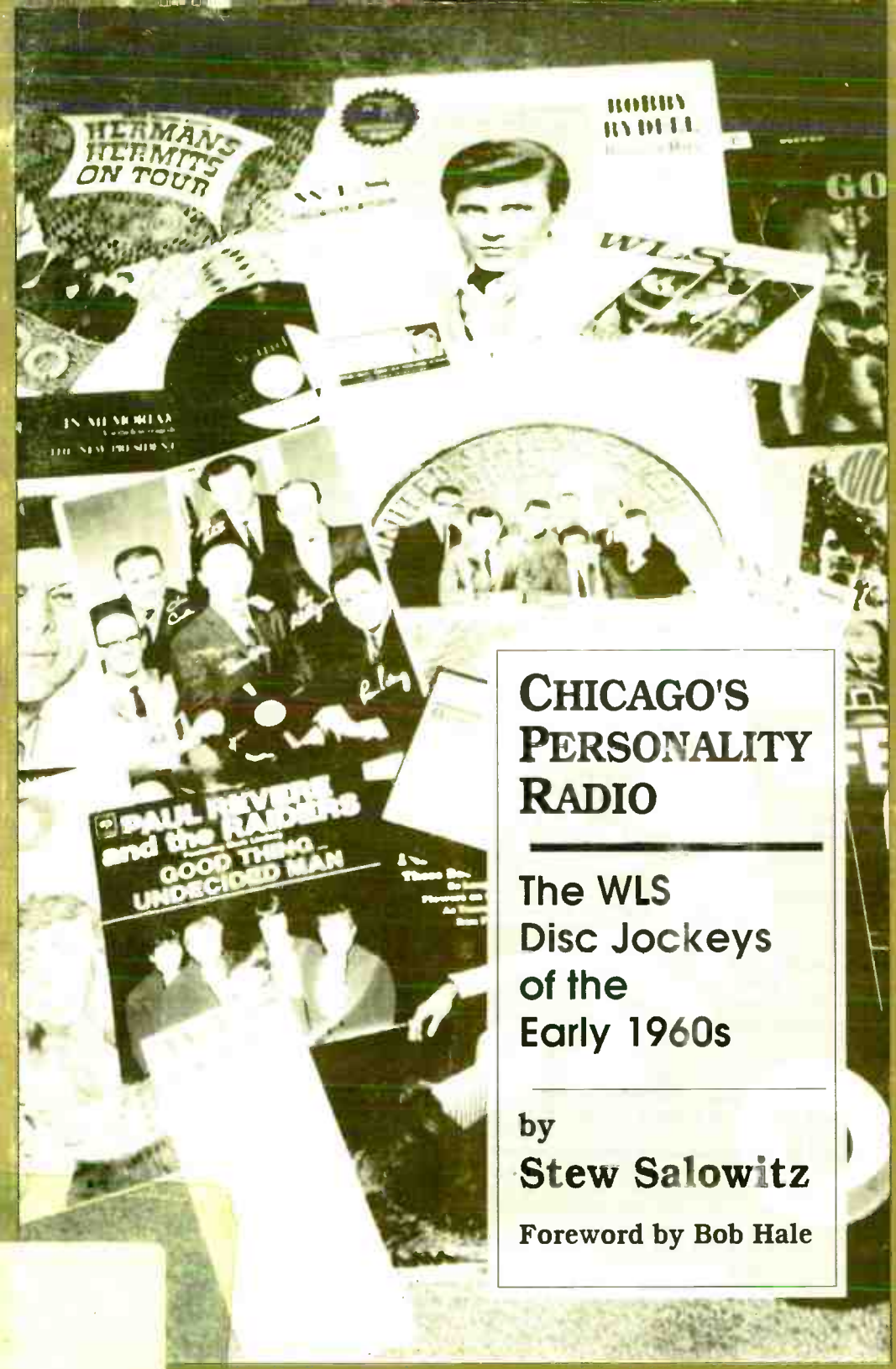

CHICAGO'S PERSONALITY RADIO

The WLS Disc Jockeys of the Early 1960s

by

Stew Salowitz

Foreword by Bob Hale

"All in all, (working at WLS was) the greatest time of my life. And I wish everyone that is in broadcasting now would have had the opportunity that I had to work at that radio station at that time. I run into people now, guys who manage radio stations or manage TV stations, and they'll say, 'Oh, God, I remember you. Are you the same guy from Chicago?' I run into a lot of media people who tell me they're in radio now because of me and because of what we did. I hear that all the time. We were really very influential. And we were the right guys at the right time."

-Ron Riley

"I've got to tell you that, if I had it all to do over again, I would. I consider myself to be one of the luckiest guys to have been part of the hottest years that WLS ever had."

-Don Phillips

"There's no question about it — the three years at WLS represent the high point of my career. You just don't take a three-year period like that for granted. It would be like going to the track and picking nine long shots in a row, or playing the Illinois Lottery and every week hitting the big one. Everything was going right. At record hops every Saturday night, I run into twenty or thirty people who grew up with me. If I sing the pizza song, the whole crowd sings along. That is a tremendous charge."

-Dick Biondi

$14.50

CHICAGO'S PERSONALITY RADIO

THE WLS DISC JOCKEYS OF THE EARLY 1960s

by Stew Salowitz

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stew Salowitz is the co-author of three other books, *McLean County Sports: A Sentimental Journey* (1984), *Collectors Guide to Baseball Memorabilia* (1986), and *Another Sentimental Journey* (1993), while his articles on a variety of subjects have appeared in Sports Collectors Digest, International Woodworking, The Chicago Tribune, and USA Today. In his eleven-and-a-half year stint as the afternoon radio personality on WJBC in Bloomington, Illinois, Salowitz consistently had the highest ratings in the market for afternoon drive, and was among the leaders in the nation in audience share. Since 1988 he has been Director of News Services at Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington. He lives in Normal, Illinois.

PHOTO CREDITS: Bob Hale, page vii, by Val Mazzenga © The Chicago Tribune. Reprinted with permission. Dick Biondi, page 18, courtesy WJMK (FM). Clark Weber, page 120, courtesy WJJD Radio.

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Acknowledgments

Special thanks go to a number of friends who have put up with hearing me talk about this project for a long time.

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Certainly a large thanks to all the WLS personalities for being so gracious with their time and sharing these memories with an outsider who always wanted to be on the inside.

And, as always, with love to my mother, for letting me listen to the radio when I was a child and follow my dream as an adult, and to my wonderful father, who always came in to turn off the transistor after I'd fallen asleep.

Foreword

It's May 1960.

It's bad enough that the railroads are losing passengers to the airlines, but now trucks are being used to move hogs easily from place to place. Slaughter houses are picking up their pens and moving to Kansas City. WLS, "the Voice of Agriculture from Chicago," is still counting hog and steer arrivals at Chicago's Union Stockyards. The Stockyards' days are numbered (a few years later, I would preside over a TV farewell to the Yards.) WLS, founded by Sears, Roebuck and now the *Prairie Farmer* station in Chicago, sounds much as it had for the past 30 years. It is time for a change.

May 2, 6:00 a.m. A recorded jingle with the Anita Kerr Singers announces the birth of a new era: "W...L...S...in...Chi...caaaa...gooo!" Then, Mort Crowley: "Good morning, Chicago, welcome to the New WLS!"

Then, the song Alley Oop. We did it! We've just become footnotes in Chicago radio history.

That's what this book is about — the recollections of several of us who jumped into the water. Would we tread, sink, or swim?

Some of us moved on early. Ed Grennan was the first — rock 'n' roll just wasn't his style. He carved a brilliant radio and TV career at WMAQ (the National Broadcasting Company affiliate) before his recent retirement. Jim Dunbar always had eyes — and the style — for San Francisco, and he pulled every string he could to get reassigned to American Broadcasting Company's KGO Radio in The City by the Bay. He is still the star of San Francisco. Sam Holman, our program director, so impressed the ABC overlords that he was called to run WABC in New York after only two years at WLS.

Recollections can be dangerous things. They're a lot like blimps — expandable with hot air. And, as the years roll on, the air can get hotter.

So how much faith can you put in the following reminiscences? The reader would do well to remember the old gag, "Things aren't like they used to be; then again, they never were!"

The aging imagination can color the past effortlessly. An ex-British spymaster reviewing "Bodyguard of Lies," Anthony Cave Brown's book of World War II espionage, said that writing about the intrigue, romance, and drama of the espionage apparatus of World War II is dangerous. Not that secrets would be revealed, but that aging agents, sitting around in their London clubs, sipping gin and tonics, tend to pump up their own roles in the system, ignoring the big picture in favor of the obscure cor-

ner of MI-5 (British counterintelligence and security) or MI-6 (British Secret Intelligence Service) they sat in for six years.

I think very little of what follows can be classified as "puff." There may be a few variations on facts, but we can attribute that to the passage of time, rather than some self-serving scheme.

One fact involving me will serve to alert the reader to possible variations of interpretation: my departure from WLS wasn't the result of reading a magazine at the wrong time, as Clark Weber tells it. Gene Taylor's account is closer to reality. The magazine episode actually became a gag on the boss. I was chewed out once for reading while on the air, so I put an end to that habit. But my devious mind plotted to sandbag the boss, Ralph Beaudin, an ex-Marine.

I'd come across a Marine magazine and I left it sitting on the desk for several days, hoping he's see it. He did, and he went through the roof, threatening me with expulsion. But when I turned the magazine so he could see the cover, he let go with a few drill sergeant instructions about spending some not-so-quality time with myself, and left the studio...with a smile. The next time I challenged fate, I left in the middle of a broadcast. You can read Taylor's comments to find the conclusion to my four exciting years.

Several years ago, WLS held a reunion of the "original seven." One of the station's personalities at the time had spent several days wise-cracking about the "old men" of the past who would be coming to town. But then he turned kind for a few moments, acknowledging that we opened the doors and set the stage for the flood of new, young talent that today occupies chairs in the control rooms of Chicago radio stations. We accept the quiet applause.

Stew Salowitz, himself an ex-radio maven, treats us kindly in this book, and for that we say thanks. And over the years, just about everyone we've met who remembers those first few years, when the "New WLS" ruled the airwaves in over 40 states, has good memories and kind words. I think a good time was had by all.

So, turn the pages and meet many "footnotes" to Chicago broadcasting history. You might even remember one or two of us. If so, many thanks for listening...and not forgetting.

Bob Hale
Park Ridge, Illinois
September 1993

Introduction

On May 1, 1960, the predominant headline in *The Chicago Sunday Tribune* read: DEMOCRATS FIRE ON NIXON. "Vice president (Richard M.) Nixon was the target of Democratic leaders at a $100 a plate fund raising dinner (in Washington) Saturday night." Another news story told about the California Supreme Court conferring on a last ditch legal effort made to save "sex terrorist" Caryl Chessman from being executed.

In the sports section, you read about Boston University sophomore John Thomas setting a new world record by high jumping seven feet, one-and-a-half inches at the Penn Relays. Leon Wagner hit two home runs in St. Louis to help the Cardinals top the Chicago Cubs, 5-4.

The Dow Jones 30 Industrials were off 14.62 points and closed the week at 601.70, and at Lark On Washington (4701 Washington), you could buy a brand new 1960 Lark, "de luxe six-passenger sedan," for $1595.

Four-room apartments rented for $82.50 and higher at 1543-51 N. Wells, while at 1540 N. State Parkway, a two-bedroom, two-bath apartment with air conditioning and a garage rented for $265 a month. There were homes for sale in Evanston: "New six-and-a-half room bi-levels . . . ceramic tile, birch kitchen cabinets, separate breakfast room . . . from $25,650." And in Arlington Heights, "Story Book Homes" were offered for $22,950, "with full basement and attached garage . . . wall to wall nylon carpeting."

On the comic pages, there was Dick Tracy and Peanuts, as there is today, as well as The Gravies, which is long gone. Other prominent strips included Brenda Starr, Rick O'Shay, Moon Mullins, Dondi, Smokey Stover, Terry and the Pirates, and Gasoline Alley.

At Lytton's you could buy men's two-trouser tropicals for $59.50. "More Dacron polyester, 60% blended with 40% fine wool, makes this the ideal summer suit from every man's standpoint!" Van Heusen's New Century Vanguard shirt (65% Dacron polyester/35% cotton) cost $5.95 at Carson Pirie Scott & Company.

At John M. Smyth Company, a ninety-seven inch sofa cost $289 and at Sears, a twenty-one inch television sold for $179. On that television, you could watch the University of Texas face Colgate in "The College Bowl" at four-thirty. At six-thirty you could watch "Maverick" or "Dennis the Menace," but at seven you *would* be watching Ed Sullivan. His guests on May 1 were Pinky Lee, Johnny Horton, Rickie Layne and Velvel, and Charlton Heston (reading from the Bible).

You could take in a movie: "Please Don't Eat the Daisies" was at the Chicago Theatre. John Wayne and Susan Hayward were in "The Conqueror" at the Monroe, and "Tall Story" was at the Roosevelt, starring Anthony Perkins and "the fabulous new star," Jane Fonda.

As was the case at most radio stations then, Sundays were reserved for religious programming. At 890 kilocycles on the AM dial, WLS Radio featured shows called "Calvary," "Little Church," "Tomorrow," "Vespers," and "Prophecy."

It was the last day WLS would operate as the *Prairie Farmer* outlet. The next day, May 2, 1960, the station's format changed from reporting pork bellies and corn futures, and the music of Patsy Montana and the Arkansas Woodchopper to a tightly-formatted, adventurous journey into the world of Elvis Presley and the Beatles. Tackle acne cream and the U.S. 30 Dragstrip.

It was a change that would affect radio listenership, not just in Chicago but the entire Midwest, and would impact radio programming across the country. It wasn't just the change to rock 'n' roll music — it was the abrupt departure from the station's roots that was the initial shock.

The radio station's call letters, WLS, stand for "World's Largest Store," a reference to Sears Roebuck, which established the outlet in 1924. It was Sears's agricultural foundation that operated the station, which had an original power of a paltry five hundred watts (it was boosted to five thousand watts in 1925).

Burridge D. Butler, owner of the popular farm news magazine *Prairie Farmer*, recognized radio's value in serving and servicing agriculture and the people involved, and purchased WLS in 1928. In 1931, the station became a clear-channel, fifty thousand-watt signal that could be heard by listeners (primarily made up of rural dwellers) for hundreds of miles in any direction from Chicago.

As the *Prairie Farmer* outlet, the station gained its popularity by providing ample amounts of farm programming, entertainment, religious programs, and news. It was two WLS news staffers, Herbert Morrison and Charles Nehlsen, who reported the Hindenburg airship disaster in 1937. Their "routine" coverage of the dirigible's landing at Lakehurst, New Jersey, became part of radio history when the airship caught fire. Within forty-eight hours, their recording had been broadcast on more than one hundred and twenty NBC affiliate stations.

Martha Crane, with her programs "Your Home and Mine," "Of Interest to Women," and "Feature Foods," presented women's programming from 1929 to 1964.

The National Barn Dance, aired on Saturday nights for thirty-six years, was a treasured program and attracted thousands of loyal listeners. The WLS Barn Dance, featuring performers such as George Gobel, Red Foley, and Homer and Jethro, was a four-hour olio of folk songs, country and western music, comedians, and square dancing. From 1932

to 1957, two-and-a-half million customers paid to see live performances of the WLS Barn Dance, staged at the Eighth Street Theatre in downtown Chicago.

However, competition from television and a declining farm population led to a steady decline in listenership, prompting the board of directors to sell both the *Prairie Farmer* magazine and WLS to the American Broadcasting Company-Paramount Theatres, Inc. It was no secret that ABC, sensing the changing tastes in music and radio, had coveted an owned-and-operated station in the Chicago market, and there was terrific appeal to a clear-channel, fifty thousand-watt signal.

But ABC was not interested in continuing status quo with the station's format. The company had already experienced some success with a rock 'n' roll music format at KQV, its owned-and-operated station in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and saw the format as one with a bright future, especially among younger age listeners. (Demographers, in fact, have indicated that the first "baby boomers" were born January 1, 1946, making this group of people 14 years old at the time of the WLS metamorphosis.)

In late 1959, ABC executives dispatched Ralph Beaudin and Sam Holman from KQV to Chicago as general manager and program director, respectively, and the change was begun. Five young men (all in their twenties) were hired as the original staff of announcers. Dick Biondi came from working at a station in Buffalo, New York. Mort Crowley and Gene Taylor were both working for Bartell Broadcasting, Crowley in New York City and Taylor in Milwaukee. Jim Dunbar, looking to get back on the air somewhere, was out of work in Bellingham, Washington. Bob Hale was nursing a cold in Peoria, Illinois, working at WIRL and sending out airchecks. The lone holdover from the WLS of the *Prairie Farmer* era was Ed Grennan, who would be dismissed six months later.

Over the years, there were additions and subtractions to the first group of disc jockeys — dubbed, for publicity and promotional purposes, as "The Magnificent Seven" or "Swinging Seven." Talented replacements such as Bernie Allen, Dex Card, Ron Riley, Don Phillips, and Clark Weber were shuffled into the WLS mix when Biondi, Crowley, Dunbar, and others exited — but the impact and popularity of the station and its celebrities remained constant.

The sound, christened "The Big Beat," took off at supersonic speed, bringing the deejays the adulation and attention of thousands of younger listeners throughout the country, thanks to the clear-channel signal.

So what makes the oral histories of disc jockeys from only one Chicago radio station so interesting? To be sure, the WLS announcers didn't invent their jobs as top disc jockeys any more than they invented rock 'n' roll music. Deejays Alan Freed, William B. Williams, Martin Block, and Cousin Brucie Morrow were all huge favorites in their respective cities. There was Butterball in Miami, Fat Daddy in Baltimore, and

The Geator in Philadelphia.

Even some of the features thought to be unique to WLS weren't. In the early Sixties, WABC in New York (also ABC owned-and-operated) was printing its own "Silver Dollar Sound Survey."

But the WLS disc jockeys belonged to us in Chicago and the Midwest, giving us an identity all our own. The personalities of the period were able to touch their young listeners in ways that went beyond mere announcing — they were counselors, confidants, social advisers, heroes, and influences in career planning. They were friends at times in our lives when, occasionally, no one else would listen or talk to us at our level.

It was an era when disc jockeys, being advocates for a music and, subsequently, a lifestyle that teenagers could readily identify with, were more than merely automatons or human juke boxes. They could set the mood of a song and lead listeners into a record. Deejays like Dick Biondi and Ron Riley actually "sounded" like the music, with an energy and movement that sped along at a staccato pace, producing a happiness and an excitement that was indigenous to the times. Life seemed to move at the pace of the music.

My introduction to WLS came via my high school-age sister and brother — to be a "hip" teenager meant you absolutely *had* to listen to WLS - it's where "it" was happening.

In 1962, at the impressionable age of eight, I would come home from school, sit in the bedroom I shared with my brother, and play radio. I'd snip the weather forecast out of my father's *Chicago Tribune*, sit at a makeshift desk (control board) featuring a hairbrush for a microphone, plug the plastic earphone into my transistor radio, and listen to (pretending to announce) the WLS Silver Dollar Survey.

Inspired by the music and patter shaping my childhood, I wrote a fan letter to my favorite WLS deejay to express my enjoyment. I can't remember to whom I wrote, although I suspect it was Dick Biondi. (At that time, before the advent of clock radios and snooze alarms, it was *de rigueur* to keep a transistor radio under your pillow at night to hear your favorite songs and disc jockeys. I regularly fell asleep listening to Biondi and, later, Art Roberts.) After several weeks, I received an autographed post card in return, placing me squarely on cloud nine (getting such mail would be a thrill for any eight year old). To this day I can't make out the signature of the announcer who responded, although I suspect it is not Biondi's.

Combining that early fascination with radio with the fact that I was always talking — not just at home, but in class, at ballgames, in church, everywhere — it shouldn't have surprised anyone that I would eventually spend nearly fourteen years of my adult life as a radio personality. It's a common pattern; I know of several other radio careers borne of a similar idolatry of major market deejays, including many who also came of age listening to WLS.

In radio, change is inevitable. As the *Prairie Farmer* station became a rock 'n' roll giant, now "The Big 89" has become an all-talk station, highlighting the acerbic wit of morning personalities Don Wade and Roma to the ultra-conservative ranting of Rush Limbaugh in the middle of the day. The station has corrected a downslide and is performing admirably in the fierce jungle of Chicago ratings, under the management of Tom Tradup and programmer Drew Hayes.

At 360 North Michigan Avenue, the disc jockeys's favorite post-work hangout, the London House, is long gone, replaced by a Burger King. Even the building's name during the Sixties and Seventies, The Stone Container Building, is now used as the name of the edifice at 150 North Michigan. (A little known fact: the site of so many great WLS radio broadcasts is an historic location in Chicago, the original site of Fort Dearborn.)

My oral histories are with disc jockeys who worked at WLS prior to 1968, a year *Time Magazine* described as when "America lost its national sense of virtue." In their own histories, Ron Riley and Don Phillips echo those sentiments. I wanted to deal with memories of a simpler time.

My radio background helped me immensely in gathering these interviews. If there is one truth about doing historical research, it is this: the more you know, the more people are inclined to talk to you. Being a longtime fan of Chicago radio certainly helped me talk comfortably with all of these "pioneers."

As for the "truth" in this book, it hinges on the memories of those interviewed. That explains some discrepancies in different interviews — for example, how Bob Hale lost his job at WLS differs from Hale's own version and how Clark Weber saw it. In "Hard Times," his terrific book of oral histories about the Depression, Chicagoan Studs Terkel quoted Preacher Casy (from John Steinbeck's "Grapes of Wrath") answering Pa Joad as to whether or not a ragged man in a transient camp was telling the truth. The Preacher said: "He's tellin' the truth, awright. The truth for him. He wasn't makin' nothin' up." I have no doubt that, while there may be some inconsistencies in one person's account from another's in this book, everyone is telling the truth. The truth for him.

In signing off his program, Art Roberts would always say, "Excelsior!" While it's true excelsior is the worthless material (wood shavings, etc.) used for packing boxes, it is also the Latin word that serves as the motto for New York State. Excelsior, in that case, means "ever upward."

I like to think that's exactly how Roberts intended it to be — lifting ever upward the spirits of his youthful audience, and lifting ever upward the prominence of one of the greatest radio stations of its era — WLS.

Stew Salowitz
Normal, Illinois
September 1993

WLS

The bright sound of Chicago Radio

SILVER DOLLAR SURVEY

Chicago's Official Radio Record Survey

THIS WEEK — JANUARY 17, 1964 — WEEKS PLAYED

*	1.	There I've Said It Again — Bobby Vinton — Epic	11
*	2.	Drag City — Jan & Dean — Liberty	10
	3.	Surfin' Bird — The Trashmen — Garrett	6
*	4.	California Sun — Rivieras — Riviera	8
*	5.	You Don't Own Me — Lesley Gore — Mercury	6
*	6.	Popsicles & Icicles — The Murmaids — Chattahoochee	8
*	7.	Hey Little Cobra — The Ripchords — Columbia	5
*	8.	Dumbhead — Ginny Arnell — MGM	12
*	9.	Daisy Petal Pickin' — Jimmy Gilmer — Dot	9
*	10.	Java — Al Hirt — RCA	8
*	11.	What's Easy For Two — Mary Wells — Motown	8
*	12.	Forget Him — Bobby Rydell — Cameo	10
*	13.	Slippin' and Slidin' — Jim & Monica — Betty	8
*	14.	A Letter From Sherry — Dale Ward — Dot	4
*	15.	Long Tall Texan — Murry Kellum — MOC	10
*	16.	In The Still Of The Night — The Reflections — Tigre	6
*	17.	Since I Fell For You — Lenny Welch — Cadence	8
*	18.	Whispering — Nino Tempo & April Stevens — Atco	6
	19.	The Gorilla — The Ideals — Cortland	7
*	20.	Baby I Love You — The Ronettes — Philles	5
*	21.	Tell Him — The Drew Vells — Capitol	7
*	22.	I Have A Boyfriend — The Chiffons — Laurie	7
*	23.	When The Lovelight Starts Shining — The Supremes — Motown	9
	24.	For You — Rick Nelson — Decca	2
*	25.	Stay With Me — Nick Noble — Chess	5
*	26.	I Can't Stop Talking About You — Steve & Eydie — Columbia	8
*	27.	Anyone Who Had A Heart — Dionne Warwick — Scepter	4
*	28.	Bless 'Em All — Jane Morgan — Colpix	9
*	29.	As Usual — Brenda Lee — Decca	5
*	30.	Wow Wow Wee — The Angels — Smash	2
*	31.	Girls Grow Up Faster Than Boys — The Cookies — Dimension	4
	32.	Little Boy — Tony Bennett — Columbia	2
	33.	True Love Goes On and On — Burl Ives — Decca	1
*	34.	Somewhere — The Tymes — Parkway	5
*	35.	A Fool Never Learns — Andy Williams — Columbia	4
*	36.	Todays Teardrops — Rick Nelson — Imperial	4
*	37.	Boy You Ought To See Her Now — Kevin & Greg — Assoc. Artist	4
*	38.	See The Funny Little Clown — Bobby Goldsboro — UA	4
*	39.	Um Um Um — Major Lance — Okeh	2
*	40.	I Want To Hold Her Hand — The Beattles — Capitol	2

FEATURED ALBUMS

GORME COUNTRY STYLE — EYDIE GORME — COLUMBIA

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF ANDY WILLIAMS — COLUMBIA

This survey is compiled each week by WLS Radio/Chicago from reports of all record sales gathered from leading record outlets in the Chicagoland area. Hear Bob Hale play all the SILVER DOLLAR SURVEY hits daily from 3:00 to 6:30 P.M. *Denotes record first heard in Chicago on WLS.

CHAPTER 1

Bernie Allen

How did you get started in radio?

Well, I actually got started at what is now public radio in Chicago. It's called WBEZ. At the time I started, which was in my high school years, it was simply an activity of the Board of Education. It was an FM station and nobody had ever even heard of one of those things.

They had, as part of it, the central radio workshop and a bunch of us would put on dramatic shows, various things that were broadcast during the school day for the Chicago public school system. It was an education because you got to learn how to act, how to do newscasts, how to work a board, how to work a sound truck, because we had sound effects on disc in those days, and I learned just about everything there was to know that had to do with radio. That's how I got my training.

After I graduated from high school I went on the staff at WBEZ and spent a year doing not only the things I had done as a student, but also instructing students.

Then I went out to California for a year and sort of starved out there, then came back to Chicago in 1948. I looked around a little bit and didn't do much of anything in show business. In fact, I got a job as an office boy. But in the early summer of the year [1948] I got a letter from WIND, one of the many stations I had contacted, saying they were going to have a general audition to bring their files up to date and they invited me down to be a part of it.

I went down to this general audition with what appeared to be seventeen thousand other people, and they said, "Don't call us, we'll call you." So two or three months later, they sent another letter to me, saying there was going to be a special audition to fill a vacancy and they wanted me to come down and be a part of that. I thought this was the absolute pinnacle of whatever career I may have. I have been invited to a special audition, and whatever would happen henceforth in my whole life would never equal this.

I went down there and as the elevator doors opened on the second floor of the Wrigley Building, I damn near didn't get out for the throng in the hall. There was something like sixty-seven other people milling around, all of whom had been called for this special audition, some of whom I recognized as people already working at radio stations in town. They were certainly a lot older than I was, since I was still in my teens.

I decided it was a nice day to take a walk and I turned to get back in the elevator, but the doors had closed, so I figured I might as well stay.

The morning wore on and I eventually got my turn and when I finished, I asked what they wanted me to do now. They told me to go out and sit on the couch and they'd give me further word.

People kept coming and going and it got down to seven people all sitting on that couch, nervously eyeing each other. They then took us in one at a time, and I think I was the third one in, I did what I did, and they sent me home and they would let me know later on in the day who got the job. By this time I knew I was completely at the apex of my career and this was going to be something to tell my grandchildren: I got down to the final seven!

So, I went home and about three hours later, I got the phone call saying, "Well, you're it." And I asked if they were sure they were talking to the right person. And they said they were and that they were very pleased with what I did. That was in 1948, so this year is my fortieth consecutive year at a commercial radio broadcast facility in my hometown of Chicago.

You should wear an armband to signify that.

Well, I don't know of anybody in the whole world who can put all those words together. First of all, your hometown. You know this is a very nomadic business and to have done it, and to continue to do it for forty years consecutively, in this market is — well, I don't think it could be done anymore. But it's a matter of being in the right place at the right time.

How long did you stay at WIND?

I stayed there until 1961. I had two years out in the Army, but that's considered regular employment. That thirteen-year stretch is the longest I've been anyplace, which is pretty good, too.

Then in 1961, you moved where?

Then I went to WJJD, where I am now. I was there until 1963, when I got a call from Gene Taylor. At the time, WJJD's studios were in Des Plaines at the transmitter, and I got this call from Taylor, who I knew only very casually. I was not a friend of his or anything like that.

I was used to getting calls from other people in the business who would ask me questions about music, like what that Vaughn Monroe record in 1949 was. Anyway, Taylor asked me how I'd feel about working for them over at WLS. I practically fell on the floor. In the first place, the salary was a lot different than it was at WJJD in those days, and it was a literal fortune. I told him if he had twenty minutes, I could probably make it by that time on the expressway.

He told me the reason was that everybody there was doubling up so much that they were following themselves coming and going. Jim Dunbar, Mort Crowley, and Dick Biondi had all left at about the same moment, and they didn't have any bodies over there. So, in twenty minutes I was over there, practically.

I got a nice send-off from my boss at WJJD, who was thrilled to death that one of his minions had been so honored to go to WLS, and I went over and started the same day Ron Riley did.

The people at WJJD were happy to see you go?

Yes. Boyd Lawler was the general manager, and he was thrilled to pieces that I was going to the number one station in town. We'd always had a very good relationship and he wrote me a nice, official memo with a good send-off. It's a memo I still have.

So you started at WLS in 1963?

As I recall, I started on the ten a.m. to twelve-thirty p.m. shift, and then Gene Taylor followed me. But then he became station manager and I took over the ten a.m. to two p.m. shift.

At the time, WLS was already one of the top stations in the country. That had to take some work on your part to adjust to that and help keep it at the lofty position?

Actually, I was quite a bit different from the other fellows that were there. It's a little hard to explain, but I was surrounded by a real talented crew of disc jockeys. They were real jocks who had come from all over the country, mainly Milwaukee, I guess, but they had worked at a lot of places. And they were into the disc jockey sound, the disc jockey knowledge, the music background, all the rest of that stuff that was very much a part of that new breed.

What I was, for a definition, was a "versatile performer." In other words, I'm an actor, I'm a singer, my mother was a dancing teacher so I learned how to dance when I was a kid. I was just one of those guys who, if you'd tell me to do something that had to do with show business, I could probably take a pretty good crack at it.

So here I was, asked to do something, a mid-day show on a facility that was a rock 'n' roll radio station, which meant that I had to adopt a technique to do that job. Which I did pretty successfully because I stayed there until 1971. It was simply a performance that was part of the sound of the radio station, and it was just another sound that I did. Then I would go over to one of the recording studios and do a highly technical medical narration for a pharmaceutical house, or something like that. That would be another performance that day.

And that still goes on to this day. I don't take myself as seriously as some of the folks in the "disc jockey" business do. My main endeavor was to try to do a good performance on the air and learn by osmosis from my fellow mates.

One of the things I found most amazing was that the Arbitron numbers I carried in the middle of the day were pretty good, when you figure that I had Martha Crane with her interviews, and had Paul Harvey at noon. All of these ingredients, supposedly against the book of how you run a rock 'n' roll show, still yielded very good numbers in the middle of the day.

How was the management around WLS during your tenure?

Well, when I started, Gene Taylor was the program director and then general manager Ralph Beaudin got kicked upstairs to New York by ABC, so Gene took over as general manager, at which point Clark Weber took over as program director. Everything, pretty well, went swimmingly.

I thought we did a very good job and one of the reasons is that we were all over thirty and had a good knowledge of the radio business. We knew what to do properly to make sure the audience enjoyed what we did.

This rather Camelot-like existence went on until a fellow by the name of John Rook came in, with his assistant program director, Mike McCormick. Things just started to fall apart. Rook didn't care much for what I did, so I was among the first to go when he came in, but it wasn't long after that when just about everybody else was gone. They started on an entirely new youth movement, and I think, honestly, from that point on, things began to slide a lot for WLS.

Let me get some of your impressions of people you worked with. How about Bob Hale?

He was the afternoon, Silver Dollar Survey guy. But not for too long. He got himself in a little trouble with management, so he was replaced by Dex Card.

What kind of a guy was Dex Card?

He is something else, that guy. He's a character out of fiction, I think. We got along real well. He's a very bright guy, very sharp businessman. He did so many hops that he used to not even cash his paychecks, they'd wind up in the center drawer of his desk and pile up. I'd look at them and start to cry because I was on the doorstep of the comptroller every week. He's still in the area and lives in one of the posher suburbs and has for a long, long time.

How about Gene Taylor?

Well, as I say, he was the one who hired me. He was, and is, a delightful friend. We got along very, very well, as we all did.

What about Art Roberts?

He was a very creative guy. Very with it, all the way. I always thought he was a fine talent, but he never seemed to have much staying power anywhere. He seemed to get in his own way somewhere along the line. Art was a lot more erudite than Dick Biondi was. Biondi was all pizzazz and noise and pizzas and jokes, whereas Art was more of a classic definition of a disc jockey. He'd work pretty hard on breaking records and getting information. He was more of a Martin Block style, the adult approach to things.

You never worked with Dick Biondi at WLS, did you?

No. Biondi had left by the time I got there, and his leaving was a reason Gene Taylor needed bodies.

What about Clark Weber? You've had a chance to work with him, not only at WLS, but at WJJD, too.

Clark has completely switched gears, going from music radio to talk radio with phones and guests and things like that. He's a real pro. He's very "up" with a sound that's bright and brisk. He's got a good sense of humor and doesn't mind being called "Old Baldy" or "Chrome Dome" or something like that, as Riley used to call him.

When you talk about Don Phillips, maybe you should talk about how good you both were as singers?

(Laughs.) Well, I still am. I don't know about Don. I didn't really see him very much — he was on all night and I was on during the day. He was a very nice guy and I enjoyed his company all the time.

How about the guy who started the same day you did - Ron Riley?

Ron was closer to the Biondi style, sort of off-the-wall, characterizations, Bruce Lovely, people sitting on fire escapes, and lots of noise. He was closer to the current crop of zanies on the air. He was very quick and able to think right off the top of his head and come up with one-liners and stuff like that. For what he did, I thought he did very well.

He was very much unlike that in person. While not exactly the quiet type, he was certainly low-key in private conversation. But when he would get on the air, it would be like firecrackers going off. And that was perfect for our audience, too.

With the ensemble of people at WLS, would that have to be one of the most talented staffs in history?

I would certainly have to say so. None of us was filled with a sense of self-importance and I think that created a camaraderie, and we all knew we worked for Gene Taylor and Ralph Beaudin and they were the bosses, and we did what they wanted. We weren't egotistical enough to think that we mattered more than the station.

How about Ralph Beaudin as a general manager?

I would say he was rather distant. He didn't socialize a lot, but he did his job right well. And he was on our side. If he had to fight with the bosses at ABC for anything on our behalf, he would. He's a very fair man. Tough. He didn't get in people's way. He would delegate authority, leave the people alone to do their jobs, and just rake in the money.

How did you know when it was time to leave?

Well, I didn't do that of my own volition. John Rook was the one who decided that. When he made it eminently clear that he could do without me a lot, in about 1968, we made an agreement that I would work weekends and fill-in work, which I did for the next three years. I was gradually easing into both FM radio and the free-lance business.

In 1971 then, you went to work where?

There was a series of FM stations. I worked at WCLR, WLAK, for a while in the mid-Seventies at WCFL. In fact, I was on the air when Mayor Daley died. I seem to be on the air when most people pass away. I think of myself as Typhoid Mary once in a while. I was on the air when John F. Kennedy died and when Mayor Harold Washington died.

I started at WJJD in the spring of 1983.

It's been a good long run for you in radio. I imagine you will always look back on the WLS days with some fondness?

That's where I kind of established the name in the Chicago market. I think you could ask an awful lot of people, walking down Michigan Avenue, the name Bernie Allen, and they'd probably say, "Oh, yeah, he's on the radio, isn't he?" They might not know where.

It's a lot of fun to hear from fans, and I still do.

This interview took place on April 13, 1988, when Allen was the mid-day disc jockey at Chicago's WJJD. Allen, who also worked at WLS as the mid-day disc jockey, retired from WJJD in January 1990, ending his string of 42 consecutive years at a commercial radio station in his hometown.

Since retiring, Allen does free-lance commercial voice-overs and has worked in the informational business for the people who supply 900 telephone numbers with, for instance, soap opera summaries for TV Guide magazine.

CHAPTER 11

Ralph Beaudin

Let's get started by talking about your radio background. How did you get started in radio?

I started in Omaha, working for Don Burden and Todd Storz, as a salesman. I was in sales all the time. I was just looking for a job that paid more than I was making, so I took a job in radio.

From Omaha, where did you go?

I went to WBNY in Buffalo, New York, as a station manager for a two hundred and fifty-watt station.

How did you wind up, finally, at WLS?

Well, ABC bought KQV in Pittsburgh and they were looking for a general manager to come in down there. I knew some of the guys at ABC because they'd been with Storz. So ABC hired me as general manager for KQV in Pittsburgh when they bought the station. It was a middle-of-the-road station and I switched it to Top 40. That was the first Top 40 station in the ABC chain.

Then ABC bought WLS in 1960 and I went in there as president of WLS.

Whose decision was it to change it from the Prairie Farmer station to rock 'n' roll?

Mine.

Did you catch any heat from that?

Oh, yeah. Not from the agricultural part of it, but the station was carrying forty hours of commercial religion a week. We received ten thousand letters protesting the dropping of the religious programming. And we answered all of those letters.

What precipitated the format change?

The market was right and there was nobody really doing the format in town. The strongest personality then was Howard Miller on WIND and then Wally Phillips was doing a Top 40 show on WGN in the evenings. But there was nobody doing the full format.

How was it getting things ready to go on the air?

