dierks Bentley hosted a bonfire and album listening party at his property outside of Nashville. Pictured (l-r) are KMPS/Seattle's Tony Thomas, WBCT/Grand Rapids' Dave Taft, Bentley, KMLE/Phoenix's Gwen Foster and KMPS/Seattle's Becky Brenner.

"You Look Really Good": Kenny Chesney welcomes Shania Twain back to Nashville before delivering his Entertainer acceptance speech.

Three Lunch: Universal South hosted a luncheon performance for radio remote attendees, and introduced new signees Kevin Costner and Jonathan Singleton. Pictured (l-r) are Randy Houser, Mark Wright, Costner, Fletcher Foster, Singleton and Teddi Bonadies.

Peace Of My Heart: Taylor Swift visits 2009 Country DJ Hall of Fame honoree and WGAR/Cleveland institution Chuck Collier during the radio remotes.

Trophy Place: Sony/Nashville's post-Awards party sported several execs and winners. Pictured (l-r, front) are Kenny Chesney, Miranda Lambert, Joe Galante, Carrie Underwood, Brad Paisley, Martina McBride, Kellie Pickler and Renee Bell. Back (l-r) are Kix Brooks, Paul Barnabee, Jake Owen, Butch Waugh and Tom Baldrica.

Coffee Mates: Capitol celebrated CMA night at Nashville's Lime. Pictured (l-r) are Mike Dungan, Trace Adkins, Cindy Mabe, EMI's John Bowen, Luke Bryan and Jimmy Harnen.

Going Green: Warner Bros. hosted a dinner for artists and executives following the awards, including new artist Jane Deere. Pictured (l-r) are CEO Tom Whalley, Blake Shelton, Jane Deere's Susan Brown, Scott Hendricks, Jane Deere's Danelle Leverett and James Otto.

Quote Book

"Come get me."
–KENNY CHESNEY to those who aspire to Entertainer of the Year

"There is nothing like holding my mama's hand as they read off the nominees and knowing she knew exactly what it felt like."
–Lady Antebellum's HILLARY SCOTT about her mother, Linda Davis

"The first joke I landed is the thing I'll always remember. I care a lot about this show and I wanted to do a good show."
–BRAD PAISLEY backstage

"Trust me, it's good to see all of you, too."
–SHANIA TWAIN responding to audience reaction to her appearance

"I will always remember this award and Brad's quick change into the monologue. I've never seen so much of Brad Paisley."
–CARRIE UNDERWOOD accepting Female Vocalist

"We started a band and now he's decided to go solo. Fine. See how you do on your own. We'll see how this works out for you."
–PAISLEY introducing Keith Urban

"I know, I flirted with her onstage."
–CHESNEY, regarding Twain, in the backstage press room.

"I think I just saw Kellie's Pickler!!!"
–Facebook comment following Pickler's CMA performance

RadiO: Sugarland's Jennifer Nettles and Kristian Bush visit WQYK/Tampa's Dave McKay (l) and Randy Price during the Premiere Radio Remotes.

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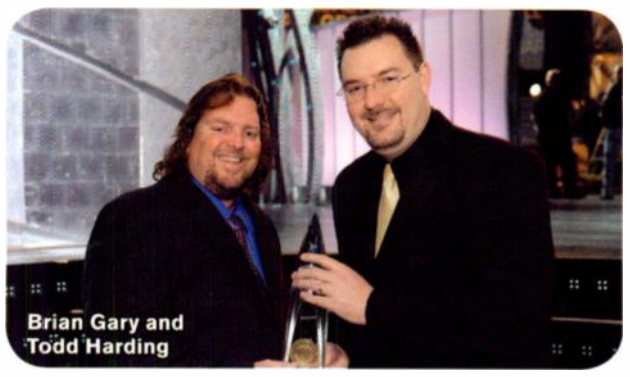
On The Trophy Case

Broadcast Winners Discuss Their Big Week

Randy Price and Dave McKay

Richard Falklen, Al Voecks, Duncan Stewart and Mike Bohan wait for Gerry House, who says, "I was helping Shania into her dress."

Andy Ritchie, Alison West and Jimmy Holt


Brian Gary and Todd Harding

Lon Helton

Beecher Martin and Mike Culotta

Randy Price & Dave McKay
Major Market Personality, WQYK/Tampa

"It all started when Bucky Covington called us on-air," Price says. "He said WQYK had won Station of the Year, and we were excited, but with a slight twinge of disappointment as nominees. He was just about to hang up, and said, 'Oh, by the way, you guys got the Major Market Personality, as well.'"

"My phone was blowing up during the show with messages from high school friends, people I knew before getting into radio – even teachers," McKay says. The suit I wore onstage was one that [the late, CMA Award-winning WQYK exec] Tom Rivers gave me. Wearing it was a tribute to Tom."

Gerry House And The House Foundation
Gerry House, Mike Bohan, Duncan Stewart, Al Voecks, Richard Falklen
Large Market Personality, WSIX/Nashville

"It was a whirlwind week," House says. "I inducted Michael McDonald into the Nashville Walk of Fame and worked with Brad Paisley on the CMA script. At the BMI Awards, I sat with Keith, Nicole, Tim and Faith. I have a room at home where my CMA Awards are. There's a spotlight on them, and heavenly music plays when you open the door, and then the oil painting of me comes down...but it's nothing special. After the awards, I wound up at Ronnie Dunn's house with Reese Witherspoon, Nicole Kidman, Keith Urban, Tony Brown, Loggins & Messina, George Strait, Reba, Martina, Rascal Flatts. I thought, 'What's wrong with this picture? I shouldn't be here. What a lucky dude.'"

Andy & Alison And The Morning Crew
Andy Ritchie, Alison West, Jimmy Holt
Medium Market Personality, WIVK/Knoxville

"Sugarland's Kristian Bush told us he could remember being 10 years old listening to WIVK at his grandfather's house," Ritchie says. "Right now, I'm driving home with the Award, so if I get pulled over I can tell the officer, 'Let me check, I think my license is in this box with ... oh, look! There's a CMA! Where did that come from?'"

"We went to James Stroud's studio to preview some music he's working on for Richie McDonald, Darryl Worley and others," West says. "I walked into a sports bar and saw Little Richard, and I got to hear Kevin Costner talk about why he got into country music. I was the only woman in the winners group, there in my green dress among all the black suits and tuxedos. It was awesome."

The Good Morning Guys
Brian Gary, Todd Harding
Small Market Personality, KUAD/Ft. Collins, CO

"Sitting amongst your heroes is surreal," Gary says. "Two rows back, there's George Strait! At the end of my row is Kid Rock. I'm thinking, 'You know, if they had a radio show, they'd probably be up closer!' We slept with the Award between us last night."

"We got to meet Heidi Newfield and thank her for being on our *28 Hours of Hope* for child abuse prevention," Harding says. "I told Jennifer Nettles, 'I voted for you in a bunch of categories. This is going to be your night.' She said, 'Me? How about you? You just won an Award!'"

CMT Country Countdown USA With Lon Helton
National Personality

"The reality of actually having won set in a couple of hours before the telecast when all the radio station reps and personalities gathered for photos. Being among all these great talents and programmers produced a huge sense of pride in being part of the best radio format there is. A very special moment for me came right after the on-air announcement of the award. I was sitting two rows behind Keith Urban, who turned around, pointed at me, and said, "Congratulations, Lon!" (Or "Lawn," as he says). "Very well deserved." There are no words to describe that feeling.

WQYK/Tampa
Major Market Station

"Although everyone was excited when we found out we won, actually walking out on that stage felt just as if you didn't know," says PD **Mike Culotta**. "That night I wore a blazer Tom Rivers had his tailor make for me. It was kind of like Tom was with us. To stand onstage and see people you work with who are friends in the industry, cheering, yelling, making faces at you, sort of brought it all home. It's a team effort at WQYK, and if we really were to do it properly, we should all be standing there."

WFMS/Indianapolis
Large Market Station

"It's fun to be there knowing you've already won, unlike an artist who has to either graciously lose on national television or go up there and be emotional," says PD **Bob Richards**. "When you see Gerry House, Mike Hammond, Mike Culotta and all the other station and personality winners, it's an honor to be part of a group whose teams are passionate about radio. It recharges and re-energizes you. And the CMA really pampers the winners. I looked a few rows back and thought, 'OK, we've got better seats than Rascal Flatts."

WIVK/Knoxville
Medium Market Station

"For Kenny Chesney to win Entertainer for the fourth time, being a hometown boy; to see Kristian Bush, who's also from this area, win a CMA; and for Andy and Alison to be there – it was special for me," PD **Mike Hammond** says. "We have a nice trophy case in the lobby where listeners can see the awards because we feel like they play as much a part as we do. New artists will come in and say, 'Man, I want one of those.'"

WGSQ/Cookeville, TN
Small Market Station

"I got to share an elevator with Kevin Costner," says PD **Gator Harrison**. "I'm glad he didn't mind when I belted out 'I Will Always Love You.' Getting a thumbs-up from Marc Chase and John Ivey – guys who gave you a shot when nobody knew or cared about you – made it more worthwhile than anything. Every person at our station earned this Award. Standing onstage – where George Strait, Kenny, Keith, Brad and Carrie are going to be – like this big goober, next to heritage call letters like WIVK and WQYK, getting the same award as Gerry freaking House, you're thinking, 'What the heck am I doing here?'" CAC

Robby Greene and Bob Richards

Mike Hammond

Gator Harrison and Phillip Gibbons

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In 1952, WSM-AM/Nashville inaugurated an annual convention weekend honoring Country radio disc jockeys for playing Grand Ole Opry stars. That event spawned the Country Disc Jockey Association. But by the mid-'50s, the exploding popularity of rock 'n' roll led to Top 40 rapidly displacing many full-time Country stations and Country segments of "variety" stations.

By June 1958, a group of artists, managers, agents, promoters, publishers and others, realizing their livelihoods were at stake, convened with the struggling CDJA to establish an all-industry trade group. On November 20, 1958, the Country Music Association was born, not only to support various professional segments, but also, crucially, to protect and advance the viability of Country radio. Fifty years later, the three enduring executive leaders of the CMA reflect on the organization's service, radio's importance and their own place in its history.

Jo Walker-Meador, 1962-1991

Connie B. Gay, an owner of several stations, was our founding President. I'd been doing PR work and didn't know a thing about country music, but came to work December 8, 1958 as a gal Friday to set up the office, be bookkeeper, receptionist, stenographer – the works – for incoming executive director, [former WSM GM] **Harry Stone**. My salary was $235 a month. CMA intended to support itself through artists donating their time doing benefit shows. We did a couple – first in Louisville with **Johnny Cash and His Tennessee Two, Jean Shepard, Carl Smith** and others. We cleared a little money, but could see it wasn't going to work. And when Harry left (by mutual consent) at the end of 1959 because CMA just didn't have the money to pay him, I was the lucky one who got to stay.

Our first slogan was "Best Liked, Worldwide" – we intended to be an international organization from the beginning. The biggest challenge was getting people to realize we were there to benefit everybody. There were many important live radio shows like the *Grand Ole Opry*, including the *Louisiana Hayride*, the *Big D* in Dallas, the *Old Dominion Barn Dance* in Richmond and the *Midwestern Hayride* in Cincinnati. WSM thought we had formed to help make those shows bigger, more competitive to the *Opry*, while people at those shows thought CMA was just another promotion arm *for* the *Opry*!

Getting more country back on radio was most important. We studied markets and went after stations where we thought there was potential for Country. Several successful radio executives, PDs and DJs volunteered to visit stations to show them how to program the music and sell commercial time. At one point, five major market stations switched to Country within a few months, and it took off from there.

In 1963, to help Country radio sell to the national market, we went to New York for the advertising community's Sales Executives Club meeting at the Roosevelt Hotel. **Gene Autry** was our President, and I arranged for us to host a luncheon and give away a beautiful Tennessee Walking Horse away as a door prize. We brought the horse to New York and Gene rode it up the elevator and into the ballroom. It created quite a sensation.

In the late '70s, I wrote President Carter to see if he would be interested in hosting a reception for the board. He said he'd be delighted, and we had a state dinner with dancing in Washington. **Tom T. Hall, Loretta Lynn** and **Conway Twitty** performed, backed by **Harold Bradley** and four more session musicians. It was a long way for me – a farm girl from Tennessee – to be in the White House.

Ed Benson, 1992-2006

In 1992, we were in the midst of the biggest boom in country music's history, but there were sea changes going on. Superstar acts were beginning to become their own economic centers, and we would see artists become bigger than their labels. Another was the rapid consolidation of radio ownership, where before the labels had always been the "big dog" in their relationship with the independently owned stations. And lurking beneath was the biggest issue of all – the early evolution of digital delivery of music.

In 1988 CMA integrated regular strategic planning into the mix, allowing the board to begin focusing CMA's resources and energies. CMA would analyze its events, its market development initiatives and even its board structure, striving to do things to have the most impact on the health of the industry and the organization. CMA's success in executing its strategic direction helped keep the organization vital and in an important leadership role.

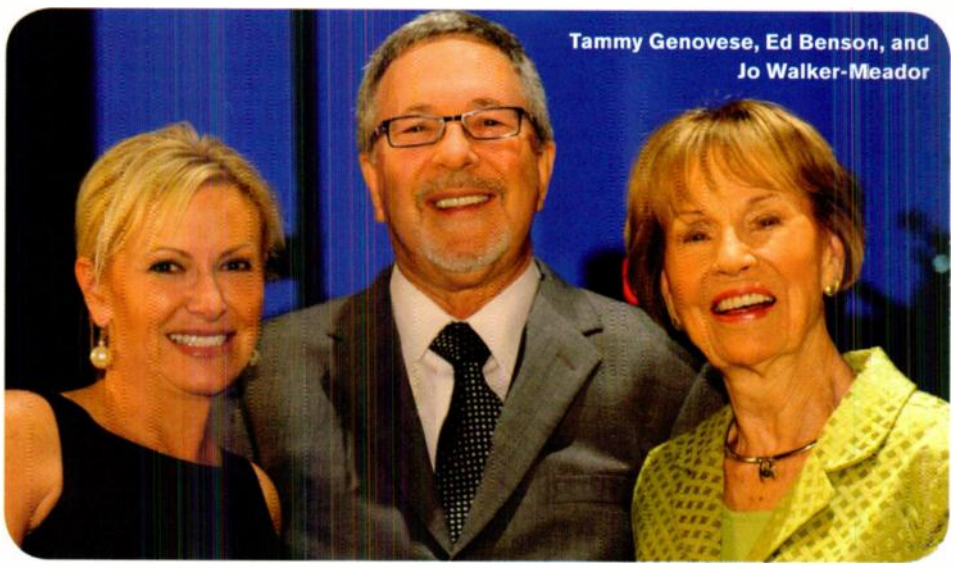
From the very beginning, radio was understood to be integral to CMA efforts to broaden the awareness of country music to the world. So CMA always devoted considerable resources to a healthy Country radio environment to help radio market itself better and get a larger slice of the ad revenue pie. In 1989, we launched CMA's biggest-ever initiative to sell Country to ad agencies and corporate marketers. The advent of the "America's Sold On Country" campaign made CMA the first organization to go into ad agencies and corporate headquarters to pitch not a media vehicle, but a type of music. In the 1990s, CMA increased the number of radio representatives on its board and continued to actively support and be a lead sponsor of CRS.

CMA's original Board of Directors in 1959: (seated) Steve Sholes, Chairman Wesley Rose, President Connie B. Gay, Dee Kilpatrick, Cindy Walker, Pee Wee King, Cracker Jim Brooker; (standing) Len Ellis, Joe Lucas, Paul Ackerman, Ken Nelson, Don Pierce, J. William Denny, Mac Wiseman and Harold Moon

Among our biggest accomplishments during my time included moving Fan Fair to downtown and changing its name to the *CMA Music Festival*. And in 2005, two huge things happened: the first-ever CMA Awards in New York and the six-year deal making ABC the new network partner of the Awards.

Some of my favorite memories were establishing CMA's London office in 1982, and working with some of our industry's talented and visionary leaders. The late **Irving Waugh** influenced me so much by his uncompromising standards for excellence. And, of course, the constant example of Jo Walker-Meador's love and devotion to CMA. I also got to know some of the real characters in our industry like the great **Joe Talbot, Merle Kilgore** and **Walter Miller**.

And I will always be glad to have known and been inspired by so many gifted and brilliant creators of our music. There are the successes and accomplishments, but unquestionably what endures the most are the friendships and the relationships.



Tammy Genovese, Ed Benson, and Jo Walker-Meador

Tammy Genovese, 2006-present

My thoughts centralize around CMA being more of the business trade association for this community. Not that we haven't done that in the past, but in these difficult times our industry's having with the economy and within the digital world, it feels like this is the time when CMA should step up and do things our industry does not have the resources for right now.

One of those is a major research project we're in the middle of: who's buying, where they live and how to market to them in the digital age. For CMA to be the focal point, the driving force behind the business – that's where I want to be.

More than 2,000 radio stations promote country. What they do for this music and their communities is huge, and they give us credibility. They offer such diversity – from more traditional artists like **Brad Paisley** to **Taylor Swift**, who reaches another demo in a whole different world. But it's all still country music, and that's the great thing about who we are as a format and what we do.

We were very pleased with the *CMA Awards* ratings and the record sales that followed. ABC couldn't be happier; they're the best television partners we've ever had. The promos were very reflective of our music and artists, and sent a fabulous message to the network TV world. The marketing committee of the CMA board worked very closely with our staff and ABC to determine strategically where we should spend our marketing dollars and whom we were going after. And it paid off.

Certainly Jo and Ed, with their great wisdom, vision and judgment, set the tone for us to be able to enjoy what we have right now at CMA. I've been here a long time, but being able to sit with the top leaders of the industry is still almost humbling. I learn and grow every day.

Our board members could walk in with their own burdens of life and the economy on their shoulders. But what's most enlightening and refreshing is that they take off their own business hats, put on their CMA hats and ask, "What can we do for this genre?" They have been leaders in this business so long, and that they continue to make it a priority to come together for the good of the industry just makes me want to work that much harder to bring it all to fruition. CAC

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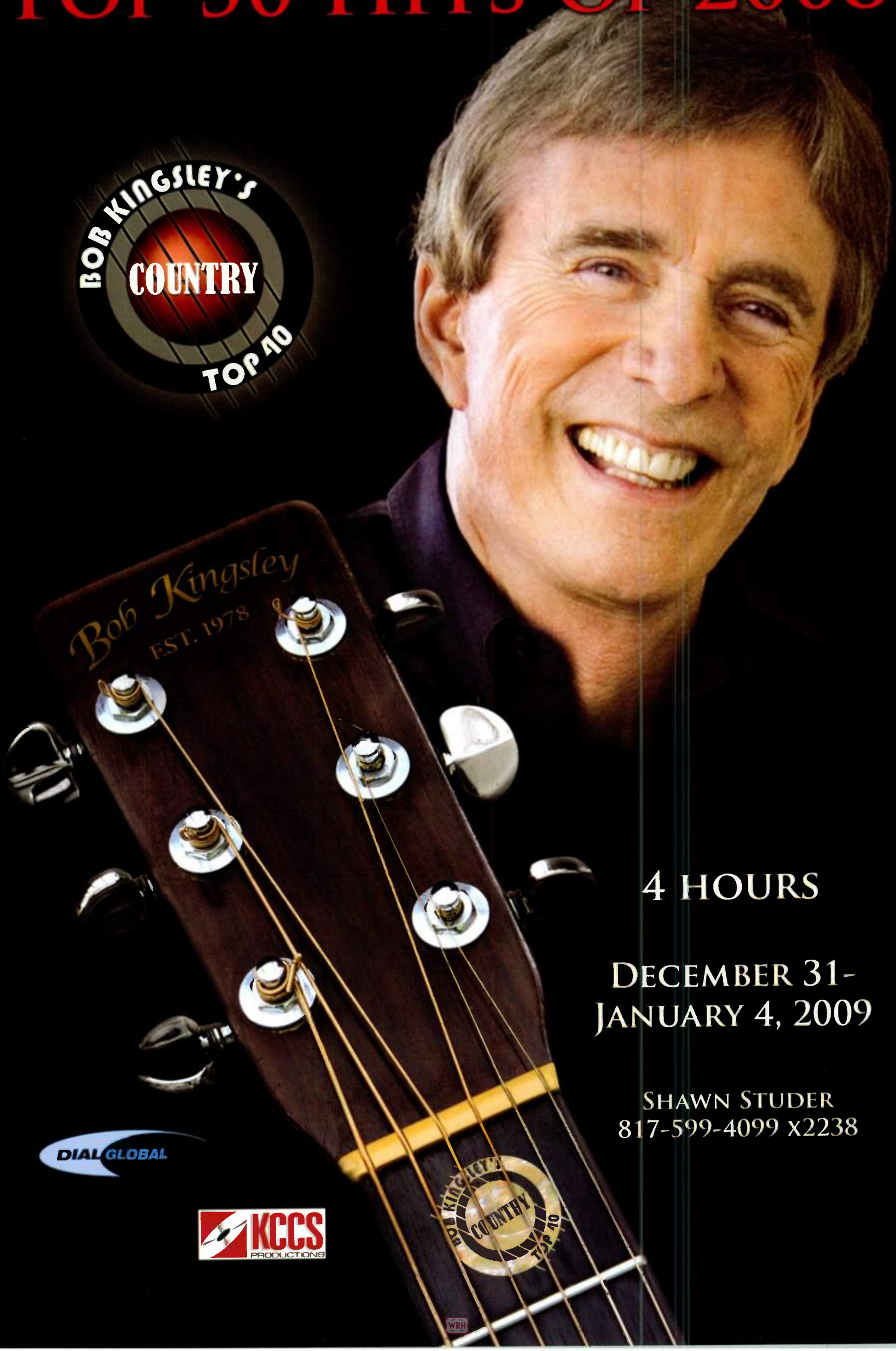
BOB KINGSLEY COUNTS DOWN THE TOP 50 HITS OF 2008



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LABEL OF THE YEAR

Arista

2008 TOP TEN LABELS

1 ARISTA NASHVILLE 15.8%

2 Capitol Records Nashville 13.1%

3 MCA NASHVILLE A UNIVERSAL MUSIC COMPANY 9.4%

4 BNA BNA RECORDS LABEL 8.2%

5 LYRIC STREET RECORDS 7.4%

6 BIG MACHINE RECORDS 6.6%

7 COLUMBIA NASHVILLE 6.5%

8 CURB RECORDS 6.2%

9 Mercury Records A UNIVERSAL MUSIC COMPANY 4.8%

10 WB NASHVILLE 4.5%

This is getting to be a habit. Country Aircheck has produced three year-end issues in its short history, and we've yet to write a Label of the Year story about anyone other than Arista/Nashville. And it's easy to understand why.

Of this year's Top 100 (page 17), Arista owns 14 including three of the top 10, five of the top 20 and nine of the top 50. Moving over to Top Performers (page 22), Arista has three of the overall top 10: Brad Paisley (2), Carrie Underwood (3) and Alan Jackson (7). And finally, of the 13 songs Arista placed in the Top 15 this year (page 20), 10 were top 5 and nine went all the way to No. 1. All told, Arista owned the chart pinnacle in 2008 for 19 weeks.

Astounding as that stat is, Arista's story is about more than superstar artists, great music and chart positions. As in any organization, it's also about a team of people working together toward a common goal. And for a rarely tapped perspective on this particular group, we asked Arista's artists for their thoughts on VP Skip Bishop; National Lesly Tyson; regionals Jeri Cooper, Lori Hartigan, Diane Monk, John Sigler and Tyler Waugh; and Coordinator Kates Rogers.

Jason Michael Carroll

"Skip is the only guy I know who wears more rings than I do. John not only looks like Kramer from *Seinfeld*, he drives like him, too. Jeri is the parental figure of the reps. When it's a late night and I have an early event the next day, she'll give me 'the look.' Then, when I'm draggin' the next morning, I get the 'I told you so' look.

"Last month during our first radio event together, I introduced California native Diane to Cracker Barrel. It was a positive first-time experience. As for Lori Hartigan, I would describe her in one word – Queen. I remember doing our first West Coast radio tour run. At the time, we were promoting 'Lookin' At You' as the possible lead single. Lori came up with a very unique push idea. Instead of 'Lookin' At You,' her brilliance thought of 'Lookin' At Ewe.' She had laminates made with a big ol' lamb on them and handed them out everywhere. The best part was when she showed up with a huge, inflatable lamb and told us we were to walk into every radio station with our mascot. We resisted, but luckily, KUPL/Portland's Rick 'Bubba' Taylor was much more interested in the lamb than I was. I autographed it and left it for him to enjoy!"

Arista extended its chart share in 2008, climbing from 14.7% in '07 and 14.8% in '06. The imprint led the charge for Sony/Nashville, which snared an astounding 35.7% of the chart, up from last year's 31.4%.

Second-place Capitol also cut a bigger piece of the pie in '08, bringing in 13.1%, over the 9.5% drawn in '07. MCA vaulted from fifth to third, BNA from sixth to fourth, and Big Machine from eighth to sixth, while Columbia and Warner Bros. made top 10 debuts this year.

Kristy Lee Cook

"They're all a lot of fun in different ways, all very outgoing, but very caring and always looking out for their artists. One time Jeri and I were at a restaurant playing pool and these guys came over wanting a game against the winning team, so we tried to lose on purpose. But it's really clear with all of them that they want you to enjoy your time on the road. Work hard, but have fun, too.

"It's always so busy when we're out – seven days a week, but sometimes you do get a day off. Lori has promised me Six Flags Magic Mountain next time we're in San Diego, which I've always wanted to do.

"I haven't met one person at Arista I don't get along with. They work hard for their artists, and I just want to tell them congratulations on being number one. You guys totally deserve it. You work super hard, but you're also great people. And that's a great combination."

Jypsi

Amber-Dawn: "Skip, aka Chief Three Bears, is one of the most amazing people we know. He's *always* cheerful and never serious. He lights up every room he enters. He wears lots of rings and waves his fingers with a quick motion so his rings rattle as if he's conjuring up some magic spell. Lori, or Lo Lo, is so fun to hang out with. Every time we go on a trip with her it's never lacking for something fun to do. She has a kind and giving spirit."

Scarlett: "Skip is incredibly smart and tactful. You can sit in a room and listen to him talk for hours. It is very obvious why he's the head of Arista: he communicates well. Lesly always takes really good care of everyone. We're always at home when we're with her. John takes us to thrift shops and these cool, 24-hour dingy diners when we're in Pennsylvania. Jeri is very classy with radio and fun to hang out with. She's a girl's girl, so naturally we have fun with her on the road. Tyler Waugh is young, hip and energetic. He's a great new addition and I'm glad he's here. Kates is so wonderful to be around and, oh my God, cute shoes!"

Frank: "Skip once told us he and his dad used to go fishing in the winter in the freezing cold. He then said if anyone knows how difficult it is to catch a fish with your bare hands in freezing cold water, that's how hard it is to market Jypsi. John is not afraid to get out a map."

Kix Brooks

"A label of the year three-peat?! Hat's off to them. You know, Ronnie and I have been a part of Arista almost since they opened their doors in Nashville, and while some of the faces have changed over the years, the one thing that hasn't changed is their commitment and dedication. As an artist, what more could you ask for from your label team?

"Promotion isn't an easy job – lots of rejection along the way. But you'd never know from their spirit. Seemed like we saw Sigler at almost every show this year. I thought we were on the road a lot, but that guy may beat us! We can always tell we've hit the West Coast part of a tour when Lori shows up. She's been trying to get us to call her 'the Queen' since we met her. Now it looks like we may have to start! And with Skip and Lesly at the helm, I'm betting this Label of the Year title could be in place for awhile. And besides, Skip's the only guy I know with hair almost as crazy as Ronnie's. He deserves the honor for that reason alone!

"Big congrats to the whole team from me and my partner Mr. Dunn. You guys earned it!" CAC

Dude Naps In A Circle: The Arista team catches their leader Skip Bishop, um, meditating during one of his famous 8am to 11pm staff retreats. Pictured ringing their boss (from top left) are Lesly Tyson, Tyler Waugh, Diane Monk, Lori Hartigan, Jeri Cooper and John Sigler.

ANOTHER BIG DOG YEAR!!!

1	JAMES OTTO	Just Got Started Lovin' You	(Warner Bros.)
2	TRACE ADKINS	You're Gonna Miss This	(Capitol)
3	RODNEY ATKINS	Cleaning This Gun (Come...)	(Curb)
4	CHRIS CAGLE	What Kinda Gone	(Capitol)
5	GEORGE STRAIT	I Saw God Today	(MCA)
6	ALAN JACKSON	Small Town Southern Man	(Arista)
7	BRAD PAISLEY	Letter To Me	(Arista)
8	BLAKE SHELTON	Home	(Warner Bros.)
9	BRAD PAISLEY	I'm Still A Guy	(Arista)
10	PHIL VASSAR	Love Is A Beautiful Thing	(Universal South)
11	GARY ALLAN	Watching Airplanes	(MCA)
12	TAYLOR SWIFT	Our Song	(Big Machine)
13	LADY ANTEBELLUM	Love Don't Live Here	(Capitol)
14	KEITH ANDERSON	I Still Miss You	(Columbia)
15	KENNY CHESNEY	Don't Blink	(BNA)
16	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	All-American Girl	(19/Arista)
17	ALAN JACKSON	Good Time	(Arista)
18	MONTGOMERY GENTRY	Back When I Knew It All	(Columbia)
19	RASCAL FLATTS	Winner At A Losing Game	(Lyric Street)
20	JIMMY WAYNE	Do You Believe Me Now	(Valory)
21	DARIUS RUCKER	Don't Think I Don't Think...	(Capitol)
22	MONTGOMERY GENTRY	What Do Ya Think About That	(Columbia)
23	JASON ALDEAN	Laughed Until We Cried	(BBR)
24	KENNY CHESNEY	Shiftwork	(BNA)
25	CHUCK WICKS	Stealing Cinderella	(RCA)
26	TAYLOR SWIFT	Picture To Burn	(Big Machine)
27	SUGARLAND	Stay	(Mercury)
28	KENNY CHESNEY	Better As A Memory	(BNA)
29	MIRANDA LAMBERT	Gunpowder & Lead	(Columbia)
30	RASCAL FLATTS	Every Day	(Lyric Street)
31	KEITH URBAN	You Look Good In My Shirt	(Capitol)
32	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	Last Name	(19/Arista)
33	BILLY RAY & MILEY CYRUS	Ready, Set, Don't Go	(Disney/Lyric Street)
34	DIERKS BENTLEY	Trying To Stop Your Leaving	(Capitol)
35	BRAD PAISLEY	Waitin' On A Woman	(Arista)
36	LOST TRAILERS	Holler Back	(BNA)
37	TOBY KEITH	She Never Cried In Front...	(Show Dog)
38	TAYLOR SWIFT	Should've Said No	(Big Machine)
39	BROOKS & DUNN	Put A Girl In It	(Arista)
40	SUGARLAND	All I Want To Do	(Mercury)
41	CRAIG MORGAN	International Harvester	(BBR)
42	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	Just A Dream	(19/Arista)
43	JOSH GRACIN	We Weren't Crazy	(Lyric Street)
44	KENNY CHESNEY	Everybody Wants To Go To...	(Blue Chair/BNA)
45	KID ROCK	All Summer Long	(Top Dog/Atlantic/CO5)
46	DIERKS BENTLEY	Free And Easy (Down The...)	(Capitol)
47	JOSH TURNER	Firecracker	(MCA)
48	GEORGE STRAIT	Troubadour	(MCA)
49	KEITH URBAN	Everybody	(Capitol)
50	LUKE BRYAN	Country Man	(Capitol)
51	GEORGE STRAIT	How 'Bout Them Cowgirls	(MCA)
52	BROOKS & DUNN	God Must Be Busy	(Arista)
53	BUCKY COVINGTON	It's Good To Be Us	(Lyric Street)
54	CLAY WALKER	Fall	(Curb)
55	HEIDI NEWFIELD	Johnny And June	(Curb)
56	JOSH TURNER f/T. YEARWOOD	Another Try	(MCA)
57	JASON MICHAEL CARROLL	Livin' Our Love Song	(Arista)
58	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	So Small	(19/Arista)
59	CHUCK WICKS	All I Ever Wanted	(RCA)
60	GARTH BROOKS	More Than A Memory	(Pearl/Big Machine)
61	TIM MCGRAW	Let It Go	(Curb)
62	BUCKY COVINGTON	I'll Walk	(Lyric Street)
63	CRAIG MORGAN	Love Remembers	(BNA)
64	JAKE OWEN	Something About A Woman	(RCA)
65	GARY ALLAN	Learning How To Bend	(MCA)
66	JEWEL	Stronger Woman	(Valory)
67	ZAC BROWN BAND	Chicken Fried	(Atlantic/Home Grown/BPP)
68	JAMEY JOHNSON	In Color	(Mercury)
69	MONTGOMERY GENTRY	Roll With Me	(Columbia)
70	TOBY KEITH	Get My Drink On	(Show Dog)
71	REBA MCENTIRE	Every Other Weekend	(MCA)
72	KELLIE PICKLER	Things That Never Cross...	(19/BNA)
73	TAYLOR SWIFT	Love Story	(Big Machine)
74	JOE NICHOLS	It Ain't No Crime	(Universal South)
75	JASON ALDEAN	Relentless	(BBR)
76	CRYSTAL SHAWANDA	You Can Let Go	(RCA)
77	LADY ANTEBELLUM	Lookin' For A Good Time	(Capitol)
78	LEANN RIMES	Nothin' Better To Do	(Curb)
79	JULIANNE HOUGH	That Song In My Head	(Mercury)
80	TOBY KEITH	She's A Hottie	(Show Dog)
81	ASHTON SHEPHERD	Takin' Off This Pain	(MCA)
82	JASON MICHAEL CARROLL	I Can Sleep When I'm Dead	(Arista)
83	SUGARLAND	Already Gone	(Mercury)
84	RASCAL FLATTS	Here	(Lyric Street)
85	KELLIE PICKLER	Don't You Know You're...	(19/BNA)
86	TIM MCGRAW	Suspicions	(Curb)
87	ASHTON SHEPHERD	Sounds So Good	(MCA)
88	SARA EVANS	As If	(RCA)
89	BRAD PAISLEY & KEITH URBAN	Start A Band	(Arista)
90	TRISHA YEARWOOD	This Is Me You're Talking To	(Big Machine)
91	EMERSON DRIVE	You Still Own Me	(Midas)
92	JESSICA SIMPSON	Come On Over	(Columbia)
93	RASCAL FLATTS	Bob That Head	(Lyric Street)
94	RANDY HOUSER	Anything Goes	(Universal South)
95	BILLY CURRINGTON	Don't	(Mercury)
96	PAT GREEN	Let Me	(BNA)
97	TIM MCGRAW	Kristofferson	(Curb)
98	JACK INGRAM	Maybe She'll Get Lonely	(Big Machine)
99	BLAKE SHELTON	She Wouldn't Be Gone	(Warner Bros.)
100	GARTH BROOKS & H. LEWIS	Workin' For A Livin'	(Pearl/Big Machine)

CONGRATULATIONS
JAMES OTTO

"Just Got Started Lovin' You"
is the
#1 Song Of the Year!

And JAMES is the
BEST SELLING NEW ARTIST OF 2008!

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CONGRATULATIONS

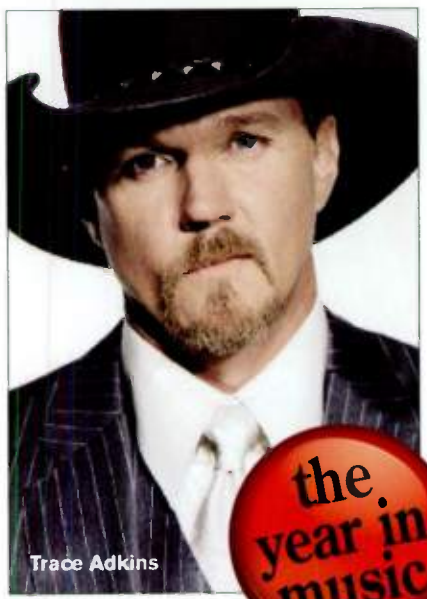
BLAKE SHELTON

"HOME" is the #8 Song of the Year!

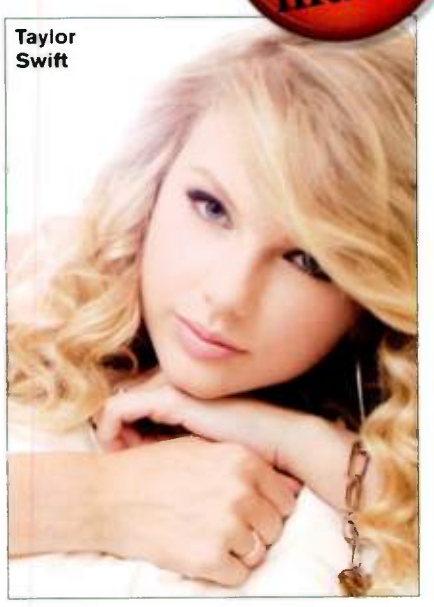
& Blake is one of People Magazine's Sexiest Men Alive in 2008!

TOP 15s OF 2008

Rascal Flatts


Trace Adkins

the year in music


Taylor Swift

George Strait

	Artist	Title	Label	Peak Position (wks. at No.1)	Peak Date	Wks. on Chart	2008 Rank
A	TRACE ADKINS	You're Gonna Miss This	(Capitol)	1 (3)	4/14/08	17	2
	JASON ALDEAN	Laughed Until We Cried	(BBR)	5	4/7/08	22	23
	JASON ALDEAN	Relentless	(BBR)	14	9/22/08	23	75
	GARY ALLAN	Watching Airplanes	(MCA)	1 (1)	2/18/08	15	11
	GARY ALLAN	Learning How To Bend	(MCA)	12	8/4/08	21	65
	KEITH ANDERSON	I Still Miss You	(Columbia)	2	8/25/08	33	14
	RODNEY ATKINS	Cleaning This Gun (Come...)	(Curb)	1 (2)	3/3/08	17	3
B	DIERKS BENTLEY	Trying To Stop Your Leaving	(Capitol)	6	7/7/08	27	34
	DIERKS BENTLEY	Feel That Fire	(Capitol)	14	11/17/08	8	--
	GARTH BROOKS	More Than A Memory	(Pearl/Big Machine)	2	11/26/07	2	60
	BROOKS & DUNN	God Must Be Busy	(Arista)	12	3/24/08	20	52
	BROOKS & DUNN	Put A Girl In It	(Arista)	3	8/11/08	17	39
	LUKE BRYAN	Country Man	(Capitol)	9	10/13/08	32	50
C	CHRIS CAGLE	What Kinda Gone	(Capitol)	3	3/24/08	22	4
	JASON MICHAEL CARROLL	Livin' Our Love Song	(Arista)	6	11/26/07	2	57
	KENNY CHESNEY	Don't Blink	(BNA)	2	12/3/07	2	15
	KENNY CHESNEY	Shiftwork	(BNA)	2	3/10/08	17	24
	KENNY CHESNEY	Better As A Memory	(BNA)	1 (1)	6/23/08	15	28
	KENNY CHESNEY	Everybody Wants To Go To...	(Blue Chair/BNA)	1 (2)	10/13/08	13	44
	BUCKY COVINGTON	It's Good To Be Us	(Lyric Street)	9	3/31/08	22	53
	BUCKY COVINGTON	I'll Walk	(Lyric Street)	9	11/17/08	27	62
	BILLY CURRINGTON	Don't	(Mercury)	13	11/17/08	17	95
	BILLY RAY & MILEY CYRUS	Ready, Set, Don't Go	(Disney/Lyric Street)	4	2/4/08	15	33
E	SARA EVANS	As If	(RCA)	10	12/10/07	6	88
I	JOSH GRACIN	We Weren't Crazy	(Lyric Street)	9	7/21/08	38	43
J	ALAN JACKSON	Small Town Southern Man	(Arista)	1 (2)	3/24/08	20	6
	ALAN JACKSON	Good Time	(Arista)	1 (3)	7/28/08	18	17
	ALAN JACKSON	Country Boy	(Arista)	12	11/8/08	7	--
	JEWEL	Stronger Woman	(Valory)	11	4/14/08	18	66
	JAMEY JOHNSON	In Color	(Mercury)	11	11/17/08	31	68
K	TOBY KEITH	Get My Drink On	(Show Dog)	11	2/11/08	12	70
	TOBY KEITH	She's A Hottie	(Show Dog)	11	6/2/08	14	80
	TOBY KEITH	She Never Cried In Front...	(Show Dog)	1(1)	10/20/08	18	37
	KID ROCK	All Summer Long	(Top Dog/Atlantic/CO5)	3	9/29/08	16	45
L	LADY ANTEBELLUM	Love Don't Live Here	(Capitol)	4	6/2/08	30	13
	LADY ANTEBELLUM	Lookin' For A Good Time	(Capitol)	13	11/10/08	22	77
	MIRANDA LAMBERT	Gunpowder & Lead	(Columbia)	7	8/4/08	33	29
	LOST TRAILERS	Holler Back	(BNA)	9	9/22/08	28	36
M	REBA MCENTIRE	Every Other Weekend	(MCA)	14	7/14/08	22	71
	TIM MCGRAW	Suspicions	(Curb)	13	2/4/08	11	86
	TIM MCGRAW	Kristofferson	(Curb)	14	6/2/08	15	97
	TIM MCGRAW	Let It Go	(Curb)	4	11/17/08	17	61
	MONTGOMERY GENTRY	What Do Ya Think About That	(Columbia)	3	1/7/08	10	22
	MONTGOMERY GENTRY	Back When I Knew It All	(Columbia)	1 (1)	6/30/08	21	18
	MONTGOMERY GENTRY	Roll With Me	(Columbia)	3	11/17/08	15	69
	CRAIG MORGAN	International Harvester	(BBR)	10	3/3/08	17	41
	CRAIG MORGAN	Love Remembers	(BNA)	10	11/17/08	27	63
N	HEIDI NEWFIELD	Johnny And June	(Curb)	9	9/29/08	29	55
O	JAMES OTTO	Just Got Started Lovin' You	(Warner Bros.)	1 (2)	5/12/08	27	1
	JAKE OWEN	Something About A Woman	(RCA)	14	5/5/08	25	64
P	BRAD PAISLEY	Letter To Me	(Arista)	1 (3)	2/11/08	14	7
	BRAD PAISLEY	I'm Still A Guy	(Arista)	1 (4)	6/9/08	18	9
	BRAD PAISLEY	Waitin' On A Woman	(Arista)	1 (1)	9/15/08	16	35
	BRAD PAISLEY & KEITH URBAN	Start A Band	(Arista)	8	11/17/08	10	89
	KELLIE PICKLER	Things That Never Cross A...	(19/BNA)	14	3/31/08	22	72
R	RASCAL FLATTS	Winner At A Losing Game	(Lyric Street)	2	2/11/08	13	19
	RASCAL FLATTS	Every Day	(Lyric Street)	2	6/9/08	17	30
	RASCAL FLATTS	Bob That Head	(Lyric Street)	13	9/1/08	12	93
	RASCAL FLATTS	Here	(Lyric Street)	7	11/17/08	11	84
	LEANN RIMES	Nothin' Better To Do	(Curb)	12	12/10/07	7	78
	DARIUS RUCKER	Don't Think I Don't Think...	(Capitol)	1 (2)	9/29/08	25	21
S	BLAKE SHELTON	Home	(Warner Bros.)	1 (1)	7/7/08	25	8
	GEORGE STRAIT	How 'Bout Them Cowgirls	(MCA)	3	12/17/07	7	51
	GEORGE STRAIT	I Saw God Today	(MCA)	1 (2)	4/28/08	14	5
	GEORGE STRAIT	Troubadour	(MCA)	6	10/6/08	18	48
	SUGARLAND	Stay	(Mercury)	1 (2)	1/21/08	11	27
	SUGARLAND	All I Want To Do	(Mercury)	1 (1)	8/4/08	13	40
	SUGARLAND	Already Gone	(Mercury)	5	11/17/08	12	83
	TAYLOR SWIFT	Our Song	(Big Machine)	1 (3)	1/7/08	9	12
	TAYLOR SWIFT	Picture To Burn	(Big Machine)	3	5/12/08	18	26
	TAYLOR SWIFT	Should've Said No	(Big Machine)	1 (2)	8/18/08	15	38
	TAYLOR SWIFT	Love Story	(Big Machine)	1 (2)	11/17/08	10	73
T	JOSH TURNER	Firecracker	(MCA)	2	12/17/07	7	47
	JOSH TURNER F/T. YEARWOOD	Another Try	(MCA)	13	6/1/08	27	56
U	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	So Small	(19/Arista)	1 (2)	12/3/07	6	58
	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	All-American Girl	(19/Arista)	1 (1)	3/10/08	15	16
	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	Last Name	(19/Arista)	1 (1)	6/16/08	15	32
	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	Just A Dream	(19/Arista)	1 (2)	11/3/08	19	42
	KEITH URBAN	Everybody	(Capitol)	5	1/7/08	10	49
	KEITH URBAN	You Look Good In My Shirt	(Capitol)	1 (1)	8/25/08	15	31
V	PHIL VASSAR	Love Is A Beautiful Thing	(Universal South)	2	5/26/08	29	10
W	CLAY WALKER	Fall	(Curb)	7	11/26/07	6	54
	JIMMY WAYNE	Do You Believe Me Now	(Valory)	1 (2)	9/8/08	25	20
	CHUCK WICKS	Stealing Cinderella	(RCA)	5	3/10/08	18	25
	CHUCK WICKS	All I Ever Wanted	(RCA)	12	10/13/08	28	59
Z	ZAC BROWN BAND	Chicken Fried	(Atlantic/Home Grown/BPP)	2	11/17/08	20	67

Taylor Swift

COUNTRY AIRCHECK YEAR-END STATS

#2 Female Artist

#4 Overall Artist

#12 Song of the Year "Our Song"

#26 Song of the Year "Picture To Burn"

#38 Song of the Year "Should've Said No"

#73 Song of the Year "Love Story"

THANKS COUNTRY RADIO FOR AN AMAZING YEAR!

WHITE HORSE

the next hit from Taylor's #1 album FEARLESS
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KENNY, BRAD, CARRIE, RASCAL FLATTS AND JAMES OTTO TOP 2008 AIRPLAY

the year in music

Kenny Chesney continues his reign as Country radio's Most-Heard artist and the format's Top Male Performer, titles he has held four of the last five years. The ACM and CMA Entertainer of the Year posted a pair of No. 1s that topped the charts for a combined three weeks.

Closely chasing Chesney in the Overall group was Sony stablemate **Brad Paisley,** who had three singles spend more weeks at No. 1 – eight – than any other artist in 2008. **Carrie Underwood** completes the 2008 Sony Trifecta, coming in third in the Overall Most-Heard category and leading the Top Female Performers list for the second consecutive year. Carrie had four songs spend six weeks at No. 1. She was followed closely by **Taylor Swift,** who led all women artists with seven weeks at No. 1 from three singles.

Rascal Flatts are Country Aircheck's top audience-getting Duo/Group for an amazing sixth consecutive year. Four major hits launched the guys to these airplay heights, which played a huge hand in them appearing before more than one million fans this year.

This year's New Artist list is quite an eclectic group. It's led by **James Otto,** whose two week No. 1 "Just Got Started Lovin' You" is the Most-Heard song of 2008. Award-winning **Lady Antebellum, Lost Trailers** and the **Zac Brown Band** also broke through in 2008. **Chuck Wicks** paced the new solo artists, while **Heidi Newfield** emerged from Trick Pony to notch her first Top 15 solo hit. Rounding out this bunch is a group of artists who have achieved stardom in other formats. Led by Hootie and the Blowfish lead singer **Darius Rucker**, this contingent of Country newcomers – including **Kid Rock** and **Jewel** – notched their first Top 15 hits in this format in 2008.

A total of 194 songs charted in 2008, up from 190 last year. There were 86 songs reaching the Top 15, with 27 going all the way to the top. Seventeen artists posted No. 1 hits in 2008, with 12 of them posting multiple-week No. 1s a total of 45 weeks.

The comeback, feel-good story of the year belongs to **Jimmy Wayne.** After a four-year absence from the charts (his last Top 15, "I Love You This Much," peaked at No. 6 in March 2004), Wayne took "Do You Believe Me Now" to No. 1 this September.

TOP 15 1st TIMERS

This year's list of artists notching their very first Top 15 Country hit is as wide-ranging as any class to have achieved this milestone. All at once it's a trio of Top 40 royalty, a singer/songwriter who had the year's No. 1 song after a few stops and starts along the way, the former lead singer of a group who wrote a huge hit for her debut solo effort and a couple of bands who toiled in clubs for years before this first taste of radio acceptance. Two artists – James Otto and Darius Rucker – saw their songs hit the top of the charts in 2008, while the Zac Brown Band took their hit to No. 1 the first week of the 2009 chart year (11/24/08).

Jewel
(Valory)

Kid Rock
(Top Dog/Atlantic/CO5)

Lady Antebellum
(Capitol)

Lost Trailers
(BNA)

Heidi Newfield
(Curb)

James Otto
(Warner Bros.)

Darius Rucker
(Capitol)

Chuck Wicks
(RCA)

Zac Brown Band
(Atlantic/Home Grown/BPP)

Carrie Underwood

Country Radio's Top 2008 Perfomers

OVERALL

1. Kenny Chesney (BNA)
2. Brad Paisley (Arista)
3. Carrie Underwood (19/Arista)
4. Taylor Swift (Big Machine)
5. George Strait (MCA)
6. Rascal Flatts (Lyric Street)
7. Alan Jackson (Arista)
8. Montgomery Gentry (Columbia)
9. Sugarland (Mercury)
10. Keith Urban (Capitol)

MALE

1. Kenny Chesney (BNA)
2. Brad Paisley (Arista)
3. George Strait (MCA)
4. Alan Jackson (Arista)
5. Keith Urban (Capitol)
6. Dierks Bentley (Capitol)
7. Gary Allan (MCA)
8. Trace Adkins (Capitol)
9. Toby Keith (Show Dog)
10. James Otto (Warner Bros.)

FEMALE

1. Carrie Underwood (19/Arista)
2. Taylor Swift (Big Machine)
3. Miranda Lambert (Columbia)
4. Kellie Pickler (BNA)
5. Ashton Shepherd (MCA)
6. Heidi Newfield (Curb)
7. Jewel (Valory)
8. LeAnn Rimes (Curb)
9. Sara Evans (RCA)
10. Reba McEntire (MCA)

DUO/GROUP

1. Rascal Flatts (Lyric Street)
2. Montgomery Gentry (Columbia)
3. Sugarland (Mercury)
4. Lady Antebellum (Capitol)
5. Brooks & Dunn (Arista)
6. Lost Trailers (BNA)
7. Zac Brown Band (Atlantic/Home Grown/BPP)
8. Emerson Drive (Midas/Big Machine)
9. Eagles (ERC/Mercury/Lost Highway)
10. Little Big Town (Capitol)

NEW ARTIST

1. James Otto (Warner Bros.)
2. Lady Antebellum (Capitol)
3. Chuck Wicks (RCA)
4. Darius Rucker (Capitol)
5. Lost Trailers (BNA)
6. Kid Rock (Top Dog/Atlantic/CO5)
7. Ashton Shepherd (MCA)
8. Heidi Newfield (Curb)
9. Jewel (Valory)
10. Zac Brown Band (Atlantic/Home Grown/BPP)

Kenny...

Country Aircheck Artist of the Year Three Years in a Row...
A 4th CMA and ACM Entertainer of the Year...
Stadiums, College Bars, Country Songs and A Whole Lot of Fun

You Make Us So Proud...
Your Partners, Friends and Fans

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THE ECONOMY IS IN THE DUMPS, THE COUNTRY
IS AT WAR, AND IT'S GETTING COLD OUTSIDE... BRRR!
TIME FOR US ALL TO GET A BAILOUT!

CAROLINA RAIN

WILL HELP YOU TAKE OFF THE

"WEIGHT OF THE WORLD"

IMPACTING NOW!

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Better As A Memory

Personal Remembrances Of 2008

The year's biggest stories received their due in the opening pages of this publication. As in previous years, however, Country Aircheck has made a point of seeking and accepting the personal stories and remembrances that provide a different yet equally relevant perspective on the year that was. Enjoy.

Tonya Campos and Tatiana

Tonya Campos
KKGO/Los Angeles

"When Compassion International approached me about going to Nicaragua and doing an on-air tie-in, I said yes in a split-second. We planned my trip to take place before our on-air promotion. Our goal was to get 300 children sponsored, which entails $32 a month, and ensures the child receives one hot meal a day and pays for school uniforms, pencils, paper, etc. It was the best thing I've ever done. It was a life-changing experience. I broke down at my first glimpse of poverty and they told me that was normal. It's a shock if you've never seen it.

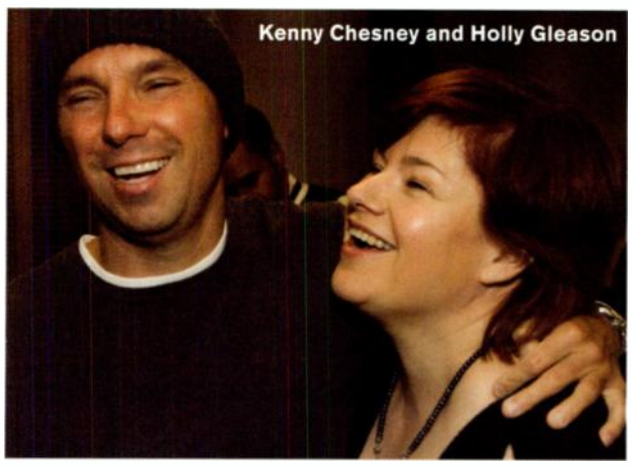
"After a day of playing with about 150 children, this little girl came and tugged at my sleeve. She said, 'I want you to have this,' and handed me her purse. I had told her earlier how beautiful it was, but I didn't want to take it from her. She told me to take it because she had another one. I lost it. She represented all those children who have nothing, and here she was giving me something to take home. It's with me all the time as a reminder.

"I went down there with the idea of sponsoring one child. I ended up sponsoring two. Veronica was the first. She was very cautious and shy at first. Later that day she put her arm around my neck and I thought, 'This is it.' Tatiana was love at first sight. There were kids everywhere and my eyes just zoned in on her. A few hours later we were all set to tour a child's home. I had no idea this was pre-planned; it happened to be her house. Later that night I kept thinking of her and her mom. They have so much love in their house, and just need help with basic items. I had only budgeted for one child, but I said to myself, 'I cannot go home and not sponsor her.' I had a hard time getting on that plane to come back. You want to help all of them.

"We came back Sept. 25 and had a 'Day of Compassion,' when I would tell stories of various children. We had people who didn't have enough money pool with a couple of friends to sponsor a child. One man in particular sponsored 10 children in one phone call. There were tears throughout the day. I think my going there made it real for listeners. We got more than 250 children sponsored. If all goes according to plan, I do want to go back in April to visit my sponsor children and take them the basics. I cry every night for those children. At least for these two, I can help."

Holly Gleason
Joe's Garage

"The Yummy List connected me with people I love through small details of a life lived in the wind. Beyond the sweet replies, the only thing ever to show for it was an eventual screen credit in Cameron Crowe's *Elizabethtown* and the occasional nudging invitation from **Travis Hill** – aka Scooter Carusoe: 'Don't you wanna write a song?'


Kenny Chesney and Holly Gleason

"Songs are magical. But somehow not for the likes of me, in spite of a career as a music critic, lover of songs and midwifer of dreams. So the tide of invite and demure went. Until two bad days and an even worse morning...

"'You still wanna write?' I asked the man who'd penned 'Anything But Mine,' long before 9am on a Tuesday.

"'Let me get my book.'

"Two days later, I was at Carnival Music offering up the line I'd used to deflect men in bars as an underage kid with pinwheel eyes and a love of music being made: 'I'm better as a memory than as your girl.'

"There's a simplicity to that. Knowing you're perfect, a unicorn versus possibly hurting them because your dreams were a little too big for where you are. Rather be honest and willing than let someone project a fantasy you can't embody.

"It came fast. Two verses, a bit of chorus. Random lines Travis stitched together. My girlfriends were wild for it. 'You have to give it to Kenny...'

"I'd never. Even writing as Lady Goodman – Penny Lane's real name in *Almost Famous* – it seemed too presumptive. But peer pressure won.

"Left on his bunk at his tour opening, not a pitch, but a lullabye for 'a hillbilly rock star' drowning in post-show adrenalin. The album was done, but road momentum only grows. Let it rock him to sleep, then.

"'Where did you get that song?' he asked. It'd been cut on Scooter's computer...on my way to the airport. It was *that* rough.

"'He...just wrote it...,' I hedged.

"'I'm cutting it Tuesday.' And he did. With a great big open heart and a level of vulnerability I've never heard from him.

"'I'm just a dreamer, nothing more...'

"'Built to fade like your favorite song...'

"'My only friends are pirates, it's just who I am...'

"Aren't we all? Certainly Kenny Chesney. Not an obvious choice, but certainly a piece of his soul. When I heard it on the radio – fresh from screening the Rolling Stones' *Shine A Light* – everything melted away. The guitar swelling up, the organ spreading, Kenny Greenberg's electric guitar melting everywhere.

"There are no words. Nor for watching strangers, eyes closed, murmuring along with my friend, the words everyone had lived. It is our memories that make us rich – the things we keep, but especially the things we let go. Every time it comes on the radio, I'm reminded of something I started scrawling in my 7th and 8th grade school books all those years ago."

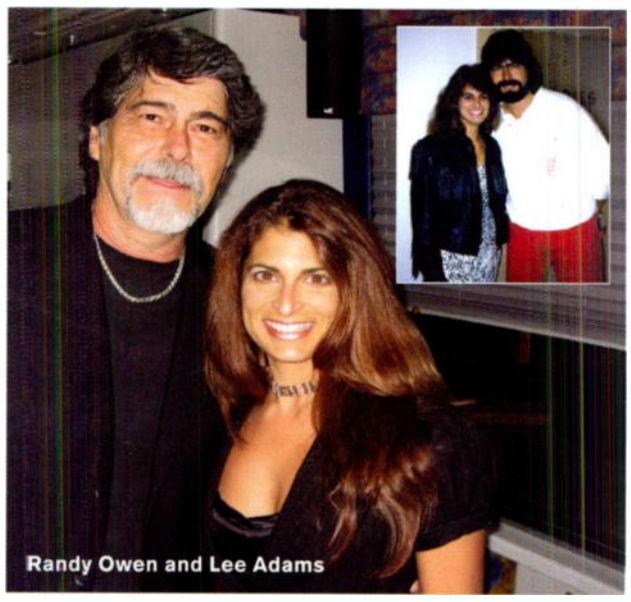
Lee Adams
Broken Bow

"Growing up I was really into country music, which was rather odd for a teenager from Baltimore. My friends were listening to KISS and AC/DC and I was into Willie Nelson, Kris Kristofferson and Waylon Jennings. Then Alabama came out, and suddenly it was cool to like country. They were more like The Marshall Tucker Band or Skynyrd; they were young, good-looking, and ran around the stage with a lot of energy. I first saw them when I was 16, and I stood in line at the Baltimore Civic Center for two-and-a-half hours just to meet them. That solidified my love of them and their music.

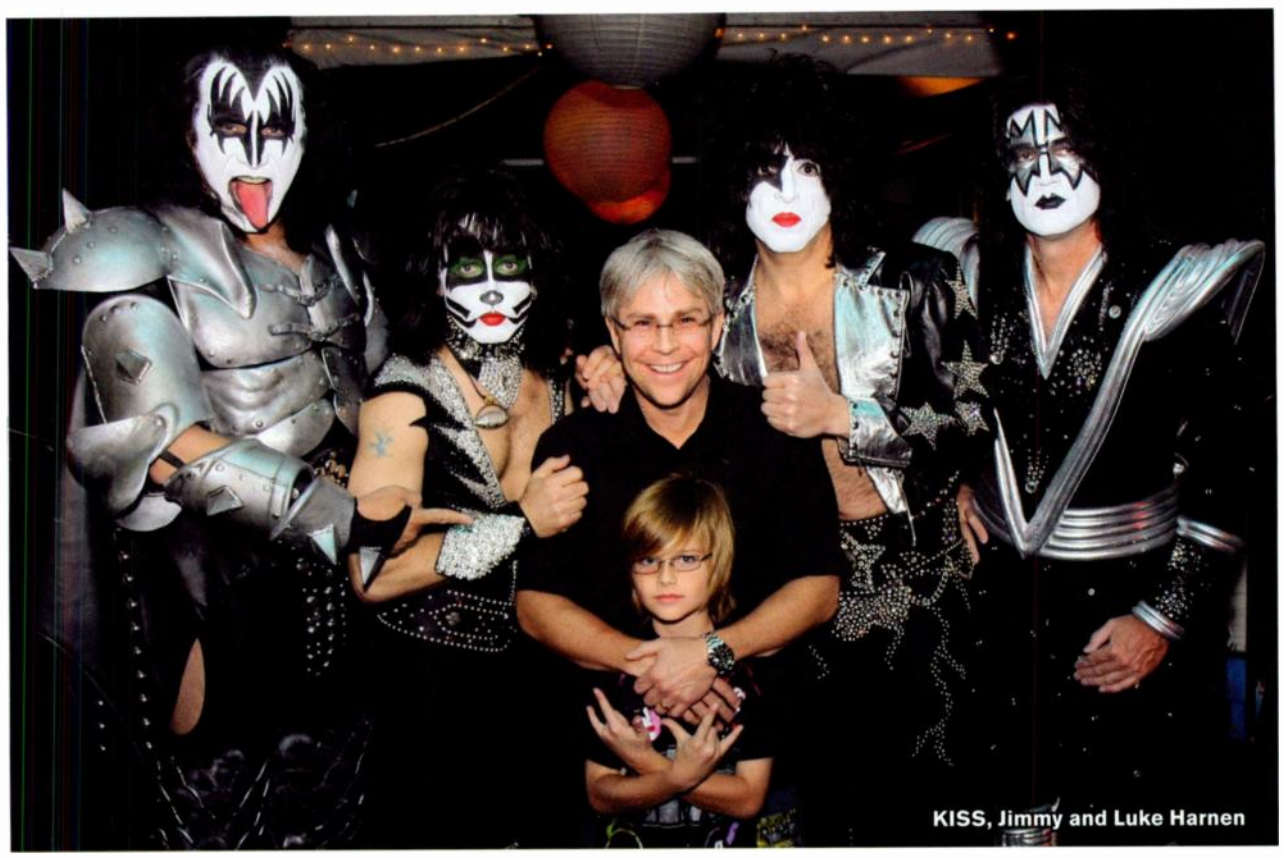
"I was in college in the mid-'80s and working for a radio station when my PD got two tickets and passes for Alabama. I pestered him horribly for them – part-timers rarely got the honor – and he relented. That was the show where the first picture was taken.

"A friend from college recently said to me, 'It's funny you work with **Randy Owen** because your dorm room was plastered with Alabama memorabilia.' My first day out with Randy I was very nervous, and I told his manager about my 'fan' status. I swore him to secrecy, but within the first two minutes of our drive to WKIS/Miami he told Randy about it. It was quite humiliating for me, but they all got a kick out of it.

"The most surreal moment for me was when I was able to witness Randy writing a song on the bus. I was texting family and friends saying, "OMG, this cannot really be happening!" But I'm not the only one in awe of him: I see many PDs acting the same way when we visit stations. He's an icon and has a strong presence. It's been an amazing experience to work with someone who is so gracious and talented and has brought so much to the format."


Randy Owen and Lee Adams

The Year In Memories

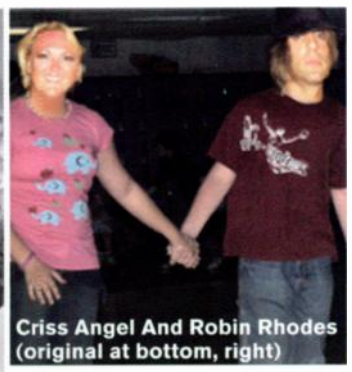

KISS, Jimmy and Luke Harnen

Jimmy Harnen
Capitol

"My son **Luke** has become a huge **KISS** fan so we took a father-and-son trip to Lake Tahoe for a weekend to see them in concert. Just the thrill of a lifetime from beginning to end! To make it even better, each of the guys in KISS was totally cool – everything that, as a kid, you'd want your rock 'n' roll idols to be."

Robin Rhodes
Mediabase

"I saw **Criss Angel** (The Mindfreak Magician) onstage at the ACMs, and it seems I made some type of high-pitched squeal that only dogs could hear. That is according to my date, and I think this is just embellishment on his part. But I will admit to being a bit of a Criss Angel groupie. I stalked him backstage until I got to speak with him and have our picture taken. You would have thought I was a 12-year-old girl who met one of the Jonas Brothers because I kept telling people I met Criss Angel and showing them the picture.


Criss Angel And Robin Rhodes (original at bottom, right)

"Two weeks later, **Jill Gleason** got a group of friends together for my birthday and presented me with *the* Coffee Table Book. It had the picture of me and Criss, as well as others that were photoshopped to no end. It's truly priceless and everyone who has seen the book cries tears of laughter."

Robynn Jaymes
WSLC/Roanoke

"I had just gotten home from CRS and had to rush my mom to the hospital. We thought she was having a heart attack and found out that she had lung cancer. The woman has never smoked in her life. Once word got around the industry, I received many emails and phone calls with encouragement and prayers.

Robynn James and her mom

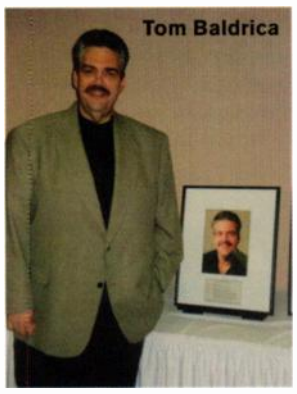
"One call in particular was so very cool. I was at a lunch meeting and my cell phone rings and the number shows up as 'private caller.' Now, I have a pretty good idea of who all has my number, and out of curiosity I try to answer the call. It was so loud in the restaurant that I couldn't understand who was on the other end. I explained that I was at lunch and couldn't hear and could they please call back. I hear the woman on the other end say something about being sorry she caught me at a bad time and she would try later.

"I missed the next call completely, and ended up kicking myself when I heard the message. It was **Jewel**. I had written **George Briner** an email telling him how the song 'Stronger Woman' was inspiring to me. I know it's a breakup song, but I just channeled the positive message for both my mom and myself. George passed the email along to Jewel and she left such an encouraging message.

"Mom is going on eight months in remission and we continue to be thankful. And we still turn up the volume when we hear 'Stronger Woman.'"

Tom Baldrica
Sony/Nashville

"When I walked into that room to be inducted into the Virginia, Minnesota Hall of Fame and saw all those people, I knew I was going to have a helluva time getting through the speech. This was at the beginning of very emotional week with all these friends, family and people I hadn't seen for a long time, and the look on my mom and dad's faces was the most amazing thing of all.


Tom Baldrica

"It's really been important to me that there's some sort of legacy for me in my hometown. As I'm here facing my mid-life crisis at 46, you really start to realize how important that is and how important home is. For people to say, 'You haven't forgotten your roots, and we thought strongly enough about what you've done and who you are to put you in here' is pretty cool.

"My high school band director, John Vukmanich, did the induction. As a tuba player, my high school years were all about being in that marching band. Mr. V was the absolute natural person because my identity is very much wrapped in that tuba; there's no two ways about that.

"There's a plaque now hanging in the city hall alongside that of winemaker Robert Mondavi, the man who invented the Greyhound bus system, the inventor of the Dick Tracy watch and Dr. Audrey Baumgartner, a NASA rocket scientist who developed software that space agencies around the world use. It's pretty heady stuff – I'm just making hillbillies famous."

Brook Stephens
KZPK/St. Cloud, MN

"In early April, our morning show received word that a 13-year-old Sauk Rapids girl had been severely burned in a fire pit accident. Taylor Strand had third-degree burns over 80% of her body and was in the burn unit in the Twin Cities. Here's a local girl whose life has changed in mere seconds, and the only thing her family asked was that we mention her Caring Bridge web page.

"Instead, our morning team put together a fundraiser that night at one of our remote broadcasts. When planning a typical promotion, fundraiser or event, we try to give it as many days of talk as possible. This time, we only had hours. Amazingly enough, you would have thought we'd had this planned for months. Close to 500 people made their way to the event and we raised more than $6,000 for Taylor's family, who were commuting back and forth between St. Cloud and the Twin Cities to be with Taylor. We even had a listener show up and auction off his ponytail. Yes, his ponytail! It brought in $500 and then was donated to Locks of Love.

"At the end of that day, without the bat of an eye, we decided that we would help be the driving force behind the support of the Strand family, and in later weeks participated in many more fundraisers. Taylor has had more than 20 surgeries and is now at the Shriner's Hospital in Cincinnati with her mother by her side. She's a fighter and we are so proud to have been a part of such an amazing story of strength and courage. That 13-year-old has more fight in her than our whole staff put together."

Emmie Anderson Wisniewski
A Remembrance From Those Who Loved Her At UMG/Nashville

There is an appointed time for everything...
A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to uproot the plant.
A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to tear down, and a time to build.
A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.
–Ecclesiastes 3:1-4

"Emmie Anderson Wisniewski (Dec. 1, 1974 – Oct. 21, 2008) grew up loving country music. She was part of artist fan clubs, listened to Country radio and subscribed to *Country Weekly* – all so she could keep up with her favorite artists including Wynonna Judd and Reba McEntire. She and her family even made annual trips to the Nashville Fairgrounds to take part in Fan Fair. After graduating from LSU, she decided she was going to make the move to Nashville and pursue her

Emmie Anderson Wisniewski

dream of working in the country music industry. Without wasting time (those who knew her know how efficient she was with her time), Emmie signed up with a temp agency and was placed at MCA for a part-time, short-term position. She quickly endeared herself to the staff and became an invaluable asset. It was with MCA that Emmie started her career and, 10 years later, where she ended it.

"Emmie was a true gift to everyone who knew her personally or had the privilege of working with her. Whether your dealings with her were on a regular basis or just a moment in passing, she made an impact. She was a smart and beautiful person with a glowing smile and an infectious laugh. She was a deeply spiritual person and was always there to listen or lend a hand.

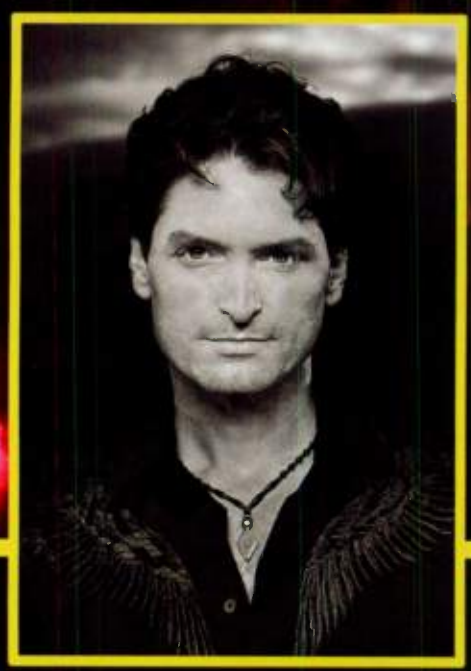
"We all have fond memories of her and the one the thing we will never forget is her love for the music, artists and people with whom she worked. She took pride in everything she did, and did so with the greatest enthusiasm. We learned a lot from Emmie, but it was her unparalleled passion that taught us the most. The artists she worked with weren't just artists, they truly were her passion. And her co-workers weren't just people with whom she shared an office, they were her family. She reminds us all to care – care about the work you do, care about the music and care about the people with whom you work. It is easy to get jaded in this industry, but, as evidenced in Emmie's untimely passing, life is too short. Emmie's death reminds us all to reflect on how lucky we all are to be working in such a great community.

"Emmie, we love you and miss you. Geaux Tigers!" CAC

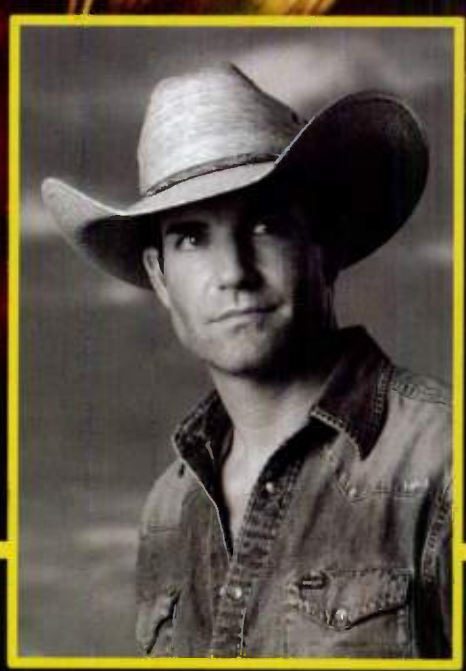
KZPK Strand Fundraiser

Reaching For The Star!

Wishing All our Radio Partners Happy Holidays!



George Ducas



Jason Meadows

Thompson Square

and more great Singer Songwriters to come...

The WhiteStar Radio Promotion Stars

Clay Henderson
Southeast Promotion Manager
Direct: 615-429-0262
clay@whitestar-nashville.com

Mike Klein
Midwest Promotion Manager
Direct: 310-702-4191
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Direct: 615-347-4164
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donna@whitestar-nashville.com

Carson James - Senior Consultant,
Radio Promotion & Marketing
Direct: 615-351-7751
carson@whitestar-nashville.com

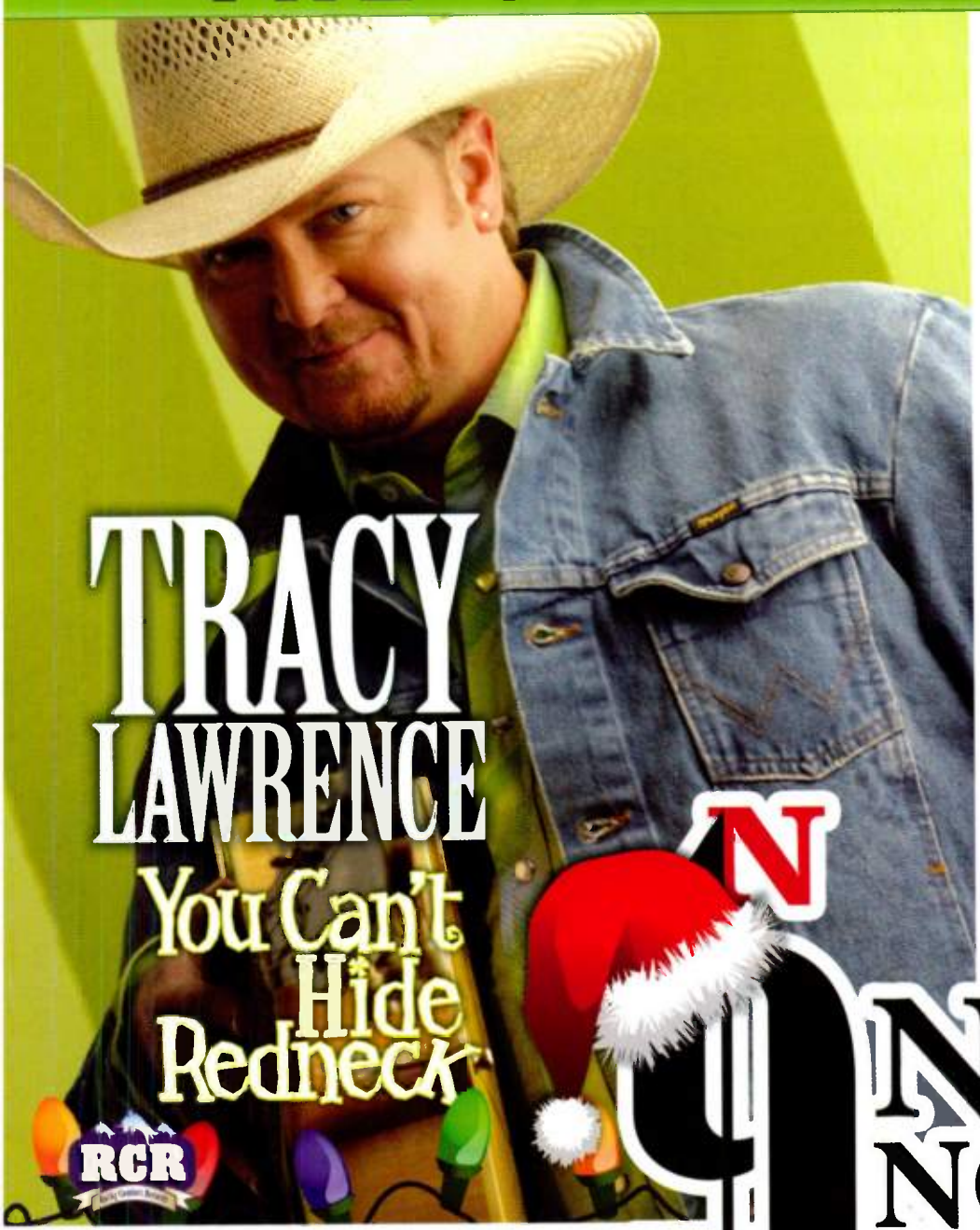
WHITE★STAR
NASHVILLE

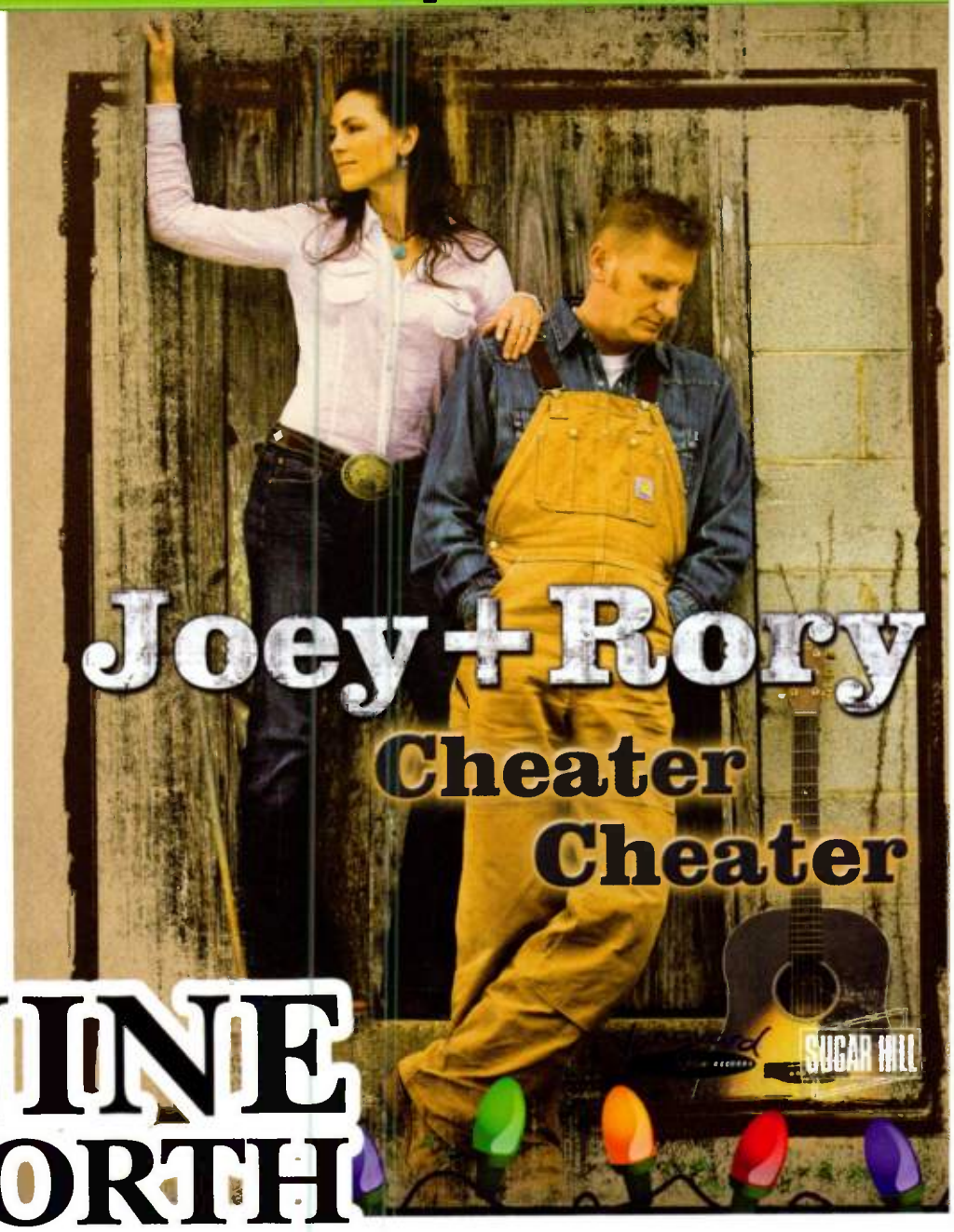
GEORGE DUCAS "Walk Through This World"

Impacting Jan 12th

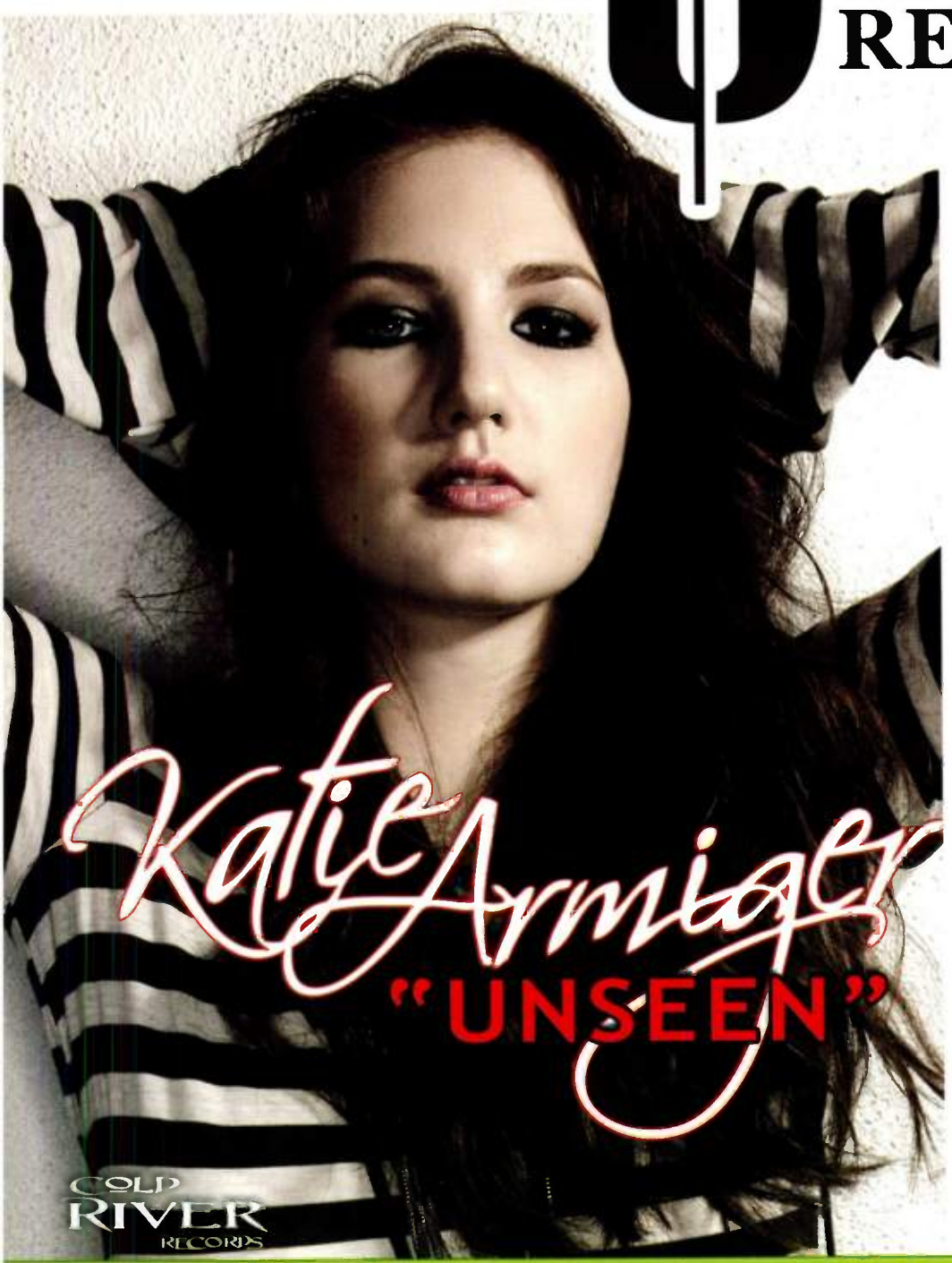
WRH

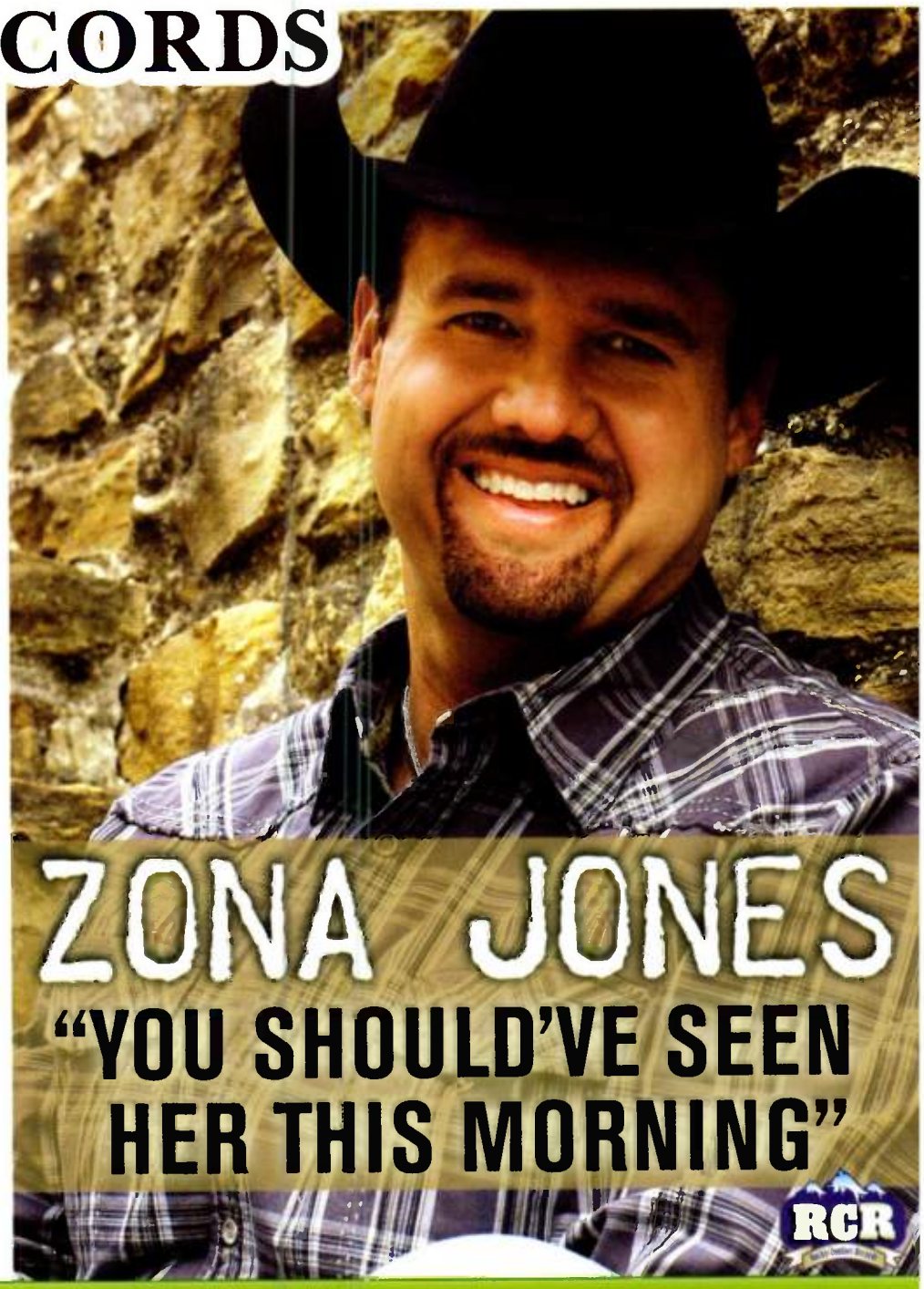
THE CLASS OF 2008/2009





NINE NORTH RECORDS





Thanks And Happy Holidays From Rocky Comfort Records, Cold River Records, Vanguard/Sugar Hill Records & The Nine North Team!

WHAT DECLINE? PLANS FOR '09

First-Quarter Music Preview

Repeat after us: "We are not in a recession. We are not in a recession." Not working? Yeah, didn't think so. But hey, look at the bright side. The last time the economy was this bad we got Jimmie Rodgers and The Carter Family building the foundation of this genre. Who knows? Maybe the artists and music Nashville's labels are planning to unleash in Q1 '09 will usher in a shining new era in country music. C'mon, you know the drill: "Yes we can! Yes we can!"

1720 ENTERTAINMENT

Jamie O'Neal's 1720 debut single "Like A Woman" continues to be the focus for VP/Promotion **Bill Macky** and staff. The label expects to have O'Neal's album completed and in stores before spring. Meanwhile, **Rissi Palmer** is busy working on new music. "We hope to have something for Country radio in the first quarter," Macky says.

Jamie O'Neal

ARISTA

Skip Bishop and his crew are charging full steam ahead into 2009. First up, **Jason Michael Carroll**'s "Where I'm From," from his sophomore album, is at radio now. The album will be available in March. Bishop says, "Jason returns with his signature style of honesty and country grace and a song that touches all of those familiar heart-strings.

"**Alan Jackson**'s 'Country Boy,'" Bishop continues, "has shot inside the Top 15 in just eight short weeks. The follow-up to back-to-back No. 1s from *Good Time* continues to research, sell and request – the triple crown for radio," says Bishop. And up next from Jackson is "Sissy's Song." Bishop describes it as "one of the most powerful singles in the format in years. We have purposely kept this touching, real-life-inspired ballad waiting in the wings. One listen will tell you why."

BIG MACHINE

The Big Machine rides into its fourth year of operation on a "White Horse," **Taylor Swift**'s second single from her sophomore release *Fearless*. VP/Promotion **Jack Purcell** promises "a number of major announcements to roll out in Q1 on behalf of Taylor's skyrocketing career that will not only support your playlists, but will arm morning shows with plenty to share with listeners."

Jack Ingram steps into '09 with "That's A Man," and a new album project expected early in the year.

The "**Adam Gregory** Experience" is setting up for a first-quarter North American album release. His current single "What It Takes," which he co-wrote, is already at radio. Sr. Dir./New Media & National Promotion Strategy **John** "I Need More Words In My Title" **Zarling** says, "Adam's involvement with Cricket Wireless this fall has provided stations a direct link to co-brand this new-to-the-U.S., platinum-selling Canadian artist with an already established and expanding brand."

The new year also brings the official set-up and launch for **Kate** and **Kacey Coppola**. "Family harmony has always been an integral part of country music," explains Purcell. "That sibling synergy, combined with enviable songwriting chops and an abundance of personality, point to a bright future." Prior to inking a deal with Big Machine Records, Kate and Kacey were contestants on the CMT series *Can You Duet?*

BLACK RIVER

The River surges into 2009 with a new single from **Jeff Bates** titled "One Thing." VP/Promotion **Rick Baumgartner** says the ballad is "in the tradition of Bates' hits 'Love Song' and 'Long Slow Kisses.'" The song will ship in December and go for adds in January. Bates also has an extensive touring schedule in place for 2009.

The first new act from BRMG, **Sarah Darling**, will emerge in early 2009. This singer/songwriter wrote or co-wrote all of the songs on her debut project, working with Jeff Dayton, David Pack and David Malloy. Her first single is expected late first quarter. Baumgartner beams, "I am thrilled for radio to get a chance to see and hear Sarah. She is a breath of fresh air and a tremendous talent."

BNA

"We are very exited about **Pat Green**'s upcoming album," raves VP/Promotion **Bryan Frasher**. "We are having great success with the current single 'Let Me,' and I feel like Pat has put together a masterpiece." Street date 1/27/09.

Kellie Pickler has just launched "The Best Days Of Your Life," which she co-wrote with Taylor Swift. Frasher tells us, "This single will take Kellie into the first quarter of next year and brings a lot of sass and tempo to the radio. She was very involved in the recording of her new album, and it shows. It's an album that offers a glimpse into the artist herself."

The "football" version of **Lost Trailers**' "Holler Back" will be featured on the Westwood One Super Bowl broadcast, and MRN has put together a NASCAR version using excerpts from the song's video.

Kenny Chesney plows on with his second single from *Lucky Old Sun*, and Frasher expects to have more music from that record by the end of the first quarter.

BROKEN BOW

"BBR has a very busy first quarter," VP/Promotion **Lee Adams** says. **Jason Aldean** introduced his new single "She's Country" on the recent CMA Awards telecast. It's the lead single from his third BBR album, due out in spring '09.

The second single from **Randy Owen**'s solo album *One On One* is the **Megan Mullins** duet "Holding Everything." "The song, written by Dolly Parton, got an overwhelming response when the BBR staff played music for radio this past fall," says Adams. It's due out after the first of the year.

Also Q1, BBR will be introducing Jackson, TN native **Ash Bowers** at CRS. Adams gives us some background: "Ash and his band have toured the U.S. extensively, logging as many as 300 shows each year and performing for crowds as large as 15,000. Overseas tour stops included Korea and Japan."

CAPITOL

The first new single from Capitol Records in '09 will be from **Eric Church**. Radio will receive the new single priority delivery on Monday, Dec. 22, going for airplay on Jan. 12.

Emily West just wrapped up recording sessions in Nashville with producer **Mark Bright**, and her new single will ship to radio in early January.

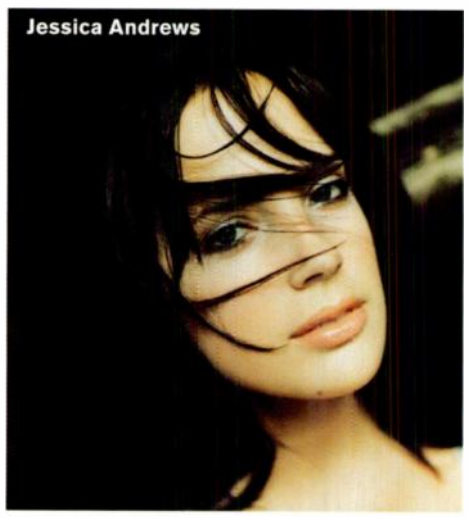
Dierks Bentley will release his next CD in February. It is led by the first single "Feel That Fire," which SVP/Promotion **Jimmy Harnen** points out "has become the fastest-rising single of his career. Look for Dierks out on tour in January with Brad Paisley and Darius Rucker."

Luke Bryan is also in the studio, again working with producer **Jeff Stevens**, recording the follow-up to his debut album *I'll Stay Me*. The first single ships to radio in February.

Keith Urban is in Nashville putting the finishing touches on his new album, co-produced with Dann Huff. "If the first single 'Sweet Thing' is any indication, we can expect another in a line of great Keith Urban albums," assures Harnen.

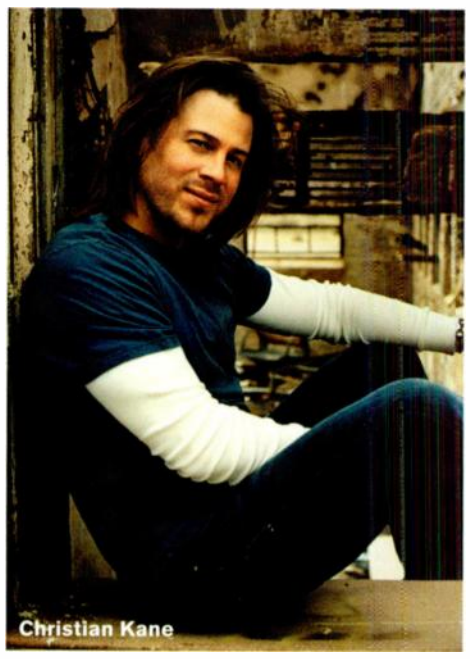
CAROLWOOD

Lyric Street's sister is off to a running start with **Jessica Andrews**' "Everything." The song continues to be the label's priority through the first quarter, but keep your eyes peeled for other acts to join the roster.


Jessica Andrews

COLD RIVER

"**Katie Armiger** is coming off of a breakout year in which she released two singles from her critically acclaimed second album *Believe*," cheers Cold River's **Pete O'Heeron**. "She also became the highest-charting independent female of the year, scored her first Top 40 Hit with 'Unseen,' became the No. 1 Artist on GAC for Fan Time Spent and launched the smash hit GAC-TV web series *Kapturing Katie*." The new year brings a new single for Armiger, "Trail of Lies," co-written with Lisa McCallum and Quinn Loggins.


Christian Kane

COLUMBIA

VP/Promotion **Jimmy Rector** and his staff are looking forward to 2009, which will bring "Big Red" new music from **Montgomery Gentry, Miranda Lambert** and **Gretchen Wilson**.

The newest addition to the label's roster is actor **Christian Kane**. "We're very exited about Kane," Rector says. "If you want a gritty country singer, we're about to give you one."

COUNTRY THUNDER

Former Trick Pony member **Keith Burns** has teamed up with **Michelle Poe** to form the duo **Savanna**. Their song "Always A Woman" is shipping in December, impacting in January, with an album to follow in the second quarter.

Singer/songwriter **Brad Wolf**, who was previously signed to Warner Bros., is set to release his single "Take Me Back (To When We Had It All)." **Shawn Hammonds**' self-titled album is due out in March. SVP/Promotion & Artist Development **Bobby Young** says, "Hammond's single 'Everything' is getting great response at radio." The label is also still on target for a **Bluefield** album in March or possibly second quarter.

CURB

The dynamic duo of VPs **April Rider** and **Adrian Michaels** are looking forward to new singles from **Bomshel, Lee Brice** and **Jo Dee Messina**. Also expected is music from **Tim McGraw**'s upcoming album.

Of course, the label is continuing to focus on singles already at radio, including **Heidi Newfield**'s "Cry, Cry ('Til The Sun Shines)" and **Rodney Atkins**' "It's America," which he debuted at the *42nd Annual CMA Awards*.

DOLLY

Dolly Parton will be releasing, in conjunction with her Broadway show *9 to 5*, her fourth single and title track from her most recent album *Backwoods Barbie*. The musical

PLANS FOR '09

opens April 23 at the Marquee Theatre. "The show has received critical acclaim from its L.A. premieres," the label's **Bruce Reiner** says. "And this single is the main song in the show. Look for some major announcements coming in 2009 from Dolly."

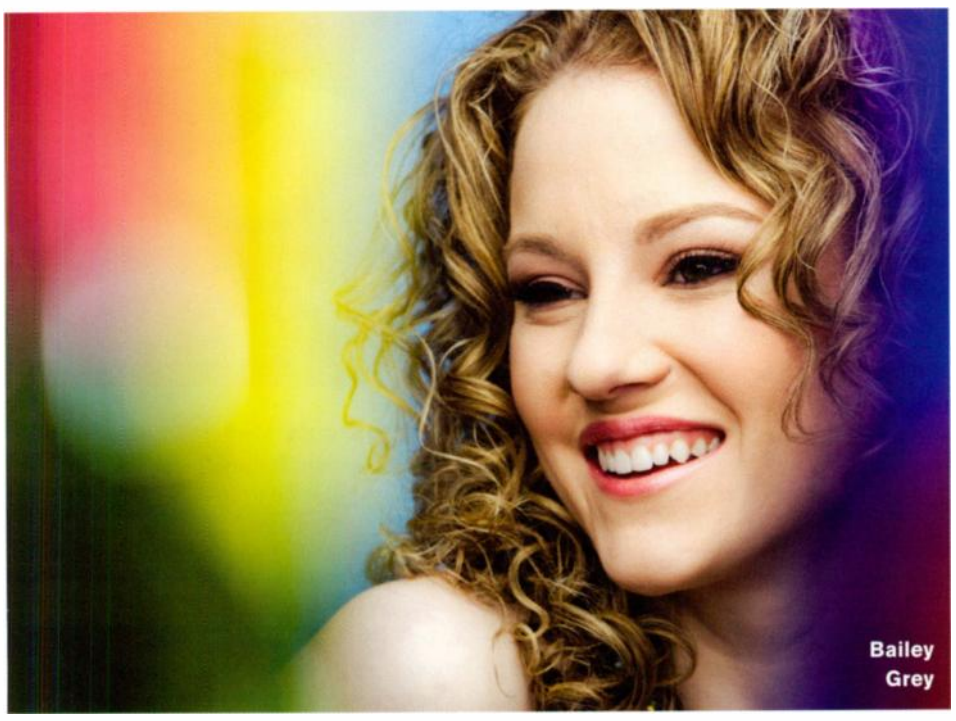
DECCA

One Flew South is warming up for the release of their second single "Life" in early 2009, with what **Pamela Jill Newman** calls "a retooled promotion force." OFS' **Chris Roberts** and **Billy Mann** penned the follow-up to "My Kind Of Beautiful." "The song has been a passionate favorite with radio and fans alike," Newman says. "It talks about rolling with the punches and trusting that everything in life happens for a reason."

LOFTON CREEK

Mike Borchetta and team head into the New Year with **Mark Chesnutt**'s latest, "Things to Do in Wichita." The single is off his *Rollin' With the Flow* CD and goes for adds Dec. 15. "This is the choice of many of the programmers and is also a fan favorite," says Borchetta.

Pat Roper just finished recording sessions with Darran Smith and went for adds with "Now We're Getting Somewhere" in early Dec. **Donnie Vondra**'s next single "If I Didn't Love You" is already going for adds, and an extensive radio promotion tour through Texas is planned with Lofton Creek's **Brad Taylor**. Also look for new **Bailey Grey** music early in the year.


Bailey Grey

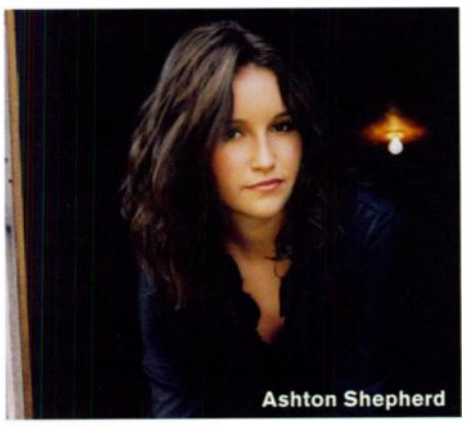
LYRIC STREET

VP **Kevin Herring** is looking into the New Year and sees new music from virtually every act. **Billy Ray Cyrus** will launch his next single "Back To Tennessee" as part of the Hannah Montana movie out in April. The label is hot on the case with **Josh Gracin**'s single "Telluride" through first quarter.

Sarah Buxton's "Space" continues to be a focus with a new album on the way. A **Rascal Flatts** album and first single are also expected. New material from **Bucky Covington, SheDaisy** and **Trent Tomlinson** are all in the pipeline.

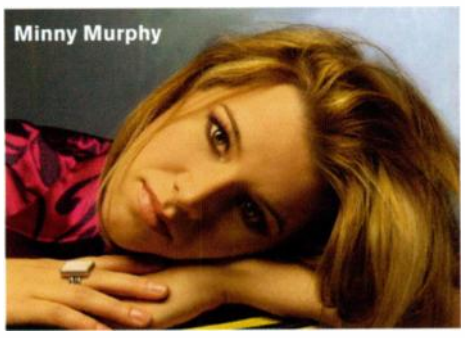
MCA

Under the direction of newly appointed VP/Promotion **Van Haze**, MCA is expected to bring an as-yet-undetermined third **Ashton Shepherd** single, shipping sometime in Q1.


Ashton Shepherd

MERCURY

VP/Promotion **Damon Moberly** and UMG SVP **Royce Risser** bring fresh sounds to 2009. **Jamey Johnson**'s second single is expected in February, but the jury is still out on what it will be. They are taking nominations at damon.moberly@umusic.com or royce.risser@umusic.com. In addition, **Billy Currington**'s second single from *Little Bit Of Everything* is expected.


Minny Murphy

MONTAGE

Minnie Murphy's debut single "Take Me to Texas Tonight" ships to mainstream reporting stations in January. It will be followed by her self-titled album, expected to have an early '09 street date.

Andy Griggs is back in the studio with Montage's A&R guru **Anthony Martin** working on the single "Cut Throat, Montana," which is set for a late-February release.

The Road Hammers are completing their second Montage album, *The Road Hammers – II*, which is set for release in Canada Feb. 17. The debut single, "Homegrown," has already been released north of the border and will hit the States next year.

NINE NORTH

Label honcho **Larry Pareigis** continues to work a multitude of projects. The company's relationship with **Tracy Lawrence**'s Rocky Comfort Records will bring new act **Jaryd Lane** and a debut single in Q1. The project is being produced by Lawrence and Julian King.

Vanguard/Sugar Hill has teamed up with Nine North to bring **Joey+Rory**'s "Cheater, Cheater" to radio, and the song will be followed by a second single from *The Life Of A Song* sometime in Q1.

Moon & Stars Studios is working with Nine North on the **Monty Lane Allen** cover of Steve Winwood's "Back In The High Life Again." "The Nine North team is proud to work this effort from Monty's *Great Big World* to Country radio," Pareigis says.

RCA

Nat'l Dir./Promotion **Doug Baker** checks in with RCA's plans for the New Year: **Chuck Wicks'** single "What If You Stay" will be released as the follow-up the Top 5 "Stealing Cinderella" and Top 15 "All I Ever Wanted." In late January or early February, look for **Chris Young**'s "Gettin' You Home." **Jake Owen**'s sophomore album is currently under construction but is due out Feb. 24. **Martina McBride**'s album should see a March street date.

Johnathan Singleton and the Grove

RHYTHM HOUSE

Brynn Marie continues to be the primary focus for Rhythm House/Nashville and **Daryl Price**. Her single "Start Now" hits radio Jan. 26, and she'll be supporting the release with a radio tour throughout January.

ROBBINS

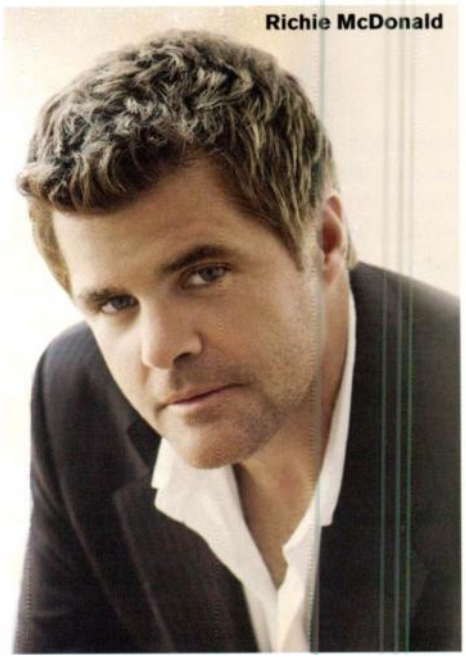
VP/Promotion **Tony Benken** is upbeat about the label's first release from **Shane O'Dazier**, "I Hate This Town." "Shane is right in the pocket for radio listeners with his young, fun, compelling storytelling, and this song proves it," says Benken. O'Dazier has been playing the SEC college circuit in anticipation of the single release, which is set for Jan. 5.

SHOW DOG

VP/Promotion **Rick Moxley** and his team will have several new pieces to work in early '09: **Trailer Choir** are putting the finishing touches on a new single. **Carter's Chord** are working on four new tracks, with **Toby Keith** producing. **Mica Roberts** is also cutting fresh tracks. All three will have music out in Q1.

STROUDAVARIOUS

Coming in early 2009 is the debut Stroudavarious single from singer/songwriter **Anthony Smith**. **Darryl Worley** and **Richie McDonald** have albums coming out in early spring. Also on the schedule is Stroudavarious' first group, **Houston County**, who are currently in the studio with producer **James Stroud**.


Richie McDonald

UNIVERSAL SOUTH

VP/Promotion **Teddi Bonadies** and staff are gearing up for the debut single from singer/songwriter **Jonathan Singleton**. "He is coming off his first No. 1 song as a writer with Gary Allan's 'Watching Airplanes' and currently has the latest single from Billy Currington, 'Don't'," Bonadies says. Expect the first single from **Jonathan Singleton and The Grove**'s Dan Huff-produced album in the first quarter.

Joe Nichols has been in the studio with producers **Mark Wright** and **Brent Rowan**. "They have cut some amazing songs that will definitely break out in the New Year," vows Bonadies.

"Anything Goes," the title track from **Randy Houser**'s album, is expected to peak in the quarter, making way for a second single.

VALORY

The VMC team plans to keep laying bricks for singles launched in 2009. **Jewel**'s "Till It Feels Like Cheating" and **Jimmy Wayne**'s "I Will" are among them. As for Wayne, "Many believe it could be even bigger than 'Do You Believe Me Now,'" says VP/Promotion **Jon Loba**. **Justin Moore** and **Emerson Drive** also remain priorities.

Shane O'Dazier

WARNER BROS.

The first '09 project out of the gate is a solo **John Rich** album. The single is called "Another You," and former VP/Promotion **Nancy Tunick** describes it as "a powerful song of love and regret."

Jessica Harp, formerly of **The Wreckers**, is taking the leap as a solo artist with "Boy Like Me." "Jessica's distinctive voice sells this playful song about finally finding 'a boy like me,'" Tunick explains. A second single from **Blake Shelton**'s new album *Startin' Fires* is also expected in the first quarter.

WHITESTAR

Carson James, the head of WhiteStar's brand-new promotion team, is jumping in headfirst in the New Year. "It's all about **George Ducas** and his debut single 'Walk Through This World,' out Jan. 12," James says. "George may have been gone awhile, but he has been unbelievably busy as a songwriter." Ducas co-wrote "Real Fine Place To Start," for Sara Evans, his first No. 1 as a writer. He also has credit on Radney Foster's "Just Call Me Lonesome," Garth Brooks' "Beer Run," as well as the new Eli Young Band single "Always The Love Songs."

Also new in '09, WhiteStar will be introducing music from **Jason Meadows**, who is featured in the new Dodge Truck Ram Challenge commercials. Watch for duo **Thompson Square** sometime in Q1 as well. CAC

George Ducas

2008 CMA

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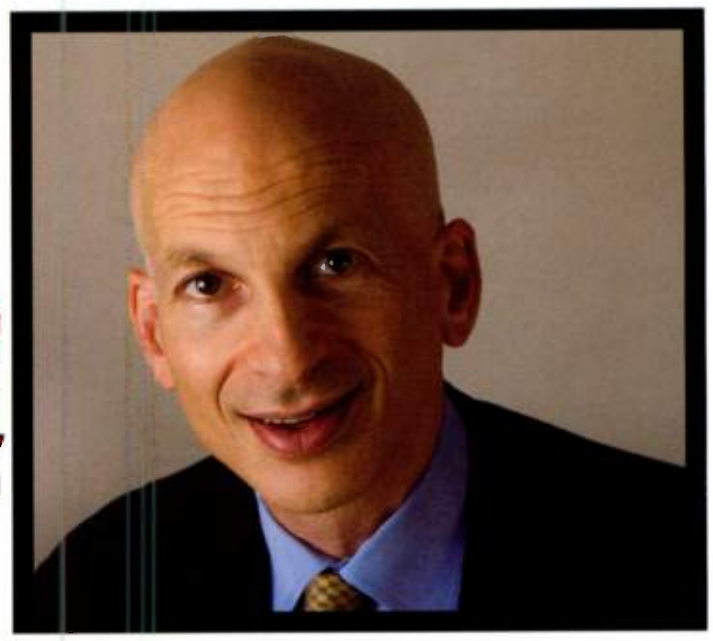
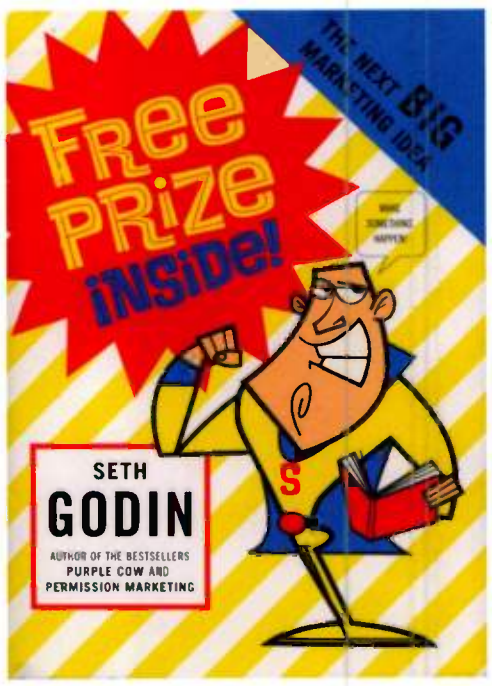
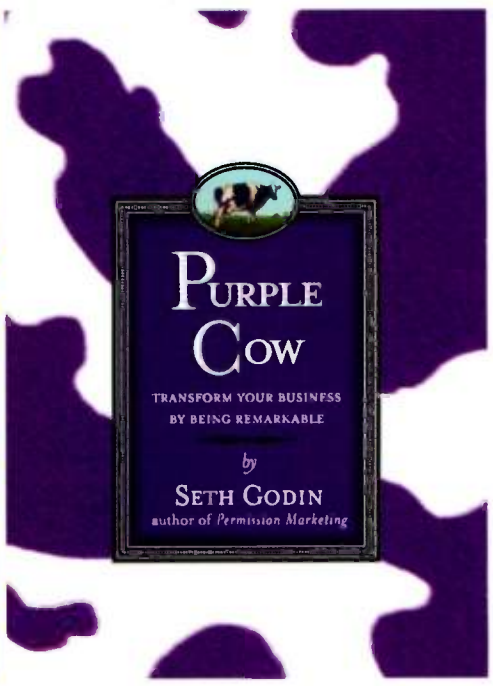
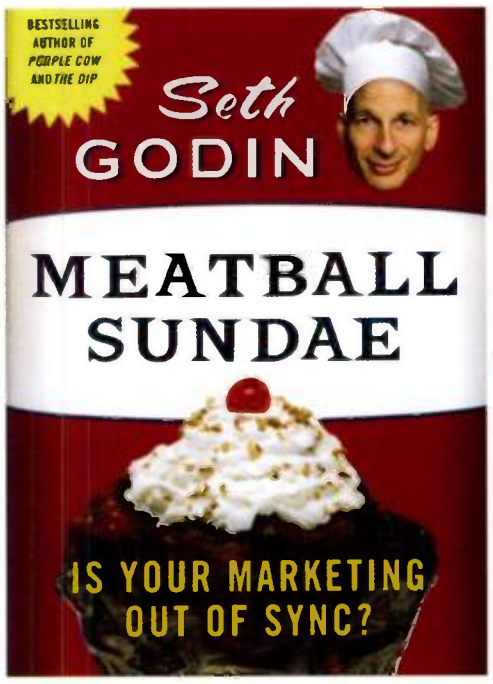
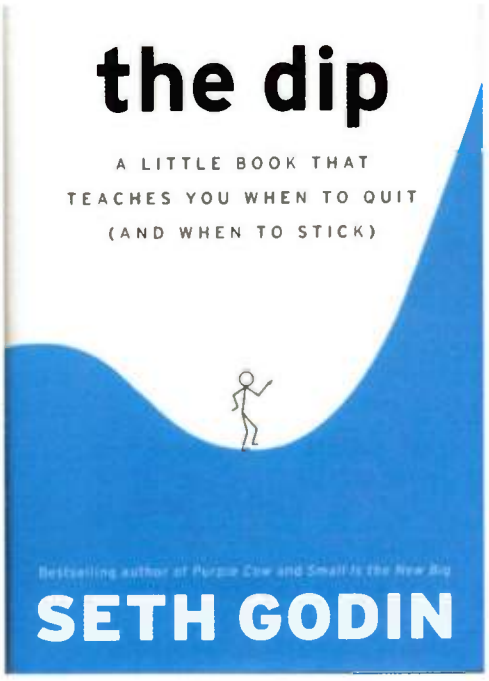


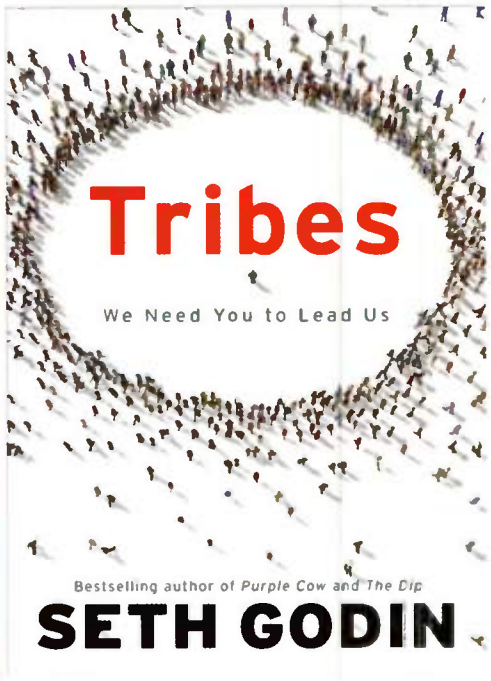
- Writes the most popular marketing blog in the world
- Is the author of the bestselling marketing books of the last decade

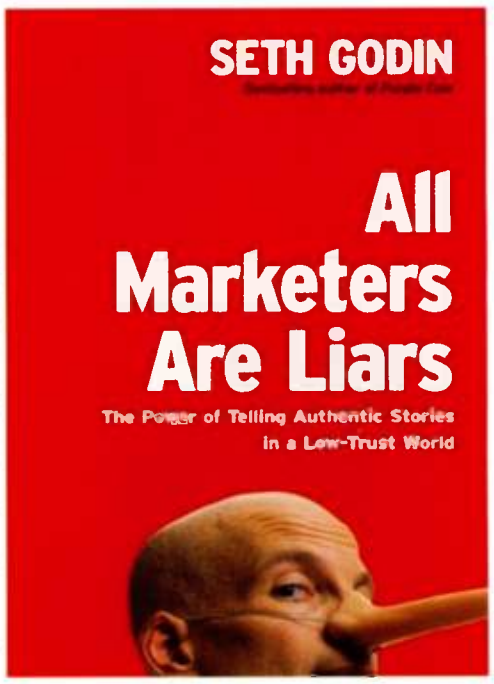












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JOE GALANTE

Let's Build More Stars

Sony/Nashville Chairman Joe Galante is one of those rare left-brain/right-brain people who has both an affinity for numbers and a passion for music. He was 20 years old when he joined RCA/New York as a budget analyst. Two years later, in 1973, he transferred to the Nashville division as Manager/Administration. In 1977, he became Director/Nashville Operations and later rose to VP/Promotion and then VP/Marketing. In 1982, Galante succeeded Jerry Bradley as the head of RCA/Nashville. He moved back to New York in 1990 to head RCA Records Label-U.S. He returned to Music City in 1994 as Chairman of the RCA Label Group, which included RCA and BNA. RLG welcomed Arista to its fold in July 2000 and added Sony/Nashville's Columbia in the spring of 2006. Country Aircheck talked with Galante a few days after the CMA Awards.

Country Aircheck: What were your overall impressions of the show?

Joe Galante: I thought it was a well-balanced presentation of what is going on. We opened with two of our best [**Brad Paisley** and **Keith Urban** singing the current single "Start A Band"], and you could see the camaraderie. That was great TV because they were having a blast and they got to be themselves. Closing with the **Eagles** was another great anchor for us in terms of putting the two pieces together. You never felt stuck in presentations; it was a very music-intensive show. The stage, graphics and all the packages were phenomenal in showcasing our best and brightest. It was well done.

Any of the results surprise you?

You're always surprised. You hold your breath for the entire show, and you're never sure why some things work and some don't. It is what it is. But, there were some pretty strong contenders in the Vocal Event category, and then **Robert [Plant]** and **Alison [Krauss]** win. That's one of the awards where I went, "Boy, that's strange; that's really different."

What did you think of Kenny Chesney inviting the Wailers to sing with him and having Kid Rock on the show?

It mixed up the show, musically; you didn't know what to expect next, which I thought worked really well. Kid Rock had a huge record in this format this year; why would he not be represented? The Wailers are part of Kenny's influence, and that made sense, too. I didn't have any issues with anybody who appeared on the show. I don't remember anytime we've had reggae, hip-hop and classic rock all on the same show; it was really interesting.

Kenny won his third consecutive Entertainer of the Year Award and fourth in the last five years. You've been with him since almost the beginning. What is it you know about him that the rest of us don't?

He just never stops. I know he doesn't rest. He's consumed by this, in a good way. It's not 24/7, because when he goes away, he goes away. But he never stops thinking about how to make it better for the fans. He is so comfortable where he is. That's why going out there with the Wailers or doing the *Lucky Old Sun* album helps develop him as an artist and feeds him artistically. And, as opposed to getting the same run-of-the-mill records that we can line up on somebody's career over a period of time, I think it's great. It's great when **Alan [Jackson]** goes out and does *Precious Memories* and then works with Alison Krauss. It broadens what to expect of these artists and goes against the tendency to get so narrow. My biggest concern about our format is that we have such a narrow bench of superstars. If they keep making the same record every 18 months, they can't ever surprise anybody or add dimension to their music. We're just so focused on Country radio and scans. Every once in awhile, letting an artist breathe, like *Timeless* did for **Martina [McBride]**, allows them to explore something that they normally can't.

You oversee the Arista, BNA, Columbia and RCA Country imprints for Sony. What is the culture you try to cultivate in your company?

The artists and the songs are at the center of everything. That's why we exist. Every morning I check sales reports and statements and marvel at how much money we still make from what [former RCA label chiefs] **Chet [Atkins]** and **Jerry [Bradley]** did. So, I have a sense of obligation, knowing that we actually have two of the three oldest labels in town with Columbia and RCA. Half of the people in the Hall of Fame are from those labels. You ask, "What am I doing to add to the legacy?" And that really comes back to, "What are we doing with our artists and what kind of songs do we have to support those careers?"

After that it's about trying to instill similar values in people about supporting the artist in every way they possibly can, and being honest. The biggest thing we've got to have today, and in what we do here, is just being honest, open and transparent. If we're successful in our mission in getting records up the chart and selling, then everybody benefits. This isn't about, "I like this artist better than anybody else, and therefore we're going to do this." It *is* about the marketplace. There's only so much we can do with the time we have. So the artist, the management, the label – everybody – all need to be on the same page.

It's also about having honest conversations. Record companies are probably in a better position than most in the music chain to feel economic or behavioral changes. Before the sub-prime mess was in the headlines, we felt it. Before there was a change in CD sales, we felt it. We've felt our audience's lack of response – as of yet – to digital, even as people have been asking, "Why aren't you going there and why aren't you doing this?" It's like, "Dumb ass! Don't you think we're trying? But they're not biting." We're on the front lines, we see what's going on. We also have a really good understanding of what's going on with best practices around our labels, what's going on in the country and what promotions are working at what radio stations because we're sharing information.

We're competitive as hell within the company, but we're trying to give everybody the best shot at getting something done. We talk to artists and their management and teach them as much as we possibly can. We talk to them about what's going on and show them the research we're getting. So, a lot of our culture is about educating people, giving them the tools and giving them the responsibilities. This is not the old days when I could sit here and micro-manage this stuff. There's too much going on.

It's really all about understanding our operating principles: Respect the artist and respect the music first. From there it's about building the attributes of the brand – how do we differentiate one act from another and give them the support we need to give? That's a big part of this thing. And, being honest. In this environment, nobody's got time for bullshit.

How have you handled the artists coming into your culture when Arista and Columbia came under your purview?

In both cases, we went out of our way to make sure we spent time getting to know every artist while also giving them as much time as possible so they understand us. [I'm] talking again about the culture and the philosophy, asking what they needed, what they wanted. It's really pretty simple: If you keep your word, you don't have a whole lot of problems. But I think *that's* what it is – it's the commitment where people know that you're going to keep your word. And if there's a change in what you said, you have to go back to them. There's a lot of conversation; I don't want people to be surprised.

Hey, we don't have all the answers. We never pretend to have all the answers. All we can do is present the issues that are there and try to find mutual solutions, because at the end of the day, we're all trying to do the same thing. Sometimes our approaches may be different than at other labels; there's no doubt about that. But a lot of it is because we're so focused. People refer to that as "control." And the reality is, "No, we're agreeing on the goal. But we gotta be really in sync if we're going to get there." And it just depends; the system isn't right for everybody. Some people don't like that kind of focus. They would like to meander a little bit more, and that's fine. That just doesn't work here.

How do you manage the four labels in terms of, on one hand, being one company under one big umbrella, and on the other hand, fostering competition for chart share, for No. 1s ...

And for resources and for mom and dad's time? I'm fortunate enough to have great partners like Butch Waugh, Renee Bell, Paul Barnabee, Cathy Woods and so many others here who understand we're all here to do the same thing: help each person in the company do the best they possibly can. But again, the honesty under which we operate is very transparent. If we don't think they're doing the right job, we will change them. And that is a written rule. Everyone understands: you're here to do the best you can for the artists. I don't want to have a conversation that an artist didn't have a hit or sell records because someone wasn't competitive enough. So yeah, we have a lot of very competitive people here. But they understand the reality of the marketplace. There are days you can't walk down the hallway because two of the labels are going for No. 1. It's jump ball, because that's a free marketplace.

Having that kind of rule in place really raises that bar.

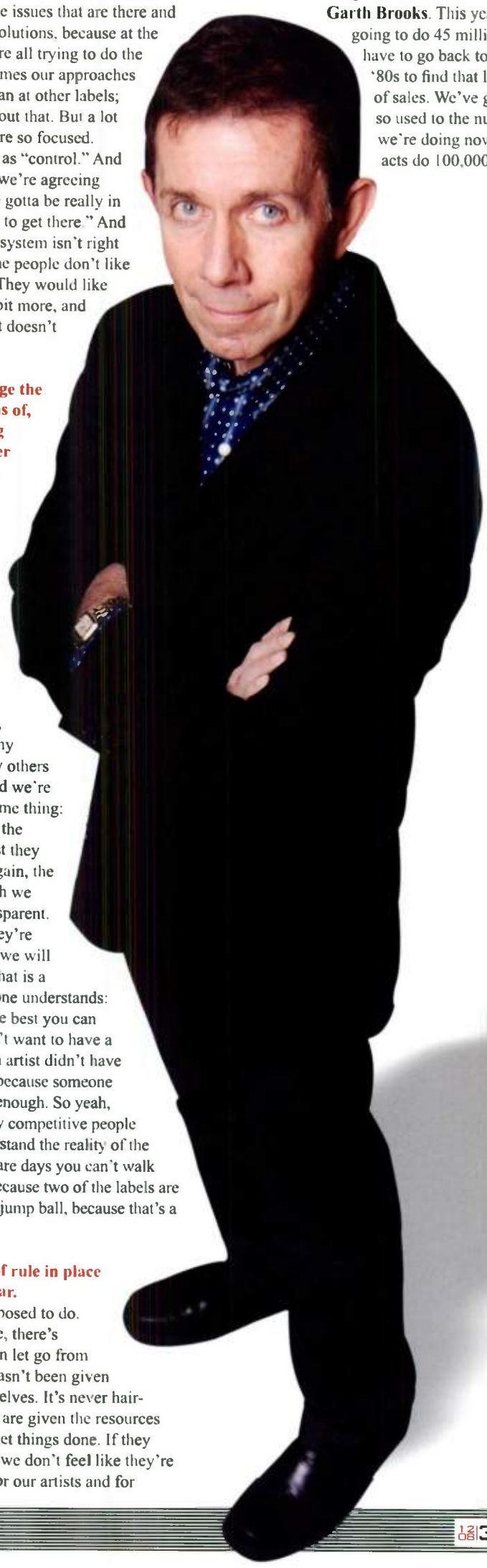
That's what it's supposed to do. But at the same time, there's nobody that has been let go from this company that hasn't been given time to prove themselves. It's never hair-trigger time. People are given the resources and the training to get things done. If they can't compete, or if we don't feel like they're doing the best job for our artists and for this company, we move on. If you're in this building, bring your "A" game.

What are the marching orders for the promotion VPs?

It's about airplay and moving forward on a regular basis. It's also about building the presence of the artists. It's not just about getting the easiest song on the album up the charts, and that's all there is. We argue about how we move the ball forward; there's a lot of blood on the walls about singles. Part of the problem is this town is too focused on airplay and not focused enough on producing sales. So these [promotion] guys are charged with, "OK, we may not get the chart position you want, but if we're getting the sales, we're OK." **Brooks & Dunn's** *Believe* is a prime example. It wasn't a No. 1 record, but it was the Song and Single of the Year and sold three-quarters-of-a-million records. I'll take those song all day long.

Physical sales are way off again this year. Where do you expect 2008 sales to come in?

In '05 and '06, [Country] did 75 million units. In '07 we did 63 million, including three million from the Eagles and two million from **Garth Brooks**. This year we're going to do 45 million. You have to go back to the '80s to find that level of sales. We've gotten so used to the numbers we're doing now. New acts do 100,000 units



and people are jumping up and down and making another record on somebody. As a town, we haven't adjusted to these sales levels yet. We're still doing a lot of things the same way, and still spending money the same way. We've got to adjust our mindset. I don't believe what we're seeing right now is cyclical; I believe this is a permanent change. There is a digital movement that hopefully, in the course of time, grows for the country consumer. Although, with the economic crisis we have right now, I'm not sure how many people will be making a transition to iPods in our format.

So we're at the lowest sales levels since the '80s and there's a lag for digital. And, it might even take a generation until Country fans move to the digital age. How much pain is this town gonna suffer?

Next year is going to be really difficult for everybody. To a certain degree, this is the last hurrah. You're seeing radio cutting back left and right on marketing and other things. How many controllables can you reduce before you finally have to lay off people?

I don't think we'll lose the presence of major labels in Nashville. We've seen a plethora of independent labels grow up here the last couple of years, and I wonder whether they can be economically supported in this environment. It's not just a matter of radio; you've got to look at the accounts, which aren't carrying the same number of SKUs they used to. The cost of doing business is getting higher, prices are declining and the *volume* is declining. Now, I may not be the best business guy in town, but those don't sound like great reasons to go into business.

And, publishers aren't getting as many cuts. Labels are beginning to get off records faster – they just can't ride 'em out the way they used to because it doesn't make any sense. Why would you stay on records if they're not selling, if they're not producing any real value? So, from a songwriting/publishing standpoint, things are only going to get worse as time goes on, because labels just can't make their resources about the chart, the chart, the chart. And we still have that mentality in town. I honestly believe there will be a shift as time goes on. Because records that chart but don't sell do not produce careers. They may be producing airplay, but ask a buyer or an agent, "If somebody has a No. 1 record, does his price go up by $15,000 or $20,000 the way it did a couple of years ago?" And they'll say, "No, it doesn't."

What's going on at retail? I hear there's been a change in the way stores are stocking records.

Everybody's bringing down the available supply. We've gone from stores having a 12-week supply two years ago to where many now only stock enough inventory to last two to four weeks. The bad news is an artist can have a hit record that is actually starting to sell, and it'll be out of stock. And that will happen for a period of *weeks* until we are able to build the case to grow. This will require more vigilance on our part and more patience on the artists' part because this is retail's way of saying to us, "If you don't turn, we're not going to take care of you." This is not the same business it was a couple of years ago. These are all [publicly traded companies] that are looking at their numbers, and they're very conscious of their inventory.

What are your expectations for Christmas sales?

This is going to be a very difficult Christmas across the board. We're really nervous about everything because of all the anecdotal information coming out where people are just saying, "We're cutting back, we're cutting back." And then more people read that and think, "Well, then *we* need to cut back, too." But, while we may actually have some bright spots through the holiday, I'm worried about coming into January and the switch gets shut off and we suffer a quick drop.

What's your sense of the Country radio business today?

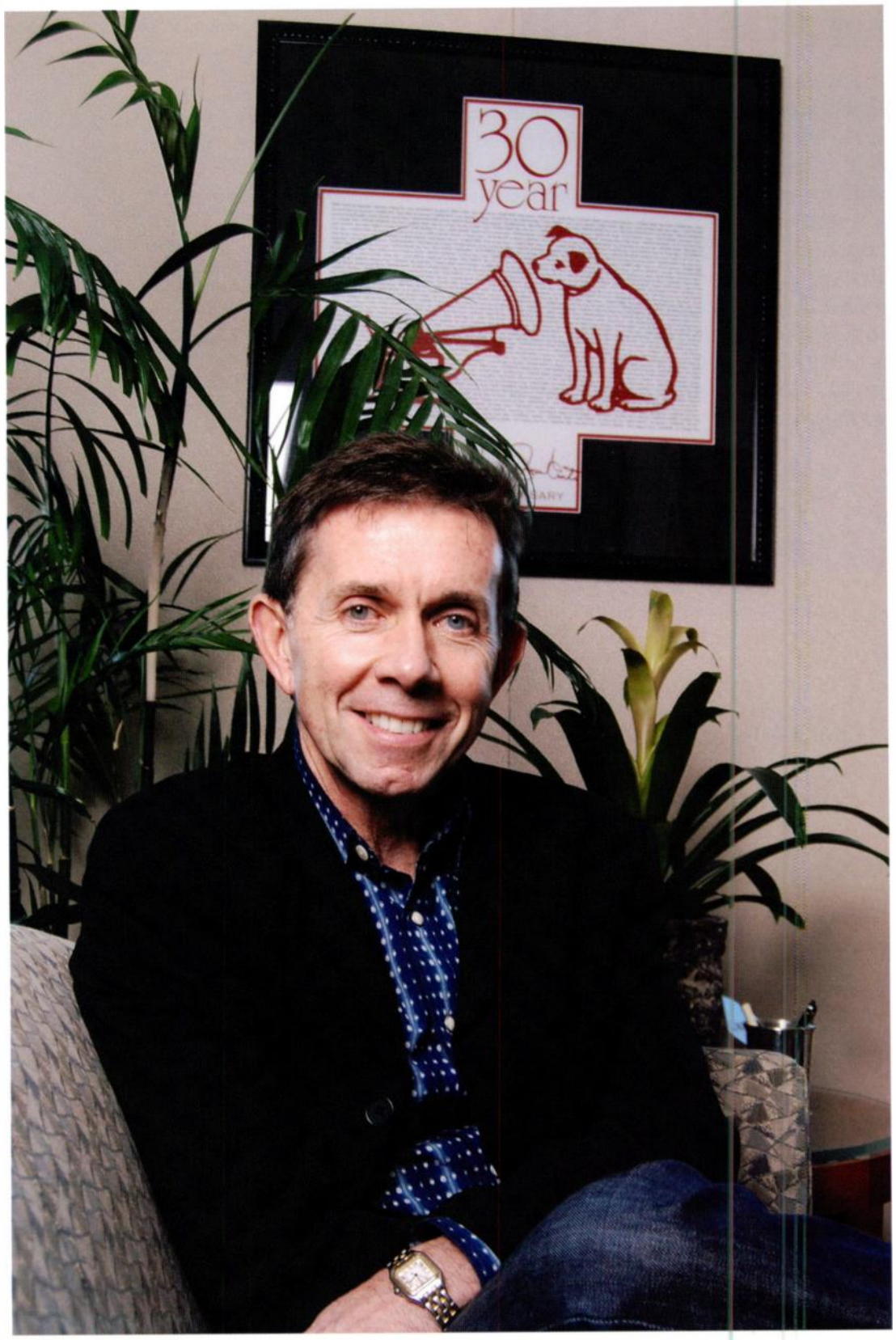
Both sides used to spend a lot more time on music. The great thing about this format is there's still more one-on-one than in any other format, and there's still a hunger from a programming standpoint to build relationships. But everyone at radio is juggling a lot of balls, and they can't do what they did before. Everybody's watching over everybody's shoulder. Everybody's worried about not losing, as opposed to trying to win, and it's changed the focus and the attitude about what goes on.

People look at the singles chart success of some of these records and anoint somebody as the "new star." But you say, "You don't have a star yet. We're a long way from defining somebody."

I'm disappointed that we still are taking radio real estate and trading it for free shows and all the stuff that goes on at various places, as opposed to really trying to invest and build. This format needs to identify people and invest in them. We all need to build more stars, and we've got to do it quickly.

What do you mean when you say you want radio to invest in artists?

Many in radio are still looking at the charts. They should ask, "What's behind the chart number? What else does the artist have going for them?" Take **Jake Owen.** He was part of (CMA's) Vocal Event nomination, so he's now presenting on the Awards show. And he's part of ABC-TV's red carpet online promotion. So all of a sudden, he's above the fray of a lot of these guys that just show up in town. Programmers need to look at the value a company brings to separating an act from the pack, like putting Jake in front of Kenny Chesney and Brad Paisley (in concert). Radio needs to look beyond the charts and ask, "Who's going to help you separate that act, to help build your audience, to make your audience aware of the artist?" They don't have the marketing dollars to do that.



That's how we can be working better together. There has to be more than, "Will they come in and do my free show?" I'm not denigrating free shows, because they do have value when you start to move through the system. But some of these acts, you put 'em on live, they're terrible.

The reality of the marketplace is that radio has the real estate, and they need to be smarter about how they approach this. Because that real estate *is* how people enter this format. There's no denying that radio *is* the driver in this format. Everybody else stands behind them, in a distant second place. So, programmers have to come back the other way. If they've got less time and resources these days, they should look to the people who do artist development and partner with them, and invest in those acts.

The "360 deal," where labels share in all or many of an artist's revenue streams seems to be all the rage these days. How do you see them?

This is one of my favorite subjects, and I know I'm going to piss off a bunch of people. But I find it interesting that when we go to the [performing rights organizations] awards dinners we had just recently, they put the songwriters and publishers up there. And I can honestly tell you that nobody on that stage had anything to do with getting that record to the top of the chart. Labels are completely left out of that loop. But not a day goes by that I don't get a call or email from a writer or a publisher saying, "We're down in spins. What's going on?" We are the promotion department for all those people. But what's the value for me in driving a record from No. 10 to 5 to 1 if I'm not receiving anything? If it's not selling or not selling at the level it did before, why do I care? And that's a question that's going to come up more in the future than ever before.

Along that same line, artists and managers say, "I need these records up the charts to drive my dates." OK. And their investment in this is what? We're on the hook for the recording, the marketing, for all our people out there, all the T&E, covering backstage meet-and-greets, all that stuff – our dime. I'm not saying that there isn't an investment from the managerial standpoint. But the way it's working right now is the big pile of money is [in] live, merch and performance. Record sales is the smaller pile.

But the question is whether there's a justification for us to be sharing in more of everything. Do we need to give up some of our upside and they give up some of their upside to us? Yeah. There needs to be a more collaborative effort. But it's not the solution unless you're able to break artists to the same level that the stars are on. In order for this to succeed, we're committed to people that want to be in business *with* us. We're not committed to people that want to use us. There has to be a better relationship than that.

Sony recently purchased BMG's share of Sony BMG. Do you have a sense yet of what the change will mean for Sony/Nashville?

It's going to be much better for us. Rolf [Schmidt-Holtz] is our Chairman, and I've known him for 15 years. Rolf is the heart and soul of this company. And having one guy who reports to [Sony Corp. of America President/CEO] Sir Howard Stringer will be beneficial.

Sony is a content company. Bertelsmann was in a joint venture, and it was pretty much just, "How much are you paying me?" Bertelsmann had no desire to be in the vagaries of the record business, where you go, "Oh – the record didn't make the quarter; it's moving into the next quarter." And they ask, "How is that possible?" It was very dictatorial in that sense: "You *must* be in the quarter." Well, that's not the way it works. Sometimes product development slips; that's just what happens. I'm not telling you that's what we should be doing; that's what's happening.

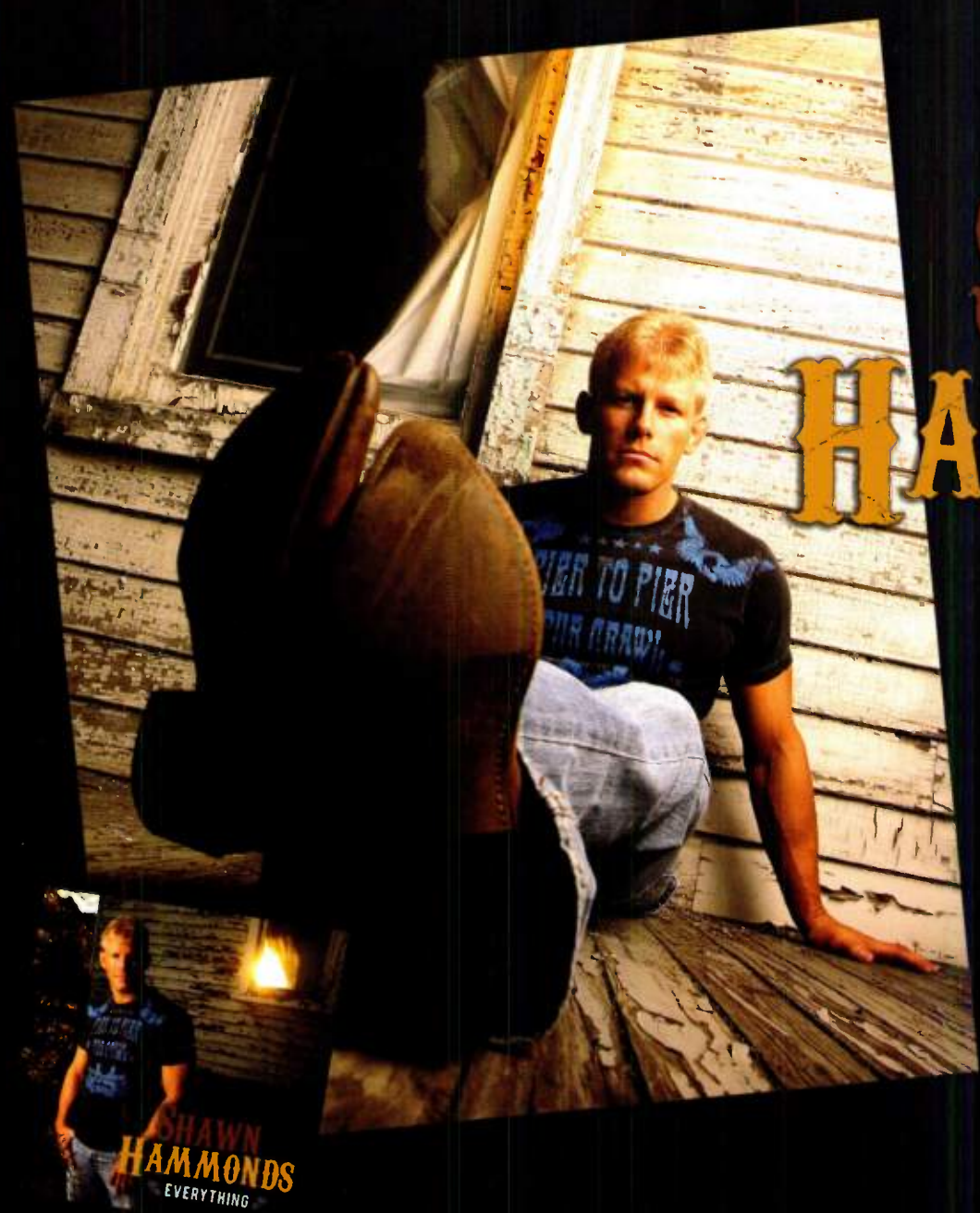
Sony also allows us to be more integrated in terms of content. For instance, we have the PlayStation SingStar Country game. They're focused on trying to integrate all our products directly to their TV, to the PlayStation and on film projects. We didn't have those opportunities before.

They understand that this takes longer. The joint venture produced profits for both parties. Everybody was happy with what they got. Sony has made a very intelligent investment, in terms of the overall music group. When you look at what EMI paid versus what Sony paid to own a company that's three times the size of EMI, it's a good deal. But at the end of the day, it comes back to the fact Sony is in the content business and there is better synergy for us.

You've outlined the challenges this business faces. But as difficult as things may be today, what gets you out of bed in the morning? What gets you excited?

No matter how bad I'm feeling, it always amazes me how [EVP/A&R] Renee [Bell] or [VP/A&R] Jim [Catino] will send over a song that just changes my entire day and I go, "Damn! That's it." Or, an artist brings in their latest session that really lights me up and reminds me that, at the end of the day, for me, it's still all about the music. CAC

GIVE YOUR LISTENERS "EVERYTHING"



THE DEBUT SINGLE FROM

SHAWN HAMMONDS

EVERYTHING

"Not another ballad, I said, but what a KICK-ASS song!!! If you're hurtin' inside, this song says it ALL...and let's face it, everyone hurts sometimes!"
~HollyWood Harrison, KRRV

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COUNTRY
AIRCHECK
DECEMBER 2007

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

LYRIC STREET RECORDS

10 YEARS 20 MILLION ALBUMS

THANKS COUNTRY RADIO
FOR A DECADE OF AIRPLAY PARTNERSHIP!

THANKS RADIO
FOR AN AMAZING YEAR!!!

#8 LABEL OF THE YEAR

#2 TOP FEMALE PERFORMER OF THE YEAR – TAYLOR SWIFT

#9 TOP FEMALE PERFORMER OF THE YEAR – TRISHA YEARWOOD

7 SONGS IN THE TOP 100 OF 2007

"TEARDROPS ON MY GUITAR" – TAYLOR SWIFT
"TIM MCGRAW" – TAYLOR SWIFT
"MORE THAN A MEMORY" – GARTH BROOKS (PEARL RECORDS)
"LIPS OF AN ANGEL" – JACK INGRAM
"MEASURE OF A MAN" – JACK INGRAM
"OUR SONG" – TAYLOR SWIFT
"HEAVEN, HEARTACHE & THE POWER OF LOVE" – TRISHA YEARWOOD

TAYLOR SWIFT

JACK INGRAM

TRISHA YEARWOOD

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THE TOP SEVEN OF '07

Big Changes, Big Personalities, Big Stories

For radio and the music business, 2007 will be remembered as a year of upheaval. Broadcasters are experiencing the greatest ownership shift in the post-Telecom era, and record labels are suffering through the most painful format conversion in the industry's history. But don't worry, there's plenty of good news, too – particularly for the country community. Nashville artists are making hay on the touring circuit. Lots of it. And the Country format got two top-five markets back in California this year. Onward!

1 Ownership Has Its Privileges

Buyouts, Sellouts & More For Radio Groups

Not since the 1996 Telecom Act set off a ground-shaking buying spree has there been so much turmoil in radio ownership. Wall Street's lack of confidence in the medium's growth is behind many of the deals, including the massive $19.5 billion buyout of **Clear Channel** by a consortium led by **Bain Capital Partners** and **Thomas H. Lee Partners**, whose intent is to take the group private. The move precipitated the sale of 448 of Clear Channel's smaller market radio stations and all 42 TV stations.

Speaking of private, Atlanta-based management for **Cumulus Media** announced a July deal in which President/CEO **Lew Dickey** and an affiliate of **Merrill Lynch Global Private Equity** would take the 344-station company off the market for $1.3 billion. A $2.7 billion deal between the **Walt Disney Co.** and **Citadel Broadcasting** closed in June, sending **ABC Radio**'s 14 FM and eight AM stations, as well as **ABC Radio Networks**, to **Citadel**, which is now the third-largest radio group.

And in November, **Lincoln Financial Group** began exploring options to divest its 15 stations in Atlanta, Denver, Miami and San Diego. As for the Clear Channel stations being divested, 52 in Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas are going to Dallas-based **GAP Broadcasting**. And **Gap West**, which operates separately, is buying and already running 57 more in Idaho, Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Washington and Wyoming.

2 In D House

Independent Labels Continue Raising Expectations

Tracy Lawrence's two-week No. 1 wasn't the first sign that independent labels have some pretty good friends at Country radio, but it sure drove the point home. The ascension of **Rocky Comfort/CO5**'s "Find Out Who Your Friends Are" was immediately preceded by the No. 1 affirmation of **Emerson Drive**'s "Moments" on **Midas** – a historic back-to-back for independent country releases.

Independents rang the cash register as well, with **Big Machine** earning a double-platinum certification for **Taylor Swift**'s self-titled debut, which shows no sign of slowing. And that success probably made the decision to launch Big Machine sister imprint **The Valory Music Co.** that much easier. Factor in launches including **Nine North** and **John Michael Montgomery**'s **Stringtown**, and the ranks of independents remain crowded despite losses including **Rust** and **903**.

3 Garthzilla Returns

Brooks' Off-Again Retirement Boosts Country

No question, he's still got it. **Garth Brooks** stepped out of his self-imposed soccer-dad exile and proved he moves the audience needle more dramatically than anyone since, well, Garth. "More Than A Memory" debuted at No. 4, tying his own Mediabase record, and his *Ultimate Hits* was Country's top-seller in its second week, following a debut-week hat tip to another monolithic artist return by The Eagles.

And much to the delight of the broadcast constituency, Country radio was at the very center of Brooks' well-orchestrated return. From the Garth Radio Seminar (GRS) gathering in Nashville at which he announced his plans, to the marathon nine-show concert run in Kansas City and associated nationwide cinema-cast, Country radio was front-row-center. Brooks has also scheduled five shows over two days in Los Angeles to aid fire victims. At least his vocal cords will have a few years to recover.

4 Ticket Punch

Country Tours Rule The Road

"Country touring is as healthy as it has ever been and getting healthier," says Live Nation's **Brian O'Connell**. "There are more bites at the apple for more artists. We still haven't found the top end." For confirmation, look no further than blockbuster 2007 tours from **Kenny "Stadium King" Chesney**, **Tim McGraw** and **Faith Hill**, **Rascal Flatts**, **Brad Paisley**, **Keith Urban**, **Brooks & Dunn** and **Alan Jackson**, **Toby Keith**, **George Strait** and even a one-city stand by **Garth Brooks**.

In an over-stimulated marketplace, the word "live" still has pull. "Touring is the only way to cut through the radio-television-internet clutter," O'Connell says. "Touring gives artists the ability to touch fans on one-to-one basis and put new music in front of them."

And though life on a bus has long been the most reliable path to profit for country artists, the center of gravity keeps shifting further away from recorded music. "There was a time when you toured to support the record," O'Connell says. "Now you're putting out records to support the tour. It's come full-circle."

Touring's growth isn't just good for the superstars, according to Monterey/Paradigm's **Brian Hill**. "You have the next generation of headliners like **Sugarland**, **Little Big Town**, **Montgomery Gentry** and **Gary Allan** touring consistently and doing well," he says. "And you've got the emergence of **Taylor Swift**, **Jack Ingram**, **Jason Aldean** and **Miranda Lambert**, who are making an impact in the hard-ticket market and doing strong business on their own – that's hope for the future."

Amen.

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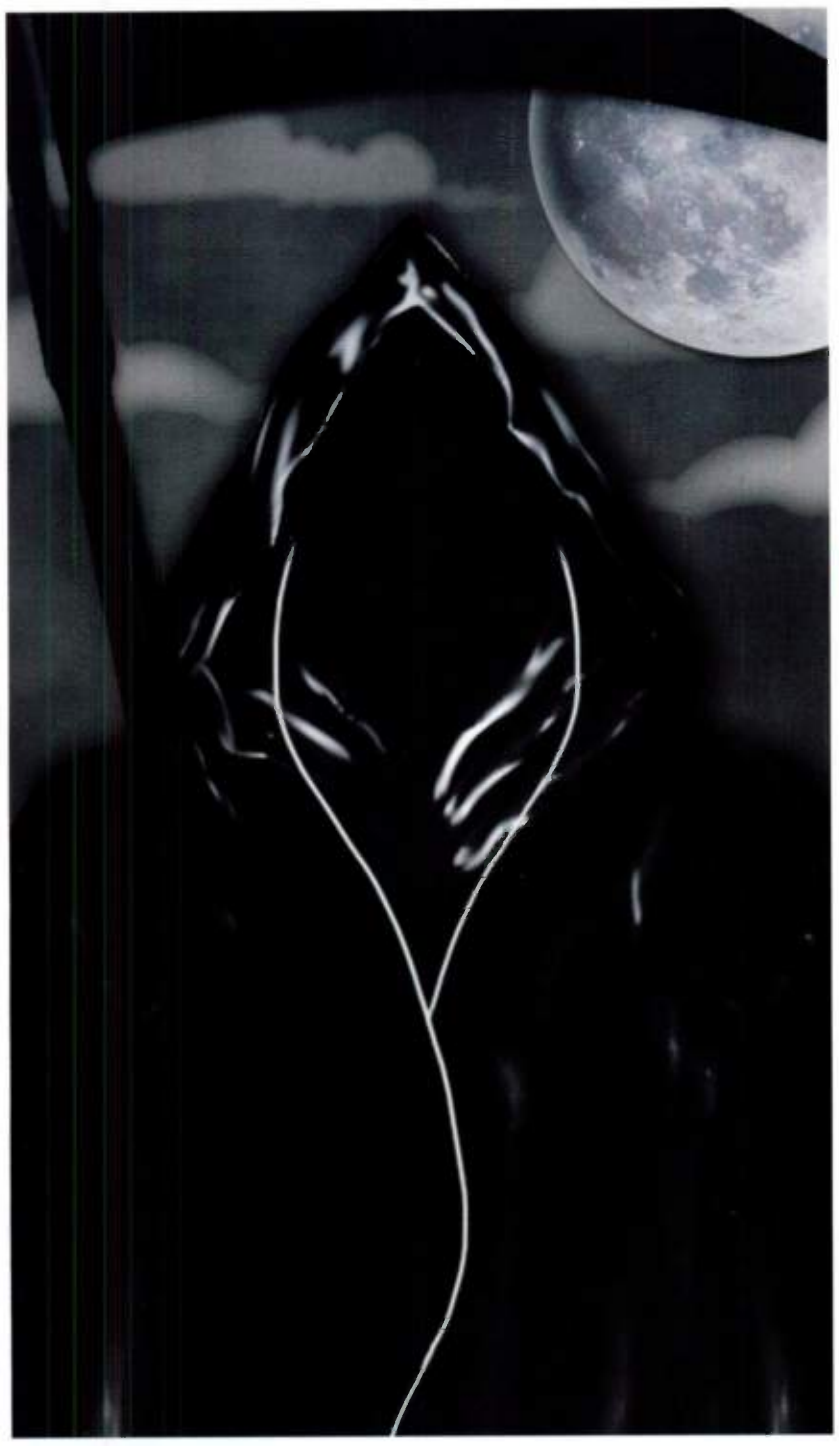
Top Performer Kenny Chesney

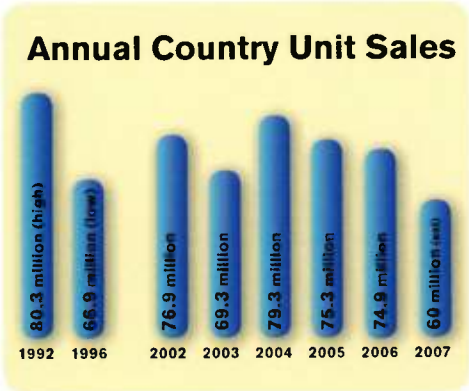
The Top Seven Of '07



5 How Low Can You Go?

CD Sales Fall – No Bottom In Sight

At press time, the good people who study these things anticipated a year-end country album sales figure somewhere around 60 million units. That precipitous 20% drop from 2006 (74.9m) is the lowest annual total in the SoundScan era (see graph), and is significant enough to have even the most cheerful label staffer wondering if it's time to update the old resume. Unlike past downturns, this decline can't easily be attributed to variances in superstar release schedules or the relative appeal of country music and music in general.



In fact, audio with a beat seems to be as popular as ever, if the white earbuds sprouting from the public's craniums are any indication. But where are they getting all those tunes? Unlike past format conversions, consumers don't have to re-purchase their favorites, they can rip their CD collection right into their computers. Unfortunately, they can also rip their friends' discs.

Without question, the ability to cherry-pick singles and tracks has cut into a business built on the album model. And file-sharing remains a thriving outlet for music, particularly with a younger generation that seems to see labels as The Man with a lawsuit in his pocket. That can't be good.

6 Ratings: The Next Generation

PPM Shows Country's Strength

Arbitron's long-awaited commercial rollout of the Portable People Meter debuted in 2007, first in Philadelphia and then Houston. Though Arbitron reminds broadcasters that comparing diary numbers to PPM figures are akin to apples and oranges, early findings from the PPM ratings reflect lower time spent listening but much higher weekly cumes than indicated by diaries.

Beasley's Country **WXTU/Philadelphia**, for example, generated a 12+ cume of 428,000 in fall 2006, but with PPM scored a whopping 727,000 in September 2007. Meanwhile, CBS Radio's **KILT/Houston** soared from 440,000 in fall 2006 to 719,000 three months ago. Across town, Cox Country competitor **KKBQ** nearly doubled from 436,000 to 812,000.

The slow-moving train of radio support accelerated this year as more group owners climbed aboard, only to be recently delayed on its route to New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco and other major cities. Several key broadcasters and at least one radio trade group have issues with PPM sample sizes among younger and ethnic demos, pushing rollouts to September 2008 and beyond. Regardless, PPM's deployment is destined to have a profound impact on the music industry as programmers begin to see more immediately the effect of specific songs and artists, in-studio artist visits, promotions and, of course, commercials.

7 Goin' Back To Cali

KKGO & KBWF Reclaim LA & SF

Just in time for CRS, the Country radio industry gave birth to twins in late February when Mt. Wilson Broadcasters seized an obvious opportunity and switched Classical KMZT/Los Angeles to **KKGO (Go Country 105.1)**, while Entercom ditched Adult Hits KMAX/San Francisco in favor of **KBWF (The Wolf 95.7)**. The moves put country music back on the airwaves in two of the top five markets.

By September, KKGO OM and 17-year company veteran **Mike Johnson** had advanced to Sr. Operations & Programming Manager, while APD/MD/mid-dayer and former 12-year KZLA staffer **Tonya Campos** was named PD. Fueled by a big launch party and "Go Fest" show with **Brooks & Dunn** and **Alan Jackson**, Go Country notched a 1.8 in spring '07 and a 1.4 in summer, outperforming Emmis' new effort both books. KBWF gave the boot to Adult Hits by firing up 10,000 Country songs in a row under new PD and "Prime Minister of Twang" **Scott Mahalick**, who had built Entercom Wolf sister KKWF/Seattle. The Wolf posted a 2.2 in its first full book, easing to a 1.8 in summer. CAC

EIGHT FOR '08

1 Let's Make A Deal: Has the chart success of independent labels and indie promotion teams emboldened any big-name country artists to take a Madonna-like 360 deal with, say, Live Nation? Answer: If the price is right.

2 If We Can Make It There: Could Country be movin' on up to the East Side? We hear it might take a move-in to get a Country stick in the Big Apple. You heard it here first.

3 Major Bummer: The big-label model is getting squeezed more ways than a hillbilly singer's hand at a county fair. Hate to say, but we might lose a couple imprints. But it's just that much more talent – executive and artistic – for the indies to scoop up.

4 Old School, Baybee! Country shocks the marketplace by breaking several new artists without the help of *American Idol*. Yeah, okay. Even we know that's far-fetched.

5 Dear Diary, You Suck: The PPM's September rollout begins to shape programming decision-making in major markets. By this time next year, it's the buzz of the industry.

6 Feed Jake: Broadcast performance royalties become a hot topic in Washington, with broadcasters and the music biz prepared for a final showdown. Oh, wait. It's an election year. Never mind.

7 Let's Do Launch: Another heritage music delivery company steps out into the final frontier, giving the satellite radio space another competitor.

8 Daisy's Dukes: Jessica Simpson becomes country's next big star, asks countdown host, "Who are you again?"

COUNTRY AIRCHECK

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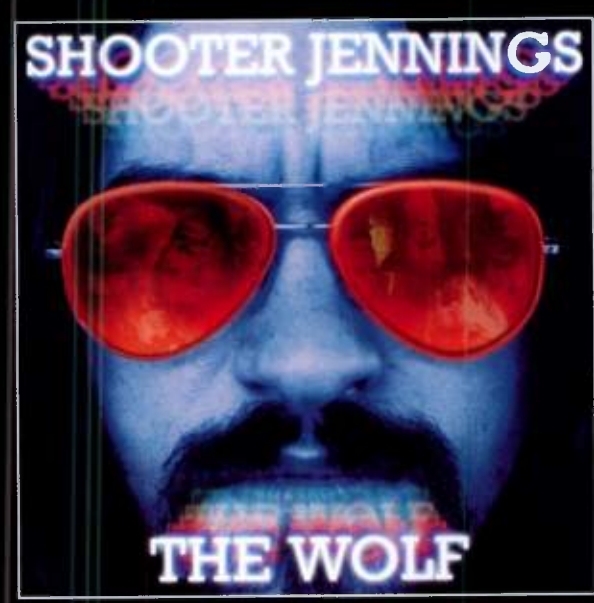
mission california

"...one of the better-kept secrets around" - *USA Today*

JOE NICHOLS
REAL THINGS

"...the best album of his career & probably the best country album this year."
- *Associated Press*

His new single "It Ain't No Crime" coming soon!



SHOOTER JENNINGS
THE WOLF

"*The Wolf* is an unexpected charmer."
- *Los Angeles Times*

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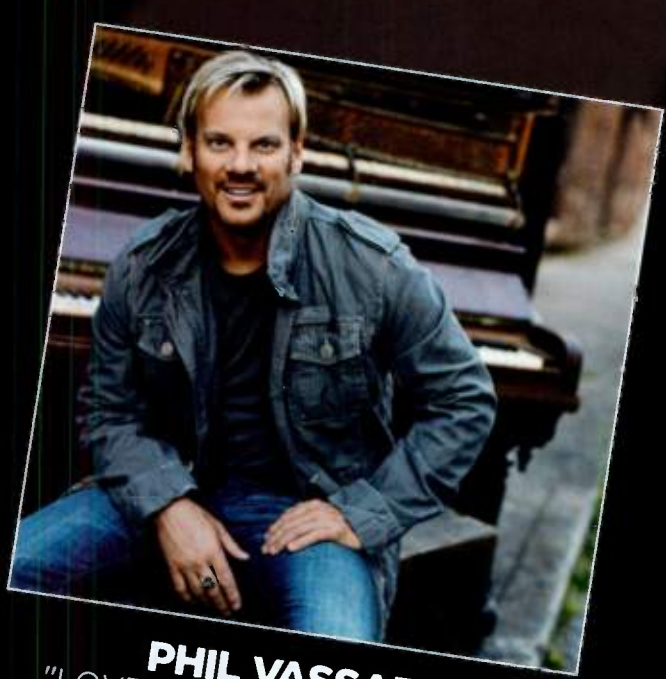

PHIL VASSAR
"LOVE IS A BEAUTIFUL THING"
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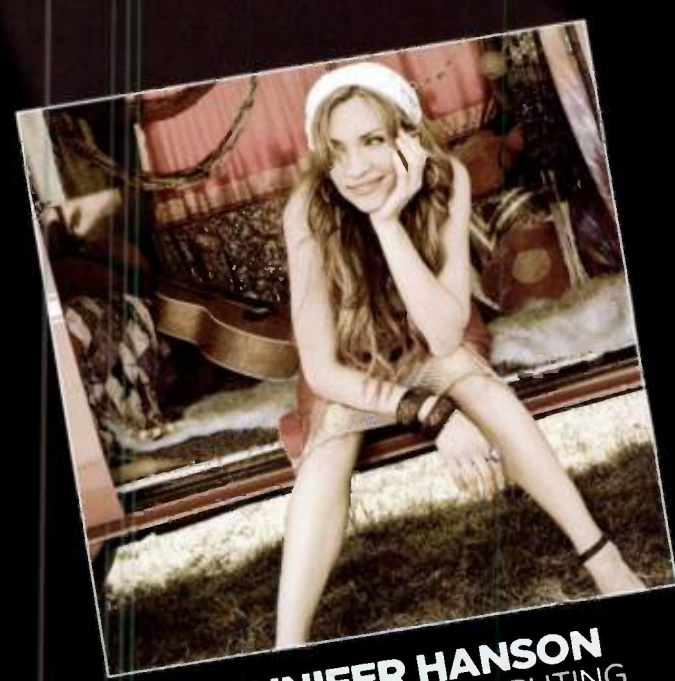
GEARING UP FOR 2008

Teddi Bonadies
Denise Roberts
Rhonda Christensen
Matt Corbin
Laurie Gore
Rick Hughes
Allen Mitchell
Chuck Swaney



JENNIFER HANSON
THE NEW SINGLE DEBUTING EARLY 2008

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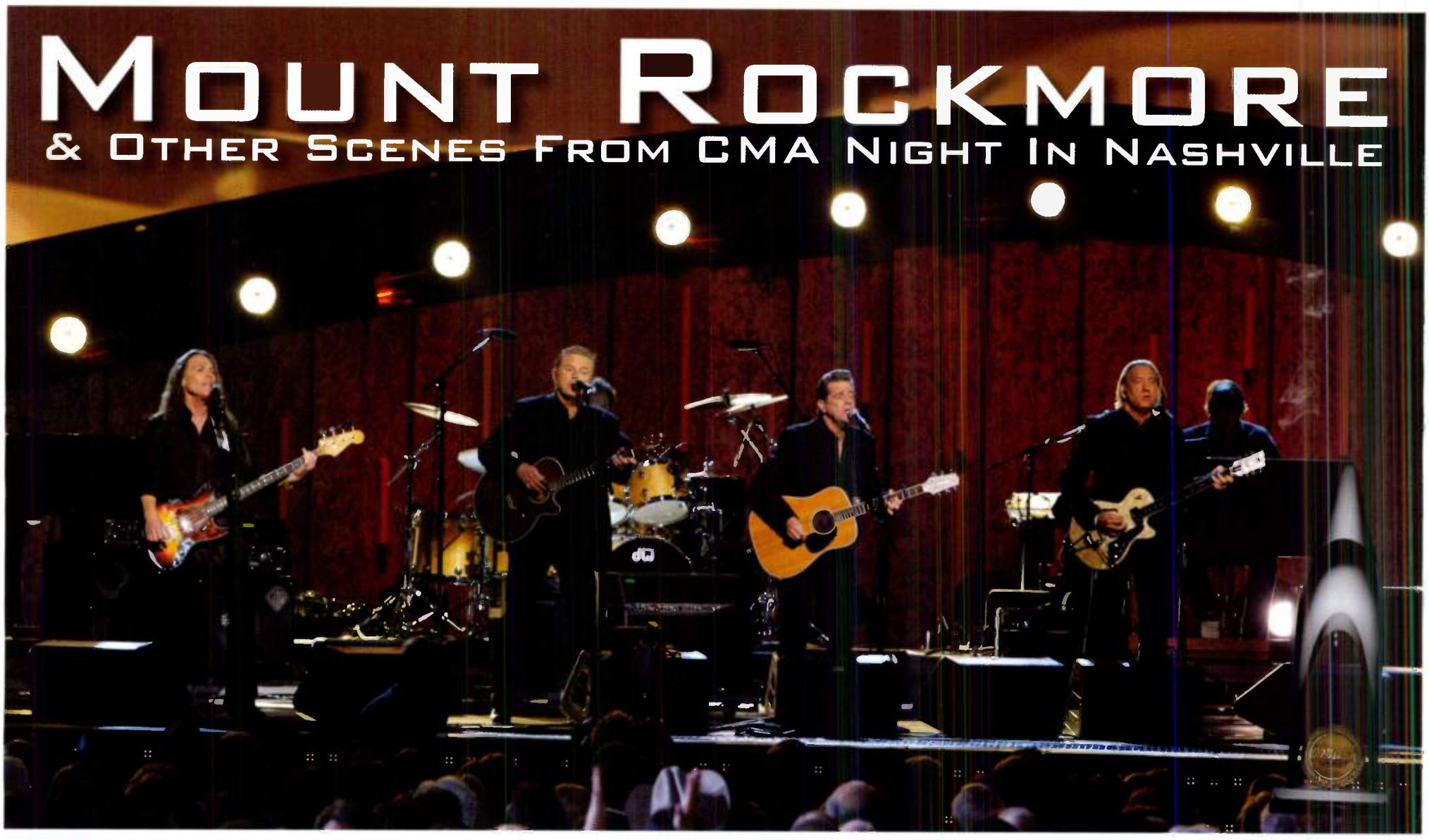
Mount Rockmore

& Other Scenes From CMA Night In Nashville



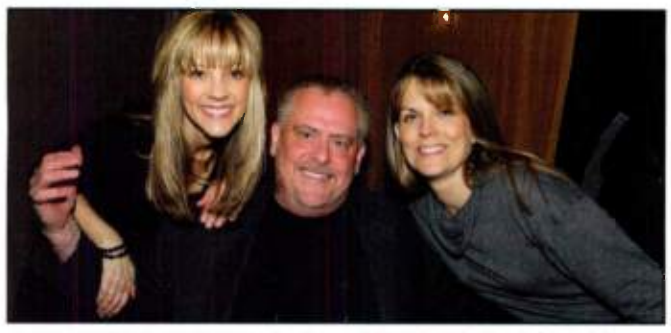
The Eagles' first-ever awards show performance highlighted an entertaining and solidly rated 41st Annual CMA Awards Nov. 7 at Nashville's Sommet Center. Here's a look at some of the night's most memorable moments and people.

CLICK HEAR: Taylor Swift, Brad Paisley and Kellie Pickler during the "Online" performance.

SHAKE & BAKE: George Strait & Tony Brown celebrate their Album of the Year win.

THE CHAMP: Entertainer of the Year Kenny Chesney shines again.

WE CAN MAKE IT IF WE TRY: Sugarland win Duo



A BEAUTIFUL THING: Industry vet Bobby Kraig visits with Universal South's Teddi Bonadies (l) and Rhonda Christensen during a party for radio at Phil Vassar's home.

HERO SANDWICH: Luke Bryan and Capitol's Mike Dungan shred for the camera.

Quote Book

"I'd like to thank my ex-wife Amy...for being such a good mother to my daughter. She surely deserves half of this song and half of this award, too."

–JAMEY JOHNSON accepting Song of the Year for "Give It Away" along with co-writers Bill Anderson and Buddy Cannon

"I'm very thankful to you and Tim [McGraw] for being on this record."

–TRACY LAWRENCE to Kenny Chesney after winning Vocal Event

"This one was completely unexpected. I had already congratulated Randy Scruggs."

–JERRY DOUGLAS on his Musician of the Year win

"For those of you keeping score, it's been 13 years in this business, only one marriage and no arrests!"

–LEANN RIMES at the beginning of her segment as host

"This is definitely the highlight of my senior year."

–TAYLOR SWIFT accepting the Horizon Award

"I first met Kellie Pickler when she was out on the 'If you check her for ticks you're dead tour' with Brad."

–KIMBERLY WILLIAMS PAISLEY introducing Pickler's performance

"I want to thank my dad, who carried amplifiers and ran sound even though he didn't know what he was doing."

–BRAD PAISLEY accepting Male Vocalist

The Win Crowd

Broadcast winners share their Awards week experiences

Lia Knight

Chris Carr

Jim Denny, Deborah Honeycutt Kevin Freeman

Colby Ericson, Dan Tooker, Jon Watkins

Gator Harrison, Greg "Styckman" Owens

The Lia Show, Lia Knight, National Personality:

"You get to hang out in the green room for a while, then there's that moment of waiting," Lia says. "After that, they hand you the award and take a picture of you staring out into space. You try not to be nervous or have jitters because there's something so amazing about being able to walk out on that stage. The Awards have a very familial feeling – everyone coming together and celebrating the success of the format and the music. It's such a cool experience."

Chris Carr, Major Market Personality, KEEY/Minneapolis:

"The audience reaction has been incredible," Carr says. "After Jason Aldean called me on-air, one woman called just bawling because she was so happy. I didn't put it on the air because it seemed a little self-serving, but this win is very personal for people around here. I went on the air the day after the Awards – which, by the way, was a mistake – but people call and really take ownership of it. They even show up to appearances, and they say 'Thank you,' which is very interesting."

Jim Denny & Friends Jim Denny, Deborah Honeycutt, Kevin Freeman, Large Market Personality, WFMS/Indianapolis:

"We talk to Country's favorite stars every week, but sitting in the audience [near] Carrie Underwood and Rascal Flatts made us realize we're fans, too," Honeycutt says. "We had to laugh when Carrie walked by and we all grabbed our cell phones to text our friends at home. Something else that left a lasting impression was during the pre-telecast award presentation, we looked out from the stage and locked eyes with Martina McBride. She was one of the only stars who arrived early and she sat in the center of the front row clapping for each and every award winner. Class act."

Dan Tooker in the Morning Dan Tooker, Jon Watkins, Colby Ericson, Medium Market Personality, KFDI/Wichita:

"The amazing thing about us winning is we're not at the station anymore," Tooker says. "That was what everybody wanted to talk about, to the point it was almost comical. What's really cool is hearing from people I haven't heard from in 20 years. I don't think you realize what a big award it is until other people let you know what a big award it is. Businesses in Wichita have congratulations signs up. Local TV stations covered it. We almost didn't go because it was a little bittersweet, but we're really glad we went."

Gator & The StyckMan Small Market Personality, WGSQ/Cookeville, TN:

"So I gotta go to the bathroom before the show," Styckman says. "I line up at the urinal, look up, and realize that Whispering Bill Anderson's on my left and Randy Travis is on my right. Peeing with the legends. That was my CMA magical moment."

"We had better seats than Rascal Flatts watching the freakin' Eagles onstage at the CMAs," Gator says. "And at one point Martina McBride looked into my eyes and said, 'Excuse me.' To be honest, I peed my pants a little."

KYGO/Denver, Major Market Station:

"I was standing onstage as Emerson Drive announced the winners, and had this random rhetorical question pop into my head – 'How did I end up here?'" PD **Joel Burke** says. "It was incredibly exciting and at the same time humbling for both myself and GM Bob Call to represent the people who work here now and everyone who's worked here over the last 28 years. We stand on their shoulders and would not be having this success if they hadn't laid the foundation."

WMIL/Milwaukee, Large Market Station:

"We've been nominated six times and this was our first win," says PD **Kerry Wolfe**. "Being able to stand on that stage and hold a CMA award felt great. But my favorite memory from the week might be walking down to the Hilton, where we were doing the broadcast, and hearing someone scream, 'Kerry Wolfe rocks!' I turn around and see Taylor Swift hanging out the window of an SUV like she's on the front of the Titanic."

KXKT/Omaha, Medium Market Station:

"I felt like a kid in a candy store," interim PD and morning co-host **Craig Allen** says. "We've been nominated for both personality and station several times and I thought we were just going to be a perpetual Susan Lucci – never winning. The whole thing was a blur and, honestly, pretty surreal. I do remember watching Luke Bryan play *Guitar Hero* and giving it probably the worst performance I've ever seen in my life."

WKXC/Augusta, GA Small Market Station:

"The musical experience was incredible," says PD **T. Gentry**. "We had our guitar pull when we got back, and as I introduced the airstaff I handed each of them the trophy," Gentry says. "The audience went crazy. It's almost bigger to the listeners. They see that crystal bullet and just flip."

"That's when it really sunk in that it was ours," night jock Chris O'Kelley says. "Having that trophy in your hand is pretty incredible." CAC

KYGO/Denver PD Joel Burke GM Bob Call

WMIL/Milwaukee PD Kerry Wolfe

KXKT/Omaha (former PD) Tom Goodwin, Interim PD Craig Allen

WKXC/Augusta, GA VP/MM Kent Dunn, OM/PD T Gentry

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LABEL OF THE YEAR

2007 TOP TEN LABELS

1 ARISTA NASHVILLE 14.7%

2 Capitol Records Nashville 9.5%

3 CURB RECORDS curb.com 8.7%

4 Lyric Street Records 7.9%

5 MCA NASHVILLE A UNIVERSAL MUSIC COMPANY 7.85%

6 BNA BNA RECORDS LABEL 7.2%

7 Mercury Records A UNIVERSAL MUSIC COMPANY 6.5%

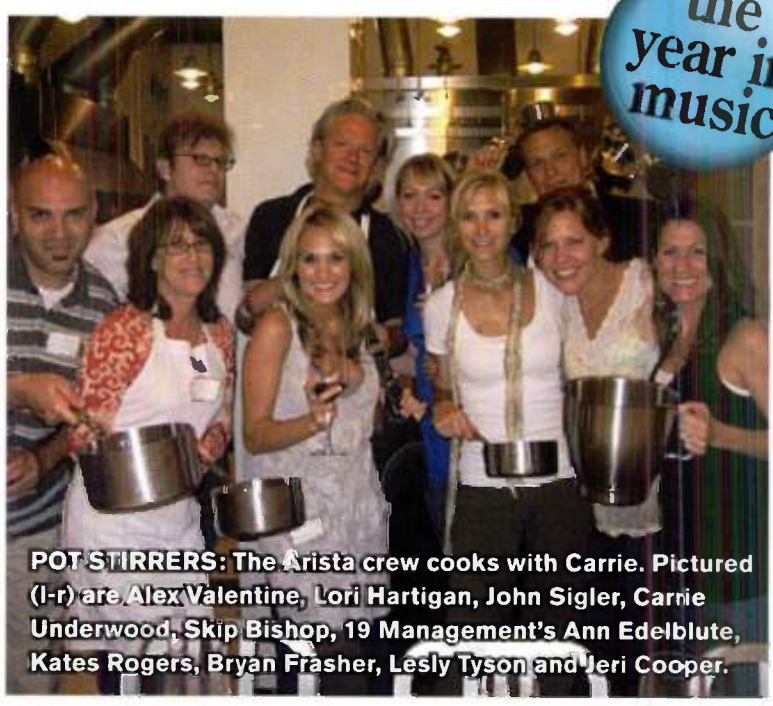
8 BIG MACHINE RECORDS 5.5%

9 BBR 5.1%

10 RCA RCA RECORDS LABEL NASHVILLE 5.08%

ARISTA

the year in music



POT STIRRERS: The Arista crew cooks with Carrie. Pictured (l-r) are Alex Valentine, Lori Hartigan, John Sigler, Carrie Underwood, Skip Bishop, 19 Management's Ann Edelblute, Kates Rogers, Bryan Frasher, Lesly Tyson and Jeri Cooper.

For the second straight year, Arista/Nashville owns the largest chart share – 14.7% – in country music. The numbers are indisputable: 12 tunes in the Top 100, three in the Top 10, four in the Top 20 and 10 in the Top 50.

VP/Promotion Skip Bishop sees his team as "soldiers on the front lines protecting God's universal language. There's a remarkable combination of creative madness and rigid discipline that makes this group untouchable. We know we're blessed with incredible music and gifted artists, and that manifests a sense of responsibility that we carry proudly."

Looking back at an exceptionally successful year, we asked the Arista folks for their snapshot memories of '07. "Brad [Paisley] and Kim had a baby and named him Huckleberry, and that's hard to beat," Bishop says. "Lesly Somerville got married and the after-party is still going on. Jason Michael had two huge smashes. Bryan Frasher won a world grappling tournament and a BBQ cook-off in one year. Ronnie and Kix somehow became 10 years younger, had more fun and sold more records. John Sigler came out of his hippie commune in Woodstock and drove an old truck to Nashville. And Alan Jackson just delivered the most stunning album of his life. It's been quite a year."

Indeed. Here's what the rest of the team had to say:

Bryan Frasher, National

"We got together at Skip's house periodically for what we call 'Arista Jam Sessions,'" Frasher says. "Skip cooks – more important, his wife Diane cooks – and we hang by the outdoor fireplace and pool and just start throwing ideas around. We play music, brainstorm and it gets rowdy. It gets ridiculous. But we always come away with something worthwhile. More than that, we come away knowing each other a little better each time. It accelerated the bonding experience and by the end of the year, I think we all knew we could lean on each other at any time."

John Sigler, Northeast

"Skip and I took Carrie Underwood on a jet tour for her album launch," Sigler says. "We had events in Boston, Philadelphia, DC and Baltimore in one day. There was a multitude of details to cover and it was a tremendous amount of work, but it had tremendous impact. I've done alternative rock promotion for 17 years and have been impressed at how well-educated new country artists are about the business. The other encouraging thing is how many young people I've seen at country shows. There's a whole new generation coming up that loves this music."

Alex Valentine, Southwest

"Seeing two giants like Alan Jackson and Brooks & Dunn take the stage on one tour was pretty special," Valentine says. "I'll always carry with me that memory of standing on the side of the stage watching these two great artists and thinking, 'Holy smokes, these guys *are* country music!' I'm in awe that I get to learn this format on a label like Arista and at a company like Sony BMG. I sometimes can't believe I get to do this every day with these people."

Jeri Detweiler-Cooper Southeast

"In May, we had a seven-course meal at the Sunset Grill to learn all about etiquette from our friend Kim Goddard, and it was hilarious," Detweiler-Cooper says. "Imagine Tom Baldrica trying to find the right fork or Bryan Frasher trying to find a polite place to put his empty sugar packet. A couple of sad events for me personally were having Phil Vassar and Keith Anderson leave Arista. I worked Phil's first No. 1 song and miss having the day-to-day with him. Same with Keith, even though he's just down the hall. Personal highlights include seeing my son Luke walk and talk. He loves music, but until Brooks & Dunn do a version of 'Wheels On The Bus,' they won't be superstars in his eyes."

Lesly Tyson, Mid-South

"Jason Michael Carroll wrote 'Livin' Our Love Song' with his guitar players Tim Galloway and Glen Mitchell during a radio tour," Tyson recalls. "We were on a bus between Memphis and Nashville at easily 1am, but had to catch a flight to Atlanta later that morning. They were sitting up and singing the song over and over. I finally had to say to them, 'That's one of the best hooks I've ever heard, but you've got to stop singing! You've got to sing at an event in the morning!'

"The other fun experience was a cooking class we all took in Franklin with Carrie Underwood as we were getting ready for the launch of her new album. It was a great opportunity to spend time together and hear her enthusiasm for the record. She was so fired up about the writing process."

Lori Hartigan, West Coast

"The first single for JMC was supposed to be 'Looking At You,'" Hartigan says. "I had the 'marketing genius' idea of having laminates made with a sheep on them that read 'Looking At Ewe.' Following the theme, I worked out a promotion with KMPS/Seattle that invited listeners to hear an emerging star at the Puyallup Fair in, of all places, the petting zoo.

"JMC and two players performed for sheep, goats, pigs and birds, along with radio staff, Skip and about 20 listeners. One off-key bird squawked the entire way through 'Alyssa Lies.' I didn't know whether to laugh or cry, but Jason pulled it off and had fun. Everyone was impressed. Seven months later he returned to play for an SRO crowd of 2,000. I sat in the bleachers and remembered back to humble beginnings at the petting zoo."

Kates Rogers, Coordinator

"Our late-night event at the Arista CRS suite was memorable for the road stories artists and regionals were telling," Rogers says. "Skip shared his experiences in pop and how he and Butch Waugh first came to know each other. I don't think I was born then. Bryan Frasher made us laugh with tales from the road and Arista forefather Bobby Kraig dazzled us with magic and card tricks. Also this year, Lesly got married and the entire staff was in attendance. Let me tell you, Arista can *dance*!"

Reiterating the top-to-bottom strength of his staff, Bishop says, "If a meteor landed on me today, any one of them could take my place. This team is never out of touch, never breaking from the task and always thinking far beyond the reach of the headlights. We're never far away from each other. Even when we're apart, we're together." CAC

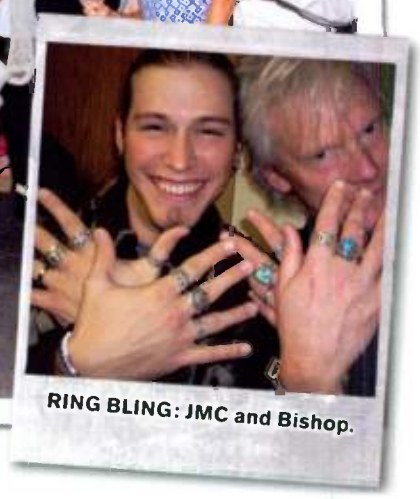
Arista repeats on the strength of an amazing 18 charted records, proving that last year's dizzying 14.8% chart share wasn't a fluke. Arista posted 11 Top 15 hits and three No. 1s that spent five weeks at the top. Sony BMG's four imprints – Arista, BNA, Columbia and RCA – amassed a 31.4% chart share in 2007. Collectively, they had seven No. 1s that were good for 20 weeks at the peak. Leading that charge was Kenny Chesney, who had three No. 1s that ruled for a total of 14 weeks.

Capitol captures the No. 2 spot again this year, propelled by 17 charted records. Of those, seven hit the Top 15 including Trace Adkins' "Ladies Love Country Boys, which spent two weeks at No. 1.

Curb leaps from sixth in '06 to third thanks to 11 charted tunes, among them six Top 15s and three No. 1s including the most-heard song of 2007, Rodney Atkins' "Watching You."

WEDDING BELLE: Lesly Tyson with Arista and Sony BMG staffers at her reception.

GOAT OF MANY COLORS: Pictured (l-r) are KMPS/Seattle's Tony Thomas, Arista's Lori Hartigan, Jason Michael Carroll, KMPS' Becky Brenner and Arista's Skip Bishop.

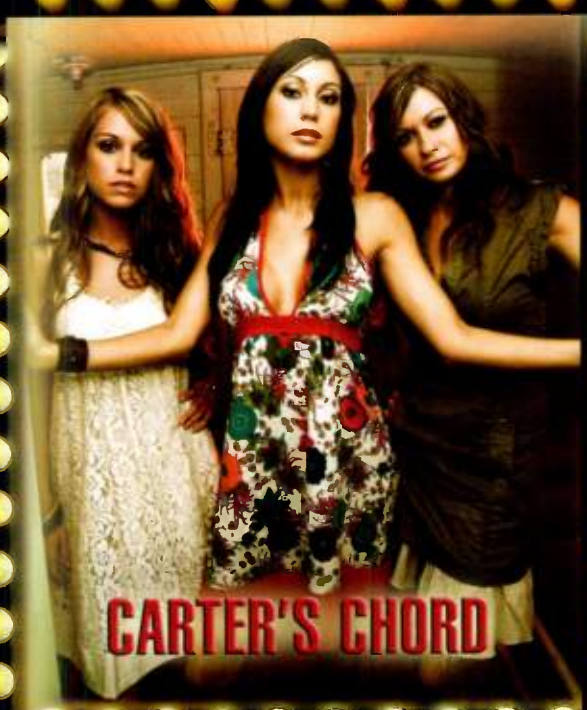


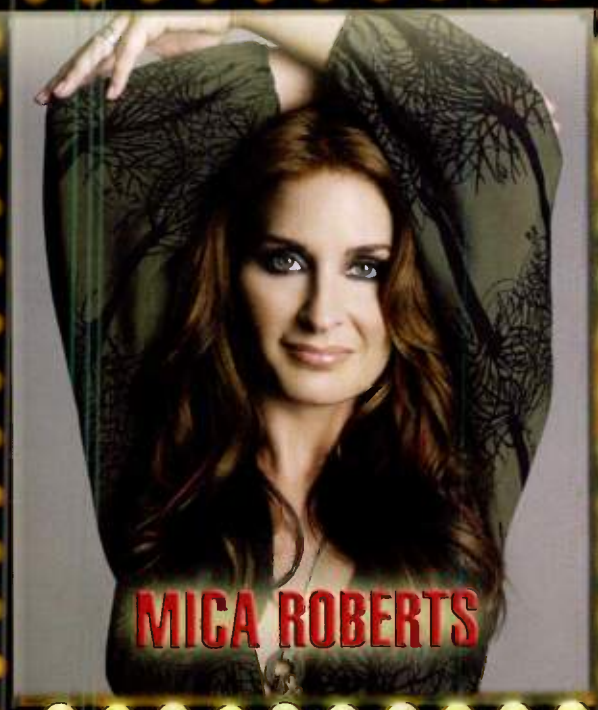
RING BLING: JMC and Bishop.

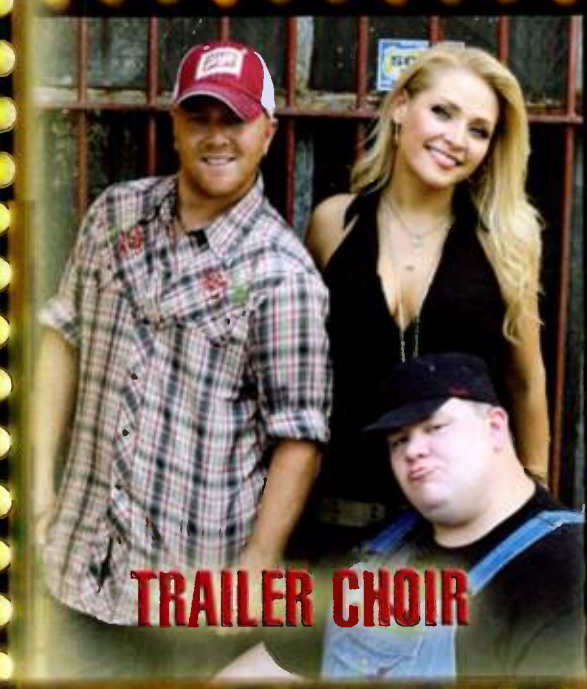
SHOW DOG NASHVILLE

PRESENTS

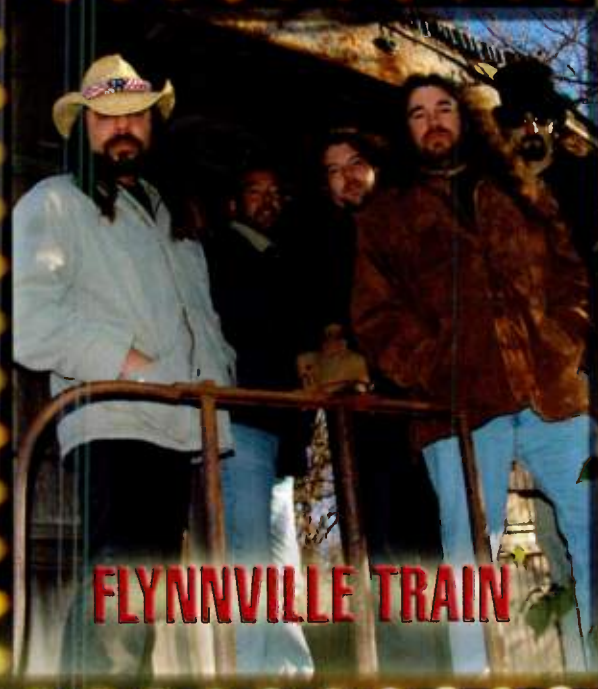
"BEST IN SHOW"







SHOW DOG NASHVILLE



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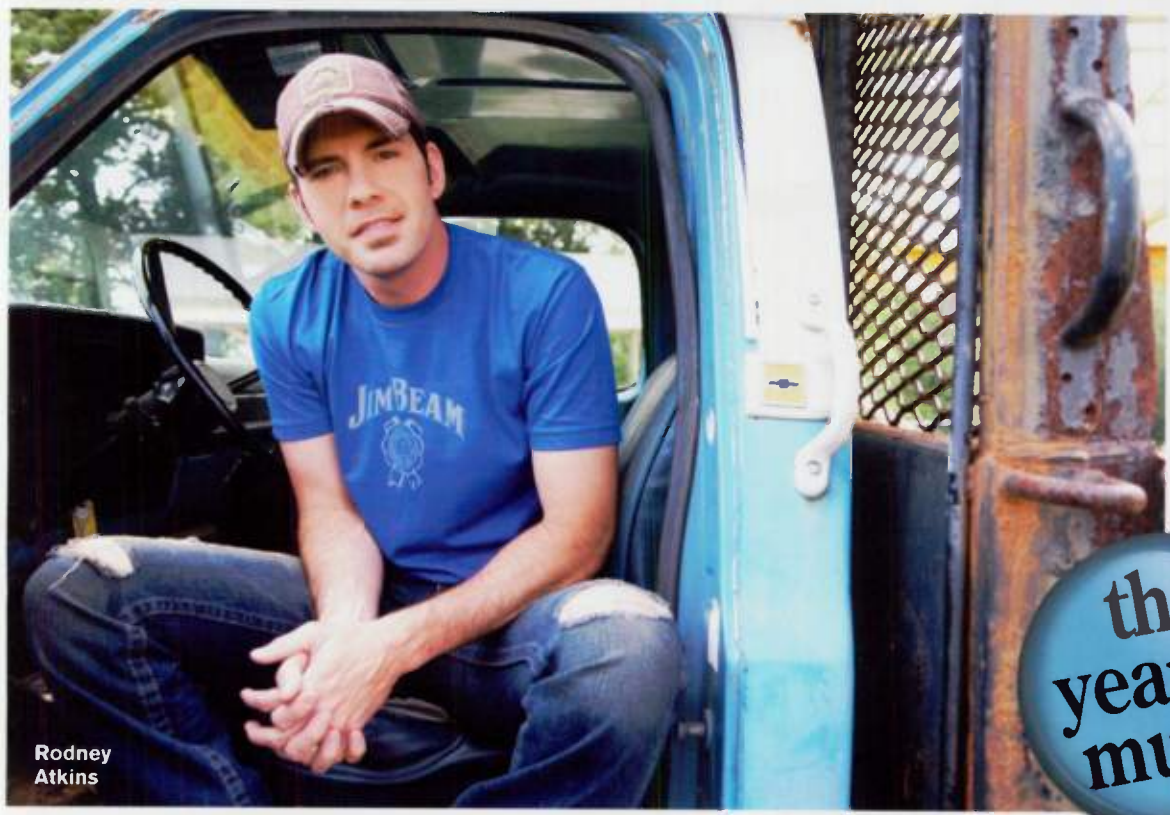


Rodney Atkins

TOP 100 OF 2007

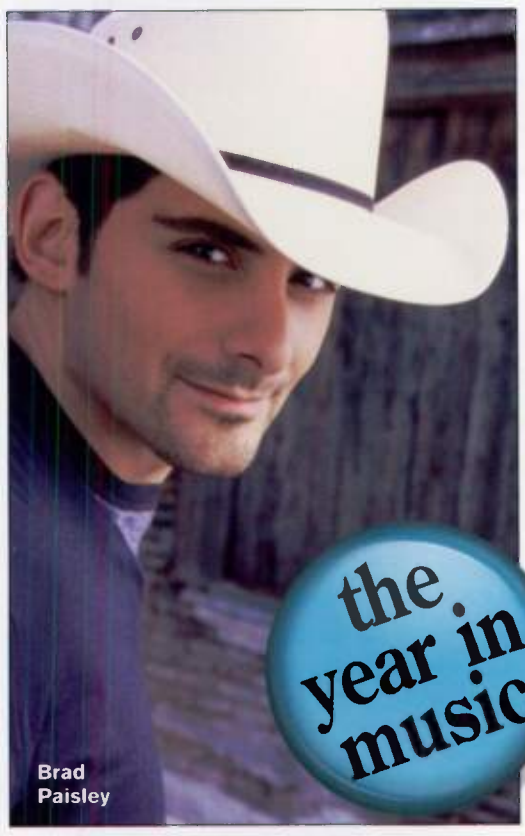
the year in music

MEDIABASE

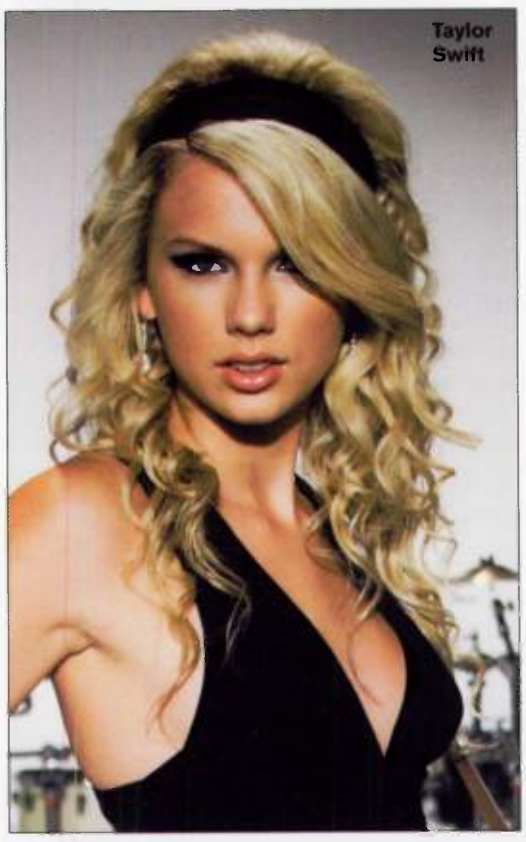
1	RODNEY ATKINS	Watching You	(Curb)
2	BILLY CURRINGTON	Good Directions	(Mercury)
3	TRACY LAWRENCE	Find Out Who Your Friends Are	(Rocky Comfort/CO5)
4	BRAD PAISLEY	She's Everything	(Arista)
5	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	Wasted	(19/Arista)
6	EMERSON DRIVE	Moments	(Midas)
7	TRACE ADKINS	Ladies Love Country Boys	(Capitol)
8	KENNY CHESNEY	Beer In Mexico	(BNA)
9	SUGARLAND	Settlin'	(Mercury)
10	RASCAL FLATTS	Stand	(Lyric Street)
11	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	Before He Cheats	(19/Arista)
12	MONTGOMERY GENTRY	Lucky Man	(Columbia)
13	BIG & RICH	Lost In This Moment	(Warner Bros.)
14	RODNEY ATKINS	These Are My People	(Curb)
15	RASCAL FLATTS	My Wish	(Lyric Street)
16	GEORGE STRAIT	It Just Comes Natural	(MCA)
17	MARTINA MCBRIDE	Anyway	(RCA)
18	GEORGE STRAIT	Wrapped	(MCA)
19	ALAN JACKSON	A Woman's Love	(Arista)
20	TIM MCGRAW	Last Dollar (Fly Away)	(Curb)
21	BRAD PAISLEY	Ticks	(Arista)
22	TAYLOR SWIFT	Teardrops On My Guitar	(Big Machine)
23	BUCKY COVINGTON	A Different World	(Lyric Street)
24	KENNY CHESNEY	Never Wanted Nothing More	(BNA)
25	JAKE OWEN	Startin' With Me	(RCA)
26	JASON ALDEAN	Amarillo Sky	(BBR)
27	CRAIG MORGAN	Little Bit Of Life	(BBR)
28	JOE NICHOLS	I'll Wait For You	(Universal South)
29	SUGARLAND	Want To	(Mercury)
30	KEITH URBAN	I Told You So	(Capitol)
31	TOBY KEITH	High Maintenance Woman	(Show Dog)
32	KEITH URBAN	Stupid Boy	(Capitol)
33	DIERKS BENTLEY	Free And Easy (Down The Road...)	(Capitol)
34	TOBY KEITH	Love Me If You Can	(Show Dog)
35	JASON ALDEAN	Johnny Cash	(BBR)
36	LUKE BRYAN	All My Friends Say	(Capitol)
37	RASCAL FLATTS	Take Me There	(Lyric Street)
38	TIM MCGRAW	If You're Reading This	(Curb)
39	JASON MICHAEL CARROLL	Livin' Our Love Song	(Arista)
40	BROOKS & DUNN	Proud Of The House We Built	(Arista)
41	REBA MCENTIRE F/K. CLARKSON	Because Of You	(MCA)
42	BRAD PAISLEY	Online	(Arista)
43	TIM MCGRAW	My Little Girl	(Curb)
44	JASON MICHAEL CARROLL	Alyssa Lies	(Arista)
45	CRAIG MORGAN	Tough	(BBR)
46	CLAY WALKER	Fall	(Curb/Asylum)
47	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	So Small	(19/Arista)
48	DIERKS BENTLEY	Long Trip Alone	(Capitol)
49	KENNY CHESNEY	Don't Blink	(BNA)
50	GARY ALLAN	A Feelin' Like That	(MCA)
51	TIM MCGRAW W/ FAITH HILL	I Need You	(Curb)
52	TAYLOR SWIFT	Tim McGraw	(Big Machine)
53	GARTH BROOKS	More Than A Memory	(Pearl/Big Machine)
54	JOSH TURNER	Me And God	(MCA)
55	BLAKE SHELTON	Don't Make Me	(Warner Bros.)
56	TRENT TOMLINSON	One Wing In The Fire	(Lyric Street)
57	KELLIE PICKLER	I Wonder	(19/Arista)
58	JOSH TURNER	Firecracker	(MCA)
59	SUGARLAND	Everyday America	(Mercury)
60	MIRANDA LAMBERT	Famous In A Small Town	(Columbia)
61	KENNY CHESNEY	You Save Me	(BNA)
62	MONTGOMERY GENTRY	Some People Change	(Columbia)
63	BROOKS & DUNN	Hillbilly Deluxe	(Arista)
64	GEORGE STRAIT	How 'Bout Them Cowgirls	(MCA)
65	SARA EVANS	You'll Always Be My Baby	(RCA)
66	ERIC CHURCH	Guys Like Me	(Capitol)
67	SARA EVANS	As If	(RCA)
68	JACK INGRAM	Lips Of An Angel	(Big Machine)
69	JOE NICHOLS	Another Side Of You	(Universal South)
70	LITTLE BIG TOWN	A Little More You	(Equity)
71	LEANN RIMES	Nothin' Better To Do	(Curb/Asylum)
72	WRECKERS	My, Oh My	(Warner Bros.)
73	JACK INGRAM	Measure Of A Man	(Big Machine)
74	MARTINA MCBRIDE	How I Feel	(RCA)
75	MONTGOMERY GENTRY	What Do Ya Think About That	(Columbia)
76	KEITH URBAN	Everybody	(Capitol)
77	TAYLOR SWIFT	Our Song	(Big Machine)
78	TRENT TOMLINSON	Just Might Have Her Radio On	(Lyric Street)
79	LONESTAR	Mountains	(BNA)
80	CLAY WALKER	'Fore She Was Mama	(Curb/Asylum)
81	COLE DEGGS & THE LONESOME	I Got More	(Columbia)
82	DARRYL WORLEY	I Just Came Back From A War	(903 Music)
83	KELLIE PICKLER	Red High Heels	(19/BNA)
84	TRISHA YEARWOOD	Heaven, Heartache And The...	(Big Machine)
85	GARY ALLAN	Watching Airplanes	(MCA)
86	PAT GREEN	Dixie Lullaby	(BNA)
87	LITTLE BIG TOWN	Good As Gone	(Equity)
88	BLAKE SHELTON	The More I Drink	(Warner Bros.)
89	SUGARLAND	Stay	(Mercury)
90	PHIL VASSAR	The Woman In My Life	(Arista)
91	CAROLINA RAIN	Isn't She	(Equity)
92	TRACE ADKINS	I Wanna Feel Something	(Capitol)
93	JOSH GRACIN	I Keep Coming Back	(Lyric Street)
94	EAGLES	How Long	(ERC/Mercury/Lost Highway)
95	CHUCK WICKS	Stealing Cinderella	(RCA)
96	RASCAL FLATTS	Winner At A Losing Game	(Lyric Street)
97	LEE	She Ain't Right	(Curb/Asylum)
98	PAT GREEN	Way Back Texas	(BNA)
99	WHISKEY FALLS	Last Train Running	(Midas)
100	TRAVIS TRITT	You Never Take Me Dancing	(Category 5)

TOP 15s OF 2007

Billy Currington



Brad Paisley


Taylor Swift

	Artist	Title	Label	Peak Postion (wks. at No.1)	Peak Date	Wks. on Chart	2007 Rank
A	TRACE ADKINS	Ladies Love Country Boys	(Capitol)	1 (2)	2/26/07	16	7
	JASON ALDEAN	Amarillo Sky	(BBR)	4	1/16/07	11	26
	JASON ALDEAN	Johnny Cash	(BBR)	6	7/23/07	26	35
	GARY ALLAN	A Feelin' Like That	(MCA)	12	4/2/07	22	50
	RODNEY ATKINS	Watching You	(Curb)	1 (5)	1/16/07	13	1
	RODNEY ATKINS	These Are My People	(Curb)	1 (2)	8/27/07	27	14
B	DIERKS BENTLEY	Long Trip Alone	(Capitol)	10	3/26/07	25	48
	DIERKS BENTLEY	Free And Easy (Down The Road...)	(Capitol)	2	10/22/07	26	33
	BIG & RICH	Lost In This Moment	(Warner Bros.)	1 (2)	7/9/07	24	13
	GARTH BROOKS	More Than A Memory	(Pearl/Big Machine)	3	11/19/07	13	53
	BROOKS & DUNN	Hillbilly Deluxe	(Arista)	13	3/12/07	17	63
	BROOKS & DUNN	Proud Of The House We Built	(Arista)	2	9/10/07	20	40
	LUKE BRYAN	All My Friends Say	(Capitol)	5	9/17/07	34	36
C	JASON MICHAEL CARROLL	Alyssa Lies	(Arista)	5	2/12/07	14	44
	JASON MICHAEL CARROLL	Livin' Our Love Song	(Arista)	5	11/5/07	36	39
	KENNY CHESNEY	You Save Me	(BNA)	5	12/4/06	2	61
	KENNY CHESNEY	Beer In Mexico	(BNA)	1 (3)	3/12/07	15	8
	KENNY CHESNEY	Never Wanted Nothing More	(BNA)	1 (5)	7/23/07	14	24
	KENNY CHESNEY	Don't Blink	(BNA)	1 (6)	10/15/07	14	49
	BUCKY COVINGTON	A Different World	(Lyric Street)	5	8/6/07	31	23
	BILLY CURRINGTON	Good Directions	(Mercury)	1 (3)	5/14/07	28	2
E	EMERSON DRIVE	Moments	(Midas)	1 (1)	6/4/07	27	6
	SARA EVANS	You'll Always Be My Baby	(RCA)	12	3/12/07	17	65
	SARA EVANS	As If	(RCA)	12	10/29/07	23	67
I	JACK INGRAM	Lips Of An Angel	(Big Machine)	14	3/26/07	20	68
J	ALAN JACKSON	A Woman's Love	(Arista)	4	6/11/07	25	19
K	TOBY KEITH	High Maintenance Woman	(Show Dog)	3	5/14/07	18	31
	TOBY KEITH	Love Me If You Can	(Show Dog)	1 (1)	10/8/07	20	34
L	MIRANDA LAMBERT	Famous In A Small Town	(Columbia)	13	11/5/07	34	60
	TRACY LAWRENCE	Find Out Who Your Friends Are	(Rocky Comfort/CO5)	1 (2)	6/11/07	31	3
	LONESTAR	Mountains	(BNA)	10	11/27/07	5	79
M	MARTINA MCBRIDE	Anyway	(RCA)	4	3/5/07	21	17
	TIM MCGRAW	My Little Girl	(Curb)	3	12/11/06	6	43
	TIM MCGRAW	Last Dollar (Fly Away)	(Curb)	1 (1)	4/2/07	16	20
	TIM MCGRAW W/FAITH HILL	I Need You	(Curb)	7	8/20/07	22	51
	TIM MCGRAW	If You're Reading This	(Curb)	3	10/15/07	25	38
	REBA MCENTIRE F/K. CLARKSON	Because Of You	(MCA)	3	8/20/07	18	41
	MONTGOMERY GENTRY	Some People Change	(Columbia)	6	12/11/06	5	62
	MONTGOMERY GENTRY	Lucky Man	(Columbia)	1 (1)	6/25/07	24	12
	MONTGOMERY GENTRY	What Do Ya Think About That	(Columbia)	10	11/19/07	17	75
	CRAIG MORGAN	Little Bit Of Life	(BBR)	7	2/5/07	14	27
	CRAIG MORGAN	Tough	(BBR)	9	8/6/07	25	45
N	JOE NICHOLS	I'll Wait For You	(Universal South)	7	3/26/07	21	28
O	JAKE OWEN	Startin' With Me	(RCA)	6	7/9/07	35	25
P	BRAD PAISLEY	She's Everything	(Arista)	1 (1)	1/8/07	9	4
	BRAD PAISLEY	Ticks	(Arista)	2	6/4/07	16	21
	BRAD PAISLEY	Online	(Arista)	2	9/17/07	16	42
	KELLIE PICKLER	Red High Heels	(19/BNA)	13	1/16/07	10	83
	KELLIE PICKLER	I Wonder	(19/BNA)	13	8/6/07	28	57
R	RASCAL FLATTS	My Wish	(Lyric Street)	1 (2)	12/4/06	6	15
	RASCAL FLATTS	Stand	(Lyric Street)	1 (1)	4/30/07	18	10
	RASCAL FLATTS	Take Me There	(Lyric Street)	1 (4)	9/10/07	15	37
	RASCAL FLATTS	Winner At A Losing Game	(Lyric Street)	12	11/26/07	7	96
	LEANN RIMES	Nothin' Better To Do	(Curb/Asylum)	15	10/29/07	24	71
S	BLAKE SHELTON	Don't Make Me	(Warner Bros.)	11	5/14/07	28	55
	GEORGE STRAIT	It Just Comes Natural	(MCA)	1 (1)	2/20/07	14	16
	GEORGE STRAIT	Wrapped	(MCA)	1 (1)	7/2/07	19	18
	GEORGE STRAIT	How 'Bout Them Cowgirls	(MCA)	4	11/26/07	16	64
	SUGARLAND	Want To	(Mercury)	1 (1)	12/18/06	6	29
	SUGARLAND	Settlin'	(Mercury)	1 (1)	5/7/07	20	9
	SUGARLAND	Everyday America	(Mercury)	9	8/27/07	17	59
	SUGARLAND	Stay	(Mercury)	11	11/26/07	11	89
	TAYLOR SWIFT	Tim McGraw	(Big Machine)	5	1/16/07	10	52
	TAYLOR SWIFT	Teardrops On My Guitar	(Big Machine)	2	8/6/07	27	22
	TAYLOR SWIFT	Our Song	(Big Machine)	9	11/12/07	13	77
T	TRENT TOMLINSON	One Wing In The Fire	(Lyric Street)	10	2/5/07	12	56
	JOSH TURNER	Me And God	(MCA)	14	4/30/07	24	54
	JOSH TURNER	Firecracker	(MCA)	5	11/12/07	21	58
U	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	Before He Cheats	(19/Arista)	3	12/4/06	1	11
	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	Wasted	(19/Arista)	1 (3)	4/9/07	20	5
	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	So Small	(19/Arista)	1 (1)	11/26/07	17	47
	KEITH URBAN	Stupid Boy	(Capitol)	2	3/5/07	17	32
	KEITH URBAN	I Told You So	(Capitol)	2	7/23/07	18	30
	KEITH URBAN	Everybody	(Capitol)	10	11/12/07	14	76
W	CLAY WALKER	Fall	(Curb/Asylum)	6	11/5/07	34	46
	DARRYL WORLEY	I Just Came Back From A War	(903 Music)	15	1/16/07	11	82
	WRECKERS	My, Oh My	(Warner Bros.)	8	1/16/07	10	72

Laura Bryna

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EQUITY

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2

PHYSICAL

Kellie Pickler
Small Town Girl
Gold Debut

Carnival Ride
is certified
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in 30 days!

*5th Gear is outpacing all of Brad Paisley's releases to date

*Miranda / Kerosene & Platinum

8 9

Jason Michael Carroll / Waitin' in the Country /
Best Selling New Male of 2007!

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YOU SPIN IT

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Carrie
Highest digital debut for country album EVER!
(44,928)

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Kenny Chesney - over 600,000 myspace friends
(and growing!!)

Youtube.com artist views:

Paisley: 4,205,391
Chesney: 2,009,987
Lambert: 481,671

28 29 30

MOBILE

Carrie Underwood
"Before He Cheats"
Mastertone
Nearing DOUBLE PLATINUM

Waylon Jennings
"Theme From the
Dukes of Hazzard
(Good Ole Boy)"
1st Platinum
mastertone

RADIO

* SonyBMG is the #1 Label Group of '07
* Arista is the #1 Label

Major new artist breakthroughs:

- Jason Michael Carroll
- Kellie Pickler
(toured with Brad Paisley, opened for Rascal Flatts)

Cole Deggs & The Lonesome

Chuck Wicks
highest radio debut
fastest rising single from new male!

TOURING

Kenny - 3rd Consecutive Billboard "Top Package" Award winner
* 6 time ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR!

Martina McBride
Top Country Female touring act of '2007
(and 80 million TV impressions!)

IT'S STILL ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC

Brad Paisley - "She's Everything" Gold mastertone "500,000!!"

Kenny Chesney - "Summertime" Gold mastertone

Jason Michael Carroll - "Livin' Our Love Song" 350,000+ digital downloads!

© 2007 SONY BMG MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

KENNY, CARRIE, THE FLATTS AND BUCKY LEAD 2007 PACK

the year in music

Kenny Chesney is Country radio's Most Heard artist and the format's Top Male Performer for the third time in the last four years. The reigning CMA and ACM Entertainer of the Year dominated the top of the charts in 2007 with three singles that spent an almost-unheard-of 14 weeks at No. 1 – almost 30% of the entire chart year.

Throw in his appearance on buddy Tracy Lawrence's "Find Out Who Your Friends Are," which also went No. 1, and his duet with George Strait "Shiftwork" and you'll understand more fully why Kenny continues as reigning king of Country radio.

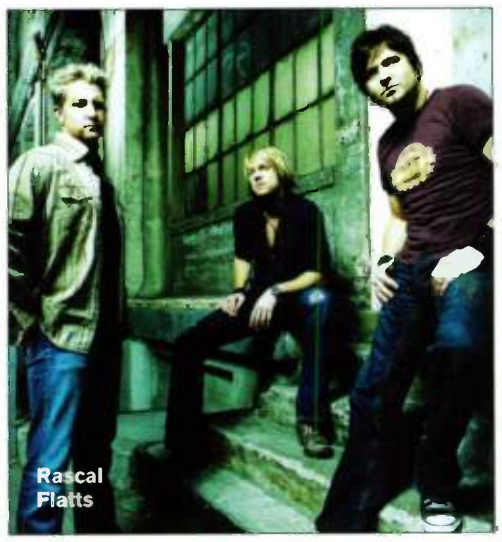
And that makes Carrie Underwood the queen. She's our Top Female performer for the second consecutive year, having released five singles in her short career, all reaching No. 1. Two peaked in 2007, "Wasted" and "So Small."

Rascal Flatts are Country's top airplay Duo/Group for the fifth consecutive year. And, they weren't far behind Chesney, nabbing runner-up status, as in '06. The Flatts boys had three No. 1s that held the summit for a combined seven weeks.

American Idol played VP/A&R for country this year, serving up two of the top three newcomers. Bucky Covington led new artist airplay while Kellie Pickler placed third.

A total of 190 songs charted in 2007, with 77 songs reaching the Top 15 and 23 of them ascending all the way to the top. Fifteen artists posted No. 1 hits in 2007, with eight of them having multiple-week No. 1s a total of 41 weeks.

This year's Cinderella story belongs to Emerson Drive, who scored a huge smash with "Moments," reminding us all that almost every artist is just three minutes away from stardom. And comeback story of the year goes to Tracy Lawrence, who notched a two-week No. 1 hit on his own label with a song that rang true on so many levels. It was great to have him back at the top of the charts.


Rascal Flatts

TOP 15 1st TIMERS

2007 was a pretty tough year to be a new artist. Only five acts – two of whom were propelled by *American Idol* – managed to post a Top 15 record for the first time this year. It's only the first time since 1987 that fewer than six artists cracked the Top 15 for the first time. Only Jason Michael Carroll and Kellie Pickler were able to post two tunes inside the Top 15. None of the new acts managed to score a No. 1 hit. And, a shout-out to Sony BMG, which has three of the five acts listed below – nicely spread out among three of its imprints.

Bucky Covington (Lyric Street)

Luke Bryan (Capitol)

Jason Michael Carroll (Arista)

Jake Owen (RCA)

Kellie Pickler (BNA)

Country Radio's Top 2007 Perfomers

OVERALL

1. Kenny Chesney (BNA)
2. Rascal Flatts (Lyric Street)
3. Tim McGraw (Curb)
4. Carrie Underwood (19/Arista)
5. Brad Paisley (Arista)
6. Sugarland (Mercury)
7. Rodney Atkins (Curb)
8. George Strait (MCA)
9. Keith Urban (Capitol)
10. Montgomery Gentry (Columbia)

MALE

1. Kenny Chesney (BNA)
2. Tim McGraw (Curb)
3. Brad Paisley (Arista)
4. Rodney Atkins (Curb)
5. George Strait (MCA)
6. Keith Urban (Capitol)
7. Jason Aldean (BBR)
8. Toby Keith (Show Dog)
9. Craig Morgan (BBR)
10. Dierks Bentley (Capitol)

FEMALE

1. Carrie Underwood (19/Arista)
2. Taylor Swift (Big Machine)
3. Martina McBride (RCA)
4. Sara Evans (RCA)
5. Kellie Pickler (19/BNA)
6. Reba McEntire (MCA)
7. Miranda Lambert (Columbia)
8. LeAnn Rimes (Curb/Asylum)
9. Trisha Yearwood (Big Machine)
10. Faith Hill (Warner Bros.)

DUO/GROUP

1. Rascal Flatts (Lyric Street)
2. Sugarland (Mercury)
3. Montgomery Gentry (Columbia)
4. Emerson Drive (Midas)
5. Brooks & Dunn (Arista)
6. Big & Rich (Warner Bros.)
7. Little Big Town (Equity)
8. Wreckers (Warner Bros.)
9. Lonestar (BNA)
10. Cole Deggs & The Lonesome (Columbia)

NEW ARTIST

1. Bucky Covington (Lyric Street)
2. Jake Owen (RCA)
3. Kellie Pickler (19/BNA)
4. Luke Bryan (Capitol)
5. Cole Deggs & The Lonesome (Columbia)
6. Lee Brice (Curb/Asylum)
7. Chuck Wicks (RCA)
8. Sarah Buxton (Lyric Street)
9. Whiskey Falls (Midas)
10. Dusty Drake (Big Machine)

KENNY CHESNEY

Whatta Year...

3rd consecutive ACM Entertainer of the Year

3rd CMA Entertainer of the Year

6 NFL Stadiums, 8 local bars and over 1.2 million fans rocked -

3 Multiple Week #1s:

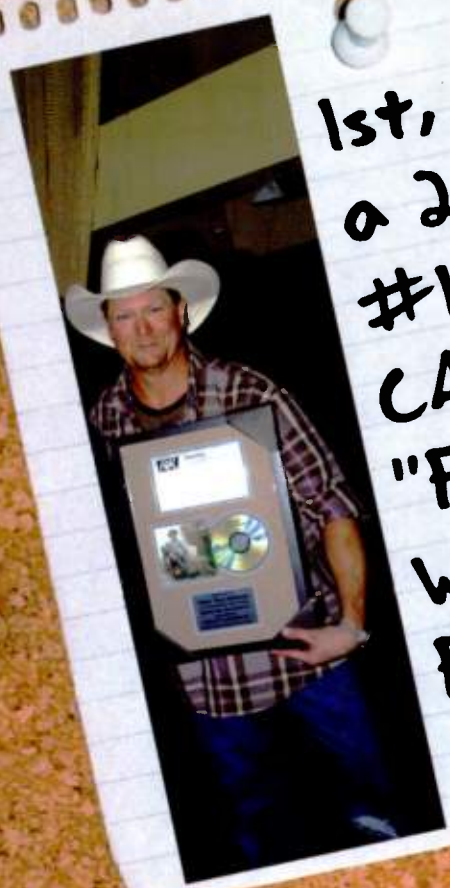
"Don't Blink," "Never Wanted Nothin' More" & "Beer In Mexico"

& Now this...

Mediabase/Country Aircheck's
ARTIST OF THE YEAR!

Your Friends

Dale Morris, Clint Higham
and everyone at
Morris Management



1st, we got a 2-week #1 at CA/MB with "FIND OUT WHO YOUR FRIENDS ARE"

2nd, we got a CMA Award for Musical Event of the Year

3rd, we have the 3rd MOST HEARD SONG OF THE YEAR at CA/MB

In 3 easy steps, I found out who my friends are!

Thanks and happy holidays, Country Radio, from your Rocky Comfort/C05 family:

David, Darlene, Trudie, Karen, Bubba Wayne, Laney, Mike, Gina, Larry P. and me,

Trae Sommers

RCR C05

2007 MEMORIES

Industry Execs Share Their Stories

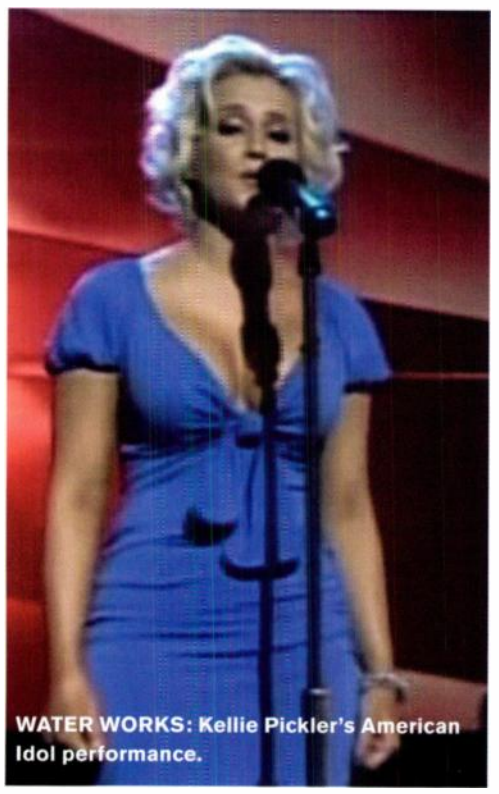
In our "Top 7 Of '07" story that opened this publication, we covered the year's biggest stories. Now it's time to find those personal perspectives on the year – memorable moments ranging from the ridiculous to the heart-rending. Read on.

Scott Siman
RPM Management

"**Tim McGraw** and the **Warren Brothers** had written 'If You're Reading This' a few weeks prior to the ACM show. It was inspired by a book Tim had read about letters from soldiers. Tim performed the song at a private show in April, and needless to say it received an incredible response. At that point, Tim took the initiative and decided to debut the song on the ACM Awards.

"He developed the concept and worked with [rpm VP and tour manager] **Robert Allen** on the logistics. Producer **Rac Clark** and ACM's **Bob Romeo** worked with us to keep it a secret, even going so far as to have the first closed rehearsal in ACM history. Except for a handful of folks at that rehearsal, no one knew what Tim was going to perform – not the families, not the audience, not even **Faith**.

"At the commercial break following the performance, we walked the families back through the audience. It was a standing ovation and not a dry eye in the house. Tim has remained committed to those families, and many of them were able to come to Soul 2 Soul II shows, courtesy of Tim and Faith. Based on all the stories we received, Tim established a section of his website where families can post stories and pictures of their loved ones who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedoms. Country radio picked up on the moment and made it Tim's second live TV performance to chart – 'Things Change' being the first."



WATER WORKS: Kellie Pickler's American Idol performance.

Dan Anderson, BNA

"**Kellie Pickler** was supposed to perform on the Sony BMG boat at CRS, but a week out *American Idol* called. It was a difficult choice, but *Idol* was the vehicle that launched her. We wanted to find a way to get her broadcast appearance live on the boat, and asked about satellite capabilities, but the only way to do satellite was if the boat was sitting still. The weather that night was bad, and at first we didn't even know if we'd be able to sail, but we did.

"Our backup plan was to TiVo it, burn it to DVD, race it to a security guard at Opryland, then have a cigar boat pass it off to us on the General Jackson as we turned around a bend in the river. We didn't know the time she would be on until the day of show. **Wes Vause** was with Kellie in L.A., emailing us updates as to when it was going to air. We had to be in contact with everyone, the General Jackson and the Coast Guard. It was wild once it got to the boat, as no one had seen it. Wes was emailing, saying it was good and we should air it. The turnaround from when it aired on TV to when it aired on the boat was just at an hour."

Grace Reinbold
What A Trip!

"We took 500 CMA Awards radio station trip winners to see **Marty Stuart's** *Sparkle & Twang* exhibit at the Tennessee State Museum. Marty greeted every person individually and then escorted us through the exhibit. He introduced the group to dimensions of country they had never seen, and it was so wonderful to observe what's special about this music through his eyes.

"When we took them to the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum for dinner and a tour, we were led by Hall docents. All of a sudden, **Trisha Yearwood** appeared and reprised her early Nashville gig as a Hall of Fame tour guide. She had just come back from Kansas City to launch her new album and the crowd went absolutely wild. It was so awesome to see a celebrity of her status – someone who is so incredibly busy – do that. Both events really embodied the entire spirit of country music."

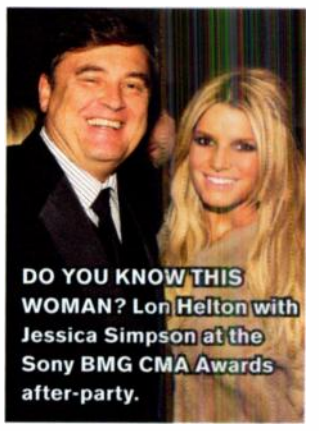
Jimmy Harnen, Capitol

"**Keith Urban** didn't think he'd be in town for CRS, but he was and contacted us at the last minute about doing a show. We had about 48 hours to put it all together. Staffers from Capitol and Borman Entertainment were running and gunning in all directions. Total fun. Total adrenaline rush. And the show was just killer – he played for almost three hours and then came out to meet folks. It was like a concert right in your living room.

"This was also the year that my seven-year-old son **Luke** started playing guitar. As a musician, to see your son jamming away on a guitar was beyond cool. It's kind of the full circle thing and really made me proud. It also made me realize how darn old I am!"

Joe Galante, Sony BMG

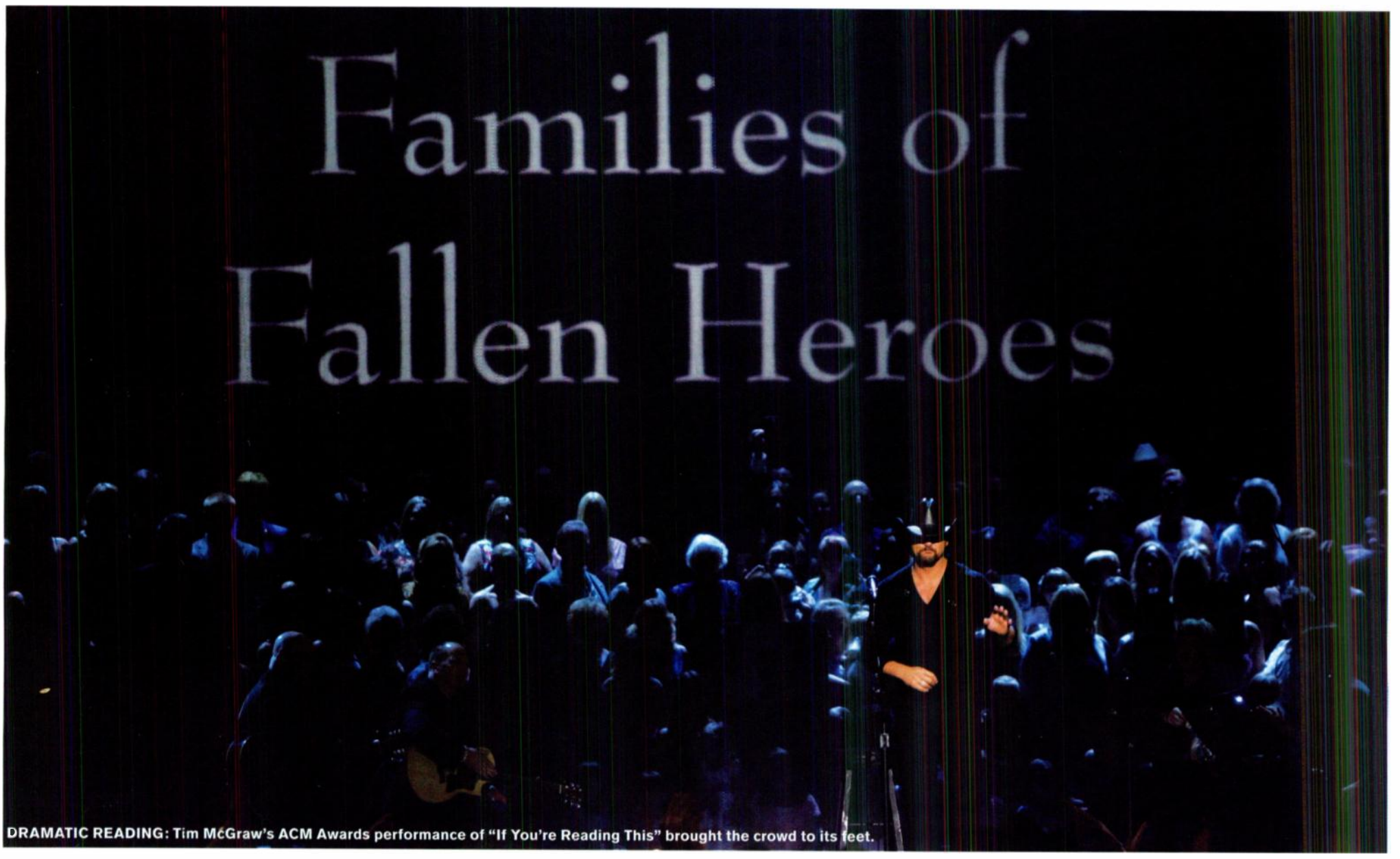
"During the BMI Awards dinner, I saw **Lon Helton** at another table and said, '**Please come** with me. I want to introduce you to **Jessica**.' He says it was just, 'Come with me – I want you to meet someone,' but we know he can't hear – hasn't for years. So I got Jess and said, 'I would like you to meet Lon Helton. He has a countdown show and you will be talking with him when your single comes out.' Lon looked directly at her and said, 'I'm sorry. What's your name?' Very sweetly, she said, '**Jessica Simpson**.' Lon turned red, and said, 'Of course. And now Joe will kill me.'"



DO YOU KNOW THIS WOMAN? Lon Helton with Jessica Simpson at the Sony BMG CMA Awards after-party.

Judy Seale
Judy Seale International

"While on a Stars For Stripes Thanksgiving tour with **Aaron Tippin**, we went to the Balad air base hospital in Anaconda, Iraq to visit wounded and sick troops. We saw an injured 10-year-old Iraqi boy whose entire family was thought to



DRAMATIC READING: Tim McGraw's ACM Awards performance of "If You're Reading This" brought the crowd to its feet.

LOVE EVERYBODY: Big Kenny in Sudan.

The year in Memories

have been killed by an IED blast. He was alone and pretty beat up – one eye was sewn shut and the other was cloudy. No one was sure if he was blind or not.

"I sat on the floor next to him and via an interpreter said I had a picture for him, and called Aaron over. The boy obviously didn't know who Aaron was, but managed to stand up, put his arms around Aaron and hug and kiss him. The nurses and some big men were crying.

"The boy laughed at things Aaron said as if he really understood him. His name was Saddam and I asked Aaron, "Did you ever think you'd be in Iraq comforting a little boy named Saddam?" Aaron has two young sons around that age, and he wanted to bring the kid home with him. Remarkably, his mother, who survived the attack but thought her son was dead, was located and the two are now together.

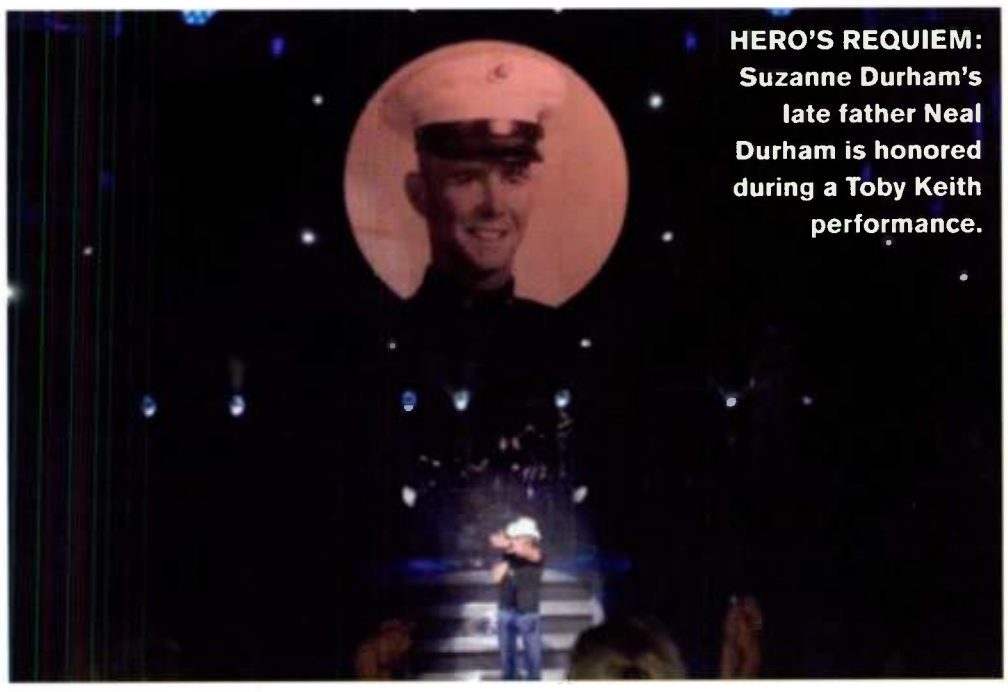
"Aaron signed 4,500 t-shirts, caps and guitars on that tour. Every single soldier got to meet him. That contact is more important than the performance. When it was over we took an 'angel flight' with draped coffins of fallen heroes at our feet the whole way home."

Big Kenny Alphin
Big & Rich

"The trip to bring medicine and supplies to Akon, Sudan was quite an undertaking. Half the people that were originally going with me dropped out a week before we took off. Miraculously, some people just stepped up out of the blue. But it had taken us months to get these visas, so we were worried. Luckily, the relationships we had made along the way at the embassy in Sudan helped us get new visas.

"The cargo plane we chartered in Nairobi, Kenya lost its left engine cover right after takeoff. We had to turn around and wait another day to leave, but everything happens for a reason. **Achol Cyier Rehan**, the commissioner of Gogrial County, where we were going, was in Nairobi and able to fly with us to Akon the next day.

"When our plane finally landed, 500 people who had been waiting more than a day for us were standing on the dirt runway. They were singing, marching in line and chanting. Some men wrestled a ceremonial calf to the ground and stretched it out for us to jump over as a blessing to us. It was a surreal experience. They were full of so much appreciation and joy it gave me great hope. I will never forget opening those doors and seeing all those people and hearing the power of those voices singing."



HERO'S REQUIEM: Suzanne Durham's late father Neal Durham is honored during a Toby Keith performance.

Tony Randall
KUSS/San Diego

"During San Diego's fires my co-host **Kris Rochester** and I got a call from a listener, **Dr. Matt Hubbard**, who was working with firefighters in a staging area who hadn't eaten in 24-36 hours. We made a quick call to our friend and diner owner **Stu Segall** asking if he could help. They loaded up a truck full of hot coffee and food and set out to find these guys out in the middle of nowhere. The firefighters were risking their lives, and no one thought to feed them."

Laney Lawrence
Rocky Comfort Records

"We knew 'Find Out Who Your Friends Are' would hit No. 1 on Saturday, but we didn't want to celebrate until we saw the printed chart on Tuesday. **Tracy** and I talked to the staff at CO5 and a lot of other people who helped make this happen. We went into it saying we'd just be happy to make the top 30, and even just charting was exciting. It didn't sink in until we had our No. 1 party. This has exceeded everything we thought."

Suzanne Durham
Show Dog

"My dad passed at the end of July, and everyone – **Toby Keith**, the Show Dog family, Paradigm, TKO, **Flynnville Train** – has been so supportive. Toby and Show Dog covered trips home for six months while he was in hospice and everyone sent flowers at the funeral. Toby was playing in my hometown of Boston at the Tweeter Center September 22, and my whole family was given tickets and backstage passes.

"During the encore, which was "American Soldier," Tour Manager **David Milam** and video guys **Lee** and **Kevin** surprised us by putting my dad's Marine photo on the stage screen, superimposed with a color shot of the American flag. The crowd went crazy, because they knew it was someone important to Toby. I don't think they know what a special moment they gave to my family. My uncle **Tony** and brother **Joe** both had tears in their eyes. It was the first concert Tony had seen since the '60s, and he said, 'It was worth the wait.'" CAC

FRIENDS: Celebrating the No. 1 ascension of "Find Out Who Your Friends Are" are (clockwise from top left) Tracy Lawrence, Joe Diffie, George Jones and Kenny Chesney.

THE ROAD HAMMERS

"I DON'T KNOW WHEN TO QUIT"

THE DEBUT SINGLE FROM MONTAGE MUSIC GROUP

Montage Music Group

TIM ROBERTS/WYCD "THE ROAD HAMMERS ARE IN HIGH GEAR ON THEIR KILLER CD – ELECTRIC ON STAGE AND UNSTOPPABLE ON THE ROAD!"

DAVE DANIELS/KJUG "KJUG WAS PROUD TO GIVE THE SINGLE THE FIRST SPIN. FOR THE JUG IT'S HAMMER DOWN, GOOD BUDDY..."

NATE DEATON/KRTY "WHEN THE ROAD HAMMERS WERE HERE I THINK I SAID THAT YOU HAVE A HIT RECORD. I WAS WRONG – IT'S A SMASH! WOW, IT SOUNDS GREAT... CAN'T WAIT TO PUT IT ON..."

STEVE WARREN/THE BLUE SHEET "I LIKE A RECORD WITH ATMOSPHERE, A RECORD THAT HAS A GUITAR HOOK SO COOL IT FORCES YOU TO HUM ALONG, A LICK MADE FOR AIR GUITAR. THESE BOYS ARE GOOD AND THEY'VE GOT MORE HITS ON THE FIRST ALBUM, TOO."

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FROM THE PHENOM WHO BROUGHT YOU "17 IN ABILENE"!

HER NEW SINGLE & THE SONG THAT RADIO ASKED FOR

"MAKE ME BELIEVE"

Coming in January...

Her Star Is On The Rise:

- "Houston's Best Country Singer" – 93Q Country 2005 contest winner
- Debut single "17 In Abilene", which she co-wrote, landed at #22 on Music Row setting a record for the highest charting debut for a solo independent artist since 2003
- #1 video on CMT Pure
- #1 on PowerSource Top 75 Country Chart – October 2007
- #1 single on Europe's Hotdisc for 6 weeks straight
- "Country's Net Big Thing" – CosmoGirl, October 2007
- Featured Country Artist for download in People Magazine's special Country Issue – November 2007
- Wrote 7 of the 11 songs on her debut album
- CMA Habitat for Humanity Artist

Music News Nashville
"Cold River Records has found something here and might very well have the 'Next Big Thing'."

Houston Chronicle
"Katie Armiger is only 16 years old, but she's poised to take off in a big way...Her youthful vocals sparkle with urgency."

CMA CloseUp Magazine
"All indications are that Katie Armiger is about to make a major splash and then keep making waves for years to come."

European Hotdisc Review
"She's only 16 and for my money is a rare talent who deserves to go right to the top. This girl is going to be a massive star if there's any justice."

THE EMOTION...THE POWER...AND THAT VOICE!

