

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

WYSU

Personal Experience

O H 1391

DONALD R. ELSER

Interviewed

by

Dan O'Neil

on

December 7, 1990

O Don, First of all, I know that you were instrumental in getting the radio station started at YSU, but I also know that you kind of had a life long interest in radio. I am kind of interested in finding out something about that life long interest and your activities in radio prior to the establishment of WYSU FM

E Well, I had taken a number of courses in radio. When I was in the army I was down at the University of St. Louis. They had classes so I took some there. Of course television was just starting. Radio was the most important thing. I could have stayed in St. Louis because a woman and her husband, I can't remember his name, taught a class and they were starting a radio station. They hired some people out of our class and they told me to stay down there because it would be a great thing going. So I got interested and I thought why not buy one of my own. So, I asked around and I met some fellows who were buying into one and we had one located down in Florida. They wanted \$30,000 for it at the time. It was an FM station and FM wasn't doing much good. You could buy almost any FM station for practically nothing. After Mr. Gersovich came into the department we got the idea that we might buy one together. Lou Molner, who was the chief technician down at the station that they had in Struthers and that Mr. Gersovich put on the air, was coming along. He would be the engineer, someone would be the salesman, and someone would be the announcer. So, we found one over in Sharon for \$25,000, which we didn't buy because we got involved in something like this. That station went for, it was almost unbelievable, a million dollars recently. It wasn't Sharon. It was over towards the east, I forgot just where. Anyhow, I was always interested in that sort of thing. Of course, I haven't been a radio amateur since 1931. I was on the air with my amateur station and interested in that sort of thing. I always thought it would be nice to buy into a station. You know, there was some opening in Youngstown, one that just recently sold, which I was interested in. A friend of mine, Tony Ross, was the owner. He said, "Don, get into it now. It is a great time. A time to make it. Get into it and make money and do good." And they did fine with PBW. I was always interested in that, but then I got to thinking why not a radio station on the campus. They were starting then and I was listening, at the time, to WCLV in Cleveland, which was a fine arts station.

I would call them quite often to tell how they were receiving. They would call us to see how we were receiving them down here. I got to know oh, the name escapes me, who does the announcing. I got to know him and I thought, "Well, why not a fine arts station in Youngstown on the University's campus?" It seemed right that we should have something that would reflect the culture and everything of our University, from music to drama and everything else. That would work out fine. I couldn't get much interest in it from the people at the University. Although, I talked to President Jones about it and he said, "Well Don, that would be very nice if we had the money." We didn't have all that much money back then.

O This was in the early 60's?

E Yes He said, "Go ahead If you want to, you can Try and raise some money " I didn't feel that his interest was that much. He liked me because we got along fine I think anything I'd have come in with, an idea, he'd have gone along with if it sounded reasonable So, we didn't get very far with that Mr Jones left and Dr Pugsly came on campus and I got to be real friendly with him

O So the University became a State University It was no longer a private school It became a State University?

E That's right Money became more available, plus the fact that I discovered you could get money from Washington for a station on this educational network

O PBS?

E And if it would match, matching funds, they talked about all of that at the time. Finally, Mr Geisovich came to teach in the department

O I think I was just coming to the University I came, I believe, in 1967. 1968 was my first year I think Steve was here, he was working, I think, part-time, in the department.

E Well, it was some time before I got him full-time He came and taught part-time and, of course, the high school station's choices wasn't the kind of programming we wanted They did a lot of semi-popular, ethnic stuff and that Anyhow, we would join the network which, either they didn't want or wasn't available to us A University station seemed the practical way to go. There was only about one frequency open in Youngstown for that sort of thing I knew somebody was going to get it That was one of the arguments I gave to President Pugsly and he investigated and found out it was true He got interested immediately He said he thought it would be a good job He liked good music and he had a good radio in his car.

O He was a painter, wasn't he?

