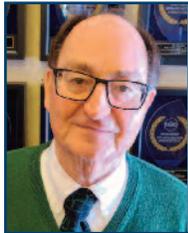


“One of America’s Finest Small Market Radio Broadcasting Companies”

32 YEARS OF RADIO BROADCAST EXCELLENCE A Legend Retires

Anyone who has ever had to leave a voicemail message at Heartland Communications Group for General Sales Manager Jeff Wagner, has heard Jeff wish them, “A GREAT Radio Day!” And that is exactly what Jeff has been doing for the last 32 years...having many GREAT radio days. Everyone around him has benefitted.



Jeff Wagner

Jeff will be retiring in April from the broadcast business in Northwest Wisconsin. His amazing influence for over three decades has influenced so many.

When told of Jeff Wagner’s retirement, the President of the Wisconsin Broadcaster’s Association, Michelle Vetterkind said, “I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to Jeff for his tremendous service to the broadcasting industry in the state of Wisconsin! I’ve known Jeff for over 25 years – and am most proud that he was awarded the WBA’s Local Broadcast Legends Award in 2018. Jeff truly epitomizes what LOCAL Broadcasting is all about! On behalf of the Wis-

consin Broadcasters Association — Congratulations, Jeff. Enjoy the Chapter – You deserve it!

The HCGazette contacted Jeff’s former boss, Bruce Grassman, CEO and owner of Results Broadcasting who said, “Jeff Wagner is ‘Radio-Radio.’ He always represented our company in the best possible way. He was trusted by his clients and highly respected by his fellow employees. Several years ago, it was my honor to nominate Jeff as a Wisconsin Broadcast Legend. Jeff received that honor and he earned it all the way. With Jeff’s retirement, radio is losing a GIANT.”

“Jeff Wagner is the most respected Senior Statesman and leader in the radio broadcasting industry in Wisconsin’s Northwoods,” according to Heartland CEO Jim Coursolle. “Jeff has left his positive mark on so many people whom he has touched in all his 42 years in small business of which 32 years were spent in radio broadcasting. I have learned a great deal from Jeff. I also want to thank Jeff’s wife Joyce, who has supported him all along the way. Jeff, you will be greatly missed by the gang at Heartland. Since you have chosen to retire in Eagle River, please stop by the stations often;

See **Legend**, Page 5



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Eagle River News

Jim Coursolle, CRMC
President and CEO

Wendi Ell, newsletter
designer and
publisher

www.heartlandcomm.com



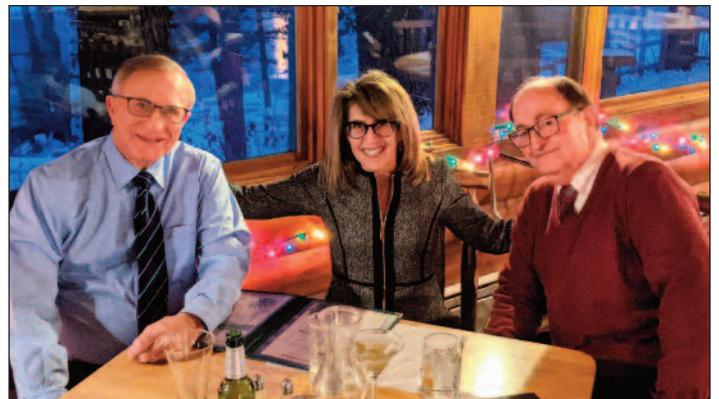
STACEY LAZARUS JOINS HEARTLAND EAGLE RIVER TEAM

13-year professional sales veteran Stacey Lazarus will bring her sales experience and knowledge to the Northwoods in March. She has accepted the position of General Sales Manager with the Heartland Eagle

River 4-station cluster.

Lazarus, a member of sales ‘President’s Club’ with 4 years consecutively averaging 150 percent of her sales goal, is a passionate marketer who believes in one of Heartland’s

See **Lazarus**, Page 5



Jim Coursolle, Stacey Lazarus and Jeff Wagner.

