

totallyadult™



DECEMBER 1, 2000 • ISSUE NUMBER



P J HARVEY STORIES FROM THE CITY, STORIES FROM THE SEA
IN STORES NOW

FEATURING THE TRACK AND VIDEO "GOOD FORTUNE"

NOW ON: WXRT • WXPB • VH1 • WNCS • WYEP • WDET • WRNR • WFPK • KTAO • KCRW • WVOD • DMX • WRSI • WFUV • WCBE • KBAC

ON TOUR: DETROIT MI, DEC 2 • MINNEAPOLIS MN, DEC 4 • CHICAGO IL, DEC 5 • PHILADELPHIA PA, DEC 7
BOSTON MA, DEC 9 • NEW YORK, NY, DEC 11 • WASHINGTON DC, DEC 12 • ATLANTA GA, DEC 14

OVER 50,000 SCANNED IN TWO WEEKS

"IN THE HEAVEN OF GREAT RECORDS." -- SPIN MAGAZINE

For more information, please contact info.rosentfeld@jive.com or (212) 603-7871

www.pjharvey.net
www.islandrecords.com
9 DEF JAM MUSIC CITY

...nearly impossible to capture an of the glory, creates and triumphs of a particular radio station, especially one as historic as KBCO in Boulder, Colorado. What started as a modest 250-watt beacon booming out of the then little town of Boulder has, 23 years later, turned into the globally known World Class Rock.

The concept was to create a colorful radio station that lived and breathed within its own unique community. At first, the idea was to image this soon-to-be existent station by combining the words Colorado and Radio, thus creating Color Radio. But realizing it was probably too much of a novelty nickname, the powers that be followed another path and came up with one that would stick for years to come—Boulder Radio. That's how the classic calls came to fruition, 'B' for Boulder and 'CO' for Colorado.

KBCO's illustrious history represents the true vision, spirit, patience and power of Adult Rock Radio. What you're about to embark on is not only a journey of a legendary radio station, but also a historical look at the formation of the Adult Rock format itself.

In the following pages you'll see that we tracked down KBCO's original owner, Bob Greenlee, and found out what inspired him to launch the station. We also hooked up with former Program Directors Dennis Constantine and John Bradley and got their perspectives on the early years, while Mike O'Connor fills you in on the near demise of KBCO, as well as the triumphant comeback with Dave Benson at the helm.

But this isn't just a look down memory lane...we also fill you in on KBCO's most vital time ever, today! General Manager Don Howe fills us in on how he manages such a unique station, Promotion Director Julie Smith explains how they tackle their classic events and Program Director Scott Arbough gives us the insider scoop on what it's been like to live through it all. We also have profiles on morning host

Bret Saunders, Muddayer Ginger Havlat, afternoon host Oz Medina, evening host Keefer as well as morning show producer Ron Bostwick. And lastly, we check in with some of 'BCO's former jocks, including Paul Marszalek, Ira Gordor and Peter Finch to get a feel for what it was like to be behind the 'BCO mike. So whether you've actually heard KBCO, or have simply heard of KBCO—this tribute magazine will fill you in on its incredible story.

So, how do you go about putting together a magazine on a radio station in Colorado, when you're stuck in California? That's easy. You enlist the help of folks who are in San Diego, Portland, Oregon, and Annapolis, Maryland! Big high-fives going out to Kevin Stapleford, who captured the true essence of KBCO's early years with his eloquent pen, and our own Lieutenant Columbo, Jon Peterson who not only tracked down KBCO's original owner and all of the current DJs, but also located some of 'BCO's former jocks and put together their stories. Thanks Petey! Along with all the archival items that KBCO's Julie Smith gathered for us, many of the images you'll see in this magazine came from the personal collections of Dennis Constantine and John Bradley—thanks guys! And lastly, a big heart thank you to the entire KBCO crew for helping us put all of this together. Scott Arbough, Julie Smith, Jonathan Hanst, Bret Saunders, Ginger Havlat, Oz Medina, Keefer, Ron Bostwick and everyone else—you guys are great. Thanks for all your help. We had a fun time piecing this colorful puzzle together.

Enjoy //



KBCO



IF WE COULD, WE'D GIVE YOU A STAR.

WORLD CLASS ROCK ON THE RADIO WALK OF FAME.

PRESIDENT/SFX MULTIMEDIA GROUP
STEPHEN R. SMITH

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, PUBLISHING
GERRY CAGLE
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT/GM
KARMEN BECK

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, URBAN ENTERTAINMENT
MILLER LONDON
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, MUSIC AND MEDIA
TOMMY NAST

VP/SPECIAL PROJECTS
JOHN SCHOENBERGER

SENIOR DIRECTOR ADULT ROCK SERVICES
SHANA LIVIGNI

DIRECTOR/ADULT ROCK SERVICES
MATTHEW LAWTON

VP/MANAGING EDITOR
JIM NELSON

VP/RADIO
ROBERT ENGLAND
ASSOCIATE EDITORS
STACIE CLARK
TOM MAGUIRE
JOHN EASDALE

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
JON PETERSON
KEVIN STAPLEFORD
JOHN SCHOENBERGER

TRANSCRIPTION
STACEY MURPHY
VANESSA ROCCKI

ART DIRECTOR
MELLE BELLE KARAKAWA
ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR
NATALIE ENGLISH
GRAPHIC DESIGNERS
LAURIE ES
CARLOS ESCOBAR
NICOLE HAYES
ARMANDO NUNEZ
ALEX DENA
AMY MARTIN
PETE MACKEL
MARY LAW
OSCAR VARELA

VP/PRODUCTION
DAVE AUTHER

PRODUCTION DIRECTOR
FRANK ANASTASIA
PRODUCTION MANAGERS
ERIC HARTER MONTE MALONE
IMAGING PREPRESS MANAGER
ALDEN KEITH STUBBLEFIELD

VP/RETAIL
GEORGE SAADI
RETAIL EDITOR
LIA JANUSIS
ASSOCIATE RETAIL EDITORS
GERRY T. SHAI DAN GLASBAND

NEWS EDITOR
MARINA WILLIAMS

VP/CLIENT INFORMATION SERVICES
VICTOR CABALLERO

TECHNICAL SUPPORT
STAN PRIMMER RALPH PLOTKIN

VP/BROADCAST SERVICES
MARK FELSOT

VP/AFFILIATE RELATIONS
NEAL BIRD

DIRECTOR BROADCAST SERVICES
JOHNNY VALENZUELA

DIRECTOR/AFFILIATE RELATIONS
MARIA MUSAITEF

BROADCAST SERVICES
MICHAEL DAVIS JERRY McQUEEN

DIRECTOR HUMAN RESOURCES
LIZA WEST

COMMUNICATIONS
KATHY BISSONETTE

CONTROLLER BILL DONCKELS

DIRECTOR/CIRCULATION & ACCOUNTING SERVICES
JACKIE BODNER

SENIOR ACCOUNTANT JEFFREY MUZI

FINANCE ANALYST EMMA NORIHIRO
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE PROCESSOR ERIN TYLER

LOGISTICS
DANNEN KING, TIM STEPHENS, JACKIE RAMOS,
BRIAN DAVIS, DAVID APODACA, & MARK GREGORIAN

SECURITY DIRECTORS
EDDIE GONZALES RAMIL BUENASEDA

120 North Victory Blvd. Burbank, CA 91502 818.955.4000 fax: 818.955.8048
e-mail: totallysam@sfx.com

TOTALLY ADULT: A TRIBE TOWNSHIP OF SFX MULTIMEDIA GROUP, LLC • PUBLISHED BY THE SFX MULTIMEDIA GROUP, LLC

6 KBCO THE EARLY YEARS, PART I

It happened in 1977, way up yonder in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. Just as the golden era of free-form AOR was about to end, a new age of Progressive Radio was about to begin. **Kevin Stapleford** gets a feel for the early years with KBCO's original dynamic duo, **Dennis Constantine** and **John Bradley**.

10 KBCO'S ORIGINAL OWNER, BOB GREENLEE

Bob Greenlee was an enthusiastic, creative General Manager with a vision to run a successful, profitable radio operation. **Jon Peterson** describes how Greenlee surrounded himself with a team of dedicated broadcasters with their fingers on the pulse of the Denver/Boulder market.

14 KBCO THE EARLY YEARS, PART II

Ka-boom. In 1992, **John Bradley** left KBCO to form SBR consulting, along with KBCO General Manager Ray Skibitsky and Promotions Director David Rahn. "I was shocked," recalls **Dennis Constantine**. **Kevin Stapleford** fills us in on the entire story.

18 KBCO TIMELINE!

When did KBCO sign on? When was Scott Arbough hired? When did Studio C first start up? Want answers? **Shana LiVigni** put together this handy Timeline filled with all you need to know.

20 THE MIKE O'CONNOR AND DAVE BENSON YEARS

With the departure of its General Manager, Program Director, Promotion Director and then its Operations Manager, KBCO was adrift. **Matthew Lawton** explains how **Mike O'Connor** was called in to sink the ship, but instead, steered it back on course as **Dave Benson** came in to claim the crown.

24 CURRENT PROGRAM DIRECTOR, SCOTT ARBOUGH

When you mention the name Scott Arbough, it's almost synonymous with KBCO. **John Schoenberger** finds that it's only fitting now that the new KBCO, which owes so much of its astounding success to the foundation laid down by the original KBCO, has **Scott Arbough** as its Program Director leading the station forward into a new decade and century.

28 GENERAL MANGER, DON HOWE

KBCO got into the consolidation game early, first with Noble, then Jacor and now Clear Channel. **John Schoenberger** talks with the station's current GM, **Don Howe**, who quickly realized that the best thing for KBCO was to leave it alone as much as possible.

32 PROMOTION DIRECTOR, JULIE SMITH

Jon Peterson catches up with KBCO Promotion Director **Julie Smith** and finds out what it's like to give away trips around the globe, payment-free leases on mountain homes with an SUV in the garage and even free imported beer for a year!

40 MORNING HOST, BRET SAUNDERS

If there ever was a perfect morning host for KBCO and the Denver/Boulder market these days it's got to be **Bret Saunders**. He's a man who can talk with passion and intelligence about everything from conspiracy theories in the Florida election results to naming the worst song on The Kinks' second album.

42 MIDDAYER, GINGER HAVLAT

Ginger Havlat's been at KBCO in one capacity or another for 16 years. She's passionate about connecting with her listeners in every way possible. "When I answer the phones, I do so with the purpose to make a connection. I can't tell you how rewarding it is when I answer the phone and they go, 'How's it going, Ginger?'"

