

June 2008

Volume I, Issue II



News and Information about Buffalo Broadcasting

# RF Newsletter

## Inside this issue:

Industry News	2
Warehouse Visit	3
Jack Armstrong	4
Comings/Goings	5
Hall of Fame Bios	6

## It's Our Second Issue!

Welcome to the second issue of our Buffalo Broadcasters Association Newsletter. Thanks to all who emailed messages of support following release of our first newsletter in March. It was great to hear from all of you, especially those of you who are no longer living in the Buffalo area.

Some of you took the time to write your own article for this newsletter. I was planning to include one or two in this edition. But Steve Cichon kindly compiled biographies of this year's Broadcasting Hall of Fame inductees, which we're including here. So, look for columns from Dave May and J.R. Reid in future issues. Please feel free to pen your own and pass them along to [mccott@wbfo.org](mailto:mccott@wbfo.org).

Besides news of this year's Hall of Fame, this issue of the Buffalo Broadcasters Newsletter remembers the legendary Jack Armstrong and more. Enjoy!

## An Invitation!

The Buffalo Broadcasters Association holds its annual Media Night Out on Tuesday, June 17th, at Brennan's in the Clarence Plaza at Main Street and Transit Road.

If you work in the media — announcers, newscasters, sales reps, office personnel — you're invited, as are all members of the Buffalo Broadcasters Association and the Advertising Club of Buffalo.

Festivities begin at 5:30. There's plenty of free parking. See you on the 17th!



## Industry News

The Arbitron radio ratings, 12+, for the Buffalo market in Winter 2008 finds WBEN in the top spot with an 11.2 share, followed by WYRK, 10.8, WJYE, 6.6, WGRF, 5.7, WKSE, 5.7, WBLK, 5.6, WTSS, 5.3, WGR, 4.8, WHTT, 4.5 and WEDG, 4.0.

WIVB's News 4 won every newscast but one in the May sweeps. WGRZ's "Daybreak" topped WIVB's "Wake Up" at 6am. WIVB was also first in prime time, followed by WKBW, WUTV, WGRZ, WNLO and WNYO.

Entercom has debuted a national Hot AC evening show, "Your Time with Kim Iverson," that airs on eight stations nationwide, including WTSS, Star 102.5 in Buffalo. Competitors WJYE and WHTT also air their own syndicated evening shows that target female listeners 25 -54 — Delilah on WJYE and John Tesh of WHTT.

Congratulations to WYRK for being nominated as "Radio Station of the Year (Medium Market)" by the Academy of Country Music. At the awards ceremony televised nationally by CBS on May 18th, radio station WUSY in Chattanooga snagged the top honor.

The 51st New York Emmy Awards ceremony was held recently in New York City. In the "News Special" category for 2007, Chris Gallant was recognized for directing/ editing, Scott Brown for producing/writing and Andy DeSantis for photography for a WGRZ news documentary on Anthony Capozzi. Kurt Murphy of WIVB received an Emmy in the Advanced Media: Animator/Motion Graphic Designer category. And Kevin McCabe of the Bills Television Network was honored in the Writer: Sports category.

Retired Channel 4 Sports Director and the longtime voice of the Buffalo Bills, Van Miller, will be inducted into the New York State Broadcasters Association Hall of Fame on June 24th.

Eileen Buckley, assistant news director at WBFO Radio, was honored by the Erie County Bar Association at its Law Day luncheon on April 30th with its Media Award. Buckley was honored for her reporting of such high profile court cases involving convicted killers James Kopp and Altemio Sanchez.

WNED and the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra are presenting the JoAnn Falletta International Guitar Concerto Competition, June 9 -13, at Kleinhans Music Hall, starting at 7:30 each evening. For the first time, the semi-finals will be broadcast on classical station, WNED-FM, 94.5.

University at Buffalo Bulls football and basketball games will air on WECK 1230 in the coming year. Bulls football had been a fixture on WGR while basketball games were most recently broadcast by WWKB.

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## Warehouse Open House

About 20 members of the Buffalo Broadcasters Association turned out on Saturday, May 3, for an open house at our storage site on Elk Street in Buffalo. Richard Taylor, president of Austin Air, graciously donates space inside his Austin Air building to house our broadcasting memorabilia.

