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Gambling's fans sound off

By MAUREEN NEVIN DUFFY
Correspondent

The loss of John R. Gambling's radio show on WABC-AM (770) still is reverberating with area listeners.

We reported the substitution of Curtis Sliwa for the morning slot formerly inhabited by Gambling in our March 23 column and listeners wrote in hopping mad.

GKen, who e-mailed omitting a name, said, "Enough of Sliwa! Too much — commercials, radio time, etc. How greedy can he get? (The) loss of John Gambling — big loss — makes me turn off (the) radio a lot. Too bad."

Ronald from Holmdel typed us a beautiful letter, which arrived via snail mail. A "long time listener to the Gambling radio show," Ronald said he found Gambling "enjoyable to listen to and a real gentleman, (who) certainly didn't deserve to be treated like he was." Ronald, like others, wanted to know where Gambling is now. We wish we could tell him. We've poked around on the Internet but couldn't find any stories following the last about his firing, of which there were many. We did send a message through WABC's radio Web site. Hopefully, we'll learn something from that.

Bearing in mind that for every person who writes, there are many others who care just as much but don't get around to putting their thoughts into pixels or pen to paper. Here is another note from a reader who signs himself "A New Jersey Broadcast Veteran" — "This is my take on the WABC stuff. Citadel Broadcasting way overpaid for the ABC radio group last year, and to make it worse, the ad market proceeded to soften. Citadel laid off hundreds nationwide (including morning newsman George Weber at WABC and Rocky Allen at co-owned WPLJ). Gambling was a prime target for layoff (short show, big contract, dip in timeslot ratings between Imus and Limbaugh, no loyalty to him on the part of the new owners).

"They were already paying Curtis his full morning salary by contract, so now they get him to do two more hours a day and they save the big Gambling salary. My opinion is that they will cut Sliwa, too, when his contract expires, slide Imus back to 5 to 9 a.m. and run the syndicated Glenn Beck show (not currently heard in NY), live from 9 until noon, leading into (Rush) Limbaugh (or maybe just do two hours of Beck from 10 to noon, if the I-Man (Imus) doesn't want to get up any earlier)."

Some readers wanted us to get their message across to WABC. Patti in Point Pleasant e-mailed this:

"Read your article about the shakeup at WABC this morning. Hooray for you to acknowledge this change in the lineup. I am just devastated by the new morning programming. I enjoyed the jousting of Curtis and Kuby and then the remarkable intelligence of John Gambling. John was always thoughtful about his opinions and reasonable about his conclusions.

"Radio is always on in my house while I go through my daily chores. Learned so much from John. Now we have to deal with a tired old war horse, Imus, who is often unintelligible, slurring his words. Lots of dead air. Then almost two hours of Curtis whom I admire for his courage and his hard fought rise to fame. But let's face it. He's no John Gambling. Really furious with ABC. The station is history

for me in the morning.

"I hope you can forward this to the 'powers that be' at ABC. Congratulations for a great article."

Thanks, Patti, but we might be overstepping our bounds to actually direct this mail to WABC. However, we did send our own e-mail asking where Gambling can be heard now.

At this point, he can't," the Webmaster replied. "I'm sure once he is on another station it will be widely reported."

You can leave a message of your own for management at: www.wabcradio.com. You can also call the main switchboard at (212) 613-3800 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Maureen Nevin Duffy hosted "Asbury Radio — The Radio Voice of Asbury Park," a weekly public affairs talk show at WYGG-FM, for more than six years. Have a morning DJ Story to share? Please send it or your ideas for Radio Somewhere or comments to AsburyRadio@aol.com or 3 Deal Lake Court, Asbury Park, NJ 07712.
