

Community News Editor

Eric Stutz
341-1100, ext. 3707
estutz@th-record.com

Community

Send calendar items, school news, club news
and photos of family celebrations by e-mail to:

Deborah Medenbach
Community News Coordinator
800-295-2181, ext. 6606
dmedenbach@th-record.com

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Napanoch broadcaster brings theater to satellite

By Deborah Medenbach

Times Herald-Record
dmedenbach@th-record.com

Napanoch — Joe Bevilacqua is a polar-opposite soul brother to Howard Stern. He's been in the radio business for more than 25 years and, like Stern, is a huge proponent of XM Satellite Radio as the wave of the future.

Bevilacqua's work is so old-school squeaky clean that FCC regulators can probably nap safely while his broadcasts are on the airwaves.

But Bevilacqua and his wife, Lorie Kellogg, are turning away from working on commercial radio for the same reason Stern is.

"Satellite radio has room for everything. There are so many channels with potential for something unique. There's a more diverse palette of music and broadcasting and room to be thoughtful. You can't do that in commercial radio," Bevilacqua said.

Like the early days of cable television, Bevilacqua and Kellogg look forward enthusiastically to the wide-open world of satellite broadcasting as the future venue for their radio theater and documentary pieces.

XM currently broadcasts their comedy shows five days a week.

The move to the cutting edge requires only a good computer and microphone. The programs are e-mailed or sent on CDs to XM from Bevilacqua's home studio.

The couple have a nice view of the mountains from the house on Irish Cape Road they've lived in for the last three years. Kellogg's art studio shed is perched in the front yard. Three dogs sound a welcoming bay as visitors walk to the small house, ducking under a laundry line of Tibetan prayer flags flapping by the front door.

When a visitor enters the living room, eyes are immediately drawn upward to a network of white birch logs that hint at something Joe and Lorie know for certain — every corner of their house is a Zen garden of inspiration they riff on in their Camp Waterlogg radio shows. A postage-stamp sized bathroom plastered with Buster Keaton images expands like a sodden sponge into "Buster's Bath House" in their radio skits.

They have attempted to trans-

form their home into a replica of the ranger station in the Yogi Bear cartoons. Since Joe's first voice mentor was the late Daws Butler, the creator of Yogi Bear, Huckleberry Hound and other memorable voices of the 1960s, the effort makes sense. An atmosphere of folk art and sophisticated sound equipment merge to create radio theater of a distinctly upbeat, G-rated variety.

"Everything here we add into the show," Bevilacqua said.

It's a life mission for this couple and their acting team from Liquid Comedy to entertain, not assault their audience.

"Our work is about keeping it nice," Kellogg said. "It's not about uncovering fraud or busting the bad guy. Happiness is someplace for everyone."

"I worked at NPR in the 1980s. It was a time of incredible inventiveness," Bevilacqua said. "Public radio today is milquetoast. It's lulling. They don't want to offend anyone." The couple hope the "Liquid Comedy" and "Comedy-o-Rama" productions will add diversity to the XM Satellite Radio market.