44 AFTERNOONS WITH OZ MEDINA

Oz Medina has been skipping down the rock & roll yellow brick road for quite some time. "I worked for Noble Broadcasting in San Diego, which also owned KBCO at the time, so they hipped me to the opening here. When I arrived for the interview, I got in the rental car and turned on the station. The first thing I heard was 'The Heart Of Saturday Night' by Tom Waits and I thought, 'That's it. I think I'm staying.'"

46 NIGHTS WITH KEEFER

Most of us in the Adult Rock world got to know **Keefer** in his previous life as PD at KBXR Springfield, Missouri. Just about everybody thought he was nuts to leave a PD gig and come out to Boulder as a weekender in 1999, but his faith in himself and desire to do anything to join the KBCO family has been well worth it.

48 MORNING SHOW PRODUCER, RON BOSTWICK

Despite having a job which forces him to get up at 3:30 in the morning, six days a week, **Ron Bostwick** is a happy camper. He is on a radio "cloud nine" and he freely admits it.

49 VOICES FROM THE PAST

Just as folks like Scott Arbough and Ginger Havlat provide continuity and great insight into the musical nature and evolution from the inside of KBCO, an equally unique perspective comes from those who got out of the building all together. In this piece we hear from some of the many great voices of KBCO's past.

KBCO: The Early Years, Part I

The Book Of Genesis

(As told by the Prophets Constantine and Bradley)

By KEVIN STAPLEFORD

CHAPTER ONE: From "Color" To "Handyman"

It happened in 1977, way up yonder in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. Just as the golden era of free-form AOR was about to end, a new age of Progressive Radio was about to begin. Before the year was over, KBCO would be born, spawned from the seeds planted by original owner Bob Greenlee and a programmer by the name of Dennis Constantine.

Dennis, at the time, was doing mornings at KBPI. Driven by his dream to expand the musical boundaries of the radio dial, however, he was looking for a new challenge. "Well, what really drove me was that I was fired," Constantine explains with a laugh. "When [the PD] put this new 135-song playlist in place, he didn't really need personalities any longer.

"Soon after," he continues, "I heard about a man up in Boulder named Bob Greenlee. He owned a little daytime AMer, and the rumor on the street was that he was going to buy an FM station. I noticed some people wearing T-shirts from Bob's AM station, KADE, at a Neil Young concert, so I asked them about it and they said, 'Yeah, he's going to be buying KRNW, and he's going to need a program director.' So I went and talked to him.

"I don't know if Bob Greenlee knew me at the time, but I put together a proposal for him outlining my ideas," Dennis explains, over two decades later, from his current PD chair at KINK Portland, OR. "When I first started working at KBPI, it was very progressive; the typical AOR of the time, big playlist, big library. In 1976 they were being challen-



(l-r): Dennis Constantine, Jim Messina and John Bradley

ged by a Superstar station, and they soon cut their library. Since KBPI had always done pretty well ratings-wise, I knew that there was an opportunity to carry on the baton that they had just dropped—to be the full-service AOR that Denver had just lost.

"I also tried to convince Bob that there was an opportunity to play off of Boulder's image and be *the* Boulder radio station. Boulder was a hip town at the time; there were a lot of musicians living there, such as Firefall, Dan Fogelberg and Stephen Stills. So, I put together a tape presentation at Brownbag Studios. It presented what the music would sound like, the imaging and the overall presentation. The original name that I had come up with was 'Color Radio.' The idea was, if you took the words Colorado and radio, and you run it all together as one word with only one 'R,' it looks like 'Coloradio.' As Bob and I listened to the tape, though, we realized that it didn't wear well; it was too much of a novelty. Pretty quickly, we came up with the idea to call it 'Boulder Radio' and then looked for call letters that would go along with Boulder. That's where the 'BCO' came from, 'B' for Boulder and 'CO' for Colorado.

"Later, when John [Bradley] came on board, we really cleaned up the presentation so it sounded more like a Denver metropolitan station. When we talked about Boulder, we didn't say, 'Here in Boulder,' we just said, 'In Boulder.' We still had the Boulder image and we even ran billboards that said 'The music's better in Boulder,' but the on-air presentation was much less exclusionary of everybody outside of Boulder. We really put our arms around the entire metro area and, at the same time, retained the Boulder image. I think that's what helped give the station its unique identity. Everybody else was a music station, but we were the Boulder music station. It gave us something to hang our hat on.

"I remember going to visit the station Bob was buying, KRNW. They were broadcasting from the third floor of a building in downtown Boulder. The entire radio station was in one room—the record library, the DJ, the receptionist and the transmitting equipment. The transmitter had a cable that came out of the back, with an antenna sticking out of the window—and that was the entire radio station! That's what Bob Greenlee bought for \$265,000! For his money, he got a piece of paper that said he had a license to operate at 97.3, and that was it—because the equipment was junk, total junk. We got KRNW's record library, after it was pilfered by the staff. My job from February, until we signed on in June, was to call the record companies and say, 'We're starting this new station in Boulder, can you send us the Bob Dylan catalog?'

"As I was putting the library together, I was working directly with Randy Morrison, who was the program director of the AM station, KADE. He was my mentor in creating the sound of the radio station. He had been programming in Boulder, he had programmed for the ABC chain in Chicago and had a really solid

continued



Instructions for use of the KBCO Recording Sessions Weekend



- How to use the KBCO Recording Sessions Weekend:
- A. Tune radio to 97.3FM
 - B. Insert 90 minute cassette into tape deck
 - C. Press the record button at the beginning of each set to record 45 minutes of uninterrupted music
 - D. Add recorded tape to your music library to be listened to at home and in the car
 - E. Repeat

*Offer available from 5:00 p.m. Friday, January 8, 1993 through 8:00 p.m. Sunday, January 10, 1993 only. *Time 68 recording sessions per person. User encouraged to call 442-9000 for song suggestions at any time during the recording sessions. *Tapes not included. *Keep stereo away from open flame.



Souvenir Program

McNutt Returns To KBCO/Denver As PD



Fifteen years after leaving the MD post at Noble Broadcasting, KBCO/Boulder-Denver, Judy McNutt has rejoined the progressive outlet as PD. She replaces Doug Clifton.

Examining cross-town sign-on KXPX (see story, Page 3). The KBCO staff is excited with longtime consultant Dennis C. ...



HAVLAT EXITS KBCO



Ginger Havlat

After ... for the ... now ... break ... radio ... BCO ... recent ... leaving ... some ... in my ... high ...

Kinetic Sculpture Challenge

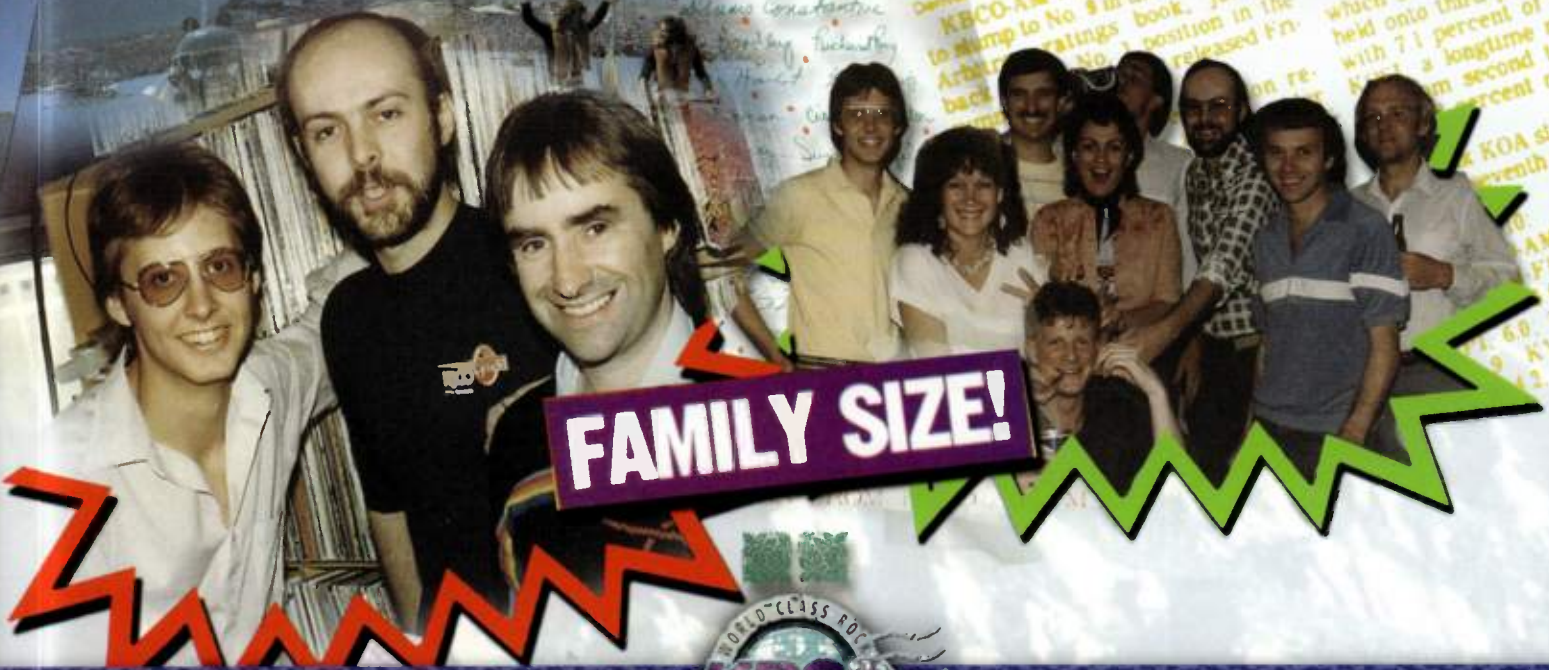
McNutt Rejoins KBCO, Denver Gets New 'Peak'

Summer ratings restore KBCO to No. 1 spot

By Joanne Ostrow
Denver Post Television-Radio Group
KBCO-AM-FM, which appeared to slump to No. 8 in the local spring Arbitron ratings book, jumped back to No. 1 position in the released F...

Spokane ... in ... stations ... the need ... of long-range trends ... judge by the erratic Arbi...

Relative newcomer ... which sells itself as ... held onto third place ... with 7.1 percent of the ... a longtime rati... second to ... percent of D...



FAMILY SIZE!



radio background. Taking his cue, our original formatics were very simple: we played everything in three-song sets. The first song was the current, the second song was the familiar song and the third song was a deeper cut. And we'd just go one-two-three, one-two-three—and that's really how the station was born.