KatieArmiger.com • www.myspace.com/katiearmiger

COLD RIVER RECORDS
NINE NORTH RECORDS
QUARTERBACK RECORDS

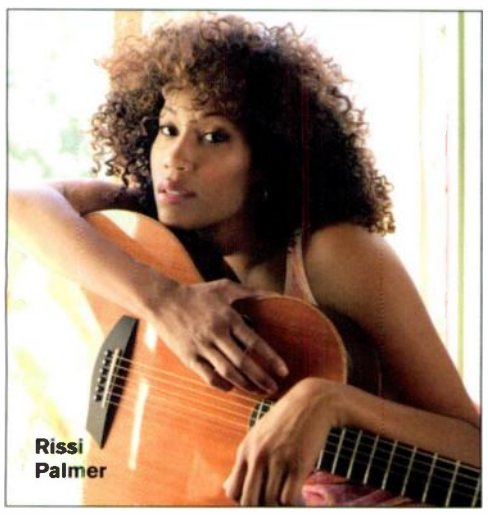
OFF TO A GR8 START

First Quarter Music Preview

Dire predictions for the music business aside, the flow of new music and the need for fresh sounds on radio are inevitable. So as labels seek a needle-moving artist or project and radio searches for that next big smash, we offer our customary preview of the upcoming quarter's single and album releases. Here's to a 2008 that defies the forecasts!

1720 Entertainment

From the veep seat, **Bill Macky** says **Rissi Palmer**'s follow-up single to "Country Girl" is on deck. The song is "Hold On To Me," and it was


Rissi Palmer

written by Palmer, Shaye Smith and Ed Hill. "The song was recorded by Faith Hill for her *Fireflies* CD, but when John Rich came on board to produce with Faith, the album went in a different direction and they wound up giving it back to Rissi," Macky says. "Carrie Underwood also had this song on hold at one time." The cut is from Palmer's self-titled debut, for which she wrote or co-wrote nine of 12 tracks.

Arista

National **Bryan Frasher** uses Arista's slot to highlight the label's early 2008 offerings – one single, one album. First up is **Jypsi**'s "I Don't Love You Like That," bowing in January. "It's exciting that radio is already starting to play this track from the sampler we sent out in the fall," he says. "Jypsi's music is as new and fresh as the band is authentic and visually stunning. They exemplify truth in music and are right for Country radio right now."

Alan Jackson's new single "Small Town Southern Man" is already spinning at radio in advance of a street date expected in the first part of the year. "Alan is the consummate singer-songwriter-performer, and it's amazing how he can produce such quality work time and time again," Frasher says.

Big Machine

The Purcell/Zarling tag team offer this take on the Big Machine's early '08 releases: "Once 'Our Song' peaks, **Taylor Swift** will follow up three consecutive Top 10 hits with 'Picture To Burn,' the fourth single from her platinum-plus self-titled debut. The deluxe limited-edition release, along with her Target-exclusive holiday package, will be impacting retail through the holidays.

"**Garth Brooks** will follow up his record-breaking No. 1 hit 'More Than A Memory' with 'Workin' For A Livin',' the duet with Huey Lewis. This is the second single release from his Pearl Records collection *The Ultimate Hits*.

"**Trisha Yearwood** returned this fall with her critically acclaimed Big Machine debut *Heaven, Heartache And The Power Of Love*. The yet-to-be-determined follow-up to the hit title track will be impacting radio beginning in January.

"As **Jack Ingram** joins Martina McBride's arena tour in January, his single 'Maybe She'll Get Lonely' will remain a priority throughout the first half of '08. Also on deck is a new single from **Danielle Peck** and the launch of **Fisher Stevenson** in the spring."

BNA

The BNA focus for Q1 will be new singles from **Pat Green, The Lost Trailers** and **Terri Clark**. For Green and The Lost Trailers, these are lead singles from new albums that will hit later in the year. Clark's tune is "In My Next Life," which is from her debut BNA album *Next Life*, set for release later in '08.

Back to first quarter, which will see a second **Sarah Johns** single and a third from **Kenny Chesney**'s current album *Just Who I Am: Poets & Pirates*.

Broken Bow

New veep **Lee Adams** takes her turn in the quarterly preview, saying, "BBR welcomes a new year with two big hits. **Craig Morgan**'s 'International Harvester' and **Jason Aldean**'s 'Laughed Until We Cried.' Jason will be hitting the road with another major Country superstar act. Big announcement coming soon.

"We continue to break **Crossin Dixon** with their current single 'Make You Mine.' **Lila McCann** is making waves with a perfect song for the season, 'That's What Angels Do.' And **Megan Mullins** is in the studio with Buddy Cannon sounding better than ever.

"BBR is also very excited to introduce our 2008 new artist **Dean Brody**. A prolific, young, singer/songwriter – arriving in a minivan to your radio station soon."

Jypsi

Capitol

"**Keith Urban**'s 'Everybody,' **Chris Cagle**'s, 'What Kinda Gone,' **Lady Antebellum**'s 'Love Don't Live Here' and **Luke Bryan**'s 'We Rode In Trucks' all roll on in 2008 climbing the charts," raves Senior Veep **Jimmy Harnen**.

Additionally, **Trace Adkins**' new single "You're Gonna Miss This" from his *Greatest Hits Volume II, American Man* CD ships to radio Jan. 2 and impacts Jan. 14. Look for Cagle's as-yet untitled CD to hit retail Feb. 26.

Category 5

Alan Fletcher delivers the Category 5 game plan. "**Shauna Faegan** is a critically acclaimed newcomer who Nashville's 'best of the best' studio musicians are raving about," he says. "The label will release her debut single in Q1, with an album slated for Q3."

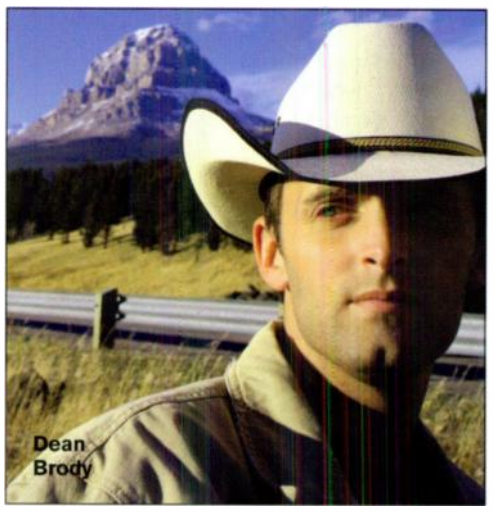
Columbia

Jimmy Rector and the Columbia promo staff open the new year with **Miranda Lambert**'s "Gunpowder & Lead." Fresh off her dynamic CMA Awards performance of the song, Rector says the tune is "the absolutely great, ass-kicking music we have come to love from this emerging superstar. Translates the energy you see live and just makes you want to turn up the radio."

And with a Jan. 28 add date, **Keith Anderson** brings "I Still Miss You." "It's what Keith does best, and we couldn't ask for a better song for his Columbia debut," Rector says. "One of the most-loved young acts out there and the perfect way to fall in love with the new album, coming in Q2."

Country Thunder

It's a triple play for VP **Doc Gonzales** and the Country Thunder team, with new albums from **Heartland, Jamie Lee Thurston** and **Bluefield**. Thurston's disc is titled *Do My Thing*, and the other


Dean Brody

two are still TBA. Each will be advanced by a Q1 single, also yet to be determined. Stay tuned.

Curb – Curb/Asylum

SVP **Carson James** promises a strong commitment to great music from the Curb and Curb/Asylum teams. Look for a new single from **Steve Holy** titled "Cliff In Colorado" that James says is the first story song Holy's ever done. A new **Clay Walker** single will be rolled out once "Fall" finishes its strong run at radio.

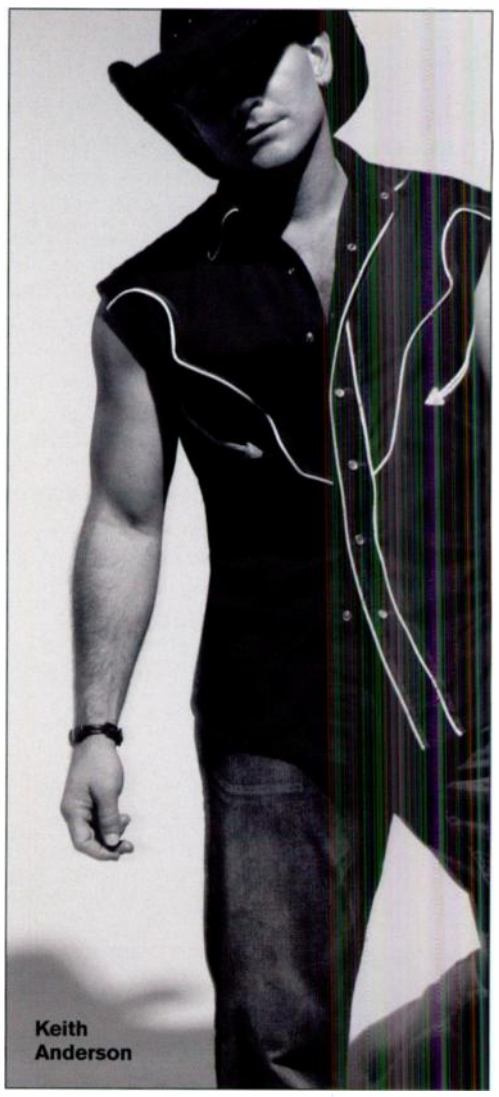
"We'll be introducing **Ashley Gearing** to radio next year," James says, noting that **Byron Gallimore** is producing her album. "She'll play our CRS lunch performance with **Rodney Atkins**."

Late rollouts in Q407 include **Rio Grand**'s "Storm Inside Of Me" and **Tim McGraw**'s "Suspicions," both of which will roll deep into Q108. Newcomer **Star De Azlan** remains a focus, as does **Cowboy Crush** and their single "Miss Difficult."

Dolly

Not too hard to figure the priorities for Dolly Records. Honcho **Bruce Reiner** says the priority is building toward an early February release of **Dolly Parton**'s *Backwoods Barbie*, her first mainstream album in 17 years. The single, of course, is "Backwoods Barbie."

"Expect a massive media appearance campaign coinciding with the album releases," Reiner says.


Keith Anderson

"Major TV coverage from every outlet known to man, as you'd expect of someone at Dolly's iconic level."

The follow-up single will be "Jesus & Gravity," a tune Reiner says is a "different level of song." Look for it some time in the first quarter.

Equity

Follow the path of **(David) Haley's Comment** for the full scope of Equity's first-quarter offerings. "**Little Big Town**'s CD *A Place To Fall* continues riding a wave at retail," Haley says. "Their current single 'I'm With The Band' is still showing growth.

"**Laura Bryna**'s debut album *Trying To Be Me* releases Jan. 22 on the heels of an unprecedented multi-million-dollar multi-media and publicity campaign in Las Vegas. The video for her single 'Make A Wish' will play continuously across 35 flat screen monitors at the Luxor and Excalibur hotels throughout the month of December," he continues. Two 10,000-square-foot images of Laura will be displayed on the Luxor Tower, and her video will be seen regularly on four huge

Laura Bryna

video screens in front of the Fashion Show Mall on the Las Vegas Strip.

"She will also do a full band performance at LAX nightclub in Vegas in January. She'll be the first country act to play the venue, which has hosted Usher and Britney Spears, among others."

"Finally, **Clint Black**'s 'The Strong One' is paving the way for a first quarter album release." The title is still TBA.

OFF TO A GR8 START

Lofton Creek

Big Poppa **(Mike) Borchetta** says **Mark Chesnutt**'s *Rollin' With The Flow* album will street Feb. 15. Single releases upcoming include **Kristina Cornell**'s "Ordinary Girl" March 1 and **Carmen Rasmusen**'s "Shine" a month later. No foolin'.

Lyric Street

Kevin Herring and his team will be directing radio programmers to Lyric Street to hear new sounds from, among others, **Marcel**. His "I Love This Song" will be out in Q1 in advance of a summer album, if all goes as planned. "It's about time he started singing his own hits," Herring says.

Josh Gracin's "We Weren't Crazy" will be at the center of the label's efforts throughout the winter, with the album due in March. Accomplished songwriter Brett James produced the single, and splits production credit on the album with Marty Williams.

There will be a third single from **Rascal Flatts**' latest album *Still Feels Good* once "Winner At A Losing Game" finishes its chart run. And Herring says to expect a follow-up to **Bucky Covington**'s "It's Good To Be Us" at the appropriate time.

And the **Billy Ray Cyrus** single "Ready, Set, Don't Go" featuring his daughter Miley will be a priority through Q1 as well.

MCA

Katie Dean reports that the folks working for MCA will continue bringing traditional singer/songwriter **Ashton Shepherd** to radio in support of her debut single "Takin' Off This Pain." Look for her debut album to bow in March.

David Nail

Expect a second single from multi-platinum new Grand Ole Opry member **Josh Turner** right after the holiday break, and a **George Strait** single is also slated for first quarter. "We'll carry a few current singles into 2008," Dean reports. These include "The Only Promise That Remains" by **Reba** with **Justin Timberlake** from her platinum-certified *Reba Duets* album. **Gary Allan**'s "Watching Airplanes" will also carry over. And wrapping the Q1 priorities is the launch of **David Nail**'s MCA debut single "I'm About To Come Alive."

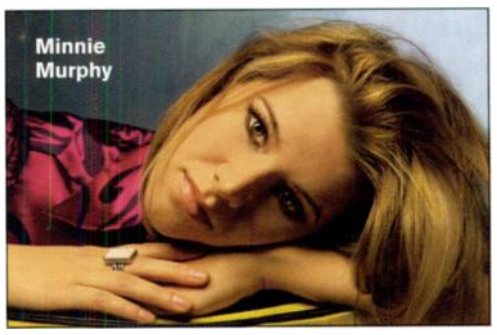
Mercury

For the Mercury crew and VP **Bruce Shindler**, the Q1 priorities are continuations of Q4 priorities: "We'll keep working **Sugarland**'s 'Stay,' the **Eagles**' 'How Long,' **Halfway To Hazard**'s "Devil And The Cross" and "Til We Ain't Strangers Anymore" from **Bon Jovi** and **LeAnn Rimes**.

Montage

The **Mike Wilson**-led promotion force at Montage will be working hard to launch two new acts as 2008 breaks. Already out and about on radio tours and the road are **The Road Hammers**, whose single is "Don't Know When To Quit." The album *Blood, Sweat & Steel* is due sometime in the second quarter.

Montage's other new artist is **Minnie Murphy**, who will be introduced to Country radio beginning in February. The label is setting up for an April single. "She's a great singer, writer and piano player," Wilson says. "Plus, she's 24 years old and just beautiful. She's actually Jamie O'Neal's sister."


Minnie Murphy

Nine North

El Presidente **Larry Pareigis** forecasts "quality acts and killer music" for the new year, including Cold River Records' **Katie Armiger**. Her new Cold River/Nine North/Quarterback single "Make Me Believe" has him believing the song will "be the breakthrough with mainstream Country radio for this youthful winner of KKBQ's 'Houston's Best Country Singer' contest."

Katie Armiger

The **Bellamy Brothers** return with the "cleverly worded" single "Drug Problem" from their latest CD *Jesus Is Coming*. "There's plenty there to get hooked on – pun intended – especially for Country morning shows," Pareigis says.

Nine North is partnering with Sassy Angel and New Revolution on the launch of native Californian **Emma Mae Jacob** and her single "What If We Fly."

"**Jason Meadows** made a big mark for himself in 2007 with '100% Cowboy' and '18 Video Tapes,'" Pareigis says, "so it's natural for him to return as a 'Big Shot.'" The song is Meadows' first Baccerstick/Nine North release.

"**The Roys** return with the song that everyone on their 2007 radio tour clamored for – and just to show that we heard you loud and clear – here comes the charming, touching 'Grandpa's Barn,' Pareigis says.

DM/Nine North bring **Shannon Walker** and his mainstream Country debut "That's Why God Made Me."

"Finally, from the Nine North family to yours, good wishes for the happiest and healthiest of holiday seasons," Pareigis says. "See you in '08!"

Parallel

Aaron Brougher checks in with the scoop on **Jeremy McComb**, whose next single is the Liz Rose/Jimmy Yeary-penned "This Town Needs A Bar." The song impacts Feb. 18, shortly after the Feb. 5 street date for McComb's album *My Side Of Town*.

Jeremy McComb

Quarterback

Head coach **Chris Allums** says his team is still focused on building **Stephen Cochran**'s single "Everything We Knew" at radio. **Trent Willmon**'s next album is due in stores Feb. 26 on Compadre, and title track "Broken In" is the lead single. Look for it in January. Finally, a follow-up to **Katie Armiger**'s debut single "17 In Abilene" is on the ramp (as noted above), and the album lands in the spring.

RCA

Doug Baker serves the RCA scoop, starting with the debut album from **Chuck Wicks**, which he calls "phenomenal." Wicks wrote or co-wrote 10 of 11 for the disc, titled *Starting Now*. The single, still building at radio, is "Stealing Cinderella."

Also in the first quarter, RCA will introduce **Crystal Shawanda** and her debut single. "We just started playing stuff for people before the end of the year," Baker says. "She's a very unique singer – fiery, emotional and such a strong vocalist." Scott Hendricks is producing.

RCA also has the first single from the second **Chris Young** album. James Stroud is producing and a single is due toward the end of Q1.

Rockie Lynne

Robbins/Nashville

The country division of this 12-year-old independent label bows with a new single from **Rockie Lynne**, "I Can't Believe It's Me." Promoveep **Tony Benken** calls it "a powerful song destined to become the wedding hit of the spring season." Add date is Jan. 14. Lynne has spent the better part of 2007 touring and writing songs for his upcoming release.

Show Dog

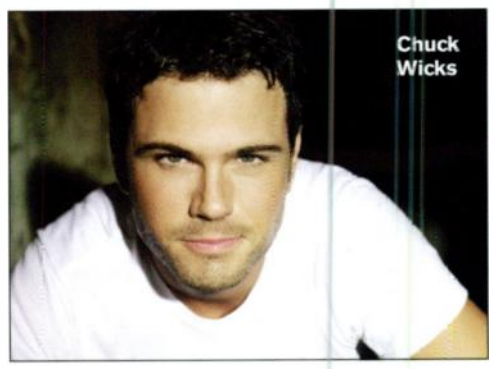
"We'll start the year with **Toby Keith**'s 'Get My Drink On' in strong rotation at radio," says VP **Tom Moran**. "This is the third smash off the *Big Dog Daddy* album. Toby's incredible career is flying high and will only get stronger with the release of his second feature film *Beer For My Horses*. Toby co-wrote it with buddy Rodney Carrington. The soundtrack will also be a huge part of our 2008 plans."

Moran and the Dog Pound promo staff will also look to build on the inroads made by **Flynnville Train** in 2007, continuing with "Tequila Sheila." **Carter's Chord**, produced by Keith, are also front and center at Show Dog. Their extensive radio tour continues through the Feb. 18 add date for their debut single "Young Love." "They're where the format is headed," Moran says.

Also in the early '08 plan is **Mica Roberts**, a longtime Keith band member. "Her vocal prowess is well known, and now Toby will produce her long-awaited first album," Moran says.

Universal South

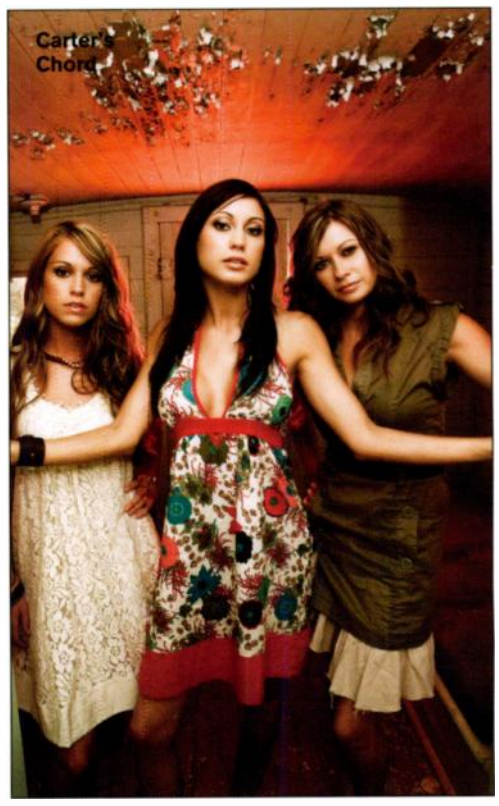
Teddi Bonadies and her promo staff are touting a new **Joe Nichols** single titled "It Ain't No Crime." The Mark Nesler/Tony Martin/Tom Shapiro co-write is "very different," Bonadies says. "It's about a young, single guy sitting in a lawn chair in a baby pool in his yard. Going for immediate impact in January."


Chuck Wicks

Phil Vassar's "Love Is A Beautiful Thing," a Jeffrey Steele/Craig Wiseman co-write, is a focus for Q1, and Bonadies says the label expects to have new music from **Jennifer Hanson** sometime in the quarter, too.

Valory Music Co.

The new kids on the block are promising an extensive radio set-up for **Jewel**'s first single – also the label's debut – due before CRS. "The transition to Country radio should be a natural one for the Grammy-nominated artist who cut four of her six studio albums in Nashville, grew up on a farm in Alaska and currently lives on a ranch with PBR World Champion Bull Rider Ty Murray in Stephensville, TX," Loba says.


Carter's Chord

Valory will also begin introducing new artist **Justin Moore**, for whom the label has already secured an opening slot on the Trace Adkins tour starting in January. "Look for an intensive viral campaign before his big introduction at CRS, followed by a thorough radio tour," Loba says.

Jimmy Wayne moves over from sister imprint Big Machine and is in the studio. "One of the pleasant surprises since I have been working with Jimmy is discovering the amount of goodwill out there for him," Loba says. "It's just a matter of getting the right songs – and we *will*."

Warner Bros.

"We continue to focus on breaking **James Otto** with his Warner debut single 'Just Got Started Lovin' You,'" says VP **Nancy Tunick**. Concurrently, the WB team is focused on the current releases **Faith Hill** ("Red Umbrella"), **Big & Rich** ("Loud") and **Blake Shelton** ("The More I Drink"). CAC

MARCH 5 - 7, 2008

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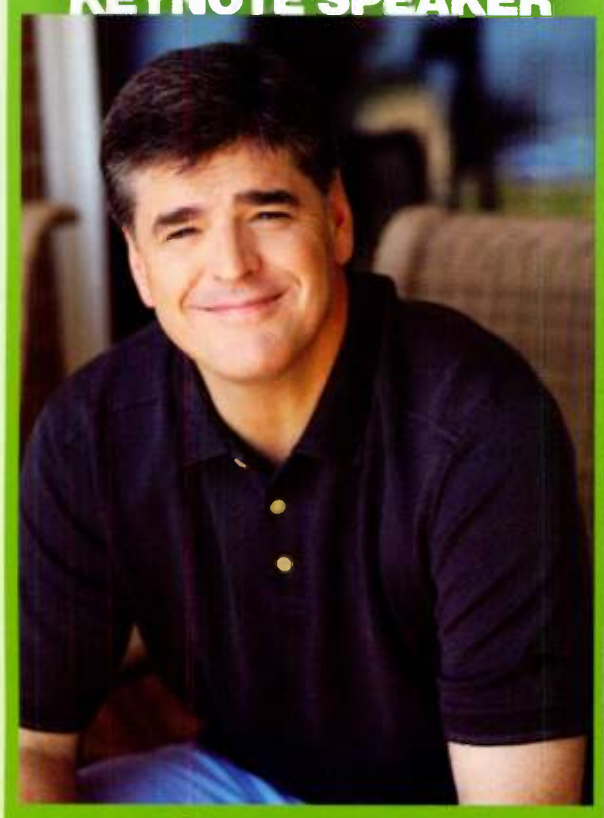

SEAN HANNITY

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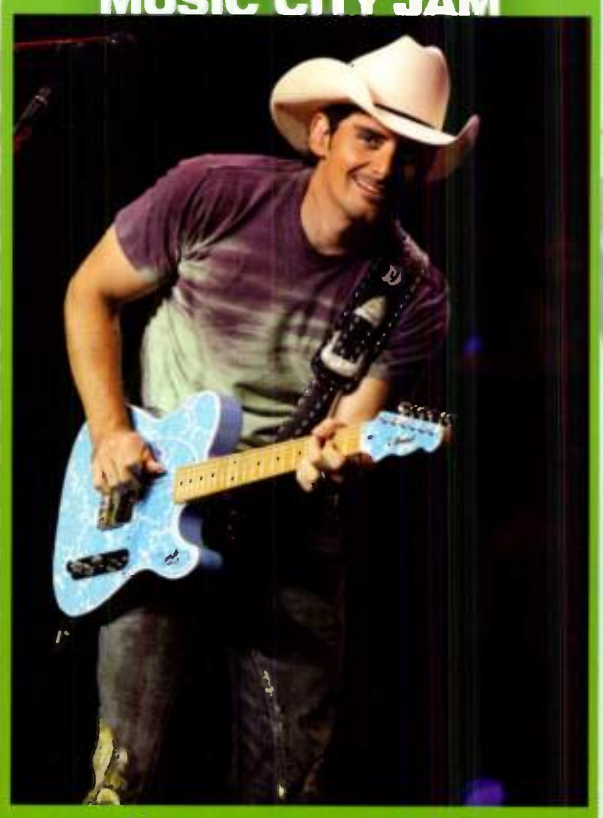


BRAD PAISLEY

LIFE OF A LEGEND

GEORGE JONES

PANELISTS FROM BOTH RADIO AND RECORDS INCLUDING

JAYE ALBRIGHT
Albright & O'Malley

CAROLE BOWEN
GM - WKIS Miami, FL

BECKY BRENNER
PD - KMPS Seattle, WA

TRISTAN COOPERSMITH
CAA/The Intelligence Group

MARC CHASE
Clear Channel

TED COHEN
TAG Strategic

CHARLIE COOK
Cumulus

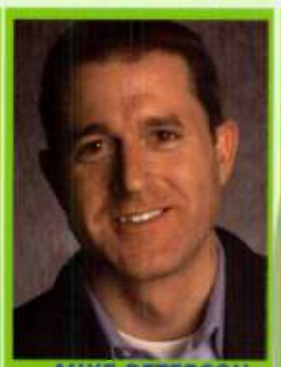
MIKE CULOTTA
OM/PD - WQYK Tampa, FL

JOE GALANTE
Sony BMG Nashville

VALERIE GELLER
Geller Media International

SHEILA KIRBY
Interep

GARY MARINCE
Arbitron



MIKE PETERSON
PD - WUSN Chicago, IL

JOHN RICH
Big & Rich, Warner Bros.

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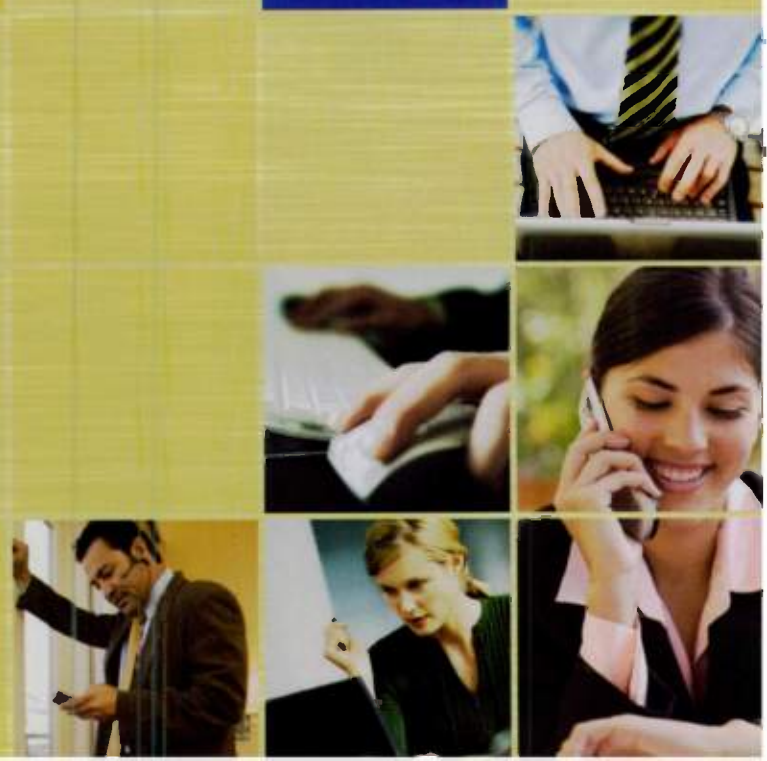

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WRH

SCOTT BORCHETTA

Gearing Up For The Revolution

He knows one way to do things – full speed. Whether it's record promotion, running his own label or Super Truck racing, it's pedal to the metal. Get on board or get run over.

After more than 20 years promoting records independently and as an executive with MTM, MCA, DreamWorks and UMG/Nashville, Borchetta cranked the engine on Big Machine Records in September 2005.

The label has run wide-open for two years, and was recently rewarded with a double-platinum certification on Taylor Swift's self-titled debut album. Next to the starting line is Big Machine sister The Valory Music Co., which rolls with the country debut of Jewel as its first release. Borchetta and his team are moving fast. Don't blink.

CA: There's been much industry discussion about a new independent business model. What was Big Machine's original model and how has it changed?

SB: The idea was to be as lean and mean as possible. We wanted to have just enough [staff] to be able to compete – and we're still operating with that mentality two years later. But the success we've had with Taylor Swift – and now Trisha and Garth – has allowed us to get bigger. As I look across 19 employees and two labels, I still think we're incredibly lean.

We have to continue to watch every dollar. We've had a great year, but so what? I look around and see major labels trying to figure out how to get smaller. It's up to me and my executive team to make sure we stay small. These are very tough times and we don't take any of this for granted. We've hit on a few things that are really working and we're going to continue this same underdog mentality of being giant-slayers.

Does Big Machine participate in other areas of revenue – merchandising, publishing, touring – with its artists?

Every deal is different and they're all partnerships. We do share in all that and in corporate initiatives that we bring to the table. We have to. Our company is a branding and marketing company and we build value in these artists as brands.

I preface every signing with, "If we both do our job properly..." Because if we do that, several years from that first meeting that artist can look me in the eye with their balance sheet in front of them and say, "Okay, my record company income is No. 5. I made more money on touring, merch, songwriting and corporate sponsorships. I'm valuable now. And it started from nothing. You laid this out clearly, and I'm not pissed off like the Dixie Chicks. (Laughs.) I'm not pissed off like Toby Keith. I get it. You told me what it was going to look like. Thank you."

We've hit on some things that make sense in partnership with our artists, but if we want to continue in business together, sometimes there will have to be adjustments. The artists who will stay here will be the ones who want to grow and embrace change. And that's every reason why I've been fired before. People didn't want to continue to grow. I'm not good at sitting still.

You launched in September 2005. Is Big Machine in the black?

We broke even our first year and we're very black. We're beautifully black.

A large vat of that black ink is courtesy of Taylor Swift, whose debut CD was just certified double-platinum. Could you ever have expected to be at this point so soon?

Putting this together I did three projections – a disaster plan, a survival plan and an aggressive plan. Taylor has hit the aggressive plan – touchdown. We absolutely planned for success. But did I write down that we'd be double-platinum? No. It hasn't totally sunk in that she just won the CMA Horizon Award, the record's double-platinum, she has a major tour for next year and her next 18 months are done. I'm just happy that we were able to deliver for the artists and label staffers who trusted that we could do this. That's the most gratifying thing.

What's the hardest thing about running a label?

Getting respected. Being treated like we're supposed to be here. A lot of our friends at radio knew me, [VP/Promotion] Jack Purcell and some of our other great promotion people, so radio was the first to have a feeling we might have a chance to be successful. The difficult part was at retail and at distribution. We were just another label – and indie labels go under all the time. There wasn't a lot of belief that we would make it, and I could feel that.

But I have to say that the day we opened, [Universal Distribution head] Jim Urie called and said, "I'm glad to be back in business with you. Call me if you need anything." And that first year, I called him – a lot. I know where all the buttons are in promotion; I didn't know where any of them were in distribution.

A big part of my education was understanding what distribution can and can't do. And they can do a lot. But it's one thing for Jim to acknowledge that we're here. It's an entirely different situation for the company to understand – for the CFO to care about us in the sense of making sure things get done, for example. So there were some people within the system who I'd been successful with before, who I helped make a lot of money for at MCA and DreamWorks. But there was a whole other level of uncertainty, and I felt it in a big way.

Was there an early wake-up call?

You assume that shipping 100,000 units will enable you to walk into a Borders in Phoenix the day it's released and buy your record with your artist. It was pretty embarrassing when the record wasn't there. And that was just because people didn't know who the hell we were. And they didn't care. They've got a lot of records to put out. Who's Big Machine? Just because we shipped all that product didn't mean it ever made it out of the back room. I had to go back to Jim and say, "Jim, please push the button on this. It's not going to be the biggest record of the year, but I promise you we're going to be clean on it."

Our overall distribution return percentage is single digits, and that's what every label head in town prays for. But it took that extra day and night of pounding it and pounding it and pounding it. We have a lot of great friends now at retail, and Taylor's the reason. We promised them that this was going to be a big record. I said, "Guys, you don't have any basis to trust me, but trust me." And even though we had enough people who stepped up, we still didn't get enough shipped that first week. But ever since October 24, 2006, there has not been a week where Taylor Swift did not have a reorder. Reorders are beautiful, and they continue to be beautiful.

Where did you think you could save money that you haven't?

We thought we could make good, inexpensive videos. The first videos we did on Danielle Peck and Jack Ingram were low-budget videos and they looked low-budget. I learned I can't do that and now I'm not willing to cut corners there. Videos are really important to great-looking artists, so we're spending major-label dollars on our videos because they come back to us. Jack, Danielle and Taylor are video stars.

Where have you been able to do things differently from a major label and save?

We make records a lot cheaper. That's an area that producers and musicians in town are starting to wake up to. We don't do double-scale sessions. I've told musicians who've actually brought it up that my goal is to have them make 50 records for me. If I have to pay them double-scale, I may only be able to make one with them. I'd rather be in business with them for 10 or 15 years, but if I'm not in business I'll just have to hear them on the radio.

I've had a major producer tell me, "Scott, I know what you're doing with your business model. I want to be part of what you're doing. Let's do something together. We'll find a way to make the right record together. Don't let old business practices scare you away from calling me."

What's another example of doing business differently from the majors?

Royalty accounting is a nonstop education and it's something we're trying to revolutionize. I'm tired of artists getting ripped off. All the deductions drive me nuts. Labels tell acts, "We'll pay 85% of this, and for packaging we take this deduction, etc." I tell our artists that for each dollar that comes in, I'm going to give them X, and we're going to forget about all these stupid deductions and do better for them by streamlining the deductions. I want to get it to a flat tax!

And, as we move more into a digital world, there are daily revelations about how a record company needs to be paid so we can pay our artists. One of the neatest things is the recent announcement of a portable Internet radio player. Hallelujah! Because the record companies actually did something right, we have a performance fee coming. And the performance fee is going to be coming for terrestrial [radio], too. Broadcasters don't want to talk about it, but, without apology, it's coming. We'll continue to spend millions in creating this content and branding, but there's a value to it.

You've always wanted to be head a label. Why were you never given the opportunity at a major or start-up, especially after the success you enjoyed as head of promotion at MCA and Dreamworks?

I was un-hire-able. (Laughs.) I know people thought – heck, they still think I'm crazy! Fortunately, I have other like-minded crazy people around me. The only way this was going to happen was for me to create it. There was a strong opportunity at one moment with Warner Bros., but Universal wouldn't let me out [of my contract] to talk to them. But it just wasn't happening, so I decided that at the end of my Universal contract, come hell or high water, I was doing this.

Did the fact you came from promotion and not sales hold you back?

Oh, yeah. I had a situation where a major label executive was interested in being a partner and his boss said to him, "Well, we know he can get them played, but we don't know if he can sell them. We don't know if he's a good A&R guy." It was another vote of no-confidence. One of my favorite commercials of all time is Michael

> "COUNTRY RADIO IS STILL KING. BUT THEY MUST UNDERSTAND THAT OTHER MEDIA ARE NIPPING AT THEIR HEELS. DON'T LET 'EM CATCH YOU."

Jordan who says, "Keep telling me I can't slam." So keep telling me I can't do it. It just makes us work harder. But I don't feel like I have to prove anything to anybody. I don't do it for that.

Really?
No. I just felt I had to do this. People may not believe it, but I don't care about me. (Laughs.) Sometimes I get mistaken for being arrogant. It's just confidence. I have no fear of responsibility. I take responsibility for my actions, I cover my employees, I cover my artists. I just needed a little bit of money and support to see if we could do it. And the fact that I don't have to answer to New York or L.A. is just a dream come true.

What's the best thing about heading a label?
I kind of built my own club. I always wanted to build a label the same way we built promotion departments: No walls, no attitude or prejudice – the best idea wins. We're all on the same page. Here's the plan, execute. My responsibility is to hire people who I think are intelligent and hard-working and to sign artists whose music I love that I think can be successful. I've got great businesspeople to figure out the business side. But I get to do this thing, and I have people who share and add to the vision.

This isn't just about me; this is about us. I'm a team builder. One of the things that is a true gift is that I have the capability and the history of building winning teams. One of the things I'm proudest of is being able to find great people, fit them together and have them work in harmony.

What qualities do you look for in people you hire?
Truly, a light comes on when I meet somebody, and I park that in the back of my head. I look for individualism. There's also an intelligence factor and what I call a "now" factor – do they understand what the game is right now? And if they don't, are they capable of learning it and accepting it? And, is this a good person – someone I want to be around every day? I go mostly on my gut. I hang out with them a little bit, see what they're about, and decide if they fit in with my team. I've met incredibly intelligent people that just didn't fit here.

What are your thoughts on the state of Country radio today?
[Labels] still want Country radio to lead, but they've got to get out of this AC mentality. There are so many more things that we can do as brand builders to bring the audience to radio. It's always hard to make sweeping comments because they are great partners, but I'm amazed at the high level of people who are turning their heads and not embracing the opportunities out there – they're hurting us.

This is a current-based format, and the more you continue to shrink it, ultimately, the more you're hurting yourself, because we're going to find ways to keep this music alive. We've been through this before – like in the late '80s when you could just feel something was going to pop. I have all the confidence in the world that somebody, whether it's a Marc Chase or a Charlie Cook or whoever, will someday let programmers go crazy and create great content. They have to. And shame on Marc and Charlie if they don't.

If you were the king of Country radio, what would you change?
I would make every Country radio station in the top 125 or top 150 markets reporters, whether they wanted to be or not. That would force them to deal with what's happening today. If they wanted to participate in these fabulous artists, whether it's Garth or Kenny or Taylor or Sugarland or Carrie or whoever, they'd have to be a participant. This is not one-way. And they'd see the investment pay off. But I fear a lack of investment and a vote of no-confidence in current artists.

There's going to be a huge battle for the car, especially after XM and Sirius merge. To compete with all the Country channels, five channels of any format, NASCAR, Howard Stern and people's favorite sports, radio had better be doing something engaging on their terrestrial signal. They have to win the car. If they don't, all of our attention, all of our media, all the things that we spend a lot of money on to bring this incredible music and these incredible stars to their listeners, will be going somewhere else. And I don't want to take it anywhere else.

The fact is, we [labels] want to do this with Country radio first. I can't scream that loud enough. Country radio is still king. But they must understand that other media are nipping at their heels. I would tell radio, "Don't let 'em catch you."

What do you think made you such an effective record promoter through the years, and why do you have such a good relationship with Country radio?
I believe in them and I want to be their best partner. And, we've proven that. When I'm presented with a plan, I always try to start with, "OK. How can we do this?" instead of, "Nah, we can't do that." I always try to get to the point I can say, "We can make that work. Here are the steps, and if you can do X, Y and Z, and make this happen and that happen, we can deliver our end." And that's not airplay-related, it's market-related.

Last month you launched The Valory Music Co. When did you first think you needed to add a second imprint?
About a year ago. It was frustrating to have a couple of artists in development and I couldn't get their records out. I'm not willing to sign something I really love and put it fifth or sixth in line. It really crystallized when the Garth conversations became very real. It was like, "OK, I gotta do this because it's the right thing for our company. But who loses? Who's going to have to sit down and wait even longer?" And then I had a couple of other meetings with artists and thought I either had to stop taking meetings or find a way to put some more music out. Ultimately, it came down to the fact that for not that much more investment and by adding just five more employees we could double our output.

How did you get together with Garth?
[Garth's manager] Bob Doyle first approached me two years ago to work "Good Ride Cowboy." At that point we were with Toby [Keith] and there was no way that we could handle both Toby and Garth together. So I very reluctantly and humbly passed, and let them know that I was absolutely honored and disappointed. But they came back, and this time we were ready. We got the business stuff done before Garth and I really ever sat down. And once we sat down, sparks flew. It's been incredible. And those are fun moments, great conversations, and we're having a blast.

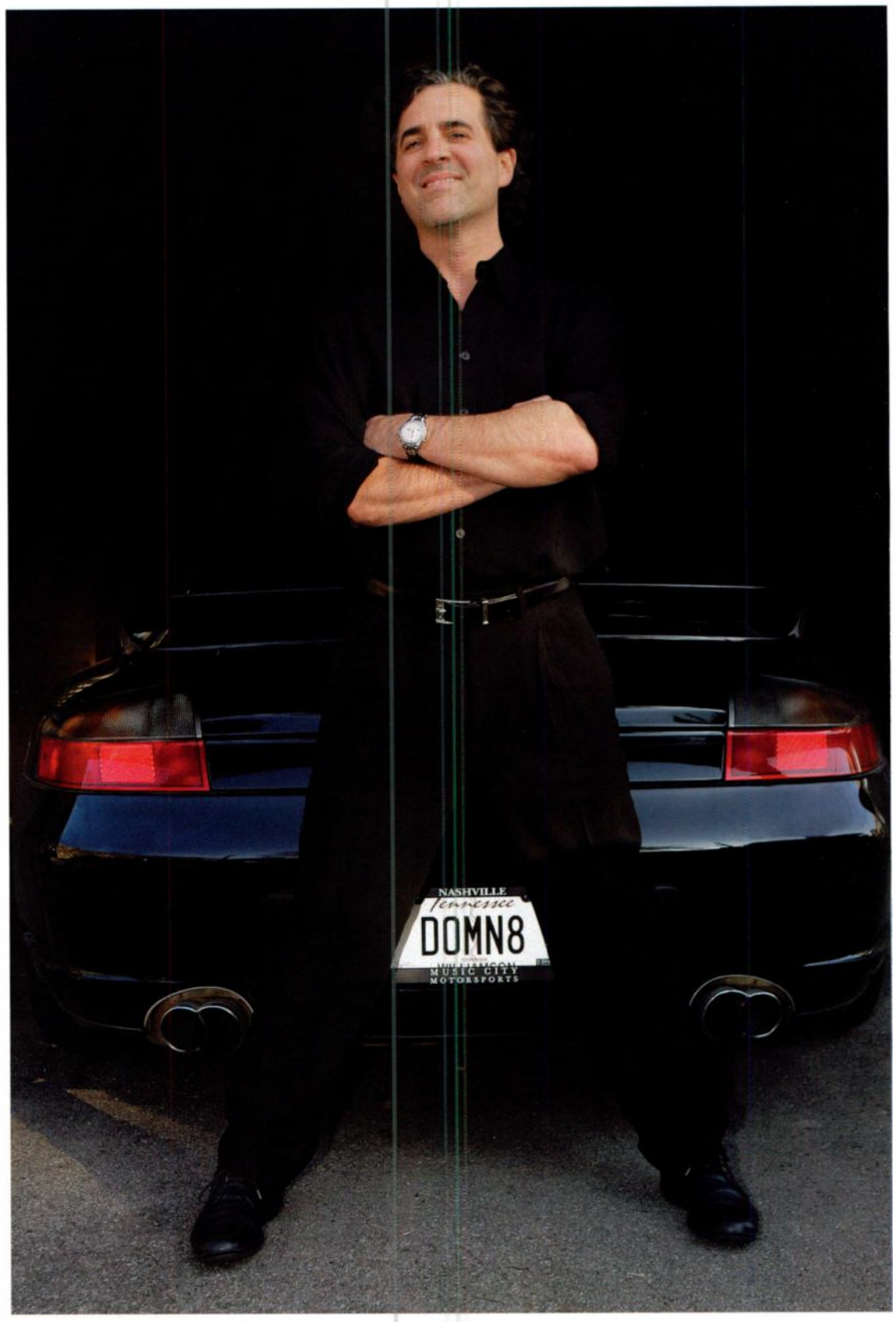
What's been the biggest disappointment of the past two years?
Anytime you have a record that doesn't work, it's a disappointment. I think that I probably misread a couple of things, like putting out a Jimmy Wayne single without a six-month set-up and thinking we'd have a lot more open arms. It was a real wake-up call to have a really cool single go out that we'd been asked for, and not have it be accepted.

Jimmy believes so much in what we're doing here and he's such a great team player, my biggest disappointment is that we haven't had a chance to get him where I think he needs to be. So I'm thrilled that he's going to have another great opportunity with Valory.

What's your long range plan?
Right now it's a three-year plan. We put everything into motion that I had dreamed that we could put into motion for this year. Now it's about execution. We have Trisha. We're working with Garth. Taylor Swift is the biggest new thing in the business. We have a real shot with Jack Ingram. We have a wonderful new Danielle record coming in the first quarter. The Jewel record is amazing. The Valory crew is already getting great feedback on Justin Moore. So what's next for both imprints is execution.

And you're not going to hear from me for awhile. I've been way too visible. I'm going back underground. You won't see me. I don't like being this public, to be honest. I like my artists to be public, and I like me and my staff to keep our heads down and continue to be the underdogs that we are and just focus on the job. I want to retire from interviews for awhile. I feel like I've been talking too much. I just don't want to spend my days talking about what we do. I want to spend my days doing it. CAC

> "I HAVE ALL THE CONFIDENCE IN THE WORLD THAT SOMEBODY WILL SOMEDAY LET PROGRAMMERS GO CRAZY AND CREATE GREAT CONTENT. THEY HAVE TO. AND SHAME ON THEM IF THEY DON'T."



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MUSIC SALES AT A
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Is The CD In Free Fall?

PAGE 9

POWER 31

Airplay Leaders

PAGE 13

We Bagged A Big Name For The INTERVIEW

PAGE 29

COUNTRY
AIRCHECK
SEPTEMBER 2007

UNIVERSAL HITS FALL 2007

175 / 275 — New Album In Stores 9/18
REBA
Duets

176 / 276 — Newest Inductee to Country Music Hall of Fame
VINCE GILL
"How Lonely Looks"

177 / 277 — Going for 56 #1's
GEORGE STRAIT
"How 'Bout Them Cowgirls"

178 / 278 — New Album October 30th
JOSH TURNER
"Firecracker"

179 / 279 — New Album October 23rd
GARY ALLAN
"Watching Airplanes"

188 / 288 — Headlining CMT Tour
SUGARLAND
"Stay"

189 / 289 — New Album Coming Soon
BILLY CURRINGTON
"Tangled Up"

190 / 290 — #1 Country Album on iTunes week of release
HALFWAY TO HAZARD
"Devil And The Cross"

191 / 291 — First Studio Album In 28 Years (10/30)
EAGLES
"How Long"

192 / 292 — World Tour '08
BON JOVI
New Single Coming Soon

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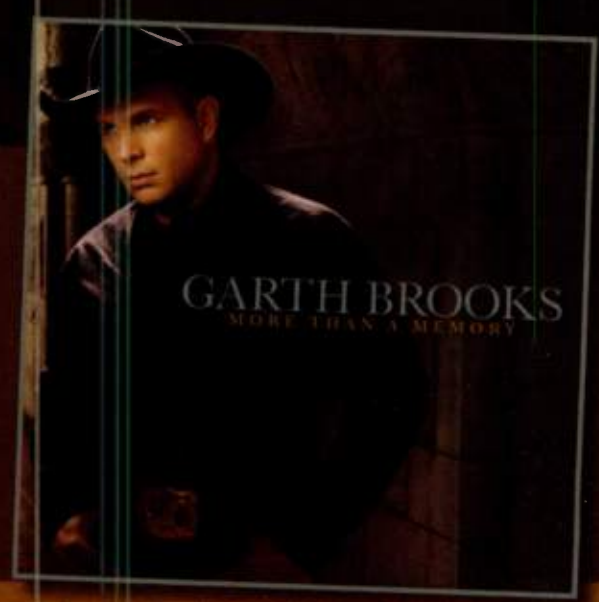

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MARCONI SALAD NAB Noms Say Cheese

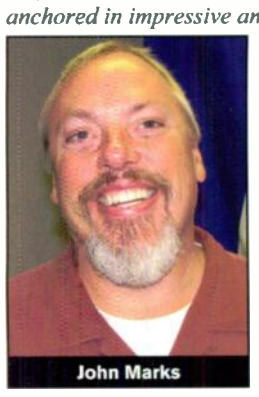
Beyond its musical legacy, Country radio exemplifies many of the best qualities in broadcasting – from community service to great promotions. This year, nine Country stations and three Country air personalities are finalists for the 2007 NAB Marconi Radio Awards. The recipients will be announced Sept. 27 during the NAB Radio Show in Charlotte. Here's a closer look at the finalists:

MARCONI Radio AWARDS

SERVING THOSE WHO SERVE

Country Station Finalist: KSON/San Diego

*You'd be hard-pressed to find a reason why the Lincoln Financial outlet shouldn't take home the first trophy in its 44-year history. A consistent market powerhouse, KSON is anchored in impressive and heartfelt demonstrations of public service, as detailed by PD **John Marks**:*



John Marks

U.S. Marines armed and ready with Christmas toys for the kids.

"Each week we have an 'Everyday Hero,' where we double the paycheck of people who go unheralded for the many things they do to support their family and community.

"Being in a military town, overseas deployments leave parents short-handed. So we have a program called 'Operation Helping Hand' to supplement the income of those with special needs.

"A first-time event this year was 'KSON's Christmas You Missed.' On June 25, we got together with the Armed Services' YMCA and threw a celebration for all the service people who were deployed over the holidays. We had gifts, Santa Claus, trees, Christmas music and the football games on TV from Christmas Day. Our mayor and San Diego Chargers football players were there. We also introduced 17 children who were born while their parents were away.

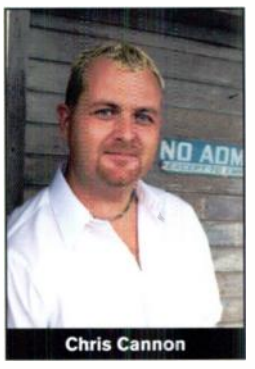
"No matter how cynical people are about the war, it really doesn't matter to us; we support the military. If you didn't walk away feeling something after that event, you just don't have a heart. It really was an incredible day, and we'll do it forever."

All Is Calm In San Diego: At KSON's "Christmas You Missed" event, morning show producer Tori Peck (l) was interviewed by XETV-TV (Fox 6)/San Diego reporter Ruben Galvan in the "snow."

"COUNTRY'S BEST" FOR 35 YEARS

Medium Market Station Finalist: KTTS/Springfield, MO

*Few stations dominate the way Journal's **KTTS/Springfield, MO** does, ranking more than five shares ahead of its nearest competitor. KTTS won the Marconi Small Market Station trophy in 1999 and, earlier this year, a CRB Radio Humanitarian award. Ten-year staffer and OM/PD **Chris Cannon** shared what makes "Country's Best — KTTS" so successful.*



Chris Cannon

"We're a Country station, but foremost we're the *community's* radio station. We're one of the few that does news at the top of every hour, and we have a 24/7 news staff. We had tornadoes last year and a big ice storm this year, and when those things happen we're all over it. We're not 10 in a row, followed by a no-talk triple play

"We have the St. Jude radiothon every year, but we recently brought in Terri Clark for a quick St. Jude fundraiser. We raised over $4,300 in 90 minutes with $5 tickets and a silent auction.

"We've been doing our KTTS Christmas Crusade forever. Listeners can adopt a single person or even an entire family that needs assistance, and, of course, there are kids, some who are in hospitals. We only ask for one or two toys per child, a coat, a set of clothes and groceries, and we also get generous support from some of our clients.

"On pick-up day families come here, but they don't know who bought the stuff. They just say, 'Thank you so much.' Some break down and cry. Last year we helped over 450 families to make sure they had a Christmas."

"If you're not local or entrenched in your community, you could still be No. 1. But down the road you may not be. What we like to say is that we're helping neighbors."

Brand New Bag: In preparation for the 2006 KTTS Christmas Crusade, volunteers line up hundreds of bags of gifts for families and individual children. Every family gets a sack of groceries and cleaning supplies. Insets: A pair of KTTS's youngest listeners enjoy a new toy from Santa. At right: Gathering after Terri Clark's KTTS fundraiser for St. Jude Children's Hospital are (l-r) KTTS APD Curly Clark, Terri Clark, BNA Southwest promotion rep Scott Long, KTTS OM/PD Chris Cannon.

TAKING THE MARKET BY STORM

Country Station Finalist: KTST/Oklahoma City

*KTST/Oklahoma City had what would be a dream year for any station: five consecutive ratings increases including its two best books ever. Under PD **Tom Travis**, who also oversees Clear Channel Country sister KXXY, "Twister" became the market leader for three sweeps between summer 2006 and winter 2007, when it ranked No. 1 25-54 for the first time.*

"In the first quarter of 2006, KXXY and Twister were too much of each other musically, if you will. We took KXXY more adult, playing more of the classic artist hits of the late '90s and the early 2000s, and very few currents. We already had a station playing current music – Twister – so why have two?

"Getting this nomination says a lot for the staff. There are three former PDs working here. So we don't have jocks tinkering with music and doing things that make PDs pull out their hair. When I say, "We need to focus on TSL, and here's how we'll get the quarter-hours," they understand the language.

"We have 'Relationship Thursday' featuring a morning hour with **Dr. Tate**, a licensed marriage counselor, who guides listeners. It's become an award-winning benchmark. We're also proud of our annual Team In Training program for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society in connection with the Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon."

Funnel Cake: Against a backdrop poster featuring good wishes from Country artists, Twister PD Tom Travis and VP/Market Manager Bill Hurley show off their baking skills with a Marconi finalist celebration treat.

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COUNTRY AIRCHECK

Volume 2, Issue 4, September 2007

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MARCONI SALAD

THE GIFT OF GIVING BACK

Country Station Finalist: KYKX/Tyler-Longview, TX

*One conversation with GM **Ginger Nimmons** is all it takes to see why Access.1's **KYKX/Tyler-Longview, TX** is a Marconi finalist for the second straight year. Beyond notching its best book in six years this spring, the staff's goodwill efforts have earned it three consecutive Texas Association of Broadcasters public service honors.*

Ginger Nimmons

Charity, Take The Wheel: KYKX/Tyler-Longview, TX's September 2007 raffle of its station RV to a lucky listener is raising thousands of dollars for the East Texas Meals On Wheels organization.

"As a GM, if you want to fulfill your commitment to public service, you've got to allow your staff the time to do it. That might mean letting someone voice-track a couple hours so they can be somewhere else. It is our duty to donate particular amount of time back to our community in public service.

"We've worked very hard to build a good reputation. When you say 'KYKX,' those call letters get respect because people know who we are, and I've got so many people who work here who deserve this award.

"Right now we're giving away our old station RV to East Texas Meals On Wheels. They're selling $10 raffle tickets and we'll give it away at the East Texas State Fair at month's end. Meals On Wheels keeps 100% of the money.

"We partner with the local newspaper and TV stations to promote a lot of our public service efforts. In most markets, it doesn't seem everyone can work together. But our relationship with the local paper is so good that they just did a huge story about KYKX winning all these awards. We've done Coats For Kids and toy drives together because the more people you can let know about an event, the better. Don't lose the cause just because somebody else is going to be part of it."

FOUR ON THE FLOOR

Small Market Station Nominee: WAXX/Eau Claire, WI

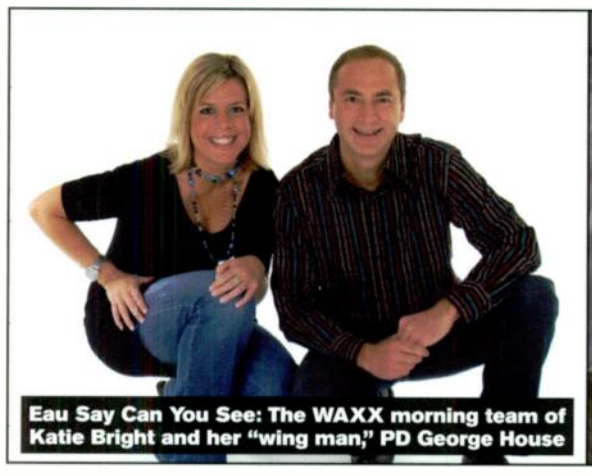
*With four Marconis already in hand, **Maverick Media's WAXX/Eau Claire, WI** is up for Small Market Station of the Year, which it won in both 2000 and 1990. It's also received two Small Market Personality of the Year honors, including one for 19-year PD **George House** in 1998. Not one to let up, the longtime No. 1-rated station delivered in spring 2007 its best ratings in nearly three years. House talked about how WAXX maintains its remarkable national stature.*

"We've been in the Country format for 40 years and are blessed with a great signal and a great staff. I'd love to take credit for all of it, but the building blocks were laid many years ago, and our job is to keep it going. Most of the credit goes to the loyal listeners we build friendships with.

"It's mostly good being a heritage station, but in 2005 we hired Coleman and took on the difficult task of modernizing the music, imaging, jingles and morning show to make it more relevant to 25-49-year-old females. We look at this as a three-to-five-year plan, so we haven't quite hit our peak yet.

"Ever July since 1990 we've done Country Jam USA – a three-day music festival with all the top stars and several charity tie-ins. We get about nine months' promotion out of it, and it exemplifies all that we're about.

"Each day we walk in that door a little nervous about presenting a great station. We've always had superb management putting key people in the right slots. So you really feel that excitement to keep this station's legacy of excellence intact."

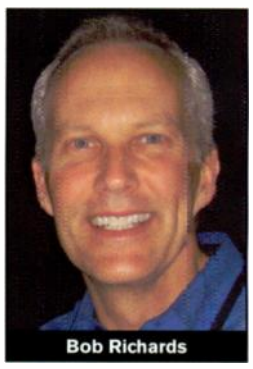

Eau Say Can You See: The WAXX morning team of Katie Bright and her "wing man," PD George House

Making Memories: WAXX morning cohost Katie Bright gets close with Keith Urban backstage at the station's three-day Country Jam USA last year.

IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR

Country & Medium Market Station Finalist: WFMS/Indianapolis

*Perennial market leader Cumulus **WFMS/Indianapolis** is a two-time Marconi award recipient. PD **Bob Richards** explains the chemistry that results in double-digit ratings, an award-winning morning show and enduring listener loyalty:*


Bob Richards

"The culture is led by 23-year Market Manager **Charlie Morgan***. He and a great percentage of people here are from the Indianapolis area, so when you come to work for WFMS, you feel this respect and honor. That translates into working hard. We're also all pretty good friends. We really enjoy working with one another and seeing each other become successful.

"There are two events that really typify WFMS. One is Country Music Expo, a two-day free event in April we've been doing about 13 years. Roughly 20 artists do a half-hour acoustic set, 15 minutes of Q&A with the audience and then sign autographs for a couple of hours. We'll also invite songwriters up for a guitar pull, as well as record label presidents and producers to explain how to make it in Nashville, how they find someone with raw talent and develop them into an artist. It brings listeners in closer to the whole process.

"The other marquee event is our WFMS Free Stage at the Indiana State Fair, with 10 days of concerts featuring both established acts and new talent. The State Fair attracts 750,000 people, which is WFMS's audience: it's families, it's agriculture.

"We try get to know the audience and why they come to our station. We make an emotional connection through the music and reflect it back to them."

Better Man: At the station's Country Expo, WFMS morning teammates Kevin Freeman and PD Jim Denny put in their song requests to Equity Music Group's Clint Black.

Fan Fairly Similar: If this shot of WFMS's Country Music Expo looks a bit like Fan Fair, it's no coincidence. The event models many of the CMA Music Festival's popular interactive elements.

**Editor's Note: Charlie Morgan left WFMS September 6.*

MAKING THAT DAILY DIFFERENCE

Country Station Finalist: WIVK/Knoxville

Mike Hammond

*Citadel's **WIVK/Knoxville** is a quadruple Marconi winner: Medium Market Station in 2006, the 2005 Country Station, the 2003 Medium Market Station and 1989 Large Market Station of the Year. WIVK pulled a 25.2 in summer 2006 – its best ratings in more than a decade. Longtime OM/PD **Mike Hammond** reflects on the Rocky Top legend:*

"We've been very fortunate in that we've got a great staff of people. We've been in the community for a long time, and if the community didn't support us like it does, then we obviously wouldn't be up for these awards.

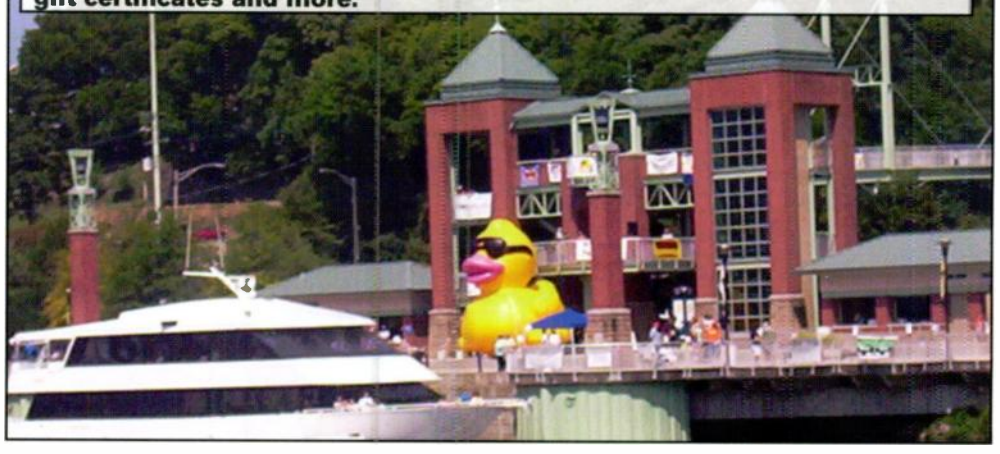
"Everybody in the building is very into community service. It's something that has been ingrained in us, whether it's one of our personalities, our Frog or me speaking to a civic club or organization.

"We just finished promoting our Duck Race. People spend $5 for a yellow rubber duck and we dump them off a bridge into the river. The first 10 ducks in the chute downstream get a prize; the winner receives a new car. It raises more than $100,000 for the Boys and Girls Clubs.

"We're the flagship station for Tennessee Volunteers football, and we wrap ourselves around the team. We're unique in that we are an FM Country station that carries men's basketball. And we're always part of special events including the Tennessee Valley Fair and the CMA Awards.

"The day-to-day things make the difference. We try to honor as many requests as we can to send our people out and to have our Frog go by. There's hardly a day that goes by that we're not involved in some type of community event."

Webbed Site: The crowd gathers at the riverfront in Knoxville to cheer on their entries as thousands of rubber ducks cascade into the Tennessee River for WIVK's annual Duck Race to support the Boys & Girls Clubs. Prizes include a 2007 PT Cruiser, a Honda TRX 250 Recon, jewelry, $1000 gift certificates and more.



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Higher Form Of Ham Radio

Small Market Station Finalist: WKDZ/Cadiz, KY

*In a converted Hardee's in rural Kentucky lives a bastion of local radio, Ham's **WKDZ/Cadiz**. The station is hoping to win its second Marconi, having captured Small Market Station of the Year 2002. Like a TV in a Motel 6, the revered trophy is actually screwed to a shelf at the station. Three-year OM/PD/MD/PM driver/play-by-play announcer and banner hanger **Bill Booth** discusses the station's efforts.*

Market Forces: Always super-serving the local community, WKDZ/Cadiz, KY OM/PD/afternoon personality Bill Booth gets the low-down on the weekly specials from Mallory Lawrence, owner of Hancock's Neighborhood Market.

"One of the ambitious ventures we embark on annually is the Trigg County Country Ham Festival. It's a free, all-volunteer event, but it had faded in recent years. So last year we had an on-air auction, cooked and sold pork chop sandwiches and barbecue to raise $40,000 to keep it going. We broadcast live 10 hours a day, and we were blessed with good weather and huge crowds. We go overboard, and are totally worn out by the end, but it's lots of fun and good radio.

Hog Wild: WKDZ OM/PD Bill Booth fires up the station's Kawasaki Mule to motor around the area's Hamfest celebration, which the station gives pen-to-pen coverage each year.

"Community commitment starts at the top. Our group GM, **Beth Mann**, is very involved in the local Rotary Club, our news director is on the tourism board, and a lot of other folks are involved in the community. If you can do some good, whether it's a blood drive or raising $3,000 to help 60 kids with back-to-school shopping, why not? When you make investments in the *community* that bring long-term dividends, it's very rewarding."

"Blessed Time" For A Special Station

Large Market Station Finalist: WUBE/Cincinnati

*Country's lone representative in the Large Market Station category, Bonneville **WUBE/Cincinnati** is a first-time finalist. We talked with OM **Patti Marshall**, under whose stewardship B105 improved from third to second in the past year.*

B-105.1 FM GOOD TIMES • GREAT COUNTRY!

Patti Marshall

"As much as we love being recognized by our listeners and we spend a lot of time on that, to be recognized by your peers is pretty damn special, especially for this staff. I don't think you get a Marconi nomination without a staff like this.

"Hurricane Katrina was a day that, honestly, changed all of our lives. It wasn't just one station, however. All four [cluster] signals simulcast with all of our jocks, all day, with one common goal: to raise goods and money for Katrina victims. We ended up with eight semi-trailer trucks and $250,000 in cash. That was a very emotional day for me, and made me very proud to be in this business.

"For 16 years we've done the Marine Corps' Toys For Tots campaign. A lot of these guys we're working with have either been to Iraq and back, or have lost friends there. For them to spend so much time caring about kids in our community when you know they've got so much heavier things on their minds – it's humbling.

"We're honored to receive this nomination. It really is a blessed time for us."

Marine Won: Two of America's fighting finest stand guard over gifts from generous WUBE/Cincinnati listeners.

Marconi Salad Personality Finalists

Cooking Up Chemistry

Medium Market: Danielle Carrier & Mark Ericson

Small-town waitress gets big break in local diner! Eight years ago, **Danielle Carter** was sassing two customers as she slaved away as a waitress. Little did she know one of them was WOKQ/Portsmouth, NH OM/morning co-host **Mark Ericson.** Taken with her personality, Mark offered Danielle fill-in work in mornings. Listeners fell for Danielle's bubbly persona quickly and the part-time gig soon became a full-time job.

Mark Ericson & Danielle Carrier

"As much as I'd like to tell you how incredibly talented, virile and handsome I am," Mark says. "It's been since Danielle started that we have received all this recognition."

The two have a strong community focus. "We gladly work with any non-profit that has to do with family, children or animals," Danielle says.

Beyond the philanthropic work, they have a lot of fun, too. The duo's first – and last – April Fool's joke took the station to an all-disco format. "Many of the listeners got it, but at some point the crowd started to turn on us," Mark says.

"Before it was over there were almost 180 phone calls, over 400 emails and one woman actually filed a complaint with the FCC for taking away her country music," Danielle adds.

Listeners are also protective of Danielle. "She's the naïve, innocent one," Mark explains. "And I, of course, am Satan. I have literally been hit by an old lady in the produce aisle because I was mean to Danielle. We have the most amazing listeners. I've never seen anything like it."

A Cleveland Institution

Large Market: Chuck Collier

After more than 44 years in radio – 35 in afternoon drive at **WGAR/Cleveland** – **Chuck Collier** will readily admit that he's never had a job. "One of the secrets of life is to find something that you're passionate enough about that you would actually spend your whole life doing it for free," he says. "Then, work hard enough at it that somebody will pay you a decent buck to do it."

Chuck Collier

Chuck began his radio life at tiny WSRW/Hillsboro, OH at the age of 15. Already an aspiring jock, he walked in hoping for the chance to just sweep floors. Unbeknownst to him, the station's program director had an audition planned and in a matter of minutes, Chuck was booked to do Wednesday morning news.

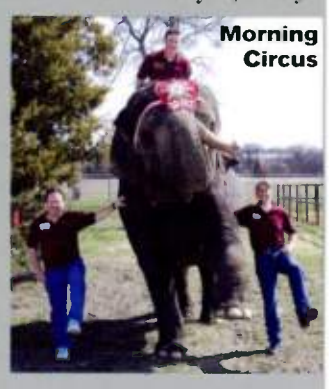
"When I think back to that 44 years later I still get goose bumps," he admits. "The awards are wonderful, but nothing beats the feeling I had that day."

"Sometimes you make somebody laugh or maybe bring a smile into their life," he says of the simple rewards in his found profession. "One woman wrote to me from prison to tell me that she and some other women in this institution listened to me every day. She said 'Thank you for being a friend to those who have none.' That's when I realized that I'm making a difference.

Set This Circus Down

Small Market: Will Payne, Barry Diamond, Fan Man

Imagine pulling a paycheck for hanging out with your best friends. For **Will Payne, Barry Diamond** and **Fan Man** of the KITX/Hugo, OK *Morning Circus*, that dream is a reality.



Morning Circus

"When you asked Will's daughter when she was young who her dad was, she would answer, 'willpaynebarrydiamond.'" Barry says.

Their moniker, *The Morning Circus*, isn't just a nod to the circus troupes that winter in Hugo, it also describes the on-air antics for which the trio are so-well-known. "I have been escorted from Wal-Mart property," Fan Man, who only recently joined the show, confesses. "I've been kicked out of Burger King and banned from the premises. I had to do a public strip show in a Speedo because I lost a bet on a football game. It was chilly."

Community service plays a part in the show's local and national recognition. "One of my favorites is the Big Brothers/Big Sisters 'Bowl For Kids Sake,'" Barry explains. "We raised $23,000 in one day last year."

"We're each involved in different programs," Will adds. "I'm active in the Rotary Club, Barry has been an honorary Bell Ringer for the Salvation Army and we raise money for the United Way. We just love to give back as much we can. They make it possible for us to do what we love, so what better way to show our gratitude?" CAC

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Music Sales At A Crossroads

Labels Face The CD's Swan Song

The last Christmas for the CD? Or, on the optimistic side, there's the notion that already-shrinking retail floor space will evaporate completely...except during the holidays when they roll music out with the wrapping paper, fake trees and other seasonal favorites. Chicken Little, it seems, has taken a keen interest in the music business.

Fortunately, reports of the industry's demise have been greatly exaggerated. Ask Apple's Steve Jobs, who has built the iPod into a monolith based on the public's insatiable appetite for having their music their way. Unlike previous format transitions, however, consumers don't have to replace their music collections. The ability to convert disc to digital, and the resurrection of the single, have created a profound schism in the record business.

A stark acknowledgment of this new reality came in the Sept. 2 *New York Times Sunday Magazine* cover story. Under the headline, "Can Rick Rubin Save The Music Business?", the Columbia Records co-Chair and celebrated producer (Johnny Cash, Dixie Chicks, System of a Down, Beastie Boys) had this to say:

"I have great confidence that we will have the best record company in the industry, but the reality is, in today's world, we might have the best dinosaur. Until a new model is agreed upon and rolling, we can be the best at the existing paradigm, but until the paradigm shifts, it's going to be a declining business. This model is done."

Gloom, Not Doom

Engineering a new structure for music sales is vital, but country is facing a more immediate challenge. As of early September, country CD sales were down 34% against an overall industry decline of about 20%. Week-over-week sales on the Country album chart for the first week of September were 375,000 units, compared with 570,000 last year. Country market share is down to 11%, compared with 13% in 2006, with total unit sales in the neighborhood of 31 million. Last year, country sold about 75 million CDs.

Joe Galante

"We have four months to make up 40-plus million in sales," says Sony BMG/Nashville Chairman **Joe Galante**. "That's 2.4 million units a week. There's no way the math works out."

And now the good news: New releases from Kenny Chesney, Rascal Flatts, Garth Brooks and Carrie Underwood are all needle-moving blockbusters. "Our second half is going to be up dramatically," Galante says. "Net, we'll still be down for the year. The question is how far down."

Big returns on the big releases have the potential to make up a lot of ground, but ending 2007 just 15% down still puts country at roughly 65 million units for the year. For Galante, the concern then becomes 2008. "In our case, there won't be another Kenny or Carrie release. We will be down in terms of absolute top-drawer records. Our first half of 2008 should be up relative to a comparison with 2007, but the second half won't have these records and we'll decline."

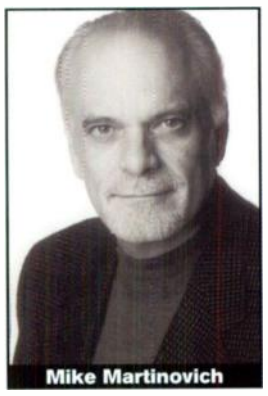
Unit sales on current albums only reflect a portion of the decline labels are experiencing. Catalog sales are off as well, and the wholesale prices of CDs are falling, too. Decreases in units and how much they sell for is a double hit that has labels reeling. How bad will it get?

"I need to see what Christmas does and what happens in the first quarter," Galante answers. "If these records in the fourth quarter hold up and come through the first quarter, then the sky's not falling. If the drop-off is great and the records don't hold up....

"It's a tough environment for everyone," he says. "There's gloom, but I don't think there's doom. We're going to have to find a new way to do it."

Bad News Bared

Fortunately, country labels will benefit from watching how their parents in New York and Los Angeles address these issues. "Country will be the last bastion for CDs," says Consortium partner and marketing vet **Mike Martinovich**. "It was the last demographic to abandon the cassette, as well as previous configurations. The psychographic nature of the country consumer plays a role. They enjoy the personal vicarious relationship with artists. We're the only format that has something like CMA Music Festival. They enjoy holding the physical CD."


Mike Martinovich

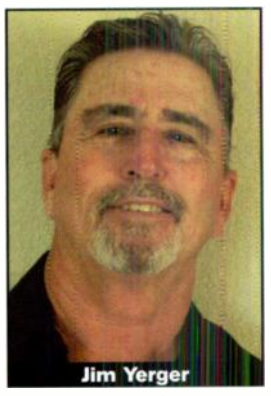
As "big box" retailers like Best Buy and Wal-Mart reduce floor space for music, the squeeze affects some disproportionately. "Obviously there will be floor space for the stars," Galante says. "But people are going to have their finger on the trigger to send it back if it's not selling. We're not going to have the kind of time we had before."

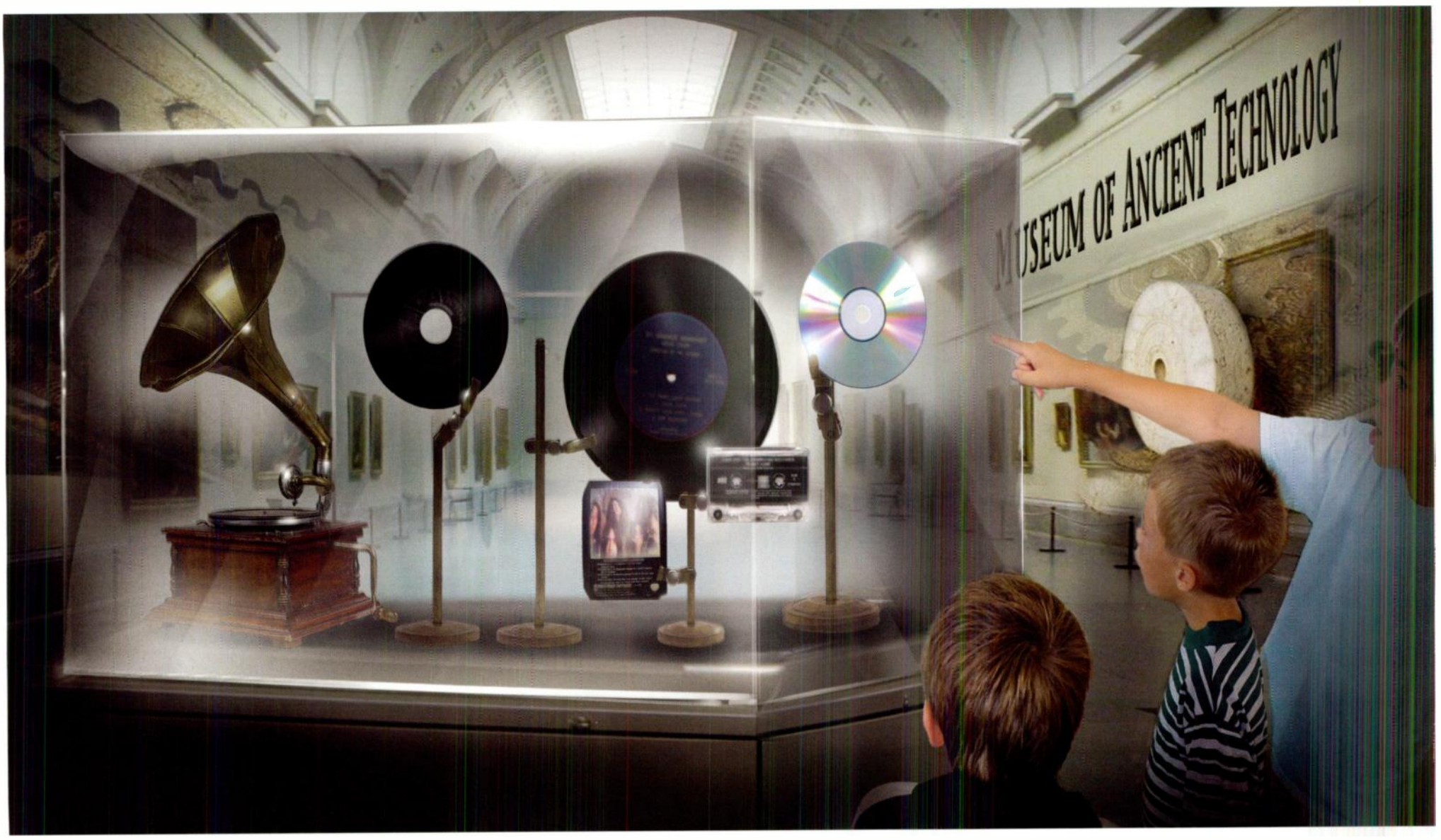
Benson Curb

Deeper catalog titles are a thing of the past at the big accounts, and new acts are also pinched. "Let's say you get a new artist on the radio and they come out selling well," says Curb Records VP/Sales **Benson Curb**. "If it takes you 20 weeks to get the next track up, you could lose distribution. That's five months and retail doesn't have the patience anymore. It's a big challenge for everyone, but particularly Nashville because we depend on Wal-Mart and Target more than anyone else."

Curb says that music is caught in a downward spiral. "The fact that the big box retailers are shrinking floor space for music is becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy," he says. "When you cut 10% of your music space there's a good chance you're going to sell less. Then your inventory goes down and you miss some sales. Then you wonder why your sales keep going down. All you hear about is negativity and you cut more. It's a vicious cycle."

Concurrent to the reduced footprint, retailers aren't cutting labels any deals on price and positioning costs. "I've had conversations with retailers who are telling me that shelf space in the fourth quarter will be increasingly expensive," says Broken Bow EVP **Jim Yerger**.


Jim Yerger



-Music Sales At A Crossroads-

Playing The Hallmark Card

Finding solutions for the CD in a download-leaning marketplace will require creative thinking. "You're going to have to package it with something they can't get anywhere else," Yerger says. "As far as I'm concerned, I would love the opportunity to create my own album of songs I know I enjoy. That way, I'm getting full value for the money I spend."

Curb says spending the money to produce a full-length album, particularly for new artists, may need to be rethought. "You could break a 10-song album into two EPs, with a single or two from each," he says. "And then for Christmas, you could release a deluxe combined version."

Asking less at the cash register to try new music would offset longstanding objections to paying full album prices after only hearing one song. "Consumers have consistently complained about the content, about there being only a few good songs," Martinovich says. "What's happening at retail is that consumers are shopping value. They're looking for favorite artists and they still prize collecting the physical product, to some degree. That's why box sets and collectibles are doing well. The TV-driven stuff is doing best."

Martinovich is working with the Weather Channel on a music CD due in October. "It's music heard during their 'local on the eights' segment," he explains. "They realize their core audience is comprised of people who are still relatively heavy purchasers of physical CDs." The move is the latest in a trend that has seen Hallmark, Starbucks and other retailers get into a business with which they've never previously been associated.

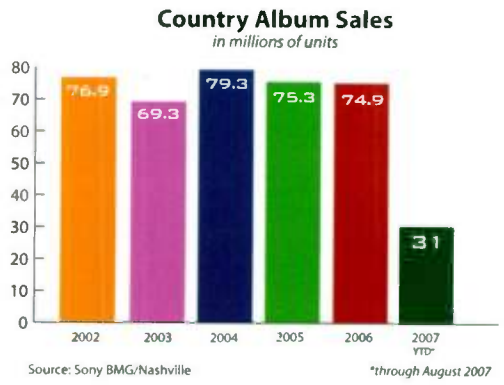
"SoundScan is just now beginning to track nontraditional sales," Martinovich says. "Starbucks doesn't think there's a problem with CD sales. I think we'll be surprised when we see those numbers."

There are other bright spots, as well. "Target carries fewer titles than Wal-Mart or Best Buy, but their business seems to be going fairly well," Curb says. "They're out trending the rest of the industry with fewer SKUs (stock-keeping units, or titles). They're putting CDs at the front of the store and putting key titles in front of people at key times. They've never focused on deep catalog."

The demise of catalog at the big boxes has pushed consumers to Amazon and iTunes, and one of the other retail beacons – particularly for country – Borders.

Head For The Borders

While country is down more than 30%, at Borders the deficit is only in the teens and the outlook is good. "I've been trending up since right around the end of May," says Borders country buyer C.J. Snow. "We planned that actually, based on the light early release schedule for 2007."



Not only is Borders climbing out of the red for the year, the retailer has even gone into the black for August month-over-month with last year. "We've gone positive and haven't stopped," Snow says. "We're double-digit positive for the month of August."

Borders' success with country in the face of industry-wide declines is attributable to a commitment that's been growing since Snow joined the company almost four years ago. "In the past, country was looked at as a consistent seller, but not necessarily one you can spotlight," Snow says. "My background is in country, and over the years I've been able to convince people that country is something we should be serious about. Country's market share has been growing, and people started to realized there may be something to this. We took some chances and they've paid off."

Snow points to branded cross-promotions with GAC, end cap campaigns with CMT, ACM Awards promotions, signing on as the exclusive retail partner for CMA Music Festival, and the "Road To The CMA Awards" promotion that's building toward the Nov. 7 event.

CJ Snow

Like the big box retailers, Borders keys on the major releases, but also drives sales outside the realm of blockbuster titles. "It's about finding titles our customers want," Snow explains. Borders may only account for a few percentage points of total market share on one of country's most prominent releases – though still a significant source of revenue for the company. On other releases, however, Borders can climb toward and past 20% of an album's market share. "When you have an Alison Krauss, Lyle Lovett or Vince Gill, it can be a significant chunk," Snow says. "Emerson Drive sells well for us. Little Big Town are a house favorite, and those are the kinds of artists we'll go after."

Not only does Borders draw a different customer than those stopping at CD racks on their way to purchase toothpaste, the buying experience also is much different. "Our average in-store time is about an hour," Snow says. "I'm not a typical consumer, but I can get lost in a bookstore, especially one that carries music, for three or four hours."

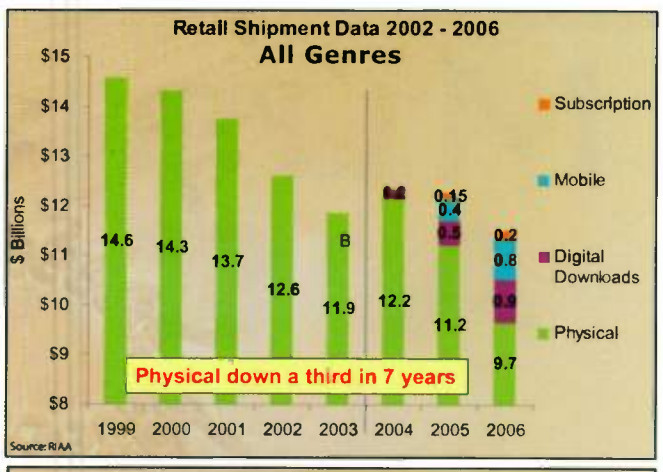
And with country music featured prominently during this extended browsing experience, Borders is doing quite well for itself...and for Nashville. "It comes down to the realization that country is, to some extent, insulated from the digital decline," Snow says. "The numbers indicated it, and it's become a focus area of ours and mine. And it will continue to be."

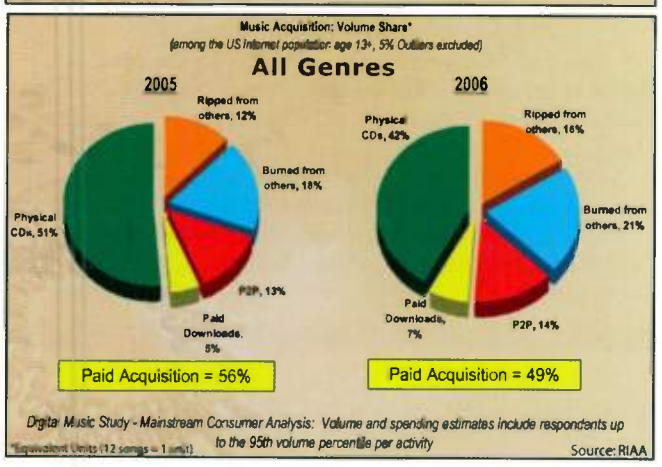
iPod Killer

Paid downloads continue as a growing business, though not enough to offset physical declines. And then there are the unpaid variety. "Consumption of music is up 12 to 15%," Martinovich says. "Unfortunately, it's through unpaid acquisitions. People haven't stopped loving music, they just think it should be free."

Digital sales are up 48%, though breakouts by genre aren't available as yet. Galante pegs country's share as about 5%. The overwhelming majority of sales come from Apple's iTunes Music Store. "We need other retailers to be involved, whether that's Amazon, Rhapsody or others," Curb says. "There needs more outlets that promote music and get people excited. What if iTunes decides not to carry your title, for whatever reason?"

Another big issue with having one outlet controlling 90% of the business is price. "From what I can see, it's going to become increasingly expensive to feature your song or album digitally," Yerger says. "They're going to take the lead from what the big boxes have been doing for years, and that's price and positioning."





In response to those and other concerns, Universal Music Group has hedged its iTunes bet by going month-to-month after not renewing its contract with the service. Simultaneously, UMG is attempting to boost other online retailers by offering its songs through them without Digital Rights Management (DRM), otherwise known as copy protection.

"It's encouraging that they're trying to level the playing field, but I don't know that what they're doing is going to achieve that," Curb says. "I don't think the consumer knows what DRM or non-DRM is. We sell 85% of our music non-DRM on CDs, so why is there a debate about whether we should have DRM on our digital music? I have trouble understanding what we're protecting there."

Stream Dream

The biggest shift the fading CD may force upon the industry is record companies demanding a share of other revenues. "Building artists and brands and selling those brands is where it's headed," Curb says. "There's a lot of money being left on the table because agreements aren't moving fast enough. Curb doesn't have specific plans for incorporating other revenue streams, but those options are being explored."

"We are looking at it very hard," Yerger concurs. "If things continue in this direction, the artist and label will really have to partner up."

"You can't have the label engine driving everything and being compensated the way we were before," Galante adds. "We take most of the risk and there are a lot of revenue streams making money.

"A manager said, 'All we're good for is promotion,'" he continues. "I'd like to see him get a tour without getting those records on the radio. You can't tell me people are going out to see the Police because of the new album. They're going out to see the hits, and they're all radio records. Radio hits are what's driving everybody at some point in their careers."

The speed with which any new business model takes hold is tied to the extent to which sales continue to decline over the next quarter, 2008 and beyond. "Is this the last Christmas for the CD? No. Certainly not in country," Martinovich says. "Will that day come? I don't think anybody doubts that. You can't fight technology." CAC

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COUNTRY'S AIR FORCE

RANKING COUNTRY'S AIRPLAY LEADERS

For better or worse, Country radio and the music business are inextricably bonded. A Country station without music is just talk radio with twang, and Nashville without airplay is, well, Americana. So, in asking a panel of industry experts to rank those with the greatest influence over this symbiotic relationship, Country Aircheck offered this criteria:

"Airplay is currency for Country radio as well as the music business, so those with the greatest influence over airplay decisions should receive your highest rankings – those who directly control airplay or have influence to obtain airplay on behalf of artists."

And so, here are the top 31 airplay power brokers, as ranked by a panel of their peers, along with their stories of success, struggle and strange happenings at the intersection of music and broadcasting.

COUNTRY AIRCHECK'S POWER 31 AIRPLAY LEADERS

1 JOE GALANTE
Sony BMG/Nashville Chairman

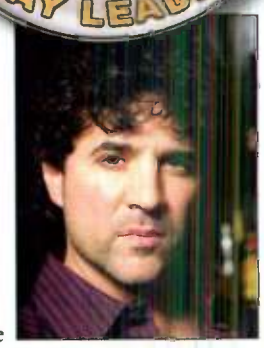
Happy Feat: I will always remember going to the studio and hearing Alan Jackson's "Where Were You (When The World Stopped Turning)." This was early October, after Sept. 11, and we were all still very emotional. The CMA TV Committee had pretty much closed the show, but I played the song for them and people were speechless. When Alan debuted it on the show, the emotion swept through the room. CMT's Brian Philips was sitting behind me and said, "Get that to me and it's going on the air right now."

The song went from that performance to radio within hours, and the CMA moved mountains to get it done. It helped an entire nation understand a little better what they were going through, and the whole industry threw out the rule book. We all shined. It was that one moment when you knew we did the right thing artistically and commercially. Those aren't easy to find.

Humble Pie: When we took Ronnie Milsap to radio last year, the response to the music was thumbs-up. He got a standing ovation on our CRS boat show. He toured with George Strait. He visited radio. Every place he went on the air, the phones lit up. But the single went nowhere. He was singing better than most guys on the radio, and the music was better than what was being done by a number of acts. But that didn't matter — he was not going to be allowed back onto the chart. And I had to sit down and tell him face-to-face that he had done all the right things, but it wasn't going to happen. This is the same guy I had countless No. 1s with at RCA. He helped grow this format. It hurt deeply.

Can't Make This Stuff Up: We had our regionals ask key radio folks for their thoughts on a follow-up to Brooks & Dunn's "Play Something Country" and went with one of their top two choices. We put out "Building Bridges" as requested and the album fell out of the top 15 in sales. We decided to go with the track that everyone told us was the one that wouldn't work. It was called "Believe," and boy, did we all believe. It turned out to be Single and Song of the Year and sold about 750,000 albums, which gave the guys their best-selling CD in the last five years. Of course, it didn't test. But we can't build careers without taking the risks. This isn't a science.

2 SCOTT BORCHETTA
Big Machine President



Happy Feat: The campaign for Reba's "Somebody" that knocked Tim McGraw's "Live Like You Were Dying" out of the No. 1 spot for one week. This was the first big campaign that I worked with John Zarling on, right after DreamWorks was merged into UMG/Nashville. Getting to work with the MCA crew again was an absolute blast, and we all felt like we had something to prove. We chose our attack date so far out and created so many weapons – combining things that we were doing at DW with things that MCA VP Royce Risser and JZ were doing, as well as the power of Reba's untapped assets. Our audience and point increases were off the hook, and nobody really thought we could do it until Thursday of that week. By then, there was nothing our competitor could do. Huge fun.

Humble Pie: Everyday is humbling. You better be able to take a punch.

Can't Make This Stuff Up: Jimmy Harnen's crazy outfits while at DreamWorks – he dressed up for holidays I didn't even know existed. Royce is willing to self-inflict bodily harm for attention. Both remind me to have fun, and we work *way* too hard not to have fun.

3 CHARLIE COOK
Cumulus VP/Country

Happy Feat: I am a pretty basic guy when it comes to hearing music: Does it pass the "who cares" test? So songs like "I Loved Her First" and "Alyssa Lied" were obvious because they made you stop and listen. We were early on Jason Michael Carroll's record, and I liked that we helped jump start his career. The business has swung so strongly to an artist-driven format that when you can participate in a newcomer's music, that's satisfying.

Humble Pie: I'm going to give away my age here, but I missed "I Can Help" by Billy Swann. It was not my decision alone, but at KLAK/Denver they let the disc jockeys participate in music meetings. A bad idea, as evidenced by me thinking that this was the worst record ever. And I missed "Achy Breaky Heart." I remember Kevin Herring trying to convince me that this was the hottest thing out there when I was at WYNY/New York. We ended up playing it, but I hated every minute of it.

COUNTRY AIRCHECK'S POWER 31 AIRPLAY LEADERS

4 Jaye Albright
Country Consultant

Humble Pie: I thought Monty Holmes' "Why'd You Start Lookin' So Good" was going to launch his career as an artist. That's my kind of country music. Monty was nice enough to come to town for me to do an appearance at a Las Vegas Stars baseball game in 1998, and I still owe him that favor. At least we all had a good time and saw a great ball game together.

Can't Make This Stuff Up: In 1964, I was doing mornings at a Jazz station and a Broadway show tunes program seven to midnight in Cleveland while attending Kent State University. I played trombone in the KSU band and orchestra, and considered myself as having extremely sophisticated musical tastes. So, when the Capitol Records rep brought me a copy of the Beatles' first release in the U.S., I told him that they were too weird and would never make it. That pretty much indicates, even today, my ability to hear a hit.

5 Luke Lewis
UMG/Nashville Chairman

Happy Feat: Having 10 hit singles each on *The Woman In Me* and *Come On Over*, something that probably won't ever happen again. The first sold over 10 million and the latter over 21 million, becoming the biggest country album in the SoundScan era.

Humble Pie: Sugarland's first single, "Baby Girl," took 46 weeks to peak on the Country singles chart. It was a stark reminder that most programmers rely more on research than their ears these days. It did happen, but it should never take so long to recognize a hit.

Can't Make This Stuff Up: Prior to the Spitzer investigation, we had some programmers expecting us to pay them for airplay. Extortion isn't really funny, but the notion of providing content which drives ratings and ad revenue, and then being expected to pay to have the content aired, is laughable.

6 Gregg Swedberg
KEEY/Minneapolis PD

Happy Feat: Arista brought a number of PDs to [then label head] Tim DuBois' house, ostensibly for a Clint Daniels and Shannon Brown showcase. They needed a guitar player, so they brought along Brad Paisley. After showcasing those two acts, which you got the impression were the focus, they let Brad play three songs – his single, "Who Needs Pictures," an early version of "The Fishing Song" and one other that he hadn't recorded yet and didn't think would be on his first album. It was "He Didn't Have To Be."

I remember getting up in Tim and Mike Dungan's faces, poking my finger in their chests and demanding that they get that "Dad" song on the record because it was a No. 1 record. Well, it was one of the rare opportunities where I was right. The song was Brad's first No. 1, and Brad stopped a show last year to tell an arena full of people that story. My kid thought I was cool for about half an hour.

Humble Pie: After Little Big Town's first CD didn't hit like it should have, Karen Fairchild sent a possible single to me for the next CD: "Boondocks." I thought it was brilliant, but way too hip for the format and told her so. Two weeks later, Sony folded Monument and the band got dropped. When they got picked up by Equity, I told Mike Kraski not to come with "Boondocks." He did anyway. I added it mostly because I believed so much in the band, knowing that it probably wouldn't work. When the requests started rolling in I assumed they had a good street team. Then the callout started, and the song I insisted wouldn't work went Top 5.

7 Mike Dungan
Capitol/Nashville President/CEO

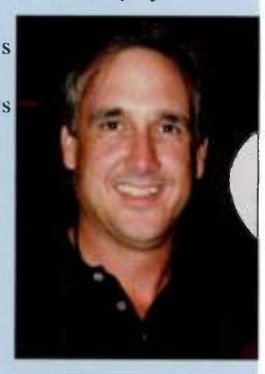
Happy Feat: When I started working with Trace Adkins on his fourth album, his career wasn't in desperate shape, but it could have been if we didn't make an immediate impact. He had recorded "I'm Trying," which was definitely a stretch, but I just knew it was a smash. Neither Trace, management nor the promotion staff wanted it as the first single. Trace's exact words still burn in my head: "If I'm going to fail, I'd at least like to have a hand in what I'm failing with." But I got everyone to "just trust me." We put it out and I didn't sleep for days. Then the positive comments and adds began to pour in. Trace was back, the song went top 5, and we jump started the *Chrome* album, the re-beginning of many platinum performances to come.

Humble Pie: With the "minor" exception of Gretchen Wilson, The Jenkins came out of CRS as the buzz act. But it was a major wakeup call with respect to the "split" at Country radio. It was all about a song that no one at the label wanted to cut, much less pick as a single. We included it on the album because it meant so much to the band. To the traditionalists, "Blame It On Mama" was salvation. But the progressives hated it, and refused to air something that referenced 20- to 30-year-old country songs. It was a standoff.

Without airplay from the left side of our radio panel, we stalled on the chart. And the minute we did, the traditionalists bailed. Then we came back with the more contemporary "Getaway Car," which the progressives loved (Mark Evans still plays this), but the traditionalists howled we had "ruined the band." It was a lose-lose situation. From that moment on, I realized that this format is divided between those who have been in country radio all their careers, and those who came over from the pop world in the '90s.

Can't Make This Stuff Up: I occasionally borrow a line from pop promo legend Matty "the Humdinger" Singer. "You put this on, and I promise that if it ain't a hit, I'll come in there and personally #@&% +*!$ &#@%!

8 Jeff Garrison
CBS Radio VP/Country KILT/Houston PD



Happy Feat: Brad Paisley played "He Didn't Have to Be" at a private PD meeting for what was then AM/FM. The entire group and I were blown away. Arista added it to the project and we supported it out of the box.

Humble Pie: I believed in Kelly Coffey's music and it worked great in Phoenix and Houston, but I learned that Nashville controls artists much more than radio. That's the way it goes. I feel for artists.

Can't Make This Stuff Up: When I programmed WESC/Greenville, Garth released *Fresh Horses* and "Fever" was the first single. The CD was scheduled to be released on a Tuesday, but our afternoon jock, Johnny Reb, called me on the Friday before and said that a listener just bought the new Garth CD at Target. So I went down, bought three copies and told the store manager they shouldn't sell any more until Tuesday or they would get in trouble with the label – making sure my competition couldn't buy it. Subsequently, Capitol's Bill Catino had to overnight the album to radio two days early.

9 Clay Hunnicutt
Clear Channel VP/Country WUBL/Atlanta PD

Happy Feat: Being there at the beginning of Kenny Chesney's rise. He used to come to WUSY (US-101)/Chattanooga and hang out in our break room, playing guitar and chatting. We played all of his early records on Capricorn before everyone knew him as the star he is today. He came back on his first headlining tour and said, "Isn't this crazy?" That's one of the things that makes country music so great – those relationships you'll never forget.

Humble Pie: It wasn't something that didn't work, it was something that did and I missed – Craig Morgan's "Almost Home." I liked his music but just didn't hear that song the first 20 times. Jon Loba even came and literally camped out at the radio station to get our attention. Once we started playing the song, it just took off and became a huge hit for us and Craig. I was sorry we were so blind earlier.

Can't Make This Stuff Up: Brad Paisley was in our conference room introducing himself and talking about this song he was going to sing that was written by Kelley Lovelace. I stopped him and said, "Wait, who?" Kelley and I were friends in high school but had lost track of each other over the years. It was so great to see a bright new artist playing an amazing song written by a guy that I graduated high school with. What a crazy, small world.

10 Rusty Walker
Country Consultant

Happy Feat: Two acts that stick out are Alabama in the late '70s and Keith Urban in the late '90s. I was at WQYK & WQIK/Tampa in the early days of Alabama, and we were early supporters, giving them "big market support" even before they were signed to RCA. The late Rick Shayne and I were both big fans of The Ranch during their Capitol days. I remember telling Bill Catino on several occasions that I thought Keith Urban had star quality.

Humble Pie: There have been so many; I have the worst ears in country music. That's why I rely on the opinions of country music fans to shape my own opinions of a song. I am, primarily, a country radio strategist and as a programmer, very "research-driven." I was only a music director for a couple of months, and quickly demoted.

11 Mike Peterson
WUSN/Chicago PD

Happy Feat: The adoption process of Sugarland (not including regular tour visits) has included unique promotions that have put them in front of thousands of locals at the first-ever Shedd Aquarium concert on Lake Michigan, a private performance themed around their song, "Baby Girl," at the Ritz-Carlton, and a sold-out Chicago Theatre concert benefiting St. Jude. Additionally, the Sugars have become true friends of the radio station, literally making themselves available at a moment's notice for phoners, website content, teeth-whitening sessions and the occasional surprise visit to just say hello. Ticket sales are big, record sales are high, and their Q factor is at the level of most of our other superstars. Chicagoland definitely loves Sugarland!

Can't Make This Stuff Up: We got a laugh out of the simple packaging of Carrie Underwood's "So Small" CD, which came in a box big enough to sleep APD/MD Marci Braun. In the strange category, I'd go with an unnamed artist's hands-on approach when discussing *his* new CD while sitting in my office. To say it was a surprise to suddenly feel his hand on my upper thigh would be a dramatic understatement.

12 Marc Chase
Clear Channel SRVPP

Happy Feat: In Tampa in 1989-1990, Stevie B. was a virtually ignored artist. A half-dozen songs became massive hits for [WFLZ] the Power Pig, and Stevie wound up being a member of our dysfunctional family. I think he still calls Jeff Kapugi on his birthday.

continued on Page 18

RASCAL FLATTS

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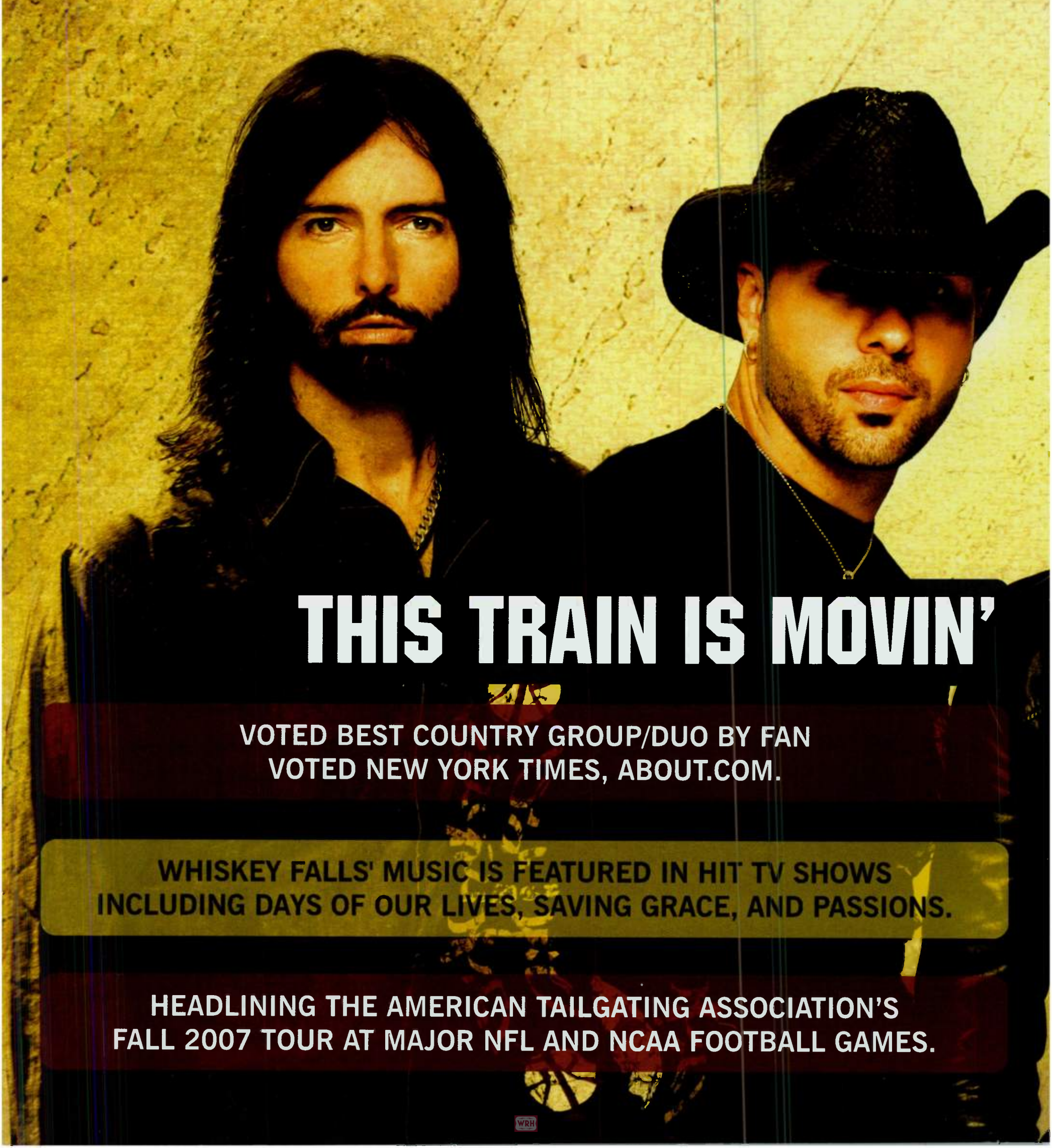
- GARY, JAY, JOE DON

Lyric Street

WRH

WHISKEY FALLS



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COUNTRY AIRCHECK'S POWER 31 AIRPLAY LEADERS

Humble Pie: Today there are a few current country songs that have the potential to cross over into the mainstream. Many of our mainstream programmers object to playing the songs due to "the way it sounds." I was thrilled to see Carrie Underwood's "Before He Cheats" do well at stations who gave her a legitimate shot. Kenny Chesney and Uncle Kracker's "When The Sun Goes Down" had the same potential, but it was a little too early in the acceptance curve.

Can't Make This Stuff Up: When [UMG President] Monte Lipman was just a music mogul in the making, someone decided it would be a great idea to make him bring *20/20* cameras on a music call. He didn't go home with an add.

13 Butch Waugh
Sony BMG/Nashville EVP

Happy Feat: RCA serviced radio the lead single, "Time Of My Life," from the *Dirty Dancing* soundtrack three times before it finally hit. Our initial shipments to the accounts were somewhere in the 50,000 to 100,000 range, but if we had known the project was going to sell in excess of 15 million we might have shipped more. That album came at a time when RCA as a company really needed a hit.

In country, Kenny Chesney's career has become the biggest story I have ever been involved with. I met him in 1997, and all he ever wanted was to make great music, put on a great show and satisfy his fans. To this day, he works as hard as ever, pays attention to detail, loves his fans and continues to give them every ounce of energy he has.

Humble Pie: The "scan driver." The accounts feel it, the consumer wants to own it, you can fill momentum building, only to hear the words, "It is not testing." It's gut-wrenching. Scans get the attention of tour promoters, TV, print and will drive a career, but when the song goes away at radio, all the momentum goes with it.

14 Becky Brenner
KMPS/Seattle PD

Happy Feat: I take great pride in my 2000 CRS campaign to recruit people to take the limos to Ocean Way Studios to hear this new group. Rascal Flatts. I went three times and told every person I saw that they had to hear this group. Many – Tim Closson, Tim Roberts, Michael J. Fox – were doing the same thing, but there were naysayers. It's thrilling to see the band's success.

Humble Pie: I still believe in the talents of Mark McGuinn, Ryan Shupe & The Rubber Band and John Corbett. I have also been humbled by the songs/artists I didn't "get" in the beginning – Kenny Chesney and The Dixie Chicks, to name two. No one is 100% right all of the time and, in the end, the listeners will determine the hits.

15 Mike Curb
Curb Records Chairman

16 Jimmy Harnen
Capitol/Nashville SVPP

Happy Feat: Of late, having Luke Bryan's debut single, "All My Friends Say," hit the top 10 32 weeks after we shipped it is really gratifying. Luke and the entire team worked very hard and traveled many miles. Everyone just put their heads down and kept pedaling.

Humble Pie: Anytime any record stops short of the goal, it is heartbreaking. Trace Adkins' "Arlington" was one of those for me. While it did receive a lot of airplay and did reach No. 15, I truly felt it was a No. 1 record. I lost a lot of sleep during that time rethinking everything and trying to find a way through. To this day, that song stops me in my tracks whenever I hear it on the radio. It's extraordinary.

Can't Make This Stuff Up: I have sent photos of myself to radio dressed up as a turkey, a leprechaun, Uncle Sam with Randy Travis, Austin Powers with Linda Davis as Agent Kensington, a bumblebee with my then six-month-old son Luke, as a nun with Toby Keith, a knight, a Hershey's Kiss with Jessica Andrews, and have walked around Nashville radio remotes dressed up as one of Eric Church's "two pink lines," just to name a few. Perhaps the strangest thing is that I don't find this strange.

17 Bill Catino
UMG/Nashville EVPP

Happy Feat: I'm pretty proud of breaking Meat Loaf. We were a small, five-man label called Cleveland International – a Cinderella story in the making. Everyone at our distributor, CBS-Epic, thought we were crazy to think we had a shot at getting this 250-plus-pound rocker to work. We believed that this is a "no rules" business and the people love underdogs. And 19 million albums later, not counting bootlegs, everyone was a believer.

And I'd be lying if I said that breaking all the sales and chart records for more than a decade with Garth wasn't equally thrilling. Everyone acts like the old R&R never existed, but we had so many firsts. First with more than four weeks at No. 1. First to debut inside the top 10. It was a great feeling, and I'm sticking around long enough, hopefully, to see that passion and excitement come back.

Humble Pie: Closing Cleveland International two years after selling 19 million albums. Also, getting excited about a new act, getting radio on board, but not the audience.

Can't Make This Stuff Up: Pulling up to a station in a long, black Caddy, opening the trunk and telling the PD to jump in is always fun. Kidding!

18 Randy Goodman
Lyric Street President

Happy Feat: September 11 happened on a Tuesday. That next Monday morning, Aaron Tippin was sitting in his truck outside the Lyric Street offices waiting for someone to show up, and I just happened to be first. He played "Where The Stars And Stripes And Eagle Fly." I turned it down after the first chorus and started calling people in to hear it. Everyone started brainstorming, we came up with the idea for the Red Cross donation and by the next morning were downloading the song to radio – one of the first times we'd ever done that. Not to diminish anything else we've ever done as a label, but that was a uniquely inspirational moment – a chance for us to make a difference doing what we do.

Humble Pie: I believe in Sarah Buxton, but it's been frustrating. And I don't blame radio; a lot of major market stations have championed her. Maybe it's a little too edgy for its time, but she's such a uniquely gifted talent as a writer, vocalist and stylist. My commitment is that we'll figure it out, but right now that one's got the freshest sting. It's an open wound.

Can't Make This Stuff Up: I'm searching for one that won't get me jailed or disowned by family, church or current employer. I'll go to two extremes. The first was when we first started with Lyric Street and the CMA was having its board meeting in Los Angeles. Being naïve, I called the head of synergy at Disney and suggested a reception for the board at Disney Studios. When the time came, we got off the buses and were greeted by Beauty & The Beast, Cinderella, the Seven Dwarves, Mickey and Minnie, and had an incredible banquet. Michael Eisner himself came out to greet the board, then they sectioned everyone off and gave them tours of the animation studios, the *Armageddon* set or the Imagineering facility. It was an unbelievably huge spectacle and we were all blown away.

The other story is from Lyric Street's early days when adds were hard to come by. Our Southeast regional, Theresa Durst, kept hearing from PDs how tight things were, how tough it was to get something new on the playlist. So she bought a box of Astroglide, which is a sex aid, and sent bottles of the stuff to all her programmers with a note that said, "Maybe this will help with your tight lists." And of course, that opened things up and allowed us to get a bunch of adds.

19 Joel Burke
KYGO/Denver PD

Happy Feat: Most recently, Jack Ingram's "Wherever You Are." We were the first station outside the state of Texas to play the song. Watching it go No. 1 was awesome.

Humblse Pie: My biggest disappointment in the past couple of years was my belief and support of Hanna McEuen. I learned the hard way that sometimes the most talented artists can fall through the cracks in Nashville. Also, sometimes artists and songs are just too artistic for the format.

Can't Make This Stuff Up: A record rep once said to me, "Come on, Joel, play the song. It sucks less than their last one." I don't think this person is in the business anymore.

20 Mike Moore
Entercom VP/Country; KWJJ/Portland PD

21 Scott Lindy
Sirius Satellite Radio Country PD

Happy Feat: Taylor Swift blew me away at Toby Keith's CRS guitar pull a few years ago. I rattled the phones and email at Big Machine demanding music. We put 4 songs into rotation and got amazing response. I know I'm waaaay out on a limb to say this about a new and very young artist, but I truly believe she's going to be huge over the next few decades.

Humble Pie: I was programming WPOC/Baltimore when I first heard Brian McComas' CD sampler. I got him on a WPOC concert, played the music and tried to get our music meeting excited about it. In the end, a handful of our listeners felt like I did, but that handful wasn't enough. The lesson was this: it's not about what I (or any PD) thinks of the song. From time to time, every one of us should stick their neck out on an unknown record that they truly believe that's what keeps radio exciting. But the audience decides.

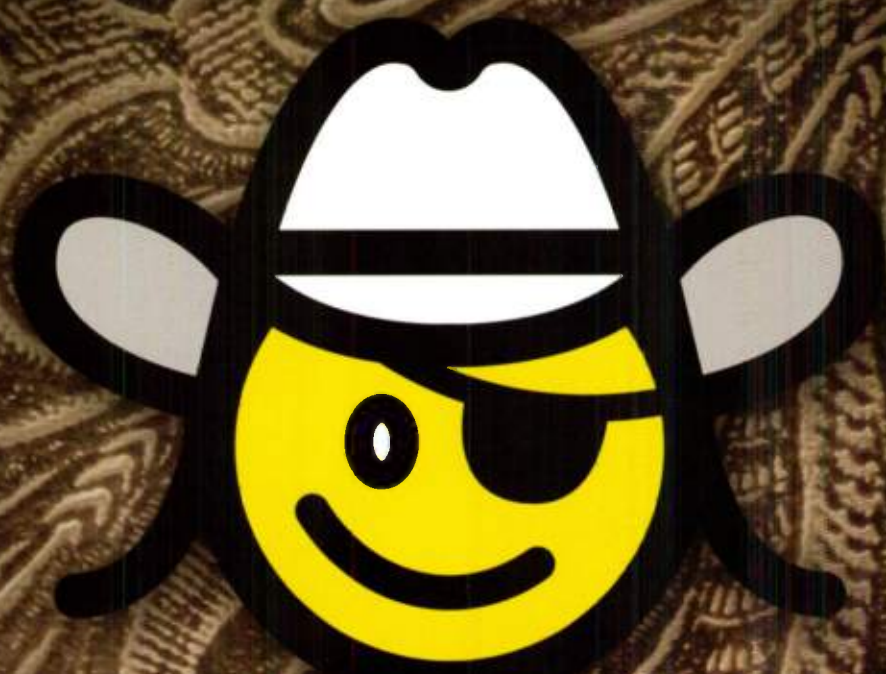
Can't Make This Stuff Up: I've started to answer this question about 10 times...and deleted every one of them. However, I'd like to answer it in detail between 2am and 4am at CRS 2008 somewhere near the Bridge Bar. See? Now we all get to keep our jobs! I love this business.

22 Mike Kennedy
Wilkes/Kansas City Dir./ Programming; KBEQ/KC PD

Happy Feat: Blake Shelton was in the middle of a label shuffle way back when, and it really felt like they were going to let "Austin" just go away. So KBEQ and a couple of other stations started really banging the single and, hopefully, helped turn this into the hit song it truly was.

ONE BAD EYE.

ONE GOOD SHOW.



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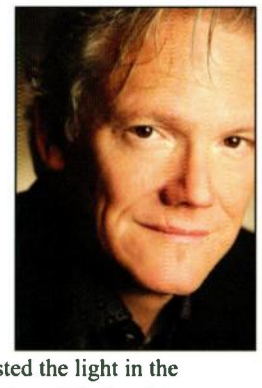
COUNTRY AIRCHECK'S POWER 31 AIRPLAY LEADERS

23 Skip Bishop
Arista/Nashville VPP

Happy Feat: After the astounding success Lonestar's "Amazed" enjoyed at Country, Butch Waugh came to New York, played it for me and said, "What do you think?" We mapped out a plan for Pop radio and I began the laborious task of knocking on closed doors. Top 40 was in a dance music moment and there was little to no Country crossover activity, but after wearing them down, my friends at Z100/New York agreed to one midday spin...and all hell broke loose. The phones went nuts and their early research was massive. "Amazed" went on to be a multi-week No. 1 Pop record.

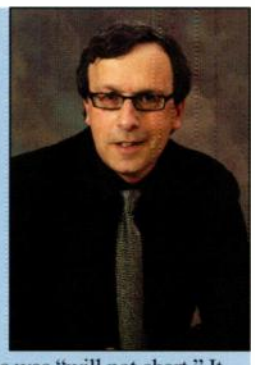


Humble Pie: Radio's lack of enthusiasm for Alan Jackson's "Red on a Rose" album. It's a brilliant piece of music – one people will continue discovering for years.

Can't Make This Stuff Up: I was asked to meet an artist on Saturday in the presidential suite of a lavish Los Angeles hotel to explain the difference between reported charts and the newly emerged detection- and audience-driven chart. I asked if I could bring my then 11-year-old daughter, Elizabeth, and was told it was fine. The security was massive and were we escorted on a private elevator and met by four guys with suits and walkie talkies.

Sir Elton greeted us at the door in a beautiful silk kimono and an army of aides poured our teas, moved the room temp up and down, adjusted the light in the room and fluffed couch pillows while I explained this new chart methodology. My daughter, meanwhile, was bowling with apples from Elton's fruit basket, doing somersaults off the furniture and teaching the security guards "The Hokey Pokey." It was quite a snapshot.

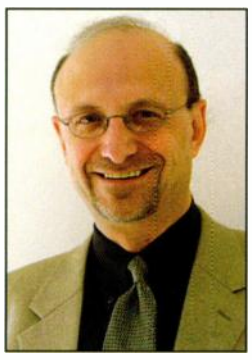
24 Joel Raab
Country Consultant



Happy Feat: One of my clients was playing "Good Morning Beautiful" as an album cut, and getting huge response. Once the song was released as a single, I knew it was a hit and helped spread the word. The No. 1 couldn't have happened to a nicer guy, Steve Holy.

Can't Make This Stuff Up: Ten years ago a label ran a contest for PDs, MDs and consultants. To be entered to win, you had to guess the peak chart position that song would reach. I thought the song was pretty bad, so my guess was "will not chart." It didn't. I was the only one who made that prediction, and won. The label was gracious enough to give me the prize.

25 Michael O'Malley
Country Consultant

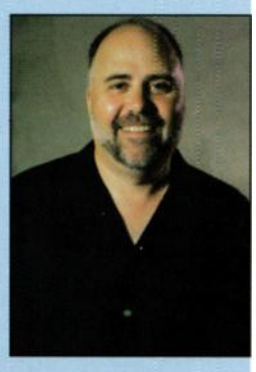


Happy Feat: The first time I heard John Michael Montgomery's "Life's A Dance," I thought it was a special song. I don't know if WYNY/New York was the first to add it or not, but Steve Blatter, who was my MD at the time, agreed to add it on the spot.

Can't Make This Stuff Up: I'll always remember a CMA Awards after-party where I was walking over to congratulate Kix Brooks and introduce myself. But before I had the chance, he asked if I could bring a bottle of champagne to his table. Apparently, my tuxedo was similar to those of the waitstaff and he'd mistaken me for a waiter.

26 Kevin Herring
Lyric Street VPP

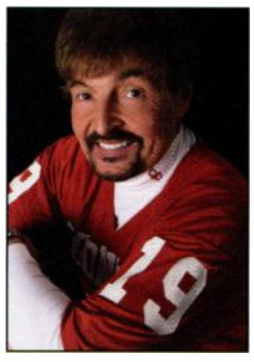
Happy Feat: Hearing Aaron Tippin's "Where The Stars And Stripes And Eagle Fly" in Randy Goodman's office after 9/11 and seeing it show up on nearly every Country radio station in America in a matter of days.



Humble Pie: I'm not really sure what went wrong or why it didn't happen, but I thought SHeDaisy's "In Terms Of Love" was a can't-miss smash. I still feel that way. Sometimes, despite your best efforts, a great song falls victim to the system and timing.

Can't Make This Stuff Up: I was working a Larry Boone record for Mercury. New York City wasn't exactly a friendly market for Larry, and WYNY MD Steve Blatter was fighting me tooth-and-nail. I arranged a dinner with him at a Manhattan restaurant, and before the dinner I went to the restaurant to arrange with the maître d' to play Larry's song over the restaurant's sound system during dinner. Amazing the spins you can get for $10 (payola is legal in a restaurant). Halfway through our meal, the Larry Boone record eased its way into the music mix, much to Mr. Blatter's surprise. He was so amazed I went to such trouble that he added the record. "Don't Give Candy To A Stranger" went on to be a top 10 song.

27 Coyote Calhoun
WAMZ/Louisville PD



Happy Feat: Mercury brought Toby Keith to town for dinner in early 1993. He was from Oklahoma, I'm from Oklahoma. He's a big Sooners fan, I'm a big Sooners fan. I got along so well with him, I thought, "I really hope he can sing." A couple months later, Mercury brought the Triple Play bill into town – John Brannen, Shania Twain and Toby. We'd just started playing "Shoulda Been A Cowboy" and I thought he was going to be a star. A few years later, George Briner stopped by to play me a song called, "How Do You Like Me Now?!" I loved it first time through, and that doesn't happen often. George called Toby on the spot and I told him this was going to be the biggest song of his career. It made me feel good because I'd been a supporter from the start.

Humble Pie: The Catherine Britt record. She's young and it's early in her career, so it could still happen. But I thought "What I Did Last Night" would be a monster and went out on a limb for it.

Can't Make This Stuff Up: Warner Bros. brought a duo in to play Coyote's, a local club I have a piece of. They had this beautiful girl singing backup for them who had enough moxie to go around introducing herself to people and sign autographs. She had all the earmarks of being a star, and later became one. Faith Hill. Another time, RCA brought John Rich in as part of the New Faces of Country series, and he had Gretchen Wilson singing backup. Now I make a point of meeting all the people who play in the bands. You never know.

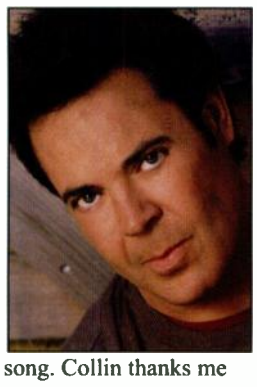
28 Bob Moody
Regent VP/Programming

Happy Feat: In 1994 Merle Haggard had a legitimate No. 1 hit at WPOC/Baltimore with a song called, "In My Next Life," even though it peaked at No. 58 on the national charts. Someone gave me a phone number and asked that I call Haggard, who thanked me for having the "courage" to play his music. That meant a lot to me and I'll never forget it.

Humble Pie: I've eaten so much "crow" over the years that it's one of my major food groups. I told Tom Schuyler that the downside of signing Kenny Chesney would be that he was too scrawny to ever star in a video. Thankfully, he didn't pay any attention to me. I was also convinced that a female group called Evangeline would be the biggest act since Garth Brooks. Their only single died at No. 70 on the national charts.

Can't Make This Stuff Up: In 1991, I convinced a Mercury rep that I couldn't add "It's Chitlin' Time" by the Kentucky HeadHunters because it wouldn't be right to play a song about pork during Rosh Hashanah.

29 Blair Garner
After Midnight and *Blair Garner* Show Host



Happy Feat: Collin Raye's "What if Jesus Comes Back Like That" wasn't a single, and wasn't going to be. But I believed in it and put it on with a vengeance. Epic wasn't the least bit happy that within only a week or so – thanks to After MidNite affiliates joining the campaign – we got "What if Jesus Comes Back Like That" within one or two positions of their official release, "One Boy, One Girl."

I'm not going to lie, Jack Lameier had a few choice words for me, but he and I laugh about it now. Ultimately, Epic threw its support behind the song. Collin thanks me profusely whenever I see him. And every year when Christmas time rolls around, I get a special feeling of pride for pushing as hard as I did.

Can't Make This Stuff Up: Back in my CHR days, I worked with Jessica Ettinger, MD at WPLJ/New York. We were between PDs and a listener sent her a cassette of some European release by an unnamed artist with many No. 1 hits who couldn't get a record deal. It sounded like George Michael, but neither she nor I could identify the singer. Jessica called the listener and I saw her jaw drop as she mouthed, "Donny Osmond!"

At the time our competitor, Z100, was calling us "Wimp Radio," so we couldn't very well play a purple-socked Donny Osmond. Or so it seemed. After a little brainstorming, we put it on as our "PLJ Mystery Artist." If it connected with the listeners, great. If not, we'd just drop it and nobody would be the wiser.

Within one week "Soldier of Love" became far and away our most-requested song. And, since it was an import, it was our exclusive. Man, did Z100 hate that. Jessica called Bill Waite, Donny's then-manager, who about had a coronary. He agreed to fly an incredibly grateful and disbelieving Donny to be on with Jim Kerr, our legendary morning man. We promoted the reveal to Gotham City and had a buzz going like I'd never known. When Kerr introduced Donny, the place went nuts! John Fagot of Capitol Records was listening, and within minutes called the station and offered Donny a deal. "Soldier" went all the way to No. 1.

30 Mike Culotta
WQYK/Tampa PD

Happy Feat: We were the first ones on Big & Rich in America. The label sent us the advance, and [MD] Jay Roberts and I absolutely loved it. We had multiple cuts on the air at the same time. They came into the market prior to the album coming out, and people were singing along to every song. It was a touching moment for them, and for us.

Humble Pie: We have always loved the Warren Brothers and played their music. And Joe Galante and the folks over there have made repeated attempts to get it going. Maybe in today's environment the result would be different.

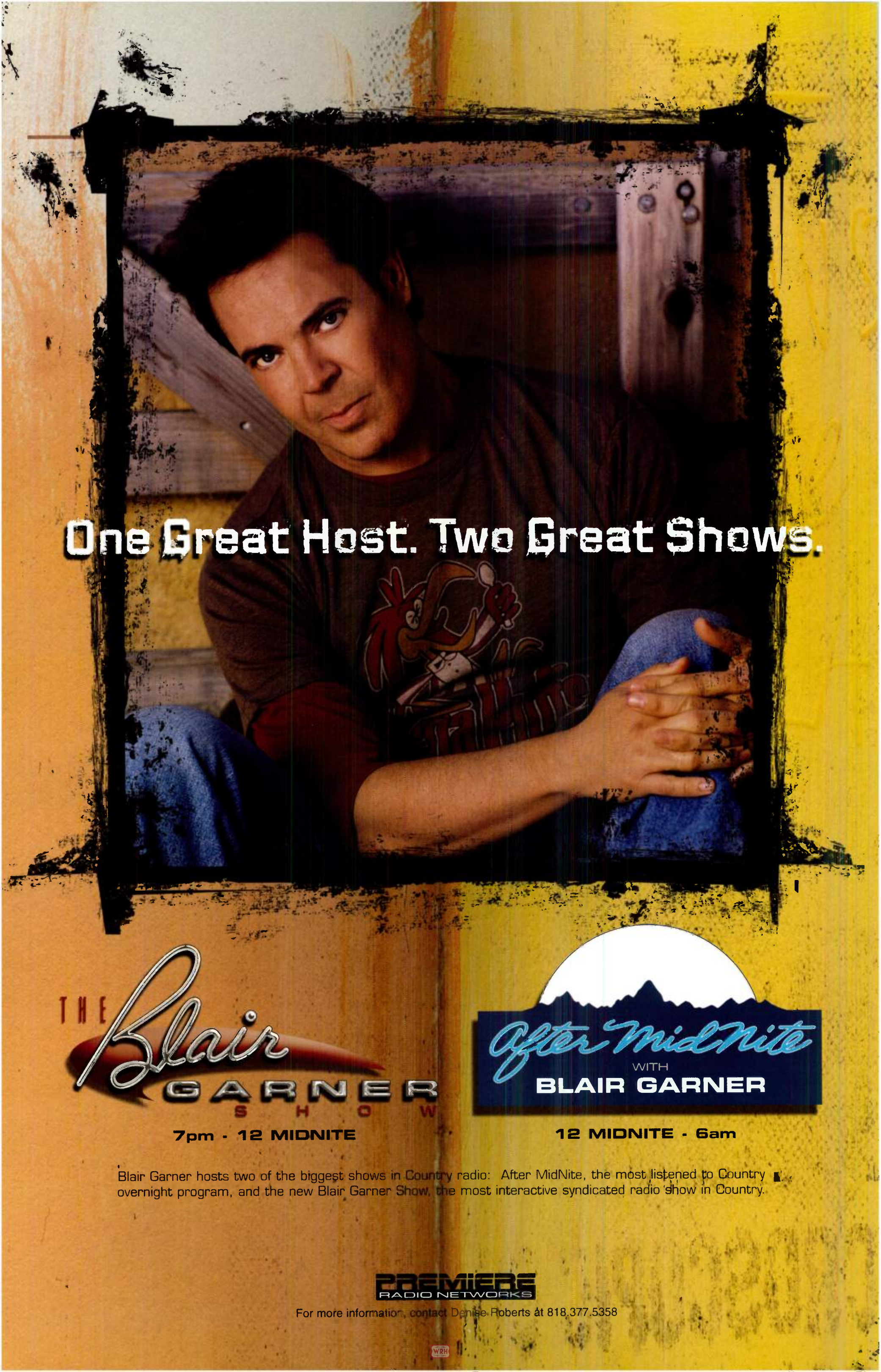
Can't Make This Stuff Up: Sawyer Brown's "800 Pound Jesus" isn't a song we were instantly on, and we had lots of discussions with the label, which really wanted us to play it. At one point Jay made a sarcastic comment that if an 800-pound Jesus showed up it would be a sign for us to spin it. Sure enough, the next day Brooks Quigley from Curb went to a garden store and sent us a Jesus statue. We called him and told him it only weighed 150 or 200 pounds, and he said, "I've got four more, I can send them down." We played the record, and one of our DJs still has the statue in his backyard.

31 Kerry Wolfe
WMIL/Milwaukee PD

Happy Feat: While working in Colorado Springs at KKCS, I was cleaning my one-bedroom apartment on a beautiful Saturday afternoon. I was getting bored, but just happened to have brought home a VHS EPK of a new act. I popped it in and heard "Much Too Young (To Feel This Damn Old)," as well as "The Dance" and "If Tomorrow Never Comes." I was blown away and called every friend I had in radio at the time and told them how ginormous this Garth Brooks guy was going to be. Most thought I was crazy, but I made Colorado Springs believers from the start.

Humble Pie: Van Zant's "That Scares Me" didn't happen and I was a huge believer, jumping way out in front. I'm not sure why it didn't happen; I still think it was one of the most relatable songs I've ever heard. Another song I tried to make a hit was Kenny Chesney's "Tin Man." Les Acree told me about Kenny, I checked it out and fell in love with the song. It was re-released a few years later and didn't work then, either.

Can't Make This Stuff Up: Seeing Bill Heltemes from Atlantic standing on a scissors lift at 6am dressed in a Superman outfit trying to get me to play a Craig Morgan song. Hours later, I think he left with the add. CAC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FALL MUSIC PREVIEW

FALL OUT BUY

Labels Shake Their Year-End Money Makers

More than ever, Nashville's labels are hoping for a blockbuster holiday sales season to prop up slumping numbers. And as much as ever, Country radio could use a few big hits to boost the fall book. So, in addition to airtight analysis, industry-leading news coverage, the occasional free coffee mug and bizarre pop culture references, one of the services Country Aircheck likes to provide is a preview of upcoming single and album releases. The hope is that within this busy slate of music, both radio and the labels will find a tonic to quench their mighty thirsts. Read on!

1720 Entertainment

"Country Girl" **Rissi Palmer** gets the undivided attention of **Bill Macky** and the 1720 staff through year-end. Palmer's self-titled debut

Rissi Palmer

for the newly launched Nashville division of 1720 hits retail Oct. 23. She's the only country artist featured in the "Who's New" section of Yahoo! Music, she has an exclusive Starbucks EP that's been a top 5 seller on iTunes, and page views to her MySpace site jumped 400,000 in just the first nine weeks of the single's release.

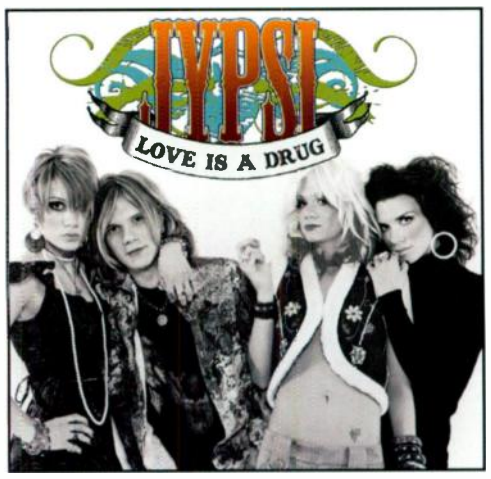
Arista

"Arista's autumn is going to be crazy," raves lead cowboy **Skip Bishop**. "We're getting in position to have back-to-back chart-toppers with **Brooks & Dunn, Brad Paisley** and **Carrie Underwood**." Guess we can call Skip "Tony Promo."

Jason Michael Carroll is "exploding" at radio with what Bishop describes as stellar research, sales, ringtones and video play. The single, of course, is "Living Our Love Song." **Keith Anderson**'s "Sunday Morning in America" has the Arista team's full attention, as it sets the stage for his second album following the gold *Three Chord Country*.

"The group that's really causing a stir in the Nashville community is our new Arista family band, **Jypsi**," Bishop says. "This group of remarkably talented siblings has a substantial digital buzz already, and they are beginning to draw tons of critical and media attention." First single "Love is a Drug" is due mid-September, and the Blake Chancey-produced album will bow in February.

"Jypsi are pure original talent," Bishop says. "There's nothing like them and there never has been. They are remarkable musicians and range in age from 16 to 25. Because they're a family, they have been playing together their entire lives."



Big Machine

Our hero **Jack Purcell** and his trusted promotion sidekick **John Zarling** are calling for a "full throttle" fourth quarter from the Big Machine. In case you missed it, the label is working "More Than A Memory," the lead single from **Garth Brooks'** upcoming Pearl Records hits collection, due Nov. 6. "Early buzz is extraordinary," say the J's – P and Z. "Expect more unique marketing opportunities surrounding the album launch to be announced in the coming weeks."

The BMR crew is also revving up for the first studio release in two years from **Trisha Yearwood**, led by the single, "Heaven, Heartache And The Power Of Love." Info about album premiere programming in conjunction with the album's Nov. 13 street date is forthcoming.

Also at the top of the promotion effort list is "Our Song", the new single from **Taylor Swift**'s platinum-plus self-titled release. A limited edition enhanced package of Swift's debut album hits stores Nov. 6.

Danielle Peck's single, "Bad For Me" continues to be a focus, supported by heavy rotations on the video networks and a GAC Short Cuts campaign. And Peck's sophomore album is due in stores Jan. 15.

Jack Ingram's current single, "Measure Of A Man" will be worked through its peak, "continuing his streak of more than 95 consecutive weeks on the singles charts." The fifth single from *This Is It*, "Maybe She'll Get Lonely," is expected at radio in November, just in time for his run on the Dierks Bentley fall tour.

BNA

Veep **Rick Moxley** and the rest of the BNA spin seekers are already pushing on with "Don't Blink," the second single from **Kenny Chesney**'s *Just Who I Am: Poets & Pirates*, released Sept. 11. "Knowing the Chesney song's pace," Mox says, "I wouldn't be surprised to get to a third single before or just after the holiday break."

Kellie Pickler's "Things That Never Cross A Man's Mind" has generated some creative promotion ideas, but we've been ordered to hold our tongues, on penalty of chickens.

Terri Clark will have new music in late September or early October in the form of a single titled, "My Next Life."

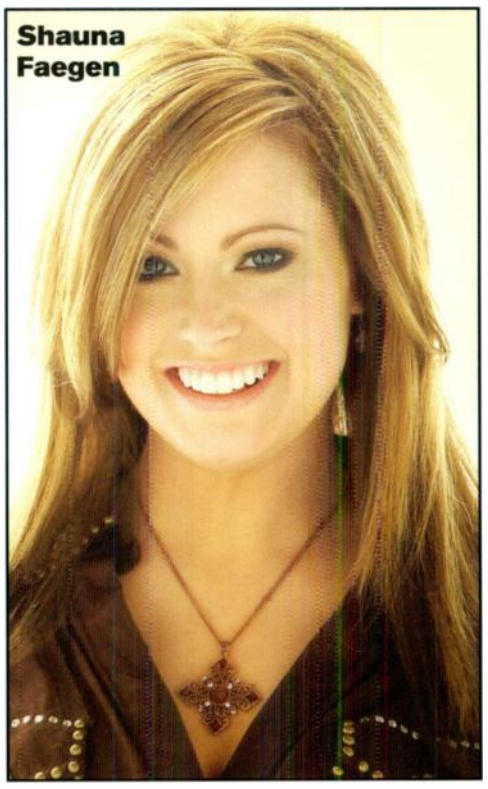
Finally, by the time this article hits, BNA may be settled on the next single from **Sarah Johns**, but that decision could be difficult considering the depth of her debut album. *Big Love In A Small Town*, out Aug. 28, has already given us "The One In The Middle," and Moxley says there a number of radio-ready cuts on the record.

Broken Bow

Like a message in a bottle, the handiwork of former veep **Jon Loba** calls from the past and reveals the BBR promotion team's ongoing endeavors. **Jason Aldean**'s "Laughed Until We Cried" and **Craig Morgan**'s "International Harvester" are already percolating and bound to brew up a full head of steam deep into the fourth quarter. "We'll continue to work our new act for 2007," Loba writes, "Crossin Dixon." That's obviously the proverbial "we."

Capitol

As the scabs on our knees, palms and shins heal from Dungan's Pub Crawl, Senior Senor **Jimmy Harnen** and his charges are busy executing a finely tuned fall plan. Already in the rotation are new singles from **Trace Adkins**, "I Got My Game On," as well as **Keith Urban**'s "Everybody" and the title track from **Eric Church**'s debut album, "Sinners Like Me." Getting back to Adkins, the new tune is from his next album release, as yet untitled and due in December.


Shauna Faegen

And in September, Capitol is introducing **Lady Antebellum**, comprised of Charles Kelley, Hillary Scott and Dave Haywood. "They're currently out meeting Country radio as well as playing live dates," Harnen says. Their inaugural album should land early in 2008.

Finally, Jimmy says to look for the new album from **Chris Cagle**, which will include the single, "What Kinda Gone," in stores early in the new year.

Category 5

Travis Tritt's label debut, *The Storm*, landed in stores Aug. 21 and the single, "Never Take Me Dancing," has been the focus for the **David Shaw**-led promotion force. "The fall and new year will usher in two huge ballads from Tritt," Shaw says of what's to come. "'Something Stronger Than Me' and 'What If Love Hangs On' are both giant slices of what Country radio has been asking the label to serve up by Travis. Eat up!"

Cat 5 is also readying new artist **Shauna Faegen**, who will be doing an extensive promotional tour this fall. "Beware, once she starts singing in your office or conference room your staff will immediately stop working and rush to see where this amazing voice is coming from," Shaw says. The 22-year-old is "ready to wow the world with an amazing talent and fresh sound that country fans are bound to love!"

CO5/Nashville

Darlene Starr says the CO5 team is centering its promotion efforts on six releases through year-end. **Tracy Lawrence**'s "Til I Was A Daddy Too," the follow-up to his recent No. 1 on Rocky Comfort, is already making its run. The Disney release, "Ready, Set, Don't Go," by **Billy Ray Cyrus**, is also at the center of CO5's promotion plans.

For Rounder, the team is setting up **Alison Krauss**' "Simple Love," while "18 Video Tapes" from Baccerstick's **Jason Meadows** is already on the rise. And on the newly formed Parallel Records, **Jeremy McComb** has the single, "Wagon Wheel."

Finally, Starr reports that CO5 will be implementing an album awareness marketing and promotion campaign for an upcoming **Dwight Yoakam** tribute to Buck Owens. *Dwight Sings Buck* is due in stores Oct. 23 on New West Records.

Lady Antebellum

FALL MUSIC PREVIEW

Columbia

VP **Jimmy Rector** sets Columbia's agenda, leading with the current **Van Zant** single, "Goes Down Easy," from the Oct. 9 album, *My Kind Of Country*. "The title says it all with this song," Rector says.

On Sept. 17, the Columbia staff rolls out "Girl Next Door" from **Cole Deggs & The Lonesome**. A month later, Oct. 15 is the impact date for **Gretchen Wilson**'s "You Don't Have To Go Home." "Everybody says they want ass-kicking country music from Gretchen," Rector says. "Well that's what's coming.

"We'll have a new single from **Miranda Lambert,** as well," Jimmy adds.

Country Thunder

The **Mayne** man says the new single from **Heartland**,"Once A Woman Gets A Hold Of Your Heart," is front-and-center through the end of the year. "It's written and produced by **John Rich**,"

Jamie Lee Thurston

Bill says, "and wowing people everywhere." A new album is in the works; look for it in January.

Soon to join Heartland in thundering across the country is a new single from **Jamie Lee Thurston** titled, "Dear God." Thurston wrote and produced the cut, and will be out with CT's airplay-advocating promo staff on a radio tour in support of the October release.

Curb, Curb/Asylum

Carson James sees big hits in Curb's future, starting with the August release, "Power Of One," from **Bomshel**. "It's a poignant, cool, cutting song," James reports. "And you've never seen a band that can work a live show the way they do without a hit single. They play rock shows and go over big. They're pretty intense."

Texan newcomer **Star Diazlon** will get her introduction to Country radio with a single due sometime this fall. On the Curb/Asylum side of the fence, the next addition on the schedule is "Miss Difficult" from **Cowboy Crush**, due in November.

Looking ahead, **Rodney Atkins** and **Clay Walker** are both likely to have new singles before the year's out. As for albums, **LeAnn Rimes** bows with *Family* Oct. 9. "She co-wrote almost every song on the album with her husband, Dean, and many other great Nashville songwriters," James says.

Equity

"Strong One," the first single from a forthcoming **Clint Black** album, heads the Equity list. "Clint is on his most focused tour schedule in quite awhile to support the album," reports promo domo **David Haley**. "And he's been very active in setting up the single at radio."

Black has reunited with producer **James Stroud** for the album, and the single is his first chart record that isn't self-penned. Haley notes, however, that Black did write or co-write a good portion of the album.

Joining Black on tour, and in the hearts and minds of Equity's promotion staff, is **Laura Bryna**. Her Equity debut hits retail Nov. 20, preceded at radio by the single, "Make A Wish." The song, written with her manager/producer Richard Sarchet, is related to the well-respected children's charity for which she has been a volunteer since her youth.

"Just when you thought it was safe, **Kevin Fowler** has reunited with Equity," Haley jokes. You may remember Fowler's debut with the label four years ago, and now he's back with *Bring It On*, due in stores Sept. 25. "Long Line Of Losers" is making air waves in Fowler's

Laura Bryna

native Texas, and Equity is starting to feel the impact in neighboring states, as well. "His fan base has tripled since his debut, and we're hoping to establish him more as a national act," Haley says.

Another big red circle on the Equity calendar is Nov. 6, when **Little Big Town**'s sophomore album for the label drops at retail. "After 1.2 million albums sold, we're very excited to have another round of music," Haley says. The Wayne Kirkpatrick-produced "I'm With The Band" is already moving at radio, and LBT are slotted on the CMT Tour which rolls Sept. 27 through year-end. "I can't go anywhere without someone congratulating us for their success," Haley says, "and Country radio certainly shares in that."

Lofton Creek

Padre **Borchetta** has a full complement of album and single releases lined up. Former *American Idol* contestant **Carmen Rasmussen** has *Nothin' Like The Summer* set for release, joining the disc offering by **Kristina Cornell** titled, *It's A Girl Thing*, containing her song, "Little Red Balloon."

As for singles, the **Drew Davis Band** has "Back There All The Time." Borchetta calls them "the best live band in country music." Also on tap is **Mark Chesnutt's** "Rollin' With The Flow." "I heard Mark's 'Too Cold At Home' before he signed with MCA and tried to get him to join us

Cook And Glenn

at Curb before I signed Tim McGraw, but was unable to," Mike says. "Now, 15 years later, I did it. This will be our biggest hit."

Radio can also expect "I Give," a single featuring **Shawn King** and **Willie Nelson**. The wedding song is being sold through the label's website and other digital distributors.

Cook and Glenn, the duo featuring Alabama's Jeff Cook, has "She Only Calls Me When She's Drunk," and Nashville duo **Townsend and O'Donnell** have "Cowboys Got It," which Borchetta predicts will "be a monster in Texas."

Marcel

Lyric Street

"Without question, the big album for us is **Rascal Flatts'** *Still Feels Good,* in stores Sept. 25," says the ambassador to radio from Disney's world, **Kevin Herring**. "The guys have once again raised the bar. If it was possible for them to take it up another level, I really think they have. This is the best of their five albums. They wrote a couple of the songs themselves and there's some really special stuff on this record."

Mid-September brings "Good To Be Us," the follow-up from **Bucky Covington**'s self-titled debut album. The Lyric Street cast will still be writing the script for **Trent Tomlinson**'s latest hit, and **Josh Gracin**'s next audio flick should premiere in October. The Gracin song will advance new music due at retail sometime in the first quarter.

Herring and friends are working now to set up **Marcel** for a December launch. The accomplished writer (Gracin's "Nothin' To Lose," Flatts' "Backwards") wrote or co-wrote his entire album, produced by Marty Williams.

Additionally, the house of mouse will have a follow-up Flatts single at the appropriate time, and Herring reports that **Sarah Buxton** is back in the studio cutting new tracks radio will get a crack at early next year. He closes with one final thought: "Don't wait. Whenever you see a Lyric Street record, just run it right into the studio."

MCA

"The **Reba/Kelly** duet, 'Because of You,' continues to research through the roof," says Veep **Royce Risser**. "It's Reba's fastest-moving single in a decade, and is poised to peak around the release of *Reba Duets* on Sept. 18."

A new studio album by **Gary Allan** streets Oct. 23, and the MCA crew is working "Watching Airplanes" with gusto. **Josh Turner's** third album, *Low Country,* bows Nov. 6. Risser says first single "Firecracker" is Turner's fastest-moving single ever.

The next single from **George Strait**, "How 'Bout Them Cowgirls," is building toward becoming a monumental record. When it tops out, "Cowgirls" will be Strait's 56th No. 1, giving him the uncontested all-time record. He's currently tied at 55 with Conway Twitty.

Mercury

The guy in the veep seat, **John Ettinger**, is crazy 'bout Mercury's slate of releases, starting with **Billy Currington**'s next album. This will be the third from the platinum-selling Currington, and should drop sometime in the fall. "We're riding a wave of success with two No. 1s on the second album," Ettinger says. "And from what I hear, what he's going through right now has been truly cathartic. He's excited what it's doing to the sound of his music."

Also on deck is a second single from **Halfway To Hazard**, although which cut is still TBA. "I'll say this, many of our friends at radio have chimed in and one thing is certain: The band's debut release is full of songs people love," Ettinger says. "Bottom line, Mercury *will not stop* working this amazing project."

H2H, he adds, have performed 30 shows on the Soul2Soul II tour, including 12 on the big stage. "Nothing but good reviews," Ettinger says.

Another single release from **Bon Jovi**'s gold-selling *Lost Highway* album is expected, as is a fourth single from **Sugarland**'s *Enjoy The Ride*. Ettinger is mum on which track Sugarland will bring, but says it could be the vocal event of the fall.

"In other news," he says, "we're gearing up for Sugarland's first headlining tour." The CMT bill, which also includes Little Big Town and Jake Owen, starts Sept. 27. "The whole Universal team is excited to work with Country radio on this tour," Ettinger says. "That includes **Bruce Shindler**."

The Road Hammers

Midas

It's all about focus for **Rob Dalton** and the Midas promotion staff. **Emerson Drive**'s "You Still Own Me," the third single from their album, *Countrified,* is at the forefront of the label's efforts.

At retail, Sept. 25 brings the self-titled debut from the immensely talented four-piece **Whiskey Falls**. The band's "Last Train Running" continues its roll up the chart.

Whiskey Falls

Laura Bryna

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EQUITY

FALL MUSIC PREVIEW

Montage

When not imparting his culinary wisdom on only the most fortunate airplay decision makers, head promo poobah **Mike Wilson** is directing his team in setting up **The Road Hammers**. "We're starting to get out and play music to radio," he says, adding hints at a couple October showcases for the band. They're finishing up their album, and a single launch is expected this quarter.

Montage is continuing to work **Andy Griggs'** new album, *Tattoo Rose,* and the single, "What If It's Me," should be ramping up as this goes to print. Griggs' new music is produced by master songwriter Frank Myers.

The introduction of newcomer **Minnie Murphy** is also in order. Murphy is finishing her debut album and playing some major festivals as she readies her single launch.

Big plans for **Little Texas**, who will log more than 100 tour dates this year. Wilson says single plans are, ahem, up in the air. "They've got this song, 'Texas 101.' We're seeing a lot of smoke in that region for it, so we're going to follow that and see if there's any fire there before locking in the next single."

Nine North

The slate is clean but the plate is full for **Larry Pareigis** and company, as this fall is the

The Roys

first for his new venture. Already working at radio is **Ty Herndon** and his single, "Mighty, Mighty Love," in partnership with Pyramid Records. From the album, *Right About Now*, the song was written by hitmakers Darrell Brown, Dennis Matkosky and Tim Nichols.

Hailing from Fitchburg, MA, or as Pareigis likes to call it, "the hotbed of country music," are new traditionalist brother & sister duo **The Roys** and their debut Pedestal/Nine North single, "Workin' Girl Blues." Their debut album is expected in early '08.

Katie Armiger

Now visiting radio to introduce his first new music in three years is **John Berry** on Clear Sky/Nine North. The single, "A Woman Like You," is from the Q1 album, *Those Were The Days*. "John's very passionate about this Tim Nichols- and Craig Wiseman-penned, Kerry Kurt Phillips-produced song," Pareigis says.

Finally, the partnership with Combustion Music brings the Chris Farren-produced **Brent Keith** single, "Looking For A Road (Theme From *Dale*). "This is the closing theme – and only new song – on the soundtrack for the CMT Films/NASCAR Images major motion picture *Dale,*" Pareigis explains. The film is the story of legendary racer Dale Earnhardt, as narrated by Paul Newman. "Don't miss the closing credits," Pareigis adds. "The bloopers rock."

And one more shot from Larry: "Have an awesome fall book – and did I mention that all these Nine North songs are tempo?"

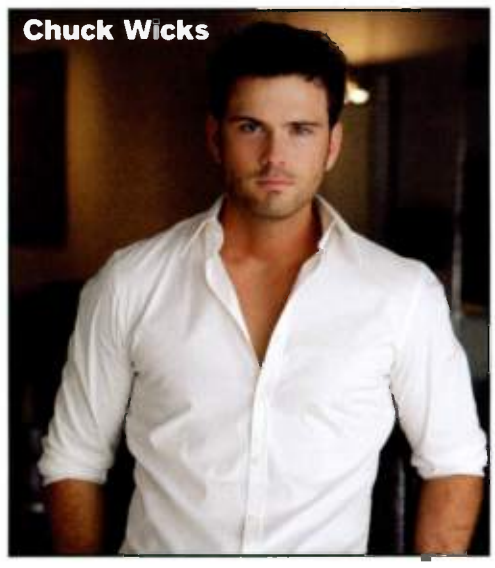
Quarterback

QB QB **Chris Allums** says his staff's been burning the tires off with radio stops advancing the recently released debut from the talented **Katie Armiger**. A new single from actress/singer **Beverley Mitchell** (*7th Heaven, Saw II*) titled, "Walkin'," is due in September from her album, *Heaven On Earth Down Here*.

"We're also excited about another artist we're working with as part of our new partnership with Compadre Records," Allums says. He's referring to **Trent Willmon's** "There Is A God," which has an impact date of Sept. 17. The album, *Broken In,* is due Jan. 22. Rodney Clawson, Dan Frizsell and Willmon produced.

RCA

Nipper National **Doug Baker** opens with the **Jake Owens** single, "Something About A Woman," reporting the promo crew's "extreme excitement" about the tune. "The first two were a


Chuck Wicks

success, and radio really seems to like this one... and Jake in general," Baker says.

Before the year closes, radio can expect to see a follow-up single from **Martina McBride**, as well as another single from **Sara Evans**. The latter's next retail release is her first greatest hits project, in stores Oct. 9.

Turning to the new artist focus for fall, Baker reports strong buzz for newcomer **Chuck Wicks**. "Anything I say is going to sound like a cliché," Baker admits, "But he really is unique and distinctive with great songs." Wicks co-wrote everything on his debut album, which is advanced by the single, "Stealing Cinderella." He's deep into his first radio tour and the response has been "over the top."

Produced by Dann Huff and Monty Powell, Wicks can be seen as well as heard on the new FOX show, *Nashville,* in the coming months.

Show Dog

Promo veep **Tom Moran** and tha dawg pound will be concentrating on two singles already making their mark at radio. First and foremost, obviously, is Big Dog **Toby Keith's** "Love Me If You Can" from his current *Big Dog Daddy* album. The promotion team's other focus is on continuing to build the buzz for **Flynnville Train** and their song, "Nowhere Than Somewhere."

On the album release schedule, Keith's *A Classic Christmas* is due Oct. 16. The two-disc set features Toby's renditions of holiday classics. As of Sept. 11, music fans were able to purchase Flynnville Train's self-titled debut.

Warner Bros.

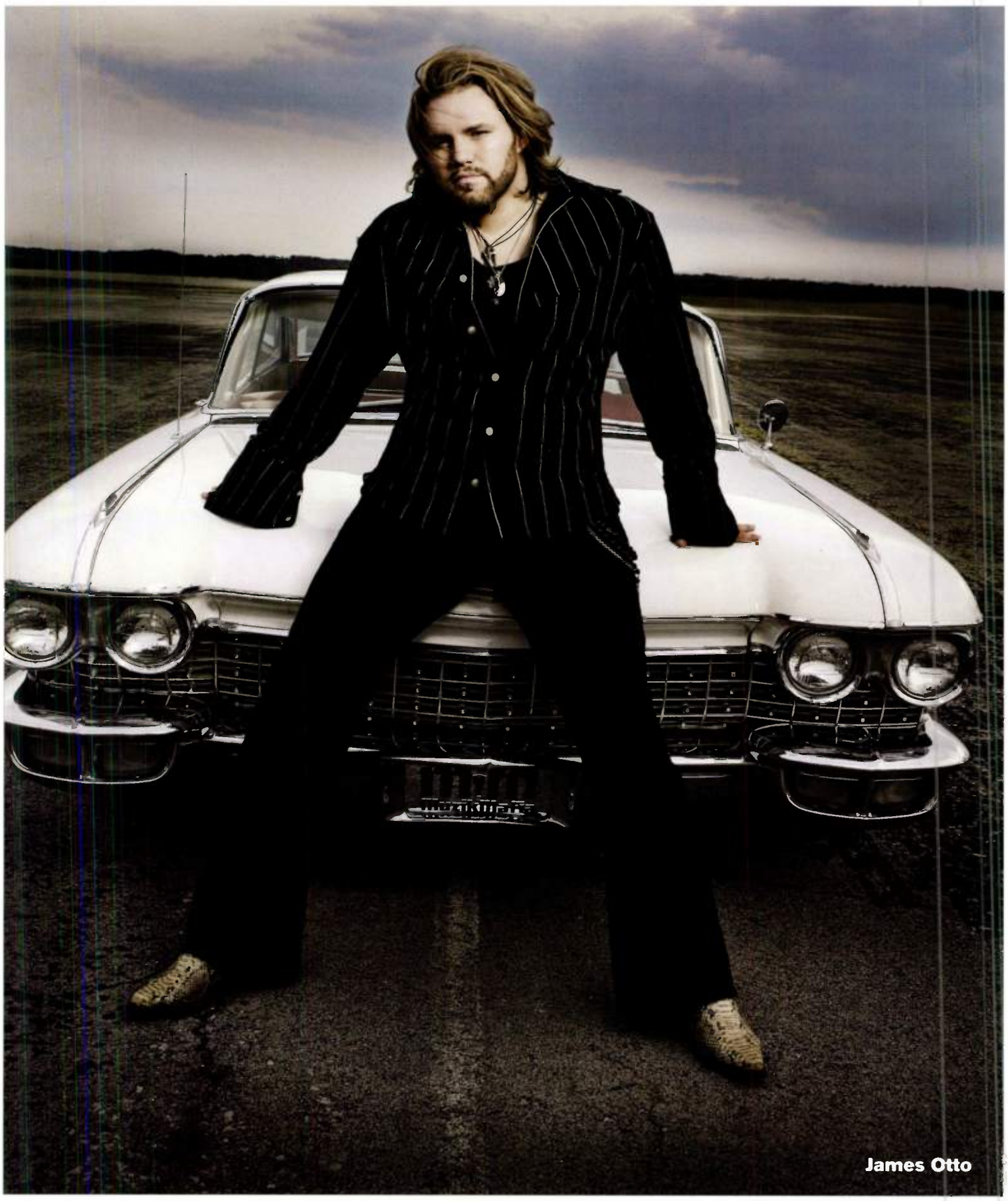
The CD release schedule opens Oct. 2 for the WB with **Faith Hill's** *The Hits*. Veep **Nancy Tunick** says the title of Hill's career-spanning collection also happens to be the promotion department's theme through year-end. "Hits are what we have for the listening audience," she says.

Ongoing are **Blake Shelton's** "The More You Drink" and **Big & Rich's** "Between Raising Hell and Amazing Grace." **Randy Travis** returns to his Warner Bros./Nashville home with a new country project that "evokes his classics but also moves him forward musically," Tunick says.

Joanna Cotten keeps building with her debut single, "The Prize," with Tunick noting that those who've seen her perform live go well beyond fandom to become "a proselytizing converts."

James Otto will continue to visit radio stations, showing off his soulful voice and accomplished songwriting with his lead single, "Just Got Started Loving You." And **Lance Miller** returns from summer touring with Hill and Tim McGraw with his ode to "The Beach."

An introduction to **Lori McKenna** is also in order, and that process has begun with appearances on *Good Morning America, Nightline* and *Oprah* in support of her album, *Unglamorous*. CAC


James Otto

Rusty Walker

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- Pete Benedetti, President & CEO/New Northwest Broadcasters, LLC

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To provide the radio industry with important insights into this elusive generation, Arbitron and Jacobs Media went straight into the homes, apartments and dormitories of young adults to record how they use all types of media and technology in their daily lives.

You'll want to benefit from the rich observations revealed by "The Bedroom Project."

View the trailer at www.jacobsmedia.com

The Bedroom Project: How Young Americans Use and Interact with Media

NAB Radio Show "Super Session"
Wednesday, September 26
3:45 PM – 5:00 PM
Charlotte Convention Center
Overview on Media and Technology

The Bedroom Project: Radio Uncovered

Jacobs Summit 12
Thursday, September 27
2:15 PM – 3:15 PM
Charlotte Convention Center
Radio-specific Insights

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MARC CHASE

Corporate Oxymoron: I'm Here To Help

Marc Chase is one of the most talked-about people in Country radio and in Nashville. And yet, the Clear Channel Sr. VP/Programming has never programmed a Country station, shuns the spotlight, and doesn't have a formal bio or glam-shots to provide the trades. Hell, he doesn't even carry business cards. So, just who is this guy? And why does he wield so much power in the Country world?

Chase describes himself as "a southern-bred Yankee, born in Indiana and raised in Alabama." His love affair with radio began, he says, "while listening to Milo Hamilton and Ernie Johnson do Atlanta Braves play-by-play in the '70s."

As for life, he says simply, "I fell in love with radio in the '70s, my wife in the '80s, my kids in the '90s and I still love 'em all. Currently, I consider myself an oxymoron: I'm from corporate and I'm here to help."

Some may be surprised at another love in his life. "I love country music," he says. "As a kid, I was in the back seat of the car listening to Hank, Sr.; Ferlin Husky; and Waylon. From the time when I was two until now, I have lived in the South. If you're in the South, Country is a way of life. It's more than just a format. The music's a big part of it. But really, it's all about family, friends, God, country – and all that adds up to Country radio. It's pretty amazing."

Chase currently supervises stations of all formats in 46 markets. He says that fewer than 40 of the stations are Country, and he prefers to not single out any of them. We can tell you, however, that some of the Country stations he oversees are among the nation's most successful and most well-known. Some are even legendary.

CA: So, why don't you have business cards?
MC: It's my job to make other people successful. It's not for people to know about me. My goal is to be a service, like a coach or a cheerleader, for our radio stations. My mindset is, "How can I help you get better?" Within that process we have some disagreements, but without a grain of sand and some friction, you wouldn't get a pearl. The best PDs I ever work with are the ones who are unafraid to speak up. They'll say, "Wait a minute, that's not right. I don't think this is the right way to do it. What about doing it this way?" It shows engagement and commitment. And the beautiful part of what we do is that there's more than one right way to do it. Everybody wants a formula. But there are a thousand winning formulas. I try to keep track of the 200-300 bad ones so we can go, "OK, if you do one of these 1,000 things vs. one of these 200, you're going to increase your chances of success."

CA: In addition to being an oxymoron, what else do you do as Clear Channel's Sr. VP/ Programming?
MC: I start fires, put out fires, and, when I am not getting burned, I teach fire prevention.

CA: Do you get singed often?
MC: I get burned all the time. But fire prevention is the best part, because it's usually the part people like. The startin' 'em and puttin' 'em out is the hard work.

CA: How do you manage each station's programming within a market cluster?
MC: Every station needs to understand its role in the competitive market matrix and in the cluster, and then to focus all its resources on being the best it can be.

CA: How do you work with individual PDs? Is it consultant-like, or are you there to present the overall Clear Channel programming tenets and assist in their implementation?
MC: It's market-to-market, station-to-station, format-to-format. In some cases I'm a cheerleader. In some I'm a cheerleader and coach. There are others with which I get the luxury of sitting on the bench watching an amazing team perform. Anyone who has ever worked with more than one station knows you can't possibly do it alone. I am fortunate to work with some truly amazing and talented programmers.

CA: What's your first step in working with PDs?
MC: My favorite example [in describing what I do] is directions. For example, to get to the bathroom from your office, you might turn right, turn left, go straight, open the door, go right, walk in, pee. But, if you started from your kitchen, took those same directions and opened the door and peed, you might not be peeing in the bathroom. You gotta know where you are before you know where you're going. I work with PDs a lot to know where they are, why they are where they are and to help them figure out where they want to go. But at the end of the day, no matter my level of engagement, I am held accountable for the product performance of all the stations in my region.

CA: What are the problem areas that you find yourself working on most with PDs?
MC: The three biggest areas where stations get screwed up are: PDs don't pay attention and what they think they're doing and what is happening isn't really happening; their music gets too new and we work on finding the proper balance of current, recurrent and gold; and, people try to reinvent the wheel. Instead of leaving records that are the core essence of the station alone, PDs will push the fringes. And the fringes will test well, and then PDs will put them into power rather than leaving them in secondary rotation.

CA: Do you have any "basic laws of programming?" By that, I mean certain things that must be done, no matter what?
MC: Protect the license! Pay attention!

CA: What do PDs fail to pay attention to the most?
MC: You're not going to believe me when I tell you it's listening to their radio stations. PDs get busy. They have sales departments to deal with, people calling them, people standing in their doorway and assholes from corporate asking for some report. They get busy and forget to pay attention to the things that are important to the listener. I'd like to wipe out the title of program director and rename the person responsible for the product a "listener advocate." That's what a PD's title should really be. We need people who understand who their listeners are, why they come to our radio stations and how to make sure that while they're there it's the best possible experience they can have – while still making money, because we are a business. The government doesn't underwrite us like they do NPR.

CA: What should a PD be listening for?
MC: It's about feeling good. It's like when you hit the switch, you expect to get light. When you hit the button for a Country station, you want to feel good. No one wants to hit that button and feel angry or miserable.

CA: What's the biggest challenge facing radio – and Country radio – today?
MC: The challenge is the same across all formats – staying on top of the shifts in technology and consumer behavior.

CA: How does radio compete with new technologies that bring all sorts of audio opportunities to consumers?
MC: Technology is still trying to catch up to us, and radio must constantly change if we want to stay ahead. Here's what I do believe about radio: it is the ultimate streaming application. Radio is portable, the price is right and it is very personal. The downside is that we're in the broadcasting business. By that I mean we transmit programming for public or general use, and today the consumer's focus is, "give me what I want, when I want it." To stay ahead of the curve, we must change. Thankfully, we have these little things called websites that open doors radio stations have never really had before. We are at the tip of the iceberg in upside with this combo, and it is one reason why I'm very bullish on our business.

CA: Is HD radio going to get traction?
MC: Oh, man, if I knew the answer to what was going to get traction next, I'd be like Carnac or Nostradamus. HD will eventually get traction.

CA: What have you seen in the PPM?
MC: A ton. But it's early, so it's hard to connect data points and see if they're meaningful. Certain formats do a little bit better in PPM than others. The device itself is totally without emotion. It doesn't care. So you can't vote for your favorite radio station anymore in your diary. You have to really listen. And so we're seeing some of the differences in listening (and voting) as we change currencies.

CA: Should stations be changing now to get ready for PPM and the way that audiences are measured by it, or should they wait until it actually comes to their market?
MC: That's pretty funny. You just asked me, "Should stations change to do something that would benefit their listener more?" versus somebody who's going to fill out a diary and try to remember what they listened to. Here's a sure-fire answer: we should always do something today that's going to make it better for the listener tomorrow.

CA: But that's the point. A lot of programmers program to methodology, not to listeners.
MC: Right. And you know what? You're going to see different levels and different shakeouts as PPM rolls through. We're so early in the transition that I'd love to be able to tout, "Oh, these 15 things work -- do this, this and this."

"THE WAY WE MANAGE IS, 'YOUR BALL, YOUR BAT, YOUR BUTT.' BUT PDS ARE ACCOUNTABLE FOR WHAT THEY DO. IF THEY FUCK UP, I'M GONNA COME PULL THE BALL AND BAT OUT OF THEIR BUTT AND IT'S NOT GOING TO BE PRETTY."

But there are all kinds of diary manipulation tricks and there'll be People Meter manipulation tricks. There's not going to be any system that somebody doesn't try to monkey with.

In the meantime, you've got to figure out what you're about and how to do the best job you possibly can entertaining the people who count on you. Radio has a lot of people who count on us every day — not just the 3.2 days a week like Arbitron tells us. Right? Come on!

CA: What's your sense of radio's future?

MC: Here's the deal: Radio is going to have to change far beyond anything that we can imagine now.

In the next five to seven years, it's possible that we could see changes as radical as when we went from Fibber McGee & Molly and orchestras in studios to disc jockeys and records. We are on the precipice of another fundamental change, and that's my biggest frustration with our industry as a whole. We have a hard time changing. We really haven't changed that much in the last 30 years. But I'm bullish on radio because I'm bullish on our brands.

CA: Is programming a Country music radio station basically the same as all other music stations? Or, are there any "Country radio programming rules" specific to this format?

MC: I know there are critics who would love to hear me say, "It's all cookie-cutter and pre-fab," but it's not. Are there some universals in Country? You bet. Hey, there are some fundamentals that transcend formats. But a radio station is more than just the sum of the individual parts. If done right, it's magic. A radio station should be a living, breathing entity designed to reflect the beliefs of its listeners.

There are some universals, such as that it's better when what we do is focused on the listener than it is when it's about us. Imagine that! The listener likes it more when we talk about things that interest them than things we want them to know about us. We have to do both. But the secret is in the balance.

CA: Do you think most Country stations play too much current music?

MC: Historically, the Country charts would support that statement. Until a few years ago there were only one or two songs that stayed at No. 1 on the Country chart more than one week. I know for a fact that the listeners' passion for a favorite song lasts far longer than 168 hours. But the charts are like, "Boop! No. 1, we're done." Of course, you can never be too new for record label promotion departments. By and large, our radio stations make a lot more money taking care of their primary two sets of clients: listeners and advertisers. The record communities have at least three sets of clients, including the retail chains, the buying public and radio stations.

And, just as radio has Arbitron diary-holders and PPMers that we don't exactly have direct control over, labels have a similar situation with our PDs. I'm sure it's maddening at times, but Clear Channel lets its PDs decide what they add, what they play and how often they play it. They are also accountable for the ratings results.

A lot of our PDs, in virtually every format, enjoy music and want to break new music. You don't have to lead them to do that; they want to do that. The most successful programmers are the best at balancing their hunger for breaking new music with the audience's needs.

CA: Do you think Country stations get out of current hits – in particular the top-testing songs – too early? Should they hold onto records longer?

MC: Yes and no. It varies by programmer. [WAMZ/Louisville PD] **Coyote Calhoun** made it into the Country DJ Hall of Fame by holding onto his recurrents a little longer than any of his jocks would have liked. [KEEY/Minneapolis PD] **Gregg Swedberg** is very aggressive with new music and K102 is very successful. [WMZQ/Washington and WPOC/Baltimore PD] **Meg Stevens** is ultra-conservative. All three are very successful, and all three are smart enough that they'd do it differently if they were in the other person's shoes.

CA: What current-recurrent-gold mix do you think works the best for Country?

MC: The music mix is totally based on the competitive market matrix. When you are the Country franchise in the market, your responsibility to the listener is different than if you are in a three-way ratings war.

Here's a quote for you: Adult stations can be 100% current! But their ratings won't be very good. The art is in mixing the perfect balance of all the available music: current, recurrent and gold.

CA: How do you find that balance?

MC: That's the hardest part. Everybody is so "research, research, research." It's really about painting a music log every day and taking the listener on a musical journey.

We have some PDs who understand their audience and why they come to the radio station. And, every day they set out to take 'em on a musical journey. We also have some programmers who really don't understand the "journey," but who do understand the math behind the journey. So, even if they're not painting a picture, they at least make sure the math works and that they're rotating records through the right hours, dayparts and days. Then, believe it or not, there are some people that just don't understand why they are doing what they are doing. Somebody else set up a system that they're working with, and they just hit F10 and run with it because they've been handed the job. That doesn't mean that somebody who hits F10 isn't a great PD. It's just a different skill set in where they are.

You can't have a few hundred programmers and not have some of everything. It's all kinds of people working together.

CA: When Country stations you work with cut their current lists, your name seems to come up as the reason for the changes – at least among the labels. How involved do you get with a local station's current music decisions?

MC: What gets me involved in that process is the accountability of how well the PDs are doing. [Let's say] the ratings aren't where they should be. Instead of programmers stepping up and saying, "My ratings aren't what they need to be; I'm not managing my talent; I'm not managing my promotions or doing my marketing right;" and/or "I'm not doing my music right," the easiest thing for a PD to do is blame me for cutting their list. And I'll tell you what I've told Nashville record guys: If someone tells you I took a record off their list, call me and I'll tell you if that's the truth.

The SVPPs in Clear Channel do not tell programmers what to add. We do say, "You are responsible for your radio station's performance, and if you're going to invest money in your research, you need to use it. Or, save the 50 to a hundred grand a year and don't do research if you're going to ignore it."

CA: So, the PDs make the music calls? Where does research come in?

MC: Our PDs are the gatekeepers. They pick the songs that get exposed to their listeners. They get the benefit of listener feedback, and that research helps them decide the speed the songs move through rotations.

The way we manage is, "your ball, your bat, your butt." A PD gets the right to read the market, market the research, look at the competitive market matrix and decide what works for them. But, again, they're accountable for what they do. And, if they fuck up, I'm gonna come pull the ball and bat out of their butt and it's not going to be pretty. Am I guilty of holding PDs accountable to their audience? Absolutely. It's a huge part of my job.

CA: With all due respect, in some circles you're viewed as the guy who is single-handedly killing Country radio by slashing Country radio current playlists and applying pop radio rules to Country stations. What's your sense of that?

MC: First of all, if we did apply pop/Top 40 rules to Country radio, no one would be complaining. A Country station that was 90-95% current would have Nashville foaming at the mouth.

Specifically as to being "the guy," it's easier to blame someone else when things are not going as good as would like than to fall on the sword yourself. So people who know … know better. People who don't … don't.

Today, country music is not the mainstream monster it was over a decade ago. The largest market in America doesn't even have a Country station. I'm guessing that's my fault, too.

Here's the rub: My primary concern is protecting the license and growing audience. The listeners like songs far beyond the No. 1 slot on the chart, but that's all that promotion departments need a song to do. The charts are set up to be a leading indicator. There's a gap between the charts and the audience's tastes, and that's where all this noise comes from.

I can assure you that if audience research told us we should be playing 100% current music, that's what we would be doing. In the early '90s, you could not feed the Country listener enough new music. But that's not what the listeners are telling us today. Look, the fun stuff isn't holding onto your recurrents or making sure your best-testing gold song is your most-played gold song. There's nothing glamorous about that. The smarter guys have always done that inherently. They've always held onto the things the audience values the most a little bit longer rather than the things driven by internal or external influences or leading-edge indicators.

So is it what I want? Absolutely not. I take my personal tastes out of it. I quickly found out very early in my programming career that if I played what I liked, things got ugly. I'm better off asking the audience what they want and then do my best to give it to them. I encourage the programmers I work with to do the same. It's like that lifeline on the TV show, *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?* About 85% of the time the audience advice was solid. So if you ask the audience, about 85% of the time you get good advice. It's not a perfect system, but it's state-of-the-art today. You just have to paint your way around it because people can't tell you everything they want.

Managing the gaps is the hardest part – where art meets science. It's reading between the lines. There are gaps between what our advertisers want and what our listeners want; gaps between what the record companies want and what our listeners want; gaps between the record labels and what the artists want; and, gaps between what music consumers want and what record labels want. There are always gaps; there always will be. The key is finding a way to manage between the gaps. Manage … it's not a four-letter word, it just seems like it sometimes. CAC

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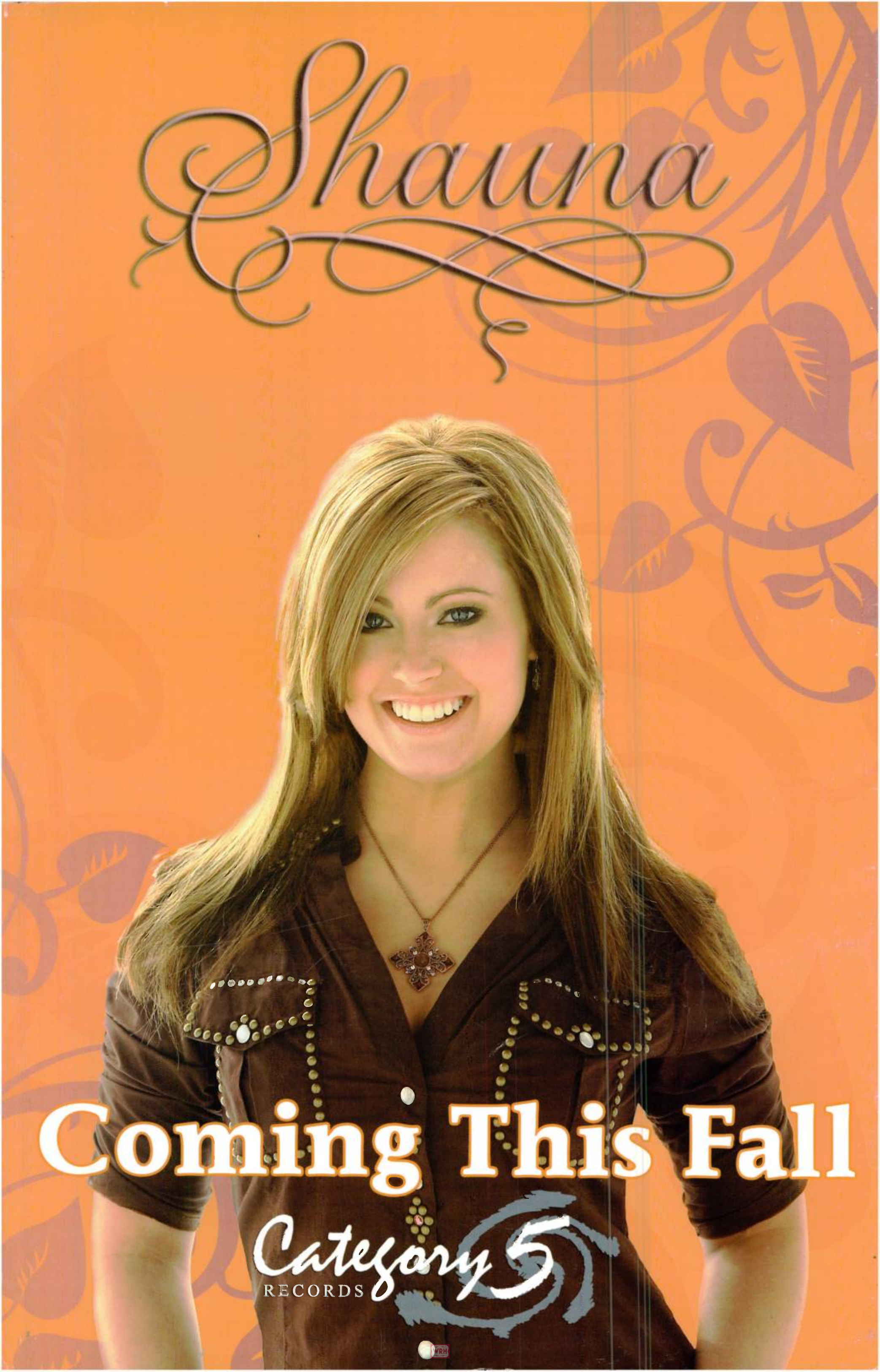
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COUNTRY AIRCHECK

FEBRUARY 2007

LABEL CONTACTS INSIDE!

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JASON ALDEAN

The New Single...

"JOHNNY CASH"

"All you have to do is see how Jason Aldean's audience worships him to understand that he is a major force with the young side of Country. This kid appears to be on the fast track to stardom. How can you argue with a song that advocates getting in the car and cranking up the Man in Black?"

- Gregg Swedberg, Clear Channel Minneapolis, K102

"It's been a long time since I have heard such a lightning rod song. It's an instant smash."

- Joel Burke, Lincoln Financial Denver, KYGO

"I don't give quotes, but with three HIT singles to his credit and a GREAT live show...this guy is a STAR!"

- Mike Moore, Entercom Portland, KWJJ/The Wolf

"Jason should rename this Johnny 'Smash!' Big phones since the first spin..."

- Crash Poteet, ABC Radio Dallas, KTYS/The Texas Twister

"Jason Aldean's 'Johnny Cash' is one of the most refreshing songs I've heard in a while. It's a sure fire hit!"

- Johnny Chiang, Cox Radio Houston, KKBQ/The New Q93

"'Johnny Cash' kicks ASS!!

- Mark Jennings, Citadel Dover, WOKQ/97.5

"Jason Aldean avoids the sophomore jinx! 'Johnny Cash' is a HIT!!"

- Doug Montgomery, Clear Channel Grand Rapids, WBCT/B93

"Another cool song, from a cool guy, about a cool guy. Jason is on fire with our listeners!! 'Johnny Cash' will keep that fire burning!"

- Billy Kidd, Entercom Rochester, WBEE/92.5

"Cash would be proud!!"

- Mike Macho, ABC Radio Atlanta, WKHX/Kicks 101.5

"Jason Aldean goes to the NEXT LEVEL with 'Johnny Cash'!!"

- Dex, Clear Channel Chattanooga, WUSY/US 101

"When I popped that burning ring of fire into the CD player and hit play...I wanted to quit my job, fire up my Mustang and burn rubber to Vegas....then I remembered I was married with children and responsibilities and I came to my senses...but, I couldn't wipe that grin off my face or fight the overwhelming urge to wear nothing but black for the rest of my life!"

- Danny Ryan, Simmons Media Salt Lake City, KEGA/101.5 The Eagle

"This is another huge hit for Jason and we couldn't wait to put it on the air!"

- Bill Dollar, Cumulus Montgomery, WLWI

"Love it. Could we be early on a Jason Aldean song? Stay tuned!"

- Doc Medek, Entercom Scranton, WGGY/Froggy 101

"Jason Aldean makes it FOUR SMASH HITS IN A ROW with 'Johnny Cash'!"

- Jon Loba on behalf of the many CBS Radio Stations who cannot be quoted ☺

BBR

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THE BIG ONES

Nine Huge Moments In CRS History

As CRS-38 opens in Nashville, the seminar is comfortably ensconced as the genre's single most important industry event. Most of that significance is due to the vital connection between Country radio and Nashville's music community, and the annual meeting of the two has been the occasion of many a memorable occurrence. Some have shaped the seminar, others changed the format itself, and a few changed people's lives. All of them sent attendees home with a story to tell, and brought folks back the next year in hopes of catching their own magic moment.

9 Star Grazing
Country's Best & Brightest In Attendance

For some it was **Garth Brooks** keynoting the 1998 seminar before jetting off for a *Saturday Night Live* appearance. Others point to his stripped down ASCAP luncheon performance in 2001, during which Brooks referenced the 1990 CRS performance at which he introduced "Friends In Low Places" to Country radio. The list goes on. **Alan Jackson** recounting his radio successes during Super Faces 2000. **Toby Keith** announcing he was leaving Universal to form his own label (see page 34). The old Artist-Attendee cocktail receptions at which you couldn't turn around without bumping into somebody famous. **Keith Urban** with **Dolly Parton** and **Ronnie Dunn** last year. Inevitably it seems, CRS attendees travel home with fond memories of seeing one of Country's biggest stars because those artists continue to participate in the event — even when they're at the very top of their game.

"We all wondered who the chubby/nerdy guy in the cowboy hat was running around to all the suites handing out cards and promo items. It was Garth Brooks!"
—**Lee Rogers**, KUPL/Portland

"I remember watching Garth get mobbed by CRS attendees in the early 1990's. The energy he generated was reminiscent of Beatlemania, though I don't recall anyone actually fainting. Passed out from the beer maybe, but no fainting."
—**Frank Bell**, Keymarket VP/Programming

"Alan Jackson getting misty at his Superfaces show. There was a moment when he was reflecting on his career and you could see that he was still moved by the music and relationships after all these years."
—**Lance Tidwell**, WGKX/Memphis PD

8 A River Runs Through It
RCA Launches The Boat

It's never been an official CRS event. In fact, its very existence caused quite a bit of CRB board consternation early on. Now in its 21st year, "The Boat" has nevertheless become part of the fabric of CRS.

The annual RCA, then RCA-BNA, then RLG and now Sony BMG, cruise down the Cumberland has land-locked origins. The first pre-seminar RCA gathering was at **Joe Galante**'s house. The next year it grew a bit and rained, so Joe erected a tent. Having outgrown his yard, Joe went searching for a new venue in 1987.

"I wanted someplace smaller and more intimate than a ballroom," he says. "Plus, I didn't want to do it at the hotel because promo guys from every other label would work the radio guys while we were feeding them and serving drinks."

Over the years, passengers have been fortunate enough to see **ZZ Top** trading licks with **Brad Paisley, Huey Lewis** joining **Phil Vassar**, Paisley and **Alison Krauss** debuting "Whisky Lullaby," an eight-month pregnant **Martina McBride** singing "Concrete Angel," tributes to **Ronnie Milsap, Waylon Jennings**, and moving remarks from Alan Jackson to outgoing Arista VP **Bobby Kraig**.

For Galante, the highlight is **Eddy Arnold**. "It wasn't just Eddy's performance," he says. "It was watching Martina, **Lorrie Morgan** and **Mindy McCready** sitting on the steps with their faces in their hands, totally mesmerized."

"It was such a monopoly back then we were determined to 'sink it.' We had spotlights shooting across the river shining on giant Reba and Vince billboards. We hired a high school marching band and had circulating spotlights and cheerleaders. As the boat came in, we could see people on the deck laughing and reacting. It was a night none of us will ever forget."
—**Scott Borchetta**, Big Machine President (former MCA VP/Promotion)

FROM THE PUBLISHER

For 38 years, the Country Radio Seminar has been broadcasting's preeminent convention. Its "Growth Through Sharing" credo is not an empty promise. CRS was built to educate and inform. Beneficiaries have ranged from broadcasting's elite to programmers in the smallest of small markets. It's not too great an exaggeration to suggest that almost everyone involved in programming a Country station or promoting a country record in the last 38 years has attended at least one CRS. And, they all have one thing in common: unforgettable moments.

Lon Helton

CRS-38 will be my 25th CRS. Like all of you, I could fill this entire publication with stories. For me, it's seeing Garth Brooks in the United Stations suite in 1989 and then interviewing him before a packed ballroom in 1998. It was sitting next to Toby Keith in 2005 when he shocked the room with the news he was going to launch his own label. There was Malrite's John Chaffee in his "Wonder Woman" outfit. And keynoters Dick Clark, Lou Holtz, Sam Donaldson, Terry Bradshaw and Ken Kragen, among so many others.

CRS' "special moments" come from everywhere: the keynotes, the sessions, the performances — whether at the old Super Faces Show, the new Music City Jam, the New Faces Show, the Boat, the suites or the clubs on lower Broadway — or Opryland Hotel's Pickin' Parlor or the Renaissance Hotel's Bridge Bar. They're all part and parcel of the CRS experience.

For this, Country Aircheck's very first CRS special, we asked seminar veterans for their favorite CRS moments. Hopefully our countdown will cause you to reflect on your own special CRS memories. As CRB Executive Director **Ed Salamon** noted, "More important moments in Country music happen during CRS than the rest of the year combined."

May CRS-38 create a few more great memories for you. If it doesn't, well, then you're not really trying.

Lon Helton

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COUNTRY AIRCHECK

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7 Downtown & Country

Outgrowing Opryland & Crossing The River

You have to be old as **Charlie Monk** to know CRS got its start in downtown Nashville at the Sheraton on Broadway before bouncing around to several hotels over the next few years. In 1982, it moved to the largest convention hotel east of the Mississippi — Opryland, and held court for 16 years. The 1998 homecoming was influenced by a number of factors including a revitalized downtown, as well as seminar's size warranting a stand-alone convention.

Instead of sharing Opryland with other confabs (Liquid Waste Haulers, anyone?), CRS had an area to itself, access to a wider variety of venues for after hours events, and was much closer to Music Row — a big plus for the locals. And so Cascades gave way to the Convention Center, Magnolia B gave way to 209-210, and the Pickin' Parlor gave way to the Bridge Bar.

"Somehow I hooked up with John Wesley Ryles and we were stumbling from hospitality suite to hospitality suite at the Opryland Hotel – both of us of fairly light complexion and blonde. The Urban League was also having a convention and John and I stumbled into one of their suites. As much as we stuck out in that environment, we continued drinking and the people from the Urban League didn't seem at all fazed."

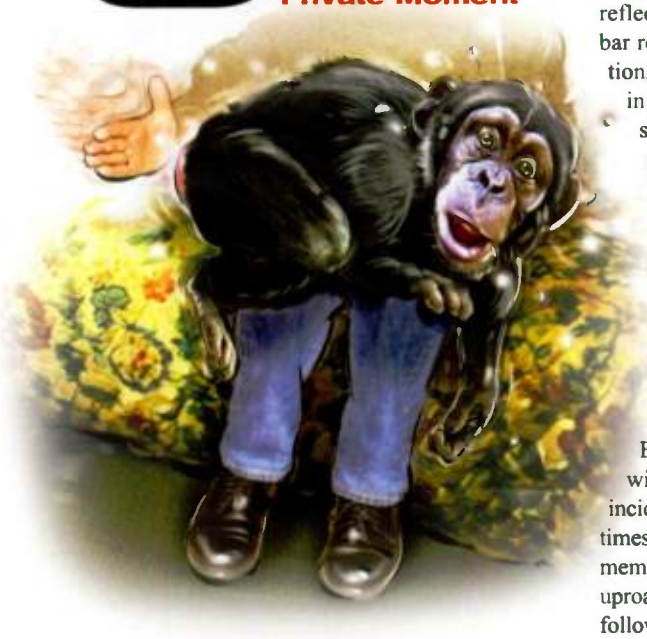
—Dale Carter, KFKF/Kansas City PD

"Epic had a basement suite at Opryland. We used to call it the Bunker. On one particular all-nighter the power went out at the hotel. Rob Dalton called the front desk to complain that he was in a pitch black room trying to entertain some folks and when could he expect the power back on? The person on the other end of the phone prompted Rob to think about opening his curtains to let in the daylight. Who would have thunk it? How time flies when you are having fun."

—Mike Rogers, Curb Director/National Promotion

6 Take Off Your Pants & Jacket

Bridge Par Patrons Share Attendee's Private Moment



Arguably the most talked about performance in seminar history is also its most infamous. One late night during CRS 2001, patrons at the Bridge Bar noticed that the image of an upper floor window was reflected on the angled glass of the bar roof. Inside the room in question, a CRS attendee was engaged in an act for which he probably should have pulled the drapes.

As the bar crowd realized what was happening they began cheering the self engrossed gentleman's every effort. Eventually, a small contingent decided to visit the room and save this man from any further embarrassment. When he was finally convinced to go to the window and look down, the Bridge Bar throng greeted him with a mighty roar. Since then, the incident has been retold countless times and immortalized, perhaps most memorably, in **Blake Shelton**'s uproarious New Faces video clip the following year.

5 The Night It Felt So Right

From New Faces To Nipper

More than 300 performers have graced the New Faces stage in the last 37 years. While most have us have favorite moments, the 1980 New Faces show changed the face of Country music forever.

Alabama qualified for the 1980 show with "I Wanna Come Over," a single on MDJ Records that peaked at No. 33 on the national charts late in 1979. They opened New Faces that year by singing their two allotted songs a cappella, even choosing not to use the requisite house band. They weren't even done with the second song when Joe Galante, then VP/Marketing for RCA/Nashville, headed for the stage to set up a meeting.

You've Come A Long Way, Bama

"I thought 'God almighty, this is absolutely incredible," Galante recalled. "And, it was a band!" Bands weren't part of the Country landscape at the time. There were singing groups, but no bands.

The next day, MDJ Records owner and band manager **Larry McBride** spent about an hour with Galante and RCA/Nashville President **Jerry Bradley** before signing a deal for the finished MDJ album at just under $100,000. Alabama became the first band signed to a major Nashville label.

After 27 years, 42 No. 1 hits, 95 million albums sold and untold millions of concert-going fans Alabama has been inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame.

"CRS was a lot smaller then and the New Faces show was held in a banquet room. It was very intimate, and you got a real feel for Alabama's passion level and how serious they were. Even though they only sang, there was just something about them – particularly Randy Owen – that was very special. Everybody felt it that night."

—Bobby Kraig, radio and industry veteran

4 The Day The Music Slowed

Edison's Rosin Put No.1s In Perspective

It was titled innocently enough — "A Statistician Looks At Country." But its reverberations were felt throughout the entire industry. It may well be the most-talked about session in the seminar's 38-year history, as well as the most misunderstood. After the 1999 presentation, Edison Research President **Larry Rosin** was credited — blamed? — for single-handedly slowing down rotations and add policies at Country radio.

"That was one of the most talked about speeches I've ever given," Rosin says. "It's fun to be seen as being that influential, but what I said was largely misinterpreted. I absolutely, positively did *not* tell Country programmers to slow down their rotations. But a combination of things, including R&R's move to using Mediabase data to compile its charts three months later, made it appear as if I had waved a magic wand and made it all happen."

Detailing his original intent, Rosin explains, "Country ratings had been down for several years ...and a number of programmers said it was because there weren't enough good songs. I asked the question, "If there aren't enough good songs right now, how can there be 45 songs good enough to go No. 1?" AC had 11 and CHR had 17. One of the most influential things I did was show a market where a Hot AC station had played Faith Hill's 'This Kiss' more times than the Country station. The reason was the Country station 'cleared the runway' after 'This Kiss' had landed to make room for the next single, while the Hot AC hung with the record. That example shocked a lot of PDs.

Rosin's presentation can still be found in the archives at *www.edisonresearch.com/home/archives/CRSFINAL.pdf.*

"The Edison research, along with Critical Mass Media's findings that people were tired of being force fed the music too quickly, had a lot to do with rotations slowing down. I recall that our Milwaukee study and the Edison report were virtually identical. It made me think twice about moving songs up the chart in such a hurry."

—Kerry Wolfe, Clear Channel/Milwaukee OM and WMIL PD

"Larry gets a bad rap. At that same CRS, AC expert Mike McVay said that he couldn't understand why Country dropped songs so fast when they continued to test better and better for a format we shared so much audience with. That was the year that Persons Using Radio trends started downward for all of radio. Anyone who calculated their current categories OES saw they needed to spin songs more times per week and/or hold onto songs longer in order to get the same level of reach and frequency. Rosin spotted an important trend and was pointing out something many stations and programmers were already taking action on."

—Jaye Albright, Albright & O'Malley Country Consulting

Devil Du Jour: It's all Larry Rosin's fault.

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THE BIG ONES

3 Not A Moment Too Soon

Tim McGraw's New Faces Performance

"That was the first night of my career," **Tim McGraw** has said of his 1994 CRS New Faces performance. After a slight pause, he amended that to, "It was really the first night of my *life*."

Unquestionably, a star was born that night. McGraw had "Indian Outlaw" on the charts at the time, but when he sang "Don't Take The Girl"' there was magic in the room. The irony is that it almost didn't happen. Back then, New Faces artists sang two songs with a house band. "We couldn't get the sound right on either one of the songs," McGraw said. "In fact, I almost got conveniently sick...and didn't perform at all. Thank God I didn't."

There's one more reason McGraw probably still thanks his lucky stars he didn't call in sick that night. That same New Faces Show was the first time Tim met his future wife, and the mother of their three girls, **Faith Hill**. Apparently it was a *very* magical night.

"Everybody was raucous during 'Indian Outlaw.' Then, as they started listening and getting into 'Don't Take The Girl,' the room got more and more quiet. You couldn't even hear the clinking of glasses by the time the song was over. Tim said thank you and walked off the stage. Boom. Done. That one-two punch sent them through the roof. People went nuts."

—Tim McFadden, artist manager

"One of the most electric concert moments I've ever witnessed. He just blew it out to a standing ovation. In less than 10 minutes a superstar had been born."

—Tony Thomas, KMPS/Seattle APD/MD/PM driver

"There are very few careers where you can point to a single night or performance and say, 'That show made a difference.' But Tim's New Faces performance did just that. Even before the album was released Tim told me he wanted 'Don't Take The Girl' as the second single. We wanted to show that even though he had a big hit with a novelty song, he had depth and was a serious artist."

—Mike Curb, CEO Curb Records

2 Here's A Crazy Idea...

CRS Founders Focus On Dialogue

This is the moment without which no others would exist. The earliest contributors to Country Radio Seminar, **Tom McEntee, Jerry Seabolt, Barbara Starling, Biff Collie, Dave Olson, Ralph Paul** and **Charlie Monk**, were in part reacting to the old DJ Convention which had become little more than a alcohol binge. Calling the event a "seminar" and encouraging the free flow of ideas rather than just liquor gave the event meaning.

Seventy people, including 43 from radio, attended the first CRS. Despite losing money, CRS-1 did what we've all come to expect: It allowed attendees to communicate directly with their colleagues about the industry and the challenges they all faced. Most importantly, it sent 70 people home with glowing reports about the gathering. And that positive word of mouth carries through to this day.

"I wasn't looking to create a schoolroom atmosphere where people came to be lectured. I was more focused on creating...a place for people of similar interests and goals to gather and build something in common. And though it was impossible for me to imagine what might happen...one thing was apparent: It could change the world of Country radio."

—Tom McEntee, CRS co-founder

Start Foundation. Early CRS contributors include (l-r) Jerry Seabolt, Tom McEntee, Barbara Starling, Charlie Monk and the late Biff Collie.

1 Child's Play

St. Jude and Country: A Match Made In Heaven

Country Aircheck's top CRS moments have ranged from the seminal to the silly. And while one can quibble with the order or even the inclusion of some of these "events," there's no arguing the No. 1 moment in CRS history to date. It's doubtful any convention, anywhere, in any business featured a keynote speech that has had a more profound and long-lasting affect as the one Alabama's **Randy Owen** delivered at the 1989 Country Radio Seminar.

It was there that Owen issued this challenge to Country radio: "Because of our visibility we have an opportunity to do a tremendous amount of good for organizations like St. Jude that really help. For me, it's more than an opportunity — it's an obligation."

Eight months later, the very first Country radiothon for St. Jude was on the air, raising $1.2 million. Since then, Country radio and the country recording industry have has raised more than $280 million for the Memphis-based children's research hospital.

This year, more than 200 Country radio stations are expected to conduct "Country Cares For St. Jude Kids" radiothons. They'll have plenty of company, as St. Jude continues its "Radio Cares for St. Jude Kids" programs that encompass other formats, including AC, Oldies, Urban, Gospel and Rock. And, more than 60 stations are expected to take part in a Spanish-language-format program called Promesa Y Esperanza (Promise and Hope) that began in 1997.

"Years ago after meeting my father, Randy Owen visited St. Jude, saw the children and fell in love with them. Because of Randy's continued leadership and commitment to Country Cares, children all over the world are surviving catastrophic diseases and leading healthy lives. We are ever grateful to Randy."

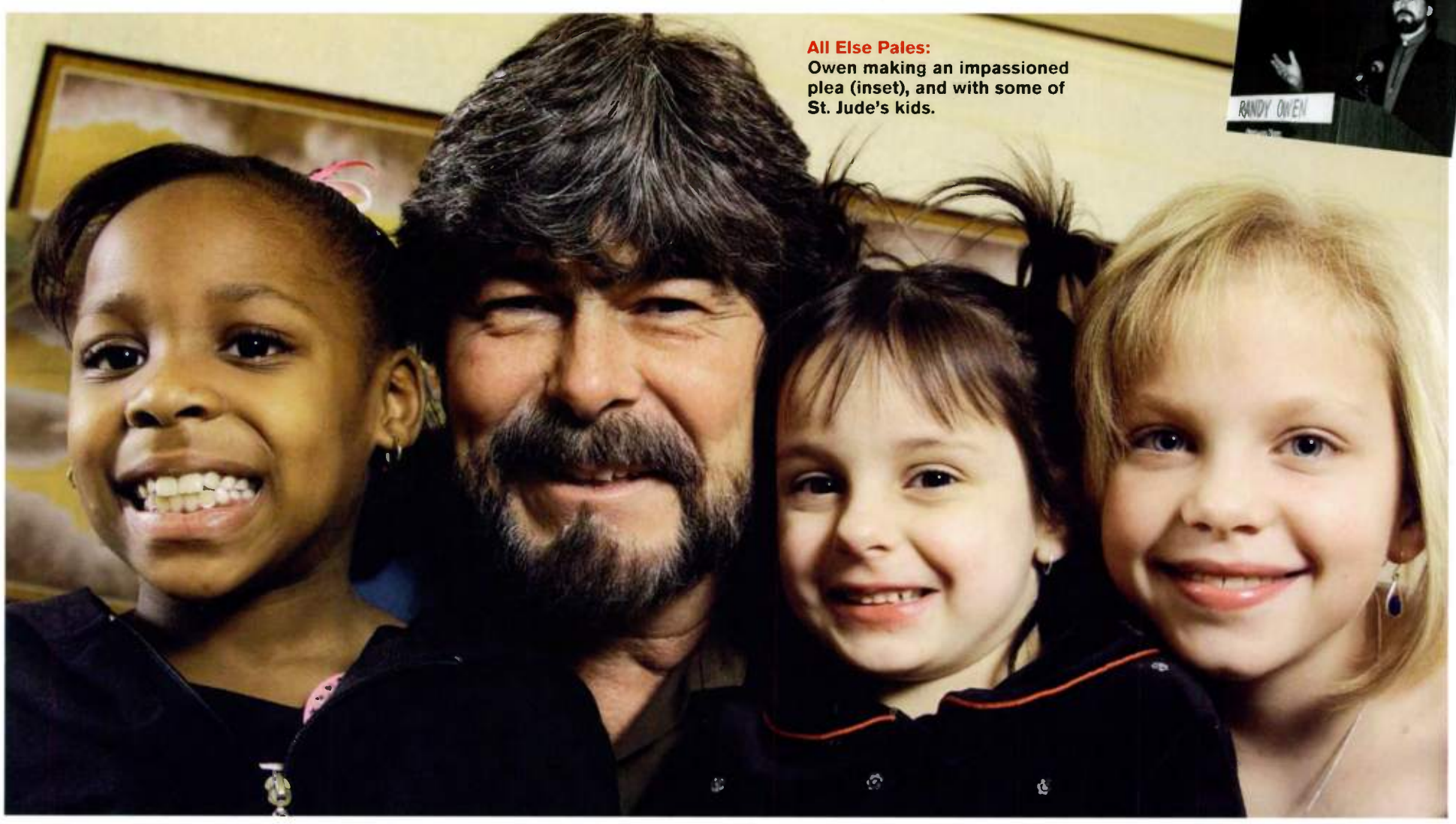
—Terre Thomas

"Without the leadership, time and talent of Randy Owen, the Country Cares for St. Jude Kids program would not be where it is today. Randy's contribution to St. Jude has been one of great passion, dedication and devotion. His challenge to Country radio so many years ago was the beginning of a remarkable relationship that helped generate a program that is now the foundation for our fundraising efforts. Our Country Cares partner stations have not only raised a tremendous amount of money for us, but they have also generated a great deal of awareness about St. Jude and the mission we serve. Radio carries our message of hope to people all across the country."

—Dave McKee, COO, ALSAC/St. Jude Children's Research Hospital

"It's a natural because St. Jude kids and country music have so much in common. The music speaks straight to the heart, reminding us of the importance of love and laughter in the face of pain, the deep meaning of simple joys, the value of courage, the necessity of faith against huge odds."

—the late Danny Thomas, St. Jude Founder, in a letter soliciting country artists' assistance with Owen's radiothon idea.



All Else Pales: Owen making an impassioned plea (inset), and with some of St. Jude's kids.

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Country Music DJ AND RADIO HALL OF FAME

LES ACREE

Big Stations, Big Talent, Big Heart

Raised on a farm in Memphis, Les Acree felt destined for radio listening to his heroes Bob Neal, Wink Martindale, Dewey Philips and John Froland, and seeing them at the local fair. Mentored by such key figures as Dean Osmundson, Bruce Nelson, Bob Young and Jonathan Fricke, Les worked his way up from small markets to programming several of Country's crown jewels — WMC/Memphis, WGKX/Memphis, WIVK/Knoxville, WTQR/Raleigh-Durham, WNOE/New Orleans and KRMD/Shreveport, among others, winning several national awards. His legacy for outstanding community service includes being the first major market station to do fundraising for St. Jude Children's Hospital. While Les feels blessed to have collaborated with so many talented broadcasters and recording artists, the list of luminaries who feel the same about having worked with, learned from and supported by him would fill many pages. Of his induction into the Country Disc Jockey Hall of Fame, the irrepressible 45-year veteran says, "I ain't dead yet. I'm just as excited about radio today as I was back when I started in 1961."

Music was a big part of my family. We had a radio in the barn when we were milking cows, and in the field while pulling peanuts. I decided at nine years old I wanted to be in radio. In ninth grade my English teacher had us stand up and read a poem. She said, "My gosh, I need to tell some people about you and see if we can get you into some speech competitions." We didn't have a speech class, but I was in the Future Farmers of America, which had a creed contest where you recite the FFA creed. I won that, and went on to win the FFA West Tennessee Public Speaking Contest. That gave me the confidence that I could do this as a career.

We were fortunate enough to have a radio school in Memphis. My parents said, "Well give this a try. But if you fall on your face, you're going to college." I said, "Okay, that's a deal." I was at Keegan's School of Broadcasting and playing drums in a band. The manager from KDKD/Clinton, MO called wanting someone to do an afternoon rock and roll show. The instructor said, "Well, we've got a pretty good student here who plays in a rock and roll band." The GM got me on the line and told me, "Grab some copy," and I auditioned right over the telephone. We made a deal for $60 a week, and I was about to jump out of my pants. My folks didn't believe me at first: "You auditioned over the *telephone*? Are you kidding me?"

> "WE HAD ONE TURNTABLE SO WE HAD TO TALK BETWEEN EVERY SONG, WHICH TAUGHT ME HOW TO BE A SEMI-PERSONALITY."

I got off the bus with two suitcases at the town square in Clinton, Missouri. I didn't know a soul, but was ready for an adventure. I caught a cab to the station, and on the way the driver had a heart attack. An ambulance was called, and I was 30 minutes late my first day. The station was actually in a house because they figured in case it didn't go over, they could always sell it as a home! I was so nervous. I was intent on using "Les Allen" on the air, as Acree was an unusual name, and I liked Steve Allen, who was popular at that time. One break I'd say Les Allen, but the next break I'd say Les Acree, and back and forth. Finally, the manager said, "By God, I don't care which name you use, just stick to one of them!" I figured I'd never forget my real name, and that's how Les Acree became Les Acree.

We only had one turntable so we had to talk between every song, which taught me how to be a semi-personality. We finally got two turntables and a new board with audition channels so we could do production while on the air. One Friday I had a stack of about nine spots and a hot date. I put the mike in audition, and got started, clearing my throat and saying cuss words after each spot. I got through them all, smiled, turned that mic off audition and then realized that the board was still in program. The mike was on either way, and everything I'd done went on the air. No wonder the phone was ringing!

Two years later I was programming WTUP/Tupelo — my first PD job — and we had an opening. A guy came in wearing a pair of tight jeans, boots and ducktail. I said, "Who in the world is *that* walking down the hall?" He was looking for a job, and I said, "Well, I'll never hire that guy." The manager brought him back and said, "This is Bruce Nelson. He goes by the name *Phil Harmonic*. He wants a job." After I listened to his tape, I said, "This guy's great." Later on he would become my PD at WUBE/Cincinnati. Today Bruce is a member of the Country DJ Hall Of Fame and a great friend.

A station's license means it's there to support its community, and I was a recipient myself of a Goodwill Industries Christmas when I was in the sixth grade. Our house had burned down and we lost everything. I always appreciated charity from that day forward. I knew I hadn't done anything wrong and wasn't trying to take advantage of anyone; we just needed help.

I remember standing in the kitchen in the late '50s. Mom and dad were reading the paper, and said, "Danny Thomas is going to build a hospital in Memphis that treats kids for cancer and does research. It's going to be absolutely free." I thought it was so profound that he'd do that for all these kids he doesn't know. While programming WMQM/Memphis these sorority gals came to me and said, "We want to have a fundraiser for St. Jude. Can you get us some artists? We'll get some auction items and call it the St. Jude Life-A-Thon." Everything fell into place. We did it for two-three years there and three more years at WMC, with Ronnie McDowell, John Anderson, Jerry Lee Lewis, Charly McClain and others. These gals would rent a truck and drive around to furniture stores, asking, "What can you give us?" They were pretty nice-looking ladies; it was hard for those men to turn them down. When it came time for the first national St. Jude fundraiser, I hopped on board at WTQR and have been involved one way or another ever since. It's always been special to me and always will be.

I go back to that kid standing on that square with two suitcases ready for the world, and I never dreamed this day would come. Thank God for [founder] Chuck Chellman ... I didn't even know there would ever be such a thing as a Country Disc Jockey and Radio Hall of Fame. It's pretty darn humbling, especially when you look at who has gone in and those I'm going in with. Other than accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as my savior, getting married and my kids, this would rank next in line, that's how big it is." CAC

Team Building: Acree (above) at CRS with (l-r) Louise Mandrell, RC Bannon, Ronnie Milsap and Wayne Edwards. At right, he's pictured (left) with WMC/Memphis staffers.

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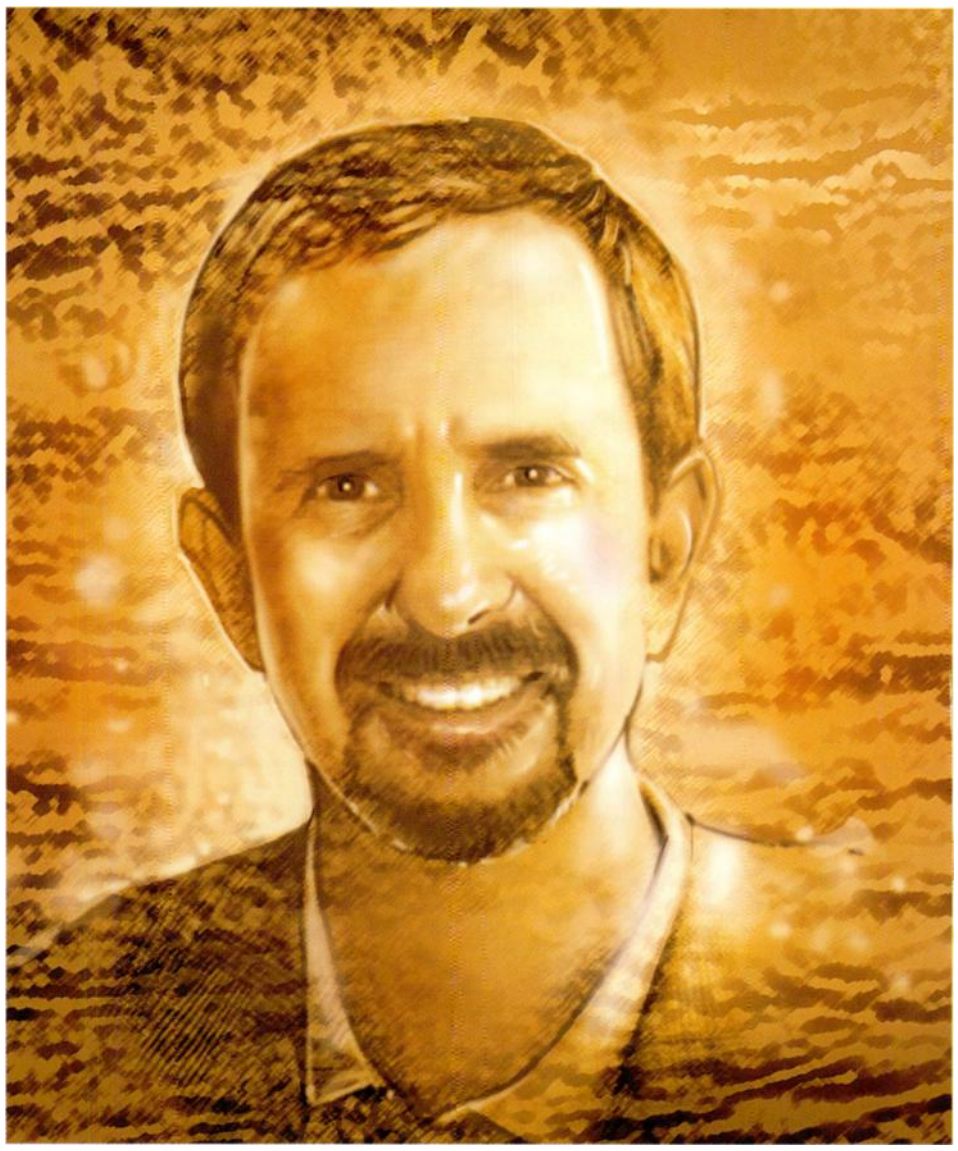
Country Music DJ AND RADIO HALL OF FAME

LARRY DANIELS

50 Years Of Integrity, Passion And Class

While learning to drive a tractor at age eight in California's San Joaquin Valley, young Larry Daniels never dreamed that as a teen he would ease away from the dust and toil of farming to pursue a career in radio. A simple spiritual moment of motivation led Larry to his first job at a local station. From there, a coincidental encounter with Buck Owens, with whom Larry shared a common bond for understanding and appreciating one's audience, eventually paved the road to Arizona, where Larry was instrumental in leading KNIX/Phoenix to unprecedented local and national stature. After nearly three decades with KNIX, Larry formed his own successful consultancy, and this year commemorates his 50th year in radio. Always ready to embrace the creative process, Larry is eager to solicit input on all ideas, including his own, to improve them. Long regarded as one of radio's most thoughtful, well-reasoned broadcasters, this Country Radio Hall of Fame inductee also possesses an intangible intuition that complements his formidable strategic skills.



One day in high school in Tulare, our teacher was talking about radio and a thought just popped up in my mind: "I wonder how I can get into radio?" And there was this message that came to me, "Go ask your teacher." She said, "There's a station three blocks from here, why don't you go ask them?" It was lunch hour, and so off I ran to KGEN-AM. I told the GM Bob McVay that I'd come down every afternoon after school to file records, carry out the trash — whatever they needed — if they'd just teach me radio. There was this quiet silence, and I thought, "Oops, this is not gonna work." Then he said, "Can you start tomorrow?" I still get goose bumps just thinking about it.

I was paid $1 an hour. Three months down the road, they had taught me a lot. Because KGEN was a daytimer, I got to practice at the control board at night. One Saturday I was carrying out trash and the DJ didn't show up. Mr. McVay turned to me and asked, "Larry, can you do it?" I said, "Yes, sir!" So he put me in the control room. The record was playing, and at the end I got scared; I didn't know what to say. Mr. McVay stood right behind me and said, "Well, Larry, don't just sit there, *say* something." So I turned the mic on, back-announced the song and just went into the next one. That's how it all started.

Within two years, KGEN switched to all-Country. I guess I was a hard worker, and the manager named me PD. I was just 18 or 19. A few days later, I got this phone call from a pay phone alongside Highway 99. The guy says, "Hello, so you guys have gone Country, huh? Well, you probably don't know me. My name is Buck Owens." He was just starting out, but I knew who he was because I'd seen him on his daily Bakersfield television show. Buck asked if he could come on by, and when he did he brought out a record and said, "Larry, I met this new singer I worked with on a show in Oregon a few days ago. She's going to be a big star someday. You need to play this one." It was Loretta Lynn's first record on Zero Records.

We became big friends, and one afternoon I asked Buck if I could interview him. "Sure," he said. But I'd never interviewed anybody before. I was so scared that Buck had to ask the questions, and he wound up interviewing me! Buck was very radio-friendly and just a fun, great person. In 1961 I went to KUZZ/Bakersfield to do afternoons and within six months the manager named me PD. In 1965 Buck bought the station, and that was such a thrill. He always told people he inherited me.

Bakersfield had five nightclubs with live bands every night. Buck had bought the Pine Burr Dance Hall in Goshen, CA and his band would play there Friday and Saturday nights. Soon his career was starting to shoot up; he was having one hit after another. One day he said, "Larry, could you put a band together and go play the Pine Burr every Friday and Saturday? I'll book the talent and you can back them up." He taught me to be a musician, and every once in awhile he would get me up there to sing with him. I played rhythm guitar, and hired Doyle Holly to be my bass player and some other incredible musicians. A couple of years later, Buck was looking for a bass player and I recommended Doyle, and he became one of the Buckaroos. We recently lost Doyle, and that was very tough. He was a wonderful person and a great friend.

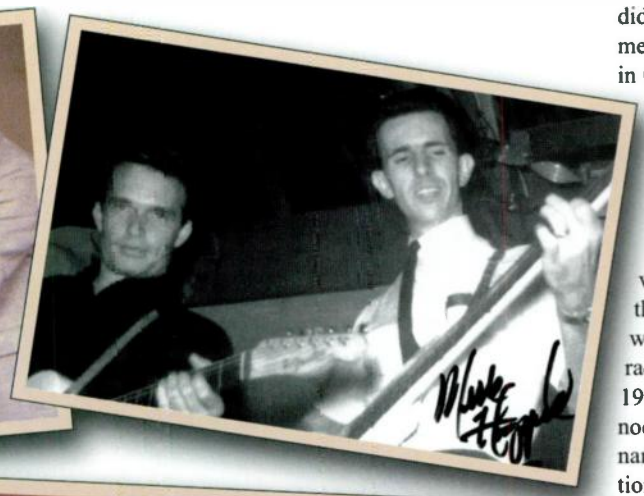
After Buck bought KUZZ, he came to me and asked if I could teach radio to his sons Buddy, 17, and Michael, 15. So after school they would come down to the station, and they'd help me take out the trash, too! I worked with them a bit and then put them on the air together as a team in afternoons. Buddy was extremely funny on the air, while Michael was very disciplined and into strategy, and I told my wife then that I thought someday I'd be working for him. In 1971, Buck bought two stations in Phoenix, and asked me if I would come to work at Country KTUF and KNIX. Within a year I asked them if they wouldn't mind switching the FM to Country because I thought FM is going to be big.

In 1978, Michael Owens became my boss — just as I had predicted. He had this theory: "Whatever is right for our listeners, let's do it." We focused on our listeners constantly. Michael let me hire the best people, and they all were such an inspiration for me. We believed in brainstorming a lot, and came up with the best idea when we worked together. That's the way Michael wanted it. It probably came from Buck originally because Buck focused on his fans so much. After his performances, he'd take off his hat, shake their hands and talk with them. He was great with people.

I find that stations who talk directly to their listeners in a kind and loving way are the ones that win big. I'm a big believer in putting the listeners in front of all your planning. If you treat them like friends on and off the air, you are going to win them over.

I never thought I'd be inducted into the Country Radio Hall of Fame. As a child, I figured I'd be working on a farm out in the field all my life. I've been really blessed to be in radio. It's been my first love, obviously, and to have been led right into it is unbelievable ... I think predestined. There's a message sent to each of us. All we have to do is listen. CAC

> "I'M A BIG BELIEVER IN PUTTING THE LISTENERS IN FRONT OF ALL YOUR PLANNING. IF YOU TREAT THEM LIKE FRIENDS ON AND OFF THE AIR, YOU ARE GOING TO WIN THEM OVER."



Bakersfield Sound: Daniels (above) with KNIX execs Bob Podolsky and Michael Owens on the station's 20th anniversary; laying down the bass for Merle Haggard in 1965; and staying in tune with Buck and Michael Owens during Daniels' 10th anniversary with KNIX.

WHEN BOB KINGSLEY'S COUNTRY TOP 40 IS ON THE AIR THESE STATIONS ARE

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- Poughkeepsie, NY WRWD-FM
- St. Cloud, MN WWJO-FM
- Columbia, SC WCOS-FM
- Utica, NY WFRG-FM*
- Lansing, MI WITL-FM*
- Sioux City, IA KSUX-FM
- Sacramento, CA KNCI-FM*
- Melbourne, FL WHKR-FM
- Cincinnati, OH WUBE-FM*
- Baltimore, MD WPOC-FM
- San Diego, CA KSON-FM
- New London, CT WCTY-FM
- Cookeville, TN WGSQ-FM*
- Milwaukee, WI WMIL-FM
- Gainesville/Ocala, FL WOGK-FM*
- Salt Lake City, UT KUBL-FM
- West Palm Beach, FL WIRK-FM
- Muskegon, MI WMUS-FM*
- Great Falls, MT KMON-FM*
- Alpena, MI WATZ-FM
- Pasco, WA KORD-FM*
- Panama City, FL WPAP-FM*
- Birmingham, AL WDXB-FM
- Albuquerque, NM KRST-FM
- Meridian, MS WOKK-FM*
- Charlottesville, VA WCYK-FM*
- Las Vegas, NV KWNR-FM
- Juneau, AK KTKU-FM*
- Boston, MA WKLB-FM
- Providence, RI WCTK-FM*
- Jacksonville, FL WQIK-FM*
- Albany, NY WGNA-FM*
- Fresno, CA KSKS-FM*
- Texarkana, TX KKYR-FM
- Mobile, AL WKSJ-FM*
- Lexington, KY WBUL-FM*
- Syracuse, NY WBBS-FM*
- Huntington, WV WTCR-FM*
- Honolulu, HI KHCM-AM
- Des Moines, IA KJJY-FM
- Portland, ME WTHT-FM
- Omaha, NE KXKT-FM*
- Little Rock, AR KSSN-FM
- Rochester, NY WBEE-FM*
- Cape Girardeau, MO KEZS-FM*
- Charleston, WV WQBE-FM*
- Shreveport, LA KXKS-FM
- Springfield, IL WFMB-FM*
- Denver, CO KYGO-FM*
- Lafayette, IN WKOA-FM*
- Twin Falls, ID KKMV-FM
- Dillon, MT KDBM-AM
- Bend, OR KSJJ-FM
- San Angelo, TX KGKL-FM
- Mankato, MN KYSM-FM*
- Victoria, TX KIXS-FM
- Washington, DC WMZQ-FM
- Valdosta, GA WAAC-FM*
- Jackson, MS WMSI-FM
- Burlington, VT WOKO-FM
- Bristol, VA WXBQ-FM*
- Harlingen, TX KTEX-FM
- Waco, TX WACO-FM*
- Quad Cities, IA-IL WLLR-FM*
- Johnstown, PA WFGI-FM*
- El Paso, TX KHEY-FM
- Evansville, IN WKDQ-FM*
- Youngstown, OH WQXK-FM*
- Fayetteville, AR KKIX-FM*
- Lebanon, NH WXXK-FM
- Billings, MT KCTR-FM
- Ft. Wayne, IN WQHK-FM*
- Myrtle Beach, SC WGTR-FM
- Fayetteville, NC WKML-FM
- Florence, AL WXFL-FM
- Live Oak, FL WQHL-FM
- Seattle, WA KMPS-FM*
- Wichita Falls, TX KWFS-FM
- Pittsburg, KS KKOW-FM*
- Albany, GA WOBB-FM
- Beckley, WV WJLS-FM*
- Terre Haute, IN WTHI-FM*
- Mason City, IA KIAI-FM*
- Anchorage, AK KASH-FM
- Tampa, FL WQYK-FM
- Longview, TX KYKX-FM
- Reno, NV KBUL-FM*
- Chico, CA KALF-FM
- Augusta, GA WKXC-FM*
- Warroad, MN KKWQ-FM*
- Monroe, LA KJLO-FM
- Ontario, OR KSRV-FM
- Tupelo, MS WWZD-FM
- Eugene, OR KKNU-FM
- Santa Maria, CA KSNI-FM
- Lafayette, LA KMDL-FM
- Monterey, CA KTOM-FM
- Yakima, WA KDBL-FM
- Corpus Christi, TX KRYS-FM*
- Traverse City, MI WTCM-FM*
- Amarillo, TX KMML-FM
- Columbus, MS WKOR-FM
- Boise, ID KQFC-FM
- Stevens Point, WI WYTE-FM
- San Luis Obispo, CA KSLY-FM
- Klamath Falls, OR KLAD-FM*
- Meadville, PA WGYY-FM*
- Lakeland/Winter Haven, FL WPCV-FM*
- Laurel/Hattiesburg, MS WBBN-FM
- Greenville/New Bern, NC WRNS-FM*
- Jackson, TN WJGY-FM
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- Watertown, NY WFRY-FM*
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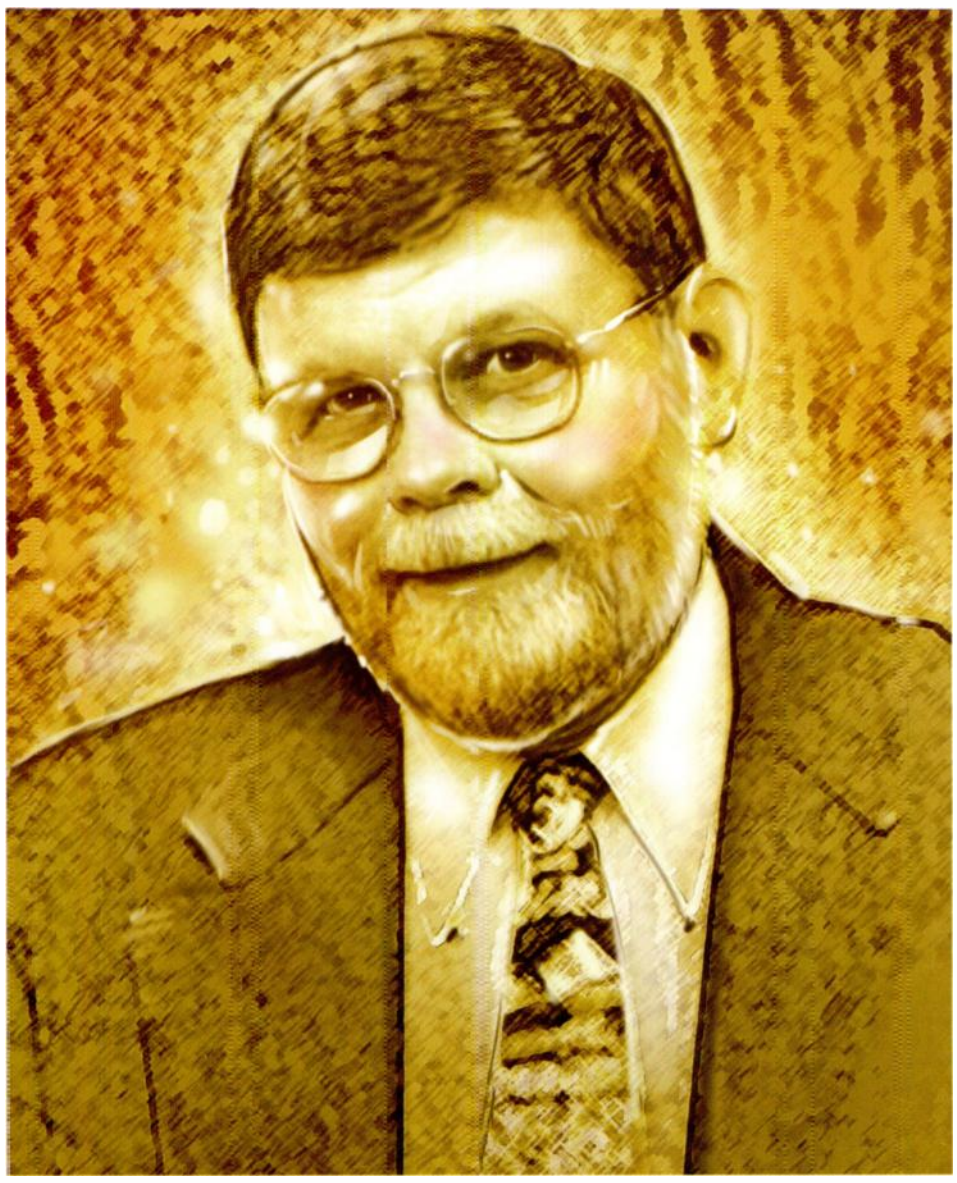
Country Music DJ AND RADIO HALL OF FAME

BOB MOODY

Getting It Over The Plate

Bob and Elton John

After being encouraged by his school classmates to try his voice professionally, Bob Moody was only 16 when he got his first shot at radio, working for the late, legendary Buddy Deane at KOTN/Pine Bluff, AR in 1967. A major and pioneering Baltimore TV/radio personality, Buddy made a profound impact on Bob, showing him a horizon that stretched far beyond a life in small-market broadcasting. From those modest beginnings, Bob advanced quickly to larger markets, landing a coveted gig at CKLW/Detroit before programming KRMD/Shreveport, WAKY/Louisville, a defining decade at WPOC/Baltimore, Group PD for Nationwide Communications, VP/Country for McVay Media and now VP/Programming for Regent Communications, overseeing many market-leading Country stations. Bob is a world traveler, but is just as happy to find a good minor-league ballgame to catch while on the road. While his induction to the Radio Hall of Fame recognizes 40 years of achievement, Bob keeps a modest perspective, with many of his most valued principles rooted in smaller market radio.



My first Country job was between college semesters in the summer of 1970 at KCLA/Pine Bluff. My dad had always played Country music in the house, but I wasn't a big fan. At KCLA you picked your own records, and I'd just look for something with an interesting title and put it on the air. One day I found this Mickey Newbury song, "She Even Woke Me Up To Say Goodbye," by Jerry Lee Lewis. I played it and thought, "Wow. This is something completely different." I think the people who make the marvelous songs we have are our secret weapon in this industry and they don't get enough credit.

At the end of the summer, PD Shelby Cooper, who called himself "The Old Blabbermouth," called me into his office. "Son, you're a pretty fair Country DJ," he said. "There's just one problem with what you do on the air. You don't make enough mistakes." Well, I got indignant. I was 19 years old and in *my* mind the whole object of the game was to be professional. So I thought, "What an old fool." But Shelby went on: "You know, people in everyday life — they trip over their tongue, start sentences and then go back and start again, or forget what they were talkin' about. Listening to you, you're just too perfect...it's like it's rehearsed. Son, my motto has always been, 'If it smells, it sells.'" And I thought, "What a moron." It took me about 15 years to figure out he knew what he was talking about and I should have paid attention at the time. You can be too perfect, and that's one problem with voicetracking. Nobody ever makes a mistake, so it starts to sound canned, sterile. So we use as little voicetracking as possible in our company, and I've been smellin' ever since.

In 1971 I applied for a job at KKEG/Fayetteville. They told me, "We pay everybody the same: minimum wage — $1.65 an hour." I said, "Well, I can't work for that." The guy said, "Really? Well, then, how much do you want?" I thought about it for a minute and answered, "Two dollars an hour, not a penny less." The guy said, "Well, let me go ask the boss, but I don't think he's going to go for that." In about an hour he called back and said, "I don't believe it, but he said OK. We'll pay you $2 an hour." The first day I showed up at the station, which was in a house trailer, you had to be careful when you walked in because if you jumped up, the needle would fly off the turntable. As I was getting ready to go on the air, I noticed all these people arriving, standing around in the corner and over by the door. It turned out they were gathering to see this guy who was so good that he was making $2 an hour.

Working at CKLW in the '70s was a lot of fun. Its cume was in the top 10 in North America. Herb McCord was the GM, my PDs were Bill Hennes and Les Garland, and the airstaff was incredible. When an act came to Detroit, they'd send limos over to the station to take you to the show and backstage with all the artists. I'm glad I couldn't pick up CKLW in Arkansas as a kid, because if I had known what I was getting into I'd have been scared to death. A CKLW documentary aired on the Canadian History Channel. Now when you show up on that, you *know* you're old!

My office in Baltimore had a photograph of a minor league baseball player named Steve Dalkowski. All of the major league scouts from the early '60s say he threw a baseball faster than anyone they'd ever seen. The problem was that he couldn't get it over the plate, and so he never made the big leagues. They found him years later as an alcoholic, working as a migrant laborer picking oranges. My point is that I don't care how much talent God gave you, if you can't get it over the plate, you won't make it. That was a great motivator and focus for me.

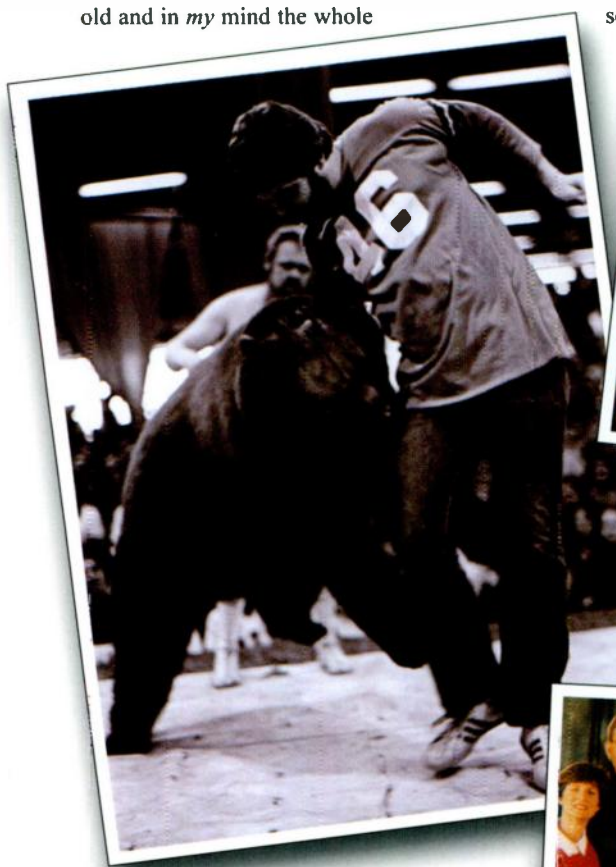
It's difficult, if not impossible, to be an interesting on-air personality if you're not an interesting person. As jobs have become more time-consuming, I run into people who haven't read a book for 10 years or who brag about how long it's been since they've taken a vacation. Those people are just so one-dimensional that I think they have difficulty relating to the audience. So I've always kept a series of outside interests to puts things into perspective.

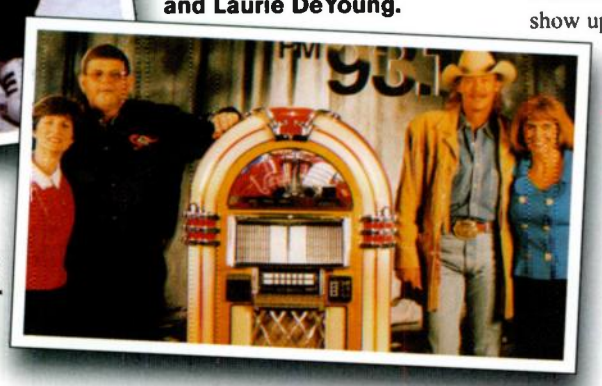
> "IT'S DIFFICULT, IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE, TO BE AN INTERESTING ON-AIR PERSONALITY IF YOU'RE NOT AN INTERESTING PERSON."

For example, I have a fascination with James Boswell, biographer of [famed British essayist/critic] Dr. Samuel Johnson. In 1990 I became Honorary President of the Auchinleck Boswell Society in Scotland, and was the first one who didn't have a title or initials after his name. So they asked me how I wanted to be "styled." I thought about "Robert Moody, AM & FM," "Duke of Earl" or "Robert Moody of Timonium, MD." They ended up making me "Esquire."

It means an enormous amount to be inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame. To be honored by your peers — people that know your strengths and your weaknesses — is one of the greatest things that's ever happened to me. What I'm most delighted about is going in with Larry Daniels. Putting me in the Hall ahead of Larry would have been kind of like sending Pee Wee Reese to Cooperstown ahead of Babe Ruth.

I am excited about the technology we're starting to deal with, where you'll be able to listen to Internet radio stations in your car, including those we're producing, and HD Radio. To be a content provider over all of these new platforms is very exciting. As an industry we'll be very foolish if we don't take advantage of the fact that we own the microphones, own the good voices, and that we know how to do this. If we're smart, there are going to be a lot of opportunities. CAC


Bearly Sane: Moody wrestles a real, live black bear at the Detroit Armory in 1975. "I did not want to hurt that bear, but he cheated," Bob said after losing. "I cannot tolerate a carnivore that cheats."


Beer Run: With fellow inductee Larry Daniels (above); and at the production of a WPOC/Baltimore television spot with (l-r) Kay Kinnard, Alan Jackson and Laurie DeYoung.

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Country Music DJ AND RADIO HALL OF FAME

JOE LADD

Engineering A Great Air Career

A childhood fascination with crystal and ham radio while growing up in rural south Texas led Joe Ladd to professional broadcasting. His early interest in engineering eventually led to the first of only three radio jobs in his career — KANI/Wharton, TX for $2 an hour and "all the records you could eat." Shortly thereafter, he was doing almost everything at KWBA/Baymont, TX, where he stayed five years. Joe's technical interests eventually gave way to focusing on being a strong air personality and on the programming side, ultimately earning him one of Country radio's most sought-after positions at legendary KIKK/Houston. Joe was a fixture at KIKK for 25 years, and during that stretch was recognized twice as the CMA Music Director of the Year. He also shouldered many additional duties: charity fundraising, artist management for a young singer named Mark Chesnutt, house announcer at Gilley's before and during its glory years, and co-owning a 100-kw FM in Midland-Odessa with Dr. Bruce Nelson. Already enshrined in the Texas Music Hall of Fame, Joe now joins his former radio ownership partner in the Country Music Disc Jockey Hall of Fame.

I was always interested in electronics as a kid, toying around with little one-tube radios and crystal sets. I grew up on a farm in a little town called East Bernard, TX — we called it East Barnyard — hell, we didn't even have a telephone out there. There were no phone lines, so I became a ham radio operator when I was 14 years old; that was my contact with the outside world. It was a passion for me. I listened to AM stations, DX'ing at night to pick up those that were the most further away. I studied electronics after high school and earned radiotelephone licenses which let me work on commercial broadcast equipment.

Living in Houston in 1963, I was working on two-way radio gear for an oil company. KANI, which was close to my home town, had just signed on the air. My mom had become ill, and I thought it was an opportune time to move back home for a little bit. I checked to see if I could work on the transmitter or something as an engineer. The only opening they had was a sales job. I took it, but it didn't pan out too good, so eventually I did some airwork there in the morning and kind of got the feel of it. After a half-year or so, I moved on because I thought I knew everything at that time. After all, by then I had been in radio six months!

I took a job as a jock at Country KWBA/Baytown, across the ship channel from Houston. When the engineer badly screwed something up, I said to the manager, "I can do a better job," and they made me chief engineer. It was a directional three-tower system, but I worked with consultant engineers and still was disc jockey, PD, all that stuff. I really learned my trade there. I was 23-24 years old, trying to build a career, and was engulfed with living radio day and night. We'd sign off at 10PM and I'd sometimes work 'til five in the morning fixing things. It was just the love of being able to work. I started going back to college, too. I was just eat up.

> "I FELT LIKE I NEVER HAD A JOB IN RADIO — IT WAS EXCITING AND A PLEASURE TO BE THERE. I JUST HOPE THE KIDS IN RADIO TODAY ARE GOING TO HAVE AS MUCH FUN AS I DID."

Good Times: An early '90s seminar shot from the MCA suite pictures (l-r, standing) Gary McCartie, McBride & The Ride's Ray Herndon, Shelia Shipley Biddy, Joe Ladd, Mick Anselmo; (l-r, kneeling) Rick Stephenson, MB&R's Billy Thomas, Scott Borchetta, Terry McBride and David Haley.

Being an air personality was more challenging and fun than the electronics end. I began devoting myself to being an air personality, programming the station and being more involved in the community. KWBA flipped formats to rock for about a year during the Beatles era, and we'd do outside promotions and have all these girls showing up. I thought, "Hey, this is pretty cool." But Country just worked better for that market.

Of course I listened to KIKK. I asked a salesman who worked there if he would check for any on-air openings. He called me one day in 1968 and said, "I think they're going to let a guy go." I went over there and asked about a job. The PD said, "When can you start?" I said, "Right away," and got the midday shift!

It was just amazing how everything changed in my life. I was thrown right into the middle of the No.1 station and one of the top stations in the country. I was getting phone calls from people I hadn't heard from in years, and meeting all the country artists, promoters, songwriters. I didn't think it could get any better than that.

We eventually evolved from KIKK-AM to the FM, which was downtown. It simulcast during the day and at night programmed music with very little talk. No one was listening, at least they didn't *think* so. One night I had to work the FM all-night show when a jock got sick. I couldn't believe it: the phones would never quit ringing. We weren't even getting that kind of activity on the AM. The next day I told the PD and GM, "Hey guys, there's something to this FM. A lot of people are listening to this damn thing." Car radios with AM & FM became mandatory, and I told them FM was going to blow up, and it did. FM saved KIKK because competitor KENR 1070 was beginning to kick our butt. Of course, then our FM went into play and we remained the market powerhouse for years.