E He was interested in the arts and after we got the station in there he was one of our most valuable, I don't think money, supporters He was always listening to us He would tune it in and he would let us know how he received it or didn't receive He was our voice out there. He would drive to Columbus to tell us how far down that way he could hear us, he wanted to pick up coming back So I said to Steve Geisovich, "We will go over and you go along and talk Tell about how you put the station on sown I Struthers " So, we went over one day and we really got

to talking and he said, the President said to me, "What do you think it will take?" At the time I said, "Oh, around \$75,000 was the figure I had come up with." So that sounded reasonable. He said he would think it over. A week or two later he called me and he said, "Do you think that is enough?" I said, "Well get as much as we can. That is what we'll do. The quality and everything of what we get." So he said, "Well, let's make it a \$100,000." He gave full, fast support. Before you know it Steve and I are flying back and forth between here and Washington to meetings and to lawyer, we had a lawyer down there that had to make me study. I wanted WYSU and there was a KYSU somewhere out in North Dakota someplace. That was as close as it came to our call. I was just set on WYSU, fine arts broadcast. And so, we got on the air. We put it over in the. Down the hall from my office in the

O In the old motel wasn't it?

E We had to put our tower out there which is a bad place for it. It was down the hall there. We couldn't have put it up any higher because the Landsdown airport, which has never been anything worth. They protested a higher tower because they said it was in their landing pad. You could sit there for days on end and you could never find a plane going over there landing. We were just held there for a number of years. Incidentally, now we are on the tower for WKBN, up above 300 some feet. We have increased our coverage by over fifty to sixty percent, just by putting it up there. We managed to get the frequency, which was fairly free, except we had to have a rather clover leaf pattern so we wouldn't interfere with the station in the area and went over in Canada and a few other stations. Now, Westminster has a small station.

O A small station

E It was a campus station really

O How many watts was WYSU when it started out?

E We started out around 30,000. Right now it is 50,000. It was 40,000 before we put up Todd, now it has gone up to 50,000, twenty-four hours a day.

O Twenty-four hours a day

E Every day of the year

O You started from the very beginning You had a program

E Well I'll tell you, I wanted one but I was trying to get Dan interested. So, I gave it to
He took it for about a month, two months

O Was this Biome?

E No, not Biome

O Heron?

E No, he directs the opera

O Oh! Vogel, Don Vogel

E Don Vogel took it, and he said, "I can't keep it up" It is rather strange, and I don't take
this as a dig at Dana, but they were very interested and they backed us on the fine arts thing But
when it came time to get anymore in there because it requires a lot of work

O Takes a certain kind of commitment, doesn't it?

E Well, it does

O There is you, there is Martin Berger, there is Charles Darling They have been for years
You three are main stakes

E Darling, he's been along for a while. He has his own board at home where he puts it on tape, which I don't do, I go up there and tape it.

O I didn't know that, he's got his own board?

E He brings the tape in, all ready to go. I always thought I would like to do that but, for years, I did the whole thing myself. Then, when I had my heart attack, I came off the air for a while. Finally, I couldn't operate the board. I can't even type, even to this day. I had enough trouble getting my amateur radio on the air here. I had to have Frank come out one day and help me do this. I finally got it back on the air but I used to do the whole show. I started out writing everything and then I got to know where I could just bring it off. I didn't write anything because it sounds as if you are reading it. If you can't know enough about what you are doing, you shouldn't do it. So, I find out about music and know what I want to say, say it, and now I use the students. Students help me put it together on a Thursday and then it is aired on Saturday.

O This is a program that has run continuously.

E Well, it was Saturday night on Broadway and then it was Sunday night, not on Broadway because there is nothing on Broadway. I forget what I called it for a little while. I had an hour and a half.

O Twenty-two years we are talking.

E I have done most of it without missing except a few times when I have been in the hospital and I had to get there without warning. Like now, I am going and I'll air ahead. I'll have three, four weeks aired on tape so that by that time I hope I'm out. I use students and I get very good students. There are some very good people. They go on and do work, their jobs, not that there are many jobs. There are all kinds of places radio people can go besides stations. In factories, and places like that, they have a lot of that kind of thing. They get jobs doing that. A lot of our work is volunteer. Of course now we have underwriters.

O There is some fund raising going on now, isn't there? There is someone who is hired just to

E Oh yes she does public relations work. She goes around and gets underwriters. For instance, the underwriter for my show is Manchester Bennett Powers and Ullman Law Firm and they have been underwriting us.

