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CHILDREN'S DAY SCHOOL

limits on ownership. Meanwhile, Bush appointed FCC chair Michael Powell is doing just the opposite: pushing to remove the remaining six controls over media ownership, including:

- a rule prohibiting one company from owning both a daily newspaper and a television station in the same local market;
- a 35 percent cap on the number of households any one broadcast company can reach nationwide;
- a regulation barring the four major TV networks from merging with one another.

Envisioning The Future

"I think clearly these large corporations and this concentrated ownership are how the broadcast industry is going to be configured from here out," says UO Associate Dean of the School of Journalism and Communications Al Stavitsky, who's working on the book, *Stale Air: What's Wrong with American Radio?*

"Clear Channel has become the poster child for what's wrong with American radio and much of the ire has been pointed at them because they are the largest," he says. "They took advantage of deregulatory change and played it very skillfully from a business standpoint."

But Stavitsky points out that radio is going back to its roots. "It was very network-centralized in its early days but then when television came along and became the dominant medium in the late '40s and '50s, taking the popular sitcoms and dramas, radio was left wondering, 'What's our niche?'"

The stations became localized. They hired DJs, became highly targeted: Top 40, stations kids liked; stations their parents liked; country; rock.

"Radio's really undergone profound changes over the past two decades," says Stavitsky. "Listener behavior changed." Over the past 25 years, the bulk of radio listenership shifted from AM to FM. Traditionally, news and talk was on AM, and music was on FM, which had stereo. The music attracted younger audiences, which appealed to advertisers.

Now, with the caveat that some stations are sticking to local programming, in many ways, says Stavitsky, the move toward centralization means "Radio is going back."

But even Clear Channel and Cumulus are going to have competition, as new technology means many more choices for listeners. If one corporation is trying to push a political agenda, it may be overshadowed by an entity that has enough channels to provide any agenda. That means a wider universe of listeners will tune in and hear whatever ad is being played.

For example, Sirius Satellite Radio offers 100 channels, including country music and "activist music." It even offers divergent political programs, "Sirius Right" and "Sirius Left," to please every listener. Its competitor, XM Satellite Radio Holdings, also offers a wide variety of choices.

That might be great for the audience share numbers and ratings advertisers buy into, but will it keep listeners happy?

With so many choices, Stavitsky believes, ironically, "the only thing that will ensure the survival of local stations in this environment is to provide local service and have local content. You're not going to get Eugene weather or music from XM or Sirius."

As for Clear Channel, word's out on that company's dealings. And if Rush Limbaugh's still bringing in the ratings bacon, maybe the problem lies not with the corporation. **EW**



Michelle Shocked:
Indie radio launched her career.

KRVM Still Kicking

Will Clear Channel buy KRVM? That was the question heard immediately after the station announced it was on the 4-J budget chopping block. But KRVM is licensed as non-profit, and the license would have to be changed before it could become a commercial holding. That move would be "very far down the road," says KRVM General Manager/Chief Engineer Carl Sundberg. The latest KRVM update: The station raised nearly \$50,000 from the local community as soon as it was announced it was headed for trouble.

"That showed support and so did all the people who showed up at the 4-J [school board] meeting," says Sundberg. "Now, 4-J's rethinking."

While 4-J will not have the funds to continue to support KRVM, Sundberg believes with staff cuts down to 2.5 FTE, he might be able to raise the funds to keep the station going. Having less than five employees means KRVM will lose Corporation for Public Broadcasting funding in addition to its 4-J funds, but he believes with grants, underwriting and public support, the station will stay on the air.

"No one who pays taxes in any way, shape, fashion or form will have any reason to complain about us being here," says Sundberg. "We'll still be able to provide educational and instructional opportunities for kids, and continue to offer the kind of programming the community's grown to love," he says. He adds that KRVM's survival "is still not a done deal" and the station, along with all public broadcasting stations, will accept donations "24/7."

-Aria Seligmann

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July 28-Aug 1 *Session II*

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Aug 3-16 *The American Songbook*
Song & Dance Camp (grds 6-12)
Aug 3-16 *The American Songbook*