

AOR

(ALBUM ORIENTED ROCK)



Mike Harrison

At the recent Arista convention in San Diego, I had the pleasure of participating on a radio panel featuring **Gerry Peterson**, PD of **KCBO/San Diego**; **John Sebastian**, PD of **KDWB/Minneapolis**; **Mary Kay Anthony**, National MD for Bartell Broadcasting; and **Ed Wright**, owner/operator of **GEI**, an independent publicity and merchandising company. A variety of topics were discussed, but the main thrust of the meeting was focused upon the details of "passive audience research" and the theory that radio listeners are either artist oriented or song oriented.

As I mentioned in a recent column, it wasn't long ago that music radio listeners were drawn toward particular "images" with which they identified. It was, indeed, the schism between group identification factors that lead to the emergence of a mainstream style of radio and an alternative one. The evolution of the public's consciousness, in regard to music and all its sociological implications, determined the boundaries in the competitive struggle between the two forms.

If in fact, listeners are beginning to find less social identification in music, regarding it mostly for its entertainment properties, it might be wise for AOR and Top 40 programmers to turn their attention toward artist-orientation and song-orientation as a major dividing line in categorizing radio listening habits and tendencies.

Every record has a different degree of potency in its ability to attract a radio listener and that strength changes from day to day, from minute to minute. On one level even a terrible new record by an important artist can be attractive to radio listeners for a limited period of time merely out of cultural curiosity. On a totally different level, certain songs are certainly going to emerge as favorites even among the most sophisticated of audiences. In "The Top 40 Story" **Paul Drew** puts it rather succinctly: "You can't hum a hit album."

It was generally agreed to at the session that no matter what your research tells you or programming methodology you subscribe to, people listen to songs on the radio for a great variety of reasons and the more of those reasons taken into account, studied, and dealt with...the more creative and prone to success a programmer will be.

It was an interesting session and although I didn't have the opportunity to stay for the whole convention, I got the impression that it was successful. Congratulations to **Clive Davis** and fine company!

Evolution

Marjorie Gross has been appointed Creative Director of Nova Broadcasting Services, Inc. Nova, headed by **Tom Yates**, consults **WORJ/Orlando** and **KPAS/EI Paso**...**Chuck Moshontz** is the new **KZEW/Dallas** News Director joining "the Zoo" from **KLAS-TV/Las Vegas**...**Terry Gerbstadt** has moved from middays to do morning news at **T105/Dayton** with **Mike Coste** from **WQDR/Raleigh** joining **T105** to do middays. **Alan Michael McConnell** left **WVUD/Dayton** where he did evenings to join **T105** doing weekends...**Ron Dennington** was promoted from Program Director to Operations/Program Manager at **KZ100/San Antonio**. **John Czaga** has joined **KZ100** doing news from **WQXI/Atlanta**...**Mike Bechtel** moves to **KWST/Los Angeles** doing weekends from **KXFM/Santa Maria**...**Joe Benson** has left his Music Director position at **WQFM/Milwaukee**. Acting as Interim MD is **Dave-O Popovich**, also doing weekends at **WQFM**...**KAYD/Beaumont** is changing from an AOR format to Top-40 effective 8/29. The **AM KAYC** is also Top-40 and the two stations will do some simulcasting on the weekends. **KAYD** will keep the same air staff and **Michael Danborn** will remain Program Director through the format change.

