

## Battle of San Francisco CONTINUED

since they all play the same records over and over, the only difference possible is the personality each station injects into its presentation.

"We do it by preparation," he states. "Our gags and gimmicks and intros are not ad libbed but carefully planned, prepared and rehearsed. Before switching from WLX to KEWB we held a week-long talent school, woodshedding our dee jays in our personality pattern. Those bits of chatter so informally presented as lead-ins for commercials or record intros are written for the disc jockeys by freelance writers.

"We believe that most people these days don't listen to radio constantly but for 15 minutes or so, now and then, in the car, in the kitchen, wherever. They tune us in primarily to get the top tunes but they also want to be entertained, so we make our presentation of music, commercials and everything else as entertaining as we know how. News is not read as it comes off the ticker, but rewritten with colorful phrases to make it entertaining as well as informative. We try to avoid echoes and noisy sound effects, to make our impression pleasantly."

One KEWB premise is to play more records than the rest. "Our minimum is 14 an hour and we're now running 17-18 because we don't have enough commercials yet," Mr. Enis says. Business is on the upswing, however, he reports, with some advertisers like Ford and Winston retaining their KLX schedule, others like Hamms increasing their time, and new accounts like Chevrolet coming in.

To get its call established and to keep listeners tuned in, KEWB is running a continuous stream of contests which began at noon Sunday, June 8 (at the end of the 24-hour phone book marathon) with "Big Bay Pay Day." Listeners were told to call friends whose names began with a particular letter ("This is 'S' hour"), changed hourly or whenever there was a winner, and to ask: "Have you heard the new KEWB, channel 91?" One name would be the lucky one, paying off \$91.

Numbered fan club cards, distributed through music shops and by mail, are the basis for hourly giveaways of \$5 and \$10 cash prizes, another incentive to keep tuned to KEWB. Apparently these contests, plus newspaper ads, bus posters, direct mail, sidewalk foot prints in gay colors, sound trucks (playing KEWB promo jingles) and other off-the-air promotion, are working, for KEWB began getting a heavy mail response from the start. A weekend "Count the Music" contest, asking for the number of selections played during

60 consecutive hours (June 19-21) had a response of 1,395 cards and letters (one to an individual) by Tuesday noon (June 23). The first morning mail that same Tuesday also contained 1,245 entries in the "Secret Sound" contest launched the day before, and 1,120 more guesses came in by telegram before noon.

Agency media buyers, in general cool to the entry of another Top 40 station into the Bay Area, nonetheless expressed the feeling that KEWB's "money plus smart management" would inevitably make it a factor in the market.

**KFRC • 610 kc, 5 kw, 6 a.m. to midnight.** Owned by Don Lee Div. of RKO Teleradio Pictures. Manager is Jack



MR. THAYER

Thayer, general manager of WDGY Minneapolis (a Storz station) before being appointed vice president and general manager of KFRC in June. Program format: A "wonderful list" of the top tunes, a startling change from the show tunes and light classics which comprised the station's musical programs prior to March. Another major change occurred the end of April, when a batch of Don Lee news programs, which had a loyal following, shifted to ABC and KGO.

The philosophy of the new KFRC is that mobility is the key to modern life and to modern radio as a part of modern life. "Radio today is found everywhere but the living room where it used to reign," Mr. Thayer states. "We're no longer selling adjacencies to *Amos 'n' Andy*. We're selling spots which build their own audience and do their own selling instead of riding a program's coattails. Good spots, like those for Dodge, Beechnut, Pepsodent, stand on their own. They, and the way the personality at the station handles them, are what produce sales today."

Only a little over a year ago, KFRC, KCBS and KOBV were fighting it out for first place in San Francisco audience favor, according to Pulse statistics. Business was good; May and June 1958 were the best month's in KFRC's 34 years, Mr. Thayer reports, "but then came major league baseball on KSFO." The Pulse reports for January-February and March-April 1959 give KFRC a standing of fifth to sixth in share-of-audience.

The immediate reaction of agency buyers, as reported the end of June, is that in dropping its news and "listen-

able music" programming, KFRC had lost its distinctiveness and was now just another formula music station. "They're trying to go rock and roll and don't quite know how," one buyer declares. A watchful waiting attitude is general. "We didn't cancel, but we did cut back," the buyer for a major radio advertiser says.

To build audience, Mr. Thayer has brought in Scott Burton from WISK Minneapolis, where he was "The Flying Scotsman" on the air and program director off-mike, as production coordinator of KFRC. To boost sales, he is encouraging his sales force to sell ideas, rather than time. An example: Four Wheel Brakes queried KFRC about \$500 worth of availabilities for a July campaign. Instead, "we offered them a Fourth of July safety slogan contest. This gave them a public service plus to their advertising and they spent \$2,000 with us," Mr. Thayer reports.

**KGO • 810 kc, 50 kw, 5:45 a.m. to midnight.** Owned by American Broadcasting-Paramount Theatres Inc. Manager is Jack



MR. STAHL

Stahle, previously with ABC's KABC Los Angeles, who moved to KGO the end of June in the dual capacity of station manager and local sales manager.

Program format: "Happy" popular music and lots of news, including ABC's John Daly, Paul Harvey and John Vandercook newscasts plus those of Frank Hemingway, Cliff Engle, John Holbrook and Virgil Pinkley which moved from KFRC-Don Lee on April 28. Nightly stereophonic broadcasts with KGO-FM total 14 hours a week: Monday-Saturday, 7:30-9 p.m.; Monday-Friday, 10:45 p.m.-midnight, and Sunday, 7:30-8:15 p.m.

KGO's new musical format was adopted last September, following a period of rock and roll programming at which the station was not overly successful. "San Francisco's a peculiar market," Mr. Stahle says. "It's more conservative than other parts of the country and what works there won't work here."

Agency buyers comment that KGO has changed program format so frequently in the past few years (reflecting changes in the program philosophy of the ABC radio network) that it now has a job cut out for it to establish a personality with listeners. Perhaps its strong news programming will help, they say; they're waiting to see what the ratings show. (For the past year, KGO has stood at about seventh place in share of audience.)