

A word with Evil Irv

By Tom Waring
Times Staff Writer

Irv Homer recognizes the power of a radio talk show host.

The veteran talker has been able, with little effort, to change the topic on his show from a discussion of the Vietnam War to a debate over the merits of Tastykakes vs. Twinkies.

"You can lead people by the nose," he said.

Homer, a Wissinoming native and former longtime Parkwood resident, used to own three saloons. He listened and spoke to customers and was a talk radio fan.

Occasionally, he'd place a call to one of the radio hosts.

"I used to call and needle the hell out of them," he said.

Later, he worked at stations in Media and Chester before debuting on WWDB (96.5 FM) on March 17, 1975. At the time, 'DB was the first FM talk station in the nation.

Homer worked the 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. shift, earning \$75 a week. He remained behind the microphone until November 2000, when the station switched to 1980s music.

Since then, he has voiced his opinion on Sunday mornings on *Inside Story* on Channel 6. He loves squaring off with the three other panelists.

"Television's great," he said.

Homer also had a weekday afternoon show on WBCB (1490 AM) and a Sunday night show on WPHT (1210 AM). The show on the 50,000-watt Big Talker didn't work out too well because management didn't like the host's harsh criticism of syndicated star Rush Limbaugh.

Homer also tired of the 'BCB gig a couple of years ago but has been back on the air since Dec. 1. He mans the 1 to 2 p.m. slot on the Levittown-based station, which is co-owned by Eagles broadcaster Merrill Reese.

At age 84, Homer loves discussing the news of the day.

"It keeps my mind occupied," he said.

Known affectionately by fans as "Evil Irv," he was a bit irascible on a recent show. He wasn't too happy to take a call from Ruth about sardines. And Albert angered him when he called on people to join the Peace Corps to bring "peace on Earth."

The host started snoring on air, then said, "I've got to get out of this business."

While Homer might get disenchanted with a caller's topic or disagree with an opinion, he is very excited about a show broadcast on his Web site, www.irvhomer.com

The online broadcast debuted on Monday. It can be heard every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8 to 9 p.m. Homer can talk about whatever he wants and bring on his favorite guests. Psychic Valerie Morrison is scheduled for Jan. 30.

"I'm uninhibited from managers, sponsors and language," he said. "And I have a bigger audience, so we don't have to talk about sardines."

Besides working, Homer spends his time watching movies, listening to short-wave radio and tuning in to interviews on National Public Radio. He also remains actively involved in the leadership of the Sunshine Foundation, which provides wishes for terminally and seriously ill children.

A Feasterville resident, he lost his wife of 53 years, Francine — better known to listeners as "Queenie" — to cancer in April 2007.

The radio job allows him to talk about current events.

On a recent show, he said it "boggles my mind" that Israel comes under criticism for retaliatory strikes against the militant group Hamas.

He also called on the same scrutiny of Caroline Kennedy — who wants to take Hillary Clinton's New York Senate seat when Clinton becomes secretary of state — as there was of Republican vice presidential nominee Sarah Palin. And he warned about the dangers of using cell phones, playing CDs, watching DVDs and monitoring a GPS — all while driving in heavy traffic.

"There are too many gizmos and gadgets in the average automobile," he said.

In response to Bo, a caller who said other nations shouldn't interfere in wars, Homer offered a novel concept for fighting.

"I think everybody who loves war should enlist, regardless of their age," he said.

Homer also has an interesting take on organ donation. He's willing to donate his kidneys to his worst enemy.

"I want him to get up four times a night to go to the bathroom," he said.

Politically, he generally follows a libertarian ideology. He doesn't like Republicans or Democrats, conservatives or liberals. He thinks that if a politician keeps just 30 percent of his promises, he should receive only 30 percent of his salary.

As for talk radio, he notes that liberals can't get their act together to break what he sees is a bloc of right-wing shows.

"The thing that made WWDB successful was the diversity of opinion," he said.

The way Homer sees it, he's glad to have an outlet to express his views.

"It keeps me off the streets and out of the pool room from one to two," he said. ••

To reach Homer on his WBCB show, call 215-949-3232 or toll-free 1-888-922-2149 weekdays from 1 to 2 p.m.

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