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Thursday, June 18th 2009

Leave the light on...



Motel 6 spot wins the \$100,000 Radio Mercury Award.

It's not the first Big Win for Motel 6 or for the Dallas-based Richards Group, but they were celebrating last night at the Lighthouse at New York's Pier 61 on the West Side. To help along the celebration, the RAB invited New York radio talents

like Craig Carton from WFAN's Boomer & Carton, Dan Taylor of WCBS-FM and Lisa Paige from the new 92.3 Now FM. This year's Radio Mercurys generated controversy because of the awards the judges chose not to give – especially for “station-produced.” I don't buy the idea that the awards are trying to conserve money - I've been on some judging panels, and sometimes you really do sit in a room for several hours and eventually say “none of these are truly excellent.” No matter what you think of the makeup of the judging group, I bet that's what happened this year with the Station Produced, Political, Student-Produced, and PSA categories. In fact the Radio Mercury Awards program intends to offer even more prize money for 2010 –

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Cash prize to double for “Station Produced” Radio Mercury Award, to \$10,000.

Ditto for the Student prize (doubling to \$5,000), and the PSA prize (raised to \$5,000, given to charity). Raising the cash incentive for Station Produced from \$5,000 to \$10,000 should answer the question about how well the program treats radio station creative efforts – and about the program's bankroll. Actually, “Station Produced” wasn't even an original category for the Mercurys. Jim Thompson's early-1990s idea was to incentivize the agencies with a huge check, and radio stations still aren't eligible for the \$100,000 grand prize. (That's the one that went to The Richards Group this year.) Last night's other cash prizes were awarded to JWT for the first Integrated Campaign Award (client Jet Blue, \$10,000). To Young & Rubicam New York for Office Depot. BBDO New York for AT&T. DDB Chicago for Anheuser-Busch (for “Mr.



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Championship Ring Designer"). And Grupo Gallegos in the Spanish Language category for client Comcast. There was another first-time Mercury category, for Marketer of the Year. Winner - McDonald's. It's too bad there's a hue and cry about not awarding some prizes this time, and there are definitely some hard feelings. But if the idea of the Mercurys is to salute excellence - then we need to create more of it, right?

The RAB strikes a new alliance with the VCU Brandcenter to run workshops for radio creative.

RAB President/CEO Jeff Haley wants to get stations and advertisers closer together. If radio should be listening more to its customers (as consultant John Parikhhal keeps telling me), then sitting down around a table with advertisers at the creative level is probably a very smart thing. Another new feature The Radio Mercurys are adding for 2010 - a "People's Choice Award, where industry members can vote online for their favorite creative." Listen to all this year's winners - including the very clever "DVD" spot for Motel 6 featuring Tom Bodett - on the [/rab.com/](http://rab.com/) >RAB.com site.



What's up with Marv Albert, Westwood and the NFL?

I'm now hearing that Marv asked Westwood to wait until the NBA season was over before talking about renewing his deal for football. The Lakers and Kobe Bryant finally brought down the curtain on the long NBA season this week, and now Marv hopes to avoid the curtain coming down on him at Westwood. T-R-I said back in mid-April that he's been making TV-type money for his radio gig, and Westwood may want him to scale that back - a lot. But they haven't announced any talent to replace him, and it may be that the longer this goes on, the better Marv's chances are. One thing's for sure - this year more than ever, you're hearing about "NFL" and "dollars", given Westwood's aggressive signings with individual teams, as well as the league deal. That game schedule is [here](#) and Westwood One Network Prez Gary Schonfeld says he's sitting on rights agreements with 23 individual teams, including 12 of the last 13 Super Bowl Champions. They'll have the usual 57-game NFL package, including Monday night, Sunday night, Thursday night and Saturday night, plus a separate Sunday afternoon doubleheader package beginning September 13. Speaking of sports and money -

WSB, Atlanta (750) remains the flagship for University of Georgia - but radio rights go to ISP Sports in a monster deal.

