

WSMB Signals

Western States Museum of Broadcasting

SOU AND JPR FOUNDATION SIGN FINAL WSMB AGREEMENT

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On December 9, 2004 Southern Oregon University (SOU) and the JPR Foundation signed the final agreement authorizing the Foundation to initiate architectural design, funding and subsequent construction of the new building which will house the Western States Museum of Broadcasting. Under the terms of the two agreements covering this project which SOU and the Foundation have signed,

WSMB will share quarters with SOU's public radio network, Jefferson Public Radio, and the two activities will share some common facilities such as an auditorium, conference room/meeting spaces and communications infrastructure items.

The building will be located on a 2.6 acre vacant lot located at the corner of Ashland Street/ Highway 66 and Walker Street in Ashland and is anticipated to be approximately 40,000 square feet in size. Previously, Economics Research Associates (ERA) was engaged by the Foun-

datation to conduct an economic feasibility study of the WSMB's contemplated operations. As part of its findings, ERA identified this prime building location as a key component of the Museum's economic capability.

Under the terms of the agreements between SOU and the Foundation, the Foundation must complete construction of the building prior to 2011.

The Foundation anticipates beginning architectural design of the building early in 2005.



(Left) A December 9 champagne toast—in Howdy Doody glasses—following signing of the final lease authorizing creation of the WSMB's home. (Left to Right) Ronald Bolstad, SOU VP of Finance/Administration, Ronald Kramer, JPR Executive Director, Elisabeth Zinser, SOU President, Steven Nelson, JPR Foundation President.

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Early television broadcasts and receivers were hardly what we are now accustomed to in our 'cable-ready' world.
- The papers and memorabilia of one of Oregon's broadcast legends, Ray Johnson, have been donated to the WSMB
- 85-year old Les Smith's career has covered the greats from Elvis Presley to Danny Kaye.

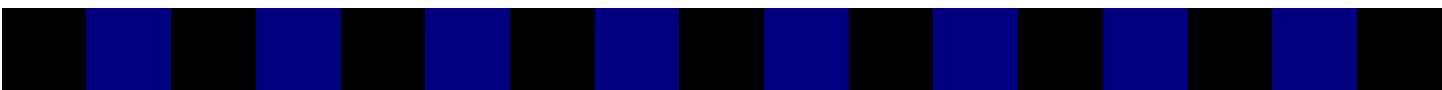
UTAH FARM BOY MOVED TELEVISION FROM MECHANICAL TOY TO ELECTRONIC REALITY

"Radiovision," and other terms for what we call television were all eagerly forecast within months of radio's popular inception. But early TV was a cumbersome mechanical device. Utah farm boy Philo Farnsworth dreamt of an en-

tirely electronic TV system and was obsessed by it. He told his wife, on their wedding night, that there was another woman—television—invited her to join in the excitement of its discovery. She, and he, did. In 1931 he sold his patent to RCA.



Farnsworth with his 1929 dissector TV tube and television system.





(above) A young Ray Johnson photographed with Miss America 1958 when KMED covered a Kiwanis Fair. (below) These patches were used on the blazers worn by KMED radio and TV news personnel in the 1960's



ITEMS RECENTLY DEPOSITED WITH THE WSMB - RAY JOHNSON COLLECTION

Ray Johnson (1922—2004) is best known as one of the owners, and manager for nearly 30 years, of one of southern Oregon's premiere radio/TV organizations. Ray came to work at KMED(AM) in 194x to install a new higher-power transmitter. He helped form a company which purchased the station from its original owner, Blanch Virgin, in 195x. Under Ray's administration KMED launched the Rogue Valley's second television station, KMED-TV, Channel 10 (now KTVL) and one of the Valley's

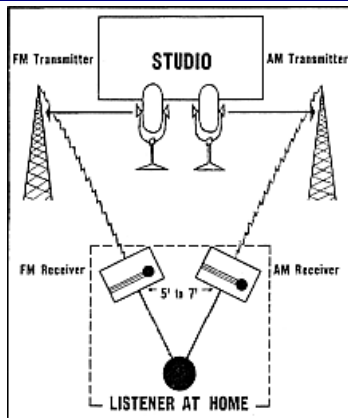
premiere FM stations, KMED-FM (now KTMT).

