As America remembers the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks that took place ten years ago this weekend, Premiere Networks syndicated talker Sean Hannity also looks back and remembers how the national launch of his WABC/New York afternoon show and that fateful September day are forever entwined.

**Take us back to September 11, 2001, as you sat down to host just your second national radio show.**

We launched on September 10th 2001 and the next day I couldn’t even get to the radio station. God bless the folks at WLIR on Long Island who hosted our show and others from multiple radio stations and got all of us on the air. It was crazy there, with engineers running wires up and down the halls, but they got us all on the air. We were all just doing our best to gather information and pull together the show. That day changed me. We’d followed so many events that led up to that day and then all of a sudden it was brought to our shores. As a New Yorker to see those Twin Towers come down, then the Pentagon gets hit and United 93 in Pennsylvania -- trying to process all that and getting the new show on the air with the right message and the right information … just talking about it like this and remembering it all again still gives me chills up and down my spine. I knew people from our church who died that day. And my good friend and a regular guest on the show, Barbara Olson, was on that plane that hit the Pentagon. When I got a call telling me that, I didn’t report it right away because I really hoped and prayed it wasn’t true. I can only imagine the feeling for most of us was similar to what people felt after Pearl Harbor. You knew immediately that our country was never going to be the same again for a long time.

**So, are you surprised that in a business like broadcasting -- where the road of syndication is littered with failed shows -- you’re still here and going strong 10 years later?**

I just have never really thought about the years going by. My formula for the radio show hasn’t really changed since the day we started, and that is to put on the best, most informative and most entertaining show I can every single day. I figure if I do that, the listeners will keep coming back. I have never been one to project or predict where I’m going to be in two years, or five years, or 10 years, for that matter. I just get up everyday knowing I am doing what I love to do and that my passion for the job has never been stronger.

**You’ve done not only radio for the past ten years, but also a nightly television show. How have you managed to avoid burnout from a daily routine like that?**

When that on-air light comes on -- whether on the radio or in the TV studio -- it energizes me. I love doing the radio show and I love doing the TV show. At this point I can’t imagine what my life would be like without both of them. That said, I have made some cutbacks and adjustments over the years because I also want to be a good father. So I built a studio near my home so I can see my kids every day after school and I don’t travel quite as much as I used to. I also wrote three books over the course of the past ten years and I don’t really have any plans to do another one anytime soon, so that’s another place where I’ve reclaimed a lot of personal time.

**How have you as a host and the show evolved in the last ten years?**

I think the biggest change is that I’ve lived more years, experienced more life and gained more wisdom. For example, in these tough times I can still remember what it was like to live paycheck-to-paycheck. I know what
PERSON-TO-PERSON

WHOO (ESPN 1080)/Orlando picks up Central Florida radio broadcast rights for the NFL Tampa Bay Buccaneers’ games … WLAC/Nashville adds an extra “Nashville and Tennessee-focused” hour of the Steve Gill Show, from 8-9am (CT), beginning Monday (9/12). Gill’s WLAC-based Radio America syndicated program continues to air on the Clear Channel News/Talker in its current 5-8am slot … Gleiser Communications-owned KTBB/Tyler, TX splits its AM/FM simulcast, keeping News/Talk on AM 600, while flipping 92.1 to ESPN Radio and local Sports/Talk. Concurrently, co-owned KYJS picks up ESPN Deportes.

NETWORK / SYNDICATION NOTES

WSB/Atlanta slides Premiere Networks America Now with Andy Dean into the Cox Media Group News/Talker’s overnight slot. Dean got his radio start doing weekends at WSB before his recent national rollout by Premiere … Westwood One inks New England Patriots QB and three-time Super Bowl champion Tom Brady to host a weekly interview segment with Jim Gray, as part of the network’s weekly NFL Monday Night Football pregame broadcasts. Brady will also join Gray on Conference Championship Sunday and Super Bowl XLVI pregame shows … FOX News Radio will offer coverage of September 22nd’s GOP presidential debate from Orlando. FOX News and Google are sponsoring the event that will be moderated by FOX anchor Bret Baier … KFMB-AM/San Diego adds Citadel Media’s Red Eye Radio with Doug McIntyre.

EMERGING TALK MEDIA

What high tech retailer is “the most disruptive company in the media and technology industries?” Bigger than Apple, Google, or Microsoft? Wired.com staff writer Tim Caromody offers the surprising answer to that question HERE … GET BREAKING NEWS alerts by following us on TWITTER, or “friend” us on FACEBOOK. Find one-click links to both at www.NTSMediaOnline.com.

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GIG ALERTS

KGO/San Francisco has a prime opening for an experienced General Sales Manager. You’ll need experienced management chops, strong analytical and organizational skills, a proven track record and exceptional strategic planning abilities to land this Bay Area gig that reports directly to GM Deidra Lieberman. Get more details on the job and instructions on how to apply HERE … Veteran radio personality Bruce Kelly -- most recently the victim of budget cuts at WZFG (The Flag)/Fargo -- is looking for his next Talk radio opportunity. With an on-air resume that includes stints in Phoenix, Miami, Boston, Pittsburgh and DC, Kelly’s got some serious major market skills and a passion for Talk radio. Reach out to him with your ideas for Bruce HERE … Got a gig open? Looking for a new challenge? Just e-mail the details and contact info to al@ntsmediaonline.com and we’ll post it here, free of charge, as a service to industry professionals.

At least not in Chicago, where WGN Radio morning host Greg Jarrett and weekend “Mr. Fix-It” host Lou Manfredini recently teamed up with the Chicago Blackhawks to offer two lucky fans a chance to join them to paint the NHL team’s logo on the ice at Chicago’s United Center. The annual “painting of the ice” is a revered tradition in the Windy City that marks the official start of the hockey season. That’s Jarrett pictured above leaving his mark at center ice.

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it’s like to be a busboy, a bartender and a waiter. I know what it’s like to hang wallpaper, paint houses, put up sheet rock and lay tile. I’ve been there and all those experiences are part of my life that I bring to the show. I know what it was like to put everything I owned in the back of a van and drive across the country to a city where I knew no one except the guy who hired me over the phone. Add to that getting married, having kids and all the experiences that brings. All of that cumulative knowledge has added to who I am and to what I bring to the show. The other thing that has influenced the evolution of the show was 9/11 and how that day changed everything for all of us in this country. It’s been a transformative decade and consequential times in America.

“ I was a kid with a dream to be on the radio. ”

We can’t have this chat without hearing your commentary on the presidential election year ahead. Anyone you’d like to see get into the race?

It’s my favorite year, every four years -- it’s our Super Bowl. My prediction? I don’t think we’ve ever seen a presidential election like this one is going to be. I think we’re probably going to see the meanest, no holds barred political campaign that the country has ever seen, and historically we’ve had some pretty tough ones. As for who would I like to see get into the race, I don’t want anyone to get in that doesn’t want to get in of their own free will. You need to have a calling for it, not be pushed into it. Of all the people running today, there’s not one that would not do a better job than our current President. But, whomever wants this one has to really want it. It’s going to be a tough campaign. These are going to be very, very consequential times. The one piece of advice I’d give to whoever gets the nomination is to pick Marco Rubio as VP. His story is really compelling. I think he is one of the major future faces of the conservative movement.

So will we be back here chatting together five years from now?

God willing. I have never forgotten how blessed I’ve been in this business. I was a kid with a dream to be on the radio. All those years I worked for free or for very little money -- I never had a clue where this all would end up. But my hope would be that you and I are healthy and having this conversation again in five years and that our country is in a better place than it is today.

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