



This document contains early Billboard articles.

MAY 23 1970

## Global Top 40 Radio Show Due

By CLAUDE HALL

LOS ANGELES — Watermark Enterprises Inc. will launch the first worldwide commercial syndicated Top 40 radio show July 1, it was announced here last week by Tom Rounds, president of the firm. Rounds, Watermark chairman Tom Driscoll,

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# Watermark Launches 1st Global Syndicated Top 40 Show July 1

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and vice president Ron Jacobs unveiled the new three-hour show last week in Mallorca at the second annual Billboard International Music Industry Conference. The first unveiling of the show for the U.S. market will be held during the third annual Billboard Radio Programming Forum June 18-20 at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York.

The show's format features a countdown of Billboard's top 40 records from the Hot 100 Chart

and the show will be available for broadcast on Sundays, unveiling information that will be in the Billboard that reaches most radio stations either on the following Monday or Tuesday.

On July 1 the show will be launched in France, West Germany, Spain, and the Netherlands. Negotiations are under way with stations in other countries and there's a strong chance that the show will pierce the Iron Curtain countries.

The show is being produced by Ron Jacobs, who was noted

for building KHJ in Los Angeles into one of the nation's most successful Top 40 stations. Host of the show is Casey Kasem, leading air personality. The format, besides featuring a countdown of the major-selling 40 records in the nation, also contains historic sidelights on record artists and records—all fitting into a tight format. The foreign version will be different from the U.S. version in that several of the state-owned radio networks will adapt it to fit their own programming concepts. In the Dutch countries, for example, the state-owned radio will take the components of the show and translate for their own air personalities. In Spain, the feature material will be in English, but the introductions to the records will be in Spanish.

Rounds said that he is now setting up a distributor network for the Far East.

One of the major aspects of the new program is that it will introduce U.S. hits early in foreign countries, Rounds said. "This type of program could, for the first time, establish a sales impact for a major 40 records worldwide at the same time." This could, in time, lead to an international sales chart, he said, showing the major-selling records around the world.

## Watermark Forms Co. for Non-Music Concept LP's

LOS ANGELES — Increase Records has been formed by Watermark, Inc., to produce non-music concept LP's and other special item projects.

First project is a seven-LP series derived from the recent

history of rock 'n' roll, which aired over RKO General stations. GRT will distribute the seven LP's being developed by Ron Jacobs, Pete Johnson and Ellen Pelissero — the same team which put together the rock music history.

Jere Brian, a&r director for Increase, plans six LP's for this year, including "A Child's Garden of Grass," the book by Jack Margolis and Richard Clorfene.

Watermark has opened Mitchell Fisher Associates for personal management. Fisher, with Ron Jacobs, Tom Mofat, Tom Driscoll and Tom Rounds, are the principals in Watermark. Seals and Crofts, who record for TA Records, are handled by this division.

Watermark is also expanding into feature films with one property featuring music by Alex Hassilev already finished for National General Corp. The firm's Hawaii concert division, Arena Associates, is scheduling a full roster of dates for both Honolulu and Los Angeles.

JUN. 20 1970

# 'American Top 40' Bows At Forum; On Air July 1

LOS ANGELES—"American Top 40," a new syndicated radio show produced by Watermark Inc., to be unveiled at the Billboard Radio Programming Forum in New York June 18-20, will hit the air in 10 key markets July 1. Tom Rounds, president of Watermark, said the three-hour show, which will countdown the leading 40 best-selling records based on advance information from the Billboard Hot 100 Chart, is set for Boston, Philadelphia, Detroit, St. Louis, San Antonio, San Diego, Minneapolis; San Bernardino, Calif.; Albany, N.Y., and Honolulu.

The show is produced by Ron Jacobs, noted for programming KJH in Los Angeles into one of the top radio stations in the nation. Casey Kasem is host.

Already, the show is set to

be launched overseas in countries such as France, West Germany, Spain, and the Netherlands. It will be launched there at the same time as in the U.S. Full-scale placement of the show in U.S. markets will begin immediately after the Forum. Rounds will be exhibiting the new programming concept in the Jade Room at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel during the Forum and signing up new markets on an exclusive basis.

JUL. 11 1970



Tom Rounds, president of Watermark Inc., was on hand to tell program directors and general managers about "American Top 40," a new weekly special based on the Billboard Hot 100 Chart, Watermark just launched around the world. Billboard will be helping place the new show on stations, exclusive in each market, free to the stations.

OCT. 17 1970

## MGM Pitch On 'Top 40'

By ELIOT TIEGEL

LOS ANGELES—In the largest buy made on the three-month-old syndicated radio show, "American Top 40," MGM Records has purchased all availabilities on the weekly, three-hour radio show for the next six weeks. The program, now airing in 30 markets, is produced for Watermark, Inc. by Tom Rounds, Casey Kasem and Don Bustany,

## MGM Taking Spots On 'American Top 40'

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and is based on advanced Billboard Hot 100 listings.

The MGM buy, which was made through Watermark by MGM president Mike Curb, is part of an extensive label campaign for 10 MGM artists: Eric Burdon, Bill Medley, Bobbie Bloom, Michael Parks, the Mike Curb Congregation, Hank Williams Jr., the Osmond Brothers, Richie Havens, Lalo Schifrin and 11-year-old Heintje, the Dutch-born singing import.

The label will receive more than 150 spots per week in the 30 markets for the next six weeks. Watermark, which is aiming at a goal of 150 stations by the middle of next year, has been averaging one new station every three days. Latest to sign for the show, which is narrated by Kasam, a veteran disk jockey and

originator of the "bio" or teaser format on rock radio, are KJR, Seattle; WGAR, Cleveland, and KNUZ, Houston.

Curb views the program as a blessing for record manufacturers who now can make a uniform buy across the country through "American Top 40." "We watched," he said, "the program carefully and its ratings in various markets before we made any decisions. Our promotion men checked the impact the show made where it was aired and our conclusion was that Kasem and the show definitely sold product. It's a stimulus to record-buyers, and I think everyone in the industry recognizes the importance of programs that have the ability to stimulate the listener as well as to entertain him. I think the next six weeks will provide us with some interesting results."