It was interesting because we were in the third floor walk-up at the Prairie Farmer printing building, and trying to get new studios built over on West Washington, and hiring all new people, and starting from scratch — new equipment and everything.

I brought in a program director, Sam Holman, from Pittsburgh with me, and we had a chief engineer by the name of Fred Zellner, and had Armand Belli as the sales manager.

So it was up to Sam Holman to get the best personalities he could find? What kind of thing did you tell him to do?

Well, he knew what we'd done in Pittsburgh and the idea was to bring in bright, young guys from, preferably, out of town who didn't know it wouldn't work.

Was there some doubt that it would work?

Oh, sure. At that time, in Top 40 radio, you'd go from market to market and they'd say it worked there, but it won't work here because we're different.

Chicago's a different place than Pittsburgh, obviously, and these people who were brought in became instant stars.

The personalities did, because we hit the market rather quickly and we were consistent in our formatting. We had the gold records as well as the Silver Dollar Survey and would go back five, six, seven years and play some of the older artists. And we had it heavily day-parted according to morning, mid-day, afternoon drive, and evening.

And the signal was just so great.

Yeah, fifty kilowatts. We had listeners all over the place.

How was the situation in sales right at the start?

Well, it was wait and see, but it built rather quickly. Some of the major agencies in Chicago had been buying Top 40 radio in other parts of the country, so they got on the bandwagon rather quickly.

Wrigley Gum was one of our bellwether accounts during the early Sixties. Budweiser came on rather quickly. And so, a couple of key accounts and then it began breaking, and at that time a large percentage was national business. And the national buyers in New York and Chicago knew KQV in Pittsburgh and knew WBNY in Buffalo, so they bought in to WLS early.

How was the money you had to offer the guys on the air?

Well, they made more than they were making where they were working before or they wouldn't have come. And we were an AFTRA union shop.

The people who were hired were billed as "The Swinging Seven" at one time. It's almost a universal opinion that Dick Biondi was the lead player in the cast.

Well, Dick was the out-front guy, of course, because of his time shift. But immediately in front of him was Art Roberts and Art moved in and took over when Biondi left, and Art built the numbers on up.

Biondi was very good. He was very cooperative and worked extremely hard for us. He'd had a problem before with success and how to handle it, and he had the same thing with us.

The format is what really carried it and we just had damn good guys that executed and worked darned hard. They were out doing sock hops and speaking at high schools; they were out all the time doing something.

And that wasn't forced on them by management?

No, no. We encouraged it, but they all got wrapped up in our pro-

Art Roberts

Jim Dunbar

Mort Crowley

Dick Biondi

CHICAGOLAND'S POPULAR MEN ABOUT RADIO – THE WLS SWINGING SEVEN!

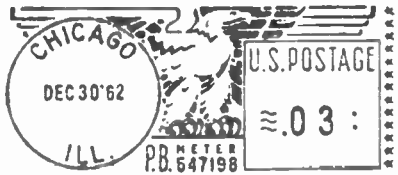
THANKS FOR THE LETTER.

Bob Hale

Gene Taylor

Clark Weber

360 NORTH MICHIGAN AVENUE • CHICAGO 1, ILLINOIS



STEW SALOWITZ
1117 JOHN ST.
NORMAL , ILL

gram and everybody worked damned hard at it. Hell, those guys would drive two hundred miles to do a hop. They worked their tails off, and everybody was working for the radio station.

I think you'd feel more comfortable talking about the announcing staff as a whole?

All of the guys were dynamite, everybody that we had in there. We'd have a jock meeting and it was all enthusiasm. We had very little bitching. Sam Holman was an extreme disciplinarian and he was tough on the guys, but everybody really learned the program well. Then Sam went on to WABC in New York.

How did you feel about eventually leaving WLS?

Well, I'd been there about six years and ABC moved me to New York as group vice-president for radio for ABC in 1966, which meant the group reported to me as well as the network.

I developed the four network concept for ABC and got that on the air, then really had nothing to do.

What were the four networks?

Information, Entertainment, Contemporary, and FM. The real decision on these came to bear from the radio stations. At that time, WLS, WABC, WXYZ, and KQV were all Top 40 and carrying Don McNeill's Breakfast Club, a half hour of news at noon, and another half hour at night. It was becoming more difficult to be competitive in the market places with other stations kicking off.

So by developing the four network thing, we could put those shows on the various networks that would fit those stations in the market place.

Did they think that would work?

Well, they bought off on the idea rather quickly. It was like a twenty-minute presentation and they gave me the go-ahead.

What happened after leaving New York?

I left ABC in 1969. I resigned to start my own radio group, which didn't get off the ground. We moved to Phoenix and I ended up running two or three companies from down there. My wife and I raised our family in Phoenix.

I had a manufacturing company for a few years but the groups I ran from Phoenix were the Linn Broadcasting Group, and the Meredith radio division, and then the Combined Communications radio division. I was president of all three of those at one time or another.

I came to Omaha two or three years ago. It's a small group with six stations, two in Kearney, Nebraska (KGFW and KQKY), two in North Platte (KXMP and KODY), and the two here (KKAR and KQKQ). We're Top 40 in two of them, have country in two of them, all news in another one, and the small town, middle-of-the-road on another.

What kind of philosophy do you have as a station manager or a general manager?

The only way you can be successful is to teach the people who work for you everything that you know. So that's what I try to do, make sure

that my sales management people, my program directors, and everybody know as much about the radio station as I do. I get my program directors involved in sales, sales involved in programming, and everybody involved in administration. A manager has to give them the tools to do it, though.

Someone told me that you were a dynamic manager and delegated authority well, and that you never had anything on your desk. Not even a telephone.

I worked with a clean desk for years.

I hope you remember your days at WLS as exciting times in Chicago radio.

Yeah, they were good days. Everybody had a lot of fun, we did a lot of good work, we did an awful lot of great projects, we were one of the lead stations working with Danny Thomas on the teen march for St. Jude Hospital. We did an awful lot of things off the air, always involved in the community in various areas.

No regrets about being there?

No, hell no. Everybody was excited about what we were doing and everybody worked hard at it.

Ralph W. Beaudin died of cancer on May 23, 1990, at the age of sixty-two. He was the executive vice president and chief operating officer of Mitchell Broadcasting Company in Omaha, a job he began in 1987. The company owns Omaha radio stations KKAR and KQKQ; Kearney, Nebraska stations KGFW-AM and KQKY; and KODY and KNXP in North Platte, Nebraska.

Beaudin, an Omaha native, began his radio career in Omaha in the Fifties after working in the classified advertising department on The Omaha World-Herald.

This interview was conducted on April 13, 1988, while Beaudin was running the stations in Omaha.

WLS

The bright sound of Chicago Radio

SILVER DOLLAR SURVEY

Chicago's Official Radio Record Survey

DECEMBER 15, 1962

THIS WEEK			WEEKS PLAYED
1.	TELSTAR	Tornadoes — London	9
2.	RETURN TO SENDER	Elvis Presley — RCA	9
3.	LOVE CAME TO ME	Dion — Laurie	7
4.	BOBBY'S GIRL	Marcie Blane — Seville	11
5.	GO AWAY LITTLE GIRL	Steve Lawrence — Columbia	5
6.	THE LONELY BULL	Tiajuana Brass — A&M	9
7.	PEPINO THE ITALIAN MOUSE	Lou Monte — Reprise	6
8.	ALL ALONE AM I	Brenda Lee — Decca	11
9.	SOME KINDA FUN	Chris Montez — Monogram	7
10.	MY OWN TRUE LOVE	Duprees — Co-Ed	9
11.	MONSTERS HOLIDAY	Bobby Pickett — Garpax	3
12.	THE IN BETWEEN YEARS	James MacArthur — Scepter	6
13.	RUBY ANN	Marty Robbins — Columbia	4
14.	FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART	Dean Martin — Reprise	4
15.	SHUTTERS AND BOARDS	Jerry Wallace — Challenge	4
16.	TO LOVE	Ral Donner — Gone	7
17.	KENTUCKY MEANS PARADISE	Glen Campbell — Capitol	7
18.	REMEMBER THEN	The Earls — Old Town	7
19.	DON'T YOU BELIEVE IT	Andy Williams — Columbia	12
20.	ZIP A DEE DOO DAH	Bob B Soxx — Philles	8
21.	THE NIGHT HAS A THOUSAND EYES	Bobby Vee — Liberty	3
22.	CHAINS	The Cookies — Dimension	4
23.	TELL HIM	The Exciters — UA	6
24.	MY DAD	Paul Peterson — Colpix	3
25.	I SAW LINDA YESTERDAY	Dickey Lee — Smash	3
26.	BABY'S GONE BYE BYE	George Maharis — Epic	5
27.	TEN LITTLE INDIANS	Beach Boys — Capitol	5
28.	BOY TROUBLE	Revlons — Garpax	7
29.	UP ON THE ROOF	Drifters — Atlantic	4
30.	THE DARKEST STREET IN TOWN	Jimmy Clanton — Ace	5
31.	ZERO ZERO	Lawrence Welk — Dot	3
32.	TWO LOVERS	Mary Wells — Motown	3
33.	SANTA CLAUS IS WATCHING YOU	Ray Stevens — Mercury	4
34.	IF I NEVER GET TO HEAVEN	Kathy Dee — BW	2
35.	SEE SEE RIDER	LaVern Baker — Atlantic	5
36.	MY WIFE CAN'T COOK	Lonnie Russ — 4-J	6
37.	EVERYBODY LOVES A LOVER	Shirelles — Scepter	5
38.	HALF HEAVEN HALF HEARTACHE	Gene Pitney — Musicor	4
39.	HELLO FAITHLESS	Dora Hall — Premiere	4
40.	MY COLORING BOOK	Kitty Kallen — RCA	4

FEATURED ALBUMS

RAMSEY LEWIS — SOUND OF CHRISTMAS — ARGO

CHRISTMAS WITH EDDY ARNOLD — RCA

This survey is compiled each week by WLS Radio/Chicago from reports of all record sales gathered from leading record outlets in the Chicagoland area. Hear Gene Taylor play all the SILVER DOLLAR SURVEY hits daily from 3:00 to 6:30 P.M.

CHAPTER III

Dick Biondi

How did you get your start in radio?

By hanging around the radio station in my hometown of Binghamton, New York, in the late Forties. I'd show up there after school and run for coffee and doughnuts for the guys. I was just fascinated by the business, as most kids were. One thing led to another and they asked me to help with the football broadcasts as a spotter, and then working election night. Pretty soon it became what I wanted to do. And I did it.

I used to sit around and pray for somebody to get sick so they could be late for work so I could give the station break.

After high school, you decided to try it professionally?

I'd had five years of working at the radio station there, so I felt like I'd already gone to college or radio school. They told me there wasn't much more they were going to teach me than I'd already learned. By the time I got out of school I had a pretty good idea of what I wanted to do as far as radio. I wasn't proficient, but I didn't feel somebody was going to teach me more than what I had learned from people like Rod Serling and others who were working at the station then.

Rod Serling from "Twilight Zone" fame?

He was writing copy there and I was running out for coffee for him and the rest of the guys. There were some pretty heavy guys, at least for that era in that particular part of the country.

From Binghamton, where did you go?

Corning, New York, was my first radio job. I did a regular show, a split shift. Opening up in the morning and then coming back to close — it was a daytime station. I worked there for about three or four months before they had a change of ownership and I was one of the people who got let go. So I went to Alexandria, Louisiana.

That's quite a move, from Corning, New York, to Alexandria, Louisiana.

Yeah, it was a good move. It was a smart move because if I did get discouraged I wasn't able to just run home to mama and papa. I stayed and I started doing play by play sports, football and basketball, and playing rhythm and blues records. Back in 1950 is when I was down there. I was playing rhythm and blues and rock 'n' roll before anybody up here [in Chicago] had ever heard of it.

I was playing to a strictly black audience. It was called "Jammin' Jive" and it was directed to the black audience. Every advertiser was

from Lower Third Street in Alexandria, or the black section of town. I even had a spot on my show where I sold graves for the black cemetery, which there were at that time. Even the cemeteries were segregated.

Who were the musicians you were playing then?

Buddy Johnson, Earl Bostic, Joe Liggins, Wynonie Harris. I could keep going on and on. This was 1950, 1951.

From Alexandria, where did you go?

York, Pennsylvania. I spent not quite a year there, got fired, and then went to Erie, Pennsylvania for only about two or three months because they were putting on a station in Youngstown, Ohio, and they got me used to the new rock 'n' roll format in Erie. After those two or three months I went to Youngstown and WHOT, which is probably the second most successful place I've been to in my career.

When I got to Youngstown, they weren't on the air. I actually helped put the tile down in the studios and in the bathrooms. We started off and had a great crew. I was their "featured jock", quote, and that's where I got into pop music.

I did record hops and brought entertainers into the area before many had heard of them. In fact, the first time Jerry Lee Lewis ever came north, he was at my hop. That was two weeks before he went on the Steve Allen show back in 1957. I had him on a hop two weeks before with Michael Landon, the actor. There were four thousand kids in the ballroom. And my mother and father were there, too, and they didn't know what was going on.

Did you have an inkling what was going on?

Oh, yeah. I started in 1954 and the first act I brought in was a guy named Clyde Stacy from Tulsa, who had a record called "So Young," which was recorded, believe it or not at the Oral Roberts Temple because it had the right echo. That was the beginning of the hops.

I also had Bobby Darin, Frankie Avalon, Fabian, Paul Anka, the Four Dates from Philadelphia, George Hamilton IV, anybody that was anybody came through.

Including Elvis Presley eventually?

Not in Youngstown, but in Cleveland. That's where I met him and that's where he signed the back of my shirt. That was the first time he ever came north — he was brought to Cleveland. Bill Randle of WERE was the guy that brought him up. Randle was probably one of the greatest jocks in the business, by the way.

I was still working in Youngstown but went up there for the show and backstage at the arena, I had Elvis sign the back of my shirt. I told the kids the next week I was going to jump off the stage and whoever grabbed my shirt could have his autograph. I told Elvis and he laughed about it and said, "I know what's going to happen to you." And he was right, because I wound up in the hospital.

Pandemonium?

I don't think anybody even got a piece of the autograph — the girls went crazy. My back looked like I had been in some wild passionate

affair or something. I had to go to the hospital to have it checked. But it was great.

You had some good times, then, in Youngstown?

Yeah. I used to dye my beard school colors — one half red, one half blue, or whatever the colors used to be, and I'd dress accordingly. Everything was color coordinated. A lot of stuff like that. I sat on a flagpole. Did all sorts of goofy things that I'm happy I did.

To deviate a little from the history and dive into radio philosophy, it sounds like everything you did and have done on the air has been pretty well to please an audience, and primarily an audience of younger listeners. You've been great at that over the years.

But now [at WJMK] I'm trying to please anybody that's listening. But that's what I was into, I have to say that. And, without realizing it, I had a lot of adult listeners, too, even when I was at WLS. I guess I didn't realize that at the time.

But yeah, my philosophy was to entertain the young kids. Hell, I was young myself, or at least I thought I was. And I was having fun. I was enjoying doing them [the shows].

And young people are a loyal audience, too. You get a young person to listen to your show and the word spreads and the popularity increases.

They're also very honest. They can tell you in a minute, and you can find out how long you're going to last if they decide you're not being straight with them.

Back down the history trail. What about after Youngstown?

After Youngstown, it was Buffalo, New York for two years at WKBW. It was good because we covered the entire eastern seaboard and even into Cuba. Guys in Guantanemo would listen to us, as they did when we were at WLS.

Did you do anything rebellious in Buffalo?

Oh yeah, did a lot of things — got kicked off the air for playing an Elvis record. Some of the things would take hours to tell you about, but they were fun and exciting things that I thought were good and wild.

Like going down to Graceland and picking leaves off Elvis's lawn, then mailing them, individually, one in an envelope, to anybody who sent in for one. I came back on the plane with three polyethylene laundry bags full of leaves and everybody was looking at me like I was some sort of a nut. But I didn't care.

Buffalo was your stop just before WLS?

Yeah, that's where Sam Holman heard me because he was on his way from Elmira, New York, to somewhere. I guess he liked what he heard and he called me and we got together.

You were one of the originals that Holman brought in?

Yes. The original crew was Jim Dunbar, Gene Taylor, Mort Crowley, Bob Hale, Sam Holman, Ed Grennan, and myself. Ed Grennan didn't stay very long but he was an original. I hate when people leave him out because he was an original, he made a definite attempt at it, and he just

moved on to something else. He's still in Chicago as a booth announcer at WMAQ-TV.

Some people struggle for years to get into a major market and you did work hard, but isn't it a stroke of luck that Holman heard you, called you, and put you on the air?

When he decided he was going to Chicago, he remembered me, so he called. At least that's the story he told me and I'll have to believe him because Sam was a saint to me.

I don't think I struggled ever. I think I've been very lucky and have been doing things. I've been falling into manure and coming up smelling like roses.

In your three years at WLS, you were part of a team that developed the station into a great one in the country. Did that take a lot of work?

That's the problem. I didn't think it was a lot of work. I never even thought about it as work. And that's the thing people can't understand. I was having so much fun I didn't even realize what we were doing.

I knew we were popular and I knew we were having all kinds of things, but I never thought it was anything, like, out of the ordinary. I figured that's what we were supposed to be doing. Probably the greatest program director we ever had, Sam Holman, knew how to handle it — he kept us in line. I wish there was one program director in the country today like him. There would probably be a lot more happy disc jockeys.

What about Ralph Beaudin as general manager?

He would jump in if he thought it was going out of line, but Sam was the program director and Sam handled programming. What happened between them in his office, I don't know, but it was nice to have a guy like Ralph around. He would say, "Okay, this is your job, you do it, and if it doesn't work, then we'll sit down and decide what we're going to do about you."

Ralph was a manager who knew how to keep his company happy. If he had something to say, if he chewed you out, you always had a recourse, you could go back to Sam. Beaudin became more of a hands-on manager after Sam left because there was nobody who could handle us the way Sam did.

He was a delightful man and I was very sorry to see him pass away at such a young age. But he was unique and we need more people like him. People who try to develop a family rather than run the place with a whip or by fear.

And you guys were a family back then.

Oh, yeah. Every Wednesday morning we had a meeting. Sam would have us over to his house on Sundays just to get drunk. When I say get drunk, we'd have parties and, at that time, we were all so young, two beers and we'd all be drunk. It was just a fun time.

When you worked on the air at night, you must have heard from every state in the union. That had to be an awesome feeling of power?

We heard from thirty-eight states that I know of for sure. Like I say, I don't think we realized what we were into. If we had known it, we would have probably messed it up - at least I would have. I knew we were having a great time and things were going wild.

How about your first night at WLS — were you any more nervous there than at any other point in your career?

No. I was so excited I don't even think I knew what nerves were. I was wired.

Beaudin could have fired me after the first night because everybody was frightened to death at what they heard. The listeners were happy with everybody else, then they get this guy that blew the tubes out of the radio. He could've fired me, but he was man enough to listen to Sam Holman and Sam said, "Give us time," and we proved right.

And, with your time in Youngstown, you'd gotten used to the adulation and frenzy with the hops and such.

Yeah, that's the thing, and I just figured this is what we did in Youngstown, only here it's on a bigger scale. I'd be getting a little more recognition. More record people would come in and see me. Things like that.

Was it ever scary with all the people around you at the sock hops?

Ah, not really. I always had somebody around me. Only one time they tried to rip my clothes off, and that was at a benefit at Thillens Stadium. I loved it because my mother and father were there and I thought, Wow, now they're going to know that their kid has really made it big. But the show people locked me in a little cage and I was safe.

I know it's hard to compare with today, but how was the money at WLS back then?

It was big money back then. I can't remember exactly, but it must have been $20,000 a year or something like that. I'm talking about starting, just beginning. That didn't include the hops and things. And as we progressed, things got a little — more fun.

I was doing one hop a week. I really couldn't have done more because I was working that nine p.m. to midnight shift and I was doing my hops on Sundays, so the chance of doing more was not as good as those guys working the other shifts.

But I had fun and the money didn't even matter. I didn't even care. The fact was that I was doing it. I was paying my bills and that was the important thing.

Let me get your candid, off-the-cuff impressions of some of your co-workers at WLS. You were billed as the "Swinging Seven" or the "Magnificent Seven." Was that really the case?

We were crazy. Let's face it, we were all having a ball, and I guess by today's standards, we were swinging. We got free records. Record companies took you out to dinner, which was okay. I'm happy to say that I don't think any of us ever got into a situation that was really bad. I was lucky I wasn't a music director or program director so I didn't have to

worry about anybody with payola or anything.

Speaking of payola, did your professional paths ever cross with Alan Freed?

Alan Freed was from the Youngstown area and his manager, Lew Platt, was from there. So we met briefly back when I was in Youngstown. Lew Platt, at one time after he left New York, wanted to take me over and I didn't want to get involved. I didn't think I was important enough to have a manager.

Back to your mates at WLS. What about Bernie Allen?

Well, I didn't work with Bernie at WLS. I didn't until I came back here in 1983 and he was at WJJD. He's a sweet, wonderful man.

How about Mort Crowley?

Mort and I talk quite often. Not as often as we should, but when you're fighting for your careers as we are, you lose track a little. He's in the Milwaukee area. He was probably one of the first, even before the "Zoo" people and everything, he had all that going long before these people thought about it. The sound effects, the different voices, the one-liners, and all that.

How about Gene Taylor?

Taylor and I were probably the best buddies because we lived right next door to each other for the whole three years I was at WLS. We shared the same wall. He was like, for those three years, the big brother I never had.

What about Clark Weber?

I can't comment on Clark.

Okay. Art Roberts?

Art and I knew each other from when I was in Youngstown and he was in Akron and then, of course, we worked together in Buffalo. Art was a hard-working guy. He had different views on radio than most people and I think he always wanted to get into management. He was a legend in this town.

He took over after I left and I'm sure he went through a couple of rough weeks or whatever it was, but he was a pro and I think people realized that it wasn't his fault, whatever happened.

And Jim Dunbar?

Dunbar I love. Dunbar was probably the most cerebral of all the people I've ever worked with. He didn't say much, but when he said something it made a tremendous impression. He's gone on to do probably better than any of us, and he deserves everything. He's a brilliant, brilliant man. I never looked at him as management. I just looked at him as a guy that was a helluva talent and knew how to say the right thing at the right time, which so many of us don't.

Did you know Ron Riley?

Only slightly. He would work part-time. He's a delightful guy, very funny, always smiling. That's what I like about him.

How about Bob Hale?

Hale, if he ever learned how to be on time, would be one of the nicest

guys in the whole world. He always had trouble coming in and he always came in after me, but we still laugh about it today. He's a sweet man and he's one of the people that have kept in touch over the years. I love him to death.

Can you comment on the WLS disc jockey Dick Biondi?

(Laughs.) I'm gonna drop that one. I'm not going to comment on myself. I don't know what to say. I let other people do the commenting.

At that time, you were on the cutting edge of some new music, weren't you?

I was the first one to play a Beatles record on a major station in the United States. That's documented by fan clubs. It was in 1963 when I played the VeeJay thing, "From Me To You" and "Please Please Me."

Did you know that was going to be big?

Not really. I played it on my show. I liked it and it got so much reaction on it, when I got fired in May, I took it with me to Los Angeles and I played it on KRLA. The phone rang off the wall and people were saying, "Get that crap off the air! Play the Beach Boys!"

Just one year later, well, you know. It made me feel good that I played something before L.A. discovered it. I still remember the phones, people saying, "You disc jockeys in Chicago better get with it — you don't know what's happening."

Well, you were always a little rebellious -

Not a little rebellious — quite!

All right, you were always quite rebellious of management. There are a few things in radio that can wear a disc jockey out, like having eighteen minutes of commercials an hour.

Well, it was that, but it was the principle behind it. Even today with the bottom line, they don't put that many commercials. You put five minutes of news, five minutes of something else that was talk-oriented — to me it was dumb because it was taking up time from the records. And then twenty-one minutes of commercials. So you figure you've got thirty-one minutes of talk or commercials, and then you're supposed to play records and maintain some sort of an audience. That didn't make sense to me. So I fought it.

And that was the real reason for your being fired at WLS.

Definitely. That's the fight that I had with the sales manager. We literally came to, well, I went after him with a letter opener. I was going to stab him. I didn't care — I saw red and lost control. The engineers and whoever wrestled me down, wrestled him down, and they told us all to go home. I guess they meant to go home and cool it. I took it as being fired and that was it. I never came back.

After WLS, it wasn't the end of the world for you?

No. I went to KRLA in Los Angeles and stayed there for about five months. Then I went to New York to do the first rock 'n' roll network, syndicated, down-the-line, live disc jockey show. That lasted a year, but it was very productive.

I had the Rolling Stones on the very first day they came to the United

States. Had Peter and Gordon the first time they came to the United States. Gerry and the Pacemakers. Jackie Wilson was on. Muhammad Ali. On and on and on, really, because they would all come to New York as the English invasion happened. Dave Clark was on with me.

But my show was on in such small markets and there were a lot of mistakes that I made — Casey Kasem can tell you because he used to sit and listen to the show in Los Angeles and make notes. I like Casey because he told me he was listening to that show and was picking up things. None of us do anything original. Even when we say "Mama" or "Dada" we're copying something.

After New York, where did you work?

Then it was back to L.A. and KRLA until 1967. Then back to Chicago and WCFL.

And it's interesting to note that you had a longer stay at WCFL in the late Sixties and early Seventies (1967-72) than you did at WLS in the early Sixties, where you had much more fame.

WLS was still a powerhouse, no matter what anybody tried. They seemed to hold onto that image they had built up, the image we built up for it. It's amazing that after all that time, starting in the Seventies, Art Roberts came over to WCFL. Weber came over to WCFL. They all followed. They all were disenchanted with what happened at WLS. The only two that didn't come over were Hale and Taylor.

When did you decide to leave Chicago that time?

When I got fired in 1972. John Rook came in and, for some reason, I was let go. I have no idea what he was into and have no desire to. He thought he knew the answers to everything, as so many program directors do.

After that I went to WSAI in Cincinnati for a little under a year. I got fired when a new regime came in and then I went to North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, for ten years.

That's quite a difference from Chicago.

It definitely was. I started working for $97.50 a week. But I had a ball. Played golf every single day. Did play-by-play football. Just had fun. Found a whole new type of life or new type of people. It was an interesting situation.

[Chicago television reporter] Bob Sirott came down to North Myrtle Beach to do a "Where Are They Now?" bit and that's what brought me back to Chicago. When I came back I worked at WBBM-FM for a year, but since 1984 I've been at WJMK.

And that has been your longest tenure at a Chicago radio station.

I'm just keeping my fingers crossed it'll go a few more years.

We're having fun, doing a lot of appearances — almost one every weekend. It's a fun situation.

What do you think about the other radio you hear these days?

I think if they'd just relax and let people entertain. We've got too many consultants, too many people trying to do audience tests. We

never went out and said, "Hey, folks, what do you want to hear?" We let people decide by the dial.

I never was a big man with Bill Gavin or any of those guys who sat in San Francisco and told you how to run your radio station. And we have people now who live in Cleveland who tell you how to run a radio station. To me, consultants are people who couldn't make it on the air or as a program director and this is their way of getting even — screwing up radio stations.

Radio people are so worried about offending one group of the audience. Play a record and if it doesn't play, the audience will let you know. One record's not gonna hurt.

Relate to the audience. Radio guys are so frightened, with the one-liners, to let the disc jockey talk. That's frightening.

And the music that you started playing thirty or thirty-five years ago is still around. That must be nice to see.

It's going to be around for a while. There's going to be other stuff coming in.

They laughed at the Beatles. They laughed at the Stones. They laughed at Presley. They laughed at me in 1950 when I was playing Buddy Johnson, Earl Bostic, and Joe Liggins on "Jammin' Jive." Chuck Berry with "Maybelline."

There's new music, good songs, coming up. I don't know if the rap stuff will be around. I'm sure it will be a form. It's just like bubble gum music. My ultimate dream would be to be able to have a show where I could play Wynonie Harris from the 1950s and come right back and play "Save The Best For Last" by Vanessa Williams.

Because today's kids enjoy the oldies and a lot of today's adults enjoy today's young songs. Good music is good music. It's sorta like the old saying about making love — the worst I had was pretty damn good.

It seems you've always been in a position to enjoy your work. That's obvious from the length of time you've been in the business.

It's the only thing I do, the only thing I want to do.

I get frustrated. I get pissed off at people today not caring whether radio is entertaining. Many of them think, like in so many other businesses, that the bottom line is the only thing. But I love what I'm doing. I'd be like a fish that they threw up on the dock. I'd die without it.

How many little Italian kids from an Italian ghetto in upstate New York could do what I've done? I've had the pleasure of meeting some of the biggest people in the world. Just two weeks ago, Senator [now Vice-president] Albert Gore was on WLS Talk Radio and he told the interviewer that as a kid he grew up listening to WLS and Dick Biondi. And this guy could very well become our president some day. If he does, I'm going to call him up and remind him.

I don't ever want to be in management. Everybody says, Buy your own station, but I don't want that. All I want to do is be on the air and entertain. That's enough.

But there's no doubt that the three years you were at WLS repre-

If you send your name and address written anywhere on this Silver Dollar Survey, plus the name and address of your Gayla Dealer, with 10¢ for postage and handling, to GAYLA PICTURE, WLS, Chicago 1, we'll send you a large reproduction of Dick with the Gayla Girl.

The Gayla Girl

Gayla Girl and Dick

Carol Ann Strobel

(THE GAYLA GIRL)

WEARING THE NEW FANTASYS

...by GAYLA

Hi!

Remember... if you're going steady you wear it on the left. If not, wear on the right. Everybody's getting in on this new fad. (Guys even give the gals to their gals to ask them to go steady.)

Thanks a million,

Dick Biondi

sent the high point of your career?

There's no question about it. You just don't take a three-year period like that for granted. It would be like going to the track and picking nine long shots in a row, or playing the Illinois Lottery and every week hitting the big one. Everything was going right.

At record hops every Saturday night, I run into twenty or thirty people a week who grew up with me. If I sing the pizza song, the whole crowd sings along. That is a tremendous charge.

And a lot of people tell me they got into radio as a result of listening in those days, which is sort of an awesome responsibility, but I'm trying to handle it all. As I grow older - I don't like to use the word 'older' — as I live longer, there have been so many nice people who haven't fared as well as I have, and I think I've been pretty well blessed.

Dick Biondi is a hard man to pin down for an interview, but once he is "captured," his stories and reminiscences are treasures. I tried, off and on from early 1988 — when this project started — until I finally interviewed him on April 8, 1992. He works as the nighttime disc jockey on Chicago's "Oldies 104," WJMK (FM), and does the same kind of show there he did at WLS in the early Sixties. May he never change.

Without his cooperation, this project would be incomplete and I am forever in his debt.

CHAPTER IV

Dex Card

When I told someone today that I was going to talk to you, they wanted me to ask, first thing, if that's your real name?

It sure is, as a matter of fact. That's kind of a funny story. I know it sounds phony, but the real name is Dexter. I grew up in Maine and my dad was in the real estate business, and during the first year of the Roosevelt administration there was a public works project to harness the tides at Eastport, Maine, the Bay of Fundy, the highest tides in the world.

They were going to create enough electricity to supply all or most of New England. Anyhow, it never came to pass because it was just prohibitively expensive, but the army engineer in charge of the project was a guy named Dexter Baker. My father became very friendly with this person and I was named after him.

Dexter Baker is in the history books — he is the guy who, years before, discovered yellow fever. He wasn't a physician, he was an engineer, but when he saw a lot of people getting yellow he at least had the sense to separate those that had it from those that didn't.

Another kind of unusual thing with my name is that I was hired, early in my career, to work in New York City for Bartell people, who owned six or seven radio stations at that time. They had pre-recorded jingles for all of their personalities. One of them was Johnny Holliday and one of them was Charlie King. So, when I went to work for them, they gave me my choice of whoever I wanted to be. Their contention was that I couldn't be Dex Card because it sounded too phony. (Laughs.) But I stayed Dex Card.

Well, how did you get started in the radio business?

I think the interest began when I was in junior high school. I built a little facsimile studio in my bedroom. I remember the microphone was a hair brush and I had an old seventy-eight player that I used as a turntable, and I used to rewrite commercials from *Life Magazine* and do my own little simulated program.

I kept hanging around a radio station in my hometown of Portland, Maine, and would help the announcers and would do some station breaks during the network time. Finally, because of somebody's illness or inebriation, I got an opportunity to do a late night disc jockey show on this station, and it happened that the general manager of the station heard me and called me in the next day and offered me part-time, vacation fill-in employment at the station during the next summer. I was

about fourteen or fifteen years old then.

And it took off from there?

Yep. During my years in high school I worked as a summer replacement at radio stations, seven or eight weeks worth of work when the regular staff went on vacations. A little bit later I was drafted during the Korean thing and, luckily, was sent to Germany and ended up with the American Forces Network there.

I had network programs over there for my last year and, although I was drafted and didn't particularly want to go in the service, it turned out very, very well. I got some great experience and really enjoyed myself in Germany and all of Europe. You couldn't do a lot on a corporal's pay but I managed to earn a little extra income working with a German movie company in Hamburg and also selling cars for a German dealer to GIs and service club personnel.

When I got out of the service I came back and got on with a station back in Portland, WGAN, and I stayed there a couple of years, and then went to Providence, Rhode Island, and from there to New York with Bartell that I told you about.

That adventure was kind of unique. The station was called "Wadio," WADO. You had to sound like a rabbit to work there. I was there for about six months and the station got in some financial difficulty, evidently. It had been a foreign language station before (the Bartell group) took it over and went Top 40. They couldn't afford to wait for a couple of years for this thing to be profitable so, after I was there for six months, they turned it back into a foreign language station, so I either had to go to Berlitz or leave. But they offered me a job at any of their other stations, and I chose Milwaukee.

The adjustment from New York to Milwaukee was psychologically debilitating to me, so when I got there I immediately resigned and went to look for another job in Boston. From there I went to KYW in Cleveland, which was before it moved to Philadelphia, and from there I went to WLS in Chicago.

Landing the job at WLS had to be quite a coup. It was an established station in another major market. How did you wind up there?

It was a funny thing. I was only in Milwaukee at the station for two months and I became very friendly with the general manager of the station, a nice guy named John Reddy. When I left Milwaukee I would keep in touch with John, not often, but once every couple of months.

After a couple of years in Cleveland, I got a call from Ron Riley, who was working at WLS and who I'd competed against in Cleveland. The call told me that Gene Taylor had just fired Bob Hale in the afternoons and that I should get on the phone with Gene Taylor immediately.

So I called Gene and he wanted a tape. I didn't figure that was the way to get the job, so I remembered that Gene had worked for John Reddy in Milwaukee. I called John Reddy and explained the situation and asked if there was anything he could do to help me. He said, "You got the job, kid, just stand by your phone." John called Gene Taylor and

Gene was on the phone with me within fifteen minutes and wanted to know when I could come in. I was there the next day. And without even interviewing me, Gene was taking me around the station, introducing me as the new afternoon man.

It's knowing the right person or being in the right place at the right time.

So you came to WLS in 1964 and it was already established as one of the top radio stations in the country.

It was either number one or number two with the highest cume or the highest quarter hour in the country. Both of the top two were owned by ABC, WABC in New York and WLS in Chicago.

It was just a phenomenal experience because it was a very exciting time of the British invasion - the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, and people like that - and radio was significantly more important to people than it is now. I don't think that station will ever be duplicated because, during my first year there, we were the only station in Chicago playing contemporary music.

In my last Arbitron rating at the station in 1967, I had a forty-two percent share in afternoon drive. And you just don't find any station in a major market with anything much above a seven or an eight in afternoon drive, and that was a phenomenal thing.

The reason for the success was two-fold. Number one, there wasn't a hell of a lot of competition. WCFL was in it at the time I left, but they weren't really competing that much and secondly, the station was just a great sounding radio station, there was no question about it.

I'm sure it took a lot of work on your part, individually and collectively, to keep things running at peak efficiency.

Yeah, it did, but it was very personality-oriented. The other guys perhaps more than me. But it was loose - Gene Taylor kept the station very "loosey," he wanted the guys to get on the air and have a good time and play the hits. It was that simple.

I did the Silver Dollar Survey show in the afternoon, so I was somewhat limited in that, but I think it fit my personality better. I'd begin with number thirty, or number forty, I can't remember, and worked up to number one and I made those numbers very important.

You've talked about Gene Taylor. How was the rest of the management at that time?

Ralph Beaudin was the general manager and he was a redhead who operated his radio station very efficiently. But he did it by surrounding himself with good people and letting them do it.

Ralph never had anything on his desk. Not even a phone. He kept the phone in a desk drawer. And he was an extremely sharp person. He is the guy who, later in his career, invented the three network system for ABC, which turned out to be unbelievably successful. Nobody, at that time, thought it would work and everybody criticized Ralph and ABC for doing it, but he initiated the concept that saved ABC Radio and made them profitable very quickly.

How was the money back then for disc jockeys at WLS?

I think it was very good for its time. You gotta remember this was in 1964 through 1967 when I worked there, and a dollar did a heck of a lot more than it does now. But the salaries of the personalities were not anywhere near as large as they are now, and this is because of the inflation factor.

When I came to WLS from Cleveland I got an almost one hundred percent raise. Plus we made a lot of additional money by doing personal appearances. The station encouraged this and we promoted them on the air in a structured format. So, I think a person could make an additional $10,000 to $20,000 a year doing personal appearances, and most of us did.

Personal appearances like sock hops and things like that. I imagine there were some perks that went along with being at WLS, too?

Yeah, well, you were a celebrity and it's just an unbelievable thing but I haven't been on the air at WLS or anywhere since 1967, and people still remember the name. I'll take a suit in to be cleaned at a strange cleaners and give them my name and they say, "Gee, were you the guy who was on WLS?" I mean, that's twenty years ago. It's just amazing.

Let me get some impressions from you of your co-workers at WLS. You never had a chance to work with Dick Biondi, but did you know him?

I never worked with him, but knew him later. He left WLS about three or four months before I got there. I thought Dick had a great deal of talent, but I thought the talent was more applicable to the 1960s than it would be to the 1970s.

You did, however, work with Bernie Allen?

