

# Radio & Records

THE INDUSTRY'S NEWSPAPER

## SPECIAL EDITION



**CAPITOL  
IS BECOMING  
ESTABLISHED AS  
THE HOTTEST,  
FASTEST-GROWING**

**AOR LABEL.**

**OUR COMMITMENT  
IS SPEARHEADED  
BY A  
NEWLY-FORMED AOR  
PROMOTION TEAM,  
WHICH PROUDLY  
REPRESENTS  
THESE CURRENTLY  
HOT ARTISTS:**

Wing's Debut American Tour Was The Concert Sensation Of '76! Hundreds Of Thousands Of Fans Were Treated To The Greatest "Rock Show" Ever Recorded. Recorded? More On That Later... But First, For Your ARB Programming Pleasure, Consider The Other Heavy Hitters On This Page.

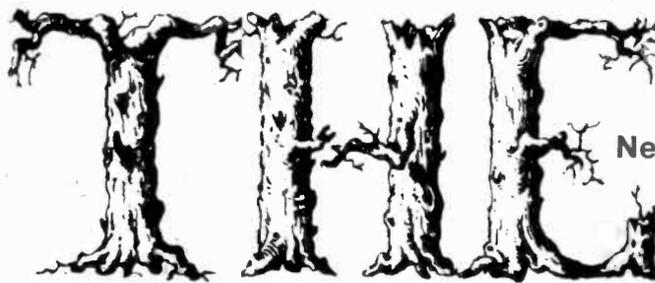


# STEVE MILLER BAND

"Fly Like An Eagle" is Platinum Plus... And One Of AOR Radio's Hottest Albums of '76!

"Live Bullet" Established Bob As A NATIONAL Star. His New LP, "Night Moves," Will Bring Him SUPER-Stardom!

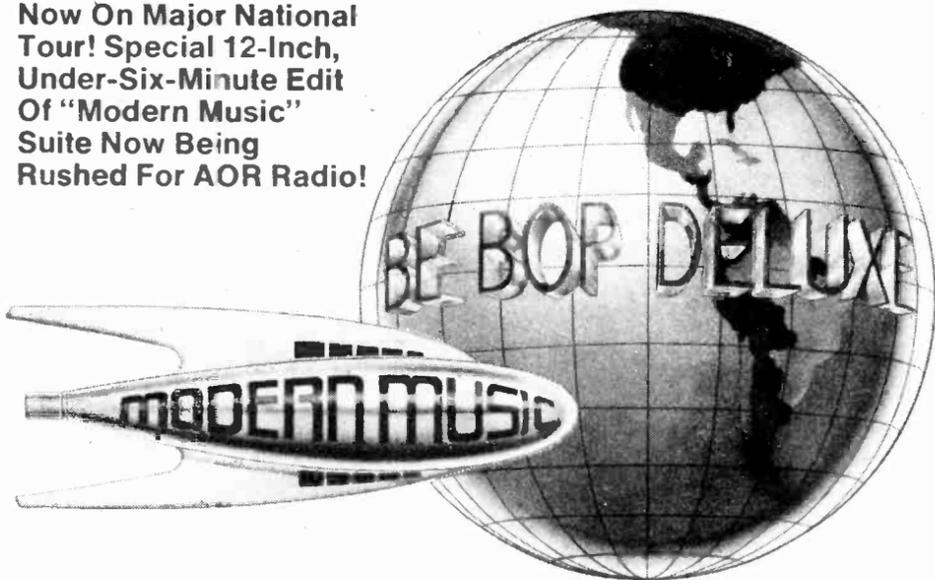
# BOB SEGER & THE SUPER BULLET BAND



The Classic "Georgia On My Mind" Has Been Newly-Recorded And Released By The Band, And Follows Their Recent Success With "The Best Of The Band" LP.



Now On Major National Tour! Special 12-Inch, Under-Six-Minute Edit Of "Modern Music" Suite Now Being Rushed For AOR Radio!



# LITTLE RIVER BAND

"(It's A) Long Way There" Is Fast-Becoming An AOR Classic And A Top 40 Hit!

Soon To Be Seen In Major Concert Appearances Throughout America! The Title Track, "Big Towne, 2061," Has Just Been Released As A Single From Their Second Futuristic Album.



America's Hottest New Performing Band! "(She's Just A) Fallen Angel" Newly-Released As STARZ' First Single From Their Debut Album, And It's Already Breaking!



# Radio & Records

THE INDUSTRY'S NEWSPAPER

presents

# AOR 1976

**ALBUM ORIENTED ROCK...**the radio people and the record people who make it, promote it, play it, and virtually live it...that's what this special is all about.

**AOR RADIO...**to have any one "special" accurately reflect or represent it would probably take more than a million pages to publish and about ten years to read. While I'm writing this and you're reading it, the significant changes and growth are continuing. AOR RADIO is marked by evolution and effect, action and reaction, one way and another way. You hear it said that "it ain't the same as it used to be" and that the progressive radio that gave birth to it all is no longer. Well, nothing that gives birth to anything remains the same, but a spirit can transcend the material and physical manifestations of the commercial media's daily competitive needs. The spirit of progressiveness lives on. The diverse poles of AOR radio, with a maze of methods and madness in between, offering its participants countless ways to carry out the original dream without having to subscribe to one standardized school, are a testimony to the format's progressive nature as a mainstream type of radio. To know it is to do it or to be associated with it in one way or another. It is our hope and goal that this special edition of Radio & Records will provide a more detailed glimpse at the world of AOR for those on the outside, so that they may better understand it. For those on the inside, we look at it as a tribute to their continuing pioneering and aggressive dedication.

**THANK YOU...**to all the people who made this special possible...to all those who contributed their fine articles, to those who sat up with me all night and sweated through the "Great Debate," to all those who consented to be interviewed, to honestly share their opinions and knowledge, to the entire editorial, production, and secretarial staffs of Radio & Records who worked long and hard hours putting this together, to those who believe enough in AOR to sponsor this special, to Bob Wilson for originally believing enough in AOR to provide it with such a fine vehicle of communication in the first place, and to those of you who read the following pages.

**Mike Harrison**  
AOR Editor  
Managing Editor  
Radio & Records



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# AOR, YOU'RE AOK.



We'd like to thank AOR stations  
all across the country for the incred-  
ible support you've given our artists.

*A&M Records*

## Radio & Records

# All-Time Album Airplay/40

10/17/75

1	1	LED ZEPPELIN.....	Led Zeppelin IV (Atlantic).....	"Stairway""Black Dog""Rock & Roll""Misty Mountain"
3	2	PINK FLOYD.....	Dark Side Of Moon (Harvest).....	"Money""Time""Us & Them""Breathe""Gig"
-	3	FLEETWOOD MAC.....	Fleetwood Mac (Reprise).....	"Rhiannon""Over Head""Say You Love""World"
-	4	PETER FRAMPTON.....	Comes Alive (A&M).....	"Feel""Show Me""Baby I Love"
7	5	LYNYRD SKYNYRD.....	Pronounced (MCA).....	"Free Bird""3 Steps""Simple""Tuesday"
8	6	BEATLES.....	Abbey Road (Apple).....	"Sun""Something""Come Together""Darling""Maxwell"
10	7	BEATLES.....	Sgt. Pepper (Capitol).....	"Little Help""Day In Life" Title "64"
16	8	BEATLES.....	White Album (Apple).....	"Guitar Weeps""USSR""Revolution""Bill"
2	9	ELTON JOHN.....	Yellow Brick Road (MCA).....	"Funeral/Bleeding""Saturday""Candle" Title
11	10	ROLLING STONES.....	Let It Bleed (London).....	"Get What You Want""Midnight" Title "Shelter"
6	11	WHO.....	Who's Next (Decca).....	"Baba""Fooled Again""Mobile""Blue Eyes"
4	12	DEREK & DOMINOES.....	Layla (Atco/Polydor).....	Title "Bell Bottom""Wing""Love Sad""Any Day"
12	13	JIMI HENDRIX.....	Electric Ladyland (Reprise).....	"Watchtower""Traffic""Voodoo"
18	14	CAROLE KING.....	Tapestry (Ode).....	"Too Late""Far Away""Friend""Woman"
5	15	CROSBY, STILLS & NASH...	Crosby, Stills & Nash (Atlantic)...	"Judy""49 Byes""Wooden""Long Time"
17	16	ALLMAN BROTHERS.....	Live At Fillmore East (Capricorn)...	"Statesboro""Whippin' Post""Stormy""Liz"
-	17	LED ZEPPELIN.....	Led Zeppelin II (Atlantic).....	"Lotta Love""Heartbreaker"
32	18	Mc CARTNEY & WINGS.....	Band On The Run (Apple).....	Title "Jet""Wheels""1985"
25	19	WHO.....	Tommy (Decca).....	"Overture""Pinball""Take It""Free"
-	20	EAGLES.....	One Of These Nights (Asylum)...	Title "Eyes""Limit""Thrill"
-	21	JEFFERSON STARSHIP.....	Red Octopus (Grunt).....	"Miracles""Play On""Freddie"
36	22	ROLLING STONES.....	Beggars Banquet (London).....	"Devil""Street Fighting"
40	23	ZZ TOP.....	Tres Hombres (London).....	"La Grange""Bus""Chicago""Beer"
-	24	BOB DYLAN.....	Blood On The Tracks (Col).....	"Jack Of Hearts""Buckets""Stranger"
13	25	YES.....	Fragile (Atlantic).....	"Roundabout""Long Distance"
-	26	AEROSMITH.....	Toys In The Attic (Columbia).....	"Walk""Emotion""10 Inch"
35	27	DAVID BOWIE.....	Ziggy Stardust (RCA).....	"Suffragette" Title "Suicide""Starman"
-	28	ROLLING STONES.....	Sticky Fingers (Rolling Stones)...	"Sugar""Knocking""Bitch""Moonlight"
-	29	BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN.....	Born To Run (Columbia).....	Title "Jungle""Thunder""10th Ave"
24	30	CSNY.....	Deja Vu (Atlantic).....	"Teach""Carry""House" Title
31	31	JONI MITCHELL.....	Court And Spark (Asylum).....	"Help Me""Robbery""Paris"
30	32	LED ZEPPELIN.....	Physical Graffiti (Swan Song).....	"Kashmir""Trampled""Boogie""Rover"
-	33	ELO.....	Face The Music (UA).....	"Evil""Magic""Night Rider""Poker"
-	34	JETHRO TULL.....	Aqualung (Reprise).....	Title "Loco Breath""Hymn""Mary"
19	35	BOB DYLAN.....	Blonde On Blonde (Columbia).....	"Rainy Day""Memphis""Sad Eyed Lady"
29	36	JEFFERSON AIRPLANE.....	Surrealistic Pillow (RCA).....	"Somebody To Love""Rabbit""Today"
21	37	STEVIE WONDER.....	Innervisions (Tamla).....	"Living For City""Too High""Lady""Worry"
23	38	AEROSMITH.....	Get Your Wings (Columbia).....	"Dream On""Train Rolling""Lord"
-	39	BOB DYLAN.....	Greatest Hits (Columbia).....	"Rolling Stone""Watchtower""4th St.""Rainy"
-	40	TED NUGENT.....	Ted Nugent (Epic).....	"Stranglehold""Hey Baby"

This chart is the result of a special survey of our reporting stations. Stations contributed their 10 most played albums, and the most played cuts from those albums. The same formula used in determining the weekly **R&R** album chart (the number of reports, the number of cuts programmed, market size, ratings, and individual station programming habits) was employed in determining the rankings. The important thing to remember about this chart is that there is no time restriction imposed. Any albums, current or ancient, qualified. The period considered was the entire history of each station. It should be pointed out that the albums on this chart were reported by the people currently programming the stations. If taken six months from now it would probably come out differently, just as this chart is different than the last survey taken 10/17/75.

## Chart Summary

By Sharrison

During the discussion of the "Great Debate," an important point was brought up. In the future of AOR, do you keep your demographics and keep trying to bring in new people, or do you continue playing to the same audience, grow with them, and become the MOR of tomorrow? In calculating the second All-Time AOR Top 40, approximately one year after the first, the question was answered, and you answered it yourselves. An important element of AOR is its "progressiveness"—being first, being with or ahead of time—time is so essential to AOR.

An important question many programmers ask themselves when programming music, and especially the older albums, is "is it still relevant today?"—to today's audience, to today's society...has time proven this album a classic?

When the second All-Time Top 40 was calculated, we looked at the first and compared the two—who made it again? Who fell off? And why? Upon careful inspection, the reasons began to take shape. Some groups one year later are no longer as relevant to today's music as they once were. Some artists, whose more recent albums have not met with success, have accordingly had a gray shadow cast over their more successful past albums, knocking them off the list. And the overwhelming popularity of a few recent albums, such as Fleetwood Mac's and Frampton's, forced room to be made for them.

It was interesting to note also that for the most part the chart was made up of superstars with a track record. There were no one-shot, one-album artists. AOR's history and roots may not be very old, but they are solid.

Another interesting note was that some artists stayed on, but their more recent albums charted, rather than older but equally successful albums.

You have answered your own question. AOR continues its practice of "progressiveness"—staying with the times—and will probably continue to do so far ahead into the future.



# MOST PLAYED 1975 AND 1976!

LED ZEPPELIN'S     THE FIRST ALBUM TO BE NO. 1 IN  
AIRPLAY FOR TWO CONSECUTIVE YEARS.

LED ZEPPELIN'S LATEST ALBUM, THE SOUND TRACK FROM THE WARNER BROS.  
MOTION PICTURE, "THE SONG REMAINS THE SAME," A 2-RECORD SET RECORDED  
LIVE AT MADISON SQUARE GARDEN.



Distributed by Atlantic Records

# IT TAKES A STAFF LIKE THIS...

**DICK KLINE**

National Vice President, Promotion

**HILLERY JOHNSON**

National Vice President, Special Projects

**VINCE FARACI**

National Director, Pop Promotion

**TUNC ERIM**

National Director, Album Promotion

**PRIMUS ROBINSON**

National Director, R&B Promotion

**MARGO KNESZ**

Assistant National Director, Pop Promotion

**LARRY KING**

Director of Field Operations

**GUNTHER HAUER**

National College M O R Promotion Director

**BETH ROSENGARD**

Assistant National Director, Album Promotion

**JUDY LIBOW**

Assistant National College Promotion Director

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Regional Director, Atlanta

**MAURICE WATKINS**

Regional Director, Atlanta

**GEARY TANNER**

Atlanta

**CHARLES GEER**

Atlanta

**MICHAEL KIDD**

Balt / Wash

**FRED LEWIS**

Boston

**CARROLL HARDY**

Buffalo

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**RANDY HOCK**

Chicago

**KIRKLAND BURKE**

Chicago

**TOM HEIL**

Cincinnati

**HAL KAPLAN**

Regional Director, Cleveland

**WILLIE SMITH**

Cleveland

**MIKE LABEAN**

Cleveland Pittsburgh

**NEVIN ST. ROMAIN**

Regional Director, Dallas

**DAVID SAMUELS**

Regional Director, Dallas

**DANNY SMITH**

Dallas

**JOHN TOPE**

Denver

**RON COUNTS**

Detroit

**WILLIS HALL**

Detroit

**HERB GREENE**

Hartford

**TODD GALLI**

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**CHUCK LACKNER**

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**DAVID FLEISCHMAN**

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**PAM BENSON**

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**STEVE LEEDS**

New York

**CLARENCE BULLARD**

New York

**GEORGE COLLIER**

Regional Director, Phila

**BUDDY DEE**

Regional Director, Phila

**CHRIS UNCANGCO**

Phila

**DAVID KIMMEL**

Richmond

**WALT CALLOWAY**

San Francisco

**SANDY SILER**

Seattle

**HARRY MURPHY**

St Louis

# TO BREAK ARTISTS LIKE THESE.



# And Now The News

By Brad Messer

Most successful AOR programmers will agree that Album Oriented Rock radio is much more than just music. It's an attitude that creates an environment throughout all aspects of the station's programming, from jock style and delivery to commercial load and content to community involvement. AOR radio has

made great strides in the area of News and Public Affairs approaching these elements with styles and methods as different as those of AOR music departments regarding the playing of records. The following article by Brad Messer, News Director of KMET, offers some insight into these approaches.

Who are we AOR newspeople and what are we up to? I'm Brad Messer, News Director of Metro-media's KMET in Los Angeles, sharing with you some of my ideas and attitudes and hoping you'll share back.

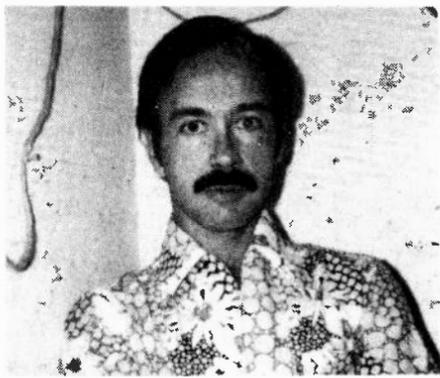
I'm curious to know whether there is a common thread among Album Oriented Rock radio news operations throughout the nation. Do we as editors, writers, reporters, and airpeople accidentally or on-purpose have the same goals and ideals?



**BRAD MESSER IN BLACK AND WHITE:** At left, Brad Messer as he appeared seven years ago, while News Director of KYA, San Francisco. For two weeks Messer posed as Black, in a station-financed experiment aimed at uncovering illegal racial discrimination. The wig and Hollywood makeup worked perfectly, and Messer's disguise was unquestioned.

For instance, in aiming at my target audience of 18-34 I always avoid blood-and-guts. Do you, at your AOR station? KMET emphasizes local news and features, and when we're hot we sometimes go for days with only two-liners on Washington D.C. And I wonder whether other news operations do that.

So onward to my rap, and please keep in mind I'd personally like to get feedback and enlightenment, because now it's Me and You and it'd be just plain ol' Us if we knew one another, eh?



## To Get It, You Gotta Get It Here...

It's easy to get caught up in the routine of the daily operation and forget to create something special, but something special is the only way I'm appreciably different from my competitors across the street. What's special? Just getting into a story no one else is covering...and covering the hell out of it.

A couple examples. As ND of KGB/KGB-FM in San Diego I got the fiscal concurrence of PD Ron Jacobs to add a fulltime news reporter just to cover one story day after day, a two-month court trial, as the local revolutionary college prof claimed he had been spied upon by local police and conspired against by the FBI and paid government informers. Turned out the fellow was telling the truth, and as the trial developed daily, San Diegans got a detailed look at the war that had developed between the radical Right and Left in Southern California. That's the only trial KGB ever covered full time; no one else staffed the trial for radio or TV, and our listeners got something useful they couldn't get elsewhere. And my reporter, George Wilson, won the Sigma Delta Chi "Freedom of Information" award for his balanced reporting. That was special and it cost some money. The Epsilon Bootes Star Probe Theory, on the other hand, was special and did *not* cost money...or very much, I should say.

"Just because everything is different doesn't mean anything has changed."  
So, Calif. Oracle

"Don't let your mouth write no check that your tail can't cash."  
Bo Diddley

Bo Diddley

## Space Probe From Another Star

Risky stuff. Flying saucers, ESP, anything not accepted in the mainstream of American culture is risky stuff, right? Screws up your credibility. Well, maybe not. If it's handled with intelligence and balance you can come out of a risky story downright clean. My partner Brent Seltzer and I ran across the story of a Scotsman who theorized there may be evidence of a satellite in Earth orbit, sent here from the double-star system Epsilon Bootes. We decided immediately it was probably a crackpot theory but we wanted to know exactly what the man thought and why, and we wanted to find qualified astronomers and other scientists who would tell us precisely why the man was wrong, or maybe, right. Let me capsule the story for you and then say what we did with it.

## Way Back When Radio Got Invented

In the 1920's European radio experimenters aimed their signals away from Earth and sometimes the signals bounced back, from areas where there were no known objects. Even more curious, sometimes the echoes returned to Earth with altered delay times between signals. No one knew quite what to think of that, but those Norwegian, Dutch and French experimenters kept careful notes of the delay times anyway, and some fifty years later Scotsman Duncan A. Lunan happened to see those notes and got an idea. When he diagrammed echo delay times and sequences, he saw a pattern closely resembling a map of a certain part of the heavens... a star chart that almost perfectly matched a known part of our sky. In fact, it exactly matched what those stars would have looked like 13,000 years ago. Lunan developed other evidence to support his theory that Earth may have been visited by a satellite probe 13,000 years ago, that the probe was designed to communicate with Earth by reflecting our own radio signals back to us in code, and that the satellite might still be in orbit fairly close to the moon.

## Risking That Precious Credibility

Seltzer and I grabbed that story and no one else did. We began with some telephone calls to the theorist in Scotland, followed by calls to prestigious scientists at several universities in California and Great Britain, spiced in comment from Arthur C. Clarke, involving the British Consulate in Los Angeles in hand-delivery of scientific papers from London...and for the better part of six months we dogged the developments, as Lunan sought money for a satellite search and the scientific world debated his theory. Ah, it was spacy stuff indeed, and our phones lit up and the mail poured in, and across the street at KCBQ the old-line, pro ND was studiously ignoring the story and telling people who called they'd just have to hear that story on KGB because the Q didn't run irresponsible stuff like that.

He missed the point, or acted like he missed it, because there he sat talking about car wrecks and shootings, and here we were on the trail of something supremely interesting...a step-by-step check, in a responsible manner, of a theory that interested nearly anyone who heard about it.

## Ending Up With An Ending...

We could drink a few beers and talk all night about the theory. It turns out the theory is still hobbling, although some strong counter-theories were advanced. The effort to search for the satellite was either abandoned or is right now far underground.

Seltzer and I picked up the annual Sigma Delta Chi award for Enterprise Reporting, which was nice, but here's what was nicer in my mind—our listeners knew for sure we would really investigate those "risky" stories and let the facts speak without prejudice. In the context of this article, we newspeople were creating something special no one could hear on another station. To me an important part of working for an 18-34 audience is covering what other news departments don't.

"Nothing in the universe exists alone. Every drop of water, every human being, all creatures in the web of life and all ideas in the web of knowledge are part of an immense evolving dynamic whole..."

Loren Eiseley

"It don't mean shit."

Wavy Gravy

"It is a curious thing what a quantity of sickness, coldness, hunger and bare-footedness we are willing to let other men suffer. It literally has no limit."  
Harry L. Hopkins, 1934 radio speech

"The only justice in the Halls of Justice is in the halls."  
Lenny Bruce

"Guard your tongue in Youth, and in Age you may mature a thought that will be service to your people."  
Chief Wabasha

Chief Wabasha

## Nuts And Bolts

Many AOR stations are FM, and the element of quality audio is even more critical than on AM. If I run an actuality with hiss, my FM listener hears that hiss. When I have the equipment to filter a marginal piece of audio up to air quality, I filter it to remove rumble or hiss. We try to roll the actuality rapidly up to 100% and at the end quickly roll it down. The audible difference in a roll-up and a cold start is subtle but I think worthwhile when you're working with first-rate sound equipment. I usually cut the actualities to the minimum length. Sometimes I illustrate a story with one or two lines of contemporary music. Occasionally I play actuality down the phone to a news source and record his reaction and present the whole call—from dialling to hanging up—in the following newscast. When I get those calls from politicians or organizations wanting to feed me some actuality material, I have been known to put the complete call on the air including my question, "Who paid for this call?" Listeners who are led into the heart of a medium's operation without pretense respond with equal honesty and openness, and—in my experience—everyone benefits from two-way dialog between newspeople and listeners.

## Do You Notice The Unnoticed?

Sometimes I try to take an anthropologically-oriented view and report slow changes and unnoticed phenomena. I'm working now on what appears to be a significant change in the Southern California weather pattern over the last century, and I find interesting stories in such slow-moving events as how a new freeway changed an entire county in 30 years, the disappearance of the neighborhood grocery stores, and so on. I look ahead to anniversaries and sometimes prepare birthday bios for rock stars, summary follow-up reports on local major stories of five years ago, whatever might be a little different.

KMET and several cooperating California and East

Coast stations ran extensive reports last year on the emergence of the New American Underground Air Force—the fleet of literally hundreds of airplanes used to smuggle dope to the American market. In piecing together a big picture from isolated incidents, we created something special.

In a newscast I try to give my listeners something they won't get across the street, while making sure they're not left ignorant of the "big news" everyone else is sure to be running. I try to insure that my listener has something interesting to talk about afterward, and I try to protect the listener from being surprised by something his friends heard on another station. What's your philosophy?

Continued on page 12

*The ABC's of AOR.*

During the course of the year the following albums have achieved AOR Top 40 status and lasting significance in contemporary music.

Amazing Rhythm Aces Too Stuffed To Jump ABCD 940	Mark-Almond To The Heart ABCD 945	Steely Dan Royal Scam ABCD 931
Jimmy Buffett Havana Daydreamin' ABCD 914	John Mayall A Banquet In Blues ABDP 958	Synergy Sequencer PPSD 98014
J. J. Cale Troubadour SRL 52002	Christine McVie The Legendary Christine Perfect Album SASD 7522	Dwight Twilley Band Sincerely SRL 52001
Crosby-Nash Wind On The Water ABCD 902	Nektar Recycled PPSD 98011	Martha Velez Escape From Babylon SASD 7515
Whistling Down The Wire ABCD 956	A Tab In The Ocean PPSD 98017	Joe Walsh You Can't Argue With A Sick Mind ABCD 932
The Crusaders Those Southern Knights BTSD 6024	Poco Rose Of Cimarron ABCD 946	<i>Just out:</i> Stephen Bishop Careless ABCD 954
Flamin' Groovies Shake Some Action SASD 7521	Terry Reid Seed Of Memory ABCD 935	Brand X Unorthodox Behaviour PPSD 98019
Mac Gayden Skyboat ABCD 927	Renaissance Live At Carnegie Hall SASD 3902	Climax Blues Band Gold Plated SASD 7523
Dirk Hamilton You Can Bark On The Left Or Sing On The Right ABCD 920	Leon Russell Best Of Leon SRL 52004	Gabriel Sweet Release ABCD 972
B. B. King and Bobby Bland Together Again—Live ASD 9317	Sir Doug And The Texas Tornados Texas Rock For Country Rollers DOSD 2057	Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers SRL 52006
John Klemmer Touch/Barefoot Ballet ABCD 922/ABCD 950		

Continued from page 10

At the risk of getting a little too holy on you here, I'd like to share some thoughts about the categories of things we newspeople do...

### News, Comment, And Public Affairs

They're three separate things, and I tend to think it's good journalism and good radio to keep 'em separate, and to plainly label each as we do it on the air.

The least pressing reason for strict separation of the three is because sometimes it's illegal not to.

The most pressing reason is honesty in responsible communication. Consider this:

You know what News is. So do I, so does everyone. Among newspeople we could probably agree on a general definition, but forget that and think about this one aspect of News: it happens and we report it.

Public Affairs programs are made to happen by us. Do you see the difference there? For Public Affairs programs the thrust of creativity comes from within us newspeople and not from outside. News happens: Out There and we reflect it to our community, while Public Affairs programs happen because we determined—from our community—a local need, and then we created something to help fill that need. News happens and we report it. *Public Affairs is Doing Something About It.*

Now in both News and Public Affairs we are assumed to be presenting balanced, factual accounts of ideas, events, and so on. The third category, Comment, is saying what we think about all this. What we newspeople think, or know, or feel personally. Three little subdivisions of Comment are commentary, personal comment, and editorial comment. Here are the differences. Commentary can be generally described as that element of a news report that balances it by virtue of personal knowledge or experience, such as, "Now a personal comment. Although President Nixon told a White House news conference that antiwar demonstrators had not been prevented from attending his San Diego Airport speech, I personally was there at the airport and plainly saw people with antiwar placards and banners herded forcibly into a parking area behind a hangar out of sight of the visiting President. I do not know whether President Nixon saw that or knew about it." End of comment. That is one kind of Comment. Commentary can be defined as personal opinion, and if it's the station owner's opinion it becomes Editorial Comment.

So here we have News, three kinds of Comment, and Public Affairs. News happens and we report it. Comment is saying what we think about it. And Public Affairs is doing something about it. Of course these categories get hazy, and blend at the edges, and sometimes we see material that obviously fits two or even all three categories, but I think we shouldn't, and here's why.

By demanding clarity and distinction, by keeping our own minds straight on the differences, we contribute to ourselves as professionals and we contribute to our listeners. We run clean, factually-balanced newscasts that give listeners enough information from which to make their own informed judgments. If we have personal comment we plainly label it personal, not letting it slide into the News category. And in Public Affairs, we own up to our responsibilities and do our best to Do Something About a community need. In my experience, listeners have appreciated knowing exactly what is being presented.

Evaluating information against experience, the listener constantly makes credibility judgments. You and I know standards of reporting vary widely.



Some stations will run anything just because it's controversial, and some run only confirmed, well-checked stories. As a newscaster, you can listen to other news reports and often know immediately if they're wire copy, an audio service, yesterday's

news, audio follow-up on a newspaper story, and so on. You the newscaster have a heightened sense of source evaluation...but I contend an important segment of your AOR audience has the same sense, and maybe nearly as well-developed.

If you occasionally succumb to believing the audience is the Great Unwashed, or the Idiots Out There, test me on this. Aim clear thoughts as high as you can, perhaps over the head of your target demographic bracket, and I'll be surprised if intelligent people don't immediately contact you by phone or letter. You will get feedback because you will have related. You will have related because you programmed something intelligent, and your audience will have had something worth talking to you about. You think, perhaps, I am two tokens beyond reality and hopelessly lost out there in Idealism. The answer is no. That ain't too idealistic at all, because every time I put something really worthwhile on the radio I get instant feedback. So do you. The damned trick is to aim yourself consistently as high as your own knowledge has taken you, and not give in to the temptation to program schlock to the Great Unwashed, simply because schlock is pretty easy to produce. That's the key to the whole ballgame.

In my experience, audiences have responded with appreciation when I have given my best efforts, which I don't always give because there are Mondays and Down Days too, you know. But that is where the Big M comes in. Motivation. I am supposed to motivate my newspeople and someone else is supposed to motivate me when I can't.

No, you should always motivate yourself, someone says. Well, sure. Do your best and all that. I know. But what I'm talking about is the Big M from Outside...the motivation you are expected to provide for your news department and your PD or GM is supposed to provide for you.

When an employee performs with excellence, point it out and give a verbal gold star. If you have an employee who's unhappy, find out why. Maybe you can cure the cause quickly. If you are able to point out a positive way to accomplish a goal, and if you take the time to do it consistently, obviously you will soon have employees who accomplish goals consistently in a positive work environment.

People are motivated by professional ego, personal greed, humanistic instinct, fear, hate, love and so on. When you play to a specific individual need, if you're not playing games, you're providing positive input where needed to maintain an employee's good feeling about him/herself.

When he was PD of KYA/KOIT in San Francisco, Dick Starr put together a winning crew and finally whipped the giant KFRC in the Pulse. Being a motivator, he had those Pulse surveys pressed into plaques, for the air people. Each plaque with photos of the individual in collage. An ego pat, and effective.

A few years before that, while ND of McLendon's flagship when KLIF was still King Kong to the rest of those monkeys in Dallas, I remember having an award etched for a newscaster who had slogged through knee-deep swamp to get to the scene of a plane crash. He may not remember KLIF paying to replace his clothes, but odds are he remembers the special and unique award I gave him to hang on his apartment wall. Positive motivation comes in smaller doses.

Aircheck your newspeople and aircheck the competition...and listen to both with your newspeople. When your station is directly compared to the people across the street, in a positive effort to evaluate quality, you and your newspeople know where you stand and where you'd better aim. Are your people really putting out a better product, day after day, based on a direct comparison? If you take the time to aircheck and compare, quality, output will jump, because you will develop job consciousness, competition, and a team spirit.

## From The Department Of Redundancy Department

I believe people can listen just as smart as I can talk. I believe in keeping News, Comment, and Public Affairs strictly separated, because it's fair to the listener and it forces me to think clearly about what I'm doing. I believe motivated people in a news operation will keep aiming for higher professional and personal goals, which benefits us all from station to community as a whole. I believe my newscasts should aim at fair, balanced presentation of

facts and ideas...with coverage of "the big news" and something special no one else offers.

And I wonder if you other AOR newspeople believe all that too. If not, what? What are the ideals and philosophies common to progressive radio news departments? Are AOR newspeople really of different minds than our previous-generation radio screamers and stentorian three-ballers?



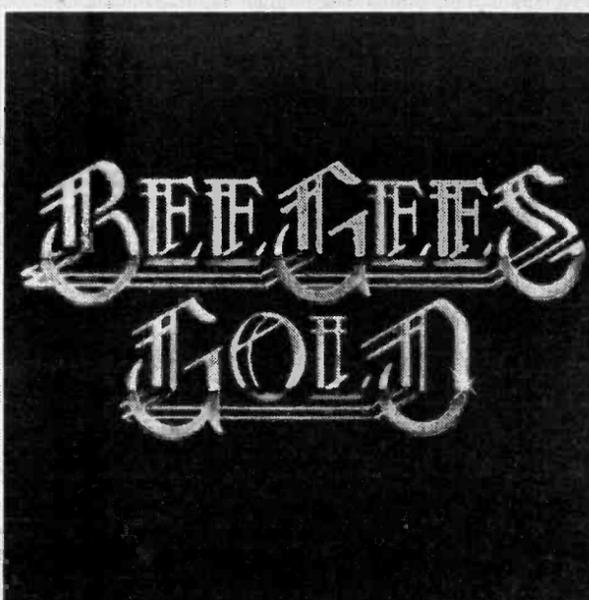
### And While You're On The Horn

How about sharing some news reports with KMET Metromedia Los Angeles? Feed us your goodies, we'll cover Los Angeles for you. We're at 213-462-4460.

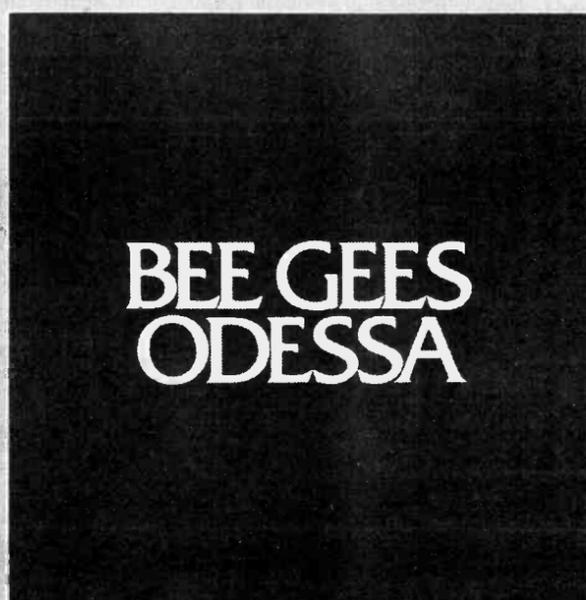
# Feast your ears on the music we believe in...