OCT. 10 1970

## 'American Top 40' Gets 26 Stations

LOS ANGELES — Twenty-six stations have launched "American Top 40," the weekly series of specials produced by Watermark, Inc., reported Watermark president Tom Rounds. The three-hour series features a countdown of Billboard's Hot 100 Chart and is rush-released to the stations so that it arrives in advance of the Billboard. The show is designed to be broadcast on Sunday afternoon. Casey Kasem is host.

Stations now featuring the show include KJR in Seattle, KJOY in Stockton, Calif.; KRUX in Phoenix; KEYN in Wichita, Kan.; WGAR in Cleveland, WAIR in Winston-Salem; WFLI in Chattanooga; WNOX in Knoxville; WCBM in

Baltimore; WMEX in Boston; WPGC in Washington; WVIC in Lansing, Mich.; WKBR in Manchester, N.H.; KMEN in San Bernardino, Calif.; KACY in Oxnard, Calif.; KHYT in Tucson; KCPX in Salt Lake City; KQEO in Albuquerque, N.M.; KINT in El Paso; KTSA in San Antonio; KNUZ in Houston; KIRL in St. Louis; KEYS in Corpus Christi; KPOI in Honolulu, and WWWW-FM in Detroit.

All these stations are already carrying the show—free to the top 100 radio markets—or are slated to launch it this week. In addition, at least 10 more stations will begin carrying the weekly specials in the next three weeks.

# KRLA Hops On Top 40 Show Bandwagon

LOS ANGELES — KRLA, this city's progressive rock AM outlet, has become the 31st station to program "American Top 40," the three-hour syndicated show based on Billboard's Hot 100 chart.

KRLA will air the show Sundays from 9 a.m. to noon. Johnny Darin, the program director, said that "in the past syndicated shows have not made it on major stations because of quality and packaging. We took the show because the talents involved are the best in the industry. A Casey Kasem (the show's narrator and former KRLA personality) is one of the finest disk jockeys in the country. The show is a well done professional package, it's done the way a rock station has to be done for a major market."

With the addition of KRLA, "American Top 40" is now in seven of the top 12 markets. Among those cities airing the show are Detroit, Baltimore, Boston, St. Louis, Cleveland and Washington. Tom Rounds, of Watermark, the production company, noted that all 31 stations are in the top 100 markets and that Watermark expects to add another 10 markets within the next two weeks.

OCT. 24 1970

JAN. 23 1971

## Ratings Soar For 'Top 40'

LOS ANGELES — Results from the latest ARB survey show "American Top 40," Watermark, Inc.'s nationally syndicated rock radio show, to be one of the most-successful newcomers to radio in a long time.

Figures just in show that "American Top 40" has become the No. 1 music show in Los Angeles on KRLA during its 9 to noon Sunday time slot. The KRLA audience gain was 69 percent in the time period from

(Continued on page 28)



CASEY KASEM, SEATED, TOM ROUNDS, center, and Don Bustany, producers of the "American Top 40," from Watermark Inc., discuss new entries on the chart, during a taping session at the Watermark studios. The "American Top 40," is based on Billboard's Top 40 charts and is now in 35 markets across the country on a free, first-come-first-serve basis.

NOV. 28 1970

## 'American Top 40' Soars in Ratings

• Continued from page 1

last May before adding the show to October, using "American Top 40."

Other major markets registered similar light increases with the show, which is based each week on the Billboard Hot 100. In Boston, WMEX's 9 to noon Sunday "American Top 40" time spot showed an audience increase of nearly 99 percent with the show since last May. There was a 57 percent jump for WFGC in Washington, which also airs the show on Sundays, 9 until noon. WGAR, Cleveland, began airing the three-hour special exactly six months ago on Saturday nights, 7-10 p.m. ARB results show an audience increase of 33 percent for the time period since the show's debut.

Sixty-five stations are now air-

ing the syndicated show, which is in its sixth month of operation. It's produced for Watermark by Tom Rounds, Casey Kasem and Don Bustany. Kasem, a veteran announcer, also narrates the weekly, three-hour countdown program.

Rounds, who expects additional ARB ratings within the next two weeks, said that the greatest indication of the show's success is in its renewal pattern. All 26 initial subscriber stations renewed at the end of the first quarter and all 46 at the end of the second cycle.

# 'American Top 40' To Secondary Markets

LOS ANGELES—"American Top 40," the three-hour weekly syndicated radio show now airing in more than 65 of the top 100 markets, will be made available to stations in markets below the top 100 beginning Monday (25).

Tom Rounds, who produces the show along with Casey Kasem and Don Bustany for Watermark, Inc., said that initially the show was geared exclusively for the top 100 but several weeks ago, as the result of requests from markets below the top 100, Watermark began experimenting with 10 secondary stations.

"The results," said Rounds, "were phenomenal. The show turned out to be what the local time buyers really want—a special they can be identified with each week. Of course, they continue to buy time on the local stations' regular programs, but

'AT 40' was like a bonus to the station. It gave them a chance to sell a special each week and the response was beyond all expectations. Seven out of the ten stations pre-sold the show for 13 weeks."

The movement into the secondary markets comes at the same time that "American Top 40" is celebrating its six-month birthday. "We've reached the point," Rounds said, "where the show is considered to be a regular part of each station's weekly programming. Casey (Kasem narrates the top 40 count down) sounds live to the listener and they've come to feel that he is one of the station's regular personalities. As an example of the identification and success we've had, a few weeks ago we invited listeners to write in for a list of the top 100 tunes of the years as compiled by Billboard. Within two weeks Casey had received 10,000 letters."

