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Radio dedications are still free: THIS IS DEDICATED TO THE ONES WE LOVE

By *MAUREEN NEVIN DUFFY*

With state-of-the-art radio broadcasting made up of CD cuts and pre-aired shows on demand via Internet, and voice tracking and national news broadcasts eliminating live announcers, it's a rare treat to turn the dial and hear a live personal dedication.

There are generations of people who grew up with the warmth of knowing that at least someone out there had a sweetheart so in love as to profess their feelings for all to hear.

And what a boon the dedication is for the un-poetic to convey deep emotions through a skillful song writer and the stirring base of a talented singer.

The radio dedication may be a true American tradition. Whether the dedicator wants to reach a burning torch across the airwaves to a lost love, or just remind the gal he left behind at breakfast that she's still the one, the sentiment comes through clearly.

Think about what that means in this age. The message can't be reduced to something cold or pre-packaged, or material in the basic sense — meaning it can't be weighed or measured and compared to more luxurious dedications or cooler expressions. The dedication stands alone as a pure symbol of romantic love.

Still free

Miraculously, commercialization of the airwaves has not turned dedications into a revenue stream. Even in the depths of — choose one — Slowdown, Recession, Depression or depression — it is still absolutely free.

And dedications haven't been allowed to fall victim to the baser humans who might have manipulated them into some commercial message or clever double entendre. Of course, there is nothing stopping a dedicator from sending off a flirty or seductive song — that's part of love, too, after all. "Afternoon Delight" is probably a popular selection. What better way for a busy lover to convey an intimate desire?

As part of one generation that grew up with dedications, these messages have taken on a deeper, in some cases bittersweet flavor. I'm thinking of a recent Sunday morning, when Ken Dashow — yes he's still around and greater than ever — read a dedication on his "Breakfast with The Beatles" show over WAXQ's Q104.3 FM, a classic-rock station out of New York City.

A wife undergoing cancer treatments wanted to express her gratitude to her husband for supporting and caring for her. Dashow, with his discipline and wisdom directing measured tones, read the woman's words about how her husband shunned any praise, saying it was his role to help her.

But the woman, Michelle, noted that many husbands can't cope with the strong emotions and turn off to their wives — or worse, desert them. Her husband remained emotionally close, something she needed as much or more than medicine.

And so Michelle wanted him to know that whether they have one year ahead of them or 50, "In My Life I've Loved You More."

Closer to home, Dan Wilson also plays requests on Wilson's "Ice Cream Hour," 9 a.m. to noon each Saturday over WHTG's Great Gold 1410 AM. You can listen to the show while you share a homemade ice cream sundae with someone special at Wilson's Ursula Plaza shop in Long Branch.

Asbury Park Press radio correspondent Maureen Nevin Duffy created and hosted "Asbury Radio — The Radio Voice of Asbury Park," a weekly public-affairs talk show over WYGG, 88.1FM. It continues as a blog on AsburyRadio.com. Please send your comments and suggestions regarding Radio Somewhere to

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