Yeah. Bernie preceded me on the air for most of my career at WLS. He was a very nice person, perhaps the quietest of the WLS jocks during my time there, but very businesslike in his approach to being on the air and his approach to the radio station. He fit very well with the WLS situation because he was on mid-days, primarily catering to adults.

What about Don Phillips? Another quiet guy?

He did the all night show and he was not particularly quiet. He just didn't have as much presence at the station as the other guys because he worked all night and was only there in the daytime for meetings or for promotional events.

How about Art Roberts?

Art was on at night and his shift and mine weren't together because Ron Riley was between us, so I didn't see Art as often as I did Riley or Weber or some of the other people. But Art was probably the most "artsy" of the people, and I think he did an excellent job at night.

Let's talk about Ron Riley.

Ron was probably my best friend at the station. We'd known each other in Cleveland and, as I mentioned, he tipped me off to the opening at WLS. And we both lived in the Chicago suburb of Lincolnshire, and we knew each other and were friendly and socialized a great deal.

He was an excellent talent.

Another guy you worked with has been around for a long, long time - Clark Weber.

Yep. Clark did the morning show during my entire time at WLS. He was a very nice, friendly guy. Funny and loose. He later became the program director when Gene was promoted to the managerial position.

I think Clark was a good talent and he is probably the only one of the bunch that is still on the air. He has made the transition, as he has grown older, into talk radio formats, and I think he does that very well.

Gene Taylor would have been your program director, general manager, as well as the guy who hired you.

Yeah. He was just a super nice guy and probably better as a program director than as a general manager. But he was very street smart and made good common sense decisions and was greatly responsible for the success of the radio station from a programming and personality standpoint.

I wasn't there at the time Gene left the radio station, but I felt that he made a horrible mistake when he left ABC to go to Cleveland as a general manager. I think he did that because he felt there was going to be an opportunity for him to participate, with an equity position, in Globetrotters.

Comment, if you can, on the WLS air personality Dex Card.

Hey. (Laughs.) Dex made the music more important than it was, and that was the secret of the Silver Dollar Survey show. When a new Beatles record came out, we got on it and, boy, I hate to describe myself. I was pretty straightforward and smooth.

Well, I know that in your position, you got to meet a lot of music stars. Maybe you can talk about that.

We emceed a lot of the star shows that came into Chicago. I introduced the Beatles, as a matter of fact, at White Sox Park during their concert there, which was a great thrill. It was probably the most exciting time in contemporary music ever and won't be duplicated. I was around for the Elvis "inauguration," too, in the mid-Fifties and the Beatles, to my mind, far surpassed that the Elvis excitement.

It was an opportunity to meet with a lot of exciting people, some more exciting than others.

What were the determining factors about your leaving WLS after you'd been there for three years?

I had done the same thing since I was about fourteen years old and I just made the determination that I didn't want to play rock 'n' roll records for the rest of my life. I was in my early thirties and I just decided that there were other things I wanted to do.

So, during my last few months at WLS, I developed some other things. I developed a syndicated show that I produced and sold to stations in the United States and elsewhere, like Malaysia, Singapore, and others that were exciting. And I also went into the teen nightclub business and then, eventually, got into the concert business. I produced con-

certs in the Chicago suburbs and also at college venues around the Midwest, and I did that for about ten years after I left WLS.

Then I got into management of radio properties in Kenosha, Wisconsin, and ownership. I now own a couple of stations in Racine, Wisconsin (WRJN-AM and WFNY-FM) and am a participating owner of a couple of stations in the Appleton, Wisconsin, market.

WRJN is a very local, news-oriented station with an adult music format. It's quite successful. It's a very old station that I purchased from the Sentry Insurance Company, and it just celebrated its sixty-first anniversary. We have changed WFNY to KQ-92 and it's playing an aggressive adult contemporary format. And the two stations together are doing very well.

In Appleton, the FM station is beautiful music and the AM is country, and they're also doing quite well.

That's fun, I suppose, and keeps your hand in it.

Yeah, it does. And I have pretty good people, so I'm not working that hard. I probably visit the radio stations once every week or two and, you know, count the money. (Laughs.)

I went back in the radio business in 1975 in Kenosha and retired from there in 1985, or was going to retire. But I found a couple of other opportunities and decided to get back in.

Once it's in your blood, it's hard to shake it.

Well, you gotta do something. I'm too young to retire [Card was fifty-five at the time of the interview in 1988], but I didn't want the day-to-day routine of running a radio station.

I don't really have any hobbies. I read a lot and manage my portfolio that I've been able to accumulate over a lifetime, and oversee the radio stations. I like to take nice vacations, but I don't play golf or tennis or any of those other things, which is probably unfortunate.

You were certainly part of an interesting radio station at an interesting time. That magic at WLS can never be recaptured and is probably a once in a lifetime shot.

Yeah, I think it is. As we go back to the WLS days, and this was before FM radio became a significant factor, we and WCFL were the only two stations playing hits and we were winning. You look now and there are eight or ten stations playing practically the same music in Chicago, so the pie is sliced thinner. The stations that have good ratings are making tremendous amounts of money. But there will be nothing like WLS again.

This interview took place on April 9, 1988, when Card was an owner of four radio stations in Appleton and Racine, Wisconsin.
Since then, he has sold those stations and says he has "temporarily retired." His wife passed away in 1989 and he remarried in 1992, lives half of the year in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, and admits he might consider getting back in the radio station-ownership business, if the right station

and the right price were to come his way.
After all these years, Card still has a marvelous voice, is quick to laugh, and is a delight to talk with.

WLS

The bright sound of Chicago Radio

SILVER DOLLAR SURVEY

Chicago's Official Radio Record Survey

DECEMBER 22, 1962

THIS WEEK			WEEKS PLAYED
1.	GO AWAY LITTLE GIRL	Steve Lawrence — Columbia	6
2.	TELSTAR	Tornadoes — London	10
3.	BOBBY'S GIRL	Marcie Blane — Seville	13
4.	RETURN TO SENDER	Elvis Presley — RCA	10
5.	LOVE CAME TO ME	Dion — Laurie	8
6.	PEPINO THE ITALIAN MOUSE	Lou Monte — Reprise	7
7.	THE NIGHT HAS A THOUSAND EYES	Bobby Vee — Liberty	4
8.	MONSTER'S HOLIDAY	Bobby Pickett — Garpax	4
9.	THE IN BETWEEN YEARS	James MacArthur — Scepter	7
10.	THE LONELY BULL	Tijuana Brass — A & M	10
11.	THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART	Dean Martin — Reprise	5
12.	I SAW LINDA YESTERDAY	Dickey Lee — Smash	4
13.	MY DAD	Paul Peterson — Colpix	4
14.	REMEMBER THEN	The Earls — Old Town	8
15.	TELL HIM	The Exciters — UA	7
16.	MY OWN TRUE LOVE	The Duprees — Co-Ed	10
17.	SOME KINDA FUN	Chris Montez — Monogram	8
18.	TO LOVE	Ral Donner — Gone	8
19.	SANTA CLAUS IS WATCHING YOU	Ray Stevens — Mercury	5
20.	FROM A JACK TO A KING	Ned Miller — Faber	4
21.	UP ON THE ROOF	The Drifters — Atlantic	5
22.	RUBY ANN	Marty Robbins — Columbia	5
23.	THE DARKEST STREET IN TOWN	Jimmy Clanton — Ace	6
24.	SHUTTERS AND BOARDS	Jerry Wallace — Challenge	5
25.	CHAINS	The Cookies — Dimension	5
26.	ZIP A DEE DOO DAH	Bob B Soxx — Philles	9
27.	MY COLORING BOOK	Kitty Kallen — RCA	5
28.	TEN LITTLE INDIANS	Beach Boys — Capitol	6
29.	HALF HEAVEN HALF HEARTACHE	Gene Pitney — Musicor	5
30.	ZERO ZERO	Lawrence Welk — Dot	4
31.	TWO LOVERS	Mary Wells — Motown	4
32.	WHAT TO DO WITH LAURIE	Mike Clifford — UA	3
33.	IT'S UP TO YOU	Rick Nelson — Imperial	3
34.	DON'T MAKE ME OVER	Dionne Warwick — Scepter	5
35.	IF I NEVER GET TO HEAVEN	Kathy Dee — BW	3
36.	SEE SEE RIDER	LaVern Baker — Atlantic	6
37.	EVERYBODY LOVES A LOVER	Shirelles — Scepter	6
38.	BABY'S GONE BYE BYE	George Maharis — Epic	6
39.	DIDDLE DE DUM	Belmonts — Sabina	5
40.	TWILIGHT TIME	Andy Williams — Cadence	3

FEATURED ALBUMS

THE VOICES OF CHRISTMAS — WALTER SCHUMANN — RCA

YOUNG AND LIVELY — VIC DAMONE — COLUMBIA

This survey is compiled each week by WLS Radio/Chicago from reports of all record sales gathered from leading record outlets in the Chicagoland area. Hear Gene Taylor play all the SILVER DOLLAR SURVEY hits daily from 3:00 to 6:30 P.M.

CHAPTER V

Mort Crowley

Let's go back to the very beginning of time and find out how you got started in the radio business.

Actually, it was something that I wanted to do from when I was very young. I got a job after school, during my sophomore year at Pulaski High School in Milwaukee, at a daytime radio station there, sweeping it out and doing some announcing. That was WRJN.

Then, lo and behold, the opportunity came to appear on television on WTMJ. They were looking for a teen-age emcee for a half-hour show, and they held a big elimination contest and had applicants. I won that thing and the job paid exactly zero. But I was on television for a half an hour on Saturday afternoons from five to five-thirty. Of course, in those days, nobody had a television set. My mother and father had to go down to a furniture store to look at their kid dancing around on the funny little tube.

A couple of years later, when I graduated from high school, my folks moved from Milwaukee to North Wales, Pennsylvania, a suburb about thirty-five miles out of Philadelphia. I went to LaSalle University and, in my free time, got a job at WFLN, a classical music FM station.

That's not too bad, to be young and working in Philadelphia.

No, that wasn't too bad at all, except in those days, FM was not the monster that it turned out to be. In those days we were lucky if we had forty-five or fifty percent penetration.

Still, it was a very large market and it was a beginning.

From Philadelphia you went where?

I stayed in Philadelphia for a while because I had to finish out school. Then, after graduation, I went into the Air Force and went to Denver. What I was doing for the Air Force permitted me to work at a radio station, and I got a job at KIMN. I also worked at channel nine, or channel two, in Denver.

I was doing a bingo show on television called "Marko," and also did some news. And then I started to do news for the Intermountain Network with KIMN in Denver, while also doing jock work. So I had a situation where I had to decide whether I wanted to be a disc jockey or be a newsman. Well, they paid disc jockeys considerably more dough, so I said the heck with news.

After I left the Air Force I went to, where the heck did I go? It was St. Louis for the old KWK. From St. Louis to New York. From New York to Chicago. From Chicago to Los Angeles. From Los Angeles to Minneapolis,

for a short while. Then down to St. Louis. Where the heck did I go then? To Cleveland, for about a year-and-a-half. Then I came back to St. Louis and stayed there for a long, long period of time. And the next time I left St. Louis it was for Washington, D.C. And then from Washington, D.C. back to St. Louis. And from St. Louis to Milwaukee, where I am now.

So, I have worked in New York, Philadelphia, four times in St. Louis, Washington, D.C., Denver, Detroit, Cleveland, Los Angeles. We criss-crossed the United States and became a migratory white-collar worker.

What led you to WLS in Chicago?

I was in New York City with the Bartell operation there and I had called a friend of mine, Sam Holman, who was working in Pittsburgh with Ralph Beaudin at KQV. I found out that Holman was going to Chicago and wanted to congratulate him. He asked me if I was interested in coming to Chicago and I told him, "No, I had a good job in New York." That was around December 1959.

In April of 1960, I called Sam and I said, "I've changed my mind. This operation here is folding. Have you got any space in Chicago?" He said, "Well, you son of a bitch, I just hired Dick Clayton for the last spot. You should have called me a week ago." But he took my phone number and address.

So, about a day or two later I get a phone call and Holman wants to know when I can be in Chicago. I asked what the hell happened and he told me that Clayton didn't want the job. I told him I wanted the job, and that's how I came to Chicago.

Before I go any deeper into the conversation, let me ask a philosophical radio question. Radio is known for its nomadic existences, but you've made a huge number of moves. Why all the moving around?

Well, the gold mine is not gonna come to you. You're gonna have to go out and look for it and mine it. If the search takes you from one end of the country to the other, then do it. If you're committed to making yourself a buck, that's what you should do.

Radio is one profession or calling that you can probably pick and choose just about where you want to live, how much dough you want to make, how comfortable you want to be, how much pressure you want to put on yourself. The bigger the market, the more the strain is. That's also very, very true of television. But radio is much more nomadic than TV ever will be.

But there are so many jobs you can do in broadcasting. If you don't like sitting behind a microphone, you can sell. If you don't like selling, get in the technical end. You can get into the creative end of it or the production end.

I followed the buck and I always have and I always will.

You've never shied away from big markets. You've always accepted the pressure and done well.

Yeah, thank heavens. We've had a couple of bad moves. The move to Los Angeles was a bummer and the move back to St. Louis for the fourth

time was also a bummer, but those things are part and parcel of the job.

But, yes, I have done well and I thank God for it. A lot of people have gone out and busted their chops in big markets have never returned. They're just gone, you know.

When you came on board with WLS, that was when they were starting to play rock 'n' roll music, and that had to be pretty exciting.

Here you had a big, fifty thousand-watt radio station that had absolutely no audience, none at all. They could hear this thing all over the middle West, virtually in three-quarters of the United States at night, and there was nobody listening to it.

They cleaned up the signal, they put in new equipment. It was unheard of that a radio station this big was going to go rock 'n' roll. This was some kind of anathema to purists, but it is what the general public wanted.

Actually, format radio started a long time ago when a guy named Paul Bartell, no relation to the Bartell family of broadcasters, would play Top 40 music. He was on a station called WFOX at 860 on the dial, a daytimer. This was in 1946 or 1947. What he did was play the top forty songs from the charts, and he'd create a lot of false excitement on how [important] the charts were. But, you'd go up and down the beaches, and the portable radios, which were about half as big as radiators in those days, were all playing the same station. The people were listening to popular music.

Then along came Todd Storz, the Bartell family, Gordon McClendon, and they all began to do the same thing. What we did in Chicago was play Top 40 music, but we also had personalities. The jocks were not only allowed, but were encouraged, to be persons on the air. And the nuttier the better.

Dick Biondi was, no doubt is, one of the finest talents in radio today. He's a very nice, calm individual. You turn on the red (on-air) light and he's insane, he's exciting to listen to. And that's what we had at WLS. We had seven guys who were absolutely great, they just came right out of the radio and you just had to listen to these people. And you don't have that today. The creativity has gone out of it.

While you've started talking about the people, let's just go ahead from there. How about some further comments on Biondi?

Well, Dick Biondi, there's nobody like him. There will be nobody like him. He's a one of a kind. I guess that's what happened at WLS is that you had one of a kind, super personalities on the air. I did voices and schtick in the morning. Biondi had comedy things on and would do outrageous things, like saying, "OK, don't forget, Saturday is going to be bath night. Let's everybody take a bubble bath." And the stores would go crazy because the shelves had been cleaned out of bubble bath.

But the station loved it, and advertisers loved it. The power of the radio station was incredible. We got into a Christmas promotion our first year, and we had started in May and by December we were rolling pretty

good. We didn't know how powerful the station was until this Christmas promotion where you could call Santa Claus. So, the station manager and program director decided to cover their butts by inviting the telephone company in.

Three guys came in with briefcases, three-piece suits, horn-rimmed glasses, and they suggested we put in a couple of extra phone lines. We got them to go on record putting in two or three extra phone lines. Within a week after we started the contest, which was around the tenth of December, the phone people were back asking us to please take the contest off the air. We were tying up trunks, not just phone lines, but trunks! And then the stories started to come in, after we'd give the phone number on the air. Some kid in Peoria would hear the number and call and get a funeral parlor. Some kid in Hibbing, Minnesota, would call it and get a massage parlor.

They logged, in that ten-day period of time, a million phone calls in the Chicago area. It was a monster.

Let's get back to talking about your co-workers. How about Bob Hale?

Bob did the all-night show, the thing called "East of Midnight." He played a lot of music, had a couple of pieces of schtick now and then, but for the most part, kept his trap shut, which he was supposed to do. He did an excellent job.

What about Gene Taylor?

Gene was another straight guy. He had some phenomenal ratings numbers, and I believe his original shift was following Sam Holman's afternoon drive show. I think Gene was on from six to nine at night.

Would you believe that there was an hour news block in there? And, at nine in the morning they had "The Breakfast Club." I finished my show and it came on. When we were first on, for the first couple of months, Dennis Day was on with fifteen minutes in the afternoon. That is the kind of mindless drivel that we sat there and agonized over and still this thing became a juggernaut.

How about Art Roberts?

Roberts came to us about six months into the operation. He was not one of the original seven. He worked out very, very well. In fact, he turned out to be a neighbor of mine. He had a lot of schtick, a lot of gongs and whistles. A very entertaining guy on the radio.

What about Clark Weber?

Clark came from Milwaukee, and I know him really well. He's a very warm personality on the air. He seems to be able to communicate very well with people. I would hear him from time to time when I was in a different market and he always did an excellent job.

Jim Dunbar was one of the original guys.

Yeah. Jimmy, I felt, was somewhat uncomfortable doing rock music. I think Jim is one of the brightest guys, one of the most intelligent men in the business today, and he saw the opportunity to go to San Francisco, took it, and has been there ever since. He got himself into a

"LONESOME LARRY" CLEARS UP HIS PROBLEM...the man's way!

talk operation and has done brilliantly. I always thought that Jim's intelligence was maybe a bit of a drawback for doing rock radio.

I've got the utmost respect for Jim Dunbar for not only doing what he did at WLS, but also for doing what he did in San Francisco with the Zodiac thing. Are you familiar with that?

This isn't where he was shot at through the control room glass?

No. That was when I was working at KMOX in St. Louis, and I called him and he didn't want to talk about it on the air. The story there was that he had begged the manager for some bulletproof glass, because where he sat, he was vulnerable. And one day, a gunman came in, shot the sales manager to death, shot a couple of other people to death, and then walked up to the window where Dunbar was seated at the microphone and fired, literally point blank, at him. And they had just installed the bulletproof glass.

Then the man walked out into the lobby and put the gun to his own head and killed himself.

The Zodiac thing was a serial killer who was loose and had communicated with Dunbar on the air, and he had interviewed Zodiac. There's a very definitive book on Zodiac now and Dunbar is quoted extensively in there.

Anyway, I always thought that this was the kind of work Jim should be doing, as a talk show host.

Let's talk about Sam Holman, since he helped start everything.

Way back, when I was leaving Denver, I had been hired to come to St. Louis for WIL. They had Jack Carney, the aforementioned Dick Clayton, a whole bunch of big personalities, and they wanted me to be their morning guy. They were paying a heavy, heavy, heavy amount of money.

So, I went back to the people at KIMN and they said I had a contract with the Intermountain Network to do news as well as be a disc jockey. I didn't want to get into a big hassle, so I called Jack Carney back and said, "I can't come because of my contract." He said, "Look, I will work both shifts until April, then we'll take you on."

Well, when I get to St. Louis, Sam Holman gets there at the same time. So, Jack Carney and Sam Holman and station manager John Box and I all went into Mr. Box's office and he said, "Guys, you all have jobs. What I want to know is which of you would like to stay in St. Louis and do the mornings and which of you would like to go to Milwaukee and do the mornings for the same dough?"

And I said, "I'm from Milwaukee. It is cheaper to live in Milwaukee. I will go to Milwaukee." And that's how I met Sam Holman.

Holman knew a lot about programming. The format for WLS was strictly a Storz format. Storz was doing personality, so was Bartell, but Storz had a much better angle on how to do it. In other words, the melding of the jingles, the news, the contests, the personalities. But Holman took a terrible station in Pittsburgh, the signal of KQV to this day is awful, and they drove that thing to number one. They drove KDKA right

up the wall with that station.

What about Ralph Beaudin as the general manager?

Ralph Beaudin was a general manager who really didn't do much. He'd get there about nine in the morning, go down and have breakfast, because we'd always have breakfast with him. Then he'd come back, open his mail, drink a couple of glasses of milk for his ulcer, go down for lunch at eleven-thirty. Then go home about two or three in the afternoon after being on a long distance call. That went on five days a week.

The only problem that Beaudin had in Chicago was riding herd on his disc jockeys, a wild bunch of people, and trying to sell the station. Because there was sales resistance at the beginning. I never considered Ralph any kind of a sensational manager, except that he had borrowed the format from Storz, plugged it in, and got the right people for the right jobs.

How about a guy named Mort Crowley on WLS — what kind of a guy was he?

Mort Crowley was, at times, the most undisciplined son of a bitch that you could find. We were all very young, very "go get 'em," and it was an opportunity to use every piece of God-given talent that you had, and you used it.

The morning show was a little more tightly formatted, but still I had control over the music, could do just about anything I wanted. They had a new sponsor coming on, and remember this is 1960 or 1961, and it was McLaughlin's Manor House Coffee. They told me it was a big account and that I was going to do the spots live. I said, fine.

So I get on the air with the first spot and said, "Look, now you broads out there are sitting across the table from your husband. What I want you to do tomorrow morning is to take some of this McLaughlin's Manor House Coffee, dab some behind your ears and behind your knees, and see how that works, and then give me a call and tell me what happens."

Saying something like that in 1960 or 1961 is like saying, "Fuck," today. This guy shows up and, so help me, he had a high collar on. He was one of the McLaughlin brothers, and he is about to cancel. They call me in and there's a meeting between Ralph Beaudin, the salesman who has the account, and this guy who looks like Calvin Coolidge's ghost, and me.

I looked at him and said, "Mr. McLaughlin, I'm very, very sorry, but I think that's the way to sell it." I went on to say, "By the way, I know your brother real well." He said, "You do not know my brother." And I said, "I know your brother, Fred McLaughlin, of Denver." He said, "Where did you meet him?" And it turned out I did know his brother, and he wound up not canceling but gave me another chance.

Back then, what were the perks or nice additions to the salary that made it worth your while?

We got nothing from ABC except a damn, damn good salary. And the hops that we generated, the public appearances that we generated we did on our own. But that had to be looked at by ABC Legal, because they

were very circumspect about payola in those days. If you had records to give away, where did you get them? What did you do in return? They were somewhat less concerned about young men fooling around with younger girls, but mainly it was the payola thing and the plugola.

So, if you kept your nose clean on them, then you could go out and make some side money. Being that I was the morning man, I did not make anywhere near what the people handling the nights, where the kids were.

How did you know when it was time to leave WLS?

I think what happened was that, while the thing started out as a very, very friendly, almost brotherhood that was established between the jocks, and the jocks families as a matter of fact — we used to have family outings and our kids got to know others' kids - I think the stardom, the competitiveness started to take its psychological toll. Not that we were cutting each other's throats, but, hey how come we're not getting any more dough from ABC?

So, when other offers came along, people took them. While folks like Roberts stayed there a while, Biondi got into a fierce argument with programming. Stations, as they want to today, want to make ratings numbers and want to make dough.

Being very young, instead of spending a couple of bucks and taking a plane ride out to Los Angeles and spending a couple of days at the station to see what kinds of "Bozos" are running it, I just went out there. I got out there and I found that there were a bunch of dumb bastards running the radio station that didn't know what the hell they were doing, had no idea about format. Going to Los Angeles was a mistake.

How long have you been in Milwaukee this time?

I've been back about a year.

Hired by WOKY?

Interesting story. Actually I was hired by WISN to do news for the morning show. I worked for Gannett Radio and did news on the Mutual Network in Washington, D.C. I was the White House correspondent and also covered the Pentagon and the State Department.

I went to St. Louis as vice-president of programming for KXOK, which collapsed because the financing fell through. I talked to a few friends at ABC and WISN contacted me. At the time, WISN was playing music and had personalities and their ratings numbers were sliding. I signed on there to do news and when I left the morning show was up to a 5.1 share, from a 3.5.

What happened was, I got canned at WISN after five months because they changed the format. So, I was out of work for two days, thank God. WOKY said, Why don't you come over here? We're changing some things around and have some trouble with our numbers. They wanted me to do personality news and also co-host the morning show with Debbie Young and a sports guy named Ted Moore, who used to do the Green Bay Packer games.

The thing took off. It is one of those rare instances where three peo-

ple can sit down and, in twenty minutes, sound like they've been working together for twenty-five years. Over at WISN, they changed the format to talk, which I had done, and the station is trying to maintain a 2.0 rating.

But the old days at WLS must have been quite a time, a great group of people, musically and historically?

I don't think anything like that will happen again because of the fact that the mix of music and personalities and everything else, even the jingles done by Anita Kerr, it all came together — the right people at the right place at the right time. It's one of those rare things that happens and that's why people are still talking about the station.

There was no one WLS jock I found more loquacious than Mort Crowley. He was, as they all were, gracious with his time and answered my questions with great elaboration and some relish. There's a lot of philosophical ideas in radio, and Crowley isn't afraid to tackle any of them. The original interview took place on April 14, 1988, when Crowley had just turned fifty years old. He was twenty-two years old when he started at WLS in 1960. Since our conversation, Crowley moved away from WOKY to become an independent program consultant and "put some stations together," including one in Neenah, Wisconsin, that required a one hundred eighty mile commute each day.

Still working out of Milwaukee, Crowley started working for the Tampa-based Sun Radio Network doing a three-hour-a-day talk show, five days a week. Through satellite technology, he is heard from noon to three p.m. Eastern time in all 48 states and Alaska.

WLS

The bright sound of Chicago Radio

SILVER DOLLAR SURVEY

Chicago's Official Radio Record Survey

FEBRUARY 15, 1963

THIS WEEK			WEEKS PLAYED
1.	WALK LIKE A MAN	Four Seasons — Vee Jay	6
2.	RUBY BABY	Dion — Columbia	7
3.	HEY PAULA	Paul & Paula — Philips	10
4.	WALK RIGHT IN	Rooftop Singers — Vanguard	9
5.	LITTLE TOWN FLIRT	Del Shannon — Big Top	8
6.	CAST YOUR FATE TO THE WIND	Vince Guaraldi Trio — Fantasy	8
7.	RHYTHM OF THE RAIN	Cascades — Valiant	7
8.	HE'S SURE THE BOY I LOVE	Crystals — Philles	8
9.	WHAT WILL MARY SAY	Johnny Mathis — Columbia	6
10.	WILD WEEKEND	Rebels — Swan	5
11.	YOU'RE THE REASON I'M LIVING	Bobby Darin — Capitol	6
12.	GREENBACK DOLLAR	Kingston Trio — Capitol	6
13.	FLY ME TO THE MOON	Joe Harnell — Kapp	5
14.	I WANNA BE AROUND	Tony Bennett — Columbia	5
15.	BIG WIDE WORLD	Teddy Randazzo — Colpix	7
16.	THE 2,000 POUND BEE (Part 2)	Ventures — Dolton	9
17.	GLOBETROTTIN	Tornadoes — London	5
18.	BUTTERFLY BABY	Bobby Rydell — Cameo	4
19.	OUR DAY WILL COME	Ruby & Romantics — Kapp	5
20.	SETTLE DOWN	Peter, Paul & Mary — WB	6
21.	WHO STOLE THE KEESHKA	Matys Brothers — Select	5
22.	WHAT DOES A GIRL DO	Marcie Blane — Seville	5
23.	THE END OF THE WORLD	Skeeter Davis — RCA	5
24.	LINDA	Jan & Dean — Liberty	2
25.	LOVE FOR SALE	Arthur Lyman — Hi Fi	2
26.	COME BACK LITTLE GIRL	Ronnie Rice — IRC	7
27.	JAVA	Floyd Cramer — RCA	6
28.	SEAGRAMS	Viceroys — Bethlehem	7
29.	CLOSER TO HEAVEN	Nick Noble — Liberty	4
30.	BOSS GUITAR	Duane Eddy — RCA	4
31.	BLAME IT ON THE BOSSA NOVA	Eydie Gorme — Columbia	2
32.	YOUR USED TO BE	Brenda Lee — Decca	5
33.	I'M IN LOVE AGAIN	Rick Nelson — Imperial	3
34.	ALICE IN WONDERLAND	Neil Sedaka — RCA	5
35.	LET'S LIMBO SOME MORE	Chubby Checker — Parkway	3
36.	LET'S TURKEY TROT	Little Eva — Dimension	5
37.	MAMA OOM MOW MOW	Rivingtons — Liberty	5
38.	WHY DO LOVERS BREAK EACH OTHER'S HEARTS	Bob B. Soxx — Philles	3
39.	SEND ME SOME LOVING	Sam Cooke — RCA	4
40.	SOUTH STREET	Orlons — Cameo	4

FEATURED ALBUMS

WINNERS — STEVE LAWRENCE — COLUMBIA
ALL ALONE AM I — BRENDA LEE — DECCA
MARCH ON BROTHERS — HIGHWAYMEN — UA

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CHAPTER VI

Jim Dunbar

The old days at WLS were interesting radio days. How did you get your job there?

I was in a place called Bellingham, Washington. I had left New Orleans, where I had been on the air after having come out of Detroit. I'd gone out to Bellingham to run an automated program service, put it together and run it. It was a real nifty challenge and we actually got it working, then I discovered I couldn't work for the old goat who owned this thing.

I ended up telling him to put a pencil in his ear, and there I was, twenty-eight years old or something like that, stuck in Bellingham with a young family. So I began networking and I got in touch with Hal Neal, who at that time was running WABC in New York. I had worked for him at the ABC station in Detroit. Neal put the word in, knowing they were looking to put a crew together in Chicago.

Later, I think it was that same afternoon, I got a call from Ralph Beaudin, who was running the Chicago station. He told me to send him something and I did. He heard it and told me to come on. That was in 1960.

Another situation in radio where fate plays a part.

Oh, yeah. It's a cliché, but you've heard it and know it's true, but it's always a case of being in front of the tidal wave when it sweeps along the beach and pushes you along with it. You know, right place, right time.

And the seven personalities on the air at the time really turned WLS into something that was awfully big.

The old joke is that the station had been owned by Prairie Farmer, and was owned originally by Sears. That's where WLS came from because WLS stands for "World's Largest Store." Prairie Farmer then was the Sears publication, and ABC bought it, although I think originally it was a fifty-fifty deal where ABC owned fifty percent and Prairie Farmer owned fifty percent.

Somehow, ABC ends up with the whole enchilada and, when we took over, we still had staff musicians. The gag was that Yellow Cabs in Chicago had more audience on their short wave than we did with that fifty-kilowatt, clear-channel signal.

So, it was a pretty startling turnaround. Ralph Beaudin put together a really interesting group of people and the hub of that wheel, really, was a crazy man named Dick Biondi. He was emotionally and psychologically stuck forever in that crack between seventeen and seventeen-and-a-half

years old. He got to be a monster, and the rest of us just kind of circled around that orbit.

I have no illusions about why it worked — it worked because of Biondi, and then some other skilled radio people who got exposure because the kids decided they'd maybe dial in in the morning, now that they were hung on Biondi at night. And there they'd find Mort Crowley and myself and Art Roberts and people like that.

So, we benefited from the luster of Biondi. He was a super nova; the rest of us were kind of black holes in that galaxy. Or other kinds of holes.

So, here you have a core of teenage listeners, while you're nearly thirty years old yourself.

That was our audience. I don't know if they ever dissected, demographically, that audience, but I'm sure the median age had to be somewhere around twelve for the girls and maybe fourteen for the guys.

How was the management at the WLS?

It was a well-run station. Beaudin's genius, and he really was, was that he hired good people and cracked the whip next to their heads a couple of times to get their attention, told you how he wanted it done, fine-tuned it, and then took his hands off and let it happen.

The only time you heard from Beaudin was when there was a variation on the theme that he'd set forth. And he was very strict about that. The format was among the many reasons it succeeded. Anytime, day or night, you turned on WLS, you got a very comforting sequence of elements that occurred always in that sequence. Beaudin's the guy who proved that's what fourteen-year-olds wanted to hear.

It was terribly limiting because you're working on a format that limits you to a playlist of twenty records plus a few albums tossed in. The big battle was choking off enterprise and imagination and ways of approaching that format that gave you a little flexibility. But everybody was highly motivated.

I didn't know how long I was going to be able to last in format radio, because it is kind of mind-altering, and there were other things I wanted to do - talk, for example. But I wanted to get some time in that format and it was fascinating. I was there three years and it was a fun-filled time and most of it was very challenging, because I think of the way that Beaudin ran with hands off.

Was the money good then?

Pretty good, yeah, it wasn't bad. It's kind of laughable now. I think I went in for $25,000, which I'm not knocking, but that was pretty good money then. I left three years later and I remember, I came out here to San Francisco and took a $17,000 pay cut. So I was making pretty good money by that time in Chicago.

We had cracks at free-lancing things. I did a lot of commercial work. Biondi was doing wall-to-wall record hops and other guys were, too. I didn't do much of that.

We've talked about Biondi. Let me get some impressions of other

guys you worked with at WLS. How about Mort Crowley?

Mort is a very funny guy. He was working as a stringer for a radio network and I interviewed him at the Democratic National Convention. I put him on one morning as a resident authority on Democratic peregrinations. It was a lot of fun, because all we talked about was Chicago, circa 1960.

Mort was always a very amusing, funny guy who had kind of a crazed streak in him. We'd play the games to see who could get away with more and still stay within the format and not get his tail chopped off by Beaudin. I think, probably, Mort won that one.

How about the rest of the guys?

Sam Holman was the first program director and Gene succeeded him. Gene was always kind of full of surprises and he had a "What, Me Worry?" kind of philosophy that was very appealing. He was a guy with a great laugh and it saved his job for him at one time. His laugh on cue, that's what it was. Art Roberts was in a year-and-a-half or so after the rest of us. And then there was Clark Weber. Clark was a nice guy. They're all nice guys, but Clark was a real warm and fuzzy, nice man.

Over a span of years, you seem to have lost touch with the old gang.

We really haven't maintained very close contact. I saw Sam Holman about ten years ago with a children's program service he was putting together, maybe for radio and television. I saw Gene Taylor here in town as a tourist a couple of times. I don't think I have seen Biondi since I left that station.

I've never been much, and I'm not suggesting it's a virtue, but I've never been much on that. I have a high school reunion coming up and I'm not even sure I'll go back for that. If I do, it would be chiefly to see a football game.

Once it's done, it's done. It's not over until it's over, but when it is over, it's over. That's maybe a little hard-hearted, but I think maybe this business breeds that into you because it is a revolving door sort of business.

The other thing, too, and this is not often discussed, but you're competing with everybody in this business, even those on your own staff. People are in this business for many reasons, but one common reason is ego need. There's an unusual ego need and, as a consequence of that, there's a good deal of palpable competitiveness. And I think it gets in the way of relationships. I think the business tends to distance people.

When Sam Holman was program director at WLS he wanted to generate a kind of family thing and he would call a few command performances, but I always went to them kicking and screaming. I didn't like that, and I don't think most of the guys did. As a consequence, we never socialized much.

The guy that I have sat across from for twelve years on the morning news here on KGO is a man who is a good friend of mine and I have a lot of respect for, professionally and personally. And we have never spent

one social minute together. And don't care to. I spend more time with this guy every day than I do my wife. So you understand what I'm saying.

So, in 1963, you decided it was time to leave?

What happened was that Beaudin came to me and said they needed a program director in San Francisco, told me the station was in pathetic shape. In fact, what was happening here was analogous to what happened in Chicago three years earlier. They had tried many aborted attempts to put a format in that would attract an audience and nothing had worked and it was kind of a graveyard for managers.

ABC had kind of ignored it up to 1963 because they had other problems that they were trying to solve, then they decided to focus on KGO. I told Beaudin I'd take the job. I was really tired of working format radio.

I came out with discretion on which way we were going to go, but I kind of decided even before looking at the San Francisco market that it would be an ideal market for news/talk. Literally everything else had been tried and it was probably the only option we had. So, I'm not taking credit for having that much foresight; it's just that there were very few options left.

And you've been in San Francisco and at KGO ever since? That's a solid career.

Yeah, that's a long run in anything — cards, sex.

And to have started a news/talk format in 1963, you must have been a pioneer station.

We were. KABC in Los Angeles had the format that we adopted, so I'm not going to take credit for inventing it, because I certainly didn't. But there was not much of it being done.

There was one station in San Francisco that had the CBS "At Your Service" format, first put together back in New York by Drake and that bunch in the mid-Fifties, and it had been very successful in New York. And it seemed to have filled whatever kind of need there was for that kind of radio here in San Francisco. So, it took some courage to put a talk format together because there was already one in place. The prevailing thought then was that only one could make it in any market, and it had to be a major market at that.

It was a kind of a pioneering effort and, initially, I was at a point when I was going to go management. I had just decided I'd had it on the air. So I was given a budget and I hired some guys and I realized, after I got into it, that in order to do what I wanted to do, I had to go on the air. And that's the reason I stayed on the air.

So I started doing an afternoon talk show in July and did that for twelve years.

And here you are, still on the air.

Yeah. That shows enormous tolerance on the part of the listeners, doesn't it? If it hadn't been for the fact that I couldn't squeeze any more budget out of this operation, I certainly wouldn't be on the air.

You gave up the programming end of it, though?

I programmed in New Orleans, in Chicago, and out here, and I discovered that there's only so much of that in the human system. I got tired of pushing paper around, and standing people up against the wall, and pulling triggers. I really didn't like that.

We have a television operation and they put together a new format for a morning show, and they asked me if I'd do it, that is, be the talent for the program, which was called "A.M. San Francisco." In order to do that, I had to give something up, and it wasn't a difficult choice at all to leave programming. That's how I bailed out of the management side.

So you were in both radio and TV at the same time?

I did the afternoon talk show on radio and did the morning format on radio, and did that for ten or twelve years. I was crazy. It was really an overload, carrying a lot of bricks around in your pack. Then, there was actually a point where I was a television news anchor for two-and-a-half years. And that was really nuts. So, I was a textbook type-A, driven, compulsive, and all that stuff, and one day I decided I didn't want to do that with my life anymore.

So I'm back down now to morning anchor on radio, four hours a day. I love it. It's the best job in broadcasting.