The numbers are stunning - North Carolina-based ISP Sports pays \$92.8 million over eight years for a media rights and marketing package that appears to be the richest ever in college football. The [Atlanta Business Chronicle](#) calculates that the \$92.8 million works out to \$11.6 million a year, and the radio rights are now bundled in. WSB has aired Georgia Bulldogs football games since (not a misprint) 1939, and it's had the radio network and coaches' show rights since 1995. ISP already had the sponsorship and marketing rights and gets radio plus the TV coaches' show. This is the largest single deal ISP has ever done and it's bigger than the \$11 million-a-year deal Ohio State cut with IMG College.

A vertical advertisement for "Smerconish THE BALD TRUTH". At the top is a logo featuring a white silhouette of a bald head against a blue and red background. Below the logo, the text "Smerconish" is in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Underneath that, "THE BALD TRUTH" is written in very large, bold, black, sans-serif capital letters. Below the title, it says "Two live shows daily. 6-9 ET. Noon-3P ET." in a smaller black font. Further down is the "DIAL GLOBAL" logo, which consists of a blue oval with the words "DIAL GLOBAL" in white. Below that is the phone number "800.611.5663" in red. At the bottom of the ad is a close-up photograph of a bald man's head.

A yellow rectangular advertisement for "KSR Kelly Music Research". The text "KSR" is in large, bold, black letters at the top. Below it, "KELLY" is in a smaller, bold, black font, followed by "MUSIC RESEARCH" in an even smaller font. At the bottom, the phone number "610-446-0318" and the website "KellyMusic.com" are listed in black text.



The new iPhone is smarter about radio – you can listen in the background.

That's an irritating drawback of the two previous iPhones – they handle just one task at a time, so if you're checking the weather or the stocks, you lose the radio station you were listening to. Apple heard the complaints, and in the new OS 3.0 model, Internet radio will continue streaming as you're using the Safari browser to visit your 401(k). Will that use up more power? Maybe. 3G phones are inherently greedy for power. If you have an iPhone or are considering one, allow me to suggest an additional battery pack such as the Mophie Juice Pack that I've had since last Fall. It looks like a normal protective case – but it's actually a form-fitting battery. Back to Apple's addition of background streaming – this is a good thing for Internet radio and broadcast stations who stream. Radio's going to pop up in all sorts of ways, and Apple knows it. They still don't want to put an actual FM receiver in their phone, though.

iPhones and iPod Touches add Sirius XM programming – through a new app.

Car sales may be lousy – but Apple has sold over 40 million units of the iPhone or iPod Touch, and this opens up a whole new universe for Sirius XM. It said this feature would be available in the second quarter and they hit it with two weeks to spare. Satellite subscribers who already pay for the Internet option can listen to Sirius XM for free, after downloading the new software from the App Store. Those who aren't signed up for the Internet option (where you can listen over any computer) will pay \$2.99 a month for premium online service. Mel Karmazin's known for years that satellite-distributed programming isn't his real business – content is. He'll need to keep pushing it out to other mobile and Internet devices, but the new app for iPhone/iPod Touch is a start. It may help make up some of the ground from car sales, and it gives him a new revenue category to report on. Karmazin recently confessed to the company's first-ever quarter-to-quarter decline in subscriptions. At the end of Q1, the company was down about 400,000 subs compared to New Year's Day.

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Time for equal time, in Yakima?

KIT (1280) morning drive news personality Dave Ettl decided to run for City Council in the Washington state town, and that brings up the always-confusing question of equal time for political candidates. That's because GAP Broadcasting would like to keep Dave on the air, and city council-race opponent Sonia Rodriguez tells [KAPP-TV](#) "I want the time the rules allow for and require...This is a well-known issue and one the station is going to have to deal with." So what's the law? Ettl calculates that he spends about 40 minutes of actual talk-time per day. I asked [communications attorney John Garziglia of Womble Carlyle](#) for his take – "The short answer is that Ettl's opponents are entitled to equal opportunities for the 40 minutes per day, and it does not have to be one 40-minute block of time. His opponents can ask for, and are entitled to, 40 one-minute spots, or 80 30-second spots, etc. The station and Ettl can attempt to reach an agreement with the opposing candidates, but the FCC will not enforce such an agreement. If an opposition candidate changes his or her mind, the station is obligated to run the equal opportunities. There is only one good answer – Remove Dave from the air until he either wins or loses the seat."

