

**THE VERMONT
ASSOCIATION OF
BROADCASTERS**

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BOSTON TO DROP JAY LENO?



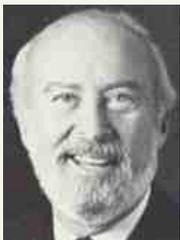
WHDH-TV (Ch. 7) in Boston says it has no plans to broadcast Jay Leno's new weeknight primetime program. The NBC affiliate plans to run local news in the 10–11 p.m. slot instead. The NBC folks aren't amused. They say they'll strip the station of its affiliation if it doesn't carry Leno's new show, scheduled to start in September. Leno is a native of Andover, Massachusetts.

LIGHTS OUT FOR *GL?*

Quick, which show has the record for the longest-running broadcast drama? If you said "Gunsmoke," you'd be wrong, pardner. "The Guiding Light" (just "Guiding Light" since 1975) has been on radio and TV since 1937. The soap opera switched from NBC radio to CBS TV in 1952. Last week, CBS cited low ratings when it announced the show would have its final broadcast on Sept. 18th.

LARRY GLICK DEAD AT 87

Boston talk show pioneer Larry Glick passed away in Florida March 26 during heart surgery.



Famous for his quick wit and his willingness to use sound effects to "blow up" callers, Glick began his career at WLMH, Laconia, NH in 1948. After stints with AFN and stations in Florida, Glick joined WMEX in Boston in 1964. He was a late-night mainstay on WBZ from 1968 to 1987.

The VAB Voice



April, 2009

BROADCASTERS RALLY AGAINST PERFORMANCE TAX

Hundreds of broadcasters from across the country descended on Capitol Hill last week to let lawmakers know they strongly oppose the imposition of a new performance tax.

Proposals backed by the RIAA have been introduced in both the House and Senate. The House version was brought forth by Rep. John Dingell, while the Senate bill is co-sponsored by Patrick Leahy of Vermont.

In response, "Freedom of Local Radio" resolutions have been introduced in both chambers (S. Con. Res. 14 and H. Con. Res. 49) that oppose "any new performance fee, tax, royalty, or other charge" on local broadcasters.

At press time 170 House members had agreed to sign on to H. Con. Res. 49. There are 435 House members, so broadcasters hope to convince at least another 48 representatives to sign on to the Radio Freedom Act.

Analysts estimate the performance tax would hit broadcasters with two billion dollars a year in new "fees." This new burden would certainly cause scores of stations to either drop music from their formats, cut jobs or go out of business altogether.



Even small radio stations would be forced to pay a minimum of \$5000. In terms of margin, a station would have to bring in an additional \$100,000 in billing to afford to pay the levy.

The VAB's delegation at the Washington meetings included VAB President Candis Leopold, Executive Director Jim Condon and Legislative Liaison Ted Teffner.

In meetings with staffers for Leahy, Sen. Bernie Sanders and Rep. Peter Welch, it was explained there are some Vermont radio stations that barely bill 100K per year.

"This would be a devastating blow to Vermont radio stations," Leopold told the staffers.

The Senate version of the performance tax would first be debated in the Judiciary

Committee, chaired by Sen. Leahy. The VAB delegation has asked Leahy to table the bill, even though Leahy is the lead sponsor.

Performance tax revenues would be split between the music performers and the (mostly foreign-owned) record companies.

The tax would be in addition to the licensing fees stations must pay to publishers and composers through ASCAP, BMI and SESAC. The new tax would also mark the end of the mutually beneficial relationship that has existed between radio stations and music performers for nearly eight decades.

Please ask our elected officials to support local radio and say "No!" to a performance tax.

**U.S. Sen. Patrick Leahy
433 Russell Senate Bldg
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510**

**U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders
332 Dirksen Building
United States Senate
Washington, D.C., 20510**

**U.S. Rep. Peter Welch
1404 Longworth H.O. Bldg
Washington, DC 20515**

ALL ABOUT ABIP

The VAB Alternative Broadcast Inspection Program (ABIP) is a benefit that allows TV & Radio stations to voluntarily be inspected by an authorized inspector, protecting you from an FCC inspection and fines.