RS1-3003



RS1-3007



RS1-3006



RS1-3004



RS1-3001



Records, Inc.

Manufactured and marketed by 

**Do we really  
have to tell you  
who invented  
AOR?**

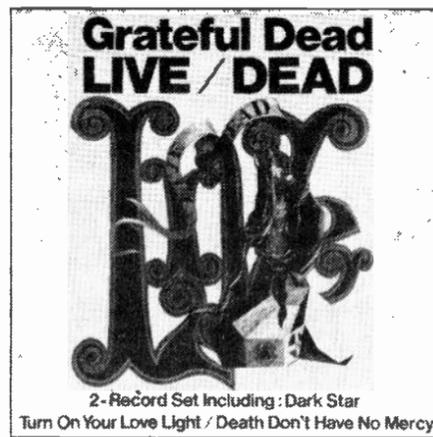
**Warner Bros.**  
**We're big on big records.**



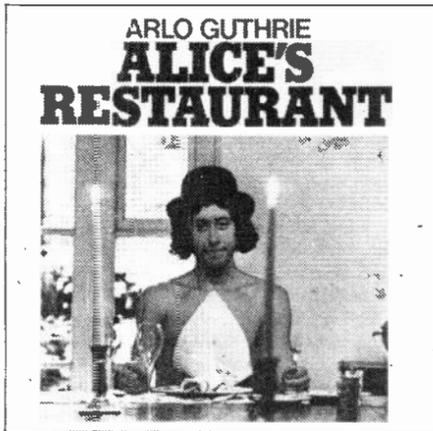
The Allman Brothers Band  
Eat A Peach (Capricorn 2CP 0102)



Fleetwood Mac  
Bare Trees (MS 2080)



The Grateful Dead  
Live Dead (2WS 1830)



Arlo Guthrie  
Alice's Restaurant (RS 6267)



Jimi Hendrix  
Electric Ladyland (2RS 6307)



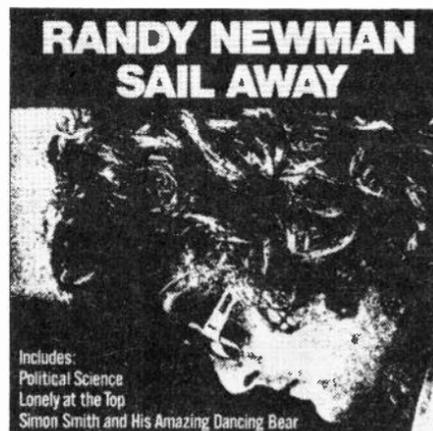
Little Feat  
Dixie Chicken (BS 2686)



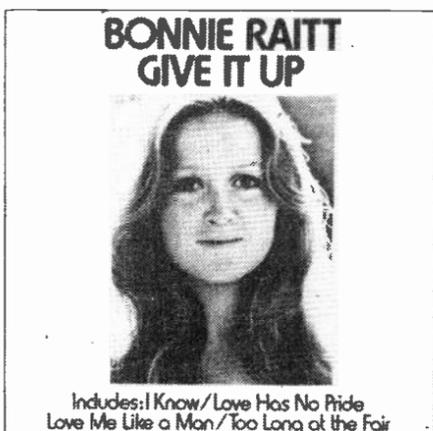
Van Morrison  
Astral Weeks (WS 1768)



Maria Muldaur  
Maria Muldaur (MS 2148)



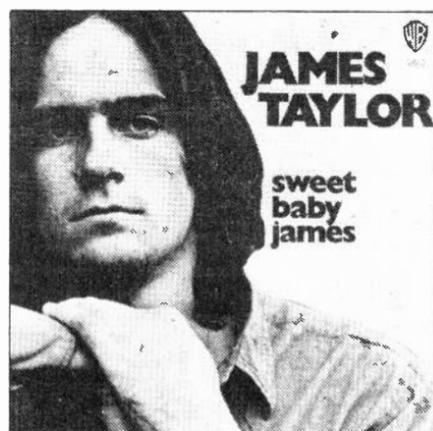
Randy Newman  
Sail Away (MS 2064)



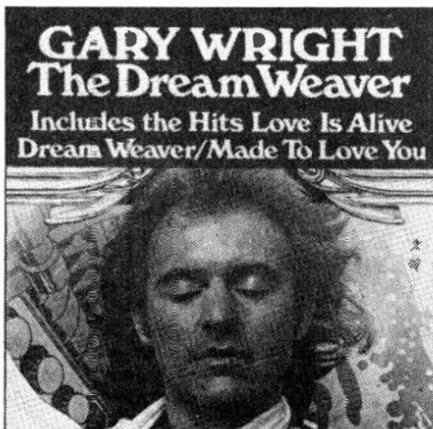
Bonnie Raitt  
Giving It Up (BS 2643)



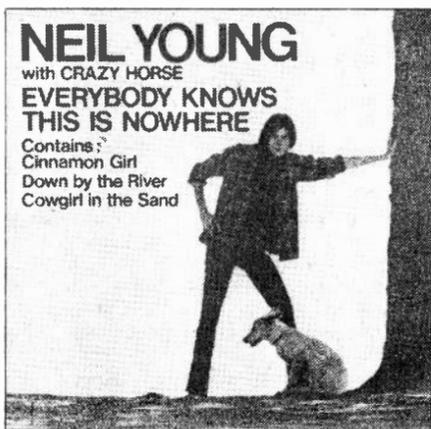
Todd Rundgren  
Something/Anything? (Bearsville 2BX 2066)



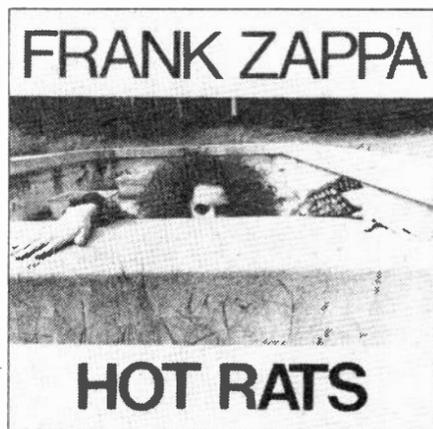
James Taylor  
Sweet Baby James (WS 1843)



Gary Wright  
The Dream Weaver (BS 2868)



Neil Young  
Everybody Knows This is Nowhere (RS 6349)



Frank Zappa  
Hot Rats (RS 6356)



# A Conversation With Lee Abrams

Lee Abrams has become the industry's leading (in terms of number of stations) consultant among those specializing exclusively in AOR radio. Having worked in progressive radio since 1966, he began to explore the concepts of what would eventually become his "Superstars" format while serving as Program Director of the ABC-FM O&O in Detroit, WRIF, back in 1971-72. From there he served in a con-

sultant capacity doing research for WQAM, Miami, and became Program Director of WEFM, Chicago, with the intent of turning it AOR from Classical. That station never went AOR, though, because a Classical Music society prevented the change in a legal action. From there Abrams joined the consulting firm of Burkhardt & Associates, which recently changed its name to Burkhardt/Abrams.



**R&R:** Describe the current structure of Burkhardt/Abrams.

**ABRAMS:** I handle the so-called Superstars division, and Kent (Burkhardt) handles his stations. We each have our list of clients and we service them independently. We're independent from each other except from a bookkeeping, general management and administrative standpoint.

**R&R:** Do you ever utilize each other's knowledge?

**ABRAMS:** Absolutely. We talk just about every day and meet at length each weekend, and we're always bouncing things off each other. He questions me about album music that has Top 40 potential and I'm bouncing tapes and things off him. We give each other an added dimension.

**R&R:** Do you actually call yourselves consultants?

**ABRAMS:** I would say yes, because pretty much that's what we are.

**R&R:** What exactly does a consultant do? Many people don't really have a clear understanding of that. Some people think a consultant is a dictatorial programmer who lays out every record and programming element from afar, while some people think he's just an advisor. Do you have a set pattern as a consultant or is it a variable thing?

**ABRAMS:** I'd say the goals we're trying to achieve are the same for each station. Usually a station that is not reaching its full potential will call us in, or we'll approach them. However, the way we deal with each station can differ quite a bit. In no way are we dictatorships, because every station is handled independently. Certain stations have certain capabilities. WYSP in Philadelphia has a PD who is brilliant at production, so we would lean a little heavier on producing the station because we have that capability, whereas in Buffalo, the PD and Manager there are extremely competent at handling promotions, so we might try things promotionally there that we wouldn't attempt at other radio stations. The goal is to show the Program Director the whole concept, go through a teaching process, so he can be somewhat self-sufficient after the first month or so, and then we can really get things going. If we maintained a dictatorship with each station, after a while we'd be cheating ourselves and the radio station. What we try to do is get Program Directors who are very talented and emotionally stable, so we can show them the concept in the beginning and then they can take it from there—and that's where the real productivity and creativity come in. I think if we didn't teach them what this whole thing is about and created a dictatorship situation choosing every record out of Atlanta, we'd probably do OK, but we wouldn't have the great stations we try to build.

**R&R:** Do you place the PD's in their positions?

**ABRAMS:** There are several ways it happens. There might be a station where a General Manager or ownership is new to the whole thing; they might have just bought a station or are coming over from MOR or Beautiful Music into this thing, and in this case they would ask us for a Program Director. We have a lot of PD's who are sort of training, acting as Music Directors at certain stations, or disk jockeys that show potential, and in that case we would turn them on to one of our people. Another situation is we go into a station that's doing OK, has a good Program Director, just needs a little course correction, and in that case we would stick with the existing PD. For example, in both Seattle and Kansas City, there were Program Directors already in the station, and after talking to them I felt they were extremely competent, as did the local management. As a result we stuck with those Pro-

gram Directors and it's worked out very well. In other situations we've gone into stations and they have asked us for Program Directors and we show them some of the guys we have and they usually pick from one of those guys. Back in the beginning, I was paranoid about working with a PD I'd never met before who might not be into the whole thing, but I think if we are strong enough as consultants, we can turn around the Program Director by introducing him to the whys and the wherefores of what we do and establish a strong communication. Usually we can tell within a month if the Program Director is not going to work out. In that case we would make the recommendation to the manager to find a replacement.

**R&R:** So you're more ends-oriented than means-oriented...

**ABRAMS:** Exactly. With Program Directors there are some situations where the guy is totally incompetent and we have to strongly recommend to the manager to let us put in a Program Director, but in most cases where there's an existing PD, it works out. I think most of it is really up to us,

**"I think in order for a station to succeed in the mass market while being an album station, it has to look seriously at itself as being rooted in Top 40."**

to work with the PD and make him understand that we're not trying to take over the whole thing, just trying to add another dimension to the station, to increase the success potential.

**R&R:** The concept, the term, the logo, "Superstars," what's behind that?

**ABRAMS:** We have an automated service which is mainly geared for small and medium markets which may not be able to afford the luxury of live programming. When we first went into it, we needed a handle for the whole thing, and we came upon Superstars because that's pretty much in its purest form what the whole thing, especially the automated package, is about. It's nothing but Beatles, Rolling Stones, the Superstars. It became a handle for our whole AOR consultancy, and Superstars is really nothing more than something we put on the tape boxes.

**R&R:** Is there a noticeable difference in your programming of stations by region?

**ABRAMS:** Absolutely. That gets back to the thing where each station is individual. We find through our research that every market has its own orientation, its little quirks, and so we make an extra effort to program locally. That's part of the importance of having a strong Program Director for each station, so they can realistically point out the difference in that market, analyze the various research input that comes in.

**R&R:** So you take all this into account. Your company doesn't really stand for any one style of AOR programming—a lot of people think that...

**ABRAMS:** Well, to the untrained ear they may sound alike. We do this all the time, like we'll take a tape of a station in San Antonio and play it to people in Atlanta, and most people perceive very little difference because the mechanics, we use are

pretty much the same. It's just little things that stand out differently, musical things, and subtle points in the format. I'd say to the average listener, the stations are similar, but there are differences in each station. Again a lot of this goes back to the Program Directors, who are given the incentive to try to change, find something wrong with this thing. And if they understand it, they'll find things wrong, and that's how we improve. A station in Louisville might find one of our sequence sheets for music rotation won't be working out right, and he'll point it out and say, "Here, why don't we try this," and we would try it out in Louisville, and if it worked out then we would introduce it to the other Program Directors. So I think it's really important that the PD understands that this is not a locked-in thing. The whole Superstars format is a good idea, but we're not going to grow unless it's improved.

**R&R:** Have you found anybody who's hired your service and then, after they've got the basic understanding of your methods and philosophies, decided that they may not need you any more and have tried to do it themselves?

**ABRAMS:** Yes, we had a station in Lexington, KY, that decided not to renew the contract after a year. That's the only one I can think of offhand. We had an unfortunate situation in New Orleans a few years back, which was quite complex, but in recent history the only one which was very successful and decided not to use the consulting services was the station in Lexington.

**R&R:** Did they continue to succeed?

**ABRAMS:** No, they went from a 9.7 to a 5.4, I believe.

**R&R:** How many stations do you currently consult?

**ABRAMS:** I believe right now it's 15. We have plans

to expand quite a bit, especially in the automation. We're probably going to take on a few extra people to increase our potential for new stations. We're finding when you add too many stations, the quality of each goes down a little bit because you can't spend enough time with them, so we're planning to add some people and trying to crack the automation market a little further. We shoved it aside in favor of the live presentation, but I think we're going to open up.

**R&R:** When you say the automation service, what you're really doing is consulting them with their automation; you don't syndicate, do you?

**ABRAMS:** We put together all the tapes. The only thing we do not do is provide voice tracks. Our feeling there is it is desirable to achieve a very localized sound, and we found that if you get a heavy Los Angeles voice and put him in Lexington, some of the credibility will be gone. But we offer every other service possible.

**R&R:** Could you describe the economic structure of your business? How much do you charge?

**ABRAMS:** We charge by market size, based on the SRDS rankings, and the price is basically the same for automated and live. We do offer some group discounts for groups that prefer to go with our service with several stations, such as Taft, but that's about it. We prefer not to bargain too much off our rate cards, because, frankly, we've found ourselves in demand, and we prefer to go straight by the rate card.

**R&R:** Have you found that sometimes stations in smaller markets will have a larger budget than some large stations in big markets?

**ABRAMS:** Yes, quite a bit. Usually we find that a lot of the smaller stations don't have the sophisticated accounting that larger stations have, and probably are not as administratively mature and cost-conscious as the larger stations, and therefore are a little more free with the dollars.

**R&R:** Let's talk about AOR radio. How do you see Top 40 radio changing with the advent of AOR success around the country?

**ABRAMS:** Well, I think Top 40 really is nothing more than the repeated play concept, something some people came up with about 20 years ago. I think the repeated play concept, even in the short playlist situation, will probably be around for a great deal of time. What I do see evolving and changing is the presentation of these stations. I can see maybe 20 years from now we'll have Country-Rock stations, Jazz-Rock stations, etc.

**R&R:** Do you think this fragmentation trend could be turned around, or do you think it's the way we're moving and there's nothing that can be done about it?

**ABRAMS:** I don't think there's really much that can be done about it. Stations are going to be forced into a situation where the programming will require more and more technology. The day of the "listen to a record once and throw it on the radio because it sounds good" is coming to an end. I think stations are going to be forced into a situation to learn more about it and do more research.

**R&R:** OK, research, album research is still a very hazy concept to most people in radio, to the entire industry. They know Top 40 research—but albums are a different story. Describe your album research.

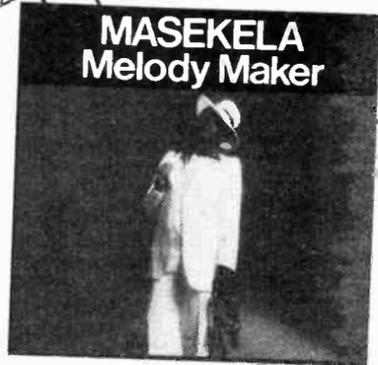
**ABRAMS:** We have several systems. At about 300 stores around the country we have a system in which there are little cards with a person's name, address, and the album they just bought. After they buy the record they fill out these cards and put them in a box. Then the Music Director from the station in that market will come by and collect all the cards, and for any record in question they can call back the actual purchaser of the record. Some of the results are as follows...

I remember in Atlanta there was a record out a few months back, I believe it was Earth, Wind & Fire. At first we found that it was a Top 3 album, but most of the people who bought it were Black, and going one step further, they tended to listen almost exclusively to the Top 40 and R&B stations. Now what this created was a record that

Continued on page 18



# WELCOME TO CLUB CASABLANCA



# Conversation With Lee Abrams

Continued from page 16

was a Top 3 album, and we're an album station, but it just wasn't right for us. You can see just by looking at sales, a typical album station might have gone all out and played this record because it was a big selling album—but it was selling to the wrong audience. A Grand Funk record a few years ago was a very big album, I think it was the *We're An American Band* album, and we called back several hundred people who bought the record and found out that they all listened to nothing but the single on the album. Meanwhile, in this situation our competitor was playing just about every cut off the album, whereas we found the actual consumer who put out five bucks was just into it for the single. Also, when a new Elton John or Chicago album comes out, we can find out in a week or two exactly what cuts to play based on the people who buy the record. We find most people who buy records pretty much live with the record. To a radio person who gets 300 records a week, it's no big deal, but to somebody who buys it it's a little present. For example, on the Fleetwood Mac record, when it first came out we did one of these surveys, and found the three favorite cuts were "Over My Head," "Rhiannon," and "Say You Love Me," just right off the bat. So this gives us great insight to the record buyer and exactly why he bought the record, and what cuts that person likes.

**R&R:** In that particular case it's also a credit to Warners' A&R Department, because sometimes you might find the single that comes out of an album is not one of the popular cuts.

**ABRAMS:** Oh, many a time. Then there are times when all the Program Directors I talk to will decide that one song is the best cut on the album, sort of a group consensus, and the consumers picked a different cut. We find that a lot of records may be very popular, but because of the average 16-28-year-old's buying power they don't show up in sales. About a year ago Manfred Mann's album with "Spirit In The Night" on it was a tremendously popular record from a request standpoint, but they didn't get much sales off it. We did a little study and found out that a lot of people buying the new Joni Mitchell and Pink Floyd which had just come out, when asked if they had the money what other record would they buy, would say the Manfred Mann record. A lot of records do not show up sales-wise because of the average buying power is maybe eight or nine dollars a month for albums, and the average person might like four or five records but does

people evolving.

**R&R:** What percentage of the music on the radio stations you're involved with are standards and old records?

**ABRAMS:** In the first year or two we work with a station, I would say about 60%. The reason is, you can play, say, "Whipping Post" by the Allman Brothers, and it's amazing how many people never heard that before because it was never played on Top 40 radio, which most of the new 18-24's were listening to when that came out. We find that a lot of albums in that age of 1968-69, classics by Cream or Hendrix, whatever, are just like brand new records to a lot of these people today. So we rely on them because there's a vast years and years' worth of material we can recall today which the people will treat like new.

**R&R:** I have found that the oldies average is anywhere from 45-65% on the national AOR scene. Oldies is where a lot of stations go wrong or have problems. They may have solved the basic problems of programming current albums, but they fall apart when it comes to playing the old stuff. What type of research do you use in actually dealing with how to play these old records?

**ABRAMS:** Ever since 1968 we've tried to do about a million questionnaires a year, and these questionnaires are distributed in schools and shopping centers primarily geared to reach 16-30-year-olds. They ask what are your three all-time favorite songs, and in this category, for example, we will get, say, a million back every year. In 1968, maybe "Green River" by Creedence Clearwater showed up on 42,000 of them. In 1970 "Green River" showed up on 20,000; in 1974 it showed up on 6000. Last year "Green River" showed up on 150. On the other hand, "Good Vibrations" may have showed up in 1968 on 40,000, 1970 on 45,000, and last year 47,000. So by looking and trending all of these questionnaires on a year-to-year basis, we can pretty much determine what is valid today and what isn't. For a new station trying to start this system, it might be a little difficult, but as far as we're concerned we just have to go back year by year to find out the percentage of song responses.

**R&R:** What other forms of research do you do—what do you look at, what do you read, what do you go by besides your own systems? Surely there must be some outside sources that you go to.

**ABRAMS:** We try to get out on the streets as much as possible, not necessarily face to face with people, but to try to involve ourselves with the same kind of lifestyles a lot of other people do. We do a lot of surveys in schools, very simple surveys. I would say everybody in our organization is involved. We suggest they get out as much as possible. The waitress at the restaurant, ask her what she's listening to and why. Don't ever let on that you're from a radio station. All of this adds up because if everybody does this consistently, you get a great deal of on-the-street, off-the-cuff information. Singularly, it doesn't make much sense, but all put together you can get a very good feel. The cumulative effect is the whole thing.

I have done in the past hitchhiking surveys, where I do nothing but hitchhike and study in-car listening

of person, so we can build our day-parting system on that rather than using the old heavy-at-night, soft-in-the-morning thing.

**R&R:** What about artist image? A lot of radio people are very hung up on artist image. They will be reluctant to play a record because of something other than the music, or even the research. For example, Neil Diamond or even Grand Funk for AOR radio. Do you think that AOR radio people over-react to image, that they could increase their ratings if they were less tied to a lot of the late 60's artists?

**ABRAMS:** Absolutely, because a lot of progressive stations are very much hung up on their existing audience rather than the potential audience. You can talk to 18-24 men all the time; meanwhile there's a 27-year-old female who is what we call a vulnerable Top 40 listener, listens to Top 40, may try the Progressive stations and just gets blasted against the wall, with nothing but Peter Frampton and Led Zeppelin and Zappa. If you would try to understand that you can reach that person and that 18-24 male music freak too, stations would be much better off. What we try to do, sort of a key to the format, is musical compatibility, and one example of musical compatibility would be melodics over art-

20 to 23 they get into another bag, and at 24 music is secondary to them at that point. I think the same thing will happen to those Kiss fans. They'll probably always have an attachment to the group, but as time goes on, just like Cream is a thing of the past now, they'll feel the same way. The same thing to me in 1968 was to my brother with Hootenanny music in 1963, as to the generation older than him was in 1957 with Paul Anka, and going back to Mary Ford and Les Paul.

**R&R:** So you see AOR programmers who cling to their roots and don't open their minds to the tastes of the new generation are running the risk of turning their stations into eventual Pop/Adult?

**ABRAMS:** Right. I won't name anybody, but there are a lot of stations, these great progressive image stations of the 60's, that are now in horrible trouble like WMMR, that market is falling apart because they're hanging on to that 1968, 1969 thing. I think they're robbing themselves. One very hard poison to swallow for a lot of programmers is that the reason a lot of the top artists today like Chicago might be leading AOR artists is because of the Top 40 roots they have. I think in order for a station to succeed in the mass market while being an album station, it has to seriously look at itself as being

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**"Music compatibility is critically important, and the artist image, prejudging artists, can be disastrous."**

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istics. With the group Yes, you could play the entire "Close To The Edge," which is in my opinion a brilliant piece of music, and the average Yes fan would freak if he heard that on the station. Meanwhile, the 28-year-old housewife who is experimenting with this station will hear that and go "Oh God" and back to Top 40. Whereas if a station just played a Yes album track, "Long Distance Runaround," which is melodic, you can hum along to it, the results might be different. It's finding through research the songs that will appeal to that housewife and also appeal to the college student. It can be done, but a lot of stations are so hung up on being progressive and hip they just say that's not right for us and they miss the boat. An example for us is Gino Vanelli. He's sort of a hip Tom Jones, but a lot of radio stations I know and even Program Directors I deal with have been reluctant to play this artist, because they think he's too Las Vegas, whereas actually all our research shows that there's a huge audience, especially females 23, 24 and up, that is into that artist. Music compatibility is critically important, and the artist image, prejudging artists, can be disastrous.

**R&R:** Do you see the culture as having changed?

**ABRAMS:** Dramatically. All the people we've researched over the past nine years we keep records on and call them back. It's weird to call back somebody you interviewed in 1967 who was an absolute acid freak and find out that now that person is a lawyer, working for a very straight law firm in Bangor, Maine. You ask what he's into now and he'll say Eagles, Neil Diamond. It's amazing, because you look back and he was into Clear Light, Blue Cheer, and you go a little deeper and find out he got married, he's got a nice job, had to cut his hair, change his thinking, found out that the revolution wasn't going to happen after all.

A lot of people are still thinking back in 1968 whereas things have changed a lot. One research thing we just found is that there are three types of progressive listeners age-wise. The ARB sometimes screws us up, because a lot of times we think that as soon as somebody turns 18 they get an FM radio and all listen to the album rock, but really it starts a few years younger. We're finding now that a lot of those people who were into that kind of real progressive music back in 1967, some of them have evolved into the Jazz-type thing, but most of them have evolved into the music thing being second or third in their lives, where it was first before. That has a tremendous impact on artist perception because they were heroes a few years ago, and now they're just regular people.

**R&R:** How do you see the 18, 19-year-olds today, 1976 being different than the 18 and 19-year-olds were in 1968?

**ABRAMS:** This is a great question, because we were just talking about this the other day. I remember in 1968 I was an absolute Cream fanatic. I have an older brother, and he and his friends thought Cream was just the worst, loud, raunchy, just terrible music. I couldn't understand that. And now, Kiss is not my cup of tea, yet I talk to 15, 16, 17-year-olds and they say Kiss is the greatest, the same kind of feeling I had towards Cream in '68. I think the whole thing goes in cycles. You see there are people who are into one kind of music under 15, sort of formative years, then they get into another thing between ages 16 and 19, and when they're

rooted in Top 40. The roots of our stations are in Top 40, they're not alternative in that they're completely different, it's just they're extensions of Top 40. Our stations are really Top 40 stations that have grown up a little bit and evolved.

**R&R:** So what you're saying then is your successful AOR station today has a strong relationship with Top 40 radio.

**ABRAMS:** Yes, I think the roots are in Top 40, from the mechanics, to repeated play, to the promotion, to most of the artists. Just look at some artists, Peter Frampton. I'm sure a lot of these successes of Peter Frampton in continuous sales are due to the two singles.

**R&R:** Of course, it's AOR radio that gave Top 40 Peter Frampton.

**ABRAMS:** Absolutely.

**R&R:** So it goes back and forth.

**ABRAMS:** Exactly, but a lot of AOR stations tend to discount Top 40, whereas actually, with the cume that so many Top 40 stations have, you just can't discount them.

**R&R:** How do you explain the rating success of a lot of free-form stations in isolated situations, like a WMMR in Cleveland? There aren't too many of them. How would you explain a WMMR?

**ABRAMS:** Well, I listened to it while I was in Cleveland, and I think for what they do, they do it very well, and they've been doing it consistently for so long. I think the main point is the consistency and quality of the programming. I thought it was excellent, the execution of their madness.

**R&R:** But that doesn't happen in some situations.

**ABRAMS:** No, I think if anybody went into a market and tried to synthesize an old-line progressive station, they'd fall right on their ass. Like in San Francisco you're going up against KSAN, better hire some of their people away, etc., etc., which I think is a totally wrong approach, because you can't create something in a few months that has taken so many years to do. It's like an MCR station—you can't go into Chicago and try to cut-WGN WGN, because part of the reason they're so strong is because they've aired for the last 40 years.

**R&R:** Because they are what they are as opposed to why they are what they are. They could be big for all the wrong reasons, but those are the reasons nonetheless.

**ABRAMS:** Right, and a lot of times radio people are so over-mechanized that they sometimes forget about what real people are thinking.

**R&R:** How do you see a well-run radio station?

**ABRAMS:** We try to look at radio stations as an album, in that it has to be produced. On an album, if the vocalist is too loud and you can't hear the bass line, that's usually negative. And the same thing with a jock—if a song ends and his mike is too loud, that's a flaw in the production of the station, and if the jock is weak-voiced, that can be the same thing as a bad vocalist. We try to make all the stations like *Sgt. Pepper* from a production standpoint—flawless in that area.

**R&R:** Do you see any room for personality on the part of the jocks?

**ABRAMS:** Yes, but it's not something you seek out, it just sort of happens. In the old days personality was defined. When the music stopped, there was a personality. Now what we need is somebody who,

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**"We try to look at radio stations as an album, in that it has to be produced... We try to make all the stations like *Sgt. Pepper*..."**

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not have the buying power to get all the records he wants, therefore somewhat invalidating the sales information.

**R&R:** So to do good album research you have to expand your focus to include more than just what's selling?

**ABRAMS:** Oh yes, this is a completely different medium.

**R&R:** How do you take into consideration artists with strong cult appeal?

**ABRAMS:** We did a thing recently, this also was in Atlanta. The Aerosmith record was immediately a Top 5. The card survey we did, calling back all the Aerosmith buyers, showed that everyone who got the record was between 17 and 19, and well over 95% were male. The demographic stand of that album was incredibly narrow. The whole Jazz-Rock thing is really happening, but what we found is that it isn't anything that new. It's just that the people who started getting into albums in the middle and late 60's and evolved to the point musically where Rock & Roll doesn't turn them on any more have gone to the next thing artistically and that's Jazz-Rock. I'd say in our surveys well over 80 or 90% of the people who are into Chick Corea today were also into Jefferson Airplane and Jimi Hendrix and the Doors back in 1967 and 1968. So it's really not new people turning on to it, it's just these

habits, because this is where a person has his radio and his little buttons and we can register all the information on what he tunes in, tunes out while driving. Of course the sample is limited to the type of person who would pick somebody up hitchhiking. But that's part of our audience. We also do ARB-type diary studies where we would send out at our expense what looked like ARB diaries. They go back to a blank box number. Let's say we send out 10,000 using phone book methodology. During the month we're doing the survey we'll monitor every radio station competitively, write down what they're playing, and every commercial, every jock break, and then we'll get these diaries back, which incidentally are minute-by-minute diaries. Let's say out of 10,000 we might get maybe 3000 that are translatable, and then what we'll do is look at the diaries versus everything these stations played. For example, we might look at our station in Atlanta, which played Cat Stevens, Joni Mitchell, and all of a sudden played Iron Butterfly at 7 in the morning, and we'll look at this thing at 7 or 7:05, whenever it was, and find out that 80% of our females tuned out at 7:05. When we break this whole thing out and look at it, which takes several months to do, we have a very accurate look at exactly what people are tuning out and when. We have found exactly what type of records tunes out what type

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# Those Southern Boys Of AOR Radio

By Bill Bartlett, PD  
WAIV/Jacksonville

While researching this article, I discovered that the evolution of AOR Radio in the South progressed much like its evolution throughout the country. The beginnings of AOR were centered around a non-organizational, free-form philosophy that retarded its acceptance. It is now evolving at a rapid pace and may soon become the mass appeal station in every market.

The development of AOR Radio is similar to Darwin's theories of evolution. AOR began as a simple, non-scientific, somewhat political alternative medium, stimulated by the "longhair youth drug culture," whose attitudes reflected the disorganized times of the late 60's and early 70's. Through the years, America has undergone considerable change; AOR radio has also been subject to change and improvement.

AOR Radio began in the South through college and commercial radio. Some of the first college AOR's were WRUF/Gainesville, Fla., WRAS and WREK/Atlanta, and WUSF/Tampa. To the best of my knowledge, the first commercial AOR station in the South was WTAI-AM/Cocoa Beach, Fla. They began their "progressive" approach in the summer of 1967, when Lee Arnold (formerly WORJ, now WGVL) was Program Director. Arnold was asked what prompted the birth of progressive radio in Cocoa Beach. He said that all variables for acceptance of this new approach were present. It was the surfing capital of the East Coast, many young, intelligent engineer types who worked at the Cape lived there, and it had the feeling of a "Little California." WTAI did well in ratings, but had inner conflicts with sales and management. As a result, coupled with fear of the format on the owner's part, WTAI went Country a few years later.

WTAI was the first AOR in the South, and the first AM AOR in America, establishing a new approach



to radio that opened the door for numerous stations to follow. The trend picked up steam in various Southern markets. We'll examine their history.

## Atlanta

According to Bill Tullis (formerly WPLO, currently Channel 17, Atlanta), progressive radio began in late 1967 here, when WPLO-FM hit the airwaves. Originally, it was Country, then Black until a few Georgia State broadcast students successfully convinced the management to go progressive during the afternoon hours. Some great names came out of WPLO: Steve Hosford and Ed Shane, the godfather of progressive radio in Atlanta. WPLO was an automated FM mono station that reflected the activities of Atlanta's alternative culture.

Soon to follow were two college stations, WRAS and WREK. WPLO pulled out in October 1974, returning to Country. During the same time, Atlanta managed to sneak a free-form progressive outlet on the AM dial, WIIN, pioneered by John Parker (now Regional Promotion Manager, Casablanca) and Brent Alberts (now WAIV). For a short time, WIIN was the *only* commercial progressive station in Atlanta. This enabled the station to secure all concert, nightclub, and record company advertising dollars.

WIIN's listeners supported it loyally. However, FM competition came to town in June 1974 and virtually wiped WIIN off the map. It was 96-ROCK, started by Kent Burkhardt and Barry Chase. In the beginning, 96-ROCK was fairly free-form until Lee Abrams began consulting it. The change of format on 96-ROCK occurred in October 1974 with "Superstars," a new stage of AOR radio awareness that quickly took hold. Today AOR radio in Atlanta is quite competitive. There are two commercial AOR stations, WQXI-FM and 96-ROCK. Both are using "familiarity" in music execution.

## Jacksonville

Progressive radio started briefly in this market in the summer of 1969, when WAPE toyed with the concept on Sunday evenings with their "Underground Circus," hosted by Alan Facemire. Again, it was a free-form approach with no direction or structure. The most obscure music imaginable was played. It was even difficult for the hard core fans to enjoy, but it was a beginning that paved the way for future acceptance of AOR radio.

During this time, a group called the Second Coming (now the Allman Bros.) formed in Jacksonville, and received airplay from WAPE. The station used to sponsor free Second Coming concerts at their transmitter grounds, showcasing a band that would bring Southern rock & roll to the ears of young Americans. The relationship between WAPE and Southern music was a strong one, but the lack of format prevented WAPE from continuing with the experiment. WAPE's Underground Circus died shortly before the station was sold and became a *real* Top 40 radio station.

At this point, there was a critical void in Jacksonville alternative media, existing until 1971 when WIVY (then MOR) began playing progressive cuts Jamie Brooks (WIVY, PDQ-FM, WAIV) was the part-time announcer who gambled on adding these tunes. It was discovered that WIVY was soon to be purchased by another company; in the meantime the station was "all over the road," going nowhere, but I saw the doors opening for Jacksonville's first progressive FM station. I personally circulated petitions at most of the colleges in town in support of a progressive format at WIVY-FM. These petitions, close to 10,000, were passed along to the new GM at WIVY. Shortly thereafter, they tried the progressive format at night. Finally, WIVY went free-form progressive on a 24-hour basis.

