

# Voices From The Hills

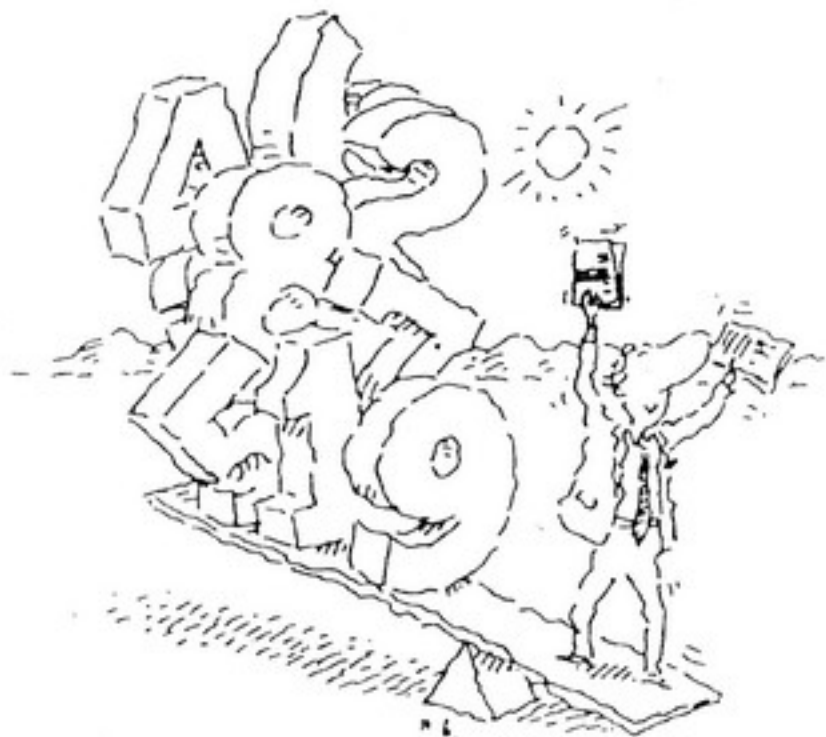
Vermont Association of Broadcasters 35th Anniversary

May 19, 1989



**70 Years of  
Vermont Broadcasting**





# There's strength in numbers

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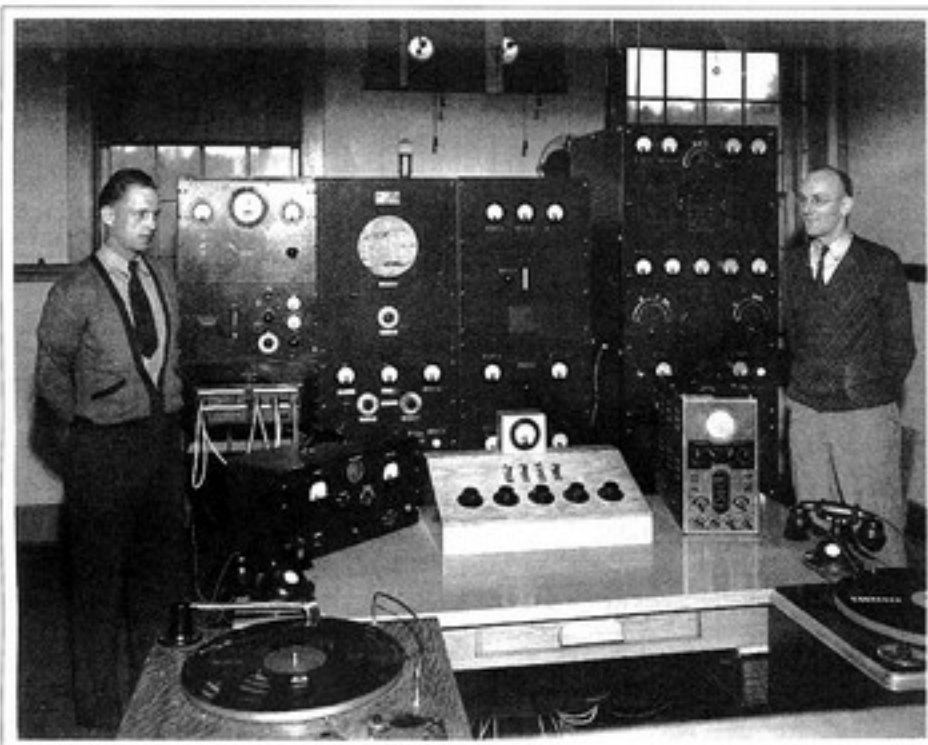
We salute the Vermont  
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account executive  
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**ARBITRON RATINGS**

# 70 Years of Vermont Broadcasting



## Foreword

by Ellie Thompson

The result of two years of research, *Voices From the Hills* tells the story of the first 70 years of Vermont broadcasting (1919-1989), as remembered by those who were in the thick of it at the time.

On April 16, 1987, I got a phone call from Mark Brady, for whom I was working as a part-time announcer. He told me that the Vermont Association of Broadcasters was interested in creating a written record of broadcasting in Vermont. The idea was to preserve as much of our rich and colorful past as possible before so much time has transpired that the memories, keepsakes and stories were lost forever.

I thought it was a splendid idea and was honored that I had been asked to do it. Armed with a tape recorder, I began interviewing present and retired Vermont broadcasters in my quest for facts, photos and "war stories."

I spent many hours at the Vermont Historical Society Library and the Vermont State Library in Montpelier, looking for documentation to go along with the anecdotal record I was assembling through these interviews. I also want to thank Lillie Brown of the NAB for sending me their station records for Vermont which was very helpful with the research.

Special thanks are in order to the VAB Board, Marsha Maurice, Frank Balch, Vic Biondi (of the California Broadcasters Association), and the many Vermont broadcasters both past and present who contributed their memories and memorabilia. □

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p. 26	Don Thurston
pp. 30, 31	Vin D'Acuti
p. 37	David Parnigoni
p. 41	Mark Brady
p. 44	(group) Clara Antonetti
p. 44	(lower right) Cecile Fahl
p. 45	Gov. Kunin's office

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WALL...  
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OF FUN!**



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## VAB Presidents

- 1. E. Dean Finney**  
WTWN, St. Johnsbury ..... 1954-55
- 2. A. E. Spokes**  
WJOY, Burlington ..... 1955-56
- 3. J. Gordon Keyworth**  
WBTV, Bennington ..... 1956-57
- 4. Frank Balch**  
WJOY, Burlington ..... 1957-58
- 5. Stewart T. Martin**  
WCAX-TV, Burlington ..... 1958-59
- 6. Carlo Zezza**  
WCFR, Springfield ..... 1959-61\*
- 7. Craig "Rusty" Parker**  
WDEV, Waterbury ..... 1961-63
- 8. Daniel Ruggles III**  
WSKI, Montpelier ..... 1963-65
- 9. Vincent D'Acuti**  
WJOY, Burlington ..... 1965-67
- 10. Frank McCormack**  
WHWB, Rutland ..... 1967-69
- 11. David E. Parnigoni**  
WKVT, Brattleboro ..... 1969-71
- 12. Alan Noyes**  
WSNO, Barre ..... 1971-73
- 13. Phil Waterman**  
WCAX-TV, Burlington ..... 1973-75
- 14. William Graham**  
WIKE, Newport ..... 1975-77
- 15. Peter Martin**  
WCAX-TV, Burlington ..... 1977-79
- 16. John Kimel**  
WWSR/WLFE, St. Albans ..... 1979-81
- 17. Brian Harwood**  
WRFB, Stowe ..... 1981-83
- 18. Mark Brady**  
WFAD/WCVM, Middlebury ..... 1983-85
- 19. Ken Greene**  
WCAX-TV, Burlington ..... 1985-87
- 20. Tom Pierce**  
WEZF, Burlington ..... 1987-89

\*change from one year term to two year term of office

# Contents

## The Original 13

1919-1954

Like the original 13 colonies of the United States, there were 13 stations in Vermont at the time of the formation of the VAB in 1954.

WVMT (formerly WCAX)	4, 5
WLAK (1922-1925)	6
WNBX (became WKNE)	7
WWSR/WLFE	9-11
WSYB/WRUT	12, 13
WDEV	14, 15
WJOY/WQCR	16, 17
WSKI	18, 19
WHWB/WKLZ	20
WSTJ/WNKV (formerly WTWN)	22
WTSA AM - FM	23
WIKE	26
WBTN/WHGC	27
WCFR/WMKS	29
WDOT	30, 31



## Television and the Rise of FM

1954-1989

Vermont was the last of the then 48 states to have its own TV station. When TV took over network programming, radio turned to local news, FM stereo, and Rock'n'Roll.

WCAX-TV	33-35
WSNO/WORK	36
WKVT AM - FM	37
WWWT/WCVR	39
WNHV/WKXE	40
WFAD/WCVM	41
WVNY-TV, WEZF	42, 43
WYKR, WNCS	43
WRFB, WNNE-TV, WVNR	46
WPTZ-TV, WBFL	47
WIZN, WGLY	47
WJJR, WEQX	48
WXXX, WMXR	48



## Family Broadcasting in Vermont

Broadcasting is still "a family affair" at some Vermont stations, whether it's fathers and sons or husbands and wives.

..... 38, 39



## Women in Vermont Broadcasting

Women have come a long way from cooking shows to positions in sales, news, programming, announcing and management.

..... 44, 45



# WVMT Stereo <sup>620</sup>

## Burlington

### Station 1-ARY

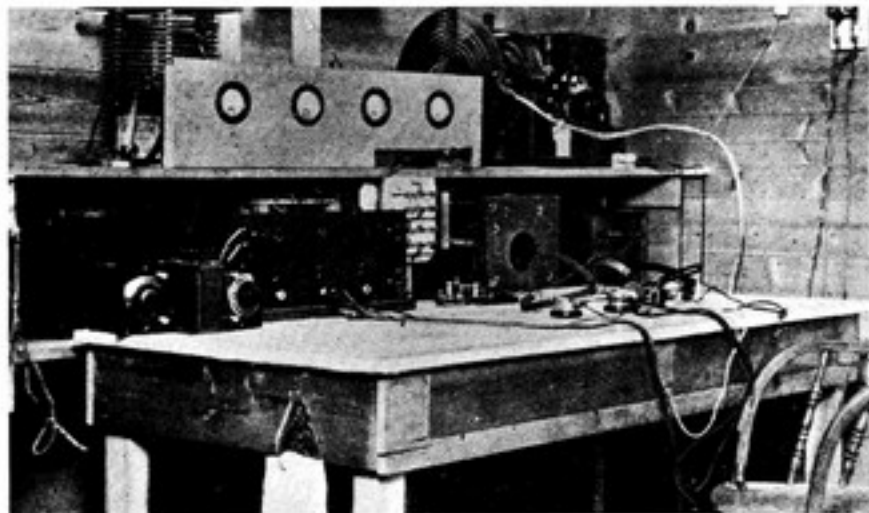
Vermont broadcasting was born on a college campus. Somewhere at sea during World War I was a young man named George Brodie, whose college career at the University of Vermont had been interrupted by the war. After serving as a radio operator in the Navy, he returned to UVM in the fall of 1919. He brought with him both experience and enthusiasm for radio, and is considered the founder of the University of Vermont Radio Club.

The club operated amateur station 1-ARY, which was licensed by the U.S. Department of Commerce in 1919. This was not radio as we know it today, but wireless telegraphy. They were not broadcasting to a mass audience but engaging in two-way, point-to-point wireless communication with other amateur stations, like the "Ham Radio" enthusiasts of today.

And they were very good at it! By 1921 they were in communication with points in 23 states, conversing daily with Princeton. Three club members demonstrated their radio receiving equipment at the State Fair that year. They received and reported news, weather, sports scores and market quotations. The purpose of their exhibit was to demonstrate to Vermont farmers how they could be kept informed of market conditions through radio. The exhibit managed to generate considerable interest, and club members helped install several radio sets for farmers the next summer.

During the International Transat-

lantic Tests conducted by the American Radio Relay League in December of 1921, the signals of 1-ARY were the first to successfully cross the Atlantic and be heard in Scotland. Both the



UVM amateur station 1-ARY circa 1919.

spark and continuous wave sets were used in sending these calls.

Begun in the autumn of 1921, club members and the University's Engineering Department completed the installation of a 100-watt continuous wave transmitter in the spring of 1922. The University's Agricultural College received a license from the Department of Commerce with the call sign "WCAX" at that time as well. It was operated by the University Extension Service and the "C-A-X" stood for "College of Agriculture Extension."

### WCAX

WCAX broadcast the 118th Commencement Program at UVM on June 16, 1922. A receiving set was even installed on the steamer Ticonderoga for use during the alumni boat ride on June 18th. Broadcasts were sporadic at first and regularly scheduled programming did not begin until October 10, 1924.

By then a new station had been built by William M. Hall, an electrical engineering student at the time. WCAX was now a totally separate entity from 1-ARY, although they were housed in the same building. Leon W. Dean had become editor of the Extension Service and became WCAX's first regular radio announcer. For one hour every Friday night, the station broadcast farm information, University events, and lectures by Professors on just about any topic. They even did "remotes," by running phone lines to the Gymnasium and the Old Mill Building to broadcast University basketball games and music recitals.

The University operated WCAX until 1931, and as such it was the forerunner not only of commercial radio in Vermont, but of college radio and public radio as well.

### WCAX Becomes Commercial

Col. H. Nelson Jackson, President of the Burlington *Daily News*, bought the station on Nov. 4, 1931 and transformed it into a commercial enterprise. The station was moved from the campus to College Street in downtown Burlington, and new 125 foot towers were installed. Power was increased to 250 watts in 1937 and a new 250 ft. antenna tower was put on the *Daily News* building.

In 1938 the *Daily News* and WCAX were purchased by Charles P. Hasbrook. WCAX became the Vermont outlet for CBS in 1940, and the power was increased to 1000 watts. Power was again increased in 1947 to 5000 watts. The newspaper was sold, and in 1954 WCAX-TV was born (see

separate article on page 33).

In 1958, the two stations moved to the WCAX Radio-TV Center at 100 Market Square on Shelburne Road. It was the first location designed specifically for broadcasting. In 1960 WCAX radio switched from CBS to NBC, a change from soap operas and classical music to increased local programming.

### WCAX Becomes WVMT

In 1963, WCAX radio was sold to Vermont Radio, Inc. (Simon Goldman, President), which is owned by James Broadcasting Company, Inc. The call letters were changed to WVMT. The station moved to its present location in Colchester in 1967.

The most recent excitement at WVMT is the change to AM stereo. □

### Sources

"Radio Work at the University of Vermont", by Ralph Spalding, from *The Vermonter* (magazine), Vol. 27, Number Two, 1922; "Radio Broadcasting Comes to Vermont: WCAX, the University of Vermont Station," by William M. Hall, from *Vermont History*, the proceedings of the Vermont Historical Society, Vol. 49, Number 2, Spring 1981; "Programming Practices and Ascertainment of Community Needs in Vermont Radio Broadcasting: An Analysis of License Renewal Applications," a 1976 Master's Thesis by Millyn Dana Moore; George Goldring (WVMT's present General Manager); George Cameron (past G.M. and V.P.); Lillie Brown (NAB); and "A History of Vermont Broadcasting," a 1961 undergraduate UVM term paper by Richard J. Cooper. □

## Profile: George Cameron

Pictured here at home casually relaxing after his retirement in 1987 is George Cameron, long-time manager and part owner of WVMT.

A Rutland native, his first job in radio was at WHWB as a sportscaster in the early '50s. By 1960



*You know I hate having my picture taken.*

he had worked his way up to the position of manager of WDOT in Burlington, and came to WVMT in 1965. He was the guiding force of WVMT for over two decades, as well as at WSYB in Rutland during the seventeen years that Vermont Radio, Inc. owned that station from 1970 to 1987. □



Bolton Valley Ski Challenge 1970, WVMT staffers left to right: Ernie Farrar, Burt Dean (kneeling), Tom Check, Jack Barry, George Cameron and Bill Arnold.

### WCAX Radio Notables

**A.E. Spokes**  
General Manager, 1963

**Whitey Killick**  
WCAX News Editor in the 1940's

**John Millar**  
Vice President and General Manager, 1964

### WVMT Hall of Fame

**Jim Donovan**  
left WVMT in '86 to become an NBC sportscaster

**Tom Check**  
left WVMT in '77 to become the voice of the Toronto Blue Jays

**Chip Hobart**  
left WVMT in '69 to work for Drake/Chenault, and WAAP in Boston



WVMT was awarded one of the first National Association of Broadcasters' Crystal Radio Awards for its public service programming in 1987. WVMT competed with hundreds of stations for this award. □

# WLAK

## Bellows Falls 1922-1925

1922 was quite an exciting year in Vermont radio history. Less than 3 months after WCAX, a second Vermont station went on the air. The date was September 4, 1922, the station was WLAK in Bellows Falls, and the headlining entertainment was the Brazil Orchestra, also of Bellows Falls.

WLAK was owned and operated by the Vermont Farm Machinery Corporation, which manufactured such diverse products as cream separators, washing machines, and gun shells.

Its purpose was to relay farm news and weather information to farmers, and to advertise the company's products at the various fairs. Vermont Farm

also sold radio receiving kits (you had to put your radio together yourself in those days) and radio parts.

WLAK was a 500-watt station, on the air for 6 hours a day. Its tower was a 50 foot flagpole on the main building at Vermont Farm, with the antenna strung between the chimney and the pole. The generator was run by a homemade 5 horsepower motor in the basement.

In between the farm news and announcements, there was live music and gramophone records for entertainment. Some of the regular local talent included Mrs. Nettie Wheeler Lovell (piano), Jessie Butler (xylo-

phone), and Perley Huntoon (clarinet). WLAK operated until December 1925 when Vermont Farm went out of business. □

### Sources

*Vermont—the State with the Storybook Past and Profiles from the Past: An Uncommon History of Vermont*, by Cora Cheney; "History of Rockingham," by Frances Stockwell Lovell and Leverett C. Lovell; Bradley Weeks (owner of WBFL in Bellows Falls), and a taped interview with Charles Doe, (tape 89) from the vault of the Vermont Historical Society Library. □

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Subsequent to the act to regulate radio communication, approved August 13, 1912,  
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This license will expire on the 31st day of December, 1923

*J. B. Brown*  
Acting Secretary of Commerce

*Charles Doe*  
Radio Engineer  
Charles Doe  
Bellows Falls, VT

Washington, D. C. September 11th, 1923

INSPECTIONS		
DATE	FUNCTION	REMARKS

Excerpts from the four-page license issued for WLAK in 1923. There was no FCC at the time, so radio licenses were issued by the Department of Commerce. Rules included giving priority to distress signals from ships at sea and not broadcasting for the first fifteen minutes of each hour when requested by the Secretary of Commerce.

