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RADIO PRESERVATION TASK FORCE

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SAVING AMERICA'S RADIO HERITAGE:
RADIO PRESERVATION, ACCESS, AND EDUCATION

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SESSION: CAUCUS ON RADIO JOURNALISM

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SATURDAY,
FEBRUARY 27, 2016

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The meeting convened in Room 2119 of the Hornbake Library, located on the College Park Campus of the University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, at 1:30 p.m., Lawrence Lichty, Moderator, presiding.

PRESENT:

LAWRENCE W. LICHTY, Northwestern University
JOSH DAVIS, University of Baltimore
SETH KOTCH, University of North Carolina
TOM MASCARO, Bowling Green State University
VICTOR PICKARD, University of Pennsylvania
MICHAEL STAMM, Michigan State University
BILL SIEMERING, Developing Radio Partners

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P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

1:44 p.m.

MR. LICHTY: Here's the format or formula. Either way. In the beginning, I'll give a short intro here and then we'll ask each person, if you don't mind, we'll just go in this order because I have a piece of paper in order written. So, I'm saying. Okay.

Our topic here to the best of my knowledge is supposed to be journalism-radio. Okay. I think that everybody here has a different kind of idea of what that really means. Okay. And we'll start from that.

I'd suggest one thing first. I wanted to start with a Oh, The Humanity. Okay. Everybody know where it comes from? Yes. Of course.

Why the Sun-Times would use that as a headline a week ago I have no idea. How many people know what that means? Okay.

MR. HOWELL: Is that Jeb Bush?

MR. LICHTY: I think you could make --

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MR. HOWELL: Jeb was saying he wished the Hindenburg --

MR. LICHTY: That could be. That could be. It occurs to me that there are two reasons. One is nobody remembers nothing or everybody remembers everything. Okay.

Our job here is to remember everything. Okay. That's what's going to happen today I hope. Okay.

I was going to suggest because really this is supposed to be a forum. We don't have really prepared for remarks unless you want to begin of this. So, my suggestion we'll be able to talk something about three minutes each and then I virtually know everybody here who knows something and knows how to talk about this. So, we will.

I suggested that maybe we should think about -- we cover at least these things. First, news. That's pretty obvious.

Second, documentaries and that word

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documentary means different when you were in 1937 than it does now. Okay. Because as you know, all those documentaries were, in fact, really written, prepared and so forth until the day of the -- the last of the war. Okay. And many, many -- we can talk about those later.

Secondly, here -- in addition to that, I would include that we would talk some of the programs that have to do that are forums. You can call them public affairs. They like to call them public affairs now. You can just call it Saturday night or excuse me, Sunday morning blabs. Whatever you want.

And then I would also suggest we do one other thing and that is we need to make some sort of a difference here between network and local. Okay. We can talk about at the beginning if you want. We know a lot about radio journalism from CBS. We've talked about that. Everybody here has probably read some work out of my low south. So, we know that. We've seen some of that material

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that's available.

We discussed yesterday about whether or not NBC really has stuff or doesn't have stuff. Okay. Can you use it? So forth.

Like almost everything, ABC has nothing to do with this. So, let's forget about it. Okay.

And then we need to think about the local material. I'd be very curious from other people, too. That can -- I know that a Michigan expert, a Michigan expert, a Philadelphia person, a around the world person. Okay. So, I think we need to make some sort of a distinction here between the kind of network journalism that we got versus what was available.

For us, at least, what kind of material there might -- we might find locally and I suspect all of you know more about some different things about local than I do.

Now, since that's pretty close to three minutes, I quit and so, it's tom's turn.

MR. MASCARO: Thank you. Okay. I'm

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Tom Mascaro. I teach at Bowling Green State University in Northwest Ohio. I live in Livonia, Michigan which is quite near -- it's part of metropolitan Detroit.

I'm a television documentary historian not a radio historian although interested in it and have done a little bit of work about radio as a precursor to television documentary.

So, what I wanted to do was to look at Michigan radio archives as maybe a model for some other states. That if I could do something in Michigan, then that template or that model could be used in other states.

It's important to note that Detroit is directly across the river from Windsor which is Canada. We have a tunnel and a bridge that goes from Detroit to Windsor and, of course, we have an Upper Peninsula and a Lower Peninsula. The Upper Peninsula -- I mean they used to be separated only by water until >57 when the Mackinac Bridge was built and up until then, it was common for vacationers

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and hunters to drive north and wait for one of the car ferries and queue up to take the car ferry over to the Upper Peninsula or over to Mackinac Island and to do their hunting. So, the geography of the region has an impact on -- obviously on the culture.

So, I thought about trying to cover, I guess, three areas. One is to consider some state milestones and see if I could identify or locate archives of news or radio reports that covered those events. Such as the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel being built and dropped in the river and opened up. The Flint 1937 sit-down strike by the UAW. Race riots in Detroit in both 1943 and 1967. As I mentioned, the opening of the Mackinac Bridge in >57.

I was interested in trying to identify if there were particularly bad storms or weather events. We don't get a lot of tornados. We get a fair amount of snow as a rule and then the sinking of the Edmund Fitzgerald in Lake Superior.

I also wanted to consider or thought we should consider a history of the broadcast radio

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in the state. So, this is listed and I don't know whether this is factual. WWGA Radio out of Detroit was the first commercial broadcaster of regular programs in the United States in 1920 and I don't know where that compares to KDKA with the -- which was also in 1920 I think. Right?

MR. LICHTY: You're wrong, but go ahead.

MR. MASCARO: Okay. And then there was a Michigan radio network in 1933 that was a part of the Trunsky Trendall Broadcasting Corporation and then it expanded to various other cities and also the history of Detroit radio. So, I thought that it would be interesting to look at the history of the medium throughout the state.

And also to identify specific documentary reports which turn out to be near impossible on a -- with casual research and also some archives.

So, just as some examples, the Flint sit-down strike, there are a number of websites where you can see or find a few radio clips and also

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some textual documents that talk about how radio was a part of the event and that would be something worth capturing.

Michigan radio, this would be a distinction between local and network. Michigan Public Radio has done some recent documentary reports that include coverage of older events. So, even though we may not be able to recover the existing archives of contemporaneous reports, we might be able to find some reports that refer back to those periods and maybe there are some clips that are within that.

There is for these Detroit race riots of 1943. There are a couple of speeches by the mayor of Detroit Edward Jeffries and the Governor Harry Kelly at the time. So, there's some sound bites there that were contemporaneous.

The opening of the Mackinac Bridge was covered on WWJ radio. They had a lot of problems as they would with any kind of big project like that. So, that was given radio -- radio news coverage.

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I'd like to pick up the phone and call a station and say -- and say what do you have down in the basement. Of course, that is not how the world works. So, I wasn't able to actually identify archives.

But, I -- because these people sat in cars waiting for the ferries, I'm sure that there was radio traffic related to that culture. I know that the short-order cooks and the restaurants in the area did a pretty good business. Some people were like car hops on roller-skates and they would take orders and so on and deliver food. So, I'm sure that there's a radio culture associated with that that's at least written about if not documented.

And then finally, I did find a site called Motor City Radio Flashbacks and this Memories from the Soundtrack of Your Life. There's a number of MP3s on that site including History of Detroit Radio, an air-check library and commercials. Soupy Sales Moldy Oldies is on there who was a local personality. History of Rock and Roll.

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So, there's some material out there. I did not get my hands on things. The UAW has a library as I've mentioned for their broadcast network that's in the Walter Reuther Library, Wayne State.

And I think that's probably more than three minutes.

MR. LICHTY: That's close enough for rock and roll.

MR. MASCARO: Okay. Thank you.

MR. LICHTY: Mike. Excuse me. Victor, would you -- you're an [??], too. I'm not sure I can say that first, but give a short intro of what you do.

