

Allison's talk show makes comeback

The next time you want to ask your neighbor, don't even bother running next door—just phone 525-5350.

Bob Allison, who hosted the morning "Ask Your Neighbor" radio talk show for 16 years on WWJ, made his first broadcast from Garden City's WID radio station Monday morning.

It was just like old times—one of his listeners even sent him a bouquet of flowers.

Allison left WWJ a month ago when the station's switch to an "all news" broadcast policy eliminated the show there.

The format at the new station is the same—question and answer call-ins—but the show's now one hour instead of two hours. That time change has led to a couple of other changes, including an experiment Allison isn't quite sure will work.

"We're going to try to answer all the questions on the same show," explained Allison, a Birmingham resident. "Maybe it won't work, but if it does, it will be great radio."

It seemed to work just dandy Monday morning, thank you.

In fact, after two people called in with answers for a woman who needed to remove—gently—adhesive tape from the recently cropped ears of a Doberman pup, Allison decided he'd had enough and asked listeners not to phone in any more answers.

Magically, out went the little white "hold" buttons on a screening phone operated by Livonia resident Linda Purvis.

Then there was a woman—all the callers were women—who wanted to know how to clean an aluminum coffee pot. Allison named a commercial product, and a caller suggested cream of tartar.

"That must have been the 1,000th coffee pot I've cleaned," said Allison after the show.

The first minutes of the show were plagued with "greetings," as Allison referred to them on-the-air. A 10- or 15-second tape delay wasn't delaying all the conversation at one point, so that questions and responses were broadcast simultaneously.

Allison, who seems to be just as nice a guy as he sounds like on the radio, handled the interruption like a pro, however, even using it as a convenient "segue" into a commercial.

"You'll never have foul-ups with such-and-such heating and cooling," said Bob, calmly.

Engineer Foster Braum, meanwhile, was pawing at the air around him in desperation, looking for the source of the problem and sweating.

That wasn't as bad, though, as those



"Ask Your Neighbor" host Bob Allison has brought the popular radio talk show back to this area via WID. Allison and engineer Foster Braum launched the first show this week. (Staff photo by Art Emanuel)

first few seconds of the show when WID, that's 1090 on your AM dial, was using expensive air time and thousands of dollars in equipment to broadcast.

"Dead air," yelled a receptionist as she scurried down the hall.

"This is the first live phone-in show we've had here," said station manager Ron Gerak. "We'll work it out."

A second-format change in the new "Ask Your Neighbor" is the elimination of live recipe broadcasts, a tragedy for old-time fans. Never again will we hear "the white of six eggs," in some screechy, real-world voice followed immediately by "the white of six eggs," spoken with the authority and God-like presence only a professional broadcaster seems able to conjure up at will.

But then, Allison is still selling cookbooks compiled in part from those recipes—13 different ones.

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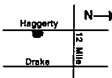
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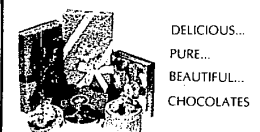
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