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TAYLOR ON RADIO-INFO

Radio-Info.com

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Wednesday, April 9, 2008

Delay of Game

The Final Four meant the banks' lawyers couldn't get hotel rooms in San Antonio...

That's literally the story I hear, that the college hoops crowds took all the nice rooms where the out-of-town attorneys for the banks in the Clear Channel lawsuit would like to have stayed. So yesterday's showdown is postponed to Friday, by "mutual agreement." Judges are usually willing to grant minor delays to accommodate the travel and work plans of attorneys and principals, and that's what happened here. But that doesn't make the eventual hearing any more pleasant to contemplate – you've got a local Texas judge who's already granted a Temporary Restraining Order, hearing the arguments from six banks about why they aren't committing "tortious interference" with the \$19.5 billion buyout of a Texas firm. The two private equity buyers, Bain Capital and Thomas H. Lee Partners, want the TRO made permanent. That would seriously raise the pressure on the lending consortium led by Citigroup – maybe enough to force a re-negotiation. Lots of folks think that's the only viable solution. But one T-R-I reader says "Clear Channel's still got just a contract-law claim in a state court, and this doesn't have to be over anytime soon." The next action on the New York Supreme Court suit, also against the lenders, isn't due until at least May 5. Clear Channel stock ("CCU") added 21 cents yesterday to close at \$28.75. That's more than 10 bucks below the Bain/Lee offer of \$39.20.



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BIA's list of top-ten billers for 2007 starts with a rock station: L.A.'s modern rock KROQ.

BIA Financial has the CBS Radio KROQ literally dead-even with its 2006 billings, at an estimated \$67,600,000. But look at its growth curve since 2002: \$47.7M, \$53.9M, \$58.6M, \$60.3M, and then \$67.6M for both 2006 and 2007. #2 biller is another Los Angeles station: Clear Channel CHR KIIS-FM, up – way up – from \$52.8M in 2006 to \$65.9M in 2007. You wonder if KIIS-FM aspires to once again return to the #1 billing-champ title it once held, years ago? Then comes CC's "Lite" AC WLTW, New York (\$60M to \$62.8M). #4 is Clear Channel's talk KFI, Los Angeles (\$59.3M to \$61.1M). And CBS's "1010 WINS", New York (\$60.8M to \$57.7M). The second five? KCBS-FM L.A., KOST L.A., WCBS-AM New York, Z100 New York, and then the only non-New York or L.A. player – Bonneville all-news WTOP, Washington, at \$51.15M. There used to be more New York stations in the top 10, and one reason there's not is the Don Imus fiasco of almost exactly one



year ago: BIA estimates that WFAN's revenue hurtled downwards from \$52.5M in 2006 to \$37.5M in 2007. That's what losing your franchise morning show can do to you. Okay, so what were the biggest markets doing, last year?

At \$1.1 billion, Los Angeles gets to keep saying "We're #1."

L.A. was followed on the BIA list by New York (\$755M), Chicago (\$555M), Dallas (\$416M) and Atlanta (\$398.5M). You won't be surprised to learn the big markets were down last year, and that smaller metros like Wilkes-Barre/Scranton (up 8%), Des Moines (up 6%) and Poughkeepsie (up 5.4%) were more congenial places to be. It wasn't that many years ago when some radio station buyers avoided markets like those, because of the economics of the marketplace (older cities with shrinking business bases) and the number of competitors. Now – they're the places to be. All the BIA numbers are from the just-issued Investing in Radio Market Report, out just in time for next week's NAB convention in Las Vegas. BIA's Mark Fratrick estimates that radio could be down "as much as 3.1%" this year, because of the economy and what's happening in larger markets. But he believes they should start turning around (with the economy and digital) in 2009. BIA figures radio revenues slipped about 2.3% last year. Fratrick tells the New York Daily News' David Hinckley that the Big Apple dropped about 3.5% between 2006 and 2007. Hinckley points up a multi-year trend at one station that's a big part of what's happened at CBS Radio lately: "K-Rock" – briefly "Free FM" – WXRK went from \$53.2M in 2005 to \$50.8M in 2006 – to just \$17M in 2007. That's the impact of Howard Stern (and replacements like David Lee Roth, et. al.) and one of the reasons Joel Hollander and now Dan Mason are rowing against the tide. And check former Stern station KLSX in Los Angeles – off from \$51.2M to \$31M in just one year.