[ChicagoSportsWebio.com](#) Fugitive Webio Radio owner David Hernandez faces criminal charges.

First it was the SEC heaping civil charges of running a Ponzi scheme on him, for the alleged theft of \$11 million from more than 100 people who invested with him through NextStep Financial. Now the [Chicago Tribune](#) says the U.S. attorney's office has issued a warrant for criminal mail fraud. But nobody knows where Hernandez is. He hasn't been seen since Monday, when he drove off in his olive-colored 2005 Ford Explorer.

Meanwhile the Webio sports Internet radio operation that he bankrolled through Spectrum Entertainment Group continues, with talent like Mike North and Chet Coppock still on the job, despite the rubber paychecks from Hernandez. The missing money guy had been talking about expanding Webio into broadcast radio – but now he's more likely to appear on police radio.

Toledo rocker “106.5 The Zone” is the latest convert to sports on FM.

Though it's a limited signal – a Class A licensed to Delta, Ohio, southwest of Toledo. But costs are costs, and Cumulus figures the strategic move to simulcast an existing format – sports “Ticket” WLQR at 1470 – on WRWK will save some money and may attract more of those saleable 25-54 demos. WLQR PD Norm Warner tells the [Toledo Blade](#) “everyone has been having a tough time with the economy, but the sports format [on WLQR] has been terrific.” So can it be twice as terrific, on two signals? That's what the Ohio Board of Radio-Info.com has been asking since the Blade story yesterday morning. The Ticket holds the local rights to Detroit's NFL Lions, baseball Tigers, and the Stanley Cup-contending NHL Red Wings. Now with two signals, Cumulus can split the “Ticket” (sorry) by airing a Tigers game on the AM and the Red Wings on FM. WLQR's got the local ESPN affiliation. The Ohio Board has its own thoughts. 🗨️



“Crowdsourcing” may be the next hot new PD, say CBS Radio and “Jelli.”

“100% user-controlled broadcasting” and “No suits, no DJs, no kidding” are the hallmarks of a new social networking site that lets fans of a station control the music programming, in real time. CBS is trying it out first in – where else? – San Francisco,

on modern rock Live 105/KITS. It's choosing a timeslot with very small tune-in (10pm to midnight on Sundays) to give it a go, starting June 28. San Francisco is also the market where CBS attempted an all-podcasting format, on its 1550 AM facility. Mike Dougherty at Jelli.net says “our vision is to bring the power of the web to the airwaves by creating 100% user-controlled broadcasting.” The crowdsourcing of music decisions includes real-time voting and social networking on the side – a chance to interact with other listeners. The San Francisco Board at Radio-Info.com is sampling Jelli now. 🗨️



May PPMs for New York –

CBS Radio's new CHR challenger “92.3 Now” WXRK is gaining rapidly in 6+ cume (about 1.5 million in March, 2.5 million now) and AQH share (1.4-1.5-1.8). That means it's now passed Emmis' adult alternative WRXP (1.3-1.5-1.5). Up at the top of the rankings – the “Lite” remains strong, as AC WLTW is consistent, 6.2-5.9-6.2. Ratings historian Chris Huff tells T-R-I

“It's now seven straight #1 PPM books for Lite, and the ninth overall in New York's 12-book PPM history.” Clear Channel sister Z100, CHR WHTZ, remains second (4.8-4.9-5.1), just a Z or two ahead of third-place classic hits WCBS-FM (4.7-4.8-4.9). All-news WCBS-AM (880) is up 3.7-4.1-4.4, now occupying fourth place. That may reflect the soap opera of New York's mayoral race and what's been happening at the state capital in Albany. All-sports “Fan” WFAN (660) improves 2.1-3.4-3.8 (Mets baseball?). Study all the new May People Meter numbers – cumes and shares – on the Ratings Page of Radio-Info, [here](#).



