“Why aren’t people paying their bills? Sales reps like myself are dying a slow death.”

Partly because of “chargebacks” from the AE’s own station, says this major-market Senior AE. He writes T-R-I to say "As a 20 year seller, I have never seen a period of time where advertisers and/or their agencies are not paying for services rendered. And I am not referring to the fly-by-night companies, the shady business types. I am referring to big time companies. It’s unacceptable! Also, some agencies are waiting until the last possible moment to pay the stations, to hold as much money in their own accounts as possible. Sales reps like myself are dying a slow death as our companies take back sales commissions and don't help us try to collect the cash. More than half of my day is now in 'collection' mode as opposed to 'selling' mode. That does not benefit the company and as a commission-only sales rep, it definitely does not benefit me.”

This guy also has a beef with his own employer – "I am convinced that companies have a line item for 'chargebacks' - when the company retrieves sales commission dollars from reps if they have not been paid by the 90-day mark. Yet if/when the advertiser does pay later, the sales rep does not get that money. There are thousands of dollars at stake at my station due to this. No one wants to talk about it for fear of retribution from their parent companies, for exposing how they continue to screw with the salespeople.”

Got an opinion? I'm at Tom@in3media.com.

“Frightening reports” in D.C. about a performance royalty, from one NAB Board member.

Texas broadcaster Ben Downs was one of the folks who "got some face time” during last
week’s Capitol Hill visits with lawmakers. He tells T-R-I “Our relationships with our Congressmen remain good, but for the first time I heard some frightening reports. During a meeting in the Rayburn Room, just off the House floor, a Member allowed that he didn’t see a way the performance royalty could be stopped if it came to a vote in the House. He said it was a 100% certainty to make it out of the Judiciary Committee. Of course, we are closing in on a majority of Congressmen who have signed on to our anti-performance royalty Concurrent Resolution #49, so his analysis may be pessimistic.” How about Congressman Rick Boucher’s pointed suggestion that broadcasters and the record labels negotiate, so that legislation isn’t necessary? Ben says it’s “only reasonable at first glance. The NAB is taking heat for not being willing to compromise, but in reality a compromise is a defeat for our side. Just look at the streaming rates. At first, when we used Aggregate Tuning Hours for payment, the rates were reasonable. With the passage of time, look how debilitating and onerous they have become.”

Sean “Hollywood” Hamilton returns to L.A. radio on Clear Channel’s “My FM” KBIG.
He’ll occupy afternoon drive, 2-7pm, as he moves onto a station that has relatively few personalities, either local or syndicated – Kari Steele, Billy Bush and Valentine. Hollywood worked at KIIS-FM (102.7) in the Rick Dees era from 1986-1992, and Orange County Register writer Gary Lycan recalls that he “hosted a live satellite radio show from Disneyland” named “Hangin’ with Hollywood.” He interviewed lots of visiting celebs, though Wikipedia claims that a fateful 1992 chat with “a young and nervous Celine Dion” ended that gig. Apparently Hollywood, “in a light-hearted way”, was imitating Celine unconsciously touching her chest – and Disney’s Michael Eisner was there with his kids. “Hangin’” was canceled the next day. Hamilton’s most recent station job was at WKTU, New York, and he’s continued to host syndicated shows for United Stations – “Weekend Top 30” and “Hollywood Hamilton’s Remix Top 40.”

Atlanta’s new “Streetz 102.9” has an HD-2 connection with Clear Channel.
And this looks perfectly legal - a setup where an FM translator repeats an HD-2 signal. The FCC has decided that an HD-2 multi-casting channel is a “station”, and that has opened the doors for creative deals like this one. (The Commission won’t let translators originate their own programming, just repeat that of another station.) Yesterday’s T-R-I speculated that “Extreme Media LLC” had an arrangement with an HD-2 operator to LMA its frequency. And that’s the case. Extreme just paid $235,000 for FM translator W275BK at 102.9 in Atlanta, and now we know that it’s originating the hip-hop “Streetz 102.9” somewhere else - on the HD-2 signal of Clear Channel’s “Viva 105.7” W WAV. To put it another way – this is the tail wagging the dog, since all the branding relates to the frequency of the translator, not the HD-2 channel. But realistically, that’s how most potential listeners will find it. The ever-busy Atlanta board of Radio-Info.com is still talking about the new hip-hop station here. While in another major market, CBS finds a creative (and revenue-enhancing?) use for one of its HD-2 channels –