In addition to his work in southern Oregon, Ray served as a president of the Oregon Association of Broadcasters as well as a member of the Board of the National Association of Broadcasters.

A longstanding NBC Radio affiliate, for many years KMED produced an annual broadcast from the Oregon Shakespeare Festival for national broadcast over NBC.

Ray was one of the few Oregon broadcasters who used the authority granted by the FCC to formally editorialize. The station scrupulously sought out opposing views to Ray's own but his distinctive editorial voice was a KMED feature for decades.

Shortly following Ray's passing, his son, Robert, donated a broad, fascinating collection of Ray's papers, photos and memorabilia (including all of Ray's editorials) to the WSMB.



FROM THE MUSEUM'S COLLECTION— THE ADVENT OF STEREO BROADCASTING

(left) WCRB, Boston MA, promoted and illustrated the way an AM/FM simulcast functions, and how the public could listen, in this illustration which appeared in 1954.

and, in 1954, recording companies began mastering some recordings in stereo, on tape, in anticipation of stereo LP recordings eventually being developed. A small connoisseur label, Audio Fidelity, reportedly released the first stereo recording in 1957 and the major record companies followed suit in 1958.

Radio was entirely monophonic but was eager to offer stereo music in part to compete with television's rise. A system for broadcasting stereo on AM stations was devised but the FCC failed to authorize its use.

In the mean time, in order to join the "stereo bandwagon," some stations inaugurated AM/FM "simulcast" transmissions. An AM and an FM station, sometimes commonly owned, "teamed up" with the AM station transmitting the left channel audio and the FM station the right. Stereo reception required two separate radios to be received in stereo primitive by current standards. (If you listened with one radio you only received one channel's information.) A few manufacturers offered AM/FM Stereo receivers, which contained entirely separate AM and FM tuners in the same radio, to facilitate simulcast reception. For many Americans, AM/FM simulcast reception was their first introduction to stereo sound.

TV got into the act when ABC-TV occasionally offered an FM-TV stereo simulcast of the Lawrence Welk program (using an FM station to carry one channel to augment the TV audio).

AM was the primary radio service with FM drawing little listener attention. Many FM stations failed for lack of advertising revenue. In Portland KEX-FM was donated to the state (and became what is now KOPB). In Grants Pass, California Oregon broadcasting's FM station, KGPO, simply disappeared. Seeking to stimulate FM, by preventing AM stereo's introduction, the FCC authorized FM stereo in 1961 and it revolutionized the FM radio dial. The first station on the West Coast to offer FM stereo was KPFB in Portland. The equipment to generate the FM signal at the station was primitive and somewhat "fussy."

By 1980 FM stereo had helped make FM the dominant radio service, dramatically eclipsing AM radio.

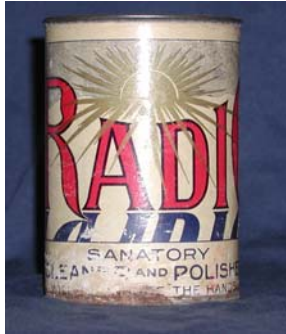
Radio's founding in the early 1920's prominently featured recorded music. Originally broadcast using wind-up phonographs whose playback "horn" was located near a microphone, radio evolved to offer electronically recorded and reproduced recordings—all I monophonic sound—until the mid-1950's. Experiments in recording two-channel "stereo" sound had begun in the 1930's



(left) Scott 330C AM/FM simulcast receiver (which required connection to a stereo amplifier and speakers). Note the separate AM and FM tuning dials. (WSMB collection)

CONCEPT OF RADIO WAS UBIQUITOUS

In radio's early years it epitomized all the wonder and excitement of what came to be called the "flapper era." "Radio" became almost a syno-



nym for all that was trendy and new. As a result the term,



which couldn't be copyrighted, was applied to a huge variety of consumer products which had no relationship to the radio industry.

Products which used radio in

their name included cleansers, shaving strop dressing, perfume, powder, pen points and razor blades.



(far left) Radio cleanser can. (2nd column) Radio strop dressing. (3rd column) Radio Girl facial powder. (above) "Girl with the Radio Eyes" sheet music, 1922., suggested that "radio" was a quality which could be reflected in a woman's gaze. (WSMB collection)

OREGON BROADCAST HISTORY BOOK PROJECT: LESTER SMITH

WSMB and the Oregon Association of Broadcasters are jointly sponsoring the preparation of a book covering the history of broadcasting in the Beaver State. Recently Ron Kramer recently interviewed Lester (Les) Smith in Bellevue WA for that project.

