

HEINL RADIO BUSINESS LETTER

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INDEX TO ISSUE OF SEPTEMBER 27, 1935

WRVA Wooden Tower Greatly Broadens Service Area.....	2
FCC Policy Apparently Approves Transfers.....	4
Women's Radio Group Defends Commercial Broadcasting.....	4
Four Ocean Liners To Get Facsimile Receivers.....	5
Clash Reported Between Members Of The FCC.....	6
Three Power Increases Approved By Examiners.....	6
Radio Pioneers Turn Eyes Towards Ethiopia.....	7
Only Three License Renewals Are Still Held Up.....	8
Colon Station In Market For Amateur Talent - Free.....	9
Industry Notes.....	10
Mutual System Is One Year Old.....	11
Applications Granted by Broadcast Division FCC.....	12

No. 863

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WRVA WOODEN TOWER GREATLY BROADENS SERVICE AREA

The all-wooden tower erected last Spring by WRVA, Richmond, Va., has proved its effectiveness in greatly extending the station's service area even during the Summer months, when broadcasting is usually at its worst.

Field strength measurements made by Paul F. Godley, of Upper Montclair, N. J., have shown an approximate increase in the station's dependable nighttime service of 400 per cent and a jump in daytime service of 300 per cent, according to C. T. Lucy, Manager of Station WRVA.

So encouraged is the management of Larus & Brothers, tobacco manufacturers, over the experiment that it now is evolving plans for even greater coverage and has filed an application with the Federal Communications Commission for a permit to increase its power from 5,000 watts to 50 KW.

The tower is a gigantic tripod, rising 320 feet and constructed entirely of wood. Although wooden radio towers have been in use in Europe for several years, WRVA was the first station in this country to experiment with it.

European radio engineers have contended that wooden towers absorb fewer radio waves than do steel towers and consequently permit the transmission of stronger signals.

"The use of the 'low-velocity' antenna system on WRVA's new 326 foot wooden tower has effected a very material increase in the service area of the station", Mr. Godley stated.

"Since WRVA operates on a cleared channel, most important gain is found in the extension of the primary nighttime service. The so-called fading zone of the station has been pushed out to such an extent that dependable night-time service area shows an increase of approximately 400 per cent.

"Although surveys have not been completed, it can be said that the effect upon daytime service is the approximate equivalent of a three fold increase in power in the old WRVA antenna."

Denying a rumor circulated among Washington radio engineers that WRVA's radiated signal takes a material drop in rainy weather, Mr. Lucy said the effect "is exactly the opposite".

"Whereas in our old antenna system using the two steel towers, there was an appreciable drop in our antenna

9/27/35

current during rainy weather because of apparent leakage over the insulators in the base of each tower, we are gratified to note that since we have been using the wood tower there is no change whatsoever in our output during rainy weather", he said.

As testimony in support of the engineering report, Mr. Lucy cited the following excerpts from listener letters:

Binnewater, N. Y. - "I heard your station Wednesday night. It came in better than ever. I am receiving more and better results, and I believe the new tower is bringing those results to me." - W. F.

Bowling Green, Va. - "Since you have gotten the new wooden tower up I can get the programs fine at night; before that time I had some trouble in getting them clear, but now they come in fine without the humming they had in the past." - T.W.V.

Charlottesville, Va. - "As to the reception with the new antenna, it is infinitely better. I didn't think that it could be improved to such an extent. Heretofore we have been unable to obtain clear reception through WRVA after six o'clock in the evening, but now we get it very clearly." - Miss M.E.

The use of wood for a radio tower is made possible by a very simple contrivance called the modern timber connector, developed abroad from an idea conceived in this country several decades ago, according to the National Lumber Manufacturers' Association.

The tripod or triangular idea which makes WRVA's new tower differ so radically from the ordinary square-based or four-legged affair, is American in both its origin and development. A recent invention of a Washington, D.C., engineer, the triangular form was employed for the first time in WRVA's new station, although fourteen Forest Service lookout towers of this type are now being constructed in the Northwest. The triangular feature is valuable in that it reduces resistance to the wind and enhances the economy factor, as it decreases by approximately 25 per cent the amount of lumber needed.