You'd see a lot of talent in Houston. We'd play their songs on-air and tried to get them record deals, saying "We've got a guy here just singing his butt off. You need to take a look at him." A lot of them who signed came out of Houston: Gene Watson, Mickey Gilley, Freddy Fender, Randy Cornor, Kenny Dale — on and on.

I was an announcer at Gilley's, and great acts would come through there. We were right there when they started writing stories about it and *Urban Cowboy* was being made there ... we were all in it. The Hollywood producer told the owner, "If this movie is successful, Gilley's will be the most successful club in the country." And it was. For years, a line wrapped around the building a mile long with people trying to get in there every night. It was just phenomenal.

There was the opportunity to work with a lot of charity organizations, and because we had Nashville contacts we could get artists to help. Some of the best feelings I ever had were also sad, such as presenting at Texas Children's Hospital, where you see young kids suffering but how their faces would light up when we would bring somebody by. It was a good time in my life.

For some reason or another, I always seemed to survive at KIKK through several ownerships, managers and PDs and it was one hell of a career. I felt like I never had a *job* in radio — it was exciting and a pleasure to be there. I just hope the kids in radio today are going to have as much fun as I did. CAC

Country Music DJ AND RADIO HALL OF FAME

BIG JOHN TRIMBLE

The Truck Stops Here

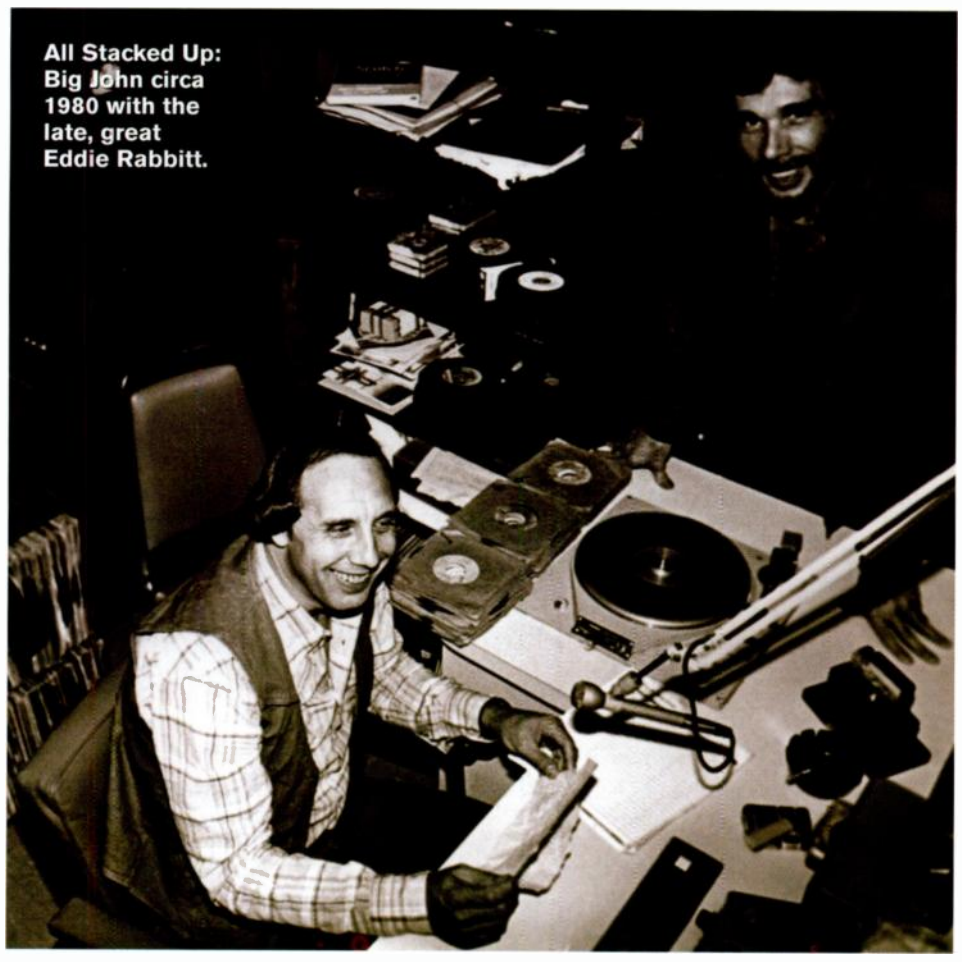
Even before his first job at age 14 in his tiny hometown station of WSIP/Paintsville, KY, John Trimble knew he wanted to be in radio. His live remotes from the original Shoney's Drive-Inn between 1957-1958 were right out of American Graffiti, and John honed his personality skills further in the Army as an MC and stand-up comedian. After several gigs including as PD and afternoon personality at the first-ever fulltime Country FM, WVHI/Evansville, IN, John accepted the challenge of hosting a trucker show at KMO/Seattle. There, and at big-signal KGA/Spokane, "Big John" Trimble became the trusted full-service companion to truckers throughout the Pacific Northwest. That led to hosting a live truck-stop remote show for three years at KWKH/Shreveport, and then 18 years in a similar role at WRVA/Richmond with his wife Jean as his sidekick. Renowned for presenting numerous Opry-style shows for regional audiences, the 52-year broadcaster anchors mornings on nearby WCLM/Richmond. Remarkably, John's induction into the Country Disc Jockey Hall of Fame will mark his first-ever appearance at the Country Radio Seminar.

As a kid, I'd sit in the mountains and listen to stations from Louisville, Cincinnati, Nashville and Richmond. I'd hear those big voices booming through the radio and it just always fascinated me. In 1947 we got a station in Paintsville, and it was just what I wanted to do. In 1955 I was injured in an auto accident and couldn't play sports at school for a year. I had a cast on my neck, and started hanging around the radio station so much that eventually they just put me to work at 75 cents an hour doing a one-hour afternoon teenage show. I played the original rock and roll: Fats Domino, Jerry Lee Lewis and all those '50s cats. It was a little 250-watt station, but that didn't matter to me; it could have been 500,000 watts, you know?

The Shoney's Drive-In show was just like the movie *American Graffiti.* They had built a remote booth right on the lot and called them "Sky Castle Shows." It was 1957 and they had waitresses out there in roller skates and kids outside dancing by the booth. You were like Elvis, man!

In 1960, I volunteered for the Army to get into Armed Forces Radio, and at the end of basic training at Ft. Knox, KY, the first lie they told me was, "Your school is not open right now. You can either hang around here and train the next group of troops coming through or we can send you to Ft. Lewis, Washington. They need somebody in their entertainment division as an emcee." Now I'm just a dumb board from the mountains, and I thought I'd be going to Washington, DC, where I could come home to Kentucky. I forgot all about the other Washington! Next thing you know, my butt's on a Greyhound bus to Seattle. But I started emceeing some shows, doing stand-up comedy, and it was great. We played service clubs and officer's clubs, but mainly we played off post. We worked old soldiers' homes, hospitals, anyplace they'd requisition us to come do a show. We worked just about every prison on the west coast. I did a show at Folsom Prison before Johnny Cash got there. They were the greatest. I'd walk on stage and say, "It's nice to have a captive audience!"

> "To think that I'm even considered to be in a place comparable to people like Nelson King, Randy Blake and Mike Hoyer is something that means a lot to me."



All Stacked Up: Big John circa 1980 with the late, great Eddie Rabbitt.

I moved around a lot for awhile after the service. I knew it was always time when somebody offered you more money. Back then, you measured your success by the size of your U-Haul going down the road.

I was doing afternoons on KMO/Seattle in 1972, and they wanted me to start a trucker show, as Charlie Douglas was having success with it in New Orleans, selling a lot of advertising. I really didn't want to do it at first. Then, of course, they told me they'd increase my pay and give me a part of the show. The only reason I think they wanted me to do it is because I was the only Southerner on the staff and I guess they figured every trucker out there was a Southerner! Even if you were from Vancouver, BC, you're still a Southern guy — at least Southern by heart. That's true, though, in many ways.

Most of the drivers back then came from small towns like myself ... sort of poor backgrounds. They are the most patriotic people I've ever seen, and I grew up in that era too. We just sort of connected. When I first started doing the all-night trucker show, about the only thing I knew about trucking were the words, "Keep on Truckin'." But then I started reading trucker magazine, discovering their different laws, stuff that they needed, what their gripes were. Then I would put drivers on the air and let them talk about it.

I was only there a year, but of all the places I worked, I probably did a better job for the drivers at KGA/Spokane than anyplace. They would call me from Whitefish, Montana and it'd be 40 below and 10 feet of snow. Sometimes I'd spend 30 minutes just doing reports on the weather on the passes, telling them when they have to put the chains on. Out there it's a whole different ballgame than truckin' back east.

There were some really good truckin' songs and really good truckin' singers. It all just fit together, and about '74 the CB thing came along and that really kicked it all into gear. I just absolutely backed into it. For several years I also would do a lot of trucker banquets and present live Country music shows, taking the show to different places around the country. Being on 50,000-watt WRVA, I could go to Pennsylvania or Ohio and people knew who I was. Sometimes we'd have an Opry act from Nashville or we'd just do it as our regular cast. Today we do the *East Coast Opry,* sort of like *Prairie Home Companion.* I don't sing or tell stories like Garrison Keillor, but if you've seen that movie, you've seen the *East Coast Opry.*

WCLM/Richmond has a variety format, and I do the Country morning show. Each morning I walk out my back door to where I've built a studio. I turn the power on, do a show, and go back into the house. I used to do it *in* the house, but I was making too much noise, so my wife made me move outside.

It's a real honor to be inducted. To think that I'm even considered to be in a place comparable to people like Nelson King, Randy Blake and Mike Hoyer is something that means a lot to me. Back in the '50s, you had to start in a small market and work your way up. The main thing I learned, even when you get up to the 50,000-watt stations, is that you can still do it like a small market. That's what I always did. Some newspaper or magazine said the thing that I did was that I brought the whole country down to one county. I always kept that small-town touch, and still do. CAC

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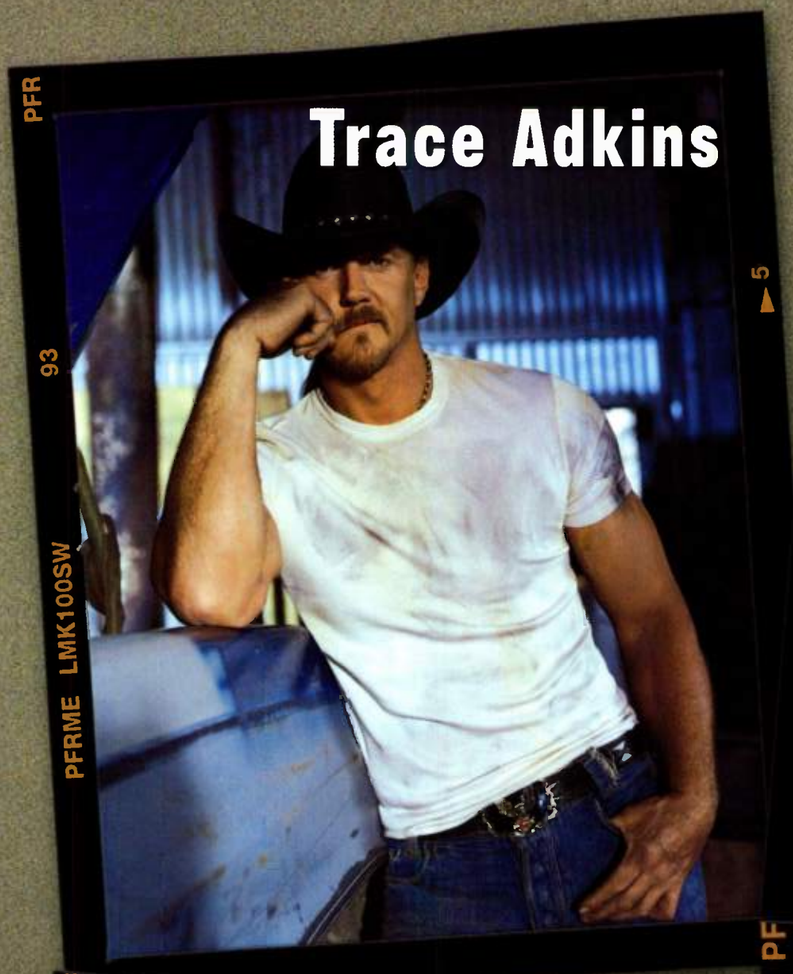
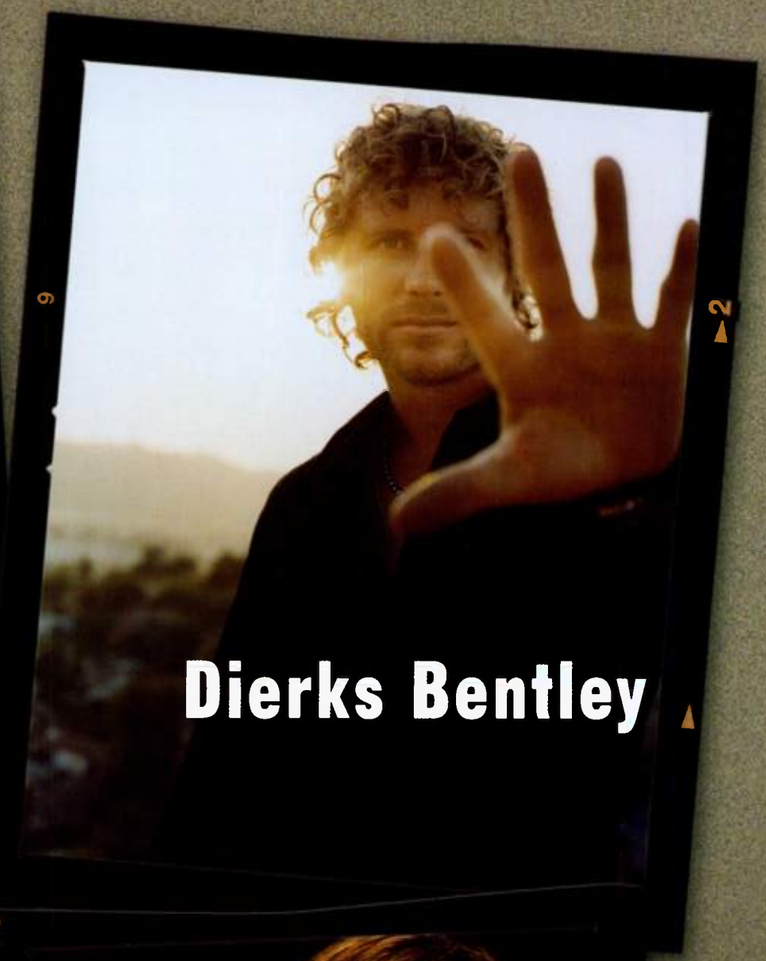
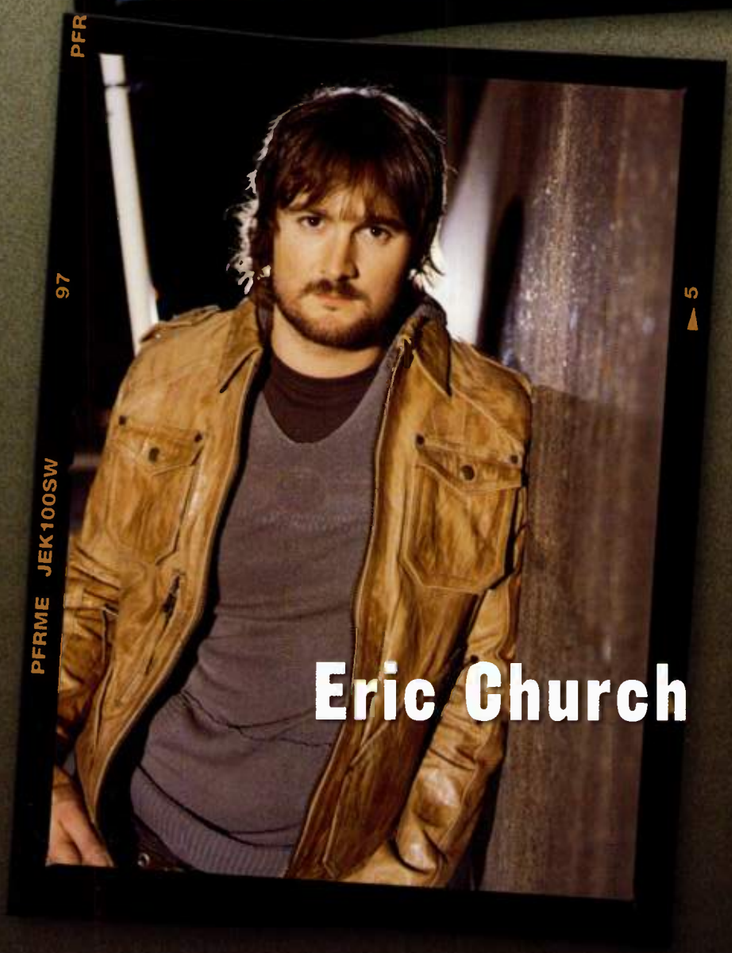
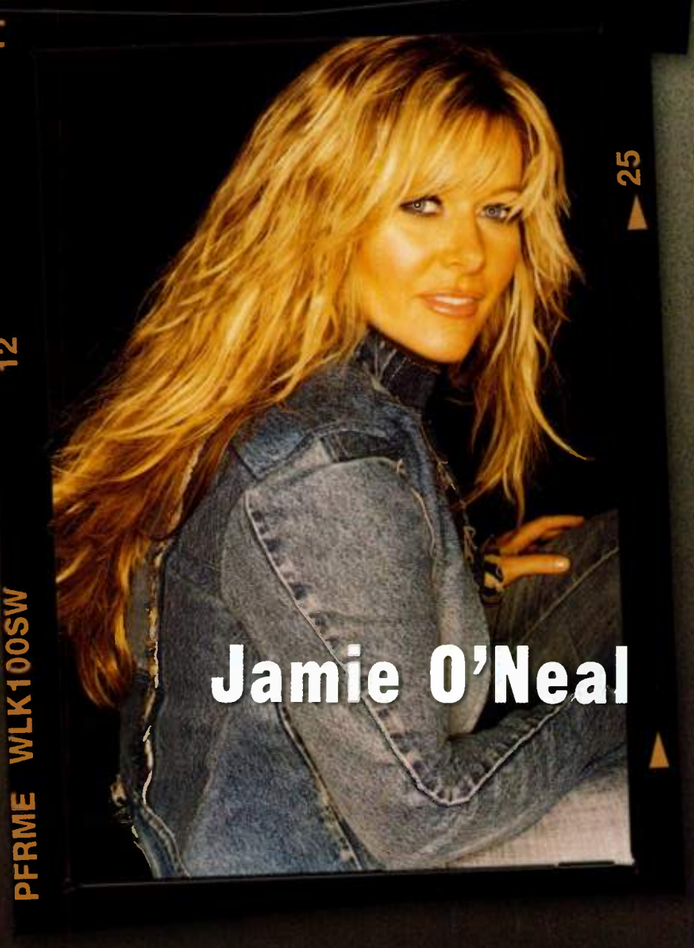


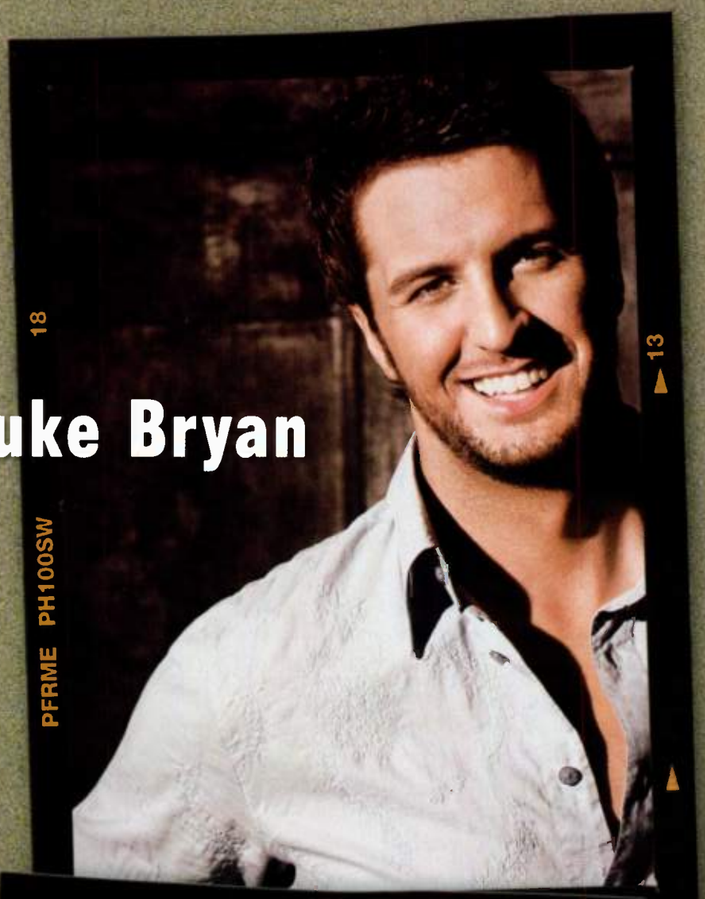


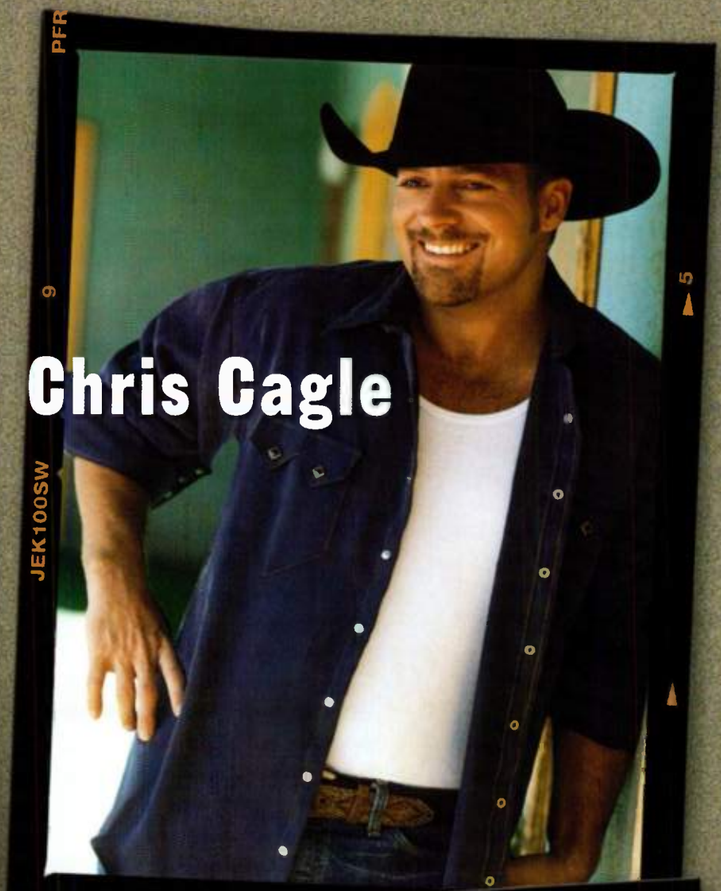


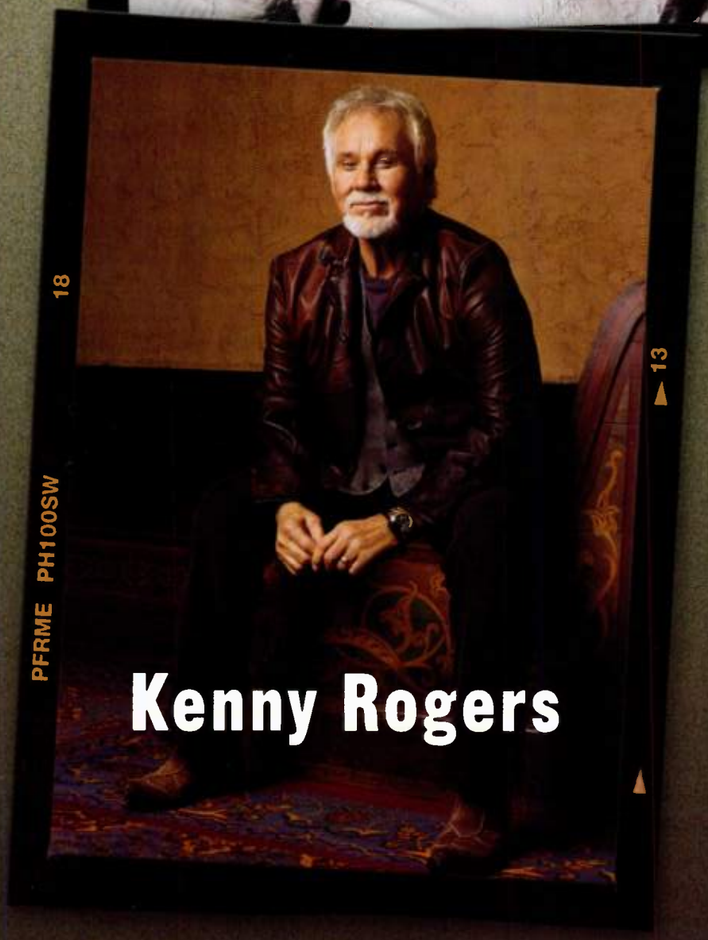


Your Friends at Capitol

to CRS 38







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KENNY ROGERS

CRB Career Achievement Award

What's The Frequency Kenneth?

House Sitting:
Chatting with Gerry at CRS-37.

There's no need to point out the importance of Country radio to Kenny Rogers. After all, he attributes much of his success — the launch of his career, monumental hit songs, the ability to refocus and even his name to the format's influence. He clearly remembers his first station visit, promoting the song "Crazy Feeling" on Carlton Records, and speaks glowingly of his CRS appearance last year. Rogers is returning to radio now with the song "Calling Me," a duet with his longtime protégé and buddy Don Henley. The track, from his latest Capitol/Nashville album *Water and Bridges*, has already garnered a Grammy nomination for Best Country Collaboration, and Rogers was thrilled to work with the friend he'd discovered decades before in Lyndon, Texas. Being recognized with CRB's Career Achievement Award is fitting, as he is the only artist to have charted a record in each of the last six decades.

Radio has always been really good to me, even in the very early days. I went to KNUZ/Houston radio where Paul Berlin was *the* big jock at the time. Paul noticed my record read "Kenneth Rogers" because that's always been my name. And he said, "Well, you'll never make it with that name, you've got to be called Kenny Rogers." I said, "Oh, I can't do that!" Well, he went on the air and introduced me as "Kenny Rogers." Later, I went outside and a bunch of little girls started screaming. I thought, "Well, maybe I can do that after all!"

My first ever on-air interview was with a guy who, apparently, was at his first day on the job. He had a list of questions he was going to ask me no matter what. He started off by saying, "So how long are you in town?" I said, "Three days, I leave Wednesday [for] New York." And he says, "Okay. Well, where do you go from here?" And I said, "Well, I go to New York, and then I think I'm doing American Bandstand." And he said, "Okay, well, are you doing any television?" It was like he didn't even hear my answers, and that went on for 20 minutes! I kept answering his questions before he even asked them. And to me that was one of the funniest things. Even as a new artist and as frightened as I was, I was so much more secure than he was.

Country radio is a unique animal. It's like all art forms — constantly changing. You have to be aware of that and try as best you can to adapt to where they are. As I've gone through the years the one thing I've learned is, great songs always get a good shot. So I've always focused on finding great songs. And I really haven't tried to live off my past laurels because there are guys out there running radio stations who weren't even born when I was at the peak of my career. When you start expecting favors, then you get disappointed. And when you get disappointed, then you act differently.

I don't think I ever really fully accepted it until one day I went to a station in Cleveland trying to get a song played [from] my first Dreamcatcher record. I did an hour interview and then called my manager when it was over. He asked how it went and I said, "Well, I figured out they're totally in awe of what I've done, and couldn't care less about what I'm doing." It was a sad reality for me, certainly a reality check. I realized I had to concentrate more on standing away from the crowd, because there's a type of music that's very contemporary out there, the Keith Urbans and Tim McGraws, that I can't compete with. That's not where my heart is, my heart is in story songs. I have to do what I do and that has helped me. Radio has said to me in so many words, do a great song and we'll try it. If it's not good then you're gonna stand in line with everybody else, and I can live with that.

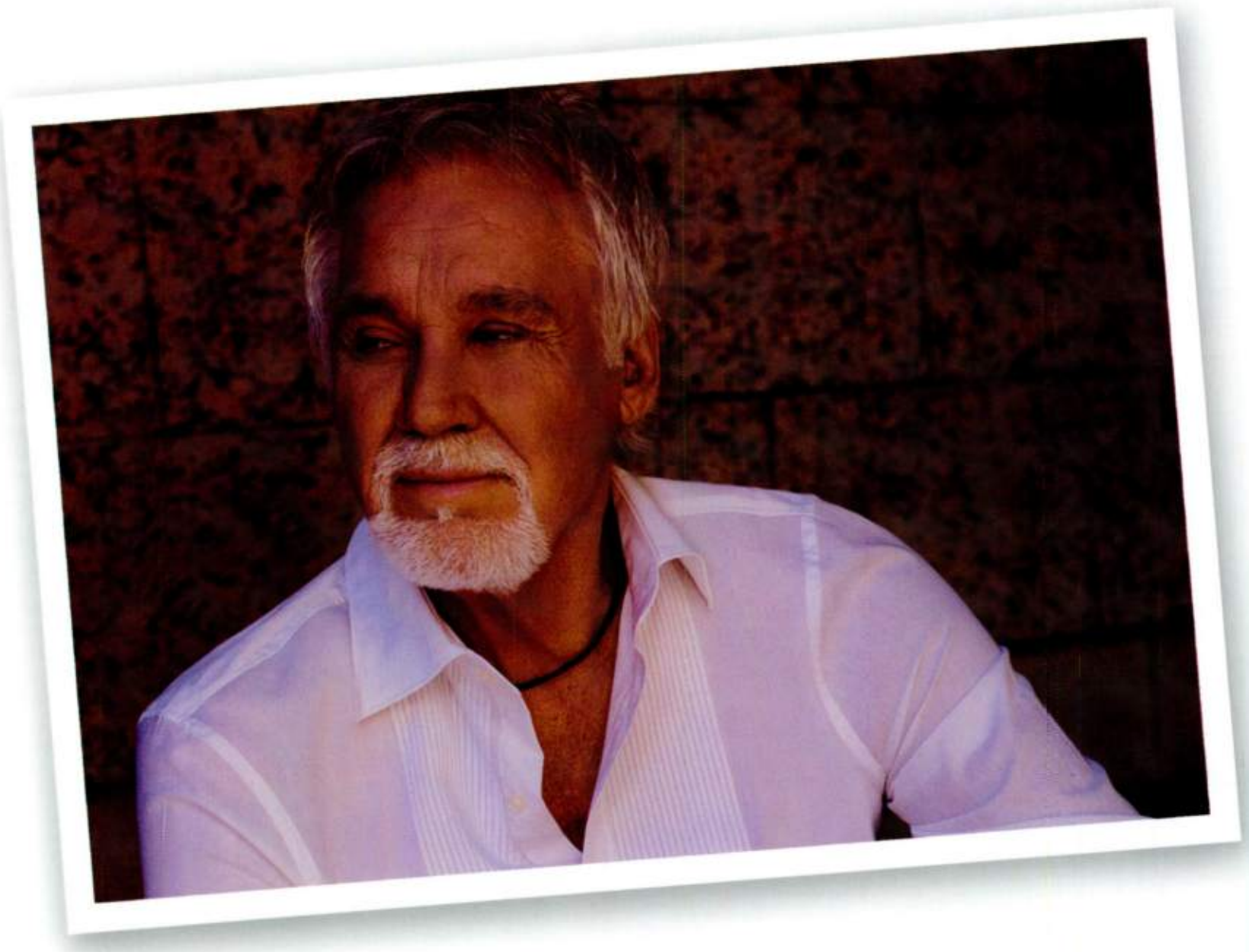
CRS is the highlight, because I'm a very analytical person. I don't just live my life and say, "Gosh, how'd that happen?" As a rule I know why it happened and why it didn't happen, and I love discussing it. It doesn't make me right, but CRS gives me a chance to test my opinion with people like Gerry House when we spoke last time on a panel. It was great fun because we found some laughter in the conversation but we also had a chance to discuss where radio is, where I am, how it works and what's going on.

There was a time when Country radio was more about the message than the messenger, and today it's more about the messenger than the message. That doesn't make it right or wrong, it's just kind of where it is. If you're really, really hot, they're going to play whatever you do whatever it says. And there was a time when country, even before my time, was much more conversational. It told a story and people said, "I can relate to that story, I love that record." Now it's, "I love that artist." That's good. It's healthy. What makes CRS so important is everybody knows what sells in Shreveport, what sells in Nashville, what sells in L.A., what sells in New York. But until they get together and find some unity, it's hard for country music to move as a block.

It's always nice to be appreciated by your peers, and in this case it's the very people who gave me the success I've had. That's very, very important to me and it is a very special group of people…especially since a lot of the guys voting now weren't even born when I had records out. I have a friend who's a psychologist, and I talk about this in my show because I think it's fascinating. He says as men get older, particularly men who have been successful, you stop striving for success and you start striving for significance. So something like this is really a stride towards significance for me. It's historic in its concept, something that my kids can be proud of someday, and so from that standpoint I'm very excited. CAC

Country Radio Broadcasters Career Achievement Award

CONGRATULATIONS KENNY!



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CHARLIE MONK Toiling In Ubiquity

PRESIDENT'S AWARD

Charlie Monk thinks there is just one reason he's receiving the President's Award from the Country Radio Broadcasters at this year's CRS—his age. "They're not sure I'll be around next year," he quips. "They think I'm starting to look a little paisley."

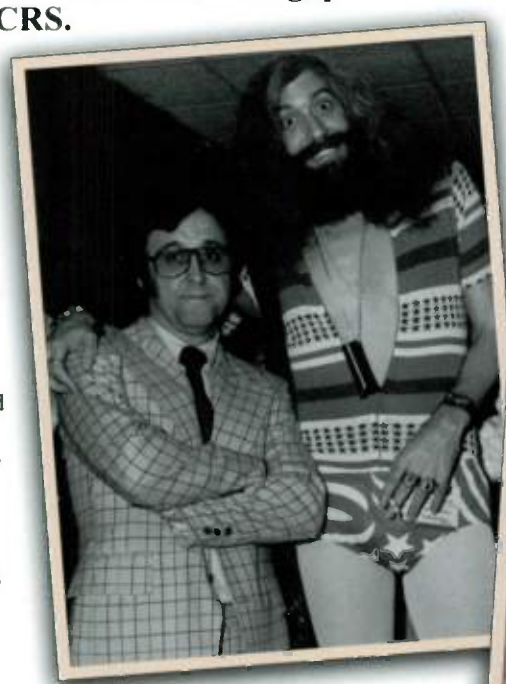
In truth, the "mayor of Music Row," as Monk is known, is receiving the honor for his service to the industry. The President's Award is given annually to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the marketing, production, growth and development of CRS.

Mayor McCheese

Industry colleagues say the award couldn't go to a more deserving individual. Monk was, after all, one of the five original founders of CRS some 38 years ago, and he has been part of planning every event since then. "If I got paid minimum wage for every [volunteer] hour I'd put into this thing I'd be a rich man," he says.

Monk, a music publisher and Sirius Satellite Radio personality who regularly refers to himself as "the beautiful and talented Charlie Monk," claims to be the only person who has worked on and attended every single CRS. He's also the longtime producer and sometime host of the CRS New Faces show.

His "Mayor" moniker was hatched in a *Country Weekly* story about him, and it has long been a source of bemusement for Nashville's real mayor, Bill Purcell. "He thinks it's fine as long as I don't go downtown," Monk says of his pretend turf war with Purcell. "He refers to me as 'the ubiquitous Charlie Monk.' I've tried to tell him 'No, I'm a Methodist.'"



Tights Spot: Monk pictured with curiously dressed Malrite head of programming John Chaffee (above) and Marie Osmond (right).

Rim shot.

It's jokes like that one that have made his monologue at the New Faces show an annual highlight. While sometimes cutting, with what he calls his "little barbs and put-downs," Monk says there have only been three occasions where his New Faces jokes have seriously offended anyone.

One of those incidents happened decades ago when he insulted a music journalist, who called him the Monday after the show to tell him off. Two days later, she was fired. "That proves you shouldn't mess with me," he says, laughing.

Asked for the all-time favorite of his New Faces jokes, Monk replies, "I once said Jimmy Bowen was to country music what Saddam Hussein was to world peace." He's also tickled about having once called Mike Borchetta "the Joe Isuzu of country music."

Work on his monologue is a yearlong process. And while he admits insulting people for laughs can be "treacherous," Monk picks his victims carefully, choosing those with a strongly defined personality. Many, he says, have begged him to be a punch line in his monologue, something that's become almost a rite of passage in the country music business.

CRS: The Early Years

Monk says CRS started "because there was no event or organization patronizing the radio people. There was an event that WSM [Nashville] had—the disc jockey convention—but there was nothing academic about it, it was just a two-day drunk. We wanted to have an educational seminar."

In the early days of CRS, he says, there were "no goodie bags, no banners, no competing events and we probably had 95% participation in every academic seminar."

It's that academic tradition of CRS that Monk is most proud of, and as a longtime member of the CRB board he's sometimes been the one keeping the group focused on that goal when the temptation can sometimes be to concentrate more on the moneymaking aspects of the event that ensure its future.

He recognizes there is a balance that must be achieved there. "I don't care whether it makes a penny," he says of CRS, adding, "by the same token, I want it to continue."

"I've never been concerned about growth," he continues. "Bigger is not necessarily better for me. I'd rather have fewer people learn more than more people learn less."

Monk says CRS is now "such a well-run event. It moves and shakes." Over the years of helping organize it, he says, "It didn't always come off like we planned, but I feel like it's always come off better than I expected."

Today, he says, "the ones who want to learn about radio and the impact it might have can come to this event and get their money's worth. If you just want to party, you can come and do that too."

While he's proud of the stars the seminar has drawn over the years, noting "probably without exception every major country act has been to this event," he also gets concerned when the celebrity aspects overshadow the learning.

"We've gotten so show bizzy, it's about security and entourages for these acts," he says. "We've made the stars more important than the radio people. I don't find any of them more important than the validity of helping to build country music.

"This event," he adds, "belongs to everybody." CAC

MONK MOMENTS: Thoughts On Charlie From Industry Colleagues

It's a good thing Charlie Monk has a good heart, passion for the industry, and a beautiful family. He has a terrible sense of fashion and his "sense of humor," well, let's not go there.
—Bill Mayne,
903 VP/Promotion & Artist Development

He's a mentor, inspiration and role model. He likes to be the life of the party, but he's a very serious family man, serious Christian and serious business man.
—David Haley,
Equity Sr. VP/Promotion

I often refer to Charlie Monk as the Jay Leno of country music. Whereas Jay is a national treasure, Charlie could be called a Nashville treasure. Whereas Jay is one in a million, Charlie was won in a raffle.

Seriously, his contributions have been numerous and generous and I am personally very excited about him receiving this honor.
—Jeff Walker,
AristoMedia/Marco Music Group President

Charlie's name has become synonymous with backstabber. I can't believe there is a person left in this business that doesn't have an axe to grind with him. (Kidding!!)
—Royce Risser,
MCA VP/National Promotion

Charlie was one of a very few that called me several times a week when I was between jobs just to say hi, see what was cooking and to offer me some very good advice about life in general. He's a very good, caring man and I'm proud to say he's a friend. I'm so pleased to see him get this award. (I'm sure he'd hate for people to know that he's really a nice guy!)
—Bill Macky,
Category 5 Exec. VP/National Promotion

The first time I saw Charlie perform his "Let us pray . . . " opening of the New Faces show, I had only been working in country radio for three weeks. When Charlie started ripping people in the industry, getting an equal amount of laughter, applause and groans, I thought, "Wow, maybe one day I'll be on Monk's list." Now I can't get off of the freakin' thing!
—Scott Lindy, Sirius Director/Country Programming

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-KEITH HILL - the "Unconsultant"

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FACE TIME CONTINUUM

Selected by radio from an eligible pool of new artists, this year's New Faces have the opportunity to seize Country radio's collective support with one memorable performance. Of course, seeking radio's favor is something they've all been doing since well before their music made the airwaves. Country Aircheck asked each of them about their experiences with radio. And though Taylor Swift was forced to withdraw from the show, we've included her responses as well as those of her replacement Trent Tomlinson.

Starring In Seminar's Signature Event

JACK INGRAM

Ingram started writing songs and performing while studying psychology at Southern Methodist University in Dallas. As his audience grew, he moved on to the Texas dancehall circuit — places like the legendary Gruene Hall, where his 2006 Big Machine debut album, Live—Wherever You Are *was recorded. His latest single, "Lips of an Angel," is from his forthcoming album* This Is It, *due out in March. He's hitting the road with Brad Paisley on his Hershey's Presents Bonfires & Amplifiers tour, kicking off April 26 in Chattanooga. He currently has his own weekly radio show, "Jack's Tracks," on Dallas' KPLX "The Wolf," as well as on XM satellite radio channel 12.*

What was your station growing up?
I listened to KIKK-FM in Houston, but I mainly listened to KILT-FM. It ranged from George Strait to all the Outlaw stuff as well. Country music in Texas has never been uncool. It's always been the rock n roll sound of our culture.

How many radio tours have you been on?
The unique part of my story is that I've been on a radio tour for the last 10 years. It's just this last year that radio and I have had the opportunity to actually work hand-in-hand, as far as me visiting, and them being able to play my stuff. My CDs have been in the programmers' car stereos for years.

How do you feel about your relationship with your regional label reps?
Those guys, they bust their asses. For every record they get played there's always 10 that they can't get played. I'm always amazed at the fight in these regionals. They go out there day in and day out and get told reasons why their records suck, but they still keep coming back.

Do you have any expectations about what the New Faces show will be like?
I have 20 to 25 minutes, and it's my job to go and blow the roof off the joint. I've heard stories of people making a mark at New Faces, and surprising people. Whether I'll surprise them or not, I don't know. It's hard to sneak up on people after 10 years.

Do you remember the first time you heard one of your songs being played on the radio and knew it was a hit?
I was in Chattanooga. It was November 2005, right after "Wherever You Are" had been released. I heard the song driving into town. I could feel the station was really behind it and it was starting to take off. You see those scenes in movies where time stops for a minute and something special is happening. It was just like that, only better.

MIRANDA LAMBERT

A two-time CMA Horizon Award nominee, Lambert earned a Grammy nomination for the single "Kerosene." Her gold-certified debut album, also titled Kerosene, *debuted at No. 1, an accomplishment only six other country artists in the history of SoundScan have achieved. A native of Lindale, TX [pop. 2,500], where the town motto is "Good country living," Lambert gained national attention when she competed on the first season of* Nashville Star, *ultimately placing third (among 8,000 contestants). She earned a recording contract with Sony Music, and became the top-selling new country artist of 2005, touring with George Strait, Keith Urban, Dierks Bentley and Jason Aldean. Her new album,* Crazy Ex-Girlfriend, *featuring the lead-off single of the same name, is due for release May 1.*

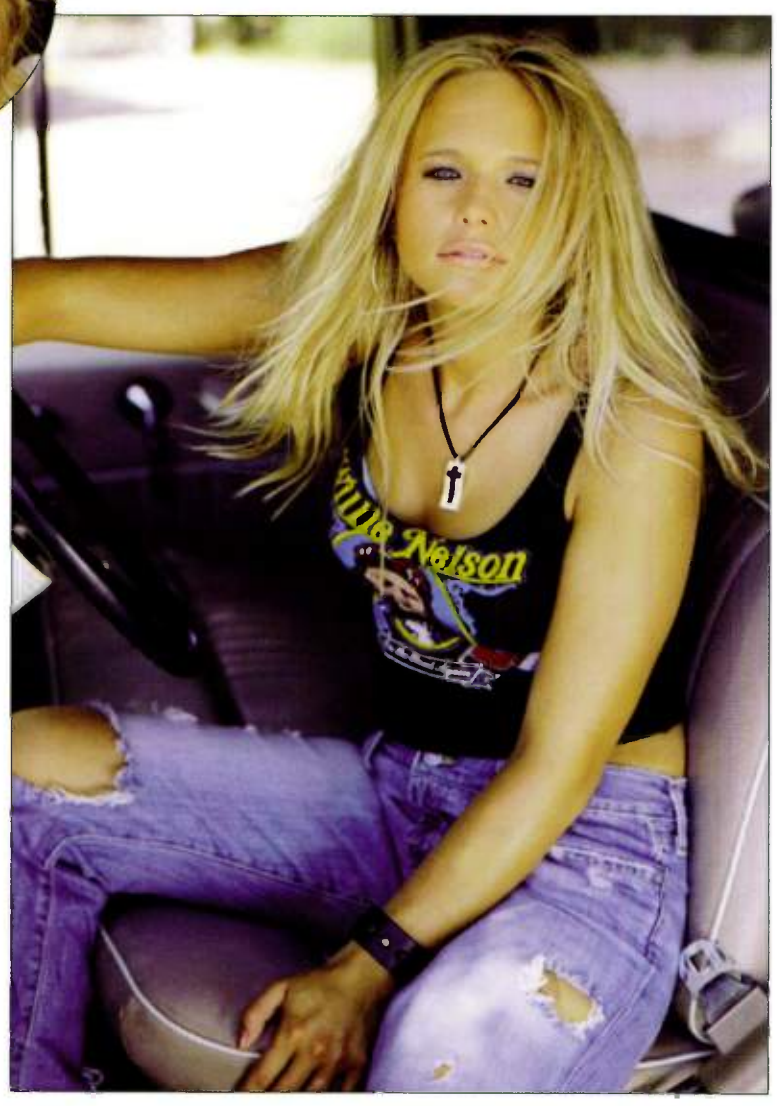
Did you grow up listening to Country radio?
Yes, I listened to KYKX/Longview, TX. The very first time I sang onstage was in a contest that they put on.

What is your most vivid radio tour memory?
I guess it's a vivid memory that I've eaten at every Morton's restaurant! I always eat at Morton's on radio tours so that's a great memory!

Anything unexpected every happen during a radio tour?
When I was doing my first radio tour, before "Me and Charlie Talkin'" was released, we stopped in St. Louis, Mo. It happened to be during the World Series. Our Midwest rep, Bo Martinovich, somehow scored two tickets for the game. We got to go and watch the Cardinals play a home World Series game, which was unbelievable. I'm not really a baseball fan but that was amazing!

Do you remember the first time you heard yourself on the radio?
Not really. It's always good to hear your songs. I do remember that when I heard my record had gone No. 1, I was on the side of the road with a broken-down truck thinking, "Wow, I sure feel like a big star!"

What are your expectations for the New Faces show?
I can't wait. Jack Ingram is one of my all-time heroes. I've been a die-hard fan since I was 16. And the first time I heard Taylor Swift's record, I tracked down her phone number and called her and told her I loved [it]. With those two, Eric Church, Rodney Atkins and me, I think it's a great representation of the "new faces" in town.



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FACE TIME CONTINUUM

ERIC CHURCH

Church grew up in Granite Falls, NC. Within a year of moving to Nashville, he signed a publishing deal at Sony Tree and began getting cuts, including Terri Clark's "The World Needs A Drink." A record deal with Capitol followed, and in July 2006, his debut album, Sinners Like Me *was released. His first two singles, "How 'Bout You" and "Two Pink Lines" have both reached the Top 20. "Guys Like Me" is his latest.*

Did you have a favorite Country station growing up?

We had several good stations in my area. This was the late '80s/early '90s, during that big country boom. It's interesting that this was when I discovered Waylon, Merle and a lot of those great artists, not because they were being played on the radio, but because artists influenced by *them* were being played.

Have any good radio tour stories?

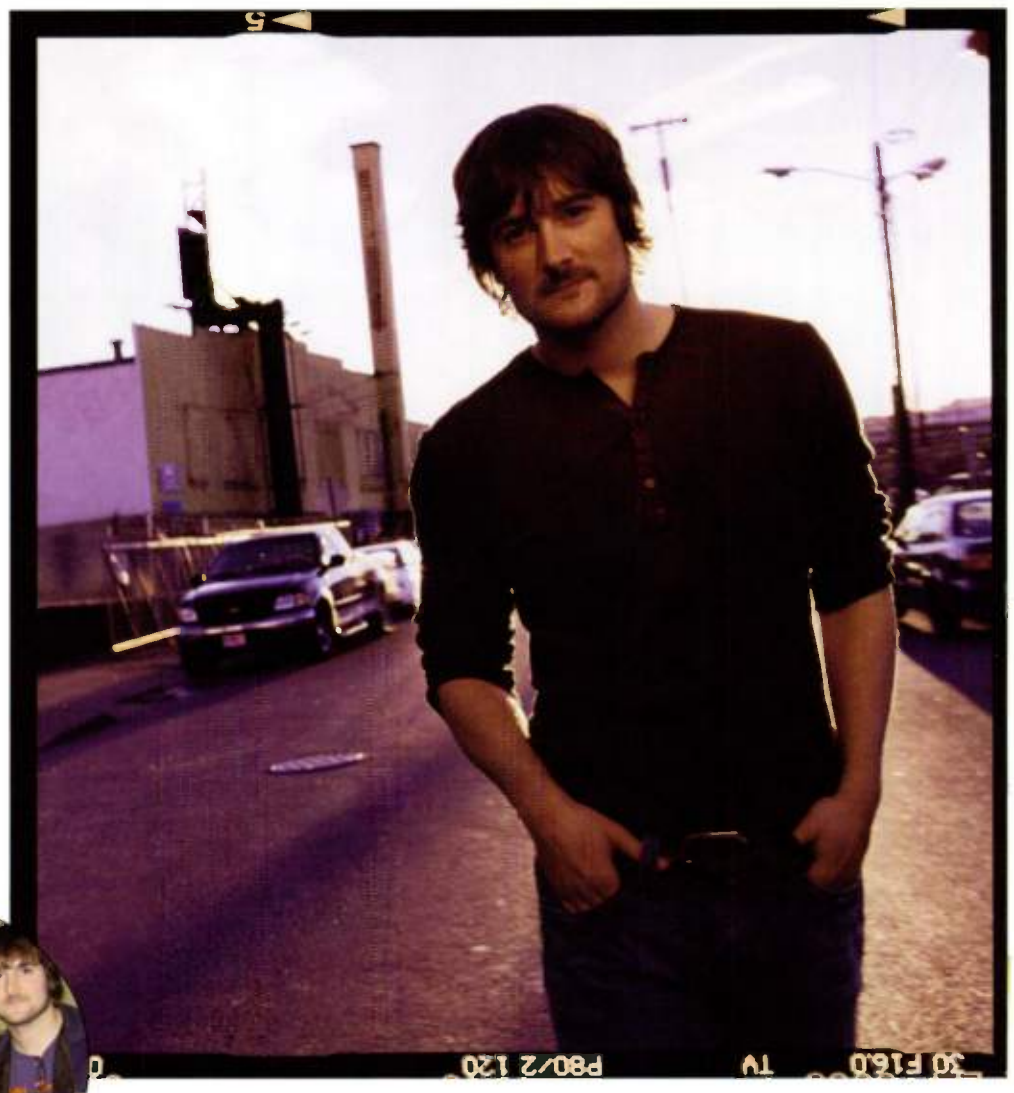
Angela Lange and I were visiting stations in the Southeast, and our luggage got misplaced coming off a flight in Virginia. It was one of those "hit the ground running" trips where you cover several cities in a day, so when the airlines said, "Don't worry, we'll get your bags to you," we just thought "How?" Rather than stay put in one town to wait for the luggage, we just kept going. After a few days of living in the same clothes, we looked pretty ragged.

Anything surprise you about being out meeting stations?

Let me just say, for the record, that (Capitol Sr. VP /Promotion) Jimmy Harnen does not stop to eat. Ever. I'm not sure he's human. Has anyone ever checked him for a bellybutton? After a few days of being on the road with him the first time, I just went into survival mode: grabbing apples in hotel lobbies, asking the flight attendant for extra bags of pretzels on flights, anything to have a reserve of food. The only thing Jimmy thinks about on the road is RADIO – now, that's dedication.

What does CRS mean to you?

CRS is the reason I'm here. I credit [Capitol President] Mike Dungan with that. I wanted my first single to come out before Christmas of last year, and felt pretty strongly about it. But Mike said, "No, let's launch you at CRS." And after everyone had a chance to see me perform with my band at the Capitol luncheon [in 2006], it all seemed to change for me. I still hear comments from people about that performance.



Do you remember hearing your song on the radio the first time?

From the time you cut your songs in a studio, you play them all the time in your car, at home, everywhere, so actually hearing your song on the radio isn't what seems odd. It's when they announce your *name*! That is when it feels different. The first time I heard my song on the radio, it came between a Toby Keith song and one from George Strait – I'll never forget that.

TAYLOR SWIFT

Swift, who recently celebrated her 17th birthday, grew up in Wyomissing, Pa. Inspired by her maternal grandmother, a professional opera singer, Taylor began performing at karaoke contests, festivals and county fairs at age 10. At 11, she performed the national anthem at a Philadelphia 76ers game in front of thousands of fans. And at age 12 she was writing her own songs. In early 2007, her first Big Machine Records single "Tim McGraw," which she wrote, reached the Top 5, selling nearly 300,000 digital downloads along the way. Her self-titled debut album bowed at No. 3 in early November, and has recently certified gold. Taylor was chosen by George Strait to open his 2007 tour, and was forced to withdraw from the New Faces show to perform the Kansas City date of the tour.

What's your hometown station?

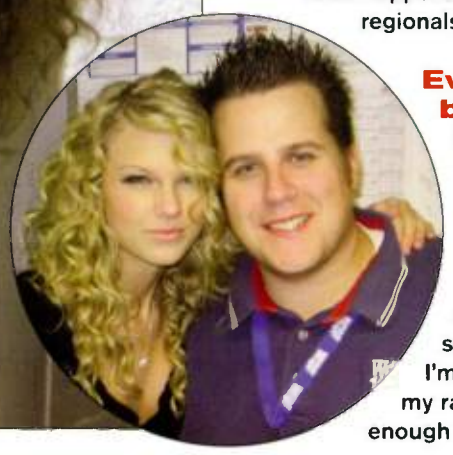
I grew up listening to WIOV out of Lancaster, PA. I just remember hearing LeAnn Rimes on that station for the first time and falling in love with country music. She was the first country singer I felt I could relate to.

What is your most vivid radio tour memory?

One time a DJ came into the studio and confessed that he had no idea who I was – which I didn't mind. So I gave him all the bullet points about who I was, and how I got here. He proceeded to go live on the air starting with "And today we have a special in-studio guest, Taylor Hicks!" Definitely a high point in my life.

Got any good road stories?

What happens on the road with my regionals stays on the road.



Ever been to CRS before?

No. I actually did one showcase for Big Machine when it was first starting, but I didn't get to do any artist stuff. I've been asking other artists about it, and I'm so excited. Never seen a New Faces show, but I'm still pinching myself that my radio peeps were kind enough to pick me.

Are you used to hearing your songs on the radio yet?

It's the coolest rush possible for me to feel, other than the roar of the crowd. I especially love hearing it when I'm not expecting it, and I'm just driving down the road. It confirms that everything I've worked for is justified, hearing my song come on the radio is a beautiful thing. I don't think people in radio (DJs, PDs, MDs) really understand how much power they have to make my day.

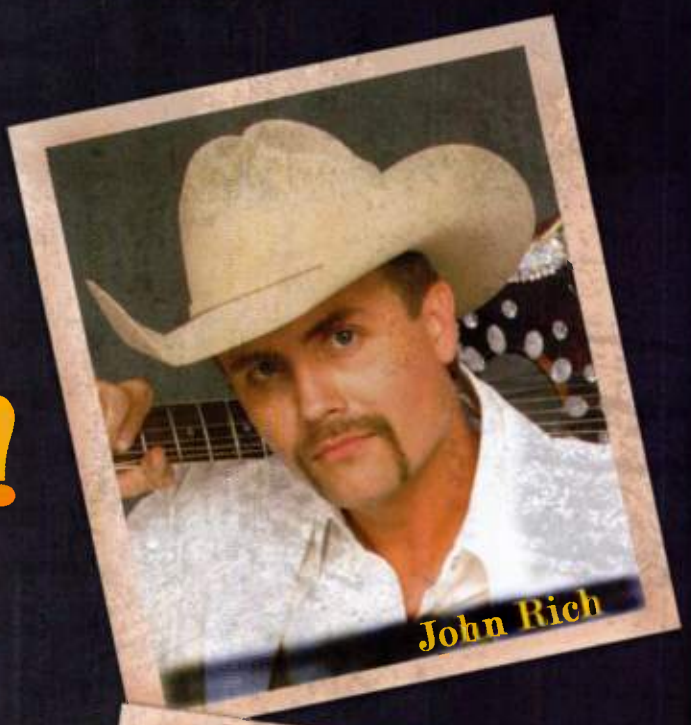
Do you remember the first time you heard your song?

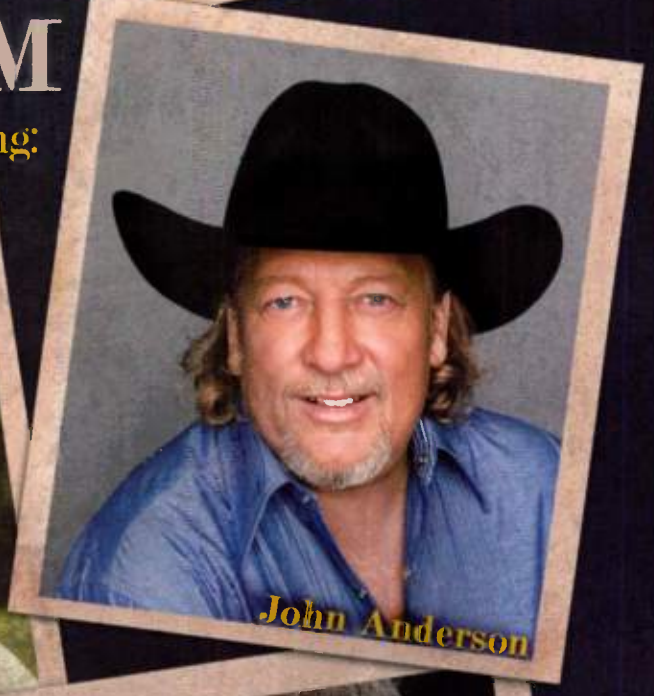
Yes. I was driving down the road in Hendersonville, TN, and it was an all-request Saturday night on the Big 98 [WSIX/Nashville] with Slam Duncan. It was about a week after my single had been released. I had the radio on, and some girl called in and said "I'd like to hear that 'Tim McGraw' song you played earlier, by Taylor Swift" and I about drove off the road. That was almost the end of it all right there!

ASCAP at CRS

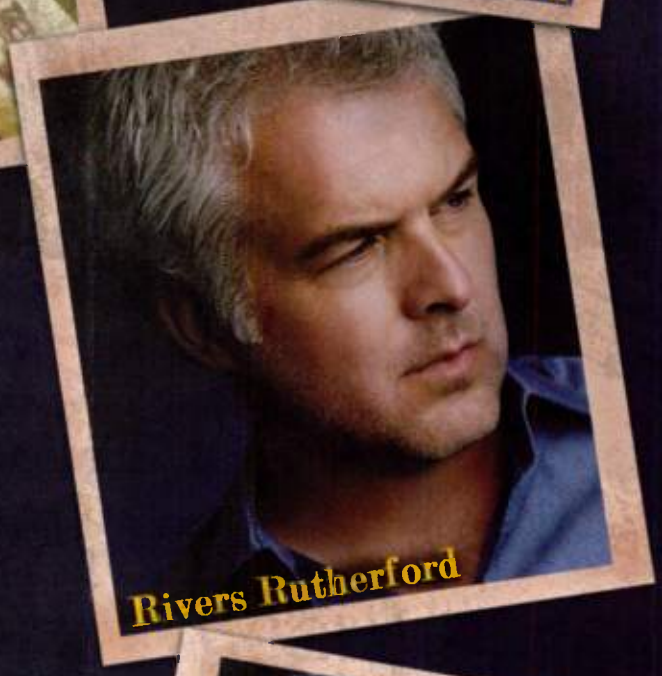
KCRS LIVE!

WEDNESDAY
february 28, 2007
5:00-6:30 PM
featuring:

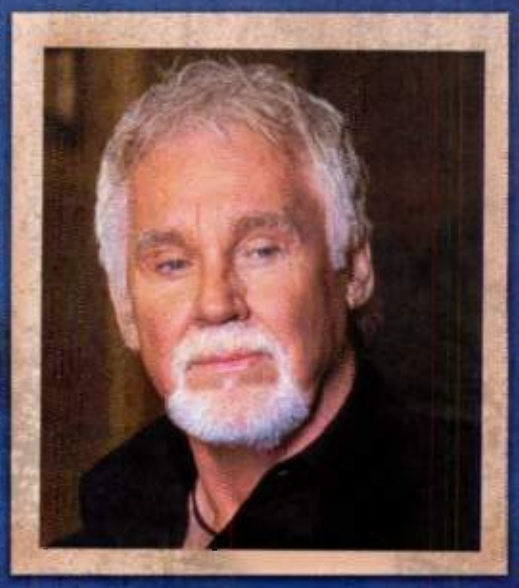

John Rich


John Anderson

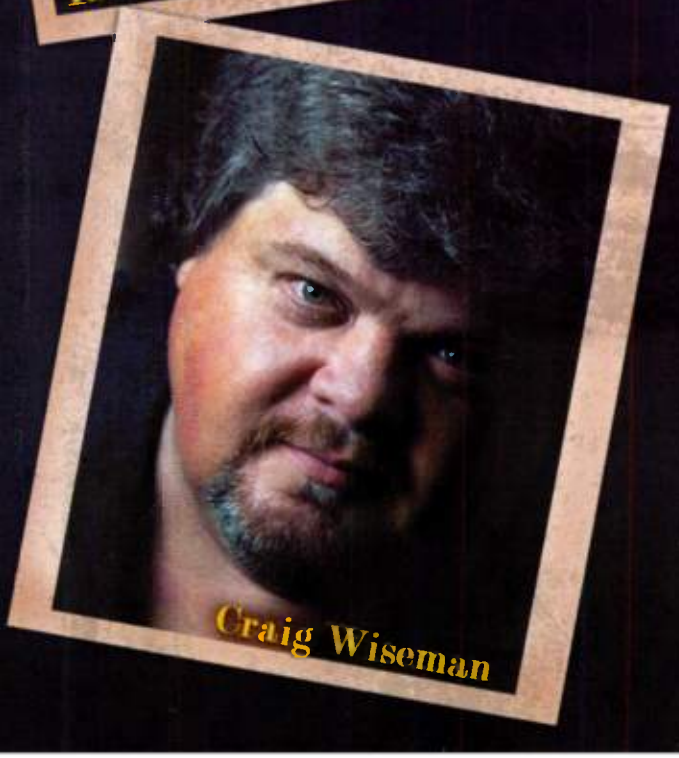
Gretchen Wilson


Rivers Rutherford

Jon Bon Jovi
Keynote speaker
Thursday, March 1st
8:30 AM



Kenny Rogers
CRB Career
Achievement Award
Tuesday, February 27
6:30 PM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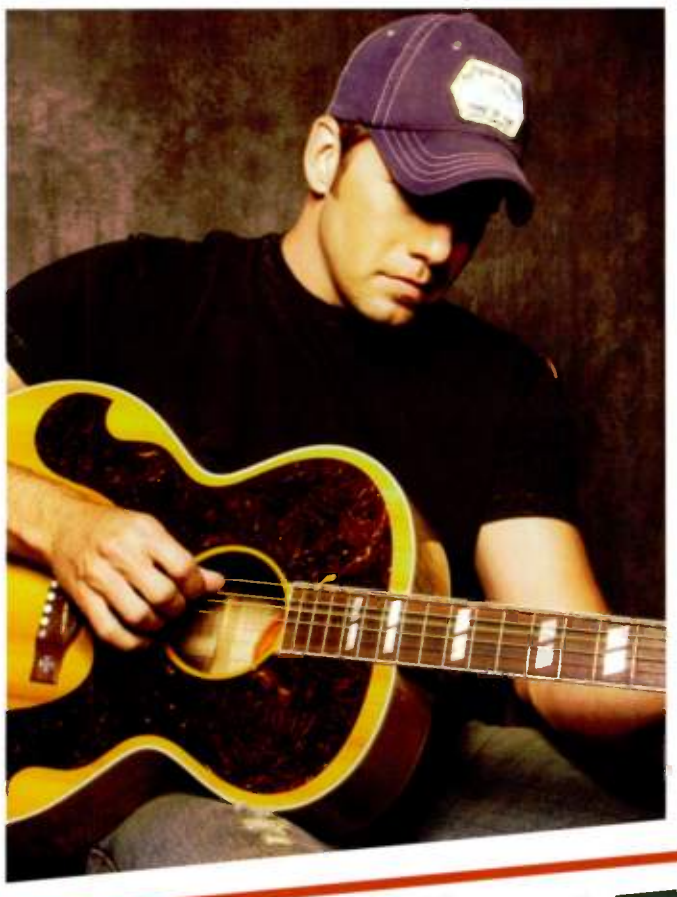
FACE TIME CONTINUUM



RODNEY ATKINS

A native of Cumberland Gap, TN, Curb's Rodney Atkins broke through with the Top 5 single "Honesty" in 2004. His 2006 album, If You're Going Through Hell *debuted at No. 1 country, No. 3 overall, with the title track earning multiple weeks at No. 1. In January 2007, the follow-up single "Watching You," inspired by Atkins' son Elijah, followed suit. Atkins will be touring with Martina McBride and Little Big Town beginning in April.*

Did you grow up listening to Country radio?
Yeah, man! WIVK/Knoxville. I just remember the station always seemed larger than life. It's where I discovered Alabama singing "Old Flame." They changed my life.

What is your most vivid radio tour memory?
Which radio tour? I did one in '98 and one again in '02 and then another in '06! There are so many memories.

Any interesting stories about being out on the road with the regional label reps?
Joe O'Donnell ... something about Mexican food and a contact buzz. Karen McGuire and her power-shopping abilities are mystical.

Are you used to hearing your songs on the radio yet?
I'm not used to hearing myself. One of the greatest feelings in the world is hearing "Watching You" with my boy in his booster seat while we're going to the Co-op. Very cool.

Any particular memory of the first time you heard one of your songs on the radio?
I remember the first time my wife called and said, "I just heard 'If You're Going Through Hell' on the radio." I asked, "How'd it sound? Was it good?" She responded, "You sing like a hick!"

TRENT TOMLINSON

The Missouri native co-wrote and co-produced his debut album Country Is My Rock, *which has spawned two hit singles — "Drunker Than Me" and "One Wing In The Fire." The album's title track is used in EA Sports' NASCAR 07 video game, and "Hey Batter Batter" was the theme for ESPN's Home Run Derby. His Tour of Hope concert series, in partnership with FitzBradshaw Racing, raised funds for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.*

Do you have any early memories of listening to the radio?
I remember sitting in the front seat of my parents' car when I was a just a little kid and pushing the buttons to find a song I liked so I could sing along. "The big one was 'Swingin'," which I ended up going out and getting on a 45 after hearing it on the radio. I always listened to KTMO in Kennett, MO because they broadcast my dad's basketball games — he was the local coach.

What is your most vivid radio tour memory?
Me, Chris Loss and Eddie Haskell from KRST/Albuquerque taking all the casino's money!

Did people tell you scary stories before you went on your first one?
They did, but you know I didn't have one bad response or visit. Mine was great. You do end up eating steak every night. I gained 13 pounds on my radio tour. No kidding. It got to the point where I stopped being hungry.

Have you been to CRS and seen a New Faces show?
I was at CRS last year, but this is my first time there as an artist. I've always known how important [New Faces] is, but I'm just trying to focus on doing what I do and not getting caught up in the pressure cooker. I'll try and take the same approach I do every night. The label worries about that stuff, but I just have to be myself.

Is it at all humbling to think about the support you've already gotten from radio?
"One Wing In The Fire" has been on the charts more than seven months, and that's really a testament to radio being behind me. They've been good to me, and I do feel the need to work hard in return. It's a collective effort on all ends — radio, the label, everyone. If I can just try to do the right thing in everything I do, even though I fall short sometimes, I'll be holding up my end. CAC

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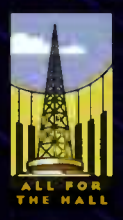

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WRH

We Have Contacts

Record Rep's Phones, Faxes & Emails

Here's the latest compilation of country label promo staffs and how to reach them.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: An explanation of some of the abbreviations: *"EVP" is Exec. VP;" SVP" is Sr. VP;" "NSD" is National Sr. Director; "ND" is National Director; "FD" is Field Director; "SD" is Sr. Director; "D" is Director; "FP" is Field Promotion; "C" is Central; "MA" is Mid-Atlantic; "MC" is Mid-Central; "MR" is Market Research; "MS" is Mid-South; "MW" is Midwest; "NC" is North-Central; "NP" is National Promotion; "Reg." is Regional; "W" is West Coast; "NM" is New Media; "SP" is Specialty Programming; "M/P" is Marketing & Promotions; "RD" is Regional Director; "STP" is Strategic Planner; and "Sec." is Secondary)*

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SW: Glenn Noblit	615-748-8000	glenn.noblit
W: Rick Young	818-953-4172	rick.young
Sec.: George Meeker	615-748-8000	george.meeker
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Jack Ingram @ Exit/In Featuring Sunny Sweeney (Saturday, March 3rd, 8:30pm; Exit/In)

Join BMR artists **Jack Ingram** and **Sunny Sweeney** as they preview tracks from their upcoming releases in a rare Nashville performance.

Dusty Drake · Jack Ingram · Danielle Peck · Sunny Sweeney · Taylor Swift · Jimmy Wayne

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"RED FLAG"

WHAT'S GOING ON DURING CRS & WHERE CAN YOU CATCH CODY McCARVER...

Wednesday, February 28th

3:00 – 6:00 pm Renaissance Bar

6:00 – 10:00 pm Red Flag Bus Open
*Look for the Special Guests' "Red Flag" bus in front of The Renaissance to party with Cody!

10:30 – 11:00 pm Tootsies Lounge
*Cody will be signing autographs!

11:00 pm – 12:00 am Tootsies Lounge
*Cody Performance.

12:00 – 1:00 am Party With Cody!

Thursday, March 1st

5:00 – 10:00 pm Red Flag Bus Open
*Look for the Special Guests' "Red Flag" bus in front of The Renaissance to party with Cody!

10:30 – 11:00 pm Tootsies Lounge
*Cody will be giving away copies of his album and meeting fans!

11:00 pm – 12:00 am Tootsies Lounge
*Cody Performance

12:00 – 1:00 am Party With Cody!

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Visit www.codymccarver.com for full details on where to catch Cody during CRS, on tour, on the radio and on TV!

C O 5

TOBY KEITH

Two years ago I sat down with CRS-36 keynoter Toby Keith and was as surprised as everyone else in the room — including staffers from his own record label — when he revealed his plans to leave DreamWorks/Universal and form his own stand-alone independent. True to his word, Keith has since launched Show Dog Nashville, split with initial promotion team partner Big Machine, released a platinum-plus album and starred in his first feature film. On June 12, Show Dog will release Keith's next studio album *Big Dog Daddy*, the first album he's produced on his own...and the first he wholly owns. (*White Trash With Money* was a joint venture with Universal). As we've all come to expect from Toby, he was extremely direct in this latest interview:

CA: Why did you choose to produce this album yourself?
TK: I was on the verge of producing my own albums before *White Trash With Money*, but with everything going on I just didn't have time. I had to find somebody I could trust to finish the album and Lari [White] did a great job. I built this album more around my gut instinct. I don't co-own this with Universal. I own this album outright, so I wanted to make sure I dedicated my time to it.

I sing a lot of the harmonies myself, and I've never done that. Singing along with my own voice is kind of like sibling harmony, you know? I've always cut the tracks the way I want them and until it came time to mix I'd let James Stroud or whoever cut the background vocals and stuff like that. I didn't fret over all that too much. Now I've produced the whole project.

CA: Is Show Dog where you thought it would be at this point?
TK: For all practical purposes, we've only been open since January or February 2005. A year later we've scanned 1.2 million on [*White Trash With Money*] and shipped about 450,000 on the *Broken Bridges* soundtrack — scanning 250,000. We've scanned somewhere around 1.5 million albums in a year. I couldn't be happier.

This year we have two pieces of catalog, my new album and two new acts coming. I'll be working on another movie before this year is up and there will be a soundtrack. We'll probably have a Christmas album, too. This time next year we will have maybe six pieces of catalog. That's the secret — start building catalog.

CA: Two years ago you said this move was about freedom. Have you found the freedom you were seeking as a singer/songwriter?
TK: First and foremost I'm a songwriter who just happens to sing and have all these other activities, but if that goes away I'll still be a songwriter. And the freedom is the only reason I came over to do this. The ego and the want-to in me wants to make this label successful.

CA: Speaking of songwriting, you're being honored by BMI for 50 million performances of songs you wrote. That's an astounding number.
TK: I don't have anything to compare that to. That's one of those numbers that's so big — 50 million *anything* is a lot. I'm very fortunate and very thankful at the same time. BMI has always been the awards show out of all of them that I don't miss. I have so much fun seeing all the songwriters there. It's such a great brotherhood and sisterhood. Those are people who don't get enough respect. It's such a feast or famine business, and a lot of times it's just famine.

CA: Back to Show Dog business, have you found the freedom you expected?
TK: I sat a group of people down and laid out a game plan. Every piece of it has come true and we haven't had one person quit. The only person I've had leave is [VP/Promotion] Denise Roberts, and she didn't take another job doing the same thing. She wasn't happy in Nashville and wanted to go back to California, where she's working with Blair Garner.

We just hired Tom Moran and all the pieces are in place. It might have looked like we struggled a little bit through the fourth quarter on the charts, but I didn't want to do a knee jerk reaction and just hire somebody. So we held tight until we got the right person.

CA: What new freedoms did you find with your own music?
TK: There was a huge argument that hurt a lot of feelings back at DreamWorks before I left over what song to release first off *Honkytonk University*. My gut said "As Good As I Once Was," but the label felt it needed to be "Honky Tonk U." "As Good As I Once Was" ended up being the most played song of the year at BMI.

For the new album, I cut all the tracks then started working on finalizing three or four. "High Maintenance Woman" and a couple more really floated to the top. I was feeling good about what I had, so I just sent it out, told Tom to get it to the regionals, pick a date in February and let's get going. That would have been a two-month ordeal before. I can travel with my gut. Now, you have to live with it. When you fail there's nobody to blame but yourself.

CA: What's been your biggest disappointment?
TK: Lindsey Haun's single "Broken." I gave radio a great vehicle, a visual star, a girl who can sing and sings a great song. I showed them by the sales of the soundtrack, by the downloads and by her being voted CMT's Rookie of the Year that she was hitting that demo right in the mouth. All they had to do was just climb on board. I thought it was a complete no-brainer. In the end it had more to do with the song being too pop sounding.

CA: Broken Bridges got off to a slow start, but now you've got a soundtrack album in the top 10. Have you been surprised?
TK: It's right in line with the game plan I laid out. I said as soon as the masses see the movie, this is what we'll sell. When Paramount didn't give us the screens we wanted in September, we had already shipped albums. Well, we had some returns, but look what happened when CMT started airing the movie. The thing is selling every bit as well as I predicted in September.

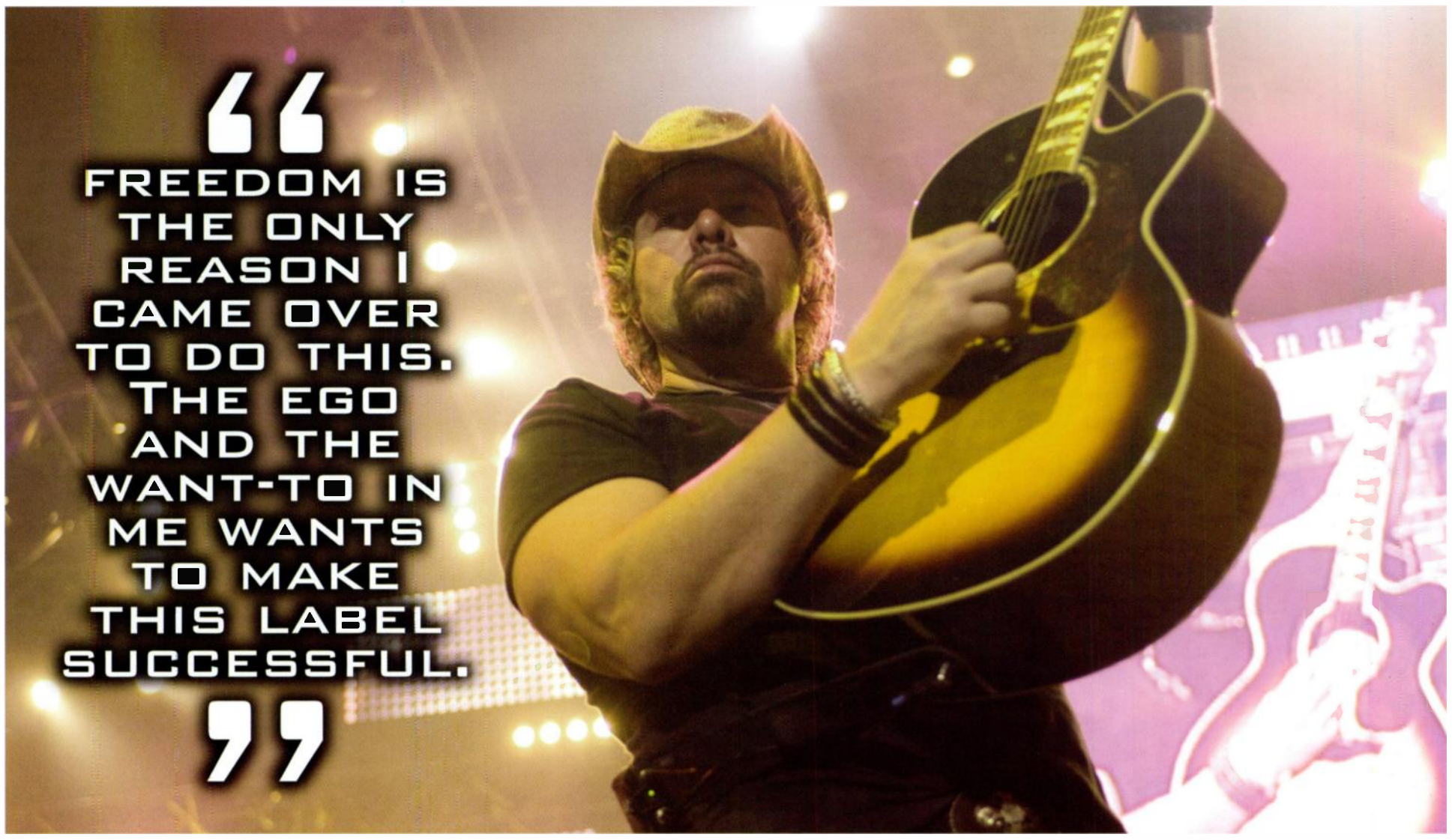
CA: Are you more or less hands-on with the business side of the label — sales, promotion, A&R — than you thought you'd be?
TK: I've talked to Tom Moran twice since December, and he officially came on board in January. I don't deal with the day-to-day and committee meetings. As for A&R, I'm 100% the man.

CA: Who are the two new artists you mentioned earlier?
TK: Flynnville Train is unbelievable. They're a must see. We're sticking them in people's faces and they just blow everybody away. They're coming first and radio's biting on all three of the songs we've got out there. Carter's Chord is three sisters with the last name Robertson. Their mom and dad Bonnie and Carter were in Waylon's band for years. Their mom being a background singer, they sing like birds and she taught them harmony structures that are really intricately placed in their songs. I'm producing them.

CA: Are you still an investor in Big Machine?
TK: I left money in there. When we split [Big Machine Founder Scott Borchetta] was trying to get his finances together. Being partly responsible for talking to him about going into it together, instead of abandoning him I said leave my money in there. He's got enough of a struggle trying to create the record sales you need to keep it afloat. If it does good I'll be an investor, if it doesn't I'll write it off.

LH: What's been the biggest surprise about having your own label?
TK: That there hasn't been one. At some point you expect it to jump up and be more than you can chew, but I've got such good people. CAC

—LON HELTON



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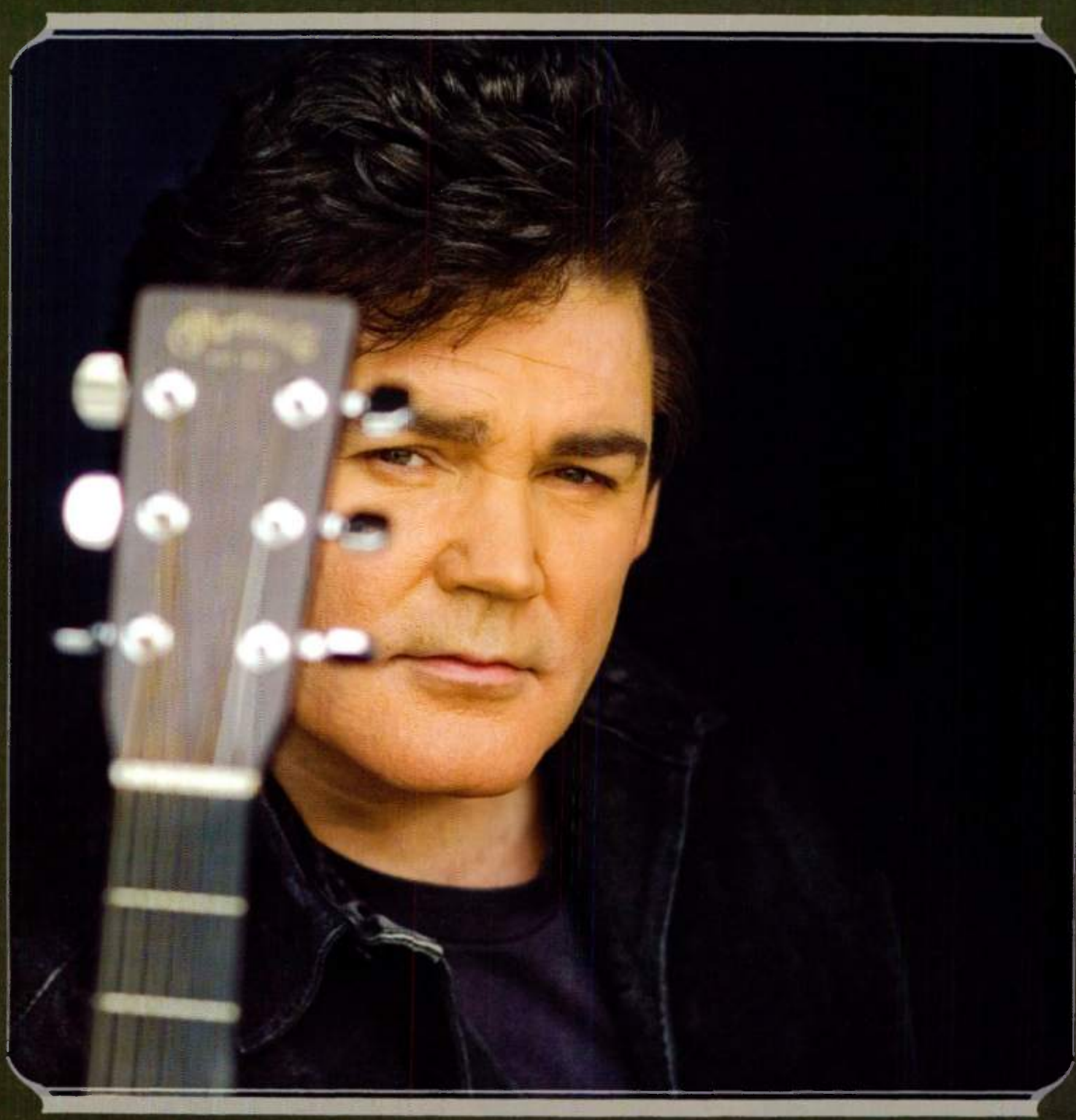

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-Josh Turner, MCA Recording Artist

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What Would YOU Do With CRS?

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B&D: Career Achievement

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WARNER MUSIC'S JOHN ESPOSITO
The Interview

LABEL CONTACTS INSIDE!

COUNTRY AIRCHECK
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Don't Miss

JUSTIN MOORE

Performing On The New Faces Show

Friday, February 26th @ 7:30 PM
Convention Center Performance Hall

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THE VALORY MUSIC CO.: Reba, Jewel, Jimmy Wayne, Justin Moore
REPUBLIC NASHVILLE: The Band Perry, Fast Ryde, Sunny Sweeney, Eli Young Band

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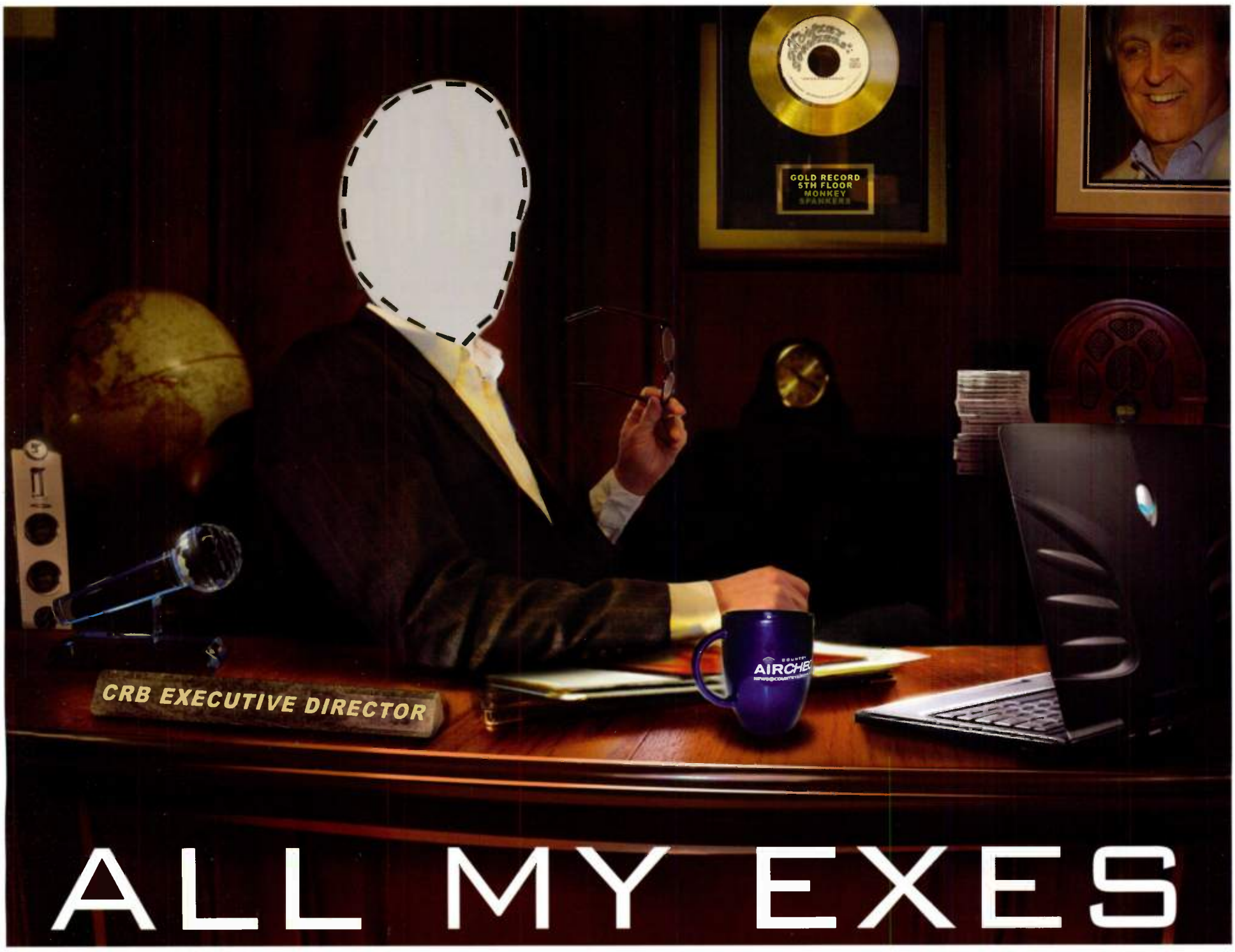


ALL MY EXES

If You Were CRB Executive Director...

Country Radio Seminar enters its fifth decade this week (ponder that one for a minute) and faces some of its greatest challenges yet. Declining music revenue and corporate radio's debt squeeze were generating plenty of pressure before the economy threatened to implode. Carving out time and budget for a trip to Nashville sounds great, if anyone had any of either.

Thankfully, the solution is obvious. At press time, CRB's executive director position was still open, so Country Aircheck asked a wide cross section of radio and music business professionals what they would do to sustain the Seminar were they named to the bully pulpit (board, schmoard). Some of the best responses are below:

Buzz Jackson

KIIM/Tucson PD/PM drive

It might be valuable to do seminars over the web. Lots of us don't have the budget to go, but would still be able to learn and contribute if there was a Country Radio (oh God, I can't believe I'm going to use the word) Webinar.

Wes Poe

WDAF/Kansas City MD

The only thing I would change about CRS is I'd move the Bridge Bar to a place where only CRS registrants have access. Obviously, there is room in the convention center to have a place where everyone can hang and network.

Rick Baumgartner

Black River Music Group VP/GM

A programmer from one of the bigger chains recently told me he has to pay his own registration, hotel, transportation and has to take vacation to attend. No wonder attendance has dwindled in recent years. Especially when the seminars are basically the same as in years past and registration costs are so high – from $499 to $649.

Let's pull down the curtain and expose Oz, shall we? This isn't the Country Radio Seminar, it's the Country Record Company Seminar. This event is all about record companies trying to get attention from radio. And if the point for radio is hanging out with industry friends, sharing ideas in small groups and getting to see artists, we need to allow for more of that.

So, leave Nashville. Keep it annual but alternate years with another city. A change of scenery does everyone good. If I'm a programmer and have to foot the bill and use vacation, I might be more likely to go if the event is somewhere I would love to visit.

Change the date to late April or early May to take advantage of nicer weather and facilitate the use of other venues around Nashville.

Drop the price to $199 and, if you want a last-minute rate, $249.

Keep to mornings with the educational seminars and open the afternoons to what we all want: the chance to have a drink, meet with friends and colleagues, hear new or established bands and get better acquainted with the artists. None of the bigger traditional events would be affected. This would make it easier for more labels to participate and allow for more music to actually be exposed. Labels are always told not to take programmers away from officially sanctioned events. Most abide by that rule, some do not. What are we protecting? The sponsors' dollars. Period. Let's open up the playing field. Maybe the sponsorship price of a luncheon goes down.

Offer more ongoing educational opportunities. We've changed the way artist liners are handled, why not utilize new technologies and offer seminars every quarter over the Internet? Online universities provide lectures this way. This way the CRB provides education throughout the year and allows for more music-specific content at the annual event.

And find a way to keep all the locals out of the Bridge Bar. It has become the big place for "wannabes" to hang and is no longer a place for any business to be accomplished in the evenings.

Buzz

Wes

Rick

Tom

Marci

Jack

Brian

Travis

Stoney

Tom Jordan
KSKS/Fresno PD/Mornings

With four of us left running the station, we can't afford for me to take off for CRS this year. There's just too much to do. But I don't want to see Seminar go away. I'd love to see it evolve into something much smaller and twice each year in different cities. You could do one East and one West, then the next year do one North and one South. Maybe the first year you do Nashville and Pittsburgh. Hold it on a Friday and Saturday. It would make it much easier for people like me – doing programming, music, promotions and mornings – to take off Thursday night and go back Sunday.

Marci Braun
WUSN/Chicago APD/MD

I'd have food at every session. Like Eric Cartman said, "More people will come if you have punch and pie."

Jack Purcell
Big Machine VP/Promotion

My suggestion for the past eight years has been for the CRS to move to CMA week. The Award show would fill the space of the Music City Jam, and leading up to the Awards there would be plenty of new and established artists in town for the industry to showcase.

Radio would benefit through efficiency and ratings. For stations that would normally attend both events, travel budgets would be cut in half. Yes, it's in the middle of the Fall book. Perfect. Your on-air talent (which includes a lot of PDs and MDs) would be front-and-center bringing listeners great content. Think of the access radio would have to our format's superstars. Most plan for a fall release and would be oh-so eager to talk with each and every station about their hits, upcoming tours and on-sale dates. There is also the contesting element to work with.

The agenda for the three- or four-day week could be a couple of broadcast days and two days of CRS agenda. No doubt there are challenges, but combining the events provides a benefit in national exposure across all media outlets. This, in turn, is brought back to each station that participates.

Brian Jennings
Morris/Salina, KS OM

One of the things I always thought would be fun would be voting on a New Faces Show "winner" that evening. Let's actually have the attendees proclaim "the next big thing" after the show by voting on the best new act of the year. It would help build momentum for a new star and allow us all to wrap our arms around the process.

Travis Moon
KAJA/San Antonio PD

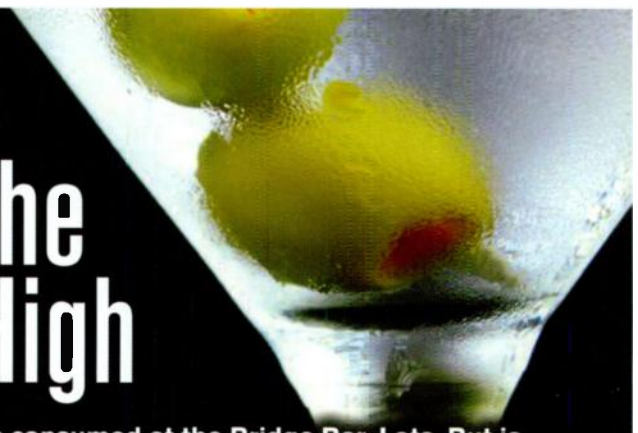
It starts with reassessing the goals and the point of CRS. We've got to actually come away with something tangible, not just the same stuff every year. People need to go home itching to get back on the air and try some things they learned.

And we have to be honest about the issues we're facing—how we can make the format healthier. That honesty needs to come without antagonism. Radio's health is equal to that of the record industry, and vice versa. We have to be open so people feel welcome to participate without worrying that if they say the wrong thing it will ruin their career.

The agenda needs to narrow down to the stuff that's most important. We may have too many panels, and we might need to pull that back in favor of what's going to move the needle. Are we just putting panels on for the sake of filling a quota? We could have fewer, and they might be ones you're really going to remember.

This might be a little bit of blasphemy, but there's almost too much stuff off-campus; it becomes a distraction. I'm not saying we go back to the Opryland days, but there's got to be a way to where we can keep things on-campus without keeping people captive. A lot of people bug out early from New Faces, or don't even go. The fragmentation is hurting the event. Let's find a way to celebrate the format where it doesn't feel like five different seminars in one.

Bridge Over The River High



Lots of alcohol is consumed at the Bridge Bar. Lots. But is it truly enough to float a battleship? Considering a World War II-era battlewagon displaces about 40,000 tons, um, no. So what can you do with the volume of booze consumed at the Bridge Bar during CRS week? Country Aircheck's crack research team ran the numbers and has reached the highly scientific conclusion that approximately 80,000 ounces (625 gallons) of beer, wine, spirits, mixers and sundry beverages are consumed during the four nights and three days of CRS. Enough to...

... fill 15 standard bathtubs ...

... put an inch of rain on a 20x50' roof ...

... fill the gas tank of 22 Cadillac Escalades ...

... as gasoline, power a (non-recalled) Toyota Prius on a drive around the world ... easily ...

... elicit 279 add commitments from PDs who won't remember their pledge Monday morning.

Stoney Richards
WDSY/Pittsburgh APD/MD

There are two big problems with CRS in the new PPM world. First, it's hard to get away while leaving so much station business behind. We're all doing a lot more with less and, I might add, doing it well. Also, CRS doesn't mean anything to the audience. It's hard to tell listeners that you're going to Nashville to schmooze with the stars when they are not included.

So what do we do? Make it a two-day event – Friday and Saturday. Each night ends with a big multi-label concert that is available for broadcast. Each day, have booths or studios set up for artist interviews.

Seminars and forums? Yes. And feature new equipment. I'd also love to hear about a story/song from the writer, producer and singer, from pitch to demo to final cut. How about talking about promotions and planning with the people who put together the Kenny Chesney or Keith Urban shows? How about managers talking about how fans can become more active in fan clubs? And of course, small-room concerts available for Flip video release to our audience. New Faces? Televise it. Broadcast it.

And it's all jam-packed over two days, each ending with a massive only-Nashville-can-do-it-this-way concert. Maybe have it underwritten by labels, broadcast companies, software companies (are you listening, Bill Gates and Steven Jobs?) CMA, Chevy Trucks and so on. Oh, yes, and open bars!

Ah, well, maybe someday. CAC

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CRB/Country Aircheck Award Nominees

CRS has come to represent many things in its 41 years including education, interaction, great music and, yes, good times. Country Aircheck is proud to partner with CRB to add "recognizing excellence" to that list. Here are the 2010 CRB/CA Awards nominees:

Major Market Station
(metros 1-25)
WUSN/Chicago
KPLX/Dallas
KYGO/Denver
WYCD/Detroit
KKGO/Los Angeles

Large Market Station
(metros 26-50)
KASE/Austin
WMIL/Milwaukee
WSIX/Nashville
WGH-FM/Norfolk
WQDR/Raleigh

Medium Market Station
(metros 51-100)
KUZZ/Bakersfield
WYRK/Buffalo
WIVK/Knoxville
WKSJ/Mobile
KIIM/Tucson

Small Market Station
(metros 101+)
WKSF/Asheville, NC
WUSY/Chattanooga, TN
KKNU/Eugene, OR
WXBQ/Johnson City, TN
WLLR/Quad Cities, IA-IL
WGSQ/Cookville,TN

Major Market Market Manager/GM
(metros 1-25)
Dan Bennett, KPLX/Dallas
Bob Call, KYGO/Denver
Lisa Decker, KMPS/Seattle
Mark Krieschen, KKBQ & KTHT/ Houston
Dave Robbins, WUSN/Chicago

Large Market Market Manager/GM
(metros 26-50)
Vonneva Carter, WGH-FM/Norfolk
Nate Deaton, KRTY/San Jose
Tom English, WSIX/Nashville
Pam McKay, KASE & KVET/Austin
Mike Rowen, KBEQ & KFKF/ Kansas City

Medium Market Manager/GM
Market Manager/GM
(metros 51-100)
Robert Ausfeld, WGNA/Albany, NY
Ed Brantley, WIVK/Knoxville
David Coppock, WKSJ/Mobile
Ken Kowalcek, KIIM/Tucson
Mel Owens, KUZZ/Bakersfield

Small Market Market Manager/GM
(metros 101+)
Kent Cooper, KOUL/Corpus Christi, TX
John Laton, WLLR/Quad Cities, IL-IA
George Roberts, WAXX/Eau Claire, WI
Ken Salyer, WKSF/Asheville, NC
John Tilson, KKNU/Eugene, OR

Major Market OM/PD
(metros 1-25)
Joel Burke, KYGO/Denver
Johnny Chiang, KKBQ & KTHT/ Houston
Charlie Cook, KKGO/Los Angeles
John Marks, KSON/San Diego
Meg Stevens, WPOC/Baltimore & WMZQ/Washington, DC

Large Market OM/PD
(metros 26-50)
John Crenshaw, WCOL/Columbus, OH
Mac Daniels, KASE & KVET/Austin
Mike Kennedy, KBEQ/Kansas City
Lisa McKay, WQDR/Raleigh
Kerry Wolfe, WMIL/Milwaukee

Medium Market OM/PD
(metros 51-100)
Bill Black, WKSJ/Mobile
Beverlee Brannigan, KFDI/Wichita
Mike Hammond, WIVK/Knoxville
Buzz Jackson, KIIM/Tucson
Tom Jacobsen, WGNA/Albany, NY

Small Market OM/PD
(metros 101+)
Dave Daniels, KJUG/Visalia, CA
Bill Hagy, WXBQ/Johnson City, TN
Gator Harrison, WGSQ/Cookeville, TN
George House, WAXX/Eau Claire, WI
Jim O'Hara, WLLR/Quad Cities, IL-IA

Major Market Music Director
(metros 1-25)
Marci Braun, WUSN/Chicago
Garret Doll, KYGO/Denver
JD Greene, KEEY/Minneapolis
Ginny Rogers, WKLB/Boston
Tony Thomas, KMPS/Seattle

Large Market Music Director
(metros 26-50)
TJ McEntire, KBEQ/Kansas City
Mark McKay, WGH-FM/Norfolk
Mitch Morgan, WMIL/Milwaukee
Bob Pickett, KASE/Austin
Bill Reed, KTST/Oklahoma City

Medium Market Music Director
(metros 51-100)
Colleen Addair, WIVK/Knoxville
Spencer Burke, KIZN/Boise
Kristina Carlyle, KRST/Albuquerque
Kix Layton, WSSL/Greenville, SC
Dave Taft, WBCT/Grand Rapids

Small Market Music Director
(metros 101+)
Dan Douglas, WGTY/York, PA
Brian Gary, KUAD/Ft. Collins, CO
Brian Hatfield, WKSF/Asheville, NC
Adam Jeffries, KJUG/Visalia, CA
Chris O'Kelley, WKXC/Augusta, GA

Major Market Personality/Show
(metros 1-25)
Cliff & Company, KSON/San Diego
The Cornbread Show, WIL/St. Louis
Donna & Muss, KEEY/Minneapolis
Lisa Dent & Ramblin' Ray, WUSN/Chicago
Shawn Parr, KKGO/Los Angeles

Large Market Personality/Show
(metros 26-50)
Doc & Grace, WWKA/Orlando
Gerry House & The House Foundation, WSIX/Nashville
Jim, Deb and Kevin, WFMS/Indianapolis
Karen, Scott & Radar, WMIL/Milwaukee
Mike Kennedy, Zeke Montana & Natalie, KBEQ/Kansas City

Medium Market Personality/Show
(metros 51-100)
Andy & Allison, WIVK/Knoxville
Dan & Shelby, WKSJ/Mobile
John & Tammy In The Morning, WMAD/Madison
Roger, Tom & Melissa, WPCV/ Lakeland
Steve Lundy, Gina & Craig, KXKT/Omaha
Kevin & Brenda "Mee In The Morning," KIZN/Boise

Small Market Personality/Show
(metros 101+)
Barrett, Fox & Berry, KKNU/Eugene, OR
Bearman & Ken, WUSY/ Chattanooga, TN
Dave Richmond, WDWG/Rocky Mount, NC
Gator & The StyckMan, WGSQ/ Cookeville, TN
Rick Stephenson, WFYR/Peoria, IL

National/Syndicated Personality/Show
Cody Alan, CMT Live
Kix Brooks, American Country Countdown
Big D & Bubba
Blair Garner, After MidNite
Bob Kingsley, Country Top 40

Platinum Record Label
Arista/Nashville
BNA
Capitol/Nashville
MCA/Nashville
Mercury

Gold Record Label
Big Machine
Broken Bow
Curb
Lyric Street
Show Dog

Record Label VP/Promotion
Skip Bishop, Sony Music Nashville & Arista/Nashville
Kevin Herring, Lyric Street
Steve Hodges, Capitol/Nashville
Jack Purcell, Big Machine
Royce Risser, UMGN

Record Label National Director/ Promotion
Buffy Cooper, BNA
Renee Leymon, Lyric Street
Jim Malito, Broken Bow
Mike Rogers, Curb
Lesly Tyson, Arista/Nashville

Record Label Regional Director or Manager/Promotion
Charlie Dean, Mercury
Angela Lange, Capitol/Nashville
Mandy McCormack, Big Machine
Mara Sidweber, Bigger Picture
John Sigler, Arista/Nashville

Independent Record Promotion Team or Promotion Executive
Rob Dalton, New Revolution
David Newmark, CO5/Nashville
Larry Pareigis, Nine North
Michael Powers, Bigger Picture
Jeff Solima, Bigger Picture and New Revolution

"New Face of Country" Professional
Kris Abrams, KMLE/Phoenix PD
JD Greene, KEEY/Minneapolis MD
Mark Medina, KNIX/Phoenix PD
Chris Miller, WGAR/Cleveland PD
John O'Connell, WIRK/West Palm Beach PD

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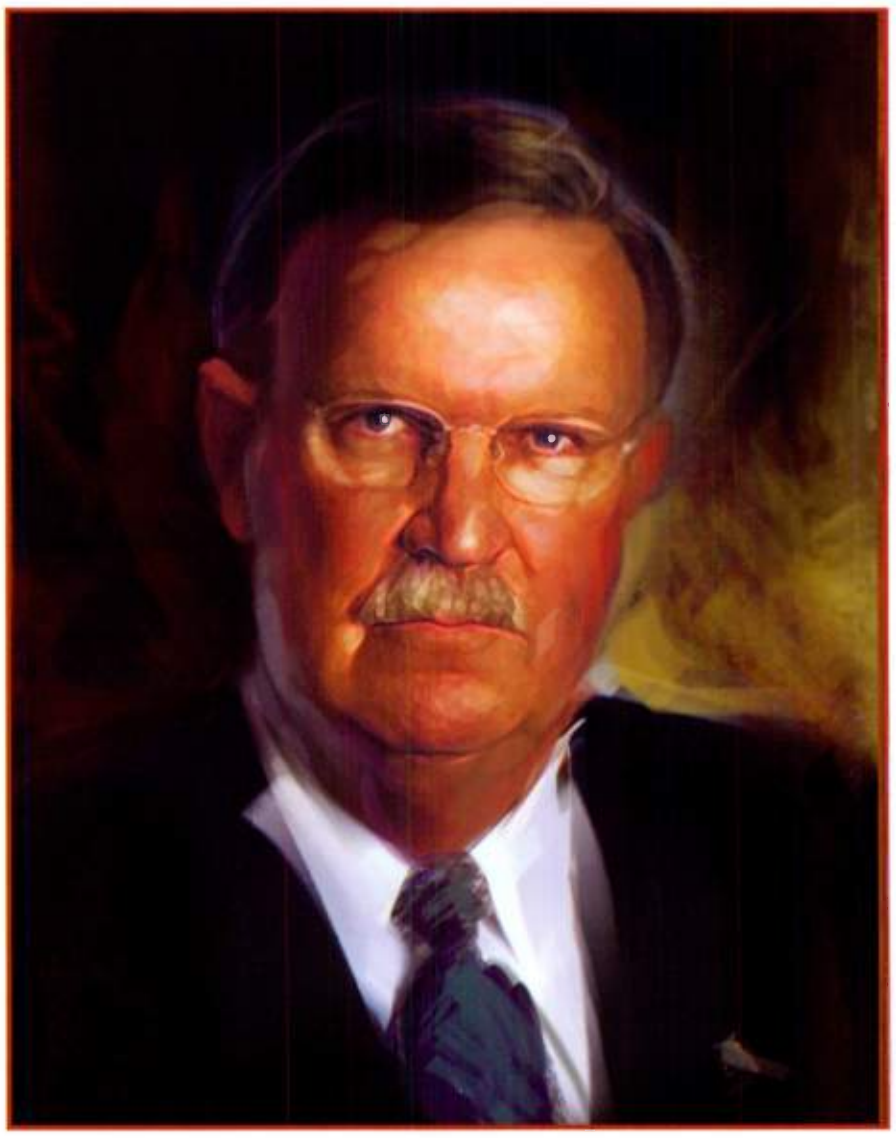
ASHLEY RAY
Carter's Chord
BAYLIE BROWN
CROSS CANADIAN RAGWEED
phil vassar
MAC McANALLY
JONATHAN SINGLETON & THE GROVE
Mica Roberts
Trailer Choir
ELI YOUNG BAND
TURN 'EM LOOSE
& MAKE SOME NOISE!
WRH

Country Music DJ AND RADIO HALL OF FAME

BILL BAILEY

Doing It The Listeners' Way



A larger-than-life, multiple award-winning broadcaster who programmed and hosted mornings on KIKK/Houston and crosstown KENR for more than 20 years, Bill Bailey took his name from a DJ who suddenly quit, leaving management with new jingles already cut and needing a successor. Among his many accomplishments, Bill led 250-watt daytimer KIKK to No. 1, and arranged for the first Country music tapes to travel into outer space. Widely regarded for breaking countless artists and hits, Bill retired from radio in 1982 to successfully run for county constable in the Houston suburb of Pasadena, where he oversees a staff of 70. A member of the Texas Radio Hall of Fame, he still keeps close to the microphone as an announcer for the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo, to which he has lent his voice for 49 years.

I was born a radio guy. In the second grade, I was walking in downtown Houston with my mother, and she said, "Oh, my goodness! There's Ted Nabors!" She introduced me to Ted, an announcer on KTRH, and so I started listening to him. I thought, "Oh, boy, that was something I want to do." My teacher used to play these semi-classical records in class, and I would direct the music, which got me noticed by the girls. At school programs, I was always the announcer.

> "MY TEACHER USED TO PLAY THESE SEMI-CLASSICAL RECORDS IN CLASS, AND I WOULD DIRECT THE MUSIC, WHICH GOT ME NOTICED BY THE GIRLS."

Management never knew this, but I'd have worked for free. At KTEM/Temple, TX, I adopted the name "The Lone Wolf." That started the long trip into my chemical dependency ... on adrenaline. Several years later on KTHT/Houston, I worked weekday mornings, plus a six-hour morning weekend shift. One time I was really cooking, and when the guy came in at noon to relieve me, I asked him, "Don't you have something to do? Let me just take it a little while longer!" He looked at me like I was nuts. But I loved radio so much that I would get on a natural high.

KIKK was the only Country station in town, and everybody looked down on us. But all the guys who worked at the petrochemical plants along the ship channels in Pasadena had their radios on KIKK. We had news live at :55, rather than at the top of the hour. We had two colorful news characters, Richard Dobbyn and Milton Alan Graves, and they would say [in booming voices], "A-tisket, a-tasket – a dead babe in a basket!" And, "This morning, he's under arrest in the city jail. She's under a sheet in the city morgue!" Real sensational stuff. The plants would change their 10am and 3pm coffee breaks just so they could hear our news. We were all characters and owned the market.

I'm not a musician, but from the earliest days I used to listen to a 15-minute show on KTRH/Houston called *The Chuck Wagon Gang* and another called *The Hillbilly Bandwagon* that played Hank Williams and Ernest Tubb. To then become part of it and to meet these people, it was like a dream come true. KIKK and WPLO/Atlanta were the two breakout stations in America [for new music]. I would guess we programmed more stations than anybody before or since. We worked the joints – Gilley's, Dance Town USA, the Esquire Ballroom – different clubs every night. KIKK is probably the only radio station where all three of the broadcast-day guys who worked together – Arch Yancey, Joe Ladd and me – are in the Hall of Fame. It was just a magic time. Faron Young told me once, "You gotta let the drunks spit in your face." That's when they put their arm around you, and say, "Oh, God damn, Bailey, I love youuu" and slobber on you. They'll tell you what they like and what they don't like. That was our focus group. We didn't have all the stuff they've got today. We just listened to our listeners.

Astronaut Pete Conrad and I were friends, and when he went to the moon, his friend Charley Pride was at Cape Canaveral for the launch. I was there, too, and we were staying at a nearby Holiday Inn. The night before lift-off, Pete was in quarantine at the Cape. It's raining, and Pride's sittin' on the bed playing guitar. Pete's whole family is there, all crowded into this double-bed room. Suddenly, Pete appears at the door and says, "Anybody got a cold?" He had snuck out and driven down to see his wife. Charley was pickin', and we were all singing and carryin' on. If NASA had known that, they'd have killed him.

I miss the bully pulpit from being on the radio, staying up on current events and things happening in the community that you have an opinion on. I also miss the money! These guys today are making a lot more than we did. But it's always a rush when you're out at the grocery store or service station, and people point at you, and say, "That's Bill Bailey." You feel the "specialness," whether it's real or imagined, that they bestow upon you. That's a great encouragement.

Being inducted is humbling, and I'm not sure I can get through my remarks without becoming emotional. My mother was the one who said, "You can do this" and got me up in high school to be on the radio at 5:45am. I'm 70 years old and to this day I would never do anything to disappoint my mother and father. People asked me what I wanted to do with my life, and I said, "I want to be a man worthy to be a servant at my father's table." On a plaque over my back door at my home it says, "All I want is to enter my house justified." When I first heard that line in the movie *Ride The High Country*, I didn't understand what it was talking about – to be proved right, in the Biblical sense, as a good man who's done the right thing. I don't want to be a great man, and I'm not going to be. But I want to be a good man.

Even if I didn't go into the Hall, I was still friends with Ernest Tubb, still sat next to Tex Ritter at the CMA board meetings, still was there when Bob Wills went into the Country Music Hall of Fame, and was in the studio with him when [producer/label executive] Paul Cohen recorded him. None of that stuff can ever be taken away. I don't need a plaque to show I did that; I was there. When the lights are out, I've got it. But I didn't do it my way. I did it the listeners' way. CAC

Captive Audience: Here's Bill Bailey with Merle Haggard at the Texas Prison Rodeo. It was at one of these star-studded annual fundraisers where Bailey, who served as an announcer, met his wife, Janis, an administrator at the prison. Bill says the men and women inmates watched from opposite sides of the arena behind high, barbed electrical wire. "I'd call out to the men, 'Say hello to the ladies.' They'd all cheer, and I'd say, "Yeah, that's as close as you're gonna get for the next 99 years."

Fly Me To The Moon: Bill Bailey, shown at top left with KIKK's Arch Yancey, Buck Owens and Bill's astronaut friend Pete Conrad, prepared music tapes, jingles and special shows from country artists for multiple Apollo space missions; those recordings are archived at the Country Music Hall of Fame & Museum. Thanks to Bill, Bob Wills' "San Antonio Rose" was the first Country song played from space.

Tanks For The Memories: In one of his most famous stunts, here's Bill Bailey atop a secretly borrowed Ft. Hood battle tank he brought in to a sold-out Astrodome to seek "revenge" for his car, built by friend A.J. Foyt, being "kicked out" from an Auto Thrill Show demolition derby. Bill was "disqualified" again and exited the tank just before it crushed two cars at 35mph, injuring the tank crew and Foyt. The national story led to an apologetic call from alarmed Pentagon officials.

Country Music DJ AND RADIO HALL OF FAME

LAURIE DEYOUNG

A Reverence For Relevance

Only the third woman to be inducted into the Country Music DJ Hall of Fame (and attending the ceremony for the first time), Laurie DeYoung first worked several years in her native Michigan, including stops at WSHN/Fremont and Grand Rapids outlets WYGR, WCUZ, WLAV and WKLQ. Following a year at KBZT/San Diego, in 1985 she arrived at WPOC/Baltimore, where she is serving her 25th year in mornings. Especially talented at interviewing, Laurie's shared the microphone with Johnny Cash, Dolly Parton, Kenny Rogers and countless others. Her perennially strong ratings, ever-relatable personality, preparation and social media skills have rightfully earned this onetime aspiring actress the accolades of both peers and listeners during her unprecedented run on the stage of Country radio's theater of the mind.

My parents were very supportive of me being in radio. But most are just glad when their child is independent, self-sustaining and isn't calling home for money. I grew up in a musical home: Mom was a great piano player, and Dad was really an excellent communicator. One of the philosophies of my show is "good music, good conversation." I grew up with the love for music, and also for sitting around a meal with people and having a great conversation where you feel like you really get to know and understand someone. I found radio to be this great job that would make use of both of those values.

We did car-deer accidents at WSHN, as well as 4-H news, people's funerals, and a bargain hotline to sell your washer/dryer. We played everything from the Rolling Stones to Perry Como, and it was a great introduction to me as a fulltime radio job.

When I left WKLQ to go to San Diego with my colleague Rocky Marlowe, there was this big media buildup about how my career was doing so well. A year later, they came in one morning and fired everyone. So it was back to Grand Rapids, where I knew I could get work. It was humbling to knock on the doors of those people and say, "Remember me? The big deal who was going to San Diego? I'm back. Got work?" We had moved in with my husband's folks. As dear as they were, I'll tell you, that'll motivate you to get a job.

The last words I said to Rocky before he landed at WPOC were, "If it's a Country station, don't call me," because I knew nothing about the format. As a young woman in radio, men were easy to win over. Women were much harder; they did not want somebody on the air who didn't know what they were talking about. They were ferocious with you if you came off being the stupid sidekick. But Rocky knew a lot about Country, and that was a real learning lesson. The staff weren't particularly warm to us coming in from out of town, as there was speculation we were getting the big bucks, which certainly in my case wasn't true. Doug Wilson, the PD who hired us, was warm and gracious, but didn't stay long. Then Bob Moody came in, and he was a huge supporter of me. Bob was a great person to call with the news about my being inducted.

When I had a child it totally changed women listeners' acceptance level of me. Before, you're the woman taking time away from their DJ or distracting him when he's on the air. There was almost like a sexuality about it; it was threatening to them. But once you have kids, it puts you on their playing field and takes away that element. All of a sudden you're in the women's club.

Being on the air September 11, 2001 was difficult. It's obviously a moment to connect with people about what they're feeling, but I get very emotional about things and was trying the entire show not to break down sobbing. Sometimes I would crack. I don't think there's anything wrong with that, but you're walking a fine line where you're trying to absorb what's happened while on the radio. Recently, a woman called me off-air and broke down telling me her husband tried to kill himself on Christmas night. I'm genuinely amazed at the level of intimacy on which people will deal with you. I value that immensely, and am always moved by those things.

A funny moment occurred when a guy called in so excited because he thought he had won tickets to the "Paul Harvey" Show. He and his wife had arranged a sitter and gone to dinner to make a whole night of it. He came to find out it was for the "Fall RV" show! Someone told Paul about that, and he actually used it on his broadcast.

When Garth Brooks first came out and we were doing some Nashville broadcasts, I remember there were stations that wouldn't talk to him because he was a new artist. We did, and always have made it a practice to talk with everyone. Not because they could be a big star someday, but because every person is worth dignity.

Raising three children, I would hear people say, "You must get used to morning-show hours." I'd reply, "No, I just get used to being sleep-deprived." I'd be playing a game with my child, who would say, "Mom, wake up! It's your turn!" I was never one to go to bed at 8pm so I could get up for that early shift. I always felt, "I'll miss half of my family's life if I do that." Especially as your kids get older and when teenagers don't have any problems until 11pm.

> "THIS IS A GREAT TIME FOR EXPERIMENTATION: TO CONTINUE TO BE FRESH, COME UP WITH DIFFERENT IDEAS AND TRY SOMETHING."

This is going to sound crazy, but I used to have to be reminded when the ratings were coming out. Here's a motivator for you: when I first got here, our former GM told me he didn't believe Country could *be* No. 1. So the expectation was that if you make the top five, we're happy with you. The good part about that was that I didn't feel a lot of pressure. As we continued to do better and ended up No. 1, I was just as surprised as they were.

Now I know every *week* how we're doing. In the PPM world, it's impossible not to think about it because you're constantly being evaluated – so much more than you used to be. I don't think for one second that anyone's bulletproof, certainly not in the times we're living in. This is a great time for experimentation: to continue to be fresh, come up with different ideas and try something. I always want to stay relevant and as accessible to as many people as possible.

The overanalyzing of everything can be just paralyzing for people. I have to always remind myself that people are drawn to radio because there's something compelling them to listen. When you just play music and end up becoming like satellite radio, that's where you're going to lose what makes you unique. I think people want to have a relationship; that's what radio is about. People feel like they know you – you're part of their morning and part of their life. CAC

Stars & Guitars: Over the years, Laurie DeYoung has interviewed virtually every star in the business, including many of the legends, except, for some reason, the elusive kd lang. Although she admits to being more of a private person, Laurie is clearly the huggable type, as shown with Johnny Cash (top), Ricky Van Shelton, (above) and Keith Urban (right).

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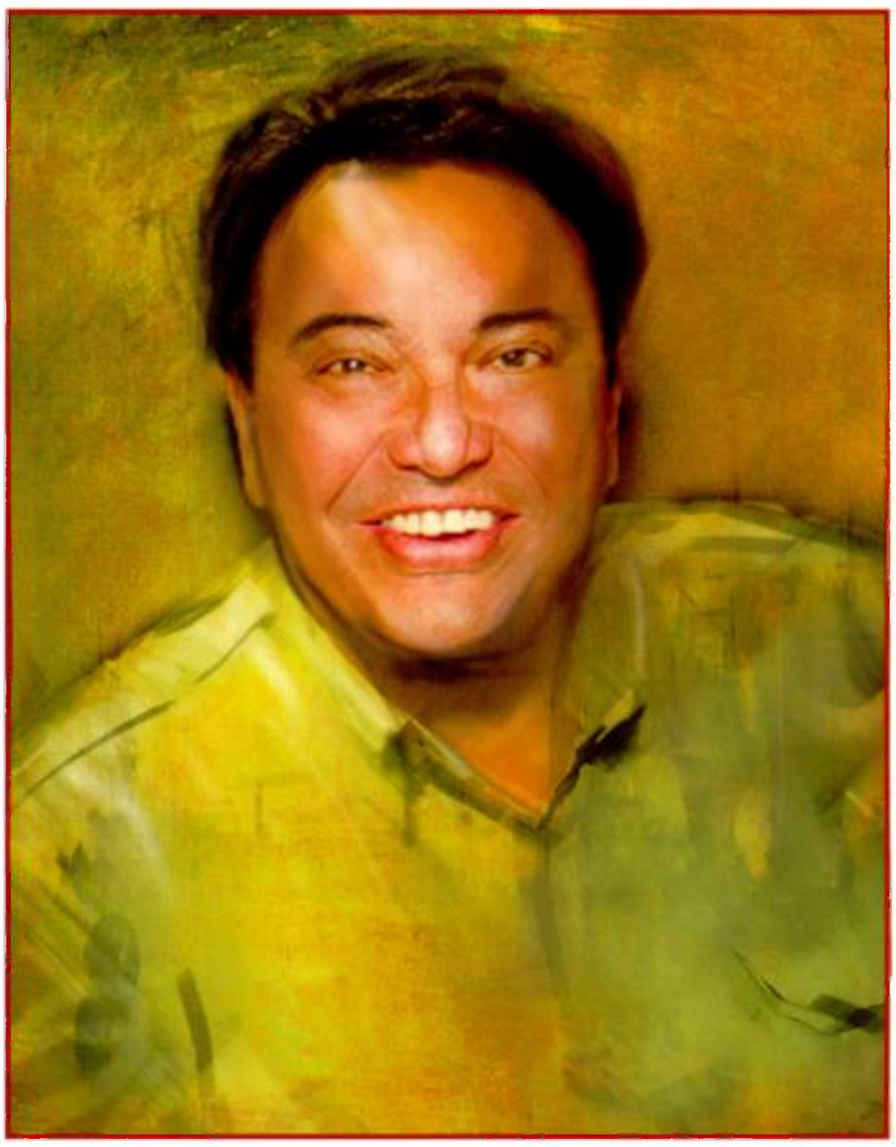
Country Music DJ AND RADIO HALL OF FAME

RUDY FERNANDEZ

Privileged To Help The Community

A cancer survivor and born with one arm, KEAN/ Abilene, TX PD Rudy "Fearless" Fernandez is not only one of the most courageous people you'll ever meet, he's also all about giving back. Serving as the city's Emergency Communications Director, Rudy is known for bringing awareness to important causes on a grand scale. His trademark is, perhaps, forsaking comfort and even his own safety to help raise funds for those in need. A devoted father of eight, Rudy continually generates high ratings book after book, yet embraces his competition for events like the St. Jude Jam. Beloved by his fellow citizens in Abilene, Rudy has, even before his induction, already earned the enduring respect of his broadcast peers, label executives and artists.



I was always fascinated with radio. When I was younger and we were stationed in Spain, Dad and Mom would find me hiding during thunderstorms in the closet listening to Wolfman Jack and others on Armed Forces Radio and Radio Free Europe. I would imitate them [*Ed. note: very well, too!*] In 1973 we were moved to Carswell Air Force Base in Ft. Worth, and at night I'd listen to border blasters like X-Rock 80, KOMA/ Oklahoma City and on WLS/Chicago, John "Records" Landecker and, signing off, Larry Lujack. Our housing was next to Gordon McLendon's KLIF/Dallas. I was 13 and would ride my bicycle up there. Some of the DJs were out back with a bottle of wine, sitting on the hoods of their cars. This was the hippie era, with long hair and bell-bottoms. One of them asked me if I was interested in radio, and I said, "Sure!" We went in and he said, "When this record runs out, flip this one on and turn this one off." They showed me what the pots were, and I did it. He said, "Hey, you're gonna make a jock after all!" And I ended up hanging around the station.

I used to mail my aircheck to anyone who would listen to me, including Ron Chapman and Larry Lujack. God knows how many airchecks I sent Larry. Along with my questions and the cassette, I'd include a $5 bill and a self-addressed, stamped envelope. And Larry would write back, saying things like, "Walk around all day, going 'Uh, uh, uh,' and you'll quit doing it." He'd always write, but never did send the money back.

The nickname started one day when I was around 21 or 22 years old. We had to change a tower light on an oil derrick we use at KEAN to mount all our Marti antennas, STL, etc. There was no one else around, so I had to climb up the derrick almost 100 feet to do it. When I came down, our then-PD George Owens, said, "Now *that* is fearless. Damn, you are Fearless Fernandez!" The name stuck, and our GM Benny Springer was happy because we saved him a ton of money for not having to hire a tower climber.

> **"WHAT IF THE WORLD COMES TO AN END, AND I'M IN THIS COFFIN? BUT IF THERE'S A NEED FOR IT, I'D DO IT AGAIN."**

The West Texas Rehabilitation Center was really suffering because the bottom had fallen out of the oil boom. The only one who could put a deposit on a Mercedes was a pigeon. The WTRC, which helps everyone from crippled children to adults suffering from strokes, needed a fundraiser. I grew up listening to radio stunts, and a car dealer needing to draw attention offered to suspend a van chained from a crane and put me in it "to see what the name Fearless is all about." The idea was that for every car sold during the remote, the dealership would donate $50 to the center.

MY HEROES HAVE ALWAYS BEEN COWBOYS: KEAN/ Abilene PD Rudy Fernandez was once a recording artist himself, and that's just one of the things that bonds him to the stars, who sometimes hang out with him at home (see story). Here's Rudy with Garth Brooks, Clay Walker and Shenandoah.

They asked me, "Can you hang up there for five days?" I said, "As long as I've got food, water and a toilet." So they got me a portable RV toilet, and set up an extension cord for the Marti and a phone line so I could do my breaks. So I'm hanging in the air, when suddenly the wind kicked up and a tornado was spotted. The weather and visibility was so bad that the crane operator, who lived out of town, couldn't drive in. I'm swinging around in the van, and couldn't call anybody because it snapped both the power and the phone lines. The GM goes, "Oh, crap! Rudy's still up there." But that drew a lot of attention: the TV stations came out, and we're selling cars and people are putting money in the donation basket. We raised $20,000 in five days, and did it again two years later for the March of Dimes.

We got the Marines and a funeral home involved in a "Buried Alive So The Message Will Survive: Don't Let Drugs Bury You" event for a drug awareness program for schools in 1990. I fasted for 24 hours before being buried in a coffin for another two days without anything, broadcasting from six feet under. Your stomach growls a lot, and your head screws with you, too: "What if the world comes to an end, and I'm in this coffin?" I'm claustrophobic, but if there's a need for it, I'd do it again. I take these charities personally.

One time Kenny Chesney came over to my house, and I warned him not to sit in the recliner, as it wasn't very stable. He just thought I didn't want him to sit in *my* chair. I told him, "Kenny, it's broke. Do *not* pull the lever. Kenny, do *not* lean back in my chair." I'm trying to tell him to not pull the lever, and boom! Ass over teakettle, down he goes, face down in my living room.

Gap Broadcasting is a great company, and President George Laughlin is very much a hands-on owner. I've got his cell phone number. He'll come into the building, knock on my door and say, "Hey, can we talk? I've got an idea." Not to knock them, but when was the last time any of the Mays brothers or Lew Dickey did that?

I still worry every day about losing my job. I have this theory that if I can work on-air the last day of the year and the first day of the next year, I'll be there the whole year. I still want to go to the next level, and am extremely honored to be inducted. When I got the news from Coyote Calhoun, I cried for two days. These are all the guys I've looked up to. I've worked at this trade for years simply because it allows me to do good in the community. I have a weakness for kids, the elderly and animals. For whatever reason, those are the ones who can't help themselves, but folks my age can go out, get a job and make our communities better. To young broadcasters, I'd say to them that we've been given a privilege and an honor to be on the radio. People have opened up the door to you to let you into their lives. *Never* forsake that trust. We have to remember what the licenses are granted for – to serve the community – and I hope I'm doing it. CAC

The Band Perry
ELI YOUNG BAND
FAST RIDE
THE ORIGINAL 2
SUNNY SWEENEY
Republic
NASHVILLE

Country Music DJ AND RADIO HALL OF FAME

CY BLUMENTHAL (1913-1983)

Country's Modern Trailblazer

Starting with WARL/Arlington, VA in 1951, former grocery store operator Cy Blumenthal created Country radio's first large-market station group, later adding WCMS/Norfolk, WHMS/Memphis, WABB/Mobile and KCKN/Kansas City. In 1960, "Countrypolitan" KCKN became a pioneering "modern Country" station, and three years later, KCKN-FM (now KFKF) debuted as a simulcast. Among those Cy helped during his career of owning "The Family Stations" were WARL GM Ray Armand, entertainer Jimmy Dean, beloved comptroller Margaret Mayers, future WCMS owner George Crump, founding CMA President/station owner Connie B. Gay, and personalities including eventual Country DJ Hall of Famers Ted Cramer, "Uncle" Don Rhea, Joe Hoppel and Don Owens.

Cy's legacy was "doing it right": he invested in his properties, loved his staff and let the local pros do their jobs. Over time, Cy sold his stations, the last being the K.C. combo in 1965 to Danny Kaye and Lester Smith. According to legend, Cy's card-playing skills came in handy during some rough patches when it was hard to make payroll.

Son-in-law (and former KCKN & KFKF senior account executive) Steve April:
I was in Brooklyn when my Navy stint was over in 1961, and getting work was difficult. Cy offered me a job as a "salesman recruit" in Kansas City and my wife, Edie, Cy's daughter, a job as traffic manager. He said, "You don't know a damn thing about radio or sales, but in 30 days you'll be pretty good." He handed me a stack of past-due bills and said, "In the next three months, I want you to collect these. I'm not going to tell you how, just go do it." By God, I did get most of it. Cy knew if I could do that, I could learn to be a good salesperson. I did, and he was right.

Cy taught me the rudiments and nuances of country music, how important the lyrics were and how the audience listens to the story in the song. That carried over to listening to the stories in the commercials, many of which were ad-libbed. Cy never belittled other stations or gave a damn what they did; he only cared about what our station did and how to make it better. Cy had a passion for everything, and it was inherent in his makeup to do things right.

One time, a guy from Memphis opening up some motels called to buy overnight spots, offering a lot of stock in his company instead of cash, but Cy ultimatley said no. The little motel company turned out to be Holiday Inn! But Cy probably was the most brilliant businessman I've ever run across. He could think five steps ahead of anybody else, which made him a fantastic businessman and a hell of a card player! That gave him an enormous advantage. Beyond that, Cy was tremendously charismatic, with a booming voice and great laugh.

Some of Cy's announcers at other stations had gone to hell in a handbag: alcoholics, gamblers, but they had talent or did at one time. It was not unusual for Cy to bring 'em out to KCKN and tell [PD] Ted Cramer to put 'em on the air. Cy once brought to K.C. a major D.C. advertiser who'd gone bankrupt. He set him up in business, gave him a great rate on the station and said, "Make your life a success." And he did this with salespeople, too. Cy was just a huge-hearted guy.

> "CY WAS A GOOD BUSINESSMAN WITH A LOT OF FAITH IN COUNTRY MUSIC AND ABOUT THE VIABILITY OF THE FORMAT TO SUSTAIN A CHAIN OF STATIONS."
>
> **—Former longtime KCKN PD Ted Cramer**

Former longtime KCKN PD Ted Cramer, now on-air at KFKF:
Cy was a good businessman with a lot of faith in country music and about the viability of the format to sustain a chain of stations. That in and of itself made him a pioneer. In its first year as Country, KCKC was successful, but in 1958 a lot of the country music was crossover Top 40 hits – Elvis Presley, Carl Perkins, the Everly Brothers. Country stations were taking a beating from these big fulltime Top 40 stations. So, in 1959, Cy decided to turn all of his stations Top 40, and I came in from across town.

Some of Cy's stations were daytimers and didn't do well against their Top 40 fulltime competitors, and country music was changing; there was a new wave of artists on the way. So after a year, Cy decided to go back to Country. Most of the Top 40 staff left, and as I was the only one with Country experience, they told me to get the format on the air. That was a really terrific moment because I had decided to keep some of the production values we had used in Top 40: a lot of quick production, good voices, etc. We went on with a high-powered, fast-paced presentation, and became one of the first, if not the first, modern Country stations. Cy liked what we were trying to create. He held the belief, "What can we do to make your job easier, to help you win?" He gave me total backing, saying, "Go to it, Sonny!," and it took hold immediately. At the time, we didn't know the station was as progressive as it was and the trails we were blazing. We were just having a good time. I loved Cy ... he was very, very good to me.

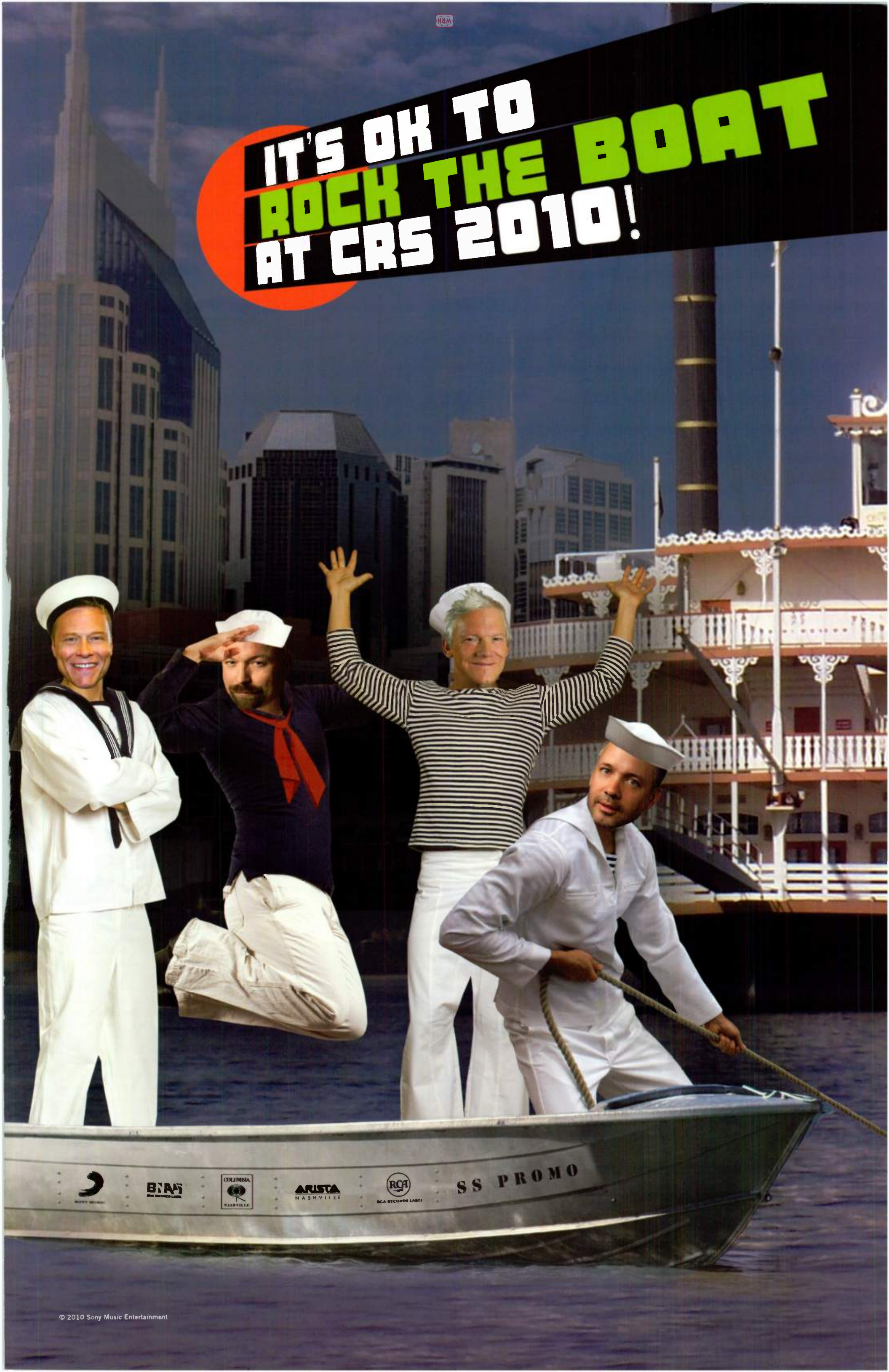
Former longtime KCKN personality "Uncle" Don Rhea:
In 1962, KCKN was Countrypolitan under Ted Cramer, but he had [temporarily] left, and during that brief period [venerable K.C. broadcaster] Harry Becker was PD. At that time I was OM at KENS (now KKYX)/San Antonio. Harry and I had run three stations, and I was set to bring him in at KENS, when the station was suddenly sold. When I told Harry what had happened, he said, "Come work for me as morning man!" But Cy personally approved my being hired, and at the top of the union scale. You can imagine this guy no one's ever heard of, walking in to do the prime shift. Half the staff didn't talk to me for three months.

Cy had the vision to get away from the barnyard follies and hayseed [style of Country radio that prevailed then]. His company was one of the best to work for, and he was a wonderful, nice man – a real pro who knew what he was doing and how he was going to get there.

Daughter (and early KCKN Traffic Manager) Edie April:
Everyone called him "Mr. B," and it was his success as a salesman that enabled him to become a successful entrepreneur. He'd say, "Selling advertising is like selling butter and eggs. You offer the best product at the best price." I always think, too, that this mindset also applied to the station programming. He always wanted to give his listeners the very best product in music and on-air personalities. My only regret is that my mom and dad aren't around to accept this honor, but if Dad were, I know he'd gratefully acknowledge the contribution to his success made by his employees – the managerial, office, sales, engineering, on-air – and most of all, by the appreciation and loyalty of the country music audience. CAC

Radio is a piece of cake: Owner Cy Blumenthal used to say radio was a simple business, and here are some key folks to prove it. Celebrating someone's birthday circa 1963 at his KCKN/Kansas City (actually in a house). From left: PD Ted Cramer, a DJ believed to be Jim Clark, morning man "Uncle" Don Rhea, KCKN sales exec Steve April, an unidentified staffer and GM Glen George. At right, Cy Blumenthal (far right) and then-GM Ed Charles (circa 1962, far left) with agency personnel going bumper-sticker crazy over KCKN. At top are Cy and his wife Hannah.

IT'S OK TO ROCK THE BOAT AT CRS 2010!



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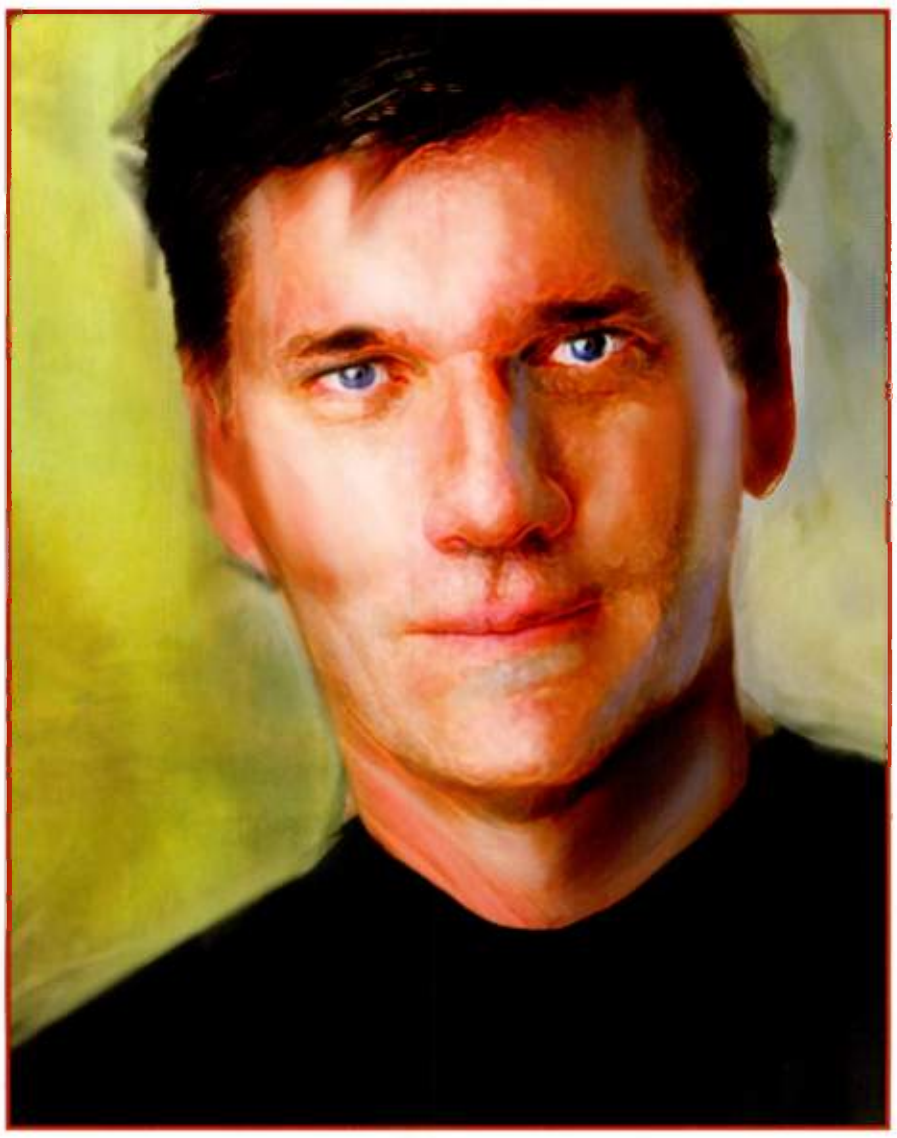
Country Music DJ AND RADIO HALL OF FAME

DAN HALYBURTON

Being Part Of The Accomplishment

Renowned as a programmer, group VP, market manager, and technologist, Dan Halyburton epitomizes the versatile radio executive, exemplified by countless success stories: WDGY/ Minneapolis, WQAM/Miami, WFMS/Indianapolis, KPLX/Dallas (first as a turnaround with Hall of Famer Bobby Kraig and later as the daring Wolf with now-CMT President Brian Philips), Susquehanna SVP/GM Group Operations, Emmis/ New York VP/MM and now as President of RadioTime. Those achievements are matched only by his reputation as a mentor and thought leader, including roles as CMA President and Chairman. Dan's induction into the Country Radio Hall of Fame coincides with his 40th year in broadcasting, which, as you'll read, started with some enterprising experiences.



Growing up in Miami, I was always interested in radio. During a hurricane one day, I put on my yellow slicker, went outside with a spoon as a microphone, and reported on what was happening. I was the MC in my junior high school band (which later included Bobby Caldwell) and in 1969, a few of us in our high school theater group got permission to start a rock station during lunch. We went into the office to the console that could send audio to each classroom, and cued up eight-track tapes to the songs we wanted to play. Seconds after we started, the principal came out, yelling "Turn it off!" We were blasting "Crossroads" by Cream into his office and had forgotten to switch off his speaker. So my close friend Mark Elfenbein [later as broadcaster Mark Stevens, who passed away recently] suggested setting up equipment in the back of the theater department and running wires to speakers in the cafeteria. We didn't tell anyone who we were "on the air," even using fake names. It went great for almost two weeks, when the activities director came to me and said, "OK, we know it's you! And it's pretty good, but you have to operate through our auspices." So my start in radio was actually a kind of pirate station.

I got a job tip about doing overnights at automated Beautiful Music WOCN/ Miami at a Sheraton on Key Biscayne – a luxury location compared to many radio stations we've all worked in. I thought, "This must be the way all radio stations are." The manager asked, "Do you have your FCC license?" I hadn't taken the test, but said I had and was just waiting for the results. So right after the interview, I ran out to take it, passed, and was hired. They asked, "On weekends, you have to cut up the UPI audio for the newscasts, and write intros. You've done all that before, right?" "Yeah, yeah, no problem." I didn't even know how to type. My first night, I was just terrible, in way over my head. I went home at dawn and my mom asked "How did it go?" I started to cry, bawling, "They're going to fire me." But they didn't, and I survived.

Right after high school, a job opportunity came up to take rock FM station WWOM/New Orleans to Top 40. I drove there with three other kids who would work there, too. Four shifts, no part-timers, no other employees that we ever saw – except for a guy who brought us the log every couple of days. I was doing afternoon drive, but had never been on the air except to do legal IDs for WOCN, and I was awful. One day, a truck full of refrigerators and washer/dryers that had been traded out arrived, and we put them all in the sales department. We got bomb threats from Day One, because the hippies were mad for taking away their free-form rock and playing "A-B-C" by the Jackson 5 every hour. For a month, it was crazy: long hours, no adult supervision, drinking hurricanes every night. One night the audio console caught fire, and the overnight guy who was there couldn't tell if he was still on. The PD told him to take the station off the air because we needed an engineer. And the next morning a big, ugly guy came in and fired all of us without pay; a melee broke out and nearly fisticuffs. Finally, we packed up and drove back to Miami, and eventually were paid about $175 for the month.

My first Country jobs were at WGMA/Hollywood, FL and the big competitor WWOK. I loved Country because my dad would listen to WWOK in his pickup. Glynn Walden was our chief engineer [later head of engineering at CBS Radio], and I got into the technical side of radio from talking with him. Cy Russell was an amazing GM and a real character. One time I used the word "nookie" on the air, and got dragged into Cy's office with a listener who'd actually come down to the station to complain. In front of the guy, Cy gave me a real verbal beating. I apologized profusely, and as the guy got up to leave and looked away, Cy winked at me, and afterwards said, "Listen, kid, just don't say that again."

My first PD gig was at WTCR-AM/ Huntington, WV, a ramshackle building on a dirt lot that used to be a shipping office for a trucking company. There was a big hole under the console we had to put a board over at night, or the studio would be full of bugs the next morning. I crawled under there one day when the AC went out, and there was a giant pile of beer bottles guys had been drinking while on the air and thrown down through the hole!

WWOK PD Mal Harrison was a great programmer, and I later worked for Ted Cramer there, too. That's where I discovered I wanted to be a PD, to put it all together. I also studied under mentors Larry Grogan at WFMS/Indianapolis and Dale Weber at WDGY/Minneapolis, who showed me the parts and pieces of a station, and later with [Susquehanna Presidents] Art Carlson and Dave Kennedy, who showed me what leadership looked like.

One time at Emmis/New York I was having a great conversation with someone in the kitchen about the business. She came back later and apologized for not knowing I was the GM. To me, that was always the highest compliment – that she thought I was just somebody who worked there. I had accepted the role of leadership and was proud of it. But rather than being known as the guy in charge, it was more important to me to just be part of something being accomplished.

The two most exciting times for me were, first, at WTCR when I got my first book as PD and we had the biggest share the station had ever had. I ran around the building, proud and thrilled. I had the same feeling in my heart when Lon Helton told me I was being inducted. To be recognized for something you love as much as I love radio, means the world to me. It's not what you've done, it's how you've done it – to me, that's what this honor is all about. CAC

> "IT'S NOT WHAT YOU'VE DONE, IT'S HOW YOU'VE DONE IT"

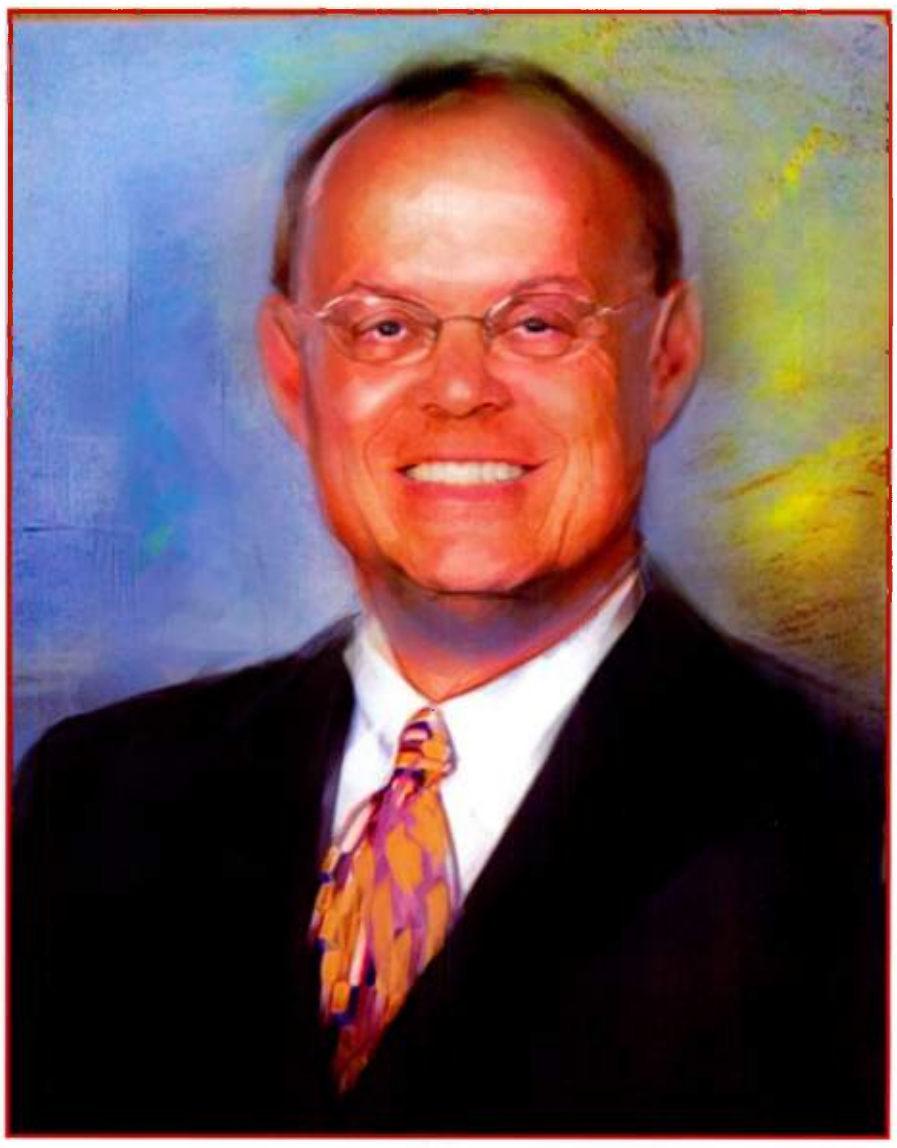
HIT MAN: Although he's an unabashed country music fan, Dan Halyburton will tell you he's never sought to get close to the artists. However, numerous performers have reached out to *him* over the years, including John Denver, (top left, taken in Dan's KPLX days in the early '90s) and all dressed up with Mel Tillis (above), back in 1978. (At right) Dan with his wife Kristy before the 2007 N.Y.C. Halloween Parade.

Thank You

Country Music DJ AND RADIO HALL OF FAME

MIKE HAMMOND

An Inner Sense Of Excellence



CMA, ACM, CRS, Marconi, Edward R. Murrow, Associated Press – you name the award, WIVK/Knoxville has earned it. While Director/Operations & PD Mike Hammond will defer these accolades to his talented team, he deserves much of the credit for the honors and the 20-share ratings WIVK consistently generates from its top personalities, distinguished news coverage and tireless community service including being one of the first St. Jude supporters. The Country music industry also owes a tremendous debt to Mike as a supporter of new artists. These are just a few reasons why the 30-year station veteran has helped keep WIVK No. 1 for 106 straight books – a distinguished individual track record that's unlikely to ever be matched.

I grew up on a farm way back in the mountains ... an original Tennessee hillbilly. Our family would gather around to listen to the *Grand Ole Opry* on Saturday nights, and so I became aware of Country music at a very young age. My grandmother had always wanted to go to the Opry, but she and my grandfather never got their driver's licenses and it was a long, two-lane road to Nashville in those days. When I worked at WKDF/Nashville back in the early '70s, I had the chance to take them. For my grandparents to be able to see Roy Acuff, Minnie Pearl, Porter Wagoner and all the people they'd heard all those years was really special.

My sights were set on being a lawyer; I didn't want to do farm work the rest of my life. And I never thought I would get into radio. But I was in 4-H, and at 15 got involved in speech contests and oratorical things through that and the Optimists Club. The manager of local AM daytimer WMCH/Churchill, TN heard me one day. She came up and said, "I was wondering if you had ever thought about being on the radio." I said, "Well, no, I haven't." She said, "I have a weekend slot open if you'd be interested." I said, "OK," went down there and she hired me!

The PD showed me the control board that first day and said, "I'm going to go get breakfast. Good luck!" And then he left. I was sitting there by myself; there was a *lot* of dead air that day. But I learned the board quickly, and when he came back I asked him, "Why did you leave me? I didn't know what I was doing. I know it sounded awful." He said, "Well, that's the only way you learn; you gotta do it. I knew if I stayed here with you, you'd rely on me, but I'll bet you know how to do the board now." I'd work after school until sign-off, playing the Supremes, Beach Boys, Rolling Stones and the Beatles. One of the great things about being on the radio as a teenager is that you never had to worry about getting a date. I earned $1.60 an hour, and to get a paycheck was one of the grandest things.

I came to the University of Tennessee, decided broadcasting would be my degree, and started working in Knoxville radio part-time before WIVK. James Dick was the owner at WIVK, and he gave me an opportunity to grow, which means I made a lot of mistakes. My first job was to create a news department. I told Mr. Dick I didn't know anything about it, and he said, "Well, we'll teach you." Sure enough, they did.

A life-changing thing happened to me in 1974, just after we started the news department. We had gotten some two-way equipment, and tornadoes came through, destroying a town about 45 minutes away. We drove down there to do some interviews, and police directed us to a church where people had gone. Down in the basement there were probably 150 people and you could hear a pin drop. They were huddled around a radio, listening to that person talk about what had happened. I was thinking, "The only thing these people have in order to know what's going on outside this building is the guy on that radio." Those people were scared to death; they didn't know if they had anything left. I knew then I had an important job. I left that building with a renewed sense of commitment about what we owe to our community.

> "THE PD SHOWED ME THE CONTROL BOARD THAT FIRST DAY AND SAID, 'I'M GOING TO GO GET BREAKFAST. GOOD LUCK!'"

Hammond It Up: As Mike Hammond likes to say, "back when I had hair" (top left), here's the portrait of the broadcaster as a young man" on-air at WIVK. In addition to programming WIVK, Hammond has served many years as the courtside announcer for UT Lady Vols basketball, partly for fun and also out of his respect for one of his "standard of excellence" influences, Hall of Fame coach Pat Summit (right). East Tennessee native Kenny Chesney owes a lot of his success to Hammond and WIVK, and brought him a plaque (above) commemorating his sales success.

My life changed again in 1980 when Mr. Dick came to me and said, "I want you to be my program director." I said, "Well, I've never been a PD." And again, he told me, "We'll teach you." Mr. Dick sensed in me a love, energy and passion for wanting to get it done right because I really believe in a standard of excellence. There also was a creativity I felt I could bring to the job, and our news department had done well. I'm just thankful he gave me the opportunity.

I was very young and dealing with a seasoned airstaff including Claude Tomlinson, [former GM] Bobby Denton and [current GM] Ed Brantley. But I learned that as long as I was helping them reach their goals, rather than them helping me reach mine, it would work. And alcohol helped! (Laughs). We have a tight bond here, and my philosophy has always been letting them be themselves while providing whatever coaching and training I can. Instead of spending time in front of a computer, spend it in front of your staff. I genuinely enjoy people, and if I can help someone win an award, be successful or get their ratings bonus, that really excites me because I see the hard work and dedication they put in off the air. Once I hang it up here, I really would like to teach.

Helping arrange Neyland Stadium for Kenny Chesney back in '03 was probably the most special time for me, and I know it was for him. Kenny had come by and told me one of his dreams was to play there. I asked him, "If I can help, will you do it?" Kenny said, "Man, you work it out, I'll play." I got a commitment from the city to shut down roads around the stadium for a street party. A university presentation was made, and although a stadium show had not happened since Michael Jackson in 1983, UT Athletic Director Doug Dickey said, "Let's do it!" I thought I was going to wet my pants. Kenny brought in Keith Urban, Rascal Flatts and Brooks & Dunn, and the rest is history. Backstage, I was told Kenny wanted me to introduce him. I said, "I've got our air talent here for that." They said, "No, he wants *you*." Oh, my gosh, there's 60,000 people out there. But I went out there, and said, "Folks, it's time for Kenny Chesney!" and I mean, it *erupted*.

I did not expect to be inducted. When R.J. Curtis called to tell me, I got choked up; it was about 30 seconds before I could even talk. This means everything to me ... to have your peers say you should be recognized with the people on that wall – a little boy from Churchill, Tennessee – it's unbelievable. CAC

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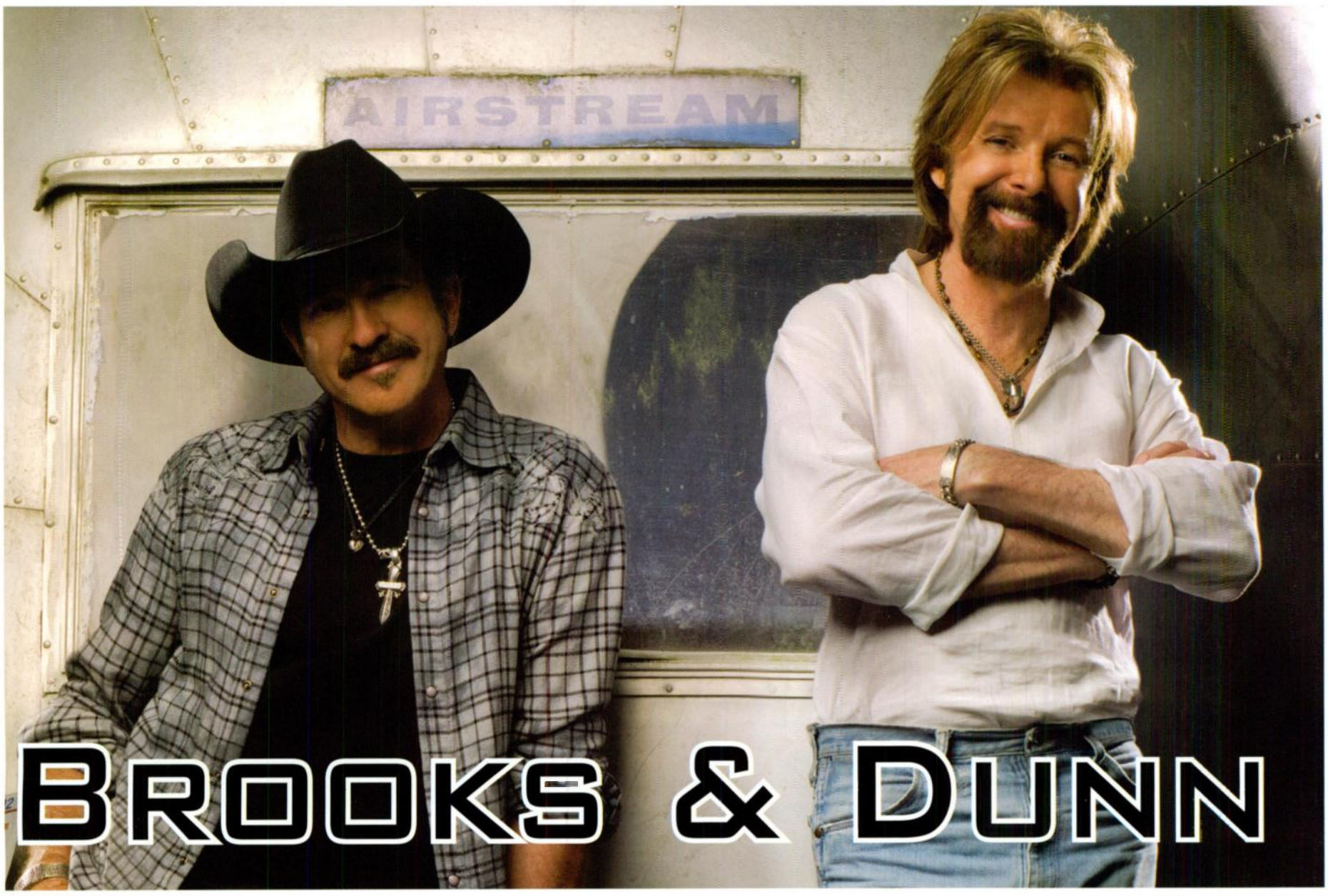
CRB Lifetime Achievement Award



Hard Workin' Men

The numbers are staggering: 26 ACM awards, 17 CMA awards, three American Music Awards, two Grammys, 20 No. 1 singles and tens of millions of albums sold. Add to that one more accolade – the CRB Career Achievement Award.

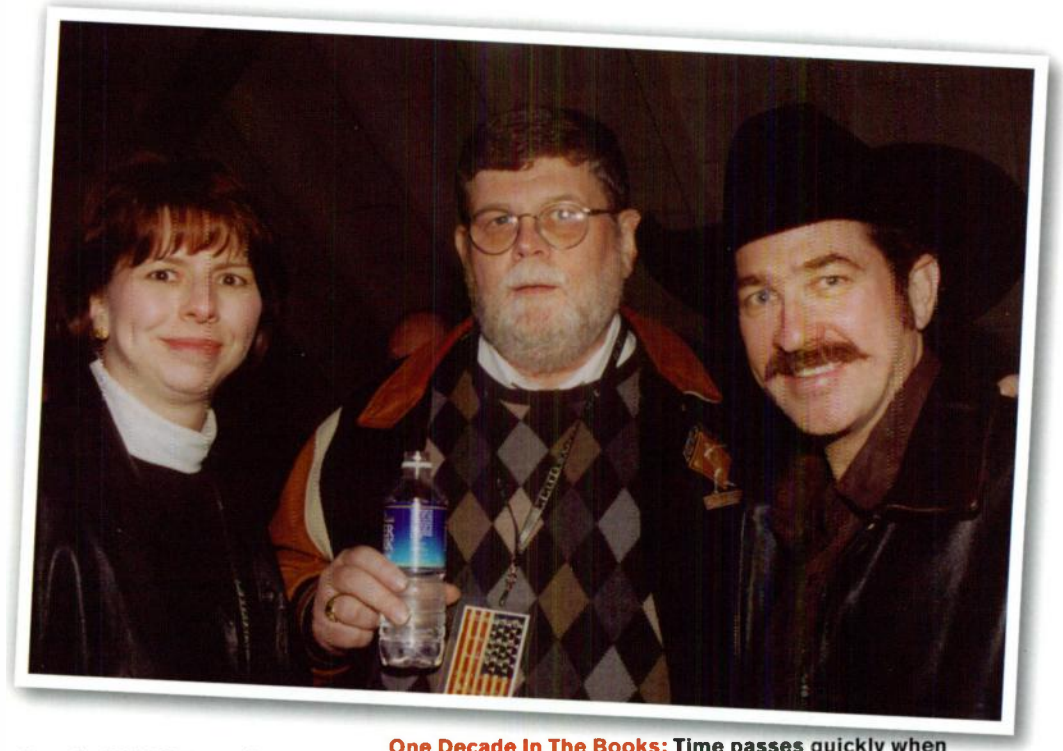
For nearly 20 years, Kix Brooks and Ronnie Dunn have tirelessly made some of the most beloved and recognizable country music ever heard on the radio, and their songs have even been used for political campaigns on both sides of the aisle. As the duo prepare for their *The Last Rodeo Tour*, which hits the road this summer, Country Aircheck asked some of the most important players in the duo's career from both radio and records to reflect on their success and how they changed our musical landscape. And there's no better place to begin than with the man who started it all.

"Over a plate of chicken fajitas here in Nashville, I introduced Kix and Ronnie and suggested they hang out and write," says former Arista/Nashville President **Tim DuBois**. "I was struggling to find a duo and had demos from both Kix and Ronnie, though they had never met one another. Within three weeks of the introduction, they brought me 'Brand New Man.' It was the first song they ever wrote together, it ended up being their first single and ultimately their first No. 1. The minute I heard that song, I knew this was going to work and offered them a deal on the spot. It wasn't automatic, though. While I was trying to convince them to sign the deal, they were still trying to figure out if it was really going to work."

"We were out in California, and it was really my first run with the guys," says manager **Clarence Spalding**. "This was 18 years ago. We were opening for Reba and I got on the bus. The guys were in the back playing video games. I said, 'You guys want a beer?' They said, 'Sure.' So I go up to the front lounge and, well, there's not any. So I get off the bus and go into catering to get them some. The bus driver asked if everyone was ready to go, and they thought I was in the front lounge. So when I came back, the bus was gone. They left me! I look up and I can see it a mile away in traffic. I'm screaming in the phone to the tour manager, and Kix quotes it all the time: 'This is the most f'ed up thing I've ever been a part of.' And I can remember thinking to myself, 'I'm never going to stay here.' Well, they turned the bus around. They were apologizing out the ass, and then they started laughing. So now there's this 18-year story. If somebody says, 'I don't want anybody to leave me on the road.' They'll say, 'Ask him. We'll leave your ass in a heartbeat.'"

"During CRS in 1991, while everyone was on the RCA Boat, Tim DuBois and Allen Butler invited a small group of landlubbers to a studio to hear a new duo about to release their first single," recalls Regent VP/Programming **Bob Moody**. "Brooks & Dunn were there with us as we were played tracks from their forthcoming album. When Ronnie sang 'I saw the light, I've been baptized...' I turned to [then-manager] Bob Titley and said, 'I wonder what the Baptists will think of *that!*' Years later, I asked Bob if he remembered what I had said in the studio that night. 'Remember it?! I worried about it every single day up until 'Brand New Man' hit No. 1!'"

"When we were on the second single from *Brand New Man,* I was in Fargo, ND with the guys doing a listener appreciation show for KVOX," says former Arista regional **Denise Nichols**. "The act was just starting to pop, and people were beginning to know who these guys were; it was feeling really good. We're at the venue, and the station guys showed up to meet them. They had these shirts that said, 'KVOX Welcomes Garth Brooks & Holly Dunn,' but with the 'Garth' and 'Holly' crossed out! Their original story was that they thought they had booked Garth and Holly and had the t-shirts already printed and didn't have the budget to reprint. As the record rep, I had my own 'Artie Fufkin' moment. Of course, it was all in good fun, and Kix and Ronnie got a good laugh out of it. That show was the first time I really got a sense of what was happening for them. The arena held 3,000 people, but they were hanging from the rafters, screaming and singing along



One Decade In The Books: Time passes quickly when you're with friends, and here is Kix Brooks at an event with 2007 Country Radio Hall of Fame inductee and Regent Communications VP/Programming Bob Moody (then VP/Country for McVay Media) with his wife Karen, taken in 2001.

CRB Lifetime Achievement Award

to every song! After the show, the guys signed autographs for everyone who wanted one. I think I left the venue around 2am, and they were still there signing. It was an amazing night and a glimpse of what was about to unfold."

"A significant number of today's headlining stars started as opening acts for Brooks & Dunn," **Bob Titley**, the duo's longtime former manager, points out. "They both beat their brains out in clubs for years, so when they started headlining they always kept an eye out for young talent. They came to my office raving about a kid named Keith Urban playing a little club in Nashville, later putting him on the tour. I remember when Faith Hill did a 20-minute opening set as the third act on the show. The list they gave a boost to is very long, and Kix and Ronnie insisted their opening acts be treated with respect. They weren't to be squeezed into a corner of the stage or unfairly limited in their production. B&D were confident enough in their show to not feel insecure about having a great act open for them."

Hey 19: 1997 was a big year for Brooks & Dunn, who in late summer released their quadruple-platinum *Greatest Hits Collection* featuring 19 smash singles. Here are Kix Brooks, then-Arista/Nashville President Tim DuBois and Ronnie Dunn at CMA Fan Fair that June.

"A few weeks after the guys played the Kentucky State Fair in 1992, I was in Coffeyville, KS for a high school class reunion," begins WAMZ/Louisville PD **Coyote Calhoun**. "I was getting ready to drive to Tulsa to catch my flight back home when, lo and behold, Brooks & Dunn's bus pulls up! They were scheduled to play the Inter-State Fair & Rodeo in Coffeyville that day. They invited me up on the bus to chat for awhile, and then I realized the bus had been moving. After I asked where we were headed, they guys explained we were on our way to the venue and thanked me in advance for emceeing the show. I told them they must've had a lapse in memory because this wasn't Louisville and I don't think whoever was scheduled to do the stage work in Coffeyville would be too happy if I showed up. Besides, I had to get my ass back to Tulsa for my flight asap! We were a long way from Louisville."

"Brooks & Dunn were performing in Nevada when I was the Operations Manager at Clear Channel in Las Vegas," says Albright & O'Malley's **Jaye Albright**. "I brought a bunch of listener winners from the station to meet the guys, but we were stopped by the tour manager and told there was no type of meet 'n' greet that night. I asked if he could at the very least go back and explain that these listeners were promised a trip backstage and whatever Kix and Ronnie decide, I'm good with. Within 30 seconds, a voice from a dressing room yelled, 'Jaye Albright and some listeners from KWNR?! Well, get on back here!' The guys were just the best, and the listeners were so excited. The truth with Kix and Ronnie is if you ever want to get to them in any way, just tell them you have some country fans with you. They're a couple of guys who've always loved the fans, they give them more than their money's worth in concert and they've given us some great music over these many, many years."

"The guys were playing after the rodeo at the old coliseum in 1992," WGAR/Cleveland MD **Chuck Collier** says. "They were largely unknown to the crowd and only a few hundred of the 10,000 that were at the rodeo stayed for the show, but what a show it was! My kids and I met the guys, and it was such a fun night. None of us knew how huge they'd be! It's been a great run for Ronnie and Kix, and I wish them nothing but the best and a big 'thank you' for all the music. I look forward to seeing them at one more rodeo this summer!"

OK, Who's Buying? Celebrating is bound to happen when you've got (at right) Ronnie Dunn, Alan Jackson, then-Arista VP/Promotion Bobby Kraig and Kix Brooks together following the 2002 ACM Awards. Brooks & Dunn won the Top Vocal Duo/Top Vocal Duet/Top Vocal Duo category for 15 consecutive years through 2007, as well as the Home Depot Humanitarian Award for 2006, among other honors. Above: Kix and Ronnie bookend then-WXTU/Philadelphia personality Cadillac Jack and PD Bob McKay during a visit to the station.

"It was three weeks after 9/11," says former WXTU/Philadelphia PD **Bob McKay**. "It was our first-ever Philly Chili Cook-Off and the headliners included Brooks & Dunn, Martina McBride, Keith Urban, Montgomery Gentry and Phil Vassar. The nation was still in deep mourning and disbelief, and the thought of canceling the event was certainly discussed. Instead, we decided to make the show a celebration of America. We invited firefighters from FDNY as well as Philly fire companies who responded to NYC, introducing them onstage. It was truly an American event – Kix even jumped into the audience draped in the American flag. It was literally a sight to behold, but the best was yet to come. I made arrangements for each artist to stay until the end of the show for an a capella performance of 'God Bless America.' At the conclusion of the Brooks & Dunn encore, Martina appeared with a mic, followed by the rest of the performers and the firefighters. This collection of superstars, the flags in the audience and onstage, the crowd singing along ... it was a truly unforgettable memory that was burned into all of us. Kix and Ronnie were the impetus for making this happen and for that, I and a grateful nation say, 'Thanks for the memories!'"

"They're very different people," Spalding says. "But they're similar in that they both like trying different things. They're not afraid of it. They were like, 'Let's do it.' You weren't afraid to bring them ideas. We might all laugh at it like, 'How stupid is that?' I wish we had a documentary camera filming through the years as we were designing sets. 'It costs how much to create a tornado onstage?' And they're super-talented. Some of the biggest songs – 'Brand New Man,' 'Red Dirt Road' – they wrote together. It's an odd blend of two guys who really wanted solo careers who came together. I don't think they thought it was going to last. Now they look back and they've been together 20 years."

"When I was in Miami for surgery in 2005, the guys said they would send one of their buses down to bring me back to Nashville because I was in no shape to fly commercial," remembers former Arista VP/Promotion **Bobby Kraig**. "Instead of sending a bus, they and Alan Jackson arranged for a private jet to pick me up. They even had a seat removed to accommodate my wheelchair. Thinking back, I'm not sure what I would have done to get home. That's the kind of guys they are – always thinking of anything they can do to help out. Kix and Ronnie are among the most caring, loyal and intelligent artists I have ever worked with. They worked their asses off, not only on their music, but they also do an amazing job working with radio. They 'get it.' They knew to ensure their own success they need to help radio succeed, and they didn't whine about it. There's nothing artificial about these guys. It's been a quick 20 years." CAC

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BRAD PAISLEY
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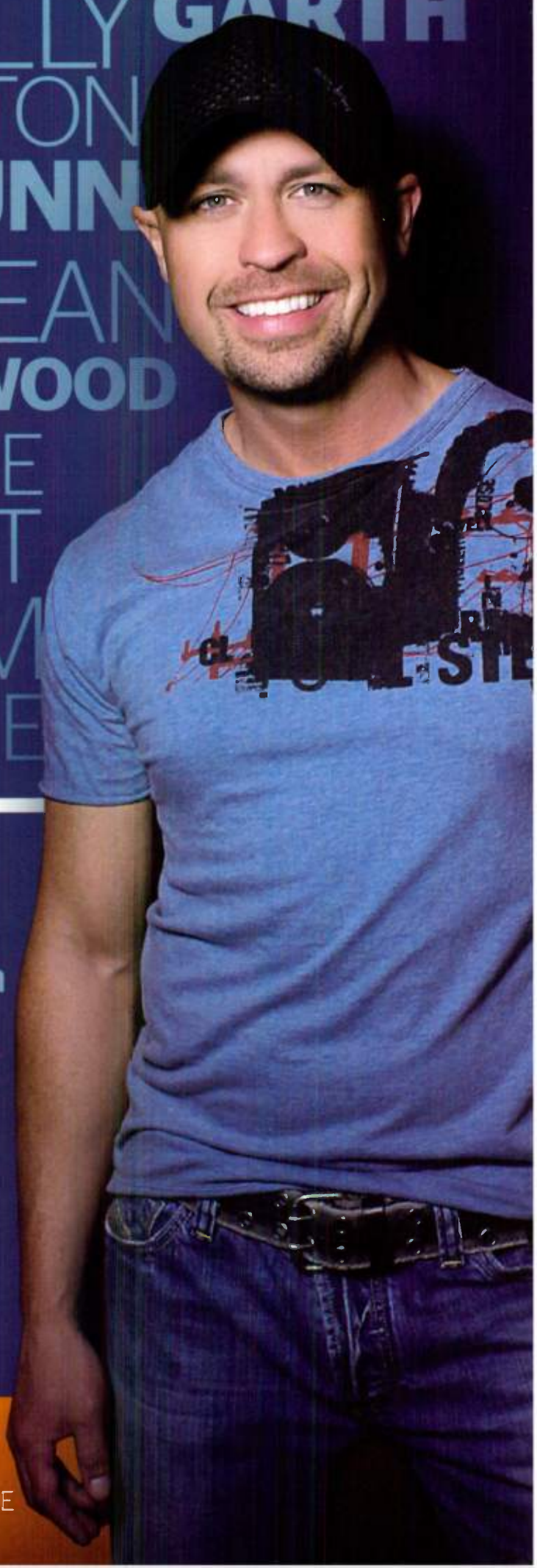
AND MANY, MANY MORE



"Cody's show always feels **fresh** and **current.** Cody cares about country music's past and **future,** and has always worked to make his shows **exciting,** interesting and **personal.**"
– Dierks Bentley

"Hey, we **love** hanging with Cody in the studio on **CMT Radio Live!**"
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BAMAJAM RECORDS

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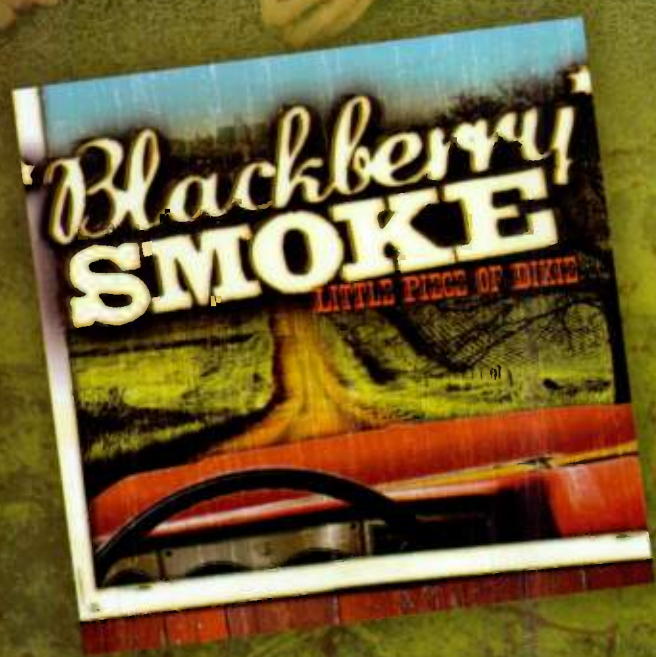

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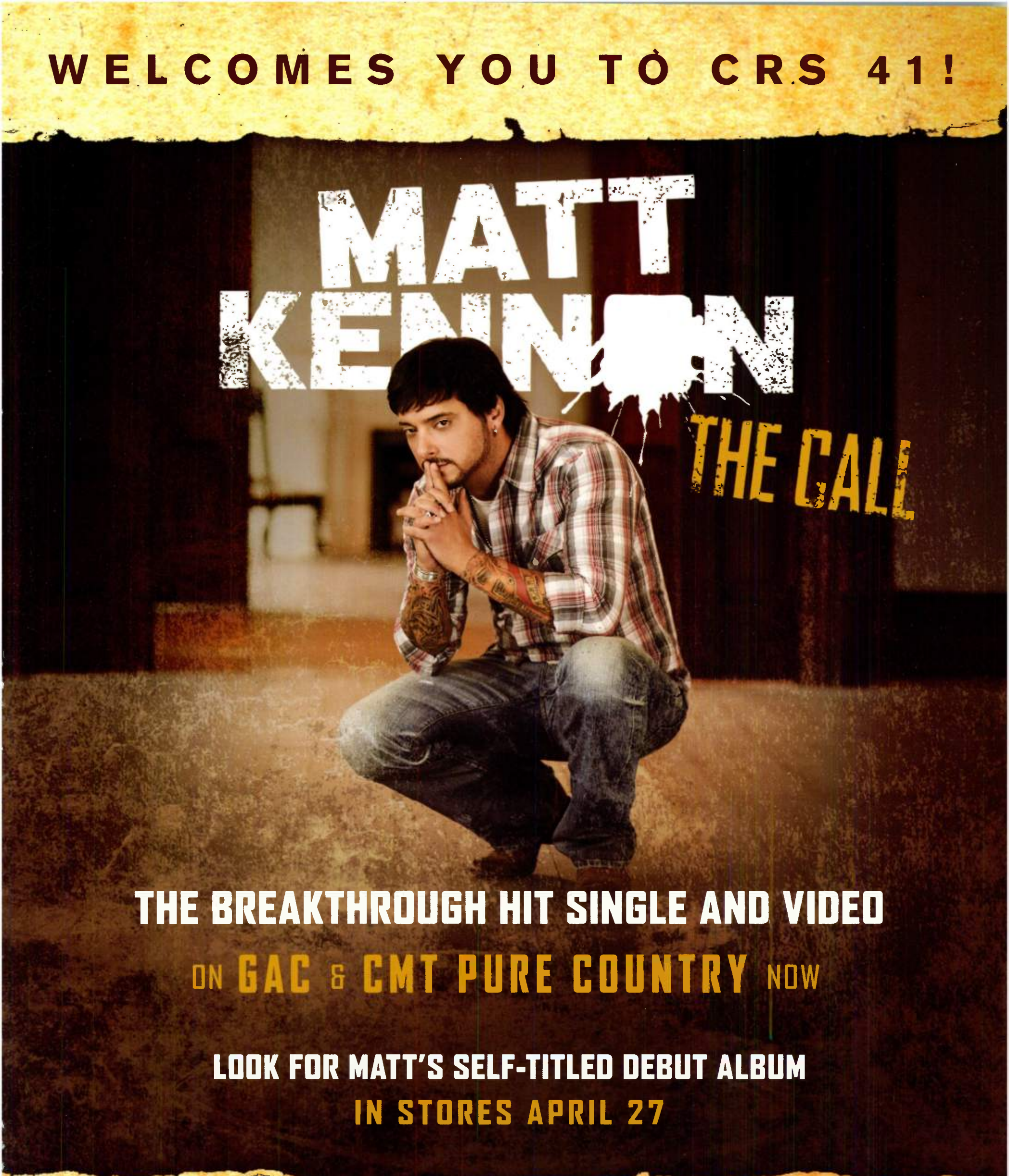

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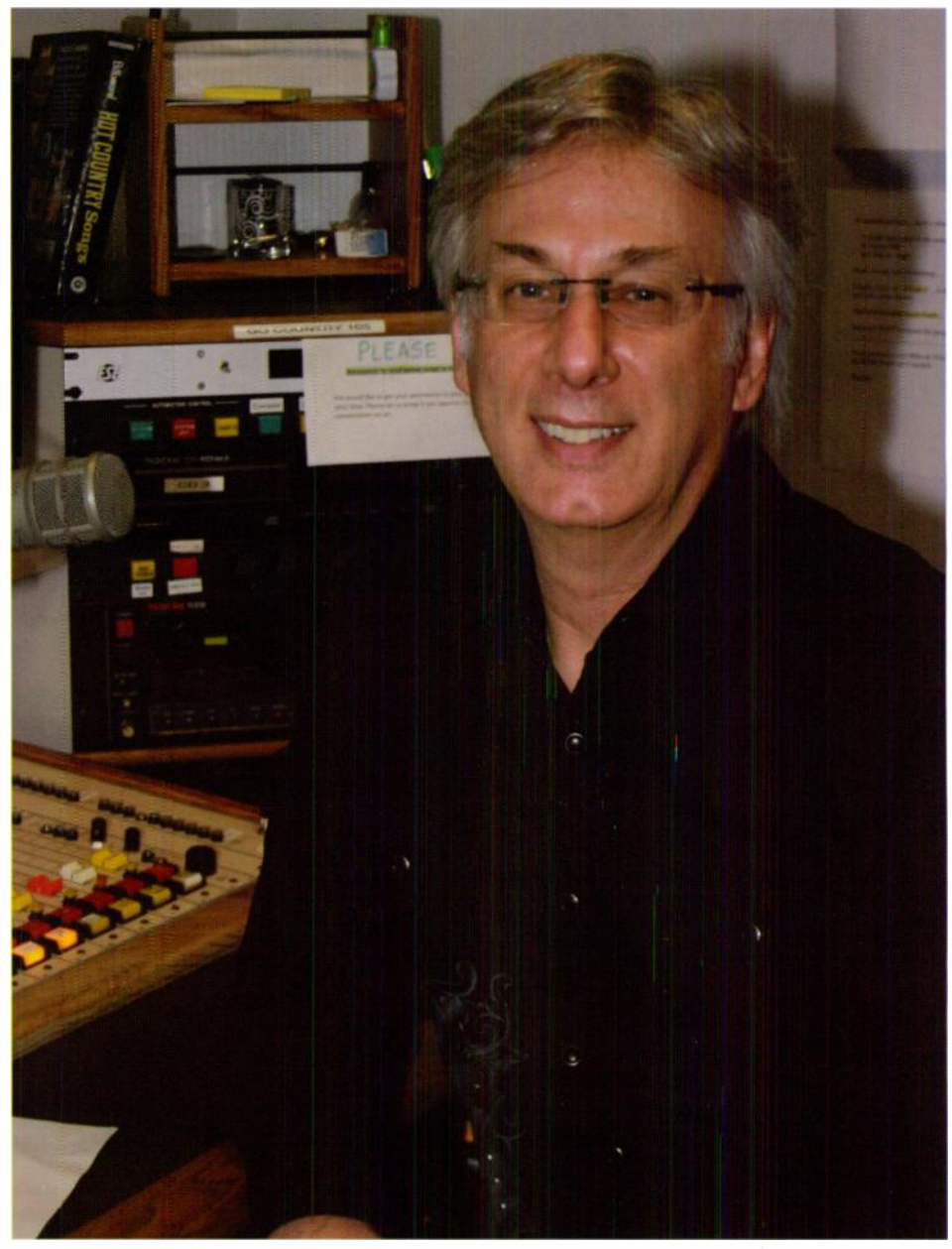


Celebrating his 40th year in radio, it is fitting that Charlie Cook is the 2010 recipient of the Country Radio Broadcasters' President's Award. A CRB Board member for 25 years, he's served as President and has played an instrumental role in guiding the organization's research efforts to better understand Country radio consumers. Currently Sr. Manager/ Programming at KKGO/Los Angeles, Charlie has worked with McVay Media as a consultant since the early '80s, and has served in executive roles with Westwood One and Cumulus in addition to programming in New York, L.A., Miami and other markets. A perpetual student of the game, Charlie traces his success to a handful of people and specific moments in time, most notably a certain CRS in his early years in radio.

I grew up in Detroit, and one reason I got interested in radio is because it's such a great radio town, especially for a kid in his teens during the era of Motown and the Beatles. Three guys were appointment listening for me: Dick Purtan (WXYZ), Tom Clay (CKLW) and Johnny Randall, also on WXYZ, who I thought was the smoothest-sounding disc jockey ever.

The debate club did a presentation at the one PTA meeting my mother ever attended in her life. I was 15 at the time. She came home and told me, "The debate team was pretty cool. That would be something you would be good at." She died that summer, and I vowed that when I got back to school I'd look into it. I got involved in "forensics" – speechmaking – and won a contest for reading *John Brown's Body*. My prize was an engraved dictionary from the *Detroit News*. I carried it with me for almost 50 years until it was lost in a fire last year. The speech teacher said, "You have a good voice; you should look into radio." I had wanted to be an attorney, but that would mean six or seven years of school. A disc jockey is pretty much about whether you can put a sentence together. So I figured out which was easiest [laughs], and at age 19 got my first fulltime job from Ross Biederman at WMBN/Petoskey, MI.

Married with a kid making $2.10 an hour, I did 3pm to signoff at 11:30pm or so. It was a tough putt for a young kid; I worked 10 hours of overtime per week to help make ends meet. Soon, a fraternity brother, Bob Osborn, who was working at suburban Detroit Country station WSDS/Ypsilanti, called with a noon-3pm opening at $125 per week, and I also worked at WPAG/Ann Arbor, trying to make whatever I could.

I went to my first CRS after becoming PD and morning guy at WSDS at age 21. It was the first time I'd been on an airplane. In those days, they had somebody pick you up at the airport, and I have never felt more comfortable or more welcomed in my life than I did at that first Seminar. It was important to them that you were there and that you got out of it what you expected to. It built a love for the Seminar in me absolutely instantly. "Belly up to the registration table and we'll get you all taken care of," they said. And then RCA took us to see Elvis at MTSU. It felt like the coolest place to be.

At WSDS, I did something I didn't know was wrong, coming from a 500-watt daytimer in Ypsilanti: I entered the *Billboard* Country Disc Jockey of the Year contest. I ended up as one of the five finalists among personalities from big cities. Based on that, I got a 7pm-midnight job at KLAK/Denver, where I met overnighter Lon Helton. That was one of my truly lucky days of my life, as we became fast friends. Lon is my biggest cheerleader, and one of three people I've met in the business whom I don't want to disappoint because they've been so encouraging and supportive.

> "IF YOU LET ME HANG AROUND WITH YOU, I THINK I'LL PROBABLY LEARN SOMETHING."

Another one of those three has been Ed Salamon. I met Ed at a *Billboard* convention in New Orleans around 1976 when I was PD/ mornings at WWVA/Wheeling, WV. I walked up to him, cleared my throat and said, "My name's Charlie Cook, and I know you used to be from Pittsburgh. I'm from Wheeling. If you let me hang around with you, I think I'll probably learn something." He looked at me and nodded, "Yeah, sure!"

I don't think I left Ed's side for the entire weekend. I'd walk him to his room, and would be there in the morning when he came out. I basically stalked him. I ate meals with him, sat next to him at the panels, and listened to everything he said. He was so welcoming to me. About six months afterwards, I called him to discuss an offer I had received to go to WCOP/Boston. Ed said, "Just wait. Don't take that job." A few months later, he called and said, "I've got a job for you here in New York at WHN!" I went from Wheeling, WV to New York City as his Asst. PD and one or two shifts per week. I don't know if anybody's done a jump like that. Ed's been great to me. He's always looked out for me and has been an important part of my life.

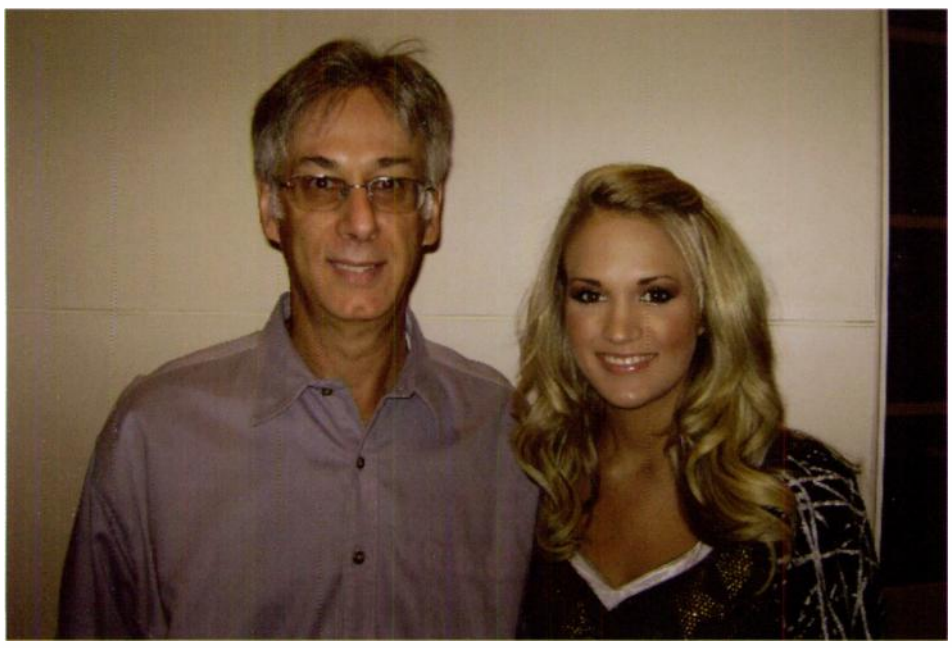
Then there's Mike McVay. Around 1975-76, I'm at WWVA and Mike is across town at WNEU; we're both doing mornings. The circus came to town, and they had the morning personalities riding elephants down Main Street. So I get on this elephant, look over and there's a guy in a turban, harem pants and no shirt. I thought, "I don't know *who* he is, but I just gotta meet him." I introduced myself and we became instant friends that day. Mike's probably the smartest radio guy I've ever met, and we still talk a few times every week.

When I made my way to PD at KHJ/Los Angeles, I was invited by Jim Ray to be on the CRS agenda committee, and later chaired it. CRS has always been about the people you meet and the acquaintances that you renew, and I've learned so much from them. We haven't done our job in 40-plus years if we don't send everybody home with one thing they can use. At my first Seminar, I came in not knowing *anything*. At WSDS, it had been pretty much "play whatever you want." But when I came back to the station, I started a crude music rotation, putting the most popular records in a different-colored sleeve, with one to be played at least every quarter-hour. CRS is great because of the effort put on by the board to design something that will be actionable immediately.

I was so blessed to be involved in the Research Committee and to get close to two great guys, Edison Research's Larry Rosin and Tom Webster. I was able to participate in building the research for the Seminar, which was always enlightening.

Because I served on the CRB board so much, I know the process that this award goes through. It's a very nice gesture, and I appreciate it very much. That Becky Brenner was kind enough to choose me as the one person for this year is a real honor.

To those coming up in the business: Meet as many people in the industry as you can. That meeting with Ed Salamon that day in New Orleans changed my entire life, and it was only because I somehow had the nerve that day to reach my hand out and introduce myself. I can't even imagine what my life would be like had I not taken that one step. CAC



Before He Eats: Among Charlie Cook's many executive roles was a stint at VP/Country for Cumulus Broadcasting, based in Atlanta. During that time about three years ago, Carrie Underwood stopped by for breakfast and this photo with Charlie at the Inter-Continental.

19 & CRAZY

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WEZL WFUS WGNE WIVK WIWF WKHX WKKT WKSJ
WMZQ WOGK WPCV WPOC WQIK WQYK WRNS WSIX
KCCY WTQR WUBL WUSJ WWGR WXBM WYNK WYPY
WKSF WSSL KUZZ KWJJ WBBS WBCT WCTK WCTO
WGAR WGGY WGH WGNA WGTY WIOV WITL WKLB
KUPL WMIL WOKQ WPKX WQMX WRBT WTNR WUBE
WXTU WYCD WYRK KATC KATM KBUL KCYE KCYY
KFGY KFRG KHKI KIIM KIXZ KIZN KJJY KJUG KKWF
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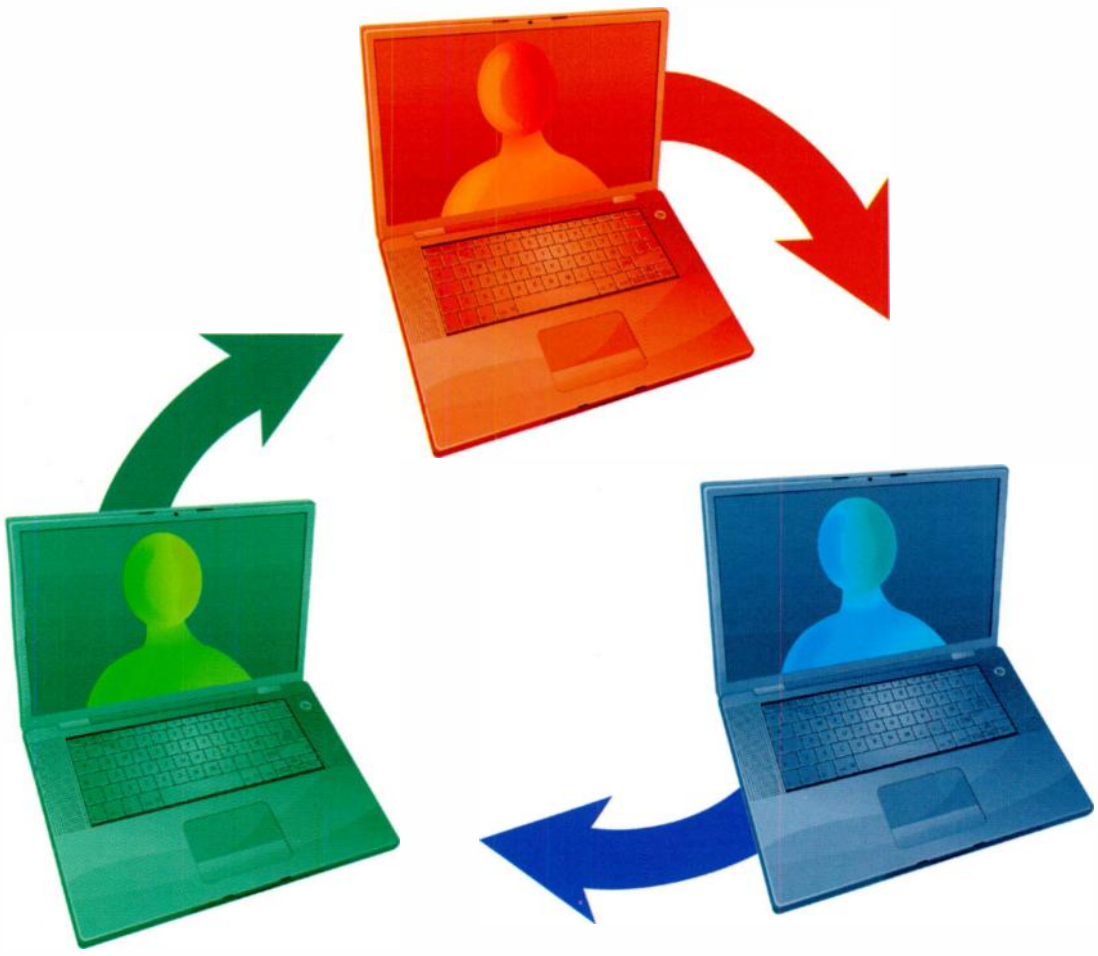
How Good Is Your Network?

by Ray Massie



Moving radio brands to the Internet has been a huge focus of late. And it's understandable – web ad revenue has grown exponentially while the spot business has been in steady decline. Station-level conversation and activity aimed toward building websites, VIP clubs, e-mail databases, Twitter, Facebook, and MySpace accounts has been intense. All that effort going in so many directions takes time, money and people. The question to ask now is, "How social are you?"

One of Country radio's strengths through the years has been its close relationship with its fans. But as radio stations have moved increasingly to syndicated programming and imported voice tracking, conversations between stations and listeners have diminished; engagement has fallen away. Concurrently, PPM has driven many stations to crank up the jukebox, a move that has caused communication and companionship with fans to change dramatically or even disappear.

Radio seems stuck between two worlds. Are we simply a carrier of content, like the Internet? Or do we produce stellar content for digital and over-the-air distribution? The good news is, radio stations have been given new tools to communicate with and get closer to listeners than ever before: Facebook, Twitter and MySpace social networks.

Where They Already Are

Facebook is the second-highest-traffic website in the world, second only to Google. Latest research shows nearly one-third of people who use Facebook fall into the segment called "conversationalists." They like to talk. These are the fans who will post a few times a day. And did I mention that most of these are smack in Country's target audience of women? More than 350 million people worldwide use Facebook. In Seattle, there are more than 260,000 women between the ages of 25-44 who have Facebook accounts. That's close to half the weekly cume of either Seattle Country station. Women, conversations and Facebook – Country radio must have a seat at that table.

Unlike Google, you can completely control what happens on your Facebook page and how you rank. It should be obvious that your listeners go to Facebook long before they come to your station's website. So, the easy answer to growing your website is go to where the listeners are. With that in mind, it's interesting to note that many Country stations in Top 50 markets are not even using Facebook. And other stations which *are* using Facebook make it difficult or impossible to find their FB page from the station's website.

There are 31 Country stations with 2,000 or more Facebook fans. The surprising leader is WSLC/Roanoke, VA with more than 28,000 fans (see story at right).

Wherefore Art Thou, Twitter?

Twitter is frequented by millions of Americans and ranks 15th in U.S. web traffic. But this popular social media service doesn't get a lot of love from Country radio. My study shows that, with the exception of a few standouts, Country is essentially non-existent there, with the majority of stations having well under 1,000 Twitter followers. Stations using Twitter often don't use it to its fullest capability; a few only tweet their playlists, resulting in low follower numbers. As with Facebook, many either do not have Twitter accounts, or those accounts are impossible to find on the station's web home pages or through Google.

It's also interesting to note that many stations with a large Twitter presence have little in the way of a Facebook presence. The reverse is also true: Five stations – KATM/Modesto, CA, KEEY/Minneapolis, KMLE/Phoenix, WMIL/Milwaukee and WUBE/Cincinnati – rank among the Top 20 in both metrics.

Country's Facebook King

WSLC/Roanoke has more Facebook fans than any Country radio station in the U.S. – more than 28,000 – nearly triple the following of any other Country station. WSLC PD Brett Sharp talks about the station's social networking success.

What is the secret of your huge Facebook growth?

First of all, isn't it amazing that country people have computers? It all got started when my morning co-host Robynn James called me out for not having a Facebook page. Then a car dealer friend of ours called and challenged me to build a page. In one day, we got over 1,000 fans.

I had no idea what Facebook was about. To keep it pretty organic, I intentionally didn't learn anything about it before we started. I let the listeners teach me, and they really did. We talked briefly about stunting, but the short version is that our growth came from giving away a car. (Note: Before running a similar contest on your page, it's important to know that Facebook changed its terms of service in mid-November, which eliminates or severely restricts the ability to run contests on the platform. For example, you cannot predicate entry to a contest on making a comment or becoming a fan. Running afoul of the new rules means risking having your page shut down. See the promotions rules page on Facebook for terms.)

WSLC's Facebook page gets more than 100 responses a day. Today, when we don't have the time to talk with listeners as we once did, that has to be a great source of information for you.

It's fantastic. We read the comments on the air and call people by name. A couple of comments from Facebook, and bang! The phone lights up. Your listeners are fun; they'll do the punch line for you. It makes it easy.

Who is in charge of your Facebook page?

No one person is responsible. We've learned it has to be real. We used to send out slick-looking e-mails, but we found that if we have the personality write and post their own words, the response is a lot higher. We still work our Gold Star Club and set appointments for listeners to come to the station for audience-building, but we've found that text works better for us than the fancy, high-gloss efforts. We've seen an increase in our website traffic as a result of our Facebook activity. During our Facebook promotion, visits to 949starcountry.com increased 37.6%, pulling in 10,000 new unique visitors during the one-month period. Our Facebook page has almost become another website for our radio station.

Has the initiative to attract that many followers resulted in ratings gains?

We've only had one book since the targeted effort to get Facebook followers. But the Fall 2009 book showed both our Metro and TSA cumes were up significantly. Our TSA cume of 232,200 was an all-time high. Our Fall 2009 Metro cume was up 15,000 over Spring 2009, and ahead of Fall 2008 by more that 13,000. While we really can't attribute all of that to our Facebook promotion, it's safe to say it definitely moved the needle.

Have you found a way to make money from the page?

We've been working with sales to try to find a way, and right now the work on these pages is like product placement. But we haven't broken through that yet.

Social media give listeners a chance to have their say about your station and staffers, and to say it very publicly. How do you handle the inevitable issues such as posts that say, "You suck"?

I meet the problem head-on. We never pull a post off the page because it's negative. We thank them for their interest and concern, and share our point of view. We are very protective of our fans and listeners.

If you were giving advice on starting a Facebook page to those Country stations that aren't in the space yet, what would you say?

Launch it and talk about real things. The more real you are, the better. We don't do additional contacts with WSLC's Facebook fans, like e-mail blasts, outside the Facebook environment and posts. A few posts a day is about the proper amount of contact to have with listeners. Working in social media is worth it. Facebook is a grass-roots cume-building effort.

[Editor's note: You can hear Ray Massie's complete interview with WSLC PD Brett Sharp at http://socialradiopros.wordpress.com.]

Listen ... And Respond

One of the most important aspects of becoming involved in social media is simply being in the conversation. At its most basic, social media is really pretty simple. Listen and respond. Engage and talk. Part of radio's problem today is that we aren't listening; we are broadcasting. Broadcasting in social media is a waste of time. Communicating and engaging is what social media does. It isn't broadcasting – it's a different animal.

Social media is *not* and will not work well as advertising. Think of it more like audience research. The difference is the continuing "free" investment in building your audience relationship. The time needed to build the relationship and remain part of the conversation is extensive and important.

As important as listening is, it's equally key to respond. Social media gives radio a chance to be old-school again. Remember when we used to answer the phone? Remember when it was fashionable to do live broadcast, not table and tent "remotes"? With social media, we now have the chance to be "high-touch" once again. Only this time, it can be a bit more "one-to-many" versus "one-to-one."

More than ever before, social media gives us the opportunity to interact. Deepening the engagement is the end result of time and energy spent in the social space.

Listening and responding will reinvigorate your on-air sound. It will improve your listener focus. Your audience engagement levels will improve. Your ability to defend your space against those who will take from you is enhanced.

Perhaps the most important key to social networking, if you are going to do it, is to commit to it and do it right. We know having raving fans is a key to ratings and revenue success. Social media can be a difference maker in making that connection with passionate fans.

CAC

Veteran Country programmer and Gap West/Billings, MT OM Ray Massie heads the social networking company Social Radio Pros. Contact Ray through his website socialmediapros.wordpress.com.

COUNTRY TWITTER TOP 20

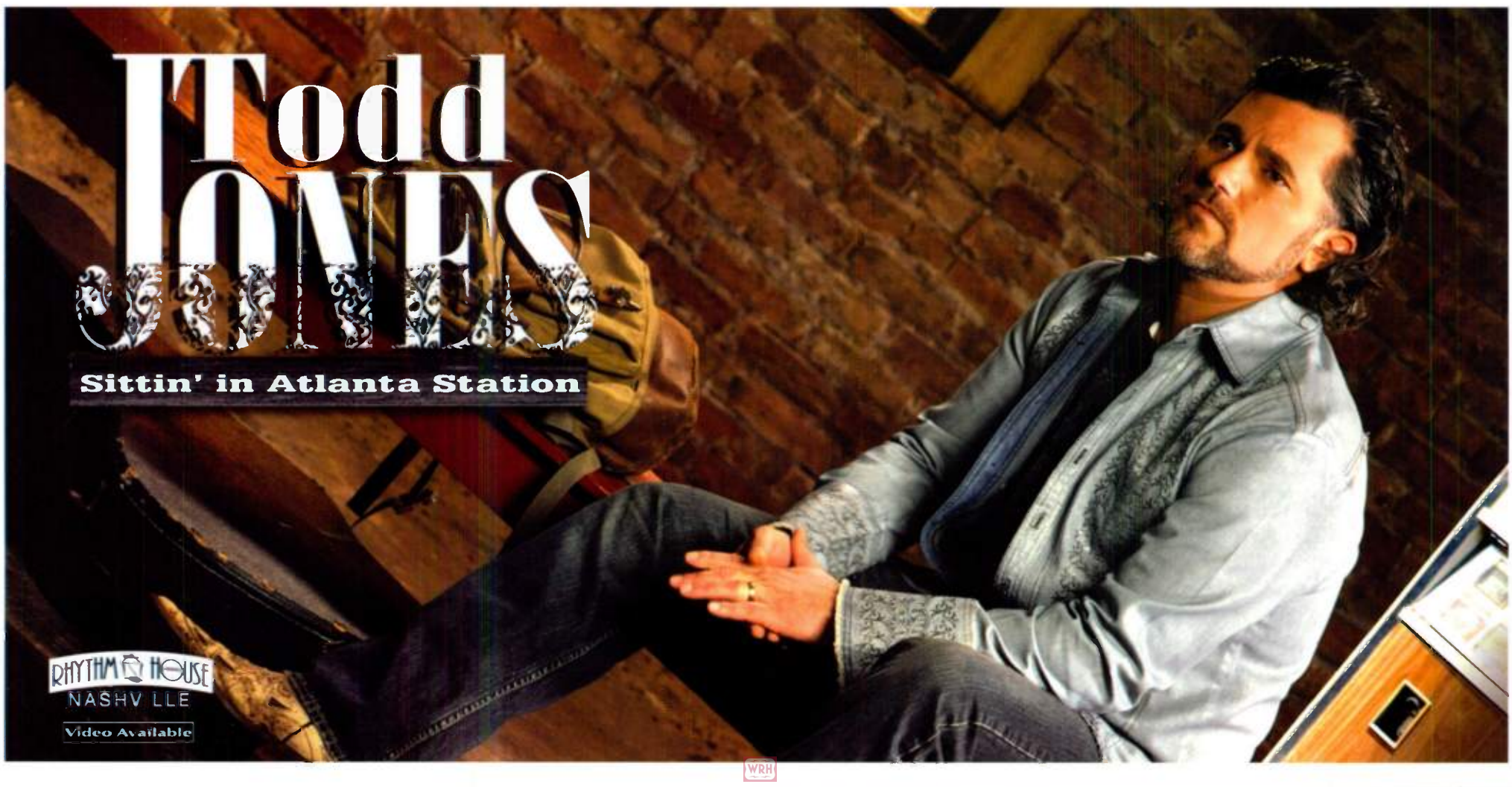
According to a study done at the end of December by Social Radio Pros' Ray Massie, here are the Top 20 Country stations with the most Twitter followers. The "Tweets" column is the number of tweets for a week in December.

Mkt. Rank	Station/City	Followers
44	WSIX/Nashville	5,930
67	WBCT/Grand Rapids	3,403
2	KKGO/Los Angeles	2,311
15	KNIX/Phoenix	2,122
11	WYCD/Detroit	1,871
28	WUBE/Cincinnati	1,663
15	KMLE/Phoenix	1,437
7	WUBL/Atlanta	1,390
66	KSKS/Fresno	1,212
16	KEEY/Minneapolis	1,172
111	KATM/Modesto, CA	1,133
26	KFRG/Riverside	1,098
23	KUPL/Portland, OR	1,036
46	WQIK/Jacksonville	852
9	WMZQ/Washington, DC	794
46	WGNE/Jacksonville	789
37	WMIL/Milwaukee	786
39	WFMS/Indianapolis	730
30	KSOP-FM/Salt Lake City	711
45	WTQR/Greensboro	698

COUNTRY FACEBOOK TOP 20

According to a study done at the end of December by Social Radio Pros, here are the Top 20 Country stations with the most Facebook fans. The "Posts" column is the number of posts for a week in December.

Mkt. Rank	Station/City	Fans
113	WSLC/Roanoke, VA	26,878
8	WXTU/Philadelphia	9,044
25	WOGI/Pittsburgh	8,170
43	WGH-FM/Norfolk	7,917
20	KYGO/Denver	7,196
21	WIL/St. Louis	6,784
16	KEEY/Minneapolis	6,544
3	WUSN/Chicago	5,805
53	WYRK/Buffalo	5,509
15	KMLE/Phoenix	5,074
28	WUBE/Cincinnati	5,049
63	WGNA/Albany, NY	4,289
42	WQDR/Raleigh	4,250
22	WPOC/Baltimore	4,239
37	WMIL/Milwaukee	4,113
36	WCOL/Columbus, OH	3,897
111	KATM/Modesto, CA	3,761
103	WBUL/Lexington, KY	3,680
58	WSSL/Greenville	3,598
45	WPAW/Greensboro, NC	3,240



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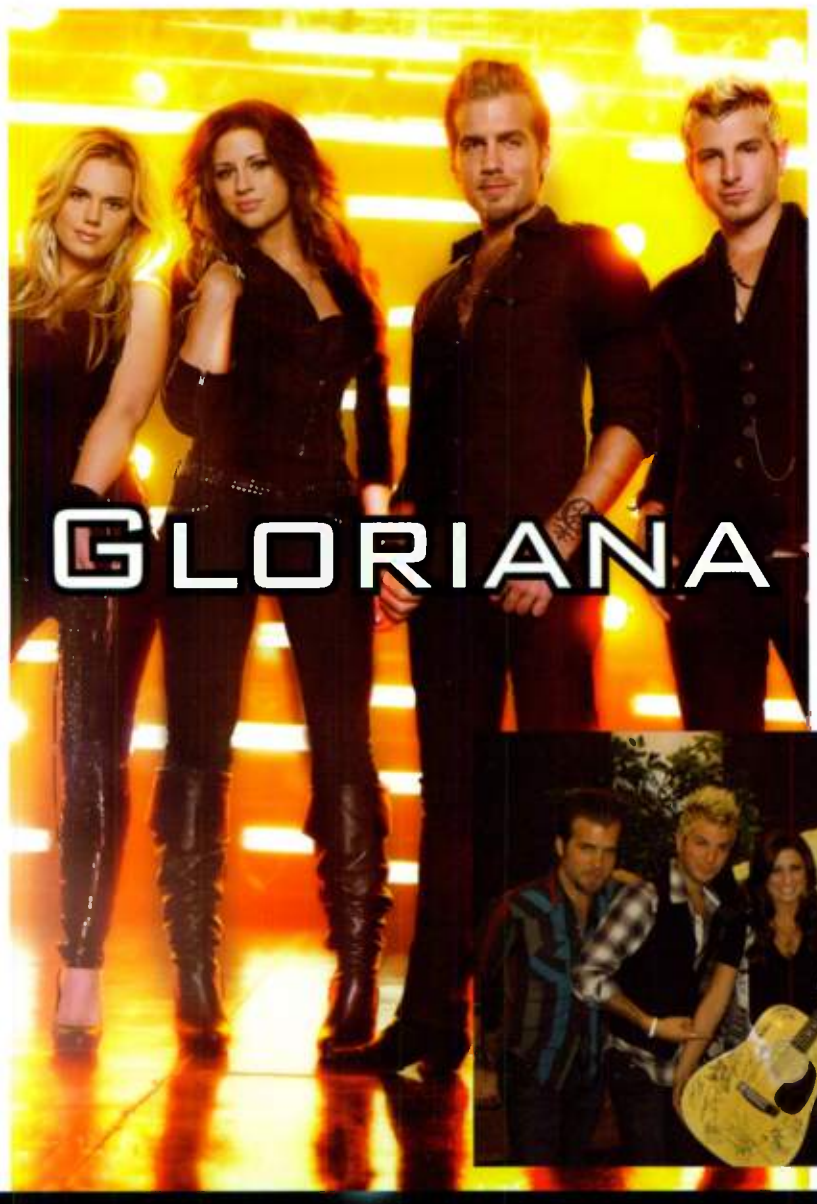


Rachel Reinert, **Cheyenne Kimball** and **Mike** and **Tom Gossin** rode the "Wild At Heart" wave to the top 15 before cresting at the *American Music Awards* with their text-voted all-genre Breakthrough Artist win. The group's second single "How Far Do You Wanna Go?" began the year by rolling into the top 40.

Did you listen to Country radio growing up?
CK: My grandfather actually was a country singer, so I was raised on it. I'm from Dallas, but I listened to every station.
RR: I spent most of my life in Southern California, but my mom's from Missouri and my dad was raised on a farm in Illinois. They always had Country music on when I was growing up. I used to listen to KZLA/Los Angeles, and I was really sad when it went away. What's really great, though, is that KKGO is there now.

What's it like to visit those stations?
RR: It's really great. We did a huge radio tour when we were starting out, and I feel like we've been to every major city in the US. Everyone is real nice, and it's cool to see the whole operation. We got to show them who we are, how we play and what kind of musicians we are.

Do you recall the first time you heard your song on the radio?
RR: We were in San Jose and in the car, and all of the sudden it came on KRTY. We all freaked out. I will never forget that.

Does hearing your song ever get old?
MG: It hasn't, because of all the travel. You don't have much time to turn on the radio and search for the song. The couple times we have heard it were amazing.

What's your most vivid memory from your radio tour?
MG: Riding in that 15-passenger van, which wasn't the most comfortable thing. Trying to sleep in it, and it stunk like dirty socks and pizza. We had a blast, though.
TG: This guy came to a meet-and-greet, and told us about how he had our CD in his truck when it got stolen. When the car was recovered, they found all the CDs had been taken except ours, and it had a fingerprint on it that turned out to be the thief's. They ended up catching him with the Gloriana CD.

What's been a real "wow" moment from the year?
CK: The AMA win was unbelievable for us, and we, of course, thank Country radio for that. None of the fans would know who we were without radio.
TG: We totally didn't expect to win. We were up against Lady Gaga, and we thought there was no way we were going to win, so we didn't get our hopes up. When they called our name, it was pretty bizarre.

What does CRS mean to you?
CK: The Country world is so much like family, so it's great to catch up with so many artists we toured with along the way.

Do you have any expectations for the New Faces show?
TG: We watched it last year, and it was one of those moments when you get the "I so wish that I was up there" itch. This year it's an honor for us, and we can't wait to show people who we are.

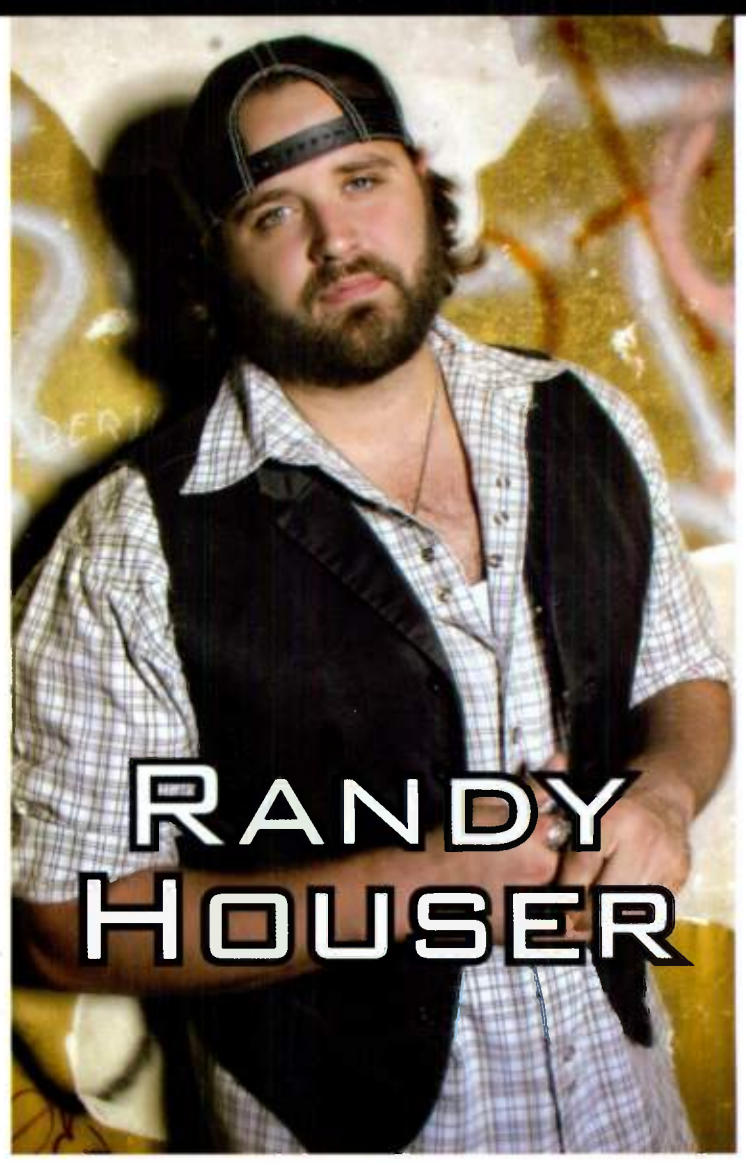
Friday Night Lights

CRS 2010's New Faces of Country

Five of country music's brightest lights, as determined by CRS attendees, will perform at the annual New Faces of Country Music show on Feb. 26.

Country Aircheck caught up with each of this year's selected artists somewhere on the road to find out how radio looks from the artist side of the fence.

This "Honky Tonk Badonkadonk" co-writer showed the country that "Anything Goes" when his top 20 debut single caught the attention of David Letterman and earned him an invite to perform on *The Late Show* in 2008. Next, Houser took "Boots On" to the top 5. As he readies his next album, "Whistlin' Dixie" is climbing the chart.



Did you listen to Country radio growing up?
All my life. When you grow up in Mississippi, Country radio is pretty much all you listen to. It's been a huge part of my life.

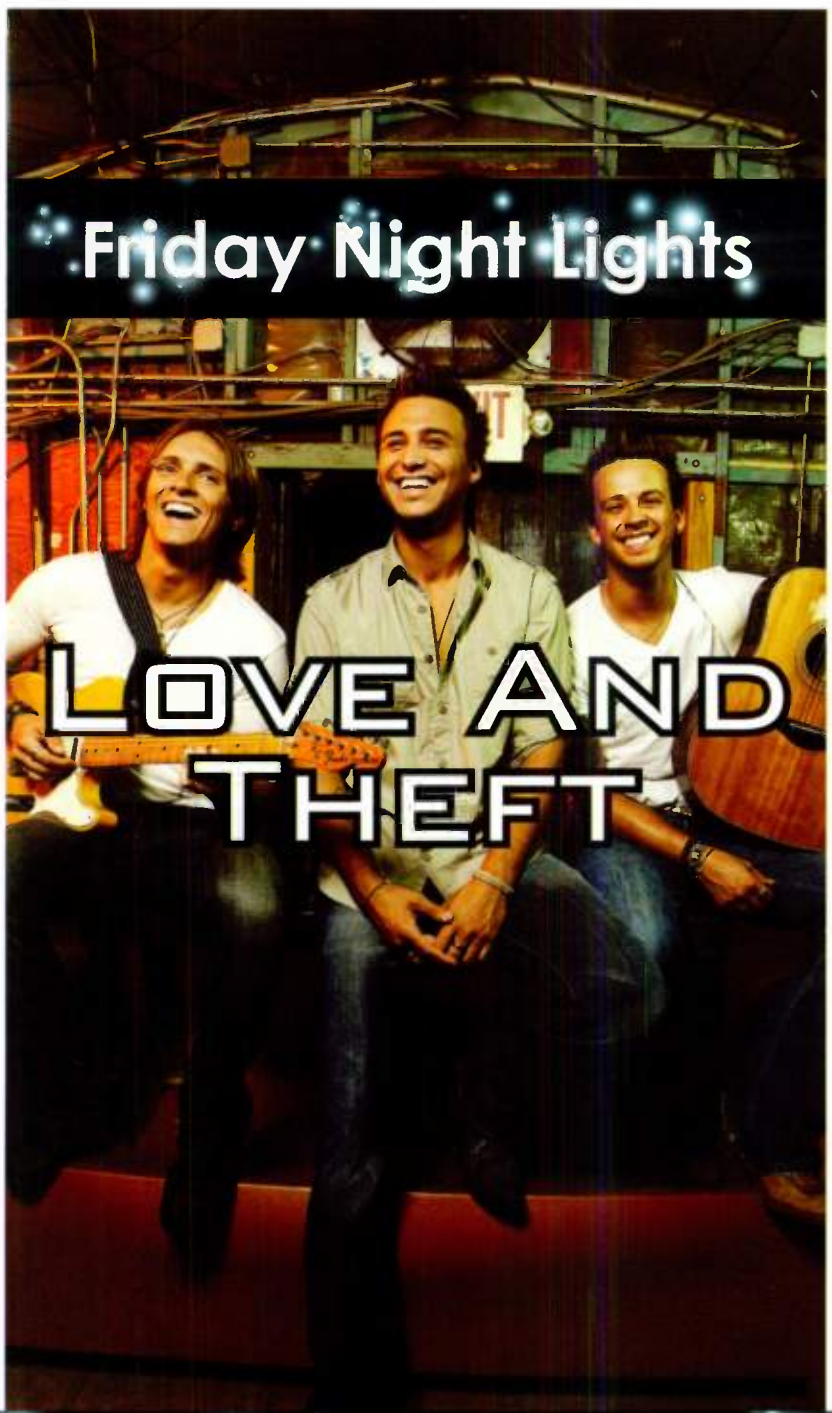
What was your hometown station?
WQST/Forest, MS, but they've become American Family Radio now. The closest after that are WUSJ/Jackson, MS and WOKK/Meridian, MS.

Do you recall the first time you heard your song on the radio?
It was on *Country Countdown USA* with Lon Helton. Jamey Johnson and I were in my car, and I had just hit the top 30. I was out doing radio tours when "Anything Goes" came out, and I only have satellite radio on the bus, so I was never listening to FM radio. Memories of growing up, learning how to play guitar with my daddy, and playing clubs all those years came rushing back. What was real fun about it is that two songs later, we got to hear "In Color." It's something I'll never forget.

Does hearing your song ever get old?
You're always exited to get to hear it playing on the radio. We're mixing the new album right now, and last night I went out in my car to listen to it. When I turned on the radio, "Whistlin' Dixie" was playing, so I got to stick a new song in after it, and A-B it to see how they matched up.

What is your most vivid memory from your radio tour?
I was with Allen Mitchell, before he went to Mercury, and we were in Kansas City. KBEQ was having their birthday bash and it was also [MD] TJ McEntire's birthday, so they took us to a karaoke bar in middle of nowhere. We got plowed and sang until four in the morning. It was one of the most fun nights. Then there's the time I put John Trapane's head through the bus window (pictured). We went to see him when he was still in Detroit, and the wind sent the bus mirror into the window.

Has there been a real "wow" moment in the last year?
When I realized **Country Aircheck** had named me the No. 1 New Artist, according to airplay. That's pretty wow!



LOVE AND THEFT

Last year saw **Brian Bandas, Eric Gunderson** and **Stephen Barker Liles** grow from "that band with the guy Taylor Swift sang about" to a top 10 country trio. After the chart ascension of "Runaway" on the now-shuttered Carolwood, LNT moved to sister label Lyric Street and released their latest single "Dancing In Circles."

What stations did you listen to growing up?
BB: KASE/Austin.
EG: I had two: WSOC and WKKT/Charlotte.
SBL: WQYK/Tampa. The first time we ever heard "Runaway" on the radio, it turned out to be them, which was pretty cool.

What is it like visiting those stations?
SBL: It's awesome to go to your hometown and play for stations that you listened to forever. Someone called us "the little Eagles" when we were at 'QYK. Then Brian said, "That's the best thing you could have said."

What were you doing when you heard your song on-air for the first time?
SBL: It was toward the beginning of the radio tour. We were back at the hotel, and had an hour or two to take a nap.
EG: I was in a really bad mood, I guess, because I was awakened from a nap.
SBL: It was awesome, though, and then the same day – they saw it, I didn't – we had our song "World Wide Open" on a commercial.

Does hearing your song ever get old?
BB: I've heard a lot of stories. People say, "Man, you're going to get so sick of hearing your song," but I don't.

What's your most vivid memory from your radio tour?
EG: Our first radio visit was KBWF/San Francisco, and we did not know what to expect. It was when [former PD] Scott Mahalick was still there.
SBL: There was a piano in the lobby, and we saw it and were like, "Let's play here." Scott just stood there, and we started playing and people started coming out.
EG: Then he said, "I want my morning guys to hear you," and asked if we'd been on the air yet. He immediately took us in the studio, we were interviewed on the air, and then they played our song. He was so excited about the song from the beginning.
SBL: It was awesome going from being nervous as crap to him being so excited. Our reps kept telling us, "This isn't going to happen everywhere."

How have you been adjusting to your new promotion staff?
SBL: Our old regionals were like our best friends. They were there from the first day we ever went to a radio station. We got to know them on a very personal level. Lyric Street is like a family, though, so we were already really good friends with the regionals.
EG: We originally thought we were going to be working with them anyway.
BB: We're very fortunate to have such a tight-knit team.

What does CRS mean to you?
SBL: We're really looking forward to CRS this year because we've made so many friends at Country radio, and a lot of them we only get to see two or three times a year.

Do you have any expectations about the New Faces show?
BB: We're ready to rock out.

JUSTIN MOORE

In 2008, the Arkansas native broke into the top 40 with "Back That Thing Up," and returned last year to finish the job with the No. 1 smash "Small Town USA." As Moore and his wife welcome their first child, his "other" baby "Backwoods" makes its way at radio.

Did you listen to Country radio growing up?
I grew up in a town of 300 people in central Arkansas – that's what everybody listens to. I always loved the lyrics because they described how I was living. I don't think I could sing or listen to anything else; my dad would disown me.

What were your local stations?
There are a couple, KSSN/Little Rock and KQUS/Hot Springs, AR. In Arkansas there are a lot more Country stations than anything else.

What's it like visiting those stations?
It's great. Chad Heritage at KSSN and Vicky Parker and Craig Dale at KQUS have been there for me for awhile. It means a lot when you have support back home. They've always been great team players, and I can't thank them enough.

Do you recall the first time you heard your song on the radio?
I was driving through the northern part of Arkansas when I heard "Back That Thing Up." Then fast-forward to "Small Town USA." I was three miles from my house in Arkansas when I heard it the first time. Each time I was in my home state, which I thought was pretty fitting, and I believe they were both on KSSN.

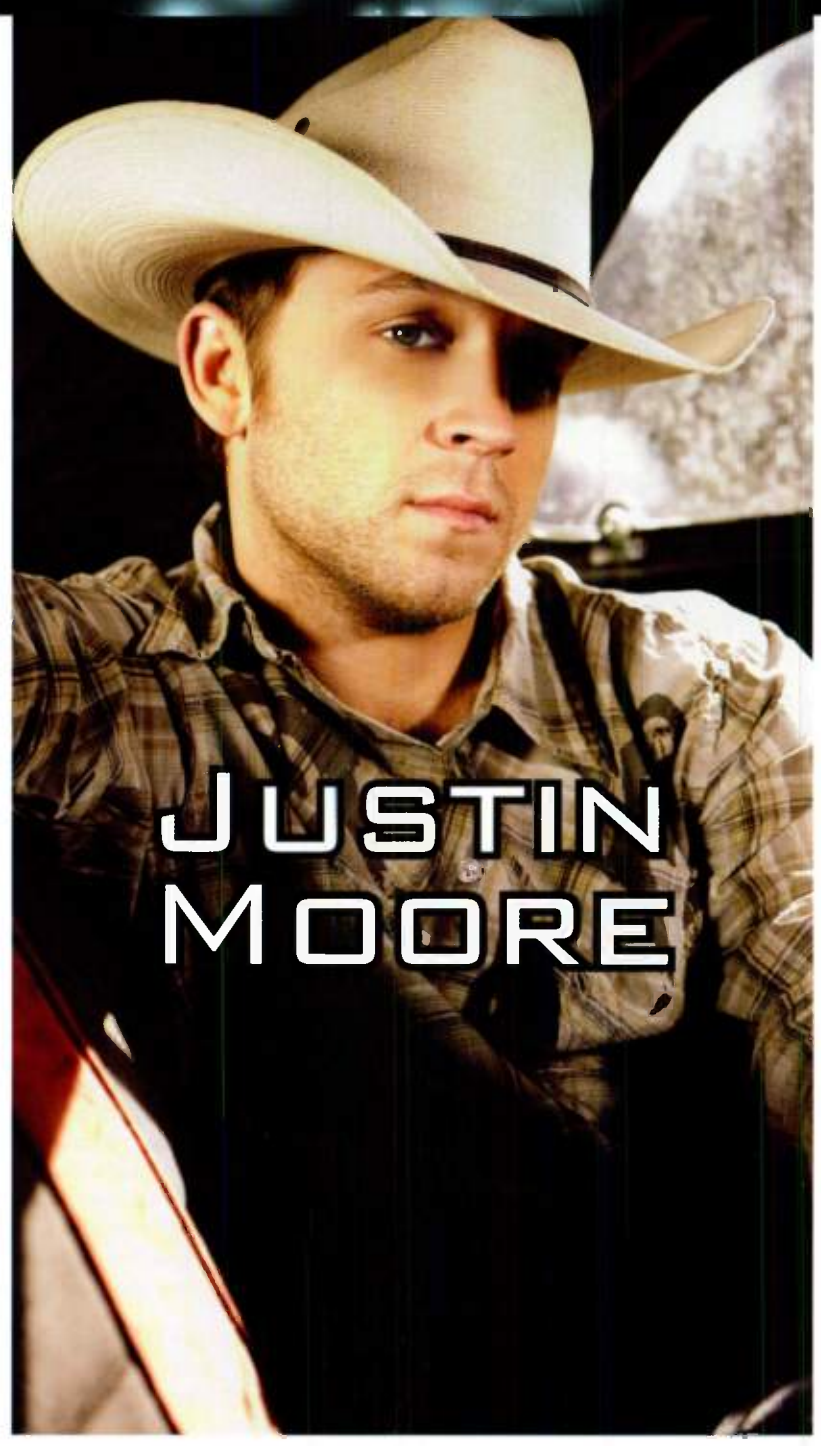
Does hearing your song ever get old?
Never. I crank it up. You can't take for granted it's always going to happen that way, so I'm going to take advantage of it while I can.

Did you ever imagine you'd be on the same label as Reba?
The fact that I'm mentioned in the same group of people is just crazy. We did a thing in the Bahamas together this past year, and I talked to her. Afterwards, I called my dad and said, "I was talking to Reba about this or that," and we both kinda stopped. He said, "What?" And I go, "Yeah, that sounded weird." When you grow up in a town of 300 people you're not allowed to dream as big as I have, and I feel blessed to have had the year we've had.

What's been a real "wow" moment from the year?
It was around CRS last year when I got to play the *Opry* for the first time. That means more than anything, to be accepted into that family. I was very fortunate to have a lot of my family come. I had both of my grandpas backstage, and they got to watch me sing a song from my record, called "Grandpa," on the *Grand Ole Opry*. In December, I lost my grandfather I wrote that song about, so the performance was a special moment I'll never forget.

What does CRS mean to you?
The coolest thing about CRS is that the first couple of years you're there, you're just meeting people. The most exciting thing now is that I get to see all the radio folks who have changed my life.

Do you have any expectations about the New Faces show?
I'm very excited. It's a huge honor, as everybody knows. It's extremely humbling that Country radio has embraced me and my music.



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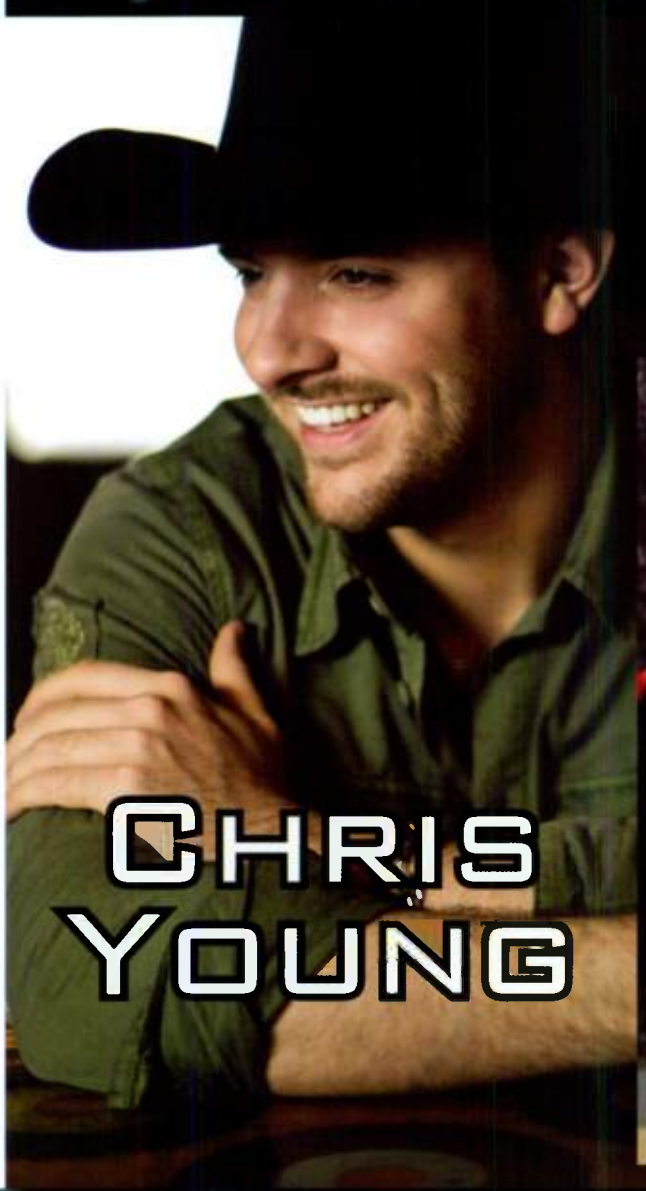
Friday Night Lights



Chris Young

After his debut single "Drinkin' Me Lonely" flirted with the top 40 in 2006, the Middle Tennessee native courted the top 50 in 2007 with "You're Gonna Love Me." Young got back in the dating game when "Voices" reached the top 40 in 2008, and finally scored when "Gettin' You Home (The Black Dress Song)" went to No. 1 last October.

Did you listen to Country radio growing up?
I was pretty much steeped in it. I got really lucky – my mom and dad were big fans and I just naturally became a big fan. Anytime we'd go over to my grandfather's house, he'd play me old Marty Robbins. I've been exposed to all of it. I always knew country music was what I wanted to do.

What was your hometown station?
I'm from Nashville and listened to anything that was Country. It's kind of weird to visit those stations now. The first time I was ever on the air was with Bill Cody at WSM-AM. It's exciting for me when friends text me, "Hey, man, I just heard your song on the radio."

Do you recall the first time you heard your song on the radio?
It was my first single, "Drinkin' Me Lonely," and it got a lot of airplay around Nashville. I had just gotten home from my first radio tour, and had just turned off the interstate. My truck has that thing that scrolls the name across the screen, and I felt like such an idiot because I had to pull over and video it as my name went across.

Where were you when you found out you went No. 1?
I was flying back from a radio visit in Salt Lake on that Saturday. When I landed, I called Keith Gale, and the first thing he said was, "How does it feel to have the No. 1 song in the country?" I started freaking out, and then he told me he had someone that wanted to talk to me. This guy starts telling me, "Yeah, when I had my first No. 1 record I was out of the country ..." Then I asked who I was talking to, and he said, "It's Kenny Chesney." I figured Keith was playing a joke on me, and said, "No, really." He said, "This is Kenny Chesney, and I just want to say congrats on your first No. 1 record." That night my promo staff, and everyone else I could find, went out in downtown Nashville and celebrated.

Whose idea was it to put Josh Easler in the dress?
I had nothing to do with that! He should take all blame for that. I love him. He actually came on to the team when I did; his first radio tour was my first radio tour. I can say that I love everyone on my promo staff.

What's a vivid memory from your radio tour?
We were in Austin to do an acoustic show at Graham Central Station – it holds about 1,200 people. I had never played the city since I got my record deal. The station told me they had gotten a lot of response from the song, but they didn't know what the show would be like. I was thinking we'd have 300-400 people. We ended up having a packed house, and there were a hundred or so people waiting outside for an acoustic show. That really humbled me. It was all because of radio. CAC

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Here's the latest compilation of promo staffs and how to reach them.