APR. 17 1971

## 'U.S. Top 40' In Int'l Swing

LOS ANGELES—"American Top 40" has gone international with the signing of stations in Canada and three other foreign markets. Tom Rounds, of Watermark, Inc., producers of the show which is based on Billboard's "Hot 100," said that CJOC, Alberta, and CHAT, Alberta, Canada, had both started airing the show. In addition, the Dutch National Radio Network; Radio 610 in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad; and Radio Fiji are also airing it.

The international expansion was made possible through an agreement with Emory Air Freight which guarantees that the tapes of the weekly top 40 tunes will be delivered within 48 hours anywhere in the world.

Casey Kasem narrates the weekly three-hour countdown show which is now heard on nearly 100 domestic stations.

## AMERICAN TOP 40 RATED TOP SHOW IN L.A. AREA

LOS ANGELES—"American Top 40" has become the top-rated show in the Los Angeles metropolitan area according to survey figures released by ARB.

The three-hour, weekly syndicated show which airs on KRLA here (it is in 71 other markets) came out with a 7.5 ARB to top KIAI's 7.4; all-news KFWB 7.1 and KABC, the conversation station, 6.0.

Prior to the survey, "American Top 40" had been the top-rated rock music show but with the new results the show now tops all programming in the metro area (the metro area comprises Los Angeles and Orange Counties).

Tom Rounds of Watermark Inc., the company that produces the show, also said that "American Top 40" has been chosen by Yamaha for a test campaign for the company's 14 new motorcycles for 1971. The test, which will air through March and April, will feature three to six commercials per week on the show. Casey Masem narrates the top 40 countdown which is based on Billboard's Hot 100 chart. **MAR. 27 1971**

## Watermark Launches Presley Radio Special

JUN. 12 1971

By CLAUDE HALL

LOS ANGELES — A 12-hour radio documentary on Elvis Presley—"The Elvis Presley Story"—has been launched by Watermark Inc. The syndication special will be produced by Ron Jacobs, responsible for putting together "The History of Rock & Roll." Jerry Hopkin, who wrote the recent series for Look magazine on Presley and will have a book, published by Simon & Shuster,

out in October, titled "Elvis" is writing the new radio special.

Jacobs spent last week in Nashville, Tupelo, Miss., and Memphis doing research and taping some 15 hours of interviews including one with George Klein, lifelong personal friend of Presley and now program director of WHBQ, Memphis Top 40 radio station. Also interviewed were Sam Phillips and the Blackwood Brothers.

The special is expected to be ready for broadcasting Labor Day. Tom Rounds, president of Watermark, is executive producer. The firm is currently interviewing Los Angeles area radio personalities to find the right man. Jacobs is also seeking personal tapes from foreign air personalities of Elvis Presley records that they've introduced on the air in order to demonstrate during the special the popularity of Presley around the world.

The format of the show will hinge on 12 chapters including individual segments devoted to his Army and movie careers and his Las Vegas activities. Last week, Jacobs was seeking some personal studio tracks never before released or broadcast. The show is expected to include some 140 different Presley major records.

Studio production on the special is expected to begin in the next two weeks. A demo for radio stations who wish to broadcast the special will be available July 15, Jacobs said.

JUN. 10 1972

# American 'Top 40' To Contemporize Format

LOS ANGELES — "American Top 40," three-hour weekly special produced and syndicated by Watermark Inc. here, will revamp its format after airing a special show July 4—"The 40 Biggest Hits of the Rock Era"—commemorating the third anniversary of the show. The special, according to sales manager George Savage, will focus on the top 40 records since 1955. The show has already been produced and will be sent to subscribing radio stations soon. Tom Rounds is president of Watermark.

"American Top 40," hosted by Casey Kasem, is based on the Billboard Hot 100 Chart each week. Effective with the show slated to be aired July 8 weekend, the format hour will be changed to allow more clustering of commercial inserts and longer music sweeps. Commercial insert slots will be cut from eight to six. Five of these will be tailored to carry two minutes of commercials and the other will be a one-minute spot.

Rounds said that this change still allows 11 minutes of commercials per hour but keeps "in step with the national contemporary music programming trend toward more clustering of commercials and music sweeps. The show will sound less talky and less cluttered this way, while giving the producers more latitude to deal with our

steadily increasing usage of usually longer album versions of single titles as well as the average length of Top 40 singles which seems to be growing every week.

"Each hour is set up for 14 records. Recently, however, because of the more frequent appearance of records like "Taxi" in the top 40, we've considered ourselves lucky to have been able to just play the entire Top 40 without internal editing, much less insert any 'specials.' Until this trend reverses, therefore, more hours will probably consist of 13 records."

## 'American Top 40' to WCFL

CHICAGO—WCFL, 50,000-watt Top 40 operation here, added "American Top 40," the weekly Watermark three-hour special based on the Billboard Magazine's Hot 100 Chart, on June 25. Tom Rounds, chief of the radio syndication firm, reported that this brings the total to 175 stations coast-to-coast and around the world featuring the show, which is hosted by veteran air personality Casey Kasem.

The show features a countdown of chart tunes. Billboard supplies advance information and the show heard over the air either Saturday evening or Sunday on most stations is a presentation of the major-selling records as they show up in the trade paper's chart the following Monday. JUL. 15 1972

## 'American Top 40' Adds 25 Stations

LOS ANGELES — "American Top 40," the weekly special hosted by Casey Kasem added 25 more radio stations in September, according to Tom Rounds, president of Watermark Inc.

The stations include KTLX in Denver, WGNS in Murfreesboro, Tenn.; Radio Kanto in Yokohama, Japan; and DCX in Whakatane, New Zealand; and 4XO in Dunedin, New Zealand. Radio Kanto has Reiko, top female air personality in Japan, simultaneously translates the program and the station is planning to organize a network of stations in Japan to blanket the country with the three-hour program. The show, now on around 180 stations, features a countdown of the Billboard charts.

