

February, 2018



# TRHoF **E-Waves** NEWSLETTER est 2010



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## OFF MIC

by TnRHOF President Douglas Combs



For the first time in almost two years (my tenure as president is coming to an end in July), I seem to be at a loss for content for this month's column. I'm not sure why, because the Tennessee Radio Hall of Fame has a lot going on right now. For instance:



- The persons who nominated the 2018 inductees are working with our producer Chip Chapman on gathering information to compile induction videos.
- Paul Randal Dickerson is assembling the releases and working with media to make sure our friends and industry are aware of this year's class.
- Garry Mac has arranged for our next board meeting to be not only a meeting, but also an educational gathering in Chattanooga.
- Stations are being invited to compete for our new award for community service, "The Luther."
- Cindy Arnold is practicing her phone technique as she prepares to head up ticket sales for the May 5<sup>th</sup> induction ceremony. Tickets go on sale early in March.
- Past President Gary Batey is looking for past "All Americans" as the call goes out for WMAK / 1300 alums to be at the banquet. The station is being honored as Legendary Station of the Year.
- Board Member Melissa McDonald is in the early stages of developing a capital campaign that will provide funding to create museum exhibits that will take the Tennessee Radio Hall of Fame story "on the road" to museums in several communities across the state.

As for me, I have an appointment to meet a guy along the side of 840 this weekend and pickup a box of old air checks on reels. This acquisition should provide future additions to our You Tube Channel.

My only question is, why are you standing on the side lines? As our organization grows, so do our needs. You are invited to be as involved as you like. We are always looking for folks who have a little spare time or some stories to share. Sometimes, that is as simple as offering an old air check from a station. Or maybe you have a donation of memorabilia, such as a station sign, an old jacket (thanks, David Tower), photos, video or any of a thousand different things.

Get involved! The more you give, the more you get back!

Doug

## February HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Betty Bennis  
Tom Britt  
Tommy Bryan  
Marcia Campbell  
Cam Cornelius  
Vicky Cutrer  
Miranda Davis  
Dale Deason  
Eric Disney  
Joe Gardner  
Bill Hagy  
Kirk Harnack  
Dottie Hale  
Jim Hicks

Michael King  
Melissa McDonald  
Marty McFly  
Bob Mayben  
Tom Rains  
Pat Reilly  
John Stracener  
Dennis Thibodeaux  
Chris Tramel  
George Vavalides  
Richard White  
Jack Williams  
Jeremiah Wiser

# 2018: The First Awarding of "The Luther"



*by Douglas Combs  
TRHOF President*

In creating "The Luther Community Service Award," the Tennessee Radio Hall of Fame's goal is to celebrate radio's unique ability to become partners with fellow citizens who push forward to assist citizens in towns and cities across our state. The Board of Directors wished to celebrate radio stations' roles as community servants. The special nature of this award reflects the contributions of a broadcaster whose own work benefited his community and region for more than 70 years.

No one in the Volunteer State's radio history better reflects community service than the state's longest-working broadcaster, Luther Masingill. He was on the air during the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, as well as the September 11th attacks in 2001. He is thought to be the only broadcaster in America to make initial reports on both incidents. In between, he supported numerous causes in Chattanooga, even down to helping listeners locate lost dogs. He was initially honored as a member of the Tennessee Radio Hall of Fame's first induction class of 2012. He was later inducted into the National Radio Hall of Fame.

How did your station serve the community in 2017? To compete for the 2018 Luther (the first ever), please check [www.tennradiohalloffame.org](http://www.tennradiohalloffame.org) (starting February 15<sup>th</sup>) for details. Good luck to all stations!