CBS is using an HD-2 channel in Dallas to run 140 games of the Texas League Frisco RoughRiders.
This is one of the first multi-channel-only play-by-play sports
deals we’ve seen, and KRLD-FM general manager Mike Henry is talking “the mass opportunities for partnerships such as these.” He doesn’t indicate the business terms, but presumably some money is changing hands before the umpire yells “Play ball.” Presumably the HD-2 signal is also streaming on the website of “Fan 105.3.”

Outgoing FCC Commissioner Adelstein keeps attacking the Arbitron PPM.
He again lobbies the Commission to open an investigation and says the authorization to do so lies in the Communications Act. But previous Chairman Kevin Martin wasn’t convinced, and neither, perhaps, is Acting Chairman Michael Copps, who often aligns with his younger Democratic colleague. Jonathan Adelstein is soon to head off to the wilds of the U.S. Agriculture Department, to become the administrator of the Rural Utilities Service (a great job for a guy from South Dakota). But he’s long been sympathetic to the entreaties of minority broadcasters like NABOB (National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters), the Spanish Radio Association and the MMTC (Minority Media & Telecommunications Council). Arbitron notes that it has already made important settlements with New York, New Jersey and Maryland and has agreed to extend the enhancements from those deals to all other PPM markets. Furthermore, Arbitron is continuing to work with the Media Rating Council – which is the agency that’s actually the expert on ratings. Not the FCC.

“If the FCC chooses to pursue more race- or gender-based approaches” to ownership – it will need better data.
You can see where the Commission’s two Democrats are going, by pushing through a big expansion of the requirement to file the Ownership Form 323. It’s partly because the courts “will insist upon” more detailed data to back up future new policies about ownership diversity. So this is just a first step towards new policies. Communications attorney John Garziglia tells T-R-I “this portends the ‘data dump’ that the FCC will be increasingly requiring from broadcasters in its effort to assess whether the public interest is being served.” In the short-term, it will be a new filing burden on not just those radio broadcasters who’ve previously been exempt, but also on low power TV and Class A TV stations. Also on those who hold a minority interest in a corporation which is controlled by a single majority shareholder, and those who haven’t had to file because of the (very complicated) Equity/Debt Plus attribution threshold. In other words - If you’re not an attorney, you’ll need to consult one. The Commission sets a November 1 deadline for filing Form 323, with data “current as of October 1.” After that, it’s an every-two-year requirement. There will be “random audits”, and all the data will be searchable, so that outside groups can look up the minority and female ownership percentages of this or that company.

The FCC also might start collecting ethnic and gender data
from low power FMs and non-coms.

It’s asking for comments on a potential new “FCC Form 323-E”, for non-commercial stations. Ditto for LPFMs. Though it’s also asking for way to “minimize any potential reporting and recordkeeping burdens on non-commercial licensees.” Both of the Commission Democrats (acting Chairman Michael Copps, soon-to-depart Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein) are enthusiastic about casting a wider net to collect data on ownership diversity. Republican Commissioner Robert McDowell, always civil, says “I do not entirely agree with every word in the item, [but] I support this action and look forward to reviewing the information that it will yield.” The “data collection” news release is here.

But the FCC pulled its item about “rural radio.”

