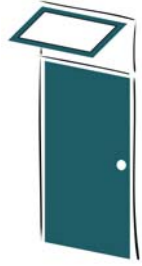


# the transom review

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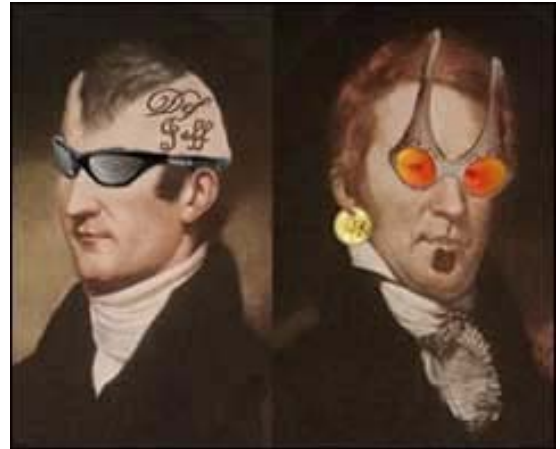


Edited by Sydney Lewis

## *Golding & Verbanac's Topic*

### About Barrett Golding

Barrett has been an independent audio producer since 1983. His works have been broadcast on numerous shows, including *All Things Considered*, *Lost & Found Sound*, and CBS Radio's *The Osgood File*, as well as NPR's *The DNA Files*, *Morning Edition*, *Marketplace*, and *Living on Earth*.



His work has been funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the National Endowment for the Arts, National Public Radio, the Montana Arts Council, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Andy Warhol Foundation.

Barrett has won numerous awards from the Scripps Howard Foundation, the American Bar Association, the National Federation of Community Broadcasters, and the Montana Broadcasters Association.

Barrett's work for the Web include serving as curator for Hearing Voices, Creative Director for the Dreamwaves Project, and a contributor for Transom.org. His archived audio works can be found at <http://www.pressrecord.com>.

He has also served as General Manager of KGLT-FM (Bozeman, Montana), an audio engineer for National Public Radio, and web developer for numerous projects.

### Barrett Golding Links

- **Hearing Voices:** <http://www.hearingvoices.com>
- **Dreamwaves Project:** <http://www.dreamwv.com>
- **Audio Archive @ Press Record:** <http://www.pressrecord.com>
- **Lost & Found Sound: "Listening to the Northern Lights"**  
<http://www.npr.org/programs/lnfsound/stories/990326.stories.html>
- **Lost & Found Sound: "Voices from the Dustbowl"**  
<http://www.npr.org/programs/lnfsound/stories/000728.stories.html>

## About Josef Verbanac

Josef is a Composition & Technical Writing Professor at Montana State University and announcer with KGLT-FM in Bozeman, Montana. He's collaborated with Barrett on DreamWave, KGLT's web presence, and Hearing Voices projects. He also handles the care and feeding of the MSU Department of English's website. His primary task for this particular journey is to insure that Barrett does not get lost and tote the requisite allotments of whiskey.

### Josef Verbanac Links

**KGLT-FM:** <http://www.kglt.net>

**MSU Dept. of English:** <http://www.english.montana.edu>

**Hearing Voices:** <http://www.hearingvoices.com>

**Dreamwaves Project:** <http://www.dreamwv.com>

## Intro by Jay Allison

July 22, 2002 - #1

When Barrett and Josef last inhabited a Transom topic, it was during the first part of their Lewis & Clark inspired bicycle ride, *The Great Pains and Accuracy Tour, 2001*. That journey resulted in various radio pieces and in useful artifacts for Transom, like *From Edit to Air*. Now, they are back as our Guests, but this time attending to radio as they ride, both as makers and as listeners.

Barrett and Jo don't mince words. While they labor in the service of public radio, they also snipe at it and kvetch over it. Their service affords them that right. They were involved in the creation of Transom and they snipe at that too. It's okay. Snipers discourage complacency, the true enemy.

If you work in public radio, don't get defensive right off the bat. See if there is information from these guys you can use. If there isn't, challenge them. Make them say what would be better than what is. Somewhere in the argument is our compass setting, our path across the country.

Remember, Barrett and Josef are on bicycles and in tents, tracking the routes of the Explorers, accompanied only by small radios. They are vulnerable travelers, perhaps tuned to frequencies that we, settled in our houses, might miss. Always heed the traveler for he sees more clearly your home.

# Golding & Verbanac's Manifesto

## Barrett Golding - July 23, 2002 - #2

Rather than Many Festos, how about just a single radio-related Fest. It starts at 5pm rolling out my Montana driveway in a rental car filled with two bikes, two bikers, and gear for camping, riding and recording. It will finish 1000-miles-in-16hours away on Washington's Pacific Coast, at Cape Disappointment Coast Guard Station, a little late for our 0830 appointment with the Station Chief. Josef drove us thru the mountains. I drove us thru the night. At sunrise we switched seats again so I could sleep an hour before our Big Interviews with USCG Brass.

The radio was on the whole time. The radio was on when there was barely a radio signal. For 100 miles of the Bitterroot wilderness, we hung on to a damn fine loud-rock station from Missoula until there were only sporadic gasps of music-like sound amongst the static. In Idaho we kept bouncing between a country and a rap station (that's right, Idahoans love their hip-hop). On the Washington border we picked up the CBC's *Nightwatch*, taking calls and talking to "the community of the night" -- we lost them as they were about to discuss their dreams.

On the AM band we sampled Rush and Dr. Laura, KGO Talk Radio-San Francisco, a Spanish station in Portland, and French from Montreal. We listened to anything remotely stimulating, anything to keep us company. What we didn't listen to was public radio, Between the evening and morning news magazines, public radio was mostly uninspired, sleepy announcers killing time until the next national feed.

Public radio is my home. But I think the place needs some fixin' up.

We pander to the 10% of Americans who listen to public radio, and ignore the 90% who don't. We assume the 90% listen to commercial radio because they like it. I think they don't like commercial radio any better than we do. They just like it better than public radio -- just as I, a *public radio fan*, didn't like what I heard on our Mountain-to-Ocean all-night excursion.

If pubradio could pull in just one-tenth of those non-listeners, we'd almost double our audience. Is there stuff here at Transom, and places like *Hearing Voices* and *Third Coast*, that might attract some of the public now not part of public radio? I think so. More accurately: I'm betting my career on it.

We dropped the rental in Astoria, Oregon, and camped on the coast. After taking a single night to drive as far west as we go could go, our plan now is to spend the next few weeks pedaling back. This, then, is part two of the Great Pains & Accuracy Tour, our transcontinental trip, mic-ing and biking the Missouri and Columbia Rivers and the Rocky Mountains (aka, Lewis & Clark Trail). Along the way we will upload our thoughts, sounds, images and radio reveries here in this Transom discussion.

Right now we're off to record immigrants sturgeon fishing along the very polluted Columbia Slough, a sort of modern day hunter-gatherers. Tonight we'll be at a small Portland club to hear musician John Zorn's latest experiment. The game is afoot...