There are dozens of boxes filled with film recorded by local television newsrooms in the 1960s and 70s. There's a Channel 4 camera, video recorders, old radio control boards and microphones. Radio stations have donated promotional items such as tee-shirts and banners that date back to the 1970s.

Right now, the priority for the Buffalo Broadcasters Association Board of Directors is digitizing the old film, a process that will require much time and tens of thousands of dollars. But work is already underway. Film scholars traveled to Buffalo in June 2007 to review the film and make recommendations.

While members of the board have spent a few Saturday mornings at the warehouse to organize the material, the open house provided the general membership to check out the historic memorabilia.

"I can't wait to see this material in a museum, all organized and labeled," said Phil Arno, who has worked at a number of television stations in Buffalo and Los Angeles.

"It's wonderful," said Tim Tucholka, whose late father, Ed, is a member of the Buffalo Broadcasting Hall of Fame. "People should know how much history is here."

Dave Gillen, president of the Buffalo Broadcasters Association, said he thought the open house went well.

"Being able to see this is a plus," Gillen said. "The members were excited to see what he have. Hopefully, this will get more people involved."

Dave May, former WBEN engineer, talk show host and traffic-copter reporter, is offering to help organize the materials, according to Gillen. Stay tuned for more details about this effort.

A special thanks also goes out to Monica Headd, account representative of Austin Air, who gave of her Saturday morning to host us during the open house.

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## A Tribute to Jack Armstrong...

By Mark Scott

There are a number of legendary Buffalo broadcasters who influenced me in the late 1960s and early 1970s to pursue a career in radio – Danny Neaverth, Clint Buehlman, Stan Roberts and a host of others. But at the top of the list would be Jackson Armstrong because of the unparalleled excitement, energy, enthusiasm and talent he brought to the airwaves. As such, it was like a kick in the stomach when word surfaced on the day after Easter that Jack had died at his home in Greensboro, North Carolina.

I only met Jack once at a WHTT reunion a few years back. We talked about our industry. I've been in the company of future presidents, senators, governors and celebrities. But I don't think I've been quite as excited as I was that night when I finally got to meet and talk with Jack.

He was born John C. Larsh. He was a star in many of the nation's big markets. Here in Buffalo, we remember him for his two-and-a-half years in the early 1970s at WKBW Radio. I remember listening that first night, amazed at what I was hearing. It took about a month before I and others were able to get used to his fast-paced delivery. But once you got used to it, you could understand every word. He didn't slur or stumble. It was pure gold!

"Night after night, Armstrong put on a clinic -- great on air production, superb pacing, funny lines, between the lines humor, double entendre and great voices, especially that of his sidekick, the Gorilla," wrote WHTT's Jim Pastrick on the website, Radio Info. "And then there was his patented sign off at 100 miles an hour but clearly intelligible... 'who he, he who; it's nice to be important but more important to be nice; wash face in morning, neck at night; don't let your six shooter get rusty...' We were lucky to hear him in our own home town."

I think WECK's Tom Donahue nailed it when he told WGRZ Television that many of us wanted to be like Jack, but couldn't. He was truly a singular talent!

But Jack Armstrong was more than a radio personality. He was a loving father. His daughter, Devon Larsh Fischer wrote on Jack's website in announcing his untimely death, "If you knew him at all, you would know that he wouldn't want you to be sad for a moment. He would want you to remember all the good times, what he gave to radio and to the world. He would also want you to help fight to bring back the personality in radio if at all possible. He loved being a DJ almost as much as he loved being a father and that says A LOT."

I'll always remember Jack's last show. It was February 27, 1973. My grand-

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## Tribute, Continued

mother died that day. My grandfather came to stay with us that night. For the first time, he regaled me with stories of fighting in World War I. (Oh how I wish I had the sensibilities I later developed as a journalist to have recorded my grandfather's recollections.) But at about 9:30, I excused myself. I went to my bedroom, got out my reel-to-reel tape recorder and recorded the last half-hour of Jack's show. I still have that tape somewhere in a box in the basement today.

Ironically, Jack's last job in radio was just a couple of years ago when KB brought him back for its oldies format. The show was voice tracked. But he used the technology to its fullest, delivering a show that was just as good had he been here live. At the risk of offending the radio managers and programmers who are reading this, it saddens and disappoints me that there was no room in our industry for Jack Armstrong these last two years.