"The first day was exhilarating," Dennis recalls. "I'll never forget that day. After working for months to put a library together and get the format in place, the station was a reality. I did the first shift on the first day, signing on at noon. The first song we played was James Taylor's 'Handyman,' and I'll tell you why. First of all, it was Bob Greenlee's favorite song at the moment—he was the owner, so he had the right to pick it! The second reason was it was a brand-new song and we were the only station that had it. We had a really strong connection with Columbia Records. Debi Lipetz, the local College Columbia rep, had an advance of the new single, so we had a market exclusive. The next song that followed it was...well...I have no clue. It was probably Steely Dan or Grateful Dead or something of that ilk. When I finally left the building that night, I remember driving home to Denver listening to the station. I was on Cloud Nine; it was like watching my baby being born."

CHAPTER TWO: The Route Of The Tortoise

Signing KBCO on, it seemed, was the easy part. Next, Constantine and company had to grapple with the reality of building a real radio station—with a real signal. Underlying these efforts, however, was a genuine belief in the product. They knew exactly where they wanted to go...but they also knew that they had to take their time—slow and steady would win the race. Sound like science fiction now? Nope, it was just the '70s.

"My intention right from day one was that KBCO would be Denver's #1 radio station. I just knew it could happen," Dennis says matter-of-factly. "I even planted that seed with the staff. I put a sign in the studio that said, 'We're growing.' I told everybody, 'This is going to be the #1 radio station in Denver one day.' They all laughed at me, but I always said that our job was not done until we're #1. I had done it before; I knew

that if we really connected with the community and were very relatable to listeners, KBCO could be at the top.

"I really felt something happening right away," he continues. "We'd go around town and hear the station playing in stores, and by that summer everybody else could feel it, too. In those days, Denver had two Books a year, and they were those four-week Books where you were in ratings for four weeks and then it was over. When the Fall Book came out, we had like a 1.3 share 12+. At the time we were still operating with very low power, because the FCC, in those days, was very slow in getting upgrades through the system. We started off with 250 watts, then it was upped to 600 watts, but one of the things that Bob Greenlee really did right was put us on top of a tall mountain, so even with 600 watts we could be heard in downtown Denver.

"It's a long story, but the short version is that stations in Colorado are limited to the amount of power they can put out because of a government listening station located just two miles north of Boulder. It's considered a 'quiet zone,' which means that not a lot of RF signals can penetrate into Boulder—by government law—because they have a lot of sensitive equipment there to track space junk and satellites. Because of that, there was a lot of red tape to go through to get power increases. Eventually, over the span of eight years, Bob finally got the power increased to the full 100,000 watts, and we moved to a new mountaintop site closer to Denver. At that point, when we turned the 100,000-watt stick on, we had probably the best signal in Denver. That was 1985. When that finally happened, the station really took off. Suddenly, people who could barely pick us up before could get us loud and clear. The station really started zooming up in the ratings, and we reached #1 12+ by the winter of 1988...and then stayed there for most of a year and a half.

"Sorry, I'm jumping ahead of myself," Dennis says suddenly. "It was really the late '70s when KBCO laid down its roots and we got a very cool street buzz going throughout the community. We all knew that this was going to be a slow, steady growth story, because this was not the kind of radio station that just took off—especially with some of the equipment hurdles that we faced right from the beginning. Remember, the '70s and '80s were a completely different time. Today, you have to

really grab people quickly and that's why an '80s station—like The Mix here in Portland—can go on the air and go right to #1 in their first Book. The real challenge for stations that get quick numbers is to maintain their market share after the initial impact. KBCO, on the other hand, built a solid foundation; it took years to build it, and that station is still living off of the foundation that was built back in the '70s and '80s."

CHAPTER THREE: Boulder Hears The Who

"Dream Team" is such an over-used phrase nowadays, but that's just what began to develop at KBCO in the early '80s. Whether by chance or by design, a group of people came together that would soon take the station exactly where Dennis Constantine thought it could go—to the topmost of the poppermost. What's more, their fingerprints are all over the modern version of KBCO, nearly 20 years later.

As Dennis describes, the process began when he came across a former program director of KBPI. Although, as the decade began, John Bradley was ensconced at WMMR in Philadelphia, he had ties to good ol' Boulder, Colorado, and...well, we'll let the principals tell the story:

"By the time we turned into the '80s, KBCO had developed a strong following," recounts Constantine. "We were making money and we finally had some money

"We really put our arms around the entire metro area and, at the same time, retained the Boulder image. I think that's what helped give the station its unique identity. Everybody else was a music station, but we were the Boulder music station. It gave us something to hang our hat on."
—Dennis Constantine

continued



to spend. I remember the first big-ticket staff member that I wanted to hire was John Bradley. He had been working out in Philadelphia at WMMR, and his girlfriend at the time was working as an intern at KBCO."

"It was time to leave Philadelphia," recalls John Bradley, "so first I went to KILO in Colorado Springs as a stop-over to decide what my next move would be. In looking around I knew that there was a station in Boulder, because my longtime girlfriend [Terry, now Mrs. John Bradley] was working there. So I decided to go to Boulder to see if I wanted to get married or not—but then I would do the real radio thing after that. KBCO was really a Boulder-only station at the moment, and it had no impact in Denver...but I ended up getting married and staying at KBCO for 10 and a half years."

"I used to call John on the KILO hotline at night," Dennis explains; "We had a lot in common, philosophically. I started talking to Bob [Greenlee] about bringing somebody of John's caliber to the staff. We had good people, but John was a *great* person. I thought he could be the person that could really help propel the radio station into a new arena."

"On one of my first shifts on KBCO, I played The Who," laughs John, "and I think I shook up the staff and the listeners, because it was so rock. The station at that time was very folk-based, very Colorado acoustic-rock sounding: Firefall, Eagles, Karla Bonoff, Dan Fogelberg—and here I came out of WMMR and played a Who song—oh my. I think I came in and shook things up a little bit, intentionally and unintentionally."

"Once John was in place as the APD," continues Dennis, "we started creating a lot of special programs and features. He brought in a couple of ideas from 'MMR, like 'March Music Month,' where they had a featured artist each day. We ripped that idea off, and built upon others, and we began to create a radio station where there was always something special going on."

"One day in 1981," Dennis adds, "John mentioned to me that the next step for KBCO would be to hire a world-class music director. He had worked with Doug Clifton down in Colorado Springs and really thought highly of him, so we started talking and he was eventually hired. Then there was a woman in Denver working at an AM daytime underground station, KFML. This was Ginger Havlat. After she joined, we found a guy up in Fort Collins working at KTCL named Scott Arbough. We really liked him, so he joined us and now—all these years later—he's KBCO's PD. Anyway, once we had all these people in place, we had a tremendous airstaff."

"This was when we collectively started to create some really amazing special programs. We did an April Fool's

stunt where we were broadcasting from 50 years in the future, and we convinced Bob to let us run the entire day without commercials. We created the commercial inventory for the day, where each ad was for a space-age product like a 'time shifter,' where you can skip through a day just by hitting a button. All this stuff came out of staff brainstorming sessions. Ray Skibitsky was the General Sales Manager under Bob at the time, and he was the leader of the idea team; he had a lot of great ideas."

Meanwhile, as he alluded to earlier, John Bradley decided that KBCO was much more than a comfortable place to get his head together in preparation for the next big thing—it was the next big thing!

"After the first few months there was an inkling that the station wanted to grow and bust out a little bit," he explains. "The music was changing. When the station signed on in 1977 with its Dan Fogelberg sound, it worked. Remember, though, by 1981, music was changing. The Cars were big and Tom Petty had a couple of albums out by then. Music was just starting to evolve, and I think KBCO came to grips with the idea that it had to evolve also—and I was ready to evolve with it. It was exciting, because as people at the radio station kind of altered their thinking, I thought, 'You know what? We could do something with this radio station.'"

CHAPTER FOUR: The Steady Climb Of Yin And Yang

Plenty of change was afoot in the house of KBCO in 1981. As Constantine stepped up to the role of Operations Manager, Bradley was named Program Director and Doug Clifton became Music Director. Not only that, the signal continued to increase, and a groundbreaking computerized scheduling system was put in place (that would be the introduction of MusicScan's RealTime). As one might expect, however, the real change began with the overall musical focus. If Dennis was the heritage folk-leaning guru, John was the rock & roll heretic...and, somehow, they found a balance that made Denver sit up and take notice.

"When we first started, KBCO had the mountain, folksy kind of acoustic guitar-based rock sound," Dennis admits. "At the same time, though, there were these

artists like Talking Heads and Elvis Costello coming out with very interesting, unique and different music. We embraced Elvis right from the start; he was rootsy—he was an angry young man—but he was rootsy. We even had him over to the station when he came through, and he took phone calls on the air and I remember he was just pissed off about everything in the world. Our listeners were so nice; they would say, 'Elvis, I just wanted to tell you that I really like your record,' and he would say, 'You're an idiot!' He would just start screaming at them about how stupid they were."

"When John arrived," continues Dennis, "we really started talking about focusing the music more in that direction. We decided that we would continue to play off of the folk-driven acoustic roots that the station had laid down but, at the same time, move forward. By then we had Dire Straits and Peter Gabriel and all these really beautifully produced records. They just sounded wonderful on the air and nobody else was really playing them in the market."

"I would say we had a healthy debate going on," adds Bradley. "It certainly wasn't arguing, but it was just a good balance. We both compromised. Remember, this was before call-out research. A few stations, certainly not us, were doing auditorium music testing, but this was a time when you just picked the music. You didn't have a lot of scientific evidence to go on. So it was a lot of gut; a tremendous amount of gut. And did you worry about it? Yeah, but the approach was more along the lines of, 'Hey, this is a great song, let's play it. Grateful Dead into A Flock Of Seagulls? Yeah, okay, no problem.' The only thing we avoided back then was corporate rock—Boston, Def Leppard, Foreigner, Journey. We stayed away from that."

The meld worked, and by the mid-'80s KBCO began its steady climb up the Denver rankings ladder. "One of the best feelings that I had at KBCO was when we first beat KAZY in the ratings," John recalls. "They were the second AOR in town. Next, when we beat KBPI—where Dennis and I both used to work—it was, 'Yeah, we are on a roll,' and we just felt great."

