

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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Cornering The Market In Music?

WPEG-FM 98's Owners Agree To Buy WCKZ-FM Kiss 102 For \$3 Million



By Winfred B. Cross
THE CHARLOTTE POST

It's all over except for Federal Communications Commission approval.

Broadcast Partners, Inc., owners of WPEG FM-98, has agreed to buy WCKZ-FM (Kiss) 102 for \$3 million from Comopas Media Group of Bethesda, Md.

"We bought it because the FCC now allows us to own two FM and AM stations in one market," said Lee Simonson, vice chairman and CEO for the firm. "We like Charlotte, think it's a great market to do business in. We felt from a financial as well as an artistic standpoint that it makes sense to own two stations in a market we like and do so well in."

Wayne K. Brown, president and general manager of WPEG and WGIV 1600 AM, will serve as KISS' new general manager once the deal is closed.

"I'm excited the company decided to make Charlotte its first duopoly (operating more

than one FM or AM station within the same market). I think it shows the company's commitment."

Brown said the acquisition of the station will not make WPEG's job any easier.

"It certainly doesn't take any pressure off of us. We still have to pay our investors back the \$3 million for the purchase of the station. It's going to require us to sell the positioning of the radio station."

Simonson said the agreement was reached Friday but "we'd been talking for a long time - at least a couple of months."

KISS 102 has been up for sale since Nov. 4, 1992, at which time the station was placed into receivership to Compass Media group. The station was being run by EZ Communications while WEZC's sales associates handled advertising.

"The station has been for sale since we took it over," said Jonathan Schwartz, president of Compass group. "Our goal was to build it back up to where it was and make



Brown

it a marketable station. We moved it back to its old offices on Morehead Street and started running it as a separate organization."

According to Schwartz, KISS 102 was down to only two employees and monthly sales of only \$10,000. The station currently has 15 employees and bills around

\$100,000 a month in advertising.

"It's now a profitable radio station," Schwartz said. "It started making profit two months after we took it over and has made profit every since."

Schwartz said moving the station back to its original format of dance, urban, rap and pop also helped. The station has much the same format as WPEG, which made the stations fierce competitors for market share. However, both Schwartz and Simonson agree the stations are very different.

"Kiss is not as focused on the African-American community as WPEG is," Simonson said. "Our interests focus in on that community. That's not to say we don't want other listeners, we want and enjoy having them. But no other station in the area has a mission statement quite like ours. So we really don't go head-to-head like WSOC and WTDR. It's a different constituency."

Still, the sale of the station does help WPEG during what

some view as a tough transitional period. The station lost its biggest draw -- Skip Murphy and his morning crew -- in February. Buzz on the street isn't very complimentary of Murphy's replacements -- Porsche Stevenson and Nate Quick. Dana Terry was recently added to the show.

Frankie Darcell, a very popular mid-morning deejay, left for Detroit in June. Stevens replaced her temporarily. Monica Starr has now taken that spot.

Brown said that type of movement comes with the radio territory.

"Whenever you have great talent, inevitably, they are going to leave you. Unfortunately a lot of ours left at the same time. But this station has the talent to go out get good people and train them to become the best."

Since Murphy's departure, WPEG has been No. 1 with 25-to-54-year-olds and tied for No. 1 with WSOC-FM with 18-to-34 year-olds, ac-

cording to Brown.

Simonson said the sale will not be final until FCC approval, which may come in late October or early November. No thought has been given to programming changes for Kiss he said. "That is something we will probably look at after intense research."

Schwartz has high praise for Broadcasting Partners, but doubts it will change Kiss' format.

"(Broadcasting Partners) is an excellent broadcasting company. We think this was a terrific buy for them and an important acquisition for them."

"(Kiss) is very successful at what it's doing. As time goes on, it's going to be a very difficult decision to change the format if that's what they want to do."

Broadcasting Partners, Inc. also owns WVAZ-FM in Chicago, WKQI-FM in Detroit, KSKY-AM in Dallas, Tx, and WNY in New York.

The Movie Column by A.C. Turner

Son-In-Law ☆ ☆ 1/2

Starring: Pauly Shore, Carla Gugino, and Lane Smith
Directed by Steve Rash • Produced by Michael Rotenberg • Rated PG-13 • A Hollywood Pictures release • Opens Friday in theatres nationwide • Rating: ☆☆☆ Classic; ☆☆☆ Excellent; ☆☆☆ Good; ☆☆ Fair; ☆ Why?

I walked into this movie expecting absolutely nothing about this flick to thrill me. That's unusual because I try to be as open as possible when viewing a new film.

I housed prejudices about the movie because I am too familiar with Pauly Shore's previous work. Shore's

"talent" has never lit the excitement flames of my MTV screen.

In fact, I never, ever could stomach his act for more than two minutes. Every time his face accidentally invaded my line of vision, I would wonder how someone could get paid big money to

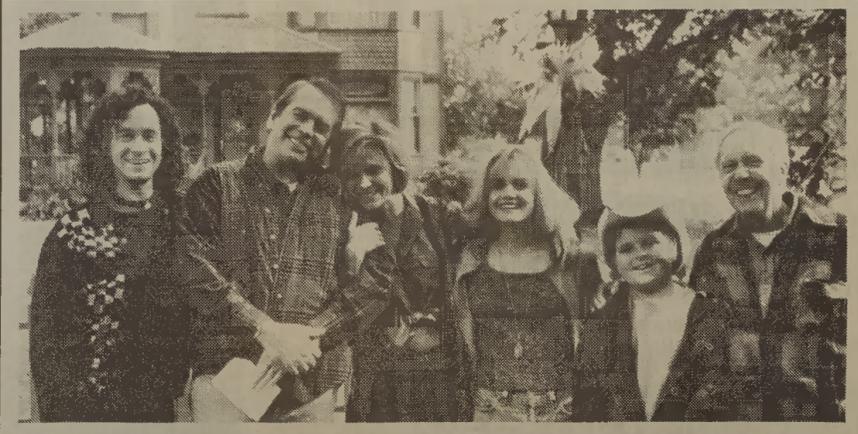
be nothing short of irritating while hardworking people all over the world could barely make ends meet.

Hollywood Pictures' new release, "Son in Law," which features Shore, appeared to offer more of the same dumb space cadet antics that made Shore rich.

"Son in Law" turned out to be a testimony to how a well-written script can make the most stupid actor and most bland premise seem funny. Screenplay writers, Fax Bahr, Adam Small and Shawn Schepps composed a work that came to life on screen in a real yet hysterical way.

The first portion of the film was filled with relatively short vignettes. Often that approach comes across as a choppy and sporadic beginning, but in this case it successfully established the family's personality and the main action.

Good writing alone cannot make this happen.



From left to right: Pauly Shore, Lane Smith, Cindy Pickett, Carla Gugino and Mason Adams.

The veteran cast of actors (you'll recognize them but won't know their names) carried their characters out of the shallow and into the deep waters. Lane Smith led the way.

Smith is an accomplished actor and has starred in "Final Days" as Richard Nixon. Other credits are "Places in the Heart" and "Weeds."

Smith can be proud of his work in "Son in Law" because

his stoic father character tickled the crowd until they were forced to laugh out loud. Mason Adams whose biggest success came with his

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