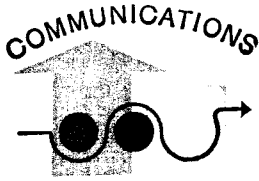


COMMUNICATIONS

Communications Editor: RICHARD L. TOBIN

The Amazing Comeback of Radio



EDITORIAL

By Richard L. Tobin 65

LETTERS TO THE

COMMUNICATIONS EDITOR 66

WHEN A REPORTER ASKS FOR ADVERTISING

By Peter Bart 67

FM: A NEW TREND TOWARD QUALITY

By John Tebbel 70

WHAT SURVEY DO YOU BELIEVE? REBUTTAL FROM THE PRESS

By Arville Schaleben 72

HOW TO WRITE A PERFECT EDITORIAL

By Ralph Schoenstein 74

MAGAZINES: THE PRESS GREETES A RIVAL

By James F. Fixx 76

THE REVIVED ART OF DEBATING

By Hallowell Bowser 78

PR IN THE COMMON MARKET

By L. L. L. Golden 81

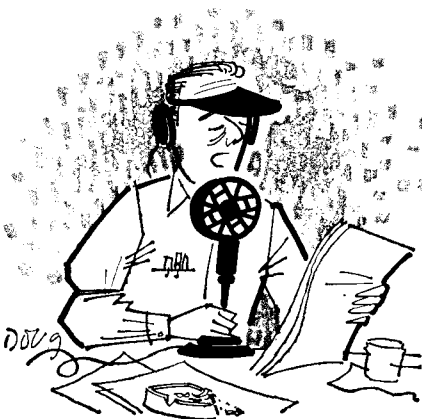
IN A FOREST of excitement over rising postal rates, monumental changes in national magazines, running battles between Newton Minow and the television industry, the Pulitzer Prizes, U.S. Steel's public relations, and other vital communications matters, a unique victory over circumstance has come to pass without fanfare or even much notice. To reduce this quiet but genuine accomplishment to a single fact, old-fashioned radio is making a fantastic comeback. All the more dramatic because it has reached its small triumph via back streets and unmarked roads, far from the glittering highway we know as network television, radio's rebound might well be a casebook for the recovery of sick media anywhere.

Radio in the modern definition includes the tiny local coffeepot as well as the network flagship station, FM as well as AM broadcasting (see John Tebbel's informative article on FM beginning on page 70 of this supplement). Radio broadcasting techniques and programming today are as different from pre-TV radio as pre-radio newspapers were from, say, this morning's *Wall Street Journal* or New York *Herald Tribune*. Editorially stronger than ever and far more conscious of civic responsibility, the good local radio station has, in many areas, now replaced the hard-hitting editorial page as the conscience of its community.

Radio enjoyed its heyday in the 1930s and 40s, taking income from print media on one side and happily cashing in on the Hitler and post-Hitler news crests on the other. In 1945, radio reached a peak of communications effectiveness when it first flashed to the world such dramatic headlines as the sudden death of Roosevelt, VE Day, the atomic explosion, VJ Day, and the beginning of postwar disillusionment. Radio was news king then, no doubt about it. Television did not make much of a mark until the political conventions of 1948, which gave it enormous impetus. From that hour on, radio knew it was in a battle for its very life, as newspapers had since the 1930s been locked in mortal combat with radio.

Radio probably hit bottom in 1955. From a total revenue (network, local, and national spot) on the way to a billion dollars at postwar peak, the income for radio had dropped to \$554 million by 1955. There were those so foolish as to believe that radio was dead and incapable of resuscitation, bravely forecasting that television would take over completely. Yet radio income and listening audiences soon began to rise once again and, by the end of 1961, under the valuable leadership of the Radio Advertising Bureau, radio's total income had topped \$707 million, and the number of U.S. radio stations had jumped from 2,669 to 3,550. New high-water marks will be set in 1962.

Many factors contributed to radio's comeback. The influential *Gallagher Report* was precisely right when it said that "radio was saved by fresh thinking." Intra-industry squabbling so common to magazines, television, and newspapers—so absurd on sister ships in heavy weather—somehow has been avoided in radio. Since much of the best radio management quickly went over to television, a new and uninhibited generation moved in, young men with fresh ideas and approaches. And the result has been a change



upward in radio advertising revenue in the United States, approximately as follows (in millions of dollars):

| | 1948 | 1961 |
|---------|-------|-------|
| Network | 210.6 | 40.0 |
| Spot | 121.1 | 222.0 |
| Local | 229.9 | 445.0 |
| TOTAL | 561.6 | 707.0 |

The Radio Advertising Bureau is run by Kevin Sweeney and Miles David, to whom radio is a religion. Its sole object is to provide radio with leadership, hoping to induce more and more listeners and greater and greater income to radio, and to keep radio's trade flag flying. In the first three months of this year alone, 124 stations joined the RAB.

