

November, 2017



# TRHoF E-Waves NEWSLETTER



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## OFF MIC

by TnRHOF President Doug Combs



The blessing (and the curse) of growing older is the depth of experiences one remembers. For example, while fueling the car the other day, I noticed the changes this industry has seen. When I was young, you drove your vehicle into a **service** station. As you pulled into the area, a bell chimed in the building. Upon hearing the bell, a gentleman in a uniform would walk up to the driver's side window. He then asked what blend of gas and how much you wanted. After fueling, the attendant would clean your windshield, check your fluid levels under the hood and check the air pressure in your tires. Following completion of these services, he would then take a cloth rag from his back pocket, remove any residue from his hands and politely ask, "Is there anything else I can do for you?" For many years, this level of service accompanied a transaction costing less than 50-cents per gallon.



In banking, you transacted business by going into a real bank. Then, an advance allowed us to stay in our cars for routine business, and bank in a "drive-through." This led us to the next step, the automated teller machine and now, internet banking (they don't need to see you at all).

Oh, how times have changed. And for the most part, many of us have become accustomed to these changes. However, many of us are still concerned, upset, and some, even outraged, on the changes in the radio industry. Technology and consolidation have translated into MANY changes for broadcasting.

Don't get me wrong, as a radio station owner, I believe many of the technology advances assist

stations in providing services to listeners in ways that were not available before. Being able to add school closing announcements on a snowy night without leaving my warm home is great!

Where many of us see a problem is in the ease of keeping a "noise" coming out of the box. When technology opens the door to free up personnel from air duties, it's up to management to make sure those persons are instead working to keep the content LOCAL. In radio, content is king! Good broadcasters take advantage of industry changes and technical advances to deliver better coverage for their audiences.

Doug



Tommy Bolden  
Donna Brake  
Ed Brantley  
Ken Burger  
Starlet Burney  
Ben Cagle  
David Carroll  
Bonnie L. Chaffin  
Randy Chambers  
Kyle Croft  
Ferrand Lee Cumpton  
Lee Dorman  
Ray Eaton  
Cindy Francis Lovelace  
Earl Freudenberg  
Steve Gill  
Watt Hairston  
Ernest Harper, Jr.

Gator Harrison  
Dennis Haskins  
Herbert Howard  
Terry Hudson  
Drue Huffines  
Jon Johnson  
Jodee Jordan  
Fred Moore  
Duanne Nelson  
Troy Pennington  
Don Raines  
Sheila Scruggs  
Jordan Tinkle  
Bob Todd  
Steve Turner  
Ralph Vaughn  
Charlotte Denton Wise



# Communing in Camden

The Tennessee Radio Hall of Fame's latest Meet n' Greet was a complete success. A large group gathered at Smarder's in Camden for lunch and fellowship. Pictures below tell the story. Part of the group also went on to

tour the local radio station, and the site where an airplane carrying country performers Patsy Cline, Hankshaw Hawkins and Cowboy Copas crashed, killing all aboard, in 1963.





Above: At the historic crash site.



Above: At the radio station.

Left: Corporate logo.



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# My Radio Story: David Tower



*Editor's note: On the last page of each issue, we ask members to share their radio stories. Thanks to member David Tower (pictured in a recent photo at left) for sharing his! Every member of the Tennessee Radio Hall of Fame is invited to share his/her own personal career story.*

I was going to be a high school English teacher, but some dreams never materialize. From Texas I moved to California after graduation. and my very first job was as a copyboy for the *San Francisco Examiner* in the Oakland office. I also worked for a hardware store part-time and was making some good money and before I knew it, four years had passed me by. I moved back to Texas in 1964 and called the DJ at the top rated radio station in the area. Many people commented on my voice for some reason, saying I should be in radio, but I had never been inside a station. He said I should enroll at Elkins Institute of Radio in Dallas as a shortcut because in those days, a First Class Radio License was required for most stations at night. Before the six-month course was over, I was offered a job in Orange, Texas. at KOGT, which was only 40 miles from my home, so I accepted.

At a small radio station, you learn everything from the bottom up...how to write and produce commercials, select your music, rip-and-read your news. I was with KOGT for some time when the PD came to me and informed me they were going Country. I handed in my resignation on the spot. He made a deal with me that if I stayed a month and didn't like the format, he would help me go anywhere



*Above: Tower and other staff (including some very famous radio names — can you spot them?) outside the WMAK building at Ninth Avenue and Division Street in Nashville.*

I wanted. By the end of the month I was hooked on Country, and with in a few weeks, was made music director and I selected what we could play. I also met many of the artists who would drop by, from Loretta Lynn to Conway Twitty.



*Above: Tower accepts the 1972 Associated Press Award for Best News Operation in Tennessee.*

From one of them, I learned that WENO in Nashville was looking for a DJ and I sent them a tape. I was hired in June of 1969. My job there was to warm up the station for the morning DJ, and then rip-and-read the news for him. By December, I had enough and quit. Then, I got a call from WMAK, which was looking for a news person. I applied, but told them I had no experience in news at all. However, they liked my voice, and I was hired in January of 1970. With the help of people like Mike King, Mike Donegan and Alan Nelson, I learned how to become a news person, and when News Director Mike King left a year later, I was named news director.

