

Remembering Charlie Brown

VoxPro developer, successful radio show host remembered by colleague

By [Rick Bidlack](#) ·

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CHARLIE BROWN

6AM-10AM ON **KJR** SEATTLE



The author is a senior development engineer at Wheatstone. He worked at Audion Labs helping Charlie Brown co-develop VoxPro. Audion Labs was purchased by Wheatstone in 2015.

I suppose that for all of us there are inflexion points in our lives where you meet someone or experience some new thing that changes your life thereafter. Charlie Brown was such a turning point for me. He was also my introduction to radio.

At the time we met, Charlie had been retired from a successful 33-year career in broadcasting where he had worked at Seattle's top stations as a morning man, holding court and ruling the airwaves in a top 40 format. His love of radio and wanting to bring the best content to his listeners drove him to create the VoxPro DAW in 1992, bringing it to market in 1994 (as a Mac application). Replacing reel-to-reel machines with computer software was at the time a hard-sell, but his own and other early adapters' use of the product made it a reality.

Charlie and I were brought together through two degrees of mutual friends — he was looking for a programmer to complete the rollout of VoxPro to the Windows platform, and I was freshly unemployed from my third dot-com implosion in a year.



It was the summer of 2001. The venue, Audion "Laboratories," was a 12-foot x 20-foot cabin on the back of Charlie and Kimberly's property on an island in Puget Sound. A 40-minute ferry ride involved in getting there. I thought, "How amazing, perhaps even impudent, to think that you can develop a new product with a skeleton crew and no budget and bring it to market." I had been burned at several venture capitalist-funded start-ups but I was willing to take a chance with Charlie.

So Charlie led me through that process, and he introduced me to the radio family. He wasn't technical, but he had excellent instincts about technology. He was unfailingly kind, generous, optimistic, and infinitely forgiving of my many shortcomings and missteps. We had a wonderful journey together at Audion ("Audion-and-on-and-on ...") for 14 years, during which time I got to see his idea, VoxPro,

become the preeminent audio editor in radio. He was a model of the well-lived life, an example of what persistent hard work and the willingness to take a risk can bring. I will miss him greatly.

Charlie is remembered by a city that loved him in this [Seattle Times](#) article published on Friday, May 15.