Fisticuffs over FM spectrum, between Low Power FM's and translators.

Yesterday's eye-glazing "suspension of the dismissal" of FM translator applications by the FCC cloaks a dramatic back story – partly because it signals more delays for people who thought they had a clear path to gaining a translator. But beyond that, communications attorney John Garziglia says "the political pressure to allow Low Power FM's on 2nd and 3rd adjacent channels will become even greater" as time drags on. (That's a question for Congress, and they're chewing on it.) And way beyond that – you get a tiny glimpse of the tension between religious broadcasters who've quietly built mammoth chains of translators, and the newer LPFM crowd. Some of those religious broadcasters used the most recent filing window to put literally thousands of applications in the hopper. The FCC – mindful of the alleged abuses that happened in the window before that one – adopted a sensible-sounding "Choose 10" policy. But now it's heeding the petitions for reconsideration by the mass filers, and suspending Choose 10. Garziglia says "this abrupt reversal likely shows the extent to which religious broadcasters have political power at the FCC." Most likely scenario – this whole stop-and-go process is back in "pause" mode for a long time to come. Few details in the Media Bureau's decision yesterday, so it's a fast read, [here](#).

L.A.'s new "Sound 100.3" is "comfortably hip."

Bonneville chief Bruce Reese might disclose, under sodium pentothal, that one of his alltime favorite stations to listen to is KFOG in San Francisco – one of the iconic adult alternative, or AAA, stations. Now Bonneville's paying \$137.5 million plus the startup expenses for the chance to create such a format in Southern California. Or – is Reese remembering the "World Class Rock" that ran for a while on the 103.1 siblings (KACD/KBCD), until they fell to the commercial pressures of the Clear Channel/AMFM merger in 2000? Back to the present – where "World Class Rock" now reigns on KRBV, the 100.3 facility that Bonneville's buying from Radio One. Chicago-based Executive VP Drew Horowitz and VP/Programming Greg Solk have their hands on the controls of the new "Sound" and they'll be hiring a full staff. Imagine the line outside that door, probably including some former KACD/KBCD folks, who may've also worked at adult alternative predecessor KSCA in the late 1990s.



Bonneville's already got one "Sound" – in Cincinnati.

It's the adult alternative WSWD (94.9) it picked up from Entercom as part of the swap-meet among Bonneville, Entercom, CBS and Cumulus/Susquehanna. The logos of the existing Cincinnati Sound and the new one in San Francisco bear a family resemblance, but that doesn't mean they're separated-at-birth in terms of programming – not at all. (Even if the mission statements and credos sound similar.) More than any other format, the various executions of adult alternative are distinct from each other, because every city's unique, and every PD's vision is different. There are fewer than 100 commercial AAA stations, and it's interesting how many of them, percentage-wise, are operated by Bonneville and Entercom. I'm told that Entercom's David Field feels strongly about the format (something you can sense from



what's on the walls at the corporate offices in Bala Cynwyd, PA). While AAA is a format that the LDS Church-owned Bonneville can feel comfortable with – unlike CHR or urban or modern rock, which all carry song lyrics and other content (like bar promotions) that are problematic for the church. But there is another format Bonneville's attracted to –

Bonneville didn't do news/talk this time. But next time, it might.

All the rumors about people at existing Bonneville news/talk facilities being cued up for a trip to Los Angeles for a format launch were great cover for its real intention to do "The Sound." (And realistically, would other operators have been able to shut down the opening for AAA? Probably not.) But Bonneville loves the combination of news/talk on FM, as it's proving with screamingly good 25-54 numbers on WTOP, Washington (103.5), and then on KTAR, Phoenix (92.3) and on the KSL-AM/FM simulcast in Salt Lake. So the next time Bruce Reese starts maneuvering to buy or swap for an FM – the news/talk rumors could be true.

Clear Channel puts more on the plate of Premiere's Charlie Rahilly – oversight of RCS and LAN.

