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JOHN SMYNTEK

On the demise of WKRK-FM...

Another listening option disappears

October 2, 2007

BY JOHN SMYNTEK
 FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

WKRK-FM is gone, with only one show---Deminski & Doyle---merged into the new sports talk WXYT-AM and FM.

Given the station's perennially low overall ratings, who cares?

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I do. Talk radio pretty much breaks down into three sub genres these days on the Detroit radio dial: Sports talk , political talk and how-to talk.

WKRK was the last provider of what's-on-your-mind-today talk for the segment of the audience not obsessed with politics. It was a place where things were tried and where radio at least gave the impression of not being totally processed.

I understand the market---there was just a small dedicated bunch of WKRK listeners. And you can't spend a decent FM signal on it when 1270 AM was so flawed despite the best alternatives engineering could offer.

A confession: Back in the '90s when my old University of Detroit schoolmate John Hayes bought 99.5 FM, he asked me what I thought about putting a talk format on FM. "Cutting edge idea," I told him. "You should do it." I doubt if he went ahead on my advice alone but the station failed miserably and after less than a year became a much more listened-to country music station.

It's probably time to bury FM talk once and for all in the Detroit market. But don't expect to see many mourners at the funeral.

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jec

Used to listen to WJR but got tired of their Dr. Laura/Mitch Albom line-up. Switched to WKRK. I miss the Mid-day show with Jay, Shila and Bill. It never failed to make me laugh. Then I'd segue into D&D. Would listen while I made dinner in the evening. The new format -- yuck.

Posted: Fri Oct 05, 2007 9:28 am

laker_hockey

TyDurden,

if you where ever really a Stern fan you should look him up on Sirius, it is the best radio that I have ever heard. They have a bunch of other great shows on the channels over there too.

Radio started to die when they let the same 2 companies own all the stations in the country. They need to break up the monopolies.

Posted: Thu Oct 04, 2007 6:46 am

worldmikel

These are not the glory days of a J.P. McCarthy or a city that has hustle and bustle with the sounds of cash registers clacking. The only reason I can think any Media owner would have to engage in a contract with someone currently working in Detroit Radio is to free themselves of tax liabilities, benefits and perks afforded actual employees. I'm guessing many are simply paid by the hour like shopping cart wranglers or greeters at Meijer's. Advertising in Detroit Media must be simply on auto-pilot. I bet some are living on in-kind things like trade-outs for cars and dinners. Advertisers, especially in Retail, must be absolutely clueless or superstitious in their purchasing of time and space. Where is the return in this stagnant and declining Economy? Media workers here should be thanking their lucky stars. They are living on charity, not fruits of their own actual labor.

It is astonishing that most AM stations are still on the air. They must be getting some whopping discount on their Electric bill. I don't see how they can earn enough to keep the lights on, let alone the transmitters.

Posted: Thu Oct 04, 2007 5:50 am

TyDurden

Stern was cool back in the day...

The shark fin was sighted with all of the anonymous stripper/porn actresses the he interviewed. I swear, he said the same stuff to them all. Babes don't translate well over the radio.

We knew it was coming when he openly turned his show into a political platform for the Democrat party.

Finally, he officially jumped when he went to x-m or sirius or whatever.

Posted: Wed Oct 03, 2007 11:44 pm

FMC_Survivalist

A lot of the following is lost in the formatting, but here are the last set of ratings. As you can still see from this: WKRK was/is tanking. They are in 19th place. OMG ... 19th place!! Admittedly, there are no time slots or demographics shown here, but there is enough data on this one matrix to even make the kids at the corner with a lemonade stand know when to fold 'em. If we take our hearts out of play, the smart play is "Adios amigos".

- STATION FORMAT OWNER Fall 2006 Winter 2007 SPR 07 SUM 07 P-1 SUM 07 P-2 RNK
WMXD-FM URBAN AC CLEAR CHANNEL 6.7 4.9 5.5 5.9 5.7 1
WJLB-FM URBAN CLEAR CHANNEL 5.3 5.2 5.3 5.3 5.3 2
WJR-AM NEWS/TALK ABC 5.3 5.5 5.6 5.3 5.0 3t
WKQI-FM CHR/POP CLEAR CHANNEL 4.6 5.1 4.8 5.1 5.0 3t
WOMC-FM OLDIES CBS RADIO 3.9 4.2 4.0 4.4 4.7 5
WWJ-AM NEWS CBS RADIO 4.2 5.3 4.7 4.6 4.6 6t
WVMV-FM SMOOTH JAZZ CBS RADIO 4.4 4.0 4.3 4.4 4.6 6t
WRIF-FM ACTIVE ROCK GREATER MEDIA 4.5 4.6 5.1 4.7 4.3 8
WYCD-FM COUNTRY CBS RADIO 3.8 3.4 4.4 4.3 3.9 9
WNIC-FM AC CLEAR CHANNEL 6.5 3.7 3.1 3.5 3.6 10
WDVD-FM HOT AC ABC 2.6 2.7 3.6 3.5 3.3 11
WHTD-FM URBAN RADIO ONE 2.5 2.2 2.3 2.7 2.9 12
WMGC-FM AC GREATER MEDIA 3.4 3.2 2.8 2.9 2.8 13t
WCSX-FM CLASSIC ROCK GREATER MEDIA 3.0 3.5 2.7 2.8 2.8 13t
WDRQ-FM CHR/POP ABC 2.3 2.9 2.5 2.6 2.7 15
WDMK-FM URBAN AC RADIO ONE 2.8 3.1 3.2 2.8 2.6 16t
CIMX-FM ALTERNATIVE CHUM 2.5 2.8 2.3 2.3 2.6 16t
WDTW-FM CLASSIC ROCK CLEAR CHANNEL 2.2 3.0 2.3 2.3 2.2 18
WKRK-FM TALK CBS RADIO 1.7 2.0 1.9 2.1 2.0 19
WGPR-FM URBAN AC WGPR-FM 1.6 1.4 1.6 1.5 1.8 20

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WXYT-AM SPORTS CBS RADIO 1.9 1.2 1.8 1.7 1.7 21
WDFN-AM SPORTS CLEAR CHANNEL 1.4 1.2 1.3 1.3 1.1 22t
WMUZ-FM CHRISTIAN AC CRAWFORD 1.1 0.8 1.3 1.2 1.1 22t

Posted: Wed Oct 03, 2007 10:20 pm

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