

## Powerful Aircheck Sessions

### Instructions For Care And Feeding Of Talent

By Valerie Geller

**Editor's Note:** What follows is an excerpt from Valerie Geller's new book, *The Powerful Radio Workbook: The Prep, Performance, and Post Production Planning*. Though most of her comments are primarily directed toward personalities in spoken-word formats, you'll notice that nearly all of the points can be applied to air talent in music formats, as well. TW

"Did you hear the show?" That is a common question heard at radio stations. Most managers don't have the time to actually hear the on-air product. However, the talent is hungry for feedback. Starving, actually.

Surprisingly, Talk Hosts often hire me, at their own expense, to conduct air-

check sessions with them, craving direction that their Program Directors cannot, or do not have time to, give.

Airchecking is more than just a "tape critique". One-on-one coaching, "powerful" airchecking, is a specific, focused way of working. It is not the

(Continued — see Powerful Aircheck on page 2)

### Rivers Interview — Part 2

In part one of our exclusive "PD" interview with AMFM's former Chief Programming Officer, **Steve Rivers** talked about

- ✓ the skill-set needed to compete in radio's new world order
- ✓ the way PDs and GMs are adopting a cluster-mentality
- ✓ juggling more balls — how to take it in-stride, and
- ✓ focusing on what's important (both in life and on the job).

(See "PD" issue #51.) This week, Steve looks forward to where radio is headed.

(Continued — See Rivers Interview Part 2 on page 4)

### Continuing Education For The Dedicated Radio Programmer

#### Inside "PD" Issue # 53

Page 3 Rick Sklar's MusicRadio Policy

Page 3 Geller Media International's Basic Aircheck Rules

Page 4 Steve Rivers Interview — Part 2

Page 9 Most Effective Promotions Of All Time: Scavenger Hunts

Page 12 Round The World Roundup (Promotions/Topicals)

Page 12 News/Talk & Surveillance: Nat Sound, Top 10 Talk Topics

Page 13 Ocean Toons: The Digital Age

Page 13 Tribute To Mark Denis

Page 14 Elements Of Stationality: Sweepers/Liners/Splitters/Bumpers



**Programmer's Digest** Publisher/Editor **Todd Wallace** is Director Of AM Operations for the AMFM Inc. Phoenix cluster. His programming consultation firm, **Todd Wallace/Associates** has served over 100 radio stations in the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the U.K., and the Philippines. A broadcaster for over 30 years, he is internationally recognized as the "founding father" of the "callout" research concept and pioneer of the "P1" concept. Reach TW at (480) 443-3500 or e-mail: [TW3tw3@aol.com](mailto:TW3tw3@aol.com)

# Powerful Aircheck Sessions

(Continued — from page 1) only way that can be used to develop, improve, and advance talent, but it is the best way. Airchecking is the process of listening to tape of a show and, using specific criteria, determining what worked and what did not work. With a guide, airchecker, coach, or PD as your witness, one then decides what has improved.

Even if you listen to tape of your shows religiously, you are likely missing many nuances of the total performance. One air talent I work with says, "When I listen alone, I focus on how I did. I get critical of just myself, not how the whole show went. When I listen with other people in the room, I focus on *everything* that is happening on-the-air; the guest being interviewed, sound effects, callers, spot breaks, etc. I hear it *all*."

It can't be helped. Think of your school or family group photos. When you see one, the first thing you do is look at *yourself*. It is the same in radio. It is a natural thing to pay attention to how you made a certain point or handled a particular caller. You are less likely to be aware of subtleties of that caller's comments, or the news anchor's clever contribution. There is something about listening to your show with a *witness* in the room that *forces* you to hear your work differently.

In this workbook, we explore a variety of specific techniques and methods for effective airchecking. Managers will learn to create an environment that makes staff *receptive* to constructive criticism. The goal is to aircheck in such a way that each talent sets achievable goals to fulfill his or her creative potential.

**Talent:** if you do not know what you sound like on-the-air, you are always in the danger zone. You are working with a handicap.

Watch a child play by making faces in a mirror. What do I look like mad? What do I look like with my tongue out? Can I see myself from the back?

**Airchecking is like a mirror.** How do I sound when I am sad or angry. How do I behave with a difficult guest? What happens when I try to sound better than my partner? Am I smarter than my partner? What happens when I pretend to know something about a

topic I know nothing about?

What happens

when I'm bored on-the-air? How do I sound if I didn't get enough sleep? What kind of a show will I have if I have not been out of my house in a month (except to go to work)?

Your audience knows! But, without your aircheck tape as a mirror, you won't. Sitting alone with a tape of your show is like a single mirror. Working with a talented aircheck coach can give you multiple reflections of your work. There are other angles you cannot see with only one frame of reference. Viewing those other angles is the power of a good aircheck session.

**Think of the show as a garden and airchecking as a *weeding* process. To maintain its health, growth, and beauty, you should regularly walk through your garden, taking note of which plants are thriving and which need attention.**

**"Play it til you're sick of it. Then play it for another month"**

— (The late) Rick Sklar

(PD of MusicRadio WABC/New York)

TW Tip #2164

## What IS An Aircheck?

Think of the show as a garden — and airchecking the show as a weeding process. In order to maintain its health, growth, and beauty, you should regularly walk through your garden, taking note of which plants are thriving and which need attention. Some parts of the garden flourish, some struggle to live. Always you appreciate its beauty. If there is a special new plant in your garden, you want to learn its potential and create the right environment for it to grow. You make sure it has the

right sun, soil, etc. Your aircheck is like that walk to see how well your garden is coming along.

## How Does One Learn To Aircheck?

Unfortunately, there is no airchecking school for programmers. One learns by working with people, seeing what is effective and what is not. Some aspects of airchecking will vary greatly, depending upon the individuals involved. It is in the best interest of programmers and managers to learn to aircheck effectively, simply because — if the talent wins, the *station* wins. There are a few things one must never do, but the only right way to aircheck is the way that *works*.

In the United States, where it is becoming easier and less expensive to run a syndicated network show than to have local live talent on-the-air, it is critical that we develop new talent now. Most syndicated programs were once *local* success stories. Someone *worked* with each of those hosts when they were starting out.

Continued — See **Powerful Aircheck Sessions** on page 3)

# Powerful Aircheck Sessions

(Continued — from page 2) Even the strongest syndicated shows can be beaten by hot local talent. We frequently meet novice broadcasters with much to offer. What will stations do once today's syndicated shows run dry (or move on to television)? Seems we never look to the future. Airchecking and developing these talent people is the way to ensure that creative and powerful radio will continue into the next generation. Of course, after a few years of experience, some of these people will go on to become major syndicated talent.

## Care And Feeding Instructions

Unfortunately, talent doesn't come with care and feeding instructions. Without an understanding of what is required for an individual air talent to succeed, even the most gifted new hire may not reach his or her potential. In a case like that, it takes a year or two for the talent to leave or be asked to move on. What went wrong?

Let's go back to the garden analogy. You came home from the garden club with some big, fancy bulbs. The picture on the box showed a huge, exotic flower, but, unfortunately, the box was without instructions. How much water is needed? How much sun?

There may be nothing wrong with the talent you have chosen. But when you have to play a guessing game with insufficient information, there is a chance of damaging the talent, or at least failing to create an environment where talent, like that fancy flower, can blossom.