NOVEMBER 18, 1972, BILLB

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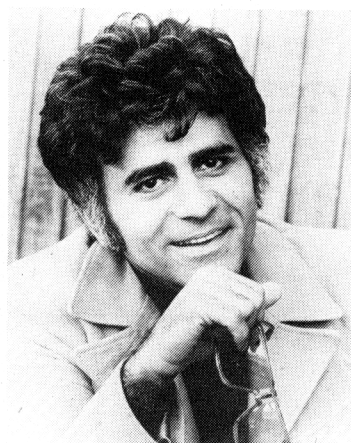
NOVEMBER 18, 1972, BILLB

# Boosting Commercials' Effectiveness

*EDITOR'S NOTE: When it comes to doing a commercial either live . . . or in the production studio . . . it's difficult to know how to improve what you're doing. If you're a program director, it's even more difficult to know what to say to the air personality who has the announcement to do. How do you improve your effectiveness ratio?*

Here are the "inside" secrets of one of the best voices in radio-TV. Casey Kasem, nationally-known radio personality, is heard on more than 250 radio stations in this country with his weekly "American Top 40" show, as well as being half a dozen voices for weekly television cartoon series. A professional for 25 years, Kasem is often invited to lecture at schools and universities about broadcasting techniques. Last year, besides being the voice heard on over 200 major spots for national sponsors, Kasem was a speaker at the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences' (Hollywood chapter) symposium on commercials. When he offers the following guidelines for improving the personality's effectiveness in selling a product in this personal-viewpoint article, you can be sure it's the voice of experience helping you.

People ask, "How can I sound more natural, believable and sincere in delivering a commercial?"—and they usually want a one-line answer. I'd have to say: "Stop being an announcer." But it really involves more than that.



CASEY KASEM

I came out of radio **acting** in Detroit on shows like "The Lone Ranger" where you **have to sound believable**. First, you learn to use a mike the way a violinist does his instrument. Control your voice; let the mike do the exaggerating for you. It makes a slight rise in volume sound bigger than it is. When you underplay, it picks up every little nuance you breathe. Get closer and let your voice drop and come out easily, your voice sounds bigger; further away, it sounds thinner.

To sound natural, place someone 10-12 feet from you and—WITHOUT WHISPERING—read the copy so that the person CANNOT hear what you're saying. If he DOES, you're not talking—you're announcing.

Use your body physically, too. Sometimes the mike has to be a lady's ear or a child's face. If a line calls for a smile, SMILE. When doing kids' parts, I stood on one leg like an ostrich to get a precarious feeling; kids are like that, sort of off-balance—you never know which direction they'll head next. Sometimes when I do a very gentle commercial (like a public service spot about forest fires), my hands look like I'm praying. I let my body do what it has to do to **create a mood**.

When I started as a DJ, it was the scream-and-rant era of early rock 'n' roll. The old DJs sounded like evangelists. If I was a shouter, it was typical of the music of the day. People never tire of an honest, danceable beat, and it's hard to stay cool with that kind of music. Instinctively you want to "groove" with it.

Other DJs did funny stuff and chatter, but I opened up playing hits back-to-back to give the listener more music. Often, between records, I'd have up to three or four local spots. You can't do three or four minutes sounding like an "announcer," so I integrated my personality with the commercials. I learned to "hook" people, get 'em interested in my story, deliver the payoff, then "hook" 'em again. It taught me about the DJ's one-to-one relationship with his listener.

## Big-Voiced

The national commercials came "canned"—and they were big-voiced, hard-sell "Madison Avenue" (c. 1945). People bought it because there was nothing else; radio and TV were both relatively new. But most local spots were done live. The copy came from the station and wasn't always that good (but you can make even bad copy sound better by the way you read it). It was necessary—and fun—to make up your own commercials from "fact sheets." Ad-libbing spots forced you to maintain the one-to-one relationship and not switch personalities when you went to the commercial.

The only way you learn is from experience, so don't be afraid to make mistakes. In fact, make as many mistakes as you can **early** in your career. One day it all crystallizes and you see the big mistake(s) you've been making. Then you really improve. I never forgot Peter Ustinov's comment: "The reason I made it to the top was that I was never good enough to make it at the bottom."

All of us wonder about imitating someone else when we start out. The trap lies in mimicking someone's style; it's not believable. Each of us has a different style. If you mimic anyone in anything, make it their attitude. Eventually you get out of this and start doing yourself.

## Afraid of Changes

A lot of DJs are afraid to make changes at the suggestion of the manager or program director. Fortunately, it happened to me at a period in my life when I didn't feel I knew it all (I still don't). I had been hired out to the West Coast with some other DJs as a "wild-tracker." In a three-hour show, I'd use as many as 100 canned voices. "The Little Girl Without a Name," an imaginary character, used any female voice I had on hand. I tried not to waste words or go off on tangents but say interesting things relevant to the commercials, music, promos, etc. It often took me two-to-eight hours to write this show.

One day the manager told me not to do that kind of show any more, despite the fact that I was rated No. 1 in San Francisco. He wanted me to talk to people about the artists and their music, as they used to do in the 1940's. That night I hadn't the slightest idea what I was going to say, but I accepted the challenge with a positive approach. I had been doing low-keyed numbers in the final half-hour of the show, so elements of the **real me** were already familiar to the listeners as well as the wild stuff in front.

As luck would have it, I found a copy of "Who's Who in Music, 1962" in the big scrap barrel wedged in the studio door the next day. Those statistics saved me. That day I began the teaser-biography format which became today's "American Top 40" show. Not one word of explanation to the audience, but they accepted it. Remember: as much as you may love what you're doing, don't think the audience necessarily loves it as much as you. If you have to head in a new direction, make up your mind to do it better than anyone else ever has. If I hadn't accepted the change but had stuck to my old image, it would have limited my appeal and I wouldn't be where I am today.

## Screamers Replaced

Today the "screamer" (with a few exceptions) has been replaced with the low-keyed honest approach. The whole show, including commercials, is a single entity, wrapped up in the DJ's personality.