Good people to work for, obviously, because they've had you around for a long time.

Great station. Not because of my contribution, but just a great station.

I've done seminars for business people about media, I've produced film. In fact, I produced a twenty-minute industrial image film last year for the California Trucking Association. I've done a lot of video for some of the wineries.

You must be one of the more well-known people in San Francisco?

Well, I'm probably one of the most over-exposed. If that equals well-known, I guess the answer is yes.

But everything you remember about the "good old days" at WLS are pretty positive?

It really is. Because it (format radio) was a discipline I really had to have. I thought I was a pretty hot jockey and I discovered there were a lot of ways to defining that. There were guys that had some skills that I had never even imagined. I thought I could do it all and I realized at WLS that I was a distance from that. And I came away from WLS a lot better air personality than when I started.

And it was a struggle, because we didn't have a lock on it, initially. It took about nine months before we got any sign in any ratings book that we were right, and it was a long time to have that question hanging over your head like Damocles's sword. But then, with the affirmation, it really took off like none other before in that market.

Jim Dunbar, a soft-spoken and terrifically honest gentleman, held down

the mid-day slot at WLS during its early years. He worked for WLS from 1960 until 1963, when he left to program KGO, the ABC owned-and-operated station in San Francisco. The news-talk format has been an incredible success and Dunbar had prospered, financially and professionally.

On the sidewalk outside the Fourth Street Bar & Deli, at the corner of Fourth and Mission in San Francisco, are three gold stars and inscriptions, not unlike at the Hollywood "Walk of Fame." All of the stars were awarded in 1990 - one belongs to Baseball Hall of Famer Willie McCovey, the beloved slugging first baseman of the San Francisco Giants, and another star belongs to Ruth Brinker, who was instrumental in organizing Meals on Wheels and Project Open Hand in San Francisco.

The third star belongs to Jim Dunbar, and the inscription reads:

JIM DUNBAR

"One of San Francisco's leading broadcasters, Jim Dunbar has been bringing news and information to Bay Area residents for more than 25 years. In addition to his current position as morning-drive news anchor for KGO Radio, Jim has conducted his own radio talk show, emceed 'A.M. San Francisco,' and anchored the '5:00 News.' He is also considered one of the pioneers of newstalk radio, having helped to develop this format while serving as a program director at KGO Radio."

Despite his successes, Dunbar has experienced his share of rough times. In 1973, the KGO studios were located on Golden Gate Avenue with windows facing the street, when a man took several gunshots at Dunbar. A bulletproof glass saved his life, but the gunman, a resident at a psychiatric rehabilitation center who reportedly thought KGO was controlling his mind, did kill another station employee before turning the gun on himself and committed suicide.

This interview took place in September 1987 at the studios of KGO Radio in San Francisco. His station was designated by Billboard Magazine as a dominant station of the 1980s, along with Chicago's WGN, KMOX in St. Louis, and WCCO in Minneapolis. His morning news program has been number one in the market for 14 years ("about 56 straight [Arbitron] books," he estimates), and he humbly says that it proves "you can fool some of the people most of the time or most of the people some of the time."

CHAPTER VII

Ed Grennan

How did you get your start in the radio business?

Well, my hometown is Chicago and I started in radio on Guam with Armed Forces Radio while in the service in 1944.

I was majoring in psychology at Loyola and really didn't want to be a psychologist, I just thought the subject was interesting. When I got overseas and got into that business, I figured that was what I wanted to do. Then came back to college and changed all my majors. I had to take triple English one semester and double English another to catch up with myself.

Then, as now, I suppose entry-level radio jobs were tough to come by.

I didn't even know how the heck to look for a job. I didn't know who to ask for. I didn't know there was such a thing as a program director — not that there is anymore, either - but I didn't know a thing. I finally was lucky.

I got a lead on a job in Springfield, Illinois, for the summer at WXLI. That was a marvelous job — I made $37.50 a week, living away from home. That's food, laundry, the whole bit. I quit there in the fall and finally wound up at WQUA in Moline, Illinois, for four years. I got married and went to Battle Creek and Kalamazoo in Michigan and from there went back to Chicago.

I had a summer replacement job at WGN and eventually wound up at WLS in 1959. I was the only jock they kept from the old station to the new one, although I didn't fit in at all.

So far as I know, I'm the first person in the States to ever have a talk show where the public called in. We did it in Moline at WQUA for about two of the four years I was there, and we didn't even know what to call it. When the people called in, I'd answer by asking, "Hi, do you have a problem or solution?" and that's the terrible name that it became - "Problems and Solutions."

One time a man from the sewer department called in one day and he had malorganite, which is human waste that's been processed. It makes excellent fertilizer, I guess, for gardens and what-have-you. He said he had this for whoever wanted to bring their own shovels and containers and get it. And I'm not kidding you, I had five hundred people out there shoveling shit. The power of that show knocked me out.

Anyway, I took that show into Chicago and we called it "Party Line," which made more sense. In Chicago we had a seven second delay, which

ED GRENNAN

we didn't have in Moline, and Jim Dunbar took it out to the West Coast and did it there when he left WLS.

So you were there when it was the Prairie Farmer station?

Oh, yeah, for one year. I was working at WBBM when I met a friend of mine, a guy I had gone to high school with and he was living in Chicago, managing a huge paint company. I used him as a sponsor for "Party Line" to go over to WLS and knock on their door. That's how I got the job at WLS in the first place.

What was the difference between the old WLS and what became the new WLS?

If there's a hundred and eighty degree thing, that would be it. From the old, stodgy - and I mean stodgy and old - and creaky Prairie Farmer station, it went into this raucous rock station that I couldn't get acclimated to. They asked, When you're listening to new music, is it 'bad' enough to be played? This wasn't the cute term 'bad' — they meant, at the beginning of the new WLS, that they would play bad music. And I couldn't make that accommodation.

They would audition music and I would say, "That's a good one," but I didn't know what the hell I was talking about because I wasn't a rock guy at all.

And I really didn't fit. [The other jocks] were all terribly hip and I was terribly square, I guess. Dick Biondi and Bob Hale are very nice guys. But, for instance, they had a reunion a couple of years back and nobody even thought to ask would I like to join. I was a sore thumb sticking out there, I didn't belong, I didn't know what the hell I was talking about, and I didn't believe in that kind of radio where you screamed and hollered and almost made off-color remarks.

I can't understand how all of that has become so socially acceptable now. I don't listen to [Chicago radio personality] Steve Dahl. When I was starting out in radio, you couldn't say "hell" or "damn," much less anything else. I've heard Dahl exactly one and I went into shock. Not that I'm a prude — I'm the father of six — but he was throwing mud on something I liked. The kids like it, his station's ratings are good, I guess, but what is implied by the language is nothing but sex. Whether individual sex or collective sex, (he) didn't care.

I know Dahl got fined $6,000 for some of the stuff he said, but that's nothing. If you can buy ratings, in their mind, for $6,000, that's very cheap. But I couldn't make that accommodation to him, in particular, and I was lost as far as the rock stuff was concerned. I used to play Norman Luboff, Hugo Winterhalter, maybe even Glenn Miller. How the hell they kept me, I don't know, but they did. For a year.

Was Norman Luboff music the kind of thing they were doing on the Prairie Farmer station?

Yeah, they played western music and fit in very well, but when they knew they were about to change everything, they gave me a show where I could play some great jazz accordionists and the like. But they only allowed that at the very end when they knew the whole thing was going

down the drain.

At least in my estimation, going down the drain. I'm certain in their estimation, (the old format) deserved to go and should have gone years before. They were terribly hip and we were terribly square.

There were certain things said. We had a guy whose name, I think, was Joe Franklin. I'm not positive what it was. But let's say it was Joe Franklin. He had been an actor in Hollywood, not anything big but he had a nice voice. He was doing the news for us at WLS and making us all scream and holler, that kind of thing. The news then was how many stories can you get in, not can you make any sense with it.

Anyway, Franklin was living in a hotel room and got up one day and, as he started to walk, he fell down. He went to the hospital and found out he had a blood clot on the leg, and they amputated the leg. When I went to visit him at the hospital, he was dictating to the wall. He had lost it.

I came back and told the other guys at WLS, and their joke was, "Will the real Joe Franklin please stand up?" I'm sorry, but I don't find that funny. The other guys thought that was really hysterical. I remember who said it and I don't want to be poking fingers at anybody, but I don't deliberately poke fun at somebody who's hurting. I couldn't get with that kind of joke.

Let's talk about some of the people you worked with. One of the guys who came in was Dick Biondi.

Dick was funny. You know, he made all this screaming noise on the air, "On Top of Old Smokey" and things like that. But he was a very quiet, gentle man. Likable guy. He was a wild man on the air according to the standards of that day. I liked Dick very much. He was kind enough to say nice things about me, and I haven't seen him in years and years, but from time to time somebody will remark that they met Dick and he wanted to be remembered to Grennan. That's nice, because I only worked with him a short time before they fired me.

Another one of the original guys was Bob Hale.

Bobby, incidentally, has a religious background. I think he studied for the ministry at one time, and he does a religious show on television plus the disc jockey thing he does on WJJD.

Bob does an excellent job - he's funny, he's clean, he's interesting, and he's still bubbling when he's doing commercials. And he's no spring chicken anymore, either. He's still working hard at it and I appreciate listening to him.

How about Mort Crowley?

I don't remember much about him, to be honest.

Gene Taylor would have been there at the start.

Gene was there and was program director for a while, I think, after Sam Holman. I don't remember much about him, either, other than his name. He seemed like a nice fellow.

What about the two people who came in as management, Sam Holman as program director and Ralph Beaudin as general manag-

er?

Holman was in charge of us jocks, and Beaudin was really a remote figure.

I'll tell you about the old WLS when it was the Prairie Farmer station. The general manager was a nice little man who everybody kowtowed to and knelt in front of when he came into the station. I found out he played golf and he and I would go out and play.

There's a way of playing with your boss and getting away with it. He was a bad golfer and he hit a good shot one day and I said to him, "You little son of a buck, if you hit another shot like that, I'll drop you right here. When we get back to the office, you're still the boss, but don't hit any more shots like that." The other station employees we were playing with thought I was being disrespectful and lightning was going to strike me and I'd be nothing but a charred mass.

The guy thought that was marvelous because what I was doing was complimenting him. The very fact I could talk to him like that proved we got along fine, and when we got back to the office, he was the boss.

It was just the opposite with Beaudin. They looked at me with a look that asked, How the hell did we keep him?

And you didn't have a lot of regard for Holman, I gather?

No, I didn't. He's not the worst, but the second worst guy I've ever worked for. I'm sorry he's dead, and you shouldn't talk ill of the dead, maybe, but I didn't like him when he was alive. He just made life a little hell for me because, again, I didn't fit in.

Holman is a guy who left his first wife because she had a retarded child by him, then, at the Christmas party that year, he slapped his new wife when she objected because he was playing footsie with his secretary. He was about the worst guy I've run into, and was totally wrapped up in being that, it seemed to me. Rather than just casually or accidentally making mistakes or alienating people, he kind of enjoyed it. Now somebody else may give you that he's a male Mother Teresa, but not to me.

We had an announcer working there named Jerry Mitchell. Sam was six-foot-three or six-four, but wasn't a hell of a lot of muscle, but weighed two-twenty, two-thirty — he was a big man. Anyway, he decided to take Jerry Mitchell on, in front of a bunch of guys, in Indian wrestling. And he was just making a damn fool out of Jerry because Jerry wasn't a strong guy. Okay, what does that have to do with life?

Jerry also took care of his wife, who was a total invalid, and he would wrap her arms around his neck and try to dance with her. He had that kind of guts if he didn't have the physical strength, the macho thing.

Anyway, I watched this Indian wrestling going on with a bunch of people standing around and I told Sam, "I'm next." Well, I used to do Indian wrestling. My dad would bring guys home for me to Indian wrestle when I was fourteen, fifteen years old. I was next and I knew Sam didn't have anything, so I bounced his knuckles. Holman said, "Oh well, he plays golf," and he walked away from me. That may have been the

straw that broke the camel's back, because I was gone shortly after that.

You've already mentioned Jim Dunbar as one of the early WLS jocks.

He seemed like a nice fellow, a very calm guy. I don't think he looked down on me. I'm not trying to be paranoid — I just knew I was out of place. I felt I had talent in my own way, the other guys had talent in their way, and never the twain shall meet.

Clark Weber would have come in later.

I think so. There's one of the nicest guys in the whole city of Chicago. He's a gentleman and he's funny and he's friendly and he never forgets who you are.

You talked about making $37.50 a week in Springfield, how was the money at WLS?

I made more money than I made previously at WLS, I'll give them that much credit. I made something like $400 a week, and I did hear Sam Holman say of me to someone else, "He's making more money than he's ever made in his life."

I couldn't refute that. That was big money at that time, when I was raising three or four kids. That was a huge help to me and when I had to part with it, it was a huge loss.

But I'll tell you the honest to God truth, you know how sometimes when you look in a mirror you get a chance to look at yourself as you really exist? One morning when I looked in a mirror, my face was crying. I didn't like working with those guys because I felt so totally out of place. And I knew eventually they were going to get to me. I just wasn't clever to think of some of the catch phrases they were using.

But after about six months with WLS, if there is such a thing as being relieved to be fired, you were that?

Yes, the money hurt to lose because of family, but I was happy to get out of there. At least my face wasn't crying anymore.

How did you support your family after that?

I worked at WBEE, the black radio station, as a salesman, and I didn't fit in there either because I didn't know the South Side and you couldn't take checks from people. It was bad news.

Then I got with a brand new FM station, WCLR, in Skokie, Illinois. We were quite close on the dial to WFMT-FM, and if you want to hear some screaming and hollering, boy, did they come up in force. I was manager of the station in Skokie and, finally, quit.

I was very fortunate, then, to go over to WMAQ as a summer replacement. Radio and television, but mostly radio at that time. As will happen, there was a guy who came in who was going to be the full-time announcer. I still remember his name — Sam Bogart. He came in and they gave him to me to train — to take my job. The irony of that.

He came there one day when I had, like, five days left of the time I was going to be there, and his wife, who was from an influential family in Texas, didn't like Chicago at all. Bogart stayed one day and didn't show up the second day.

A guy came running in to me and asked, "Do you still want the job?" Did I still want the job? Twenty-nine years later, I retired.

What did you do at WMAQ?

At that time, you did everything. That was the nice part about radio. You did newscasts, you did sports, you did music shows of all kinds, and I mean all kinds. Classical or pop stuff or jazz, whatever it was. You did a little of everything, and you were qualified to do a little of everything.

I started doing a television show there called "Today in Chicago." I later won an Emmy for football, and I won an Emmy for a television show I had on the air for eleven years called "It's Academic." When you had a chance to do everything, you felt good about it.

Honestly, when I got there, there were such damn good announcers, in my mind, I didn't know how the hell I lucked out to get in. There was a guy named George Stone who was the second best announcer I've ever heard in my life. He had a quality factor that was built-in. I don't mean he had a big, resonant voice, he just sounded great. He showed interest in what he was doing, treated the audience as good people. The only guy who was better than he, in my estimation, was Alexander Scourby, who did a lot of national stuff. He had a marvelously distinct and quiet delivery that was the best I ever heard, and George Stone was right there next to him.

Later on, the whole thing changed into a news operation, and you sat there. Jim Hill and I had "grandfather" clauses - we couldn't be fired. But we sat there feeling frustrated as hell because we didn't do anything. Every now and again, we'd do a station break, maybe a commercial. There were days I sat there and did nothing and went home at night. I don't mean even a station break. Nothing. Then I'd go home and wonder, What ever happened to the industry I was in?

When the time came I was getting up in age, I left. I had a five-bypass heart operation in December 1990 and got back and everything was fine. But then I had two operations on my back I shouldn't have had, according to doctors at Rush-Presbyterian Hospital. They (the doctors) eventually treated me with medicine and cured me, but the back operations wrecked my legs. So as of November 1, 1991, I retired.

People came from all over to my retirement party and people said some terribly nice things that you hope you've affected someone that way. To find out people are willing to come right out and say it, it's touching. There are some nice people over at WMAQ. Carol Marin is a lovely person. When my wife and I had our fortieth wedding anniversary, we threw a large party, and (WMAQ anchorman) Ron Magers showed up at it. They get calls all the time to come here and do this, so it was nice of him to be there. There are very, very nice people there.

What are some of the things you've done in retirement? Some free-lance things?

I haven't been able to, frankly, because of my back problems. I ended up in a wheelchair, got into a walker, then graduated to a cane. Now I'm

walking without a cane and I plan to play my first round of golf in a long time tomorrow. And I was a golf idiot, playing three times a week.

I did a free-lance job just yesterday for a guy I've known for a long, long time. I haven't gone back to the agents and said I'm available yet, because I've had eye surgery, also.

In closing, the WLS job meant what to you?

It was remarkable to remember and easy to forget in a lot of respects. Why they kept me, I don't know, and I was looked at as the village idiot, I'm sure. The other guys were terribly hip to that kind of music and I was way out, lost. And deservedly so, they let me go.

I didn't fit into that. Not that I didn't want to fit it. I tried, but I just didn't know what the hell I was talking about.

It's a little-known fact that Ed Grennan was one of the original seven jocks when WLS made the switch to rock 'n' roll in May 1960. The only disc jockey who was held over from the station when it was the Prairie Farmer outlet, Grennan's tenure at WLS lasted only a few months - but he found a home at WMAQ in Chicago for twenty-nine years, retiring in November 1991. I talked with Grennan on June 25, 1992, shortly after his seventieth birthday.

Grennan's memory during the interview was, by his own admission, not as keen as he'd liked, so he sent me his résumé, which goes as follows:

1944 - Armed Forces Radio, Guam
1946 - WXLI, Springfield, Illinois
1947 - WBCK, Battle Creek, Michigan
1950 - WGN, Chicago, Illinois (summer replacement work)
1950-54 - WQUA, Moline, Illinois
1954-58 - WAIT, Chicago, Illinois
1958-59 - WBBM-FM, Chicago, Illinois
1959-61 - WLS, Chicago, Illinois
1961-62 - WBEE, Chicago, Illinois
1962-91 - WMAQ-TV, Chicago, Illinois

Both Bob Hale and Dick Biondi insisted that any project dealing with the WLS of the early Sixties wouldn't be complete without hearing from the man who "didn't fit in," Ed Grennan. He continues to be active in the industry, doing free-lance commercial work, and was a breath of fresh air to speak with.

CHAPTER VIII

Bob Hale

How did your career lead you to WLS in Chicago?

They didn't come after me, I can tell you that. The job didn't seek me, I sought it. When I started at KRIB in Mason City, Iowa, in January of 1958, I was about two or three weeks on the job when I heard that Prairie Farmer was going to sell to ABC, but that it was going to be a long, protracted negotiation and Federal Communications Commission approval.

So I contacted WLS in Chicago and they told the people I wanted to contact was a group in Pittsburgh at KQV that was coming in - Ralph Beaudin was the general manager and Sam Holman was the program director. So I did two or three airchecks from KRIB and sent them and received no response, not even a, "We got your tape." Then I left KRIB and went to WMAY in Springfield, Illinois, in 1959, and I spent six months there and sent Beaudin and Holman one or two more airchecks.

Then I went to Peoria, Illinois, at WIRL in January of 1960. They had made me a nice little offer. Then, on my second day on the air, I pulled an aircheck. Then, about four weeks later, I pulled an aircheck and sent it. So I must have bombarded Beaudin and Holman with about eight, nine airchecks.

One day, in March of 1960, we'd had a cold snap hit us and I'd been doing a disc jockey show, then after I'd finish that I'd go out on the street for another three or four hours in "Big Red," which was WIRL's little roving car where we did hourly reports from, even if nothing was happening. I remember I had to do a report outside and I had been sweating from the heater inside, and I'd gotten a bad cold a few days earlier. So I told the news director one day I had to go home, I was feverish.

I went home and my wife made me a hot toddy, a strong one, and I got boozed up a little bit and was zonked out and the phone rang. And it was Sam Holman. He said, "Bobby, we're putting together our act here in Chicago and I'd like you to be my all-night man. Are you interested?" I said sure and asked him when he wanted me to start. He told me the end of April, but said if I could make it earlier they wanted to do some dry runs, me and Dick Biondi.

So I gave my resignation and three or four of the jocks at WIRL called all a-twitter, because half the staff had applied for those jobs there (at WLS) and I was the only one that got it. One guy's nose was really bent out of joint.

So you left Peoria for Chicago.

Yeah, we played around after midnight at the station, when the station was off the air. We'd turn the transmitter on and we did talking back and forth and played a few records, asked for phone calls across the country trying to check the signal. Fred Zellner, our chief engineer, would go out to the transmitter.

We had phone calls from Alaska, Mexico, and ships at sea, so we knew we had a powerhouse on our hands. I remember one night we were doing this and Holman looked at me and said, "Hale, you are getting a dynamite piece of power in your hands. Use it well, have fun."

Then in the first week of May 1960 we went on the air.

Did you get many complaints about the radical station change?

We got a lot of static. There was a faithful following to the old Prairie Farmer station. You had all the barn dance people, all the people that listened to the great crowd of country and western music stars who were no longer going to be on. But we broke the radio market right there because we became number three in the market pretty quick. Never did make number one, couldn't beat WGN, and had trouble beating Howard Miller at WIND.

But you guys, as personalities at that time, formed WLS into one of the top stations in the entire nation, on the cutting edge of format rock 'n' roll radio.

That's because of the station's power. We weren't the first doing this, though. You had Todd Storz at WDGY in Minneapolis and Kansas City. KTHT in Houston had a tight format, a moving format, and WABC in New York was coming on, but didn't hit it quite as big as we did. And there was KQV in Pittsburgh.

So we weren't the first but we made the most noise, because we were the first in the biggest markets. And the power — at night, everybody heard us. My all-night show got even better. The colder it got, Biondi and I could be heard around the world. We got cards from people in London and Luxembourg and France. As far as it was dark they could hear us.

We had a good sound, a good working group, and we could fill in for each other, but it wasn't the same when we did that. We got a rhythm going that we could play off each other and had a lot of respect for each other, and each one of us was distinctive. Nobody really sounded like the other guy.

How was the management at the time?

Enthusiastic. Beaudin was a hard-nosed, hard-driving guy. Good at his job, knew what he wanted. Critical when he had to be, praiseworthy when he had to be. There was only one bad incident that involved all the disc jockeys. One day Ralph came into a Wednesday morning meeting and stunned us all by saying, "OK, if this is the way you guys want to act, you can all go to hell as far as I'm concerned. But I'm not going to have my seven disc jockeys making a name for themselves at my expense and then going around to other radio stations looking for jobs!"

We all sat there and wondered, What is the man talking about? Gene Taylor, our program director, said he had no idea what this was about

WLS

The bright sound of Chicago Radio

SILVER DOLLAR SURVEY

Chicago's Official Radio Record Survey

THIS WEEK	JULY 12, 1963	WEEKS PLAYED
* 1.	SURF CITY — Jan & Dean — Liberty	7
* 2.	EASIER SAID THAN DONE — Essex — Roulette	9
* 3.	SHUT DOWN — Beach Boys — Capitol	7
* 4.	SO MUCH IN LOVE — The Tymes — Parkway	9
* 5.	TIE ME KANGAROO DOWN SPORT — Rolf Harris — Epic	4
* 6.	BLUE ON BLUE — Bobby Vinton — Epic	10
* 7.	SUKIYAKA — Kyu Sakamoto — Capitol	7
* 8.	GYPSY WOMAN — Rick Nelson — Decca	10
* 9.	TILL THEN — Classics — Musicnote	8
*10.	RING OF FIRE — Johnny Cash — Columbia	7
*11.	FALLIN' — Roy Orbison — Monument	7
12.	DAUGHTER — Blenders — Witch	6
*13.	MEMPHIS — Lonnie Mack — Fraternity	9
*14.	HOOTENANNY — Glencoves — Select	8
*15.	FROM ME TO YOU — Del Shannon — Big Top	6
*16.	GOODNIGHT MY LOVE — Fleetwoods — Dolton	8
*17.	COME GO WITH ME — Dion — Laurie	7
*18.	TEN COMMANDMENTS OF LOVE — James MacArthur — Scepter	7
*19.	WHEN A BOY FALLS IN LOVE — Mel Carter — Derby	7
*20.	BE CAREFUL OF STONES THAT YOU THROW — Dion — Columbia	5
*21.	BE TRUE TO YOURSELF — Bobby Vee — Liberty	6
22.	LAND OF 1,000 DANCES — Chris Kenner — Instant	6
*23.	DEVIL IN DISGUISE — Elvis Presley — RCA	4
*24.	NOT ME — Orlons — Cameo	6
*25.	SIX DAYS ON THE ROAD — Dave Dudley — Golden Wing	4
*26.	JUST ONE LOOK — Doris Troy — Atlantic	5
*27.	CANDY GIRL — Four Seasons — Vee Jay	4
*28.	I'M AFRAID TO GO HOME — Brian Hyland — ABC Para	4
*29.	BLOWIN' IN THE WIND — Peter, Paul & Mary — WB	3
*30.	WIPE OUT — Surfaris — Dot	3
*31.	BRENDA — Cupids — KC	7
*32.	SURFIN' HOOTENANNY — Al Casey — Stacy	4
33.	EVERY STEP OF THE WAY — Johnny Mathis — Columbia	6
34.	HARRY THE HAIRY APE — Ray Stevens — Mercury	3
*35.	DON'T SAY GOODNIGHT AND MEAN GOODBYE — Shirelles — Scepter	6
*36.	ROCK ME IN THE CRADLE OF LOVE — Dee Dee Sharp — Cameo	5
*37.	WAIT TIL MY BOBBY COMES HOME — Darlene Love — Philles	4
*38.	MY BLOCK — Four Pennies — Rust	4
*39.	KEY TO MY HEART — The Taffys — Fairmount	5
*40.	MAKE THE WORLD GO AWAY — Timi Yuro — Liberty	5

FEATURED ALBUMS

QUINCY JONES PLAYS HIP HITS — MERCURY

THE CRYSTALS SING THE GREATEST HITS — PHILLES

This survey is compiled each week by WLS Radio/Chicago from reports of all record sales gathered from leading record outlets in the Chicagoland area. Hear Bob Hale play all the SILVER DOLLAR SURVEY hits daily from 3:00 to 6:30 P.M. *Denotes record first heard in Chicago on WLS.

and went out to talk to Beaudin in the hallway. Ralph said he had heard that some of us had been looking at WIND and WBBM, and it dawned on me what was going on.

There was a station manager at another station, and I won't mention a name, but he was a crafty son of a gun. One of his stunts, we found out, was to plant the word around town that all the WLS disc jockeys were unhappy and were looking for work. Word got back to Ralph and had the exact effect that this guy had hoped it would, but not the long-term demoralizing effect he had wanted. It took a couple of days for this to iron itself out. Ralph never did apologize, but he said he understood.

How about the rewards, the money?

The money wasn't great, not as great as it is today. I think the top dollar was $500, maybe $700 a week. Nobody was making $50,000 a year, at least not in salary. The rewards came with the record hops.

You guys were stars and got to do a lot of outside work.

We could, in two days' time on a Saturday or Sunday or Friday night, match our salary. Easily.

I can remember weekends where I did five record hops. When I was doing the afternoon show, I'd buzz off at six-thirty or seven o'clock, go out to a Friday night dance. I'd go do a Saturday afternoon appearance, come back to Chicago and do a Saturday night, go up to Wisconsin on Sunday afternoon, and come back and do a Sunday night gig.

We didn't charge astronomical rates, maybe $200 or $300. That's still pretty good money. But we didn't do that every weekend. I would say most of us brought in an extra $10,000 to $20,000 a year. Biondi would get a heckuva lot more because Dick was the most popular, really appealed to the real teeny-bopper who had more record hops going.

I had some regular gigs. Every Sunday for a couple of years I had one in the Loop that I was doing, and I had a semi-regular appearance at a resort area in Indiana. So we had some regular things going that really helped out.

The personalities there were billed as "The Swinging Seven."

Well, "Magnificent Seven" is how we started it. Because that was the era of the movie, you know. Then when the Beatles came along, we all adopted Beatles names and they ran Silver Dollar Surveys with us in Beatles haircuts.

We've mentioned Biondi before, but he was a powerhouse as a personality.

Dick is a complex guy. He's calmed down a lot but was a very hyper guy. He does his show standing up. We'd all sit in the same place but each of us would operate differently. About a minute before Dick would go on the air, he'd move the flip cards to one side, the scripts to one side, the weather report to a different side, and move the microphone to a totally different place than I did. And I had done the same thing when I followed the guy before me. We all had our little quirks.

Dick was good with phones. A lot of people would call, and when Dick could he'd go out and talk to people on the phones during records.

We had a period when we allowed visitors, but we couldn't handle it after business hours because of the security. But when Dick was allowed to have visitors up there he always treated them royally. Very polite, very nice guy.

But, like any of us who were alleged creative people, he could have a temper tantrum.

How about Mort Crowley?

Mort, along with Jim Dunbar, were the most cerebral. Dunbar should be a bank executive or a politician. Dunbar did not look like a disc jockey, did not dress like a disc jockey — he's the only guy who would come to work in three-piece suits, although Mort would do that, too, on some occasions.

Those are the days when we dressed up. Beaudin demanded that we wear a shirt and tie on the air, even after hours. Of course, at midnight when nobody saw me, I took that tie off. But he wanted us dressed.

But Dunbar had the glasses, close-cropped hair, probably could manage the Jack Kemp campaign, he is of that image.

Crowley was the comedian. He had these sound effects, the bells, the doors, the whistles, the voices, and could create on the spot satirical, humorous stuff. A lot of it fell flat but some of it was just some of the best stuff that has ever been done in Chicago radio humor. He was good, a very talented guy who likes to write, likes to talk. Very sure of himself and he knows what talent he has and is very comfortable with it.

Do you want to elaborate on Jim Dunbar?

Dunbar was humorous, but his humor was wry. He'd be in the middle of something and throw a line out and five seconds later you'd catch it. He has a dry, low-key, non-hyper, very laid-back smooth approach. I think that's why he's been so successful in San Francisco.

How about Gene Taylor?

Gene was, and still is, full of leadership qualities. He is one of the guys you'll admire for the rest of your life. He handled people well, very diplomatic. He very rarely got hot, but you knew when he was uncomfortable with something you did. Then once it was done, it was done; he wouldn't carry it on.

He was a funny guy and knew the business. Boy, did he know his music. He and Sam Holman and Dick Biondi really knew every artist, every agent of every artist. They had spent a lot of time in this business, more time than some of us did, so they really knew everybody from the big cities. They knew the New York agents, the Chicago agents, they knew who was married to whom.

I'll tell you an interesting sidebar story. You remember Barbara McNair, the singer? Her husband died and, in Chicago, was a record promoter we all knew named Ben, young guy with blonde hair, blue eyes, looked like a football player. Nice guy, friend to all of us. Now we go back about five or ten years ago, I'm down on the island of Aruba with a group from the Thomsen Vacation organization. They flew a bunch of us down there for a radio and television promotional tour, along with some

travel agents.

I'm in the ocean, up to my neck in these huge waves that are rolling in. Now, who can see what anybody looks like in the middle of an ocean, in Aruba? And I hear this voice calling out, "Bob Hale, how the hell are ya?" And I look over and it's Ben. I asked him what he was doing down there and he told me his wife was appearing at the Americana. He introduced his wife and it was Barbara McNair.

I had known the two of them pretty well, separately, when I was a disc jockey. And Barbara McNair, when she started out, knew Sam Holman very well, they were old friends from the east. So when she would come to town we would have lunch with her and we would play the heck out of Barbara McNair records, so we were kind of her special folks. So I spent an evening with Barbara and Ben down in Aruba. But talk about being recognized in strange places as a result of being at WLS.

Let's talk about Art Roberts.

I guess we all had some kinds of senses of humor. Art giggled a lot, especially at his own material, which was OK because he was a pretty funny guy. Art would keep us loose if we had a tense meeting or something. I don't recall Art getting angry at anything. He could go with the flow and bend with it and say, "Ah, well, what the heck."

Art used to sign off his show with, 'Excelsior,' which is a bunch of stuff, torn up, ripped up, shredded, packed, useless material but it serves a purpose in that it protects whatever it's surrounding. That's kind of the way Art approached life, I think. You've got a purpose here but it may not look like it's important, but it's important and don't take yourself too seriously.

Art is a humble guy, always was, always will be. He loved to be out in the public but he never let it go to his head.

How about Clark Weber?

He is off the wall. He knew the raunchiest jokes and, if there was to be a Peck's bad boy in the crowd, it would be Clark, because you never knew what he was going to do or what he was going to say. He had a great irreverence where his humor wasn't subtle — it hit you like a hammer. And that kept us all in our place.

Clark is a pilot and so he liked to fly and talk about it. Smart? Oh, smart as a whip. You listen to him today, he's still on top of everything. When he's on the air, he's got all the facts you need to know, what's going on, very helpful, in fact.

You know, Wally Phillips was always considered the den mother of Chicago in the morning when we had a snow problem or a water problem or lights were out or there was a disaster. Clark, to some degree, has that quality, too. He's on top of everything when he's on the air. Just a neat guy.

Here's the interesting thing. You can run down that list of seven, or expand it to eight or nine, and any of us who worked together, there were no personality or jealousy clashes or backbiting of the other guy.

There were egos involved, but we all knew it and joked about our egos, and we could all keep each other pretty humble. And we all made enough mistakes that we didn't think we owned the place.

Weber, for a long time, had an on-air 'feud' going with Ron Riley. Riley must be another interesting character.

That feud was, they would sit and plot how they were going to do that. It started as a joke and Riley, walking through the studio one day when Weber fired off something, so Riley fired off something back at him and it built. And everybody loved it and they played it to the hilt, but nobody ever believed it was an anger thing. It was all jokingly put-downs.

Ron probably came into WLS with the most enthusiasm of any of us, in that when he came in it was, "Gosh! I'm here!" And he always treated it as if it were his first day and he was still awed and thrilled by it. He never lost the excitement of the thrill of being in Chicago radio. I think some of us became a little jaded after a while, but I don't think Ron ever did. He was refreshing in that respect.

How about this other guy that worked there — Bob Hale?

I didn't know him too well. He was a complex guy. Hale spent a lot of his time not only doing record hops, but spent a lot of time at the church youth groups. He wrote for the Lutheran youth magazine for several years, and sometimes he'd give up record hops and go work with youth rallies and conferences and take home gasoline expenses instead of $400 or $500.

I think he felt that he was where he was because the good Lord wanted him there so he returned the favor as often as he could. I developed a relationship with the kids because they saw a different side of disc jockeys, and that was good because there was a time when rock 'n' roll was being condemned and it was morally questionable in the minds of some people.

When did you know it was time to leave WLS?

When I got fired in the middle of my broadcast.

Well, that'll do it.

About every time, that'll do it. Biondi, the same thing. He got fired in the morning in the middle of a meeting. He and I, it was kind of the same problem. He and I had been kind of griping about the commercial load and the fact that we had to cut back on what we had to say to kids. It was just, "Get the commercials in, get the music on, don't talk, don't talk, don't talk." We felt it was becoming a very boring, machine operation.

Dick had a spat with Gene Taylor one morning and threw an ashtray at him. I was sitting next to Taylor and we both pulled our heads back and the ashtray hit the wall, and Gene said, "Dick, I think you ought to go home. Take the day off." And Dick said, "If I go home, I'm not coming back." Gene said, "We'll talk about that, but I do know that you're going home now." That was the end of it. And he never came back. It has nothing to do with a dirty story that Dick allegedly told on the air. That story

made the rounds for decades and Dick and I laugh at that because we know what the real story is.

It's a strange thing. The story is one that Bob Hope told years earlier and got cut off the air by NBC for telling. And for some reason that got transferred to Dick Biondi about twenty-five or thirty years later. I don't know how that rumor got started.

I had some problems there and my attitude was slipping, too, regarding several things. I missed a meeting with a client one day and that kind of precipitated things. I was not exactly the most enthusiastic person. The fun for me was starting to go out of it and I was beginning to show that.

They called Ron Riley in early and Ron slipped in and took over the show. I walked back in, picked up my pencil, we both shrugged shoulders. Out I was.

But some great memories of the station exist?

Oh, yeah. It wasn't that disastrous because by the weekend I was working at NBC. They were going rock 'n' roll over there.

And you've done some nice things since WLS.

I did thirteen years of television. I put Channel 32 [WFLD in Chicago] on the air in 1967 at the same time I did a once a week show at WMAQ. I was doing news and sports and staff announcing at Channel 32. I did that for a year.

Then WMAQ offered me a full-time contract to host the "Today In Chicago" show. I figured if I were lucky I would last three years because that's what the other two hosts had done. Ed Grennan for four years, then Larry Atterberry for about two-and-a-half, three years. I lasted thirteen. And we developed a Sunday show out of that, a two-hour live magazine show. And I also did a little over a year with the "Today" show out of Chicago in the late Seventies.

I then had a four-year break of free-lancing in Chicago, when I did the lottery. At the same time I did the lottery I was working at WTTW-TV as a staff announcer on a free-lance basis. And then I did six months of the "Contact" show on WIND, before Dave Baum came back. I was in between — Baum went to St. Louis and then came back. Then the lottery went to television, then went to a sixty-second nightly number drawing. I had been working at WCFL, also, doing part-time on weekends.

When WCFL dropped its news format I decided I wanted to do news somewhere and Lexington, Kentucky, was looking. So I took a job here doing TV news at WLEX.

Of all the 'old' WLS disc jockeys, I know and appreciate Bob Hale best of all. He has always been most gracious about talking on the phone, eating dinner or lunch, and giving me encouragement for whatever project I was working on.

A native of Brookfield, Illinois, Hale's broadcasting career began at station

WHA in Madison, Wisconsin, while a student at the University of Wisconsin. After receiving his degree he worked at all three Madison TV stations before moving on to KRIB in Mason City, Iowa.