Editor's Note: *An explanation of some of the abbreviations: "NSD" is National Sr. Director; "ND" is National Director; "NP" is National Promotion; "NSP" is National Promotion Strategy; "NRS" is National Radio Syndication; "P" is Partner; "SD" is Sr. Director; "D" is Director; "FP" is Field Promotion; "C" is Central; "MR" is Market Research; "MW" is Midwest; "NE" is Northeast; "S" is South; "SE" is Southeast; "M/RP" is Mgr. Regional Promotion; "PE" is Promotional Executive; "W" is West Coast; "Sec." is Secondary; "BD" is Business Development; "NM" is New Media; "MP" is Manager/Promotion; "STP" is Strategic Planner; "SMP" is Strategic Marketing and Promotion; "SP" is Special Projects; "TS" is Tour Support; "FM" is Field Marketing; "LP" is Logistics and Promotion; "M" is Marketing; "PMA" is Promotion and Marketing Analyst; "RM" is Radio Marketing; "R/IS" is Research & Information Systems; "RS" is Radio Syndication; "SA" is for Satellite; "Coor" is Coordinator/Promotion; "EA" is Executive Assistant.*

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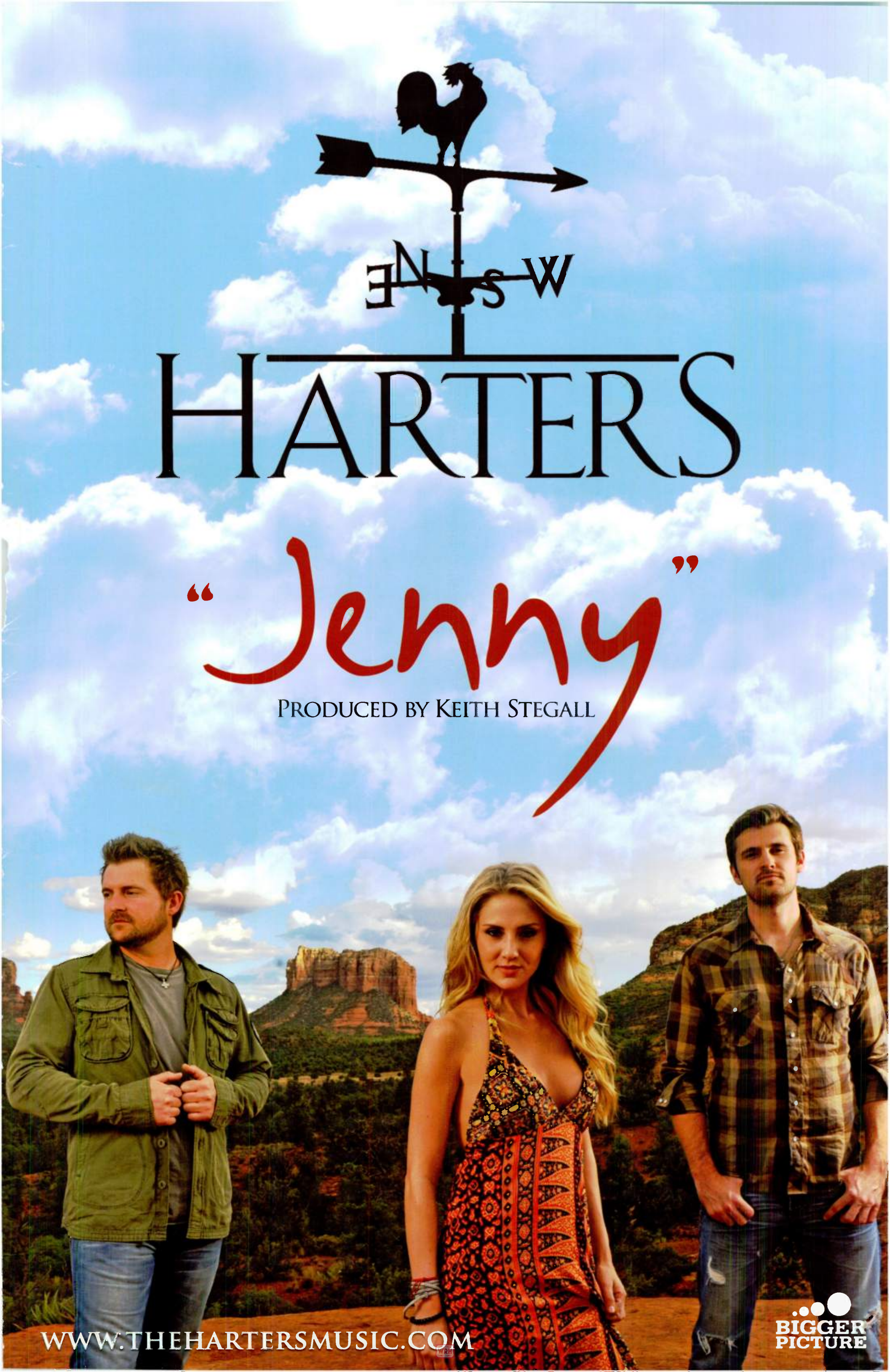
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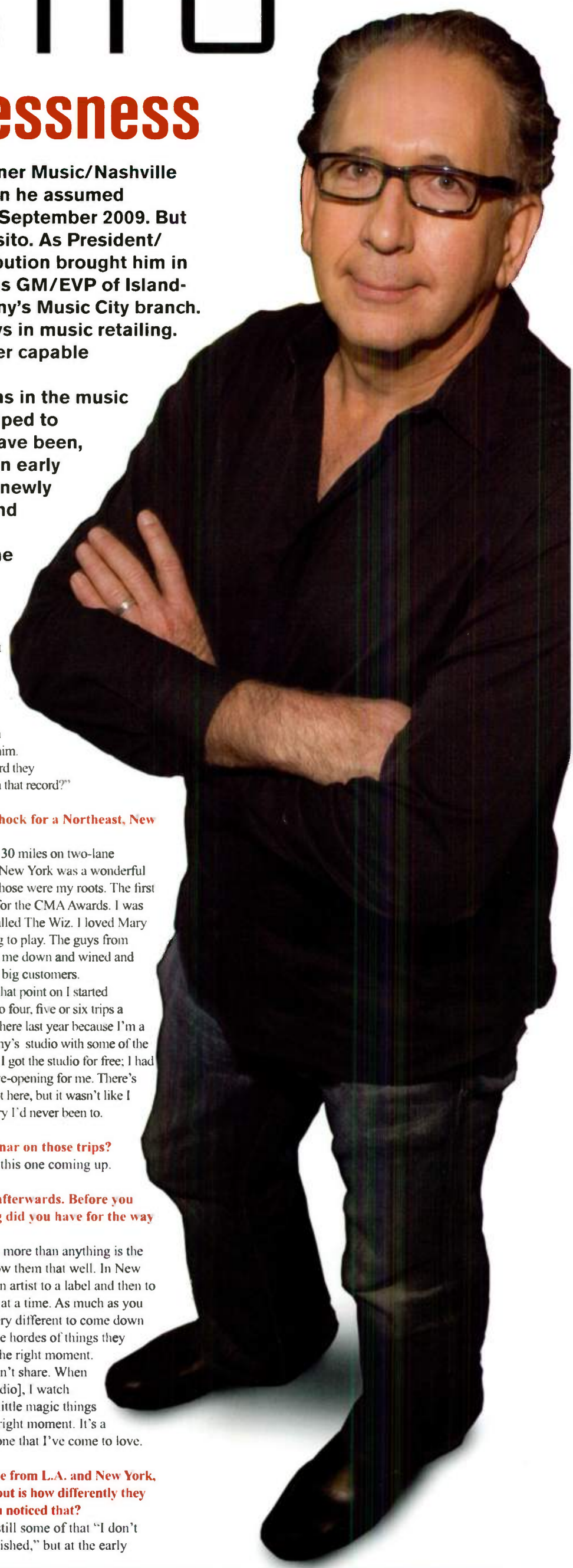
JOHN ESPOSITO

Clutter-Free Relentlessness

For many in the country industry and Country radio, Warner Music/Nashville President John Esposito was a complete unknown when he assumed command of what had been Warner Bros./Nashville in September 2009. But Nashville was anything but unfamiliar territory to Esposito. As President/CEO of WEA Corp., his oversight of sales, marketing and distribution brought him in close contact with many Nashville hit makers. In his prior role as GM/EVP of Island-Def Jam Music Group, Esposito worked closely with the company's Music City branch. And his relationship with country music extends back to his days in music retailing. He is also, as some have already experienced first-hand, a rather capable vocalist, guitar player and drummer.

In the five months he's been on the job, Esposito's interactions in the music community and regular visits to Country radio stations have helped to introduce him to key decision makers, but his plans for WMN have been, to this point, closely held. Country Aircheck sat down with him in early February for an exclusive conversation about the direction this newly structured company will take. From a clear definition of roles and adding a promotion team, to integrating support functions and charging A&R with picking singles, he offers a candid view of the kind of focus and intensity he expects to foster.



Warner Music created this new division last year. Whose idea was it for you to come to Nashville as its top executive?

Lyor Cohen, my boss. He hates to be called my boss, but I'm a child of the idea that the person I report to is my boss. Lyor is wonderful and I've worked with him for years. I was the GM of Island-Def Jam from the late '90s until 2002, when I came over to be President of WEA. Lyor was my supervisor; he likes to say partner. He's the guy who motivates me and mentors me and all of that. We did the radio promotion for Luke Lewis' label on the Shania Twain pop releases. And when Luke wanted to start Lost Highway, he needed a partner in New York to help support him. Since we already had a relationship, Lyor said, "Let's do it." He assigned me to be the liaison in New York because he knew I especially loved the Americana version of country that Lost Highway in its early days was going to be.

So when Lyor got to Warner Music and wanted to make some changes, he literally came down to me and said, "Are you ready to go start your Lost Highway?" That was his metaphor; it's not literal. He knew I was a logical choice – someone he trusted and who had offered to pitch in if he ever needed help at a record label in Nashville. At that moment, I had no idea what Lyor really meant. I knew Atlantic was thinking of starting a label; I thought it might have been that.

Any hesitation?

Zero.

What is your background with country music?

Growing up, it was the Eagles, Poco, Buffalo Springfield, Loggins & Messina. I don't remember how I heard "Forever And Ever Amen" because I wouldn't have been in a situation to have heard that song. Every friend had Led Zeppelin in their collection, not Randy Travis. When I heard it, the sound was extraordinary to me. I went out and bought it; the first official country record I ever bought. I was living in Plainfield, NJ at the time, and I remember playing it for people and getting the "What happened to you?" expression. And I would say, "Just listen to this voice. It's just undeniable." It was the start of my diving a little deeper into country music. And I now I get to spend time with him, and it's such an honor.

We're working on a couple of projects with him at the same time. His 25th anniversary – imagine that – of *Storms Of Life*. We've got a cool duets project of his classic tracks. Not all from that record, but it is the centerpiece. He also wants to do a record of classics and we love the idea, but we don't want it to come off like, no offense to Rod Stewart, but that version of classics. So we're at lunch trying to define the A&R of it, and Randy starts singing me "Nowhere Man." And I'm thinking, "I get paid for this?" This beautiful voice from across the table. It's magic. And that song, if it makes the record, will probably be the most known.

We want them to be songs that sound familiar but haven't been recorded a million times. I tell Randy that, God willing, if I have some success here we're going to put a Mount Rushmore on top of this building eventually and his face will be one of them. I love the fact that we still have someone on our roster who is an icon. And what's really fun is the love of all our other artists for him. When they heard about the duets record they started hawking me, "How do I get on that record?"

Is the Nashville at all a culture shock for a Northeast, New York, New Jersey kind of guy?

I'm from Punxsutawney, PA. It's 30 miles on two-lane highways between towns out there. New York was a wonderful 30-year experience, but its not like those were my roots. The first time I came to Nashville was 1993 for the CMA Awards. I was working at a retailer in New York called The Wiz. I loved Mary Chapin Carpenter and she was going to play. The guys from Sony knew I loved her, so they flew me down and wined and dined me because I was one of their big customers.

There was no turning back; from that point on I started visiting Nashville two, three and up to four, five or six trips a year for the last decade. I even came here last year because I'm a songwriter and cut tracks at Big Kenny's studio with some of the greatest session players in Nashville. I got the studio for free; I had to pay for the musicians. That was eye-opening for me. There's still so much I had to learn when I got here, but it wasn't like I was told to go to some foreign country I'd never been to.

Ever get to Country Radio Seminar on those trips?

No, but I'm looking forward to this one coming up.

I can hardly wait to talk to you afterwards. Before you moved here, what kind of feeling did you have for the way Nashville does business?

The thing that has fascinated me more than anything is the publishing community. I didn't know them that well. In New York and L.A., you typically sign an artist to a label and then to a publishing deal. It's not one song at a time. As much as you can read about that on paper, it's very different to come down here and watch the people who have hordes of things they don't want to share with you until the right moment. I love my A&R people, but they don't share. When an artist is about to go in [to the studio], I watch them open the drawer and pull the little magic things they've been sitting on for just the right moment. It's a whole different animal to me, and one that I've come to love.

When executives come to Nashville from L.A. and New York, usually the one thing they talk about is how differently they can interact with artists. Have you noticed that?

One hundred percent. There is still some of that "I don't want to play it for you until it's finished," but at the early

Game On: Mean Joe Greene looks on as Esposito works at his desk. Elsewhere, (inset) a framed wall writing proclaims, "This space reserved for our first gold record as Warner Music Nashville." A platinum companion hangs beside it.

stages when they're putting their ideas together about what they're recording, artists absolutely want to have partnerships and take our input. One of the things that really attracted to me to this town is there is so much less pretension with country artists. I joke with people outside of Nashville that there are more guitars per living room than any other city in America. You can go to the banker and they've got three guitars right there. And they're tuned. These things are not decorations. They're there because the banker knows Kix Brooks is going to come in, have a glass wine of and play a couple of songs.

I don't want to dwell on Blake Shelton, but he's the thing with the most wind in our sales today. I happened to meet Blake through Jim Ed Norman eight years ago when, as he describes it, he looked like Terri Clark. Through this process, meeting after meeting and call after call, he wants to decide these things together. That's not, by and large, my experience. It's more the managers talking to you outside of Nashville. This is refreshing, and it is indulgent from a music standpoint.

Anything since you've been here about the way Nashville does business that is either humorous, stupefying or just stupid?

I am not being humble when I tell you I am still in the learning process. The last thing in the world I want to be, and particularly now that I've made the decision to spend the rest of my life here in Nashville, is the guy who is going to tell anybody how to do things. Everybody else can tell me how to do things, and that will shape a vision I will work with this team to execute.

The thing I have found most fascinating is you can't get away from the business. I could walk out the front door of my Rockefeller Plaza office and walk for five days and not bump into one person from the music business. I can't go buy a cup of coffee in Starbucks and shake hands with somebody without hearing a half-hour later, "I think Esposito just had a meeting with this guy and might be hiring him." Oh, my goodness!

It's no secret that I let go of our former head of promotion and have been very much on the search for one. I've had to have every meeting at my house because nobody wants to be seen. Okay, that's cool. But I'm not used to the fact that I can't go to the YMCA and not get interrupted 20 times while I'm working out. At Whole Foods, it's "Hey, Espo!" And by the way, it's all good; I like it. But I do like to shut down. There has to be a time for my brain to not think about the business so I can come back in on Monday and have a freshness to it.

What have you learned in the brief time you've been here about the relationship between labels and Country radio, and how that relationship differs from other formats?

There's not a significant difference in how you would approach radio. The significant difference is that in most other genres you have numerous paths to go down, whereas you really have one lane to go down in Country. You can get fires started in the deeper hinterlands of formats that ultimately build up to the big mamma-jamma of Pop, but you don't have that opportunity here. And the length of time the average song from add date to, if you're lucky, peaking in the top 10, is much more protracted. I'm not telling you anything you don't know. These things are theory when you're reading about them, but when you're living them you realize you only get so many swings at bat. You really better have the most magnificent artists and the most magnificent songs. The relationship of going and talking to Country radio is the same I would have with Z100/ New York. It's just there are fewer of them and it's that one funnel.

I want A&R to lead this company. I don't want this company to be picking singles by committee. I want the people who found the artists to have a sense of conviction that they know the artists the most, understand the format the most and should pick those singles. I want them to appreciate that they'd better pick the right singles. They'd better give the team that's going to go to radio the right ammunition. A big part of what I try to do in my job besides be a cheerleader, which is really a big part of what I believe my job is and has made me successful so far in my career, is un-cluttering things. If you only get so many swings at the bat at Country radio, you'd better not be thinking about other things that take you off that focus. I don't want us to aim at No. 2; I want us to be No. 1. If I'm doing any activity that takes me off my game of closing toward that, that's a problem. I'm constantly walking around finding, "What are the things people are having to do that would not be part of their core purview? And what can I do to get it off their plate?"

I've enjoyed going to meet Country radio and have been to a number of markets. I'm going out tomorrow to Houston, and I'll be out the next two weeks, too, just to hear how they view our approach and what we can do to make sure we have a better chance to win. I'm digging these people; they're all humans. Ultimately, promotion is sales to radio, and I've been a salesman my whole life. I like the activity of going out and having them tell me why they don't do something so I can figure out how I'm going to convince them to do something they may not want to do.

Any surprises as you watch the charts?

I swear I'm not being humble, but there's so much to learn. There are, obviously, ways to make sure you can have the success that is the difference between No. 1 and No. 3 or cracking the top 10 — those benchmarks. It starts with music. It has to be magnificent to have a chance, and that alone may not pull you through. You not only have to have the relationships, but also know which stations can influence other stations and how to sequence that process. I'm going to learn that and have it become second-nature. I'm fortunate that I knew enough people down here – some who are competitors and might not be inclined to educate me – but some who aren't and know how that promotion thing works in Country a lot better than I do. I'm getting a lot of great input, so I figure if you come back and interview me in a year I might even be able to tell you exactly how it works. Off the record, of course!

> "I COULD WALK OUT OF MY ROCKEFELLER PLAZA OFFICE AND WALK FOR FIVE DAYS AND NOT BUMP INTO ONE PERSON FROM THE MUSIC BUSINESS. I CAN'T GO BUY A CUP OF COFFEE IN STARBUCKS WITHOUT HEARING A HALF-HOUR LATER, 'I THINK ESPOSITO MIGHT BE HIRING HIM.'"

"A este joven solo le gusta el futbol y escuchan musica en español en cualquien estación"

"I like local news radio, local sports, call in programs, anything local is good"

"My Radio sounds like what everyone is talking about in school"

"I listen to baseball."

"BECAUSE I DON'T HAVE A CD PLAYER IN MY CAR, I REALLY RELY ON THE RADIO FOR MY SOURCE OF MUSIC."

"I always listen to the radio if I have a day off as opposed to having the TV on"

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"Country music soothes the mind and I like singing to it."

(These authentic comments were submitted by Arbitron diarykeepers in Spring 2009)

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Is there anything that stands out in particular as you talk to Country programmers?

Every experience that has added something to the toolbelt has been helpful. I'm starting to figure out who wants to give input about which one of two songs they like some. Some don't particularly want that; I'm learning the difference. Another thing I'm learning is that we could have all done a better job of getting out with them more often. I don't know exactly why before I got down here they didn't want to engage them. But as a road warrior who enjoys going to dinners and really getting to know people so that you have a deeper sense of what makes them tick, you find out most of them welcome that. You might get preached to by some, but people want us to succeed. They really want us to give them great music; they don't want us to half-ass it. They actually do respond to the squeaky wheels getting more grease. And I want us to have the relentlessness.

If I've learned any one consistent thing, it's that each one has a different way of approaching relationships, but they actually do want to have a relationship with us despite the fact that they're getting hammered by dozens and dozens of "us" and despite having a limited number of hours in the day. From a competitive standpoint, I watch who is having the most success, and the very simple key is relationships. That is from a relentlessness I've seen that I want to bring to us. I'd rather us be carnivores than backpackers.

Are there any specifics about Country radio you've learned from talking to these programmers?

A general sense that an artist needs to be dedicated to the format, and please be sure that they are. They're not mad if an artist is dedicated to the format, has great success and has some crossover success as long as that artist doesn't then want to abandon them. Because they get a limited number of plays a week. They want to be spinning people they think they're going to be facing year after year and will be helping to build their brand equity. Everybody has made that point with me one way or another. It's one thing to hear it from your staff. For me, it gets more in my fiber if I actually hear it from them and how they articulate that common thread.

To specifics now with your plans for Warner Music/Nashville: There are lots of rumors about two labels or three. Where are you right now?

We will do it slightly differently than many of the rumors might suggest. I oversee Word and the newly renamed country label group Warner Music Nashville, which includes Warner Bros. Nashville and Atlantic Nashville. I have been given not only a charge from New York, but also the wherewithal financially where I can build out our staff in areas such as marketing, publicity and promotion.

We will make some other moves here to become more locally self-sufficient, but will continue to work with our partners at Atlantic and Warner Bros. on certain projects. When records really blow up, we could use some of their extra marketing staff because, at the end of the day, we're only so many people down here.

Having said that, a majority of our roster is signed to enhanced rights deals. I'd like us to have the local team and the wherewithal to execute on these deals at an extraordinary level so the artists can see we're doing it because if we work at helping to build that brand with you, we should all share in the joy of that. We owe it to the artists to show we can execute at a level that's better than anyone else. The Warner Music Group already developed lots of these capabilities, but I also want to be able to manage lots of it here in Nashville.

For instance, when we tell an artist we'll handle your merchandising, it's not like we'll email designs to you. We're going to walk you in and the people who make the designs and manage the production will be right there. We're going to build out rooms that will showcase our capabilities. We'll have a group of technologists that artists can sit with and design the website together with us on the spot.

And what are you doing with promotion?

I have heard so many absolute "facts" about what I'm doing, it's wonderful. When I'm interviewing people for the Senior VP/Promotion ...

At your house.

... at my house. I'm told, "Well I heard you're doing this." And I hear it from like five different people. Quite often I've never even met with whomever they're talking about.

The most important thing I can do is get a very senior-level person in promotion who can be a partner in not only making sure we're delivering at an extraordinary level for our artists, but also in making sure we have a staff that is a good combination of strategy and closers. But I want this person to be a strategist with me for the constant shaping of Warner Music Nashville.

There is a *lot* of speculation about whether we will have more imprints. I'm not even talking about doing that until we make sure we're taking care of our current roster. I am so uber-focused on delivering for the great artists we already have.

What's your sense of where country music is today, and what do you look for in an artist to sign?

Lyor uses the word magnificent and I think it's the most appropriate word. Good is the enemy of great. We have to sign great, magnificent artists. You're here in my office and see my collection of stuff that does include pictures of me with country artists through the years. But you see Springsteen and Sinatra. I tell the artists that they are litmus tests for me. One guy wrote all his songs and nobody wondered whether he was authentic. But everybody thinks Frank Sinatra wrote all those songs, right? Well, you guys don't, but ask my mother or somebody outside the business. It's a "Sinatra song" because he had an authenticity that was so extraordinary. The interpretation made you think he owned the song.

I want our artists all to be measured against that. When you listen to Brett Eldredge, there's not a chance you won't say, "Holy cow, he feels that in his bones." It's wonderful that he happens to be co-writing all the songs, which is not an imperative but happens to be a luxury we got with him. That's what I want to feel. It's easier for me to elevate my passion and be the cheerleader I need to be when I feel that artist has that much magic. Because when you're not sure, you don't run against the wall as hard.

As for the sound of country music, I listen to that chart and hear a lot of different things. I don't feel like there is "a sound." Even at the top of the chart, I don't feel like one sound is winning, which, to me, is encouraging because I'm not trying to sign one sound. It's wonderful that it could be Reba one week, Lady Antebellum the next, Miranda gets up there and, God willing, Blake. And none of those sound the same. I hope we can have a diverse enough roster that you fall in love for different reasons.

Is the six-cut LP an experiment or something that will be done across the roster?

It's an experiment until we find out if our theory works. God bless Blake and [manager] Narvel [Blackstock] for coming along. We've been getting hawked this idea from Wal-Mart for some years: Don't wait until you have 12 or 13 songs, come out more consistently. Blake is the kind of artist who has had radio success and some sales success, but not the kind we wanted. We said, "This could be a perfect thing" because he just keeps recording, so we could come out with something every six months. [When] we have this massive track, let's go out and give a value on this. It's going to be priced very sharply on the shelf, and God bless Wal-Mart, they're thrilled that we're the first ones and are giving us extraordinary support to help drive this record. You will not miss Blake Shelton in a Wal-Mart store on March 2, trust me.

What kind of input do you expect promotion to have in single selection?

My only proclamation is that I hope the A&R and promotion departments have the deepest of relationships. I've said this to my A&R department and I've said it in front of the entire staff: If everybody is picking the single, I don't know who to shoot. At the end of the day, your A&R department's job is to be masterful at finding that artist and the song. I would hope they are partners and bring the promotion person down to say, "Hey, what do you think?" But what I've noticed is people can get wobbly and indecisive if they're starting to ask everybody to have input. When I talk about un-cluttering, I have a sense that's not a unique trait that had been going on here, that single selection by committee had been an impediment in other places. I'm one who believes in conviction, and it starts there. That's what A&R's job is.

I've played music for every radio programmer I've been with. I want them to know I'm not only passionate about music, but I also want to share with them some of the stuff I think deserves to be played on their radio station. I'm more interested in getting their body language than I am in having them pick the single. As I've heard and have experienced, that can be all over the map, and then you've forced yourself into this indecisive mode. The best shot we have is if everybody on my team runs against that wall with the same force, and nobody is going slightly to the left or right because they had the chance to say, "Well I didn't think that was the right one." If the A&R people don't consistently come up with the one, it's my job to fix. Blame it on me. Trust that they picked the right one, and let's all run that way together. CAC

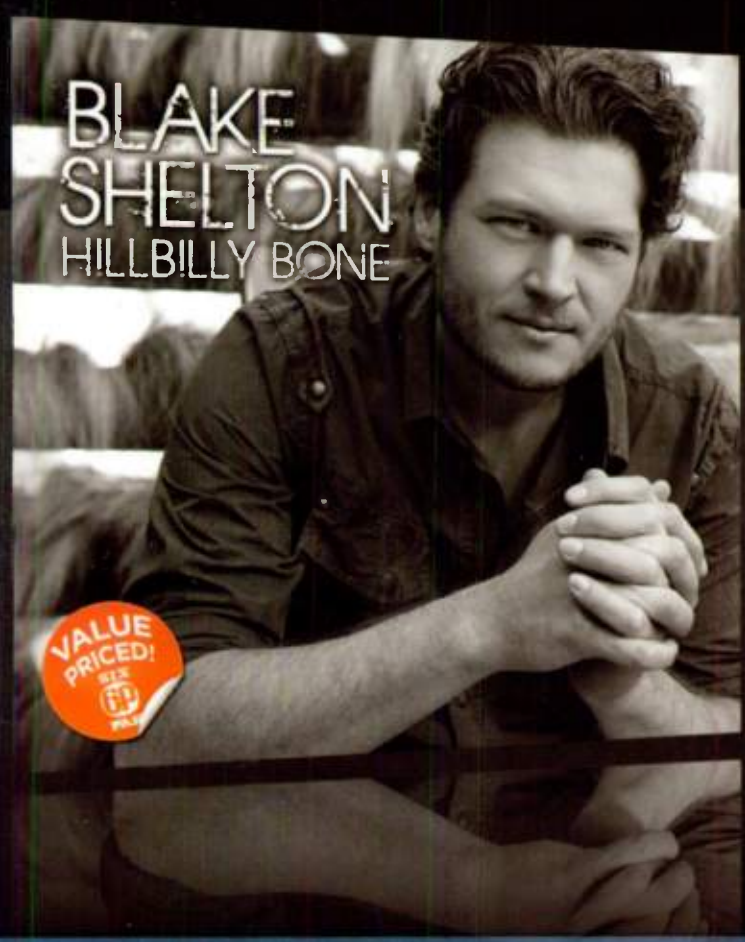
> "I'VE SAID IT IN FRONT OF THE ENTIRE STAFF: IF EVERYBODY IS PICKING THE SINGLE, I DON'T KNOW WHO TO SHOOT. THE A&R DEPARTMENT'S JOB IS TO BE MASTERFUL AT FINDING THAT ARTIST AND THE SONG."

BLAKE SHELTON

HILLBILLY BONE

IN STORES
MARCH 2

Over **2.5** million albums sold
4 Gold Albums
5 #1 Singles
10 #1 videos
13 top twenty singles at country radio



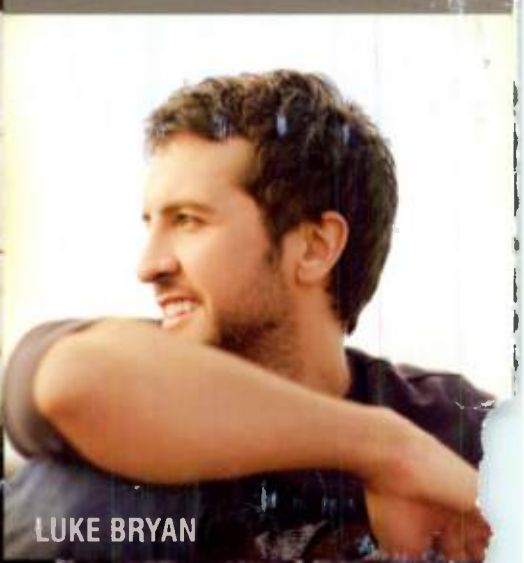
Featuring
6 brand new songs
including the hit single **HILLBILLY BONE**

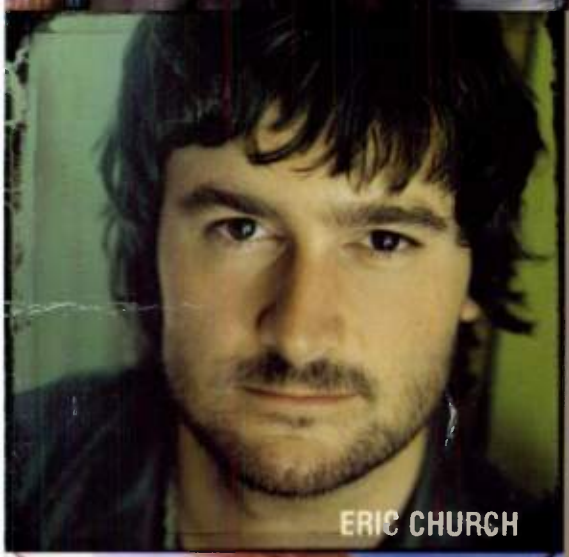
"I talk to my fans every day and the first question they ask me is, *'When are you going to release a new record?'"* says Shelton. "I want to give my fans new music more often and at a lower price. The fact that people will be able to get the new music for less money is a gift to my fans who have been behind me every step of the way."

CAPITOL'S RADIO STARS

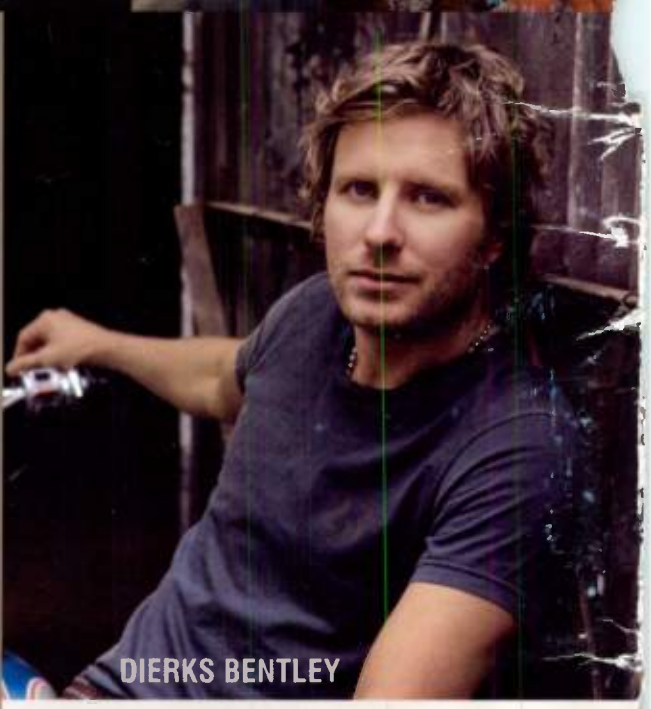
LITTLE BIG TOWN

DARIUS RUCKER


LUKE BRYAN


ERIC CHURCH

LADY ANTEBELLUM


DIERKS BENTLEY

EMILY WEST

KEITH URBAN

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HERE'S TO AN EVEN BETTER 2010 WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF JENNETTE McCURDY AND WALKER HAYES!

Capitol
RECORDS NASHVILLE

WRH

THE TOP 100

Top 15s, Top Performers & Label Of The Year

THE YEAR'S BIG STORIES

ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR

BLAKE SHELTON

THE INTERVIEW

COUNTRY AIRCHECK

DECEMBER 2012

1...2...3...4

Capitol

RECORDS NASHVILLE

#1 LABEL OF THE YEAR

FOURTH YEAR IN A ROW!

2009 * 2010 * 2011 * 2012

THANK YOU COUNTRY RADIO!

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RACHEL FARLEY

Carson James
Sr. VP Promotion Broken Bow Music Group
Carson@brokenbowrecords.com

Renee' Leymon
VP Promotion
Renee@redbowrecords.com

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Bethany Dean
Promotion Coordinator
Bethany@redbowrecords.com

RED BOW RECORDS

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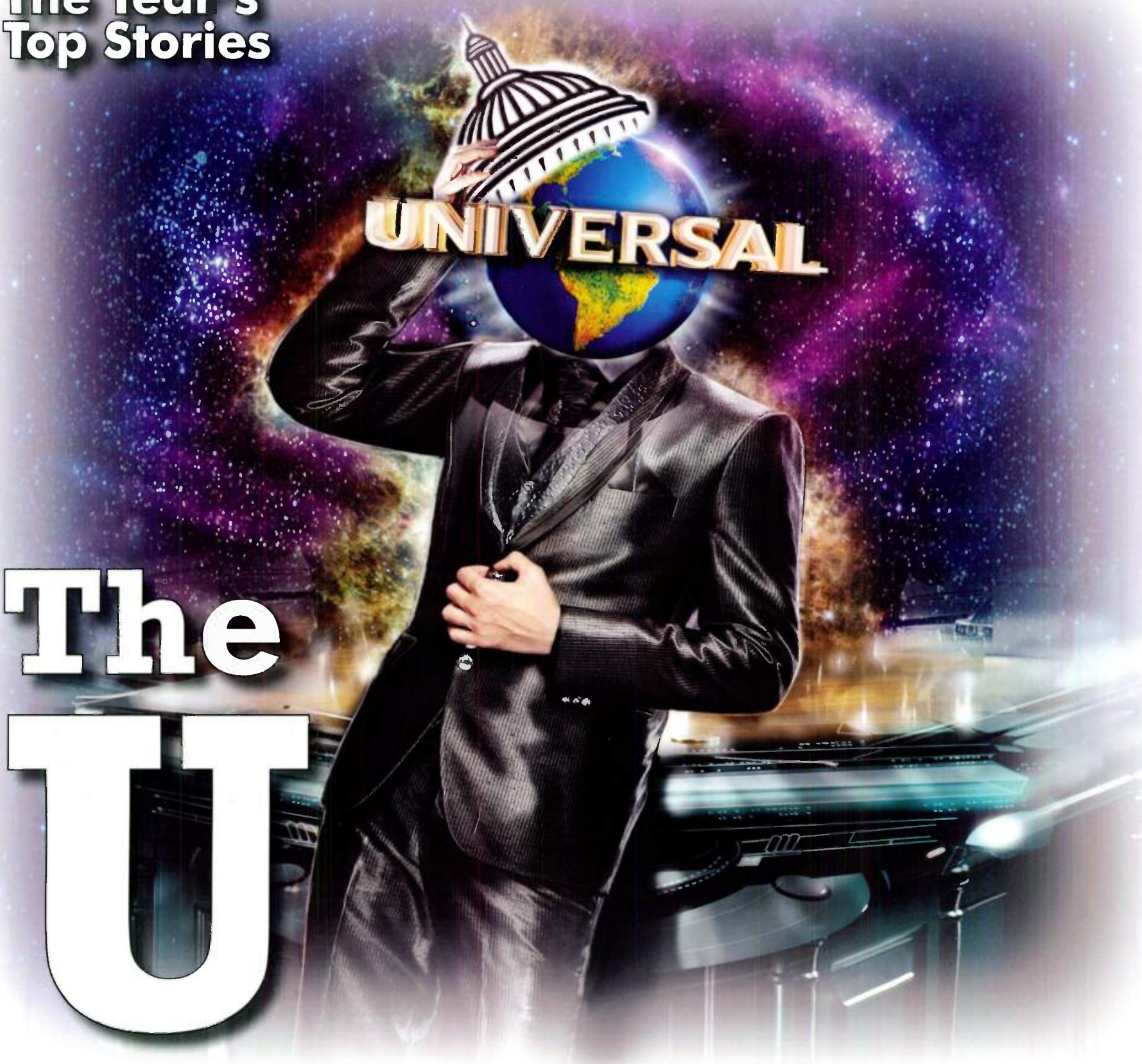
The Year's Top Stories



The U

Citigroup's late 2011 auction of perpetually troubled **EMI Group** to **Universal Music Group** probably sent visions of 40% market share dancing in investors' heads. Unfortunately for them, it also stoked a few European Commission nightmares and led to a merger agreement that included sell-offs of significant portions of EMI's international business.

In Nashville, the merger was preceded by the move of **Capitol & EMI Nashville** President/CEO **Mike Dungan** to UMG/Nashville as Chairman/CEO, replacing the long tenured **Luke Lewis**. Months of "when/if" approval speculation ensued until October, when the consummated deal brought the two houses together, if not literally.

Surprising to many, the combined companies retained four imprints – **Capitol**, **EMI Nashville**, **MCA** and **Mercury** – and the departure of roughly a dozen staffers was a shallower cut than was perhaps expected. (Though certainly deep enough for those who left.)

Had the two companies been combined this year, UMGN would have enjoyed 28.33% of Country airplay – more than 8.5 points ahead of the next biggest label group. Could we see a day when one in every three records spun at Country radio is from one company? The notion isn't as far-fetched as it used to be.

Performance Royalty

Countless organizations and lobbyists have trudged up Capitol Hill at the behest of labels, artists and radio hoping to resolve (or not) the hotly debated performance royalty issue. But counting on Congress to break that logjam is about like, uh, counting on Congress to break a logjam.

Instead, the first discernible movement on the issue originated in Nashville as the **Big Machine Label Group** (excluding Republic Nashville) and **Clear Channel Media + Entertainment** reached a deal in which the label group and its artists receive a share of the radio group's terrestrial revenues in exchange for reduced digital royalty rates. The trade-off amounts to a Clear Channel bet that online listening will become a much greater part of its platform and revenue growth.

"This is a big step, but we think this investment is an opportunity worth taking to align our interests in all of our revenue streams and grow digital listening to its full potential with record labels and their artists as our partners," Clear Channel CEO **Bob Pittman** said at the time.

Both companies went on to forge similar deals elsewhere. BMLG partnered with Entercom, while Clear Channel secured similar deals with **Glassnote Entertainment**, home to Mumford & Sons, and classical label **Naxos**.

"We did it with eyes wide open, knowing it would cost more in the short term," CC EVP **Wendy Goldberg** told **Country Aircheck**. "But when you take bold steps, you have to be willing to make the effort and investment."

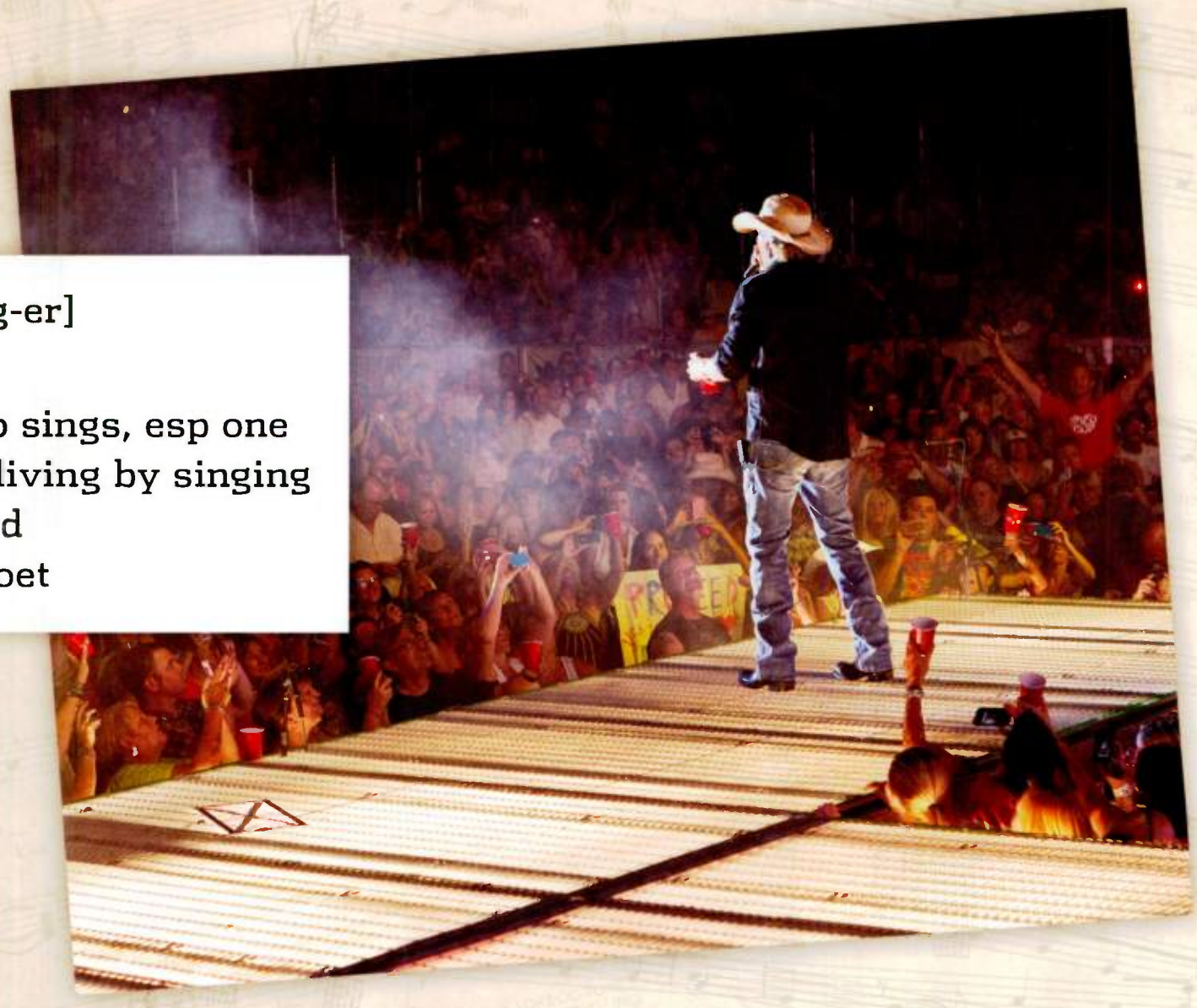
Scott Borchetta — Bob Pittman

Independent Variables

As Universal was consolidating market share and pursuing cost efficiencies, a more centralized major label paradigm continued to be offset by growth from other corners. Certainly in Nashville, Big Machine Label Group and its three imprints carried all the weight of a major and, not to be outdone, **Broken Bow Music Group** launched a third label. In partnership with Sony-owned Red Distribution, **Red Bow** brings another full promotion team into the Country airplay chase.

Also adding an imprint was **Curb**, which launched the secondary-focused **Sidewalk** with its own promo staff. **Zac Brown Band** did their best Toby Keith, bringing promotion under their own umbrella as **Southern Ground**. **RPM Entertainment**, which helped ZBB through its transition, also staffed-up, while **Blaster** brought the **InstiGator** indie team fully in-house. Perhaps the most traditional ground-up label formation was that of **Streamsound**, headed by producer **Byron Gallimore**. Thankfully, for the genre and format, the continuing diversity of companies making and marketing country is reflected in the successful diversity of the music itself.

TOBY KEITH



sing·er[1] [sing-er]

— *noun*

1. a person who sings, esp one who earns a living by singing
2. a singing bird
3. a word for poet

- Over 37 million albums sold
- 30 # 1 hits as a singer
- Billboard & ACA Artist of the Decade
- 12 consecutive headlining tours, entertaining over 1 million fans per tour
- The Ford Truck Man for 12 years
- 15 Toby Keith's I Love This Bar & Grill Restaurants

And now his next big hit, "Hope On The

THE DEFINITION OF
SINGER-SONGWRITER

song·writ·er [sawng-rahy-ter, song-]
— *noun*
a person who writes the words
or music, or both, for popular songs.

- Toby has written 24 #1 hits (8 as the solo writer)
- Billboard & NSAI Songwriter of the Decade
- 3 time BMI Songwriter of the Year
- 2 time NSAI Songwriter of the Year
- "Should've Been A Cowboy" was the most performed song of the 90's at country radio
- 55 separate BMI Million-Air Awards & 13 BMI standard songs

Rocks," written by Toby Keith

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The Year's Top Stories

A Red Letter Day

Lifting the playbook for Taylor Swift's record-setting *Red* album launch is fairly simple. First, secure an uncommonly gifted and hard-working international superstar. Then, go nuts. In all seriousness, the first task isn't quite so easy, and the second wasn't quite so random. But with a million-debuting foundation in Swift's last album *Speak Now*, the Big Machine and 13 Management teams were well-poised to execute a history-making game plan.

Radio and radio listeners were, of course, critical components. A month before the Oct. 22 release, Swift began a series of four consecutive weekly *Good Morning America* appearances to preview a song from the album, culminating in a live performance Oct. 23. There and at other media stops – *Late Show With David Letterman* and the *Ellen DeGeneres Show* among them – radio contest winners were in the audience.

A sweeping radio campaign was anchored by Clear Channel's Artist Integration program, with four formats blasting debut single "We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together" for 24 hours. Release day featured an on-demand iHeartRadio Album Release Party hosted by Ryan Seacrest. A "24-hour Dream Life" contest to join Swift on tour aired on the group's Top 40 stations, with a similar experience expected to be offered through Country stations.

Multiple groups and nations were represented at a two-day radio remote in Nashville, as Big Machine brought in 72 stations from locales as diverse as Norfolk and New Zealand. Exclusives and tie-ins with Target, Walgreens and Papa John's helped spread the word and the multi-tiered effort paid off in 1.2 million first-week sales (Nielsen SoundScan). The number was the highest one-week figure in a decade (2002's *The Eminem Show*) and made her the first female artist to crest the mark twice. Simply stunning.

Channel Cats

Music City's influence on mainstream television reached new levels in 2012 as the major networks echoed earlier eras in which country stars were television personalities, as well. But where *Barbara Mandrell And The Mandrell Sisters* (1980-1982), *The Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour* (1969-1972) and *The Johnny Cash Show* (1969-1971) followed the variety format, modern fare offers much more, well, variety.

Particularly at **ABC-TV**, home to the *CMA Awards*, the additions of *Nashville* and *Malibu Country* – a 60-minute drama and sitcom, respectively – have given country, or the idea of it, more time in prime time. At **NBC-TV**, **Blake Shelton**-led *The Voice* has championed a ratings resurgence.

Not to be outdone, **FOX-TV** enlisted **Keith Urban** to revitalize the *American Idol* judges panel. Other offerings included performance competition shows featuring **Jennifer Nettles** and **John Rich**. All this reality may just beg the question, how real can country get? "I'm a *Real Housewives* fan, so I'm thinking it's time for a *Nashville Housewives* show," says Little Big Town's **Karen Fairchild**. "Maybe Tim and Faith?"

But We Play Them On TV: *Nashville*'s Connie Britton, Hayden Panettiere and Kimberly Williams-Paisley at November's CMAs.

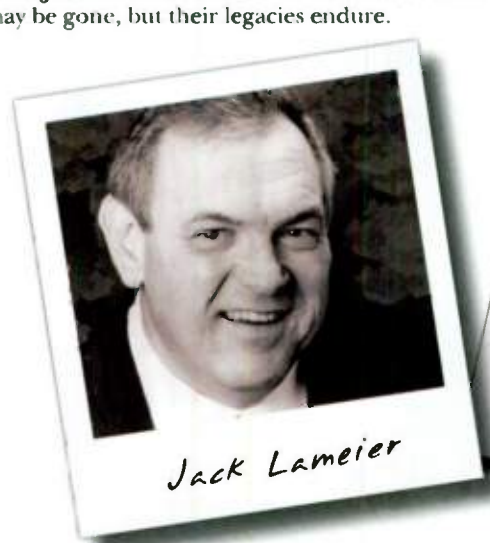
In Memoriam

Put simply, our industry lost giants this year. Country Radio Hall-of-Famer **Rusty Walker**, promotion great **Jack Lameier** and entertainment icon **Dick Clark** may be gone, but their legacies endure.

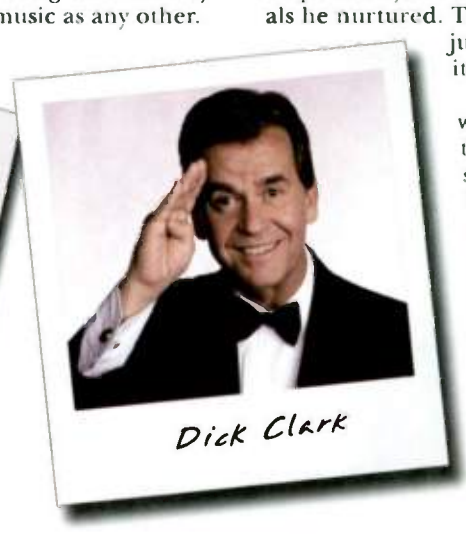
"Music is the soundtrack to your life," said the man who, for millions, was its deejay. Just as *American Bandstand* and *Dick Clark's Rockin' New Year's Eve* came to embody American culture, the *Academy of Country Music Awards* Clark helped create did immeasurable good in communicating that Country music was as much America's music as any other.

If Nashville's record community ever felt like a real family, it was quite possibly the work of Lameier. For 40 years, he shaped the industry as a music promoter, ACM luminary and friend. The list of artists whose careers he shepherded is only surpassed by the collection of industry professionals he nurtured. Turns out "Jack's Place" wasn't just a chart-night watering hole ... it was a corner in our hearts.

Similarly, Walker's influence will continue to be felt through the people he mentored as stories of spectacular station launches, his unapologetic passion for radio and his consistent guidance carry his memory forward. As much as any other single person, Rusty shaped modern Country radio. Like the others he joins in posterity, Rusty was an embodiment of something truly grand. They, and those listed below, are all missed. **CAC**


Jack Lameier

Rusty Walker


Dick Clark

Bill Bailey
Rick Blackburn
Jefferey Bonds
Evan Bridwell
Larry Butler
Ken "KC" Carlile
Susanna Clark
Charlie Collins
Craig Cornett
Jan Crutchfield
Blake Dalton
Dane Daniel
James Delmonico
Al DeLory
David Dziedzic
Dusty Edwards
John Garabo
Tad Griffin
Tony "Hammer" Hamilton
Donna Hilley
Ray Houser
Greg Jessen
Tim Johnson
Homer Joy
Gina Lacky
Charlie Lamb
Al Brady Law
"Miss Rita" Lee
Al Leighton
Charlene Lewis
George Lindsay
Jim London
David McKee
Dan McKinnon
Bob Michaels
Danny Morrison
Cois "Pee Wee" Moultrie
Chris Neal
Geoff Neauhoff
Barbara Orbison
Richard Quillen
Tom "Cat" Reeder
Jayne Rogovin
Austin Ryggs
Earl Scruggs
Dale Sommers
"The Reverend" Joe South
Dan "Bee" Spears
Brian Strobel
Arthel Lane "Doc" Watson
Patti Wheeler

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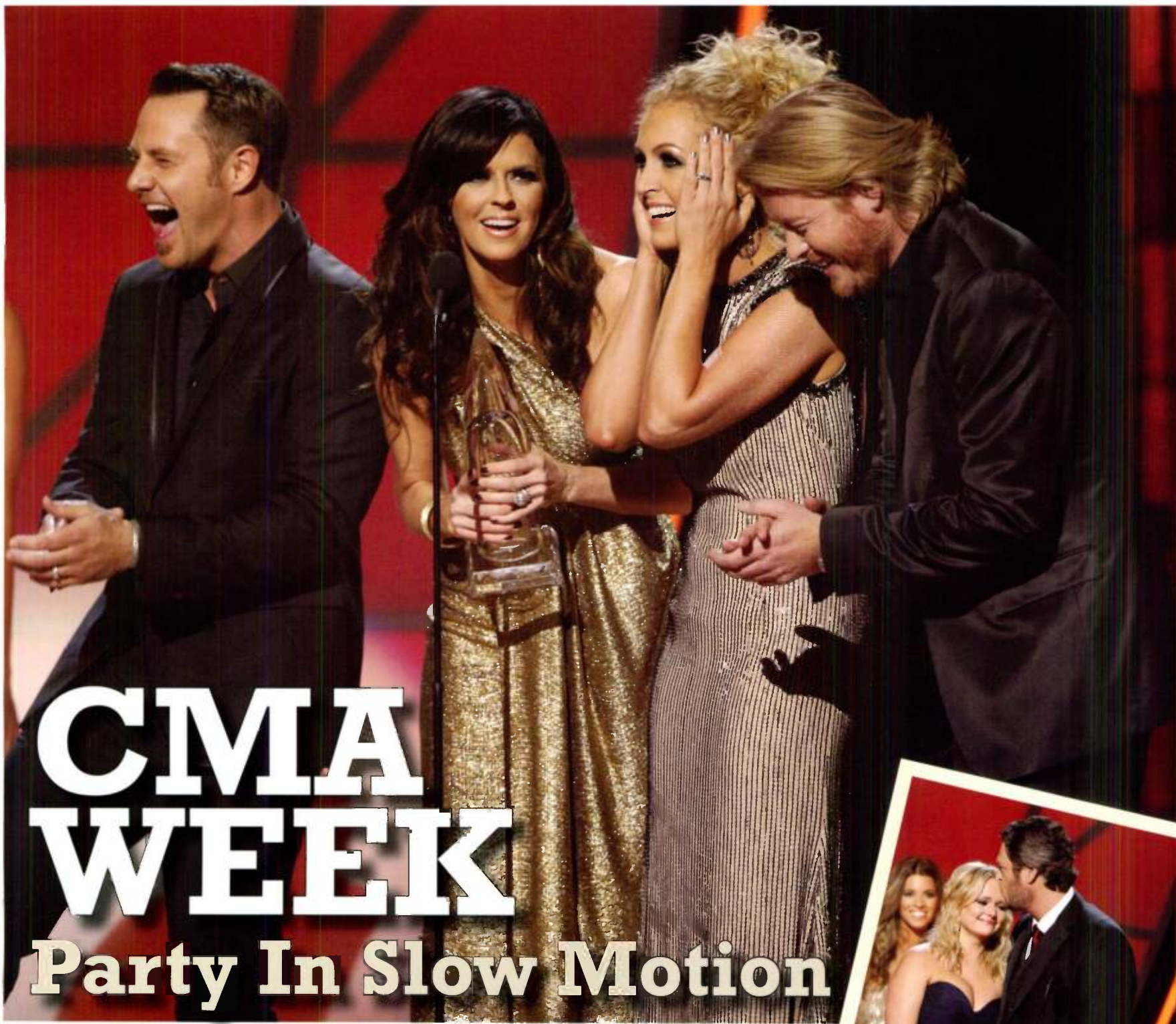
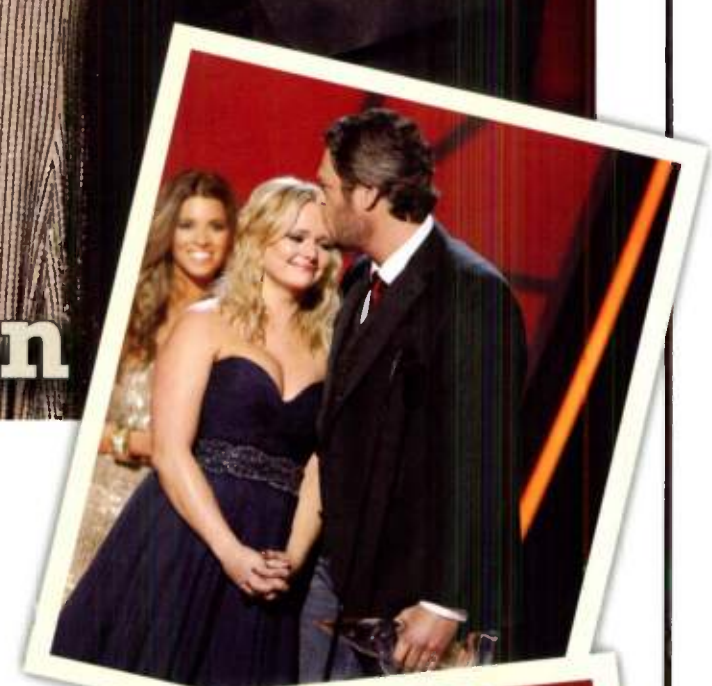
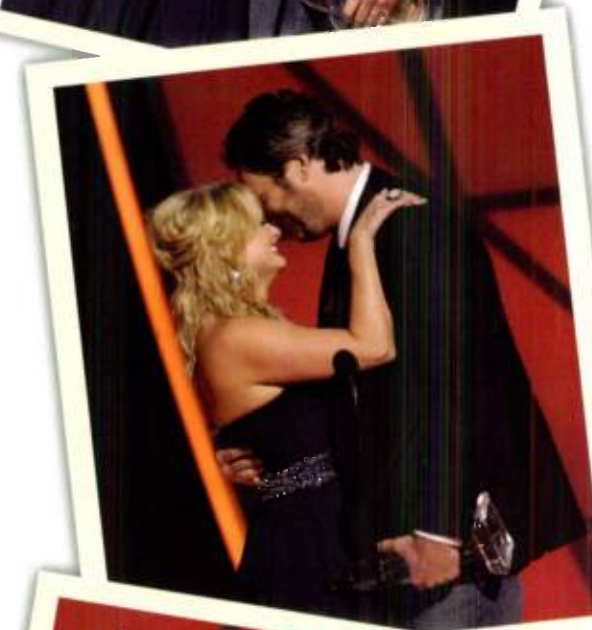


CMA WEEK

Party In Slow Motion

Time stopped for Little Big Town and other winners at the *46th Annual CMA Awards* last month in Nashville. On the ensuing pages, Country Aircheck offers its annual stop-motion photo journal and asks this year's Broadcast winners about their experience. Ready, set ... freeze-frame!





Honey-Do Kiss: The first husband-and-wife Duo of the Year, Shawna & Keifer Thompson (left), share a moment onstage.

Special K-Pop: Hosts Brad Paisley and Carrie Underwood (above) rock it "Gingham Style."

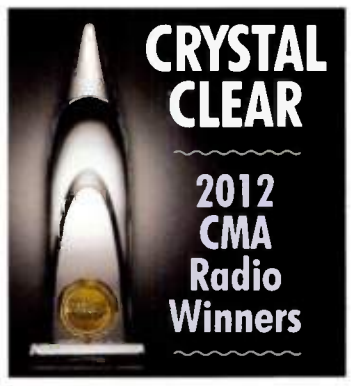
Over Joyed: Miranda Lambert and Blake Shelton (right) accept Song of the Year for "Over You."

CMA WEEK

Would Somehow Form A Family: The newly merged UMG/Nashville bunch (above) mingles at the after-party. Pictured (l-r) are Scotty McCreery, Canaan Smith, Walker Hayes, Jimi Westbrook, Kristian Bush, Eric Paslay, Keith Urban, Phillip Sweet, Dierks Bentley, Karen Fairchild, John Pardi, UMG Distribution's Jim Urie, Darius Rucker, Kimberly Schlapman, Eric Church, Lauren Alaina, Kelleigh Bannen, UMGN's Mike Dungan, Dave Haywood, Hillary Scott, Kacey Musgraves, Charles Kelley, Josh Turner, Luke Bryan, Randy Montana, John Osborne (Brothers Osborne), Drake White, Mallary Hope, TJ Osborne (Brothers Osborne) and David Nail.

Complete Pass: Reba hands Blake Shelton the Entertainer of the Year trophy.

Paris, Tennessee: Taylor Swift's performance.



WKLB/Boston

Major Market Station

"I went through absolute disbelief for about 48 hours," PD **Mike Brophey** says. "This is something somebody else wins. But I knew in my heart our submission was good and our ratings – especially over the past couple years – were great. Being nominated made sense, but to get the nod? I was dumbfounded; it's more exciting and gratifying than I ever expected it to be.

"We feel very proud for the team. Most of us have been with WKLB a long time. Greater Media Chairman Peter Smythe was in Paris at the time, but he called our house he was so excited.

Mike Brophey

"Facebook activity during the awards show was nuts. We posted a couple of pictures from the pre-show; then some people posted the screen shots of me with the award on TV. We had more than 900 likes almost immediately.

"When you listen to this format you can't be bored from title to title. It's just stellar. I've always said if I could just get people to try us, I've got you converted. Boston moves an enormous amount of concert tickets and downloads, and WKLB delivers great TSL. That's reality; it's not just a good PPM panel.

"This justifies everything we've been doing for 20 years. At the same time, I really feel the listeners in our corner. They were so supportive and excited that their radio station was legitimized. And our company has stuck with this format for two decades; to bring this home to Greater Media was really neat."

WUBE/Cincinnati

Large Market Station

Grover Collins

"This award could never have been accomplished without the work of so many people," says PD **Grover Collins**. "I have a staff that is so professional; they've been doing this a long time. They all know great radio and I'm honored to work with them. Promotions always make sure our clients are happy and served well; our jocks take tremendous care in preparing breaks and trying different ways to be compelling and entertaining. And I thank Nashville for providing a great collection of music – it's the best it's ever been.

"Including our wins in 1998 and 2009, this is our third CMA station award. I've been a part of winning before, when [morning host] Chris Carr won Personality in 2011. It's a natural high and you start to have flashes of everything you did as a station that culminated in the presentation submitted to the CMA.

"I found out during a meeting. I got a message from Chris, who had just gotten the call from Brad Paisley. That's when you go into that tunnel vision. We screamed and ran down the hall. We high-fived. We hugged.

"My wife and I drove to Nashville Halloween day, went to the Hard Rock Broken Bow party and hung out with Randy Houser. Then we checked out the Tim McGraw show. It was really cool to watch my wife. She does middays on our Top 40 sister station and this is not anything she's used to. She was a complete and utter fan and had the time of her life."

WIVK/Knoxville

Medium Market Station

"It would be easy to say that because the station won awards in the past, the staff was was a little jaded on this one, but the reality was they were more excited this time because of what they've gone through this past year," says PD **Bob Raleigh**. "Some folks suggested that the station wasn't what it once was and proving them wrong brought an extra sense of satisfaction.

"I'm most proud of this award because of the incredible team I'm blessed with. These guys are the most dedicated, most passionate and most professional I've ever been blessed to be around. I'm really just grateful they let me hang out with them! I'm not just trying to be humble or cliché, I truly mean that. I didn't win this award, they did.

Bob Raleigh

"Everyone here is involved in at least one or two charities and entrenched in the community. That really sets the station apart. I'm not taking away anything from Country, but we could probably play polka and still do extremely well. It's as much about what goes on between the songs as it is anything else.

"Right after they flashed me on screen, I did receive a lot of emails and text messages – even some from people I hadn't heard from in a while. I joked that I was hoping they'd offer me a TV series, but it didn't work out."

If you could compare life to a day at the amusement park, I feel that my first guitar was a ticket to get in, and I've been in line to ride the big roller coaster ever since. Now, being on this radio tour, it feels like the bar just locked and the ride is about to take off. Thank you for this opportunity!

Charlie

"One of the most talented artists I have seen at a radio tour stop in my entire career."

– Shelly Easton, WXTU Philadelphia

"Not all artist visits are created equal. I told everyone in the room after Charlie played that they probably should remember today's date, because they got to see a star before everyone else did. Bring listeners in, bring the office in, if corporate's in town, bring them in. This kid's a star."

– Gregg Swedberg, KEEY Minneapolis

"Charlie Worsham brings the complete package to country radio, mind-blowing instrumentation, heartfelt songwriting and a uniquely pure country sound."

– Tim Roberts, WYCD Detroit

"Wow! Charlie's going to have a long career in Country music & I'm excited to get in on the ground floor."

– Kerry Wolfe, WMIL Milwaukee

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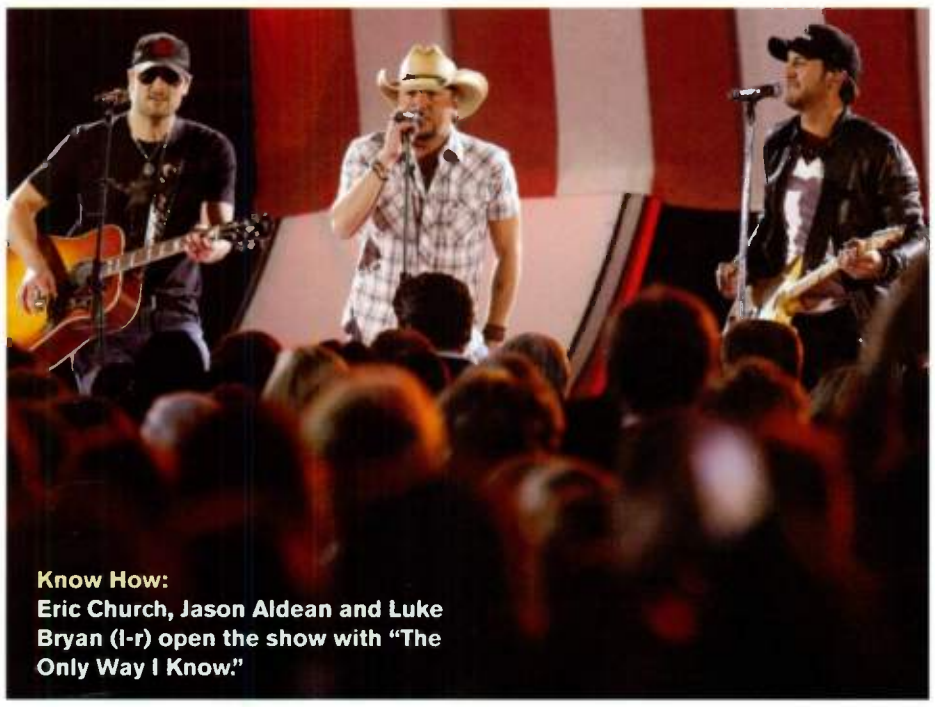
IMPACTING JANUARY 14

W.A.R. Promotion: Chris Palmer (VP), Jordan Pettit (Nat. Dir.), Ray Vaughn (SW), Lindsay Walleman (MW/NE), Raffaella Braun (WC), Tom Martens (SE)

Curtain Call: The Sony/Nashville throng celebrates after the awards. Pictured are (l-r, top) Casey James, Kix Brooks, Jerrod Niemann, Tyler Farr, Bush Hawg (Shaun Ames, Alex Wilshire, Craig Hand, Ben Helton, Russ Caldwell), Chris Young, Bush Hawg's Jim Phipps, Sony/Nashville's Angie Magill, RCA's Keith Gale, Sony/Nashville's Caryl Healey, Columbia's Norbert Nix, and Love And Theft's Eric Gunderson and Stephen Barker Lyles; (bottom, l-r) Sony/Nashville's Mike Craft, Arista's Lesly Tyson, Joanna Smith, Kelly Clarkson, Kenny Chesney, Miranda Lambert, Sony/Nashville's Gary Overton, Angie Johnson, The Henningsens (Aaron, Clara and Brian), Kristen Kelly, and Sony/Nashville's Paul Barnabee, Lisa Ramsey-Perkins and Jim Catino.



Know How: Eric Church, Jason Aldean and Luke Bryan (l-r) open the show with "The Only Way I Know."

Medal Workers: Songwriter of the Year Catt Gravitt and Song of the Year writer Jon Stone ("A Woman Like You") are cheered at SESAC's annual awards gathering. Pictured (l-r) are SESAC's Tim Fink, Gravitt, Stone and SESAC's Pat Collins and Trevor Gale.

Two For Team: CMA Duo of the Year Thompson Square and team revel following their big win. Pictured are (l-r, bottom) BBR Management's Shawn Pennington, Stoney Creek's Abi Durham, Keifer Thompson, Magic Mustang writer Westin Davis; (l-r, top) BBR's Jen Joe, Stoney Creek's Heather Propper and Samantha Borenstein, Shawna Thompson, New Voice's Tully Kennedy and David Fanning; (rear) Stoney Creek's Chris Loss.

WUSY/Chattanooga

Small Market Station

Gator Harrison

"We didn't get the call that we'd won until late in the day and we were all a wreck," says PD **Gator Harrison**. "Nothing had been announced; no other nominated stations were Facebooking their win, but it was 5 o'clock, so what the crap? That's when Dex & Mo got the call from Brad Paisley, who told us we'd won not only Station of the Year, but that Dex & Mo had won Personalities of the Year. We pulled everyone we could into the studio to play it back for our listeners and the 'congratulations' calls began to pour in. Eric Church joined us for a celebratory dinner and we got to watch him record his live album right here in Chattanooga that night. It was unforgettable.

"The CMAs were the same way. Note to self: don't sit behind Big Kenny and his hat! The most beautiful view at the CMA Awards was sitting right beside me, though, with my wife Tennille, daughter Roman and mom Sondra. All three women in my life were able to be there and share it with me.

"The WUSY family continually gives of itself to spread the gospel of country and community. It's got nothing to do with national recognition, but belief in the power of radio to impact people positively. These guys are my family and I'm blessed to wear the station shield with them."

Donna Valentine, Mike Mussman
K102 Wakeup Crew, KEEY/Minneapolis

Major Market Personalities

DV: When Lee Brice announced the names of all CMA Radio finalists, he completely butchered our names. Sure enough, during CMA week we drop into Loser's on Music Row and who do we run into? Lee, of course. He felt really bad and decided he needed to buy us some shots.

Mike Mussman and Donna Valentine

MM: Four apology shots later, he still couldn't pronounce our names!

DV: And I still have the headache.

MM: We've been nominated before and the station has won, but this was a first for us. We got a heads up that winners would be called at 8am. By 8:45, Donna and I are vowing to never enter again. But a few minutes later Brad Paisley called. Right away there's elation, then we get brought right back down when my Dad asked what the award was for; he had no idea.

DV: It was an exciting whirlwind trip. I got home, looked at the award, got choked up and all I could think was, "What just happened?" Muss' mom wasn't here to see this. My dad isn't here and I know he was concerned about me when I moved away in my early twenties.

MM: I ended up taking my trophy home and put it on a table where some knick-knacks already are. My daughter says its perfect for holding her scrunchies. I asked my wife if we could put it in the bedroom, but she said, "You didn't win the award there."

Randy Carroll, Jamie Martin
KJ & Friends, KAJA/San Antonio

Large Market Personalities

Randy Carroll and Jamie Martin

RC: I've been at KJ 29 years. Until the last few years we were never really encouraged to submit an entry. I credit PD Travis Moon for pushing us. I guess I haven't really focused on what my peers thought about me. It's ultimately about what San Antonio listeners like and care about.

JM: While in Nashville, we got to experience the Tim McGraw showcase on Halloween night and, boy, that was a night to remember. Everybody is used to seeing Tim perform in stadiums and there he is on this little stage five feet away. We saw Faith Hill standing backstage dressed down with her hair in a ponytail; it was a great party all around.

RC: If you're a fan – and that's what we are – it's awesome. After we did the show Friday (11/2) we went to breakfast at Noshville deli and Reba and Narvel came in after doing Good Morning America. Can you imagine how freaked out any normal country fan would be if she just walked in like that?

JM: My CMA trophy is on top of a buffet in the kitchen; I had to put it up really high so my little boys (5 and 6 years old) won't knock it down.

RC: Mine is in my truck right now – only because I hosted Great Day SA on channel 5 today and took it to show on television. It's not glued to the dash or swinging from the rear view mirror. Yet.

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WRH

CMA WEEK

Going Our Way? The Warner Music Nashville crew hitches a ride to Partytown following the CMA Awards.

Gotta Hand It To Him: Willie Nelson is honored with the CMA Lifetime Achievement Award, which is now named in his honor. Pictured (l-r) are Nelson, Faith Hill, Tim McGraw and Keith Urban.

Partners In Rhyme: SiriusXM receives ASCAP's Partners In Music honor during the PRO's annual CMA week gathering. Pictured (l-r) are Lady A's Charles Kelley, ASCAP's Vincent Candilora, Sirius XM's Charlie Monk and John Marks, and Lady A's Dave Haywood.

Iconography: Tom T. Hall is honored as BMI's Icon during the organization's annual Country Awards. Pictured (l-r) are BMI's Jody Williams, publisher Tom Collins, Hall, and BMI's Del Bryant and Clay Bradley.

Roger Todd, Melissa Moran, Tom O'Brien
The 97 Country Breakfast Club, WPCV/Lakeland, FL
Medium Market Personalities

Roger Todd, Melissa Moran and Tom O'Brien

MM: We actually thought it was a big joke when Brad called, because we know what a big prankster he is. But, of course, it was super exciting.
RT: And getting to see the Tim McGraw show that week was fabulous, too. He accidentally spit on Melissa, she was so close.
MM: He did not!
RT: And she hasn't washed her face since we got back. We were that close! Now we're sending all three awards out with Tom every morning and charging a quarter a touch.
TO: It's cost me about $5,000 so far!
RT: Tom just can't keep his hands off 'em.
TO: People connect with country artists and with us, I think, because we're real people living real life with them.
RT: We just have fun and try to make a difference. Times are tough with jobs, people being downsized, and trying to raise a family. If we can just put a smile on their face every morning and help people in the community, it's a win-win for everybody. To get an award for it? You can't beat that.

Bill Poindexter and Melissa Turner

Bill Poindexter, Melissa Turner
Dex & Mo, WUSY/Chattanooga
Small Market Personalities

BP: Seriously, when I was a kid, I'd sit in the bathtub and talk into the bar of soap like it was a microphone! My dream when I started in country music 40 years ago was to one day just see a show at the Grand Ole Opry, so this has just been incredible.
MT: And this award is the listeners' award as much as it ours, and we let them know it. Our Facebook page was insane the night of the awards show and I must've answered hundreds of people congratulating us.
BP: It means a lot because when we started on the air together, this was really Mo's first full-time on-air job. I've taken great pride in her achievements in the last five years and she's become as good as anyone I've ever seen.
MT: I can't say as a child that I always wanted to be on the radio, but my family would tell you that I don't mind talking a lot and being in the spotlight. One of the reasons Dex and I work is that we're able to play off our differences; the fact that I'm younger and he's an old guy.
BP: Oh, with this old guy thing!
MT: It just works!
BP: People like "Big" John Anthony, David Earl Hughes, Clay Hunnicutt, Sammy George, John Hart and Greg Mozingo set a standard for this station in the community years ago. I'd love to take credit, but this goes back a long way.

Lon Helton
Country Countdown USA, Dial Global
National Personality

"This has been quite a year for talent booker **Jo Pincek Hunt**, producer/writer **George Achaves** and me, with National Personality awards from both the ACM and the CMA as we celebrate our 20th anniversary," Helton says. "It's especially rewarding because the three of us have been together from the beginning.

Lon Helton

"There is nothing quite like going through CMA week as a broadcast award winner. The sense of pride is overwhelming, but my favorite part is still the 45-minute photo session with all the broadcast winners just before the TV show. Many folks are meeting for the first time and instantly sharing a very special bond. It's made even more special by having family members there to share in the thrill.

"Jo, George and I are grateful and deeply humbled to have been honored six times with this award. My sincerest thanks to all the programmers who have put CCUSA on their airwaves, and to all of the artists who have carved so much precious time out of their schedules to give me a hand countin' down the hits. Thank you all." **CAC**

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LABEL OF THE YEAR

Capitol RECORDS NASHVILLE

Those chants of "four more years!" coming from the Capitol have nothing to do with politics as the label celebrates its fourth consecutive chart share victory. With 14.5% of all Country airplay in 2012, according to Mediabase, Capitol Nashville has orchestrated another textbook campaign. All great success, however, comes with great scrutiny. So as Country Aircheck turned to radio for their thoughts on the Capitol cabinet, we also found a few skeletons in their closets. Spin it!

2012 TOP 10 LABELS

1 Capitol 14.50%
2 RCA 10.30%
3 Republic Nashville 7.20%
4 MCA 6.90%
5 Big Machine 6.80%
6 Broken Bow 5.60%
7 Curb 5.40%
8 Arista 5.00%
9 WMN 4.90%
10 Valory 4.80%

2012 TOP 5 GROUPS

Sony Music Nashville 19.70%
Capitol/EMI Nashville 18.83%
Big Machine Label Group 18.81%
Universal Music Group 9.50%
Warner Music Nashville 9.30%

Sr. VP Steve Hodges

"The best thing about the Capitol bunch, from [Chairman] Mike Dungan on down, is it's always been about whoever has the best idea and then working together," says Clear Channel EVP/Programming **Clay Hunnicutt**. "Steve has always been fair and a great partner. He always really supports their established artists, of course, but where I've seen the most passion is when they're trying to break new artists.

"He's always done a great job of introducing them, even before they have music, in some cases. Whether it's playing cornhole with Luke Bryan in Steve's backyard, playing golf with Eric Church or having cheeseburgers with Kelleigh Bannen, he represents them well.

"He's also got a bit of a nickname. We were members of the same golf club for years and played a lot of rounds of golf together. He used to have a temper issue and we called him 'Hodgie' because he's broken four or five clubs on the course out of frustration."

VP Shane Allen

"Shane has always been the consummate professional, but he can let loose and have fun at the same time," says KSON/San Diego APD/MD **Brooks O'Brian**. "And he totally fights for his artists – it's not just a job for him. He's one of those with whom you can agree to disagree, but he'll continue to provide information and research trying to bring you around. Most important, he understands the importance of the relationship between radio, records and artists. He's always looking for that win-win.

"And then there's the fun side of Shane, which takes me to CRS a few years back at about 1am. I'm with a friend walking down the hill to the Hilton Suites. We're exhausted, done and ready to call it a night. And here comes Shane marching up the hill with a line of people behind him. Single file. He stops us and is like, 'Oh, no. You're not going anywhere. You're getting on the Shane Train.' Sure enough, we fell in line and ended up at the Bridge Bar and another venue after that. It's all kind of fuzzy. But I do remember cursing his name the next morning in whatever panel I was at."

Southeast regional Bobby Young

"Bobby is incredibly passionate about music," says WSKJ/Mobile PD **Bill Black**. "Reason being–as we have discussed many times–is he keeps having more children. His motivation to keep Capitol as the most successful label is mainly about having to work until he's 97 just to keep them in diapers. The guy is a baby-making machine. He's got grown kids and some little ones – I think he's up to 37 kids at this point. So he's got that extra commitment, otherwise he won't be able to send them to college ... or reform school.

"Bobby has been my rep through a couple of labels and I've known him a good 10 years or so. A lot of Capitol's success has to do with their ability to find talent and really persevere. They don't have a lot of overnight successes at that label, when you look at Luke Bryan, Eric Church and others. That team stuck it out for six or seven years or more on several of those artists before they finally had that big connect. And they continue to do that year-in and year-out."

Southwest regional John Trapane

"A couple of years ago [KFDI/Wichita MD] **Carol Hughes** and I were working with John on an Eric Church promotion," says Journal VP/Programming **Beverlee Brannigan**. "Carol was on the air and I was eating lunch at a Subway. We were texting back and forth, and I texted her a question about the promotion, referencing John Trapane. The auto-correct function on my phone turned Trapane into 'Propane.' Say no more, since that day John has always been Propane to us!"

"He's even that way in my phone." Hughes adds. "That's all I call him! One thing I particularly love about Propane is that he is as into the music as I am. My favorite conversations with him are when we get time to just talk about music – all music. He's great to work with and has become a great friend, too."

West Coast regional Paige Elliot

"Before she was even at the label, we did a Lady A show and the band's videographer/photographer Adam Boatman lost the pictures from the meet-and-greet," says KRTY/San Jose GM **Nate Deaton**. "So a week before their next show in town, Shane Allen calls and says, 'Let's mess with Paige. You and Adam should have a huge altercation right in front of her.'

"The night of the show, we're in the meet-and-greet room with the tour manager, Adam, the band and a few other people when someone goes, 'Paige Alert!' After she walked in, Adam comes up to me with his hand out and I'm like, 'What the hell are you doing here? I don't want you taking pictures! I can't believe you're still employed!' Paige turned five shades of red. "She's says, 'He's just kidding' and tries to calm Adam down, who's like, 'I don't have to take this stuff from you!' I'm yelling at him ... he's threatening to call security. And Charles [Kelley] is trying so hard not to laugh – we'd told the band about the prank at dinner the night before. Finally, Adam goes, 'I've had it. Either get this guy out of here or find somebody else to take pictures!' Paige is trying desperately to bring him back going, 'He's just messing with you.' And he goes, 'No, we're messing with you, and you can thank Shane Allen!' The band was howling, but I think Paige got Shane back later by telling him she was pregnant with John Pardi's baby."

Midwest regional Brent Jones

"He's a good guy, but I mess with him a lot," says WBCT/Grand Rapids PD **Dave Taft**. "He once sent an email asking if I wanted some 'win it before you can buy it' copies. I told him the email came through all scrambled like it was coded and asked him to resend. This went on for about three emails before he finally called and left a message asking the same thing. I called him back and told him his message was all garbled and he should have his IT person look into it. There must be something wrong with his phone lines. He was getting upset because he couldn't figure out why I couldn't see or hear his messages. It took a bit before he caught on.

"There's also the time Shane Allen and I made Brent sing Taylor Swift's 'Fifteen' at a Grand Rapids karaoke bar to get a song played. The kicker was I had five weeks to add it! There's video of that somewhere. He's not a very good singer."

Northeast regional Diane Lockner

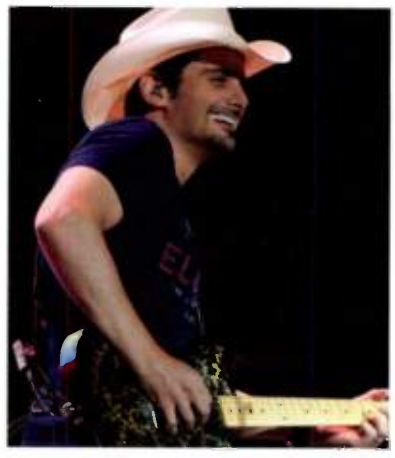
"Capitol has always had some of the best regionals in the business ... and ones that can take a joke," says Townsquare/Northern Colorado OM **George King**. "Back in the mid 2000s, I was new at WMZQ/Washington and was to meet my new rep Diane at a Nissan Pavilion show. Since we hadn't met, she had no idea what I looked like. She was running late and called to say she would meet me backstage. I was standing there with a couple of other regionals when a car came flying through the backstage parking area. One of them said, 'There's Diane.'

"My twisted mind went into action. I ran up the car, acted like I was working for the venue and proceeded to tell her she couldn't park there and had to move. She was already late, in a panic and started arguing with me, demanding to park and showing her all access pass. But I politely insisted none of that mattered and she had to leave the area immediately. In a huff, she started to get back in her car incredibly frustrated and mad ... until I introduced myself. I think she still holds a grudge, but she has always been one of the best reps I've worked with." **CAC**

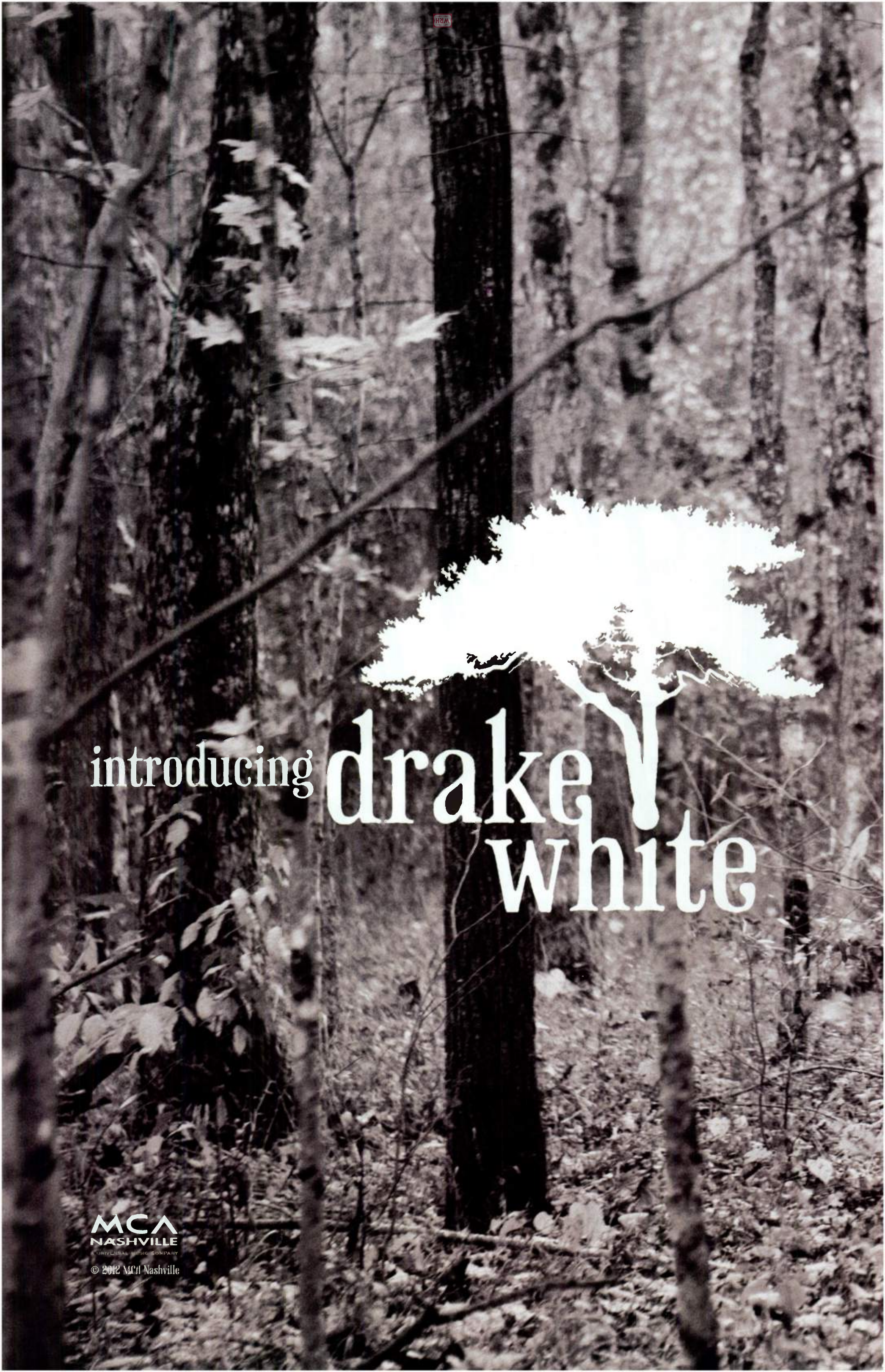
TOP 100 OF 2012

THE YEAR IN MUSIC

1	ERIC CHURCH	Springsteen	EMI Nashville
2	BRANTLEY GILBERT	You Don't Know Her Like I Do	Valory
3	JOSH TURNER	Time Is Love	MCA
4	KIP MOORE	Somethin' 'Bout A Truck	MCA
5	ELI YOUNG BAND	Even If It Breaks Your Heart	Republic Nashville
6	LUKE BRYAN	Drunk On You	Capitol
7	GLORIANA	(Kissed You) Good Night	Emblem/W.A.R.
8	JANA KRAMER	Why Ya Wanna	Elektra Nashville/W.A.R.
9	LEE BRICE	A Woman Like You	Curb
10	RASCAL FLATTS	Banjo	Big Machine
11	BLAKE SHELTON	Drink On It	Warner Bros./WMN
12	JASON ALDEAN	Fly Over States	Broken Bow
13	LOVE AND THEFT	Angel Eyes	RCA
14	DUSTIN LYNCH	Cowboys And Angels	Broken Bow
15	JAKE OWEN	Alone With You	RCA
16	TIM MCGRAW	Better Than I Used To Be	Curb
17	MIRANDA LAMBERT	Over You	RCA
18	ZAC BROWN BAND	No Hurry	So. Ground/Atlantic/BPG
19	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	Good Girl	19/Arista
20	LADY ANTEBELLUM	Dancin' Away With My Heart	Capitol
21	KEITH URBAN	You Gonna Fly	Capitol
22	KENNY CHESNEY	Come Over	Blue Chair/Columbia
23	CHRIS YOUNG	You	RCA
24	LUKE BRYAN	I Don't Want This Night To End	Capitol
25	HUNTER HAYES	Wanted	Atlantic/WMN
26	EASTON CORBIN	Lovin' You Is Fun	Mercury
27	DIERKS BENTLEY	5-1-5-0	Capitol
28	TAYLOR SWIFT	Ours	Big Machine
29	DIERKS BENTLEY	Home	Capitol
30	BLAKE SHELTON	Over	Warner Bros./WMN
31	ERIC CHURCH	Drink In My Hand	EMI Nashville
32	THE BAND PERRY	Postcard From Paris	Republic Nashville
33	KENNY CHESNEY	Reality	BNA
34	GEORGE STRAIT	Love's Gonna Make It Alright	MCA
35	KEITH URBAN	For You	Relativity/Capitol
36	MONTGOMERY GENTRY	Where I Come From	Average Joes
37	LITTLE BIG TOWN	Pontoon	Capitol
38	THE BAND PERRY	All Your Life	Republic Nashville
39	ZAC BROWN BAND	Keep Me In Mind	So. Ground/Atlantic/BPG
40	LEE BRICE	Hard To Love	Curb
41	TOBY KEITH	Beers Ago	Show Dog-Universal
42	JASON ALDEAN	Take A Little Ride	Broken Bow
43	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	Blown Away	19/Arista
44	MIRANDA LAMBERT	Fastest Girl In Town	RCA
45	JASON ALDEAN	Tattoos On This Town	Broken Bow
46	RASCAL FLATTS	Come Wake Me Up	Big Machine
47	JAKE OWEN	The One That Got Away	RCA
48	CHRIS CAGLE	Got My Country On	Bigger Picture
49	CRAIG MORGAN	This Ole Boy	Black River
50	TIM MCGRAW	Truck Yeah	Big Machine
51	LUKE BRYAN	Kiss Tomorrow Goodbye	Capitol
52	DAVID NAIL	Let It Rain	MCA
53	JUSTIN MOORE	'Til My Last Day	Valory
54	LADY ANTEBELLUM	We Owned The Night	Capitol
55	THOMPSON SQUARE	Glass	Stoney Creek
56	MARTINA MCBRIDE	I'm Gonna Love You Through It	Republic Nashville
57	GREG BATES	Did It For The Girl	Republic Nashville
58	JERROD NIEMANN	Shinin' On Me	Sea Gayle/Arista
59	BRANTLEY GILBERT	Country Must Be Country...	Valory
60	THOMAS RHETT	Something To Do With...	Valory
61	BIG & RICH	That's Why I Pray	Warner Bros./W.A.R.
62	ELI YOUNG BAND	Crazy Girl	Republic Nashville
63	THE FARM	Home Sweet Home	All In/Elektra/New Revolution
64	TOBY KEITH	Red Solo Cup	Show Dog-Universal
65	ZAC BROWN BAND	The Wind	Atlantic/So. Ground
66	KIP MOORE	Beer Money	MCA
67	ERIC CHURCH	Creepin'	EMI Nashville
68	TAYLOR SWIFT	Sparks Fly	Big Machine
69	MIRANDA LAMBERT	Baggage Claim	RCA
70	FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE	Cruise	Republic Nashville
71	RANDY HOUSER	How Country Feels	Stoney Creek
72	KENNY CHESNEY/T. MCGRAW	Feel Like A Rock Star	Blue Chair/Columbia
73	TOBY KEITH	I Like Girls That Drink Beer	Show Dog-Universal
74	CHRIS YOUNG	Neon	RCA
75	LADY ANTEBELLUM	Wanted You More	Capitol
76	CASEY JAMES	Crying On A Suitcase	19/Columbia
77	HUNTER HAYES	Storm Warning	Atlantic/WMN
78	SCOTTY MCCREERY	The Trouble With Girls	19/Interscope/Mercury
79	ANDY GIBSON	Wanna Make You Love Me	Curb
80	CASEY JAMES	Let's Don't Call It A Night	19/Columbia
81	ALAN JACKSON	So You Don't Have To Love...	ACR/EMI Nashville
82	JON PARDI	Missin' You Crazy	Capitol
83	RODNEY ATKINS	He's Mine	Curb
84	RASCAL FLATTS	Easy	Big Machine
85	KELLY CLARKSON	Mr. Know It All	19/RCA
86	KRISTEN KELLY	Ex-Old Man	Arista
87	EDENS EDGE	Too Good To Be True	Big Machine
88	KENNY CHESNEY	El Cerrito Place	Blue Chair/Columbia
89	JUSTIN MOORE	Bait A Hook	Valory
90	JOSH THOMPSON	Comin' Around	RCA
91	TAYLOR SWIFT	We Are Never Ever Getting...	Big Machine
92	BRAD PAISLEY	Southern Comfort Zone	Arista
93	DARIUS RUCKER	True Believers	Capitol
94	BRAD PAISLEY	Camouflage	Arista
95	PHIL VASSAR	Don't Miss Your Life	Rodeowave
96	ZAC BROWN BAND	Goodbye In Her Eyes	Atlantic/So. Ground
97	DIERKS BENTLEY	Tip It On Back	Capitol
98	THOMPSON SQUARE	I Got You	Stoney Creek
99	KIX BROOKS F/JOE WALSH	New To This Town	Arista
100	RONNIE DUNN	Let The Cowboy Rock	Arista



Happy Holidays
Thank You Country Radio For Making
SONY MUSIC NASHVILLE
The №1 Label Group Again in 2012!
SONY MUSIC
ARISTA NASHVILLE
COLUMBIA NASHVILLE
RCA RECORDS LABEL NASHVILLE


introducing drake white
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NASHVILLE
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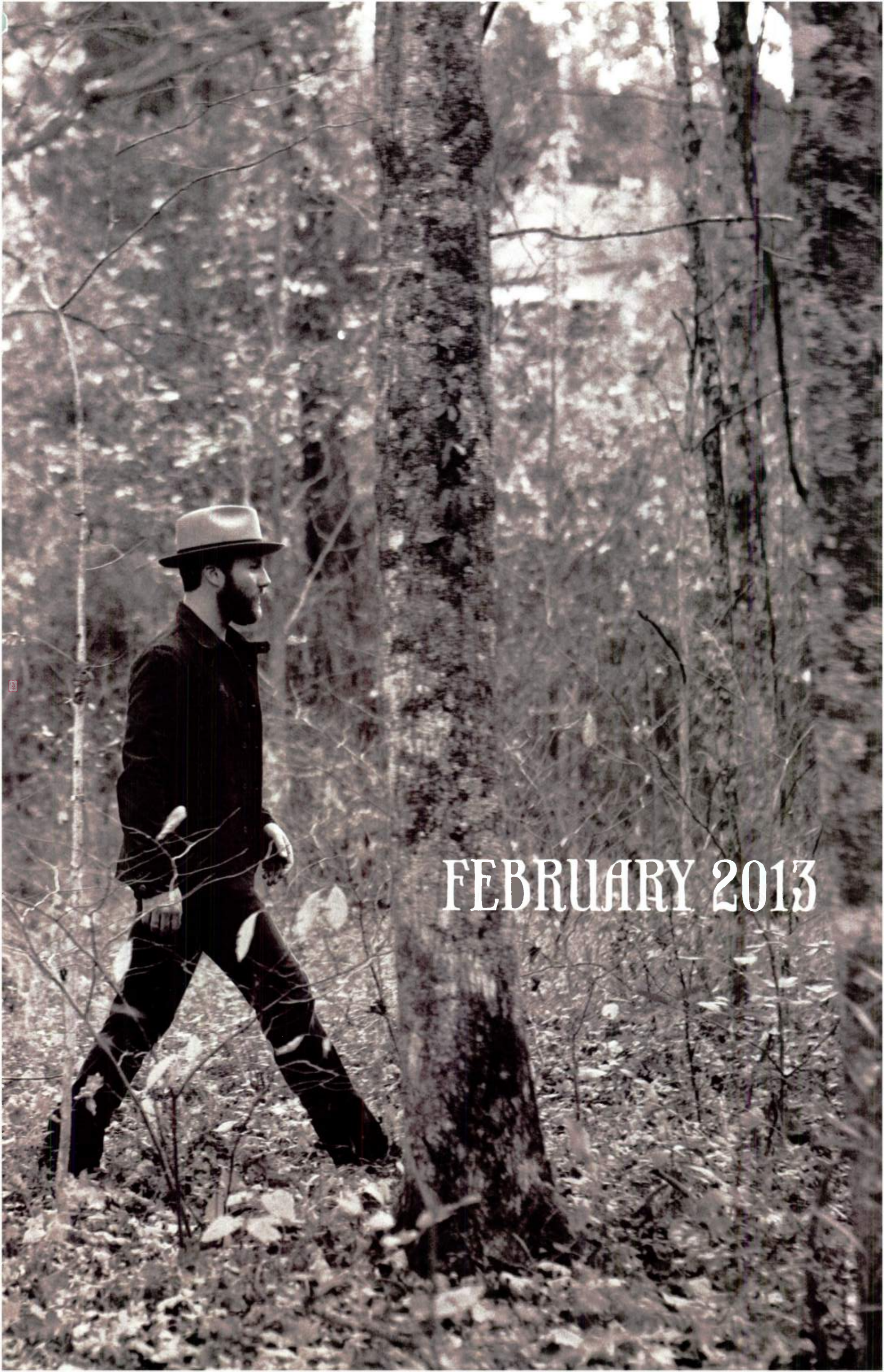
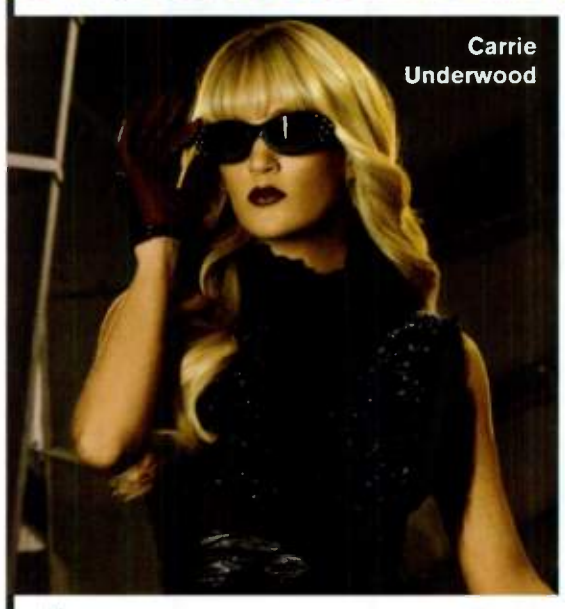

FEBRUARY 2013

TOP 15s OF 2012

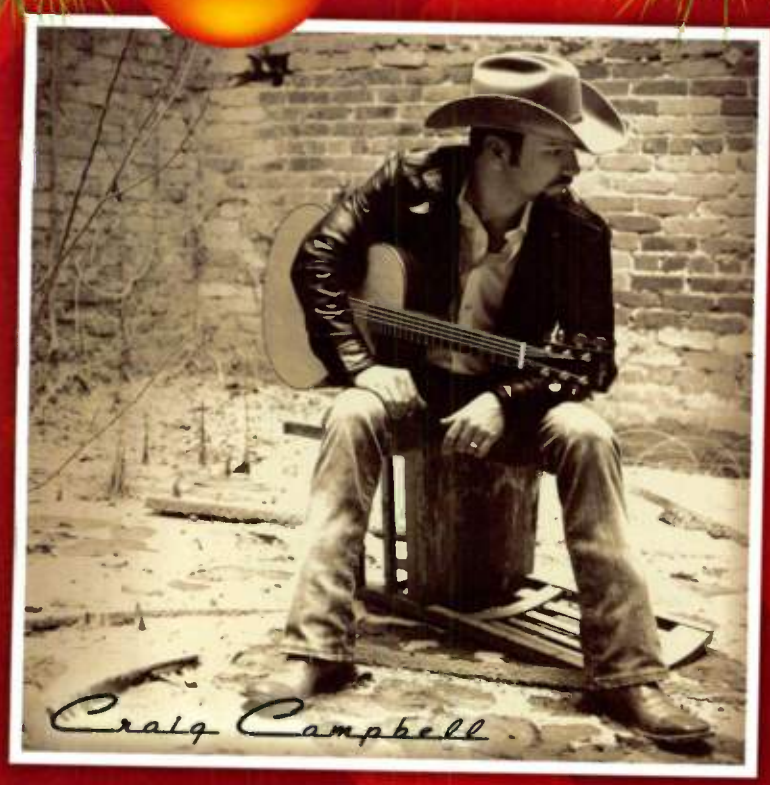
Jason Aldean

Zac Brown Band

Kip Moore


Carrie Underwood

	Artist	Title	Label	Peak Position (wks. at No.1)	Peak Date	Wks. on Chart	2012 Rank
A	JASON ALDEAN	Tattoos On This Town	Broken Bow	1 (1)	11/28/11	8	45
	JASON ALDEAN	Fly Over States	Broken Bow	1 (1)	5/14/12	17	12
	JASON ALDEAN	Take A Little Ride	Broken Bow	1 (2)	10/8/12	14	42
B	THE BAND PERRY	All Your Life	Republic Nashville	1 (1)	2/13/12	15	38
	THE BAND PERRY	Postcard From Paris	Republic Nashville	5	8/6/12	24	32
	GREG BATES	Did It For The Girl	Republic Nashville	10	11/12/12	29	57
	DIERKS BENTLEY	Home	Capitol	1 (1)	3/12/12	19	29
	DIERKS BENTLEY	5-1-5-0	Capitol	1 (1)	7/23/12	18	27
	BIG & RICH	That's Why I Pray	Warner Bros./W.A.R.	15	9/4/12	18	61
	LEE BRICE	A Woman Like You	Curb	1 (1)	4/9/12	23	9
	LEE BRICE	Hard To Love	Curb	1 (1)	10/29/12	26	40
	LUKE BRYAN	I Don't Want This Night To End	Capitol	1 (2)	1/30/12	13	24
	LUKE BRYAN	Drunk On You	Capitol	1 (2)	7/2/12	21	6
	LUKE BRYAN	Kiss Tomorrow Goodbye	Capitol	1 (2)	11/12/12	15	51
C	CHRIS CAGLE	Got My Country On	Bigger Picture	12	5/21/12	28	48
	KENNY CHESNEY	Reality	BNA	1 (1)	3/5/12	18	33
	KENNY CHESNEY	Come Over	Blue Chair/Columbia	1 (2)	8/6/12	14	22
	KENNY CHESNEY	El Cerrito Place	Blue Chair/Columbia	14	11/12/12	9	88
	KENNY CHESNEY & TIM MCGRAW	Feel Like A Rock Star	Blue Chair/Columbia	10	5/14/12	8	72
	ERIC CHURCH	Drink In My Hand	EMI Nashville	1 (1)	1/17/12	11	31
	ERIC CHURCH	Springsteen	EMI Nashville	1 (2)	6/18/12	21	1
	ERIC CHURCH	Creepin'	EMI Nashville	11	11/12/12	18	67
	EASTON CORBIN	Lovin' You Is Fun	Mercury	4	10/29/12	37	26
E	ELI YOUNG BAND	Crazy Girl	Republic Nashville	2	11/21/11	2	62
	ELI YOUNG BAND	Even If It Breaks Your Heart	Republic Nashville	1 (1)	7/16/12	28	5
F	FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE	Cruise	Republic Nashville	5	11/12/12	14	70
G	BRANTLEY GILBERT	Country Must Be Country Wide	Valory	1 (1)	11/21/11	3	59
	BRANTLEY GILBERT	You Don't Know Her Like I Do	Valory	1 (1)	7/9/12	33	2
	GLORIANA	(Kissed You) Good Night	Emblem/W.A.R.	2	8/13/12	41	7
H	HUNTER HAYES	Storm Warning	Atlantic/WMN	12	2/6/12	14	77
	HUNTER HAYES	Wanted	Atlantic/WMN	1 (2)	9/24/12	30	25
	RANDY HOUSER	How Country Feels	Stoney Creek	15	11/12/12	24	71
K	TOBY KEITH	Red Solo Cup	Show Dog-Universal	8	2/6/12	14	64
	TOBY KEITH	Beers Ago	Show Dog-Universal	6	7/23/12	19	41
	JANA KRAMER	Why Ya Wanna	Elektra Nashville/W.A.R.	3	10/1/12	40	8
L	LADY ANTEBELLUM	We Owned The Night	Capitol	1 (1)	12/5/11	7	54
	LADY ANTEBELLUM	Dancin' Away With My Heart	Capitol	2	4/30/12	22	20
	MIRANDA LAMBERT	Baggage Claim	RCA	2	11/28/11	4	69
	MIRANDA LAMBERT	Over You	RCA	1 (1)	5/7/12	21	17
	MIRANDA LAMBERT	Fastest Girl In Town	RCA	3	11/12/12	23	44
	LITTLE BIG TOWN	Pontoon	Capitol	1 (2)	9/10/12	19	37
	LOVE AND THEFT	Angel Eyes	RCA	1 (1)	8/13/12	40	13
	DUSTIN LYNCH	Cowboys And Angels	Broken Bow	2	10/15/12	40	14
M	MARTINA MCBRIDE	I'm Gonna Love You Through It	Republic Nashville	4	2/27/12	17	56
	SCOTTY MCCREERY	The Trouble With Girls	19/Interscope/Mercury	15	3/5/12	18	78
	TIM MCGRAW	Better Than I Used To Be	Curb	5	6/18/12	28	16
	TIM MCGRAW	Truck Yeah	Big Machine	10	10/15/12	17	50
	MONTGOMERY GENTRY	Where I Come From	Average Joes	8	4/2/12	21	36
	JUSTIN MOORE	Bait A Hook	Valory	15	1/30/12	13	89
	JUSTIN MOORE	'Til My Last Day	Valory	9	11/12/12	33	53
	KIP MOORE	Somethin' 'Bout A Truck	MCA	1 (2)	5/29/12	30	4
	KIP MOORE	Beer Money	MCA	7	11/12/12	19	66
	CRAIG MORGAN	This Ole Boy	Black River	13	5/21/12	29	49
N	DAVID NAIL	Let It Rain	MCA	1 (1)	1/9/12	10	52
	JERROD NIEMANN	One More Drinkin' Song	Sea Gayle/Arista	15	11/21/11	2	--
O	JAKE OWEN	Alone With You	RCA	1 (1)	4/2/12	22	15
	JAKE OWEN	The One That Got Away	RCA	2	11/12/12	25	47
P	BRAD PAISLEY	Camouflage	Arista	14	1/30/12	13	94
	BRAD PAISLEY	Southern Comfort Zone	Arista	13	11/12/12	8	92
R	RASCAL FLATTS	Banjo	Big Machine	1 (1)	4/30/12	18	10
	RASCAL FLATTS	Come Wake Me Up	Big Machine	6	11/12/12	25	46
	RASCAL FLATTS	Easy	Big Machine	4	12/12/11	8	84
	THOMAS RHETT	Something To Do With My Hands	Valory	15	7/9/12	26	60
S	BLAKE SHELTON	Drink On It	Warner Bros./WMN	1 (2)	4/23/12	19	11
	BLAKE SHELTON	Over	Warner Bros./WMN	1 (2)	8/27/12	18	30
	GEORGE STRAIT	Love's Gonna Make It Alright	MCA	1 (1)	3/19/12	20	34
	TAYLOR SWIFT	Sparks Fly	Big Machine	4	11/21/11	2	68
	TAYLOR SWIFT	Ours	Big Machine	1 (1)	3/26/12	19	28
T	THOMPSON SQUARE	Glass	Stoney Creek	15	8/6/12	28	55
	THOMPSON SQUARE	I Got You	Stoney Creek	6	12/5/12	7	98
	JOSH TURNER	Time Is Love	MCA	2	9/17/12	38	3
U	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	Good Girl	19/Arista	1 (1)	6/4/12	17	19
	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	Blown Away	19/Arista	1 (2)	10/22/12	18	43
	KEITH URBAN	You Gonna Fly	Capitol	1 (2)	2/27/12	17	21
	KEITH URBAN	For You	Relativity/Capitol	6	9/10/12	23	35
Y	CHRIS YOUNG	You	RCA	1 (1)	2/6/12	14	23
Z	ZAC BROWN BAND	Keep Me In Mind	Atlantic/Southern Ground/Bigger Picture	1 (2)	12/12/11	9	39
	ZAC BROWN BAND	No Hurry	Atlantic/Southern Ground/Bigger Picture	2	6/4/12	20	18
	ZAC BROWN BAND	The Wind	Atlantic/Southern Ground/Bigger Picture	10	9/4/12	15	65
	ZAC BROWN BAND	Goodbye In Her Eyes	Atlantic/Southern Ground	12	11/12/12	7	96



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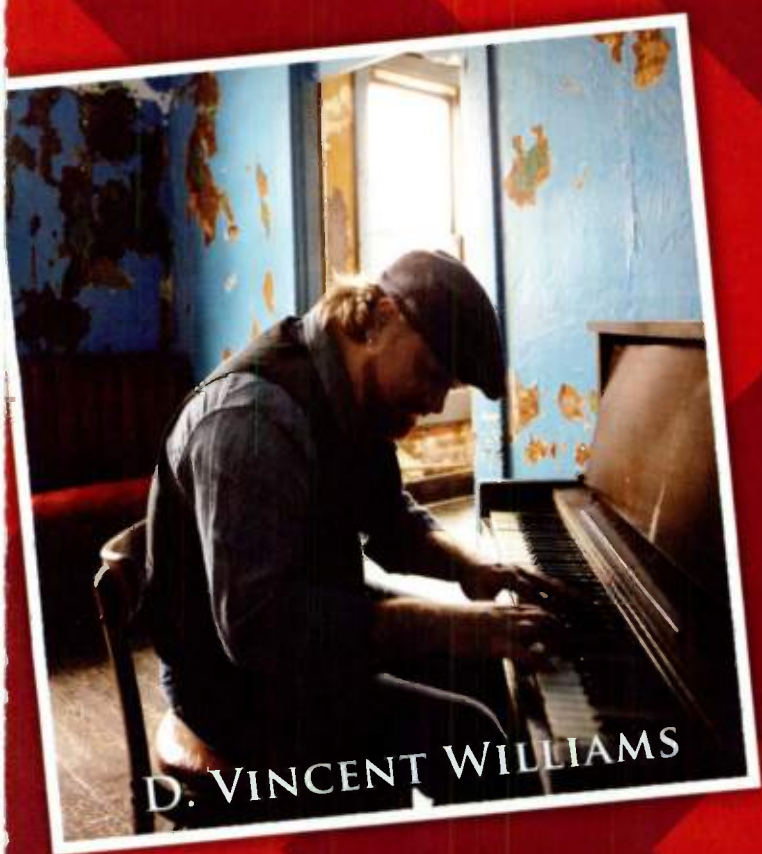

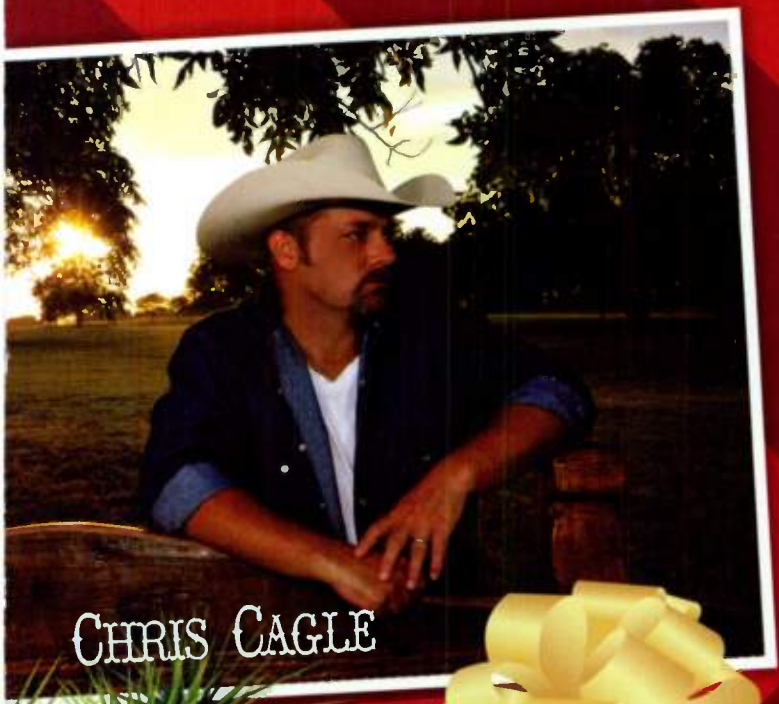

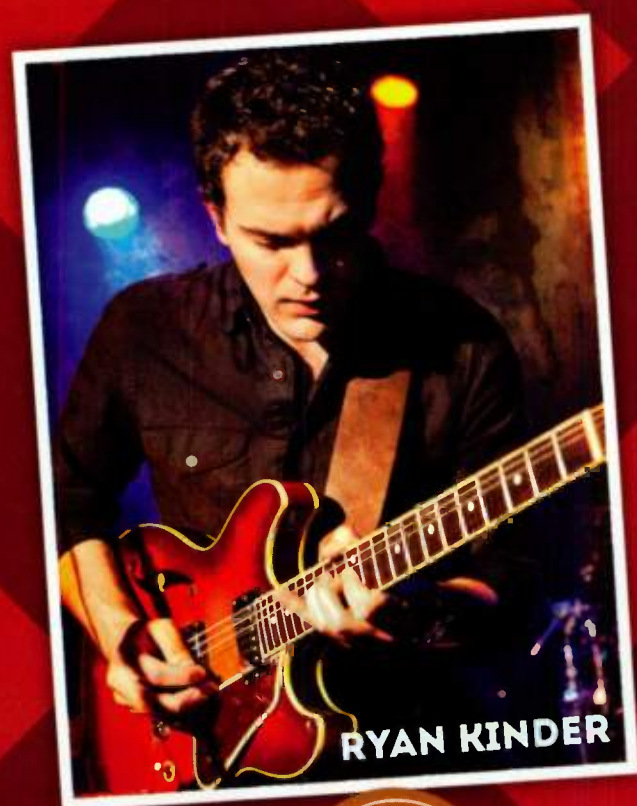

Happy Holidays From Everyone At Bigger Picture!

BIG MACHINE

#1 BILL

BIG MACHINE LABEL Country Album
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Duo/Group of 2012 **TIM MCGRAW** #7 Count
2012 #2 Billboard Hot Country Songs - You Don't Kn ... rt
Country Aircheck Duo/Group of 2012 **ELI YOUNG BAND** #4 Co ... p of
Country Aircheck New Artist of 2012 **GREG BATES** #7 Country Airchec ... of 2012 E

THIS IS HOW WE

LABEL GROUP

BOARD TOP COUNTRY LABEL

s Label #2 Billboard Top Country Imprint **BIG MACHINE** #5 Country Aircheck Label of 2012 #2
t Country Songs **REPUBLIC NASHVILLE** #3 Country Aircheck Label of 2012 #3 Billboard Hot
Digital Song – WANEGBT #1 Billboard Top Country Album – Red #1 Billboard Top Country Artist
Male Artist of 2012 **EDENS EDGE** #9 Country Aircheck New Artist of 2012 **BRANTLEY GILBERT**
r Like I Do **JUSTIN MOORE** Certified Gold Album **THOMAS RHETT** #5 Country Aircheck New
Country Aircheck Duo/ rd Hot Country Songs - Even If It Breaks Your
Aircheck New A **ROUP** #1 Billboard Top Country Label
Aircheck La **LORY** #10 Country Aircheck
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BMLG

ROLL!

*Photo credit: Luis Benitez

Luke, Miranda, ZBB and Kip Top 2012 Airplay

Miranda Lambert

THE YEAR IN MUSIC

TOP 15 1st TIMERS

The seven artists who scored Top 15 hits in 2012 for the first time did so with a vengeance – not only did they have hits, they were *huge* hits. In fact, four of our newcomers posted tunes in the year's Top 25. Kip Moore's "Somethin' 'Bout A Truck" is No. 4, Jana Kramer's "Why Ya Wanna" hit No. 8, Dustin Lynch's "Cowboys and Angels" lands at No. 14 and Hunter Hayes' "Wanted" is the No. 25 most-heard song of the year.

These seven acts accounted for nine songs among the 80 that reached the Top 15 in 2012. Hayes and Moore each had a pair of Top 15s and each notched two-week No. 1s. Lynch took his debut single to No. 2 and Kramer hit No. 3, no small feat in this era when women are finding Country airplay difficult to come by. Greg Bates is still cookin' with his debut single, "Did It For The Girl." And Florida Georgia Line's "Cruise" was sitting pretty at No. 1 as this issue went to press. Rounding out the Class of 2012 is Thomas Rhett, who debuted this year with "Something To Do With My Hands" and currently finds his second single ensconced in the Top 20.

GREG BATES
(Republic Nashville)
• • •
FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE
(Republic Nashville)
• • •
HUNTER HAYES
(Atlantic/WMN)
• • •
JANA KRAMER
(Elektra Nashville/W.A.R.)
• • •
DUSTIN LYNCH
(Broken Bow)
• • •
KIP MOORE
(MCA)
• • •
THOMAS RHETT
(Valory)

Luke Bryan dances his way to the top of Country radio's 2012 airplay ball with three chart-topping hits that stayed at No. 1 for six weeks. *Tailgates And Tanlines*, nominated as CMA's Album of the Year, yielded "I Don't Want This Night To End," "Drunk On You" and "Kiss Tomorrow Goodbye," each of which spent two weeks at the top of the charts. "Drunk On You" is 2012's No. 6 song, while "Night" ranks No. 24. The format's top Male MVP as well, Luke waltzed his way to the top spots from his position as last year's No. 9 MVP and No. 7 Male.

Miranda Lambert is this year's Female MVP, moving to the top spot after coming in second to Taylor Swift last year. Lambert also had a trio of hits, including "Over You," the CMA's Song of the Year and a two-week No. 1 hit written by Lambert and husband Blake Shelton. Her current hit "Fastest Girl In Town" presently resides at No. 3 on the chart while "Baggage Claim," a carry over from 2011, hit No. 2 during the 2012 chart year (11/13/11-11/10/12) and contributed to her overall airplay stats. The reigning CMA Female Vocalist of the Year is also the only woman to grace this year's Overall MVP list, placing sixth.

The Duo/Group MVP for the second consecutive year is the **Zac Brown Band,** who also placed as the year's No. 4 Overall MVP. The guys had four songs on the chart this year, including "Keep Me In Mind," which was released in 2011 but spent two weeks at No. 1 in the early part of the 2012 chart year. "No Hurry" hit No. 2 last June while "The Wind" was a Top 10 hit. "Goodbye In Her Eyes" is currently in the Top 10.

Kip Moore parks his pick-up squarely in the top slot as 2012's New Artist MVP on the strength of "Somethin' 'Bout A Truck." That song spent two weeks at No. 1 last spring and is also the No. 4 song of 2012.

The total number of songs charting during the year continues its decline, as a total of 175 songs charted in 2012, down from 196 in 2011 and 2010. And that was off from 204 in '09. In 2008, 194 tunes hit the Top 50, while 190 did it in '07.

Forty-six different artists accounted for 80 Top 15 songs this year, up from 39 acts and 78 songs last year. That compares to 79 in 2010, 84 in '09, 86 in '08 and 77 in '07.

There were 36 No. 1s from 25 different acts; in 2011 there were 37 chart-toppers from 25 artists. Luke Bryan led the way with six weeks at No.1, while his Buck Commander buddy **Jason Aldean**, and the CMA Entertainer of the Year **Blake Shelton**, each chipped-in four weeks at the top. **Carrie Underwood, Kenny Chesney** and **Eric Church** all spent three weeks at No. 1 in 2012.

Men continue to dominate the Country airwaves, although they slipped one percent to 65% of the 2012 airplay. Solo women singers once again accounted for only 13% of Country spins, while Duos/Groups edged up one percent over last year with 22% of all airplay. In 2010 it was 67%, 16% and 17%, respectively.

Luke Bryan

COUNTRY RADIO'S TOP 2012 PERFORMERS

OVERALL

1.	LUKE BRYAN	(Capitol)
2.	ERIC CHURCH	(EMI Nashville)
3.	JASON ALDEAN	(Broken Bow)
4.	ZAC BROWN BAND	(Atlantic/Southern Ground)
5.	KENNY CHESNEY	(Blue Chair/Columbia)
6.	MIRANDA LAMBERT	(RCA)
7.	RASCAL FLATTS	(Big Machine)
8.	DIERKS BENTLEY	(Capitol)
9.	BLAKE SHELTON	(Warner Bros./WMN)
10.	TIM MCGRAW	(Big Machine)

MALE

1.	LUKE BRYAN	(Capitol)
2.	ERIC CHURCH	(EMI Nashville)
3.	JASON ALDEAN	(Broken Bow)
4.	KENNY CHESNEY	(Blue Chair/Columbia)
5.	DIERKS BENTLEY	(Capitol)
6.	BLAKE SHELTON	(Warner Bros./WMN)
7.	TIM MCGRAW	(Big Machine)
8.	LEE BRICE	(Curb)
9.	BRANTLEY GILBERT	(Valory)
10.	KEITH URBAN	(Capitol)

FEMALE

1.	MIRANDA LAMBERT	(RCA)
2.	CARRIE UDERWOOD	(19/Arista)
3.	TAYLOR SWIFT	(Big Machine)
4.	JANA KRAMER	(Elektra Nashville/W.A.R.)
5.	MARTINA MCBRIDE	(Republic Nashville)
6.	KELLY CLARKSON	(19/RCA/Columbia)
7.	KRISTEN KELLY	(Arista)
8.	LAUREN ALAINA	(19/Interscope/Mercury)
9.	MAGGIE ROSE	(RPME)
10.	SARA EVANS	(RCA)

DUO/GROUP

1.	ZAC BROWN BAND	(Atlantic/Southern Ground)
2.	RASCAL FLATTS	(Big Machine)
3.	LADY ANTEBELLUM	(Capitol)
4.	ELI YOUNG BAND	(Republic Nashville)
5.	THE BAND PERRY	(Republic Nashville)
6.	GLORIANA	(Emblem/W.A.R.)
7.	LOVE AND THEFT	(RCA)
8.	LITTLE BIG TOWN	(Capitol)
9.	MONTGOMERY GENTRY	(Average Joes)
10.	THOMPSON SQUARE	(Stoney Creek)

NEW ARTISTS

1.	KIP MOORE	(MCA)
2.	HUNTER HAYES	(Atlantic/WMN)
3.	JANA KRAMER	(Elektra Nashville/W.A.R.)
4.	DUSTIN LYNCH	(Broken Bow)
5.	THOMAS RHETT	(Valory)
6.	CASEY JAMES	(19/Columbia)
7.	GREG BATES	(Republic Nashville)
8.	THE FARM	(WMN)
9.	EDENS EDGE	(Big Machine)
10.	FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE	(Republic Nashville)

Zac Brown Band

Thank You Country Radio For Another Great Year!

- №1 Album Top 200 Multiple Weeks–"Uncaged"
- №1 iTunes Top Country Albums Multiple Weeks–"Uncaged"
- №1 Country Aircheck Duo/Group Of 2012
- №4 Country Aircheck Overall Artists Of 2012
- FOUR Top 10 Singles In 2012
- Over 1.3 Million Albums Sold In 2012
- Over 3.6 Million Tracks Downloaded In 2012
- Performed For Over 1 MILLION Fans In 2012

Southern Ground Artists
ROAR
CAA

"Blackberry" SMOKE

THE NEW SINGLE
PRETTY LITTLE LIE

➢ Available on PlayMPE
January 7, 2013

➢ Add Date
January 28, 2013

★ Headlining House of Blues' 2013 "Ones to Watch" Tour
★ #1 iTunes Top Country Albums
★ "Four out of Four Stars." –Country Weekly

"In a world where so much is fabricated, these guys are about the music." –Eric Church
"Blackberry Smoke is the real deal!" –Dierks Bentley

BLACKBERRYSMOKE.COM

Southern Ground Artists CAA

LEE BRICE

I DRIVE YOUR TRUCK

FOLLOW-UP TO HIS 2 WEEK #1 "HARD TO LOVE"

USA TODAY — "I Drive Your Truck" was handpicked as their track to download on Brice's current HARD 2 LOVE album.

People — "I Drive Your Truck' puts a fresh spin on a three-hankie ballad."

The New York Times — "an electric, overpowering song... Mr. Brice sang it vigorously."

PLATINUM Certification – "Love Like Crazy"
PLATINUM Certification – "A Woman Like You"

CMA — Nominee New Artist of the Year 2012

Billboard — Song of the Year 2011 "CRAZY GIRL"
Song of the Year 2010 "LOVE LIKE CRAZY"

Academy of Country Music — Song of the Year 2012 "CRAZY GIRL"

SESAC — Song of the Year 2012 "A WOMAN LIKE YOU"

Nominated for 3 ACA's
Breakthrough Artist of the Year
Breakthrough Single of the Year and
Song of the Year for "A Woman Like You"

AND NOW, HIS MOST POWERFUL SONG TO DATE!

CURB RECORDS
curb.com

GQ

GENEROUS QUARTER

Labels are ready to show off their designs on radio airplay with a quarter's worth of stylish artists guaranteed to improve listener and programmer lifestyles alike. They've spent months preparing sleek recordings and sharp promo campaigns that work for all occasions. Below, Country Aircheck fashionably follows what's trending.

A-Blake

Recently expanded into Nashville with the hire of VP/Promotion & Acquisitions **David Newmark**, A-Blake will focus initially on **Jason Cassidy** and his single "Blame It On Waylon." Look for it early in 2013.

Arista

The Henningsens, **Brad Paisley**, **Carrie Underwood**, **Jerrod Niemann** and **Kristen Kelly** are sure to keep the A-team busy. VP/Promotion **Lesly Tyson** says, "There is already a very exciting buzz on The Henningsens. Not only are they prolific writers, they are absolutely captivating performers." Debut single "American Beautiful" impacts Dec. 17.

"Brad's 'Southern Comfort Zone' has exploded at radio – another home-run and the first single from his highly anticipated April 2013 release. Carrie spent more weeks at No. 1 than any other female in the format in 2012 and she'll follow-up 'Blown Away' with 'Two Black Cadillacs,' which is already racing up the charts.

"Jerrod will continue to *Free the Music* in the new year with the moving power ballad 'Only God Could Love You More.' He spent almost all of 2012 on the road with Brad, Miranda and Blake, and headlining the Jagermeister tour; be sure to catch him in 2013."

Finally, Kelly will deliver "He Loves To Make Me Cry" and will tour with The Band Perry and Rascal Flatts next year.

Average Joes

A focus on music from **Colt Ford**'s album *Declaration Of Independence*, **Montgomery Gentry**'s single "I'll Keep The Kids," **JB and The Moonshine Band** and the John Rich-produced project from **Gabe Garcia** will open a busy year for AJE.

"JB and The Moonshine Band are a great band out of Texas, and Gabe Garcia has a modern-day 'Strait ahead' country sound," says VP Marketing & Promotions **Tony Morreale**. "We'll also continue to build the fan base of 19-year-old Virginian **JJ Lawhorn** and introduce the **LACs** to new fans and radio friends."

JJ Lawhorn

Big Machine

"Big Machine rolls into the New Year with a record-breaking **Taylor Swift** album," exclaims VP/Promotion & Media Strategy **John Zarling**. "[She'll] be kicking off the New Year from what is truly the center of the media world, Times Square, on ABC's *Rockin' New Year's Eve*. With 'Begin Again' rocketing up the charts, the song will run through Q1; she kicks off her much-anticipated *Red Tour* March 13.

"Tim McGraw's label debut *Two Lanes Of Freedom* will be released Feb. 5 featuring lead single 'Truck Yeah' and his current hit 'One Of Those Nights.' Radio will have the chance to fully engage through flyaways, album giveaways, special programming and more.

"Fresh from a Hollywood Walk of Fame induction and being honored for selling seven-million concert tickets, **Rascal Flatts** ride into 2013 with the new single and title track to their No. 1 album *Changed* and the second leg of their *Changed Tour* with opening act The Band Perry. Their current single will remain a priority throughout Q1, with promotional support coinciding with their new DVD release, *Rascal Flatts Changed: All Access & Uncovered*.

"Big Machine's soundtrack for ABC's hit drama *Nashville* will also remain a

The Henningsens

Generous Quarter

priority for Q1 and beyond. **Hayden Panettiere**'s character **Juliette Barnes** voices the project's official lead single 'Telescope.' Opportunities for radio to engage with the actors will include interviews, promotions, in-market visits and digital content.

"Our commitment to developing new artists continues with the January rollout of **Edens Edge**'s "Swinging Door" from their top 10 self-titled debut. They'll be on the road promoting the single in Q1."

Sweetwater Rain

Bigger Picture

"**Chris Cagle** will continue to climb the chart with his latest hit, 'Let There Be Cowgirls' from his *Back in the Saddle* album," says BPG Artist Joint Ventures President **Michael Powers**. "He's planning a big year of touring and radio visits

"**Craig Campbell**'s second album will be out in March. It is yet to be titled, but will obviously showcase his latest up-tempo hit 'Outta My Head.'

"Bigger Picture will also finish up newcomer **Chris Janson**'s radio tour with the first single in January called 'Better I Don't.' He's tearing it up on radio visits and live shows right now with his unique guitar and harmonica acoustic set."

Black River

"First of all, a huge thank you to Country radio for our Top 15 on **Craig Morgan**'s 'This Ole Boy' earlier this year," says VP/National Promotion **Bill Macky**.

"Come first quarter, we will continue to move 'More Trucks Than Cars' up the charts, and Craig will have some great news about a first-quarter tour.

"**Sarah Darling**'s 'Home To Me' will be moving up the charts next year and will also have a feature role on one of network TV's most popular reality shows in February.

"**Kellie Pickler** heads into the studio in the first quarter to record her debut release for Black River. And we will also be hosting the Friday lunch at CRS, and promise to have some amazing new music and performances at that show. Don't miss it!"

Blaster

VP/Promotions **Gator Michaels** says, "Blaster is taking off in 2013! **Aaron Lewis** has made the best album of the year and the single 'Forever' will take us through the first quarter. In January we'll be introducing **Jared Ashley**, an amazing singer/songwriter who's played hundreds of dates over the last few years."

Lindsey Ell

Broken Bow

BBMG SVP/Promotion **Carson James** says, "**Jason Aldean** will still be rocking after the holidays and we've got many choices for singles to come in the first quarter. There are so many to be drawn to.

"**Dustin Lynch** will be going strong with 'She Cranks My Tractor,' the second single off his No. 1 debut album. This is in-your-face, up-tempo; he'll also be on the Keith Urban tour.

"A brand new **James Wesley** single will go for adds Jan. 21. 'Waking Up The Rooster' is a really fun, tongue-in-cheek party song that we're excited about. He's an official spokesperson for Farm Boy Apparel, too.

"And I can't go without mentioning **Kristy Lee Cook**. 'Airborne Ranger Infantry' is timeless and social media has blown up over it. We may have caught a little brush fire with Veteran's Day. It's a great record that touches people and always gets a reaction."

Capitol

"Capitol will start the new year with highly anticipated new music from *AMA* winners **Lady Antebellum**," says SVPP **Steve Hodges**. "Expect the first single from their fourth Capitol album in early 2013.

"On Jan. 22, **Darius Rucker** releases his third Capitol album *True Believers*. That will be followed by his 2013 headlining tour of the same name. By February, we'll be celebrating **Jon Pardi**'s second single, following up his 2012 hit. 'Missin' You Crazy.' And on the heels of his hit 'Tip It On Back,' early 2013 will also bring us new music from **Dierks Bentley**. Ditto for **Keith Urban**! Of course, Keith will be busy judging *American Idol* in 2013, but you can look for a new album in the summer.

"We'll deliver a second single from Darius; should happen just after CRS. Also in March, look for *AMA* winner **Luke Bryan**'s *Spring Break 5* project, just as it's time for people to head to the beach. Don't forget that his fourth studio album will come later in the year, too. We'll finish Q1 with CMA Group Of The Year **Little Big Town** and their third single from the *Tornado* album."

Cold River

"We saw a record year in terms of CD and ticket sales," says Pres. **Pete O'Heeron.** "With a growing national fan base, **Katie Armiger** has garnered big fan-voted acknowledgements from 'Hottest Bachelorette' and 'Most Beautiful' to a No. 1 video and primetime TV appearance on ABC-TV's *The Bachelor Pad*." New album *Fall In To Me* lands Q1. "Katie poured her heart into this two-year project, writing or co-writing all of the songs. You can find her on tour and coming to your market."

Columbia

Veep **Norbert Nix** says, "Our first quarter will be focused on our commitment to breaking current new artist singles by **Casey James** and **Tyler Farr,** as well as continuing hits from superstars **Kenny Chesney** and **Kelly Clarkson**."

Curb

"We'll be working the new single from **Lee Brice** 'I Drive Your Truck' and will continue with **Rodney Atkins**' 'Just Wanna Rock N Roll,'" says VPP **Adrian Michaels**. "**Sweetwater Rain** will be entering the charts on their debut single 'Starshine,' and the lead single from **LeAnn Rimes'** new CD *Spitfire* will be 'What Have I Done.' We also have quite a few very special projects that are in the studio right now that I am very excited about."

EMI Nashville

"After 'Creepin'' hits the top of the charts, we'll follow-up with the next single from **Eric Church**'s CMA Album of the Year *Chief*," says new promo honcho **Jimmy Rector**. "**Kelleigh Bannen**'s 'Sorry on the Rocks' continues to climb and will take us into the spring. Her infectious energy is hard to ignore and so is her music.

"Also moving through the charts is the **Uncle Kracker** 'tempo feel-good' 'Nobody's Sad On A Saturday Night.' His roots are showing and they are country.

"And toward the end of Q1, we're planning to release **Alan Jackson**'s 35th No. 1 'Dixie Highway.' It's an up-tempo fun duet with the Zac Brown Band and a timeless combination that has already proven itself."

Drake White

Flying Island

"With national television exposure on NBC-TV's *The Voice*, touring with Blake Shelton, debuting at the *Grand Ole Opry*, performing in front of 70,000 fans at LP Field during CMA Music Fest, a tour-filled summer schedule and being named one of *Country Weekly*'s Top 10 Most Beautiful Women, **Gwen Sebastian** gave us a sunny year on the Island," says Dir./National Promotion **Shelia Shipley Biddy**. "She's currently wrapping production on her new album, which will include the powerful single 'Met Him In A Motel Room.'

"The Island is partnering with Wrinkled Records to promote its **BJ Thomas** release *The Living Room Sessions*. The new year will mark his 50th year in the music business, and this new album will feature some amazing collaborations– Richard Marx, Lyle Lovett, Keb Mo, Vince Gill, Steve Tyrell and Sara Niemetz.

"First-quarter also sees the launch of our Classic Country Media Services program. The platform allows legendary artists to expose new projects or music releases by providing audio sound-bites, news, and new music to Classic Country stations and programmers nationwide."

InstiGator

David Haley's InstiGator group will continue its work helping Way Out West launch **LiveWire** and their single "Lies." The cut is from their *Livin'* album.

MCA

UMGN VP/Radio Marketing **Katie Dean** describes newcomer **Drake White** as "an Alabama native who wrote all the songs on his debut album. He spent the fall on tour with David Nail and is so energetic on stage, he actually chipped a tooth while performing.

"**Gary Allan** has his biggest hit in years with 'Every Storm (Runs Out of Rain),' which is expected to peak around the release of his album *Set You Free* in March. **Kip Moore** will have

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a third single from his album *Up All Night* following the peak of his current hit 'Beer Money.' And **George Strait** is back in the studio working on his 28th album. The lead single is 'Give It All We Got Tonight' and the MCA staff is committed to getting 'King' George his 60th No. 1 single before he turns 61 in the spring.

"**Josh Turner**'s follow-up to the top 5 most-played single of the year 'Time Is Love' is the more up-tempo 'Find Me A Baby.' The **Randy Rogers Band** will release their album *Trouble* Feb. 12. The debut single 'One More Sad Song' was the group's highest charting effort to date and the second single 'Fuzzy' is an up-tempo visual right out of the movie *The Hangover*. And finally, **David Nail** is also in the studio. New music expected in the spring."

Mercury

Oh, look. It's Katie again. "**Kacey Musgraves** will release her debut in late Q1 as 'Merry Go 'Round' continues to climb the charts," Dean says. "She'll also be hitting the road with Little Big Town and Kenny Chesney in 2013. **Billy Currington** is working on his next album, with the first single expected at radio after the first of the year. And **Easton Corbin** will follow his top 5 hit 'Lovin' You Is Fun' with the title cut from his latest release *All Over The Road*." Look a January impact date.

Momentum

With promotions headed by The Talent Associates, Momentum will deliver new music from flagship artist **Rachele Lynae**."Her single 'Party Til The Cows Come Home' held position on playlists longer than almost any other independent release in 2012," says TTA CEO **John Ettinger**. "The new album will include more tempo fun, with a nod to Lynae's ability for big vocals, strong melodies and a 'get out on the floor' mentality. Look for the second single, pre-CRS, in February."

Nine North/Turnpike

"First, a very happy, healthy holiday season to you and yours from the Nine North/Turnpike Music artists & team," says Pres. **Larry Pareigis**.

"We're working with Crush Management Nashville's **John Grady** to bring an absolute smash to Country radio: 'Bruises,' from multi-platinum selling band Train singer-songwriter and Pistol Annie **Ashley Monroe**. Airplay has already begun with an official January add date, but with a song this good who's going to wait?

"And we're working with Stonehall Entertainment to carry **Phoenix Stone's** '100 Proof Moonshine' into the new year. So, cups up! Phoenix also kicked some serious [butt] at a recent CMA-week luncheon at Sharla McCoy's *Live From Music Row*.

"New Sun Records' **Crystal Shawanda** was there, too, and reminded everyone why country music needs her back. She's still such a focused, powerful voice, and you can hear it in her hook-laden new single 'Chains.' Here's my promise: Add all the above now and you won't hear from any of us until January!"

Ocala Records

Promotion vet **Mike Borchetta** is touting a new single from **Kelly Parkes**, now on the Ocala label. Parkes fifth single "Good As Me" joins Ocala's first release, the **Wheeler Sisters**' "This Is Gonna Get Ugly." "Kelly is appearing weekly at Tootsies in Nashville," Borchetta says. "Many of the greats have started on that stage." Parkes will also be in Las Vegas for the National Finals Rodeo in December.

RCA

"We will continue into the first quarter with our current singles from **Joanna Smith**, **Chris Young**, and **Love And Theft**, and launch follow-ups from **Miranda Lambert** and **Jake Owen**," says VP/National Promotion **Keith Gale**. There'll also be new music from the **Pistol Annies**. "Plus, at CRS, we'll begin setting up our exciting new band **Bush Hawg**. They're produced by Michael Knox and currently working hard out on the road building a fan base. This was a big year for RCA, and we plan to improve upon it in 2013!"

Bush Hawg

Red Bow

The new Broken Bow Music Group label is aiming for a fast start. "**Rachel Farley**'s self-written debut single 'Ain't Easy' will come first," says BBMG SVP/Promotion **Carson James**. "She's an amazing 17-year-old who writes like she's 30 and sings like she's been doing it forever. I really believe she is unique; unlike any other female artist out there. We'll be setting her up through January with an add date sometime in February.

Rachel Farley

"We're in the song selection process with **Joe Nichols** and should have something shortly," he continues. "The interesting thing with Joe is nobody realizes that he's really sold a bunch of records He's in excellent shape and is singing better than ever."

Republic Nashville

Newly promoted veep **Matthew Hargis** breaks it down: "**The Band Perry**'s debut single 'Better Dig Two' from their highly anticipated sophomore release has already cracked the top 15 and continues as the fastest rising single of the trio's career." The album is scheduled for April and TBP will tour in late winter and spring with Rascal Flatts.

"Hot new country duo **Florida Georgia Line** have a lot to celebrate this holiday season," Hargis continues. "Their debut single 'Cruise' hit No. 1 the same week their debut album *Here's To The Good Times* was released (12/4). FGL are gearing up to hit the road with Luke Bryan on his first headlining tour throughout 2013. Additionally, don't miss them on the CRS New Faces Of Country Music show.

"Nashville native and country newcomer **Greg Bates** has already cracked the top 10 and continues to climb with his debut smash 'Did It For The Girl,'" Hargis says. "Fresh off the 2012 Brantley Gilbert tour, look for Greg's debut album in the spring.

"**Eli Young Band** have had an amazing 2012 on the road with Rascal Flatts, scoring their second No. 1 with 'Even If It Breaks Your Heart.' And now their brand new 'Say Goodnight' has already reached top 30 and continues to climb," Hargis concludes. "In addition to prepping for their 2013 stadium tour with Kenny Chesney, the EYB is currently in the studio working on a brand new album for a summer 2013 release."

Rodeowave

"We will release a new **Phil Vassar** single in early 2013," reports GM **Teddi Bonadies**. "It'll be from the forthcoming *Don't Miss Your Life* album. We'll also continue with the 'Band of Brothers,' Brad, Bryan and Curtis Rempel, the sibling trio **High Valley**. They recently released their debut single and video for 'Love You For A Long Time' and will keep meeting radio nationally.

"And **Miss Willie Brown** are in the studio working on the follow-up single to 'You're All That Matters To Me.' It will be coming in early 2013, ahead of their A&M/Octone album that will be released in the spring."

RPME

"RPME's flagship artist, known affectionately as **Maggie Rose**, is connecting with fans across the country," says SVP **April Rider**. "Her James Stroud-produced and Judson Spence-written debut single 'I Ain't Your Mama' is doing great, and her debut album will drop in early spring."

Show Dog-Universal

"SDU will ring in 2013 with **Toby Keith**'s 'Hope On The Rocks' climbing the charts," asserts VP/Promotion & Radio Marketing **Tom Baldrica**. "In the words of the man himself, 'If I were invited to perform at the Bluebird Café with the best songwriters in Nashville, and asked to play the top three songs I'd ever written, "Hope On The Rocks" would be one of them.' That's a powerful statement coming from the *Billboard* Songwriter of the Decade, NSAI Songwriter of the Decade and three-time BMI Songwriter of the Year!

Joel Crouse

"In mid January, SDU will introduce **Joel Crouse** to radio. He's a 20-year-old singer-songwriter, born and raised in Massachusetts, who spent 2012 opening shows for Darius Rucker, Rodney Atkins and Sara Evans. His debut single, also coming in mid-January, is a co-write with current BMI Songwriter of the Year Luke Laird ('Pontoon,' 'Drink In My Hand,' 'A Little Bit Stronger') and producer Jamie Houston. It's an up-tempo smash called 'If You Want Some.' And trust me, Country radio listeners will want some ... and more ... of Joel Crouse. It's gonna be ... epic!'"

Sidewalk

"We will be working on the launch of our first new artist here at Sidewalk, **Dylan Scott**," says promotion head **Larry Hughes**. "He's from Louisiana, and his dad played guitar for Freddy Fender and Freddy Hart. Jim Ed Norman will produce, and we are close to determining his first single."

Southern Ground

"Coming up, of course we've got the **Zac Brown Band**'s 'Goodbye In Her Eyes' as it continues to climb the charts," says the label's **Mara Sidweber**. "And in January we'll be launching the first single from **Blackberry Smoke**'s SGA debut *The Whippoorwill*. 'Pretty Little Lie' will ship the first week of January and go for adds on Jan. 28."

Stoney Creek

"A brand new album from **Randy Houser** is coming Jan. 21 and I've heard most of the songs on it," says group Senior Senór **Carson James**. "It's a totally different Randy and I'm amazed at how melodic the songs are. We're still powering up 'How Country Feels' and we've got plenty to follow it up with. The new **Thompson Square** made an immediate impact in sales and airplay. Look for the the new album late in Q1. There's a **Parmalee** song called 'Carolina' that we'll be releasing, too. It shows how melodic and incredibly tight their harmonies are. We also signed a girl out of Canada, **Lindsey Ell**. She's working with New Voice (Thompson Square) and is in the studio now."

Streamsound

"We're releasing our second artist **Austin Webb** with the debut single 'It's All Good' as we start 2013," says promotion head **Mike Wilson**. "And in mid-January, we'll ship the new **Jaida Dreyer** single 'Half Broke Horses' along with her first album.

"I'm also happy to report that we'll be back on the road with a new artist, **Dakota Bradley**, in January. It's worth noting that his project is being produced by both Byron Gallimore and Tim McGraw. The first single will impact April 1."

Tenacity

"We are very excited to welcome **Lonestar** and 4-Star Records into the Tenacity Records family," says SVP/Promotion **Tim McFadden**. "We'll have a new single in January and an album in the spring. This is their 20th anniversary, and in that time they've received nearly 5,000,000 spins. We can't wait for everyone to hear all of this great new music. They are already touring hard and expect them to be in your market in 2013. We are also pumped about the new **Bill Gentry** single 'Hell And Half Of Georgia.' Bill has been

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" Aaron's voice is so pure and powerful. Don't let the fact that he's a rock superstar fool you. He's a country boy through and through. Our format is lucky to have him."
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touring hard and this is the single that everyone has been asking for."

The Talent Associates

Lead associate **John Ettinger** leads off with **Emerson Drive**. "They had huge success with the song 'She's My Kind Of Crazy' on the Canadian charts late last year. When SiriusXM decided to start playing this good-feeling, up-tempo romp, we felt we should get serious about the band's first U.S. release in over a year. The song has had brisk sales with iTunes and other digital platforms due mainly to the satellite radio play, and their new studio album *Roll* is already available on iTunes in the U.S.

"A new single from Kansas native **Matt Gary** will hit radio early in 2013 as well. Fresh off his fall tour with MCA's David Nail, Matt has grown so much on the stage and in the studio. We'll have a single and at least an EP full of the new stuff by spring."

Triple Crown

"We're looking forward to 2013 with new artists and music," says promotion head **Doc Gonzales**. "We'll be following-up the smash hit 'I Loved Her First' with **Heartland**'s new single 'The Sound a Dream Makes.' And a new artist with a true traditional sound, **Tim Culpepper**, will be out visiting radio in early January with 'Pourin' Whiskey On Pain.' Finally, the super-charged all-female group **Mustang Sally** will debut with 'Real Woman.' It's really a full-throttle live show you won't want to miss."

Valory

VP/Promotion **George Briner** and his team promise to "continue raising the 'Evolution of the Revolution' banner to new heights" in 2013. "Coming off two gold albums and his most recent monster hit 'Til My Last Day,' **Justin Moore** is gearing up for the studio with a pickup truck full of hit songs. His debut single from his third album will be on radio's desk in the first quarter, and he'll be kicking off a headlining tour in February.

"As **Brantley Gilbert** celebrates the second most-played song of 2012 with 'You Don't Know Her Like I Do' and enjoys his current rising single 'More Than Miles,' he's also heading into the studio. Look for his first album in more than two-and-a-half years to hit your desk in 2013. He'll also be kicking off a headlining tour with Kip Moore in February, and will soon announce his participation in a major summer concert tour.

"A year ago, very few knew the name or the music of **Thomas Rhett**. That changed and 2013 will be an even bigger year. 'Beer With Jesus' is doing great and he'll head into the new year on the Jason Aldean tour, which will continue through 2013. And on March 5, he'll release his debut, self-titled album.

"And in January, Valory will also roll out **RaeLynn**, who's most known for her role on Team Blake on NBC-TV's *The Voice*. She's currently in the studio with super-producer Dann Huff, and will start showcasing her music and magnetic personality to radio after the first of the year. Expect a first single in Q1."

RaeLynn

WMN

Senior Veep **Chris Stacey** launches the Warner dynamic duo's entries by noting the group's record-setting year. "We *doubled* our chart share year-over-year with the continued dominance of **Blake Shelton**, break-through singles from **Jana Kramer, Hunter Hayes, The Farm** and **Gloriana** along with a huge showing at this year's CMA awards," he says. "Based on our initial set-up for our forthcoming artists, Warner Music Nashville will continue to shine in 2013.

"CMA New Artist of the Year **Hunter Hayes**' third single 'Somebody's Heartbreak' is his fastest-rising to date and appears to be the perfect follow-up to the multiple-week No. 1 smash 'Wanted,'" Stacey says. "We're looking to start off the new year at the top of the charts again!

"I don't remember the last time we were handed a single that I thought from the opening note, 'Man, this thing will be a research monster,' but that's exactly what went through my head with **Brett Eldredge**'s 'Don't Ya.' Play it and check your research – you'll see.

"We've spent the bulk of fall and winter introducing you to **Dean Alexander**, a soulful crooner with a unique California-country style influenced by Chris Isaak and Dwight Yoakam." Look for a mid-February impact on his debut "Moments."

"Oh yeah, there's one more guy I should mention," Stacey continues. "How could I forget your reigning CMA Entertainer of the Year and ACM and CMA Male Vocalist? **Blake Shelton** has been off in Hollywood engaged in his little side gig as a champion talent coach on NBC-TV's *The Voice*, but he took time in July to record his first-ever holiday album *Cheers, It's Christmas*. His NBC-TV *Blake's Not So Family Christmas Special* aired Dec. 3. And during days off from *The Voice*, he's been in the studio with Scott Hendricks working on his follow-up to his Grammy-nominated *Red River Blue*. We couldn't be more excited to bring you exciting *all-new* music from Blake early in Q1!"

W.A.R.

Chapter two of the Warner tome has **Chris Palmer** and the W.A.R. mongers pushing for "an even bigger and better 2013. Team W.A.R. is looking to follow-up a record breaking 2012 with an even bigger and better 2013!" It starts with **Faith Hill**'s "American Heart." Palmer says, "Its powerful and patriotic message is striking a chord with Country P1s. She's also delivered a magnificent album produced by Byron Gallimore. Faith worked closely with our staff and has engaged us all during the recording and marketing discussions. There are multiple singles Country radio will love.

"**Big & Rich** have roared back with an incredibly raucous and entertaining new studio album, *Hillbilly Jedi*," Palmer continues. "It's already producing one of the highest-charting singles of their career, 'That's Why I Pray.' Q1 will begin with the up-tempo single 'Party Like Cowboyz!', which delivers another classic Big & Rich rockin' country hit.

"**Gloriana** reached a career milestone with their highest-charting single to date and one of the top 5 most played singles of 2012, '(Kissed You) Good Night.' We believe we have what could be an even bigger single with 'Can't Shake You.' They'll be opening for some of the biggest names in the format and headlining in 2013.

"**Jana Kramer** set records for both the most adds out-of-the-box for a debut artist and the highest-charting debut single from a female in the history of **Country Aircheck**," Palmer name-drops (wisely). "We are off and running with her amazing follow-up 'Whiskey.' Jana looks to have another busy year as she continues to visit radio and has some exciting touring news that will be announced soon.

"**Charlie Worsham** is just finishing his radio tour to rave reviews and the add commitments to back it up. First single 'Could It Be' goes for adds Jan. 14. I thank my lucky stars that [label prez] John Esposito and VP/A&R Cris Lacy brought this young man into my life.

"And **Frankie Ballard** is currently in the studio recording new hit music, and I love the few things I've heard. He's coming into his own, developing a very unique sound and will have new music near the end of the quarter."

Way Out West

As noted earlier, Way Out West's **LiveWire**, their single "Lies" and album *Livin'* are being worked in conjunction with InstiGator. WOW's **Mike Severson** also touts new music from **Shawna Russell** expected in early 2013. The single is "Run" and Severson expects it to "push Shawna to the next level." **CAC**

Introducing...

RACHEL FARLEY

RED BOW RECORDS

"Rachel is seasoned way beyond her years, she is a great singer/songwriter with great stage presence. I think she is a star and that's why I wanted her on my tour."

-JASON ALDEAN

"Rachel Farley is not only my little sister, she is a damn rock star. I've personally watched this girl's talent grow from the most amazing early teen singer, all the way up to a still young, but even more thoroughly talented, and blessed young lady. Her voice is non-negotiably insane, powerful and God-given. Her incredible writing displays her calling for song creation. She keeps true to herself, and writes from experience... leaving you wondering how such a young writer can paint so many pictures with words and amazing melodies. To say her performance... no matter full band or acoustic, is relentless, passionate, and entertaining is an understatement. This young lady is not just another girl with a guitar and some boy-hatin' break-up songs...she's a god-blessed force of nature, worthy of any stage, studio, or writing session you can put her in. Long story short... My little sister is a badass.

-BRANTLEY GILBERT

AUSTIN WEBB

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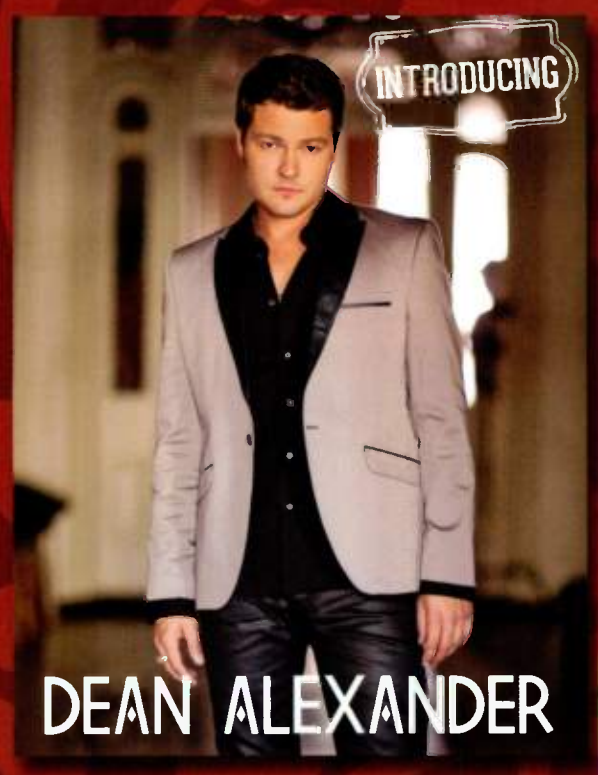

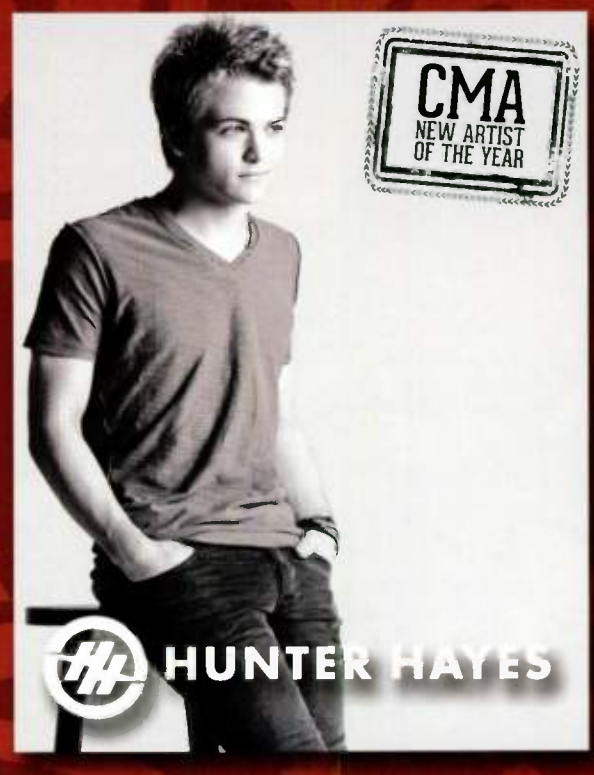

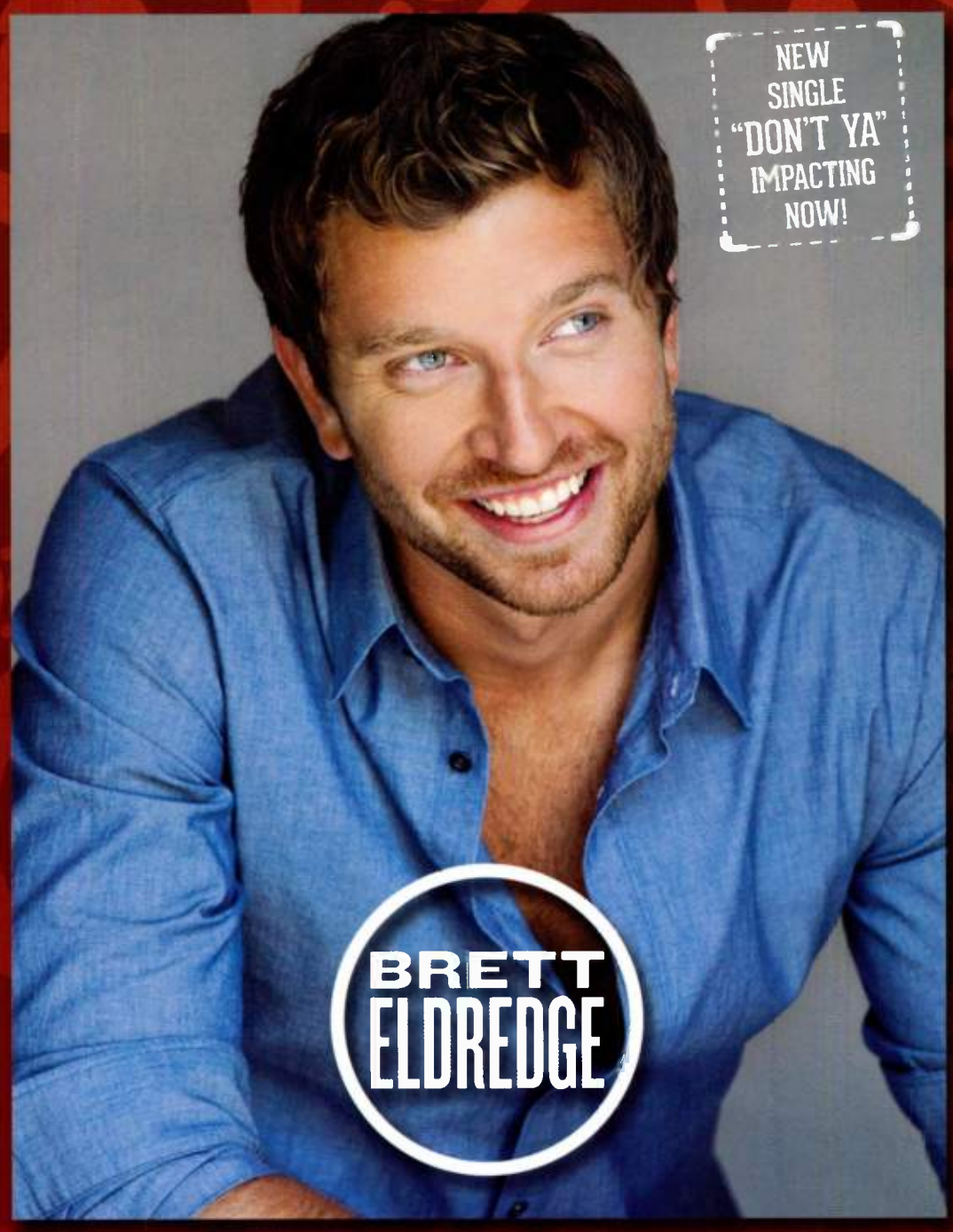

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM WARNER MUSIC NASHVILLE!

Blake Shelton

The Business Of Having A Ball ... Or Three

Arguably the breakout star of the breakout show that's leading NBC-TV's breakout resurgence, Blake Shelton is charting new ground for country artists. Serving as a primetime television personality while leading a music career that's riding seven consecutive No. 1 singles is an unexplored challenge. In fact, just finding time for this interview required navigating tapings of *The Voice* Season 4, shooting live shows for *The Voice* Season 3, work on his NBC Christmas special and recording his next album. Ultimately, the discussion was squeezed into downtime during an appearance on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*. Apparently, Shelton's balancing skills are superb, if last month's CMA Entertainer of the Year honor is any indication. Here, he speaks at length about the business of Blake, Inc.

THE INTERVIEW

Country Aircheck: What's your role in your business? Are you the CEO? COO? Just the talent? How involved are you?

Blake Shelton: When it comes to the actual nuts and bolts of things, I try to stay in the loop, but really try to wait to the last minute to get involved. Anytime there's a contract or offer, if it's something management knows I have no time to do or it's not worth my time, I don't ever hear about that. But the bigger things like whether or not we're going to tour or do a television show, those things they leave up to me. It's my life and those are the things I have to live with, and I have to decide what I can be best at, too.

> "I'm not going to spend a minute of my time reading through contracts because that just sucks out the good part of what I do. I take the luxury and time to just have fun with it."

How deliberate was your move into television over the last few years?

It wasn't planned out. Ironically enough, over the years of being a Nashville country artist, I always had people tell me, 'Hey, you should be on TV. You need to be a comedian or something like that.' But it was never something I pursued or talked about with management or even my agents. When *The Voice* just kind of fell into my lap, I don't know if I'm one of those people who believes in meant-to-be or not, but it sure seemed like that's what it was, because it does feel natural for me to do this.

And thank God for having someone like Narvel [Blackstock, his manager] who has a lot of background in television. Without his input on this, I could have had a good career either way, but because of having him I've had a great career now. Knowing which television opportunities are important and which ones aren't makes a difference. Even different from Reba's television career, I'm kind of in uncharted territory for a country artist. Every decision is something we all have to sit down and think about for a long time.

How important was Twitter in developing or offering a platform for Blake the personality?

Way more important than people I'm associated with even want to acknowledge. I was told many times, "You've got to get off Twitter. You're saying things that are just ... you're destroying your career ... what's wrong with you ... you sound crazy." Really? Because I'm just having fun. I'm not saying anything on Twitter that y'all don't hear me saying in the office when we're in here bullshitting.

I finally got to the point where I just decided, man, if I can't be this guy on Twitter then what has happened to country music or entertainment,

THE INTERVIEW

even? If it's about songs, then okay. But if it's about artists and people getting to know them, like I thought country music was supposed to be about, then I'm going to get on here and talk about the fact that I just went deer hunting. Or that I'm drunk. Or make jokes. I want to have a personality. The last thing I want to do is not offend somebody.

How do you matter if you don't stand for something? You're not contributing anything if you're afraid all the time that you're going to offend someone. For every person I offend for saying I deer hunt, I gain another person's respect. And I'm trying to gain respect, not just be middle-of-the-road.

We can go as far back as your CRS New Faces video and some of the subsequent clips you've done in terms of this evolution or realization over the years that there was a quality – can I call it smart-ass, for lack of a better term? Does that at some point become a strategy to pursue that aspect of your career?

I just think I can't help it. And it's an asset more than it is a liability. I want people to remember me. If I was still trying to break in as an artist in this business, that's what I would be trying to figure out a way to do. For me, being a smart-ass, or quick witted – I read that about myself, but I'm not sure I'm that quick – if those are things I can do naturally that are valuable, why wouldn't I use them?

So it's not calculated, it's more a reflex than anything else. The fact that I'm not afraid to be myself is just out there now that we have Twitter and I'm on TV. I'm not going to take shit from anybody and I'm going to give it right back to them. And I expect them to do the same to me. We're adults and we're having fun. I'm having a ball and don't take myself seriously at all. And I'm not afraid to express that.

What are the decisions you made as you looked at getting deeper involved with television, whether it was co hosting the ACMs, doing NBC's *Clash Of The Choirs* or getting into *The Voice*? What are the things you worried about?

More than anything, I worry about losing my spot in country music because that is easily the most important thing in the world to me when it comes to my career. And when it comes to my personal life, even. God-dang-it, country music is my heart. That's always the thing that has been in the back of my mind. Am I spending too much time with television? But the CMAs this year shook me up a little bit with the Entertainer award.

What we envisioned early-on with this was that I would still be a country artist but be seen by a lot more people. Instead of doing 12-month tours I'd doing six-month tours, but be in people's living rooms two nights a week every week or more. When Entertainer happened it was like, "Oh, my gosh, we shouldn't be afraid to keep going down this road!" Just because nobody else is doing it this way doesn't mean it's wrong. That's what we're figuring out, more than anything.

My career is kind of an oddity, but I think deep down people know I'm an expression of the country lifestyle, middle America and those types of values. I'm a country artist first and just happen to be on television doing it.

How many scenarios did you plan for in terms of, if it's not a hit, if it just goes a season or two and that's it, or if it ends up being as big as it's been?

We never really thought about it blowing up huge. Our thoughts were, "What if we start this show – it kind of sounds ridiculous anyway with these chairs and hitting buttons – and it's a flop?" We decided it's still worth it because it's television. Especially being a country artist, we just don't get that many opportunities. If two-million people watch and they cancel it, that's two-million people who probably never heard of me anyway. It's no different than being on an episode of a talk show.

It's not like I moved to L.A. to try to be an actor. That wasn't my goal, so anything that happens along these lines just falls out of the sky. It's crazy not to jump at these opportunities. I didn't spend a bunch of time trying to get there, and if I fail as a television personality, well fine. First, I'm a country singer. So I don't care. Now that it's taken off big, I'm seeing opportunities that wouldn't have been here for me. You realize, I've got this relationship with NBC and I've got a Christmas album coming up. I know I've got their attention a little bit, maybe they'll take a meeting and talk about doing a special on TV. That's how that stuff happens.

Now that you're deep in it, what didn't you know back then that you wish you'd anticipated?

The biggest surprise to me, in representing myself in a way that's true to who I am, is when corporations want to be involved with me. Whether it's JCPenney, Samsung or other cool things I've gotten to do with corporate America. I don't have any business doing that. But through the show and a connection I've made with the audience out there, I've been lucky enough to have them come to me and ask me to introduce their new telephone product, or be the voice of a charity project through JCPenney. Me? Really?

You told us for our CRS issue that you thought Glen Campbell was the template in terms of balancing TV with being a current country artist. How do you think you're measuring up?

I don't know. It's definitely a different day and time. It would be like comparing a NASCAR driver from 30-years ago with someone from today. It's a different game altogether. The heart is the same. I know Glen could do all kinds of things and loved doing it. I don't know that I can do all kinds of things, but I'm loving everything I'm getting to do right now. What's important to me is what it shows to people who are tuning into *The Voice* or watching the Christmas special. I want them to say, "That that guy is absolutely having the time of his life." If nothing else, I want that to come across.

I think that came across with Glen, Dean Martin and people like that who were singers, artists and just personalities. Personality carried them as far in their careers as music did because, I think, they were just going with the flow and not being afraid. That's the worst thing you can do in this business. If you're brave enough to make that move to Nashville, why would you want to be a chicken-shit now and not swing for the fence or stand for something? For the life of me, I'll never understand how you can be an artist but not want people to understand who you are as a person. Actually, let me just say that I actually hope they never do. I'd like to be the only one.

What are the logistics now? How do you balance recording, taping, live shows, touring?

We're at the mercy of NBC when we look long-term. And I feel sorry for them trying to put together four different artists' schedules to get us all together at one time for a TV show. We just have to look at possible scenarios. People think I don't tour at all, which isn't true. We toured arenas from January to April. And this summer I hit every festival and fair that would have me. We played a lot of shows this year. The most important thing is that nothing overlaps. That's where I can't take it, and I learned that the hard way.

The very first season of *The Voice* just kind of happened how it happened, and none of us were prepared. I had already signed-on and was happy to be on tour with Brad Paisley that summer. Next thing I know I'm finishing up a live episode of *The Voice* and hauling ass to get on a jet to get to a concert somewhere, sometimes that night. And it's like, okay, this isn't making sense. Not only is it not fun, but this is where people get into real bad habits. I can understand now how that happens to some people. We decided we were going to have to do these in separate segments, even if it means we miss a couple weeks here and there because we're not totally sure about schedules. It's still worth it not to have them overlap.

So is there a lot of push and pull with the network, the label, your agents?

Absolutely. And rightfully so. We get a lot of pressure from Warner Bros. to get out there and tour, and they're right to expect that. So I try to do as much of it as I can. But they also understand the value of this television show and how it's, basically, changed the amount of records I sell. It all works together, but you have to manage it.

Does the scrutiny that comes with the TV gig give the network more influence in your decision process? Does it ever temper you on Twitter?

They really don't, and I don't know that I could do this with any other network. NBC really wants me to just be Blake. For some reason, when they signed on with me, they signed on with *me*. And I'm grateful. It's worked out for both of us. I've never heard a peep out of them about my Twitter account, because even if I say something controversial it goes back to that saying that there's no such thing as bad publicity. It's just my mouth. I'm not trying to hurt anybody. They let us get away with a lot, and they probably think the show wouldn't be as interesting if they tried to tamp us down.

> "More than anything, I worry about losing my spot in country music because that is easily the most important thing in the world to me when it comes to my career."

How does being CEO of a TV career differ from when you were just CEO of a country singer's career?

It doesn't, really. All that really changes is simple things like getting out of the house and going somewhere. My profile is just way up there. As a CEO, I just get out there and do my job. I count on having good, smart people around me making good decisions that put me in the right situations. And they have faith in me to let me go for a couple hours, whether it's onstage or in front of a camera, that I'm going to be the guy who gets us the next gig down the road. That's my job. I'm supposed to be good at connecting with people. I'm not going to spend a minute more of my time reading through contracts because that just sucks out the good part of what I do. Now that I'm at this level, I take the luxury and time to just have fun with it. Because I'm doing that, it's feeding the fire even more. It allows me to just be me.

Do you see yourself as an inside advocate for country music with the network? For instance, getting NBC to go for the Christmas special?

Sure I do. In fact, if I have one responsibility, it's to show the world that, yeah, we're country and we sound like it, but we're smart people. Nothing frustrates me more than the stereotype attached to country artists. I listened to a guy interviewing Kenny Rogers on NPR and got so pissed off because he kept referring to him as a "country and western artist." I wanted to go, "Man, you're the one who doesn't belong on the radio if you're not any better at your job than that. You need to do your homework."

We represent ourselves pretty well. We're up to speed on what's going on in the world. We can be on TV, have

KATIE ARMIGER

What A Year!

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- ★ FEATURED ON WALMART DOVE ZINEPAK WITH CARLY RAE JEPSEN, NELLY FURTADO AND OTHERS
- ★ NATIONAL COLLEGE TOUR
- ★ 75+ PAID SHOWS
- ★ 4 APPEARANCES ON GRAND OLE OPRY
- ★ #1 VIDEO ON GAC
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fun and not take ourselves too seriously. We're not going to be a pain in the ass to the network. We're going to show up on time and work. This is what we do and we're good at it. When the next guy comes along, I want the network to go, "I worked with Blake Shelton and he was always on

THE INTERVIEW

time, he wasn't a diva, he didn't throw fits. He just did his job and got out of the way." That's the legacy I'd like to leave behind because I want to see a lot more country artists get the shot. I'm tickled to death to see Keith Urban on *American Idol*. Maybe, just maybe, they saw the success of *The Voice* with a country artist and think they can piece that together, too. Maybe I had something to do with it, maybe not. But either way, it's exiting that it's happening.

You're working on an album now. How has that process been going?

My part is done, so now we're all sitting around staring at [producer/label exec] Scott Hendricks waiting for him to get his part done. Now that Tree [Paine, his publicist] is out of the room, I'll tell you that we'll have a single sometime in January. The album will come a couple three months after that. I don't know if they have an exact date. I'm pumped about it because I thought *Red River Blue* was a good as I could do, and I honestly think we beat it. And I don't know how.

One thing that has happened – and it happened during *Red River Blue*, as well – is a benefit of being busy. Not having as much time on the road to listen to songs over and over again, and completely overthink them – which I've been guilty of in the past – has helped. I'd think, "Well,

> "I want the network to go, 'I worked with Blake Shelton and he was always on time, he wasn't a diva, he didn't throw fits. He just did his job and got out of the way.' That's the legacy I'd like to leave behind because I want to see a lot more country artists get the shot."

I don't know if I should sing this song about my grandpa because he's dead." That's kind of dumb to think like that, but if I've got enough time, I damn sure will. So with the last album and now this one, if I love a song in the first two or three times, I just cut that damn thing.

That's how we ended up cutting "Honeybee." That's not brain surgery, it's just a fun, feel-good song. Same thing with "God Gave Me You." Even though it hit me like it did the first time I heard it, it would have been real easy for me to question whether it made sense to do a Contemporary Christian song. People might say I'm a sellout. So not having the time I used to have to overthink some of these songs has actually worked out.

How important is touring when you can get in millions of living rooms every night and, conversely, do you worry it goes someone less incentive to see your show?

I do worry about that, and I did. But one of the things that makes me not worry so much is seeing Adam [Levine] put together this new tour for Maroon 5 and the whole thing sold out in, like, a day. So being in people's living rooms isn't hurting. And it's not like those people who watch the show are really getting to experience our music. Someone might sit at home wishing Adam would sing "This Love" or one of their other hits, but that's not what the show is about. People still have to come out to a show to experience what we do in terms of music.

It's always tough for actors or people with success in another area to add a country career because they're doing it part-time versus so many who are working overtime. Being pulled in the other direction, coming from country into a television career, are there competitive issues that you worry about, or does being country's face on television compensate for that?

Oh, it definitely does. You know, getting the chance to introduce a new song on national television is a pretty big deal. The network will come and ask if we want to play "Honeybee" on the show, and we've gotten to do that with "Over" and some others, too. You know, there were a lot of times I didn't have the chance to play a song on national TV – like on an awards show performance, which I couldn't get for a long time.

Plus, I'm on national television just being myself. I didn't come out here to try to get a job as a character in a sitcom. We're on this show being who we are as musical people, so when people watch, they're seeing us do what we do. There isn't that disconnect between who we are on the show and who we are in our other careers.

You mentioned backstage at the CMAs your willingness to try things, even if you don't know if they'll work. And you cited the "Six Pak" projects. What did that experience teach you?

I don't know that it actually taught us anything other than that if you do something new, you'll get a hell of a lot of publicity for it. From that standpoint alone it was probably worth it. But I actually think it goes back to the song, me and Trace [Adkins] doing "Hillbilly Bone." If you'd put those two Six Paks together and had "Bone" as the first single, it probably would have accomplished the same thing.

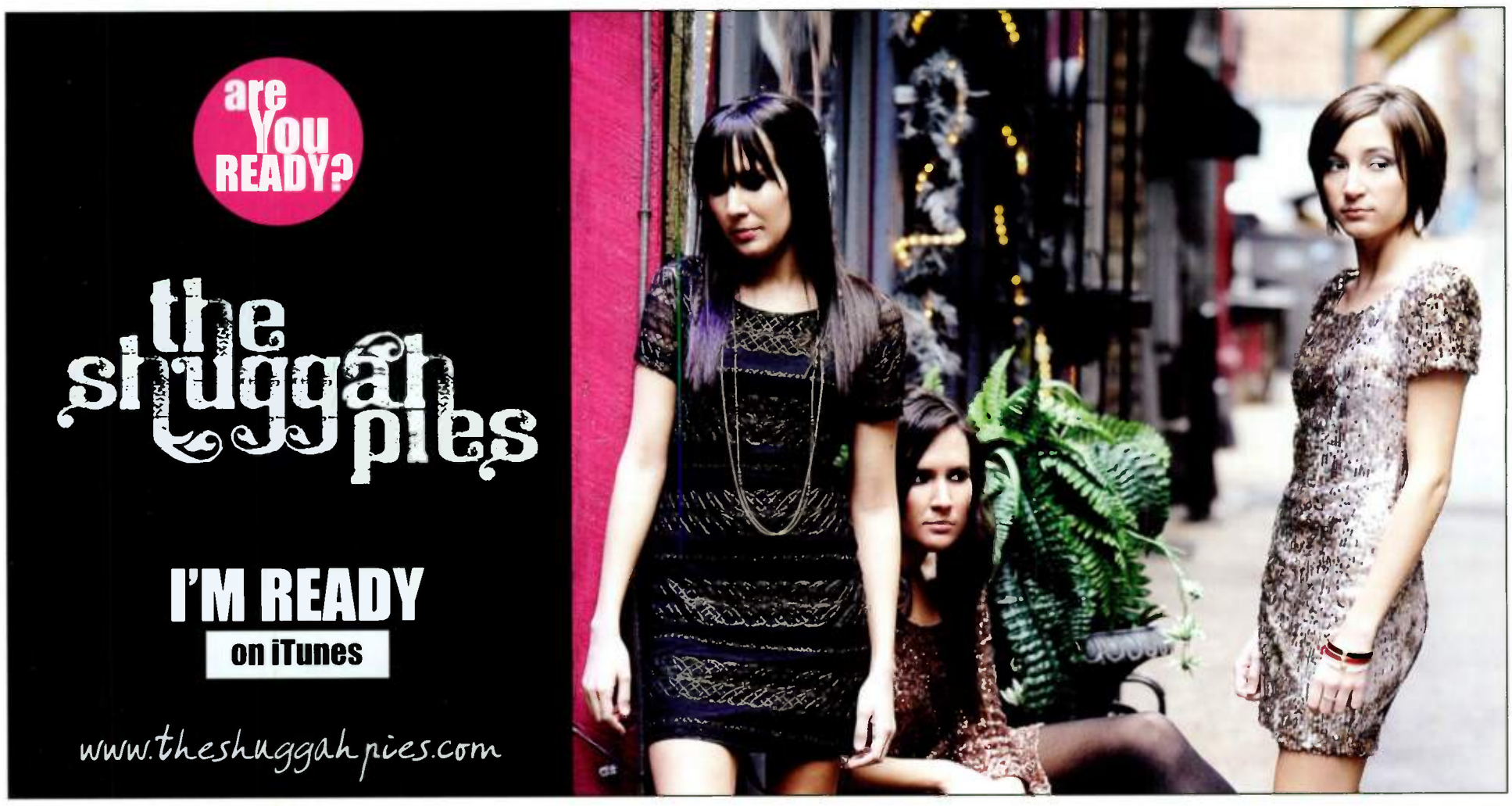
In your acceptance speech for Entertainer, you referenced some of the other nominees, a couple of whom are selling out stadiums. Do you feel you're, in some way, re-writing the criteria for that award?

I guess I already have, and I'm sure some people aren't really happy about it. I'm sure there were several people after that was announced who were not exactly pleased. But there are a lot of different ways to reach people. And I guess we'll find out next year whether people agree with this new definition. Is being Entertainer something that should focus on being out there on the road all year, or should we take all these other ways of reaching people into consideration? So at next year's show I guess we'll see what people think about all that.

I know for me, it sure feels different than it ever did before. You realize how much something like *The Voice* puts you out there in ways nothing else really can. Like, walking into a supermarket and seeing a tabloid with my picture on it. And Miranda's picture on it. And a headline that says we're pregnant. And I know that's not true and I'm like, "Where are they getting this stuff?" I'm realizing that I'm now in this world where they do that kind of stuff to people, which is really kind of exciting because now I'm thinking about how we can use this to say something crazy and have some fun with it. Like, why can't they say I have three balls?

And on that note ... now that you're in that world, having that platform of *The Voice* and forging this new path, where do you go next?

Not having really calculated getting here, I think you just stay the course and see where it takes you. Whatever it ends up being, I think TV is going to be in my future for a while anyway. And it's working for me. Man, this is the first time that things have really been clicking consistently for me. I've been lucky all along, but this is the first time that things have really been clicking. I didn't plan on it happening like this and neither did anyone else in my camp. We knew where we wanted to get and were lucky enough to make the right decisions along the way to get us here. But a lot of it just fell in my lap, too, to be honest. **CAC**



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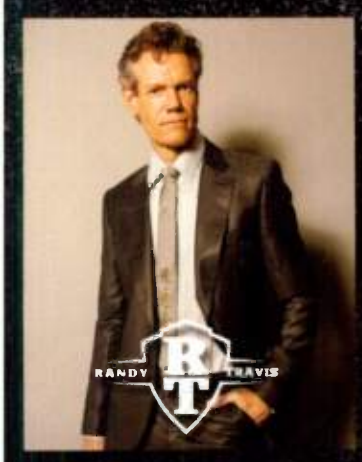

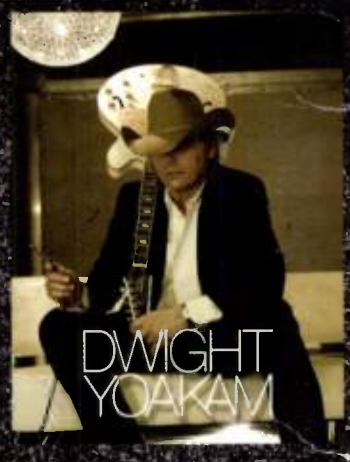

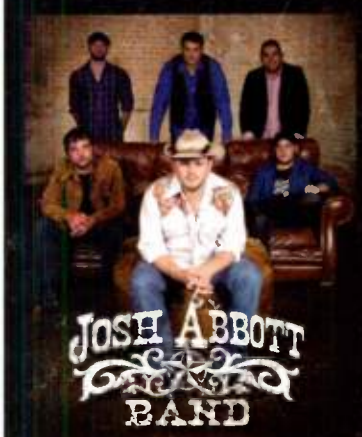

2012 HIGHLIGHTS

- CHART SHARE INCREASED 50%
- BLAKE SHELTON EARNS 7TH CONSECUTIVE #1 SINGLE
- HUNTER HAYES HAS ONE OF THE BEST SELLING SINGLES OF 2012
- JANA KRAMER IS THE HIGHEST CHARTING DEBUT FEMALE IN AIRCHECK HISTORY
- BROKE THROUGH 4 NEW ARTISTS
- 4 SINGLES IN THE TOP 10 CONCURRENTLY FOR THE FIRST TIME IN WMN HISTORY
- 3 MULTI-WEEK #1 RECORDS INCLUDING HUNTER HAYES
- 2ND HIGHEST CHARTING SINGLE FOR BIG & RICH
- 3 PLATINUM CERTIFICATIONS
- 7 GOLD CERTIFICATIONS

AWARDS

CMA

BLAKE SHELTON
ENTERTAINER, MALE VOCALIST AND SONG OF THE YEAR

HUNTER HAYES
NEW ARTIST OF THE YEAR

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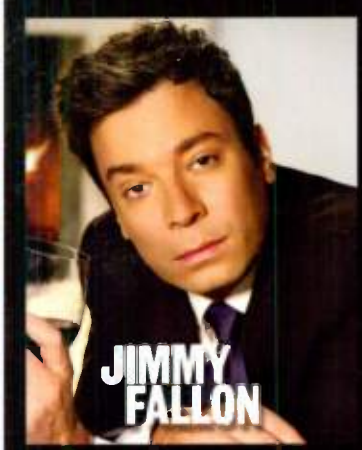
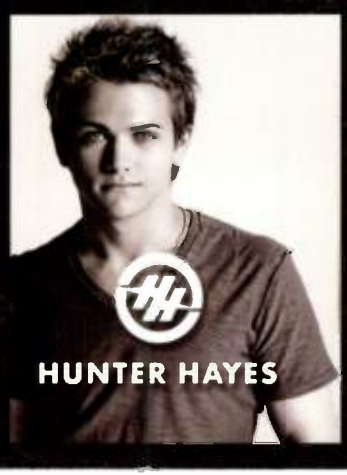
BLAKE SHELTON
MALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR

ACA

18 NOMINATIONS!





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RADIO MARCONI NOMINEES
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Airplay Leaders
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JAYE ALBRIGHT
THE INTERVIEW
PAGE 37

COUNTRY
AIRCHECK
SEPTEMBER 2010

MIRANDA LAMBERT
ONE *revolutionary* YEAR

4-WEEK #1 SINGLE "THE HOUSE THAT BUILT ME"
ON THE HEELS OF THE #1 SINGLE "WHITE LIAR"
ACM WINS FOR ALBUM OF THE YEAR, FEMALE VOCALIST AND VIDEO OF THE YEAR
CMT AWARD WIN FOR FEMALE VIDEO OF THE YEAR
BACK-TO-BACK GOLD SINGLES
SOLD-OUT SHOWS ON HER ROADSIDE BARS & PINK GUITARS TOUR

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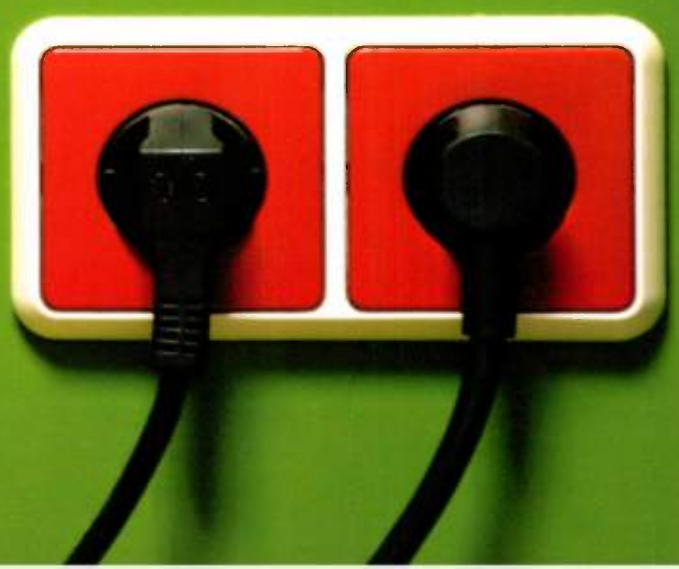
REPRISE NASHVILLE

WB RECORDS



WRH

MEET THE AUDIENCE

Latest Arbitron Data Puts Country On Top

For the first time, Arbitron has merged the contemporary music formats of Country and "New Country" stations into one, and that's good news: Country is now America's most popular programming, delivering 13.4% of all radio listening in Fall 2009, up from 12.9% in Fall '08, according to the ratings firm's new *Radio Today 2010* study. This annual report, combining PPM and diary information from all stations in measured markets, is the most recent comprehensive national data available.

That 13.4% total (6.4% in PPM markets and 14.1% in diary metros) is the highest combined share Country has generated in these annual studies since Spring 2002. With 2,626 terrestrial, HD and online stations, Country broadcasters reach 64 million consumers each week, more than any other format except Adult Contemporary, and that's not even including the nearly audience from 405 Classic Country stations.

RATINGS POWERHOUSE

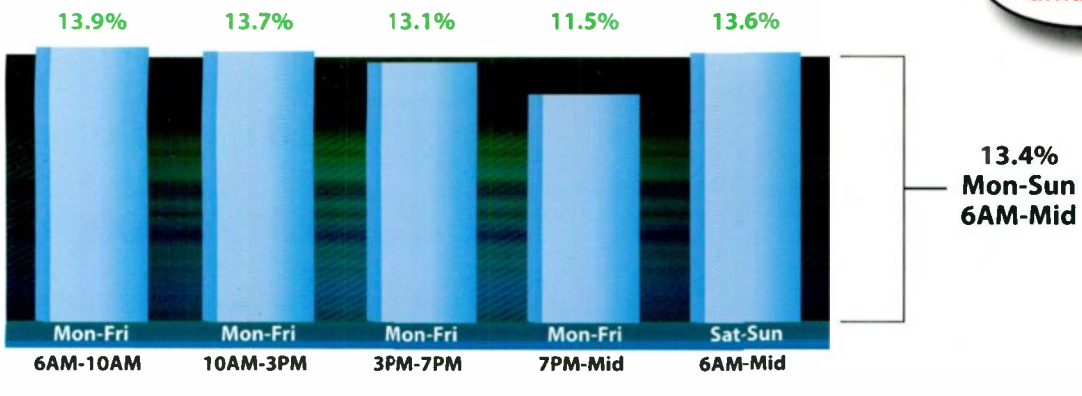
During the Fall '09 PPM ratings, Country stations ranked in total audience share among the top three outlets in Atlanta, Baltimore, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Minneapolis, Pittsburgh, Salt Lake City, San Antonio and Tampa. Four stations –WUSN/Chicago, KPLX/Dallas, KKBQ/Houston and KKGO/Los Angeles – regularly attract more than 1 million weekly cume. Meanwhile, 89 stations were No. 1 in their diary markets in Fall '09, and many others would have been, too, if the stations in their subscriber-only metros were ranked. (In Spring '10, 84 stations in 186 diary markets were No. 1 – a whopping 45% winner's ratio.)

Where is Country radio strongest? During Fall '09, five states delivered more than twice the format's national average share: Kentucky (index 238), West Virginia (235), Montana (232), Wyoming (220) and South Dakota (219). Country generated more than a 20 share in 16 states.

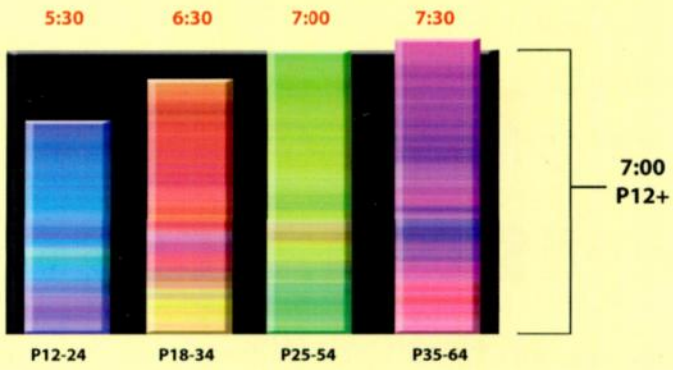
ACROSS-THE-BOARD LEADER

Leaning female and for years the least ethnic of all major formats, a majority of Country's audience is between ages 25-54, 35-64 and also 45+. Country is No. 1 with adults 25-34, 35-44 and 45-54. It's No. 2 with adults 18-24, 55-65 and 65+ (with whom it is the top music format), and also ranks third among teens. The growth demographic is among 18-24s, up steadily each year since Spring '02 from less than 9% in composition to more than 11% in Fall '09, while its proportion of those 35-44 is down from 20% to 16% over that time frame. Country is strong in all dayparts: It ranks No. 1 in afternoons and evenings, and in is No. 2 in mornings and middays (but is the leader among music formats).

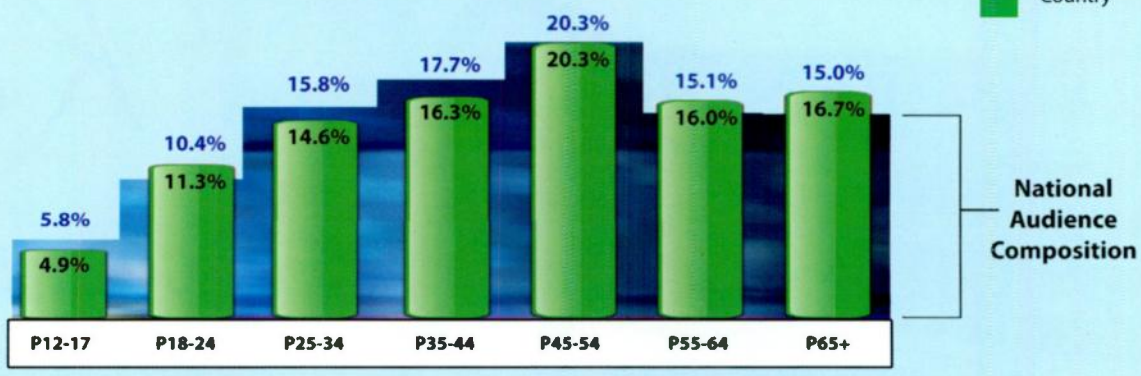
AQH Share Of Listening By Daypart
Persons 12+



Time Spent Listening by Demographic
(Hours: Minutes)
Mon-Sun, 6AM-Mid



Audience Composition by Demographic



AQH Share Trend Persons 12+, Mon-Sun, 6AM-Mid

	SP02	SP03	SP04	SP05	SP06	FA08	FA09
Country:	12.9 %	13.0 %	12.0 %	12.5 %	12.6 %	12.5 %	13.4%*
New Country:	0.5 %	0.4 %	0.4 %	na	0.4 %	0.4 %	* Country (12.9) + New Country (0.5)

12+ Share in PPM Markets
6.4 %
12+ Share in Diary Markets
14.1 %

Meet The Audience

Education And Affluence

The percentage of Country consumers 18+ who have attended college or hold a degree has risen at a nearly 9% rate since Spring '02, more than any other major format. The proportion of adult Country listeners with a degree has risen annually since then to 16% – a 22% rate of increase over that time – also leading all primary formats. Nearly half of adult Country listeners live in households earning $50,000 or more annually, up from 40% in Spring '02 – a 20% rate of increase, more than any other format.

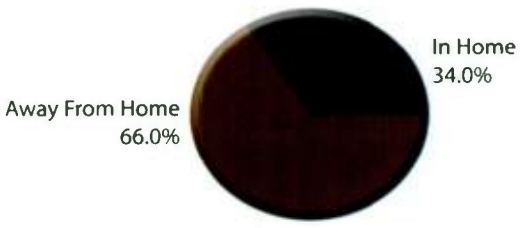
Tops In TSL

Country earns longer listening patterns than most other formats. Overall, it ranks tied for No. 1 12+ with Urban Adult Contemporary among music formats, at seven hours per week. It has the longest time-spent-listening not only with adults 18-24, but also among English-language formats with adults 18-34. It ranks No. 2 in TSL among English-language programming with adults 25-54 and 35-64. Away-from-home-tune-in accounts for two-thirds of all Country listening (66%), which is relatively unchanged for the past five years.

The least ethnic of all music formats for several years, Country's combined African-American and Hispanic composition is less than 9% – a figure that has remained relatively steady since Spring '03. Country attracts the lowest proportion of Blacks among English-language formats, and is fourth-lowest with Hispanic consumers among 22 leading formats.

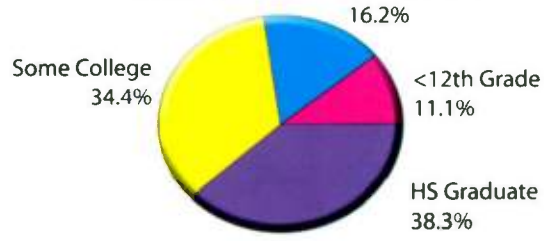
AQH Share Of Listening By Location

Persons 12+, Mon-Sun, 6AM-Mid



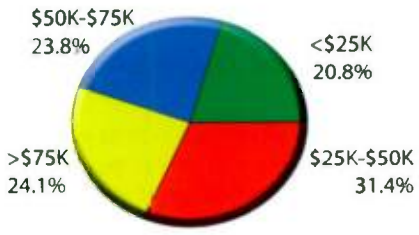
Education

Persons 18+



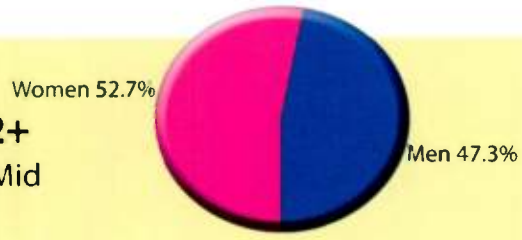
Household Income

Persons 18+



Listeners 12+

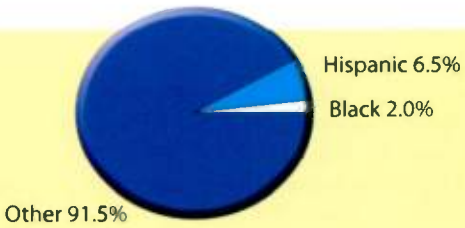
Mon-Sun, 6AM-Mid



Ethnic Composition*

AQH Persons

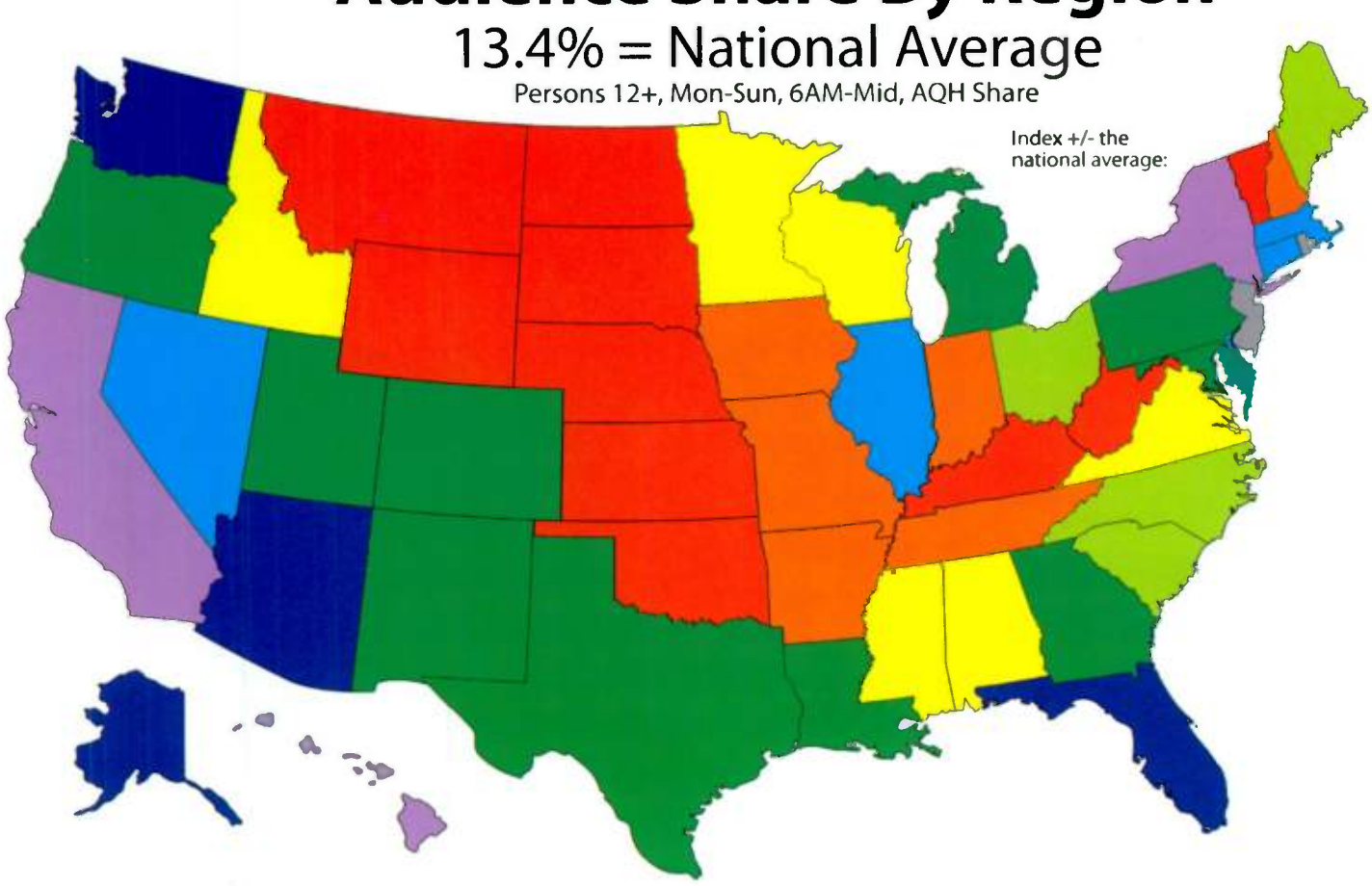
*Only in DST-Controlled Markets



Audience Share By Region

13.4% = National Average

Persons 12+, Mon-Sun, 6AM-Mid, AQH Share



Index +/- the national average:

- ≥ 175
- 150 - 174.99
- 125 - 149.99
- 110 - 124.99
- 90.01 - 109.99
- 75.01 - 90.01
- 50.01 - 75.00
- 25.01 - 50.00
- ≤ 25.00

All percentages are rounded

Katie Armiger

CONFESSIONS OF A NICE GIRL

THE BRAND NEW ALBUM HITS THE STREETS OCT. 5TH

FEATURING THE HIT SINGLES "KISS ME NOW" & "LEAVING HOME"

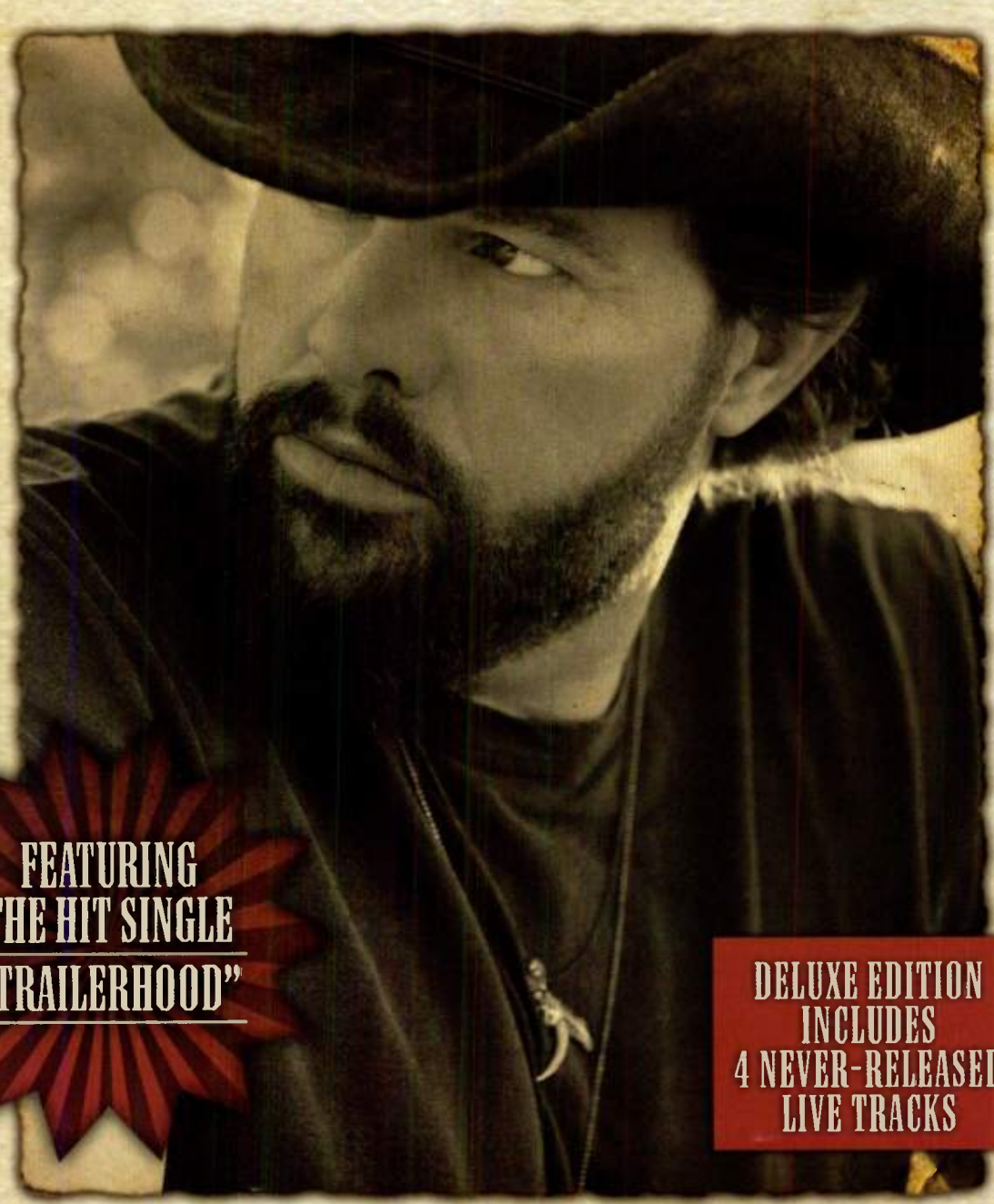
CHECK OUT KATIE'S FIRST NATIONAL MAGAZINE COVER JUSTINE MAGAZINE/OCTOBER ISSUE

COLD RIVER RECORDS

"KATIE ARMIGER IS A GIFTED SONGWRITER AND A TERRIFIC SINGER...HER NEW ALBUM IS FUN AND UPBEAT... THE SONGS SHOULD BE HUGE." - *JOEY GUERRA, MUSIC CRITIC/WRITER, HOUSTON CHRONICLE*

UNIVERSAL MUSIC

FOLLOW OUR TRACKS



FEATURING THE HIT SINGLE "TRAILERHOOD"

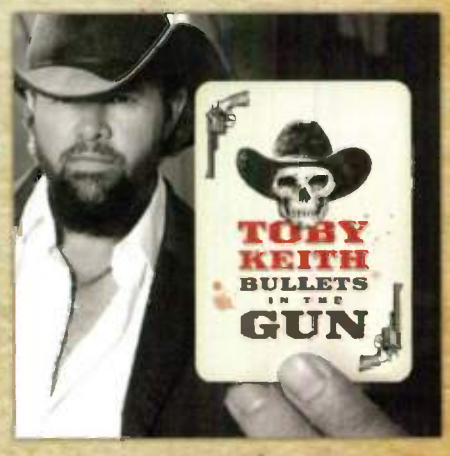
BULLETS IN THE GUN

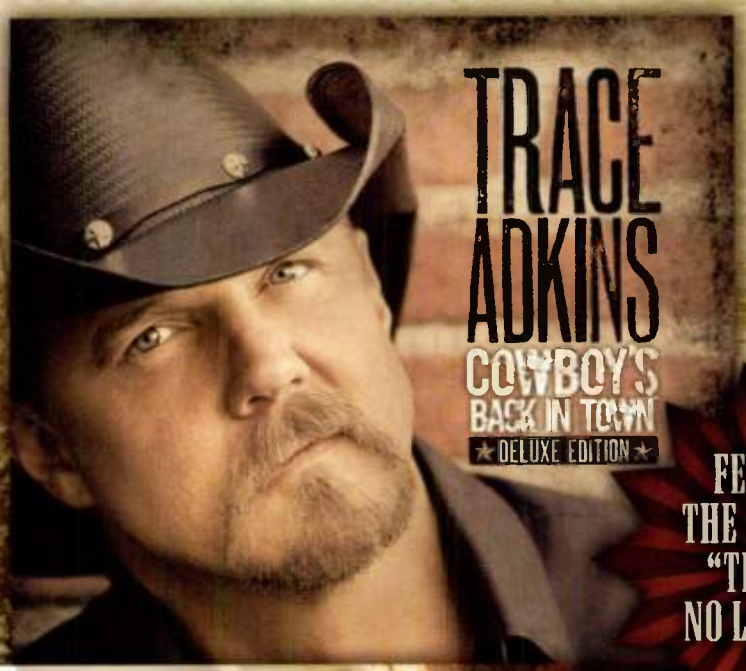
THE NEW ALBUM FROM TOBY KEITH

AVAILABLE IN STANDARD & DELUXE EDITION

IN STORES OCTOBER 5TH!

DELUXE EDITION INCLUDES 4 NEVER-RELEASED LIVE TRACKS





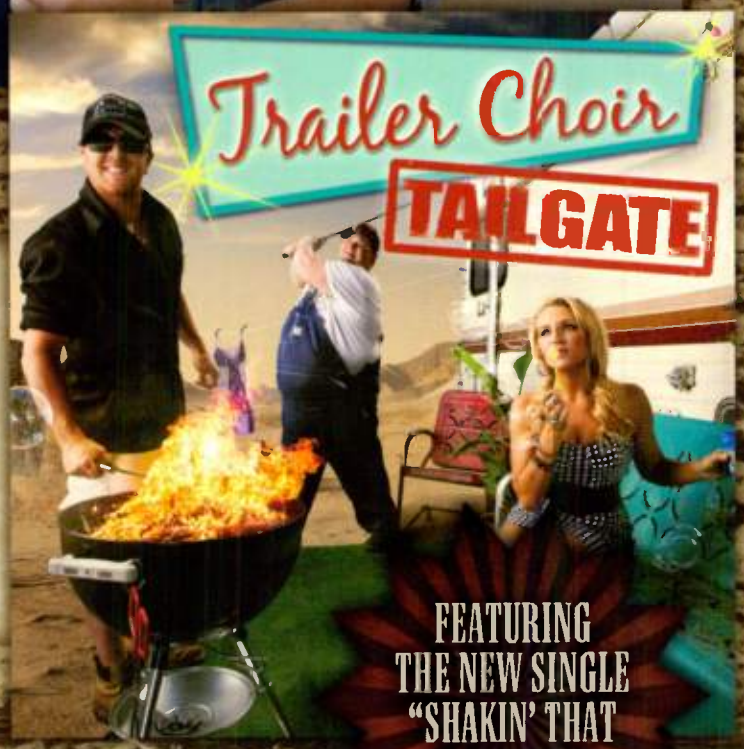
FEATURING THE HIT SINGLE "THIS AIN'T NO LOVE SONG"

FEATURING THE HIT SINGLE "THE SHAPE I'M IN"

FEATURING THE NEW SINGLE "A MAN LIKE ME"

Carter's Chord

SINGLE COMING SOON!



FEATURING THE NEW SINGLE "SHAKIN' THAT TAILGATE"

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Hemingway's Whiskey

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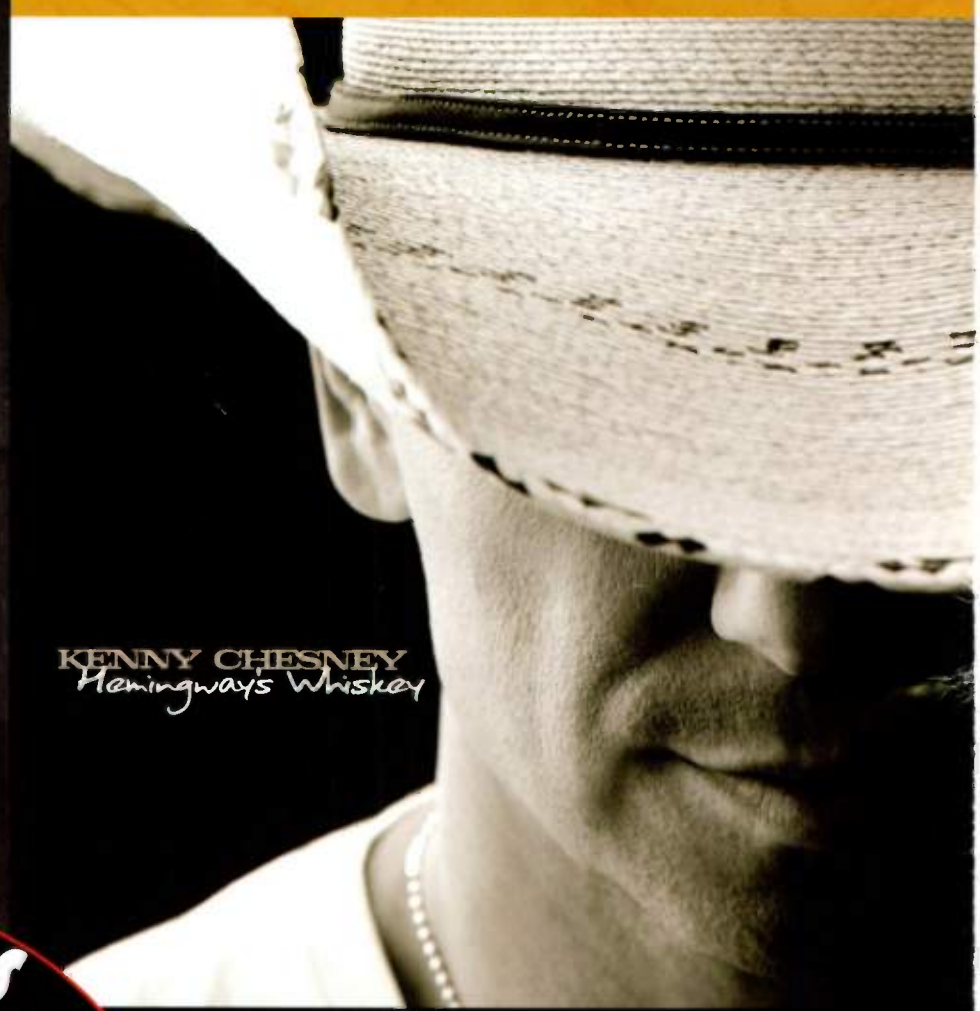
Thursday, SEP/23–Sunday, OCT/3



BOB KINGSLEY'S COUNTRY TOP 40

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NABBED FOR EXCELLENCE

Country's Marconi Nominees

The National Association of Broadcasters' prestigious Marconi Awards recognize stations in all formats based on ratings success, awards won, community involvement and promotions. And as in years past, Country stations are well represented.

Ingrained In The Community

Country Station of the Year: **KMPS/Seattle**

*CBS Radio's Northwest cornerstone earns its Marconi nod with a deeply rooted sense of its place in Seattle, according to **KMPS** PD **Becky Brenner**.*

"Part of it is the heritage and longevity we have in serving the market," she says. "We do so much charity work and are so involved in the community. We really make an effort to super-serve all of the counties in the metro area, and when you do that and have done that for 35 years, it becomes ingrained in you.

"We have a really passionate group of people who are always involved in our three-day breast cancer campaign, in our bike drive for the Forgotten Children's Fund and in our St. Jude radiothon. KMPS has been supporting St. Jude from the very beginning. We also participate in a March of Dimes walk. Like so many Country stations, we have continued to help everywhere we can.

"The other aspect is doing as much as we can to promote country music, particularly newer artists. You can't expose as many artists as you'd like, but we try to pick two or three every year to do a number of events with. We want to help them build a following here, and Dierks Bentley is a good example of one of those artists who, to this day, still does very well in Northwest."

The station is also highly involved with local service members. "We have the third-highest concentration of military installations in the country, and we do a lot with the local USO supporting events and activities including homecomings and deployments," Brenner says. "We have Army, Navy and Marines all within earshot, plus, so many settle here when they retire."

Working hard for the broader community sometimes gives way to reaching out to just one family. "At our George and Reba show in the Tacoma Dome in March, I went all the way to the back at the very top to find deserving fans," Brenner says. "I sat down behind a young family – a mom, dad and two young daughters who were holding binoculars. I leaned down and asked, 'What's your favorite radio station?' The mom turned around and said, 'I love KMPS, the morning show Candy & Potter.' She went on and on. So I said, 'How would you like to see the show from the floor?' She almost started crying and told me that I had no idea how much this meant to them. She'd been in a car accident that week, her car was totaled and they had spent their last bit of money buying tickets to the show because her daughters love Reba. Her husband hadn't slept in 24 hours because he worked graveyard and had stayed up to drive them two hours from up north so they could see the show. Then she gave me a big hug. One of the many reasons I love this job."

It All Goes In Cycles: Show Dog-Universal's Joe Nichols helps Seattle area service members assemble bikes for the Forgotten Children's Fund.

Check Yes Or Know: Station staffers with the Richmond area's latest contribution to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

A Heritage Of Caring

Country Station of the Year and Medium Market Station: **WKHK/Richmond**

*When a station has been successful and service-minded as long as Cox's **WKHK/Richmond** has, the benefits are beyond measure.*

"We thought we'd be lucky to be nominated for one Marconi, but when we were up for two, we were thrilled," says PD **Buddy Van Arsdale**. "K95 has been a consistent performer in the ratings since long before I got here. We're *the* Country station in this market and have always done a tremendous amount of community service. This was one of the first stations to work with St. Jude, and over the last 20 years we've collected more than $3 million.

"We recently found out local food banks were having shortages, and started the *Feed Richmond* campaign. Some other things we do include pulling together music for the military. Our troops go through some intense periods in harm's way, but long stretches of boredom, too. Somebody said it would be nice if they had CDs, so we had people bring us new and used albums to send overseas. It ended up being more than 10,000."

Van Arsdale points to his long-tenured airstaff as a terrific asset. "A lot of stations have heritage morning teams, and our Catfish & Lori have been on the air together for 10 years. Catfish goes back to 1987. Middayer Bill Drake has been here for nine years, and PM driver Tara Hunter has been in the market a long time.

He also credits ownership. "You know how Cox is," he says. "We're very listener focused, play the right music and represent ourselves well in the community. And we wouldn't have it any other way. It works."

And then there are those heart-stopping moments of clarity. "It was the end of our annual two-day St. Jude radiothon," says morning co-host **Lori Kelly**. "A young lady who was a new K95 listener stopped by our remote broadcast location. She had just become a University of Richmond graduate school student, and was moved by all of the stories and asked if she could show us something.

"This was our 20th year of raising funds for St. Jude and we had seen a few things along the way, from piggy banks to construction workers with money in a hard hat. But we were not ready for what she was about to show us. It was a picture of her at the age of three in the arms of a loving nurse in Memphis at St. Jude Research Hospital. She was a walking testament to the amazing work being done every day at the hospital. And K95's involvement with *Country Cares* provides us and our listeners an opportunity to make a difference. That's what radio is about."

Contributing Energy

Country Station of the Year and Large Market Station: **KUBL/Salt Lake City**

*Citadel's **KUBL/Salt Lake City** takes fun very seriously, but PD **Ed Hill** says the station also knows what hits home for staff and listeners alike.*

"Anytime we do an event, we believe in putting on a K-Bull 93 carnival," he says. "When there's a concert in town, we'll have 50 to 80 yards of activities going on. We really take over and entertain the crowds by creating a scene. It's the age of the Internet, but even though we've all gone digital, you have to go out and shake hands. And people are thrilled when you do.

"We create experiences, we don't just create listening. And we're proud of our ability to capture a certain energy on-air you don't get on most stations. Our job is to make people feel good, and we do really good job of it."

Sometimes feeling good is about more than entertainment. "The Huntsman Cancer Foundation work we've done here is probably what we're most proud of," Hill explains. "We feel so lucky to be a part of what that organization, John Huntsman and the people of Salt Lake have put together in giving this community a highly-ranked and cutting-edge cancer center.

"Being in Country radio and seeing the success of St. Jude makes me appreciate having a similar situation here. We've really modeled our radiothons after that. Glenn Beck has put John Huntsman on his show and brought national attention to the work done here in Utah. Huntsman is a billionaire, a huge country fan and a conservative politician who was connected to President Reagan. Then you've got a talk show host who is globally influential. And you've got these people from different backgrounds and walks of life who come together on a Country station to make a difference. People come before business for these guys. It's special.

"Cancer has touched everyone. My dad has had it, my mom has had it. Our afternoon guy's mother died from it. One year I interviewed a father and son, 29 and four, who both had it and both eventually passed away. But we can look back on our careers here and honestly say we helped a lot of people."

Acknowledgement of the station's efforts is a boost for his crew, Hill says. "The name of the award speaks for itself. For us to be considered not just as Country station but overall, we take that extremely seriously and are very appreciative of the honor."

You Can Take A Ride On My: A K-Bull listener, with an assist from Kenny Chesney, shows the station some love at a local concert.

Two Cold At Home: WCNL-AM's Steven Smith (l) and two volunteers rally for presents during their annual Toys For Tots event.

Serving Foul Weather Fans

Small Market Station

WCNL-AM/Newport, NH

*WCNL-AM/Newport, NH's GM/PD/AM driver **Steven Smith** uses the power of radio to give back to the community and celebrate Newport culture, a feat that earned him a Marconi nod for Small Market Station of the Year.*

"Our job is to serve and be a voice for the community we're a part of, while still sticking to our musical format," Smith explains. "Everything about the station is trying to be a nice mirror of the community around us.

"I like to think of the radio station as like a weekly newspaper that reports about church functions, local sports and more. We do a feature every week with the Newport Recreation Department, and people love it. They find out when baseball signup is going on and when flag football starts up. I've done big radio before, and I intentionally have it set up this way so it's very [down home]."

Smith says the station isn't just a voice *for* the town, it's also a voice *from* the town. "Having gone to high school here gives me an advantage in so many different aspects," he says. "I know the town like the back of my hand. I know the history. I know what used to happen and how things used to be. My folks are from here and so are my grandparents. My wife does middays and my afternoon drive guy is from a few towns over."

A wide view of country works well in Newport. "We play anything from Patsy Cline to Johnny Cash to new Toby Keith, as well as country crossover artists like the Eagles and Jimmy Buffett. We target late-Generation X to retired baby boomers. I had a woman call the other day who said, 'I like your station because I can't set my clock to it.'"

Getting out of the studio is just as important for small-town radio, according to Smith. "*Toys For Tots* is my favorite event we do," he says. "This year it was something like six degrees on Main Street, but I think the cold weather helped the cause. I actually sat outside for three days with a wireless mic, working on the air from 5am to 6pm. Around day three, people were really feeling sorry for me and just kept walking up with presents. There's a bakery across the street and people kept bringing food. Others brought hand-warming packets. Seeing the listeners step up in those circumstances was pretty awesome."

Exceeding Expectations

Small Market Station

WFRE/Frederick, MD

*PD **Jess Wright** uses **WFRE/Frederick, MD**'s Music City connections to break fundraising records and give back to the community.*

"Knowing it's a bad economy, we went into the 2010 St. Jude radiothon just hoping that we didn't go down from our 2009 total of $174,000," Wright says. "We tried to find creative ways to get people excited about what we were doing. When we had incentive prizes, we tried to make them a bigger deal and tie-in the artists we play who also support St. Jude. If we had Toby Keith tickets, I said, 'I just checked my voicemail, and Toby Keith just called and wants to help. He's donated tickets to his concert.' When we had match hours, I said for one it was an anonymous donor from Nashville, who didn't want to be identified. It really made it seem that Nashville and the country music community were talking about what we were doing here.

"At 3pm on the second day of our radiothon, the request line rang and it was actually Randy Owen," Wright continues. "It validated everything we said on the air for the past two days about people trying to help out. He talked for about 10 minutes and told us it was his goal to raise a billion dollars for St. Jude in his lifetime. We took that as our mission to help him. We asked for 99 Partners In Hope in the following hour-and-a-half and we got them. The phone call energized the staff and the listeners. In the end, we raised just over $312,000.

May's Nashville flood offered WFRE and its listeners another chance to reach out. "Nashville is, indirectly, a place that helps me make my living," Wright says. "I followed the coverage just feeling helpless. I knew I couldn't just collect money, because we had just raised so much for St. Jude a month earlier. That Monday morning, we went on the air and said, 'Nashville is always there for us and nobody else is coming forward. We need to help with this situation.' By Tuesday morning we had a place to collect items, a truck to drive them to Nashville and a driver. At the end of the day Wednesday, we knew we needed a second truck. Then 24 hours later, we needed a third. It was 22.5 tons of donations. We just can't say enough about the heart people have in this area."

Dough Nation: WFRE/Frederick, MD staffers proudly display the oversized fruit of their fundraising labor for St. Jude. Pictured (l-r) PM traffic driver Dave Conrad, MD/middayer Will Robinson, PD/PM driver Jess Wright and AM drive personality Tom Whalen.

Building Characters: Scott Innes (front) gives one enthusiastic thumb-up while raising more than $100,000 to build a Miracle League ballpark. Pictured (l-r, back) are Brandi Polito, "Rhinestone Al," "Hollywood Hal," & LSU baseball coach Paul Mainairi. Pictured (l-r, middle) are Jimi Jamison, Richie McDonald, John Conlee, Larry Stewart, Marty Raybon and Jim Hogg.

Where There's A Need, There's A Way

Medium Market Personality

Scott Innes, WYNK/Baton Rouge

*A 1999 Marconi winner, **WYNK/Baton Rouge's Scott Innes** may be known as the voice of Scooby Doo (among other famous cartoon characters), but it is his local and global service that earned NAB recognition.*

"I have a lot of respect for what the Marconi stands for," Innes says. "I believe radio is a means of public service. My motto has always been to touch the lives of the listeners and through them the area."

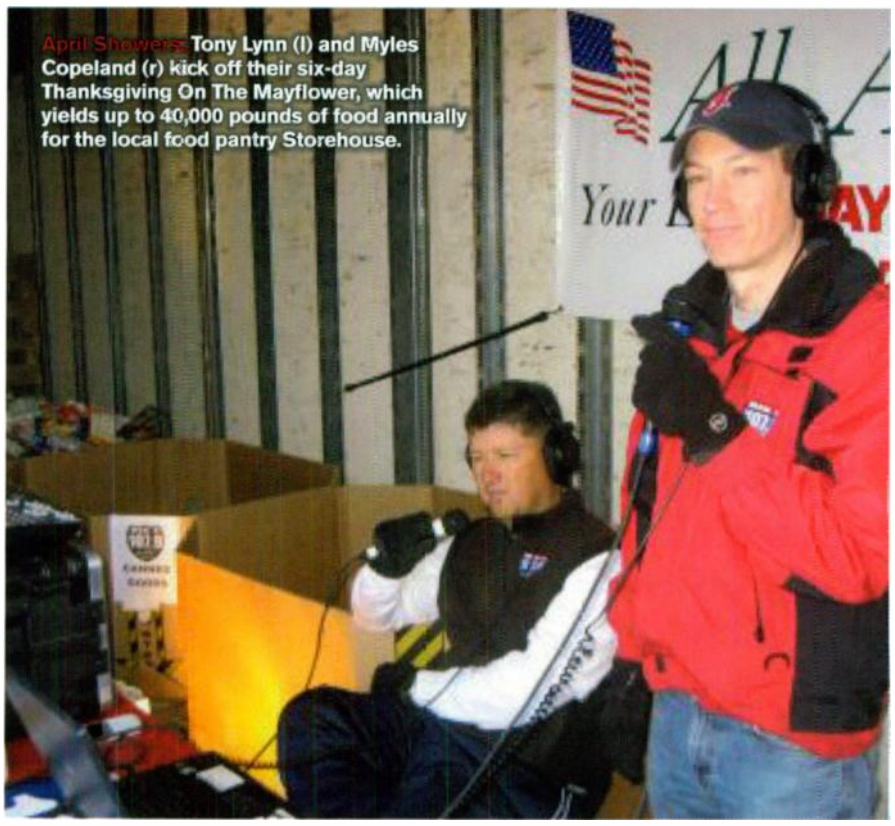
And the listeners, with a little help from Nashville, return the service. "There are Miracle Leagues all over the country, and I saw they were going to build a park here," Innes says. "Then it was just sitting there for months with a sign that said, "Coming Soon," but nothing was being done, so I met with the people who ran it. They were losing money and thinking about just turning it into a T-ball field. I happen to know this little kid who sits in his wheelchair throwing his baseball up and down in the air. He loves to play but there's nowhere for him to do it. That picture came to my mind and I said, 'No, *we're* gonna build this field.' So, I got Richie McDonald, John Conlee, Marty Raybon and Larry Stewart to donate time. We hosted a concert, had a VIP dinner and had silent-auction items from everyone you can possibly imagine. We raised more than $100,000. That got the ball rolling on the park. This year they still need about $75,000 to finish it, so we're doing another concert with Sammy Kershaw, Aaron Tippin and Doug Stone, with Richie and Larry coming back, too. It's already soldout."

Local causes are only part of Innes' efforts. "I overheard people say, 'I've been hearing all about this Haiti earthquake, but I've called all over and nobody is taking donations,'" Innes recalls. "I decided to take up the charge and call it *Hugs For Haiti*. Congressman Bill Cassidy is in our building, so I walked into his office and told him that I wanted to fill a semi-truck with donations and that I needed him to make sure it got to Haiti. He made a couple of calls and said he could get it done. At the same time, the New Orleans Saints were at the Super Bowl, so we had limited edition t-shirts made that had a picture of crawfish with a Saints jersey on it riding a beat up Colt. We sold a ton and raised more than $10,000 for Haiti."

THE FIRST SMASH HIT FROM RASCAL FLATTS' BIG MACHINE RECORDS DEBUT RELEASE: NOTHING LIKE THIS - IN STORES NOVEMBER 16TH

WHY WAIT

RASCAL FLATTS



April Showers: Tony Lynn (l) and Myles Copeland (r) kick off their six-day Thanksgiving On The Mayflower, which yields up to 40,000 pounds of food annually for the local food pantry Storehouse.

Too Much Information? Too Much Heart? No Such Thing

Medium Market Personality

Tony Lynn and Myles, KBQI/Albuquerque

*Community service, honesty and the power of self-deprecation helped KBQI/Albuquerque's **Tony Lynn** and **Myles Copeland** land their Medium Market Personality nod.*

"I feel like one of [our] chief rules is that the more embarrassing something is for us personally, the more urgent it is to be shared on the air," Copeland says. "So long as you're being honest and real, especially about things that people aren't necessarily honest or real about, that's going to make for [an interesting show]."

"Funny that you mention it," Lynn adds. "We talked to Jimmy Wayne a couple times [on his *Meet Me Halfway* walk], and then one day I said to Myles, 'Hey, how about when we get off the air, we drive to meet him?' Because he was tweeting from Socorro, NM, which is about an hour away from the station. So Myles and I jump in the car, pick up some water and something for him to eat. We're driving and driving and we're not seeing Jimmy – just desolate desert. So finally, we stop and I call Jimmy's cell phone. I say, 'Jimmy, it's Tony and Myles. We're looking for you out here on Highway 60.' He goes, 'Oh, man, I'm at the airport in Albuquerque. I'm flying out to do some weekend shows!'"

"This was a bit of a role-reversal because I'm usually the one who comes up with the hair-brained ideas that don't work out," Copeland says. But the important thing, Lynn adds, is that "our listeners were laughing with us."

The scary but ultimately uplifting leap of faith that is their annual food drive testifies to their connection with their listeners. "It always feels like the end of *It's A Wonderful Life*," Copeland says of the event, which provides free groceries to the working poor. "You start off looking at how empty this semi-truck is. When you're sitting there for six days, which is a long time, you realize that were it not for the folks dropping off this food we'd just be two idiots sitting in a supermarket parking lot."

"It's something that we really believe in," Lynn agrees. "This really holds a special place for us, and I think it really translates on the air. That's why I think it's been successful. I'm getting goose bumps, and it's not even November."

Big Picture In A Small Town

Small Market Personality

Cyril "Bub" McCullough, WMCI/Mattoon, IL

*WMCI/Mattoon, IL's **Cyril "Bub" McCullough** may be a native son, but he thinks globally and acts locally to draw attention to causes that are important to his community.*

"First and foremost, you don't do it for the glory," McCullough says. "The goal is to make a difference, and that's what I feel we're doing every day. You never know what you can do when you open that microphone. It's just like a songwriter or a song. The power of the human voice is incredible. And it's hard to never have a bad day, but you just can't because there's someone out there who's having it rough, so you have to be a beacon. It could always be worse."

The power of broadcasting is very real in Mattoon. "When you can relate to people you don't even know, that's an amazing ability," McCullough continues. "It's incredible what our listeners do for us. They give and they keep on giving, and we're probably averaging about $25,000 a year for St. Jude in our annual radiothon. When you get a community of 17,000-18,000 people and average about $25,000 in 12 hours, that really stands out. It's an emotional ride because I've never not done all 12 hours. We get here at 5am, then we go on at 6am and we're on until 6pm. So I'm on the air every three to five minutes. I'm pretty passionate about that one. When you see someone face-to-face at *Relay For Life* and what you've done has saved their life, that matters."

The Marconi nod coincides with McCullough's 21st anniversary at the station. "Maybe at one point, I longed to be Gerry House," he admits. "But there's only one Gerry House and he takes care of his business in Nashville, and he's as good as there is. If I went there, I'd be lost in a big sea. I guess I'd rather be a big fish in a small pond and make a difference every day."

Ultimately, listeners become family. "I've become a part of their life," he says. "There are kids whom I've announced the day they were born and who are now in college. I still keep track of them and their moms and dads. We're still good friends, so I guess that means I'm doing a good job."

Spare Time: Cyril "Bub" McCullough (second from r) takes a break during the 2010 Bowl For Kids' Sake, which had WMCI/Mattoon, IL facing off against WAND-TV to raise funds for Big Brothers Big Sisters. Pictured (l-r) state Representative Chapin Rose, WMCI middayer Lane Blickem, WAND-TV's Greg Trumbold, Senator Dale Righter, WMCI GM Carol Floyd, McCullough and WAND-TV's Adam Watts.

Encore

The following repeat Marconi nominees have been profiled in previous issues of Country Aircheck, but are, of course, no less deserving of praise for an incredible year. Congrats!

Country Station of the Year
KSON/San Diego, WFMS/Indianapolis

Large Market Station
KYGO/Denver

Small Market Station
KOFM/Enid, OK

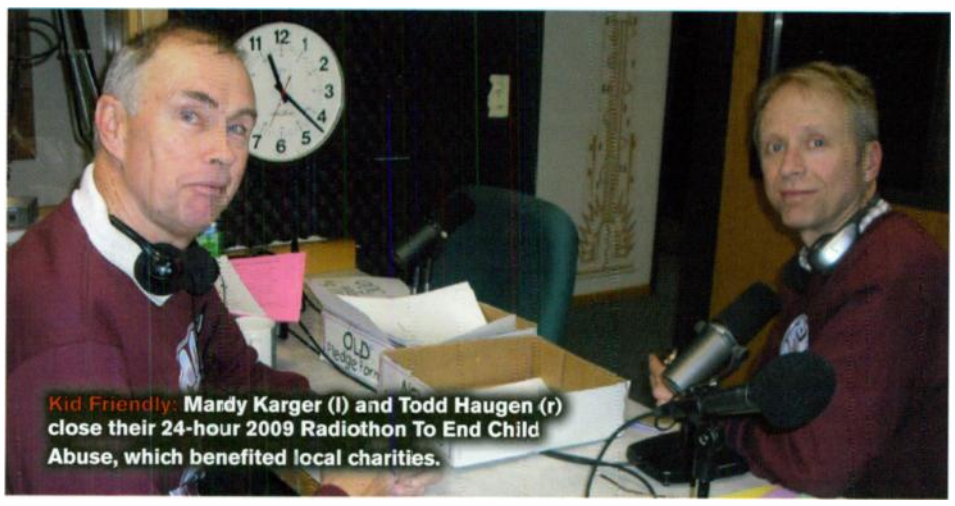
Medium Market Personality
Brian Gary and Todd Harding, KUAD/Ft. Collins, CO

Small Market Personality
Will Payne and Barry Diamond, KITX/Hugo, OK

Great Listeners In The Community & The Studio

Small Market Personality

Todd Haugen and Mardy Karger, KBHP/Bemidji, MN



Kid Friendly: Mardy Karger (l) and Todd Haugen (r) close their 24-hour 2009 Radiothon To End Child Abuse, which benefited local charities.

*KBHP/Bemidji, MN's **Todd Haugen** and **Mardy Karger** build a foundation to support various causes by celebrating one another's differences and through honest broadcasting.*

"We don't really consider ourselves personalities in the community," Karger says. "We just want to do something for others, and I think the people on staff here would do this without having their name on the air. They're just wonderful people to work with."

Haugen agrees. "We're honored not only by this nomination, but also each day by the fact that so many people do regularly listen to our show and that they participate in these causes we support," he says. "If we can turn whatever friendship we've made with our listeners into something that helps, we're happy. And I'm really glad the importance of public service is so well established within our company."

Of course, there are fun and games involved, as well. "We really enjoy what we do on the air, and I think our listeners must be having an okay time, too. If we can turn that into getting people involved with the United Way or ending child abuse or helping out MS or cancer research and all the other things that we work on, then that's really satisfying."

Their personal dynamic fuels the show. "We're sort of like an old odd couple," Haugen says. "We don't agree on everything, but we understand where each of us stands and respect each other's opinions. We're willing to listen to each other, which is, after all, the key element of being a decent team in broadcasting or anywhere else. You have to slow down a few moments, close your mouth so that the other person can talk, and listen and consider each other's position. We've been doing this a long time, and I hope that it goes on for a long time."

"Todd and I are very honest with each other, and we're very honest on the air," Karger elaborates. "We love the loyalty of our listeners. We have youngsters, preschoolers listening to us as well as older [folks]. And we are basking in that light – we're down-home and don't fake anything."

Haugen sums, "We're just ourselves. Homegrown folks in north-central Minnesota."

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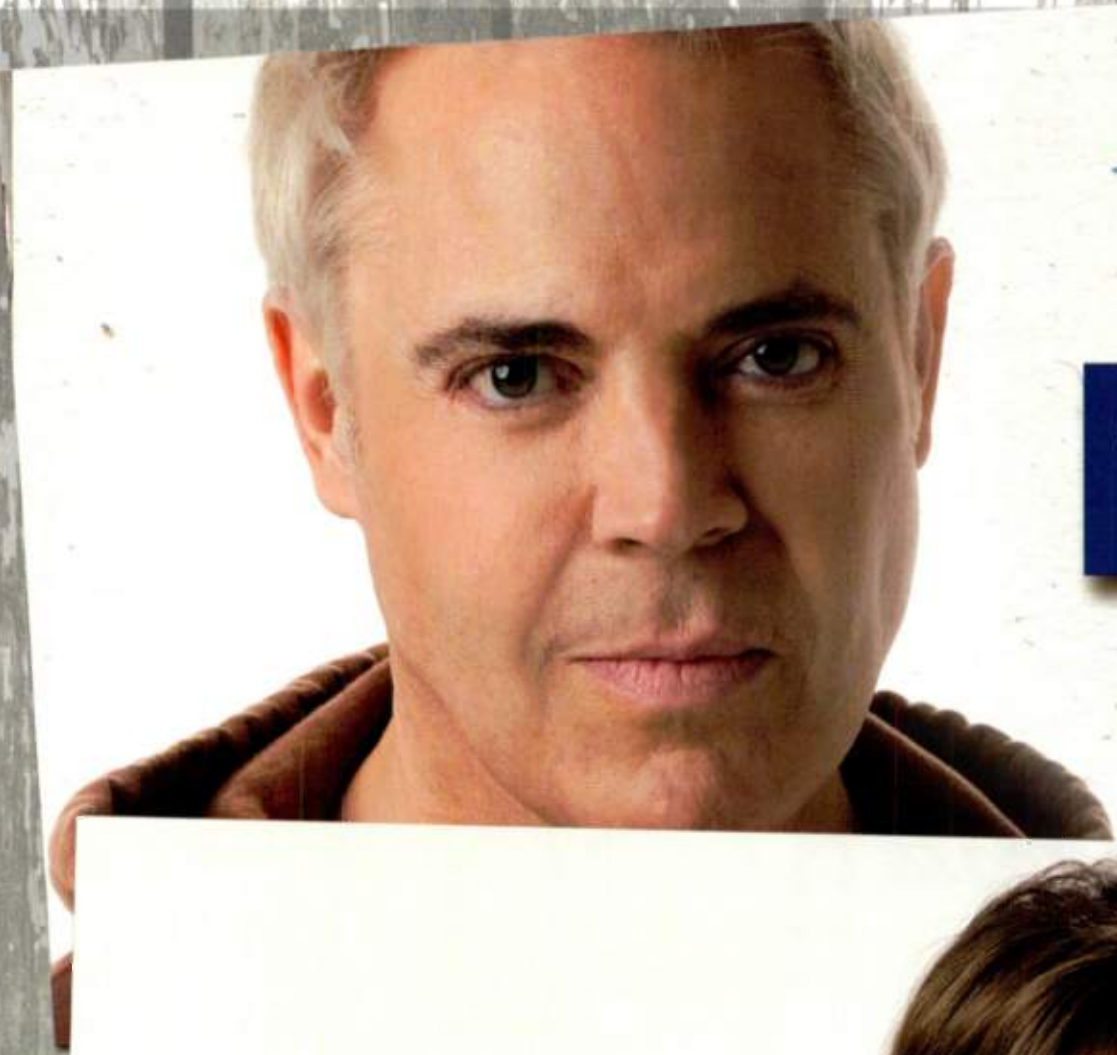

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SHAKE UP THE ESTABLISHMENT

PPM Analysis: Long-Tenured Personality Departures

If you've paid any attention to Country radio over the last 20 years, you know the names. Hudson & Harrigan. Ichabod & Scallops. Lee Rogers. Rick "Bubba" Taylor. And in the markets where these and many other personalities have built their careers, the listeners know them as well. But radio's difficult economics, the advent of PPM with its attendant emphasis on music over talk and many other factors have resulted in a parade of prominent departures. So how does the audience react when an established air talent moves on?