## An Early Genius Charles Doe

***In 1917, he made the trip from his home in Milton, MA to Bellows Falls, VT on a motorcycle... What an adventure!***

WLAK was built and operated by Charles Doe, who was its emcee for about a year and a half as well. Doe's interest in radio began at the age of 15, when he first listened to a friend's sparks set in Milton, MA. After graduating from high school, he joined the Navy as a radioman. He attended the pioneer Naval Radio School at Harvard in 1918 and served on the troop carrier Agamemnon during WWI.

Sometime just before his Navy days (probably around 1917), Doe paid a visit to his friend Raymond Phipps. He made the trip from his home in Milton, MA to Bellows Falls, VT on a motorcycle. The roads were muddy, bumpy and sandy, but what an adventure it must have been! Phipps' uncle, James J. Hay, worked at the Vermont Farm Machinery Corporation. So after the war when Vermont Farm decided to build a radio station, Charles Doe was the man they asked to do the job.

Doe left the station in 1923 to open his own radio shop in the Rockingham Hotel Block in Bellows Falls where he built, sold, and repaired radios. He worked for WNBX in Springfield for a time in 1936 and 1938, but maintained his status as Bellows Falls' "radio and TV man" all his life. □



# WNBX

**Springfield**  
1927-1940

WNBX was the first Vermont station to be used for evangelistic purposes. Attorney H. H. Blanchard headed the group at the First Congregational Church which obtained the license for WNBX on June 2, 1927. Sunday services and the sermons of Rev. George Mott were broadcast from the transmitter in the belfry. The purpose of this station was to spread the gospel, at least as far as was possible with its modest 10 watts of power. Even the light bulb over the vestry door was more powerful than the station!

Then in 1931 WNBX was bought by a group of businessmen headed by Fred Wheeler. Engineer Willis ("Bill") Moore boosted the power to 250 watts, and set up a studio on the stage of the Ideal Theater. It was now a commercial station.

By 1932, WNBX had moved to a transmitter shack on Cherry Hill Road and a studio suite in the Woolson Block. It took determination and luck to keep the station on the air, with Cherry Hill Road being either washed out or snowed in 6 months of the year. Engineer Moore was often marooned there and the staff had to haul supplies to him by toboggan. But somehow they managed to broadcast 5 days a week, no matter what the weather.

Everett Williams became the first station manager in 1932. There were no programs, no records, and few sponsors. He quickly went to work scheduling live music shows. He played the violin, his secretary played the piano, and there was a specialty show called "Banjo Tricks."

He hired trumpet player Ozzie Wade (also in 1932), who along with Bill Bumford started a two-hour "Early Birds" program which aired at sunrise. They were known for kidding sponsors and anyone else who caught their attention. From a loudspeaker set up in Doc Auber's optical shop, these two would address the people on the street below with comments like: "Good morning, are you just getting home?"

Since the studio was not soundproof, every fire alarm and siren was picked up by the mike and broadcast, even if it was in the middle of a Brahms Lullaby. In typical thrifty Vermont fashion, engineer Bill Moore copied the new ribbon mike (the latest innovation at the time) with magnets from a Model T, at a cost of a dollar instead of a hundred.

WNBX increased to 500 watts in 1933, and to 1000 watts in 1934. It was bought by Harry Wilder of Syracuse, NY in 1936, and briefly became a part of the Yankee Network. Wilder owned WSYR and WTRY in Troy as well.

In 1937, the station switched to the CBS network, broadcasting favorites like Amos 'N Andy. Another jump in power came in 1940 (to 5000 watts), and the station moved to Keene, NH. It became WKNE and is still on the air today. □

## Sources

Frank Zezza (WCFR), Cindy Hall (WKNE), "A History of Vermont Broadcasting," by Richard J. Cooper, WKNE Anniversary Brochure.

# WBTN

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Belva Keyworth



Bob Harrington



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# WWSR • WLFE

## St. Albans

Originally WQDM

On December 31, 1929 a brief announcement appeared in the *St. Albans Messenger*. It was tucked away on a back page, along with the Boy Scout Notes and society items.

This brief article somewhat casually noted that "For the past week local radio fans have enjoyed daily broadcasts from St. Albans' own studio, station WQDM..."

So began Vermont's first commercial radio station, on or about Christmas Day, 1929. WQDM was located in the basement of the A. J. Antoine Music Store (formerly Bailey's Music Rooms) on Kingman St. in downtown St. Albans.

Arthur Antoine was the manager and Ed Regan the engineer. Regan designed and built the transmitter and was in charge of the construction of the station. WQDM had a li-

cence from the Federal Radio Commission to broadcast at a frequency of 1390 kilocycles, and its transmitter had a range of about 35 miles.

At first, WQDM was only on the air for one hour a day (noon to 1 pm). But right from the start, some familiar radio functions were in place. For instance, this same 1929 newspaper article mentions that the correct time would be given "... through the courtesy of M. D. Armstrong and F. L. Scofield, local jewelers..."

In addition, the article states that "...S. M. Driscoll is now making arrangements whereby the station will be able to broadcast daily the conditions of the highways leading to and from this city." It was noted that this

would be especially useful for the traveling public in the spring of the year. Since Vermont roads were dirt, and therefore often perilously muddy in the spring, it is easy to see why reports on road conditions were one of local radio's first important functions.

Perhaps WQDM was given so little notice at first because radio was already available to Vermonters. The

members he was paid the sum of \$6.50 a week. He did a little of everything at the station: news, sports, classical music, and even swept the floors. He did the announcing for a call-in request show with Mrs. Bostwick, who would play the requested songs on the piano.

The station was now on the air from 10 am to 1 pm. Anderson recalls that after his broadcast shift he would

go home, eat lunch and change clothes. Then Mr. Regan would pick him up and take him to the site of the new tower and transmitter shack they were building on the Swanton Road. They were digging trenches with a metal blade welded to a plow, laying wire in a radial pattern, with the tower in the center, like the spokes in a wheel. The tower was made from pieces of train engine tubing they

got from the local railroad yard, welded together to make a large pole.

This homemade arrangement had many problems, and was blown down in an ice storm. Anderson recalls: "It folded in sections and came crashing down in a Z-like figure, just missing the transmitter shack."

A more substantial tower was built after this, and by 1938, WQDM was a 1000-watt station, broadcasting from sunrise to sunset. The studios moved to a space above De Patie's Shoe Store on Main St. and began using the Trans Radio News Wire, which Anderson believes was the first service offering news written especially for radio to be used in Vermont.

*continued on the next page...*



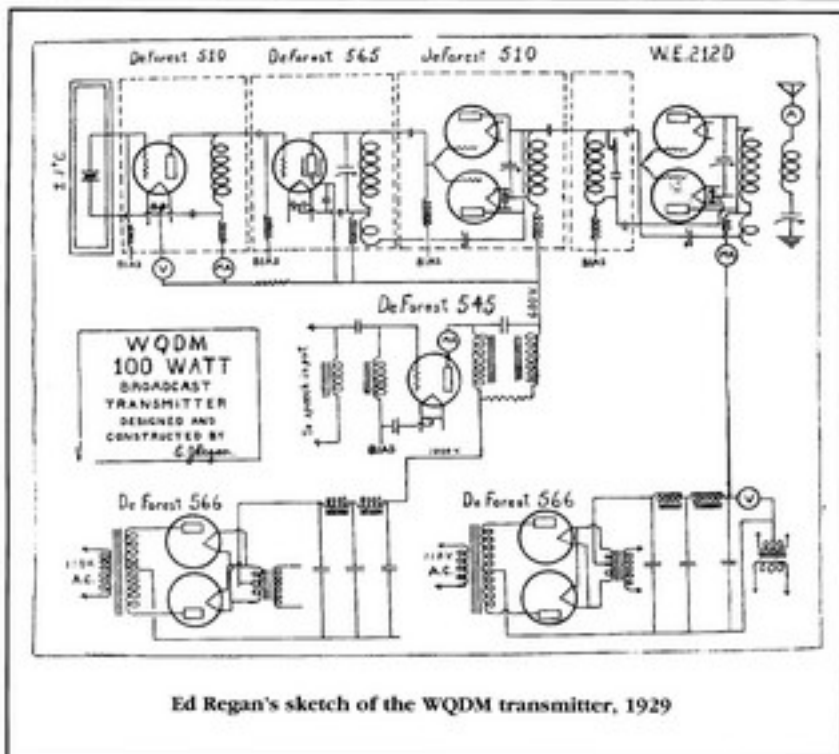
Ed Anderson (L) interviews Fiorello LaGuardia (center) in 1938 at Burlington Airport.

1929 newspapers were full of ads for radios, and contained daily listings of programs that could be heard on stations all over the Northeast.

What WQDM had to offer that couldn't be heard on these other stations was local news, community information (such as the road conditions), and local musicians and talent. Such was the case when popular local musicians Arthur and Florence Bostwick began performing on WQDM on a regular basis in the early 1930's.

In 1936 when St. Albans native Ed Anderson joined the staff at WQDM, Bostwick had become station manager and co-owner. Anderson was the first official staff announcer, other than Bostwick or Mr. St. Antoine. He re-

1938 was also the year that a fellow by the name of Wasserman came on the scene. With experience in New York City radio, he became station manager and brought with him some sophisticated programming ideas, along with his "city slicker" dress and mannerisms. It is thought that he became a co-owner of the station as well. He left in 1939. Not long after that Ed Regan left (in 1939 or '40) to become a field man for the FCC. Anderson bid fairwell to St. Albans in 1940 to begin a 37-year announcing career at WTIC (radio and TV) in Hartford, CT.



Ed Regan's sketch of the WQDM transmitter, 1929

## WQDM becomes WWSR

In February of 1941, the station was purchased by Vermont Radio Corporation, Inc., which was owned by Lloyd Squier and William Ricker, who also owned WDEV in Waterbury, VT. It was then that the call letters were changed to WWSR.

There are several stories about what those call letters stand for, depending on who you talk to. Most agree that the "S" and "R" stand for "Squier" and

"Ricker". One account purports that the second "W" stands for "Whitehall," after Harry Whitehall, founder of WDEV, and Lloyd Squier's mentor. Another account suggests they are an abbreviation of the name "Wasserman."

When Squier and Ricker bought the station, the studios and offices were located at 75 N. Main St. and the transmitter on the Swanton Rd. It was operating at a frequency of 1420 kilocycles.

In 1959 the station was purchased by Robert Kimel and a silent partner, Bessie Grad. Kimel moved his family to St. Albans and ran the station. Grad was later bought out by Kimel.

The Yankee Network (which had been picked up somewhere along the way) was dropped in order to place more emphasis on local news and features. "Every time the fire alarm went off, we reported it," recalls Kimel. There was even a popular death announcement show, sponsored by the local Funeral Directors. In the '60s WWSR had a News Tip System, whereby listeners were paid for news stories they phoned in.

In 1962, a new transmitter was installed, and in 1968 the studios and offices moved to a newly constructed building (which is its present location) at the transmitter site on U. S. Route 7.

## FM Added

In March of 1970, WWSR FM went on the air. It was the first Rock FM in the state. At the time, the prevailing

thought was that FM was to be used for classical or "Beautiful Music" formats, where its improved fidelity would be appreciated. Robert Kimel was reluctantly persuaded by his son John, that appealing to a younger market with a stereo rock sound was an idea whose time had come.

In 1978 the FM call letters were changed to WLFE. Robert Kimel sold WWSR and WLFE to his sons, John and David Kimel, in 1982. Both had started working at WWSR while in their early teens.

John began his announcing career at age 13, calling himself "Johnny O." He is presently station manager, and served as VAB President from 1979 to 1981.

David began selling when he was 15. Although no longer General Sales Manager, he is still involved in station sales and community relations. He is also heavily involved with New England Media, the brokerage and consulting firm founded by Robert Kimel in 1981. □

## WWSR Firsts

### First commercial radio station in Vermont

With the call letters WQDM, this station began broadcasting on or about Christmas Day, 1929.

### First woman station manager in Vermont

Cecile Fahl began her career in 1940 at WQDM (which became WWSR in 1941), and was station manager from 1956-1959.

### First Rock FM in Vermont

In March 1970 WWSR FM blazed the trail for the successful marriage of FM and rock music in Vermont.

## Illustrious Alumni

### Frank Balch

came to WWSR to work as a transmitter engineer in 1948.

He went on to become the owner/manager of WJOY/WQCR in Burlington.

### Stuart Perry

was a WWSR News Director who also had a distinguished newspaper career at the *Free Press* in Burlington.

### Theodore Boisvert

came to St. Albans in 1946 to begin his 30+ year career as an engineer at WWSR. He also did engineering work at WDEV.

## Profile: Robert I. Kimel



Bob Kimel in 1959

Robert Kimel never intended to get into radio. He wanted to be a math teacher. He attended Phillips Andover with the likes of Jack Lemmon and George Bush.

So how did the math student who went to school with a future movie star and a future US President end up being a Vermont broadcaster for over 30 years?

It all started in Lawrence, MA where Kimel's father had worked in radio at station WLAW in the '30s. Young Bob Kimel's first job was for a newspaper, the *Lawrence Eagle* (which owned WLAW).

Next he found himself working in sales at a radio station in Haverhill, MA. Once he got a taste of radio, he set himself the goal that he would own his own radio station by the age of 35—and he did!

He called a broker and said, "I want to buy a radio station, but I don't have any money. What's the cheapest thing you got?" The answer was WWSR in St. Albans, VT. In 1959, he bought WWSR and moved his wife and two sons to St. Albans, and has been a part of the Vermont radio scene ever since.

In 1960, he bought WSNO in Barre and brought in Alan Noyes to manage it. He added WORK-FM to WSNO in Barre and WLFE-FM to WWSR in St. Albans in the 1970's.

In 1981 he formed a media brokerage and consulting firm, New England Media, which has offices in four states and Canada. He was honored by the VAB as Broadcaster of the Year in 1986. □

### Sources

Sylvia Reynolds and Ed Steele of the St. Albans Historical Society, Lillie Brown of the NAB; former station employees Cecile Fahl, Ed Anderson, and Frank Balch; the Vt. State Library, the *St. Albans Messenger*, Ken Squier (son of former owner Lloyd Squier), former owner Robert Kimel, present owners John and David Kimel, and the 1961 UVM term paper, "A History of Vermont Broadcasting," by Richard J. Cooper.

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# WSYB

AM 1380

# THE GREAT T97

## Rutland

On December 10, 1930 Rutland's first radio station, (Vermont's second commercial station) went on the air at 7 pm. The political opportunities of radio were becoming recognized by Vermont politicians, and WSYB made an impressive initial broadcast. Gov. John E. Weeks was the featured speaker, attorney general-elect Lawrence C. Jones was the master of ceremonies, and Rutland Mayor Arthur W. Perkins headed the list of local officials who spoke during the station's first official broadcast.

They were followed by a host of local talent, performing both vocal and instrumental music. The station's first announcer was Ray Purinton.

### Seward & Weiss

Like WQDM in St. Albans, which had debuted almost exactly a year before, WSYB was started by the owners of a music store. Henry Seward and Philip Weiss hoped that having a local radio station would increase the sale of radios and records at their store. This was the Depression, and radios (which sold anywhere from \$15 to \$75) were considered luxury items.

WSYB was located in the Seward & Weiss Music Store at 33 Center Street with an aerial mast on the roof of the building. Henry "Dick" Seward, Jr., a member of an old Rutland family, provided the technical know-how in building the station, as he did at the music store. He had been building and repairing radios since as early as 1919, according to his brother, Jack Seward. Henry, who loved anything technical or mechanical, was also an inventor. He once sold his design for what was something like an early jukebox to RCA for \$5,000.

Philip Weiss was the salesman, and he wasted no time in stirring up com-

petition among local businesses as to who was to be the "first" on the new station. The Ross-Huntress Clothing Co. had advertised its sponsorship of the Marble City Quartet from 7:30 to 8 pm. Not to be outdone, the Robillard & Westin Shoe Co. advertised its "Happy Feet Program," which was to air at 7:15 pm.

### Weiss Music Co.

Seward sold out his interest in WSYB early on and went into construction, doing mostly electrical and plumbing work. Weiss had already brought in his brother Henry, who became involved primarily in the engineering duties. A few years later another brother, Jack, returned to Rutland from a sales position in Pennsylvania, to become the accountant and manager. The broadcasting company became known as the Weiss Music Co. and remained so until 1970. All three brothers did some announcing, and like small stations everywhere, wore many hats.

Making a success of a new business during the Depression wasn't easy. Rose Weiss (widow of Jack) recalls that in the early years, the brothers received backing from their parents. They took no salaries for almost 5 years, living with their parents on an allowance of \$5 a week for spending money. Rose, who often sang on WSYB said: "We lived radio...for the first 12 years we didn't go anywhere or do anything but radio."

The station outgrew its original Center St. location and moved to West St., then to Washington St., and then to Dorr Dr. where it remains today.

The station's call letters and slogan stood for "We Serve You Best." One way Phil Weiss thought to do this was through broadcasting local sporting events. Play-by-play coverage of the Rutland City Five semi-pro basketball team began in the mid-'30s. Ken Coleman, one of WSYB's most famous alumni, announced the play-by-play of the Rutland Royals, a Northern League team in the late '30s. They also covered high school and college games and tournaments.

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to hear the new Orthophonic Recording. The new Orthophonic Victor Records placed on your old Victrola, is really surprising in its clarity, brilliancy and volume. You have it on the new Orthophonic Victrola and it is perfect!

Give the Orthophonic Victrola a hearing. It will amaze and delight you. And all in the most convenient package which is portable, and easy to use. The Victor steps itself when the record is placed on the turntable. There need be no touching the record. The Orthophonic Victrola can be had equipped with the new, revolutionary gramophone records. These records will give you the best results before it is necessary to change it. And finally, there is the new Orthophonic Victrola which gives the most convenient package which has the most volume of any kind. It changes the way records are heard.

Go to your Dealer, an expert in the field, for the new Orthophonic Victrola. He will give you the best results before it is necessary to change it. And finally, there is the new Orthophonic Victrola which gives the most convenient package which has the most volume of any kind. It changes the way records are heard.

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**Victrola Model No. 100**  
The new Orthophonic Victrola  
The new Orthophonic Victrola  
The new Orthophonic Victrola

**Do you know**  
why the greatest musicians and vocalists, in every field, turn to Victor for the preservation of their art and the enjoyment of their own work?

For every great musician, whether known or to be known in the past or in the future, and the great majority of singers, instrumentalists and composers, choose Victor for their own records. They know that the Orthophonic Victor Records represent their art in a manner which has nothing to be desired.

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Give Victor Dealer will gladly furnish you with the same complete Orthophonic of Victor Records. All the same, you will find some exciting excitement, from these delightful records.

