

MORNING DRIVE-TIME / Dueling on the dials

Hours, public appearances part of DJ life

They're paid for their voices, but they certainly have a knack for showing off their faces.

Morning DJs regularly can be seen introducing performers on stage, helping raise money for charities, hanging out in record stores and car dealerships and peering out from billboards.

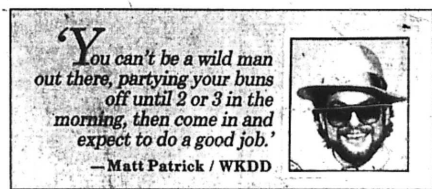
One of the top morning men thinks it's pretty much a waste of time. Says Jeff Kinzbach of WKDD: "In spite of what everybody thinks, it doesn't matter how many times the TV camera comes in, it doesn't matter how many times your face is on a billboard or a bus. People listen to you for one reason: what you do between 6 and 10 on the radio."

"You hear about disc jockeys who run down on Public Square and give away money and stuff. And then their ratings drop. Why do they drop? Because what they should have been doing is concentrating on what the hell they were doing on the air. Instead, they're out giving away money. Who the hell cares?"

Heavy promotion of a lousy program is like advertising a product that doesn't work, says Kinzbach's partner, Ed "Flash" Ferenc — it just won't sell.

But other morning personalities have an entirely different view of public appearances.

Says Matt Patrick, head of WKDD's 5:30-10:00 p.m. "The Eye" show: "They are the one thing that bumps your ratings more than anything. As much as what you do on the air is what you



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— Matt Patrick / WKDD

do off the air. I've found that the more you get out there and talk to people — touch them, let them see you — the more they will listen.

"They'll tune you in because they meet you — 'Hey, there's that guy I met last night."

The wording in John Lanigan's sizable contract with WMJ enables the station to require him to make half a dozen personal appearances a month.

"They haven't really asked that much yet, but they've got it in there," he reports.

Lanigan hopes the station's managers continue to pick their spots, because public appearances can quickly get out of control, he says.

Saturday night, Lanigan says, is a charity, I'd like to go out to dinner with my wife once in a while.

They will tie you up with something every single night, every weekend until you're old.

"I did that for a long time at 'GAR and I won't do that anymore."

But everyone makes appearances — including Kinzbach — and during the week those affairs can lead to short nights.

Some jocks are lucky enough to be "morning people."

WLSR's Jay Drennan "loves" getting up at 4 a.m. He really said it. And the day he said it he was coming off three hours of sleep.

While WAKR's Adam and Bob are a little more reserved in their praise of the dawn, they also consider themselves natural early birds.

But the majority of DJs, they say, are not. They're doing it for money for some charity, I'd like to go out to dinner with my wife once in a while.

WKDD's Barbara Adams, for example, has three alarm clocks and sometimes manages to sleep through them all.

The morning shift has forced Patrick to clean up his act, he said.

"You can't be a wild man out there, partying your buns off until 2 or 3 in the morning, then come in and expect to do a good job."

Kinzbach concurs. "Some of the best preparation for our show is eight hours of sleep," he says.

But the occasional short night can pay dividends, according to WMMS' Ferenc.

"You know how you are after you get up enough sleep. You're kind of cranky, but sometimes you're real glib-witted and say things you wouldn't normally say, which makes for good radio. But you can't keep up that routine."

For jocks with young kids, like WGAR's Paul Tapie, eight interrupted hours is little more than a fading memory.

Lack of sleep is the price you pay for working the morning show, Tapie says, but "they pay you well for it. I call it pain money."

Somehow, thanks to massive quantities of coffee or cigarettes or sheer willpower and a combination of the three, drive-time jocks usually manage to sound loose and lively.

But they're not necessarily loose and lively all the live-long day. And that can be awkward during those public appearances that were not designed

to be public appearances.

"When you're at the grocery store and somebody says, 'Hey, Matt Patrick,' you gotta be Matt Patrick. No matter how tired you are or (bleeped) off you are at the world, you can't say, 'What!'"

"You have to represent the radio station no matter where you are."

"And then you don't know if people know who you are or not. That's the trouble with me. I become so trigger-paranoid. You wanna go to a bar and get drunk and fall down and you don't know if anybody knows who you are. So you end up going to places like the Teeter-Totter Tavern."

"(But) if that's the worst thing I can say about my job, then I guess it's not so bad."

All of the morning stars want to escape from their personas once in a while.

When he's with friends, WGAR's Paul Tapie almost never shows his impressions.