MR. PICKARD: Sure. Gladly. My name's Victor Pickard. I'm at the University of Pennsylvania. I'm also not strictly a radio historian per se. I'm more of a policy historian who has wandered into radio policy historical work.

I have written mostly about 1940's' policy battles. Things like, for example, the FCC Blue Book. How many people have heard of the FCC

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Blue Book? I figured there would be a few in this crowd. Not so much outside of this crowd.

The kind of work that I try to do is recover what has largely been forgotten with regard to these policy battles in the '40s and that's why -- without trying to exert too much of my own personal agenda in this discussion -- I was wondering whether there is some space as we're talking about recovering these archives to consider including policy archives.

These archives are related to discussions about how radio should be designed. So, not just programming-related materials, but also looking at policy documents.

And to give a couple of examples -- in fact, I was just talking to Michael Stamm and Mike Socolow about this -- I just happen to be in the middle of trying to recover some papers associated with Larry Fly who was FCC chairman in the early '40s. He is arguably one of the most progressive and aggressive chairmen ever to serve at the FCC;

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I'm right now trying to find out exactly where an almost completed biography of Larry Fly is located along with some other archival materials.

So, I'm not sure whether this could fall under the purview of this caucus and the broader RPTF project, but this is the kind of archival activism that I'm involved with right now.

One other figure that I've been working on a lot is Charles Siepmann. Has anyone heard of Charles Siepmann? A few people out there. He was actually the primary author of the Blue Book and one of the first programming directors for the BBC before he came over to the U.S. and got involved with a lot of policy battles here, especially around the FCC in the 1940s. Then fled to the academy -- as many radicals do -- and he founded what I think was actually the first Ph.D.-granting department of communications in the country. That honor usually goes to Wilbur Schram and my alma mater, the Institute of Communications Research at the University of Illinois, but I think Charles Seipmann

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predated him by at least one year.

So, again, this might be too removed from where the primary project should be focused here, but these are the kinds of archival initiatives I'm taking on right now. I'll leave it there.

Thank you.

MR. LICHTY: Michael.

MR. STAMM: Hi. I'm Michael Stamm. I'm a cultural or political historian who through my work has sort of found my way into being an historian of journalism and newspapers and radio. So, that's -- I sort of came into it because I thought these offered ways of thinking about American culture in very interesting ways. So, that's why I sort of got into this field.

I teach at Michigan State University. Michiganans do it right. Right in the middle.

And I think -- I'm also -- I've also been very interested in the question of the local and the national, but in a slightly different way than Tom. In not from an event oriented way, but from

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-- just thinking about how local communities experience the life around them. Because I think, you know, there's always a thing. Radio -- I mean we all know this. If you study radio at all, the sources just aren't there. It's almost like being an archaeologist.

It's hard enough to do national radio. When you get to what small towns or medium size towns like, that stuff is just almost completely gone. So, I find that hard.

It's really interesting figuring out how the local and the national are related and so, one of the collections that I've stumbled upon that I think will be a really interesting way to maybe get at this is Michigan State University is the license holder for WKAR which is the -- the NPR affiliate in the middle of the state. Don Gonyea is now a national correspondence. Going to start working at that station.

But, what we have we found are several hundred hours of programming from the late >80s into

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the mid->90s of the Michigan public radio program that led into All Things Considered. So, it was the 15 minutes before All Things Considered and we can -- we have -- we have them all in the university archives and we're working on getting a grant to digitize them.

Because I think one of the interesting -- the two really interesting things you can do with this think about how local news relates to the national. So, we're not privileging national politics when we're talking and national events when we're talking about local people. We have very specific concerns whether it be, you know, labor, the environment. Whatever it may be. It's going to be different in different parts of the country.

But, also, I think that one of the things that I found really interesting about radio in general, but local radio in particular is it's like the ambient sound of different places. Like it sounds different in different places and it's the -- if you're making coffee in Michigan, it sounds

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different than it does in California or Texas or whatever and so, I think it's just this really -- the ambient nature of local radio.

Even if it's not about anything. Even if it's -- it's almost like the more mundane the better and I want to hear what it sounded like on Tuesday afternoon before All Things Considered in the middle of Michigan.

So, I think that to me is like a really interesting way to think about the local and the national through this particular archive.

But, I do think that's one of the really important things to do is to figure out how to get these local voices which are particularly hidden from history because they don't -- they simply don't exist in the record right now in accessible form.

And I guess I'll just conclude by saying that this came up. We were talking about the American Academy of Public Broadcasting this morning that, you know, preservation to me is like the first part of a process where accessibility is

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really what I think I'm after with this stuff. It doesn't -- it doesn't mean -- it means a lot to preserve it, but it means more to preserve it and make it readily accessible and I think about if you've been in the field for, you know, more than decade, you realize like how important archive.org has been to being able to get sound clips for classrooms.

I remember getting tapes in the mail. Sending cash or checks to people to get a cassette tape in the mail with broadcast material on it.

So, the availability and the accessibility of news broadcasting I think is particularly important to do and I hope that we can do some of that. So.

MR. LICHTY: Good. Yes, and I think we -- I hope there'll be lots of discussions. I would like to talk a bit about Michigan, too. But, not for long and I apologize to you.

MR. DAVIS: That's okay. I'm Josh Davis. I teach at the University of Baltimore.

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Seth Kotch and I are involved with Media and the Movement. So, he's going to talk about the preservation, digitization side. I'm going to talk more about the -- I guess the historian side.

I'm a U.S. historian and I'm especially interested in social movements and movement institution building, movement culture in the >60s and >70s. I'm writing a book on activists who started small businesses.

This project's in some way -- it's not in the book, but it's connected in that Media and the Movement is a look at civil rights and black-power activists who decided to start their own media outlets. Magazines, newspapers, but especially community radio stations.

And part of the idea was in some ways, you know, you probably know the Hait Clivinoff book the Race Speed. In some ways, we tried to turn that idea on its head. Which was to move -- shift from black newspapers mostly from the North and also white-owned media outlets in the North and to ask

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the question what did black southerners especially black southern activists think and say about their own movement and the media they created.

We might often think that activist media was more myth making or in some ways, it's kind of thought of as propaganda, but these individuals we're looking at thought of themselves as journalists. Particularly radio stations in the Carolinas and Georgia. So, they were non-profit community radio stations either African-American or multi-racial in North Carolina.

In Durham, there was one called WAFR. It was the first black controlled, independent, non-commercial radio station that wasn't at a college or university. WAFR. It stood for Wave Africa. They were black-power activists, pan-Africanists and they connected. Really, they did local news in Durham, North Carolina, national news mostly around black issues and international news especially around Africa, the diaspora. They connected those three.

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Another station was WBSP in tiny Warrenton, North Carolina near Soul City. We're looking at WPFW in D.C. Which you guys know as Pacifica station, but was really the most black-oriented Pacifica station for many years and WRG in Atlanta.

All of these stations really were started by activists. People who didn't come from a radio background, but from a social movement background.

And what we did about 50 oral history interviews with a bunch of different individuals and Seth's going to talk about the preservation.

But, a few other points I just wanted to make quickly is that a lot of what we've been doing is also thinking about, you know, reconsidering what the definition of journalism is. I mean the people we looked at did come from journalist background. They did not think of themselves as journalists, but really the work they were doing was journalism.

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They're doing it at very different places, in very different ways and they also, you know -- they don't fit neatly into the history of commercial black radio. They don't fit neatly into the history of the black print press. They don't fit totally into the history of I guess leftist movement-making. They kind of overlap with all those things.

And, you know, one of the interesting things is there's probably five or six different caucuses today that our work could have fit into or panels yesterday.

And the final thing I'll just say that Bill said which was a good point, I think policy is an important thing to think about.