KBCO had arrived, and was about to accomplish the impossible. Among its untold treasures, however, the horizon held many clouds for our heroes as well. As Bradley and Constantine prepared to ride an unprecedented wave of totally adult success, KBCO would encounter an amazing series of battles. For the details, turn to Part II, The Book Of Revelation. ✨



KBCO'S ORIGINAL OWNER **Bob Greenlee**

BY JON PETERSON

"I didn't know anything about programming. That's why I hired good people!"

So says, Bob Greenlee, the original owner of KBCO and a hardworking guy. Admittedly, he was not a "visionary" in the programming sense of the word, but he did have a vision. He was an enthusiastic, creative owner/GM with a vision to run a successful, profitable radio operation. And that vision involved surrounding himself with a team of dedicated broadcasters with their fingers on the pulse of the Denver/Boulder market.

"If you're going to hire good people, then you've got to let them do their job. As long as they met the goals that were mutually agreed upon, then I left them alone." Bob Greenlee did just that, and the results have become legendary. "I told everyone from the very beginning that if they relied on me to assist with programming, and it was based on my tastes, all we'd be listening to is Gregorian chanting." Bob had the foresight to surround himself with good people and gave them the room they needed to achieve their team goals. And in the process, KBCO set the standards and benchmarks that every Adult Rock station strives for; creativity balanced with radio fundamentals, audio art tempered with successful commerce and short-term strategies that lead to long-term success stories.



But the "Granddaddy of all Triple-A stations" didn't reach #1 in the market overnight. It was a result of endless years of hard work and a boundless commitment and love for quality radio.

Greenlee was always interested in radio. He got into the technical and ham-radio-operator side of things in high school, even earning his 2nd Class FCC Engineering License before graduation. Also, Bob's father was an audiophile, who built his own hi-fi equipment. "I used to help him build his own tube-type amplifiers, so I knew that there were people out there who were interested in the signal quality that AM couldn't deliver. So my introduction was

in building these huge speakers and amps and hooking them up to one of the very first FM stereo tuners and trying to pull in WOI-FM, a classical station out of Aimes, Iowa." The year was 1959 and Bob had a feeling that the FM dial would blossom in the coming decade.

In 1961, Bob attempted to talk a rich uncle into investing in and purchasing an FM station. At that time, there were only four frequencies available for application, and all one needed to do was fill out an FCC form, submit a very nominal engineering study and it was almost always automatically granted. "It was a pretty fertile field," according to

Greenlee. "But my uncle said, 'Who the hell is ever going to listen to FM radio?' It would have cost about \$50,000 at the time, and he rejected the idea. Still, I firmly believed that FM was the future of radio."

Without his own FM station, he did the next best thing. Bob managed his campus radio station and graduated from Iowa State with a degree in Broadcasting in 1963. Upon graduation, he moved to Des Moines and worked for an advertising agency with some family friends for a few years, but there was still a strong calling to return to radio full time. "I worked with a media broker in an attempt to buy

"To me, it was a great, grand journey. All of us who were there during my 12-year period grew and gained a great deal from the experience, both personally and emotionally, as a result of having been together."

a station. I had the choice of buying an AM-daytimer in Boulder or a full-time AM Station owned by Curt Gowdy in Laramie, WY. I went on a scouting mission to both places and I really fell in love with Boulder."

Bob bought KADE-AM in 1975 and ran it as an FM-style album rock station. "At that time, most cars didn't have FM tuners, so it served a real listener need." But Bob realized that the possibility of making any money at an AM daytime station would be very limited. "I kept looking around, counseled with an engineer and found an under-utilized Class C license." The name of that station was KRNW-FM and Bob had his heart hung on the hopes of eventually buying and upgrading it.

Bob Wilkinson, an attorney and eccentric hippy, owned KRNW. "The station was 1,000 watts with an antenna that was caving in on the roof of a three-floor office building," recalls Greenlee. "It had a six-mile signal radius, but even with that small coverage, the station had an interesting following in the progressive college community. It was largely a time-brokered station. Right after arriving in Boulder and purchasing KADE, I started laying the groundwork with Bob Wilkinson to buy KRNW." The sale eventually went through by the end of 1976, and Greenlee changed the call letters to KBCO-FM.

"Here was this 1,000-watt station operating on a 100,000 watt Class C facility and I was trying to upgrade it. So even though I had the license for a 100,000-watt station, I had a difficult time in getting the actual power boost approved by the FCC. There was this weird 'government quiet zone' because of an antenna farm the National Bureau of Standards operated just north of town. All the radio and TV stations here in Boulder had to adhere to their restrictions and coordinate their power and frequency with several governmental agencies, so upgrading this FM station was more of a challenge than I ever imagined in the beginning."

But before he could even begin to think about upgrading the station, he had to first get it off the ground under its new call letters. Randy Morrison was running the AM station and had been hired from KBPI, the big Rock Radio station in Denver. "He had this idea in his mind to program country rock-based, Colorado-sound music, with groups like Firefall, Dan Fogelberg and some CSN. He was the one who recommended to me the hiring of Dennis Constantine to run the new FM side. Dennis had been at both KBPI and a Top 40 station in Denver."

According to Greenlee, Constantine was a very dedicated, hardworking guy who had a great sense about music and what would work in the market. The idea was to build the AM-FM combo in a slow, sustainable manner and

entrench its uniqueness in the community. "We were profitable almost from the beginning on both the AM and FM. The AM had been in the format for a year. When we got the FM on the air, we sold commercial spots as a combo for both. The AM rate was \$8, so if you paid an extra \$3, you got a spot on the FM, too. It was a great way to help build revenues and an audience for both stations."

Dennis, Bob and the newly hired Sales Manager, Ray Skibitsky, kept the operational costs low in the beginning. "I just let it build over time to establish credibility in the marketplace. In 1981, I had to borrow a lot of money to build transmitters, towers and the cost of overcoming this governmental zoning. It was at that point that we decided we finally had a competitive signal in the Denver market. With that signal, Dennis, myself and the team wanted to know how far we thought we could take the station."

Constantine hired Jhan Hiber, a respected radio consultant, who helped the station by conducting research projects and focus groups. According to Greenlee, it was Hiber who analyzed the initial research and came back and said, "You guys have the capability of being the #1 station in the Denver market. All it's going to take is some commitment on the part of the staff and spending some money on television."

However, it wasn't Greenlee's immediate goal to be #1 in the ratings.

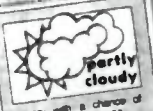
continued



Autumn getaways
Favorite destinations
of Boulder travelers
PASSPORT, PAGE 1C



Missing pit bull found in Aurora PAGE 1B
U.S. to impose new anti-abortion rules PAGE 14A
Buffs' Oliver hurt, may miss 6 weeks PAGE 1D



Aug. 30, 1987
Boulder, Colorado
75 Cents

Boulder County's
Complete Newspaper
97th Year No. 167

Sunday Camera

Greenlee dared to be different Unique sound, style took KBCO from obscurity to top

By BILL SCAMMON
Camera Staff Writer

Bob Greenlee says the world is full of "cookie cutters and carbon paper" and radio stations that sound like one another.

Greenlee, a fan of Mozart chamber music, in 12 years parlayed two small Boulder FM and AM stations into KBCO-AM and FM, the Denver area's leading rock 'n' roll station. (KCOI beat KBCO in the latest Denver-metro Arbitron ratings, but it has an easy-listening format.)

Greenlee did it, employees say, by rejecting a menu approach to radio and by letting the creative people be creative.

And in so doing he and his wife, Diane, parlayed a \$325,000 investment into two radio stations they sold Tuesday for \$27.5 million.

"If Bob doesn't like it, we must be doing something right," is the standing joke of the people who chose the music for KBCO.

Promotions director David Rahn says Greenlee has given them the flexibility to "put a lot of ourselves into the station." That, he says, breeds pride and more interest in "what happens down the road."

Down the road, things shouldn't change much, according to the buyer. The Greenlees sold their station to the (See GREENLEE, Page 1A)



FATHER OF KBCO: Boulder Councilman Bob Greenlee prefers Mozart to rock, but let KBCO follow the beat of a different drummer

"I wanted to be the #1 billing station in the market. We always were very firm on price. The Denver stations had to beat up each other on rates and we always kept our edge by being in Boulder and not becoming part of that Denver scene. And to this day, I still think that being from Boulder gave us a competitive advantage, not just in terms of sales, but in programming as well. Boulder has the image of being a cool, offbeat, progressive college town to visit—or vicariously wish that you lived there—so I've always thought that was our edge. We didn't have to discount a lot and we had the time to slowly build the station throughout most of the '80s to get us to #1, which we eventually achieved in 1988."

Although Bob was a hands-on station owner and GM, he wasn't GSM. As the station grew on the programming side, Ray Skibitsky kept the pace just as spiffy on the revenue side. "Ray was on the AM station when I got here in '75; the previous owner had hired him. He was a young, aggressive and bright guy; I saw a lot of potential in Ray, and just let him do his thing. I worked with Ray in developing a sales staff and a sales direction, but Ray pretty much handled all the day-to-day stuff, and did very well indeed!"

Greenlee attributes KBCO's success not just to their slow, sustainable growth and common-sense business model, but also to the non-biological extended family atmosphere that he helped foster among his employees. "Because of my own humble background and beginnings, I always

considered the KBCO employees not only my companions in the work situation, but also as a part of my life on the personal side, and I think that's the way we all felt about each other. I fostered that sense of camaraderie and sense of extended family, because I think that people work together better when they have common goals and a common commitment, not just to their job, but also to each other. Not to mention our livelihoods were at stake. We were all economically tied to each other, too. My success and their success were all intertwined. I was not a group owner with out-of-town stations in 15 other markets. We had to make it here in Boulder and Denver."

Like many wise businessmen who take a family-run operation to the next level, Bob Greenlee knew that he had to eventually sell the station. "I saw what was happening to the industry, how it was quickly consolidating. I knew that I had to get real big real fast, or get out. And I just wasn't particularly energized at that point to stay in and build a multi-station, major-market, family-owned chain. It took me most of my life to figure this out, but what I really enjoy doing is *building something*—I don't enjoy running something. And when it got to the point of maintenance, instead of creative building, then it lost a lot of the challenge and appeal for me."

But Greenlee knew that he had helped to create a very special place for his extended family of radio teammates and for the community at large. "When I finally made the decision to leave and to sell the station in 1988, my #1 goal was to sell it to somebody that understood that this was a unique property. The last thing that I said upon closing the deal with John Lynch of Noble Broadcasting was, 'John, go home and leave these guys alone. Let them do their job. You don't need to stand over them.'"