O Pugsly saw the P R capacity to having an F M station, that is what he saw as the value of it.

E It should reflect a certain type of culture that maybe not everybody appreciates but when it's there they look at it.

O It adds to the cultural life of the community It is a cultural institution

E That is right Our supporters are If it goes off the air for an hour they are . . .

O Very intense supporters

E Oh, they are and they give money I have one gentleman, Robert Cole over in Canfield, who buys me a lot of my disks He'll go to New York to see a show and I'll get them in the mail then

O I have heard his name a lot as a And he buys days

E He'll buy a whole day He is on our committee We have a citizen's committee I came walking with him out of a meeting in Kilcawley when I saw this big white car in the lawn I said who comes to the university in that thing" And he said "Oh that's mine "

O That's mine

E He says I spent 35 thousand dollars last year I found out that he is an Ursuline graduate. I was talking the other day to my ex-son-in-law's sister and we had breakfast quite often and I forgot to ask, his mother just died and he is fifty-five He came the other day we had a big meeting, a community meeting out in the WKBN Tower there was that long car.

O Yeah, geez, the only great supporters I can think of one and that would be Hilda Guard

E Oh Hilda Guard geez, She thinks it's great We have doctors, lawyers, people who turn up and call in and we have very, very strong supporters

O How is the fund raising going? I know that there is a public appeal for support and that has been going on for I don't know how many years five or ten years

E Well we have it twice a year for a week or so

O It is coming up soon?

E It is coming up, yes this month I'll make it probably if nobody else knows about it and we will have mostly call-ins and things and it has been effective I think It impresses the right people you know and we are still getting we get support from the national and all of that, they cut that way down

O The university or the state funding really subsidizes it

E Oh state funding, we get

O Yeah but it's not as expensive as television where you are talking about it and dropping

the budget

E Oh no Well we have probably the lowest number of full time people of anyone I know. They have twenty-five, we have five

O At the radio station?

E Yeah, they have news people, we don't have that They have public relations and all that, I would say they have at least twenty We have five, plus people who volunteer, and once in awhile we a lot and people will say oh that fella announced the other night, it was a student and you can tell a student right away to a fella who has had experience but they are going to be better and they have some commercial stations and they sound better with some background So we put them on and they are usually very efficient They are very reliable people and you can tell by their voice and their work But we have to use those people because you know how long it takes, if you have to get or pull the records for a four hour show and then air it, that is a lot of work So we went to carrying jazz at night and we got all kinds of reactions Someone (whose name I won't mention) said you know I put that on to go to sleep with it. I said you've gotta take a pill But we had jazz and there are people who like it

O The program has diversified over the years, it was kinda purely classical

E Well we have to soften it up a little, so to speak I have to be very careful

E Now I'll tell you a funny thing that happened there Right after we went on the air, I went into a certain office and I found thirty Costellonis records. I played them on my show, and I played one last week Costellonis plays Broadway musicals, but I could see that soaking in, ya know? You pull out a record that is kind of nonchalant right between the drums and Beethoven, it wouldn't work If you try to please everybody, you end up pleasing nobody, and I don't think we have to please everybody, anymore than commercial stations please everybody I think there is an audience Now when we went on another sister station, another university, that is not too far from here, I won't mention the name It was all student-operated and all jazz And all of the professors got together and demanded that we go our way because they had been listening to our station and now we had some competition Now I won't tell you what station or university it is but it is right next to our frequency and sometimes people tune it in by mistake There is always the argument over who listens to classical music Well a lot of people and I went on, and well my philosophy was that you don't go on and build you university and build your curriculum around popularity I mean, how many people are going to come up and do this? I don't think the university station should have to please, you know I think they should approach it from the university's point of view The best in music, like we want the best in something else, and that has been our philosophy ever since and we had, for instance, for the first five years I spent a big amount of time talking to students about that philosophy, they wanted student shows. Now my son-in-law's brother had a student jazz show on at Kent They said the students had their own thing over there and they played that and so we talked about it, and it took a little while to get our point across Now we don't hear a thing about it Another thing that we had happen, they

wanted to broadcast all of the sports events. Then the commercial stations called us and they said, we want them, if they are available we want them. That is how we quieted that down, and that worked out well as far as I am concerned. We never wanted them, we never wanted them really. You are going to have trouble, who are you going to get as announcers? Who are you going to get to handle it? It wasn't all that easy.

