



"The Brown Network . . . WBRU,"  
Brown University Yearbook, 1947

## "From Gaspipes to Websites: Radio at Brown 1936-2006"

Exhibit, Lownes Room, John Hay Library  
Brown University  
February 21 - March 9  
Monday-Friday, 9 am - 5 pm

## Audio Documentary Launch & Reception "From Gaspipes to Websites"

February 25  
John Hay Library, 2 - 5 pm  
<http://bsrserv.bsrlive.com/alumni>

## Panel Discussion "The Importance of College Radio"

Sunday, February 25  
Smith-Buonanno Hall, Room 106  
7 p.m.

WBRU 95.5, BSR 88.1, Brown University's Department of American Civilization and the John Nicholas Brown Center present ***From Gaspipes to Websites: Radio at Brown 1936-2006***, an exhibit celebrating 70 years of Brown college radio — from the dorm-room experiment that started it all, to the 1960s FM revolution, to the students behind the stations today. The exhibit will be on view February 21 through March 9 at Brown University's John Hay Library, open 9-5 Monday through Friday.

On Sunday, February 25, from 2-5 p.m., join alumni and radio fans at the John Hay Library for a public reception and the launch of a new audio documentary about Brown radio, sponsored by the Creative Arts Council, The Cogut Center for the Humanities, and the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities. Pick up a free CD of the documentary at the exhibit, while supplies last! Once the exhibit opens, you will also be able to listen in Providence public libraries, for free online in the iTunes stores and at our alumni website at <http://bsrserv.bsrlive.com/alumni>

After the reception, WBRU and BSR alumni and current students present a panel discussion, ***The Importance of College Radio*** at 7 p.m. in Brown's Smith-Buonanno Hall, Room 106. Panelists include Peter Tannewald, '64; Don Berns, '69; Dan Oppenheim, '98; and Rita Cidre (General Manager, WBRU) '07 and Jason Sigal (General Manager BSR) '07. (Bios of panelists attached).

The exhibit and audio documentary are based on a group independent study course undertaken by student staffers at WBRU and BSR under the direction of Susan Smulyan, Associate Professor, Department of American Civilization in Fall 2006. Students worked in the Brown Archives at the John Hay Library (with the supervision of Gerald Gaidmore,

University Archivist) and in uncatalogued papers at both stations to compile a history of Brown radio. Amanda Murray, a Master's student in Brown's Public Humanities program, serves as curator of the exhibit. Materials from the exhibit, student essays, and the documents themselves will soon be available on a website developed with the Center for Digital Initiatives, Brown University Libraries.

The exhibit, "From Gaspipes to Websites" is not just a historical timeline, it's about the people behind the stations, then and now. The exhibit weaves together the students' motivations for working in radio, the topics they chose to research, and their ideas about the future of radio at Brown – in terms of collaborations, challenges, and changing technologies. It also traces the founding of The Brown Network in 1936, the growing involvement of Pembroke women during (and after) World War II, the transition from AM to FM in the 1960s (and with it the change from big band music to rock n roll), the impact of WBRU's award-winning news coverage, and the rebirth of BSR in the 1990s. These stories are told through a combination of documents and photographs from the University Archives of the John Hay Library, audio clips of interviews and airchecks, memorabilia from the BSR and WBRU studios, and historic radios from private collector and Brown graduate school alumnus, Ned Connors. Among the cool objects in the exhibit:

- Photographs from the early decades of Brown radio showing students involved in radio, both around campus and in the studios, and the changing studios in which they worked
- A photograph and transcript of WBRU's 10th Anniversary Broadcast in 1946
- Pembroke and Brown yearbook photos, from the 1940s to the present
- A 1953 Heelers' Manual for new interns
- An array of local and national newspaper and magazine articles from each era highlighting campus debates about the role of WBRU, debates that fueled the creation of BSR
- Framed WBRU-FM logo art from the 1960s and program guides showing how the music format changed
- WBRU's "wall of T-shirts" from the 1990s and Summer Concert Series poster art
- Antique radios from the 40s, 50s, and 60s which show the technology through which college students listened. The radios are from the collection of Ned Connors, who received his MA in American Civilization.

The audio documentary, also titled "From Gaspipes to Websites," chronicles the history of 70 years of radio at Brown University. The sixty-minute documentary includes music, archival tape, and stories from listeners, DJs, reporters, and employees. It transports the listener on the journey from the dorm-room broadcasts of freshman George Abraham in 1936 to the modern day stations of WBRU and BSR, which reach hundreds of thousands of listeners and are staffed by more than a hundred students and non-students. The documentary was produced by three students at Brown who work at WBRU and BSR: Rita

Cidre, Lindsey Gaydos, and Jason Sigal. The executive producer is Paul McCarthy, a Brown alum and professional public radio producer. McCarthy has done work for public radio programs including This American Life, Weekend Edition, Talk of the Nation, and WRNI's Focus Rhode Island. He is also the creator of the radio documentary series "Inside Out: Rhode Island Radio Stories" and the interview program "Not Your Classroom."