While working in Mason City, Hale hosted a "sock hop" on the night of February 2, 1959 at the Surf Ballroom in Clear Lake, Iowa. It was the "Winter Dance Party" tour playing to over a thousand people, and at the top of the bill were Buddy Holly and the Crickets, Ritchie Valens, and "The Big Bopper" (J.P. Richardson). That night, the plane carrying the three stars took off in a Beechcraft Bonanza shortly after one a.m. in a heavy snowstorm and crashed minutes later into a frozen cornfield on the farm of Albert Juhl in Ames, Iowa. Holly, Valens, and Richardson died ("the day the music died"), and Bob Hale was the emcee at their final performance. He had the unenviable task of breaking the news to his listeners on the air the same day.

This interview took place in January 1988, shortly after Hale had been let go in a staff cutback at WLEX-TV in Lexington, Kentucky. Resilient as ever, Hale found a home as the afternoon drive personality back in Chicago at WJJD, working at the same radio station as Clark Weber, and just across the hallway from Dick Biondi at WJMK-FM. He was moved to the nighttime shift in the spring of 1993.

A former seminary student who has written for religious publications, Hale also hosts WMAQ-TV's Sunday morning religious talk show "Sunday Chronicles: The Interfaith Hour," which is co-produced by the Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago, the Board of Rabbis, and the Church Federation.

WLS

The bright sound of Chicago Radio

SILVER DOLLAR SURVEY

Chicago's Official Radio Record Survey

THIS WEEK — DECEMBER 27, 1963 — WEEKS PLAYED

*	1.	Wonderful Summer — Robin Ward — Dot	11
*	2.	There I've Said It Again — Bobby Vinton — Epic	8
*	3.	Dominique — The Singing Nun — Philips	9
*	4.	Dumbhead — Ginny Arnell — MGM	9
*	5.	Drag City — Jan & Dean — Liberty	7
*	6.	Midnight Mary — Joey Powers — Amy	10
	7.	Surfin' Bird — Trashmen — Garrett	3
*	8.	Be True To Your School/In My Room — Beach Boys — Capitol	9
*	9.	Louie Louie — Kingsmen — Wand	11
*	10.	24 Hours From Tulsa — Gene Pitney — Musicor	11
*	11.	What's Easy For Two — Mary Wells — Motown	5
*	12.	Drip Drop — Dion — Columbia	9
*	13.	Wives and Lovers — Jack Jones — Kapp	11
*	14.	Daisy Petal Pickin' — Jimmy Gilmer — Dot	6
*	15.	Forget Him — Bobby Rydell — Cameo	7
*	16.	Popsicles and Icicles — Murmaids — Chattahoochee	5
*	17.	Long Tall Texan — Murry Kellum — MOC	7
*	18.	Slippin' and Slidin' — Jim and Monica — Betty	5
*	19.	Pretty Paper — Roy Orbison — Monument	5
*	20.	Turn Around — Dick and Dee Dee — WB	8
*	21.	Loddy Lo — Chubby Checker — Parkway	8
*	22.	I Wish You Love — Gloria Lynne — Everest	10
*	23.	Talk Back Trembling Lips — Johnny Tillotson — MGM	9
*	24.	Since I Fell For You — Lenny Welch — Cadence	5
*	25.	When The Lovelight Starts Shining — Supremes — Motown	7
*	26.	The Marvelous Toy — Chad Mitchell — Mercury	8
*	27.	California Sun — Rivieras — Riviera	5
*	28.	A Letter From Sherry — Dale Ward — Dot	2
*	29.	Tell Him — Drewvells — Capitol	5
*	30.	Hey Little Cobra — Rip Chords — Columbia	2
*	31.	That Lucky Old Sun — Ray Charles — ABC Para	3
*	32.	Quicksand — Martha & Vandellas — Gordy	7
	33.	Kansas City — Trini Lopez — Reprise	4
*	34.	That Boy John — Raindrops — Jubilee	8
	35.	The Gorilla — Ideals — Cortland	5
*	36.	I Have A Boyfriend — Chiffons — Laurie	5
*	37.	Snowman Snowman — Jaynettes — Tuff	6
*	38.	Can I Get A Witness — Marvin Gaye — Tamla	6
*	39.	Bless 'Em All — Jane Morgan — Colpix	7
*	40.	Girls Grow Up Faster Than Boys — Cookie — Dimension	2

FEATURED ALBUMS

SINGS OF MIXED-UP HEARTS — LESLEY GORE — MERCURY

DOWN AT PAPA JOE'S — DIXIE BELLES — SOUND STAGE 7

This survey is compiled each week by WLS Radio/Chicago from reports of all record sales gathered from leading record outlets in the Chicagoland area. Hear Bob Hale play all the SILVER DOLLAR SURVEY hits daily from 3:00 to 6:30 P.M. *Denotes record first heard in Chicago on WLS.

CHAPTER IX

Don Phillips

As is customary, let's start at the beginning and find out how you got started in radio.

I got out of high school in Milwaukee in 1948 and I really didn't know what I wanted to do. I liked to sing and I did some vocal group singing with the group that eventually evolved into the Hi-Los. I never sang with the Hi-Los, I did sing with the group that preceded it. Those were really happy years for me, because I was nineteen, twenty, twenty-one years old, and those were really fun years. During that period of time I also became quite interested in radio, and Gene Perling, who was the lead man for our vocal group, worked at WEMP.

I managed to work my way in there doing part-time work and I did a lot of part-time radio all around in Racine, Milwaukee, and Waukesha. I just kept hammering away at it, mostly on a part-time basis, until finally I was able to work my way into a full-time job. That was probably about 1955 or 1956, working at a couple of stations in Milwaukee. I was at WRIT, which at the time was a rocker, and then to WOKY, which also was a rocker. And from WOKY I went right into WLS.

You joined WLS after they had started doing the rock 'n' roll music that built their huge reputation.

Right. In fact, I must say that a good deal of the talent that went into WLS in the early years did come out of Milwaukee. Gene Taylor, Clark Weber, myself, Sam Holman — and we had all worked together up there. I suppose that as you go through radio, you go with who you know, and Gene Taylor brought me into WLS.

And I'm sure there were a lot of people hustling and applying for those jobs.

Oh, there were. The competition was fierce. We had people running tapes into our place all the time. There was an awful lot of talent out there that wanted to get into big time radio.

When I got to WLS, the format was already established for about a year. Sam Holman started the format and he brought in Gene Taylor. Bob Hale was new at that time, and Jim Dunbar and Mort Crowley, and Biondi was doing the night gig. Hale was doing the all night show, then he was replaced by Clark Weber, then I replaced Clark.

How did you actually get the job at WLS?

Oh, golly, it was a funny thing. They had a need for a summertime news guy to come in and fill in and Gene urged me to come down and do some news for them. I was working in Milwaukee, but the pay at WLS

was good and it wasn't a bad commute — it only took an hour to get from my house to WLS. So the summer before I joined WLS, I worked news.

Then, as happens in radio, the guy who hired me at WOKY got the ax and I knew that my days were numbered there, and sure enough, about six or nine months later, I was out. As soon as Gene Taylor heard about that he gave me a call. And that was it.

WLS had already established itself in the market by the time you came aboard. What kind of work did it take on your part, as an individual, to keep things running at the top of the game?

We had a very simple policy at WLS, and I will be forever grateful for the way the people who were running the station acted. Their philosophy was, "Well, it's yours. Go in there and have a ball. Play the music and have a ball." And we had the format and the Silver Dollar Survey and all the music on the Survey was available to me because I had the longest hours, so I could play anything that was on the Survey, plus what we always lovingly referred to as the vault of treasured music, which was the golden oldies schtick.

We had, I guess, three or four carousels full of oldies, so I did not lack for great music. We also had the greatest jingle package in the world and, to my way of thinking, during the time I was there the station was its most exciting. Then in about 1968, things started happening that weren't so pretty in this country and it just got to be a mess after that.

The music got very dull and, in the early Seventies, all the guys complained about the music. We had an exciting era.

Working the overnight shift, with the great signal WLS had, you must have heard from all over the country.

I heard from all over the country and all over the world. We beamed out west very, very well and I would, from time to time, hear from guys who were listening on Midway Island or out in the middle of the Pacific or on some ship somewhere. The guys would just love it. They'd write me a letter and tell me how they'd heard the show and they were lonely as hell out there, then all of a sudden, there we were and it made them feel real good.

And that always made me feel real good, so we generally tried to gear ourselves to mention the fact that we're out there, guys, if you ever want to hear something, give me a holler. If the skip is right, you may get lucky.

How was the money for back in those days?

The money for back then was about the best I think a disc jockey could be expected to make during those years. If you were sponsored you could make $30,000 or $40,000 a year, plus record hops, so that was pretty good money.

And those record hops were great supplements to all of your incomes?

Oh, yeah. It bought me a nice airplane and, in fact, Clark Weber and I got our pilots' licenses practically together and we did a lot of flying

together.

I bought a beautiful, used but very nice Avion, which was always one my favorite airplanes — low-wing, four-passenger, retractable, two hundred and sixty horsepower, she was beautiful. I flew a lot to the hops. Made a lot of trips to Benton Harbor, Michigan, to Lake Geneva, places like that.

This all leads me to ask about the 'perks' that you guys must have had because of your stardom in Chicago.

We had a few perks, there's no getting away from that. They weren't anything out of the ordinary that people in the business today don't get. Whenever I had an automobile sponsor, I had a car. There was a time in my house when I had four cars. I had two of my own and one from Mr. Norm, and then along came an Oldsmobile promotion at the station and they gave us all Toronados to drive. It was crazy.

That was about the biggest perk I ever got, outside the standard record promotion luncheons and things like that. You have to remember, working the all-night show, I was kind of out of it. I did my best to pick and choose the things I thought were really important to be at, for the station's benefit or for my own, and there were very few times that the station actually insisted that I make it to a place. Whenever they did, I was more than happy to do it because they never really asked that much of me. They realized that working that night show just gets to you after a while, and you need all the rest you can get, especially if you're doing lots of hops.

There were some weekends when I'd have a Friday, a Saturday, and a Sunday night hop. That really kills you after working all week long.

Let's talk about some of the other people who were at WLS when you were there. We'll start with your impressions of Ron Riley.

I would see Ron more often than I'd see some of the other guys, simply because Ron was generally hanging around late after his show. I'd try to get in about an hour early, sometime during the Art Roberts show. So, Ron and I got to know each other quite a bit. We never got a chance to socialize a lot because our hours clashed, but during the time I knew Ron, my son became interested in ham radio and Ron was a ham operator. So we got to get together with Ron a number of times and he really brought my son along, got him started, got him interested, and pointed him in the right direction.

Ron was a lot of fun, a lot of fun to be around, and a doggone good disc jockey.

What about Dex Card?

Dex was the one guy that I probably knew the least. I would only get to see Dex mainly at staff meetings and that was about it. But he was a very personable guy, a very likable man, and did a nice job with the Silver Dollar Survey. Nothing flashy, he just kind of went in there and ran the numbers. They had him so heavy with spots he didn't have much time to say much in between the records.

How about Bernie Allen?

Bernie was a very nice, middle-of-the-road kind of guy. Of all the guys, and he sometimes admitted it, he probably fitted the WLS image the least. But he did a very fine job and was perfect for where he was, on the air from eleven a.m. until two p.m. or something like that. I can't even remember his time slot exactly.

Bernie and I had mutual interests in that we both liked to sing, so we did get together and commiserate on our mutual interest from time to time.

You already mentioned that one of your program directors was Gene Taylor.

Yeah, Gene was the guy who brought me in. Later on, Gene became station manager when Ralph Beaudin moved on to New York.

It's not an easy thing to be a station manager because you've got to remember not to stifle creativity, and both Gene and I worked for stations where they were heavy format people and they wanted you to just stick to the format, play the music, and shut up. Gene did not manage like that and I'll be forever grateful.

One of the guys you probably ran into more than anyone else was Art Roberts, simply because of your shift following his?

Art and I crossed paths every night, of course. I got to know him quite well. He and I have kept in touch, talking on the phone, although Clark Weber is probably the guy I keep in touch with the most.

Art was good for his time slot. He was the kind of guy you could really expect to do well by your kids. He realized he was going to be looked up to by a number of young, impressionable people, and as a result, he took that responsibility very seriously. I always thought that was an admirable trait in Art, and he was a good family man.

Go on with Clark Weber.

He has one of the most enviable minds I've ever known in the business. He remembers jokes, he's got a card file and you give him one word and he'll have four jokes for it. There are many, many nights he just sat around and regaled everybody with one joke after another. He was a great dialectician and could tell great Italian jokes, Jewish jokes, whatever,

He was an excellent morning man and has been in the business all these years. You have to remember, I've been out of the business since 1968, but Clark has just gone on and on there in Chicago.

You mentioned Ralph Beaudin. He was the station manager during your early years there and from everything I've heard, he was a good one.

He was one of the best. You must remember that, in my time slot, I didn't get to see the day crew a lot. Whenever I did it was always a very cordial kind of an encounter and, when we had a staff meeting that I had to attend, Beaudin was always very diplomatic.

In doing his job, he hired people, explained what the job was, and said go do it. And you never heard from him again. At least that was my impression. He just expected you to do your job, and that's a wonderful

quality in a manager. Not too many people can manage with that degree of confidence; he did, and was very successful at it for a good number of years.

You never had a chance to work with Dick Biondi?

No, in fact, Dick got fired just as I was arriving. It was Gene Taylor that fired him. I remember that clearly.

Just as I was coming into WLS, Biondi said, "You can't do that to me," and Taylor said, "Oh, yes, I can." And he did and that was it. Biondi was gone.

How about Bob Hale?

Bob was there for about a year while I was and one day he crossed swords with Gene Taylor, also. I liked Bob a lot, he was very talented, and when he started doing television around Chicago he was very smooth. I admired his work a lot.

Why don't you comment on Don Phillips, whose work at WLS you know best of all?

I don't know really what to say about me. I tried desperately to be entertaining for five hours and after about two-and-a-half or three hours of really grinding it out, you kind of run into a brick wall. About three o'clock in the morning I'd take about a half hour break to recharge my batteries, then come back in and really give it to them again for the last hour.

We used to have a lot of fun. We did a lot of comedy on the show, I had more comedy and joke services than you could shake a stick at. I got together with a couple of people who moved on — in fact, one young fellow named Jeffrey Barron called me and he's writing comedy material today for people like Bob Hope — and we sat down and wrote like a weekly joke service for a while. But it's not easy, I'll tell you. I've got a lot of respect for joke writers.

Did you distribute that joke service?

Yeah, we attempted to, and it would have taken off with some work. We found, though, that after working at it for a while that we just collectively didn't have the time or the inclination to try to keep going with it. It was just too much. It's not easy to sit down and write jokes. That's why topical jokes become so easy to do because you can draw most of your jokes from the news.

Anyway, it became very apparent to us early on that we were all too busy doing our other things to carry on with that. But it's an endeavor that I probably would have liked to continue if I had more time, but it wasn't in the cards for me.

Tell me how you knew it was time to leave WLS.

I didn't leave. They left me.

We had a fantastic run, but we were all getting up in age — we were thirty-seven, thirty-eight years old. And you could start to feel it, the youth was coming to the fore and we were getting shoved aside, and you could feel it coming. Gene cleaned me out first and, within a year, Dex Card was gone and a couple of the other guys were gone. Eventually

everybody was moved out and replaced by younger guys.

I was probably fired with about as much grace and dignity as anybody could be. When they fired me they said, "Whenever you're ready, just let us know and we'll have somebody in here." It was like three or four months later that I finally left.

But, by that time, I had developed another interest. I was very heavily into the stock market.

Yes, I wanted to talk about what you've done with your life since getting out of radio.

When I left WLS I went into the stock market. I worked as a stockbroker for a number of years, and then when the Chicago Board of Options opened up I bought a seat and I went down and traded on the floor for a few years. That blew my ears out.

So I decided that I wanted to build a boat and sail away, off into the sunset and get away from this crazy world for a while. So that's what I did. I built this fifty-foot sailboat and took it down the Mississippi River and ended up down here in Houston, Texas. I arrived here in December of 1980.

At the time of this adventure, were you still a family man?

Oh, yeah. By the time I moved the boat down, my youngest son was one year away from graduating from Texas A & M University with a petroleum engineering degree, so my family was pretty well all grown.

Are you still active in the markets?

I would say that what I do today is that I'm an investor. I'm in business for myself.

What are your thoughts about radio today?

The thing that turns me off today about radio, and not all radio, mind you, is the vulgarity that has been allowed. We used to do double entendre jokes and, though you were doing them, you weren't doing anything one-tenth of what they do today on some of these talk shows.

It seems that every major city has a couple of really vulgar guys working in the morning and they're all trying to out-vulgar each other.

And that's the one thing that turns me off about radio. But there are a lot of things that turn you on about radio, too. It's still a doggone good medium. I think if I had it all to do over again, I'd've liked to have had a real good career in news. News was always one of the things I liked to do.

But you can still look back on your days at WLS with fond memories.

I've got to tell you that, if I had it all to do over again, I would. I consider myself to be one of the luckiest guys to have been part of the hottest years that WLS ever had. Of course they had a lot of hot years after we all left. But I just thought that those years, on up through when that Vietnam thing started getting really messy and ugly, were just marvelous years.

Don Phillips lives in League City, Texas, where he is an "investor." These days, he is very interested in computers, stemming from his innate curiosity about the machine, and does some consulting in the data transmission and programming fields, even working occasionally for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in nearby Houston.

This interview took place on April 7, 1988, and I've had the occasion to talk with Phillips a few times since then. He is a gracious, helpful person with great stories to share, and a calm demeanor that must have been borne out of answering the phones during an all-night shift at an extraordinarily popular radio station.

WLS

The bright sound of Chicago Radio

SILVER DOLLAR SURVEY

Chicago's Official Radio Record Survey

JANUARY 15, 1965

THIS WEEK			WEEKS PLAYED
* 1.	Downtown	Petula Clark — WB	6
* 2.	Love Potion #9	The Searchers — Kapp	8
* 3.	Come See About Me	The Supremes — Motown	11
* 4.	Mr. Lonely	Bobby Vinton — Epic	13
* 5.	I Feel Fine/She's A Woman	The Beatle's — Capitol	10
* 6.	You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin'	The Righteous Bros. — Philles	8
* 7.	Anyway You Want It	The Dave Clark Five — Epic	10
* 8.	The Name Game	Shirley Ellis — Congress	8
* 9.	Keep Searchin'	Del Shannon — Amy	8
*10.	Thou Shalt Not Steal	Dick And Dee Dee — WB	9
*11.	Sha La La	Manfred Mann — Ascot	9
*12.	Kiss And Run	Bobby Skel — Soft	6
*13.	The Crusher	The Nova's — Parrot	5
*14.	Willow Weep For Me	C. Stuart & J. Clyde — WA	9
15	Don't Forget I Still Love You	Bobbi Martin — Coral	7
*16	Let's Lock The Door	Jay & The Americans — UA	4
*17.	The Wedding	Julie Rogers — Mercury	12
18.	Twine Time	Alvin Cash — Mar-V-Lus	6
*19.	Give Him A Great Big Kiss	The Shangri-La's — Red Bird	5
20.	You're Nobody Till Somebody Loves You	Dean Martin — Reprise	2
*21.	Hawaii Tattoo	The Waikaki's — Kapp	9
22.	Have You Looked Into Your Heart	Jerry Vale — Columbia	3
*23.	All Day & All Of The Night	The Kinks — Reprise	3
24.	How Sweet It Is	Marvin Gaye — Tamla	5
*25.	Little Bell	The Dixie Cups — Red Bird	4
*26.	Do What You Do Well	Ned Miller — Fabor	7
*27.	The Look Of Love	Lesley Gore — Mercury	5
*28.	Everyday	The Rogues — Columbia	4
*29.	The 'In' Crowd	Dobie Gray — Charger	4
*30.	I Go To Pieces	Peter & Gordon — Capitol	3
*31.	You're The Only World I Know	Sonny James — Capitol	6
*32.	Promised Land	Chuck Berry — Chess	4
33.	The Jerk	The Larks — Money	8
34.	Amen	The Impressions — ABC Para	6
*35.	I'll Be There	Gerri & Pacemakers — Laurie	4
*36.	This Diamond Ring	Gary Lewis — Liberty	3
37.	Sometimes I Wonder	Major Lance — Okeh	5
38.	Makin' Whoopee	Ray Charles — ABC Para	3
*39.	The Boy From N.Y. City	The Ad-Libs — Blue Cat	3
*40.	Finders Keepers	Nella Dodds — Wand	3

FEATURED ALBUMS

LATIN THEMES FOR YOUNG LOVERS — PERCY FAITH — COLUMBIA

THE FOLK ALBUM — TRINI LOPEZ — REPRISE

This survey is compiled each week by WLS Radio/Chicago from reports of all record sales gathered from leading record outlets in the Chicagoland area. Hear Dex Card play all the SILVER DOLLAR SURVEY hits daily from 3:00 to 6:30 P.M. *Denotes record first heard in Chicago on WLS.

CHAPTER X

Ron Riley

How did you get your start in radio?

Let's see if I can remember. I guess I was always one of those kids who was very extroverted, and rather than play basketball, I was always the one who announced the games. I enjoyed doing that kind of thing.

Then I won a contest and got to work at a local radio station up in northeastern Illinois at WKRS in Waukegan. I went up there doing high school news once a week, and that was a trip. It fulfilled my ego needs at age seventeen or eighteen.

I went away to the University of Wisconsin, and while I was there I worked at the campus radio station while futilely attempting to get a degree in journalism. I worked at WHA, the college station in Madison, mostly as a technician. When I was a kid I had a ham radio license, so I always liked to mess around with electronics. I never thought of myself as being, actually, an on the air performer as much as I just liked the ambiance of being in a radio environment, no matter what it was. Either side of the microphone, or tubes or towers, whatever it was, I just happened to like radio. I was a radio maven.

As a kid in grade school I used to sit down and listen around on my radio band and see where I could hear broadcast stations coming through and used to log them in. That sounds corny, but radio was always a thing with me.

Finally, while I was at Wisconsin, I got a chance to work at a bigger radio station and got involved in a lot of the remote broadcasts they did, and I did everything. I hauled around equipment, which at that time wasn't as small as it is now, and finally got to announce some classical music and mispronounced all the names to the chagrin of the classical music fans.

Then I got a job working at WAPL in Appleton, Wisconsin, and that was my first air personality job. At that time, in the late Fifties, air personalities sat in windows of department stores and did remotes at the zoo and man in the street broadcasts and all kinds of things. So I did all that good stuff, small-town radio. But my ambition at that time was really to work at WOKY in Milwaukee, because they had an assemblage of real exciting personalities on the air. I really wanted to work there in the worst way.

I finally got a job there, doing the all-night show. About that time I got called into the service because I was in the Reserve. While I was away in the Navy, WLS came to be, and all the guys I worked with at

WOKY went down and got WLS on the air.

I came out of the service and I couldn't get a job anywhere. So I called WOKY and said I needed something to do, because I was just getting married. They told me I could come up there and work as a summer fill-in for them. Then I called Gene Taylor down at WLS and asked if he had anything open where I could maybe fill in. He said I could come down and do the all-night show for Clark Weber, who was going away on vacation for about five weeks.

I told him I had just told WOKY I would work there, but he said it would be good for me and give him a chance to hear me on the air. So I did both jobs. I worked afternoons at WOKY and went home and slept for a couple of hours, then whipped down and did the all-night show at WLS, went back and slept for four hours, and went back up to Milwaukee. I was living in Deerfield, Illinois, at the time. It was crazy, really bizarre.

Then I got an on-air job at WHK in Cleveland. After I got in there, after about eight months, the Biondi thing happened at WLS. I got notified that I got the job at WLS, and I was sweating it. I took the telephone into the shower stall with me waiting for them to call me. But working those five weeks at WLS really helped because I wasn't an unknown quantity then.

Where was your hometown and where you started in high school?

Actually, my home is Chicago. I was born there and raised up on the north shore and Highland Park and Deerfield and Antioch. Really, the first commercial station I worked at was Waukegan, then I went to DeKalb (Illinois) for a little while, and then went to the University of Wisconsin and up to Appleton.

So, coming back from Cleveland to WLS was a result of knowing Gene Taylor?

No, I wouldn't say that. I think Gene Taylor was the kind of guy who couldn't give a shit if he knew anybody. WLS was a powerhouse station and he could have taken his pick of anybody he wanted. Sure, I would admit that there were probably five hundred guys who could have done my job — well, maybe fifty — but the fact that I went over there and was not an unknown piece of baggage maybe helped. But I don't think I got any favors because I happened to know Gene. I know that once I was in-house, I performed just like everybody else.

Working at WLS, everybody in radio should have had that opportunity. I was there during the best years, during the best time, the best station, the best music, I mean everything was just letter perfect.

It had already started its ascent to the top as a good radio station.

Ah, it was a great radio station. We'd get response from all over the world. We used to have servicemen call us in Alaska and people call us from Mexico.

I remember when Batman was an entity, I used to talk about the

Batman show and all that kind of thing, just to relate. I always tried to relate to what my audience was into. That's why a half hour before I got on the air every night, I would take telephone calls. They used to wait in a line and I used to sit there and take calls and find out stuff. They loved to talk about themselves and ask questions, and I got a tremendous feel for how they were thinking, and I think that was key to my ability to relate to my audience as well as I did.

Even now, I run into people who are in their thirties and forties and they'll say, "God, I remember the night that you did. . ." That's something, twenty years later, to have people remembering that.

We were all doing things right, but they gave us the opportunity to do it there. I had a Batman club where I just offered bumper stickers and cards, and people were just going to send a self-addressed stamped envelope. We ended up sending off about a hundred and fifty thousand and we finally had to send the project to a mail house. We heard from every state in the United States, every province of Canada, three Central American countries, the Philippines. It was just bizarre.

Then, the Vietnam war was going on and I remember I got a photo in the mail from some guy. It was of U.S. tank going down the road and it had a big bumper sticker on the back that said "Ron Riley's Batman Club."

The response to that radio station was just staggering.

But the preparation you did was something to be proud of.

Well, I worked seven days a week. I worked six days live on the air, two or three evenings a week I did record hops, on Sunday I had a taped show but I'd go out and do hops in the afternoon. I did station promotions. I made it a point, and I think we all did, to have that very valuable one-on-one contact with the audience. We were just not a talking head. We were real.

The mind set of doing that work, didn't it get old?

It was always fresh. It was always great. If I had been working for some pea-pod it would have been different, but working for a station with that impact. We all felt that and were a very cooperative group together. We harmonized with each other. We had our little internal bullshit feuds and all that, like who got this album first and who gets to play it. But overall we all had a good time and we all liked each other. There was jealousies and competitiveness but certainly no animosities.

How was the management at the station?

Well, when I went in there, Ralph Beaudin was there and he was the tall, ex-Marine redhead who everyone was always a little fearful of, and Gene Taylor was kind of the catalyst in between. They were tough, they were disciplined, they wanted to have nine o'clock Monday morning meetings, which we all came to. But most importantly, they felt that you were there for the reasons that they hired you and they were going to let you do your thing. And we were allowed to be ourselves. We had no constraints up until the changes in the early Seventies, which is when I got out of there.

How about the money at WLS?

It was a lot of money for that time. I don't even remember what I was making at that time, but it seemed like an awful lot of money.

We would supplement the income with the hops and sometimes we'd do them free, but, it's a funny thing. In retrospect, the money wasn't that important. It was good and we were living well, but we were all just enjoying being what we were. It was a, to use the vernacular, a trip.

How about the 'perks' that accompanied the celebrity status? You'd walk down the street and sometimes people would recognize you, and certainly there were social situations where you'd be recognized.

Having the retrospect of radio and TV, it wasn't all as demanding as being a TV person is. In radio there wasn't that immediate recognition factor.

But, among the kids, when you would go out and do two or three or four record hops a week at the major high schools in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Wisconsin, as well as the greater Chicago area, you do get recognized on the streets.

There weren't that many perks to go with it. I found perks later on in TV. A broad base of demographics liked the TV people. But at WLS, we were considered teen idols and there weren't that many older people who admitted to listening to or liking rock 'n' roll music. But I'm sure there were a lot of clandestine listeners and, when the Beatles came out, everybody's mother was in there trying to get tickets. Literally.

Let's talk individually, get some impressions, about some of the people that you worked with. You say Dick Biondi was gone when you came in?

Yeah, but I knew Dick before when I worked the all-night show for those weeks and he was a good friend of my brother's, who was a record promotion guy in Chicago on the streets at that time. Dick was zany and he was a star, and a very, very nice guy.

Was Bob Hale there when you were?

Yeah, Bob was there in the afternoons. I didn't know Bob too well. I've seen Bob since then, but I can't say that I knew him too well. Bob, unfortunately, was let go a year or so after I started.

How about Dex Card?

Dex and I were buddies. We used to do a lot of hops together, and Dex was first a businessman and second a disc jockey. He was involved in a lot of shows, a lot of hops and things like that. He used to have clubs. He was, and still is, a very good businessman. A nice guy and a good friend.

Gene Taylor had the unenviable task of moving from on-air to management. That might have been a tough step for him?

Ah, I'm not sure. I think he was loved, whether or not he was good for ABC at the time was something that they had to determine, but he was very well liked. I think he worked very hard. I think Gene, at the time, might have had some personal or domestic problems that might

KEEP YOUR DIAL SET ON RADIO 890 AND HEAR THE "NEW" BEATLES

CLARK
"BEATLE"
WEBER
6-9 AM

"RINGO"
TAYLOR
10-12 NOON

"BEATLE
BERNIE"
ALLEN
12:30 PM-
3:00 PM

"BOB
THE
BEATLE"
HALE
3:00-6:30 PM

"RINGO
RON"
RILEY
7:30-
9:00 PM

ART
"THE
EXCELSIOR
BEATLE"
ROBERTS
9:00-12 MIDNIGHT

DON
"BEATLE
ALL-NIGHT"
PHILLIPS
MIDNIGHT-
5:00 AM

have turned him a little bit during one period of time of his management career.

Art Roberts and you were on at night and, in my opinion, those were glory days of listening to nighttime radio.

I think Art and I are probably better friends now than we were then. We were very good friends and we liked each other a lot, but there was that competitiveness about us there for some reason or other that made us always want to outdo each other. It was great for the listeners, but sometimes he'd rub me wrong, and I'm sure I'd rub him wrong.

Our desks were right next to each other. You can't work with anybody eight years within that proximity and that competitive nature, and not have some type of little animosity that might creep up. But Art is a real wonderful guy and he always was. We were young and very competitive and used to jump on each other's case once in a while. But it all seems not too very important now.

I always used to think Art used to steal my ideas and he used to think I'd steal his records. I used to get albums from England, exclusives from friends, and Art would go in to Gene Taylor and wonder why he didn't get to play half of that. Then I arranged to have a Beatles interview and Gene would want Art to do it with me.

When I talked to Bernie Allen he told me he had now worked in Chicago for forty years. He was probably the quietest of all the people you worked with.

He certainly was the quietest, and with him being on mid-day, we didn't interface too much. He was always good and worked hard.

How about Don Phillips?

Don came on at midnight and, again, we'd see each other once in a while, but we were all so busy. We were tremendously busy, so there wasn't the opportunity to socialize. We worked six days a week and we were doing hops, and we very rarely got together socially. Maybe in the afternoons, I'd go down to the London House about five o'clock or so and have a couple of drinks and maybe Art Roberts would be there.

But I can only remember once or twice we all got together at each other's houses.

You have mentioned Ralph Beaudin. I was told that he never had anything on his desk, that it was always clean and organized.

Nothing on his desk but his feet. He used to like to sit back in his chair and put his feet up on his desk and he said that way he never got angry because the blood always kept circulating. He was a good delegator. He was every bit the Marine sergeant or whatever it was he was.

You and Clark Weber had an on-air feud that was classic stuff.

I had more fun with that because under the surface I always thought Clark deserved to be made fun of. (Laughs.) But then when I started that stuff on the air with him, I used to call him up at night and put him on the air and blow bugles in his ear and stuff like that.

Everybody loved it so much because it was really what everybody wanted to do - how many people wouldn't want to call their bosses up

and say, "Hey, stuff it." I used to pretend I was a pizza place calling him and asking where he wanted his pizzas delivered. People used to love that.

And he grabbed onto it pretty well. He was always a good sport. I found out later, when I became a demographic strategist, that it was really good to have that spilling over into the nights to keep a retention factor for people tuning in in the morning. We were recycling listeners, and that became kind of a benchmark because we were the only ones doing that kind of thing then, and you can hear that kind of stuff now.

A lot of the pieces we did orchestrate. You know, we were almost the original "Good Morning, Vietnam" people because we were being played over there before anybody was doing live shows there. These guys always used to write us and tell us that Armed Forces Radio just plays crap, so will you guys make us a tape? It cost the station a fortune to make tapes and we'd sit there every night. It got to the point where Clark and I would do a show and they'd have it pressed on record and it was whoever beat the other to a line. We did a lot of dumb lines and played some oldies and laughed at each other. We sent those out — I'll bet we had requests for five thousand of those damned things. I think I have one of them now.

But I still have a bunch of stuff, though. I have a whole wall full of pictures and newspaper clippings. I've just got a trunk full of stuff. I've got an autographed picture of the Beatles. When I die, they're gonna auction it off like Andy Warhol's junk.

Here's a good one for you to comment on — Ron Riley.

I thought you were going to say Larry Lujack.

Well, you would have worked with Lujack, but he's not of the 'first generation' WLS guys I'm focusing on.

There was a difference. We were all pretty well cut of the Sixties cloak and when Larry came in, he was cut of a different — he ran to the beat of a different drum. We used to have meetings and he used to come in with jeans on and sulk and stand in the back of the room. We always had to kind of dress up, wearing sport jackets and ties and all of that, mainly because we all used to be out doing things and going with the salespeople. But Larry was his own person.

He was different on the air, a little bit ahead of himself. I'm not sure that Larry and I really got along together, but Larry didn't get along with anyone real well. He was very caustic and very put-on, both on and off the air. He sued to sit in the studio when he was on the air and everybody would want to see him. Kids would come in and stand in the observation room and look, and we always had the curtains open so they could watch us. Larry would get on the air and close the curtains.

One time I opened the curtain just a little bit so they could peek in at him, and they waved, and he came out and verbally laid me out. He was really a recluse.

How about Ron Riley?

As far as WLS goes, I think it was the greatest thing that ever hap-

pened to me as a person. I have a lot of fond memories from it, made a lot of good friends, and it was really a cornerstone, a linchpin of my going on in the industry. I went through my star syndrome. You know, working with the Beatles and the Rolling Stones in McCormick Place, having all that attention, and being in front of thirty thousand fans at Wrigley Field or someplace at a concert, can do things to your head.

I went through the usual problems, a divorce. I had a very high opinion of myself for a long time, but you almost had to have an ego to do what you did. I don't think anybody can be on the radio and be a performer if you don't have some kind of a good impression of yourself, and that was my flight of fancy.

When WLS changed and they got some real jerk in there as a program director and we had to stop being personalities, because that was the syndrome of 1971, it was time for me to get the hell out. And that's when I came out east and decided I'd better be in programming.

When did you know it was time to leave?

When program director John Rook hired somebody to replace me. He and I were not going to get along, so I played it out, because I had a new wife. Then I heard that he'd hired somebody so I went in and asked Gene Taylor what the deal was. Gene had to go along with Rook because he was an ABC product forced down Gene's throat, too.

After you left WLS, where did you go?

I went to WCFL for a minute and worked over there for a little bit while I kind of gathered myself together, and then I had this chance to come out to Baltimore to program an AM and FM station, and I spent twelve years here. That was WCAO-AM and WXYV-FM.

I went through a lot of changes, format changes. It was good, but once you've been on WLS, it isn't a lot of fun to be on the radio, so about three years after I got here I took myself off because it just wasn't what I wanted to do anymore. You know, WLS was the pinnacle, the peak, the climax of being a disc jockey. And I just couldn't be a disc jockey anywhere else.

So, the first opportunity I had when I was so encumbered by programming the AM and FM radio stations, I just simply took myself off being on the air, and I was glad I did.

Then I got into TV here. I was the kind of guy who always had to work two jobs anyway - if it wasn't on the air and record hops, it was radio and TV. So even though I was programming a couple of radio stations, I did TV at night. I did a program for about six years called "Bowling For Dollars," which was a local game show on the NBC channel.

Then after that I went over to Channel 13, the ABC channel, and I did weather there for five years. This was all while I was still working in radio. Then I decided to dump out of radio completely when I heard the owners were going to sell the chain of stations.

Did you enjoy programming?

Yeah, yeah it was good. It gave me an opportunity to look back at

some of the things that other programmers did and do them differently.

When you were programming, did any of the old WLS guys contact you for jobs?

No. I think we all had too much spirit to do something like that.

And, since 1983, you've been working for Baltimore itself?

I did TV until 1983 and then an opportunity came along to get involved in marketing tourism. I had made a lot of contacts living out here for seventeen years now, and it seemed like a good idea. Baltimore has done a wonderful job with a renaissance, so I got this position and I really like it a great deal.

I travel a lot and I've always liked traveling, even when I was in radio. I always liked getting on an airplane and going someplace, so I do a lot of that, and a lot of marketing work. I really enjoy what I'm doing.

I still do a little free-lance. I do some commercials now and then when I'm called on, because a lot of people know me in town after being on TV for a long time. So I just keep a little hand in it, but every so often, I listen to radio here, and I can listen now as a real listener. We never had that privilege years ago, to be able to really enjoy radio. Anyway, every so often I hear people on the radio and I say I'd like to get in there and do a three-hour show or maybe a weekend. I know I could be entertaining, but it's not what I would care to do for a living.

I've paid my dues and I worked for the best station in America during the best time.

What do you think of radio today?

Confusing. I think formatically it's very fragmented. I go to a station once in a while to cut spots and I see everybody selecting all their music with computers. A lot of the personal selection of music has gone out of it and the humanism. One guy starts playing soft rock, the other one plays a little above soft rock and sprinkles in some Johnny Mathis or America records. That's gonna make a difference?

I think there are too many stations myself, and then there are too many alternatives nowadays with compact discs and all of that. That's a thing that we didn't face. AM was big, FM was just coming about, so that's one of the reasons that it was an ideal time. It was like saying World War II was the last of those kinds of wars. Radio, as I knew it in the Sixties into the Seventies, was the last of that kind of radio because after that it was complete FM penetration, which has been good.

