

March 2021 - Clay's Corner

Providing news and views from a broadcast engineers perspective since September 1986

Some liked him, some did not...but all can likely agree that Rush Limbaugh was one of the most influential broadcasters of our time. Just about a year after he announced that he had cancer, and it was terminal, Rush passed away on February 17th. For over 32 years, since August 1, 1988, Rush was on the air, daily, on some 600 stations and an audience in the millions.

Here, locally, his show was carried by Bonneville's KTTH from 9 to noon. If you traveled much around the country, regardless of where you were during this time slot, you could find Rush on the air, usually on AM.

Many did not know that he got his start on the Radio as a DJ while still in high school and worked at various stations across the country. Give a listen to the following link. In it you will be certain to recognize his voice and the type of patter he continued to use in his show.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=FPgO9NLy-7A&fbclid=IwAR3cGmuexJhybKJQ3RBIKpgUrS7xZ6Q0ZL3fILmDE5gudbgGaScEz1pYIo>

Many are saying he got his real break in 1984 at KFBK in Sacramento.

Rush was an entertainer who became a political figure even though he was not a politician. People in entertainment know how important it is to find their niche. Rush certainly found his, and made millions doing so. Along the way he became the voice of the conservative movement and is given credit for having been very influential in the process. Apparently, much what we heard was 'Showman Rush' while in private he was a lower key humble man.

Another area needs to be mentioned...how he influenced AM Radio. I don't know if he was on an FM Station somewhere...perhaps so...however his show was predominately on AM Stations, both large and small. His popularity was welcomed by owners and operators of AM's at a time that

many of them were falling behind to FM's. Some have called him the savior of AM.

His passing has now created a lot of concern at those stations that could well be viewing Rush's death as an event that may, ultimately, cost them money and audience. Many a station felt that they were lucky to have Rush on their station...and often the ratings proved it.

Not often do we lose a talk show host and have a governor announce that flags will be flown at half staff. That's what took place in Florida.

What is often not discussed is how he was very generous with his support of charities.

The network that carried his program, a division of iHeart Media, is certainly aware of the issue and is planning on airing re-runs, or 'The Best of Rush' for those that will want to hear his voice. He was the kind of a personality that you can't just go out and hire a replacement for.

Since the onset of his illness, there have been several who have been subbing for Rush, including some from this area. I was thinking that this would be like trying to replace John Wayne or Alex Trebek. These are shoes that may be impossible to fill. Eventually, perhaps someone will be hired that can build on his success. Only time will tell. As I heard someone say, not everyone can sit down and talk three hours without a script! Another said, Jimmy Fallon may host "The Tonight Show," but he'll never be Johnny Carson. Another example comes to mind. Remember when Paul Harvey passed? There was an attempt to fill that slot with (if I recall correctly) his son that did not work as hoped for.

For those who need a periodic infusion of hyper-conservative rhetoric, there are no shortage of on Radio and TV willing to fill their tank with questionable substances.

Speaking of Jeopardy, the search goes on for a host for that popular show upon the death of long-time host Alex Trebek. In this case, the producers are going to be using some big names as guest hosts. That may work for a TV game show, but one that requires the host to do what Rush was doing is another matter.

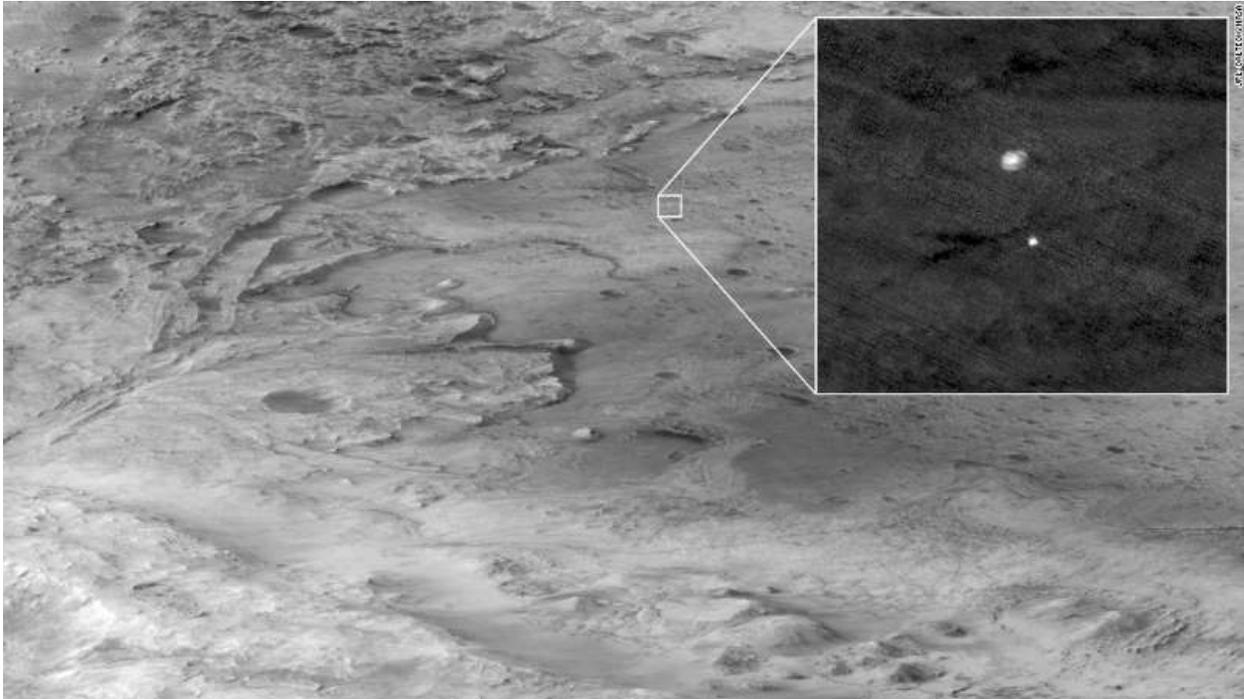
Interesting bit of timing in that we recently lost another in a similar line of work – Larry King. Both of these men have left a very big mark in the world of Broadcasting.