Update

Catching Up: **WMMS/Cleveland's** recently departed Music Director **Shelly Stile** popped into LA joining **MCA National AOR Director Joy Hall** and yours truly for breakfast. According to Shelly, she's going to check out the West Coast for career possibilities in either radio or records. I spoke to **WMMS PD John Gorman** back in Cleveland who reports that the station still has not named Shelly's successor, but in the meantime the station's extremely popular Public Affairs Director **Murray Saul** has joined the ranks of **Former** soldiers in the "Buzard Nuclear Army"...**Former KSAN'er** (from the early days) **Stafan Ponek** reports all is doing well at the firm of **Ponek-Fisher Associates** in Mill Valley, California. The company's back to school special "Ring Ring Goes The Bell" will be aired during the Labor Day weekend on some 87 FM stations coast to coast. The 90 minute special features memories of school from **Steve Miller**, **Heart**, **Grateful Dead**, **Foreigner**, **Doobies** and more. The company is also offering "Seeds" a thirty minute weekly program dealing with top artists' formative years. Interested stations should contact either **Ponek** or **Stephen Fisher** at (415) 383-9020...Here's a hot one: Most of you are familiar with the program "American Top 40". Well, the **CBC** in Canada has a similar coast to coast program there called "90 Minutes With A Bullet" hosted by **Jim Millican**. The program utilizes many AOR techniques (special features, in-depth analysis, artist interviews etc.) within a Top 40 singles framework. Jim asked me to mention to our AOR reporters that he's interested in utilizing some of those fabulous artist interviews that American AOR radio is noted for on the Canadian program. He's also looking for on-the-air correspondents. They're even willing to pay for the goodies (if all parties attached are agreeable). Contact **Jim Millican** in Winnipeg at (204)

876-2756...A smiling **Timothy Leary** stopped by the offices of **R&R** along with **Gabriel Wisdom** and **Daniel Gilbertson** to report that the "Joyful Wisdom Program" (written about here a few months back) is now running successfully on some 30 AOR stations across the country including many major markets. They've also kicked off a speakers bureau called **Future Presentations** in which they provide colleges with speakers (including **Timothy**) discussing the future evolution of mankind. Interested stations can reach **Daniel Gilbertson** at (213) 876-2756 for info concerning both the Public Affairs program and speakers service...Congratulations to **Billy Juggs** upon his being upped from Music Director of **KMET/Los Angeles** to Assistant Program Director (he'll continue to do music)...Speaking of **KMET**, here's a funny one. Morning man **Jeff Gonzer** couldn't understand why he was receiving calls on the request line from listeners asking him about the Porsche that he used to own. Finally, he discovered that the auto dealer to whom he traded the car had put an ad in the LA Times stating that the vehicle was formerly owned by **Jeff Gonzer**!...**Capitol Record's AOR Director Ray Tusken** reports that numerous members of the company came down with an awful 24 hour-type virus immediately following the company's recent convention in Coronado but everybody at this point is basically back to normal (whatever that is).

Concerts & Conversation

Presentations: **KLBJ/Austin** presented a **Janis Joplin** radio anthology with interviews with **Kenneth Threadgill** and other Austin friends from the early 60's...**KWST/Los Angeles** is presenting a history of **Fleetwood Mac** complete with interviews with past and current members of the group in conjunction with their Los Angeles concert...**WYXE/Madison** presented a free outdoor concert with **38 Special** and **Heartfield** in Warner Park.

Radio Concerts: **Steve Miller** on **WMMS/Cleveland**...**The Allman Brothers** on **TK101/Boston**...**Gamble Rogers** live from their studios on **WGVL/Gainesville**...**Jesse Winchester** on **WYXE/Madison**.

Interviews: **Mac Gayden**, **Townes Van Zandt** and **Silver Hammer** on **WSIM/Chattanooga**...**Heart** on **WMMS/Cleveland**...**Roy Buchanan** and **Jimmie Spheeris** on **KLBJ/Austin**...**Leo Sayer Climax Blues Band** and **Rick Derringer** on **WVAF/Charleston**...**Rick Derringer** on **WNOR/Norfolk**...**Dick Pinney** on **WJKL/Elgin**...**Fools Gold** and **Chilliwick** on **KZAM/Seattle**...**Pierce Arrow** on **KAWY/Casper**...**Vassar Clements** on **KWFM/Tucson**...**Mahogany Rush**, **Ted Nugent** and **REO** on **KSJO/San Jose**.

Color

Get Off On KWST: Listeners are invited to send in a postcard with their name and phone number and their boss' name and phone number. Each morning one card is pulled and **KWST/Los Angeles** arranges for that listener to get the day off!

Refined Texas Crude, the "homegrown" LP by local artists, is in the final mixing process at **KFWD/Dallas** with **Alan Parsons** assisting afternoon jock **Gary Shaw**.