### **Josef Verbanac - July 23, 2002 - #3**

The thing began with the two of us wanting to see, to feel, to know what had happened in the west since those two intrepid discoverers (all saccharine intended) traversed the continent.

We departed, much as last summer, leaving late -- with Barrett, there are no other time frames but degrees of lateness. This required an all-night drive, much bottled water and bad coffee -- not to mention mostly awful radio.

Why is that?

Is there truly so very little good programming out there in four states and nearly one thousand-miles?

That certainly seemed to be the case... I am neither as adamant a radio defender as BG, nor as forgiving of crappy noise. I would much rather turn the damn radio off, roll down the windows and listen to the sounds of the land I'm passing by.

Still, this is something of a radio odyssey, and I felt it my responsibility to be at least a bit more attentive to what we were hearing.

And in those hours after sunset and sunrise, it was pretty banal stuff -- particularly, no, *especially*, public radio broadcasting: safe, transparent ambience that took no risks, elicited no response other than boredom and a quick station change. At least the commercial stations (whether AM or FM) *tried* to be interesting or lively.

We did manage to arrive at Cape Disappointment only an hour late, and in spite of the aural deadspace we had passed through.

As Barrett was interviewing those sheepishly willing Coast Guardsers the Executive Officer suggested as "having stories," another thing was obvious: they didn't listen to public radio much, if at all. When BG introduced himself, and described what he was doing, their response was frightening in its uniformity: "National Public Radio? Ohhhh... I listen to that (long pause, then more softly) sometimes."

Nor were they only ones.

In fact, *every* interviewee had a similar admission -- whether they were river pilots, state parks personnel, high school history teachers or coffee shop proprietors.

This, readers and listeners, is a pretty poor showing, no?

**[Editor's Note: While on the road, Barrett and Josef posted wonderful sound, and beautiful or illuminating images. This review contains references to several audio postings. It's absolutely worth visiting the guest archives to experience their audio-visuals.]**

## **A Conversation w/ Barrett Golding & Josef Verbanac**

### **The Intrigue Of Listening Josef Verbanac - July 24, 2002 - #4**

a need for storytelling?

as I've been hanging around barrett's interviews these past few days, I've noticed that when I'm within line-of-site of an interviewee, they'll very often talk directly to me -- rather than to barrett and his microphone.

is this some sort of psychological response to 'make the microphone go away'? or does it play to some deep-seated human need to tell stories to an audience?

at first, I thought that I was simply a hindrance to the process -- an extra body that was barely other than a windscreen against obtrusive sounds (traffic, etc.).

but increasingly, these people seem to want to direct their conversations towards *me*... and I don't even have to ask any questions.

I just need to listen -- which doesn't seem so difficult, now does it?

as little more than barely an amateur in radio, I am more than a bit intrigued by this phenomena.

### **1stperson.Shiva Barrett Golding - July 24, 2002 - #5**

"I don't listen to public radio, it just upsets me."

the above quote is from Peabody Award winning public radio producer Dmae Roberts ([www.1stperson.org](http://www.1stperson.org)). we're visiting Dmae and her hubby while in Portland. that a rundown of what her week is like would provide a pretty good portrait of a pubradio producer's life.

Dmae had just finished a huge weekend fundraiser for her non-profit theatre/radio org, *MediaRites*. she has three shows due this week (*Living on Earth*, *Studio 360*). The morning we are leaving she is preparing for her weekly show on Portland's KBOO. This combo of production, admin, local and national radio, frenzy, deadline madness, and obsession is not atypical for a pubradio pro.



BG and Cowboy

### **1stperson.harrumph**

**Dmae Roberts - Jul 25, 2002 - #7**

By the way, I said I don't *like* to listen to NPR (not public radio) cos I get so mad...

But I do listen as a substitute for coffee.

And I *hate* commercial radio.

### **Listening At The Speed of Flow**

**Michael Joly - July 25, 2002 - #8**

The sound world needs more people who listen while traveling at the speed of two-wheelers. I'd love to hear the sounds of your bikes and breath laboring up some Pacific slope. You know that sound when two bike buddies are totally in the endorphin zone and they're yakking back and forth keeping each other amused and inspired? Brains all wired into the smart trance zone brought on by hours and hours of cyclical rhythm as the words flow like radio conversations should?

### **Overnight Radio Road Kill**

**Ellen Rocco - July 25, 2002 - #9**

I'm a big fan of Barrett's work and I wholeheartedly agree with the critique of overnight radio. I just told our program director that when I retire from being station manager, I'm gonna take on the overnight shift and drag in everyone who walks, bikes or skis past our studio. Being on air for a remote region like the north country, it's a constant juggling act: keep people connected with the

world (npr and web stuff), keep the classical and world beat people happy, keep the voice junkies juiced up, etc etc etc...But, boy oh boy, ain't it true, driving at night through the frozen St. Lawrence Valley or empty wildness of the Adirondacks, radio (including north country public radio) is *boring*. Easy to fall asleep and end up a traffic statistic--and there's no traffic.

### **Big Ears?**

**Josef Verbanac - July 26, 2002 - #10**

"I'm a radio person."

--Betty @ Patterson Store & Café

What urge entices someone to listen to the nearest country-western station all night long?

Better yet, what are those ineffable qualities that make someone a "radio person?"

I doubt that they are a diminishing percentage of the population --this site's popularity (not to mention the passion of participants' postings) or one like *audible* being a strong testament otherwise.

### **Waxing Thematic**

**Barrett Golding - July 26, 2002 - #12**

Why weren't our last set of *Lewis&Clark* shows (for *Savvy Traveler*) all that great? Somebody tell me. I need to know so that the next series (for *Living on Earth*) will be.

The SavTrav shows were not as moving as they should have been. And the land and people along the trail are quite moving. So, in that aspect, I failed to properly convey what's going on -- the goal, I feel, of all reportage.

Not that the SavTrav shows were bad. They were pretty good, especially in parts. But there comes a point when you've been at this radio thang awhile that it's easy to kick out something good. I'm not sure, tho, it gets any easier to make something great.

It's probably too early to start wrestling with themes. We're still very much in middle of collecting tape. Forcing some half-assed idea of What Shows Should Be can only make things worse. But it's human nature to look for pattern, and so Josef and I often get wax thematic in the campgrounds and coffee shops. Most recently, we decided to try to drum up some \$\$ from state humanities councils for expanding the web arm of this beast. So we translated our thots into the arcane language known as Humanist:

Our goal is to convey a portrait of the people along the route as it exists today, including the perspectives of humanities scholars of national significance and local expertise, historians - both academic and amateur, archeologists, geographers, folklorists, but also fishermen, waitresses and others we encounter. We will explore:

- How history is told, popularly and professionally.
- Western population decline as harbinger of a re-emergence of the frontier, i.e., a reversal of Turner's 1893 thesis.
- What we have done, physically and culturally, with the water, woods, prairies and settlements these past 200 years.