The ratings at WIVY were great from 6pm-Midnight, to the point of dominating the market. The second competitor came into being in September 1972 when this writer was offered the 6-midnight show at then "Solid Gold" automated WPDQ-FM. Within a year-and-a-half, WPDQ-FM was a 24-hour progressive radio station, causing the death of WIVY as a progressive outlet. As time progressed, so did the direction, format, and structure of WPDQ-FM, making it a force not only in Jacksonville but a key station in the South. WPDQ-FM was sold in July 1975, and the call letters were changed to WAIV ("The Wave"). WAIV has been relatively successful as a "Fusion AOR" station, programming directly to the crossover audience which buys LP's. In fact, it's currently the most cost-efficient station in its chain of eight outlets.

## Nashville

Until recently, Nashville was considered a market famous only for the development of Country music

and radio. According to Ron Huntsman, the developer of WKDA, "Nashville is an extremely aware music community; not only Country music but Contemporary." AOR's growth was welcomed openheartedly. In the early days of WKDA-FM, the usual directionless style was dominant. WKDA-FM was too loose to generate income until Huntsman came into the picture in 1970. Under his direction, the station was structured with a strong sense of local identity, broadcasting live local concerts from Nashville's famed Exit Inn. The broadcasts have helped give Nashville a strong sense of contemporary/progressive identity previously overlooked. Under its current PD, Jack Crawford, WKDA-FM has continued to make positive strides as one of the key FM's in the South.

## Jackson

AOR radio began in this city on July 29, 1968, when WJDX (now WZZQ) went from elevator music to a hip Top 40/album cut rock format. During the daytime, WJDX was TOP 40, and album-oriented at night. WJDX evolved into a loose progressive outlet with a signal that covered most of Mississippi. According to Johnny Summer, current PD at WZZQ, "As music became more progressive, so did the station. During the early days of ZZQ, the announcers were in total control of the music selection process. In November 1974, free-form came to a halt and was replaced with a strictly controlled type of AOR programming." According to Summer, the initial reaction to the format change prompted a significant portion of the "active" audience to circulate bumper stickers that read "ZZQ SUCKS" (if you would like one of these stickers, you can write WZZQ, Jackson...I understand they have quite a few). With the new structured format and bumper sticker publicity, WZZQ had a great rating book in April/May 1975. Summer explains, "The Jackson market as a whole cannot support free-form radio, but WZZQ is accepted more by its audience with its consistent and controlled format." Summer also feels "AOR radio that is strictly formatted is here to stay, but programmers *must* keep changing with their market."

## Miami

The beginnings of AOR radio in this fragmented market were with WEDR. WEDR was one of the loosest free-formers around. They used to allow each record company promotion man 15 minutes of air time each week to showcase new company product. This didn't last long, and neither did WEDR. Then came the "Magic BUS," WBUS, a fairly successful free-form progressive outlet. Coconut Grove loved it, but one of the reasons for the death of WBUS was its signal problems in surrounding counties, in addition to the birth of a fierce competitor, WSHE, in October 1971. Gary Granger comments, "WSHE was probably the first truly formatted AOR station in the South with organization, direction and purpose, successfully applying technology to AOR radio." Six months prior to its birth, Granger along with owner Gene Milner developed programming concepts and marketing studies which made WSHE a financial winner. Granger says, "This time period was a great challenge towards developing new program directives as policies toward commercial limitation, non-sponsorship of newscasts, and so forth, were set up. There were more 'don'ts' than 'do's' developed in the beginning, but it led to a quick understanding between programming and management." About the status of AOR radio today, he commented, "Ultimately we're all doing the same thing, trying to reflect our target audience. Five years ago, obscurity and disorganization were the overall definitions of AOR radio. Anything related to organization was *taboo*. Today, it's the masses we are attempting to reach." AOR radio in Miami is relatively competitive today, with two basic commercial signals, WSHE and ZETA 4.

## New Orleans

The first progressive station in this market was WRNO, which began in 1968 with a free-form style. Shortly thereafter, two more progressives hit the airwaves, WVSL and WWOM. Neither lasted long with their free-form approaches. According to Bill Burkett (WRNO, WAPE, now KRKE), "FM Rock, whether Top 40 or progressive, didn't do very well in the beginning." In reality, AOR didn't mean much to New Orleans until 1973 when Lee Abrams and Sonny Fox came to WRNO. During the same time WNOE

Continued on page 32

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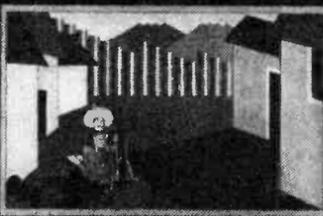
The Beach Boys  
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 Lady's Choice (Capricorn CP 0169)

**RY COODER**  
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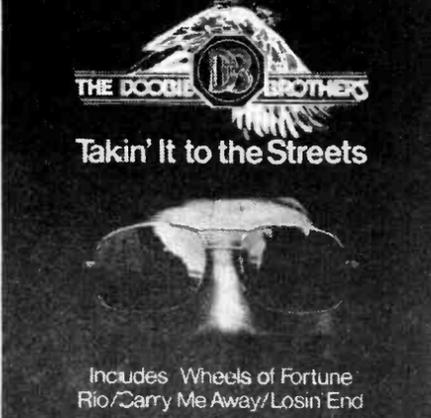
Ry Cooder  
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Alice Cooper  
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The Doobie Brothers  
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 Amigo (MS 2239)

**AL JARREAU**  
**Glow**  
 Includes Milwaukee/Hold on Me  
 Your Song/Fire and Rain



Al Jarreau  
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**GORDON LIGHTFOOT**  
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Gordon Lightfoot  
 Summertime Dream (MS 2246)

**MANFRED MANN'S EARTH BAND**  
**The Roaring Silence**  
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Manfred Mann's Earth Band  
 The Roaring Silence (BS 2965)

**GEOFF MULDAUR**  
**Motion**  
 Includes Hooray for Hollywood  
 Let It Out/Southern Nights



Geoff Muldaur  
 Motion (MS 2255)

**DAVID SANBORN**  
**Sanborn**  
 Includes Indio/Concrete Boogie  
 Herbs/Smile



David Sanborn  
 Sanborn (BS 2957)

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 A Night on the Town (BS 2938)

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**Long May You Run**  
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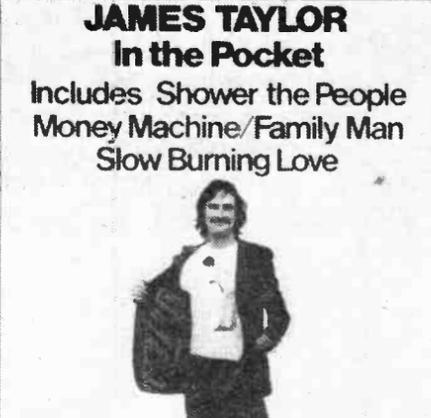
The Stills-Young Band  
 Long May You Run (MS 2253)

**Stuff**  
 Includes Fools/My Sweetness  
 Sun Song/Happy Farms



Stuff (BS 2968)

**JAMES TAYLOR**  
**In the Pocket**  
 Includes Shower the People  
 Money Machine/Family Man  
 Slow Burning Love



James Taylor  
 In the Pocket (BS 2912)

**WENDY WALDMAN**  
**The Main Refrain**  
 Includes Back By Fall  
 Soft and Low  
 West Coast Blues  
 Goodbye Summerwind



Wendy Waldman  
 The Main Refrain (BS 2974)

**Sammy Walker**  
 Includes Decoration on the Wall  
 My Old Friend/Catcher in the Rye



Sammy Walker (BS 2961)

**Jesse Winchester**  
**LET THE ROUGH SIDE DRAG**  
 Includes Step by Step/Damned if You Do  
 How About You/Working in the Vineyard



Jesse Winchester  
 Let the Rough Side Drag (Bearsville BR 6964)

# The Changing Record Companies

Big Mike Klenfner, Vice President of Album Promotion and Special Projects for Arista Records, sat back in his chair and explained, "I look at AOR radio and I love it, because it's fun, it's exciting, every day it's different. It's the toughest thing in the world for a promo person to find job justification in. If I'm a Top 40 promotion man, you can hire me on a record and I can say I just got your record on XYZ and it came on as a hitbound. The next week it went from hitbound to 29 out of the 30 records they're playing. And then because of store reports and sales it took a great jump to 20 from 29. Then it went to 11, 8, 3 and then it went to number one."

"You can't do that at AOR radio. You can only say your record went on the radio at XYZ. But what is it? A hitbound? There are no hitbounds in AOR radio. There are no extras. A record's added. What does that mean? Your record's on. But, Mr. Manager, what is my record? Well, it's being played light, medium, or heavy. These are the terms most companies are now using. But what's light, medium or heavy? I categorize light as being one play a day. You're dealing with six Program Directors at each station! Now when I say that, I'm not talking about the Lee Abrams stations, because they are more of a latter-day thing than the AOR of even three years ago. The PLJ's are a newer thing, too. The KLOS's, well, KLOS is a unique situation. I'll leave them out because they don't strictly adhere to the ABC-FM O&O format, they have their own ballpark. But a PLJ or a DAI or an RIF, these are newcomers in the last few years. Whereas in those markets it was always the ABX in Detroit or the W4's."

But what does it mean? It went on one play per day? What is that? What's medium? Two plays a day? Three plays a day? And heavy is what—five plays or six plays a day? And how long can it last? How long can you keep five up? How can you communicate with every jock? How do you get every hotline number to call every jock? So you see, the means of promotion of AOR radio are totally different. I don't think it works only on gimmicks, on T-shirts, on pens and posters. They all help, but it is a unique type of promotion."

If Klenfner sounds knowledgeable, it's because he is. If he sounds confused, that, too, is because he is. AOR is confusing. That is the incongruity and irony of AOR promotion. Record companies across the nation are beefing up to keep up with this growing format (or perhaps "non-format") phenomenon—AOR radio—and meet its needs head on.

At this point, there probably is no record company that can claim to have AOR promotion down to a science, a state many have achieved with Top 40. AOR radio is still in a positive geometrical evolutionary pattern and has yet to reach its ultimate incarnation; maybe it never will. When you look at the structure of your average healthy record company, you realize that it is an organization based on art and systems. It is difficult to bring art and systems into play to deal with something as varied and prone to change as AOR radio. Yet, valiant and successful attempts are being made. The universal key that unlocks the door to AOR radio for record companies' promotional purposes is good people who have a respectable knowledge of the genre, are extremely flexible, and are aware of their constant need to keep learning.

For people like Mike Klenfner, AOR radio is nothing new. From his beginnings as a staff member of the Fillmore East, he went on to become Music Director of WNEW-FM at the turn of the decade. When he accepted Clive Davis's offer to become Columbia Records' first National FM Promotion Director (as it was then called), he became the first radio person from a major progressive station to be tapped for a significant promotional post by a major label—something that would be repeated in the future as labels turned to AOR radio to find new people to represent them (including the likes of Thom O'Hair, Gil Colquitt, Jim McKeon, Dave Lanco, Chris Hensley, and more).

Record companies must be able to meet the needs of an extremely unorthodox format which is the major vehicle for the exposure of the product responsible for most of their profits—albums.

Because the changes have come so quickly and the criteria for AOR success are so varied, record

companies have gained proficiency in different areas pertaining to AOR.

## PRODUCT

AOR radio, possibly more than any other contemporary music format, pays a great deal of attention to musical quality, and utilizes, quality judgment as one of the requirements for airplay. If the product isn't there, the best AOR promotional efforts will eventually not bring results.

In the words of John Montgomery, National Album Promotion Director for the entire Warner Bros.



Ray Tusken, Capitol

family, "No matter what your reason for being in the music business, the bottom line is selling records. Of course, I just happen to be a music freak. Music is magic and communication. It's one of the only hopes to keep this planet together."

Music is one thing that Warner Bros. has in abundance. The company has been known to get more albums on the AOR turntables from just one release than many companies do in a year of releases.

As a result, Warner Bros. has been able to concentrate on the sales and marketing aspects of AOR. Montgomery, the first person to hold a national album position in the company, has a background firmly rooted in sales. Prior to taking over the department a year-and-a-half ago, he spent 4½ years as a WB salesman in San Francisco.

## MARKETING

"With all that product—we can have up to 20 albums happening at the same time—you have to be real organized to deal with the regional breakers mixed in among the national universals." Montgomery coordinates the album activities of Warner Bros.' army of local promotion representatives, who concentrate on getting the records played. Then there are the eight Regional Managers. According to Montgomery, "Our Regional guys take in both promotion and sales. Warner Bros. emphasizes sales knowledge in Regional Promotion because there is already so much airplay—it must be turned into sales."

## ARTIST DEVELOPMENT

Montgomery explains, "Artist Development is essential to AOR success. Even with a full and diverse roster such as ours, a record company must look to the future. I get involved with the Artist Development department headed up by Bob Regehr. I just came off the road from a promotional tour of

radio stations and stores with Bonnie Bramlett and Mike Finnigan. If a record company is to be successful in this field, it must stick with artists over the long haul. It's not just a matter of looking for that quick hit single."

## STATION INVOLVEMENT

Most AOR stations welcome the opportunity to program promotions tied in with artists and record companies. Many do not have the huge promotional budgets of Top 40 radio, and most stay away from the "cash giveaway" type promotions anyway. Music involvement promotions such as interviews with artists, album and ticket giveaways, radio concerts, free outdoor concerts, etc. are right up the AOR radio alley.

"Heavy" Lenny Bronstein, National Album Promotion Coordinator for A&M Records, has roots which go back to Brooklyn College's radio station. From there he entered the record business as A&M's New York City local representative. After a short stint representing the company in San Francisco, he took over the national position. He works out of the L.A. home office doing, as he puts it, "most



Lenny Bronstein, A&M

"AOR as a term is really a set of definitions...It's a tool, it's like a hook in a song, it's something to grab on to in terms of understanding..."

of the paperwork," while his New York counterpart Rich Tatoyan, A&M's National Album Promotion Director, spends most of his energies seeing radio people on the road and traveling with artists upon whom the company will be concentrating their efforts.

The subject of station promotions can become politically sticky in the numerous markets with more than one AOR station. Bronstein explains, "The proper way to deal with this is to be at least 98% honest with them. I don't say 100%, because sometimes you just can't. You've got to let them know what you're doing, and you've got to balance them out, whether it be a balance at the same time, when you're giving tickets away at one station and albums at another, or you do them at different times over any given period. If you have two or more stations in a market you don't weigh it by what they've done for you or by whether someone is a neat guy or really cooperative, or whether he adds your records while the other station is a real hard-ass about it. You've got to do it where you feel you're going to get the most out of it, and know at the same time that person or station is going to get behind that promotion. And you have to tell them I want to do a promotion with you, but somewhere along the line I'm going to have to do one with the other station in town. We're always conscious at A&M that there is more than one station. Not all artists are of the caliber of a Peter Frampton. We're not going to give an artist like Peter

kind of promotion to a station that's bang, bang, bang. You can't explain a promotion like that in 10 seconds. They prefer call-ins or ticket giveaways. There are both types of stations in AOR radio. I try to gear a promotion to a particular station based on my knowledge of it, but at the same time I'll tell them, hey, I'd like to do a promotion on a particular artist with you. Do you have any ideas of what would be best for your station? I try as often as possible to leave it to them to come up with something they would be comfortable with. Let them be creative, because they know best what they want for their station."

## IN-STORE PLAY

Bronstein states that a very important part of AOR promotion is dealing with stores and turning the people who work there on to the new records. "We've run airplay contests in stores in which we give prizes to clerks that we find playing our albums. It's very important, especially in AOR promotion, for the clerks to be aware of the music, because quite often a consumer will come in after hearing something on the radio and not remember the name of the artist. I'd like to know that if somebody comes in and wants to buy "the new Janice Arm-twisting album," the clerk knows it's really Joan Armatrading."

Capitol Records has taken the in-store campaign into new territory with their highly publicized "CAP-FM" album series. The actual sound of an AOR station is recreated on disk, utilizing only select tracks from each new Capitol release. This type of



Tunc Erim, Atlantic

"You can only say your record went on the radio at XYZ. But what is it? A hitbound? There are no hitbounds on AOR radio. There are no extras. A record's added. What does that mean?"

Frampton to any one station in a market. We avoid such confrontations.

"You can't give a teen-oriented promotion to an eclectic kind of station. I wouldn't walk into KSAN and do a promotion that I would at a tighter station, which would be looking for more of a high energy-type of promotion. For example, KSAN once did a promotion where listeners had to draw a particular artist or scene. I couldn't see taking that

in store play guarantees that the right cuts will be played, and each selection is announced, which enhances listener awareness and receptivity.

#### COORDINATION

Ray Tusken, National AOR Director for Capitol, explains that his department is not solely a Promotion department, but an all-encompassing entity that takes in the various needs of a major label's AOR endeavors. According to Tusken, "Capitol needed an album department more than perhaps many other labels. We really had a vacuum. People were used to using the terms 'progressive,' 'FM,' or 'album.' In that sense there was inertia that had to be overcome in terms of redefining a new approach as AOR, but the label was ready to make a change. It represented a major second phase in the administration of Mr. Menon, our President. A general turnaround in the label's goals to make the album the primary object for promotional emphasis and marketing—we had already reached the point where we were the number one singles label, and had developed the ability to utilize that as our key tool to insure that our major artists could be seen from album to album—but several things were going on simultaneously. A new A&R regime which was bringing us many new Rock acts that were either groups or solo artists just starting out. We had no Album Promotion department at all. At the same time, the terminology that R&R began to define was something I felt very strongly could be used to mold this new feeling at Capitol and generate a lot of interest. I welcomed there being a new terminology to be defined and examined, because it was a tool for discussion. It was a tool analyzing what we were doing in terms of marketing and promotion, and it, along with the album airplay chart in *Radio & Records* and the general expansion of information available to us from all the trades, brought an awareness which has grown in the last year regarding album Rock artists, leading us to believe AOR would be the correct approach for Capitol to use."

Tusken plans to approach AOR from a 1976 perspective, looking at the role of a record company to be not only promotion but education, too. "AOR, I'm afraid, is still somewhat misunderstood by many people. I don't believe there are too many people in radio that misunderstand it; perhaps many are still in record companies. I have a feeling that this re-education undertaken by Capitol has been very successful, because there is a general knowledge at Capitol that AOR encompasses what has been referred to as progressive radio and what is also



Mike Klenfner, Arista

termed tightly-programmed or more formatted album Rock radio.

"AOR as a term is really a set of definitions, because there were many interlocking definitions that needed to be made. It is also a springboard for a philosophy and the understanding of the dynamics of the radio style that is the most dynamic in nature. It is in itself a springboard for music that will eventually be embraced by other forms of radio. Consequently, the term AOR itself at Capitol took some time to be established. Once understood there's no confusion, and there needn't be. It's a tool, it's like a hook in a song, it's something to grab on to in terms of understanding, an all-encompassing definition in terms of what we determine to be progressive radio to tight formats or album Rock radio. I have found that many of our promotion men have difficulty in understanding this philosophy. But the idea that there are new definitions at the same time that Capitol is redefining its goals creates a dialogue within the company that is invaluable. I can't speak for other companies, but I sense that if this isn't the case with all our competitors, we'll have a long-range advantage."

#### IMAGE

AOR radio is a very image-conscious format. This concern for image encompasses everything from on-the-air sound to the image of artists, and even the images of the record companies are reacted to. Tusken explains some of the ways Capitol is striving to gear their image to AOR. "It has been evident from the beginning that not only do we have to deal with the image of the artist, but that we had to deal critically with the image of the company in terms of our acceptance in presenting these new artists at an AOR radio level. We have had to study the dynamics of AOR radio, of marketing, thrust and timing, and it involved not just the promotion department, but everyone in advertising, marketing, and A&R. We have publicity, artist relations, areas that must be involved, and we have developed an extremely strong team in the last year who are as new to the company as many of the artists. There are no old philosophies to be overcome. Internally there is a total commitment to creating the new image for Capitol. How do we go about creating this? By realistically assessing the potential of our various artists, by trying to know when that assessment is accurate and requires a commitment from us. We have also done many things that are strictly geared to the image. One is the CAP-FM album, which definitely reflects our association with AOR radio, as well as our respect for it.

"I've been given the freedom to do editing of tracks that I felt were potentially valuable in terms of generating AOR airplay for artists, but were perhaps too long for a new artist hoping to get played. In fact, the Little River Band single, which looks like it might develop into a substantial hit, is over four minutes long, and was originally designed as an AOR edit. We try to make sure that the product, before it goes out, has the greatest potential for gaining AOR airplay, considering the limitations that might exist in terms of tightening formats or overlong songs that have to be edited. We are in such close touch now with AOR programmers that we can also respond to their comments when we feel a consensus of opinion—when something needs to be done at the record company level, action is taken. It is this responsiveness to AOR radio, our involvement in listening and communicating and responding, that I think will more than anything give us an AOR image. If we do not have at the end of this calendar year a roster of a half dozen new artists who have gold albums, we certainly will have altered our image to the point

that the receptivity of AOR radio toward a new artist will be incredibly enhanced, and that was really the most important initial goal we had. As important as building any one of these artists is the ability to walk into an AOR radio station and have the programmer realize that when we say this is an important artist and we have a major commitment behind this artist, that we are not spinning our wheels, that we understand how to make our good intentions work, and we know how to turn that into an effective commitment."

#### RECOGNIZING THE DIFFERENCES

Mike Pillot, Associate Director of Album Promotion for Columbia Records, heads up that label's national AOR activities out of New York. In his travels he has studied the various types of AOR stations, and tries to gear his promotional activities to their many styles and philosophies. Pillot's observations follow: "As you know, there are differences. I think the fundamental difference would be between the radio station that plays a lot of music and the station that doesn't. By a lot of music I'm talking about a lot of different albums. The ABC format of radio stations, they're playing a nice group of new records. They're playing one, possibly two cuts off the albums. Now, in the case of a Peter Frampton or Fleetwood Mac or Aerosmith record, the new Bob Dylan, they're playing maybe four cuts off these records. But on a new record, by a group that is not established, they realize that the record is not going to be number one, and it's out of their hot play category. Let's use the Boston record, for example. Very hot new record. It's a record I've found kind of interesting, because it's a record that everyone in the industry was excited about prior to its release, and the consumer seemed to respond immediately, which doesn't always happen. The ABC format stations went on this record almost immediately. KLOS went on it almost the first week it was out. Now they went on, of course, one cut, 'More Than A Feeling,' which was a single. I'm sure by now they've added another cut or two off the record, but that is the cut



Gil Colquitt, Columbia

that is in heavy rotation. The other side of the coin is a station up the coast, KZEL in Eugene, where Stan Garrett is playing a lot of music and he wants to give his audience a chance to say no. I think the

ABC people are playing records that for the most part the audience can only say yes to. I think that's really the fundamental difference between AOR radio stations."

#### HOW AOR RELATES TO TOP 40

Pillot finds AOR radio and promotion a new and effective tool for single exposure and sales. "I think that when you talk about Top 40 promotion and Top 40 radio you're dealing with a demographic that is incredibly huge, and these people are not just buying singles, they're buying albums and singles. Top 40 radio, for the most part, is playing just singles, but they are interested in hit albums and I think any intelligent programmer today will tell you that hit album cuts are very important to his mix on the radio. Not everyone is playing them but they do an awful lot of research in that area, and I think they can see down the road a little bit, that these hit album tracks eventually become singles. A good example is 'Don't Fear The Reaper' by the Blue Oyster Cult, a song that was a huge AOR album cut that we released as a single after six or eight weeks of strong playing. It has taken us quite a while to establish the single, but album radio established it when we released that album. That cut just jumped out of it, almost every programmer in the country liked it, and we had a feeling at Columbia that this was a very strong cut. But rather than ship it immediately we wanted to see it build a little bit, and I think that paid off in the long run. It was an interesting way to develop the Blue Oyster Cult, because the group at that point had no real identity at all at Top 40 radio, and I think with the concentration on that one particular cut and album radio we really made the Blue Oyster Cult a band to be recognized. People were talking about the Blue Oyster Cult and consequently Top 40 people became aware of it and people gave it a shot and the rest is history. I definitely feel there's a relation between a hit album cut and a hit single. When we talk about hit albums we usually talk about albums that contain hit singles, and very few albums today go to the top that don't have hit singles."

#### CHANGE

More and more, record companies are structuring themselves to deal with AOR radio and albums. The extremely popular Tunc Erim, National FM Promotion and Special Projects Director for Atlantic Records, who has been a regular one man road show for the label that has more albums on the all-time AOR airplay chart than any other, reports that Atlantic is currently in the process of expanding the department to include four AOR regional specialists who will work Rock albums, Jazz, and the college radio level for the label.

New blood is flowing in the old corporate arteries, and a lot of the old record veterans now approaching their thirties, who used to hang out at the local underground stations back in the late 60's-early 70's, are filling national positions. There's Mike Bone at Mercury, Don Wright at RCA, Jack Ashton at Chrysalis, Mike Shavelson at Epic, Bobby Applegate at Island, Bert Stein at Elektra/Asylum, Jon Scott at MCA, Larry Harris at Casablanca, Scott Jackson at ABC, Jeff Dengrove at UA, Linda Clark at Jet, Nils Siegal at Polydor, Barry Goldberg at 20th Century, Tom Thacker at Chelsea, and even independents like Ron Middag, Augie Bloom, and Richard Chemel, plus many, many more. They are the album specialists who are part of a new breed of record executive, and the promise of hope for an exciting future in cementing the relationships between the radio and record industries.



John Montgomery, Warner Bros.

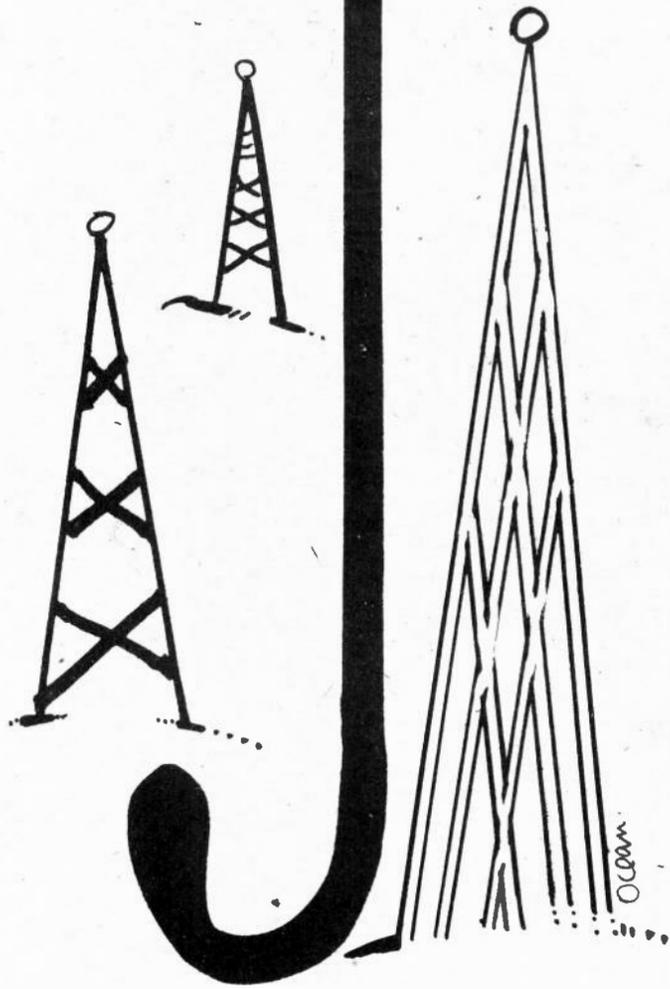
## AOR'S FAVORITE 30

This chart was compiled in a similar manner to the All-Time Top 40, with each station reporting its all-time favorite albums. The only difference is that this chart is reflective of a compilation of each radio station's staff's personal taste and does not reflect actual airplay. Also, each station reported five, as opposed to ten, albums.

- 1 BEATLES/Abbey Road (Apple)
- 2 BEATLES/Sgt. Pepper (Apple)
- 3 PINK FLOYD/Dark Side Of The Moon (Harvest)
- 4 JIMI HENDRIX/Electric Ladyland (Reprise)
- 5 BEATLES/White Album (Apple)
- 6 WHO/Who's Next (Decca)
- 7 ROLLING STONES/Let It Bleed (London)
- 8 FLEETWOOD MAC/Fleetwood Mac (Reprise/WB)
- 9 CROSBY, STILLS & NASH/Crosby, Stills & Nash (Atlantic)
- 10 PETER FRAMPTON/Comes Alive (A&M)
- 11 BOB DYLAN/Blood On The Tracks (Columbia)
- 12 JONI MITCHELL/Court And Spark (Asylum)
- 13 WHO/Quadrophenia (MCA)
- 14 DEREK & DOMINOES/Layla (Atco/Polydor)
- 15 YES/Fragile (Atlantic)
- 16 JONI MITCHELL/Ladies Of The Canyon (Reprise/WB)
- 17 LED ZEPPELIN/Led Zepplin II (Atlantic)
- 18 JEFF BECK/Blow By Blow (Epic)
- 19 CSNY/Deja Vu (Atlantic)
- 20 JEFFERSON AIRPLANE/Volunteers (RCA)
- 21 CAROLE KING/Tapestry (Ode)
- 22 DAVE MASON/Alone Together (Blue Thumb)
- 23 LED ZEPPELIN/Led Zepplin IV (Atlantic)
- 24 MOODY BLUES/Days Of Future Passed (Deram)
- 25 ELECTRIC LIGHT ORCHESTRA/Eldorado (UA)
- 26 STEVIE WONDER/Fulfillingness First Finale (Tamla)
- 27 BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN/Born To Run (Columbia)
- 28 LITTLE FEAT/Feats Don't Fail Me Now (WB)
- 29 STEPHEN STILLS/Manassas (Atlantic)
- 30 EAGLES/Desperadoes (Asylum)

# The Umbrella Markets

Do You Know The Weight Of San Jose?



Many AOR stations (as well as those with other formats) find themselves in the frustrating position of being situated in a large market within a larger market which tends to shadow their existence. In many cases, these "umbrella market" stations are forced to compete with the so-called metro stations which totally penetrate their market, while they are unable to reach as many listeners in that geographical region.

The Orange County (California) Broadcasters Association was recently formed to combat this very situation in the Los Angeles metropolitan area, and has been successful in urging Arbitron to provide the Orange County market with its own book separate from the Los Angeles report.

The Long Island market (Nassau/Suffolk Counties) faces a similar umbrella market handicap operating as the next door neighbor to the nation's most populous radio market, and has been doing extremely well in establishing itself as an entity to be reckoned with.

For many years, and in some cases even today, there are radio stations looked upon as being

"suburban" when in fact they serve markets as large as those considered medium to major.

In the relatively brief history of the format, AOR radio has made tremendous progress in bringing recognition to the umbrella markets and establishing their importance.

KOME in San Jose is one such success story. The following article was written by Ed Romig, Program Director of KOME, to share some of his station's methods of attaining equal status in the San Francisco market, operating out of an umbrella market situation.

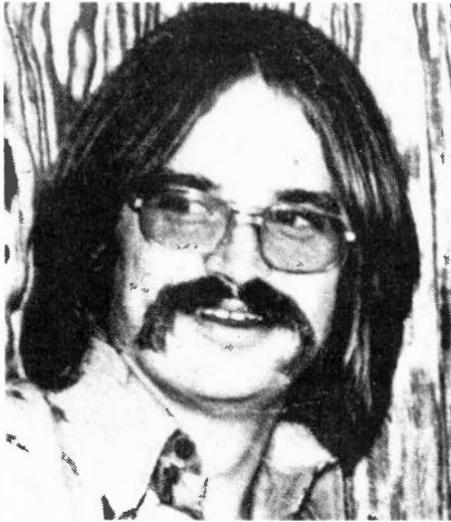
## By Ed Romig

One of the most difficult battles we at KOME have fought is to achieve the proper recognition of ourselves and our city-of-license as a key component of the San Francisco Bay Area market. For those who know of San Jose only via the Dionne Warwick song of years ago, be forewarned that many residents of the area consider that association somewhat distasteful, so watch your jokes! San Jose is a city of roughly 600,000, and the center of Santa

Clara County, one of the fastest-growing counties in the nation. San Jose is 50 miles southeast of San Francisco, at the south end of San Francisco Bay. The South Bay is the most populous area of the entire San Francisco Bay region. The old categorization of San Jose as a "suburb" of San Francisco is clearly erroneous.

In addition to the San Francisco ARB's and Pulse ratings, we are serviced by three San Jose ARB's, along with separate San Jose Pulses. The Metro Survey Area totals 1.2 million population, so it is a good-sized market unto itself. We are in the peculiar position of being the No. 28 market within the No. 5 market. Most of San Jose's 12 stations cover the majority of the Bay Area, and a few, KLOK, KBAY, and KOME, are major factors in San Francisco ratings, aside from dominating the San Jose books.

But despite the importance of their signals, San Jose stations are often overlooked. National buys



often go to San Francisco stations, even though many of those stations are inefficient in serving the populous South Bay. Some record promo people neglect proper servicing of San Jose, and overlook placement of record ad money on important Bay Area stations from San Jose. Even trade publications (R&R excluded) often overlook proper coverage of San Jose stations, even though in many cases they serve essentially the same area as San Francisco signals. Since I came to KOME in September 1974, there have been many frustrating moments resulting from a general ignorance of the realities of the Bay Area radio market—including the reality of San Jose stations as great audience-getters, record sellers, and ad buys.

San Jose stations have an inherent disadvantage in attracting a wide Bay Area audience, because people tend to identify with the major city of any area. San Francisco is the traditional primary city of the Bay Area, even though it is by no means the only center of influence. There is also the inherent snob appeal of a San Francisco identity. Even though Santa Clara County has far more people than San Francisco County, there is little San Jose identity. Instead of a close, cohesive metropolitan unit like San Francisco, San Jose is a mass of sprawling communities, a suburban metropolis of dozens of cities that intertwine, much like Los Angeles. A San Jose station that identifies too heavily with strictly San Jose will have difficulty attracting and relating to a very spread-out audience that may not identify with San Jose itself. That's why we present ourselves on the air, in sales, and promotionally as a Bay Area station.

I am not saying that your on-air identity with your city of license is going to determine your success. Obviously, if your on-air sound is appealing, you'll get listeners no matter how you identify yourself. But if a listener in Palo Alto constantly hears "San Jose San Jose San Jose..." he's going to get the impression that the station is not intended for him. He's going to feel excluded from that station, even if it's only a subliminal reaction. He may feel excluded enough to turn to a station that more closely identifies with him and his immediate environment. That might be a Palo Alto station, or a San Francisco station with a broader Bay Area identity.