I just think there's too damned many stations. We have three classical music stations in this market, and I can get five including Washington. We're talking classical music. It's just unbelievable. There's just too much. I don't know how in the hell anybody makes a living.

One thing that has developed in recent years that you probably look back on your days at WLS and wish you could have done is telephone talk radio.

Well, they were doing some of that, experimenting all-night at WCFL in the mid-Sixties, but I think the personality guys now are a lot freer. This freedom of speech thing, they can say a lot of things that we were

always trying to say between the lines. They can be pretty blatant about it. Whether that's good or bad radio is very subjective, but the point is that it can be a lot more open or a lot looser now than it was then. We were like the nice guys and we really wouldn't say anything bad, but we may infer it.

All in all, WLS was a tremendous time?

All in all, the greatest time of my life. And I wish everyone that is in broadcasting now would have had the opportunity that I had to work at that radio station at that time. I run into people now, guys who manage radio stations or manage TV stations, and my wife (Cindy) is an attorney who negotiates contracts for a lot of major TV people. Anyway, I'll run into a guy who is a producer for "Good Morning America" and he'll say, "Oh, God, I remember you. Are you the same guy from Chicago?"

And it's always such a surprise. I run into a lot of media people who tell me they're in radio now because of me, and because of what we did. I mean, I hear that all the time. And from some of the most unlikely sources.

We (WLS announcers) were really very influential. And we were the right guys at the right time.

And, sociologically speaking, it was a very 'clean' era. The Sixties were pure before Vietnam and Watergate and other things came along.

Well, the Sixties in general, up to about after the Beatles and the Beatles were a nice transition and the music was good. And then it became a little sociologically unclean. There were rifts, there was Vietnam, there were the Nehru jackets, the flower girls, and all that kind of stuff. We kept along with that change, that time, the psychedelic music and all that. But I think after a while, it got a little out of hand and I think a lot of that was like leaving Oz.

This interview took place on April 27, 1988, from Riley's home in Brooklandville, Maryland. In 1990, Riley became the director of tourism sales for the Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau, handling the international market.

As you can tell by the frequent laughs in the text, Riley is easily amused, easy to talk to, and a joy to listen to.

CHAPTER XI

Art Roberts

How did you get your start in radio?

I started out in college. I wasn't really looking to go into radio, but wanted a part-time job and they had a bulletin board with jobs in town listed. They had one that said, "Part-time announcer wanted," and I applied for it and nobody else did. So I got into radio.

What is your hometown and college background?

My hometown is New York City and the college I went to was Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond.

Did you enjoy radio right from the beginning?

Actually my ambition at that point of life was to be a speech therapist. My major was speech. I had a fellowship to go to Ole Miss beginning in the fall, and I also was married in college and we had our first child, so I needed a job somewhere. I had applied at some radio stations and never got an answer and I got a job with the Jackson Brewery Company in New Orleans, driving a beer truck, which paid more money than anything else. And then one of the radio stations in Atlanta, Texas, called me and said they had a job opening there.

It was half the amount of pay I was getting for driving a truck, but there was something inside of me that said, 'Well, why don't you give it a try?' So, that's where we started, down in Atlanta, Texas, with its population of about three thousand people.

There obviously were some great promotions for you along the way to allow you to get to WLS.

Well, I went from Atlanta to Longview very briefly, then to Tyler, Texas, which was my first learning base, I guess. It was a very good radio station and I was made program director there after I'd been there about a month.

The guy that ran the station took me in his office a month after I'd been there and told me he was going to make me program director. I told him I'd never been a program director and he said, "I'll tell you what, Art. Just make it a better radio station." And that was the only instruction he ever gave me. So that's what I started thinking about, and we were a pretty good station.

I did a rhythm and blues show in Tyler at night as well as doing a day thing, and that show got a rating in Dallas, which got me an offer from KLIF and that's how I got to my first major radio station. That was 1955.

Then I rose pretty fast. I went from there to Dayton, Ohio and stayed

there not too long before going to Akron, Ohio. I guess that knowing rhythm and blues gave me an edge back in those days. I knew something about a music that attracted a very heavy white audience, a music that nobody wanted to play because they considered it black records. In Akron I worked at WCUE, which is a nice, historic radio station. That was where Alan Freed started, and by that time he had gone on to Cleveland and New York, and what they were looking for was somebody who could know that music and play it because they had such great success with it when he was there. So, that's how I got hired in Akron.

From Akron I went to WKBW in Buffalo, New York, and from there I went to WLS.

How did the folks at WLS find you?

I just sent a tape, and I never heard back from them. Then about four months later I heard of another opening there, so I called them and they said send another tape. I told them they already had my tape and they said, "Well, send it again." So I did and they hired me. The same tape I got rejected on I got hired with.

And who was the program director back then?

It was Sam Holman.

So you had a chance to get together with a bunch of other very talented people at WLS and formed that station into one of the top radio stations in the entire country. That had to be pretty exciting.

It was. It was a station that evolved. I think one of the biggest strengths that it had was that it had a family feel to it, which is something that I've tried to inject at every radio station I've ever been at. I experienced something there that you don't find too many places. Sort of a magic.

It happens with a lot of radio stations, I think. It's sort of like a football team, the right combination of people and suddenly you win the Super Bowl. That's what we were — the right combination of people. We gelled together and got along very well and had a single focus in being dominant in the market, and that's what we did.

How did you find management at WLS at the time? They had to be pretty supportive.

Oh, very much so. I think all stations start at the top and work down. If you've got a dummy at the top, you're in trouble.

Our very first manager, Ralph Beaudin, was very strong and he had that same sense of purpose, of being dominant in the market. He didn't have a time schedule; it wasn't like you had to be number one in six months or else. It was just, Do well and eventually we'll show the market that we are a number one radio station. You can't lose with that kind of leadership.

There was, obviously, a lot of preparation that went on to do your show. You worked a variety of shifts but are probably best remembered for the nighttime show that you did, that you inherited from Dick Biondi.

Right. I used to work about four hours a day to do a four hour show.

WLS

The bright sound of Chicago Radio

SILVER DOLLAR SURVEY

Chicago's Official Radio Record Survey

THIS WEEK — DECEMBER 20, 1963 — WEEKS PLAYED

*	1.	Wonderful Summer — Robin Ward — Dot	10
*	2.	There I've Said It Again — Bobby Vinton — Epic	7
*	3.	Dominique — The Singing Nun — Philips	9
*	4.	Drag City — Jan and Dean — Liberty	6
*	5.	Dumbhead — Ginny Arnell — MGM	8
*	6.	Midnight Mary — Joey Powers — Amy	9
*	7.	Be True To Your School/In My Room — Beach Boys — Capitol	8
*	8.	24 Hours From Tulsa — Gene Pitney — Musicor	10
*	9.	Louie Louie — Kingsmen — Wand	10
*10.		I Wish You Love — Gloria Lynne — Everest	9
*11.		Drip Drop — Dion — Columbia	8
*12.		Turn Around — Dick and Dee Dee — WB	7
*13.		Slippin' and Slidin' — Jim and Monica — Betty	4
*14.		Forget Him — Bobby Rydell — Cameo	6
*15.		Loddy Lo — Chubby Checker — Parkway	7
*16.		Pretty Paper — Roy Orbison — Monument	4
*17.		Talk Back Trembling Lips — Johnny Tillotson — MGM	8
*18.		Since I Fell For You — Lenny Welch — Cadence	4
*19.		Wives and Lovers — Jack Jones — Kapp	10
*20.		When The Lovelight Starts Shining — Supremes — Motown	6
*21.		Popsicles and Icicles — Murmaids — Chattahoochee	4
*22.		Quicksand — Martha and Vandellas — Gordy	6
*23.		That Boy John — Raindrops — Jubilee	7
*24.		Daisy Petal Pickin' — Jimmy Gilmer — Dot	5
*25.		Long Tall Texan — Murry Kellum — MOC	6
26.		Surfin' Bird — Trashmen — Garrett	2
*27.		The Marvelous Toy — Chad Mitchell — Mercury	7
*28.		What's Easy For Two — Mary Wells — Motown	4
*29.		That Lucky Old Sun — Ray Charles — ABC Para	2
*30.		California Sun — Rivieras — Riviera	4
*31.		When The Wind Blows In Chicago — George McGurn — A & M	7
*32.		Rags To Riches — Sunny & Sunliners — Teardrop	7
33.		Can I Get A Witness — Marvin Gaye — Tamla	5
*34.		Tell Him — Orewvells — Capitol	4
*35.		Be Mad Little Girl — Bobby Darin — Capitol	4
*36.		The Impossible Happened — Little Peggy March — RCA	6
37.		Kansas City — Trini Lopez — Reprise	3
*38.		Snowman Snowman — Jaynettes — Tuff	5
39.		The Gorilla — Ideals — Courtland	4
*40.		I Have A Boyfriend — Chiffons — Laurie	4

FEATURED ALBUMS

JOHNNY MATHIS — SOUNDS OF CHRISTMAS — MERCURY

CHART BUSTERS — VARIOUS ARTIST — CAPITOL — VOLUME #3

This survey is compiled each week by WLS Radio/Chicago from reports of all record sales gathered from leading record outlets in the Chicagoland area. Hear Bob Hale play all the SILVER DOLLAR SURVEY hits daily from 3:00 to 6:30 P.M. *Denotes record first heard in Chicago on WLS.

I'd take one hour and be on the phones with the kids that would call, and also I was the music director for about five-and-a-half years. So you're talking about fourteen-hour days. Seven days a week.

We did shows seven days a week then. Sunday was taped, but still you didn't do the voice tracks only, you did the whole show, so it was like doing two shows in one day.

You were among the first that I remember who would inject stories, like the "Peter Fugitive" series, and different things like that into your program.

When I took over the nights I told the kids on the air that we'd never have the same show twice as long as I was here, and so that was my goal, to do a different one each day. And we involved the audience a lot. We had somebody on the switchboard taking calls. I didn't talk to them on the air, but I talked about them on the air.

We had hundreds of phone calls. I used to average, back then, about two hundred letters a day. When I left WLS, we had to buy our own pictures there, and when I ordered my last batch of pictures there, the guy told me, and this is after ten years, I had reached ninety-five thousand pictures. That's a lot of pictures to give away.

That's like a cult following.

Yeah, it is, and the amazing thing is that when we had that reunion people would come up and show you a picture that they still had. That's kind of touching to know that somebody would hang onto a picture for that long, just remembering some good times they had when they were younger.

How was the money situation then?

Like a major league ballplayer. Sort of, you were a home run hitter but you weren't paid for it back then. We thought we were paid well and were happy with it. There was a lot of talent stuff that floated around, commercials and appearances. It wasn't like it is today, that's for sure. Today they're way into six figures in a lot of markets and that was unheard of then. The highest paid disc jockey was Howard Miller on WIND and he made $100,000 a year.

But you guys really did supplement your income with the sock hops on the weekends.

Yeah, we did that. I liked doing commercials, too.

And didn't you also do a television show for a time?

"The Swinging Majority" was on almost three years. It was not a dance party kind of show, it was a showcase kind of show. We had artists come over and lip sync their records, and we would interview them. There was always an influx of artists in Chicago and we could always find three or four who would be appearing somewhere, so it wasn't hard to get talent.

I also had a local section where I would have a local group every week. We had a house band and they cut their own records every week and would do those. One of the groups that came was the Jackson Five from Gary, Indiana. We were really proud to have them first in the coun-

try.

We had everybody on that program except Elvis Presley and the Beatles.

You had a chance to meet a lot of stars, then. Did they drop in at the radio station, too?

The Beatles didn't — you went to them. But everybody else did, including the Rolling Stones. The Beatles just couldn't move around safely, so you met them at a hotel if you wanted to do an interview, and we did do an interview with them.

Let's talk about some of your peers in Chicago radio. How about Dick Biondi?

I knew Dick back in Ohio. At the same time I was in Akron, he was in Youngstown. I drove over to Youngstown and worked out a deal with him. He used to do his record hops there on a Tuesday, and I had one there on a Wednesday. We arranged for whatever artist he had there on Tuesday would stay over and appear on Wednesday.

Back then he was a real character. He had this long beard and he would dye his facial hair to different school colors. He might be green and gold one time, or blue and orange, whatever the colors were. Every week he would do this, and I thought that was an outstanding attempt of winning a market.

Then we worked together in Buffalo, and were back-to-back there. I did afternoons and he did nights. Then we went to WLS and wound up together again, and when I inherited the show from Dick, they had that dumb rumor that went around that he got kicked off because of a dirty joke, which is not really true.

He just had a dispute with management. We ran lots of commercial spots, I mean eighteen minutes an hour, and his gripe was that we wanted fewer commercials. He wasn't wrong, he was just ahead of time. Management was into making money, and they figured the ratings were gonna be there anyway. That's where they came to their parting, a dispute over who was going to run his program.

Funny that you guys came from different backgrounds but worked together at two or three different places, isn't it?

Yes, it is. Quite a coincidence.

How about Bob Hale?

Bob came in from Iowa and one of his claims to fame was that he was the emcee for the last Buddy Holly concert. He was kind of conservative and wound up doing television for a long while in Chicago.

What about Mort Crowley?

I think there was an era where morning people did the opening and slamming of doors, had voices, and had little vignettes and skits in between the records. That's what Mort did, and he did it very well.

How about Gene Taylor? I know he was the program director at WLS for a few years, which must have been an interesting job with all the different personalities involved.

I'll tell you about being a program director back then. You got paid

$25 a week extra over your salary and that was it. Gene wanted to get into management so he went from being a program director to an assistant manager and took a big cut in pay, because that job paid less than what he made being on the air. And then he wound up manager of WLS for about five years.

Gene was a good athlete, a good golfer, a very nice person.

Here's a good character to comment on — Clark Weber.

Clark worked very hard on his program. He had this mock feud going with Ron Riley that was a good gimmick. I think everybody had things they did consistently, which was another strength of the radio station.

What do you recall about Jim Dunbar?

Oh, Jim was a scholar. He was quite a guy. He didn't belong as a disc jockey, although he was very good at what he did. He's sort of a program director's dream — he's very consistent, he would do the same kind of a show every single day.

But Jim was into the stock markets and went out to California and he's one of the best talk hosts on radio anywhere in the country.

Ron Riley was sort of a latecomer to the original WLS cast, but was eventually the lead-in to your nighttime show.

Ron, again, was another person who worked very, very hard on his program. He had little characters and voices that he did, he had the feud with Weber, and he latched onto the Batman thing, which I always thought was very clever. He went out and got himself a Batman costume and would appear that way.

Do you ever look back on those days and some of those appearances you made and wonder, How could I have done that?

Well, I don't know, I enjoyed it. It was kind of a thrill. It was more than just stepping out and, like they do today, saying hello and then leave the stage. You had to fill for about twenty minutes in between the acts, I had a chance to do stand-up comedy. I would do routines in between, and I must say one of the biggest thrills of my life is hearing five thousand people laugh at something I said that they considered funny.

Here's a chance to comment on another guy who worked at WLS and how he enjoyed it, what kind of job he did, and what it meant to him — Art Roberts.

Well, I guess I like every place I've ever been. I liked WLS best because of the times and I consider that part of my career very lucky, right time, right place. It was a time when music was very exciting. I had a chance to be a part of the beginning of the Beatles. I had the first Beatles fan club way before they ever came to this country. I would read in magazines how popular the group was in England and thought what would happen if they became big here. So I started Beatles Fan Club Number One and we had maybe a hundred and fifty members; not a lot of kids responded to it. But when they did hit, it was kind of neat to know that those few were very proud of the fact that they belonged to the Chicago Beatles Fan Club Number One.

I had a chance to introduce the Rolling Stones for the first time in Chicago, the Dave Clark Five, any of those British groups that got to be popular during that era.

Even the Vietnam part. I even got tangled up in the march against the war down in Chicago and wore a jacket with a rainbow on the back of it. I had a chance to be a part of Earth Day; they made me the head of the Earth Day committee there. That was the first stand against pollution and, right in front of City Hall, we must have had twenty or thirty thousand people show up for that, with many dignitaries and politicians.

I was able to get involved in fun things and serious things in a ten year tenure that, I guess, made me grow. I don't think you could repeat that, so as I look at it, it was, again, right time, right place and I was very lucky to be there.

How did you know it was time to leave WLS?

They told me. (Laughs.) We had a change in management and they wanted to change the radio station around and make it the "Rock of Chicago" and do lots of segue music. It just wasn't my kind of thing.

When was that?

That was in 1970.

And after 1970, where have you been with your career?

I went to California first. I went to KNBR in San Francisco, and then I came back to Chicago to be the program director at WCFL for a couple of years.

Then I went, like a lot of people do, on my own. I picked up a couple of radio stations to "consult" — one in Oak Park, Illinois, the other in Milwaukee. I wound up moving to Milwaukee and did that for about a year. Then I did my first drop-out of radio.

I went into a magazine called "MPG," *Music Programmers Guide*. It did pretty well for about two-and-a-half years or so, then it folded because the partners who had the money behind it split up, which ended the magazine.

Then I went back into radio, going to WKQX in Chicago, which is NBC's FM station. I did that for a couple of years and was still living in Milwaukee. That was a time of high interest rates, so you couldn't sell a house, and I was kind of stuck commuting. Then I went back and worked for a couple of years at WBCS, which was kind of nice. It became number one in town and was a country station. That's where I found out I really liked country music.

From there I had an offer to leave radio again and go with a software house in California. They made information management software and dealt with some large folks like Singer Corporation, National Cash Register, and others. I went there as their advertising manager and wound up in marketing and sales and headed up a whole division. I was vice-president of a division there. And for the four years I was there, I enjoyed what I did and learned a lot about a whole different world, but I wanted to get back into radio. I really missed it.

So I started to work my way back in again. People said that I

wouldn't have any problem, anybody would want to hire me. And that isn't really true. Whatever you've done in the past adds to your knowledge but it doesn't necessarily add to your credence in the marketplace. It seems to be a business of "What did you do today?" I wound up back in Milwaukee for a couple or three months, and once I got there I knew I never wanted to live in Milwaukee again.

So I left there and went back to California and did a little stint with KNEW and that's where they let me get my feet back into it. I owe them for getting me back in. Then I had a chance to join T.K., which is where I am now. I was hired as operations manager for K-Love [KLUV] in Dallas and this station here in San Antonio, KBUC. They decided they needed someone to concentrate on building up the station in San Antonio, so I've concentrated my efforts on that.

But all along, radio is something that has been a lot of fun and something you don't regret a bit?

Oh, absolutely. I think Sam Holman put it the best. He said, "It's one hell of a sleigh ride." And it was. And it still is. I just enjoy every day that I'm here.

This first interview was conducted on March 24, 1988, when Roberts was the operations manager of KBUC, a country station in San Antonio, Texas. Shortly afterward, Roberts was instrumental in changing KBUC to a Hispanic radio format (and the call letters to KZVE), playing "Tejano" music, a very popular "Tex-Mex" music in that part of the United States. "San Antonio is sort of the Nashville of Tejano music," Roberts explained. "Its popularity spreads from Southwest Texas to Arizona to Colorado to New Mexico and, oddly enough, Chicago is a big pocket for Tejano music." In thirty days, the station moved to number two among the seven Spanish stations in the market. But management eventually decided to "turn everybody over," said Roberts, "and they put all new people in there. That's what corporations do," he laughed.

For a time after that, Roberts was marketing an information management software product, working with former WLS cohort Don Phillips on a project for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, but after three years Roberts decided to get back into radio.

"I was in Uvalde, Texas, looking to buy a radio station. It was a little town and just had three radio stations, but that was two too many, actually. After ninety days it was certain that I'd never make a good living out of it: you could probably carve a living out of it, but that's about it. So I vacated that.

"The other radio station in Uvalde said they needed someone to manage the station in San Marcos, KSPL, so that's where I came. And now I have an option to lease it, so I might be doing that."

KSPL is an oldies-format station with plenty of news, talk, and information. "It's focused to the area," Roberts said. "This is a nice town of about 35,000 with a university (Southwest Texas State), thirty miles from Austin

and forty-five miles from San Antonio. Radio on this level is fun because you do everything. I do commercials, sell them and write them and voice them.

"Relations are the most important part of selling a small-town radio station. Service and relations - you've got to really service the town and the listeners have to feel that you're important to them. That's what this station does that's kind of unique."

As things go in radio, however, Roberts' stay at KSPL was short-lived. He moved to the Chicago suburbs, where he looked for work, and finally found it in New Orleans as manager of WZRH, an alternative rock station.

"The station appeals to 'Generation X' demographics — young professionals who want to continue the lifestyle they enjoyed very much in their college years," explained Roberts. "There are computer programmers, doctors, lawyers. It's a large group of people, usually eighteen to thirty-four in age, but we're finding it a larger group, stretching into the early forties. We're playing music from Depeche Mode, R.E.M., and U-2.

"As a group, our listeners are kind of anti-hype, so we don't need billboards or contests. They prefer non-screaming disc jockeys, so it's a loose, free-form type of format. In that way, it's very similar to how it was in the old WLS days. We were kind of a loose, free-form operation and didn't have to play thirty songs in a row."

And has Roberts adapted to the musical changes over the years? "I think once you've developed an ear for any kind of music, if you concentrate, you'll become very adept at knowing what's good and what isn't," said Roberts. "That's how I've been able to survive from station to station and music to music. I've just learned what hit records are and what they are not."

Excelsior!

WLS

PERSONALITY RADIO IN CHICAGO

SILVER DOLLAR SURVEY

WLS' OFFICIAL PLAY LIST

OCTOBER 6, 1967

THIS WEEK		LAST WEEK
* 1.	The Letter — Box Tops — Mala	1
* 2.	Never My Love — Association — W.B.	2
* 3.	Little Ole Man — Bill Cosby — W.B.	3
* 4.	Brown Eyed Girl — Van Morrison —Bang	5
* 5.	How Can I Be Sure — Young Rascals — Atlantic	16
6.	Hey Baby, They're Playing Our Song — Buckinghams — Columbia	13
7.	Come Back When You Grow Up — Bobby Vee — Liberty	4
* 8.	Ode To Billie Joe — Bobby Gentry — Capitol	7
* 9.	Apples, Peaches & Pumpkin Pie — Jay & Techniques — Smash	8
*10.	Let It Out — Hombres — Verve	15
*11.	Gimme Little Sign — Brenton Wood — Double Shot	11
*12.	You Knew What I Mean — Turtles — White Whale	9
13.	It Must Be Him — Vicki Carr — Liberty	19
*14.	Reflections — Diana Ross & Supremes — Motown	4
*15.	I Make A Fool Of Myself — Frankie Valli — Philips	10
*16.	Funky Broadway — Wilson Pickett — Atlantic	12
*17.	To Sir With Love — Lulu — Epic	23
*18.	We Love You/Dandelion — Rolling Stones — London	17
*19.	Anything Goes — Harpers Bizarre — W.B.	18
*20.	People Are Strange — Doors — Elektra	21
*21.	Expressway To Your Heart — Soul Survivers — Crimson	25
*22.	Higher And Higher — Jackie Wilson — Brunswick	20
*23.	Purple Haze — Jimmie Hendrix — Reprise	26
*24.	Hush — Billie Jo Royal — Columbia	27
*25.	Child Of Clay — Jimmie Rodgers — A & M	32
*26.	Get On Up — Esquires — Bunky	24
*27.	Your Precious Love — Marvin Gaye & Tammi Terrell-Tamla	
28.	Younger Generation — Janis Ian — Verve	27
*29.	Soul Man — Sam & Dave — Stax	30
*30.	Rain, Park & Other Things — Cowsills — MGM	38
*31.	You Keep Running Away — 4 Tops — Motown	31
*32.	You've Got To Pay The Price — Al Kent — Ric Tic	33
*33.	Natural Woman — Aretha Franklin — Atlantic	35
*34.	Treat Her Groovy — New Colony 6 — Mercury	37
*35.	Ode To Billie Joe — Kingpins — Atco	34
*36.	Incense & Peppermints — Strawberry Alarm Clock — Uni	40
37.	The Last Waltz — Engelbert Humperdinck — Parrot	39
*38.	I Can't Happen Without You — Power Plant —Diamond	
*39.	Next Plane To London — Rose Garden — Atco	
*40.	It's You That I Need — Temptations — Gordy	

This list is selected each week by WLS/Chicago from reports of all record sales gathered from leading record outlets in the Chicagoland area and other sources available to WLS/Chicago. Hear Larry Lujack play all the SILVER DOLLAR SURVEY hits daily from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m.
*Denotes record first heard in Chicago on WLS.

CHAPTER XII

John Rook

How did you get started in the radio business?

I started originally, when I was in high school, in the newspaper business. Before long I was covering stories for the Omaha World Herald, the largest paper in Nebraska. I'm from the western part of the state, a tiny town called Shadron. The Omaha paper hired me to cover western Nebraska. I did that for my senior year in high school and my first year out of high school, 1955.

I wanted to "Go west, young man," and went to California. Through a set of circumstances I became very, very friendly and close to a fellow named Eddie Cochran, who was one of the first inductees into the Rock Hall of Fame. We became like brothers, and I went on the road traveling with him as his road manager in 1956 and 1957.

It was through that job that I met the Everly Brothers, Paul Anka, Buddy Knox, Buddy Holly, Jimmy Bowen, and others like that. Fats Domino, Little Richard. In 1957 I decided I wanted to get into radio. So I went back to my hometown in Nebraska, but on the way back I stopped at a little station in Newcastle, Wyoming, where the guy had an opening immediately and I took it.

As an announcer?

As an announcer, yes. I'd never been on the air before.

It wasn't too long before I wound up in Salt Lake City. Then I went to KTLN, a rock station in Denver, serving as their music director and afternoon drive jock. In 1963, my competitor in Denver, Ken Palmer of KIMN, recommended me to ABC to get me out of his hair, to have me hired out of the market. The next thing you know I got a call from the ABC owned-and-operated station in Pittsburgh, KQV, asking if I'd like to talk with them about moving to Pittsburgh and being the program director. I'd never been a program director before.

I went east, spent a week there meeting with them, and they were meeting with all kinds of other people at the time. Finally the manager, a guy named John Gibbs, told me I was recommended by Hal Neal, the president of ABC at the time, to get me out of the Denver market. He told me he could see why; they'd interviewed eight people that week, all of them from large markets, but that I was the pick.

So I took the job in Pittsburgh in 1963. KDKA had been the monster station in that market for years and, within a short period of time, we had knocked the stuffings out of them pretty good. We never soundly beat them in the ratings, but for a little, five thousand-watter at 1410 on

the dial, we did a helluva job against them.

Who did you have on the air at KQV?

Chuck Brinkman was our night man. A guy named Dave Scott, who has since died. We had Hal Murray, a jock out of Minneapolis and San Francisco, in the mornings. Dex Allen, who I brought in from Denver. He now owns stations out here in the west.

KDKA was old-line, east coast, Clark Race and Rege Cordic personality radio. Talk, play a record. Talk, play a record. We came in and modernized KQV. I'll never forget the first time I met with the staff there, and in Chicago at WLS.

I asked them why they thought people were listening to this radio station? The jocks answered that people liked the announcers, the sports, but no one really seemed to know. It's the music, I told them. I asked if we started playing polkas the next day, would anyone listen? And if they're listening for the music, didn't they think we ought to play it? The first time we had to play two back-to-back. They couldn't believe it!

But it worked. And it worked substantially enough that, by 1967, Mike Joseph flew me to Philadelphia and offered me the program director's job at WFIL. He had just taken over at WFIL and was going to take it rock for the first time. I went back to Pittsburgh and gave my notice, and the very next morning Hal Neal called and flew me into New York.

He told me I wasn't going to go to Philadelphia, but that I was going to Chicago and WLS. Bigger market, bigger station, everything. So I went into Chicago. Neal said I had carte blanche because we were being beaten in the ratings by WGN, we were being beaten by WCFL, and the station was quite an embarrassment to him personally. Ralph Beaudin, who built WLS, was now his boss in New York and the station had fallen apart since he left it.

So Neal said, "Do whatever you want. If you want to hire all new disc jockeys, I don't care. Those guys are totally out of line anyway, on the air giving free mentions to record hops, making money for themselves and to hell with the station." He was very angry.

I went in as program director and met with the jocks and found, for the most part, they were all good talent, were solid, knew the market. They were well-known names. But there was absolutely no reason why they couldn't learn some new tricks. So we taught them some new tricks and in about six months we had totally annihilated WCFL.

When you went into a station with that stature in a market like that, what were some of the things you saw that needed some fine tuning?

It sounded old. The station sounded old. There was no game plan. It's like a basketball team — you can't have five guys passing the ball to whoever they want. There is a game plan. There is a position on the court. There is a better scorer, and he should be in afternoon drive or morning drive.

You should daypart the music. You can't wake up to a straight shot

of tequila, but you might take a straight shot of tequila at seven in the evening. So daypart the music and the talent. And they'd never given any thought to that.

I remember the first time I heard WLS. In Hot Springs, South Dakota, at my second job in radio, I sent a letter to the program director of WLS — who happened to be Gene Taylor — asking if there was any opportunity when I could come by and visit and, possibly, apply for a job. I used to pick the station up out in South Dakota. Interestingly enough, when I got to WLS as program director in 1967, I found that letter in the files with a note from Taylor to his secretary that said, "Write and give him the usual." (Laughs.) I took that letter to Taylor and asked if he remembered this. I told him it took me a while to get here. He laughed over that.

Anyway, the jocks were embarrassed about their showing in the ratings. They'd been on top of the world for a long time and suddenly they were being beaten, rather substantially, by WCFL, which was a well thought-out, planned radio station.

Who was in charge at WCFL?

Ken Draper. He did a great job of knocking WLS out of the top spot.

WLS was old-line, east coast, personality, pop music radio. I'll never forget that, when I got there, Ron Riley was bringing in records from home to play on the air. He wanted to play an old Columbia record that Aretha Franklin had out, which was not a hit song. But they weren't playing "Respect" by Aretha Franklin because (music director) Clark Weber thought it was too black.

There were all kinds of things like that. They didn't play two songs in a row. But WCFL was playing two in a row with a twenty-two second jingle between the songs. So I came back with three second jingles.

Before we stray from that, the WLS jingle packages over the years have been terrific.

Well, when I first got there, it was, "What's the weather for the weekend gonna be? Will it be hot, cold, rain, snow?" And they went on and on. I didn't change the logo, which was legendary. And their personalities were legendary, so there's no need for changing them. They just needed to be taught a new game plan. But I shortened the jingles. I went to PAMS in Dallas and re-cut them.

I also decided that since WCFL had marketed itself around their dial position at 1000, calling themselves the "Big 10" or something like that, we needed to hammer our position better and changed everything to be "The Big 89 — WLS" and we went with that. I told the jocks that I had listened during the day for twenty minutes and never heard our call letters. They assumed everybody knew what they were listening to. I put signs up in the control room encouraging them to mention the call letters and pretty soon, they started doing the call letters regularly. Between every record.

We reversed something that was on its way down, and within six months we were on top of both WCFL and WGN. Then the jocks looked

at me and thought, Jesus, this guy knows what he's doing. From then on, it was a piece of cake. Anything I said they did.

But there was some resistance?

I never had any resistance from Art Roberts. Larry Lujack was a prince, easy to work with. Clark Weber gave me some resistance. He was the program director I'd replaced. There was some resistance from Ron Riley. I had big resistance from Jerry Kaye at night. He never seemed to want to take any direction.

After about a year I'd decided which ones could be replaced and couldn't be. So I brought in Kris Erik Stevens and Chuck Buell. Since they were younger fellows, I put them where the youth needed to be — at night. I let Bernie Allen go and moved Art Roberts to mid-days. I kept Jerry Kaye on the all-night and Lujack was on in the afternoons. I kept Clark in the morning because Clark was a damn good morning man.

How long did you stay at WLS?

I was there from 1967 until 1971. Then I went out to Los Angeles to be president of Drake-Chenault. Bill Drake was so modern and so ahead of his time. I have great admiration for him, and he's still doing it. He's now the new "hottest" programmer in America for the twenty-five to fifty-four age bracket.

He's brilliant. I came out of the east — Pittsburgh, Chicago — and had met with Frank Boyle, president of the Robert Eastman Company, talking about programming philosophy. He told me I had the same philosophy as some guy out at KYNO in Fresno, California, a guy named Bill Drake. Within that year, Drake and I met and sat across from each other at a convention and it was amazing. We had the same philosophies. I was more personality-oriented than he was, although he developed the Real Don Steele, Charlie Tuna, and Robert W. Morgan. We hit it off so good he offered me the presidency of his company in 1970, and in 1971 I left WLS to go do it.

I got along great with Drake, but didn't get along at all with Gene Chenault. About two years later, I decided to quit and start consulting on my own. Immediately, I got a call from Lew Witz, who had taken over where Ken Draper had left off at WCFL, and he said he'd be interested in talking to me about consulting WCFL.

I called WLS, who was having some problems at that time because WCFL was starting to make a little bit of a run back at them. Actually, I called Hal Neal in New York and told him WCFL was interested in having me as a consultant. And Neal hung up on me, pretty much saying they wouldn't be the least bit interested in hiring me as a consultant. So, I took the job as a consultant at WCFL.

I got there on a Sunday night and on Monday morning, I got up at the crack of dawn, rented a limo, and went over and parked in front of the Stone Container Building and waited for Larry Lujack to come to work. When I left Chicago, he was the afternoon man and since then, they'd decided to use him as the morning man.

I met him at a quarter 'til six, coming around the corner of the

building. I stepped out of the limo and we chatted briefly. I said, "What are you doing up at this hour, man?" He said, "I'm going to work." I said, "God, a great talent like you has to get up at this hour to make a living? I'll tell you what, you come over to WCFL and I'll pay you better money than you're making now and you won't have to get up until noon."

When he got off the air at ten o'clock that morning, he called me, we put the deal together and I hired him at WCFL to do afternoons. (Laughs.) That crippled WLS totally then. I brought WCFL around and we beat WLS soundly.

Who else was at WCFL then?

Bob Dearborn was there. Dick Biondi was there, but he quit the minute I walked in because he'd heard I'd hired Lujack. I wanted to move Biondi to nights and put Lujack in the afternoons, but Biondi's ego couldn't stand that I was bringing Lujack across.

Within six months we were beating WLS. By this time, Mike McCormick was program director at WLS and he was in over his head. When I went to WLS, I asked the talent, "Do you know where you are? You are at the legendary WLS. You ought to be just thrilled to be on this stage. Now let's make it sound like it. Let's make every programmer, every station in America, let's make them tune in at night and listen to us and find out how to do it." They had lost it by the early Seventies.

But that station in the late Sixties — whew! I had a Chrysler Imperial I used to take road trips in, down to St. Louis or wherever to listen for people. But I'd hear my station off in the distance and I'd be so damn proud. It just didn't stop cookin'. Great sounding radio station.

How long did you stay when you came back to Chicago to consult WCFL?

I was there for about six months. I would have never even taken the gig if Hal Neal had've been decent. I wasn't even looking for a job at WLS. I just wanted him to know that WCFL had approached me. He blew his cool. I get along great with him — he brought me into that company. I didn't expect him to hang up on me.

Did you remain a consultant for a long time?

I consulted across the country until 1977. Then I went to KFI in Los Angeles, the fifty kilowatt giant out there, and programmed it until 1982.

Then I decided to get into ownership and bought an FM radio station in Spokane, Washington — KCDA — in 1983. I'm in charge here.

And what's the format of the station?

Country. If you remember back when WLS had its biggest periods, there were always country artists being played. Even back to the old "Barn Dance" days. When I was at WLS we played Tammy Wynette's "Stand By Your Man." We played "The Race Is On" by George Jones. We played Johnny Cash, "A Boy Named Sue." Roger Miller. Glen Campbell. We always played what I'd consider mass appeal music. Let's not label it.

And we played a variety of music. We played Archie Bell & The Drells right along with the country. It was like an Ed Sullivan theatre where the

talent introduced the hits. Patti Page had a hit called "Hush Hush Sweet Charlotte" and we played it. So it was variety radio in those days, and I always made certain that our music was mixed. Maybe it was Herb Alpert or something like "Ode To Joy." It was something that was going to give us as much variety as possible.

At WLS it must have been incredible power to pick the hits.

When we went on a record, within one week it would bullet in on the *Billboard Magazine* charts at number forty-two in America. Or number thirty-six. Or number thirty-eight, you know. One week after we picked it, it went. We literally controlled the music of America there for several years.

Bill Drake and I used to get on the phone to discuss what we were going to pick the next day. He had KHJ in Los Angeles and I had WLS. We controlled the music in America.

I imagine you had some record promoters courting you right and left?

I used to come up the back entrance to get to my office, and they would be at the elevator shaft all the way into the station. They would run to get me coffee or a sandwich. I had an image or reputation of being too aloof to them, but later they told me I was a prince compared to the new crowd.

They were all there — Howard Bedno, Pete Wright. When I left WLS they threw a surprise party at a hotel and everybody in the entire record industry showed up, from every label and business, along with all the people I'd worked with at various stations.

Do you like being an owner?

I miss the big dollars, not necessarily for myself, but to have the dollars available to do what I could do with them. In 1988, the number one talk station in America, KABC (WLS's sister station in Los Angeles), hired me as their program director. I'd been out of it for five or six years, but I took the job and I loved it. The money was right, not just for me but for talent. I mean, they're paying talent a million bucks apiece now. If I wanted to do an outdoor billboard promotion, they'd give me two million dollars.

I thought to myself, My lord, they did more billing at WABC or even WLS, I'm sure, in two weeks than we do in an entire year in Spokane, Washington. KABC billed $31 million last year. So, I look at it and think that out of the amount of time and effort and work you put in, I would much rather be where it's more appreciated and have the dollars to help do it.

On the other hand, no one can fire you when you own it. (Laughs.) But the real problem with our whole world and business is you just came out of an administration, the last ten or twelve years — and I'm a long-time Republican — where the new directives and deregulation by the Federal Communications Commission has been a disaster for single-station owners like me.

In this market we have three owners who own four stations each.

You're allowed to own up to two AMs and two FMs in any market now. You get a guy like me who has an FM. How in the hell do you compete against someone who has four stations? They literally just kill you. So I've entered into an agreement to merge my FM with another guy who has an FM station and we'll have to put them together to compete.

I'd just as soon not have to do that, frankly, but you have to.