I have talked with *Living on Earth* about all these ideas. They are sympathetic and supportive of my desire to make a show that is as informative as it is moving. These continental rivers, the Missouri and the Columbia, are haunted by history and growth and failure and stagnancy and freedom. It's all there waiting for me to record.

### **Leash That Premise**

**Jay Allison - July 27, 2002 - #13**

I am sympathetic to your wish to make radio stories as great and moving as life itself. I hope someone will come along and tell us how.

Do you find any problem with the confines of the construct? I mean, when you devise a premise like this bicycle tour, you run the risk of the premise getting in the way of what actually happens. The stories you find don't go along with the framing device. does that happen, is it happening?

Also, I'm sure people are going to want to know how you're recording, all the fun technical bits.

### **Big Swaths Bounce With Abandon**

**Barrett Golding - July 27, 2002 - #15**

since the last shows were for SavTrav, it was natural and obvious to use the device of following a trip. but i think shows may have suffered as a result. my *Living on Earth* editor noticed this, and i think she's right.

the next time i'm gonna take the route in big swaths, like one called Rivers. they may bounce back and forth to different places and abandon chronological progress across the geography. got a lotta thots on how this could work.

another show might be on Monuments (as in lasting evidence, a reminder, someone or something great), and a third on Indian Country. but still working on ideas for these latter two.

as to the equipment we're using, got it down to:

- ~ sharp mdmt90 mini-disc portable recorder
- ~ shure vp-88 microphone (m-s stereo)
- ~ toshiba 2MP digi camera

**Tag Theme Wrestling  
Josef Verbanac - July 28, 2002 - #16**

framing devices... in this case, *the road*:

*"It's the emblematic American journey. In U.S. history there is always a tension between home and the road. We talk a good talk about the joys of home, but the truth is we are obsessed with the road."*

-- Author James Ronda, as quoted in "Time Magazine."

when we began talking about this series of trips, we really had no focusing idea or theme, other than we wanted to do some biking across a large swath of the west... if anything, barrett was the one who had some notion about a lewis & clark related web-presentation (but that was one topic among many that we discussed).



Josef on Missouri breaks

the idea that it would become, in some form, a type of modern ethnographic snapshot didn't occur until we first began checking the availability of funding from state's humanities councils, and needed the appropriate "passwords" (as barrett has become fond of analogizing) to get in.

now, some nine states and over fifteen hundred miles later, we are still, as barrett put it, "tag team theme wrestling."

for me, anyway, something appealing about the trip is not necessarily the history, or even the cycling per se, but the motion and variation and the anti-hermeneutical "in media res" thing.

we're not seeing the west from the safety and security of an air-conditioned SUV, shuttling between motel sixes. we *are* seeing how people eke out a living, how their communities have grown (or failed), what makes some part of this Country distinctive from the rest.

I hope that, somehow, becomes subsequently apparent in the tape...

**You Have To Go Out....And Then You have To Listen  
Barrett Golding - July 29, 2002 - #20**

"You have to go out... You don't have to come back."

that's the unofficial motto of the old U.S. Life-Saving Service that became the Coast Guard. i love that Josef& and i started our trip at a place called Cape Disappointment: "The mouth of the Columbia River, known as the graveyard of the Pacific."

our first intervus were with a couple of the Search & Rescue (SAR) folk who regularly pull boats and people out of the most treacherous stretch of the west coast. kinda interesting cuz our first intervuu was w/ a USCG ex-SantaCruz surfer who just won a big medal for SAR, and looked the hero. Kyle had a bit more of a desk jockey look. we kinda figured the surfer would be the killer intervuu, turned out, tho, both regularly risked their lives and both had great stories, but Kyle was the better story teller. as they (don't) say in the USCG: you can't judge a boat by it's coxswain.

**Eclectic Diverse Eccentrics Deliver  
Barrett Golding - July 29, 2002 - #21**

KWCW at Whitman College let me use their production room all day yesterday, no charge, free reign. it's a small but really kewl station.

this is the kind of pubradio i live for: wildly eclectic programming delivered by a diverse set of student and community eccentrics. that's what i listen to, that's what i love, that's what every town needs *before* they get an NPR station. this is also the kind of station Josef&I volunteer at back home.

**Puzzled By Slam  
Barrett's cousin Sybil - July 29, 2002 - #22**

Barrett:

I am a bit puzzled by your public radio slam. I listen every day to the news, and often to *MarketPlace* and *The World* as well, depending on my commuting schedule. I often listen to classical music and jazz. I *never* listen to talk radio, whether public or any other variety. Although, once, years ago, when Steve and I were driving across country, I did listen to a talk radio show about how they had proof that the Ruskies were colonizing the moon and mining precious metals--

**Across The Path  
jonathan menjivar - July 30, 2002 - #26**

i'm interested in hearing if you're feeling any pressure knowing that when you're recording your interviews, you're spending a limited amount of time with your subjects and then moving on. the bike trip as radio expedition is really exciting, but it also means that you better get some good material and quick otherwise you're going to have fill in a lot more blanks than you probably want to.

barrett, i remember reading something where you said how you liked to work by just stumbling across people and seeing what happens...from dmae's 1stperson.org:

*That's also how I like to find good tape: people who cross my path -- serendipity as interview-gathering technique. Now, of course, on a funding proposal, I don't write: "I'm just gonna kinda go out there and see what happens." But that's what I do, and it works pretty damn well. Radio producer Larry Massett, in a interview at ThirdCoastFestval.org, said: "I still think this is the best way to collect tape: randomly, for no reason, and in no hurry."*

so what do you do when you're in a hurry? are you in a hurry?

one more thing. i'm so used to *not* hearing you in your pieces. how's it feel to be more out front?

**Quirks, Invention, Sound, Surprise...And Moon-Mining Ruskies  
Barrett Golding - July 30, 2002 - #31**

syb [#22]:

"I listen every day to the news...Am I missing the point of your critique here?"

not really, except that you are well served by pubradio. while i and, i think, many others may not be. those of us who aren't crazy about comradio, but aren't happy w/ much pubradio either. see, i like quirks, invention, sound and surprise. there are stations that offer that regularly. most are not NPR stations tho. and most don't receive taxpayer-\$ support from CPB, as do NPR stations. so in effect, what has happened is that NPR is paid by CPB to compete with the stations i like. and we're left with a bunch of kewl lil stations around w/o CPB support. people listen to them tho. in some towns these stations very much make up the flavor of the community. but, you're right, for classical/jazz/news, NPR is best. however, i prefer: a talk radio show about how they had proof that the Ruskies were colonizing the moon and mining precious metals...

jonathan [#26]:

"so what do you do when you're in a hurry?..."

I try not to get in a hurry, ever, w/ an interviewee. that's so unsatisfying if there's somewhere i need to be, but i'd rather talk to the interviewee instead. we make time, we keep our sked open -- it changes daily cuz of what/who we find. and in b/w intervueees, we ride like wind.