The corners of WRVA's tower are $38\frac{1}{2}$ feet apart at the tops of the foundation piers. From this the structure tapers to a point where, 280 feet above the ground, the corners are but 15 inches apart. The balance of the height is attained by a flag staff which thrusts upward 40 feet from the apex of the tower proper.

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FCC POLICY APPARENTLY APPROVES TRANSFERS

Despite an occasional demand on Capitol Hill that broadcasting frequencies be returned to the Federal Communications Commission when a licensee no longer wishes to use them, the FCC apparently intends to go ahead approving transfers to new owners.

Three such transfers have just been approved by the FCC although there was at first a gesture of scheduling a public hearing and then cancelling it. The FCC itself seems to be divided on the issue.

The transfers most recently approved included the sale of WFBE, Cincinnati, to the Scripps-Howard newspapers, which have organized the Continental Radio Company. The call letters will be changed to WCPO.

The other transfers which got the FCC permit were KGKO, Wichita Falls, Tex., to Amon Carter, Fort Worth publisher, and KFRU, Columbia, Mo., to Luther L. Hill. KGKO is to be moved to Fort Worth.

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WOMEN'S RADIO GROUP DEFENDS COMMERCIAL BROADCASTING

Although one of radio's severest critics, the Women's National Radio Committee comes to the defense of the commercial broadcasting system in its second issue of Radio Review, a pamphlet released on September 21st.

The Committee makes it clear that it still thinks there is room for improvement in radio advertising, but it has this to say in defense of things as they are:

"Correspondence with members and non-members convinces us that the national audience does not resent radio advertising. It is merely the abuses of the system, caused by poor judgment on the part of advertisers and their agencies, which provoke indignant protests and heap bitter criticisms upon radio."

Conditions would be better, the Committee states, if radio and the press would patch up differences,

"We believe radio may be used most effectively to complement advertising in newspapers and magazines", the Committee contends. "This presupposes a harmonious relationship between radio and the press which at present does not exist, and so we wish to ask both factions at this time, 'Won't you please kiss and make up?'"

The following programs and talent are given approval in the new Radio Review:

"The Wife Saver" (NBC Red); "Saturday Musicale" (CBS but not running now); "Today's Children" (NBC Blue); "Story of Mary Marlin" (CBS); "Vic and Sade" (NBC Red); "America's Hour" (CBS); "Veloz and Yolanda's Orchestra" (WOR and WGN); "A & P Gypsies" (NBC); "Grace Castagnetta" (WEVD); "Lady Esther-Wayne King" (NBC & CBS); "NBC's Music Guild"; "Women in Washington" (WMCA-WIP); "The Eton Boys" (CBS); "Poet's Gold" (CBS); "Fred Waring's Ford Program" (CBS).

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FOUR OCEAN LINERS TO GET FACSIMILE RECEIVERS

After months of experimentation, the facsimile radio transmission of weather maps and newspapers from shore to ships has reached a practical enough stage to merit installation of receiving apparatus on four ocean liners.

Charles J. Pannill, President of the Radiomarine Corporation of America, made the announcement this week upon returning from Europe after attending the Seventh Annual Meeting of the International Radiomaritime Committee in Brussels. He did not name the liners.

Tests have been in progress on the United States liner "President Harding", Mr. Pannill said, and the mechanical details of transmission have been developed to a stage where the service is marketable. He predicted that every passenger liner in the future will be equipped with the service.

A map, or one page of a newspaper can be sent to a ship in 25 minutes, Mr. Pannill said, and it is planned to send maps twice daily, showing not only wind directions, hurricane data, the position of icebergs and derelicts, but also the position of as many liners and freighters as possible.

Facsimiles have been radioed across the Atlantic before, sent out from the Riverhead, L.O. station of the company and received at various places on sets which traced graphs and charts with automatic pen-and-ink recorders. Because of the special problem presented by a mobile instrument at sea, development of the short-to-ship service was delayed until Charles J. Young, son of Owen D. Young and a research worker in the corporation's laboratories, developed a carbon recorder which is not affected by ship motion, no matter how severe.

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CLASH REPORTED BETWEEN MEMBERS OF THE FCC

A reported clash between the Telegraph Division and the Broadcast Division of the Federal Communications Commission has rocked the FCC offices but brought forth neither an affirmation nor a denial of the story. The rift is said to have resulted from a stinging rebuke administered recently by Commissioner Irvin Stewart, Chairman of the Telegraph Division, to his colleagues, Anning S. Prall and Eugene O. Sykes, of the Broadcast Division.