We do not identify ourselves as San Jose/San Francisco. To do so would risk alienation of our home territory by seeming to put 50 miles between KOME and home base. Besides, "Bay Area" is a sufficiently all-inclusive identity. We infuse this philosophy into all aspects of our air presentation—news, public affairs, and community involvement. Dana Jang, KOME's Music Director, spends a great deal of time on the phone calling record stores for local sales reports. And again, by "local" we mean Bay Area. Stores in Marin County and San Francisco are called in addition to the closer outlets in San Mateo, Alameda, and Santa Clara Counties.

All this input is considered at weekly music meetings

Promotionally, we have expanded distribution of promotional items such as KOME Decals and *Phonograph Record Magazine*, and other efforts, outside the immediate San Jose area. With nearly a half million decals out, we seem to have a good saturation in San Jose and now wish to expand that coverage.

Our newest advertising campaign goes far beyond the boundaries of normal San Jose station promotion. TV spots appear on San Francisco stations as well as San Jose's. A billboard campaign is currently showing in three counties. Nowhere in the billboard or spot do we mention San Jose. Why should we? All we need to get across is an image, the call letters, and 98.5.

Another way to promote ourselves as a Bay Area medium (and to promote San Jose radio in general) is to insist on fair and equitable record service. There were times when a San Francisco station got a major release 24 hours before we did, and we registered our displeasure with the appropriate promo person. Many of them didn't realize that we were in a competitive situation with San Francisco stations, and that 24 hours inequity in time of release was intolerable. The myth of San Jose as a "secondary market" was undoubtedly promoted by San Francisco stations. Fortunately, most of the major record companies now realize that we're all in the same market, and such inequities rarely occur. Such advances were often the result of direct liaison between a station and the groups themselves. KSAN, being an established station, well known to artists and management, often obtained test pressings well in advance. Even though such arrangements may be out of the hands of the local promo person, we voice our objection anyway. In some instances it has prevented a recurrence. There is no reason why a responsible promo person can't get a major release to all stations in a given market at nearly the same time. It is inexcusable to hand deliver a major release to a San Francisco station and then mail it to San Jose.

A station in market situations similar to ours should not only insist on equitable record service, but should also expect equitable treatment from the labels in the form of advertising dollars. If a station is pulling audience and its airplay has been shown to sell records as KOME does, that station should share in ad budgets, whether the station is in San Francisco, San Jose, Sausalito or Milpitas.

It is also important to seek the same equity as far as record promotions are concerned. We don't enter into such promotions unless we feel that KOME will get as much benefit as the label. Stations in similar situations, getting results for a record company, should also expect reasonable promotional efforts.

We have also established a San Francisco Sales Office, with Thom Bennett as Account Executive. Thom can maintain a close personal contact with agencies and record promo people, and can cover functions and parties that cannot easily be attended by other station personnel. Thom's presence in San Francisco has proved invaluable on many occasions.

At one time there was a gaping chasm in this market. There were free form KSAN and KOME on one side, and Top 40 radio on the other. After consulting with General Manager Dan Tapson and the station ownership, we set out to fill the void with a structured format that assured a degree of consistency and familiarity, but allowed room for personality, creativity, and a wide variety of music. We saw a need for an alternative in not just the South Bay, but the entire Bay Area. With this approach we've attained and maintained a consistent No. 1 18-34 in the San Jose ARB's, and usually 5-6 in San Francisco. In the April-May San Francisco we were No. 1 18-34 at night, with a strong showing through the rest of the day. We also beat KSAN 18-24 in the San Francisco book. That ARB turned a lot of long-overdue attention our way, from agencies, record companies, and San Francisco stations—many of whom had never realized the viability of a San Jose station as a key factor in the total Bay Area picture.

What I would suggest to any station in a somewhat similar market is to first analyze your market, analyze your signal and its potential coverage of that market, analyze the competition on the home front and in the broader sense, and decide how far you want to extend your influence. Once you've made that determination, aim yourself at that audience. Don't be so isolated in programming, promotions and news coverage that you inadvertently exclude anyone in that target area. At the same time, beware of going too far and being so general that you have no identity at all. Your primary concern is, of course, getting your station to sound its best. Once you've attained that, be sure you are identifying with all the audience you want to reach, and giving that audience reason to identify with you.

**Now, more than ever,  
this is the company  
where  
Radio Comes Alive**



**ALBUM**

- Jefferson Starship/"SPITFIRE" BFL1-1557
- Savannah Band/"DR. BUZZARD'S ORIGINAL" APL1-1504
- Daryl Hall & John Oates/"BIGGER THAN BOTH OF US" APL1-1467
- John Denver/"SPIRIT" APL1-1694
- Ruth Copeland/"TAKE ME TO BALTIMORE" APL1-1236

**KEY CUTS**

- "St. Charles," "Cruisin'," "With Your Love"
- "Cherchez La Femme," "I'll Play The Fool," "Sour and Sweet"
- "Do What You Want, Be What You Are," "Rich Girl," "Crazy Eyes"
- "Baby, You Look Good to Me Tonight," "Come and Let Me Look in Your Eyes," "Like A Sad Song"
- "Milky Way Man," "Heaven," "Win or Lose"

**ALBUM**

- Aztec Two Step/"TWO'S COMPANY" APL1
- Ryo Kawasaki/"JUICE" APL1-1855
- Hot Tuna/"HOPPKORV" BFL1-1920
- Pure Prairie League/"DANCE" APL1-1924
- Ralph Graham/"WISDOM" APL1-1918
- Roger Troy/"ROGER TROY" APL1-1910



**KEY CUTS**

97 "Dance," "Conversation In A Car," "Finding Somebody New"  
 "The Breeze and I," "El Toro," "Sometime"  
 "It's So Easy," "I Can't Be Satisfied," "Song From The Stainless Cymbal"  
 "Dance," "Fade Away," "All The Lonesome Cowboys"  
 "Smile," "Wisdom," "Feel The Love"  
 "Don't Put The Blame On Me Baby," "Don't You Have Any Love In Your Heart?," "When A Man Loves A Woman"

**ALBUM**

Waylon Jennings/"ARE YOU READY FOR THE COUNTRY" APL1-1816  
 Juice Newton and Silver Spur/"AFTER THE DUST SETTLES" APL1-1722  
 Guy Clark/"TEXAS COOKIN'" APL1-1944  
 Ray Charles and Cleo Laine/"PORGY & BESS" CPL2-1831  
 • Albert King/"ALBERT" BUL1-1731

**KEY CUTS**

"Can't You See," "Are You Ready For The Country," "Old Friend"  
 "If I Ever," "Slip Away," "Sailor Song"  
 "Anyhow, I Love You," "Texas Cookin'"  
 "Oh Lawd, I'm On My Way," "I Loves You, Porgy," "Bess, You Is My Woman"  
 "I'm Ready," "I Don't Care What My Baby Do," "Guitar Man"

**In the months to come,  
together we will capitalize  
on the momentum that  
has been created in  
promoting established acts  
as well as breaking new artists,  
until there will be no doubt that  
this is the company where the  
Real Comers Are**

**RCA Records**

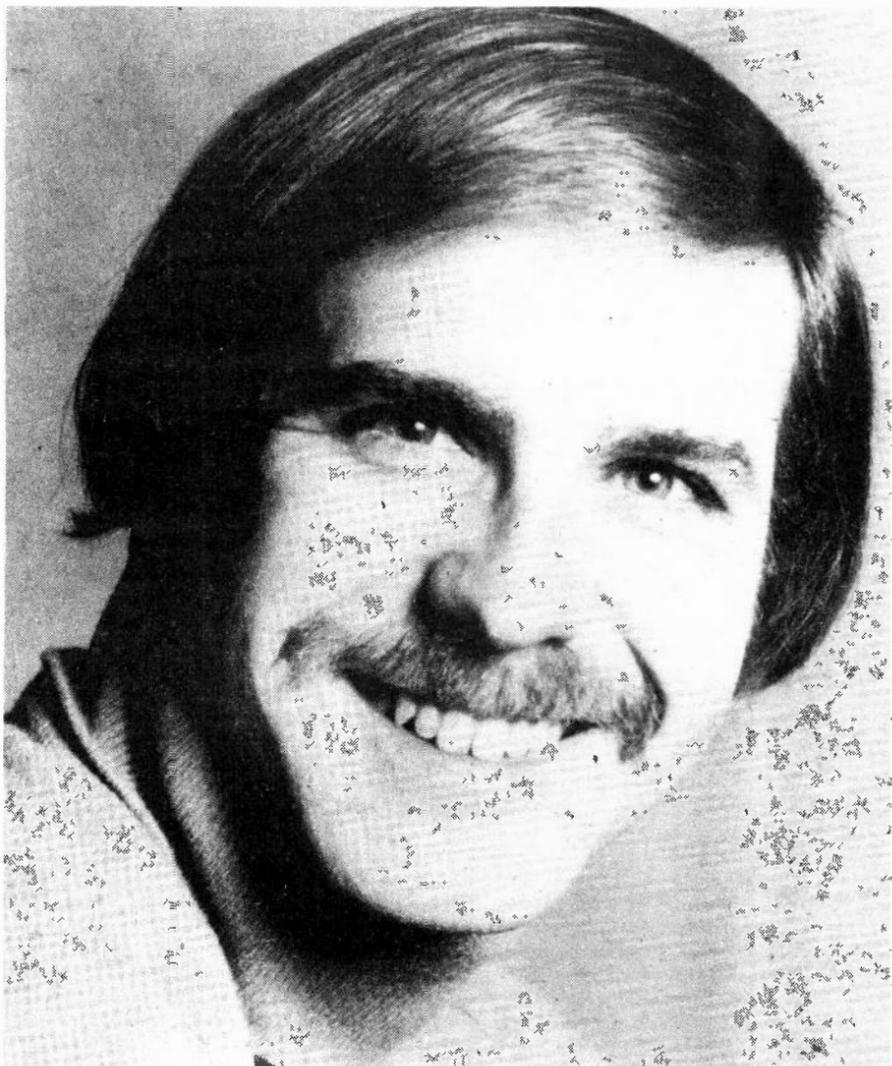
# The AOR Air Personality

By Richard Neer

As AOR develops, there seems to be more attention paid to the Program Director and Music Director. Interestingly, it is the person behind the microphone and turntables who was so instrumental an element in starting progressive radio, and is still to this day a vital component of the format's sound, image, and direction.

Richard Neer began his AOR career back in 1970 (after a few years of working everything from Beautiful Music to Sports) when he became WLIR's first

Music Director and one of the charter members of that station's air staff. In 1971 he joined WNEW-FM as Music Director and part-time jock. After several months he left the MD position to take over a full-time air shift on the station, which he has maintained ever since. In addition to his radio work, Richard is very involved in theatre and drama, with an eye toward increased activity in those areas in future years. The following article details some of his thoughts on the role of the AOR Air Personality.



Is the Renaissance man alive today in the guise of the AOR jock? Just a quick rundown of the things expected of him would indicate an affirmative answer. In addition to being a music maven, he should have a working knowledge of news, sports, politics, sociology, engineering, education, psychology, career guidance, and where you can get a ride to Miami for intercession.

The very term AOR "jock" seems pejorative considering the responsibilities, but it seems that no one has come up with a better umbrella to place over the gig. Too many of us associate the word jock with the glib, fast-talking Top 40 approach we all tried to get as much distance from as we could in the late 60's. We tried to be real, sincere, honest, in an age where all around us was pure polystyrene. We tried to be a friend to our audience, and frankly, in those days it was, to quote Phil Ochs, "a small circle of friends." We wanted to be involved in our community; we attempted to present a point of view that the so-called "straight" media couldn't (or wouldn't). We attempted to deal directly with human relationships that were deeper than the cleansing action of certain medications that would clear the skin, thus solving all the problems a guy could possibly have. In short, we were trying to be in-

are confined to a couple of minutes at best, which forces us to present our ideas concisely with few illustrations, rather than belabor the point endlessly. Our sets of music are shorter and contain more three and four-minute tracks as opposed to the lengthy jams we once favored. The reason is simple: commercials. Whereas once we may have had four or five spots per hour during prime time, our commercial load has grown to 12 and sometimes more spots per hour. This doesn't lend itself to the type of long raps and music sets that once prevailed.

I work at a station that is one of a dying breed: the free-form FM Rocker. We are still totally at liberty to play and say what we choose. And yet people are constantly asking, "Haven't you tightened up your playlist lately?" Since there is no playlist, the only tightening up has been within our collective heads. We are still the station in town responsible for exposing new artists, but we seem to be more discriminating in our choices. One reason has to be the tremendous increase in the number of LP's released weekly that fit into our satchel. If in 1969 we added 10 records per week, we would be using most of the albums released. If we add 10 a week now, we are passing over at least 80% of the works available.

**"Very few will ever bother to call or write to tell you that on Wednesday, October 13, you did a boring show, but the great silent protest will be felt when the radio is turned off or switched to another station."**

involved in something more than collecting a weekly paycheck.

I suppose that things have changed in the past 10 years as far as AOR radio is concerned. Even the names "progressive" or "underground," which seemed so appropriate at the beginning, seem hypocritical now. Perhaps it was even then, but our eyes, tinged with rosy naivete and idealism, would not accept it. Our ideals to change things for the good side are still present; they are just more deep-seated and fraught with the deathly hue of compromise. In 1969 a commercial for a male-oriented sexist publication would be rejected out of hand. Now such ads are only turned aside if they are too blatant. After all, they have a right to have their point of view aired. Our stations are less dogmatic than they were. We don't look askance at our Top 40 brethren; in fact we have gone back to searching their timeworn truisms for some guidelines that might help our numbers, guidelines that we wanted no part of seven years ago.

Basically, we seem to have grown up, along with the rest of what once was called the "counterculture." Maybe "absorbed" would be a better word. We have learned to face the economic realities of what we are doing, as we shake our heads sadly at all the boutiques that are now vacant storefronts.

The point I'm really hoping to make is that in this absorption process, in this growing up, we have not lost our battle. The fact that every department store now has a boutique section means that boutiques were a good idea. There was and is a market for what they had to offer, but in our constant American quest for efficiency, the small owners have moved on, except for those who knew what they were doing all along. It is the same way for music and FM radio. The self-indulgent, the excessive, the fakers were weeded out, and what now remains are the stations that really serve their audiences. We are survivors of a flood of economic bad times that made everyone reconsider their priorities and slim down to the basics.

How does this affect the people behind the microphone? For one thing, the interminable "raps" aren't heard very much these days. Most comments

The same records are being played with greater frequency. In the early 70's, I would try to avoid playing the same artist two shows in a row. Now there is a base of maybe 10 people I feel I should use almost every time I'm on. People are unable to listen to all four hours every day, so I try to play important albums at different times, but much more often than before.

The lesson I've learned in my 10 years of radio is self-discipline. No Program Director can listen to your entire show every day. You must be your own PD during every program you do. If you feel lazy on a given day, you shouldn't clutter up your time with long tracks and cliched segues. Maybe the station's PD won't notice but you will, if you are conscientious. And if you are on the phone or reading a magazine and don't pick up on it, you can be sure that your listeners will. Very few will ever bother to call or write to tell you that on Wednesday, October 13, you did a boring show, but the great silent protest will be felt when the radio is turned off or switched to another station. And another thing I've learned is to answer your phone. Not to play requests especially, but to get the feedback that makes radio a two-way medium. Don't feel that mail and telephone response really indicates what your audience is thinking. Maybe one-tenth of one per cent ever call or write you. But if you play a record to please one person without stopping to consider if you'll be turning the rest of your audience off, then you are not exercising your responsibility as a programmer. Your callers have valid points very often. They can remind you of a great old track you haven't played in ages. They can hip you to a new artist who is creating excitement with non-record industry types, the people who listen to you and buy records. But don't accept their suggestions as dictates. Your judgment is the basis for your program.

I hope that stations like WNEW-FM stay alive for a long time. For besides giving me a place to work and hang out, they provide a lot of good uncensored music and informative entertainment for a lot of folks. It may not be as scientific as a station programmed by computer or a computer-minded Music Director, but it's a whole lot more satisfying.



# The AOR Music Director

By Paul Payton



When I was asked to discuss what it's like being a "progressive" Music Director, I figured on taking one of two approaches. I could sit down and think it through, writing a carefully-worded, politically and descriptively accurate essay, or I could reel off a bunch of words in a stream-of-consciousness style and hope that would cover it. As it happens, circumstances have forced the latter approach; this fall's release is not to be believed in its scope and volume, not to mention the promotional pressure coming along with it.

Actually, that's my job—the main part, at least in time spent; I try to listen to all the new music, make some kind of marking indications—a sort of "first opinion"—as to the sound and texture of the



cuts, and which ones I recommend as major attractions on each album. In that connection, I also serve as liaison between the radio station and the record companies and trades. I have no set hours for promotional visits or calls, and it gets real hectic sometimes, but it's worth it (unlike some stations, however, no money ever goes across my desk; all record company advertisers are house accounts, so there is never a question of conflict-of-interest or cause-and-effect between time bought and times played). When albums come in, I try to psych out which the leaders are and review them first. Using a shorthand code, I "grade" the tracks, affix a 2"-by-4" tag with every jock's initials, and add my comments to that. I also expound on the album a bit in a series of "music bulletins" which are posted in the control room; these are just first impressions, bits of history surrounding the album, and any other pertinent information. At WHCN, we also build an airplay graph on the back of an LP; a 3x5 card is taped vertically on the jack-

*The role of the AOR radio Music Director is one of the most difficult to define, because of the tremendous variation in the job's definition from station to station. At some stations, the job basically entails being a record librarian; at some it is a buffer position to insulate the Program Director from the onslaught of promotional forces; at some it involves full or part time research; at some, total control over everything played on the air; and at others a little bit of everything.*

"Country" Paul Payton, Music Director of WHCN

et, the cut numbers indicated across the top, and the date the track is played entered by the jock, who is also free to enter his opinions on the comment tag. In this way, when promo people call or visit for airplay reports, I can cite with a reasonable degree of accuracy what got played when (I still haven't figured out what "light," "medium," and "heavy" really mean in digits).

We use a three current-bin system at WHCN for new music, breaking albums, and established goodies. These are our "format bins," which I shuffle once weekly at minimum. Using a closely-guarded secret guideline, we turn the air people loose around these bins, another new bin for jazz, and a 20,000-album library which I'm responsible for maintaining. Airstaff creativity makes the station what it is, not a dictatorial Music Director or Program Director. Of course we direct—those old trippin'-on-the-air days are over, if they ever really existed; but at WHCN, the people who work for the station are there because of what they do naturally.

So that's the main part of my job—sorting out the new music and keeping it organized, internally and externally. Part of the organization technique also includes the sales report. We are not slaves to research, but since no accurate local sales figures for our coverage area exist, I make my own. Fifteen

in Hartford, tries to approach his job in a progressive way, using musicology as a base, maintaining the ideals of the original progressive radio but dealing with these concepts within the realities of 1976. One of the original pioneers at WBRU in 1966-67, Peyton came to WHCN in 1971 and became Music Director the next year. During his career he has worked at KFML and KBPI in Denver doing AOR; worked Top 40 at WICE and WSVP; and served as Music Director of Country WHIM. He holds an AB in music from Brown University, and has attended the Juilliard School of Music.

locations, from esoterica specialists to high-volume chain stores, are asked for their Top 20 weekly; our sales report is extrapolated from this data. It kills about 5 or 6 hours one day a week, but it gives me the missing piece of the puzzle. The rest of the pieces are R&R's new-adds chart, Walrus, national sales charts, jock input (from their extensive home listening—we are graced with generally excellent service), and most important, my own gut feeling as to what's right for what we're doing.

I've developed a couple of peeves which this year have grown quite intense. The amount of new product worthy of consideration has increased almost geometrically. This is rough, because there are only 24 hours in a day, and only so much product that anyone can handle. Seriously, all you labels, if a staff of professional music freaks can't digest an average of 20-25 new albums a week, how can a casual listener? As a result, a lot of worthwhile product gets lost. And it seems that record companies can no longer tolerate medium-sized acts, many of which seem to be not good enough to keep for good, but too good to throw away.

What I foresee as an outcome is the already-underway rebirth of regionalism. Well and good—it is from local scenes that tomorrow's major artists will come. But let them develop—I don't personally

like being hyped that Irving Melvin's Band is making it in Anytown, USA, and because of that it's right for me; on the other hand, I enjoy knowing about it, although all these scenes and personnel changes are a bitch to keep up with. To keep a finger on everything, I frequently have time only to process new music, not digest it, and circumstances sometimes make me lost in discussing something without my notes around to prompt me. I guess that's the price I pay for the technological advances that make local scenes more visible, and it's nice to see working bands getting breaks; but it must be frustrating for them to be released nationally and then lost in the shuffle. This brings up the promotional pressure, escalating along with the amount of product in the marketplace. There is all too often a tedious sameness to much of the product—and its hype. Some original musical stylists have managed to slip through, bolstered by local or cult scenes, and they are like oases in the desert. However, all this stuff to waddle through has taken some of the fun out of the job.

But don't get me wrong—I love this combined radio/records industry, I love what I'm doing, and I would even do it for free on a college station between jobs. In fact, I have in the past. I've been doing radio for 14 years (12 professional), and I don't know what else I'd like to do. There's no thrill that compares to discovering and breaking a new artist. I enjoy hanging with radio and record people and rapping down sounds, personalities, concepts, and even trivia ("What was the flip side of..."). AOR radio hasn't always been as personally profitable as it is currently, and it certainly has never been so competitive; where WHCN was until a year ago one of only two professional FM rockers in Connecticut, now there are five at various gradations of the spectrum bidding for the same audience. I feel I've worked for what I've gotten, and I'm proud of my resume; the situation at WHCN has been thus far unmatched in my life in terms of respect, professionalism, facilities, and personal gratification. I'm not married to the station, but I am to the ideals it represents.

I enjoy the unique position I hold: WHCN's full-time Music Director, no regular air shift, a lot of production and "utility infield" work, including fill-ins; and up to and including now, it makes me happier than anything else I could do to earn a living or make a life.

## Those Southern Boys Of AOR Radio

Continued from page 20

FM went commercial progressive. WRNO was one of the first successful stations programmed by Abrams. He reflects on the early days of Southern AOR: "AOR radio in the South started off in the same manner as AOR radio elsewhere. It was free-formatted with a bunch of people playing their favorite tunes on the radio. The beginnings in the South were a disaster, and it slowed the progression process of successful and profitable AOR radio. The general philosophy of AOR radio in the beginning was to do everything opposite of Top 40 radio. No Top 40 technology was applied to AOR in the late 60's, with too much politics in the beginning." Abrams further comments that "successful Southern AOR radio developed out of successful AOR stations in the Midwest. Success with Southern AOR did not start happening until Northern PD's came down and made it happen."

As mentioned earlier, WNOE-FM came into the picture about the same time as WRNO. WNOE-FM came into the market with a massive advertising campaign that brought almost immediate success. Today, WRNO and WNOE-FM are still competing in New Orleans.

## Gainesville

The first progressive station in this college town was WRUF, the college station which began its progressive approach in May 1969 under the direction of Curtis Jones (WGVL, WZZQ, now Lifesong Records). Jones was asked about his first impressions of AOR radio. He said, "AOR radio was formed out of a demand from listeners who wanted to hear Hendrix and Joplin styles of music. As Top

40 became tighter with Drakeisms, listeners were being 'shorted' on hearing the music they were purchasing."

Gainesville became a natural market for AOR radio. With the student population of the University of Florida at about 20,000, free-form AOR naturally worked. Commercial progressive radio began in Gainesville in February 1972, when Curtis Jones pioneered WGVL-FM. In the beginning, WGVL was basically unstructured like its predecessor, WRUF. One of the most creative personalities during the early days of WGVL was Bill Thacker, known as "Montana," who organized, WGVL's big outdoor birthday party which attracted thousands of long-haired "freaks." Most everyone in Gainesville thought Montana was using secret codes while broadcasting, but it was only his weird mind—he was so weird he used to bring pet pythons to work with him.

Through the years WGVL has remained free-form, until quite recently when Lee Arnold (WTAI, WORJ) instituted a record rotation system. According to Arnold, "There are as many 18-34's living in Gainesville as there are in Orlando. At this point, WGVL reaches about 60% of the market, with potential to reach 80%." Arnold also notes that "in Gainesville WGVL can be a bit more progressive since the base of their audience is an upward mobile demographic."

### OTHER SOUTHERN MARKETS

## Raleigh

The success story here has been WQDR, one of the first Abrams stations. Raleigh is not a typical Southern city, as it probably has a higher proportion of college-educated people per capita than the rest of the South. Therefore, the market has its own unique identity, with softer rock taking dominance over heavy metal. WQDR is programmed by Bill Hard, one of the South's most influential Program Directors.

## Memphis

Memphis got off to a good start when Jon Scott

(MCA national promotion) pioneered WMC-FM. It was free-form and had good numbers, but management failed to generate sales and revenue interest, so the format changed to Top 40 Rock. Presently, Memphis is without a commercial AOR station.

## Orlando

WORJ was first here in 1970 with free-form radio. They kept this approach for many years, until recent times. Now WDIZ is making waves with AOR under the direction of Mike Lyons.

## Tampa/ St. Petersburg

AOR started here with the college station, WUSF. It was true underground, similar to the approach used at WGVL. Later, an AM progressive, WFSO, began. Currently, Tampa receives the signal of WQSR (Sarasota). WQSR is one of the few free-form stations working successfully. They are the most "Northern-sounding" AOR in the South, Mark Beltaire and Steve Huntington are doing a fine job

with their wide music list.

## Others

There are other stations in the South which are making waves. For example, WERC-FM/Birmingham. And there's 3WZ, Charleston, one of the finest sounding AOR's in the South. WBEU/Beaufort, WRPL/Charlotte, and many more can be added to the list.

AOR is alive, well and growing rapidly in the South. The Southern Boys of AOR radio are maintaining a professional plateau comparable to any other region in America. There is a regional pride and identity in every Southern market, thanks to musicians who have helped establish the identity of Southern AOR radio (Allmans, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Charlie Daniels, Marshall Tucker, the Outlaws, etc.), and people like Gary Granger, Lee Abrams, Jack Crawford, Lee Arnold, myself, and others who have watched AOR in the South evolve from a stepchild to the sleeping giant of the immediate future. Yes, boys, AOR in the South is here, and "we're gonna do it again."

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# The Great DEBATE

## **Top Programmers Debate The Philosophies Of AOR Radio**

### **FEATURING**

Bonnie Simmons, PD KSAN/San Francisco  
Bert Kleinman, Exec. VP of Programming, Drake/Chennault  
Clark Smidt, President, Broadcast Ideas and Operation  
Stan Garrett, PD KZEL/Eugene  
Jeff Pollack, Music Coordinator, KBPI/Denver  
Norm Winer, PD WBCN/Boston  
Bill Compton, PD KDKB/Phoenix  
Jack Crawford, PD WKDA-FM/Nashville  
John Gorman, PD WMMS/Cleveland

The growth of AOR radio as an industry force over the past few years has been so rapid and widespread that the genre runs the gamut in terms of styles, methodologies, philosophies and terminology. On an obvious level, most of the variations in the national AOR radio spectrum are lumped into two major categories: "tight" and "loose" in regard to the stations' policies of adding records, jock discipline, and overall environment. On a more subtle level, there are countless differences between the stations that qualify for the profes-

sional umbrella term AOR (Album Oriented Rock).

For the purpose of airing out some of these differences within the structure of AOR radio, with the hope of finding universals in terminology with a respect for variation, Radio & Records organized a "debate" situation between some of the genre's leading programmers, with a balanced cross-section of the field represented. The original plan was to have the debate solely between two people, Norm Winer, Program Director of WBCN in Boston, who would represent the "loose" faction, and Bert

Kleinman, Executive Vice President of Programming for Drake/Chennault, who would represent the more structured, "tight" faction. The audience—Jack Crawford, PD of WKDA-FM in Nashville, Bill Compton, PD of KDKB in Phoenix, Stan Garrett, PD of KZEL in Eugene, John Gorman, PD of WMMS in Cleveland, Jeff Pollack, Music Coordinator of KBPI in Denver, Bonnie Simmons, PD of KSAN in San Francisco, and Clark Smidt, President of Broadcast Ideas and Operation (formerly PD at WCOZ/Boston)—was originally invited to serve in a questioning

capacity, but that rule was waived, as it quickly became evident that each person present had some thing to offer to the debate, representing different views. As a result, all present proceeded on an equal footing. Radio & Records' AOR Editor, Mike Harrison, served as moderator.

The debate took place late into the night in Harrison's hotel room in San Francisco on September 19. The following is an edited transcript of the conversation that transpired, with only repetitive or extraneous dialogue omitted.



**THE GREAT DEBATERS:** (front row l to r) Bonnie Simmons, PD KSAN, San Francisco; Bert Kleinman, Exec VP of Programming, Drake/Chenault; Clark Smidt, President, Broadcast Ideas and Operation; Stan Garrett, PD KZEL, Eugene. (back row) Mike Harrison, Managing Editor, Radio & Records; Jeff Pollack, Music Coordinator, KBPI, Denver; Norm Winer, PD WBCN, Boston; Bill Compton, PD KDKB, Phoenix; Jack Crawford, PD WKDA-FM, Nashville; John Gorman, PD WMMS, Cleveland.

**R&R:** We'll start with Norm Winer. Please define what you consider to be your type of AOR radio.

**WINER:** WBCN is essentially a radio station whose musical diet comes from all types of music—Classical, which is our owner's particular favorite, since that's what we were before we switched formats eight years ago, and Jazz and R&B and Blues. There are many progressive or AOR stations that play no Black music, but we play a pretty good quantity of that. We also play tapes of local musicians, which are not commercially available; we do a lot of live broadcasts, we have a very active and multi-faceted news and public affairs department, with the largest staff of any in Boston for an FM station. We've got about eight people in there, not all fulltime, but eight people with weekly responsibilities. We have prime-time scheduled public affairs shows, a lot of news, we try to be active in our community, we do things like low-keyed, non-plastic blood drives and voter registrations. We broadcast live through our mobile facility, which enables us to do radio from the street and do live broadcasts from theaters without any notice.

**KLEINMAN:** I'd like to look at AOR from another perspective, and that's with respect to its width, as opposed to its depth. In some radio stations it's that very depth that becomes the major interest factor at the station. I think that one of the things that the "A" in AOR has to do with is the audience. Certainly AOR stations play music that comes from albums. The research-oriented ones say they do because that's what the people are voting for in terms of their purchase of album product. But it's not just the kind of music, I think it's the entire orientation of the radio station towards the audience, a particular audience which perhaps felt that it was not being served by a lot of other radio stations. It is the orientation towards this audience—

**WINER:** That serves in what respect?

**KLEINMAN:** Well, many people felt maybe the radio stations reflected a lifestyle they were not comfortable with. In any event—

**WINER:** What do you mean by that?

**KLEINMAN:** Well, let me project it another way. There were a lot of people, and I think there still are, who feel they don't enjoy some types of radio. Some people don't enjoy AOR, don't enjoy Country, don't enjoy MOR. My point is, I think there's a turning of radio stations back towards the particular audience, to serve that audience, for instance, with blood drives as well as a lot of other things you do at the radio station. That to me is the real essence of AOR. It is an orientation towards playing to as opposed to playing at an audience, and serving that audience. We happen to be playing album music, it's an easy way to define it, you could just as well say we were playing 8-track tape music or lampshade music, but I think it's this orientation

that is very important in AOR radio. Some people feel you best serve the audience by consolidating and organizing the music, and other people feel that you best do it by letting human beings have free reign. I think they're both valid, but they're both directed at serving an audience, which to me is the beginning of AOR radio.

**R&R:** OK, I have a question for each of you. What steps do you take, or how do you know that you are serving your audience by your type of programming?

**WINER:** For one thing, the sort of things we deal with and talk about on the station, the sort of PSA's we do, the organizations in the community we get involved with, the events we give publicity on our newscasts, generally have large quantities of people there. In many instances, solely because they heard about it on our radio station. Obviously, if they weren't interested in such an event, whether it be a blood drive or a live radio show from an aquarium or a day at the zoo, or a free outdoor concert, they wouldn't be there. But there are responses to things like that.

**R&R:** Physical and audible.

**WINER:** Physical and audible, but what I'm saying is something more than simply regarding the music. I don't mean to harp too much on our PSA programs and public affairs, but when you're talking about the way a radio station relates to a community, when you talk about Album Oriented Radio, the "A" is far less important than the "R", and what a radio station is supposed to do is to play an instrumental role—no pun intended—in its community. It's more than playing the songs the kids want to hear, it's really an active involvement in the community, specifically because you're there, and the only reason why the FCC supposedly lets you stay there, is because you have something to do there.

**KLEINMAN:** I would like to add to it. I think that the people who listen to AOR stations are perhaps more demanding and expect more involvement from their radio station than people who listen to a lot of other stations. One of the interesting things is that if you had one question to ask a person, and you wanted it to indicate a lot about them as a human being, one of the most meaningful questions you could possibly ask is "What's your favorite radio station?"

**WINER:** Especially when you're holding \$50.

**KLEINMAN:** No, even without it. I'm just talking about if you're talking to a person and say, "Hey, what's your favorite radio station?" and they name the Beautiful Music station. That says a great deal about that person. Music is a very internal important thing.

**GARRETT:** I tend to disagree with that. I have to disagree that music is that vital to a person's life. There are too many people who listen to my station who are just too callous. You can go out and about and they can only name a half dozen records,

**KLEINMAN:** But a lot of people will listen to a particular station and will identify in a cultural way with it, that was all I was trying to say. I wasn't talking about the depth of people, as related to what Norm said, and that is that a radio station culturally is a very important element in somebody's life, and I think it is this culture and identification with the culture that is part of what makes AOR radio AOR radio. Has anybody here converted a station to AOR? A radio station is first of all silence. Anything other than silence is what we add, and when you do that, when you start from zero and you start adding, you have to look at the station in terms of components. You can get all the great music in the world you want, you can get all the great jocks on the air, but until you've stretched out and, as a WBCN does, gotten down to the people, you don't have AOR. You have something that is plastic and impersonal, even though you could be playing the craziest music.

**WINER:** We're talking about the unique sort of relationship an AOR station has with its audience, but we have to put on record the fact that that doesn't necessarily have any correlation whatsoever to ratings. Despite word of mouth, or the general hip sentiment in a given market as to what is the best, the most popular, the most vital station in the market, in terms of its impact on people's lives, all that might have no reflection whatsoever on the ratings, and it is in effect the ratings that ultimately will determine that station's fate.