With most commercials pre-taped now, you don't have as much opportunity for creativity. So, take advantage of the public service spot; pretend it's the only one you have on the air. If your warning can prevent someone from, say, becoming an alcoholic or having a fatal accident, you've done more than entertain; you may have saved someone's life.

There are still some local spots that are done live. If you ad-lib them from your own "fact sheet," use what I call "handles"—words the listener can grab onto with his five senses ("tree," "red," "soft," "hot," "square"). Think like an actor; find vivid words in the copy with which to paint "visual" images for more impact.

There are 25 ways to read any line; often it's just a difference in attitude. Take Union Oil's "Put a man with spirit on your side—the Spirit of '76!" Try saying it like a father-to-son, bank-prez-to-employee, angry, sexy, tongue-in-cheek, and so on. Or Gillette's deodorant (protects, won't sting); "Soft 'N Dry—it does, and it doesn't." Deal with the thought behind the line and bracket important words and phrases. Softening a key word makes it stand out, as does laying back with it or raising your voice level. For a natural, actor-like quality, DON'T clear your throat before speaking; you'll sound less like an announcer. Leaving the "garbage" (saliva) in makes a young voice sound older and has a guy-next-door or man-on-the-street effect. This is a handy tip if you're doing voice-over commercials on the side—but on your own show, it doesn't pay to switch personalities. Instead, adopt the attitude that fits.

## Bring Attitude

Attitude shapes your believability, the most important thing you can bring to a spot. Maybe the listener doesn't "buy" all that you're saying, but he can appreciate your talking to him like an adult and being as sincere as you can. If a commercial sounds a bit impossible and you don't believe it yourself, react

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# Boosting Commercial

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normally as anyone else would—not cynically, but with an inquisitive or curious tone. This strengthens the audience's belief in you, lets you sell the product better for the 95 out of 100 reputable sponsors who don't make incredible claims, and allows management to proudly maintain its air-talent's credibility. If you still have doubts, check it out; a simple call to the Better Business Bureau is a good place to start.

Don't be afraid to help people. Treat a commercial as something you're introducing to someone that might help him, the way a grocer points out a new product to a housewife. When you find yourself selling something you really like, give it your best. However, don't feel that, after reading a 60-second (or 30- or 10-second) spot, you have to add 15 seconds of your own to it. This is cheating the sponsor, the station, your listeners and yourself. It only means you weren't good enough the first time you read it, or that the copy should be rewritten.

If you get a spot for, say, a restaurant you haven't tried personally you can still personalize it with your tone. In effect your voice says, "I haven't tried it yet, but here's what they say they've got" and "It's my job to tell you about it and your prerogative to test it." Overdoing believability in your delivery can be risky, especially using first-person ("I think it's great and I want you to buy it"). Don't say "I" when you really mean "they" unless you've bought or used the product, talked with the company, or the like. Don't say "I" as if you were part-owner of the product but only as a broadcaster who has an obligation to give the client his money's worth. Your audience knows you're informing, not selling direct from the store.

It helps for on-the-air talent to meet the clients. Air-talent is often tremendously isolated from other parts of the business, and even a simple call from sponsor to DJ is the best thing a salesman could arrange. When a DJ speaks to an agency man or station salesman, he can ask for more of the human interest side and go after things the copy might not contain. It helps add that personal touch to his tone. The brass is on his side, wanting him to be great, so he shouldn't be afraid to suggest constructive ideas for improving spots.

## Drawing the Line?

It's the station's responsibility to assess material and keep false advertising off the air—and to indicate whether you use first-person or not. Even so, there are times when you feel like drawing the line. In a smaller station, if I thought that what I was required to say would dupe the public, I'd either refuse or have someone else do it. You have a moral and ethical obligation as a broadcaster and to yourself to keep the airwaves free of lies.

Sometimes it's the style, not the content, that irritates. In the old days, canned spots were loud and phony-sounding. Some managers still feel you can yell something at the public enough so they'll eventually buy it—but others feel it hurts the station and turns listeners off. If you've emceed a dance or concert, you know an unruly crowd ignores loud announcements, figuring they're unimportant, but quiets down to catch what it thinks might be "confidential" information delivered in low-keyed intimacy.

If you find yourself sounding "read-y" after doing the same spot several times, you can bounce back by remembering that you're telling a story with a beginning, middle and summation. And you're telling it to a FRIEND who'll LET you open up, be slightly dramatic, laugh at a joke, choke up if it's serious or tender, whatever you want. DJs who hold back are usually thinking about thousands of strangers hearing them without accepting their words. Remember your one-to-one relationship with that "good friend" out there.

Treat no spot as "insignificant." If you earn extra with voice-overs, you never know which job may result in landing you a national account.

The DJs job, then and now, is to inform, entertain and sell the product. But we've come a long way in **humanizing** this job since the early days of "Top 40." There's just no substitute for someone talking to you, giving you information and believing what he's saying.



Watermark photo

**HISTORIC SESSION**—Wrapping up "The California Special"—a six-hour documentary on music are from left: Ron Jacobs, producer; singer John Stewart who narrated the special; writer Jerry Hopkins and engineer Lee Hansen. The scene is the studios of Watermark Inc., the North Hollywood syndication firm. The documentary will be ready for broadcast later this month. **JUL. 5 1975**



Watermark photo

**IN PRODUCTION**—At work on "The Elvis Presley Story" are, sitting, Ron Jacobs, left, the producer, and engineer Lee Hanse; standing, narrator Wink Martindale, left, afternoon personality on KMPC in Los Angeles, and writer Jerry Hopkins, also author of a book called "Elvis—A Biography." This team reassembled to up-date the historic rockumentary on Elvis Presley just three weeks ago. **JAN. 25 1975**

## 300 Stations For Presley Series

LOS ANGELES—"The Elvis Presley Story," a 13-hour radio documentary just revamped and re-released by Watermark Inc., has been ordered for more than 300 markets, according to company president Tom Rounds, and orders are still pouring in.