After the reception on February 25, three Brown alumni and two current Brown students will participate in the second of a series of panel discussions on radio sponsored by the Department of American Civilization and the John Nicholas Brown Center, at Brown University. Over its history, radio has proven one of the most flexible of media, constantly reinventing itself, and that flexibility becomes more interesting in a changing media world. We want to look at why and how radio continues to play a role in our daily lives by talking to practitioners and scholars who consider radio programming and radio structure. The February 25<sup>th</sup> discussion, "Brown Radio: The Importance of College Stations" will consider such questions as how participation in college radio affects students' lives and careers; the way college radio changes American broadcasting; and the unique place of Brown radio in the history of radio and the history of college broadcasting. Biographies and titles of panel participants attached.

### **Contact Information**

Ann Dodge, John Hay Library, [Ann\\_Dodge@brown.edu](mailto:Ann_Dodge@brown.edu) (401) 863-3723,

Susan Smulyan, Department of American Civilization (401) 863-1694,

[Susan\\_Smulyan@brown.edu](mailto:Susan_Smulyan@brown.edu)

Chelsea Shriver, John Nicholas Brown Center, (401) 863-1177,

[Chelsea\\_Shriver@brown.edu](mailto:Chelsea_Shriver@brown.edu)

Amanda Murray, [Amanda\\_Murray@brown.edu](mailto:Amanda_Murray@brown.edu) (202) 641-1121 (on the exhibit)

Paul McCarthy, [paulbmccarthy@gmail.com](mailto:paulbmccarthy@gmail.com) (401) 258-2089 (on the audio documentary)

---

## **PANEL DISCUSSION**

### **February 25, 2007: Brown Radio: The Importance of College Stations**

(in conjunction with exhibit at the John Hay Library and audio documentary launch; and a Group Independent Study Project, "Brown Radio History")

**Smith-Buonanno, Room 106, 7 p.m.**

- Susan Smulyan, Associate Professor, Department of American Civilization, Moderator
- Peter Tannenwald, Brown, '64, VP of Irwin, Campbell & Tannenwald, P.C., communications lawyer, legal counsel to WBRU and former WBRU Board Member
- Don Berns, Brown, '69, radio and club DJ for alternative musics, known in Canada as "Dr. Trance"; helped develop rave culture in Toronto
- Dan Oppenheim '98
- Rita Cidre, Brown '07, former General Manager, WBRU
- Jason Sigal, Brown '07, General Manager, BSR

BIOS

**Peter Tannenwald, Brown '64**

Peter Tannenwald worked as a disc jockey, news reporter, News Director, Chief Engineer, and finally General Manager at WBRU in the early-1960s. He has been WBRU's legal counsel since 1967 and has served in both elected and appointed positions with the Federal Communications Bar Association. He is currently Vice President of Irwin, Campbell & Tannenwald, P.C., where he practices communications law.

**Don Berns, Brown '69**

Don Burns started his 35-plus year radio career at WBRU. He has been a radio personality at stations across the U.S., including stops in Buffalo, Dallas, San Diego, Kansas City, and Pittsburgh. From 1985 to 2000, Berns became a nationally known club DJ under the name "Dr. Trance," and he helped to develop rave culture in Toronto.

**Dan Oppenheim, Brown '98**

Bio forthcoming

**Rita Cidre, Brown '07**

In her hometown of San Juan, Puerto Rico, Rita used radio to combat the city's traffic problems. She was always tuned in to her favorite stations in the car but never thought she would end up working in one. In 2003 she started working in the News Department at WBRU and in her sophomore year she stepped in as News Director. Later in 2006 Rita was elected the station's General Manager, a role that sparked a scholarly interest in radio. Rita hopes to make radio part of her life forever and she is applying to work at National Public Radio.

**Jason Sigal, Brown '07**

Jason Sigal is the General Manager of BSR, where he has also served as Rock Director, Production Director, and Program Director. After Jason's family moved from California to New Jersey in 1998, he discovered WPRB, a college-community station based out of Princeton University, which made the move worthwhile. Jason started off as a high school intern at WPRB, and returned to work as Sales Director in the summer of 2004. In his first season at BSR, Jason became lead producer of "Exposure" and launched the free-form music program "Continuous Hit Music."