**KLEINMAN:** Radio stations, other than Number One stations, stay in business. I think the ratings services are very clear about what it is they measure, and I think they measure that quite accurately. What you're saying is perhaps what they measure is not necessarily what's important to you and your radio station. That's a whole other thing.

**R&R:** Let's talk about goals. Is it the main goal of an AOR station to go after the potential audience, or to please the already obtained audience?

**WINER:** The degree to which a radio station is doing what they're supposed to be doing is the balance of that, because that's what every radio station has to be doing, pleasing their loyalists, the hard core, expanding their audience, without sacrificing any of their marks of success.

**R&R:** How do you deal with that at WBCN?

**WINER:** Painstakingly. It's an extremely difficult part. I didn't talk about how the station is structured. It's something less than what was once called free-form, and that's been the case for about the last two or three years. But there are about 30,000 records, scratchy old Blues records, weird comedy records with obscenities on them, which we don't play any more. Most people who used to play them actually don't even work at the station any more. There are all sorts of things in there that people have played, and in terms of the general

programming philosophy, there are minimal guidelines in terms of specifics, because programming guidelines are generalities and I'm simply not going to tell a person who's gotten their job through their expertise in terms of musical awareness, knowledge, vocabulary and sensitivity, how they should put it together. That's why they're working there, so I give them the records they can use to do their radio shows, and give them a few specifics in terms of what time of day they're on and so forth, and the fact that WBCN is competing in a certain time and space with stations doing very specific things, so we have to keep them in mind. I basically indoctrinate them, and because these people have been working there so long, it's been a long process of discussion and idea-swapping and sharing and vetoing and some dictatorship and a little tyranny. I've gotten better at that as time has gone on. But essentially it's a subtle process, compared to computers and charts and graphs and things like that. By and large, I'd say it works, but simply because of the specifics of the situation and the people who are there and the degree to which they have been able to assimilate the things I've tried to convey to them, in terms of the way I would like the station to sound.

**KLEINMAN:** I would like to talk about goals. I think the goals of a station exist on several different levels, one of which is the level you mentioned, in terms of the relationship between the Program Director and the people on the radio. I still think the first goal of a radio station has got to be what its license says, to serve the people.

There's a lot of ways you can interpret that, just like there's a lot of ways you can interpret the Bill Of Rights, but it is a very basic, simple, and important thing. There are management goals for a station, some of which are related to making a lot of money, or making a little bit less money and having a better station, or related to having a station one is happy to have even if it doesn't make any money. Then I think there's also how one accomplishes this and how one relates to the people at the radio station, how they relate amongst themselves. The job of a Program Director is to direct the program of the station. You do it perhaps in a way not unlike a theatre director. You don't give them the lines to say, but you try to create a circumstance which makes these people function to their best and ultimately to the audience, and that is a very difficult thing for which there are many different solutions. But there are other approaches to people being happy and having other kinds of stations too.

**R&R:** One of the questions here then should be, is the directing done in retrospect or done prospectively? How do you feel about that? In other words, when you're driving along, you hear WBCN

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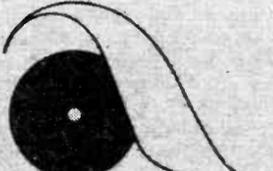
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# The Great DEBATE

Continued from page 35

and it sounds terrible to you. Has that ever happened?

**WINER:** Certainly.

**R&R:** You take action as Program Director, correct?

**WINER:** Generally, yes.

**R&R:** Do you ever feel with anybody on the air that sometimes you should direct them prior to their going on the air, rather than in retrospect?



Norm Winer, WBCN

**WINER:** It's a subject obviously that's impossible to generalize, Mike. On the one hand, there are fulltime announcers who do sparkling radio shows and for years have gotten wonderful ratings, and then one night their car breaks down and their old lady leaves them and they're on the air with the freedom to program anything they want, so it's sad songs for four hours.

**R&R:** The reason I ask, though, is because when you think about it, this issue is one of the major differences of opinion and philosophy between the two styles.

**KLEINMAN:** You see, essentially, I think we're trying to do different things, and so we have different means. It would be ridiculous to try and accomplish the kind of human interaction Norm is talking about by giving a bunch of people cards and slogans. On the other hand, to try and get this other kind of sound, it would be absurd—

**R&R:** And I'm sure there are some people in this room who would have a third feeling about that, saying both types of radio have the same goal, just using different means to attain that. Is there anybody here who feels that way?

**GARRETT:** I have a question about that whole thing. Why do you do what you do, Norm? I assume that this goal is survival, to do good radio and to please your audience, so why do you approach it from your method? Justify that, Bert, and Norm, you justify yours.

**KLEINMAN:** I don't know if I would attempt to justify it, but I can explain it. My approach to radio is to some extent a marketing approach, in the sense of looking at a market and trying to figure out how to serve the people there. A structured AOR is one way to serve that audience, that market; it's not the only way. To do a structured AOR format, you have to structure it, there's no way to do it and have a non-structure.

**GARRETT:** I assume you speak for progressive and underground. Why do you play Rock music as opposed to Beautiful Music, when a cut will be on albums and you can still gain the audience? He uses the term AOR as the means, the format, or area he's working in to gain an audience. When he said AOR, I assume he means progressive, underground, free-form, those kinds of terms.

**R&R:** I think he means the musical term that takes them all into consideration.

**KLEINMAN:** This is a question that's much more dif-

ficult for the structured AOR programmer than it is for the person who says he plays Mantovani because that's the way he feels and it works, that's right. For the structured AOR person, you have to make a decision, you have to sit there and say George Benson, "This Masquerade," is that record one that fits within the framework of this music? You can sit down and you can really think about it, whereas on your station, I would imagine that if somebody felt that, it would be by definition relevant.

**WINER:** Then here we're into some generalities that I think should be cleared up, because for one thing the concept of a structured AOR station would probably apply to WBCN, in that I decree, and only I can decide which record will be added to the library from all the new ones that come out. I personally pick each cut that will be playable on each album, but the difference is that they can play any song they want, any order they want, and there are zillions of them in there, not five, not two a week, so I'm a structured AOR station.

**KLEINMAN:** So if you say you don't want George Benson played, then nobody on the station can play it, is that correct?

**WINER:** Exactly.

**R&R:** Is there anybody in this room who has a type of AOR radio that's different from that?

**WINER:** I didn't make this clear, but the basis on which I make records and cuts playable is on the votes of the announcers.

**KLEINMAN:** But it is nevertheless a committee of people who on your station—

**WINER:** It is either a committee of people or myself.

**GARRETT:** What if nobody likes it, but it's selling a ton?

**WINER:** Then I would put it in the library and nobody would play it. It depends what it is—take Dr. Buzzard. It's selling like crazy, promo men are frothing at the mouth over it, they think it would be the most appropriate thing in the world for us to

before. That might indicate to them that certain cuts are overplayed, that some things are not getting the attention, because no matter what time you're on the air, you think you know what everybody else on the station is playing, but you never do. When you put those six shifts together, plus the weekend people, you get an entirely different picture of the radio station than what you thought.

**KLEINMAN:** Well, you do after the fact what a structured AOR station does before the fact.

**SIMMONS:** I suppose it has less paperwork than I might get involved in if it were to be more structured, but it's difficult in that, one, you're placing your trust in all those disk jockeys, and any number of things can go wrong. You're leaving yourself open to things happening, you're also leaving yourself open to a built-in disadvantage. Without the props or tools, like cue cards, music list, everything you might use, the disk jockeys are open to periods of not doing so well on their shows, or being boring. At the same time, our lack of structure allows for that brilliance which sometimes comes out too. But if they're not feeling well, if something goes wrong, your show can fall apart, and you don't have things to grab on to, so it is chancy sometimes.

**R&R:** Bonnie, have you found that there are some unwritten cards, that certain things are repeated over and over again even though they're not on a card?

**SIMMONS:** Sure, I'm sure we have lots of them.

**GORMAN:** WMMS is basically a free-form format that also does research. We do a forty-store survey every week. We make this information available to everybody on the air. An MMS person has the total freedom to play whatever they feel like, bearing in mind there's an audience out there, this is what's selling, you don't have to play it just because it's number one, you don't have to play it once an hour, but at the same time understand that this is what's selling. Albums are added, and we have a Music Director who puts cue sheets on albums and will listen. If there happens to be a few cuts that stand

had a whole staff to fill and the only thing you had available to you was the type of air talent available to a radio station in Greenville. Would you run your station the same way, or would you immediately take steps to tell them what was done and what you expect of them, and if they were unable to do it, would you set out to structure it for them?

**SIMMONS:** So I have no staff and I'm working with a bunch of people who are from Greenville, Mars, and they have no radio experience?

**R&R:** They have very little, they're young, they're right out of school, and they're all anxious to get ahead and a lot of them really think that they're fantastic jocks and have great musical knowledge. What would you do in such a situation?

**KLEINMAN:** That's what we deal with.

**SIMMONS:** Why?

**KLEINMAN:** Why? Because somebody has to, somebody has to go out there and help people who may not have tremendous resources to try and be something.

**SIMMONS:** It's certainly possible to train people, though. People in KSAN, most of the people on the air, a lot of people who have been on the air there, a lot of them had not been in radio before they came to KSAN, and did have to be trained as announcers and as personalities and learn how to operate. When Terry McGovern, who has taken the mornings from 14th to second in a year, came to KSAN, he had been at KSFO for six years before. At KSFO they didn't deal very much with a lot of the current music, and he basically had a six-year gap of musical knowledge. He had not paid attention, and I was faced with bringing him through six years of it and keeping him current and getting it to a point where he could do it by himself, because I certainly didn't want to get up at six or seven in the morning for as long as I did it with him.



Bert Kleinman, Drake/Chenault

**GORMAN:** The question that you asked relates to the fact that WMMS was born out of a situation just like that, or reborn. It was Metromedia that had highly visible air personalities, and when Metromedia sold the station and the new owners came in, a lot of people anticipated that the station's format would change. The station didn't have fantastic numbers, occasionally it would have a flash, but as a whole, it didn't look as though it was going to go. Most of that staff had left, and Denny Sanders, who was one of the original people at WMMS, was faced with the problem of putting together the staff and maintaining the show. Denny brought me down and it was up to the two of us to try to rebuild the radio station in two weeks. Denny started before I got there and I continued it in going after local talent. We had to raid the icebox and there was nothing left, and we couldn't wait and ask for tapes from all over the country and all that, so we went to the college stations and raided them, and most of these people, it was their first time in radio. On WMMS today, we have three aliens, who weren't born in Cleveland; everybody else on the staff was born and raised in Cleveland and it's their first radio show.

**R&R:** What would you do then if you were suddenly faced with rebuilding it again?

**GORMAN:** I'd do the same thing that Denny and I did the first time—look for the good raw talent, who have an interest not only in music but who know how to talk to the Cleveland audience.

**R&R:** Do you all think that one of the weaknesses in AOR radio then is the ability of programmers to find the raw talent? Considering the criteria they use for judging it, are they overlooking a lot of potential raw talent?

**SMIDT:** But there's also a lot of talent we brought for WCOZ that had already developed itself in other situations. WCOZ was nothing a year ago last August, and now it's a very fine-sounding station, and most of the people had prior experience. There was a group of talented professionals who came together in that situation.

**KLEINMAN:** I'd like to talk about something which I think is good news as opposed to bad news, in terms of what has happened to AOR radio. Yes, it started with some very creative people that had a lot of special things happening. Now it's come to the point where we need to spread out, and we need in-

“I wouldn't be involved with radio if it takes a much lower position as an art form. I have sold out almost as much as I'm going to sell out. I have compromised, I have done research, I have done all that shit. I have become a Program Director almost to the full extent that I ever had to become a Program Director.”

—Norm Winer

play, yet the jocks wouldn't touch it with a ten-foot pole.

**R&R:** Do you ever do anything to suggest it to them, either by whipping or just smiling?

**WINER:** We have music meetings, I play the records for them, they are musical experts, they know a good record when they hear it, and if they don't like it, I'll go with them.

**KLEINMAN:** If they didn't know anything about music, then what?

**WINER:** Then you would have to tell them exactly what records to play.

**SIMMONS:** At KSAN nobody makes musical decisions as to cuts people can or cannot play. There is a Music Director who listens to as much of the product that comes in as possible. He will perhaps mark a cut with his initials if he really liked it a lot, more than anything else on the album. He will also take albums and put them in a new file, which holds maybe 200 LP's. But being put in the new file does not mean that it will get played, nor does it mean that if something is not in the new file that you can't play it.

**KLEINMAN:** Can you just bring a record in and put it on the turntable?

**SIMMONS:** Each disk jockey makes his or her own decisions on everything they play on the air. The only thing we actually ask of them is—something we have encountered is that people working on the air have a tendency to program to their three best friends.

**KLEINMAN:** Maybe the people they are depending on are not typical of the audience.

**SIMMONS:** Lately in meetings we've been talking a bit about that, and perhaps sticking to things that are more familiar or at least each set having something familiar to the average listener out there. But none of the disciplines are written, there is no list. There is however a backwards music list—we make a list of the things that were played the week before. As people do their shows they fill out a list.

**KLEINMAN:** You do the post-playlist thing.

**SIMMONS:** Exactly, and that's used mostly to indicate to the people on the air that perhaps things are getting overplayed. They'll see how many times cuts got played on the new albums from the week

out, they'll be starred, but that doesn't limit a person to just playing that.

**POLLACK:** Do you put the records in different categories? Like top-selling records...

**GORMAN:** Our albums go in the studio, but everybody at the station also gets a copy of the albums, and the Music Director might not put an album in. If somebody on the air wishes that album to be added, it's added. All it takes is one person to add an album. Basically, it's unstructured in that sense, but at the same point, they understand what is selling in the city. We also do requests, we have a 24-hour request line, so we know what people are requesting, and all of this is made available to the air staff, but they can do with it as they see fit within their own personalities.

**KLEINMAN:** Even though we all approach our radio stations in a very different manner, we're all working with either the staff we have or the kind of staff we can get given the circumstances. Bonnie is sitting here in San Francisco, she can obtain a quality person to work with her on that radio station. Put yourself out into Greenville, USA, and the freedom of the jock in Greenville certainly is no less important than it is in San Francisco, but in terms of accomplishing your goal, which is to have a radio station that serves the people, you are governed by the kind of people we have in terms of their musical knowledge. And I'm sure that all of us vary even from week to week in the degree of authority or control that we exert, no matter how structured or unstructured the stations are. Being a Program Director is being a manager, and it's being a manager for a 24-hour-a-day operation, and that's a very complex kind of thing.

**GORMAN:** You're saying if it's Greenville, USA, a small market, that you're limited to the air personality that you can get. The odds are better for getting better people if you're in a larger market?

**KLEINMAN:** I was not trying to put down the small market person, I want to make this very clear. What I was saying is that in terms of the tremendous sophistication of musical knowledge some of you people demand, that there are very few people in the entire United States who have it.

**R&R:** Let me reiterate what Bert is saying. Suppose tomorrow everybody left your station and you

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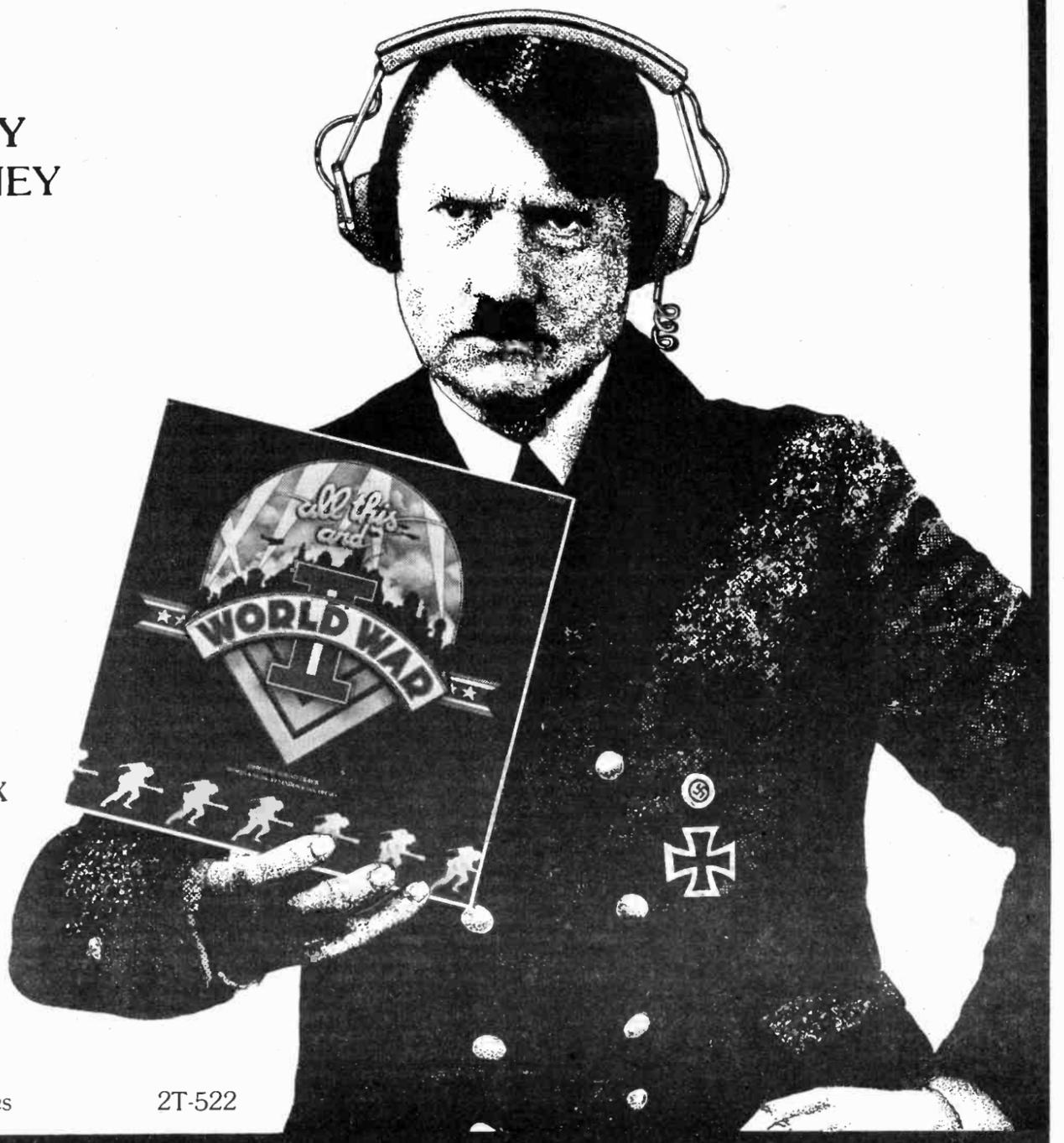
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# The Great DEBATE

Continued from page 38

stead of spending eight years building one incredible radio station, six, eight, nine or ten months in a lot of cases to create a viable radio station in the market. Otherwise, management says that's it. There's a lot of us that don't have eight years. Now, this is not to say that WMMS or KSAN should not continue to exist, but there's another way to do it too. And that is to come in and start with the silence, put together the root of it, and then let it build locally from there, whether it builds into more formatting or less formatting. A lot of us are faced with the problem of a radio station in such-and-such a place, this is January, there's an ARB in April. You want to have this station on the air past September, so let's see something in this April/May ARB. There are a lot of people who say that radio stations cost a tremendous amount of money to operate, so the key is to find a quick way to put on a valid radio station. A lot of those can be extremely good. A lot of us don't have eight years.

**POLLACK:** It's going to take a certain amount of time, then I'm going to want to get the best



Bonnie Simmons, KSAN

that I can find. You're going to be wasting a lot of time looking around for people if you're in a small market, and a lot of people aren't going to come to a Greenville, USA, because you're not going to be able to pay them enough.

**WINER:** So you use the local town, and you're going to have to give them guidelines, because what other way is there? If you have a timetable...

**KLEINMAN:** But you're not talking about taking the entire trip, you're not talking about taking the community involvement—

**WINER:** Who said I'm not talking about it? I'm the one who brought that up in the first place. I think that's very important.

**KLEINMAN:** How are you going to set that up in three months?

**WINER:** There's a lot of ways you work at it. You decide to do a blood drive, well, a radio station can decide that they're going to go out and go into that community and find everything they can possibly do. That has nothing to do with whether they're structured or have phrases or anything.

**KLEINMAN:** Is that as essential in the process of setting up an overnight radio station as the three or four records you decide to add in a given week?

**WINER:** Absolutely. As a matter of fact, without that you have nothing. You think that in terms of relating to an audience you're really giving them their due, when on the one hand you're trying to do things that might be beneficial for them and get your name in the community and establish some sort of reputation and image for your station, but on the other hand you don't let your announcers talk to them or play very much music for them because in your opinion they cannot assimilate that much—

**POLLACK:** But you know, Norm, what we have forgotten, which is very important, is that talking to your staff and getting a common goal among your staff, being able to express what we're here for, and if each air personality knows what the station needs to accomplish...

**WINER:** Yes, every radio station has to be structured to the extent that the air staff is complying with the Program Director's vision of what the radio station should sound like. To that extent, when you're hiring novices, you've got to structure the shit out of them as opposed to when you're hiring musical specialists, you have to structure them a lot less. Now I think that a lot of the people you're hiring are the people in a situation where they're setting up overnight AOR's or hiring

people who are Top 40 rejects but who grew their hair a little longer or smoke better pot, and they wind up...

**KLEINMAN:** I think there are a lot of people who are honestly trying to learn about AOR radio.

**GARRETT:** But you don't just hire people, right, you just tell the people there what to play, right?

**KLEINMAN:** Neither.

**R&R:** Bert is speaking here not only on his current project, just like you're not, but on the many projects—

**KLEINMAN:** But if you're going to get involved with the community, what do you think is a better way to do it, sitting down and saying "here we are and we've got to get out into this community, we've got three weeks, six weeks, six months, a year to do it", or sitting there and saying, "well, I hope by some magic my jock who comes in tomorrow morning is going to magically go whoopee, whoopee, on top of everybody in my community?"

**WINER:** Oh no definite strategy. I didn't suggest anything like that. But to many radio stations who are trying to make an impact immediately, relating to their community means giving \$50 to some—

**KLEINMAN:** I'm not talking about that and I don't think any AOR station could go on like that and get any results.

**GORMAN:** You're all limited to a situation where you have to deliver a commercial success in a short amount of time.

**WINER:** I think all our owners want to at least break even or make some money.

**KLEINMAN:** But quickly.

**WINER:** Everybody does.

**R&R:** How much pressure do all of you feel is on you as far as time is concerned and where do you draw the line over what's a short period of time and a long period of time? Is it from book to book? Is a station reborn after every book?

person who started it and who built it to where it is, so you can speak for that station that really existed up until this point. Was WCOZ in your conception actually coming for WBCN?

**SMIDT:** Yeah, we got a lot of local press on the great Boston "air war," WCOZ and WBCN, and they showed pictures of the stations with call letters. It was good press for both of us, we got our call letters and pictures in the papers, the weeklies. WCOZ was designed to get the 18-34 audience, so I wasn't after BCN, but I was after a percentage of WBCN just like I was after a percentage of WVBF, WBZ-AM and FM, where I brought the staff from, and WROR, and anybody else who was getting those sort of numbers. It was a combination of stuff, but we still played a very large variety of albums. We were at this New England Broadcast thing last weekend, and people were talking about Providence stations coming on with 21-hit playlists and being a hit, but we came on with a playlist of 21,000 and it worked.

**WINER:** How did you relate to the new music?

**SMIDT:** Well, we probably didn't relate to new music as much as you did. We didn't add as many new records, but we also didn't have that much of a tight playlist. I think we had a current list of a hundred albums.

**WINER:** OK, one of the cliches would be—and I think this would be something that representatives of the record industry would say in terms of the differences between stations called AOR being the way in which they relate to new music—the cliche was, and no offense, Clark, that WCOZ would wait until WBCN was on a record and established it before they would start playing it, and with many new records that was true. There were some records they played before we did, but the fact that they would wait until we established records, and the way we're going about playing new product

"The more formatted AOR stations are getting incredible teens. I think that's very important. Teens are starting to get oriented to this kind of music."

—John Gorman

**POLLACK:** I think trends matter more.

**R&R:** And how do you mean that?

**POLLACK:** How has the station performed over the last two or three books, what sort of things are you doing, are you going up, is it steadily downward, are you holding steady, is there new competition and how are you doing...

**KLEINMAN:** I think informed owners understand the dynamics of radio station growth, and they measure it in different ways. They measure it in terms of business, and a lot of AOR stations exist because they have great business and not because they have great ratings. It takes two, three, four years to build a radio station, but in the first six months or a year, when you've started from scratch, the guys have got to see something. You just can't sit there and flounder and wait for it to happen. You have to see some level of results.

**SMIDT:** You've got to come on with a good sound and a good product and you can start taking commercials immediately. WCOZ was sold out with only six an hour, but sold out in November, and we came on in August. It was local advertising responding to a good immediate sound.

**WINER:** The major factor in a market would be the degree to which AOR radio is in its heyday, and it's really not, because there's not that many people doing it in very many places, and there's a lot of people trying to prostitute the shit out of it, and I kind of resent that. The fact is that a new radio station in a market, particularly one that plays a larger quantity of music, is one that in 1976 most people between the ages of 14 and 25 want to hear, even in Greenville, USA. So the initial impact of a new station in terms of being placed in the middle of that culture, something they've never had, the impact right there would be satisfying all those people. WCOZ in a major market was satisfying the desires of people who had had only one radio station to listen to for seven years, and if for no other reason, they were intelligent, sophisticated people, they wanted to hear what COZ had to offer, because they basically knew WBCN, so just promotion of the existence of a new source for them was sufficient to let them go over there.

**R&R:** But what was the difference between the two stations when you both were there? Clark, we know you've since departed, but you were the

now, is such that we try to establish a record. I won't let a record be played...

**SMIDT:** I think you're correct in saying some of these things...

**WINER:** Well, I'm overstating it, but I'm telling you the cliches.

**SMIDT:** We watched what was happening in the market, and we did go on a lot of records before WBCN, but we played new product in a different consistency, in a different frequency, and the new product was balanced with the old product. It was a combination of how we presented the music and who did it and at what time and with what approach and information that made WCOZ do well.

**R&R:** You brought up a good point, and I want to ask everybody in this room the question, do you think AOR radio allows the record industry to establish most of the criteria that goes into judging "progressiveness"? Do you think AOR reacts too much to the judgments, accusations, and general chitchat of the record industry in regard to how well that station is, in fact, serving its community?

**GARRETT:** Sure, we react to that over the long haul, but I think the audience can tell you instantly. If you go on a record the company is into, you bought it, you played it, then the audience will tell you instantly whether or not you should continue to play it.

**R&R:** How do they tell you instantly?

**GARRETT:** The fact that nothing happens, it turns out to be a zero. You play it, everybody's playing it, it's getting exposure, and nothing happens with it. There's enough new product coming in where you don't have to deal with those nothing-happening records very long before you know you should be on to something else.

**COMPTON:** It doesn't apply, at KDKB we don't get as much pressure from record people to go on certain records to be progressive as to cut back and be more structured in the way we do radio. The main thing we hear is that we don't sound like KLOS or we don't sound like KMET. The main kind of feedback we get from record people is "I hear a lot of things on your station that I don't hear in Los Angeles."

**SIMMONS:** They would like you to have a rotation?

**COMPTON:** They would like to be more familiar with our music. They consider Phoenix a kind of oasis situation. We get pressure from record comp-

anies telling us what they think is progressive, but I don't think we particularly respond to it.

**CRAWFORD:** We're probably about the only AOR station in Tennessee, not just in Nashville. Memphis has none, Knoxville just recently acquired one, and we expose so much more music than anyone else in the entire area that they don't have anybody to compare us to.

**GORMAN:** It's kind of difficult to answer that question, at least for WMMS. I think record companies are still puzzled with how to relate to MMS. We go on a record that is selling, when we add a record, there are sales. If we add something that doesn't go over, they won't get any response, no matter how hard they try to promote the thing. Is the question really how much influence do record companies have on us?

**R&R:** On your attainment of those ideals, philosophies, and the self-image that you all have. You all sit here and talk about your philosophies, you're talking about your goals, about the things other than ratings that you are trying to get, because you are idealistic and faithful to certain roots of AOR radio. Now, in monitoring your success or failure, in reaching those non-rating goals that make you AOR, who do you use to tell you, other than your own opinions, whether you're there or not? The record companies? And if you do, how much of an influence do they have? Example—I just went to New York City and I was talking to record people, and they were talking about the market, and a large number of the record people were putting down WPLJ and praising WNEW-FM because WPLJ is, and I quote, "not that progressive."

**WINER:** But WNEW announcers do all their national spots. One question I would like to ask the group with all these tape recorders on, is to what extent is anyone concerned with the reactions of a promotion person or promotion people generally, to your radio station?

**POLLACK:** Norm, I think we can close out a real good source, because a lot of record people, especially today, know a lot about radio, a lot of them work in radio, and I think we close up a source of getting feedback. I think a lot of times they can say "Maybe you should be playing this record," and it'll make you think, "Well, maybe I have prejudgments," which refers to a column that Mike had in R&R a couple weeks ago about preconceived notions you have about an album, whether it's a Grand Funk album or whatever. I think we can close up a source. We should take into account what they have to say, essentially.

**WINER:** Yeah, but I think hitchhikers are a better source of input and more accurate than promo people, I really do.

**GARRETT:** You can't say that. We're talking about records and we're talking about relativity, now we're talking about good people. I'm talking about people you can respect, they can tell you stuff no hitchhiker will have an inkling of, they can tell you stuff about a record—there are probably stations around the country or areas that you key on... right? Now if they can get you that information, and say, listen—

**WINER:** But will their information be the determining factor? Would you then say, OK, I guess I'll put that record on top of my pile?

**GARRETT:** That's close enough. Will any one thing be the determining factor? What I'm saying is that the record people can feed information to you that local people cannot, and we are dealing with music, we're dealing with recorded music, and they are certainly loyalists, right, they're working for their company.

**WINER:** Who are they devoted to, the record or the audience?

**R&R:** The answer is to pick up record promotion people who are hitchhiking.

**KLEINMAN:** There's different kinds of decisions here that programmers make. I think there are very different kinds of AOR stations, and I certainly like to take as much input as I can, and some of it is from record people, and some of it is from national trades. You have to evaluate each in terms of the source, and your own perception. I'm not saying one is more important than the other, but each is a different kind of decision. Norm, you say, OK to such-and-such an album, and you put it in the studio. The structured AOR Program Director says, "This cut every 15 hours." That's a very different kind of decision, and the guy in the structured thing not only has to make a decision on that particular cut, but possibly thousands of other cuts. It's a different kind of situation and maybe it takes different kinds of input.

**GORMAN:** It's one of the frightening things about one person making arbitrary decisions.

**KLEINMAN:** Wait a minute, at least in my experience, I've never worked in a one-person situation, I've always worked with a committee. At WPLJ in New York, we had a record committee. At Drake/Chennault we have a record committee, and it's a question of getting people to sit on that committee, who are knowledgeable and have a wide variety of different kinds of tastes, as opposed to getting four or five people who are totally compatible.

Continued on page 42

# Burt Stein, Elektra/Asylum Promotion Man:



“One of the things I like most about my job here at Elektra/Asylum is the quality of the product. It’s nice to know that when our new release arrives at a radio station the guys listen because they want to, not because they have to.”

“And the secret is albums from artists like these ... Warren Zevon, Tom Waits, John David Souther, Carly Simon, The Rowans, Linda Ronstadt, Orleans, Sergio Mendes, Chris Hillman, Steve Goodman, Andrew Gold, Richie Furay, Jay Ferguson, Judy Collins, Harry Chapin, Cate Bros., Brigati, Bob Crewe Generation, David Blue.”

“And these should be in your hands shortly...Queen, Joni Mitchell, Eagles, Jackson Browne.”

“What more can I say? The product speaks for itself. But if you want to speak to me you can give me a call. The number’s (213) 655-8280.”

“Just ask for me, Burt Stein. At Elektra/Asylum Records.”



# The Great DEBATE

Continued from page 40

**GORMAN:** Would any of the people sitting on the committee be natives of the city for which they're programming?

**KLEINMAN:** You're talking about two different things. One is, where you were born, another is what your musical perceptions are, another is what your own disciplines are, and the way you consider research. I can speak for Drake/Chennault, for instance, where we have a record committee where we deal with national-type things. This is for all our formats. We have people of different ages, different sexes, different geographical areas, and I think that's very important. You can't hope to program a station, for instance, that women are going to like and totally shut out women from the whole process, as is done at a lot of stations, where a bunch of guys get together and say, "How are we going to get to the 18-34 woman?"

**WINER:** But the problem is you're dealing with generalities.

**GARRETT:** Why can't you do that?

**WINER:** Because you're not an 18-34 woman.

**GARRETT:** Bert, do you have an odd-numbered committee?



Clark Smidt, Broadcast Ideas and Operation

**KLEINMAN:** In our case, it never gets down to a vote. I've never been at a record committee, and again this started when I was at WPLJ, where it got to that. It's not American Bandstand. It's a discussion amongst intelligent people. Sometimes you can spend a half hour, 45 minutes talking about one particular album. You get a question, the George Benson question for example. Fantastic album, do you play it at this radio station or not, of course you do, and then there's other people that will say, of course you don't.

**GARRETT:** What about a record that's got more than one track to it, like Fleetwood Mac, that's got four or five that made it over the course of time? Who makes the decision that you're going to play this song and not the—

**KLEINMAN:** That's what I'm trying to say. In my experience, I have found that it is most productive to use a committee of very informed, intelligent people—

**GARRETT:** And a lot of those are record people—

**KLEINMAN:** No, I'm talking about sitting down at a radio station with its staff, I'm not talking about bringing in all kinds of people from outside.

**GARRETT:** Essentially, well-informed people—

**KLEINMAN:** Well-informed in general. I know what my musical biases are. We all have them, and I think that everybody needs the interaction of other people, but what you have to be able to do, and this is like what you're saying you do with your jocks, is get down with the people and have them sit there and say, "Hey, here we are and we're trying to do this."

**SMIDT:** At WCOZ it took four out of eight people to pass an album, so any four votes could get an album put in the studio. Then how it was played depended on the feedback and the direction we all contributed.

**WINER:** The difference between that and what Bert's talking about is like at WBCN it's a matter of specific people and the specific issues they're talking about. With Clark it's the specific albums people voted for, and specific cuts. But you're

talking about a bunch of people sitting around and making decisions regarding what many people and many different markets will be hearing. How many different markets are you deciding for?

