

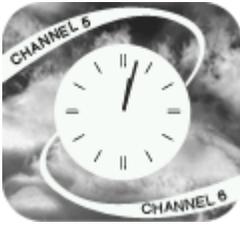
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by Tom Taylor | tom@in3media.com | 609.883.3321

Friday, August 28th, 2009

No promised land for AM?



Time's running out for AMs and other hopefuls to get Channel 5 and 6.

It's not that they can [apply](#) for that spectrum now – but the FCC has failed to fence it off. It could've imposed a freeze on the spectrum that lives below 88.1 on the current FM band – but it hasn't. The Broadcast Maximization Committee says what's happening is unfair, both short-term

and long-term. Short-term, because non-commercial FMs have to continue protecting full-power Channel 6 stations that aren't there any more, since the June 12 DTV conversion. Long-term, a lot of radio operators think that the vacant Channels 5 and 6 would be a swell place to move AM stations who contend with an increasingly noisy "standard band." Also a fine place to put all those eager community radio activists trying to squeeze through the current LPFM opening. (Of course it would require a decade or more to get receivers out there.) National Public Radio is among those who who've petitioned for at least a "freeze" on licensing new operators in Channel 5 and 6. As it is, a lot of non-coms must protect the existing Channel 6 low power stations which are essentially becoming radio stations. Such is the case with WNYZ-LP, which is doing business in New York as a radio station named "Pulse 87."

Sold!

WJMS (AM) & WIMI (FM)

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Restless Tribune bondholders want to know more about Zell's "fraudulent" deal – a lot more.

The "pre-LBO creditors" tell a Delaware judge that the late-2007 sale to a group led by real estate tycoon Sam Zell is a disaster (it's been in Chapter 11 for many months). And they're afraid the eventual solution will reward the very banks who arranged the deal and will screw them, the longtime bondholders. That group wants access to emails and other communications (says the [Wall Street Journal Deal Journal](#)) because they claim the lawyers and advisors are playing both sides against



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the middle. In the cozy world of Wall Street, these debtholders are alleging that many of the experts working for the creditors committee are the same ones who crafted the original deal in 2007, so they're "conflicted." You keep reading about all the sophisticated [financial](#) and legal professionals enmeshed in the Tribune story, and about Sam Zell – and you have to hope that somebody's watching out for the Tribune staffers in the [ESOP](#) (Employee Stock Ownership Plan) who made Zell's deal possible from a tax standpoint. What's happening to them?



Clear Channel makes abrupt market manager changes in Charlotte and Cleveland.

T-R-I hears that Charlotte-based Regional VP Morgan Bohannon got the news that he was out yesterday morning at 8. Soon the surprised staff heard that Mike Kenney was inbound from

Cleveland as the new President/Market Manager for the five-station cluster that includes classic rock "Fox" WRFX at 99.7 and soft AC WLYT at 102.9. Back in Cleveland, Gary Mincer was speedily promoted from the director of sales post to become President/Market Manager, taking over for Kenney. (Mincer's successor as DOS is George Allen.) The cluster there includes talk WTAM (1100) and classic hits "Magic 105.7" WMJI. So what happened in Charlotte? No indication from Clear Channel. But memo to Mike Kenney – be sure to change the voicemail message on the number listed on Thursday's press release. When I first called it, mid-afternoon, it still had Morgan's voice on it. Same at 9pm last night. Whatever happened with Bohannon, it happened fast.



Cell-phone-only sampling is critical.

GARY FRIES, President Emeritus, Radio Advertising Bureau



Yes, B96 Minneapolis listeners, it was all a stunt...

The bit developed after KTTB jock Tone E. Fly was "suspended" on August 13 because he and other jocks allegedly "kept talking about things they were told not to talk about." That felt like a stunt, right? Especially since Mr. Fly was asking management for a better signal. You already knew that KTTB was due for a move-in from Glencoe, MN to Edina (right in Minneapolis). Then on Tuesday, the on-air and online stunting really began, with a website that was a scratching black-and-white nothing, basically, and what Charlotte Peterson at [TwinCities.Decider.com](#) call "bizarre, genre-jumping canned radio featuring artists like Toby Keith, Kings of Leon and Pink Floyd." Oh, and promos like this – "a bunch of suits told us our station wasn't good enough...all the stuffy suits have been fired...Goodbye to our old signal in Glencoe...welcome to a new era of B96." And voila, the jocks were all back and it was a stun by Northern Lights Broadcasting. Nice one, too.