Certainly, worth mentioning is what might be called one of the most difficult ‘remote broadcasts’ that came in the form of the latest landing of a package of equipment on the planet Mars. This one will have many more cameras and – microphones!!

The fact that the time difference makes it impossible for anyone to make a last minute correction, makes this all the more challenging. This is, perhaps, the ultimate automation system. In this case, it had to be smart enough to ‘think on its own’ and make last second corrections if required. This is nothing short of amazing.

One aspect of this mission is demonstrated in the following picture. Think of it. You have this automated landing sequence involving multiple devices that in the end lowers the rover to the surface with a parachute...and, in a case of incredible timing, you have the MRO orbiting the planet and able to capture an image of that portion of the landing sequence and transmit that image back to us millions of miles away. Words cannot adequately express how this one made me feel.

Now the exploration process will be ramping up and our TV screens will be filled with new images that only a few years ago would have been deemed totally impossible.



© JPL-Caltech/NASA HiRISE captured this image of Perseverance on its way to the landing site.

As my readers know, this past month I wrote rather extensive comments about truth, misinformation etc. After I had finished writing my column, news items were coming in that were related directly to what I was talking about.

Note this one came from ABC News (I highlighted portions).

 **DHS uses alert system for 1st time in a year to warn of domestic terrorism threat**
Using a federal system designed to warn all Americans about terrorist threats to the U.S. homeland, the Department of Homeland Security has issued a warning that anger "**fueled by false narratives**", especially unfounded claims about the 2020 presidential **election**, could lead some inside the country to launch attacks in the coming weeks.

And this from the New York Times –

The Jan. 6 assault on the US Capitol has become a catalyst strengthening federal lawmakers' resolve to enact stronger regulations on technology giants like Google and Facebook, whose platforms were used to spread election **misinformation** and incite the deadly riots. Members of Congress are already pursuing antitrust regulations to prevent big tech companies from wielding too much power, but action on hate speech, **disinformation** and data privacy could also come under President Joe Biden's administration.

I recall hearing warnings, about 70 years ago, about this kind of thing. In those days we were told that this was the work of 'Communists and Enemies'.

So congress is holding hearings and probes...'Tis what they do! They are also looking into popular social media platforms. Of course we can expect the political parties to get irritated. Frankly, I'm not sure that the U.S. Congress will be able to be objective, as they are likely to spend more time trying to protect their own biased view of the truth.

I wonder if they will also look into YouTube. There you can find people talking about every topic on the planet as if they were an expert...some of it pretty radical. What's stopping anyone from putting on a white coat and adopting a name with doctor in front and promoting the latest snake oil?

In my opinion (which is worth as much as the ink that this column is printed on) we may well be incapable of having an objected, unbiased, bipartisan view of these issues. What we need to create is 'Truth Police'. Or perhaps the ability to take the truth stretchers to court to prove what they are saying is true or face mandatory punishment. Many would, of course, call this a form of censorship and claim that their constitutional rights were being trampled. Oh well...I can dream, can't I?

Former CNN host and now employee of Hearst Television Soledad O'Brien put it this way:

"I think that is nothing that the Congress has to deal with. It's news organizations themselves who should hold themselves to this standard. It's a journalistic standard," O'Brien pushed for news outlets to avoid posing every story as "having two sides," and to stop booking "liars" that spread false information. "Every perspective does not deserve a platform," she said. "Media thrives on the open exchange of ideas, but that doesn't mean you have to book a neo-Nazi every time you book someone who is Jewish."

