

WSLQ switches format

Roanoke-area radio stations are continuing to shuffle musical formats in their determination to grab a piece of the audience. The latest switch is that of WSLQ (99.1, FM), also known as Q99, which has returned to the album rock that it played before joining the Top-40 gang.

Top 40 has become a bit crowded, what with WROV (1240, AM), WXLK (92.3, FM), WFIR (960, AM) and WUEZ (1480, AM) all mining that same shallow vein.

★ ★
Journeyman disc jockey Pat Garrett has taken his services to WROV on a parttime basis. He's spinning those old platters from midnight Friday until 6 a.m. Saturday for the Valley's top-rated station.

★ ★
WROV, incidentally, wasted no time in raising the money for Suzy Mink's expenses as an Olympic torch bearer. Rob O'Brady, who regularly lends himself to good causes in addition to being one of the valley's most agreeable radio personalities, raised the estimated \$650 from listeners during a single show early in the week.

Ms. Mink, a Hollins alumna and staff member, is one of 52 runners who will carry the official Olympic torch from Yorktown, Va., to Lake Placid, N.Y., for the 1980 Winter Games. The torch will be ferried to Yorktown by air and will be carried the 1,000 miles to Lake Placid by runners working in relays over nine days.

★ ★
WPVR (94.9, FM) will be doubling the power of its signal, from 50,000 to 100,000 watts, this summer. That's the word from Jim Gibbons, owner of WPVR and its sister AM

station, WFIR.

Now that everyone else seems to have dropped it in their quest for the big-spending young audience, WPVR holds a lock on the "beautiful music" format which is popular among more mature listeners.

★ ★
The audience for opera is small, but loyal and demanding. Listeners haven't hesitated to complain to WVWR (89.1, FM) about the sound quality on the public radio station's Saturday afternoon broadcasts of Texaco-sponsored Metropolitan Opera performances.

Station manager Steve Mills is pleased to report, therefore, that improvement is on the way. A new transmission line was to go into service today. Listeners will find the sound much better and, for the first time, will be able to hear the opera in stereo.

Today's opera, incidentally, is Puccini's "Tosca," at 2 p.m. with Montserrat Caballe in the title role. Also performing will be Giuseppe Giacomini as Cavaradossi, Cornell MacNeil as Scarpia and Renato Capecchi as Sacristan.

★ ★
Guitarist Kim Simmonds, leader of the rock group Savoy Brown, will be the subject of a three-part "Long Live Rock" special on WVWR. The shows will air successive Fridays at 11 p.m. starting Feb. 1.

Ben Cromer, host of the show, will talk with Simmonds, whom he interviewed while Savoy Brown was in Roanoke recently, and play the band's music.

— JEFF DeBELL