KBCO's ongoing and enduring success is a living, breathing testament to Bob Greenlee's vision for the future of radio, and his commitment to the unique nature of his adopted Colorado home. "To me, it was a great, grand journey. All of us who were there during my 12-year period grew and gained a great deal from the experience, both personally and emotionally, as a result of having been together."

And not just for those who grew up on KBCO. It's quite obvious that everyone in the Adult Rock format owes Bob Greenlee a tremendous "tip of the hat" for his years of hard work, impeccable interpersonal skills, and yes, dare we say, his "vision" for a unique, intelligently programmed, yet profitable broadcast operation.

At KBCO, how could it have been any other way? 🌟

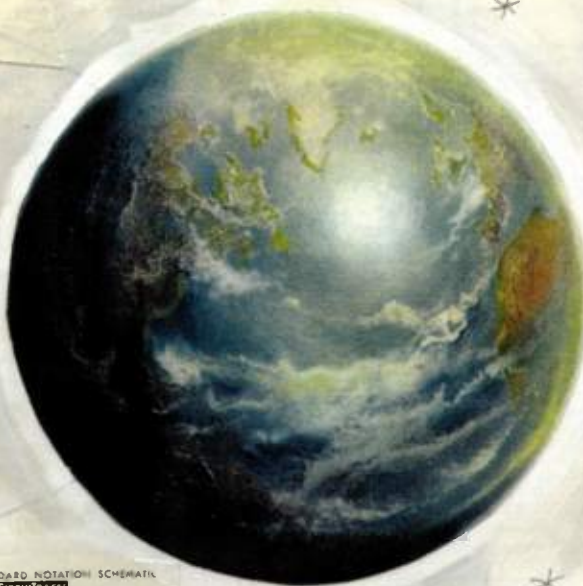


1a.)
VARIABLE
CAST

COND BURN

FIRST BURN

100 M. MI.



Name _____
Grade _____



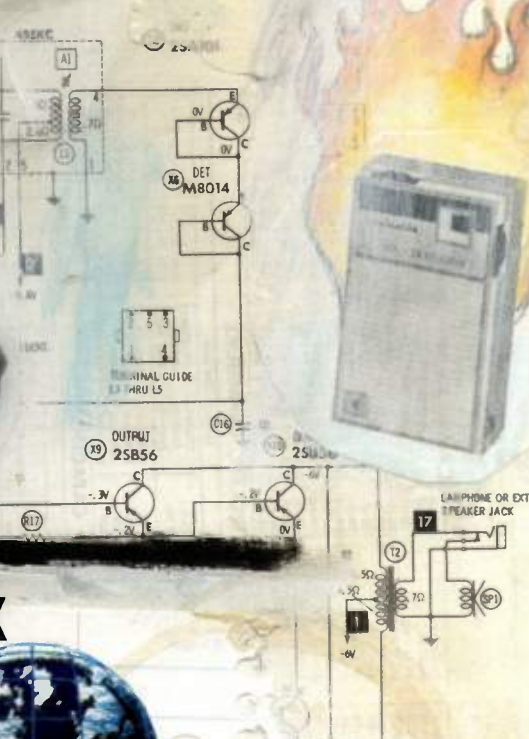
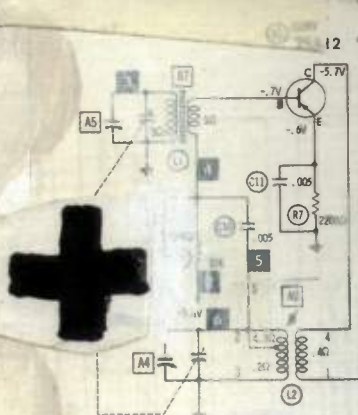
Check for specified source voltage. Set
Exhaustion loop of generator to radiat
Adjust output of generator to radiat
Suggested Alignment Tools:
A1 thru A6.
GENERAL CEMENT #8888, 9089,.....WALSCO #2541, 2587

PHOTOFACT STANDARD NOTATION SCHEMATIC
with CIRCUTRACE
© Howard W. Sams & Co., Inc. 1963



ADJUST	REMARKS
A1, A2, A3	Adjust for maximum. Repeat until no cement can be made.
A1	Adjust for maximum.
A2, A3	Adjust for maximum.
A4, A5	Adjust for maximum.
A6	Adjust for maximum.

RADIO NAME: _____
SUPPLIER: _____
TYPE SET: 10-Transistor AM Receiver
POWER SUPPLY: 9 Volts DC
OPERATING: 6ma @ 9VDC (No Signal, Min. Volume)
12ma @ 9VDC (Signal, Normal Volume)
TUNING: BROADCAST BAND - 1600KC



WORLD CLASS ROCK



Resistors are 1/2 watt or less
10% or 20% unless otherwise
with v
ratic
ket pl
om u
ls me
rated
l give
1515



© 2000 Warner Bros. Records Inc.

KBCO: The Early Years, Part II

The Book Of Revelation

(As told by the Prophets Constantine and Bradley)

BY KEVIN STAPLEFORD

CHAPTER ONE: It Happened

In the first installment of our saga, KBCO emerged as the top-rated Rock station in Denver in 1986. Still, the collective eyes of the station's storied staff were set on a much bigger prize—knocking Soft AC KOSI out of the market's pole position. It seemed the impossible dream at the time, as KOSI had been entrenched at #1 for over a decade. In the winter of 1988, however, that changed: Denver had a new ratings champion—and the world of KBCO would soon change forever.

"I remember that day very, very vividly," John Bradley says. "Ray Skibitsky, KBCO's General Manager by then, pulled off the ratings from the fax machine and it was lunchtime, so there weren't a lot of people in the building. I was there and a couple of others and we weren't even gathered around the fax machine, which is where the numbers came in back then. Ray knew that they were about to come across, so he just went and got them. Before you know it, he was running through the halls like Paul Revere, shouting, 'We're #1 in the market. We're #1 in the market.' It's one of those things where you're kind of numb and you don't believe it until you see it in print."

"I knew that the Arbitron info was downloading, but I had a lunchtime meeting, so I was out of the station when the ratings were released," Dennis Constantine remembers. "As I got back into the car after the meeting,



(l-r): Dennis Constantine and John Bradley

Doug [Clifton] was on the air and he came on and said, 'KBCO. #1,' and then he went into Joni Mitchell's song, 'Number One.' I thought, 'Wait a second, does that mean that we're #1? What does he mean by that?' And within a couple of minutes, I'm driving up to the station and, as my car is turning onto the street where the station is, I see Ray Skibitsky running out of the building, jumping up and down with his finger up in the air, #1, pointing up to the sky. I thought, 'Oh my god, I can't believe it,' and he was jumping up and down like a little boy. It was really great."

"One of the great Arbitron ironies," John points out, "is that we were #1 in the Winter of '88, but the next Book we fell to #9, 12+. Then, in the next Book we went back up to #1—and we didn't change anything and the market didn't change. It was one of those great, 'Huh?' moments from Arbitron."

"In a way that worked in our favor," he adds. "We were quickly humbled. One of my big things at KBCO was always to promote, market and program

like nobody knows who we are. You can't take for granted that we were the best thing in the town, the hottest thing in town, the most known thing in town. It's important that we always acted like nobody knew who we were so that we would try harder.

"Being #1 was never one of the things that we promoted, anyway. We never positioned the station as the #1 radio station—not at all. One other footnote is that we became #1 just after Bob Greenlee sold the radio station to Noble Broadcasting. So we really saw the #1 achievement as a local ownership, a Bob Greenlee achievement...and then suddenly we were corporately owned. So it was kind of a bittersweet #1, in a way. Hey, we reached #1, yet we're going into this umbrella of corporate ownership. What did that hold for us?"

CHAPTER TWO: The Takeover

Funny how things turn out. As Dennis's original dream for the little station that could finally came to fruition, everything changed. Learning how to defend its position as a market-leader would only be part of the equation for the '90s, it turned out, as Bob Greenlee sold KBCO to the San Diego-based Noble Broadcast Group. Noble CEO John Lynch met with Greenlee in Boulder, negotiated a deal, and KBCO's founder soon saw his \$265,000 investment immediately grow into \$27,250,000.

continued



1987 PROGRAM



ALL NEW
THE MESSAGE



WORLD CLASS ROCK



Support of Kenyan
suits runners to a

Boulder Boulder change
spurs KBCO flag shirt
By Kristian Kromer

Best Radio DJ
Ginger Barlow



Special in The Denver Post
...runners won't be the only ones to
...and black flag in today's
...the Boulder
...the construction of the
...KBCO-TV
...and more



KBCO top donor to AIDS project



FAMILY SIZE!



"Well, we knew that they owned 91X [XTRA San Diego], so they couldn't be such a bad company," sighs Dennis. "As we expected, John Lynch came in and made these proclamations that nothing would change, 'We love the station,' blah, blah, blah...and it was true, I mean, I think that was his intention. I remember suddenly needing to learn how to really control a budget, though. When Bob owned the station, if we needed a new cart machine for the studio, I would go into his office and say, 'Bob, we need to buy a new cart machine.' That was the whole process. With Noble, you had to write down everything that you thought you might need to buy in the next year. It was like, 'Whoa, what a concept.' So, I put together my wish list, and it really did work well for a couple of years. There was plenty of money to buy stuff. We were buying television advertising and really trying to find ways to use the Noble money to maintain that #1 position. So really, the first year of Noble was like heaven, because they left us alone. They were in San Diego, and we had money to spend.

"We were believing that they weren't going to change anything," John Bradley offers, "yet we knew that things would change because the owner wasn't in the corner office of the building anymore. It was just an uncertain time. There were a lot of radio stations changing hands at that time. It was on a small scale, but similar to what has happened in the last few years of consolidation. Stations were selling and, wow, we were one of them. I knew it would catch up to us sooner or later.

"It really hit home when people started coming into the station that didn't live in Boulder or Denver," he adds. "They started coming into the station and having authority to do some things, whether it was in the business office or critiquing the programming or tweaking the engineering. We were like, 'Wait a minute, you're not from here. What are you doing here? Cut that out!'"

"It got worse," Dennis explains. "This is the time when radio groups were laying out outrageous amounts of money for radio stations. Compared to today, it's like nothing, but we were shocked when John [Lynch] went out and paid the high-

est price ever paid at that time for a radio station. He paid \$65,000,000 for a station in oil-depressed Houston! As a result, the financial pressures really came down hard on all of the remaining stations in the group. The only way Noble could pay these prices—since it was all short-term money with balloon payments—was to get stations in the group to increase cash flow. When that first balloon payment came due a few years later, they were looking to save money everywhere. It got so bad that employees were bringing in their own pens and pencils to work. There was no paper in the copy machine. There'd be no postage in the postage meter, so we couldn't send anything out. It was comical because, here was the #1 radio station in Denver, and we didn't have any money.