Smith has been a major figure in broadcasting, and other in-

dustries, for over half a century. Smith purchased KJR(AM) in Seattle in 1954. A year later he purchased KXL(AM), Portland, and subsequently acquired stations in Spokane and Hannibal MO. Entertainer Danny Kaye became Smith's partner (and close friend) and Kaye-Smith Productions added stations in Kansas City MO and Cincinnati OH to the

chain. Along the way Smith started the Seattle Mariners and, with Kaye, started an array of other enterprises including a concert production company (which handled all the Elvis Presley concerts). A leader in the broadcast industry, Smith is still an assiduous radio listener and critic.



"It was really a common interest in aviation that brought Danny Kaye and me together and formed the basis of our friendship."

WSMB VISION AND LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

Individuals who have agreed to participate in establishing the WSMB through service on the Vision and Leadership Committee are:

Les AuCoin, former Congressman

• Diane Gerard, member of the JPR Foundation Board

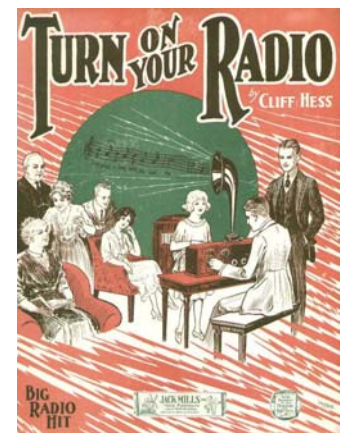
• Ron Kramer, JPR Foundation Executive Director

• Patsy Smullin, California Oregon Broadcasting

• Greg Walden, United States Congressman

• Ron Wyden, United States Senator

"Turn on Your Radio" sheet music, 1925, described the thrill of listening to one's home town performers, capturing the public's sense of wonder at being able to stay in touch with events in distant places. (WSMB Collection).



Western States Museum of
Broadcasting

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Preserving and Interpreting the History of Radio, Television
and Recording Industries



The WSMB is an affiliate of the non-profit JPR Foundation and is dedicated to preserving and interpreting the history of the radio, television and recording industries. When completed the WSMB will include a research library and archive, displays of equipment and artifacts, including radio and television receivers and broadcast equipment, displays of typical historical radio and television programming and a variety of interactive exhibits.

In addition to the Museum's exhibits and collections, its programs will include an active education program including visiting lectures and performances by persons drawn from the broadcasting industry.

RADIO'S 'MAGICAL' QUALITIES CONNECTED LOVE AND DEATH IN POPULAR CULTURE

Radio's debut in the early 1920's fired the public's imagination with a sense of mystery, romance and wonder equal only to the invention of the electric light and the automobile. Even scientists weren't entirely certain how radio worked. Some worried that, if too many persons tuned into a single station, it's current would be "used up" and others couldn't

tune in.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, prominent author of the Sherlock Holmes mysteries, was intensely interested in spiritualism and hypothesized that radio waves existed in the same demi-world as spirits. Doyle's speculations that radio might be used to communicate with departed souls attracted wide attention.

Not surprisingly, the public fascination with radio found reflection in popular song. With an American population that was increasingly urbanizing, the sense of wonder which radio conveyed was reflected in pieces like "Turn on Your Radio" (one page 3) which talked about listening in on one's home town activities through radio.

Many songs spoke of radio's

use in communicating with deceased loved ones (particularly mothers). For example, the subtitle to "I Wish There Was a Wireless to Heaven" was "and I Could Speak To Mama Every Day." "Mr. Radio Man" vocally entreated a dead mother to return to life.

Radio's sense of romance also literally extended to romance. Songs like "Send Me A Kiss By Wireless," "My Radio Queen" and "Oh! How She Radiates On the Radio" all connected radio and love.

For a sightless medium, "The Girl With the Radio Eyes" was, perhaps, the clearest reflection of the culture's having imbued radio with a romantic quality, both literally as well as institutionally.

(left) "I Wish There Was A Wireless to Heaven" sheet music; 1922. (top right) "Mr. Radio Man" sheet music; 1924. (bottom right) "The Radio Girl," sheet music, 1924. (WSMB Collection)