"i'm so used to *not* hearing you in your pieces. how's it feel to be more out front?"

the following may be a bit of a shocker: I always feel a show is a personal failure if I have to narrate it. partially cuz i feel the tape can almost always tell its own story -- it doesn't need me -- if i just work w/ it long enuf -- and partially cuz i'm a way better producer/mixer/sound&intervu-gatherer than i am a narrator-writer. now i love to hear narration but lotsa other folk, people like larryMassett, scottCarrier, jayAllison, sarahVowell -- their narration is as kewl as the sound. my sound is always better than my writing. an example: a page which has both links to a narrated SavTraveler show and the non-narrion collage version i much prefer (but couldn't get aired w/o some narration) on the *Rainbow Family*.

**Serendipitous Common People  
Barrett Golding - August 2, 2002 - #36**

we've been calling people to arrange recordings when we can -- those suggested to us by historical societies, history profs, and such. but my favorite intervus are those we stumble upon; like one w/ Lois & Betty during breakfast at the Patterson Store (WA).

two quotes sum up what i love about recording expeditions. the first was from a Park Ranger, after i explained to him what we were doing, as we pulled in one evening to his campground. he said: "I love serendipity," and took time off from his dinner to come talk w/ us. the second was one of the Sisters at the Monastery of St. Gertrude (an ab-fab intervju), as we were leaving, she told me: "It's wonderful that you record common people." i agree.

**Snipe, Kvetch, Flint, And Steel**  
**Barrett Golding - August 5, 2002 - #38**

To promote discussion, how abouts we "snipe.. kvetch... and don't mince words" -- all those things jay warned you about at the top.

i'm not crazy about much of what i hear at Transom. while a few shows are genuine gems, much of it is very mediocre -- fine for local radio, but not purposeful in a national forum.

and i'm not sure promoting mediocrity, even experimental mediocrity, or emerging promising youth and student mediocrity is really gonna lead to anything other than more mediocre producers.

i'm unconvinced people graduate from mediocre to amazing. my observation is they often remain in one or other category.

really fine producers start with a spark; over time they fan it into a flame-- but the flint and steel was there at the outset. you can hear it in even their very first productions:

**Jake Warga & Matt Perry's *Street Dogs***

<http://www.transom.org/shows/2001/200108.shows.streetdogs.perrywarga.html>

**Scott Carrier's *Hitchhiker***

<http://www.transom.org/shows/2001/200101.shows.inspiration.html>

if ya ain't got a spark, you better go get one, cuz all the Transoms and radio workshops and journalism classes alone will never set you on fire.

and that's what pubradio needs: it needs to burn...

**Out Of Phase**  
**Barrett Golding - August 5, 2002 - #41**

**Tape Recorder:** A suggestion that something has to be recorded (documented) very precisely. See **Radio**.

--*Encyclopedia of Dream Symbols (found in an OR used book store)*

i'll admit to being overly influenced by dreams. they often leak into my work.

before i left i had one in which a friend came over for help with her new stereo receiver. after hooking it up to my speakers and turning it on (to the radio?), the sound came out tinny, not loud. it occurred to me maybe her speaker outputs were connected out-of-phase (polarity, in tech talk). then i realized: hey, it could just as easy be my speakers that are wired out-of-phase. that's when i woke up.

what might the dream be talking about? this L&C project was very much on my mind. and i always try to express what happened in a dream in a simple declarative sentence, as if the dream was real. immediately this sentence popped into my head: My speakers are out-of-phase -- my speakers, i.e., the people i interviewed, the people who will speak in my show.

this, i believe is true. i have no idea what it means, but i still think it's true. are my speakers out of phase with each other, or with the topic, or with what the show should be? haven't a clue. all i know for sure is: My speakers are out-of-phase. and i don't think that's a good thing; but i think knowing it will help me get my show back in sync.

**Radio:** Communication, information, messages about emotions, internal dialogue. To listen to a radio in a dream is to listen to your own voice.

**Burning Anew, Step By Step**  
**Mary McGrath - August 6, 2002 - #43**

Barrett,

Public radio is mediocre. It's boring. It's predictable. Every once in a while you hear something that surprises and delights. And you wonder -- can it ever burn again, the way it did in the 70's and early 80's? The system is bureaucratic and corrupt in many ways. The best work doesn't get on the air in too many markets. Stations are barriers to creative talent and the managers of so many of them are inept. So like you, I'm a big critic but I'd also like to be present at the creation of something really new and challenging. Let's try and spell it out here. Is the answer the Radio Exchange that may force new content on the air? Is it internet radio? Does change come about one show at a time? Who's doing the best work out there and what does it sound like? Describe a dream job for you in public radio. What would you be doing? Who would you be working with and what would the mission be? How can we start a radio revolution?

**Mom's Radio Is Broken**  
**Phil Charles - August 6, 2002 - #44**

I was driving my mother to the store today...she's in her 80s...and the entire time we were in the car she fiddled with the radio. Now, you must understand it's summer at the Jersey shore...a group of barrier islands packed with millions of vacationers. She could not find a decent radio station (and that we agreed on) and she asked me "why can't somebody broadcast a good radio station."

What is a good radio station???...now that's a tuff one. I just told her...quite offhandedly..."Mom, your radio is broken...it doesn't have any good radio stations in it."

You tell me...What is a good station? I'm sure I knew at one time!

### **The Stuff Of Good Radio**

**helen woodward - Aug 7, 2002 - #45**

like lois and betty above who find humor in being alive so long; I think this is the stuff of good radio, but in my humble opinion it's out there all over the place, just waiting for the serendipitous microphone-holding radio type to come along. now what you do with it afterwards well that's another thing, I look forward to hearing if they make it into the final cut.

as for pub radio and transom's features, you said the majority may be OK for local radio but not national, so what's the difference as you see it? is the bar higher (or somewhere else) for national audiences? aren't the travails of common people interesting enough for the nation? cos that's what I listen for, and hear in many of the transom pieces, common people dealing with life, their lives, tragic events may or may not consume them, but they go on, or someone they know does to tell their story.

### **The Last Clan Of Puritans**

**Barrett Golding - August 9, 2002 - #46**

the last clan of Puritans reside in the Program Director offices of pubradio stations across the country. not all PDs, of course, some are the essence of innovation and exploration. but quite a few of these pubradio gatekeepers are remarkably prudish.

long ago i produced a series called *Chrysti the Wordsmith*, a 2min. module of etymologies, with a million listeners, mostly on *Armed Forces Radio* and *Voice of America*, but also on about 60 domestic stations. an Iowa pubradio PD called to say she was dropping the series cuz of content: a couple listeners had called to complain about Chrysti's show on "brassieres around the world." the PD also found it offensive. "bra" for g-dsakes -- she was wearing the very thing she found distasteful. (btw, in German it's "der Bustenhalter," in Spanish: "el sustain".)

j.menjivar posted about the excellent show *Knitting w/ Dog Hair*:

“ i can't imagine a station or show in america who wouldn't need a lot of convincing to play this.”

he's right. most stations wouldn't run shows like this. but some do. josef&i dj at one: KGLT-Bozeman. if we think something's good, we're allowed to play it, music or spoken word. of the 240,000 words in the dictionary, our manager let's us play all but one.



so i got permission from *Audible* to cut out the "fuqs" from another Transom show: *Wiretap* -- one of the best, most addictive radio pieces i've ever heard. i mentioned to JayA that i was making a fuq-less version for broadcast, and asked if he'd like a copy for his pubradio network: Atlantic Public Radio. he told me that to air it on APR it'd have to have other content removed (sexual and such), or their listeners would object.

now, APR is one of the kewlest NPR-type pubradio goin -- run by the same folk that bring you Transom, but even they can't go down there, if ya know what i mean. yet comradio dj's have been drooling sex every morning for decades, and getting great ratings doing it. the barrier was smashed long ago. yet pubradio is still scared to drive thru. one whole major category of human experience is off-limits to most pubradio. that type of handicap is hard to overcome.