Westwood gets even more NFL and college football avails to sell.

Larry Kahn at Sports USA Radio has a piece of the football radio-rights pie, and after ending his relationship with Dial

Global – a carryover from Jones – he affiliates with Westwood One for ad sales. That piece of paper gives Westwood One the ad sales job for all Sports USA NFL Sunday doubleheader and NCAA football games. Sports USA has 34 NFL Sunday afternoon games for this upcoming season, starting with the September 13 Colts-Jaguars matchup. It also has 18 NCAA pigskin contests starting September 5. Westwood's got its own hefty package of football, continuing a heritage that goes back to predecessor Mutual, so its sales staff is truly looking at a lot of avails. Kahn's new alliance with Westwood continues a business relationship he had with Westwood Network Division President Gary Schonfeld, who was previously at Jones. Stations looking for NFL games have several choices this year, including the new Compass Media Networks, which is run by former Westwood CEO Peter Kosann. (It's a one-degree of separation world here.) Compass has a sales-rep deal with – who else? – Dial Global.

Necessity is the mother of...cooperation between competitors, on the engineering side.

Rivals Cumulus and GAP Broadcasting are sharing and coordinating resources in Amarillo, Midland-Odessa, Abilene and Shreveport, reports Radio World. That prompted me to ask GAP CEO George Laughlin how it's going, and he says "It is working very well, and we are in the process of doing the same thing in other markets with other broadcasters." He jokes that he and Cumulus co-COO John Dickey "like to call it 'frienemies', because we still want to win the revenue and ratings game. But we have found a win-win that all parties benefit from." In the three Texas markets and Shreveport, Radio World's Leslie Stimson says "there are set days that the engineers are scheduled to work for each company, however that is flexible depending on need." The GAP engineers get a bonus for the work and aren't being asked to work more hours than when they were GAP-only – although it's understood that engineering emergencies happen, and they take precedence over everything else.



Saul Levine's "hybrid" format for L.A.'s KGIL (1260) is "Retro."

The owner of "Go Country 105 KKG0-FM" has often used his AM to plug what he perceives as missing musical or spoken-word format holes, and the one he spies at the moment is "timeless music for all ages", but not just the Great American Songbook stuff he's tried before on KGIL. This time (says LARadio.com) the goal is to be extremely inclusive with pop vocals from back to the 1950s doo-wop days up through adult standards to more recent fare. He's signed up familiar SoCal voice Mike Sakellerides for an unusual morning/midday shift of 8am to 1pm, and he'll call the whole thing "Retro 1260."



Previous formats for 1260 have included talk, classical, standards, oldies, and smooth jazz. The Orange County Register says the current weekend classical programming will be sent to an HD-multicasting channel, but that "Pet Place" remains. The advent of "Retro" breaks up the simulcast of 1260 with Tijuana/San Diego-market XESURF at 540. That station goes to brokered Spanish Christian programming, though still under Levine's management. Meanwhile, L.A.-market "Go Country" continues to climb under programmer Charlie Cook – whom Radio-Info's Sean Ross interviews in the latest "Ross On Radio", which is a free signup [here](#). 🗨️



First Phase I Summer Arbitrends for West Palm Beach, Albuquerque, Colorado Springs, Huntsville...

In West Palm – It's more "Sunny" than usual, with AC "Sunny 104.3" WEAT getting hotter with a 5.7 to 6.5 move to stay #1. Then come two more CBS stations – rhythmic "X102.3" WMBX at a 5.3. And country WIRK, which has a 4.9 and its highest rank in a long time. All shares are 12+ AQH shares, Monday through Sunday.

Albuquerque – Talk KKOB-AM is #1 as usual, but the margin is pretty thin by historical standards. Here's the "KOB" trendline since last Summer – 10.3 to 9.6 to 9.0 to 8.1 to a Phase I 6.8.

Colorado Springs – The top tier is the same, lead by Bahakel's rock KILO, 7.7 to 7.4. Too early to see the effect of KDZA-FM's mid-July format flip from oldies to rock – designed to chisel a few shares off of KILO's long-dominant position. Doing oldies, KDZA went from a Spring-book 5.3 to a 5.1.