If you think that misinformation is something new...well, think again. The following is from 'Science News':

100 years ago, in 1921, The media magnate E.W. Scripps was contemplating the parallel goals he saw in science and journalism: to

discover how the world works, and to explain it truthfully and in a way that people can understand. An informed, educated public, he believed, was essential to a democratic society. Scripps was appalled by the media's willingness to promote fake cures and dangerous theories, writing in 1919 that "there is a vast quantity of misinformation being constantly spread abroad by our newspapers.

As pointed out by the previous, we have been dealing with misinformation and conspiracy theories for a very long time. Unfortunately some broadcasters and the Internet have provided a vehicle to spread further and faster than ever before.

Fear is a 'lubricant' for these items. Remember a few years ago when NIER first was mentioned. Suddenly many who lived near a broadcast transmitter was thinking that they were getting 'radiated' and would, as a result, develop cancer. Cougar Mountain in our area became ground zero due to, at that time, the 10 – 100,000 kW FM's that were there. Broadcasters across the country were suddenly having to deal with a new issue. Cellular has had their battles with neighbors putting up a fight over the thought of having a cell site nearby. Keeping those radiation hazards away from schools is common. More recently, the term 5G has come to mean evil with conspiracy theories linking these new communications systems with the Coronavirus, in some cases, causing people to attempt to destroy these new systems. In the case of the Internet, there is no limit to the amount of misinformation that can be spread. Only recently, after the Capitol Riots, have the social media system that many use to spread false and misleading information come under review of law makers that have come to learn first hand the damage that can be done, all in the name of free speech.

A well known person in this area, Bill Gates, has a conspiracy theory attached to his name as well. There are those who think that the Covid-19 vaccine being administered now also contains microchips that would permit tracking of those that received the shot. This is enough for some to declare they don't want to be vaccinated.

A firm, based here in Seattle, according to this item from the Seattle Times appears to be also involved in the promotion of misinformation.

By [Katherine Khashimova Long](#)

Seattle Times business reporter

As vaccine misinformation has [prompted some to say](#) they will refuse to be inoculated against the [coronavirus](#), the world's largest online retailer remains a hotbed for anti-vaccination conspiracy theories, according to a new study by University of Washington researchers.

Amazon's search algorithm boosts books promoting false claims about vaccines over those that debunk health misinformation, the researchers found — and as customers engage with products espousing bogus science, Amazon's recommendation algorithms point them to additional health misinformation.

In the future, the fallout and damage from all of this will, perhaps, lead to regulations where there are licenses involved. Could a licensee of a Radio or TV station be challenged because they aired misinformation?

On the Coronavirus front:

The sad news is that deaths from this terrible virus have now gone past the 500,000 mark and they are predicting another 100,000 may succumb in the next couple of months. Looking at the annual death toll from other diseases, you find that about 730,000 or 29% of all deaths in the U.S. are attributed to heart disease and stroke. 580,000 or 23% are due to cancer. 140,000 die due to chronic respiratory disease and 130,000 die from accidents (including motor vehicle). Looking at it this way, at least over the past year, Covid-19 has become the 3rd largest cause of death.

Perhaps interesting is that Covid-19 deaths in the U.S. have lowered the life expectancy in this country by just over a year (1.13) with a disproportionate impact on Black and Latino populations.

The good news is the curves are (finally) going in the right direction. Vaccinations are increasing and we are all gaining hope.

Olympic Games authorities have yet to decide whether the Tokyo games will go forward this summer, due to rising coronavirus case numbers and vaccine shortages. NBCUniversal had bet on Olympic coverage in 2020 to

kick start Peacock, and could lose billions in advertising revenue if the games are cancelled.

Looks like we will indeed have an NAB convention in Las Vegas this year, albeit, in the fall. Already plans are being made for a Spring show in 2022 to get us back on track.

As has been said by many – for the vaccine to work its magic, the majority of the population has to get it. Therein lies a problem. We have way too many who feel that the virus is a hoax or they have a degree of vaccine hesitancy. The sad part is some of these people are not likely to change their mind. This brings us back to the idea I wrote about quite a while back. We are likely to have to resort to some kind of incentive system to help with the issue. Employers can and should be engaged here (already some are). I suspect certain modes of travel may have to impose restrictions. How about if you want to attend a sporting event, you have to have been vaccinated? However, this would likely start up those who would take advantage of the situation by selling bogus Vaccination ID cards.

Perhaps we should look at Israel, a country with a high percentage of its citizens now vaccinated, to see how things are working there. Their parliament just passed a law allowing the government to share the ID's of those that have not had their shots with other authorities until the pandemic is determined to be over. The big question, do people have a right to not be vaccinated? Which takes me to a couple of questions:

- Could KRUD Broadcasting ask an applicant, or one that's been working from home, if they have been vaccinated, or would that violate their rights to privacy?
- Could KRUD choose to hire a vaccinated person over one that was not?