Stewart in an executive session, according to Variety, charged "favoritism, toadying to influential petitioners, and violations of the Division's own rules of procedure."

Minutes reputedly describing the quarrel were refused a Variety reporter by Herbert L. Pettey, Secretary of the FCC.

Stewart's outburst is said to have followed Judge Sykes' recommendation that the Commission decline to reopen the case of WSMB, New Orleans, on the ground that an appeal from the Broadcast Division's rejection of a power boost application came too late.

"The Stewart blast came out of an entirely clear sky and threw the regulatory agency into complete confusion and bewilderment", said Variety. "It looks like a serious incident, which may lead to an explosion with far-reaching political consequences."

The Telegraph Division Chairman protested "against disregard of regulations and the practice of granting applications without hearings or through consideration of the merits of various propositions. He cited the boost in power from 500 watts to 1 KW of KRNT, Des Moines, Ia.

When questioned by newspapermen, Stewart refused to either affirm or deny the story.

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THREE POWER INCREASES APPROVED BY EXAMINERS

An increase in daytime power from 1,000 watts to 5 KW was recommended for Station KYA, San Francisco, Cal., by Examiner Melvin H. Dalberg in a report to the Federal Communications Commission September 23.

At the same time Examiner George H. Hill recommended that the FCC reaffirm its grant of 5 KW daytime permit to WWJ, Detroit, and allow WAAF, Chicago, which operates on the same

9/27/35

channel (920 kc), to increase its daytime power from 500 watts to 1 KW but to deny its request for a construction permit to operate at night with 500 watts.

The Examiner held that the power increases in the daytime would not cause any great interference and that no evidence was offered in support of WAAF's request for night operation.

Granting of a construction permit to erect a new station at Moorhead, Minn., to operate on 1310 kc., 100 watts, unlimited time, was recommended by Examiner P. W. Seward conditional on the proposed removal of KGFK from Moorhead to Duluth.

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RADIO PIONEERS TURN EYES TOWARDS ETHIOPIA

While the layman radio listener, even though he possesses an all-wave receiver, probably will be undisturbed by the State Department's request of the Navy for an emergency radio station at Addis Ababa, short-wave fans - the radio pioneers - will look on it as a new world to conquer.

Four expert radio men from the Navy Department at Washington are en route to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, for the purpose of insuring rapid communication between the State Department and the American Legation in case of an Italo-Ethiopian war and a breakdown in the present communication system.

There is only one radio station at Addis Ababa - ETA - and it is a radio telegraph transmitter which until recently sent out only dots and dashes that mean nothing to the average listener.

Upon this station all diplomatic representatives and newspaper correspondents are dependent for immediate communication with the outside world. If it should get out of order, the world might wait for several days for word from the Ethiopian capital.

The story of how this station has risen suddenly from an obsolete wireless telegraph link to the place of an important international broadcasting device is told by George M. Lilley, Radio Editor of the Philadelphia Inquirer, as follows:

"Station ETA was of little concern to America until first news of the impending Italo-Ethiopian embroilment flashed across the borders.

"It was only hours then until enterprising, foreseeing RCA Communications, Inc., had jumped into the scene. Those who

controlled the affairs of ETA were soon won over. Not long afterwards Ethiopian ETA cast the jabbering voices of men into the sultry, watery heavens - not just dots and dashes that people don't understand.

"Eight thousand miles away, at RCA's Riverhead, L.I. station they anxiously scanned radio's wonder bands for vestiges of the waves created in the far distant land. And quite a surprise was in store.

"Station ETA could be heard, could be heard here loudly - direct. In spite of the fact that its power totalled only 2 kilowatts and no form whatsoever of directional antenna was being used, the waves from Addis Ababa rolled through so readily that RCA decided no intermediate relay point should be needed for network relays. None has been employed on the rebroadcasts already put on.

"Usually signals streak out to their American destination on either 7.62 or 18.27 megacycles, the former used during the late afternoons and nights for reception here, the latter when daylight spreads over most of the path.

"Personal observations, however, soon showed that Addis Ababa isn't received so clearly by we average fans as it is at RCA's highly elaborate terminals of reception."