If you found something you did not recognize in your garden, you would cut it back without knowing what it was (even though it could be something wonderful). The same goes for air talent. Veteran airchecker **Dan Vallie**, with Vallie-Richards Consulting, puts it well when he advises programmers to let talent go out on a limb as far as they can. "Do not restrict them until they find their range of potentials and limitations. It's better to reel back after a while than to have to keep pushing them out there."

A great aircheck session with a trained PD can move talent along faster than any other tool. Progress may be painstakingly slow. Talent improves, step-by-step, day-by-day. Frustratingly, the processes sometimes seem to be working in reverse. There is a period of intense growth, followed by what sound like patches of mediocrity, where all seem to have been in vain. What you may really be hearing is the talent searching for ways to implement suggestions and ideas you have

discussed. Have faith and *continue* the process. If you are on the right path, positive change will come.

When done correctly, airchecking can be a solution to the dilemma facing managers and programmers around the world, who complain, "I can't find good talent. I've listened to dozens of tapes and they are all bad or mediocre." Or, "This is a good station in a reasonably-sized market, with a good job that pays a decent salary — why can't we find the right people?" The answer is *develop them*. Here is the aircheck method we use at Geller Media International . . .

## Basic Aircheck Rules

**1** Always have a tape of the show you are discussing on hand. You may want to transcribe it, word for word, to emphasize specifics. Keep in mind, a transcript can destroy context (i.e., sarcasm, irony, humor all get left behind with the loss of vocal inflection. This often happens when a talent receives a nasty call or complaint letter with specific quotes included. Inevitably, the *context* is *missing*. A discussion can degenerate quickly if the actual facts of the case are in dispute. Having the tape allows you to not only look at the content, but also the *context* of an event on the tape.

**2** Focus on one thing at a time. Sometimes an aircheck session turns into a "dump" session, in which talent unburdens him- or herself of a lot of thoughts having nothing to do with the show. A double standard applies. It's acceptable, to a point, for the host to digress. After all, a PD is uniquely able to understand pressures talent may be under (and even, in some cases, do something to alleviate them). As a manager, however, you are there to aircheck, not to vent. *Listen* to the talent. Should you hear the makings of a great show taking place in your office, encourage the talent to put that *on-the-air*. **Caution:** Don't let these diversions distract you from the aircheck session; just move the subject back to the tape and the talent, at the most appropriate moment.

**3** Tell the truth. Trained communicators sense when you are fibbing

**4** Reinforce the positive by starting with the good stuff. Remember to acknowledge goals that have been achieved.

**5** Be fair. Criticism goes in very deep. No matter how angry you are, avoid verbalizing your negative reactions to a piece until you can express them calmly and rationally.

(Continued — see *Powerful Aircheck Sessions* on page 10)

# Rivers Interview — Part 2

(Continued from page 1)

**TR:** Steve, What do you think are the biggest problems and challenges facing radio programmers today?

**SR:** You've got to get your arms around the *cluster* philosophy. The genie is out of the bottle and the "old days" are just that. Accept change. Your station will probably be sold soon, or has been already been sold (maybe several times). You've got to be a *leader* and calm the troops. Keep them focused on your goal, and encourage them to do their best. The rest tends to take care of itself. It's hard for anyone to work in a vacuum, but that's become a way of life over the past few years. If you're good at what you do, there's less to worry about. All companies are constantly searching for good people, especially Program Directors.

**TR:** As a PD tries moving up the food chain in this consolidated world we live in, are there any things that he/she might do that would *hurt* their chances?

**SR:** It's become more true than ever: Be nice to people on your way up, they will be the same people you'll work for on your way down. I think you should be careful of dealing in absolutes, like "I'd *never* work for *that* company". Be aware of what you say in print or on panels. Things have a way of coming back to haunt you when least expected.

**TR:** You've always been known as a "jock's PD". What are some of the things a great Program Director can do to bring out the best in his/her air personalities?

**SR:** It's funny you should say that and I appreciate it. I've always tried to go the extra mile to put up with a lot of off-air nonsense with air talent *if* I'm getting some incredible radio, on-the-air. I think you've got to support your talent like you support members of your family. Stand by them, protect them from anyone getting in their way, but make it clear that in order for that to happen, you expect their very *best* performance, all the time. If jocks know you're on their side, and you respect their abilities, they'll work their tails off for you. I've been extremely lucky to have worked with some of the best talent ever heard on American radio.

**TR:** Let's turn our attention to new technology. Where do the new-tech options fit in the battle for present radio listeners' minds?

**SR:** Right now it's the calm before the storm. It will take time for some of this to take hold and for listeners to feel

it's worth the investment for new receivers, etc. However, compare the advent of the CD to the DVD and look how quickly the public is adopting it. Three years ago the average price for a DVD player was around \$700. Now, they can be found for less than \$300. When movies on VHS first became available, the price was close to \$100 to purchase. Now, just months after a film has left the theatres, you can own your copy on DVD for less than \$30. Timelines are definitely being compressed.

**TR:** Do you find that most of the "old-fashioned" basics still apply to format radio in the year 2000?

**SR:** Yes. I think we've all done a good job of applying the science to what we do. Now we need to encourage programming as an *art-form* — without losing sight of the

basics that win ratings books. The playing field has been leveled to a great degree. You can have a major market talent like **Howard Stern** on a station in a town of 80,000 or in a city of 8 million. 20 years ago, that was impossible. Stations in medium markets are using the same type of research to fine-tune their stations as the majors. When it comes to the technical side of programming, there are no secret weapons. Today, stations that apply the basic laws of good radio programming will stay in the hunt. However, the stations that apply the basics with a

high degree of *entertainment value* become the *monsters* that write the ratings books time after time.

**TR:** Give us an example of some of the old basics that still apply — and some that no longer do.

**SR:** Having mentioned Stern, I think he has proved beyond doubt that having a *local* morning show is far less important than having an *entertaining* morning show. The station with the higher entertainment value *wins* — hands down, every time.

**TR:** Okay, now let's do *Steve Rivers: The Futurist*. Do you think we'll recognize "radio" (the way we know it) in the year 2005?

**SR:** I think so, but the listener will have many more choices besides traditional AM and FM stations.

**TR:** What do you see down the road in, say, 2010?

**SR:** High Def digital radio will be a reality, making FM radio CD quality and AM stations competitive once again *as music stations* (by technically sounding as good as FM today). I think audio processing and receivers will improve allowing any station (Continued — See *Rivers Part 2* on page 5)

**Support talent like  
you support members  
of your family. Stand  
by them. But make it  
clear that in order for  
that to happen, you  
expect their very  
best performance.**



# Rivers Interview — Part 2

(Continued — from page 4)

**SR:** (continued) to broadcast surround sound using just two speakers, and the same technology available today on Sony TVs. By then, anyone who wants it will have broadband access for audio and video on the net. By then, Internet 2 may become a reality offering less network congestion. Internet and satellite radio receivers will have been installed as a standard feature on cars for the past five years. Internet radio will become part of the set-top convergence accessible in your living room and will be as interactive as television, with artist and concert information, for example, available at the touch of a button. Picture listening to your favorite new artist explaining how she came up with the idea for the song you're hearing on the radio. I think by then, Internet radio stations will evolve into mini MTVs or VH1s. Jocks will introduce music video DVDs, so you can *watch* your music as well as listen to it.

You'll be able to easily choose (key word, *easily*) from a menu of 500 or more of your favorite stations from around the world, including radio stations *you* create that guarantees to play only *your* favorite songs. You might even be able to create your own lineup of DJs or superstars from a databank of stored voices. Is it live, local or memorex will become less of a question than is it *entertaining*? In short, *anything* you can conceive is very possible.