But the RAB would be totally ineffective had it no legitimate product to sell. Radio broadcasting is a relatively simple process; therefore costs are modest. Compared with the fantastic complexities of television broadcasting, made necessary in part by the addition of sight to sound and in part by unbelievable but understandable stupidity in a young and groping industry, radio is practically a one-man show. Radio is highly ubiquitous; news coverage, for example, is so simple by comparison with TV news coverage that the wonder is we ever thought radio technique complicated in an exciting pre-TV era. Because it has had to in order to exist, radio has simplified its procedures, staffs, cost patterns, network feed techniques, and its trade relationships to a point where a small radio station in a monopoly situation is a valuable and important property. And the invention of the tiny transistor set has given radio a portability about the equal of reading matter.

At the same time that television has reduced its program denominator by genuflecting to enlarging mass audiences, enlightened radio programming has boldly entered new fields of thought, entertainment, ideas, and news coverage never dreamed of when radio did not have to fight for its life. The offensive and omnipresent disk jockey is still an auricular sore, but there are literally hundreds of radio stations in the U.S. nowadays approaching the quality once identified solely with WQXR in New York.

In other words, radio has proved that nothing is too well said and no program too high in quality to attract a substantial audience and income, in either AM or FM. With the coming of summer and greatly increased radio listening via auto, beach, and other portable reception, radio's comeback will even more dramatically prove what fresh thinking, a positive approach, vital leadership, and a quality product can do to heal sick media. —R.L.T.

Letters to the Communications Editor



THE MEANING OF SECTION 315

JOHN TEBBEL's "Freedom of the Air: Myth or Reality?" [SR, April 14] is a thoughtful and appreciated contribution to the continuing fight for freedom of expression. The National Association of Broadcasters' Public Affairs and Editorializing Conference, on which he bases much of his article, helped point up many of the problems which broadcasters face in exercising freedom (of expression) under (technical) license. Follow-up articles such as Mr. Tebbel's help acquaint the public with our problems and thus speed the day of their eventual solution.

Mr. Tebbel did, however, make one serious misstatement which I am sure was unintentional. He said: "The problem of editorializing, at least as far as political candidates are concerned, rests in large part on the meaning and implications of Section 315 of the Communications Act of 1934, which requires stations to give equal time to candidates, *but gives them the power to censor what is broadcast.*" (Emphasis supplied.)

The law does require equal opportunity for candidates, but it also flatly prohibits stations from censoring any candidate's speech. I bring this to your attention in the interest of clarity.

LEROY COLLINS, President,
National Association of Broadcasters.
Washington, D.C.

I READ WITH INTEREST John Tebbel's article "Freedom of the Air: Myth or Reality?" Mr. Tebbel has combined and confused the provisions of Section 315 of the Communications Act of 1934, and has intermingled its provisions with reference to a law regarding a broadcasting station's right to editorialize.

First of all, Section 315 is concerned only with the use of broadcasting facilities by a *legally qualified candidate* for a public office. This section, in part, reads, "If any licensee shall permit any person who is a legally qualified candidate for any public office to use a broadcasting station, he shall afford equal opportunities to all other such candidates for that office in the use of such broadcasting station. . . ." Thus, Section 315 has no jurisdiction over use of a station by a *non-candidate* even if his "message" is political in nature.

In addition, there is no provision for censorship of what is broadcast by a candidate. Section 315 continues: ". . . Such licensee shall have no power of censorship over the material broadcast under the provisions of this section." This further provision of the act has been tested several times, with the same basic results. The Federal Communication Commission's decision in the 1948 Port Huron Case indicated that a licensee may not censor a

political speech by a qualified candidate, even if it is libelous. In the 1951 WDSU political censorship decision involving this New Orleans station, the FCC again stated that the station cannot censor a speech by a candidate, even libelous materials. The Port Huron decision also indicated that a station may censor or delete materials in such a speech that are against federal statutes. These would include materials which are obscene, profane, or indecent. These are forbidden by Section 326 of the act.

So Mr. Tebbel's statement that Section 315 empowers stations to (in his words) "censor what is broadcast" is not true. . . .

There are no provisions in the act, nor are there any specific laws, which dictate a broadcast station's obligation to or responsibilities for espousing an editorial position. The only part of the law referred to is usually Section 307(d), which states that public interest must be served.

It is relatively clear, then, that Section 315 applies only to equal time provided for legally qualified candidates. Any comments by a station that are generally controversial materials are not under jurisdiction of Section 315. And a broadcaster may censor these programs at will; which he may not do on a program by a candidate for office (unless that program violates federal laws or statutes). Obscenity, profanity, and indecency are forbidden by federal law; libelous and defamatory statements are under jurisdiction of state laws.

RAYMOND T. BEDWELL, JR.,
Coordinator and Instructor
in Broadcast Law,
Marquette University.
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

IT WAS A REFRESHING experience to read an article sympathetic to the problem of broadcasters. So many papers and some magazines have published articles on our business without adequate research. However, in "Freedom of the Air: Myth or Reality?" there is an error so gross that it changes the entire spirit of the attitude the author is trying to express. He states that section 315 of the Communications Act of 1934 requires stations to give equal time to candidates but also gives them the *power to censor what is broadcast.*

Unfortunately this is the exact opposite of the truth. The broadcaster has no power to censor a candidate's speech even when he knows in advance that the speech carries libelous material. This fact is the main reason for broadcasters' objection to the present rules and has been a subject of debate for many years. I hope that this serious error can be corrected in your magazine in the near future.

I believe Mr. Tebbel was confused by
(Continued on page 79)