Service to community is the foundation of all successful radio stations. Broadcasters who are "in tune" with their communities have the unique role of providing promotional exposure for organizations and individuals who (by way of a group effort) work to help the needy, address community needs and, in general, bring a better way of life to their service areas

Whether as a broadcaster or a listener, you can most likely name efforts or events in your area that hold a special memory because of their impact on people. Blood drives, pancake breakfasts, charity walks, concerts and street fairs are just a few of the events where radio stations join their neighbors to help their communities. Radio personnel roll up their sleeves, flip pancakes, walk a mile (or two or 10), interview artists, and even sit in dunking booths or take pies in the face to help their neighbors.

*How did your station serve the community in 2017?*

**THE**  
**Luther**  
A celebration of radio's service to community!



**Share your station's story of service at [TennRadioHallofFame.org](http://TennRadioHallofFame.org)**

# Legendary Station WMAK: Legacy of Success



*by Gary Beaty  
TRHOF Past President  
Inductee, Class of 2017*

In the hearts, minds, and memories of a large number of radio professionals, listeners and Hall of Fame inductees – both past and future – the call letters of one Nashville station will forever be revered. Those call letters of course are WMAK, 2018's Legendary Station of the Year.

It was Hall of Famer George Mooney's Corporation that acquired the station from the Lin Broadcasting Corporation in late 1967, or early 1968, (not certain of the exact date). The station had already established a somewhat successful Top 40 format for a number of years in the Nashville market. Under the branding "Scotch Plaid Radio," it had tried to knock-off the top 40 market leader for many years – WKDA, a 1000-250 watt station which was known as the "Home of the Good Guys." The Lin group tried hard, but never triumphed. It was only after Mooney's acquisition, re-branding and re-staffing that WMAK overtook their top 40 rivals and became the dominant station in Nashville for a long, long run.

Ironically, the successful formula for WMAK, in my opinion, began in another market: Knoxville. At Mooney-owned WKGN which (and here's the ironic part) the programmer was a former WKDA personality, Rally

Stanton, a McKenzie native who had made his way to Nashville and became very successful as a staffer working with long-time PD Dick Buckley. Stanton hired a young PD out of Manchester, Joe Sullivan, one of our Career Inductees this year, who became the PD at WMAK following the Mooney acquisition.

Joe had a knack for spotting and hiring talents that would fit into his successful refinement of a music and personality-driven format that would, by the end of 1968, overtake WKDA, and would for several years set the foundation for WMAK to remain the premier top 40 station in Music City. I was just plain lucky to have part of the mix. I had worked with Joe in Manchester for a short time, and later crossed paths with him at WKGN as a part of that staff.

Some great talents – familiar names to our Hall of Fame – worked at WMAK, including inductees Scott Shannon, John Young, Charlie Chase, Mike Bohan, Noel Ball, the great Allen Dennis and Coyote McCloud. At least two other Hall of Fame inductees -- Ralph Emery and the late Hairl Hensley — were also on-air personalities long before Mooney ownership. The station also seemed to be a conduit over time to our first Legendary Station, WSM, with at least eight former staffers (myself included) migrating to the Air Castle of the South to continue their careers. WMAK was, and will remain in our memories, one of the greatest top 40 radio stations of all time!

## Teaching Voice of America About Elvis' Legacy



*by Lin Folk  
Inductee, Class of 2017*

On the 10th anniversary of Elvis's death, there was a city-wide observation in Memphis. Voice of America in Chicago asked me to produce a feature about it, but before I could do it, I was told to call San Francisco for permission. This was a surprise to me.

Permission was granted, and I spent time in Memphis gathering information. My hotel was sponsoring a \$25.00 dinner of Elvis's favorite foods — tomatoes, cucumbers and onions; plus, peanut butter and banana sandwiches. This was extremely popular.

Then I talked to several people who had come from foreign countries to take part in this day, and Elvis' music was added.

The Voice of America Chicago manager called me the next day to tell me that he originally intended to broadcast my piece as sort of a joke. But, after hearing the feature, he realized that this was no joke! And it was broadcast all over the world.



# Fumble! My Meeting with a Football Great



by Brent Stoker  
Board Member

I try to learn from mistakes. At the same time, like most of us, I also sometimes try to shut out memories that are too embarrassing.