"It's my time to be away from all this," he says. "And then you hope you're not infinitely boring as yourself."

Tapie does so many voices he sometimes forgets his own. When talking to his wife, occasionally a voice "will just kind of slip through. But I'm not crazy. I'm not Hal Holbrook, who he thinks he's Mark Twain for a year. That's never happened to me."

Then he breaks into Ronald Reagan: "And I don't think I ever will." — BY BOB DYER

DJs verbal vanguard of daily dawn wars

Continued from page E4

In slightly different form on WKDD.

Chances are, the WKDD version is brassier, even though Akron residents tend to be more conservative than those in Cleveland.

"You try to be controversial," Patrick said. "I do that deliberately to see what will happen."

"It's funny, sex doesn't seem to really upset people too much as long as you're not explicit. (But) if you get into things like religion, politics — things people take a very hard stance for or against — you can get yourself in trouble."

Patrick, who doubles as music director, says the key to a good show is preparation.

"My whole life pretty much is around that show," he says, listing the ways he tries to stay on top of the news. "Except for may be Kinzbach, I don't know of any one who spends as much time preparing. . . . You want it to sound spontaneous — that's the art of the professional aspect of the whole thing."

John Lanigan

Patrick's style is somewhat reminiscent of a younger John Lanigan, who — speaking of the way he is putting in some long mornings at WMJ — says he "drew up a better offer than anybody else's," he said. And quite frankly, I'd lived here and it was easy to move back to Cleveland.

This from the man who vowed during his "final" show on WUAB-Ch. 43 two years ago that he didn't care "if you like this or not," because he "never" coming back to Cleveland.

The soft-rock station appears to be getting its money's worth from Lanigan's hefty new salary. The first time out, Lanigan picked up a significant chunk of listeners in both Cleveland and Akron.

"I don't know what I expected, honestly. I mean there was a chance you could come back and nothing would have worked."

Lanigan speaks 100 miles per hour, even off the air, even with tired, bloodshot eyes. In fact, he seems to do everything fast — once he was clocked at 94 miles per hour on Interstate 71 near the Wadsworth exit in Akron.

But while his energy level may not have changed, the tone of his show has.

"I'm not as blue as it used to be, I don't think," Lanigan said.

He also has trimmed his own air-time. "It's a little bit tighter, a little bit more concise. I think we're in a faster pace."

"It's very hard to sustain comedy in a long period of time. I

AD COSTS

Cost for a 30-second ad aired one time only.

MORNING DRIVE-TIME
WMMS (100.7-FM): \$250 to \$500, depending on time of year

WMJ (105.7-FM): \$125 to \$175, depending on time of year

WGAR (99.5-FM, 1220-AM): \$125

WAKR (1590-AM): \$68
WKDD (96.5-FM): \$67.20
WLSR (1350-AM): \$28.80

mean, *Saturday Night Live* tries to do it once a week and generally falls flat. . . . so there's no point in trying to do it for 4½ hours a day and do a lot of it."

Lanigan makes no bones about digging up and recycling his old jokes. For each show he pulls out year-old notes, updates them if necessary, then files them away for the following year. He figures one or more members from one year to the next.

But he still insists preparation is important. The biggest misconception among listeners, he says, is that morning DJs are born witty and spontaneous.

"I'm not that witty and spontaneous," he prepared. Bob Hope isn't that witty. Johnny Carson isn't that witty. None of them are that spontaneous. It's all prepared."

Paul Tapie

Well, maybe Lanigan hasn't listened to WGAR lately. On both the AM (1220) and FM (95.5) frequencies from 5:30 to 9, Paul Tapie is ad libbing his way around the best news.

WGAR's management may be getting the best deal in town. While WMMS is shelling out half a dozen salaries for its morning crew, WGAR is paying one. Jock — Paul Tapie — and getting the equivalent of 150 people.

Tapie started as a standup co-

median — a good one, a potential national headliner — and after 3½ years at WKDD still considers himself more of a comic than a DJ.

He may have rougher edges than some of his competitors — some days, for instance, he forgets to give the time as often as he should — but his humor is fresh and unique.

"As a comedian," he says, he finds Lanigan's ability to write a spot "repulsive."

How timely is Tapie's material? One recent morning, shortly after a news report that John McEnroe and Tatum O'Neal were expecting a baby, Tapie launched into a bit about the couple going through Lameaze class.

Said McEnroe: "Come on, Tatum, breathe in. Out. In. Out. In. — No! That was out, not in! It was clearly out! It wasn't even on the line, you jerk!"