WMAK was the last AM station to be number one in Nashville, and I think the news department was a part of what made us so good. Each year, we took home the honor of biggest contributor to the AP. In 1975-76, we swept the awards, winning in every category: Sports, Spot News, Editorials, Public Affairs, and Human Interest. To top it off, we also won the big prize...Best Overall News Operation. We won another in 1979-80 for Outstanding News Operation, and many others.

I was offered the news directors job at WLAC, and made the switch to the station I listed to as a teen in Texas. I also met some of my early idols, like The Hossman and Gene Nobles. I also worked with some of the very best news people in the business: Melissa McDonald, Paul Randall Dickerson, Buddy Sadler, Anne

*(continued on page 5)*

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# Working on the Holidays: Pete Weber



In all my years in sportscasting, I learned early on that “holidays” were merely a time when games are played and that people want to talk about them. So “holidays” oftentimes come several days or weeks thereafter.

One such time for me was Christmas 1993. I was on the roster of those who worked ESPN Radio then, before ESPN became a 7/24/365 operation in 1998. Prior to that point, ESPN Radio was a 6:00 p. m. – 1:00 a. m. operation on Saturdays and Sundays.

The network was stuck trying to find people to come in for their Saturday – Sunday shift, December 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. Al Jaffe was director of talent at the network back then, and he almost apologetically reached out to me. I gulped, then said I would check with Claudia if she was alright with that. She saw what a chance it was for me, and agreed.

For several days, I had no idea who would partner with me. We generally worked in three-person teams then (Chuck Wilson from Providence, Tony Bruno from Philadelphia, and from the TV side, Mike Tirico, Dan Patrick, etc.). However, I understood that on this holiday weekend it would be twosome.

Just before departing my then-home of Buffalo for Connecticut, I found out that I would be part of a huge ecumenical/non-denominational set of broadcasts on Christmas weekend: with a Catholic host (me) and a Jewish host (Hank Goldberg of Miami). Here’s a little of the flavor from that broadcast: [https://soundcloud.com/peteweber-1/espnradio-12-25-93?utm\\_source=soundcloud&utm\\_campaign=share&utm\\_medium=email](https://soundcloud.com/peteweber-1/espnradio-12-25-93?utm_source=soundcloud&utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=email)

Hank was familiar nationally, having worked football, boxing and horse racing on NBC before signing on with ESPN. He is a walking sports encyclopedia if ever there was one.

We were familiar with each other from our NFL work — Hank on the Dolphins’ broadcasts and me with the Bills. So, we were “friendly rivals,” together for the holiest two days of the year for many. Bottom line, we had two good 7-hour shifts, had a good time together. All went well.

On Tuesday, there was a FedEx delivery to our house. In the box was a beautiful etched-glass bowl thanking me for spending Christmas weekend in Bristol, Connecticut, rather than home in Buffalo. Inside was a card: “Thanks, Pete,” and signed by Steve Bornstein (President and CEO of ESPN at the time).

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## David Tower *(continued from page 4)*

Marie Deer, Paula Stewart, George Baber, and Eddie Parker, among others. I think one of the keys to my success was that I always hired people who I thought could replace me as news director, and any one of them could.

In 1992, I became disenchanted with the direction news was taking, and instructions from the PD to include more news about personalities. I knew then that news would never be the same for me, and I enjoyed it too much to continue in that vein, so I quit. Believe it or not, I have not been behind a microphone since. Even so, the memories are still with me and so are many of the people I worked with, who remain friends to this day.

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## Brown Featured in Mid-South Coliseum Story

Tennessee Radio Hall of Fame Inductee Dave Brown is being featured in a new documentary about the history of Memphis’ Mid-South Coliseum and the wrestling matches there over the years. WMC-TV, Channel 5 in Memphis, reports the documentary is being produced as part of an effort to save the historic structure.

Appearing with Brown is famed Memphis wrestler Jerry Lawler.



*Right: Dave Brown and Jerry Lawler discussing their memories of the Memphis Mid-South Coliseum.*

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

November 4, 2017

Board Meeting (Board & Advisory Council)

Lunch: 11:00 a.m.

Meeting: 12-noon - 2:00 p.m.

Sportsman's Grille

1640 Westgate Circle

Brentwood, Tennessee



May 5, 2018

Annual Induction Banquet

Embassy Suites

Murfreesboro, Tennessee

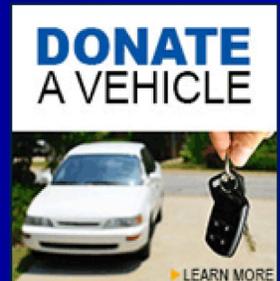


More Events Coming Soon!

To check the TRHOF event calendar anytime, go to the home page of our website:

<http://tennradiohalloffame.org>

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*Click here for details.*



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