"As a matter of fact," he continues, "they even sold the building we were broadcasting in to the tenants that we had downstairs. John [Lynch] wanted to move us to Denver and I said, 'No way, you're crazy. You can't move a Boulder radio station to Denver.' That was our unique identity. When people think of a radio station, they have to have some image that they can associate with it. KBCO's music image was so nebulous; you couldn't describe it in two words, Classic Rock or the Best Country, or whatever. So the name that we put on it was 'Boulder'; that's the thing that differentiated it from everything else on the dial. We couldn't just move KBCO to some suburban strip mall parking lot in Denver.

"By 1990, this financial stuff really started playing hard on a lot of the staff members. It was as if this, this *bastion* of creativity was being suddenly snuffed out by the lack of money we had to spend. Plus, everything was about how could we get more money flowing into the building. Noble was trying to find money in every corner so that they could pay off their debtors. It was really a difficult time for the station."

(Remember, folks, this was 10 long years ago—before the grip of consolidation took ahold of the radio world at large. Like so many other things, KBCO was first in dealing with corporate takeover!)

CHAPTER THREE: The End

Even as the days were darkening at KBCO, the outside world began to celebrate their new progressive radio ideal. Led in part by the smashing success story growing out of Boulder, music trades added their own Adult sections and, suddenly, there was a national format to create. As one might expect, Dennis and John were looked upon as the keepers of the "new" magical keys. The powerful combination of external opportunities and internal difficulties, however, would soon tear the team apart.

"Many in the industry were looking at KBCO as the big station in the format because it was #1 in the market, so I started getting calls," says Dennis. "I got calls from radio station managers who asked, 'Can you help us?' As a result, I took on a few consulting clients just at the time when KBCO was becoming a hard place to be for all of us.

"At one time we were a very tight group, but things got rough when the financial foundation of the radio station got weak. Then, when I started consulting a couple of stations, I think that Ray and John probably saw it as though I was not as interested in KBCO anymore; that I had outside interests. I think it was their intention all along that if we *did* start consulting—if we took KBCO out on the road—that we would all do it together. My first client was WHFS, which I had done as a favor to Dave Einstein, who was a friend of mine from years before. At the time, there didn't seem to be a problem with it, but it just created a distance between me and Ray and John."

"KBCO was starting to slide down from #1 and I thought that Dennis should have given his full attention to KBCO at that time," John admits, "but, in this period, there was also an interesting event that happened. WXRT's Norm Winer and KBCO had exchanged calls during this late-'80s period, because they were doing a lot of the same things. At the time, there were very few stations around the country that did whatever kind of radio that we were doing. Also, we

continued



"One of my big things at KBCO was always to promote, market and program like nobody knows who we are. You can't take for granted that we were the best thing in the town, the hottest thing in town, the most known thing in town. It's important that we always acted like nobody knew who we were so that we would try harder." —John Bradley

had started using Music Master, the music scheduling system—which was a big leap for us—so Norm and MD Lin Brehmer came out to see how a computer could help you schedule music. So we had this first kind of Triple-A summit and it was interesting. Dennis and John from KBCO. Norm and Lin from 'XRT...sounds like a to-the-death cage match.

"After that, I would say I was kind of itchy to do something else," John went on to explain. "Partly because of the corporate ownership and partly because I had been at KBCO for over eight years at the time. So, you know, it just became time to move on to something else—not because I didn't like it anymore, but because I was ready for the next challenge. And I think after being there for that long—and Ray Skibitsky was there longer than that—you build up some rules around yourself that you have to play by. I started wanting to do other things with KBCO, but they may have messed with the ratings. So jumping over to consulting allowed me to say, 'Hey, here's a station that can do X and here's a station that can do Y and here's a station that can do Z.'"

Ka-boom. In 1992, John Bradley left KBCO to form SBR Creative Media, along with KBCO General Manager Ray Skibitsky and Promotions Director David Rahn. "I was shocked," Dennis Constantine says, "because it happened very quickly. But they had their vision for this company that they wanted to build, they knew what they had to do, and they couldn't do it and continue to work at KBCO. So they went out and created their company, and that's when I promoted Doug [Clifton] to Program Director. It was tough when those guys left, but our bullpen was deep. We had a lot of good people there to step up to the plate."

"Well, I think for some, it was very sad and they missed us," John shrugs, "and other people at the station were, I

thought, were kind of bitter about it. It's not like we were going across the street to work against them, we were just leaving to go start a consultancy...it was time for new challenges, and you can't take everybody when you leave."

The following year, Dennis also left KBCO to deal with a consulting plate that had grown uncomfortably full. Then, before 1994 was over, SBR signed on The Peak—featuring a great deal of the music and airstaff that had originally made KBCO a phenomenon. The station almost did KBCO in, as a matter of fact. Rumor has it that Howard Stern was one day from doing mornings. But then, a series of miracles took place—which involved (drum roll please) both Dennis Constantine and John Bradley.

CHAPTER FOUR: The Second Coming

After the departure of Bradley, Constantine and the rest of KBCO's old guard, the station staggered to the brink of extinction. Mike O'Connor was brought in to assess KBCO's future. In June '96 it was decided not to blow up the station, as was rumored, and plans began to relaunch the station in the fall of 1996...re-enter Dennis:

"Mike O'Connor was the PD, and he is a brilliant strategist," he remembers. "He asked me to come back and help him put together a historical retrospective of KBCO. It was a special show that would run over two weeks, and the whole concept was that KBCO would be playing back its entire library: its complete history from the beginning to now. What I did was play the archivist. I had tons of old air checks of the station and different things we had done. So we basically re-

lived the radio station.

"So I went through my archives and put together the music and old airchecks. I pulled out all the old songs, even the old rootsy things that we played—David Bromberg and all this shit. Mike and I sat down, day by day, and went through it all. Mike really had a vision of how he wanted this to sound. He had a really sharp production wiz named Jonathan Hanst who would take a lot of the narration that I had laid down and put the whole thing together. He created produced bits that ran throughout the day, in between the historical music. As they started reliving KBCO, the phones were lighting up. People were saying how great it sounded. Mike saw the amazing response and, midway through this two-week retrospective, he realized his decision to save the radio station had been correct! Mike had decided that the station wasn't broken, it just needed to be revitalized. So, by the time we were done with the retrospective, KBCO was reborn as World Class Rock."

As if that wasn't synchronistic enough, John Bradley and business partner Dave Rahn completed the circle last year, as SBR took over the consulting reigns of KBCO [Ray Skibitsky is no longer with the firm]. "The immediate future is that KBCO is an immensely dominant product," Bradley says. "It's been interesting to hear and see and find out how KBCO resurrected itself from the ashes in the late '90s—mostly because of its unique heritage. The station could resurrect itself because of how great it was in the past, and Mike O'Connor and Dave Benson and Scott Arbough have done a great job of leaning on that heritage, while really making it a station that is very different than it used to be. Why did it work? How could the station make such a comeback? Well...KBCO was always credible, that's the big thing. It was built on credibility."

He pauses and adds, "Yeah, if there's one thing we did, we built a credible radio station." ✨



23 YEARS OF ROCK

And Still Rolling

1977

JANUARY

- Bob and Diane Greenlee purchase the 97.3 KRNW Boulder, CO, license for \$265,000 from Robert N. Wilkenson.

FEBRUARY

- Dennis Constantine is hired to develop and sign on KBCO at 97.3 FM.

JUNE 3

- KBCO signs on with 250 watts broadcasting from 7,000-foot Lee Hill.

DECEMBER

- Richard Ray is named Production Director.

1978

MARCH

- Judy McNutt joins KBCO as MD.

APRIL

- Elvis Costello takes calls from listeners on the air.

JUNE

- Ray Skibitsky is promoted to GM.

WINTER

- KBCO presents Grand Opening of Boulder Theater.

On-air schedule:

Dennis Constantine (mornings), Jeremy McCaleb (middays), Judy McNutt (afternoons) and Richard Ray (nights).

1979

JANUARY

- Mike McClain joins KBCO as News Director.

JUNE

- Bill Murray, from "Saturday Night Live," stops by KBCO and does a four-hour guest show.

SEPTEMBER

- KBCO's power increases to 33,000 watts.

NOVEMBER

- KBCO ranks #1 in Boulder Arbitron and Birch ratings.

1980

MAY

- 15,000 people watch 60 human-powered crafts race in the first KBCO Kinetic Sculpture Challenge, from Erie to Boulder.

JULY

- Debut of new program, KBCO Lunch Blocks.

SEPTEMBER

- Michael London joins the KBCO airstaff doing nights.

1981

JANUARY

- John Bradley becomes APD.

MAY

- KBCO Kinetic Sculpture Challenge races from Boulder Reservoir to Boulder.

NOVEMBER

- Listening audience grows to 100,000. Arbitron share increases from 1.6 to 2.4.

1982

JANUARY

- Ginger Havlat joins the KBCO airstaff.

MAY

- KBCO Kinetic Sculpture Challenge held entirely at Boulder Reservoir.
- Columbia Records announces it's cutting off service to KBCO because of an album tracking problem.

JULY

- Roxanne joins KBCO airstaff, Dennis Constantine's promoted to OM and John Bradley's named PD.

AUGUST

- David Rahn joins KBCO as Promotions and Marketing Director.

SEPTEMBER

- KBCO unveils its Sunday Night Jazz program with Richard Ray.

OCTOBER

- Doug Clifton joins KBCO as MD.

1983

FEBRUARY

- KBCO is the first radio station in Colorado to play CDs.

AUGUST

- Karen Conway hired as News Director.

SEPTEMBER

- KBCO Kinetic Sculpture Challenge is held in the fall due to construction at Boulder Reservoir.

SEPTEMBER

- Scott Monahan (from KUSA-TV Denver) is hired as PM Drive News Anchor.

DECEMBER

- KBCO becomes Denver's #1 Rock station, moving 3.7 to 5.2 (#1 18-49, #5 12+).

1984

APRIL

- Laurie Cobb joins the airstaff.

MAY

- KBCO Kinetic Sculpture Challenge held at Boulder Reservoir.

SEPTEMBER

- KBCO moves to new state-of-the-art studios at 4801 Riverbend Rd.

OCTOBER

- Peter Finch joins KBCO morning show as newsman/sidekick.