You know, for us one of the big realizations is how important the Public Broadcasting Act was in the late '60s and in some ways, it was, you know, one of the last gasps of Johnson's Great Society. But, what it really did was, you know -- I guess the Federal Government

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legitimated non-commercial radio like it never had and it really fueled this outgrowth. You know, this outpouring of non-commercial stations in the >70s.

Another interesting point is, you know, the findings of the Kerner Commission and their, you know, emphasis on how much black Americans were left out of the media structure and in many ways, a non-commercial black radio station of the >70s really benefited both from public broadcasting and from the Kerner Commission and fitting into this niche.

I mean I don't think Lyndon Johnson ever would have imagined that radial black-power activists and pan-Africanists would get FCC licenses just a few years after the passage of that Act. But, that's what was happening and so, it's kind of the almost unexpected history of Federal policy making and it has very effective consequences for radio.

So, let me stop on that note. Let Seth talk some more about, you know, the preservation

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efforts we've been doing.

MR. LICHTY: Yes. Seth.

MR. KOTCH: Okay. Yes, I'm Seth Kotch from the University of North Carolina and just sort of picking up where Josh left off.

I don't think they would have imagined that they would get NEH Grants either, which they did, in the 1970s to help establish this station, the WBSP in Warrenton, North Carolina. Ninety-seventh out of a hundred in GDP in the hundred counties in the states. Majority black. Still poor. Still rural. Still black.

But, because of their journalism activism, in 1982, this is the year before CNN was founded, they anticipated the 24-hour news cycle covering constantly the illegal dumping of PCVs in rural parts of North Carolina and the state government's plan to create a dump for those PCVs right there in Warren County.

They set up a fairly effective network of that sort of intersected protest and coverage

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of protests. They interviewed county commissioners and council people. They brought down NAACP members and one of those people who came down and visited at one of these community meetings is credited with inventing the term environmental racism. Really kind of signaling the shift from the legal and political battles of the 1960s that resulted in the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act and the sort of transitioning to a more politically-focused, environmentally-focused, economic-empowerment focused and an institution-building focused kind of Civil Rights Movement or long Civil Rights Movement as scholars of the movement like to say.

So, these radio stations were parts of these -- were new community-based institutions that were intended to produce local change and they didn't just cover the news. They also understood themselves as being work-training centers, after-school programs for kids who didn't have access if their parents were working for instance

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and so, some of the programming included children's radio broadcasts produced with help from grown-ups, but with child-generated content and they trained people in radio broadcasting engineering. Some people went on to successful careers in the industry.

So, as Josh mentioned, this was an oral history project. We completed about 52 interviews with a variety of media-makers during this period in the >70s onward and, of course, as we talked to them, we learned about the existence of all these kind of boxes and stacks of reels and so, we have over the course of a building relationship with the members of this community managed to digitize about 125 of these audio recordings using George Blood in Philadelphia.

So, we're creating preservation and access level files with as much metadata as we can generate from what's written on the reels to what's written on the box, to the condition of the tape itself and we're slowly starting to listen to this

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material for the first time in 40 years and creating audio logs.

As Michael said, it was an interesting point he made, our focus -- our end goal is not preservation. We want to preserve the material in perpetuity and we've been fortunate to develop a relation with UNC libraries where they have committed to bring the digital material into their collection and eventually, with agreement and buy-in of the donors, the physical material as well although that's been a process of negotiation as we said. A major southern university with a complicated historic relationship with -- and other marginalized communities.

Our goal though is accessibility and our goal is ease of use and coming out of the oral history world, oral historians are worried about what they sort of call the opacity of sound. I think probably that word cuts against a lot of your understandings in this room about sound's humanity and its accessibility.

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As far as research, oral historians are concerned that a two-hour sound file is just not something that a student, for example, can easily engage with in a classroom. So, how do we take something that's big and thick and we can't really see down into the middle of it and make it accessible, engaging a lot of teaching and research in productive ways and in ways that recognize that, you know, the way we teach and do research right now is demanding and kind of fast paced and a student who's choosing between listening to a two-hour radio broadcast digitized from the >70s and reading a summary of it is going to choose the summary.

So, how do we kind of split the difference? Get them to do some listening if possible while providing the tools to understand the material.

So, as we're digitizing, we're developing kind of a prototype. It's called -- we're calling it its working title, Playback Station, and the idea is that we're using code to

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allow you just to click on text transcripts of these radio broadcasts and oral histories integrated into a single curation platform that will allow people to basically mix and match excerpts of radio broadcasts and then oral histories with the people who produce them. They can create custom play lists, add, delete. Each of those tracks as we're calling them in sort of a throwback fashion had some metadata built into it and, of course, all the materials are available in its complete form to anyone who wants to sort of dig deeper.

So, the idea is that we're trying to sort of replicate the experience of listening to the radio in a way that people might have in the 1970s and trying to do so in a way that's hopefully respectful to the material, respectful to the communities that we're engaging with. All of this in the -- and on that final note, which is that this has been an interesting and a challenging learning process and it's a challenge I think to those of us who are interested in Acollecting.@ A word that

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has kind of possessive sort of sound to it.

Taking material out of these attics and basements and moving them say a Research 1 University or other universities and collections and I think thinking about sort of the importance of that act and the ethics of taking the material and distributing it. It's really important.

And we think we all feel a great sense of urgency about preserving this material, about making sure it doesn't physically deteriorate before we're able to sort of capture the content. But, in doing so, we have to make sure we're not kind of re-colonizing that stuff.

MR. LICHTY: I would like just to you, Bill, just tell a little background to the other things you've done up to writing. Okay. Just do you mind? And keep it to an hour.

MR. SIEMERING: I was -- I was just going to -- well, talk about I know and just pick up just sort of continuity in the beginning of what you're talking about in terms of the current position of

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recordings.

So, I was in Buffalo, SUNY Buffalo, at that time and I made the case to CPE which is -- I was going to say it was in the >60s, late >60s. To establish a study down in the heart of the black community in Buffalo. Because it's -- it's observed there were no people of color that were in any media really at that time. Not even as weather people.

So, and Martin Luther King had said we have to write and see it in the streets because -- and I would go to Solowinski meetings. They had an organization called the Build there and they had prepared a statement about schools and they would formally present this or take three minutes and then the TV guys would shut off there camera and say well, you know, we can only use 45 seconds of it. So, do you want to do that again?

And I thought, you know, this has been going on for 300 years. Maybe three minutes is okay, you know.

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So, I realize the need to give a voice to people, to the voiceless. So, and I used the original SVC thinking about the airwaves for people and that was kind of their slogan and so, they originated 27 hours a week of programming from that facility and basically, all of the weekend programming came from there.

And getting around to the forum, because of the unique strengths of radio is it doesn't just bring information to people vertically. Its unique strength is -- one of its unique strengths is the horizontal. The discussion that takes place and that's where minds are changed and that's where things happen really and they -- that was one of the features on this program was.

If Mr. Chairman would allow me to add one other category here and I'd like to add live events.

MR. LICHTY: Yes.

MR. SIEMERING: Because later -- well, I was in Buffalo just to -- to do that place. There

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was a serious demonstration on campus in March of >70. It was just about the time I was finishing writing the mission statement or had and so, we broadcast live events of that. It went on for about a week. Three hundred police occupied the campus. Trashing news cruisers and all this kind of stuff.

And the Buffalo Courier Express had a nice feature about it. Saying it was the voice of reason amongst this chaos.

So, this is the kind of thing that -- it's too back there wasn't a recording of it. I don't know. There maybe some remnants of recordings of people. I don't know.

But, the events are really very important because radio is live. It's one of the -- again, it's one of its like strengths and there were demonstrations in Buffalo as well within the black community. We covered those.

So, I just think that there's probably a need to improve those things as well and then I did -- have been involved in documentary production

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starting actually when I was just a student at Wisconsin at WHA and they were producing a series called Voices of Europe about after the war how things were going. There are a number of documentaries they did about World War II. Even in 1952, they were still doing this.