Country Aircheck's analysis of PPM data in markets where such changes have occurred shows an undeniable impact. At the same time, ratings swings in either direction require an understanding of many factors – more, likely, than can be covered in this report. Among the considerations: Were these airshift changes part of an overall overhaul? How loyal were the listeners to the exiting personality? How did listeners react to the new show? Was there an investment in marketing to promote the change? Did the music mix also shift? Did competitors make changes? Did one or more P1 household drop off the panel?

With PPM monthly data, access to Mediabase music logs and Arbitron PD Advantage/Music Monitors tools, one can study in some detail how listeners respond to these kinds of programming changes. The purpose here is not to pass judgment on the motives that led to these decisions, but to illustrate the kinds of ratings shifts that can occur.

Immediate Impact After Change	Up	Down	no change
Share in first month compared to prior month	4	6	0
Share in first month compared to prior show's avg.	5	4	1
Long-term Impact After Change			
New show average vs. prior show's average.	2	4	4
Month-By-Month			
New show above/below prior show's average.	21	27	9

Ratings are adults 25-54

Do 25-54 Adult Ratings Go Up Or Down After A Major Change In Personalities?

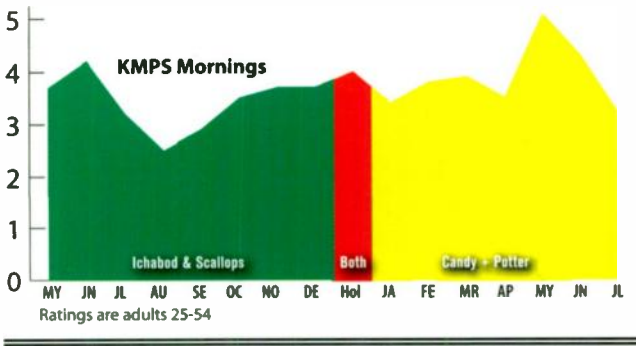
The statistics in the yellow box (above, right) indicate that the PPM ratings impact resulting from key daypart changes is a toss-up. Looking at 10 (nine in mornings, one in middays), the immediate one-month impact can go either way depending on whether one considers the prior month or prior average.

Long-term, the ratings for new shows vs. the prior shows are collectively pretty much a dead heat: We see several more individual months of lower ratings than the previous shows' averages, but the actual net score of all 61 monthly shares since their respective changes (that is, either up, down or unchanged) is, remarkably just +0.2 shares. And if you add up all the differences between the new show averages vs. old show averages, the net is just -0.9 shares across all 10 shows combined.

Several stations in this study made their changes fairly recently, so it's still a bit early to draw any durable conclusions except that each station situation is unique. Here's how it looks market by market:

Seattle: Rattle, Then Hum

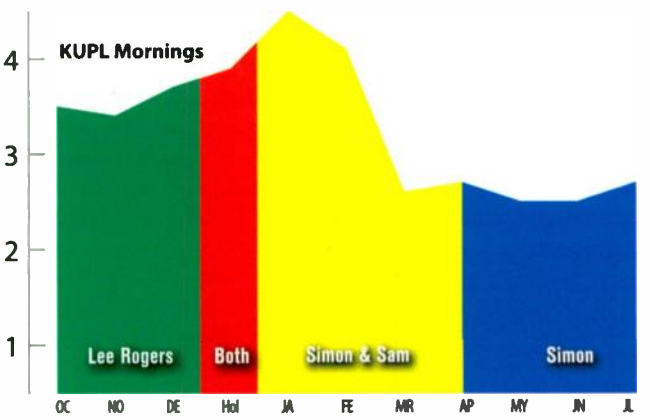
Average Before: Mid-3s. When 23-year station veteran **Ichabod** and his wife/sidekick/producer **Scallops** left **KMPS** last December, they'd been averaging a mid-3 share with adults 25-54 and 46 minutes of daily P1 TSL over the nine PPM monthlies between May and Holiday '09. KMPS' overall 25-54 share was about 0.4 above mornings 25-54.



Ratings are adults 25-54

Average After: 0.5 share higher. Area natives **Candy + Potter** saw their 25-54 share immediately drop from nearly a 4 share to the low 3s in January, even as the station's 25-54 overall share increased two-tenths to close to a 4 share. However, they began to gain share steadily, peaking around a 5 share in May. Since their arrival, C+P have averaged a bit less than a 4 share, with P1 TSL up more than three minutes. Their 12% share gain appears to be partially attributable to a 6% bump in P1 panelists and a 13% P1 cume increase. KMPS' overall 25-54 share is averaging about 0.5 above mornings 25-54.

Interestingly, competitor **KKWF** has done well in 2010, too, with its 25-54 morning share up 15% and daily P1 TSL up 14%, helped by a 7% uptick in P1 panelists.



Ratings are adults 25-54

Portland #1 New Kid In Town

Average Before: Mid-3s. Fifteen-year **KUPL** morning personality **Lee Rogers** – a 41-year broadcaster – had been delivering share and P1 TSL increases among adults 25-54 shortly before exiting December 18, 2009, and averaged in the mid-3s in the station's first four months of PPM prior to his departure. Although trailing competitor KWJJ by about a share, his P1 TSL was notably better than his rival's three of those four months.

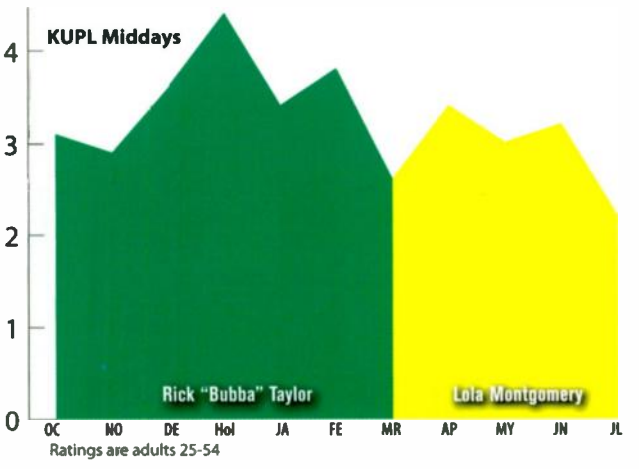
Average After: Mid-3s. Call it a trial period, call it a good start, but either way, the first month of **Scott Simon** and **Amy "Sam" Bishop**'s *Simon & Sam* was impressive, with January well above a 4 share with adults 25-54 and P1 TSL up 12% to a record 85 minutes per day from the Holiday period. After that, shares and TSL softened to around a 4 share and then fell sharply in March, with P1 cume plummeting 41%. Bishop left in May after four months as morning cohost.

Average After: 2.5. Mornings in May and June settled at a mid-2 share each month, rising two-tenths in July, but still well below the two previous lineups, with 17% fewer P1 panelists and lower TSL figures. Overall, in the eight months since Rogers' departure, the morning show has averaged slightly above a 3 share between Holiday '09 and July '10 (down 30%), but despite a low cume, TSL was up in June and July, so things may be turning around.

Meanwhile, format leader **KWJJ** has seen its morning drive 25-54 share rise 22% this year, with P1 TSL up 23% and its lead on KUPL increasing from 1.2 shares during Holiday '09 to 3.4 shares through July '10.

Portland #2 Midday Movement

Average Before: Low 3s. Prior to leaving his midday post at KUPL April 6, 2010 after 25 years with the station, personality **Rick "Bubba Taylor** had been averaging a low 3 share with adults 25-54 from PPM's start in October '09 through March 2010; he met or beat that average four of the five months before exiting. Taylor had a solid 74 minutes of P1 TSL per day, far higher than his average midday TSL of 51 minutes. However, KWJJ had during those seven periods maintained a 1.9-share lead 25-54 in mornings, well above its 0.2 edge overall 6+.



Ratings are adults 25-54

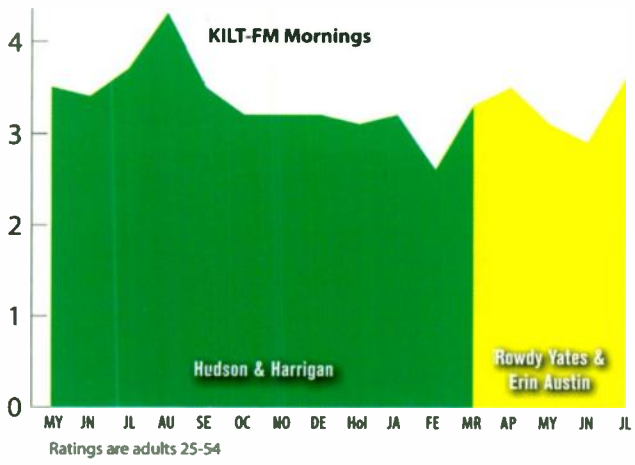
Average After: 0.4 share lower. Former KKWF/Seattle midday personality **Lola Montgomery**, who had worked as MD at KWJJ in the early '90s, took over for Taylor, and in her first month raised middays from a March PPM low in the mid-2s to a low 3 in April. In her first four months, Montgomery was averaging just below a 3, despite a soft July. That decrease is matched by a similar loss of daily P1 panelists. KUPL's daily and P1 TSL figures have held essentially stable since before the transition, while midday P1 cume is down 4%.

Since the change, KWJJ has extended its average midday lead over KUPL by about 1.1 shares to nearly three shares 25-54, thanks in part to a huge daily P1 TSL increase in July

SHAKE UP THE ESTABLISHMENT

to nearly two hours – the best in station PPM history for that daypart – despite losing an average of 20% of its daily P1 panelists over that four-month span.

And as for Bubba Taylor? On April 26, he started in mornings at crosstown Classic Hits KLTH, which had averaged around a 4 share 25-54 from October '09 through April. Bubba's first three months have averaged in the mid-4 range among 25-54s. So far, so good.



Houston: End Of An Era

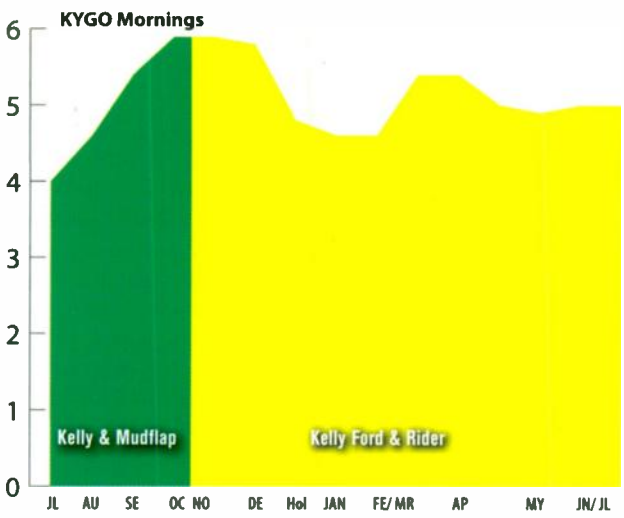
Average Before: Low 3s. The duo of **Hudson & Harrigan (Fred Olson & Randy Hames** were the most recent pairing) were an institution on **KILT-FM** for 28 years, and they averaged in the low 3s among adults 25-54, consistently outperforming the station 6+ and edging out rival **KKBQ** until their final two months, when 'KBQ pulled ahead by a fraction.

Average After: 0.1 share lower. In the first month of **Rowdy Yates** and **Erin Austin**'s morning show following Hudson & Harrigan's exit March 24, the station bumped up two-tenths in April – its highest share in nine months. But that was followed by declines in May and June.

Leading the decrease was a 20% loss of P1 cume compared to the prior show; daily TSL and P1 TSL remained relatively steady. KKBQ looked like the beneficiary because its morning numbers improved 35% between April and May. However, it appears that growth was due largely to a big jump in the number of P1 panelists, which contributed to a 37% cume increase; its TSL figures were basically steady.

Then in June, KKBQ suddenly lost half of its 25-54 morning P1 panelists (and 43% of its May P1 cume) and returned to its P1 panelist average it had from May '09-March '10. And even with its own May-June ratings decline, KILT-FM pulled back in front of KKBQ in June for the first time in five months. July was a breakthrough, as KILT-FM jumped in mornings from below a 3 share to a mid-3 figure 25-54, adding to its lead and outperforming the station 6+ for the first time since January (before the changeover).

Averaging less than 0.1 below her predecessors, Yates and Austin now have equivalent TSL figures despite 10% fewer P1 panelists and 19% less cume. And if you average the four-month span of April-July since they took over, KILT-FM and KKBQ are tied 25-54 with identical shares.

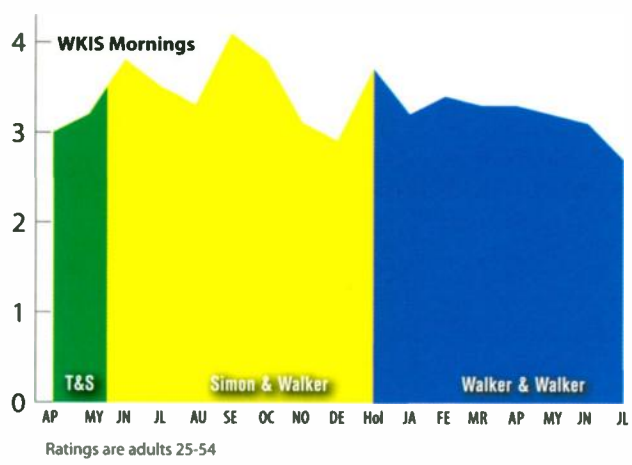


Denver: Does Ford Have A Better Idea?

Average Before: Close to a five share. Steve "Mudflap" McGrew had been the morning sidekick to **Kelly Ford** for eight years, and for good reason: The morning show, which also has included other personalities over that time span, was honored with several CMA Awards, as well as a Marconi in 2008 with **JoJo Turnbeaugh** (who was part of the show between February 2007 and October 2008). Ford and McGrew were anchoring mornings when PPM debuted in the Mile High City in July 2009. In the first four months of PPM (and Mudflap's last four with the station), KYGO's morning drive ratings with adults 25-54 were steadily growing, from almost a 4 share in July '09 to a nearly a 6 in October, which even topped the station's overall 6+ share. P1 panelists were increasing, as were daily TSL and P1 TSL. The show's lead over competitor **KWOF** nearly doubled to almost four shares during that time.

Average After: 0.1 share higher. McGrew departed in mid-October, 2009, as that month's PPM ended, and KYGO paired Ford with former WFYV/Jacksonville morning personality **Mark Newman as Kelly Ford & Rider.** The morning show took a bit of a hit for a few months, but has since recovered and is now outperforming Holiday-January with 10% more P1 panelists and 16% more P1 cume, even with 8% less P1 TSL.

KYGO's lead over KWOF is also averageing a half-share larger than before, and this summer the station set PPM records for cume and share, ranking No. 1 in the metro for the first time.



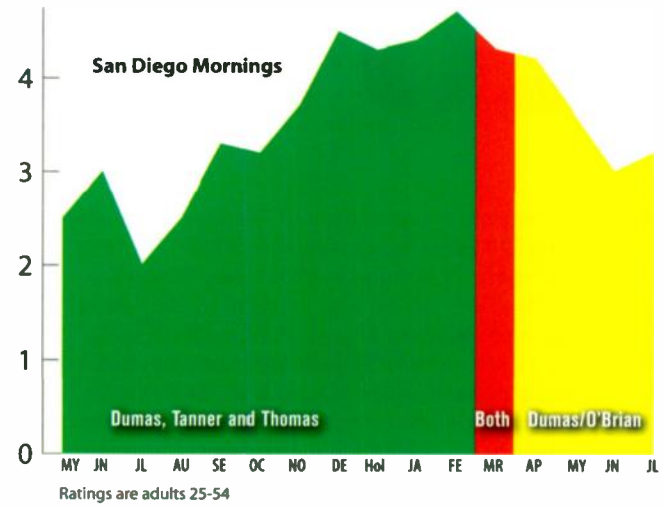
Miami: Changing Partners

Average Before: About a 3 share. At **WKIS/Miami,** the seven-year shift of **Terry & Staci Coffey** had only been in PPM for a couple of months before leaving at the end of May 2009, but both of those two months scored much higher 25-54 than the low 2-share range their final five diary books had averaged.

Average After: Mid-3s. In June '09, **Scott Simon** moved from afternoon drive to mornings, and was joined by WKFR/ Kalamazoo, MI morning cohost **Matt Walker**. They were successful immediately between June and September. However, despite the presence of more P1 panelists, the show's ratings began sliding in the autumn, dropping to below a 3 in December before rebounding to a mid-3 over the Holiday period. In all, the eight-month run matched the station's 25-54 share overall (mid-3, with a 12% increase in both daily TSL and P1 TSL from Terry & Staci Coffey's first two months in PPM).

But Simon exited in December 2009 for KUPL/Portland. He was quickly replaced by former AC WFLC afternoon personality (and current Miami Dolphins stadium announcer) **Kenny Walker**, who joined Matt Walker to create the *Walker & Walker Morning Show*, which debuted Jan. 6, 2010.

Average After: Low 3s. Could WKIS keep up the momentum despite the changes? In terms of TSL, definitely. With 4% fewer average P1 panelists, P1 TSL grew an additional 10%. As for WKIS's share of adults 25-54, Walker & Walker's first month was a low 3, and has averaged that since, which is about 0.3 below the previous team and 0.2 shy of the station's overall 25-54 ratings, while improving cume more than 4%. In short, not bad considering all that's happened here in the past 15 months.



San Diego: And Then There Were Two

Average Before: Mid-3s. After a soft start between May-July 2009, the KSON morning team of **Cliff Dumas, Bill Tanner** and **Morgan Thomas** seemed to be mastering the PPM game, rising from almost a 2 share with adults 25-54 to the high mid-4s in February 2010, averaging a 4.3 the last five months together and 53 minutes of P1 TSL, compared to 45 minutes for the total 12 months in PPM together. Not only that, the trio had increased their average lead over competitor KUSS to 2.3 shares the final five months, up from 0.4 in the market's first five sessions in PPM.

Average After: About 0.1 share higher. When Tanner and Thomas departed from KSON March 15 (mid-month for that session's PPM), they were promptly succeeded by MD/ midday personality **Brooks O'Brian**. The 25-54 average of these first five months is above the former lineup, helped by 6% more 25-54 P1 cume and 25% better P1 TSL. The lead over KUSS is averaging a half-share higher, while KUSS's own 25-54 shares are an average 0.4 lower since the transition at KSON.

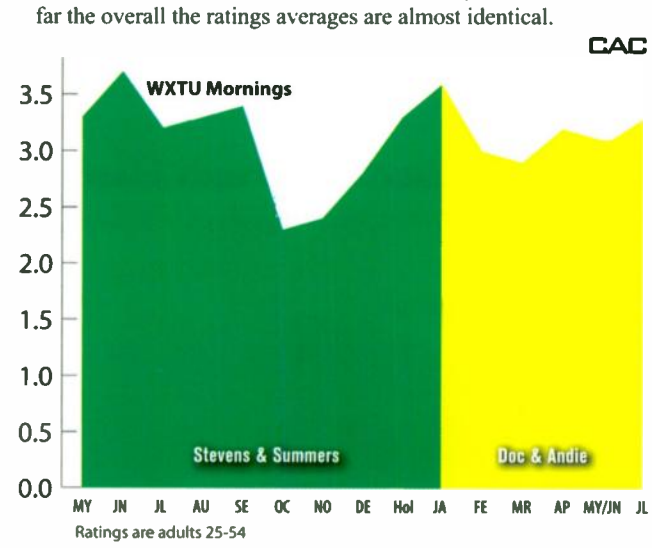
Philly: Too Close To Call

Average Before: About a 3. In April 2009, **Kris Stevens** moved up from afternoons on **WXTU** to join **Andie Summers,** replacing 10-year station veteran **Scott Evans**. *Evans & Andie* had scored a high 2 share among adults 25-54 in February '09.

In the first five months of their 10-month run, Stevens and Summers averaged a bit better – in the low 3s – with adults 25-54. A steep drop-off in October-November preceded three solid ratings gains between December '09 and January 2010 before Stevens left the show, with the final month up to a mid-3, resulting in a total 10-month average of around a 3 share.

Average After: About the same. In early February '10, **Ken "Doc" Medek** took over as cohost, creating *Doc & Andie*, and the show's 25-54 ratings also have averaged around a 3 share, while their show's 25-54 P1 cume has risen 17% , compared to 'XTU's overall 25-54 P1 reach, which is up 13%. With an extra 19% in P1 panelists each week, their P1 TSL has improved 8% on the prior lineup. But the morning show is averaging about 0.9 share 25-54 below WXTU overall 25-54, compared to a half-share shortfall during the last nine months of Stevens and Summers. So it's too early to determine a storyline here, as thus far the overall the ratings averages are almost identical.

CAC



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FIRST IN COUNTRY

Country Countdown USA

"Lon's passion for country music really comes through the speakers. His *incredible Nashville connections* insure that the *top stars* will be helping him count down the hits and seem very comfortable giving him the *'inside scoop'*. It's fun!"

Becky Brenner, Program Director/Digital Web Manager - KMPS-FM/CBS Radio Seattle

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"The Opry show is a *wonderful way to combine the past and the present* in an entertaining way that has our *listeners anxiously awaiting the show!*"

Tonya Campos, Program Director - KKGO/Los Angeles

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Rowdy Yates, KILT-FM, Houston.

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Mark Phillips, Program Director/Afternoon Personality - 99.5 The Wolf KPLX-Dallas/Ft. Worth, TX

Country Gold

"A longtime favorite on our station. *Listeners love to hear 'memory music'* and Rowdy does a phenomenal job playing the *perfect mix of classic country hits*. The show consistently performs in *double-digit shares*, for both Persons 12+ and Persons 25-54 and it's always the *number one ranked show* in our Metro on Saturday nights. Keep up the great work, Rowdy!"

Mike James, OM/PD - WPCV FM Lakeland/Winter Haven, FL

Stars of Country

"Stars of Country *delivers big hits* with a *big host*....Cadillac Jack....it's *a ratings winner!*"

Tim Roberts, Operations Mgr/Program Director - WYCD-FM Detroit

Country's Cutting Edge

"*Ramblin' Ray works for our weekends* --- let him work for yours!"

Marci Braun - WUSN Chicago

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"We air *TWCMC* on Sunday mornings, using your *scripts and drops*, recording and producing it with our morning show. This allows us to talk about local events and concerts during the show and really *'connect' us to the country stars*. It's a great show and *I wouldn't change it for any other countdown show!*"

Gary Shores, Program Director - K-100/WKKO

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THE WEEKLY COUNTRY MUSIC COUNTDOWN

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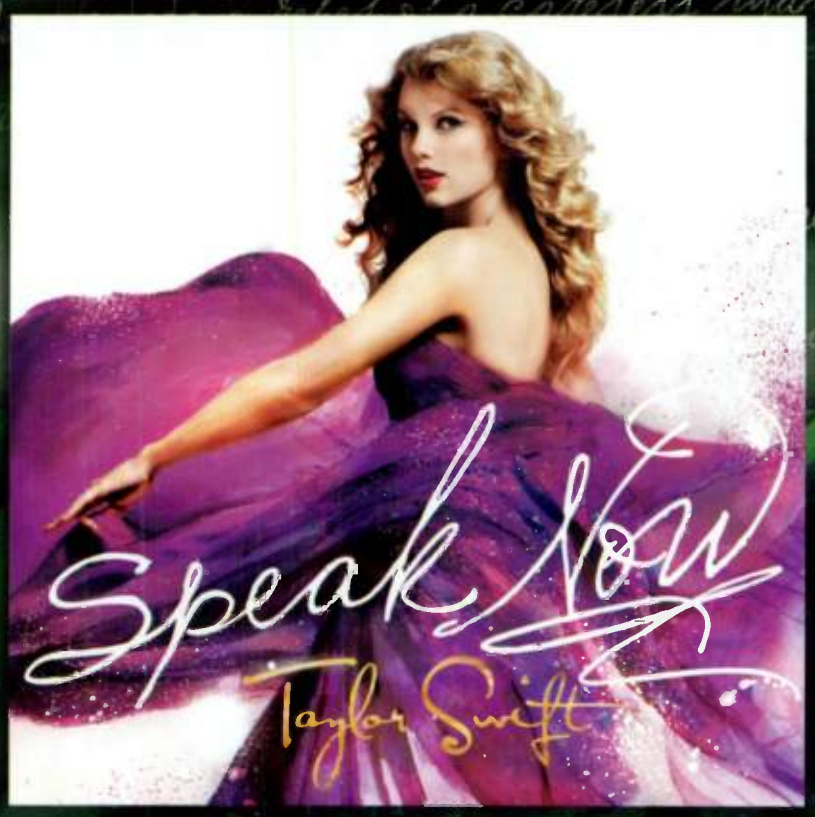
WRH

Mine

Taylor Swift



The first smash hit from Taylor Swift's much-anticipated release

Speak Now

in stores October 25th

BIG MACHINE RECORDS

TaylorSwift.com
SpeakNow13.com
BigMachineRecords.com

POWER 31

Changing Of The Guard

There's very little science in our annual Power 31 ranking – now in it's fourth year – and that's completely intentional. Country Aircheck readers are simply asked to rank individuals who they believe have the greatest influence over airplay decisions – people who directly control airplay or influence airplay on behalf of artists. Rather than a hard, statistical study of charts and airplay, what you get instead is a late-August snapshot of perception. Perception, however, can be a powerful thing. And the perception of power, in and of itself, has power.

If this year's reader response is any indication, then, the centers of influence are shifting. Ten never-before-ranked label and radio pros (above) make the list, including label heads, radio execs and promo veeps. As in years past, we asked a close associate of each ranked executive to describe or illustrate what makes them so effective.

1 Scott Borchetta
Big Machine Label Group President/CEO

"The best story I can tell you about Scott is how I met him," says entrepreneur and Big Machine partner **Ray Pronto.** "I had sold my business a year prior and was basically retired when I ran into an artist named Dusty Drake. I was very impressed with his music and started a little label from Pittsburgh with Dusty as my artist. After a few hundred thousand dollars spent and still not able to get any meaningful radio play, [Keymarket VP/Programming PA-OH] Frank Bell suggested that I meet with a guy named Scott Borchetta to see if he'd be willing to help me get more radio play for Dusty.

"The meeting was scheduled for 20 minutes. I played one of Dusty's songs for Scott named 'Love You.' Scott reached into his desk and grabbed a version of the same song recently recorded by his initial artist, Jack Ingram. We laughed, the meeting extended itself to about three hours and I was so impressed with Scott's knowledge and aggressiveness towards building his own label that, on the spot, I agreed to 'close out' the angel investment he was still seeking and become his partner. During that same meeting, he played a couple of songs from an unknown artist named Taylor Swift and asked me what I thought. I said I'd probably wait a year or so until her voice matured. Wow, was I wrong, and was he ever right! He's been right ever since, and I simply stay out of his way and enjoy the ride."

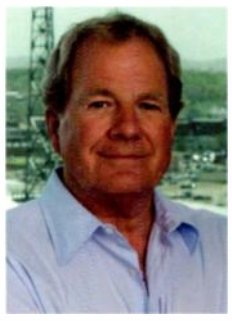
2 Mike Dungan
Capitol/Nashville President/CEO

"Mike has been involved with all of my albums since 2002, and I feel, as an artist, that I've been incredibly lucky to have him at the helm," says Capitol/Nashville artist **Keith Urban.** "He's a passionate music lover, has enormous respect for the artists that make it and has such a unique way of rallying behind literally anyone he truly believes in. But he's more than just a record label president. Mike has this ability to make you want to try harder. He's hard to impress and so, early on in our relationship, I took to calling him 'Coach,' and that's what I still call him today. 'Hey Coach, what's happenin'?' He's never asked me to not do that, so I'm guessin' he's cool with it and maybe even sees some of that in himself. It's a compliment, and I think Capitol Records is also pretty darn lucky to have someone like him overseeing this crazy game every day. It's certainly way more fun. And I just wanna add my congratulations to Dungan on this extraordinary feat. Here's lookin' at you, Coach!"

3 Jaye Albright
Albright & O'Malley Consulting Partner

"I would be hard-pressed to name another person who has helped me more in my career," notes WYCT/Pensacola, FL PD **Kevin King.** "I've worked with Jaye in several markets and situations, each with unique challenges. Every time, her expertise, advice and direction have been one of the strongest weapons in our arsenal. I first met and started working with Jaye in the beginnings of WKXC/Augusta, GA where we were up against a heritage station with a 30-year head start. Countless times as a first-time programmer I would want to stray in directions that would be far from beneficial for the station or my career. During those times, Jaye would start the correctional sentence the same way, 'Kev, you're not wrong, but...' Following that would be the explanation of just how I was screwing up. Jaye's guidance has been just as important with our independent operation now in Pensacola at Cat Country 98.7. The difference between then and now is that Jaye no longer suggests I'm 'not wrong' when delivering the correctional."

4 Luke Lewis
Universal Music Group/Nashville Chairman

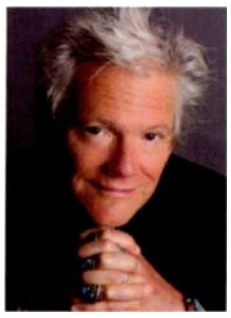


"The success of our Nashville company and the creative talent of Luke are inseparable," states Universal Music Group Chairman & Co-CEO **Doug Morris.** "Besides being an enormously gifted record executive, Luke is a visionary and leader who tackles challenges with intelligence, passion, craft and dignity. With Luke in charge, we know that we have many years of extraordinary, impassioned and insightful music-making ahead of us."

5 Doug Montgomery
Clear Channel Premium Choice PD
CC/Grand Rapids Dir./Prog. Operations

"Doug is one of our very *best* at knowing the Country format beautifully, and for having the ability to multi-task, lending his considerable expertise to *multiple* programming situations across the company," says Clear Channel SVP/Programming Ops Center & Premium Choice **Darren Davis.** "I've had the pleasure of working with Doug for many years in several different capacities, and I'm always impressed with his intensity and *strong* desire to win – and win big. He's proven to be the perfect choice to run our Mainstream Country Premium Choice channel. Doug brings real value to the Premium Choice affiliates. A former boss of Doug's once said to me, "Darren, I get to my desk every morning by 8am, and I know that no later than 8:10am, I'm gonna see the shadow of Doug Montgomery lurking at my door, eager to share a new idea he dreamt up overnight. He never stops plotting and improving things."

6 Skip Bishop
Sony Music/Nashville VP/Promotion
Arista/Nashville VP/Promotion



"Skip is the most self-motivated, creative person I have ever worked with," asserts former Sony/Nashville EVP **Butch Waugh.** "I tell everyone Skip is a pioneer: he explores places in his own mind that don't even exist in others. He knows no boundaries when it comes to ideas. It is a testament to his staff, since to work with Skip you must possess a faster internal motor than others, must be on the cutting-edge, be able to change direction on a dime without losing ground and be willing to throw caution to the wind in the name of accomplishing goals.

"One story: Following an exhausting long night's effort promoting records, Skip returned to his hotel room. Knowing he had to be back at it early the next day, he called the hotel's front desk to set his wake-up call. He told the receptionist to please ring him at 6am. Her reply was, 'You just missed it.' True story."

7 Royce Risser
UMG/Nashville SVP/Promotion

"Royce is not a typical boss," understates MCA/Nashville VP/Promotion **Van Haze,** hastening to add, "and I mean that in the best way possible. Promotion can be a giant, stress-filled balloon and absolutely aggravating at times. He keeps us all focused on the big things and at the same time makes sure we have the most fun possible. In this year alone, he jumped out of a box and scared the crap out of me, shot me in the back with a blow-gun dart in the office and told an elevator full of ladies I have horrible hemorrhoids – all while talking to radio. He is a true multi-tasker and one heck of a great guy to work for."

8 Becky Brenner
KMPS/Seattle PD

"Becky has always led by example," says longtime KMPS MD/personality **Tony Thomas.** "She's ready and available to our staff and callers throughout the day, and her door is open way more than it's closed. She makes it to practically every live country show that comes to the Seattle area and is always present to support our crew at big station events. Becky's always among the first to arrive at our St. Jude radiothon and the last to leave. She'll take on any role that needs to be filled, from on-air pitches to answering the phone. And when it comes to passion for the music, no one in the building cranks a great song up louder than Beckyy does on her office stereo."

9 Gregg Swedberg
Clear Channel/Minneapolis OM
KEEY/Minneapolis PD

"Gregg's passion for music is well known, but what should really be known is that Country music's future has always been in good hands with Gregg," relates KAJA/San Antonio PD **Travis Moon,** who was Swedberg's MD at KEEY. "Saying I learned a lot from Gregg is really an understatement. He's blunt, to the point and I always felt I knew exactly what he expected. I worked with Gregg for 11 years. I always found it funny that lots of folks would ask, What's it like to work for Gregg?' My response was, depending on the year, 'Well, I've worked with him for over seven-eight-nine-10-11 years. That should pretty much answer your question.'

"Gregg always made me feel challenged, and his integrity for the music and Country radio is off the charts. It is proven every week when someone in the industry says, 'That must be a pretty good song if KEEY added it.' We need more of that in Country radio, but we also need to celebrate a guy like Gregg, who brings the best to our industry every day. I'm pretty proud to have worked for him, and when he gets recognized, it is very much deserved."

10 Steve Hodges
Capitol/Nashville & EMI Nashville SVP/Promotion

Capitol/Nashville VP/Promotion **Shane Allen** recalls the words of a former president in describing his boss. "There's a great Ronald Reagan quote that really summarizes Steve's leadership style," he says. "'There is no limit to what you can accomplish if you don't care who gets the credit.' I've heard Steve say over and over, 'There are no egos here,' and that really is the truth. And it starts with him. He's the first one to pull the entire staff into a No. 1 photo or send an e-mail to the rest of the office, praising a job well done by someone else. He'll be right there with us sending e-mails, watching spins and making calls at 11pm on a Saturday when we're in the middle of a No. 1 battle. But when it comes to celebrating the battles won or assessing the battles lost, he stands with his staff just like he expects us to do with each other. There's no time for being territorial or pounding chests, because we're all invested equally in our artists and each other."

11 Gary Overton
Sony Music Nashville Chairman/CEO

"In my eight years working alongside Gary O, I found him to be a tremendous businessman who cared greatly for the songwriters and artists he supported," says EMI Music Publishing EVP/GM **Ben Vaughn.** "He's very much a leader by example. And he is a leader when the spotlight is on and also when no one is watching. I was always impressed with his consistency, whether he was dealing with someone brand new to the Row struggling to get their career started, or counseling an artist at the top of the charts."

12 Clay Hunnicutt
Clear Channel SVP/Programming VP/Country

"Clay uses his calm, confident manner to inspire his employees and keep them focused on the right things," says WUBL/Atlanta APD/MD/afternoon personality **Lance Houston.** "I learned so much in my early tenure here at the Bull watching Clay keep his cool in some very frustrating situations that always come up when a company decides to take on a heritage radio station in any market. I was so impressed by the way he never threatened any record rep or artist when we'd run into a roadblock early on. Clay shows his passion for and dedication to our format every day. It's an honor and pleasure to have worked for Clay over the last few years."

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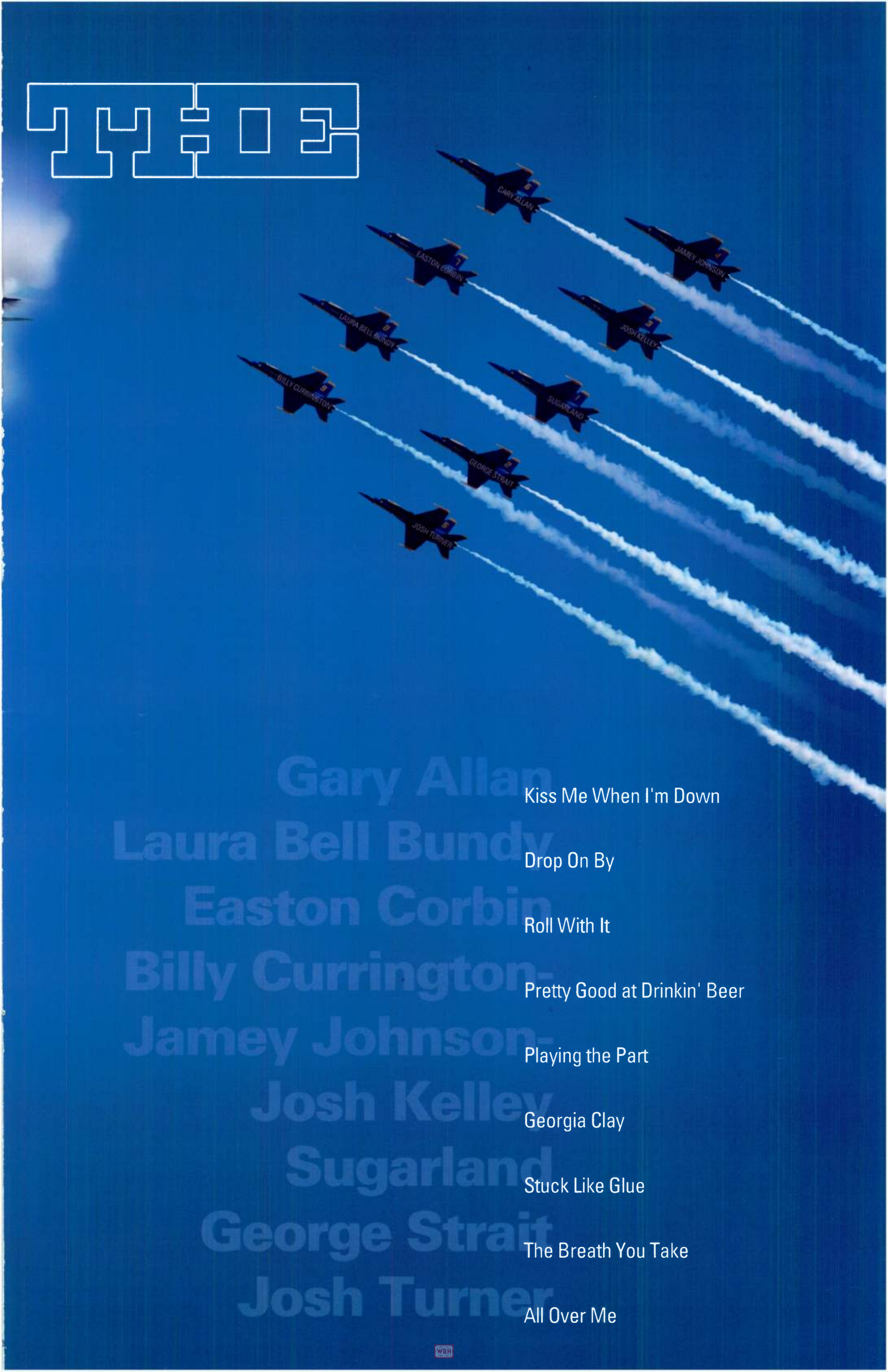
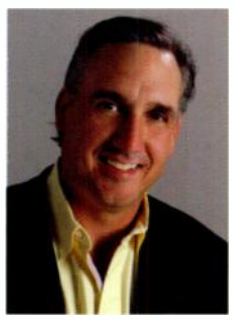


Gary Allan	Kiss Me When I'm Down
Laura Bell Bundy	Drop On By
Easton Corbin	Roll With It
Billy Currington-	Pretty Good at Drinkin' Beer
Jamey Johnson-	Playing the Part
Josh Kelley	Georgia Clay
Sugarland	Stuck Like Glue
George Strait	The Breath You Take
Josh Turner	All Over Me

13 Rusty Walker
Rusty Walker & Assoc.
Programming Consultant

Wooden Media Services principal **Joel Burke** worked with Walker during Burke's decade-long tenure as the PD of KYGO/Denver. He remembers, "We had just wrapped up a long day of sitting through a research study, and the results weren't very positive. However, leave it to Rusty to get us all laughing. He plugged in his laptop and we began watching a number of very funny videos. We were like a bunch of middle-school kids laughing 'til we were crying. The results of the study didn't change, but we all left that day with a positive attitude ready to take the challenges head-on!"

14 Jeff Garrison
CBS Radio VP/Country
CBS Radio/Phoenix OM, KMLE/Phoenix PD



"Jeff is one of those guys who just seems to make good things happen," says KILT-FM/Houston APD/MD **Greg Frey.** "I felt we got a lot of breaks at KILT because of Jeff. Artists, label heads and managers all love being around the guy because he's so full of life and full of great stories. Just before Jeff left for Phoenix, we had a 6pm listener event at the station with Jerrod Niemann. The same day, Warner Music Nashville brought John Rich by at 4:30pm for an interview. Jeff, John Rich and the Warner guys went to dinner and I stayed to handle the Jerrod event. When I was done, Jerrod and Arista's Diane Monk and I decided to grab a bite at the Armadillo Palace. We get there and find out George Ducas is playing that night. Just as he begins his set, in through the front door walk Jeff and John Rich, along with WMN's Chris Stacey, Chris Palmer and Ray Vaughn. They had no idea we were there! We put a couple of tables together and both Jerrod and John wound up onstage with George. Folks in the Palace were freaking out. Jeff and I looked at each other with big smiles on our faces. I know it's never lost on Jeff how cool it is be in Country radio."

15 Mike Curb
Curb Records Chairman

"Mike has an undying belief that no matter what changes, that thing we call a hit will always be something people want to hear and own," says Curb VP/A&R **Doug Johnson**. "He has retained a belief that he is in the business of magic. Look at 'Indian Outlaw,' 'Blue' or 'Three Wooden Crosses,' which I wrote: He will champion music he thinks is special even if it isn't right down the middle." Adds Stroudavarious CEO and producer **James Stroud**, "Mike is a student and historian of every kind of music and he applies that knowledge to his label and music. He's not only a dear friend, but he's been an amazingly successful partner with me on a lot of artists."

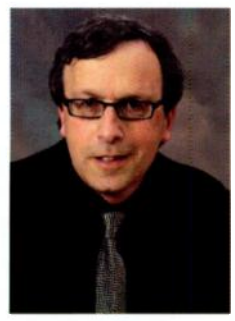
16 Joe Galante
Sony Music/Nashville
Consultant

"Working with Joe Galante is an experience," says Arista/Nashville artist **Brad Paisley.** "He's tireless in his enthusiasm, competitive in the best sense of the word, supportive of each artist's idiosyncrasies, loyal and flexible (although I've never once gotten him to go to lunch anywhere other than Midtown Cafe. He won't do it.) There has never been a more unique blend of 'Northern city boy Italian partial-redneck country lovin' class act in Hugo Boss shoes.' He is the benchmark, the gold standard by which all future record men will be judged. I've truly loved every minute of working with him."

17 Mike Moore
Entercom VP/Country
KWJJ/Portland PD

"Sarge (I called him Sarge almost from the start) is just fabulous," says WSIX/Nashville morning personality **Gerry House** of the man who programmed WSIX from 2000-2003. "He made me feel good. He was always there, and I knew he was someone you could count on. He worried and prodded and poked and wondered and changed and fixed and won. I still love the thought of him charging out of his office laughing and charging me up. He is one of the good guys, and I miss him all the time. We still talk. I turn to him for opinions about my future and my current stuff. He doesn't even work for the same company as I do. *That* I still don't understand, nor will I ever get over. He made me better."

18 Joel Raab
Joel Raab Associates
Country Programming Consulting



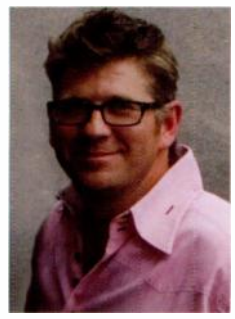
"I've known Joel for over 25 years, but just recently have been working with him as our consultant," says KFKF/Kansas City PD **Dale Carter.** "Before Joel came to us, he was consulting WDAF-AM across town. They were just getting ready to launch WDAF-FM, and he came after the only jock I didn't have under contract. I, of course, tried to bluff him when I heard about it, and he, of course, was a very cool customer. They got my jock and we eventually got Joel. From my perspective, it was a good trade!"

19 John Esposito
Warner Music Nashville President

"My favorite thing about John is his love for music," WMN artist **Blake Shelton** says. "The first time I sat down to have a beer with him, an hour later he was onstage singing karaoke. He came out on the road with me for awhile, and I figured we'd spend the time talking about business, but all we did was play old songs on the iPod and talk music. He couldn't wait for soundcheck each day because he'd get up there after it was over and play drums for half an hour. Then he'd move over to one of the guitars.

"He's fascinated by music, and that's what drives him. He doesn't know the word 'no,' so he's not afraid to look you in the face, smile and tell you he won't accept anything less than a No. 1 single. And he'll stop at nothing to get it done. He's completely changed the mindset of Warner Music Nashville in not quite a year, and by doing that has also changed the outcome."

20 Michael Powers
Bigger Picture Group Co-President/Promotion



"I met Michael for the first time when I joined the Mercury team in the early '90s" begins long-time Powers associate and friend **John Ettinger,** who recently opened Ettinger Talent Associates. "The funniest man I've every met, which is not a distinction I give lightly. Wit and intelligence. He was so fun to be around that we all pretty much fought over who got to play golf with him. Even Luke Lewis was in the fight. We were just hoping to be in his cart as he made up dirty lyrics to Shania or Toby or Sammy Kershaw songs.

"Michael is very much a music guy, passionate about country and all forms of music. He has written songs and can make up the funniest songs on a piano you've ever heard. When he gets on the keys, it's gotta be like hanging with Burt Bacharach in 1967. Magic. He's written at least one smash country song. He's too shy to bring it out around the industry, but if a publisher is reading this, you should give him a call.

"Michael never had a pretense or concern about the normal or the polished way to tackle promotion. He wakes up each day and jumps at it. His mind says, 'Should that person be playing this record? Well, then, let's get it played.' He has a terrific quality with his teams and is never afraid to be raw and real, sometimes dramatically real. He instills a feeling in the younger staff that he's with them and feeling the struggle for the music out in the field. There is a long list of terrific promotion people who've learned from him, including Damon Moberly, Joe Putnam, Jeff Solima and John Zarling. I mention Solima because I guarantee he's had a great time the past few years with Michael. Of that, I have no doubt."

21 Kerry Wolfe
CC/Milwaukee Dir./Programming
WMIL/Milwaukee PD

"Kerry is the smartest programmer I've ever worked with," says WMIL MD **Mitch Morgan,** who's worked with Wolfe for 21 of the last 27 years Morgan has been with WMIL. "He is also the hardest-working. He works all day at the station and then another couple of hours at home in the evening. Consultants are always telling us we have the best music flow of any Country station they've heard. That is because of Kerry. He is also a devoted family man to wife Jessica and daughter Macie. In his free time (not a lot of that), you can find him on his boat on Pewaukee Lake. And, one other thing you may not know about Kerry: If he's relaxed enough, he will sing karaoke!"

22 Jimmy Harnen
Republic Nashville President

"One of the things that makes Jimmy so successful is his ability to still have fun and laugh about life," says KBWF/San Francisco PD **Mike Krinik,** who did regional promotion for Harnen at Capitol/Nashville. "I don't know of many label presidents who still are willing to put on a nun costume or prisoner outfit to get the right 'photo op.' Not only does Jimmy enjoy life, but he loves the fruit of hard work just as much. Jimmy is one of the power company's best customers (always working late with the lights on), but that work, as I learned from him, is 'finding a way through.' His job is to convince someone to play a song that they may not 'hear' at the moment, and I don't know a more persuasive individual in town. Coming from such innocent beginnings, picking up a mic or playing a piano as he did as teenager, Jimmy did it because he loved the sound of music and it moved him. Decades later, as a label head, Jimmy continues his passion for music by seeking out young talented people who have a dream, just as he once did. He takes their talent and helps them make their dreams become a reality."

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23 Jack Purcell
Big Machine VP/Promotion

"One of the best kept secrets in Nashville is finally out," says veteran record exec **Nick Hunter**, who worked with Purcell at Warner Bros. and Audium. "Jack is getting some of the credit he deserves for being someone who follows through on what he's asked to do, not being afraid to say 'no' and telling the truth. At the end of the day, that's what means the most. He started in the mailroom at Warner Bros., worked his way up to VP/Promotion, got his head chopped off there, joined me at our little label Audium and he and his dog Lucky took a David Lee Murphy single top 5. I think we sold 200 copies. Scott Borchetta was firing up his Big Machine, asked Jack to come on board and they haven't done too bad. He has to be good if for nothing else than the fact he doesn't like baseball or auto racing."

24 Jan Jeffries
Cumulus SVP/Programming

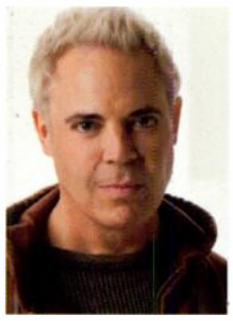
"After 25 years in the business I thought I knew a lot about radio, but Jan has truly opened my ears to a whole new level of understanding programming," admits KPLX (The Wolf)/Dallas PD/afternoon personality **Mark Phillips.** "I've never known anyone so committed to winning and so attentive to detail. His leadership and guidance are large parts of the reason why 99.5 the Wolf is the top Country station in Dallas-Ft. Worth *and* the most-listened-to Country station in America!"

> "There is no limit to what you can accomplish if you don't care who gets the credit."

25 Jeff Solima
Bigger Picture Group
Co-President/Promotion, New Revolution Partner

"I've worked with Jeff for more than 15 years," says his New Revolution partner **Rob Dalton.** "He's the best promotion man in this business. I'm proud to know him and work with him, but I can't decide which story best demonstrates his leadership and professionalism: It's either the time he jumped up onstage, surprising Wynonna, to sing a song he didn't know the words to at a showcase. Or maybe it's the time he tried to resuscitate [New Revolution rep] Maurisa Pasick during a medical emergency while wearing a Gumby costume. Gumby has no hands. So it's hard to say; the list is pretty long. I do know that Jeff has fought for and earned his place in this industry and has a passion to get things done. Congrats, bro!"

26 Blair Garner
After MidNite
and Blair Garner Show Host



"It takes leadership and effectiveness to sustain a nationally syndicated radio program for nearly 17 years," notes Premiere Radio Networks VP/Integrated Marketing & Promotions **Rick Murray.** "Two primary reasons behind Blair's success are passion and a desire to step up to the plate and do what is right. The future of any industry is dependent upon supplying it with new 'product.' Blair has always taken a leadership role in giving new artists an opportunity. As the story goes, when Victoria Shaw called him during the ACMs a few years ago and asked if she could bring a new act up to his room so he could meet them and take a listen, he said 'Sure.' He thought he had a few minutes, so he thought he would jump in the shower. There was a knock at the door (housekeeping, Blair assumed), and as he opened the door wrapped only in a towel to ask the attendant to come back later, there stood Victoria and her new friends – an unsigned act now known as Lady Antebellum! Being from Texas, Blair had to be hospitable, so he invited them in, where they all visited and Lady A performed a few songs for Blair. Luckily for all of them, there was no wardrobe malfunction."

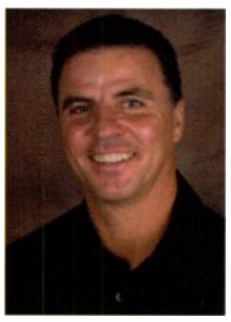
27 Meg Stevens
WMZQ/Washington PD
WPOC/Baltimore PD

"I still remember the first time that I had a conversation with Meg," recalls WXTU/Philadelphia PD **Shelly Easton.** "We bumped into one another at a Clear Channel programmers' meeting. She had just moved from Syracuse to Cleveland to program WGAR. I had just landed my very first PD position and admired her promotion to Cleveland. I noticed that 'GAR had taken a nice bump in the ratings, so to break the ice I asked her how she did it. She was wearing glasses and looked very smart, and as a new PD, I was ready to be enlightened. 'I sucked less than the book before,' she said as she grinned and made her way past the Continental breakfast line to blend in with the rest of the programmers taking their seats. I smiled and immediately liked her. It was an insightful moment. Meg Stevens is no bullshit. She looks at business and programming with a level head, and consistently gets the job done without patting herself on the back. Best of all, Meg has a unique, dry sense of humor that makes her one of my favorite people."

28 Damon Moberly
Mercury VP/Promotion

"Damon is the consummate team player," asserts Mercury VP/West Coast Promotion **Pat Surnegie.** "We've both been on the Mercury team for double-digit years, and he's always been, as the NE regional previously and now as our team leader, completely focused on the goals and successes of the team. He's also one of the most passionate music guys I know. He's a great leader and a great friend."

29 Mike Kennedy
Wilks/Kansas City VP/Programming, KBEQ/Kansas City PD



"Mike has always amazed me with his ability to identify artists and songs that may not work across America, but will work well on Q104," says KVOO/Tulsa PD **Luke Jensen,** who spent 11 years in a variety of capacities working with Kennedy at KBEQ, KMXV & KCKC/Kansas City. "I remember doing nights and him asking us to give the song "Mrs. Steven Rudy" a spin. I know Mike well and wondered to myself if he'd spent the day at Baja 600 enjoying the Margarita Especial, or if he was serious. He was serious, and so was the reaction we got from the listeners. There have been many of these instances over the years when Mike was able to create Kansas City superstars by believing in the music and sharing it with the Q104 audience. That is a special gift, and he is certainly deserving of a slot on the Power 31 list."

30 Adrian Michaels
Curb Records VP/Promotion

"It was 16 years ago when I first met Adrian Michaels," recalls Curb Dir./National Promotion **Mike Rogers.** "One of our earliest experiences together was working a Tim McGraw show, ironically enough. He had Martina on the bill with RCA and I had Sons of the Desert with Epic. After work was done for the evening, we went out and celebrated 'Adrian Style' with some tequila of the day that I swear made me blind. We struck up a close friendship from that point on, and although we worked separate labels over the years, I always admired his passion for his work. It is no secret that his passion for the game rubs off on everyone around him. It's that 'take no prisoners' attitude that's translated in to a very successful promotions career. In the meantime, Adrian is constantly bringing people into his circle and making them feel like family. I am grateful that, back in the day, he did so with me. He shows up every day ready to make a difference and expects his troops to do the same. Here's to my favorite Pittsburgh Steelers fan. Congratulations, my friend, on an honor certainly deserved. Cheers!"

31 Marci Braun
WUSN/Chicago APD/MD

"Marci was ready for the challenge from day one," says former WUSN and current Hot AC KRSK/Portland, OR PD **Mike Peterson.** "Her first interview for the position went very smooth, but I found out many months later her trip to and from the interview were loaded with challenges that she concealed very well for a Green Bay girl going after a Chicago job.

"Prior to the interview, she purchased what turned out to be the most uncomfortable shoes to match her business suit. Unable to hail a cab, she had to walk several blocks from the train station to the radio station. Soon, those uncomfortable shoes dug in deep and started rapidly making some annoying and painful blisters on both feet. Within seconds, the cloudy skies opened up a classic Midwest thundershower, forcing her to juggle the umbrella, hop puddles, sprint through 'don't walk' signs and duck under overhangs as the biting pain of fresh, raw blisters grew worse.

"But Marci showed up on-time, professionally dressed, appeared relaxed and spoke with confidence about how she would develop the position and contribute to the team. She was perfectly composed and showed no evidence of pain, discomfort or that she'd even been hit with one drop of rain. From blisters and an interview day downpour to the Power 31 ... congrats, Marci!" CAC

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& NINE NORTH PRESENT

"HE BETTER BE DEAD"

THE DEBUT HIT FROM

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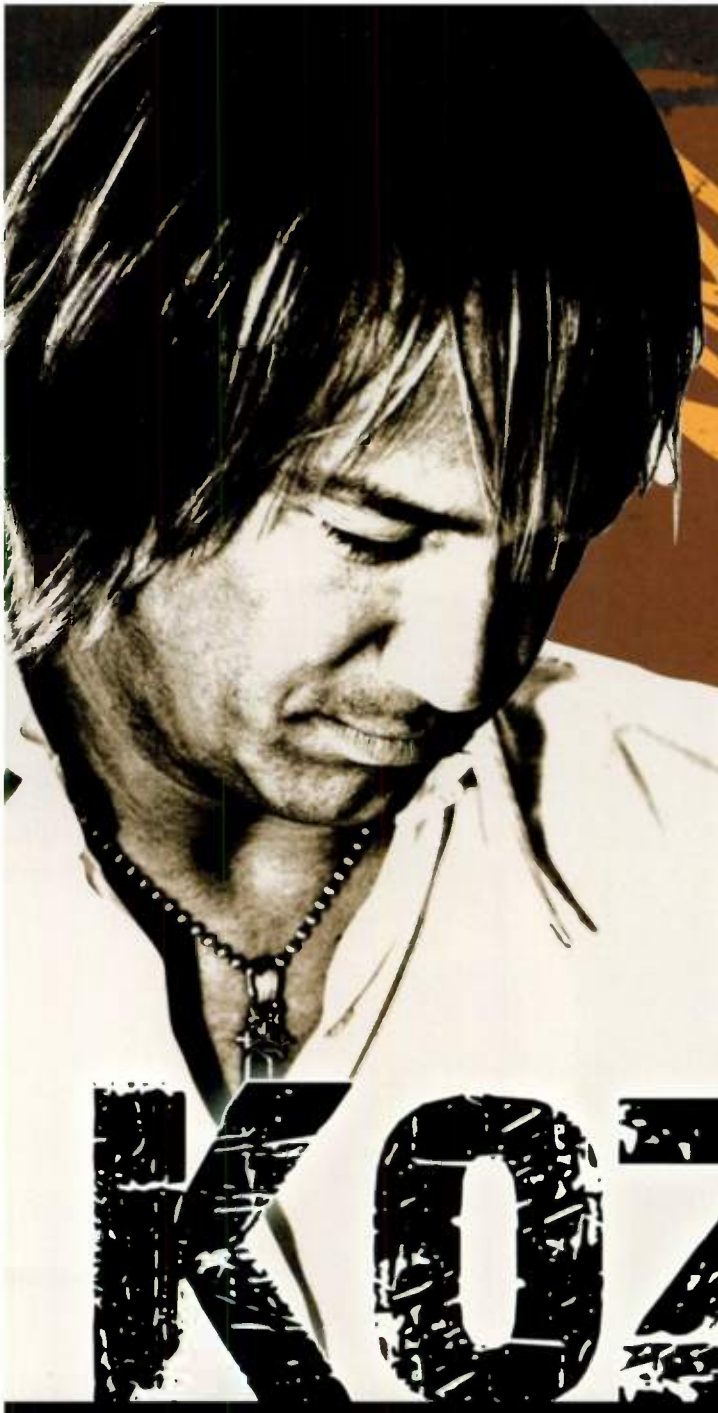


DARREN KOZELSKY

"SOMEBODY FIND ME A PREACHER"

IMPACTING NOW!

Believers At: KFTX, KEAN, KKJG, KRAZ, WTHI, KTHK, WTCM, WKWS, WGTR, WOVK, WHKX, WKKW, MCCW, KDKX, KQUS, WXFL, KRRV, WBBN, WDGG, WQDR & More!

A Love Song...with Great Tempo!

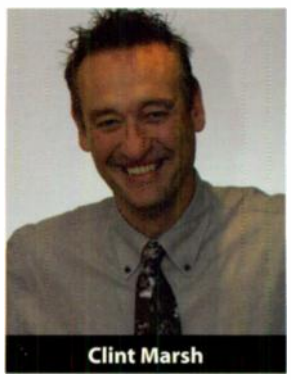
SQUEEZE THE BIG

MANAGERS RESPOND IN RADIO'S NEW ECONOMY

Deregulation, consolidation, an explosion of debt and ad revenue freefall continue to shape radio, but discussions of a battered and embattled industry only tell part of the story. Yes, what was a $22 billion business in 2006 fell a whopping 26% to $16 billion by 2009. And the debt associated with stations consolidated at big multiples forces a reduced workforce to do more with far less. But guess what? They're doing it. Across all market sizes and in every corner of the country, radio managers operate with fewer people in all departments and smaller to non-existent budgets. They still make it all work through new technology, hard work and more than a little asset alchemy.

The Way We Were

To be sure, that old "Pleasantville" image of mom-and-pop radio already seems quaint. Ask **Clint Marsh**, a 28-year radio veteran who's spent most of his career in smaller markets. Marsh manages Federated Media's three-station cluster in Warsaw, IN, which includes Country WAWC (Willie 103.5). In last year's tight economy, the stations let go four or five fulltime sales and programming staff and began voice-tracking evenings and overnights; weekends are a mix of live and voice-tracked shifts. In all, the roster is down about 15%, but the cluster still has 26 employees – more than some stations in much larger markets.


Clint Marsh

"We were never given a mandate to reduce costs by a particular percentage," Marsh says. "It's been more like, 'Do what you need to do to run your business.' But cutting staff was the hardest thing I had to do. We were able to help some find positions; for others, I gave the best references I could. The layoffs didn't hurt morale as much as I thought. The key was being honest and upfront with everyone. We immediately explained what was going on, and those who were still there afterwards were told we wanted to keep them. The salespeople already knew what was happening because they were the ones being told 'no' more often than 'yes.'"

Large markets are just as affected, if not more so. Emmis Indianapolis Market Manager **Charlie Morgan**, who's worked his entire career in the metro, recalls, " When I left the station I was at [Cumulus' WFMS] in 2006, there were 85 fulltime employees; today there are fewer than 45. Here, there's been a 20-25% reduction from the high point in 2006-2007."

Hat Tricks

For nearly everyone, individualized station duties have increasingly given way to cluster multi-tasking. WKIS/Miami GSM **Carole Bowen** says, "Vastly fewer people are responsible for the overall running and product of a station. And with that comes increased pressure and job responsibilities. The money is just not nearly the same: This year, our market is improving, up 13%. But last year it was a complete train wreck, down 20%. Our organization has never had a lot of fat; I've always felt we've operated smartly. However, the economic realities have necessitated that we figure out ways to do things with lower associated costs."

Most in radio understand the economic pressures. Marsh explains, "People here have really stepped up, coming to *me* with a commitment and a plan when people were let go. All but a part-timer has other duties besides their airshift and production. My morning guy on Classic Hits WRSW-FM also sells. My afternoon guy is also our Asst. PD, does our music, imaging, logs, production and remotes. Our WAWC PD/morning guy is also OM for the rest of the cluster. Our midday guy is assistant production director and also does a sports talk show. Our afternoon guy on Willie is also promotions director for all three stations and does a lot of production. A few years ago, when things were really good, there was some promotion budget, but we've lost that. We haven't lost promotions themselves, we've just had to be more creative in how we do them."

Former Regent SVP/Operations **John King** says it's like a throwback to his early days. "I started as a DJ in a small radio station. I read the news, was the production guy, did an airshift – sometimes two a day – and when we signed the station off, I'd take all the AP wire copy out back and burn it. I'd spend 12 hours a day in a radio station until they'd finally say, "Go home. You're getting on our nerves."

> "IT'S EASY TO VILLAIN-IZE CORPORATE, BUT THEY ARE THE ONES TRYING TO KEEP THE COMPANIES AFLOAT."
> – CAROLE BOWEN

Identity Left

More seriously, King maintains that the risk to radio is not so much the workload as it is the blurring of differentiation across brands. "Some guy who's worked his whole life in Country has to be able to put on his Classic Rock hat in the middle of the day and deal with some morning person with a different set of values from your core format," he says. "That becomes difficult. When I first came to Nashville, I was the VP/Programming for the company that owned WSIX. I could listen to the station and, even if I wasn't the guy who did the music logs, I knew if somebody was playing records out of place. But if you're doing three formats, and a lot of PDs do, you can't even listen to it enough to be truly focused on your brand. And while stations have certainly been hurt by the economics of the business, the economics of time has really creamed a lot of cool brands. All of a sudden, why did that Classic Rocker remind me of the hillbilly station down the hall? Didn't I just hear that sweeper on the Oldies station? Is that the same voice doing Mix?"

John King

The client-side compromises also are more evident, King says. "Before consolidation, you might have had an AM and FM, and that client base didn't overlap a lot. Now, stations are tuned, for the most part, to a couple of specific demos. So when you go out and pitch to Home Depot, "I've got five stations with these ratings that in the aggregate reach this percentage of that demo," they start wanting value-added. Now you've got some promotion teed up that makes sense for one or two of the stations and bullshit for two others. But you're taking it because you've got to have the dough."

My Wish

In recent years, managers have been forced to make cuts in every department. Research and marketing frequently came first. Then it was support staff: fewer sales assistants, and delegating more work to contractors and part-time help. Personalities took on a second shift. A sales manager was let go, next a PD, then more air talent, as well as, perhaps, the production/creative services person dedicated to the station branding and imaging. As revenues begin to improve and debt burden is reduced, where will these executives spend first?

Bowen sees several opportunities, noting, "There's one person we had to let go in our marketing department that was a tough loss. Our commission structure has been fairly dramatically reduced, and that's also been hard; I'd love to see that a little healthier. In programming, we've had people who are extraordinarily talented, but they're wearing a lot of hats and are spread mighty thin. Our PD has had to add a number of responsibilities, all of which he's very capable of doing, but there's only 24 hours in a day. We have three stations, and my sales

THE BIG SQUEEZE

team at one time had a designated assistant who was a specialist on WKIS. She attended every sales meeting and was so integrally involved. She knew it inside and out, better than anyone and was incredibly valuable."

Marsh says, simply. "Staff. The first person I'd hire back is a news director. We didn't completely cut local news, but it'd be nice to have someone dedicated to news for our three stations. And more salespeople as the economy gets better."

Morgan offers, "If I had money to spend today, it would be on research and marketing before I would add more people back in. The Emmis culture always was to save as many people as possible and cut other things. But the first person I'd add would be a sales manager."

Adds King, "If radio's stated goal is to just get north of five percent of the gross revenue coming from digital media, they're going to have to have some specialized sellers."

Blame Game

Pointing to company headquarters and Wall Street for painting managers into these corners is a little too convenient. Bowen explains, "It's easy to villain-ize corporate because they're not in the trenches. But they also are the ones trying to keep companies afloat, first and foremost, as unpopular as the repercussions of that are. Has product suffered some? Yes. But have new tools and technology enabled us to do things we never thought were possible with the level of personnel that we now have? And more are coming. They have enabled us to weather these cuts far better than we would've been able to do 10 years ago."

Charlie Morgan

The fact is, during the heyday of deregulation, it was either get in or get out. Morgan comments, "Do I think there's been a lot of bungling in consolidation? Some of it's been done very poorly, and some of it, I might even argue, has been done with poor intent or misinformed direction. But are we stronger in many ways than we were when we were mom-and-pops with no best practices and without the value of having sister stations in other markets where we could trade, learn and have better talent attracted to our company? I've got to think that we are. It's just that a lot of pain has occurred to get us to that point."

Continues Morgan, "[Chairman] Jeff Smulyan made a point to me how a public company and its value were penalized by Wall Street for *not* having leverage that now suddenly seems irresponsible. You had a choice: Either accept that the value of your company was going to be artificially depressed because you weren't meeting an outsider's expectation of what multiple at which you should be leveraging your assets, or to leverage them such that when the musical chairs game stops (just as it did with home mortgages) you look back and say, 'Well, that was so irresponsible. How could we ever have done that?' Because now you can't pay the debt at the rates and values at which they were done. You can't tell me that somewhere in that process almost all parties involved knew this somehow was likely going to happen, yet we allowed ourselves to live in denial because the system was rewarding us for it."

Ladder Go-Round

Does having fewer staff mean a shift away from a purely hierarchical organization structure to one that is more team-oriented? Depends whom you ask. Bowen says, "My PD Ken Boesen and I work very closely together, certainly closer than I've ever worked with a PD. Sales and programming look at situations and try to conquer them together, whatever they are. It's a good thing. We're all each other has."

Speaking for Emmis, Morgan notes, "This organization still has a great deal of individual market autonomy, and therefore there's a lot of team-based decision-making and collaboration at a local cluster level. Some other companies are much more hierarchical and basically implement at a local level a more unified corporate vision."

King participated in a a group-think atmosphere in the former Regent (now Townsquare Media). "One of the attractions of working for [former CEO] Bill Stakelin is that he viewed each of these clusters as their own entrepreneurial local business. We were desperately trying not to do top-down stuff. We weren't always successful, but we would build consensus on most issues that we had control over before we would say, 'Here's our new rule.' As a corporation, we were there to aid in their success, not to hinder them."

Marsh sees it both ways. "There are still companies that are very hierarchical, with silos. And others that are more team-oriented in how they use their assets. Our culture is more team-based, but someone's got to have the ultimate responsibility in our building, and that's me."

A Little Positive Mental Attitude

"There are a few incredibly courageous operators finding themselves in a much better place today," Morgan says of those who've thrived in a depressed economy. "The non-operators are moving on to some other industry, and we've all lived through this painful correction. There is great hope that we can, from all that rubble, build back what is a pretty solid business if we don't have to pay 35% interest on our loan. If we can pay 6%, then suddenly the business is still a very good one. And those who have been able to maintain relationships with their employees, listeners and advertisers are set up for a pretty cool run. Many other organizations talk about best practices, when what should be talked about is best *thinking* because it's our thinking that drives our actions."

Carole Bowen

King concurs. "I still think radio's an incredibly viable medium. It can sell somebody's goods and services, and amasses an audience significant and targeted enough – and from a price perspective – as to be a fabulous marketing tool for whatever business there is. And it has some flexibilities and features that are unique for talking directly to consumers."

Bowen is equally bullish about local radio's return to strength. "Any business that survives in the long term, and radio has proven to be very resilient over many decades, has to be able to operate in different climates … to reinvent its business model to some degree. I'm very optimistic because I believe the basic product of radio is still very viable. It's something people want and will continue to utilize. Every piece of research I see indicates that people are using radio as they always have, to a very high degree of reach in the marketplace. I'm often asked, 'Well, what about this or that competing audio product?' None of them has been responsible for reducing the time people are spending with local radio. The bottom line is that radio still is a great product that consumers want."

Marsh affirms that Federated's attitude is forward-thinking. "Our company is committed to radio, and I'm as excited and optimistic about this industry today as I was 28 years ago, given that there's going to be a lot of change. I'm excited about that; I'm not afraid of it.

"I still could not imagine anything else I'd rather be doing," he says. "I am so blessed to have made a living at this. I came from a very small town in southern Indiana, and my parents and brother did piecework in a shoe factory. Not to knock them, of course, but when I think I could be doing that … and we complain about *this?* Come on!

"Things have changed, but by and large we've held up all right. We've made some missteps, but personally I think consolidation was a positive thing. To me what screwed up everything was when everybody decided to go public and had to start answering to shareholders. We've had challenges for years, and will through my last day in this business before I retire. But if you understand and roll with it, and embrace change, it's an exciting time to be in this business if you're not the one hiding under your desk. Some guys are. Step up and figure out how this is going to work." CAC

A ZERO SUM GAME

Radio stations make money … or do they? It's not unusual to see 20-30%, or even more, fall to the bottom line, but that's just the operating profit after expenses. Then comes the killer – the debt payment to the bank or investors, at least for a large percentage of stations. Former Regent executive John King explains, "After debt service (and all the other stuff below the line), there's nothing left. That's why everybody's defaulting their asses off. They don't have the money." Looking at the slumping stock values of most radio companies from a few years ago, it's clear that Wall Street agrees.

No wonder the NAB is now seeking to reach a reasonable deal on a performance royalty with MusicFirst soon, just in case Congress might have a more label/artist-friendly scale in mind. But for a station like WKIS/Miami, which BIA reported generating $7.9 million in 2009, the 1% figure NAB is contemplating would mean a $79,000 bill each year. GSM Carole Bowen observes, "If we were on the hook for another $50,000-$100,000, all things being the same as they are now, there's no doubt that more people would lose jobs."

In a cluster situation, it's common for shared costs to be apportioned in accordance with the proportion of revenue that a particular station generates, rather than by what each one actually spends. As a result, financial statements don't necessarily represent that station's true profitability … if there is any.

TYPICAL STATION OPERATING EXPENSES

Salaries (excl. commissions)	30%
Sales commissions	15%
Administrative overhead*	15%
Ratings service	8%
Performing rights fees	7%
Marketing, promotion	0%
Research	0%
Operating Profit	25%
Less debt payment	-25%
Net Profit	0%

*Includes rent, utilities, equipment/maintenance, vehicles, insurance, music/production/traffic software, programming/engineering consultants, legal, subscriptions and fees, web hosting and related operating expenses. All figures are average estimates from interviews with GMs across various market sizes and companies.

> WE WOULD BUILD CONSENSUS ON MOST ISSUES WE HAD CONTROL OVER BEFORE WE'D SAY, 'HERE'S OUR NEW RULE.' WE WERE THERE TO AID IN THEIR SUCCESS, NOT TO HINDER THEM. – JOHN KING

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This Past Summer Uncle Kracker Made the Whole World "SMILE"...
UNCLE KRACKER
Next it's "Good To Be Me"
The Follow-Up Smash Featuring Kid Rock! Already Blasting Up The Chart and Spinning in Detroit, Minneapolis and San Diego!
TOP DOG
BIGGER PICTURE

Thank You Country Radio!
Zac Brown Band
Sincerely, & Team
Southern GROUND
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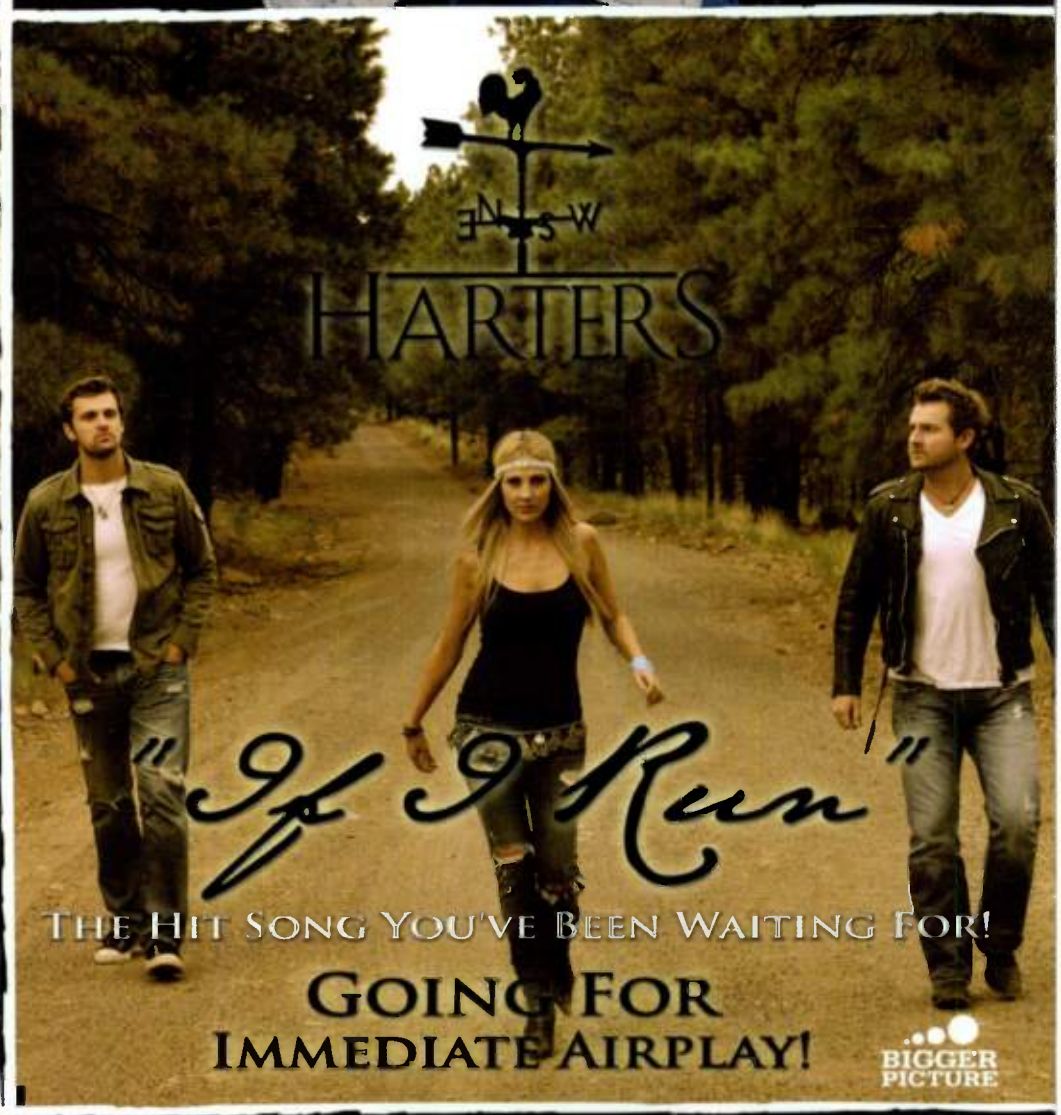
ROAR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"If I Run"
THE HIT SONG YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR!
GOING FOR IMMEDIATE AIRPLAY!
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CHRISTIAN
Kane
"HOUSE RULES"
Christian Is Looking Forward To Seeing You Out On His Fall 2010 Promo Tour!
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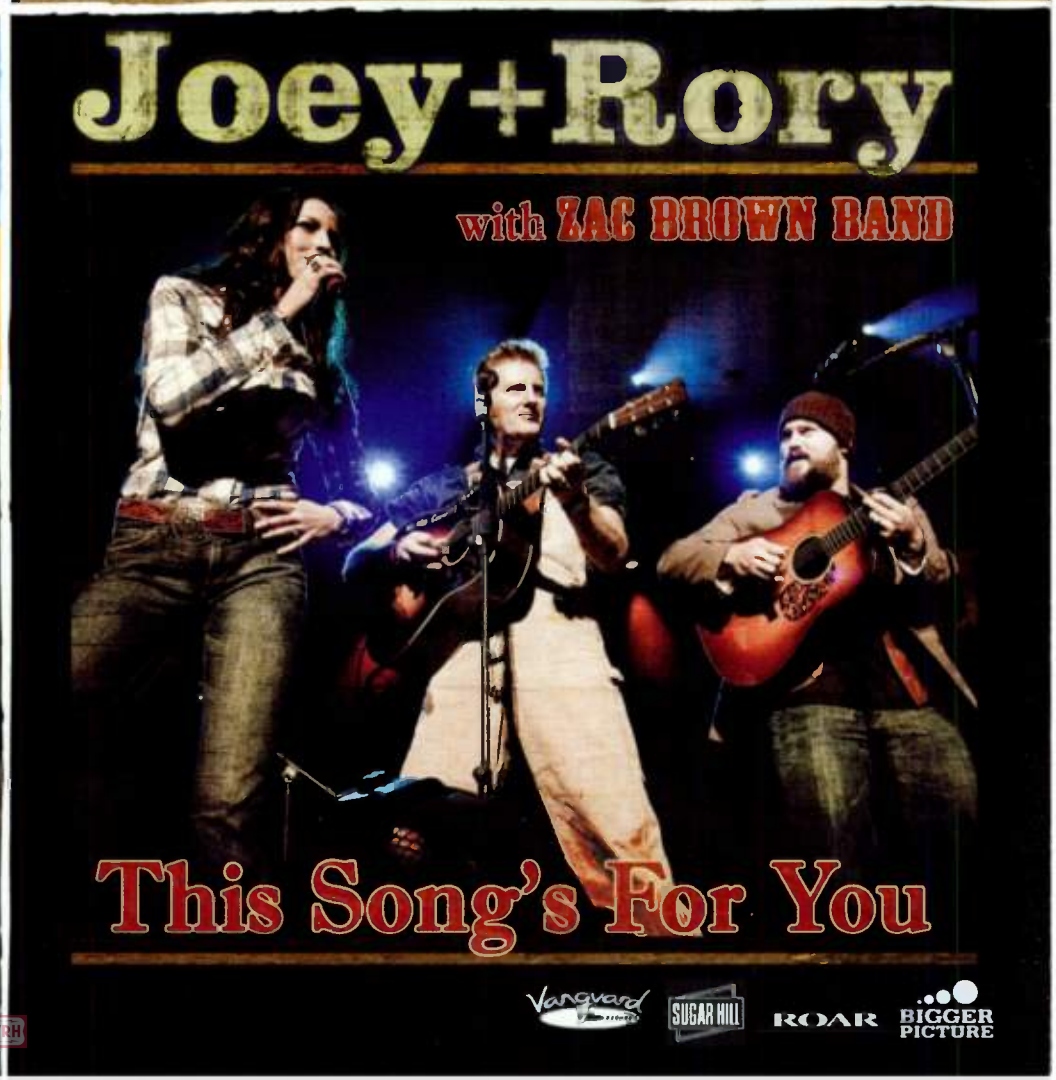

Joey+Rory
with ZAC BROWN BAND
This Song's For You
Vanguard
SUGAR HILL
ROAR
BIGGER PICTURE

THE MUSIC

Fourth Quarter Music Preview

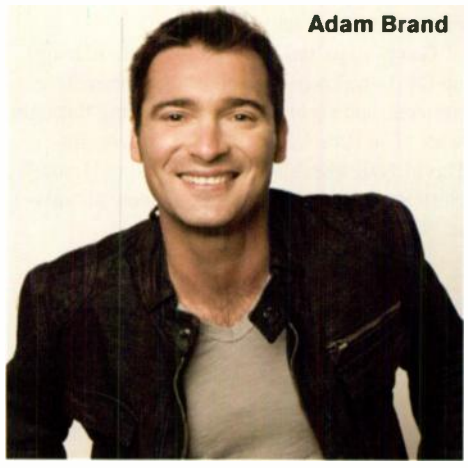
The Spring meeting was held in total darkness in a crumbling old barn on the outskirts of Nashville ... and the collective fortunes of the country music industry and Country radio hung in the balance. As the Super Secret Superstar Society (SSSS) convened, there could be only one topic: who would be releasing fourth-quarter albums and their accompanying singles. One by one, Music City's biggest stars stood and made their pledges. "I'm in." "I'll do one." "Make mine a double." "Me, too." The rest is about to be history. *(Ed. Note: We could be making some of this up.)*

Arista

Brad Paisley leads the Arista charge with "Anything Like Me" from his Nov. 2 *Hits Alive* project. VP/Promotion **Skip Bishop** points out that the song is moving faster than all previous Paisley releases and "is destined to be his 14th No. 1 in a row." More than a typical best-of collection, *Hits Alive* promises what Bishop calls "a three-tiered experience of onstage, in-studio and online interactive elements that only Brad Paisley could have imagined."

Australian import **Adam Brand** is introducing himself with "Ready For Love" after already proving himself Down Under. Bishop notes that Brand is the recipient of 11 Golden Guitar Awards, which equate to Entertainer of the Year.

Carrie Underwood's "Mama's Song" is already underway on the charts, and will be a priority for the Arista team


Adam Brand

going forward. "Destined to be one of her classics," Bishop says.

And then there's **Jerrod Niemann**'s second single, "What Do You Want From Me," which hopes to follow "Lover, Lover" to No. 1 and gold certification while propelling sales of album *Judge Jerrod & The Hung Jury*. That release debuted at No. 1 in July. Bishop suggests Niemann is "the format's next superstar artist."

Late-breaking: **Alan Jackson** will have a hits project out Nov. 23, title TBA.

BBR/Stoney Creek

SSSS member **Jason Aldean** is doing his part Nov. 2 with the release of *My Kinda Party*. SVP **Carson James** says the BBR crew has been designated to drive the title track single to the top of the chart. Over on Stoney Creek, James heralds the return of **Crossin Dixon** and their single "Lovin' In The Country." "They feel like this is their sound," James says. "Big-time three-part harmonies and in-your-face attitude." At radio now. **James Wesley** and **Thompson Square** remain priorities, and the label is equally excited about **Blake Wise** and his upcoming new single. "He's got a great voice, GQ looks and is just a really good dude," James says. Look for music in November.

Big Machine

Even with more than a dozen major album releases on the books, surely **Taylor Swift**'s *Speak Now* is one of the top few. Her label is celebrating its fifth year in business with its biggest album yet, out Oct. 25. "Country radio will have numerous ways to get involved with the release, with a larger-than-life contesting element in play, as well as many on-air album release tools in the works," says Sr. Dir./Bunch Of Stuff **John Zarling**. A follow-up to the chart-climbing "Mine" is expected late fall.

Also in the barn that night raising three-part hands were **Rascal Flatts**. Their first Big Machine album *Nothing Like This* arrives Nov. 16. Coincidentally, the Big Machine promotion team is eyeing street week for maximum airplay on lead single "Why Wait." Again, look for multiple tie-ins with Country radio. **Steel Magnolia**'s "Just By Being You (Halo And Wings)" will continue to build a buzz for the Jan. 11 release of their self-titled debut. In addition to the current single, the top 5 "Keep On Lovin' You" will anchor the album. And finally, Big Machine is working with sister label Republic Nashville on "That's Beautiful To Me," **Jaron And The Long Road To Love**'s successor to the top-selling single "Pray For You."

BPG

With five straight No. 1 singles and a double-platinum debut album, the **Zac Brown Band**'s admission to the club isn't so secret anymore. And their second act, *You Get What You Give*, lands Sept. 21. First single "As She's Walking Away" features fellow Georgian Alan Jackson, and the BPG team is probably invested in scoring nothing less than chart-topper No. 6.

Newcomer **Craig Campbell**, like ZBB, is produced by Bigger Picture's **Keith Stegall**. His debut album is due Oct. 19, title TBA. Also a Georgia boy, Campbell has "spent most of the summer visiting radio stations and will be finishing his promo tour and playing on the road through the end of the year to support his fast-rising debut single 'Family Man,'" according to promo domo **Michael Powers**.

"If you've ever read Country Aircheck, this

Craig Campbell

song's for you," is not one of the lines from **Joey+Rory**'s new single "This Song's For You," but it would be a nice addition. "After spending time this summer on the road with the Zac Brown Band, they wrote the song with him, and the whole band is playing on the track," Powers says. *Album Number Two* (we're not making that up) landed Sept. 14.

Singer/songwriter/actor/busy dude **Christian Kane** is back with "House Rules" and a yet-to-be-titled album out Oct. 24. He just finished filming season three of TNT's *Leverage* and is embarking on a radio tour through year's end.

Finally, **Uncle Kracker** says it's "Good To Be Me" in the follow up to his multi-format hit "Smile." Look for him on tour and at radio this fall.

Black River

"As a kid growing up in Tennessee and Georgia, my father had an Indian belt folded and placed in the second drawer of his dresser," VP/GM **Rick Baumgartner** says. "For those who aren't familiar with an Indian belt, it is a leather belt with a design made out of little beadwork. The belt never had a buckle attached and was used for one reason – to impact my backside when I disobeyed. The fear of it was almost as bad as the pain it caused. And my mom took her seat in the choir loft every Sunday morning at our Baptist church."

Nice story. But what does that have to do with ... oh, right. **Due West**'s new single "The Bible And The Belt." Baumgartner explains, "Written by lead singer Tim Gates along with

Blake Wise

Q The Music

Billy Austin and Marc Beeson, this is a song that will resonate with everyone who ever grew up like I did." As will a crushing fear of beads, Indians, choir lofts and second dresser drawers.

In less traumatic news, **Sarah Darling** co-wrote her single "Wrapped in Moonlight" with David Malloy. **Jeff Bates** returns with an EP titled *One Step Closer*, led by single "The Rapture." Both will be out in October.

BNA

Though unconvincingly asserting he knows nothing about a late-night barn meeting, Veep **Bryan Frasher** will admit, "**Kenny Chesney**'s record is, in my humble opinion, one of the best albums of new material from any act in years." *Hemingway's Whiskey* pours Sept. 28. "'Boys Of Fall' will probably hang around until February," Frasher says, "but we will be coming with a new single from this record sometime after September. You'll hear the ground break around you when it hits radio."

Frasher describes new material recently turned in by **Craig Morgan** as "right in his wheelhouse: tempo, country, fun and exciting." **Kellie Pickler** is working on a new album with Frank Liddell; expect a single this fall. BNA also recently signed **Casey James**, who will soon be underway recording an album. "He's a real artist, real musician and has been playing in bands in and around his home state of Texas for years," Frasher says.

Capitol

Breaking out the major musical capital, Capitol will be delivering **Darius Rucker**'s *Charleston, S.C., 1966* Oct. 12 and **Keith Urban**'s still-untitled new release Nov. 16. Urban's first single was expected at radio early in September. "New singles will also include 'Kiss Goodbye,' the second single from **Little Big Town**'s August album *The Reason Why*," says SVP/Promotion **Steve Hodges**.

Lady Antebellum's next single, "Hello World," the fourth release from *Need You Now*, is also due Q4. A successor to Rucker's "Come Back Song" is also slated, while the debut from **Walker Hayes**, "Pants," is still being pressed at radio. Hayes' first album *Reason To Rhyme* will arrive early next year.

Cold River

Katie Armiger's third album *Confessions Of A Nice Girl* strikes Oct. 5. "Thousands of fans voted for the title on gactv.com," the label's **Pete O'Heeron** says. "Katie has worked with co-writers Sarah Buxton, Blair Daly, Joe West, Rebecca Lynn Howard, Amanda Flynn and Bruce Wallace for the project."

Columbia

Vice Cop **Jimmy Rector** sets the stage for Big Red's big lineup: "**Joanna Smith** is a modern-day Patty Loveless with Dolly Parton personality," he says. "No worries of crossover here: this girl is *country* with the writing to back it up. First single 'Gettin' Married' will relate to every female listener you have, single or not."

Elsewhere, **Miranda Lambert**'s DVD *Revolution: Live By Candelight* hits retail Oct. 12. And Vocal Event is already in the label's sights when it comes to the Nov. 9 release of *Coal Miner's Daughter: A Tribute to Loretta Lynn*. "Loretta, Miranda and Sheryl Crow put a modern-day spin on the classic song, as the 30th anniversary of the movie is this year," Rector says. "I can't wait to get to work with one of the greats in our format. Hell, she invented the radio tour."

Joanna Smith

Josh Kelley

Curb

Clay Walker's "Where Do I Go From You" opens the season for VP **Adrian Michaels** and his charges. Early October will find them ramping up **Lee Brice**'s "Beautiful Everytime," which they'd love to be as big a hit as "Love Like Crazy," though maybe more quickly. There will be an as-yet-undetermined **Rodney Atkins** single in November, and the last chart of the year will bring **Star Deazlan**'s "I Want A Man That Can Dance."

E 1

Chuck Rhodes runs out a big agenda that starts with **Cody McCarver**'s Q1 album, advanced by the current single "I'm America." The video features a guest appearance by Charlie Daniels. Also next year will be new music from singer/songwriter **Deborah Allen**.

"One of the stories we'll be telling over the next six months is that next to Disney, we are the largest independent film, television and music company out there," Rhodes says. "With our television division producing hits like *Rookie Blue* on ABC and *Hung* on HBO, as well as distribution of the mega-hit film *Eclipse: The Twilight Saga*, eOne is poised to make major strides in *all* areas of the entertainment business in 2011."

EdgeHill

Prez/dispenser of info **David Haley** has the floor. "I'm happy to be teamed with my friend Keith Burns from Trick Pony again, and I am happier that he introduced me to Michelle Poe. **Burns & Poe** are on the air with 'How Long Is Long Enough.' Look for the self-titled album around Nov. 1 on Blue Steel Records.

"Remember this name ..." Ooh, a memory game. We want to play! "**DJ Miller**. He is going to be *big*. His first single 'A Little Naughty Is Nice' is making it on playlists as he makes his way across the country visiting stations." The label is Evergreen.

Haley is also working the **Cody McCarver** project. "If you have not seen the video, please take a moment and go to CMT.com," Haley says. "Cody has a great message."

"New for us this month is **Kolt Barber**, who lives somewhere between the saddle and the stage. He owns a 300-acre ranch near Nashville, and when he is not working there he is in the studio working on his debut album, out later this year. The single is 'Send The Rain.'"

Last but not least, **Mark Chesnutt**'s *Outlaw* album includes the single "Loving Her Was Easier," which has Haley pumped. "Mark has one of the best country voices of all time. I am glad he is back on the radio."

EMI Nashville

Double-duty Hootie **Steve Hodges** is back for a second round with Capitol sister imprint EMI. "Watch for EMI Nashville's second **Troy Olsen** single 'In Good Hands' on the heels of 'Summer Thing.'" *Get Right Tonight*, Olsen's debut album, will be a first-quarter release, though an EP lands Oct. 5.

MCA

New kid on MCA's block **Josh Kelley** and his single "Georgia Clay" are a focus right up to and through the early 2011 release of an album. "The buzz on Josh feels great, and he's on tour with Miranda Lambert in the fall," says MCA VP "V Is For **Van" Haze**. "I'm sure he'll make even more fans."

Gary Allan and **Josh Turner** are offering up third singles from each of their respective projects, and **George Strait**'s blowing through with "The Breath You Take." Likewise for **David Nail** with his current "Turning Home." Both Strait and Nail will release new albums in 2011.

Mercury

Sugarland's current "Stuck Like Glue" is being counted on to propel *The Incredible Machine* to a big Oct. 19 launch. Newcomer **Randy Montana** is on the road with the duo and setting up the next single from his forthcoming debut.

Billy Currington's September release *Enjoy Yourself* has already spawned a hit in "Pretty Good At Drinkin' Beer." The second single from the project is still being determined, but you'll see it before the snow falls, for sure. **Laura Bell Bundy** is back with a single from the "achin'" side of her album, called "Drop On By." Look for a recurring role on *How I Met Your Mother* when the new TV season commences.

Easton Corbin's "Roll With It" sure is, and a third single will be out in time for ka-chingle bells. And last but not least, **Jamey Johnson**'s "Playing The Part" sets the stage for the double-disc *The Guitar Song*, which landed mid-September.

Nine North/ Turnpike

Loquacious **Larry Pareigis** has much to discuss, so we won't waste a moment: "We've blown past the 50-station mark on the debut Skyville Records/Nine North single from **Stealing Angels** 'He Better Be Dead,'" Pareigis says. "Wally Wilson, Paul Worley, the Nine North team and the ladies all want to thank you for your early support.

"Speaking of debuts, **Emerson Drive** have created their own label, Amdian Music Company, and Nine North is proud to be partnered with them on their new single 'That Kind Of Beautiful.'

"**Jason Sturgeon**'s family used to work oil rigs – hence the name of his label, Toolpusher Records," Pareigis says. Has he taken a breath yet? "We're proud to be working with this Indiana native on his latest single 'Rollin' On.'"

Margaret Durante

Still going. "BamaJam Records has graciously brought the Nine North team aboard to bring you **Blackberry Smoke** and **Matt Kennon**. Smoke's current single 'Good One Comin' On' is going for airplay now. Matt's 'You Can Still Wear White' impacts Sept. 13."

"We are also joining forces with Emrose

KOLT BARBER
BREAKN' GROUND WITH THE DEBUT SINGLE
SEND THE RAIN
BARBED WIRE ENTERTAINMENT
edgeHILL

Q The Music

Records and Stroudavarious to present the new single from the stunning **Margaret Durante**, 'Mississippi's Crying.' Former Sony Music head Tommy Mottola brought her to the attention of James Stroud. She's on the road to see you now, all leading to a Sept. 27 impact date." So that's about it for ... oops, we thought he was done.

"The Turnpike Music guys are very busy, too. Besides representing all the artists listed above on the Activator charts, they've been kicking ass on Root 49's **Bridgette Tatum** and her current single 'That's Love Y'all,' Warehouse Music's **Risa Binder** and her upcoming single 'All The While,' and the latest from Average Joes' **Matt Stillwell**. His 'Drunk Enough' goes for Indicator/Activator airplay Oct. 11."

Quarterback

Newly partnered with John Ettinger, QB co-principal **Chris Allums** outlines the label's efforts: "**Todd O'Neill** and the **Adam Craig Band** have both been back in the studio, and we'll have great new singles from both of them shortly," he says. "Also, we're excited to be a part of **Bridgette Tatum**'s team now, and look forward to continuing growth with 'That's Love Y'all.' We're also looking forward to introducing **Matt Gary**, a new artist we have big plans for in the coming quarter and next year."

RCA

Chuck Wicks' "Hold That Thought," **Danny Gokey**'s "I Will Not Say Goodbye," and **Chris Young**'s "Voices" remain top priorities for RCA, with Young and Gokey's tunes supporting current albums. Wicks' is the debut release from his upcoming sophomore album.

Also on Nipper's plate (bowl?) is the debut single from Academy Award winner and RCA recording artist **Gwyneth Paltrow**. "It is one of three *great* songs she sings on the soundtrack for the film *Country Strong*," raves VP **Keith Gale**. "We plan to release *all three* as singles. There is so much going on with this project and this film. Please ask your RCA rep for more info." The film stars Paltrow and Tim McGraw; look for the soundtrack Oct. 26.

Brand-new music from **Sara Evans**, "A Little Bit Stronger," is pumping airplay iron already. A Tony Brown-produced single is due early in 2011. New music from **Jake Owen** will also land before the New Year's ball drops.

Republic Nashville

"If I Die Young" shows no signs of it, as **The Band Perry**'s chart-climber continues to

The Band Perry

build for Republic Nashville and promotion honcho **Bobby Young**. "The band has been home in Greenville, TN probably a total of 30 days since beginning the first leg of their radio tour last October, and there doesn't seem to be any chance of the schedule lightening up," he says. The album is due Oct. 12, and a major tour slot will materialize in November.

Sunny Sweeney's "From A Table Away" certainly draws on the singer/songwriters deep love of country, but Young points out, "Her producer Brett Beavers has wrapped her music in a production that is definitely today and sounds amazing in today's current mix of contemporary country."

Yep. Looks like **Jaron & The Long Road To Love** still has the format's longest name (take that, Zac Brown Band featuring Alan Jackson). Republic Nashville also has J&TLRTL's "That's Beautiful To Me" with which to follow "Pray For You."

Look for a new single from **Eli Young Band** in the quarter, as well. "They've spent the last six months recording their first album for us," Young says. "Over the past few years they have proven they can find great songs with infectious melodies and hooks and create signature music."

Ride

VP **David "Rick" Shaw** says, "Team Ride is pushing forward with 'Sunshine!'" Which beats pushing forward with light drizzle any day. "The sun is always shining somewhere, and the fans are laying out their hard-earned American shekels for this **Steve Azar** single. So, steady-on! Big ole thanks to everyone who has supported us getting this hit song heard. Look for a new Azar track (yet-to-be-determined) in the New Year. And be on the lookout for a new act next year, as well."

Rocky Comfort

The growing Rocky Comfort crew is comfortably in a groove working the new **Zona Jones** cut "Prove Me Right." The song was written by Radney Foster and produced by James Stroud.

Show Dog-Universal

Can't decide if **Toby Keith** is an unlikely candidate for joining a secret superstar society, or is a you'd-never-guess-it ringleader. Either way, he's bringing the Q4 firepower with Oct. 5's *Bullets In The Gun*. Single "Trailerhood" is rockin' radio now.

Promo gunner **Rick Moxley** says stations can expect an Oct. 25 add date on new music from trio **Carter's Chord**. "Simple Little Screwed Up Life" is the title. "They've been in the studio with Mark Wright and Toby," Mox says. "It's a catchy, uptempo thing with a unique spin on how things sometimes get out of control."

Stroudavarious

"We're proud to be in partnership with Treehouse Records and Dale Morris Productions," Veep **Bill Macky** says. "First up is 'Leavin,' our debut single from **Blaine Larsen**. The tune allows Blaine to showcase his incredible vocal range on a song that was a multiple-week No. 1 for Paul Brandt in Canada.

"'Keep In Mind' is the new single from **LoCash Cowboys**," Macky continues. "Written by Jeffrey Steele and Shane Minor, it's an 'every parent's prayer,' no matter how young or old their children may be."

Stroudavarious is also teamed with Emrose for the **Margaret Durante** launch. James Stroud produced the album and debut single "Mississippi's Crying." Impacting Sept. 27. Finally, expect to hear from Dale Morris Productions' **Rob Lane**. "He's a talented young man with a big, strong voice and a debut single called 'The Best Is Yet To Come.'"

Valory

"On one hand, I feel like Santa Claus on Christmas Eve getting ready to deliver a bunch of presents," VP **Jon "Loco" Loba** says of his crew's on-deck music. "On the other hand, we feel like the CIA. We could tell you what is coming in Q4, but then we would have to kill you." As if he's the first promo guy with that thought.

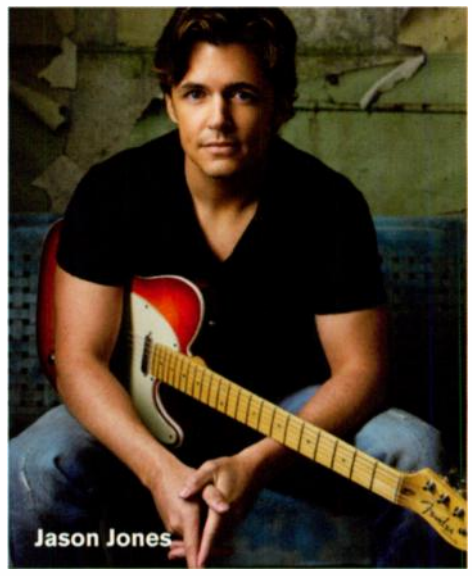
In the not-so-secret category (or is she?), **Reba**'s *All The Women I Am* splashes down Nov. 9. Team Valory will continue working her "Turn On The Radio," as well as **Justin Moore**'s "How I Got To Be This Way." They'll also be on the road giving radio a preview of some new music from Moore.

"Somehow in the midst of an incredibly intense touring schedule, Justin has managed to write like crazy and has turned in some amazing songs," Loba says. "We can't wait for everyone to hear them!"

Warner Music Nashville

Senior Señor **Chris Stacey** checks in with new news from the newly expanded double-trouble Warner group. Taking point is **Blake Shelton**'s second single, "Who Are You When I'm Not Looking," from his *All About Tonight* six-pak. Stacey calls it "a vocal performance that will take your breath away," adding, "This is why women love Blake. This single will also be on Blake's first greatest hits release, due out Nov. 9." What? Another surprise Q4 album?

James Otto's self-penned "Soldiers & Jesus," from his Sept. 14 album *Shake What God Gave Ya* is on deck. "There's no question that James is the new proponent of country soul," says VP **Bob Reeves**. "The breakout star's follow-up to 2010's quintessential


Jason Jones

summer song will have you doing an about-face, and bring you to a standstill."

The **JaneDear girls**' "Wildflower" will be worked through the quarter. "The reaction to this song and video by the fans is really quite amazing," Stacey says. "The video reached No. 1 on the GAC countdown after just a few short weeks of fan voting."

Atlantic's **Jesse Lee** sings "Like My Mother Does," and debut music from the **Dirt Drifters** and **Jason Jones** will also surface.

Warner Atlantic Reprise

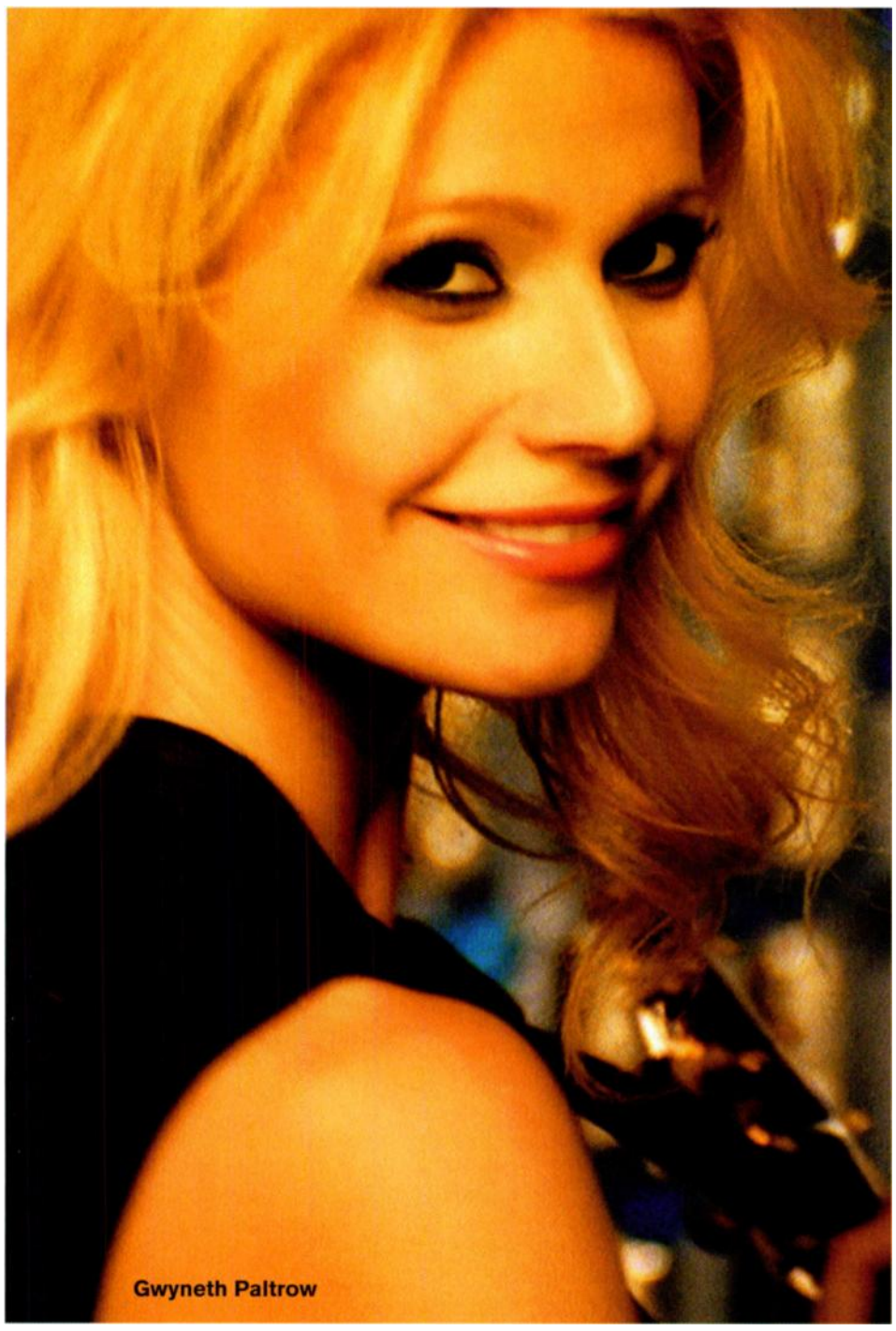
Because the battle analogies are just too obvious, we'll go the opposite direction and frame the new label's write-up with a theme of, mmm, bunnies. Up first, the WAR team marches straight into ... the carrot patch with Reprise's **John Rich** and "Country Done Come To Town," the lead single from his forthcoming *Rich Rocks* six-pak.

Fuzzy guitar nibbler **Frankie Ballard**'s debut Reprise single "Tell Me You Get Lonely" is locked and ... twitching its little pink nose. WAR is also launching Atlantic's **Brett Eldredge**, whose moving debut single "Raymond" will have the label's regional reps hopping out to radio with ears blazing.

Brett Eldredge

For something slightly different, the label will also be working a project called *Original Songwriter Demos* featuring original demos that artists heard when they were pitched what would ultimately become hit songs. "All of us industry insiders have had the chance to hear stuff like this," Stacey says. "But the fans, the core fans, will really love the opportunity to hear it."

Tune in next quarter as we continue to unravel the mystery of the Great 2010 Album Deluge. But for now, that's all, folks! Well, maybe not all. DJ Miller!!! (Haley probably thought we weren't paying attention.) CAC


Gwyneth Paltrow

CODY McCARVER
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JAYE ALBRIGHT

What's In It For The Listeners?

Over the course of a 45-year broadcast career, Jaye Albright has held just about every radio job imaginable – major market programmer, personality, manager, researcher and consultant – but her contributions to the industry are so much deeper than the positions she's held. It's hard to imagine anyone has been more thoughtful, more insightful or has mentored more programmers and air talent than she. It's also hard to imagine anyone with more passion for this format, and for radio, than Jaye.

Spending an hour talking to the 2008 Country Radio Hall of Fame inductee is an education in itself. Country Aircheck recently caught up with her on the road – where else? – during a client visit to WYCT/Pensacola, FL. Our thanks to GM Mary Hoxeng and PD Kevin King for sharing Jaye with us.

CA: You spend a lot of time researching Country radio listeners and have access to additional research. What are some of the current trends you've identified?

JA: We're now in a phase that comes along every seven to 10 years, when crossovers are occurring. When fans hear an Uncle Kracker on their Country station, they don't seem to mind that at all. They love *Crossroads* on CMT and the idea of seeing Brad Paisley riffing with John Mayer or Peter Frampton. Country listeners really get that and appreciate it. Most of their friends aren't country fans, so it's like a secret they want to let them into about something that's really good.

But now, when we've got Lady Antebellum, Taylor Swift, Keith Urban and now Jerrod Niemann being picked up by multiple formats, the core Country listeners have taken note and don't like it. Hank Williams, Sr. dealt with the same thing with "Your Cheatin' Heart", and I know that happened with Dolly Parton with "Nine To Five," Shania Twain and Faith Hill. I don't think the fans have ever liked it when they cross over. It's an ownership thing. Listeners really enjoy it when other artists like Darius Rucker come *into* country; they're delighted to have him in the format. At a West Palm Beach concert, it was interesting to see the young-skewing audience grooving to all his country songs, and yet when he does Hootie & The Blowfish material, they didn't know it. You watch Jimmy Buffett perform for a packed house of Parrotheads, and when he does "It's Five O'Clock Somewhere" with Mac McAnally, the whole crowd goes crazy. And you think, "These folks must all be listening to Country radio."

The Country audience is not that crazy about Taylor Swift crossing over; it causes a bit of negative polarity. But it's great for her to go on the MTV Awards and basically self-identify as country. It's smart, savvy and I know we all appreciate it a lot. On one hand, you welcome it because it's improving the image of country outside the core, which has got to be good for us long-term. And yet the core's not comfortable with it; they don't get it and they don't like it.

Do crossovers have any other impact as it relates to radio?

The CMA study has shown two years in a row how one impediment to fans listening more to Country radio is repetition. And when these artists are all over the band on other stations, they hear that as a lot more repetition.

A complaint of Country listeners we've always heard that many of us tend to deny is, "You play that same song every hour." But in markets where there are three or more Country stations playing much the same list, it *is* possible if you dial around a little bit to hear the same song once or even twice in an hour. So to deny their reality is to deny what's going on for them.

There's another aspect of the repetition: the sameness of sound. I was in a PD's office recently and counted 30 artist pictures on his wall. There are more artists touring around visiting stations today than I've seen in many years, and more regionals trooping around with independent artists than I've ever seen before. You look at this group of autographed photographs with their "thank you for taking time to meet" notes, and, in my humble opinion, it's a bunch of sound-alike artists or groups. I asked the PD, "Could you tell me what makes this person different?" The answer was no.

You would think new music would be the antidote to the repetition issue, and yet there's a sameness to what's being pushed at radio that I know listeners don't embrace. It's not that they don't like it; they can't tell the difference. What you want to do is build a star who's going to be able to tour and draw crowds. The smart stations are cherry-picking and adopting certain artists and trying to build them into stars, and that's the right thing to do. But the trouble with that is that if one station adopts someone and another adopts another, we don't have the national penetration that is still important to make what you would define "a hit" and a superstar.

What are some of the key programming issues that you see for Country radio?

We do an annual consumer road map study in which all our clients in the US and Canada participate. If you had asked the listeners 20 years ago, or maybe even 15 or 10, "What are the reasons why you choose one Country station over another?," the top two reasons were always, "The station plays the best songs for my taste" and "The one that plays the most music without too much talk and interruptions."

We've seen a trend over the last few years where "the best songs" still wins. People still want to hear the best music – the ones they like most – a lot. That's what drives your usage of radio today for country fans. But the latter is not true anymore. It's no longer quite so much a music quantity [issue]. Instead, it tends to be, "DJs who sound like friends, who relate to the music and keep me updated on things I'm interested in." And in a way, it's ironic to see this happening at a time when radio is becoming more and more voice-tracked.

Isn't that a problem?

Yes, and it's a huge one. There are two things that are success factors of the over-performing, big Country stations – certainly among our clients—and in general, as well. One is that they still have jocks who relate to the local community. Look at stations that do better than the national average for Country shares, and a commonality is that they're local and deeply involved in the community. They have people who personify and bring the brand to life – not just in one or two dayparts, but across the board. Most Country stations aren't doing that, but the ones that do, do well.

The other commonality is social networking. Look at any Country station that's doing double-digit shares, and then look them up on Facebook. They're going to have 20,000-35,000 Facebook friends. The average Country station maybe has 1,000 or 1,500. And maybe they have voice-tracked middays and 7-midnight is syndicated. So I would just say, "Hey, radio. Something is going on here. Listeners want to be engaged, converse and have a dialogue and be part of a community." If we don't do it, we'd better. Luckily, there are a lot of Country stations that still do it, and they're doing really well.

The reason why other Country stations aren't doing it is because this has been a tough economy, and it's not getting better. There are people who want to buy and sell stations, and, to a large degree, that will solve this problem. In spite of bringing 40% to the bottom line, a lot of big companies can barely pay the debt service. If people could get out from under the debt they have and somebody new could buy a station at a reasonable multiple, we'll start seeing radio get back to a local service. I think most people know what we should be doing.

Everybody talks about using Facebook and Twitter. How well do you see stations integrating social networking to maximize its value?

I see a lot of folks using it the wrong way, as if it's like a liner card or a promo telling people about what you're going to do. I also see stations that tweet the title and artist of every song they play, so every three minutes they're sending you a tweet. What are they thinking?

The right way is to communicate with listeners and listen to them. They want to communicate to us, and if all we do is shout at them, we're sending them away. What we should do is listen and converse with them. Ask them things, they'll reply, and then thank them for the reply. Give thanks for that reply on the air, so what you're doing is inviting them to the dialogue and getting their help in creating the compelling content, the sense of immediacy of what's going on.

Integrate that social network into what you do as a new platform for the entertainment that you create; [it's like] engaging people in 3-D. So your Facebook, Twitter and MySpace, very simply, have to be as entertaining as the station if you hope to use them to brand and market it. If all you are do is hyping and selling me, I'm not going to be your friend; I'm not going to like you. If your radio station makes a promise, your Facebook presence better deliver.

What's your sense of PPM at this stage of the game?

It's an immovable force coming our way, and it's good. It's far better than the old system, by and large, except, of course, the sample size is way too small. And as a result of the sample size being small, there are really some huge flaws in the system in terms of reliability. There are too many panelists per household and not enough households, so the geographical representation for the panel is not as good as it probably needs to be. Arbitron is trying to fix it, but it's a process where you've got a panel that [runs] as long as two years in the US and three years in Canada. Fixing problems is an evolutionary thing because they're going to have about an 8% movement within the panel month-to-month.

But you have to say, when you look at it under a microscope, as I have, by and large, that it is [measuring] real radio usage. It looks believable, it's people living their lives, and the great news is that radio is so deeply integrated in them. Other media talk about how younger people don't use radio anymore and that radio's reach is nowhere what it used to be because of

> "ALWAYS MAKE IT ABOUT THE AUDIENCE, ABOUT THE LISTENERS, THEIR LIVES AND THEIR VALUES."

new media. The great news about PPM is that it proves the lie in all of that. Radio's reach is huge, and young people still use radio a *lot*. Radio and television are the big media dogs. What other medium can say, "Our average consumer is with us more than three hours every day"? The People Meter shows we're still ubiquitous. When it comes down to out-of-home, there's just no medium that has the impact, power and depth of radio. That's what's exciting.

How do you regard PPM's impact on Country radio?

The advent of PPM has been really good to Country in markets where there's only one dominant Country station with a low ethnic population. But it's not been so good to Country in markets where there's multiple Country stations or where there's a very high ethnic population. That's a big concern. In some markets, where Arbitron is having great difficulty getting an ethnic/non-ethnic sample balance accurately reflecting the population through these small PPM panels, we're going to begin to see Country [or multiple Country stations] as not viable anymore.

How much of what you have learned from PPM about programming to listener behavior translates to your diary market clients?

Everything, actually. There's really only one thing that isn't transferable, and that's the way PPM credits quarter-hours versus the way diaries do. In PPM, you should overlap quarter-hours with your spots. The right thing to do is to minimize the number of commercials in every quarter-hour as much as you can in PPM. The first three minutes of every quarter-hour aren't critical to have an average-quarter-hour, because you need five. So you want to put together five minutes of listening, and it doesn't have to be contiguous in PPM; it can be just any five. Other than that, to me, everything is the same.

The biggest lesson of PPM is that people don't like commercials, and clutter makes people change stations. Duh! The truth is that the station which plays the fewest commercials and is the most entertaining, with a mix of personality, music, fun, contesting, information and relatability, is going to do well. And the station that plays the most minutes of things that listeners don't care about, like promotions, hype, hard sell and commercials, is not going to do as well.

As I've consulted over the years, managers have said, "Can you prove to me 10-12 minutes an hour of commercials is about as many as a successful Country station can run and still generate good time spent listening? Show me." And, of course, in diaries, the data is not down to the micro-level enough to be able to really believably do that. Look at the TSL of a station that runs 15 minutes of commercials, and the TSL of another that runs eight. You can kind of see it in diaries. But in the People Meter, whether it's a commercial or a promo – non-interesting, non-entertaining *anything* – the minute you're trying to sell somebody something, probably 40% of the audience is going to go away. And you can prove that.

[Arbitron VP] Gary Marince said, and I believe this, "PPM, if folks will pay attention to it, is going to make radio better." And it will. But we're going to be dragged kicking and screaming into that because old habits die hard.

There seems to be a much larger emphasis on brevity.

You've got to keep in mind that the average occasion of listening is a lot shorter than we ever believed it was in diaries. And yet anyone who really thought about it knew that was right. The idea that what we see in diaries – six or seven quarter-hours as one point of listening for people in cars driving to work as the way they [really] use radio – the truth is that it's not real. The average length of the [listening] occasion is somewhere between 2-11 minutes, depending on how heavily the person uses the station. If you build everything you do to, say, within a 2-11-minute period, you're going to get everything I want to you to know about my brand. You'll do well in diaries and PPMs, too.

As you think about all that, you begin to realize what a genius Bill Drake was. Because really, everything he taught his jocks in the '60s is about PPM-friendliness. A lot of us in the '80s and '90s forgot that stuff as morning zoos began to proliferate. We tended to think that the bigger we make things, the bigger impressions they're going to have. But the truth is that the more powerful you can say it, in fewer words, and the more you talk like a real person rather than talking like a disc jockey, the better you're going to do, whether in PPM or in a diary market.

We're seeing a lot of air talent adjustments taking place in PPM markets.

I was a personality for 30 years, and was as guilty as anybody of being too corny, too self-involved. I talked too long and forgot to engage the listener. The message I have learned from PPM – and if you apply it you can see it works in diary markets, too – is that the station we *all* work at is WII-FM. Those call letters stand for "What's in it for me?" If you approach the listener with that in mind, if everything you do is listener-focused and starts by telling them what's in it for them about what you're going to talk about, it's all good. It works.

If you're talking with an air talent, or with a programmer about talking to talent, how do you convey "What's in it for me" radio in a real-world context?

In some ways, the answer to that is how you do Country. Most other formats, other than maybe News/Talk, have about a seven-to-10-year age target they're talking to. You can clearly define the values of a certain age group and be able to tell, whether it's a Top 40, Classic Rock or whatever, exactly who they are. Most of us are really good at talking to our own generation. Those of us who are 45+ really "get" boomers and understand how to engage and relate to them; they know what boomers' lifestyles are like, what their priorities are, their worries and all that stuff.

The challenge with Country is that we've got three generations within the target audience now. Let's say our target is 18-49 or 25-54. We have almost exactly equal proportions of the 15-29-year-olds – a large group of the population called Millennials, and then we've got the Gen X'ers, which is a smaller number in the population, but they're right in the center of our target – 30-44. And then you've got the leading-edge boom, which is another large group in the population, turning 55 at a fairly rapid clip every year. So we've got to figure out ways to build values-based commonalities that unite them all.

Look at Brad Paisley as an example of how it's done: Tell stories about your life. Sometimes they're emotional, family-oriented, about kids, relationships, sometimes tongue-in-cheek-funny, poking fun at yourself. Then, like he did with "Water," invite your fans in to contribute the pictures and videos of themselves doing things in the water, so that when they go to the show, they see themselves as part of it. That's what I mean by "What's in it for me."

What you want to do is create a community of people who connect and share with one another through your station and through all the other things your station has today: loyal listener clubs, VIP clubs, insider clubs, Facebook pages, video blogs – all of that.

Utilize everything to bring people together, let them tell their stories. Interact with them, engage with those stories through every tool you've got and then put the best of that on the radio. Always make it about the audience, about the listeners, their lives and their values. It sort of gives the feeling, "If you want to know what people who like Country music in this town are all about and what they're like, this is the only place to connect to that."

Would it behoove stations, especially morning shows, to tier or layer the people on the air to span those three different life-groups?

Yes, I think so. Although the good news is that there is a lot of similarity in the values of all of them. An amazing development is how conservative the Generation Y group is – it's very family-oriented. So really, bringing people together and thinking of them as a listener family works really well for all of them. That's why St. Jude and Children's Miracle Network have always worked well for us … helping other people, finding needs and standing up for what people care about. That works big-time and unites everybody.

What are the key traits of successful PDs today?

You need to be a leader, a manager and a communicator. And you also need to be a terrific time manager – someone good at prioritization and who never wastes time working on something that isn't going to achieve your goal. Once upon a time, that would not have been even in the top five skills a PD had to have. But you do today because there are so many demands on people's time. You also have to be a delegator and understand how to make people accountable once you've delegated to them to make sure the organization is heading in the right direction and getting things done. That's because the organizations we're managing now are bigger than they ever were before and we have more things under our responsibility.

The other things – coach, mentor, recognizing talent, rewarding and challenging them and helping them to grow and to recognize what good content is and isn't, teaching people how to develop and create it, and developing and creating it yourself – the old skill sets are still necessary, too.

Are you excited about radio today as when you got in it?

Oh, my gosh, yes. There's something liberating about hitting what you could be called retirement age. I could actually stop now, really. But I still want to do it because it's still fun, still great. Then, of course, there's my own personal story of gender issues and the industry being so supportive of me. I'm the poster child for carpe diem. There are a lot of really good things happening in our music right now and there are some wonderful people. It's fun to see it and fun to be cheering them on as they do it. CAC

Changing Stations: Albright (r) with WYCT GM Mary Hoxeng and PD Kevin King.

> THE CHALLENGE WITH COUNTRY IS THAT WE'VE GOT THREE GENERATIONS WITHIN THE TARGET AUDIENCE NOW. WE'VE GOT TO … BUILD VALUES-BASED COMMONALITIES THAT UNITE THEM ALL.

Lee Brice

"LOVE LIKE CRAZY"

THANK YOU COUNTRY RADIO

FOR LOVING IT LIKE CRAZY AND SPINNING IT LIKE CRAZY!

THE LONGEST RUNNING CHARTED COUNTRY SONG
IN RECORDED HISTORY

LOOK FOR LEE's FOLLOW UP SINGLE "BEAUTIFUL EVERY TIME" COMING THIS FALL

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Also, new fall album releases from Little Big Town, Darius Rucker & Keith Urban

CRS BINGO!
Win A Free iPad

HALL OF FAMERS
GLEN CAMPBELL
POP PDS TALK COUNTRY

SONY/NASHVILLE'S
GARY OVERTON
The Interview

LABEL CONTACTS INSIDE

COUNTRY AIRCHECK

FEBRUARY 2012

WELCOME TO CRS! ★ DON'T MISS:

TEAM UMG

MCA NASHVILLE

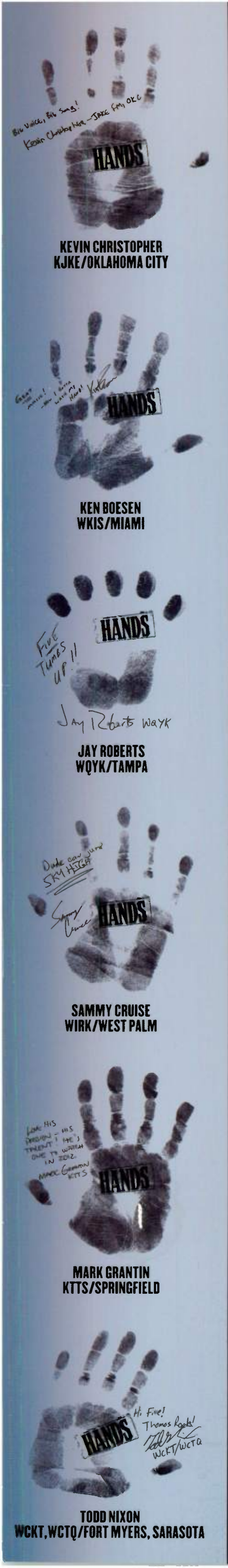
Mercury RECORDS

AT THE RYMAN LIVE!

WED, FEB 22ND 12:00 PM

A SHOW OF HANDS

THOMAS RHETT



KEVIN CHRISTOPHER
KJKE/OKLAHOMA CITY

KEN BOESEN
WKIS/MIAMI

JAY ROBERTS
WQYK/TAMPA

SAMMY CRUISE
WIRK/WEST PALM

MARK GRANTIN
KTTS/SPRINGFIELD

TODD NIXON
WCKT,WCTQ/FORT MYERS, SARASOTA

"I LOVE THE THOMAS RHETT MATERIAL.
IT'S QUIRKY WITH ATTITUDE, PERFECT FOR 93Q."
JOHNNY CHIANG - KKBQ/HOUSTON 93Q

"THERE ARE THOSE OCCASIONS WHEN YOU SEE A NEW ARTIST PERFORM FOR THE FIRST TIME AND YOU IMMEDIATELY KNOW, YOU JUST KNOW THAT THEY HAVE 'IT.' THOMAS RHETT HAS 'IT.' HE'S GOING TO BE A STAR!"
BOB RICHARDS - WLHK/INDIANAPOLIS Country 97.1 HANK FM

"THOMAS IS THE REAL DEAL. I CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF HIS MUSIC. WE ARE WATCHING THE BIRTH OF A SUPERSTAR!"
JOHN PAUL - DIAL GLOBAL

"IF YOU WANT TO HEAR THE FUTURE OF COUNTRY MUSIC, TAKE A LISTEN TO THOMAS RHETT. NOT ONLY IS HE A GIFTED MUSICIAN AND SONGWRITER, BUT AFTER SEEING HIM LIVE ON A FEW OCCASIONS, HE IS THE LIFE OF THE PARTY ON STAGE."
CLAY MODEN - WYRK/BUFFALO COUNTRY 106.5 WYRK

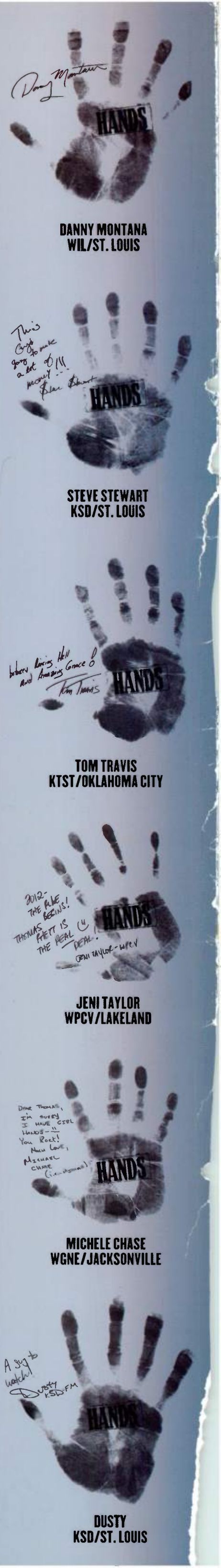
"WHAT CAN I SAY ABOUT THOMAS RHETT? WELL, HE OOZES CHARISMA, HAS GREAT SONGS, THE PRODUCTION ROCKS AND HE'S MY NEWEST FACEBOOK BUDDY! I THINK WE ARE WITNESSING THE BIRTH OF ANOTHER STAR."
(100% POSITIVE LISTENER REACTION ON SINGLE TEST SPIN - BOTH ON AIR AND FACEBOOK!)
MIKE MOORE - KWJJ/PORTLAND 99.5 FM WOLF

"THE BULL IS PROUD TO WELCOME THOMAS RHETT TO OUR FAMILY OF GEORGIA COUNTRY ARTISTS!! I CAN'T WAIT TO GET HIS MUSIC ON THE AIR!"
LANCE HOUSTON - WUBL/ATLANTA 94.9 THE BULL

"COUNTRY ARTISTS HAVE NO PROBLEM SITTING ON A BAR STOOL, PICKING A GUITAR AND PLAYING A SONG. THERE'S A HANDFUL WHO DO THAT AND CONNECT WITH THE AUDIENCE. THOMAS RHETT IS ONE OF THOSE GUYS."
STONEY RICHARDS - WDSY/PITTSBURGH Y108

"HE HAD ME AFTER THE FIRST 20 SECONDS. I STOPPED THE SONG AND SAID I'M ADDING IT."
JONATHAN WILDE - KWOF/DENVER 92.5 WOLF

"SOMETHING TO DO WITH MY HANDS"
IMPACTING NOW!
THE VALORY MUSIC CO.
WWW.THEVALORYMUSICCO.COM



DANNY MONTANA
WIL/ST. LOUIS

STEVE STEWART
KSD/ST. LOUIS

TOM TRAVIS
KTST/OKLAHOMA CITY

JENI TAYLOR
WPCV/LAKELAND

MICHELE CHASE
WGNE/JACKSONVILLE

DUSTY
KSD/ST. LOUIS

CRS BINGO!

"R-A-D-I-O and Bingo was its name-o!" Welcome to the first consecutive CRS Bingo! contest, brought to you by Country Aircheck and Power Source Country. We've taken the popular "Fan Fair Bingo" concept and added a few twists ... and prizes! Not just *any* prizes, mind you, but two Apple iPads, courtesy of Power Source Country. Good luck!

THE RULES

- Complete any space(s) on the CRS Bingo! play card (right) by emailing your answer(s) or photo(s) to crsbingo@countryaircheck.com by 8am Friday (2/24).
- Standard bingo rules apply: Five in-line spaces across, down or diagonally count as a "Bingo."
- Everyone who successfully completes a "Bingo" will be entered to win an iPad 2.
- Everyone who successfully completes a "Cover-All" of every space will be entered in a separate drawing for an iPad 2. (Ed. Note: Could be great odds!)
- Winners will be drawn at the New Faces Show & Dinner Friday (2/24).

R1. Picture of yourself congratulating a 2012 Country Radio Hall of Famer.

R2. Picture with any label regional rep or VP/Promotion in an elevator, revolving door, closet or bathroom.

R3. A quote from Clear Channel CEO Bob Pittman's keynote.

R4. Number of stair steps from the Renaissance Ballroom area to the top-level NCC floor.

R5. The city and calls of CRS Exec. Dir. Bill Mayne's first job in radio.

A1. Name of the CRS Board President.

A2. Picture of yourself with Chet Atkins, Owen Bradley, Roy Acuff or Minnie Pearl (bronze versions).

A3. Picture of yourself and a friend in the CRS 2012 Badge Bar.

A4. Three Bob Night: Picture(s) of yourself with three people named Bob. (Likely candidates: Bob Reeves, Bob Mitchell, Bob Richards, Bob Moody, Bobby Young, Bob Kingsley, etc.)

A5. Read Wednesday's CRS Daily Buzz (powered by Country Aircheck) for the designated clue.

D1. Post a photo to your Facebook or Twitter of any artist reading Country Aircheck (and notify CA by email, as detailed above).

D2. Names of the performers scheduled for Thursday's BMI/Country Aircheck-sponsored WCRS Live!

D3. Card Swap: Visit the Power Source booth (NCC Level 2), pick up their business card and put yours in the bowl. Send us Jason Higgins' or Rich Miller's cell number.

D4. The names of the panelists and moderator at any CRS session.

D5. Photo of yourself with one of Nashville's oversized Gibson Guitars.

I1. The second song performed during Wednesday's UMGN luncheon.

I2. The color of the shirt Edison's Larry Rosin wore during Wednesdays Research Presentation.

I3. Picture of yourself in or in front of the Bridgestone Arena.

I4. Read Thursday's CRS Daily Buzz (Powered by Country Aircheck) for the designated clue.

I5. The names of the Country Radio Hall of Famers on the bottom-left and top-right plaques in the display between the hotel and NCC.

O1. Post a photo to Facebook or Twitter of yourself with a cupcake and/or coffee from the St. Jude booth in the NCC (notify Country Aircheck of the posting via email).

O2. The third song performed during Thursday's Capitol luncheon.

O3. One of the phrases on the Country Aircheck CRS hand sanitizer stations.

O4. Photo of yourself and a rep from the sponsoring company/label at any after-hours CRS event.

O5. The first sentence in the second answer given by Gary Overton in The Interview, page 47.

Open to all CRS registrants, excluding employees, spouses and associates of Country Aircheck and Power Source. One iPad per winner.

THE NEW SINGLE

CARRIE UNDERWOOD

GOOD GIRL

IMPACT DATE: FEB 27

SCAN FOR A MESSAGE FROM CARRIE

WRH

ARISTA 19

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WWW.CARRIEUNDERWOODOFFICIAL.COM

Beverlee Brannigan

Encourage Meant At Every Level

It's Only Make Believe: Brannigan with the late Conway Twitty during the CRS artist-attendee reception in the late '80s. She's only missed the seminar twice since 1979.

Country Radio HALL OF FAME

*One of only four women to be inducted into the Country Radio Hall of Fame, **Beverlee Brannigan** spent 20 years at KJJY/Des Moines, arriving as a 24-year-old first-time PD and tasked with launching the station from scratch. KJJY went on to become a steady ratings leader with a nationwide reputation for excellence. For the past decade, Brannigan has equaled or surpassed that success at Journal's KFDI/Wichita, which has consistently ranked No. 1 in the market. National honors during her tenure have included a CMA Station of the Year Award and two morning shows recognized as Personality of the Year. Brannigan doubles as cluster OM, and in 2010 she was elevated to the company-wide post of Dir./Country Programming.*

> "You have to love every person you work with for the talents they bring."

Class Acts: With Dick Clark in the United Stations Presidential Suite at an early '80s CRS. Brannigan went to Northwestern University with Clark's son, television producer Rac.

Guitar Pic: Brannigan is still hanging with the format's biggest stars, evidenced by this shot at Keith Urban's Wichita show last year.

I've been interested in radio my whole life. No lie, one of my very first memories is of the WNEW/New York jingle from when I was four and living in New Jersey. Why is that that taking up space in my head? I grew up north of Boston in a preppy little town called Topsfield. My memories are full of radio. You hear musicians saying there was always music in their house; for us it was the radio. Mother listened to WBZ/Boston, a Group Westinghouse station. Dad loved classic music, so that was always blaring.

My first Country job was at WOKQ/Dover, NH. I got a call one day out of the blue from JJ Jeffrey of the famous WRKO. He and "Doc" Bob Fuller had bought some radio stations, and WOKQ was one of them. They were looking for part-time air talent, and he'd heard me on WNBP. I didn't know a thing about country music.

I fell hard for the music. After college I did afternoons at WOKQ for two years and loved it. The owners, Fuller-Jeffrey Broadcasting, then bought KJJY/Des Moines, which was actually licensed to Ankeny, IA. They needed to run it on a shoestring. I was single, unattached and I could relocate. That was my first PD job, in 1981. I was 24.

I didn't know enough to be scared or intimidated. I packed my things in my car and drove across the United States to Iowa. Some of the biggest challenges were all the ones that just come with a startup. Plus, I was a woman. I also did middays and afternoons, but I'm not the greatest air personality. I had the benefit of working with some terrific people who gave me great coaching, like Rusty Walker, Joel Raab and JD Spangler.

The big station at the time was KSO-AM/Des Moines. KJJY went on to be a really great station with one of the greatest staffs I've ever managed, but believe me when I tell you I made *plenty* of mistakes. In 2001, Wilks came in and bought KJJY from Barnstable, and my services were "no longer required." I was two weeks' shy of 20 years there, but I saw it coming. I got up in the morning, and my husband had left me flowers. It was a hard day.

Being out of work was a great centering time. I'd meditate and pray and think about what I needed and wanted to do. It was a great time to step back and listen to radio differently. I learned how annoying some of the radio stuff is when you're listening as a listener. I learned that just because it happened on the morning show, not everyone heard it. I learned it's important to account for people who aren't listening when the cool thing you did happened.

I'm a long-term thinker and relentless, which may explain my longevity. When you have a long-term view, the bumps in the road are easier to get through without being too reactive. If I have any gift, I suppose it's being able to recognize what is spectacular about the different personalities I've worked with. They are way cooler than me. It's a matter of pointing out to people what they do well and encouraging them.

You have to love the air talent. That's the first thing. You have to love every person you work with for the talents they bring to you. After you love them, you hold them accountable for being great. Brian & Kelly [current KFDI morning hosts] would say, "She gets us." [APD/middays] Carol Hughes would say, "She's hard, but has made me a better jock." Then they'd say, "Her desk is messy." I love a clean desk, but I have a great deal of difficulty keeping it that way. That's my dirty secret.

I'm proud of the morning show talents who have won the CMA Personality of the Year Awards at KFDI. The station won a CMA in 2003, and that was a highlight. The week I was called with the Hall of Fame news was the same week Brian and Kelly won the CMA Award. We also had a terrific book, and that was the most exciting news. The accolades are wonderful, but the thing you come to work and grind on every day is to move the ratings needle.

I don't know what being in the Hall of Fame means yet. I'm so flattered and extremely honored to be in that group of people. My first reaction is probably that I'm not worthy, but apparently some other people think I am, so I'll accept it graciously and hope in some way my being in there can encourage other people. Encouragement is probably most true to my heart. I want to encourage people to be great every day, to be part of the industry I love so much. Since I'm among so few women on that wall, perhaps it will encourage others. If that happens, I'll take that as a win. I have just been so fortunate to work with great companies, talented airstaffs and people who have made me look good. I really won the lottery when it came to that.

Encouraging excellence is something we really need to continue doing. When I look around broadcasting, what I'm seeing is making me sad. We're getting away from serving our local listeners. Broadcasting comes with a responsibility, whether it's Country or other formats. Bob Fuller, one of the first owners I worked for, instilled this. You have to serve the people listening, and I see instances where that isn't happening. For those who do continue to serve listeners and be good broadcasters, more recognition is probably in order. **CAC**

Moby

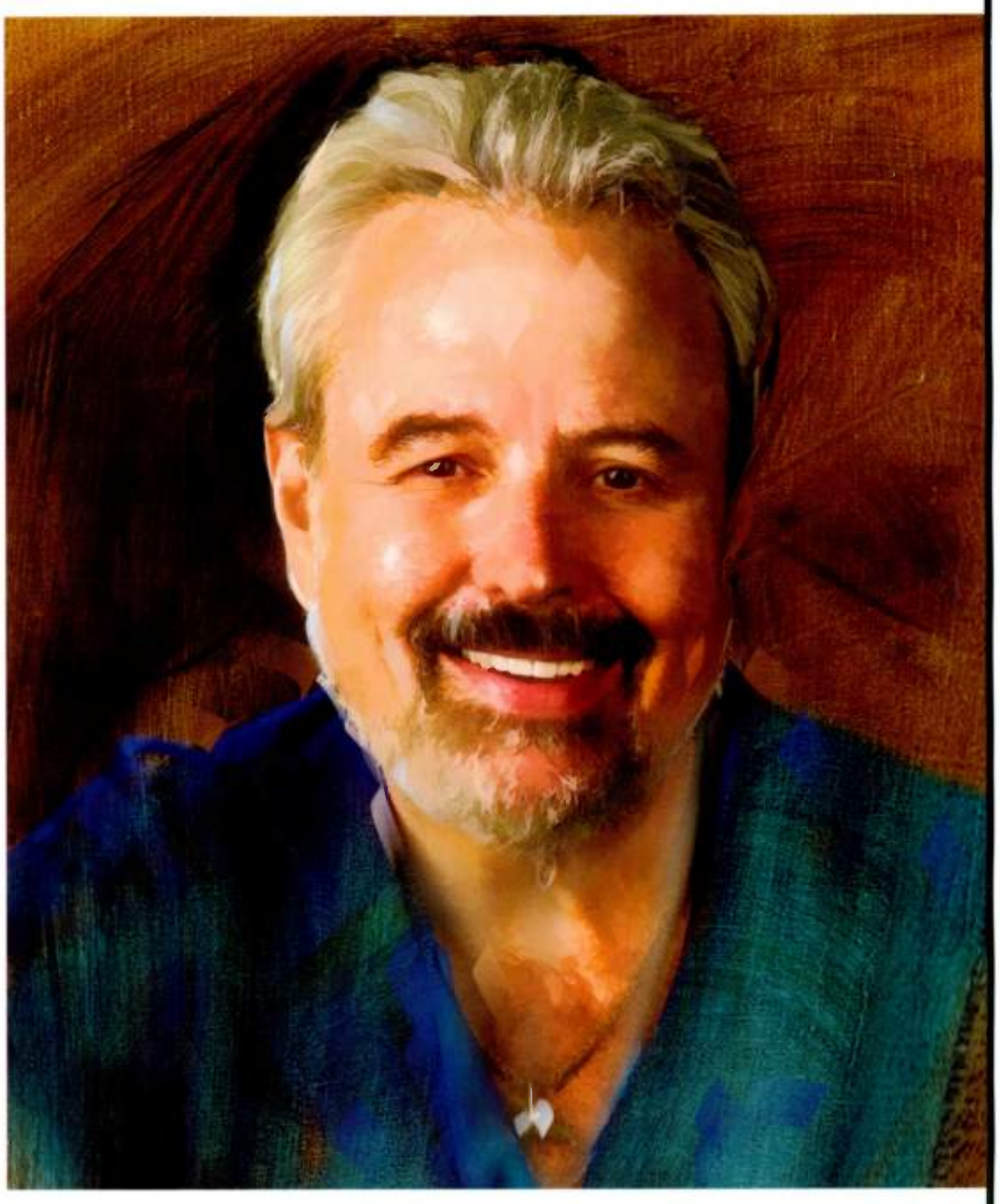
Endearing To Listeners, Even In Deer Season

Hard Drivin' Men: With NASCAR legends Kyle and Richard Petty at WKHX/Atlanta circa 2002.

Country Radio HALL OF FAME

One of radio's true larger-than-life personalities, James "Moby" Carney worked his way up from small-town radio in Tennessee to WAMB, WKDA-FM and WKQB/Nashville, WQXM/Tampa, KSRR and KLOL/Houston and KEGL/Dallas, making his name for years riding the "shock jock" wave with top ratings before a decade dominating mornings at WKHX/Atlanta, where Moby was first syndicated. Widely known for his community service efforts, he was so popular among Houston law enforcement officers that their battering ram had a Moby sticker on it and is still called "The Moby" today. Although diagnosed with MS in 1984, he hasn't slowed down for a moment. For the past seven years, his self-syndicated morning show network from Roswell, GA has been carried in numerous markets in partnership with United Stations. Moby says ignorance is bliss. "If we'd known up front what a monumental job it was, we'd have never done it."

> "My goal has always been to embrace the audience, endear myself them, and allow them to endear themselves to me."



I was offered a job at 15, before I was even interested in radio. Mac Johnson, who owned 250-watt daytimer WCSV/Crossville, TN, called my dad and asked, "Jim, you got a boy in high school, don't you?" Dad said, "Yeah, what's he done?" Turns out Mac hires a high school student to do work part-time Sunday mornings. He had just fired a kid he'd caught at the station with beer and buddies. Daddy asked me, "Want to go work for Mac at the station?" I said, "That sounds like fun!" I showed up a half-hour early, at 5:30am, with my Thermos of coffee and sandwiches my mom had made me. My job was to play gospel music from 6-11am. Mac said, "This is a mic switch, and this is how you cue a record. And at 11 o'clock, if you'll just turn this on and punch this button, that intros the Baptist Church. By the time he's done preaching, I'll be back." That is all the formal training I've ever had. And if you listen, you can tell!

I earned the minimum wage – $1.60 an hour. What Mac didn't know is that I would have paid *him*. My goal has always been to embrace the audience, endear myself to them, and allow them to endear themselves to me. It may sound weird, but I was always the fat kid who felt as if he had to be the friendliest guy around to make up for that. I was always overtly friendly, but honestly so. I was named "wittiest" in my senior year of high school, always a jokester. When the girls got their hearts broken, they'd come cry on my shoulder and I let them do it. I became more by feeling I was less. Even now, from time to time, part of me still feels that.

My mom was upset when I dropped out of college at Belmont, but I knew I wanted to pursue radio. I had been doing every other shift on AOR WKDA-FM/Nashville all weekend for 18 months. PD Jack Crawford promised me I'd get the first available fulltime shift. The guy who was doing 7-midnight had a bit of a "problem." One evening, he came in, puked and passed out on the control room floor. I didn't know what to do, so I called Jack. He said, "Well, guess what? You're the new 7-midnight guy." Two books later, I had a 50 share.

When I moved from afternoons at KSRR/Houston to mornings, what was I going to do to stand out? It became, "Good morning, Houston. Get your lazy asses out of bed!" I fed off the audience. The dirtier I was, the more the audience loved it. I pushed it as far as I could. It became a self-perpetuating monster, this shock radio thing. And nobody else in the country was doing it like this. I wasn't making much money, and soon L.A., Detroit and other markets were calling. When I told GM Jeff Trumper this, he said, "Moby, you've got a contract." I said, "I know it, and they know it. They're talking really big money." He sat back in his chair, playing with this little wind-up robot. After thinking for a moment, he threw it to me across the desk and said, "Welcome to the 50% tax bracket." I thought, "This *is* a good day." I've still got that robot.

For years, people had been saying to me, "Moby, listen to how you sound. You should be doing Country." My agent called about an opportunity to do Country for Norm Schrutt at WKHX/Atlanta. But I loved Texas and was doing really well in rock and roll. But within a couple of days, my five-year-old son said, "Daddy, I was listening to you today and you said "ass." I thought, "He's going to grow up emulating me." And about how I'd always been told to pursue Country. So I took the job and immediately became a more mature disc jockey trying to get into heaven.

[Future Hall of Famer] Rhubarb Jones was on 100-kw WYAY & WYAI, and was very successful. I had just arrived at WKHX, and saw him at a Travis Tritt listening party. I asked somebody to introduce me to him. Sweetest individual you've ever met. Rhubarb took my hand and said, "Moby, we know you're here, and there's plenty of room here for both of us. And as soon as you get settled, my wife and I want to take you out to dinner." I pulled him close and said, "I didn't come here to be your friend, buddy." And I let him go and walked away. He knew right then the war was on. We are good friends now, but only because he understood that it was business. Rhubarb's such a great guy that he will allow me to be his friend 20 years later.

There's no way to express the gratitude I feel to be inducted. My nine-year-old daughter can walk down that hall with her grandchildren and point up and say, "That's Grandpa. That's my dad." I didn't know I'd be able to leave a legacy like that. I was absolutely stunned by the news. And I'd just been inducted into the Georgia Radio Hall of Fame the prior Saturday. When Mike Culotta from the board called, he said, "Well, this *has* been a good week for you, hasn't it?"

I'll know it's time to hang up the headphones when someone calls 911 and they carry me out feet first. After 41 years, it's still so much fun. Retire? What would I do? Deer season only lasts three months a year. **CAC**

Southern Belles: Hosting a 2011 beauty pageant at a Benton House senior living home in Georgia in 2011. Moby's been doing these for more than 20 years.

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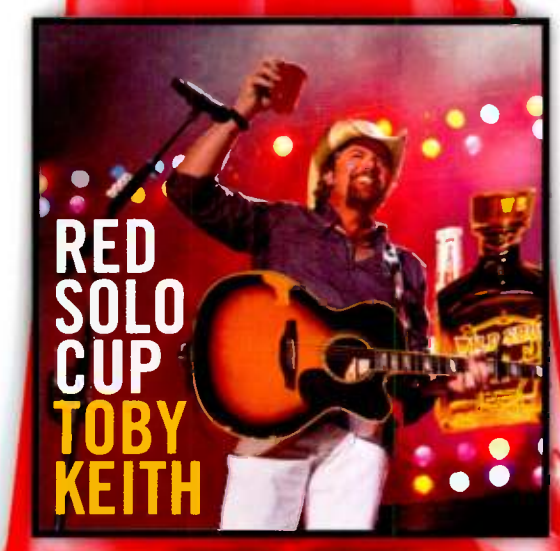

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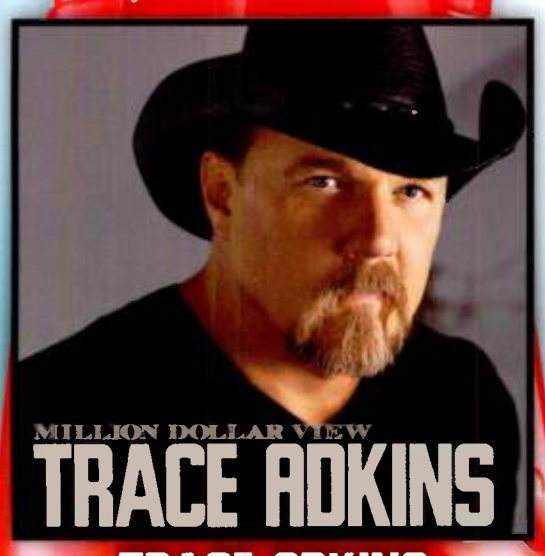

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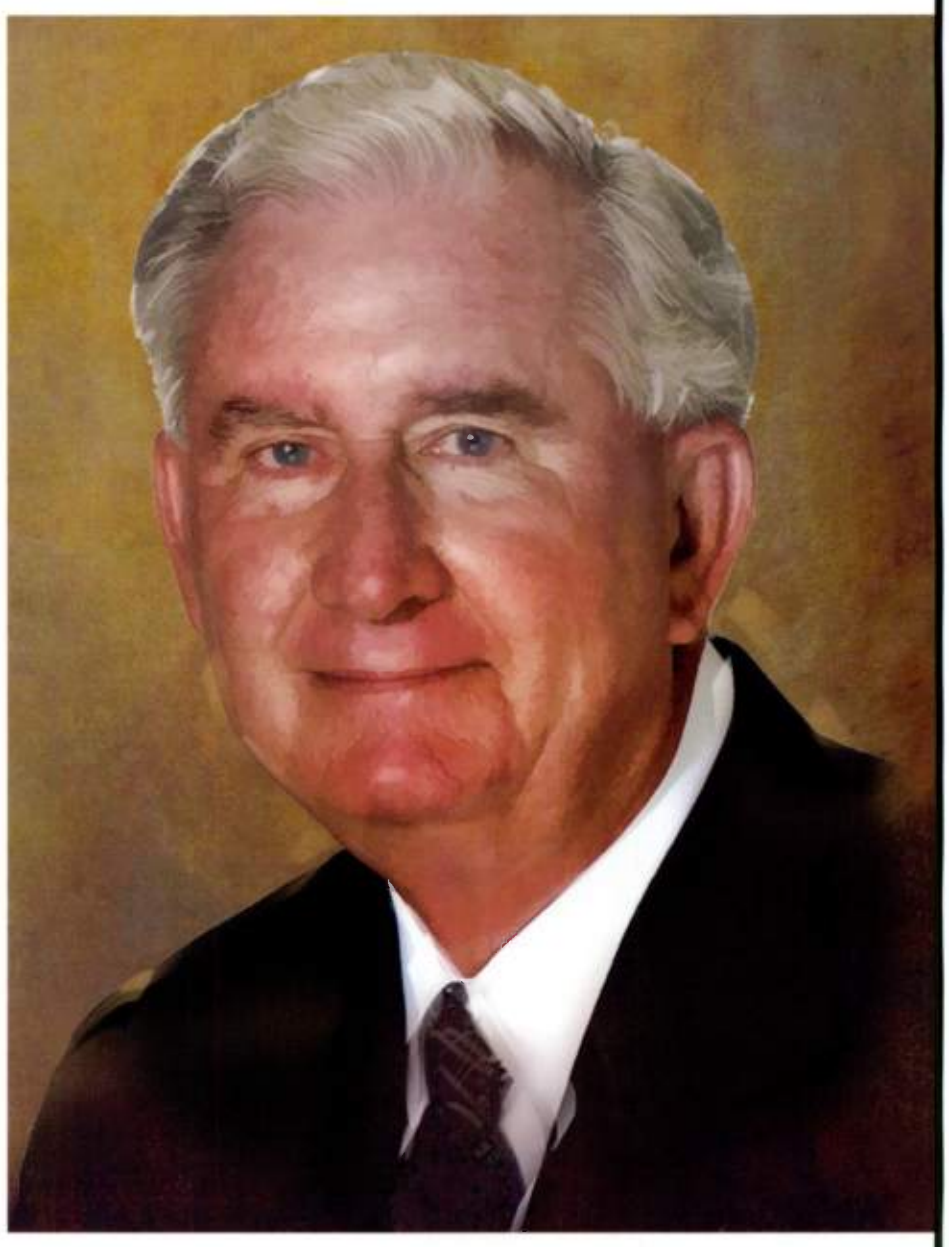
Ron Rogers

Father Of Modern Country Music Radio

Music Man: As GM of the No. 1 station in Austin, Country music aficionado Ron Rogers always took time to visit with the stars whose hits graced the airwaves at KVET & KASE. Pictured are Ron and his wife Pam with Garth Brooks, Willie Nelson and George Strait.

Country Radio HALL OF FAME

The University of Texas' first baseball announcer, ***Ron Rogers*** *debuted contemporary formatics on Country KOKE-AM/Austin in 1964, shaping a new sound that to this day remains the format's standard. A lover of Country music, perennial "student" at CRS, and nine-year format representative to Arbitron's Radio Advisory Council, Rogers worked nearly his entire 42-year career in the Texas capital. He was, most notably, President of KVET Broadcasting's top-rated KVET-AM & FM and KASE for 24 years. Rogers, who was inducted into the Texas Radio Hall of Fame in 2004, took every phone call and put no cap on what his employees could earn. His straightforward, supportive management style propelled eight stations in three markets to ratings/revenue dominance and engendered among his employees long-term loyalty rarely seen before or since.*



As a kid, I did play-by-play on the all-star baseball games we played where you'd flip little cards around. At school, my voice changed before many others', and people told me, "You ought to be in radio." I majored in radio/television at the University of Texas, and sold Bibles door-to-door. I was bitten by dogs and rained on, but it taught me the value of the dollar better than anything. The question you asked was not, "Do you want a Bible?" but, "Would you prefer the speckled or gilded edges?" I learned you'd better create a need for radio and adapt the pitch to use *your* stations as opposed to others'.

We got to see LBJ [owner and future President Lyndon Baines Johnson] from time to time at KTBC-AM-FM-TV/Austin. I got to know Mrs. Johnson better, as she was more involved in running the stations than he. The whole family was always very gracious. When I was at KVET & KASE in the early '90s, Mrs. Johnson had lost her GM at KTBC & KLBJ. She asked if I'd come over and evaluate resumes of prospects for her. I ranked them 1-5, with No. 1 whom I'd hire first. She thanked me, and soon hired No. 5. Maybe she thought I was trying to put a fast one over on her. It's funny, because he lasted about six months, and she then hired No. 1.

> "I'm still meeting with people smarter than I am and learning every bit I can."

If you're not smart, look at people who are. When we took KOKE Country, I studied Gordon McLendon's and Todd Storz's operations. Rather than play Bob Wills for an hour at noon, why not be uptempo with five-minute newscasts and jingles? Nobody had ever heard of jingles in Country before. We still played Marty Robbins and Jim Reeves, but put sophistication into the presentation to appeal to a broader group of folks. There was no blueprint, we had no money to advertise and were a daytimer. But it worked. We went to No. 1.

When George Strait came by with his first single "Unwound" in 1981, we were among the first, if not the first, to play it. I really liked George. Several years later, an MCA staffer divulged to me, "George loved that visit so much, he said, 'Man, those guys are nice. If this singin' thing doesn't work out, I think I want to be in radio.'"

One time someone came up backstage and said, "Mr. Rogers, I hate to tell you this, but Dave Dudley just fell off the stage." A moment later, it was, "One of Willie Nelson's boys just hit Jerry Lee Lewis in the mouth." I asked, "Did Dudley break anything?" They said no. "I said, 'Well, then, prop him up and tell him he's going to have to sing 10 or 15 minutes more because Jerry Lee can't come out right now.'"

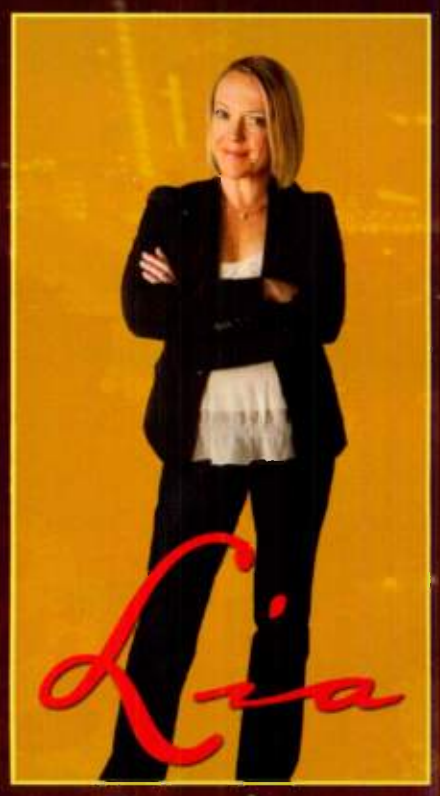
Willie is big buddies with [Texas Hall of Famer] Sammy Allred, who was on KVET. He was with Sammy one day, and I was told Willie was smoking [pot] in the studio. I said, "Well, ask him to leave." They said, "*You'd* better ask him to leave," so I told Willie, "I can't jeopardize my license with you doing that." Not long after that, I fired Allred, so Willie and I didn't speak to each other for a few years.

I hired Allred back several years later and took Willie to play golf at the Austin Country Club. We were first going to have lunch, and Willie had on his Pedernales Cut-N-Putt Golf Club tank top. The pro told me, "Mr. Rogers, I don't care who he is. He can't play golf in that." So I said, "Put a shirt on my bill." I later said to Willie, "I know it's going to come as a great shock, but they won't let you play in your shirt. So I bought you one." There were 15-20 people wanting his autograph and, right in front of 'em, Willie took his tank top off and put mine on. He grinned and said, "Ron, I know it's wrong, but I get so many nice country club shirts doing this!"

A few months later, Willie came by and brought a piece with four pictures of him in that shirt. A "for sale" tag around one read, "$1,000," with the next marked down to $750, another was $200 and the last said, "Will trade for one Pedernales tank top." A gold plaque read, "Ron Rogers, I'll give you the shirt off my back – Willie." We turned out to be great friends. It was in my office for a long time, and I still have it in the garage – my wife doesn't want it in the house.

It means a great deal to be inducted. For many years there was a survey among GMs on the most admired stations. And KASE was in the top 10 or so every time. I also was pleased with that because it meant that my colleagues thought that we had done well, and that I had represented them pretty well on the Arbitron Advisory Council, including as chairman.

Fabled University of Texas football coach Darrell K Royal told me, "Ron, I'd follow Bear Bryant into the restroom if I thought he'd tell me something about coaching." I did that, too. I'd say, "Look, I'll go to CRS and if I learn five things, it's worth my time." I'm still meeting with people smarter than I am and learning every bit I can. **CAC**



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Eddie Stubbs

America's "Hillbilly" Disc Jockey

De-Vinyl: Stubbs readying a 78 at WAMU in 1990.

Country Radio HALL OF FAME

Arguably the most knowledgeable person about country music's history working the airwaves today, WSM-AM/Nashville's ***Eddie Stubbs*** *spins 78s, 45s, LPs and current CDs – accompanied by his eloquent, gracious storytelling and fueled by his passion for the music. He grew up in Gaithersburg, MD listening to WSM at night, later becoming an accomplished fiddler for the Johnson Mountain Boys while pursuing radio at WYII/Williamsport, MD and public WAMU/Washington, DC. In 1995, Stubbs joined WSM and the very small fraternity of those to ever become* Grand Ole Opry *announcers. He received the CMA Large Market Personality award in 2002, the first AM station jock to win in that category in 20 years. Today, Stubbs is both Nashville's longest-running evening air personality and WSM's longest-tenured talent to ever host that daypart.*

> "Many times those old records have been the best friends I've had."

The first generation of bluegrass was my first love: Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs, Don Reno and Red Smiley, Mac Wiseman, Bill Monroe, the Stanley Brothers. WAMU had wonderful on-air host Gary Henderson, who was on Tuesday and Thursday nights. Gary became a mentor to me, and I failed more than one test on Friday mornings in high school from listening to him. When I'd go watch him work, he let me cue up records. We were kindred spirits, and when you hear me on the radio, you're really hearing Gary. He had great timing and anecdotes to help sell any record. Gary's still on the air at WAMU.

The first time I saw Kitty Wells perform, it was like my life changed. I used to go see Kitty and Johnnie Wright, and had worked with Johnnie on a box set in 1991. It was a thrill to play with them several times. Johnnie had even offered me a job about five times over the years. In 1994, I was going through a divorce; it was a very sad time. They were in Maryland for a show, and while with them on their bus, he said, "More than ever, you need a change in your life. If you come to Nashville, I think you'll do good. Next year we'll be working in Nashville 4-5 nights a week at the Texas Troubadour Theater, and we'd really love you to come to work for us." They hadn't had a fiddler in their band for 32 years, and didn't need one. It didn't take long to make up my mind, and I moved to Nashville in March 1995 and started my life over.

When I got Johnnie and Kitty in my life, it was like inheriting a third set of grandparents. They rescued me from some of the darkest days of my life. They believed in me, gave me encouragement, unconditional love and support and allowed me to become a part of their family. Anything I've ever done that has happened in this town can be directly traced to those people. I will never, ever be able to repay their kindness for what they did for me.

Hello Kitty: Stubbs, the late Johnnie Wright and Kitty Wells circa 2002.

Hi Cat: Tom "Cat' Reeder, WAMU's Gary Henderson and Stubbs circa 2003.

I was backstage at the Opry on a Friday night. Seventeen days after arriving in town, without having been on-air at WSM, OM/PD Kyle Cantrell, who'd hired me, handed me this script for GTE Telecommunications. He asked me if I could read it. It had all these big words like "peripheral." I said, "I don't talk this way." He said, "I didn't ask if you *talked* this way, I asked if you could *read* it." I said, "I guess so." With 10 minutes' warning, he said, "Good. You're going to announce the next half-hour of the *Opry* and introduce Bill Monroe."

My knees literally knocked side to side. The perspiration was rolling off my receding hairline because Bill Monroe was a real iconic figure to me. I didn't sleep the whole night. And the next night, I was on the televised portion of the *Opry* on TNN, playing fiddle behind Kitty Wells on "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels." Those are 24 hours to remember.

My first time on-air at WSM was filling in on a Sunday morning playing these 15- and 30-minute recorded ministries. Here I am, a 78-rpm kind of guy trying my best to learn their computerized system. There's a torrential thunderstorm, and suddenly our 50,000-watt blowtorch is knocked off the air – in my first shift! I called our PD at 5:30am, and his response when he picked up the phone was, "I *thought* that would be your ring."

In the days before we had music directors and consultants, there were what I reverently call "hillbilly disc jockeys" – guys like [Hall of Famers] Don Owens and Tom "Cat" Reeder. They were true fans of the music, and *they* had say over what was going to get played and, often, how it was going to turn out. They were so in touch with the listeners, they pretty much knew the kinds of cars they drove. They had a platform where artists would call them or come and see them when they were in the area. It was like a triangle among the artists, the fans and the radio, all working together. And there was nobody telling you that you couldn't play something. If it was good, you played it. They played the top current records, but seasoned their program with older music and other recordings that might be regionally popular. That's what I wanted to be – a good hillbilly disc jockey.

Many times those old records have been the best friends I've had. They're always the same. They don't judge you, and you know what they're going to be like. You may listen to them in a different mood or a different mindset, but there's a consistency that will always be there. It's a friend that's always on the shelf, just waiting for you go pull it off and connect with it.

My goal at WSM has always been for things to be as country as possible; there's no such thing as "too country." If you can visualize and smell the country through those speakers, that's when it's just right. That's when it's real. You can play a 78 by Cowboy Copas at 9:30pm, but it wouldn't sound quite the same at 9:30 in the morning. There's something especially meaningful – a certain mystique – about hearing traditional country music over the airwaves at night. I think country music was meant to be enjoyed that way.

The Hall of Fame plaques hung outside our studio here for years, and every night I would walk by, looking at people like Tom "Cat" Reeder, the first DJ I ever heard on the radio when I was about four. And Don Owens, who got Tom started, and was Gary Henderson's idol. You realized that they were the among the very best, and it's extremely humbling to be thought worthy enough to be alongside them. For most of us who work in radio, this is the highest honor that any of us will ever receive. I feel like I need to go out and earn it now. **CAC**

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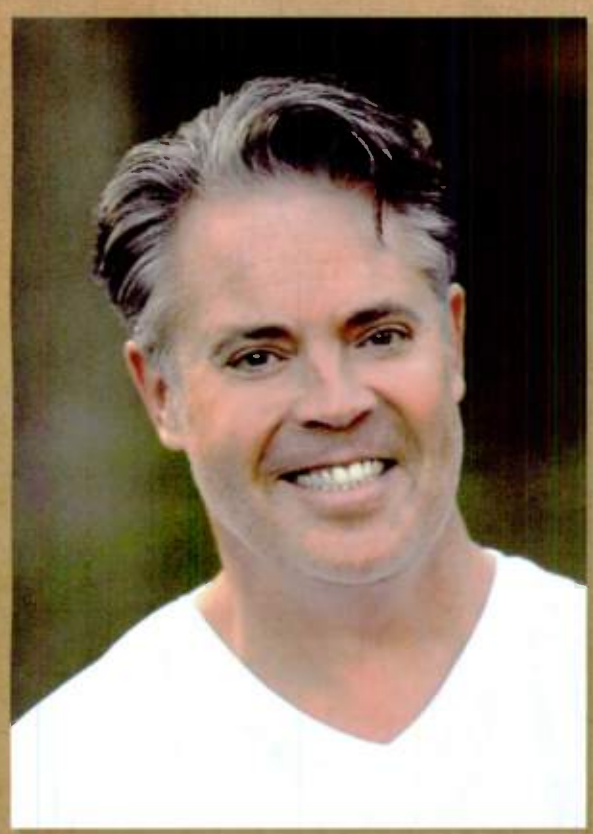

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Rusty Walker

Master Of The Arts & Call Letters

Tying One On: Wearing a necktie on-air, as WZZK listeners expect from their DJs.

Country Radio HALL OF FAME

Ponder for a moment that, with more than 750 stations under his wing during the past 42 years, ***Rusty Walker*** *has worked at or with the majority of all the Country stations in rated markets in America. Beneath his Mississippi small-town exterior is one of the most strategic-thinking, competitive programming minds in all of radio. Regarded as a pioneer for bringing the Top 40 sound and structure to Country broadcasting, Walker has a finely tuned acumen for interpreting research, which, combined with an eye and ear for the show-biz side, has led to numerous success stories. Countless Country pros proudly attest to have benefited from Walker's innate mentoring skills, with many more sure to follow.*

> "Anybody who tells you to fix your weaknesses to equal your strengths is wrong. You've got to maximize your strengths to overwhelm your weaknesses."

In 1970, I was 16, working at the Dixie Queen, a local hamburger/soft-serve ice cream joint in Corinth, MS. Ron Morgan, who did 7pm-midnight on our "Countrypolitan" WWTX-FM, came by for a burger every evening before his show, and knew I loved radio; all we did was talk about it. Ron got an opportunity to go to the AM and do play-by-play, and told me, "You ought to audition for my job." The next day, I went to the downtown sales office to audition. There was no mixer, just a microphone and turntable, dual-wired into a cart machine. I read the front page of the newspaper into the cart machine at 3:30pm, and by 7pm that night I was out at the studio – a trailer 15 miles out of town – spinning the hits for $1.60 an hour. It was love at first sight. I worked there six months before I even knew you had to have a license.

My first programming job came while doing mornings at WQYK/Tampa. Then-PD Jim Malloy had hired John St. John and me, and the three of us would sit together designing clocks and developing ideas to put on the air. A huge Elvis aficionado, Jim had all kinds of Elvis memorabilia. In January 1977, posted on the bulletin board was, "Jim has relocated to Memphis and Rusty Walker is now PD." It turned out that Jim had a premonition that something was going to happen to Elvis. Literally overnight, Jim left to go to Memphis without a job; he was simply drawn there. Of course, later that year Elvis died. It's the oddest thing.

In those days, AM Country stations were playing 80-90 currents. We were very streamlined for an FM Country station, a lot tighter than everybody else. After WQYK achieved some success, John and I went to co-owned WQIK/Jacksonville to re-create what we'd done in Tampa. We started with a 2 share and left three years later No. 1 with a 13.

I've always liked very confident air talents with good pipes. Fred Winston in Chicago is somebody I've always been in awe of. Another is Brother Bill Gable, who was at CKLW/Detroit a long time. He did a great job of communicating succinctly in the Bill Drake concept of getting everything done in seven seconds. As someone who cannot tell you what I think about a song until I find out what the consumer thinks about it, Bob Pittman and Ed Salamon were gigantic influences in my early days. So was Malrite President John Chaffee, who played a big part of the births of Album Rock WMMS & Country WHK/Cleveland, among the best stations ever to grace the airwaves.

My ability to launch successful stations like KMLE/Phoenix and KCYY/San Antonio came from low self-esteem. I was never good enough to get a job at a successful station. I'd have to go to a bad station and try to make it a good one. So early on in my career, I gained a lot of skill in start-ups, which was basically talent mentoring. It played to my early interest in becoming a band director. When they did a personality test on me, the characteristics of "director" was way off the chart.

One station I'm particularly proud of building was WZZK/Birmingham. New City gave us all the tools we needed. We filmed fabulous TV spots that ran heavily most of the year. We'd order t-shirts 10,000 at a time and generated "rock star revenues." At one time, we had about a 30-share 25-54. The company was excited to have these Southern kids more interested in the science of the business than all in the other stuff.

Another favorite station was the old Y106/Atlanta. Talk about stylized: We had Rhubarb, George Mason-Dixon, General Zach Taylor and Dixie Lee. We played "Dixie" at the top of the hour. *"From high atop the tallest man-made structure in Georgia, you got it crankin' on Atlanta's Y106 FM."* Then we'd always say something stupid – our "outrageous IDs." Our competitor, WKHX, was managed by Norm Schrutt. After we had beaten Kix for the first time, it was, "Boom! Kickin' Schrutt and taking names."

Have I ever been soundly beaten in the ratings? More times than you will ever know. There's the old Thomas Edison line, "If you want to have a good idea, you first must have many of them." Anybody who tells you to fix your weaknesses to equal your strengths is wrong. You've got to maximize your strengths to *overwhelm* your weaknesses, because if you're trying to fix what's wrong in the first place, you're headed in the wrong direction. I'm a big believer in finding what you can do well and doing it over and over again.

I live in Iuka, MS (pop. 3,000), but everybody else in our company lives in Corinth because it's a metropolitan area – 13,000 people! I fell in love with Iuka the day I moved here because I love small towns and the water; it's got the best part of the Tennessee River. Iuka's a great place to raise your kids and keeps me close to the country sensibility. Everybody knows everybody. Here, I'm Sammy, not Rusty. It's so much like the Miranda Lambert song, "Famous In A Small Town."

As for being inducted, I'm really speechless. In the past, people have told me, "I nominated you," and I'd say, "I'd rather be relevant than a relic." I hope that is still the case. It's only going to make me work even harder, because I'd like to have a couple more gigantic wins as a member of the Hall of Fame. **CAC**

Son Of A Beach: As WQIK/Jacksonville PD in 1979. Dig the North Dallas Forty t-shirt.

We Need The Stinkin' Badges: Before they became household names, here are Rusty and Reba circa 1977.

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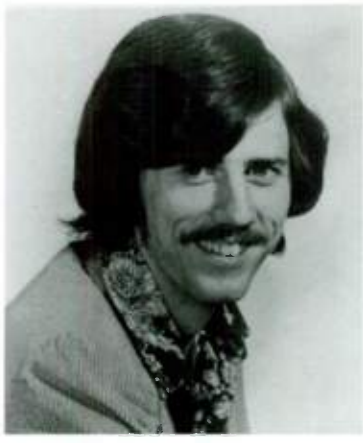
Bill Whyte

You Can Go Home Again



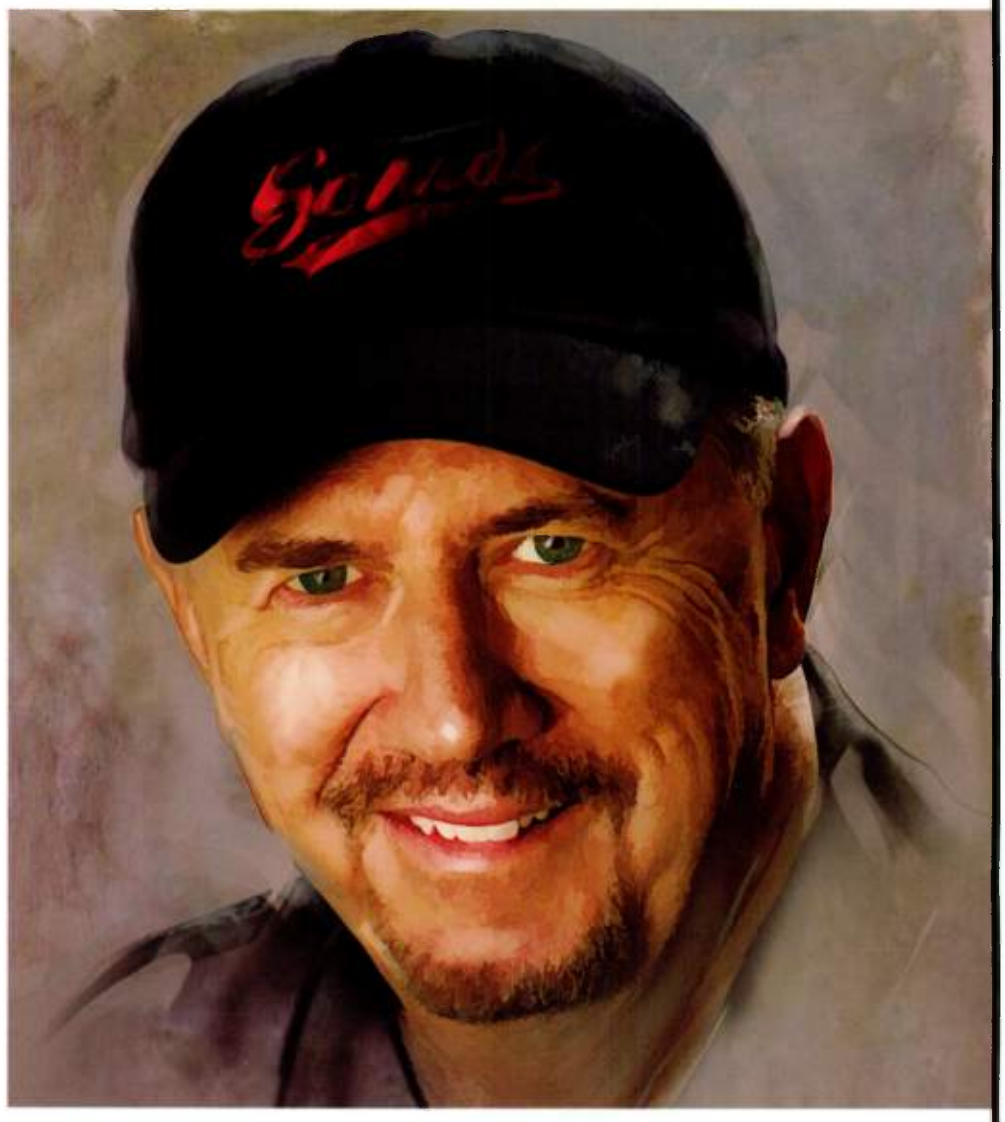
Call Him Conductor: An official press shot from his early days as bandleader of Bill Whyte & The Short Line; that name referenced the famous railroad.

Country Radio HALL OF FAME

*With his roots planted in small-town America, **Bill Whyte** has earned recognition beyond his wildest dreams as a songwriter, bandleader, recording artist and now with his induction. A top personality on KWRE/Warrenton, MO, WUBE/Cincinnati, WMIL/Milwaukee, WFMS/Indianapolis and WSM-FM/Nashville, Whyte's a CMA Large Market Personality winner and one who never said no to community service. These days he's penning songs, songplugging, guesting at his beloved WSM, playing select gigs and continuing to write comedy for United Stations. Although Whyte admits, "I've had the most unplanned career ever," somehow it feels as if things have turned out exactly as they should.*

> "Walking by those Hall of Fame plaques of all those I've worked with, I'd be lying if I said I didn't think, 'Could that happen to me?'"

All Aboard: Wearing his satin jacket on-air at KPCR in the early '70s.



I grew up on a farm in Missouri and while in high school was very active in the Future Farmers of America. I'd compete in public speaking against students from other small towns. One day I was listening to Country KPCR/ Bowling Green, MO, and this guy I knew from another Ag chapter was on the air! I thought, "If he can do that, I can, too." Daytimer KPCR ("Kow Pasture Country Radio") was a one-bedroom trailer actually in a cow pasture. If you had a warm body and could breathe, owners Paul and Betty Salois put you on the air. I didn't know anything about radio, but was hired as their "weekend warrior." Paul showed me the microphone, how to put a needle on a record, how to put a cart in for a commercial, said, "OK, you're on the air!" and then he left! I learned on the fly. But the minute I had a piece of radio, I was hooked.

College was three-and-a-half hours away near Kansas City, and I had a band going at the same time. For four years, every Friday I'd drive home, play a gig en route, work Saturdays from noon-sunset, sign KPCR off, run to another gig, sign back on Sunday morning and at noon drive back to school. In the summer, I worked at KPCR every day for $80 a week. But I could play my own records and talk about my band, and you couldn't beat that. Believe it or not, Duke Hamilton, who's in the Hall of Fame already, also started in that same trailer.

My parents thought working in radio was great, but not so much the music part. Mom said, "You'll just wind up playing in honky-tonks." Later, she was so proud, and ironically, I *did* wind up playing honky tonks for years. I was country from the git-go. Coming out of a gig at 2am, I'd turn on WSM-AM/ Nashville for Ralph Emery. Sometimes you could pull in Bill Mack in Ft. Worth, Charlie Douglas in New Orleans, Mike Hoyer in Des Moines – those great all-night truckin' shows. Ralph had an open-door policy, and I once got to watch him do his show with Little Jimmy Dickens and Marty Robbins. While working at WUBE/ Cincinnati, I was in Nashville for CRS, and was walking by the WSM studios with Dale Turner. I told him my dream had always been to do overnights on that station. Dale said, "Really? Do you know what that all-night shift pays?" After he told me, I said, "You know, I really *don't* want to do the all-night shift at WSM." All these years later, here I am, working in that studio!

Creative music things have always been part of my radio career. In 1997, I was working at WMIL/Milwaukee and found out that WSOC/Charlotte PD Paul Johnson was getting Lonestar to recut "No News" as "Big News" with lyrics about how the Panthers would defeat the Packers in the NFC Championship. I called Lonestar in the studio and said, "Richie! Are you recording this song?" They just exploded in laughter – they'd been busted. I said, "OK, but when the *Packers* win, will you re-record it if I send you the lyrics?" They agreed, the Packers won, I wrote the lyrics overnight and they recorded it. We started playing the song, the Packers won the Super Bowl, and it was a monstrous hit all over Wisconsin – so big that WMIL sold cassettes of it for $5 at a remote, with people lining up in a snowstorm as far as you could see to buy them. We sold at least $50,000 worth, and it all went to the Child Abuse Prevention Fund.

On Sept. 11, 2001, I was doing mornings at WSM-FM, and had scheduled Bruce Robison to come in for our "Songwriter's Corner" feature. We were watching the TV, describing "this generation's Pearl Harbor." Bruce, who hadn't heard the news, came in and opened his guitar case. I tapped him on the shoulder and pointed at the TV. He didn't say a word, and then just shook my hand, packed up and left. We were completely immersed in what was happening, and WSM-FM kept me on the air the entire day. Talk about being one-on-one with your audience. It was a tough but very proud day to be in radio.

We didn't have a lot of money growing up, and you learned to stand on your own two feet. My mom was killed in an automobile accident a long time ago, and my dad has been blind for many years. Last spring, I played an "evening in the round" with Linda Davis and her husband Lang Scott. I said, "It would be so great to take this show to my hometown," which is about 1,200 people. They said, "Let's just go do it for your dad." So for Father's Day, we rented out the Knights of Columbus building I'd performed in as a kid. The place was packed, with my dad in his bib overalls in the front row. To see so many family members and friends from all those years – people who'd heard me from that cow pasture – was incredible. The coolest part was seeing my dad surrounded by a sea of people, all up hugging him.

Walking by those Hall of Fame plaques of people I've worked with – Duke Hamilton, JD Cannon, Bill Cody – I'd be lying if I said I didn't think, "Could that happen to me?" After I came back to Nashville to write and perform fulltime, I figured, "Once you're off the air, you're out of mind." When Charlie Morgan, for whom I'd worked at WFMS, called, I teared up and my wife started crying when I called her. Neither one of us expected it. That enough peers say, "Yeah, he deserves to be there" is just an overwhelming, incredible honor. Now that I'm a starving songwriter, I'm trying to figure out how much the plaque will be worth if I melt it down to sell it for scrap. **CAC**

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One of Country radio's highest-profile personalities for the better part of 40 years, Bob Kingsley began producing American Country Countdown *in 1974 after a successful career in Los Angeles radio. Four years later, he assumed hosting duties. During the past 34 years, Kingsley has compiled numerous accolades and honors, including the ACM and CMA National Personality of the Year Awards. He was inducted to the Country Radio Hall of Fame in 1998 and has hosted the Hall of Fame dinner, as well. The CRS President's Award this year recognizes a man who has been a constant supporter of CRS events and the organization's most avid ambassador.*

> "I am always preaching that you really need to go to CRS if you want to be competitive."

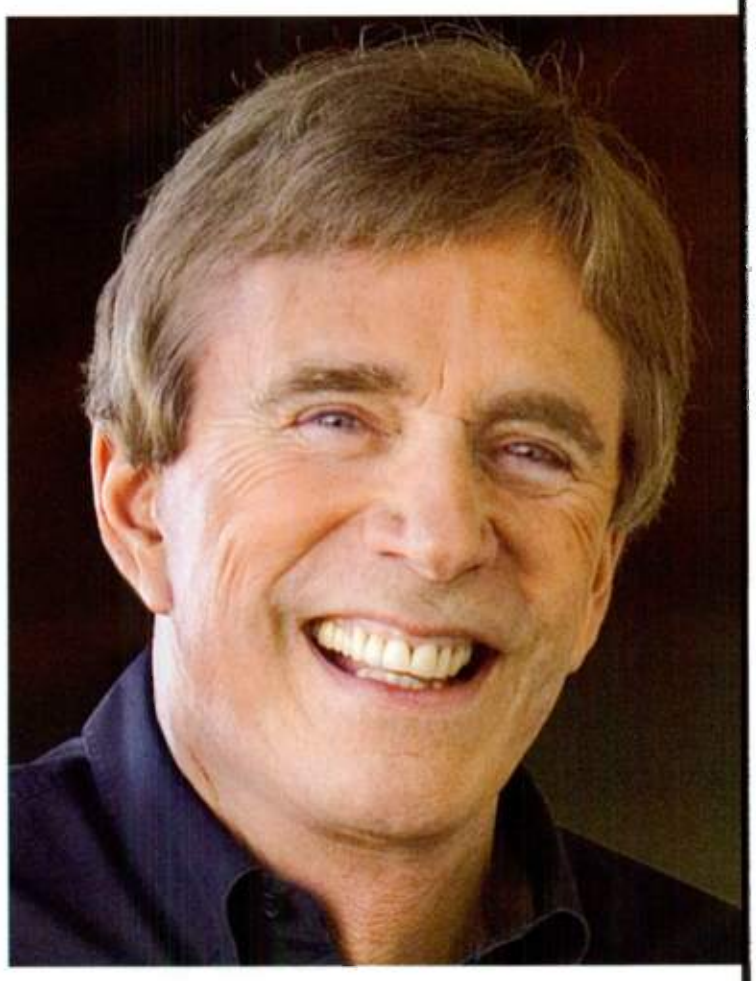
Every year at the Hall of Fame Dinner I get the same feeling that I had when I went in. I know the nerves. I remember how excited I was. You're going into the Country Radio Hall of Fame! I've watched everyone go up there to accept, and I wonder if they have that feeling of acceptance.

I was born and raised in California, which is not exactly a stereotypical Country hotbed. It's almost overwhelming when I think about it how far I've come. There's a plaque with my name on it on that wall, and you think, "I've done something: I've made a contribution and am in the company of people who helped promote country music." That's a big deal and it still blows me away.

My chosen career path was to be a jock and play records. For me, it was always about talking about the artists, the songwriters and the musicians. Then, of course, having it evolve into the *Countdown*, it just doesn't get any better. I never thought about not being accepted. But when you're outside of Nashville, that's the hub, the home, the *Opry*, everything. To be included with those heavyweights is pretty cool.

I went to the second CRS and still remember it like it was yesterday. It was out at the Airport Hilton and I was staying at a little hotel down the road with no hot water. The quickest shower I ever took. I walked into the Hilton and to this day, I haven't been able to find the name of the guy who was obviously a record promoter, wearing bright-colored tights and running all over the hotel.

The next day, Ed Salamon delivered a speech on programming. I thought, "Boy, do I like that. As soon as I get back to L.A., I'm going to rip off those ideas!" I remember thinking this is something I have to attend every year. I've never missed a CRS since. There were always great parties going on, but during the day there were things to learn, people to meet and it was so organized. I don't care who you were looking for, sooner or later they'd be walking through that lobby.



Mr. Roper! Bob congratulates Top Male Vocalist Glen Campbell at the 1968 ACM Awards. Pictured (l-r) are Jan Howard, Kingsley, Campbell and the late actor Norman Fell.

One of my favorite memories from CRS was meeting Johnny Cash. It was so hard to get hold of him, and I got the chance to sit down with him. It's great to sit with Tim McGraw or any current act now, but this was in '73 or '74, and I was truly an outsider getting to talk with Johnny Cash. Buck Owens was always interesting, too. Some of these people were impossible to get. Talking with Waylon Jennings after he went straight was one of the best interviews I've ever been involved with; he talked about it all.

We didn't do actualities in the beginning, and getting artists on the phone was tough. But if you got to them early, normally you had continued access as their careers grew. I don't believe I could still do this and be on so many radio stations without the one-on-one interviews. Today, artists see how important it is to speak with Country radio. I listen to several morning shows every day, and there's not a day that goes by when I don't hear something about an artist or an actual artist on the air.

Hat Acts: With Brad Paisley.

CRS just keeps getting better. Every single year I come back with something I've learned. I also love being involved and believe in it so much. I talk to stations almost every day and am always preaching that you really need to go to CRS. If you want to be competitive, I think you really need to go and hear what people have to say. There's also no better way to get started with networking – it's a family feel. What other genre has its own hometown?

For about 15 years we've been sponsoring songwriter events; that's one contribution we've made. I know this sounds trite, but without those songwriters we'd have nothing. It dawned on me some years ago that when you hear a song, you don't necessarily think about who wrote it. But I remember hearing some of them play their own tunes and thinking how different it was than the record. The emotion I got was different, too. I love hearing these people perform their own stuff.

This year we'll have two nights and at least 12 A-list songwriters. The response has been sensational and the publishers were all extremely cooperative. Do you think there's a songwriter that hears their song who, for the most part, doesn't think they could do it better? I remember Harlan Howard saying that, and it's true! It's wonderful to hear a songwriter with a guitar in his hand telling a story about how that song came about. I remember one year when Craig Wiseman told the story of how he came to write "Live like You Were Dying." I had tears in my eyes. Then he did the song and told us Tim McGraw had cut it. Being onstage with a bunch of people paying attention can be a new experience for some of them, but once they get up there, they come to life. It's a wonderful way to hear songs we're all familiar with.

Bill Mayne called and said Mike Culotta was trying to get in touch with me. We got on the phone, he gave me the news and I just couldn't believe it. Talk about an overwhelming moment! To be perceived this way is great. Looking at the previous recipients, it's amazing to be in that company.

It gets a little emotional. It's like that first CMA Award. And then the Hall of Fame; they're all truly significant when I look back at them. I reach over and tap on my wooden desk here and wonder, "Are they really talking about me?" It's not as easy to start in radio as it used to be. But if you want it bad enough and you're not consumed by the dollar, there are places you can find a way in.

I love this business. I just got done with a writers' meeting where we looked at what we're doing this week. Once again, we've come up with some stories I cannot wait to tell. There are two or three interesting things here that I don't know if anyone else knows, and I'll deliver it like I'm the only one who does. It's exciting, every single week. **CAC**

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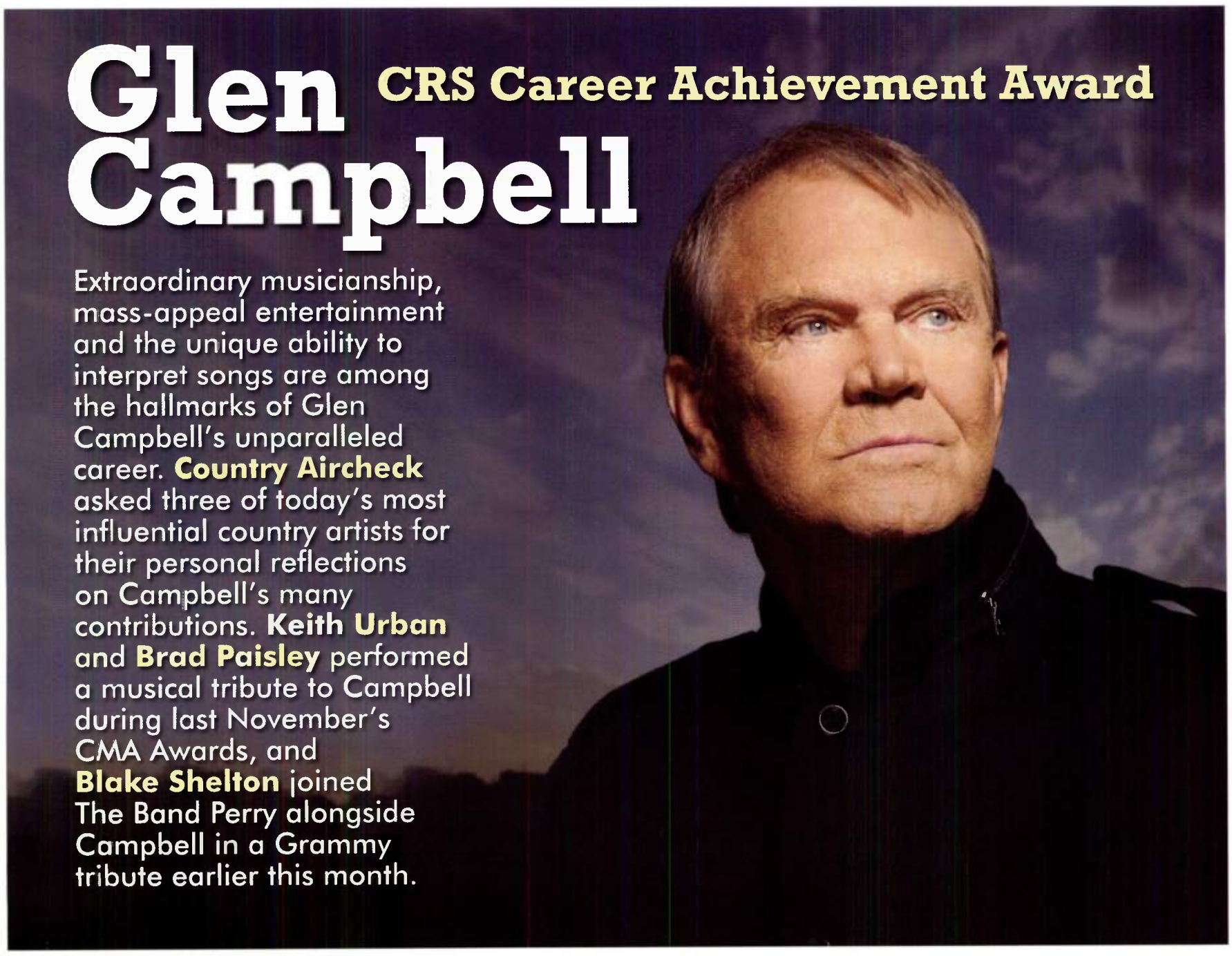

Extraordinary musicianship, mass-appeal entertainment and the unique ability to interpret songs are among the hallmarks of Glen Campbell's unparalleled career. **Country Aircheck** asked three of today's most influential country artists for their personal reflections on Campbell's many contributions. **Keith Urban** and **Brad Paisley** performed a musical tribute to Campbell during last November's CMA Awards, and **Blake Shelton** joined The Band Perry alongside Campbell in a Grammy tribute earlier this month.

Brad Paisley

Glen is a good example of somebody who's so good at so many things that it's hard to properly reward any of them. He was, first and foremost, a virtuoso guitarist who began playing on Beach Boys and Frank Sinatra records – stuff that wasn't the least bit country and also not easy. Those records had chords out the wazoo, and you had to cop a completely different style for each of them.

I was born too late for the *Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour*, his network TV show where you'd see him play leads with people. God bless The Nashville Network in its day; that's where I realized what he was. Glen would come on to perform, and you'd say, "Oh, he *played* that?" He was so well-trained by playing for all those other guys as a session player.

Where you really saw Glen shine were the live shows. He could stand onstage, sing and then take a ride on the guitar – an intricate, creative, flourishing ride – before coming right back to the song. And he's still doing that today.

Because his records were always very tasteful, you'd be hard-pressed to realize this guy was the lead player. It's different than on a Vince Gill or Stevie Ray Vaughan record, where you think of a guitar being just as prominent as the vocal. Glen was a *vocalist* on records. There were some songs with leads, however. On his 1989 *Walking In The Sun* album, he re-cut Lefty Frizzell's "Gone, Gone, Gone" and played some great guitar on that.

We had a great night five or six years ago. He joined us for an encore and played two songs with me, which was a blast. I think we played "Folsom Prison Blues" and something else. He just went off, started improvising and basically schooled me.

Blake Shelton

Growing up, I owned the 45s for "Rhinestone Cowboy" and "Southern Nights." We listened to those so many times it was mind-numbing. As it turns out, that's what everybody across the country was doing with Glen Campbell.

Right now, I can appreciate how he was able to balance TV with being a current country artist at the same time. You can work it to your favor if you treat it right, and he's the template for that.

As a vocalist, he spanned all genres with his sound, which at times leaned as much pop as it did country. Lyrically though, the songs were definitely country. For every singer like me that he impacted with his vocals, there's another group he influenced as a guitar player.

It was an honor to be part of the Grammys earlier this month, but especially this particular tribute and performance for, with and about Glen Campbell. I know when my career is over, I'll look back at it as one of the big moments.

A few years ago, we played a show together up in Canada. One of my favorite things was watching Glen hold a note with that huge grin on his face at the same time. I don't know how somebody does that so effortlessly. After the show, he was just the warmest guy you can imagine meeting. Suddenly, here's this iconic figure standing there in white tennis shoes that he wore onstage. We loved that and wondered, "Why the hell can't we get away with that?"

Keith Urban

I remember the first time I met Glen, I looked at his hands and thought, "Those are the hands that played the songs I grew up listening to." I have to say, though, that Glen had a stronger vocal influence on me than anything else. My dad had Glen Campbell records, so I knew all those songs by the age of six.

There was something about his voice that just had this beautiful tonality to it. He had a kind of an angst or cry in it that really appealed to me. Because I emulated those songs early on, he probably impacted my vocal style without me really knowing it.

"Where's The Playground Susie" is one I've always loved. Oh my gosh, melodically it's just magnificent! That's another Jimmy Webb song, and Glen had the right voice for Jimmy's melodies; it was a perfect marriage. Glen can sing so many different kinds of songs, but there are certain vowel sounds and notes that, when you blend them the right way, showcase the core strength of his range.

Another lesson from Glen was the understanding that you can be a great guitar player, but if the song doesn't require a bunch of gymnastics, you don't put it in. That's the mark of a tremendously gifted musician – the instinct of what *not* to play.

I hope people continue to realize what a pioneer he was on TV by bringing people on his show who never would have received exposure if not for Glen's ability to expand country to a national stage. That's an extraordinary and commendable thing which helped our genre massively.

I often use him as a reference when people talk about what is country and what is pop. All of his songs were huge pop hits and Glen didn't wear a hat, which allowed some of those songs to find their way across musical borders. What he was doing then bore little or no resemblance to Hank Williams, but it certainly didn't make it any less country. **CAC**

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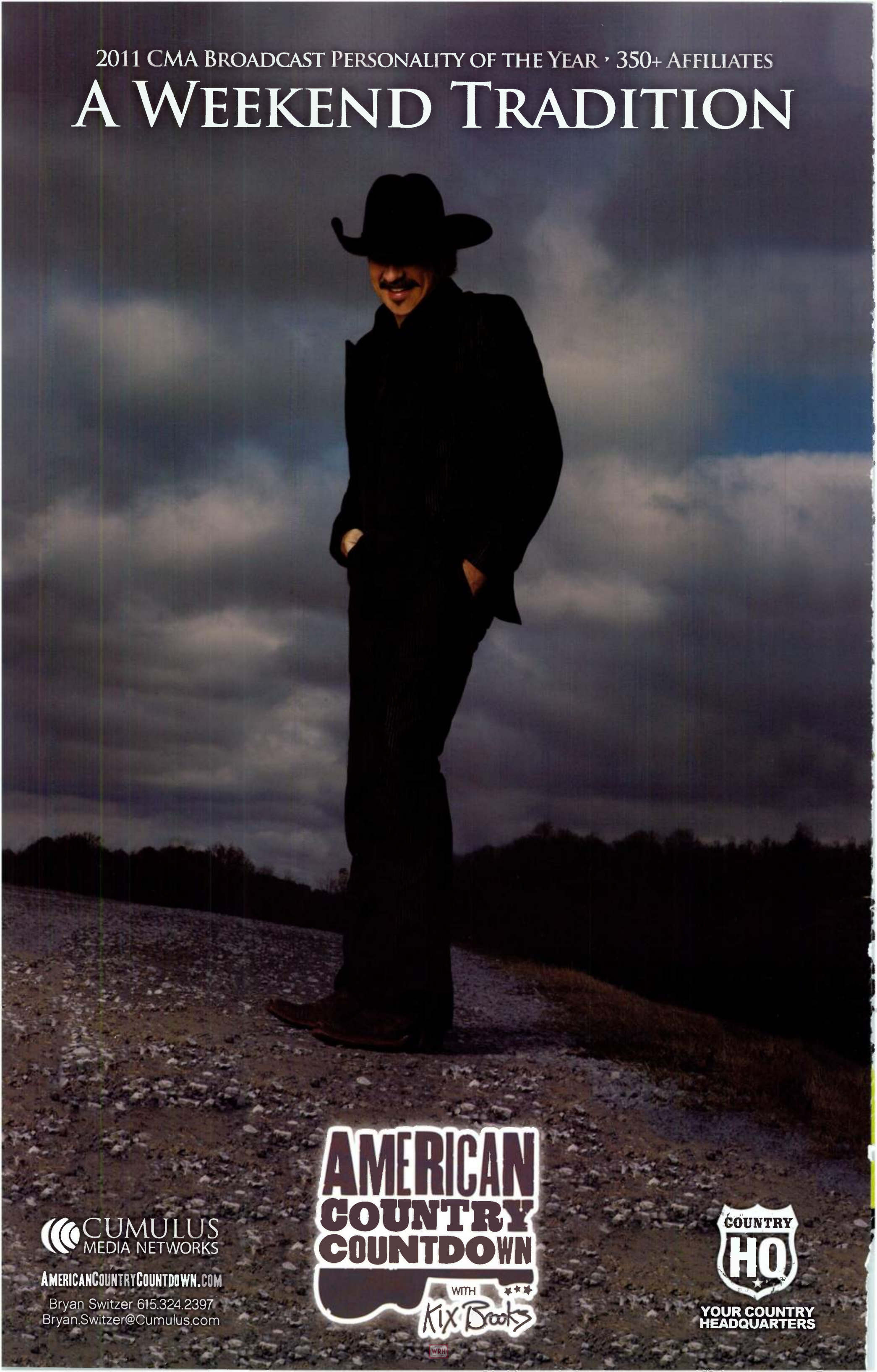
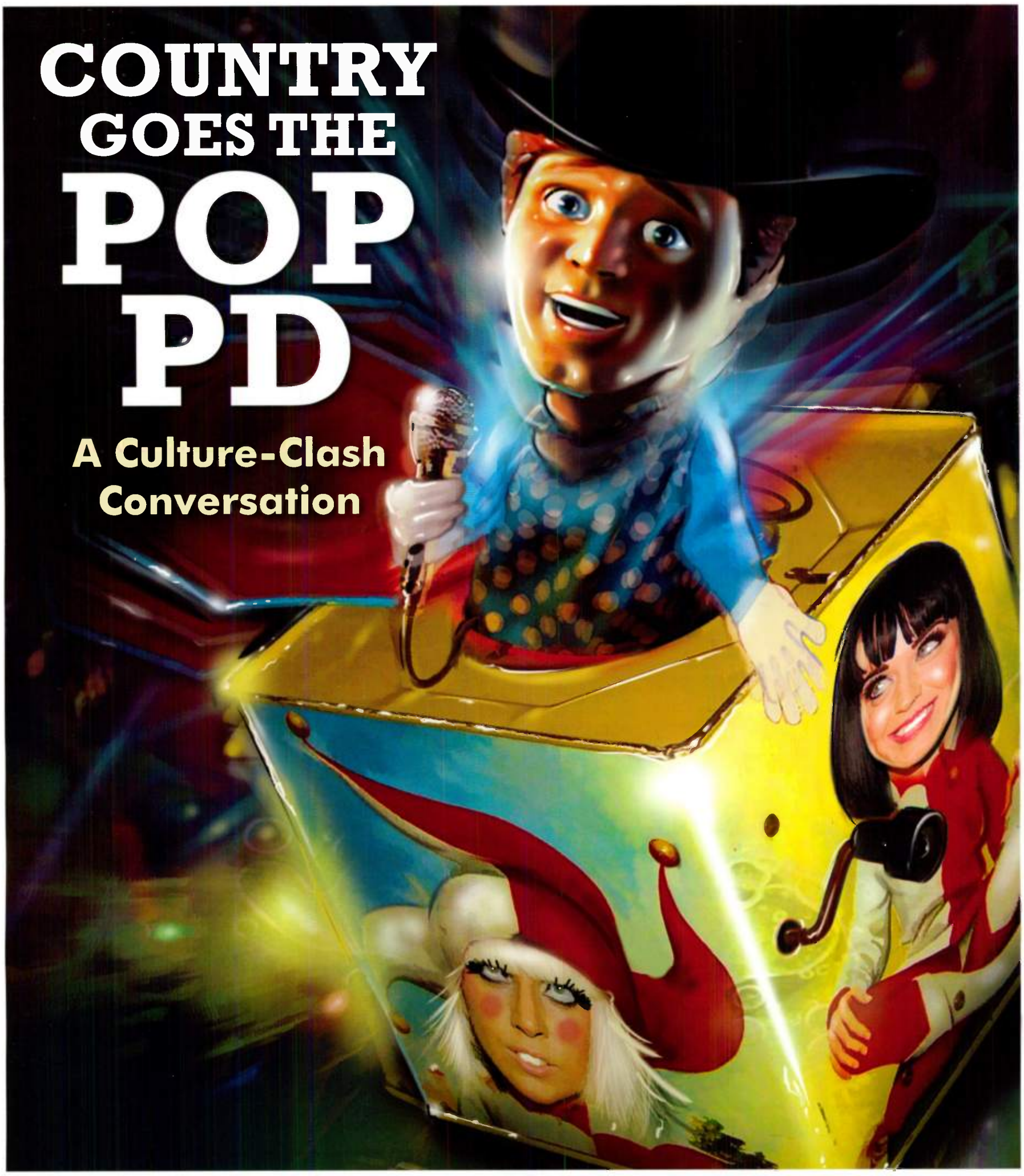


COUNTRY GOES THE POP PD

A Culture-Clash Conversation



Programmers jumping the fence from Top 40 to Country is hardly a new phenomenon, though the recent numbers are remarkable. About 18 months ago, a small army of Pop programmers entered the format in top markets including Denver, Houston, Nashville, Sacramento, San Diego and Seattle. In each case, the station's performance improved. More recently, Jeff Kapugi joined WUSN/Chicago, Rob Morris was tapped for a July arrival at the new KMNB/Minneapolis (where even interim PD Kevin Metheny has a Pop pedigree) and Brian Michel took the reins at WUBL/Atlanta.

So what do experienced and successful programmers from outside the format think about Country? What, if any, preconceived notions did they bring with them? Have their views changed? How different is the relationship with labels? And what does Country do better than other formats? To find out, **Country Aircheck** put together a panel of fence-jumpers who have since enjoyed a good bit of Country success: KILT/Houston's **Mark Adams** (CBS Radio), WSM/Nashville's **Dan Bowen** (Cumulus), KSON/San Diego's **Kevin Callahan** (Lincoln Financial) and KKWF/Seattle's **Mike Preston** (Entercom). They took it from there.

COUNTRY GOES THE POP PD

Country Aircheck: Before you started programming a Country radio station, what was your perception of the format as a competitor and a listener?

Mike Preston: I sat a few feet from Becky Brenner at KMPS/Seattle for nine years and had a lot of exposure to what was a successful station for a long time. It was a fun, music-passion format from an overall radio standpoint, and it generated strong ratings and revenue. From a listener standpoint and for my taste, it was executed with a little less intensity than I would like to have seen. Sonically, it felt like people were playing it way too safe as opposed to the vibrant, active stations I usually programmed.

Dan Bowen: From my perspective [at WSTR/Atlanta], it felt about the same as what I was doing. I knew we were sharing a lot of audience, and because of that and the mass appeal nature of certain titles, it felt like the game wasn't completely different. For me, it's a great place to be because I was always a country music fan. To be programming it makes it doubly exciting.

Kevin Callahan: I grew up on country music and my personal music roots are in country and rock. Depending on which format I was programming at the time, I was envious of the listener loyalty and the values that typically come through on Country radio. Before San Diego, I was in Albany, NY, so we were competing with a heritage station, WGNA. Watching the magnitude of what some of their events could do in terms of attracting loyal listeners was probably the biggest thing. It's great to do this now in a format that is accessible to my entire family and where I am in my life right now.

Mark Adams: I don't have anything nearly as insightful. I had never listened to Country radio in my life until a year and a half ago. My perceptions were entirely stereotypical. My closest exposure prior to taking over KILT was having an office next to Jeff Garrison and basically making fun of him for the banjo music he would play. My first real exposure was the day I took over the station. We had a lounge performance with The Eli Young Band, whom I'd never heard of. I watched the listeners file in and, demographically, it didn't look that dissimilar from anything you'd see at a Hot AC or even a Top 40 event. That was a revelation. When the band started playing, I thought they were pretty cool. I became a fan quickly. Now it's just a lot of fun, and I love being in Country radio.

Mark Adams

Longtime Country programmers will say that Pop PDs oversimplify things when they first get into the format. Was that your experience?

DB: Country is much more sophisticated behind the scenes than most people give it credit for. Coming in, I don't think I understood everything you must take into consideration when putting together a great Country station. When you start thinking about sounds, tempos, genres and the balance of all those factors, it's just more complex than on the Pop side. Figuring what sounds right has more depth in a way you didn't seem to have to deal with in Pop. For example, there aren't a ton of great females in the format, so you have to evenly space those out.

KC: If you ask people in my building, they'll say I've made it more complicated (laughs). I agree with Dan on all those things, but the attraction to this format that continues to ring true are the strong beliefs of the life group and making sure those are present on the station. In my Rock and Pop background, I don't know that those strong beliefs, like the moral compass or the political views, are there. There is a lot truth to this format being about God, country and family.

Are there any beliefs you had about Country that no longer hold water?

MA: I've done about eight formats, and they have more in common than they do differences. Good PPM execution is good PPM execution; that's the beginning, middle and end of it. All the things people insisted on – that Country is so different and you have to play everything, people love the artists and you need to play 28 currents and all this other stuff – I just don't buy it. I applied what I would call Hot AC mechanics to KILT, because the two formats have a lot in common, at least in terms of how music libraries are assembled. We tightened it up, increased the turnover on the hits we were playing and got rid of the songs I thought didn't matter. We've been improving our position ever since.

Mike Preston

MP: I would echo that 100%. I heard, "You can't spin records that hot." Wrong. You can. Or, "People won't accept the energy or the intensity of what you're doing." Wrong on that, too. And as Mark said when talking about PPM mechanics, it goes beyond that. We've all heard people who can execute well, but the stations aren't that good. You still need have to have a great product. Many Country stations are sitting in clusters with other successful stations, but for some reason avoid strategies and tactics that are working.

MA: Here's something I say all the time that is considered sacrilege in the format, but I maintain I'm right: Anybody can put out a crappy record. The biggest artist in the world can put out a terrible song and conversely, someone you've never heard of can put out a great one. I've done Top 40, Hip-Hop and Rock and believe, in this day and age, we're in a song format.

Now, when you talk about upper-demo women who are partisans and have been with the format a long time, is there a greater benefit of the doubt given to the Tim McGraws, Toby Keiths and Rascal Flatts? Sure, and as a programmer you have to figure out where that line is. But at the end of the day, it's about the song. If it's a hit, it will go. Nashville does not want to hear that and I fight with them about it all the time.

> "All the things people insisted on, that Country is so different and you have to play everything, I just don't buy it."
> — Mark Adams

How does Nashville's promotional pitch differ from your past experience?

MP: If the right two or three people were already believers, that means more to me than the alphabet soup that I'm always given in Country promotion. Timing, momentum, internal and external market factors all come into play. On top of that, there's my own passion or dispassion for the songs. I'd rather know about the 4-5 people I'm in sync with than the other 130 stations; they're not what matters to me. I do find, and I hate to say this, there is a little more of a lemming mentality than in Pop or AC. Like Mark, I programmed both those formats and had credible programmers I knew. I'd see what they were doing and jump in, too. It wouldn't matter if 68% of the panel was in.

MA: I'm the day-to-day PD at our CHR station, too, and on that side they work facts, metrics and things I care about. How well is it selling? How is it moving? What's going on digitally? What's the marketing plan? How many TV shows is the artist appearing on? How are we working in concert with the radio station to break this song and make it become a hit? Is there a callout story from a station that has 300 spins? Is there specific information to help me make a decision? Even in reference to callout, they're smart enough to know I don't care what a white-leaning, Midwest Top 40 is doing, because my Top 40 is

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COUNTRY GOES THE POP PD

Rhythmic and in a Hispanic market. So they come to me with stories of stations with similar demography.

In Country, not only do I *not* get that, but they just throw out call letters of stations I've never heard of in markets I've never been to that have nothing in common with Houston. Nine out of 10 times, they're referencing spins that are occurring at 3 o'clock in the morning. Apparently, I'm not supposed to know all that, but sadly, I figured it out pretty quickly.

KC: As slow as the David Nail or Lee Brice examples of the past year or so were, even Country is trying to push things too fast through the charts. When we look at audience feedback on songs, it's amazing that when a label is ready to give up on a song or it hits No. 1, I have people just starting to get familiar with it.

DB: With any format right now, it takes a long time to develop a song or artist, but especially Country.

MP: There's something I didn't know before I got into the format, but I've now seen it borne out in every music test I've done and in my callout, and it appears all promotion execs know this: Country songs don't burn. So it's not burned, it's still testing great, but no, we don't want you to play it anymore because we have another song by the same artist. So they ask if we can just flip it out. Since when do you own a slot?

Every one of us who has programmed knows the songs are actually bigger with the audience when they're coming down, not when they're going up. It kills me that there's this choreography of slotting one artist this week because another one is scheduled for next week and so on. That doesn't happen in other formats.

MA: I have one more point and it's emblematic of this topic. Lady Antebellum's "We Owned the Night" is still a big record for us. I've had people comment to me, "Man, I can't believe you have 1,000 spins on that." One thousand? I have records I've powered at Top 40 and Hot AC with double that and they stay in power. There's no way in hell your average P1 Country listener is tired of their favorite song after 400-500 spins. It's nonsense.

MP: We know so much more now. We know how many spins songs actually get and what the sales really are. There is far more research in terms of listener opinion, and yet so much of how Nashville wants to run the music through the chart hasn't changed. That's where the disconnect is. God love those artists Kevin mentioned who take 56 weeks to get to No.1, but there are a lot of songs that last a lot of weeks only because the labels just won't give up, even though the tea leaves clearly indicate it's not going to happen.

Dan Bowen

Has the format become mainstream?

DB: If Country is the new Pop and brings shares, I'm all about it. But those real stories about life are what brand this format and make it unique from others. Right now it feels like the format is in a growth mode.

KC: I look at Country as a format that's been gradually making its way toward the mainstream. It's not a stereotype that used to exist. Lots of people can relate to it because of the stories. I think we're in a pop/mainstream cycle right now, but I don't know that even if that changes the format will be any less popular.

MP: Today, when a band is sitting in the lobby of our stations to visit, you can't tell if they're here to see the Rock station, the Alternative or the Country station because the stereotypes Kevin referred to have been broken down. Those are a rarity today. That's because there's a generational shift.

MA: Depending on the markets, too, you're seeing a split. Some markets have a Classic Country station that does well. You can't sit in the mushy middle; you have to own something. It's extraordinarily difficult to be a station that has true programming appeal for people age 12-54. You have to pick somewhere, and the more contemporary side is where the music has evolved. The vast majority of Country records are really good pop songs.

MP: The reason some pure Pop stations haven't totally embraced Country is that, sonically, it doesn't mix well with a Rhythmic format.

Kevin Callahan

MA: Right. It's a much better fit with Hot AC, and that's true even here in Houston in our cluster. KHMX plays a lot of Country music. "Just A Kiss" from Lady A is a power on that station. But on our Top 40, we don't even play songs that are mass appeal like The Fray or One Republic because the station is so Rhythmic. In terms of demographic appeal, I think Country and Hot AC have a lot in common and that was my starting point when I first took over KILT.

Every format has its own nuances. What does Country do better than most?

KC: One thing is artist access. For programmers, it's no big deal to go backstage and get a great picture with a terrific country artist; it's fun. But when you bring listeners along, country artists are just better at realizing that's a lifelong memory for listeners and music buyers. Labels, management and artists all understand how important that is.

MP: The first thing is that the artists still truly appreciate what radio brings to the table.

KC: When Country artists come to visit, they pay attention to you and what interests you. In other formats, if you're lucky enough to get the artists in the station, it's all about them. That's important, because in Country you can build a relationship and talk about what's important to everybody.

MP: Nashville should be applauded for that. It makes radio want to be a great partner when we know the artists value our contribution to what they're trying to do.

DB: Another thing Country does so well is program with sincerity. We try to make a deeper connection with listeners than you see in other formats.

MA: The format lends itself to public service more effectively than other contemporary formats. In Top 40, it's a bitch to come out of Jay-Z or Kanye West and try to do something touchy-feely. In Country, there's an expectation of that, and the audience does reward you for it. Good, local radio is important regardless of the format, but utilizing your station as a public service vehicle is something Country has always done well. There's still a big value to that.

The last two years have seen a wave of Pop programmers shifting to Country. Is that a defined strategy in some companies?

MA: I would say, and I'm sure this is with Mike's company, too, they look at every situation differently. They just look for the best person for the job. Here, it started with my Market Manager Brian Purdy, who said, "I like what you've done with our other stations. Can you try this with KILT?" If there was anything they liked about me, it's that I had no preconceived notion about the format. In some cases, that's an advantage.

MP: The Wolf had talked to many well-known Country programmers before me, but they felt the station was more akin to a Pop station than the standard Country station. When Mike Moore and the guys were bringing me into Entercom, I said, "Hey, why do you guys want a Top 40 interloper getting in the middle of all this?" Mike said, "Are you kidding? This format needs new ideas." I was lucky my name popped up. **CAC**

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> **— Mike Preston**

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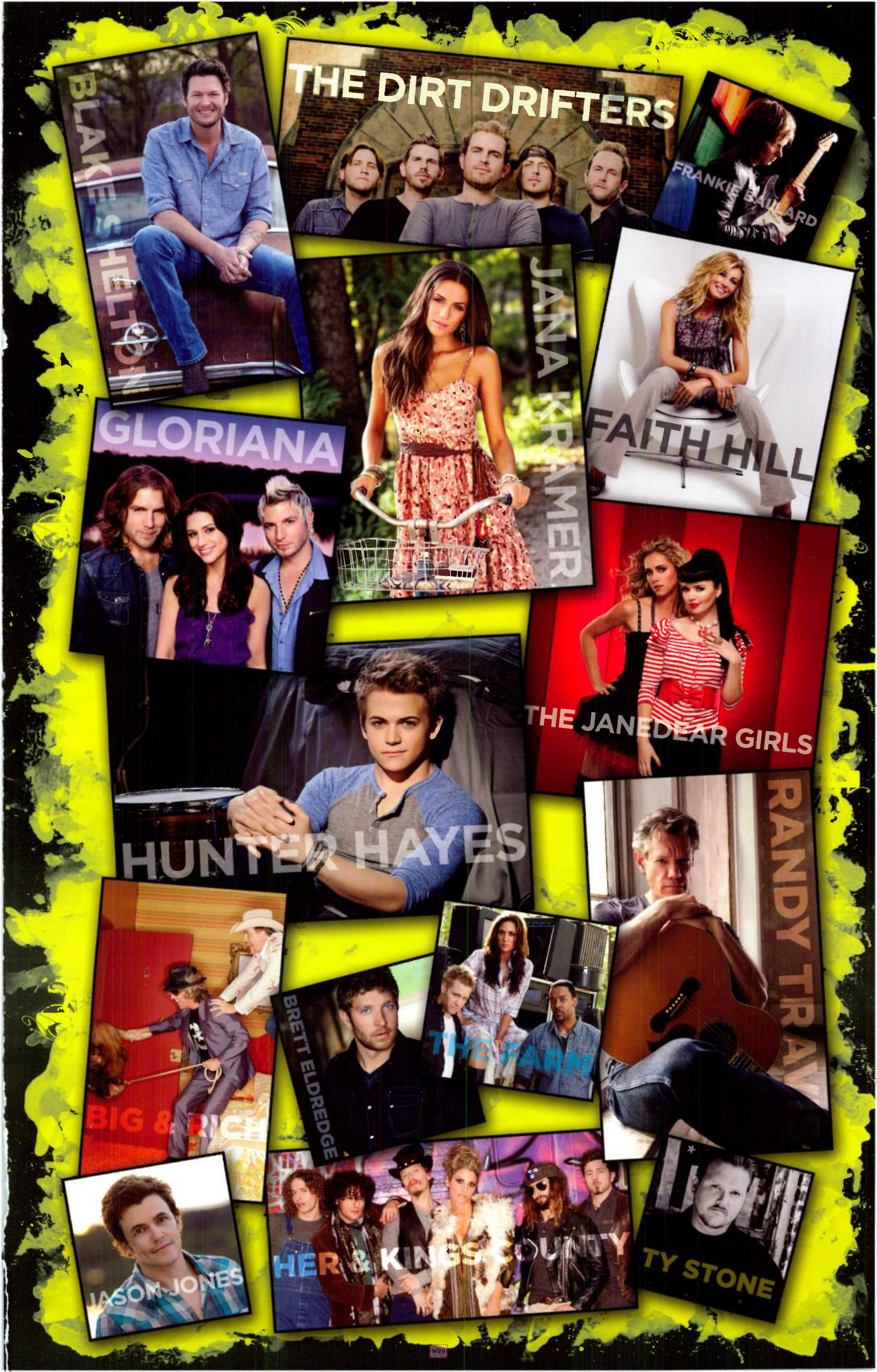
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Eli Young Band | Hunter Hayes | David Nail | Sunny Sweeney | Thompson Square

They scored their first Top 10 hit with 2009's "Always The Love Songs" and notched a No. 1 with the platinum-selling "Crazy Girl" last year, but this Republic Nashville band has been building a fan base the old-fashioned way for years. And now it's all coming together with their album Life At Best and latest single "Even If It Breaks Your Heart."

Wooly Bully: With WDXB/Birmingham's Dollar Bill.

Eli Young Band

What does being a New Face mean to you?

Jon Jones: It's like going out and playing a recital in front of your whole family at Christmas. There's no intimidation factor that may have been there a few years ago.

Mike Eli: The fact that radio voted for us to be part of the show is a huge deal to us.

Was it important to establish yourselves as a road band first before tackling radio?

JJ: To get airplay later on in our career really taught us how important Country radio is to our success. As "Crazy Girl" started climbing the chart, our relationships with radio strengthened. They wanted to know what they could do to help it top the chart.

James Young: A lot had changed in radio since we last did a radio tour. We hit more places this time around. I think "Crazy Girl" allowed us to get us into new markets and play in front of more people. Plus, we loved supporting the stations that have supported us.

What was the difference between the "Crazy Girl" radio tour and other radio tours?

JJ: The Republic Nashville promotion team did an excellent job at picking out places that were key for us to go to. They found ways for us to get outside the conference room and get in front of listeners, which is where we really thrive.

Chris Thompson: We also got feedback from radio staffers who'd notice the interaction between the four of us. They saw that we're friends, we actually like one another and enjoy what we're doing. That aspect of our live show really shines through in a performance.

What were some of your favorite radio events?

JJ: We played with Darius Rucker for KYGO/Denver at Red Rocks. That was pretty amazing.

ME: I remember seeing pictures of The Beatles, U2 and other artists who've performed there. At the time, they were selling the benches from the original auditorium. A couple of the guys bought some, and we got to take a little piece of Red Rocks home.

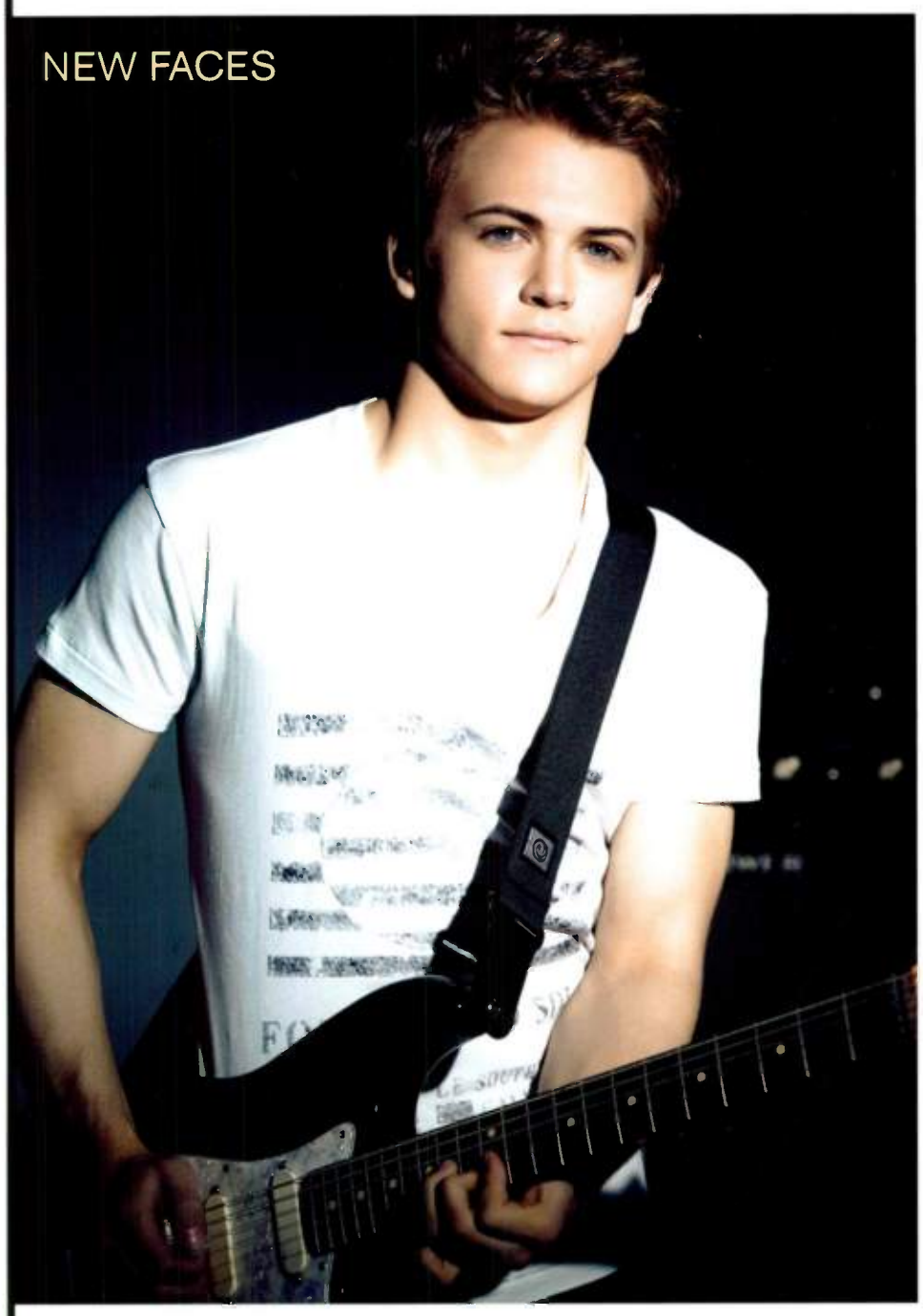
JJ: Joel Burke was one of the first PDs who introduced us to the region. He understood that the fastest way for us to make an impact in the area was to get us to play live for fans.

What was the transition to Republic like for you, and who made you feel at home?

JJ: Everyone. There's not a weak link there. Jimmy Harnen is unafraid to lay it out there and say, "This is a great song. This is a great band. Give this a chance. You're going to love them." Getting to know Matthew Hargis and his approach toward radio was also intriguing. Everyone on the promotion staff is allowed to do things their own way as long as they work hard at it. Their personalities really shine through.

JY: When you have a band and a radio team that's hungry for a hit, it's the perfect combination.

NEW FACES



Hunter Hayes

While the industry gathered for CRS 2011, Hunter Hayes was in the studio recording every instrument on his self-titled debut album, which he also wrote, co-wrote and co-produced. When time came to promote his Top 15 lead single "Storm Warning," Hayes took a mobile recording studio on the road to visit radio. By the time the album hit stores Oct. 11, he was already two dates into his first headlining tour.

Hunter Calling: With WCOL/Columbus, OH's John Crenshaw.

Is it important to you that the New Faces bill is determined by radio?
This will be my first CRS, and I'm fully aware that the people who voted for me see a lot of music. To be worthy of the event is pretty cool. I have radio and fans to thank for all the success. They have absolutely changed my future and my life.

Which station was your early adopter?
Easy. My hometown station in Lafayette, LA. KMDL added "Storm Warning" the day I set out for my radio tour, and they kept playing it.

What was your most memorable radio event?
There were tons, but we did a morning appearance for WCOL the day after our concert in Columbus, OH. It was very last-minute and they told us it was going to be at a pumpkin festival. So I thought we were going to go a pumpkin patch at 4am. We went to this downtown restaurant, and as we were driving up it was like a ghost town. All the streetlights were off and no one was awake. I wasn't expecting any listeners to be at this show but, I kid you not, it was like the whole town *packed* the place. There were people with four or five empty beer cans on the table and cheering at 6am.

You came into our offices with a massive rig and recorded a song on the spot. Did you do that at every station on the radio tour?
Almost. We wanted to do something cool that radio probably hadn't seen before. For me, it was fun because I was doing what I'd be doing if I were at home anyway. We built a recording studio in one rig that ended up weighing 120-130 pounds. It cost a fortune to build, but it was totally worth it. I recorded a three-minute song in 30 minutes and split it into four parts so we still had room to talk. Looking back, I'm glad we did it that way. I'm most myself when I'm making music.

David Nail

Before topping the chart with "Let It Rain" in January, David Nail scored a 2011 Best Male Country Vocal Performance Grammy nomination for "Turning Home." His credits also include the Top 10 single "Red Light," which peaked at No. 6 in 2009.

Nailed It: With KMXN/Topeka, KS's Kyle Kristofer and Amber Lee.

What does radio's New Faces vote mean to you?
It's a pretty big deal. I remember going to my first New Faces show thinking, "Okay, there are a lot of important people in this room."

Who were some of your early radio backers?
Mike Kennedy (KBEQ/Kansas City), Marci Braun (WUSN/Chicago) and Nate Deaton (KRTY/San Jose) have always been strong believers. There've been tons of people who've stayed in my corner and reminded me to be patient because being a new artist isn't easy. I feel like, now, we've not only broken through, we've kind of established an identity. I credit that to my record label and the early supporters who've helped put us on the map.

What were those early radio tours like for you?
I've always looked up to guys like Vince Gill, who always makes you feel like you're in his living room when he sings. But those conference room performances were intimidating as a new artist. I've always been somewhat shy, but over the years, I've gotten more comfortable letting loose. A lot of times we'd go to the stations and sing at 5 or 6am. It was hard just to wake up at 4am, shower and warm up your voice. That was something early on that I always took a lot of pride in doing. Hopefully that impressed them.

Did your Grammy nomination help at radio?
It definitely didn't hurt, but radio has always been a cheerleader for me. After the nomination, I visited a lot of stations where they would high-five and congratulate me. To get support like that from PDs and others makes the recognition extra sweet.

What was your first CRS like?
I had just signed with Mercury in 2001, and had just gotten my first cellphone. [UMG exec] Brian Wright's invite to attend a Universal event was one of my first cellphone calls ever. He explained the conference to me and said every artist from every label is in town. I remember they turned the Hermitage Hotel into a House of Blues Casino. Everyone, including Shania, was there. I thought, "I'm going to be doing stuff like this every night for the rest of my life!" I went to the bar for a beer and handed the bartender a couple dollars. He said, "Sir, everything's on the house tonight." I walked up to Brian and said, "Every beer is *free*? Y'all are paying for *everyone*'s alcohol?" I was flabbergasted. I remember feeling like the rest of my life was laid out before me. I still laugh about it because I found out real quick that it wasn't like that all the time. But for that night, I thought, "Wow, this is the music business! You don't have to pay for *anything*!"

JASON STURGEON

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University of Illinois
Champaign, IL

FEBRUARY 17
The Arena
Corbin, Ky

FEBRUARY 18
The Arena
Corbin, KY

MARCH 2
Southern Illinois Center
DuQuoin, IL

MARCH 3
Southern Illinois Center
DuQuoin, IL

MARCH 9
The Sears Centre Arena
Chicago, IL

MARCH 10
The Sears Centre Arena
Chicago, IL

MARCH 13 SPRING BREAK
Flora Bama Lounge
Pensacola, FL

MARCH 14 SPRING BREAK
Flora Bama Lounge
Pensacola, FL

MARCH 15 SPRING BREAK
Flora Bama Lounge
Pensacola, FL

MARCH 17
The Barn
Sanford, FL

MARCH 23
Coyotes
Augusta, GA

MARCH 24
Coyotes
Augusta, GA

MARCH 30
Bryce Jordan Center
State College, PA

MARCH 31
Bryce Jordan Center
State College, PA

APRIL 13
Good Time
Charlie's Bar
Miamisburg, OH

APRIL 14
Value City Arena
Columbus, OH

APRIL 22
Wolf Den/Mohegan
Sun Casino
Montville, CT

MAY 18
Choctaw Idabel Casino
Idabel, OK

MAY 19
Choctaw Pocola Casino
Pocola, OK

AUGUST 4
Indiana State Fair
Indianapolis, IN

AUGUST 18
NW Washington
Fairgrounds
Lynden, WA

OCTOBER 26
All American
Quarter Horse
Congress
Columbus, OH

OCTOBER 27
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Deschutes County
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Sunny Sweeney

The Texas spitfire shares her title as one of the Big Machine Label Group's flagship artists with Taylor Swift and Jack Ingram. A move to Republic Nashville in 2009 led to her first Top 10 single "From A Table Away" last March, and "Drink Myself Single" soon followed. Both are featured on her current album Concrete.

We're On A Float: With Republic Nashville's Jimmy Harnen and Stacy Blythe.

Is it exciting to get this recognition from Country radio?
This is the coolest thing that has happened in so long. Knowing that it was voted on by radio is a huge compliment because it's just me doing what I do, and they're digging it.

Your radio visits for "From A Table Away" and "Drink Myself Single" were a bit different, weren't they?
Well, we usually had beer. I can't count how many times we went into a conference room at 11am while everyone watched us pull out a six-pack and our "Hillbilly Koozies," which are brown paper bags you wrap around a tall boy. But that's how I started doing music – at a bar with a bunch of people who were too drunk to function.

We published a few trade shots of you and radio with a massive inflatable sun. Whose idea was that?
That was all Jimmy Harnen. We were driving in Tampa and he goes, "Slam on the brakes! Go back!" We turned around and went to this store where they were selling these *huge* rafts. He bought them out. We took a few to a couple stations because they were a pain to blow up. But everywhere we went, people would ask, "Isn't he president of your record label?" He's one of the hardest workers in this whole business, and it's *hard* on a radio tour. There's no time to sleep. You're singing and traveling like a gypsy. There were times when we were like, "Well, Jimmy's president of our record label. If he can do it, we can do it."

Is it important to have a label that works just as hard as you do?
There's not *one* slacker at Republic. They bust their asses all the time. You can email them in the middle of the night and most of the time, you'll get a response back instantly. It's a 25-hour-a-day job, and it's all for the sake of good music.

Who at radio has made the biggest impression on you?
I have three sisters, and Marci Braun (WUSN/Chicago) could easily be the fourth. At dinner one time, Johnny Chiang (KKBQ/Houston) took note that I love gum. A month later, I went back to the station and he bought 100 packs of gum for me. It's really cool when people go out of their way when the clearly don't have the time. They just do it out of the goodness of their hearts.

Thompson Square

During CRS 2011, Thompson Square's Keifer and Shawna Thompson celebrated the RIAA gold certification of their first No. 1 hit "Are You Gonna Kiss Me Or Not" just two weeks after their self-titled debut album hit stores. The track topped the chart in March, went platinum in May and went on to be the No. 1 most played single of 2011. The couple also rounded out the year with three American Country Awards and two Grammy nominations.

What does being a New Face mean to you?
Keifer Thompson: It means everything.
Shawna: Keifer and I had been going to CRS for four or five years before we signed with Stoney Creek. Hearing everyone on the New Faces bill was a big deal. Being invited to be part of it seems surreal.

Did you ever think about how one song might change your whole career?
KT: You can't anticipate the success of "Are You Gonna Kiss Me Or Not." I think we had 60 stations on the add date. When that happens, you just hang on. There were a lot of people who boosted the song when it needed to be boosted and kept it in power maybe longer than it should have been. We learned so much about how songs become hits. And there have been a lot of artists out there who've been successful for 10 or 20 years who still haven't gotten Grammy nominations. Some people go through their whole career without a No. 1 hit. My idol Bruce Springsteen's never had a No. 1. I put it in perspective like that.

Feeling's Mutual: With KXKT/Omaha's Hoss Michaels.

Speaking of, you covered The Boss at every radio tour visit. Did that go over well in the Northeast?
ST: When we got to WXTU/Philadelphia, we questioned whether we should do it. That's pretty much Springsteen territory.
KT: A lot of times you'll get booed because he's such an institution there. But Springsteen is one of my biggest influences. It was out of pure respect that we covered him. Razz at WXTU is a huge Springsteen fan. They liked it and complimented us on it.

Is it bizarre to look back at how far you've come?
KT: It's come full-circle. When you finally get the chance to do what you want to do – what you go to bed dreaming about – when you finally get to do that for a living, it's a dream come true.
ST: Last year's CRS was our one-year anniversary of working at The Wheel on Broadway. We had a showcase party there and played for a bunch of our radio friends. Benny Brown surprised us mid-concert with our first gold certification plaque, which he hid under his jacket so we wouldn't see it. That was a *very* memorable CRS moment.