O It is disruptive to the nature of your programming too. It is very jarring.

E For instance we have carried the Metropolitan Opera since we went on, we have to carry it on a Saturday, we cannot tape it and play it. We cannot play it at any other time, yet there are a lot of people who like to throw it off and yet there are a lot that listen to it. So we are caught. Sometimes we train the people on what we can give, but I kinda wanted, I could see we carry more news now than we used to, if you noticed? And we carry more talk shows, because they are a bit _____. Do you ever listen to that car thing on Saturday?

O I do, I do.

E They are crazy nuts.

O They've become very popular. They are doing some advertizing now, they have a national contract for I forget what it is, but I know that they have a national contract.

E You would be surprised the reaction they got from people who I didn't even know listened to us.

O Car Talk.

E Yeah Car Talk, it's a real popular one. And of course we always have Hoss, and he has a following. And we put him on twice, if we put him on once, we hear rumples.

O I listen to the money program on Saturdays also right after car talk, and that is a good one because it is in depth.

E We found that Saturday morning is a good time. Then we go to the Opera, but Saturday morning is mostly talk shows. We have a lot of people, like dentists and doctors who run that thing in their office. They don't want a lot of talk. Then we have people who say oh they want news, oh we want more local news. We don't have a staff for local news. We can't carry that, we try to give news about the campus and that sort of thing but at all times I think we should consider ourselves PR for the campus, then we try to do that but carrying local news is a different story.

O There are some headlines that you can use, but that is about it.

E Yeah we could toss that in, and we have weather reports because the students like that,

they like to do those so we kind of turn those over to them

O I am kind of interested in the personalities that were a part of WYSU over the years and the first person who comes to mind is Bill Foster. What memories do you have of Bill Foster?

E Well you know Bill ran a music store down on Lincoln Avenue. I knew Bill back then, Bill had been a highway patrolman and among other things a musician. So I passed Bill one day on the way to the station and he said "Hey Don come here, you are going to need an announcer for those performing arts. I said "Bill could you handle it?" He said sure so I said make us a tape. You know we had tapes but his was so far ahead of anybody's. His wife came to me after he dies and thanked me. She said we got married shortly after this, she said you know Bill was just changed after this and he did a good job, he took it seriously, only there was this one time when he was shoved all over the dial and Bill said "This is where I want to be." He said "I'm not going to change my way of life to be where you want me to be." And they were shoving him all over the place, and I backed him, I backed him. I said "Steve, leave him alone, he's doing a good job." We got in trouble once, he said "Thank god it's Friday." He got in trouble for that and some people called in and told us don't say that anymore. What would they say, um, Thank god it's Friday, and Bill would go over to the dentist's place afterwards, ya know?

O Bob Sacketman?

E Yeah

O The Flying Club

E So Bill came over and said what is this? I can't say that? I said just don't say it for a while

O Was he a great joke teller around you? I know at The Flying Club he was just one of the great recanters

E Oh Yeah. The day Hoss came into town Bill entertained him up at his place and they just sat there for three hours trying to out tell each other, Hoss had just as many as he had. It was the craziest evening I've ever had. That Hoss is quite a fellow

O He loves to tell a story too, doesn't he?

E Oh yes. And Bill would always have a few stories to tell. I miss him, I miss him a lot. He is one of the people I can count on two hands the people I miss, and I miss Bill a lot

O I'm kind of curious about the development of TV, there was radio there then TV got going

E They asked me if I thought we should have TV and I said yeah because Kent had it. And

permanent by taxing it to a department. Well they say if you give all of this money to a department, it's going to make the other ones jealous and that sort of thing. It got that way so I think it was a mistake.

O This was a local production facility here in Youngstown, there was one over in Kent and then in Akron.

E Every university had one, and then you had your drive for money at channel 45 and all three would take part in it, and it worked out fine. And we had the finest equipment. We had a band, we had everything. So when you ask me where it went, I hate to think about it.