**PI:** Do you think PURs will continue to decline for terrestrial radio, as they have for the past several years?

**SR:** As these other choices we've talked about become reality, I think persons-using-radio for traditional radio will decline further.

**PI:** Loaded question: *why* do you think it's happening?

**SR:** When was the last time you heard a radio station that made you go "wow!"? Programmers have been struggling so much with how to play the "cluster game" that we've become less focused on doing one thing per day on our stations to make the audience wonder *what's coming next*. The art of anticipation has grown cold. We no longer keep the audience in suspense. Granted, there seems to be fewer hours per day to set aside for creativity — *but somehow you're going to have to make room for it*. Right now, that should be the *priority* at your station. If the PD doesn't have time, then form a "creative team" within the station. Use people like **Gerry Tabio** to teach you how to brainstorm for new ideas. Keep negative thinkers inside the station away from this

team. Give them the **power** to come up with new ideas! And don't let *anybody* get in your way.

**PI:** New ideas mean new employment opportunities opening up at major stations. What's your take on the importance of an Imaging Director or Creative Director at either the station or cluster level?

**SR:** I feel now, more than ever, that the Creative Director position ranks right up there with PD, MD, and Marketing. There are so many choices for a listener to pick from when considering traditional radio, CD, and soon satellite and wireless Internet, that it's critical that every available effort is made to "stand out" on the dial. Daily improvement of production value should be a PD's primary goal. What can we do or say today that makes us *different*?

**Granted, there are fewer hours each day to set aside for creativity — but somehow you're going to have to make room for it. Right now, that should be the priority at your station.**

**PI:** Of the new media that will be available in 2001, which do you think is a bigger threat to the future of terrestrial radio? Streaming online webcasts? Or digital satellite radio?

**SR:** I think it depends who gets to people in their cars first! The one thing I learned from my former AMFM partner, **David Lebow** is that even though Bert Hinkler flew *further* than Charles Lindberg, with a *better plane* — nobody cares! Chuck

will *always* get the credit. New technology must be served as simple and easy as possible before people really begin to use it. I'm impressed with the hustle that the satellite radio companies have begun. Doing deals to have your "band" featured on car radios is *huge*. I think wireless Internet and satellite are both going to be problems for terrestrial radio, but the first to produce a new experience that gives listeners more choices and makes it *easy-to-use* grabs the brass ring.

**PI:** Dot-com is a major force in today's economy and radio sales. How would you rate radio's use of the Internet thus far? And what are the implications for radio programming?

**SR:** I would say that radio has barely begun to use the Internet. As a CHR programmer of some mature Top 40s over the years, those kinds of stations are always challenging to program. They must always re-invent themselves every few years to stay in the game. The trick is knowing what to keep and what to throw away. In major markets, there is less room to experiment because of the possible cash-flow implications. However, with the Internet — *why not* (Continued — see **Rivers Part 2** on page 6)

# Rivers Interview — Part 2

(Continued — from page 5)

**SR:** (continued) use it to create web-channels that can do things the mother ship can't get away with? How about hip-hop on one web-channel, alternative or another? Trance on a third. Whatever the leading audience members would consider hip. Why not? *KISS-FM* is already headed there. **Shadoe Stevens'** *RhythmRadio.com* is a great site for world music. Why couldn't your CHR get away with it? It's also a great way to train new entertainers with little risk.

**PD:** So what can stations do to better exploit the 'Net?

**SR:** Ask that same question, whenever possible, of your audience at music tests, on your website — in a mall, etc. They'll give you some very creative answers.

**PD:** What are some of the cleverest ways you've heard stations promoting their websites on-air?

**SR:** I heard a station's morning team set up a really off-color joke and said that the punchline would be available on their website 10 minutes later, or waiting for them when they got to work. That's a great way to move people from the radio to the web. Even if you didn't go online to get the punchline, it might cause you to check out the website at a later day or time.

**PD:** Some of us have the mindset that "these are the good old days" and that "radio today is still more fun than you should be allowed to have". How do you effectively communicate this message to the troops at station level?

**SR:** I think that comes from within. What we do should never be taken for granted. Do you really want to trade places with someone inside an insurance company? If you're still not getting that same rush when you open the mic, that you did the first year you were on-the-air, then you need to recharge your battery. The same is true of PDs. If you don't feel pride when you hear your station on in a mall, something's wrong. I know times are different than they were several years ago — but that's just it. *Different*. You can't think of it in terms of better or worse. Let go of things you can't control and concentrate your efforts on things you can control. Like improving your station's production, thinking of a new way to sell your position, or coming up with a fresh contest idea. If you change or add one new thing per day, your radio station will begin to take on new life and magic starts pouring out the speakers. I've seen it happen and the change inside the building is incredible.

**PD:** The interaction between Sales and Programming has

come a long way over the past 20 or 30 years. What's your take on where it's at — and where it's headed?

**SR:** The radio stations where the GM, PD and the Sales Managers understand the importance of how the station sounds in relation to how much money it can generate are rare. Everyone is under pressure to perform within a large, public company; but those three or four people must learn to function as a team. The PD must be willing to work with the Sales department, but even more importantly — the Sales managers and especially the GM must respect the product they're trying to sell. That's why a written, agreed-upon goal inside the station is important. It forces the decision-makers to stay focused on what is important for the station to succeed. It helps when the management team is composed of "big thinkers".

**PD:** As the new world order of consolidation further takes hold, do you envision different kinds of promotional opportunities?

**SR:** I think we're just starting to see radio companies thinking about building their own version of "Amazon.com". With the purchasing power of a company the size of Clear Channel, they should be able to offer incredible deals to their listeners on just about any product important to their core audiences and make money by doing it.

**PD:** What's your philosophy in dealing with value-added client-promotions?

**SR:** Internally, the Promotion, Sales and Programming management must stay focused on the goal of the station. Run everything through that filter. If a value-added promotion doesn't make sense in its current form — try to reshape it into something that does work for the audience. If you can't, it must die a quick death.

**PD:** We've got year 2001 straight ahead of us. What do you think are the growth formats of the next year or two?

**SR:** I think you're going to see more 35-44 music formats as America continues to turn gray. These, too, will run in shorter cycles. The world is definitely spinning faster in every category — especially music and video entertainment, so new formats tend to lose sizzle faster than ever. Novelty for something new is intense, but so is the fade to black! The other side of that is that baby boomlet formats will come and go as music cycles continue to accelerate. That's why placing stress on improving station entertainment value is critical. The hits will always be important in any music format — but that's just the ticket to get you in the door. In today's world — you need the right music and something more to keep their attention.

**PD:** Do you see any other new hybrid formats breaking out anytime soon?

**SR:** The number of Trance music channels on the Web fascinates me. (Continued — see **Rivers Part 2** on page 7)

If you change or add one new thing per day, your radio station will begin to take on new life and magic starts pouring out the speakers. The change inside the building will be incredible.

## Rivers Interview — Part 2

(Continued — from page 6)

**SR:** (Continued). People are looking for a safe escape. An adventure. According to the most recent Internet study done by Arbitron, listeners are craving more than just local stations in their areas and most would be willing to pay for it. Of course, this applies to *music* choices, but I'm wondering if there isn't something more? A chance to be transported *elsewhere* for a few minutes? If I were Direct TV, I'd offer the chance to watch not just my local stations, but stations in NYC, San Francisco, LA, Chicago, Atlanta, London, Sydney, etc. The same for radio stations. Offer me the chance to dial in Capital-FM in London, RTL, Berlin, or Z100, KISS108, 99X, Mega100, KIIS-FM — in fact, any of those stations in my living room and you've got a winner. Even better — put 'em in my car! Those dead-ass music channels are a waste of money. But hey, that's just my opinion.