The documentary is being offered on an exclusive market basis and available in stereo versions as well as monaural. Show is provided on albums and can be programmed as 12 weekly, 13 daily, or 13 nightly episodes . . . or as a 13-hour marathon. As Rounds notes, it's one of the few documentaries that fits all formats—rock, MOR, country or even soul. In Los Angeles, the show is being featured on KMPC, the MOR giant.

The show was produced by Ron Jacobs, now program director of KGB-AM-FM in San Diego, who personally flew into Los Angeles to

handle the new 13th hour of the documentary which features Elvis himself reviewing his life. Wink Martindale narrates the entire series. It was written by Jerry Hopkins.

Rounds up dated the historic documentary in honor of Elvis' 20th year in show business and his 40th birthday. The original version, only 12 hours long, was done in 1971 and, at that point, was the second biggest radio documentary of all time behind "The History Of Rock And Roll" which happened to have also been largely a Ron Jacobs project when he was programming KHJ in Los Angeles. "The History Of Rock And Roll" is owned by Drake-Chenault and is still selling. However, "The Elvis Presley Story" may pass it by this time around with all of the new impetus.

The audio history includes more than 80 interviews with persons

who've known Elvis best ranging from East Tupelo, Miss., to Las Vegas, Los Angeles and back to Memphis. So complete is the updated version of the documentary that there's even an interview with an automobile salesman in Memphis who sold Presley 11 cars in six days. In addition, 18 new songs have been added to the epic, bringing the total number of tunes to nearly 180 hits.

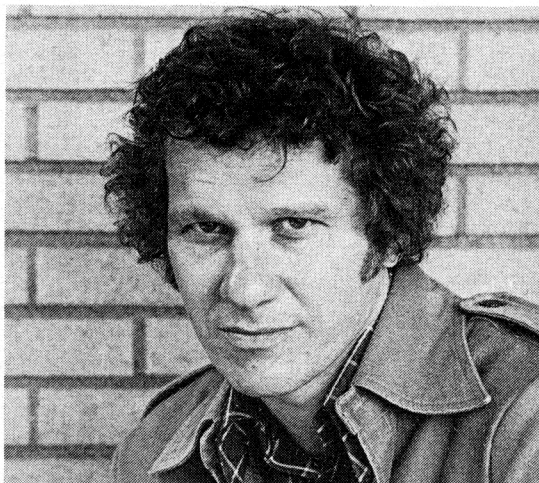
The story is told in 51-minute chapters with 117 60-second commercial slots available. It is available on tape for those stations who prefer it that way. It comes complete with an operations manual, ad layouts and a press kit. A total of 13 albums represents the entire documentary and Watermark has installed back-up quality control measures to assure radio stations of supreme broadcast quality.

APR. 12 1975

# Syndication—The Success Story

"Let me ask you a dumb question." I was talking to Bob Howe on the Wats line. Howe is sales manager of KHIG (FM), an American Top 40 subscriber located right there in the middle of downtown Paragould, Arkansas. "You're putting up 20 billboards to promote a once-a-week show?"

Howe had surprised me three months before, having aced out New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Toronto, Tokyo and Sydney to become the first station in the world to pick up a market exclusive for the 1975 edition of "The Elvis Presley Story." He'd sold it out in about 20 minutes and had the promotional genius to tie it all to-



**MISTER SYNDICATION**—When Tom Rounds started Watermark Inc. in Los Angeles, syndication was a dirty word in radio. But, with the help of several cohorts and many long, long hours of hard work, Tom Rounds made syndication pay off. When he talks about radio in general, it comes from experience—he has been air personality, program director, and general manager during his soundly-based radio career. Today, he is president of one of the world's most successful radio syndication firms and all successful radio syndication owes a tribute to his endeavors and pathblazing.

gether with a dusk-till-dawn (or was it dawn-till dusk?) marathon of old Elvis flicks at the local drive-in.

Bob had had experience with us West Coast syndicators and was used to our continual underestimation of what good radio can mean to a progressive-minded station programming to 80,000 souls in a two-county area. He answered the "dumb question" by pointing out that although the station's format was well liked and business was good, American Top 40 was week-in, week-out their most promotable event and was undoubtedly the biggest single tune-in factor they had going. People in town who had always bragged about the fact they were 16th cousins of Elvis Presley were beginning to discover distant relationships with AT40's Casey Kasem, and, if it was o.k. with us, they'd just like to build an entire station-promoting billboard campaign out of their most prominent and easily identified program feature . . . a syndicated show called American Top 40.

## Fresh Insight

The KHIG story gave me a fresh insight into the phenomenon of contemporary radio program syndication, the development of which we've been involved with since 1969.

Surprises . . . like the KHIG experience . . . have come thick and fast for us . . . but mainly, as we look back over the past six years, they fall into two categories: first, the amazing ability of local radio to grow with and respond to its audience and the listeners' demands for better content . . . more than music. Secondly, the ability of local radio stations to create the business climate with their advertisers to support a market for program concepts that until recently hadn't been able to get off the drawing boards, or out of the production studios.

Watermark began as a production company, and as I can best recall, not a lot of thought was given to marketing. Not, at least, until local radio stations surprised us into taking their lead. Our goals were simple: to produce programs that could be integrated into good, local radio operations; to provide services that could complement live, creative, community-involved stations; to maintain standards of high quality and intelligent, entertaining content delivered by the best talent available in the Hol-

*(Continued on page 33)*

# Syndication—The Success Story

• Continued from page 22

lywood reservoir of talent (before the next earthquake drained it). What we really wanted to do was create programs that were our idea of "good radio" . . . full of creatively expressed ideas; programs that local stations could work with and feel good about carrying exclusively in their markets. Ideally, we hoped to inspire stations to develop new ways of communicating with their audiences, partly through our product, partly through their own methods.

