

"On the Highway to Good Health"

Steve Kelly, managing editor

In the quiet and serenity of earth's orbit, the Galaxy II satellite, a wonderous floating piece of hardware embodying man's telecommunications technology, beams down to our little green planet the Chicago-based Interstate Radio Network (IRN) programming to more than 50 affiliates nationwide, heard over some 150 radio stations.

The IRN, with studios located in the Tribune Tower in Chicago and the Opryland Hotel in Nashville, describes itself as the "first and only full-service entertainment and information network in America programmed specifically for truckers, travelers, and third-shift workers." It airs from 10 p.m. Eastern time until 5 a.m. Pacific time, seven nights-a-week, 365 days-a-year.

Back on terra firma, at 3:20 a.m. EST time, truckers driving the interstates, and other night owls, can hear a mellifluous voice say: "On the Highway to Good Health with Dr. Wayne Henry Zemelka."

Wayne Zemelka, D.C. (Dr. "Z") is a 1975 graduate of Palmer College with decades of radio and television experience, who currently teaches marketing at Palmer, is the author, producer, and announcer for IRN's nightly health segments. Although the spots are only two minutes, Dr. Zemelka packs a cornucopia of interesting information into his allotted time slot. He speaks on a broad, topical range of health concerns inspired by his copious perusal of numerous journals, publications, and the latest published research.

Spaced throughout the night, one also hears Dr. Z's one-minute public service announcements, including chiropractic promotional pieces. One such promo goes like this:

"Driving across the interstates of this great country is an exciting experience, all the while getting paid for it if you're driving an 18-wheeler, except if you're having back, shoulder or neck pain. The International Chiropractors Association reminds you relief may be just hours away if you're on Interstate 80 heading towards the Walcott/Amaco Truck Stop. Palmer College of Chiropractic has opened a chiropractic clinic at the Walcott truck shop staffed by licensed doctors of chiropractic. The clinic is opened seven days-a-week, 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. with x-ray facilities and the latest chiropractic adjusting equipment. No appointment is necessary at the Walcott Chiropractic Clinic, and it's easy to find ...(gives directions) ... A service to the trucking industry by Palmer College of Chiropractic and the International Chiropractors Association.

"For the International Chiropractors Association, this is Dr. Wayne Henry Zemelka on the 'Highway to Good Health.' You're on the Interstate."

Three years ago, Dr. Zemelka met the people who run the Interstate Radio Network at the annual July "Truck Jamboree" at the Walcott Truck Stop, just west of Davenport off the Interstate 80 Walcott exit. Palmer College at that time was planning on opening a chiropractic clinic next to the truck stop. The people from IRN were interested in Dr. Z doing some health programming for their network, and they showed an interest in chiropractic as well.

Palmer College subsequently opened their Walcott Clinic September 1989 (see "Palmer Clinic --

Roadside Service of Another Kind") in the April 26, 1991 issue of "DC").

That November, IRN contacted Dr. Z and asked if Palmer College would be interested in providing the financial backing to produce the health segments for the network. Palmer College was unwilling to fund the project, so Dr. Z contacted the ICA. The ICA agreed to underwrite the expenses for the program for one year, and Dr. Z began airing his program in January of 1991.

A year later, when the ICA dropped its support, Dr. Zemelka undertook the expenses himself -- buying the recording equipment, put in his own audio studio -- and keeping the nightly program alive. Each month he sends the network 10 new segments; currently he has written and produced 236 segments for IRN. He continues on because he believes it's important to promote chiropractic, a profession that's been very good to him.

"I felt we couldn't pass up this opportunity as a profession," he said. "It's important for us in the marketing business to promote chiropractic. There are two keys: one is the marketing; the other is the legislative. If we keep both of them up in front, we're going to do all right."

To promote chiropractic, two or three times a year Dr. Z accepts the invitation to be the guest of Gene Davis, IRN program manager in Chicago on his Friday night broadcast. Dr. Z fields questions from callers and discusses the importance of chiropractic for the trucking industry.

The IRN continues to grow. Dr. Zemelka recalls working as a disc jockey back in the 60's at the 50,000 watt KGA radio in Spokane, Washington. He's happy to report that KGA recently joined the IRN.

While Dr. Zemelka may be only one small voice on the crowded airwaves, it nice to know the profession is represented.

Or as Dr. Z says, "Chiropractors in this country need to know that we have people out there who are promoting the heck out of the profession."

Stephen Kelly
Assistant Editor

Editor's note: With Dr. Zemelka bearing the expense of the program, it's fair to say he wouldn't mind a little financial assistance from any chiropractic organization. In return, a sponsoring chiropractic organization would have a mention at the end of each program, and one 60-second public service announcement that would rotate throughout the week. While he would maintain full-editorial rights for the research, writing and production of the programs, he would write the 60-second public service announcement with information supplied to him. In no way does this imply a "sponsorship" of the program, since that would involve a commercial fee paid to the network for that privilege.

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