Pres. Release

Have you ever told someone to “Shut-up” or have you ever been told to “Shut-up?” I’m going to wager a guess and say, probably yes. Most of us have either been told to shut-up or have told someone else to shut-up in the past.

Sometimes, those two words were used with levity; other times they were used in anger or as a rude command, perhaps. Maybe, it was a mandate that you questioned and perhaps didn’t appreciate.

Here comes the segue: Your Freedom of Speech was being immediately curtailed. Whether justified or unjustified, you are being told to “Shut-up” or be silent. When we were kids, we may have been told that by a friend or classmate, but at least in my home, neither my Mom or Dad allowed either of those two words. Confession: I have used them, however, in the past. Sorry, Mom and Dad.



Jim Coursolle
President, CEO

I have been in the broadcasting business for over 60 years. I began in 1961 as a freshman with a college radio station. In all those 60 years, I have been taught and have come to understand that broadcasting among other things – had as its most important function the duty – to protect Freedom of Speech. College professors teaching broadcasting and speech classes drilled that into my head in those days.

Our Freedom of Speech is the first part of the United States Constitution’s Bill of Rights. The United States Founding Fathers knew that speech, or audio communication, was paramount. In an article I read, it outlined the fact that a deaf person learns much slower than a blind person. The article stated that at the ages between 12 and 15 years old, a deaf person is usu-

ally 5 to 6 years behind a blind person in learning skills. When I read that, I knew that my decision to dedicate my life to radio broadcasting — which is audio communication — was the right choice for me. People sometimes tend to believe that television which combines sight and hearing is more important than audio communication. But if that were the case, the telephone, and now smartphone, music and the sound of the words “I love you,” would fall on unmindful ears.

Our Founding Fathers knew that speech and the FREEDOM to be able to speak was the most important freedom that the United States Constitution could ever provide to an individual. Whether you are a

See **Freedom**, Page 5

“Whoever would overthrow the liberty of a nation, must begin by subduing the freeness of speech.”

– Benjamin Franklin

January Top Sellers



Sales Reps

Trish Keeley	\$24,196
Diane Byington	\$20,581
Tammy Hollister.....	\$17,280
Scott Larson.....	\$9,301
Tyler Ostman	\$9,136



BIRTHDAY “BROADCASTS”

FEBRUARY

no birthdays
this month

MARCH

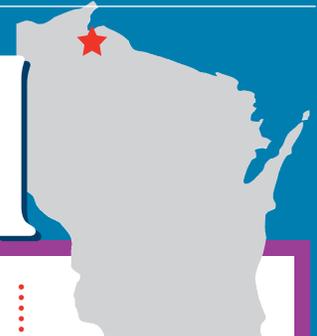
18th – Chris Oatman – *Eagle River*
29th – Steve Putney – *Ashland*

APRIL

no birthdays this month



Ashland



Valentine's Day Drawings

By John Warren,
General Manager

The 2021 Valentine's Day Promotions on WBSZ, WJH and WNXR consisted of three very nice packages including a one-night stay at the Hotel Chequamegon, \$50 dining certificate at 2nd Street Bistro, flowers from Country Buds Flower Shop, couples pedicure at California Nails, a couples massage from Main Street Massage, a cheese tray from Benoit Cheese Haus, "Just for Her" package from Home Expressions, a bottle of wine from Super H Foods and chocolates from Harbor House Sweets.

See **Ashland**, Page 6



WJH – Congrats Nancy Bares Marita pictured with Steve Stone.



WNXR - Congrats Michelle Connors Pictured with Dave Olson, aka Q Ball.



WBSZ - Congrats to Jeff Zunker Pictured with Rick St. Nick.

PD NOTES...