So, those are interesting records and then later, I was executive producer of a series called Soundprint and that was in 1987 to >93 or so.

Documentaries really present an excellent way of capturing issues of the time very well. I think sometimes better than the news. Which also, often, was just worth the reading. So, I just make a pitch for that.

MR. LICHTY: Could I start out with two really criticisms? And that's not the right word I want. I want information.

I'm a big fan of Soundprint. Can I get a copy right now?

MR. SIEMERING: Yes. I think so. I'm

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not sure. That's still --

MR. HOWELL: Can I just interject --

MR. SIEMERING: Yes.

MR. HOWELL: -- and say that the Soundprint archives is in the basement of this building.

MR. LICHTY: Okay. But, it is all live or not?

MR. HOWELL: No, but it would -- it's potentially available. It's in an archival repository. We have a tremendous backlog as most people can probably relate to, but I did, you know, work with the creator that program.

MR. LICHTY: Lincoln?

MR. HOWELL: Yes, and she -- she lives in suburban Maryland.

MR. LICHTY: Yes.

MR. HOWELL: And she called us up and I met her at the loading dock with her buddy and a pick-up truck and they gave me everything she had. Twenty-plus years of work and --

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MR. LICHTY: How many issues?

MR. HOWELL: It's a grant waiting to be written.

MR. LICHTY: How many episodes did you do? I was under --

MR. HOWELL: Hundreds of episodes. Hundreds.

MR. LICHTY: How about five years?

MR. HOWELL: And she has very good control. There was a terrific Excel spreadsheet that came with it and so, she's --

MR. LICHTY: Yes.

MR. HOWELL: -- much better from an archival standpoint than a lot of people we deal with.

MR. LICHTY: Yes. But, I would make one point and that is this is a relatively -- you started in --

MR. HOWELL: It just went off the air a few years ago.

MR. LICHTY: Say again.

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MR. HOWELL: It just went off the air permanently a few years ago.

MR. LICHTY: Right, but you started --

MR. SIEMERING: I started in radio --

MR. LICHTY: No. No. No. When did you start Soundprint?

MR. SIEMERING: Soundprint. In '87, I think it was.

MR. LICHTY: So, the fact that those are available right now is really a tragedy.

MR. SIEMERING: Yes. Okay.

MR. LICHTY: I'm glad that you found out, but let me go backwards and this is back to Michigan thing. There was a time a huge collection of disks and other material at the University of Michigan. Is that still there, MaryAnn? Do you know?

MS. WATSON: What kind of collection?

MR. LICHTY: All of the radio stuff.

MS. WATSON: WUON stuff?

MR. LICHTY: Yes. Well, it was both.

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You tell me the fact --

MS. WATSON: The WUON stuff was at Bentley Historical Library in Michigan and it is pretty well preserved.

MR. LICHTY: But, there's no catalog because I looked the other day and I -- because I didn't -- I'm in some things and there's no reference. Do you know how you can find stuff or what?

MS. WATSON: I think if you have -- you know, I was there and looked at all of the WUON files. I don't know how much they have of the actual broadcast. They had tons of textual reference.

MR. PEASE: The danger of minimally viable cataloging. Because you -- sometimes if you go with that, it will get you a lot of records done really quickly, but you will not -- you may not get the names. You may not get the subjects. So, you will get a lot of things which you cannot then find your way through.

MR. LICHTY: Yes.

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MS. WATSON: Yes.

MR. LICHTY: Okay. Other corrections, additions, et cetera?

MR. MASCARO: I wanted to hear a little more from Michael about capturing the everyday. You know, there's a lot of places where you might have a book reading, you know, in the afternoon. They'd read 15 minutes of a book. So, you can't capture everything obviously. So, well, probably when you see that or hear it, what do you hear? Like how long is it and how do you -- how does that sound in your head?

MR. STAMM: These particular writings or just in general?

MR. MASCARO: In general, yes.

MR. STAMM: You know, to me, it's just anything ordinary. Okay. Don't really have an ideal typical version of that. It's just the sound of an ordinary voice on an ordinary Tuesday afternoon.

I mean not to make that the one thing

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that's the most important, but that's most of what I end up listening to on the radio I think. It's just -- it's on in the car.

Like I know Diane Rehm is on, but I don't know what -- I forget what the show was about two days later. But, it's really just the sound of it coming over.

So, I think just anything we can get that sort of gives some sense of that. Because we -- you know, there's been a really great record of all these like important events that we get. But, if you think about just the -- you know, just would be the flow I guess in a certain sense. Some way just --

MR. HOWELL: All the interstitial stuff. I mean think of all the local stations all around the country. Have all things considering. Did what -- the Michigan station didn't have a dedicated host and maybe long newsbreaks.

Like WAMU here in Washington, they probably only broadcast 70 percent of the national feed because they have so much local material. Is

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that stuff being saved? Is that stuff being archived? And it probably is, but --

MR. STAMM: It's just fascinating. There's that one site that exists like A Day in Broadcasting. Which is just the coolest things. Because it's like it's -- it's what Tuesday sounded like.

MR. LICHTY: Actually, there are about three. There's one beginning in Washington 1939. And, of course, there's all the World War II. Yes. Yes.

But, you're right. It is -- would be interesting to know how many there are, but there are more than -- there can't be more than five or six complete days of the world in 70 years. Okay.

MR. HOWELL: And where you're obviously going to have your best luck is with public and university stations that would have a library and archive as part of the institution. That's what's so sad. Is that all the wonderful little local personalities and local stations and call-in shows

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and early radio, people who went on to do really good things, just it's gone.

Because like my favorite example is I grew up in Cumberland, Maryland. Willis Conover, when he got out of the Army, his first radio job was at WTPO in Cumberland, Maryland. Anybody know of Willis Conover before he went to Voice of America? No. No, you know.

So, it's sad, but you just multiply that story across the country.

MR. MASCARO: There was a CBS television documentary about the moonwalk, the first landing on the moon that Kuralt did. It's called Moon Above the Earth -- the Moon Above, the Earth Below and it was an intercutting, here's what's happening up in orbit and then on the surface of moon. Now to ordinary events in different people's lives in different parts of the country. Like somebody was in the hospital emergency room and somebody was -- and that's what I was thinking about as you were -- just now as you were talking about that idea.

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MR. LICHTY: He actually did an earlier one, too. When they landed on the moon and he started from Maine to Hawaii and did four hours. Excuse me. Two hours.

Positions, directions, arguments.

MR. PICKARD: Now, I'm just -- I'm looking forward to opening up the discussion.

MR. MASCARO: What about the newspapers and radio that you guys thought? I mean it seemed to me that there would be some if not radio archives, radio history embedded in part of the that. Can you --

MR. PICKARD: You mean newspapers efforts to buy radio stations and --

MR. MASCARO: Yes. And then the effort to take -- peel them away.

MR. PICKARD: Yes, I think there's definitely some archival materials that could be rescued that would shed light on this.

But, again, I don't know if it's too distant from the actual radio programs themselves.

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I'd be interested to get feedback from other people whether they think this kind of policy related evidence is -- important to recover as part of the broader RPTF agenda.

MR. LICHTY: Right. Well, here's a question. Let's take the Blue Book you mentioned.

MR. PICKARD: Yes.

MR. LICHTY: Okay. In the Blue Book, there are a lot of examples of good and bad. Okay. I assume that nobody saved that material. Do you know?

MR. PICKARD: Well, they have content analyses. In the Blue Book itself, they've got these wonderful --

MR. LICHTY: Right.

MR. PICKARD: -- diagrams of sponsored versus --

MR. LICHTY: Exactly.

MR. PICKARD: -- sustaining programming. But, how much materials they have related to that? That's an open question.