On-air schedule:

Dennis Constantine (mornings), Richard Ray (9am-noon), Doug Clifton (noon-3pm), John Bradley (3-6pm), Michael London (evenings), Roxanne (nights) and Laurie Cobb (overnights).

1985

FEBRUARY

- Scott Arbough joins KBCO.

FEBRUARY

- Ira Gordon is added to the airstaff.

MARCH

- KBCO debuts Red Rooster Lounge, the Sunday night blues show.

APRIL

- KBCO broadcasts Intervention Day April Fool's hoax.

MAY

- KBCO Kinetic Sculpture Challenge held at Boulder Reservoir.

JUNE

- KBCO's power increases to 100,000 watts from high atop the 8,000-foot Eldorado Mountain.

SEPTEMBER

- Doug Clifton promoted to APD; Ginger Havlat becomes MD.

NOVEMBER

- KBCO audience reaches 200,000.

1986

FEBRUARY

- First annual KBCO Downhill Cardboard Derby is held at Arapahoe Basin Ski Area.

MAY

- KBCO Kinetic Sculpture Challenge And Balloon Classic held at Boulder Reservoir.

SEPTEMBER

- Renae Foxhoven joins the promotions department.

1987

FEBRUARY

- KBCO Downhill Cardboard Derby held at Arapahoe Basin Ski Area.

MAY

- KBCO Kinetic Sculpture Challenge And Balloon Classic held at Boulder Reservoir.

AUGUST

- Noble Broadcasting Group purchases KBCO-AM & FM from the Greenlees for \$27,250,000.

DECEMBER

- KBCO becomes Denver's #1 radio station 12+.

1988

FEBRUARY

- Second annual KBCO Downhill Cardboard Derby held at Arapahoe Basin Ski Area.

MAY

- KBCO Kinetic Sculpture Challenge And Balloon Classic held at Boulder Reservoir.

JUNE

- Studio C concept created by live performance from Melissa Etheridge.



1989

FEBRUARY

- KBCO Downhill Cardboard Derby held at Arapahoe Basin Ski Area.

MAY

- KBCO Kinetic Sculpture Challenge And Balloon Classic held at Boulder Reservoir.

AUGUST

- KBCO buys all the tickets for The Who concert at Folsom Stadium in Boulder.

SEPTEMBER

- Paul Marszalek joins KBCO airstaff, replacing Roxanne.

DECEMBER

- *Billboard* names KBCO Radio Station Of The Year and Doug Clifton as Music Director Of The Year.

1990

FEBRUARY

- KBCO Downhill Cardboard Derby held at Arapahoe Basin Ski Area.

APRIL

- KBCO hosts Kinetics Party And Parade Downtown Boulder, followed by Kinetic Ball at Boulder Theater.
- KBCO's Kinetic Kite Festival at North Boulder Park.

MAY

- KBCO hosts Kid-netics at South Boulder Recreation Center.
- KBCO Kinetic Sculpture Challenge And Balloon Classic held at Boulder Reservoir.

FALL

- KBCO hosts Mudd Volleyball Tournament.
- For the second consecutive year, KBCO selected as *Billboard's* Radio Station Of The Year and KBCO's Doug Clifton voted Music Director Of The Year.

NOVEMBER

- Tom Koetting joins KBCO staff as Production Director.

WINTER

- KBCO's Snowball Softball Tournament.

1991

FEBRUARY

- KBCO Downhill Cardboard Derby held at Arapahoe Basin Ski Area.

MAY

- KBCO Kinetic Sculpture Challenge And Balloon Challenge held at Boulder Reservoir.
- Dino Ianni promoted to KBCO VP/GM.

JUNE

- Ray Skibitsky, John Bradley and Dave Rahn leave KBCO to form **SBR Radio Company**.
- Doug Clifton named KBCO PD.

JULY

- Renae Foxhoven named KBCO Promotions and Marketing Manager.

AUGUST

- Dennis Constantine upped to VP/Programming.

1992

FEBRUARY

- KBCO Downhill Cardboard Derby held at Arapahoe Basin Ski Area.

APRIL

- First *KBCO Studio C* CD released, produced by Tom Koetting.

MAY

- KBCO Kinetic Sculpture Challenge And Balloon Challenge held at Boulder Reservoir.

1993

FEBRUARY

- KBCO Downhill Cardboard Derby held at Arapahoe Basin Ski Area.

APRIL

- Dennis Constantine leaves KBCO to consult radio full-time.

MAY

- KBCO Kinetic Sculpture Challenge And Balloon Challenge held at Boulder Reservoir.

SEPTEMBER

- Dino Ianni leaves KBCO.
- Mary Rawlins promoted to VP/GM.

1994

FEBRUARY

- KBCO Downhill Cardboard Derby held at Arapahoe Basin Ski Area.

MAY

- KBCO Kinetic Sculpture Challenge And Balloon Challenge held at Boulder Reservoir.
- Doug Clifton leaves KBCO to start-up KXPK (The Peak).

JULY

- Judy McNutt joins KBCO as PD.

SEPTEMBER

- The Peak signs on.

OCTOBER

- Ginger Havlat leaves KBCO for The Peak.
- Scott Arbough named MD of KBCO.

1995

FEBRUARY

- KBCO Downhill Cardboard Derby held at Arapahoe Basin Ski Area.

MAY

- KBCO Kinetic Sculpture Challenge And Balloon Challenge held at Boulder Reservoir.

JUNE

- Mike O'Connor named PD of KBCO.

1996

FEBRUARY

- Jacor Communications buys KBCO as part of a \$152,000,000 package.
- KBCO Downhill Cardboard Derby held at Arapahoe Basin Ski Area.

MAY

- KBCO Kinetic Sculpture Challenge And Balloon Challenge held at Boulder Reservoir.

JULY

- Cherry Park Arts Festival.

SEPTEMBER

- KBCO plays back its entire music library over two weeks, in chronological order, hosted by Dennis Constantine.

FALL

- KBCO World Class Rock From Then & Now promotion gives away a Land Rover and VW Bus.

NOVEMBER

- KBCO donates \$42,700 to Boulder Aids Project.

DECEMBER

- KBCO gives away 600 toys to Boulder's Emergency Family Assistance Association.

1997

JANUARY

- Dave Benson (from SBR Radio Company) named PD of KBCO.

FEBRUARY

- KBCO Downhill Cardboard Derby held at Arapahoe Basin Ski Area.

MAY

- KBCO Kinetic Sculpture Challenge And Balloon Challenge held at Boulder Reservoir.

JUNE

- KBCO's 20th Anniversary Show at Buell Theatre features Lyle Lovett, Bruce Hornsby, Todd Park Mohr and Robben Ford.

AUGUST

- Bret Saunders joins KBCO's morning show.
- Ginger Havlat leaves KPXK and returns to middays on KBCO.

1998

FEBRUARY

- KBCO Downhill Cardboard Derby held at Arapahoe Basin Ski Area.

APRIL

- KBCO Annual Kinetics Parade with Dr. Laura and Neurotic Naggin' Flies.

MAY

- KBCO Kinetic Sculpture Challenge And Balloon Challenge held at Boulder Reservoir.

JULY

- KBCO's Ginger Havlat voted Best Radio DJ in Boulder.

NOVEMBER

- 25,000 copies of KBCO's *Studio C Vol. 10* (\$9.73 per CD), sell out in record time at six Blockbuster locations.

1999

FEBRUARY

- KBCO Downhill Cardboard Derby held at Arapahoe Basin Ski Area.

APRIL

- KBCO presents Natalie Merchant at the Paramount Theatre.

MAY

- KBCO Kinetic Sculpture Challenge And Balloon Challenge held at Boulder Reservoir.
- Clear Channel buys Jacor Communications and KBCO.

NOVEMBER

- Melissa Etheridge performs for 1999 Studio C Celebration.

2000

FEBRUARY

- KBCO gives away a World Class Adventure to Seven Continents.
- KBCO Downhill Cardboard Derby held at Arapahoe Basin Ski Area.

APRIL

- Dave Benson leaves KBCO to become PD of KFOG San Francisco.
- Scott Arbough named PD of KBCO.
- Keefer named MD of KBCO.

MAY

- KBCO Kinetic Sculpture Challenge And Balloon Challenge held at Boulder Reservoir.

KBCO 1990-2000

Death Or Glory?

BY MATTHEW LAWTON

In April of 1991, KBCO's worst nightmare came true. General Manager Ray Skibitsky, Program Director John Bradley and Promotion Director Dave Rahn left the station to form their own company, SBR Creative Media. Wanting to take advantage of the demographic hole that existed in the Denver market, SBR hired Dave Benson to assist them in the design and launch of KBCO's new archenemy, KXPX (The Peak). Along with former 'BCO owner Bob Greenlee, ex-'BCO PD Doug Clifton, mid-dayer Ginger Havlat and an assortment of other ex-'BCOers in tow, SBR launched The Peak, which was an '80s-based Alternative station, in September 1994. Within one year, The Peak had a 6 share and leveled what 18 years of heritage, loyalty and great radio had created. The Peak had taken off like a wild fire and left KBCO smoldering. This is the story of KBCO's amazing rise from the ashes.

In the summer of 1995, KBCO brought in Mike O'Connor to rectify the dismal situation. Having worked at Z93 in Atlanta before moving to The Edge in Albuquerque, O'Connor came to the station as a radio terminator. His one job was to destroy KBCO and launch a new format and sound on the 97.3 dial position.

"I walked in during 'BCO's darkest days," recalls O'Connor. "I arrived after The Peak had hammered KBCO. I was hired to blow up KBCO and put Howard Stern on and do a form of extreme



***"I was hired to blow up KBCO and put Howard Stern on and do a form of extreme rock. As far as everyone was concerned, KBCO was over."
—Mike O'Connor***

rock—very similar to what The Peak ended up trying several years later. As far as everyone was concerned, KBCO was over."

But after some research, O'Connor decided instead to take advantage of KBCO's heritage and recapture the true love and support of the people of Denver. "The research clearly said that not only was the opportunity to do a hard Alternative format pretty miniscule, but that we're basically blowing up a radio station whose images were intact but whose programming may not have been the best. KBCO's perceptions were still great and people still loved the station, but they were playing such bad music that they were getting killed in the TSL game against The Peak. Judy McNutt had left around the beginning of '95 and for months they had been without a PD until I entered the building in June."