When the Tennessee Radio Hall of Fame Board scheduled a Saturday meeting for the private dining room at the Sportsman's Grille in Brentwood, I didn't give the location much thought. I recalled eating there a few times over the years, but nothing untoward entered my mind.

Nor were any emotional flags raised that day when I entered the restaurant.

But as our Board meeting in the back dining room got underway, I took in the room's echo, the wooden beams of the vaulted ceiling, the smooth stones surrounding the impressive fireplace, and the room's overall one-of-a-kind essence. It didn't take me long to be overwhelmed with a strong sense of déjà vu.

As the meeting continued, details of a day in my radio career at least 20 years earlier soon overwhelmed me. Not sure whether I was working then in programming, sales or promotion (having spent time in all three), but football great Gale Sayers had been in Nashville for some event. I was never a go-to production or sports guy, but I somehow wound up in this very same dining room years earlier with the charge of getting a few moments of audio from the Pro Football Hall of Famer for future broadcast.

My handheld recorder at the ready, I approached Mr. Sayers and, with us both standing in a relatively

quiet spot near the fireplace, he graciously agreed to talk. A quick mic-check revealed equipment malfunction. After a moment or two of fumbling around with the recorder, I told him all looked good, and we proceeded to chat. A good 30 seconds into it, I realized we were still in audio no-man's land. I stopped the conversation and asked him to hang on. He politely agreed. I tried to keep the look of panic off my face, but it quickly became clear to me that there was no way the recorder would cooperate. After an internal prayer to the broadcast gods, I assured him all was good and proceeded to question him one more time.



I'm not sure if he knew his words were lost to the echo of the Sportsman's Grill dining room, never to be electronically captured by my inept efforts, but if so, he didn't let on. After several minutes of this charade, I thanked him and he thanked me. We shook hands and parted.

I don't recall what followed next but I suspect I made a hasty retreat. All this came flooding back to me during our November Tennessee Radio Hall of Fame Board meeting.

As I mentioned, it was at least 20 years ago. I assume the Broadcast Statute of Limitations has run out.

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# Beyond AM: Tennessee Broadcasters on Shortwave



by Skip Woolwine  
Former TRHOF Board Member

You've probably heard the term "shortwave radio" before, but unless you're a radio geek, you might be clueless what it means, or what it's used for. Standard AM radio stations are found on frequencies from 530 kHz (kilohertz or kilocycles) up to 1700 kHz (aka "medium-wave").

But imagine if you had a radio that tuned the frequency spectrum *above* 1700. What would you hear? Frequencies between 1700 kHz and up to 30,000 kHz are commonly called "shortwave."

Antique floor-model and tabletop radios from the 1930s – 1950s commonly had shortwave bands so we at home could hear news and programs from around the world (e.g. BBC) – very important during times of war. No other technology was available.

With a shortwave radio, you can hear all sorts of sounds: music and voice content targeted to international listeners; two-way communications among amateur (ham) radio enthusiasts; voice communications for military, transoceanic ships and aircraft; mysterious-sounding signals for navigation, Morse code, fax, teletype, and spies for unknown governments.

Most international broadcasts are produced by the national governments of countries all over the world. According to one international broadcaster:

- Only about 20% of the world's population has Internet access.
- There are many regions where regular AM, FM, and TV are either tightly controlled and censored by the government, or there are no signals available.
- At any given moment, there are over three billion people listening to shortwave.
- On shortwave, audio programs that can be heard include the Voice of America, BBC, Radio Havana Cuba, Radio Canada International, Radio Taiwan, Radio China, (and the list of countries is endless), with news, music and features in a rainbow of languages.

