



THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

March 5, 2024

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Bo Thompson and Beth Troutman, Good Morning BT, 1110 AM WBT 99.3 FM Radio

by **Bill Barte**

Bo Thompson and Beth Troutman have both had successful careers of their own.

Bo has worked in Charlotte Broadcasting for nearly 30 years. He's hosted WBT's morning show since 2012.

Beth is an Emmy Award-winning television personality. She has been an anchor with WCCB and WCNC in Charlotte. She has also hosted nationally syndicated television programs and ran for Congress in 2004.

The hosts of Charlotte's top-rated radio morning program, Good Morning BT, recently celebrated their second anniversary together. The synergy between Thompson and Troutman of WBT Radio (1110AM/99.3FM) was highlighted during their presentation to Charlotte Rotary, moderated by club president-elect, **Kim Brattain**.

However, before their portion of the program began, Thompson agreed to join **Woodson Bradley** and Dr. Thomas Moore, leading the club in song. Thompson noted that Moore's encouragement when he was a child in the mid-1980s helped build his confidence to pursue broadcasting (he and his siblings had been a part of Thomas' "children's albums").

Both Thompson and Troutman are from the Charlotte area. Thompson

grew up in Charlotte attending Myer's Park High and Davidson College. Troutman was raised in Concord. She then went to college in Chapel Hill.

They both agreed that the biggest misnomer of their job is that it doesn't take work. The fact is that it "takes a lot of work, to make it look as if it isn't work" when they are hosting their morning program. The show runs from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. Monday through Friday and includes breaking news, current affairs, entertainment, politics, and pop culture.

A lot of work happens before the show. Bo and Beth text back and forth with ideas, articles, and noteworthy subjects to cover. Bo can utilize a home studio to help with show production before arriving at the Ty Boyd Studio. He arrives at the station at 4:45 a.m. each morning and leads the 5-6 a.m. hour. Beth arrives by 5:40 a.m. and helps set the tone in the studio with her male colleagues on the program: traffic reporters, producers, sports directors, and Bo. Her arrival brings a "bunch of energy."

Surprises on the program can happen almost every day. It may be a certain subject that takes the on-air team down a "rabbit hole" or it can be what a certain guest, caller, or co-host may say. Sometimes it may be the different people who listen to the program who call in unexpectedly. Thompson referenced a wide variety of political candidates and influencers whose calls can take over a show on any given day.

That variety of listeners is one of the proud accomplishments of the program. Our speakers referenced "Good Morning BT" as a "throw-back to the way programs on WBT used to be." It is a program that celebrates dialogue and community during a time when there is a lot of divisiveness in the media.

In fact, Troutman told the story of one of her favorite interviews during her time at WBT. Vice President Mike Pence who many times was perceived as stoic and serious ended up being funny and gracious with his time. Pence, who had his own radio program in Indiana during the 1990s, loved hearing his old show's opening during the interview with Bo and Beth.

Thompson's favorite interview was the "American Dream," Dusty Rhodes. This professional wrestling icon and former World Champion was overall just a great interview. Many in the Charlotte Rotary crowd remember when Charlotte was an epicenter for wrestling with Jim Crockett Promotions being headquartered here.

Challenging interviews? Tom Wopat was having a bad day when Bo Thompson spoke to him via his former station, WDYT. Wopat, a singer and actor who rose to fame as Luke Duke on the Dukes of Hazzard was promoting a play but wasn't into talking about it.

Troutman said her most challenging interview was with the comedian and HBO Real-Time host, Bill Maher. He cut their interview short saying, "I have something else that I have to do."

Thompson and Troutman have recently begun a run on WBT's sister station, 107.9 The Link. The Bo and Beth Show airs from 7-10 a.m. each Saturday and features commentary and hit songs.

Questions from members included syndication possibilities (they'll see what the future holds), the influence of Rush Limbaugh (he saved talk radio with talent and good production), and the importance of writing in media with artificial intelligence influence (bigger effect on television production than its current translation in radio).

In closing, Charlotte Rotary was treated to the "Good Morning BT" duo as they successfully shared their mission of creating a formula for their radio program that informs, entertains, and "makes people feel good" when they listen.

A recording of the meeting can be found here: <https://vimeo.com/921820598>
The program introduction begins at approximately 33 minutes and 5 seconds.