

# THE TRAVELERS

# BEACON

*January - February, 1965*





## On Our Cover

Providing poise, charm and a touch of beauty to the lobby of WTIC's Broadcast House are the station's receptionists, Miss Suzanne Olsson, standing, who has the added distinction of being Miss Constitution Plaza, and Miss Kai Everett. A story of WTIC's 40 years of broadcasting, which began on February 10, 1925, begins on the opposite page.



Broadcast House, the home of WTIC-AM-FM-TV since September, 1961, is located in Hartford's Constitution Plaza.

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## the beacon

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# 40 YEARS OF BROADCASTING

*On February 10, 1965, radio station WTIC will celebrate its fortieth birthday—a milestone reached by only a relatively few radio stations in the United States.*

*It has grown from a station which operated three days a week on 500 watts, to one of the largest and best stations in the entire country.*

**WTIC** today is a thriving, lively 39-year-old, operating 24 hours a day on a power output of 50,000 watts at 1080 kilocycles on the radio dial. Persons from virtually any town or city in any state of the Union can receive its signal when weather and other conditions are right. Over the years, WTIC has reached virtually every corner of the globe and has gained a position of leadership in the broadcasting industry.

Radio was in its infancy in 1924 when the late Travelers Vice President Walter G. Cowles convinced Travelers President Louis F. Butler that the Company would derive tremendous publicity benefits through the operation of its own radio station.

President Butler authorized application for the license, and J. Clayton Randall, formerly employed by the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Co., was hired as the station's chief engineer.

Herman D. Taylor, who was named his assistant, is today chief engineer at WTIC, and the only member of the staff who celebrated his fortieth anniversary before the station reached its fortieth birthday.

On an especially built penthouse atop the Grove Street Building were soon erected two, 150-foot steel towers designed to support a T-type antenna. Two studios, separated by a control room, were fashioned in the southwest section of the sixth floor of that building.

Initial tests were conducted on Dec. 19 and again on Dec. 22, 1924, using Travelers employee talent. Mail was received soon after from listeners not only in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island, but from New Hampshire, Maine, New York, Maryland, Georgia and Nova Scotia as well.

WTIC's formal opening came on



Tuesday, Feb. 10, 1925. It ran from 7:45 until 10:24 p.m., and concluded with a remote pickup of an instrumental trio playing from the ballroom of Hartford's Hotel Bond.

After three months of broadcasting each Tuesday, Thursday and Friday night from 8 to 10 p.m., WTIC began broadcasting five nights a week. On Dec. 19, the station made its first Sunday broadcast, and early in 1926 went to six days a week. In March, 1925, WTIC joined the first coast-to-coast network in carrying the presidential inauguration of Calvin Coolidge.

During its first year, WTIC completed nearly 700 hours of broadcasting. Although a non-commercial station, it permitted sponsors—without commercial announcements—to present programs under their firm name and required them to pay only the talent costs.

Vaudeville acts and dressing room interviews of such stars as Jack Benny, Edgar Bergen, Phil Baker, Eddie Foy and Bert Lytell were

same year inaugurated a series of "Music Appreciation Programs" designed for school listening throughout five New England states.

WTIC began broadcasting seven days a week on Aug. 29, 1927, when it switched its wave length from 860 to 560 kilocycles. A speech by Herbert Hoover in New Haven that year was fed by WTIC to NBC, and three hockey games from New Haven were broadcast.

Rudy Vallee's first radio broadcast was over WTIC during the 1927 Yale commencement, and the first quiz program in the history of radio broadcasting, "Jack Says: Ask Me Another," adopted from a popular parlor game, began on WTIC that same year.

After wiring nearly four miles of the Thames River in Connecticut in June, 1928, WTIC fed to NBC the first broadcast of a Yale-Harvard boat race. Seth Parker's "Old Fashioned Singing School," featuring Paul Lucas, made its debut over WTIC in October, 1928, and that same month

The following July, two, 200-foot antenna towers were completed on Avon Mountain, and test programs were reported to have been heard from such distant points as Prince Edward Island, Seattle, Miami and even Bermuda. The new transmitter, operating first at 5,000 watts, came on the air Aug. 2, 1929. It was upped to 20,000 watts on Aug. 30, and WTIC broadcast for the first time on 50,000 watts on Sunday, Sept. 1, 1929.