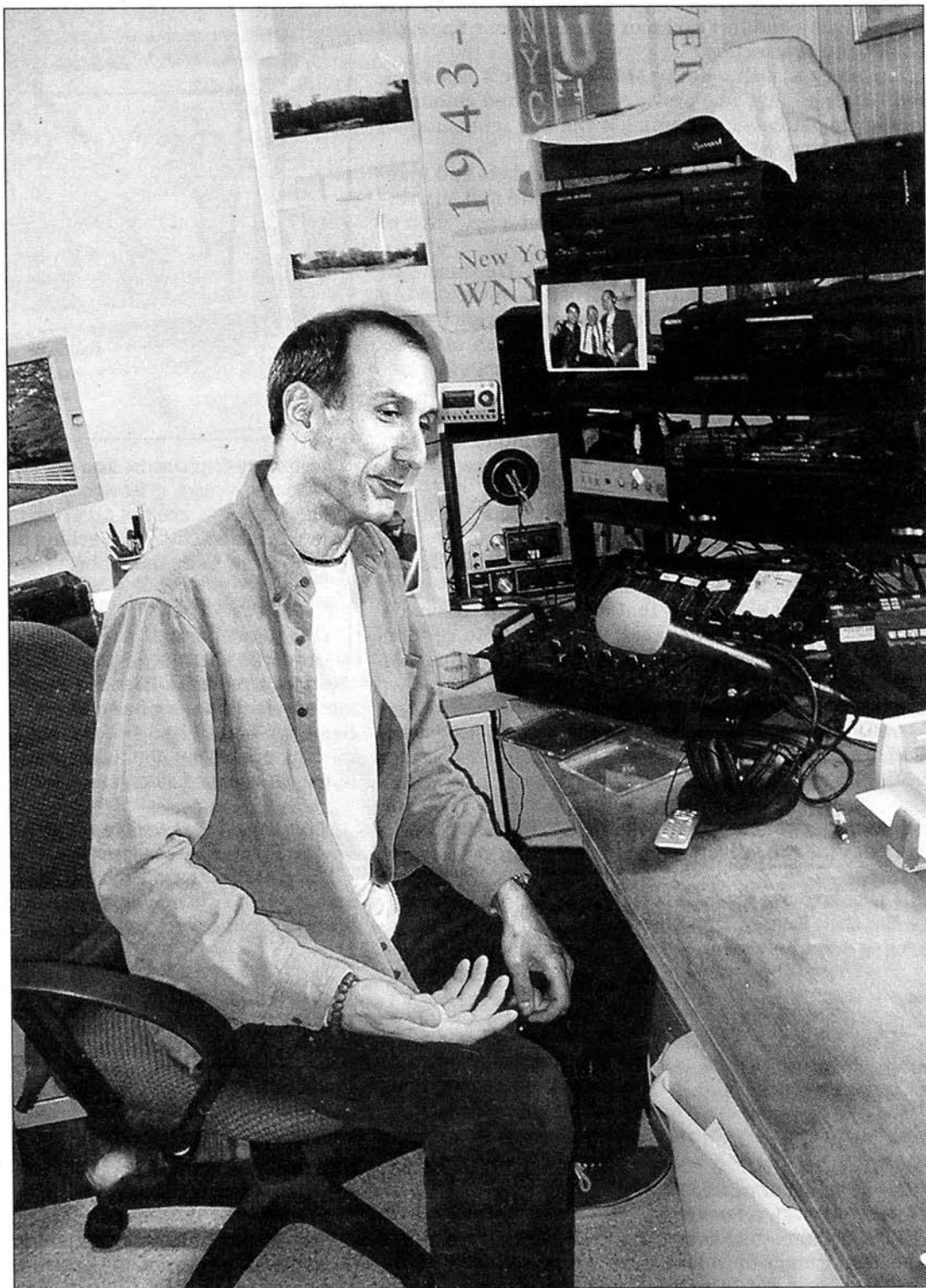
Bevilacqua created award-winning radio documentaries on the cultural assets of Austin, Texas, when he was a broadcaster there. He hopes to create similar pieces for XM, as well as producing inspirational fillers with Sounds True Publishers for commercial and satellite radio markets.

Bevilacqua worked with mentor Daws Butler for 13 years. Bevilacqua published a collection of Butler's skits last year and co-wrote an authorized biography this year. The biography, "Daws Butler: Characters Actor," will be available in December from Bear Manor Media in Pennsylvania (www.bearmanor-media.com).

The book's forward is by fellow Butler student and friend Nancy Cartwright, the voice of Bart Simpson.

Like Butler, Bevilacqua splits his time between working in his chosen field and teaching radio acting skills to the next generation. He currently teaches presentational speech at SUNY Ulster and is developing a radio production curriculum for next fall.

For more information about Bevilacqua and Kellogg's radio shows, books and classes, go to www.comedyorama.com.



ABOVE: Joe Bevilacqua in his radio production studio in Napanoch. Bevilacqua and fellow actors from the Liquid Comedy team create improvisational radio theater pieces here for XM Satellite Radio's radio theater channel.

Photos by

**DEBORAH
MEDENBACH**

LEFT: Joe Bevilacqua and his wife, Lorie Kellogg, in their Irish Cape Road home. They have tried to make their home look like the ranger station from Yogi Bear cartoons in honor of Bevilacqua's mentor Daws Butler, the voice of Yogi. The home's features are the inspiration for many of their "Camp Waterlogg" skits on XM Satellite Radio.