

The Radio
03-31-2014 by Harry Zirkelbach

Looking back, past all those years, it defied belief in how important radio had been, yet how removed from the media of radio he had been. His voice had never been heard on radio, yet had invested several years there.

Transmission of noise was evident from the first moment two humans got together to compare ideas. It would be some time before their heirs managed some communications, only to learn that hearing is not understanding. One of the codified first laws of human nature, is honored today, at all levels of society. "More work is needed".

It would require 99.98% of human existence before Guglielmo Marconi and competitors managed to bridge the distance the human voice could be propagated by other means than the larynx.

And just in time too, for the world was beginning to have a lot to say. Particularly in America after the approval of the 19th Amendment Aug 18, 1920.

But I digress. In 1901 Marconi completed the first recognized trans-Atlantic communication; then on January 18, 1903 a message was transmitted for South Wellfleet, Massachusetts to England; that message, a simple greeting from President Theodore Roosevelt to the King of England. Cordial relations continue.

The work of Marconi and other lads led to the first United States commercial Radio Station, WWJ, Detroit Michigan. Then national networks began, connecting cities in all states via programs originated from a central location, often New York City.

My parents and neighbors became nightly listeners to the radio program Amos and Andy shortly after they began broadcasting nationally after 1928. That narration became the conversation for the neighborhood in the hey-day of the depression;

that humor a distracting relief from troubles the nation could not resolve.

In fact, the next twenty plus years was dominated by individuals, famous for their radio voice, as comic entertainers and political personages. And while the Network affiliates dominated with famous voices, local radio stations had proliferated. The age of the amateur local radio performer began, grew.

These local stations, usually broadcast on limited power and hours of operation, were professional in other aspects.

Local stations could operate with a small staff, each performing multiple tasks, announcing, sales, operating, clerical, yes floor moping. So local boys and girls would appear weekly as amateurs, sing songs, recite jokes or tell short stories; and be certain to generate an audience as family and neighbors take pride in these children, increasing the local audience.

The arrival of television lessened the influence of radio permanently.

But radio remains.

Today broadcasting retains an audience, is profitable, with no dominant leader. Metropolitan Denver can choose stations from 19 TV , 23 AM, 89 FM broadcasters.

Those signal can be received in this very room.

Still, we enjoys isolation from that noise, while we listen to one another tell our remembrance of listening to radio broadcasts.

Smile if you recall Mert and Marge, Amos and Andy, Fibber McGee and Molly, Lux Radio Theater.

They are gone, remembered as “free” humor and entertainment.

