

Steve and Leah make mornings fun again

Birmingham radio just got better.
A lot better.

For those of you who commute across Birmingham each morning and afternoon getting to and from work, you know just how important a good radio show can be.

I've spent all but four years of my life here in this town, and there is one thing I can say. We have enjoyed some great radio over the years.

Some of you reading this will remember Birmingham's original rock and roll disc jockey Duke Rumore. That was way before my time, but I've heard the stories.

During the 50's, radio in Birmingham exploded with new stations such as WVOK 690, WEZB 1220 which is now WAYE, WSGN 610, WSFM, WENN 1320 and others.

In the 60's we listened to WYDE 850, WJLD 1400, and no one will forget Bessemer's own 1450 WYAM.

Then came the 70s when the FM dial took center stage, with many of the AM stations developing FM sister stations. We also had Birmingham's first stereo FM country station WZZK.

And what great personalities we've enjoyed. Patty and the Doc, Doug Layton, Burt and Kurt to name a few. There was Dick Breit, who went on to do television, Shelly Stewart, Rob and Shannon and our very own Don Lovett. Don't tell me you never listened to the "Tradin' Post of the Air."

We somehow survived the Mark and Brian years at the former 95-Rock and have, over the past several years enjoyed the down home humor of Rick and Bubba.

Looking back, what a decade the 70s was. On "The Big 610 WSGN" you had Jon "Rock & Roll" Anthony, Amaysa "Cookin'" Kincaid and a soon to be famous Rick Dees going up against "Most Music ERC" that featured Doug Layton, Jim Christian and my boyhood favorite Coyote J. Calhoun. What a distinctive voice that was.



Dale Jones
Editor/Publisher
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Many changes have been made in Birmingham radio down through the years. Stations have changed formats, locations and call letters many times. We've seen personalities come and go.

But what WERC 960-AM did in 1982 changed the face of Birmingham radio like never before. The station, now owned by Clear Channel, knowing that they could no longer compete by playing music because of the growth of FM, became the first station in town to go to a news/talk format. It started with Eli Gold and his afternoon "Calling All Sports" radio show. This show pioneered the sports talk format that is now popular all over the country, and helped lead the way for shows like Paul Finebaum and even the all sports talk format of WJOX.

During the 1983 blizzard, more people tuned in to WERC for weather information and news than ever before as motorists were stranded all over the city.

The 90s were huge at WERC with TC and John Ed (Tommy Charles and John Ed Willoughby) in the mornings, Paul Finebaum in the afternoon, and Russ and Dee Fine in the evening.

But lately, Birmingham radio has become a bit stale.

Sports talk has become repetitive to the point of nausea. Rick and Bubba as loveable as they are, have lost some of their "umph"

and Steve Harvey, Tom Joyner, and John Boy and Billy are syndicated from other states.

Ah, but WERC has done it again. Like a breath of fresh air they have brought in a new, entertaining, and fun-loving duo in "Steve and Leah in the Morning."

Steve Shannon, formerly of the Steve and DC Radio Show and who is a hometown boy has teamed up with Leah Brandon, a native of Roanoke, Virginia, who has worked in radio since age 16. Leah was part of The John Ziegler Show on KFI AM-640 in Los Angeles.

On the air since last Monday, these two are funny, friendly, a plethora of interesting information and even easy on the eyes. (Well, okay, ONE of 'em is anyway but this is radio, so what does that matter, right? Hey it's my editorial, let me write what I want to.)

Who cares that they are not on an FM Station? Many of the AMs sound just as good as the FMs these days.

I don't know Steve Shannon or Leah Brandon. I've never met either one. Nobody put me up to writing this. I'm not getting a kickback, no free t-shirt, not even a date with Mrs. Virginia (...you have to listen to the show). But when there is something good going on in and around our area, I think you need to know.

Hey, remember that great editorial I wrote a couple of years back about the Waffle House? I was never given so much as a piece of sausage for that one, and I still love the Waffle House.

No, I just know good radio when I hear it. Remember my award winning show here on WSMQ in Bessemer a few years back? Yeah, well, it was way ahead of it's time.

Anyway, let me encourage you to turn in to Birmingham's finest radio morning show. I think you will get a kick out of our newest radio morning team, and I think they might just take their place in our rich Birmingham radio history.

Enjoy the entertainment and you can thank me later.