The pandemic has provided an opportunity for those who seek to profit from the situation. I recently received this item from a provider of internet spam:

According to Google, Gmail users received 18 million daily malware

and phishing emails related to COVID-19 during the early months of the pandemic (back in April). Add to that another 240 million COVID-related daily spam messages.

OK enough of that...shifting gear to EAS (one of my favorite topics):

For well over a year the Washington State SECC has had a Committee working on revising the State EAS Plan. One of the major reasons for this activity has been the FCC's efforts in creating a uniform platform for EAS plans. At this point, state EAS plans have been 'all over the map' making it difficult for the FCC to approve them. Additionally, the FCC needed a better way to determine what the SECC's were doing in the area of providing monitoring assignments for Participants (Radio and TV Stations and Cable). They have developed a system called ARS that will provide a method for SECC's to report their work to the FCC. In turn, this information will be used to 'cross-check' the information the FCC receives from participants via ETRS. Fortunately, the Washington SECC's Plan Revision Committee has been able to participate in a couple of webinars and beta tests of the system. Frankly, we have been waiting for the FCC to launch this new system. Well, the wait is over. What we did not know is the Commission is launching ARS within a new NPRM (Notice of Proposed Rule Making).

This NPRM has hit the streets and is being reported on by various organizations that provide news etc. to Radio and TV Broadcasters (and I assume Cable operators). Most are labeling this as 'FCC plans for improving EAS'.

The NPRM certainly does cover the long awaited ARS, but it also deals with some areas of EAS changes that are not part of it. Keep in mind that the FCC, like the Washington SECC, considers WEA as part of Public Alert and Warning. Therefore some of the new NPRM concerns both.

Here are some of the highlights (there are many more):

- Mobile devices (FCC speak for your smartphone) would not be allowed to opt out of WEA alerts from FEMA

- SECC's would have to meet at least once per year (Washington meet bi-monthly)
- Establish a requirement for SECC's to work with the FCC (ARS)
- EAS Plans would not be available on the FCC Web Site (States could, if they wished)
- We may have some new Event Codes. For example, one dealing with National Security. Event codes dealing with this issue were dropped some years ago with the winding down of the cold war.
- Create a new Originator Code (NCA) that would permit FEMA to issue national level emergencies (presently only provision is for Presidential Messages). With that would come a new Event Code (NSE). Yes, this would likely require all EAS equipment to be upgraded.
- Create a mechanism for reporting EAS or WEA false alerts (think Hawaii missile attack)
- Propose a rule to require repeating an EAS message (currently these messages are a one time thing)

Part of the FCC release is an NOI (Notice of Inquiry) that asks questions. These are typically efforts by the FCC to 'run the matter up the flag-pole'.

- They are looking for input on the feasibility of delivering EAS Alerts via the internet and streaming services.
- How to augment Radio and TV, Cable and Satellite Radio message delivery via the internet.

I highly recommend that everyone carefully watch this activity as it will – very likely – impact many. I also recommend that you download the entire 52 page document from the FCC for the simple reason that the devil is in the details! Knowing the details has a lot of benefits.

Looking back at my early days in this business, maintenance of a broadcast station was very different than it is today. Sure, we had Vacuum

Tubes, but we were required to determine the reason why a piece of equipment failed and then replace it so it would be placed back in service. The term for this is 'component level trouble-shooting'. We relied on a number of businesses in our area that stocked the necessary parts. Those firms did not rely exclusively on broadcasters to keep them in business, as there were a large number of Radio-TV repair shops that were repairing consumer electronic equipment.

Over the years electronic equipment underwent major changes...becoming significantly more reliable. It also became increasingly more complicated to the point that some equipment could no longer be repaired locally. In many cases, it became more cost effective to replace it rather than repair it.

At the hobby level – electronics have made a major shift.

At the consumer level – you no longer see a Radio-TV repair shop in your area. Today you see consumer electronic equipment awaiting to be picked up with the trash.

So, when the demand dries up, so do the suppliers. Remember it was not that long ago that we lost Radio Shack. Recently it was announced that Fry's were closing their doors – not just the huge facility in Renton – but all 31 stores, after nearly 36 years in business. Sure the Pandemic played a role, but the demand for a local electronics store has just about totally dried up. Today, there are (maybe) a handful in our area.

Thankfully there is still sufficient demand, so that a firm operating nationally can still supply those resistors and capacitors. And, yes...you can buy them from Amazon.

Now that huge building in Renton will be on the market, joining others that include K-Mart, Sears and others.

So who are the winners in this? As I sit here at home writing this, to my left is a window looking out at my street. Already today I've see trucks from Amazon, FedEx and UPS...and I live on a dead-end! Welcome to the new world.

Last month I noted the amount of gray, or missing, hair at the SBE Chapter Meeting. Here's an item I ran across from NAB that digs into that issue:

[Stations struggle to recruit, train new generation of broadcast engineers | Current](#)

Another manufacturer of equipment has called it quits. Ward Beck Systems, maker of audio equipment has ceased operations. The company was founded by in 1967 by Ron Ward and Rodger Beck.