**The Call For More Sex Behind Their Bach**  
**kelly dean - August 9, 2002 - #47**

we get watered down, sexless fodder on public radio because pd's listen to the vocal minority. a few loud, prudish protesters monopolize the attention of managers in any organization. cutting edge, breakthrough leadership means, in part, learning what to ignore as much as what to pay credence to.

just because they are loud doesn't mean they speak for everyone. but it's easy to forget amid the hubbub, especially if they also happen to be rich underwriters clinging desperately to their bach. so, hey, watch yer bach...

**The Real Wounded Heart**  
**Barrett Golding - August 10, 2002 - #49**

many thanks for the above questions and observations. they get to the heart of the pubradio problems and solutions.

"like lois and betty above who find humor in being alive so long...I look forward to hearing if they make it into the final cut." ...sez Helen Woodward [#45].

this is kinda important to me, cuz i usually work outwards from the tape to the story. rather than composing a story and finding tape to fit, i hold on to the tape i love and hope to find a story that can link it together. will Lois & Betty make it? i think so. i think they are central to portraying the land&peoples of the current Lewis&Clark Trail. (see, i'm already composing the thematic arguments i'll use on the editor to keep this tape in the show.)

helen also asks: "...aren't the travails of common people interesting enough for the nation?"

a locally produced show has a built-in interest for the listeners, so a show need not be great, just good, to sound great on local or regional radio. but a national show should have a grander resonance. it must reverberate on its own, w/o the benefit of a local connection. the danger of

presenting mediocre sound-portrait type pieces nationally is that listeners recognize mediocrity. and they begin to think (and write in): what's with all this fluff? where's the news? but hit them w/ a killer sound-portrait and even the hardcore news junkies love it.

documentary radio, i believe, was critically wounded by a show that once seemed to be its salvation: the *SoundPrint* series promised "documentaries of substance." and for several years it delivered extraordinary shows. but as years wore on, more and more shows were quite ordinary. the series lost listeners and stations -- at one point it aired on only about 30 stations. Program Directors interpreted these carriage figures as proof there's little listenership for documentary radio. and it's true, few people want to hear mundane radio documentaries. what's untested is whether people would appreciate regular doses of Heartbreaking Works of Staggering Genius, or at least sound-portraits and radio docs that attempted and often achieved excellence.

### **Increase The Frequency** **Barrett Golding - August 10, 2002 - #50**

"Every once in a while you hear something that surprises and delights. And you wonder -- can it ever burn again." ...sez Mary McGrath [#43].

yes, absolutely. not daily, or even weekly, but every so often NPR plays something that makes you proud to be part of the system. like a few weeks ago, the drummer for Semisonic had a wonderful audio-essay on the awkward process of *making a music video*. on our trip, getting coffee at a truckstop one pre-dawn morning i heard a nice commentary by my old high school buddy Richard Harris. and sometime today i'm off to NPR.org to listen to the the new Joe Richman piece everybody's raving about:

#### **My So-Called Lungs**

<http://www.npr.org/programs/atc/features/2002/aug/socalledlungs/>

for NPR to really improve, all that needs doin is a concerted effort to increase the frequency of these pieces. many of us would become regular listeners again. right now, i use NPR news mags like audio wallpaper -- it's on, but i don't pay that much attention to it.

mary also asks: Who's doing the best work out there and what does it sound like?

I am: *Pressrecord.com*.

oh, ok, there's lotsa others too. for doc/feature stuff, *3rdCoast* has an outstanding collection. for wilder stuff, well, i've heard *HearingVoices.com* has some allright shows.

And "Describe a dream job for you in public radio."

job? did you say job? i've spent my whole life avoiding that thing, why ruin my record now? honestly, i'm pretty happy being a freelancer, and occasionally riding herd on projects like *HearingVoices*.

but allow me to wax historical. there was one job, a job i wouldn't want, but which a guy named Don Druker administered admirably. he held the now-defunct position of Head of Radio Arts at the NEA, and he had a huge impact on many of us old farts. i first met him at a conference (AIRLIE) in 1983. he was on a panel, and rather than give a talk, he played tape. great tape, adventurous tape, stuff i'd never heard. imagine: a bureaucrat who prefers to present art than talk about it. he wrote an essay called Radio Renaissance predicting a flourishing of the radio arts. he was wrong, soon afterwards radio began it's steady decline toward art-lessness. but who knows, maybe someday.

and finally, Kelly Dean [#47] nailed it:

"pandering to the few..."

we in pubradio pander to the vocal Puritan minority, we pander to the few folk who sometimes tune into NPR, and ignore the 90% of the public who never listen to public radio at all. we lack the courage and foresight to find out what the public might want, that they're not now getting from either pubradio or comradio.

i'm guilty too. with each grant i get from CPB, i think: this time i'm really gonna do something wild. they'll never fund me again when they hear what i did, but i'll finally get to Make the Art i was meant to create. but when the money comes, i start thinking about what might actually air, and how handy those CPB checks are, and i usually end up working on the air-able shows first, until all the money's gone. then i send in another CPB proposal, and i think: this time...

### **Pure Raw Energy**

**Alex Safford - August 10, 2002 - #51**

Barrett and Josef, I appreciated reading your thoughts and the thoughts of others on your Lewis and Clark journey. I find it interesting that the topic of dialogue became primarily a journey into public radio rather than a main focus on the actual trip at hand. What will become of your trip's documentation? Will it air eventually on radio nation-wide? Will it maintain the focus on public radio or will you focus on the day-to-day traveling and the people you met and interviewed along the way?

In regards to public radio: I enjoy listening to *All Things Considered* and to *Talk of the Nation*.... I also enjoy Garrison Keillor and Peter Schickele....Still, having grown up in Bozeman and having personally been involved with KGLT radio in Bozeman, I understand what you mean, Barrett, by what can be achieved through local public radio. The pure raw energy that KGLT achieves can not be emulated with streamlined national radio. NPR and other national public broadcasting funders would be doing the country a great service by financially supporting locally run public radio stations that allow a fair amount of freedom and variety in their broadcasting decisions.