By Steve Putney,
Operations Manager
and Program Director

First Sports

On January 19th, the Ashland Stations created a first-ever broadcast of high school sports. WATW AM & FM focuses on the Indianhead Conference including the local Ashland Oredockers. WNXR FM has carried games for the Northwestern High School. On that Tuesday night, the two schools met in boy's basketball action. The game

was aired on both WATW and WNXR featuring first half play-by-play with Mike Granlund and 30-year veteran of calling Tigers games, then second half play-by-play by Nick Gima. It was the first time the two had called a game together and the first time the same play-by-play was accompanied by separate sponsors for each school and radio station. It was an exciting first for listeners and play-by-play team. We hope to do more network-type sports in the future.

WATW Sports Update

WATW AM & FM will be the

new home for the Milwaukee Brewers Baseball season. The team was previously heard on sister station WNXR FM. The 2021 season moves to WATW which also features the Wisconsin Badgers football and basketball, Green Bay Packers football as well as local football, basketball and hockey.

Christmas Trivia Giveaway

Jesse's Used Appliance in Ashland donated a washer and dryer

See **Programming**, Page 6



John Warren
Ashland
General Manager

www.wbszfm.com
www.wnxfm.com
www.wjihfm.com
www.watwbaycountry.com



Steve Stone
Operations
Manager and
Program Director

Eagle River



CRACK THE VAULT

By Mike Wolf,
Corporate Program Director

Coyote 93.7 and Mix 96 are giving listeners the chance to win \$25,000 on each station and all they have to do is Crack the Vault.

Listeners of these stations are being invited to attend one or all of the live broadcasts throughout

the Northwoods. At each location, listeners stop and enter a 5-digit code. So, where do they get their code? They simply make it up! Maybe it's a birthday, pet's birthday, an anniversary or just 5 numbers picked at random.

Its going to be a fun way to kick off the new year, especially with the possibility of winning \$25,000.



Jeff Wagner
Eagle River
General Sales Mgr.

www.wrjo.com
www.mix96northwoods.com
www.coyote937.com

F.O.R.K. Concert for the Kids

Coyote 93.7 will be participating in the 2nd Annual Concert for the Kids.

FORK is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization created to provide nutritional support to children from food-insecure homes within east-central and central Vilas County and now branching out into Oneida County.

To accomplish

this mission FORK works with people, businesses, and organizations within the greater Vilas and Oneida County communities to ensure that all children who need this kind of help are identified and provided nutritional support, leaving no child left behind.

In 2020 FORK, was greatly impacted by COVID-19. To ramp up donations for 2021,

FORK along with the help of Coyote 93.7, will put on the 2nd Annual Concert for the Kids.

This event is a gathering of bands from all over the Northwoods that will be aired on Coyote 93.7 and at www.coyote937.com June 5th. The night will also include interviews conducted by Jim Franklin, Coyote 93.7 morning host, with FORK board members along with local business owners.



WRJO Fish Fry Tour

The WRJO Friday Night Fish Fry Tour is setting sail in the Northwoods for year number five.

WRJO's Fish Fry Tour is a live broadcast event that invites listeners out to participate in a Wisconsin tradition on Friday nights. The evenings are complete with fun, food and winning.

The Wheel O' Fish is filled with prizes provide by restaurant sponsors such as appetizers, drinks, tchotchkes, fish fry certificates and of course the coveted Friday Night Fish Fry T-shirt.

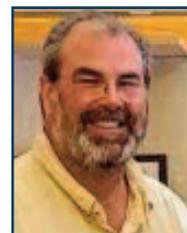
Each listener that comes to the live broadcast receives one free spin of the Wheel O' Fish to see



what prize they will win. Listeners can attend each live broadcast and spin once each week.

WRJO also takes entries from participants that enter them into a grand prize drawing to take place at the end of the tour that includes, two fish frys from each location as well as a two-person all-day guided fishing trip with a local Northwoods fishing guide.

The Fish Fry Tour has become very popular with WRJO listeners and has them marking their calendars to attend every week.



Mike Wolf
Corporate
Program Director



Jim Franklin
Program Director

909 N. Railroad Street, P.O. Box 309, Eagle River, Wisconsin 54521

Legend, from Page 1

Jenny and Wendy will keep the coffee on!”