After wondering if we were going to get any lowland snow this winter, the wait was over on the afternoon of the 12th as the flakes began to fall. Our area was turned into a winter wonderland with snowfall over just about all of Western Washington. Officially, SeaTac Airport recorded just over 12 inches of the stuff. Not often you see snowmobiles going down your street!

Like most snow events in this area, warmer air was winning out later on Saturday. Meanwhile, south of us, Northwest Oregon was getting freezing rain that was causing a lot of headaches and power outages. I recall living in Portland, as a kid, and experiencing what my folks called a 'Silver Thaw' that did a lot of damage with inches of ice covering everything. Thankfully, we have few of these events in the Seattle/Tacoma area. I do recall one however, around Christmas, when the ice brought down a lot of power lines and trees. SR-18 east of Auburn was closed due to fallen timber.

Here's a picture of a Ham Radio antenna from the Portland area belonging to former Entercom-Portland Chief Engineer, Kent Randles being bent over by the ice-storm that hit that area.



The Ice winning this battle!



Here Kent is showing how the ice built up on the guy ropes holding his antenna.



On the hills to the west of downtown Portland are many very large towers that support antennas for the area's FM and TV Stations. You have to believe that they collected their share of ice as well. When the temperatures warmed, that ice falls to the ground. You DO NOT want to be near one of them when this is taking place.

Pat Shearer, Broadcast/RF Systems Engineer for KPTV/KPDX Broadcasting, shared the following picture. He wrote:

“The attached pic shows the 4" ice that was covering the tower at the peak of the storm

There were literally hundreds of pieces of ice laying on the ground at the base of the tower. I took that pic to show the thickness but that piece was by far not the largest one I saw. there was one that was about 16" x 5" x 4" thick and you could see the curve where it came off a tower leg.”

Look at the size of those ‘ice-cubes’ compared to that glove.



Pictured here is the second winter site access vehicle owned by AccelNet. They need to access West Tiger too, due to their growing amount of facilities up there. It's been interesting to observe how Land Mobile/2-Way radios were replaced by Cellular, which significantly reduced the amount of equipment at these mountain top facilities. Now they are being put to use by firms, like AccelNet who are called WISPs or Wireless Internet Service Providers.



This picture was taken by Doug Fisher of the transmitter building at South Mountain, home of KOMO-FM, KDDS and KLSY. He said there was 4-5 feet of snow on top.



The forecast on Saturday the 13th indicated that by the following weekend, all of this would be just a memory with temperatures to be near 50. Time to be putting away the snow shovels and thinking about getting that lawn mower started for the season to come.

For those of us who still, routinely, travel to higher elevation locations, we can look forward to, perhaps, two more months of winter weather at locations like West Tiger Mt. where snow can, and often does, remain a factor until mid April.

Meanwhile, Snoqualmie Pass (25 miles to the ESE at a similar elevation) is experiencing the most amount of snow they've had in 10 years...and winter is not over yet. You can check out the snow totals by going to WSDOT, Mountain Passes, Snoqualmie Pass, Snow Dept. Report. It will ask you to choose which pass and season. Interesting to look back at previous years to see how this year stacks up (no pun).

After the big snow, Alex Brewster and Rob Purdy needed to go up to West Tiger for a Hubbard Issue and found this about two miles up the 6+ miles to the site:



Their Jeep, with chains, was dragging bottom. Next step – call Doug Fisher to come up with his Gator with tracks.



Steven Allen visiting the KIRO-AM Transmitter on Vashon after the snow found that someone had built a snowman...with a big smile!



Meanwhile other parts are dealing with some historic winter conditions. This headline is something you don't often see.

Blackouts Cascade Beyond Texas in Deepening Power Crisis

Severe winter weather is not something you normally associate with Texas, but not this year, as the mid-February frigid weather spread across the middle of the continent all the way into Mexico. Here are some of the high (or low) points related to this year's winter blast.

The record low temperatures are exceeding the capacity of many electrical utilities, which have been forced into having rotating outages all the way into Mexico.

- At a time where there is political pressure to shift from a fossil fuel generation to one based on renewable energy sources, this is proving to be a huge wake-up call.
- Many wind power systems have been rendered out of commission due to something they apparently did not plan on – ice on the blades.
- Oil production has been reduced due to the cold, which is causing gas prices to increase all over.
- A shortage of natural gas has forced a number of generating plants off line as consumers furnaces are running like never before.
- Cold is having an effect on the electric grid much as excessive heat did this part year.
- It was 18 degrees in Houston, matching the temperature in Anchorage. Meanwhile, it was 5 degrees in Dallas.
- Abilene Texas had 14 inches of snow (we had just over 4).
- This storm is a big one -- stretching all the way from Texas to New England. Unlike most winters, Texas has been hit the hardest.