Not enough agreement among the three sitting Commissioners to “move the item”, as they say at the Portals? The “policies to promote rural radio service and to streamline allotment and assignment policies” thing was deleted from the agenda just before yesterday’s Open Meeting. And with Jonathan Adelstein to be gone fairly soon, let’s see if any other Commissioners pick up the interest in radio in less-populated places. I still hear that South Carolina utility commissioner Mignon Clyburn is slotted for one vacant Democratic seat, which would bring some diversity to a Commission that’s currently three white guys. As for the empty Republican seat – who knows? The White House typically consults with the minority party to find some acceptable candidates. For now the FCC’s operating with just three Commissioners, and the word is that Adelstein is staying as long as possible, until he’s confirmed for the job at Agriculture.

Carmel’s KRML, the backdrop for Clint Eastwood’s “Play Misty For Me” flick, may be sold.

KRML is closing down its “Jazz and Blues Company” retail store, for sure, and a station sale may follow. KRML’s located in the “historic Eastwood Building in downtown Carmel”, says the Monterey Herald. Owner David Kimball says sale negotiations are being finalized now. The Herald says KRML was listed last year at $1.8 million, along with its “Jazz and Blues Company” operation and a live-performance space. “Jazz by the Sea” KRML is at 1410 and has 500 watts daytime and 16 watts after sundown. As you’d imagine, it also streams its unique jazz and blues programming at KRMLRadio.com. If you haven’t seen the 1971 noir-ish ”Play Misty For Me” – it’s about a whispery-voiced jazz DJ and an obsessed female fan. Eastwood himself is an aficionado of jazz and a pretty fair jazz pianist.

Boston’s WMJX (106.7) gets into FCC trouble with its “Cool, Hot or Green” car contest.

Greater Media now owes a contest violation fine of $4,000, but it could’ve been worse. Problem was, the winner thought she was getting her choice of a new car – not just a two-year lease on one, and a lease for which she’d need to qualify, credit-wise. She was one of the smaller prize-winners who initially got a gas card for $106 and then was fortunate enough to move on to choose from a “cool” car
(a Mercedes-Benz C-series sedan), a "hot" car (Audi TT convertible) or a "green" car (Toyota Prius). WMJX acknowledges that the complete rules were spelled out only on the station website and – importantly – that the on-air promos didn’t refer listeners to that site. Greater Media says it’s undertaken “remedial measures” to prevent such a problem from recurring, and that it deserves a simple admonishment. But the Commission says that’s a non-starter (if you’ll excuse the auto-related pun) – that the base-level contest rule violation fine of $4,000 is appropriate for conducting a contest with "misleading information" in the promos. The agency also reminds everybody of the requirement that a contest’s “material terms” must be fully and accurately disclosed. The FCC notice of apparent liability is here.

**Canada's Corus Radio reports revenue down 6% for the fiscal quarter that ended February 28.**

Corus Radio was still profitable, with $7.1 million going to the bottom line. But that was off from $10.3 million in the previous year. Corus Entertainment President/CEO John Cassaday assumed direct oversight of radio in September when longtime U.S. broadcast exec John Hayes left as president of the radio division. Corus Entertainment continues paying a dividend and just declared dividends on both its Class A and B stock of about a nickel per share. Corus trades on the NYSE as “CJR.” Yesterday it gained 42 cents to finish at $11.50. Its Class B shares trade on the Toronto Exchange as “CJR.B” and they also rose, up 43 cents to $14.26.

**So is Dan Mason really leaving CBS to run Cox? I got asked about that rumor 10 times yesterday.**

The fact is that Dan’s got a three-year deal to run CBS Radio for Leslie Moonves and it’s not up until Spring 2010. (Remember that Mason returned to run CBS the week after the Don Imus fiasco in 2007 – crazy timing.) Could strange things happen? You bet. Are we coming up on a possible two-year window in his deal? Looks like it. But that’s all message-board conjecture that sprang up yesterday. And besides, we don’t know that current Cox Radio boss Bob Neil has plans to go anywhere. Perhaps those rumors are tied to Cox Radio going private at $3.80 a share, if parent Cox Enterprises gets its wish?