Is it safe to say CRS will never be the same for you?
KT: I don't think anything will be the same. **CAC**

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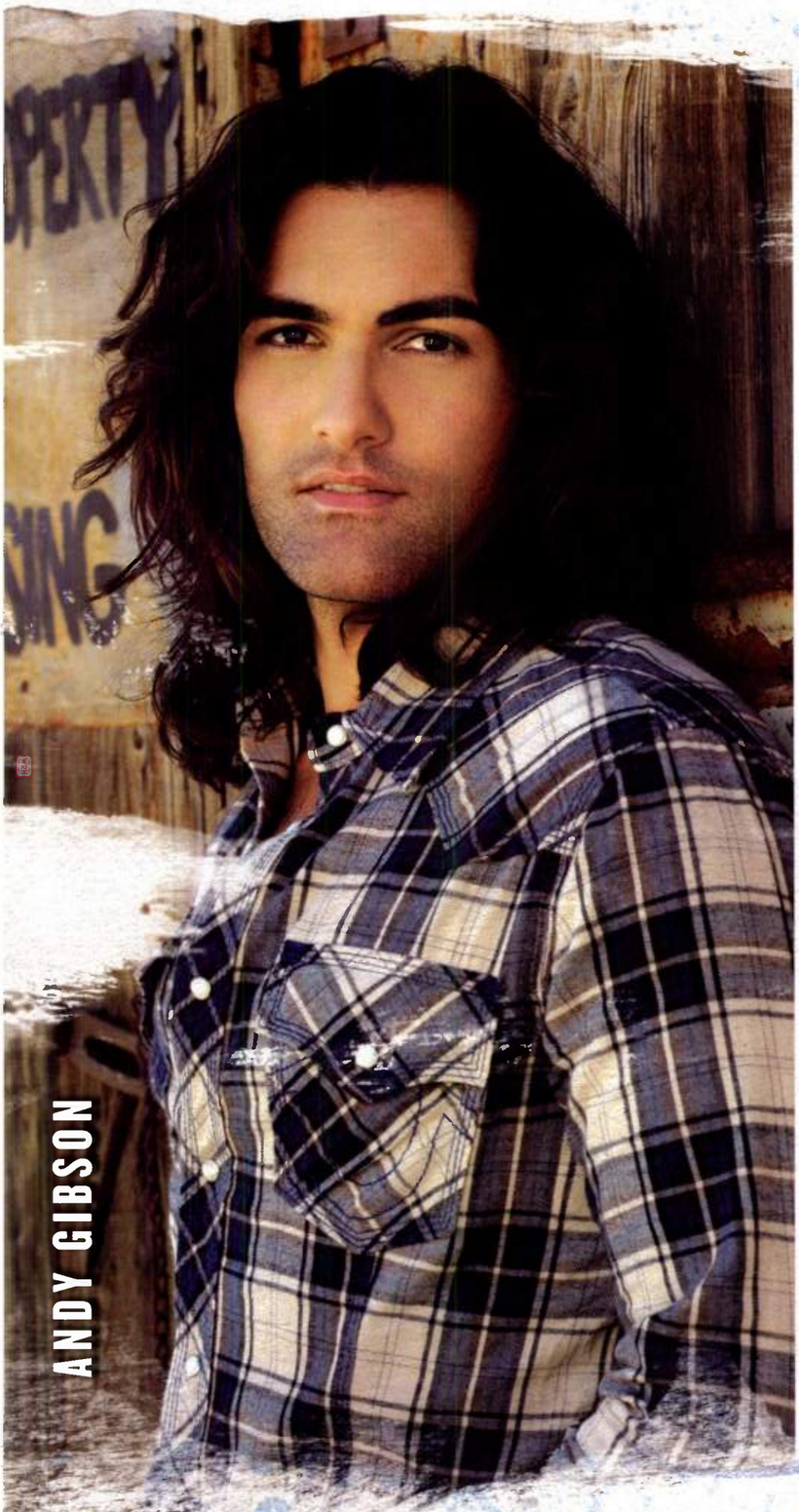

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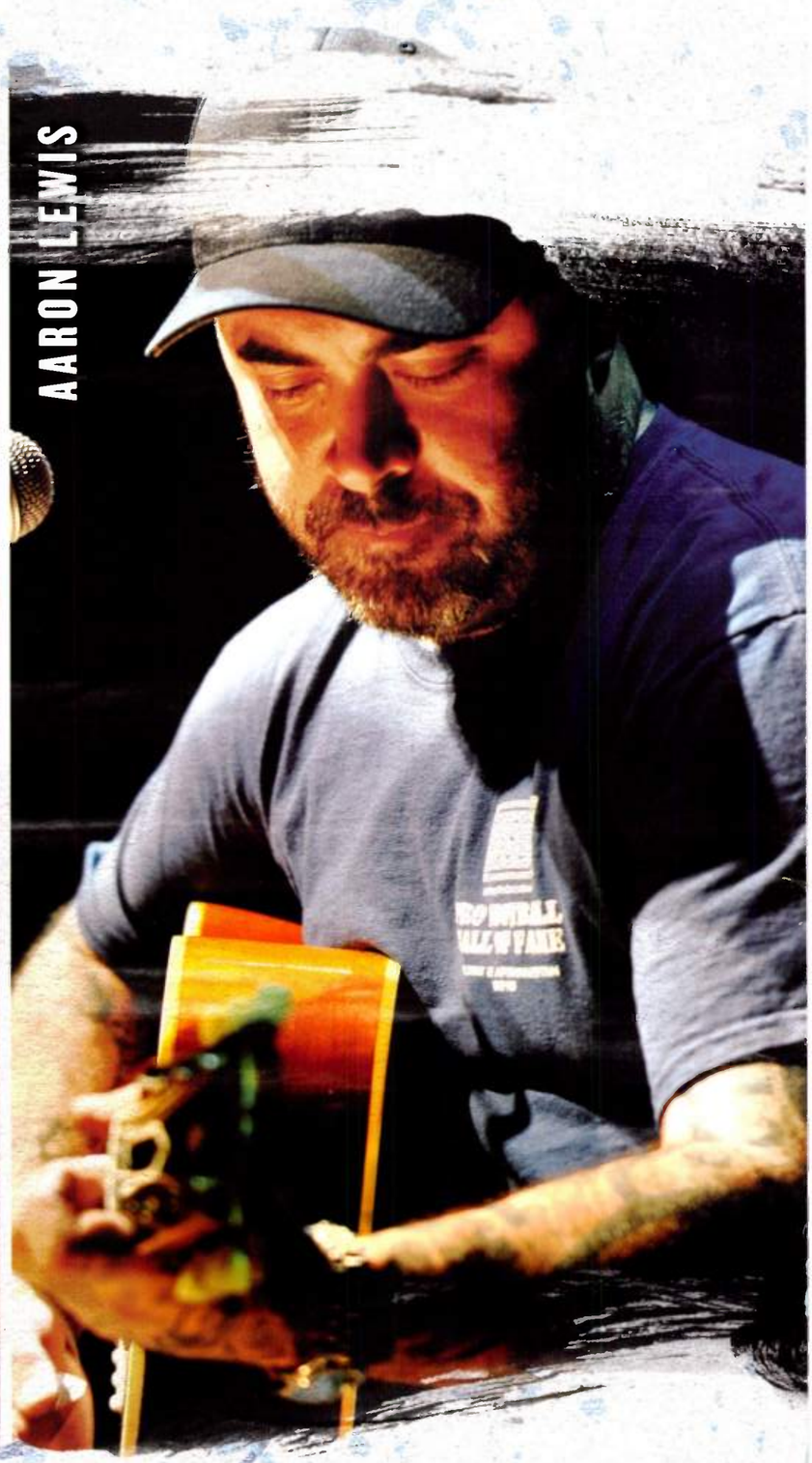

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The third annual Country Radio Seminar/Country Aircheck Awards celebrate the year's top professionals who have made an impact in Country radio and the music business. Congratulations to all the 2012 CRS/CA Awards nominees!

Major Market Station
(metros 1-25)
WUSN/Chicago
KYGO/Denver
WYCD/Detroit
KEEY/Minneapolis
WXTU/Philadelphia

Large Market Station
(metros 26-50)
KASE/Austin
KBEQ/Kansas City
WMIL/Milwaukee
WQDR/Raleigh
KAJA/San Antonio

Medium Market Station
(metros 51-100)
KUZZ/Bakersfield
WHKO/Dayton
WBCT/Grand Rapids
WIVK/Knoxville
KFDI/Wichita

Small Market Station
(metros 101+)
WKSF/Asheville, NC
WUSY/Chattanooga, TN
KUAD/Ft. Collins, CO
WXBQ/Johnson City, TN
KTTS/Springfield, MO

Major Market Market Manager/GM
(metros 1-25)
Dan Bennett, KPLX/Dallas
Bob Call, KYGO/Denver
Natalie Conner, WXTU/Philadelphia
Debbie Kenyon, WYCD/Detroit
Rod Zimmerman, WUSN/Chicago

Large Market Market Manager/GM
(metros 26-50)
Jim Bryant, WUBE & WYGY/Cincinnati
Nate Deaton, KRTY/San Jose
Pam McKay, KAJA/San Antonio, KASE & KVET/Austin
Brent Millar, WPAW/Greensboro
Jeff Tyler, WMIL/Milwaukee

Medium Market Market Manager/GM
(metros 51-100)
Tim Feagan, WBCT/Grand Rapids
Bill Gentry, WAMZ/Louisville
Eric McCart, KFDI/Wichita
Bill McMartin, WSSL & WESC/Greenville, SC
Mel Owens, KUZZ/Bakersfield

Small Market Market Manager/GM
(metros 101+)
Wayne Foster, KJUG/Visalia, CA
Rex Hansen, KTTS/Springfield, MO
Pete Hanson, KUAD/Ft. Collins, CO
Lisa Nininger-Hale, WXBQ/Johnson City, TN
Leonard Wheeler, WSLC/Roanoke, VA

Major Market OM/PD
(metros 1-25)
Mike Culotta, WQYK/Tampa
Shelly Easton, WXTU/Philadelphia
Tim Roberts, WYCD/Detroit
Meg Stevens, WMZQ/Washington
Gregg Swedberg, KEEY/Minneapolis

Large Market OM/PD
(metros 26-50)
Joel Burke, KASE/Austin
Mike Kennedy, KBEQ/Kansas City
Travis Moon, KAJA/San Antonio
Bob Richards, WLHK/Indianapolis
Kerry Wolfe, WMIL/Milwaukee

Medium Market OM/PD
(metros 51-100)
Beverlee Brannigan, KFDI/Wichita
Coyote Calhoun, WAMZ/Louisville
Mike Hammond, WIVK/Knoxville
Buzz Jackson, KIIM/Tucson
Lance Tidwell, WWYZ/Hartford
Sue Wilson, WQMX/Akron

Small Market OM/PD
(metros 101+)
Jeff Davis, WKSF/Asheville, NC
Bill Hagy, WXBQ/Johnson City, TN
Gator Harrison, WUSY/Chattanooga, TN
Adam Jeffries, KJUG/Visalia, CA
Rob Kelley, WQHK/Ft. Wayne, IN

Major Market Music Director
(metros 1-25)
Marci Braun, WUSN/Chicago
Garret Doll, KYGO/Denver
Lance Houston, WUBL/Atlanta
Jay Roberts, WQYK/Tampa
Ginny Rogers, WKLB/Boston

Large Market Music Director
(metros 26-50)
Cadillac Jack, KCYE/Las Vegas
TJ McEntire, KBEQ/Kansas City
Mitch Morgan, WMIL/Milwaukee
Bob Pickett, KASE/Austin
Angie Ward, WTQR/Greensboro

Medium Market Music Director
(metros 51-100)
Colleen Addair, WIVK/Knoxville
Kris Daniels, WHKO/Dayton & WQNU/Louisville
Carol Hughes, KFDI/Wichita
Kix Layton, WSSL/Greenville, SC
Dave Taft, WBCT/Grand Rapids

Small Market Music Director
(metros 101+)
Stephanie Crist, KMDL/Lafayette, LA
Brian Hatfield, WKSF/Asheville, NC
Dave Michaels, WQHK/Ft. Wayne, IN
Chris O'Kelley, WKXC/Augusta, GA
Bill Poindexter, WUSY/Chattanooga, TN

Major Market Personality/Show
(metros 1-25)
Lisa Dent & Ramblin' Ray, WUSN/Chicago
Laurie DeYoung, WPOC/Baltimore
Doc & Andie, WXTU/Philadelphia
Dr. Don Morning Show with Rachael And Grunwald, WYCD/Detroit
Fitz In The Morning, KKWF/Seattle

Large Market Personality/Show
(metros 26-50)
Randy Carroll & Jamie Martin, KAJA/San Antonio
Mike Kennedy, Jillian Gregg, Zeke Montana, KBEQ/Kansas City
Marty McFly, WKDF/Nashville
Jeff Roper and Angie Ward, WTQR/Greensboro
Scott Ward & Tommy Carrera, KFRG/Riverside

Medium Market Personality/Show
(metros 51-100)
Andy & Allison, WIVK/Knoxville
Brian & Kellie, KFDI/Wichita
Natalie Cash & Jim Carey, KWEN/Tulsa
Ellis & Bradley, WSSL/Greenville, SC
Scott Wynn & Sue Wilson, WQMX/Akron

Small Market Personality/Show
(metros 101+)
Dan & Dude/WQHK/Ft. Wayne, IN
Dex & Mo, WUSY/Chattanooga, TN
Eddie Foxx Show with Sharon Green, WKSF/Asheville, NC
Brian Gary & Todd Harding, KUAD/Ft. Collins, CO
Phillip Gibbons, WGSQ/Cookeville, TN

National/Syndicated/Personality/Show
AfterMidNite with Blair Garner
American Country Countdown w/Kix Brooks
Big D & Bubba
Bob Kingsley's Country Top 40
CMT Radio Live with Cody Alan

Platinum Label
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Capitol
EMI Nashville
RCA
Show Dog-Universal

Gold Label
Big Machine
Broken Bow
Curb
Republic Nashville
Valory

VP/Promotion
Shane Allen, Capitol
George Briner, Valory
Keith Gale, RCA
Steve Hodges, Capitol & EMI Nashville
Jack Purcell, Big Machine
Royce Risser, UMG/Nashville

Director/National Promotion
Buffy Cooper, (formerly) BNA
JoJamie Hahr, Valory
Matthew Hargis, Republic Nashville
Mandy McCormack, Big Machine
Norbert Nix, (formerly) RCA
Mike Rogers, Curb

Regional Promotion
Cliff Blake, Republic Nashville
Charlie Dean, Mercury
Dawn Ferris, Broken Bow
Louie Newman, MCA
Erik Powell, Big Machine

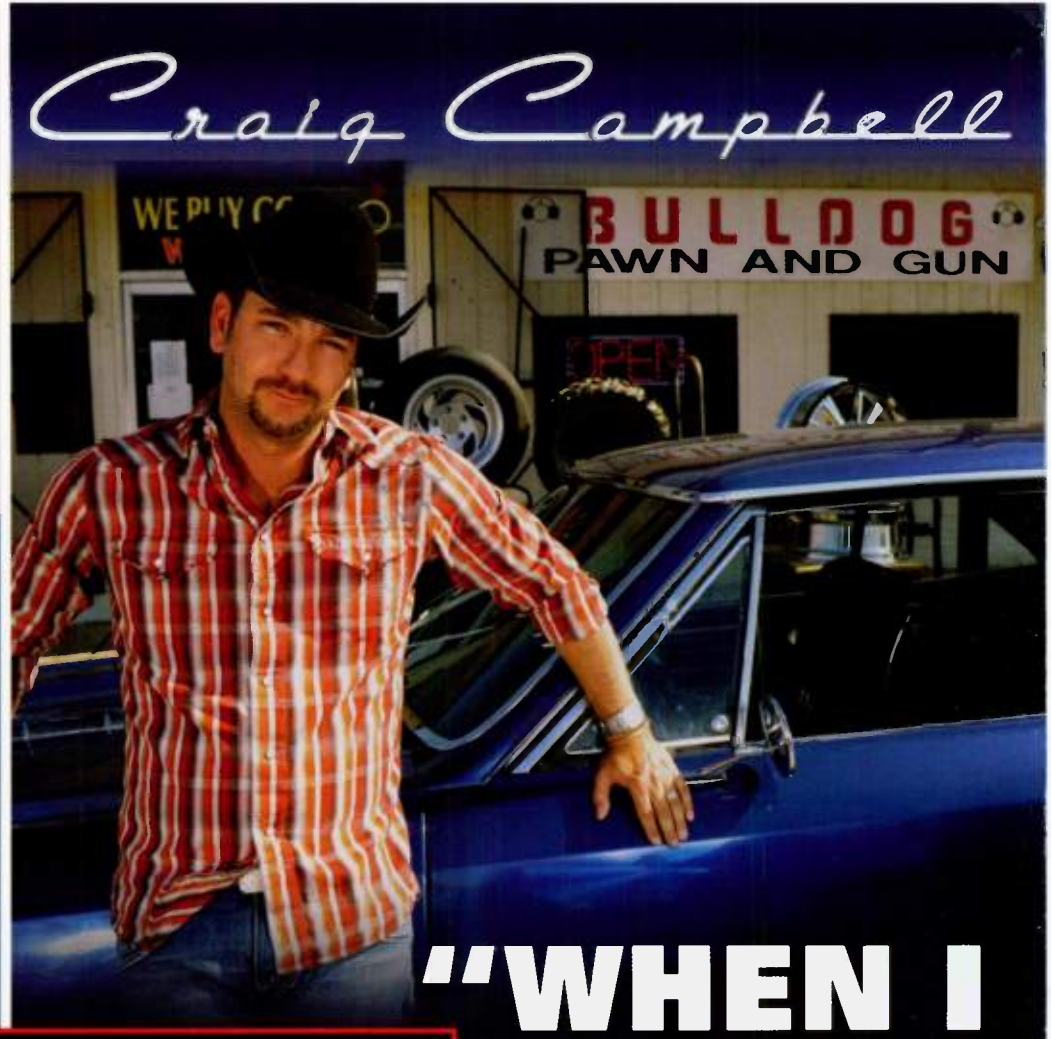
Independent Promotion Team/Exec.
Bigger Picture
Grass Roots Promotion
New Revolution
Nine North
Diane Richey Promotion

"New Face Of Country" Professional
Kevin Callahan, KSON/San Diego
Byron Kennedy, KNCI/Sacramento
Kevin Mannion, KNIX/Phoenix
Mark Niederhauser, WMN
Adam "Phathead" Zuckerberg, WJVC/Nassau-Suffolk

ZAC BROWN BAND

No Hurry

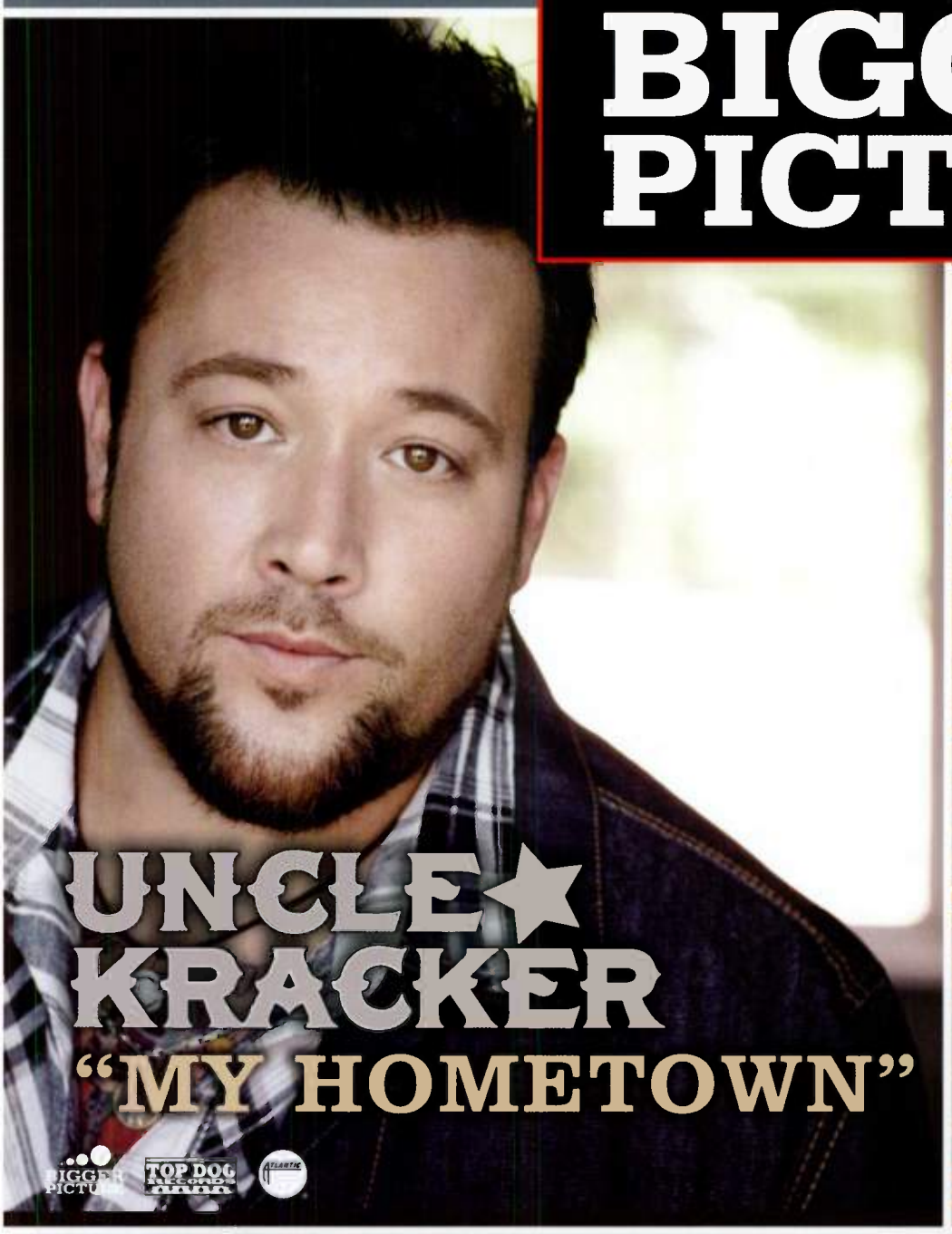
BIGGER PICTURE · Southern Ground · ROAR



"WHEN I GET IT"

BIGGER PICTURE

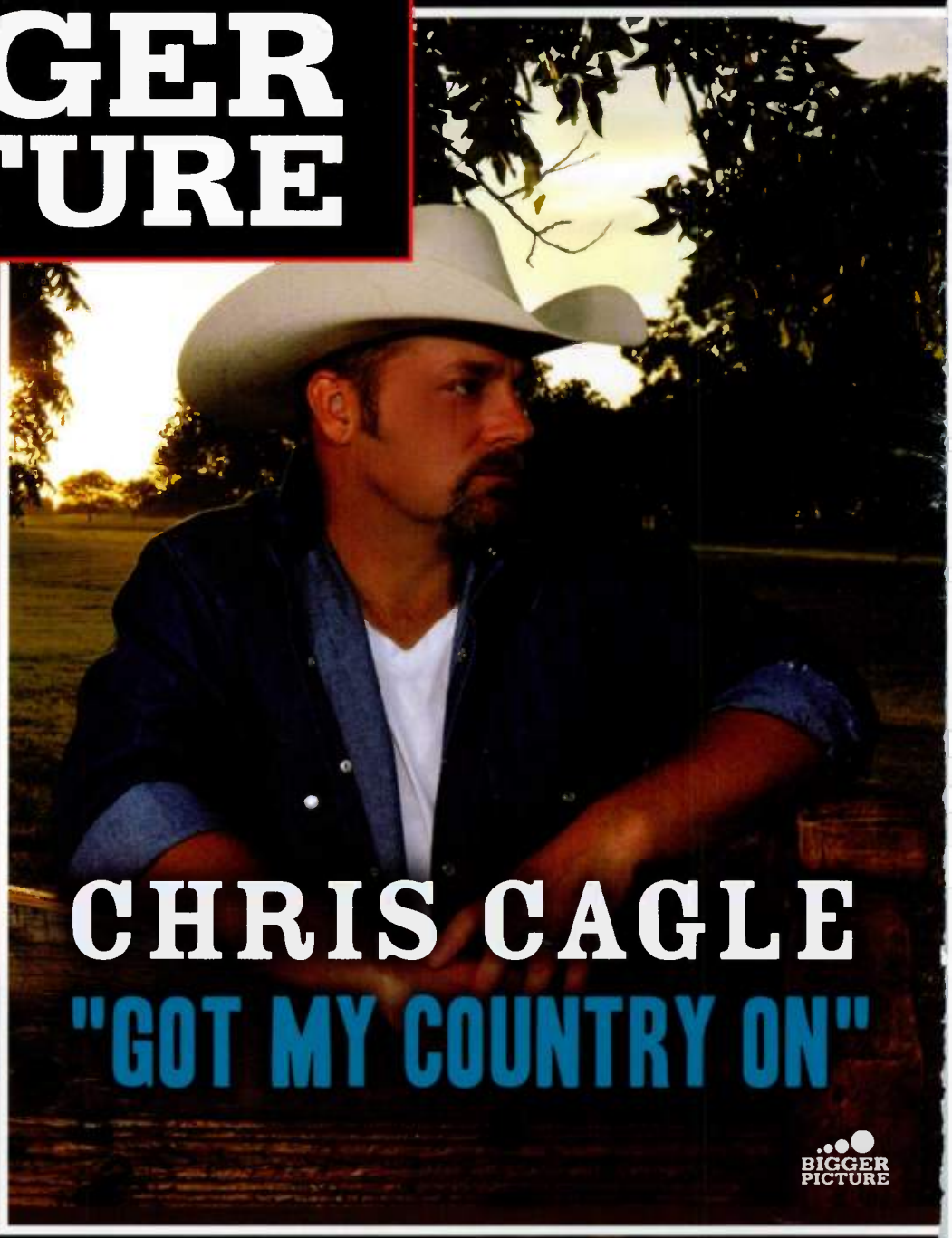
BIGGER PICTURE



UNCLE ★ KRACKER

"MY HOMETOWN"

BIGGER PICTURE · TOP DOG Records · ATLANTIC



CHRIS CAGLE

"GOT MY COUNTRY ON"

BIGGER PICTURE

INTRODUCING

D. VINCENT WILLIAMS...

SEE YOU THIS SPRING ON HIS UPCOMING RADIO PROMO TOUR!

BIGGER PICTURE

WRH

PROMO MOTION

How To Reach Label Reps

Editor's Note: An explanation of the abbreviations: ***BD****- Business Development;* ***C****- Consultant;* ***CO****- Coordinator;* ***CR****- Client Relations;* ***D****- Director;* ***D/RI****- Director/ Research & Information;* ***D/RP****- Director/Regional Promotion;* ***DRR****- Director/Revenue & Research;* ***D/SP****- Director/Special Projects;* ***DSM****- Digital & Social Media;* ***DTS****- Director/Strategic Partnerships;* ***E****-East;* ***FP****- Field Promotion;* ***IM****- Interactive Marketing;* ***LO****- Label Operations;* ***MA****-Mid-Atlantic;* ***MP****- Manager Promotion;* ***MS****- Mid-South;* ***MST****- Media Strategy;* ***MW****- Midwest;* ***NC****-National Coordinator;* ***ND****- National Director/ Promotion;* ***NDRM****- National Director/Radio Marketing;* ***NE****- Northeast;* ***NP****- National Promotion;* ***P****- Partner;* ***PE****- Promotion Executive;* ***PR****- President;* ***RD****- Radio Division;* ***RP****- Regional Promotion;* ***RS****- Radio Syndication;* ***RM****- Radio Marketing;* ***S****- South;* ***SE****- Southeast;* ***SP****- Secondary Promotion;* ***SVP****- Sr. VP;* ***SW****- Southwest;* ***W****- West Coast*

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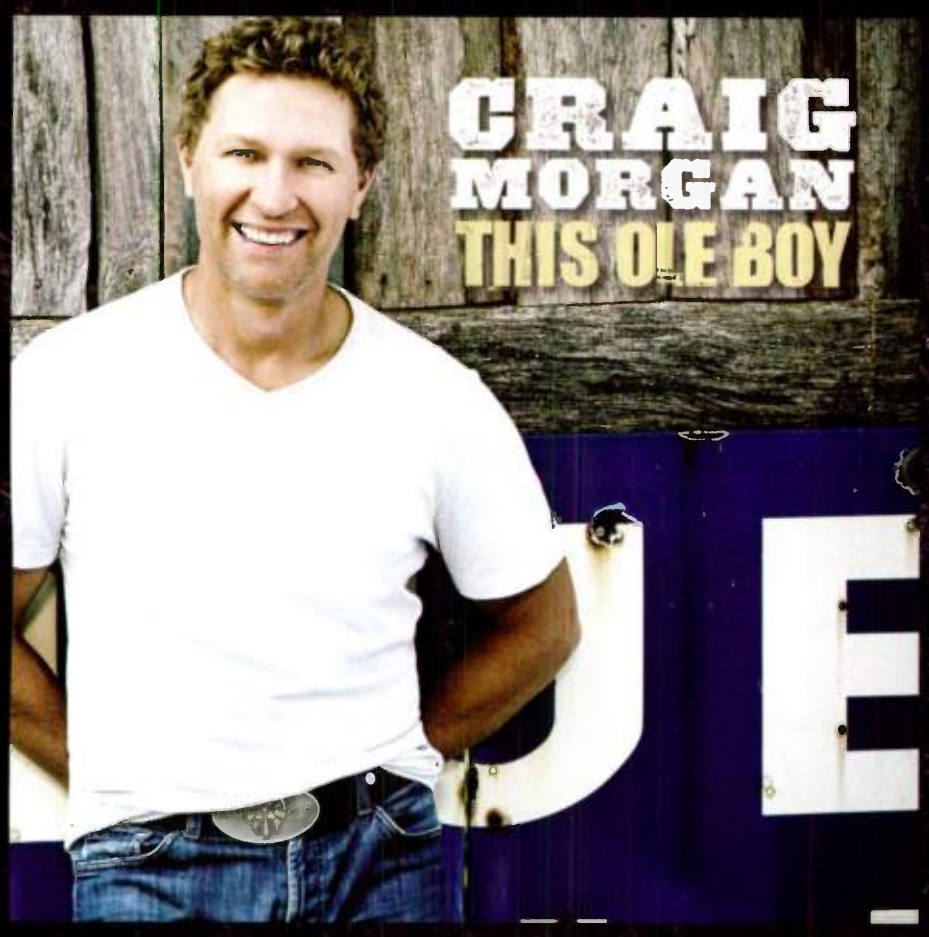
BLACK RIVER
ENTERTAINMENT



We can't WAIT for YOU to HEAR what is coming in

2012

DUE WEST

Kelly Parkes

"Don't Make Me"

Charted on BB Indicator!
3rd Single in a Row!

Nominated For

Female Artist of the Year
New Artist of the Year
Breakthrough Artist of the Year
By *New Music Weekly*

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Senior Class: The Broken Bow/Stoney Creek SVPs with their leader. Pictured (l-r) are Jon Loba, Benny Brown, Paul Brown, Carson James and Rick Shedd.

Benny and the Gents

The Man (And Men) Behind Broken Bow's Against-All-Odds Success

Before Benny Brown and Broken Bow Records, the trajectory for independent country labels was unwavering and unfortunate. With one very notable exception in the form of Mike Curb, the flight plan for indies always ended in a smoldering heap on some not-too-distant portion of the runway.

> "I've been in enough business relationships to know that if greed keeps things from being a win-win for both parties, then it's a short-term relationship."
> — **Benny Brown**

Not only did Brown and his upstart label bust down the major-fortified gates and forever shift Nashville's record company balance of power, he also rewrote what it means to be a music man. Consider that this Northern California car dealer who is not a musician, songwriter or performer is the creative center of a company that has had, over the last seven years, three of Country radio's No. 1 most-played songs. In 2005 it was Craig Morgan's "That's What I Love About Sunday," followed in 2009 by Jason Aldean's "She's Country" and, last year, Thompson Square's "Are You Gonna Kiss Me Or Not."

"I love that it's three different acts," says Jon Loba, SVP over the Broken Bow and Stoney Creek label group. "He's got the best ears in this town. Some may say that's hyperbole, but no other label group has done that twice in that time frame, let alone three times."

Bathtub Of Demo-aid

Brown's music industry efforts started with trying to help a young singer he heard on a Northern California TV show in the late '80s. He visited Nashville artist manager Jack McFadden, who represented Lorrie Morgan at the time. While in McFadden's office, Brown noticed a bathtub full of cassette tapes and asked if he could have the unwanted song demos. McFadden couldn't imagine why there was any interest. "I told him I wanted to listen to them," Brown explains. "He said, 'You'll go tone deaf!'"

But listen to them he did, taking a long interest in music a step further. "From 1963 to 1985 I was an independent car dealer and spent a lot of time on the road listening to Country radio," Brown explains. "A lot of times that was the only thing you could get in rural areas. Sometimes I'd be on the road and go two days without sleeping. Me in the car, making stops at dealerships, and the thing that kept me awake at night driving from L.A. to Northern California to Seattle was the radio. And I got to where I could listen to a new song or artist and know whether it would be a hit or not."

His fascination with music was extended with the early '90s purchase of Nashville's Legends Studio, which he used to develop artists including Mercury's Wesley Dennis. "I was so frustrated with the single choices, and we ended up buried in recoupables," Brown says of the experience. "Never saw a penny. That was my first issue with major labels."

Brown also worked with artists Joanie Keller and Damon Gray. "We had a song called 'Three Little Teardrops' with Joanie and couldn't get anyone interested," he says. "So we started the label just out of frustration."

Benny's nephew Paul was the parts manager at his dealership while going to law school. "I was involved in concerts somewhat, and driving home from a show in Reno we talked about it," Benny says. "I felt we needed someone on the legal side, so as soon as he passed the bar we started the label."

That was July, 1999. Keller and Gray both released albums on Broken Bow in 2000, but the label's first No. 1 was still years away. "We had to figure out what was real and what wasn't," Paul says. "Whe we got to town, we saw a lot of presentations from the different consultants we hired. At first we were told to go to secondary stations, and if you could get something going there it would pop up to the big chart. But that doesn't happen. We had to learn that lesson, and Benny just kept pushing forward."

Almost Home

The lack of early success was surely disappointing, but it didn't dissuade the young company. "My way of thinking was always long-term," Benny says. "Even in the car business, I built it based on long-term relationships, not greed up front. After seeing what happened to me and my artists, I thought I could come up with a different business model that was fair to the artist and to the label."

A Nashville entertainment attorney retained to draft the label's early contracts was taken aback by Brown's parameters. "'Nobody gives this much,' he told us," Benny recalls. "We set it up so the artist has a really fair portion. I've been in enough business relationships to know that if greed keeps things from being a win-win for both parties, then it's a short-term relationship. I wanted whomever I worked with to feel good about it. So we came up with a model and have pretty much stuck to it."

Curb's early mainstream country success came via co-ventures with labels, so Broken Bow's notion of winning a toe-to-toe slugfest with the majors seemed foolhardy to some.

Benny and the Gents

"Before we came to town we talked to a lot of people who told us the majors will circle the wagons and won't let us break through," Paul recalls. But break through they did.

"Craig Morgan was really a turning point in all of our minds," Loba says. "We had a wonderful team of consultants and a wonderful staff who fought vigorously to keep Benny from putting out 'Almost Home.' They begged him. It's a 4:38 ballad on an unknown act. Career suicide, they said. I was everyone's last chance to talk Benny out of it, so I got him on the phone. At the end of the conversation he said, 'I've been a gambler my whole life. You don't bet on nines, you bluff on nines. I'm not going with any other song, I'm going with my ace. That's the ace. Tell them to go work it.'"

Paul adds, "Benny said, 'If we can't win with a great song, we need to know that. We can't afford to push good songs up the chart. There's no return on investment.'"

"Almost Home" was a top 10 hit in 2003, suddenly elevating an independent from the kiddie table. "I heard a lot of people laugh about the car guy," Paul says. "What does the car guy know? He knew what he liked and pretty early on learned we can't be making albums for Benny. He started making music for what he perceived the mass audience to be. He'd bring employees into the dealership's conference room and play them songs, take that feedback and make decisions based on it. These are real people. Music isn't confined to Nashville, L.A. or New York. It lives throughout the country."

Spend & Save

Even with Morgan's success, there were many hard lessons learned. Sherrié Austin, Chad Brock, Lila McCann and Joe Diffie taught Broken Bow an important lesson about known artists hoping for a second chance. "No matter how much you believe in someone, once they fall out of grace or sight with radio, it's hard to ever bring them back," Benny says.

His affection for the artists only deepened the disappointment. "You feel like you're family to them and want so much for good things to happen. That's the hard part of this business, seeing people who are so deserving and you can't make it happen, no matter how much money you spend."

Paul Brown points to his uncle's almost irrational passion and resolve as keys to Broken Bow's success. "People always ask me what it takes to make it as an independent, and I tell them you have to have someone who's willing to throw $15 million in the street," he says. "If it's not there when he comes back the next day and doesn't ruin his day, you have a chance. We didn't hit a home run right off the bat, and it's easy to give up. We were in it for millions, but the more we learned, the more we realized that nobody really knows anything. The audience tells you whether you've got a hit or not. Until then, it's just gut."

And Benny's increasingly dead-on gut shouldn't overshadow his business acumen. SVP/Promotion Carson James remembers his first in-person meeting with Brown at his dealership. "We're in his office talking philosophy and getting ready to negotiate, but he leaves both doors to the office wide open," James says. "The whole time we're talking, people are coming in and out, asking him quick questions. But he never lost his focus, which really impressed me. And when you called Corning Ford and asked to speak to Benny Brown, they never asked who's calling. He picked up every single call. For him to be worth what he's worth and have all the successful businesses he's had over the years, that says a lot."

"One of the things I've learned in the 20-some-odd years I've been working for Benny is that $100 is a lot of money to him," Paul says. "A million is a good investment or bad investment, but $100 is a lot of money. He helps control costs across the board, even in deals with artists. Jason Aldean fully recouped in his first royalty period and has been recouped ever since. Part of that is controlling costs, and Jason has created a really nice royalty stream for himself.

"The other thing is loyalty, and Megan Mullins is a perfect example," Paul adds. "He cut 34 sides and released four singles trying to get something going. For whatever reason, it didn't connect."

Hit Pickin'

Much of the impetus for starting Stoney Creek was Brown's belief in Mullins. "For whatever reason, I thought maybe we need a different promotion staff with a fresh start," Benny says. "And we'd never really been able to push more than two songs at a time on the charts. I don't think it's fair to talent for them to sit in the wings and wait. With a second staff we had a chance for those people to be heard."

> "It's all about the best side. I don't care who wrote it, who published it, who gets the money."

Benny relocated to Nashville 18 months ago, and still owns five new car dealerships out West. But being in Music City may not be completely to his advantage. "When I was in California going to work every day at the dealership, I probably listened to twice as many songs," he admits. "But I just finished a media room at home, and I told these guys I'm going to start devoting more of my time to where it all starts."

Brown remains extremely hands-on with song selection. "You have to match the song and music to that person," he explains. "Some artists can't hear themselves doing it. You finally talk them into it and they do it, and it becomes their favorite song. With some artists it takes more persuasion than others. Out of all the artists I've ever worked with, Jason has been the easiest. We've been on the same page, for the most part, though his single choices may be a little different. Craig Morgan was the opposite. He didn't want to cut 'Redneck Yacht Club,' much less have it as a single."

SVP/Operations Rick Shedd says, "Benny's so focused and engaged in the creative part of the business. His joy is finding songs, matching them to artists and then bringing them to market. It's a collaborative process and all opinions are considered and encouraged, but at the end of the day, Benny Brown makes the decision."

His work with Thompson Square highlights Benny's ability to help artists find songs that reflect who they are. "Shawna's voice is what really attracted me, and when I heard the demo for 'Let's Fight' it all came together," he says. "I knew what I wanted to do with them, but I didn't say anything. So we invited them to a Christmas dinner we were having for the staff, and I announced at dinner that they were going to be our newest artists. They actually broke down and started crying."

Song selection continues to be a give-and-take process. "I barter with them," Benny admits. "Keifer and Shawna Thompson are great songwriters, but it's all about the best side. I don't care who wrote it, who published it, who gets the money. We cut 'Are You Gonna Kiss Me Or Not' in the first group of songs for them and always felt like it was the big song."

Beyond Broken

Broken Bow and Stoney Creek aren't the company's only music-related ventures. "Years ago, we started on the publishing company and have been building on it," Brown says. "We've got some great writers now. We're getting some good cuts. If you've got great writers and it's the right song, you get to hold it and own it.

"I've been very pleased with the progress we've made with Stoney Creek, but I don't see myself starting any more labels. I want to grow these and do the best we can for the artists. We do have a management company and plan to grow that. We've got BBR Land, which is buses to take care of our artists. We've also got BBR Air to take care of me and the artists. Those aren't all about money-making."

Paul points to return on investment. "Right now, if you leave capital sitting in the bank, not much is coming from it," he says. "So when you can put it to work, it makes a lot of sense. Especially with a brand new artist, it's very difficult for them to ride comfortably. We're able to put them in a newer bus and they get charged back for it, but we're very fair about that, too."

That fairness makes the company a great place to work, according to Shedd. "There's a true family feel in whom he hires, whom he signs and the way we're treated," he says. "If you've been in the record business for more than five years, you're a refugee from somewhere, but here we do everything for the right reasons. We do things other companies wouldn't do and we don't do things other companies do. And we always make the best decision for the artist and the music. That's the biggest difference. We're not driven by corporate pressures."

Nor is there a scramble to take credit for the label's successes. "You won't hear Benny taking credit for breaking Jason Aldean," Paul says. "We didn't break Jason Aldean. We did everything we could to promote him, but who Jason Aldean is broke Jason Aldean."

Adds James, "The family atmosphere is so tight. Make no mistake: It's a business, but everybody really does care about each other. It's not about individual accolades, though they are recognized. It's about what we do collectively."

And driving that collective success is Benny Brown, who once found himself in the office of songwriter Larry Shell and saw a plaque for "Rumor Has It," which was a hit for Reba. "I'd found that song in the bathtub of demos," Benny says. "I'd wanted it for one of my acts at the time. I said to Larry, 'I can tell you one thing about that song: It was a long time between when you wrote it and when it got cut.' And Larry said, 'Yeah, seven years. How'd you know?'" CAC

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COLD RIVER RECORDS

Gary Overton

A New Day For A Dynasty

Perhaps the most momentous power shift Nashville's seen in years took place in April 2010, as 15-year EMI Music/Nashville publishing head Gary Overton jumped to the label business as Sony Music/Nashville's Chairman. Prior to publishing, Overton served as an artist manager for Alan Jackson, and even had a short stint in A&R (see below). His tenure at Sony has already seen a restructuring from four promotion teams to three, though the wholesale upheaval some predicted was never in the cards. In his first extended interview on the job, Overton tells Country Aircheck about his vision, what he's learned, his thoughts on following a legend, how an executive from the creative side hits his numbers and much more.

THE INTERVIEW

Country Aircheck: You've been at Sony for almost two years. Have you figured out what this job is yet?

Gary Overton: Oh, yeah, as much as I ever will. I worked in A&R at BNA for a year back in the early '90s. I was hired just to be a song guy in A&R; there were no other real responsibilities. But I went to virtually every meeting – promotion, marketing, sales – you name it. I went, one, because I felt like my job was to help bring what is unique and compelling about the music and artistry to all those people so they would know how to represent it. And, two, I could find out what labels do. And over the years as a manager and in publishing, I interacted a lot with more than just the A&R departments. Of course, once you get inside you hopefully learn more and a lot faster.

Jump ahead 18 years, and all that stuff you learned is not quite the same.

It's like riding a bicycle or swimming. I'm not as graceful or as fast as I used to be, but I could get down the pool. I wasn't looking to go from publishing to a record company, but Sony/Nashville was a very well-run company. [Former Chairman] Joe Galante did an incredible job and created a dynasty here. And Sony Music Entertainment seemed very healthy. So if I was going to take the jump and accept the challenge, it seemed like the right time and the right company. There were other opportunities, but those labels didn't make sense for me.

> "To follow arguably the best record executive this town has ever seen, that's daunting."

What did you think the job would be, and what has the reality been?

I was thinking music always has to be first and that it's a new day. We need to figure out what makes sense now for our business, artists and partners. Don't just live on what historically has been the business model. The key has always been having and finding great department leaders, and there were a lot of great people already here. So it was really about finding people who shared my vision or were willing to adapt to the new vision. And then it was about advancing the ball down the field.

But the volume of emails, phone calls, reports and meetings is incredible because of how big a place this is. The thing is to not get buried by all those things because what's most important is great music, the artists, working through your friends at radio, media and retail and, ultimately, selling records. We can get very caught up in 10 hours of meetings a day and not accomplish any of that, so I've had to cut down on the meetings.

Is there an area you weren't as versed in that you had to immerse yourself in right away?

As a manager you know the sales stuff, but don't have to know the mechanics because you're a step removed. Here, the sales function is the most important thing I can do besides finding, helping create and exposing compelling music. We have to sell records – that's kind of job 1. When I became a manager, I asked the artist's business manager to make me a pie chart of income sources so I knew where to be an expert first. Here, 99% of our income comes from record sales. So, I need to understand the sales function and now, of course, digital sales, which didn't exist when I was a manager. There's a lot to learn.

Your previous interaction with Country radio was probably nothing like what you're experiencing now.

I've been a fan since I grew up in New Jersey listening to WHN/New York – Conway and Loretta. At the same time, I was listening to and going to concerts at Madison Square Garden of The Who and Led Zeppelin, but I loved country. I'd pick up my friends in my mother's Delta 88 and I'd have it on WHN. They'd go, "What the hell is that?" As far back as I can recall, Country radio has been a real friend to me.

Is it challenging to get our artists onto Country radio? For some artists it is. Others who are doing really well, not as much. But I look at Country radio and try to understand their perspective and the difficult jobs they're tasked to do. And their jobs *are* very difficult. Radio's been very welcoming, honest and fair to us, which is what I've asked for. I think we've done a good job finding music with them in mind, because they are, by and large, a pretty accurate barometer of what the listeners want to hear. It's a very symbiotic relationship, to be quite honest. Some people like to paint it as less than that, but I don't feel that way at all.

You've made several road trips to get acquainted with radio. What'd you ask them?

I asked how their business was and, in some cases, was glad to hear [previously declining] ad revenues were leveling off or coming up. I asked about their websites

and what their task was with that. I asked their perspective of not only country music, but also of Sony Music/Nashville, its artists and promotion staffs. I remember walking to the parking lot with a PD after a nice dinner and saying, "Well, thanks for a great time. I really appreciate you." She said, "That's it?" I said, "That's all I had. Was I supposed to ask you something else?" She said, "You're not going to tell me what adds you need today or ask why am I not playing it?" I said, "No, that's what we do on a daily basis. I wanted to hear what's important to you, and how we can work together. I don't have an agenda." The response was, "Wow, that's never happened before."

Is there anything about radio that makes you scratch your head and ask, "Why the hell do they do that?"

I don't know that I understand the radio business well enough to scratch my head. I don't presume to know any more than they might understand what goes on at a record label. Consolidation and acquisitions seem to make it challenging for us to promote to radio and seem to create challenges for each station when they're gobbled up. But that's nothing new.

What have you thought as you've realized that communication from radio to promotion and then to a label head, manager or publisher isn't always a straight line?

People believe and many times are led to believe that a promotions staff can manipulate songs on a week-by-week basis until they're No. 1, then move that record out of range and move our other record in there. The fact of the matter is, if a record is very strong it's doing a lot of its own things. We are massaging it along the way because there are a lot of fine points to promoting a record that I'm finding out about. We have eight promotion people representing any given record, so I have eight sources of input. Then I have radio people I can speak to, and the manager and the artist calling. There's a lot of chatter [and] it's rather comical at times.

THE INTERVIEW

What do you find humorous?

How stories evolve. You tell a kid the monkey's in the tree and by the time he tells the other kids, the aircraft carrier's in the living room. You're like, "How did that happen?" With as many cooks in the kitchen as there are, it's a loud kitchen.

What are you learning about promotion?

It's one of the few activities I've not done for a living in this business. I've driven a tour bus, promoted some dates and done a lot of things. But I've never done promotion. I've always felt it was the hardest job there is. The worst thing in the world for them was the invention of the cellphone because they truly work 24/7. It's hamsters on wheels when the chart closes, and then one minute later the new chart opens. It doesn't end. There's not been one person on staff here that, even when they're on a family vacation, isn't sending me emails throughout the day even though I tell them, "I really would like you to have balance in your life. Please, try to step away from it so you can get some balance and keep your family and your life."

Until recently you had a SVP/Promotion as a layer of management between you and the three VPs. Did you eliminate that layer because you wanted to be closer to promotion yourself?

I've not made a decision to not hire for that position, but am in a kind of test period to see how this works. I have direct contact with the VPs of Promotion so they can give me information without a filter. Radio is arguably one of our two most important partners, so being a step closer to radio and promotion is a good thing. I'm not looking to hire today, but I'm also not saying that position won't exist. A lot of what I'm trying to do is make this a label built for 2012, 2013, 2014 and on to 2020. Maybe that position is not necessary. Maybe it's there to create a new position. Several years ago there weren't digital people in this building. Now we have a number of them. I'm just trying to evolve what we do.

You have one CRS under your belt at Sony. If I recall, you didn't come away all that excited about the panel you were on last year.

Well, I think I got tuned up in that panel. There were two questions I was told

would not be asked and, of course, those were the first two I was asked. One was about M-Score and the other was about performance royalties. I remember trying to give a very honest answer to both in my limited knowledge at the time.

As for CRS, all the labels and managers try to get our artists and music out there because we have all these important radio people in town. A microcosm of that last year was having Kenny Chesney invite 30-35 people to his house in St. John for a weekend to hear what he was up to. It was very interesting to watch all the radio folks interacting with each other, very happily talking about music they're excited about, maybe music they weren't so excited about, whose chain was being bought and who had a new boss. I think Kenny saw that and intuitively knew not to make the weekend about him 24 hours a day. He let them have their time.

At CRS, all the labels are competing to chauffeur these guys around every minute of every day. We've got a lunch, a breakfast, a dinner. Maybe we should let these guys have their time to interact with each other, whether it's around the panels or just time they can actually spend together talking about what's going on in their markets or with their group. I enjoy CRS a lot, but there's a lot jammed in; it's a blur. We had a great boat show last year and we're going to have another great one this year, but it's a lot.

We almost need the Secret Service walking all of us around to make sure we're at the right place at the right time. I imagine with the CRS app folks can make their own calendar and get where they need to go.

You're the quarterback who follows Brett Favre – the guy following a legend. Do you feel that?

Absolutely. You'd have to have an insatiable ego to think that it's anything but that.

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To follow Joe, who created a dynasty here – arguably the best record executive this town has ever seen – that's daunting. The key was to learn a lot from what he created, but then have a vision for how to take it from here to down the road. So, yes, at times I heard, "Well, Joe didn't do it that way." And I'd say, "Well, Joe's not here." I just try to be judged on the merits of what I'm trying to help create. History will judge how I did.

If I remember correctly, it was rumored in the press that I was firing the whole staff. That was interesting because I've never done that anywhere. Jimmy Bowen was most known for doing that, and he had reasons. Not having been at a record company, I didn't have a whole staff I could just walk across the street. And that's a good thing because I could get to know the staff on a group and individual basis and make some choices.

The early press releases talked about Joe being a consultant for six months. How involved was he?

We had a couple months together in the building and then he was working from the house for the remainder of his consultancy. He said, "Listen. I'm here for you, call me if you need something. Otherwise,

THE INTERVIEW

I'm not going to bug you. If you call me, you've always got me. If you need me to attend a meeting with you, I will go. If you need me, I can travel with you or without you. Whatever you need, that's what I will do for you. But I won't be there saying, 'Why the hell did you do that? This is how I always did it. Boy, this was a dumb idea getting you in here.'" He was nothing other than helpful.

You inherited a lot of Sony/Nashville artists – from superstars to mid-level artists to new acts. Who has been signed since you've been here?

It is interesting how long it actually takes to sign an artist, make a record and then find the right time in the calendar to release it. But I guess the ones who were truly signed after I started include Casey James, Wade Bowen and Kristen Kelly. I like to sign artists who've been out performing so that when they sign with us, it's not the first time.

In this age of the Internet, social media, 500 TV channels, etc., when artists of a certain level can take their message to their million Facebook friends, do superstars need record labels? Right now, for instance, Tim McGraw is a free agent, and I hear Kenny only owes you one more record.

I can't imagine Kenny Chesney being anywhere other than here for his entire career. (Laughs) But to answer the question: Absolutely! So tell me about the stars who have gone off and done their label. How well have they done?

Well, Toby Keith has been pretty successful.

I love Toby and what he's done after saying, "I'm gonna do it my own way." Now he's back letting Universal fund it all. Kenny's an amazing man and artist, and can talk to you as an artist because that is what he is; he's a superstar. But then there are times when he's almost standing outside of himself looking at his career and the industry in a very intelligent and intuitive way. We were talking about how he's in just about every business *but* the label business. And he said, "That's not by mistake."

There's a lot that goes into the label side. There's a lot of things we do that the general public and even those in the industry don't really realize how involved we are in artists' careers. We are a part of their touring mechanism, bringing radio to the shows and promoting shows. There's the digital frontier, trying to really get our arms around it and protect the artists' music. Radio promotion is, by far, one of the biggest things we do. And we're talking to Tim because he's an incredible artist and he's looking for a label home. I don't see many superstars saying, "Eh. I don't need those guys."

Speaking of artists, you had a long relationship with Alan Jackson, who left your label group last year. What happened there?

First of all, I *have* a long relationship with Alan. You said "had." Alan and I have been friends since before he had a record deal, and I have been blessed to be his publisher, his manager and with his record label. When I got here, his deal was pretty much up and had not been extended at that point. We had a lot of good conversations, and it came down to where he and I had the conversation. He had made a management change and gone back to Nancy Russell. He made some other changes in his career, and it just seemed like a natural point. He had been with Arista and, ultimately, Sony for 20 years. So it was pretty much agreed on by both of us.

I said, "The last thing I would want, running a label that represents a superstar like you, and certainly as your friend, would to be the place that cannot continue to support your career. I want you to be excited about the music and to make great music. And people want to hear it. So if moving on makes sense for you, I understand." It was really bittersweet for both of us because we had been together since day one.

Do intermittent rumors about Sony acquiring other companies or leadership changes bother you?

I don't have as much trouble as other people because I feel like I know the truth most of the time. But I'll be honest with you: It really pisses me off because my staff wonders if their job could be in jeopardy, wondering, "Is Gary going to be here?" There's usually an agenda and personal gain at the other end of those rumors. They'll say the company's going to be bought and someone else will be running the place, but they're 0-for-2 so far. The great thing is working for Doug Morris, whom I'd not known before. He started out as a writer/producer and became arguably the most successful record executive there's been in our business. He's very open. He called me the first time he heard those rumors and said, "I just want you to know, Gary, it's all bullshit. One thing you'll know about me, I'm a straight shooter. If you ever have a question, you ask me. If something comes up, I will let you know. But you're doing a marvelous job. You're staff is doing incredibly well down there in Nashville." I said, "Thank you. That helps me a lot, mostly for my staff." And it means a lot to have his open support and for him to make that call.

Sony/Nashville was Country Aircheck's 2011 Label Group of the Year, with two of your imprints in the top 5. What other accomplishments from your first two years make you proud?

Well, we had four of your top 10 songs of the year, and have had 20 top 10 singles. I think 15 went to No. 1. As for sales, six of the seven albums we put out in 2011 debuted at No. 1 on *Billboard*'s Top Country Albums chart, and the other debuted at No. 2. And we've had something like 80 award nominations – CMA, ACM and Grammys. That's by far the highest of any country label.

> "I'm blessed to be involved in the creative side, and I can also count."

As we talk, you're sitting in a pretty comfortable-looking rocking chair. Does that chair have any significance?

Not in itself, but a funny story: I wasn't on the job at EMI a month when the CFO came in to do budgets. We sat down and were chatting when he said, "This is Stickley furniture, isn't it?" I said, "Yeah, you've got a good eye." He noted how expensive it was and kept talking about reducing spending on certain items to be able to afford furniture like that. So I said, "You want to talk about it? Let's discuss this. Guess how much all this furniture cost." He guessed $30,000, and I told him it was $47,000. "Now, ask me how much it cost EMI. Zero. It's mine. I brought it with me, and I'll take it with me. If EMI was going to buy the furniture, I certainly wouldn't spend that kind of money."

They found over time that I'm blessed to be involved in the creative side and that I can also count. I've hit my numbers everywhere I've been. When I got here, we had some artists who couldn't get traction, so we didn't release their albums. So instead of having 12 releases, we had seven. If there's a question about not making numbers, I'll say, "You'll find out that I know how to do this." We made our numbers and we're going to blow through them this year. I can count.

On a more personal note, what have you enjoyed most about this job?

My wife, Jan, always said to me, "You're not going to end your career in publishing. You like challenges." And she's right – I love challenges. It's not that publishing wasn't challenging, but I'd been at EMI 15 years, and according to someone's tally, had been Publisher of the Year 12 times and had made our numbers virtually every year.

It was going really well and there really was no end in sight. And some have asked why I would join a record company at arguably the *worst* point in record industry history. I always think, "Yeah, thanks for bringing that up." But I've really enjoyed the challenge, getting to learn new things about our business that I've not been involved with before and being updated on some things I was involved with before that have changed. I like being closer to the music that gets to the public through radio, whereas before I was one step removed from that. There are lots of little victories, and I want to make sure that when there's a No. 1 party for a single my promotion staff gets to go to it. We don't make money from that, but they work their asses off to accomplish it. It's important to me that they go to those so they can enjoy it. And sometimes the writers and publishers who are there will call them out and thank them, which means a lot. It's a hard business and it's a hard time. But it's fun to be successful at a label, having not been at a label before, and being able to share that victory with everybody.

CAC

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WELCOME YOU TO CRS 2012

YOU'RE INVITED

Tuesday, February 21st 1-5pm
DUSTIN LYNCH
Albright O'Malley Pre-CRS Seminar
Country Music Hall of Fame

★ ★ ★

Wednesday, February 22nd
THOMPSON SQUARE
Municipal Auditorium
Performing with Lady Antebellum and Darius Rucker

RANDY HOUSER AND PARMALEE
11pm to 1am
National Underground
Across from the Hard Rock on Broadway

★ ★ ★

Friday, February 24th
THOMPSON SQUARE
CRS New Faces Show

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And of Course
THE INFAMOUS BROKEN BOW/STONEY CREEK SUITE
Renaissance Hotel
Tuesday - Friday

BBR

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So You Don't Have To Love Me Anymore

I'll be the bad guy, I'll take the black eye
When I walk out, you can slam the door
I'll be the S.O.B. if that's what you need from me
So you don't have to love me anymore

When you and our friends talk, make it all my fault
Tell 'em I'm rotten to the core
I'll let it all slide, get 'em all on your side
So you don't have to love me anymore

Chorus: I will keep all those memories of the good times
Yeah, there were some good times
So when you think of you and me
They won't even cross your mind

If the wine you're drinking leads you to thinking
That yo ... nt what we had before
Girl yo ... let it ring and ring
So you

Chorus

If y
I do
So y

Thanks again country radio!
Y'all have always been
good to me + my music.
See ya at CRS!
Cheers,

ACR
Alan's Country Records
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RECORDS
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GEORGE STRAIT

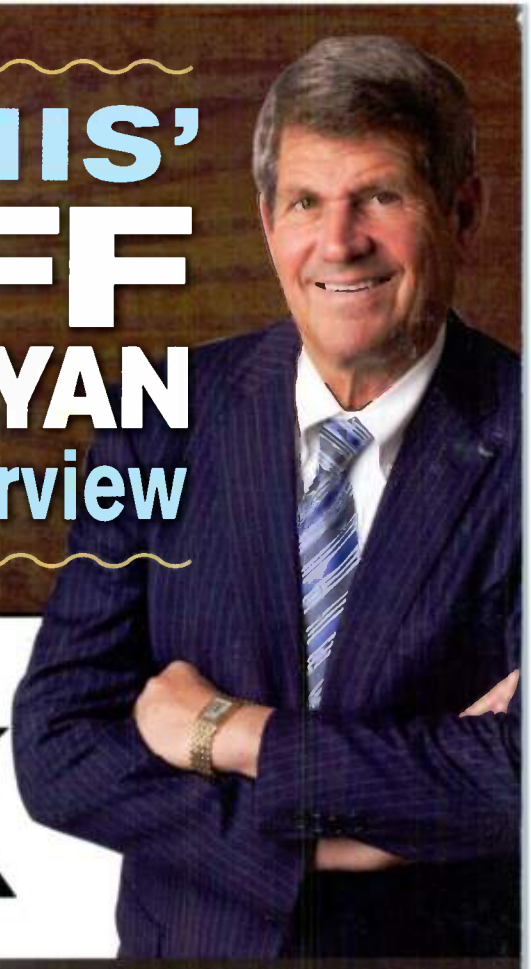
BOB ROMEO

LABEL CONTACTS

Hall Of Famers' Best Stories

EMMIS' JEFF SMULYAN

The Interview



COUNTRY AIRCHECK

FEBRUARY 2013

New music · New Tour · American Idol · All For The Hall

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SHERYL CROW

NEW SINGLE

"EASY"

ON YOUR DESK NOW!

IMPACTING MARCH 11

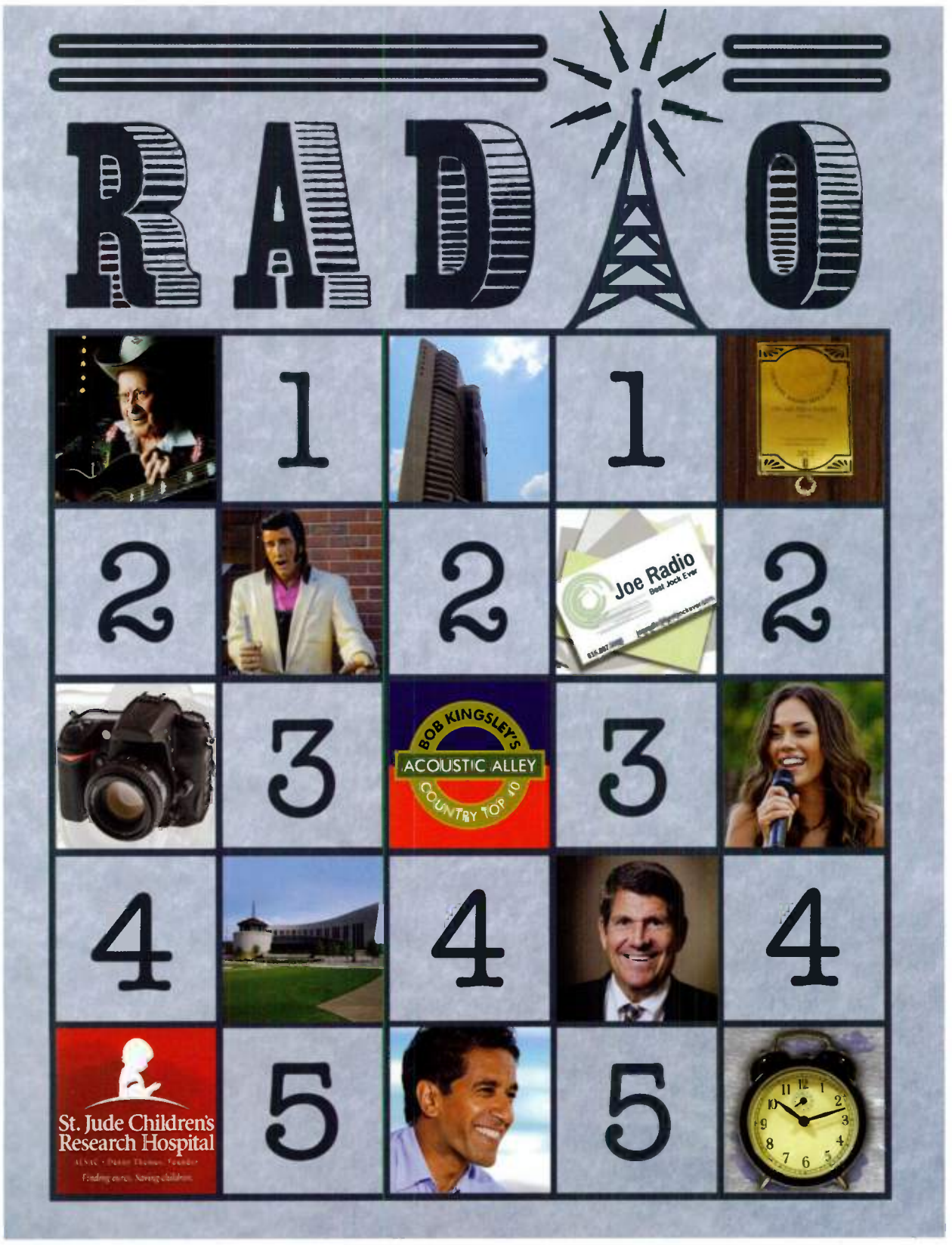
CRS BINGO!

The second annual CRS Bingo! is here to offer fun, frivolity and free iPad minis! Brought to you by **Bob Kingsley's Country Top 40** and **Country Aircheck**, the sequel promises another succession of stops through the CRS universe on the way to our prize presentation during the New Faces Dinner & Show. Ready? Set? Go nuts!

THE RULES

* Complete spaces on the CRS Bingo! play card (right) as indicated, emailing the designated proof to crsbingo@countryaircheck.com by noon Friday (3/1).
* Standard bingo rules apply: Five in-line spaces across, down or diagonally count as a "Bingo." Everyone who successfully completes a "Bingo" will be entered to win an iPad mini. Everyone who successfully completes a "Cover-All" of every space will be entered in a separate drawing for an iPad mini. (Last year, that was only two people!)
* Winners will be drawn at the New Faces Show & Dinner Friday (3/1).

Fine Print: Open to all CRS registrants, excluding employees, spouses and associates of Country Aircheck, Dial Global and Bob Kingsley's Country Top 40. Prior winners excluded. One iPad mini per winner.



R1. Approximate time of the first Little Jimmy Dickens sighting at Wednesday's Grand Ole Opry performance.

R2. Photo of yourself wearing the CRS laminate of any label regional rep or VP/Promotion.

R3. Photo of yourself with any artist in attendance.

R4. Number of tables in the CRS Badge Bar.

R5. Photo of yourself at the St. Jude coffee cart or in the internet cafe.

A1. Name of the fourth performer during Wednesday's lunch.

A2. Photo of yourself with the Elvis statue in front of Legends on Broad.

A3. Names of the performers scheduled for Thursday's BMI/Country Aircheck-sponsored WCRS Live!

A4. Photo of yourself in or in front of the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum.

A5. Photo of yourself with a competitor from another station, label or company.

D1. The number of floors in the Renaissance Hotel.

D2. Read Wednesday's CRS Daily Buzz (powered by Country Aircheck) for the designated clue.

D3. Photo of yourself with Shawn Studer who can easily be found at Bob Kingsley's Country Top 40 Acoustic Alley Thursday (2/28, 7pm, Belmont Room).

D4. Names of the panelists at Thursday's "Younger Country" panel.

D5. A quote from Dr. Sanjay Gupta's Friday presentation.

I1. Photo of yourself congratulating a 2013 Country Radio Hall of Famer.

I2. The name and contact info from any business card you have received.

I3. List the menu of food served at Thursday's lunch.

I4. How many hours a year Jeff Smulyan says the American public spends listening to radio.

I5. The floor and room number of any label suite.

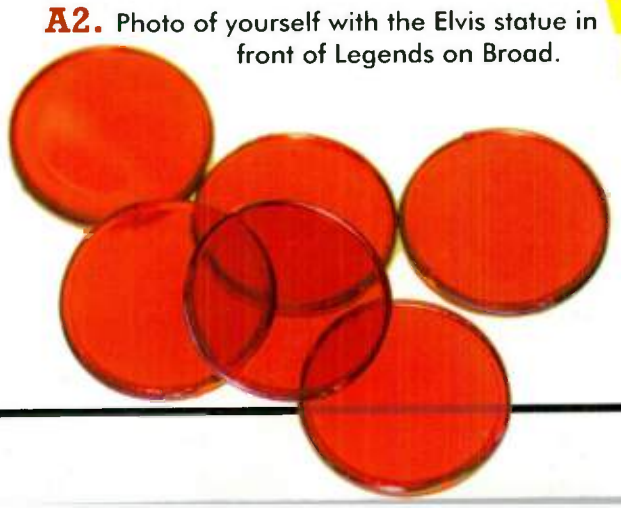
O1. The names of seven Country Radio Hall of Famers whose plaques are on display between the hotel and NCC.

O2. Read Thursday's CRS Daily Buzz (powered by Country Aircheck) for the designated clue.

O3. Name of the bar Jana Kramer visits in this issue's New Faces feature.

O4. Photo of the alarm clock when you get back in your room Thursday night/Friday morning.

O5. Photo of the alarm clock when you wake to attend Friday's sessions.



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SONGWRITERS

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- Ben Hayslip
- Natalie Hemby
- Luke Laird
- Shane McAnally
- Wendell Mobley
- Jeff Stevens

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Dr. Don Carpenter

A Diagnosis Of Country

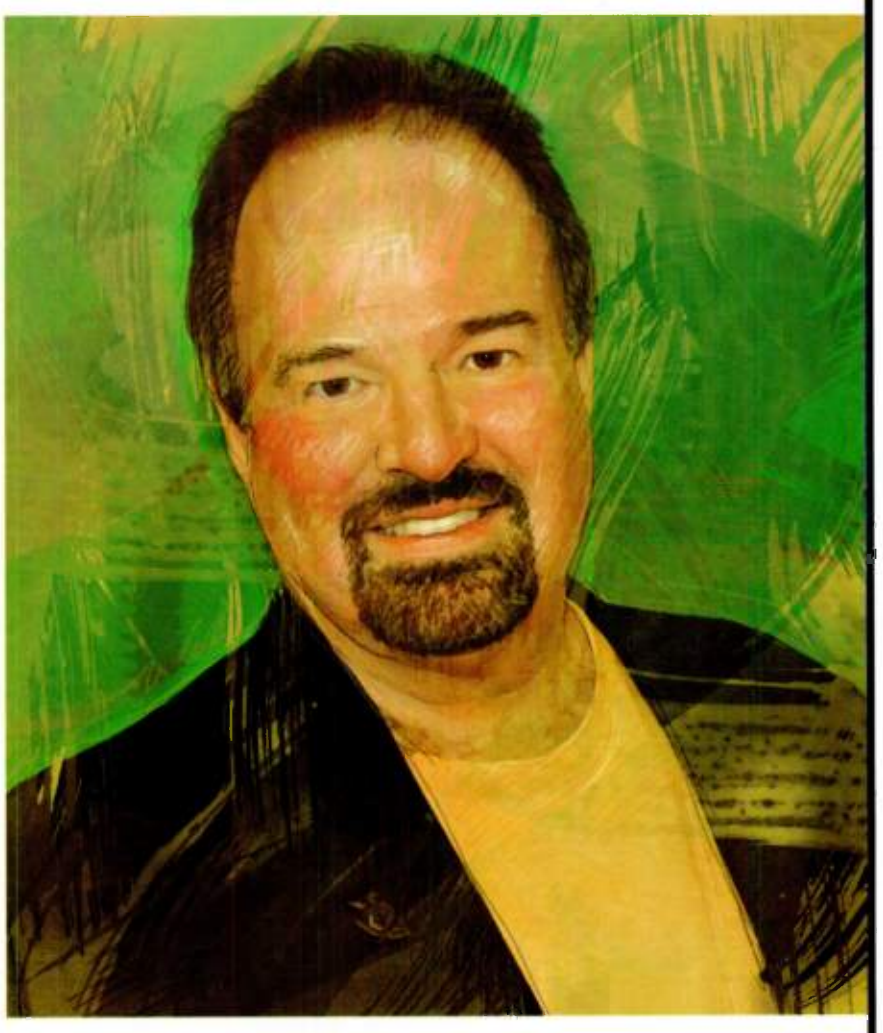
His Future's So Bright: A 1992 publicity shot for WFLZ/Tampa shortly before the station became the Power Pig.

Country Radio HALL OF FAME

*With the exception of a stint at WUBE/Cincinnati, **Dr. Don Carpenter** has been a fixture in mornings at **WYCD/Detroit** for the past 20 years. The Tulsa native has also written* The Dr. Don Prepsheet *for Country radio during the past 22 years, so not only has he influenced listeners over the years, but fellow radio personalities as well. As a college student, Carpenter waged a career tug-of-war between veterinary medicine and broadcasting. Thankfully for Country radio and Detroit listeners, broadcasting prevailed.*

> "When I talk to some longtime radio friends, they still can't believe I ended up doing Country and want to know who I have pictures of."

Hat Act: In his hat-wearing days, shortly after the 1993 launch of WYCD (Young Country)/Detroit.



I grew up in Tulsa and my mother's habit was having the radio on every morning. She always had it on the same station, KRMG, and they played a little bit of everything. That's the kind of radio I fell in love with from the very beginning. The morning guy took phone calls and did sketches. I used to think it would be cool to be on the other side of that, so I made mental notes. I had already decided I wanted to be a veterinarian, but I thought I'd work on the radio during weekends because it just sounded fun.

When I was at the University of Tulsa, I had an internship at a station, which meant I was grunt-boy. I was on the college station, too, while attending veterinary school, which is where the Dr. comes from – though I never actually got that far. I still have people ask me questions about their pets and I say, you realize I could still spay a cat, but I wouldn't trust me with one you're particularly fond of, if I were you.

I thought, give radio a try, let it run its course for a while then maybe go back to veterinary medicine. I figured as soon as the radio career evaporates, I'll go back to college, but here we are 30-odd years later and I'm still working in the business.

I once worked at a daytime AM station where only the owner and the PD had keys to the place. I did my Saturday night show and the PD was supposed to come in and lock the station at sunset. Sometimes that was 6pm and sometimes it was 8pm. But I couldn't find him and week after week this went on. Pretty soon I learned I just needed to go from bar to bar. He was usually passed out in the back of one, hammered to beat the band. He just told me to take the keys and lock up the station myself. So I'd do that and return the keys to his pocket. I'm sure he woke up the next day wondering how they got there.

My first commercial station was KAKC/Tulsa, where I always wanted to work. It was the station everybody listened to in high school, so it became my dream to do mornings on KAKC. I did overnights, weekends and evenings. When it changed formats to Music Of Your Life, everybody wound up quitting or getting fired, so I became the morning guy. There weren't many listeners left by then, but I was able to tell my mother, who was dying of cancer at the time, "Hey mom, I did it. Your son became morning man at KAKC."

I started at KFSB/Joplin in 1981. The GM was John David, who is now NAB Exec. VP/Radio. The format was called Town & Country. I got to play the records from people I grew up listening to. It could be Ed Ames at one point, the Beatles at another and, of course, all that Southern Rock of the time. We also played Porter Wagoner, Dolly Parton and The Wilburn Brothers. It wasn't format specific.

My next stop was Top 40 KWTO /Springfield, MO. I did pretty well; it's the only place I've ever worked where I had an 18-share. I was No. 2 and it still wasn't good enough. After two years there, the station was sold and the PD advised me to find another job, thinking I'd get fired anyway. I went to Des Moines for 90 days when the new owners called and said, "What happened?" I said I'd come back if they doubled my salary, so they did. By then I'd started doing a little comedy writing and was playing with something called the Internet. I was contributing to several different forums and radio services.

The folks at Jacor saw this and thought I'd be a great addition to the Oldies station in Tampa, knowing full-well they were flipping formats to Top 40. So I went to WFLZ/Tampa, it flipped and we started a little station called the Power Pig. We had an 11-share right out of the box. I was there two years. My favorite story about working at Power Pig happened after I worked there. Every time I'd try to get a job somewhere they'd see it on the resume and say, "Uh, I don't think we want that here."

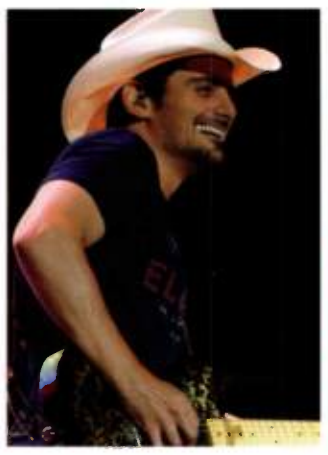
In 1992 I was getting calls from someone I didn't know asking me to come to Detroit. He wouldn't tell me the format, the station or what I would be doing. I wasn't going to jump at that. Finally, Bob Shuman, who was working with me at Power Pig, told me Harry Valentine has been trying to call me. Harry said they were starting a Talk station called WOW-FM. It was going to be an irreverent station and they wanted me to do afternoons. That was a lot of fun and the hardest job I ever had in radio. I had to be both the funny guy and the one with serious thoughts. It required a whole different world of prep.

Six months into it they flipped to Young Country, which was a lot like Power Pig or the Talk station. The approach was that you could lift off the music, put in different songs and it would sound okay. It was a fun radio station that happened to play Country music. I did three years in afternoons while they went through several morning shows before they decided to try me. But you mess up two dayparts doing that. After 18 months of mornings I went back to afternoons. In 2000, I went to WUBE/Cincinnati when they didn't renew my deal.

I followed Jim Fox in mornings at 'UBE and didn't listen to my own advice. I always said don't follow a legend, follow the guy who follows the legend. Since it was the first gig available I took it and that was really rough. Leaving WUBE was one of the more amenable exits I ever had, though. I couldn't do that anymore and they didn't want me anymore.

Detroit is all about loyalty and that had a lot to do with me coming back in 2005. We're coming up on nine years this time and I've loved every minute of it. What I like most is that Detroit's not what is portrayed. I got here kicking and screaming, but the first time they drove me from the airport to the station I thought, this is not Detroit. This is just like Tulsa in terms of amenities and people. I would stack up the suburbs of this town against any other town I've lived in. It is colder here – I give Detroit that.

You say "Hall of Fame" and it's like, really? That surprises me. I've always felt like it was hard just keeping a job. I think I speak for anybody going in the Hall when I say it blows me away. I see the legendary names and don't think I belong in the same room with them. I couldn't carry their lunch after what they've done for this format. I'm seriously humbled. When I talk to some longtime radio friends, they still can't believe I ended up doing Country and want to know who I have pictures of. **CAC**



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Welcome To The Family!

ARISTA
NASHVILLE

Gaylon Christie

"I Use The Word Blessed"

Country Radio HALL OF FAME

Air-personality, salesperson, GM and station owner, Gaylon Christie accomplished much during his 50-plus years in radio, all of it playing exclusively Country music in Texas. Already successful as a morning man and GM, he built KOOV/Copperas Cove, TX from the ground up in 1977, operating it hands-on until his 2001 retirement. Fiercely proud to be both Texan and in small market radio, Christie had a major influence on the industry by serving on the CRS Board of Directors for 12 years. It was Christie who lobbied to have CRS oversee the Country Radio Hall of Fame and to make programmers and GMs whose off-air contributions helped grow the format eligible for induction. In 2000, CRS recognized his industry contributions by honoring him with its President's Award. Christie's lifelong love for Country is rooted in his background as a musician, where his career began.

Sharp Dressed Man: Christie behind the microphone, sometime in the '50s.

> "If you're a young broadcaster and you really love the industry, you should be hoping to someday be considered for the Hall."

If You're Gonna Play In Texas: Alabama's Randy Owen visits KOOV/Copperas Cove and Gaylon Christie.

The musician thing was something that just happened. Back then you couldn't make any money in radio by itself. But you could go pick a guitar for $50-$60 a night, a lot more money than you could get in radio. This was back when television was new, too. If you were on TV each week with your own show, you were something. We had that going on. Goodness, I was a 17-year old senior at Holland High School in Texas and I made $16,500 playing steel guitar in 1954. Did I save it? Hell no!

When I first got into radio you were either the early morning disc jockey, the late night DJ or on at noon. It was block programming and that's when they played Country music. Because of my background as a musician, I was the Country guy. My first job at KTEM/Temple, TX was a 15-minute show at noon.

I continued playing music on the weekends with my band, Gaylon Christie and The Downbeats. We backed up every country artist that came through because, in those days, nobody had a band. They would play with a local group of musicians in each town. We got to know a lot of them. Willie Nelson was a songwriter just starting out at the time and he would come and hang out on our bus. He played us many of the songs as he was working on them, including "Hello Walls." He was also involved in Gospel music and I remember him sharing "There's A Family Bible On The Table." Another one he played us was "Ain't It Funny How Time Slips Away." Pretty soon his career took off and we'd still see him every once in a while. He'd say to me, "I remember ole' Gaylon, we used to be broke together." And I'd say, "Yeah, and one of us still is."

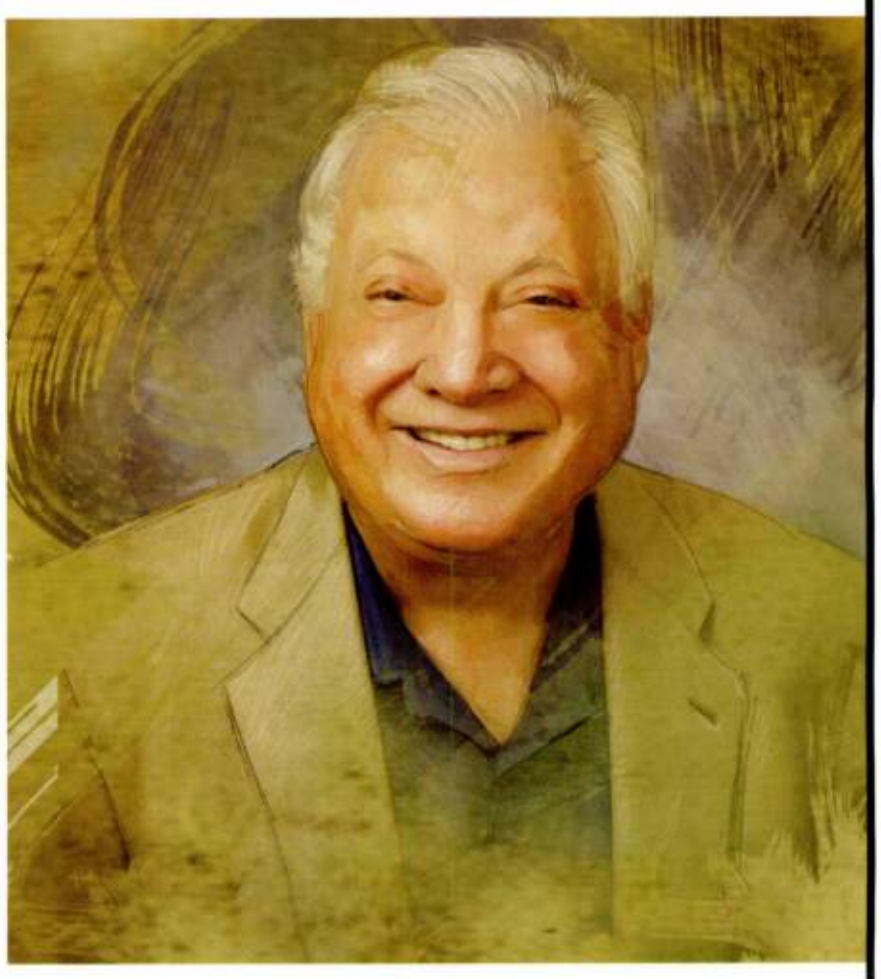
There were two radio stations in Texas that went from blocks of Country music to playing it fulltime. KENS/San Antonio was one. We saw that and thought it if they can do it, we can. So we did that at KTON/Belton, TX in the early '60s. We worked out the format. It wasn't a pure Country format; it wasn't a honky tonk-get drunk-cheat-on-your-wife format. The music was growing up and it really worked. We began to do live shows with Roger Miller, Marty Robbins and Ferlin Husky. We thought that would bring loyalty to the music and the station and help build the format, too. We always connected the community with these concerts.

You go through phases as a young guy. First you're a DJ and you get a lot of airtime, but soon you realize the money is in sales. So I went into that and started making a little money. While I was working at KTON, the station was sold and the new owner asked me to run it for him and that's how I became a GM.

Leaving KTON in 1975 was the most difficult decision I ever made in my life, but you have to keep moving. I was GM of KXOL/Ft. Worth for a few years and there were eight stations there. Seven of the eight changed ownership and management in one year. That spoke to me very loudly. I wanted a place where you had more stability than that. I wanted a place where you could grow, financially and in other ways.

But that was the right decision. Sometimes things you do in your career and your life, you like to think it's because of your genius but the most important thing is timing, really. That's where I met my business partner and we formed the M&M Corporation. He had the money and I had the mouth. With that combination we made KOOV work for a long time.

I looked around and the largest market in the area without a radio station was Copperas Cove, TX. It was right there in the middle of that Ft. Hood military complex, where about 55,000 soldiers were stationed. You just knew there was an audience. It took me about two years and we finally got it on the air in 1977. I was the owner, GM and stayed on the air because I worked cheaper than anybody else. And I had done mornings for a long time in that market. We were putting this brand new station on and I thought we needed a familiar voice to add some stability. I did mornings for about seven years until the station grew and we hired another morning man.



Was it hard to sell KOOV in 2001? Oh, gosh no. I had people lined up to buy the station. The merchants were all doing well, which meant advertising was doing well for us. The timing was right, it felt good and everything came together. I sold it to Cumulus, back when everybody was trying to buy radio stations. That was a very good deal. They snapped it up quickly and I took off to the bank, smiling. And after that sale, I retired.

I became buddies with Chuck Chellman who helped found what was then the Country DJ Hall of Fame. At one point I told him the Hall belongs under the stewardship of CRS because that's what we do; it's a natural fit. There are also a lot of great programmers who deserve to be in the Hall. That's how CRS came to oversee the Hall of Fame and I'm glad to have seen that happen. If you're a young broadcaster and you really love the industry, you should be hoping to someday be considered for the Hall. I never was too serious about that because guys from small markets don't dream of that.

The first reaction after being told of the Hall of Fame induction is that you really can't believe it. Then you ask yourself, do I belong here? KOOV was a small market station, as was KTON. I never chose to go the big market route because I wasn't looking for another job that paid $15 more per week, or an offer to be Assistant Music Director. That never appealed to me. I saw the opportunity for ownership in Copperas Cove, which was a stable little town. It just felt where I needed to be. The final step would be there.

To have been active in this business, grown into ownership for so many years, well, what else could you ask for? That's a career that a lot of people would trade me for. I use the word blessed. I was blessed with wonderful employees and, most of all, great timing. It wasn't always my doing, it just happened. I wasn't dumb enough to mess it up. I just shut up and went on with it. **CAC**

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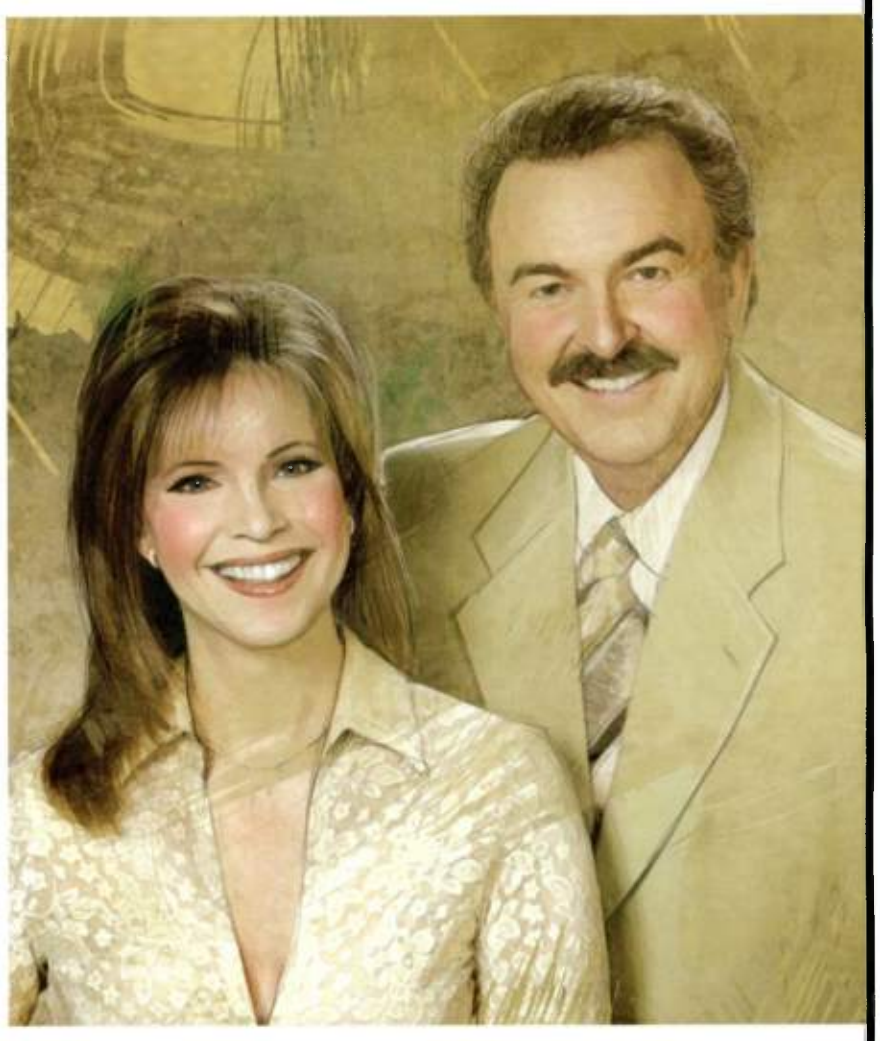
Crook & Chase

Bridging Media

Country Radio HALL OF FAME

Lorianne Crook and Charlie Chase first teamed in 1983 as TV personalities on TNN. In 1987, the Crook & Chase Minutes radio feature was launched nationally. Two years later, the Crook & Chase Countdown followed, and it's now entering its 26th year. Crook & Chase have also hosted numerous events at CRS through the years, including the Super Faces Show, Music City Jam and seminar panels. They are the first radio team to be inducted into the Country Radio Hall of Fame, and Lorianne is the sixth woman to be inducted.

Hannah Before Montana: Welcoming Billy Ray Cyrus and daughter Miley when she was just a toddler.



Lorrianne Crook: Our career started together in television. I was here in Nashville hosting my own show on the ABC-TV affiliate WKRN, channel 2. Charlie was my competitor and had his own show on WSMV, channel 4. An independent TV producer here, Jim Owens, who has now been my husband for 28 years, called Charlie and I in April of 1983 and said we should be national personalities. I didn't know either of them at the time.

Charlie Chase: And I had never met Lorianne or Jim either.

LC: By September of that year, we were on the air as a Jim Owens Production, doing This Week In Country Music. All three of us have been together ever since.

> "It's just been a wonderful relationship; you're blessed when you find someone you can work with like that. We're kind of a brother-sister combination."

CC: My career started back in the Stone Age at radio in 1966 at WRGS/Rogersville, TN. They gave me an opportunity when I was in high school. By the time I was a sophomore, I was working 40 hours a week at $1.10 an hour. It was block programming. You had Country in the morning, then Gospel, followed by Easy Listening toward the end of the day and Rock at night.

I moved to WMAK/Nashville in 1974 and replaced Pat Sajak at WSM-AM in 1976, working mornings and afternoons for 10 years. It was there that I got into TV, leading to my connection with Lorianne. She and I started doing radio with updates for stations in the late '80s. We had 700-some stations taking our updates every week.

LC: It was just such a natural thing between us right away. I still get such a kick out of Charlie's sense of humor. He really throws me zingers and goes way off script. That's how we started doing so many live shows because we thought, "These scripts are boring, it's much more fun to just talk." It was instantaneous.

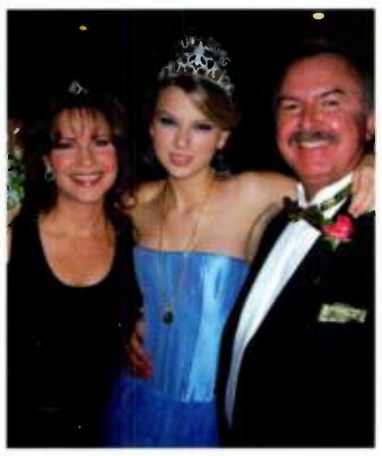
CC: It's just been a wonderful relationship; you're blessed when you find someone you can work with like that. We're kind of a brother-sister combination. We think it's healthy to agree and disagree with each other, but over the years, we have always been on the same page. I've had so many radio teams come up to me and say, "I wish I could find somebody to work with as well as the two of you do." That's the greatest compliment we can get. And we don't try to over-analyze it because we don't want to understand it and screw it up.

LC: One example about our relationship is when we got on camera recently with Tim McGraw. Charlie and Tim have a great sense of humor and love to tease each other in these interviews. At certain parts of that, when these guys have this back-and-forth going on, instead of being jealous of that and trying to jump in, I sit back and let it go.

CC: But let me add, the listeners know and I know, when we're done, she understands exactly how to go in and clean up the mess we've made!

LC: And Charlie does the same thing for me. It's a very lovely give and take. I had to get my mind around radio when we first started and Charlie helped me a lot. When I started in TV I went straight into celebrity interviewing and I had no script or teleprompter. It was all ad-libbed. With radio, obviously there are lots of reads you have to do. It took me a while to not sound robotic. I was so uncomfortable having pieces of paper all over the desk and making sure I picked up the right one to read. Also, in TV, if your co-host says something funny, you roll your eyes and mug into the camera. I was doing that on the radio until Charlie said, "This is radio, you have to react with words."

CC: I've said this so often, radio is the greatest training ground for TV there is. You have to develop a sense of ad-libbing and shooting the breeze within a certain timeframe. Once you can master that, you have it down. I am so proud to say I've been in radio since 1966. The other thing about a radio background is that when you sit behind the control board and that mic, what I've always tried to remember first is the trust so many people have put in you when they tune in.



Taylor & Tiara: Helping Taylor Swift celebrate the success of "Our Song."

LC: There is something about bringing an artist into a radio studio that is very intimate. The lights are low and the interviews are so much more revealing, intimate and personal. They feel more comfortable and relaxed.

CC: When we talk to an artist, we want them to trust us. We put the spotlight on them and if there's something negative coming out under that spotlight, we are going for a positive result. A lot of artists have said things to us they normally wouldn't and, when it's over, they feel good they said it to us. Over the years, we have become friends with these artists. We laugh and cry, we share stories on and off the air more so than you might realize. This is like a family.

LC: Here's something else Charlie has taught me: Instead of just sitting across from someone and starting a list of questions from the top, have an icebreaker. It can depend on the artist and what mood they're in. In a split second, Charlie knows what to say to start the interview on the right foot.

LC: Bill Mayne [from CRS] called me with the news about the Hall of Fame. He asked if I'd join him down at he Convention Center and I guess it was the end of a long day and I was exhausted so I said, "For what?" I hope it didn't sound rude, but he was being so secretive. When he told me we were going into the Country Radio Hall of Fame I screamed so loud he probably needs a hearing aid now.

CC: I said, that's really cool Bill, but I'm busy. Could you mail the award to me? Seriously, I told him how honored and appreciative I am for this. This is an industry that is limited in the number of positions available. To have a position as long as I've had is indeed an honor, and to be recognized for your work in this way is really special.

LC: It's something you don't think of on a day-to-day basis. You're so covered up every day trying to get it right. If I'm not prepared, my palms sweat and it strikes fear in me not to do the best job. I'm filled with that angst all day. You never think such a group of illustrious people notice that you try hard to reach a level of excellence. And to know they not only notice you tried, but did it at a high level, it's just overwhelming. Looking at the list of people in this elite group, I think Charlie is shoulder to shoulder with them. Sometimes I think, "Do I deserve this?" **CAC**

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Eddie Edwards

Easy Being Himself

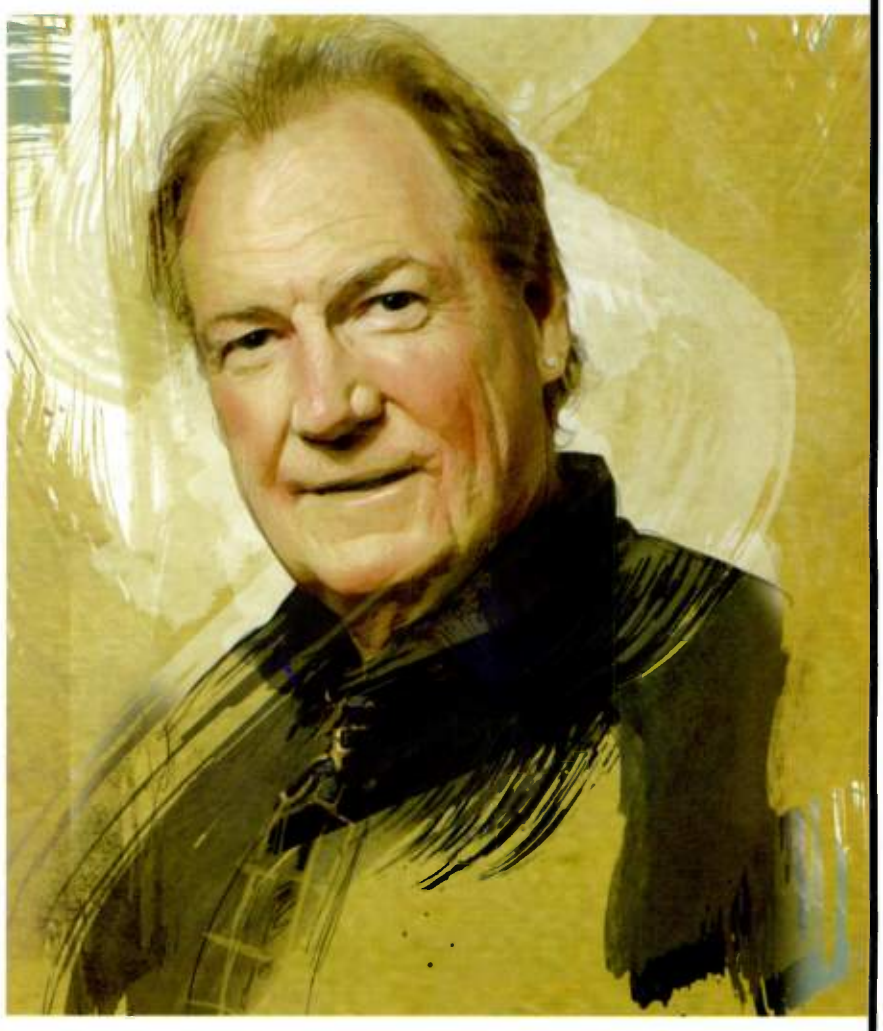
Gras, Brah: Edwards (l) serves as King of the Krewe of Grela during New Orleans Mardi Gras in 2002.

Country Radio HALL OF FAME

Marvelously unique at a time when unique isn't always celebrated, Eddie Edwards is a third-generation showman who has left an impression on most everyone he has met. A personality in every sense of the word, the California native has made himself a household name from the West Coast and Great Plains to the most culture-rich cities of the South and south of the border. KLAC-AM/Los Angeles, WMC-AM/Memphis, KAJA/San Antonio, WSIX/Nashville and XEPRS-AM/Rosarito Beach, Baja California, Mexico are just a few stations that have blasted "Crazy" Eddie across their airwaves. For more than 20 years, the honor has belonged to WNOE/New Orleans. It's in the Big Easy that Edwards says he came into his own and found out that it's okay to be "Catholic and Country."

> "People would say, 'Hey, why don't you come out and play harp with us?' I've played with Gary Allan, Brad Paisley – I even played guitar for Garth Brooks once."

iHarp Radio: Taking the stage with his harmonica during a New Orleans Brad Paisley show in 2001.



My dad was in show business. He was in bands and had TV and radio shows on the West Coast. His dad had worked on the radio, too. So when push came to shove, that was the only talent I had, though I didn't recognize it right away. One of the classes I had to take in college was Speech. One day the teacher came up to a couple of us and asked if we'd like to make an easy grade. He told us that if he could get 11 people together, he could have a broadcast class. Of course we said, "Yes." They eventually had everyone in the new class make tapes and invited a guy named Art Way from KOGO-AM/San Diego to evaluate them. Afterward, he gathered us together and said, "Most of you might want to think about another part of the business beside the talent end of it, but there is one person here who has an instinct for it." To my surprise, he said my name. He ended up putting me in touch with a friend of his who had a radio station and the rest is history. At that time, being in college and working part-time, making money and being on the radio was pretty attractive.

One of my fondest memories happened during the first few days at my first job. It was KIOT-AM/Barstow, CA. I would pull up at the station each morning at 5am and see the strangest-looking stray dog. I identified with it because it looked so skinny and scared, and I gave it part of the sandwich I had made for my lunch. The next day when I showed up, there were three dogs, so there went my all of my sandwich. By the next day there were like nine of 'em. A little later when my boss asked me how the job was going, I said, "Man I swear this place has the weirdest dogs I've ever seen! I'm having to bring extra sandwiches to feed them and jump out of the passenger side of my car and run for the station door every morning!" Well he told me they were coyotes! I had to get inside every day before they cornered me.

I started playing the harmonica because my dad was a musician and I grew up around music. I was also looking for something else to do besides just intro local bands when the station sent me out. I thought it would get me more face time and hopefully attract some of the waitresses. There is a big blues scene in Portland and I got this local street musician to teach me what he knew. And from the first time I did it, I was onto something. People would say, "Hey, why don't you come out and play harp with us?" I guess that kind of became part of my act and it made me one of the guys. Since then I've played with Gary Allan, Brad Paisley – I even played guitar for Garth Brooks once. I play at all kinds of festivals around town, too. I always play one number to leave 'em wanting more. And the way I play, that's enough! Only the musicians know I'm just a mediocre player!

People wouldn't think that Crazy Eddie would be a big Ralph Emery fan, but I am. Him and Gerry House. It was when I heard Ralph that I thought, "Oh, man, that's a more modern way to work." He didn't do the corny stuff, not that I have anything against that. He greatly influenced my interviewing style. The best Country disc jockey of all time, though, was Gerry. I replaced him a couple of times and those employers wanted me to sound like him. So I kind of had to study him. But it was Gerry that finally told me, "You know, you should just be yourself." And he was right. Once I stopped trying to copy people, I fell into my own. That's why I've had a big run here in New Orleans. That and, more recently, Don Gosselin. He's a great PD and a lot of fun.

New Orleans was the only place you could be Catholic and Country. It's the Bible Belt, but it's the Catholic Bible Belt. I call it the Rosary Belt! I remember a consultant coming through one time when I was doing mornings – and you have to understand, there have been a lot of consultants – and he said, "I just got off the plane and I have no idea what you guys are talking about." The discussion had been on altars and lucky beans or something and I quickly realized it was useless trying to explain it to someone who wasn't Catholic and from New Orleans. He finally asked, "Well what about people like us that get off the plane?" And of course I said, "Well we really don't care as long as you come here and spend money."

Hurricane Katrina was like being at the end of the world. Initially we all left. Then we got back together about 60 miles north at [Clear Channel's studios] in Baton Rouge. We joined with Entercom because we had the facility and they still had the New Orleans signal. We called it "United Radio" and it ended up becoming the voice of the whole catastrophe. We were taking phone calls, finding out information, relaying it, and living and eating together for months. It was truly a historic broadcast that will never happen again because now everyone is prepared for that kind of thing. It was scary, too. There were curfews, military helicopters, transport vehicles and National Guard soldiers all over the place for what seemed like forever. When I went back in, I remember taking a picture of sniper units on the roof of a school just in case things went bad somehow. People were just desperate. Also, when I was in Oregon years earlier, Mt. St. Helens blew. So, basically, I do disasters.

Working with St. Jude is one of the things I'm most proud of. In the mid '80s, I worked at WMC/Memphis not too far from the hospital, but had no idea what it was. It wasn't until I got to New Orleans and Randy Owen and Ted Stecker got us going with the radiothons that I figured it out. I've seen people come by who were going through treatment who I didn't think were going to make it. Then I would see them come back years later with wives and kids – just absolute miracles. I'm most proud of that, and having been married 30 years and raising three wonderful children. My daughter is a lawyer with the SEC, so write a nice article or I'll get you audited. I have two sons – one is in the financial business and the other works in the hotel business here in New Orleans.

Being inducted into the Hall of Fame is validation. There is no higher honor than to be noticed by others in the industry. It's almost too big an honor for me to really grasp or react to. I certainly have had an adventure and a lot of fun. When people ask me if they should get into radio, I always say, "Look at me. You could end up in the Hall of Fame. And you could literally make hundreds along the way." **CAC**

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF THE 2013 CRS COUNTRY RADIO HALL OF FAME AWARD RECIPIENTS & INDUCTEES...

Bob Romeo
Gaylon Christie
Dr. Don Carpenter
Lorianne Crook &
Charlie Chase
Eddie Edwards
Bill "Dex" Poindexter

Performing Tonight At
The After Party
With Katie Armiger
(Immediately following the Dinner)

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Craig Campbell

BIGGER PICTURE

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BIGGER PICTURE

CHRIS CAGLE

"Got My Country On" - Top 15
"Let There Be Cowgirls" - Top 15

And Coming Next...
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This Could Be His Year....Again!

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BIGGER PICTURE

WRH

Bill Poindexter

Laugh Man Standing

The Red Strokes: Longtime co-host, the late David Earl Hughes, (l) and Dex (r) visit with Dick Clark at the ACM Awards in L.A. in the early 2000s.

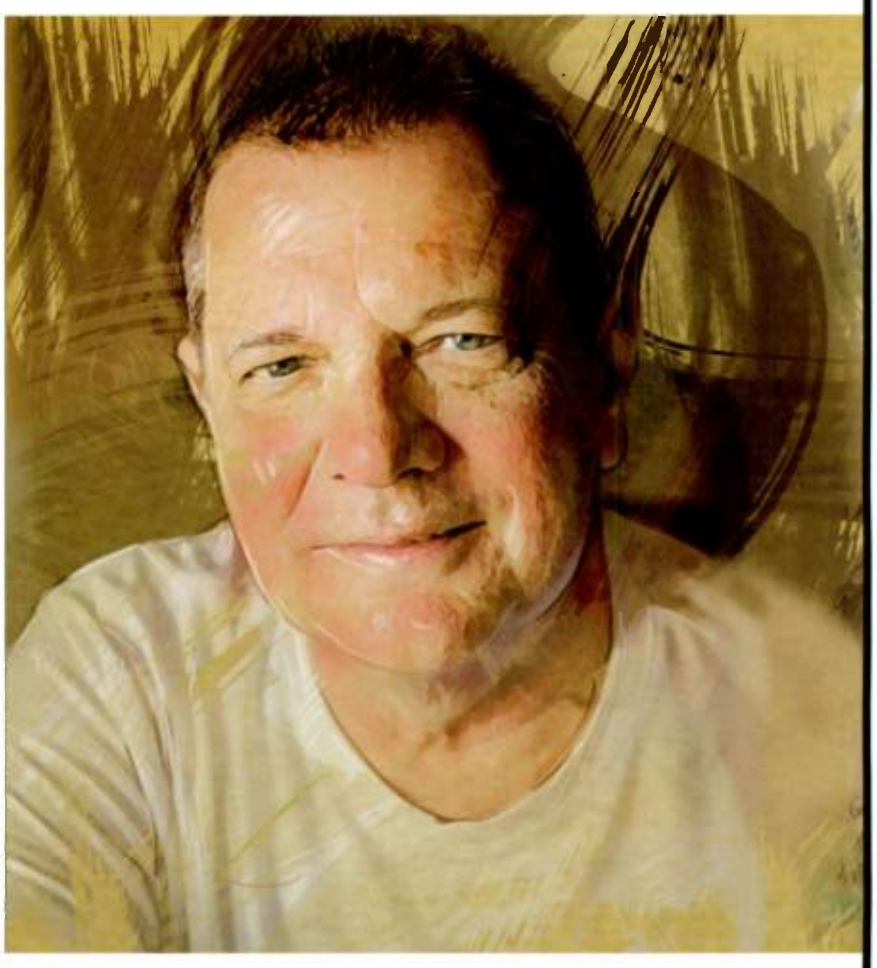
Country Radio HALL OF FAME

Live from a bathtub in Rossville, GA and armed with a bar of soap for a microphone, Bill Poindexter made having fun job No. 1 even as a kid. Somewhere between there and staking out the local radio station in search of Elvis, Dex set his sights on becoming "the guy on the air." That goal has taken him from his hometown station to AM powerhouse WFLI/Chattanooga to record promotion with ABC, United Artists and RCA, and finally back to Chattanooga at WUSY (US101). It's there in afternoon drive that Dex has endeared himself to friends and listeners alike for more than 20 years. The legendary station's accolades are only rivaled by Dex's own: four CMA Personality of the Year awards, one ACM Personality of the Year award and two nominations for the Marconi. With help from partner Melissa "Mo" Turner, Dex continues the tradition and has no plans of slowing down.

> "The most important thing I bring to the table is a positive attitude and a sense of humor. If you're having fun doing radio, people tend to have fun listening to radio."

Little & Loud: Dex (r) and current co-host Mo hang out with Little Jimmy Dickens (c) at the Grand Ole Opry while in town for the duo's 2012 win for CMA Personality of the Year.

The local radio station was three blocks from where I lived in Rossville. I remember being 10 or 11 years old and my friends and I riding our bikes over there. At that age, we didn't know that Elvis wasn't actually in there singing! We'd keep an eye on the parking lot because we knew Elvis drove a Cadillac, and if we saw one, we'd go in and see if it was him. It was a typical radio station with a control room like a fishbowl and you could sit in the lobby and watch the guy on the radio. Eventually, I was going three or four times a week and I'd just sit there and watch him for hours at a time. The DJ's name was Bob Broome and one day he saw me and motioned for me to come into the control room. He let me read the weather forecast on the air and that was it. Once you get on the radio, you're never good for anything else, and I knew what I was going to do with my life.



I was still in high school when I landed my first real job on the air, and I was horrible! It was WRIP, which was a 3,000-watt FM in 1969 or '70 and no one listened to FM back then. The only person I new for sure that was listening was my mama. And pardon the expression, but I couldn't say shit with a mouthful of it at the time. I was scared to death. I'm just thankful nobody made a tape, because if I had heard myself at the time, I'd have quit right then and there. The station didn't have a production room, just a control room, so you were expected to do your production on the "B" side of the board during songs while you were on the air. And because the station only had two turntables and one cart machine, you had to talk between every commercial as you waited for the cart to re-cue, and put another one in once it did. If it was a 30-second commercial on a 70-second cart, you'd better be ready to do some serious talking! And if the cart machine went out, you ended up reading four minutes or more of commercials from the copy book live! Six hours of that was pretty insane.

I grew up listening to WFLI/Chattanooga, which was a bigger-than-life, 50,000-watt AM station that you could hear everywhere. The personalities were real stars and my life's goal was to just be on the air there. When I was in high school, one of my friends was Jimmy Byrd, who was doing afternoons. He gave me some insight that helped get me on the air by telling me that Bud Bell, the overnight guy, was bad to drink. Bud would usually pass out pretty early on Saturday and Sunday mornings and there'd be dead air, so Jimmy told me it would be a good idea to be there when he did so I could take over. Sure enough, about 3 o'clock in the morning, Bud passed out right there at the control board and fell onto the floor. So I grabbed him by the ankles, pulled him into the news room, and I was on the air! The GM was also the morning guy, so when he got there he was more than surprised and asked, "Who are you?!" I paused for a second and said, "Well I'm the guy on the air!" Once he realized Bud was passed out in the news room, he was glad I had been there.

I'd spent a few years working records with ABC, United Artists and RCA before finally deciding I wanted to move back home in the mid '80s. Around '93, I'd been listening to [WUSY] and was thinking, "Man these guys are really doing it right; I've never heard a radio station like this before." So I went over to see the GM at the time, Sammy George, who I knew, and said, "I want to be a part of what's going on here." He said, "Well I don't really have anything open except for a job setting up remotes and I know you don't want to do that." I didn't miss a beat and said I'd do it – anything to get my foot in the door. A little later, the girl who did afternoon traffic reports went on maternity leave and they let me take over. The afternoon guy was David Earl Hughes and we just clicked during the six or eight weeks she was out. By the time she came back, I'd found my place and I've been here ever since.

My very best times in the business have been here at US101. I'm around the most creative people I've been around in my life. We have a great time together. We laugh together, we cry together, everything. I lost my wife in December and this radio family has wrapped their arms around me like you wouldn't believe. There's just so much love in this building for one another and for our listeners. It's a very, very special place to be. Someone asked me just the other day if I ever think about retiring. Why would I? I come to work, I have a ball here, I'm around the people I want to be around, all of whom love what they're doing and love being where they're at. It goes back to [former GM] Sammy George, [former OM] Clay Hunnicutt, [GM] Jared Stehney and [OM/PD] Gator Harrison. It's always been the philosophy that we hire good people, we pay them a good living and we leave 'em alone and let 'em do their job. You don't find that at very many radio stations these days, so I think I'm going to stay here a while.

Our involvement with St. Jude is something I'm very proud of. Here at US101, we don't just have a radiothon, we do things for St. Jude year-round. We do a rodeo, we have a guitar-pull called Heart Strings For Hope, car shows, bowling tournaments – all kinds of stuff. I'm also proud to be involved in the Forgotten Child Fund. For the last 17 or 18 years, we've raised tons of money for underprivileged children here in town. Giving back to the community has always been the most important thing.

I grew up very poor, and my dad was killed in a car wreck when I was five years old, leaving my mother, who was handicapped, with five kids to raise. While we didn't have much, she had the most incredible sense of humor of anyone I've ever met. We laughed about everything and that's what I bring to the table here and why I think I've been successful. No matter how hard times get, we laugh about 'em. Sammy George may have said it best in an interview about the radio station years ago when he described me as "the laughable buffoon." The most important thing I bring to the table is a positive attitude and a sense of humor. If you're having fun doing radio, people tend to have fun listening to radio.

There are a whole lot of people who probably deserve this more than me, but you know what? I'm gonna take it! [WUSY morning show] Bearman and Ken, and [my on-air partner] Mo will be in the Hall of Fame one day. She, for one, is the most hard-working, dedicated person I've ever seen. There are so many from here who will make it and I'm honored to be the first.

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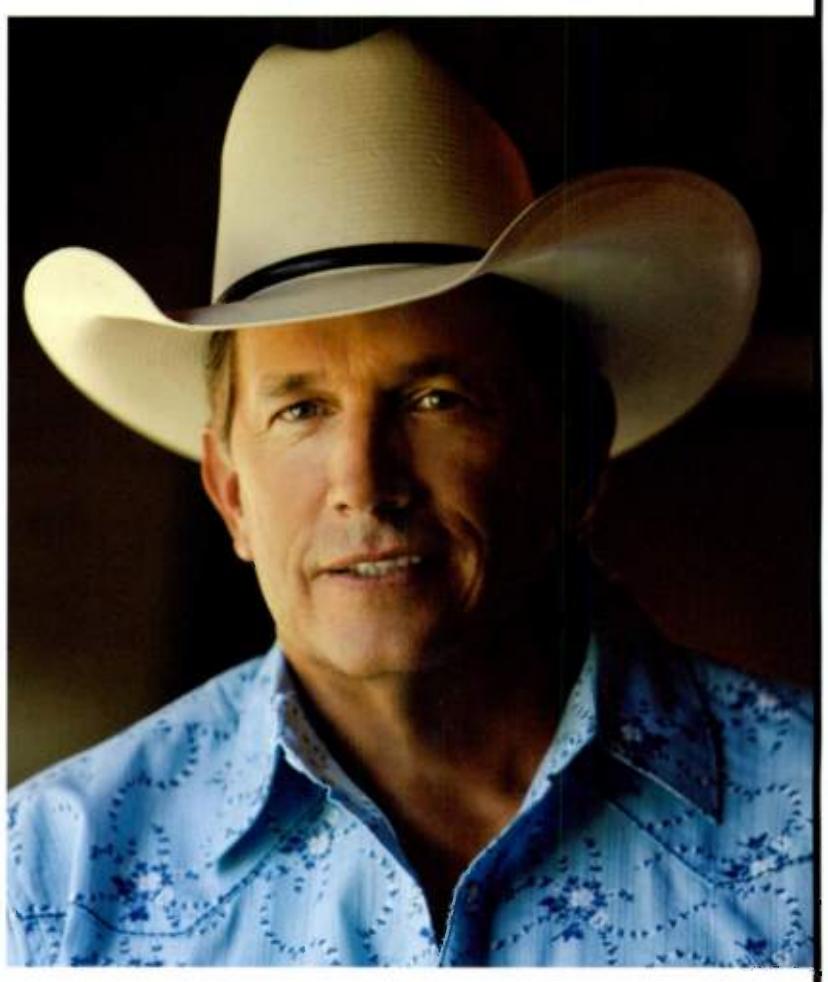
George Strait

George Strait's iconic status has long been such that he is known simply as "The King." A mainstay on Country radio since the 1981 release of "Unwound," Strait has logged 59 No. 1 singles since then. His RIAA certified albums include 13 multi-platinum, 33 platinum and 38 gold awards. A former CMA and ACM Entertainer of the Year, he was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2006 and named the ACM Artist of the Decade in 2009. In September, he announced that his 2013-2014 tour would be his last.

CRB Career Achievement Award

The Cowboy Rides Away Tour *began in January and proved to be the usual hot ticket, with the Lubbock, TX opening night show selling out in 15 minutes. Not that there was any doubt his home state of Texas still loved him, but his March 13 appearance at the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo sold 77,000 tickets in two minutes. When you think about criteria for the CRS Artist Career Achievement Award, "Presented annually to an artist who through their creativity, vision, performance or leadership has made a significant contribution to the development and promotion of country music and Country radio," you realize Strait really is "The King."*

> "I've been so blessed to have radio support me for all of these years. And they've just stuck with me."



If the radio was on, it was usually some kind of farm reports or news, because that's what my dad listened to; not a lot of music. After I got older and got out of the house a little more and out on my own, I found myself listening to rock and roll more than anything. It wasn't until later on when I started hearing country songs on the ol' jukebox that I kind of got interested in country music. [Ray Price's] "Walk Me To The Door" was really my first taste of country music that I really liked, and that kind of perked me up a little bit. I remember hearing it on the jukebox at the Dairy Queen there in Pearsall [Texas].

I'd gone to Nashville in '78, and then I went back again probably about '79 or '80. But in-between those times, I'd played in a bar in San Marcos called the Prairie Rose that Erv Woolsey had opened. I got to know Erv and he'd been working in the record business, so he introduced me to Jim Foglesong and Ron Chancey, and they all came down to hear me in Texas. Foglesong agreed to let me come to Nashville and do a session. I cut "Unwound" and a couple of others songs. He said if "Unwound" was a top five record, then I could do an album. So it became a top five and he let me do an album. And the rest is history.

I remember the first time I heard "Unwound" on the radio because we took it around to radio stations when it came out. It was me and Erv and Roger Ramsey, who was the promotion guy for MCA at the time. And we took it to KKYX/San Antonio and Jerry King said, "Sure I'll play it." He stuck it on and I said, "Wait, wait, let me go out to the car so I can hear it on the radio."

I just think it'd be cool to have, you know? I mean, 60 No. 1 records when you're 60 years old – that's just pretty cool. If it happens, it'll be great. If it doesn't, I can live without it. You know I've been so fortunate in this business to have 59. I mean, let's not get greedy.

Hair For The Party: MCA brass visit with Strait circa 1987. Pictured (l-r) are Katie Gillon, manager Erv Woolsey, Jimmy Bowen, Strait, Shelia Shipley Biddy and Bruce Hinton.

I'm gonna miss that [crowd] most. When I'm sittin' in my ol' rockin' chair and can't move around or anything, you know, years from now, just play me that live record from somewhere where I can hear that crowd again, 'cause it's like nothing else. I will miss that a lot.

Opening Cowboys Stadium ranks right up there at the top. Closing down the Astrodome and re-opening it in Reliant Center is right up there, too. I've been fortunate to have some big things happen in my career and to play some big shows, but places like that and the Alamodome in San Antonio? I mean, I did that a few years back and I don't think I've ever heard a crowd as loud. When I did "El Rey" with the mariachis, it was crazy. I mean, it was insane.

I still get a little bit nervous, especially after I've been off six or eight months. I'm always worried about it. I don't know why, but after the first couple of songs I'm fine. But anybody that does a show like Cowyboys Stadium, Reliant or the Alamodome, if they don't get nervous, they're just not human.

CRS Preview: Strait and his wife Norma (far right) visit KVET/Austin's (from left) Penny Reeves, Steve Gary and Bill Mayne.

Well on show day, I usually like to do a good 45-minute, hour-long interview. (Laughs) And then I do sound check. (Laughs) A typical day, hmm. We roll all night and I ride the bus and wake up at the venue. I'll get up and I'll have some breakfast and then probably go back to sleep for an hour if I can. It's really kind of a boring day, because I don't really get out much. I'm kind of confined to the bus. Then I'll have some lunch and I'll do sound check and watch a little TV and maybe play the guitar a little bit, sing a little bit, practice and just wait for show time.

It's a pretty nice compliment [to be cited as an influence]. I had my heroes – Merle Haggard, George Jones, Bob Wills, Conway – all those guys. To think that somebody looks at me like I looked at those guys, it makes me feel really good. And to hear my name in one of their songs is even better. I was kind of tickled when I heard Garth singing "Ain't Goin' Down ('Til The Sun Comes Up)" with my name in there. I mean, here's Garth Brooks, the biggest entertainer in the world probably at that time. Go figure.

Radio is always changing and it was changing when I signed with MCA back in '81. There were all the crossover records and everybody wanted a crossover hit. [You could] sell more records that way. Then you kind of went back to the more traditional sound of country music and it stayed that way for a good while. And now it's kind of getting away from the traditional sounding music to something else. But it's always changing. I've seen it go one way, then the other way, and then back. That's one of the advantages of being in the record business and touring and stuff for 30 years – you see a lot of changes. But, you know, it's all good. People are craving different music all the time. I still feel like I can stay current and stick to what I do and hopefully Country radio will still play 'em.

I've been so blessed to have radio support me for all of these years. They jumped on "Unwound" and this unknown guy from Texas that wanted to sing some honky-tonk music. And they've just stuck with me. I really, really want to say thank you for that. I really appreciate it. I couldn't have done anything without you guys. **CAC**

Editorial Note: Special thanks to UMG/Nashville's Katie Dean for expediting this piece.

Congratulations, George Strait

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MCA NASHVILLE

Bob Romeo

Working (Or Not) For The Music

Academy of Country Music CEO Bob Romeo has been with the organization since 1987, first as a board member, then rising to Chairman and, for the last decade, serving as CEO. During the past 26 years, the ACM has provided top tier acts for CRS, first with the Super Faces Show in the '90s, which eventually evolved into the Music City Jam. Now ACM is affiliated with the New Faces Of Country Music Show, evidence of their continuing support of new artists and the seminar. The 2013 CRS President's Award recognizes a man who both individually and through his leadership of ACM has been a tremendous partner and advocate for CRS.

President's Award

> "When radio starts the ball rolling, the ACM, the CMA and other TV shows should help the ball roll."

My entrée to Country music was from the concert side of the business. Even before graduating high school, I started going out on the road and servicing shows for my father, who owned the Omaha-based Don Romeo Agency. He was big into Country and specialized in fairs and festivals. In the late '70s and early '80s, fairs were the big entertainment destination because there were fewer arenas.

When I finished high school, I wanted to work full-time for him, but he insisted that I get a degree, saying, "This music business is a shaky one." And I'm thinking, "Well, you've been doing this your whole life." I was so mad at him, but I ended up getting a degree in structural engineering, specifically fire engineering. I didn't even go to graduation, I had it mailed to the house and said to my dad, "Now I can start working full-time, right?" And he said, "Yep."

When I was just 17 years old, I worked these novelty shows for a year as a stagehand. At a show in Nebraska, Pat Buttram from Green Acres was the host. Remember his little friend, Arnold the Pig from Hooterville? At the end of the night, he introduced Arnold. My job was keeping Arnold on the leash until he went on stage. As I passed the leash to Pat, the spotlights came on and it scared the pig, which went squealing off the front of the stage and fell right into the orchestra pit. Dead. I guess pigs can't jump or fall. Pat Buttram is crying, my dad is yelling at me, "You have to go find a pig!" I'm 17 years old and thinking the world is ending. The next day, in my Oldsmobile Delta 88, I got a lesson in pigs. I must have gone to 15 or 20 farmers, but I finally found another little white pig. I bought him for $50, drove back to the fair and that was the second Arnold.

Bucking The System: Bob Romeo (r) and Garth Brooks (l) present the late Buck Owens with an ACM for Nightclub of the Year at the Crystal Palace In Bakersfield, CA.

I grew up listening to what is now Classic Rock, but in the early days, I loved Charley Pride, Ronnie Milsap, and The Statler Brothers. We had a lot of dates with Johnny Cash and June Carter Cash, Conway Twitty and Loretta Lynn and, of course, Kenny Rogers when "The Gambler" first came out. You never thought of that as working with legends. It was just business and not nearly the big business it is today. It was $15-$20,000 for a show settlement where, now, in many cases it's in excess of a million dollars a night.

I had so much more interaction with radio back then versus now because almost every radio station was locally owned. In every market where we'd have a fair, we wouldn't move until we talked to radio; that's where we got all our information. On my fair sheet the contacts were the station PD and MD in every town. If I was booking the fair for Grand Island, NE or Cheyenne, WY, the first call I made was to the local Country station and ask what they were playing or what was hot.

At that time you didn't have nearly the layers of artist management either. Bobby Sikes was Marty Robbins' bandleader, road manager and the tour accountant. The acts carried the sound on the bus for those shows. We'd get them set up while the band went out and sold the merchandise. About five minutes before the show, we'd honk the horn on the bus, they'd come back, change and do the show. After the show, they'd go back out and sell more merchandise.

His Honey Bee: Blake Shelton (l) plants a big one on Bob Romeo during CRS 2011.

One of the best moves we made was taking the ACM Awards show to Las Vegas and making a better experience for the artists. We needed to make the ACM show seem like a concert. Remember, that's my background. It's about entertaining fans and we got back to doing that. To me, the ACMs are a concert for 14 million people instead of 10,000. The fans at home want to see artists sing their hits that radio plays. They like the visual connection of seeing the artists sing those hits.

The ACM partnership with CRS started when we sponsored the Super Faces Show. Over the years we thought that was getting stagnant. We talked about shaking it up, which led to the Music City Jam. We wanted it to be good for radio to see. I remember watching Toby Keith do it. You'd think all his beer-drinking buddies would join him. But it was Crystal Gayle, John Anderson and Bobby Bare. I thought it was cool to see the people who influenced him.

The next logical thing for us has been moving to the New Faces Show. We've always felt it is important to try and launch new artists. We're committed to this format. My father always told me if you're in the business, you have to give back. Country radio has made a big investment in these new acts; it's a great fit for us and where we should be. In my mind, without Country radio, how would these acts get their start? Network TV always wants to showcase the biggest stars. While we appreciate that, we have to help these newcomers and build the stars radio is trying to launch. We're in it together and when radio starts the ball rolling, the Academy, the CMA and other TV shows should help the ball roll.

A memorable CRS moment for me is the year we had Taylor Swift at the Music City Jam. [CRS Executive Director] Bill Mayne and I talked about getting some really young people involved. Bill had a great relationship with a local college that provided interns at CRS. He knew he could get a lot of them to be up at the front of the stage. Taylor could not have been hotter with young Country fans and still is today. That was a cool moment and a great show. Radio people who can sometimes be a little jaded were able to see how she can light up the audience.

Being notified about the President's Award was humbling. I was speechless. I said I could think of 20 people more deserving. It feels strange, like, "Do I really deserve this?" I guess I just enjoy what I do, so things you enjoy you don't consider work. Therefore, have I really worked hard for this award? No. I don't know if I've worked at all.

When the news hit I must have gotten 100 emails from people and that is more than any other honor I've received. This, again, tells me that a lot of people realize what CRS is all about and how important it is to the industry. **CAC**

LOOK OUT. WE'RE ABOUT TO EXPLODE!

Toby Keith

Trace Adkins

JT Hodges

Joel Crouse

Josh Thompson

Krystal Keith

Rose Falcon

Jessie James

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HIT SHOP RECORDS

"Wow, the last time I heard a CD with this many HITS from a new artist was Zac Brown, and Weston has the shiz."

Scott Mahalick
PD/KUPL/Seattle

"How often do you run across a debut single from a great new artist & great new label, I guess you get Lucky Sometimes"

Charlie Cook
Director of Programming
West Virginia Radio Corp

[WESTON BURT]

Single #1
"Lucky Sometimes"

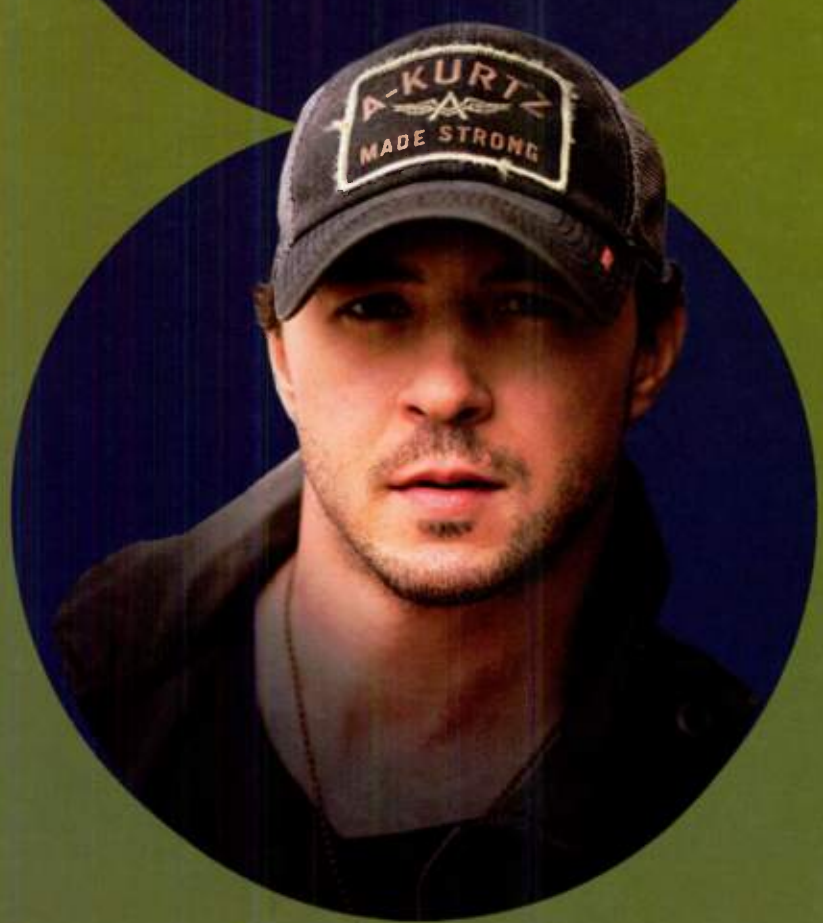
3/25

"You can hear it once, and know that it belongs on your station"

Jon Watkins
MD/KEGA/Salt Lake City

"Wow...that's how to launch a career and a label! Sounds like a HIT to me!"

Leslie Fram
SVP Music Strategy/CMT



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HIT SHOP RECORDS

First Time to Longtime

Fresh Eyes On St. Jude's Country Cares Seminar

The first time I walked into the hospital, St. Jude was part of my job. When I walked back out, St. Jude was part of my life." That's WQYK/Tampa OM/PD and longtime St. Jude Country Cares Seminar attendee Mike Culotta explaining his first experience to a 2013 first-timer. A record 870 attendees were in Memphis this January for the annual event, and an amazing 347 had never before participated.

Over 24 years, **St. Jude Children's Research Hospital** has been woven so deeply into the fabric of Country radio and country music, it may be helpful to seek out a renewed perspective. Those who've long been associated with the endeavor might benefit in recalling their own initial experience. And those who have joined the industry since the formation of Country Cares may understand St. Jude as something deeper than just another detail of their employment. So **Country Aircheck** sent a seminar rookie to cover the event, and to seek out the thoughts of others who were attending for the first time.

EMI Nashville Midwest rep **Chris Fabiani** admits to being "kind of worried about what to expect in the hospital. I hate to see kids in pain. But when you walk in the door, it really is a place full of hope. You see parents walking in the halls with their kids who have cancer, but they're happy and excited to see you. They've got everything going against them, but they're happy and joyful and fighting. It was incredible. I called my wife later and said, 'We're becoming Partners In Hope.'"

The two-day event focuses Friday on guided hospital tours for artist and radio attendees. That evening's Casino Night allows stations to win "cash" with which to obtain autographed memorabilia to use as incentives during their radiothons.

Warner Bros./W.A.R.'s **Charlie Worsham** was impressed with a research doctor he met on his tour. "He compared what cancer is on a cellular level to taking 1,000 copies of Tolstoy's *War And Peace*, which has 3 million words per copy, and putting them through a shredder, then trying to find one letter in one book that is out of place. That's how difficult it is to find the anomaly that causes cancer."

He was also moved by seeing "how colorful, bright and happy a place St. Jude is. And getting to meet some of the patients – they are so full of joy for life. I don't know if I've ever met anyone as brave as these patients. It's something I'll keep with me for the rest of my life."

Saturday, artists and labels head home as radio pros settle in for best-practices sessions on programming, promotions, social media and more. "It's really a phenomenal event in terms of having people from Alaska, New York, Florida, California – everywhere," says Clear Channel/Chattanooga Dir./Promotions **Blakely Satterfield**. "It's kind of like a fellowship. Seeing so many people participate, I started to realize how it's possible for them to make all this happen.

"It's one of the few moments we aren't in competition. There are no trade secrets. People from different companies are more than happy to share ideas, information and resources – to say how much money they made on something. Everyone lets down their guard and really shares."

In many ways, the seminar is information and emotion overload. Even longtime attendees find themselves hearing things they've never heard. And it's basically impossible to take in everything. Just scratching the surface:

Family Ties: Country Cares founder Randy Owen with patient Azalee.

Peace Of My Heart: Red Bow'sRachel Farley with patient Jayla.

Hope Wins: Casino Night mixes fun with purpose.

✚ When St. Jude started, the survival rate for the most common form of childhood cancer was 4%. It is now 94%. The survival rate for all pediatric cancers was 20%, and is now up to 80%.

✚ Every discovery is shared freely, and St. Jude trains doctors worldwide on the latest protocols.

✚ Perhaps the best expression of the above is the slogan, "To cure one child in Memphis is to cure a thousand children worldwide."

✚ There are only 78 beds in the hospital. The emphasis is on patients and their families staying together, which they are able to do at hotel-like "houses" on the grounds and nearby. Again, with no cost to patients or families.

✚ No family pays a dime for treatment at St. Jude. Costs absorbed for families also include transportation to the hospital, meal vouchers, weekly $100 grocery cards and more. As a mother of three daughters with brain tumors said, "St. Jude has been there for my family more than you can imagine. Not just for my kids, but for me."

✚ Blue phones throughout the hospital offer translation services for international patients and families.

✚ The nurse-patient ratio is 1:3.

✚ There are 3,400 hospital employees and an additional 1,000 with the fundraising arm ALSAC on St. Jude's 65-acre Memphis campus.

✚ Country Cares for St. Jude, founded in 1989, has raised $440 million. It costs $1.8 million a day to operate the facility and 75% of it is donated by the general public. The average donation is $20-$30 a month.

✚ St. Jude has treated 17,000 pediatric cancer survivors, and now treats 7,800 kids each year.

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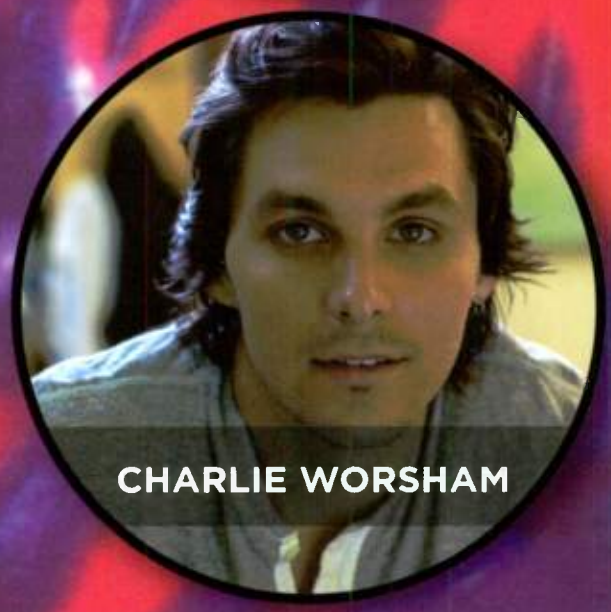
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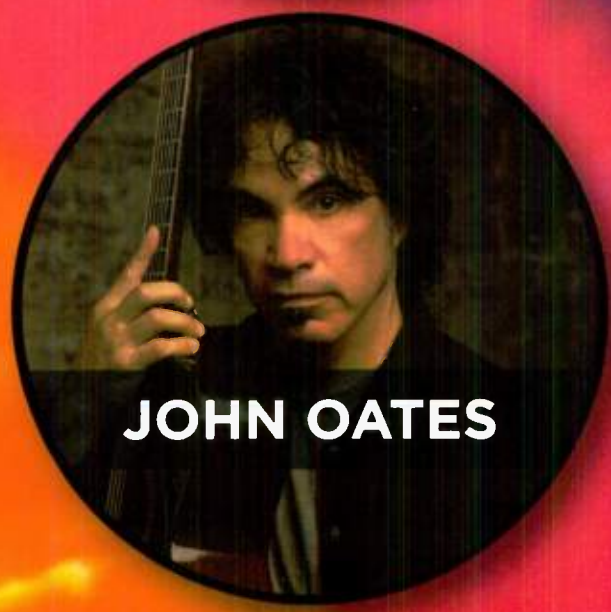
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First Time To Longtime

Much is made of the "St. Jude moment," leading to the oft-repeated inquiry, "What was your moment?" For many this year, it was the keynote by Avett Brothers bassist Bob Crawford, whose 22-month-old daughter Hallie was diagnosed with a brain tumor in 2011. Treatment including surgery commenced near their North Carolina home, and the prognosis doctors offered was often poor. There were numerous trips to a hospital grieving room, a medically induced coma, a pathologist who opened his report by telling them, "I'm so sorry" and a refrain that began to wear on them: "You have a very sick little girl."

A neurologist said their daughter would never sit up, breathe without a tracheotomy tube or eat without a feeding tube. They even had an oncologist tell them, "If I were you, I would blow my brains out." Their insurance denied coverage for radiation treatment and doctors got to the point where they asked Crawford and his wife to focus on their daughter's quality of life and longevity, rather than a cure. And again, "Mr. Crawford, you have a very sick little girl."

Connected with St. Jude, the Crawfords traveled to Memphis. Bob described their arrival as a bit like a chaotic first day of school. "Finally, we got in and met Hallie's doctor, Dr. Cynthia Wetmore," he said. "And these are the first words she said to us, 'Mr. and Mrs. Crawford, Hallie doesn't have an ependymoma. We know that. She has astrocytoma/glioma. There is hope. We are going to cure her.'"

More than offering the first positive words they'd heard in months, Wetmore and the St. Jude team did exactly what they promised. Crawford subsequently introduced his quite healthy looking daughter, who was back in Memphis for her three-month scans. The verdict: "clear and stable."

That sense of hope in the face of despair and accomplishing the impossible hits attendees in different ways. "I'm an emotional person and, of course, I cried at the stories," Satterfield says. "But at the end of the day, the economics really amazed me. There are times I can't wrap my mind around how any place spends $1.8 million per day, does all they do, doesn't let the families pay a dime and still makes it work. That's my moment of awe. It's a feat of proportions I cannot fathom. And there are so many ways St. Jude could make money with their research, and they don't – they share it. They just cross their fingers and hope donors continue to donate and people like us will do what we do. It's an amazing thing you don't find in the modern economy."

Radio & Records: Labels, stations and artists come together at Country Cares. Pictured (l-r) are BMLG's Scott Borchetta, KAJA/San Antonio's Travis Moon and Bree, Brantley Gilbert, and Valory's Brad Howell and George Briner.

Very Not Sick Little Girl: Avett Brothers bass guitarist Bob Crawford with daughter Hallie and wife Melanie.

For others, the St. Jude moment might have been the words of Craig Dismuke, whose son Ingram also battled a brain tumor. "I worked on Wall Street prior to this, and I was very skeptical of people," he said. "With good reason ... but we've gotten to see the good in people. Anybody who has raised money for St. Jude over the past 50 years, who has given my son a better chance, is our hero, whether it's $20, $1,000 or $1 million. My prayer is that when some dad, 10 years from now, hears that his son has cancer, that because of what you guys do this year, he'll have a better chance of beating it."

And, really, it doesn't get any simpler than that. "One researcher told us, 'Now that you've been here, you're part of the family,'" Fabiani says. "It changed me and I can't wait to go back." **CAC**

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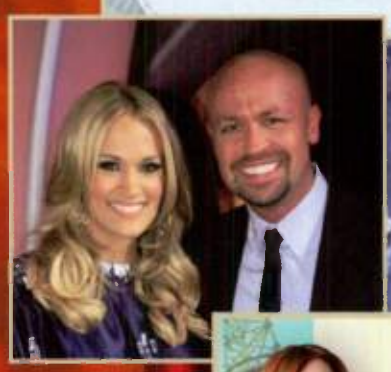

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Mar 12	TBA	San Antonio, TX
Mar 15	Rialto Square Theatre w/ George Jones	Joliet, IL
Mar 16	Emens Auditorium w/ George Jones	Muncie, IN
Mar 23	TBA	Jacksonville, FL
Apr 13	TBA	Silver Dollar City, MO
Apr 20	Rivers & Spires Festival w/ JoDee Messina	Clarksville, TN
April 26	Dosey Doe	Conroe, TX
Apr 28	TBA	Tampa Bay, FL
June 2	Boston Waterfront	McKeesport, PA
June 6-9	CMA Fest	Nashville, TN
June 13	Porterfield Country Music Festival	Marinette, WI
June 14	Joe's Bar	Chicago, IL
June 21	Butler County Fair w/ Thompson Square	Allison, IA
Jul 5	Riverfront Rendezvous w/Casey James	Stevens Point, WI
Jul 11	TBA	Houston, TX
Jul 19	Dane County Fair	Madison, WI
Jul 20	Heartland Jam Music Festival	Davenport, IA
Jul 31	WE Fest Pre-Party w/ Florida Georgia Line	Detroit Lakes, MN
Aug 1	WE Fest Main Stage	Detroit Lakes, MN
Aug 6	Wisconsin State Fair	West Allis, WI
Aug. 12	Gaylord Convention Center Military Event	Nashville, TN
Oct 17	International Rice Festival	Crowley, LA
Nov. 2	Northern Ohio University Freed Center	Ada, OH
Nov. 3	Kent State University PAC	New Philadelphia, OH

Catch Katie on the NEW *Marie Osmond Show*!

COLD RIVER

Country radio has declared five New Faces of Country Music and, as they prepare to showcase their skills at this year's Country Radio Seminar, Country Aircheck kicked back with each of them in some of Nashville's beloved dive bars.

Easton Corbin AT BOBBY'S IDLE HOUR

Mercury's "A Little More Country Than That" singer emerged in 2009 with that No. 1 hit, but 2012 was the year to prove himself with his second studio album, *All Over The Road*.

Why is now the right time for you to be a CRS New Faces artist?
Everyone looks at that sophomore record to say, "Can he follow that success up?" And I think we have with this new record, so it's a great time to get out there and build up that momentum again and break it through.

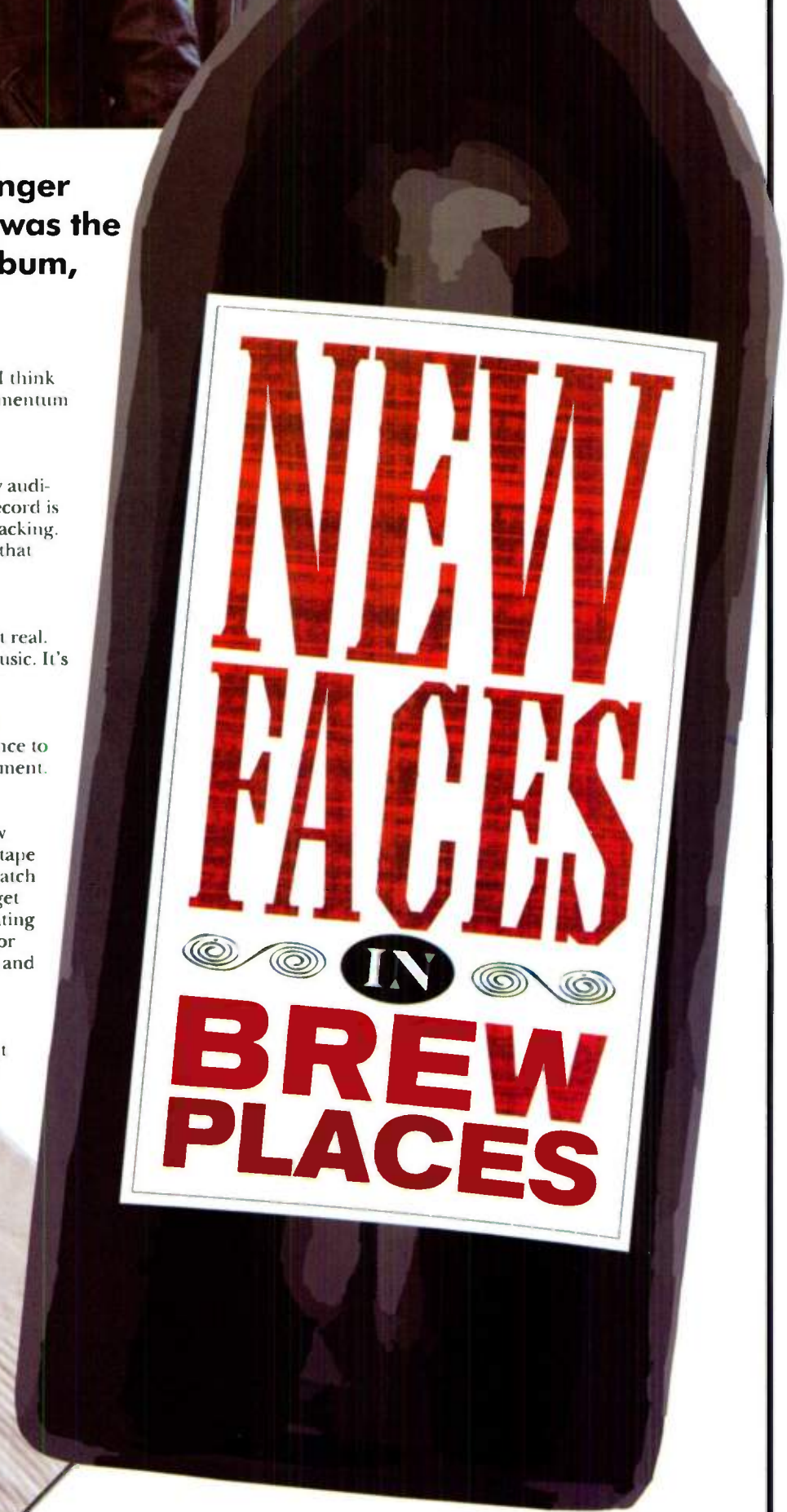
You had your own big shoes to fill after "A Little More Country Than That."
Yeah, that song was great because, as a new artist, it *really* introduced me to the country audience. Everyone was able to see who I am, where I'm at and what I'm about. The new record is kind of a continuation of that. As far as picking songs of that caliber, it's a little nerve-racking. But I tell myself to just do the same thing I did before. Pick great songs that I love and that speak to me. If I do that, they'll speak to the audience.

And hopefully your audience will grow.
I hope so. Country fans have the best bullcrap meter. They know when something's not real. And that's definitely something I want people to understand and take away from my music. It's real and authentic and it's me.

What does an artist with some experience, like yourself, look forward to most at CRS?
It gets you back in front of all the programmers. A lot of them may not have had a chance to experience you live, so it's a great way to get out there and let them see you in your element.

Walk me through an average day on your last radio tour.
If there happen to be two stations in one town, we'd come in and do the morning show then go out to lunch with that whole crew. Then we'd go over to the other station and tape something and probably go out to dinner with them. I'm telling you, you have got to watch your figure out there. Going out to dinner that much and eating them steaks ... don't get me wrong, I love a steak, but good Lord! There are nights you stay out drinking and eating and then you have to get up early and do it all over again. And sometimes a headache or two comes along with it. At times it gets to be a big blur, but we met some great people and made a lot of good friends out there.

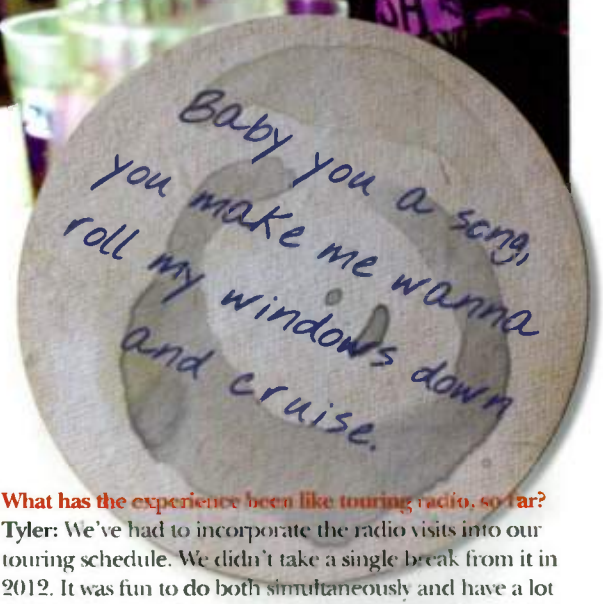
Where do you see yourself fitting in with the future of country music?
The deal about the country genre is that there are so many different types of things out there. I will say that I hope there's always room in the format for just good old country music, straight down the middle.



We're having such a good time together, it's only just begun. My heart's never smiled so hard, baby, loving you is fun.

Florida Georgia Line at Dino's

Brian Kelley is the Florida and Tyler Hubbard is the Georgia in the Republic Nashville duo. They met while attending Nashville's Belmont University, formed a band, and started recording "Cruise" the same day they signed a publishing/management and production deal with Craig Wiseman's Big Loud Mountain.



How familiar are y'all with CRS?
Brian: A few years ago we went to one little after party, in the atrium of some hotel, and kicked it with some people.
Tyler: I didn't even know what I was doing.
Brian: Yeah, we kinda just snuck in and had some free drinks.

Sippin' on Southern, Fireball Whiskey whispers, Kentucky clear, break out the bottle of Bacardi Black, the ice you float your beer in, the tops you pop, sippin' on a Bud Light, gold flakes glimmer in the cinnamon booze, bring your own cup for the keg – those are just a few of the drinking references on your album.
Brian: If someone listens to our album front to back, they'll get to know us pretty well. Our take on life ... it's about the good times.
Tyler: And that's where we're at right now. Hearing those drinking references back, I'm like, "Wow! That's a lot of drinking references." The songs have little snippets of alcohol here and there, but I think overall, they reflect who we are – fun-loving guys who grew up in the country. Besides, finding all these different ways of talking about drinking is pretty fun as a songwriter.

Florida Georgia Line knows how to party.
Brian: We were the ones that asked for another pitcher. And it's a Monday night.
Tyler: We work real hard, too. We bust it seven days a week, but any chance we get to kick back, we always do.

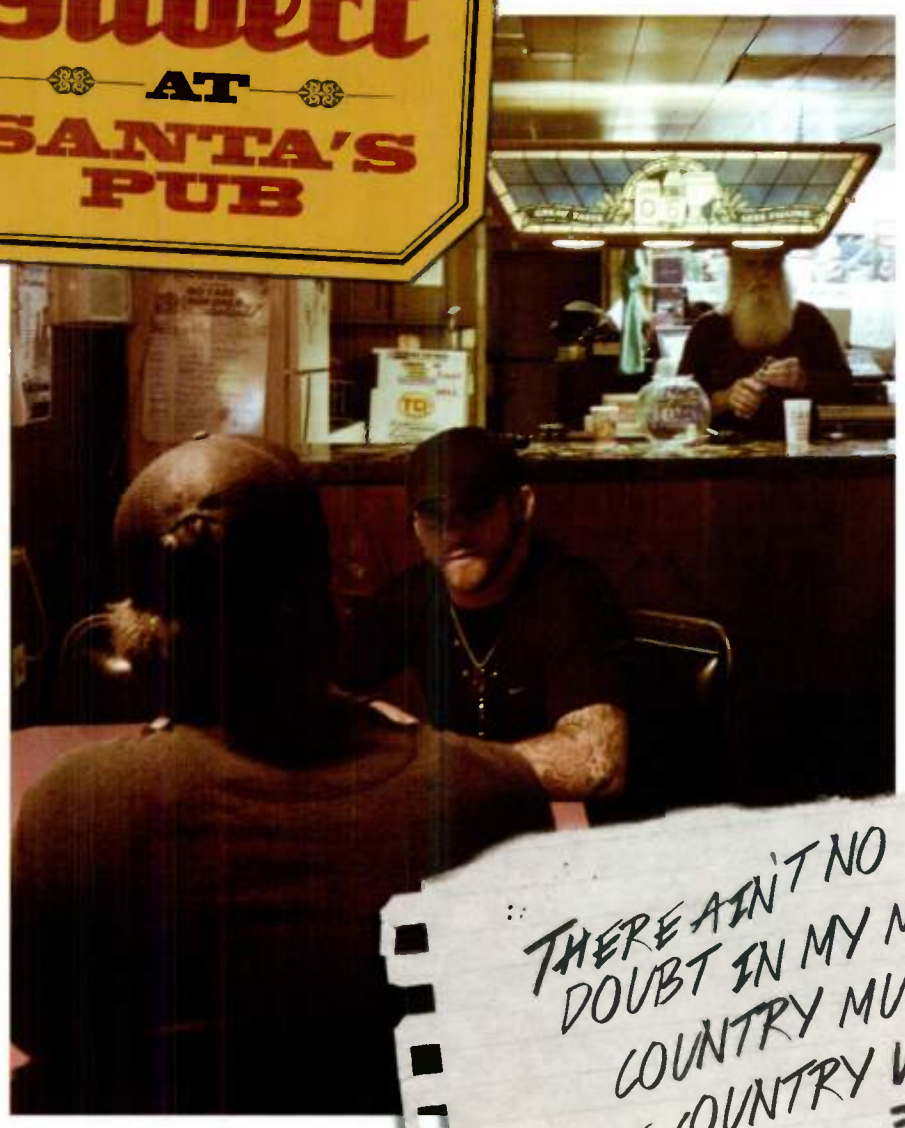
Who is more responsible for keeping up with the business side of things, Florida or Georgia?
Tyler: I'd say BK is up on his stuff a little more than me.
Brian: I get on Mediabase and try to make sure we see every email that comes in, too. When "Cruise" went on the charts, it was fun to watch. Every once in a while I'd text one of my radio reps, "Where's it at?"

How did rap and hip-hop come to influence your sound?
Brian: We grew up listening to Country, pop, rap, hip-hop and Top 40 radio. A lot of people, especially our age, our fans, grew up listening to the same stuff. You know, if there was something they didn't like on the Country station, they're going to the rap station. And vice-versa.
Tyler: There's definitely a correlation. Country music's making its way into the hip-hop world, which is fun. It's fun to be on the cutting edge of something and seeing where country music's going. Some people might get offended by that, but music should always be evolving. Why not keep people on their toes and do something different?

What has the experience been like touring radio, so far?
Tyler: We've had to incorporate the radio visits into our touring schedule. We didn't take a single break from it in 2012. It was fun to do both simultaneously and have a lot of the radio folks come out to see our live shows. They get to have the experience that is sometimes hard for us to achieve in a conference room. It also gave us more hang time and the opportunity to develop those relationships.

Brantley Gilbert at Santa's Pub

The songwriter behind Jason Aldean's "Dirt Road Anthem" and "My Kinda Party," Valory's Gilbert has officially stepped into the spotlight with two No. 1 hits of his own – "Country Must Be Country Wide" and "You Don't Know Her Like I Do."



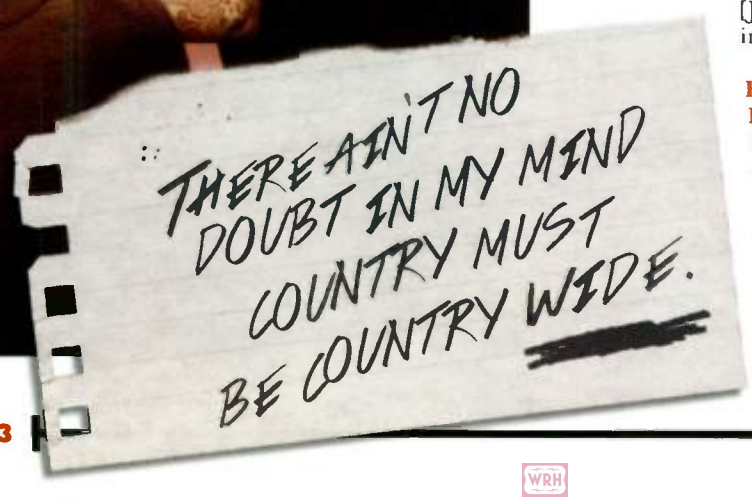
How would you describe your image?
A lot of people call me a rebel or an outlaw. And they call my music country-rock or southern rock, but I don't know. I never sit down to write a certain kind of song. Songwriting has meant a lot to me from the time I was young. I never wanted to take the time to learn anybody else's songs because I wanted to write my own, with my own voice. Even as a little kid I knew that I wanted who I am to be reflected in the music I make.

Let's talk about country rap.
A lot of people say country rap is crap, but I don't care who you are, "The Devil Went Down To Georgia," that's a rap song. Charlie Daniels is doing it so that makes it country. Colt Ford is a country guy. He grew up 20 minutes from where I live. It's country as hell there. He's a country boy and what he's rapping about is country stuff. "Dirt Road Anthem" was very, very controversial. I sat down to write that song just to see if I could write a rap song about something that was relevant to me. My opinion is probably best kept to myself on most things, but on this one, I don't think it's fair to say something's not country just because it has a different beat behind it. There's a lot of different ways you can sing a country song.

Do you make song decisions based on what you think might work on Country radio?
I try my best to never let that enter my mind in the writing room. In conversations, sometimes you turn to your cowriter and they'll be like, "Radio won't play that." Well, in that case, sorry. If it's the right line, then it's the right line. Writing a hit song is awesome. I love watching them go to No. 1, but if it's not real ... you can't just make up a story in your head because you think it's going to top the charts.

What's the most difficult part about touring radio?
Sometimes it's a little uncomfortable playing in a conference room. My fiancé [Jana Kramer] figured that out though. She pulled a bus up in front of the station and had them come out.

How does it feel to be recognized as one of the CRS 2013 New Faces?
It's an honor. There's so much talent and everyone's done a significant amount of work to get here. I get a first-hand look at what Jana's doing and she's working her tail off, especially in radio. If you put our schedules side-by-side you'd wonder how in the hell we ever get see each other. She's booked Sunday through Wednesday doing radio and Thursday through Saturday doing shows. We're all putting the work in so, yeah, it's good to be a New Face. Hopefully, I'll be around long enough to be an old face.



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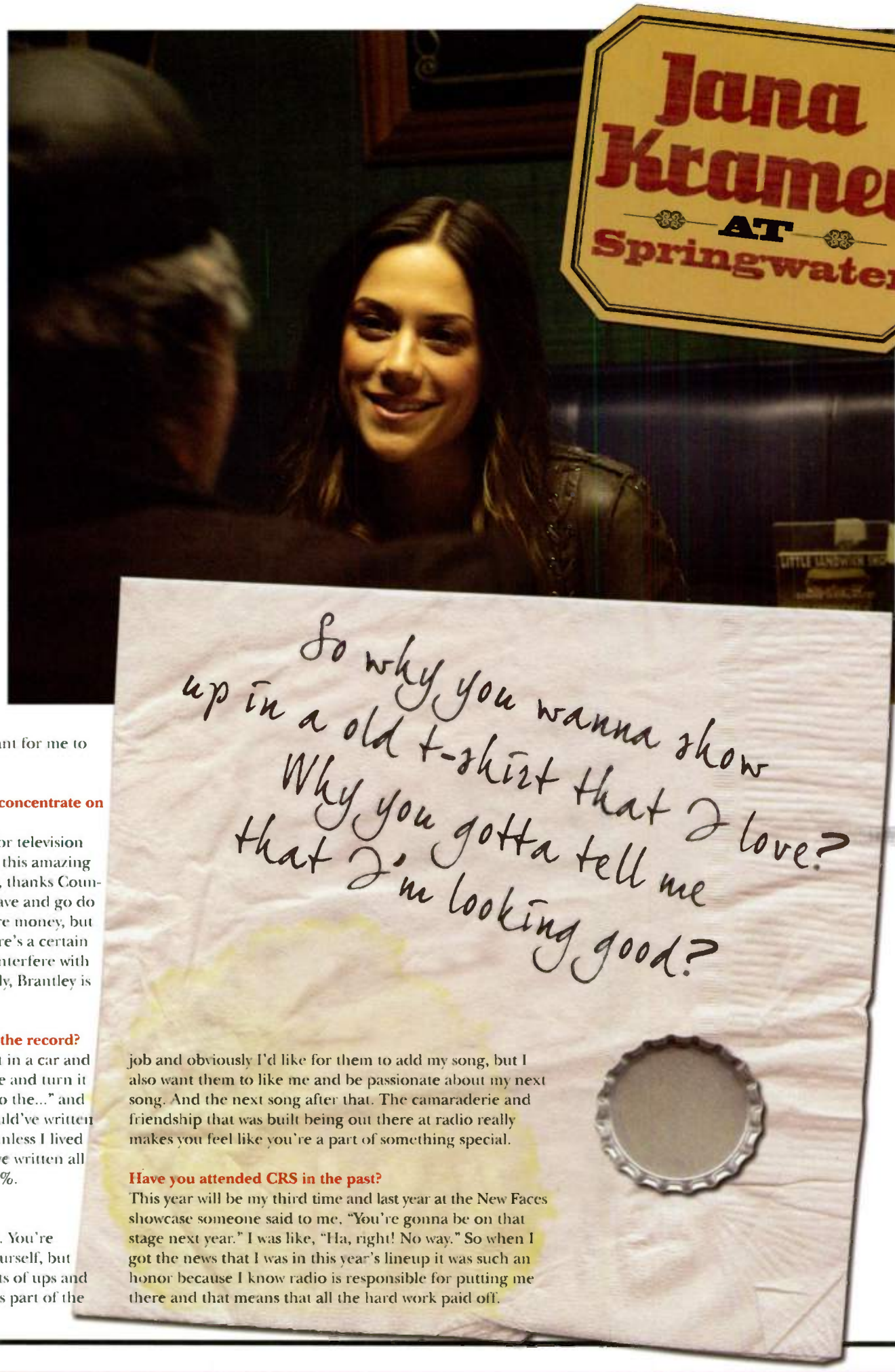
Jana Kramer AT Springwater

A good-looking rookie year has the Elektra/W.A.R. phenom and actress following up the success of "Why You Wanna" with "Whiskey" and accepting a marriage proposal to fellow New Face Brantley Gilbert.



Is there a particular radio station logo on that old t-shirt that you love? Like a bull or a frog or a wolf?
I think it's just an old, worn out, either blue or white T-shirt, like one of those comfy undershirts that guys wear. Maybe some holes in it, but no logo.

Have you found many similarities between auditioning for television and visiting a radio station?
There are definitely similarities, but it's also very different. With acting, I was able to hide behind a part. You have to sell yourself as the artist and the entertainer in both situations, but with radio it was important for me to really be myself.

Was there any risk involved in leaving TV to concentrate on your music?
Yes. We've had to turn down a lot of things for television lately. And I want to because I've been given this amazing opportunity. I wouldn't be able to say, "Okay, thanks Country radio for playing me. I'm just going to leave and go do a TV show now." Acting would make me more money, but it's just not what I want to do right now. There's a certain creativeness I miss, but I never want that to interfere with the music because the music is No. 1. Actually, Brantley is No. 1. Then the music.

What was the song selection process like for the record?
My producer Scott Hendricks and I would sit in a car and listen to songs. I'd get three seconds into one and turn it off. He'd be like, "You didn't even let it get to the..." and I'd stop him and say, "If I don't feel like I could've written that song then I'm not going to sing it." So unless I lived it or wrote it, I can't. That's why I feel like I've written all these songs because I can relate to them 100%.

How was the radio tour?
It was the hardest I've ever worked in my life. You're constantly on, 24/7. I mean, you're being yourself, but you can't have a weak moment. There are lots of ups and downs, and at times, it's very stressful. But it's part of the job and obviously I'd like for them to add my song, but I also want them to like me and be passionate about my next song. And the next song after that. The camaraderie and friendship that was built being out there at radio really makes you feel like you're a part of something special.

Have you attended CRS in the past?
This year will be my third time and last year at the New Faces showcase someone said to me, "You're gonna be on that stage next year." I was like, "Ha, right! No way." So when I got the news that I was in this year's lineup it was such an honor because I know radio is responsible for putting me there and that means that all the hard work paid off.

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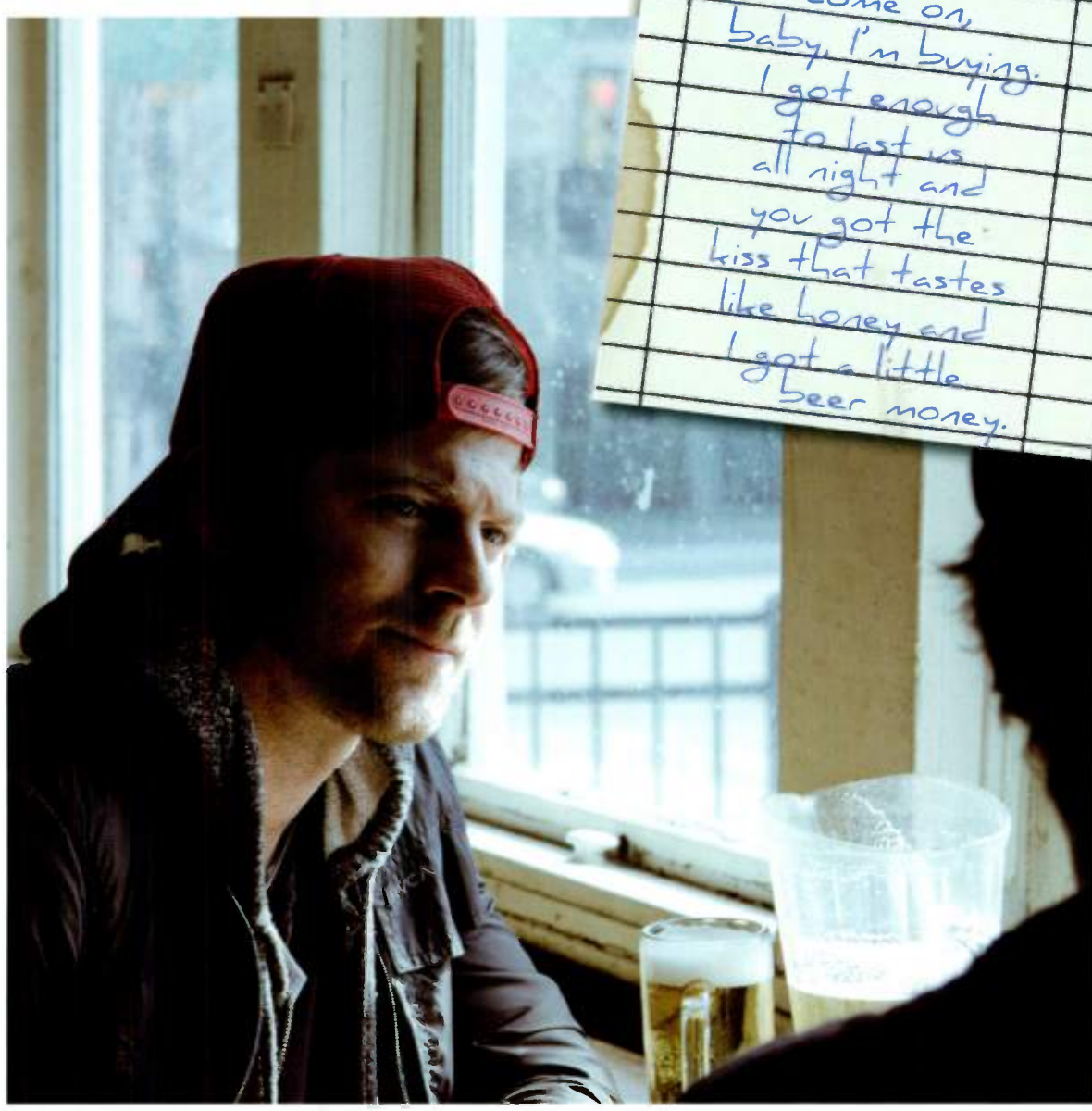
Kip Moore AT BROWN'S DINER

MCA's Moore grew up listening to Tom Petty and Bruce Springsteen. Their influence can be heard throughout Moore's debut album Up All Night, which spawned the No. 1 "Somethin' 'Bout A Truck" and the follow-up "Beer Money."



What's your take on Nashville being a 10-year town?
I've been here for 10 years and a month and I've written close to 700 songs. That's what I do. And I do it constantly. I had to learn to be patient. I remember those nights where I was like, "I want it right now," and I look back on them and I'm glad it didn't happen to me earlier. Because as much as I thought I was, I wasn't ready.

So now is the time.
It's the perfect time. I feel like it takes years to grow and you have to go through experiences to understand why you like certain records. I was always studying. I was always asking myself, "Why do I like this, why do I like that?" I tried to apply those things to my own writing. And I definitely learned patience. When my first single ("Mary Is The Marrying Kind") didn't work, I had my little freak out for a couple days, but learned to shut it off and keep going.

Walk me through a day on your radio tour.
You might take a red-eye from California to New York and get off a plane at six in the morning so you can go straight to a station to get set up and start playing by 6:30. After that you head to Buffalo, NY to play at another station at 9:30, then you fly out of Buffalo so you can get to Hartford, CT by one in the afternoon. And then you're driving three more hours to play a show for another station. At one point we were in five different states in one day. It was the hardest grind of my life. I feel like I didn't sleep for two years. And it's easy to be like, "Ugh ... nobody cares. I'm just going through the motions." But every single time, I tried to sing like it was the last freaking time I was going to, and I brought my heart and soul to every performance.

Your patience must have really come into play.
I told myself to go into this with an open mind. I had that approach each morning regardless of how early it was. These are busy people and it's got to be tough for them to sit there and listen to all these different artists. My goal was to make them hear me, make them believe what I'm saying. If anyone asks me about my radio tour, I can say it was one of the best times of my life. Yes, it was a grind, but I made some great friends and people were really good to me and really attentive when I played.

How did you receive the news of being a 2013 CRS New Faces artist?
It was very meaningful to me. I was very thankful. My manager called me and told me while I was on the road and I just said, "Wow!" It's a great compliment because it means that radio is thinking highly of me and all that time I put in. This is the payoff and there's no better feeling than that. **CAC**

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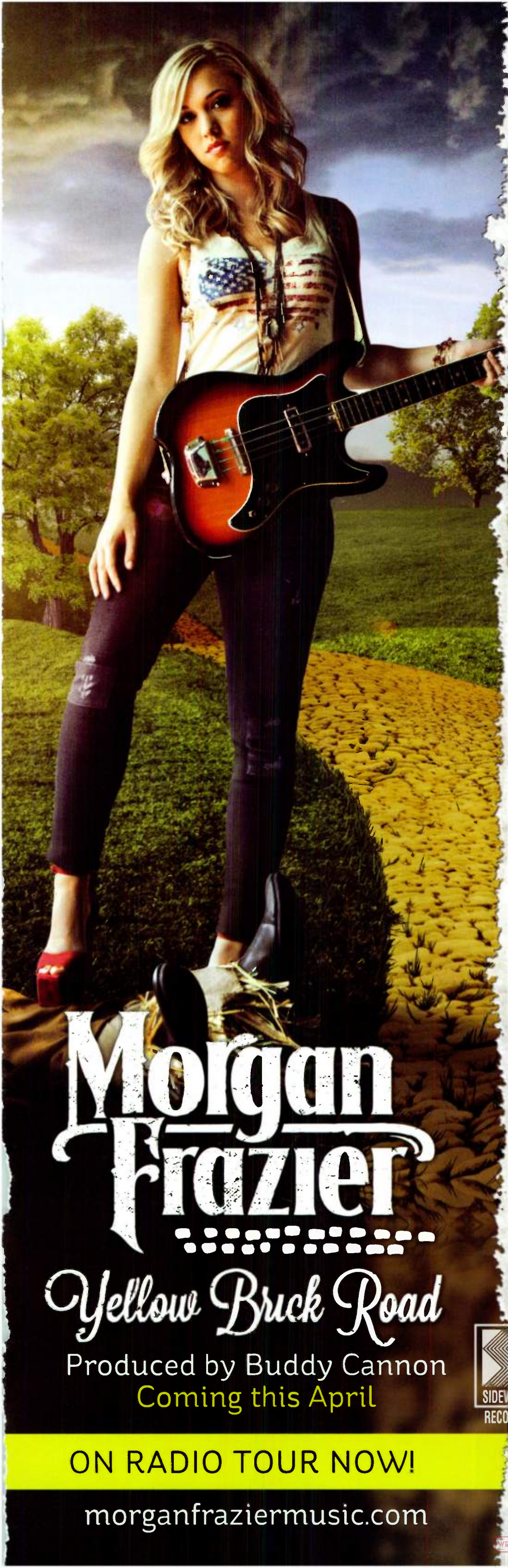

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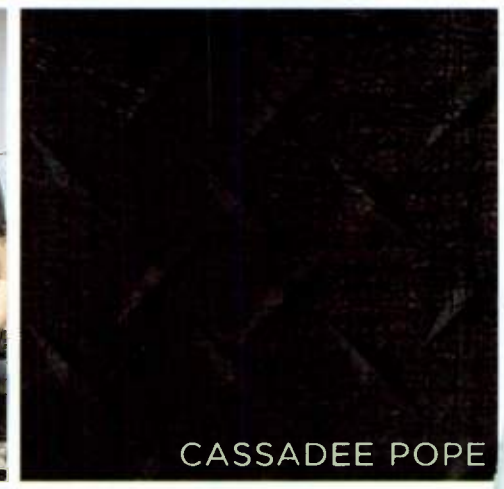

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AD	Admin
BM	Business Manager
CEO	Chief Exec. Officer
CF	Co-Founder
CM	Classic Country Media Serv.
CO	Coordinator
D	Director
DOP	Director of Operations
DM	Digital Marketing
E	East
EVP	Exec. Vice President
GM	General Manager
H	Head
IMN	Interactive Marketing, 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
PRS	Secondary Promotions
RIM	Radio Interactive Marketing
RIS	Research & Info. Systems
RM	Radio Marketing
RMN	Radio Maketing 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.
SP	Special Projects
SEP	Secret Projects
STP	Strategic Partnerships
SVP	Senior Vice President
SW	South West
VP	Vice President
W	West
WC	West Coast

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rpm

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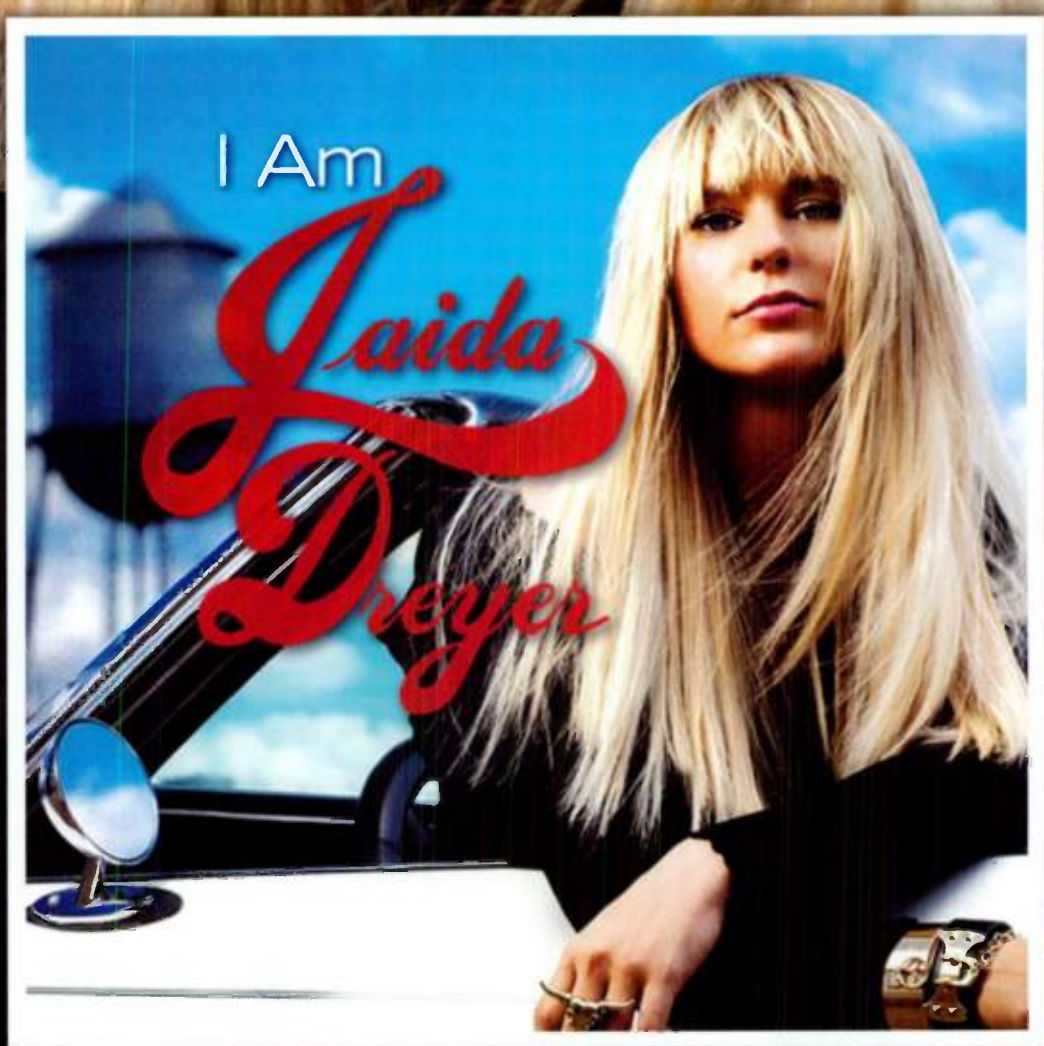

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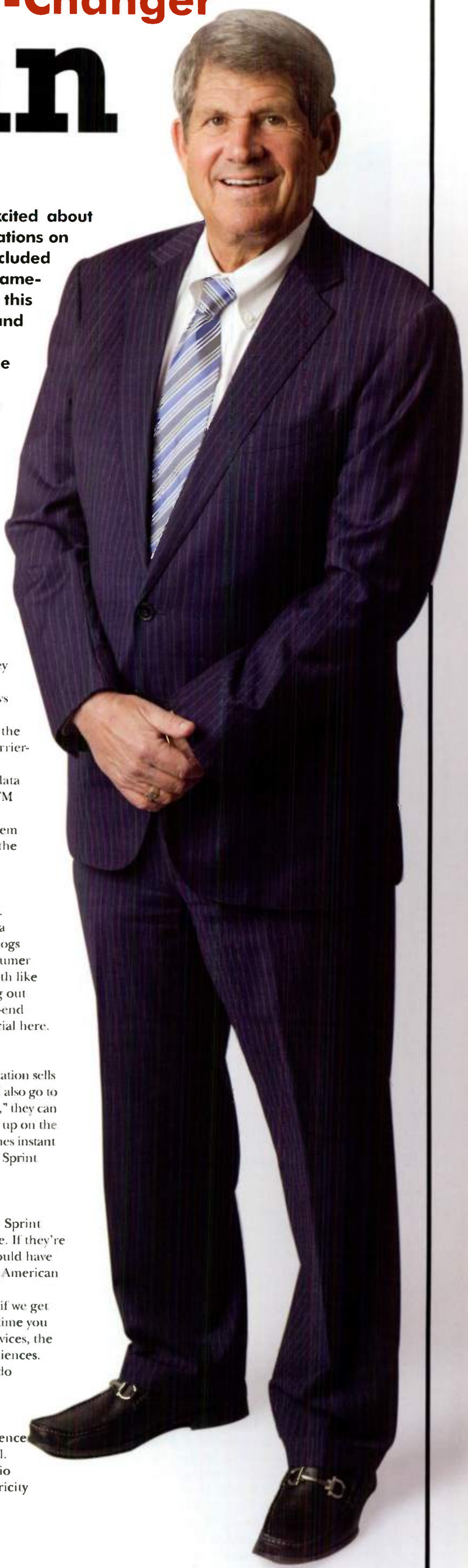
Jeff Smulyan

Gunning For A Game-Changer



Emmis Communications Chairman Jeff Smulyan is understandably excited about Sprint's January announcement giving customers access to local FM stations on selected Android and Windows smartphones. The carriers' decision concluded a years-long labor of love for Smulyan, who believes it will ultimately result in game-changing improvements for radio and its public perception. Quarterbacking this initiative on behalf of the radio industry is another feather in Smulyan's cap and cements his reputation as both entrepreneur and industry visionary.

Formed in 1980, Emmis currently owns 20 FM and two AM stations in the nation's largest markets, plus radio stations in Slovakia and Bulgaria. The company's U.S. station portfolio includes Country WLHK/Indianapolis and WTHI/Terre Haute, IN. Its publishing division has six local, regional and national magazine operations.

Here, Smulyan talks in detail about the FM chip and its potential new revenue stream. He also discusses PPM's effect on programming, content and air talent, operating in today's economic climate, and offers his thoughts on Country radio specifically.

THE INTERVIEW

Country Aircheck: You have been spearheading this effort for nearly six years. Why was it so difficult to accomplish?

Jeff Smulyan: I learned very early that in the rest of the world, most phones are sold through manufacturers. They put these chips in during the early days and said to consumers, "If you want a radio in there it's $5 extra." People liked it and bought it, so well over a billion phones around the world have radios activated. But in this country, it's pretty much carrier-centric. They decide what goes in the phones, not manufacturers. The carriers felt they'd rather sell music downloads or charge for data services, even though over time we went from specifically putting FM chips in to having FM chips as part of a standard chip set in every smartphone in the world. It wasn't a question of actively putting them in when smartphones came about; it was a question of integrating the software and turning them on.

> "The average consumer doesn't care if they listen through the streaming network or over the air. Where that ends is when they start getting a data bill for that signal."

What made Sprint say yes?

Number one, they try to build their market around unlimited data. Remember, the American public spends about three billion hours a year listening to local radio. If you're selling unlimited data, that clogs the data network. If you're metering data, you just charge the consumer more. But if the consumer is getting all they can use for $30 a month like in most Sprint plans, that's really not helpful. So getting everything out of that data network is helpful. I also think they looked at the back-end advertising revenue and realized there may be something very special here.

What are those back-end opportunities?

We have the ability to enhance advertising. For example, if my radio station sells McDonalds an ad campaign, they run a special on Egg McMuffins. If I also go to McDonalds and say, "Now in smartphones, we can download coupons," they can buy an enhanced ad. So when the ad comes on the radio, the ad pops up on the smartphone, you click on it and the coupon pops up, too. That becomes instant commerce for McDonalds and new revenue for the radio station. The Sprint people feel this has a tremendous opportunity to create value.

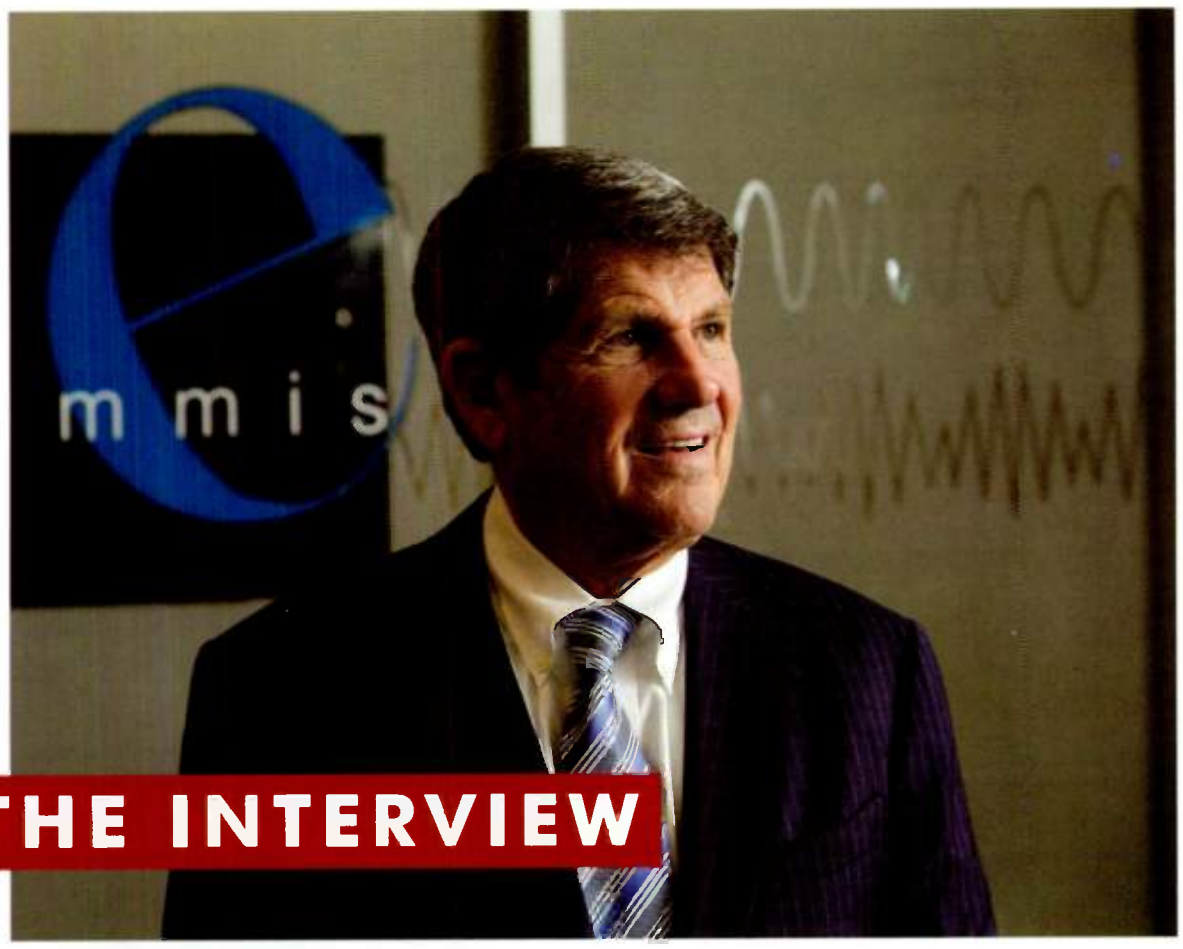
What would be your expectations for creating new revenue?

We estimate it could be $150 million of new revenue in 300 million Sprint smartphones. The Sprint people feel it's multiples of that and more. If they're right and you replicate that across 300 million smartphones, you could have a back-end revenue business that is half again as large as the entire American radio industry.

Here's why that's attractive: It's new revenue for the industry, so if we get a dollar of new revenue it's found money. In addition, it's the first time you combine call to action of a broadcast signal with location-based services, the ability to download coupons, but also our interactivity with our audiences. Marry all that for the first time and we think you have a chance to do something very special.

To be clear, this is a tuner and not an app, correct?

It's been hard for people in the industry to understand the difference between streaming their audio and having their over-the-air signal. I've used an example that has resonated with people: I have a radio station in Los Angeles, KPWR. It costs me $39,600 a year for electricity to run my transmitter; that's my distribution cost. For that price, I can reach one person in Southern California or all 15 million simultaneously, at no incremental cost.



THE INTERVIEW

If I took my transmitter down and had to reach those people through the data networks, my cost to distribute to our 2.8 million listeners a week would be over a million dollars a year in bandwidth costs. That's a one-way cost. The consumer will spend more than a million dollars because they buy bandwidth differently than I do.

Let's assume they're equal: $2 million vs. $39,000. Exact same listeners, exact same content. That's the difference between a one-to-many system and a one-to-one system.

Is it possible that it's simply too late for this, what with the public's near obsession with apps?

We wanted to build an interactive app that does all the things and has all the sex appeal, if you will, of some of the other things they see. That's why we want every station in America to have album art, liner notes, interactivity, interactive ads, but also instant polls, rate-a-record, text-to-win contests – all sorts of social media. We need to do that to be competitive. That was the NAB's conclusion. We built the app because there was nobody else to build it and when I say the app, I mean the [NextRadio] tuner.

But I think the most important thing, and what I've been saying for several years, is that when data metering starts to become big, that's when this matters a lot. The average consumer doesn't care if they listen to KPWR through the streaming network or over the air. Though we all argue the over-the-air signal is a little easier to receive.

There's confusion, but where that ends is when they start getting a data bill for that signal. We're now in the first inning of data metering. Up until a year ago, everybody bought unlimited data plans. Five years ago they paid for talk and text, then it shifted to unlimited data and they got that free. Nobody cared. Then data usage went crazy.

Since the introduction of AT&T's smartphone, they saw their data business grow by 21,000 percent. That's why the carriers have all gone to the FCC and asked to take some of these TV signals. They're out of spectrum. Our point is, when people start to stream audio and video, they start eating into data plans.

The first examples we see are in automobiles. The smart dashboard is a big thing in cars now. When they started, carmakers said, "We'll just have a separate 3G or 4G connection. But they did focus groups and people said they won't pay $70 a month for another phone line in the car. Carmakers decided to just hook smartphones into the dashboard and that will activate all this stuff. The problem is, people plug their phones in and take a trip from Nashville to Miami. They listen to iHeart, Pandora or KPWR. They get back from vacation and receive a bill from their wireless carrier for another $40-$50 and say, "What the heck was that?"

Once people get these data bills, it's sticker shock. If it's another $5-$10 a month, maybe. Our point is, if we can provide a free alternative and it's cool looking, we think we have a great opportunity.

When this rolls out in late April or early May, how can you make a point to consumers that this is important?

I'm hopeful that when everyone goes to the air, these phones are introduced, people start talking about them and we provide a good consumer experience, that people will be very happy.

The amount of money that we need is a lot less than for the HD Alliance, where we just gave up inventory. There's a second step here. We're asking everybody to contribute inventory, which we will turn into cash and give to Sprint. And I can tell you; it is a far, far smaller amount than for the HD Alliance.

Who did you actually represent in working to make this happen?

The group was myself, CBS Radio, Clear Channel, Cox and Entercom. But it's really much deeper than that. Really, it was the 12 leading companies. The most gratifying thing is that once we announced this, we reached out to a lot of people to get commitments. I have not had one person tell me no. Everyone has said they'll do their part.

This became a labor of love. I was convinced this industry absolutely had to do something. I've also looked at our business and said people can't borrow money, and they can't buy assets because they can't get money. They can't sell assets because their buyers can't get money. Wall Street has dismissed all of us who are public. Madison Avenue has not allocated significant dollars and the perception is that we're a dying medium.

That's against the backdrop of a medium which on a 6+ basis reaches over 270 million people a week. It makes me crazy. So I've said the No. 1 thing this can do is change the perception of the industry.

Beyond that, based on what we've seen all around the world, it should add 15% more listening because we know when people have a radio in their hands they listen more, especially when it's a free alternative. We know there's an opportunity to redefine the relationship with listeners if the interactive tuner is exciting. We know the back-end opportunity can be game-changing. All these things together might be the shot in the arm this industry needs.

I've been an entrepreneur in this industry for 40 years, and this industry absolutely needs that shot. What gratifies me is that so many other people believe the same thing. And anybody who doesn't think we need a shot in the arm isn't in this industry today.

When you compare the effect of radio's consolidation now vs. 1996, is the industry better or worse now?

I'm not sure there's a correlation between the two. But clearly the industry is worse off. What's interesting is the radio industry has not fragmented nearly as much as TV or the cable channel industry, but the perception of our industry is that it is fragmented like crazy. I can't give a speech to college students without them wanting to talk about Sirius XM or Pandora or Spotify. Yet if you really look at the impact of those industries on our actual business, it's negligible. But the perception out there is that we're a dinosaur and we have to do something to change that.

Anything specific?

Could we do a massive repositioning campaign? I guess so, but doing that as an industry is impossible. We have to go to where our listeners are and reintroduce people to what we do. I still think the one thing that might make us hip again is the cell phone. That's the one device where 310 million people are living with it every day.

Emmis has always placed a high value on air-talent and compelling content. What has PPM done to the radio business? Has it taken content down the right, or the wrong road?

Obviously, it's gone down roads we're not in love with in terms of air talent and how much time people spend. But I'm a big believer that you always have to realize the world as it is. We had done enough research on PPM to know it was going to change our lives forever, but I also feel you can never live with your head in the sand.

Advertisers told us the diary method doesn't adequately reflect how people live their lives. I had friends who said we had to stop this and we said look, if our customers are telling us this is what they need, you have to live with it.

It's disappointing in many ways. On the other hand, we've learned to program with it. A great talent is a great talent in PPM, diaries or whatever. We certainly have some great ones. I'm a believer that you play the hand you've got and PPM is the one we have. Do I wish it had shown certain things? Sure, but it's probably a fairly accurate depiction of how people consume this medium.

Were you surprised at the effect it had on certain formats versus others?

Not surprised at all. We knew all that. We had a Smooth Jazz station [WQCD] in New York and we said as soon as PPM comes there, Smooth Jazz is over. On the other hand, we knew with ethnic stations in the last diary [then-Urban] WRKS (KISS) was first and our competitor, WBLS was third. Three years into PPM, I think 'BLS was ninth and Kiss was 11th. We knew it was tough, but that's the world you inherit.

Emmis has been both a public and private company – overall, what effect has being public had on broadcasters?

Being public is great when Wall Street loves you. Your currency rises, your stock rises and the value of employee stock options grow. If you want to make an acquisition you issue more stock, you don't have to borrow all of it. When things are good, it's wonderful.

When things are bad, it is really tough. You have additional costs of being a public company to comply with Sarbanes Oxley and other securities rules. And you know you're not issuing any stock because there's no value; no demand. All the stock options you give your people, which is a great retention tool and builds morale, don't have much value. I always said, Wall Street loves what it loves.

On the other hand, when you're a private company you don't have access to credit as easily and you don't have access to other forms of capital as easily.

Emmis started small, expanded to major markets with multiple stations and is now back to a smaller, more compact company. What were the challenges of operating in both scenarios?

On one hand, if I'm in New York, I'd always rather have eight stations than one. Emmis for most of its existence competed with much bigger players with strong brands. KPWR/Los Angeles has had a companion, but for most of its existence it hasn't had one and it's been one of the strongest brands in Southern California. We're not a believer that you have to have clusters if you have great brands.

Any thoughts on Cumulus recently deciding to create a national brand for Country (Nash-FM)?

It's fascinating and it's one of those things where you never know. If it works – and I've been on that side a number of times in my life – you're a genius. When it

> "People say, 'Well, he's the guy who killed Country in New York once, he didn't choose Country the second time and he got out of Country in Los Angeles.' But we love the format."

ARBITRON @ CRS

Country Radio: The Most-Listened-To Format in America

Radio Today Reports New Highs for Country Audience

The most recent edition of the Arbitron exclusive *Radio Today* report contains great news for fans of Country radio as the format hit an all-time high with a 14.1 share of 12+ listening across the Country; an increase of .8 shares over the previous year's report. That not only means Country is the most listened to format in America, but also means the total share is the highest recorded number for any format since Arbitron began tracking national format performance.

The size of the audience is even more impressive when you consider that the format ranks number four overall in markets measured with the Portable People Meter™ (PPM®). That means the current success is being driven by smaller market audiences and there is still room for growth.

Making the format's giant audience possible is a unique appeal that crosses demographic and gender lines. The format ranks No. 1 in total ratings in every demographic except teens and adults over the age of 55, where it ranks second and is almost evenly balanced in gender.

There have also been notable changes in the overall makeup of Country listeners recently. Nearly a quarter of Country listeners now live in homes with an average income of $75,000 or more. That number has increased by more than 50% in the last 10 years. Likewise, over the past decade the percentage of Country listeners with a college degree has been rising. As of today more than 16% of listeners have a college degree—an increase of 26% over the past decade—and another 34.5% have attended some college.

Nearly any advertiser should be able to benefit from Country radio's large and diverse audience but certain products and services, like home improvement, are especially fertile ground.

According to data from Scarborough Research, 26.2% of Country listeners invested in interior paint or wallpaper in the last year while 26.5% had landscaping work done, making them 11% more likely than average to have undertaken these projects. Likewise, the audience is more likely than most to have invested in remodeling their kitchen or bathroom, installing new carpet or floor covering and repairing or replacing their heat or air conditioning system.

All of this information and more about Country listeners, as well as profiles of listeners to every other major radio format, can be found in the Arbitron *Radio Today 2012* report available to Arbitron clients at my.arbitron.com.

See Arbitron at the Country Radio Seminar

Arbitron will be participating in two sessions at the 2013 Country Radio Seminar. We hope you'll come and see what we have to share.

Small Market PPM: Five Strategies for Recall Markets
Thursday, February 28, 10:00AM
NCC, Level 2, Rooms 209-210

Arbitron Senior Vice President of Marketing Bill Rose will share several PPM-related programming lessons that can be applied in Diary markets. Topics will include:

- Achieving ideal music rotations
- What hosts should be talking about and how much
- Effectively promoting station contests and events

The Special PPM Report: The Country Radio Audience
Thursday, February 28, 11:30AM
NCC, Level 2, Room 206

Arbitron Director of Programming Services Jon Miller will share a series of insights about the Country audience culled from listening across all of the PPM-measured markets. His findings will include:

- Which markets have the highest penetration of Country listening
- How many Country stations one market can support
- The peak hours for Country listening

NOT YOUR AVERAGE QUARTER-HOUR

Recycle More in 2013

By Jenny Tsao

I'm making a personal resolution to do more recycling in 2013, and you should too. Recycling is good for the environment and your station's ratings.

At the 2012 Arbitron Client Conference, I presented a study of audience recycling patterns for the five top-rated stations in the 10 largest markets that illustrates how there is more than one way to bring listeners back to your station.

Vertical (Same Day) Recycling

Vertical recycling is about enticing listeners to tune back into your station later the same day. For example, if they listen in the morning, the goal is to get them to tune in at work during middays or when they drive home.

That might not be easy, but the results are worth the effort. Listeners who tune to only one daypart account for 11% of a station's total week ratings, while those who tune to three or more dayparts make up nearly 60%.

Top 1- Stations	One Daypart	Two Dayparts	Three+ Dayparts
% of Full Week AQH	11%	31%	58%

These numbers reinforce the importance of bringing listeners back throughout the day for more occasions of listening, which we know drive ratings in PPM. Listeners who make a habit of tuning in three, four, or five times a day have a huge impact on the station's overall numbers regardless of which dayparts they tune into.

Horizontal (Next Day) Recycling

Horizontal recycling is about getting listeners to come back to the station for multiple days and it is another powerful ratings driver. Fifty-eight percent of top rated stations' total AQH for adults 18-34 comes from listeners tuning 4-5 days a week and for adults 25-54 the number rises to 66%.

Demographic	% of Daily Cume tuning 4-5 days/week	% of AQH tuning 4-5 days/week
Adults 18-34	23%	58%
Adults 25-54	27%	66%

So there is more than one kind of recycling. One can help the environment and the other can help grow your audience. Both are worth your time and energy.

Jenny Tsao is the Programming and Marketing Operations Manager at Arbitron. Reach her at jenny.tsao@arbitron.com.

NOT Your Average Quarter-Hour

You can get your dose of ratings and programming insights at **arbitrontraining.com/programming**

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doesn't, you're an idiot. When I heard Lew [Dickey] talk about risk, I can identify with it.

I saw recently where some of their strong brands will not roll into Nash, which makes sense. I'd like to see our competitor WFMS, the country station here in Indianapolis, be called Nash-FM because 'FMS is such a strong brand.

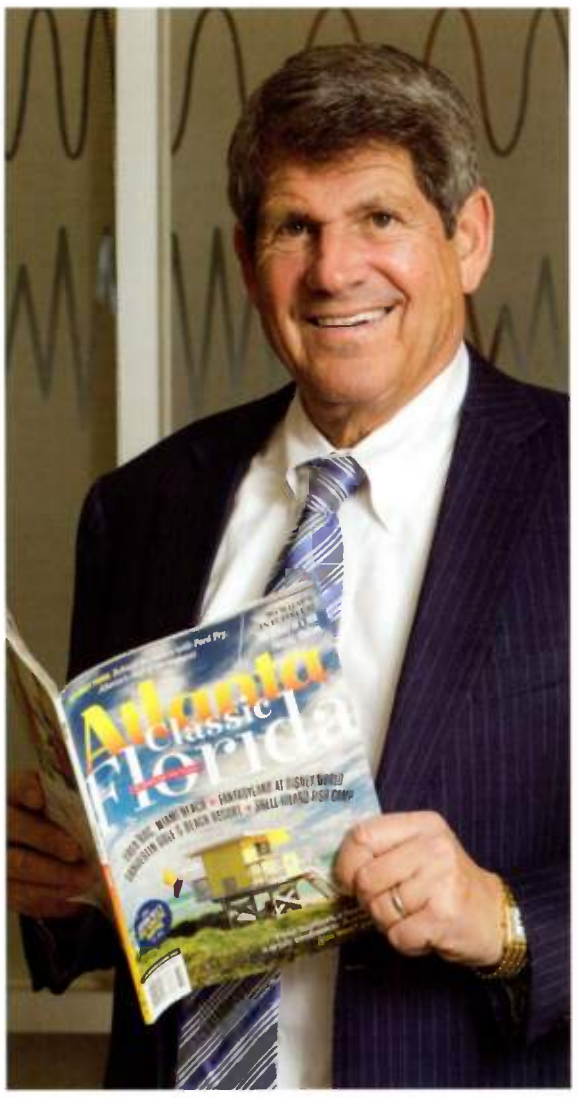
But the format is vibrant. Will it work in New York? I'm hopeful, but who knows? We had that hand before and we felt on WHN-AM it didn't make sense so we switched to WFAN.

Clear Channel has iHeartRadio as a national platform and now Cumulus has Nash. Will we see more, similar initiatives from radio companies?
It's case by case. Obviously, Clear Channel believes very strongly in streaming. We've been streaming

THE INTERVIEW

for 17 years and are probably a little more skeptical about it. They may see things we don't. We've joined iHeartRadio and TuneIn. We're all questioning whether that's a viable business model. Who knows? In terms of branding, iHeart is a great idea and Nash-FM, in most cases, will be a fine idea.

You're very familiar with New York radio. Knowing the market, what makes Country work and what will make it challenging to achieve success with both ratings and revenue?
Historically the challenge is – and we had to make the decision when we bought the NBC station and couldn't have a second FM – did we keep the Hot brand, which was at 103.5 or keep WYNY at 97.1? We



Talk about WLHK/Indianapolis' Country launch and progress.
We liked it and it's kind of frustrating because people say, "Well, he's the guy who killed Country in New York once, he didn't choose Country the second time and he got out of Country in Los Angeles." But we love the format. I happen to listen to the format a lot, my wife listens and so does my daughter. You try and play the hand you can. We were delighted when we had the chance to do Country in Indianapolis and we feel vindicated by it. Emmis has always been about defining what is the best niche.

Can Hank eventually win this consistently?
Absolutely, when you look at the team we have in place with [Market Manager] Charlie Morgan and [OM/PD] Bob Richards, who know this format and this market as well as anybody alive. I wouldn't bet against them and that's not to denigrate WFMS. It's been a wonderful radio station for a very long time, but we've come a long way in the last couple of years.

Is the industry able to compete when Wi-Fi becomes readily available in cars? We hear some refer to in-car listening as the "last bastion." True?
That's why I'm such a nut about the portability of cell phones. We'll have a lot more listening if people have a radio in their hands. Even when universal Wi-Fi comes, by the way, there are some technical reasons why it may be very tough to do Wi-Fi in cars. There's a lot of debate about that.

There's still a cost to one-to-one spectrum distribution. What you find is people are always going to have to pay something. There's always a cost to spectrum. We really have the cheapest spectrum cost of all. As long as we do our job, there's a market for a one-to-many distribution model.

> "We've been streaming for 17 years and are probably a little more skeptical about it. Others may see things we don't."

decided on [Rhythmic Top 40] WQHT.

The good news is that, more and more, Country is becoming a compelling format nationally. It clearly has a lot of people in New York. On the other hand, it's very tough in an ethnically diverse market to do Country and we faced that same battle in Los Angeles. You're dealing with a market where – and this seems like a bad thing to say – but almost every African American, Spanish and Asian listener is not a likely candidate for the format. Therefore, when you have gigantic, diverse markets like New York or LA, it's a tougher challenge.

Do you ever regret flipping KZLA/Los Angeles out of Country?
I guess I should tell you that I promised myself to never regret anything. If I didn't do that, I would have regretted selling WFAN, I would have regretted switching KZLA and then selling it.

We really just felt Country was tough. Since Saul Levine has done that [with KKGO], I think he's seen it has a nice audience but it will always be tough.

When we flipped to KMVN (Movin'), it didn't do any better. When the time came, given the way the world changed, we needed to sell the station anyway.

Would we have been better off staying there? Probably. I would defer to [Emmis President/Programming] Rick Cummings on that and look at all the math. But I always say if 70% of your decisions are right, you're way ahead of the curve.

That was one where you could say KMVN really didn't do well, but Country in Los Angeles has not really knocked the cover off the ball. So neither alternative was wonderful.

Who will be the buyers of radio properties down the road?
We're probably in a unique position. If we buy things, we'll do it with other partners and their equity. We're lucky, we have one of the best balance sheets in the business and I'm very pleased. Will we buy more radio? You never know. We'll see, but I think we have a pretty interesting opportunity to do that.

Where is radio in five years – or is it still possible to have a long-term strategy?
My sense is that we can do that. And, I circle back to the smartphones because I think that's the game-changer. If we're right, and in five years we're in close to 300 million phones and people rediscover radio by understanding it's free, local and interactive in ways we can make it, we'll have a wonderful future. **CAC**

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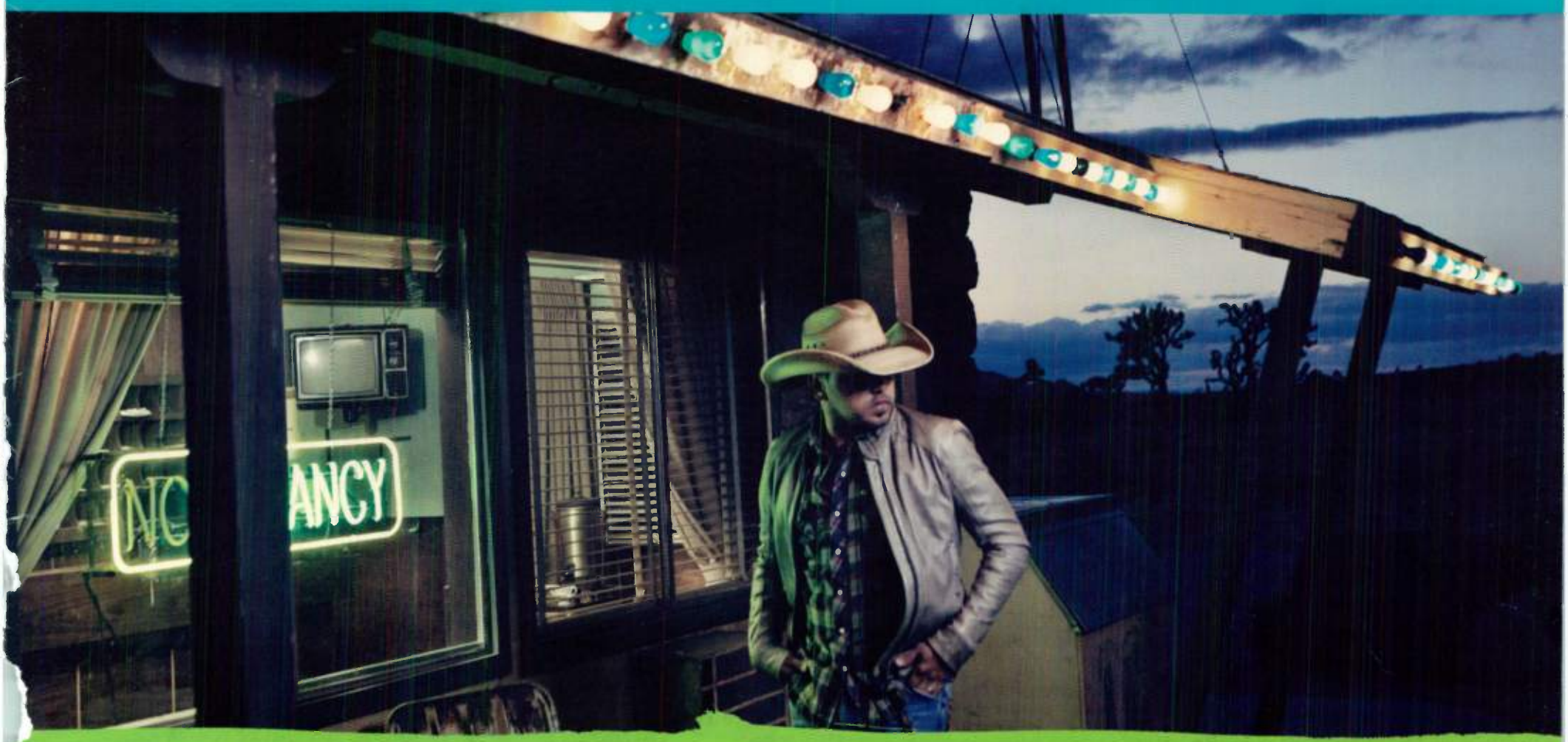

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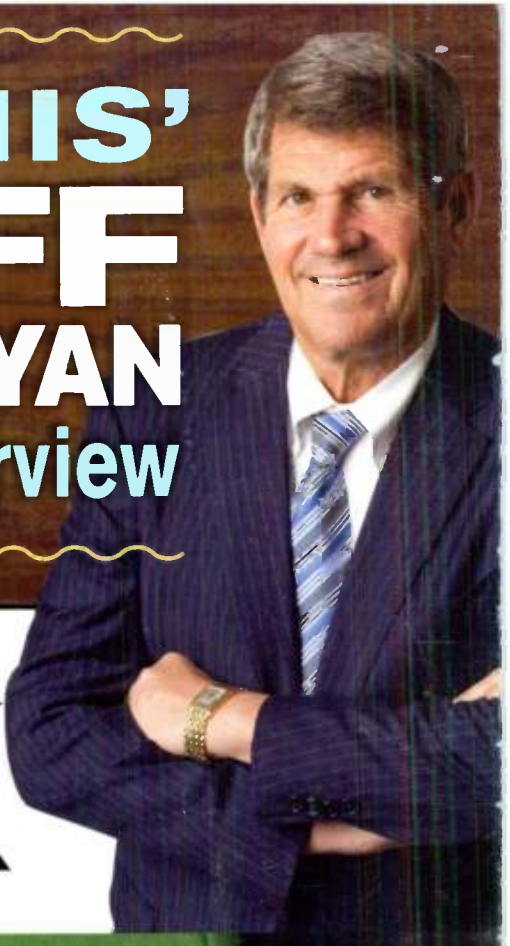
EMMIS' JEFF SMULYAN The Interview



COUNTRY AIRCHECK

FEBRUARY 2013

GARY ALLAN "PIECES"

The follow-up to the **#1** smash,
"Every Storm (Runs Out of Rain)"
From his **#1** Album, *Set You Free*
On Your Desk Now!

MCA NASHVILLE

JON PARDI

UP ALL NIGHT

The "Pardi" song of the spring/summer!!
On your desk and on Play MPE
Add date is March 11

Capitol

KNIX 102.5 IS FORTY IN PHOENIX
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POWER 31 Airplay Leaders
PAGE 17

Entercom's PAT PAXTON The Interview
PAGE 33

COUNTRY AIRCHECK
SEPTEMBER 2008

IT'S IN THE STARS

SONY BMG NASHVILLE
ARISTA NASHVILLE
BNA RECORDS LABEL
RCA RECORDS LABEL NASHVILLE
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THE AIR GUARD PRESENTS

Laura Bryna

THE AIR GUARD FINDS ITS VOICE

- The Air Guard has selected Laura Bryna to serve as the 'voice' of the new Air Guard advertising campaign.
- Laura's debut album "Trying To Be Me" will be reissued on September 2nd and features the song "Hometown Heroes," a tribute to the men and women of the Air Guard.
- Laura will be making concert appearances, signing autographs and talking with fans and members of the Air Guard at numerous Air Guard events and units across the country over the next twelve months.
- The Air Guard's national campaign will include a mix of print, radio, television, online and public relations.

"Hometown Heroes" going for airplay now!

Laura Bryna

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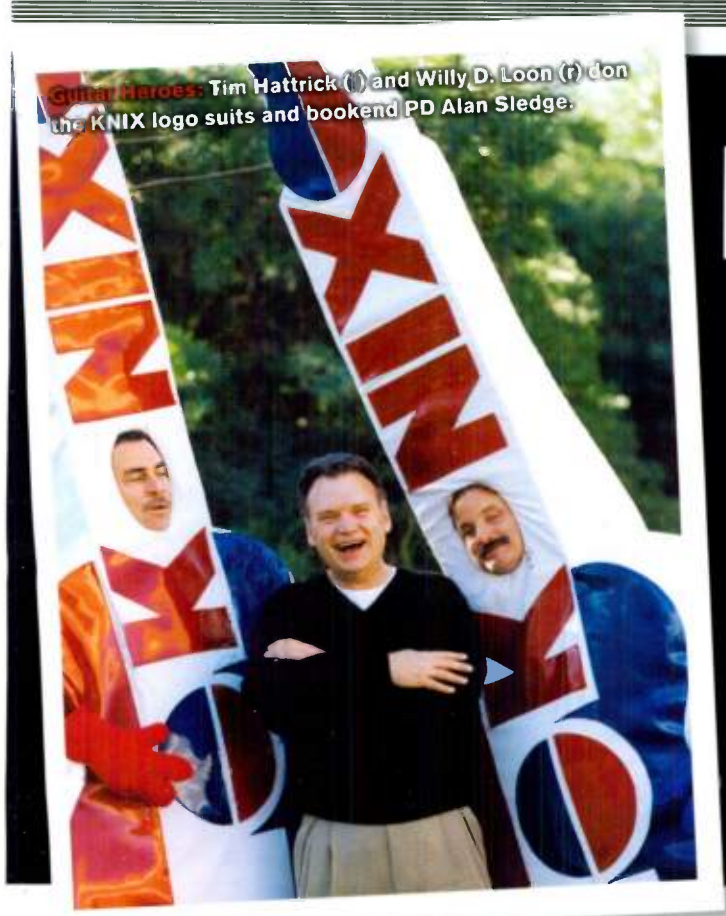


Guitar Heroes: Tim Hattrick (l) and Willy D. Loon (r) don the KNIX logo suits and bookend PD Alan Sledge.

KNIX IS 4 In Phoenix

When Buck Owens bought KNIX-FM in Phoenix for $75,000, few could have imagined the extent to which his station's commitment to country and to its listeners would succeed. At its peak, the station was beyond dominant and, more important, perhaps the most influential and trendsetting Country station ever on the FM dial. As KNIX celebrates its 40th anniversary, Country Aircheck contacted several current and former executives for their favorite recollections of the station Buck built.

Michael Owens, KNIX GM 1978-1999: Sometime in early 1979 – about a year after I became General Manager of KNIX-AM/FM – we were struggling with ratings and revenue. We were 10th or 12th at the time, trying hard to break through to become a player in this big Phoenix market. We came up with an idea for a promotion and teamed with a local independent gasoline company to sell gas at 10 cents per gallon. (Gas then was selling for about 80 cents.) We began promoting the specific location only an hour before it went on sale – which created total chaos. We had a total of 16-18 people at both stations, so we were short-staffed and ill-prepared. But we received a tremendous amount of television and newspaper coverage.

I knew the promotion was successful when I heard the traffic reporter for KOY, the No. 1 station in the market at the time and the only station that had a traffic reporter in a plane, directing people away from our promotion site because it was causing a huge traffic jam. I'll never forget the reporter told his listeners to stay away because "some stupid radio station and some crazy general manager" had come up with a ridiculous promotion. The next rating period KNIX was No. 1 in the market, the first of many to come and "the beginning of something big."

Larry Daniels, KNIX PD/General Program Manager, 1971-1999: We had the honor of being able to hire and work with very talented, creative and listener-friendly people at KNIX. Michael Owens, who came over to Phoenix from Bakersfield in 1978, had a plan that really moved us to the top of the radio market. That plan was always asking, "How do you think our listeners would feel about that?" We placed our listeners as the top priority whenever any changes were made.

We also formed our own research department and for many years were able to really know what our listeners wanted to hear on KNIX – as well as what they liked and what they didn't like. We listened to them as much as they listened to us.

Through the years KNIX also hosted an incredible number of unique events. One of the most memorable was a Dolly Parton Look-A-Like contest in December 1979. The event was presented at Mr. Lucky's, the largest nightclub in Phoenix, and 30 Dolly Parton look-alike contestants paraded onstage before more than 1,000 listeners who had jammed into the club. Unfortunately, another 500 couldn't get in because the place was filled! We had a couple people from RCA/Nashville (Dolly's label at the time) as judges, along with local newspaper and TV celebrities. Local TV stations covered it live and the *Phoenix Gazette* newspaper ran a front-page photo plus a two-page review of the event. And remember, this was in 1979 when we still struggling to establish KNIX.

Tie One On: A late-'80s airstaff flier.

George King, Personality/APD/MD 1985-2002; PD 2000-2002: What has always stood out in my mind about KNIX were the people (*OK, seeing the music director on the squat machine wasn't pretty*) and their contributions to the station's success. Everyone who has ever passed through the doors was awed (*usually by that immense picture of Buck*). Like the employees (*yes, we were required to genuflect in front of it*), the artists (*who were inspired*) and label reps (*who never sued us for tripping in the lobby and busting up their knee*) have all felt the greatness that was and still is KNIX.

The hallowed halls of KNIX have always been full of talented radio professionals: Like the jocks, who were and are some of the most creative and innovative in the business (*how many morning guys could pull off doing their first breaks from a two-way in their car ... every morning!*) and totally professional (*yes, those were real pigs in the lobby to honor our GM.) Ed.: (See Tim Hattrick's story.)*

The management was some of the most giving (*oh, the fun we had when fighting over the pile of used ties when someone got their new seasonal wardrobe*) and generous, throwing all those "employee relations parties" (*and some still ask why they were employee-only parties!*)

And KNIX wouldn't be as successful without its listeners – the most loyal and devoted in the country (*like the one who visited the studios with a shotgun or the winner of the "girl who can hold a Big Gulp without using her hands" contest*).

But along with all the fun, I still remember all the great things KNIX has done for the community (*in untold millions of dollars raised over the years*), for the listeners (*who enjoyed great programming*) and for the country music industry (*who can stop kissing Mike and Buddy's butt ... they don't own it anymore*).

Yes, the memories are many and great, and I will always feel proud to say that I was a part of those amazing call letters.

W. Steven Martin, KNIX Personality, 1975-2000: When Buck came to town to do an appearance, the whole staff showed up ... and most were on time. Not me. After my shift I took an afternoon nap and missed the part where I introduced Buck. (Not a good thing.) I arrived about halfway through the show and kept a low profile at the bar. After the show I heard Buck wanted to see me about something. I walked up to the table and said, "Hi, Buck." He gave me the Owens stare and said, "You missed your chance to be onstage with me, W." I explained and said I was sorry, but Buck still didn't look too happy. Then the young lady with Buck said, "I love W., and shower with him all the time (one of my radio bits). Will you introduce me?" Buck said, "This is W. and he works for me. He has a wife named Susie and small twins at home. W., shake her hand and go have a drink, I'll see you tomorrow at the station." And I did. Over 27 years at the station I never had asked for a contract. I always knew Mike and Buddy Owens were men of their words and would always be fair and take care of me. We were family.

In The Day: Larry Daniels, the late Sandy Lovejoy, W. Steven Martin, George Strait, Jim West, Doug Brannon.

After Johnny Cash was busted coming back into the U.S. with drugs, one of his first stops was in Phoenix. He had a court-assigned preacher to escort him so he could continue his tour. I showed up backstage with a cassette tape recorder to do an interview before the show. As I entered his dressing room, he told the preacher we would need about 30 minutes of complete silence for the interview. The preacher said he would stand outside the dressing room until we finished. Mr. Cash locked the door and told me to sit down. He went over to a guitar case, opened it and smiled! At first I thought he was going to sing or something. Well, out came bottles of booze and sacks of an unknown substance. After awhile he came over to the table, sat down and asked me what questions I had. I was a little shocked and said, "I don't think I have any." He took the mic and just started talking about his music. When he was done, he turned off the mic and said, "I need you to stay with me for about 10 more minutes while I get ready for the show again." I've never played or heard a Johnny Cash song again without thinking about that interview. What a trip.

Team Tuxedo: Garth Brooks (c) congratulates (l-r) Buddy Owens, Bob Podolsky, Michael Owens and Larry Daniels on an ACM Station of the Year win.

Steve Harmon, KNIX Morning Co-Host, 1996-1998: Everything you have ever heard about KNIX and "the palace" is true. The Phoenix Mafia – Michael Owens, Buddy Owens, Larry Daniels and George King, a hall of fame management team – Hall of Famer W. Steven Martin doing middays ... all in one spectacular building.

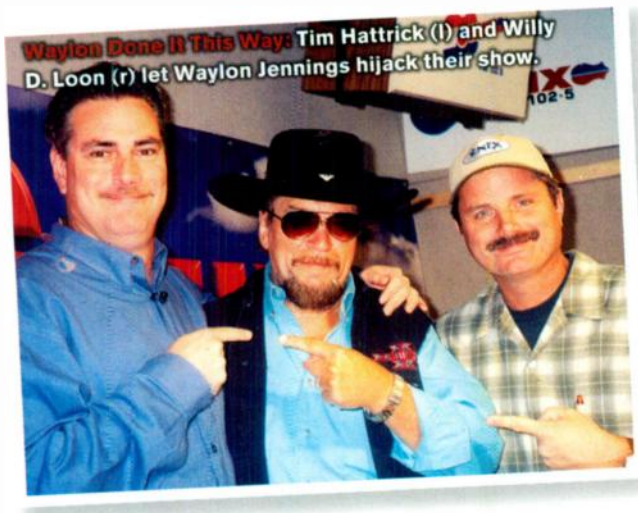
It was, no *is*, almost too much to imagine the talent walking the halls – all there to help with any idea my morning show could come up with. For instance, "The Taco Bell of Love," where we took over a Taco Bell for Valentine's Day and married 37 people in the drive-thru line. The "reception" had pictures, cake and a dj for their first dance – all in the parking lot. Vicki Fiorelli and her promotion team turned even our lame crazy ideas into golden moments. Crazy idea: "Boss, um, we need to get Alice Cooper on the show." Larry Daniels would say, "OK, I'll call him" and "poof," Alice Cooper would appear.

During my time there, KNIX was one gigantic family organization with a goal not just to be No. 1 in Phoenix, but to be the leading management team in the business, period. Those years were the most special time in my life. I do wish I had used the gym attached to the building with a trainer more. Everybody was so dang buff there.

KNIX IS 4

Today's KNIX 102.5

Tim Hattrick of the *Tim & Willy* morning show, 1998-2007: Shortly after we had signed a deal to be the morning show on KNIX, I came home and found a message on my answering machine from Buck Owens. It said, "Tim, just wanted to welcome you to the KNIX family! We're thrilled to have you and Willy join us, and we can't wait for you to start!" I probably rewound and listened to it 20 times before



Waylon Done It This Way: Tim Hattrick (l) and Willy D. Loon (r) let Waylon Jennings hijack their show.

it sunk in. I still think back to being a kid watching *Hee Haw*, and if I'd ever imagined that one day that guy on the show was going to leave a message on my answering machine, I'd have thought, "What's an answering machine?'

Of all the radio stations I've worked in, KNIX in Tempe was easily the nicest, most beautiful facility. That's what made it really funny to me when we arranged for 50 pigs to stampede the building during a citywide sales meeting in honor of our General Manager, **J.D. Freeman**, for his 50th birthday. What a mess!

By far the best on-air moment at KNIX was the day Waylon Jennings showed up and took over our show as we deemed it "Waylon Wednesday." It started with me asking, "Waylon, what do you want to do? It's your show." He responded, "I don't know. I'm so drunk right now, I don't know where I'm at!" (Joking, of course!) For all his reputation as a cantankerous angry outlaw, he proved to be one of the kindest, sweetest. funniest people we've ever met. He told stories about getting a handwritten note from John Lennon, about how he came to possess the boots Hank Williams died in, how he'd only been to Luckenbach,Texas once – and he *hated* it. He shared the famed story, with chilling detail, of how he gave up his seat on the ill-fated flight that crashed and killed Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and the Big Bopper. His voice cracked with emotion as if it had happened only a year earlier. All in all, an unforgettable man, and a truly unbelievable three hours from our 10 years on KNIX.

Buddy Owens, MD 1986-1999: KNIX's success had to do with two things. First, the wonderful team of people we had working with us; they were all just brilliant. And, second, the people who created and promoted the music and their willingness to work with us so well.

It started with my brother Michael and Larry Daniels. As the role of music director changed through the years, they understood and gave me the space to create relationships with the artists, managers, record promoters and listeners. We didn't care if it was Garth, Alan, Tim, George, Reba or somebody we'd never heard of, they all got red-carpet treatment. Larry always said, "You never know who's that next big star." That philosophy paid off so many times for KNIX.

KNIX's connection with the artists allowed us to align ourselves with listeners' favorite artists and to market ourselves with "endorsements" that told listeners KNIX is "one of the best Country radio stations in the country." We were very proud to be selected several times by our country music peers with ACM and CMA Awards and other honors. Once that ball started rolling, it just seemed to grow and grow. It was so much fun. I cannot talk about KNIX without recognizing all the hard work the staff did through the years. My brother Michael is, in my opinion, the best radio manager I've ever met. He knew how to give people an assignment and then let them do their job. Larry Daniels was, without a doubt, the backbone of KNIX's success. His knowledge and understanding of what people wanted in their radio station was unsurpassed. It's no wonder Michael and Larry are both in the Country Radio Hall of Fame. The two of them made going to work every day so much fun. GSM **Bob Podolsky** understood programming and never sacrificed the sound just to make a few extra dollars.

There are so many more in the promotion and research departments. The late **Sandy Lovejoy** was such an asset for KNIX with her writing skills; the artists just loved to talk to her. The on-air personalities, including W. Steven Martin, **Steve Goddard**, RJ Curtis and on and on – I love them all. Thanks to all of them.

RJ Curtis, PD/Morning Sidekick-Producer 1987-1993: Michael Owens would be the first to tell you that at KNIX, "we worked hard and we played hard." He's absolutely right, of course. The workday started promptly at 8am, and if anybody showed up at 8:03 or 8:05, they heard about it pretty quickly. Conversely, when that 5:00 whistle blew, the place emptied out almost immediately. But what happened in between was an intense, focused and disciplined professional environment dedicated to winning. That doesn't mean the environment was devoid of fun.

The day Larry Daniels turned 50, Michael rented a wheelchair and pushed a beet-red Larry into every meeting that day. Laughter and a loose atmosphere were encouraged because Larry and Michael thought it fostered creativity. The hard work required of staff members was rewarded with events such as the annual pool party, held during a workday afternoon at a fabulous resort in Scottsdale.

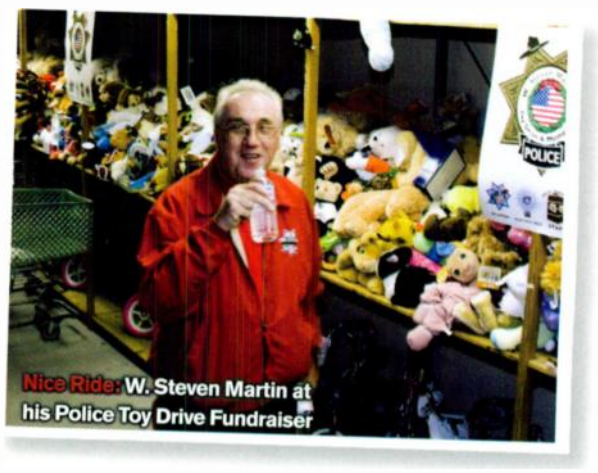
The staff workout facility is already legendary; it was an approximately 2,000-square-foot room with state-of-the-art fitness machines and free weights that rivaled any health club I ever saw. Two part-time fitness trainers were retained to help staff members start and maintain an exercise program. The majority of staff members utilized the gym, which, of course, made them healthier and less likely to have any sick days. I've always said getting a job at KNIX, in those days was similar to winning a Rhodes scholarship. No matter where you worked after that, you could always say you worked at arguably the finest Country radio station in America. Those call letters on a resume got people's attention, and they still do.

Doug Baker, Personality 1980-1986: I started at KNIX as a part-timer. This was a major step up, as my first real radio job was in Bartow, FL at an AM daytimer. So there I am at Buck Owens' KNIX feeling like I was on the right path. The first six weekends I was on, the station went off the air! The engineer didn't think it was funny at all. I was scared to death. Happily, *none* of the transmitter problems were my fault. Eventually, I stayed on the air, and the station did, too. KNIX paved the foundation for my career and I will always remember my time there as very special. Michael, Buddy and Larry: Thank you!

Vicki Fiorelli, Dir./Marketing & Promotion, 1991-present: One of the biggest things that I hold the proudest is that KNIX has always been there for our community. KNIX employees are a family, our community is part of our family. Family takes care of family. Many KNIX employees volunteer and help our community/listeners in so many ways. We use our on-air time to help thousands of non-profits. The Owens family made a commitment to be of service to our listeners as well as to our clients, and KNIX still does that today.

Susan Karis, Clear Channel EVP/ Operations-Western Region: I joined KNIX when Clear Channel acquired the station from Owens Broadcasting. As a longtime broadcaster in Phoenix, it was truly a great honor to become a part of all that KNIX represented. It's been even more exciting over the years as KNIX became a part of Clear Channel and knowing that we have done everything to keep the brand strong and make it even bigger today and ready for another 40 years! Today's KNIX 102.5 is better than ever and still stands for all the best of country music.

When I think of KNIX I think of all the great work that was done in the community over the many years. I think of the Tim & Willy Kids Fun-dation and the incredible difference it made. Most personally for me was just in the past three years, when Tim & Willy joined me in working with Florence Crittenton



Nice Ride: W. Steven Martin at his Police Toy Drive Fundraiser

(a residential and transitional living center for troubled girls 12-18) as a sponsor of the annual luncheon. That morphed into Tim & Willy over there working with the choir, meeting kids at the school, donating for summer programs, taking the girls to Phoenix Mercury games and more. The starting point of a sponsorship from the Fun-dation became so much more personal and meaningful, and that is KNIX.

I think of a flight I was on, leaving a meeting in San Antonio and returning to Phoenix. I sat next to a woman who lived in Phoenix and had been visiting her son. He was a soldier rehabilitating an Iraq war injury at a center in San Antonio. As we started talking and she realized that I worked with KNIX, she started to cry. She shared with me that she was a listener and she had connected with Tim & Willy and the station about her son. I don't remember all the details, but I know there was great outreach and caring for her son and her family from the station. They had him on the air several times and were following his recovery. Wow, what a powerful KNIX moment, what a human moment. I cried with her.

On a lighter note, Darryl Worley was in the station for a private performance with listeners, and I brought my daughter with me. She was in first grade at the time and missed the first hour of school. She dressed up and was so excited. She had a ball and felt like the star of a KNIX show. For KNIX listeners, there were so many of those moments over the last 40 years. The great news is that KNIX will provide so many more of them in the years to come. CAC

Pipe Dream: In 1998, *Tim & Willy* took listeners to Chicago's Wrigley Field, where Willy D. Loon sang the National Anthem as Tim Hattrick signed autographs for people who didn't know who he was.

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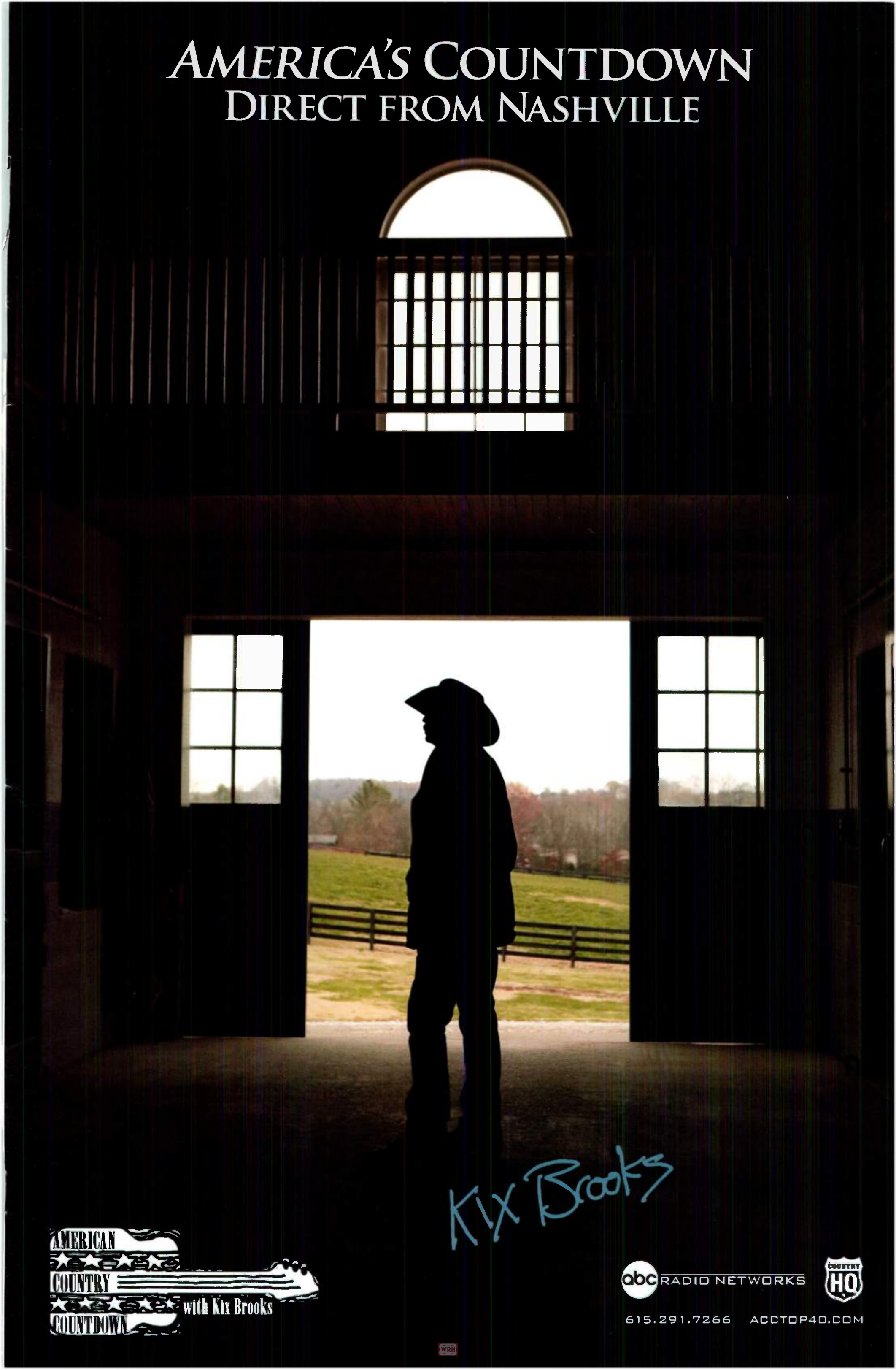

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MARCONIS

THE FEW, THE PROUD, THE NOMINEES

FROM A STATION THAT IS THE CORNERSTONE OF A FORMAT, AN INDUSTRY AND TO A CERTAIN DEGREE AN ENTIRE CITY, TO SOME OF THE MOST DYNAMIC STATIONS AND PERSONALITIES IN MODERN BROADCASTING, COUNTRY RADIO IS WELL REPRESENTED IN THIS YEAR'S NAB MARCONI RADIO AWARDS. SIXTEEN NOMINATIONS, INCLUDING 11 IN ALL-FORMAT CATEGORIES, DEMONSTRATE THE FORMAT'S CONTINUING STRENGTH AND VITALITY. HERE'S A LOOK AT THIS YEAR'S FINALISTS:

THE NEXT GENERATION OF THE BRAND

Legendary Station of the Year: WSM-AM/Nashville, Gaylord

*When we caught up with **WSM-AM/Nashville** OM **Joe Limardi**, he was reviewing 70 online audition videos from aspiring bluegrass acts. The submissions were original jingles for sponsor Spring Mountain Farms Chicken, with finalists receiving live performance opportunities and the winner a studio recording date. The promotion typifies how, since 1925, WSM has maintained its musical heritage of supporting unheralded artists while relentlessly embracing advances in technology; to wit, the station's efforts with various new streaming formats, video podcasting, downloads, furthering iTunes partnerships, Grand Ole Opry simulcasts with GAC, and someday perhaps, an iPhone app. Limardi explains the balance of preserving traditional expectations with keeping WSM relevant and vibrant to new audiences.*

"WSM coined the phrase 'Music City' and, with our 38-state signal, really made Nashville what it is. The station gave people all over the country the chance to 'bring your instruments to Nashville and show us what you're made of.'

"Promotions like Spring Mountain Farms and the talent competitions we do hark back to the original days – the roots – of WSM when everything was live. We give deserving talents the chance to open for artists like Marty Stuart or Tracy Lawrence, or perform at our 83rd birthday at the Ryman in October. While we still look to be cutting-edge the way WSM was in 1925, it doesn't get any more local, country and down-home than giving someone the chance to be the opening act for a superstar at a county fair.

"This town really made stars, thanks to WSM. It was not only the Opry, but also the station 24/7 that was putting anybody and everybody with a song and an instrument on the air. Today, we're certainly not breaking the hits because the FMs do that, and that's fine. We want to look for those unknowns, those 'bubbling unders' who three months from now will be all over FM radio.

"The more we embrace ourselves around these call letters, the more we're finding there are no real generation gaps. It seems to be the industry perception that WSM is just that old radio station with the Opry. But those three letters worldwide mean so much more than a station that plays classic country music; it can mean everything country. As we move into the next 83 years, the real initiative here is to take the call letters and to give them global meaning and presence.

"Online, we can do anything country: specialty streaming channels for alt-country, bluegrass, folk, Americana, the international country scene. If you like Texas country, we'll have a channel for that online. Our first one, in August, was 'Bluegrass Underground' -- a streaming live show with the Steeldrivers from 300 feet underground in the Cumberland Caverns in McMinnville, TN. Talk about acoustics!

"Our current sales marketing campaign 'We're taking Nashville back' has a two-prong meaning: Everything we do takes people to another time, but we're also taking the town back because it was ours 83 years ago. It's time for us to look to the future of the radio station, outside the boundaries of the AM band. The Internet is where the next generation is getting their entertainment. Realistically, we'll have minimal growth on the AM side, but the bigger picture is our 250,000-stream audience, and we don't even promote the stream. When we've got a quarter-million people tuned in during any half-hour around the clock, it's obvious they're listening from all over the world. So the next generation of WSM is going to be more of a global brand. It's a long road ahead, but with the passionate people here, the sky's the limit."

Tower Of Power: **Nashville residents got a jolt of big news the day WSM-AM went on the air 83 years ago. Dig the artist's theater-of-the-mind images as projected in the imagination of local listeners**

TRACKING DOWN LISTENERS

Major Market Station of the Year: KBWF "The Wolf"/San Francisco, Entercom

*In little more than a year, format newcomer KBWF (The Wolf)/San Francisco has earned a reputation as a creative, highly localized station. It has quickly scored more success during the past decade than any previous Country station in the cosmopolitan Bay Area, a market that has always been challenging for the format. The Wolf's "Paws For Cause" campaign supports 32 nonprofits through $2 million in airtime and 800 hours of community service annually. PD and "Prime Minister of Twang" **Scott Mahalick** talks about how The Wolf has made such an immediate impact.*

Watch This: **Clay Walker rocks a huge tailgate party crowd at The Wolf's "Beach Ball Free For All" outside AT&T Park prior to Kenny Chesney's *Poets & Pirates* Tour show.**

"I keep a document called '100 Little Things' – all the details that go into winning. Our goal is to be the hip, young station in the Bay Area that plays country music. The station that has an uptempo, upbeat, edgy, clever, entertaining attitude that puts a smile on listeners' faces and makes them want to tell others. At its core, the Wolf is Country and darn proud of it, but it's packaged and delivered in an entertainment environment. That means the stationality is just as important as the personalities, so the Wolf brand can come to life three-dimensionally. This station has a soul and we're fortunate to have wall-to-wall, seasoned A-plus players who understand that and execute the plan every day.

"We just took the entire staff around the city in a limo, after which our chief engineer led us on a little expedition up to a park at the base of the transmitter site on San Bruno Mountain, where we had box lunches and Champagne. It was a great bonding experience and part of everybody getting to know the city and each other so they can feel confident when they're talking about each other's activities on the station. Those kinds of things don't take a lot of money, but keep everybody motivated and excited.

"Before the Kenny Chesney stadium concert recently, we produced the 'Beach Ball Free-For-All,' a tailgate party for 10,000 in the parking lot, headlined by Clay Walker with the Lost Trailers, One Flew South and Steve Cochran. It took the pre-party vibe Kenny's famous for to a whole new level; it was the biggest day in Northern California history in terms of this format.