But your days at WLS were among your most memorable?

Oh, hell yes. I remember reading that when Marty Greenberg went to WLS, somehow he thought he was there during the utopia of the station and I read a report of how he had built WLS single-handedly.

Well, he was there only last Saturday, if you know what I mean. It was Sam Holman and Ralph Beaudin that built WLS, God bless them. *Variety Magazine* ran a story on me in 1968 that called me the architect of the "new" WLS. That's probably what I am known as, but I certainly didn't build it. That job was done long before I got there, and Beaudin was really the key man there.

This interview took place on March 25, 1993, with Rook answering his own phones at his own FM station, KCDA, in Spokane, Washington. Rook was battling a cold, and would cough mightily whenever he laughed. He loves to laugh as he tells stories, so he laughed and coughed a lot during our conversation.

In his book, "Superjock," none other than the legendary Larry Lujack wrote that Rook was, as a programming consultant, "the best there is." And his track record proves it. It's interesting to note that I was put on Rook by Art Roberts, who considers Rook a programming wizard, also — even though it was Rook's regime that let Roberts go at WLS.

WLS

The bright sound of Chicago Radio

SILVER DOLLAR SURVEY

Chicago's Official Radio Record Survey

THIS WEEK — JANUARY 12, 1963 — WEEKS PLAYED

1.	GO AWAY LITTLE GIRL	Steve Lawrence — Columbia	9
2.	THE NIGHT HAS A THOUSAND EYES	Bobby Vee — Liberty	7
3.	WALK RIGHT IN	Rooftop Singers — Vanguard	4
4.	HEY PAULA	Paul & Paula — Philips	5
5.	UP ON THE ROOF	The Drifters — Atlantic	8
6.	MY DAD	Paul Peterson — Colpix	7
7.	I SAW LINDA YESTERDAY	Dickey Lee — Smash	7
8.	MY COLORING BOOK	K. Kallen — RCA; S. Stewart — Colpix	8
9.	FROM A JACK TO A KING	Ned Miller — Faber	7
10.	HALF HEAVEN HALF HEARTACHE	Gene Pitney — Musicor	8
11.	BOBBY'S GIRL	Marcie Blane — Seville	6
12.	IT'S UP TO YOU	Rick Nelson — Imperial	6
13.	CAST YOUR FATE TO THE WIND	Vince Guaraldi Trio — Fantasy	3
14.	LOOP DE LOOP	Johnny Thunder — Diamond	6
15.	FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART	Dean Martin — Reprise	8
16.	SHUTTERS AND BOARDS	Jerry Wallace — Challenge	8
17.	THE BALLAD OF JED CLAMPETT	L. Flatt & E. Scruggs — Columbia	5
18.	TWO LOVERS	Mary Wells — Motown	7
19.	WHAT TO DO WITH LAURIE	Mike Clifford — UA	6
20.	ZERO ZERO	Lawrence Welk — Dot	7
21.	CINNAMON CINDER	Pastel Six — Zen	5
22.	TROUBLE IN MIND	Aretha Franklin — Columbia	3
23.	THE 2,000 POUND BEE (part 2)	Ventures — Dolton	4
24.	HE'S SURE THE BOY I LOVE	The Crystals — Philles	3
25.	DON'T MAKE ME OVER	Dionne Warwick — Scepter	8
26.	BONNIE DO	Johnny Cooper — Ermine	5
27.	PUDDIN N' TAIN	Alley Cats — Philles	5
28.	I'M GONNA BE WARM THIS WINTER	Connie Francis — MGM	5
29.	MOLLY	Bobby Goldsboro — Laurie	5
30.	MAMA DION'T LIE	Jan Bradley — Formal	5
31.	TROUBLE IS MY MIDDLE NAME	Bobby Vinton — Epic	2
32.	STRANGE I KNOW	Marvellettes — Tamla	6
33.	PROUD	Johnny Crawford — Del Fi	4
34.	RUBY BABY	Dion — Columbia	2
35.	LITTLE TOWN FLIRT	Del Shannon — Big Top	3
36.	COME BACK LITTLE GIRL	Ronnie Rice — IRC	2
37.	THE BIRD	The Dutones — Columbia	2
38.	GOING TO BOSTON	Little Sisters — MGM	4
39.	AIN'T GONNA KISS YA	The Ribbons — Marsh	4
40.	HOW MUCH IS THAT DOGGIE IN THE WINDOW	Baby Jane — UA	4

FEATURED ALBUMS

ANITA BRYANT'S GREATEST HITS — ANITA BRYANT — COLUMBIA

LOVE IS A POKER GAME — NELSON RIDDLE — CAPITOL

This survey is compiled each week by WLS Radio/Chicago from reports of all record sales gathered from leading record outlets in the Chicagoland area. Hear Clark Weber play all the SILVER DOLLAR SURVEY hits daily from 3:00 to 6:30 P.M.

CHAPTER XIII

Gene Taylor

Let's start at the beginning and find out how you got started in radio, leading up to your work at one of the best radio stations in the country.

Well, I started the way an awful lot of younger people started — and I *was* younger at one time in my life — I went to a radio announcing school, Brown Institute in Minneapolis. This was in 1948. I was on the GI Bill, and of the 40 or so guys who were in the class, two of us got jobs when the class graduated. I went to a small town in Wisconsin and the other guy went to a small town in South Dakota. After he froze his tail off through the course of one winter in South Dakota, he got out of radio broadcasting and I stayed in it, because I didn't get that cold over in Wisconsin.

I made the kind of normal progression, off and on, going from Wisconsin Rapids, which was my first gig, then left radio for a short time, went back to Wisconsin Rapids for about a year. Then on to Eau Claire, Wisconsin, for a year, on to St. Paul and the Twin Cities, which was my hometown. I worked at a couple of stations there. In 1958 I went to Milwaukee and worked for Bartell Broadcasting, and at that point I met Sam Holman, who was working at a competing station in town.

We found out that we had mutual likes and dislikes and so on and so forth and got to be pretty good friends, and he left Milwaukee and went into the ABC-owned station in Pittsburgh, KQV. When ABC purchased total control of WLS in Chicago in the latter part of 1959 or the early part of 1960, Ralph Beaudin and Sam Holman were sent in as a management team by ABC to set up their rock 'n' roll operation. Sam then called me to see if I wanted to come work in Chicago and, quite frankly, the first time he asked me I said no. I was quite comfortable with Milwaukee. I was doing mornings, working for Bartell, was married and had a couple of kids.

A short period of time went by and I kind of got the "antsies" a little bit and decided I would at least investigate what Sam had to offer. I was thinking about asking Bartell for a raise and wanted a little backstop work to be handy. So I went down and interviewed with Sam and did an in-studio audition for Ralph Beaudin. They offered me a job and I went back up to Milwaukee and asked Bartell for a raise. They said no, and I said good-bye and went to Chicago.

I was with WLS in Chicago for eleven years, from the spring of 1960 on. A year-and-a-half later, Sam went to New York as program director

at WABC and I became program director at WLS. I stayed in that position until 1965, then was promoted to a management training position as station manager. In 1966, when Ralph Beaudin went in to head up the ABC Radio Networks, I became general manager at WLS and stayed with them until 1971.

Let's talk about the era circa 1962, 1963. WLS was one of the premiere radio stations in the country. The signal was great and strong, the people working there were great. That had to take a lot of work on everyone's part.

Well, we took pride in it, that's for sure. But strangely enough, I've never really looked at radio as being work and I think that's a kind of universal opinion among most people, especially when you're working at successful radio stations, obviously.

I don't think we at WLS really worked that hard. I think we were just like one of those phenoms that happen to come along at the right time in the right place, with music starting to happen the way it happened in the rock 'n' roll era. And because we were sitting on a fifty thousand-watt channel with a signal that bounced over most of the United States, we were a heavy influence in the record industry and enjoyed great success in the city of Chicago. We probably enjoyed even more success outside the city of Chicago, but nobody could sell advertising based on that.

And while we all worked hard at it, it was the enjoyable kind of work. Not only did the guys go ahead and put in more than a reasonable amount of time making sure they were doing good jobs on the air, but they also spent plenty of time going out and doing personal appearances and other attendant deejay kinds of things. It made them extra money and it made it fun to work at it because you would actually get a chance to see five hundred kids at a record hop who were fans of the radio station.

I've always maintained that, while I thought that we were a highly successful group of disc jockeys, I don't know that any of us were really that great as disc jockeys. Maybe we were good for our time, but I've heard a lot of jocks since then who, if you'd have stacked me up against them, I wouldn't have stood a chance.

I think it was a combination of right place, right circumstance, right radio station, right time in the music industry, and a group of people who worked pretty damn well together to get it done.

How was the management at that time? They had to be pretty supportive?

Extremely supportive. In those years, we hadn't really gotten into the heavy competitive battles with big contests, big promotions, and things. Our contests were relatively simple stuff — our people would win a free month's rent instead of a new home.

Our general manager, Ralph Beaudin, let his program directors run the radio station. His philosophy of management is one that I've sort of adopted - a manager is meant to manage. You hire good people and you let them do their job. If they don't do their job, that's when you stick

your nose in and try to use your expertise to make things better. But in the meantime, don't fix it if it ain't broken.

Management was very supportive, and WLS quickly became a very successful radio station financially for ABC.

Speaking of financial successes, how was the money that was filtered down in your paychecks in those days?

In the beginning it was good money for all of us. It was probably more than any of us had anticipated making in our lives, but we were paid on the basis of being free-lance talent. We were paid by the hour that we worked. The reason Beaudin did it that way was because if we had staff announcers as disc jockeys, then every time we recorded a commercial and it was played outside our shift, we would have had to have been paid a talent fee for it.

So they hired us as free-lance and that meant they could do whatever they wanted with whatever we did on the air, and our voices could appear all over the radio station without any extra compensation. Generally speaking, most of us went to work there for something in the area of roughly $25,000, which was about AFTRA scale for a week-long disc jockey shift of some three or four hours.

It wasn't until probably the mid-Sixties that disc jockeys were paid over scale. But most of us had come out of markets where we were making $12,000 or $16,000, and to jump up to $25,000 was a nice, nice kick.

You mentioned the personal appearances and the fan adulation. Were you really, as billed, "The Swinging Seven?"

How do you mean "swinging?" (Laughs.) I walked into the Boul Mich tavern on Michigan Avenue in Chicago in 1985, and had not been in there in about twelve years. I walked up to the bar and Bill, the bartender, turned around and he went, "My God, Gene Taylor, is it good to see you." And we did the hugs and handshakes, then he turned around and poured me a Scotch on the rocks. And that's what I was going to order.

We had an awful lot of fun. Some of the disc jockeys maybe even had too much fun. In my mind's eye, that was pre-drug era for all of us, but I don't think any of us were too shy about the amounts of booze we consumed. I'm sure there were more than a few of us who managed to, with some of that adulation, take advantage of some circumstances as far as ladies were concerned. It never seemed to do any harm when you asked a lady if she wanted to have dinner to tell her that you were one of the disc jockeys at WLS.

Let's go over some of the individuals for you to comment on. How about the guy who was maybe the 'flagship' of the whole crew, Dick Biondi?

Biondi was one of those extremely difficult people to work with, and was an immense talent. If you listen to him these days, he is, for all intents and purposes, just about the way he sounded then.

Boy, if there ever was a Pied Piper of Hamelin, it's Dick Biondi. He

could, on the air, tell kids to wear one white sock and one black sock to school the next day and we'd get calls from parochial schools and school board members about how this guy was leading their students and their teen-agers down the paths of sin by making them do things like that. And then there were his peanut butter pizzas, and people would order them or bring them up to the radio station for him.

He was one hell of a talent. He had a tendency, in my mind's eye, at that time to have a lot of highs and a lot of lows. When he was high he was sensational; when he was low, he was the most depressed human being in the world. It was kind of a battle constantly to keep him from getting too high or too low and to keep him on an even keel, where he wound up producing on the air the kind of things that you needed. Even when he was depressed, he sounded good on the air, but he could be a little miserable to live with once in a while. As a matter of fact, I'm the guy who fired him.

There have been all sorts of strange stories that have made the rounds on why Dick Biondi got fired, the general perception being that he said something really rotten on the air, and that simply wasn't the circumstance at all. Most of the things he said maybe were little double entendre jokes, stuff like that, caused no major problems for us. Primarily, Biondi got fired because the two of us got into a shouting match one day over something. Who the hell knows what it was? He hated commercials, and it might even have been that there were too many commercials on his show, and we got into a shouting match at each other and it came down to a point where it was best for everybody to part company. You can't have disc jockeys telling program directors how to run radio stations, and at the top of their lungs, and that's kind of the way it was going, with the rest of the staff standing out in the hallway, listening through the door to see what was happening.

Let's move on to Bob Hale.

Hale was a nice guy, an ideal overnight guy. Later on, when we moved him to afternoons he did an extremely good job, but the afternoon show, that Silver Dollar Survey show, it was kind of like you could have plugged an orangutan in and he could have had number one ratings, simply because of the character of the show — playing the forty most popular records in Chicago day after day after day, along with a couple of new ones occasionally.

Bob's biggest problem, when we parted company, was the fact that he couldn't get to work on time. After repeated warning after warning, we finally had to part company because his constant habit on working from three o'clock until six-thirty in the afternoon would be that he would be fifteen minutes late three days out of five. And that just isn't good radio.

How about Mort Crowley?

One of the real characters of the Western World. Mort had an extremely wry sense of humor and, to this day, he smokes the biggest, blackest, ugliest cigars that anybody can manufacture on the face of the earth.

He's a very proper guy. He was the kind of morning man who went to work wearing a three-piece suit at six o'clock in the morning. Mort was extremely talented, had a good sense of humor, was a good disc jockey, and, as an awful lot of good disc jockeys are, sometimes he went over the edge a little bit.

He left us. I don't think we parted company with him. I think he voluntarily left, and you know I can't remember to this day where he went from WLS. He was a good man — easy to deal with because you never saw him after ten in the morning.

What about Art Roberts?

Art Roberts is one of the nicest people that I know. I never could understand why he was so popular, because I would listen to him and it would just sound like Art Roberts to me.

When Dick Biondi got fired, one of our great fears was that the nine to midnight show would go to hell in a hand basket with ratings with Biondi not being there, because he was carrying like a sixty share of the audience. We slid Art Roberts into that slot and when the next ratings came out, he had a seventy share of audience.

He was immensely tuned into what his audience is and what they want and what he could supply them in order to make them want more, either of the radio station or Art Roberts, and he's still doing that to this day. He is now a premier country music person.

Here's a guy who has had a long career — Clark Weber.

Yep. He's a good family man. I always kid him about his rug because he does indeed wear a toupee, and I knew him in the era before he had a toupee. He's really an effervescent personality and he was able to bring that across. He was a really good "mechanic," ran a good show, took care of business. He became program director at WLS for about a year, and then we felt that his show was suffering, gave him the choice of remaining as program director or as air talent, and he chose to stay as air talent. It was at that point we brought John Rook in.

Weber's on-air feuds and battles with Ron Riley were things of joy to listen to because they had so damn much fun doing it.

Since you mentioned Ron Riley.

I love him. I absolutely love him.

He is a man who seems to have great joy with life, no matter how tough things are. He's very talented and was another of the kind who was very much in tune with his audience and when he was working those evening hours, he knew what teen-agers in Chicago wanted to hear and the silliness they wanted to hear on the air. He would do absolutely anything to promote himself, a la when Batman and Robin were a happening thing, and we got a Batman costume and he went running around at personal appearances dressed as Batman. He hung out of the window ledges of the London Guarantee Building to get pictures taken from the streets. He was a good, good disc jockey, and as far as I know he wound up being a good administrator, too. I think he wound up as a program director of a station in Baltimore.

What about Jim Dunbar?

He celebrated his thirtieth birthday and the London House restaurant was in the same building [at 360 North Michigan Avenue] that we were, and we were downstairs at lunch because a bunch of record promoters wanted to take Dunbar out and put him on a little bit. We were all laughing and giggling and drinking far too much at lunch time, and Dunbar was just sitting at the table and not saying much of anything.

Finally, somebody said to him, "C'mon, Jim, lighten up, for God's sakes. You're done with your airshift, have a couple of drinks, have some fun, it's your birthday." And he said, "I know it's my birthday. I'm thirty years old. It's all over."

His rationale at the time was that he had made a promise to himself that he was going to be a millionaire by the time he was thirty and he wasn't even close. I suspect these days he doesn't have to worry about being a millionaire.

You still work with Ralph Beaudin at KKAR, and he was quite a guiding force back in the WLS days?

He sure was, for all of us from that standpoint. Ralph was an extremely fair guy, not a hard-nosed manager as so many managers are. He let people have their head and let them do things, but when he said, "Stop doing that," you knew he meant stop doing that.

There were no ifs, ands, or buts about it. He wanted the radio station to sound the way he wanted the radio station to sound, and an awful lot of ideas about the programming came from Ralph Beaudin, not necessarily the creation of program directors.

That management mind of his went on to serve him very well. He went on to become manager of the ABC Radio Networks and he was the guy who came up with the idea of the four radio networks back in those days — to utilize the lines that ABC was paying for on a twenty-four-hour-a-day basis but only using for five minutes once an hour for a newscast and maybe for some public affairs programming. He was the guy who decided each hour could be split up into fifteen minute segments and there could be a Contemporary Network, an Entertainment Network, and news styled to go along with those kinds of formats. That was his baby.

What was your impression of Gene Taylor, a guy you should know reasonably well?

I think I sound much better on the air these days than I did then. I think I'm a lot more comfortable, a lot more confident of myself.

I always swore, back in those days, that I never would have hired me. I think I put myself into the classification of being one of those sorts of people who is an easy employee, I don't like to make waves, I think I'm a good "mechanic." I think I was good doing commercials and I think I was good doing disc jockey shows and I think if you taped my show on Monday, you could have replayed it on Tuesday and not noticed much difference. Always on time, always helpful, if somebody needed someone to go out on a sales call, I was always there to volunteer to do it, and I

still do that to this day.

I think a lot of us got very lucky back in those times. We got jobs because we knew people, which still goes on in radio. It's not very often that a totally strange human being walks into a radio station and is hired on the spot because he sounds so damned good. Somewhere along the line, there's been a referral.

Most of us went into WLS in the beginning on that kind of a basis. Ralph Beaudin knew Sam Holman. Sam Holman knew me. They both knew what Biondi was capable of from when he was working up in Buffalo. Ralph Beaudin knew that Art Roberts had competed against Dick Biondi and had beat him. I think Sam also knew Mort Crowley, probably from out of the St. Louis era.

So I think a lot of us got lucky, and that, briefly, is me. I was a good "mechanic" and I was with a very good radio station.

A tough decision for you in your career had to be, Do I want to stay as an air personality or do I want to go into management and sales?

Yeah, that was a tough one. To the best of my knowledge, WLS was the only radio station within the ABC group that ever, to this day, had a management training position available, and they just called it station manager. Ralph Beaudin came to me in 1965 and he offered me that job. It meant that I would be off the air as a talent because ABC was still functioning, at that time, under the premise that their program directors made their money mostly from being on-air talent and picked up a pittance as being the program director.

I really had to struggle with that and, as it happens, I was in a car pool with a bunch of guys who also lived in suburban Chicago, guys who were in television and advertising. I spent about a week agonizing over it, talking it over with my wife. The way it was presented to me, at that time I was making about $35,000 a year as a combination deejay and program director. ABC would only pay $25,000 a year for the job Beaudin offered. Luckily enough, the guys in the car pool had enough business sense to sit and talk with me and explain some of the advantages of management that I wasn't aware of, and I talked myself into accepting the thing.

So I took the job as station manager and took a $10,000 a year pay cut and a year later I was general manager at the station and was making $50,000 a year. It just happened to break right. I think Beaudin offered the job to me when ABC was starting to make plans to move him to New York, but I don't know that for fact. I know Beaudin did like to promote from within.

How did you know it was time to get out of WLS?

I was very bored. I was also separated, I wanted to get out of Chicago. I thought I was a real hot shot general manager. The station was being extremely successful, and we had whipped the WCFL battle. Even though they might have been doing OK against us as far as ratings were concerned, we were killing them as far as making money was con-

cerned.

The Globetrotter organization came along and offered me a job, going in to run their radio stations in Cleveland. That was a fledgling organization. Globetrotter Communications, it was like, "Get in on the ground floor and get tons of stock options and, you know, retire in five years if you want to. But leave Chicago and come to Cleveland." And that sounded like it made a lot of sense to me. As it turns out it made no sense at all.

So you stayed with them for a while?

I was with Globetrotter for just about a year. We parted company at the end of 1972 and I packed up and moved to California and effectively got out of radio. I was not on the air or in management, anyway.

I was just tired of working radio. Things had gone so well for me in Chicago, and they really went well for me in Cleveland, not to the satisfaction of the Globetrotter people. Being a manager meant sitting in an office from nine o'clock until noon, then going out, having a couple of martinis at lunch, then coming back and sitting in the office until four or four-thirty, and solving little problems that arose, and making sure you had a staff meeting once a week. That was really kind of boring.

I was out of radio, except for a year I did at a nostalgia station in San Diego, from 1973 until 1987. I was working at a small advertising agency and radio commercial production house out in Orange County, California, and we parted company and I was looking for work. So I called Ralph Beaudin in Omaha to see if he knew of any management positions that might be open because I was looking to get back into that end of it. I thought I knew how to manage and do it well.

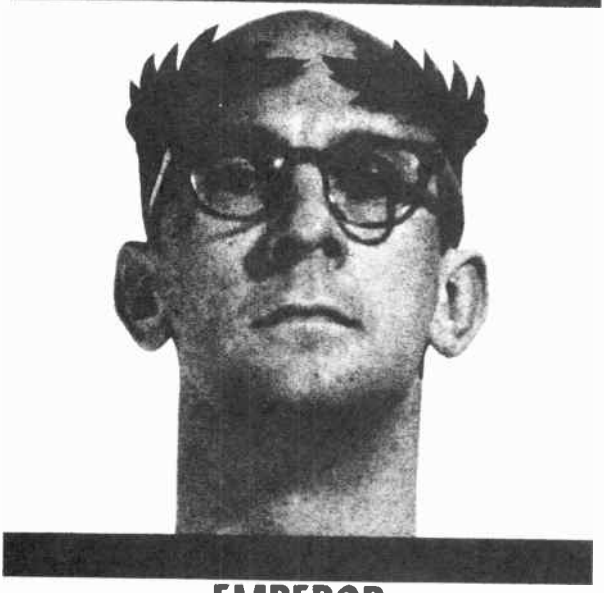
I called Beaudin, not from the standpoint of getting a job, because I'd found that when I did that, people would want to know when was the last time you worked in radio. I'd tell them 1972 and they'd say, "Thank you very much. Goodbye." I thought Beaudin might be a reference and might know of something back in the Midwest. The management thing, no, but he offered me a chance to come back and get on the air. And I kind of squinched up a little bit and thought, What the hell, why not?

The old days at WLS can probably never be recaptured, though.

When I was back for the reunion in 1985, Joel Sebastian had a neat thing to say. He came in from New York, and we were sitting, talking, and he said, "You know, you really can't go back, but damn, is it fun to stand in the doorway and look in!"

I'll tell you a funny story, though. I get back into radio in September 1987 and the kid who's the news editor here used to listen to me in Chicago because he was born and raised there. Every once in a while, somebody does something like you're doing, for example, with this interview. I'll say, safely, that I've run into at least ten people in this town who are native Omahans who used to listen to WLS, because that was the station to listen to if you were from the Midwest. And they go, "My God, you're that Gene Taylor!" And I know they were like twelve years old when they were listening. But it is fun.

This interview took place March 24, 1988, when Taylor was working in the job he still holds - as a newsman on KKAR, an all-news station in Omaha, Nebraska.



EMPEROR WEBER NEEDS YE

Let it be known by Royal Decree!

His Imperialness, Emperor Weber of Weberland, Noblest of the Noble, thine truly Benevolent Leader, has this day commanded that ye have been selected for His Imperial Commandos.

From this day forward, it shall be thine solemn duty to serve faithfully as Lieutenant of Weber's Commandos, to stand on the side of virtue, spreading sweetness and light as ye journey life's pathways, and to Defend to the Death the Imperial boundaries of Weberland, rightfully located at latitude: WLS, Channel 890; longitude: Daily 6-9 A.M.

Send now for thine commission as Lieutenant. Mail thine name and address along with self-addressed, stamped envelope to His Imperialness, Emperor Weber WLS, 360 N. Michigan, Chicago, Ill., Ye shalt have thine Lieutenant's commission within a fortnight.

Marke of His Imperialness

CHAPTER XIV

Clark Weber

How did you get your start in radio?

Well, that goes all the way back to 1950. I was a ham radio operator in high school, and I met a couple of ham radio operators who were engineers at radio stations. I went with them over to their stations to take a look at them.

In high school, I was the class clown. I was always the one who was socially in demand, not because I was bright or brainy or came from a rich family — although I went to a posh high school, my father was a policeman — but was accepted because I was comical and funny and popular.

So, I naturally put the two, my ham radio hobby and being the class clown, together.

Where are you from?

I was originally from Milwaukee and my first job, after I came out of the Navy in 1954, was with WAUX in Waukesha, Wisconsin. I was there a year before I went to West Bend, Wisconsin, to WBKV for three years, then I went to Milwaukee and was with WRIT for two years. Then in September of 1961 I came to WLS.

How did you manage to get that job?

In kind of an unusual way.

I was out one night with Sam Holman, who later became program director at WLS, in Milwaukee. We came out of a record company party and Sam was a practicing alcoholic at the time who drank something vicious. We went across the street to pick up our cars and Sam made a comment to a parking lot attendant. When drunk, Sam would get vicious and argumentative as all hell.

The parking lot attendant picked up a chain and started swinging it at Sam. I happened to see a squad car at the corner, so I ran over and got the squad car and the police pulled over and broke it up.

Sam, in his drunken way, said, "I'll never forget you for this. You saved my life." All this was before he went to Chicago to turn the Prairie Farmer station around.

I didn't think any more about it, of course, but in September of 1961 he called me and said, "Hey, it's time to pay back a favor. I want you as my all night man at WLS."

Well, that was quite a jump in pay, so I immediately took the job and promptly came to Chicago. I commuted for one whole year between Milwaukee and Chicago on a daily basis because I couldn't sell my

home. And that was a grim, grim year.

I'll bet some of those mornings after you got off the air were fun.

It used to take me until ten o'clock to get home. I'd get off the air at six, and by the time I caught the train at seven, and by the time I got back to my home in Brookfield, Wisconsin, it was ten o'clock. I'd go to bed and get up at six, then turn around and come back to Chicago again.

The hard work you guys did in the early Sixties, though, turned WLS into the top radio station in the country. Certainly people in Chicago and the Midwest loved the station and loved you guys.

It was a situation where we were given free rein. All of the people that were hired were experienced jocks who had spent a minimum of five years in radio, and much of that in rock. Each one of us was capable of sitting down and creating our own little island of entertainment, and each one of us was unique. We could do no wrong, but we were only the second station to do that sort of thing in Chicago. WJJD had been doing it for a year earlier, but not very well. Ours was a perfect mix because the music was exciting and rock 'n' roll was just beginning to cover a broader area, and with that fifty thousand-watts of WLS, lordy, it did cover the territory.

Working overnights, I'll bet you got some calls from faraway places with strange sounding names.

Oh, yes, exactly. In later years, when I became the program director, I was driving on the island of Kauai in Hawaii, and Ron Riley was doing the all-night show, and I had left some instructions for him on how I wanted him to handle a contest. I got in my car and turned on WLS, just to see if I could hear it in Hawaii and, of course, it was booming in and there was Riley screwing up the contest. I got back to my hotel room and called him and said, "What seems to be the problem? I was listening here in Hawaii and you seemed to be having a problem with the contest. How can I help you?" Riley about fell out of his chair.

How was the management at WLS in the early days of its being a rock giant?

In the early days, it was wonderful. Sam Holman's last official act was to hire me, then he went off to New York. Gene Taylor was the program director and was a nice, nice man. I knew him in Milwaukee and we'd been friends but worked at opposing stations. Gene was, and still is today, a very easy-going guy who managed with a velvet glove. It was a pleasure.

Ralph Beaudin was the general manager. He was a somewhat quiet, stern, but certainly a fair individual.

They had to be pretty supportive of what you guys were doing.

Oh, sure. The station was making money faster than they could possibly print it. Those people in management, of course, were getting a piece of the action so they were most pleased with the way it was going. Sam had done a good job of setting up the music concepts and the overall programming sounds, so that all Gene had to do was let it run.

WLS

The bright sound of Chicago Radio

SILVER DOLLAR SURVEY

Chicago's Official Radio Record Survey

FEBRUARY 28, 1964

THIS WEEK			WEEKS PLAYED
* 1.	I WANT TO HOLD YOUR HAND	The Beatles — Capitol	8
* 1.	SHE LOVES YOU	The Beatles — Swan	6
* 2.	Dawn Go Away	Four Seasons — Philips	8
* 3.	Out Of Limits	The Marketts — WB	8
* 4.	See The Funny Little Clown	Bobby Goldsboro — UA	10
* 5.	Please Please Me	The Beatles — Vee Jay	3
* 6.	Navy Blue	Diane Renay — 20th Century	7
* 7.	Penetration	The Pyramids — Best	8
* 8.	I Love You More And More	Al Martino — Capitol	8
* 9.	You Don't Own Me	Lesley Gore — Mercury	4
*10.	I Saw Her Standing There	The Beatles — Capitol	3
*11.	The Shelter Of Your Arms	Sammy Davis Jr. — Reprise	5
*12.	Fun Fun Fun	The Beach Boys — Capitol	5
*13.	Hi Heel Sneakers	Tommy Tucker — Checker	7
*14.	Glad All Over	Dave Clark — Epic	7
*15.	A Fool Never Learns	Andy Williams — Columbia	10
*16.	Stop And Think It Over	Dale & Grace — Montel	8
*17.	Abigail Beecher	Freddie Cannon — WB	8
*18.	It's All In The Game	Cliff Richards — Epic	7
*19.	Rip Van Winkle	The Devotions — Roulette	6
*20.	Bird Dance Beat	The Trashmen — Garrett	6
21.	True Love Goes On And On	Burl Ives — Decca	7
*22.	Puppy Love	Barbara Lewis — Atlantic	6
*23.	Long Gone Lonesome Blues	Hank Williams Jr. — MGM	5
*24.	Vaya Con Dios	The Drifters — Atlantic	5
*25.	Worried Guy	Johnny Tillotson — MGM	3
*26.	Saginaw Michigan	Lefty Frizzell — Columbia	8
*27.	Little Boxes	Pete Seeger — Columbia	4
*28.	Liverpool	The Viceroys — USA	3
*29.	He Says The Same Things	Skeeter Davis — RCA	5
*30.	I'll Make You Mine	Bobby Vee — Liberty	3
*31.	Bye Bye Barbara	Johnny Mathis — Mercury	5
*32.	Think Nothing About It	Gene Chandler — Constellation	5
*33.	She Rides With Me	Paul Peterson — Colpix	6
*34.	Baby Don't You Cry	Ray Charles — ABC Para	3
*35.	Good News	Sam Cooke — RCA	5
*36.	Needles And Pins	The Searchers — Kapp	4
*37.	My True Carrie Love	Nat Cole — Capitol	3
*38.	It's No Sin	Ouprees — Coed	5
*39.	Hey Jean Hey Dean	Dean & Jean — Rust	5
*40.	Live Wire	Martha & Vandellas — Gordy	3

FEATURED ALBUMS

OLDIES BY THE DOZEN — VOL. II • VARIOUS ARTIST — PARKWAY

BARBRA STREISAND — THE THIRD ALBUM — COLUMBIA

This survey is compiled each week by WLS Radio/Chicago from reports of all record sales gathered from leading record outlets in the Chicagoland area. Hear Bob Hale play all the SILVER DOLLAR SURVEY hits daily from 3:00 to 6:30 P.M. *Denotes record first heard in Chicago on WLS.

You spoke of the station making money. How was the money back then for the personalities?

The money then was very good. Certainly it was not what you would see today — this was 1961. I came to Chicago for $31,000, which was union scale for the all-night show. But people were doing record hops left and right and they were paying $300 or $400 a piece.

I know that you had a chance to do a bunch of record hops.

It reached the point where I couldn't fly to all of them myself because I was just getting too tired. For my first eighteen months there I did the all-night show, then went on the Silver Dollar Survey for a short time, and then I went on the morning show.

So, I was doing the morning show, then getting in a plane and flying to appearances in Iowa and Michigan and Wisconsin and Illinois and Indiana. I hired a pilot. I would fly down and my pilot would fly the plane back so I could sleep. And we covered the territory.

Were you ever scared?

As far as the flying was concerned? No. One night, on my own, I fell asleep on the way back from Warsaw, Indiana, and that's when I decided to hire someone to fly back.

You (personalities) were billed as "The Swinging Seven," among other things. Can I get some individual remembrances of some of your co-workers? How about Dick Biondi?

Well, Biondi was, and still is today, wound up tighter than a two-dollar watch. He was charismatic in that he could relate to a thirteen-, fourteen-, fifteen-year-old, and he had that special talent to be a buddy of theirs, and still he was close to thirty at the time. That was a unique talent.

The ratings that they had at night were awesome. Somewhere in my basement, I still have some of the Pulse ratings that were taken, and Biondi had something like a fifty or sixty share on his show at night. But there wasn't anything like it. He was anti-authority, but he was kind and clean. He was devil may care — he had all of the anti-establishment ingredients that a kid would admire, and yet Biondi never went too far.

How about Bob Hale?

Bob had a laid back style and didn't seem particularly hungry. He was later fired for reading train magazines in the studio when he was on the air. I think that the Silver Dollar Survey finally bored him. That was a show where you started with number forty and worked your way down to number one; it was a rather predictable show. So Hale was reading magazines and Ralph Beaudin went by the window one day and saw him and said, "You do that again and you're fired."

By golly, about a week later, Bob did it again and Ralph saw him and fired him.

One of the early morning men on WLS, Mort Crowley?

Mort had stomach problems, ulcers, I believe, and that's why they put me into the morning show. Getting up at two-thirty in the morning was just more than the stomach could handle, so he became ill one day

and said, "I just can't do the morning shift." He then went off to St. Louis.

Crowley was a nice guy, funny guy, irreverent, very talented. He was one of the early masters of multiple voices.

You've already mentioned Gene Taylor. What was his on-air style like?

Gene's style on the air was predictable. He was easy-going, friendly, had a crew hair cut, made a nice-looking appearance, was very kindly toward the kids, and that was important because our audience was primarily under the age of twenty-five.

Let's face it, it was primarily a teen station in those days. To talk to them, to take time to autograph pictures — on Saturday mornings we used to open up the studios and we had a viewing room, and they would pack that viewing room. In fact, we used to have to hire Andy Frain ushers just to move 'em in and move 'em out. It required a personality to step into those mobs and relate to those kids, and they were so open and so enthusiastic and so worshipful of WLS that we had a great responsibility to those kids. It was a wise air talent who recognized that and dealt with it.

In that early group, there wasn't anyone who let that stardom go to their head. We were all reminded of that by Ralph Beaudin, too, that those people expected a certain amount from us. They used to throw some big sales parties, and I remember we air personalities would walk in and Beaudin would be standing there greeting everyone and he'd say one word, "Circulate." And I learned how to work a room from him, and to converse and to schmooze with the clients. That was very important and I still use that today.

How about Art Roberts?

Art rode the coattails of Biondi, of course, and his biggest time was during the folk rock era, the hootenannies and that sort of thing. Art never had a great voice but he was a most sincere personality on the air and did very, very well.

What about Jim Dunbar?

"Mr. Smooth." I always felt that Jim, although he never showed it, was above rock 'n' roll, and I always felt that he was destined to do something that was more esoteric than the Everly Brothers, although he was very good at it.

When he was at WLS, he asked to go out and sell advertising time, which was most unusual. He wanted to get a feel for the selling end of the broadcast business because he felt it would make him a better air personality.

Ron Riley came to WLS a few years later. Any thoughts on him?

Ron was very quick to recognize that he could create something and it would enhance his show, like his "Bruce Lovely" character. You have to realize that, in those days, there was an engineer on the other side of the glass. You didn't have telephones and you didn't bounce things off the newsman. The newsman was there to do the news and he was not a

part of your show, although several of us tried to include them from time to time, but they didn't like that. They felt that was not within their realm of reporting so most of them shied away from involvement on the air.

So you had to create, within your own persona, the other characters that enabled you to broaden your base. By creating those other characters it gave you more latitude and more areas to go into, to talk about, to involve the audience with. That's one of the reasons I had Winky the Weather Bunny and would talk about my mother-in-law, "Mighty Mouth," and it was the reason Riley and I created the Weber-Riley feud.

It went back to an earlier time in Milwaukee when Riley and I were at one of those infamous record company parties and Riley drank a little bit too much and made an ass of himself. He was quite popular in Milwaukee, so I got on my morning show one day and criticized him on the air, more tongue-in-cheek than anything else. Well, he got on his show on WOKY and commenced to let me have it. So, when we brought him to Chicago, we figured it to be a natural and would continue this.

Riley would take the role of the bright upstart, the young man that the kids can relate to. By that time I was the program director at WLS, and I took the part of the curmudgeon boss, the stick-in-the-mud, the stodgy individual, and we'd play off each other.

It went absolutely wild. We would pre-record telephone calls where he was waking me up at ten o'clock at night just to tell me what a jerk I was. That kind of anti-authority sort of stuff, and the kids just thought it was wonderful. It reached a point where we couldn't even have lunch together because people could not imagine us friendly enough to have a civil word. It worked very well and we milked it for all it was worth for quite some time.

You've talked some about the station manager Ralph Beaudin. From all I've heard, he was quite a guy.

Yes. He was a nice man. I believe he was a high school dropout who went into the Marines. He came out of the Marines and was selling radio and was selling for ABC. They decided he would be perfect for the job and I think it was his first job in management. But he was perfect for the job.

How about some thoughts on another guy who worked there for quite a while, a guy you should know pretty well — Clark Weber.