Here's a picture of them de-icing blades on a wind turbine:



I wonder if the operators of all the wind farms in our state are prepared to deal with a situation like this?

Texas broadcasters jumped into action providing citizens with badly needed information. Many scrambled to stay on the air. Certainly those with generators and an adequate supply of fuel learned of the value of planning ahead for the unforeseen. Tragically, the state did very little in the way of public warning via EAS etc. Obviously there are going to be a lot of 'corrective actions' taken in the months ahead.

Thinking about this, I wonder what would happen to this area if we were hit with the kind of weather Texas had? There are likely many that feel. 'That won't happen here'.

Obviously there will be some serious repercussions from this event. We've not heard the last about this one. Far from it. A lot of politicians likely are very apprehensive about the next election cycle.

Interestingly the Chinese are using this event to tout how this would not take place in their country due to their superior system of government.

The following was posted on the EAS Forum: Needless to say, there are a lot of very upset people in the Lone Star State.

Time to add Texas to the list of states needing to learn lessons from other states. All disasters may be local, but the resources and response shouldn't be just local.

[Texas Tribune](#)

As Texans endured days in the dark, the state failed to deliver vital emergency information.

When the lights went out this week and Texans lost access to power and clean drinking water, the Texas Division of Emergency Management failed to provide accessible and life-saving updates on outages and inclement weather.

Texas was not the only place in the country to experience the ravages of winter this year.

What you are looking at here is the top of a tower that used to hold an FM broadcast antenna (the black things in the picture) for KOEZ in Des Moines, Iowa, laying on the ground.



In this case the storm toppled the top half of the tower of the 100,000 watt station.

The bottom line – we here in this area have it pretty good in many ways and should be very thankful! At the same time, we should not be smug and complacent!

I often write about West Tiger (the mountain). Lowell Kiesow (Chief

Engineer for KNKX) ran across this one. Look closely at the little white building.



According to Lowell, the place pictured is on the BNSF Cherokee sub near Catoosa, Oklahoma.

Just for fun, I Googled West Tiger and found some interesting and unrelated things.

- [West Tiger](#) - A legendary person known for beating [Jacob Butcher](#) in a [squash](#) match.
- How about the Appleton West Tigers Lacrosse Team in Appleton, Wisconsin?
- Let's not forget the West Tiger Salamander.



Well....The Radio Ratings are out. Here's how the 12+ top-stations stack up:

- #1 KIRO-FM (News/Talk)
- #2 KUOW (News/Talk)
- #3 KISW Rock (of course)
- #4 KOMO (News)

#5 KZOK
#6 KQMV
#7 KJR-FM
#8 KEXP
#9 KSWD
#10 KRWM

A couple of observations...

- 3 of the top 4 don't play music
- #2 and #8 don't play commercials
- #8, compared to the others, has very limited coverage

From the department of 'I recall those call letters'...

KFKF – Once used in Bellevue now resides with an FM station in Kansas City.

Here is truly a great picture from the Seattle Times. You can see the I-90 Floating Bridges crossing Lake Washington. If you look carefully at the upper right corner, you can see the broadcast towers on West Tiger Mt.



Coming as no surprise – Boeing announced an \$11.9 billion loss in 2020. Their list of issues just keeps growing.

- The grounding of the 737 Max (thankfully recently lifted)
- QC issues with their 787
- Huge write-off on the 777 Max
- The recent engine failure on a 777 (not their fault)

As a result they are moving all the 787 production to South Carolina and recently announced they are moving out of one of their buildings in the former Longacres site.

Sinclair and KOMO recently made the news with their announcement that they will be delivering their local radio stations via the KOMO-TV ATSC-3.0 signals.

Probably a bit early to ask that auto dealer where you are shopping for new wheels if they can receive it. Time will tell if this will be a competitor to other providers of audio content to vehicles such as SiriusXM. I have to wonder, are we doing this because we can or because of a forecast for demand. Oh yes, it has a name – Nextgen TV Hybrid Service. If you have a NextGen TV let me know how it works.

In the big bad world of spectrum shuffling, a company representing the small user is asking the FCC to reverse a decision. Shure Inc., maker of wireless microphones has filed a petition with the Commish, asking them to reverse its position and guarantee that at least one 6 MHz TV channel in each market be reserved for wireless use. What is perhaps not well understood inside the Beltway is the fact that there are a zillion wireless microphones out there that need a place to operate. I'd bet that most of their owners are not aware of all of the spectrum changes or are just ignoring them, hoping for the best.

To their credit, the FCC did identify spectrum at 900 MHz, 1.4 and 7 GHz as alternatives. Shure has pointed out how this effort falls short. There is more info on the Shure Website.

