

Clay's Corner for October 2011

The last Quarter of 2011...Wow! Fall is certainly in the air here in the great Pacific Northwest...At this writing, we have already had a couple previews of wind and rain and the snow level is down to 5-6000 feet a sure sign that summer is gone.

Some not so good news to report this month as one of our own, Marty Hadfield, recently suffered a heart attack. Thankfully a stent was installed (he said it looked like coax braid) and he is on the mend. This serves as a firm reminder of how fragile we all are. Take it easy Marty – We are all praying for a fast and complete recovery. Marty joins Jim Dalke who is a fellow stent-man. Marty recently returned to the Seattle area from Portland as chief at Clear Channel and has been a fixture in Seattle Broadcasting for many years.

Everyone was wondering if the FCC would delay the required date for all stations to have new, CAP capable EAS equipment. In the end, this is exactly what they did....Pushing the deadline to next June 30th. There were a number of reasons why I feel this was a wise decision – First of all, broadcasters were being asked to purchase new equipment to be compliant with rules that have yet to be adopted...Secondly, the Feds have yet to complete their CAP Based distribution system. For those stations that were fearing not having this equipment in time, this is certainly some relief. Here in Washington State things are quite a bit different as we are one of the very few that have developed our own CAP based distribution system, this started almost a year ago. Some are saying that the new FCC EAS rules could be out in December. I will be forwarding onto the Washington State EAS Remailer all the latest infoYou are a subscriber are you not?

If your station has purchased a CAP Capable EAS endec, there are a couple of things you need to do –

- 1- Contact Don Miller at Washington Emergency Management [-d.miller@emd.wa.gov](mailto:d.miller@emd.wa.gov) . Don can provide you with the information you need to connect your new unit to WaCAP, the Washington State CAP Server.
- 2- When you have your unit connected, and are receiving messages from WaCAP, you need to let me know so the Monitoring Assignments can be modified to reflect this new capability. You can contact me in a couple of ways – a) Post a message on the Washington EAS Remailer or, b) Send me an email direct – k7cr@blarg.net.

The NRSC, working with NAB and the CEA, have adopted a new IBOC standard called NRSC-5-C. Included in the new version are details about the use of asymmetric digital sidebands or carriers. As Radio broadcasters look to increase their HD Radio power we will see more use of this technique. I know of at least one of the West Tiger FM's that will, one day, make use of it. One of the fellows working on this was Andy Laird who is VP and CTO for Journal Broadcast Group. Andy, for a while, worked here in Seattle.

Another new technique has recently been blessed by the FCC - MDCL. You may well have not heard of MDCL or Modulation Dependent Carrier Level. Basically the way it works is an AM station would be able to vary its carrier level with modulation. The FCC has had a long standing rule governing 'Carrier Shift' that had to be modified to make this possible. The advantage of this technique is a rather significant increase in transmitter efficiency, in the neighborhood of 20 to 40%. For power hungry AMs, this is great news. Reportedly Nautel and Harris are ready to ship transmitters with this new technology. Those of us that have been playing around with Single Sideband Amateur Radio equipment for years are quick to point out that AM is a very wasteful system. Sounds like MDCL is a good compromise.

Another modification of an historical modulation mode is being challenged. Omnia Audio wants to shortly begin field testing of an FM stereo single-sideband suppressed carrier system. Just when you have been exposed to MDCL for the first time....Here comes SSBSC. The developer, Frank Foti, believes that the system will be compatible with existing receivers and provide a reduction in multipath and an improvement in Signal to Noise Ratio. NRSC has convened a sub-group to look at the proposal.

The economy continues to be on most people's minds. Perhaps a silver lining is on its way for some broadcastersThe elections are likely to bring some serious money into our industry. An example is the millions that are being spent on the proposal to get our state out of the booze-biz.