Jeff’s radio career began in 1979 after Jeff spent 10 years in the restaurant business. He began as an owner and General Manager of WATK, WRLO and WACD in Antigo. When Marathon Media Group purchased WATK, WRLO and WACD and added WHDG, WRHN and WOBT, Rhinelander and WMAQ and WLKD, Minocqua, Jeff was named Regional General Manager.

Following that position, he became the General Manager of Badger Radio’s 5-station cluster in Marinette/Menominee.

In 2002, Jeff received a call from Berner Broadcasting’s owner Mary Berner and accepted the GM position of WRJO and WERL, Eagle River, where he served until 2005. In 2005, Heartland Communications Group (HCG) purchased the Eagle River stations and Wagner continued with HCG in the position of Eagle River market General Manager and Regional Sales Manager.

In 2010, Jeff accepted the General Manager position with Results Broadcasting, Rhinelander, who owned stations WCYE and WHOH where he remained until Results sold their Rhinelander stations to HCG in 2018.

Wagner rejoined HCG in 2018 where he serves as General Sales Manager for stations WRJO, WCYE, WNWX (formerly WHOH) and WERL FM & AM.

Jeff will be succeeded by — and assist in the transition of — veteran sales executive Stacey Lazarus, who joins Heartland as General Sales Manager from the New Jersey area.

**Lazarus**, from Page 1

cornerstone philosophies which is “Nothing Begins Before the Sale is Made.”

Lazarus majored in Communications in college, also attended the Connecticut School of Broadcasting and received a degree in March of 1995. Her recent job experience was with New Jersey’s Cablevision Sys-

tems and then with Altice USA after they acquired Cablevision.

She is just completing her training as a Certified Life Coach and expects to graduate in March 2021 with her professional certification. Her final classes are on-line as are many classes during the Coronavirus pandemic.

See **Lazarus**, Page 7

Freedom, from Page 2

Democrat, a Republican or just apolitical, I’d guess you would agree.

Early in February of 2021, President Joe Biden declared that the use of the words “China Virus” and “Kung Flu” would be considered “hateful speech” and there would be punitive action taken against anyone who would dare use such words.



That declaration, in my opinion, was illegal and unconstitutional. In the first place, most people living in this country and around the world know that the Coronavirus originated from China in a Wuhan Chinese laboratory. The “truth” should never be labeled as anything but the truth. For years, many diseases have been labeled by where they originated such as German measles or the Spanish flu.

Today, we even see social media banning the former President of the United States from using their services. Recently, an article appeared in the Wall Street Journal, that said a doctor and U.S. Senators using U.S. Senate testimony were banned from a certain social media site even though the testimony was on the record at the United States Congress and given under penalty of perjury. Stop and think about that for a minute. Someone was so arrogant that they told the United States Congress to “Shut-up!”

My youngest daughter met her husband when she was performing for a professional ballet company touring South America. She once told me in a conversation that my son-in-law’s family was chased out

of Nicaragua by the Communist Sandinistas. He saw the same kind of actions in Nicaragua that we are now seeing in the United States. His college-aged daughter, my granddaughter, once told me her father was genuinely concerned and nervous about the direction the United States was going in. It was the same direction that led Nicaragua — and according to him, later Venezuela — to become socialist/communist countries. Being from Central America, my son-in-law keeps in touch with his family members who now live in Brazil. They update him on things happening in South and Central America. Most of us know that Venezuela — now a disaster area destroyed by communism — was once a country that was incredibly wealthy. And, that was not so long ago. That destruction didn’t take long according to my son-in-law, It happened in a period of about a year or so. Suddenly, the people of his former country Nicaragua — he is a U.S. citizen today — woke up. But it was too late. Today, they live in fear. Speech and their activities are monitored. If they

See **Freedom**, Page 7

Ashland, from Page 3

Listeners were asked to submit to win on the WJJH Facebook Page, their funny Valentine story about how they met or a date that went wrong that led to their relationship.

In order to qualify WBSZ Listeners would listen for a sounder and call the studio and say "I Love Country Music on Z-93" including the name of their love.