Yeah. He thoroughly enjoyed it. It was just like Cinderella's ball — you knew that eventually it had to be over. And it wasn't the high point of my career — I enjoyed my eleven years at WIND, but they were not as "heady" as at WLS. As you said earlier, it was when the nation just worshipped at the feet of that radio station. In some respects it was difficult to keep your feet on the ground, because there was this constant worship.

But I like to think that I did keep my feet on the ground. I used to tell the other people that it's OK when someone calls you a star, it's OK to taste that, but don't swallow it. Because the minute you did, you began

to lose your perspective.

Just a thought here. Wouldn't it have been amazing if you could have done telephone talk back then?

Oh, do you know I wanted to? I talked to them about it. There wasn't even a telephone in the studio because they didn't want you to be distracted. When I went to WIND, I went to the general manager and told him I wanted to use the phones. He told me, "We can't do that — Wally Phillips does that."

How did you know it was time to leave WLS?

Well, we had a program director there by the name of John Rook, who had come to Chicago from the Pittsburgh ABC station. He was the kind of person who liked to tinker and he began tinkering with that very delicate balance, and it began to die. It was, then, the beginning of the end of the dynasty of WLS.

It had held onto its ratings numbers to a certain extent but by that time, FM was beginning to come in. Rook made the mistake of "play more music, play more music." The minute you do that, you begin to destroy the reason for listening to an AM station — personality. Rook was an individual who could see no other way but his, and ABC eventually fired him.

He was a very promotion-minded program director and that is something you don't often see. But there were a great number of changes that he instituted — some of them good, but many of them just did not, in my opinion, contribute to the station the way I thought that they should. When he came in, I was the program director and doing the mornings and I couldn't do both, so I just stayed on mornings.

I worked with him for about a year and a half and I thought, OK, it's midnight and it's time to get in the pumpkin and get out of here. So I left and went across the street to WCFL for two years.

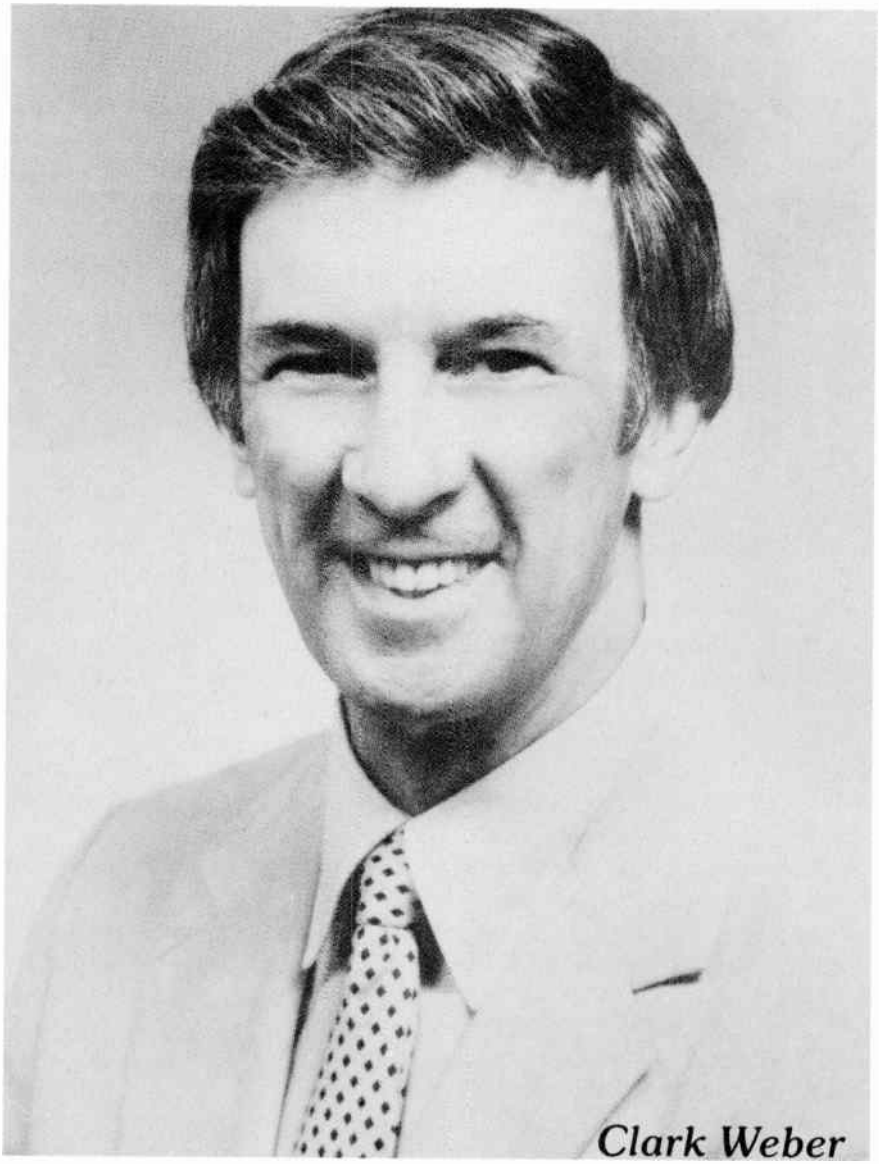
My time at WLS as a fun time and by 1970, it was over. The changes went from personality to more music and the people brought in to WLS were younger, less experienced, and more "formattable."

You mention that being at WLS during that era wasn't the high point of your career. What was?

I was there not quite eight years and I was at WIND for eleven. I enjoyed my time at WIND because it was mostly talk. It was a different kind of radio entirely. From a "heady" standpoint I would have to say that WLS was, though.

Did you save anything from the old days?

Oh, sure. As a matter of fact, I was in the basement recently looking for a tape that Riley and I did. With "Good Morning, Vietnam" being such a successful movie, Riley and I did a one-hour tape for the Armed Forces Radio Service in 1966. It was a hilarious hour, even by today's standards, and we even added some beer commercials in it and then we were requested to send more tapes and we began getting letters from GIs from the Midwest asking for copies of the tape. We sent out hundreds and hundreds of those tapes, and I was looking for it in my basement



Clark Weber

because I wanted to play it on the air and let people know what "Good Morning, Vietnam" really sounded like.

What about your work in radio today?

It's certainly different. But then again, I'm different, too. I've seen some tremendous changes here in Chicago radio since 1961, not all of them good, but certainly changes.

I've been very fortunate to be here all those years, but I will admit that I've had to work reasonably hard at staying in contention all these years, particularly as a talk host. But I enjoy it. It's fun to get in there for four-and-a-half hours every morning and talk and to be conversant to the point where people will say that's entertainment.

I have absolutely no complaints whatsoever.

Mother Weber's oldest son, Clark, is a fixture as the morning talk show host on WJJD Radio in Chicago. In a Radio Chicago Magazine interview with Linda Cain in the summer 1991 issue, Weber said: "I like to treat listeners as if I'm running a hardware store. Because each one is a special customer and I value their patronage. I respect the audience. We can agree to disagree and still be friends. And that's always been my underlying philosophy as a talk host." It's a philosophy that has served Weber well in Chicago for more than thirty years.
This interview was conducted on February 24, 1988.

SUNSHINE THIN KRISPY CRACKER CONTEST

1. Ron Riley is next to the middle studio
2. The first studio on the right is playing "Surf City"
3. Art Roberts is about to give a commercial
4. Ron Riley is eating Hi-Ho Crackers
5. Bernie Allen owns an MG
6. The studio playing "Sukiyaki" will give a sports cast next
7. The studio playing "Sukiyaki" is between the one playing "Tie Me Kangaroo Down Sport" and the one playing "Blue on Blue"
8. The weather will be given next in the middle studio
9. Clark Weber is in the first studio on the left
10. The DJ who is about to give the news is eating Graham Crackers
11. The DJ who is about to give the time drives a Sprite Sports car
12. Bob Hale is playing "Blue on Blue"
13. The studio playing "You're the Devil in Disguise" is between the one with the DJ who owns the Thunderbird and the one who owns the Triumph
14. The DJ eating Cheese-its is in the studio next to the one where the DJ is eating Wheat Wafers

Q: WHICH WLS PERSONALITY DRIVES THE JAGUAR?

Q: WHICH WLS PERSONALITY EATS SUNSHINE THIN KRISPY CRACKERS?

Send in your answer to:

Krispy Contest
WLS Radio
360 North Michigan Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60601

The first twenty correct answers received win Silver Dollars and qualify for the top prize, a transistor radio.

CHAPTER XV

A Selective Chronology of WLS Program Schedules 1960-1967

Schedules and text gleaned from the radio logs published daily in *The Chicago Tribune.*

April 29, 1960
10:00 - Party Line
11:00 - Martha Crane
1:00 - Polka
1:30 - Show Time
7:45 - From God
8:00 - Haven
9:00 - Bible
11:15 - Faith

May 2, 1960
6:00 - Farm
6:30 - Jim Dunbar
9:00 - Don McNeill "Breakfast Club"
10:00 - Ed Grennan
12:00 - News
12:30 - Mort Crowley
4:00 - Sam Holman
6:45 - News
7:00 - E.P. Morgan
7:15 - Gene Taylor
10:00 - Dick Biondi

On the day WLS made the switch from Prairie Farmer to rock 'n' roll, the top five songs in the country (according to Billboard Magazine) were "Stuck on You" by Elvis Presley, "He'll Have to Go" by Jim Reeves, "Theme from 'A Summer Place'" by Percy Faith (having just finished a nine-week stay at the top of the charts), "Sink the Bismarck" by Johnny Horton, and the Brothers Four's "Greenfields."
Also on May 2, 1960, Caryl Chessman was executed in the San Quentin

Prison, Calif., gas chamber, after a twelve-year battle for his life. Chessman was convicted in January 1948 of kidnapping, rape, and robbery.

September 28, 1960
5:30 - Farm
6:00 - Farm Bulletin
6:30 - Jim Dunbar
9:00 - Don McNeill "Breakfast Club"
10:00 - Ed Grennan
12:00 - News
12:30 - Mort Crowley
3:00 - Sam Holman
6:30 - News
7:00 - News; Gene Taylor
9:00 - Dick Biondi
11:00 - Music
12:00 - All Nite
How many high school-aged youngsters learned to dance "The Twist" while listening at night to Dick Biondi playing the hit record by Chubby Checker? Other top songs in the autumn of 1960 included "Chain Gang" by Sam Cooke, "My Heart Has a Mind of Its Own" by Connie Francis, "Walk, Don't Run" by the Ventures, "A Million to One" by Jimmy Charles, and the unforgettable "Mr. Custer" by Larry Verne, which would eventually be a number one song.
In Chicago on September 26, 1960, the first of a series of television debates between Vice President Richard Nixon and Senator John F. Kennedy took place.

January 16, 1961
5:00 - Farm
6:00 - Mort Crowley
9:00 - Don McNeill "Breakfast Club"
10:00 - Jim Dunbar
12:00 - Report
12:30 - Art Roberts
3:00 - Sam Holman
6:30 - News, Alex Dreier
7:00 - E.P. Morgan
7:15 - Gene Taylor
9:00 - Dick Biondi
12:00 - Bob Hale
Bert Kaempfert's instrumental "Wonderland by Night" topped the Billboard Magazine charts this week. Two other instrumental songs were in the top five — "Exodus" by the twin pianos of Ferrante and Teicher, and Floyd Cramer's "Last Date." The Shirelles with "Will You Love Me Tomorrow" and "Are You Lonesome Tonight" by Elvis were also in the top

five. Bubbling under the top hits, but poised for future success in early 1961, were Lawrence Welk ("Calcutta"), Neil Sedaka ("Calendar Girl"), and Smokey Robinson and the Miracles ("Shop Around").
On January 20, Democrat John F. Kennedy was inaugurated as President of the U.S., and on January 28, plans for establishing the Peace Corps were made public by the U.S. State Department.

May 31, 1961
5:00 - Farm Special
6:00 - Mort Crowley
9:00 - Don McNeill "Breakfast Club"
10:00 - Jim Dunbar
12:00 - News
12:30 - Art Roberts
3:00 - Sam Holman
6:30 - Alex Dreier
6:50 - Quincy Howe
7:00 - News; Gene Taylor
9:00 - Dick Biondi
12:00 - Bob Hale
"Travelin' Man" by Ricky Nelson topped the charts this week, helped out by its flipside — "Hello Mary Lou." Other tunes in the top five on this date are hardly among the most popular on current oldies playlists — "Mother-In-Law" by Ernie K-Doe, and "Mama Said" by the Shirelles are recognizable. But whatever happened to "Running Scared" by Roy Orbison? Or "Daddy's Home" by Shep and the Limelites?
Earlier this month, on May 5, the first American in space was Navy Commander Alan Bartlett Shepard, Jr., who showed the right stuff with a successful suborbital flight aboard the Project Mercury capsule Freedom Seven. And on May 30, the 45th Indianapolis 500 was won by Texan A.J. Foyt, who completed the course with an average speed of 139.130 miles per hour, a new race record.

October 19, 1961
6:00 - Mort Crowley
8:00 - Paul Harvey Commentary
9:00 - Don McNeill "Breakfast Club"
10:00 - Jim Dunbar
12:00 - Alex Dreier
12:30 - Art Roberts
3:00 - Gene Taylor
6:30 - Alex Dreier
6:55 - Quincy Howe
7:00 - Edward P. Morgan
7:30 - Bob Hale
9:00 - Dick Biondi
12:00 - Clark Weber

Uh huh, it was the right one, baby, for Ray Charles, sitting at the top of Billboard Magazine's chart on this day with his song, "Hit the Road Jack." "Runaround Sue" by Dion, "Crying" by Roy Orbison, "Take Good Care of My Baby" by Bobby Vee, and the Dovells's "Bristol Stomp" were other top tunes as Halloween approached. Notice that Sam Holman has departed WLS (in September 1961) and Gene Taylor has taken over Holman's afternoon drive show. In his last official act as program director, Holman hired Clark Weber to do the all-night show, beginning a long run in Chicago radio for "Old Chrome Dome."

On October 1, New York Yankee slugger Roger Maris hit his sixty-first home run, setting a new season record. His Yankees won the World Series, four games to one, over the Cincinnati Reds.

March 26, 1962

5:00 - Farm Special
6:00 - Mort Crowley
9:00 - Don McNeill "Breakfast Club"
10:00 - Jim Dunbar
12:00 - Midday News
12:30 - Art Roberts
3:00 - Gene Taylor
6:45 - Norman Ross
7:00 - Edward P. Morgan
7:15 - Weather, News
8:00 - Bob Hale
9:00 - Dick Biondi
12:00 - Clark Weber

As spring 1962 came along, Bruce Channel's "Hey! Baby" was at the end of a three-week stay at the top of the pop charts. Chicagoan Eugene Dixon had changed his name to Gene Chandler and had a top five classic called "Duke of Earl," while Kenny Ball also charted high with "Midnight in Moscow." Connie Francis's "Don't Break the Heart That Loves You" and "Let Me In" by the Sensations were other top five records.

On March 2, 1962, Philadelphia Warriors star Wilt Chamberlain made 36 field goals and 28 free throws, totaling 100 points in a game against the New York Knicks. On April 9, Academy Awards would go to Maximilian Schell (best actor for "Judgment at Nuremberg") and Sophia Loren (best actress for "Two Women"), and to George Chakiris (best supporting actor) and Rita Moreno (best supporting actress) in the best picture of the year 1961 — "West Side Story."

July 27, 1962

5:00 - Farm Special
6:00 - News, Mort Crowley
8:00 - Paul Harvey Commentary
9:00 - Don McNeill "Breakfast Club"
10:00 - Jim Dunbar

12:00 - Midday News
12:30 - Art Roberts
3:00 - Gene Taylor
6:30 - News
7:15 - Weather
7:30 - Bob Hale
9:00 - Dick Biondi
12:00 - Clark Weber
One of the top records of the middle of the summer of 1962 was the instrumental "The Stripper" by David Rose & His Orchestra. Other hits included "The Wah-Watusi" by the Orions, "Sealed With a Kiss" by Brian Hyland, and Ray Charles with "I Can't Stop Loving You," but the number one tune (for four weeks) this summer was Bobby Vinton's "Roses are Red (My Love)."
On July 27, the Justice Department announced that General Electric had agreed to pay the United States $7.47 million in damages for excess profits received in a price-fixing case. Earlier in the month of July, Gary Player of South Africa became the first non-resident of the U.S. to win the PGA Golf Championship.

December 26, 1962
6:00 to 9:00 - Mort Crowley with music, time information, and traffic reports.
9:00 to 10:00 - Don McNeill "Breakfast Club"
10:00 to 12:00 - Jim Dunbar with music and Martha Crane with interviews.
12:00 to 12:30 - Roundup of local and national news with market reports.
12:30 to 3:00 - Art Roberts with music and "Flair."
3:00 to 6:30 - Gene Taylor with music.
6:30 to 7:30 - Alex Dreier, Norman Ross, Tom Harmon, and Edward P. Morgan with news commentaries.
7:30 to 9:00 - Bob Hale with music.
9:00 to 12:00 - Dick Biondi with music and chatter for the teen-agers.
12:00 'til dawn - Clark Weber with music and time information.
'Twas the day after Christmas, and the number one song on Billboard Magazine's chart was an instrumental named "Telstar." The artists, the Tornadoes, were the first British group to have a number one single record in America. Chubby Checker was doing the "Limbo Rock" (how low can you go?), while Marcie Blane was making her bid to be "Bobby's Girl." A song, "Big Girls Don't Cry," from the Four Seasons had fallen from number one, and Elvis was bemoaning his postal service in "Return to Sender."
New York City was eighteen days into a one hundred and fourteen day newspaper strike. Before it would be settled on March 31, 1963, the strike will cost what some guess to be $100 million. On December 23, the Cuban government began releasing prisoners captured in the Bay of Pigs invasion under an agreement with a U.S. committee of private citizens, by

which Cuba would receive more than $50 million in food and medical supplies. Also on December 23, the Dallas Texans, on a field goal by Tommy Brooker in the second extra quarter, defeated the Houston Oilers, 20-17, in the American Football League championship.

April 1, 1963

6:00 to 9:00 - Gene Taylor with music, time information, and traffic reports.
9:00 to 10:00 - Don McNeill "Breakfast Club"
10:00 to 12:00 - Jim Dunbar with music and Martha Crane with interviews.
12:00 to 12:30 - Roundup of local and national news with market reports.
12:30 to 3:00 - Art Roberts with music and "Flair."
3:00 to 6:30 - Clark Weber with music.
6:30 to 7:30 - Alex Dreier, Norman Ross, Tom Harmon, and Edward P. Morgan with news commentaries.
7:30 to 9:00 - Bob Hale with music.
9:00 to 12:00 - Dick Biondi with music and chatter for the teen-agers.
12:00 'til dawn - Joe Kelly with music and time information.
No fooling, if you tuned in the Silver Dollar Survey today, you could hear Clark Weber play Skeeter Davis ("The End of the World"), Art Roberts introduce the Orlons ("South Street"), and Bob Hale spin a tune by Bobby Darin ("You're the Reason I'm Living"). They'd also be playing the song that occupied the number one spot for more than a month — "Our Day Will Come" by Ruby & the Romantics, along with "He's So Fine" by the Chiffons, a tune written by Ronnie Mack (not George Harrison).
The city of Chicago was abuzz about the National Collegiate Athletic Association basketball championship won by Loyola on March 23, as the Ramblers topped Cincinnati, 60-58. And on April 9, Sir Winston Churchill was proclaimed an honorary U.S. citizen in a White House ceremony that was televised worldwide.

June 3, 1963

6:00 to 9:00 - Clark Weber with music, time information, and traffic reports.
9:00 to 10:00 - Don McNeill's "Breakfast Club"
10:00 to 12:00 - Gene Taylor with music and Martha Crane with interviews.
12:00 to 12:30 - Local and national news and market reports.
12:30 to 3:00 - Bernie Allen with music and "Flair."
3:00 to 6:30 - Bob Hale with music.
6:30 to 7:30 - Alex Dreier, Norman Ross, Tom Harmon, and Edward P. Morgan with news commentaries.
7:30 to 9:00 - Ron Riley with music.
9:00 to 12:00 - Art Roberts with music and chatter for the teen-agers.
12:00 'til dawn - Don Phillips with music and time information.

Seventeen-year-old Lesley Gore, a Tenafly, Jew Jersey, high school student was at the top of her career (and the top of the charts) with "It's My Party." Other top hits were "Surfin' U.S.A." by the Beach Boys, "Da Doo Ron Ron" by the Crystals, and Jimmy Reed's "If You Wanna Be Happy." It should be noted that it was still possible, in June 1963, for a song from Al Martino to be charted as high as number three — "I Love You Because."
On June 12, 1963, civil rights leader Medgar Evers was shot in the back by a sniper outside the Evers home in Jackson, Mississippi. The assassination set off a number of demonstrations throughout the U.S., including Chicago.

November 22, 1963
5:45 to 8:00 - Clark Weber with music, time information, and traffic reports.
8:00 to 9:00 - Don McNeill "Breakfast Club"
9:00 to 12:00 - Gene Taylor with music and Martha Crane with interviews.
12:00 to 12:30 - Roundup of local and national news with market reports.
12:30 to 3:00 - Bernie Allen with music.
3:00 to 6:30 - Bob Hale with music.
6:30 to 7:30 - Alex Dreier, Norman Ross, Tom Harmon, and Edward P. Morgan with news commentaries.
7:30 to 9:00 - Ron Riley with music.
9:00 to 12:00 - Art Roberts with music and chatter for the teen-agers.
12:00 'til dawn - Don Phillips with music and time information.
On this infamous day in American history, music seemed so unimportant. In fact, WLS was heavy-laden with news broadcasts regarding the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. It was the brother-and-sister act of Nino Tempo and April Stevens with the top song in the country — "Deep Purple" (and not the Hush version, by a long shot). Dale & Grace ("I'm Leaving It Up to You"), the Impressions ("It's All Right"), the Village Stompers (the instrumental "Washington Square"), and a former five-week number one song from Jimmy Gilmer & the Fireballs ("Sugar Shack") were other top five records.
In other news from late 1963, quarterback Roger Staubach of Navy was voted the winner of the Heisman Trophy for outstanding college football player, and on December 8, Frank Sinatra, Jr., was kidnapped at Lake Tahoe. He was released, unharmed, on December 11 after his famous father paid a $240,000 ransom. Three suspects were arrested two days later by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and most of the money was recovered.

March 1, 1964
6:00 to 9:00 - Clark Weber with music, time information, and traffic reports.
9:00 to 10:00 - "The Breakfast Club" with Don McNeill.

10:00 to 12:00 - Gene Taylor with music and Martha Crane with interviews.
12:00 to 12:30 - Roundup of local and national news and market reports.
12:30 to 3:00 - Bernie Allen with music and "Flair."
3:30 to 6:30 - Bob Hale with music and traffic eye.
6:30 to 7:30 - Alex Dreier, Norman Ross, Tom Harmon, and Edward P. Morgan with news commentaries.
7:30 to 9:00 - Ron Riley with music and time information.
9:00 to 12:00 - Art Roberts with music and chatter for the teen-agers.
12:00 'til dawn - Don Phillips and music and time information.
It would be no surprise to turn on WLS and hear the Beatles, what with their celebrated arrival in New York on February 7, 1964. When Bob Hale counted down the Silver Dollar Survey, he would have "I Want to Hold Your Hand" at the top of his list. It was a number one song for seven weeks nationwide. Lesley Gore with "You Don't Own Me," the Rip Chords and "Hey Little Cobra," the Marketts's "Out of Limits" (an instrumental), and the serene "Surfin' Bird" by the Trashmen were hot on the heels of the Beatles.
On February 25, 1964, the heavyweight boxing championship was fought in Miami Beach, Florida. And the winner was Cassius Clay after Sonny Liston failed to answer the bell for the seventh round due to an arm injury. On March 15, Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton answered the bell, however — wedding bells as the couple was married in Montreal. It was Liz's fifth marriage; Burton's second. Also in early March, Teamsters president Jimmy Hoffa was found guilty by a Chattanooga, Tennessee jury of tampering with a federal jury in 1962. He was sentenced to eight years in prison and fined $10,000.

May 29, 1964
6:00 to 9:00 - Clark Weber with music, time information, and traffic reports.
9:00 to 10:00 - "Breakfast Club" with Don McNeill.
10:00 to 12:00 - Gene Taylor with music and Martha Crane with interviews.
12:00 to 12:30 - Roundup of local and national news and market reports.
12:30 to 3:00 - Bernie Allen with music.
3:00 to 6:30 - Dex Card with music, news, and traffic reports.
6:30 to 7:30 - Alex Dreier, Norman Ross, Tom Harmon, and Edward P. Morgan with news and commentaries.
7:30 to 9:00 - Ron Riley with popular tunes and "Flair Reports."
9:00 to 12:00 - Art Roberts with music and chatter for teen-agers.
12:00 'til dawn - Don Phillips hosts a lively show of music, time information, and news.
When Mother Weber's oldest son, Clark, was waking people up in late May 1964, he could do it with a sassy Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong tune,

"Hello, Dolly!" Two more Beatles songs were also charted in the top five — "Love Me Do" and "Do You Want to Know a Secret" — along with the Dave Clark Five's "Bits and Pieces." The top song on Billboard Magazine's charts was from Mary Wells, extolling the virtues of "My Guy."
Television's Emmy Awards were presented on May 25 and Dick Van Dyke and Mary Tyler Moore were chosen as best actor and best actress in a comedy series for their roles in the show that was selected as best comedy, "The Dick Van Dyke Show." Drama winners were Jack Klugman, best actor for "The Defenders," and Shelley Winters, best actress for the "Chrysler Theatre" production of "Two Is The Number." On July 26, 1964, Teamsters president Jimmy Hoffa was found guilty by a Chicago federal jury of fraud and conspiracy in the handling of his union's pension. He was sentenced to five years in prison and fined $10,000. Sound familiar? See the note at March 1, 1964.

September 28, 1964

6:00 to 9:00 - Clark Weber with music, time information, and traffic reports.
9:00 to 10:00 - "Breakfast Club" with Don McNeill.
10:00 to 12:00 - Gene Taylor with music and Martha Crane with interviews.
12:00 to 12:30 - Roundup of local and national news and market reports.
12:30 to 3:00 - Bernie Allen with music.
3:00 to 6:30 - Dex Card with music, news, and traffic reports.
6:30 to 7:30 - Alex Dreier, Norman Ross, Tom Harmon, and Edward P. Morgan with news and commentaries.
7:30 to 9:00 - Ron Riley with popular tunes and "Flair Reports."
9:00 to 12:00 - Art Roberts with music.
12:00 'til dawn - Don Phillips hosts a lively show of music, time information, and news.
It should be noted here that a new program on WMAQ from 7:00 to 10:30 p.m. was "Bob Hale's Music Hall." Also, Norman Ross not only did news commentaries on WLS, but also hosted a music show for Talman Savings that aired on WMAQ at 10:30 p.m. So Ross was a radio announcer, working for two stations at the same time, and getting billing in the daily radio schedules.
One of the great songs of all time (and it sounds as good today as it did then), "Oh, Pretty Woman" by Roy Orbison, was the top song in the country. Ronny & the Daytonas were praising the "G.T.O.," the Shangri-Las were hot with "Remember (Walkin' in the Sand)," and Eric Burdon led the Animals in "The House of the Rising Sun." The Newbeats were also top five material with their record "Bread and Butter," later popularized in the film "9 1/2 Weeks."
Six days ago (September 22, 1964) a musical based on the stories of Sholem Aleichem opened at New York City's Imperial Theatre. Starring Zero Mostel, "Fiddler on the Roof" enjoyed a long stay — 3,242 shows to

be exact. Also in New York City, on October 29, thieves made off with jewels from the Museum of Natural History, including the five hundred sixty five-carat Star of India. Professional swimmers Allan Kuhn and Jack "Murph the Surf" Murphy and beach boy Roger Clark were arrested and given a lenient sentence, having helped recover the stolen jewels. Also in the autumn of 1964, the Summer Olympics took place (from October 10 to 24) in Tokyo, Japan, and the United States claimed 36 gold medals, the most of any country at the games.

January 15, 1965

6:00 to 10:00 - Clark Weber with music and traffic reports.
10:00 to 11:00 - "Breakfast Club" with Don McNeill.
11:00 to 12:00 - Gene Taylor show.
12:00 to 12:30 - Round-up of news, weather, and market reports.
12:30 to 3:00 - Bernie Allen with music.
3:00 to 6:30 - Dex Card show.
6:30 to 7:30 - Alex Dreier, Norman Ross, Tom Harmon, and Edward P. Morgan with news and commentaries.
7:30 to 9:00 - The Ron Riley show.
9:00 to 12:00 - Art Roberts with music.
12:00 'til dawn - Don Phillips hosts a lively show of music, time information, and news.

The Beatles were back at the top of the charts to start the new year of 1965 with "I Feel Fine," while "She's a Woman" was a top five record for them at the same time. Bobby Vinton ("Mr. Lonely"), the Supremes ("Come See About Me"), the Zombies ("She's Not There"), the Righteous Brothers ("You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin'"), and Petula Clark ("Downtown") were other songs on the playlist as the Weber-Riley feud roared and as Dex Card counted 'em down on the Silver Dollar Survey.

On January 20, Lyndon Baines Johnson was inaugurated as the 36th President of the United States. Sixteen-year-old Peggy Fleming won the U.S. women's singles figure skating championships at Lake Placid, New York, on February 13. And on February 21, another assassin's bullet shocked America as 39-year-old Malcolm X was killed by rival Black Muslims while addressing a gathering at the Audubon Ballroom in New York City. Born Malcolm Little, he broke from the Black Muslims in 1964 and founded the extremist Black Nationalist movement. Two days after his death, Black Muslim headquarters were burned in New York City and San Francisco, while unrest was also visible in Chicago.

October 28, 1965

6:00 to 10:00 - Clark Weber show.
10:00 to 11:00 - "Breakfast Club" with Don McNeill.
11:00 to 12:00 - Rotating with Ron Riley and Art Roberts.
12:00 to 12:25 - Roundup of local and national news and market reports.
12:25 to 3:00 - Bernie Allen with music.

3:00 to 6:30 - Dex Card with music, news, and traffic eye.
5:00 - Paul Harvey, news.
6:30 - Newscope with Alex Dreier, Norman Ross, Tom Harmon, and Edward P. Morgan.
7:30 to 9:00 - Ron Riley
8:15 to 12:00 - Art Roberts with music and chatter for teen-agers.
12:00 to 6:00 - Don Phillips with music and time information.
There was a quarter-page ad in the Tribune on October 29 promoting Clark Weber and "The Personality Station." It's interesting, from a radio perspective, that the "personality" station needed to rotate two of its key celebrities during a mid-morning time slot in the absence of one other full-time announcer.
The top spot on Billboard Magazine's chart all month in October 1965 was "Yesterday" by those guys from Liverpool. Rising up the charts were the Rolling Stones with an eventual number one song, "Get Off My Cloud," while descending the list was the controversial "Eve of Destruction" by Barry McGuire. The Ramsey Lewis Trio was in with "The 'In' Crowd," as were the McCoys with "Hang On Sloopy." Roy Head with "Treat Her Right," and the We Five with "You Were On My Mind."
On this day, the Gateway Arch in St. Louis, Missouri, was topped out. The six hundred and thirty-foot steel arch, designed by Eero Saarinen, commemorated the city's role in westward expansion and the Louisiana Purchase. On September 11, nineteen-year-old Deborah Bryant of Kansas was named Miss America at the annual pageant in Atlantic City, New Jersey. In less than two months, on December 15, Gemini 6 would be launched. Piloted by Captain Walter Schirra and Major Thomas Stafford, it made the first successful space rendezvous (with Gemini 7) one hundred and eighty-five miles above Earth.

April 1, 1966
6:00 to 10:00 - Clark Weber
10:00 to 11:00 - "Breakfast Club"
11:00 to 2:00 - Bernie Allen
12:00 to 12:30 - Roundup of news, weather, and market reports.
2:00 to 7:00 - Dex Card
5:00 - News and stock market reports.
6:30 - Alex Dreier, Norman Ross with news and commentaries.
7:00 to 9:00 - Ron Riley show.
9:00 to 12:00 - Art Roberts
12:00 'til dawn - East of Midnight with Don Phillips.
By April 1, 1966, awareness of the Vietnam war was growing in America. U.S. troop strength in Vietnam was reported by Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara to have reached 215,000, with another 20,000 U.S. troops on their way. Staff Sergeant Barry Sadler was atop the musical chart for an incredible five weeks with his "Ballad of the Green Berets." Other popular tunes of the spring of 1966 were considerably more upbeat than Sadler's, including the falsetto work of Lou Christie in "Lightnin'

Strikes." "Listen People" by Herman's Hermits. "California Dreamin'" with the Mamas and Papas. "Daydream" by John Sebastian and the Lovin' Spoonful. and Nancy Sinatra's classic "These Boots are Made for Walkin'" ("Are you ready. boots?").
Academy Awards were presented on April 18 to "The Sound of Music" as best picture. to Lee Marvin for actor in "Cat Ballou," and to Julie Christie for actress in "Darling." There was exciting sports news in Chicago in March. when Bobby Hull. the Black Hawks's "Golden Jet," scored his fifty-first goal of the season on March 12 against the New York Rangers. Hull was the first player in hockey history to eclipse the fifty goal mark. and he went on to score fifty-four.

September 15, 1966
5:30 to 6:00 - Farm special
6:00 to 10:00 - Clark Weber
10:00 to 11:00 - "Breakfast Club" with Don McNeill.
11:00 to 2:00 - Bernie Allen
11:05 - Martha Crane
12:00 to 12:30 - Roundup of local and national news and market reports.
2:00 to 7:00 - Dex Card
6:30 - Alex Dreier. Norman Ross. Tom Harmon. and Edward P. Morgan with news commentaries.
6:40 - Report from Bears' Training Camp with Rudy Bukich.
7:00 to 9:00 - Ron Riley
9:00 to 12:00 - Art Roberts with music and chatter for teen-agers.
12:00 'til dawn - East of Midnight with Don Phillips.
In a great year for music. the beginning of the school year in September was filled with classics — "Yellow Submarine" (Beatles). "Cherish" (Association). "Sunshine Superman" (Donovan). "Summer in the City" (Lovin' Spoonful). "You Can't Hurry Love" (Supremes). "See You In September" (Happenings). and "Bus Stop" (Hollies). With songs like this on their current playlists. it's no wonder the WLS personalities had the killer audience they did. It's corny to say that the music made memories. but it's the most honest thing to say. How many people who were alive during this era cannot think back to one of the songs mentioned above and not conjure up some kind of a pleasant thought? A date. A pizza after the football game. Cruising around town listening to Art Roberts.
While all this great music was going on back here in the States. U.S. weekly casualties in the Vietnam War hit a record 970 during the week of September 18-24. 1966: 142 killed. 825 wounded. three missing. During the same period. South Vietnamese losses were 98 dead. 280 wounded. 71 missing. In three weeks. the World Series would be won by the Baltimore Orioles. as they swept the Los Angeles Dodgers in four games. the final three being shutouts. And on October 30. a phone call led Chicago police to a trash can in Grant Park. In the can. police found an Italian Renaissance painting just stolen from the Art Institute. a few blocks

to the north. The painting, Correggio's "Madonna, Child, and St. John," was valued at $500,000.

May 30, 1967

5:00 - Farm special
6:00 to 10:00 - Clark Weber
10:00 to 11:00 - "Breakfast Club"
11:00 to 2:00 - Bernie Allen Show.
12:00 to 12:30 - Midday coverage of news, weather, and stock markets.
2:00 to 7:00 - Dex Card
6:00 - Alex Dreier
7:00 to 9:00 - Ron Riley
9:00 to 12:00 - Art Roberts
12:00 'til dawn - Don Phillips

Notice how the radio listings have gone full circle, back to reporting only the names of the people hosting the programs. Compare this with the much longer entries in 1964 and you have a pretty sense of how the industry was being perceived. By later in 1967, the Tribune had stopped running AM radio logs completely, concentrating on highlights for FM stations only.

Still plenty of great music, including the chart-topping "Groovin'" by the Young Rascals. A definite soul feeling filled the top five, with the Supremes ("The Happening"), Aretha Franklin ("Respect"), and Arthur Conley ("Sweet Soul Music"), but also near the top was a former number one song for Nancy Sinatra and her father, Old Blue Eyes. "Somethin' Stupid" remains the only father-daughter duet to be a number one record.

The installation of the 100 millionth telephone in the U.S. was celebrated on May 11 at ceremonies attended by President Lyndon Johnson and representatives of the Bell System and the U.S. Independent Telephone Association. On June 4, television's Emmy Awards went to Bill Cosby for best actor in "I Spy," and Barbara Bain for best actress in "Mission: Impossible," which also won for best drama series. And in Vietnam, U.S. casualties for the week of May 21-27 were reported as the greatest weekly toll of the war: 313 killed and 2,616 wounded.

September 27, 1967

In the column, "The Sound — Music and radio: for young listeners," *Chicago Tribune* reporter Toby Malagaris wrote: "If you've been wondering, 'Where have all the WLS disk jockeys gone?' — the answer is 'on strike.' Their union, American Federation of Radio and Television Artists [AFTRA] is on strike in sympathy with a strike by the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians [NABET] against the American Broadcasting Company.

"WLS is an ABC affiliate. Negotiations were still going on between NBC and NABET at the time of this writing.

"Filling in at WLS are Gene Taylor, vice president and general manager, who is on the air from 5 to 10 a.m. and from 2 to 6 p.m.; and

Joseph Bacarella, operations manager of WXYZ, Detroit, on from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., and from 7 p.m. to midnight. From midnight to 5 a.m., there is a program of music with station personnel doing the news, radio promotions, and station identifications.

"Handling the newscasts are Harold Salzman, WLS news director; Bill Rice, WLS editorial director; and Joseph Vaughan, editorial director for WXYZ, Detroit.

"As for what the disk jockeys are doing with their time during the strike — Bernie Allen is 'home resting'; Clark Weber, who is WLS program director, has his managerial duties to perform; Jerry Kaye, the all-night man, is 'getting some sleep'; Art Roberts is in the process of moving into new living quarters; Ron Riley is 'out'; and Larry Lujack is playing golf, reading, getting lots of sleep, and 'trying to find a paper route to earn money.'"