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MR. LICHTY: I wonder if the FCC would know if they actually had any -- if they had any recordings or any of that material.

MR. PICKARD: Yes, I didn't come across it in my -- research when I was in NARA going through some of the FCC papers, but I think it could be out there and I think there might be historians in room that might also know something about this.

But, that would be -- I think that would be a really interesting project to try to recover those materials.

MR. LICHTY: Well, the connection I was making was this and that is that during World War II, the FCC was making a lot of recordings because they were interested in Japanese and German and other rosters. Okay.

MR. PICKARD: Um-hum. It's true. Yes.

MR. LICHTY: Did they have any good reason -- with either the Yellow Book first or the Blue Book later, did they have any reason to make actual recordings or do they have any records

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of that other than --

MR. PICKARD: I would like to find out. I mean yes, I only looked at the actual content analyses, but I have to assume that -- the programs were recorded and stored somewhere. Because they probably weren't always doing it in real time.

MR. LICHTY: No. Yes.

MR. PICKARD: So, yes, that's a great question.

MR. LICHTY: Go ahead.

MR. PEASE: Michael, what is the name of the BWTR HAR program?

MR. STAMM: Oh, I want to say State Edition, but don't quote me on that.

MR. PEASE: Okay.

MR. STAMM: Because -- I think that's what it was called.

MR. LICHTY: MaryAnn.

MS. WATSON: I have a question for Seth and Josh. You guys are history heroes. That's fantastic.

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What happened to the station?

MR. KOTCH: I mean --

MS. WATSON: Did they sell out for a lot of money to be syndicated or --

MR. KOTCH: No. No. Well, the answer isn't as complex as I -- all my heming and hawing would indicate. They declined. WAFR was founded in 1971. The pledge model is new for the record. What is it? NPR starts asking in >73 or >74. So, this is sort of a new thing for radio listeners who are accustomed to hearing ads for toothpaste instead of being asked for money and WAFR goes -- stops broadcasting in 1975.

MR. DAVIS: Yes. Yes, WAFR lasted for about five. Because WBSP station which was in a tiny town, but had a hundred thousand watt signal. Last for about ten years. WPFW in D.C. still going. I think largely -- it helps to be part of a national network, Pacifica. WRFG in Atlanta has struggled, but it's still existing after going on the air in 1973 I think.

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You know, I think kind of how this connects to the issue of policy which I think is closely connected starting a radio station is incredibly difficult. Most of the radio stations we've talked about at this conference or most of the next networks are established entities.

You know, in our research, people -- a married couple that decided they wanted to start a non-commercial radio station and they worked on getting it off the ground and navigating the incredibly complex FCC application policies for two years before you even went on the air.

MR. HOWELL: What station is that?

MR. DAVIS: What station was it?

MR. HOWELL: Do you know what it was?
What station?

MR. DAVIS: That was WBSP.

MR. HOWELL: Oh, I'm sorry.

MR. DAVIS: But, part of the difficulty of getting them on the air I think is very closely connected to how often they declined. Because you

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have groups of four or five activists who are keeping a station alive.

MR. KOTCH: And it actually early nicely sort of mirrors, if nicely is the word, it mirrors the kind of like brief, bright, hot flame that a lot of activists in the Civil Rights Movement. Sort of -- you go down to Freedom Summer for one summer. Just one life-changing moment and you're done. You might not be done with other styles of activism and that posture doesn't change, but you burn out quickly and so, these are people who are volunteering or working for next to nothing, putting in long hours and they burned out.

And VSP sort of tried to pick up from AFR and AFR fades away in 1976. They have meetings with VSP to try to -- sort of try to figure out how they can kind of leverage that connectivity and actually, towards the middle of the 1980s, there's a short-lived organization called the Triangle of Women's Radio Network.

That has -- just as WVSP identified what

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they thought AFR was speaking too much about black power and not enough broadly about minority interests, this Triangle of Women's Radio Network identifies the VSP and AFR not talking enough about women or to women or for women and they pile in the car with a guy from Duke's WDDS to drive up to D.C. with a proposal to sort of put it on the desk of the FCC again. They don't end up getting licensure.

And so, in a way, the story has a kind of caesura right there. At the moment in 1986, but WVOE which is in -- I recently found out how to pronounce this. It's spelled like you should say it Chadbourn. Which I've been saying for about three years, but apparently people from the town say Chadbourn. So, Chadbourn, North Carolina, tiny. Has 1800 people today. They're still broadcasting and they started broadcasting in 1962.

When Josh interviewed Annie Mae Williamson who -- I don't know if she still gets behind the booth, but if she does, she's quite advanced in age.

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MR. DAVIS: I interviewed her after her radio show. This station started in 1962. It's commercial, but --

MR. KOTCH: Still broadcasting.

MR. DAVIS: -- essentially community. WVOE Voice of Ebony. I think it was the third black-owned station in the South and maybe the ninth black-owned station nationally after several Michigan presumable. This woman has been doing a radio show since 1965 and she was still doing it in 2014.

MR. LICHTY: How did you guys get into this and are there any other examples that we should know about?

MR. DAVIS: You mean of community radio and --

MR. LICHTY: Yes.

MR. DAVIS: I mean it's all over the country, but I think the question implies how incredibly fragile community radio was. Because when I say community radio, I generally mean

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non-college and non-institutional.

MR. LICHTY: Right.

MR. DAVIS: But, there's community radio. It's still going all over the country and how did we get in touch? A lot of pestering, harassing, calling. Sometimes you call someone. It takes five calls. Occasionally, we get very lucky. We call someone and the first call they want to do interviews. But, persistence is the name.

MR. VAILLANT: I have a question for Josh and Seth. Building up to this, we're talking often here about endangered collections. Collections that aren't really collections that have to be kind of organized. Curated, but often involving private individuals and you were talking about building community trust. A very sensitive matter when you're talking about community radio when the collectors are not part of that community.

You're in this role and it's historians and publicists in effect of a story that is very important to a community.

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So, I was wondering if you had -- many of us are involved in this kind of quest and it involves working with people who are very invested in their lives' work and do you have any sort of -- a sense of do's and don'ts, strategies and tactics that work well for you building trust? Especially in a community that was kind of more politically radicalized. Perhaps ideologically hostile towards a kind of dominant historical narrative. But, see what I'm saying.

What have you learned? How do you train your team? What are some of the things you might want to share with the rest of us about how to proceed if we find ourselves trying to do something similar?

MR. KOTCH: It's a great question. I will say that oral history is a great way to build a relationship. Because you have a great excuse to sit down and demonstrate interest and sensitivity and perform listening. Not soliciting that this is an act or a false act.

And often once you've sat down with

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someone for two hours and listened to their life story, their comfort level for sharing with you in other ways is significantly increased.

If you have managed to prepare yourself well for the interview to show them that you care about their life, to show them that you care about their story, to show them that you're interested in listening to them and so, that's such an important icebreaker.

And so when Josh and I -- I wish we had a team. But, we've been privileged to work with some other -- some colleagues on this as well.

You know, if we come in and say we're interested in you as a history-making person, we know a little bit about your life story. We want to know more. Let's talk. After the interview, there are sort of standard oral history practices that often extend that relationship. We send them a copy of the transcript. We'll send them a copy of the video and the audio recording. We take their edits. Eventually, we're able to deposit the

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transcript into an historical collection in Carolina. We send copies to their friends and relatives and things like that. Demonstrating that we sort of created -- with most of the effort being theirs, of course, but we've kind of co-created something special that we can then share.

The other element, of course, is just patience. As you say, these were -- these are just people who might feel like outsiders from say UNC or some other big university. They're radicals who work to undermine the very structures that UNC was built on. Right.

And so, the answer there is really just kind of patience. The standard oral history process of getting the transcript done sort of builds these milestones in where you can check in with them. Here's the transcript. I look forward to hearing back your thoughts. You know, here's the audio. Here's the video. I wrote a blog post about you. What do you think? That kind of thing.