O That started at what time? Was that the mid-seventies when the TV came in?

O It lasted for about ten years then? Maybe not quite that long.

E I don't think it lasted more than five.

O And then there was the selling off of the equipment. Then the mothballing of the TV production studio for a while.

E I'd rather not discuss it.

O Disappointment.

E Well all I'm going to say is that it never should have happened.

O Don, First of all, I know that you were instrumental in getting the radio station started at YSU, but I also know that you kind of had a life long interest in radio. I am kind of interested in finding out something about that life long interest and your activities in radio prior to the establishment of WYSU FM.

E Well, I had taken a number of courses in radio. When I was in the army I was down at the University of St. Louis. They had classes so I took some there. Of course television was just starting. Radio was the most important thing. I could have stayed in St. Louis because a woman and her husband, I can't remember his name, taught a class and they were starting a radio station. They hired some people out of our class and they told me to stay down there because it would be a great thing going. So I got interested and I thought why not buy one of my own. So, I asked around and I met some fellows who were buying into one and we had one located down in Florida. They wanted \$30,000 for it at the time. It was an FM station and FM wasn't doing much good. You could buy almost any FM station for practically nothing. After Mr. Gersovich came into the department we got the idea that we might buy one together. Lou Molner, who was the chief technician down at the station that they had in Struthers and that Mr. Gersovich put on the air, was coming along. He would be the engineer, someone would be the salesman, and someone would be the announcer. So, we found one over in Sharon for \$25,000, which we didn't buy because we got involved in something like this. That station went for, it was almost unbelievable, a million dollars recently. It wasn't Sharon. It was over towards the east, I forgot just where. Anyhow, I was always interested in that sort of thing. Of course, I haven't been a radio amateur since 1931. I was on the air with my amateur station and interested in that sort of

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O So the University became a State University. It was no longer a private school. It became a State University?

E That's right. Money became more available, plus the fact that I discovered you could get money from Washington for a station on this educational network.

O PBS?

E And if it would match, matching funds, they talked about all of that at the time. Finally, Mr. Gersovich came to teach in the department.

O I think I was just coming to the University. I came, I believe, in 1967. 1968 was my first year. I think Steve was here, he was working, I think, part-time, in the department.

E Well, it was some time before I got him full-time. He came and taught part-time and, of course, the high school station's choices wasn't the kind of programming we wanted. They did a lot of semi-popular, ethnic stuff and that. Anyhow, we would join the network which, either they didn't want or wasn't available to us. A University station seemed the practical way to go. There was only about one frequency open in Youngstown for that sort of thing. I knew somebody was going to get it. That was one of the arguments I gave to President Pugsly and he investigated and found out it was true. He got interested immediately. He said he thought it would be a good job. He liked good music and he had a good radio in his car.

O He was a painter, wasn't he?

E: He was interested in the arts and after we got the station in there he was one of our most valuable, I don't think money, supporters. He was always listening to us. He would tune it in and he would let us know how he received it or didn't receive. He was our voice out there. He would drive to Columbus to tell us how far down that way he could hear us, he wanted to pick up coming back. So I said to Steve Geisovich, "We will go over and you go along and talk. Tell about how you put the station on down I Struthers." So, we went over one day and we really got to talking and he said, the President said to me, "What do you think it will take?" At the time I said, "Oh, around \$75,000 was the figure I had come up with." So that sounded reasonable. He said he would think it over. A week or two later he called me and he said, "Do you think that is enough?" I said, "Well get as much as we can. That is what we'll do. The quality and everything of what we get." So he said, "Well, let's make it a \$100,000." He gave full, fast support. Before you know it Steve and I are flying back and forth between here and Washington to meetings and to lawyer, we had a lawyer down there that had to make me study. I wanted WYSU and there was a KYSU somewhere out in North Dakota someplace. That was as close as it came to our call. I was just set on WYSU, fine arts broadcast. And so, we got on the air. We put it over in the. Down the hall from my office in the

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E Oh, they are and they give money I have one gentleman, Robert Cole over in Canfield, who buys me a lot of my disks He'll go to New York to see a show and I'll get them in the mail then