**TR:** Let's reflect back just a second on your career. I know you've been in radio for, what is it, 27 years — 25 of them as a programmer. What was it that attracted you to programming management?

**SR:** I sucked as a jock!?! Seriously, **Jerry Clifton** turned my brain on. He put all of us at 96X/Miami through "programming boot camp". I think it was *then* that I realized that I could probably be an "okay" 10pm-2am jock, but I would have less control of my destiny than if I were actually *in charge* of the programming. So, I opted to move anywhere it took to become a PD. Thankfully, it turned out to be Providence, Rhode Island!

**TR:** Of all the stations you've been involved with, what do you think are your greatest accomplishments?

**SR:** I think leaving WZOU/Boston and going across the street to KISS108. Not only did we turn KISS around, but also I had the chance to undo what we had started at 'ZOU (which is now WJMN, by the way). Replacing the legendary **Sunny Joe White** was no easy task, but being the competing PD and then walking inside KISS made for quite an adventure. The other thing that comes to mind is signing on WKTU/New York and having the station perform a clean sweep in its first full book. We had an incredible team assembled for that one, behind the scenes. **Jimmy deCastro** as GM, **Bev Tilden** as Marketing Manager, **Bill Schultz** as the production wizard, **Scott Elberg** as the sales pit bull, my partner **Guy Zapoleon**, Broadcast Architecture, and **Mark**

**Ramsey** from NOVA on research, and **Scott Ginsburg** writing the checks. Oh, and a rookie in the wings. **Frankie Blue**, fresh from Miami ready to take over the PD chair I had been keeping warm. Clean sweep in the Big Apple and big smiles inside that building for the first time in a long time!

**TR:** Who are the people who have been most influential in your career — and what did you learn from them?

**SR:** So many people indirectly. The entire staff at WAKY/Louisville from 1965 to 1972. **Bill Hennes** at WKLO and CKLW. **John Landecker** at WIBG and WLS. **Dr. Brock** at Super CFL. **Jack McCoy** at KCBQ. **Jay Thomas** at Big WAYS and WAPE. From **Sis and Stan Kaplan** I learned to think big and how important showbiz is to the success of a station. **Kent Burkhart** taught me the basics and saw something in me as a PD. **Jerry Clifton** for jumpstarting my thinking. **Dan Mason** for putting me in a position to learn and teaching me how to think like a listener. He doesn't get enough credit for being a killer PD. **Scott Shannon** for so many reasons. Following him at Q105 was like getting a master's degree in programming. **Charles Giddens** for teaching me some basic skills as an executive. **John London & Ron Engleman** for showing how a professional morning team is supposed to be. **Rick Dees** for showing me how it's done in a major market. **Wally Clarke** for showing me how to play mental chess. **Rich Balsbaugh** for many reasons, but mainly for standing by his convictions, no matter what. **Scott Ginsburg** for demonstrating the *true art* of thinking big. Finally, **Jim deCastro**. This man changed my life

by *leading by example*. Big thinker, strong leader, and solid human being.

**TR:** Over the years, I know you've hit some major league promotional home runs. What are some of your all-time faves?

**SR:** Well, there was the WAPE Payroll Game that got us double digits (*and* delisted by Arbitron). We came up with the Free Money Card and the idea of telemarketing to high diary return areas in 1979 at KOPA/Phoenix so the listener would be waiting for a second call from us to win cash during times they had already specified. We gave away Porsches at KIIS-FM like they were candy bars. The KIIS-FM "Star Cruiser" that **Mark Driscoll** and I named just minutes from airtime. There were so many good ones at Kiss 108, like the **Todd Wallace** inspired "KISS \$108,000 Birthday Balls" (which was the prelude to all the million dollar games we're seeing these days). And hundreds more over the years. I once strapped a jock into a chair at a mall (Continued — see **Rivers Part 2** on page 8)

# Rivers Interview — Part 2

(Continued — from page 7)

**SR:** (continued) and forced him to listen to Barry Manilow music as long as possible to set a world's record. (That one I'm not proud of!)

**PR:** How do you feel about radio stations talking about TV on-air? Are we just promoting the competition when we do that — or is it just one more way for us to reflect the lifestyle of the target?

**SR:** That falls under the same category as, if the temperature is the same as the competition's frequency, do you change it when you do the weather? Like people would really notice! We can't control what people say or do and I think there are far more important issues on which to focus. Besides, who's to say that a listener wouldn't thank you for the reminder?

**PR:** I know you're a believer in the philosophy that "readers are leaders." What are some of the great books you've read recently that you've found applicable to radio programming?

**SR:** So many to list. Let's start with **Tom Peters'** new book, *The Project 50 (Reinventing Work): 50 Ways To Transform Every Task*. I've had this in my briefcase for the past 90 days.

*The Project 50* shows you how to "reframe" even routine tasks into what he calls, "WOW" projects. I urge every PD and GM to buy this book. I like **Watts Wacker's** new book, *The Visionary's Handbook*. It will help you put your future into perspective. *The Winner Within* by **Pat Riley**. **David Ogilvy's** autobiography. *Clicking* by **Faith Popcorn**. And a *must-read*, again and again: *The 22 Immutable Laws of Branding* by **Al and Laura Ries**. I read a ton of different magazines, as well. If you haven't yet, pick up *Business 2.0*, *Fast Company* and *Wired*. Lots of killer articles, and a list of great websites to check out.

**PR:** For our younger readers, what are some of the "classics" that every young PD who's going to make it should internalize, if they haven't already?

**SR:** Go buy *all* the Ries and Trout books on branding, positioning and marketing. Read them. And *re-read* them!

**PR:** If you could invite five non-radio people to a dinner party, who would they be?

**SR:** **Watts Wacker**, this guy is about 500 years ahead of us. **John Parkihal**, so I could see Watts Wacker and John in conversation. **Bill Clinton** — just because. **Tom Peters**, who could mix it up with Wacker and Parkihal. And **Steve Jobs**, so I could ask him why he whacked the Newton MessagePad.

**PR:** Steve, you've had a stellar career, second-to-none.

You never know where the next great idea is going to come from, or from who. Nobody has all the answers and no one is perfect. Learn from everyone.

As you look back over 27 years, do you have any regrets?

**SR:** No, I don't think I would have anything differently, except for staying in better contact with my friends and balancing the work and personal lives better.

**PR:** What else would you have done "better"?

**SR:** I would have worried less about the little things and spent more time making that "one thing" different and fresh each day on my stations.

**PR:** In your non-Radio spare time, how do you unwind?

**SR:** I like to hang out with the kids, take my wife to dinner, and watch movies.

**PR:** And when you're listening to radio *recreationally*, which formats get Steve Rivers as a P1, 2, and 3?

**SR:** News/Talk has moved to the top of the list. Other than that, I'm a scanner.

**PR:** Who's on your car-radio pre-sets in Seattle?

**SR:** KPLZ, KISS, KZOK, KJR-FM, KIRO, KOMO.

**PR:** How 'bout when you're in Phoenix?

**SR:** KMLE, The Mix, KZZP, KKFR.

**PR:** Are there any life-lessons or "words-to-live-by" that factor into how you approach your work and your life?

**SR:** A few.

✓ I think the important thing is to treat everyone *fairly*. I'd rather give someone the benefit of the doubt.