So, it can take months to get a

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transcript sort of through that whole process. The whole time you're on the phone with them and sort of just nurturing that relationship.

And there is one of the -- one of the people who Josh interviewed, he just maybe six months ago sort of said to me, you know, I really appreciate, you know, our relationship. Until now, I didn't want to give you this stuff. I like what you guys are doing. It's fine.

I wanted -- he wanted to give it to Shaw or is that to Central? I'm sorry. Some people wanted it to go to Shaw and -- he wanted to give it to the historically black college and he said I come to recognize that this historically black college doesn't have the resources to preserve the material in the same way UNC does. He's like I don't like it. I don't like that. The truth of it. He's like, but I have to acknowledge it.

And part of that -- the conversation that we had with him was with a woman named Evangeline Briley who did -- actually made public television

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in Greensboro in 1970s and we have now film from her that we're trying to -- much more expensive to digitize that audio. Trying to find resources to digitize that. She lives in a small home in Eastern North Carolina. Doesn't have a lot of resources for keeping her material safe. Even, you know, to a sort of personal standard.

And so, speaking frankly with her not just about acknowledging the fact that she continues to control her legacy even when she loans or deposits this material, but also with nothing threatening. You know, sharing with her that this is hopefully an opportunity for this material to sort of live on and that -- I tried to speak as realistic truth as possible.

But, one thing that we did and this set us apart a little bit and put us in disagreement a little bit with some of our preservationist colleagues, was we devised a content only donation. Where we said we will borrow the physical reels. We will digitize them to high standard. We will

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return the physical reels to you. We will preserve the digital material as the beginning of a conversation about a deposit.

That is to say we're worried that by the time we have this conversation the material will be unsalvageable and there are already reels that were moldy or cracked. We couldn't play them.

And so, that also I think helps send them the message that we really wanted to learn from you. We don't want to take your stuff and you can have it back if you want.

A lot of times when faced with the prospect of getting these big heavy boxes of reels back, they might just say no thanks. So, we'll see on the next round.

And I want to let Josh speak on this. I don't mean to filibuster.

But, that's been hugely important for us and it comes to market generally as historians first. As historians who are working as allies, but who are archivists and preservationists and -- but,

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I think it's given us breathing room.

And since we've had these conversations, as I said, this one person who's responsible for most of the material from the WAFR that we have has agreed to deposit the physical material into some historical collection and that was a big shift for him over a period of years. To take what he understood to be a principled stand and to sort of -- to combine that sense of principle with a pragmatic or a practical approach to preserving the material.

MR. DAVIS: I'll just co-sign everything Seth said and very briefly say building a relationship and I think preserving radio in most cases, the conversation will never start with can I have your recordings?

It's going start with oral history. It's going to start with phone calls. That trust is going to take a long time to build. In some cases, it won't, but it's a long-term project.

We've now been working on this for four

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years. We got our first in 2012 and yes, it takes a long time.

But, yes, basically, what Seth said.

MR. LICHTY: I think -- my -- this question should come at the end, but I want to make sure we don't forget it. I hope.

And it is what do we do next? What -- has this group -- this conference -- what do we do?

MR. MASCARO: Well, I can -- I mean in terms of the things I looked at in Michigan, a couple of things. One would be to be more proactive about reaching out to stations. Especially the ones that have been around for awhile. Let's see whether they still have material or if there are people that have retired that are still alive to at least be able to talk to them. Because there's a lot of institutional history for people that no longer work at the station and maybe a closet full of material.

And another would be to try to identify or catalog the archives. I think Michael's mentioned about the archives of KAR and there's some

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in BOM. At least find where the collections are.

I talked to the Walter Reuther Library, it's on Wayne State University's campus, and they have the UAW program. I don't know the years for that, but they're audiotapes and they're not indexed. So, it's come down and thread them up and find out what's there. So, there could be some interesting things there. I don't know that anybody necessarily needs to listen or collect all of them, but there would be some material that would be indicative of the time period.

MR. KOTCH: The Civil Rights History Project at the Library of Congress, I don't know if anyone's familiar with that. They had basically two kind of phases and the first was they hired a bunch of graduate students to just get on the phone and call every single library and repository they could think of and just made a big list of all the collections in the country that included oral history for the Civil Rights Movement.

This could be the start of a similar

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effort. This took a half-dozen people. It took them a long time and a lot of phone calls just to make a major -- make a big list.

All right. And then once you have that list, you can start identifying priorities. Learn more about format. All the detail-oriented questions.

MR. MASCARO: Well, and then -- one second. And then the things that are omitted are indicative as well. I guess this -- there were things that happened and they didn't collect anything. That's an indication of well, this is a history we don't respect. So, it doesn't mean that we would gather an archive, but it does mean we would gather some understanding about we threw this away because we don't care about it.

So, that list, there's a lot to be said for a pretty good descriptive analysis I think.

MS. WATSON: Well, one of the things we talked about in the Education and Outreach Committee this morning is that we're coming up on the 100th

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anniversary of radio and to sort of seize the moment. Kind of like the Bicentennial minutes. You know, a couple of years leading up to the Bicentennial, there was a lot of excitement about it and that's something the Radio Preservation Task Force didn't do. Say, you know, we're part of this 100th anniversary that's coming up.

But, what we talked about is how do you get the material used in six through high school classes and in college curricula and, you know, if people are convinced that this material has real use in education, then the funding becomes less --

MR. STAMM: I think we can reach out then to people that aren't radio historians as well. My thinking was to develop -- like these -- basically like that again. A module of some sort. Like some clip that it's like here's what this is. Here's a number of different ways.

Like there was this great panel yesterday on how people were using radio in their classroom and everybody had -- there's all these

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ideas and I think we could sort of as a group of historians involved in journalism and news put a bunch of things together like that. So, some of these would be how would you use big events in teaching, you know, U.S. history or any sort of history. But, then other things could be more about like how would you teach this, for example, in a journalism class where you might talk about, you know, ethics on the radio and the way that the voice affects the reception of a news story.

There's all these different suggestions for people about how they might use certain clips that we've preserved and made accessible.

MS. WATSON: Well, you know, I could imagine that in not too many years from now if you're studying the 1970s, the amazing work that these two young men are doing. That's just part of the, you know, pantheon of information for them to --

MR. MASCARO: There's a component to that though that -- because we all feel like everything's on the web, we forget that it's

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ephemeral. Right? That it's on the web perhaps today. It may not be on the web tomorrow.

And it's also -- I was thinking about this this morning during the earlier talks. That, you know, you can have a -- let's say you have a PowerPoint program and the PowerPoint program has some links to video or links to other sources. You have to pack that up to move it and take it to some other place. Meaning you have to pack up all the additional elements.

If you're writing a book, you take all your notes and you write the narrative and you publish the book and it has some permanence. We don't have the equivalent of that for the web yet.

And so, maybe from an educational perspective or an historical perspective, it's like we need to publish. I don't know whether it's publish the website. But, publish material that has links to audio files, photographic files, video files and that somehow get retained and packaged together and published as something that becomes

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more permanent.

I've also heard people use the term about dedicated servers. Something like that earlier today.

So, just because it's on the net today doesn't mean that it'll stay there. Frontline tried to keep -- they wanted to keep all their programs on the air and kept a lot of material with it. But, I've noticed they've had to pare down. Because eventually, they're going to have to pay for the storage for all that.

So, something that's a more permanent set of links could be important for us to develop as an academic community not just as broadcast historians.

MR. SOCOLOW: I just want to point out one thing. I think maybe a slight bias or bifurcation the way we view these things. Which is that journalism is a -- it's very profitable from -- for the networks and the local stations and yet somehow there's these hierarchies that are

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established. The Blue Book is huge in this. Right?