Congratulations to KISW in Seattle as they celebrate their 50th anniversary. KISW is not just celebrating 50 years on the air, they are celebrating 50 years with the same format. Not many radio stations can make that claim. Feb 14th, 1971. Do you remember those days? Over the years the station has been owned by various firms. For the last several, it has been Entercom. Their transmitter is at West Tiger, where they share a transmit antenna with other Entercom stations KNDD, KKWF and KHTP (as well as several others). They moved to West Tiger from Cougar Mt. Before that, their transmitter was on Roosevelt Hill.

How about a couple of pretty pictures from the AccelNet Cameras. This first one is from their Cougar Mt. camera. The tower on the left is used by 94.1 and 96.5 as an auxiliary. In the distance you can see the entire Olympic Mountain range sporting a wonderful coating of snow.



The following is from one of the several cameras they have on West Tiger. I liked this one as it was looking directly into the Sun. Note the coating of snow on the trees.



Radio employment opportunities in Seattle this month:

- Daniel Sipe has elected to exit broadcasting and iHeartMedia and is going to work for a gaming company. This means there is a job opening....

https://iheartmedia.wd5.myworkdayjobs.com/en-US/External_iHM/job/Seattle-WA-645-Elliot/Regional-Engineer_Req23058-1

- Paul Carvalho is no longer with Bonneville-Seattle creating an employment opportunity. Steven Allen is filling in until a permanent replacement is named.

https://deseretmanagement.wd1.myworkdayjobs.com/en-US/BonSeattle/job/Seattle/Chief-Engineer_R3162

And, you are looking to get out of town and really love snow...consider this one:

There are two job openings at New Hampshire Public Radio. One is Senior Broadcast Engineer, which is primarily responsible for the studio facilities, and the other, Broadcast Transmission Engineer, which is primarily responsible for the transmitter sites. Both will overlap into the other, but this is their primary focus. If you're interested, please take a look at <https://nhpr.applicantpro.com/jobs/>

Interested? Contact Randy Woods - RWoods@NHPR.org

The NAB has filed an objection with the FCC to a proposal from Geo Broadcast that would let programs originate on FM Boosters. Much of this is based on Geo's experience with what are called SFN's or Single Frequency Networks. This is where an FM Station operates one, or more, boosters using the same frequency. (Bustos Media has been doing this here in this area for some time on 99.3.) The concept would permit these systems to geo-target commercials on those boosters that serve specific areas. There are obviously pros and cons, and now that the FCC has been asked to create rules that would make this a permissible activity. Its time for interested parties to make comments.

The NAB has stated, "permitting program origination on boosters will

almost certainly drive both advertising rates and revenues down even further as advertisers push to purchase geo-targeted ads."

Photographer extraordinaire, Dwight Small, captured this gem with his cellphone camera of a wonderful moonset over his backyard. Can you imagine telling George Eastman that one day you would be able to take pictures like this with a telephone...at night?



I asked Dwight what he was doing up at that time of morning. He said he just woke up early...and now we can all benefit.

Permitting foreign ownership of a broadcast station in the U.S. has long been an issue. In recent years rules have changed. It was recently announced that a British radio/ outdoor media firm has purchased an 8.8% stake in iHeartMedia worth 117.6 million U.S. Bucks.

Speaking of money changing hands, three law firms will receive \$3.47 million in fees as a part of a Class Action settlement with SiriusXM. Seems the Satcaster used the term 'Lifetime Subscription' with some of their customers. When those customers tried to transfer their subscription to another vehicle the company balked. Apparently they meant for the lifetime of the receiver or vehicle, not the customer (oops). So now, as a result of the settlement, about a million SiriusXM customers will indeed have a 'lifetime' subscription. At times it pays to read the fine print.

From the category of 'Is it just me?' I have certainly noticed a big increase in the number of Robocalls I've been receiving. Some of the more memorable:

- Hello, this is Kate...From the broken English used, I have to assume a Eastern Europe location. The pitch varies. She is telling you that something you don't want is about to happen and to press a number to be connected to someone that can help. The one I recently received advised me that my computer virus protection company has gone out of busines and I am to Press- ____ to be connected to the refund department.
- The Social Security Fear Call (they know my age and that I'm likely collecting it.) The caller advises you that they are from the Social Security Administration and have detected illegal activity and are to press a number.
- The Car Warranty call. Your vehicle warranty has expired, but they can help.
- The Expensive Amazon Purchase. You have ordered something expensive (usually an I-Phone) and if you wish to cancel...Press...

Number spoofing only adds to the problem as your Caller ID has been rendered useless. If you call the number back you often find out it's a number that's been disconnected...but not always. I have found that an innocent person will answer and be surprised to learn how their number is being used.

Just about all of them are wanting you to 'take the bait'. Often using fear as the prime motivator. Once you press that number you get some smooth talker that wants your credit card number so they can get you a refund. Just for fun, a while back, I played along. When they asked if I wanted the refund...I said Sure! When they asked for credit card information, I told them that I did not use a credit card and requested they send a cashiers check. In about two nanoseconds they hung up.