O I have heard his name a lot as a And he buys days

E He'll buy a whole day He is on our committee We have a citizen's committee I came walking with him out of a meeting in Kilcawley when I saw this big white car in the lawn I said who comes to the university in that thing? And he said "Oh that's mine"

O That's mine

E He says I spent 35 thousand dollars last year I found out that he is an Ursuline graduate I was talking the other day to my ex-son-in-law's sister and we had breakfast quite often and I forgot to ask, his mother just died and he is fifty-five . He came the other day we had a big meeting, a community meeting out in the WKBN Tower there was that long car

O Yeah, geez, the only great supporters I can think of one and that would be Hilda Guard

E Oh Hilda Guard geez, She thinks it's great We have doctors, lawyers, people who turn up and call in and we have very, very strong supporters

O How is the fund raising going? I know that there is a public appeal for support and that has been going on for I don't know how many years five or ten years

E Well we have it twice a year for a week or so

O: It is coming up soon?

E. It is coming up, yes this month I'll make it probably if nobody else knows about it and we will have mostly call-ins and things and it has been effective I think It impresses the right people you know and we are still getting we get support from the national and all of that, they cut that way down

O The university or the state funding really subsidizes it

E Oh state funding, we get

O Yeah but it's not as expensive as television where you are talking about it and dropping the budget

E Oh no Well we have probably the lowest number of full time people of anyone I know They have twenty-five, we have five

O At the radio station?

E Yeah, they have news people, we don't have that. They have public relations and all that, I would say they have at least twenty. We have five, plus people who volunteer, and once in awhile we a lot and people will say oh that fella announced the other night, it was a student and you can tell a student right away to a fella who has had experience but they are going to be better and they have some commercial stations and they sound better with some background. So we put them on and they are usually very efficient. They are very reliable people and you can tell by their voice and their work. But we have to use those people because you know how long it takes, if you have to get or pull the records for a four hour show and then air it, that is a lot of work. So we went to carrying jazz at night and we got all kinds of reactions. Someone (whose name I won't mention) said you know I put that on to go to sleep with it. I said you've gotta take a pill. But we had jazz and there are people who like it.

O The program has diversified over the years, it was kinda purely classical.

E Well we have to soften it up a little, so to speak. I have to be very careful.

O Yeah.

E Now I'll tell you a funny thing that happened there. Right after we went on the air, I went into a certain office and I found thirty Costellonis records. I played them on my show, and I played one last week. Costellonis plays Broadway musicals, but I could see that soaking in, ya know? You pull out a record that is kind of nonchalant right between the drums and Beethoven, it wouldn't work. If you try to please everybody, you end up pleasing nobody, and I don't think we have to please everybody, anymore than commercial stations please everybody. I think there is an audience. Now when we went on another sister station, another university, that is not too

far from here, I won't mention the name. It was all student-operated and all jazz. And all of the professors got together and demanded that we go our way because they had been listening to our station and now we had some competition. Now I won't tell you what station or university it is but it is right next to our frequency and sometimes people tune it in by mistake. There is always the argument over who listens to classical music. Well a lot of people and I went on, and well my philosophy was that you don't go on and build your university and build your curriculum around popularity. I mean, how many people are going to come up and do this? I don't think the university station should have to please, you know I think they should approach it from the university's point of view. The best in music, like we want the best in something else, and that has been our philosophy ever since and we had, for instance, for the first five years I spent a big amount of time talking to students about that philosophy, they wanted student shows. Now my son-in-law's brother had a student jazz show on at Kent. They said the students had their own thing over there and they played that and so we talked about it, and it took a little while to get our point across. Now we don't hear a thing about it. Another thing that we had happen, they wanted to broadcast all of the sports events. Then the commercial stations called us and they said, we want them, if they are available we want them. That is how we quieted that down, and that worked out well as far as I am concerned. We never wanted them, we never wanted them really. You are going to have trouble, who are you going to get as announcers? Who are you going to get to handle it? It wasn't all that easy.

O It is disruptive to the nature of your programming too. It is very jarring.