Because if you're unsustained -- I mean if your sustained, you are a better program, but Bill Shiefer is, you know, for the shaving cream or whatever, a really excellent broadcaster.

But, we have this hierarchy that we have had and it's the same thing. It's sort of the Civil Rights Movement public radio station. Like here you have Cathy Hughes and Joe Madison and you have this whole for-profit African American radio scene going on at the same time. Which we automatically discount as less authentic in its news because it's related to the scholar -- to the sponsors.

I just think in terms of going out there and thinking about -- of course, it's much harder to get something from a profit-making enterprise. You know, if you guys tried to get from Cathy Hughes and Radio One, there are origins to our -- you know, I think.

But, there is something real there about the news. This is about radio journalism that's

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very important to preserve as well and I think we need to really think about that.

MR. KOTCH: You're right. It's an important point. I mean SCLC they were excited about how cooperative black-oriented radio as opposed to black-owned radio was with distributing certain messages about meetings and things like that.

MR. SOCOLOW: Well, the minority ownership question --

MR. KOTCH: Right.

MR. SOCOLOW: -- establishes several minority-owned for-profits and have done very well.

MR. DAVIS: I think -- to tie this back to like where do we go from here, I do think that there needs to be some priority making and I mean I'm very interested also, very interested in commercial black radio and, you know, by the early >70s, there was still only maybe 50 black owned broadcasters and maybe another 100 white-owned, black-oriented. But, to my mind, those materials

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were even more endangered and even more rare than a lot of the national network stuff.

That, I mean, we can wring our hands about CBS, but I feel like the black stations, that stuff, is just -- most of it is gone already.

But, I'm not saying that is -- but, you know, so, the labor point to me that's new to my ears and I would really think that there are certain aspects where there has to be some priorities in terms of we can't preserve all radio. Right? So, what is the most endangered and most -- the stuff that's going to change our view on radio and our listening of radio?

MR. PEASE: It also seems to me that when we're identifying sources for materials to bring into -- to say that we're not always looking at stations or at -- that we also look -- or in archives. We look at the people like the journalists themselves, go to them and ask what are in their collections. They say the tapes of -- I know they've got the guy who does -- Michael Blank has

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taped a number of -- has found a number of tapes -- found tapes over the years and he's re-purposed those for his program and also producers and engineers who may have saved radio over the years.

And I'll say on -- I'm sorry. On the opposite side, I'd also say that you may want -- we also wanted to strategize about which archives may want to take certain kinds. Because if we do that blanket call for -- like you're saying for the -- for the anniversary, that we may get a flood and we may want to prioritize certain kinds of materials to archives that could take -- that have expertise and capacity for those materials.

MR. MASCARO: To Josh's point, I was thinking, you know, we could also look at data from Native American stations and whether there are any documents for those.

And as you say, like CBS is covered. So, we don't want to lose it, but they've had a pretty good reputation in the historical record. So, to just make the emphasis that there are other places

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that should be addressed.

It seems to be -- I mean I think that's what's made public radio so vital is to at least give air space and air time to under-represented groups with pretty good effect.

MR. LICHTY: Anything? Yes.

MS. COMMERFORD: Well, I'm completely sort of out of -- I'm out of my element. I'm with the Voice of America and I'm in charge of the media collections.

So, we have a whole bunch of stuff. We archive our material to the national archives, but recently, you know, people retire and we go into closets and into desks and we find a lot of audiotapes and whatnot.

So, we're digitizing a lot of our materials, but this is too much for us. It's overwhelming. We just have peeling-off labels and things like that.

So, I am materials and I am -- we're inventorying and trying to figure out where we can

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put this. We know there's a legacy. There might be interest or there might not be. It might be just too much. Right? So, some stuff will, you know, just be discarded and others we'll give to places or share with places and try and create things.

But, what I'm trying to get at is there's very limited storage digitally and physically. Right. Hey, Pam, what's going on with this whole great big room. This is just gathering dust. Let's get it out of here.

So, I guess I'm getting back to, you know, time marches on and all of us institutions, the creators of this content don't have the time or the ability to get away and we can't seek you out. We don't know, you know, who's interested in all of this stuff, these radio broadcasts and, you know, check or something. What do we do with it?

So, do you have portals or reach outs that people, you know, can come to you or how do you manage it? How do you connect to, talk to people?

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MR. LICHTY: Let me ask more about that. Who does that belong to? The National Archive or --

MS. COMMERFORD: Well, it's the Voice of America. So --

MR. LICHTY: No, I know that. I know that and I was interviewed many, many times. Been there. Et cetera. I never looked online to see if there's anything or not.

Just tell us more about. Because we're talking about just the American stuff. Are you just talking in the English or are you talking all the rest or I don't know. Give me an idea. How much material are we talking about?

MS. COMMERFORD: So, National Archives takes our English language. You know, the language services, you know, Persian or, you know, Afghan or Russian or whatever, they held their own stuff. You know, in the past five or six years, we've centralized that.

Since we're all digital, we're saying

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hey, you know, it's impossible the stuff would be lost. You know, we can't sort of respond to FOIA requests or whatever. So, we centrally archive that.

So, the past was English only and everything else was discarded or, you know, maybe it's in somebody's drawer. That's what we're finding.

Now, we're trying to archive everything. So, I'm getting all of the language service materials and the English materials and we're -- you know, it's digitally created and we're storing it in the cloud or we will be.

So, that's what we're dealing with. We're creating collections.

Recently, we gave our Leo Sarkisian collection to University of Michigan. It was really exciting for us and so, we're trying to come up with partnerships for stuff.

You know, we have the country music. We're trying to work with Nashville Country Music

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Hall of Fame on that and so, we're sort of going in that direction, but --

MR. PEASE: We gave them some of the music library. We gave the music library to Library of Congress.

MS. COMMERFORD: Right. Yes, so, one -- National Archives is one. Library of Congress and then to these other institutions. It's a permanent loan. All right. We can't -- it's too much.

So, we need this accessible to the public. You know, our collections aren't accessible to the public. It's for internal use only and then you can reach out to us now, but perhaps --

MR. MASCARO: Are there themes over time in the broadcasts or are there crisis moments that you can point to? So, you have all this record, but if you had to select a few, I mean do you have themes that dictate? No?

MS. COMMERFORD: So, I want to get

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there, but I try to come up with a strategy for stuff that we create today and say well, what's, you know, historically significant?

MR. LICHTY: Yes, I guess I was saying the same. Maybe saying the same thing I'm sure. But, is there a plan? You seem to imply that there isn't a plan yet.

MS. COMMERFORD: Right. That's right. Because --

MR. LICHTY: Okay.

MS. COMMERFORD: Well, we're a broadcaster. It's not about the archives. It's not about my department. I'm just sort of I got a lot of cool stuff here. I bet you somebody would be interested in this in the future. But, no, there's no plan. That's not our mission.

MR. MASCARO: Is that State Department? DOA? Or is that State?

MS. COMMERFORD: No. No more. No, we separated back in '98 or something. We're now the U.S. Broadcasting Board of Governors.

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MR. SOCOLOW: Does the Smith-Mundt Act still apply?

MS. COMMERFORD: So, the Smith-Mundt Act --

MR. SOCOLOW: You can't even play those things in America.

MS. COMMERFORD: Well, there's a Modernization Act.

MR. LICHTY: That actually was my next question. Because when I first started here at Maryland, I would actually get people to come to my class and they were not allowed to do it and so, we would use fake names and so forth.

MS. COMMERFORD: Well, there was a Modernization Act on July 2nd, 2013. We are now domestically available. So, you can request. Actually, the -- on our website. It makes it really legal.

But, even now, you'll see more VOA stuff in news broadcasts and well, if stations come to us and say hey, we want to broadcast your material,

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then that's under consideration. We're a lot more free to share that.