Listen for a Silly Love Song on WNXR and call in and identify that song and qualify for a chance to win.



Happy Birthday Dave Olson aka Q Ball, who celebrated his 62nd Birthday Jan. 18.

Programming, from Page 3

combination to a Christmas Trivia Contest on J-96 (WJJH FM).

Listeners were given a Christmas trivia question to answer, and if the lucky caller answered the question, they qualified for a drawing that was held on December 24th during the morning show. The prize was valued at \$400 and included free delivery, warranty and installation. The winner ultimately donated the washer and dryer to a young couple who needed the appliances.

St. Nick, Z-93 morning guy, broadcast live from the event and helped judge the costumes. Even Wisconsin K-9s were a part of the celebration.

Requests & Dedications

"It all started with one listener insisting that I play a song for him daily," Steve Stone J-96 morning host explains. "Every day he would call and ask me to play a song. After a few weeks I thought, well, let's make it a feature of the morning show." Once it began, the floodgates of requests opened and the "You Pick Em, I Play Em' Request Hour" now become an hour of requests and dedications. Every weekday at 9 a.m. the J-96 is buzzing with phone calls and messages on Facebook. "It's a great hour of radio. The listeners come up with songs that don't get a lot of air-play." Ashland sales representative Shannon Anderson was able to find a local auto repair shop that now sponsors the hour as well. "The daily contact with listeners has really helped bridge the gap that COVID-19 created by not allowing us to be out in public as much with events and remotes," Stone says. "There will never be a replacement for local radio that is live and in touch with the listener. This feature is just that!"



Tail Gate Party

As the Packers prepared to face the Buccaneers, the Ashland Chamber of Commerce teamed up with Z-93 (WBSZ FM) for a "Tailgate Party and Parade" on main street in Ashland on January 23rd. All participants were encouraged to social distance as they competed in a costume contest. Everyone enjoyed the parade down main street featuring autos and floats from local residents and merchants. Rick



Front Row (L to R): Liz Seefeldt, Executive Director of The BRICK Ministries; Wendy Coffey Co-Owner of Coffey Oil; Shannon Anderson Heartland Communications Group Account Executive and Lorri Mattes Treasurer of The BRICK Ministries. Back Row (L to R): Tammy Hollister Heartland Communications Group Account Executive and Jim Coffey, Co-Owner of Coffey Oil.

Magic Stocking Supports The BRICK Ministries

Over the holiday season Coffey Oil teamed up with Heartland Communications Group to sponsor the Magic Stocking, an annual initiative that supports the work of The BRICK Ministries. Magic Stockings are placed in select area businesses before Thanksgiving and are in place through New Year's Day. Holiday shoppers are encouraged to drop their change, checks, or cash in the Magic Stocking. Coffey Oil matches the donations dollar for dollar up to \$1,000 with proceeds going to The BRICK. This initiative is an important way to ensure that The BRICK is able to provide services throughout the year.

Heartland Communications is a small market radio group serving north-central and northwestern Wisconsin with ten AM and FM radio frequencies. Coffey Oil is co-owned by Jim and Wendy Coffey and John Coffey and is the parent company of Lakeshore Holiday West fuel and convenience store. Both the Coffey's and Heartland Communication have been supporting The BRICK Ministries with the Magic Stocking every year, ensuring that The BRICK continues to serve the low income residents of Ashland and Bayfield Counties.

Heartland Communications Group North Sales scores big in December 2020, January and February 2021

Congratulations to Tammy Hollister, Shannon Anderson and Tyler Ostman on reaching the sales goal for December 2020. Not only did they obtain the station goal but they got it done by the middle of

the month. January and February have been a little more of a challenge but they got there with a lot of hard work. Thank you for your dedication! It's a great way to end 2020 and start the New Year!