**Victrola Model No. 100**  
The new Orthophonic Victrola  
The new Orthophonic Victrola  
The new Orthophonic Victrola



**In your home - anytime!**



### VICTOR TALKING MACHINE COMPANY Camden, N.J. U.S.A.

A record jacket from the Seward & Weiss Music Co. circa 1929.

Actually, the distinction of being first went to neither. In his zeal, Weiss had sold so many spots that he had promised the same time span to more than one sponsor. So a hillbilly band, sponsored by the New York Clothing Co. went on ahead of "Happy Feet" — and was the "first."

Doris Geno, the sole performer on the "Happy Feet Show," was Vermont's first jingle writer. She had written the jingle for her own show, and went on to do several others. The cost: \$5.

## Vermont Radio Inc.

After 40 years of Vermont broadcasting, Philip Weiss sold the station in 1970 to Vermont Radio, Inc. (owned by James Broadcasting Co. of Jamestown, NY), which owns WVMT in Burlington. WRUT FM was added in 1974, and Ralph Smith, Howard Cameron (brother of George Cameron) and L. J. "Tiny" Hare (among others) each served as general manager at one time.

It was Tiny Hare, Ralph Smith and Ed Stone who originated the WSYB Christmas Fund in 1973. Still going strong, the fund has raised over \$60,000 a year in the past 2 years so that needy local families can have a happier Christmas.

## Recent Changes

After 17 years of ownership, Vermont Radio Inc. sold the stations to All Communications of Vermont, Inc., owned by Alan Roberts and Richard Vaughan in 1987. Vaughan became station manager. The stations were sold again (pending FCC approval) 16 months later to Barry Dickstein and Joel Hartstone of H and D Broadcasting. □

## Sources

Henry Weiss, Rose Weiss, Jack Seward, Minnie Lamboy (daughter of Henry Seward), Lyle Rice, Vermont Historical Society, *Rutland Herald* articles (dated 11/18/30, 12/2/30, 12/10/30, 12/13/30, 1/28/81, and 11/12/88), Lillie Brown (NAB), Ralph Smith, George Cameron, Eric Michaels, Jack Healy and Richard Vaughan.



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## Waterbury

### Harry Whitehill



The founder of WDEV was the St. Albans Revenue Agent, and owner of the *Waterbury Record* and *Stowe Journal* (along with his in-laws, the Moody family). When Harry Whitehill heard the broadcasts of WQDM in St. Albans, he became excited about the possibilities of this new medium, and decided to start a radio station in Waterbury. After all, he reasoned, "More people can hear than can read."

So he contacted Ed Regan, who was the engineer of WQDM. Regan built the transmitter in a small room of the newspaper building at 9 Stowe St., and ran a single strand of wire between two antennas on rooftops a block apart.

In the midst of the Great Depression, Whitehill fearlessly launched his new "toy" on July 16, 1931. He was the salesman for the station, but never had a car, so he was driven all over the state by his young protégé, Lloyd Squier.

Whitehill had a farm on Blush Hill, which he thought would be a good location for a radio tower. Unfortunately he died in 1935, but his wife carried out those plans and built a 435-foot tower there. At the time it was the tallest in New England.

What had begun as a "toy" had become something quite different by the time of his death. Ken Squier feels that Harry Whitehill clearly wanted to make a real impact on his community with his radio station, and he succeeded; for on his tombstone is a microphone and "WDEV." □



### "The Old Squier" 1901-1979

Born in Three Rivers, MA, Lloyd Squier came to Waterbury as a child when his father became the stationmaster there for the Central Vermont Railroad. His mother remained in Waterbury after his father was killed in World War I.

After 2 years at Norwich University, Lloyd went to work for Harry Whitehill at the *Waterbury Record*. A close relationship developed between the fatherless boy and the childless Whitehill.

When Whitehill launched WDEV, Squier was the station's first announcer, copywriter, and engineer. He overcame his stutter and became a consummate announcer, but gave up on engineering after he flunked the test twice. He was just too busy programming the station to study.

In 1934, he married Guila Rowell, whom he met when she came to sing at the station. Squier once joked: "She

always said I married her to get her off the air."

After Whitehill died in 1935, Squier and a partner, William Ricker, acquired WDEV. Squier was the morning announcer and liked to hang a microphone outside to capture the sounds of nature. Once the mike picked up a farmer with his team of horses coming up the road, and "Giddup, you sons of—" was broadcast loud and clear. Another time, a man walked right into the dangling mike, and listeners heard a loud "thunk" followed by some very colorful language.

After suffering a massive heart attack around 1950, Squier scaled back



at WDEV. He remained involved at the station in a non-stressful way when he began reading his own poetry on a show called "The Old Squier." □

### William Ricker

A St. Johnsbury native, William Ricker was Lloyd Squier's partner. They acquired WDEV after Whitehill's death in 1935, and bought WQDM in St. Albans in 1941, changing the call letters to WWSR.

They made quite a team, with Squier doing the programming and announcing, and Ricker doing sales. Like salesmen everywhere, Ricker liked



to drive very fast, and is said to have worn out a car a year.

The story goes that after the hurricane of 1938 left their newly constructed studio and tower on Blush Hill a shambles, the two went out to access the damage. They stood there in the field, with debris scattered all the way to the golf course, staring at the nearly 4-foot gashes in the earth made when their tower had come crashing down. They had no insurance to cover their losses while they were off the air, and a new tower and studio would have to be built. It all started to sink in to Squier, who was almost beside himself. "This is terrible, just terrible!" he commented in shock. "Yup, and it blew my back porch off too," Ricker replied.

Ricker loved horses and was an accomplished equestrian. When World War II broke out, he volunteered to serve in the cavalry. He became involved in intelligence work when the cavalry was phased out and mechanized. Tragically, he was wounded by a grenade during the Battle of the Bulge and died in a German prison in 1945. □

### "Rusty" Parker 1927-1982

All Craig Sherman Parker ever wanted to do was to work at WDEV.



As a high school boy he used to ride his bike up Blush Hill each afternoon after school to "hang around." He was only 16 when he started working part-time there in 1943. His parents had planned to send him to Columbia, but he only lasted one semester. After a conference with his father and Lloyd Squier, he left Columbia and came to WDEV full time.

Rusty devoted his whole life to the station and his community. He worked long hours as a copywriter, newscaster,

and announcer; eventually becoming station manager and part-owner. He was also a Selectman, a Rotarian, and active in church activities. He never married.

Known by his trademark crewcut and high-pitched voice, he is pictured here doing "Scraping the Toast," the Tip Top Program.

Rusty could move with ease from hosting live "Hillbilly" bands (like Don Fields and the Pony Boys, Texas Slim and the Northern Ridge Runners and Dusty Miller) to doing agricultural shows and newscasts.

It was during a newscast that Rusty Parker passed away in 1982. As Ken Squier remembers: "He was reading the 8 o'clock news and he just keeled over and went away." Waterbury named a park after him, in honor of his years of selfless service to the community.

He was president of the VAB from 1961-1963. □

### Ken Squier

Practically raised at the station, Lloyd Squier's son, Ken, began his radio career at the age of 1 performing children's parts in live dramas at WDEV. He once accidentally knocked the station off the air at the age of 3 while playing with some "buttons." His first official job at WDEV was to take the stamps off envelopes for recycling during World War II.



Ken traveled with his father when he would broadcast from the various County Fairs. Harness racing was big in Vermont in the '30s, and after World War II stock car racing became popular. Ken was especially fascinated by the stunt men.

He began stock car announcing at the age of 14. He is so good at it that the walls of his office at WDEV are covered with awards and honors, such as an Overall Broadcast Award (Motor Racing Network) from the Eastern Motor Sport Press Association (1972), a Henry T. Mc Lemore Motorsport Press Award (1975), and an EMPA Art Peck Award (1976).

He did announcing at Daytona Raceway in the '60s, and has been a CBS sportscaster for 15 years. He is also the owner of Thunder Road in Barre.

Ken is proud of WDEV's commitment to sports coverage. WDEV began high school basketball play-by-play in 1937, using a technique called "telegraphicre-creations." In the '50s, WDEV broke new ground in winter sports coverage with live broadcasts of National and World Championships from Mt. Mansfield and Stowe. □

## WDEV Hall of Fame

### Harold Grout

Folksy host of "The Trading Post" since 1946

Also a longtime staple of the sales force

### Ted Powers

Already a successful network radio actor, he came to WDEV in 1949 and "learned my trade there"

Left WDEV in 1956 and spent 23 years at WDBJ-TV in Roanoke, VA

## Sources

Ken Squier (owner), Harold Grout (longtime employee), Hester Fuller (former employee), general manager Eric Michaels, *Burlington Free Press* article of 12/25/77 by Maggie Maurice, *Sunday Herald* and *Sunday Times Argus* article of 10/24/76 by Amanda Sessell, Lillie Brown (NAB), WDEV's 50th Anniversary Tape, *Vermont Life* article Spring 1978 by Tari Swenson Curtis, *RoanokeTimes* and *World News* article of 3/29/84 by Jeff Debell. □



## Burlington

Like Harry Whitehill in Waterbury (WDEV) and Col. Jackson in Burlington (WCAX), *Burlington Free Press* Publisher David W. Howe was a newspaperman intrigued with the commercial possibilities of radio. He first considered starting WJOY in the early 1940s. However, with a war on there was a government freeze on the licensing of radio stations.

The waiting was over on September 14, 1946 when WJOY went on the air. It was Burlington's second radio station. The studio, office and transmitter were located at 633 Main St., broadcasting almost 7 hours a day at 250 watts.

It was an ABC affiliate, featuring the likes of Bing Crosby, Harry Morgan, and Paul Whiteman. ABC was a new network to Vermont at the time with "new" ideas such as that of "block programming," which meant broadcasting 2 or 3 hours of shows of all the same genre: all mystery, all soap operas, all music, all comedy, etc.

Additional national news was provided by the Associated Press, and local news by the *Free Press*. In fact, *Free Press* City Editor Bob Beaupre and his reporters delivered local newscasts on WJOY 4 times a day via a phone line to the newspaper. Obviously, those were the days before it was against the law to own a newspaper and a radio or TV station in the same city.

### Original Staff

WJOY's first manager was Alfred Edward Spokes, who also hosted "Reports on Sports" every day at 6:15 pm. Raised in Freeport Long Island, he graduated from Syracuse University in 1940, and worked at WJTN in Jamestown, NY as promotions manager, sports director, and in 1943 as assistant manager. Spokes had always dreamed of living in New England, so

the managership of WJOY was just what he was looking for. He was the second President of the VAB from 1955-56.

Other original staff members included Val Carter as production manager and morning man, Roger Laroche as transmitter engineer and console operator, and John C. Quill as chief engineer.



Left to right: Frank Balch, NY Yankees announcer Mel Allen and Al Spokes (late 40s).

### WJOY Sports

WJOY's devotion to sports is exemplified by the parade of talented sportscasters who cut their teeth at WJOY. There's Jeff Twist with the Boston Celtics, Bob Lobel of WBZ-TV in Boston, major league sportscaster Jim Donovan in Cleveland and Paul Chapman in Detroit.

Another sportscaster who didn't do too badly was Frank Balch. In 1951 he competed for a sportscasting opening at WCAX with Tony Adams. Adams got the job and is now WCAX-TV Sports Director. However, it turned out to be good for Balch also, who walked up the hill to WJOY and got the job there. In addition to play-by-play, he did sales and announcing, became assistant manager in 1954 and general manager in 1956.

### Vermont's First FM

WJOY-FM, Vermont's first FM, went on the air in 1962. It played classical music, which was thought to be the perfect thing for FM's increased fidelity. News and public affairs were simulcast with WJOY. Says Balch: "If I had a choice between being lucky and being smart, I'd rather be lucky... and having the first FM in the state was lucky."

Although in the beginning, it may not have seemed very smart. The new FM struggled at first, because few people owned FM receivers, and classical music proved to have a very limited audience at the time. In 1972 Balch changed the FM call letters to WQCR on its tenth birthday. The letters stand for "Queen City Radio." He also changed the format, and the virtues of having an AM/FM "combo" began to become evident.

After the death of Mr. Howe in 1969, Balch became president of Vermont Broadcasting Corp. (which owned the stations). He purchased the stock necessary to gain control of the corporation and became owner of the two stations in 1971. Over the years, the stations have moved twice, switched to the CBS network (in 1967), and increased power to 100,000 watts. Currently located on Joy Dr. (since 1968), they have been owned by Hall Communications, Inc. and managed by Paul Battaini since 1983. □

### Sources

Frank Balch, Vin D'Acuti, Dennis Snyder, Vermont State Historical Society, Lillie Brown (NAB), "A History of Vermont Broadcasting," by Richard J. Cooper, *Burlington Free Press* clippings (April 7, 1971, and Dec. 14, 1975), "Radio Favorites" column by Catherine W. Coppinger, in *Panorama* magazine, Dec. 14, 1946 and a 1946 WJOY promotional booklet.

# Profile: Frank Balch

A native of Lynn MA, Frank Balch was a radio man in the Navy during World War II. After the service, he graduated from Massachusetts Radio and Telegraphy trade school in Boston, and passed the exam for his First Class license from the FCC.

Through the school's placement service, he heard about a position as a transmitter engineer in Vermont. A 22-year-old city kid who had never been exposed to a rural environment, he was in for quite a shock. At 5 am in March of 1948 during mud season, he stepped off the train in Waterbury and looked around.

Balch recalls: "I thought to myself, 'This is not for me,' and would have gotten back on the train and went back home, but it was already moving too fast."

For the sum of \$40 a week (for 50 hours work), Balch worked for Lloyd Squier both at WWSR in St. Albans and WDEV. He was soon doing announcing, sales and sportscasting as well as engineering. He learned a lot from "the Old Squier" as well as from Rusty Parker.

Balch was to have his turn as teacher of young broadcasters over his 35 years



at WJOY. Mark Brady (who later owned WFAD), and Charlie Kail (Kail Communications) are just a few of those who worked for him early in their careers.

Balch has seen a lot of changes in those 35 years. In 1951 when he first came to WJOY, there was no IBM, no Church St. Marketplace and no Medical Center. UVM was half the size it is now and there were

farms as close to downtown Burlington as the site of the present Sheraton.

Broadcasting was different then too. There were only 2 radio stations in town, and no TV. In fact, there were only 7 radio stations in the whole state. As Balch recalls, radio tried to be all things to all people then. The networks carried soaps, game shows, comedies and dramas, women's programs, sports, and news the way TV does now. Radio stars were much more important than they are now. Music was only played in 15-minute blocks. In those days, the networks paid the stations to carry sports events; now its the other way around.

To say that Balch has had an active public life would be an understatement. His broadcast activities include: VAB

President (1957-58); NAB Board of Directors member (representing the Northeast); a Director of the Associated Press Radio & TV Advisory Board and one of the first two broadcasters (AP was heavily print oriented) to serve on the Corporate Board.

His community achievements include leadership positions in: Rotary, March of Dimes, Community Chest (United Way), the Burlington Planning Commission and Urban Renewal Agency, Jaycees, Vermont Highway Board and seats on the UVM and Medical Center Board of Trustees. □

## MERRY CHRISTMAS



WJOY's Christmas card in the late 1950s



From Frank Balch's private collection an autographed photo of Lowell Thomas (C) Left is then Governor, Phillip Hoff; right is Balch and WJOY founder David Howe

## WJOY Notables

### Vin D'Acuti

Joined sales staff in '58, was sales manager for most of his 25 years at WJOY and manager before he retired in 1983. He was VAB president from 1965-67.

### Dennis Snyder

WJOY's engineer for the past 20 years has served on the VAB Board for 8 years.

### Jeff Wilson (a.k.a. Will Jeffries)

After leaving WJOY, he went on to do network TV commercials such as Topol, Allstate and Sears, and appeared on *The Young and the Restless*.

# WSK

AM STEREO 124



## Montpelier

Carl R. Taylor and Bernard M. Jacobsen put WSKI on the air on Pearl Harbor Day, December 7, 1947. They both came from politically prominent families. Jacobsen was station manager and his wife Lorelle was book-keeper.

Current morning man Bob Bannon was the station's first Program Director. He made his Vermont debut the first day WSKI went on the air when he interviewed Taylor and Jacobsen, introducing them and the new station to the community.

Bannon had been working at WCOP in Boston when his engineer friend Jim McKernan told him about this new station in Montpelier. Bannon brought with him Sir Cedric Marblehead, a children's storyteller character he had invented while at WESX in Salem, MA. Sir Cedric is only one of Bannon's repertoire of character voices. There's also Col. George S. Smedley, the Colonel's lady friend Hattie Macomber, the Colonel's friend, Sheriff Bull Maloney, and Harry Fidle, assistant scraper at the Montpelier sewer plant.

Bannon is quite a character himself, with strong views on politics and just about everything else. He plays

whatever he wants during his morning show, from Kate Smith to Frank Sinatra, Luciano Pavarotti to Johnny Cash. Switching from one character voice to another, he carries on whole conversations. He will do a live commercial or the station I.D. as the Colonel or Hattie if the mood strikes him.

After 42 years Bannon has become a legend in his own time in Montpelier. He has no plans to retire or to leave. It's that personal, local flavor of Vermont

complete his newscast. Burton kept right on with his story for quite awhile before his frustration got the better of him. Then it was his turn to do a little yelling and screaming. Of course, none of this was actually broadcast, and Burton continued in his media career, undaunted.

WSKI had a number of live, locally-produced shows in the early days. Thursday nights included a detective series, written by Bannon. One night in

1949, the surprise solution to the latest of Detective Phillip Thursday's cases was supposed to be revealed. The problem was, at showtime, Bannon hadn't figured out what it was yet! So there he was, furiously typing the script as the show was in progress, just barely managing to hand the nervous cast the final page with the solution at the last minute.

WSKI also put on very successful vaudeville shows in the early days, using local talent. They were broadcast live from the theater, with Bannon as Master of Ceremonies.

Although the days of this kind of live, locally-

produced entertainment programs are over, WSKI does remain steadfastly dedicated to local news. "If we don't cover local news, there is no reason for our existence," says owner/manager Dan Ruggles. Being located in the state's capitol, there is plenty of news to cover, and WSKI cooperates with three other area stations on political coverage. □



Bob Bannon chats with H&H Motor's Howard Dindo about the "new" 1948 Airlfite Nash.

life that keeps him here. People stop him on the street to comment on his show that morning, and they call in and write. "There's a wonderful opportunity for osmosis with your audience, and it's fun being a big fish in a small pond," says Bannon.

