

Ben Marichal

LOS ANGELES - "American Top 40," the weekly countdown of the best-selling singles as ranked by Billboard, is five years old this week. To celebrate, the "AT 40" producers will rerun their very first show during the Fourth of July weekend.

That 1970 show was taped in a Hollywood studio that is now a Pup 'N Taco stand and was aired in all of seven cities: Boston, St. Louis, San Antonio, Lubbock, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Hollywood. According to Chuck Olsen, a salesman for the show's distributor, Watermark, the growth since then has been steady. "The total number of stations carrying the show has never backslid. If one station dropped the show due to, say, changing formats to all-talk or all-country, another one would pick it up. Even now a new station comes on nearly every week."

The show is now aired on over 300 commercial outlets in every state of the union and a dozen foreign countries. In addition it's heard on over 400 affiliates of armed forces radio. Impressively, these numbers represent mar-

kets, not simply stations, since Watermark gives exclusive radio broadcast rights to only one station within each market.

"AT 40" Producer Don Bustany, traces the genesis of the show to 1969 when Tom Rounds and Ron Jacobs formed Watermark, after Jacobs had scored so heavily at RKO with the "History of Rock and Roll" package. That same year Bustany and Casey Kasem, who had already formed K-B Productions, came up with the idea for the show. "Casey took the idea to Ron Jacobs, whom he had known since Jacobs was program director at KHJ while Casey was a cross-town KRLA jock. It was Jacobs' belief in the project from the beginning, Tom Rounds' able administrative work, and the continued financial replenishment by Tom Driscoll that kept "AT 40" going through those early years and enabled it to turn the corner."

For his part, Rounds, the President of Watermark, remembers: "We launched "AT 40" at a time when longer cuts, LP popularity, and more serious music were bringing about a shift from quantitative to qualitative radio. A countdown format was seen as unfashionable, even campy. But we've seen that it's viable. The audience is there."

In fact, he feels the appeal of ratings is one of the main reasons the show's a hit, particularly with adults. "Our heaviest demographics are the 18-34 year olds who grew up listening to countdowns as part of their week-in, week-out routine. But everyone loves a winner. To follow the biggest and the best is human nature. It's a

horserace, a Miss America pageant every week."

Casey stresses a related factor, the appeal of order. "Americans love order. We're conditioned for it. We like things in their places, and charts oblige by showing standings, ranks, and positions."

Bustany cites a number of ^{other} reasons for the show's success, not the least being the appeal of his partner Casey, the human element in the weekly numbers race. "Casey isn't a stand-up and shout performer. He comes across instead as a sincere storyteller." Rounds adds: "Radio overdosed the 'more music' idea. Casey adds human interest. The music and Casey complement each other beautifully."

Casey has his own ideas on the matter. "The key isn't an overwhelming personality - any program like that would be short-lived. This show, after all, is called 'American Top 40,' not 'The Casey Kasem Show,' which is something I insisted upon from the beginning. I think that what I am is a good traffic cop, directing the various elements of the show. I lay back and showcase the real stars of the program - the top 40 recordmakers."

Another reason Bustany gives for "AT 40"'s longevity is that the staff has kept up the standards. "While there have been changes in the show over the last five years - different and more interesting features, more sophisticated teases - the basic quality is still there. We've never coasted or become complacent. Our interest and enthusiasm in doing the show is as high as when we started."

*
*
* Also he feels that local radio doesn't have the resources to effectively compete with the show. "It requires time and skills that are far too costly. Our staff includes Line Producer Nikki Wine, West Coast and East Coast Writer-Interviewers Sandy Stert and Alan Kaltman, Chart Statistician Ben Marichal, Writer Judy Bustany, and Editing-Assembly Assistant Steve Buth. Even the No. 1 show in the No. 1 market can't possibly put that much into it."

On this Rounds is adamant. "Local radio stations have been beaten down by heavy competition for ad dollars in most markets. There aren't scores of local newspapers or tv stations competing in one market. Yet newspaper chains and television networks have allowed those media to benefit from syndication for years. Some pooling of the best, which is really what syndication is all about, can work in radio too. It's not at all a cop-out on the part of local radio to carry syndicated programming."

Casey agrees. "It's not easy to put someone from out of town on your radio station. For a P.D. to recognize something he didn't create as being worthwhile takes a pretty bright guy. He's learned how to handle his ego."

Now that Watermark is firmly entrenched with "AT 40," it is moving on to other projects. "American Country Countdown," hosted by Don Bowman and produced by Bob Kingsley, began in October, 1973, and is now heard in over 100 markets. "The Elvis Presley Story," the 1971 Ron Jacobs rockumentary that aired in over 200 markets was updated

late last year. "California Special," another Ron Jacobs entry, is shipping now.

What amounts to another new area for Watermark is renting their radio production studio to outsiders. According to Rounds, "A couple of other syndicators are here because it's such an expensive proposition to build a studio."