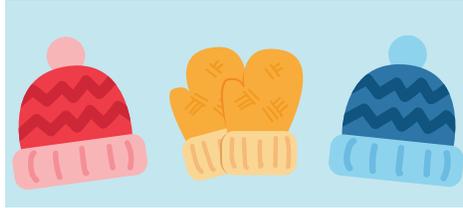
Lazarus, from Page 5

According to Heartland President & CEO, Jim Coursolle, “I am always concerned about people moving into the Northwoods. The tons of snow and the cold has already driven at least two of our former executives away. So, I hit the winter reality extremely hard when I interview.”

“Funniest thing, when interviewing Stacey, she was getting more snow in Englewood, NJ than we were getting in Northern Wisconsin. Her parents were from the Twin Cities area of Minnesota and even though Stacey’s years in high school were

spent in Las Vegas and later in California, she is certainly accustomed to winter weather. I had to laugh when she sent me a picture of her bright orange Jeep Wrangler buried in the New Jersey snow.”

Stacey visited the Northwoods a few weeks ago for three days and said she really



liked the Heartland staff and the entire beautiful area. “I’m really excited and looking forward to putting the move behind me, beginning my new position with Heartland.” Initially, Lazarus will be working with retiring Jeff Wagner during a transition period.

Lazarus already had a purchase offer accepted on a beautiful log home on many acres of timber land east of Eagle River. She also accepted an offer to sell her condo in NJ as she commits to becoming a resident of the beautiful Northwoods.

And yes, she told Coursolle that she went out and bought a new winter coat.

Freedom, from Page 5

step out of line, the consequences are dire.

I am afraid for the United States.

When people and/or the government start telling us what we can and cannot say and what is so-called “hate speech,” — “hate speech” falls under the category of all speech and is protected by our Constitution — we are in great trouble. Obviously, it doesn’t take a PhD to figure out that the government is attempting to control us. They are telling us to “Shut-up.” Every government’s attempt in history to lock down and control their citizens began with the restriction of speech.

I’m very surprised that broadcasting and newspaper organizations have not “shouted from the mountaintops” their disdain and distaste for anyone, any government, any organization, any business or anybody attempting to curtail Freedom of Speech.

These associations and organizations have members or affiliates which tend to be major networks, large broadcast and newspaper companies, etc. These networks, broadcast and newspaper companies have been guilty of trying to manipulate or curtail speech. They fail to broadcast or print the facts. They “spin” important stories, sit on realities and evidence that the public needs to know. They consistently, knowingly and allegedly twist stories and bend the truth. I’ve heard with my own ears one of the major national broadcast personalities recently say, “journalism is dead.” It may be dead with major networks or large broadcast and newspaper companies, but for the most part it is not dead in smaller markets. Recent national polls such as Gallup and Rasmussen have said that most of the American public don’t trust news organizations any longer. Like the railroads, broadcasting, newspapers,

social media, and other forms of journalism are watching their viability and credibility diminish. They have no one to blame but themselves.

Our United States government currently, is making every effort to curtail speech and to disallow Freedom of Speech. As a country, it is my opinion that we’d better be extremely careful or we will not be able to use the phrase “as a country” any longer. FREEDOM OF SPEECH is the most important freedom that the citizens of the United States possess. If we allow our government or the mainstream media including social media to take Freedom of Speech away from us — to “Shut us up” — we will have lost our country.

At Heartland Communications Group, and with many small market broadcast and newspaper companies throughout Wisconsin and the United States, Freedom of Speech is still alive and respected. Perhaps the national and statewide broadcast, newspaper and media association network companies should make FREEDOM OF SPEECH their major focal point. Since it has been so recently and greatly threatened, these broadcast and newspaper associations, networks and companies need to fend off any attempts by government, companies, organizations or anyone who restricts Freedom of Speech. After all, isn’t FREEDOM OF SPEECH the primary reason for broadcasting and the media’s existence?

FREEDOM OF SPEECH is the first protected FREEDOM of the United States Constitution’s Bill of Rights. Maybe we broadcasters (and other media) need to pay more attention to that fact. In our case, if we “Shut-up,” and are complicit in curtailing FREEDOM OF SPEECH, we will then most likely be disregarded. And, finally... we will be... SHUT DOWN.