Two men who became instrumental in the growth and development



Former announcers who are now executives of Broadcast-Plaza, Inc., are from the left: Robert S. Tyrol, vice president-radio sales; George W. Bowe, manager, special radio and television programs; and Irwin C. Cowper, vice president-television sales.

broadcast from Hartford's Capitol Theater over WTIC in 1926. The world's first public broadcast from a moving aircraft originated over WTIC in 1926, when a short wave transmitter was used to bring listeners the voices of Connecticut Governor John H. Trumbull and his pilot, aircraft builder Igor Sikorsky.

On Nov. 14, 1926, WTIC became a network member of NBC, and that

the station was incorporated under the name of the Travelers Broadcasting Service Corp.

In the fall of 1928, WTIC applied for and received approval to increase its power to 50,000 watts on a frequency of 1060 kilocycles. Land on Avon Mountain was purchased for construction of a transmitter plant, and ground was broken for this purpose on Dec. 4, 1928.



Paul W. Morency



Leonard J. Patricelli

of WTIC through the years and who today are executives of the corporation, joined the station in 1929. They are Paul W. Morency, who now serves as president, and Leonard J. Patricelli, vice president and general manager.

Walter Johnson, the station's first announcer, was another key figure in the history of WTIC. At the time of his death in 1963, Mr. Johnson was vice president and general manager.

After nearly five years of operating a radio station, The Travelers in late 1929 decided it was no longer economically feasible to support WTIC simply for its publicity value alone. Thus on Jan. 1, 1930, WTIC became a truly commercial radio station. It issued a rate card and began to accept paid announcements and programs.

An important milestone in the station's history came on Sept. 23, 1931, with the first presentation of the WTIC Playhouse. Directed by the former stage and screen star, Guy Hedlund, the Playhouse presented more than 1,000 dramatizations—including a series sent over the NBC network—before its final production in the summer of 1941. Playhouse personalities who were later to achieve stardom in motion pictures and television, included Ed Begley and Louis Nye.

By 1931, WTIC had become one of the key stations of the NBC chain, and the "Red Network" was accepting many local programs for coast-to-coast airing. Also that year, WTIC entered into a synchronization arrangement with WEAJ in New York, in which both stations broadcast identical programs at 660 kilocycles.

Synchronization was found impractical and the system was abandoned in mid-1932. Thus WTIC, which had been broadcasting seven nights a week, again became a part-time station, curtailing its night-time broadcasts to four nights a week.

In April, 1934, the Federal Radio Commission approved the simultaneous operation by WTIC and KRLD in Dallas, Texas, on the 1040 kilocycle band, enabling WTIC again



During World War II, WTIC President Paul W. Morency, center, received an award from the War Council of Connecticut. Raymond E. Baldwin, right, Connecticut's wartime governor, made the presentation, as Jesse W. Randall, left, president of The Travelers at that time, applauds the action.

to broadcast seven nights a week. The studio facilities were expanded in 1934, and WTIC took over the entire sixth floor of the Central Row Building and all of the sixth floor of the Grove Street Building except for the eastern wing.

Live vocal and instrumental groups had been a mainstay of WTIC programming from the beginning. During 1934 and 1935, however, these groups were gradually being replaced by transcriptions. On its twelfth anniversary in 1937, WTIC no longer had any staff musicians, but did have a growing library of recordings and transcriptions.

On Feb. 5, 1940, the Travelers Broadcasting Service Corp. began operating an experimental FM station, WIXSO on one kilowatt of power and a wavelength of 43.7 megacycles. WTIC-FM today broadcasts eight hours each day independently of WTIC-AM (2 to 6 and 7 to 11 p.m.) on 5,500 watt power at 96.5 megacycles. And in 1963, WTIC-FM became one of New England's first stereophonic FM stations.

WTIC went on a 24-hour broadcasting schedule after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, and later became a key station in an air raid warning plan. Its World War II efforts can perhaps best be summed up by awards presented to President Morency by the War Council of Connecticut and to the station by Billboard Magazine. The medal, presented to Mr. Morency by Connecti-

cut's wartime governor, Raymond E. Baldwin, was inscribed: "Awarded by the War Council of Connecticut for Extraordinary Civilian Service." Billboard's award stated: "WTIC did an amazingly thorough job of public service programming by blanketing every phase of civic effort and war activity."

On May 29, 1946, WTIC ordered a new Westinghouse 50-HG-1, 50 kilowatt transmitter. Installation began on Talcott Mountain in Avon before the end of the year, and the new transmitter went into operation the following July.