**KLEINMAN:** At Drake/Chennault, with seven formats, we're talking about over 200 markets.

**WINER:** OK, 200 markets, so basically you're dealing with generalities and stereotypes. Now the stereotypes, in terms of radio, are what I would consider insulting to an audience, and are the sort of things that underground radio, what would become progressive or AOR, was set up to depose—

**KLEINMAN:** First of all, I'm not sitting here putting judgment on your relationship with your jocks, whom I don't know. Don't project things on top of a record committee—

**WINER:** No, in terms of programming on a national basis, uniform programming could go into diverse areas, socioeconomic areas, that are of diverse background and composition. You have to make certain generalities and you'll probably miss some and blow some and be simply unfamiliar. Someone sitting at that table, maybe a handful of them, will be unfamiliar with the needs of a certain market, or the preference of a certain market, and the reason why this sort of radio has been successful is because of everyone's familiarity and intense concern for the specific market where they are.

**KLEINMAN:** I don't disagree with you in the slightest, but I think that you see our power as being, in fact, much more than it is, in terms of our relation to the station and our attitudes toward a regional situation. There is a basic core of things, which is a ballpark for a lot of different places. You subtract and you add, but the basic orientation is toward what's happening there. We can't sit in California and know how a radio station in such-and-such can be relevant to Main Street. They need the people at that station, but what we are doing is not the opposite of that. What we are doing is providing them with a core. We're taking what all you people have come up with, looking at some of the more successful ways it's being done. Somebody's saying, "AOR, what do I do, do I hire a bunch of people with long hair?" and we're saying, "OK, here's the center, we'll tell you everything you need to do around that, the community things we're talking about, and what have you. You don't have to do them, but we'll try and stimulate you to do those." So what we're talking about is an example, I don't think it's the opposite of what you're talking about, I just think we're dealing with different situations.

**GORMAN:** On the subject of how we react to record people, I think we have to paint a picture of what a record promoter is. They're the most underestimated people in the business, in the sense that they're the only people that can really go into a radio station and get time on that station for free. It all depends on the promotion person. The person that's coming in from Columbia, he's almost guaranteed something out of his stack of records, they have those artists. The guy from Beserkley has that much less of a chance of getting his record played on all the stations because he doesn't have as big a stable. It goes back to a record promoter's job is to get time on a station, get his product on a station, and the record promoter has to determine which course to take with every station he deals with.

**POLLACK:** But it's not a matter of the structure and it's not a matter of the skill and articulateness of the promo person. It really does come down to the skill his A&R department has, and the skill of the artist and how good the record sounds.

**R&R:** I've been asked this by a lot of record companies who are showing an interest now in gearing their companies, or at least a division, to AOR. They ask me, the ones who have not had any notable degree of success with AOR radio in the past, to what degree does the image of the label affect the reception of the music by AOR radio? How do you all relate to labels, before you hear or know what they have? A box of records comes in from one company and a box of records comes in from another—we're talking about the edge, how do you react and why?

**POLLACK:** One thing that is more fact than impression—first of all, if you take a major label, there's a good chance that that product has a sound. It's easy enough to see that certain companies are geared to a certain sound, and a lot of them are trying to extend themselves, but a lot of it depends on the credibility of the promotion person. The people in your market a lot of times will give you the image of a label, so often the national prominence doesn't make as much of a difference as how that person in your city has treated you, how much credibility he has with you.

**R&R:** What you're saying is the label usually takes on the connotation and the image of the individual in that market promoting the station. Bonnie, how do you feel about it?

**SIMMONS:** I think pretty much the way Jeff thinks, that a lot of things contribute to your image of a record company, and what you think they do. It can be anything from the local promotion people that you deal with to the national people to the producers that they have in-house at that label, to the A&R people who pick the groups that they sign.

"...We're playing the Doors and the Buffalo Springfield, who's that appealing to? Maybe me. But a lot of people think the first Beatles album is their white album."

—Jeff Pollack

The only way I can look at it is that if I am given two albums, both by unknown artists, and I flip them over and see the liner notes, there either aren't any or they don't really give me anything to key off, I don't know the producer, I don't know any of the songs, I might listen to one faster than I might listen to another depending on which label it's on. You have to have something to go by, you've got 400 albums sitting in your office that came that week, and you know you can't listen to them all, so you're going to go through them and pull some out and put them at the front of the pile, hoping that you will at least do the best you can to go through them and pick the material you can use.

**R&R:** How receptive are all of you to new labels that haven't proven track records with your station, in their attempts to try and break that barrier? Do you resist or do you welcome their attempts?

**GORMAN:** Almost every established label does have some kind of character to it. You have the multi-conglomerates, the Columbia/Epics, WEA's, that are gigantic, but you break those labels down to the segments of what they are, you pretty much



John Gorman, WMMS

have an idea of the character of that label. When you get to the smaller companies, like Janus, Beserkley, you pretty much know the character of the label, so I don't think that being on a certain label is an advantage for an act. Mushroom Records is a great example, CBS has had some terrible bombs.

**POLLACK:** But it's also had some stuff that generally speaking had something behind it.

**GORMAN:** Then it goes back to what they have accomplished. CBS has been delivering a lot of good things for years.

**KLEINMAN:** It seems to me that one of the things AOR, as a matter of principle, has to stand for, is that our business is music, and it's the music, regardless of the label or the package or anything like that—

**GARRETT:** All Mike was asking is when do you listen to it and in what priority do you listen to a new album on TK as opposed to CBS, or Mushroom as opposed to All Platinum.

**GORMAN:** I think it goes pretty much for anybody, when the one person in the room is listening to the new stack of records, of course he's going to have favorites first. Maybe a person will do it by label. But still, before you look at a label, chances are you're looking at the album cover, and maybe a person likes TK, maybe Philly International might be their favorite, so they'll listen to that first, but I don't think that overall it has any—Mushroom Records is a label that came out of nowhere.

**POLLACK:** I think it's a whole package of what makes you listen to a record one before the other—who put it out; who produced it, who's on it, what is it—

**GORMAN:** A good Music Director is going to go through everything, and he's going to check back with the company, he's going to be telling them up in front I think you've got something here.

**GARRETT:** In what order and how fast?

**GORMAN:** Well, it depends. I would think a good Music Director would try to listen to everything.

**R&R:** OK, now it's your turn to answer that, Stan. In what order and how fast?

**GARRETT:** There are certain companies, majors, which I listen to right away, but then coming the other way, there are labels, like Mushroom, which I'm very close to since it came out of the Northwest. That's another key, that it came out of where I am. I'll hunt for the little labels, because there are so many records that come off little labels. They may not be long-term, they may not be around in two years, but right now, who knows? I go into left field, if nothing else, for sanity.

**R&R:** You end up judging these labels by their music?

**GARRETT:** Well, as a rule, I like little labels, because I think that's where a lot of stuff comes from. The majors you expect a certain amount of quality, the little ones make it interesting, they make you happy, you've found something! And if you can find it before anyone else you're that much happier.

**R&R:** What about the methods of finding out what your listeners want, not only how to do it, but how to qualify the information you get? Let's talk about research and what it really means. It's a word that's overused, often misunderstood, and definitely overreacted to.

**KLEINMAN:** I think research is basically seeking information for a particular purpose, so the kind of research you do depends on what it is you want to find out, and how you want to use it. I can speak from a more structured standpoint. One of the base things you try and use is an indication of what people express their preferences for, what they're buying. That will of course bring up the counterargument—how do you even know about the record if you don't play it, that's a whole other question, but one aspect of it is to try to determine what people are buying. Obviously another is requests, but I think with the whole research question you have to start by saying, "What do I want to find out, and how do I want to use this?" I had a discussion with somebody today about a really basic question: When people turn on the radio, do they decide whether they're going AM or FM first, or what station they're going to first? Had anybody found the answer? Neither of us knew. I think you need to know what you want to find out. If you're a real Pop AOR station, you want to know what people are buying, what they'll like, but that's not the only thing.

**POLLACK:** I think what's really important is talking to people at 7-11's, on the elevator, the person that cleans up your place with a vacuum cleaner. We do all that in Denver, because we consider it very important. A radio station should go out into the community, and even give out cards and say what do you listen to, you're the one who does the listening, you're not telling us what records you like. You go into a supermarket and say what would you like to hear more on the radio, what station do you listen to, why, what time, and all that—I think it's very important research, because most people aren't in the situation to buy records.

**KLEINMAN:** I agree with you, the record research from what they're buying is not the only aspect of it, but whatever research you do, you have to thoroughly understand what it is you're measuring, and the limitations of what you're getting back. Like the store research, you can't just look at the Top 20 albums. You have to look at what they are, where they come from, and going out and asking people—you can go to the local college and run a thing, we've got a station questionnaire, when people call in...I wanted to talk about the future of AOR radio and what shapes it might take. Something has happened to Jazz on the radio that I hope doesn't happen to the kind of AOR stations that KSN and WBCN are, and that is it's really gotten isolated off into a corner and nobody wants to do it any more. What worries me is—WRIF and structured stations are doing very well, but I ask you people involved in your situations, do you really think over a long period of time that this kind of radio is going to be able to survive? Is that really important, exciting kind of radio going to get pushed aside and smothered because the people get old or the owners get impatient or something?

**WINER:** That's the question of the hour. It is the most asked question that I put to myself, and it's a major philosophical debate, and in terms of myself, quite personally, totally non-professionally, I would—

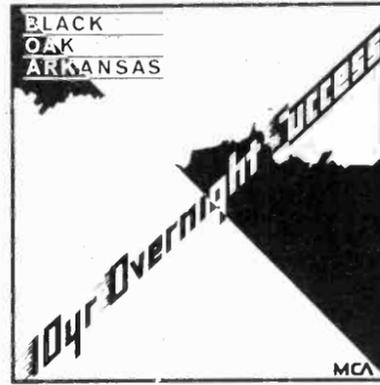
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MCA2-6000



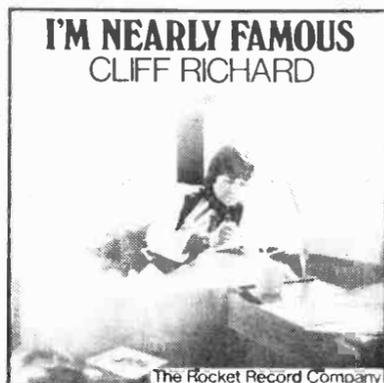
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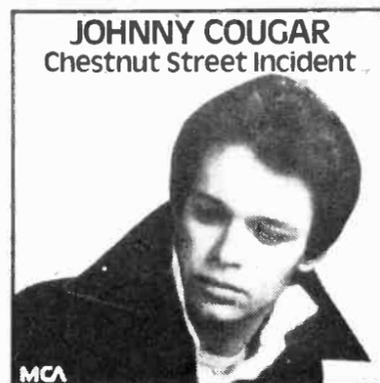
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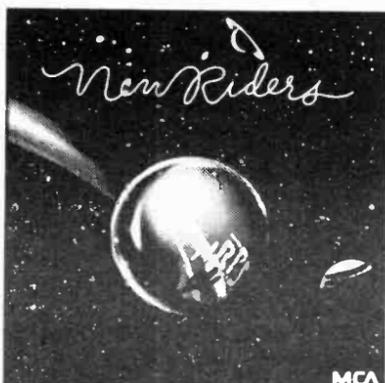
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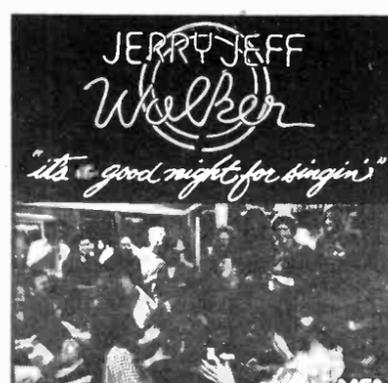
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MCA-2232



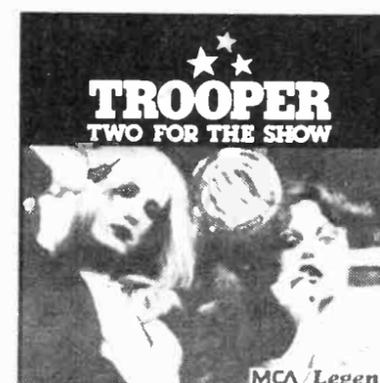
MCA-2217



MCA-2187



MCA-2221



MCA-2214



MCA-2219

# The Great DEBATE

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n't be involved with radio if it takes a much lower position as an art form. I have sold out almost as much as I'm going to sell out. I have compromised, I have done research, I have done all that shit, I have become a Program Director almost to the full extent that I ever had to become a Program Director.

**R&R:** No more format changes at BCN?

**WINER:** No, there are going to be a few more modifications. I'm going to try and structure a few more elements of BCN that I think are out of control, but after that I simply cannot—

**KLEINMAN:** You talk personally to some extent—my thing is radio, radio in general, I'm involved in a lot, from Country to Soul, Beautiful Music, but I can dig where you're coming from.

**WINER:** It wouldn't be worthwhile, I believe, but on



Jack Crawford, WKDA-FM

top of that, I believe a station conceived as WBCN is, as many of the top stations represented by the people sitting in the room are, can survive. Their presence is justified totally on the basis of their uniqueness, the degree to which they are capable of relating to their community, the role they play there, the quality of music they play, the honesty with which they deal with their audience. They're probably the highest form of radio, as far as I'm concerned. And I think people are sophisticated enough now, intelligent enough to realize that they are being dealt with honestly and not in the sort of bullshit stereotypical ways that radio has learned to deal with people, because it's easier to make generalizations than it is to remember that they're human beings, and to give them a couple of records, two new songs a week to hear and a total of 25, because they think they're idiots, and they talk to them that way. I think that there's room for this in every market, that's of great concern to me, given COZ and the modified approach which they use, which I think also makes it easier to listen to them, certainly, than it is to listen to BCN. I think with all the rough edges that I can see, if I can successfully remove them from BCN, I think we'll be around for years, and I think we'll be invaluable in our market, but I wonder, given the manner that I can deal with BCN, whether I can actually do that without subverting it. I wouldn't destroy it, I would give up first.

**KLEINMAN:** The question I had in my mind had to do not with the creative quality of the people involved, but in terms of the structure of the radio business. I think it's a tremendous challenge for the kind of AOR stations you're talking about, at WBCN, to remain, because to me it's like a vanguard, and it's very important that it be there. Now whether it's going to be like a WMMS, a number one station in its market, I don't know, but I do think that there's a responsibility to keep it going.

**SIMMONS:** Do you think it's entirely necessary? I mean, I can't say that about KSN.

**KLEINMAN:** Of course it's necessary.

**SIMMONS:** No, not about it being necessary, about it being number one.

**KLEINMAN:** No, of course not, that's what I'm saying.

**SIMMONS:** I think it depends on your markets, certainly, because KSN is in an unusual competitive situation, or at least has been in the past. There are some people coming in, saying they're going to do something that may change that force, but certainly KSN has been able to be successful. We're not the dominant station in the market, I'm not going to say we're beating KFRC.

**KLEINMAN:** Do you think it's from the inside? Is it a viable, longterm position? I'm not saying it's not.

**SIMMONS:** From the corporation standpoint I think they are quite pleased, and would remain pleased with it. Obviously they want to make money on it, so I don't feel any sense of paranoia from that corner, and I probably feel the same as Norm feels about BCN. We're still having a pretty good time at KSN, along with accomplishing a number of those things that we set out to accomplish. Were that to disappear, we'd become too awkward, too difficult, just not worth it, I wouldn't want to do it. I don't know whether everyone else feels that way on the staff, but I would think most of the people have just about reached the point that they are willing to compromise. Everybody wants to say once in a while, "Well, this isn't anything like it used to be." Well, nothing is the way it used to be, it isn't 1967-68 anymore.

**POLLACK:** That's a really important point.

**SIMMONS:** KSN used to program to the counterculture. Well, that same counterculture is now the culture, and things that had very specific delineations are now all mixed up into one enormous—everything has blended together out there—

**KLEINMAN:** Do you think you have closet KSN listeners?

**SIMMONS:** No, they're right out front. As a matter of fact, those stockbrokers going to work—the station's right down in the financial district—

**R&R:** A lot of those stockbrokers were probably radicals back in 1967.

**SIMMONS:** Even if they weren't, a lot of them were living in Pleasant Hill in the East Bay with two kids and raising a family and they still listen, and everybody at the station has found that out over the last few years, that our audience is not all longhaired welfare recipients, they're not all anything, they're all different kinds of people.

That's why I like to think of us as progressive, trying to be ahead of it a little bit.

**R&R:** I would like Bonnie to answer that. When you see the audience moving away, is it because you're not doing it right, or that they're no longer interested in what is right?

**SIMMONS:** I don't ever want to think my audience isn't interested in what's right.

**GORMAN:** I'd like to add one thing. The audience that a progressive station had several years ago was in one demographic at that time, and it is now in another demographic. Then it reaches the point, which way is that station going to go—are they going to stay with the people their own age, is it going to be 25-34, is that now going to become the most important demographic for AOR stations, or are we going to try and stretch the umbrella and still get the 18-24's and teens. The whole thing is that AOR radio at this point has two audiences, different types, one that wants to hear the Artful Dodgers and the Aerosmiths and all this new stuff out, and the other is saying, remember the good ol' days with the Yardbirds.

**R&R:** Isn't that exactly what happened to the "old-line" MOR stations, the ones that chose to stay with their audiences, as opposed to those that went Top 40 and stayed with youth?

**GORMAN:** Well, I think they went after the most salable demographic.

**WINER:** I think one of the things you're trying to raise here is to what extent do we as programmers put our heads to our stations? One of the first things is we've got to look at the audience. If you're looking at yourself instead of looking at the audience, you don't even know they've moved. You're presupposing by your question that at least you're smart enough not to be hung up in your own

that younger kid is just not going to like what you're doing, or on the other end, you're going to be losing those listeners that have been with you from the beginning.

**GARRETT:** Then you have to make the decision which demographic is the most vital. It's the younger demographic that's vital.

**R&R:** But many AOR programmers look upon the tastes of younger people as not being within their original concept of the format.

**GARRETT:** Because we're all getting older.

**WINER:** Well, I don't care so much about teenagers. I never wind up getting them in vast quantities, and I'd just as soon not, but the fact is, they have a right to AOR music too. But ratings-wise, I will never get a sizable quantity of teenagers. In terms of the age group I would like to direct my station to grab, it is 18-49, and each announcer who comes on knows that we're trying to reach 18-49 and is aware of a number of different variables to consider in programming music. If they can't grasp that, if they are not good at mixing it all up in a special way that will be able to relate to a vast majority of people...

**POLLACK:** I don't understand how you do it. How can you try to go for an audience 18-49; it seems to be impossible.



Jeff Pollack, KBPI

"I still think that the first goal of a radio station has got to be what its license says, to serve the people."

—Bert Kleinman

**SMIDT:** But in terms of the overall future of AOR radio, our stations that are very free-form having their audiences slip or maintain or grow, I think that AOR has a tremendous future because, as in Cleveland's case, this type of radio is number one, clear and away. We are involved in ratings and getting people to buy time on our stations, and you want to make the time more valuable, so it's a process of getting more people to identify with you. It's not so much research, we never had time to do a lot of research in so short a period in Boston, but what we could do was ascertain where people are at, and then if you can give the people what they want, you'll get it right back in the ratings.

**R&R:** May I bring it to a focal point again? What you said, Norm, is very important; what you said before was almost moving. When you are running the station under those self-motivated ideals, and you find in your research that the audience is moving away from you, as they do from time to time—all stations have good books, bad books, all stations have big successes in promotions—sometimes you're probably embarrassed in the response that you get to things. Do you look upon that as the audience moving away from the same thing they were attracted to at one time, or do you blame yourself for not doing the same thing the same way?

**WINER:** Yeah, that's the key, and what Bonnie was saying too, is that the reason why I still hold on to the concept of progressive radio is because I truly believe that at WBCN the only reason we're still around is because we've succeeded in evolving along with them. There are countless radio stations that tightened up in their respective markets that have since crumpled. That is because these stations have become stagnant. They had all these disk jockeys who worked there for six or seven years who refused to listen to new groups, who refused to continue to be as vital within the framework of the culture, musically and otherwise, so that they were the sorts of philosopher kings and queens that could relate in that special way that underground disk jockeys could relate to their audience. So people lost respect for them, realized they were bored, realized they were thinking of all the other things they could be doing—they no longer had the concern for the audience, and the stations crumpled. At BCN I like to think we've changed gradually, and generally before it was necessary to change.

trip, and you're watching where the audience is going, but whatever the indication, the next question is do you try and follow them, which I think is your answer, or do you stay where you are?

**GORMAN:** But AOR radio does not have an average-age listener.

**WINER:** That's when you have to start and do something other than just let it happen, you've got to start to really think about it.

**GARRETT:** We're coming to that point now where we have to cross that bridge which I was talking about. Are we going to emphasize our own age, or are we going to stick with the traditional listener who is about five years younger than us? **GORMAN:** Then again it comes down to your management, too—

**KLEINMAN:** If the jocks come in and can play anything they want, it doesn't matter what you think.

**GARRETT:** That's not exactly true. KEZL is not going to survive unless two or three years from now we can appeal to a 35-year-old person as well as to an 18-year-old person.

**KLEINMAN:** Well, now you're talking about the control over the people on the air, to put them in that direction, aren't you?

**GARRETT:** Does it make you a whole lot more successful to have those kids, because there are so many of them that listen to the radio, and if you're hunting for those 30-year-old people, they're really flaky? They can listen to an MOR station as much as they could listen to a Rock station.

**KLEINMAN:** But we're talking about jock control now, and if you're presupposing to use a Program Director, and sitting there trying to figure out how to angle that station, you're talking about controlling it, and maybe the differences between us are not between control and no control, but between the extent of control.

**SIMMONS:** Does anybody think they could have a staff that works with no control?

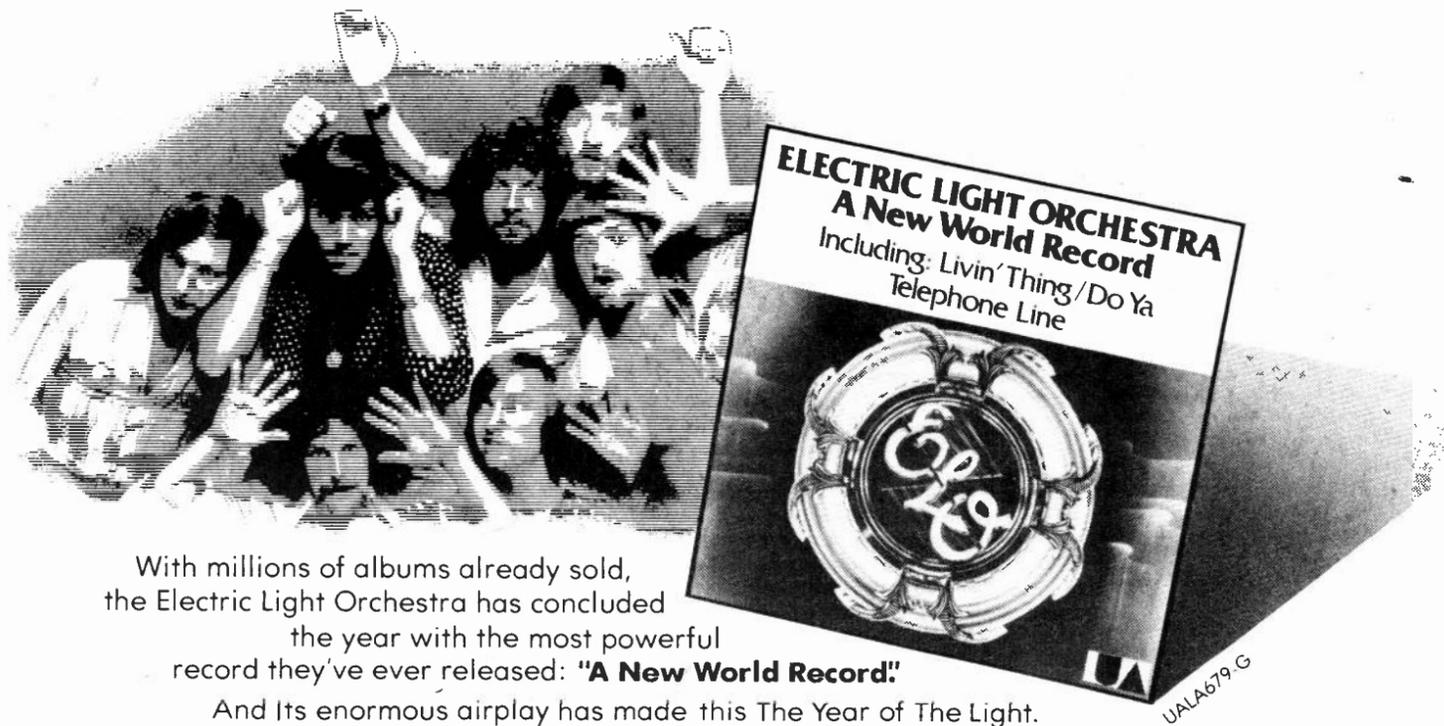
**GORMAN:** I would have to say that part of the reason for WMMS's success is that we have an air staff that ranges from 20 years old to 48, and the fact that it's a personality station, a free-form station, there's a lot of interaction, everybody is turning other people on to different things.

**GARRETT:** You're going to be here 10 years from now.

**GORMAN:** Well, somehow we've managed to stretch that umbrella, but it reaches a point where

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# 1976. The year of the Light.



With millions of albums already sold,  
the Electric Light Orchestra has concluded  
the year with the most powerful  
record they've ever released: **"A New World Record!"**

And Its enormous airplay has made this The Year of The Light.

**Now playing.**  
**The Electric Light Orchestra's**  
**"A New World Record."**

**On United Artists Records and Tapes.**

# The Great DEBATE

Continued from page 44

**GORMAN:** When Goldberg, who's 46 years old, will spend a lot of time talking to Betty Corbin, who's 22, and they'll be turning each other on to new music, somehow there is still that fine thread that's able to connect all forms of music on AOR stations like our own. But how far can you stretch that way? It's going to reach a point where there's going to be a sequel to AOR radio, that will appeal to a whole new market.

**POLLACK:** I guess, but realistically you have to look back and say, "Let's see, we're playing the Doors and the Buffalo Springfield, who's that appealing to?" Maybe me, but a lot of people think the first Beatles album is their white album.

**SIMMONS:** Much worse than that, lots of people think the Jefferson Starship's Red Octopus is their first album.

**GORMAN:** My secretary is 19, she thought Eric Clapton's first album was 416 Ocean Blvd.

**WINER:** If you look at the spectrum of AOR stations, you could break them down in a number of different ways, but one of the ways is to say there are a number of stations who primarily play new music and cram it down their listeners' throats, and there are a number of other radio stations who are a bit more lethargic, who play a lot of old records, Van Morrison, Bonnie Raitt sets, and the old FM standbys. You won't find many of those in major markets, but there are many, many of those, and they're not particularly jarring and they are the MOR stations of the future.

**KLEINMAN:** That's an interesting thing. When I was working in New York, I found WNEW-AM and WNEW-FM were quite similar, not because they played the same kind of music, but because they were both basically personality, the long-list kind of radio. They were both class acts, and the interesting thing, particularly with WNEW-FM, was the longevity of their jocks and the shift of their demographic upwards was very similar to what was going on at the AM, but in a totally other bag.

**CRAWFORD:** If we continue to grow with our audience, are we going to end up like a lot of MOR's are now? There's an MOR in Nashville, WSM, that shows up like third or fourth in total 12-plus. They have absolutely no teens, which you wouldn't expect. 18-49, they don't even show up in the Top 5, so all their audience 12-plus—

**R&R:** Let's take this down to basics, as programmers here, because you can't speak for all AOR radio, you can only speak for yourselves. Are you trying to grow with your audience or are you trying to keep your station basically the same for every group of people that comes through the demographic that was your original target?

**POLLACK:** Even more basically, are we committing ourselves to a cultural idea? It seems to me that what we're talking about is radio formats in terms of cultural ideas, and does that culture exist any more? I think that the gap between people who are closer to the 18 end of the spectrum and 35 is widening every day.

**R&R:** I think you're missing my point, because your point is just reiterating it. Obviously there will be different cultures with different generations. So by staying with a culture, we're staying with the same group of people as they get older. It's the same question. Let's not evade it, because it is a prime consideration of your own goals as you're programming your station. Are you trying to stay within a certain demographic? That is, if you say we're going to be 18-34, we're going to be 18-49, 18-anything, over the years, or do you see it as your radio station evolving with the people, so that eventually it will be 50-75 and you don't care any more about the 19 and 20-year-olds?

**WINER:** I was told last year by the owner of my station that if I work for another 40 years at BCN I'll qualify for the pension program. I can't think that far.

**R&R:** Bonnie, how do you feel about getting teens to listen to KSAN?

**SIMMONS:** Teens! Then we'll have to start running those Clearasil commercials.

**KLEINMAN:** I think this is a really important issue that we haven't keyed in on, because we're sitting here, and here's KSAN and WBCN saying to hell with anybody under the age of 18, if we ever get them, I'm leaving; and here on the other hand are a lot of other programmers who are saying, "Hey, it's really important that we focus in on the teen market."

**SIMMONS:** When we get teen numbers, that's OK. It's the same parallel as when, until 1973 or '74, KSAN never had any women, and nobody, as far as

I know, ever sat down and said, "OK, we've got to have women, so we're going to change this," and made a bunch of changes and thereby lost all the men they had by that time. Nobody ever said that, everybody just kept programming like they were programming. We didn't worry too much about not having women, and they came by themselves.

**KLEINMAN:** I'm not suggesting that KSAN change, but what I am saying is that there is a very different perception of what they're after with a KSAN and a WBCN compared to a lot of formatted AOR stations coming on, where you really target 15-30, and you really want to get teens with AOR, and maybe this is where the major difference is, between the approach you have and a more structured approach, which really wants to get people below the age of 18, wants to reach out beyond the people who are intellectually into the music and wants to reach out to those people who perhaps don't want Top 40, but are not ready for anything quite as heavy as what you're laying on them.

**GORMAN:** I caught an interesting thing on WMMS a couple months ago, where we have three times a week a five-minute student rights program with a woman who's with the ACLU. She basically tells high school and college students their rights. One of her last programs before summer vacation was that they can't tell you you can't wear jeans to school, that you have to get a haircut, you can wear your hair as long as you want, there's no law against that. She was spelling out all these things that are no longer interesting. High school students today are not interested in going in there to try and have the longest hair. In fact, if you go by a high school today, they're the most clean-cut kids you've ever seen. We've gone that full circle. I asked her afterwards, have you been in a high school

time you can try to get it recut, you go ahead and you just fight for that thing. Now, it's kind of hard to tell McDonalds, let us recut your spot, because they have a national ad campaign.

**SIMMONS:** McDonalds is easy.

**GORMAN:** The agency that handles us for them will not let us go near McDonalds.

**SIMMONS:** It's probably just different.

**GORMAN:** But it wasn't the concern over what the product was as much as the way it sounded. But then again, there are products—there was some film called "Snuff" which I don't even want to talk about, except that we just refused it on the grounds of bad taste. You can't say pimple cream is bad, everybody uses it, there is a demographic that uses it—

**KLEINMAN:** Well, I think one of the things coming out here is the so-called AOR audience, those people who enjoy listening to this unusual type of radio, now come in all shapes and sizes and ages, whereas perhaps originally they were more homogeneous culturally then they are now, because there's just so many more people—

**WINER:** They all think that radio is really lousy, you know. Radio really has regressed in the last few years, so has AOR radio, but there's really not much alternative.

**KLEINMAN:** Again, I think there's something to be said for somebody being outside a Boston or San Francisco and playing Aerosmith or Crosby/Nash on the radio, and there's a lot of places in this country where it's not being done. Or where the people are not exposed to the product—with very few exceptions. Top 40 stations that have tried to play albums and have gone away from it have run into problems of one sort or another with their audience. Mike asked the question, is AOR dying or dead? I don't think so at all, but I do think one of the things

**"KZEL is not going to survive unless two or three years from now we can appeal to a 35-year-old person as well as to an 18-year-old person."**

**—Stan Garrett**

lately, I don't see that much denim, that much long hair any more? Here's a new audience. She did not understand—here she is doing a student rights program, which is zeroing in on high schools, and she had lost touch with what was going on.

**R&R:** OK, how do you deal with that? With the control you have, are you trying to key in on these people, talking to them the way they want to be talked to, and if it's different, as you've just said, than the generation you're also talking to, that started with the station, how do you mix the two different cultures together on one radio station?

**GORMAN:** I think that's the answer we have to learn. For the next couple of years that is probably the number one thing we have to learn, because right now there is no solid answer to that question.

**KLEINMAN:** There's no generality that covers it, but there is definitely a way to do it, and we're all here because we've been able to do it.

**R&R:** So far, John, you have a station that is number one, not only number one Rocker or number one AOR, but the number one station in a market that I certainly would think has more diversity than just one culture. How have you done it?

**GORMAN:** It's really hard to explain.

**R&R:** Most AOR programmers are constantly concerned about things being within their "image". Bonnie said before, "If I get teens, I've got to run Clearasil spots." Why doesn't she want to run Clearasil spots? Is it because they don't sound good, is it because the word Clearasil is dirty? Suppose they were done credibly, where someone came on the radio and said, "I'm a doctor, and a lot of people have problems with their skin, they suffer from oils, and they get pimples and don't want them, so here's a medicine that will correct them." There's nothing really insulting about that statement if it were put that way, is there?

**SIMMONS:** Oh, there is.

**R&R:** So there's a certain cultural image that that commercial or product has on the air that's offensive to the culture. How do you deal with it?

**GORMAN:** Somehow we've managed. Clearasil we have to refuse.

**R&R:** Why did you refuse it, because of the sound of the commercial not being compatible, or just the image of it being a pimple cream commercial?

**GORMAN:** No, we have recut pimple cream spots, but we did it in line with the overall sound of the station. That spot as it was just totally destroyed the flow of the station. We've all lost it, because of the agencies that are bringing in the big bucks that pay for all this. But basically a lot of spots just don't go with the flow of the station, and every

thats got to be done, that a lot of people are working on, is getting AOR out. We're going through a tremendous period of expansion, where every day, every week, more and more stations are going AOR. AOR from the standpoint of playing albums, they're playing more than 18 records. Maybe it's not perfect in your sense that the vibes are right, or whatever, but it's happening, there's an explosion going on, and it's almost incredibly symbolic that we're here in San Francisco talking about this whole thing. What's happening? It's going out everywhere, and that's why people read R&R.

**GORMAN:** AOR has gone mass appeal—

**R&R:** Or the masses have turned on to AOR. Do you judge your jocks by the quality of each individual song they play or the moods they create? Is AOR radio just a continuum of one hit after another, or do they have to blend together?