Part of the "fun" is the practical jokes, a kind of "trial by fire" for some young broadcasters. Bannon recalls one night back in the early days when WSKI newsman Bill Burton thought he was delivering a live news commentary. Actually, a taped program was on the air. Bannon and a fellow conspirator began a loud argument, complete with cursing and scuffling. Getting louder and more abusive, they moved down the hall right into the studio where Burton was valiantly trying to

### WSKI Highlights

Oldest radio station  
in Montpelier and Barre  
(since 1947)

Longest employee tenure:  
Bob Bannon, 42 years, and has  
been morning man  
for 33 years

Broadcasts from 2 locations:  
48 State St. in Montpelier  
and 187 North Main St.  
in Barre

### Sources

1961 UVM term paper, "A History of Vermont Broadcasting," by Richard J. Cooper, Lillie Brown of the NAB, station owner Dan Ruggles, morning man Bob Bannon, 1948 WSKI booklet "One Year Behind the Mike—the WSKI Story." □

## Profile: Daniel Ruggles

In spite of his now more than 31 years in Vermont broadcasting, Dan Ruggles got into radio quite by accident. His father was the advertising director of the *Boston Herald Traveler*, and young Dan Ruggles' initial ambition was to be a newspaper man. When he got out of the service, he spent 4 or 5 years in newspaper advertising in Boston.



Then he happened into a sales position at WCCM in MA. After 8 years he had worked his way up to Commercial Manager when fate stepped in. It seems the station owner had a son who was about to graduate from college, and right into Ruggles' job. Reading the "handwriting on the wall," he hit upon an idea that would provide the job security and independence he was looking for - he would buy his own radio station.

Now all he needed was a station to buy. He wanted to remain in New England, but get out of Massachusetts. He was looking for a more relaxed life style, for quality, not quantity. He had attended the Vermont Academy in Saxon's River and Dartmouth College in Hanover, NH and had always liked the area. So he and his wife drew a 150 mile circle around his wife's summer home in Wolfeboro, NH and started their search.

They drove up to look at WSKI on a sunny day in August. They made the trip in a convertible with the top down. That did it. The rural Vermont countryside was irresistible. His wife turned to him and said, "If this is the way it is, let's buy the station today!"

When Dan Ruggles bought WSKI in 1958, the station had already gone through two changes in ownership. Paul Perreault (Montpelier-Barre Broadcasting Co.) had bought it from Taylor/Jacobsen in 1955, and then sold it to Ellis E. Erdman (Green Mt. Broadcasting Co., Inc.) in 1957.

Ruggles brought stability to the station, and has become a mainstay in the community. He served on the Public Service Board for 6 years, was elected to the State Senate for 6 years, and ran (unsuccessfully) for Lt. Governor. He served as VAB President from 1963-1965, and was chosen "Broadcaster of the Year" by the VAB in 1988. □

## The Gateway to Vermont

**WKVT**  
AM 1490 92.7 FM

*Serving the Brattleboro Area Since 1959*

Congratulations VAB  
On Your 35th Anniversary!  
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National Association of Broadcasters



David Parnigoni  
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Gary Girard  
NAB Regional  
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Northeast Region  
1986-Present

**NAB**<sup>TM</sup>  
BROADCASTERS

**Kiss**   
94.5 FM  
Rutland

**COUNTRY**  
  
WHWB AM970

Rutland's second radio station, WHWB debuted on June 1, 1949. Col. Herbert Wilson, a Washington consulting engineer who handled WSYB, had liked the Rutland area. He and his partners, Robert Harris and Charles Bates matched the call letters to their initials: Harris, Wilson, and Bates.

Wilson also bought the old Johnson Castle on the W. Proctor Rd., now known as Wilson's Castle. He remodeled an old brick horse stable across the street from the castle into the studios for the station. WHWB is still located there today.

When Frank McCormack came to WHWB in 1952, Wilson was out of the picture, and the station was being run by Bates and his wife Venna. Fresh out of the service, McCormack had come to Rutland to visit his sister. He had been involved with college radio, and began his 32-year career at WHWB as an announcer. He tried his hand at copy-

writing, and then added selling to his skills.

In 1955 the station was purchased by Central Vermont Broadcasting, Inc., which was owned by two brothers, (both lawyers) John J. Carusone of Saratoga, NY and Louis M. Carusone of Glens Falls. They brought in Jack Bennett to manage the station. McCormack became manager in 1958 when Bennett left, and became a minority stockholder shortly thereafter. He served as VAB President from 1967-1969.

owned and operated a number of small local publications including the Mt.

*Snow Valley News*, the *Mountain Times* in Killington, the *Fair Haven Gazette*, the *Poultney Journal*, and *Ski Racing International* in Poultney.

Under Pickett's leadership, WHWB switched from 1000 AM on the dial to 970 AM. This provided for additional hours of broadcast and higher levels of pre-sunrise and post-sunset power. On April 2, 1987 the format changed from adult contempo-



Ed Pickett

McCormack persuaded the brothers that FM was a great idea and WHWB-FM went on the air on March 25, 1971. McCormack retired in 1984 when the stations were bought by Media Concepts Inc. (Jack Long).

In October of that year, Media Concepts sold WHWB (AM) to Con Brio Broadcasting, Inc., owned by Edward Pickett, the present owner and general manager.

Born and raised in Maryland, Pickett is a longtime newspaper publisher. He started as a cub reporter at the age of 18 for the *Baltimore Sun*. In 1960 he became the PR Director for Mt. Snow in Wilmington, VT. He

rary to country.

Most recent innovations include the addition of WKLZ-FM, known as "KISS 94.5," on October 31, 1988, and the publication of a monthly newsletter for both WHWB and KISS in February of 1989. □

## "Wake up, Vermont!"

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Home Town Station for  
more than a half-century.

### Hall of Fame

#### Don Batten

Left WHWB in 1952 to go to WBZ in Boston

#### Bob Hager

Went on to become an NBC overseas correspondent

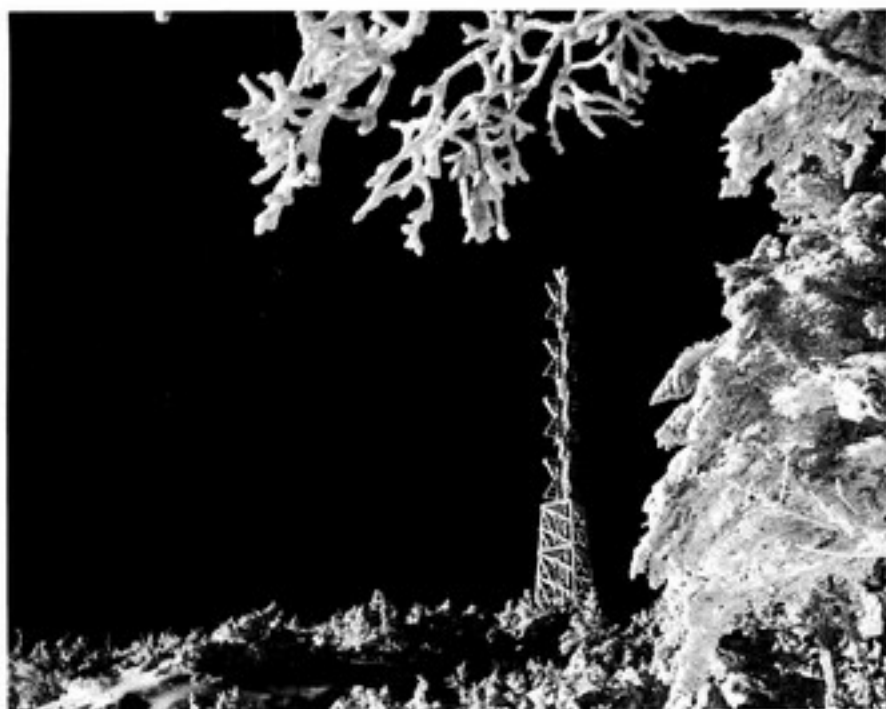
#### George Cameron

His first job was as a sportscaster at WHWB; later became manager of WVMT. His son Mike Cameron is currently station manager.

### Sources

Frank McCormack, Sheryl Cizmada, Lillie Brown (NAB), "A History of Vermont Broadcasting," by Richard Cooper, *Rutland Herald* article of 1/28/81 by Kendall Wild.

# HAPPY 35<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY TO BOTH OF US!



FIRST ANTENNA 1954

WCAX-TV went on the air on September 7, 1954. It's been a great 35 years for us and for Vermont broadcasting. So, here's a Happy Birthday salute to both of us. And many happy returns.

# WCAX TV 3

# WSTJ RADIO 1340

Originally WTWN



# WNKV FM 105.5

## St. Johnsbury

WTWN was the first of 3 Vermont stations founded by E. Dean Finney (the first president of the VAB from 1954-55) and James McKernan, both former employees at WSKI. Since they had little money of their own, these enterprising men came up with a unique way to finance their stations. First, they organized a corporation (in this case Twin State Broadcasters, Inc.). Then they sold stock to local businesses. That gave them the benefit of having advertisers who had a reason to want the station to succeed.

WTWN was located on Concord Ave. in St. Johnsbury and had a branch office on Main St. in Littleton, NH. It went on the air on July 10, 1949.

McKernan was an engineer, and Finney became manager. They brought George Peterson from WSKI with them to do sports and a children's show. Montpelier native Ken Greene, fresh out of high school, got his first job in radio at WTWN as a copywriter. Don Thurston also got his first radio job there at the age of 19. Originally hired as an engineer, he became a "combo man" when the Saturday morning announcer showed up with

laryngitis one day. Even though he was petrified and had no previous training, he found he liked announcing. "There's enough ham in me that I have-

the farm done out in the fields, pastures and barns as farmers did their chores. Programming to a community that gets up and goes to bed earlier than most

people do means that the timing of shows has to be adjusted. Nationwide, the wee hours of the morning has a low listenership. Not so in rural Vermont where milking and chores begin long before daylight.

Finney sold the station in 1979 to Northeast Kingdom Broadcasting, Inc., owned by Brent Lambert and Eric Johnson, and the call letters were changed to WSTJ. WNKV-FM went on the air on August 1, 1985.

The stations are managed by St. Johnsbury native Doug Drown. He started working part-time as a janitor at WTWN in 1957 while still in high school. After he graduated from St. Johnsbury Academy in 1958, he became WTWN's evening announcer.

He began doing play-by-play of local games (which he still does) in 1960. One of the oldest high school rivalries

in the state is that of Lyndon Institute versus St. Johnsbury Academy.

Before he knew it, he was the program director and became the manager of WTWN in 1978. He remained manager



E. Dean Finney

after the station changed hands and call letters the following year. □



L to R Red Reed, Guy Austin, Dave Mohr, Ken Mudgett, Jerry Johnson. Seated, George Peterson, Don Thurston and Jim Platt - 1949.

n't been off the air since," Thurston recalls.

"Mesquite" Jerry Johnson was WTWN's Chief Engineer and hosted a country western show called "Western Jamboree" from 1951-53. He was famous for his opening vocalization: a cross between a yodel and a howl with his theme song, "Draggin' the Steel," in the background.

St. Johnsbury native Don Mullally has been at the station (off and on) for over 30 years, and has been morning man for about 25 of those years.

Like all of the Northeast Kingdom, St. Johnsbury was (and still is) very rural. Farm news and county fairs were always a big part of WTWN's programming. Thurston recalls interviews about life on

### WTWN Program Highlights

Mon. thru Fri.	7:00-7:30 A.M. 8:15-8:30 A.M. 10:30-10:45 P.M. 12:00-12:15 P.M. 5:30-5:45 P.M.	Record Reveille Today's News and You Collect Call Luncheon With Lopes Tex Bonedie Show
Mon. thru Sat.	7:45-8:00 A.M. 8:30-8:45 A.M. 9:15-9:30 A.M. 9:30-9:45 A.M. 11:15-11:30 P.M. 4:00-4:30 P.M. 4:30-4:45 P.M. 5:00-5:15 P.M. 5:15-5:30 P.M. 6:15-6:30 P.M. 8:00-8:15 P.M.	Morning News Sacred Heart Morning Devotions Homemaker's Corner Twin State News Western Jamboree The Town Crier Bag of Tricks The Family Album Sports Cavalcade of Music
Mon. thru Sun.	12:15-12:30 P.M. 5:45-6:00 P.M. 11:00-11:15 P.M.	Noon News Evening News Late Evening News
Mon., Wed., Fri.	6:00-6:15 P.M. 7:00-7:30 P.M. 10:00-10:30 P.M.	Date in Hollywood The Cisco Kid Music By Roth
Sunday	5:00-5:30 P.M. 6:45-7:00 P.M. 8:00-8:30 P.M. 8:30-9:00 P.M. 9:00-9:30 P.M.	The Hour of Charm John T. Flynn Bright Star Songs of New Eng. Colleges I Was A Communist For The F.B.I.

1950

### Sources

Don Thurston, Doug Drown, E. Dean Finney, Jerry Johnson, Lillie Brown (NAB), "A History of Vermont Broadcasting," by Richard Cooper, and a 1959 WTWN promotional booklet.



**WTSA****Brattleboro**

Brattleboro's first radio station went on the air on April 19, 1950. It was owned by Granite State Broadcasting Corporation. When Ed Ellis first came to WTSA as an announcer in 1951, Phillips J. Terhune of Connecticut was general manager.

Ellis, who worked at the station a total of 27 years (except for a 2-year stint at WNIX in Springfield) has fond memories of interviews he did back in the '50s and early '60s. Like the one with a young Senator named John Kennedy. Or the one with a woman in the area who trained bloodhounds. That interview was aired on the NBC network, as were a number of others he did on WTSA.

Another early WTSA staff member is Clara Antonetti, who started in 1951. Antonetti did a little of everything including typing logs, copywriting and hosting 3 different programs. She did a 1/2 hour woman's show, a 1/2 hour children's program called "Party Time," and co-hosted a 1/2 hour interview program (with announcer/engineer/salesman Ed Somes) called "On the Town."



Ed Somes and Clara Antonetti at the opening of the Grand Union, Brattleboro - mid. 50s

In 1953, Tri-State Area Broadcasting Corp. bought the station and then sold it to Brattleboro Broadcasting Corp. (Ralph C. Gould, Pres.) in 1963.

In 1967, John Healy's Southern Vermont Broadcasters, Inc. gained control of the station. Healy and his wife Bette operated WTSA until 1986. They put WTSA FM on the air on December 15, 1985.

The station is currently owned by Tri-State Broadcasters, Inc. (John Kilduff), and managed by Larry Smith. Owner Kilduff is the morning man,

and manager Smith the morning news announcer. They have worked together as "Smith & Clark" (Kilduff is known as John Clark on the air) for 17 years.

Kilduff was a taxi driver in Boston. After he was held up at gunpoint twice, he decided to change professions. He attended a broadcasting school and got an announcing position at a station in Beverly, MA. He started calling around looking for an opportunity in New Hampshire or Vermont. He called Jack Healy one day, who had him audition on the air. He got the job.

Smith & Clark will call anywhere in the world about anything. They called a bar in England and interviewed a talking parrot, who luckily cleaned up his usually colorful language. Smith recalls one of his favorite calls was to a husband and wife team who were mattress testers. Their phone calls are not all fun and games. They once raised \$2500 in one morning to buy a motorized wheelchair for a man unable to acquire one any other way. Every Christmas they call anywhere in the world to extend Holiday Greetings to relatives and friends of listeners. □

**Profile: John K. Healy**

Jack Healy was a dashing Navy Aviator during World War II. In 1946 he went to work at WCBM in Baltimore, MD as a salesman. During his 20 years there, he worked his way up to General Sales Manager.

After 2 years of a 5 year contract with Metro Media, who had purchased the station two years before, Healy asked to be released from his contract and started proceedings to buy WTSA in 1967.

Healy made a fresh start at WTSA, putting in new equipment, and hiring new personnel. Bette Healy worked as bookkeeper and office manager.

"I was used to selling spots for \$100, and here they went for \$2 or \$3, and they did a lot of trade deals. It was quite a change from Baltimore, let me tell you," remembers Healy.

But Healy loved every minute of

his 20 years of station ownership at WTSA. "My only regret is that I wasted all those years at WCBM. At a small station you learn a lot, you get into everything: sales, management, announcing, engineering. I never learned a thing in Baltimore."

At first the Healys lived only a mile from the station, but found they were constantly getting called to come to the station for one reason or another.

One cold winter's night, Healy got a phone call and found that he was the only one who could get to the station to turn on the transmitter. So there he was in the wee hours of the morning walking to the station in subzero weather over a narrow bridge.

It was snowing hard when two cars suddenly appeared going in opposite directions on the bridge. "I thought I was going to have to jump into the

river there for a minute," commented Healy.

Murphy's Law was in full swing that morning. The equipment was sluggish and stubborn. Healy struggled on, with loud mutterings and curses. Not since his Navy days had he used such colorful language.

Sometime later, morning man Larry Smith arrived and said: "Get off the air before we lose our license!" The mike had been open the whole time. "After that we moved to Walpole, NH and Larry never let me near the air booth again!" chuckled Healy. □

**Sources**

John Healy, Larry Smith, Ed Ellis, Clara Antonetti, Lillie Brown (NAB).



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ANNIVERSARY

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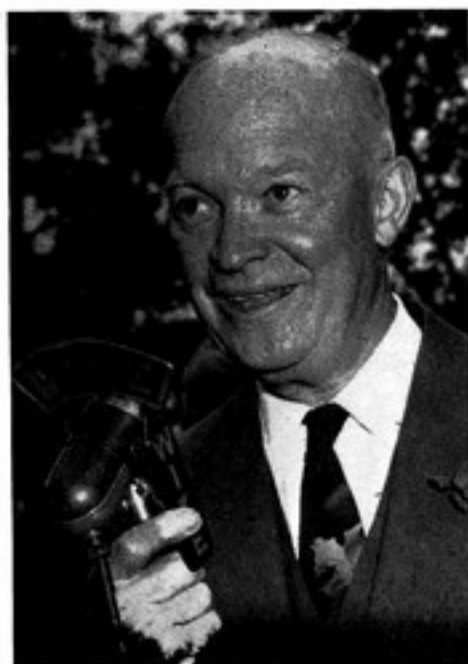


The second station launched by E. Dean Finney was WIKE, which debuted on October 12, 1952. Named in honor of General (later President) Eisenhower, it was a PR man's dream come true in 1955 when a picture of "Ike on Wike" was taken by the United Press and was widely circulated.

According to Don Thurston, here's how it happened: Eisenhower was making a tour through New England and had stopped in Whitefield, NH. The town had neglected to secure a suitable PA system, so Thurston (who was traveling with the entourage) offered the use of the WIKE equipment.

Originally the Chief of Police was going to hold the mike for Eisenhower, but the general took it himself. There stood "Ike" holding this microphone with the large letters "WIKE" for the world to see. Suddenly there was a blinding explosion of flashbulbs and "Ike on WIKE" became a part of history.

Thurston, who had worked for Finney at WTWN in St. Johnsbury, managed WIKE from 1952 to 1960, and was a stockholder. Of his days at WIKE, Thurston commented that a local radio station mirrors the community it serves. Newport, like St. Johnsbury, is rural, and the Northeast Kingdom has its own unique geography, history and people.