The Navy's emergency station, when erected, will send signals even less intelligible to the average listener as both code and dot and dashes will be used.

The signals probably will be relayed to Washington via the Philippines and San Francisco. They will be received at the Naval Research Laboratory at Bellevue, D.C., decoded, and rushed to the State Department.

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ONLY THREE LICENSE RENEWALS ARE STILL HELD UP

Out of a score of station license renewals set for hearings early in the Summer, the Federal Communications Commission has granted renewals from time to time to all but three outlets.

The renewals have led observers in the trade to believe that perhaps the hard-boiled attitude earlier assumed was a show for the benefit of Congress.

The three stations whose licenses are still being held up are KFRC, San Francisco; KNX, Los Angeles and WTMJ, Milwaukee. A hearing is scheduled for October 14. KMBC, Kansas City, Mo., and KMA, Shenandoah, Ia., were granted temporary renewals at the last FCC meeting subject to future action on the application for renewal.

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COLON STATION IN MARKET FOR AMATEUR TALENT - FREE

While broadcasting stations in this country are having to turn away ambitious amateur performers who wish to crash the ether waves, the newly-established broadcasting station at Colon, Panama, is having trouble finding sufficient talent.

Amateurs at first flocked to the studio of HP50, when it opened late in July, according to a report to the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, but they "have since lost interest and are now scarcely available."

The station has resorted to phonograph records of good quality, mainly male singing numbers, to supplement the occasional personal performances still available. Local religious, memorial, patriotic and similar broadcasts are being advertised for the station free of charge in the news columns of the local press to attract public attention to the new radio enterprise. Amateur announcers, willing to try out their abilities without pay, are being tested. Broadcasting hours are not yet fixed or regular but are being timed usually to reach a relaxing public around noon and in the early evening.

Station HP50, Colon's first broadcasting transmitter, operates on 1440 kc. with 25 watts power. It is the third station in the Republic of Panama, the other two being a long-wave station, HP5B, and a short-wave station, HPSJ, both in Panama City.

The aerial of Station HP50 is suspended between wooden towers on the flat roof of the Carbone Building and is T-type, about 100 feet long, with four wires on flat top or horizontal section, raised about 125 feet above land.

"The venture is admittedly largely experimental", Consul James Loder Park reports, "but the prospects for profit are good. The two main difficulties encountered are to obtain unpaid performers to entertain with speeches, singing and instrumental musical performance, and to obtain support of the running expenses of the station, plus a reasonable profit on the investment, by advertising local business houses. Amateurs were available at first, but have since lost interest and are now scarcely obtainable.

"A relay service for foreign short-wave programs is proposed, as promising popular approval. Short-wave reception is difficult and interference sufficiently great that set owners often find the necessary manipulation too great, and as radio interest appears to be more strictly for the programs than for DX accomplishment, the popular choice promises more following for relayed programs than for direct reception."

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Leonard Hole, recently with Benton & Bowles and previously with NBC, has been appointed assistant to W. B. Lewis, Director of Commercial Programs on Columbia Broadcasting System.

Stanley W. Barnett, formerly Manager of WBAL, Baltimore, has been made Manager of WCOD-WASH, Grand Rapids, Mich., just as the station becomes a full-time outlet for both NBC red and blue network programs. Barnett at one time was Manager of WOC, Davenport, Ia., and is a graduate of the Naval Radio School of Harvard.

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MUTUAL SYSTEM IS ONE YEAR OLD

The Mutual Broadcasting System, composed of the four basic stations WOR, Newark; WGN, Chicago; WLW, Cincinnati, and CKLW, Detroit-Windsor, becomes one year old on October 1. During that time the network has developed into a strong working unit with a record of one million dollars in sponsored business for the first year and a prediction that that total will be doubled in the year 1935-36.

CKLW, 5,000 watt station, became a member of the System September 29, being welcomed to the network with a dedicatory program.

The Mutual System is the outgrowth of an exchange of programs between WOR, WGN and WLW. At the outset the exchange consisted of but two broadcasts a week but gradually this has been increased since the inception of the system until today the schedule calls for several hours daily.