Smoke From A Distant Fire drew 200 specially invited listeners to an outdoor cookout hosted by **WOUR/Utica**.

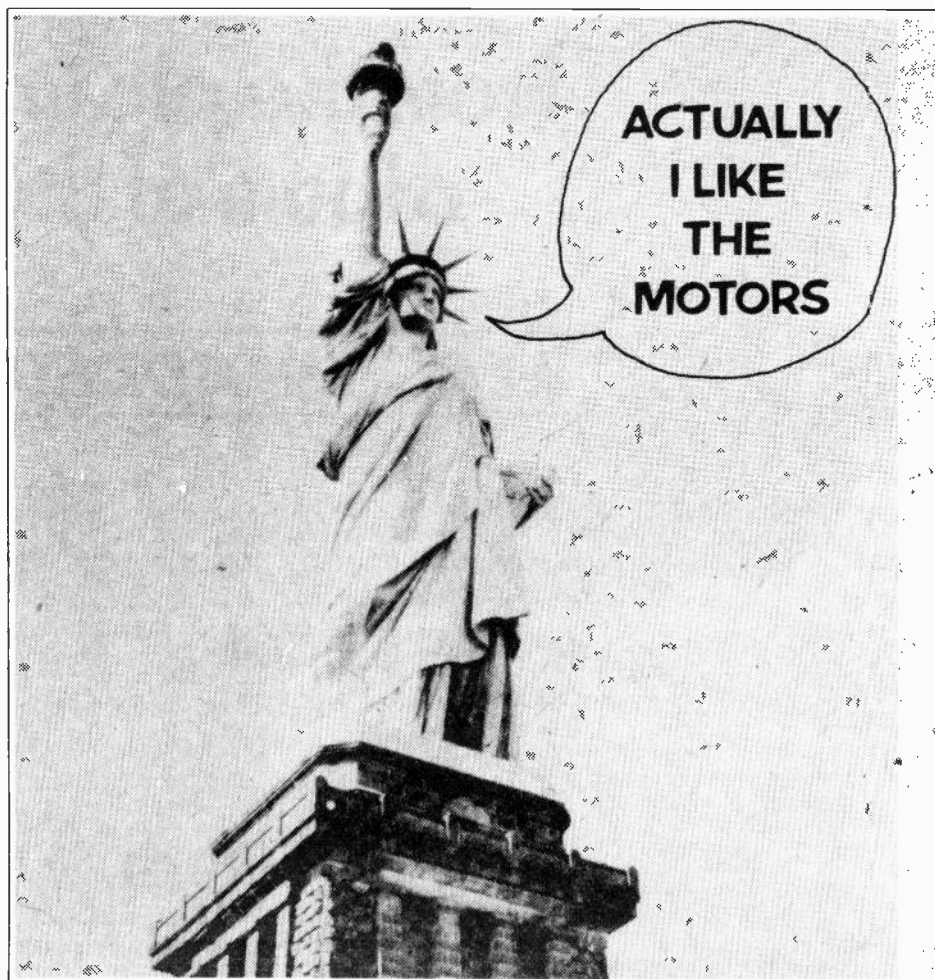
Annual Frisbee Day, sponsored by **WXRT/Chicago** in Gillson Park will feature accuracy and distance contests, 1000 free frisbees, demonstrations by pros, and will introduce "disc-golf." All proceeds will benefit the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

Lasers Lit The Skies Of Cleveland from the Hanna Fountains Mall set to music from **WMMS**.

Back To School Transportation: **KFDI-FM/Wichita** is giving away a reconditioned 1953 Ford pick-up just in time for school.

The Great Phillies Baseball Giveaway: **WPST/Trenton** will give away 1000 autographed Phillies baseballs and one \$3,000, large screen TV. As a bonus, if the Phillies make it to the play-offs, 10 pairs of tickets will take listeners to the National League play-offs.

A Picture Worth A Song: **WSIM/Chattanooga** is sponsoring a photo contest for visual interpretations of songs. So far, entries have included **Pink Floyd's** "On the Run" and **The Beatles'** "Eleanor Rigby."



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