

Perspectives

There is nothing sadder than owners who refuse to try new programming ideas because they will never, ever fully realize the profit potential of their stations. They never enjoy first-mover strategic advantage or the economies of experience. Or fun.

My heroes are the owners and CEOs who write the checks and offer loyal support for brand-new ideas. They are rare.

Who really got the word out about rock 'n' roll? The man who opened his wallet for Alan Freed to go on WJW/Cleveland on July 11, 1951: Leo Mintz.

Dr. Wendell Cox was the first African-American owner of a station in the United States and launched one of the first R&B stations in 1956, WCHB-AM/Inkster, Mich.



Todd Storz, the inventor of top 40 radio, aired the format on a chain of stations he owned. Gordon McLendon made the format bolder on his own station group.

RKO Radio owner Tom O'Neil contracted programmer Bill Drake's revolutionary evolution of top 40. O'Neil started the first progressive rock station in New York, Murray the K's WOR-FM. O'Neil and his father, William, who founded RKO parent General Tire, bankrolled Jean Shepherd's stunning, breathtaking, anarchist monologues on WOR for 19 years without ever profiting from his show. (Hear him today at flicklives.com.)

ABC chairman Leonard Goldenson payrolled Allen Shaw's concept of album rock. Leonard also fought the Department of Justice and initiated the concept of multiple networks under one roof, splitting the ABC Networks into four in 1968 and then six. They lost money for many years until their potential was unlocked by Ed McLaughlin, becoming the shining standard of network radio.

NBC CEO Fred Silverman applauded my team's vision for AC on FM and didn't blink when we hired Dr. Ruth Westheimer for her first job in media.

Jeff Smulyan, please don't forget, stood in the betting line for the first American all-sports station, WFAN/New York. Mel Karmazin hired Howard Stern after cowards fired him and backed Stern through insulting rounds of multimillion-dollar FCC fines. Where-oh-where was the industry outrage about those fines?

In 1990, Bob McAllan risked personal money to bring life to the first 24/7 FM talk station aimed at a young audience, local live New Jersey 101.5, WKXW-FM. Today, NJ 101.5 sells almost a 1 million cume. McAllan did it again by launching WTKS (Real Radio 104.1)/Orlando.

Karmazin, Leon Black, Marc Rowan, Joe Clayton and the board of Sirius made a financial commitment to cutting-edge, brand-new content that makes Sirius the leading satellite radio company.

—Walter Sabo, president
Sabo Media

PIVOTAL EVENT 1975

R&R's First Convention

Just 17 months after its launch, Radio & Records threw the first of its annual R&R conventions. The location was the Royal Coach Motor Hotel in Atlanta, featuring panel discussions, seminars, keynote speakers and superstar entertainment. A trendy backgammon tournament rounded out the festivities.

Georgia Lt. Gov. Zell Miller was the primary speaker, with a lineup that included Cheech & Chong, the Pointer Sisters, Jim Stafford, Loudon

Wainwright III and Paul Davis.

Among the radio attendees were Jay Thomas, Scott Shannon, Jerry Clifton, Lee Abrams, John Rook, Michael Spears, Buzz Bennett, Jay Cook, Bob Harper, Bill Hennes, Robin Mitchell, Peter McLane and Bill Tanner;

and record execs included Clive Davis, Joe Smith, Neil Bogart, Al Coury and Russ Regan.

Registration was \$55, a single hotel room was \$18, and a double was \$22. The event ran March 21-23. —Jackie Madrigal



RADIO & RECORDS Convention Memory

"1978 Convention, Dallas: learning how many other small-market PDs there were, like me, with the same challenges. The Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders, my picture with Dolly Parton, Nick Testa, Ben Scotti, Margo Knesz.

"1979 Convention, L.A.: learning how to really read the ARB, Casablanca Records, Donna Summer, the Backlot at Studio One Disco, steak tartare with Bwana Johnny in the 19th-floor hospitality suites, still drunk at 7 a.m. while jogging with Rick Sklar.



"Conventions since then: A million tidbits of useful info, a thousand shrimp, a hundred tote bags, a dozen lifelong friendships formed, a few job opportunities, constant amazement at how hot Erica Farber still looks. Thanks for the memories, R&R!"

—Randy West, president,
trandywest.com

1978

Top 40
BEE GEES Night Fever

Country
WAYLON & WILLIE
Mammas Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up To Be Cowboys



Pop/Adult
BARRY MANILOW Can't Smile Without You

AOR Albums
ROLLING STONES Some Girls

1979

Top 40
ROD STEWART Da Ya Think I'm Sexy

Country
KENNY ROGERS She Believes In Me

Pop/Adult
HERB ALPERT Rise

AOR Albums
SUPERTRAMP Breakfast In America

1980

Contemporary Hit Radio BLONDIE Call Me