This will lead to more competition in the syndication field, but Rounds doesn't mind. In fact he's delighted. "Radio needs good programming. It would take 100 Watermarks to satisfy that need. Fortunately, more and more good people are in syndication now. It's light years ahead of where it was ten years ago, yet this is only the beginning of what will be a monster ten years from now."

And as for "AT 40," how much longer can it go on? "Indefinitely," says Casey. "When I first proposed it to Ron Jacobs, I told him I felt it could last as long as there is radio and music being played on it. All the elements to sustain it are there. It renews itself every week."

How much longer can Casey go on counting 'em down? "I'll continue doing it until it stops being fun to do or until I'm so tied up with new projects that it's impossible to do. Also I owe some allegiance to the people who have worked so hard on the show. Most important, I want to stay until we achieve what we set out to do - have a successful show and be respected in the industry as good broadcasters who are responsible and creative. We're just beginning to have that impact." PAUL GREIN



To: AMERICAN TOP 40 SUBSCRIBERS

From: Tom Rounds

Re: Happy Birthday To Us

Friday, June 27, 1975

This is it: Program #753-1, our 261st consecutive American Top 40 show. We've dug into the musty Watermark vault and retrieved program #703-1... the first American Top 40 countdown that went on the air. By laying in just enough of the 1975 Casey Kasem to clue in the audience without spoiling the effect, we've re-timed and edited old #703-1 and it now appears as #753-1. It's fun to hear how much Casey and the program have changed over the years, and the show itself is a unique reminder of what it felt like to be alive in 1970.

BOARD OPERATORS:

The only changes in the usual sequence of events appear in commercial avail breaks C-1, C-3, and C-5 in each hour. Instead of cueing up to the usual "B" half of the split logo (American Top 40), you'll be cueing up to Casey's voice explaining what's happening. C-2 and C-4 are the standard split logo breaks.

One other note: The program, of course, is in mono just like it was way back there in 1970.



WATERMARK

10700 Ventura Blvd.
No. Hollywood, Ca. 91604
Phone: (213) 980-9490

FOR WEEK ENDING: July 5, 1975
CYCLE NO. 753 PROGRAM 1 OF 13
SIDES: 1A & 1B

PAGE NO. 1

"JULY FOURTH NINETEEN SEVENTY: THE FIRST AT-40 BROADCAST"

SCHEDULED START TIME	ACTUAL TIME	ELEMENT	RUNNING TIME
00:00		1975 CASEY EXPLANATION & OPENING THEME & OPENING OF PART 1 #40 - END OF OUR ROAD - Marvin Gaye #39 - SILVER BIRD - Mark Lindsay LOGO: CASEY'S COAST TO COAST	6:53
6:51			
6:53		LOCAL INSERT: C-1	2:00
8:53		1975 CASEY TALK UNIT LOGO: AMERICAN TOP 40 #38 - SPILL THE WINE - Eric Burden LOGO: HITS FROM COAST TO COAST	5:07
13:58			
14:00		LOCAL INSERT: C-2	2:00
16:00		LOGO: AMERICAN TOP 40 #37 - GO BACK - Crabby Appleton #36 - I JUST CAN'T HELP BELIEVING - B.J. Thomas #35 - SPIRIT IN THE DARK - Aretha Franklin #34 - MISSISSIPPI - John Phillips LOGO: CASEY'S COAST TO COAST	12:10
28:08			
28:10		LOCAL INSERT: C-3	2:10
30:20		1975 CASEY TALK UNIT LOGO: AMERICAN TOP 40 #33 - WESTBOUND #9 - Flaming Ember #32 - IT'S ALL IN THE GAME - Four Tops #31 - SAVE THE COUNTRY - Fifth Dimension LOGO: HITS FROM COAST TO COAST	9:11
39:29			
39:31		LOCAL INSERT: C-4	2:00
41:31		LOGO: AMERICAN TOP 40 #30 - OHIO - Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young #29 - EVERYTHING IS BEAUTIFUL - Ray Stevens LOGO: CASEY'S COAST TO COAST	7:09
48:38			
48:40		LOCAL INSERT: C-5	2:00
50:40		1975 CASEY TALK UNIT LOGO: AMERICAN TOP 40 #28 - CHECK OUT YOUR MIND - Impressions #27 - QUESTION MOODY BLUES THEME UP & UNDER W/TALK UNIT ENDING AT: 58:37 THEME TO: 58:50 EMERGENCY THEME RUNOUT TO: 60:00	7:34
58:24			
58:50		LOCAL INSERT: C-6	:60
59:50		STATION I.D.:	:10

**WATERMARK**10700 Ventura Blvd.
No. Hollywood, Ca. 91604
Phone: (213) 980-9490FOR WEEK ENDING: July 5, 1975
CYCLE NO. 753 PROGRAM 1 OF 13
SIDES: 2A & 2BPAGE NO. 2