## Rock History Starts It All

Before we got it together as a company, one outstanding programming event had gotten the ball rolling in contemporary syndication. It was Ron Jacobs' "History of Rock and Roll," which, in 1975, is still rolling and handled by Drake-Chenault. Originally conceived as a 48-hour weekend special for KHHJ, Los Angeles, it became the classic case of what a group of highly motivated people (with a little help from RKO's bankroll) could create. With some healthy editorial support from Billboard, the program began to create its own demand as a syndicated property, and Drake-Chenault was encouraged by radio people across the country to transform it from a station promotion to a packaged program series. "The History" is a tremendous example of how great good radio can be. For syndication producers and stations alike it became something to shoot for. It has been used by hundreds of stations to great advantage.

"American Top 40" followed a year later, and eventually, like "The History," it became known as one of those apparently simple (while at the same time extremely complex) "why didn't I think of that" ideas. The motivation for the rest of us was Casey Kasem's enthusiasm for the revival of the national countdown at a time when chart rankings, numerical assignments and local surveys seemed to be disappearing. It was 1970 and radio was de-emphasizing the "here's the record you made number 8 on this week's fab forty survey" approach. We were intrigued by recapturing the good old days when countdown were inescapable on radio . . . even earlier days when Snooky Lanson and Dorothy Collins did their thing on "Your Hit Parade."

Our idea was to make "American Top 40" a present-time, weekly "History" using Billboard's singles charts as a springboard for a continuing update on current events in pop music. Taking "The History" one step farther seemed to us such a great idea that we were envisioning thousands of subscribers within weeks. That was until the first show, and the second, and the seventh, when Casey's weekly countdown and series of "incredible but true" stories were knocking 'em dead on the magnificent total of seven radio stations.

We had totally underestimated the market's ability to take the step along with us. Few broadcasters could handle the transition from an olympic-sized blockbuster onetime special to an ongoing weekly series of specials. Some programmers could make the commitment, but the advertisers (we were barter then, and our targets were "the biggies" on Madison Avenue) just didn't get the idea at all.

With almost 100% of our attention on production and distribution we'd left ourselves totally uncovered on sales. The stations were being given the show at a time when our weekly

expenses had already reached \$4,000, and the national sponsors weren't even returning our phone calls.

## Some Surprises

Our first series of surprises came late in 1970 when a few of our subscribers clued us in on the ease they were having in selling the show locally. They were starting to rake in the bucks while we were desperately filling our barter avails with mail order spots for oldies records.

By mid-1971 we finally let local radio show us the way to survive. On September 1 we sent out a "well the fun's over" memo and notified our 125 sponsors that they'd be getting the bill for next month's programs. We were astounded when 97% agreed. It turned out that most of them, without any coaching from us, had already figured out how to turn a popular syndicated program into a great sales vehicle. That "surprise" was, for us, the turning point. Right away we started to let the local radio stations themselves put the story together.

Today we still put 100% into production and distribution with another 100% provided by Casey Kasem and Don Bustany of KB Productions and their staff of 7 writers and researchers headed by co-producer Nikki Wine and still another 100% in creating a flow of information from individual program directors, sales managers and general managers through Watermark's 6-man marketing and promotion department right back to all 330 regular subscribers. This year we sent out a 50-item questionnaire to subscribing sales managers (there are a total of 450 counting "American Country Countdown" stations as well as "American Top 40") asking for specifics on how they make the programs work. The results took almost 2 months to tabulate, but this week we're mailing out hundreds of 50-page books describing, in great detail, how local radio stations have made it all happen.

## Programs Proliferate

More welcome surprises have come with the regular appearance of some great one-shot specials and series for radio put together by other producers and distributors. Today's most talked about special programming includes two regular versions of "The Wolfman Jack Show" (Audio Stimulation, L.A.), Wink Martindale's "Music Scene U.S.A." (American Radio Programs, Hollywood), George and Judy Burns' "History of British Rock" (Burns Media, and Rod Muir's Diagamae in Australia), Dick Orkin's great comedy material (Chicago Radio Syndicate), The Dick Clark Music Machine (Diamond P, L.A.) "The King Biscuit Flower Hour" concert series (D.I.R., New York), Jim Brown and Lew Irwin's "Earth News Radio Service" in L.A., "Dr. Demento," the king of trivia freaks (Gordon/Casady, Hollywood), "The Elton John Story" (Footprint, Toronto), specials by Dick Wittington (Jeff Alan, L.A.), outstanding documentaries on the Beatles and "The Story of Rock" by the BBC (distributed by London Wavelength, N.Y.), Harry O'Conner's "Lovewords" (Hollywood), Doug Andrews' venture into sci-fi programming "Oidar" (Oidar Unlimited, L.A.), and "Soul Train Radio" by Don Cornelius (The Syndication Works, Chicago). These programs and many more are living up to George Burns' idealistic portrait of syndication as "a pooling of the best." (While I write this George is madly pooling along with a new

and mysterious syndicated product being concocted in the Watermark studios.) Our studio division has been growing rapidly and will expand its present facility with a new broadcast production studio designed to handle more of the kind of syndicated product being assembled for a few dozen clients in the field.

The programs I mentioned, and many more, have re-energized station programming and audiences, shaking up habitual listening patterns and helping create more active listening attention for radio in general.

## And More Surprises

More surprises with the success of our 1½-year-old affair with country music programming. Produced by Bob Kingsley, "American Country Countdown" is founded on good radio basics similar to those in American Top 40 but with a different twist. In 1962 Don Bowman had been lured away from the airwaves by a variety of new careers including songwriting, making records and the live concert and club stage. In 1973 we chose Bowman from an array of great country talent available on the West Coast and put him back in action as the slightly maniacal host of a weekly review of country hits, filled with facts and funnies, woven around a countdown of Billboard's Hot Country Singles Chart. Over 100 stations now work with Don Bowman and American Country Countdown every week. The surprise? We found that what was at first considered a weekend filler by so many subscribers turned out to be a primary station drawing card. The response has caused country stations to move Bowman into primer and primer weekend slots with many subscribers scheduling repeat broadcasts. Don Bowman is rapidly becoming a leading national personality for the growing country music audience. Best of all, established country radio personalities on individual stations have found him highly compatible with their styles and the tastes of their audiences. With Bowman stirring up the audiences on the weekends, receptivity to good country programming seems to be way up when Monday morning rolls around.