**The Actual Expectation Of Surprise**  
**Josef Verbanac - August 11, 2002 - #52**

*"When you listen to good community radio, or even good commercial radio (close to oxymoronic), whether it be a little ski town station, an urban jazz/hip hop signal or college radio, you are listening to an actual place -- requests, lost dog reports, DJ diatribes, babies crying in the studio, and above all, really good music and the EXPECTATION OF SURPRISE."*

-- Jon Kovash, Letter in July/August 2002 *Mountain Gazette*.

that 'actuality' of a place is what I find most intriguing when I travel...



The Chief Motel in Whitehall, MT

even, or especially, when it borders on the rude and boorish...



Gas station on the edge of Philipsburg, MT

these are the sights that I left Bozeman to see.

## Singular Passwords

Barrett Golding - August 13, 2002 - #53

*"Every journey has its own flavor."*

that phrase was uttered by a Sea Captain in i-forget-which old English novel. it seems every recording expedition too has it's own taste, sometimes its own singular set of rules, passwords which open people up to the microphone.

on another bike trip, north of Yellowstone Park, the *Weather Notebook* invited me to do something -- anything -- weather-related along the way. maybe just ask folk "how's the weather." the question which really got people going, tho, was: "What's the worst weather you've been in?"



while going thru small Montana rural, somewhat-tourist towns, i noticed the only good intervus were coming from people who were sitting doing nothing. ya know, a guy on a bench outside a gift shop waiting for his wife, two locals watching the people go by, etc.. so i decided to only talk to people who looked like they were just hangin out, and only ask the "worst weather" question. this resulted in one of the few times i got all the good tape i needed in just an hour or two of recording

### Weather Notebook Shows

**Worst Weather:** <http://weathernotebook.org/transcripts/2000/11/01.html>

**Worst Weather 2:** <http://weathernotebook.org/transcripts/2000/11/02.html>

**Montana Ablaze:** <http://weathernotebook.org/transcripts/2000/11/03.html>

the above-mentioned *Rainbow* recordings were solicited with a different tactic. people were really skittish about the mic and equipment (the government regularly spies on these folk -- i've seen FOIA-released docs which prove it). many people approached me to ask what i'm doing, some out of interest, some out of suspicion, but once i explained myself all seemed willing to talk. this, then, was my modus operandi for this show: i'd walk around with my mic dangling and wait to be accosted. i think i got some exceptional tape this way.

superstitious? probably -- getting people to talk is a bit like solving an occult puzzle. we're also like detectives, interviewing suspects, hoping to elicit a confession. we even share some of their techniques, especially patience, and the ability to listen.

on this L&C recording trip, i've been waiting for a password. i think i caught a glimpse of one when out in the ocean on a Columbia River Bar Pilot boat.

we were accompanying Phil O'Shaughnessy, and his ship-mate John, as they brought a pilot out to a Korean cargo ship, here to load grain in Portland. the trip was fun, but the intervuu wasn't really going places -- until, on their own, Phil and John started discussing the controversy about dredging

the river bar. what i like about this bit of tape is how they present several sides of the issue all by themselves, with barely a prod from me. i hadn't even asked about, nor was i aware of the dredging. this is a local environmental discussion, one of many going on along the Columbia and Missouri Rivers which rarely makes national news. in Phil and John's interchange you can hear the complexities inherent in this, and in every enviro dilemma, complexities which rarely fit the time & space devoted them by the media. this edit is long, but illustrative...

this tape will not make it to the show, unless i can cut down to a minute or so and still preserve the detail. when it happened, tho, i thot: perhaps this is the password, all these local enviro river-related issues, different in specifics but alike in the question: what should we do with the land/water? which often means: whatever it is we've done, should we do more of it, or try to undo it?

perhaps asking folk about their local enviro issue would provide a portrait of the place. and by stacking up enuf enviro issues, each with its own interlocking set of complexities, i could transcend the whole "issue" idea -- usually presented as a two-sided polarity of diametrically opposed opinions, but always really more of a circular continuum of perceptions, conceptions, misconceptions and myths. sounds good, huh? but, of course, i was wrong. asking folk about their particular environmental problems and positions yielded little usable tape.

still i think the crux of the show may reside in this idea, the fact that every score or two miles upriver the land changes, and so does the perspective and history of the people.

the recording phase is almost finished. i still don't know what this show's about. i hope i will begin to know as i wade thru the 30+ hours of tape i've collected. only recently have i even come to believe this code can be cracked. My speakers are out of phase -- perhaps because every part of the river is a new phase.

### **Web Pessimism**

**Josef Verbanac - August 13, 2002 - #54**

I have spent a goodly bit of the past few days rereading my journal... and then looking once again at what we posted about the trip last summer on the web outside of our discussion here.

and wondering, too, how this new material is to be integrated/added to the site and provides some useful and interesting ephemera for the project -- both for the shows and the trip itself..

does it?

...these past few days have renewed my *pessimism* in the web, and much of what counts as "content" on it.

so, I ask this of you, fellow transomers: which sites do you feel augment radio programming with web presentations exceptionally well? which ones don't and why? how do you *use* that information - - while simultaneously listening, afterwards, before?

**The Sense Of Place, Maybe This Place**  
**Daniel Costello - August 15, 2002 - #55**

I recently had to drive from Duluth to Denver over two days. I heard the dull statewide networks from Wisconsin to Colorado, but only the newsmagazines were worth listening to. The two stations that did give me a sense of place were both reservation stations in the Dakotas. One came from South Dakota and was broadcasting something that sounded like someone had placed a microphone under the bleachers at a little league game. Snippets of conversation, children crying, someone yelling. Instead of baseball, the distant sound was drumming and chanting. Maybe it was a powwow? I felt like I was eavesdropping and it was great.

In North Dakota I heard a station that played just drumming and chanting as long as I could hear it. I stopped for the night near the North Dakota Badlands and listened to it in the morning again. I tracked some information about it on the web when I got home, and part of their mission is to connect shut-in elders to their community and culture. I think public radio is here to connect people to the parts of our culture that are ignored by commercial radio. Are our elders listening to what we produce?

My problem with public radio is that it rarely experiments or takes chances. The BBC has a great overnight service, but it is displacing what used to be the time of experimentation and more freedom in radio. Do we really need to know the cricket scores and what is happening in the Tokyo markets at 3:00am? Can't it wait until the morning magazine? I think this is the place to gain a beachhead with new public radio. We need to grab some of the people who are so bored that they are listening to Art Bell and give them something real to listen to at night. And we need to stop the plague of statewide networks from grabbing all the available signals!

**An Excuse For Illuminating Transom's Bermuda Triangles?**  
**Jackson Braider - August 16, 2002 - #56**

I admire the idea of just going out and getting sound. The rationale for collecting it is okay, following the L&C trail -- as long as you got enough funding to pay for the laundry. But my sense, after similar experiences of my own, is that the real stories will come later, when you're working on something else entirely and you suddenly remember a piece of an interview, a clip of sound from your trip. The L&C thing, in this light, might best be seen as an excuse for gathering tape that will illuminate other things.