SCHEDULED START TIME	ACTUAL TIME	ELEMENT	RUNNING TIME
00:00		THEME & OPENING OF PART 11 #26 - SIGNED, SEALED, DELIVERED - Stevie Wonder #25 - SUGAR SUGAR - Wilson Pickett LOGO: CASEY'S COAST TO COAST	6:06
6:04			
6:06		LOCAL INSERT: C-1	2:00
8:06		1975 CASEY TALK UNIT LOGO: AMERICAN TOP 40 #24 - TEACH YOUR CHILDREN - Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young #23 - WHICH WAY YOU GOIN' BILLY - The Poppy Family SPECIAL: LITTLE OL' MAN - Bill Cosby #22 - LOVE ON A TWO-WAY STREET - Moments	13:59
22:03		LOGO: HITS FROM COAST TO COAST	
22:05		LOCAL INSERT: C-2	2:00
24:05		LOGO: AMERICAN TOP 40 #21 - MISSISSIPPI QUEEN - Mountain #20 - MAKE IT WITH YOU - Bread	6:03
30:06		LOGO: CASEY'S COAST TO COAST	
30:08		LOCAL INSERT: C-3	2:10
32:18		1975 CASEY TALK UNIT LOGO: AMERICAN TOP 40 #19 - ARE YOU READY - Pacific Gas & Electric #18 - LOVE LAND - Charles Wright & Watts 103rd Street Band	6:06
38:22		LOGO: HITS FROM COAST TO COAST	
38:24		LOCAL INSERT: C-4	2:00
40:24		LOGO: AMERICAN TOP 40 #17 - TIGHTER AND TIGHTER - Alive and Kicking #16 - MY BABY LOVES LOVIN' - White Plains	4:54
45:16		LOGO: CASEY'S COAST TO COAST	
45:18		LOCAL INSERT: C-5	2:00
47:18		1975 CASEY TALK UNIT LOGO: AMERICAN TOP 40 #15 - A SONG OF JOY - Miguel Rios SPECIAL: HELLO DOLLY - Louis Armstrong #14 - UNITED WE STAND - Brotherhood of Man	11:08
58:26		THEME UP & UNDER W/TALK UNIT ENDING AT: 58:39 THEME TO: 58:50 EMERGENCY THEME RUNOUT TO: 60:00	
58:50		LOCAL INSERT: C-6	:60
59:50		STATION I.D.:	:10



WATERMARK

10700 Ventura Blvd.
No. Hollywood, Ca. 91604
Phone: (213) 980-9490

FOR WEEK ENDING: July 5, 1975
CYCLE NO. 753 PROGRAM 1 OF 13
SIDES: 3A & 3B

PAGE NO. 3

SCHEDULED START TIME	ACTUAL TIME	ELEMENT	RUNNING TIME
00:00		THEME & OPENING OF PART 111	
6:04		#13 - GET READY - Rare Earth #12 - OOH CHILD - Stairsteps LOGO: CASEY'S COAST TO COAST	6:06
6:06		LOCAL INSERT: C-1	2:00
8:06		1975 CASEY TALK UNIT LOGO: AMERICAN TOP 40 #11 - GIMME DAT DING - The Pipkins #10 - HITCHIN' A RIDE - Vanity Fair SPECIAL: SPINNING WHEEL - Blood, Sweat & Tears	8:28
16:32		LOGO: HITS FROM COAST TO COAST	
16:34		LOCAL INSERT: C-2	2:00
18:34		LOGO: AMERICAN TOP 40 #9 - THE WONDER OF YOU - Elvis Presley #8 - THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD - Beatles #7 - CLOSE TO YOU - Carpenters	9:43
28:15		LOGO: CASEY'S COAST TO COAST	
28:17		LOCAL INSERT: C-3	2:10
30:27		1975 CASEY TALK UNIT LOGO: AMERICAN TOP 40 #6 - LAY DOWN (CANDLES IN THE RAIN) - Melanie #5 - BAND OF GOLD - Freda Payne	7:11
37:36		LOGO: HITS FROM COAST TO COAST	
37:38		LOCAL INSERT: C-4	2:00
39:38		LOGO: AMERICAN TOP 40 #4 - RIDE CAPTAIN RIDE - Blues Image #3 - BALL OF CONFUSION - Temptations	6:08
45:44		LOGO: CASEY'S COAST TO COAST	
45:46		LOCAL INSERT: C-5	2:00
47:46		1975 CASEY TALK UNIT LOGO: AMERICAN TOP 40 #2 - THE LOVE YOU SAVE - Jackson Five SPECIAL: SATISFACTION - Rolling Stones #1 - MAMA TOLD ME NOT TO COME - Three Dog Night	10:01
57:47		THEME UP & UNDER W/TALK UNIT ENDING AT: 58:43 THEME TO: 58:50 EMERGENCY THEME RUNOUT TO: 60:00	
58:50		LOCAL INSERT: C-6	:60
59:50		STATION I.D.:	:10