Huntsville – Stroh's rhythmic "Hot" WHWT seems to be holding at its recent plateau. Here's the trend since last Fall – 2.9 to 3.0 to 5.3 to 5.1. Hot is now tied for sixth place with Clear Channel's classic hits "River" WQRV.

Searching for the latest ratings online? They're at Radio-Info.com, where you see every station, from a 0.1 share to the station in double digits. The Radio-Info.com site also lists every format and every owner, and displays the recent history back to 2008. Keep checking it, [here](#).

» [Arbitrends](#) Summer Phase I

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47. West Palm Beach-Boca Raton - 1,117,800

68. Albuquerque - 701,300

74. Bakersfield - 596,900

87. Greenville-New Bern-Jacksonville - 528,900

108. Huntsville - 435,000

S = Subscriber-Only Markets

Click on the city to review recently released PPM ratings. View a complete list of Arbitron markets [here](#).

» Buzzing on the Boards

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It's oldies-to-classic rock in McAllen-Brownsville, where Clear Channel's "Oldies 105.5" KQXX, Mission, TX ditches the format after six years. The Texas Board of Radio-Info.com says the switch to "105.5 The X"

occurred on Wednesday - and it says most of the programming seems to be coming from CC's "Premium Choice" menu. More on the Board. 🗨️

The L.A. Board wonders how Sean Valentine will handle his new 3am (Pacific time) morning show for WLIT, Chicago (93.9). Valentine, who once did wakeups on another Clear Channel station in Chicago, CHR "Kiss"

WKSC from 2001-2003 is going to be super-busy. He's piggybacking this gig for a soft AC station onto his live AM drive show in L.A. for hot AC KBIG (104.3).



The New York Board of Radio-Info.com is revving up for Top 500 countdowns and beach music...various plans for Labor Day Weekend.

WCBS-FM (101.1) is doing a "refreshed" top 500 and WRXP (101.9) is promoting "the definitive 1019" songs. Get ready for next weekend on the Board. 🗨️



How does the FCC feel about advertising medical marijuana shops? That's the (non-smoking) thread just beginning on the FCC Policy Board of Radio-Info.com. No drug test or doctor's note required. 🗨️

» Wheeling and Dealing

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Around Elmira, NY, Calvary Chapel of Twin Falls sells a commercial-band FM - one of the many stations it got in 2007 as part of a complicated settlement with

CSN International. Looks like WREQ, Ridgebury, NY will be returning to commercial operation from non-commercial (it's now doing religious teaching). Included in the deal for Class A "Q96.9" WREQ is an on-channel booster in Elmira. Oh - the buyer. That's busy Pennsylvania-New York Southern Tier operator GEOS, which is Ben Smith, Kevin Fitzgerald and Betty Curtin. They're



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building a real empire of assets around Elmira-Corning, including oldies "Cool 96" WPHD and classic rock "Met" WMTT, Tioga, PA at 94.7. Subsidiary Europa also has FM translators scattered around the area, in the New York towns of Tioga, Elmira, Corning, Horseheads, Hornell, Bath and Alfred, plus Wellsboro, PA and Mansfield, PA. That's not to mention various full-power and translator interests around Wilkes-Barre/Scranton. There's even more on the drawing board for this general ownership group, including new AMs applied for in Montoursville, PA and Bunkerville, NV. Back to The WREQ-plus-Elmira booster deal – Smith, Fitzgerald and Curtin are paying \$275,000, with \$150,000 of that in a five-year note held by Calvary Chapel.

"The KGDP-FM sale to the University of Southern California went south", says T-R-I reader and Santa Barbara resident Dennis Gibson. He says "T-R-I is great, but part of your Wednesday story about KGDP-FM Santa Maria is wrong", because the \$800,000 sale by People of Action cratered. Actually, this T-R-I Newsletter carried that news on February 16 and I should've checked that when writing about this week's sale of sort-of-sister KGDP-AM, Oildale, CA for \$120,000. The FM is now silent, and here's what People of Action told the FCC – "The buyer ultimately withdrew", and that would be USC. The Pattersons' People of Action says it's looking for a replacement buyer. The University went on to buy KXTY, Morro Bay (99.7) and to change its calls to KESC, simulcasting its L.A.-based classical KUSC (91.5).