I'm sure that Don Berns or Sandy Beach could have prepared a better tribute to Jack than this one. They knew him. They were his colleagues. Still, I trust that I succeeded in some small way in paying homage to this broadcasting legend, the likes of whom we will never hear again.



## Comings and Goings...

John Murphy joined WIVB's News 4 in March as sports director. He is anchoring sportscasts at 5, 6, 10 and 11pm Mondays through Fridays. Murphy is the radio voice of the Buffalo Bills on WGRF, 97 Rock. He was the longtime sports director for WKBW, Channel 7 and worked as a sports host and newscaster on WBEN Radio.

Melanie Pritchard is leaving WKBW, 7 News for a position with her family's real estate business. She was anchor of the 5:30 newscast and a reporter. Prior to coming to Channel 7, Pritchard was a newscaster/reporter for WGR Newsradio 55.

Tricia Cruz has joined WIVB's News 4 as a reporter. She had served as a reporter for WHAM Television in Rochester.

WKSE's Jimmy T has left his afternoon drive position for CKFM (99.7 Mix) in Toronto.

**In Memoriam** — Dr. Ronald Chmiel, dentist, owner of WUWU 107.7FM in early 1980s and Buffalo Broadcasters Association member, died May 14, 2008.

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## 2008 Buffalo Broadcasters Hall of Fame

By Steve Cichon

Its the twelfth year Western New York will gather to celebrate the great talent and rich heritage of Buffalo Broadcasting as we honor six new inductees into the Buffalo Broadcasting Hall of Fame.

Despite this one making it an even dozen, 2008 is still a year of firsts for the Hall of Fame. It marks the first time we've inducted an ordained priest, the first time we've inducted a blind broadcaster, and the first time we've inducted a Miami Dolphin (but we forgive him.)

The 2008 Class is as talented as it is diverse. As you read on, you'll become acquainted not only the great history of broadcasting along the Niagara Frontier, but also its future... As stars as bright as these can't help but shine on those around them, and those on the rise for years to come.

**Ron Jaworski:** *Buffalo Bob Smith Award:* His fate at the man who'd become the "The Polish Rifle" was sealed just before his senior year at Lackawanna High School. Drafted to play baseball at 17, he wanted to forget college to have a shot to play with Bob Gibson and the St. Louis Cardinals. But two weeks of a real Buffalo summer job of bending rods in a steel mill was enough motivation to get an education.



A standout at Youngstown State, Jaws played 17 years in the NFL for 4 teams, including the Philadelphia Eagles, where he was he 1980 NFL MVP. He also backed up Dan Marino for 2 seasons with the Miami Dolphins. But no matter where he played, and now, no matter from which city he analyzes *Monday Night Football*, Ron hasn't forgotten his years as a season ticket holder at the Rock Pile, and certainly hasn't forgotten his friends and family in Lackawanna.

His compatriots on the ESPN *MNF* staff are just glad he hasn't forgotten where the good wing joints are.

**Barry Lillis:** Always wearing a smile like no other, Barry's best known for his 20 years (1976-96) in front of WGRZ-TV weather maps. But that earnest grin, and the personality that went along with it, also made Barry a natural as the local host for annual the MDA telethon, and well as the Kids Escaping Drugs Campaign, which Barry himself named in 1987.



Just before Barry left the air in 1994, he was ordained an Orthodox Catholic Priest. To this day, much of his ministry involves counseling those battling drug and alcohol dependence. Its a challenging and rewarding vocation, which is ten helped along by those thousands of weather forecasts where Barry made it feel



## Hall of Fame Bios, Continued

like he was trying to make *just you* smile.

Often someone will say they remember the time he wore a t-shirt promoting their scout troop's soup dinner on TV. People love to share memories of Barry's zany overnight presentation of poorly lip-synched movies on *Barry's Cats Pajamas*. But for Fr. Barry, it means so much more; maybe opening a door to help someone else along in life. It makes his career in broadcasting one of Buffalo's most special ever.