What might be surprising is the USA's FCC has licensed a few (less than 20) *commercial* shortwave stations, for purposes of reaching international audiences. One set of call letters can cover multiple transmitters, each on different frequencies and delivering different programs simultaneously. Four of these entities, the highest count of any state, are in Middle Tennessee:

- WWRB in Morrison, between Manchester and McMinnville beams religious programs over two transmitters - 70,000 watts and 125,000 watts – each switched at various times on 3185, 3195, 3215, 5050, 9370, and 15240 kHz.
- WWCR in Nashville programs all religion on two transmitters, each of 100,000 watts and heard on about a dozen different frequencies depending on time of day.
- WTWW in Lebanon broadcasts everything from religion to country music to Dave Ramsey, using three 100,000-watt transmitters heard on 5085, 5830, 9475, 9930, and 12105 kHz.

KNLS/World Christian Broadcasting has its headquarters and operations center in the Cool Springs area of Franklin, with transmitters in Alaska (two 100kw units on five frequencies in English, Mandarin Chinese and Russian) and in the country of Madagascar broadcasting in African English, Arabic, and soon French, Korean, and Portuguese.

Shortwave antennas can be quite different, too, from towers to long wires in the shape of a rhombus or a curtain. Depending on the antenna design, the output of a 100,000-watt transmitter can have an effective radiated power of 1,000,000 watts or more, and can be directional toward specific areas of the globe.

TRHOF member Paul Ladd's title is Senior Correspondent, and he creates English language news and feature content for Franklin-based, non-profit World Christian Broadcasting. He is a former radio news reporter/anchor for Nashville's WLAC, WZEZ, and Metro Networks/Westwood One.

Ladd says, "Our operations are financed entirely from behind-the-scenes fund raising – we never solicit money on the air. All of the multi-language programs heard on our transmitters are created in house right here, and we accept no paid programs from outside sources."

(continued on page 6)

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# Chattanooga's Brewer Was Leader, Friend



Media executive Jim Brewer, owner of Chattanooga-based Brewer Media, passed away on February 1st. Those who knew him, worked for him or partnered with him on projects are expressing sadness.

In response to a question from the *Times Free Press*, Tennessee Radio Hall of Fame Board Member Chip Chapman expressed his respect for Brewer. "I've seen a lot of great broadcasting people over the years, and Jim was one of the best," he said." In operating his radio stations, he wasn't just a 'manager.' Jim was a 'leader.' And there's a huge difference between the two."



Jim Brewer

Brewer came into the family business almost 30 years ago, and learned while working with his father. Friends and colleagues remember him as someone who was quick to support numerous non-profits, and to give of his personal time to those causes.

Tennessee Radio Hall of Fame President Douglas Combs said, "I first met Jim while working for the Tennessee Radio Network over 20 years ago. I enjoyed my time with him, and I always left meetings with him feeling that he was working hard — not only for his business, but also for Chattanooga and the surrounding counties."

Tennessee Radio Hall of Fame Inductee Keith Landecker probably knew Brewer better than anyone outside his family. The two joined Brewer Media at the same time, and they worked together for almost 30 years. "Jim was like a brother to me," Landecker said. Landecker told the *Times Free Press* that when he started a youth softball league, Jim Brewer was the first person to offer financial support. Over the years, more than two dozen boys who were part of the league were able to go to college on scholarships.

Brewer also provided support to numerous other efforts to assist the community, including advertising for programs to stop domestic violence. He and Brewer Media were recognized on many occasions for their generous, continuing contributions to philanthropies that helped people in Chattanooga and surrounding areas.

Brewer also served his industry at the state level on the board of the Tennessee Association of Broadcasters, and had made presentations to the National Association of Broadcasters. Jim Brewer even used his own journey with cancer to raise awareness of the disease.

The Brewer family asked that anyone wishing to make memorial donations to send them to the Oral Cancer Foundation of Chattanooga, or to The Partnership for Families, Children and Youth (specifically the domestic violence prevention program). Jim Brewer was 56.

