

Helen Marketti's Music Corner

WMMS, The Buzzard!



Sometimes the best things in life unfold by chance...being in the right place at the right time and creating opportunities that are innovative to grab the attention of listeners, the community, the nation and rock and roll. WMMS was a groundbreaking radio station that stretched the limits. Fans will remember the good ole days when radio was much different. You felt as though you were interacting with old friends and were part of the music experience. Now let's think of reliving those early days in a documentary film.

Dave Jingo (Jingo Bros Productions) was a fan of WMMS during the 1970s as a teenager living in Canton, Ohio. "I am a huge music fan and I considered WMMS my first teacher. WMMS was my big brother; it taught me new music, when a new album was released, when a band was coming to town and what was cool to listen to," he remembers. Dave explains how the project came to fruition. "It all started when I read John Gorman's book (The Buzzard: Inside the Glory Days of WMMS and Cleveland Rock Radio, A Memoir published by Gray & Co.) I thoroughly enjoyed it because it really hit home and brought back a lot of memories. I started thinking that it would make a great documentary. It's a feel good story in the sense of how everyone came together, the staff, the listeners and so forth."

"I sent John an email stating that I was interested in making a documentary film about WMMS. He agreed to meet with my brother and I to talk about our ideas. John liked that we were long time fans, we lived it and we understood it." Dave continues, "I suggested to him to allow us to put together a short "sizzle reel" with some interviews and stories with former WMMS staff and they could decide if this was something to pursue. John agreed with this idea and it was filmed at Cuyahoga Community College. We plan on using the "sizzle reel" as a tool when we meet with potential investors."

WMMS had a staff that was unlike any other in radio during those early days. "There was such an explosion of great music in the 70s and FM radio became available in stereo. The fans of WMMS were dedicated and fanatical

listeners," explains Dave. "A lot of the staff came from Cleveland State during the 70's. Kid Leo, Ed "Flash" Ferenc, Jeff Kinzbach and Matt the Cat were homegrown material. John Gorman and Denny Sanders came from Boston. Look over these names from WMMS; this was the line up for several years. They were young, they were music lovers and they thought outside of the box. Murray Saul left an indelible mark with the "Get Downs" for weekend kick-offs. People looked forward to it. It's important to mention David Helton's artwork, which was as much a part of WMMS as the music. His work was so well done and perfectly tailored."

WMMS staff knew what they wanted in terms of being a successful radio station. "WMMS always seemed to be ahead of the power curve. The station was a band breaker," said Dave. "On a national level, WMMS introduced significant, ground breaking artists to Cleveland and eventually to the rest of the country. Bruce Springsteen, Ian Hunter, Roxy Music (Bryan Ferry), Rush, Southside Johnny, Joe Walsh and David Bowie were a few of the names where Cleveland was the beginning. The time that WMMS really came into its own was during the 70s. We know that Cleveland was going through some hard times so this was something the whole city could rally around and know they were number one in radio."

Dave is hoping the word circulates everywhere about the documentary project. "We want people to get excited about it. I feel that the passion people felt when they listened to WMMS can

be regenerated into the documentary. The fans back then who would now be in their 40s, 50s and 60s will look back and become very excited about this project. What I am trying to do is reconstitute the Buzzard Nuclear Army. Once we can get that going, the next thing we would like to do is track down photographs, film clips, stories and memorabilia. We are interested in hearing from people who have a fondness for WMMS. We are trying to raise money for the production of this documentary. We have a production budget and we are seeking donations. We have a 501c3 in place and people can donate at different levels and it's completely tax deductible."

"I have high hopes for this documentary project," explains Dave. "I would love for the film to be seen nationally because I think it is more than a local story. It's part of rock and roll history. Our hope and our plan are to incorporate interviews with the DJs and fans but we would also like to interview the music artists previously mentioned. I have heard things they have said about playing in Cleveland, it was important to them and this will elevate the story of WMMS to a national level. If you are a music fan, a rock fan, interested in pop culture of the 1970s or interested in a good story, you will appreciate this documentary. Everyone seemed to follow WMMS. They were the pioneers, the trendsetters and the trailblazers."

If you have stories, photos and memorabilia to share, please email Dave and



Bill Jingo at: jingobrosbuzzardfilm@gmail.com

To make a tax-deductible donation: <http://www.fracturedatlas.org/site/fiscal/profile?id=8266>

The documentary project is on Facebook: WMMS Buzzard Film

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