The VAB will sign the agreement and return a copy to the station. The VAB notifies the FCC and your 150-day grace period begins the date the agreement is executed.

An inspector will notify you when your station inspection date is scheduled. Once again, Robert Shotwell of Spectrum Investigative Services will be our ABIP inspector for VAB.

Once you pass, the inspector notifies the VAB and the VAB then notifies the FCC and your 3-year moratorium from a routine FCC inspection begins.

Should an FCC inspector come to your station for a routine inspection, they will see your certificate and should leave your station. The exception to this is if the FCC agent is at your station for a complaint or something other than a routine inspection.

Once again, the VAB will contribute \$350 towards each \$450 inspection. It pays to belong to the VAB!

For more information, contact the VAB's Jim Condon at vab@together.net or Robert Shotwell at bob@abipinspections.com.

WASHINGTON WEEK IN REVIEW

With apologies to Gwen Ifill, I wanted to spend a moment to report on three separate conferences I was privileged to attend on behalf of the VAB last week.

On March 28 and 29, the VAB took part in the semi-annual meeting of NASBA, the National Alliance of State Broadcast Associations. Besides electing a new NASBA President (Christine Merritt of Ohio), we had many discussions of the DTV transition, the NCSA/PEP program and music licensing issues.

Julie Muir of the Army National Guard gave a brief presentation. She shared recent data from the Office of the Secretary of Defense on the different military service branches that people recall seeing on TV. Topping the list of all reserve branches was the National Guard at a very impressive 27%. Julie indicated the success of the NCSA/PEP program is recognized within the NGB and she pledged to protect our partnership as much as possible in the years ahead.

On Monday, March 30, we took part in the annual EAS summit to discuss issues surrounding the future of the Emergency Alert System.

It's anticipated the new CAP (Common Alerting Protocol) standards will be announced soon by FEMA. After that, stations will have 180 days to install equipment to receive the CAP messages.

VAB and all other state groups are already prepared to seek a delay in the implementation. Since the standards have not been released, there are no units on the market ready to be installed, and the models would still have to be type-accepted by the FCC.

FCC officials said they expect a delay will be granted. Another key question is, "Who's going to pay for the new

units?" So far there is no answer to that question. One FEMA official said government funding is still a "possibility." We'll see.

During the EAS summit, our luncheon speaker was native Vermonter Jim Cantore, the daredevil reporter from the Weather Channel. Cantore is a native of White River Junction and a 1986 graduate of Lyndon State College.



He recounted some of the struggles he and his crew have been through during some momentous storms, such as Hurricanes Rita, Katrina and Ike.

I presented Jim with an official Lake Champlain Quadricentennial pin, and he expressed interest in speaking at a future VAB function.

On March 31 and April 1, we attended the NAB State Leadership Conference. The primary issue discussed was the performance tax. See the front page of this issue for more on that troubling topic.

Other topics included the push to make sure that all future mobile phones come equipped with an FM chip. It's the norm in Europe (and a very popular feature) but a rarity here in America. It would be a great way to alert people to an emergency without tying up cell service, and it would help all FM stations.

- Jim Condon vab@together.net

COMMERCIAL AWARDS TO BE ANNOUNCED MAY 7 AT VAB CONVENTION

More than 160 Radio and TV commercials will battle it out May 7 during the VAB Commercial of the Year Awards.

The awards will be announced during the luncheon at the VAB Convention at the Capitol Plaza Hotel and Conference Center in Montpelier.

There are Commercial, Promo and PSA categories for radio and TV stations and a separate competition for Vermont advertising agencies. The judging this year was performed by a 10-person panel organized by Nancy Kerr of Champlain College.

The goal of the competition is to recognize and reward outstanding creative and production skills in the Vermont broadcast industry.

If you haven't received a convention brochure yet, please email Jim Condon at vab@together.net or visit our website at www.vab.org.

Morning and afternoon seminars will feature Chris Lytle, Valerie Geller and Jeffrey Hedquist. The convention will run from 8:30—5:30.

The cost is only \$25 for member and associate members, and \$50 for non-members. We hope to see you there!