So, Smith-Mundt has sort of turned over the past few years.

MR. MASCARO: One possible solution would be a special issue. Whether it's journal radio, whatever we're calling it or some other academic journal. A call for papers. You know, looking back at the history of VOA from this to that for people to study and try to identify areas that were notable or significant. At least that would give people an opportunity to look at the dry area and say this would be important, this would be important, this would be important. Which is a lot like creating the list that we're talking about.

Then you go back to the archive and say all right, we at least want to keep the records or the archives for these events.

MS. COMMERFORD: It's sort of impossible. All right. Because they're in language --

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MR. PEASE: No, but there could be language archives that might be interested.

MS. COMMERFORD: Yes.

MR. KOTCH: It sounds like you're doing what -- the right thing. What people do when they have a big body of material they want to deposit somewhere. They go out and they try to find an institution that would be interested.

And the institutions themselves often have outreach. People who are coming to the same kinds of conferences and trying to connect with those people and usually it's just a happy accident or the result of lots of research or both that sort of puts those two people together.

MS. COMMERFORD: Right.

MR. KOTCH: And so, I mean it sounds like if you found bodies of material that you've been placing in different archives that that's -- I don't know. It seems like it's sort of voluminous. It's not working, but it seems like you're doing the right thing in my mind.

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MS. COMMERFORD: Yes, it's exactly where I'm going. That is -- and usually the services will have connections and they're the ones who are relying on to get it to somebody.

MR. KOTCH: Right.

MS. COMMERFORD: When you talk about, you know, everyday life, that's saving everything and I'm definitely not wanting to save everything. It's too much.

So, I don't know. I just wanted to throw that out there.

MR. LICHTY: No, it's --

MS. COMMERFORD: There's a lot. So.

MR. LICHTY: -- it's a really very, very interesting example.

MR. MASCARO: You should talk to Georgetown. Georgetown's got the Foreign Service Program and that -- you know, maybe that's the kind of thing that would be useful. I think even at the undergrad level. So.

MR. STAMM: Hoover Institute.

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MR. MASCARO: What's that?

MR. STAMM: Hoover Institute.

MR. MASCARO: That's Stanford. Isn't it?

MR. STAMM: Yes, they might be -- they've got plenty of money. They're interested --

MS. COMMERFORD: Maybe I'll hear more. Maybe I'll attend more sessions.

MR. KOTCH: Yes, I think more like every -- you know, every major research university is going to have a big collection and have some area of focus.

Like if you were saying hey, I've got a bunch of papers from the antebellum South, I would say you need to call UNC because they love that stuff and they have many other collecting parties, too, but there must be fairly simple ways to find just sort of what are the strengths of major university collections, major Federal collection and see if they would --

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MS. COMMERFORD: Yes. You got it. That's what I'm talking about.

MR. DAVIS: I think one of the -- yes, one of the key points is that radio is not enough. With all of us who are maybe radio aficionados, but there's too much to preserve.

The key is exactly what we're talking about. The coalitions. Drop into -- so, you know, I think for us strategically it's been not just aligning people who are interested in radio, but really trying to tap into this really deep interest in the Civil Rights Movement now that it's kind of in its 50th anniversary phase.

And I think there's -- and it's not going to be a lot of preservation that's done just by kind of radio aficionados. It's really going to be people who have -- don't even know they have an interest in radio. But, they have an interest in Iranian history, you know, and who are the institutions and the people who would be interested in radio on a certain topic. They aren't interested

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in radio at all. They're interested in a topic.

And that is the conversation I think that will help to prioritize because yes.

MR. LICHTY: Does anybody have anything else?

MR. STAMM: Well, the two practical things that Josh had said was that we should come up with three to five -- we should come up with as a caucus some collections for a fairly immediate set of grant proposals.

So, something like the Soundprint sounds --

MR. HOWELL: Yes, I mean it's complete. The one worrisome things about it is that it's -- some of the stuff from the >90s, late >80s is on obsolete digital formats. Even more obsolete than DAT. So, it could take a little strategy to figure out how to get that stuff transferred. But, the wizards at George Blood could probably help.

MR. DAVIS: They could and it's going to take --

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MR. HOWELL: They're very good.

MR. DAVIS: Yes, and --

MR. HOWELL: They are good.

MR. DAVIS: I mean not to be self-aggrandizing, but, you know, we're a team of two and we're constantly on the look for money for this stuff because we've worked with George Blood and yes, it take a lot of money. It took about 100 bucks per reel to reel tape on average. Right? That goes by fast.

MR. SIEMERING: Did you have to bake it or something? What was --

MR. KOTCH: We did. Well, to bake it. Bake it.

MR. DAVIS: So, we would -- I mean I think I'd love to be one of those projects that are included in the list that goes to Josh.

MR. LICHTY: You're adding -- I think you're adding -- okay.

MR. PEASE: I don't know that they're here, but American Radio Works has done a number

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of documentaries over the years and I don't know the state of their preservation efforts. I know they have an archives, but I -- they may be under -- I don't know where they are.

MR. LICHTY: I'm not sure that we covered any of the things that I thought we might start with, but I hope we offered some helpful. I think we really focused on the news more than we really did on some of the documentary. But, I think that's reasonable.

I also think that the documentary material is probably more likely to be available and be saved. Because -- at least formats like NBC News and some of the stuff.

MR. MASCARO: And to the list -- the list issue, it always seems to start with a list.

MR. LICHTY: Yes.

MR. MASCARO: You know, if you look at television documentary, Dan Einstein does a book where he lists all of them. Maybe it's 95 percent accurate or 92, but it's most. So, you know, in

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terms of documentary, trying to identify the documentary lists, whether it's a particular collection or a particular network or a particular station, that's --

MR. PEASE: We'll be in good shape with documentaries I think if we could get into the -- with the awards list like with Peabody or --

MR. MASCARO: Yes, that's true.

MR. PEASE: -- or NEA or -- if we can get Peabody a grant or something like that.

MR. LICHTY: And I think it's very interesting that we did have some discussion at least of the local material, but I don't think that we have any idea of the amount of material that might be available in a local way.

You could suggest, Tom, that we can visit everybody and ask them to visit and so on and so forth, but I still think we're -- have a long way to find the find of local material.

Even -- because actually, I'm sure that what I was implying of local was really stations

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and you maybe -- interesting point is not just the stations, but the other people who are working there and so forth. So and so.

Josh.

MR. PEASE: There is also the independent producers.

MR. LICHTY: Yes.

MS. WATSON: One of the collections I look at was the Charles Wright African American History Museum in Detroit and they have a lot of files, but they're textual documents. They're not programs. But, there are scripts. There's correspondence. There's, you know, that kind of stuff from a black radio station and it seemed to me that you sort of go through that and look at the correspondence and look at the names of the disc jockeys and some of those families are probably still in Detroit, you know, and you contact them and find out if anything was left.

MR. DAVIS: That's a huge -- contacting families and finding obituaries and digging into

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the surviving relatives and calling them on the phone. Because a lot of people passed on from the >60s and >70s.

MR. MASCARO: Josh and Seth, how did you guys do your outreach? I mean person to person or announcements? How?

MR. DAVIS: Person to person and, you know, referral and I mean whitepages.com. There's another one called saveasearch.com. A lot of snooping. Sometimes we got really lucky, you know. Someone named Obitya Akamoule and we wanted him in the United States and I called him and he was a really nice guy.

But, it really does take -- and different. You know, some people respond to Facebook. Most people prefer phone. Some people, they're not even going to answer you unless you send them a formal looking letter on letterhead. I mean you have to really pursue these different communication vehicles.

MR. KOTCH: I think the grand term is

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snowball ethnography.

MR. LICHTY: All right. Last chance.
Anything? No? No.

Thank you all.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
went off the record at 3:05 p.m.)