That has burned me at times, but at least I feel better when I do it.

- ✓ I think one of the things that have helped me most over the years is *being a student* Of the business. Of other businesses. Of People. Of history, etc.
- ✓ There are so many ways of looking at things and you never know where the next great idea is going to come from, or from who. Nobody has all the answers and no one is perfect. Learn from everyone.
- ✓ Read. Read *everything* that catches your eye.
- ✓ Finally, strive to *balance* your work life and your personal life. Get away from your radio station and go somewhere. Even if its just a few hours away. If you're in a small market, visit a larger market. If you're in a major market, visit a smaller market.
- ✓ Never forget your past.
- ✓ Be true to yourself.
- ✓ Oh yeah, turn off the radio once and awhile. Sometimes "dead air" is *exactly* what you need.

**PR:** Which format do you think is best poised for continued audience gains over the next two or three years?

**SR:** Consider that the Latino population explosion will continue over the next decade. That's certainly one direction I would be looking to explore. As we know, Latinos love *all* (Continued — see **Rivers Part 2** on page 9)



## Programmer's Digest

# The Insert

### Perceptual Benchmarking Research

#### Track Your TV With *Precision*

A Radio Index TV Campaign Awareness study gives you a precision-track on past week & past month perceptual-levels of every radio station's TV campaign in your market (pinpointing share-of-mind, week-by-week)

## radio index

Call Toll-Free! **1-800-528-6082**

### Complete Sets Of "PD" Volume One

**The perfect way to replace those back issues of *Programmer's Digest* that have mysteriously "disappeared"!**

A \$295 value!

**Just \$99 US/Canada**

or \$115 for International Air Mail

"PD" Volume 1  
encompasses  
issues #1-50

Call:  
**(480)  
443  
3500**

*CLEAR CHANNEL DOESN'T  
OWN US!*

**...but we work for  
a lot of their stations!**

**moffett**  
MOFFETT PRODUCTIONS, INC.

**This is what "Big Voice Imaging" is all about.  
And you can afford it, no matter who owns you.  
...and we're FAST!**

**CALL 1-800-HOTT-ADS FOR A FREE DEMO!**

### Promotion/Marketing Consultation

Looking for contests that drive numbers?

**Contest**  
Central

**1-800  
528-  
6082**

Building  
Blocks  
To  
Better  
Ratings

### Programmer's Digest — Suggestion Box

**Have any suggestions on how  
we can make "PD" better?**

Call (480) 443-3500 Fax (480) 948-7800  
Or e-mail — [tw3tw3@aol.com](mailto:tw3tw3@aol.com)

### Female Voiceover Talent

**Maureen Rivers Means  
MOMentum!**

#### On-air around the world

"The Queen Of Whispers!" — Marc Driscoll

"Maureen is, by far, *the* best female voice talent.  
She is *key* to the production of our station."

— Bill Shultz, Production Director, KTU/New York

"I used Maureen at Kiss FM and I *had* to have her  
here at Mega. She *nails it!* Every time!"

— Ron Shapiro, Mega 100/Los Angeles

#### Maureen "Mo" Rivers — voice of ...

- ♦ KTU/New York
- ♦ Mega 100/LA
- ♦ Capital Radio/London
- ♦ K101/San Francisco
- ♦ WJMN/Boston
- ♦ Alice/Detroit
- ♦ Jammin' Oldies in Chicago and Pittsburgh
- ♦ WLOL/Minneapolis
- ♦ Star 101.5/Seattle
- ♦ WEZB/New Orleans
- ♦ KHYL/Sacramento
- ♦ KMLE/Phoenix
- ♦ NorthsoundTwo/Scotland

... and many more!

**Maureen Rivers** (425) 430-1498  
e-mail: [voqueen@aol.com](mailto:voqueen@aol.com)

Represented by Marc Guss, William Morris Agency, New York  
**(212) 903-1195**

**More Useful Products & Services On Back**

## Programmer's Digest

# The Insert

### Media Brokerage Services

## Clarity

**Another Reason Smart Owners Call On America's Leading Independent Broker**

In a colorful business like radio, sellers have a tendency to stretch the facts a little.

By the way, so do buyers.

What every transaction needs is a **filter** — through which all the participants can each see things more clearly.

That kind of equilibrium only comes from an experienced broker. Someone who *knows* the business from every angle.

Naturally, we're talking about ...  
Gary Stevens & Co. Who better?

**Gary Stevens & Co.** 203-966-6465

### Voice Imaging & Production

1. Imagine how extreme it would sound to have Bobby Ocean on the air in your market.

2. Much cooler: on your station..

3. Make it so.

phone - (415) 472-5625

[www.bobbyocean.com](http://www.bobbyocean.com)

**BOBBY OCEAN Voicebacks**  
JUMP OUT OF THE RADIO!

### Operation: Pass It On

**Have you told a friend about Programmer's Digest?**  
**Would you (please)???**

### Programmer's Digest — Volume One

**Have your back issues of Programmer's Digest been mysteriously "disappearing"?**

**Over 90% of our subscribers say they keep their back issues (or try to)!**

Complete sets of Volume One are now available!

**Just \$99 US/Canada**  
or \$115 for International Air Mail  
A \$295 value!

**"PD" Volume 1**  
encompasses  
issues #1-50

Call:  
**(480)  
443  
3500**

### News & Lifestyle Syndicated Features

**Ever Wish You Had The Staff To Do "Sweeps-Series" Like TV?**

**NOW You DO!**



#### **"Nelson's Lifestyle File"**

**Weekly sponsorable feature**

- ✓ Influences two diary-weeks when scheduled over Wed/Thur
- ✓ Hot-button issues sharply written & presented in conversational style
- ✓ Appointment-marketing at its best: W25-54 go out of their way to listen

**Monica Nelson Media**

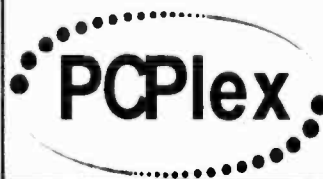
**For A Free Demo —  
1-888-873-6217**

**Recent AP Award Winner —  
1st Place — Best Talk Program!**

### Computer Presentations

**Simple Math:**

22 years of radio experience  
+ today's multimedia technologies  
=  
**powerful communications  
with clients and listeners!**



602-494-4341

Email: [info@pcplex.com](mailto:info@pcplex.com)

PowerPoint consulting, production and training for radio!

**Turn Over To See *More* Useful Products & Services**

# The Most Effective Promotions Of All Time Scavenger Hunts

It's been said that word-of-mouth is the best advertising money can't buy. (See **TF** issue #5, page 1 for deep background). When listeners are having genuine fun as they get involved in a contest/promotion, they'll often tell a friend about it, thus enabling you to, at the very least, "lease" a few of these otherwise unbuyable impressions. And build great audience momentum.

One of the most effective "involvement" promotions I've ever seen is the **Scavenger Hunt**. This promotion keeps building, day-by-day (usually over a term of 2-3 weeks), attracting more and more attention and town talk (while forcing daily re-cumming incidents) right up to the final (pre-determined) day.