John Hogan re-distributes some of the management load, as Jerry Kersting packs up to leave for his new job with Tribune in Chicago. I told you that Kersting has not only been the "deal guy" for Clear Channel Radio, he's been overseeing the "departing markets" – now to be re-introduced to their kinfolks at the regional level. But now T-R-I hears that Kersting's oversight of RCS and Viero parent LAN International passes to Charlie Rahilly (pronounced pretty close to "Riley"). So Philippe Generali at White Plains-based RCS and Sharon Blankenship at Viero parent LAN International will become direct reports to Los Angeles-based Rahilly. RCS originates and distributes software like Selector, Linker and RadioShow, and it's the parent of MediaMonitors. LAN International produces the Viero family of software that includes the Revenue Management tools and the Viero Booking Agent scheduler.



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Clear Channel's new point guy for deals – Dirk Eller.

That's another change announced by John Hogan, as master job-juggler Jerry Kersting heads for the Windy City. He's been the primary contact for would-be station buyers, sellers and brokers, and now that role will be assumed by Dirk Eller, over on the corporate side. Eller's the VP of corporate development for Clear Channel Communications, and he's already been in the loop on radio deals – especially the divestitures that I expect will gain momentum after CC goes private.

Are you a certified radio news junkie?

Then bookmark the full newpage at Radio-Info.com. It takes you straight to everything we've written during the current day, more than the stories that show on the front page. Yesterday there were several format changes, news about WRXP's beefed-up website, and a bunch of "Making Moves" items from both morning and afternoon. Ready for the bookmark? Here it comes: www.radio-info.com/news.



Wheeling and Dealing:

In Riverside-San Bernardino, it's a jaw-dropping price for a standalone expanded-band AM. But the buyer's been LMAing KHPY, Moreno Valley (1670) for five years now, and is within sight of the final payment of \$3 million. Total consideration on paper looks to be \$8,520,000 – not bad for a single AM airing a salad-bowl of programs in a variegated market. Seller is the local Delbert Leroy Van Voorhis Revocable Trust, and the buyer is El Sembrador Ministries, which has no other broadcast interests. Almost all expanded-band AMs – located between 1610 and 1700 KHz – were originally licensed for 10-kw days and 1-kw nights. But the Commission allowed this particular one to raise its night power (now directional) to 9-kw, because of the terrain. The FCC shows the actual transmitter located north of Moreno Valley, up toward Redlands, and to the East of both population centers of Riverside and San Bernardino.

In Williamsport, PA, all-sports WLYC (1050) is sold for \$150,000, but the seller – Jeffrey Andrulonis – stays around to become a one-third partner in buyer Colonial Radio Group of Williamsport. His equal partners are now Daniel Klingerman and Lawrence Allison, and this does qualify as a "change in control." But this routine-looking application gets a lot more interesting when you go spelunking

(cave-exploring) through the FCC documents –

More evidence the FCC is pushing ahead to license FM translators to AMs.

Attached to the WLYC paperwork is something exotic – a “Legal STA” form. (“STA” meaning Special Temporary Authority.) AMs that are daytimers or are hobbled by very low night power are interested in getting translators that fill out their coverage, and here’s the tale from the FCC files that’s told by Jeffrey Andrulonis: tagging along with the \$150,000 deal for WLYC, Williamsport is an FM translator at 104.3 in Hughesville, PA. That’s apparently on the air now, and re-broadcasting Family Life’s WCIT, from outside the market. But the FCC has granted Andrulonis’ request to move the translator into Williamsport and bump it down from 104.3 to 104.1. There’s a separate filing (now “accepted for filing”) to use it to re-broadcast WLYC. We’ll be watching to see how the FCC deals with that, because that could be a precursor to requests by others. WLYC has 1-kw days but just 30 watts at night, and the app tells the FCC the re-located FM translator would be used to supplement the meager AM nighttime signal – so this is all out in the open.



Sound Bites:

Talker Monica Crowley is in the TRN camp, after leaving the corral at Westwood One. Talk Radio Network boss Mark Masters has made a specialty of signing talent from other syndicators (such as Laura Ingraham, several years ago) and building up their affiliate base. Crowley worked with former President Richard Nixon on his last two books, then wrote two books of her own about his career and legacy. She’s been part of the bench at Fox News Channel since 1996 and has done commentary for NPR and writing for the Wall Street Journal, the New Yorker and others. Her radio home since 2002’s been WABC, New York – and Wikipedia notes that her sister Dr. Jocelyn Crowley is married to Alan Colmes. Small world.



