

## Radio stations get Christmas spirit early

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see who would go all-Christmas first.

Last year, WSNI - Sunny 104.5 - became Philadelphia's first station to try a full month of Christmas songs, and was rewarded with a ratings bonanza.

This year, rival WBEB-FM, one of the city's most listened-to stations, was determined not to be left out. Both stations went all-holiday within a few hours of each other on Nov. 12.

"I probably spent most of the first six months of this year wearing out a pair of shoes kicking myself in the rear end for not doing it last year," said Blaise Howard, vice president and general manager of WBEB, which is also known as B101.

In Kansas City, KUDL-FM and adult contemporary rival KSRC-FM both flipped the all-Christmas switch on Nov. 14. San Francisco's KBAY-FM and KOIT-FM made the change on Nov. 18, as did WLIT-FM and WNND-FM in Chicago. New York's WNEW-FM started on Nov. 13, with rival WLTW-FM expected to follow soon.

As might be expected, the changeovers haven't pleased everyone.

Nancy Esbensen, of Havertown, Pa., posted a protest petition on the Internet after the two Philadelphia stations made their switch.

"By the time Christmas gets here, we are going to be sick and tired of hearing 'Blue Christmas' on the

radio. And that would be a shame," she said. "There is a time and a place for everything, and Thanksgiving is the cutoff."

Two New Orleans stations, WCKW-FM and rival WLMG-FM, jumped to the all-Christmas format early this week, but switched back when listeners complained.

Philadelphia's WBEB and WSNI both acknowledged that they received many complaints that they started too early.

"In all my years of programming, I've never had to handle such a polarizing issue as Christmas music," Check said, although he quickly added that similar criticism last year melted by early December.

The phenomenon does beg the question: how early will

the stations go?

One Charlotte station, WSSS-FM, started playing Christmas music at the stroke of midnight on Halloween.

Tom Taylor, who edits the daily industry newsletter Inside Radio, said the trend may continue as long as people keep feeling the need for an emotional lift.

"There's the economy. There's the war. A lot of people could probably use a little smile, and what gets people smiling more than Christmas?"

On the Net:

W S N I - F M :  
<http://www.sunny1045.com/>

W B E B - F M :  
<http://www.b101radio.com/>

Sunny 104.5 petition:

<http://www.petitiononline.com/sunny25/petition.html>



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### Life Is Not An Emergency

How many times have you been in a situation in which it seemed that the outcome was a make it or break it situation? Many of us live our lives in such a way that almost every thing we do is a crisis or a reaction to a crisis.

We are on our way to a meeting and we are running late. As a result, we break the speed limit trying to get there, only to discover that the meeting has not yet started. Perhaps, some one told you that thy really needed something from you. You went all out to get it to them, only to discover later that what the person needed turned out not to be a necessity after all.

There are countless examples that we could cite of situations that we thought were emergencies when in fact they really were not. *Along the road to success you will discover that there are actually very few real emergencies.* Those situations that keep us running at break neck speed or that we get excited and anxious over are really only emergencies in our minds or those who project them onto us.

In order to enjoy the journey to success, learn to take life in stride. When we relax and take a longer perspective of all that is going on in our lives, it is easier to see that perceived emergencies are usually the result of our not taking adequate time to plan. You will often discover that many things that we thought were emergencies were not as bad as we thought they were.

I know someone who tells me that whenever family members call him, they always leave frantic messages for him to return their calls because of an emergency. However, they rarely state what the emergency is. Once he returns the calls he discovers that these are not emergencies at all. He has now gotten to the point that he takes his time returning the calls.

How desperate our lives would be if most every thing we did was an emergency. To enjoy our journey along the road to success, let us learn to live in ways that show to us that life is not an emergency, but a gift to be enjoyed. When we put forth our best efforts, Life seems to work things out in the end.

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## Economists predict strong growth in '04

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the economy fell into recession from March through November 2001 and has been struggling to mount a sustained rebound.

Much of the current strength is coming from tax cuts Bush pushed through Congress in May and low interest rates engineered by the Federal Reserve, which is expected to keep holding its key benchmark rate at a 45-year low of 1 percent for some time to come.

"We just have an unprecedented amount of economic stimulus coming from Washington to boost economic activities," said Sung Won Sohn, chief economist at Wells Fargo in

Minneapolis. "That is going to keep economic activity at very high levels."

Asked why unemployment was not expected to come down any faster given the strong economic growth, the NABE analysts cited the expected continued drive by businesses to boost productivity, the amount of output per hour of work, in a tough competitive environment.

The NABE forecasters predicted that productivity would rise by 4.1 percent this year and a smaller but still strong 3.7 percent in 2004.

Strong productivity growth, while depressing job creation, has acted to keep inflation under tight control

because companies can boost their profits without having to raise prices.

The report predicted consumer inflation to rise a moderate 2 percent this year, when measured from the final quarter of 2002, and an even slower 1.7 percent next year.

The nation's twin deficits are projected to worsen, with the merchandise trade deficit forecast to hit a record \$525 billion this year and set a new mark of \$545 billion in 2004. The federal budget deficit, which reached a record \$374 billion in 2003, will climb to \$462.8 billion for 2004, the NABE panel said.

With economic growth

rebounding, it said, interest rates will rise at a moderate pace. The 10-year Treasury note, a key determinant of mortgage rates, was projected to climb from to around 5 percent by the fourth quarter of next year, up from around 4.2 percent now.

That would mean that 30-year mortgages will likely rise to around 6.6 percent by this time next year, from 5.83 percent currently.

That increase will dampen housing demand, but only slightly, the report said. It predicted that housing construction will total a still robust 1.7 million units in 2004, down 5 percent from an expected 1.79 million units this year.

## Survey: 31 percent of Americans tech-savvy

By Brian Bergstein  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK - Technology geeks, unite. There are more of you than you might have realized. A study released Sunday found that 31 percent of Americans are "highly tech-savvy" people for whom the Internet, cell phones and handheld organizers are more indispens-

able than TVs and old-fashioned wired phones.

John Horrigan, author of the report by the Pew Internet & American Life Project, said the size of this "tech elite" was somewhat surprising. And while this group is predominantly young, the Pew researchers found plenty of baby boomers and seniors who are equally ardent about using

technology.

The difference, though, is that techies in their late teens and 20s are more likely to create online content, like Web logs, or "blogs."

So are you part of the "tech elite"? Consider these other Pew findings about how they live:

- They spend, on average, a total of \$169 a month on broadband Internet service,

satellite or cable TV, cell phones and Web content. That is 39 percent higher than the national average, \$122.

- Some 29 percent of them have broadband connections, compared with 17 percent of everyone else.

- About 7 percent of technology aficionados have canceled their landline phone and gone all-wireless.

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