## How It Works:

- A list of items (some hard to find, most *not* so hard to find) is announced on-the-air for listeners to collect. Some stations assign "points" based on how scarce the items are (most prefer to keep it simple in design, sans points)
- The person (or team) who collects the greatest number of items (or points) wins a big cash prize, usually \$10,000. The bigger the cash, the better the participation levels, and the bigger the audience spike you can generate. Cash consolation prizes are a good idea (\$5,000 for 2<sup>nd</sup> place, \$1,000 for 3<sup>rd</sup>, maybe \$100 for each person/team that shows up with all the items. (In case of a tie, draw.) (Continued — see **Scavenger Hunts** on page 10)

## Rivers — Part 2

Continued —  
from page 8

**SR:** (continued) different kinds of music, but relating to their culture is vital. What I'm saying is there is much more to developing formats than just music. Latino Hot Hits, Latino AC, Latino Jammin' Oldies, Latino Hip Hop. Those will *all* be big formats in the next three years.

**TF:** What, if anything, cheeses you off about radio programming — do you have any pet peeves about our profession?

**SR:** That PDs rarely get the creative time-outs needed to give their stations an extra bit of magic dust. For many reasons we've become "managers" rather than *programmers*. If I were a GM and my PD didn't ask for a few days off per month just to hang out at home, the malls, and the streets to conduct market monitors, I would be suspect. Get *outside* the station! Visit other markets. If you're part of a chain (and who isn't these days?), switch places with another PD for a week. You'll be surprised how many ideas you come up with for your station (and vice versa)

**TF:** Finally, how do we create "better radio" when the PD today is faced with so many new challenges and obstacles (like increased spotloads, minimized promotional budgets, and value-added hell)?

**SR:** I understand the daily grind as much as the next guy. Every 30 days is a new report card. The pressure to increase revenue to drive stockholder price, etc. I get it. I just wish there was a system where we could focus on the *creative*. We need to train the PDs, MDs, Production Directors, Performers and General Managers of *tomorrow*. So much of what we do is science, and I do think we've

done a good job of applying that to programming. However, more than ever, the creative has gotten lost. When was the last time you heard an aircheck of a station and went, "Wowl"? I bet it's been awhile. The playing field between major and medium markets has been leveled to a great degree. While you may have a few more promotional dollars in the majors, most medium markets are doing the same research as the larger markets. So, that's no longer the "edge" it once was. The difference between major market and medium market air talent is not as glaring as it was say, 25-30 years ago. Overall, we've gotten better at what we do.

**TF:** So, what makes the difference?

**SR:** Same as always — *magic* out of the speakers. Air talent that can convince you that he or she is having the time of their life on the radio! That the next song you hear is going to have you singing down the highway! That your station is so entertaining and unpredictable they'll have to stick around for that major

announcement at 5pm!

If there's anything we need to really teach in the next few years, it is *Entertainment*.

Increase the  
"E" — and  
watch your  
ratings go  
UP.

Good luck. I'll  
be listening.

More than ever, the  
creative has gotten  
lost. When was the  
last time you heard  
an aircheck of a  
station and went,  
"Wowl"?



**Steve Rivers**

- Resides in Seattle
- Presently engaged in several projects he prefers to keep confidential
- E-mail: [SRivers@aol.com](mailto:SRivers@aol.com)

TW Tip #1126, #2163, #3262, #4132, #6233, #7278, #9218, #15076, #16102, #21046

# The Most Effective Promotions Of All Time **Scavenger Hunts**

(Continued — from page 9)

■ Logistically, a new item is drip-feed announced on-the-air each day (usually on the morning show) or several times a day (so each personality can be part of the buzz). Announcing one item a day for 3 weeks means listeners need to collect up to 15 items (announcing 4 times each weekday for 2 weeks will result in 40 such items).

■ Some stations have gone so far as to announce a different item each hour; but it could be argued that hourly deployment requires way too much involvement by a listener (too many hoops to jump through).

**Wallace Wisdom:** Remember there's a fine line between number of forced-listening occasions listeners are required to listen-for and the point at which most listeners simply *lose interest* (causing your contest to lose steam). The general rule of thumb in Scavenger Hunts: the fewer the items, the larger the scope of participation. (e.g., Most people are already listening at 7:20am anyway, so if 7:20 is your "gateway" to contest-admission, that doesn't require much of a hoop-jump). The other consideration to take on board: TSL can also be helped by *number of listening occasions* — so announcing items at, say, 7:20am, 10:20am, 4:20pm (and perhaps 7:20pm), could improve your QH share level in (both overall and in each daypart).

## Why It Works:

- ✓ **Déjà vu.** At some point in their life, most everyone has participated in a scavenger hunt of some sort (usually as a part of school, work, or club function or maybe at a party). So most folks are already familiar with how it works (and most will associate it with a "fun" experience they've had in the past).
- ✓ **Teamwork.** Because "teamwork" is encouraged, the promotion *radiates* quickly — especially at work

(thus giving you one more entrée to capturing listeners at work). Many participants really get swept up in the spirit of the promotion and recruit their fellow workers; their camaraderie can build interest in your promotion (especially when you feature "fun" items).

- ✓ **"Activity".** When you have participants listening, in eager anticipation, for a soon-to-be-announced item, they're no longer passively listening — they're *active* participants (actives tend to generate higher TSL than passives).
- ✓ **Reflects Your City.** Scavenger Hunt is a great way to bond with "locals", by making sure some of the items have a local tie (like "a souvenir program from the Arizona Diamondbacks Opening Day in 1998"). Even those who don't participate can enjoy a mental picture you've painted about big local events.
- ✓ **"Interesting" items push the fun factor.** Aim for "slice of life". Try to play to the theater in the listener's mind (make each item something listeners can picture or re-live. "An 8-track tape". "A picture of you inside a British Telecom phone-booth". "An America West Airlines barf bag." Strive for creativity (items that are likely to generate town-talk or a chuckle).
- ✓ **Public Service tie-ins.** Strive to include an item or two that reflect local public service organizations. "A receipt for a donation of any clothing items to the Salvation Army" or "a can of food for the Food Bank".
- ✓ **Shameless Self-Promotion.** Think of innovative ways to apply tasteful image-building or the forced-listen dynamic to your list of "items". One item, for example, might be "write down the song Roger Ramjet played at 3:05pm on May 1<sup>st</sup>". Or another item might be "something that has the Magic 88.8 visual logo on it" (downloadable from magic888.com).

(Continued — see **Scavenger Hunt** on pg 11)

## Powerful Aircheck Sessions

Continued —  
from page 3

**6** Let the talent discover along with you what needs to be improved.

**7** **Outline strengths.** Ask a lot of questions. What worked? Why do you want to do this on the radio? What were you trying to say here? Did it connect? Did this make you laugh?

**8** Always end an aircheck session with one or two mutually agreed upon "achievable goals". Pick at least one thing that can easily be accomplished by the next scheduled session. Try to let the talent initiate the goal-setting.

**9** Is there anything on the tape that you could use as a promo?

**10** Have faith — believe in this person's ability to improve.

TW Tip #6234, #13022



Broadcast Consultant and **Creating Powerful Radio** author **Valerie Geller** is President of **Geller Media International**, a programming and management consulting firm for news, talk, information, and personality radio. Geller's new book, *The Powerful Radio Workbook: The Prep, Performance, and Post Production Planning*, (\$US39.95 plus \$US3 S&H) is available on the Geller Media website, [www.gellermedia.com](http://www.gellermedia.com). Reach Valerie by phone at (212) 580-3385 or e-mail: [vgeller@aol.com](mailto:vgeller@aol.com).



# Promotions Scavenger Hunts

(Continued — from page 11)

## Sales Opps

Certainly, this promotion lends itself to sales opportunities with valued clients. But it's best to be *subtle* with such advertiser tie-ins. Overt co-promotion could cheapen it, detracting from the sizzle (and the overall effectiveness).