Invariably, this discussion has fallen into one of Transom's Bermuda Triangles -- whither (and wither) pubradio. Not that I mind this discussion -- it's the circularity of this particular triangle that drives me nuts. Once we start, then it's PDs this and management that and hosts getting \$0.75 per listener and thinking still that's not enough.

## **Clarity Of Purpose**

**Barrett Golding - August 20, 2002 - #57**

odd, now that we're back and working on computers daily, we are posting less than when en route and finding a connected computer was an arduous quest.

bike-touring simplifies life. concerns about eating and sleeping and working and the meaning of life are subservient to that certainty of motion. (motion into emotion.)

I miss that clarity of purpose.

and now the bells of the Monastery of St Gertrude calling the Sisters to the Eucharist mass:

**Just :10 Seconds.....Ahhhhh.**

**Michael Joly - August 20, 2002 - #58**

Thanks for leaving :10 of ambient sound in after the bells stop ringing.

Just :10 seconds of location ambience seems like such a luxury - you know, that's the low level stuff that would get edited out or talked over in a typical NPR field report because it "doesn't work on the radio".

Clarity of Purpose. I guess because I'm both a cyclist and sound recordist your comment really rings clear to me. The clarity of purpose felt while spinning the cranks to move forward. The clarity of leaving intact the space around the bells instead of cutting to conform to context.

As much as I love radio, I feel more and more there is no place in it that lets sound ring free of the constraints of story telling.

by the way. Did you use your VP-88 in both stereo and M-S modes?

**Tech Details? Shure!**

**Barrett Golding - August 23, 2002 - #59**

i'm lazy; i use the 88's preset stereo widths. single person interviews i record with the low setting; for 2+ voices i'll often use the mid (to get more of the side channel's bi-directionality). when i record the ambience of the setting where the interview took place, i'll use the same setting i used for the interview. for other ambiences, i'll set it on high or mid width -- kinda an in-field guess of how much stereo info is there and how it might be mixed later into show.

some tech details of above:

the m-s stereo technique uses 2 mics, a mid (usually a cardioid mic) and a side (a bi-directional mic), fed into 2 different channels. to create the stereo effect, you process the signal by reversing the

polarity of one channel (usually the side) then mixing it with the other -- both still kept on separate channels. the more "side" you add, the greater the stereo "width" of the effect.

the Shure VP-88 m-s stereo condenser microphone has both mics in one case (so it looks and handles like one mic). the 88 makes the above m-s processing easy by offering three pre-processed settings for varying degrees of stereo width: low, middle, high. these pre-processed pre-sets have an output of left and rights channels (aka, stereo). the 88 also has a fourth setting which allows you to keep the m and s channels separate for later processing into stereo. that was Michael's question above: which do i use, the 88's pre-set/pre-processed stereo settings, or its discrete m-s setting? answer: pre-sets. reason: lazy. also, the pre-sets fine and save a heckuva lotta work later.

the 88 does have an noticeable amount of self-noise, especially when battery (vs. phantom) powered. i wonder if using the m-s setting might provide a cleaner signal than the pre-sets. have to test that someday (aka, i'll never get to it.)

**Cutting To The Bone So Moms Can Hear  
Barrett Golding - August 23, 2002 - #60**

"Thanks for leaving :10 of ambient sound in after the bells stop ringing...."

you thank me now, but what'll you say when i "edit out" or put "talk over" that ten seconds in the finished show. thanks for your thanks, tho. i'll try to preserve as much as possible, knowing your appreciation for that after-bell ambience.



you're right too; we might hear the bells best once they stop ringing, if provided the proper sonic space, i.e., ambience, for the bells to continue ringing in our heads. perhaps we reflect on the sound better after it finishes sounding.

all editors suggest edits. but some, the best ones, occasionally ask for additions, for more space between scenes, more music, longer pauses, extra beats of ambience or silence. (kudos to Jeff Rogers of NPR-ATC for often providing me this service.)

when i'm editing interviews, i go for the tightest cuts, the most compressed scenes. i know that even with this distillation, further edits and compression will be needed -- either i or the editor will think the show's still too long. it's easy for me to get caught up in the fever of quick cuts and transitions, and lose some of the flow a few seconds of ambience "in the clear" would lend the piece.

"... I feel more and more there is no place in it that lets sound ring free of the constraints of story telling."

michael, we both collect sounds. you think the airwaves can handle more sounds-on-their-own w/o a continual babble about what the sounds mean. i agree, but still i cut them to the bone, just to get the show on the national airwaves.

### **What Goes On In There?**

**bw - August 27, 2002 - #62**

I am very curious about your editing process... when you put stuff together.. are you simply connecting the pieces into something that you already have in your head or is it more a process that births something that surprises you?

### **The Birthing Process**

**Barrett Golding - August 29, 2002 - #63**

editing for me is usually a simple (but long) process. i listen to the entire recording -- sometimes i log as i listen, other times i just listen and log later. i log using keywords w/ time notes so i can re-find things, and a "+" for sounds/words i really like , e.g.:

2:10 bells, bldg, mass

+ 3:05 land, salmon river

then i go thru and grab all the stuff that stands out, and other stuff that might help set scene: e.g, folk saying who and where they are. from an hour intervui i might grab 10-20 minutes of excerpts, and load them into a ProTools session.

now, i know the final version will be only 2-4 minutes, so next i reduce the cuts further to just stuff i really, really want. sometimes i have an idea how it'll fit into show as a whole, often i don't. in either case, i pick only my favorite, favorite cuts, then try working w/ only these fave-cuts to see if they might make a nice little show section.

that's what happened with the Sisters of Saint Gertrude interview in the monastery garden [Go back and listen!]: i've listened to this about 1-zillion times and love it. problem is, it fits absolutely NONE of the story-structures i thot might work for this show. oh well, i'll cut another section; maybe soon i'll know where this show is going.

### **Breath And Distance**

**Jay Allison - August 29, 2002 - #64**

Are you going to make a long story from this trip? It feels like it needs breath and distance in it. Short pieces won't give us the time we need to feel the journey. This topic has a been a good reflection. I'd like to hear an hour with the pace of this topic. If you make one, we'll air it on our station.

It would also allow you to make it the way you want, without considering the constraints of the styles of other programs.

**Sounds From The Landscape, Even Harry-Land**  
**Julia Barton - August 30, 2002 - #66**

Thanks for the snippet from St. Gertrude. It's nice when the first voice describes the landscape and the mountains all around, and then you imagine the sound of the bells echoing off the mountains. I also liked how the Lord's Prayer came in after the words "healing potion." Just wondering--did you have more sounds from the landscape? It sounds like people are outside, talking about their environment, but most of the sound is from inside...it felt very "churchy" after a while. Of course, it's about people who live in The Church.

I know it's related to that Bermuda Triangle of Transom, but everyone here should run, not walk, to the latest episode of *Le Show*, wherein Harry Shearer does a brilliant, if viscious parody of public radio. It gets particularly good about 5:20 in, when he does a great version of a pointless, goofy feature about a town that wants to change its name to Merit Lite to attract smoker tourists. I played it for my Russian colleagues here, and even those who don't understand much English understood Shearer's recreation of horrible interviews--echoey, boring, with annoying wind or music in the background. It's the August 25 episode of *Le Show* at [www.harryshearer.com](http://www.harryshearer.com).