And remember, Tapie can do McEnroe's voice about as well as McEnroe.

Among his most frequent assistants are "Mudcat" Grant (a takeoff on former Cleveland Indian and TV announcer Mudcat Grant) and Johnny Carson and Mr. Haney of Green Acres.

One day his celebrity weather forecaster was Walter Cronkite. Also joining him at the Broadview Heights studio were Ronald Reagan, Archie and Edith, Sylvester Stallone, Popeye, George Forbes, Joe Tatum, Muhammad Ali, Howard Cosell, Jimmy Dudley and Jackie Stewart.

A recent purchase required listeners to make the association between sin tax and syntax, and know what each means.

WGAR switched to country 18

MORNING LEADERS

Average share of Summit/Portage listeners for commercial stations only.

FALL 1985

1. Adam and Bob, WAKR (1590-AM): 17.5

2. Jeff and Flash, WMMS (100.7-FM): 8.8

3. Matt Patrick, WKDD (96.5-FM): 8.4

4. Stan Platt, WJWR (100.7-FM): 7.3

5. Dooza McKay, WLSR (97.5-FM): 5.8

6. Paul Tapie, WGAR (1220-AM, 99.5-FM): 5.6

7. John Lanigan, WMJ (105.7-FM): 4.7

8. Jaybird Drennan, WLSR (1350-AM): 4.6

exactly standard fare on the morning airwaves.

"I like to think that people who listen to my show listen to it because they have more of a sophisticated sense of humor," he said.

"I won't cut back on something saying, 'They won't get it.'"

His satire and urban-orientated humor is not at all what you would expect at a country-music station. It seems likely his ratings would be higher if he were in a more mainstream format.

But the apparent clash between DJ and format doesn't seem to bother Tapie, who shows no signs of wanting to pack his bags.

"Country's a bit kind of a low tide right now," he says. "We've just kind of got to ride it until it comes back around full circle."

When pressed, he says: "The format shouldn't matter as far as the comedy is concerned. . . . But then, your ratings are tied into it. If your format isn't doing well, then your morning disc jockey isn't going to do as well as he should."

WGAR switched to country 18

RAMS BINGO
URW LOCAL #7, 1275 SWEETZER
SUN. & MON.
Doors Open Sunday & Monday at
5 p.m. Early Bird \$3.00
HARD CARDS 12 FOR \$5.00
PAYING UP TO \$99
WITH 180 ATTENDANCE
JACKPOT \$1000
IN 48 NOS.
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253-0248 Lic. #0090-32

HOBAN BINGO
400 Elbon Ave. • Top of 5th Ave. Hill
E.B. 6:30 P.M.
\$1000 JACKPOT
Regardless of Attendance
EARLY BIRDS \$200 • \$250 WINNER SPECIAL
\$250 X-GAME • \$250 PICTURE FRAME
MASTERCARDS 6/35 - PAY \$99
Licenses #0035-27 Security - Lighted Parking

ST. MARTHA'S BINGO
200
MONDAYS AND FRIDAYS
EARLY BIRDS AT 6:45 - OUR AVERAGE CROWD OF 225 PEOPLE
GUARANTEED \$3500 PAYOUT
Regardless of Attendance
PLAY WHERE YOU HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF WINNING
\$99 REG. GAME • \$200 EARLY BIRD
\$250 X \$300 FULL CARD • \$1000 JACKPOT
Large Lighted Parking Lot - Security Provided - A/C Conditioned - Lic. #0105-45

WEST WILBETH BINGO
HILLEL COUNTRY OF AKRON
WEST WILBETH RECREATION CENTER
GUARANTEED
DOORS OPEN 4:00
EARLY BIRD 6:30
SUNDAY SPECIAL
EARLY BIRDS 2 FOR THE 1
CLIP THE AD FOR THE BINGO CARD WITH PURCHASE OF 10 BINGO CARDS
SPECIAL ON \$100 FREE CARD GAME
Valid thru Feb. 26, 1986
MONDAY SPECIAL
EARLY BIRDS 2 FOR THE 1
CLIP THE AD FOR THE BINGO CARD WITH PURCHASE OF 10 BINGO CARDS
SPECIAL ON \$100 FREE CARD GAME
Valid thru Feb. 24, 1986

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Winner receives \$100 and is eligible for the finals. Every entrant receives a prize.
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CLUTCH IS COMING!
WEDNESDAY IS AN ALL NEW LADIES' NIGHT!!!
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EVERY 2nd MONDAY OF THE MONTH
MASTERCARDS PAY \$99
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