The sad part is that there likely many that take the bait and become a scam victim. If there were not, they would give up and go away.

And, we have been given the opinion that our Government is cracking down on this kind of thing. Perhaps these operators are like those that operate Pirate Radio Stations? They are, apparently, a few steps ahead of the law...or could care less about government efforts to curtail their business?

This has impacted me in one major way. Whereas I am on call for the people I work for, I have always left my cellphone on in my bedroom at night. Regrettably, these yahoos like to make their calls at all hours. My desire to get a full nights sleep is going to mean that if I am wanted during bed-time they are going to have to call my land line. I will simply put my phone on mute.

Remember the old days when a long distance phone call cost a lot of money? And there were no computers to do all the dirty work? Back then these types had to use real money and pay for printing and postage to get this stuff into your mailbox. Here's a reversal: A Radio broadcaster in Milwaukee is reported to be signing a deal that will have them move their stations to a downtown mall. The new space will have window view of the studios. In the past, locating radio stations within malls or at street level in downtowns was popular. I fondly remember KISN being on a downtown Portland street where you could view the announcers.

Perhaps this is in the category of when old becomes new again?

Guess I should mention that across the street from T-Mobile Park in Seattle are the KING-TV Studios.

With Malls and Radio stations both hurting financially, perhaps this will come back?

Earlier in this column I was lamenting about the demise of the local electronic parts store. One of those 'components' that we used to use is becoming increasingly scarce. That being the 3AG fuse. Recently someone wrote about this little critter titling the piece: **Goodbye 3AG fuse, we'll miss you**

He lead the piece with a picture of a 'good fuse':



And followed with a blown one:



His article was written for someone that likely does not repair electronic equipment.

The bottom line is the good old fuses, like these, are indeed becoming increasingly rare in today's equipment, as power levels are lower and the demand for something smaller has become essential.

Then there is the old joke -

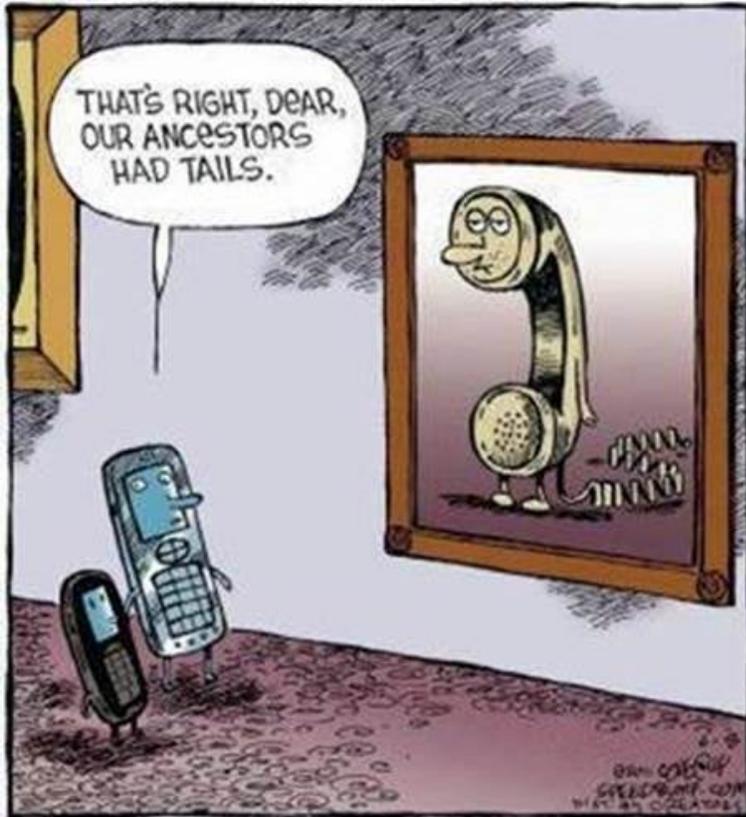
The story of the newbie who was tasked to check and sort all of the spare fuses. When the boss returned to check, all of the fuses had been discarded. "They were all shorted!"

Over the years I've worked with a lot of people in the 'Radio Biz'. Perhaps because of the fear that your gender will be confused by your listeners, most announcers/ DJ's etc. have 'lower' pitched voices. I'm sure you have heard someone say to a person with a low voice – They have a voice for Radio.

Well, there are low voices and then there are LOW voices –

[Listen To The Guy With The World's Lowest Voice Sing 'Lonesome Road' - Digg](#)

I always like to end this column with a funny or two, usually sent to me by my readers.



The next one is certainly in the 'Groaner' category.



A special thanks to all of you that sent me pictures this month. (Keep 'em coming.)

That's about it for this month, my friends. Lord willing, I will be back next month at most of the usual locations.

Until then, get vaccinated, stay safe and continue to wear your mask...and that means cover your nose too.

The 'All-Clear' is getting closer.

Clay, K7CR, CPBE

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