Perhaps two of the most popular programs ever to be aired over WTIC were created during 1947 by Mr. Patricelli, then radio program manager. One was "Cinderella Weekend," whose 1,460 broadcasts attracted 146,000 people as members of its studio audience. Some 289 Cinderellas received expense paid weekends in New York City during the five years and eight months this program was on the air.

Allen Ludden, host of the popular TV program, "Password," was the master of ceremonies for the second outstanding program, "Mind Your Manners." This program, designed to emphasize among young people the importance of good manners, consisted of a panel of teen-agers answering questions submitted by teen-agers. By 1949, 130 NBC stations were carrying the program. "Mind Your Manners" won nine top national

and international awards, including the 1950 first award in the children's program division of the 14th annual American Exhibition of Educational Radio Programs conducted by Ohio State University. It was also featured in the Sept. 26, 1950 issue of *Look* magazine.

WTIC's very popular Farm Youth Program was inaugurated in 1948 by President Morency. By the end of 1964, this program had made more than \$140,000 in no-interest loans to 4-H Club members and vocational agricultural students for the purchase of nearly 900 purebred heifers. These loans are made from a \$25,000 revolving fund, and each year the program sends two young people to the annual 4-H Congress in Chicago.



The sparkling personality and quick wit of Bob Steele are well known throughout WTIC's entire listening area.

Bob Steele, who began his "Strictly Sports" program back in 1939, did remote broadcasts of Willie Pep's championship fights from St. Louis and New York City in 1950. He also broadcast the Pep-Sandy Sadler title bout from New York on Sept. 26, 1951, and the auto race from Indianapolis in May that same year.

One hundred sixty stations carried the Travelers-sponsored NBC network program, "Voices and Events" on New Year's Eve, 1950. President Jesse W. Randall spoke briefly, and the program reviewed the year's

events from Britain's recognition of China, through the McCarthy hearings to the climax of war in Korea. This program became an annual feature during the next several years.

In 1953, the Hartford City Council voted to re-zone a 15-acre tract of land on Albany Ave. where WTIC proposed construction of a new radio and television studio. In 1959, WTIC revised its plans, and announced intention to build a broadcasting center in Hartford's new downtown redevelopment area. Plans called for a \$2 million building to provide 70,000 square feet in a basement, three upper floors and a penthouse.

Construction on the building began in April, 1960, and the giant move from the sixth floors of the Central Row and Grove Street buildings was made in September, 1961. In June, 1964, the name of the Travelers Broadcasting Service Corp. was changed to Broadcast-Plaza, Inc. Gladden W. Baker, long a strong supporter of the broadcasting operation, became chairman of the board.

Few people realize, perhaps, that it was as early as June, 1939, when the Travelers Broadcasting Service Corp. (TBSC) first applied to the Federal Communications Commission for a license to operate a television station. This application was withdrawn in October, 1940, however, "until such time as the FCC reconsidered its refusal to allow commercial television, and standards for the new science were established."

TBSC again applied in early 1944, withdrew its application for the second time two years later, and then on Sept. 12, 1947, filed an application with the FCC to construct a commercial television station in Hartford. In April, 1952, the FCC assigned channels 3 and 18 to Hartford, and TBSC amended its application to request operation of channel 3.

A hearing before the FCC on TBSC's application began in Washington on Jan. 25, 1954, and continued through 41 days of testimony. On May 31, the Travelers Broadcasting Service Corp. was granted TV channel 3, but it would be another three years,

after innumerable appeals, decision changes, delays, proposals and counter proposals, before TBSC would receive the final go-ahead. And when it came, the FCC ordered WTIC-TV to go on the air at full 100,000 watt power.

In March, 1957, three quarters of a million dollars of TV equipment was ordered from RCA. Studio renovation began in April, and shipment of WTIC-TV's transmitter was made the week of May 13. Erection of the tower and antenna was completed on Talcott Mountain on July 25, 1957. This consisted of a 100-foot, seven-ton, six-section superturnstile antenna pole which was hoisted to the top of a 440-foot Ideco self-supporting tower.

Television test patterns went on the air on Aug. 23, and WTIC-TV, Channel 3 began telecasting with its premier program on Monday, Sept. 23, 1957. Channel 3 remained a completely independent TV station for more than a year before joining the CBS-TV network on Nov. 16, 1958.