- ☐ An obvious co-sponsor can be a local mall (where all participants can gather with their items on a Saturday for the final official tally). Or maybe a theater (or some other large capacity venue).
- ☐ Dare I suggest making one of the items a value-added kiss for a key account? Like "a Coke bottle", "a McDonalds hamburger wrapper", or "a Safeway cash register receipt". It's best to keep any such value-added very broad in scope — something everyone would (or could) easily have easy access to. Avoid like the plague any blatant act of time-consuming crass commercialism, like "an insurance quote from an American Family Insurance agent".
- ☐ Scavenger Hunt can be used to influence a prime prospect the Sales Department has been trying to close for awhile. Best to make such an item totally turnkey for the prospect. Imagine, for example, a salesman walking into a car dealer and handing the owner/manager a box of 500 business cards (which the AE had printed up using the car dealer's own card imprint). The car dealer will say, "What's this for?". Salesman says, "You'll see!" The item might be "Joe Isuzu's business card". Think Joe Isuzu will be impressed with your station's pulling power when 500 people have just come in and asked for his business card?
- ☐ Good\* consolation prizes supplied by clients can also be built-in for promotional mentions. But always remember: cash keeps it clean, and money always screams the loudest. \*Good = *desirable*!
- ☐ If co-promoting with a client, *don't* require a purchase.

## Variations On A Theme

Be guided by your target audience.

- ✓ A Rock station may prefer to reinforce its music image by making all the items *music-related* ("a ticket stub to the Rolling Stones appearance at Sun Devil Stadium").
- ✓ A 12-24 CHR might consider doing a "Back To School Scavenger Hunt" to generate buzz with Teens.
- ✓ A SportsTalk station would probably want to shade the promotion toward sports items or memorabilia.
- ✓ If you've just launched a new morning/breakfast show, you might contain it entirely within the morning show (maybe announcing items at 6:40, 7:40, and 8:40am).
- ✓ Oldies or Standards stations: anything nostalgic works.

## WWWebWWise

Promoting your Scavenger Hunt on the internet is a good idea, as long as you remind web-users to *listen* tomorrow

(morning) for the next item. But *avoid* the temptation to summarize all of the items on your website. This could diminish the effectiveness of the forced-listen mechanisms you've built in to it. If listeners don't *have* to be listening to hear the items announced, there's less chance that you will generate an audience-spike with this promotion. (And *what are the three reasons you want to do any promotion in the first place?* To build Cume. To build Quarter-Hour. Or to build image so tangibly that it *builds* Cume or QH.)

One easy way to effectively involve your website is to make one of the items something that can be downloaded or printed from your website (thus generating traffic).

## Words Of Warning

- Be careful that your items don't involve the use (or lead to the misuse) of public property. A Dallas station learned the hard way a few years ago when one of their Scavenger Hunt items was a hard-to-find, out-of-print book. Listeners left a complete section of the Fort Worth Library in shambles as they homed-in on the last few copies of the book. The station ended up having to write a 5-figure check to the library for repairs (and to quickly restore goodwill, since the library was ready to file a complaint with the FCC). Think through, *up front*, all the chess moves involved in obtaining each item.
- Howard Stern may think it's cute to get callers to call-in on CNN, but most listeners think it's just rude and juvenile. Unless you have another media partner who comes willingly to such an interruption, avoid items like "a videotape of you making faces in the background while a TV weather person does an on-location remote". Turn this around: maybe you can *invite* a TV station's participation — "this afternoon, Gusto Winds from 12 News will be on-location at Bank One Ballpark. If you'd like to get your face in the background for Magic 88.8's Scavenger Hunt, show up at 5:15pm — oh, and bring a can of food for the Salvation Army Food Bank."
- Your official rules (on-air, on your website, and written copies) should stress that participants must obey all laws, traffic rules, and participants cannot destroy or deface public property.

**Personal experience.** I've used this in several markets around the world and can attest to the fact that it works! You'll be amazed at how quickly this promotion kicks off, builds momentum, and gets the whole town talking. Best of all, it works in any format (as long as you slate most of the items to have *relevance* or *interest* to your target audience).

TW Tip #3263, #4133, #9219, #15077, #17061

**"When you counsel someone, you should appear to be reminding him of something he had forgotten, not of the light he was unable to see."**

— 16th Century Spanish Writer **Baltasar Gracian**

TW Tip #7279

# News/Talk & Surveillance

## Nat Sound

### Ambient Sound Is Part Of Your Reporter's Toolbox

For the few radio reporters who actually get out into the field these days, gathering ambient sound can be a very enjoyable part of the job. Ambient sounds (aka "natural sound" in the US) are those sounds that paint a picture of what a person does or are the sounds that surround the interview subject or reporter. Sound-rich grabs (wraps) can give the listener a sense of having "been there". And yet some reporters look for a "quiet place" to conduct an interview or to file a wrap (fearing that the ambient noise will detract from their report). If you feel the need for more control over the sound, you can always play the recorded noise in the background as you file your report (or mix the sound back at the studio). Why not start and finish your report with sound.

**Tips On Recording Weather.** Natural sounds such as wind, rain, thunder are sometimes the most difficult to record. **Wind** is difficult because it causes the mic itself to make a noise, forcing the use of windsocks. You can't record the howling of the wind by simply holding the mic into the air. To get that whistling wind effect, you need to be close to a small hole or crack. You can also successfully record fluttering flags to paint a windy picture. And rustling leaves being swept along the ground will give you a better effect than actual wind in the trees (that comes out a bit mushy). **Rain** is not as easy as it sounds either. The sounds of vehicles splashing through puddles and running water in a gutter will paint a picture of a rainy day better than raindrops on the roof.

**Thunder** can be the most difficult to record because it is unpredictable and if the clap is too close, it can overload the signal going into the recorder.

**Recording Tip:** To protect the mic out in the rain, use a condom. (Seriously!) Some clarity will be lost, but the little raincoat will bring a smile to the interview subject.

TW Tip #10076

Reprinted with permission from John Williams' *Broadcast News*, the Newsletter of the Newsroom  
(To subscribe, e-mail [jwaus@camtech.net.au](mailto:jwaus@camtech.net.au))

## Talk Topics

### Top 10's From Michael Harrison's *Talker's Magazine* (week ending 5/12/00)

To subscribe to *Talkers*, call 413-567-3189 or visit their website [www.talkers.com](http://www.talkers.com)

- **Top Topics:** 1) Scandal/Gossip 2) Politics 3) Foreign Affairs 4) Fire Safety/Govt Responsibility 5) Legal System 6) Technology 7) Gay Rights/The Media 8) Economy 9) Sports 10) Gun Control/Crime & Violence
- **Top Stories:** 1) Rudy's Marriage 2) NY Senate Race 3) Presidential Race 4) Cuban Boy 5) Los Alamos Fire 6) Love Bug 7) Dr. Laura & Gays 8) China Trade Bill 9) NBA/MLB 10) Million Mom March
- **Top People:** 1) Rudy Giuliani 2) Donna Hanover 3) Judith Nathan 4) Hillary 5) Al Gore 6) George W. Bush 7) Elian Gonzales 8) Janet Reno/Alina Fernandez 9) Dr. Laura 10) Bill Clinton/Roy Weaver

## Round-The-World Round-Up

50 easy-to-steal contests, promotions, topicals, and public service projects

❑ **The \$64,000 Answer.** Clear Channel puts their collective contesting brand-stamp on the Regis trivia craze. Monitored on WGST/Atlanta: listen during weekday windows (which are announced on-air and posted on the web). Dial 1-888-560-LOOT when you hear "Be the 64<sup>th</sup> caller!". Answer nine general knowledge questions and work your way up to \$64,000.