E For instance we have carried the Metropolitan Opera since we went on, we have to carry

it on a Saturday, we cannot tape it and play it. We cannot play it at any other time, yet there are a lot of people who like to throw it off and yet there are a lot that listen to it. So we are caught. Sometimes we train the people on what we can give, but I kinda wanted, I could see we carry more news now than we used to, if you noticed? And we carry more talk shows, because they are a bit _____ Do you ever listen to that car thing on Saturday?

O: I do, I do

E: They are crazy nuts

O: They've become very popular. They are doing some advertizing now, they have a national contract for I forget what it is, but I know that they have a national contract

E: You would be surprised the reaction they got from people who I didn't even know listened to us

O: Car Talk

E: Yeah Car Talk, it's a real popular one. And of course we always have Hoss, and he has a following. And we put him on twice, if we put him on once, we hear rumples:

O: I listen to the money program on Saturdays also right after car talk, and that is a good one because it is in depth

E We found that Saturday morning is a good time. Then we go to the Opera, but Saturday morning is mostly talk shows. We have a lot of people, like dentists and doctors who run that thing in their office. They don't want a lot of talk. Then we have people who say oh they want news, oh we want more local news. We don't have a staff for local news. We can't carry that, we try to give news about the campus and that sort of thing but at all times I think we should consider ourselves PR for the campus, then we try to do that but carrying local news is a different story.

O There are some headlines that you can use, but that is about it.

E Yeah we could toss that in, and we have weather reports because the students like that, they like to do those so we kind of turn those over to them.

O I am kind of interested in the personalities that were a part of WYSU over the years and the first person who comes to mind is Bill Foster. What memories do you have of Bill Foster?

E Well you know Bill ran a music store down on Lincoln Avenue. I knew Bill back then, Bill had been a highway patrolman and among other things a musician. So I passed Bill one day on the way to the station and he said "Hey Don come here, you are going to need an announcer for those performing arts." I said "Bill could you handle it?" He said sure so I said make us a tape. You know we had tapes but his was so far ahead of anybody's. His wife came to me after he dies and thanked me. She said we got married shortly after this, she said you know Bill was just changed after this and he did a good job, he took it seriously, only there was this one time when he was shoved all over the dial and Bill said "This is where I want to be." He said "I'm not going to change my way of life to be where you want me to be." And they were shoving him all over the place, and I backed him, I backed him. I said "Steve, leave him alone, he's doing a good job." We got in trouble once, he said "I thank god it's Friday." He got in trouble for that and

some people called in and told us don't say that anymore What would they say, um, Thank god it's Friday, and Bill would go over to the dentist's place afterwards, ya know?

O Bob Sackerman?

E Yeah

O The Flying Club

E So Bill came over and said what is this? I can't say that? I said just don't say it for a while

O Was he a great joke teller around you? I know at The Flying Club he was just one of the great recanters

E Oh Yeah The day Hoss came into town Bill entertained him up at his place and they just sat there for three hours trying to out tell each other, Hoss had just as many as he had It was the craziest evening I've ever had That Hoss is quite a fellow

O He loves to tell a story too, doesn't he?

E Oh yes And Bill would always have a few stories to tell I miss him, I miss him a lot. He is one of the people I can count on two hands the people I miss, and I miss Bill a lot

O I'm kind of curious about the development of TV, there was radio there then TV got going

E They asked me if I thought we should have TV and I said yeah because Kent had it And they took it and ran with it and got it, but there again, I think it should have been made permanent by taxing it to a department Well they say if you give all of this money to a department, it's going to make the other ones jealous and that sort of thing It got that way so I think it was a mistake

O This was a local production facility here in Youngstown, there was one over in Kent and

then in Akron

E Every university had one, and then you had your drive for money at channel 45 and all three would take part in it, and it worked out fine. And we had the finest equipment. We had a band, we had everything. So when you ask me where it went, I hate to think about it.

O That started at what time? Was that the mid-seventies when the TV came in?

E _____

O It lasted for about ten years then? Maybe not quite that long.

E I don't think it lasted more than five.

O And then there was the selling off of the equipment. Then the mothballing of the TV production studio for a while.

E I'd rather not discuss it.

O: Disappointment.

E Well all I'm going to say is that it never should have happened.