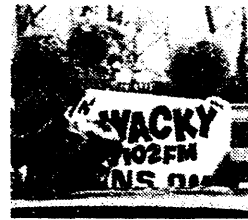


Tuning in on the '79 radio wars



Republican photo by Arthur MacCannell



The giveaway that's stirred a controversy. Page E-4.

By WILLIAM K. HOWARD
Republican Staff

If the radio airwaves seem particularly cluttered with promotions, contests and giveaways this time of year, blame it on the ratings wars.

For the next six weeks, an outside radio polling firm will test the relative popularity of the two dozen radio stations in Greater Springfield. The results of the ARBs (Arbitron Rating Bureau ratings) tell stations how many listeners they have, and indirectly tells station how much they can charge advertisers.

"This is the wildest year yet," said James Rising, operations manager at WAQY-FM.

"There are more promotions and giveaways this year than ever before," he said. "It's no secret a station can increase its listeners during ratings with contests. Everybody has to do it to keep up with everybody else."

How fierce is the competition? One station manager estimates he'll give away \$100,000 in prizes during the ratings. Another station has filed an unfair practices complaint with the Federal Communications Commission, charging a competitor is giving away play money and passing it off as real money.

The working deejay

● You want to be a deejay? Story, Page E-4.

"Sometimes when I get off the air, the sweat on my shirt works all the way down to my elbows," says disc jockey Mike Adams.

Seated at a gadget-filled console that curves around him in a U shape, Adams quarterbacks four tape cartridge players, two record turntables, a tape recorder and five telephones on the 2 to 6 p.m. shift six days a week at WHYN-AM.

If a four-hour-a-day job sounds good, it's not as easy as it sounds. Songs and commercials must blend neatly into the news at the hour and half-hour. Commercials must be logged onto an advertisers' chart. Phone consoles are continually lit. There are contests to run, station jingles to play, and live commercials to be read, all without incurring the dread demon of radio: "dead air," periods when there is no talk, no music, no commercials, nothing but dead air because of a foul-up by the disc jockey.

"That was the Bee Gees and *Fanny* be *Tender*," Adams tells listeners as a song winds down. "A song for a tender fanny. This is Mike Adams, the beast of boogie here on WHYN, the champion of hit music...."

Adams cues and plays another song, then grimaces. "I'll hear on that one from the station," he says off the air. The station does not like anything that is even vaguely sexual or suggestive.

With ratings looming heavily on the minds of station owners, disc jockeys spend nearly all their free time between records handling the busywork involved with contests. In one 45-minute segment, Adams gives away a TV set — "Gonna stick it in your bedroom?" he asks a youthful female winner ("I'll hear from the station on that") — and plays high-low cash call and tells a caller she guessed too high for the jackpot (about \$60) but gives her a consolation (a free ice cream cone). He gives away a dozen records to a caller who has 10 seconds to name all the records she wants, announces a deejay making a promotional appearance at a supermarket will give away 12 silver dollars and announces another deejay will award free fill-ups to the first three motorists with WHYN bumper stickers who show up at a Holyoke

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Deejay Mike Adams of WHYN on the job.

Republican photo by Vincent S. D'Addario

The pecking order stands this way, before the ratings:

WHYN-AM ("Hit music 56") is No. 1. It has more than twice the listeners of the next most popular station, its easy-listening sister station, WHYN-FM ("Music with the soft touch").

WAQY ("Wacky 102") is No. 3. Like WHYN-AM, WAQY plays a top-40 rock 'n' roll format that allows its disc jockeys little freedom to experiment with the music they play. Both have several contests running year-round and disc jockeys, on orders, bubble with enthusiasm round the clock. WSPR-AM, an adult contemporary station (popular music with the hardest rock excluded) is No. 4.

The challenger for a high ratings spot is WMAS-FM ("Disco 95"), which shucked its soft-rock image last November and went to an all-disco format.

"Let's just say we weren't rated very high last year," said WMAS general manager Zachary Land. "I don't know how high we'll get, but I think we'll move up."

At WMAS, there are fewer station jingles and disc jockeys are less boisterous on the air because, according to Land, "The energy level of disco is so high it doesn't need to be exacerbated by the disc jockeys."

Land's station has the advantage of being on the FM band, which has better signal quality than AM and the ability to broadcast in stereo. One drawback: not everyone has FM radio at home or in the car.

"When everybody has FM radio, you can kiss AM toodle-oo," Land said.

Land claims the ratings show FM has greater overall listenership than AM in the area. WHYN AM and FM general manager Phil Drumheller disagreed and said AM is still No. 1 overall. WAQY's Rising

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Mustering against the nukes

Ralph Nader calls a national meeting of citizens to stop the development of nuclear power until it can be proven



United Press International Telephoto

Consumer activist Ralph Nader told a news conference last week that President Carter has misled the public about nuclear energy. With a coalition of unions and congressmen, Nader called for a march against nuclear energy May 6 in Washington.

'Three Mile Island will swell the movement enormously' — Daniel Ellsberg

By STEVE HAGEY
United Press International

The specter of the silent seeds of cancer spewing from the stacks of Three Mile Island's power plant has spawned intense new opposition from anti-nuclear groups bent on dismantling America's atomic power industry.

Coming when it did — amid the Karen Silkwood plutonium damage suit in Oklahoma and an eerily timed anti-nuclear movie, "The China Syndrome" — the scare at the Three Mile Island plant at Middletown, Pa., turned a rudderless movement into a nationwide force commanding attention.

"Three Mile Island will swell the movement enormously," said Daniel Ellsberg, who released the "Pentagon Papers" and went to jail for protesting a nuclear weapons plant in Rocky Flats, Colo.

Anti-nuclear activists in years past have met with skepticism, but now, in the aftermath of Three Mile Island, the revitalized movement is gearing up to take on an industry that even supporters admit markets a technology not completely controllable.

While voters in Austin, Texas narrowly approved atomic power by endorsing a plant now under construction, and government studies so far show no problem from radiation leaks in the rolling Pennsylvania hills, the activists are unconvinced.

"People will join the movement because they see it has every chance of success," Ellsberg said. "They'll see that the people who've been warning them about nuclear energy weren't just exaggerating — they were true Paul Reveres."

But on the pro-nuclear side, the industry's trade association, the Atomic Industrial Forum, insists the rest of the American public believes in nuclear power.

Eugene Gantzhorn, the forum's nuclear information manager, says the Austin referendum demonstrates public support for nuclear power.

"It shows that the public, like a laser beam, cuts

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How will the 'Margaret Factor' affect Pierre Trudeau's chances in the Canadian election next month? Margaret Trudeau's revealing book is making waves. Story, Page E-5