

THE VERMONT ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTERS

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HARWOOD NAMED VPT CHAIR



Brian Harwood of Waterbury has been elected chair of the board of directors of Vermont Public Television, Vermont's statewide public television network.

One of the state's best-known radio personalities and a Vermont Association of Broadcasters Hall of Fame member, he is morning host on WCVT Classic Vermont. He was formerly chair and CEO of hmc2 advertising in Stowe. Since his retirement from the firm, he serves as chair emeritus.

Harwood succeeds James Wyant of Pointe Claire, Que., who continues on the VPT board as past chair. Pamela Mackenzie of South Burlington was elected vice chair. She is the area vice president for Comcast in Vermont.

VAB DUES DUE NOW

All VAB members will be receiving membership renewal notices shortly. Our membership year runs from July 1 - June 30, so it's time to send in your annual dues. The VAB continues to offer the lowest dues for any state broadcasting association in the country. We also offer the most generous ABIP program, covering two-thirds of ABIP expenses. This benefit more than outweighs the annual dues!

We're able to offer low dues thanks to the member participation in the Army National Guard NCSA program. Please keep running the current VAB NCSA announcements and please keep sending in your affidavits-- it's your help that makes all the difference!

The VAB Voice



July, 2010

VAB HALL OF FAME NOMINATIONS SOUGHT

Know someone who deserves to be honored by enshrinement in the VAB Hall of Fame? Nominations for the Hall of Fame and other annual awards are now being accepted on-line at www.vab.org.

Our annual Hall of Fame dinner will be held this coming November. Award nominations are due by Sept. 30, 2010.

Go to our website and make nominations for the following awards:

- VAB Hall of Fame
- VAB Broadcaster of the Year Award
- VAB Distinguished Service Award
- Alan Noyes Community Service Award



Above: Last year's Hall of Fame inductees: Belva Keyworth of WBTV radio and Marselis Parsons of WCAX-TV..

All award nominations will be reviewed and voted on by the VAB Board of Directors. For more information, please visit www.vab.org.

CAPITOL MATTERS

DISCLOSE ACT LOADED WITH CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS



Late last month, the U.S. House passed the DISCLOSE Act and sent it on to the Senate for consideration. The acronym DISCLOSE stands for "Democracy is Strengthened by Casting Light on Spending in Elections," and was designed to counter the recent Supreme Court free speech decision in the Citizens United case.

The original draft of the bill contained provisions requiring broadcasters to expand Lowest Unit Charge windows and eligibility and to be on the hook for failing to file all campaign spending on their websites and elsewhere. Thankfully, those ideas were removed from the version that passed the House.

Still, the bill as written is loaded with constitutional question marks.

Companies with more than 20 percent foreign ownership would be barred from making independent expenditures as would any business that has more than 10 million dollars in federal contracts. The reporting procedures were intentionally designed to be so complex that the effect will be to limit corporate participation.

Meanwhile, deals were made to exempt some groups, such as unions and the NRA, from the rules. It's hard to see how the DISCLOSE Act would pass muster with the Supreme Court.

Even the American Civil Liberties Union believes the bill will have a "chilling effect on political participation" and that the legislation "fails to improve the integrity of political campaigns in any substantial way while significantly harming the speech and associational rights of Americans." - Jim Condon

LARRY KING TO STEP DOWN AFTER 25 YEARS AT CNN



He's conducted more than 40,000 interviews and now Larry King says it's time to stop the chatter and step down from his nightly CNN show after 25

years. King, 76, plans to contribute occasional specials for the network after leaving the nightly show this fall.

A native of Brooklyn, NY, King broke into radio in 1957 at Miami radio station WAHR, where he hosted a midday music show. Moving to WIOD, he began an interview show at a local restaurant.

During his second show, singer Bobby Darin walked in and became King's first celebrity interview. Soon King began a regular show on Miami television. He credits another celebrity, Jackie Gleason, with being a mentor who helped his local show take off. Gleason, he says, not only helped King get a rare interview with Frank Sinatra, but also redesigned the set, sound and lighting for King's local show.

King left Miami after being arrested for grand larceny by a former business partner. Those charges were later dropped. In the interim, King served as the announcer for the Shreveport Steamer of the World Football League.

In 1978, King took over the late night Mutual Radio Network talk show upon the death of "Long John" Nebel. King's popular national radio show ran until 1984.

There is no shortage of speculation of who may take over the coveted time slot on CNN. Names being bandied about include Katie Couric, Joy Behar, Anderson Cooper and reality show stars Ryan Seacrest and Piers Morgan. - Jim Condon

David Oxenford

CHANNELS 5 AND 6 STILL IN THE PICTURE

In a recent speech, FCC Commissioner Mignon Clyburn suggested the proposal to reallocate Channels 5 and 6 for FM radio use had merit and should be considered further. That proposal is already before the FCC, and ripe for decision - so it could theoretically be adopted tomorrow. However, the proposal is not backed by all. What are these proposals, and what is standing in the way of a reallocation?

The proposals have been made to take TV Channels 5 and 6, which are immediately adjacent to the FM band, and reallocate them to radio broadcasting. The pending proposals include suggestions that LPFM stations could be located on the new FM channels that could be created, that new space for noncommercial radio operations could be created and, if they operated digitally, there would even be room to move the entire AM band to Channel 5.

While some have suggested that any relief from such a transition would be long in coming, as radios would need to be manufactured, in fact that process might not be as prolonged as suggested, as the frequencies used by these television channels are already used for FM radio in Asia. Radios already exist that could pick up these channels (at least for analog reception). However, television interests have opposed this reallocation, but it may well be the broadband plan which could have the greatest impact on the consideration of this issue.

The initial objections to the reallocation of these channels to radio came essentially from two groups of television operators. The first were those few full-power stations that were still operating, after the digital television transition, on these channels and either couldn't move to another channel, or were unwilling to do so without getting paid. The second group was low power television operators. Many of these operators are using Channel 6 LPTV stations, which are still operating in an analog mode in many markets, as virtual radio stations, as FM receivers can pick up the audio of these stations. While there will be an eventual transition of these stations to digital which will probably end their use as radio stations, the ultimate transition date has not yet been set.

But the recent proposal for the repurposing of some of the television spectrum for wireless broadband creates a whole new problem for the use of Channels 5 and 6 for FM radio. Those channels might well be needed for television if the FCC seriously forces TV to give up part of the UHF band that is currently used for DTV service. While VHF channels, like 5 and 6, have proved to be less than optimal for DTV use, and are not expected to be very good for mobile DTV, television users could be forced to use these channels were the FCC to follow up with its suggestions of taking some of the UHF channels for mobile broadband.

These issues are all interrelated - a change in the use of TV channels for broadband may down the road affect the growth of FM. In short, while Commissioner Clyburn may think that the idea (David Oxenford is a partner in the law firm of Davis Wright Tremaine).