It's not difficult to pick veteran radio broadcaster Jim du Bois out of a crowd. In fact, his voice, his handshake, his poise and his boisterous laugh make it almost impossible. Heartfelt and genuine, but sound bite-short and contained, it's clear he has spent his fair share of time behind a microphone.

Born and raised in Minneapolis, du Bois has worked and lived here his whole life (other than a couple short stints out of state, including one semester of law school at the University of North Dakota). Radio, it seems, has always been in his veins. "I liked the idea that — before the Internet — voices could travel hundreds of miles," he says.

While still mastering multiplication tables, du Bois assembled his first pirate radio station. From there he climbed the radio ropes, first volunteering at Minneapolis Public Schools' KREEM and, later, at age 16, grabbing his first paying gig.

One Friday night, when most other 16-year-olds were probably less than concerned with their careers, Jim received a call from a family friend, the program director at a Twin Cities radio station. His three-part timers were all missing in action — one was recently pink-slipped, one was sick and one was on vacation. "I just needed to show up and keep it on the air," he told du Bois, who did just that. Ever since, he's been cultivating a career in the studio.

Throughout the past few decades, du Bois has held a variety of positions in radio programming, from on-air to news to management to his current position as president and CEO of the Minneapolis Broadcasters Association. His day-to-day provides du Bois with a variety of tasks, from producing the weekly public affairs show Access Minneapolis, which airs on about 45 radio stations statewide, to assembling its monthly television companion. That's what du Bois was working on this morning before a bunch at Buster's on 8th he had just finished editing the recent show on community gardening.

It's not all roses, though, Twice, including last December, du Bois was embedded in Iraq with the Army National Guard with just a couple of audio recorders and a professional video cam on his back. He also spends a great deal of time considering the future of the industry and how to protect and promote broadcasting.

"I see a lot of interesting things ahead, perhaps in the Chinese-cursed sense," du Bois explains. "I get to monitor the ever-evolving broadcasting industry. We figure out how to survive and prosper in the years ahead, which is certainly a challenge, but the industry has had challenges before."

But what does du Bois do when he's not on the job or contemplating the future of his craft? He kicks back and relaxes with, well, radio. His current prized possession: A 1929 Atwater Kent, the vintage treasure of his house, that's built into a sideboard table, and — thanks to du Bois's restoring — is now clean of a crust of dust and dirt. Who says you shouldn't take your work home with you?

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**THE TWINS CITIES’ TOP 5 MOMENTS IN RADIO AND TELEVISION HISTORY, ACCORDING TO JIM DU BOIS**

1992: "Wireless" experiments begin at the University of Minnesota College of Engineering. The first signals are joyfully and gratefully heard from experimental radiotelegraph station WRU 1 by 1992 actual broadcasting begins on WLU-AM, which later becomes KUMN-AM. In 1993, Minnesota's first radio station in continuous operation moves into Radio Car and radio is banned from the air by an advisory panel that would later be overturned.

1949: KSTP-TV signs on as Minneapolis' first commercial television station. In the ensuing years, KSTP is home to several significant broadcasting "firsts," notably its distinction in 1941 as the first station in the country to broadcast all of its programming in color. In the early 1980s, station executive Stanley S. Hubbard proposes a system of satellite-like home broadcasting in 1994, Hubbard Broadcasting launches United States Satellite Broadcasting, which is eventually acquired by DirecTV.

1960s through mid-70s: The Twin Cities witnesses a classic battle between several Top 40 radio stations. WCCO-AM in Minneapolis is purchased by Todd Storz, inventor of the Top 40 concept, but he soon has a competitor across the river in St. Paul, KYMB-AM, in the 1970s, KSTP-AM and WCCO-FM (the short-lived but much-loved L5020) enter into the fray. But by the early '80s, only KYMN remains in the format. (Note: radiohistory.com has records of these stations during this era.)

1970s through mid-80s: The "Golden Age" of kids' TV programming in the Twin Cities. The sets are simple and the production is crude by contemporary standards, but a generation of young people is纽带ed to Axel, Carmen the Name, Nancy and Willie, Casey Jones and Roundhouse Rockey, Captain Gary and Miss Betty and a slice of others. The local Fox7 "Kid's TV" show signs off for good in 1987 when federal rules prohibit the hosts from endorsing products on-air (see 1989 broadcast of Axel and His Dog on youtube.com/ user/fnks/Museum).

1980s and 1990s: On May 5, 1992, the Twin Cities area is struck by a series of deadly tornadoes. WCCO-AM was one of the few stations that managed to keep the airwaves open, using phone calls from listeners who were able to help track the tornadoes as they ravaged the metro area. The station's broadcast is credited with saving countless lives thanks to the early warning of the approaching tornadoes. In 1996, KARE-TV broadcasts live video of a tornado in Hoffman from the station's helicopter piloted by "Max" Max Israelson, who WCCO coverage of the KARE tornadoes at radiohistory.com/specialevents.html. Watch KARE's live tornado video at youtube.com/watch?v=37qGJG43Aw.

The Pavilion of Broadcasting in St. Louis Park was an important resource in creating this list. The museum is home to a unique collection of radio, television, equipment and Minneapolis broadcasting memorabilia. Each year, thousands of area children participate in its educational programs, and it is open to the public. Find out more at pavilionmuseum.org.

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