**Stringing A Beautiful Necklace**  
**Viki Merrick - August 31, 2002 - #67**

Barrett, I am curious as to why the Sisters grabbed YOU so - (you didn't say) - it is a perfect "module" for living on earth, cut cleverly (give us this day our daily bread) and respectfully too. If you had enough beads of this sort, you could string a beautiful necklace...but I don't know your angle.

there are so many different kinds of "beads" from a journey - to relate them all in one sitting is impossible, difficult to digest - even if you could.

Maybe you do a small series since an hour will be hard to "sell". Quiet as I have been during your trip I *thoroughly* enjoyed "our" quasi daily encounters. I can only imagine what a treat that would be to look forward to in the middle of the freakin' news shows every day for a week. And it would better replicate the pace of the trip - we can feel butt-tired and thirsty and the oasis of St. Gertrudes and the smile of finding those ladies in the cafe...but, mulling it over now, a good hour could do it too - so take the Autumn off and maybe do both...

**Finding The Glue**  
**Barrett Golding - September 5, 2002 - #72**

i'm looking for a glue to stick voices from all over the Trail together on the same show. one "trick" would be to tell a story within the story. *Not* of our trip, and *not* of Lewis&Clark (whom people will become increasingly sick of as the bicentennial approaches), but some other tale that could pick up the end of one intervew and deftly tie it to the start of the next. a storytelling sleight-of-hand which could turn, say, a Coast Guard search & rescue into two gals sipping coffee in a small farm-town cafe.

lately i've been fantasizing that story might be the History of the Bicycle. there are bike-history tidbits that could lead a wild variety of directions....as metaphors go, bicycles ain't bad. they were precisely the glue that stuck josef&i to the road of lewis&clark. i told Larry Massett my bike-as-narrative fantasy. he's great at recognizing radio dead ends, so i was amused when he wrote back: "Actually, that's not a bad idea, using the history of the bicycle. Okay it probably wouldn't work, but it would be amazing if it did work."

**Still, Why, And**  
**Jay Allison - September 5, 2002 - #73**

What's wrong with a good old-fashioned picaresque tale? We're reading a lot of Cormac McCarthy around here these days. So, you're on bikes, not horses. Choices and fate still operate. The mode of travel still affects the journey. I mean, why are you going on these bike trips? Isn't the thing that compels you to do it enough to compel the story? There's something both epic and intimate here, both poetic and matter of fact.

It seems if you could find the *voice* for the piece, the story would follow. It would also be liberating, I'd think, not to imagine fitting into any existing public radio program, but letting the story find its own way of sounding and unraveling.

**One Lucky S.G. - S.O.B.**  
**Barrett Golding - September 6, 2002 - #74**

so we're eating breakfast at Lochsa Lodge in the Clearwater National Forest, when in walks 20 ruff&ready men&women. they're Blackfeet 39, a crew of wildland firefighters, getting ready to spend their day amongst the smoke. after talking to them, i realize i'm one lucky sound-gathering s.o.b., cuz these folk is famous -- i've read about 'em. flame fighters from the Blackfeet rez are said to be the best in the biz.



**The Unfolding Road**  
**Viki Merrick - September 8, 2002 - #75**

So, what's wrong with the coast guard guys sliding into the gals sipping coffee sliding into blackfeet "hot shots" - isn't that sort of they way it happened to you? I think that instinct is more right on than trying to validate its worth in an "acceptable" frame like history of the bicycle or whatever. If the premise is that biking brought you to all this life in a more intimate way because you "sweated up and coasted down" then show it, naturally. why can't the unfolding road tell the story ?

**Phase Module, Phase Forward**  
**Barrett Golding – September 25, 2002 - #78**

Living On Earth & i have decided how to present these disparate pieces. we'll air them separately, as a series of 2-4 minute modules, 1 per week. some shows i'll narrate, most i won't. each will have a person, or a few folk, we met on the trail, much like the rough-mixes here at Transom, and much like the way josef&i encountered them -- different people on different parts of the river(s), not necessarily associated with their up-&down-stream neighbors.

this solution works best for me and for LOE, tho not perhaps for Transom, cuz i won't be publicly wrangling w/ all those story structural issues we Transomites live for. modules mean i don't have to worry about connecting everybody together in a grand handholding circle where all themes, schemes, thots and dreams become one intricately interwoven narrative expounding upon the glory and the gory history of our great land. screw that. all i need do is cut 'em up and put 'em on-air. let them speak, not me.

modules also allow for more creativity. the content will change weekly, but so can the form. some shows can sound more audio-artsy (like the Sisters of Saint Gertrude above); others can be straight intervju (like Lois & Betty).

from the start i've been skeptical i could make something long-form for LivingOnEarth, or any other existing major national series, that would satisfy both what i wanna do and what they wanna run. later, sometime during the 2003-6 L&C bicentennial, i do believe i'll take the suggestions of several Transomites, and make a special(s) outside the boundaries of a nat'l mag series, possibly with the bike-history as story-glue, and distribute it myself.

for now, tho, maybe it's alright if "my speakers are out-of-phase," cuz it'll be a whole week before the next phase begins.

## About Transom

### What We're Trying To Do

Here's the short form: Transom.org is an experiment in channeling new work and voices to public radio through the Internet, and for discussing that work, and encouraging more. We've designed Transom.org as a performance space, an open editorial session, an audition stage, a library, and a hangout. Our purpose is to create a worthy Internet site and make public radio better.

Submissions can be stories, essays, home recordings, sound portraits, interviews, found sound, non-fiction pieces, audio art, whatever, as long as it's good listening. Material may be submitted by anyone, anywhere -- by citizens with stories to tell, by radio producers trying new styles, by writers and artists wanting to experiment with radio.

We contract with Special Guests to come write about work here. We like this idea, because it 1) keeps the perspective changing so we're not stuck in one way of hearing, 2) lets us in on the thoughts of creative minds, and 3) fosters a critical and editorial dialog about radio work, a rare thing.

Our Discussion Boards give us a place to talk it all over. Occasionally, we award a Transom.org t-shirt to especially helpful users, and/or invite them to become Special Guests.



### Staff

**Producer/Editor** - *Jay Allison*

**Web Director/Designer** - *Joshua T. Barlow*

**Editors** – *Sydney Lewis, Viki Merrick, Chelsea Merz, Paul Tough, Jeff Towne, Helen Woodward*

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ATLANTIC PUBLIC MEDIA

Atlantic Public Media administers Transom.org. APM is a non-profit organization based in Woods Hole, Massachusetts which has as its mission "to serve public broadcasting through training and mentorship, and through support for creative and experimental approaches to program production and distribution." APM is also the founding group for *WCAI & WNAN*, a new public radio service for Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket under the management of *WGBH*-Boston.

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