One of my favorite things to write about is pirate radio. For some odd reason there seems to be an endless supply of people who are willing to openly violate FCC rules. Sometimes the Commish gives them a break. This was the case recently in Orange Park, Florida. The Feds found that a fellow was operating a pirate station from his home and suggested he pay 15 Grand. It seems the poor fellow convinced the FCC that he could not afford to pay \$15,000 so they reduced it to \$300. His troubles might not be over, however, as it's against Florida laws to operate a pirate station. Here's the capper - This guy told the FCC that he had been in broadcasting for 19 years and knew he was breaking the law....and....He's 60 years old, normally old enough to know better.

Down in California, Free Radio Santa Cruz, has been running 50 to 100 watts on 101.1. In this case the FCC managed to convince their landlord that this was not wise. Now the station is looking for a new location.

Our area's own Allen Hardle explains his latest creation that will permit radio stations to show pictures on radios. This new creation is the subject of an interesting article in the latest issue of Radio World magazine. It's been revealed that Allen has been working with a local Seattle Station, KNDD. For those that have not followed Allen - He was a Seattle radio chief (way back when) and developed the billboard that displayed the name of the song being played. Later he would go on to develop systems that would do the same on RDS equipped radios. Way to go Allen !

So how big is social media ? According to recently reports, there are about a billion tweets a month.

In one of the fastest re-paint jobs in recent memory following the change from Qwest to Century Link. Seems like you see those green vehicles all over. One, perhaps funny, impact of this change has been the re-naming of Qwest Field to Century Link Field. Didn't take long for everyone to shorten this one to 'Clink'. One would expect this to happen in a city with a South Lake Union Transit etc.

Found it interesting that KIRO radio went from AM –FM Simulcast to separate programming and now their AM is being simulcast on their FM HD-2.

In Oxford, Mississippi, a local radio stations tower was struck by lightning taking out their tower lights. Unfortunately, for them, it was not reported to the FAA (a big no-no). This was followed by an FCC inspection which uncovered issues with the stations public files (The snowball was starting to move) In the end of a rather complicated sequence of event, the station will contribute about 10 grand to a cash strapped government.

The Commish recently was doing their job in Gretna, LA, where they discovered that a local AM radio station has been operating at night, past it's signoff time, for a number of years. The owners, Crocodile Broadcasting, will pay – 14 Grand is the tab.

The most interesting action of the past month was in Dunellon, FL where the Feds are asking for 12 Grand. In this case the owner, hopefully, learned a couple of lessons – 1) You don't cause a problem with the FAA and 2) When confronted by the FCC about the problem, you don't refuse to turn off your transmitter (That what the stations operator did)

With the Feds scrambling for funds, one piece of the puzzle is raising eyebrows. The White House has sent a bill proposing to raise nearly \$5 Billion via new spectrum and use fees from broadcasters and other wireless users. For sure NASBA, NAB and other will be fighting back.

KBOO, a long time NCE operation in Portland is moving north a bit with the FCC recently granting of an application for a new station on 98.7 in Chehalis, over the objection of the Chehalis Valley Educational Foundation.

Citigroup recently released a report that is certain to make a few folks un-happy. The report states there is no spectrum shortage. Their research shows wireless carriers are only using 192 MHz of the 538 MHz of spectrum they have with another 300 in reserve. NAB is certain to 'make hay' with this finding....especially in light of the FCC's view of broadcasters. This is like finding that global warming is a hoax. Meanwhile – the NAB continues to fight those that now would like to have a second DTV transition in order to gain more spectrum.

The CTIA, an association of wireless outfits, continued to battle NAB over the idea of making it a requirement to have FM radios built into wireless devices. NAB is using countless examples of

where cellphones became useless in the wake of the recent east coast storms. This battle appears to be one that will continue for some time to come.

I have been writing about copper theft of all kinds, not just from Broadcasters. Most feel that this is going on to fund drug activity....But, as I recently learned, this is not always the case. According to police a couple in PA cut down wire from 18 poles. The reason cited by the 24 and 23 year olds? They wanted money for their wedding. Copper theft continues to be a big problem for broadcasters and others in the communications industry. In Southern California, Verizon has been hit hard to the point they are asking the public to help catch the thieves, additionally, they are offering a reward of \$10,000 for information leading to the arrests and convictions. The Department of Energy has recently installed new, anti-climb fences, intrusion detection equipment, cameras etc to try and put a stop to their losses. The good news is that those that invest in high-tech prevention techniques report great success. Likely causing the thieves to seek less secure victims. As the price of copper goes up, so does the level of theft problems. Unfortunately, in many cases, little effort is made to prevent the loss until after the fact. Something about the horse and the barn door is suspect. Over in Spokane in late July, a station discovered that a 6 bay FM antenna was taken, the thieves, apparently liked the 'find' and returned for more goodies from the site. What do you want to bet security was minimal?