One way in which WIKE kept in tune with its community was in its dedication to local sports. In the '50s before regionalization, every town had its own high school teams. The town spirit rose or fell on the basis of the fortunes of its basketball and football teams. WIKE did play-by-play of some 60 high school basketball games alone each season.

WIKE always had a strong agricultural orientation, both in regular programs and live broadcasts from fairs and farm shows. Some of Thurston's fondest memories are of these farm shows. Like the time he won third prize in a Cock Crowing Contest. He never cashed the \$2 prize money check. Or the spontaneous "Name the Puppy" contest he did one year, after he adopted a pup at the show. "Dawn's Lonesome Aggie" was the winning name.

William Graham worked at WIKE from 1952 to 1980. He managed the station from 1969 to 1980 and was president of the VAB from 1975 to 1977. He is now Director of Marketing and Public Relations at the Community National Bank in Derby, VT.

Finney sold both WIKE and WTWN to Northeast Kingdom Broadcasting, Inc., (Brent W. Lambert and Eric H. Johnson) in 1979. WIKE is currently managed by Fred Gates. Gates was an announcer for WCFL in Chicago, worked for CBS radio in the '50s, for NBC radio in the early '60s, and got into sales and management in the mid '60s. He managed stations in Virginia and Indiana before coming to WIKE on May 10, 1988. □

## Profile: Don Thurston

Born in Gloucester, MA and raised in Kennebunkport, ME, Don Thurston was 19 years old and had just received his FCC 1st class license in 1949. He was sitting in the Placement Office of his Boston trade school when the phone rang. At the other end was E. Dean Finney of St. Johnsbury, who was in the process of building a radio station there, and looking for an engineer.

Thurston became part of Finney's team, who would found and operate three Vermont stations. The two also became good friends, and remain so to this day. It was Finney and his wife who introduced Thurston to the young lady who would become his wife at the first WTWN station Christmas party in 1949.

When they put WIKE in Newport on the air in October 1952, Thurston became Chief Engineer, Program Director, and Manager (how's that for wearing a lot of hats) at the age of 22.

He became a stockholder and Vice President of the North Country stations until 1960. Because there were no additional ownership opportunities, he parted from Finney on good terms, and formed Berkshire Broadcasting Co. in North Adams, MA which operates 4 radio stations.

Thurston was present at the first VAB meeting. He recalls that the motivation for forming our state association was the need for a peer group: to have others with common professional interests to share ideas and common prob-

lems (such as growing your own talent) and to take collective action for the common good.

Thurston is the only Vermonter to have been Chairman of the Board of the NAB, and received a Distinguished Service Award from the NAB in 1981. He was the first individual licensee to do so; these awards usually went to people like Bob Hope, Chet Brinkley, the President of a network, or a Corporate owner. □

### Sources

E. Dean Finney, Don Thurston, Fred Gates, Lillie Brown (NAB), "A History of Vermont Broadcasting," by Richard Cooper.

# RADIO STATIONS

W B T N  
W H G C

IN BEAUTIFUL BENNINGTON, VERMONT

Born in Argyle, NY and raised on a farm in Ft. Edward, NY, James Gordon Keyworth always knew he wanted to be in broadcasting. He got his first-class license and worked as Chief Engineer at radio station WELI in New Haven, CT while attending New Haven College.

He was also in the Naval Reserve and was called up to serve during World War II. While stationed in California, he met and married Belva Chase. After the war, he worked for an engineering firm in Washington, DC. What he really wanted, however, was his own radio station.

The Keyworths moved to North Adams, MA where he put WMMB on the air in 1947. He was a stockholder and engineer for the station and Belva was the manager and bookkeeper. While at WMMB, Keyworth did the engineering for E. Dean Finney who put WTWN, WIKE and WNIX on the air. He was also a stockholder in those stations for awhile.

On September 13, 1953, Keyworth's Catamount Broadcasters, Inc. put WBTN on the air. Benjamin A. Hubley



Belva Keyworth in 1967

was the station manager until 1958, when he left to take a position in Portland, ME. Belva Keyworth expressed an interest in WBTN, and became manager/bookkeeper at that time. J. Gordon Keyworth served as VAB President from 1957 to 1958.

In 1960, the Keyworths divorced. He went to a station in NH and she remained as manager of WBTN and major stockholder of Catamount Broadcasters, Inc.

Of those early years in the '50s Belva Keyworth remembers: "It was a challenge to sell against, or in conjunction with, an established newspaper... people would say 'We've already donated to radio'... you had to educate them about how radio could be used for their benefit."

One of the most dramatic events in the station's history occurred in 1962. A thunderstorm came up so quickly that when lightning struck the tower, it was not contained there, but came through to the studio and "cooked the console." Fortunately, the announcer was unhurt, but the station was off the air for 5 days while a new console was being air shipped from Quincy, IL.

1978 was an important year for WBTN. That was the year WHGC-FM debuted. A second story and additional space downstairs were added to accommodate the new FM. Mrs. Keyworth selected "HGC" for the FM call letters in honor of her late father, Harvey George Chase. □

## WBTN Notables

### Benjamin Hubley

WBTN's first manager went to WCSH in Portland, ME in 1958. He became regional sales manager of both that station and Ch 6 TV. He is now retired.

### David Alcorta

After getting his start as a sports announcer at WBTN, he went on to radio and TV work in California, a stint as sales manager for the Indiana Pacers, and is now with WHDH in Boston.

### Bob Harrington

This native of Dorset, VT was trained at the Leland Powers Broadcasting School. He has been doing news and sales at WBTN since 1958.

## Profile: Belva Keyworth

Belva Keyworth was working as a civilian in the Navy in her native California when she met and married J. Gordon Keyworth. He was an engineer and Lt. Commander in the Navy at the time.

Convinced that the best opportunities for new radio stations lay in the East, they headed for New England after the war. Belva worked at WMMB in North Adams, MA as bookkeeper and office manager from 1947 to 1958.

She took over the management of WBTN when Ben Hubley left in 1958. In 1960, the Keyworths divorced. He went to Plymouth, NH and founded WPNH, and she remained as station manager and majority stockholder at WBTN. She is Vermont's first woman station owner.

She served as VAB Vice-President from 1976-1978, and was elected to serve as President in 1978. However, she had recently been granted an FM license, and felt she could not properly get her FM up and running and serve as president at the same time. She was awarded a Distinguished Service Award by the VAB in 1985. □

## Sources

Belva Keyworth, Nellie Brown (NAB), "A History of Vermont Broadcasting," by Richard Cooper, and J. Gordon Keyworth.

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# WCFR

1480AM

KISS 93.5 FM

Springfield

Connecticut Valley Broadcasting, Inc. (E. Dean Finney, Pres.) put WNIX on the air on May 29, 1954. Since WNBX had moved to Keene, NH in 1940, it had been 14 years since Springfield had its own radio station.

Finney had named one of his other stations WIKE after President Eisenhower, so it seemed appropriate to name this one after another popular Republican at the time, Richard Nixon. Guy Austin was WNIX's first manager and Ken Greene was program director from 1954 to 1955. Ken was VAB President from 1985 to 1986.

Carlo Zezza bought the station and became general manager on December 18, 1957. A year or two later, the studio was moved from 106 Park St. to Craig Hill, right next to the tower the call letters were changed to WCFR in 1958.

Which brings us to the WCFR antenna story. Vermont broadcast antennas often lead dangerous lives. WQDM's first antenna broke apart into 3 pieces during an ice storm. WDEV's antenna was the victim of a hurricane. WCFR's antenna story tells of how a farmer accidentally plowed up the ground antenna system one year, and (no big surprise) knocked them off the air for awhile.

In 1970, WCFR-FM made its debut. Stereo was added in 1974, and the tower height was increased by 100 feet. The FM call letters were changed to WMKS in October, 1987 and the station is known as "KISS 93.5."

In 1974, the stations were bought by New England Broadcast Corp., whose parent company (Sconnix Group Broadcasting, Inc.) also owned WCVR in Randolph and a station in Laconia, NH. Carlo's son, Frank Zezza, became a partner in the corporation. Four years later Zezza bought the stations back and became general manager.



## Profile: Carlo Zezza

Because of concern over the actions of Mussolini, Carlo Zezza immigrated to America from Italy prior to WWII. Trained as a pilot and electrical engineer, he worked in the media in NYC after the war. He worked at WOR, and for the Bolting Co., which represented rural stations to ad agencies in large cities. He sold the first million dollar contract for an independent TV station while working for WPIX TV Ch-11.

When he announced his intention to buy a small radio station in Vermont, Zezza's NY boss was so sure that Carlo would quickly tire of small town Vermont that he offered to hold Zezza's job open for him for 9 months.

His boss was wrong. Carlo Zezza operated WCFR for 16 years. He changed the station's call letters to WCFR in 1958, raised the power to 5000 watts in 1966, and added WCFR FM in 1970. He was President of the VAB from 1959-1961. □

In 1987 he sold the stations to Quality Communications, Inc. (wholesale food distributor Wilson W. Wong and Lawrence De Haan, who owns an advertising and marketing service). Frank Zezza continues as station manager.

Over the years, WCFR has taken pride in its imaginative promotions. In the '50s during a charity auction, a WCFR announcer pushed a record up Main St. with his nose. In honor of Haley's Comet, WCFR gave away a restored 1974 Comet, hailed as "the Star Car."

Most noteworthy of all is the Vermont Apple Festival. The product of a brainstorming session by WCFR programming and sales, this was a promotion that grew beyond the station. It helped establish Springfield as a place for tourists to come for "a taste of old Vermont," with crafts and apple product displays. It is now trademarked and run by the Springfield Chamber of Commerce.

WCFR was the first station to receive a VAB "Station of the Year" award in 1984, and was honored again with that same award in 1985. □

### Sources

Frank Zezza (WCFR), Lillie Brown (NAB), "A History of Vermont Broadcasting," by Richard J. Cooper, E. Dean Finney

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# WDOT

## Burlington

When Val Carter came to Vermont to work at WJOY he dreamed of starting his own radio station. That dream came true on April 19, 1954, when Burlington's third radiostation, WDOT went on the air.

Carter was a native of Ithaca, NY, an amateur boxer in high school, and attended Cornell and the University of Pennsylvania. He had worked as production director of radio station WAGE in Syracuse, and sung major roles in a Philadelphia Opera Company while working as an accountant before World War II.

After serving in the Army Air Core, he came to Vermont as production director, announcer and host of the 8 am "Magic Eye" children's show on WJOY. He played the piano, sang, and had the kids "march around the breakfast table" every morning.

Carter, Roger La Roche, Vin D'Acuti and several other investors got the new station going at 109 So. Winooski Avenue. One of the investors, Noe Duchaine, had a metal business and another was a contractor. So the tower was a homemade job, and D'Acuti and announcer Jack Barry laid the 5000 ft. of wire at the base of it.

Carter had worked with La Roche, Barry and Lillian D'Acuti (Vin's wife) at WJOY, and brought them all in with him to WDOT.

They were great pranksters in those days. Carter showed up to do his show one morning to find his piano, the staple of his performances, out on the lawn. He had to

ad-lib his way through that day, thanks to Barry and D'Acuti. Carter retaliated by setting Barry's copy on fire and undressing him while he was trying to do a newscast.

WDOT got its call letters, not because of the popular record label at the time, but in honor of Lil D'Acuti's mom.



L to R: Paul Knight, Val Carter, Vin D'Acuti and Dana Bray - 1954

The Carters and the D'Acuti's were sitting around the coffee table one evening. They each thought of an idea for the call letters, wrote it down and placed it into a hat. Lil's choice for

WDOT was picked at random from the hat and that's how the station became "1400 on the DOT."

In October of 1959 WDOT was bought by Fortune and Anthony Pope (WDOT Corporation).

That winter, WDOT suffered smoke and water damage from a 3-alarm fire and left the airwaves dramatically after an "on the spot" report on the fire itself. Announcer Peter Guibord was delivering a newscast when he told listeners that the building was on fire. Police Capt. George McKenzie dashed into the studio and advised him to leave. WDOT went off the air seconds later when the electricity to the building was knocked out by the water and flames.

"WDOT is going to college" the station announced to promote its new location at 205 College Street. On the ground floor of a building intended to be a retail store, the control room was now on display behind a large plate glass window. They had a large sign that was a replica of a DOT Record Company record that was hooked up so that whenever the station played a record, this sign would spin around also.

In February of 1964 the station was bought by Bill Hunter of Hunter Broadcasting, Inc. Hunter had been a Ch-22 TV news announcer. Pending FCC approval, the station will change hands again this year. The new owner will be Atlantic Ventures of Vermont L.P. (Eric Schultz, Pres.) □

## Profile: Vin D'Acuti

Although he was born in San Paulo, Brazil, D'Acuti's family originated in Salerno Italy. They came to America in 1921, and D'Acuti grew up in Brooklyn, NY. He came to Vermont when he was stationed at Ft. Ethan Allen in 1941 with the 187th Field Artillery.

He married Lillian Langois of Burlington and has been a longtime and very active resident of South Burlington. After the war he was the branch manager for the Sherwin-Williams Paint Co. for 5 years, and a real estate broker for 2 years after that.

His broadcast career began when he became a salesman for WDOT in 1954. He became sales manager in June of 1955 and assistant manager in August of that same year. He left WDOT to begin a 25-year career at WJOY in 1958. He served as VAB President from 1965 to 1967.

The list of D'Acuti's community service activities is too long to include here in full. Here are just a few: Kiwanis Club, Burlington Boys Club, Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce, Burlington International Airport Commissioner, So. Burlington Selectman for 10 years, Lake Champlain Bridge Commissioner, and Justice of the Peace.



## Jack Barry

Jack Barry has been around. He's worked at several radio and TV stations in Vermont as well as in New York, Philadelphia, Trenton, Wilmington and Des Moines. Barry knew Ed McMahan, Dick Clark, Frankie Avalon and Ernie Kovaks during his sojourn in the "big time." Yet he came back to Burlington, because he likes its unique mix of rural living and urban sophistication.

A native of Waterbury, Barry's first radio experience was on WDEV when he was in high school. After serving in the Army during World War II, he returned to Vermont and began his radio career at WJOY in 1948. He bounced back and forth between the Burlington stations over the years, and has done public radio and TV broadcasting as well.

Barry has seen a lot of changes over the years. Those old 78 RPM records have given way to LPs and compact discs. Wire recorders and electrical transcriptions have gone the way of the dinosaur. Barry clings to some of the old traditions however, such as delivering live unscripted commercials, and relying on his straight forward personality and ability to ad-lib to get him through any situation.

## Sources

Vin D'Acuti, Paula Dame, Jack Barry, Barbara Gardener, Lillie Brown (NAB), "Radio Favorites" profile of Val Carter on Nov. 16, 1942, from *Panorama* magazine, Vol. 1, NO. 32, "A History of Vermont Broadcasting," by Richard Cooper, and a 1956 WDOT promotional booklet.

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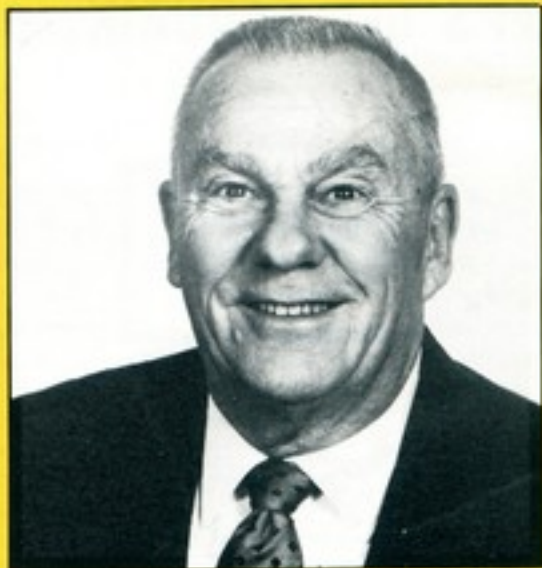
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# WCAX TV 3

## Burlington

Like WVMT radio, WCAX-TV can trace its origin to the UVM campus and amateur radio station WCAX, which became a commercial endeavor in 1931. By the time 1954 rolled around, WCAX radio was owned by C.P. Hasbrook, and Vermont was the only one of the then 48 states that did not have a television station.

The original call letters were WMVT, (for Montpelier, Vermont) because the FCC allocation was for Montpelier. Permission was granted for a temporary studio in Burlington and the allocation was later changed permanently to Burlington.

When those first test patterns aired on September 7, 1954 (to rave reviews from Vermonters), the studio was located in a converted warehouse on Barrett Street. Regular programming began on September 22.

### The Men on the Mountain

WCAX-TV Chief Engineer Charles Liese remembers the excitement of building the tower and transmitter on Vermont's highest mountain (Mt. Mansfield) in 1954. The first major problem was how to get the 70-foot antenna up the narrow and winding road to the top. It was cut in half for the trip and then welded back together.

The engineers who worked at the transmitter lived a life like that of an arctic explorer or scientist. They generated their own power and heat with diesel engines, and drilled 185 feet down for water. They kept a 6-month stock of food in freezers and learned to cook and do their own housework. Liese recalls that Mrs. Hasbrook prepared the menus herself for the winter's stock of food.

Working in shifts, they were away from home for two days at a time and snowshoed or skied to work (until the advent of snowmobiles around 1964).

It is a different world up there, beautiful but isolated, especially in winter. Liese remembers that nature seemed sharper and more intense: breathtaking sunrises and sunsets; crisp, clear starlight; awesome thunder



An early news set with long standing WCAX news team members Stuart Hall, Mickey Gallagher and Tony Adams. The weather easel and pointer have given way to the high-tech computerized satellite maps of today.

and lightning. There was plenty of wildlife to keep the engineers company: moose, bear, wildcats, rabbits, weasels, shrews, muskrats, and flying squirrels.

Ice buildup was a continual problem, sometimes 5 feet thick or more. Temperatures dropped to 35 below zero. One morning Liese awoke to find that there was no signal because the antennas were totally drifted in with snow. It took 10 minutes of frantic shoveling to restore the signal.

In 1964 power was increased to 11 kilowatts when a new transmitter was installed. A new helical antenna replaced the original "batwing" antenna as well. WCAX-TV still keeps a man on the mountain at all times.

### "The Good Old Days of Live TV"

Sports Director Tony Adams, who had also worked for WCAX radio, is one of the original staff at WCAX-TV. Adams recently announced plans for his retirement effective June 1, 1989. "It's been a rewarding 35 years. We've come a long way, and I feel fortunate and proud to have made a small contribution," said Adams. He will continue to be involved at WCAX, doing "Across the Fence" and WCAX hockey broadcasts on a free-lance basis. "I'm not just going to disappear into the woodwork," joked Adams.