**Phase II Arbitrends for Austin, El Paso, Baton Rouge, Johnson City...**

In Austin – talk just gets bigger and bigger, with KLBJ-AM growing 7.3-8.1. In El Paso – it’s a virtual tie at the top this month between Spanish classic hits “Jose” KINT (8.6-8.4) and rival "Que Buena Recuerdo" KBNA (7.5-8.3). In the Louisiana state capital of Baton Rouge, urban AC "Q106" keeps the giant numbers going, 14.4-13.0. And in Johnson City, country dominator WXBJ jumps 17.0-19.6 – though it’s been that high before, and even higher. See all the Phase II diary-based markets on the Ratings Page of Radio-Info.com, here.
The Boston board reports a format change at WEIM, Fitchburg (1280). It's no longer doing Spanish programming, or its previous AC, but is now "News/talk/information Pulse", with new call letters of WPKZ. The board says former WRKO talker Ben Parker is part of the morning team, with Red Sox baseball and Patriots football. The station's owned by Central Broadcasting Company.

WROW, Albany, NY afternoon host and PD Sherman Baldwin has left the building, and the Albany/Hudson Valley board says he was accompanied by co-host John Garb. He tells the Albany Times-Union "I was surprised" about the layoff and says it was a matter of economics. The station will plug in syndicated programming. Pamal Broadcasting owns talk WROW (590), which features Glenn Beck, Dennis Miller, John Gibson, Alan Colmes and (overnights) Joey Reynolds.

It's a déjà vu-deal in Lubbock, Texas for "Rebel 105" KRBL (105.7). Right around Thanksgiving last year, there was a $450,000 deal for Jerry Benavides (as Claro Communications) to buy Class A KRBL, Idalou, Texas. That didn't close and it's been withdrawn ("without penalty", says a new filing). Now there's another filing - by Jerry's two brothers, Albert G. Benavides and Ricky G. Benavides - for a sale at the same price of $450,000. Ahead of the closing, Albert and Ricky will LMA classic country "Rebel" from seller Triumph

Click on the city to review recently released trends. View a complete list of Arbitron markets here.
Communications (Kenneth Ramsey). All three Benavides brothers hold interests in other Texas stations, in various combinations. As with the earlier Claro deal, the broker is Media Services Group.

In Marion-Carbondale, Illinois, talk-formatted WINI (1420) is sold by local couple Nancy and Dale Adkins, to the new WINI Group LLC. Price - $250,000. The Murphysboro American paper says the principals of the buyer are Randolph County residents John Scheper and David Holder. Scheper is the president and GM of Hirsch Communications, which has "Real Country 1230" WHCO in nearby Sparta, IL. You like reading this line in the newspaper – "The new owners say they will continue to operate the station with a strong commitment to the local community." They're keeping the St. Louis Cardinals franchise, adding the Chicago White Sox, and CBS News.

One week from today, there will be an auction of 104 TV facilities – Class A, low power and full-power - belonging to Equity Media Holdings. The broker (Greg Guy of Patrick Communications) observes that these licenses together cover "an estimated 25% of the population." The markets run the gamut from Ft. Myers and Kansas City to Denver and Little Rock. The stations are in Chapter 11, and potential bidders should submit a bid on or before April 13 and supply proof of financial capability. The auction itself goes off at 10am on Thursday, April 16 at Neligan Foley LLP in Dallas.

K-Love and Air 1 parent Educational Media Foundation closes on its $550,000 purchase of two former Clear Channel stations in Maine. Those are WGUY, Dexter, a C2 at 102.1. And WFZX, Searsport, a B1 at 101.7. They’re the two FMs that Blueberry wasn’t allowed to buy when it snapped up 15 other Clear Channel stations in Augusta and Bangor. They’ve temporarily been in the Blueberry Divestiture Trust, overseen by Kalil Holding Group. Now EMF owns them, and broker Kalil & Co. reports that non-commercial Christian radio operator EMF is now right at 250 stations. As always in a deal involving K-Love, the terms are interesting. This time, EMF agreed to pay $225,000 at closing, and the other $325,000 on the installment plan, through June 2011.