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## Beyond AM: TN Broadcasters on Shortwave *(continued from page 5)*

WTWW in Lebanon is also rooted in religious radio, but has exercised more flexibility in its programming. Ted Randall's unique background of major-market DJ (Detroit, WSM), ham radio operator, and broadcast engineer enables him to wear many hats in the operation. WTWW's website ([wtww.us](http://wtww.us)) mentions a variety of shows: *Scriptures for America*, *Dave Ramsey*, *Bob Heil's Organ Music*, *HamNation* and *The QSO Show* (a couple of ham radio shows), and classic country music show *Live from Nashville* six nights a week with Randall himself.

WTWW does sell advertising and blocks of program time. Says Randall, "When I'm doing my country show at night on 5085 kHz, the amount of email is staggering. We get a lot of snail-mail, too. Listeners are all over the US, Canada, and heavily from the Caribbean and South America, too. Even China, India and Russia." While exact

listener numbers are difficult to measure, he says, "A lot of people who are *not* ham radio hobbyists do have shortwave radios. The audience is huge. When sponsors advertise on my country music show, it's very successful, especially when I do personal endorsement spots. Once, we negotiated a multi-week spot schedule for a particular C. Crain portable shortwave radio with a special offer of a premium battery charger. After a couple of days, the C. Crain Company called and cancelled. They had sold out."

Entry-level shortwave radios are very inexpensive, starting less than \$20 brand new on eBay. More serious models can be found on Amazon for \$100 and up. Or maybe find a stylish art-deco vintage tube 1940s multiband radio at an antique shop. Pick one up and you, too, can discover a whole different world beyond the AM band!



Don't forget — (nudge, nudge)

## REMINDERS



### What's Your Radio Story?

Do you have a radio story you'd like to share? It can be anything that is part of your radio history.

**We love radio stories. Please, tell us yours.**

Just email it to [starmagic@comcast.net](mailto:starmagic@comcast.net).

### Keeping Up With the Hall

Our newsletter is published the first of every month. Back issues may be viewed on our official website: [www.tennradiohalloffame.org](http://www.tennradiohalloffame.org)

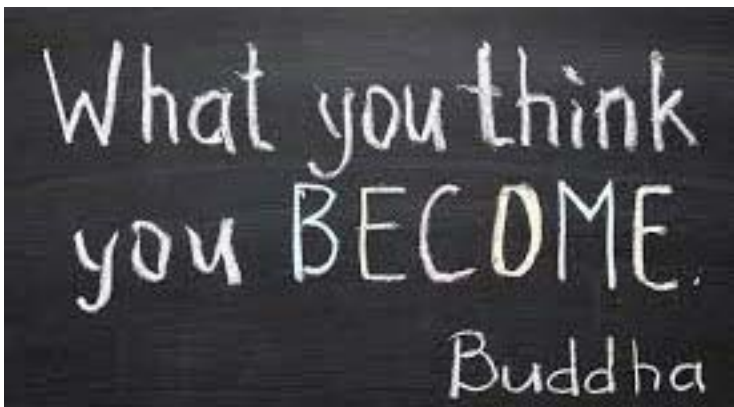
Let Treasurer Garry Mac know of any change in your email address so you don't miss an issue!

### Collecting Our History

The Hall has a committee to collect and purchase Tennessee radio memorabilia, including old microphones, on-air signage, transmitter parts, promotional items and anything else related to radio stations in our state.

If you have items to donate (or purchase on Ebay, Craigslist, etc.) please contact Nick Archer via a message on the TnRHOF Facebook page.

Our Facebook page now boasts more than 1,200 members, and our YouTube Page includes air checks, inductions and other audio/video memories.



## Check Your Calendar

February 24, 2018  
Board Meeting (Board Only)  
Chattanooga



May 5, 2018  
Annual Induction Banquet  
Embassy Suites  
Murfreesboro, Tennessee



More Events Coming Soon!  
To check the TRHOF event calendar anytime, go to the home page of our website: <http://tennradiohalloffame.org>

Donate your RV, scooter, boat, car or motorcycle to the Tennessee Radio Hall of Fame.



*Click here for details.*



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