**Art Wander:** Those of you who know the him as "Artie Baby Boo-Boo, The Tiny Tot of the Kilowatt," as Art might say: *Wait a minute, wait a minute, wait a minute!* As a kid growing up on Buffalo's East Side, Art would ditch school to watch Foster Brooks and Buffalo Bob Smith do their WGR show live from Grant's Department Store.

After a stint in the Navy, Art was the Radio Director for the VA Hospital, before landing at WKBW in 1956, where he eventually joined the news staff as a Pulse-beat Newsmen under the direction of Irv Weinstein. By the late 1960's, Art had programmed radio stations all around the country, including WOR-FM in New York, where he met the Beatles and became close with their manager Brian Epstein. Its this work done in music radio where Art feels more accomplished.



He'd return to Buffalo in the early 80s, first to program, but then to talk sports on 1400-AM. After Bills General Manager Bill Polian told Art to "get out of town," he was picked up by WGR and later Empire Sports Network to talk sports. He always pictured his show as guys in a barroom. And opinions could be right, wrong, or indifferent, so long as they were entertaining.

**Bill Stachowiak:** *Behind the Scenes Award:* Bill's love of electronics growing up led him to broadcasting in college, where he was the college station's chief engineer. That, he thought, was the end of radio business for him, which he lived and breathed as a kid. He started a business that did use his engineering background, however, selling and installing two-way and CB radio equipment for companies around WNY.

His voyage back into radio started with a tour of WPHD in 1979, where PD Harv Moore decided he was the right fit to fill an open engineering job. Since taking that job, Bill's run his own broadcast engineering firm, building studios and performing maintenance all over New York state and all over the country, often explaining to someone hundreds of miles away over the phone how to fix what's wrong.

**Continued on Page 8**

The 2008 Buffalo Broadcast Hall of Fame Ceremony will take place Tuesday, September 23, 2008 at the WNEB Studios, Horizons Plaza, Buffalo, NY.

**Buffalo Broadcasters Association**

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We're on the web.

[www.Buffalobroadcasters.com](http://www.Buffalobroadcasters.com)

## Hall of Fame Biographies, Continued from Page 7

Its a story made more incredible when you find out he did all of that without sight. Bill is blind. "I realize I have limitations, but made my mind up to live like everyone else. I was scared when all the sudden I was responsible for two stations (in 1979), but I rely on memory a lot, and I've had the help of a lot of great people over the years." And a lot of people have relied on, and rarely been disappointed with Bill.

**John DiSciullo: *George F. Goodyear Award:*** John entered his first TV studio as a boy with his grandma in Philly to watch a taping of the Mike Douglas Show. It was the most fun he'd seen adults have, *ever*, and he was hooked. A decade later, his early mentor Dave Thomas (A TV icon in both Buffalo and Philly), sent the fresh out of college DiSciullo up to his hometown for an interview at his old stopping grounds, Channel 7.

That was 1982. Save a few weeks since then when he tried his hand at producing TV in New York in 1988, he's been at 7 Broadcast Plaza as a driving force behind *AM Buffalo* and *The Variety Club Telethon*, while keeping busy with everything from news, to promotions, to programming.

In an age where telethons and locally originated TV talk shows might seem like a vestige of the past for some, DiSciullo points to his two pet projects as examples of how, with plenty of pure passion and a lot of fighting and kicking along the way, doing the right thing on television can continue to have a positive impact on the community.

**Roger Baker: *The Golden Age Award:*** One of the original superstars of Buffalo Radio in the 20s and 30s for the Buffalo Broadcasting Corporation on WGR and WKBW, Baker was the Queen City's first definitive sportscaster.

Those who remember him in the sports booth remember the ultimate professional--no focus on personality, so much as the product on the air. Calling Bisons games in the 30s from Offermann Stadium, he was straight, and by the book. After being tapped by Baseball Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis to call the 1933 World Series to a nationwide audience on CBS, Baker landed a job in Cincinnati calling the National League Reds on WLW.

After the war, Baker returned to Buffalo, reading news on WKBW Radio, but eventually moving into the General Manager's office at the short-lived Buffalo UHF pioneer WBES-TV, where he also read news. Along with Bill Mazer, Baker was also an original member of the WGR-TV sports team when the station signed-on in 1954. Baker moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico for health reasons, continuing his broadcast at KOB for several more years.