The strength of local radio . . . its ability to sense what's right for its audience, then go out and find it in the shape of good, economical and highly salable syndicated programming is what continually surprises us and makes it all worthwhile. When it comes to getting maximum listening, promoting and selling efficiency from Watermark product, local radio is and **always should be** way ahead of us. It's really satisfying when we know our carefully wrought ideas, intensive production, high technical standards and failsafe distribution systems are in good hands with live and healthy local radio operations.

ON 300 STATIONS

# 'American Top 40' Celebrates Its 5th

By PAUL GREIN

LOS ANGELES—"American Top 40," the syndicated weekly countdown of the best-selling singles as ranked by Billboard, is five years old. To celebrate, the "AT 40" producers reran their first show during the Fourth of July weekend.

That 1970 show was taped in a Hollywood studio that is now a Pup 'N Taco stand and was aired in all of seven cities: Boston, St. Louis, San Antonio, Lubbock, San Bernardino, San Diego and Hollywood. According to Chuck Olsen, a salesman for the show's distributor, Watermark, the growth since then has been steady. "The total number of stations carrying the show has never backslid. If one station dropped the show due to, say, changing formats to all-talk or all-country, another would pick it up. Even now a new station comes on nearly every week."

The show is now aired on more than 300 commercial outlets in every state of the union and a dozen foreign countries. In addition it's heard on over 400 affiliates of American Forces Radio. Impressively, these numbers represent markets, not simply stations, since Watermark gives exclusive radio broadcast rights to only one station within each market.

"AT 40" producer Don Bustany traces the genesis of the show to 1969 when Tom Rounds and Ron Jacobs formed Watermark, after Jacobs had scored so heavily at RKO with the "History Of Rock And Roll" package. That same year Bustany and Casey Kasem, who had already formed K-B Productions, came up with the idea for the show.

"Casey took the idea to Ron Jacobs, whom he had known since Jacobs was program director at KHJ while Casey was a cross-town KRLA jock. It was Jacobs' belief in the project from the beginning, Tom Rounds' able administrative work, and the continued financial replenishment by Tom Driscoll that kept "AT 40" going through those early years and enabled it to turn the corner."

For his part, Rounds, the president of Watermark, remembers: "We launched 'AT 40' at a time when longer cuts, LP popularity, and more serious music were bringing about a shift from quantitative to qualitative radio. A countdown format was seen as unfashionable, even campy. But we've seen that it's viable. The audience is there."

In fact, he feels the appeal of ratings is one of the main reasons of the show's success, particularly with adults. "Our heaviest demographics are the 18-34 year olds who grew up listening to countdowns as part of their week-in, week-out routine. But everyone loves a winner. To follow the biggest and the best is human nature. It's a horse race, a Miss America pageant every week."

Casey stresses a related factor: the appeal of order. "Americans love order. We're conditioned for it. We like things in their places, and charts oblige by showing standings, ranks, and positions."

Bustany cites a number of other reasons for the show's success, not the least being the appeal of his partner Casey, the human element in the weekly numbers race.

Another reason Bustany gives for "AT 40's" longevity is that the staff has kept up the standards. "While there have been changes in the show over the last five years—different and more interesting features, more sophisticated teases—the basic quality is still there. We've never coasted or become complacent. Our interest and enthusiasm in doing the show is as high as when we started."

Also, he feels that local radio doesn't have the resources to effectively compete with the show. "It requires time and skills that are far too costly. Our staff includes line producer Nikki Wine, West Coast and East Coast writer-interviewers Sandy Stert and Alan Kaltman, chart statistician Ben Marichal, writer Judy Bustany, engineer Steve Buth and record coordinator Ann Strohecker."

"Local radio stations have been beaten down by heavy competition for ad dollars in most markets. There aren't scores of local newspapers or TV stations competing in one market. Yet newspaper chains and television networks have allowed those media to benefit from syndication for years," Rounds says. "Some pooling of the best, which is really what syndication is all about, can work in radio too. It's not at all a cop-out on the part of local radio to carry syndicated programming."

Casey agrees. "It's not easy to put someone from out of town on your radio station. For a PD to recognize something he didn't create as being worthwhile takes a pretty bright guy. He's learned how to handle his ego."

Now that Watermark is firmly entrenched with "AT 40," it is moving on to other projects. "American Country Countdown," hosted by Don Bowman and produced by Bob Kingsley, began in October 1973, and is now heard in more than 100 markets. "The Elvis Presley Story," the 1971 Ron Jacobs rockumentary that aired in some 200 markets, was updated late last year. "California Special," another Ron Jacobs entry, is shipping now.

What amounts to another new area for Watermark is renting their radio production studio to outsiders.

According to Rounds, "A couple of other syndicators are here because it's such an expensive proposition to build a studio."

This will lead to more competition in the syndication field, but Rounds doesn't mind. In fact he's delighted. "Radio needs good programming. It would take 100 Watermarks to satisfy that need. Fortunately, more and more good people are in syndication now. It's light years ahead of where it was 10 years ago, yet this is only the beginning of what will be a monster 10 years from now."

And as for "AT 40," how much longer can it go on? "Indefinitely," says Casey. "When I first proposed it to Ron Jacobs, I told him I felt it could last as long as there is radio and music being played on it. All the elements to sustain it are there. It renews itself every week."

How much longer can Casey go on counting 'em down? "I'll continue doing it until it stops being fun to do or until I'm so tied up with new projects that it's impossible to do. Also I owe some allegiance to the people who have worked so hard on the show. Most important, I want to stay until we achieve what we set out to do—have a successful show and be respected in the industry as good broadcasters who are responsible and creative. We're just beginning to have that impact."