Adams has seen television change from live broadcasts with only 2 cameras and simple sets to the complex high-tech marvel it is today. In the early days, there was no video tape or local film for news and sports. Everything was done live, including the commercials. Adams recalls one evening when he had to do a beer commercial during a sportscast. That meant he had to move from the sports desk to

the living room set for the commercial. The script required him to sit down, open the bottle, pour the beer and deliver praises for the product.

But when he reached for the opener, it fell between the chair and the end table. Suddenly a hand came up from out of nowhere between the furniture and handed him the opener! Off camera, the floor man had stretched out on the floor and retrieved it, but on camera, all that was seen of him was his hand. To make matters worse, as Adams walked back to the sports desk, he stepped on his mike cable, which yanked the mike from his throat!

Public Affairs Director Ken Greene remembers other war stories about live

television broadcasting on WCAX: like the "easy starting" lawnmower that refused to start on camera, the time when the cake fell during Helen Workman's Mixing Bowl program, or the time Stuart Martin finished his editorial during a newscast and forgot the news director's name on the re-cue.



WCAX founder C. P. Hasbrook

## WCAX Innovations

Weatherman and V.P. of Production Stuart Hall, another original WCAX-TV staff member, remembers the

early days as a time of innovation. A wide variety of local programs were aired. For the children, there was cowboy entertainer Dusty Boyd and his Chuckwagon Tales and Gee Whiz Kids. Dusty was the first person to appear on CH 3. For the teen audience, 5:30 to 6 on Saturday night was time for "Dance Date" all through the '50s and '60s. Another popular show was "Cartmell Crossword Quiz." A brainchild of the WCAX production staff, it was considered by CBS at one time as a possible network show.

There was a local variety show called "Around the Town," which featured Ray Labelle's Orchestra and the singing of Jackie Howley and Stuart



Across The Fence guests came in through the news department at the old Barrett Street studio - 1954-1958. The show still airs today, live at 12:10 Monday - Friday.

Hall. Yes, WCAX weatherman Stuart Hall is also a singer. In fact, he made his first TV appearance when he won Arthur Godfrey's Talent Show in 1949, singing "So in Love" from *Kiss Me Kate*.

In the public affairs vein, "Across the Fence" was initiated in 1954 with the cooperation of the Vermont Extension Service. The animal "guests" for this show had to be led through the

offices in order to get to the studio on Barrett Street. One particular cow left a little "remembrance," and everyone scattered the day a huge bull was led through the office.

From 1957 to 1966, WCAX was a trail blazer in the educational use of TV. There was "Current Events Quiz," a competition between Vermont 7th and 8th graders; and "TV University," which offered college courses for credit at UVM. Hour-long concerts by the Vermont Symphony Orchestra were broadcast live for 5 years.

Present News Director Marselis Parsons is the latest in a line of distinguished newscasters, which includes J.A. Sullivan, John Millar and Mickey Gallagher. In 1968 CH 3 was among the first stations in the nation to expand its newscast to an hour. WCAX News launched "Dimension," a monthly news magazine in 1977, hosted and produced by Parsons. In 1979, both Parsons and "Dimension" won Emmys in the second annual Awards Presentation of the Boston/New England Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. □



Dance Date (1960) with host Ken Greene, the Dick Clark of Vermont. The show aired from 1955 to 1968 at 5:30 pm every Saturday. Brian Harwood took over as host in 1963.

## WCAX Sources

Stuart Martin, Ken Greene, Charles Liese, Stuart Hall, Tony Adams, Lillie Brown (NAB), WCAX 20th and 25th Anniversary brochures.

## Profile: Stuart T. Martin

Originally a physicist, Stuart "Red" Martin contributed to the development of radar. He was working as a consulting engineer following his 4 years of service in the army during WW II, when his stepfather, C.P. Hasbrook, asked him to undertake a project for him: to design, staff, and build a television station.

At the time, there were 48 states in the union. Vermont was the only state without a television station.



Stuart Martin "on the edge" looking down from the heights of Mount Mansfield during the construction of WCAX in 1954. Word has it that this is his favorite photo of those days.

Martin became the owner of WCAX in 1969 when he acquired positive control of the licensee corporation (Mt. Mansfield Television, Inc). Looking back on his 35 years of broadcasting, Martin recalls that his most satisfying experience was his success in the struggle with the Mt. Washington station over the CBS network affiliation. In the early days of television, the advertisers controlled the programming. His adversary had both more knowledge of the Madison Avenue advertisers, and more money to wage his campaign.

Martin recalls that the first turning point came when he convinced Proctor and Gamble to place their soap opera schedule on WCAX. He did a study of CBS coverage with colored overlays to show what would be added by WCAX or by Mt. Washington, and that did the trick.

Martin also takes pride in WCAX's serious approach to news and technically superior picture. He is glad that programming is now controlled by the station and not the advertisers. WCAX can now choose which of the network programs to air. Martin has observed that programming trends seem to swing back and forth from sex and violence to family shows and situation comedies. What will be successful next? Says Martin: "If it's well written, it's got a chance." Martin was VAB President from 1958 to 1959. □

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## Barre

The license for WSNO was originally filed by Broadcasters, Inc. of Manchester, NH (William Rust and Ralph Gottlieb). In 1957, the construction permit was bought by E. Dean Finney, who sold it to James Kirwin and Donald Laufer.

WSNO went on the air on October 13, 1959, and was purchased 8 months later by Robert Kimel and Bessie Grad. Alan Noyes was brought in by Kimel to manage the station in June of 1960. WSNO became a CBS affiliate in 1961 and raised its power from 250 to 1000 watts.

In 1974, WORK-FM went on the air. That was also the year Grad and Kimel incorporated under the name of Radio Barre, Inc. with Noyes assuming an interest in the new corporation. In 1979, the corporation bought Grad's stock. In 1982, Kimel sold his stock to the Kimel Broadcast Group, owned by his sons, John and David Kimel.

Since both Radio Barre (which owned WSNO/WORK) and Radio St. Albans (which owned WWSR/WLFE) were owned by Kimel Broadcast Group and Noyes, the two corporations merged in 1988 into one entity, Kimel Broadcast Group, with the two Kimels

and Noyes as stockholders.

WSNO is a family operation, with Noyes' two sons on the staff. Program Director Bill Noyes began his career at WSNO at the age of 14 as a weekend announcer. He was chosen Sportscaster of the Year in 1974 by the VT Sportscasters and Sportwriters Association. He served as Barre City Alderman, Chairman of the Republican City Committee and as a Major in the Vermont National Guard. Jonathan Noyes is the midday announcer and does hockey play-by-play. It was a father/son decision to become Vermont's first full-time country station in 1978, and an achievement WSNO is proud of. WSNO is also proud of having been one of five individual stations granted credentials to cover the Montreal Olympics, along with the likes of WABC in NY. □



WSNO's Alan Noyes with CBS news anchor, guess who, at a CBS radio network affiliate's meeting in Phoenix Arizona in 1985.

## Profile: Alan Noyes

Born in Haverhill, MA, Alan Noyes is a graduate of Boston University where he majored in advertising. He served in the Army Air Core during WWII, and more recently as Assistant Adjutant General/Air for the Vermont National Guard.

His first job in radio was in 1948 at WHAV in Haverhill. He worked as a copywriter, then joined the sales staff, and later became assistant manager. It was there he met Bob Kimel. When Kimel bought WSNO in 1960, he invited Noyes to come to Barre to manage it.

"It was an adventure to come to Barre," Noyes remembers, "I'd never been to Vermont before. There was no Interstate then, and driving that long, twisting, uphill road, with banks of

snow as high as buildings to get to the station, it made quite an impression."

Noyes has served as President of the Barre and Central Vermont Chambers of Commerce and of several local development groups. He has been a member of the Boards of Directors of the CBS Radio Network Affiliates Association and the CBS RADIORADIO Board, serving as National Chairman of the latter. He served as VAB President in 1971-1973, and was named Broadcaster of the Year by the VAB in 1987. □

### Hall of Fame

#### Chuck Maginnis

WSNO's first morning man. He once offered to trade a paper clip for anything listeners would offer. He got a pencil, which he traded for an ash tray and so on until he ended up with a car! The station sold it and donated the funds to charity.

#### John Reid

This Barre native got his start as a high school student working weekends at WSNO. He is now Vice President and Director of Communications and Technology at the Associated Press.

### Sources

Alan Noyes, Bob Kimel, Lillie Brown (NAB), "A History of Vermont Broadcasting," by Richard Cooper.

# WKVT

## Brattleboro

Joseph Close (WKVT Corporation) started WKVT as a satellite station to WKNE in Keene, NH. It went on the air on November 29, 1959 with 250 watts of power and both CBS and Yankee Network affiliations. The studio, office building and transmitter were built on Williams and Larkin Streets in Brattleboro. Edward D. Somes was WKVT's first general manager, and also served as an engineer and salesman for the station.

Barre native David Parnigoni (Radio Brattleboro, Inc.) bought the station in 1965. From 1978 to 1983 former Gov. Salmon administration official, Donald Webster, (The Webster Broadcast Group, Inc.) owned WKVT. It was during this time that WKVT-FM debuted in 1980. Webster is now a broker at E.F. Hutton in Brattleboro.

Current owner Dave Underhill (Brattleboro Broadcasters, Inc.) bought WKVT AM and FM in 1983. Underhill's radio career began at the age of 14. He got a degree in broadcasting from Boston University and worked in radio at a number of small market stations.

During the '70s and early '80s, he worked at high-level engineering and management positions, in both radio and TV, in large markets such as Boston (WBZ-TV, WGBH-TV, WCVB-TV),



Parnigoni at work in 1969

Washington, DC (Group W Radio News), and Salt Lake City (Standard Communications).

Underhill met his wife, Linda, in 1972 when they were both working at WBZ. A veteran broadcaster herself, Mrs. Underhill is in charge of traffic, billing and operations at WKVT, and is co-owner of the station.

Since purchasing WKVT, the Underhills have completely remodeled the facilities. WKVT's dedication to news has paid off with several awards: seven AP news awards, two Champion-Tuck media awards for economic understanding, and the VAB Station of the Year Award in 1987 and '88. Underhill commented that he is especially proud that WKVT had twice been cited as one of fifty finalists nationwide in the NAB Crystal Awards competition.

One of Underhill's favorite WKVT stories is about the time he jump started the entire station from his Ford Bronco. It was during a snowstorm in 1984, which had caused a power outage. Efforts to start the antique generator had succeeded only in running down its battery. So he hooked up his Bronco battery to the generator and vroom! WKVT was back on the air. □

## Profile: David Parnigoni

While attending Spaulding High School, Barre native Dave Parnigoni got his first taste of radio at the age of 16, when he was a part-time announcer working weekends and summers under Bob Bannon's tutelage at WSKI. Parnigoni recalls his first experience on the air as one of sheer terror. He arrived at the station at 8 am in order to prepare for a 5 minute newscast at 10:30 am. When it was over, Bannon commented that he had done pretty well, but asked about those long pauses between news items. Parnigoni had been so nervous that he cut off the mike and cleared his throat for about 20 seconds after each story!

In 1957 Parnigoni left Vermont to attend Emerson College in Boston. It was there that he decided he was more interested in the business aspect of broadcasting. He managed the AM college radio station there and graduated in 1961.

He worked at WWCO in Waterbury, CT from 1961-1965. Starting in sales, he became sales manager and then manager. Although only 25, he was determined to own his own station. His family still lived in Barre, and he was haunted by reminders of home. WWCO had the same position on the dial as his alma mater WSKI: 1240. It was located in a place with the same name as a neighboring town to his hometown: Waterbury. He came home to Vermont, bought WKVT and managed it for 13 years.

He also owned three other radio stations and a small advertising agency in New England. He was President of the VAB from 1969-1971, and has been with the NAB since 1981. His first position was as Northeastern staff representative. In 1984 he was named Senior Vice President for Radio with the NAB and moved to Washington, DC.

On March 27, 1989, Parnigoni announced that he was leaving the NAB

effective May 5th. "I have thoroughly enjoyed my eight years at NAB, but I really want to get back into station operation and ownership," said Parnigoni.

Parnigoni has been active in the Television and Radio Political Action Committee (TARPAC), the NAB Small Market Radio Committee, and is a member of the March of Dimes Board of Governors in Washington.

In Vermont, he has served as a member of the Vermont Governor's Economic Development Committee and was a trustee and Network Chairman of the Vermont Symphony Orchestra. □

### Sources

David Underhill, David Parnigoni, Lillie Brown (NAB), "A History of Vermont Broadcasting," by Richard Cooper.

# Family Broadcasting in Vermont

Passing on the family business from one generation to the next is a tradition that has survived in Vermont. Even when that business is a radio or TV station.

## The Kimels

Robert Kimel has said that the proudest moment of his life was when he sold his radio stations to his sons, John and David. John Kimel loved radio from the word go. He used to play at being a DJ and sportscaster in his room as a child, and debuted on air as "Johnny O" at only 13. He worked for the *Free Press* as a

reporter/photographer and joined the Sheriff's Department and the National Guard, because, "I wanted to make it on my own." One of his favorite experiences as a Deputy Sheriff was when he was a body guard for Miss Universe.

As a broadcaster, John Kimel commented that his most satisfying accomplishment to date was convincing his Dad to make WSSR-FM the first rock FM in Vermont. The prevailing school of thought at the time was that FM was best suited for a "Beautiful Music" or Classical format. But John felt it was wiser to go for a younger audience rather than compete with their own AM for adult listeners.

David Kimel also went out on his own briefly before returning to the family business. He got into college radio while attending Husson Business School in Bangor, ME and also worked at a commercial station in Bangor. However, he turned down an offer to work in sales at a station in the Boston area and came home to St. Albans instead. "Dad let me make my own decision, and made me the same offer as anyone else," said David.

"Sometimes it's harder to be a tough business man when everyone knows you, and expects more from you," commented David, "but the quality of the Vermont lifestyle is what keeps me

here." There may be a third generation of broadcasters in the making as both of David's children, David Jr. and Jennifer, have begun working part-time at the stations.



## The Squiers

After suffering a serious heart attack (about 1950), Lloyd ("The Old Squier") was content and proud to let his son Ken take over at WDEV. It was with Ken's encouragement however, that he continued to maintain a presence at WDEV with his poetry reading. Squier specialized in "Vermontiana" poetry, reading his own poems (written in the style of Edgar Guest) or that



of other local poets such as Dan Cady of Morrisville.

Kenley Squier was practically born with a microphone in his hand at WDEV. He was always at the station, playing children's parts in live dramas, and traveling with his Dad to the various fairs. It was there that he devel-

oped his interest in sports, especially stock car racing.

Ken was the originator and co-host of "Music to Go to the Dump By," a Saturday morning show that ran for over 20 years on WDEV. With his sidekick Brian Harwood and frequent guest "Maud Ferguson," Ken launched the "My Dump and What It Means to Me" essay contest on this show.

One interesting explanation for why the town dump kept catching on fire arose from this contest. Could it really be it was because of all those husbands out at the dump in the dead of night, burning loveletters from their paramours in order to keep their wives from discovering them?

Years ahead of their time in recognizing the importance of proper waste management, now one of the hot issues of the '80s, this contest drew hundreds of letters and lasted for years, although no prizes were ever awarded.

## The Martins

Stuart Martin was already embarked upon a career as a physicist when his stepfather, C.P. Hasbrook, asked him to come to Burlington to help him build Vermont's first TV station. So began Martin's now 35 year career in broadcasting. Martin applied the scientific method of problem solving to the task of designing, building and operating WCAX-TV, and has no regrets about his career change.

Stuart's son Peter is the third generation of Martins to work at WCAX. A graduate of the Choate School and Harvard University, Peter Martin was first interested in a military career. He served as a Captain in the Field Artillery in the U.S. Army from 1964 to 1969. He left active duty to become a reporter for WCAX in 1969, but has continued his military service as a Lt. Col. in the US Army Reserve.

In 1970, he was appointed Executive Assistant to Governor Dean Davis, then Acting Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs. After three years in state government, he decided to make broadcasting his career. His initial interest was in the area of news. In 1973, he became Vice President of News/Public Affairs and was appointed to his





present position as Executive Vice President in 1984. Peter Martin served as President of the VAB from 1977 to 1979.

### The Noyes

"The Noyes Boys," sons of WSNO/WORK's Alan Noyes are also second generation Vermont broadcasters. Bill Noyes has been a part-time announcer at WSNO since he was 14, and is currently Program Director. Jonathan Noyes, currently the mid day announcer, also started when he was still in high school. In the true tradition of small market radio, he can wear many hats, including sales, copywriting and sportcasting.



### The Zezas

In the southern end of the state, the Zezza family has been running WCFR in Springfield for 31 years. Carlo Zezza changed the call letters (originally WNIX) to WCFR after the names of his children: Carlo, Frank, and Ruth. His son Frank, a Middlebury College graduate, has been carrying on the family broadcasting tradition now for over 15 years.

### "Mom and Pop Radio"

There is a tradition of husband-and-wife family broadcasters in Vermont as well. After World War II, as it became more acceptable for women to work, wives who before may have been involved in behind-the-scenes ways, now began taking on more visible roles.

Lorelle Jacobsen, wife of WSKI original owner Bernard Jacobsen, was one of the first. She worked as bookkeeper/office manager with her husband in 1947. Bette Healey helped her husband John operate WTSA in Brattleboro from 1967-1986. Rex and Barbara Marshall at WNHV, and Mark and Mary Brady at WFAD carried on this tradition in the 60s and 70s. David and Linda Underhill at WKVT and Bradley and Evelyn Weeks at WBFL are current examples of this practice of husband-and-wife broadcasters. □

# WCVR / WWWT

102.3 Mhz. FM

1320 kHz. AM

## Randolph

Central Vermont Radio Corporation, owned by Frank Gilman and Nelson Crawford, put WCVR on the air on November 8, 1968. The call letters stood for the initials of the corporation.

In April of 1972, Sconnix Radio Enterprises, Inc. (Dartmouth graduates Scott McQueen, Theodore Nixon and Randall Odeneal) bought the station. Vermont Media Group, Inc. (Daniel Bradley and John Shaefer) took over in November of 1976. Bradley sold out to Shaefer in the Fall of 1978. In 1979, the station was on shaky ground with Shaefer in financial difficulty. Alfred Hill was appointed Trustee until WCVR was bought by Stokes Communications Corp. in October of 1980.

Edward and Margaret "Muffy" Stokes have breathed new life into this now family-owned and operated station. Ed is Chief Engineer and handles personnel matters. Muffy handles business affairs such as bookkeeping and copywriting. As she describes it, "I do whatever Ed doesn't do." When they first took over, Muffy also did a daily 1/2 hour interview show.

Ed Stokes is a native of San Francisco and Margaret hails from Albany, NY. They met in Washington, DC in the '60s. Margaret was a secretary and Ed was working at the U.S. National Student Association. He had returned to Washington after having taught English, French and History on the Secondary Level in Nigeria in the Peace Corps. They married in 1969 and moved to California.