**WINER:** I think people like to hear successions of music; probably that's the most noteworthy sound of our station, no matter how subtle or complex or simplistic we might be, people recognize us because we play a few songs in a row. One of the reasons I'm so concerned with advertising is because if we run too many commercials we can no longer run a good number of songs in succession. If we have to break too many times during the course of an average hour, we will not be able to play more than two songs in a row. Then WBCN would no longer sound like WBCN, we might as well be anybody else.

**GORMAN:** There has to be some kind of flow. If you have competition in the market and you had started into some spots, you know there's a lot of people hitting that button and going to your competition. Comes will tell you that.

**SIMMONS:** How many commercial minutes do you run?

**GORMAN:** Eight.

**SIMMONS:** That's all day-parts?

**GORMAN:** That's all the time. Eight commercial minutes an hour.

**SIMMONS:** How many units can that be, 11?

**GORMAN:** It can be 11, sometimes even more than that.

**SIMMONS:** So you don't have a limit. As Program Director you can't say, "No, I'm not going over eight minutes, get those spots out of here?"

**GORMAN:** Eight minutes is the maximum.

**SIMMONS:** Do you have a unit limit?

**GORMAN:** We send it into a computer, we finally computerized our traffic, but the computer has one problem where somehow it listens to the salesmen

and nobody else, so occasionally we do get over-sold.

**R&R:** Do you have a limit, Bonnie?

**SIMMONS:** It's eight minutes except double A, and then it's nine minutes if we have to. 11 units is the most amount for your nine minutes, it's 10 when we're running eight minutes.

**POLLACK:** What are the hours that are double A?

**SIMMONS:** Double A is 3-midnight Monday through Friday, and then it's a little different.

**KLEINMAN:** I'd rather not talk about commercial problems. The question that Mike asked was in respect to what is a good show, how do we put music together, what is a good set, does a set exist—

**R&R:** Are you doing sets or sweeps?

**KLEINMAN:** I can speak for some of the formatted approaches. Obviously you don't want to put together records that are going to be extremely jarring to your audience, so first you do everything you can to eliminate all the negatives. Beyond that you come to the question of priorities. Do I try and establish a musical or vocal theme in a series of music, do I have one song relate directly to another, or do I program from the standpoint of variety based on the fact that people are not going to like all the music? For instance, I deal with the question, in terms of age groups, by making sure I never play two Buffalo Springfields or things of that vintage in a row, and make sure that I always have certain kinds of records separated by a certain amount of time. In a formatted approach, one does that. One eliminates the negatives of segues, but one does not necessarily look to the segue as being a major program.

**SIMMONS:** Would you define the negatives—what are the negatives of records and who determines them?

**KLEINMAN:** I'm talking about the jock's position with records. For instance, playing Joni Mitchell's "California" followed by "Black Dog"—

**SIMMONS:** What else would be a negative besides something so obvious?

**KLEINMAN:** What I'm saying is, number one, eliminating things which are disturbing to the audience.

**R&R:** How do we know that they are? How do we know that anything is disturbing to the audience in terms of musical continuity from one to the other, other than the quality of each tune?

**POLLACK:** Do people hear segues, do they even know what a set is?

**GORMAN:** They have an idea, but you take others, you get phone calls and those listeners tell you in their own way, they won't call it a segue or a set, but they're telling you what they like and don't like. But the thing I was getting at was the whole concept of a long sweep, you'll hold the audience longer. But the one thing I did is I said, if perchance there's a slow season and you have time where you can go half an hour straight without playing a spot, don't just play segues, somehow find a way to get call letters on, whether somebody was in the station cutting an ID that you can play as an intro to a song in addition to a segue or whatever. If you even have to break between two pieces of music, the important thing is getting those call letters out, because we had a case where a station came into our market hyping itself playing continuous music, two, three hours a night of continuous music, and the fact was they were providing one thing to the audience but they were taking away another, and the station turned out to have no identity whatsoever. So even if they listened to that station, half the time they didn't know what station they were listening to, and at the same point I think our kind of radio, AOR radio, is not limited to just music, but it's also the personality—we're offering more than just continuous music.

**R&R:** So where do you draw the line between offering more than continuous music and breaking up the music too much?

**GORMAN:** I never like to see more than ten minutes go by on the station—let me say 15 minutes—the call letters should at least be given out.

**SIMMONS:** I don't have any specific instructions to the announcers like that. Each one of them is quite different from another. Each one is on a different time of day and their shows vary from day to day, and I just get a feel for it, and I think they do, that they're either not promoting each other, or not promoting the station enough, and then they will start doing it again. But there are times when there might be 25 minutes of music. During the day and early evening, I wouldn't think that would happen very often, because we're basically running four breaks an hour and they have to do it, and there's no way to combine breaks because there's too many in one cluster to do that. Generally, most of us feel that going from music to a spot is a little harsh, and we will back-announce or talk in between before punching to a spot.

**CRAWFORD:** We have so many commercials, we run 11½ minutes an hour, 17 units, which is probably more than anybody else here.

**SIMMONS:** 17 units, is that 17 or is that plus promos, PSA's, news, and stuff like that?

**CRAWFORD:** That's plus news, plus PSA's, plus weather, 17 commercial units.

# The Great DEBATE

**R&R:** Do you get overwhelming or even minor critical response from your audience saying, "Hey, you're not supposed to play that many commercials"?

**CRAWFAORD:** We get quite a few negatives, because we're running as many commercials as the Top 40's in town.

**SIMMONS:** You're running more than the Top 40's here.

**POLLACK:** How is your station doing?

**CRAWFORD:** We are fifth in the market, number one 12-plus at night, again we're sold out at night with 1 1/2 minutes and 17 units.



Bill Compton, KDKB

**COMPTON:** We do three breaks an hour in Phoenix and we mention the call letters every time we go onto a break. We only have eight minutes per hour and we have 12 units that we deal with as far as commercials are concerned, and that doesn't include PSA's and promos.

**GARRETT:** We have eight minutes and 10 units.

**R&R:** About how long a sweep do you think is optimum, and how short do you think is minimum?

**GARRETT:** A strong announcer can do anything he or she wants. I don't care if they break it after every song or after 20 minutes, or if they go through 40 minutes of music and not play a commercial, and then we don't run more than three in a row. There's just no formula.

**R&R:** I'd like everybody to comment on this, because it seems everybody has a different feeling. Listening to your radio station, how long do you think is the longest it should go without a break, without saying the name of the station?

**POLLACK:** Well, an interesting thing is, I was riding around with a friend who's in a band, and I thought this guy, if anybody, would like to hear 30-minute sweeps. But after three songs he was impatient—there were seven songs and he wanted to know what the fourth one was. I think that people really like to know. Sometimes it's nice to have variety. People are counting on you always doing 15 minutes of music. It's nice to break up once in a while, maybe you'll go over, give them a longer set, but I think over 20, 25 minutes certainly is a long time for somebody to listen, especially if they want to know what the titles were.

**GORMAN:** I'm taking it one step further and saying we're commercial radio stations and we depend on dollars, we live and die by the ARB, and the fact is, you want people to be aware. If somebody's listening to your station, you want them to know it, and if you go for an extended period of time without giving those call letters, that person has no idea who he's listening to. You have to look at successful formatted stations. The one thing every station does is give the call letters going into the song and coming out of the song. Before you even know what the song is, you know what station it's on. I think that's really important, and the problem with a lot of AOR stations is there's a long sweep and sometimes somebody will forget to give the call letters. Since we're operating in that free-form mold or non-mold, the thing I have to tell everybody on the air is get those call letters out as often as possible in your own style. They don't have to go in with an exaggerated W-M-M-S. I think a lot of AOR stations have thrown numbers away by that neglect, by being a little too free and sometimes forgetting to give the call letters. Going a couple breaks with the guy on the air forgetting to give his name and little things like that can add up to a whole lot.

**SMIDT:** We need to take into account how our radio stations are listened to. While some people can sit down and take us in on one and two hour pops, there are a lot of people who are buzzing around and may hear a little piece here, a little piece there. Sure, there are people who turn on the radio and have it going all day, but there's that other portion of the

audience, too, and we have to relate to them consuming our stations in shorter spans, and not demand they take 45 minutes to sit down and understand what we happen to be into at that particular moment. I would consider essentially two records in a row minimum and probably three an optimum. That's without any talk at all. The talk in between the end of the third and maybe another three might just be back-announcing.

**GORMAN:** Did you ever notice—I have a feeling it's true in all radio stations—the most requested tunes are all over six minutes?

**KLEINMAN:** Do you people do something to your studios to make them more conducive to creativity? This is something I think is important from the standpoint of people who have to work within a context, one of the things that characterizes an AOR station, of all things, is converting the studio into not a studio, but a room that people work in that just happens to have equipment in it.

**GORMAN:** We have a Linda Ronstadt poster on one wall and a Hall & Oates on the other.

**KLEINMAN:** Is that all, seriously?

**GORMAN:** That's not all—

**KLEINMAN:** Do you think it's the environment? **R&R:** Is that the secret of your success? I can see 100 stations running out now and putting Linda Ronstadt posters on their walls.

**GORMAN:** At the end of the year, WMMS is moving from antiquated facilities, these old funky closet-size studios—if you saw the FM studio, you can't even fit a john in there, they're cramped. Our owners are building a new multimillion dollar facility. They say we're going to have a studio that's three times the size of the one we have now, and I'm saying that within the first three weeks of the station, no matter how clean, how shiny those walls

**"There are stations that come on with 21-hit playlists and end up being a hit, but we came on with a playlist of 21,000 and it worked."**  
—Clark Smidt

are, no matter how nice it looks, that place will be plastered by everybody's personalities. Somebody will hang this poster up, somebody will put that sign up, and I think the environment is kind of important. I'm talking about a free-form AOR station, I don't think any of us work in those antiseptic white walls.

**R&R:** Does WBCN have an antiseptic environment?

**WINER:** We're on the 50th story, the top floor of the Prudential building now, but—and this relates to working conditions—we've been talking about the role each individual announcer plays, in terms of

the degree of freedom they're being handed by us to program the radio station. There have been a number of stations I've worked in or know about whose studios are social centers at night, in the daytime, whenever. I am crazy about this, I am adamant about distractions being kept to a minimum. There are zillions of things these people have to be thinking about. There's not somebody making the decisions for them and handing them a music list, so I don't want them on the telephone, I don't want them having guests in the studio, I don't want them being talked to by promo men or another disk jockey or their girlfriend or boyfriend on the phone. They have to be doing nothing but a radio show, because they've got too much to deal with to do anything else but that during the time they're in there. And they can't smoke dope in our studio, either—it's not very homelike in that respect.

**GORMAN:** We've been doing it for a couple years now, and it works. We give out the phone number of the station once an hour and everybody is asked to work at their own speed to pick up those phones.

**R&R:** We've been at this for hours now and everybody seems pretty beat. I'm going to wrap it up with one more question. How do you feel about sharing information with other stations?

**SIMMONS:** What kind of information?

**R&R:** Trade reports, other people calling you up on the phone asking you for advice.

**WINER:** Same market or other markets?

**R&R:** Same markets or other markets, people utilizing information about your station for their own purposes.

**WINER:** It really varies with who it is, and I'm very objective about it, I might be much too idealistic about this, but I really feel, for one thing, that

## Conversation With Lee Abrams

Continued from page 18

when the music stops, is just as much a part of the music as everything else. The ideal jock for one of the stations I work with would be someone who can take all those mechanics and all those pre-written-out lines and everything else and make them sound totally spontaneous. I'd like all the stations to sound totally free-form, everybody saying the right thing at the right time and playing the right records. I don't think a lot of the jocks who work with us realize their importance in projecting that magic, that warmth. A lot of them, again, get over-mechanized, they get into the routine of things and forget that they can really deliver that Led Zeppelin promo with finesse and charisma, just by making it sound spontaneous. The real personalities are the guys who can take the mechanics and make them sound like they came off the tops of their heads.

**R&R:** Do you find around the country that there are still problems on the part of General Managers and Sales Departments in properly conveying the image of AOR radio to the agencies and local sponsors?

**ABRAMS:** Definitely. I think a lot of the problem right now is that the whole AOR radio stem really isn't that well defined because you've got so many types of stations. I think it will probably take time to iron itself out. Eventually, I'm sure there's going to be a sort of standardization in sound and I think when that happens that's when the management will start understanding it better.

**R&R:** Do you get involved beyond just the programming?

**ABRAMS:** Absolutely. I would say programming, promotion, the overall vibe the station puts out. Again, the Program Director is the guy who turns the wheels, but we act as—one way of looking at it might be that we're like the coach of a football team, and if the Program Director is a good Program Director, it's like having O.J. Simpson on your club. He's the one who runs, but we put together the plays. The same thing with the Managers—we advise them deeply in a lot of other areas, especially promotion, and again, a lot of times if the Manager is very good, that promotion will come off better.

**R&R:** You mentioned before that you were planning on expanding the company. Do you have any people in mind you could tip us off to, announce here who will be joining you?

**ABRAMS:** Not right offhand, because we're still in the planning stages. Whoever it is will be somebody already working with us right now, because we might as well get somebody who has experienced the whole thing firsthand. We're just looking around, probably for somebody to help out in the automation area, and somebody to help out in the coordination of all our stations. Right now, we're getting pretty large with the live stations, and we sometimes feel we're not as effective as we could be in coordinating music research material. Getting another body in here to help in that respect, I think we could be more effective than we are.

**R&R:** How many people do you have working in the company?

**ABRAMS:** We've got myself, Kent, Mike Scott, Diane who helps in our office, Pat Burkhart, who also helps out a great deal, and we have a few other people, including 14 or 15 research kids in var-

ious colleges around the country to help out, sort of stringers, although they are not directly on our payroll, they work with us. In our Atlanta office, five.

**R&R:** One more question. What is your policy with record people?

**ABRAMS:** Quite frankly, I am on the road so often, or tied up here in Atlanta, to such a degree that I really don't have time to meet with as many of them as I'd like. So the relationships are an on-and-off thing. But generally, we would rather have the Program Directors of the individual stations preview most of the music, because they can do it effectively and we have a group consensus-type system. Let me explain how certain records have happened with us. Take the Heart record—it started in Seattle. Lee Michaels, our Program Director there, said, "Hey, this record is probably going to real big," and he watched it very closely in Seattle for a few weeks and then spread it through the other stations by talking to the Program Directors. In this case, all the hype in the world from promotion men in Atlanta regarding Heart wouldn't have helped. It was Lee Michaels who was really into it there, who really made the record.

own in terms of demographics, there's not room for both of us in the city. My intention toward COZ is to do them in. I do not think there's room, in all seriousness, for WBCN and WCOZ to survive. I see WCOZ as subverting many of the issues and values that WBCN exposed to the audience. I don't feel hostile to Clark personally, but the fact that COZ is—

**SMIDT:** I was programming it up until five weeks ago, so I guess there has to be some sort of a thing. Well, that's passed, but the point is that competition is healthy, and I think there are different forms of AOR radio that can happen so everybody can have a piece of the pie, and our piece got bigger because we were doing something different, and there's no reason why BCN can't take it back.

**GORMAN:** I'm interested in sharing all ideas with stations in other markets who have philosophies similar to my own, a collective, you know. I'm not going to help my competition, and I'm not going to help anybody that sounds like my competition, that has the same goals and structures as my competition.

**SIMMONS:** We get along quite well with the other radio stations, and it is pretty close here and we do socialize together quite a bit, talk about our radio stations, I talk to Michael Spears quite often on a number of things, and Dave Sholin. Dave and I will talk records once in a while, every couple of weeks, just for a sense of what each person has heard. We'll just use it however we want to use it. In regard to having people come in and do a similar kind of thing as KSAN up against us in this market, it has not happened. Those who have attempted it have not worked out very well. I am faced now with a couple of stations that may come after us, and I'd like to think it might be nice to have somebody come because it's difficult for us. We're sort of punching at nothing a lot of the time, because there isn't anyone directly to compete with here. I can't say to the staff, "OK, let's get KFRC," we're not the same as they are, we can't go after them. Maybe my attitude will change if somebody comes in and just wipes us out.

**GORMAN:** I'm more than willing to help the guy at the smaller stations, they don't have a heck of a lot of money to work with or anything. They're honest I like their approach to AOR radio in their market, and I'll help them out.

**POLLACK:** One of the most valid research things is what other AOR programmers think, and if you cut yourself off from that, I think you're cutting yourself off from a very valid level of learning. It's the only way you can look at it on a week-to-week basis, you look at the product, they look at the product, and you get some kind of feel of where other people's heads are at.

**GORMAN:** I wonder how many AOR stations really take a serious look at other AOR station reports, especially if they say that this one particular album is real hot in their market and you haven't added it yet. I look at everybody's. I find gems sometimes.

**ABRAMS:** Quite frankly, I am on the road so often, or tied up here in Atlanta, to such a degree that I really don't have time to meet with as many of them as I'd like. So the relationships are an on-and-off thing. But generally, we would rather have the Program Directors of the individual stations preview most of the music, because they can do it effectively and we have a group consensus-type system. Let me explain how certain records have happened with us. Take the Heart record—it started in Seattle. Lee Michaels, our Program Director there, said, "Hey, this record is probably going to real big," and he watched it very closely in Seattle for a few weeks and then spread it through the other stations by talking to the Program Directors. In this case, all the hype in the world from promotion men in Atlanta regarding Heart wouldn't have helped. It was Lee Michaels who was really into it there, who really made the record.

Each week we keep very close musical contacts with the stations, the Program and Music Directors, and these are the guys who really do the scouting for the records. I coordinate everything in Atlanta and keep track of everybody. It's the best possible system, because we've got all this input and research coming from all corners of the country and Hawaii, and it makes a lot of difference. It's much better than having 20 guys talk to me every week. Because I have so much going on, I probably wouldn't be able to retain it. My advice to the promotion people is to keep me informed with what's going on, but work pretty much with the guys locally at the stations.

# PRESENTING THE WINNERS



*Mike Pilot, Associate Director, Album Promotion, Columbia Records*

This is the winning team that helped make these great albums Platinum and Gold in 1976.

They're young, bright, aggressive and fully knowledgeable about AOR radio's special needs. You can count on them, because at CBS Records, they are the guys who carry the music to you.



*Michael Shavelson, Manager, Album Promotion, Epic/CBS Associated Labels*



*Paul Rappaport, Album Promotion Manager, Western Region, Columbia Records*



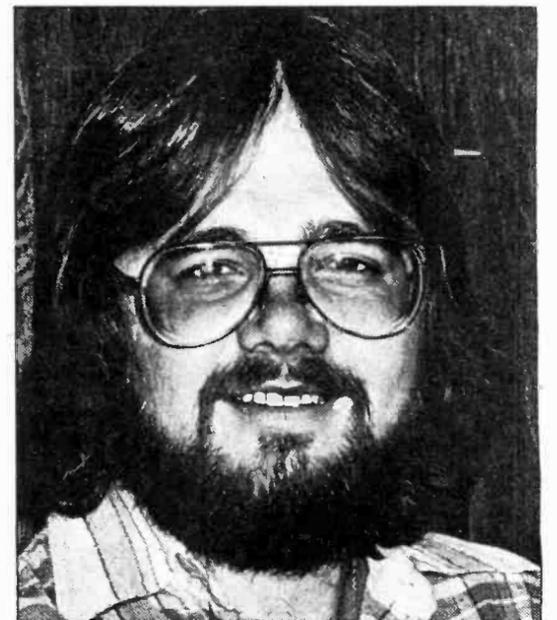
*Harvey Leeds, Album Promotion Manager, Northeast Region, Epic/CBS Associated Labels*



*Gil Colquitt, Album Promotion Manager, Northeast Region, Columbia Records*

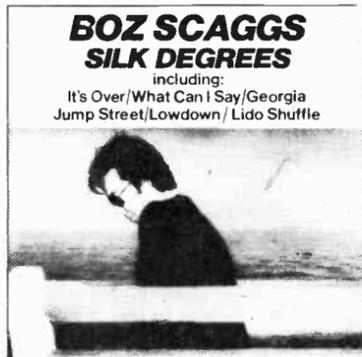


*Dave Remidi, Album Promotion Manager, Chicago, Columbia/Epic/CBS Associated Labels*

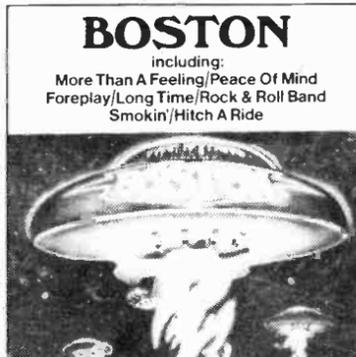


*Jim McKeon, Album Promotion Manager, Western Region, Epic/CBS Associated Labels*

# OF THE GREAT DEBATE...



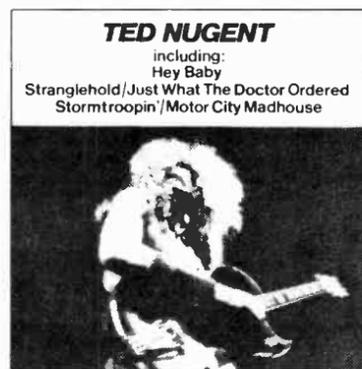
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PC 34165



PE 33692



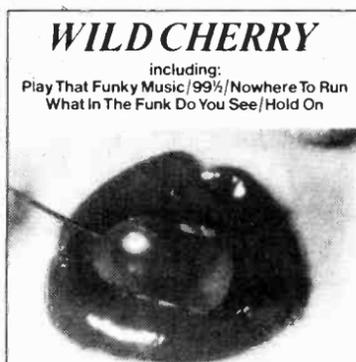
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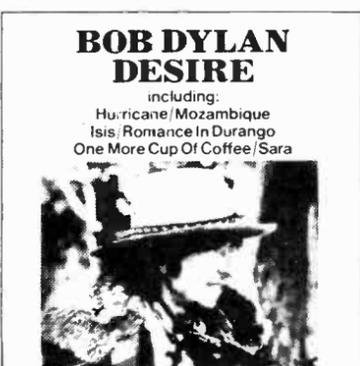
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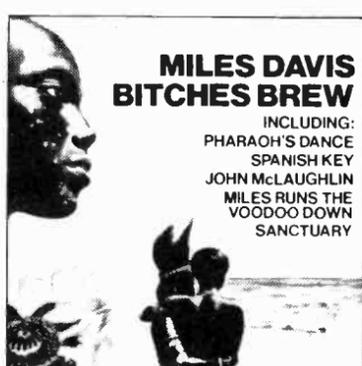
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PC 33893



PG 26



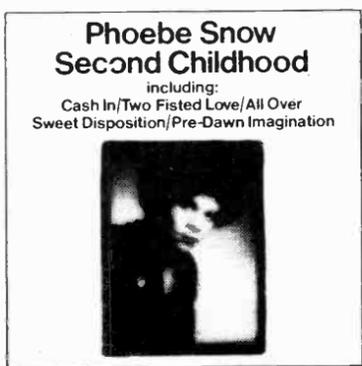
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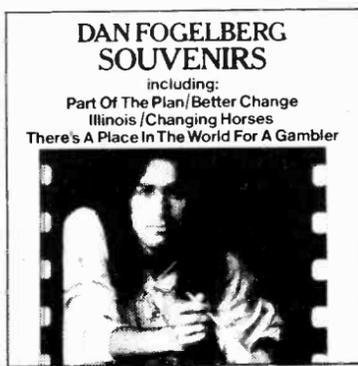
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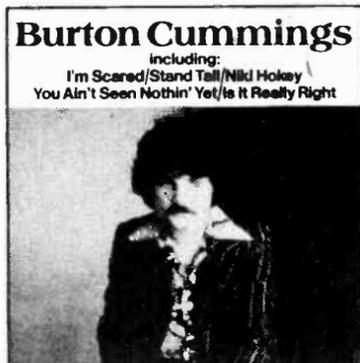


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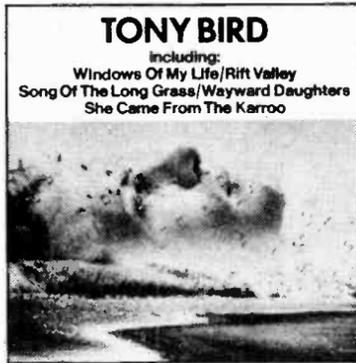


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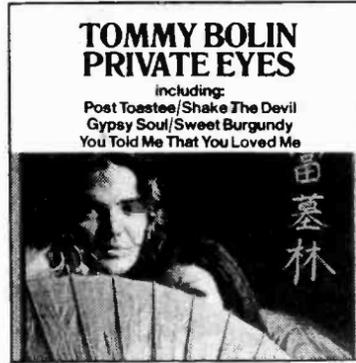
# INTRODUCING THE NEW



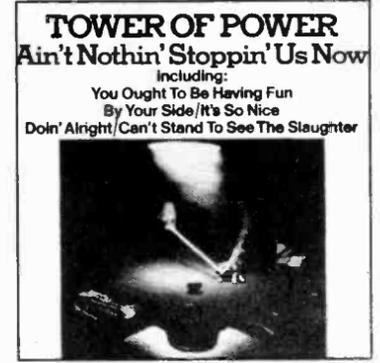
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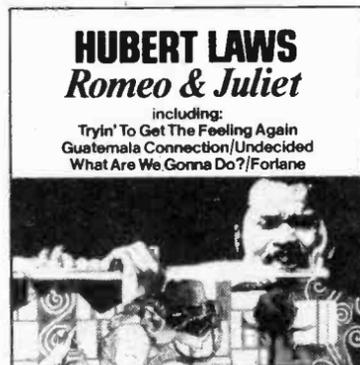
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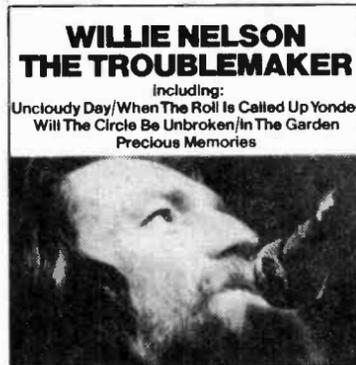
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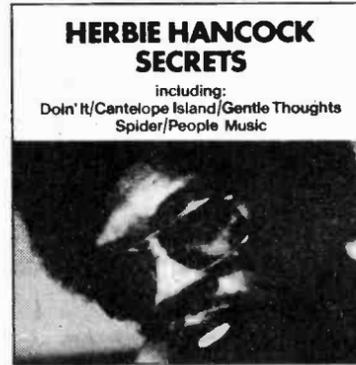
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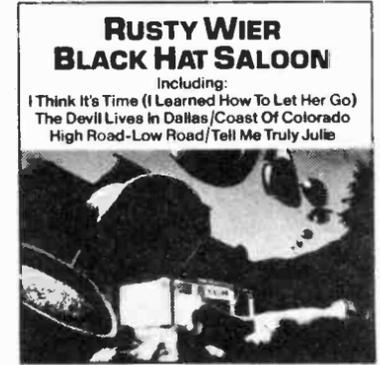
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KC 34112



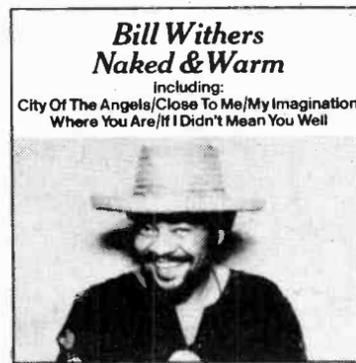
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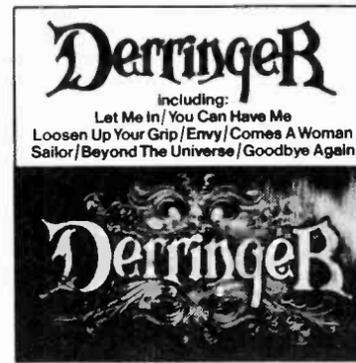
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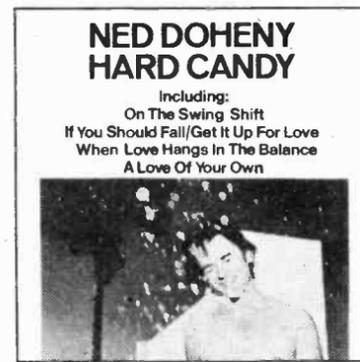
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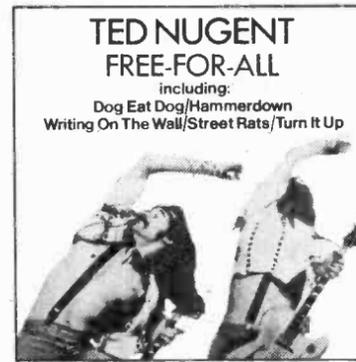
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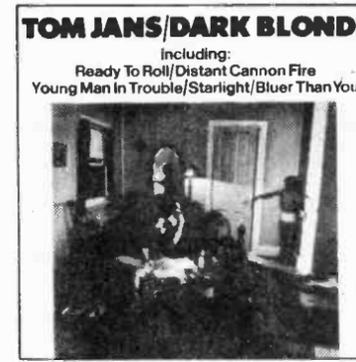
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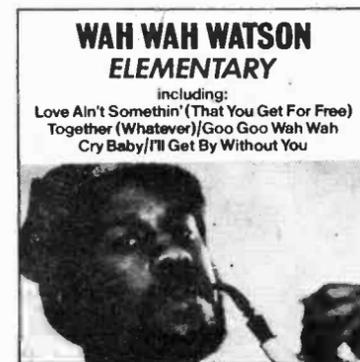
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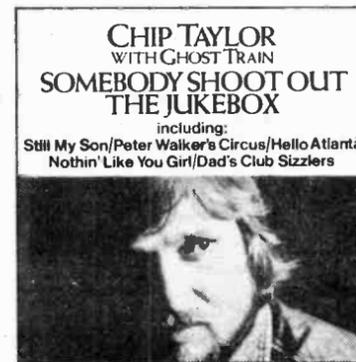
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PZ 34224



PC 34328



PC 34345



PC 34387



PC 34376

# CANDIDATES.

**SPARKS  
BIG BEAT**  
including:  
I Like Girls / White Women  
I Bought The Mississippi River  
Everybody's Stupid  
Throw Her Away (And Get A New One)



PC 34359

2-Record Set Specialty Priced  
**DAVE MASON  
CERTIFIED LIVE**  
including:  
Feelin' Alright / All Along The Watchtower  
Only You Know And I Know  
Bring It On Home To Me  
Gimme Some Lovin'



PG 34174

**REX**  
including:  
Stay With Me / Feeling Better / Trouble  
Call Her "Easy" / Ten Seconds Of Love



PC 34399

**MILES DAVIS  
WATER BABIES**  
including:  
Capricorn / Sweet Pea / Two Faced  
Dual Mr. Tillman Anthony / Water Babies



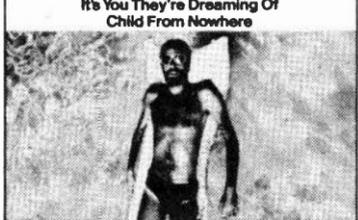
PC 34396

**SLY & THE FAMILY STONE**  
*Heard Ya Missed Me, Well I'm Back*  
including:  
Family Again / Blessing In Disguise / Sexy Situation  
- Nothing Less Than Happiness / Everything In You



PE 34348

**Jimmie Spheeris  
Ports Of The Heart**  
including:  
It's All In The Game / Sweet Separation  
I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry  
It's You They're Dreaming Of  
Child From Nowhere



PE 34276

*L. A. Express*  
**Shadow Play**  
including:  
Dance The Night Away / Nordic Winds  
Double Your Pleasure / Shadow Play / Velvet Lady



PZ 34355

**Michael Murphey  
Flowing Free Forever**  
including:  
Cherokee Fiddle  
High Country Caravan (aka Song For Stephen Stills)  
Our Lady Of Santa Fe / Yellow House  
See How All The Horses Come Dancing



PE 34220

**RUPERT HOLMES  
SINGLES**  
including:  
Weekend Lover / Who, What, When, Where, Why  
Aw Shucks / The Last Of The Romantics  
Singles



PE 34288

**KINKY  
FRIEDMAN  
LASSO FROM EL PASO**  
including:  
The Ballad Of Ira Hayes / Men's Room, L.A.  
Lady Yesterday / Bold American / Dear Abbie



PE 34304

**THE  
Charlie Daniels  
BAND  
HIGH LONESOME**  
including:  
Billy The Kid / Carolina  
Right Now Tennessee Blues / Roll Mississippi  
Turned My Head Around / Running With The Crowd



PE 34377

**Alphonso Johnson  
Yesterday's Dreams**  
including:  
Love's The Way I Feel 'Bout Cha  
Flight To Hampstead Heath  
Show Us The Way / As Little As You



PE 34364

Each of these albums is an important new release. In the coming months, they're sure to take their place among the most popular music of the day — surpassing even the astronomical sales levels that we've maintained throughout the first three quarters of 1976. After all, there's no debate about who turns new albums into lasting favorites faster than anybody else.

The CBS Records Family of Labels.  
Columbia, Epic, Portrait, Full Moon/Epic,  
T-Neck, Caribou, Blue Sky, Kirshner  
and Columbia/Lone Star Records and Tapes.

## An Interview With Larry Berger

# WPLJ and the New York Market

Larry Berger has been Program Director of WPLJ, the ABC-FM O&O in New York, since October 1974. During this period, the station has achieved its peak ratings since its inception as an AOR station, after having tried many different AOR styles over the years. Berger began his radio career back at WCTC, New Brunswick, in 1964. From there he went to WWRL, New York, in 1966, where he served as Music Director. He then became Program Director of WALL, Middletown, in 1968; Program Director of WRIF, Detroit, in 1973; and then on to WPLJ.



**R&R:** What do you think was the deciding factor after years of competing in the New York market that turned WPLJ around and finally gave it rating success?

**BERGER:** Coming up with the right formula and having the determination to stay with it for a period of time. The old story of consistency. I'm certain that somewhere during the years of experimentation and failure at WPLJ for at least a week we sounded exactly the way we do now, but for whatever reason it was passed by.

**R&R:** Do you see an overall change in the audience expectation of AOR radio in the last year or two?

**BERGER:** Absolutely. Most AOR stations are baffled by all the teens they're picking up.

**R&R:** When you say "baffled," is that a negative reaction?

**BERGER:** When they are trying to position themselves 18-34 but are ending up 15-25.

**R&R:** Why does that happen?

**BERGER:** The tastes of teens are changing. The people who like bubblegum music are probably more like eight years old and/or grandmothers, and the people who are getting into hard rock, BTO, Aerosmith, are now 14, 15, 16 years old.