"Texting is a big thing for us; we've got our own custom code. And as we interact with the listeners you can feel the excitement and enthusiasm when we play a new record. We don't just add it and have it show up in rotation; we open up the phones, talk about the story behind the story and involve the artists. We do these things not only to keep everybody interested, but also because part of our job is to educate the market on what this format is.

"For the Tsingtao Festival targeting 150,000 Asians, we put up 'Thanks for listening to the Wolf' in Chinese on the billboard that went across the Bay Bridge. It created a real buzz because a Country station had never reached out to them like that. Our line dancing with an air talent meet-and-greet was one of the most popular things at the festival. **Liza Battalones**, a 32-year-old Hispanic who does our afternoon traffic, wasn't a fan of country and didn't know much about it. Two weeks into the job she came in and said, 'Hey, where did all this music come from? I love this.' Lisa's turned into a passionate fan and evangelist for the format, and now she's telling her friends. If we can just continue to fuel and encourage this kind of word of mouth, it'll be the most exciting thing ever."

LARGE MARKET PERSONALITIES OF THE YEAR

A VOICE FOR GOOD REASONS

Cornbread, WIL/St. Louis

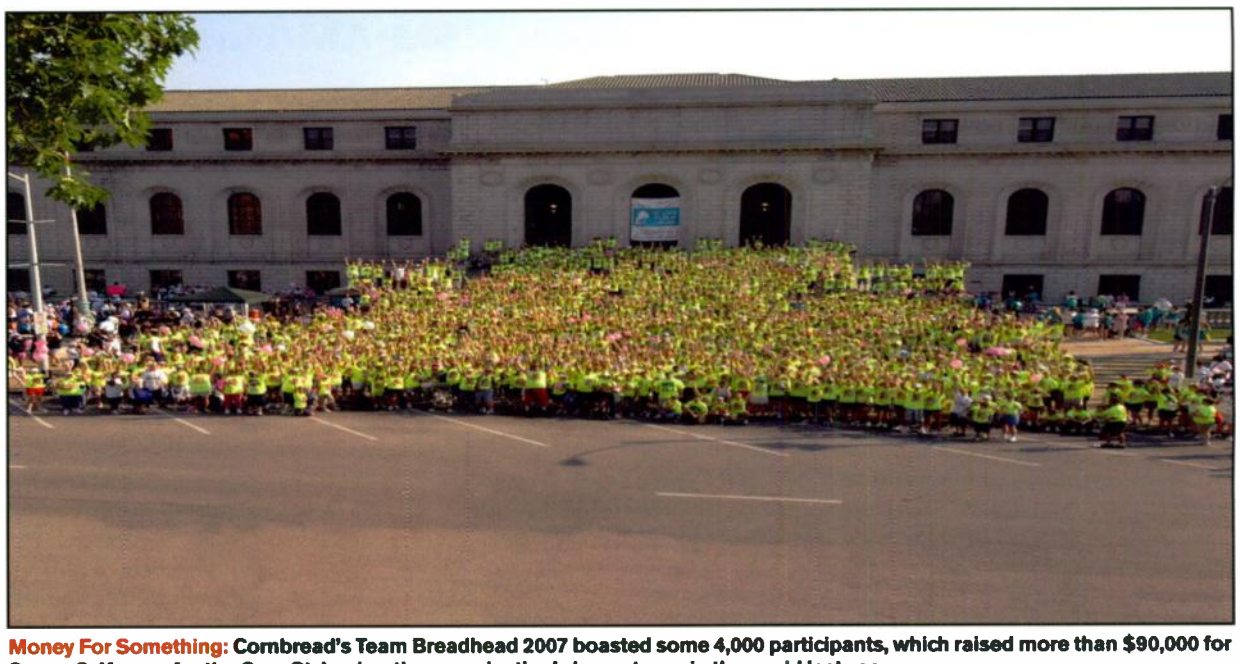
*A former newspaper delivery man who got attention for his funny answering machine messages, Cornbread was destined for morning greatness. After establishing a CMA Award-winning profile at KFDI/Wichita in 2003, Cornbread, along with sidekick Pat James, has become a Marconi finalist at WIL in less than four years – five days of which were spent keeping a rooftop vigil in a chilly tent five stories above ground until the Cardinals won the World Series in 2006. Now further supported by newsman **Father Harry**, traffic reporter **Captain Mac** and producer **Annie Dickerson**, Cornbread is recognized not only for his talent, but also for his patriotism, work ethic and commitment to charities such as the Cornbread Kids Coat Drive and the Komen Race For The Cure, assembling the largest team in St. Louis.*

"My first radio job was at 26 in Concord, CA, at my local high school station. I didn't even know they had one; it played heavy metal like Metallica and Anthrax. A teacher had heard my answering machine and invited me to come down. I figured I had nothing to lose: I was throwing newspapers and basically doing a radio show in the car, driving around talking to myself. I was the only adult at the station, and as the new morning man, the only direction I got was, 'Just do what you feel is right.' I didn't even say the call letters for the first two years because I didn't know it was a rule. I was just kind of wild, going on instincts.

"At my first Country job, KWUN-AM/Concord, I worked in a trailer doing mornings. I'd turn the station on at 6am, big bulbs would warm up, there'd be this hum and the lights would dim. I'm pretty sure I'm sterile right now from it. I didn't get a paycheck, just a couple hundred bucks in the hallway every month or so. I got *two* calls from listeners in six months – that's how hot I was at the time. When KWUN went dark, I got paid off with a reel-to-reel machine and 10 pancakes of tape. I was actually on the air when the engineer started going up the tower to take it down. That's when I realized the gig was over.

"September 11 changed my whole outlook, and I felt guilty because I didn't serve our country. I really wanted to, but I have flat feet. So we immediately started the 'Adopt A Soldier' program, putting up profiles of local soldiers for people to send stuff to. It's been huge; thousands of people have done it. I've got a good way of winding people up on the air. I can get people to come out for things, so if you've got that vehicle – a radio station – why not use it to do something with, instead of just spinning records and playing commercials?

"Awards are nice to have, but you can't get a bigger award than seeing your community get stronger from what you've done. I really get off on the work we get to do on the air, and when we hit that magic spot, such as breaking the record we had for St. Jude last year, that's better than anything. It was magic in the studio: whatever we were saying, the listeners were feeling and the phones blew up. We had 208 new people call in, and the momentum of that moment was almost a spiritual movement. We came off the air high as a kite, knowing we and our listeners did some good work that day."



Money For Something: **Cornbread's Team Breadhead 2007 boasted some 4,000 participants, which raised more than $90,000 for Susan G. Komen for the Cure St. Louis – the organization's largest race in the world last year.**

MILE HIGH MAGIC

Kelly, JoJo and Mudflap, KYGO/Denver

Making Love On The 50-Yard Line: **More than 1,000 KYGO listeners helped Kelly, JoJo and Mudflap create a human Valentine photo at Invesco Field for overseas troops. The NFL Broncos covered the costs to heat and light the gridiron.**

Kelly Ford, Mudflap and JoJo make up the successful morning team at KYGO/Denver. A 17-year station veteran, Ford has won three CMA Awards and multiple Marconi nominations with Mudflap, who has his own country band and plays all the area fairs. They have worked seven years together, with JoJo joining two years ago. Waking up with "KMJ" is like having lunch with friends who will talk about anything, and that's how they intend it to be. Extremely topical, personable and irreverent but never over the edge ("Because we want to keep our jobs," quips Ford), they connect emotionally with their "Insane Morning Posse" of listeners, as well as through blogs, MySpace, Facebook and extensive community involvement.

KF: We just try to live real life and make observations on things we believe will touch people. We think people, their feelings and things that happen to them are universal, and we try to tap into that. Clearly we want to service the country lifegroup because they're our people, but we're kind of proud that we think we can be on any morning show.

M: That's what I've gotten from all my years doing standup, was learning to write for stuff that everybody could relate to.

JJ: Plus, even if you hate Country and aren't a member of the lifegroup, there's something appealing and pleasing about this show that makes it totally universal.

KF: We're very careful to be inclusive. Everywhere, the trend is participation, being interactive. We have to and want to include the listeners ... it makes the show better. You can't make up the shit that people call in with!

M: People are always wanting to know, 'What's tomorrow? What are you all planning?' I don't know ... it hasn't happened yet! It's really important that you don't plan too much.

JJ: I've worked on a lot of different morning shows where you are so scripted out that it's over the top. If something we're talking about becomes a lightning rod, we give the room for, as our PD Joel Burke puts it, those magic moments to happen.

KF: We've all cried on the air, such as when I dedicated our first CMA win to my dad and talked about his death.

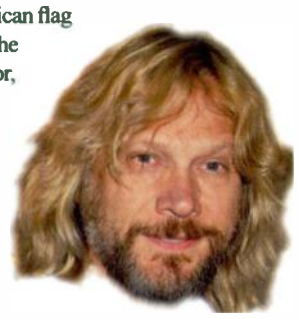
M: And when I had to put my dog to sleep, people called in with condolences and gave us their stories. There were a lot of tears that day.

JJ: This is the first place I've ever worked where my emotions have been dragged out to the point of shedding tears. It happens way more often than I ever imagined it would.

KF: Great radio is always about the stories. A woman called us hysterically recently because her dog was having puppies, and one of them was stuck! I said, "You're in your moment of panic and you're calling *us*?"

JJ: She bought the dog off Craigslist and they said the dog was fixed. All of a sudden, puppies started coming out. You always wonder who to call in the event of an emergency, and these listeners call us.

KF: Two years ago, on February 14, we asked listeners to come out to Invesco Field to hold up red, white and blue cardboards to make a human American flag Valentine to photograph to email to the troops. We had the governor and mayor, and Darryl Worley came to sing. It was 20 degrees and snowing, but then it was as if God parted the skies because it turned sunny for those 30 minutes. About 1,000 listeners participated including three women who had lost their children in Iraq. It was, for sure, my proudest moment in broadcasting.



Class Act: **Big Machine's Taylor Swift helps KYGO morning team of Mudflap, JoJo and Kelly salute the winning students of its School Spirit event.**

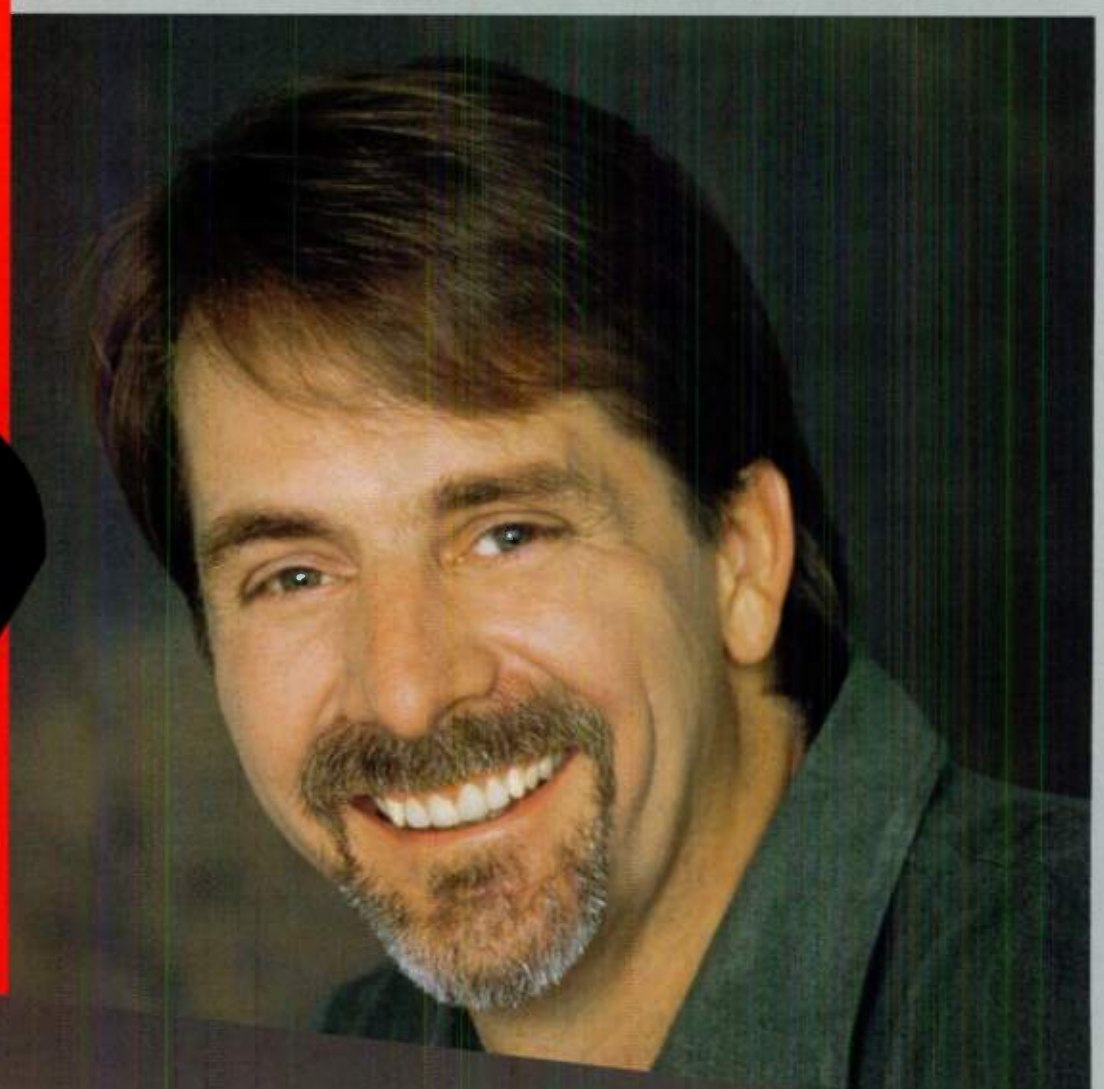
FUNWORTHY

Get Comedy With Your Countdown

NOW HEARD ON MORE THAN 350 COUNTRY AFFILIATES

JUST ADDED!
KPLX-FM/Dallas

THE JEFF FOXWORTHY COUNTDOWN



PREMIERE
RADIO NETWORKS

818.377.5300

Small Market Station of the Year

Country dominates in this category, earning four of five nominations

Country Covered

KAIR-FM/Atchison, KS, KNZA, Inc.

Trophy Case: Former Kansas Association of Broadcasters President Cliff Shank (second on l) poses with (l-r) KAIR PD/morning host Jason Drake, News. Dir. Brian Hagen and morning co-host Rachel Lehcar.

*Six-time Kansas Association of Broadcasters Small Market Station Of The Year and second-time Marconi nominee **KAIR-FM/Atichson, KS** boasts an 11-year veteran staff with a dedication to local news. PD/morning host **Jason Drake** praises the commitment exhibited by his small group of radio professions.*

"We have a full-service radio station and with only a staff of five, everyone multitasks. We have a regular full time News Dir., **Brian Hagen**, and cover every local story whether it's an accident that happens at midnight or severe weather. We're in the shadows of the Kansas City market and all three of their great stations come blasting in to us, plus we've got Topeka. With all these major radio stations coming in, our niche has to be not only playing the new hit country and breaking artists, but it's also bringing these major newscasts.

"During the Amelia Earhart Festival, U.S. Senator Pat Roberts came by our live remote for an interview with Hagen. He was here to look at the soil erosion on the Missouri River and happened to choose the night of the festival. Hagen always wears sunglasses, so as Senator Roberts, wearing shades himself, walks up with his entourage the first thing he says is, 'Brian, I'm trying to be as fashionable as you. You notice I have my shades on today.'

"The important thing is, throughout the years we've built these relationships and nothing is formal; we're on a first-name basis. Another local aspect is we never give anything away without a unique tie-in. Miranda Lambert and Blake Shelton played the Amelia Earhart Festival, and we did a ticket giveaway. Since she sings 'Me And Charlie Talkin'' and he sings 'The Baby,' the first person to bring a baby named Charlie won the tickets. Back when Sawyer Brown was here with 'Dirt Road,' we put a jock on a dirt road out in the county somewhere and said the first person to find him gets two tickets."

Decades Of Distinguished Radio

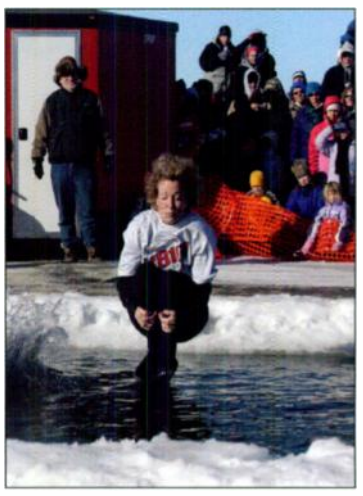
KBHP/Bemidji, MN, Paul Bunyan Broadcasting

*Owned by former Doubleday and Parker radio executive **Lou Buron, Jr., KBHP** has already won four Crystal Awards, including one in '07. As part of parent **Omni Broadcasting**, KB101 has contributed to two company Service to America Awards, one of them this year. Programmed by longtime OM/PD **Todd Haugen**, who co-anchors mornings with 36-year station personality **Mardy Karger**, KB101 has several staffers with decades of service, including **Karen "Bubbles" Thompson**. Buron is a 2007 Minnesota Broadcasters Hall of Fame inductee whose radio career began as a salesman working the Yellow Pages. He talks about the culture of commitment that has helped KB101 become as strong as its most famous Bemidji icons, Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox.*

"My mother and father divorced before I was two, and I was raised by my mother, my aunt and grandmother. We didn't have a lot of money, but what I did have was unconditional love and a tremendous amount of support. As I grew up, I realized that was priceless. I just applied that to my career, and frankly, if somebody's going to outwork me, they're going to have to get up pretty early and work an awful lot to do it.

"Our success comes not only from the programming, but also from the very well-known personalities who have been with us a long time. KBHP generated more than $700,000 for charities last year, from Coats for Kids to our 19th annual radiothon on behalf of Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota, which last December raised more than $56,000 in 24 hours.

"When we first got here with KBHP in 1989, we changed everything over from the 500-watt AM to the 100-kw FM. We put the personalities on the FM, and made the Country station what it was and still is. There've been some changes, but the majority of the primary people are still here 19 years later. Having seen KB101 evolve to what it is today, and how it continues to evolve, is probably the proudest significance for me."



Fool Rush In: KB101's mid-winter Polar Days madness includes jumping into Lake Bemidji through a hole carved by a chain saw. No, that's not a warming house in the background, and yes, it's 38 below zero outside.

Border-Line Country & Western

KITX/Hugo, OK, William Payne

Look Who's Talking: KITX GM/PD/morning personality Will Payne started in radio with his father Bill in the early '70's and had this picture taken his first day on the air.

*This first-time Marconi nominee station has found a balance in serving the Hugo, OK and Paris, TX markets with such diplomacy that GM/PD/morning co-host **Will Payne** wouldn't divulge whether his allegiance is to UT or OU. Payne, who is also nominated for Small Market Personality, says the station works hard to build country stars.*

"Our motto is this is not a job, it's a lifestyle. Everyone who works here is part of the community, we all have our own projects and we come together when it needs to be done. My morning co-host **Barry Diamond** helps a lot with Big Brothers and Big Sisters all over Texas and Oklahoma.

"When I came to town in '95, we didn't have but two concerts a year in the area, period. We ended up booking shows into local venues because the clubs wouldn't do it. The radio station took on the financing and booking. We find artists we feel very confident in and we don't just spin their record; we'll also bring them into town for a free show. We pay for everything.

"We've worked with regional acts like the Eli Young Band and Stoney LaRue, as well as national acts like Jason Meadows, Blake Shelton (working with a local casino) and Chris Young. We try to find an artist we feel like we can have a future with. Like Aaron Watson – he has a tremendous fan base here and we can get him in the market. We'll bring these artists to town several times and treat their single with the same priority as we would a national act. Our playlist covers the majority of the national stuff, except for our project acts. And they'll be in rotation right with Alan Jackson, George Strait and Brad Paisley.

"If we win the Marconi, we're going to party down on Austin's Sixth Street. I keep threatening Jack Purcell that we're going to go over and wake up Jack Ingram to party with us."

Ahead Of The Game

KOFM/Enid, OK, Williams Broadcasting

*KOFM/Enid, OK is the current Oklahoma Association of Broadcasters Non-Metro Radio Station of the Year, and PD/morning jock **Alan Clepper** is the Non-Metro Personality of the Year. With their second Marconi nomination, Clepper says the staff is eager to add the NAB award to their collection.*

"The big thing here is teamwork. The staff we have now meshes more than any staff I've ever worked with. It's beyond a professional level; it's personal. We care about each other and we're very involved in the community, from the Chamber of Commerce to a local high school boosters club.

"We keep an eye on technology and are usually ahead of the game. When we go to different seminars – state and national – about 90% of the time we are already trying or looking at what they're talking about. The experts look at us and ask, 'How is it working for you?'" We've just launched KOFM.com/mobile so people can listen on their cell phones. We've also tied-in with the local emergency management team to have emergency information transmitted over the signal. The message then scrolls on the radio display.

"One of our major events is the blood drive with the Northwest Oklahoma Blood Institute. We take a bus full of donors down to the Texas Motor Speedway and, two years ago, set the record for the most donations on that particular date.

"Our [now former] GM/afternoon personality **Jerry 'JJ Thomas' Butler** has really helped the station since he started. We were diamonds in the rough, but he saw these things we were doing and asked why we weren't telling people and documenting it. That's why we started winning awards. We aren't doing anything different; it's the same stuff from 10 years ago. It's just a different attitude."

Honor Roll: KOFM staff celebrate their 2008 OAB Non-Metro Station Of The Year Award. Back row (l-r) are Beverly Jordan, Lindsey Swart, Kari Higgins, Laurie Shaw and Cheryl Myatt. Middle row (l-r) Marilyn McAtee, Mark Holloway, J. Curtis Huckleberry, Jay Hoberecht and Brandon Clepper. Front row (l-r) are Alan Clepper, Kyle Williams, Jerry Butler and Clayton Nolan.

Brittini Black

Good Happens

WHO IS BRITTINI BLACK?

- A different kind of artist who adds a new element to Country Music; one that blends hope-filled songs with her vocal influences - ranging from Patsy Cline to Michael McDonald.
- A singer/songwriter who cares about her country – Brittini is environmentally sensitive and wants to be a positive role model through her music
- Kicking off an 18 market radio tour in September with stops in NASHVILLE, MEMPHIS, OKLAHOMA CITY, DALLAS, HOUSTON, AUSTIN, SAN ANTONIO, ALBUQUERQUE, PHOENIX, LAS VEGAS, SAN DIEGO, SALT LAKE CITY, DENVER, KANSAS CITY, ST. LOUIS, INDIANAPOLIS, CINCINNATI & ATLANTA
- The first Country Music Artist to visit these radio markets in a hybrid (or alternative fuel) vehicle, to promote the release of her first single "Good Happens" – she will calculate the total "carbon footprint" of her radio tour and plans to off-set the carbon emissions
- Documenting her radio tour with uploads of daily video footage to be shared with thousands of fans on www.brittiniblack.com, www.MySpace.com/brittiniblack, www.slugfestrecordsnashville.com and YouTube!
- Cast in the new unscripted Television Show "BREAKOUT-the road to stardom" (touted for summer 2009)

Her debut single "**Good Happens**"

IMPACTING RADIO NOW!

Her debut album ***Good Happens*** available now on Slugfest Records/Nashville.

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One listen is all it takes. Come along for this exciting ride!

CARBON ANGEL

Country Station Of The Year

The Fox That Rocks

KMFX/Rochester, MN, Clear Channel

*The can-do attitude at **Fox Country 102.5** is evident everywhere you look: fundraiser after event after promotion ... it goes on and on. OM/PD/Chief Engineer **Craig Erpestad**, a 10-year station veteran who was battling a power outage when we called, shares some interesting initiatives that have made the "Country That Rocks" station a Marconi finalist for the second time in just five years.*

"We have a tremendous staff here and sound like a major market station. Everyone's bought into what we're trying to do and works their butt off. We just threw a wedding where couples solicited to be married live on the air during the morning show. Our listeners voted online on the couples, rings, flowers, music, catering – everything. We didn't banner up the crucifix, but our legally ordained morning co-host **Tracy Dixon** presided at the ceremony, which we broadcast. The couple was ecstatic, we got lots of sponsors, and listeners loved it.

"We get a jump start on Toys for Tots in the summer, when people coming to a minor-league baseball game will bring a toy. And we have a motorcycle run to help thousands of local kids.

"[Morning cohost] **Jake Duffy**, Tracy, [middayer] **Dave Berg**, [PM driver] **Fish** and everyone else are everywhere. To support the Kids Cup hospital golf tournament, Jake said he'd let the police Tase him live on the air if people would pledge $2,000. He got way more than that. Trust me, Jake had to sign a lot of waivers, including from corporate. We put the video up online and got unbelievable traffic. But Jake says he'd never want to do that again."

Answered Prayers: Morning cohost Tracy Dixon and a special listener get a surprise visit from Garth Brooks at KMFX's Shjon Podein Children's Foundation Celebrity Party & Auction, at which Brand and Kimberly Williams Paisley make an annual appearance.

Some Just Have The Touch

KSON/San Diego, Lincoln Financial

Border Petrol: A KSON staffer pumps free gas into a loyal listener's car.

*KSON/San Diego more than lives up to its motto, "Work hard every day to improve the lives of our listeners." Recognizing the difficult economy, KSON responds by giving away $100 gas cards every hour, doubling listeners' paychecks and staging sellout $5 concerts featuring top artists. PD **John Marks** testifies as to how this remarkable station touches its audience:*

"One of the most fun and rewarding things KSON does is the 'Hometown Handshake Tour' featuring our morning show *Cliff and Company* [**Cliff Dumas, Morgan Thomas, Bill Tanner** and producer/traffic reporter **Tori Peck**]. Each week during the spring and fall, *C&C* do their show live from a restaurant or diner.

"Recently, Emily West performed during one of these shows. Once per month, KSON awards a $10,000 prize during the broadcast. C&C announced the winning name of Beth Tutt from Santee. Within minutes she called back and won. In another 10 minutes, she came by in person! Not only did she live only a few minutes away, but there was a table full of her friends and family who just happened to be at the restaurant.

"Well, it all turned into a big celebration party. Beth said she would fly her sister to San Diego with some of her prize money because they hadn't seen each other in more than *eight years*. So *C&C* called her sister live on the air, and told her about the prize and the trip to San Diego. There were tears of joy from the sisters, and many in the room had some, too. It was really a cool and spontaneous moment."

Making The Emotional Connection

KYGO/Denver, Lincoln Financial

*Community-driven **KYGO/Denver** this past winter provided a connection to thousands of motorists stranded in a sudden storm. Keeping snowbound listeners in touch with their loved ones and directing plows and rescue units to their buried locations, the staff's efforts ultimately saved lives. An avid student of basketball coaching legend John Wooden, who stresses conditioning, fundamentals and teamwork, 19-year programmer **Joel Burke** shares his philosophy about how to challenge oneself and how to inspire others.*

"The most important thing any station can do is to move their listeners from Point A to Point B emotionally. Part of the magic of radio is being able to make people feel and see things when they listen. There've been a lot of goose-bump moments here, but one of the best came after winning at NAB/San Diego in '04. The following day our nominated morning show broadcast live at sunrise on the deck of the U.S.S. Ronald Reagan; we were the first station ever to have done that.

"One of the most important qualities any person can have is to continue to be constantly curious. We talk regularly about that intangible spirit of having passion on the radio, having fun and connecting with the listeners, and looking for those magic moments. In San Diego, that meant finding out who from Colorado was on that ship and putting them on the air, including one sailor who got to talk with his wife here in Denver. Emotion is the most powerful way for people not only to remember, but also to go back and want more."

Award Of The State: The KYGO staff gather to celebrate their CMA Award as 2007 Major Market Station of the Year.

Kicking It Up A Notch

KZKX/Lincoln, NE, Three Eagles

Port Salute: WWII veterans disembark from 96 Kicks' second "Heartland Honor Flight" to Washington, DC memorials and special events.

*96 Kicks celebrates its 32nd anniversary as a Country station this November, and its excellence is finally being recognized with its first-ever national award nomination. Talk about stability: there've been only three PDs in the past 16 years, and **Carol & Mick** have been strong in mornings for well more than a decade. Kicks' ratings climbed throughout '06-'07 to an 11.2 in Fall '07 – its best book ever after **Three Eagles**' recent takeover from Clear Channel. Nebraskan native and PD/PM driver **Hoss Michaels** comments on Kicks' stability and tradition of public service.*

"We get calls not only from people working in a downtown Lincoln high-rise, but also the guy out on a tractor or in a combine. Kicks does a good job of walking that line between a city-slicker station and one that's just for the rural folks. We don't just read liner cards; we get out into the community and do many fundraisers because these are our neighbors.

"We've done concert trips to the ACMs and all that, but through the Children's Miracle Network and Children's Hospital in Omaha, our second *Cure Kids Radiothon* recently raised $68,000 over three days to help local kids and family members touched by cancer. Our second 'Heartland Honor Flight', supported by donations to the Nebraska VFW, flew 121 WWII veterans in May to the Washington memorials, Arlington and other locations. There was one 91-year-old veteran who made every event and really enjoyed being there. Sadly, he passed away on the flight home.

"I get choked up just thinking we're one of five stations the NAB is putting the spotlight on. But it's about teamwork here, a very strong work ethic and trying to make sure we're doing things the right way. It's a unique station I'm very proud to be part of."

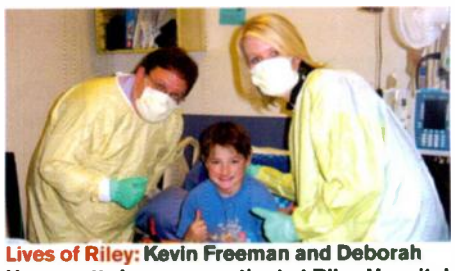
Perpetual Prominence

WFMS/Indianapolis, Cumulus

*WFMS is the highest-rated Country station in the top 50 markets, ranking nine straight years at No. 1 12+. In '07, the morning show of **Jim Denny, Deborah Honeycutt** and **Kevin Freeman** won both the CMA and ACM Personality of the Year, and Hall of Fame afternoon driver **J.D. Cannon** celebrates 30 years there next February. **Cumulus** Indianapolis OM **Bob Richards** is just happy to be part of it all:*

"We continue to be the most active station in the market. You can combine all the charity and community events that every other station here does and they still don't match what we do. But it's not just about generating revenue, it's about continuing to do the right thing. Everyone here has a passion and a heart for that; it's the part they enjoy the most.

"This past CRS was the first for our new GM **Chris Wheat**. He came from the rock world and was amazed how accessible and friendly the artists are. After Keith Anderson and Montgomery Gentry performed at the Sony BMG lunch, his mouth was hanging open because it was such a high-energy show. I just turned to him and said, 'Chris, welcome to Nashville!' It was fun to see him experience it all for the first time and really get it. As an old rock guy, he wore us out! Chris can go and go, and he's nearly 60. It was 1am one night, and I said, 'I think I'm going to call it a night.' And I was agenda chair, so I had to get up at seven. And he shouts, 'Aw, come on! Where you going? Lightweight!'"



Lives of Riley: Kevin Freeman and Deborah Honeycutt cheer up a patient at Riley Hospital before the annual WMFS Riley Radiothon.

WEEKEND WARRIOR

Welcome Back
WSM-FM Nashville

Welcome Back
WXTU Philadelphia

Bob Kingsley's Country Top 40 Wins Weekends

WGAR-FM Cleveland, OH ..... ↑ 146%

12+	11.1	#1
25-54	11.7	#1
18-34	14.5	#1

"Why do we run Bob Kingsley? It's the most-heard, most-trusted countdown in the industry. With results like this, we'd never consider anything else for weekends on WGAR."
Brian Jennings, Program Director

KPLX-FM Dallas/Ft.Worth, TX ..... ↑ 124%

WUSN-FM Chicago, IL ..... ↑ 73%

"CT40 continues to be a ratings star for WUSN. We're thrilled with the quality of work Bob and his staff consistently deliver to our audience in Chicago."
Mike Peterson, Program Director

WMZQ-FM Washington, DC ..... ↑ 45%

WKLB-FM Boston, MA ..... ↑ 100%

"Country 102.5 Boston has the highest ratings in our history! Bob Kingsley again helped lead the way with consistent, well researched, and compelling programming. It's a true benchmark for WKLB."
Mike Brophey, Program Director

BOB KINGSLEY'S COUNTRY TOP 40

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Ad Sales
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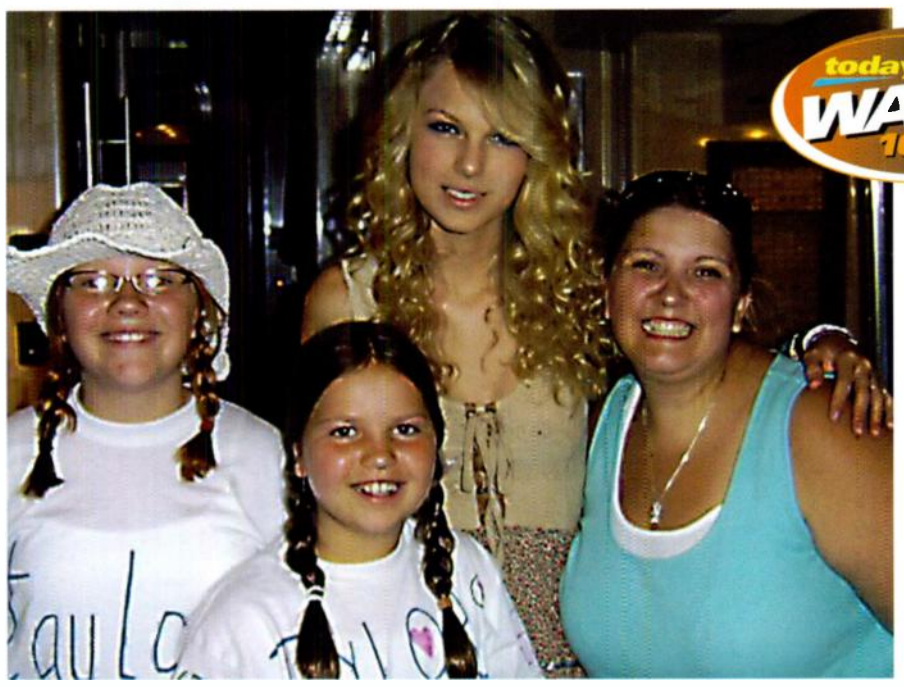
Small Market Personality Of The Year

Country takes three of five nominations in this category

Let's Get Personal

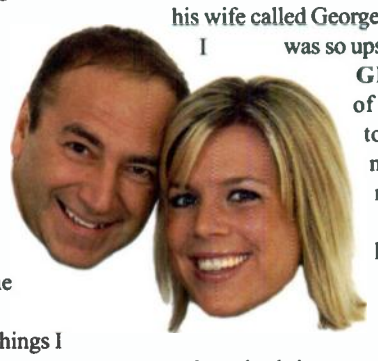
George House & Katie Bright, WAXX/Eau Claire, WI



Sister Sister: When contest winner Alexa Christianson (r) couldn't decide which of her younger sisters to bring with her on Taylor Swift's bus, Swift offered to let her bring both.

This is the first Marconi nomination for the duo, with PD/morning co-host George House having won the category in '98 with former partner John Murphy. After three years together in Wisconsin, ***Katie Bright*** *has moved to Nashville but remains a daily part of this local show, adding a new, remote injection of Music City.*

GH: We may be the most open morning show in America. Our listeners know a lot about our personal lives, and that's pretty rare. We talk about things in our lives. We laugh, Katie cries ... just about every day. We don't just do the show prep, we give an honest interaction. The listeners who call and engage us on the show, we draw them out.



KB: We did this bit about all the things I should do before I turned 30 this past January. Listeners called in, we compiled a list and someone mentioned all the haunted locations in the area. On Halloween morning we announced I would be going to this old haunted bridge out in the middle of nowhere by myself in the dark. I'm starting to freak out as I head across this bridge, but when I get to the middle I hear, "Walk all the way across the bridge, Katie." I said to George, "I think someone just said my name." Then I heard it again. I started crying and ran back to the car, just freaking out. It turns out a listener that lived nearby decided to scare me, and his wife called George at the studio when she heard I was so upset.

GH: We captured all of it on the air. It was chilling to hear. I kept thinking to myself, "Wow this is great radio."

KB: Another time we had a listener win a contest to spend time with Taylor Swift on her bus during Country Jam USA. She was only allowed to bring one other person, but when Taylor heard she had two sisters and couldn't choose, she let the listener bring both. It was one of those little extras you love to see work out, and hopefully those things add up to make a difference for our show.

Voice Of A Community

Will Payne & Barry Diamond, *The Morning Circus*, KITX/Hugo, OK

With three OAB Non-Metro Personalities of the Year under their belt, ***KITX/Hugo, OK's*** Morning Circus *hosts GM/PD* ***Will Payne*** *and* ***Barry Diamond*** *look at their fourth Marconi nomination as a blessing. And whether they win or walk away the Susan Lucci of the night, this duo will continue to serve their community as they've done for the last eight years.*

WP: Our interaction with the community, whether it's a caller saying Happy Birthday or telling us about something going on in the community, sets us apart. We try to give them as much time on the air as possible and to relay the message they are trying to get out to the community.

BD: I work a lot with the Big Brothers & Big Sisters Bowl For Kids' Sake, where kids come in and get to bowl a couple of games. The money raised goes to mentoring programs. I've been doing that for the last eight years, and in the last five months I've hosted seven events in the Dallas area. I try to make it entertaining. For instance, if someone has bowled five strikes in a row I'll say, "Throw it in the gutter and I'll give you a prize." Everyone stops bowling to see what the person's going do. At our Bowl For Kids' Sake in Sherman, TX, we raised about $29,000. And that's just one event.

WP: A few years ago we had a listener call in about a toddler, Brad, who couldn't breathe on his own. He needed money to get to the Children's Hospital in Chicago and couldn't fly because of his condition. So, in two days we collected $12,000 through traffic stops. That got him a van, money to get there and covered the hotel. When they got there they found out he would be able to eventually breathe on his own and is doing so now. People really got behind us and donated whatever they could. We love being a part of that stuff.

Bowl Of Laughs: KITX participated in the Big Brothers Big Sisters Bowl For Kids' Sake, raising money for the organization. Morning co-host Barry Diamond hosted the event. Pictured (back, l-r) listener Shawn Francis, Jarred and Will Payne; (front, l-r) listener Cole Francis, Barry Diamond and McKinley Payne.

Professional Juggler

JJ Thomas, KOFM/Enid, OK

Exchange Server: Former KOFM GM Jerry Butler (c) shows two programmers from Mali, West Africa the sales, programming and marketing aspects of running a small market American radio station.

Four-time Oklahoma Association of Broadcasters Non-Metro Personality of the Year finalist and 2007 CMA nominee for Small Market Radio Personality ***JJ Thomas*** *was also known as GM* ***Jerry Butler*** *prior to his move to Cumulus/Albany, GA.*

"Even though this is an individual award, it really reflects on our entire staff. I couldn't go in as a GM and do an afternoon show if I didn't have a staff that I can lean on. I know they're going to do their jobs while I'm in the studio locked in my own little world for a few hours a day. Some of it is voice-tracked, but that's just part of being a GM and having to wear different hats and multi-task.

"I love what I do, that's why I try to find people who have a passion for what we do. I look forward to coming into the station. Radio isn't just my career, it's also my hobby. Local involvement on the personality side, as well as the management side, is key.

"It's all about finding out what is important to your listeners. I had taken off early one afternoon to pick up my seven-year-old at grade school, and while I was waiting in the pick-up line, about 50 cars back, it occurred to me all these parents are sitting there with only the radio to listen to. I started the After School Radio Club by promoting it every afternoon about 10 minutes before the kids get out saying, 'We're giving away a free After School Radio Club shirt and tickets to (Jonas Brothers, Wiggles, etc.). If you'd like to win, give your kid your cell phone and have them give me a call.' We put the kids on the air to get them involved, and it makes the parents listen in because everyone wants to hear their kids on the radio. That's one example of how we try to be different and very family oriented without having to say it." CAC

Rusty Walker

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"When I'm on the attack...I call Bob Glasco at Rusty Walker Programming! When I'm being attacked...I call Bob Glasco at Rusty Walker Programming! When I need to whack a competitor...I call Tony Soprano. Then I call Bob Glasco at Rusty Walker Programming! They're a 'whack and attack' kind of company and are BRILLIANT STRATEGIC ARTISTS!"

- Ed Hill, PD, KUBL/Salt Lake City

"I would NEVER GO INTO BATTLE WITHOUT THE STRATEGIC THINKING OF RUSTY WALKER PROGRAMMING. Their insight into the country life-group through the years is my secret weapon."

- Joel Burke, PD, KYGO/Denver

"I like results and for my country stations I get them with Scott Huskey and the folks at Rusty Walker Programming. I know I can trust Scott to KEEP MY STATIONS FOCUSED AND ON TARGET. If it's a battle...I know I want Huskey and Rusty Walker Programming on my side."

- Jeff Wilks, President/Wilks Broadcasting, LLC

"Most every winning team has some sort of intangible edge; an X-FACTOR THE COMPETITION CAN'T TRUMP REGARDLESS OF THEIR RESOURCES. It may manifest itself in any number of ways, but for Curtis Media, it's Rusty Walker Programming. We would never–and I mean NEVER–want to be in a Country battle without him on our side."

- Phil Zachary, President/Curtis Media Group (Owners of WQDR/Raleigh)

"Rusty Walker Programming has been an extremely valuable part of our KYGO team for nearly 20 years! NOBODY HAS A BETTER FEEL FOR COUNTRY RADIO. You want Rusty Walker Programming on your side...you do not want them with the other guys!"

- Bob Call, VP/GM, KYGO/Denver

"I have worked with Bob Glasco and the folks at Rusty Walker Programming for many years, and I will continue to do so for many years to come. Bob shoots straight and tells it like it is. He TREATS OUR STATIONS LIKE THEY WERE HIS OWN, which is exactly what you look for in a programming consultant."

- Pete Benedetti, President & CEO/New Northwest Broadcasters, LLC

COUNTRY RADIO'S MOST SEASONED, MOST EXPERIENCED AND SUCCESSFUL TEAM OF ADVISORS AND STRATEGISTS.

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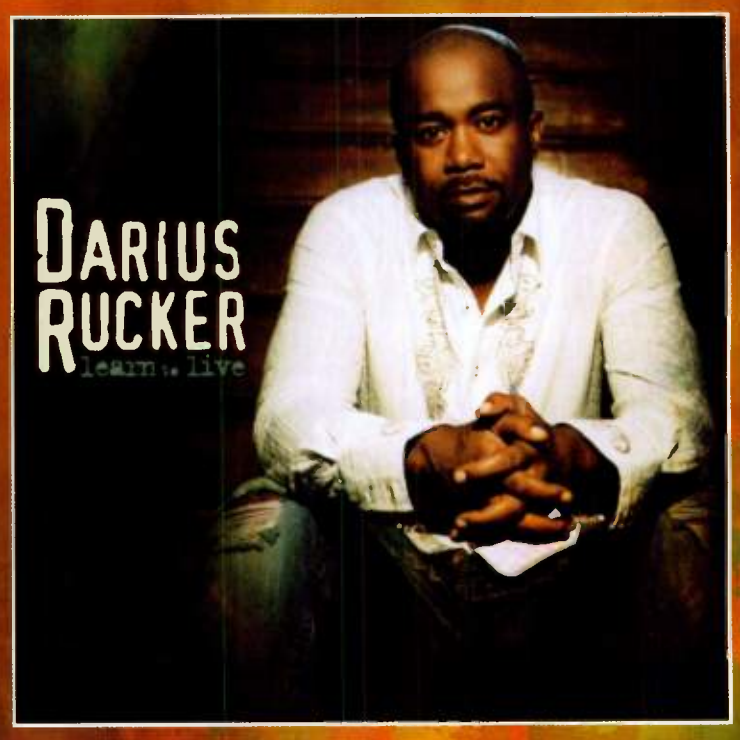
learn to live

The debut Country release from

DARIUS RUCKER

IN STORES SEPTEMBER 16TH



featuring the hit single

"DON'T THINK I DON'T THINK ABOUT IT"

www.dariusrucker.com

www.capitolnashville.com

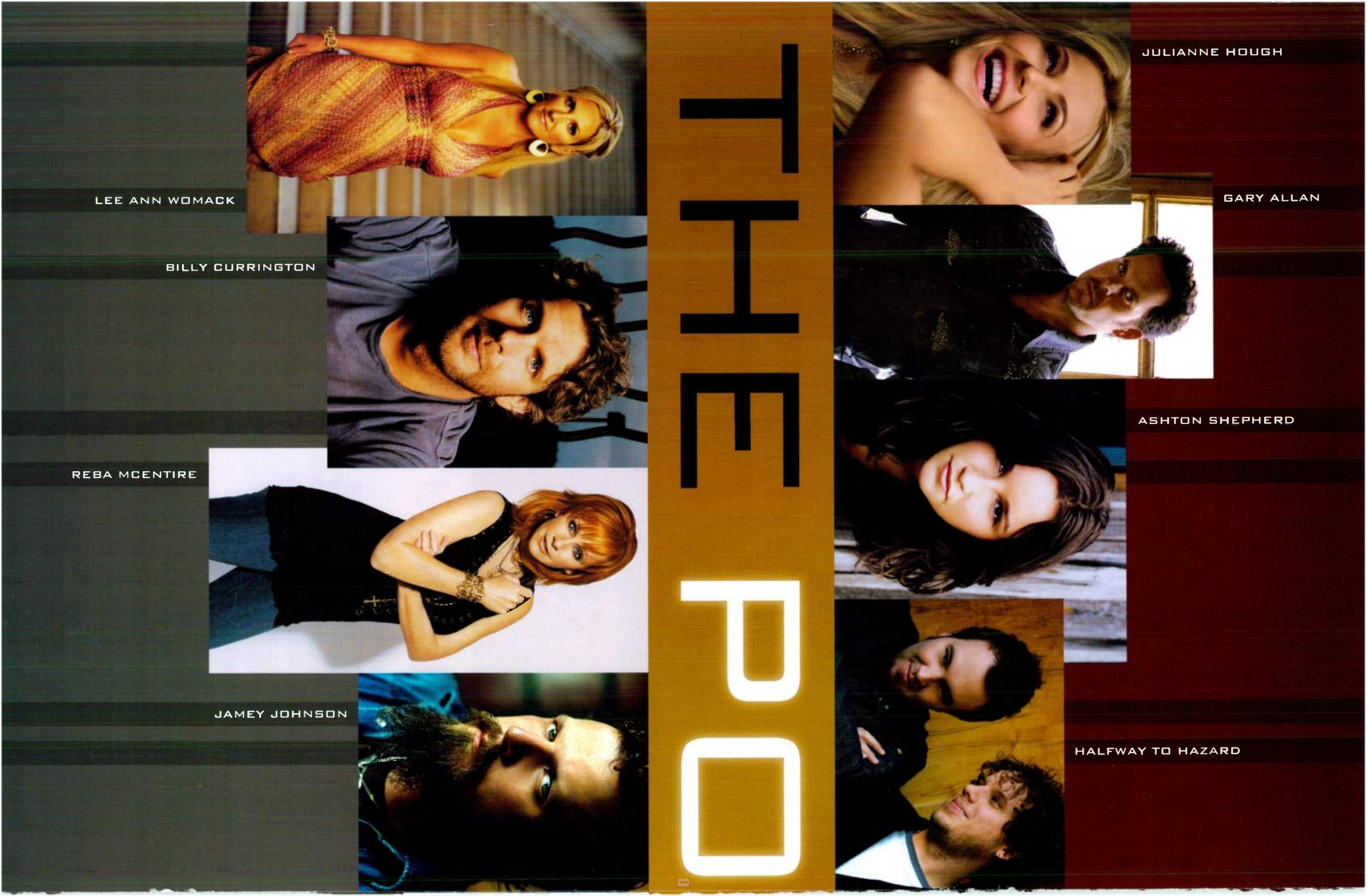
Our Annual Ranking of Country's Airplay Leaders

Since the heyday of WSM-AM/Nashville (profiled earlier in this issue), the primary conduit to the vast country listening audience has been radio, making the airing of country music on stations nationwide arguably the most crucial function of two industries whose aims are otherwise divergent.

Ranking the executives charged with navigating this often haphazard intersection is an interesting, if inexact, endeavor. Once again, however, the panel of radio and music business professionals polled by Country Aircheck delivered a thoughtful assessment of the most influential airplay power brokers, using the following criteria:

"Airplay is currency for Country radio as well as the music business, so those with the greatest influence over airplay decisions should receive your highest rankings. These are folks who directly control airplay or have the influence to obtain airplay on behalf of artists."

This year, we asked those selected to share a favorite industry photo, along with their description of the captured moment. Not surprisingly, the submissions are as varied as the personalities who make up the Power 31.


THE PO
LEE ANN WOMACK
BILLY CURRINGTON
REBA MCENTIRE
JAMEY JOHNSON
JULIANNE HOUGH
GARY ALLAN
ASHTON SHEPHERD
HALFWAY TO HAZARD

SHANIA TWAIN

DAVID NAIL

VINCE GILL

GEORGE STRAIT

WER 16

JULIE ROBERTS

SUGARLAND

RANDY ROGERS BAND

JOSH TURNER

COUNTRY'S SUPERPOWER

Mercury RECORDS

UNIVERSAL

MCA NASHVILLE

UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP
NASHVILLE

WWW.UMGNASHVILLE.COM

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1. Joe Galante
Sony BMG/Nashville Chairman

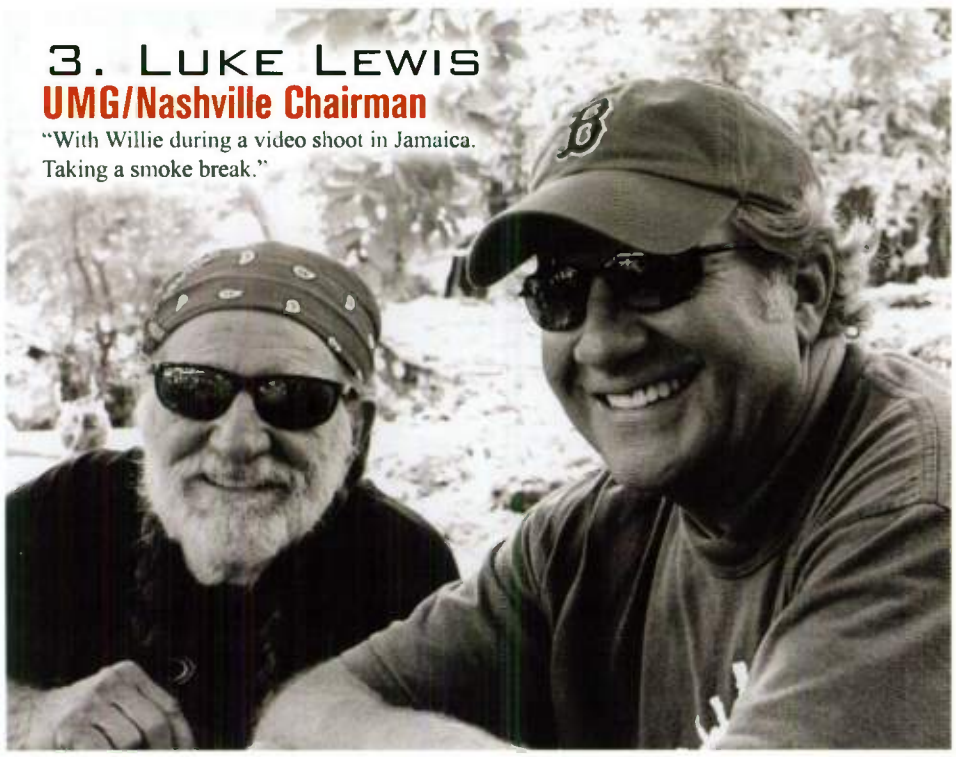
"This picture represents a group of people who believed in an artist who could be a superstar. And who, along with the artist and management, put together a plan and did what most folks in town didn't think was possible. It represents the breakthrough of Kenny Chesney to the top of the album charts, and the partnership and friendship that exists between all of us."

2. Scott Borchetta
Big Machine/Valory Music Co. President

"Even though Taylor doesn't necessarily like this photo because it was taken not long after she was soaked during her ACM mega-performance, this is a favorite of mine for so many reasons. Jack Ingram's ACM win for Top New Male Vocalist was perhaps the most popular win since the early Vince Gill awards that I was associated with – good guys do win. And with Taylor, what more can you say? She's such a bright star and a bright light. This photo is about champions – listen to Taylor's 'Change' and it says it all."

3. Luke Lewis
UMG/Nashville Chairman

"With Willie during a video shoot in Jamaica. Taking a smoke break."



4. Mike Dungan
Capitol President/CEO

"The Arista Dream Team (with Alan Jackson, Allen Butler and Tim DuBois). Taken at our ACM party in 1992. We were young. We didn't know any better. We broke all the rules. We had the time of our lives. And we kicked ass."

5. Clay Hunnicutt
Clear Channel SVP/Programming; VP/Country; WUBL/Atlanta PD

"Accepting one of WUSY (US-101)/ Chattanooga's CMA Awards is special for several reasons. One, it was one of nine Station of the Year awards and six Personality awards won by the team. Two, it will probably be the only time in my life I'll be on that stage accepting a CMA Award, unless I learn to sing (not gonna happen). And three, because Pam Tillis is looking for anyone in the audience she knows instead of listening to some radio guy from Chattanooga."

6. Jaye Albright
Country Consultant

"This was taken backstage during Garth's first appearance in Las Vegas at the Thomas & Mack Center, right after his kids came down to get a pre-show goodnight hug. I was there with some winners from KWNR and then-KFMS, and all of us were treated to Garth's brand of customer service, which has never been equaled in my 47-year radio and music career."

7. Rusty Walker
Programming Consultant

"This is me (then-OM/PD/MD/am drive and occasional AE at WQIK/ Jacksonville), APD/Prod. Dir./middays John St. John and some vagabond woman we'd run into on the street. Ha! In reality, WQIK had just scored its first No. 1 12+ and No. 1 25-54. While we were excited about the numbers, John and I were even more psyched to get to spend some time with Dolly the afternoon before her show in Jacksonville. It was raining torrentially and we had to park several blocks from the venue. If you look closely, you can see that John and I are both soaked. Although she was country's biggest female superstar at the time, Dolly didn't seem to mind that we were both wringing wet. Isn't it amazing that none of the three of us has changed a bit since then?"

TAYLOR SWIFT

Love Story

...just say YES.

THE FIRST HIT FROM

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IN STORES 11-11-08

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TaylorSwift.com | MySpace.com/TaylorSwift | BigMachineRecords.com

Katie Armiger

THE NEW SINGLE

"UNSEEN"

iTUNES + KATIE ARMIGER =
ONE OF THE HIGHEST DOWNLOAD WEEKS FOR A DISCOVERY ARTIST IN COUNTRY HISTORY!

ALREADY ON & SPINNING:
KBWF, KYGO, WCOB, KJCS, KHGE, KSOP, KVOX, KUBL, WTHI, KKBG, KEAN, WIOV, KIXQ, KBCY, WXFL, WWGR, KRRV, WFFN & MANY MORE!

COLD RIVER RECORDS

NINE NORTH

GrassRoots PROMOTION

FROM THE NEW COLD RIVER CD BELIEVE IN STORES AND ONLINE NOW.

Eric Durrance

WIND-UP NASHVILLE & NINE NORTH PROUDLY PRESENT
THE NEW TEMPO SINGLE...

"TURN IT OFF"

PRODUCED & CO-WRITTEN BY TEDDY GENTRY/PORTER-GENTRY PRODUCTIONS

ON YOUR DESK & DESKTOP VIA PLAY MPE NOW

AIRPLAY IMPACT DATE: 9/29/08

LOOK FOR ERIC DURRANCE ONSTAGE WITH JASON ALDEAN & LADY ANTEBELLUM ON THIS FALL'S CMT TOUR!

Wind-up Nashville

NINE NORTH

GrassRoots PROMOTION

8. Gregg Swedberg
KEEY/Minneapolis PD

"Backstage after a Big & Rich concert. John was so pumped up and said it was one of his favorite shows. I asked him, 'How cool is it to be you?' And he showed me. Truth is, I've never been as cool as John Rich. I have another photo taken backstage at Prince's dance club before I got into Country, but that was so long ago that I'm really not recognizable. Lots more hair, lots less weight."

14. Joel Burke KYGO/Denver PD

"I had the chance to spend a couple of hours with legendary coach John Wooden (r) in 2003, and then spend another couple of hours with him in 2004, which is when the attached photo was taken. He has had a profound impact on my life and my life at work. Coach Wooden is my hero! When I grow up, I want to be just like him. Also pictured is Andy Hill (l), who played for Coach Wooden in the early '70s."

9. Jeff Garrison
CBS Radio VP/Country; KILT/Houston PD

"David Malloy, Scott Siman, Wynn Jackson, John Huie, Christy DiNapoli, James Stroud, Greg Garrison, Byron Gallimore, Jeff Garrison, Allen Stieglitz and Harry Frazer at the Tall Man Invitational, better known as the TMI. This was in Scottsdale, winter 1998. Not pictured is T.K. Kimbrell, who got the shanks, quit and went home."

15. Mike Culotta
WQYK/Tampa PD

"This is me and my friend (I still can't believe he knows my name), the legendary Charlie Daniels, onstage receiving a humanitarian award together in Tampa. What a privilege to be on the same stage and sharing this moment with him. This picture hangs on the wall in my office right below the American flag so I can see it every day."

10. Becky Brenner
KMPS/Seattle PD

"I love this because it is such a great reminder of the amazing opportunities we experience in radio. Sarah Buxton joined us for a special Studio 9-4-1 performance and luncheon to thank the firefighters and paramedics of King County for their hard work and dedication. To thank us, they set up their tallest (100-foot) rescue ladder and allowed us to gear up and experience what they go through every day. The setting was at the foothills of the Cascade Mountains and it was an amazing, beautiful day. How many people get to do things like this and get paid for it?!"

16. Royce Risser
UMGN SVP/Promotion

"This project was a first for all of us. Josh Turner's (c) first platinum album and first hit single. EJ Bernas' (l) first hit single as a regional and my first artist breaking as a VP. We were absolutely pumped."

11. Mike Peterson WUSN/Chicago PD

"Kenny Chesney, Keith Urban, and US99 at sold-out Soldier Field was an amazing experience. A great day for country music in Chicago!"

17. Mike Curb
Curb Records Chairman

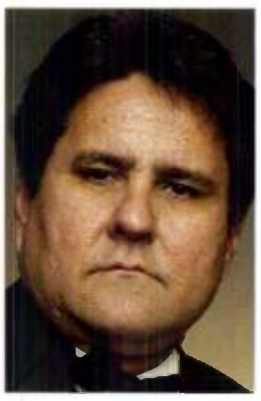
"Eddie Ray (c) opened the door for Curb Records' first distribution agreement in the mid-'60s and Dick Whitehouse was President for 35 of Curb Records' 45 years. I would never have received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame were it not for these two individuals and the support of the entire Curb Records team over the years."

12. Jimmy Harnen
Capitol/Nashville SVPP

"Taken at a crowded intersection in Addison, TX in November of 1997 before I relocated from Dallas to Columbia, MD to become NE rep for DreamWorks. I sent it to every PD and MD in the region with a note: 'I am not your everyday promotion Turkey. Looking forward to meeting you soon! Happy Thanksgiving!' Greg Cole left me a beyond puzzled message: 'Jimmy, this is Greg at WPOC/Baltimore. Re: the turkey photo... (dead air, crickets, more dead air) ...call me.' Greg and I still have a good laugh about that."

18. Gator Michaels Warner Bros. SVPP

"Danielle Taylor, Bob Reeves, April Johnson, Nancy Tunick, James Otto, Kristen Williams, Brooks Quigley, George Meeker and Ugly Fat Guy (and, in spirit, Rick Young and Glenn Noblit, who aren't pictured) at the No. 1 party for Otto's 'Just Got Started Loving You.' We actively worked this single for 300 days – the definition of passion. If I have any influence in this business, it comes from the people standing with me in this picture."



13. Randy Goodman
Lyric Street President

"Even though not everyone who should be in this is, it's a great cross-section of artists, Nashville staff and those from Burbank – including my boss – who have invested themselves totally in the dream of Lyric Street Records. It was taken last June at our 10-year anniversary party at the Country Music Hall Of Fame. Very special evening!"

19. Mike Kennedy
Wilks/Kansas City Dir./Programming; KBEQ PD

"Each year Q104 teamed up with (now former) Chiefs defensive end Jared Allen to host a concert and Halloween party to benefit Juvenile Diabetes. Taylor Swift, Emerson Drive, James Otto, Halfway to Hazard and Lee Brice have played the event. In this photo, a very small Mike Kennedy is surrounded by costumed Chiefs players including Priest Holmes, Jason Dunn, John Wellborn, Allen and Tony Gonzales."

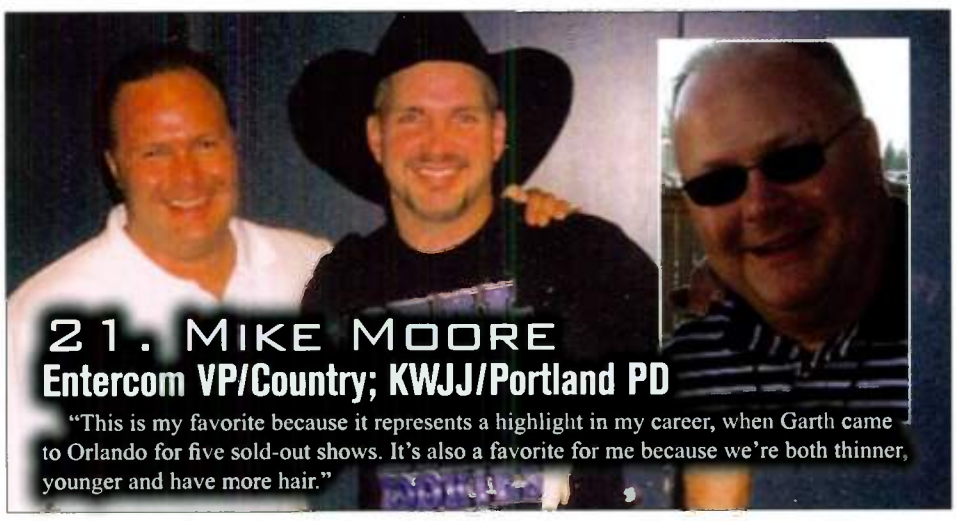
WATCH MY STORY UNFOLD

SARAHDARLING.COM

Black River MUSIC GROUP

20. Butch Waugh
Sony BMG/Nashville Executive VP

"When I left New York for Nashville in 1997, RCA Label Group was just two labels. Mike Wilson (second from left) was RCA VP/Promotion and Tom Baldrica (l) was BNA VP/Promotion. With Joe Galante's (second from right) direction and vision we enjoyed amazing success. When Arista and Bobby Kraig (c) joined in 2000, we hit another level. Working with them was one of the most satisfying and enjoyable times of my professional life. I learned so much and will always be indebted to these four. The work ethic, attitude and supportiveness we have today at Sony BMG is a carryover from the original VP-3, who set the standard for anyone who walks into the building."



21. Mike Moore
Entercom VP/Country; KWJJ/Portland PD

"This is my favorite because it represents a highlight in my career, when Garth came to Orlando for five sold-out shows. It's also a favorite for me because we're both thinner, younger and have more hair."

22. Skip Bishop
Arista/Nashville VP/Promotion

"Here's me with the barbershop quartet I sing with on weekends. The short guy is the tenor."

23. Scott Lindy
Sirius Satellite Radio Country PD

"Sam Kinison did about two hours on the air on the morning show I co-hosted at Rock WAZU/Dayton in 1990. He came back for a show in Cincinnati a month later, and while walking to his dressing room post-show he recognized me and called me out to come through the throng of autograph seekers and join him backstage. He was red-hot at the time, and it was a really cool thing for him to do and impressed the hell out of my date. Then I went bald."

24. Kevin Herring
Lyric Street VP/Promotion

"A bunch of young guns at Mercury in 1994. Wow, we were young! Me, John Ettinger, Theresa Durst, Pat Surnegie, Rocco Cosco and Michael Powers. What a team that was!"

25. Bob Moody Regent VPP

"From my Country Radio Hall of Fame induction – the ultimate honor and one of the most memorable days of my life. I was also proud to include Babe Ruth, Pee Wee Reese, Larry Daniels, Buddy Deane, my grandmother Moody, Coyote Calhoun, zoology, biology, archaeology, The Da Vinci Code, William Faulkner, Talledega Nights, the Tower of London, Al Gore, Gary Burbank and the Druids in a speech that ran only 10 minutes."

26. Kerry Wolfe
WMIL/Milwaukee PD

"This photo is important to me (I) because the three people I am pictured with (l-r) are no longer with us: Keith Whitley, who died of an alcohol overdose in 1989; Gayland Adams, who at the time was with RCA Records and later took his life; and Kevin O'Neal, the Program Director who acted as my mentor in the early years of my career and passed away just last year."

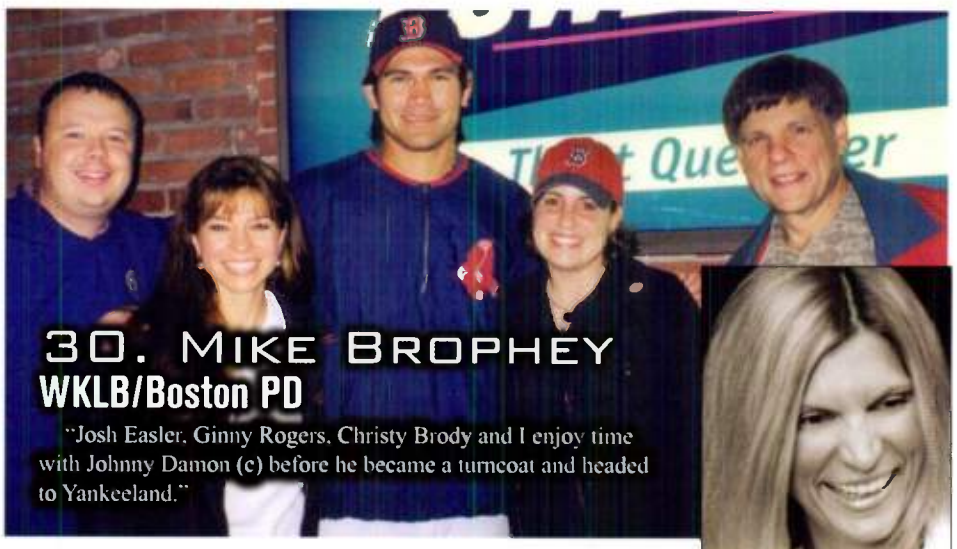
29. Joel Raab
Country Consultant

"Clint Eastwood attended a radio junket for *Bronco Billy* in New Orleans circa 1980. On the far left is Alan Furst, then me (PD at WEEP/Pittsburgh at the time), the next two I don't remember, then Ed Salamon (WHN/New York), Eastwood and a bunch of people I don't remember. Clint sat down and had lunch with us and was just as nice as he could be, cutting station promos for all of us. I will add that getting Clint Eastwood to cut a promo for me impressed my next bosses so much they hired me."

27. Jan Jeffries
Cumulus SVP/ Programming

28. Blair Garner
After Midnite and Blair Garner Show Host

"This is me dressed as Gene Simmons, posing with a rock 'n' roll vamped-up Taylor Swift at our CRS event. I'm a self-professed member of the Taylor Swift fan club, and I truly believe she is the face of our format's future. I thought it was awesome that she would play our party. And she totally kicked butt!"



30. Mike Brophey
WKLB/Boston PD

"Josh Easler, Ginny Rogers, Christy Brody and I enjoy time with Johnny Damon (c) before he became a turncoat and headed to Yankeeland."

31. Shelly Easton
Citadel Country Co-Capt.; WCTO/Allentown PD

SARAH DARLING
COMING 2009
BLACKRIVERMUSIC.COM
Black River MUSIC GROUP

PAT ROPER

THE REVIEWS ARE IN!

"It seems like the path to radio airplay these days starts with a reality TV show. Winners, finalists, contestants - they're all getting deals and shipping singles. Pat Roper is taking the old fashioned approach - a singer/songwriter with country roots who has no TV show on his resume. Instead he offers quality songs. Take a listen. You don't need three judges to realize Pat Roper offers music that our listeners can relate to."
- Jay Thomas, MD, Sirius XM Radio, Highway 16/US Country

"Great performer, great song, great record - up-tempo and under three minutes, make more records like this, ADDED!!!"
- Dr. Bruce Nelson, KFTX/Corpus Christi

"Pat is three things: 1) Real 2) Country 3) Fun. We need this guy in our format. I'll be playing 'Somethin' About That!'"
- Keith Hill, The Unconsultant

"The phones were very complimentary for Pat, they loved the single...I will most definitely be an Add for Pat...He's got some fans here in Mountain Country for sure!"
- Jim Quinton, MD, WPPL

"Lofton Creek has launched yet another winner. We are adding 'Somethin' About That' and I would suggest you give this one a second listen. Real country and powerful. And he backs it up with a dynamic live act."
- Les Humble, WRSF

PAT ROPER DEFEATED BLAKE SHELTON, BILLY RAY CYRUS AND ZAC BROWN BAND ON WWGR'S "MAKE IT OR BREAK IT"

LOFTON CREEK RECORDS

RISE & FALL

Labels Step Forward With Year-End Music

The annual fourth-quarter sales swell has Nashville's record companies loading in their most crucial projects. Meanwhile, radio programmers steer for a successful Fall book, sorting through an ever-growing pile of contenders in hopes of finding just the right musical mix. And bringing it all together is Country Aircheck's Fall Music Preview, an annual roundup of the single and album releases vying for attention at radio and, ultimately, with the listeners who keep this whole business afloat.

1720 ENTERTAINMENT

"First of all, we want to thank Country radio for their continued support of **Rissi Palmer**," says VP/Promotion **Bill Macky**, who promises more great music from Palmer very soon. The 1720 crew is also looking forward to music from **Jamie O'Neal**'s latest project, due this fall. "An ACM Award winner and multi-Grammy nominee, Jamie has reached a new level of excellence with this body of work," Macky says. "She is writing and singing better than ever, which is a pretty bold statement considering she has consistently delivered important, hit music to Country radio and her fans."

ARISTA

Kristy Lee Cook's debut single "15 Minutes of Shame" from her Sept. 16 debut album *Why Wait* is getting the full Arista push. "We were all knocked out when we heard what Kristy Lee had crafted in the studio," says VP **Skip Bishop**.

Brad Paisley's *Play* lands Nov. 4, and the first single "Start A Band" features **Keith Urban**. "Talk about a history-making event – these guys are having so much fun and are telling a story that just captures it all," Bishop says.

The third single from **Alan Jackson**'s *Good Time* is "Country Boy." "Third chapter to a three-part No. 1 trilogy," Bishop says. "It's the perfect next single." He calls **Brooks and Dunn**'s "Cowgirls Don't Cry" from *Cowboy Town* "an inspirational classic of country sentiment, told by the most distinctive pair in this format." Also on deck: A first single from **Jason Michael Carroll**'s sophomore album.

BIGGER PICTURE

"The **Zac Brown Band** will be releasing the new album *The Foundation* this fall," says Bigger Picture chief shutterbug **Michael Powers**. "Most likely October." The BP promotion team continues to focus on the Atlanta-area band's debut single "Chicken Fried."

BIG MACHINE

It's Jack P. at Big Machine, and the word of the moment is *Fearless*, which also happens to be the title of **Taylor Swift**'s next album, the follow-up to her self-titled triple-platinum debut. "The lead single 'Love Story' is already making a big impact at Country radio, and maximum airplay on that track is expected to run through the Nov. 11 street date," Purcell says. "Extensive radio album premiere plans are in play for Taylor's album launch – look for details coming very soon."

The Machinists' union continues to press **Adam Gregory**, whose NSA/Midas/Big Machine single "Crazy Days" persists with its chart climb. Gregory's radio tour rolls on as he finalizes his stateside debut album. A sampler is on its way to radio this month.

A new single from ACM Top New Male Vocalist of the Year **Jack Ingram** is also on deck. Ingram is winding down his year-long run with Martina McBride and will be putting finishing touches on his next Big Machine studio album, set for Q1 release. **Trisha Yearwood**'s "They Call It Falling For A Reason" from her album *Heaven, Heartache And The Power Of Love* remains a priority. Also coming soon is a debut single from newly signed duo **Kate & Kacey Coppola**.

BLACK RIVER

(Ed. Note: Unedited because, really, where would we start?) "Black River Music Group President **Jimmy Nichols** would like to extend 'a Laurel ... and Hardy handshake to all of our music industry friends.' Work, work, work is all they do at BRMG. Thanks to flagship artist **Jeff Bates** and his seven

Sarah Darling

weeks at No. 1 on the *CMT Pure Twelve Pack*, BRMG was able to afford that $200 handcart. Jeff's current single 'Riverbank' is a favorite amongst radio listeners, especially the Johnson. Patriarch **Gabby Johnson** was quoted as saying, 'Rurrr rurr rurr,' which is not only authentic frontier gibberish, but explains BRMG's fall marketing initiatives.

"In order to protect their phony baloney jobs, the fine folks at BRMG will debut **Sarah Darling** later this year, or if they don't get around to it, 2009. VP Promotion **Rick Baumgartner** said, 'Not since Lili Von Shtupp have I heard a voice as magical as Sarah. Wait till radio hears her, she'll make mincemeat out of them.' Promotion executives **Jim Dorman** and **Joe Carroll** would love to thank Governor William J. Lepetomane for our inspiration."

BNA

Lost Trailers' *Holler Back* is in stores and new BNA veep **Bryan Frasher** says, "We couldn't be more excited about it. This band has worked hard for years, so to have this kind of excitement around them is huge." Look for a second single in late September or early October. **Kellie Pickler**'s self-titled second album bows Sept. 30, with current single "Don't You Know You're Beautiful" still at the forefront of BNA's efforts.

Kenny Chesney's *Lucky Old Sun* lands Oct. 14, and Frasher says lead single "Everybody Wants To Go To Heaven" is "already top 10 and screaming toward No. 1!

"We are also *very* excited to have **Craig Morgan** on BNA and look forward to everyone hearing the incredible new music," Frasher says. Check it out for yourself on his current single "Love Remembers," or Oct. 21 on *That's Why*.

Finally, Frasher stumps for **Pat Green**, who he says "has most likely made his best album ever! His current single 'Let Me' illustrates how Pat has really opened up and given a part of himself that nobody has ever seen or heard before."

BROKEN BOW

BBR will release **Randy Owen**'s first solo album *One on One* Nov. 4, of which Owen co-wrote seven of the 11 cuts. The CD was produced by **John Rich** and the first single "Like I Never Broke Her Heart" is currently climbing the charts. The album release will coincide with Randy's *Born Country* book release.

VP/Promotion **Lee Adams** and staff are "very excited" to introduce **Dean Brody**, brought to you straight from the shadows of the Canadian Rocky Mountains. Midway through his first radio tour Brody was injured

Dean Brody

in a freak water skiing accident, but he's back on the road and preparing for his first single and upcoming album.

Slated for a Sept. 30 release is **Craig Morgan**'s *Greatest Hits*, which includes four years' worth of radio hits including "That's What I Love About Sunday," "Redneck Yacht Club," "Almost Home" and "International Harvester."

CAPITOL

The **Jimmy Harnen**-led Capitol crew boasts a full fall of fun, both at radio and the cash register. New studio releases are due from **Darius Rucker, Little Big Town and Trace Adkins**, joined by a new live DVD from **Keith Urban**. The first single from **Dierks Bentley**'s new album lands this month, with the full release due at retail Q1.

Rucker's country debut *Learn To Live* lands Sept. 16, already well advanced at radio by the single "Don't Think I Don't Think About It." Little Big Town will release an expanded version of *A Place To Land* Oct. 14. Harnen says the collection features four new tracks, "plus 'Life In A Northern Town,' just in time to launch their fall tour with Carrie Underwood."

Urban's hit "You Look Good In My Shirt" is offered for purchase both on his *Greatest Hits: 19 Kids* and the aforementioned DVD *Love, Pain & the whole crazy World Tour*, which lands Nov. 18. A new single from a new studio album is expected before the end of the year, with the album out in '09.

Finally, Adkins' as-yet-untitled new studio album will be out Nov. 25, and the single "Muddy Water" is already a Capitol priority. "Check out Trace with .38 Special on *CMT Crossroads* Sept. 24," Harnen closes.

Zac Brown Band

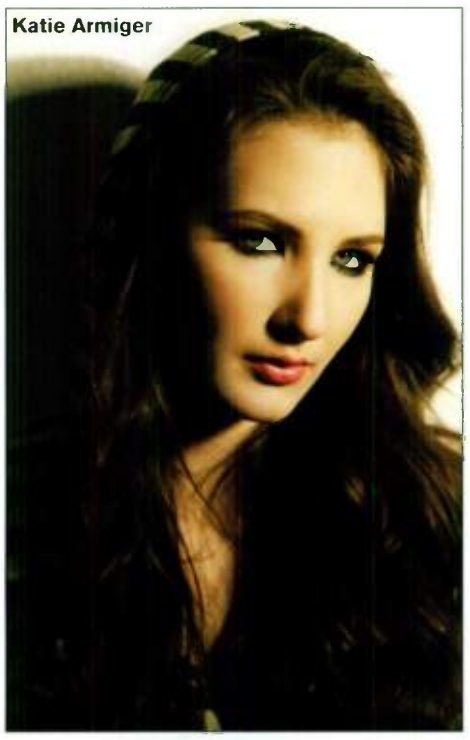
RISE & FALL

C05

VP/Promotion **David Newmark** and his band of merry men and women have two projects going for adds this quarter: Ride/Dang's **Steve Azar** will release "You're My Life" Sept. 15 from his *Indianola* album. In collaboration with Still7, **Matt Stillwell**'s "Shine" will be ready for airplay Sept. 29.

COLD RIVER

Ten months after the release of **Katie Armiger**'s first album, she has released her second, *Believe*. Armiger's webisodes are currently running on GAC and follow her as she promotes her current single "Unseen."


Katie Armiger

COLUMBIA

"Leaves will be dropping, but singles will be rising for 'Big Red,'" says Columbia ND **David Friedman**. **Miranda Lambert**'s "More Like Her" is already a focus, with sights set on following her first top 10 single "Gunpowder & Lead" to the upper reaches of the chart. Likewise, **Keith Anderson**'s "Somebody Needs A Hug" has a chart-topping predecessor in the top 5 "I Still Miss You." The new single impacts Sept. 22.

Jessica Simpson's "Remember That" is targeted for late October, and Friedman calls it "a song that will move you and make you say, 'This girl has pipes!'" The single is from her album *Do You Know*, already at retail.

Rounding out the Columbia slate is **Gretchen Wilson**'s "Don't Do Me No Good" and **Montgomery Gentry**'s "Roll With Me." Wilson's single is the lead track from her upcoming CD *I Got Your Country Right Here*.

COUNTRY THUNDER

Next up for Country Thunder is duo **Bluefield**'s single "Drive Away," impacting Sept. 15. "This single is different, hip and young," says SVP/Promotion **Bobby Young**. "And even more impressive, Rick and Jen have written and recorded a single with a hook that won't quit and lyrics that perfectly paint a picture of the artist's pain."

Due Oct. 27 is **Shawn Hammond**'s "Everything," with an album out next spring. Young explains, "This is the perfect 'country' single to impact and service the P1 and H1 country consumer. Not only is Shawn one of the best country vocalists I've ever heard, but women are going to love this guy, as well as his song."

And keep this one in mind: Brand-spankin' new Permian Records is expecting two single releases before December, according to Young. The label is also shooting for at least one first-quarter album release.

CURB

The freshly meshed Curb squad has a full complement of releases, even if the particulars remain vague at press time. New singles from **LeAnn Rimes**, **Rio Grand** (James Stroud producing), **BomShell** and **Wynonna** are expected. Also, the first single from **Rodney Atkins**' next album, following a collection that included four No. 1s, is understandably a huge priority. And, depending on the ongoing success of **Heidi Newfield**'s "Johnny And June," a new cut from her album may splash down before the holidays.

Rio Grand

One Flew South

DECCA

Decca, fresh off the recent No. 1 *Mamma Mia* soundtrack, has re-emerged in the Country format with trio **One Flew South** and their current single "My Kind Of Beautiful." Bandmates **Chris Roberts**, **Eddie Bush** and **Royal Reed** have spent the past few months developing a "devout and passionate fan base with Country programmers," according to promoter **Pam Newman**, who is heading up promotion with **Brad Paul**. The band will kick off their upcoming run of tour dates with a September appearance at Farm Aid.

DOLLY

VP/Promotion **Bruce Reiner** and company will release the third single from **Dolly Parton**'s *Backwoods Barbie*, "Shinola," this quarter. Fans can hear the single during her performances on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* Sept. 19 and *Ellen* Sept. 22. The theatrical rendition *9 to 5*, which features *Backwoods Barbie*'s title track, starts in Los Angeles this fall and on Broadway in April.

EQUITY

Laura Bryna was recently named the voice and spokesperson for the Air Guard's new major advertising campaign, and recently filmed the video for a new song she co-wrote, "Hometown Heroes," which honors Air Guard men and women who answer the call of duty to serve their communities and country. The song will become the official theme song of the Air Guard's year-long radio and television ad campaign, meant to educate men and women about this branch of the military which supports the needs of the U.S. Air Force, aids communities in times of crisis and supports the nation's Homeland Defense Department.

Carolina Rain is continuing to enjoy the chart ride with "American Radio" and are in the studio working on their second CD for Equity with a projected Q1 street date. Also, watch for a holiday single from the group.

Texas dance hall king **Kevin Fowler** is getting national attention with "Best Mistake I Ever Made," which started "after top testing at KILT/Houston and KSCS & KPLX/Dallas in addition to great stories from KBEQ/Kansas City," says VP/Promotion **David Haley**. Last, **Blake Wise** is a name that will be on your radar soon; check out www.myspace/blakewisemusic for a sneak peak.

LOFTON CREEK

Mike Borchetta and friends will be working the new single release from **Mark Chesnutt**, "Come On In (The Whiskey's Fine)" on Lofton Creek/Big 7. This is the third cut from Chesnutt's current album. Also on deck are new singles from **Donnie Vondra** and **Pat Roper**, due in October and November, respectively.

LYRIC STREET

"No double parking on Lyric Street," says promoveep **Kevin Herring**. "We will be focusing on growing the hits already on the charts." These include **Bucky Covington**'s "I'll Walk," **Josh Gracin**'s "Unbelievable" and **Billy Ray Cyrus**' "Somebody Said A Prayer." Covington and Gracin have current albums already at retail, while Cyrus' *Back To Tennessee* streets Nov. 18. **Rascal Flatts** release *Greatest Hits, Vol. 1* Oct. 28, featuring their many hits as well as three new Christmas tracks: "White Christmas," "Jingle Bell Rock" and "I'll Be Home For Christmas." "Can you say 'the perfect gift for the holidays?!'" Herring asks. "A few other surprises loom from the Mouse House," he adds, "so stay tuned."

MCA

Lee Ann Womack's latest project *Call Me Crazy*, produced by Tony Brown, lands in stores Oct. 21. UMGN's **Katie Dean** points out the album is the follow-up to Womack's 2006 CMA Album of the Year *There's More Where That Came From*.

Ashton Shepherd's "Sounds So Good" remains a focus as Shepherd opens for

Laura Bryna

Sugarland on their fall tour, which kicks off in September. **Josh Turner**'s third single and title track from *Everything Is Fine* is a priority, thanks to radio. "This is the single programmers said they wanted, and the early response has been terrific," Dean says.

George Strait's *Classic Christmas*, out Oct. 7, is his first MCA holiday release since 1999's *Merry Christmas Wherever You Are*.

MERCURY

The second single from **Julianne Hough**'s self-titled debut goes to radio just in time for her return to ABC's *Dancing With The Stars*. UMGN's Dean calls it "autobiographical since she is living her dream of becoming a country singer." "My Hallelujah Song" impacts in September.

Billy Currington's next album offers *A Little Bit Of Everything*, out in October. First single "Don't" is already spinning. "Some programmers have coined it as 'the morning after he did something right,'" Dean says.

"**Jamey Johnson** has vowed not to trim his beard until his debut 'In Color' hits top 15, and

Mark Chesnutt

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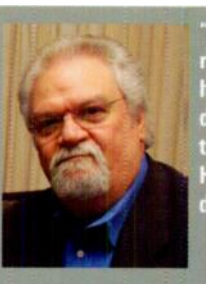

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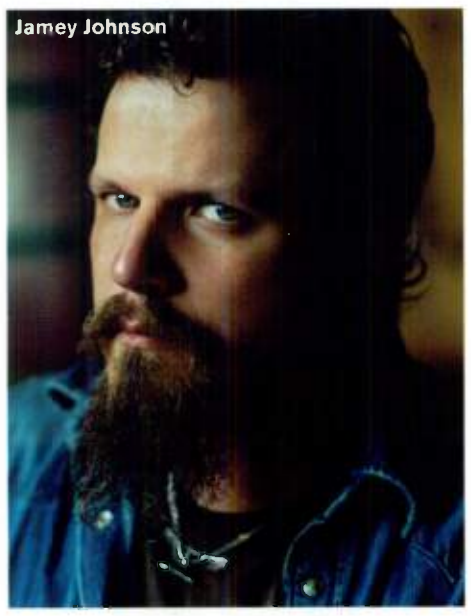
RISE & FALL

as a show of solidarity VP **Damon Moberly** has promised not to use hair product until the single tops the charts."

Finally, the **Randy Rogers Band**'s new, self-titled album lands Sept. 23 on Mercury. First single "In My Arms Instead" is at radio now.


Jamey Johnson

New Revolution

Rob Dalton and **Jeff Solima** are working **One Flew South**'s "My Kind Of Beautiful" from the Marcus Hummon-produced *Last Of The Good Guys*, in stores now. Also on the books is the latest single from Parallel's **Jeremy McComb**, "Cold." "What makes this song important and worth your attention is the imagery and everyday relatability it paints," says Dalton. "That haunting realization of not getting something we desperately want, and how that begins to consume our thoughts and our lives."

Nine North

Larry Pareigis and the Nine North team are moving fast, so don't blink. The company's affiliation with Rocky Comfort has them working **Michael Scott's** "Ray Ray's Juke Joint" and **Zona Jones**' "You Should've Seen Her This Morning." "Note that both singles are tempo," LP says. And a **Tracy Lawrence** single is due soon.

Cold River's **Katie Armiger** and single "Unseen" remain a focus, as does Wind-up/Nashville's **Eric Durrance**, who is on the road as part of the CMT Tour with Jason Aldean and Lady Antebellum. His first single "Angels Fly Away" is currently at radio, and his Teddy Gentry/Mark Bright-produced album bows digitally Sept. 16.

Nine North is also working the Vanguard/Sugar Hill *CMT Can You Duet* husband-wife team of **Joey+Rory**. The single "Cheater Cheater" is at radio, and the duo has recently been chosen as the face of the new Overstock.com advertising campaign, *At Home with the O*. A Carl Jackson-produced album is due in October.

The Major 7th & Spinville single from **Darren Kozelsky**, "She Got Me There," is also on the docket. According to Pareigis, "Previously accustomed to success in the Southwest, Darren has broadened his reach all over the nation with this new tempo release."

Last but not least, **Pedestal** brother-sister duo **The Roys** are enjoying the ride of "I Only Have Good Days," their fastest-moving *Music Row* chart single to date.

Quarterback

Chris Allums and the Quarterback staff are anticipating the release of **James LeBlanc**'s next single "Your Love Comes Shining Through." "We're really excited about building his career as an artist, after the success he's seeing as a writer (Gary Allan's 'Learning How To Bend,' Jason Aldean's 'Relentless')," says Allums. LeBlanc's album is expected before year-end. **Trent Willmon**'s current single "Cold Beer And A Fishin' Pole" is continuing to build, as is **Stephen Cochran**'s "Thinkin' I'm Drinkin'" and **Todd O'Neill**'s "Can I Come Over Tonight."

RCA

RCA's **Doug Baker** has the skinny on Nipper's plans, and leads off with **Jake Owen**, who is already at radio with "Don't Think I Can't Love You." The song is the first single from an expected Q1 album, and Baker says programmers are still buzzing about Owens' CRS performance of the tune.

Also moving toward monster airplay is a new single from **Sara Evans**. "Low" is featured on the soundtrack of *Billy: The Early Years*, the Billy Graham biopic. Impacting in late September, the song advances the early October release of the movie and soundtrack.

Baker says to expect follow-up singles from **Chuck Wicks** and **Crystal Shawanda**, whose current singles he counts as "great successes" for the RCA team.

Rhythm House

Brynn Marie, with the guidance of **Daryl Price**, is promoting her first single "Start Now," the title track from her debut album, out in September.

Robbins

VP/Promotion **Tony Benken** has just shipped the first single from the label's newest artist **Chad Hudson**, "Somebody Find Me A Preacher." "Early response is very positive, and we're dedicated to getting this song heard by country listeners," Benken says. Other projects in the pot are second singles from **Rocky Lynne** and **Joshua Stevens**, as well as **Shane O'Dazier**'s debut song "I Hate This Town."

Show Dog

As Show Dog trots in new lead promotion pup **Rick Moxley**, the label's **George Nunes** details the upcoming release schedule. This starts, of course, with **Toby Keith**'s "She Never Cried In Front of Me," the first release from his next studio album *That Don't Make Me A Bad Guy*, out Oct. 28. A follow-up single could land before year-end.

Also on the short list are **Carter's Chord**'s second single "Different Breed" and more music from **Trailer Choir. Mica Roberts** has recently been in the studio, finishing a new single which is expected soon.

And at retail, Keith's studio album will be joined by the release of his *Classic Christmas* project as two separate albums, rather than the double-disc set that came out last year. Look for a pre-holiday DVD release of Keith's *Beer for My Horses* feature film as well.

SoftDrive

Scott Weiland's SoftDrive Records has introduced its first country artist, **Tommy Joe Wilson**, whose first single "Tryin' To Find The Sun" is on its way to radio under the direction of promoter **Billy Holland**. Wilson co-wrote seven of the 13 songs on his debut album, expected in early '09.

Stringtown

John Michael Montgomery will release his latest album in four years, *Time Flies*, on his brand-new Stringtown label Oct. 14. The first single "Forever" is a ballad written by James Slater and produced by Byron Gallimore and Montgomery. The song goes for adds in September.

Stroudavarious

Promo guru **Bill Catino** is guiding the efforts of Stroudavious, with the solo debut from former Lonestar frontman **Richie McDonald** at the top of the list. "This is the voice that brought you 'I'm Already There,' 'Amazed,' 'No News' and 'My Front Porch Looking In,'" Catino says. Also coming this fall is the Stroudavarious debut from "renowned singer, songwriter and showman **Anthony Smith**."

Universal South

Teddi bares Universal South's year-end plans – that's VP/Promotion **Teddi Bonadies** – and she starts with the **Eli Young Band**. "With likely the fastest-growing fan base of all emerging acts from the Southwest and Southeast, they're turning heads," she says. Debut single "When It Rains," which started on Carnival Records before moving to Republic/Universal, is followed by "Always The Love Songs." Album *Jet Black and Jealous* lands Sept. 16.

Randy Houser's debut "Anything Goes" cracked the top 30 in time for his Aug. 28 network television debut on *Late Show with David Letterman*. The song is the title track for his album, which hits retail Nov. 18.

"This year, **Phil Vassar** had an 11-week top 10 with 'Love Is A Beautiful Thing,'" Bonadies says. "He follows it up with the new, self-penned single 'I Would.'" Vassar recently performed the song on Letterman's show. And rounding out the label's fall is an expected new single from **Joe Nichols** off a spring '09 album.

Valory Music Co.

The label billed as "the evolution of the revolution" opens the season with **Jimmy Wayne**'s *Do You Believe Me Now*. Veep **Jon Loba** calls the title track "Jimmy's biggest single to date." The follow-up track is "I Will."

Jewel's second top 40 country single "I Do" continues to be a Valory priority. And Loba points out the song's timely relevance following Jewel's recent marriage to longtime boyfriend Ty Murray. Following her run on the *Paisley Party* tour, Jewel has a late '08 solo run that will extend to 2009.

Justin Moore's campaign started in dance clubs and online with the tune "I Could Kick

Justin Moore

Your Ass," which has sold more than 20,000 digital tracks. His debut single "Back That Thing Up" will be a priority throughout the fall. Look for the debut album in Q1.

Warner Bros.

As if you couldn't tell by the world's most photographed radio tour, the WB crew is pretty excited about **Whitney Duncan** and her debut "When I Said I Would." Veep **Nancy Tunick** says, "Her charisma, beauty, distinctive voice and energy are captivating programmers and listeners across the country." And yes, the tour continues in September.

Sept. 30 is the street date for **Faith Hill**'s Christmas album *Joy To The World*. The focus track is the only new song on the project, "A Baby Changes Everything." Tunick says the song "tells the powerful story of what a baby meant to one woman and what this baby means to each person and the world."

Also brewing at Warner Bros. is new solo music from **John Rich**. CAC

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PAT PAXTON

Leading Entercom's Wolf Pack

Entercom Sr. VP/Programming Pat Paxton's radio career began in 1980 while he was still in college. Following PD stints in Sioux City, IA and La Crosse, WI, he joined Venture Communications as PD of WKEE/Huntington, WV, and eventually became the company's National PD. Next came Nationwide Communications, where Paxton programmed WONX/Orlando. He transferred to Houston, where he programmed KHMX and later was promoted to Nationwide's National PD. The late '90s found him with Guy Zapoleon's consultancy. It was there Paxton consulted a number of Entercom stations and got to know Entercom CEO David Field. "We were philosophically aligned as far as how radio should be done," says Paxton, who joined the company in April 1999. He was elevated to VP/Programming in December of that year and upped to Sr. VP in June 2003.

CA: What exactly is that philosophical alignment you have with Mr. Field?
PP: Focus on the product. Ultimately, if it's done properly, the business plan is in place, and you have support from the top, then you're going to succeed. Very rarely do you hear about a truly great radio station failing, having to change format or making major material shifts in what they do. This is where David and I are very much aligned. It's such a pleasure to work for him because he believes in great content. He supports all of our efforts – research, talent, everything – to make sure that we create great content for our listeners every day. We've found that when we do great content, generally the ratings follow, and generally the revenue follows that.

What's your role as Entercom's Sr. VP/Programming?
I work with our PDs and managers to make sure we maximize every opportunity we have in all our markets, whether that's working together to create the biggest cluster share; working with our market managers and our marketing directors to make sure we're getting the best ROI in every marketing dollar we spend; or whether it's taking a look at all the brands in the country and deciding, "OK, where do we really need to do research, and what kind of research do we really need to do?" My job is, basically, to go around asking questions – sometimes they're easy questions and sometimes they're hard. I make sure everybody's on the same page and has a really good strategic sense for what their brand's goal is and what their expected accomplishments are. From me all the way to the market manager, to the PD, to the people who work for the PD – I have to make sure the synergy is there, from top to bottom.

You interact with the GMs and market managers as well?
Absolutely. There are some markets where I interact more with the market managers than I do with the PD. In some markets we have very curious managers who like to ask a lot of questions and like to know. I applaud and encourage this because these are the people who really want to learn. Most GMs don't come from programming and don't know as much about it as they do about running a business and a sales department. Some market managers ask, "Why are we doing this?" Not in a negative way at all, just in a "I want to learn more about what we're doing on the programming side" way. Obviously, they're responsible for the business. So when we start talking about new hires, marketing dollars, research dollars – and I'm talking about significant dollars, not just anytime you throw $1,000 at something – we work through that together.

I ask the question because not all companies are the same when it comes to the relationship between programming and upper-programming management, and the GM and upper-company management.
I find [the way we do it] extraordinarily beneficial. If I'm looking to visit a market, if the market manager or PD isn't going to be there, I don't go in because I consider that a waste of everybody's time. When we spend a day in a conference room discussing both the strategic and tactical goals of our brands and what we expect to accomplish, if the GM and the PD aren't on the same page and don't agree on the same path to get there, then we have nothing but trouble down the road. So if everybody can't attend, I just don't go until everybody can be there.

You have a Director of Country programming in Mike Moore. Does Entercom have similar posts for the other formats?
Not in the music formats. We do have people who oversee our Sports and spoken-word formats. Our music formats have calls that range from weekly to monthly, depending on what's going on in the format. We have different programmers rotating in and out of heading these calls in all the various formats, so it's not one person's burden to do that for life. We do this on a needs-based ideology. I felt that I was not up to speed enough in the Country world to be able to help our Country brands to the degree that I felt was appropriate. And I think Mike is a genius when it comes to this. He's a genius when it comes to radio, but obviously, he specializes in Country radio. Having him as my go-to Country guy has been extraordinarily beneficial for me and, I think, our brands as well. Without question, he's one of the best.

How would you describe your working relationship?
It's a very collaborative and a very respectful relationship. One of the keys that make it work is that Mike is not afraid to disagree or to tell me what he thinks. That's what I expect from him. And, given the respect I have for his opinion, I gotta know what he thinks or that position is useless.

Entercom has an amazing array of formats. With your national overview and all these varied formats, what are you seeing and feeling about radio in general these days?
Radio has been pronounced dead by people who don't know what they're talking about. People in New York City who don't have a good feel for the importance of radio and the popularity of radio around the country like to write articles that are, unfortunately, widely read and widely believed – sometimes even among people within our own industry – that the medium is dead and that the medium is suffering. Radio is certainly suffering from a financial point of view. But I find it funny that it's generally newspaper writers who like to bash radio, and newspapers are probably the most endangered medium out there. They would kill to only be down what we are in revenue instead of the 20-30% that they're down.

Anyway, as I look at our brands and markets, go to promotions in our markets and see our listeners and do the research, my sense is that this medium – and this is going to sound a little bit biased, because obviously I'm in the business and I believe in it – is as strong as it's ever been. If you believe in the People Meter and in what Arbitron is telling us, on average, 92-93% of all Americans 6+ listen to the radio every single week. That is an extraordinary number and something we should be extremely proud of. The anti-radio people will say, "Well, they don't spend as much time with you anymore." *Of course* they don't spend as much time with us. In a world where video gaming has become such a huge deal; where the Internet – and I'm not talking about Internet radio, I'm just talking about the Internet – has become such a huge deal with the social networking sites and, to a smaller degree, the music sites, where iPods and mp3 players have just over the few years become such a huge deal; with all the different options out there to spend your free time, *of course* they don't spend as much time [with radio] as they used to. But, they all still come to us. And they all still spend time with us. There are very few media that can make that claim.

What are some of your core basic programming philosophies that apply to all formats?
Something that I must do, and something our PDs and GMs must do, is hire great people. By great people, I mean people who make the difference. People who will affect the community, who will make people feel something, who will generate emotion among the listeners, who will make people laugh or cry or get mad or happy or whatever the emotion is. But make people *feel*. If we can create the right mix of people on our music stations with people's favorite music and generate that emotion and in our spoken-word formats – whether its News, Talk or Sports – if we can create the right information and make people feel something, then we're going to be successful. Not everybody can make people feel. There are some people who are really good at getting on the radio and telling me the time or the weather. But they don't make you feel anything. It's our jobs to find people that make a difference in people's lives. And if we do that, the listeners will come back and listenership as a whole will grow.

How autonomous are Entercom's stations or clusters?
Oh, they're very autonomous. I tell everybody who asks that question that I don't program radio stations. There are times when I miss programming radio stations, but it's not what I do. I've programmed radio stations all my life, and, for example, when I was at Nationwide, never once did Guy Zapoleon call me up and say, "Here's what you're going to do. Goodbye and have a nice day." We talked through all the issues, and at the end of the day he knew it was my radio station and that I would be held accountable for its performance, and that I would do what I do. And that's what I do now. There are certainly times when I will disagree with PDs and will tell them that I disagree. But at the end of the day, they are held accountable for the results. And so, I would say 95% of the time I share my opinion and stay out their way. If there was ever a remote instance where I thought a decision was so bad it could cause material harm to our brand, I obviously couldn't let that happen. But that would really be a rare thing.

How much experience have you had with Country?
Nationwide had some Country stations, but **Bob Moody** was at WPOC (Baltimore) then and he was our Country guy. I didn't have to worry about [it], because Bob obviously knows everything Country and was on top of those stations. I was involved with programming and was on the air at a Country station in Sioux City, but I've had limited exposure to Country. We've had great success with our Country brands, and a lot of that has to do with Mike Moore's involvement and the great brand managers we have at those stations. I'm learning more and more and am getting to the point now where I feel somewhat comfortable at having conversations with our Country stations.

When you were promoted to Entercom VP/Programming in December '99, the company's Country stations were WBEE/Rochester and WDAF-AM/Kansas City. Entercom later purchased Sinclair, getting Froggies WOGY/Memphis and

WGGY/Wilkes Barre, PA. In '03 the purchase of Fisher/Portland gave you KWJJ. After that, under your stewardship, 'DAF moved from AM to FM, you added Country stations in San Francisco, Seattle and Greensboro. And along the way, you flipped out of Country in Memphis and Madison. What's been the thought process behind the evolution of Country as a growing component of Entercom's strategy?

The reason it's grown is because I've seen the power of the format. I've seen what the format can drive. I've learned what the format is all about, meaning I've learned that all the stereotypes that you hear about Country when you're not in the format are not necessarily true. I've learned that the Country audience is as mainstream as any format. I've learned by going to shows and seeing listeners that they could be a Top 40 audience at times. I've seen the success we're having selling these formats and the success the advertisers see when they advertise on these brands. Most important, I believe in Country.

But, like the rest of the formats, I believe in doing Country *only* if we do it right. I don't believe in putting a bunch of music on and putting a bunch of generic people on the air who have nothing to contribute to the records. That's why I'm such a fan of the Wolf formats that we do because the Wolf is a virtual brand. You listen to these radio stations and there's no question what you're listening to. There's no question you will remember what you hear. Like it or not, you're going to remember what you hear because we *do* stand out from what every other format is doing in those markets. And the same thing goes for Froggy and WBEE. Whether we're called Wolf or not, these brands stand out because of the interactivity they have with the listeners, because of the upbeat, fun nature of everything that goes on, both musically and between the music; they're just real, real community-active brands that people don't forget.

What was the internal discussion about adopting the Wolf brand for the Country stations Entercom either re-launched or launched?

I continue to believe so much in the Wolf because it's different. In Seattle, for example, KMPS is obviously a great radio station, run by extremely smart people. So in putting on another Country station, a lot of people were looking at us sideways, wondering what we were doing and if we knew what we were getting ourselves into. But we felt that, first of all, there was room for two Country radio stations in Seattle. And second, we felt if we did it differently and in a way that stood out, we could achieve some level of success. And that's what's happened. Obviously, KMPS continues to thrive, and we're doing well. As we thought, there's room for two Country radio stations in Seattle. Because the Wolf brands are different – they're not just Country radio stations, they really are lifestyle brands – I'm far more comfortable putting on a Wolf brand than I am just a typical radio station.

The same thing happened in Greensboro, where WTQR has been around for decades. We didn't go in there, saying, "Oh, we're going to knock 'em out of the format." We're not so cocky or ego-driven that we believe that. We *did* believe there was room for two Country stations. We did believe the Wolf (WPAW), in the permutation that we created and the brand in its entirety, is different from what was in Greensboro. And what's happened? 'TQR continues to do well; we're doing well. So it's just been one of those things where we have been able to differentiate ourselves from the competition by using the Wolf brand and everything that goes with it. I'm not going to say it's easy by any stretch, but certainly it's more possible than in some other formats.

What are your thoughts on San Francisco?

I think the Wolf there is one of the best-sounding radio stations in the US, let alone one of the best Country stations. We're in this for the long haul. Great-sounding radio stations get great ratings sooner or later. Our ratings are good, not great, but we're making strides every day.

Overall, I get the feeling you're really liking country.

I do, I do. And, Mike has seen to it that I've gone to Nashville a couple of times and met some of the artists. I've always heard this, but now I know it's true, that country artists are more accessible than artists in any other format – and not just to me, but to the listeners and everybody. That, of course, plays a huge part in their success.

I've gone to a couple of awards shows, and I've sat with Joe Galante and his people. I've taken the time to get to know the people, the format and the music, and yeah, there's no question that I've become a fan. Even more impressive, though, is that my Boston born-and-bred wife has also now become a country fan. I know there's a successful Country station in Boston, but people who are born and raised here, especially in South Boston, aren't necessarily the type of people you expect to become country fans, and she has now become one.

How does Entercom view websites in terms of their importance to the overall success of the station?

Absolutely critical. We need to be where our listeners are. Accessibility is a key word in our business today. We need to be accessible to our listeners wherever they are. We have to be on their computers. We have to make major strides towards getting on their cell phones, getting into the iTunes Application Store so we can get on their iPhones, offering time-shifted programming on our websites so if they didn't hear the morning show today, they can podcast and listen to it whenever they want. If we're not taking advantage of all the digital tools out there to make sure our listeners can be as exposed as they want to be to our products, when they want to be, we are putting ourselves at a huge disadvantage because everybody else is doing it.

Paxton with Mike Moore

Including streaming.

Absolutely. Streaming is a given. The majority of people who use our websites go there to stream the radio station. But we must create other reasons for people to visit. We need to create podcasts. We need to have our personalities, who in many cases are local celebrities, blog every day. And not just blog about the latest Jessica Simpson record. They need to blog about what's going on in their lives. We need them blogging about, "Hey we just brought our new baby home today." Or "I just went and filled up my car and it was $4.50 a gallon. This is crazy." We need them blogging about their lives so our listeners can see that these normal, regular people have the same struggles and challenges and joys in their lives that the listeners do. We must touch the listeners with every opportunity we have – through the radio station, the computer, the podcast, blogging and the cell phone.

What are your thoughts on PPM?

San Francisco is our first PPM market and we've only had one monthly and one weekly, so it's too early to judge. Our company is a big fan of electronic measurement. We believe in it. We think it's time, we think it's necessary. That said, and I think Arbitron would agree with this, there are kinks to be worked out of the system. PPM is *the* system now, and I don't see anybody else challenging them anytime soon. It's the system we're going to have to live with. It's the system that will check us and grade us and drive a significant portion of our revenue. So, it's up to us an industry to work with Arbitron to make sure it is as accurate and reliable as humanly possible.

Where is Entercom with HD radio, and where do you think the industry is with HD radio?

We have at least one HD station in most markets we're in. HD Radio is gonna get there. When FM radio started off with the underground radio stations and AMs were dominating, I bet people were saying, "It's gonna take forever, it's never gonna happen. People are kidding themselves." The same things people are saying now. HD Radio offers extraordinary benefits that we need to do a better job of communicating to the consumer. Once we start getting the word out in a broader way that in many markets HD Radio offers the same types of choices that satellite radio does, only it doesn't cost anything once you buy a radio, we'll start to see HD Radio become a bigger force in a lot of places.

What are your thoughts on the way the radio and music industries are operating in this post-Spitzer decision environment?

It's a little different. Again, I'm not sitting in the day-to-day programming chair, and someone who is could probably answer this question better. But I think there's more accountability out there, making sure things are done legally. There are still some arduous requirements that are nuts – filling out a piece of paper for every promotional CD that comes in seems crazy to me. But if the Attorney General of New York wants to continue to receive the tons and tons of paper they get from us every quarter, that's fine.

But I disagree very strongly with the vast majority of the assertions that Elliott Spitzer was making. He was just dead wrong on most of what he was accusing our industry of. That said, anytime you come under scrutiny, you take a look at your systems and how you do things and you find better ways. In some cases, we're doing things a little bit better than we used to.

Overall, it sounds like you're extremely bullish on the future of radio and that it will be able to compete with the new technologies.

No question. Look at Internet radio, it's nothing. Honestly. I like Pandora; I use it from time to time. But as far as it being a real competitor of ours, come on – it's not. Will it ever be? Maybe. But that's years and years from happening. Is satellite radio a real competitor of ours? Not really. There are all these different options out there, but they're not really competitors of ours. I read the other day that the No. 1 iPod accessory that's sold is the radio adapter. People wonder why Apple doesn't put radios in the iPod. Why should they when everybody is running out and buying the adapter already?

I am bullish on radio and not afraid of any of the competitors. There is a place for them, and they have done a good job in finding their place. Will any of them be the death of radio? Absolutely not. Other than taking a few quarter-hours away from us, they really haven't hurt us at all.

The next challenge people are talking about is Internet radio. When the Internet gets into the car in Portland, don't you think they'll be listening to the Wolf via the Internet or their regular radio? I don't think they'll go to whatever the latest online Country station is. The more our personalities touch the listeners, the more our music is tailored for each individual market and the more shows we have with local news, sports, traffic and weather, the more advantage we have in keeping people. Will it be a challenge? Sure. But every time something new comes out, it's a challenge. But that's the new one now – the one everyone says, "Oh, that's going to kill radio." No it's not.

It'll be one more thing people will get to do, but we will still dominate the way we do now. CAC

BIG SHOW BIG STARS BIG IMPACT

"Whitney has the best ENERGY of any jock I've heard.....she's been AWESOME for our nights, and numbers are through the roof. I couldn't imagine having anyone else on KVOO."

- ***Luke Jensen,*** *Program Director*
  KVOO - Tulsa

"Whitney is rockin Saturday nights for us in KC!"

- ***Mike Kennedy,*** *VP Programming & Operations*
  Wilks Broadcast - Kansas City

"I'm not crazy about syndication, but there's simply no one better for Saturday nights at country radio than Whitney!"

- ***Brian Jennings,*** *Program Director*
  WGAR Clear Channel - Cleveland

"After only one Arbitron Book with Whitney, Country Giant Nights are up BIG TIME...49% Overall 12+ with an increase of over 6 share points. Thanks Whitney!!!"

- ***Gator Harrison,*** *Program Director*
  WGSQ - Cookeville

"Whitney makes our nights sizzle."

- ***Kevin Christopher,*** *Operations Director*
  Tyler Media/KKNG - Oklahoma City

"Whitney Allen has proven to be exactly what we need on Saturday Nights in Colorado Springs....Excitement and Entertainment!"

- ***Jesse Garcia,*** *Program Director*
  KCCY - Colorado Springs

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THE BIG TIME saturday night

(212) 419-2926

BigTime@dial-global.com

DIAL GLOBAL

WHITNEY DUNCAN

WHEN I SAID I WOULD

"I knew from the first day of writing with her that she was a real artist. Both Mark Bright and I knew she was the kind of singer/writer that we were looking for. She is a dream to work with. She brings a passion to her work that makes me realize why I make records."
-John Shanks, Co-producer

"It's really difficult to contain my excitement about Whitney Duncan. Everything about her screams greatness and makes me want to share her with everyone. She's been able to attain a depth in her writing that is rare for an artist so young. She's the kind of person that has never met a stranger and has that west Tennessee drawl that makes you want to melt. Making the record with her felt like Christmas everyday and we were honestly sad to finish it. This woman is just awesome!"
-Mark Bright, Co-producer

"Whitney Duncan has the "It" factor! Whitney's new song 'When I Said I Would' is a riveting sonic harmonic that has me glued to my radio!!!"
-Scott Mahalick- PD-KBWF/San Francisco

CHECK OUT "WHIT'S WHIT!"

She's more than just powerful pipes and a pretty face! Whitney Duncan is also pretty darn funny. The rising country star presents an ongoing series of humorous videos you can see on AOL's theboot.com!

FOR IMMEDIATE AIRPLAY

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CASH & CROWDS

Our annual analysis of radio group ratings & revenue starts on...

PAGE 27

boss VEGAS

Nashville rocked it casino-style at the 43rd ACMs. We'll take you there.

PAGE 7

Why is this man so happy? LUKE LEWIS The Interview

PAGE 33

COUNTRY AIRCHECK

JUNE 2008

life is good

It's not just the new single.
It's a state of mind.

Taken from the debut album
Trying To Be Me

See Laura at CMA MUSIC FESTIVAL
Riverstages Sunday, June 8 at 3pm

Laura Bryna

EQUITY MUSIC GROUP

"Take This Job and Shove It"
Johnny Paycheck

"Coward of the County"
Kenny Rogers

"The Fightin' Side of Me"
Merle Haggard

"A Boy Named Sue"
Johnny Cash

"The Devil Went Down to Georgia"
Charlie Daniels

"This Cowboy's Hat"
Chris Ledoux

"Courtesy of the Red, White and Blue"
Toby Keith

"Big Iron"
Marty Robbins

"Up Against the Wall Redneck"
Jerry Jeff Walker

"In Lonesome Dove"
Garth Brooks

"Longhaired Redneck"
David Allan Coe

"Kick My Ass"
Big & Rich

"The Night I Called the Old Man Out"
Garth Brooks

"One"
Johnny Cash

"Pancho and Lefty"
Willie Nelson & Merle Haggard

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SUMMER Shorts

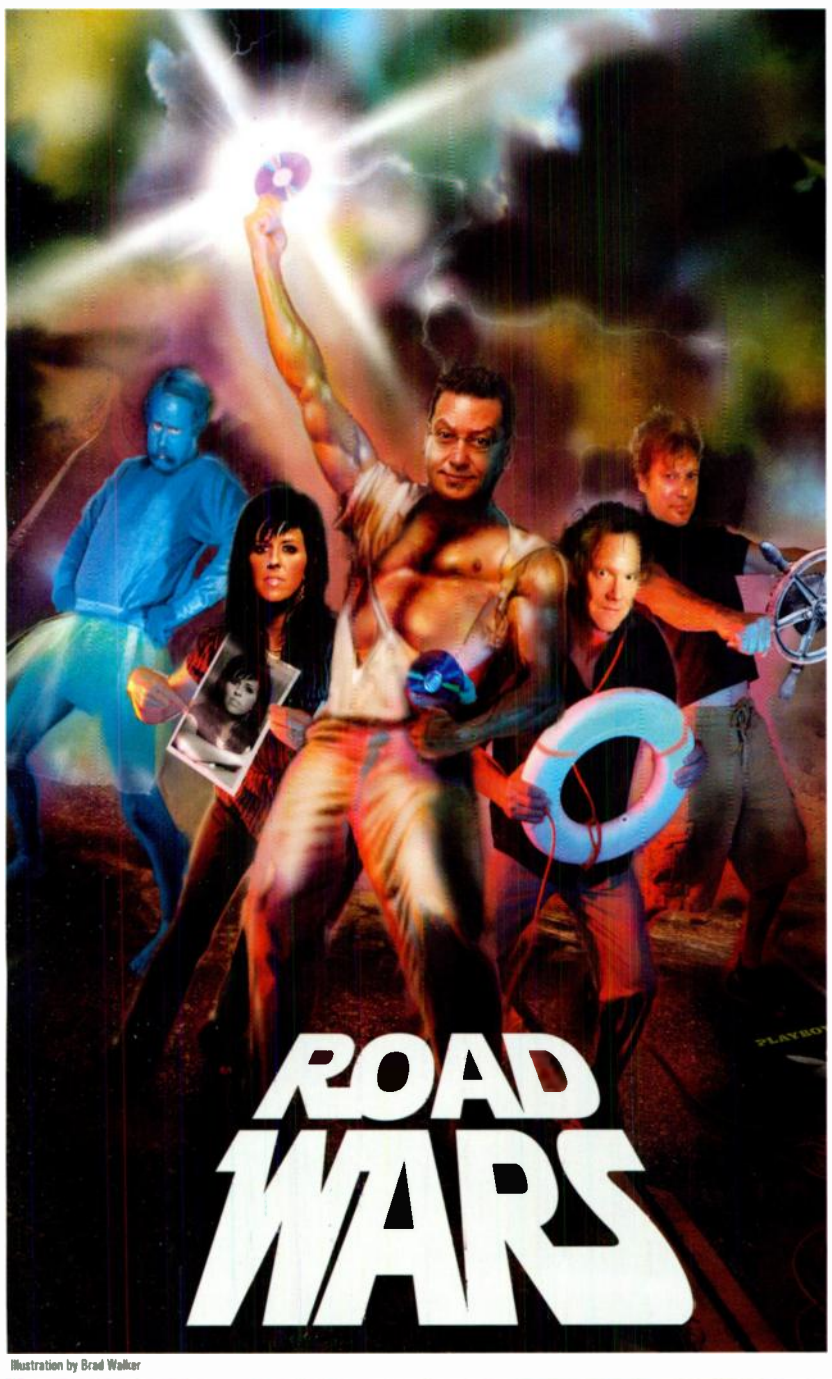


Illustration by Brad Walker

Don't Try This At Home... Or On The Road

Even with oil prices surging past the ridonkulous, summer is road trip season. As America packs the dog and kids in the family truckster for the annual journey down holiday road, Country Aircheck logged in with some professional road warriors to hear their most memorable travails.

Blue Man Loop

Broken Bow's **Bill Heltemes** recalls his days in rock promotion and the launch campaign for **Lou Gramm**'s "Midnight Blue." "I put on a blue leotard, boots, sweatshirt and tutu," Heltemes says. "Every exposed part of my body was painted with blue theatrical paint as I delivered the single in Cincinnati." Heltemes then decided to make a day of it, driving 110 miles to bring the song to Indianapolis.

"I drove 80 miles per hour in a 55 zone the whole way just hoping someone would pull me over," he laughs. "You wouldn't believe the strange looks I got as I sped by people." Uh, Bill. We believe. We believe. "Sadly, no one pulled me over."

Speaking of road hazards, Heltemes recounts a story from his days at Atlantic. "**Matt King** and I were out for a week and decided we wouldn't throw anything away. The whole back seat was filled up to the windows. And it stunk. Matt bet me I wouldn't take it back to the rental place like that, and as it turned out, I couldn't bring myself to do it."

Captain & The Deal

Arista/Nashville's **Skip Bishop** goes nautical with his excursion, which features Arista regional **John Sigler**. "At the time we were both working for RCA's pop division," Bishop says. "We were in Texas scouting a big enough boat to host a showcase, and found one of those party boats that carries 60 people into the Gulf of Mexico for a day of fishing. So over the weekend we signed on for a test run.

"We paid $25 each and jumped on this huge boat with 50 or 60 locals. I don't want to say John and I were drinking heavily, but we were enjoying some beer. At dusk everyone pulled their lines up and we headed back to dock. The water's a little choppy, and I'm shooting the breeze with some of the local guys until I realize I can't seem to find Sigler.

"So I leave the middle cabin and make a complete circle of the boat's perimeter. Then I go down in the hull where the bathrooms are. No John Sigler. I start asking around, but no one has seen him in awhile and I'm clearly starting to panic. It's dark and choppy and John had been enjoying the beer. This is not cool."

"At least 25 people are now freaking out, saying we need to stop the boat. So I climb the ladder to the little wheelhouse, intending to tell the captain we've got a man overboard. And standing behind the wheel is John Sigler. He gave the captain a Playboy in exchange for getting to drive the boat."

Virginia Is For Others

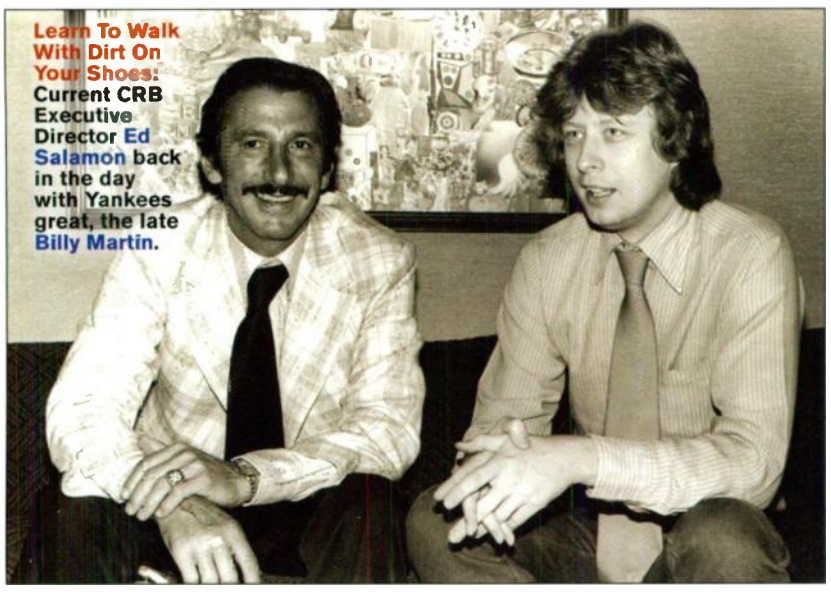
Warner Bros.' **Bob Reeves** takes things airborne, or at least tries to, in this story from his Sony days working with **Little Big Town**. "We flew to Richmond, VA for a remote kicking off a new client's ad campaign. We told them we'd have four singers and two guitars, but when we get there we find only a four-channel amp/mixer made mainly for indoor speaking. No EQ, no monitors. And the 'stage' was the top of a beat-up rental box truck, and the only way up is to climb from cab to hood to cab roof to box roof. And this roof was never intended to carry any significant weight. Anytime one of the boys leaned in to sing into one of the two shared mics, the roof would buckle and the mic would pop them in the mouth. The PA kept dropping out and since they were so far off the ground and at a busy intersection, most of the performance was completely unintelligible. But wait, there's more!

"Somehow on the flight into town, **Karen Fairchild** misplaced her license. We show up at the airport early the next morning and talk our way onto our flight using CDs and 8x10s. Luckily, we're going to Atlanta where Karen's parents live. They're bringing her birth certificate, but we only have a 20-minute layover. I turn in my best Jesse Owens imitation getting from our gate to the main terminal and back. Did I mention that I'm easily the oldest and most out-of-shape of any of the group? As I ran to the main terminal it occurred to me that I had never met Karen's parents and wouldn't have any idea what they looked like...or them me. But I found them and got back in time to have the plane's door close on my heels. The rest of the week is a blur, but I have vivid recall of the 24-hour nightmare that started off that week in Virginia." CAC

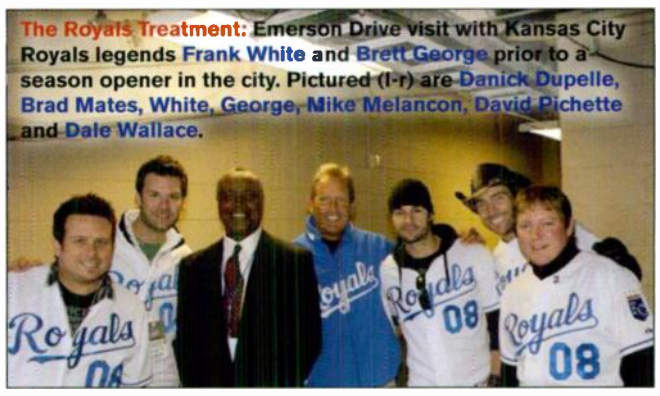
Flood Diamond

America's Pastime Meets America's Music

Next to Old Glory, apple pie and the 64-ounce soft drink, is there anything more American than baseball and country music? Survey says no. And in that spirit we bring you visual evidence of this inexorable bond.

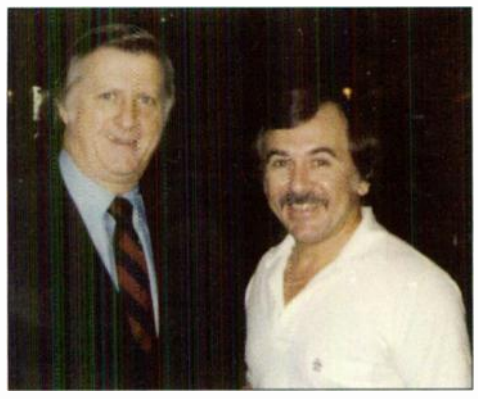


Learn To Walk With Dirt On Your Shoes: Current CRB Executive Director Ed Salamon back in the day with Yankees great, the late Billy Martin.

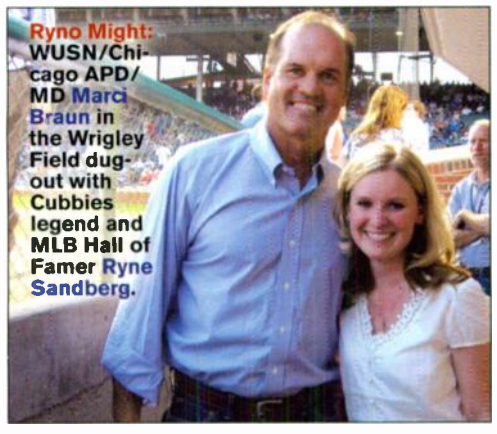


The Royals Treatment: Emerson Drive visit with Kansas City Royals legends Frank White and Brett George prior to a season opener in the city. Pictured (l-r) are Danick Dupelle, Brad Mates, White, George, Mike Melancon, David Pichette and Dale Wallace.

Angel's Among Us: Regent's Bob Moody, baseball icon Rod Carew, KNCI/Sacramento's Greg Cole and Mila Mason at Baltimore's Camden Yards in 1996.

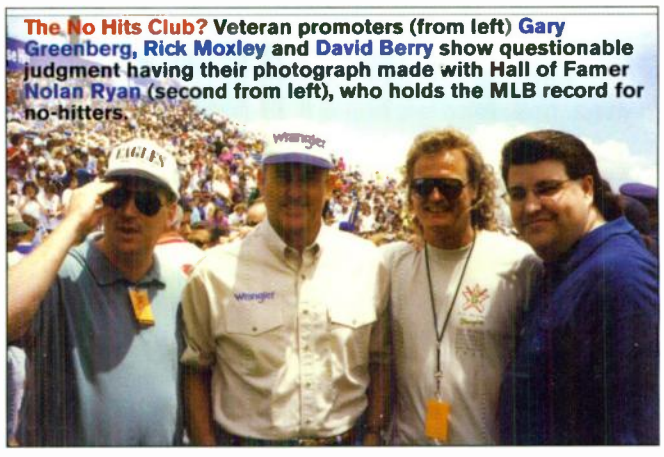


The Boss: Yankees owner George Steinbrenner chats with Lofton Creek's Mike Borchetta at a minor league meeting. At the time, Borchetta was heading a group trying to buy the Knoxville Blue Jays.



Ryno Might: WUSN/Chicago APD/MD Marci Braun in the Wrigley Field dugout with Cubbies legend and MLB Hall of Famer Ryne Sandberg.

Shirt Happens: Montreal Expos (l-r) Otis Nixon, Jackie Moore, Tim Wallach and Spike Owen sport Hank-themed "Tear In My Beer" shirts in the clubhouse circa 1989. Submitted by Nick Hunter.



The No Hits Club? Veteran promoters (from left) Gary Greenberg, Rick Moxley and David Berry show questionable judgment having their photograph made with Hall of Famer Nolan Ryan (second from left), who holds the MLB record for no-hitters.

SUMMER Shorts

Raft Punk

RADIO HOSTS ANNUAL WHITE WATER RUN

A force of nature might be required to stage a gathering of radio pros and label promotion types that doesn't involve a lot of shop talk. And that's exactly the case at Citadel KIZN & KQFC/Boise's annual summer raft excursion.

The event began as a way for the stations to thank their regional label reps. "Labels are always helping us with promotions and being great partners, and we wanted to find a way to give back and strengthen those relationships," says KIZN PD **Rich Summers**.

"The first one was a half- day, and we had maybe five or six record people plus the staffs from KIZN & KQFC," Summers says. "Everyone went back and told what a great time they had and we had more show up the next year and stretched it to a full day."

All participants abide by three rules: No cell phones. No record talk. No radio talk. And Summers admits to being a little prickly before and during the event. "People come into town and want to party the night before," he says. "I flat tell them, 'If you're hung over in the morning, you're not going. You're putting yourself and others at risk.' You have to respect the river. The party comes after."

The Payette River, on which the U.S. Olympic kayak team trains, is characterized by some fairly intense white water, including a portage around a 40-foot waterfall. "One year one of the guides who follows the rafts in a kayak went over the falls," Summers says. "He got out, watched the water pattern around the falls for a long time, climbed in his kayak, gave a thumbs up and went over. A few moments he later he came shooting up out of the water."

Helmet Cam: Another beautiful day for artists (**Holly Lamar**, foreground) and labels (**John Curb**, center left) courtesy of their friends in Boise radio.

But guides aren't the only ones who get a little damp. "We usually put two or three people in the river every year," Summers says. "There's one section where we have water fights and try to pull people out of their boats."

Artists including **Luke Bryan, Memarie** and **Holly Lamar** have braved the rapids, and often get a chance to sing after it's all over. "We're off the river by 4pm and used to go to local restaurants, but now we do a barbeque in someone's back-yard," Summers says. "It's a day of cold water, incredible scenery, lunch on the banks...and it wears you out." CAC

DESK JOCKEYS

One PD, one promo exec and the desks they drive. Here's an insider's look at the view from the seat of power, courtesy of WSIX/Nashville's **Keith Kaufman** and UMG/Nashville's **Royce Risser**.

Keith Kaufman

1. Spin Cycle: A Lyric Street contingent was walking out as the Country Aircheck crew walked in, but they left a Phil Stacey disc behind.

2. No Whoop For You: Legendary morning man Gerry House's vacation request: Denied!

3. Show Me The Money: A makeshift trophy and small pile of cash mark Kaufman's victory in the office NCAA Basketball Tournament pool.

4. She Rates Me: Station ratings and trends.

5. Screen Gems: Notes for a meeting with the sales staff.

6. Keith On Truckin': From Urban, to Kaufman, this note is one of many autographs on the office wall...directly on the wall, a trend started by Jason Aldean. "I call it job security," Kaufman says. "My boss calls it a can of paint."

7. Neat Freak: "By the time I leave tonight, all this stuff will be cleaned up. Except for my denial pile– the two or three things I always think I'll get to but never do."

Royce Risser

1. Grounded: An unused XM Satellite Radio activation and instructions.

2. What About A Practice Jersey? A "Team UMG" onesie. "If you want one, all you gotta do is have a baby," Risser says.

3. Track Meat: Airplay and add tracking sheets for Mercury and MCA.

4. Bi-Focals: Dual monitors allow Risser to pull up Mediabase and BDS data simultaneously. "I had to really do a hard sell to get these."

5. Buttoned Up: The phone system in UMG's shiny new offices gives Risser one-touch access to promotion staffers' office and cell numbers. Can video monitoring be far behind?

6. Last Waltz: Risser's Dancing With The Stars VIP laminate, rarely used, as Julianne Hough's partner Adam Corolla was voted off the show.

7. Family Guy: Twins Walker and Mason. Two-year-old daughter Raleigh is not pictured.

8. Reading Is Fundamental: A stack of trade publications, "mostly unread." Except for Country Aircheck, of course. "Of course."

9. Too Deep Coverage: Part of Risser's collection of Super Bowl footballs dating from 1991, all signed by a player who participated in the game.

SUMMER HEAT

Temperatures on the MGM Grand's ACM orange carpet topped 110-degrees, but it took Kenny Chesney's post-Entertainer rant to really get folks sweating backstage. Here's a look at that and other issues that could be raising the heat index over the next few months:

The Never-Ending Story: Can't you just picture FCC commissioners giggling in their offices: "Watch how long we make these satellite dopes wait for their merger."

If This Belt Gets Any Tighter It'll Be A Bracelet: Content-eviscerating radio cost-cutting makes us nostalgic for the early days of Telecom. <cough> Can't believe we just said that. We just threw up a little in our mouths.

Gas Exodus: Expensive oil means less driving, less in-car listening, fewer trips to the store and declining revenues. But there is a bright side for everyone looking to buy a used Hummer cheap.

Sore Vote: Chesney has a point. Encouraging self-promotion might not be the best path to prestige. Not that it stops politicians.

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COUNTRY AIRCHECK

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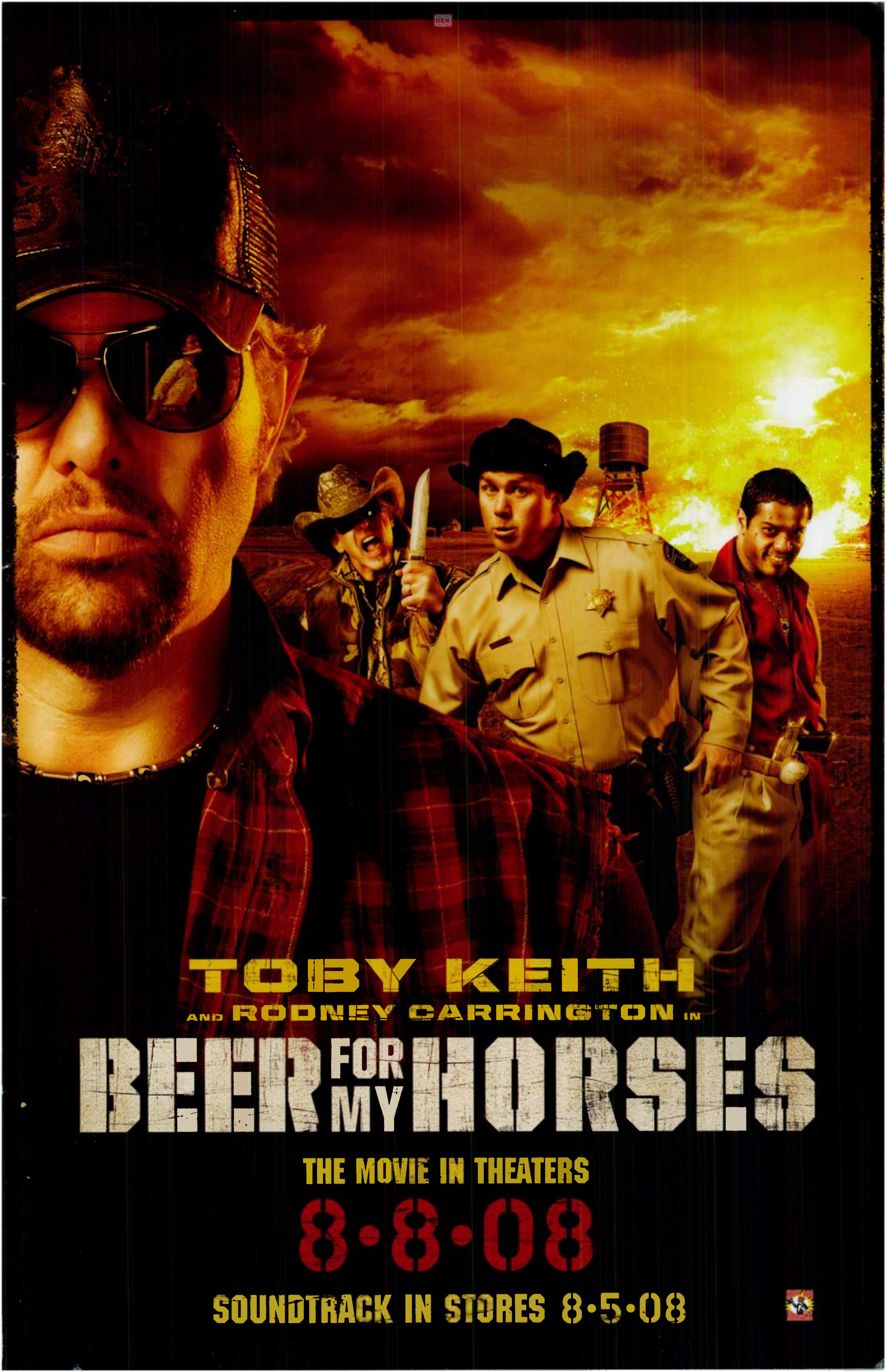
TOBY KEITH
AND RODNEY CARRINGTON IN
BEER FOR MY HORSES
THE MOVIE IN THEATERS
8·8·08
SOUNDTRACK IN STORES 8·5·08

AMERICAN ★ COUNTRY ★ COUNTDOWN

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ACM Week In Pictures

Wet Happened In Vegas

Washed up at 18, so to speak, Taylor Swift staged one of the most dynamic performances at the 43rd Annual ACM Awards in Las Vegas last month. And though Swift told backstage media she'd been imagining such a performance for years, we think she was just trying to beat the 112-degree orange carpet heat. Here's more from country's big Vegas weekend:

Neon Rainbow: Jack Ingram (r) hit the jackpot with his New Male Artist victory at the ACMs. He's seen here celebrating with manager George Couri.

Shift Nears: Kenny Chesney (l) rehearses "Shiftwork" with George Strait.

Many Flew West: Talented trio One Flew South showcased for radio Sunday morning (5/18). Pictured (l-r) are KMLE's Gwen Foster, OFS promoter Pam Newman, the band's Eddie Bush, KMLE's Lauren Thomas and the band's Chris Roberts and Royal Reed.

Club Reporters: Rascal Flatts' Gary LeVox (l) and Joe Don Rooney handed out trophies at this year's ACM golf tournament.

ACM Week In Pictures

Stuck In The Medley With You: Garth & Trisha.

Make It Rain: Universal South showcased the Eli Young Band at a well-attended brunch at Craftsteak. Pictured (l-r, top) are the label's Fletcher Foster, Teddi Bonadies and ACM Producer of the Year Mark Wright, EYB manager George Couri and C3 Management's Sarah Blincoe; (bottom, l-r) EYB's Jon Jones, Mike Eli, James Young and Chris Thompson.

Wide-Angle Lens: It actually took three cameras duct-taped together to get this shot of the luminaries at the Sony BMG awards after party. Pictured (l-r, front row) are Butch Waugh, Miranda Lambert, Reba McEntire, Kenny Chesney, Brad Paisley, Joe Galante, Kellie Pickler and Kelly Clarkson; (l-r, center) Kix Brooks, Ronnie Dunn, Keith Anderson, Carrie Underwood, Chuck Wicks, Jake Owen, Renee Bell, Janine Dunn; (l-r, back) The Lost Trailers' Andrew Nielson, Jeff Potter, Ryder Lee, Manny Medina and Stokes Nielson, Tom Baldrica and Blake Shelton.

Catch Me If You Can: Mercury's Sugarland close their performance with the Nestea plunge.

Quote Book

Onstage, backstage or elsewhere, they said it and we wrote it down. Memorable lines from ACM week '08:

"You don't stand up here because you pushed somebody's buttons on the Internet."
–KENNY CHESNEY on the fan-voted Entertainer category

"This is a performance I've been dreaming about since I was like 10."
–TAYLOR SWIFT

"I don't want to go into all the details of how that happened, but Nicole Kidman is definitely calling him Entertainer of the Year."
–ACM host REBA MCENTIRE on Keith Urban's impending fatherhood

"God help me if I screw up the introduction to this next artist. The last thing I need is a crazy ex-girlfriend."
–BLAKE SHELTON introducing Miranda Lambert

"It might be one of the first few singles that was distributed to program directors by YouTube."
–KRISTIAN BUSH regarding Sugarland's "Stay"

"She's the easiest person I've ever worked with in my life, and that includes my wife."
–Miranda Lambert's co-producer FRANK LIDDELL, who is married to Lee Ann Womack

"I feel a little under-dressed. My bedazzler broke in the room."
–JASON ALEXANDER

"Did I thank my wife? Am I going to get lucky tonight?"
–New Male Vocalist JACK INGRAM in the backstage press room

"I'm just glad they didn't let Florida and Michigan vote in this. I am going to demand a recount."
–BRAD PAISLEY on the Entertainer vote

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Fisher with KBUL/Reno APD/MD Derek Gunn

Fisher with the WQMX/Akron staff

Fisher with WFBE/Flint APD Keith Allen

Fisher with the WKML/Fayetteville staff

Fisher with KBEQ/Kansas City MD TJ McEntire & PD Mike Kennedy

Fisher with KUSS/San Diego APD/MD Geoff Alan & PD Mike O'Brian

Fisher with WCTO/Allentown APD/MD Jerry Padden

Fisher with WSSL/Greenville MD Kix Layton, WSSL/WESC/Greenville OM Steve Geofferies, WESC/Greenville John Landrum

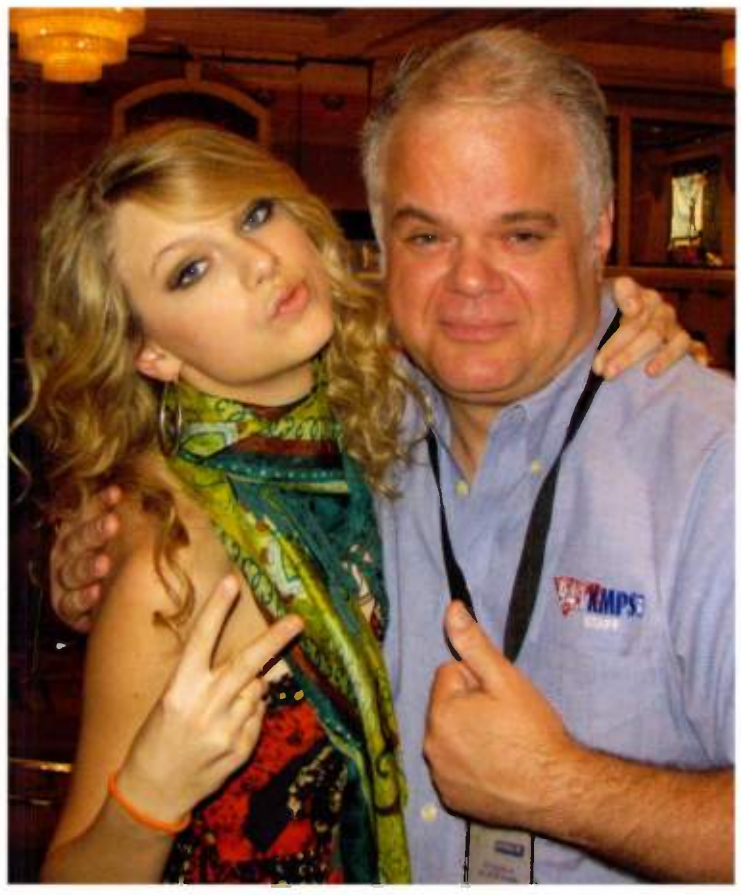
BIG MACHINE™ RECORDS

TROPHY LIFE

They may be off the ACM's camera, but broadcasters are always on-camera winners at Country Aircheck. Pictured accepting their Vegas winnings from Rodney Atkins are (from top) personalities Big D, Lia, Valleri St. John, Gator Harrison and Greg "StyckMan" Owens, and station winners WMIL's Kerry Wolfe, WUSY's Heather Webster & Kim Carson and WGSQ's Gator Harrison. Not pictured: Gerry House And The House Foundation.

ACM WEEK IN PICTURES

Preaching To The Choir: Show Dog hosted a showcase for Trailer Choir at Toby Keith's I Love This Bar & Grille in the Harrah's Casino. Pictured (l-r) are Nicki Paul and her husband KUPL/Portland PD John Paul, Keith and TC's Butter, Vinny and Crystal.



Strike A Pose: Taylor Swift hung with the radio peeps at Westwood One's radio remotes. She's pictured here with KMPS/Seattle's Tony Thomas.

Not So Stupid Girl: Sarah Buxton scored Keith Urban's band to back her New Artist show performance, with the man himself on lead guitar.

Bling, Booze & Boobs: Backstage Creations hosted the artist swag room backstage at the MGM Grand. Artists who visited were treated to jewelry, designer clothes, bottles of Maker's Mark whiskey and Margarita King tequila, Purpose skin care products and greeted by cowgirls from Stoney's Rockin' Country nightclub. Clockwise from top right: James Otto, Tracy Lawrence and Stoney's cowgirls, and Trisha Yearwood

WINNERS OF THE 2008 ACADEMY OF COUNTRY MUSIC NATIONAL ON-AIR PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR AWARD AND COMING SOON...

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ACM Radio Winners

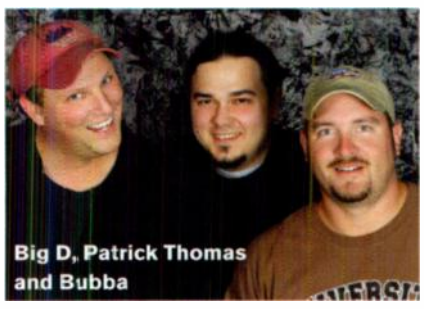
Meet the only folks who went to Vegas knowing they'd be big winners

ACM National On-Air Personality Of The Year

Big D & Bubba

Pilots Of The Airwaves

Heard on dozens of ***Premiere*** *affiliates, the* **Big D and Bubba** Show *is self-described as "a little bit of Amazing Grace and a little bit of raising hell."*


Big D, Patrick Thomas and Bubba

Both licensed pilots, they each started in small-market radio at age 14 before meeting up in Louisiana. They've now been together 12 years, shepherded by nine-year Executive Producer ***Patrick Thomas****. The 2008 ACM honor is their first major award.*

Bubba: I don't know if it's sunk in completely yet. Considering that my dad at one point wanted me *out* of radio, it's cool to have him call and say, "I'm really proud of you, glad you stuck with it."

Big D: You hear about some morning guys who don't get along? We really do. We spend so much time together, not only in the studio, but on the road traveling for market visits.

Bubba: We do two shifts a day, including afternoons at WSIX/Nashville, and travel almost every weekend. We're around each other a whole lot, and after all this time, it's just amazing …

Big D: …that we haven't killed each other.

Bubba: We hang our hat on customization to each affiliate; we're as local as the stations want us to be. When people call the request line, we answer it. We do contests and promotions for individual markets, and talk about what's going on in each city. It's a lot of work, but it makes us stand out. It's a secret formula of mayonnaise and mirrors. And Patrick helps juggle everything.

Dental Work: Pickin' with Keith Urban

Bubba: For me, it's the off-air, *real* things, that we do that matter just as much. One time Big D and I were driving around, and saw a sign on a light pole that read, "Lost baseball glove. Please call if found." Big D immediately drove to Academy Sports, bought a new baseball glove, called the number, and said, "Hey, this is Big D with Big D and Bubba. We didn't find your glove, but we have a replacement for you." That never hit the air, but is the kind of thing I remember the most.

Big D: I get a lot of inspiration from the WWII generation. We're pretty young for pilots; most are older guys. Those men are morally sound, just real true American guys that you can trust to watch your dog when you're gone.

Bubba: If there's a listener who wants us to watch their dog, we'll think about it.

Arms Race: Wrestling Brad Paisley

Pin Ball: Bowling with LeAnn Rimes and her husband Dean.

Good Ole' Boys: With the General Lee

ACM National On-Air Personality Of The Year

The Lia Show, Lia Knight

Way Better Than Acting

What a year for **Jones** *syndicated night personality* ***Lia Knight****, who completes a sweep with her fourth Gracie, her second CMA Award and now her first ACM National Personality honor – just in time for her show's 10th anniversary this September. Lia's success is rooted in her fan-like enthusiasm and warm persona that resonates through the airwaves across some 180 affiliates.*

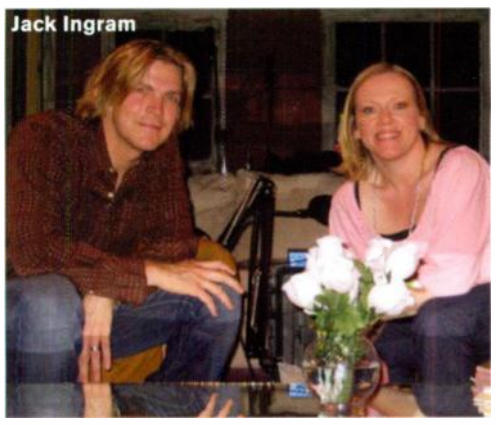
Honestly, I thought this was **Big D and Bubba**'s year, so to walk up with those guys and accept this together is very cool. I am honored and very happy for all the people involved including, [among others], **Jason Antebi, John Edwards, Scot Kirk, Heather Longacre, Stephanie McGee, Susan Stephens** and **Neal Weiner**.

Looking back on the year, **Toby Keith** called in to talk about his screenplay for *Beer For My Horses*. I said, "Dude, remember, when you are ready to start filming, I want a part." He said, "Yeah, well, remind me down the road." And I'm thinking he'll never remember. But in February, Toby called and said, "I need you in Las Vegas, New Mexico next weekend. I've got this part for ya." I spent a whole day on the set with **Mac Davis**, Toby and **Rodney Carrington**. I actually have two parts – one where they're in a truck, listening to my show. It was awesome – one of the coolest things ever. But it took like 11 hours for a 30-second scene. After the 12th take, he asked me, 'Is this more fun than radio?" I said, "Hell, no."

Lia & Phil Vassar

I never thought in a million years I'd be on so many stations. [In the beginning], nobody knew who I was; I had no brand value. Why would you take a chance on somebody like that? But one person believing in you can make a world of difference. That person was [former Jones executive] **Edie Hilliard**, who really pushed hard for me. I remember putting in 14-hour days, weeping and being scared. I wanted to not only prove myself to other people, but also prove something to myself. But I knew that if you worked really hard, if everybody's dedicated to a cause, you can be successful. The periphery of radio – the business side – I can do without. But when the live broadcast starts, the phones are ringing, the music is playing and we're all singing along, I could do this forever.

Julianne Hough


Jack Ingram

George Strait

Congratulations Lia!

Winner
2008 ACM National Broadcast
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Lia

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ACM Radio Winners

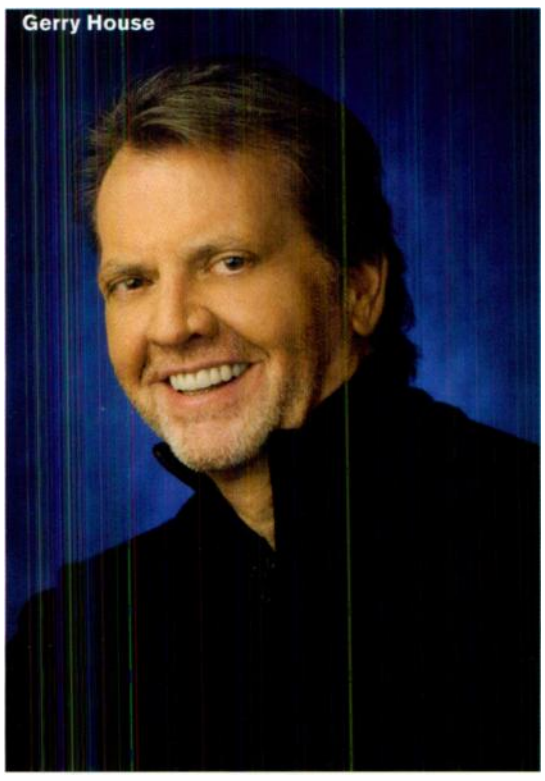
ACM Major Market On-Air Personality Of The Year

Gerry House & The House Foundation, WSIX Nashville

Teaming With Talent

Gerry House & The House Foundation's morning show on Clear Channel's WSIX/Nashville (and XM) is in a league of its own, having just captured its seventh ACM On-Air Personality of the Year trophy. Gerry's collaboration with Mike Bohan, Al Voecks, Duncan Stewart and producer Richard Falklen helps make him one of radio's most successful personalities. He's also a renowned tunesmith, jazz buff and, for the past five years, writer of the ACM Awards telecast, including host Reba McEntire's famous line in 2006: "If the Dixie Chicks could sing with their foot in their mouths, surely I could host this sucker!" Here's House:

Mike Bohan, Richard Falklen, Gerry House, Duncan Stewart and Al Voecks


Gerry House

This award is really a team effort, and since we only get one, I'm going to rent it out on a monthly basis. I'm not sure exactly how it's chosen. I think they went over a year's worth of programming, gleaned about four minutes of good stuff and put it all on one tape. And there was a doobie involved, I'm certain.

Our whole deal is to be funny every break. We make fun of the news, commercials, records, the artists and anything else that moves. I write 25 jokes a day and some incidental stuff, and keep a running tab of things to talk about. But it doesn't matter who gets the punchline. The records are really just interruptions to us!

We always joke about not getting wooed [elsewhere]. I get calls, but people just assume that I'm such a part of the fabric of this town. Being a songwriter is as important to me as the radio thing is, and I've really kind of put out the vibe that I don't want to leave; I like being here. I said this at CRS and everybody looked at me like I had two heads, but people move around too much in this business. It's OK to be a bigger fish in a smaller pond. It seems to be that the legends you hear of stay at one place.

Mike, Al, Duncan and Richard are all friends of mine, but we do not socialize after 10am; it's all concentrated during that time. Richard is a fabulous producer in that I can just say, 'Let's do this,' and I'll know it's handled. Al, Duncan and I have worked together for 25 years, and Mike is, to me, the consummate co-host. He'll ask the questions that set me up. And I'd be dead in the water if I didn't have that. I can't do it by myself.

98 W·S·I·X

ACM Major Market Radio Station Of The Year

WMIL/Milwaukee

The Notoriously Caring Country Station

Kerry Wolfe

WMIL/Milwaukee is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, and what better way to do it than with back-to-back major market Station of the Year honors from the CMA and ACM. A 20-year station veteran, Clear Channel cluster Director/Programming and RVPP Kerry Wolfe comments on FM 106's durable, multi-faceted strengths.

Our *Moo Crew* morning show – **Karen, Scott & Radar** – just celebrated their 10th anniversary, [middays/MD] **Mitch Morgan** celebrated his 25th anniversary, and [afternooner] **Mark Richards** has been in this market for 26 years. They all are very passionate about the artists and country music generally. I think I provide an atmosphere where they're able to contribute and feel like they're part of a team.

We've become somewhat of a legend in Milwaukee for country music. We do a lot of concert promotions where our listeners are out there wearing our shirts. On the back they say, "Hey, FM 106, Take Me Backstage." So when you go to a show, you'll see all our people.

Last August we wrapped up our 20th radiothon for the Child Abuse Prevention Fund – the *CAP Fund Caravan for Kids*. And if you ask anybody in the city, "What's FM 106 famous for?" the first thing they'll say is, "They're the station that does all those things for abused children." It's totally local, and we raise more than $250,000 each year – probably $7-8 million overall.

Banner Day: WMIL fans beg to hang with the stars at Country Thunder USA last summer.

Cake Mix: Moo Crew's Scott, Karen and Radar at their 10th Anniversary party in March, featuring a performance by Lady Antebellum.

Twin Lakes and Summerfest – the world's biggest music festival – are going to be big for us again this year. Before that, we'll take 100 listeners to the CMA Music Fest, where we'll broadcast, and have our own private autograph and photograph sessions with 45-50 artists. Kenny Chesney, Toby Keith, Tim McGraw, Shania Twain – they've all been part of it. This year we've got **Rissi Palmer** and **Jamey Johnson** performing.

FM 106 will always be a "family reunion" kind of station – open and welcoming to all. And we try to sound as local as possible. The majority of our jocks were born and raised here in Milwaukee or the Midwest. Those values come across: we try to be nice, helpful and we believe in customer service. We like to give a lot back to the listeners and get their input as often as we can. You have to listen to your customers, no matter what you're doing, so I'm always there with open ears.

Stage Might: WMIL sponsors Country Thunder USA – four days of music and camping for 100,000+ fans.

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ACM Radio Winners

ACM Medium Market On-Air Personality Of The Year

Valleri St. John, WWGR/Ft. Myers, FL

Captain Of The Ship

Gator Country 101.9 FM

Southwest Florida's '20' in a Row Station

Valleri St. John

*During her 23 years in radio and nearly 11 years in mornings for Gator Country, **Valleri St. John** has been named favorite local radio personality in readers' polls and nominated for CMAs and ACMs, but this is her first win. A team player to the end, she attributes her success to the support of her co-workers.*

It all goes back to when I was a kid listening to the radio. Music was always a big part of my life. I'd go to sleep with headphones on my head and do my homework to the radio. So I guess it was just in my blood. I interned at a station for three-and-a-half years and didn't get paid a penny. I cleaned toilets, ran the vacuum and watched the morning show through a big glass window every day. I just dreamt that one day it would be me. I'm still living the dream. I can't believe this is what I'm doing. I've been very blessed to work for a company that believes in me and has given me the opportunity to lead a morning show. I have a partner, **Scott Fish**, and we're *Val and Scott In The Morning*. I'm the captain of the ship and I've been here the longest, so I think that's how I got nominated. They just felt sorry for me.

Because of my personal experience with breast cancer I have tied myself to an agency, Partners For Breast Cancer Care, that helps women or men who don't have insurance. My grandmother was afflicted with it and my mom has had some scares. I talk about it on the air, bring awareness to the disease and the need for mammograms. I had a listener with no insurance call me and I was able to help. They found some problems, but caught it early enough and she's gonna be fine. When a listener involves me in something as personal and sensitive as breast cancer, those are rewarding moments.

I've always done mornings, and you never get used to getting up early. At most appearances I get asked, "How is it you get up so early and you're so fun and lively? I hate that you are so bubbly at 5 am!" My answer is that I've been up since 3:30am, and I hit snooze an average of three times a day. Once I'm out of bed, I'm fine. I just splash some cold water on my face.

When we found out that Rascal Flatts' **Joe Don Rooney** would be on the show, I thought it might be about their appearance on *Dancing With The Stars*. They had canceled a show here a little over a year ago, so when Joe Don called and said, "I've got some incredible news," I punched out the mics and told Scott, "I bet they're gonna reschedule their show." We got a bunch of people in the studio, then Joe Don said, "Congrats, Val, you're an ACM winner!" I lost it. I was a blubbering idiot. My PD had this shit-eating grin on his face because he knew and had been watching me gather people and tell them Rascal Flatts were rescheduling their concert. I was made to look like a fool, but I'll take it!

I want to continue doing this as long as I can. Radio is fun. If you're in it to make money, don't do it. Do it for the love of it. Do it for the people.

Starstruck: "When I met George Strait I completely melted. I just broke down and he just hugged me as I cried," said St. John.

ACM Medium Market Radio Station Of The Year

WUSY/Chattanooga, TN

Localization That Makes The Difference

*Combine longtime personalities, focused community service and consistently entertaining radio, and you get a station like WUSY (US-101)/Chattanooga. Under the leadership of longtime GM **Sammy George** and veteran PD **Kris Van Dyke**, both of whom have since moved on, the station captured the ACM's 2008 Medium Market trophy, just as it did in 2005. Famous as "the station that brings all the stars to town," US101 presents a listener appreciation concert every month and is constantly serving the area in times of need. Now at Magic Broadcasting in Dothan, AL, Van Dyke comments on US-101's legacy:*

The people at WUSY have big hearts, and US-101 pretty much *is* Chattanooga. When tornadoes went through Pisgah, AL, everyone said, "We gotta do something about this because we really need to help these people." Within three days we sent truckloads of water and things those people needed because almost the entire community was wiped out. Then there's the money that we generate for St. Jude every year. Our annual *Christmas For Kids* raises more than $40,000 to buy toys for children who wouldn't otherwise get any. When Katrina hit, we did a big fundraiser at a supermarket, and in one day we had seven or eight tractor-trailer-loads of supplies to send down to Louisiana. And we got that in one day from the community. To watch those trucks pull out and head down there was pretty overwhelming. Radio's all about community service, and we can't forget about that. What better way to do it than to give a helping hand?

Sounds So Good: Kris Van Dyke with MCA's Ashton Shepherd.

I learned so much from those guys – everybody from Sammy to [morning duo] **Bearman & Ken**, who've been there 20 years, all the way to the weekenders – about how to do radio. They are the magic because they love the people of Chattanooga; they're almost like family. They taught me that all you have to do is really know your audience, to care about the people that listen to you, and reach out to help them when they need it. Everything else falls into place. Any amount of success that I can conjure up in the future, I'll owe a large part of it to them for teaching me how to be genuine. It's one of the most amazing stations I've ever been a part of, and I've been in this business 38 years. I've never seen anything like it.

Saints March In: A busload of elementary school children stopped by WUSY to deliver donations for St. Jude during a recent telethon. Morning co-host Bearman and afternoon co-host Dex wave from the back row. Above: Jack, a local cancer survivor, thanks to St. Jude, is the heart of US-101's efforts.

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Jamey Johnson
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out on best music

Julianne Hough
"That Song In My Head"

David Nail
"I'm About To Come Alive"

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ACM Radio Winners

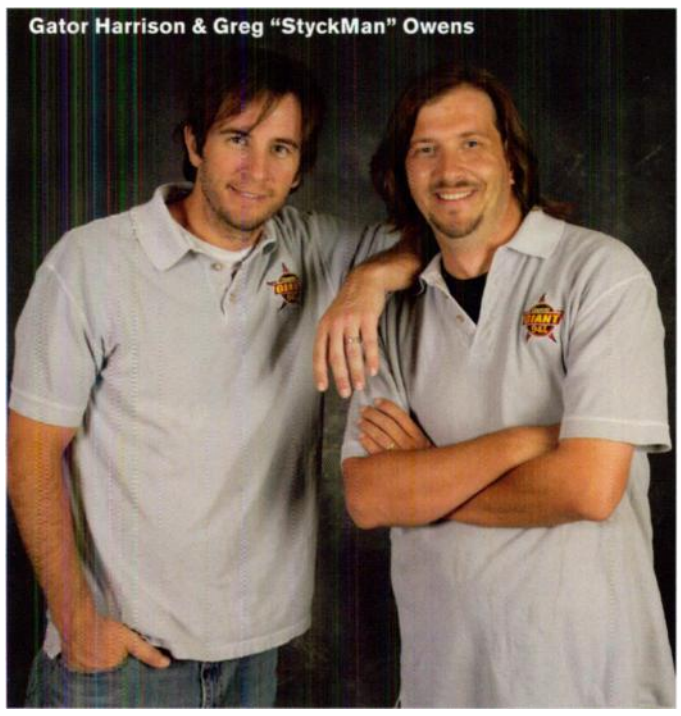
ACM Small Market On-Air Personality Of The Year

Gator & The Styckman, WGSQ/Cookeville, TN

Hometown Heroes

*PD/morning co-host **Gator Harrison** and co-host **Greg "StyckMan" Owens** were high school buds who share the same passion – radio. Both moved away, but chose to settle down where they grew up so their families could have the same childhoods they had. They've spent the last 10 years serving their community as the Country Giant morning duo.*

StyckMan: This one time our promotions director, general manager and I sent Gator to a business that had been closed for several years with the contact "Joe King." When he started his first break someone was hiding in the van and drove off. Gator, being the pro that he is, tried to make it up: "This is the future home of King's Septic Service ... and somebody just drove off in the van ... I ain't kiddin'. If there's any cops listening, somebody just stole the van."


Gator Harrison & Greg "StyckMan" Owens

Gator: That's not funny.

StyckMan: But seriously, it's easy to get passionate about the things going on in your hometown. A couple of years ago we had an elementary school that burned to the ground. We adopted them and called it "School Supplies for the Little Guys." We had obviously a very serious situation but we had fun with it and made more friends than I ever could have imagined.

Gator: Winning awards is wonderful; that's the industry telling you, "Good job." Days like the morning I broadcast live from the hospital where my wife was delivering our baby – when you are able to share those personal experiences, those moments are why you do what you do. When you get a call from a charity, it's someone you went to high school with and it's their kid that's fighting some disease. Community is our family. I'm looking forward to seeing one of our hometown favorites, Rodney Atkins, taking home a couple ACM awards.

StyckMan: I wonder what artist I'm gonna get to pee with this time. *[Ed. Note: In the Dec. 2007 Country Aircheck, Styckman recalled his trip to Nashville to receive the CMA Small Market Personality award. "I line up at the urinal, look up, and realize that Whispering Bill Anderson's on my left and Randy Travis is on my right. Peeing with the legends. That was my CMA magical moment."]*

Trophy Rife: Gator (l) and StyckMan (r) show off the station's ACM and CMA Station Of The Year awards.

Gator: In 2005 we won the ACM for Small Market Station Of The Year and I got to go accept. **Marty** and **Stew**, our afternoon guys, were nominated, too, so they came along. Three grown men and a day to shoot in Vegas, we ended up going to eat at the ESPN Zone, played at an arcade, raced go-carts and watched the Disney animated movie *Over The Hedge*. That was our Big Vegas Vacation.

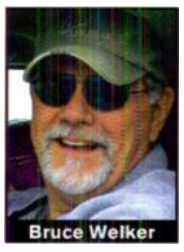
StyckMan: You coulda done that in Gatlinburg.

ACM Small Market Radio Station Of The Year

WGSQ/Cookeville, TN

Local & Vocal

*This is the second ACM Station Of The Year award for the Country Giant; the first was in 2005 when the station also took home the CMA. Clear Channel/Cookeville VP/Market Manager **Bruce Welker** attributes their success to the local airstaff and a consistent commitment to the community.*


Bruce Welker

This radio station has stationality. No matter the DJ, the daypart or which song is playing at that time, there is something that ties it all together. Four out of the five guys on the air grew up going to high school together, and they all left and came back. The other has lived here his whole life and been on the air 20-something years. The people in town know them. It's not like they are stars, they feel like they know them. They can call and complain or tell them things that are good. It's good that people feel like they can get through.

With A Little Help From Their Friends: Little Texas played WGSQ's last St. Jude concert at which they presented the charity a check for $121,215. Pictured (l-r) are LT's Dwayne O'Brien and Duane Propes, WGSQ's StyckMan and Marty McFly, LT's Del Gray and Porter Howell, and WGSQ's Gator Harrison and Stewart James.

Award Lord: The airstaff of WGSQ show off their 2005 CMA and ACM Station Of The Year Awards. Pictured (l-r) are morning co-hosts Gator Harrison and StyckMan, afternoon co-hosts Marty McFly and Stewart James, and seated is midday jock Philip Gibbons.

Plus, we're everywhere. I don't mean just showing up and doing a quick remote. Anything that happens, we try to be part of it. And through the years that has really helped develop this station in the hearts and minds of people in this community. We're halfway between Nashville and Knoxville, which is a perfect spot for country music. A lot of country artists live out this way and we've taken of advantage of it. We also have the commitment of the people of the station, not just the on-air talent but everybody – sales people, office personnel. Everybody is involved in community service.

Because Rodney Atkins is from here, his wife showed up one of the days of our St. Jude Radiothon. Those things are important in that it's a national promotion and we're able add that local aspect.

We do a Christmas Wish program every year, where people write letters and tell us things they need or would like to have. A lot of times it's things you wouldn't necessarily think about, like a pair of glasses or dental work or a new refrigerator. The station, by using other sources like clients and listeners, grants those wishes. It's not a ton of money, but it's specific to the need of the people and we get terrific response from that.

It was a big deal when we won both the ACM and CMA award back in '05. We'd love to do that again this fall. CAC

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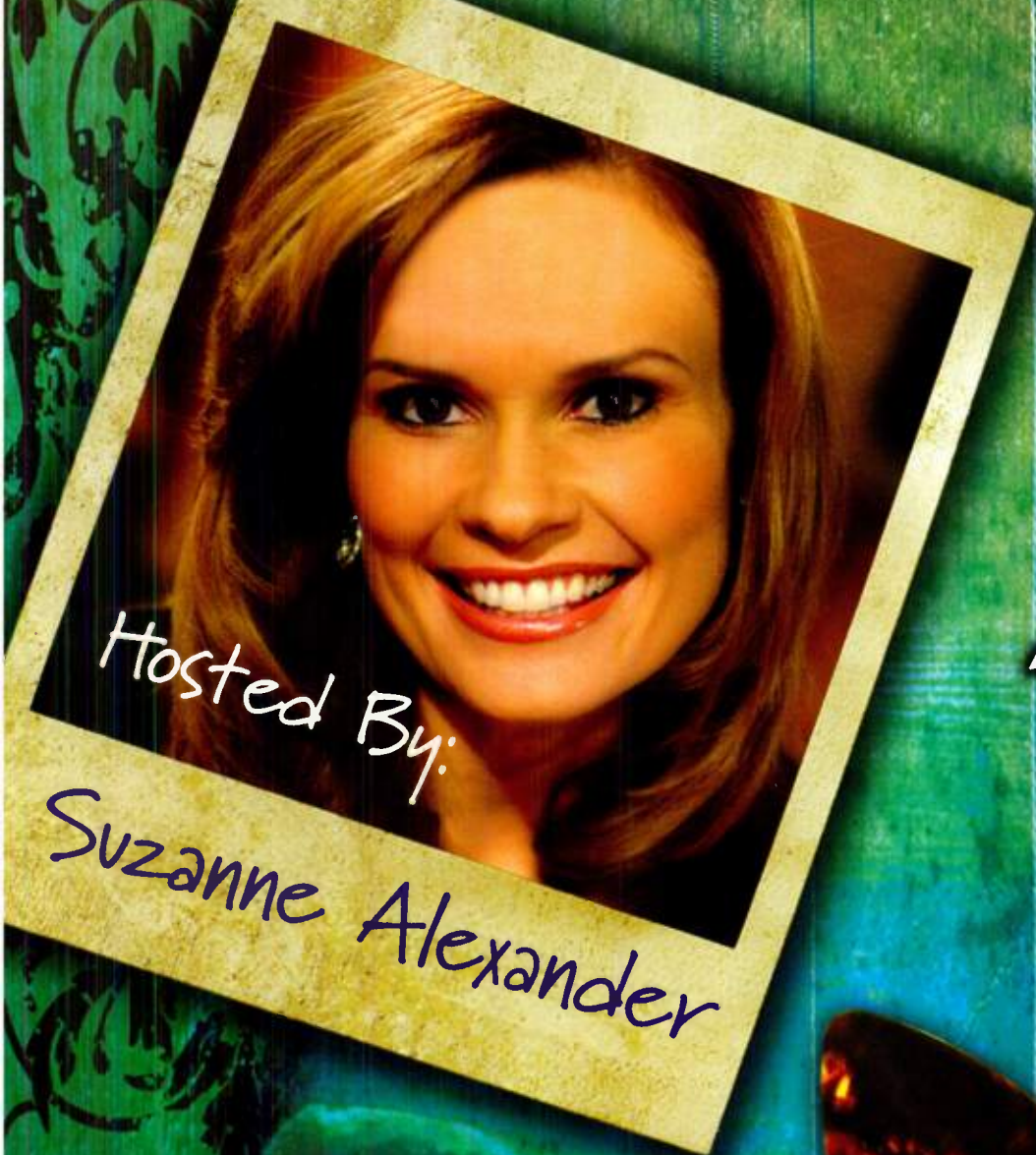

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Love Does Live Here

ACM Week With Lady Antebellum

"We looked around at some of the other artists, and thought, 'Seriously? We're sitting here?'"

—Dave Haywood

Dave Haywood, Charles Kelley and Hillary Scott landed in Las Vegas late one Thursday evening in May with a full itinerary, two shows to perform, an ACM presenter's slot and a New Vocal Duo or Group nomination. The Capitol/Nashville trio flew out Monday with their first major award, armloads of free artist swag and their first top 5 hit – "Love Don't Live Here." In between, Lady Antebellum got their first full-on taste of a major awards event weekend. And Country Aircheck was there.

The 43rd Annual ACM Awards was actually Kelley's second trip to Vegas, having attended last year's show and participated in the charity motorcycle ride. But the band was only recently signed at that point. "Even at the CMAs in November, not many people knew us," Kelley says. "This time we're going with a purpose, so it has a different feel. We're excited."

Friday

First things first, Lady A give the Westwood One radio remote a full tour Friday morning. "I'm not exactly sure how many stations it was, like 32 in three hours, I think," Hillary says.

"We got to see so many people who really seem proud that they took a chance on us early," Hillary continues. "That's a really cool feeling and it was great to reconnect with people we haven't seen in a while."

That evening, the band performs a free, online, interactive concert through DeepRockDrive.com. At the show, the band can view flat screens where fans are commenting on the performance, giving shout-outs, offering digital applause and requesting songs. "A lot of our core fans have been online and on our MySpace page supporting us, and I expected we'd see them there," Dave says.

"But in a lot of ways, we weren't sure what to expect," Charles adds. "We're a band that connects with people through the Internet anyway with our Webisode Wednesdays, and this turned out really cool. We caught ourselves reading while we were singing, which was a new experience."

"People were texting in, 'Charles is so hot! Hillary, will you marry me?'" Dave says. "We were just looking at this giant plasma and actually talking back to people between the songs. There were people there from 13 different countries."

Saturday

The motorcycle ride came early for Charles, who was up late at the tables. "A little blackjack, a little roulette," he says. "I actually put it all on green and hit. But I've got two more days here. There's still plenty of time to lose it."

Both Dave and Hillary say they have no interest in riding a Harley, with Charles or otherwise. "I might see if they'll let me ride a Vespa next year," Hillary says.

Charles actually cuts his ride short to return to the hotel in time for New Artist Party for a Cause rehearsals. Lady A will perform two songs, "Lookin' For A Good Time" and the single, "Love Don't Live Here."

Metal Shop: Lady A starts the week with WQYK/Tampa's Dave McKay and Randy Price at the radio remotes (above), and ends it holding trophies in the backstage press room (below)

ACM Week With Lady Antebellum

From the MGM convention center ballroom that will hold that night's crowd, they're shuttled over to the Grand Garden Arena to rehearse their presenting slot on the CBS awards telecast. "This is our first appearance on the ACMs," Hillary says, practicing her line. Dave chimes in with his, "But only one can win, so here are the nominees for Top New Female Vocalist." Charles keeps his line to himself, at least until they're called onstage for their run-through.

The band packs in a five-minute burrito at craft services and a syndicated radio interview before hitting the artist gift room, where they're showered with free clothes, electronics, sunglasses, luggage and more. Designers show off their wares and guitar cases are filled with goodies. Charles loads up on baby gear. "I'm going to be the best uncle ever," he says. Later he accepts a beard trimmer while Dave gets some ribbing for choosing a flat iron. "I'm not holding that in the picture," he says.

That night, Lady A go on third at the New Artist Party for a Cause, and ACM Executive Director Bob Romeo praises their performance, echoing the enthusiastic crowd response. But the main event is still to come.

"I'm not looking forward to three hours of hair on Sunday," Hillary says. "I have a 9am call and theirs is after 11, I think. It's just so unfair."

Sunday

The 43rd Annual ACM Awards starts at 5pm local time, which seems early but still gives the band plenty of time to ponder their situation. For instance, whether they need to be prepared in the event they win.

Pictured: Dave, Hillary and Charles show off their swag room haul. Free is good.

I think we were too nervous and excited to realize it. And everyone was so nice to us.

"We were on the Ellen Degeneres show when our album came out, and we have become friends with some of her team, so it was great to chat with them on the carpet."

Inside, they take their seats with the rest of the artist-heavy crowd. "Thankfully, the award we presented and the one we were nominated for were really early in the show," he says. "I don't know if we would have made it if they had been later. We looked around at some of the other artists, and thought, 'Seriously? We're sitting here?'"

And then things begin to move quickly. They present Taylor Swift with her Top New Female Vocalist award. Before they know it, they're walking to the stage to accept their own award. "Everything's been pretty unbelievable," Dave says later in the pressroom. "Playing the Opry, touring with Martina McBride, putting a record out."

"It truly feels like a dream," Hillary says. Asked about her emotional reaction, she admits, "I cry at Hallmark commercials. It's just an overwhelming feeling."

Later, the band celebrates with Capitol staff at a dinner, and they're content to rest on their winnings. There will be no gambling this night. "We had already won enough for the night and didn't want to take our chances on losing money," Hillary says. "I'm sure this will sink in at some point, but for now, it's still very surreal."

Dave admits having to go back later to watch the awards. "We were so nervous and overwhelmed by it all," he says. "Much of it is a blur."

Monday, as they prepare to fly out of Las Vegas, "Love Don't Live Here" reaches No. 5 on the Country Aircheck/Mediabase chart. "It's one of the first songs we wrote back when we were writing songs just to be writing songs," Dave says. "It's always been special to us. There are so many great artists in country music right now, so to have Country radio be so supportive of us this early is incredibly humbling."

And for Lady Antebellum, this auspicious start is only the beginning. "We have a busy summer ahead," Hillary says. "We're so excited to get out there and celebrate with everyone who has helped make all this possible." CAC

"I have a 9am call and theirs is after 11, I think. It's just so unfair."

—Hillary Scott

"It needs to be spontaneous, but there are also a lot of important people who have contributed to this," Dave says. "Even being nominated is amazing, but I can't imagine having 10 seconds to thank the world."

On a cloudless day in the Nevada desert, the heat becomes a focal point for artists dressed to the hilt for the walk down the media-populated orange carpet. "It's such a crazy experience," Hillary says. "It was really, really hot, but being our first award nomination

Party Crowd: Lady Antebellum rock the house at the New Artist Party For A Cause (below), earning special praise from ACM's Bob Romeo (above).

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"CMA Awards accountants won't tell what category or artist, but they have told CMA that artists have won by only one vote. Every member gets to vote in private on their own computer and there's no reason the 'voice' of our industry can't be 'honestly' heard – it may not be about sales or airplay every year, but an Award that represents respect from our peers is still a very important part of our history and our future. You've got to vote!"
– Kix Brooks of Brooks & Dunn

"We will continue to educate artists and make them aware that their votes do count. There are a lot of artists I talk to every day who are unaware that they can sign up their bands, their bus drivers and their crew for CMA membership. Then all of those votes count in the CMA Awards."
– Jay DeMarcus of Rascal Flatts

"I make sure that everyone in my organization – starting with the bus driver – is able to vote. We follow up to make sure that they are casting their votes on time. It is a solid business decision to sign up everyone in your company that is eligible to be a member of CMA. We all benefit when we as artists encourage our support teams to be informed and participate in the process of selecting the CMA Awards winners. It makes us stronger as an industry and community."
– Troy Gentry of Montgomery Gentry

"Country Music is an art form that needs to be protected, preserved and expanded. Voting for the CMA Awards is an important part of that process. It is something every artist making a living from the clubs to the concert stage can do to contribute to the greater good."
– John Rich of Big Rich

"When I discovered the difference between winning and losing in some cases was only a few votes, I never again missed an opportunity to vote for the CMA Awards. It's so important to make your voice heard."
– Victoria Shaw

CMA AWARDS BALLOT SCHEDULE

Online voting

FIRST BALLOT
JUNE 30 - JULY 15

SECOND BALLOT
AUG. 13 - AUG. 26

THIRD BALLOT
OCT. 17 - NOV. 4

Eligibility period for the 2008 CMA Awards is July 1, 2007 — June 30, 2008. Balloting is conducted entirely online.

CMA MEMBER CHECKLIST

Make sure everyone in your organization is able to vote.

____Accountant
____Ad Agency
____Art Director
____Artist
____Audio Tech
____Background Vocalist
____Band Member
____Banjo Player
____Bassist
____Bus Driver
____Business Manager
____Business Management Staff
____Camera Operator
____Choreographer
____Composer
____Copywriter
____Crew Member
____Designer
____Dobro Player
____Drum Tech
____Drummer
____Engineer
____Equipment Tech
____Fan Club President
____Fan Club Staff
____Fiddler
____Graphic Artist
____Guitar Tech
____Guitarist
____Journalist
____Keyboard Player
____Lighting Crew Chief
____Lighting Designer
____Lighting Director
____Management Staff
____Manager
____Merchandise Manager
____Monitor Engineer
____Musician
____Percussionist
____Personal Assistant
____Photographer
____Pianist
____Producer
____Production Manager
____Production Staff
____Promoter
____Publication Employee
____Publicist
____Publicity Staff
____Publisher
____Radio DJ
____Radio Management
____Radio Programmer
____Radio Sales
____Radio Station
____Record Company
____Record Company Staff
____Record Distributor
____Record Merchandiser
____Road Manager
____Set Designer/Director
____Set Carpenter
____Song Publisher
____Songwriter
____Sound Engineer/Manager
____Stage Manager
____Steel Guitar Player
____Stylist
____Support Services
____Talent Agency
____Talent Agent
____Talent Buyer
____Television Station
____Tour Manager
____Tour Promoter
____TV Producer
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____Video Merchandiser
____Video Producer
____Video Support Services
____Video Technician
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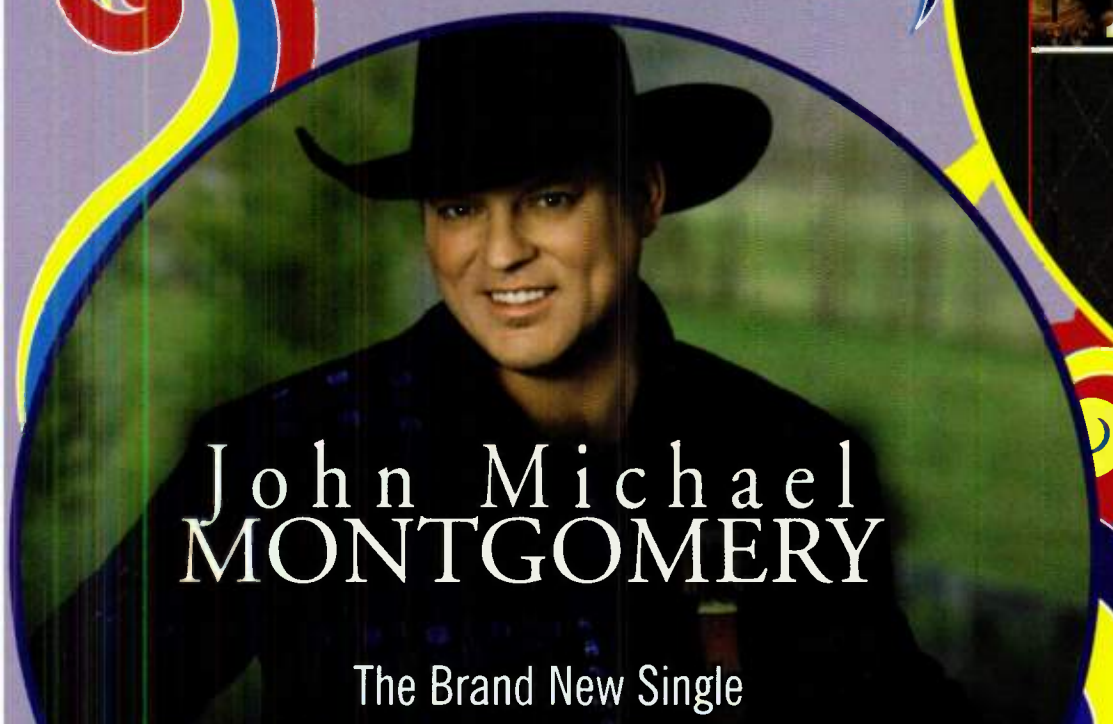

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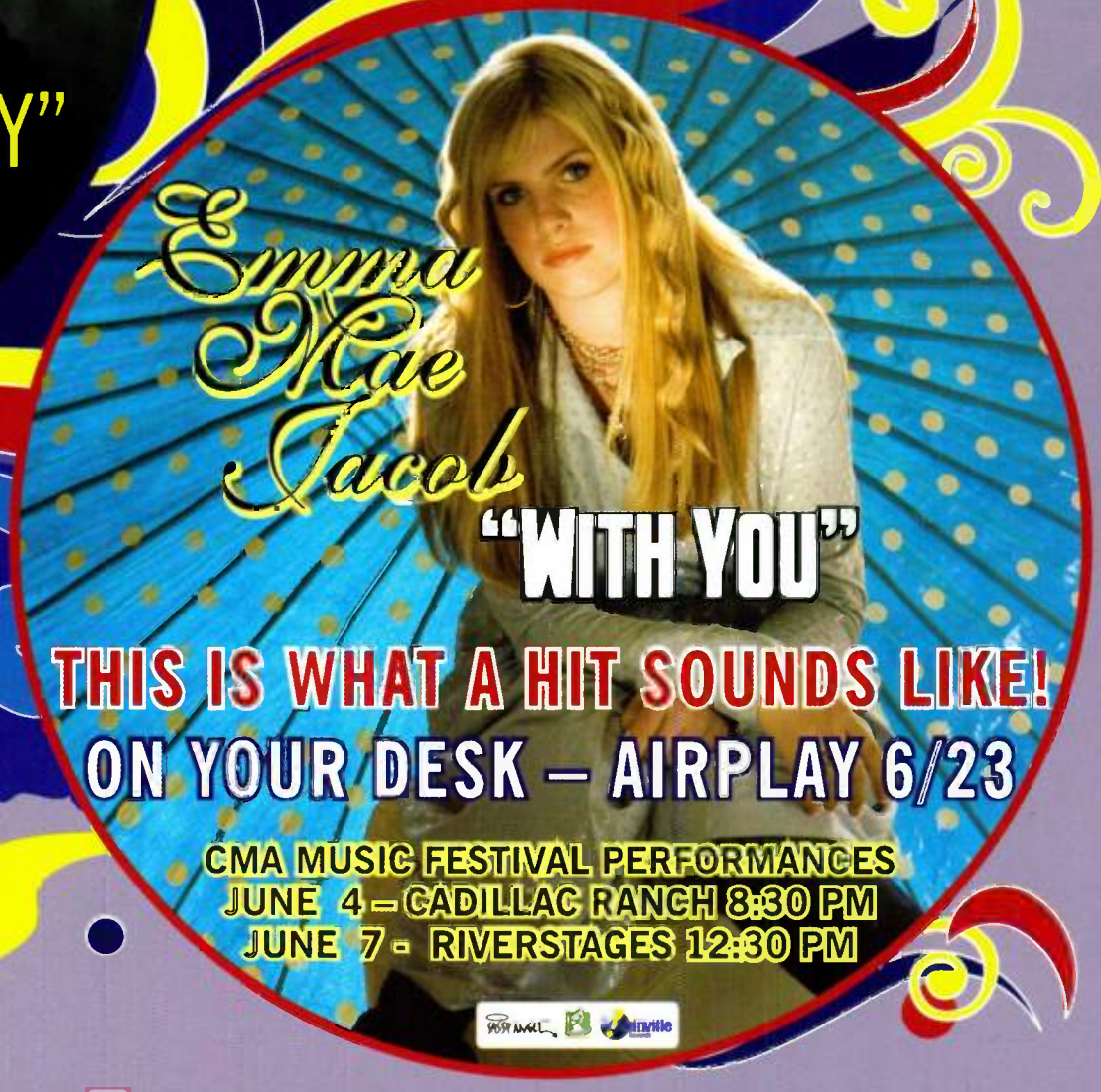

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CMA MUSIC FESTIVAL PERFORMANCES
JUNE 4 – CADILLAC RANCH 8:30 PM
JUNE 7 - RIVERSTAGES 12:30 PM

COUNTRY'S TOP RATINGS & REVENUE COMPANIES

Nineteen companies made $10 million or more from their Country outlets in 2007, with Clear Channel once again leading the pack with over $365 million in revenues. Clear Channel also led the way in listeners, with a cume of more than nine million per week.

Country Aircheck's overview of Country's top revenue and audience companies features year-to-year trends in both categories, plus ratings comparisons from Fall '07 to Fall '06, for every Country station owned by the top operators.

You'll note that Clear Channel's numbers were down significantly from past years following placement of more than 100 stations, almost 30 of them Country, in the Aloha Station Trust.

It's impossible to list all 2000+ Country stations in the USA, so this list is confined to companies with at least $10 million in revenue from their Country outlets. If your company or station has inadvertently been omitted, please let us know.

COUNTRY COMPANIES REVENUE RANKER

Here's how the companies listed on these pages rank by 2007 revenue, as compiled from individual station revenues for each year as provided by BIA. Previous years' total company revenues and revenue rankings follow, with the company's rank for that year following the revenue figure.

Owner	2007	2006	2005	2003	1997
1. Clear Channel	$365.6	$466.0/1	$440.6/1	$416.7/1	$76.3/4
2. CBS Radio	$172.0	$224.8/2	$218.7/2	$225.4/2	$167.0/1
3. Citadel	$167.0	$111.4/3	$104.2/3	$88.8/3	$32.2/7
4. Cumulus	$112.6	$111.4/3	$62.3/5	$67.2/5	$8.4/-
5. Cox	$71.6	$69.1/5	$70.1/4	$68.4/4	$35.5/6
6. Aloha Sta. Trust	$61.6	–	–	–	–
7. Beasley	$40.1	$39.9/7	$34.9/8	$28.5/10	$21.8/11
8. Entercom	$39.9	$33.8/8	$22.5/12	$20.7/12	–
9. Regent	$33.1	$27.4/10	$25.1/11	$31.4/11	–
10. Lincoln Fin. Media	$30.7	$30.9/9	$33.1/10	$35.3/8	–
11. Bonneville	$24.4	–	–	$8.9/18	–
12. Gap	$24.2	–	–	–	–
13. Wilkes	$18.1	–	–	–	
14. Journal	$16.2	$17.6/11	$16.4/13	$16.3/14	–
15. Hall	$15.9	$14.5/12	$14.4/14	$13.1/15	–
16. Max Media	$14.3	$12.7/14	$12.9/16	–	–
17. Saga	$14.2	$13.7/13	$13.1/15	$12.5/17	–
18. Mt. Wilson	$13.5	–	–	–	–
19. Greater Media	$11.7	$10.7/19	–	–	–

COUNTRY COMPANIES AUDIENCE RANKER

Here's how the companies listed on these pages rank by 2007 metro cume audience, according to BIA. Previous years' cume and cume rankings follow, with the company's rank for that year following the cume figure. Please note that fall 2007 cume figures for CBS and Cox stations in Houston and the Beasley station in Philadelphia come from PPM data.

Owner	2007	2006	2005	2003	1997
1. Clear Channel	9,258,500	11,231,455/1	10,917,000/1	10,156,500/1	2,796,800/3
2. CBS Radio	4,213,400	4,982,300/2	5,035,900/2	4,976,300/2	5,226,600/1
3. Citadel	3,846,500	2,585,900/3	2,466,400/3	1,988,800/3	961,800/10
4. Cox	2,871,100	1,905,800/5	1,854,900/4	1,798,400/4	989,100/7
5. Cumulus	2,397,400	2,488,700/4	1,565,800/6	1,660,800/5	983,900/8
6. Aloha Sta. Trust	1,557,300	–	–	–	–
7. Entercom	1,444,170	1,208,500/7	733,400/10	697,300/10	–
8. Beasley	1,384,100	934,000/8	1,039,300/8	791,800/8	761,700/11
9. Bonneville	765,700	–	–	581,200/13	–
10. Regent	730,100	646,250/9	580,100/12	687,600/11	–
11. Wilks	635,700	–	–	–	–
12. Lincoln Fin. Media	545,500	571,400/10	625,300/11	631,800/12	755,400/12
13. Gap	534,600	–	–	–	–
14. Mt. Wilson	444,700	–	–	–	–
15. Journal	429,900	404,200/12	470,100/13	391,800/15	–
16. Hall	424,400	444,600/11	414,300/14	382,800/16	–
17. Greater Media	331,200	314,100/13	–	–	–
18. Max Media	260,200	281,700/14	259,400/15	–	–
19. Saga	151,100	154,000/16	163,400/17	133,800/18	–

LEGEND: Following each station's calls and city are its Arbitron 12+ shares from Fall '07 and Fall '06. Next comes the Fall '07 Arbitron metro cume, followed by the Fall '06 figures. After that are the station's 2007 and 2006 revenues, listed in millions, except in "Totals," where actual figures for cume and revenue are shown.

A note of "na" means a figure was either not available or not applicable.

BIA is the source for all revenue and ownership data; all ratings information comes from Arbitron. The first set of figures under "Totals" shows the number of Country stations owned by the operator at the end of 2007. All totals for previous years also came from BIA and represent the totals for the stations owned that year.

Calls/City	12+ Share Fa '07	12+ Share Fa '06	Cume (00) Fa '07	Cume (00) Fa '06	Revenue (in millions) 2007	Revenue (in millions) 2006
Aloha Station Trust						
KBQI/Albuquerque	3.7	4.3	791	803	$1.3	$1.3
WIBL/Augusta, GA	2.9	6.0	385	554	$1.1	$1.2
KBKO/Bakersfield, CA	0.9	2.4	244	377	$.9	$1.0
WBFB/Bangor, ME	6.8	6.0	270	280	$.4	$.4
WGAR/Cleveland	6.5	7.5	2,890	2,809	$9.8	$11.4
WQRB/Eau Claire, WI	11.2	10.1	330	274	$2.1	$1.9
WATQ/Eau Claire, WI	7.0	6.9	210	179	$.5	$1.1
WFRE/Frederick, MD	13.0	12.6	523	536	$4.4	$4.8
KHGE/Fresno	1.6	2.0	387	496	$1.3	$1.6
WBCT/Grand Rapids	7.5	7.0	1,409	1,246	$6.4	$7.4
WWYZ/Hartford	7.7	6.2	1,849	1,703	$10.4	$10.4
WTCR/Huntington, WV	10.6	12.2	646	699	$2.1	$2.4
WROO/Jacksonville, FL	1.6	1.8	656	674	$2.0	$2.3
WHER/Laurel, MS	3.7	4.4	143	166	$.3	$.3
WIMT/Lima, OH	15.8	14.2	352	381	$1.4	$1.4
KHKN/Little Rock	3.4	4.2	466	455	$1.5	$1.5
KTPI/Los Angeles	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0
WEBL/Macon, GA	3.3	2.3	232	210	$.4	$.4
WNOE/New Orleans	6.7	7.1	1,521	1,589	$6.2	$6.2
WUBB/Portsmouth, NH	0.6	0.7	88	108	$.3	$.3
WZBL/Roanoke, VA	4.0	3.7	354	384	$.8	$.7
WWFG/Salisbury, MD	8.1	8.8	629	529	$1.6	$1.8
WPKX/Springfield, MA	5.4	7.3	702	750	$2.3	$2.4
WCTH/The Florida Keys	3.2	3.3	68	64	$.6	$.5

TOTALS:	Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
	2007	27	135.2	1,557,300	$61,625,000

As part of taking the company private, Clear Channel transferred a number of stations to a privately owned trust company known as the Aloha Station Trust, LLC in July 2007. Some stations have been sold to other companies already; the above stations were in the trust at the end of 2007.

In addition to the 24 stations listed above, the Aloha Station Trust also owns three Country stations in non-rated markets, according to BIA data. The stations contributed to station and revenue totals, but not to ratings totals.

Calls/City	12+ Share Fa '07	12+ Share Fa '06	Cume (00) Fa '07	Cume (00) Fa '06	Revenue (in millions) 2007	Revenue (in millions) 2006
Beasley Broadcasting						
WKXC/Augusta, GA	8.6	6.9	824	585	$2.5	$2.2
WKML/Fayetteville, NC	9.3	13.3	714	770	$5.0	$4.7
KCYE/Las Vegas	3.4	3.3	1,369	1,223	$5.0	$2.7
WKIS/Miami	3.3	2.4	2,764	2,479	$12.0	$14.4
WXTU/Philadelphia	5.4*	3.7	8,170*	4,286	$16.0	$15.9

TOTALS:	Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
	2007*	5	30.0	1,384,100	$40,100,000
	2006	5	29.6	934,000	$39,850,000
	2005	5	33.4	1,039,300	$37,580,000
	2003	4	25.9	791,800	$28,550,000

**2007 share and cume figures for WXTU are based on November 2007 PPM data.*

Calls/City	12+ Share Fa '07	12+ Share Fa '06	Cume (00) Fa '07	Cume (00) Fa '06	Revenue (in millions) 2007	Revenue (in millions) 2006
Bonneville						
WUBE/Cincinnati	7.6	5.3	2,963	2,291	$12.2	$12.5
WYGY/Cincinnati	2.0	1.6	1,036	941	$2.8	$4.1
WIL/St. Louis	6.0	5.2	3,658	3,512	$9.4	$9.6

TOTALS:	Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
	2007	3	15.6	765,700	$24,400,000

CBS Radio

Calls/City	12+ Share Fa '07	12+ Share Fa '06	Cume (00) Fa '07	Cume (00) Fa '06	Revenue (in millions) 2007	Revenue (in millions) 2006
WSOC/Charlotte	5.9	5.6	2,453	1,841	$8.4	$7.9
WUSN/Chicago	2.8	3.3	6,329	6,745	$27.1	$28.4
KWLI/Denver	1.4	1.9	1,008	1,120	$3.5	$3.7
WYCD/Detroit	3.4	3.8	4,370	4,445	$11.0	$12.5
KILT/Houston*	4.0	3.2	8,756	4,396	$24.9	$25.0
KMLE/Phoenix	3.4	3.9	3,182	3,389	$15.7	$16.5
WDSY/Pittsburgh	6.0	6.9	2,664	3,083	$9.4	$9.8
KUPL/Portland	4.3	5.6	2,003	2,204	$8.5	$8.3
KFRG/Riverside	3.9	6.4	1,858	2,284	$14.5	$14.0
KNCI/Sacramento	3.9	5.3	2,006	2,188	$10.0	$12.2
KMPS/Seattle	4.9	3.7	3,535	3,536	$17.0	$15.5
WQYK/Tampa	5.5	5.7	2,813	3,307	$15.0	$15.6
KVFG/Victor Valley, CA	1.0	2.4	156	211	$.7	$.6
WIRK/West Palm Beach	5.1	3.9	1,001	1,066	$6.5	$7.2

TOTALS:

Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
2007*	15	55.5	4,213,400	$172,025,000
2006	21	93.3	4,982,300	$224,750,000
2005	20	99.8	5,035,900	$218,650,000
2003	23	97.5	4,976,300	$224,975,000
1999	25	110.6	5,706,900	$223,900,000
1996	26	108.2	5,375,200	$167,050,000

**2007 share and cume figures for KILT are based on November 2007 PPM data.*

In addition to the 14 stations listed above, CBS Radio also owns one Country station in a non-rated market, according to BIA data. The station contributed to station and revenue totals, but not to ratings totals.

Citadel Broadcasting

Calls/City	12+ Share Fa '07	12+ Share Fa '06	Cume (00) Fa '07	Cume (00) Fa '06	Revenue (in millions) 2007	Revenue (in millions) 2006
KRST/Albuquerque	3.2	5.0	774	962	$3.5	$3.4
WCTO/Allentown, PA	11.7	11.7	1,530	1,432	$5.5	$5.4
WKHX/Atlanta	4.0	5.0	4,132	4,824	$22.6	$24.6
WYAY/Atlanta	2.6	1.9	2,674	2,756	$8.4	$9.7
WEBB/Augusta, ME	7.5	10.3	198	215	$1.2	$1.2
WHWK/Binghamton, NY	14.1	14.4	539	519	$2.4	$2.3
KQFC/Boise, ID	5.4	3.3	516	498	$2.2	$2.4
KIZN/Boise, ID	6.3	6.2	638	684	$3.2	$3.1
WIWF/Charleston, SC	3.0	–	552	–	–	–
WNKT/Charleston, SC	2.2	3.3	389	482	$1.3	$1.3
WOGT/Chattanooga	3.9	2.4	390	359	$.8	$.8
KATC/Colorado Springs	6.5	7.4	671	723	$1.7	$1.6
WPKQ/Concord, NH	1.6	1.0	116	106	$1.0	$1.1
KSCS/Dallas	2.9	3.0	4,550	4,514	$18.0	$19.5
KTYS/Dallas	0.9	1.0	2,371	2,132	$4.1	$4.1
KHKI/Des Moines	5.3	5.7	666	568	$2.4	$2.2
KJJY/Des Moines	6.4	3.9	716	519	$2.4	$2.5
WXTA/Erie, PA	6.7	5.2	369	337	$.9	$1.5
WFBE/Flint, MI	6.5	5.7	542	551	$2.2	$2.1
WTNR/Grand Rapids	3.3	2.4	798	591	$2.2	$2.2
WCAT/Harrisburg	2.4	1.7	322	317	$1.4	$1.5
WGOC/Johnson City, TN	1.1	2.7	107	233	$.2	$.4
WIVK/Knoxville	18.2	23.5	2,479	2,562	$13.5	$12.5
KXKC/Lafayette, LA	6.3	6.9	733	653	$2.8	$2.7
WIOV/Lancaster, PA	8.1	8.3	705	761	$4.9	$5.1
WITL/Lansing, MI	11.0	12.2	821	756	$3.3	$3.3
WGKX/Memphis	6.2	5.2	1,406	1,548	$5.6	$5.8
KATM/Modesto, CA	8.3	13.1	859	985	$7.5	$6.5
WMDH/Muncie, IN	10.4	12.2	338	372	$1.8	$2.0
WLAW/Muskegon, MI	2.7	2.6	86	76	$.4	$.3
WKDF/Nashville	5.0	4.6	1,888	1,910	$8.3	$8.1
KKND/New Orleans	1.1	1.2	341	362	$1.5	$1.7
WOKQ/Portsmouth, NH	9.6	8.7	665	767	$6.1	$5.9
KBUL/Reno	5.5	5.8	503	569	$2.0	$2.2
KKAT/Salt Lake City	2.3	2.3	705	689	$3.9	$3.2
KUBL/Salt Lake City	3.5	6.1	1,934	2,336	$6.5	$6.5
KIIM/Tucson	8.8	10.7	1,383	1,367	$7.7	$8.3
WFFN/Tuscaloosa, AL	4.0	4.0	133	113	$.3	$.2
WSJR/Wilkes Barre	1.9	1.9	408	439	$.9	$1.0

TOTALS:

Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
2007	41	219.1	3,846,500	$167,030,000
2006	39	222.4	2,585,900	$111,400,000
2005	37	222.0	2,466,400	$104,200,000
2003	29	197.9	1,998,900	$88,760,000
1999	25	165.2	1,371,300	$53,625,000
1996	15	NA	874,000	$32,200,000

Citadel closed on its purchase of ABC Radio in 2007, adding WKHX & WYAY/Atlanta and KSCS& KTYS/Dallas to its Country roster. WYAY has since changed formats.

In addition to the 39 stations listed above, Citadel also owns two Country stations in non-rated markets, according to BIA data. Those stations contribute to station and revenue totals, but not to ratings totals.

Clear Channel Communications

Calls/City	12+ Share Fa '07	12+ Share Fa '06	Cume (00) Fa '07	Cume (00) Fa '06	Revenue (in millions) 2007	Revenue (in millions) 2006
WOBB/Albany, GA	3.6	5.5	115	125	$.7	$.7
KASH/Anchorage, AK	5.3	5.4	371	318	$1.3	$1.5
WKSF/Asheville, NC	15.0	18.5	796	789	$6.1	$6.1
WCOH/Atlanta	0.0	0.0	0	0	$.2	$.2
WUBL/Atlanta	2.3	3.7	3,248	na	$16.0	$17.0
KASE/Austin	5.3	6.0	1,719	1,643	$9.3	$9.3
KVET/Austin	6.0	5.4	1,933	1,701	$7.6	$7.6
WPOC/Baltimore	6.9	7.2	3,702	4,229	$17.6	$17.5
WYNK/Baton Rouge	5.9	7.3	921	1,026	$5.3	$4.9
KYKR/Beaumont, TX	5.0	7.2	458	558	$1.5	$1.4
WKNN/Biloxi, MS	6.8	7.7	547	563	$1.6	$1.8
WDXB/Birmingham	4.7	4.6	968	1,267	$1.7	$2.2
KBMR/Bismarck, ND	9.9	12.5	124	124	$.6	$.6
KQDY/Bismarck, ND	12.2	14.2	226	245	$1.2	$1.3
KAGG/Bryan, TX	7.6	4.8	222	241	$.9	$.8
WEZL/Charleston, SC	7.1	6.1	905	859	$2.8	$3.5
WKKT/Charlotte	5.6	4.8	2,831	2,171	$7.2	$7.3
WUSY/Chattanooga, TN	15.4	17.8	1,215	1,343	$5.7	$6.8
WLND/Chattanooga, TN	3.6	3.7	374	na	$.3	$.4
KOLZ/Cheyenne, WY	12.1	16.3	146	190	$.8	$.8
KCCY/Colorado Springs	5.2	5.7	705	741	$2.9	$3.1
WCOS/Columbia, SC	5.6	4.8	788	648	$3.6	$3.9
WSTH/Columbus, GA	3.7	4.4	183	212	$1.2	$1.3
WCOL/Columbus, OH	7.0	7.5	2,293	2,445	$11.3	$11.4
KRYS/Corpus Christi, TX	6.4	8.6	524	639	$1.9	$1.8
KFXR/Dallas	0.5	0.4	873	824	$1.2	$1.1
WDTW/Detroit	2.2	2.2	2,796	3,032	$5.9	$6.1
KHEY/El Paso, TX	3.9	4.6	615	671	$1.8	$1.4
KKIX/Fayetteville, AR	12.9	11.9	703	691	$2.9	$2.9
WCKT/Ft. Myers, FL	2.0	1.5	512	408	$.9	$1.8
WAVW/Ft. Pierce, FL	5.3	6.0	658	635	$2.4	$2.3
KMAG/Ft. Smith, AR	7.7	11.4	485	523	$1.5	$1.6
KSNR/Grand Forks, ND-MN	6.0	10.3	117	164	$.8	$1.0
WTQR/Greensboro, NC	5.7	8.0	1,756	2,229	$7.0	$7.6
WESC/Greenville, SC	6.8	6.7	1,280	1,365	$4.3	$4.5
WSSL/Greenville, SC	10.0	7.4	1,614	1,496	$6.1	$6.1
WRBT/Harrisburg	8.0	7.0	896	938	$3.8	$3.6
WKCY/Harrisonburg, VA	15.9	12.1	293	260	$2.5	$2.0
WDRM/Huntsville, AL	11.0	12.6	1,062	1,089	$4.4	$5.5
WMSI/Jackson, MS	4.7	7.0	553	612	$3.7	$4.2
WQIK/Jacksonville, FL	6.6	8.7	1,874	2,186	$5.3	$5.5
KWNR/Las Vegas	4.8	4.4	1,910	1,461	$9.8	$10.5
WBUL/Lexington, KY	9.3	9.9	1,129	1,157	$3.8	$4.2
KSSN/Little Rock	10.1	10.4	1,018	967	$5.1	$5.4
WAMZ/Louisville	9.2	11.9	1,940	2,325	$8.5	$8.7
WMAD/Madison, WI	4.5	4.1	497	528	$2.0	$1.2
KTEX/McAllen, TX	5.8	7.0	1,220	1,333	$3.0	$2.9
WMSO/Meridian, MS	8.1	4.6	106	69	$.5	$.28
WMIL/Milwaukee	5.8	6.7	2,250	2,178	$8.0	$8.1
KEEY/Minneapolis	6.4	6.9	4,254	4,697	$17.2	$18.3
WKSJ/Mobile	7.9	8.3	912	1,050	$4.6	$5.2
KTOM/Monterey	3.4	4.1	484	347	$1.7	$1.7
WMUS/Muskegon, MI	10.3	13.4	360	375	$1.4	$1.5
WSIX/Nashville	6.4	6.4	1728	1819	$6.7	$6.3
WRWC/Newburgh, NY	0.0	1.0	0	104	$.3	$.4
KTST/Oklahoma City	6.6	6.9	1,539	1,682	$2.7	$2.6
KXXY/Oklahoma City	5.0	4.8	1,423	1,295	$4.6	$4.9
KXKT/Omaha	8.4	8.9	1,040	1,050	$5.2	$5.4
KHUS/Omaha	2.6	1.4	472	363	$1.3	$1.2
WPAP/Panama City, FL	13.9	12.4	353	353	$1.8	$1.7
WNUS/Parkersburg, WV	12.2	14.8	331	385	$.6	$1.0
KNIX/Phoenix	4.3	4.3	3,898	3,298	$18.8	$18.0
WELG/Poughkeepsie, NY	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0
WRWD/Poughkeepsie, NY	7.3	4.9	339	286	$2.6	$2.8
WLLR/Quad Cities, IA-IL	17.6	19.4	899	1,005	$4.4	$4.3
WRDU/Raleigh	2.4	2.0	902	901	$5.2	$6.1
KTDD/Riverside	0.9	0.9	322	225	$.8	$.7
WYYD/Roanoke, VA	5.8	4.8	527	534	$2.4	$2.5
KMFX/Rochester, MN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0
KMFX-FM/Rochester, MN	4.8	6.6	225	298	$1.3	$1.4
WCRR/Rochester, NY	0.5	0.5	185	na	$.4	$.4
KAJA/San Antonio	5.2	4.4	2,711	2,446	$8.2	$8.1
KRPT/San Antonio	0.0	0.9	0	207	$1.0	$.9
KUSS/San Diego	1.9	3.2	1,645	1,552	$2.7	$2.7
WCTQ/Sarasota	5.3	4.6	691	800	$1.8	$2.1
KNBQ/Seattle	0.6	1.0	724	1,050	$1.9	$2.0
KIXZ/Spokane	5.6	4.8	838	650	$1.5	$1.5
KSWF/Springfield, MO	4.8	5.0	497	434	$1.5	$1.5
KSD/St. Louis	3.6	4.1	2,855	2,859	$6.0	$6.0
WBLJ/Sunbury, PA	0.5	0.0	42	0	0	0
WBBS/Syracuse	13.0	12.4	1,235	1,230	$5.6	$5.5
WTNT/Tallahassee, FL	5.4	4.2	450	512	$2.0	$2.0
WFUS/Tampa	2.9	4.5	2,602	2,981	$7.0	$7.2
WWZD/Tupelo, MS	9.5	10.5	463	491	$0.9	$0.9
WMZQ/Washington, DC	3.1	3.8	3,767	4,161	$15.5	$17.0
WOVK/Wheeling, WV	16.8	19.2	461	455	$1.68	$1.65
KZSN/Wichita	8.0	6.9	829	773	$3.1	$3.3
WBYL/Williamsport, PA	5.1	4.4	125	135	$.4	$.4
WDSD/Wilmington, DE	1.8	1.5	433	309	$1.8	$1.7
WUSQ/Winchester, VA	16.4	21.4	553	604	$2.8	$2.9

TOTALS:

Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
2007*	111	571.2	9,258,500	$365,595,000
2006	173	1,059.7	11,231,455	$465,990,000
2005	181	1,075.0	10,917,900	$440,600,000
2003	183	1,052.0	10,156,500	$412,335,000
1999	53	367.5	4,355,700	$162,645,000
1996	26	187.3	3,149,900	$76,300,000

Clear Channel placed a number of stations in the Aloha Station Trust (see first entry) in July 2007 as part of its efforts to go private.

In addition to the 90 stations listed above, Clear Channel also owns 21 Country stations in non-rated markets, according to BIA data. Those stations contribute to station and revenue totals, but not to ratings totals.

Cox Radio

Calls/City	12+ Share Fa '07	12+ Share Fa '06	Cume (00) Fa '07	Cume (00) Fa '06	Revenue (in millions) 2007	Revenue (in millions) 2006
WZZK/Birmingham	8.1	5.4	1,696	1,338	$6.0	$4.0
WNCB/Birmingham	1.3	1.1	602	466	$1.3	$1.1
WHKO/Dayton	10.5	7.2	1,829	1,665	$5.7	$6.2
KKBQ/Houston*	3.7	2.9	9,865	4,358	$19.0	$18.5
KTHT/Houston*	3.2	2.0	6,469	2,770	$4.6	$4.5
WPTI/Louisville	2.8	2.3	813	851	$.9	$.6
WWKA/Orlando	4.6	4.7	1,831	1,775	$11.6	$12.0
WKHK/Richmond	6.5	7.5	1,421	1,497	$7.9	$7.8
KKYX/San Antonio	1.0	1.3	456	567	$1.2	$1.4
KCYY/San Antonio	4.5	5.0	2,245	2,202	$8.2	$7.9
KWEN/Tulsa	7.2	9.5	1,484	1,569	$5.3	$5.2

TOTALS:

Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
2007*	11	53.4	2,871,100	$71,575,000
2006	11	48.9	1,905,800	$69,075,000
2005	11	49.3	1,854,900	$70,100,000
2003	9	53.3	1,798,400	$68,350,000
1999	8	50.5	1,355,200	$55,000,000
1996	8	NA	1,110,600	$35,500,000

**2007 share and cume figures for KKBQ & KTHT are based on November 2007 PPM data.*

In addition to the 11 stations listed above, Cox also owns two Country stations in non-rated markets, according to BIA data. Those stations contribute to station and revenue totals, but not to ratings totals.

Katie Armiger
IT'S GOING TO BE A HOT SUMMER!
Her New Cold River CD/Download
IN-STORES & ONLINE 7/1/08
The New Cold River/Nine North Single "UNSEEN"
IMPACTING RADIO 7/7/08
CMA MUSIC FESTIVAL:
Fan Appreciation Party on Thursday, June 5th
Performing at the CMA Music Festival
Riverstages on Saturday, June 7th
KATIEARMIGER.COM
COLD RIVER RECORDS
NINE NORTH RECORDS
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Cumulus Broadcasting/Cumulus Media

Calls/City	12+ Share Fa '07	12+ Share Fa '06	Cume (00) Fa '07	Cume (00) Fa '06	Revenue (in millions) 2007	Revenue (in millions) 2006
KBCY/Abilene, TX	11.1	12.4	305	270	$1.3	$1.3
WKAK/Albany, GA	6.5	5.5	143	121	$.7	$.7
WWWW/Ann Arbor, MI	5.2	5.6	411	318	$2.5	$2.0
WPKR/Appleton, WI	4.1	4.0	388	365	$1.5	$1.5
WQCB/Bangor, ME	16.4	17.1	454	417	$2.3	$2.2
KAYD/Beaumont, TX	4.8	4.4	326	324	$1.1	$1.5
KHAK/Cedar Rapids, IA	15.7	17.8	432	535	$3.8	$3.3
WKOR/Columbus, MS	7.1	6.3	175	166	$.7	$.5
KPLX/Dallas	3.1	2.9	5,110	4,712	$23.0	$25.9
WJOD/Dubuque, IA	8.7	10.8	281	282	$1.8	$.9
KAMO/Fayetteville, AR	4.3	3.6	267	281	$.6	$.7
KQSM/Fayetteville, AR	3.2	3.3	294	306	$.9	$.6
KOMS/Ft. Smith, AR	9.6	9.2	368	341	$.7	$.8
KEKB/Grand Junction, CO	8.0	10.9	209	289	$1.0	$.9
WPCK/Green Bay, WI	4.2	6.5	287	287	$1.0	$.9
KSTB/Houston	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0
WFMS/Indianapolis	8.5	10.3	2,417	2,582	$14.0	$14.8
KUSJ/Killeen, TX	8.3	8.6	374	377	$1.8	$1.4
KYKZ/Lake Charles, LA	14.5	14.1	388	403	$2.2	$2.5
WLXX/Lexington	6.7	7.4	699	796	$2.1	$2.0
WAVG/Louisville	0.4	0.5	115	147	$.3	$.4
WQKC/Louisville	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0
WDEN/Macon, GA	10.3	10.9	538	577	$2.5	$2.4
WHKR/Melbourne	6.8	6.9	688	591	$2.1	$2.5
WYOK/Mobile	3.3	4.7	423	472	$.9	$.8
WLWI/Montgomery, AL	8.4	8.0	635	592	$3.3	$3.7
WYAK/Myrtle Beach, SC	3.8	3.5	297	225	$.5	$1.0
WSM-FM/Nashville	4.1	4.9	1,601	1,580	$5.0	$4.3
WZAD/Newburgh, NY	2.4	0.7	149	na	$.3	$.9
KNFM/Odessa, TX	7.0	6.3	348	290	$1.3	$1.0
KHAY/Oxnard, CA	4.8	6.4	343	420	$3.7	$3.3
WKXP/Poughkeepsie, NY	1.8	2.1	141	169	$1.3	$1.1
KWWK/Rochester, MN	8.0	9.9	276	304	$1.2	$1.0
WXXQ/Rockford, IL	11.1	13	646	633	$3.0	$3.1
WJCL/Savannah	7.0	7.6	359	383	$2.4	$2.1
KRMD/Shreveport	6.5	5.9	546	504	$2.0	$2.0
WKKO/Toledo	14.5	15.0	1,301	1,409	$6.1	$6.3
KQTP/Topeka, KS	5.0	5.5	230	241	$.7	$.6
KOEL/Waterloo, IA	16.4	13.6	362	352	$1.3	$1.4
KLUR/Wichita Falls, TX	15.6	11.3	291	251	$1.3	$1.4
WWQQ/Wilmington, NC	10.6	11.6	475	427	$2.3	$2.0
WQXK/Youngstown, OH	10.7	9.8	882	896	$3.6	$4.0

TOTALS:

Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
2007	52	308.5	2,397,400	$112,600,000
2006	54	324.7	2,488,700	$111,350,000
2005	52	301.0	1,565,800	$66,860,000
2003	58	339.8	1,660,800	$62,260,000
1999	57	461.8	1,718,000	$75,400,000
1996	6	NA	277,500	$8,350,000

In addition to the 42 stations listed above, Cumulus also owns 10 Country stations in non-rated markets, according to BIA data. Those stations contribute to station and revenue totals, but not to ratings totals.

Entercom Communications

WPAW/Greensboro, NC	5.6	5.2	1,553	1,598	$3.9	$4.1
WDAF/Kansas City	3.8	4.7	1,873	1,752	$4.3	$5.0
KWJJ/Portland	4.9	5.8	2,338	2,719	$7.1	$6.9
WBEE/Rochester, NY	10.1	9.5	1,839	1,720	$6.9	$7.6
KBWF/San Francisco	1.7	–	2,980	–	$7.0	–
KKWF/Seattle	3.3	3.7	2,658	3,189	$7.4	$7.8
WGGY/Wilkes Barre	7.9	9.2	1,176	1,110	$3.4	$3.2
WGGI/Wilkes Barre	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0

TOTALS:

Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
2007	8	37.3	1,444,170	$39,900,000
2006	7	38.1	1,208,800	$33,750,000
2005	5	28.3	733,400	$22,525,000
2003	6	31.6	697,300	$20,700,000
1999	5	24.8	538,300	$15,700,000

Gap Broadcasting

KEAN/Abilene, TX	9.9	11.8	310	353	$1.2	$1.2
KYYW/Abilene, TX	2.3	1.8	66	63	$0.1	$.1
KMML/Amarillo, TX	3.9	5.0	255	239	$.7	$.7
KATP/Amarillo, TX	6.3	7.3	228	236	$.3	$.4
KCTR/Billings, MT	13.8	18.5	287	312	$2.1	$2.1
KWYY/Casper, WY	7.9	8.5	103	98	$.5	$.5
KCGY/Cheyenne, WY	1.1	1.1	33	29	$.5	$.1
KKCB/Duluth, MN	9.7	10.0	392	361	$1.0	$1.0
KNGT/Lake Charles, LA	6.5	8.1	222	262	$1.5	$1.5
KLAW/Lawton, OK	18.8	14.3	270	229	$1.3	$1.3
KQBR/Lubbock, TX	5.1	6.6	278	317	$.9	$.9
KYKS/Lufkin, TX	16.0	16.3	357	333	$2.0	$1.9
KORD/Richland, WA	7.0	7.2	289	311	$1.5	$1.7
KXKS/Shreveport, LA	4.8	4.5	437	770	$1.9	$1.7
KWKH/Shreveport, LA	1.7	1.8	233	206	$0.4	$.2
KKYR/Texarkana, TX-AR	16.2	19.2	308	375	$2.0	$1.8
KEZJ/Twin Falls, ID	9.5	–	238	–	$.7	–
KNUE/Tyler, TX	7.2	8.1	545	548	$2.1	$2.3
KWFS/Wichita Falls, TX	8.9	9.8	216	196	$.5	$.5
KUTI/Yakima, WA	2.3	2.6	113	114	$.1	$.1
KDBL/Yakima, WA	2.7	3.3	166	197	$.4	$.7

TOTALS:

Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
2007	26	161.6	534,600	$24,180,000

In addition to the 21 stations listed above, Gap also owns five Country stations in non-rated markets, according to BIA data. Those stations contribute to station and revenue totals, but not to ratings totals.

Greater Media

WKLB/Boston	3.7	3.8	3,312	3,141	$11.7	$10.7

TOTALS:

Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
2007	1	3.7	331,200	$11,700,000
2006	1	3.8	314,100	$10,700,000
2005	1	4.2	NA	$8,500,00

Hall Communications

WOKO/Burlington, VT	17.3	18.2	928	918	$3.7	$3.5
WPCV/Lakeland, FL	13.9	14.5	1,002	1,101	$5.0	$5.1
WCTY/New London, CT	12.4	11.9	496	511	$2.3	$2.3
WCTK/Providence	5.5	8.1	1,818	1,916	$4.9	$4.6

TOTALS:

Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
2007	4	49.1	424,400	$15,925,000
2006	4	52.7	444,600	$15,450,000
2005	4	50.2	414,300	$14,400,000
2003	4	47.0	382,800	$11,200,000
2001	4	44.1	367,400	$10,250,000

Journal Broadcast Group

KTTS/Springfield, MO	15.9	13.6	971	897	$3.7	$4.1
KVOO/Tulsa	5.0	7.1	880	1,026	$3.8	$3.5
KXBL/Tulsa	4.2	4.7	688	647	$2.1	$1.9
KFDI/Wichita	12.7	13.1	1,122	1,121	$4.6	$4.9
KFTI-AM/Wichita	3.2	3.9	331	351	$1.5	$1.8
KFTI/Wichita	2.7	3.1	307	na	$.4	$.4

TOTALS:

Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
2007	6	43.7	429,900	$16,155,000
2006	5	42.4	404,200	$17,680,000
2005	5	48.1	470,100	$16,425,000
2003	5	44.2	391,800	$15,950,000
1999	12	55.8	567,700	$20,200,000
1996	11	NA	536,400	$18,600,000

Lincoln Financial Media

KYGO/Denver	5.4	5.0	2,959	2,885	$19.9	$19.7
KSOQ/San Diego	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0
KSON/San Diego	5.2	5.3	2,496	2,347	$10.8	$10.7

TOTALS:

Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
2007	3	10.6	545,500	$30,675,000
2006	4	11.3	571,400	$30,925,000
2005	5	10.7	625,300	$33,050,000
2003	4	12.2	631,800	$35,300,000
1999	4	15.2	721,400	$33,200,000
1996	4	NA	711,700	$25,700,000

Max Media

WOOZ/Marion, IL	12.0	9.9	350	335	$1.2	$1.3
WGH-FM/Norfolk	6.9	7.5	1,896	2,122	$8.2	$8.3
WWBE/Sunbury, PA	10.0	5.0	323	192	0	0
WYGL-AM/Sunbury, PA	0.5	0.5	33	26	0	0
WYGL/Sunbury, PA	0.0	1.4	0	70	0	0
WLGL/Sunbury, PA	0.0	3.2	0	72	$.6	$.6

TOTALS:

Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
2007	12	29.4	260,200	$14,250,000
2006	12	27.5	281,700	$12,670,000
2005	12	28.7	259,400	$12,900,000
1999	4	15.2	721,400	$33,200,000
1996	4	NA	711,700	$25,700,000

In addition to the six stations listed above, Max Media also owns six Country stations in non-rated markets, according to BIA data. Those stations contribute to station and revenue totals, but not to ratings

Mt. Wilson Broadcasting

KKGO/Los Angeles	1.5	–	4,447	–	$13.0	–
XSUR/San Diego	0.0	–	0	–	$.5	–

TOTALS:

Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
2007	2	1.5	444,700	$13.5

Regent Broadcasting

WGNA/Albany, NY	9.7	10.3	1,442	1,649	$7.8	$7.6
WBWN/Bloomington, IL	9.5	15.1	279	347	$2.2	$2.3
WYRK/Buffalo	9.6	9.0	1,897	1,958	$8.0	$8.8
WKDQ/Evansville, IN	11.7	12.4	556	579	$3.3	$3.3
KUAD/Ft. Collins, CO	8.1	8.3	744	660	$3.7	$3.7
KMDL/Lafayette, LA	8.2	7.5	976	922	$2.7	$2.6
WFYR/Peoria, IL	6.2	7.8	408	547	$1.3	$1.5
WWJO/St. Cloud, MN	8.6	8.5	384	399	$2.2	$2.3
WFRG/Utica-Rome, NY	12.1	15.6	615	707	$1.9	$1.8

TOTALS:

Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
2007	10	83.7	730,100	$33,075,000
2006	11	114.9	646,200	$27,400,000
2005	11	115.3	580,100	$26,100,000
2003	13	128.6	687,600	$31,415,000
1999	9	81.2	353,800	$14,400,000

In addition to the nine stations listed above, Regent also owns one Country station in a non-rated market, according to BIA data. That station contributes to station and revenue totals, but not to ratings totals.

Saga Communications

WIXY/Champaign, IL	10.3	12.9	350	339	$2.6	$2.7
WVVR/Clarksville, TN	9.8	9.4	316	318	$2.1	$1.8
WQNY/Ithaca, NY	21.9	16.2	245	251	$1.5	$1.2
KDXY/Jonesboro, AR	15.7	14.0	191	195	$1.4	$1.5
WPOR/Portland, ME	6.2	6.5	367	386	$2.8	$2.8
WNAX/Sioux City, IA	1.5	1.4	41	51	$.4	$.4

TOTALS:

Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
2007	10	65.4	151,100	$14,175,000
2006	11	60.4	154,000	$13,660,000
2005	10	62.7	163,400	$13,075,000
2003	9	50.5	133,800	$9,875,000
2002	8	40.8	123,300	$9,075,000

In addition to the six stations listed above, Saga also owns four Country stations in non-rated markets, according to BIA data. Those stations contribute to station and revenue totals, but not to ratings totals.

Wilks Broadcast Group

WHOK/Columbus, OH	3.9	3.1	1,226	1.300	$2.9	$2.8
WNKK/Columbus, OH	1.2	0.7	571	NA	$.5	$.8
KBEQ/Kansas City	3.7	4.9	1,952	1,935	$5.5	$5.8
KFKF/Kansas City	5.3	4.1	2,170	1,761	$7.1	$6.8
KLLL/Lubbock, TX	9.8	10.5	438	471	$2.1	$2.0

TOTALS:

Year	No. Stations	Fall 12+ Shares	Cume	Revenue
2007	5	23.9	635,700	$18,100,000

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LUKE LEWIS

Riding Off Into The Sunrise

To the chattering digerati, record labels are battleships in a submarine world – old, slow and easy pickings. And though UMG/Nashville Chairman Luke Lewis captains one of Nashville's most formidable label fleets, he has no intentions of going down with the ship. He's flirted with retirement and by all rights should be worried about fading CD sales and corporate (read: conservative) radio, but he seems to have pushed those issues to the side. Competition and his enthusiasm for a new generation of artists have him as energized as he's ever been. In fact, he's been drawn to that kind of creative energy since his youth.

CA: In a recent "My Tunes" feature for *CA Weekly*, you mentioned that Gram Parsons was "a high school friend who played country music with a rock attitude." He certainly must have influenced your musical tastes.

LL: Yeah. We were actually roommates at a boarding school in the early '60s. He was already very musical – a trained pianist. But he was singing folk music then and would go off on weekends to play *Hootenanny* shows. We were only 15 or 16, but even at that age, he was one of those people you just knew was going to be somebody someday.

He was really smart, and musical as all get out. And, in some respects, a bullshitter. He'd sing Scottish folk ballads and claim he wrote them. But we surfed together and went to each other's homes for holidays and stuff. We were really good friends.

Musically, Gram sent me down the path I've been on. I don't know that I ever would've had an affinity for country music if it hadn't been for him. He turned me on to the Louvin Brothers. We both had heard the Ray Charles record [*Modern Sounds In Country and Western Music*, 1962]. Of course, Gram did the Byrds' *Sweetheart Of The Rodeo*. I was vicariously following where he went musically.

He wound up around all these folks in Tulsa – Delaney & Bonnie and others – they made a really obscure record called *Motel Shot* that had a lot of old gospel songs in it, roots music. And then he went and hung out with the Rolling Stones, and I was jealous at the time. I knew he was in France, but I didn't know he was using junk. He had an enormous influence on those guys – the country things you hear from the Stones were probably because of him.

So, both of us were rock and roll kids who had listened to country. There were huge country hits when we were kids, but we didn't know they were country because they played them on Top 40 radio. We just knew they were songs we liked. So I guess I liked some country music before I ever knew what it was.

Radio seemed to play a big role in forging your musical tastes.

My first sense of popular music came in the '50s. As a kid in Florida I used to listen at night to WLAC/Nashville, WABC/New York, WLS/Chicago and stations in Miami. And once in awhile on a clear night you could pick up Wolfman Jack. If there were formats, I certainly wasn't aware of them. It was all Top 40; if it was a hit, it was on there. It didn't matter. And you didn't have a physical sense as to who was singing it, what they looked like or how they dressed. It was a really innocent way to come at popular music – to not have any of those other trappings – until Ed Sullivan came along.

So it was *all* about the radio. To bring things full circle, one of the things that distresses me most today is that terrestrial radio no longer seems to be devoted to being a place where people discover new music. That's not to say that people *don't* discover music there. But at one point in time there seemed to be a dedication to it.

It's heartbreaking to see young people leaving radio in droves – or having never even turned it on to begin with. If I were to say that to one of my own children, they'd say, "We're OK. We discover music on the Internet." And I would say, "OK, I'm just an old guy." But I wish you could still turn the radio on and hear more new music than old. If I were radio, I wouldn't concede that. New music is so critical to radio's vitality. I don't believe my generation is tired of discovering new music. They just don't know where to get it anymore.

> NEW MUSIC IS SO CRITICAL TO RADIO'S VITALITY. I DON'T BELIEVE MY GENERATION IS TIRED OF DISCOVERING NEW MUSIC. THEY JUST DON'T KNOW WHERE TO GET IT ANYMORE.

Programmers would argue that listeners want to hear their favorite songs – new and old.

The [large] amount of old music radio plays doesn't make sense to me right now. There are a couple hundred million iPods out there that people have loaded with their favorite songs, so they don't need to turn the radio on to hear their favorite music anymore. So why does radio keep playing it for them? This is the entertainment business. You have to be aggressive and take risks. And it seems, because we're sort of embattled right now, people are going into the bunker. That's not a good way to win and grow. I have a low tolerance for playing defense.

On the other hand, people are fighting for their jobs, so it's hard to be critical. I just wish both sides had more opportunity to be entrepreneurial. The nature of a record company is entrepreneurial because you have to take risks every day. Big ones. Some can put your organization at risk. But I have a boss who encourages taking risks because he knows that's what it takes.

I search all the time for entrepreneurial people in the radio business, and I'm not sure where they are. On occasion, I must admit to sort of rooting for the station groups to fail and have to break up so that some individuals can buy stations and have the opportunity to be entrepreneurial. I know that's a rash thing to wish on anybody. But I don't see any other way for it to occur.

What's your sense of the relative health of the music business? Is it fair to say that the music business should or could be fine, and that it's just CD sales that suck?

I don't know that they suck; sales just aren't as big as they were. There's a lot of doom and gloom, but it's been small before. I'm not one who thinks the end of the frickin' world is coming for music or record labels. Might we go through a rough time and have to constrict? Absolutely. But I'm still bullish.

All of us have been spoiled. We've been a growth industry since at least 1981. Everybody wants to attribute the explosion to the CD. That had a lot to do with it, of course. But a whole lot of amazing music came out in that time, too, including some stuff people might turn up their noses at, like corporate rock and Michael Jackson. And the business took off and got really huge. But who says that growth was going to go on forever, or even that it should? It may have been finite to begin with. It may have been the beneficiary of some really good fortune, timing-wise, with carriers, the music, the artists and the environment.

But it seems that all of a sudden we're embattled, although I'm not so sure that's even the case. The Internet, new delivery systems and new ways of discovering music might enable another growth spurt that makes it even bigger than it's been in terms of revenues. That said, my day-to-day function is not to try to figure out the next delivery system or make a deal with MySpace, Yahoo!, or whomever. There's a whole bunch of really smart people inside Universal who dedicate their time to all that. I'm looking for hit artists, hit songs and ways to expose them while trying to keep a bunch of really good people employed.

I don't sit around a whole lot and contemplate all these things that are causing us problems. I don't come to work depressed; I'm having a big time. We had a great year in 2007, and we're going to have another one this year. I hate that there are labels going out of business, people are losing their jobs, there aren't as many records being made and not as many artists having opportunities. And I also hate that radio is losing audience, because it's our primary driver. But if declining CD sales cause financial difficulties for record labels, there are two choices: A) get smaller and get costs down, or B) get more market share to keep the doors open and keep everybody employed. I go for plan B.

What excites you? What gets you out of bed every day saying, "I can't wait to go to work."

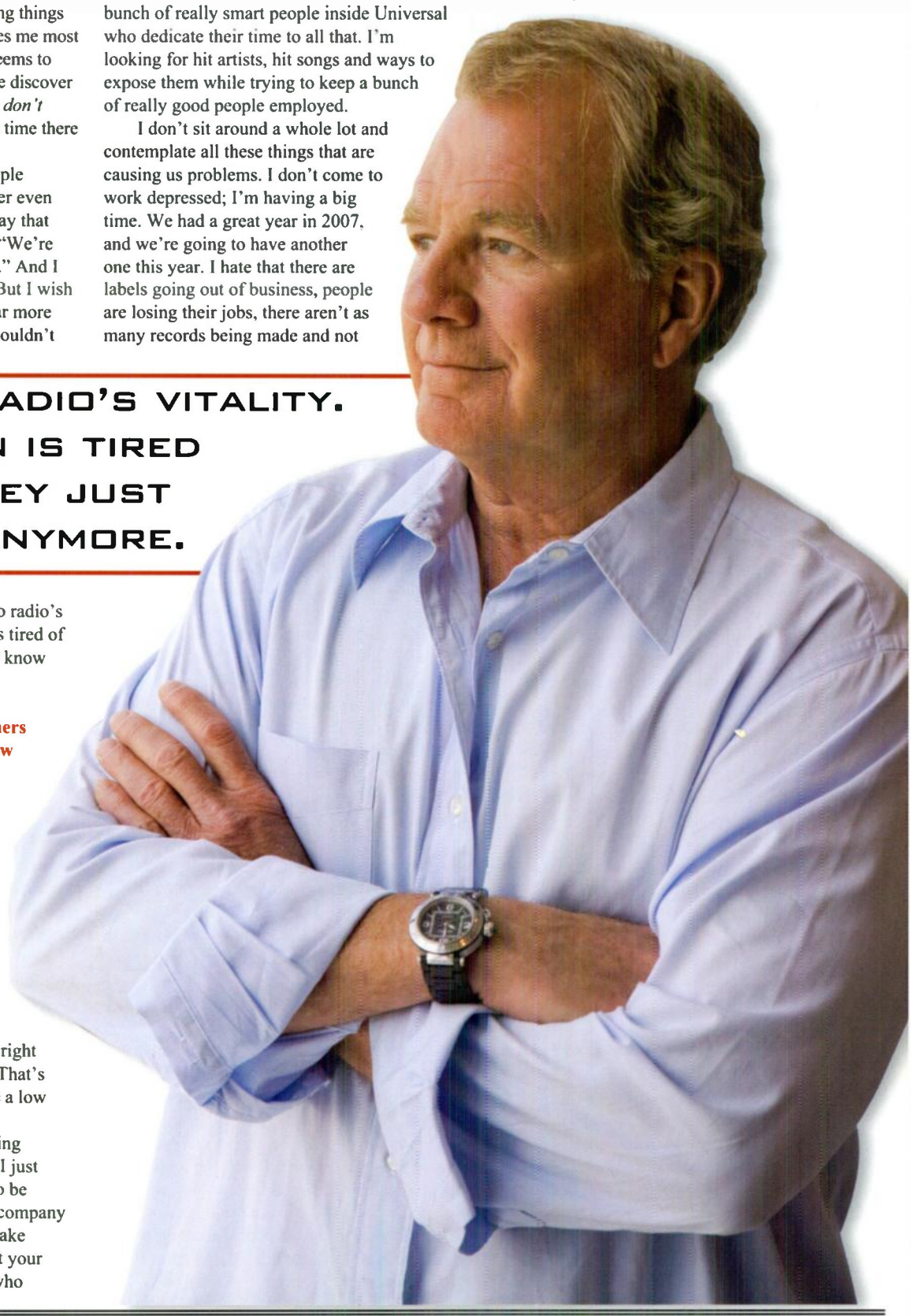
New music excites me more than anything. I'm still like a kid – that first dose, when you first discover it – it gets you excited. Everybody who loves music loves to turn their friends on to something they haven't heard. So I get to come here and try to turn people on to things they haven't heard that I think are really good. I think I've got common ears; I don't think I have particularly good ones. So when I find something that rings my bell or makes me smile, and I get to turn people on to it, that's real exciting. And it's always nice to know that maybe you're right when other people gravitate towards it, especially when they want to spend money for it. That's pretty amazing.

Sounds like you're energized by the new artists and music you're hearing these days.

I've been doing this job for 15 years, and I haven't seen a wave of young artists like I'm seeing now – young writer/artists who are absolutely geniuses. And I don't use that word loosely. *That* lights me up. I'm not saying there weren't any young people coming through here in the past. But now there are more of them than I've ever seen. They're really talented and have honed their craft. They're dedicated and bright. And *that's* the future.

Radio and the music business are at odds over performance royalties. What are your thoughts on broadcasters paying artists and labels in addition to songwriters?

I don't know if it ever would have come to the forefront if record labels weren't having such a rough time. We've kept our mouths shut for a long time about that.



We're not making enough money to keep our doors open or to thrive. What used to be unbelievably offensive to me was when broadcasters suggested we pay them to play our records. That's so fucking backwards it makes my blood boil. Anybody with any brains ought to know better than that. People could say to me all day long, "You make money because we're promoting your product." Bullshit. Radio makes way more money than us, using our free content. Radio pays its talent and everyone else who creates content. I know radio is paying songwriters, and God bless 'em. They should probably pay them more. But radio needs to pay the artists, the record labels and the people who own the content. I come down harshly on the side of that. I have no tolerance.

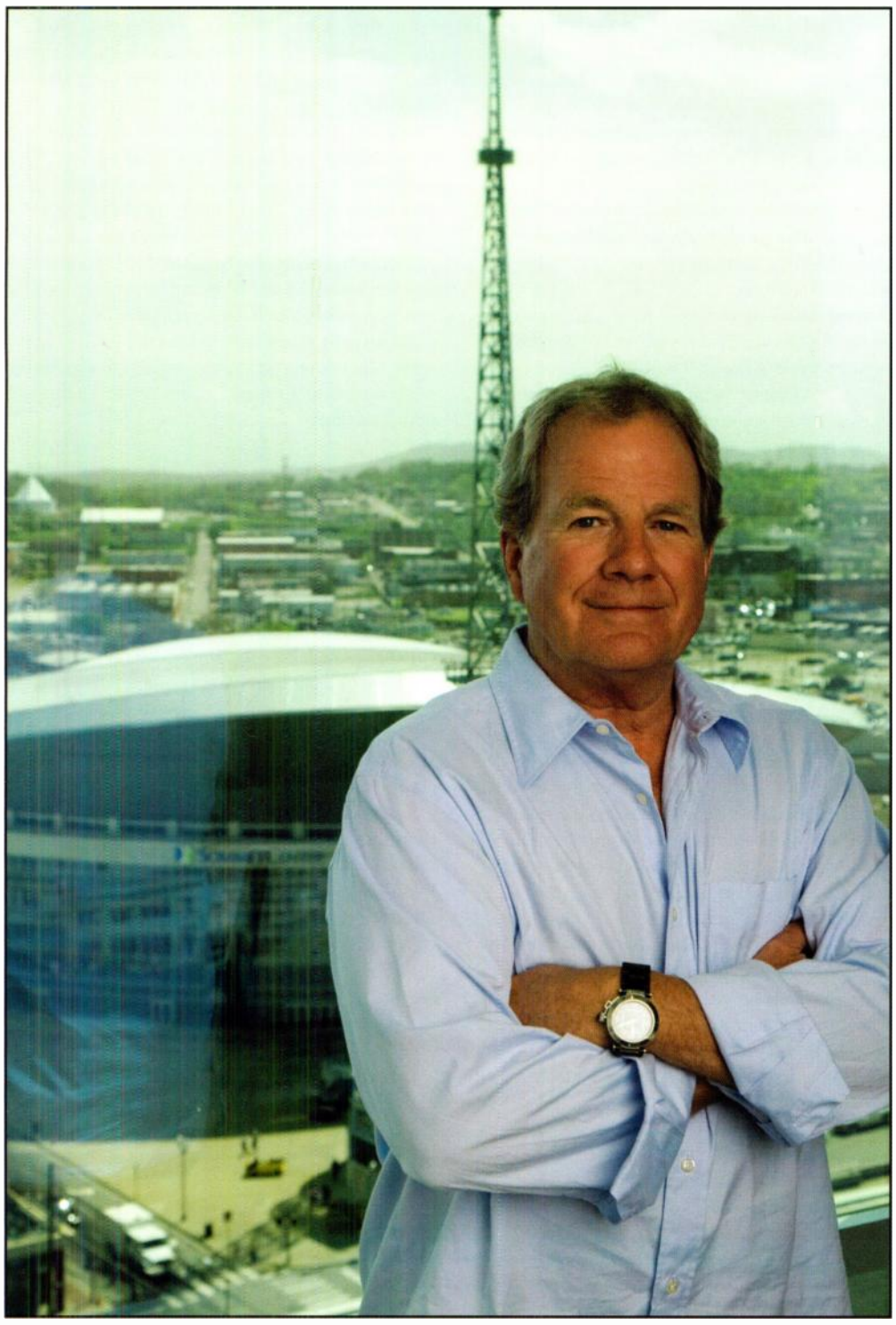
You were at CRS once again this year, roaming the halls and attending some panels. What was your sense of the mood and the people?