Our medias media has been, this past month, giving a lot of coverage to the merger of Cumulus and Citadel. Uniquely this has no impact our 'neck of the woods' as neither firm owned stations in Western Washington.

In the land where we love to sue the other guy....There is the big lawsuit against several large radio groups regarding the use of computer hard drives to play music on radio stations by a group that claims that they have prior rights. Named are a couple of firms that do business in Seattle, CBS Radio and Entercom.

I love the names that people come up with for their company. A new rival for Pandora is calling itself 'Turntable.fm'. Nothing like having a retro name for a new company. Funny too how the word 'Radio' is losing favor and yet Wireless is gaining. Guess older is better. Wonder if Ham-Radio should become Ham-Wireless. How about KOMO Wireless....or Wireless Announcers?

Arbitron is out with their new market rankings – Here is a look at how PNW markets stack up – The following is market rank, name and population –

13- Seattle-Tacoma– 3,470,400

23 – Portland – 2,120,500

93 – Spokane – 526,000

101 – Boise – 488,000

149- Eugene – 310,000

177 – Wenatchee– 237,000

188 – Tri-Cities- 211,100

201 – Yakima – 194,200

213- Bend, Or- 174,300

Big surprise for me here was Wenatchee – I had no idea it was that big. What happened to Bend, Oregon – wow!

I found it interesting that exec's from Ford came out with a clear message to radio...Telling them to get with it and get HD Radio stations on the air. Broadcasters have, for years, been talking about the 'Chicken and Egg' situation, ie, they don't want to spend money on adding HD until there are more radios to make it instantly financially viable. Now that the auto makers are calling on broadcasters to get those HD signals on the air, it will be interesting to see if this will get fence-sitting radio owners moving forward. I find it interesting that you can drive around the Seattle area and have a ton of HD Radio choices and yet go to Tri-Cities and you only find a couple of stations operating the mode. I've talked with folks in Tri-Cities about HD Radio and their response is simple...Not until there are more radio stations doing it. Appears there are a number of chicken and egg situations. Admittedly the present economic situation is not helping anyone getting off the fence.

I received a surprise call the other day from Dale Fultz. Dale is helping out a small church owned radio station with EAS in Roy. Dale was formally with KIRO and Bates in Tacoma. Other than some medical issues, he seemed to be in good spirits.

Finally, the FCC is out with their long awaiting draft on dealing with birds and towers. No comment from me on this one. If you really need to know about this – go here - http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2011/db0826/DA-11-1455A2.pdf

To close out this sessionResults of an interesting study. Scientists have discovered that, most of the time, our first decision IS the right one. You are more often right when you go on your gut feelings when setting goals. This study, conducted at the University of Alberta, has discovered that our subconscious mind is smarter than you think. Bottom line – Go with your instinct, your first thoughts is often the best.

A recent piece in Discover Magazine about our subconscious mind is a great read too. We often don't give credit to our 'other' mind because we take it for granted and don't communicate with it. There are some interesting examples – Using a keyboard (aka typing) we don't have to stop and think what fingers are doing what. We let our subconscious to the work and don't give it a 'thought'. Driving a stick shift or dealing with things using a process we call habit. The list goes on. We learn how to do something, or train our subconscious mind, using our conscious mind and then move the chore to the other cranial department so we can 'think' about other matters. Apparently we get in trouble when we make some decisions based solely on conscious thought and ignore our 'other' systems output. Perhaps this is also where bad habits go and what makes them so hard to erase.

That's it for this month – Hope to do it again in a month. Meanwhile, time to start thinking about Christmas Shopping....or perhaps better not...Then again.....

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