Since October 1, 1934, the following developments have taken place: the establishment of permanent lines between the basic stations; the development of a Mutual sales organization; the replacement of WXYZ, a 1,000 watt station, by CKLW, a 5,000 watter; the international exchange of programs between the Canadian Radio Commission, the British Broadcasting Corp., the Yankee Network and Mutual; the joining of the Mutual Broadcasting System with Proprietary Drug Association as associate member so that the network could take advantage of the association's Advisory Committee on Advertising; the WOR- Mutual Radio Playhouse which sponsors may use at a nominal cost for their radio shows, and lastly the placing at the disposal of national advertisers other affiliate stations so that sponsors may have whatever network coverage they might desire.

At the present time approximately 20 hours a week is being carried over the network commercially and approximately 40 hours of sustaining time is being fed by the chain to member stations.

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APPLICATIONS GRANTED BY BROADCAST DIVISION FCC

New - Clarence Scharbauer, Midland, Texas, C.P. to operate on 1420 kc., 100 watts, daytime, site to be determined; KWG, Portable Wireless Tel. Co., Inc., Stockton, Cal., CP to install new equipment; KNEL, G. L. Burns, Brady, Tex., Mod. of CP approving transmitter and studio sites and antenna system, extend commencement date to 10 days after grant and completion date to 180 days thereafter; WEMP, Milwaukee Broadcasting Co., Milwaukee Brdcstg. Co., Milwaukee, Wis., Mod. of CP to make changes in eqpt; KPRC, Houston Printing Co., Houston, Tex., Mod. of license to increase power from 1 KW night, 2½ KW day to 1 KW night, 5 KW day; WNEL, Juan Piza, San Juan, P.R., extension of present license for period of 60 days, 1290 kc., 500 watts, unlimited time; KYA, Pacific Broadcasting Corp., San Francisco, Cal., extension of license for period of 60 days, 1230 kc., 1 KW, unlt'd; WIP, Penna. Brdcstg. Co., Philadelphia, Pa., extension of license for period of 60 days, 610 kc., 500 w. unlt'd; KROW, Educational Brdcstg. Corp., Oakland, Cal., extension of license for period of 60 days, 930 kc., 1 KW, unlt'd.

Also, WCAE, WCAE, Inc., Pittsburgh, Pa., Mod. of CP to make changes in eqpt.; WKAR, Mich. State College, East Lansing, Mich., license to cover CP authorization changes in antenna system, 1040 kc., 1 KW day, S.H.; KNOW, KUT Broadcasting Co., Austin, Tex., license to cover CP authorizing change in transm. site and in eqpt., 1500 kc., 100 w., unlt'd.; WMFG, Head of the Lakes Brdcstg. Co., Hibbing, Minn., license to cover CP authorizing new station at Hibbing, to operate on 1210 kc., 100 w. unlt'd. time; WFBE, Radio Station WFBE, Inc., Geo. M. Schott, Pres., Cincinnati, Ohio, Vol. Assignment of license from Radio Station WFBE, Inc. to Continental Radio Co.; KFBB, Buttery Broadcast., Inc., Great Falls, Mont., extension of present license for period of 60 days, 1280 kc., 1 KW night, 2½ KW day, unlt'd. time; WJBK, James F. Hopkins, Inc., Detroit, Mich., renewal of license for the period ending Jan. 1, 1936, 1500 kc., 100 w. night, 250 w. day, unlt'd.

Also, KFIO, Spokane Broadcasting Co, Spokane, Wash., extension of present license for period of 60 days, 1120 kc., 100 watts, daytime; KDYL, Intermountain Brdcstg. Corp., Salt Lake City, Utah, extension of present license for period of 60 days, 1290 kc., 1 KW, unlt'd; KEHE, Evening Herald Publishing Co., Los Angeles, Cal., extension of present license for period of 60 days, 780 kc., 500 w., night, 1 KW day, S.H.; KFAB, KFAB Broadcasting Co., Lincoln, Neb., renewal of license for the period ending Feb. 1, 1936, 770 kc., 5 KW; KOIN, KOIN, Inc., Portland, Ore., extension of present license for period of 60 days, 940 kc., 1 KW night, 5 KW day, unlimited; New, National Brdcstg Co., Inc., Washington, D. C., CP and license for new Gen. Exp. broadcast pick-up station, freqs. 31100, 34600, 37600 and 40600 kc., 100 watts.