**R&R:** Do you think it's possible the whole structure of AOR radio will change; because of fragmentation you'll have stations limiting themselves to particular sounds within the musical spectrum, as opposed to the old days where one station would play everything from Joni Mitchell to Led Zeppelin?

**BERGER:** I hope not. I think what you're getting at is the new soft-rock format...it does seem that way, but that's even becoming fragmented and then sub-fragmented beyond...it's a struggle to decide what you want to do.

**R&R:** What is WPLJ's target audience?

**BERGER:** Nominally, it's 15-30. We're deficient in the over-25, so we're working on that. We only have been a successful radio station here for a year and a half and most of our audience is between 15 and 26, but we're working on developing it so it's a little broader. Surprisingly enough, we don't do anything that is traditionally the type of thing that radio stations do to attract teenagers. But my theory is, even though I have no way of substantiating this, that teenagers listen to WPLJ because they're growing up. They're at the point where they're going into an identity situation and they find enough familiar music on WPLJ to be comfortable with it. On the other hand it has a more adult sound to it than a Top 40 station, so I don't think it has anything to do with the music so much as with what PLJ means to a 15-year-old, what listening to us says about him.

**R&R:** What do you think it means to a 15-year-old?

**BERGER:** It means he's growing up. He says that he's growing to his friends, by getting into PLJ as opposed to 99X or WABC.

**R&R:** So you think WPLJ has a somewhat hip social image to the very young people?

**BERGER:** From the point of view of a 15-year-old.

**R&R:** What about the 26-year-old? What is his reason for listening beyond just liking the music in terms of image?

**BERGER:** It's primarily a musical thing at that point. We have a lot of songs they remember from when they were younger. We strive for a good balance in our music. It's like our demographics are very much like a Top 40 station, an FM Top 40 station.

**R&R:** Are there any barriers left for WPLJ to overcome in communicating what it's doing to the advertising agencies at this point?

**BERGER:** Well, there's always a slight lag between rating success and advertising success, but we're catching up fast. Our average rates have been up considerably, and many times we're sold out 24 hours a day, the overnight as well. It's partially an advertising answer but it's also a marketing answer. A lot of people probably still have a bad taste in their mouths about PLJ from the early 70's because I think the biggest thing wrong with the station...we were just doing too many different things and our listeners never knew exactly what to expect of us. Particularly older listeners who are less likely to be tuning around the dial, as op-

posed to teenagers, who are always cruising. There may still be some confusion about PLJ, what it's all about, although we've been utterly and disgustingly consistent since the fall of 1974.

**R&R:** How do you describe the station professionally?

**BERGER:** It's probably at the more conservative end of the AOR spectrum. We're positioned between Top 40 and the more progressive AOR's, maybe a little bit leaning in the direction of the Top 40 in terms of conception. The music is progressive, but the conception is more audience-oriented, research-oriented.

**R&R:** Are you saying that many progressives or AOR's which consider themselves progressive are not as audience-oriented as they think, because they don't do research?

**BERGER:** I would say exactly that. Especially in a

say, "I don't need WPLJ. By the time they go on it, it's already on the way down." Doing sales research as extensively as you do, you know whether or not you are playing a role in selling records, and you can sometimes ratio that to the amount of play you'll give a record that's being scrutinized. Does WPLJ sell records to any significant degree?

**BERGER:** It unquestionably does. As a matter of fact to such an extent that in a lot of cases the feedback we get from stores is a regurgitation of what we're actually programming on the air. Rarely does an album achieve any significant sales in this market without us already being on it. The only exception would be disco albums, which seem to be self-propelled, and from R&B stations.

**R&R:** Which way do you see the disco movement heading in New York, because it really started there?

**"It's mass-appeal AOR that's having a tremendous effect on Top 40 because it's exposing artists and music."**

market like New York City, where it's extremely difficult for any one individual to be so in tune with the marketplace that he can by selecting from his personal taste reach a mass audience through radio. It's impossible. You can get really fooled in New York City because everything sells out here. Record promo people come in here and they tell me, "So-and-so sold out four nights at the Bottom Line." Well, how many people are in the Bottom Line? Well, maybe 400 people, and New York has a population of 13 million. That's nothing.

**R&R:** You're dealing with this huge universe where obviously even a cult could be large. What do you look for in your search for indicators to tell you whether or not a particular record is right for WPLJ?

**BERGER:** We're primarily oriented towards record sales as opposed to airplay or disk jockey acceptance, because that's the only way I can really feel comfortable in getting some kind of real reading on what listeners want as opposed to what I want or a disk jockey wants. It has to be dealt with on a broad base because there are so many people involved.

**R&R:** Now you're talking about New York City sales research. Do you look at the sales patterns of records in other markets that are similar to New York?

**BERGER:** We look at the sales pattern on a national basis as an indicator to what will be or should be happening in New York City, but there have been a lot of cases where we've seen albums hit the Top 10 nationally and never got off the ground in New York. I don't know why that is.

**R&R:** How do you see New York being different from the rest of the country?

**BERGER:** New York is probably more conservative and slower to accept newer artists and newer material than the average market, far more conservative than Los Angeles or the West Coast in general. Most record promoters will tell you that New York is generally the last place where new artists gain acceptance.

**R&R:** Do you think that's because there's something about the consumers in New York that makes it that way, or do you think that maybe the industry has suspected that for so long that they've imposed this pattern upon the people?

**BERGER:** I really don't know why that is, but I suspect it has something to do with the inertia of the city...it's so big that it's very difficult to get anything moving. It's hard to get across town.

**R&R:** There's some controversy as to whether or not WPLJ sells records. A lot of record people say, "Get it on PLJ and it brings it home." Others

**BERGER:** Every time I think it's over with it seems to get back together again. I really don't know, but we've learned to coexist with it, and we found through analyzing raw ARB data in Beltsville that our listeners—surprisingly, almost none of them listen to disco or R&B stations in conjunction with WPLJ.

**R&R:** What do they listen to?

**BERGER:** Almost everything else but that. We share the greatest amount of our audience with WABC. Then, in descending order, it would be WXLO, WCBS-FM, WPIX, WNEW-FM, and WNBC. That was done some time ago.

**R&R:** Do you think they listen to those stations as an alternative to PLJ or do they listen to PLJ as an alternative to those stations?

**BERGER:** That's a difficult question. Because PLJ is the type of station positioned as we are, we're like the blind man touching the elephant. It depends on what you're looking for and what part you touch. It can have different meanings to you. Somebody coming from a progressive MOR station going to PLJ is probably looking for certain elements of our programming and sees PLJ as an alternative to his other progressive stations. Somebody coming from a Top 40 station is looking for other elements of our station and sees us as an alternative to the Top 40 station, so we're in kind of an enviable position—we're comfortable to a lot of people.

**R&R:** What are the biggest criticisms and what are the biggest positives you get from the audience in regard to their feelings about WPLJ?

**BERGER:** Number one criticism: Too much disco music, although we play almost no disco music. That dazzles me sometimes, but sometimes people perceive of Earth, Wind & Fire or even "You Should Be Dancing" by the Bee Gees as disco, and that's interesting, because it ties in with our small shared audience with R&B stations. The second criticism is a standard—too many commercials. Everybody gets that.

Some of the positive letters we get are from people who write to us as if we're their friends. Some guy wrote telling us how he was building his boat and listening to this station, switched around from station to station listening to them all... "I must admit I am now devoted to PLJ. It's the best because it plays all different kinds of music. I'm in the 11th grade and most of the crowd is tuning to your station. Why don't you play more Black Sabbath?" Here's somebody. "I've been listening to PLJ for four years now and I've loved every minute of it. You've played all the top songs and there was no need to rush out and spend a fortune on the albums." Maybe we don't sell al-



bums. We have our Top 90 albums that we gave away, and we asked people to write in their names and addresses. This many people saw fit to write rather lengthy letters to the station. I love it. A lot of people like the disk jockeys. That's something you hear a lot about, particularly a couple of them.

**R&R:** What is the role of the disk jockey at WPLJ?

**BERGER:** Somebody I have a lot of respect for in the industry once told me (and when he reads this he'll know who he is) that the only thing a disk jockey does is to make you feel good, and if he doesn't, then he's not doing his job. It's a human element in what is basically pieces of plastic. I do encourage the jock to talk. There's probably more talk on this station than on some of our other stations. I know that the jocks here talk more than KLOS.

**R&R:** What do they talk about?

**BERGER:** About music, what's going on in New York. I encourage them to do that a lot. Mostly things that are pretty directly related to what they're doing.

**R&R:** How much input does the jock give to the actual music selections at WPLJ? Do they have any choices among categories? Is there one category which they have a larger choice in than others, or is it all totally pre-programmed for them?

**BERGER:** They program their shows as they go along. There are certain restrictions about rotation, so they don't play the same song four days in a row, but basically they are allowed to select from categories, and as long as they include given amounts of each ingredient into their show, I know it can be done rather thoughtfully. Some of our disk jockeys get off amazing segues.

**R&R:** Are the disc jockeys basically satisfied with that?

**BERGER:** I think they are. I think several of them—one of them in particular who had done nothing but free-form radio prior to coming here—get off on being able to do good musical sets and segues and things like that within the structure. It's kind of a challenge. It's like doing a crossword puzzle... You can hear Carol Miller do a segue from a "Fly Like An Eagle" by Steve Miller to "Welcome To The Machine" by Pink Floyd.

**R&R:** What's it like being Program Director of WPLJ in the same building with the home office of the entire ABC-FM group?

**BERGER:** Surprisingly enough, it's not a problem. I was geared up for a lot more bumping into people than has actually happened, and part of that is due to the spirit that was in effect at the time I got here. It was "we're going to do it." That goes back to my boss Bill Lockridge, who I worked for in Detroit and who is General Manager of PLJ. He was the guy who really decided we're going to bite the bullet, and we're going to do it. We've had a lot of cooperation from people in the corporation, and virtually no "corporate interference."

**R&R:** Are there any advantages to being so close?

**BERGER:** Oh, absolutely. Because I can call upon the art department or the legal department for advice, or broadcast operations on engineering, although we have a very good local engineering staff.

If I want to audition a videotape, there's a screening room on the 26th floor, and I just go up there and do it.

**R&R:** Is there any personal competition between the ABC-FM O's?

**BERGER:** I don't really think so. If there is, it's not destructive in any way. There are reports published in the company which are tracking reports which show the success or failure of each station, and you feel kind of crummy if your cume dropped in half...but all the stations at this point are doing things quite different from one another—especially the four AOR stations are quite distinct. We share information. They all know what I'm playing and I know what they're playing, but there are some pretty wide differences. They're tailored to the market. Maybe that was something we found out along the way, that each market is quite different, and you can't do Detroit in Los Angeles or Los Angeles in New York. Each of them has distinct things that are necessary to win in that market.

**R&R:** What is the role of the Program Director at WPLJ?

**BERGER:** Well, I'm responsible basically, in conjunction with a couple other people, for musical selection. I'm responsible for dealing with the disk jockeys with weekly meetings. Each jock has a

"...We're like the blind man touching the elephant. It depends on what you're looking for and what part you touch."

weekly meeting and some of them I see separately of course. We go over skimmer tapes of their work during the past week, and at this point, since the station is pretty well together, it's a matter of my being here to keep everything glued down.

**R&R:** What's the job of the Music Director at WPLJ?

**BERGER:** The Music Director here does all the research. She sees the record promotion people. She shares equally in the selection of music, with me, and she auditions new record albums, sometimes even before I get to them. She checks the music logs or sheets on a daily basis to make sure everybody is doing what they're supposed to be doing.

**R&R:** How would her favorable or negative reaction affect the station's policy of adding a record, considering, as you mentioned, that the station is very sales-oriented in its research for criteria?

**BERGER:** Well, her reaction would come in two areas. The first one would be when a record is in a grey area where we could add it or wait a week or two, and if she thought it was particularly good or if it was the type of sound we were looking for, that might get the record on.

**R&R:** So WPLJ is concerned with the sound as well as numbers?

**BERGER:** Absolutely. The other thing where her input is extremely valuable is when new albums come out or when an album is at a point where we know we're going to go on it pretty soon. She'll listen to it, I'll listen to it, and we have an internal coding for what we think are the best cuts, and then we'll compare notes on it.

**R&R:** Is that how you decide which cuts to play?

**BERGER:** That, plus what the other ABC-FM stations are doing, plus, frankly, your consensus cuts on the R&R list. Walrus, sometimes, as far as cut information goes. Of course that's the most subjective area of any AOR station, to decide what cuts to play. I mean, who knows?

**R&R:** You said she sees record promo people. Do you?

**BERGER:** Yes, some of them.

**R&R:** What is your policy towards seeing record promoters, and dealing with record companies, at

WPLJ?

**BERGER:** It's very open, compared to some other stations. We don't have one day where everybody comes up. All day Monday she's tied up, and on Tuesday we do our music, so those two days generally it's difficult to see anybody, but any other time people come in here, wander in, and they're seen.

**R&R:** For record promoters to service you, what do you expect?

**BERGER:** The primary thing I'm looking for is an understanding of what the station's all about, and what the criteria are for adding records. There's a lot of frustration among certain record promoters due solely to a lack of understanding of what we're doing and why we're doing it.

**R&R:** Are you open to explain this to them?

**BERGER:** Absolutely, and we've been consistent since the fall of 1974. By now it's incomprehensible that anybody wouldn't understand what we're doing.

**R&R:** But you still find that many don't...

**BERGER:** I've even heard things to the effect that we have to get approval from some great god in the sky to play records, and that's not true. We select them right here.

**R&R:** To what do you attribute this large-scale misunderstanding?

**BERGER:** Possibly due to their perception of PLJ

as just another progressive radio station, which we're not.

**R&R:** Perhaps record people in general have this misunderstanding of what any progressive radio station is today...

**BERGER:** I'm sure of that. I've even asked certain record companies to put us on their Top 40 lists, because if we're on their Top 40 lists that's where we're going to be playing records early. If we're on their progressive list, we're going to be playing very late. But that's consistent with our policy of being between the Top 40 and a progressive station.

**R&R:** Do you see Top 40 changing in its musical selections?

**BERGER:** In the last six months there's certainly been a greater percentage of album-oriented songs on the top of the charts. Now I've seen that come and go before so I wouldn't say that's the wave of the future. It's been very obvious that there's more album-oriented music at the top of the pop charts. That's great for us, because every time a Top 40 station plays "Show Me The Way," it's an advertisement for PLJ.

**R&R:** What effect do you think AOR radio is having on Top 40?

**BERGER:** It's mass appeal AOR that's having a tremendous effect on Top 40 because it's exposing artists and music.

**R&R:** And do you see non-mass appeal AOR having an influence on mass appeal AOR?

**BERGER:** Sure, I would never deny that.

**R&R:** Which station do you think actually plays more of a variety of music, WPLJ or WNEW?

**BERGER:** I would say that PLJ does. There's only 24 hours in a day, you can only play one record at a time, and if they add 25 new albums to their list, something's got to go. Either they're not playing them, which is one possibility, or they're bumping out what they added the day before. People come up here and tell me that it's on all the more progressive AOR stations. My answer to that is, "We'll see tomorrow." PLJ is good from a record company standpoint because they know they're going to get consistent saturation airplay and that is what we know really moves the records in volume.

**R&R:** How many categories are there really in terms of volume of airplay on WPLJ?

**BERGER:** Well, record companies will really be concerned only with current product, and many of our categories are old product...

**R&R:** I'm talking about the current.

**BERGER:** On PLJ there are only two. There is one with a lot of play and one with a real lot of play.

**R&R:** Ones with a lot of play, are they usually the new records that have just been put on, and ones with a real lot of play the ones that have proven themselves?

**BERGER:** Something like that.

**R&R:** Do you think that if you took the average AOR station, progressive or semi-progressive, that this would be true even though they may not realize it?

**BERGER:** Progressive stations generally tend to do that. They have a very heavy saturation on a record in its initial couple days, and then it gets relegated to the back of the box. When a new Wings album or Dylan album comes, it's everywhere for a couple days on the progressive stations, and then it really tapers off.

**R&R:** A lot of record people don't understand that, when they try to approach AOR airplay the same way they do Top 40.

**BERGER:** They don't want to understand that. Their perception is either it's on or it's not on, which means on a progressive station that it's in the studio, which sometimes bears no relationship to airplay.

**R&R:** What do you see in store for the New York radio market in the immediate future?

**BERGER:** I hear rumors but I'd sooner not perpetuate those.

**R&R:** I don't mean details of station activity, I'm talking more about trends and station popularity.

**BERGER:** I really can't predict accurately. I thought I would be able to say what PLJ is going to be doing in the future. We're called upon in the company to make audience projections upon which business plans are made for 1977, and I know in the summer you have to do it for the next summer, and I know what I projected for '77 for PLJ and I'd sooner not reveal that. But I've been frankly surprised in other markets the kind of numbers and the kind of dominance that AOR stations have come in with. For example, the summer ARB ranked us 6th in the market. Number one came among all FM stations, which means we reach more listeners than any other FM in the country. But in the summer ARB in Detroit, for example, WRIF was the No. 2 station in the market with a 6.7 share, and I nearly fell over when they did that—they beat CKLW.

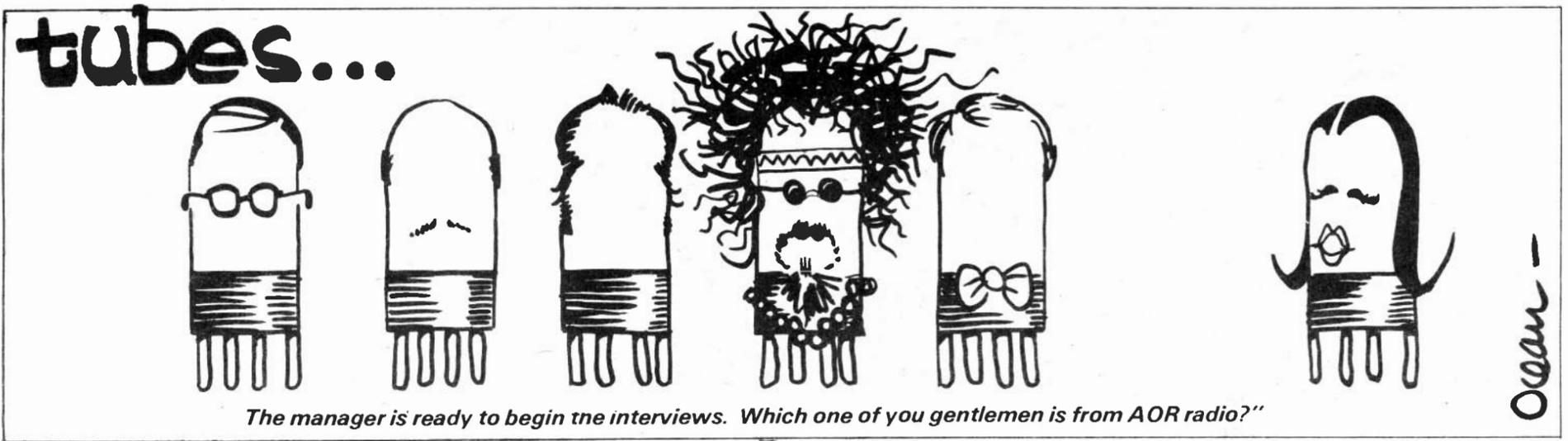
The only station they're behind is the Public Affairs, Talk, WJR...and honestly, I couldn't, when I was at WRIF, have anticipated that kind of potential for the format.

**R&R:** What type of relationship on a programming level do you share with WABC?

**BERGER:** I have a very good relationship with WABC and part of that is due to the personalities I'm very close to, Rick Sklar and Glenn Morgan. Rick was one of the people most influential in my getting to work for the American Broadcasting Company in the first place, so he and I get along very well. Amazingly, as PLJ has gone up, WABC has not gone down, and that's done a lot to seal the relationship because they don't feel we're winning at their expense. We share research information and we compare notes on certain things. Both our studios are on the same floor and engineers will shuttle back and forth from one station to the other. We share everything.

**R&R:** So the stations do not operate as if they were in competition with each other...

**BERGER:** They do, but on a healthy basis. It would be stupid of me to say that we're not in competition with WABC but that doesn't mean that I don't want them to be successful and they don't want me to be successful.



# THE SELLING OF AOR RADIO

By Walt Tiburski

The battle to spread and build AOR radio is waged on many fronts, above and beyond "getting listeners" and entertaining them. There is, of course, the development of a healthy financial base and community image. The following double feature was written by Walt Tiburski, Sales Manager of WMMS/Cleveland, and Dan Garfinkel, the station's Promotional Manager. Each approaches his particular area of expertise as practiced at one of the nation's leading and most celebrated AOR radio stations.

The field of AOR sales is nothing new to Walt

Tiburski. At the age of 29, he has been at it for the past seven years, the last four at WMMS. A graduate of Kent State University, Tiburski's outside interests include flying (he has a Beechcraft Bonanza), skeet shooting, and scuba diving.

Dan Garfinkel graduated from Brandeis University with a degree in English and American Literature. Since that time, he has worked in promotion, advertising, and publicity in books, theatre, film and radio. He has published articles in a number of magazines. Garfinkel's hobbies are sleeping and collecting exotic bathtubs.

While selling AOR radio has its parallels with selling any type of radio, there are many additional considerations. AOR radio, despite its high rankings in many markets, is still subject to many biases, usually because the advertiser/client is unfamiliar with the format. This makes it easy for the media buyer at an ad agency or the direct client to "buy around" an AOR station, and to buy the type of station he listens to and understands. AOR stations still miss out on some buys because their salesperson hasn't communicated his station's story totally to the media buyer or advertiser.

It is important to relate everything we can to the advertiser. Make them feel comfortable and familiar with your AOR radio station. Show them that the listener is not very much different from the listeners of other radio stations. But show them that your AOR station, by virtue of its demographics, has that all-important 18-34 impressionable buyer. That person who has money to spend and is spending it! Encourage them to get their share of those young adult dollars they're currently missing by not advertising on your station. After all, the 18-34 age group now constitutes the single largest population group in the U.S. today, thanks to World War II's "baby boom."

The AOR salesperson must go a step beyond ratings and demographics. He or she must relate the most important factor of the AOR listener—the lifestyle (otherwise known to research fanatics as psychographics). This increasing trend to look beyond the raw numbers is one of the healthiest things ever to happen to AOR radio. It's a probe into how people live, what they enjoy, what they consume, and countless other aspects. It supplements the AOR salesperson's pitch with statistical research on the 18-34 bracket's lifestyle, and helps

one relate that information to the advertiser. This new area of research is the AOR salesperson's single greatest tool, besides himself.

I have always felt that the AOR salesperson had to be a go-between, an intermediary, a missionary, and an interpreter. The AOR salesperson should be someone who can see both sides of the coin, and take the time to understand both.

When I first started selling AOR radio, I of course loved it and totally believed in it. This enthusiasm has continued and grown, and I feel it should be a prerequisite for any AOR salesperson. But one must be careful not to be so absorbed in the lifestyle and culture that one becomes immersed in it. One will then lose his objectivity and ability to relate it to someone who doesn't share his beliefs.

The best AOR salesperson is someone who can believe in the station's lifestyle, yet be able to relate it to the person who isn't familiar with it at all. The greatest setbacks in AOR sales happened when blue-jeaned, scruffy, long-haired folks went out and tried to tell advertisers that their stations were the ones to buy. These stations have probably since folded. The stations that have done well are the ones whose salespeople understood our business society's "hangups" on dress codes and appearance and compromised enough to meet them, while still presenting the station as a unique and exciting medium. They made the buyer at ease and took the time to "spoonfeed" them if necessary in order to get them to see its value.

The image of the AOR salesperson today is that of a professional who understands the media and presents himself with authority and confidence. The good AOR salesperson takes the time to learn about the advertiser's problems and finds a solution for them through the AOR station. Once this happens,



"The Sound Of Sales"—by Tiburski & Garfinkel

the results speak for themselves.

And that's another selling point of AOR radio—results!!! The AOR salesperson can be proud of his product because it works. We at WMMS get report after report from our advertisers telling us how well the station has worked for them. Besides the elated calls, we usually get a renewal order as proof that AOR advertisers get results!

These results have created a healthy growth in our base of advertisers. Obviously, because of our open playlist, the record companies enthusiastically (and wisely) spend a great deal of money on WMMS.

But while the record industry, concerts, movies, and other forms of entertainment form the core of our advertising, other businesses have found the station a powerful result-getter. The large department stores, car dealers, clothing chain stores, and many others have quickly joined the growing list of WMMS clients. It's a sign of the times and certainly a good one. It indicates that some AOR salespeople have done an effective job communicating the value of their station to the advertising community. It's a major breakthrough for AOR radio, but it presents a host of new considerations.

As AOR radio has become more accepted and the old underground format has surfaced, AOR salespeople must concern themselves with new challenges. As a fully recognized competitor with all other types of station formats, AOR radio now demands an even greater degree of sales professionalism and effort. The AOR format has come a long way, and it's only beginning to show how successful it really is.

The recent success of AOR radio has caused many changes internally as well. The salespeople are faced with the unusual situation of getting that big order they worked so hard to land, only to have the

tape turned down by the Program Director because it sounds like an ad for "Let's Make A Deal" with a ridiculous jingle. Then starts that extra dimension of sales ability, when the laborious process of getting the ad recut begins. Sometimes the agency cooperates and demonstrates interest in our constructive criticism, and recuts. And sometimes the less professional agencies refuse to recut, and cancel the schedule unless the station runs the spot as is. We sometimes grudgingly accept the bad spot and we also refuse it if it's particularly awful. May I add that record companies are notorious for producing bad commercials for otherwise excellent records? I find it repulsive to hear a spot for a hip new band done with such cliched copy as "hard-driving," "heavy," "super-tight," "killer," and other such trite descriptive adjectives. I find it particularly annoying to hear the gravel voice of some old studio announcer doing an awful radio ad for a great new group, only to recognize that voice as the same one I'd heard on TV doing an ad for Sears refrigerators and appliances! That guy wouldn't know a good album and how to sell one if it bit him in the ass!

But it's typical of the garbage all radio stations get from those supposed bastions of creativity known as L.A. and New York, and it's not limited to any agency or product. When will agencies wake up? You don't advertise exclusively white products in *Ebony*, nor do you see Afro-Sheen ads in the *Country and Hunt Club News*. Then why can't agencies produce compatible spots for AOR radio?

Internally, there is the intense competition between account executives for the limited avals. WMMS runs sold out at eight minutes an hour, 18 hours a day, for six weeks ahead as a rule. With the holiday retail season approaching, we'll be sold out completely for the rest of the year by Halloween. Except for a few normal changes and cancellations, you can't buy any time. Advertisers don't like this either, so a good AOR salesperson gets orders in early, and again, explains to the client.

In this article I could only touch but a few of the many points of selling AOR radio in a professional manner. I would need volumes to relate the many facets, but I can summarize the key points here.

1) Develop a thorough knowledge and sincere enthusiasm for your AOR station. This excitement is contagious.

2) Back up your enthusiasm with facts. Ratings books, psychographics, success stories, and any support materials you can muster up.

3) Be a diplomat, a missionary for AOR radio. Get out to those straight advertisers and push for them to recognize the validity of your format in the marketplace.

4) Plan ahead, use your time wisely and constructively, as you've got a bigger job to do than do your Top 40 brethren.

5) Teach your clients how to use your AOR station to their greatest advantage. The results they get will bring you reorders.

6) Do client promotions like crazy! But be sure they are well thought out, valid promotions that will excite the audience as well as get exposure for the client.

7) Follow through, make sure the client is kept informed and advised of his advertising.

8) Get the money! Collect the dollars the client owes you. Ultimately he will respect you more for asking for the money than if you don't. If you don't, you're working for nothing!

AOR salespeople have an exciting and very difficult job to do. Yet as WMMS has proven, it can be done, if you believe in it and handle yourself in a professional manner, you as an AOR salesperson can reap the many rewards AOR radio has to offer.

## PROMOTING AOR RADIO

By Dan Garfinkel

Radio station promotion people have a peculiar problem—they can't justify what they do by dollars earned. ARB doesn't rate promotions; there are no sales reports that include a balance for it. But there's no doubt about the value of promotion in the minds of broadcasters.

Promotion at WMMS is actually a bit more. It's publicity, press relations, advertising, promotion, and public relations all rolled into one job. Each of these areas provides opportunities to "sell" WMMS to our audience. What we do is not so different from other stations or other businesses, for that matter; how we do it is another story.

A few basic principles are in order first. Some of these are as old as the hills, but most of them are neglected by radio promotion people regularly.

1) Honesty. Looks silly sitting in the middle of an article on promotion, doesn't it? But if you do not operate honestly with the press and public, they will simply stop believing—the worst thing that can happen to a promotion person. When writing press releases, don't give a full page to a story that only warrants a paragraph. Don't make things up. The leverage a little self-control will give you when you do have a story worthy of big coverage will astound you. By now, you've had enough records touted as "the next big thing" to be skeptical—press people are, too.

2) Simplicity. When I use the expression "simple" in talking about radio promotion, I don't mean "stupid." Perhaps "accessible" would be a better term. In any case, when writing a story about your station for the papers, write it so the newspaper people can use it with the least amount

of work. Don't misspell, don't write your own headlines, don't type in all caps. Face it, even the *New York Times* picks up sentences and phrases from press releases. In terms of promotion, don't complicate matters. Contests are designed for listeners to participate—save your cleverness for prizes, the promo spot, or anything but entry requirements.

3) Style. This area is perhaps the most difficult to define. It's image, outlook, and lifestyle all rolled into one. It means being consistent with your air sound in your promotion and publicity style. It means arriving at a print look that is an accurate representation of what you are on the air.

What has all this got to do with selling WMMS to our audience? Promotion reinforces the positive impressions created by the air sound. It reestablishes the ideas already represented in the minds of the listeners by what they hear on the air. So that a station like WMMS doesn't cheat the audience—by promising things they don't deliver, by leading them to think that they mean one thing when they're saying something else. The trust and confidence of your audience is not easy to get, but it's very easy to throw away. One bogus promotion can undo the hundreds of hours of work put in by your programming staff.

When putting together a promotion at WMMS, the following questions are asked:

1) Is it good for the listener? Will the audience be able to make use of the prize? Will they enjoy the promotion, whether they directly participate or not?

2) Is it good for the client? Does it present the client's product in an atmosphere that is appropriate? Does it "sell" the product?

3) Is it good for the station? Is the promotion consistent with the style with which we are associated in the minds of our listeners?

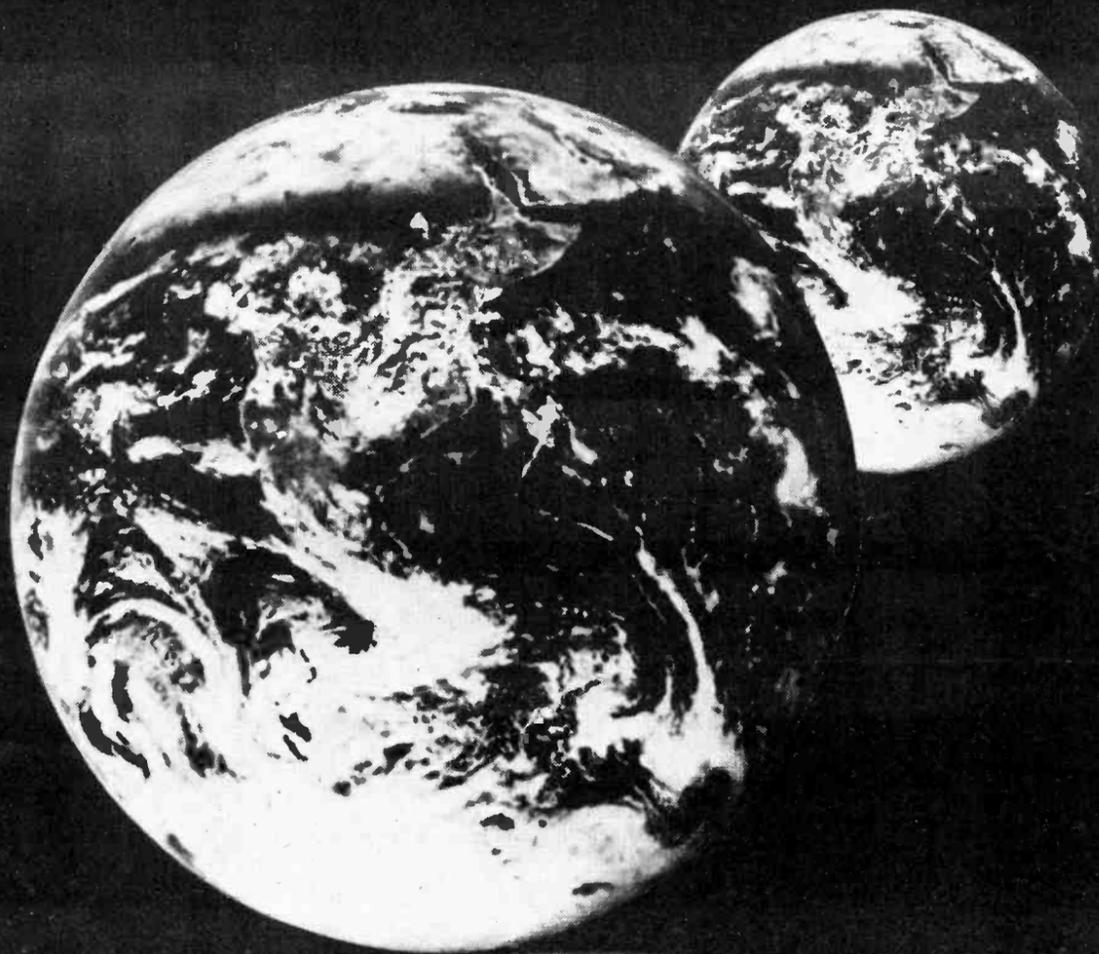
If we get positive answers to these questions, we go ahead.

Another question that frequently arises has to do with that tricky question of "style." WMMS has presented successful promotions on several occasions that might best be described as "off-format." These have involved activities like a concert with the Cleveland Orchestra, and legitimate theatre productions of things like "Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well and Living in Paris." The success of these promotional reminds us that it is dangerous to view our audience as some sort of denimed, dope-smoking monolith. There are a lot of people who like Rock & Roll who happen to have other tastes as well. Don't forget them.

What else can I tell you? The other principles of good promotion are common to all radio work: organization, making those deadlines, cooperation among the staff. Perhaps the one thing to say in summary is in the form of a reminder: Don't forget your listener. That's who all this is for—so don't put "in-jokes" on your air, don't use promotional time to do favors for clients, don't get trapped into doing promotions that don't fit the criteria outlined earlier. And whatever you do, don't short-change that listener. Remember, you're just a pimp for the best-lookin' girl in town...don't sell her for two-bits.

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