Los Angeles –

So far, there's room enough for two CHRs in SoCal. There's a steady growth curve for new top 40 “Amp 97.1” KLSX. It's moved 3.2-3.7-3.9 (age 6+ AQH share) for March-April-May, and is tied for fourth place. While top-ranked KIIS-FM shows a

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three-month line of 5.2-4.9-5.3. Chris Huff says "KIIS continues to roll - it's topped every PPM month in Los Angeles except the Holiday month." Governor Schwarzenegger's budget crisis is probably good for the ratings at talk KFI - 4.5-4.5-4.9, and a solid second place. Chris Huff says "that's the highest top-line share for KFI since Richard Nixon was president", way back in the diary days. So how about L.A.'s newest station, Spanish hits KXOS (93.9)? Mexico's Grupo Radio Centro recently began LMAing the former KMVN, and it's now a 1.1 share. The Los Angeles Board at Radio-Info.com went loco talking about that part of the numbers - 🗨️



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» Arbitrons May PPMs

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1. New York - 15,344,600
2. Los Angeles - 10,902,400
3. Chicago - 7,784,400
4. San Francisco- 5,969,400
5. Dallas-Ft. Worth - 4,973,000
6. Houston-Galveston - 4,639,000
8. Philadelphia - 4,352,800
19. Nassau-Suffolk - 2,325,200
26. Riverside-San Bernardino - 1,854,600
35. San Jose - 1,482,100
38. Middlesex-Somerset-Union - 1,381,900

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

» Buzzing on the Boards

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Did Memphis radio miss a chance to keep covering last Friday's major storms? There are some sophisticated postings here about what local radio can be expected to do, these days - and a funny comment about the transistor radio on Gilligan's Island, when it would pause during transmissions to let the stranded boat passengers talk amongst themselves. Interesting thread. 🗨️

» Wheeling and Dealing

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In the Pittsburgh area, the much-sold and often-changed WZUM, Carnegie, PA (1550) is dealt away to Katrina Chase for \$800,000. She's the president of the non-profit Believe and Achieve Family and Educational Center of Norfolk. You may recall that Chase's Faith Broadcasting just cut a deal to acquire WLTQ-AM, Charleston, SC (730). She's been busy. In the WZUM deal, the seller is Sovereign City Radio Services of Green Bay. That's Mark Follett, and you wonder whether other Sovereign City stations will turn up in this "Wheeling and Dealing" section. Broker Gene Ferry says



the price for WZUM breaks down to a \$25,000 down payment, a \$75,000 note, and \$700,000 tax certificate. Chase's company is operating WZUM under an LMA now. The station's got 1-kw days and 24 watts at night.

» Sound Bites

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"I just hate to see Arbitron get any credit it doesn't deserve..." says Irv Goldstein. The WLAD/WDAQ/WREF, Danbury general manager couldn't help dashing off this response to [Lindsay Wood Davis' column on Radio-Info.com](#) about Arbitron – about how its "Soup Nazi" culture needs a good clean sweep under the new management. Irv writes – "As a former Arbitron Advisory Council Chairman, I couldn't agree more with Lindsay's comments that it was time to throw out the baby with the bath water. Unfortunately, I couldn't agree less with his comments that Arbitron has gotten the science right. The company has long ignored the many issues in its diary markets, offering Band-Aids like two-book averages instead. Only now, facing a legitimate challenge from an established brand name competitor, has Arbitron finally moved beyond lip service and actually taken steps - or announced them anyway - to try to improve performance in these markets. For now, however, I just hate to see Arbitron get any credit it doesn't deserve."

"The Canadian government's licensing of a 97.5 in Windsor will be an interesting experiment in removing third-adjacent protection", says T-R-I reader and "ex-Toledoan, Tom Taggart." He spotted yesterday's story about the CRTC approving the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for a new FM at 97.5 and says "with the U.S. proposal in Congress pending to remove third-adjacent protection" – to foster many new Low Power FMs – "it will be an interesting experiment to see how the new CBE-FM on 97.5 does against Detroit Class B stations WXYT-FM at 97.1 and WJLB at 97.9." Canada's CRTC is willing to license stations that close together. The FCC can't, at least yet.