» Sound Bites

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No more "Breeze" in Anchorage, with smooth jazz KNIK (105.7) stunting for 20 days. There's a countdown clock on the site, and until the big announcement it "will be playing the music that made 1970 through 1989 great." Then "at the end of the 20 days, we are going to tell you our secret." I'm told that Tati Broadcasting's Class C1 KNIK, named for the Knik River, is Alaska's oldest FM. The website is [here](#).

iBiquity approves another chipset for use in automotive HD Radio receivers, from Toshiba. This is a first from Toshiba, which joins NXP and Sanyo Semiconductor in creating iBiquity-approved front-end chipsets. The game for HD Radio really hinges on automotive acceptance, and that's where the Toshiba chipset will be used. iBiquity has arrangements of various kinds with 13 carmakers, including Audi, BMW, Ford, Hyundai, Jaguar, Kia, Land Rover, Lincoln, Mercedes, Mini, Mercury Scion and Volvo.



The radio stunting around Brett Favre keeps developing new chapters, with Mid-West Family's WTDY, Madison (1670) inviting listeners to donate their old Favre #4 Packers jerseys to charity. The [Post-Crescent](#) says "The Wisconsin Guys", Dan Deibert and Kurt Baron are encouraging listeners to hand in jerseys, hats and sweat shirts in the "4 the Poor Jersey Drive." Everybody who donates gets a chance to win tickets – scarce ones –

to the November 1 Packers game, when Green Bay plays Brett Favre and the

Minnesota Vikings.

This year's Jacobs Summit has buzz, lessons from the Obama campaign, and Terry Gross. With the R&R convention now gone, Fred Jacobs and company are allying their educational "Content is King" Summit with the NAB Radio Show, and here's the final lineup for Thursday afternoon, September 24 in Philadelphia – "Buzzmarketing" author Mark Hughes at 1pm. "Creating a Social Media Strategy – Lessons from the Obama Campaign" with Revolution Messaging CEO Scott Goodstein, who was the External Online Director of Obama for America, at 2pm. Then MSNBC and Citadel Media's Joe Scarborough and Mika Brzezinski at 3pm. And a turn-the-tables interview with famed NPR interviewer Terry Gross of "Fresh Air." An NAB Radio Show badge gets you into the Summit. More about the NAB – including the new \$179 "Free Agent" registration through September 17 – [here](#).



WSB-AM, Atlanta is doing another 37-hour Cancer Care-a-Thon for kids, adding to the over \$7 million the Cox news/talker has raised in previous years. The beneficiary is the Aflac Cancer Center, the personalities involved include Scott Slade, Clark Howard and Neal Boortz – and good luck to 'em all.

"Here comes radio's fork in the road", says Mark Ramsey. That's the title of a new On The Mic column in the Features section of Radio-Info.com – and Mark sees this "fork", radio's stark choice of strategies, as critical. A quick preview - "Down one fork is a future where radio - in all its forms and channels - matters to a passionate audience." The other fork looks safe and generic and has reasonable ratings, but fewer committed fans. Read Mark's column [here](#).

» Faces on the Radio

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Steve Kelly – the Steve Kelly who's worked in Missouri, Oklahoma and Georgia (in Albany GA) – is headed back to Missouri as the new PD at Journal Broadcast Group's country KTTS (94.7) in Springfield, MO. Valorie Knight is Journal's ops manager for the Springfield station group.



Don Imus is not yet on cable's Fox Business Network, no...but the New York Post says they're "deep" in talks to make it happen, as a simulcast of his WABC, New York-based and Citadel Media-syndicated morning radio show. The New York Times adds that Imus had three years to go on the now-dissolved deal with the RFD cable channel. Today's the last day for carriage on RFD.

More evidence that T-R-I is addictive – "After my wife, you are the first thing I see each morning. Taylor on Radio-Info via BlackBerry is how I start my day." That's Maverick Media's market manager in Rockford, J Chapman, who has his priorities straight – pay attention to your spouse/significant other first, before business. See you Monday - Tom Taylor.

» Radio-Info Conference Planner: NAB

Radio Show, September 23-25, Philadelphia

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