Ed helped manage the campaign of Jesse Unruh, who ran (unsuccessfully) for governor of California in 1970. He lost to Ronald Reagan. After this Stokes worked in various legislative positions, and wrote the California Public Broadcasting Act of 1976. He later became the Executive Director of the California Public Broadcasting Commission.

Stokes has been a ham radio operator since he was 12, and has always been interested in the medium. Muffy had family in Vermont and Ed had visited the state and fallen in love with it. So when they decided to buy a radio station, Vermont was where they wanted to be. They looked for over a year before finding WCVR.

The Stokes family put WCVR-FM on the air on October 25, 1982. In the Fall of 1987, the AM call letters were changed to WWWT or "Three W T." About a year ago, both stations became fully automated. Sales Manager Ken Worthington commented that he can control the station (turn it on and off, and regulate the power) from his home. In fact, he often works at home where he has a Fax machine, computer, and production studio. Worthington started at WCVR in 1980 as a part-time announcer. □

### Sources

Edward and Margaret Stokes, Ken Worthington, John Farrow, and Lillie Brown (NAB).

**WNHV 910****KXE 95.3 FM****White River Junction**

On May 10, 1959, Phillip Smith put WWRJ on the air. The station was reborn as WVTR in 1963, when it was purchased by Green Mountain Radio Inc., owned by Lee Nolan. A year later it was sold to Frederick M. Daley, Jr. of Hanover, who brought in Larry O'Toole as manager.

The station was then located on Main St. in WRJ, with a large "window on the world" so that passersby on the street could watch the announcers at work. There was also a studio location where the Lebanon Mall is now.

Veteran newsman Eliot Page came to WVTR in 1963. His mobile unit coverage of the Lebanon Fire and the Ice Flow that claimed the bridge in White River in '64 put WVTR on the map.



Rex Marshall bought WVTR in July of 1966. He announced the change of call letters to WNHV on the "Breakfast at the Hanover Inn" show in October of 1966. "Breakfast," which originated on a rival station as a 15-minute show, was transformed and popularized by Marshall's "golden voice" and ad-lib charm to an hour-long WNHV morning tradition.

Marshall moved the station to newly remodeled facilities at the site of the transmitter on N. Hartland Road in February of 1968. The building design was written up in *Granite State Architect* in December 1988. It had several unique features, such as extensive use of aluminum, every piece of which had to be grounded.

Rex Marshall got Will Curtis started in radio when he asked Curtis (who owned a bookstore in Woodstock at the time) to do book reviews on WNHV. Soon Curtis was doing his own show, "The Nature of Things," which is now broadcast on National Public Radio as well as on WNHV.

On Feb. 1, 1969, WNHV-FM went on the air. It was the first FM in the area, and the only one until 1976. In 1982, Marshall and his general manager, Terry Boone, began planning to split the stations, with separate programming and call letters. These plans were tragically interrupted when Marshall suffered a heart attack at his desk and died in March of 1983.

Boone brought the plans begun in 1982 to fruition when WNHV-FM became KXE on April 1, 1985. Boone has begun proceedings to buy the remaining stock of Barbara and Peter Marshall (Rex's widow and son) and thereby gain control of New Hampshire-Vermont Broadcasting, which owns the stations. Boone has been Vice President of the VAB since 1987. □

**Profile: Rex Marshall**

He was known as "The Man with the Golden Voice," and the biggest name in broadcasting to come to Vermont.

Born in upstate NY in 1919, his first job in radio was at WORL in Boston in 1937. This was followed by positions at stations in Providence, Philadelphia, and Jamestown, NY. During the war years, he was a flight instructor in the Air Force.

Following the war, he returned briefly to Jamestown, and then headed for NYC, where he began his career in television. An original staff member of WPIX-TV, he was emcee-anchorman for the 1948 Republican convention, and announcer and commercial host for Auto-Lite's *Suspense Series*.

For over 25 years, Marshall was the spokesman for Reynolds Aluminium, also appearing for Maxwell House Coffee, and Gleem Toothpaste. He was also associated with two early TV series, *Mr. Peeper's* and *December Bride*.

By the mid '60s, Marshall was ready for a change. He began looking around for a small radio station to buy and found WVTR. The Upper Valley had everything he was looking for: a place to ski, ride horses, and enjoy the lifestyle of a small market broadcaster.

As the host of "Breakfast at the Hanover Inn," Marshall could interview guests on any topic with ease, or ad lib as needed. It was this very skill that had won him the attention of advertising people years before, when presidential candidate Thomas Dewey failed to show for an interview at WPIX, and Marshall had deftly ad-libbed for 45 minutes.

During his 16 years as owner/manager of WNHV, Marshall served on the NAB Small Market Radio Committee and was involved with the United Way and Windsor County Partners. □

**WNHV/KXE Hall of Fame****Eliot Page**

WVTR's first News Director and a 40 year veteran of Vermont radio

**Ray Reed**

16 year veteran of WNHV, current morning man and Operations Director

**Karen Kayen**

Program Director of KXE and current host of "Breakfast at the Hanover Inn"

**Sources**

Terry Boone, Eliot Page, Ray Reed, Will Curtis, *Rutland Herald* articles of 1/21/82 and 3/10/83, *Valley News* articles of 3/9/83 and 3/10/85, *Historical Highlights of Hartford, Vermont*, by John W. St. Croix, Lillie Brown (NAB) and "A History of Vermont Broadcasting," by Richard Cooper.

**WFAD****1490 AM****101 FM****WCVM****Middlebury**

Maine native Frank Delle was the original owner of WFAD, which debuted on December 24, 1965. It was located at 29 Court Street in Middlebury in 2 small rooms, that were so cramped that the AP machine was located in the bathroom.

Delle had a partner named Don Fisher, who held a minority interest in The Voice of Middlebury, Inc., the corporation which became the official owner of the station on October 18, 1968. The story goes that Delle had always told Fisher that the call letters "FAD" stood for "Frank and Don." But according to Mark Brady, after Delle bought out Fisher, Delle said they stood for "Frank A. Delle."

Brady and Tim Buskey (Addison Broadcasting, Inc.) bought WFAD on July 9, 1973. Brady had lived in nearby Addison, VT since 1958, and had broadcasting experience as an announcer and program director at WJOY. Buskey had also worked at WJOY, which is where the two partners met. Buskey was WFAD station manager at the time of the sale.

Brady recalls that it took a year for the sale to be finalized and approved by the FCC. It was a tough year. Andy Potter was hired to come in and rewrite *Free Press* articles for the local newscasts because they had lost their AP service. Buying equipment and supplies was first on their list when the deal finally went through.

In May of 1975, Brady and Buskey put WCVM-FM on the air. A year or two later, they moved the stations to more spacious facilities, a 3-story building at 75 Court Street. On September 16, 1976, Brady bought out his partner and became sole owner, although Buskey continued to work at the stations as an announcer. Buskey is now Chairman of the Board of Selectmen in Middlebury, and works for the Farm Bureau.

The stations moved to their newly-constructed building and facilities on Rt 7 South in August of 1983. "It was a very proud moment," recalls Brady, "we wanted to make a statement to the town that WFAD/WCVM were here to

stay. And it certainly made a difference in the morale of our employees."

On June 3, 1987 the stations were bought by Straus Communications in the Champlain Valley, Inc., (R. Peter Straus). Current general manager Lindsay Wood-Davis is proud of the awards the stations have won since he came in July of 1987. "We've hung our hat on news and local involvement," commented Davis. These awards, all won in 1988, include: Best 60-Second Commercial (VAB), Best Commitment to Radio News, and Best Radio Editorial (both from the Vermont Associated Press). □

## Profile: Mark Brady

Born in Burlington, Mark Brady was raised mostly in southern Connecticut, although his family had a second home in Addison, VT. In 1958, the Bradys moved permanently to that Addison home and Brady spent his high school years as a charter member of the Sterling School in Craftsbury (then a prep school).

His first job in radio was as the overnight announcer at WJOY AM and FM in Burlington in 1969. He worked his way up through the ranks to the position of Program Director by 1972.



Brady had always wanted to be in radio, and his "wildest dream" was to own his own station. That dream became a reality for him from 1973-1987, as the owner of WFAD/WCVM. Yet he knew it was not something he had to do forever, and set his sights on selling the stations and moving on to something else by age 45. He achieved that goal a little ahead of schedule when he sold the stations to R. Peter Straus in 1987 when he was 43.

Brady served as VAB President from 1985-1987. □

### WFAD Notables

#### Chris Graff

Hired right out of Middlebury College, Chris Graff was WFAD's News Director in the early '70s. He is now Associated Press Bureau Chief in Montpelier.

#### Frank Sesno

Also a former WFAD News Director, Frank Sesno later became the AP London Bureau Chief and is currently a White House Correspondent for CNN.

#### Jim Douglas

A part-time announcer in the early '70s, Jim Douglas is currently the Vermont Secretary of State.

#### Ken Gilbert

A popular afternoon announcer at WFAD in the '60s and '70s, Ken Gilbert is now at WDRC in Hartford, CT.

### Sources

Mark Brady, *Broadcasting/Cablecasting 1988*, Lillie Brown (NAB), Lindsay-Wood Davis.



## Burlington

On August 19, 1968, Jack Siegal eagerly put WVNY Ch-22 on the air. He appeared on camera himself to announce the arrival of "Vermont's first full-color station." In his zeal to get the station started, he overlooked his engineer's advice that the equipment could have used a little more technical adjusting and fine-tuning. That first broadcast blew Ch 22 in Springfield, MA off the air, and WVNY had to broadcast at low power for a week or so until the problem got straightened out.

WVNY's first news director Vic Maerki, went on to work for several years in Senator Stafford's office in Washington and now writes a weekly column for the *Free Press*. Larry Knight, George Rousseau and Robert Stillinger were also among the original staff.

Stillinger gained fame as the host of the popular "Trooper Yancy" children's show. Since the station was located in Ft. Ethan Allen, the show used a cavalry theme. Stillinger was clad in a horse soldier costume with hightop boots, and blue uniform with gold stripes. His sidekick was a real dummy—a ventriloquist's dummy that is—named "Trooper Hooper."

From 1967 to 1971, Stillinger entertained groups of Cub Scouts and Brownies during the hour-long live program, which featured cartoons, singing, and drawing. Sitting under hot lights, the excited youngsters were served warm Pepsi and cold pizza. One day, disaster struck. The first Cub Scout to "toss his cookies" was of course in the very back at

*WVNY continued on the next page...*

WEZF is unique in that it is the only FM radio station that got started as an outgrowth of a TV station. Most FMs were additions to existing AM radio stations, so in that sense, WEZF was Vermont's first stand-alone FM.

WEZF's early history parallels that of WVNY-TV in ownership, management, and location up until Ch 22 was sold in 1982 and moved to another location in the area.

WEZF has remained in the original historic Ft. Ethan Allen building (the former headquarters for the cavalry's Regiment Band) that once housed both stations. The building was completely renovated when it was purchased by Knight Radio, Inc. on February 24, 1984. A Class C regional facility, (the largest available) WEZF now has the largest studio space of any radio station in Vermont, with two broadcast studios, two production studios and a news booth. These were built into the area where the old TV station used to be.

Tom Pierce, who has been WEZF's General Manager since 1981, helped the Knights wake up their "sleeping giant" with the installation of state-of-the-art equipment and the first change in format since WEZF went on the air on July 19, 1969. □

### Sources

Tom Pierce, *Business Digest* (July 1985), Lillie Brown (NAB), *Broadcasting/Cablecasting* 1988.

## Profile: Tom Pierce

Tom Pierce was once dubbed "The Legend in Pinstripe" by his employees, and was also known as "The Phantom of the Chamber," by the Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce (of which he was President from 1986-1987). He became VAB President in 1987, and he has been active in a host of community service activities from Champlain Valley Crime Stoppers and the United Way, to the Flynn Theater and Shelburne Farms.

He could also be called "the graduate," having graduated from Williams College (BA 1968), the CBS School of Management (1978), and Northwestern University (Masters in Business, 1980). He also "graduated" from being a radio advertising copywriter (for movies such as "2001: A Space Odyssey" and "Romeo and Juliet") on up the corporate ladder to a Vice President of CBS Radio.

Pierce came to Burlington in 1980 to be General Manager



of Senior Vice President of Knight Quality Stations in 1987. □

of WEZF-FM, then owned by Martin Broadcasting, Inc. He was also GM of WEZF-TV, then owned by International Television Corporation. Both were located in the same historic brick building in Ft. Ethan Allen.

After having worked at high-level CBS Radio positions in management in places like New York, Chicago and San Francisco, what attracted Pierce to Burlington? "The quality of wife," quipped Pierce. "My wife was a Vermonter (from Woodstock) and we wanted to raise our family in New England. So when the Burlington opportunity appeared, we took it."

WEZF-TV was sold in 1982, and moved to another Burlington location. Pierce has remained as GM of WEZF-FM. Knight Radio, Inc. bought WEZF-FM in 1984, and Pierce rose to the posi-

## WEZF Veterans

### Roger Albright

Experienced in both major and small market radio and TV, he was also an author, teacher, newspaper editor and publisher, and parish clergyman. At WEZF he was an on-air host and Creative Director.

### Russ Butler

Beginning with WTVN in St. Johnsbury, his broadcasting career includes work with stations in Chicago and San Francisco. He organized sales promotions and was the host of "Remember Radio" at WEZF until 1984. He was also a member of the sales staff until 1988.

### Bill Hobart

An announcer whose career goes back to the '40s at one of the nation's first FMs, Hobart was the host (and writer/producer) of "The Best of Broadway" on WEZF.

# 1100 - WYKR

*5000 Watts Of Country*  
**Wells River**

WYKR has been a family effort from the word go. Puffer Brothers (Eugene and Harold Puffer) put the station on the air on October 3, 1976. Harold Puffer decided to go back into the insurance business a few years later and left the station in 1981. Eugene incorporated as Puffer Broadcasting, Inc. a year later in 1982.

Owner/GM Eugene Puffer worked at WCVR in Randolph from 1968 to 1976. He recently celebrated his 20th year of broadcasting Norwich football, first on WCVR and then on WYKR.

Eugene's wife, Clara Puffer, does "most everything" at the station, including writing copy, program logs, and answering the phone. Their son Stephen is a DJ and salesman, and daughter Deborah Milnor is the bookkeeper.

WYKR is located in an historic brick building, the former Wells River Graded School/High School. Built in 1876, it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1987, WYKR raised its power from 1000 to 5000 watts, and moved its frequency from 1490 to 1100. WYKR will be joining the TNNR Nashville Network of country music by May of 1989.

WYKR has a construction permit from the FCC for an FM, which is planned to debut by the end of 1989. It will be known as WYKR-FM 101.3, and will simulcast the same country music as WYKR AM. □

# WNCS Stereo 96.7 fm

## Montpelier

George "Jeb" Spaulding and his wife Susan thought of starting their own radio station when they were both students at UVM. On June 13, 1977 WNCS went on the air when Jeb was only 24.

WNCS is located on the third floor of the historic 100-year-old railroad depot building in Montpelier, with the tower on East Hill in Middlesex. Jeb was the original general manager and Susan the bookkeeper and office manager.

Bob Kinzel was WNCS' first News Director, with previous Vermont broadcasting experience at WJOY, WFAD and WRUV. He left in 1979 to become the campaign manager for US Senate candidate Tom Evslin. He started Vermont News Service in 1980, which provides reports on state government and other Vermont news features.

Original WNCS Music Director Russ Kinsley and Program Director Art Lavigne later went on to WIZN in Vergennes. Current Program Director Steve Zind was also among the original staff at WNCS.

Zind is credited with the creation of the Harold Mebaby promotion in 1982, which poked fun at the election process. Mebaby was a bogus write-in candidate for "anything," who's slogan was "I think like you do." His campaign song, played in the background of his "ads" on WNCS was the Human League's "Don't You Want Me, Baby?" His solution to the nuclear waste transportation issue was to "have it flown on Air Force 1 with the President on board, or better yet to send it on Amtrak. That way no terrorist will ever know where it is."

On December 30, 1986, WNCS was bought by Steven Silberberg. Current General Manager Ed Flanagan joined WNCS in 1979 as a salesperson. □

### WVNY continued from previous page

the top of the bleachers. This started a chain reaction of epic proportions. Like the "trooper" he is, Stillinger did an ad-libbed monologue with Trooper Hooper for the last 15 minutes of the show, with the camera tight in on him, while children, mothers, and staff tried to deal with the pandemonium on the set.

International Television Corporation bought WVNY in April of 1974. Don Martin and Gerald Bull were the major stockholders. Minority stockholders Dean Slack and John Hughes worked as general manager and sales manager, respectively. In March of 1978, Martin bought out Bull's stock. He sold the station, then known as WEZF-TV, to Champlain Communications Corporation (Philip Lombardo) in November of 1982.

The station has returned to its original call letters, WVNY. It is currently owned by Citadel Communications, Ltd. (Philip Lombardo) and located at 100 Market Square. William Bradley has been general manager since 1982. □

### WVNY Sources

Robert Stillinger, Brian Harwood, Tom Pierce, Lillie Brown (NAB), William Bradley, Linda Rob, Eric Michaels, *Broadcasting/Cablecasting* 1988.

# Women in Vermont Broadcasting

Women have always played a role in the world of broadcasting. The scope of that role however, has widened considerably over the years.

In addition to the usual behind-the-scenes jobs such as bookkeeping, copywriting and traffic, right from the start there was always an on-air position for the "Women's Editor." Shows such as "Bright Housekeeping" were chatty romps into the world of cooking, housekeeping, social happenings, and child-rearing.

There was a cooking show on WDEV where food was actually prepared live. More than once, the microphone accidentally fell into a bubbling stew or bowl of cake batter. These "women's shows" reflected the times when most women were housewives.

Cecile Fahl of WSSR cites the shortage of manpower during World War II as one reason she had the opportunity to advance to the position of station manager. Fahl went to work for Lloyd Squier in 1940 as a bookkeeper. Since it was a small station, she found herself wearing many hats, branching out into traffic and sales. She hosted "Take 5 with Ceci Fahl" for over

20 years and also did a "Woman of the Week" show.

She was an active member of the New England Chapter of American Women in Radio and TV and has served as State Director of that group. She was included in the 9th edition of Who's Who in American Women.

Ceci managed WWSR from 1956 to 1959, when Robert Kimel bought the station. She became office manager

to assign anyone to do the newscast. There was a heavy discussion about what to do. In the end, Paula did the news and as she recalls, the walls did *not* come tumbling down (as some had feared).