Albuquerque's KIVA (1550) switches from "Soft Favorites" to talk, dropping a format it's done for over three years. (It was adult standards before that.) Vanguard Media-owned KIVA flipped on Monday.



Texas Tech's KTXT (88.1) is finally back on the air, just barely. At the moment it's doing some public radio talk and information shows, and (the rest of the day) jazz off a hard drive. KTXT, Lubbock used to be an adult alternative station that had student involvement, but a tiny budget made the school turn it off last December. [LubbockOnline.com](#) says things might improve when KTXT and its healthier sister station KOHM

(classical at 89.1) can move to larger facilities. Manager Derrick Ginter says the jazz format will stay, even if the operation gets a real operating budget.



A farmer's hay-mower clipped a guy wire on KFEQ-AM's tower in St. Joseph, Missouri – and the 360-foot stick came crashing to the ground. Fortunately KFEQ's got a four-tower setup and this calamity will only cause it to reduce nighttime power from its authorized 5-kw. Eagle Communications GM Gary Exline tells the Radio-Info.com site

that the casualty was "Tower 4 of a four-tower array, originally built in the 1940s, out in a big field." Nobody was hurt, but it's a mess on the ground. The 5-kw daytime signal of agricultural/talk KFEQ at 680 isn't affected.



Scott Gilreath's new RASS signs Moby (both of him) and the New Broadcast Partners. That's a lot of "new" in one headline, but Scott's Radio Affiliate Services & Syndication debuted just a few weeks ago, and "New BP" is the name of



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the programming/consulting shop formed by Ken Moultrie and Mike Bettelli. Ken and Mike worked at the original BP (Broadcast Programming) in Seattle, and were in on the syndication of Delilah, Lia, Bill Cody's Classic Country Weekend, and Danny Wright All Night. Now Gilreath's RASS will rep Ken and Mike as "New BP." RASS is also working with Moby, and when I say "both of him", that means #1, the syndicated Moby in the Morning show, and #2, the soon-to-expand Moby Radio Network. Moby and his folks see the current economic climate as a perfect time to offer additional plug-and-play dayparts, and they'll announce a midday show in early July. The goal is to have a fulltime 24/7 country radio network whose individual parts can also be used by client stations.



iBiquity says HD digital radio can help during emergencies, as it signs a development deal with Sage Alerting Systems (which has years of experience with EAS) and SpectraRep, which is active across a range of emergency notification. They'll jointly develop a system that's both targetable and wide-ranging, using the backbone of radio's local delivery via broadcast towers. "Targetable" might mean the system would signal only first responders, or citizens with specific medical or other needs (like dialysis patients), or those in particular neighborhoods.

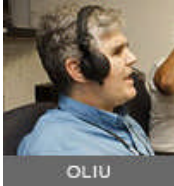


If you dig vintage radios, drop in on Jack LaVelle's museum in suburban Chicago. It's not in any of the guidebooks and the tour buses don't stop there – it's just Jack's overflowing collection of 600 vintage radios, gathered over a lifetime. The Antique Radio Museum has examples from the very early days up through the 1950s, and 72-year-old Jack would

love to give you a tour, says the [Chicago Tribune](#).

» Faces on the Radio

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Enrique Oliu gets an admiring profile from USA Today – a profile he won't be able to see, since he's blind. He also happens to be the very proud color announcer for the Spanish-language broadcasts of the Tampa Bay Rays. Enrique's been blind since he was born in Nicaragua – but nobody has more passion for the game of beisbol, or a better memory. Read the feature [here](#).

Bob Lawrence, who called Islanders NHL hockey games for years and programmed and managed WGBB (1240) on Long Island, has died of lung cancer at 70. [Newsday](#) says he attended a reunion for station personnel on April 26 and didn't talk much about his three-year bout with cancer - instead, he saluted the careers of those he'd worked with back then, such as Ted David. Bob Lawrence, born Robert Lindstrom, died last Friday in Williamstown, NJ. Newsday remembers that Lawrence was doing a sports call-in show on the Island before WFAN became the world's first all-sports station, and he called local high school football.

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