» Sound Bites

There’s been so much Hispanic in-migration around Breckenridge, CO, Summit Public Radio has switched one of its signals to simulcasting NRC Broadcasting’s “La Nueva Mix” KQSE (102.5), licensed to Gypsum, CO. They can do that, because 107.1 is a commercial-band frequency. Summit Public Radio says this will be the county’s first Spanish-language radio service. It also says KQSE will be adding local information about school closings, weather, etc. – en Espanol. The board at Summit Public Radio says flipping 107.1 to Spanish "will bridge the communication gap between the English and Spanish-speaking communities.” It estimates that the Summit County School system is now 25% Hispanic. Summit Public Radio continues its non-commercial activities on 88.3, on which it re-broadcasts Ft. Collins non-com KUNC.

This niche is getting bigger – Steve Warren’s latest format offering is Chinese pop music, and it’s available for use on AM, FM or HD stations. (It’s already a 24/7 Internet stream.) The music service is hosted in English, but features "the best variety of contemporary Chinese artists" like – and these core-artist names will be new to you.
Jay Chou, Hins Cheung, Jolin Tsai and Coco Lee, and groups like R.I.R. Boyz and 5566. More on Chinamerica Hit Radio at the website here.

“Ten great radio battles of the 80s and early 90s” – CHR battles – is Sean Ross’ latest theme, and the radio/military historian from Edison Media Research has fun with Q105/WFLZ in Tampa, with “Houston’s five-way CHR battle of Spring 1980”, and WRQX/WPGC, Washington in 1980-81. His premise? “Whatever CBS’ newly launched CHRs may do in Los Angeles and New York, they’ve had the additional effect of reigniting broadcasters’ interest in radio battles beyond their own backyard — no small accomplishment in these dismaying times.” Read up on the Art of CHR War at the Features site of Radio-Info.com, here.

» Faces on the Radio

Nadia Rowinsky, Alejandra Oraa and Azucena Cierco are the anchors of the new “morning reality radio show” named “Hola Miami”, on Spanish Broadcasting System’s “Romance 106.7” WRMA. If it sounds a little like TV’s “The View” – that’s the impression I get, too. These are “three passionate women from different generations.” Hola Miami debuts next Monday and runs 6-10am.

John Clayton is the latest addition to the cast at Seattle’s new all-sports “710 ESPN” KIRO, and it’s a direct swipe from competitor KJR (950). Clayton is an NFL reporter for the big ESPN (the folks in Bristol) and he’s taking his “Sports Saturday” program to Bonneville. The Seattle Times reviews the first day of “710 ESPN” and the corresponding day at KJR, where PD Rich Moore says gosh, “it was a typical day here.”

John Crigler, an attorney at Garvey Schubert Barer, is honored with the 2009 Bader Award from the National Federation of Community Broadcasters, at its just-concluded annual conference in Portland, Oregon. The Bader award is named for Mike Bader, and Crigler is (among other things) the author of the NFCB’s Public Radio Legal Handbook.

Dave Thompson just left Hubbard talker KSTP, St. Paul/Minneapolis (1500) after seven years – and swiftly announces his candidacy for office. He’d like to be the next chairman of he Minnesota Republic Party (says Minnesota Public Radio news). Dave says “the party needs a leader who can clearly communicate the party vision, champion a Republican majority in the legislature, and return the party to its core principles.”

T-R-I is changing email delivery systems, which you probably haven’t noticed. It’s gone very smoothly this week. (Though the IT whiz here at in3media has told me much more about “hard bounces” and “soft bounces” than I ever dreamed about.) Bottom line – if you’re not reliably getting this Taylor on Radio-Info newsletter in your in-box, very early every morning, you might need to “white-list” the sending address, since it’s coming from a different service. Questions? Drop a note to Support@radio-info.com. And remember that you can always log into the T-R-I section of Radio-Info.com and grab any edition you want – from today, or last month.
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