Born and raised in Baltimore, Paula had a degree in theater, and had done radio acting and studied playwriting before coming to WDOT in 1954. She produced and hosted "Paula's Pot Pourri," a show that featured anything about Vermont: history, music, culture, politics, etc. Unlike most women broadcasters, she shunned doing a "women's show," mostly because she "wasn't interested in that sort of thing."

Paula was already an experienced Vermont broadcaster when she came to WDOT. In 1947, she had begun producing a radio program called "This is Vermont" for the Vermont Historical Society. For three years she wrote and directed 15 minute dramatizations from Vermont's history for this show, using actors from the Montpelier Theater Guild. These programs aired on stations in Montpelier, Waterbury, Rutland and St. Johnsbury.  
*continued on next page* **43**



L to R: Helen Bowman (WIKL), Clara Antonetti (WVSA), Mary Pearl (NBC news), Esther Von Waggoner (Nat'l Pres. AWRT), Belva Keyworth (WBTV), Libby Schimmelfennig (WJOY) and Carol King (WCAX) — Hotel Somers, Boston 1961.

and Kimel's Executive Secretary until she retired in 1987.

Paula Dame believes she was the first woman to do a regularly scheduled newscast in Vermont. It was quite by accident. The WDOT announcers had all gone to a meeting and forgotten

## Hall of Fame

### Belva Keyworth

1st woman radio station owner  
WBTV 1960-present

### Ceci Fahl

1st woman radio station manager  
WWSR 1956-1959

### Winnie Lou Davis

1st woman to do radio sports play-by-play WJOY 1973

### Paula Dame

1st woman to do regularly scheduled radio newscast  
WDOT circa 1956

### Cece Wick

1st woman TV Sales Manager  
WPTZ-TV, 1983 to present

### Karen Creighton

1st woman TV station manager  
WNNE-TV, 1985-1988



Ceci Fahl at WWSR in the early '50s



## Governor Madeleine Kunin

Vermont's governor is a woman who is experienced on both sides of the microphone. As a politician she has been interviewed countless times, but in 1982-1983, she was the host of WJOY's "The Talk of Vermont," and it was her turn to ask the questions.

Kunin had a solid background in the media, having attended the Columbia School of Journalism. Her first goal was to be a reporter, and a job as such with the Burlington *Free Press* is what first brought her to Vermont. She also worked for WCAX-TV as an assistant producer before her marriage.

So when Jack Barry left WJOY, Kunin's media experience and knowledge of public affairs made her a natural choice for "The Talk of Vermont." Kunin can't recall if it was Frank Balch's idea or hers, but she saw it as a good way for her to stay up-to-date with important issues.

Kunin preferred to do interviews rather than call-in shows. "I was terrified nobody would call and there'd be this prolonged moment of silence," Kunin commented. During one call-in show she did do, there was an argument going on between two callers: "That was kind of fun; all I had to do was referee," smiled the Governor.

During her stint on "The Talk of Vermont," her show was programmed in competition with Jack Barry. Commented Kunin: "We're good friends, and I thought we could weather that...Mine was a different kind of program...I may have veered a little bit more to the intellectual side...some people would listen to both."

This "intellectual" approach was evidenced in the interviews she did live, via a phone hook-up from Harvard while she was a Fellow at the Kennedy School of Government there. One such interview was about the Soviet Union with Russian scholar Marshall Goldman. Says Kunin: "It was kind of fun to sort of pick the brains of Harvard and ship it off to JOY."

When asked which side of the microphone she prefers, being the interviewer or the interviewee, Kunin said: "It's a toss up. I suspect I may go back on the other side again some day, not in terms of a talk show host, but in terms of a columnist or a writer." □

Interestingly, a show called "This is Vermont" airs on several Vermont stations today. It is written and researched by Nedene Martin, who came East from Ohio in 1977 to work at WEZF (radio and TV). Doing a little of everything, Martin recalls, "I'd set up the cameras, and then sit in front of them to read the news." She also had experience as News Director at WFAD and WDEV before starting her work with "This is Vermont."

Her show is produced by another Vermont woman broadcaster of note, Mary Collins. One of the state's earlier female full-time announcers, she started her own production company in 1985.

Winnie Lou Davis is another Vermont woman broadcast veteran. Davis commented: "There's been lots of changes, and I think they've all been good. When I first started there were few women announcers, and sales was all men. Now it's about 50-50 on the air and in sales."

Always interested in sports, Winnie had trouble finding work as a sports announcer so she took a job as copywriter at WJOY in 1972. In 1973, she did the first play-by-play of a girls basketball game. Not only was it unusual for a woman to be doing a sportscast, but girls games were not usually broadcast at all.

Belva Keyworth is Vermont's first woman station owner. She has managed WBTN for over 30 years (since 1958), and has been the major stockholder of Catamount Broadcasters, Inc. since 1960. What is the key to her success in what had always been a man's world? Commented Keyworth: "Men have said that I'm tough, ...and that's all right. *I am* tough, but I'm a lady too." □

- First in Montpelier
- First in Barre
- First in Central Vermont
- 41 Years Service

**WSK**   
AM STEREO 124

# WRFB

LITE 101.7 FM

Stowe

It was a dream come true for Brian Harwood when WRFB went on the air on February 28, 1977. He had always wanted to own a radio station and now he did, along with partners Ken Squier and Bill Riley.

Riley, a former marketing director for Mt. Mansfield Ski Area who had worked with Squier at WDEV as well, worked in sales at WRFB. Harwood was the morning man. They had wanted the call letters to be "RFD" to go with their original logo, a mailbox. However, an AM station in Ohio declined to give permission for the use of these letters for this new FM in Vermont, so the call letters became WRFB.

In December of 1986, the station was sold to Justice Broadcasting - Stowe, Inc. (Larry Justice). Harwood remained as morning man, and Tim Hoehn became general manager. Hoehn was previously the sales manager of WCNL AM - FM in Newport, NH.

Sage Broadcasting of Vermont bought WRFB on January 17, 1989. This corporation is 43% public-owned, with the remaining stock owned by Leonard Fassler, Jerry Poch and Jerry Lebow, all of Stamford, CT. Hoehn has remained as general manager.

WRFB recently brought back a popular jazz show, "All That Jazz" with John Bauer, on April 3, 1989. □

## Profile: Brian Harwood

Brian Harwood always loved radio. He had his own "play" radio station in his home at the age of 7. He began working part-time at WDEV at the age of 14. As soon as his voice changed, he began doing on-air work. He attended Waterbury High with Ken Squier and graduated in 1956.

Soon he was working at WDEV full-time doing news, announcing and copywriting. He and Ken Squier started the "Music to Go to the Dump By" show in 1963. Harwood modeled Maud Ferguson, a "regular" on that show after Jonathan Winters' Maud Frickett character.

Harwood branched out into television, working at WCAX-TV from 1963-1968. He did Saturday night weather and sports, commercial announcing, and followed Ken Greene as the host of "Dance Date." He also worked for WVNY-TV from 1968 to 1970.

He is presently a principal in the ad agency of Knox, Nimick & Harwood, and has come full circle to return to WDEV as morning man. Harwood was president of the VAB from 1981-1983. □



# WNNE 31

HARTFORD/HANOVER

With a dual license for Hanover, NH and Hartford, VT, WNNE TV Ch 31 made its debut on September 27, 1978. It is owned by Northern New England Television and Taft Broadcasting Corporation, with Paul E. Taft as majority stockholder.

The call letters "NNE" stand for "Northern New England." The station is located on Holiday Inn Drive in White River, with the tower on Mt. Ascutney.

Current general manager Gary Elfstrom first came to WNNE in a sales position in 1982, before becoming manager in September of 1988. His first broadcasting experience was at WTSL radio. Prior to this he had a career as a branch manager for the Security Pacific Finance Corporation.

Like small market stations everywhere, WNNE has been a training ground for ambitious young broadcasters. Elfstrom cited Darlene McCarthy, who left WNNE in 1986 and is now the News Anchor at Ch 56 in Boston, and Dan Leonard, who left about the same time and is now the Press Secretary for NH Congressman Chuck Douglas, as recent examples of this practice.

WNNE won several awards in 1988 from both VT and NH organizations. The VT Associated Press awarded first place for Best Sports Play-By-Play to WNNE Sports Director J. J. Cioffi. The News Department won awards for Best Election Coverage and Best Breaking News.

The station received Golden Mike awards from the NH Association of Broadcasters for Best Commercial Production, Best Sports Feature, Best Videography, and Best Station Managed Campaign. □



WVNR • 1340 RADIO

Poultney

Norval Ramson, his son Richard and son-in-law Donald Prescott (of Don Prescott Tower, Inc.) formed Vermont-NY Broadcasting Corp. and put WVNR on the air on August 1, 1981.

John Colagrande and Burton (Ken) Barlow bought WVNR on September 7, 1982. Barlow is now an air personality at WHDQ in NH. In Nov. of 1984, Michael Tatko invested in the station and became part owner. Pine Tree Broadcasting Company (Michael and Barbara Leech) purchased the assets of Vermont-NY Broadcasting and the license for WVNR on March 10, 1986. Current station manager is Michael's sister, Judith Leech, who came to WVNR when Pine Tree took over.

Joel Williams has worked on and off at WVNR as News Director and air personality since about 1983. Chris McCormack, son of former WHWB manager and stockholder Frank McCormack, has been Public Service Director and Music Director since 1987. McCormack has been in broadcasting "since he was a tadpole," as current office manager Nancy Clark puts it. Clark came to WVNR in January of 1985.

Pine Tree Broadcasting was issued a construction permit for an FM station licensed to Whitehall, NY in November of 1988. Current plans are to operate this FM with WVNR as an AM/FM combination. □





WPTZ-TV, based in Plattsburgh, has maintained a sales presence in Burlington since the early '70s, beginning with Bob Groothand who worked out of his home. By 1977, there was a two-person sales office at 108 Church St. One of those two salesmen was Bob Shields. In 1980 he had become VT Sales Manager and hired Cece Wick as an Account Executive. The two had met when Wick did a TV commercial at WPTZ while she was a buyer for a Burlington clothing store. It was her first experience with broadcasting. She was given the yellow pages, but no accounts to start out with. "I went home and cried every night, but Bob was a great mentor, he believed in me, I couldn't have done it without his support and encouragement," remembers Wick.

In 1981, WPTZ's owner, Rollins Telecasting, Inc., decided to develop a full station in Vermont. Editing equipment was purchased and newspeople, office support and commercial producers were added to the three-person sales staff located at 1 Burlington Square. Wick was promoted to VT Sales Manager in 1983, supervising a staff of 9.

The station is presently owned by Heritage Media, Inc. (since 1987), and moved to its present location at 45 Roosevelt Highway in Colchester in March of 1988.

Wick commented that she has enjoyed watching the news department grow over her 9 years with WPTZ. Headed by News Director Rob Michalak, it now includes 3 newscasters, 1 sportscaster and 2 videographers. Wick is proud of the awards WPTZ won in 1988, which include VAB Best TV Commercial (1st, 2nd and 3rd place) and Vermont Associated Press Awards for Best Newscast and Best Sportscast. □



## Waterbury

WGLY is unique in both format and location. WGLY is located in the home of owner Alex Mc Ewing in Waterbury. The tower, a modified airway beacon, is on Robbins Mountain in Bolton. The tower site is accessible on foot by a mile and a half hike. Tower installation was completed with a helicopter.

WGLY is the only commercial radio station in Vermont which airs religious programming, playing Christian Contemporary Music. It went on the air on Valentine's Day, February 14, 1985 as WTII. The call letters were changed to WGLY (which stands for "God Loves You") in June of 1986.

The construction permit was originally held by Masterpeace Communications, Inc. in 1982. It changed hands to WTII Broadcasting, Inc. in July of 1984. Current owner Harvest Broadcasting, Inc. took over in Sept. of 1985. Alex Mc Ewing bought Harvest Broadcasting (and WTII) from Brian Dodge on Feb. 14, 1986, exactly 1 year after it went on the air.

In June of 1986, Mc Ewing moved the station from its original location on Rt. 100 N to his home on Rt. 2 West in Waterbury. □



Radio Vergennes, Inc. put WIZN on the air on November 15, 1983. Russell Kinsley was the majority stockholder, station manager and program director. Another major stockholder, Richard Longfellow, was business manager, and Art Lavigne was music director and morning man. Other original staff included Joel Bolton (assistant engineer and DJ), Bill Henk (DJ), and Mary Collins (news and production).

Lavigne became a stockholder in May of 1984, and bought out Kinsley in November 1985, thus becoming the majority stockholder. Kinsley bought WKLZ in Port Henry, NY from Peter Hunn.

Radio Vergennes, Inc. sold WIZN to Burlington Broadcasters, Inc. on July 1, 1988. Burlington Broadcasters is owned by Lavigne, Robin Martin of Washington, DC and Jay Williams of Wayland, MA. Lavigne has remained the station manager, and is still on the air doing the afternoon drive shift from 2-6 pm.

The year 1987 was an eventful one for WIZN, which opened a sales office in the Maltex Building on Pine St. in Burlington that year. The station increased its power from a Class A at 1000-watts to a Class C at 50,000-watts. It also moved its tower from the original location on Boro Hill Rd. in Monkton to Pease Mt. in Charlotte. Both of these events took place on April 15, 1987. The station is located on the 3rd floor of the Stevens House on the green in Vergennes. □



## Bellows Falls

Bellows Falls had not had a radio station since pioneer station WLAK went off the air in 1925 (see previous story on page 6). When Bradley and Evelyn Weeks bought WTII (which had been broadcasting religious music) in Walpole, NH from Brian Dodge, they felt that the WLAK history was so special that they moved the station to Bellows Falls.

Currently owned by Bradley Broadcasting Corp. (Bradley and Evelyn Weeks), the station went on the air as WBFL in August of 1983. It is located at the Westminster Professional Center, with the transmitter on Mt. Kingsbury in Acworth, NH.

The call letters are an abbreviation for Bellows Falls, and were formerly assigned to a coast guard cutter in Norfolk, VA. The Weeks' had to get a release from the US Navy for the use of the call letters.

A native of Charlestown, NH, Bradley Weeks was formerly sales manager of WWSR/WLFE in St. Albans. His wife Evelyn is bookkeeper, traffic manager, copywriter and female production voice.

WBFL's first station manager was Larry Knight, a Vermont broadcasting veteran since 1960. He was formerly station manager of WIKE in Newport, and was among the original sales staff of WVNY-TV. □

# 102.7 FM WEQX ROCKS

Manchester

What do a haunted house, Carthusian monks and a 9 year-old ham radio enthusiast have in common?

Back in 1959, A. Brooks Brown was a third grade student in Houston, TX. His teacher had served in the Signal Corps during World War II. For a science unit, she introduced the class to short wave radio. With the help of Robert Franklin, the father of one of the class, (who owned the only radio supply store in the area), they started "The Briar Grove Amateur Radio Club." So began Brown's interest in radio. After WEQX went on the air on November 14, 1984, his parents presented him with the telegraph key on which he learned Morse Code and his old Briar Grove Club membership card as a Christmas gift.

Brown's Northshire Communications, Inc. is the original and present owner of WEQX. The call letters are in honor of Mt. Equinox, the site of the transmitter. Which brings us to the Carthusian monks. They are a contemplative order and live totally cloistered in a valley behind Mt. Equinox. The Carthusian Foundation is WEQX's landlord for the tower site.

WEQX is located in an old Victorian house on Elm St. and Highland Ave. It is said to be haunted by the benevolent ghost of a young girl who died there years ago.

In the honors department, *Billboard Magazine* nominated WEQX for national awards in the following categories in 1988: Radio Program Director / Operations Manager (Adult), Radio Air Personality (Album), and Radio Station of the Year (Adult). □



Rutland

Media Concepts, Inc. bought WHWB AM - FM in 1984. After selling WHWB-AM, the FM call letters were changed to WJJR. From its new Opera House location, in downtown Rutland, WJJR signed on the air with a new format on October 8, 1984. Owner Jack Long managed the station, with a staff that included Bob Summer, Joe Laurence, Rudy Nelson, and Chris Michaels.

In March of 1988, Media Concepts, Inc. was purchased by Caravelle Broadcasting Group of Vermont (Howard Schrott, Pres.). Current manager Sam Gorruso started as a part-time announcer at Central Vermont Broadcasting, Inc. in 1976. A Rutland native, he always knew radio was what he wanted to do. He studied communications at Graham Jr. College in Boston. By 1980 he was a full-time salesman and became manager under the new ownership in January of 1989. □



South Burlington

There were 3 applicants for the new South Burlington frequency in 1980: John Nichols (then with WJOY/WQCR), John Hughes (then part-owner of WEZF-TV), and engineer Howard Ginsberg. After a long drawn-out process, the license was granted to Champlain Valley Broadcasters Corp., with all 3 parties having an equal interest. Ginsberg was the engineer, and Nichols the General Manager.

It was their plan to "shake up the community and wake up the Burlington broadcasters," as Nichols later put it. They hired out-of-town talent and sported an exciting live format in an effort to sound new and different. They did just that when WXXX went on the air on November 16, 1984.

However, the "marriage" of the 3 original applicants was short-lived. Hughes was the first to depart, followed by Nichols in 1986. Ginsberg was just getting used to being General Manager when he received an unexpected offer to buy the station that was "just too spectacular to refuse." In July of 1986, Metro-Net/Vermont, Inc. (Lewis Lloyd and Richard Borel) became the new owner of WXXX.

Ginsberg remained as manager for about a year, and was succeeded by Borel. Doug Tweedy took over in August of 1988. In November of 1988, almost 4 years to the day from when the station first went on the air, WXXX was sold to Atlantic Ventures of Manchester, MA.

Four members of the original staff remain as of this writing: Program Director Walt Speck; Copywriter Carol Ploof; General Sales Manager Jay Fisher, and Account Executive Kenan Guarino. Ginsberg has returned as Chief Engineer as of February 1988. □



Woodstock

There's "Magic" in the air. WMXR, "Magic 94," is Vermont's newest station (as of this writing). WMXR is the creation of the husband- and- wife team of Rob & Shirley Wolf. Rob Wolf was formerly manager of WLNH in Laconia, NH and WMGX in Portland, ME. Shirley Wolf has been involved in advertising as a graphic artist and freelance announcer on radio and TV.

The Wolf's competed with three other applicants for this new position on the FM band, which was created by the FCC in 1986. The staff, or "Magic Team," includes Dan Guy, former morning personality at WBOS, Boston and Clay Ashworth, former general sales manager at WFRD/WDCR in Hanover, NH.

WMXR's office and studios are located across from Britton Lumber on Route 4 in Taftsville. WMXR first cast its spell on the airwaves on April 20, 1989. □

# ***Radio is People... We've Been Lucky Enough To Work With Some of the Best***

**1959 WWRJ • 1963 WVTR • 1966 WNHV • 1969 WNHV-FM • 1985 WNHV 910 AM KXE 95.3 FM**

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**WNHV 910**

**KXE 95.3 FM**



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