Gossip blogger Perez Hilton on the radio every day? Backed by Steve Lehman and Andy Schuon? No need to check your sources – it’s true. Lehman ran Premiere for many years, and Andy Schuon’s long bio (MTV, VH1, etc.) includes being head of programming at Infinity. Lehman and Schuon’s new venture is (get ready to laugh) “C Student Entertainment.”

Cumulus does a frequency swap in Myrtle Beach, SC, with oldies WSYN shifting from 106.5 to 103.1, and sibling country WYAK taking over 106.5 and re-named as “Wolf.” Oldies WSYN’s using the syndicated John Boy & Billy in mornings, a local midday show, then ABC Radio’s True Oldies.

They’re not just in elevators any more: Muzak and DMX are being cleared to merge. In fact, the competing off-air music providers will combine, and then probably be sold as a single unit. The Department of Justice confirms it won’t object to the merger, and we’ll see what happens to the duplicated music services that come together. (Sort of like the nervous watchers at XM and Sirius, as I can attest from conversations with worker-bees there, below the Mel Karmazin level.)



“Why the Great Radio Rollups Unwound.” That’s the new “On the Mic” guest column from a longtime station operator and industry leader, who says “Somewhere, we became less local and less fun to be around.” Read it [here](#).

Correction: About yesterday’s KXTR, Kansas City item, Mark Edwards at Nassau’s WCRB, Boston says I got the right region of the country, but the wrong syndicator. He says “WCRB has not provided programming for KXTR for quite some time. The World Classical Network, which was part of WCRB under the [previous] ownership of Charles River Broadcasting, remained separate from the sale of WCRB to Nassau. World Classical Network is now headquartered at WFCC in Cape Cod, and WCRB now provides programming only for itself and for our sister stations, Maine’s W-Bach network.” Thanks, Mark.

Buzzing on the Radio-Info.com Message Boards:

San Diego doesn't get that many format changes...but how about one involving oldies?

D Discuss

On the Boston board: it's not a kickback if it's a legally-disclosed endorsement, and the key is "disclosure." Some of Boston's biggest personalities have been tossing around brand names, and here's why. **D Discuss**

Faces on the Radio:

Ken & Corey are the new morning duo at Entercom's San Francisco country "Wolf", KBWF at 95.7. Ken Anderson helped launch the Wolf in Cincinnati, and Corey Foley has been co-hosting wakeups on KDWB, Minneapolis, so they'll be getting a hurry-up lesson in San Francisco geography. Eddie King will be co-host/associate producer and Jake Ray is the producer.

Brian Wilson is indeed going to occupy the midday shift at CBS Radio FM talker WHFS, Baltimore (105.7) – but he's not leaving Toledo to do it. The guy who turned long-distance ISDN line radio into an art form years ago will continue to do his shift on WSPD, Toledo (1370). Clear Channel-Toledo GM Andy Stuart tells the Radio-Info.com website that Wilson is still his PD and "still doing the afternoon show. He's only filing in on WHFS in Baltimore until they have a permanent replacement. He's an old friend of their PD." Back in Baltimore, Ed Norris leaves middays for afternoons, replacing the Don & Mike show – as Don Geronimo prepares to make his final appearance there on Friday.

Mark Suppelsa migrates from the TV-world to one of Chicago's top-rated morning radio shows, as the new news anchor for Eric & Kathy at Bonneville's WTMX (101.9). The Sun-Times says the former WFLD-TV news anchor chose to leave Channel 32 in March and will announce a new TV gig when the 90-day "right-to-match" clause in his deal with Fox expires – but it looks like the radio thing with "Mix" is a permanent new job. He'll replace Barry Keefe, who's leaving after 30 years at WTMX and its predecessor, WCLR.



Suppelsa

"Digger" Clark just passed away, after decades of service as an engineer at L.A.'s KIIS. The poster at Radio-Info.com says "Digger was a friend of everyone that ever worked with him at KIIS." **D Discuss**

That's T-R-I for today - another four full pages and darn near 3000 words about this crazy radio business.



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