From its inception, WTIC has designed its programs with a view toward public service. Through the years it has brought to its listeners, programs devoted to safety, education, religion, fund-raising campaigns, politics, and public issues of the times. Awards made to individual programs and to the station itself during the past 40 years are far too numerous to mention. These are now on display in the award room at Broadcast House.

WTIC has continuously looked to area college and university faculty members for help in presenting special features and programs. A relationship with Yale University began as early as 1925, and "Yale Reports," now heard on both radio and television, originated in 1941. Faculty members from Wesleyan, Trinity, St. Joseph, University of Hartford, and the University of Connecticut, have also taken part in literally thousands of broadcasts on a variety of subjects.

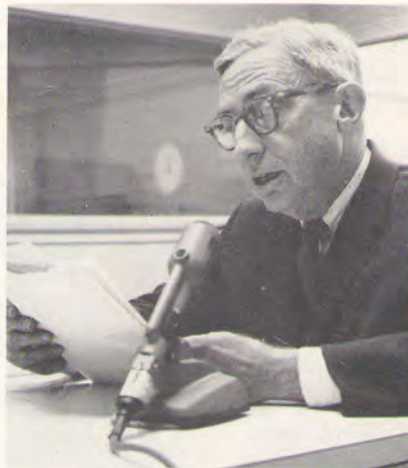
In times of disaster—floods in 1936 and 1938, the attack on Pearl Harbor, hurricanes Carol and Edna in 1954,



Bruce Kern is a frequent guest in many Connecticut and Massachusetts homes when sets are tuned to Channel 3 during WTIC-TV's newscasts.



A popular daytime feature of WTIC is the Jean Colbert Show. Taping a program for a later broadcast are Jean Colbert, director of women's activities, and the show's announcer, Ed Anderson.



The voice of Frank Atwood, "your neighbor down the road," greets WTIC's early morning listeners.

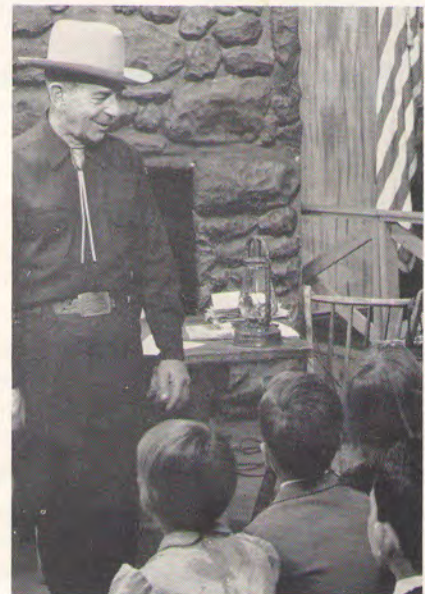


A familiar voice to those who listen to WTIC for news is that of Tom Eaton, vice president in charge of news, seen here checking the Associated Press wire at the station.

and the 1958 blizzard—WTIC devotes much of its broadcast time in assisting police and other civic officials to keep the general public fully informed of all potential dangers and the steps being taken to minimize loss of life and property.

By adding "The Other Side of the Day" program, WTIC radio went on a 24-hour-a-day schedule on Feb. 20, 1964. Steady listeners of WTIC will also recognize such names and programs as these: Frank Atwood; Bob Steele; Robert E. Smith; Bob Nelson; Dick Bertel with his "Conversation Piece" and "Americana;" the Jean Colbert Show with which Ed Anderson assists; Bill Hennessey's

"Hennessey—That's Me!" "Mike Line" which features nearly all members of the staff; news broadcasts under the direction of News Director Thomas Eaton, and given most frequently by Bob Ellsworth and Bruce Kern; weather forecasts presented by a number of people from the Travelers Weather Service; and sports scores, programs and events throughout the day and evening given principally by Bob Steele, George Ehrlich, Floyd Richards and Norm Peters.



One of the TV favorites of youngsters is the popular "Ranger Andy" program which features Andy Andrews who hosts more than 40 children for each show.

Many of these personalities are also seen and heard over WTIC-TV in a great many local programs. One of the TV favorites for youngsters is "Ranger Andy," featuring Andy Andrews. "The Brad Davis Show," designed especially for teen-aged viewers, has been extremely popular since its TV debut on Oct. 3, 1959.

Then there are dozens of others whose work behind the scenes makes it possible for these programs to be heard and seen. Writers, directors, cameramen, technicians, engineers, salesmen, stenographers, receptionists and a whole host of others.

**Happy 40th birthday, WTIC, and to your entire staff.**