❑ **The On-Hold Game.** Three contestants are put on hold by the morning show at 8:45am. They had to stay on-hold the rest of the day. Jocks check-in with them throughout the day (if they don't respond within 5 seconds, they're disqualified). Person on hold the longest wins.

❑ **The Shot Heard 'Round The World.** Just in time for 4<sup>th</sup> of July (where fireworks are legal). Invite listeners to become part of your synchronized, coordinated "shot heard 'round the world" to celebrate America's independence by setting off a firecracker at 6pm on the 4<sup>th</sup>. Do an on-air "countdown" at 5:59:50, complete with sfx of fireworks.

❑ **Throw The Election.** Your morning team dons Halloween masks of Bush and Gore. Invite listeners to come by a local mall (or the station) to throw pies at their favorite candidate to raise money for charity (\$5 a pie). Natural tie-in for a bakery. Great photo opp ("a local radio station . . ."). Keep this up your sleeve for late October.

**MORE TO COME in "TB" Issue #54!**

# Ocean Toons®

Check out the official Bobby Ocean creative web-site at [www.bobbyocean.com](http://www.bobbyocean.com). Full of interesting ideas, links, quotes, production samples, and voiceover demos. E-Mail Osh at [oceanvox@pacbell.net](mailto:oceanvox@pacbell.net)

Jeff Young's Radio 411 ([www.radio411.com](http://www.radio411.com)) is the cyber- home of Ocean Toons and the Bobby Ocean Cartoon Gallery.

## The Digital Age



IF THE DIGITAL AGE IS SUPPOSED TO IMPROVE MY LIFE, THEN WHY AM I DOING A FIVE HOUR SHIFT INSTEAD OF A FOUR HOUR SHIFT?



## This issue of "PD" is dedicated to the memory of Dennis Melbourne aka Mark Denis (1941-2000)

Radio lost another great one when Mark Denis died unexpectedly. After surviving heart bypass surgery earlier this year, he succumbed to a viral infection April 29<sup>th</sup>.

I've never met a nicer human being than Mark Denis — or a more professional broadcaster! His positive "take" on the biz and his unwavering love for life has always been inspiring to me. (For a quick review of some of the great life-lessons learned from Mark, see "PD" issue #50, page 7.)

For the past 15 years, he has done double-duty as the midday traffic reporter and the signature "voice of the station" for KFI/Los Angeles. You've probably heard him, too (and just didn't know it) — he was the anonymous voice that, for decades, has welcomed passengers aboard the Disneyland monorail.

Evidence of Mark's popularity amongst his peers is the fact that over 3,000 people attended his memorial service, which was followed by a fly-by of six LA media helicopters paying their respects.

Two great tributes to this gentle man can be found by logging on to the Los Angeles Radio People website ([www.laradio.com](http://www.laradio.com)) and at KFI online ([www.kfi640.com](http://www.kfi640.com)). The full page obituary which appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* can be viewed at (<http://kfi640.com/images/markdenistimes.gif>). KFI has done a wonderful job of putting together a CD compilation of poignant tributes made by KFI Talk Hosts. For \$6.40 you can receive a copy of the Mark Denis Memorial CD. All of the proceeds will be donated to the Mark Denis Memorial Fund. **What to do:** Send a check or money order made payable to KFI to: KFI Radio Mark Denis CD, 610 South Ardmore Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90005

Don Barrett suggested on his LARP website that perhaps the most fitting tribute would be for KFI to rename their traffic center, **The KFI Mark Denis Traffic Center**. Far be it for me to tell a radio station what they should do (heh-heh-heh), but I think that's a really *strong* idea that even makes *good programming sense* (listeners will get a warm feeling about the station every time they hear it mentioned). (Mark was loved by *listeners*, too!)

We send our love and prayers to his surviving family — wife Nancy, sons Mark Melbourne, Matt Savant, Tim Savant, and daughters Denise Roscoe, Julie Sulick, and Ashley Melbourne. **For those who knew him, Mark Denis will *always* be with us.**



## Programmer's Digest

### Sweepers/Splitters/Bumpers/Liners/Ins&Outs

The station for George Strait a day for the month of May is Kamel Country 108 KMLE/Chandler/Phoenix, the Valley's NEW Country LEADER

(jingle): "Kamel Country 1-0-strait"

Supplying 100% of the daily adult requirement of Beatles. It's Breakfast With The Beatles, on Philadelphia's Classic Hits station, 102.9 MGK.

Galaxy Online — the first EVER interactive radio show. On Galaxy 101.

93Q is KKBQ at 92-dot-9 FM! Because we have a transmitter and you don't! (jingle): "93Q Country"

Listen to SA-FM at work. The best way to make your workday suck a little bit less!

(clip): "Buddy, you're in for the ride of your life"

(female): 40 minutes of Rock 101!

(male) 40 minutes of nonstop rock. (clip): "Stand by"

(male) Another 40 minute rock block. (fem) Rock 101/KLOL

Music the way it oughta' be played — constantly! New Country 105-7

Still cool — after all these years.

(jingle): "KOOL 94-point-5"

Fox 101.9 FM — It's not just music — it's today's BEST music!

## Elements of Stationality

(Male) Finally, a radio station you can leave on all day.

(Female) The Jammin' workday network.

(Male) On Magic 101 (Female) Sacramento's

(Male) Jammin' Oldies.

This is the station where great music *lives*.

Capital Gold 1548.

Make the day go faster! Take your Oldies to work! It's a Fun Oldies Workday! (jingle): "Oldies 98"

You could win \$1,000 tomorrow morning with the Magic 105.7 Cash Bribe Oldie.

(clip) "Hi this is Paul McCartney and I could be bribed, so keep listening for the Cash Bribe Oldie".

(do wop jingle like ending of "Blue Moon") "Ba-ba-ba-bob, ba-ba-ba-Bop, Cash Bribe Oooooold-ieeeeeee"

Win \$5,000 tomorrow morning on Magic 105.7!

If it's happening now, you're *hearing it now!* Continuous team-coverage of today's biggest stories on 106.5fm, 640am NewsRadio WGST

Mix means variety. Variety means Mix. Mix 96-9

(tease of song snippet montage followed by VO)

All — coming up. On 2DAY 2000, while you work.

Back to more Zone music in 60 seconds on The New Zone 101.5. And now, for the rest of the 59 seconds, I'll just take a nap.

TW Tip #9217

## Coming Up Next In The World's Fastest Growing Programming Newsletter

### What's In The Bottle?

A Commentary On Branding

by  
Jaye Albright

Now in 22 countries!

And ...

**PDQ&A**

Stopset-Placement In  
The Consolidation Era

Also ...

**Sticker Mania**

Part 4

## Subscriptions

### Your Investment:

51 Issues	\$US295
26 Issues	\$US165
18 Issues	\$US129
12 Issues	\$US 88

Complete Set Of "PD"  
Volume One: \$US99

### How To Reach Us:

By Phone: (480) 443-3500  
By Fax: (480) 948-7800  
By E-Mail: Tw3tw3@aol.com  
By Snail Mail or Fed-Ex:  
6044 E. Foothill Drive N.  
Paradise Valley, AZ 85253

© Copyright 2000

Programmer's Digest and  
Todd Wallace/Associates.

All Rights Reserved. No form of this  
publication may be reproduced without  
the written consent of the Publisher.