It bothers me that at a time when we should be more symbiotic than ever, both sides are embattled by their respective marketplaces and other outside sources.

But I'm encouraged by the number of really bright people who are still in both industries and really dedicate themselves, just as they always have. They all have their heads down and are trying to figure out how to turn the ship.

I don't know whether you can merely survive in this business anymore. I got in it at a time when it was fun and in a growth phase. My first CRS after I came back to town 15 years ago was more fun. There wasn't the stress of keeping the doors open and keeping everybody employed. It's not as much fun now. But I'm not looking for fun. And anybody who's in this business just because it's fun is going to get blown out sooner or later *(laughs)*.

People have spoken to the benefits of CRS forever, so I can't say anything new. But to have a bunch of artists and a bunch of people who work for record companies and the radio industry get together and look each other in the eye and have meals is just such a civilized thing. It's really unbelievable, particularly when we bang heads a lot and get frustrated with each other – for whatever reason.



You've also been concerned about radio's use of research.

I'm worried sick about what I perceive to be an over-reliance on research, particularly when budgets are being cut and you know that the research probably isn't as good as maybe it was or could be. So *that* scares me.

It used to be that a record guy would go to a station and give 'em a new song, and then give the record store 30 copies of the record. Radio would play it, and if it sold, radio would keep playing it. And we'd put more in the store. That's the best research there ever was in the history of the music business. You knew *immediately* whether anybody cared about hearing it. I have no sense that, other than a few people, anybody's looking at sales today.

And the most beautiful research on the planet today now is digital sales. You can go online to see what people are buying every week. If there are enough people playing a song, I can look at it and tell you whether it's a hit, if it's burned and when it's over.

What do you think of the 360 deals – where labels are partners with artists in their other revenue-generating ventures?

If you don't have any other choice, maybe. Business models evolve over time. Until recently, the record company was the bank, with the resources and manpower to make and expose music and advance an artist's career. The payback was that the record company kept 85% or so of the money. I never heard anybody squeaking about that. If an artist was incredibly successful, the deal was adjusted. That all seemed to work pretty well for everybody.

In the past, a large part of an incredibly successful recording artist's income came from record sales. As touring got huge, record sales income for superstars became miniscule in the big picture. So it's probably not a surprise that people say, "Wait a minute. We crank up the engine, help make you a superstar and we're making 85% on a CD that we can't sell as many of anymore. And you guys are out there raking it in on merch and touring. Maybe we should get some back." I totally understand.

But you're not going to get one of those deals done with an established act unless you hand them a huge pot of money like Live Nation is doing – which is another example of a new model. So it's the new act that walks in the door who is targeted for a 360 deal. And really, what other choice do they have, especially if *all* of us were to go that way?

It's more likely that in the future management companies and record labels will merge, in some sense, and, in essence, create a 360 deal. It might work to have different companies under one umbrella, although I don't think they could be in the same building. I'm not going down the path of having managers work out of here. That's so conflicted it could never work.

Will any of these alternative options cause country superstars to leave their major label homes?

Particularly in Country, you need hits to make a lot of money selling concert tickets and merch. And to have radio hits you need some infrastructure.

If it was just about making money from an album, there are a lot of superstar artists who could finish their obligation and sell a record directly to Wal-Mart. Instead of making $2 a record, they'd make $7. If selling CDs is your primary income stream, it makes sense. But if you need to be on the radio, you need a promotion staff, which costs some serious money to maintain.

Toby Keith did it.

But he's the only good example right now. And if you're just doing it on your own records, it probably just doesn't make any sense. There are more efficient ways you can make a deal with a record label. Garth has a different model of doing this, for instance. He doesn't have a record label, per se.

Will it cripple labels to build stars, only to watch them go off on their own?

Listen, we make deals for six or seven albums; that's a long time. If we want to keep them around, a lot of them respond to a really big check. *(laughs)*

You mentioned Toby Keith a bit ago. Through the years, Toby has been very vocal in his criticism of big labels and, at times, about you personally. It strikes me that, perhaps uncharacteristically for you, you've been very quiet about the whole matter. Certainly you've had thoughts and feelings about what went on between you and Toby.

I've never spoken about that with anybody. Look, I've been working with artists for 35 years. Most of them – and I think this is true of Toby – have really high standards. They strive for excellence. And, if they perceive that a member of their team isn't meeting their standards, they get frustrated. I've always thought that was fair. Toby sold more than a million units of his first record and had a lot of success. I'm not good at history, but my sense is that at the time, Shania blew past him in terms of the scorecards. And I always thought Toby's perception was that he wasn't being prioritized as much as she was, and that was a fair assessment on his part. So I never felt there was anything particularly unfair. It did seem to get pretty mean-spirited for awhile, and I suppose it's a natural instinct to react that way, but I found it understandable. I've had a comfortable place in my heart because he came and asked to be let go [from his deal with Mercury.] He was going to the label [DreamWorks] his producer James Stroud ran, and I couldn't argue that it might not be a better situation for him because he'd be the lead dog there. And, he wasn't going to be [at Mercury] with Shania here. Any label head who says they don't prioritize their biggest act is lying. You have to.

I've always sort of understood Toby's frustrations, his desire to be the lead dog and, ultimately, to have his own way and not be encumbered by anybody who wasn't employed by him. He really wanted to control his own environment, and that's understandable. It might cost him money to do that, but he's got it. It's affordable to him, obviously.

We can all sit around and make some judgments about the results, but the results don't matter. I'm fine; my business is fine. I'm sure Toby is fine. I don't know that he would second-guess any of it. If I were to second-guess any of it, on a purely business level, it might be that I should have gotten an override, but I let him walk with no strings.

I can't say that it wasn't in some ways painful just because it was a waste of energy for both of us. Especially when you're attempting to do right by people, and I've always done that. I'm certainly not righteous or perfect, but I've always tried to be fair and I tried to be fair to him.

Where are you right now? I heard some talk that you were thinking about retiring – we even talked about it a time or two. Next thing I hear, you've signed a new deal.

Yeah. A couple of years ago I was really frustrated, feeling dark and not really enjoying my work. And two things happened: One, I'm very fearful of retirement. I like to fish and golf, but maybe not that much – I've never taken enough time off to know. Second, I became reinvigorated at work. I've got a wonderful bunch of people and artists, and I have hope for the future. What I really want to see before I leave is the blast-off after we bottom out. And I feel like we're really close. And when this business blows again, it could be bigger than any of us have ever known. I've been here 15 years. I've got a bunch of people who've been working for me for nearly that long, and I'd like to see them have bright futures. Not that I'm essential to that, but I'd like to see them [get further] on their way, and I'd like to leave on top. Who wouldn't, in whatever they do?

You run one of this town's biggest label groups with some of our format's biggest stars. That's not on top?

No. Joe's still on top. [Sony BMG Chairman Joe Galante.] So I've got another couple of years to go, I guess.

Wait a minute. This sounds like [Florida State football coach] Bobby Bowden and [Penn State football coach] Joe Paterno – 80-something-year-old guys who aren't going to retire because the other guy has one more win than they do.

Yeah, kind of! Hey, it's wonderful to have competition. Joe and I have been competing for 30 years. We used to play tennis and compete. He's a wonderful competitor, and he keeps you on your toes. I love the competition part of it; it's fun. It wouldn't be nearly as much fun without Joe around. CAC

WHAT I REALLY WANT TO SEE BEFORE I LEAVE IS THE BLAST-OFF AFTER WE BOTTOM OUT. AND I FEEL LIKE WE'RE REALLY CLOSE. AND WHEN THIS BUSINESS BLOWS AGAIN, IT COULD BE BIGGER THAN ANY OF US HAVE EVER KNOWN.

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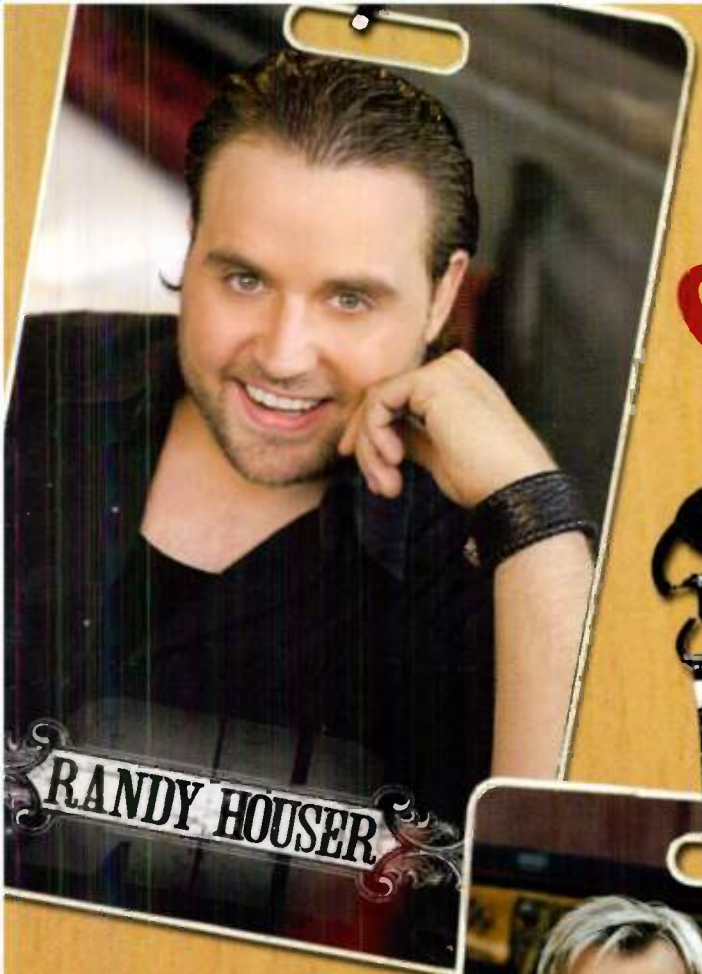
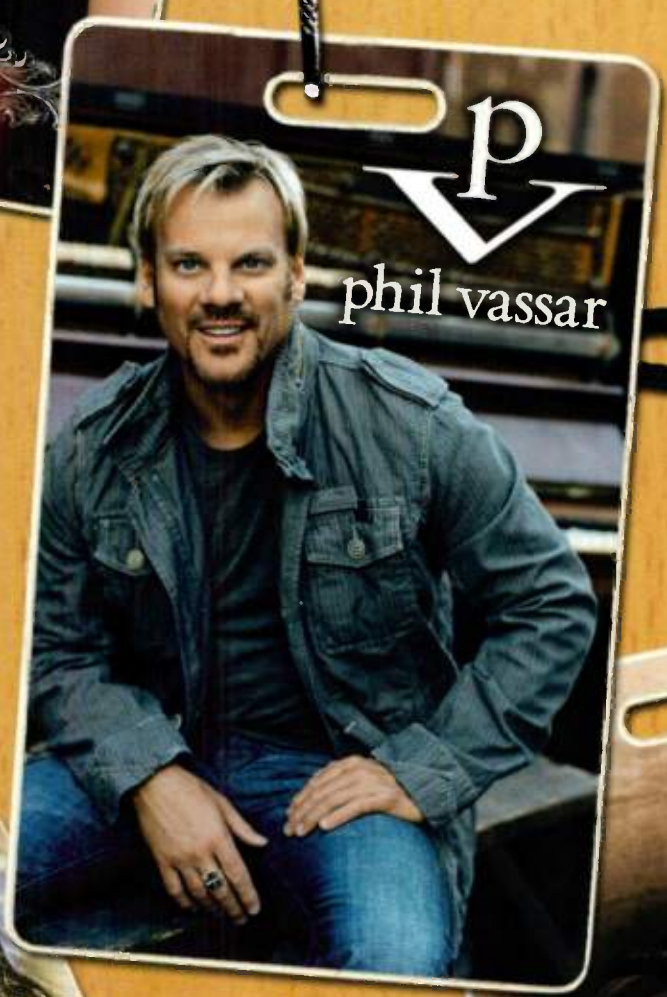
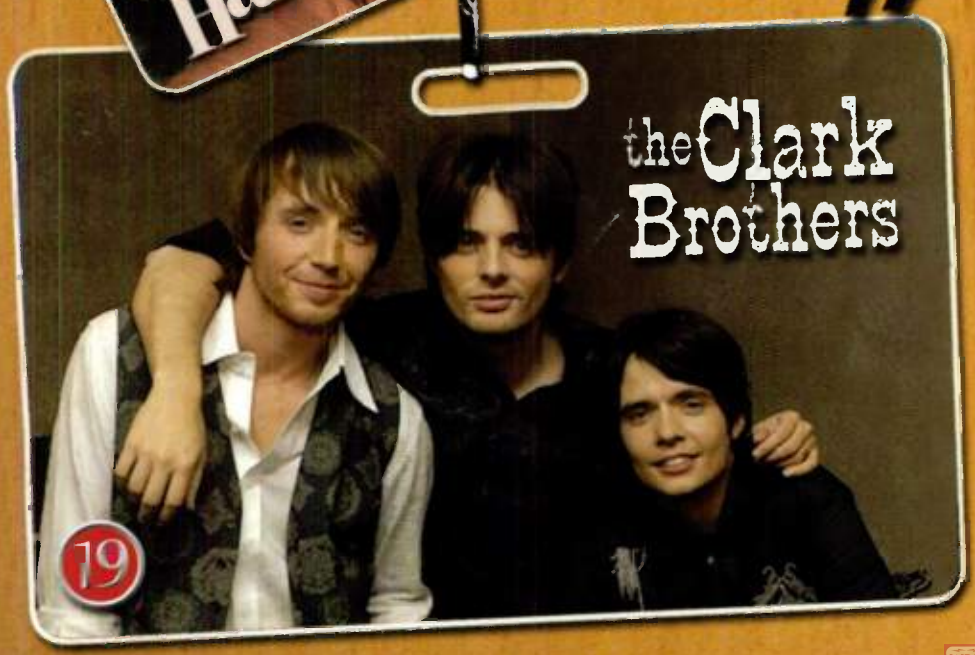




GREASED LIGHTNING DAYTIME STAGES
THU 6/5 PHIL VASSAR
FRI 6/6 JENNIFER HANSON
SAT 6/7 JOE NICHOLS
SAT 6/7 RANDY HOUSER
SAT 6/7 ELI YOUNG BAND

VAULT LP FIELD STAGE
6/5 JENNIFER HANSON

HARD ROCK LATE NIGHT STAGE
6/5 THE CLARK BROTHERS



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50 Years Of MIKE CURB

PAGE 41

HALL OF FAMERS

The Judds & Joe

PAGE 7

TOWNSQUARE'S STEVEN PRICE

The Interview

LABEL CONTACTS INSIDE!

COUNTRY AIRCHECK

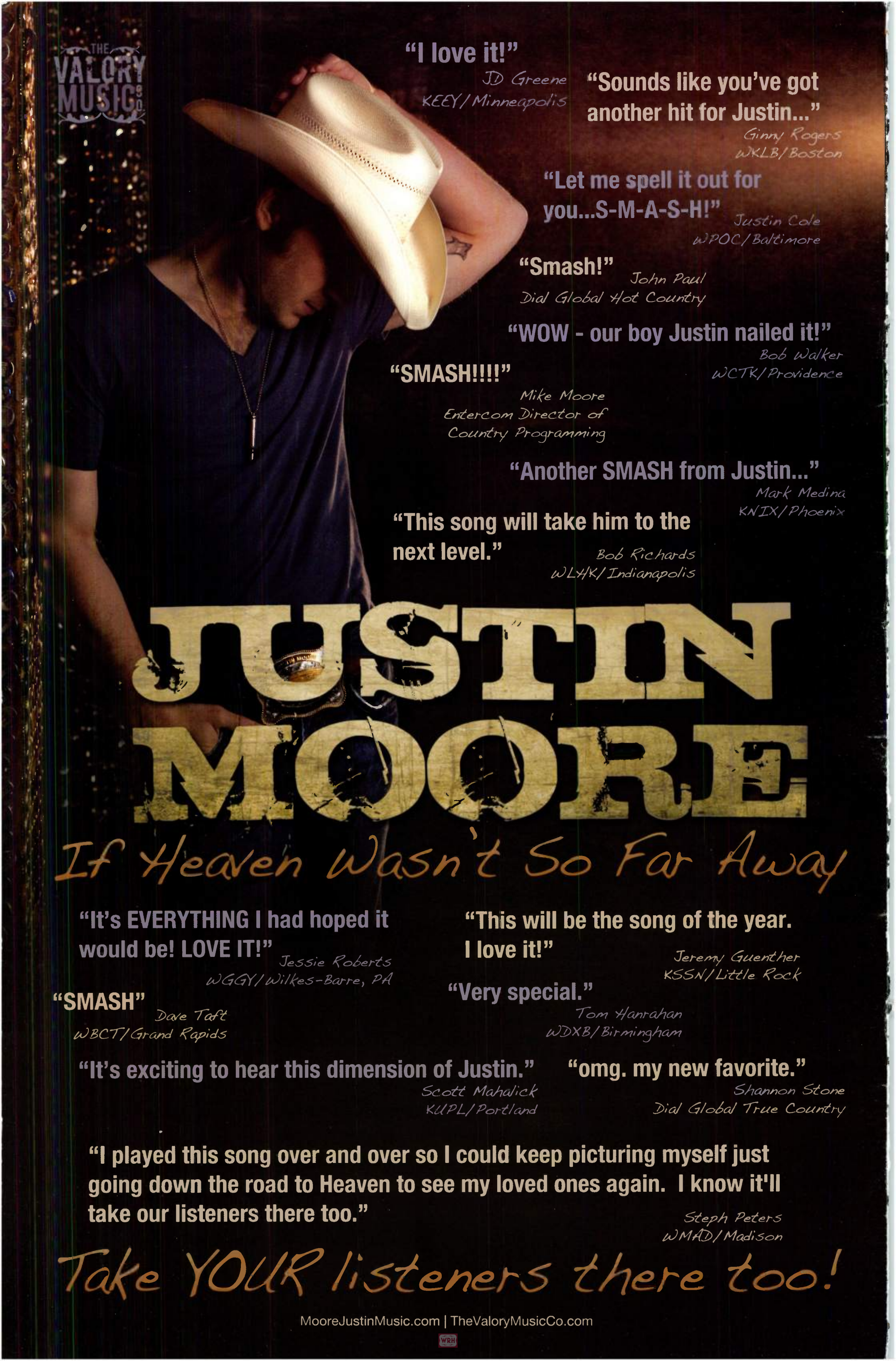
MARCH 2011

BUILDING THE WARNER MUSIC NASHVILLE LEGACY FOR A NEW DECADE

WMN

WARNER MUSIC NASHVILLE

ATLANTIC emblem TOP DOG RECORDS WB


THE VALORY MUSIC CO.
"I love it!"
JD Greene
KEEY/Minneapolis
"Sounds like you've got another hit for Justin..."
Ginny Rogers
WKLB/Boston
"Let me spell it out for you...S-M-A-S-H!"
Justin Cole
WPOC/Baltimore
"Smash!"
John Paul
Dial Global Hot Country
"WOW - our boy Justin nailed it!"
Bob Walker
WCTK/Providence
"SMASH!!!!"
Mike Moore
Entercom Director of Country Programming
"Another SMASH from Justin..."
Mark Medina
KNIX/Phoenix
"This song will take him to the next level."
Bob Richards
WLYK/Indianapolis
JUSTIN MOORE
If Heaven Wasn't So Far Away
"It's EVERYTHING I had hoped it would be! LOVE IT!"
Jessie Roberts
WGGY/Wilkes-Barre, PA
"This will be the song of the year. I love it!"
Jeremy Guenther
KSSN/Little Rock
"SMASH"
Dave Taft
WBCT/Grand Rapids
"Very special."
Tom Hanrahan
WDXB/Birmingham
"It's exciting to hear this dimension of Justin."
Scott Mahalick
KUPL/Portland
"omg. my new favorite."
Shannon Stone
Dial Global True Country
"I played this song over and over so I could keep picturing myself just going down the road to Heaven to see my loved ones again. I know it'll take our listeners there too."
Steph Peters
WMAD/Madison
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The Georgia Mafia

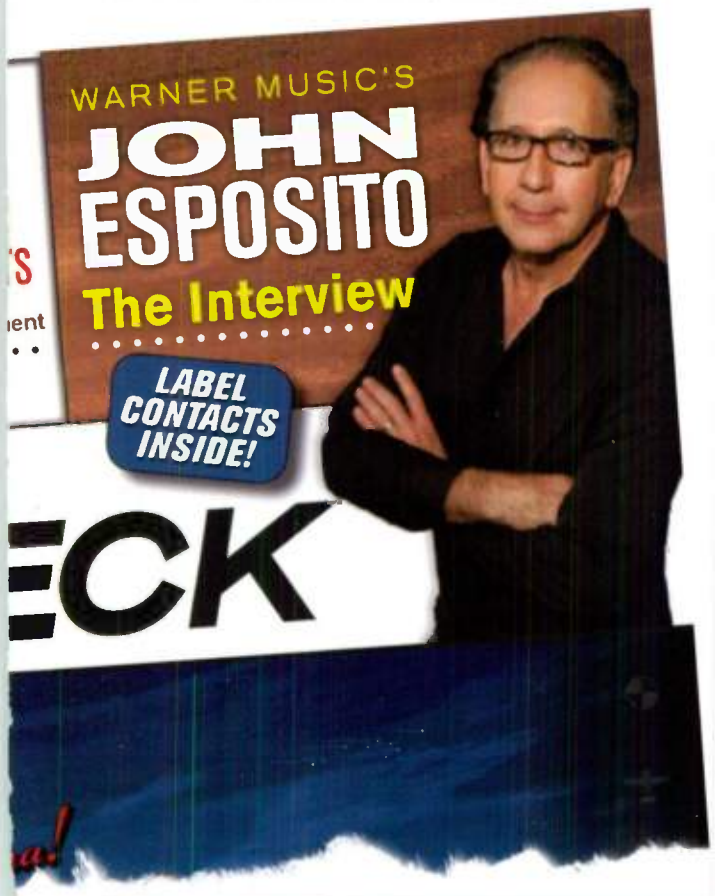
What is up with Georgia? Back in the early '90s, it seemed like anyone with an Oklahoma accent was getting signed the minute their feet hit Nashville pavement. And many of them became huge stars. Lately, it's the Georgia folks having a peachy time on the charts.

Looking at Country Aircheck's Top 100 (December issue), fully 20 songs have Georgia roots, beating out Oklahoma (11), Texas (10) and Tennessee (8). The disparity holds at the top of the chart, too, with six of last year's top 20 songs carrying a Georgia drawl, with Texas twang ringing out in only three.

If Jason, Zac, the Lady A guys, Luke, Billy and the others know the reason behind the sudden emergence of this creatively powerful syndicate, they're not saying. It's possible the Don has instituted an omerta. Or maybe they're just making fans an offer they can't refuse.

Annual Review: John Esposito

Remember when Warner Bros. was still known as the "Artist Protection Program" and nobody knew what an Espo was? That's right, one year ago this issue, Country Aircheck introduced the country community to new Warner Music Nashville President John Esposito. This was before the hire of SVP/Promotion Chris Stacey and the final formation of the second promotion staff, Warner Atlantic Reprise. Twelve months later, WMN seems to have raised the profile of its artists significantly. So we asked Espo how he thinks the past year has gone:



CA: What successes stand out to you?

JE: Clearly the most amazing thing for us as a company and for me personally is seeing Blake Shelton elevated to an entirely new level. I needed a flashpoint to ignite the building, and most of the roster were brand-new or relatively new artists. We were blessed to have in-hand two tracks from Blake we thought would be high-charting singles. Both became No. 1s. It couldn't have been done if he wasn't managed by people who happen to be true partners. Every step was carefully crafted.

What happened to my staff, and not just in promotion, but the whole team, is this idea that, "Wow, we're not so quiet anymore." People here needed something to energize them, and there's nothing like having a No. 1 record and then releasing an album we took a chance on to become Blake's highest-charting debut ever. A lot of people at radio had been rooting for Blake for a long time, and they just wanted us to be consistent in what we delivered.

You're also having some hard-fought success with JaneDear girls...

For us, "Wildflower" has been about showing the world, and particularly Country radio, that we have a tenacity we haven't shown in many years. When you have nothing but debut artists, you are fighting to get into the 40s. It's easy to give up, but when you stick with it – we're almost 45 weeks in and on the verge of top 10 – it shows people the commitment they want to see. If radio is going to invest its precious airtime, and I say that with all sincerity, we have to show them we're not just throwing stuff against the wall to see what sticks.

What did you learn at CRS 2010?

Well, I learned that everybody telling me that CRS was all but over was incorrect. It was a great use of my time. Beside the benefit of building relationships, I got to see how hammered radio people are with smaller staffs and more hats to wear. As an old salesman, I know everybody has a different key, so if a guy's working 24 hours already, you don't bug him until you find the right time and the right way.

> "WE'RE NOT GOING TO HAND PROMOTION SOMETHING THAT WE HAVE ANY SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT."

What has the last year taught you?

When you're in New York City and hearing how long it takes for a record to make it up the chart – and then actually seeing it in person – those are two completely different things. Getting to week 25 on a new artist here … in Rock or pop we'd already be on the second single.

What do you think you've done well?

I hope what I've done best is listen. I didn't come here to prove I was the smartest guy or to tell people how business should be done. I've heard from people that I've brought an energy and enthusiasm. And, I hope, nobody questions whether I eat, breathe and sleep music, and that seems to engender enthusiasm. When promotion gets a single, they understand there is no wavering. We're not going to hand them something that we have any second thoughts about.

Do you have any disappointments or things you wish you'd done better?

I feel like I have such a long way to go in my understanding of the format. I could stop doing everything else and take a four-week course for 10 hours a day, but I don't have the luxury of stealing time away from all the other things I need to be doing. I want to be able to read the chart better than anybody in the business; I have to learn the truth as fast as possible so I can help us react and make better decisions.

How do you feel heading into this Seminar?

A lot more confident. I was actually a little anxious last year that people would look at my resume and think, "How the hell did he get down here to run a country label?" Having done so many radio visits, I've developed a lot of friendships, so I feel I'm going into a friendly environment.

App Pull Of Our Eye

Now you've got an entirely new and justified reason for fiddling with your phone during CRS – the 2011 CRS smartphone app from CRB and Country Aircheck. Your entire seminar experience can be steered through one handy portal. Thank us later:

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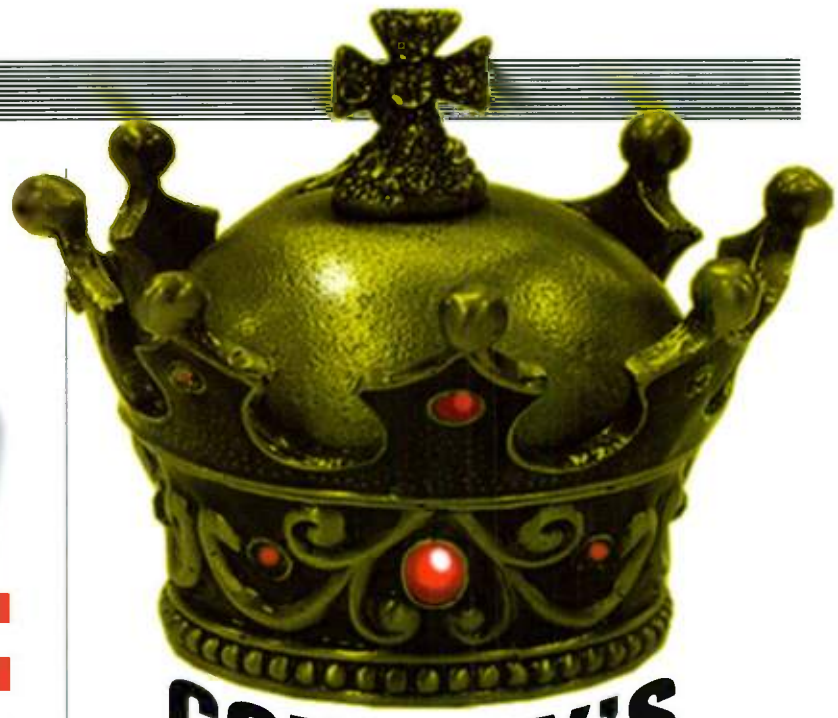

Country's Crown Jewels

No matter how you slice it, there's something to be said for being the biggest fish in the pond. Sure, top market stations draw bigger audiences in highly competitive situations, but the ability to draw anything approaching a fifth of all radio listening is a remarkable feat, regardless of market size. Here are the top 12-plus-rated Country stations in America, as measured in Arbitron's Fall 2010 book:

Rank Station	*(Owner)*	*Share*
1. WTHI/Terre Haute, IN	(Emmis)	21.5
2. WILQ/Williamsport, PA	(Backyard)	20.1
3. WXBQ/Johnson City, TN	(Bristol)	19.8
4. WQBE/Charleston, WV	(Bristol)	19.4
5. WLLR/Quad Cities, IA-IL	(Clear Channel)	19.1
6. WOVK/Wheeling, WV	Clear Channel)	18.5
7. WIVK/Knoxville	(Citadel)	18.3
8. WUSQ/Winchester, VA	(Clear Channel)	18.1
9. WKSF/Asheville, NC	(Clear Channel)	17.8
9. WFRE/Frederick, MD	(Aloha Station Trust)	17.8

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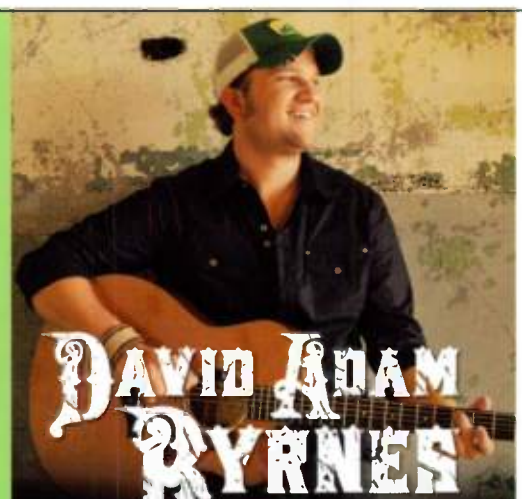

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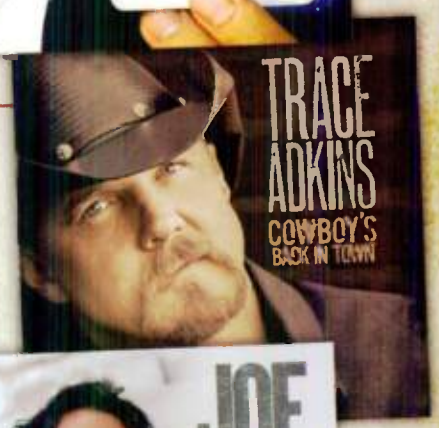
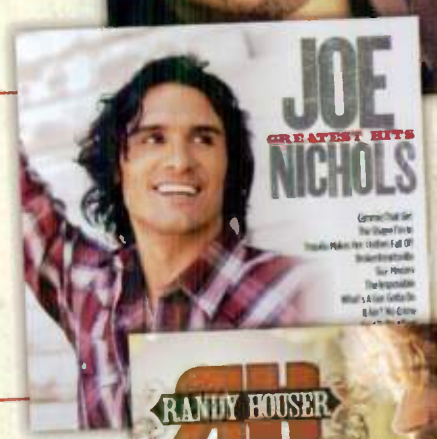
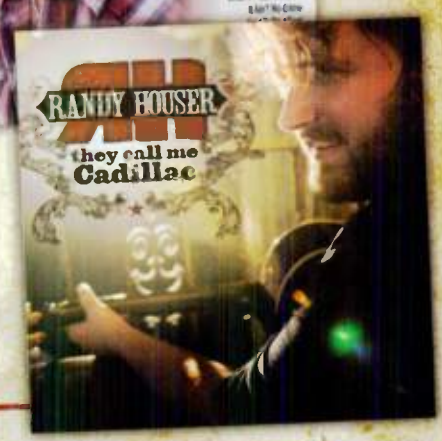
SCORE CARD

Toby Keith	*Bullets In The Gun* Debuts at **#1** on the Pop and Country Chart *Billboard*'s **#1** Artist of the Decade *Billboard*'s **#1** Songwriter of the Decade
Trace Adkins	*Cowboy's Back In Town* debuts at **#1**
Joe Nichols	"Gimmie That Girl" is a 3-week **#1** and certified Gold Digital single
Randy Houser	Sophomore release, *They Call Me Cadillac*, receives critical acclaim







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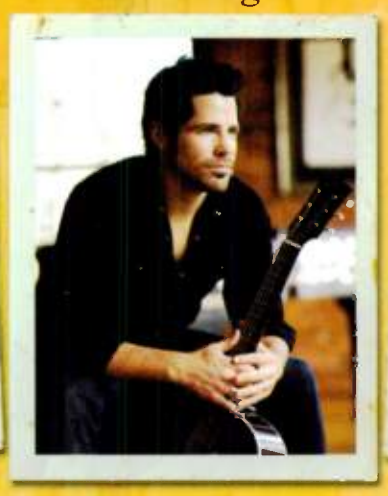
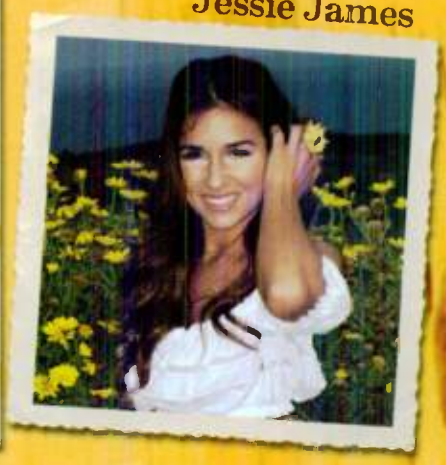
INTRODUCING

Carter's Chord

JT Hodges



Jessie James



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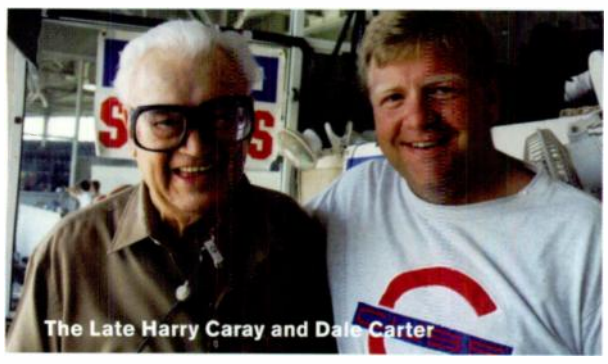
Country Music DJ AND RADIO HALL OF FAME

DALE CARTER

Still Plenty Of Game Left


The Late Harry Caray and Dale Carter

With an easy laugh and a love of radio going back almost as far as he can remember, Dale Carter has, in his own words, been "blessed." Nurtured by teachers, advisers and mentors such as Jaye Albright, Joe Patrick and Scott Huskey, among many others, Dale has turned his passion into a five-decade profession. His impressive on-air and programming career has led him to 16 years in mornings and as PD at KFKF/Kansas City. The stadium announcer for the Kansas City Chiefs, Dale still makes time to bring his award-winning play-by-play skills to high school football Friday nights each autumn on KCWJ/Blue Springs, MO.

A group of us kids hung out together and played radio back in Evansville, IN. I lived in the basement of my parent's house and rigged up an on-air red light at the top of the stairs so that nobody would come down there. At 14, my dream job was to be the voice of the Chicago Cubs. I had this little black-and-white TV, and would do play-by-play of games into a tape recorder. My stepfather was a police officer, and one of his side jobs was as security for a bank in town. At their Christmas party, they gave him a 45 with their jingle package. So I had my first commercials, and then I thought, "I can make my own." I recorded a half-hour of our top 40 station, WJPS – a station I ended up working for – and that's what I went to bed listening to every night.

Benjamin Bosse High School had a radio department. Probably the most influential person on my career was our radio teacher Ray Begarly. We had "Phase Elective English" with classes such as "Radio Directing." I took 'em all. On day one of "Introduction to Radio," Ray gave us this script called "Cold Copy" – a nonsensical piece of copy with every commonly mispronounced word on it. You'd go to the podium to read it, and Ray's at his desk circling in red every word you mispronounce. Mine was virtually all red, but that was probably the spark that got me going down the road.

At my first station, GM Red Walker was a bigwig at our church. I told him, "I've been taking these radio classes and I think I want to do this." As any good GM would do, he put me on to his PD Tiny Hughes, who was not. Tiny Hughes looked like Charlie Daniels, only bigger. He weighed about 400 pounds and had the big beard and hat. At the old DJ Convention at the Hilton, he mooned everybody from the glass elevator. Tiny would let me sit in on his shift, and one day he said, "I've got midnight-6am on Sunday. It pays $2.90 an hour, and if you want it, you can have it." You have no idea how thrilled I was. My first night was crazy. Tiny didn't like to fire people, and as a PD for 26 years, I don't like it, either. But he said, "When you get there, the overnight person is probably going to come in. Just tell her we don't need her anymore." I'm 15 years old, waiting for ABC News to be over at midnight, and she comes sauntering in. She looks at me sitting behind the board, and goes, "Well, guess I'm fired." And she turned around and walked out. I didn't have to say a word.

In Like Clint: When Clint Black came to Evansville for the first time in 1990, he got the "big star" treatment from Dale and WYNG, and spent part of the day shopping for boots.

Beasley's WYNG/Evansville, IN was a big 50-kw FM Country station, but was not making a dent against my old 1-kw AM WROZ. CJ Jones, who promoted me to PD, came in with a plan. He said, "We're going to do marketing, billboards, television. We're going to really move this thing in the right direction" and we did. In the spring of '85, we rolled in a 17.5, up from a 6 or 7 share. I thought, "Man, this is easy." I was Beasley's co-PD of the Year in 1985. And then the next book we went from a 17 to a 9. I'm thinking, "Maybe this a little harder than I thought."

We were not an *R&R* reporter yet, but there were two guys who called me on day one and have been dearest friends ever since: Dale Turner, who was at RCA, and David Haley, who was at MCA. One of the first letters I got was from Dale, went, "Hey, Dale! My name's Dale, too! I'm at RCA, and congrats on getting the gig. We'll be working closely with you." Dale and David didn't care that we weren't a reporter, and that's one of the things that's always meant something to me. Those two guys have a special place in my heart because they cared even though at the time we couldn't do anything for them.

St. Jude is among my proudest accomplishments. Brian Monell from the Louisville office came to see me in Evansville in 1991. Up to that point, there really wasn't a *Country Cares*; the radiothons were on whatever the big stick was in town. In Evansville, that was AC WIKY, which raised about $15,000. Brian said, "I really want you to jump on board." And I replied, "Let me get this straight: You want me to give up two days of my station and beg for money? Absolutely not." Brian said, "Fly to Memphis and see for yourself." I had never flown before then and was terrified of heights. I remember CJ telling me early on, "If you don't get on a plane, Evansville will be the end of your universe."

So it was off to Memphis on one of those little turbo-props with our sales manager Ron Eberhardt, a very spiritual guy. I rationalized, "I'm with Ron on a mission to St. Jude to help sick kids. If this is the end, then I'm destined!" But we made it, I was sold on *Country Cares*, and we did $50,000 the first time.

When I got to WWYZ/Hartford, I called Claire Murtha at St. Jude. She'd been trying to get the station for years, and about dropped the phone. WWYZ has since raised millions of dollars. When I came to KFKF, same deal. I told the GM, "I really believe in St. Jude." He said, "We have Children's Mercy Hospital and the KU Med Center. We really don't want to do that." St. Jude was having a session at CRS. I said, "Go to their presentation and tell me what you think." He went, came back, and said, "OK, I cried twice. You can do it."

At WWYZ, the afternoon guy Floyd Wright didn't like me at all. Here's this 28-year-old kid from Indiana coming to Connecticut. They called me "Mr. Haynie" behind my back. Floyd was telling people, "Hmph! Next thing you know, we'll be playing Kitty Wells." I didn't even know who she was. "Achy Breaky Heart" was the big single then, and I was doing a remote on Floyd's show. I took a cart, put a Kitty Wells tune on it, labeled it "Billy Ray Cyrus" and put it in the studio. He fires it up, and you hear him open the mic, "What the hell is *this?!*" Then this explosion on the air as Floyd goes into a different song. After that we became good friends.

> "BEING INDUCTED IS A GREAT ACHIEVEMENT, BUT I'VE GOT MIXED EMOTIONS BECAUSE I KNOW I'M NOT DONE."

I was the ninth PD in 13 years at KFKF when I came here. We'll have a reunion of all the PDs including Ted Cramer, Rusty Walker, Ray Massie, John St. John, Jim Murphy, Dean James – a "Who's Who." When I came here, I thought, "Wow. I'm going to be in a town that's got Major League Baseball and the NFL. Where do I sign up for Chiefs tickets?" Then the sales manager said, "You won't work here long enough to get through the waiting list."

Being inducted is a great achievement, but I've got mixed emotions because I know I'm not done. The people holding my mortgage are hoping I keep a gig for a lot longer. It really means something to know my plaque will hang on the same wall with my heroes. One is Ted Cramer, who started this station in 1963 – the year I was born – and here I am, having programmed it for the last 16 years, with Ted now on my staff.

I'm doing everything I've ever wanted in my professional life. Since the second grade I've wanted to be in politics, and now I'm on the city council. I've got a pretty terrific family, and I want to enjoy it. As far as I'm concerned, I'll be waking up Kansas City as long as they'll let me. CAC

Country Music DJ AND RADIO HALL OF FAME

CHARLIE COOK

A Little Luck, A Lot Of Talent

Last year's CRB President's Award recipient, Charlie Cook is known not only as one of Country's leading programming minds, but also and more important, as a true friend to the industry. His countless hours serving broadcasters in leadership and mentorship roles are well known, and he has recently embraced a fresh challenge by returning to West Virginia, where he spent three formative years, to help West Virginia Radio Corp. take its business to the next level. (above) All-Star Lineup: Here's Charlie (left), at the Billboard Convention Awards dinner in the late '70s in Toronto, where he won Small Market Country DJ of the Year, congratulated by Ed Salamon (c) and WHN's Lee Arnold, who won Major Market DJ that evening.

My first day as a Country disc jockey did not get off to a good start. I had just been hired at WSDS/Ypsilanti, MI to do noon-3pm , and that day my show was to be a remote broadcast for a furniture store in Plymouth, a Detroit suburb. I was so nervous, thinking that people would actually be listening, that I was physically ill and missed the first couple of breaks. I remember being in the back of the store in the mop room/ restroom, embarrassed and late on my first day.

Later on at WSDS, I did something I wasn't aware was a no-no. I was 22 or 23, and entered the *Billboard* Disc Jockey of the Year competition. Back then, *Billboard* gave out awards to personalities in various formats, regardless of market size. You can imagine how surprised I was to be a finalist. It was like Houston, Dallas Cincinnati ... and a guy from a 500-watt daytimer in Ypsilanti. I didn't win, but being nominated gave me the confidence to apply to bigger markets, and about a year later, I moved up to Denver.

WSDS was also my first PD job. I got the post because everyone else stepped back when the owner asked for volunteers. While PD, I also had to let someone go. Firing DJs has become an art form in recent years, but back in the early '70s it was very difficult for a 23-year-old kid.

Friends In High Places: During his McVay Media days, Charlie hangs with a young Garth Brooks and Cap Cities/ABC executive Norm Schrutt.

I adopted the name Cook at WSDS. After Denver, I went to WWVA/Wheeling, WV, and replaced Bob Finnegan. There already was a Bob Berry, Bob Knight, Bob Cain and Bob Barwick on staff. They said I could be anyone but Bob Clayton, the name I'd used in Denver. I chose Charlie because Charlie Rich and Charley Pride were big acts, and because WSDS' owner was a great guy named Bob Koch [pron. "Cook"]. I took his last name, and Charlie Cook was born around 1975.

When I received the President's Award last year, I mentioned I have had three friends for 30+ years who all came into my life over a short time span. I met Lon Helton at KLAK/Denver. Then, when I left Denver for Wheeling, I met Mike McVay, and then Ed Salamon at a *Billboard* convention while working at WWVA. That was my big break because in 1978, I went to work for Ed at WHN/New York. My daughter Izzy calls both Lon and Mike "uncle," and Ed is her godfather.

After WHN, I stayed with Storer Broadcasting by going to Miami, working for the recently retired Dan DiLoreto. He was a great manager and gave me a lot of room to grow and program. From there, it was off to Los Angeles in 1980 with Neil Rockoff, who had been GM at WHN. We switched KHJ-AM to Country to go against KLAC. By the time we flipped, KZLA-FM had jumped into the format. KHJ still did well because most of the Country fans in L.A. were still on AM. (Today, most of them are invisible!)

I like to take credit for Rick Dees' success. I failed to renew Rick's contract before we flipped to Country because I didn't see the format the way he did. He wanted to have characters like "Tammy WhyNot" and "Charlie Proud." I wish Rick would've paid me a nickel for every dollar he went on to make at KIIS-FM/Los Angeles and beyond. My letting his contract expire was the best thing that ever happened to him.

After a couple of years, I left KHJ to go across the street to KLAC. I really enjoyed my time at KLAC, but Al Brady Law was in his firing phase at that point, and I was out when Don Kelly retired as GM and Law came in. Al stayed in that job 53 days.

It turned out to be "right place, right time" because I joined the fledgling McVay Media. Mike and I had been friends for years, and in 1983 I asked him if he wanted to branch out into Country. I spent the next 13 years with Mike and Doris, and they were the best bosses I ever had. One highlight has been the incredible number of people I met and worked with all over the country ... the world, really. I still hear from DJs and programmers who remind me we worked together. Some are actually nice about it.

By 1996 the stress of being on the road 230 days a year finally caught up with me. It had just taken 24 hours to fly from L.A. to a client station in Shreveport, including a bus from Dallas. I had had enough. Two days later, Ed Salamon called from Westwood One and said, "Are you ready yet?" That was all I needed to hear, and we worked together for the next 10 years.

When I joined West Virginia Radio earlier this year, a half-dozen colleagues wrote to welcome me and reminded me how I had consulted them 15-20 years ago. I think this says a great deal about the company because, so many years later, these people are still there.

I've been very lucky to do a syndicated show on and off since the early '80s. That has also allowed me to get acquainted with so many broadcasters. Every once in awhile, someone will tease me that they ran *Coor's Country News* or *Country Music's Top Ten*. Today, I host *The Road* for United Stations and can connect with programmers all over the country about the show.

Another big part of my career has been my long association with the ACM. They have been incredible supporters, having allowed me to participate as Chairman, President and, more recently, as Radio Committee Chair. The organization has grown so much over the past 30 years, with a charitable arm and staffed with real people who care so much about country music and Country radio.

This is an amazing business. Owners, managers and programmers take chances on people often based only on the applicant's desire. When Ross Biederman took a flyer on a raw kid from Detroit whose only fulltime job at that point was driving a dry cleaner's truck, most people thought he was crazy. He actually might have been, but things worked out. Ross is still active in Traverse City, MI, and I will bet that there are hundreds of broadcasters today that owe him their start.

> "MY REAL LUCK HAS BEEN THAT I HAVE BEEN A DISC JOCKEY... AND I STILL CONSIDER MYSELF A HILLBILLY DJ."

I consider myself very fortunate to be going into the Hall of Fame with this particular class. I met Lee Rogers in the early '70s when I worked at KLAK. Lee did afternoons, I did 7pm-midnight and Lon did overnights. Not many stations can say three of their jocks made it to the Hall of Fame.

I met Dene Hallam just as he was getting into radio, and I remember that he sent me a box of matches when he was at WFEC/Harrisburg. Now, you might not think that this is much of a gift, but the matches were from an Italian restaurant there named Catalano's, which is my legal name.

I have respected the success that Dale Carter has had for so many years, and, of course, have enjoyed working with him on the Seminar.

My real luck has been that I have been a disc jockey... and I still consider myself a hillbilly DJ. I've been a programmer, served at a network and worked out of corporate offices twice. I've done a national radio show for Mutual, JB Productions, WW1 and now USRN. Either I simply can't keep a job, or I have tried to sample a little of everything. That way, when I grow up, I'll really know what I want to settle on. CAC

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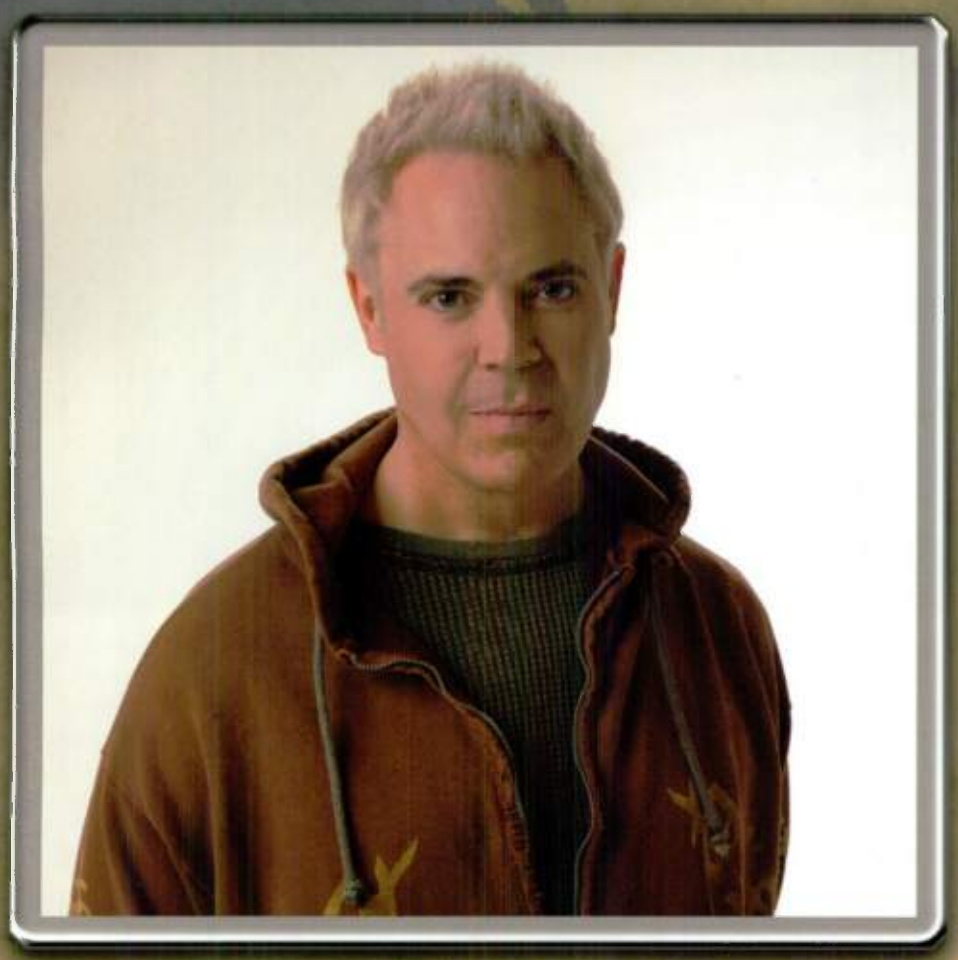

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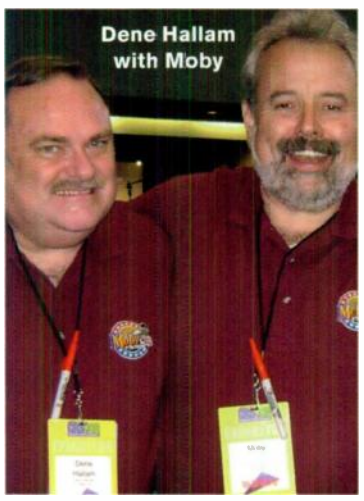
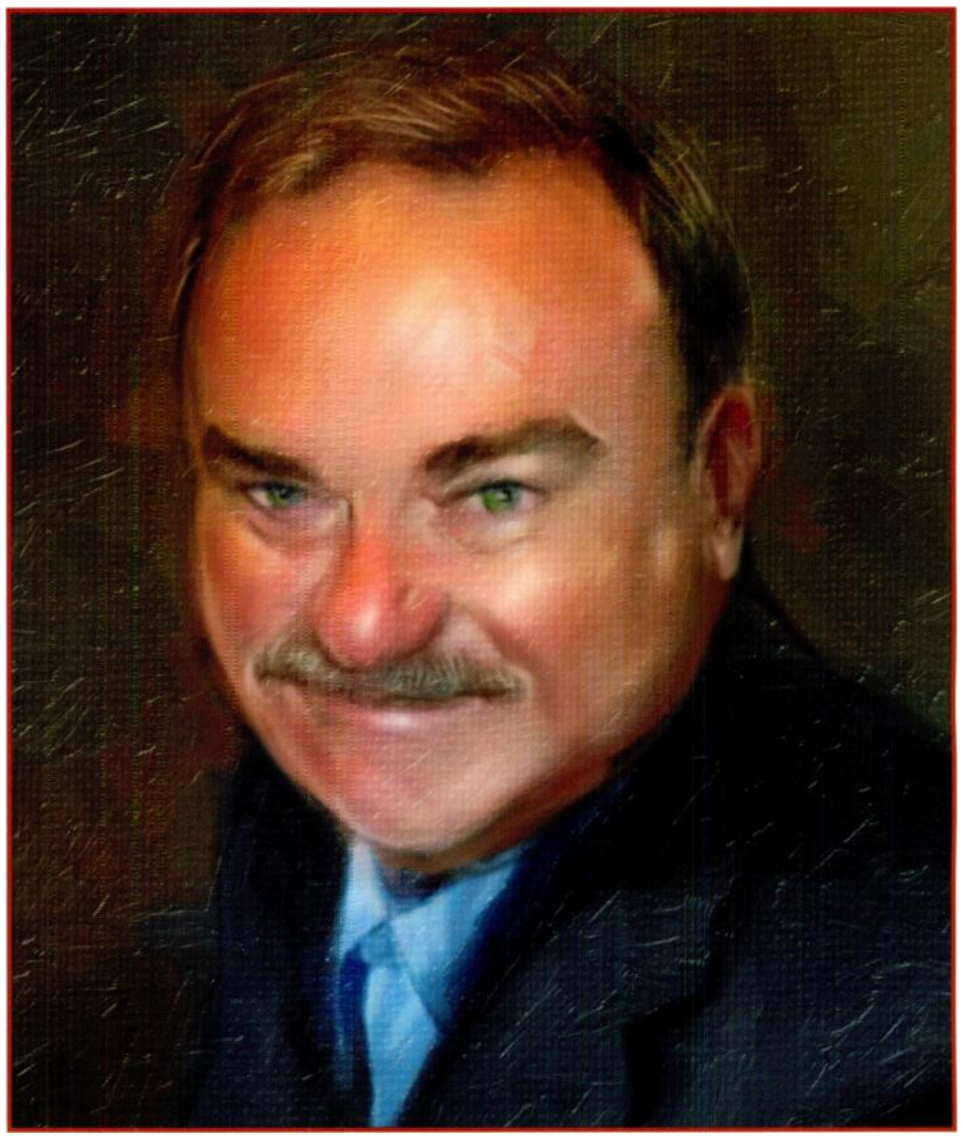

Dene Hallam with Moby

"Hey, pal!" Larger than life, irrepressible, big-hearted, meticulous – Dene Whittington Hallam III was all that and more. Widely praised for possessing "golden ears" for hidden hits and the boldness to play them, Hallam loved music as a fan and programmed as a relentless competitor. After starting at WFEC/Harrisburg under the mentoring of Ed Salamon, he delivered success from coast to coast at such giants as WEEP/Pitttsburgh, WHN and WKHK/New York, KKBQ/Houston and WKHX/Atlanta. He most recently was involved in expanding syndication of Moby In the Morning. A CMA Award recipient, Hallam died Nov. 20, 2009, but his legacy lives on through the Hallam Daughters Educational Trust, to which friends can contribute via co-trustee Moby Enterprises. Here are memories from some of his closest friends.



Ed Salamon: As a consultant, I gave Dene opportunities because he delivered results. He was one of the few PDs who you could count on to be effective at making a positive, measurable ratings difference wherever he worked. Dene's qualities of being detail-oriented and uncompromising when he knew he was right were big reasons why he was successful. Dene would call you up at any hour: "Hey, pal, I just heard this record, and you gotta hear it!"

Dene was into the details of programming from the first time I met him, even before he had even worked fulltime at a station. He'd ask, "Why is it that way, and not *this* way?" He wanted to understand everything. He was just a natural in the programming business from the passion he had for the medium and the music.

One time in Atlanta, Dene was in a competitive battle and got a local Wal-Mart employee to give him the new George Strait CD before it was released. That's the kind of length Dene would go to in order to play the hottest artist first for his listeners, and was an example of how he moved the ratings needle forward.

In a business where so many relationships are superficial, Dene was a genuine person and friend – no matter whether he was up or down – to those of us who were fortunate enough to be close to him. That kind of honesty and courage is what I miss most about him.

Joel Raab: I may have learned more in radio in two months with Dene at WEEP than in four years at Northwestern. He taught me to think more critically about programming, promotions, marketing, sales relations – everything. Dene was a perpetual student of the game. He was always forward-thinking and wanted to know what the next new thing was. Dene was really good at spotting cultural trends.

At WHN, competing against him at WKHK, I'd announce the premiere of a song, knowing he'd hear it and try to get it on before me. And he usually was successful. I'd say, "At 2pm, we're going to play "Islands In The Stream"; we had received an acetate of it that morning. Of course, he had it on by 1pm.

Because we knew each other, it was a game of chess. Willie Nelson did his picnic at Giants Stadium, and both radio stations were vying for more visibility. We handed out these nice lithographs of all the artists at the concert. It was a hot day, and in a brilliant move, Dene gave out fans to everyone that said, "I'm a fan of WKHK."

I think Dene would be thrilled and, frankly, pleasantly surprised to know he's been inducted. In spite of the big ego people thought he had, in some ways he was insecure. I'm not sure he knew how well-respected he was.

Don't Happen Twice: When Kenny Chesney opened for Alabama in the mid '90s, some special friends stopped by for his Phoenix show. Shown (l-r) are KMLE MD Gwen Foster, Chesney, KMLE PD Jeff Garrison, KKBQ/Houston PD Dene Hallam and WUBE/Cincinnati PD Tim Closson.

Kevin Herring: When I was 21, WWWW/Detroit was my first radio job, and I worked as Dene's assistant for eight months. I believe Dene's in the Hall of Fame because of his intangibles – the little things that make the big difference at being a better broadcaster. Dene was my mentor in many ways. His 24/7 work ethic amazed me, and until his daughters were born, radio was the No. 1 thing in his life.

Dene always was thinking of unconventional angles to get his station attention. He'd put artists on as DJs; they could play and talk about anything. He'd even make them read commercials and PSAs so they'd get a perspective of what we in radio did. When Lacy J. Dalton came to W4 with her single "Wild Turkey," Dene brought in a live wild turkey and let the damn thing loose in the studio. Lacy J. about died.

To this day, I believe Dene had the best ears in radio. He was right way more than wrong; a lot of people don't want to admit that. He always did what he believed was best for the station, not what was politically correct. He seemed intimidating to record people to a certain degree, but really was a puppy dog inside.

I was like one of Dene's "disciples." He was very proud of people such as Jeff Garrison, John Trapane, Barry Mardit and every jock he hired or artist who went on to accomplish better things. When it comes to broadcasting excellence, there've been very few who dedicated as much time and effort as Dene.

> "DENE WAS A GENUINE PERSON AND FRIEND TO THOSE OF US WHO WERE FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO BE CLOSE TO HIM."

Barry Mardit: When Dene interviewed me for a job at WFEC, he noticed that I'd been a 99X/New York request line operator, just as he'd been. In that job, nobody has any respect for you, so he understood early on the importance of giving credit and positive reinforcement to people. If you were a good worker, he'd go to the end of the earth to brag about you and your ideas, and try to move you ahead. That helped me get to Pittsburgh.

When Dene was at WEEP and I was PD at WFEC, he told me he had just gotten Kenny Rogers' new single, "Love Or Something Like It," before anyone else. I said, "Dene, I'd do anything to get a copy and play it tomorrow morning." He actually put the 45 on a Greyhound, and I picked it up in the middle of the night. Who else but Dene would agree to this? Dene was so passionate about whatever he believed in and felt he had to share it with the world right then. He told me about ZBB's "Chicken Fried" a year before it even charted.

One time Dene was craving a Nathan's hot dog, and we drove two hours from Harrisburg to Times Square just to get one. When I visited him at KBZT/San Diego, he suggested we go down to Tijuana. Coming back, the customs officer asked, "Do you have anything to declare?" I said, "I've got this sombrero and shawl for my parents." And Dene turns to me and says, "Why don't you tell him about the cocaine?" The closest I come to coke is a six-pack of Diet. I'm surprised they didn't do a body search, but they also didn't let Dene keep the wicker hamper he bought!

Mike McVay: Dene was gregarious and full of life. He also was unfiltered; he said whatever was on his mind. What I also loved about Dene was his amazing passion and ability to always be *on*. It would be wrong to say Dene was [purely] a Country guy. He was a *radio* guy because he also was amazingly creative as an AC and Oldies programmer, as well – someone you could send in to fix a station in mere moments. Dene was very talent-oriented, and once hired former NFL star Conrad Dobler as the perfect, aggressive personality for our K.C. Sports station after seeing him in a Miller Lite spot. Dene had the ability to hear the station in his head and convey that sound to his staff. He was closer to being like a movie director in the creativity he had, and he always knew that what he was doing would work. Dene was a real leader.

Moby: Dene and I worked together at WKHX, and developed a pretty good relationship. At Moby Enterprises, I brought Dene in to make sales calls and grow the network. He eventually took over as PD, and it was great for my network to have him sitting in that chair. He loved being involved in the music, and got me many good interviews. The prize closet stayed full because he had done so much for so many people. I always told him how much we appreciated all that he did for us. While he lived in our home for 19 months and worked for me for three years, we became family.

Dene was very meticulous, and so successful so many times it was hard to argue with him. He offered to critique me; he wouldn't have been Dene if he hadn't! I realized the strength of the source, and it would have been stupid not to listen to him. I wanted to hear what Dene was thinking because I had the benefit of having one of the greatest PDs in Country radio sitting in an office downstairs from my studio.

Dene drove me crazy, but I loved him like a brother, and was proud to deliver the eulogy. I already can hear him programming the celestial music at the Gates of Heaven, telling St. Peter, "Hey, pal, I love the band, but I think you need a few more trumpets, and maybe hold the harps back a little!" CAC

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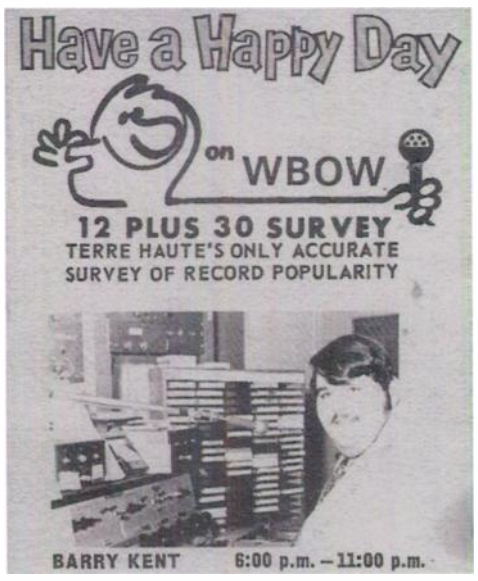
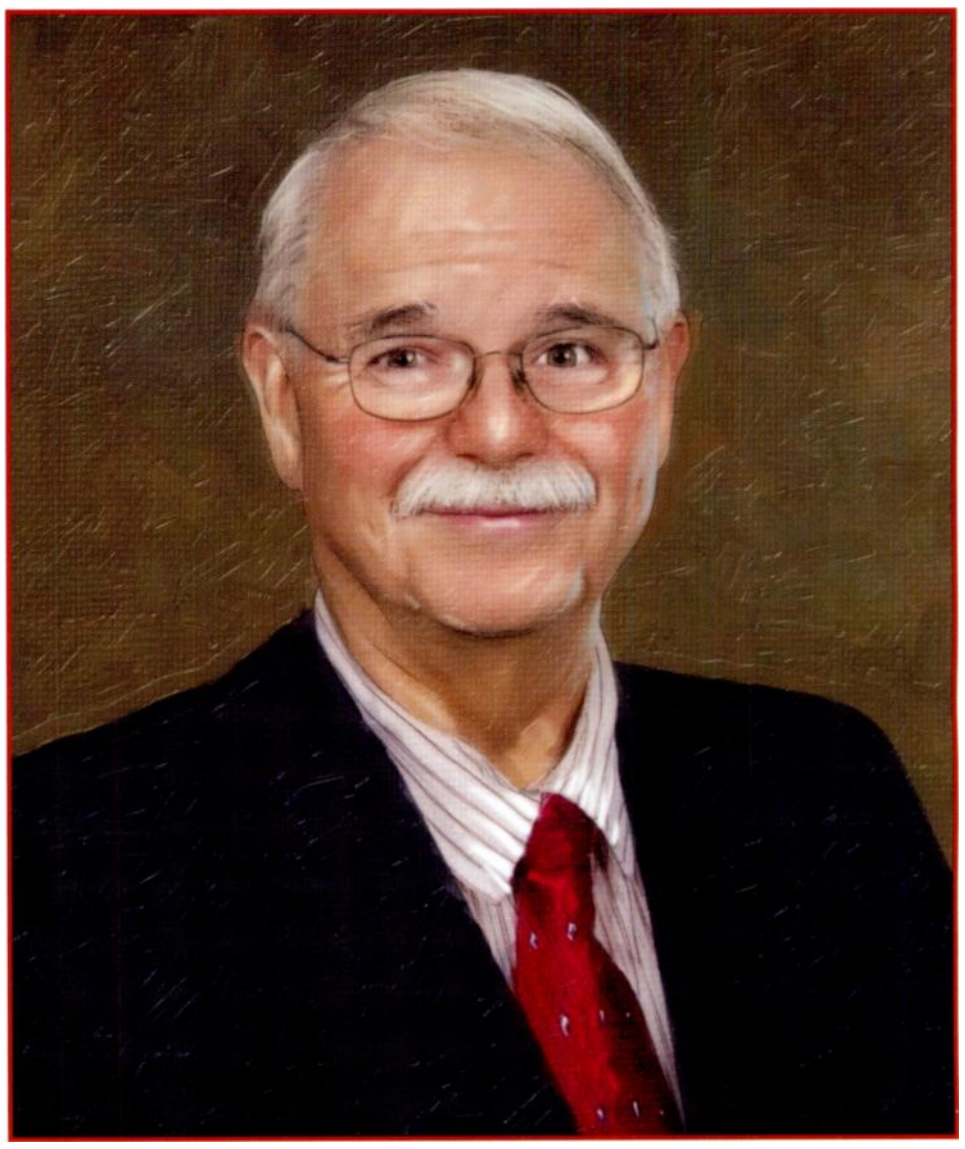
Country Music DJ AND RADIO HALL OF FAME

BARRY KENT

There's No Place Like Home



Terre Haute, IN was more than a great town for Barry Kent to start his career, it's also where he's spent his entire 42 years in the business. For the last 29, Kent's been at Emmis' market-dominant Country WTHI, which he has consistently led to 20+ shares. As OM for WTHI and Classic Rock WWVR, Kent appreciates what hometown stations can mean for a community. He also recognizes the opportunities they gave to someone in love with radio since childhood, including the chance to meet his favorite listener, his wife Kelly, while spinning Top 40 hits at crosstown WBOW as a young "Rockin' Barry Kent."



When I was getting ready for school, my mother always used to turn on the Top 40 station, which had a block of Country from 4-6am. People used to give me radios, and many had shortwave bands. That led to a fascination with ham radio, and I got my license at 14. I tried to see how far away I could pick up AM stations, listening to Bill Mack at WBAP/Dallas and other legendary jocks at WABC/New York and all the Chicago stations. I also would listen to the *Grand Ole Opry* and Grant Turner announcing, thinking, "This is too cool." How radio worked was just magic to me.

By high school, I knew I was going to be in radio somehow. My mom thought it was a bit of a pipe dream, but she helped me buy some of my first ham radio equipment. Our mailman was a ham radio operator, and found out that I was, too. He worked part-time at then-Gospel WWVR, and told me they were looking for an evening announcer and board operator. He helped me study for my FCC Third Class license and even drove me to Indianapolis to take the test. I passed and got the job! My first day, I was scared to death. The guy I relieved, Dick Lee, had been in radio for years and had a voice just out of this world. He gave me a run-through on taking the transmitter readings, then said, "Well, I'll see ya!" and walked out the door. But I had everything laid out and don't think I had much dead air. It paid $1.25 an hour, enough for the tank of gas to get me there every day. We own that station now; it's right across the hall.

In the summer of '69, I got a job doing mornings at WPFR, named after the owner/engineer Paul Ford, who built his Country FM station on his back porch. The tower was in a field behind his house and the studio and transmitter were in his backyard. To play the 45s, there was one automatic Garrard turntable/changer. He said, "Just take some of those songs and put 'em on the changer, and talk until the needle sets down, and then turn the pot up and let the music play. When the song is over, just pot it down and talk until the next record drops." At home, you could hear the record changer changing 45s on the air. His wife just let it run all day long while she did housework.

The phone rang constantly during my 7pm-midnight shift at Top 40 WBOW back in 1970; we were *the* station in town. You get to talking to the girls, "Hi, who are you? What do you look like?" At personal appearances and remotes, it was like, "Hey, come back to the station and we'll cut an audition tape. Let's go into the production room. I'll show you the ropes." It's one way to meet the girls, that's for sure. But this one girl kept calling me every night. She had a nice voice, so I decided, "Hey, it's time we meet each other." Kelly was a teenager, and I wasn't much older than she was. I met her one evening outside her home, and we walked, sat, talked for awhile and have been talking ever since. We were married in 1974.

After starting out at $85 a week, I became PD at WBOW-AM & FM in 1975 and also did afternoons. In 1982 the stations changed ownership and management, and for some reason the new GM didn't like me. I heard there was a PD opening at WTHI, where [Country Radio Hall of Famer] Bobby Kraig had once been PD, as had [former Lyric Street VP] Dale Turner. Then-GM Dave Liston offered me the job, but I had a no-compete contract with WBOW. Fortunately, I was able to talk my way out of it. I think the station's new GM thought I didn't have a chance to get another job here in town, let alone go to the direct AM competitor. Being local helped me get the job at WTHI, as Dave told me he was tired of hiring somebody from out of town who would leave after a few months. So I showed him that my non-compete had been canceled, started the next day, and have been coming into this building ever since.

In It For Radio: As many new artists do each year at CRS, newcomer Shania Twain takes time to hang with WTHI's Barry Kent.

WTHI was the AM Country leader, with a fledging FM Country station that had been Easy Listening. We took the AM Oldies and I started on the FM, doing afternoons. The building was constructed in 1890, and the TV station took priority, so the FM had been pretty neglected. The control board, on a table held up by a 2x4 under the leg, had wires hanging underneath, and I was afraid to put my legs there for fear of being electrocuted. But I knew the potential was there because Country was hot. Outlying stations were pulling ratings, and we took off running pretty quickly.

I've always tried to be a leader musically, and make sure the jock talks up the fact that this is a new song or artist. I will start a new song in evenings and weekends, but if it gets some requests and sounds good on-air, we'll move it into a better rotation real quick. I remember playing the Judds real early. I was at the Nashville Palace during CRS, when RCA's Dale Turner came over and said, "Hey, I want you to meet our latest act, the Judds." Here were Naomi and Wynonna in long, blue sequined dresses. Wow. As soon as I got back to the station, I listened and put 'em on.

Community service is very important to me. An engineering school here volunteers to put bicycles together for Toys For Tots each year, and this time we raised enough money to buy 450 bikes. The students get together on a Saturday with 20-30 assembly lines, having a ball. Then we line the bikes up on the parking lot, and the families come to get them. Seeing the looks in the eyes of these parents, knowing that their kid's going to get a new bike for Christmas, is priceless. The "thank yous" are, too. The power of this station and the reach we have is scary sometimes.

We staged our first appreciation concert in the '80s; I think it was TG Sheppard. We'd presented several country concerts at the 10,000-seat Indiana State University's arena over the years, but this time we decided to do our own. People lined up around the corner to pick up free tickets during live broadcasts at sponsor locations. The night of the show, you could look into the faces of people walking around as if, "Wow. I've never been to anything like this before." I realized these were people who couldn't afford the $15 to go to a concert. We had a bunch of new people who'd never seen a show, and *we* were their ticket. Pretty cool.

> "THE POWER OF THIS STATION AND THE REACH WE HAVE IS SCARY SOMETIMES."

I can walk into the Kroger and the checkout person will say, "Hey, Barry, I heard you on the air this morning." It embarrasses my younger son to death. Somebody will stop us at Wal-Mart and say, "Hey, how you doin'?" and want to talk. And my son will say, "Dad, who was that?" I'll reply, "I don't know, but he's a listener and we gotta treat 'em nice." Many listeners remember when our first child was born or heard me talk about the car accident when I hit the deer. It's part of what keeps you here. Years ago, I had aspirations to work at WLS/Chicago or WABC or WSM/Nashville, but as you put roots down, they're harder to pull up. I feel blessed to be able to do something I love in my hometown, to work with good companies and such great people.

When I first got interested in radio, I never really thought about being on the air, and had no inkling that I'd ever be in any kind of Hall of Fame. I feel very humble, I tell you. I was joking with the people here, saying, "Well, *there's* another thing I can mark off my bucket list." The fact is, it pretty much *is* the bucket list. CAC

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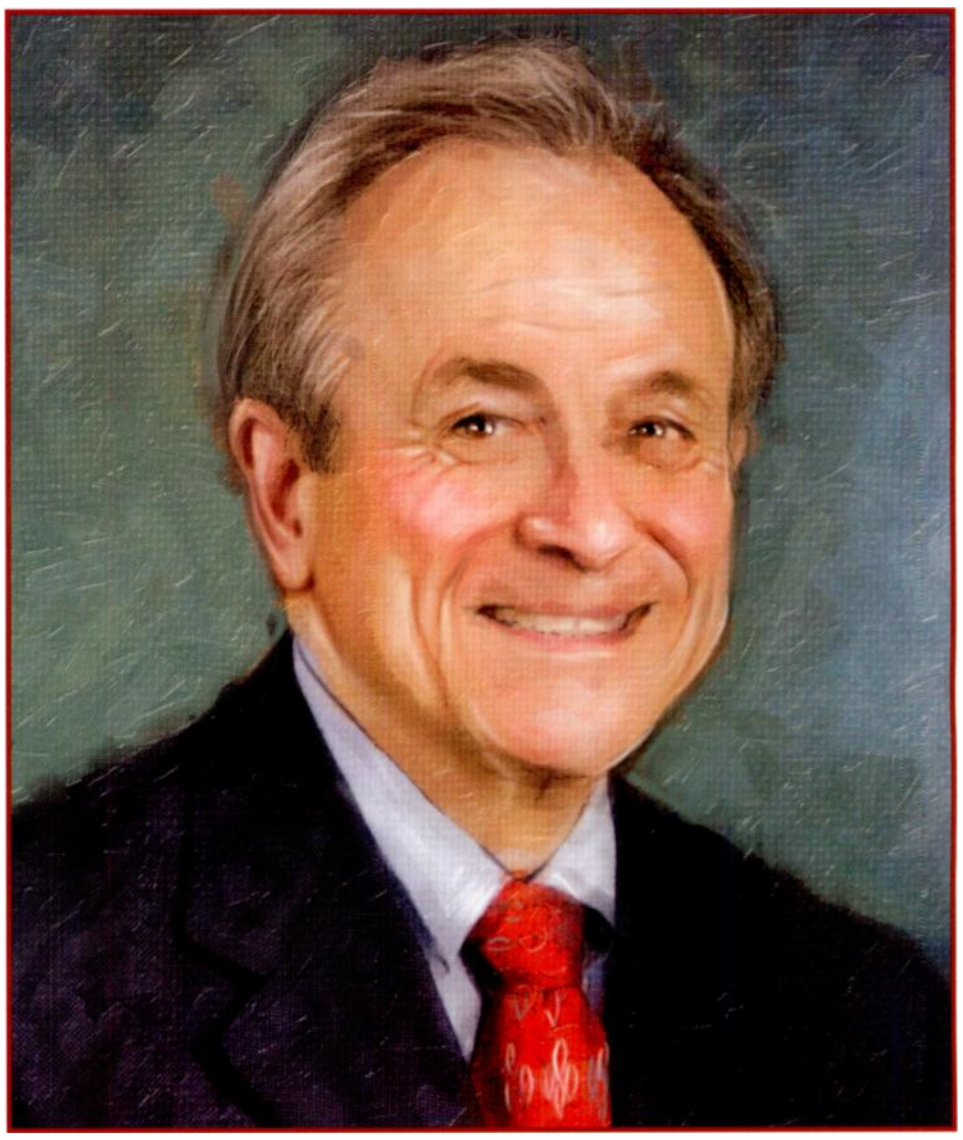
BILL PAYNE

Living Up To His Reputation

Starting out at 12 (left) on his father's station KWHP-AM/Cushing, OK in 1952, Bill Payne parlayed his love of country music and the radio business into what is now a six-station group. He honed his on-air craft working for Top 40 pioneer Todd Storz, became a skilled radio engineer, and, at age 22, built a successful FM station in his Edmond, OK home, putting up his refrigerator as collateral for turntables. Bill, who is still on the air every day at 71, gave a foothold to countless nationally-known broadcasters such as Michael Elder, Kevin Metheny, Ken Fearnow and well-known OKC talent Mike Munday, Tom Furlong, Bill Lacy, Johnny Bond, Ben Buckland and many others. When Payne joined KOMA he worked with Don Schaeffer, Don Bruce, PD Hot Rod Roddy, Sweed Daddy Ron Thompson and Don Hodges, not to mention his six-time Marconi nominee son, Will Payne. With a devotion to community service across southeastern Oklahoma, you could say Bill is an original "prairie home companion."



My dad, William Payne, was an attorney and Oklahoma Congressman Will Rogers' press secretary. He loved country music. I remember him playing Eddy Arnold's "I'll Hold You In My Heart Until I Can Hold You In My Arms" over and over. He once took me to see Ernest Tubb in Washington, DC, presented by [promoter and founding CMA President] Connie B. Gay.

My parents let me move to my grandmother's home in Edmond, while my father was waiting for his FCC station license. I liked Edmond much better than DC because of the small-town atmosphere. My loving grandmother knew just how to keep a young boy on the right track. In 1952, when my father's license came through, we moved to Cushing, where my dad started KWHP-AM. Frankly, as a youngster, I had no image of myself until I got into radio, and I became popular and respected. It was the turning point in my life. After all, I had a good reputation to live up to.

After starting KWHP-AM, my dad gave me my first job at age 12 hosting *Bill Payne's Record Shop,* playing country records. I wasn't paid anything, but got to refill the Coke machine and keep any profits I could make at five cents a bottle. I was always hanging around the engineers, and later did the morning show. One morning, when our engineer/morning announcer quit without any notice, my dad kicked me out of bed and said, "Get over there and turn that transmitter on and get us on the air, because you're the only one who knows how!" My radio career began that morning.

Pearls Of Wisdom: Here's Bill with the late Opry legend Minnie Pearl in the mid-'80s at an artist taping session during CMA's Fan Fair.

When I was 18, I was employed by country entertainer/station owner Jack Beasley. He gave me the opportunity as a First Class Engineer to install the wiring and equipment on the first daytime Country station KLPR/Oklahoma City when the station moved to their new building. As the morning man, my beat included going to police station at 3:30am to look at the crime blotter and see what went on overnight. Next, I'd head over to the fire department to see if there were any fires. As the morning show DJ, I would also report the news.

In 1959, I was hired by GM Jack Sampson to join 50-kw Top 40 KOMA/OKC to do the combo DJ/engineer job from midnight-6 for owner Todd Storz and program manager Graham Richards. Personally, I thought if a song was commercial, we should play it. Graham disagreed, and later I understood why. I made the mistake of breaking the rules and played by request Bobby Vee's new single, "Rubber Ball." The next day, Richards called and said, " "What are you doing playing that off-the-wall song?" I said, "Well, I thought it was *good.*" He said, "It wasn't on the playlist and if you ever do that again, you're fired!" After we got a gold record for it, he called back later on and said, "OK, you got lucky on that one."

With 50,000 watts at night, the atmosphere was so electric at KOMA that those long fluorescent bulbs would light up, even across the street. We had cheerleaders coming over with them, twirling them like batons.

In 1962, I was 22 when we built KWHP-FM/Edmond in our home. Although they are my initials, too, the call letters were named in honor of my father, and I'm proud of that. Our garage was remodeled to house the control room and office. The transmitter was in our spare bedroom.

We erected a 77-foot tower in the backyard. Our home was in a residential area, not zoned for a station; that's how naïve I was. The one house the tower could possibly fall on was next door, but I had put up guy wires for 100-mph winds. Our neighbor said, "Bill, I see how you built that tower. *That's* not going anywhere." So I thought I was OK. But three days before we were to go on-air, the mayor and city manager called me and asked, "What are you doing starting a station in your home? You can't do that." I said, "Why can't I? Look across the street. There's a beauty shop over there." They said, "You make a lot of noise; we can't have that." I explained, "Radio doesn't make any noise. It's *radio waves!*" The mayor said, "Well, we would like to have this station here. Let me see what we can do." So they researched all the laws, which were written before radio, and couldn't find radio listed. The mayor called back and said, "I think we can get away with this."

> "THE ONE HOUSE THE TOWER COULD POSSIBLY FALL ON WAS NEXT DOOR, BUT I HAD PUT UP GUY-WIRES FOR 100-MPH WINDS."

To get listeners, I called as many people in the phone book as we could, but only 10% of them had FM radios. Many told me that their FM tuner section didn't work; the tubes had burned out. A *Reader's Digest* article said FM would exceed AM in five years, and I would take that story around to advertisers to show them what was coming. Getting business was real tough. I used to tell myself, "I'm not going home until I sell something today." So I didn't quit. And to this day I always tell people, "If you don't quit, you can't lose."

Times were so difficult that we started the Oklahoma Academy of Broadcasting, a school to train DJs. Because of this school, we were able to train students that became local radio announcers; some went on to national acclaim. The school allowed the DJs on-the-air training, and they were able to tell employers that they had on-air experience.

Our Edmond station was a family affair, with Mom (Gail, bookkeeper) and our three daughters – Anne, Kelly and Haydon, working at various jobs including airwork.

Our son Will started on the air at KTFX/Tulsa in 1985, also at age 12. On Sunday morning, he would come in with me and we would do *The Bill and Will Show.* I would say, "You're listening to *The Bill* ..." and he'd announce, "...*and Will Show.*" As he got more experience, we expanded what he said to song titles and artists. Later, we added temperature and other bits. *The Bill and Will Show* was unique and became the only program on our station that was No. 1! At age 15, he began his first solo show.

Will became our manager and morning personality at KITX (K95.5) in Hugo at 22, and has been there for going on 16 years. His ratings quickly grew in Oklahoma. When Will added Barry Diamond from Paris, TX to the *Morning Circus Show*, the two talents together were great. The program became No. 1 on both sides of the border. The *Will and Barry* show was launched, and the duo are recognized as community leaders.

My advice to younger personalities is just to let people know that you care about them. In 1957, at KWRW/Guthrie, Senior Wally Seeds (an announcer and minister) told me, "Bill, if you really want to be the communicator, you need to smile when you're talking into the microphone. Enunciate clearly and talk with passion to one person that you love and care about." So when I do my shows, that's how it's done – in a loving and helping way. People simply relate to folks who care about them.

Today, at our radio stations, we stress that we must go out and help and love people, and let them know that we care. I believe that's what people want to know." CAC

CAROLINE, TAYLA AND JENNIFER

STEALING ★ANGELS★

WELCOME YOU TO CRS 2011

The new single

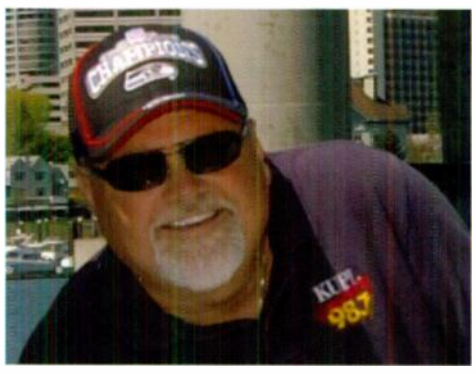
"PAPER HEART"

shipping Mid-March

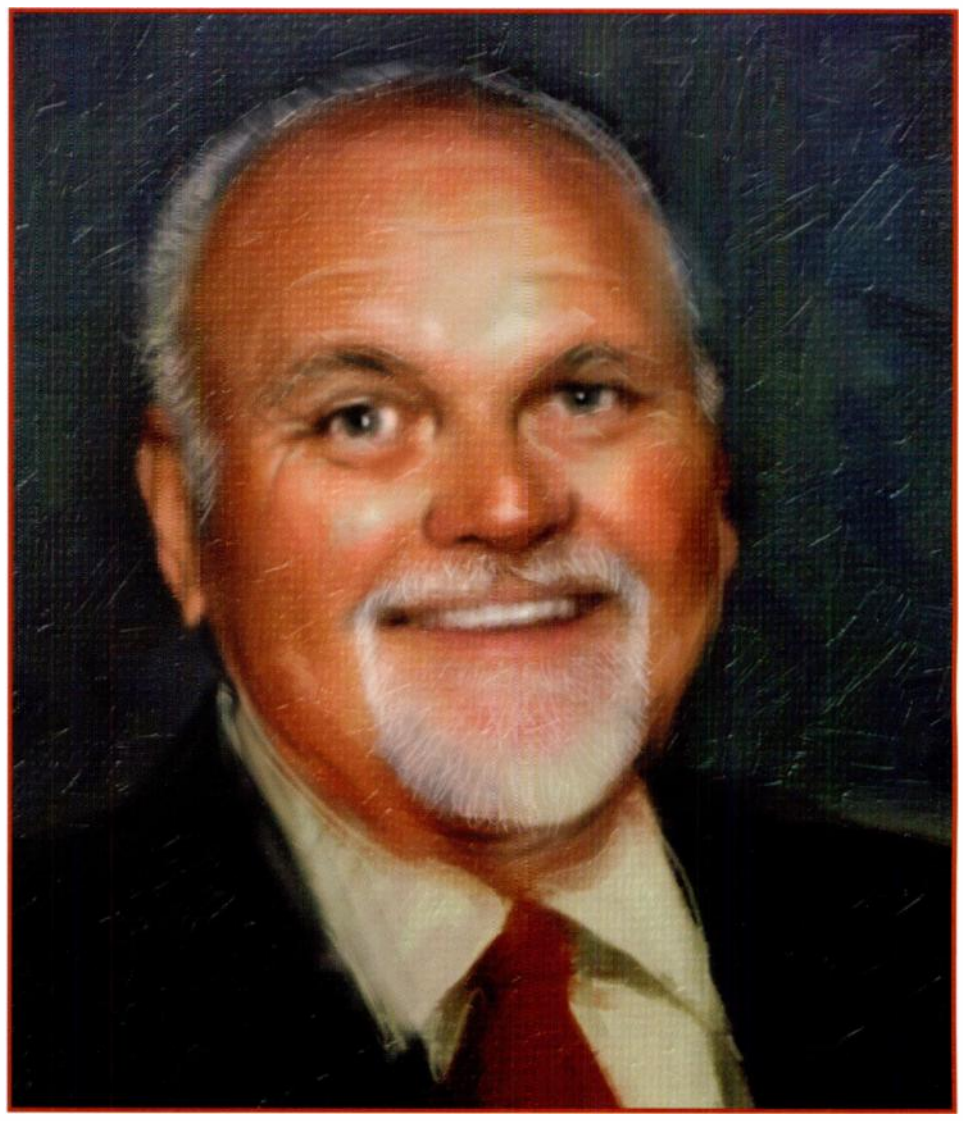
Country Music DJ AND RADIO HALL OF FAME

LEE ROGERS

He's Got Your "Six"



Growing up on a small farm in rural Washington State, Lee Rogers once walked four miles just to see his favorite DJ, the now legendary Pat O'Day, do a remote. He served in Vietnam, and worked his way up from a northern Minnesota daytimer to eventually program top stations in Seattle, Minneapolis, San Diego and Jacksonville before taking the reins at KUPL/ Portland, where he also held down mornings from 1995 through 2009. A former touring bandleader and passionate team defender, Rogers has the uncanny ability to connect with the country life-group and unify everyone around him.



When I was around 21, a guy in our Air Force barracks in Duluth, MN did a weekend show at Top 40 station there, and he invited me to sit in the studio with him. He gave me AP and commercial copy to take back to the barracks, and he'd critique me after I'd sit with a little Teac reel-to-reel and phonograph, talking over the intros, reading the copy. I had just been married and was looking for a place to live. A guy who owned the trailer we found happened to be GM at nearby 250-watt daytimer WKLK/Cloquet. When I went to see him about the place, he was on the air. I went in the studio, and said, "I've always wanted to do that." He said, "Really? Sit down!" It turned out he was, as GM, on the air from 6am-11pm *every day*. He was willing to do anything to get relief, and started showing me how to run the board. I got $50 a week and all the records I could eat, and knew right then that radio was all I ever wanted to do.

I moved back to Washington and worked at daytimer KBAM/Longview. The owner was so cheap that he built a hood over the 5-kw transmitter, put a fan in it, and that was how they heated the building in the wintertime. I did the morning show, and froze my butt off.

Heavy Metal: In recognition for regularly attending the funerals of Portland soldiers, paying homage to them on-air at KUPL and playing the National Anthem daily, Vietnam veteran Lee Rogers was presented with the Veterans of Oregon Honorable Service Medal.

KBFW/Bellingham, WA was owned by Fred Danz, who owned almost every drive-in movie theater from southern California to northern Washington. He built a new drive-in theater and put our station on the second floor with the projection equipment. Fred added a couch, and we got to see all the movies for free.

I've played music all my life, but always considered myself more of a businessman than a musician. When I put bands together, I did all the booking, paid everybody and bought all the equipment. Because I was on the radio at the same time, I was able to cross-promote my radio and band jobs and always had the best-paid bands in town. I played mostly rhythm guitar and bass, but if my drummer needed to throw up, I could play drums long enough for him to get outside and come back.

> "EVERY TALENT WORKING FOR ME KNEW I WOULD FIGHT FOR THEM FOR EVERYTHING I COULD GET."

While at KMPS around 1976, the Jack Roberts Agency in Seattle hired my band, Lee Rogers & Stampede Pass, to back several *Grand Ole Opry* stars on tour through the Northwest and Canada. For two weeks, I traveled with Webb Pierce, Minnie Pearl, Don Gibson, Hank Snow and others. One night we were at a gym in Yakima, changing clothes for a show nearby. Don told me he wrote "Oh, Lonesome Me" and "I Can't Stop Loving You" in the same day within a couple of hours. I said, "Dude, you must have been on a bummer *that* day." We sat in the shower room, watching Merle Travis pick with my guitar player while Don sang some of the great songs he'd written and recorded. Minnie Pearl used to introduce my band each night, and saved me for last. She'd say, "And now, I want to introduce you to the bandleader. He's such a handsome man." I had a beard at the time. She said, "When I first met Lee, he asked me, 'Minnie, do you mind kissing a man with a beard?' I told him, "Heck no, I never mind trompin' through a little brush to get to a picnic."

You gain a P1 listener forever the moment they think, "Wow. That person is just like me." And you can only do that by sharing who you are. The morning of 9/11, I was on the air at KUPL, playing Brooks & Dunn's "Only In America" when we got the AP word of the first plane hitting the World Trade Center. I cried on the air. I immediately knew it was terrorists, got on the air and said, "You dirty little cowards. Put on a damn uniform and stand up and fight like a man." I called the local Army recruiting office live on the air and volunteered. Of course, I was almost 60 years old. So I formed "Rogers' Rangers." I said, "This is for old guys like me who want to, but can't. All you need is to have the desire to fight." We gathered as a group a few times, and I still hear from some of them today. Each morning, I'd say, "Never forget 9/11. We're proud to be Americans" and play the National Anthem. I did that every day at 7am until the day I left Dec. 18, 2009.

At every personal appearance, pre-concert party or station event, I would shake hands and thank every person who would make the effort to come out. To win the street battle against my competitor, I wanted every P1, P2 or P3 to the country life-group to feel that my station wanted their business more than the other guy. Our people were not allowed to stand behind a table and wait for someone to come up. It was their job to get out from behind and work the front. And those P2s and P3s became P1s to the station or that personality instantly.

Whenever I'd fly in for a job interview, I could walk in the station and tell within 15 minutes whether there was any magic. The first thing I ever set out to do at a station was to create camaraderie and that magic in the hallways because I felt that happiness could be heard on the air.

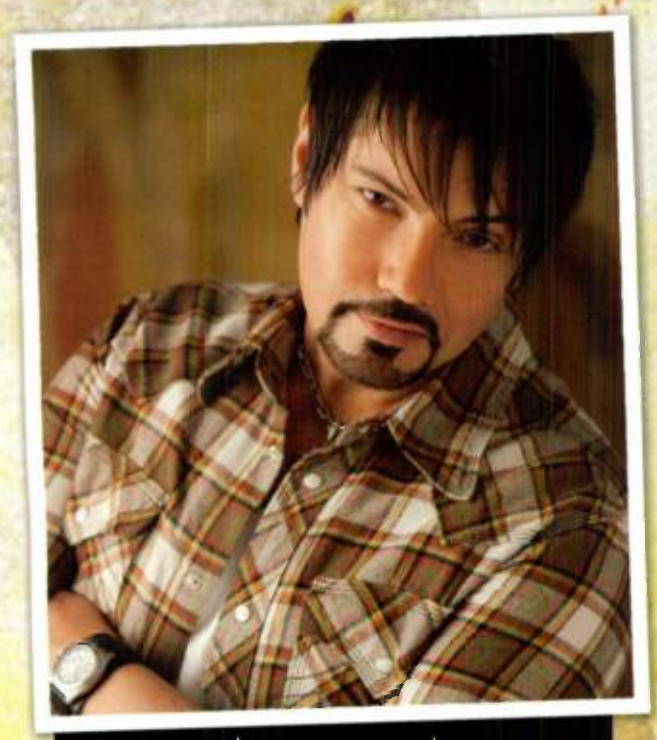
KEEY/Minneapolis GM Mick Anselmo hired me to fix the station, and knew what great programming was. But he couldn't help himself and started to micro-manage me. I walked into his office and threw my keys on his desk and said, "If you want to program the station, here are the keys to my office. If you don't, then let me do my job. That's what you hired me for." And we had a mutual respect for one another from that day on.

One rainy night we were doing a big KRPM/Seattle event at the Riverside Inn, and Jaye Albright was PD at KMPS. I had our flyers in plastic sandwich bags and I was going out to put them on the windshields of every car in the parking lot. I get outside, and see a doggone KMPS flyer under the windshield of the first car! I'm running around putting KRPM flyers on, and she's following right behind, taking mine off and putting theirs on, and I'm doing the same thing. But there was no animosity because we respected each other's competitiveness. That made us better and became a cornerstone of our friendship.

I'd take a bullet for Jaye Albright, Charlie Cook, Lon Helton, and many others. That's one of the qualities that I looked for in my employees and wanted to display to them: "This is a guy I would follow out of the trenches." If we were under fire in a trench, and a guy jumped up and said, "Let's go," I'd follow him because he would take the bullet first. And that's what I mean by saying I'd always attend station functions – pumpin' paws and slappin' backs – because that's what I'd ask of my talent.

As we used to say in Vietnam, the leader is in the 12 o'clock position, and the guy right behind is at six o'clock. So the guy who had your back "had your six." I believed that every talent working for me knew in their hearts that when I sat down in front of the GM at renewal or review time I would fight for them for everything I could get. You have to stand up for your station and employees. You have to have their six. CAC

BLACK RIVER ENTERTAINMENT



Sarah Darling
Something To Do With Your Hands
IMPACTING NOW!

JEFF BATES
one day closer

DUE WEST
When The Smoke Clears
ADD DATE: MARCH 14TH

Black River Entertainment CRS 2011 Activities

Wednesday, March 2

"When The Smoke Clears" Cigar Lounge
4pm-6pm, 9pm-2am
**Located just outside the main entrance to the Renaissance Hotel*

Thursday, March 3

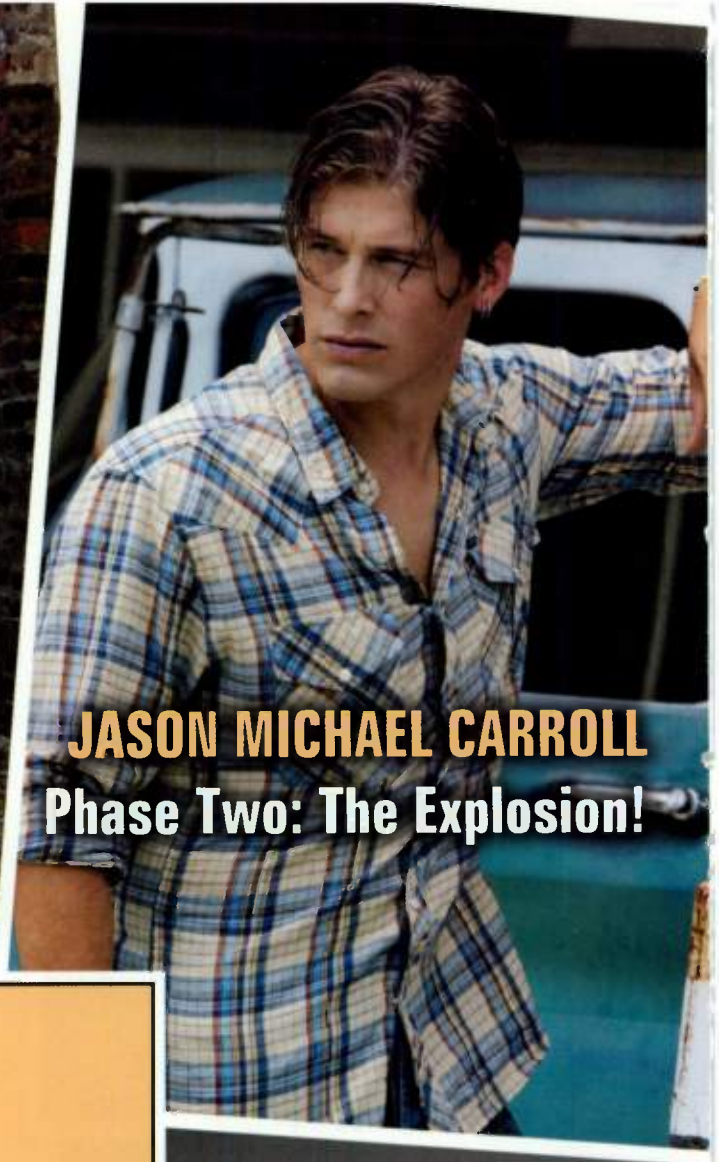
"When The Smoke Clears" Cigar Lounge
4pm-2am
with special guest Vincent Pastore a.k.a. "Big You Know" from the Sopranos (10pm-12am)

Friday, March 4

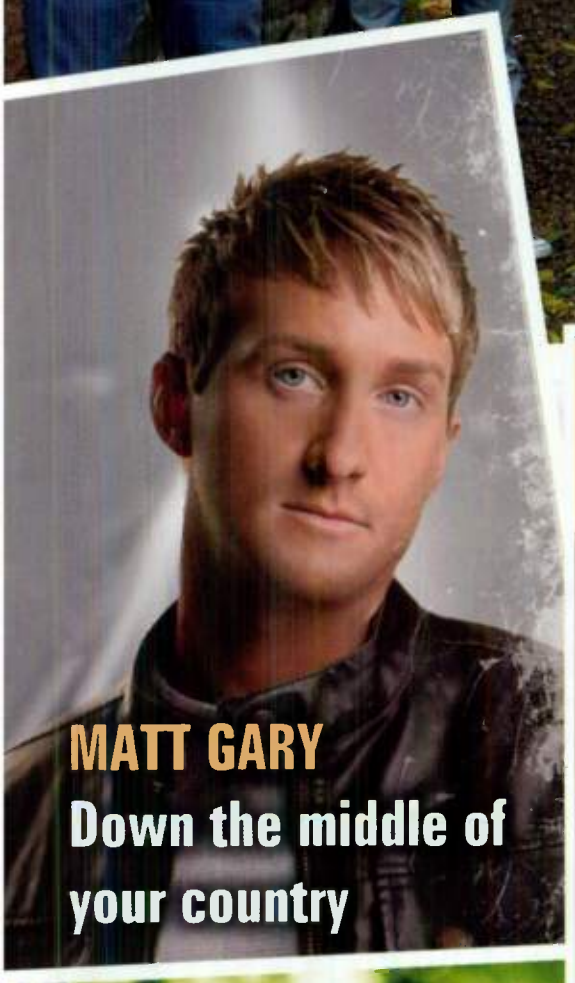
CRS New Faces Show Cocktail Reception & Showcase
Featuring Jeff Bates, Sarah Darling, & Due West
Hosted by Vincent Pastore

"When The Smoke Clears" Cigar Lounge
9pm-2am
with special Guest Vincent Pastore (10pm-12am)

EMERSON DRIVE
Celebrating a decade with a whole new sound



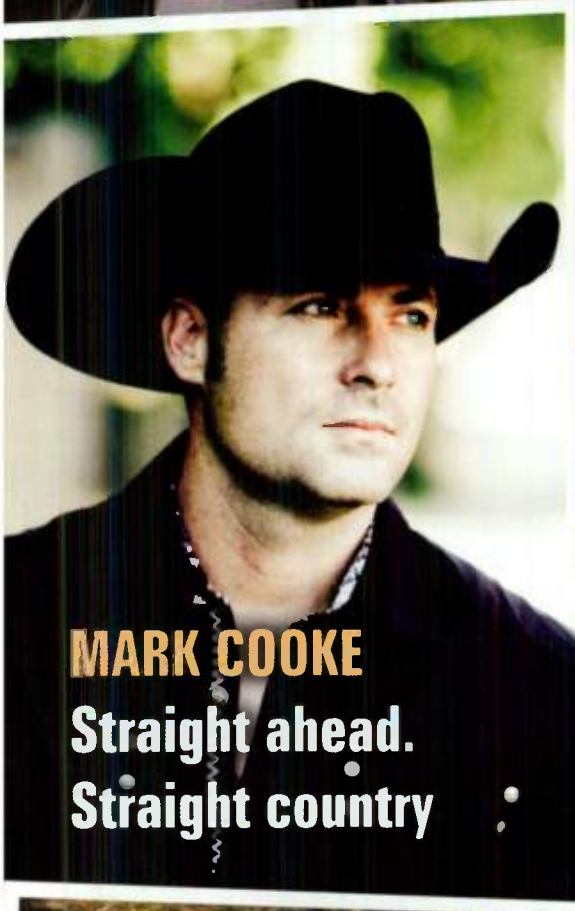
JASON MICHAEL CARROLL
Phase Two: The Explosion!



MATT GARY
Down the middle of your country

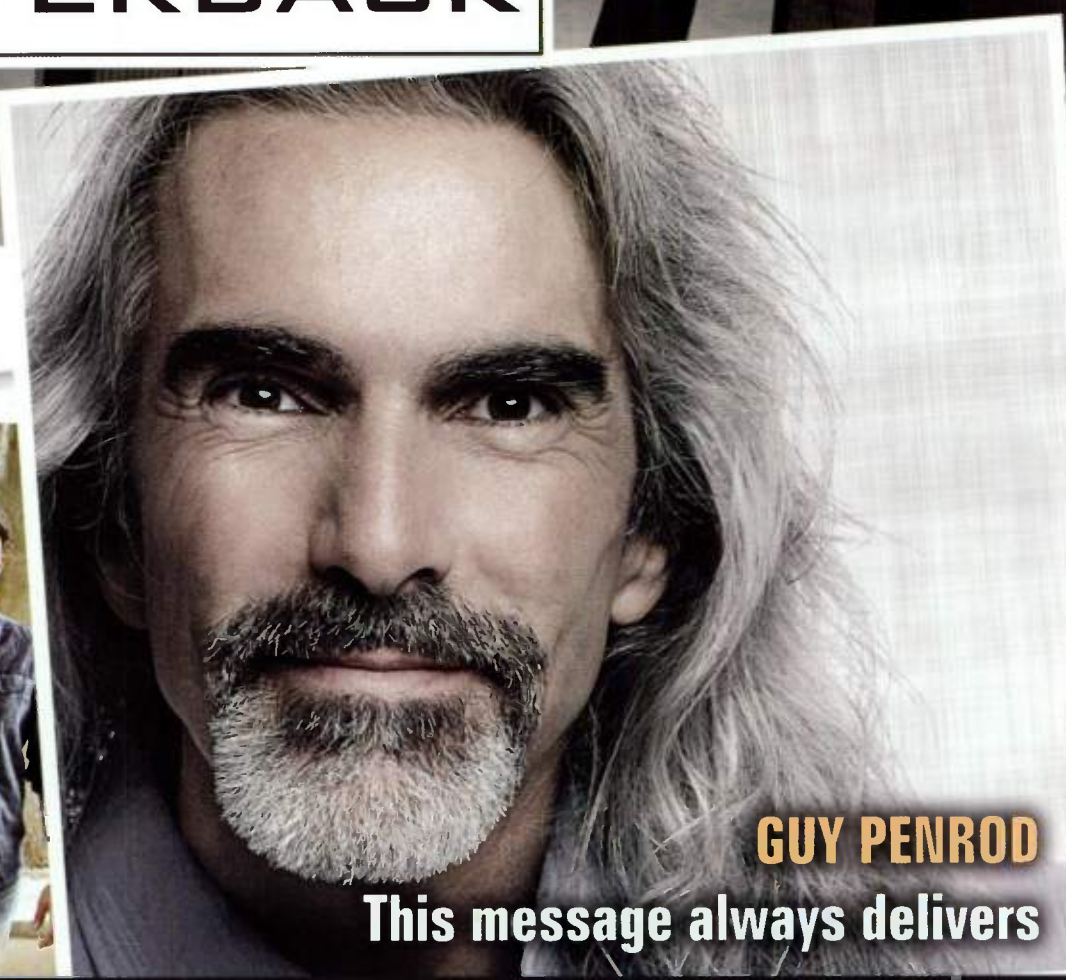
ENERGY, INTEGRITY, QUARTERBACK

BRIDGETTE TATUM
All will follow the groove



MARK COOKE
Straight ahead. Straight country

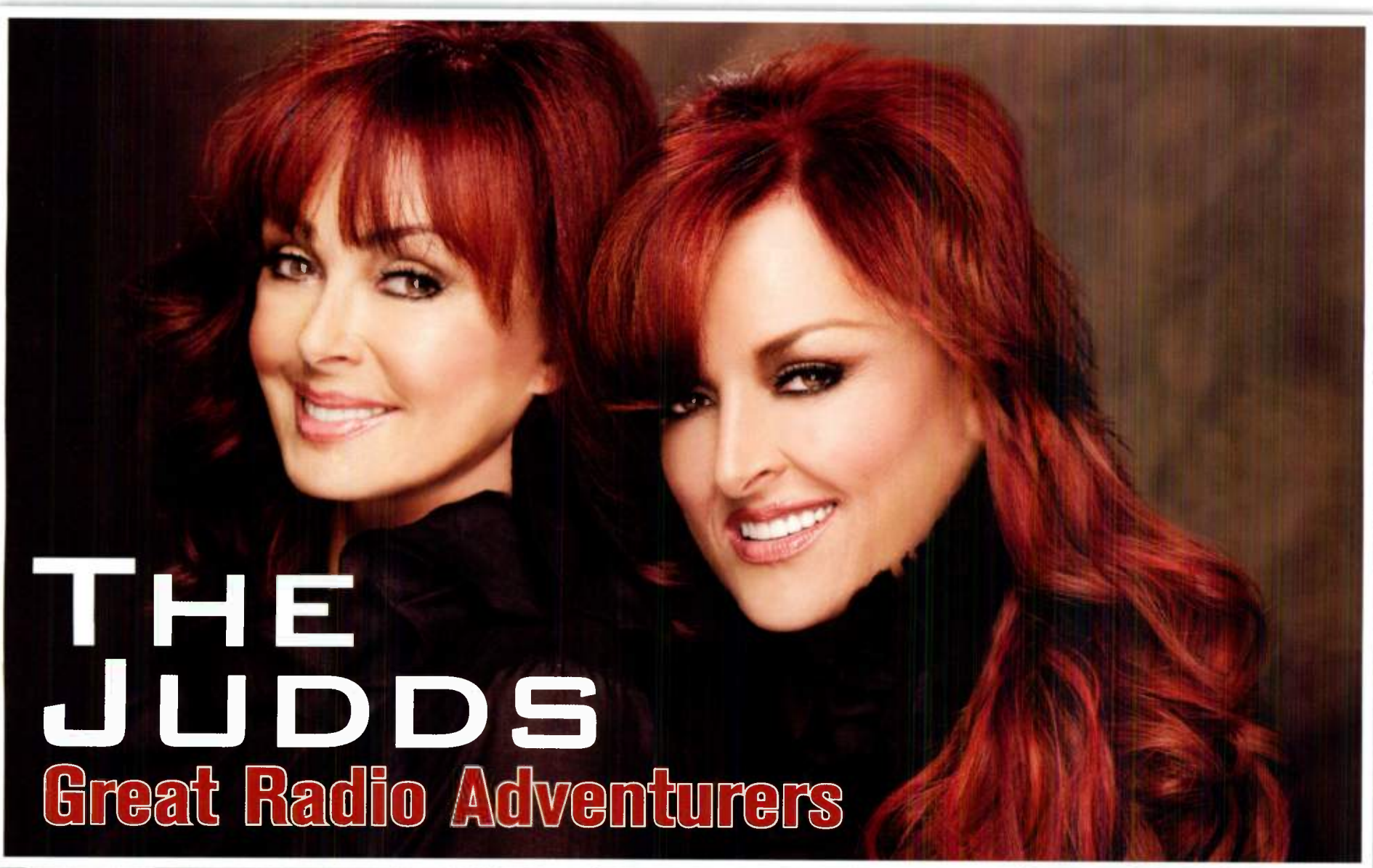
THE ADAM CRAIG BAND
Easy chair. Game on. Ice-cool country



GUY PENROD
This message always delivers

A NEW MODEL RADIO CAN TRUST

CRB Career Achievement Award



The Judds
Great Radio Adventurers

Signed to RCA by Joe Galante in 1983, The Judds earned their first No. 1 with "Mama He's Crazy" and went on to remarkable airplay, sales and awards success. Country Aircheck spoke to Naomi and Wynonna, who recently completed their Last Encore Tour, about their recollections of and relationship to Country radio.

CA: What are your earliest memories of listening to the radio?
Naomi: We were such a blue-collar family and never listened to music on the radio. We were pretty bare-bones as far as art. Back in those times, when dinosaurs roamed the earth, radio was a huge thing on Saturdays. We would listen to *Buster Brown*, *Jack Benny* and *Fibber McGee & Molly*. Radio had a huge part in firing my imagination. When you shut down the visual sense, I could really go away and get hyper-enmeshed.

Fast-forward: Wy, Ashley and I were living in a house with no heat – it was a fishing camp during the summer months – and on Saturday night we would listen to the *Grand Ole Opry* as I washed our clothes. It was a ritual. We had no TV and no telephone.

Wynnona: I have two memories. One was being a little girl listening to AM. My Pawpaw listened to baseball, and I remember that AM sound so distinctly. I also remember living in Appalachia on the mountaintop with no TV, no telephone and listening to the radio in my room. When I moved to Nashville in 1978, I had a little transistor radio that I used to listen to constantly. So I have had quite a love affair with radio, and if you've read the book and seen the movie, Mom and I spent a year on the longest campaign in the history of radio.

What do you remember about that first radio tour?
Wynonna: These characters from the label would get in a car with us and we would drive all day. We called it the "shake and howdy," the "grip 'n' grin." And at the end of the day, they would take us to a hotel conference room, invite the local radio people and we'd sing live. RCA just sent us on this adventure to meet every radio person in the United States. We had Gaylen [Adams] in Atlanta and Carson [Schreiber] in California. We'd fly in, get in the backseat of a car, my mother smelling of Jungle Gardenia and I'd get a headache.

Naomi: We had never traveled. We hadn't been to Dallas, Seattle or Salt Lake City, so we were wide-eyed. We put on weight because we ate all these big meals. We called it "The Great American Restaurant Tour." One of our reps, Jack Weston, had a shirt made that said that.

One naiveté was that we shared a hotel room. It never occurred to us we could have our own rooms. And we were so eager. We would get up for a 6am station visit and be dolled up like we were going to the Grammys. In those days I wore seamed hose. I don't even know how long it took me to do hair and makeup and get dressed like that.

One morning we got up at an insane hour to get ready. Before we left, I noticed my boots were kind of junky, so I went to the tub to rinse them off. Wy had forgotten to push down the shower switch and I got blasted with water. I could barely look at her the whole day.

Do you remember the first time you heard one of your songs on the radio?
Naomi: It was a rainy evening about 5 o'clock. We were in Nashville on Thompson Lane in front of a donut place when all of a sudden, "Had A Dream" came on. We were quiet, listening, then the DJ said, "That's The Judds on WSM Radio." We were over the moon, pounding on the windows and screaming. I actually used to call in to WSIX and WSM, disguise my voice and request the song.

Wynonna: I heard the guitar and then the lyrics, and I remember going, "Holy crap." Our producer was driving and I think it was timed for us to be in the car. I'll never forget it.

Do you remember watching "Mama He's Crazy" climb the charts?
Wynonna: Oh, heck yes. I was beside myself. When it went No. 1, I thought I had won the lottery. And I kind of did, actually.

Naomi: We were in the studio with Brent Maher. We lived for the *Billboard*. One of the reps would call us before 5pm on Friday. I know it's not good for you, psychologically, to need that report card from society, but back then we planned our life around it.

When you were racking up all those hits, did you ever think, "Hey, this is easy"? Or did you really appreciate how remarkable that was?
Wynonna: Both. When you're that young and ignorant, you still think there's a Santa Claus. But it was a lot of hard work. I don't ever remember having time off. I do remember how hard it was to keep that momentum going. Maybe we made it look easy because we were "America's Sweethearts." I think they called us that at one point. It was pretty hilarious and corny. I felt like we were getting away with something we weren't supposed to. It's like getting into a party and you're going to hang out as long as you can until they throw you out. I swear, that's how I felt.

I remember one of our first Country Radio Seminars so distinctly. We were at one of those big, long tables separated by dividers, sitting next to Alabama, and their line was like 250 people. I think Mom and I had three people in our line. I remember Mom saying, "You know what, I should have baked cookies. If we had cookies, we'd get more over here." Of course, the next year we had more, and before long, we had the 250. But getting there was definitely a slow climb. And I'm actually really thankful that it happened that way.

Naomi: I had a sense even though I couldn't articulate it back then. We'd be on the cover of *Cashbox*. We'd get a good review. We'd be No. 1 on *Billboard*. Robert Oermann would say we were great. And I loved that because I had my daughter. I was probably the oldest person signed to RCA, but we were able to crawl out of poverty. My daughter, who was not designed to work a 9-to-5, had found her place in the world.

> "We would get up for a 6am station visit and be dolled up like we were going to the Grammys."

Does it mean something special to you to be receiving this award the same night Joe Galante is honored with the CRB President's Award?
Naomi: I can't think of another soul who would be more appropriate. We liked him the first time we met him. He had on a Tommy Bahama shirt and was so low-key in his short sleeves and slacks. We'd never met anyone that important before, and I think we expected him to be a Mafioso in sunglasses.

He came over to me at a recent event, hugged me and said, "I love you." He had a reflective look in his eyes. That was as meaningful as getting an award. I thought about how grateful I am that there are people in this industry I cherish, and there are so many in the business I feel that way about.

What does your relationship with radio mean to you?
Wynnona: The thing I'm most proud of is that I keep showing up, and radio does, too. It is a community. Whether I have a song on the charts or not, I really feel supported by a group of people who have been with me for 25 years. We've bypassed the audition. We're now into, "If you don't play this record, you'll play the next." I don't care who you are, you have to earn that place, and I think that's really good for artists because we can get into a feeling of entitlement. And radio keeps us honest. CAC

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TOO MANY STARS TO COUNT!

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**KWOF-DENVER	⬆42%
***KPLX-DALLAS	⬆44%
****WSM-FM NASHVILLE	⬆18%

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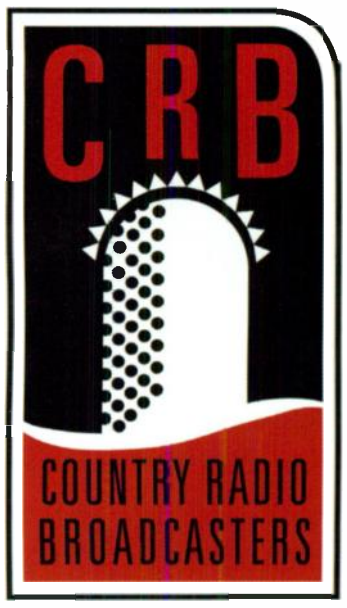
JOE GALANTE

Think You Know Joe?

PRESIDENT'S AWARD



Much has been written about former Sony Music Nashville Chairman Joe Galante since he announced his decision to step down from the label group he'd been a part of for 39 years. Most recently, Galante was featured in Country Aircheck's December issue, in which he chatted with celebrated air personality Gerry House about a wide range of topics. And his contributions to country music, Country radio, CRB and its seminar could fill more pages than are contained in this issue. So rather than tell tales of his storied success, business acumen and wide-ranging influence, this profile turns to a handful of close associates who understand Galante on a more personal level.

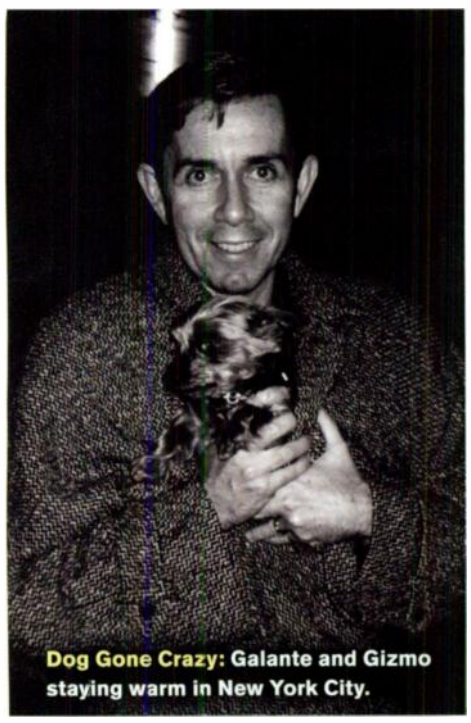
Think you know Joe? Think again.

Randy Goodman: When Joe and I came back from New York in early 1995, we often had discussions about whether there was any benefit to hiring independent promoters. Of course, in New York it was simply a matter of course to use the independents, and Joe didn't like it. Our attitude kind of was, "Thank God we're going back to Nashville."

At some point, after we'd been back awhile, Joe came into my office and told me we were going to hire a certain person as an independent promoter. He said, "I need for you to expedite this, arrange for payment and take care of it." My response was, "I beg your pardon, what?" It was completely out of character from everything we did in a strategic or philosophical sense. But Joe asked me to do it, and that's what I did.

Joe never told me any of this, but I found out later that the person we'd hired had fallen on hard times. Joe learned about it and made a decision to help out, not as a gift, but to say, "Come work with us. There are some expectations, but we'll pay you and it will help."

Later, I had a conversation with that person, who told me that Joe's generous decision, even though it was a relatively small amount of money, made a huge impact. It was a real lifeline, and nobody really knew. Joe's viewed as this incredibly fiscally disciplined executive, and he is, but he took time out of his crazy day and my crazy day to make something happen. He wasn't going to turn a blind eye.



Dog Gone Crazy: Galante and Gizmo staying warm in New York City.

Nancy Russell: Most people know the business side of Joe. There's no doubt he's in a very competitive business and can be a tough businessman. You don't get to that level without having that. But Joe has never forgotten the humble beginnings he came from. That shows in the kind of friend he is. He's never selected his friends based on what they have or what level of success they have. A dinner party at Joe's house is a very diverse group.

When I took time away from the business, as busy an executive as he was, not a week went by I didn't hear from him three times. He would just check in, ask what was going on and inquire about how I was doing. I know if he was doing that for me, there were other people he was doing that for, as well – all while running the biggest label in town. Before my dad passed away, Joe remembered every time there was a doctor's visit or procedure and checked in to see how he was doing, despite having never met my dad. He's one of the greatest friends a person could ask for.

Butch Waugh: Unless you have had the privilege to work with Joe, you may not be aware he is a 24-hour-a-day strategy meeting. Yes, he absolutely possesses all the traits of a great leader, but Joe also believes in and strives for an overall strong country music industry. He's always given so much energy to find the next generation of country artists, but he gives the same energy and time to identify the next generation of music executives. He takes time to work with, nurture and educate young people, and Sony Nashville and the entire industry is peppered with excellent industry-leading executives who first walked through the doors of RCA Records and Sony Nashville as interns seeking an opportunity. Over the past almost 40 years, if a young, aspiring and talented person wanted to be an executive in the country music industry, then Joe Galante was the person to hang your star on.

Clint Higham: Joe developed a reputation over the years of being an all-business, no-nonsense, hard-nosed, ball-busting type of guy. And he is all those things, but through the years I've seen Joe's heart many times, as well. Joe is a true man of his word. He's never lied to me or played games. He's a great record man, but he's a great artist's man, too. He always kept the artist's best interests in mind, even though technically he was supposed to put the company's interests first. There's a great charitable side to Joe, too. He's worked tirelessly for the T.J. Martell Foundation, and I've seen him melt for animals.

It may not always be on display, but Joe's an emotional guy – he is Italian, after all. He's fiercely loyal, especially when it comes to family and those close enough to be family. He takes care of friends in a very personal way, and his loyalty extends far beyond what is good just for business.

When Dale Morris' son passed away in the mid-'90s, Joe was there every day in so many ways for Dale. Not just sending flowers or a note, but in a far more personal, supportive way. Joe was one of first people I called when I began going through a divorce. He told me he been through this and knew what I was going through. He checked up on me continually, even calling me over the holidays to see how I was doing. And there was no talk about any of the artists we manage who are on his label. It was about us, as human beings. And those are the kinds of the things you never forget.

Phran Galante: When I first met Joe, he had five beautiful golden retrievers, but he kept them outside. He didn't believe dogs should be allowed in the house. Of course, these dogs didn't have what you'd call a typical doghouse. It was heated and air-conditioned. But I was still bothered by the fact that he didn't want them in the house. Fast-forward a few years, and Joe currently sleeps with three dogs in the bed – Phelony, Lexie and Fergie. And he loves every bit of it.

Brad Paisley: I came to know Joe when he became the head of Arista. I hadn't had much interaction with him up to that point, so I was nervous about dealing with a new "leader." His reputation had preceded him. To this day, legends abound about his business prowess and tenacity. I figured I would be dealing with a professional piranha of business – a tiger and carnivore of the record world. Honestly, I was a little scared.

And then it seemed like as soon as he walked in the room, instantly the ice melted. I was greeted with the warmest hug, unbridled excitement in his eyes and an air of confidence in *me*. I was sold. I realized that the legends of his business prowess are most likely true in results only, and not at all accurate in his execution of those results. His warmth and enthusiasm never dwindled in 10 years of dealing with one another.

I am hard-pressed to find a more enthusiastic audience for my music than Joe. Or a more sympathetic ear when I need one. Or a quicker laugh at one of my jokes or stories. So let the "when animals attack like …" legends remain. Just know that underneath, he's closer to the *Wonder Pets*. Incredibly effective and cute as a button. CAC

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(metros 1-25)
KEEY/Minneapolis
WQYK-FM/Tampa
WUSN/Chicago
WXTU/Philadelphia
WYCD/Detroit

Large Market Station
(metros 26-50)
KAJA/San Antonio
KASE/Austin
WCOL/Columbus, OH
WFMS/Indianapolis
WMIL/Milwaukee

Medium Market Station
(metros 51-100)
KFDI/Wichita
WAMZ/Louisville
WBCT/Grand Rapids
WIVK/Knoxville
WYRK/Buffalo

Small Market Station
(metros 101+)
KATM/Modesto, CA
WKSF/Asheville, NC
WTHI/Terre Haute, IN
WUSY/Chattanooga, TN
WXBQ/Johnson City, TN

Major Market Market Manager/GM
(metros 1-25)
Dan Bennett, KPLX/Dallas
Natalie Conner, WXTU/Philadelphia
Debbie Kenyon, WYCD/Detroit
Mark Krieschen,
KKBQ & KTHT/Houston
Paul O'Malley, KSCS/Dallas &
WKHX/Atlanta

Large Market Market Manager/GM
(metros 26-50)
Nate Deaton, KRTY/San Jose
Tom English, WSIX/Nashville
Marc Harrell, KBEQ & KFKF/Kansas City
Pam McKay, KASE & KVET-FM/Austin
Jeff Tyler, WMIL/Milwaukee

Medium Market Market Manager/GM
(metros 51-100)
David Coppock, WKSJ/Mobile
Thom Mandel, WQMX/Akron
Eric McCart, Journal/Wichita
Jim Robertson, WOGK/Gainesville
Jeff Silver, WYRK/Buffalo

Small Market Market Manager/GM
(metros 101+)
Kent Dunn, WKXC/Augusta, GA
John Laton, WLLR/Quad Cities, IA-IL
Ken Salyer, WKSF/Asheville, NC
John Tilson, KKNU/Eugene, OR
Leonard Wheeler, WSLC/Roanoke, VA

Major Market OM/PD
(metros 1-25)
Mike Culotta, WQYK-FM/Tampa
Mike Moore, KWJJ/Portland
Tim Roberts, WYCD/Detroit
Meg Stevens, WPOC/Baltimore &
WMZQ/Washington
Gregg Swedberg, KEEY/Minneapolis

Large Market OM/PD
(metros 26-50)
John Crenshaw, WCOL/Columbus, OH
Keith Kaufman, WSIX/Nashville
Mike Kennedy, KBEQ/Kansas City
Travis Moon, KAJA/San Antonio
Kerry Wolfe, WMIL/Milwaukee

Medium Market OM/PD
(metros 51-100)
Bill Black, WKSJ/Mobile
Beverlee Brannigan, KFDI/Wichita
"Mr. Bob" Forrester, WOGK/Gainesville
Mike Hammond, WIVK/Knoxville
Sue Wilson, WQMX/Akron

Small Market OM/PD
(metros 101+)
Jeff Davis, WKSF/Asheville, NC
Scott Donato, WGTY/York, PA
T Gentry, WXKC/Augusta, GA
Bill Hagy, WXBQ/Johnson City, TN
Rob Kelley, WQHK/Ft. Wayne, IN

Major Market Music Director
(metros 1-25)
Marci Braun, WUSN/Chicago
JD Greene, KEEY/Minneapolis
Lance Houston, WUBL/Atlanta
Jay Roberts, WQYK-FM/Tampa
Ginny Rogers, WKLB/Boston

Large Market Music Director
(metros 26-50)
TJ McEntire, KBEQ/Kansas City
Mark McKay, WGH-FM/Norfolk
Mitch Morgan, WMIL/Milwaukee
Bob Pickett, KASE/Austin
Jessica Tyler, WCTK/Providence

Medium Market Music Director
(metros 51-100)
Rick Brooks, WOGK/Gainesville
Spencer Burke, KIZN/Boise
Kristina Carlyle, KRST/Albuquerque
Dave Taft, WBCT/Grand Rapids
Jeni Taylor, WPCV/Lakeland

Small Market Music Director
(metros 101+)
Stephanie Crist, KMDL/Lafayette, LA
Brian Hatfield, WKSF/Asheville, NC
Adam Jeffries, KJUG/Visalia, CA
Dave Michaels, WQHK/Ft. Wayne, IN
Scott Schuler, KRWQ/Medford, OR

Major Market Personality/Show
(metros 1-25)
Fitz In The Morning, KKWF/Seattle
Cornbread Morning Show, WIL/St. Louis
Paul Schadt, Meg Butterly & Geof Knight, WKKT/Charlotte
Lisa Dent & Ramblin' Ray, WUSN/Chicago
The Doctor Don Morning Show With Rachael And Grunwald, WYCD/Detroit

Large Market Personality/Show
(metros 26-50)
Mike Kennedy, Jillian Gregg, Zeke Montana, KBEQ/Kansas City
Dale And Mary In The Morning, KFKF/Kansas City
Frogmen In The Morning, KFRG/Riverside
Karen Delassandro, Scott, Radar, WMIL/Milwaukee
Gerry House & The House Foundation, WSIX/Nashville

Medium Market Personality/Show
(metros 51-100)
Andy And Allison, WIVK/Knoxville
Dan & Shelby, WKSJ/Mobile
John And Tammy, WMAD/Madison
Mr. Bob Morning Show, WOGK/Gainesville
Wynn & Wilson In The Morning, WQMX/Akron

Small Market Personality/Show
(metros 101+)
Barrett, Fox & Berry (Bill Barrett, Tim Fox, Tracy Berry), KKNU/Eugene, OR
The Eddie Foxx Show with Sharon Green, WKSF/Asheville, NC
Dan, Dude And Lori Mae, WQHK/Ft. Wayne, IN
Robynn & Brett, WSLC/Roanoke, VA
Dex & Mo, WUSY/Chattanooga, TN

National/Syndicated Personality/Show
CMT Radio Live with Cody Alan
Kix Brooks, American Country Countdown
AfterMidnite with Blair Garner
Bob Kingsley, Country Top 40
Big D & Bubba

Platinum Label
Arista
BNA
Capitol
MCA
Mercury

Gold Label
Big Machine
Bigger Picture
Broken Bow
Curb
Valory

VP/Promotion
Skip Bishop, Sony/Nashville
Steve Hodges, Capitol
Damon Moberly, Mercury
Jack Purcell, Big Machine
Royce Risser, UMG/Nashville

Director/National Promotion
George Briner, Valory
Buffy Cooper, BNA
Mike Rogers, Curb
Lesly Tyson, Arista
Bobby Young, Republic Nashville

Regional Promotion
Cliff Blake, Columbia
Charlie Dean, Mercury
Lori Hartigan, Arista
Erik Powell, Big Machine
John Trapane, Capitol

Independent Promotion Team or Executive
CO5
Diane Richey Promotion
Marco Promotions
New Revolution
Nine North

"New Face Of Country" Professional
John Esposito,
Warner Music/Nashville
Dan Persigehl, WUBL/Atlanta
Tim Pohlman, CBS Radio/Phoenix
Mike Preston, KKWF/Seattle
Buddy Scott, WUSN/Chicago

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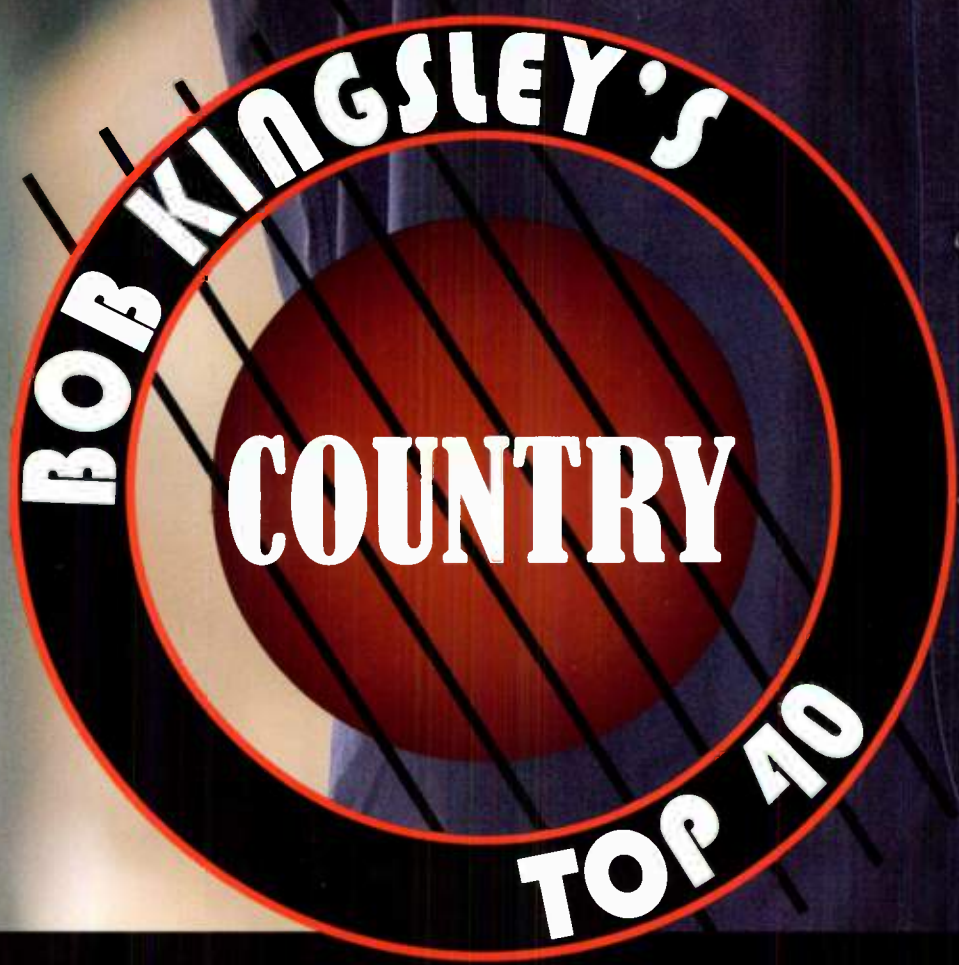

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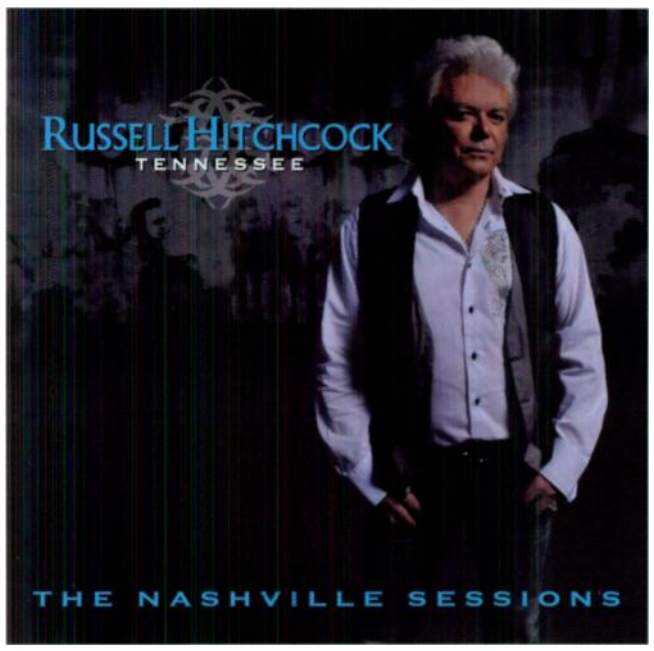

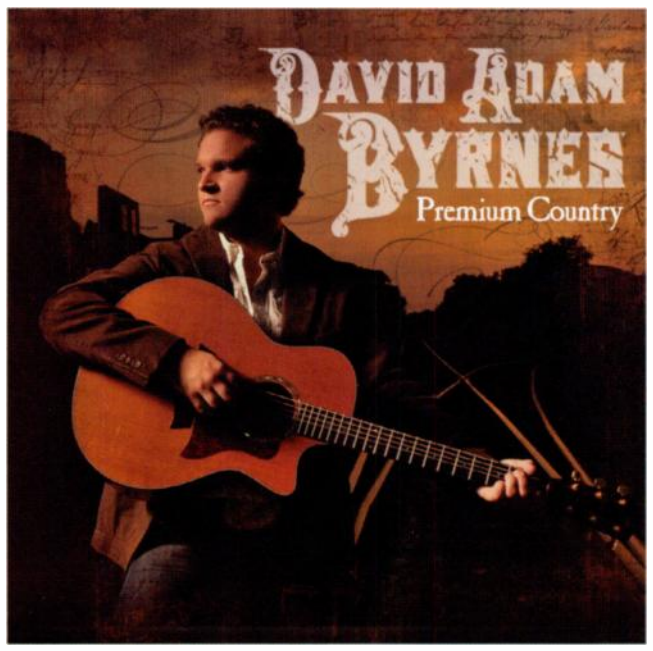

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MANAGING RADIO

Proliferating Promotion Pros ... And What It Means

The buzz at November's CMA Awards remotes centered around unexpected appearances from Tim McGraw, Alan Jackson and Taylor Swift. In contrast to the notion that A-list artists no longer need or have time for remotes, the visits were evidence of a hands-on approach to radio. And it may be no coincidence that all three artists had or soon would have an experienced radio professional on their management team.

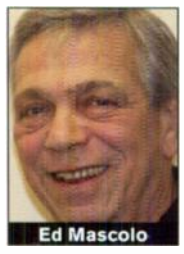
For McGraw, it's former Lyric Street promotion rep Neda Tobin at Red Light. Jackson's manager was in the process of bringing in former Sony and radio veteran Maurice Miner. And longtime Pittsburgh radio executive Frank Bell would soon join Swift's 13 Management.

They are far from alone. Not only is the concept of dedicating a management staffer to radio not new, it's being employed more frequently. The reasons behind the shift are numerous, including the continuing decline of the record company as a center of power. At the same time, label promotion teams still take the lead with music, which can make navigating the artist-manager-label dynamic tricky.

Backup Plan

None of this, however, is a surprise to the dean of management firms' radio execs, Turner Nichols & Associates' **Ed Mascolo**. "I thought it might have happened faster, actually – especially with some of the really big managers," he says. The idea originated with Reba's manager and husband Narvel Blackstock. "Narvel had discussions with [MCA head] Bruce Hinton about getting the right person to work with the label, Reba and radio," Mascolo explains. "He also talked to Lon Helton about whether I was the right guy."

Hired in the late '90s at Starstruck Entertainment, Mascolo brought a wealth of experience in label record promotion to his new position. So he was the first to attempt working with a label without making them feel like someone was looking over their shoulders. He took those lessons with him to Turner Nichols, where he worked with Rascal Flatts before their departure, and continues to work with Easton Corbin and the JaneDear girls.


Ed Mascolo

"It was a little uncomfortable at first," Mascolo says of dealing with the label in his first days with Reba. "But it worked out great, and I became really good friends with [MCA promotion execs] David Haley, Bill Macky and Royce Risser. My relationship with [Lyric Street's] Kevin Herring was always great. I kept making it clear to everyone that I'm not trying to bury you guys, I'm trying to make this a better relationship for our act at your label.

"The important thing about this type of a job," he continues, "is letting the label know you're there to help on one act. When Flatts were at Lyric Street, they always had six or seven other acts. My discussions with the label were, we don't care about anybody else. I was hired for one goal, and it's the same at Mercury with Easton and at Warner with JaneDear girls. I never wanted to put anyone in a bad light, but at the same time, it is my job to know what's really being done and to tell that to Doug and Trey."

Being a radio information pipeline to an artist's manager is only part of the job. Helping the artist and team find ways to improve the relationship with radio is also key. Mascolo offers an example: "The Flatts were getting overwhelmed in their meet-and-greets and weren't having much time to spend when PDs came through, so we created a VIP room. It was limited to PDs and MDs, maybe GMs, and now we do VIP backstage parking. We let them in and park them back by the bus. We even have cones with their names on them. We pick them up in golf carts and get them to the VIP room. And the radio people love that. I get more comments on that than I do about the free drinks and appetizers."

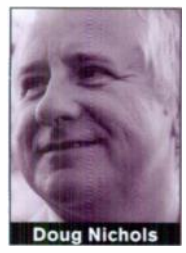
The New Metric

From the management perspective, **Doug Nichols** definitely sees the need for artist teams to have more direct involvement with radio. "Record sales are so far down, which takes away a little of the label's monetary clout in doing business with radio," he says. "Their budgets have to change, and I don't know how much or how quickly. But if the label is getting help at no cost to them, I think they will embrace it."

Nichols says Mascolo has the right kind of personality for the gig. "Because of his years as a VP/Promotion, he understands that the VP needs to be the team's leader. And as hard as the labels work, and they do their best, they have a lot of acts to work and they do welcome his help and experience because they know he's focused on one job."

A veteran promotion person's eye for chart numbers and the minutiae of airplay is of great benefit, according to Nichols. "We're able to make projections, schedule videos and figure out where and when a promotion makes sense. And then, where a relationship needs to be courted a little bit, he's the perfect guy. Radio has another voice to go to, to call and speak to someone who can help clarify things. It doesn't always have to be calling and asking. Sometimes it's listening to what's important to them."

An interesting twist on the increasing importance of touring is a shift in the metric used to plan tour packages. "We used to look at SoundScan," Nichols says. "The idea was if they're buying records, they'll buy tickets. Now it's all about what's hot at radio. Because if you put together a package of artists who are hot, when you get to the market, the stations are really going to pound the show. And even if record sales dwindle, artists can tour every year. So you need to stay current and relevant at radio to sustain a high level of touring."


Doug Nichols

Voice Activated

TKO Management's **TK Kimbrell** recently brought in promotion vet Suzanne Durham, who's worked records for his client Toby Keith for the past 12 years. Kimbrell is quite clear on how big a priority radio is to his clients. "About 60 million people tune in to Country radio, so the radio voice is the biggest voice you have in this business," he says. "You could do *American Idol* or *Dancing With The Stars* and reach 30 million people in one shot, but if you have a hit at Country radio, there's no comparison."

The motivations for reaching that audience can be very different for top artists and their labels. "When you're an artist of Toby's stature or the other handful of big superstars, for some time now selling records has not been one of your top five income streams," he explains. "You'd always like to sell records, and we love to see labels flourish. Toby has a great joint venture with Universal. But is getting your new single in heavy rotation as important as selling a ton of records? It's far *more* important.

"Selling records pales in comparison to getting your

single on the radio in front of those 60 million people. So, to me, there's nothing more important than having that radio connection and having a liaison to help you stay in touch with that huge base."

In a sense, Keith's decision to strike out on his own in 2005 was a nod to this reality. "That's exactly what Show Dog was," Kimbrell says. "When you have a mega-conglomerate of touring, sponsorships, bars, writing and publishing, it's incredibly important to control your destiny at radio. It was the smartest business move Toby could have made at that time, and hiring Suzanne is a continuation of that process.

TK Kimbrell

"She's absolutely in constant communication, giving me excellent information and an extra set of eyes to help me stay on top of my game. Not only does she keep me and Toby better in touch with radio, she also augments the great job Toby's staff at Show Dog-Universal is already doing."

In Keith's case, the radio focus comes directly from the artist. "He's always had a knack for creating songs people love to hear on the radio, and he never lost sight of how important radio is to his career," Kimbrell says. "It's his bread and butter and it's what got him off the local bar circuit.

"We don't ask Toby if it's okay for the regional to bring radio people on the bus before or after the show. That's a standing deal. He's the most accessible star I've ever seen or worked with when it comes to time with radio. And it doesn't stop there. He never turns down a soldier, a family of a fallen soldier or a child who is ill. You do those things because it's in your heart. It also happens to be good business."

Sure Feels Good

Red Light's **Neda Tobin** started with the company in August. But after 28 years at labels, she seems as exhilarated by Tim McGraw's recent No. 1 "Felt Good On My Lips" as she would be if she'd been on the promotion front lines. "I'm not the guy that goes in there and has to close the deal," she says. "It's almost nice. I don't have that pressure to get the add, get it to heavy. I'm the backup guy. My role is to work with the label and help them do what they need to do.

"Being a former label employee, I'm still a promotion person," she continues. "But there's a fine line between being a promotion person and telling a VP/Promotion what to do. You have to have respect for them and their job."

Another benefit to having someone with a deep understanding of radio in the artist's camp is in more direct communication. "I can sit down with the artist and explain why they should do something, and how it benefits them and their career. And when you do that, they get it.

"I know what the feel is on the street for different artists. If it's important to an artist to have success at radio, a No. 1 record or a top tour, they have to endear themselves to those people. You can't say, "I don't have to do that stuff anymore." Taylor Swift has set the bar so high. She has a great relationship with radio *and* their kids. And you have to measure up to that if you ever hope get out of those relationships what she gets. This is what it takes. If you want to be on top and stay on top, you have to be out there and embrace radio. You have to feel accessible.

"I've been able to get Tim to do things he hasn't done in the past because we've been able to have those conversations. He's a very reasonable guy. His time is valuable, but second only to his family, music is the priority. He didn't want to do the CMA remotes, but he did when it was explained. I can't tell you how many people were freaked out he was there."

That communication, however, is a two-way street. "Radio thinks it's no big deal to get liners or a phoner," she says. "It sounds like nothing. What's the big deal? But when you get that from 200 stations, it is time-consuming. And that's far from the only thing Tim has on his plate. So it's nice to be able to explain that to someone, and also to let them know that even if we can't help them right now, we might be able to work something out later. I really am a bleeding heart and try to help as much as possible."

> "THERE'S NOTHING MORE IMPORTANT THAN HAVING THAT RADIO CONNECTION AND HAVING A LIAISON TO HELP YOU STAY IN TOUCH WITH THAT HUGE BASE."

The relish in Tobin's voice is palpable as she discusses her new role in the industry. "When you're at a label, you're calling every week asking for something," she says. "When I call, they're more apt to talk to me even if I am calling to talk about music. They know that in having a relationship with me they might be able to get stuff they wouldn't get from the label. Now, I always tell the label if that happens. And I'll let them take credit for it. It's about team Tim."

Neda Tobin

Curb's **Adrian Michaels** couldn't be happier about his work with Tobin. "Neda is just a stellar example of how to do this," he says. "Because if it's not handled well, for me as a VP, it becomes a time management issue. If I'm doing a bunch of calls with the radio rep for four or five managers, I've lost time I need to get airplay.

Adrian Michaels

"Certain people feel it's their job to police spins and conversions, and we don't need a babysitter. I don't need someone to tell me the obvious. Neda doesn't do that. She lets us do our job and doesn't go around us. There's a lot of diplomacy needed in that role, but some want to be talking to everyone at radio that the label is talking to. And that movie doesn't end well."

The Road & The Radio

While the radio/management model seems most common with superstar acts, Triple 8 Management's **George Couri** adopted the strategy for his clients Eli Young Band, Joe Nichols, Kevin Fowler and Jack Ingram 18 months ago with the hire of former Curb and Universal South rep Karen McGuire. "She had worked directly with us on Joe and EYB as a regional ... and had great relationships across the map," Couri says. "She became available with the Show Dog-Universal merger and, fortunately, came our way in spite of having multiple offers."

Setting up the relationship between Karen and the labels was important to Couri. "You don't want to butt heads and I felt you have to make it clear to them we're not here to compete with the regionals. The primary relationship with radio is controlled by the label rep, and we want that. Where Karen comes in is tracking ... and being the first to know if there's a problem somewhere. And there may be times she has a better relationship with radio in a market and can help, and she has. Plus, she can be the first person a label rep calls with a request, getting people information even faster."

George Couri

McGuire's hiring paid off quickly. "Karen came on board when 'Gimme That Girl' was in the 20s, and it became the second-most-played song of 2010 for a guy who'd been off the radio for awhile. I'm not giving her all the credit, but she was able to help a lot with the transition to a mostly new promotion staff and further supplementing the label's efforts.

"It's not just singles, but shows," he continues. "Before we confirm any show, she makes sure local radio has the bandwidth during that period to promote it, and goes the extra mile to make sure there is a great promotion in place with our radio partners. Along with the label reps, of course. That way we're not walking into a market unsure of what level of support we can get from a station."

Couri is unequivocal about his company's approach. "My artists have not only gotten more airplay and had more success at radio because of Karen, we've also sold more tickets. We are approaching everything more aggressively. Why not add to what the promotion teams are doing? Even if we saw a 10% improvement, it's worth it. But we see more than that."

And with the no-end-in-sight decline of recorded music, the marriage of management and promotion can only become even more valuable. "Everybody's looking for the new business model, and managers are figuring it out faster than the labels," Tobin says. "A lot of managers have in-house marketing, publicity and promotion. They seem to be taking on the role of the label in almost every way except sales and distribution. The whole industry has turned around." CAC

30 years ago **Dene Hallam** gave me my first full time job in the music business at WWWW-FM in Detroit. I had no way of knowing then what a positive impact this man would have on my life and the country music industry. I am one of the many who he mentored in his own special way who are forever grateful.

Congratulations Dene, on your well deserved induction into the Country Radio Hall Of Fame.

I am proud of you, and proud to have been your pal. -Kevin Herring

Please consider a donation for Dene's Daughters' Educational Trust here:
http://www.mobyinthemorning.com/hallamfund.cfm

We don't believe in "formula radio," but we do believe that there are some radio formulae that will help your station achieve optimum ratings.

Keep these formulae on your desk so you can refer to them often as your station - and all of radio - are put to the test daily by listeners.

EV › CL

The Entertainment Value Must Always Exceed the Cost of Listening. The greater the positive distance EV is from CL, the higher ratings will be. The smaller the difference between EV and CL - or a negative difference - the lower a station's ratings will be.

Things that increase Entertainment Value: strong talent, imaging, the right music, Values Based Programming, emotion, and "surprise and delight" programming.

Things that increase Cost of Listening: clutter, imbalance, violating listener values and expectations, irrelevance and hype.

E(P1)★n = L★n

Empowering P1 Listeners Equals a Proportional Increase in Loyalty. The more your best listeners are empowered, the more loyalty you will build with them and the more value they will have for you, serving as everything from station evangelists to on air characters.

Shift from "Control" to "Unleash and Inspire."

VBP=LL

Values Based Programming Equals Listener Loyalty. True understanding of your listeners' values and infusing your product with those values sends a message to listeners that you understand and care about them. They will reward you with increased loyalty and less time spent with alternative media.

T(x)=B(x)

The stronger your Talent, the stronger your Brand. Don't skimp on talent development. Talent is a major weapon in the war against competitors including alternative media. We believe so strongly in the edge superior talent gives stations, that we wrote the day-long "Ultimate Talent Workshop and Seminar" to help talent grow their skills and give their stations a serious advantage.

B(n)=B(n)

Balance all elements of your station. This includes all aspects of music from genre to chronology, talk to non-talk, fun to seriousness. Give your station a balance check, continually identifying and realigning anything that has drifted off center.

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–Mark Adams, PD, KILT

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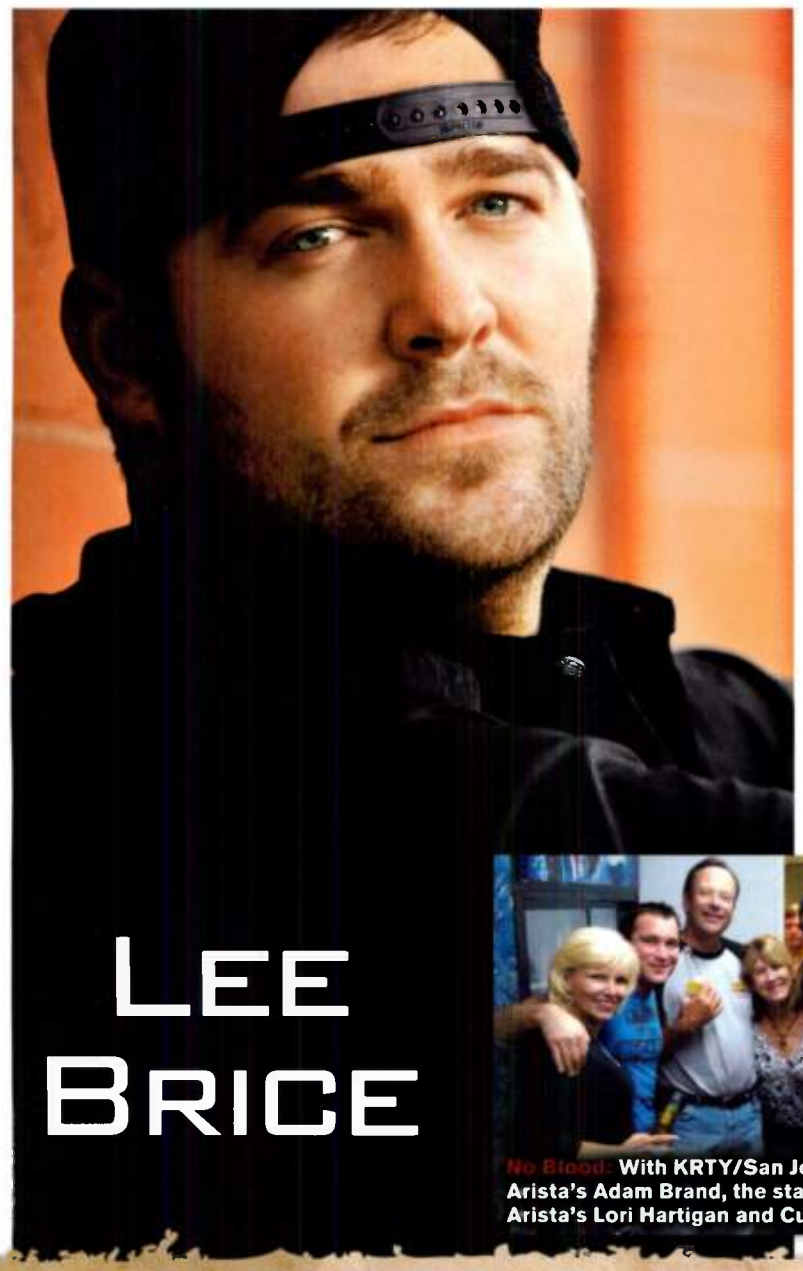


Lee Brice

Co-writing Garth Brooks' No. 1 "More Than A Memory" gave Lee Brice a calling card before singles "She Ain't Right" and "Love Like Crazy" (the longest-charting single in country music history) made their mark. Brice is continuing his charting streak with the current top 30 release "Beautiful Every Time."

What are your earliest memories of radio?
I remember WCOS/Columbia, SC playing Alabama, the Oak Ridge Boys and the Statler Brothers when I was growing up. Then Garth Brooks and Tim McGraw came along and changed my life. I had a little clock radio beside the bed when I was 12. I would go to sleep listening to the radio and thinking about where I wanted to be.

Was your introduction to Curb rep Annie Sandor as unusual as we've heard?
Before we met, she was at one of my shows and mentioned to someone that she thought I looked "dirty sexy." Over the period of an hour, that person told someone and the phrase bounced around a bit. Later that night I got a call from my manager who said, "Annie Sandor's in the crowd. She might be working with you in the future and you're going to meet her tonight. When you do, walk up to her and tell her what she said about you." So that's what I did. Someone introduced us and I said, "Oh, dirty sexy, huh?" Put her on the spot. Made her blush. It was a funny way to meet, and now we're working together. Annie's such a pro and probably works harder than any of the other reps because she has to travel so much in a region that's spread across the whole country.

No Blood: With KRTY/San Jose's Tina Ferguson, Arista's Adam Brand, the station's Nate Deaton, Arista's Lori Hartigan and Curb's Joe O'Donnell.

Any reactions to "Love Like Crazy" surprise you?
I've got a rocking show, but I once saw an 80-year-old couple out there. I thought, "What in the world?" They came through the meet-and-greet line later and stood in front of me with big ol' smiles on their faces, saying, "That's our song. This is the story of our lives. We've been together for 50 years." And I'm like, "Did I not hurt your ears? We were rocking up there!" They said, "No, it was awesome. We just had to hear that song." It's a pretty cool thing to look up and see an elderly couple mingling with 17- and 18-year-olds. Maybe that's why it stayed on the charts for so long. Everybody felt like they could identify with it.

"Crazy" got a lot of love from your hometown station, didn't it?
It was really my home area – South Carolina, where I'm from, and even North Carolina and down into Georgia and Florida. The whole Southeast was so cool for me. Even before "Love Like Crazy," my first single "She Ain't Right" went top 30 in 2007, and those were the markets that really pushed it. They stuck with me on that song and the next two singles. And then "Love Like Crazy" came along, and they got on the song early and stayed on it late. They really rocked it.

And you returned the love?
I went back to those markets a lot. I played full-band shows, benefits, in-the-rounds and solo acoustic. It's definitely a give-and-take thing. They take care of me, and I take care of them. That's how it will always be, I guess. I've got a lot of memories from those shows. Everybody's so supportive, and all the stations really stand out in my mind. I can't pick a favorite. Hopefully, it catapulted us into this next single "Beautiful Every Time."

Who New?

CRS 2011 New Faces

The annual New Faces Show & Dinner has been a launch pad for aspiring country stars for decades, and this year's five performers hope to make the most of the unique opportunity to play for a very important room. Country Aircheck spoke with each to explore their still-developing relationship with radio.

"Lover Lover" took Jerrod Niemann to No. 1 in August, leading to a gold sales certification for the single and building momentum for his current release "What Do You Want." Niemann will join fellow New Face Lee Brice on their Higher Education Tour beginning in March, shortly after they bring the curtain down on CRS 2011.

What's your favorite part of being on a radio tour?
It's a lot of things. It's a learning experience, because you're trying to understand a little bit about the process of radio. You definitely don't understand it completely because everybody has been doing it a little longer than us. For me, it was really exciting to meet the gatekeepers to the country fan.

Mud Ball: With KHKI/Des Moines' Andy Elliot.

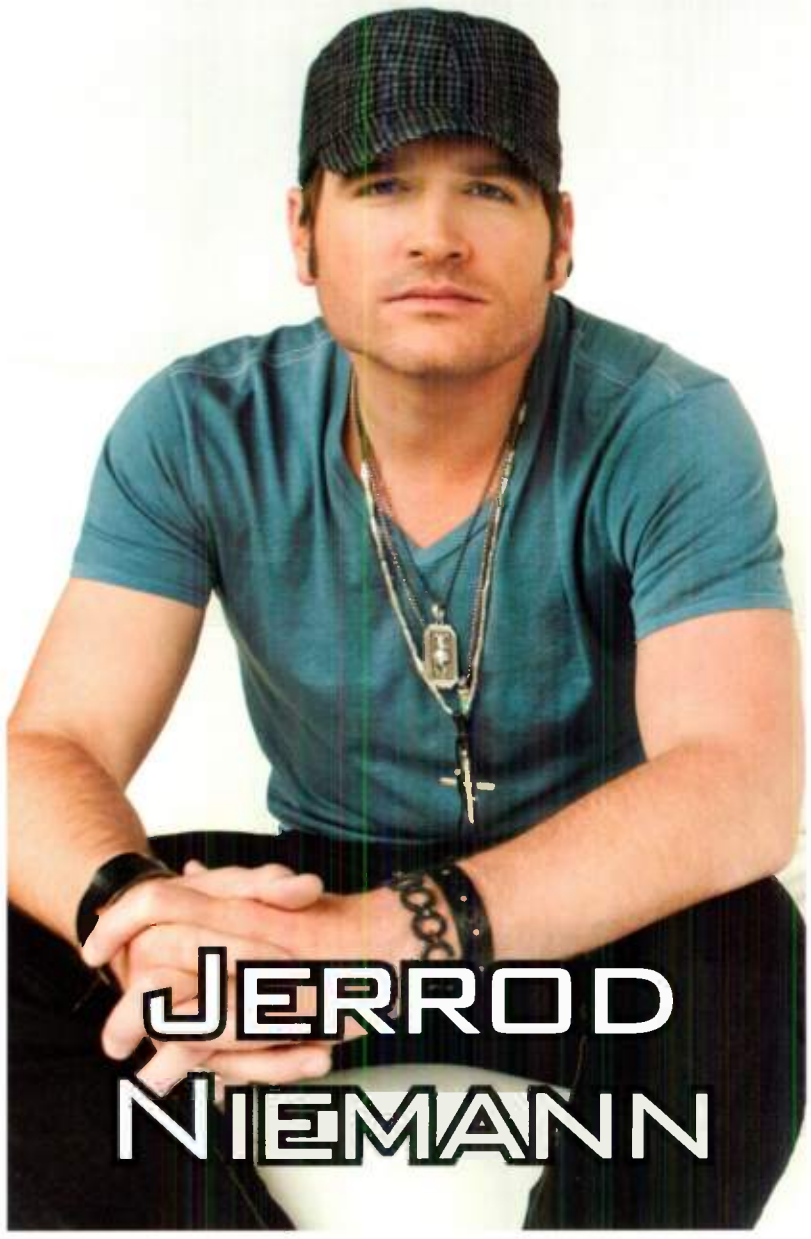
Do you enjoy the personal relationships that develop with radio?
I do. All of us artists have been in Nashville a long time, so were all really good friends. And a lot of us are drawn to the city from small towns, so you have just a bunch of really personable people. Radio is the same thing. A lot of them come from different formats, but it's still like a close family. It's important to keep country music growing and going in the wonderful direction it is, and everybody being so close-knit keeps everybody on the same page. Things are more hands-on with radio, artists and the listeners. That's important because the listeners are probably the best advertisers we've got for bringing other people to country music.

What question do you hear the most?
"Do you sing 'Lover Lover' or do you sing 'Pray For You'?" If I only had a dollar for every time someone got our songs mixed up!

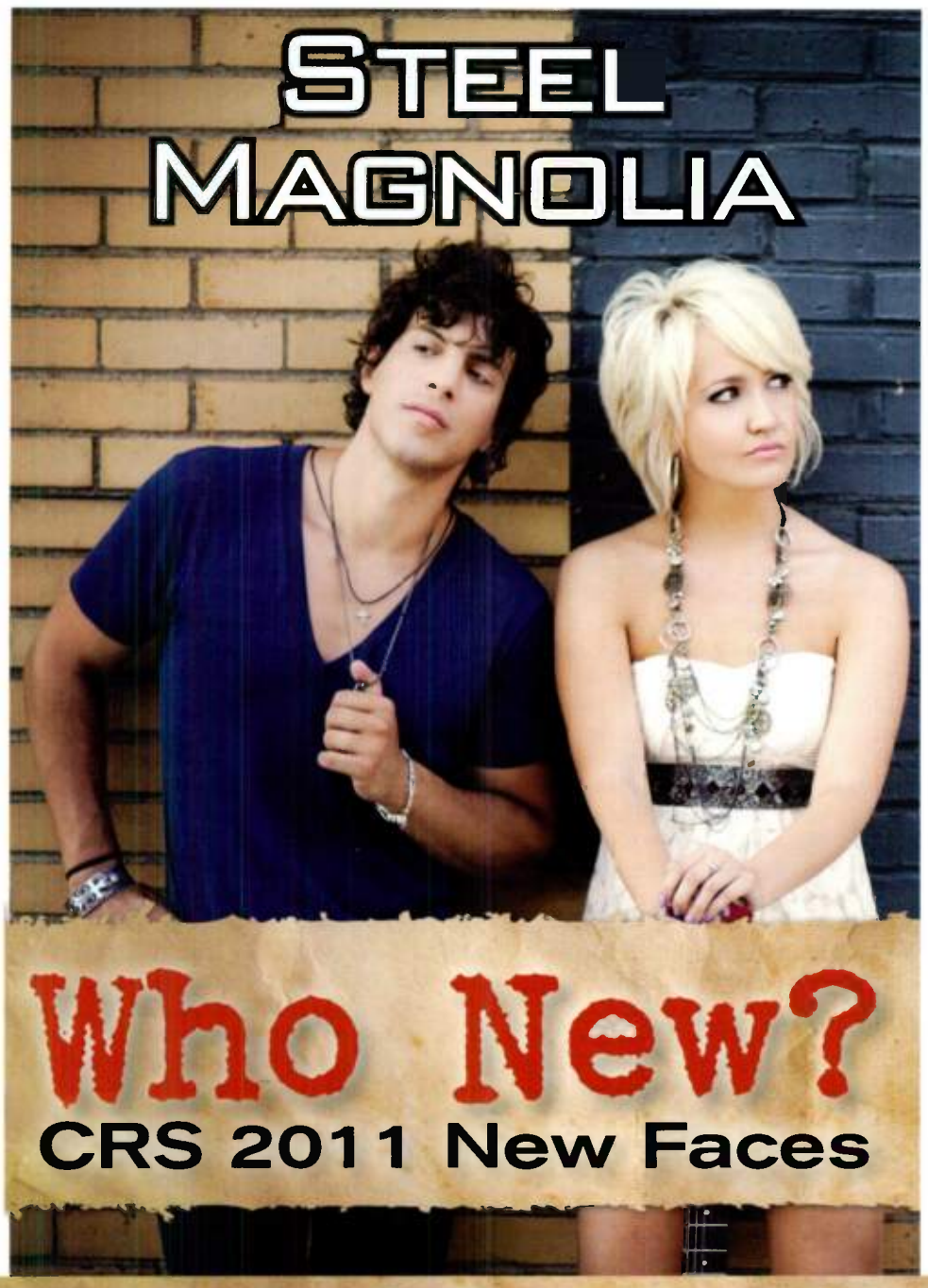
You were recently celebrated with Jerrod Niemann Day in your hometown of Liberal, KS. How was that?
Well, it was bizarre because you're standing on the same high school stage that you performed on in a school where you did all sorts of different things growing up. It's just kind of weird to be in front of your hometown in the place where you graduated and singing beer-drinking songs.

And now you've graduated to *Higher Education* ...
That's right. We're playing to more of a college audience, so I think it's not going to be a normal tour. We're working real hard on trying to do stuff together throughout the show to make it more interesting. We're not exactly doing theatrics, but we want to challenge ourselves where it's not just two drunk acts onstage. We want it to be a well-thought-out show that obviously can change but have a basic idea of some cool collaborations.

Have any thoughts on your fellow New Faces this year?
They bring a wide variety of sounds and styles to country music. In the past we've seen things get very trendy, whether it's leaning traditional or leaning very contemporary. Right now, it just seems like everything finds a way to be accepted. That night, we'll really get a chance to how diverse country music truly is.



Jerrod Niemann



Steel Magnolia

Who New?

CRS 2011 New Faces

The ACM-nominated duo won the second season of CMT's Can You Duet and scored a top 5 hit with "Keep On Loving You" last May. Joshua Scott Jones and Meghan Linsey are hoping their New Faces performance gives current single "Last Night Again" a boost.

What do you remember about your radio tour?

Joshua: I liked the fast pace of always being in a different city. Sometimes we'd be in two different states on the same day, and that's kind of fun. You get this burst of energy from being almost completely exhausted, and you're visiting all these different regions and meeting new people. It was great because Country radio embraced us, and we love people.

How do you view your relationship with radio?

Joshua: It's an excellent marriage between the artist and the gatekeepers to the fans. Everybody plays a part. It takes a whole village to raise a child, and we feel like Country radio has been the village and we're like the child.
Meghan: They are kind of like our parents.
Joshua: It's great to walk into a station and see a PD or MD that you've become friends with. They kind of know your story and you kind of know where they come from.

What goes through your mind when you hear one of your songs on the radio?

Joshua: It's like shooting a winning basket in overtime or something. I played a lot of sports as a kid, so that's kind of the best comparison for me.

Got any fun CRS memories?

Meghan: A few years ago we went to hang out in the Bridge Bar because we didn't really have anything going at that point. They had a *Can You Duet*? karaoke booth set up for the first season, and Josh actually got in there. They recorded his performance and gave us a CD of it afterwards. We still have that disc. And then we went on the show the second season and won.

What are your thoughts on the New Faces lineup?

Joshua: It's like our graduating class or something.
Meghan: We've seen these people around for years and we've all kind of come up together.

What does the New Faces designation mean to you?

Joshua: We see it as an acceptance. We're one of the new up-and-coming artists that radio has kind of embraced, and we feel very lucky to have a slot.
Meghan: I've been in Nashville seven years now, and every year it's the most talked-about show. We're really excited, for sure.
Joshua: We don't have to sneak in and try to pass out CDs this year.

Ohio Love: With WQMX/Akron's Sue Wilson.

After releasing his debut album Way Out Here and touring with Brad Paisley in 2010, Thompson is riding his current single "Won't Be Lonely Long" and looking forward to touring with Dierks Bentley this year. The former all-state gymnast and certified survivalist is also pretty encouraged by his selection as one of country's New Faces.

Josh Thompson

Have you enjoyed your radio tour experiences?

Being on the road without doing a radio tour is more like just city-hopping. The radio tour lets you actually visit cities and interact with different people. You get a first-hand glimpse. You actually go out on the town, and I love seeing new places. The second part of it is that I love making connections with people in the radio world, playing for them and getting to know each other.

Capping It Off: With WMIL/Milwaukee's Kerry Wolfe and daughter Macey.

What question do you hear most?

"Tell me about the nine months you spent in the woods." I took a wilderness guide class in Wisconsin and lived out in the woods with 13 other people for nine months. They taught us primitive survival skills.

Are you used to hearing your song on the radio yet?

It's such a weird thing. You know, that feeling of déjà vu where you could swear you've lived that dream before. Every time I hear it, I still can't believe it's happening all over again.

Do you have a favorite CRS memory?

Last year on the Sony boat. I actually did a song off my record called "Sinner" and Miranda Lambert sang with me as a duet.

What does the New Faces designation mean to you?

I think being chosen means that people believe you're really going to bust out. I was certainly aware of New Faces, but never knew it was voted on by radio. That part kind of floored me because that means all the traveling I've done over the last few years with the radio tour and making connections has paid off. For those radio folks to cast their vote in my direction is a huge honor.

What do you think of the rest of the lineup?

The voters nailed it. Those would have been my picks, too. I love those guys. I've played with all of them and have known most of them for several years. I'm fans of all of them, so that was right on.

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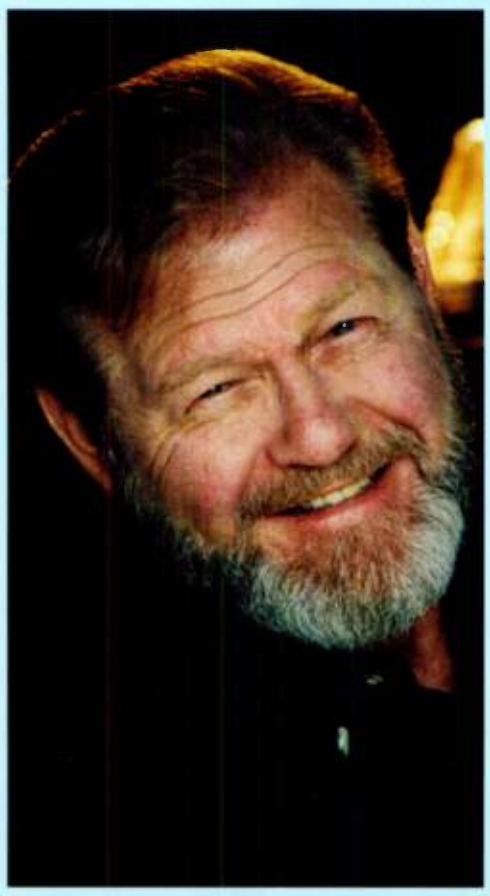
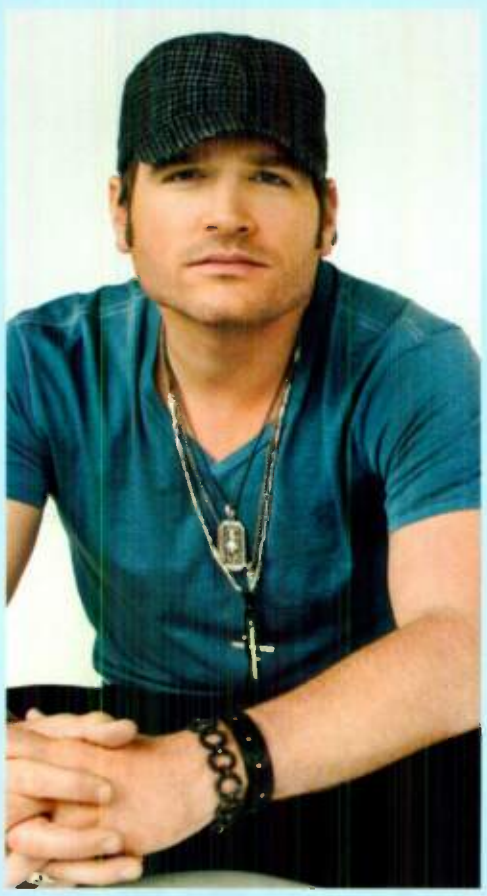


WHITEY SHAFER

"All My Ex's Live in Texas"
"Does Fort Worth Ever Cross Your Mind"



JERROD NIEMANN

"What Do You Want"
"Lover, Lover"

NASHVILLE CONVENTION CENTER
LEVEL 2 – ROOMS 204 & 205

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Kimberly, Reid and Neil Perry are on a fast ride to the top following the No. 1 ascension of their single "If I Die Young," which also earned the sibling trio a Grammy nomination. They'll open Tim McGraw's Emotional Traffic Tour this spring.

What are your early memories of radio?

Kimberly: We lived in Mobile, and our uncle was a night DJ on WKNN/Biloxi, MS. His hours were always really late, so we used to take naps in the middle of the day on the weekends and have K-99 parties at night. We would all get in our pajamas and listen to him from 9pm-midnight. I remember dancing around the table and having these Country radio parties. It was *the* best time. The incriminating home videos are under lock-and-key. No one will ever see them ... unless someone busts them out during the New Faces show.

Got any favorite radio tour stories?

Kimberly: We were at KRTY/San Jose when they did the very first test spin on "Hip To My Heart." We were so excited! We were driving out of town and videoing the moment. We pulled over because we were on the outskirts and didn't want to lose the station. When the song was over, calls rang in with just awful comments. "Her voice sounds like fingernails on a chalkboard." "They're the country Britney Spears." We refer to that moment as the "Bloodbath of San Jose."

Reid: Our poor regional, Lois Lewis, was trying to comfort us by saying, "That's good! They're passionate. Passion is what we want!"

Kimberly: It was a Cinderella story because by the end of the run, "Hip To My Heart" was consistently in the top nine at KRTY. But man, it started out rough. The video footage of us getting the wind blown out of our sails is just hilarious.

In addition to regional reps, you also had label President Jimmy Harnen on the road with you.

Kimberly: That's only because we helped him lug his 50-pound suitcases everywhere. He traveled with these two huge bags because he could never figure out what he wanted to wear. We love that guy. It's unheard of for a label president to come out [with a baby act] on a radio tour, but it was a great way to jump-start our relationship with him and with radio.

Are you surprised by the response "If I Die Young" has gotten?

Neil: It's one of our favorite songs to play live, because the whole crowd is smiling and singing along. And it's really cool to see how people fit the song to situations in their own lives.

Reid: A lot of people have left YouTube comments on the video about how the song has helped them.

Kimberly: It's a really humbling thing to hear. We were in a meet-and-greet recently, and a kid came up and said, "We lost our brother last year. He was 23. And we just wanted you to know how much this song has helped our family." We've literally had people say, "You guys are part of our family now because your song helped our family through such a rough time." A journalist in Chicago kind of summed it up best: "For a song about death, it sure knows how to bring a lot of life into a room." I know that it was such a risk for radio to try it out on their listeners, but they really stuck with us and gave us the opportunity. We're really humbled by it.

Haul Of Frame: With KBEQ/Kansas City's Mike Kennedy.

What they're saying **ABOUT**
AMERICA'S OPRY WEEKEND

"America's Opry Weekend provides us with great weekend programming. The show features today's top stars with their current singles and even live cuts from the Opry stage. One thing that our audience really enjoys is the Opry Classic Spotlight, where today's stars often sing hits from the stars of the past."
PD Toby Tucker | WDZQ-FM, Decatur, IL

"America's Opry Weekend is a great part of our weekend programming! It's a great showcase of some of country's best contemporary talent and is always compelling."
PD Russ Penuell | WSM-FM, Nashville, TN

What they're saying **ON**
AMERICA'S OPRY WEEKEND

"Last night I was lying awake in a hotel room and I finally put it into words. I get the same feeling when I come to the Opry as when I see one of my heroes. I am in awe. To me, the Grand Ole Opry is an artist and I'm really proud to be one of its songs."
Blake Shelton

"Whenever I do the Opry it still feels like the first time. I still get nervous. The Opry's going to be here for hundreds of years, and I'm just proud my name is on that list. It's a highlight of my life."
Martina McBride

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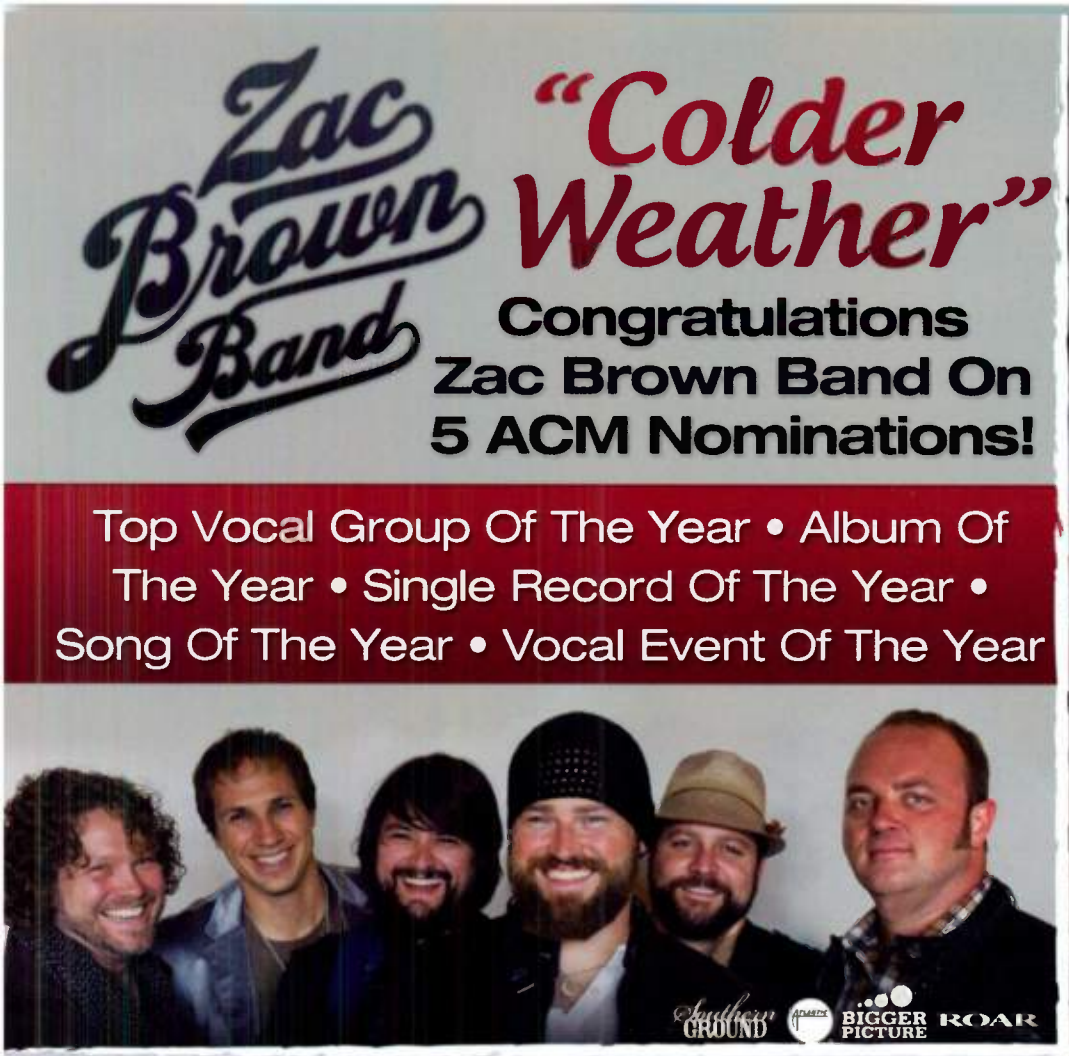
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"Colder Weather"
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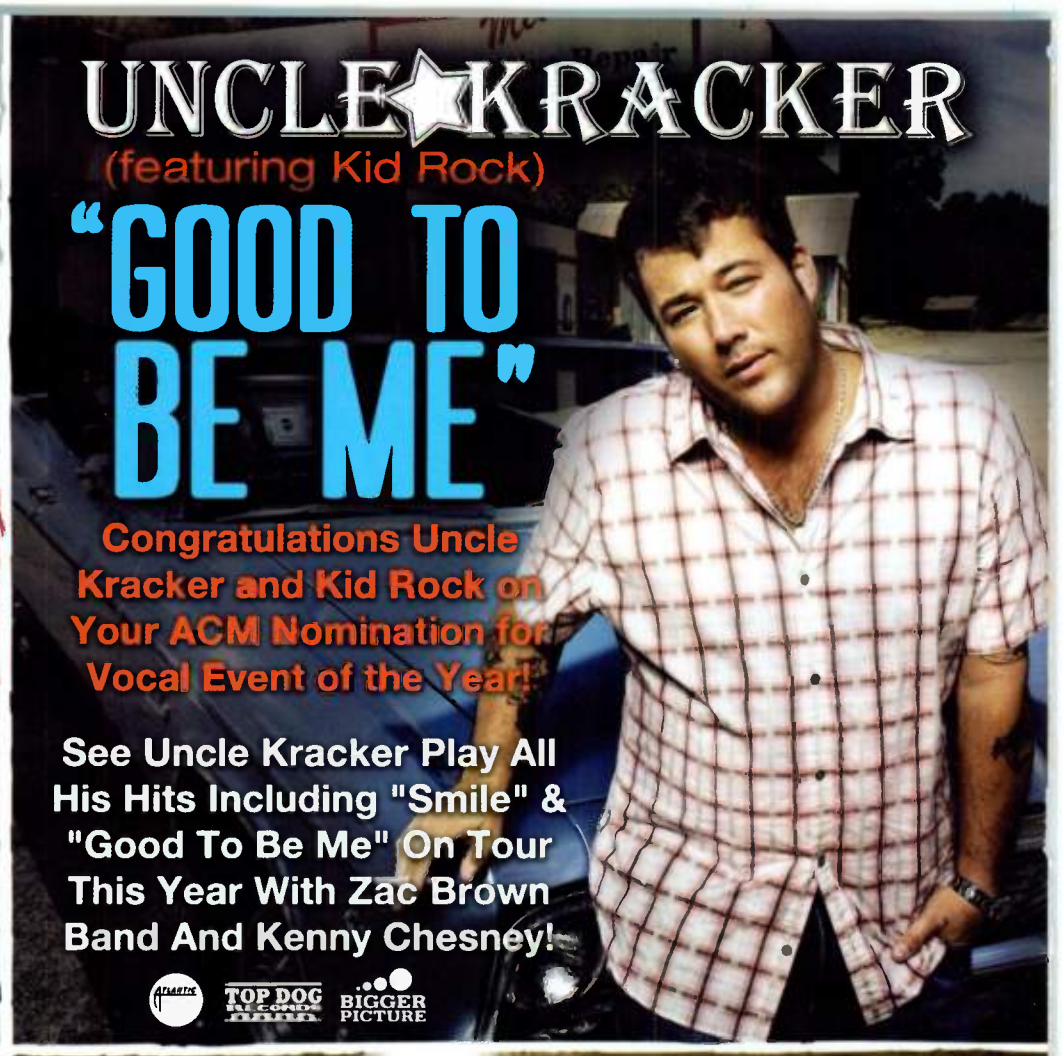
ROAR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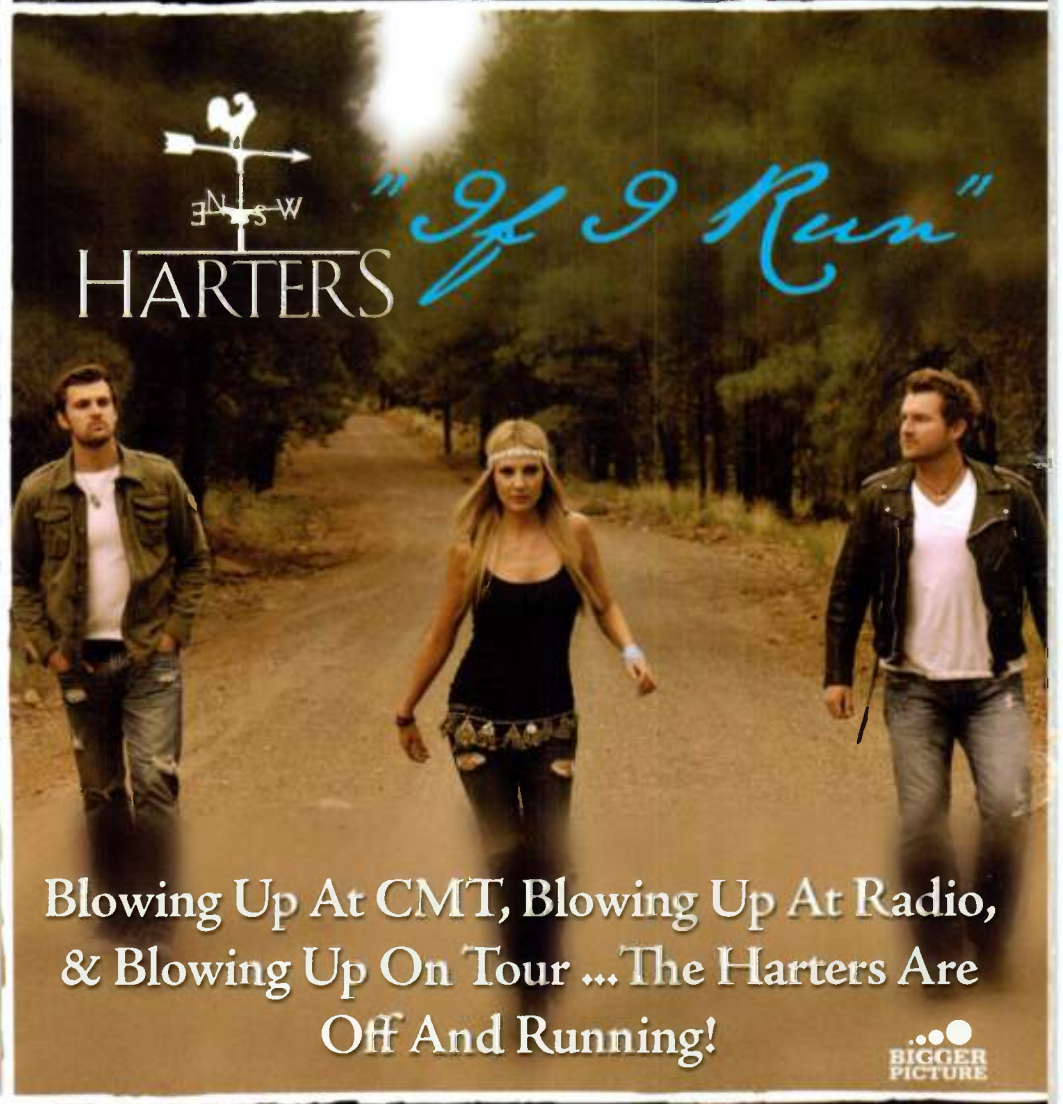
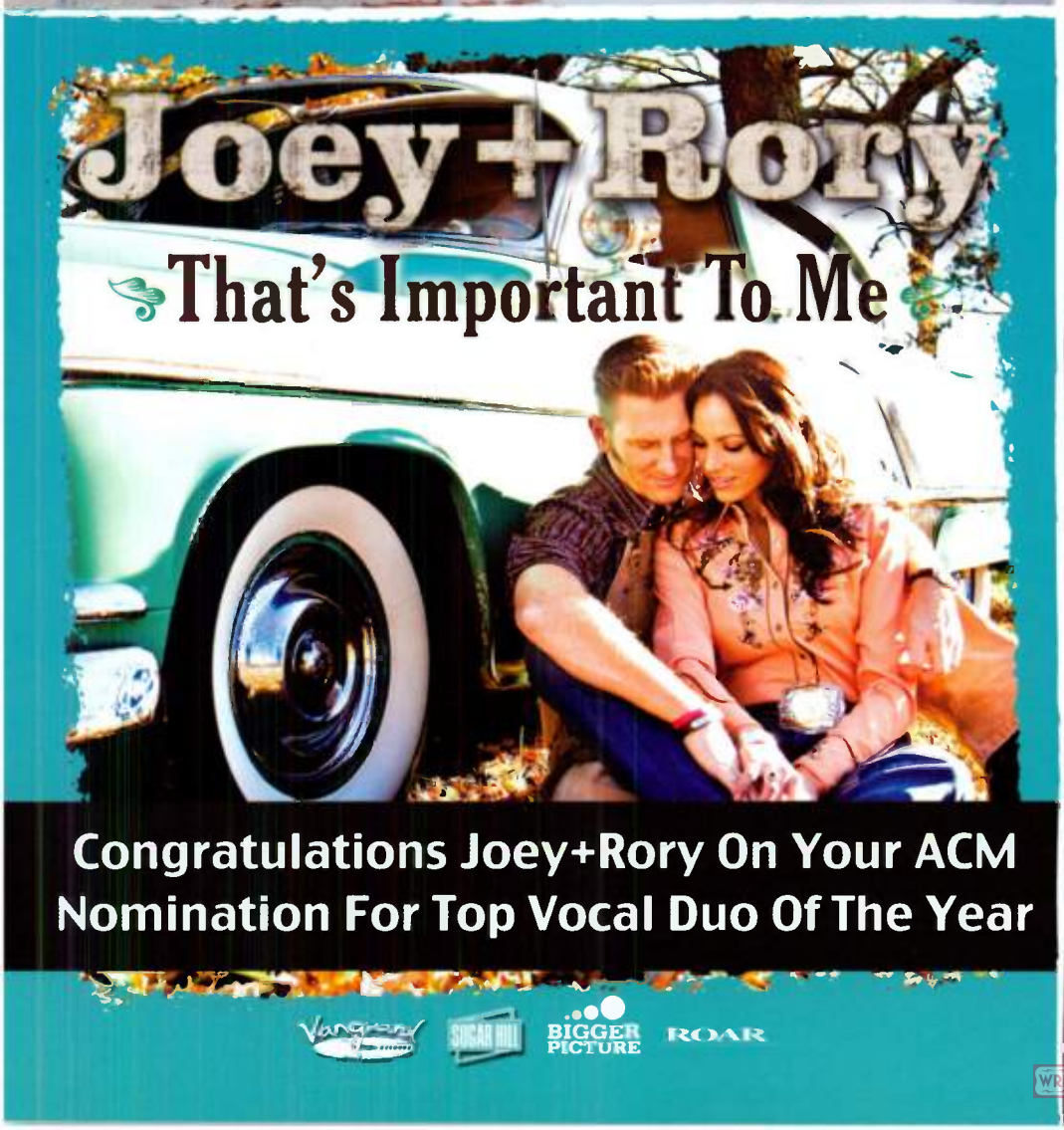

HARTERS
"If I Run"
Blowing Up At CMT, Blowing Up At Radio, & Blowing Up On Tour ... The Harters Are Off And Running!
BIGGER PICTURE


Joey+Rory
That's Important To Me
Congratulations Joey+Rory On Your ACM Nomination For Top Vocal Duo Of The Year
Vanguard
SUGAR HILL
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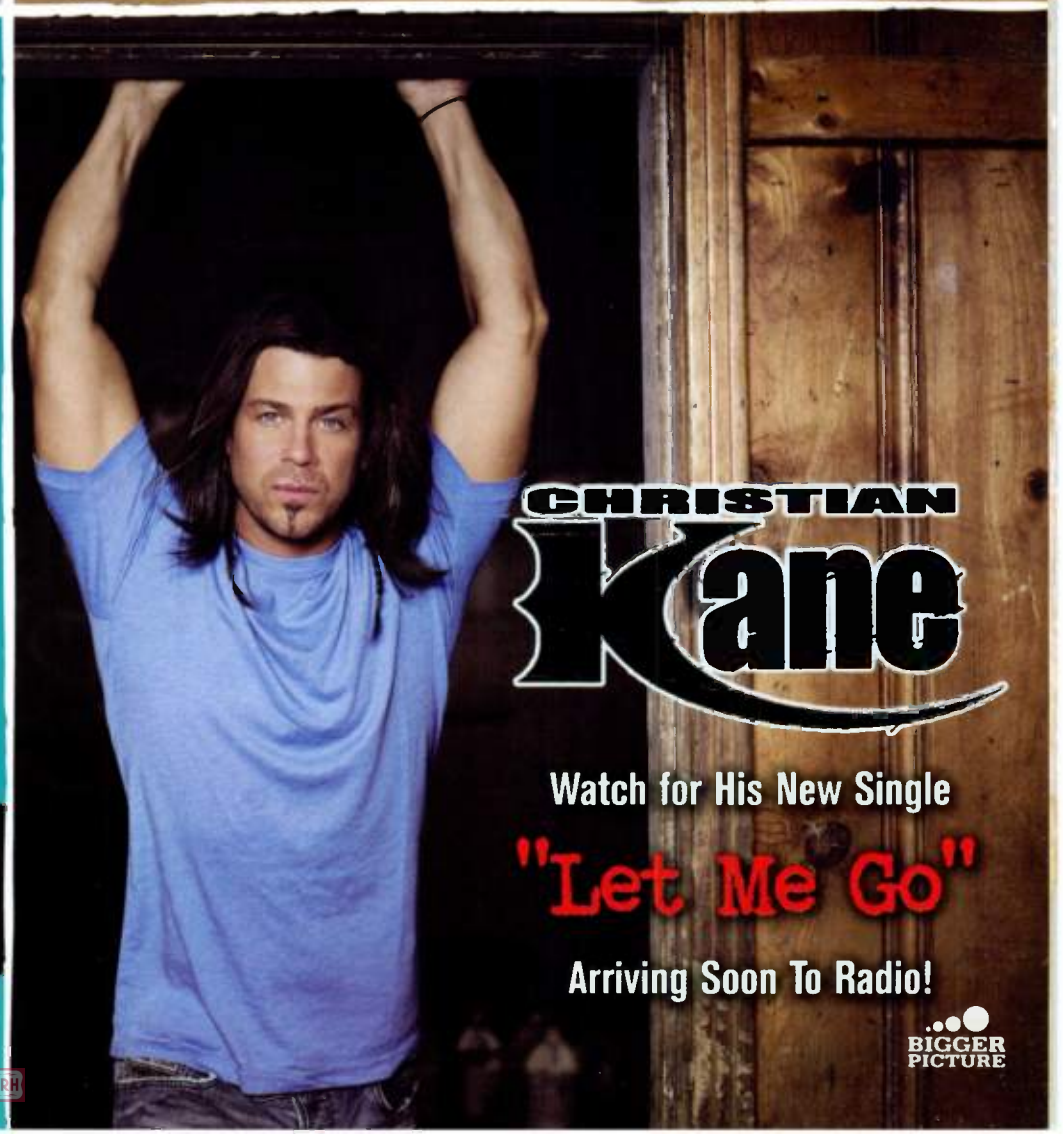
ROAR


CHRISTIAN Kane
Watch for His New Single
"Let Me Go"
Arriving Soon To Radio!
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We've Made Contacts

Record Reps' Phones, Faxes & Emails

Here's the latest compilation of promo staffs and how to reach them.

Editor's Note: *An explanation of the abbreviations: BCC-Bill Catino Consulting; BD – Business Development; CO – Coordinator/Promotion; D – Director; D/AR – Director/A&R; D/SP – Director/Special Projects; E – East; EA – Executive Assistant; FP – Field Promotion; GM/O: GM/Operations; LC/EA – Label Coordinator/Executive Assistant; M – Marketing; MP – Manager/Promotion; M/RP – Mgr./Regional Promotion; MSSP: Manager/Syndication/Special Projects; MW – Midwest; MW/MT – Midwest/Mountain; ND – National Director/Promotion; NDRM – National Director/Radio Marketing; NE – Northeast; NM – New Media; NP – National Promotion; NPS – National Promotion Strategy; P – Partner; PE – Promotion Executive; PMA – Promotion & Marketing Analyst; PR – President; RM – Radio Marketing; RS – Radio Syndication; SA – Satellite; SE – Southeast; SVP – Sr. VP/Promotion; SW – Southwest; TS – Tour Support; VP – VP/Promotion; VP/BD – VP & Business Development; W – West Coast.*

9 Nine North Records

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Celebrating Hope for 22 Years

Happy Birthday, Country Cares!

For 22 years country music has been making a significant difference in the lives of children with cancer. While addressing the 1989 Country Radio Seminar attendees, Randy Owen challenged Country Radio to unite in order to help St. Jude Children's Research Hospital®. By stepping up to that challenge, Country Radio across the country helped launch the most successful radiothon program in the world—*Country Cares for St. Jude Kids®*.

Thanks to your generous support you have helped us continue our mission of finding cures and saving children battling cancer and other catastrophic diseases—while never asking a family to pay for medical treatment. Thank you, Country Radio, for 22 years of caring.

St. Jude patient Katelyn, age 7
acute lymphoblastic leukemia

To celebrate the 22nd birthday of Country Cares, please join us for coffee and cupcakes on the 2nd level of the Convention Center from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, March 2-4.

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Rodney Atkins
Come As You Are (Word/Curb)
Pocket Full Of Rocks
Come Unto Me (Word/Curb)
Nicole C. Mullen
Comedy Video Classics
Ray Stevens
Country State Of Mind
Hank Williams Jr.
Cowboy In Me
Tim McGraw
Coyote Ugly
Soundtrack
Crazy From The Heart
Bellamy Brothers
Crazy Possessive
Kaci Battaglia
Cry Myself To Sleep
The Judds
Da Doo Ron Ron
Shaun Cassidy
Dancin' Cowboys
Bellamy Brothers
Day By Day (Word/Curb)
Point Of Grace
Delicious Surprise
Jo Dee Messina
Dependence
Jamie Slocum
Devil In The Bottle
T.G. Sheppard
Different Worlds
Maureen McGovern
Dirt Road
Sawyer Brown
Dixie On My Mind
Hank Williams Jr.
Do You Love As Good As You Look
Bellamy Brothers
Do You Wanna Go To Heaven
T.G. Sheppard
Don't Take The Girl
Tim McGraw
Eleven Roses
Hank Williams Jr.
Every Time I Breathe (Fervent/Word/Curb)
Big Daddy Weave
Everywhere
Tim McGraw
Faking Love
T.G. Sheppard & Karen Brooks
Fall
Kimberley Locke
Feelin' That Feelin'
Bellamy Brothers
Felt Good On My Lips
Tim McGraw
Fill The Earth (Word/Curb)
4Him
Finally
T.G. Sheppard
Five-O
Hank Williams Jr.
For All The Wrong Reasons
Bellamy Brothers
Forget And Not Slow Down (Word/Curb)
Relient K
Free To Be Me (Fervent/Curb)
Francesca Battistelli
Frosty The Snowman
Kimberley Locke
Girls Night Out
The Judds
Glory
Selah
Glory Defined (Word/Curb)
Building 429
Go Away Little Girl
Donny Osmond
God Bless The USA
Lee Greenwood
Going Blind (Word/Curb)
P.O.D.
Good Morning Beautiful
Steve Holy
Grandpa (Tell Me 'Bout The Good Old Days)
The Judds
Grown Men Don't Cry
Tim McGraw
Hang On
Plumb
Have Mercy
The Judds
Heads Carolina Tails California
Jo Dee Messina
Healing Hands
Jonathan Pierce
Hear Me Cry (Squint/Curb)
38th Parallel
Heartland
The Judds
Heaven On Earth
Trini Triggs
He Is (Word/Curb)
Mark Schultz
Held
Natalie Grant
Here With Me (INC/Curb)
MercyMe
He's Back And I'm Blue
Desert Rose Band
Hiding Place
Selah
Homesick (INO/Currb)
MercyMe
Honky Tonkin'
Hank Williams Jr.
Hosanna
Selah
How Do I Live
LeAnn Rimes
I Ain't Never
Mel Tillis
I Am (Word/Curb)
Mark Schultz
I Believe In Christ
Jonathan Pierce
I Can Only Imagine
Jeff Carson
I Can Only Imagine (INO/Curb)
MercyMe
I Cannot Turn Away
Jamie Slocum
I Can't Do This
Plumb
I Desire
Natalie Grant
I Feel Like Lovin' You Again
T.G. Sheppard
I Know Where I'm Going
The Judds
I Like It I Love It
Tim McGraw
I Loved Them Every One
T.G. Sheppard
I Need More Of You
Bellamy Brothers
I Need You
LeAnn Rimes
I Need You To Love Me (Fervent/Curb)
Barlow Girl
I Saw The Light
Wynonna
I Still Believe In You
Desert Rose Band
If I Never Stop Loving You
David Kersh
If I Said You Had A Beautiful BodyWould You Hold It Against Me
Bellamy Brothers
If You're Going Through Hell
Rodney Atkins
I'll Be Coming Back For More
T.G. Sheppard
I'm Alright
Jo Dee Messina
I'm For Love
Hank Williams Jr.
I'm Leavin' It All Up To You
Donny & Marie Osmond
I've Had The Time Of My Life (RCA/Curb Prod.)
Bill Medley w/ Jennifer Warnes
In Better Hands
Natalie Grant
In My Arms
Plumb
In The Blink Of An Eye (INO/Curb)
MercyMe
Inside
Whiteheart
It's America
Rodney Atkins
It's Your Love
Tim McGraw w/ Faith Hill
Jingle Bells
Kimberley Locke
Just To See You Smile
Tim McGraw
Kids Of The Baby Boom
Bellamy Brothers
Kiss You All Over
Exile
Last Cheater's Waltz
T.G. Sheppard
Last Dollar (Fly Away)
Tim McGraw
LeAnn Rimes
LeAnn Rimes
Legacy ... Hymns & Faith (Word/Curb)
Amy Grant
Let Go (Fervent/Curb)
Barlow Girl
Let It Go
Tim McGraw
Let Me Tell You About Love
The Judds
Let Your Love Flow
Bellamy Brothers
Let's Make Love
Tim McGraw & Faith Hill
Lie To You For Your Love
Bellamy Brothers
Live
Hank Williams Jr.
Live In Texas
Lyle Lovett
Live Like You Were Dying
Tim McGraw
Live ... This Is Your House (M20/Word/Curb)
The Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir
Live Video
Ray Stevens
Long Haired Lover From Liverpool
Jimmy Osmond & The Mike Curb Congregation
Long Walk Back
Junior Brown
Love Is Alive
The Judds
Love Like Crazy
Lee Brice
Love Me For A Reason
Osmonds
Major Moves
Hank Williams Jr.
Mama He's Crazy
The Judds
Maybe Your Baby's Got The Blues
The Judds
Me And Jesus (Word/Curb)
Stellar Kart
Meet Me In Montana
Marie Osmond & Dan Seals
Mind Your Own Business
Hank Williams Jr.
Montana Cafè
Hank Williams Jr.
Morning Side Of The Mountain
Donny & Marie Osmond
My Best Friend
Tim McGraw
My Give A Damn's Busted
Jo Dee Messina
My Next Thirty Years
Tim McGraw
My Paper Heart (Fervent/Curb)
Francesca Battistelli
My Strongest Weakness
Wynonna
Never Can Say Goodbye
Gloria Gaynor
No One Else On Earth
Wynonna
Not A Moment Too Soon
Tim McGraw
Not On Your Love
Jeff Carson
Nothin' Bout Love Makes Sense
LeAnn Rimes
Oh What A Night
Four Seasons
Old Hippie
Bellamy Brothers
One Bad Apple
Osmonds
One Of These Days
Tim McGraw
One Step Forward
Desert Rose Band
One Way Ticket
LeAnn Rimes
Only Love
Wynonna
Only One You
T.G. Sheppard
Over & Over
Nelly, Featuring Tim McGraw
Paper Roses
Marie Osmond
Party Time
T.G. Sheppard
Passion Of The Christ (Integrity/Word/Curb)
Soundtrack
Past The Point Of Rescue
Hal Ketchum
Payable On Death (Atlantic/Word/Curb)
P.O.D.
Please Remember Me
Tim McGraw
Press On
Selah
Puppy Love
Donny Osmond
Real Good Man
Tim McGraw
Real Life
Jeff Carson
Redneck Girl
Bellamy Brothers
Resurrection
Nicol Sponberg
Rise And Shine
Randy Travis
Rising Outlaw
Hank Williams III
Road To Ensenada
Lyle Lovett
Rock Of Ages ... Hymns & Faith (Word/Curb/Warner)
Amy Grant
Rockin' With The Rhythm Of The Rain
The Judds
Rose Of Bethlehem
Selah
Satellite (Atlantic/Word/Curb)
P.O.D.
Send Me An Angel
Real Life
Set This Circus Down
Tim McGraw
She's My Kind Of Rain
Tim McGraw
She Is His Only Need
Wynonna
She Never Let's It Go To Her Heart
Tim McGraw
She'd Give Anything
Boy Howdy
She's Like The Wind (RCA/Curb Prod.)
Patrick Swayze w/ Wendy Frazier
Simple Things (Word/Curb)
Amy Grant
Slow Burn
T.G. Sheppard
Small Town Saturday Night
Hal Ketchum
Some Girls Do
Sawyer Brown
Something Like That
Tim McGraw
Something's Gotta Give
LeAnn Rimes
Somewhere Down The Line
T.G. Sheppard
Southern Voice
Tim McGraw
Spill The Wine
Eric Burdon & War
Spoken For (INO/Curb)
MercyMe
Stand Beside Me
Jo Dee Messina
Starry Night (Fervent/Curb)
Chris August
Step Inside This House
Lyle Lovett
Step That Step
Sawyer Brown
Straight To Hell
Hank Williams III
Strong Heart
T.G. Sheppard
Sugar Daddy
Bellamy Brothers
Summer Wind
Desert Rose Band
Surrender (Word/Curb)
4Him
Take Me Flying
Mark Tinney
Tell Me Why
Wynonna
Texas Women
Hank Williams Jr.
Thank God For You
Sawyer Brown
That's The Way
Jo Dee Messina
The Bird And The Beesides (Gotee/Word/Curb)
Reliant K
The Proud One
Osmonds
The Words I Would Say (Fervent/Curb)
Sidewalk Prophets
There's Just No Stopping Your Heart
Marie Osmond
These Are My People
Rodney Atkins
They Don't Understand
Sawyer Brown
This Time
Sawyer Brown
Three Wooden Crosses (Word/Curb)
Randy Travis
Throne Room (INO/Word/Curb)
CeCe Winans
Tim McGraw And The Dancehall Doctors
Tim McGraw
To Be Loved By You
Wynonna
Too Much Is Not Enough
Bellamy Brothers & Forrester Sisters
Treat Her Right
Sawyer Brown
Tryin' To Beat The Morning Home
T.G. Sheppard
Turn It Loose
The Judds
Twelfth Of Never
Donny Osmond
Unbroken
Tim McGraw
Unchained Melody
Righteous Brothers
Unchained Melody
LeAnn Rimes
Undone (INO/Curb)
MercyMe
Up On The Housetop
Kimberley Locke
Waiting In The Wings (Word/Curb)
Point Of Grace
War Is Hell
T.G. Sheppard
Watch The Wind Blow By
Tim McGraw
Watching You
Rodney Atkins
We Belong Together
Susie Allanson
What Are You Waiting For
Natalie Grant
What The World Needs Now Is Love
Wynonna
When I'm Away From You
Bellamy Brothers
When The Rain Begins To Fall
Jermaine Jackson & Pia Zadora
When The Stars Go Blue
Tim McGraw
Where The Green Grass Grows
Tim McGraw
Where Were You When I Was Falling In Love
Lobo
Whiskey Bent And Hell Bound
Hank Williams Jr.
Who You Are (Word/Curb)
4Him
Why Not Me
The Judds
Wild Streak
Hank Williams Jr.
Wings Of A Dove
Jim Witter
Winter Wonderland (Word/Curb/Warner)
Point Of Grace
Word Of God Speak (INO/Curb)
MercyMe
Written In The Stars (Rocket/Curb)
Elton John & LeAnn Rimes
Wynonna
Wynonna
Yes, I Believe (Word/Curb)
Point Of Grace
You Are A Child Of Mine (Word/Curb)
Mark Schultz
You Are Not Alone (Word/Curb)
Meredith Andrews
You Have The Right To Remain Silent
Perfect Stranger
You Light Up My Life
Debby Boone
You Light Up My Life
LeAnn Rimes
You Raise Me Up
Selah
You Will Never Walk Alone (Word/Curb)
Point Of Grace
You're Still New To Me
Marie Osmond & Paul Davis
Young Country
Hank Williams Jr.
Young Love
The Judds
Young Love
Donny Osmond
8th World Wonder
Kimberley Locke

Roy Orbison

Selah

Natalie Grant

Solomon Burke

Lou Rawls

Kaci Battaglia

Debby Boone

Michael English

Ray Stevens

Lyle Lovett

Desert Rose Band

Maureen McGovern

Sammy Davis, Jr.

The Mike Curb Congregation

Exile

Righteous Brothers

Sawyer Brown

Bellamy Brothers

Lee Greenwood

Hal Ketchum

Shaun Cassidy

Lee Brice

MIKE CURB

50 Years In Music

Launched in 1962, Curb Productions quickly released "Speedway" by the Heyburners. The band's keyboard player was Mike Curb. The label was Titanic. Ultimately, the name was the only thing Mike Curb had in common with the ill-fated luxury liner, as he's successfully cruised through a remarkable career, now in its 50th year.

And what a half-century it's been. He was the bandleader of the Heyburners, the Babys, the Sudells, Mike Curb and the Curbstones and, ultimately, the Mike Curb Congregation, which became a regular on CBS-TV's *The Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour*. He wrote and sang the early '60s jingle "You Meet The Nicest People On A Honda." In 1968 he composed a new theme for Dick Clark's *American Bandstand*.

He was *Billboard*'s Producer of the Year in 1972, feted for his work with Hank Williams, Jr., Eddy Arnold, Marie Osmond and Liza Minnelli, among others. In the mid-'70s, his production credits included the Four Seasons' "Oh What A Night," the Bellamy Brothers' "Let Your Love Flow" and Debby Boone's "You Light Up My Life."

Curb formed Cude Records in 1963 – a legal issue with Cub Records precluded him from using Curb at the time – and Sidewalk Records in 1964. When Sidewalk merged with MGM in 1969, he became President of MGM at age 24.

His music career was interrupted, but never halted by sojourns into politics – Californians voted him their Lt. Gov. in 1978 – and auto racing, in which he is still involved. A tiny portion of his story is told here in these remarkable photos and in the words of three who know him well. (Ed. Note: Visit www.mikecurb.com for a complete, and completely astounding, history and discography.)

Eddie Ray: Mike is an unbelievable guy, not only in what he's accomplished, but as an individual. A couple things stick out – he has an almost unbelievably loyalty to friends and associates who have helped him along the way. He never forgets. In my life, he's been appearing and reappearing over the years with ideas. And he has people who've been working for him for 20 or 25 years.

He also has an extraordinary ability to follow through on his decisions. If he has an idea as it relates to music, regardless of the opposition, he sticks to that until he proves he was right. I met him when I was with Imperial Records in Hollywood. One day my secretary said there's a guy here to meet with you named Mike Curb. As a rule, I didn't see anyone who didn't have an appointment, but for some reason I agreed to meet him. He was just a kid, maybe 17 years old at the time. He came in and thanked me for seeing him. He then proceeded to tell me about every artist on Imperial, how much he liked them, who their producers were, which songs he liked – he went on and on.

So I asked what I could do for him. He said he had a group and was doing shows for colleges and high schools. I asked if he had a tape, and he didn't. He wanted to do a live audition, which I never allowed. Again, for some reason, I agreed. He came back in with three ladies and a little piano. He played and they sang. I wasn't that impressed with what I heard, but I was impressed with Mike Curb.

Before he left I told him I'd soon be leaving Imperial to head A&R at Capitol's new label Tower, and then I forgot all about him. My first day at Capitol I got a call that Mike Curb was waiting to see me. They sent him up and I signed him. We did a lot of soundtracks and beach music together and were very successful. A few years later he called me to come work for him at MGM.

I was head of A&R Administration for him at MGM, where he came to me once with a song he'd done with the Congregation. I knew the song; it was by a known songwriter and had been successful in England in a musical. He asked what I thought about having another artist do it, and I said, "Well, you've already done it with the Congregation and didn't have success. Who's the artist?" He said, "Sammy Davis, Jr."

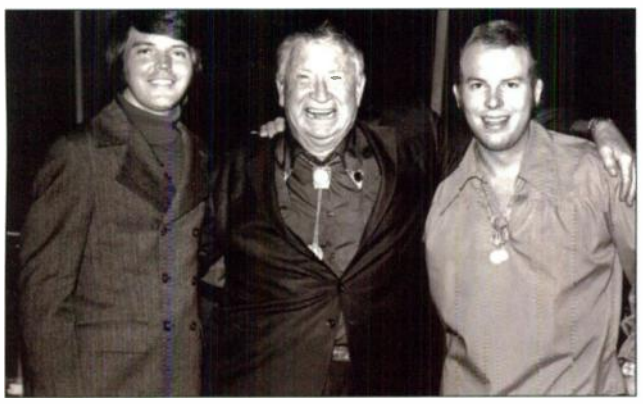
I said, "No way." I just couldn't imagine Sammy doing it. He was one of the greatest entertainers of his time and I didn't see it. Mike went to what seemed like everyone in the building, and everyone said absolutely not. Being in the job I was in, I found out Mike has booked Sammy for a recording session. Four or five weeks later the song was released. "Candy Man" went on to sell three or four million copies.

Dennis Hannon: Mike Curb is a lot of things. He's very involved, even if it's behind the scenes. He's committed to continuing education through his foundation and to restoration of historical sites and buildings. He's obviously very successful in business. But what he's really motivated by is music. In all the time I've spent with him, it really is his muse.

To say that about someone who has been doing it as long as he has is pretty amazing. When he and I talk, we will always talk about music. He listens to music at night, over the weekend and in the car. Mike is as excited about music and the process of making music as he was the day I started working for him 20 years ago.

There are so many stories I could tell, but LeAnn Rimes comes to mind. She had recorded a four-song EP that was being distributed basically on consignment in Dallas. Our WEA sales rep called us one day and said, "I don't know if you are looking for talent, but there's a girl here you might want to look at." She sent us the EP and it arrived in my office the day before Thanksgiving.

I looked at the cover, realized she was 12 and thought, "There's no way I'm going to get this." Well, Mike was in his car in front of the building getting ready to leave with his family. They were going to the Smoky



Galaxy Of Stars: Pictured clockwise from above, Curb (l) with actor Chill Wills (c) and Hank Williams, Jr.; the Curb-sponsored first car of Dale Earnhardt; Donnie & Marie; Shaun Cassidy and LeAnn Rimes.

MIKE CURB

Mike Curb has been the sole owner of Curb Records for 50 years, making it the longest-running independent imprint under the same ownership. Nashville was built around the tenet "it all begins with a song;" the Curb imprint has flourished under a similar belief that it's all about the music. When asked the secret to his success, Curb doesn't hesitate.

"Loving music," he says. "There's not a night of my life that I don't listen to music. If you don't listen, you're not going to find the next great artist or that next great song. I want to hear everything that's submitted to either our record label or our publishing company. But there's no way to listen to all that music during the day – the business is so much harder than it's ever been. There is so much to do and so many new things to learn and technology to stay in front of, not to mention the time I spend on the Curb Foundation. So I don't go out at night – that's when I listen to music.

"It's not that I know so much; I have people whose ears I trust more than mine. But I like to hear it all, if nothing else just so I know I was part of the equation of missing it", he laughs. "You have to love the music, and I've loved music all my life. It's about the music, and I've never cared if it came out on Curb, Curb/Reprise, Curb/RCA, Curb/Warner Bros., Curb/MCA, Curb/Capitol, Curb/Asylum or any other label we've partnered with."

Curb's plan for the next 50 years? He laughs, "Staying true to what got us this far: Not giving up on your artists or your people; good people always re-emerge. My whole life I've believed in finding the very best artists, putting them with the very best producers and the very best promotion, and complementing them all with the best marketing and sales. Do that, and you'll have a good company."

Mike Curb MUSIC MAN

Well Connected: Mike Curb onstage with Sammy Davis, Jr. and President Nixon (above); and pictured with other Chief Executives Gerald Ford (right), George H.W. Bush (below, right), Bill and Hillary Clinton (below, left) and Ronald Reagan (left).

Mountains for the holiday. So I handed him the CD as he was leaving. About an hour-and-a-half later he called me. "Did you listen to this?" he asked. I told him I hadn't, and he said, "Get me all the info you have on her. Find out how to reach her. Do all the due diligence."

I said, "It's 3pm on the day before Thanksgiving. Everything's closed. I'm not sure I'm going to be able to get anybody on the phone." But I made the calls and by the time Mike got where he was going, he'd gotten Wilbur Rimes on the phone and made a deal to sign LeAnn. That next week he went to see her perform in a church.

That's what he did that Thanksgiving. He heard the music and made a decision based solely on the music. Everybody else had passed on her, not necessarily because of her age, but there were worries about her parents managing her. But Mike didn't need to know anything other than what he heard.

Don Cusic: In an age of specialization in the music business, the "record man" has almost disappeared. People like Sam Phillips, Ahmet Ertegun, Leonard Chess or Art Rupe who owned an independent label and who could find a song and artist, then produce, manufacture, promote and sell the recording have all but disappeared. Mike is a throwback to those pioneers. He not only runs the most commercially successful independent label today as a record executive overseeing the business side of music, he can also write a song (he's had over 400 recorded), find talent and produce a session. He has a million balls in the air and can focus on each one intensely. If that isn't rare, I don't know what is. He's on the board of directors of a hospital, heads up a record company and listens intently to every song one of his songwriters writes or one of his artists records, keeps a finger in the political world where he was once a star, and is involved in a number of different philanthropies from higher education to feeding the hungry. He's a man of enormous energy, insight and depth. But here's the big secret of Mike Curb: He's a dedicated historian.

He loves the history of the music and the people who have made the music industry what it is. He fell in love with the 45 record when he was a teenager and has never lost his first love. Name a recording that came out on a 45 and Mike will tell you the artist, label and how they did on the *Billboard* charts. Bring up an early doo-wop group and he'll spend hours talking about that group, their recordings and every other doo-wop group who ever recorded. His memory of music is like Einstein's memory of physics – infinite! *(Ed. Note: Cusic is working on an upcoming biography of Curb.)* CAC

Family Ties: Curb artists The Judds with his wife Linda and daughters Megan and Courtney (left); with Tim McGraw and Faith Hill (center); and with Rodney Atkins and his son Elijah (right).

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INTRODUCING

Edens Edge

"...Someone give me an Amen!"

CHERRILL GREEN HANNAH BLAYLOCK DEAN BERNER

THE DEBUT SINGLE

Amen

ON YOUR DESK NOW

IMPACTING MONDAY 3/28

BIG MACHINE™ RECORDS

WRH

STEVEN PRICE

Town & Country

Formed in 2010 with the acquisition of the Regent, and soon thereafter, the GAP Radio and New Northwest stations, Oaktree Capital-funded Townsquare Media has quickly become one of America's largest radio groups with nearly 170 stations, 37 of which are Country. Chairman/CEO Steven Price leads an impressive team of executives whose vision centers around, appropriately, considering the company name, a local strategy. At the same time, he also sees the opportunity to leverage Townsquare's collective strength to create national brands, supported by a major online platform. Country Aircheck caught up with Price to learn more about the company's approach to media and, in particular, to Country radio.

CA: You've worked at the Pentagon, two private equity firms, a software company, Goldman Sachs, a law firm, and in the cell phone industry, among other posts. How did you end up running a radio company?

SP: It's probably not as [intuitive] as it sounds. Besides serving our country, which I love, what I like most are starting, building and running businesses and creating great consumer experiences within them. And that's what we set out to do here. In early 2009, our management group got together at the peak of the economic meltdown and decided to be contrarian: When everyone was afraid to invest, we decided to make a relatively big investment somewhere. We looked at 15 different areas including cable, newspaper, television, movie theaters, summer camps and cable networks, and we ultimately decided that radio was by far and arguably the best position for the future.

Why radio?

First, it's a local business, close to the consumer and proven to be effective. A phenomenal 92% of Americans still listen, on average, 20 hours a week. Research says it's still the most cost-effective and reliable mechanism for advertisers.

Second, when you talk to people across the country, you don't find they have a deep affinity for their local TV channel or newspaper, but they do love their radio brand. That's something unique that gave us the ability to build a local media company and extend past just radio.

Third, it's an ideal medium in a digital and multi-platform world. Radio has been blogging for 50 years. That's what DJs do. And it's not what people in newspapers, TV or in other media do. If you're going to focus on a new media/digital world, radio is a great place to start.

Many of your key executives were with you at LiveWire Ventures; none could be described as a radio veteran, though you do have a few GAP folks in your executive team. Did anyone help you learn the radio business?

As opposed to getting somebody on Wall Street or someone who's been in the industry for 30 years telling us how good or bad radio was (not that we didn't talk to them), we found "ground truth" is often the best truth. When we did diligence – and we visited a lot of stations because each market's different – we talked to a lot of GMs and sales reps, and went out on sales calls. We talked to advertisers to really get a sense of what's going on today, what had gone wrong in the past and what could go right if you did it right in the future. You could say that's learning by doing. We had a thesis, spent a lot of time in the field talking to people and came up with our plan to, I hope, build a differentiated radio company.

Did your early thesis hold up?

I would say it did. We are as much believers in radio and local media as we were when we started, maybe more so. I won't say we didn't have any surprises, but, actually, surprisingly few. One of the biggest was that people were negative about the business in '08, '09 and even in the beginning of last year because of the advertising meltdown. Radio, as well as other ad-supported media, was hurt hard. People were down, but the industry did not do a terrific job of communicating the staying power of the medium. Basically the same number of people listen to radio as they did 10 years ago. And yet it's seen as a dying medium. Those two don't make sense together. I don't think the industry has been proud enough and done a good enough job championing how much it delivers for consumers and advertisers. That's in part because so many radio businesses had leveraged themselves, under-invested and starved certain assets in certain markets. To some extent, that happened to a couple companies we inherited, and we've done a pretty strong 180 in terms of investing. The other thing that surprised us is how many people believe in syndicated programming. We still believe in being live and local.

The name Townsquare has meaning for your team because it speaks of community. I take it that's what you mean about being live and local.

We spent a lot of time thinking about the name. The image of "town square" is exactly what we want to convey in our markets and to our partners.

If you look back, before the age of nonstop communications, what happens in the town square? It's the place people felt like they needed to be. They were missing something if they weren't in or walking through it, checking in. "What's the new restaurant in town?" Where do I get my hair cut?" "What do I do with my kids this weekend?" And that's what we want to do: Provide the products and tools on-air, online and maybe elsewhere in our local communities, so that when people think about viewing the world outside that particular town, they view it through Townsquare. They might not know it's a Townsquare product, but they come either to our station, our websites or to one of our events to see that world.

And what surrounded the town square for centuries were local businesses selling goods and services. Well, that's what we want. We want principally local – and to a certain extent national and regional – advertisers to want to be around us because that's the way they're reaching their consumers.

We didn't feel constrained by what had or hadn't been done in the past. We just looked at it as what's right for our listeners because if we don't have listeners, we're not going to have a business.

What other media initiatives are you undertaking to complement your broadcast properties?

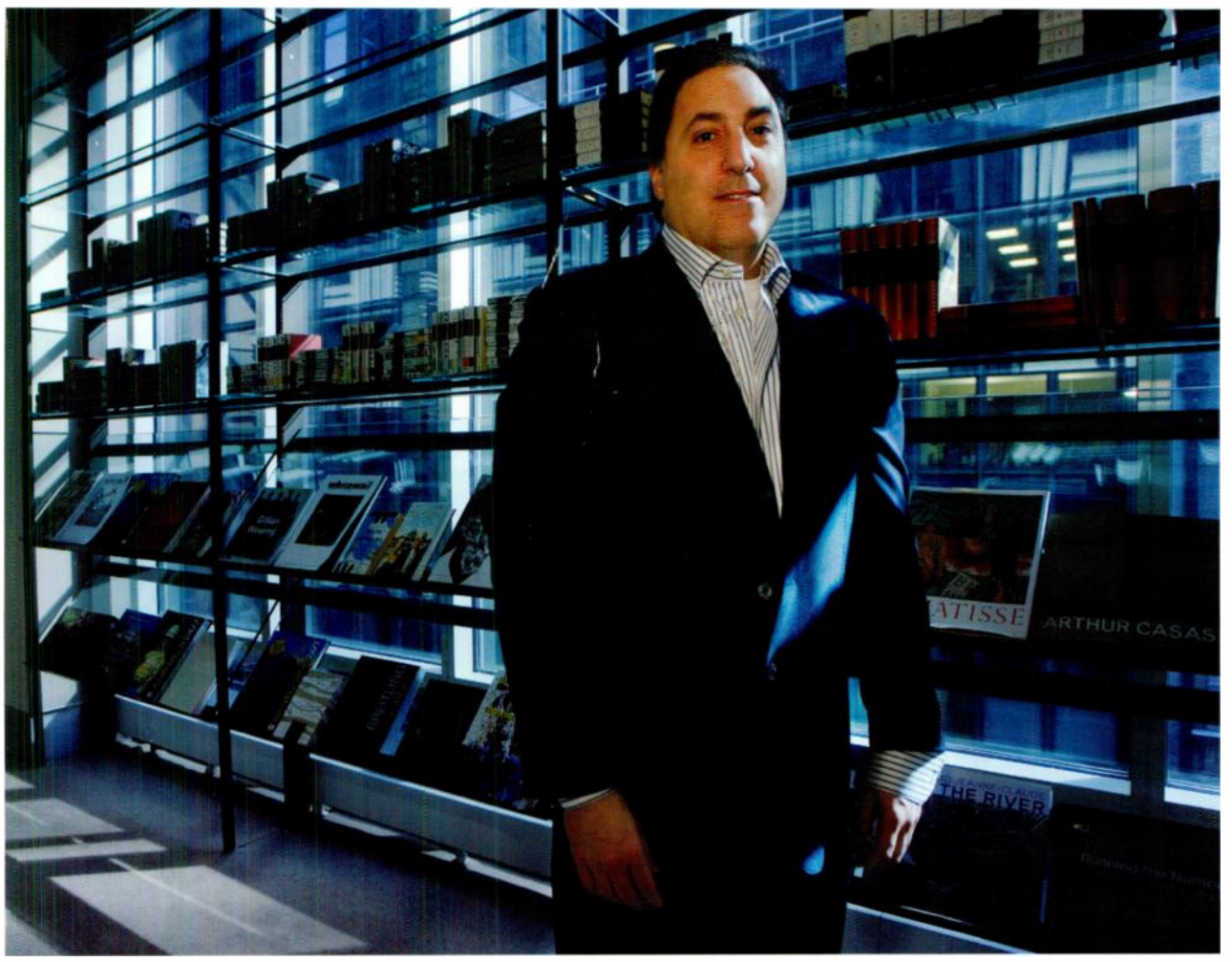
Broadly speaking, we want to be the pre-eminent local media company in our markets, and, potentially, even outside our markets. We start with a great radio platform, but we will evolve to having great radio stations and also, we hope, great websites and other great businesses including live events. We are investing pretty heavily to be that dominant local media company. We're playing offense as opposed to defense, so to speak, which I think the industry has done for the past few years. I'm not sure what other businesses we might or might not get into. The new media, digital and mobile area is clearly where we've started. We've hired what we think is a world-class team led by Bill Wilson, who was former president of AOL Media, and are focused on building great products for our customers, whether it's on-air or online.

In the last 90 days, for example, we have rebuilt all of our station websites from scratch. If you go to any one of our station sites, you'll see a clean look that's very focused on giving consumers lots of local content and a good complementary experience to what they might get on-air.

Explain the development of Taste Of Country, both as an online service and branded concert event.

We love the country music business and the lifestyle; we think it's a great and growing genre. It's increasingly part of the fabric of America, and resonates really well in the small-to-mid-sized markets where we are. We're a big believer in country on-air, online and at local events, and want to support the business and lifestyle.

In our early market visits, it appeared that we had a lot of talent in the country music area. We own the No. 1 Country station in 24 markets, so we do have a good presence in country. So it made sense to build a national country music news and lifestyle site that would serve the talent well and offer deeper content to current and potentially future consumers.



WYRK/Buffalo has been running a *Taste of Country* concert for 10 years. Last June, I brought my wife and kids to it, and GM Jeff Silver put us to work. Our whole management team was out selling t-shirts. We're hands-on! What we saw was something that had a great brand affinity … people loved it.

While thinking about our site, somebody in Buffalo said, "Why don't you just call it Taste of Country?" So we did, and launched Dec. 13. We're already up to 70,000 Facebook followers, which, from a standing start, is pretty good. The site is closing in on six-figure unique visitors per month, 10 times what we thought it would be. We're doing many innovative things, and our name is starting to get out there. We're starting to do some exclusive interviews, and launched a cute little series where country stars picked the Super Bowl winner. Faith Hill was the first we spoke to, but we listed a whole bunch of country talent and the team they wanted to win, which we thought would be a fun thing for our consumers.

We've also started a free *Taste of Country News Minute* for our stations and others. It will help get our brand out there and, it's hoped, provide for some interesting content.

You've also gotten into the touring business. The *Cold Beer and Reindeers* tour?

Taste of Country in Buffalo is one example of the live events we inherited, and we're sort of hyper-charging that. We did an eight-stop Christmas country tour through Texas, which we called *Cold Beers and Reindeers* featuring Josh Thompson, to really see if we could do a country concert in December. Candidly, it was like, "Could we as a brand-new company develop, produce and promote our own concert series?" We were very pleased, I think the talent was, too, and the people who came to the venues enjoyed it. So that's something we'll probably continue in some form. And we're doing many additional concerts and events throughout the country in our markets, some branded as the *Taste of Country Concert Series*.

What's your strategy how headquarters deals with individual stations?

In terms of corporate, I'd say we are more decentralized than most. My view is that what works in Lubbock probably won't in Ft. Collins. As opposed to providing top-down decisions that would probably be right in some places and wrong in most, our corporate philosophy – and my partner [EVP/CFO] Stu Rosenstein and I have done this in a number of businesses – is to get great local managers and talent. We view corporate not in terms of mandates, a bottleneck or to get in the way, but as headquarters supporting the local markets. What should we be doing to support them? What guidance do we need? What help do they need? That's the way we view the role of our corporate office, which we call the "Town Hall." For example, our Nashville-based Country programming specialist Bob Moody provides programming tools. We also have somebody who helps coordinate our events, book talent, etc. We're trying to provide help to the markets, but, ultimately, it's sort of a ground-up, decentralized model, which I know is different from most.

Is there a regional executive structure, or does each cluster go right to the Town Hall?

We have two Sr. VPs who help oversee the markets. We split the company into Town and Square divisions. SVPs Erik Hellum and George Laughlin, who were with GAP, run the Town and Square groups, respectively, and we talk to them often. One's based in Phoenix, one's in Dallas; it's not like everyone has to be in the New York area. I spend a lot of time talking to our GMs and visiting them. We want to know what's going on and to see how we can help. There's a lot of change going on in our company, and we're doing a lot of different things. We want to make sure the lines of communication are wide open.

How do your Country stations fit in your overall strategy?

We have more Country stations than any other format, and it's by far our most important genre both in terms of audience, No. 1 stations and revenues. Our big money makers are often our Country stations. I'd say Country is a key focus for our company.

What did you learn during your trip to Nashville last year?

It was very instructive for us. People were very open, and we felt we had good meetings. Beforehand, we had *thought* we should go deep in Country, but after that we became convinced. Tasteofcountry.com is the first music portal we've launched, and we're building at least two concert series around it. So clearly, we took it to heart.

Historically, which we really didn't appreciate because we haven't been in the radio business, there are very strong relations between the Nashville country music community and radio, which drives country more than other formats. Candidly, I'm not sure we knew that. And that is to the mutual benefit of Nashville and the radio industry. Without getting too specific, our perception is that there are ways the radio industry could have been more supportive of Nashville and talent. Therefore, we felt a real opportunity came from those meetings – a willingness and an openness to think about new and different ways to partner with local media businesses.

> "WE ARE MORE DECENTRALIZED THAN MOST. WHAT WORKS IN LUBBOCK PROBABLY WON'T IN FT. COLLINS."

For example, we met with [George Strait's manager] Erv Woolsey. We're rolling out the George Strait "cover" contest on Taste of Country nationwide. People can cover "Troubadour," put it on YouTube and send the link to tasteofcountry.com. George and his team will pick the winner, whom we will fly to Lubbock for his concert at the end of March. George will give the winner an autographed guitar onstage.

Another way I think we could be helpful is in getting a jump on digital and social media. I think our early steps have proven that we know what we're doing. We've hired the team and within a month have built up a pretty good country music website. There are probably other ways we can help either talent or others if they're thinking about digital and social media.

How does your executive team, which hasn't had its hands knee-deep in programming, look at talent and the music?

I don't pick records; that's really not on the list of my day job. And I don't think people in our corporate offices should be the ones picking records. We have Bob in Nashville, who spends time helping our Country programmers all around the country and thinks about what should be on our air. What works in Tyler, Texas might or might not work in Shreveport. But we have people in those markets who help make those decisions. So I would say it's more decentralized than a "This is the playlist, run it wherever"; we're not at that end.

We do spend time thinking about talent because we think about some of the concerts we're working on – either promoting or helping to partner with other people promoting them – and we want to make sure those are fruitful exercises for us and for the talent.

Does the long-term strategy involve buying more properties?

It's about both organic growth, as well as through acquisition. Our team has been involved in a number of acquisitions and roll-ups in different businesses. That doesn't mean we'll do that in the radio space, but we clearly would love to expand as long as the stations we buy fit the criteria we want. We're going to be prudent, and don't feel we need to grow. We feel have a broad enough platform that we can enact our business plan at this size.

We love to dominate our local markets. But if we want to be the town square, we actually have to *be* the town square. We want strong clusters with strong ratings, good live and local content on-air and online. In 90% of our markets, we're either the No. 1 or 2 radio group, and we like that positioning.

Would we like to buy good stations at reasonable prices? Yes. We have pretty large ambitions to build a nice-sized company. While we're happy with where we are today and think there's plenty of organic growth ahead of us, we have been ambitious, acquisitive and aggressive in past businesses. We hope to do so here, as well.

Can you do anything with Country in New York?

We don't own any stations here, so it would be tough. It's something we've tried to kick around a little bit, and maybe we'll kick around a little bit more. That's probably a fish bowl for others to play in, not us. Our strategy is really the small and mid-sized markets, and to provide services and product in those markets.

Is going public in Townsquare Media's future?

We do employee roundtables with pizza in all our markets, and that question comes up a lot. My answer is, I don't know. Clearly, we're in it to build great consumer experiences and to make money. What's the best way? I don't know today. We're early in this, nine months in. And we've been pretty busy in those nine months. What I do know is that if we build a great company – one that our consumers, partners and advertisers like and feel they're getting value out of it, and that's it's a growing company – good things will happen to us. I have no idea what that means in terms of going public or not. That's not something we're focused on in the near term or even midterm. We're trying to build a business.

Tell us more about those pizza roundtables.

We try to do them as often as we can. We've been to every market at least once, and in some cases, two or three times. We get the whole staff together, and it's usually after the morning shows. We spend between an hour to 90 minutes talking about what's going on in our corporate office, what we're trying to do. By now, they all know what our strategy is, so we don't go such high-level; we dig down into what's actually going on.

Bill Wilson, who runs our digital business, is usually with us, and talks about the new initiatives and then we spend a good hour in Q&A talking about what's going on in the market and the business. I will ask, "What are we doing right and wrong? How can we help you?" We want to hear, "If only I had this, I could do that." Our next trip involves seven markets and 1,100 miles in one week.

As the Internet invades radio's last stronghold, the car, how do you see maximizing your multiple platforms?

Anybody in an existing business could look at new technology as a friend or foe. And to some extent, it doesn't matter how you look at it because it's here, so we're going to make it a friend. We believe we have great local brands and great proprietary content. Our listeners want access, and they want it wherever they are. So we view digital as an untapped opportunity for radio. As long as we can build the right products to make our brands accessible anywhere the consumer is, we think that will inure to our benefit. And that's what we're doing, so we are pretty bullish on the digital opportunity.

Have you been to any country concerts? Do you listen to the music now? What do you think of our neighborhood?

Well, we like your little corner of the world, and are investing heavily to support and partner with it to the benefit of Nashville as well as our company. Personally, I like country music, and you can ask my kids because we listen to it in the car. When they try to change the station to pop, I turn it back to Country. We always have a little give-and-take. I've always liked it; I think it's a great format. I wish there were more choices in New York for country music, but I like the feel and vibe of the concerts. Last year, I saw Billy Currington, Joe Nichols, Luke Bryan and many others. We just had Joe Nichols in Albany. As my kids will tell you, because they hear it all the time, my ringtone is Zac Brown Band's "Free." I don't have any favorites because we love all of country music. CAC

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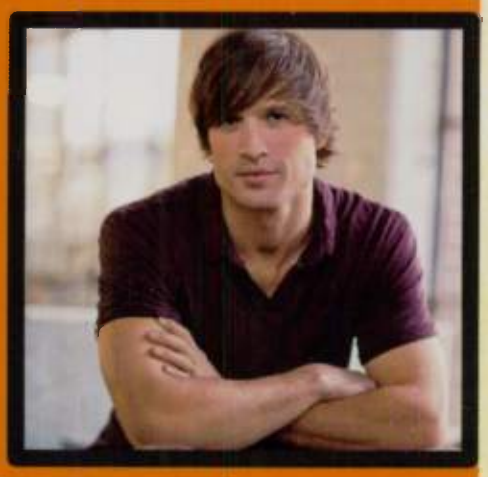

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