So for the first two and a half months, O'Connor did nothing. He knew not to blow the station up, but he wasn't quite sure where to take it. "We were able to convince John Lynch to change the former plan and we came up with this crazy scheme called World Class Rock. It's a phrase that I had tested in Atlanta, because I thought that was the way Z93 should have gone. World Class Rock basically married up perfectly with the images that KBCO had."

Eventually they created the World Class Rock package and decided that KBCO was going to be a stylistically broad radio station that covered different niches. Everything from alternative to blues to classic rock to Boulder-based hippie music would be welcomed on the 'BCO airwaves. With a ton of TV money, the station got to run for a couple of books with strategic branding and listeners' testimonial-type promos on television. By introducing new format and marketing ideas and



insisting on a certain levels of execution, the man who was prepared to put KBCO to sleep instead ended up saving the station's life.

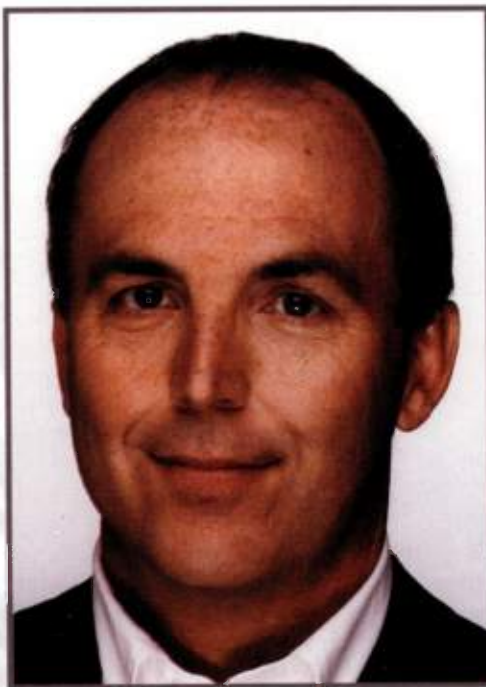
"We draped ourselves in the heritage flag," recalls O'Connor. "In my year and a half there, everything we did was an anniversary of some sort. We ran a two-week retrospective—playing every song in the KBCO library in chronological order—as the first stage in our relaunch in the fall of '95. We did another promotion where we had an old car and a VW Bus, and a new car and a new SUV, and we did sets to sort of highlight KBCO's library—you know, the best of the old, the best of the new. Then we did an anniversary Studio C concert with some of the artists that had been on earlier Studio C CD releases. Kinetics had been a benchmark that went uninterrupted even during KBCO's darkest days and continued to do well, so all the longtime promotions, like the Cardboard Derby and Kinetics, received a big place on the 'BCO page. We celebrated everything to try to reclaim our heritage in the minds of the consumer."

While still wrapped up in heritage and tradition, O'Connor unraveled some new things that caught many by surprise. KBCO began airing positioning statements, which at the time no Triple-A station would go near. KBCO broke with tradition again by giving away World Class Adventures—trips to see World Class artists in different countries. They also went one step further and hired Jonathan Hanst, an Alternative imaging icon from New York, who immediately got what KBCO was all about and applied that earthy set of voices you still hear today. Hanst created a unique sound that was both modern and contemporary at the same time. Because the voices sounded international, it gave the feeling that the station was more important than just a Boulder rock station—it was a *World Class* Rock station. And if that wasn't enough to keep the Triple-A community reeling, O'Connor did the unthinkable. "I think we might have been one of the first to really rotate records hard. It was pretty unheard of to rotate anything 35 or 40 times a week back in the mid-'90s. If you got 14 spins a week on a Triple-A station, it was considered a huge power record.

"Gary Wall, our consultant at the time, was actually quite instru-

mental in helping us right the station. He and I stripped the thing down to what would be the equivalent sound of a Modern AC today—mostly current and recurrent music; Gin Blossoms and Hootie & The Blowfish until you puked. I guess we needed to hit rock bottom that summer so we could figure a way to

"There's a lot of musical diversity that we could take advantage of. As a format, I think a lot of stations are reluctant to do that. They want to talk about how liberal they are musically, and yet they're really closed-minded. The audience is much more open to stuff, but the trick is to find the quality."
—Dave Benson



crawl out. It was a pretty tight list, but it was the best of a lot of different styles so it felt broad. You know, Eric Clapton into U2 and suddenly we're heroes."

By revisiting their heritage, while breaking a few of the rules in the Triple-A world, KBCO began to breathe again. Slowly but surely 'BCO came back, and by the fall of that year, it had made significant increases, getting back into the 4s. Within a year, it was over...they were on top of The Peak's 12+.

A year and a half after he came on board to stick the wooden stake into the lifeless KBCO heart, Mike O'Connor had, instead, revived the dying beast and transformed it back into a young athlete. It was at that same time that another high-priority Jacor station was being wheeled into the emergency room. The Fox, which was a Classic Rock station in the market, was going through the same erosion that 'BCO had gone through and Jacor wanted O'Connor to fix it. So at an industry dinner one night, O'Connor stood up and announced to everybody that he was leaving KBCO to go to The Fox and said, "I want Benson to take over KBCO." Even Benson himself thought it was funny and laughed. A few days later though, the man who was behind KBCO's downfall with The Peak got the call from O'Connor asking if he was interested. "There are only a few crown jewels in the format and to have a chance to go to KBCO, after spending all this time working on The Peak, was a very tempting and great offer," recalls Benson.

"I was impressed with Benson because he used the word 'Lilliputian' in a trade interview," recalls O'Connor. "What program director draws literary allusions to great works such as 'Gulliver's Travels' when depicting radio battle scenarios? A well-read, scholarly personality such as Benson's was perfect for the next stage in KBCO's return from the dead. That, plus Benson's participation in The Peak, made him the perfect candidate for the job. He sure made me look good."

By the time Benson arrived at the KBCO studios, the station had stopped the decline and was stabilized. "When Don Howe hired me," recalls Benson, "my marching orders were to get KBCO into the Top 5, 25-54, and keep it there."



His main game plan was to continue with what O'Connor and Scott Arbough had begun, while infusing his own ideas, along with his unique style of working with people, to help the station achieve its new goal. Benson was now fighting back from behind the 'BCO flag and showing The Peak the error of their copycat ways. Not able to compete with the *real* deal, The Peak switched formats and 'BCO was in a position to take advantage of the market conditions as they existed—as opposed to taking advantage of the format as it was portrayed in the media, trades and in the record industry at large.

"We opened our own conception of what the station could be musically. We tried to be more inclusive of mass-appeal songs and not have such a narrow conception of what either KBCO, or this format, could be. We were just looking for great songs. Scott and I worked hard at not having preconceived notions about the music that we went looking for. People would say, 'Oh, that's an alternative song.' I remember Scott and I having trouble getting the labels to service us with everything, because they had us pigeonholed as one kind of station and my observation was that there's a lot of musical diversity that we could take advantage of. As a format, I think a lot of stations are reluctant to do that. They want to talk about how liberal they are musically, and yet they're really closed-minded. The audience is much more open to stuff, but the trick is to find the quality. I think that's what we did."

When it came time to find some quality announcers, Benson went with Denver hero—and former 'BCO and Peak middayer—Ginger Havlat. "The luckiest thing that happened was that I was able to talk Ginger into coming back. She was reluctant at first, but then she reached the point where she felt it was time for her to follow her true heart when it came to what station she wanted to be at. She saw that KBCO was being better managed and better run."

At the time, the KBCO morning show featured a couple of guys trying to be cutting edge. It was a bit of a mismatch for KBCO, so Benson decided to either modify or replace the KBCO morning show. "I had met Bret Saunders at a party during that time and we didn't even talk about radio, but we discovered that we both had a lot of similar tastes. He was doing this sort of cynical, ironic, alternative show on KTCL and nobody

was hearing it. So I asked him if he wanted to come be himself on KBCO and that turned out to be exactly the way we wanted to go. That's the clue to Ginger's and Oz's success at KBCO, too—they're being themselves." So with Bret Saunders handling mornings, as himself, KBCO went from being #9 in the mornings to #1.

"We were pretty realistic about where the station was at that moment and had a pretty good plan if the market changed the way we thought it was going to when The Peak changed formats, and the way we saw other stations in the market being positioned. Scott and I talked a lot about it and I think we positioned KBCO in exactly the right spot to take advantage of where the Denver market was. We started a little brushfire and it just took off. Alternative music is really loud and sort of very narrow these days. The Classic Rock format isn't nearly as dominant as it once was, and in Denver, having all those Hard Rock radio stations, KBCO ends up being the very easy choice for a lot of adults to listen to. We put the station into a situation where we could be #1—seven Books in a row now—25-54." After stoking KBCO's enormous fire, Dave Benson left KBCO to take over the helm of KFOG in San Francisco in March of 2000.

The only time in the last 10 years when people were talking about KBCO, they talked about how great it used to be 15 years ago. After years of talking about KBCO's glory days, people are once again talking about the station in the present tense. Now under the leadership of Scott Arbough, along with longtime air personalities Ginger Havlat, Oz Medina and everybody else who's been there for a long time, the KBCO staff should be extremely proud of where KBCO is *now*. "Scott learned a lot when the radio station was at its lowest point and fought back and that's why he's got the job today," mentions Benson. "He's the best equipped person to run KBCO that I can think of. Scott's very proud of the fact that people have a high regard for the station's success today."

When looking back at their years at KBCO, both Mike O'Connor and Dave Benson have nothing but fond memories and good things to say about their time at 'BCO. "I had a lot of respect for the station's heritage," says Benson. "What heritage *is*, is a bond you've made with the audience. There's a trust. Even

if you're going through a couple of years of not actually being a very good radio station, or you're not executing as well as you could, that trust is still there. What Mike and I recognized was the Denver audience still really wanted to like KBCO and that's like having a home field advantage. People expected us to be eclectic and to do interesting events and on-air promotions. People expected us to be musically adventurous and yet respectful of the heritage of the area...that's the stuff I appreciated and tried to keep. There were a lot of old images and a lot of, 'Oh, you can't do that in Triple-A,' kind of talk and I don't really buy into much of that at all. We ended up playing a lot of interesting, new music on KBCO that people didn't think we could and it worked! We all wanted the station to be successful and to gather as large an audience as we could that enjoyed our kind of programming."

When asked what some of the lessons learned from KBCO's rich history are, O'Connor mentions, "The lesson for anyone that gets wholoped by a focused radio station is—do not rest on your laurels and think you're only as good as your next Book. Don't sit there and not make changes in the face of competition. I don't care how heritage and great you are—you will pay the price unnecessarily. That's the biggest lesson I've learned. It's the lesson that anyone should learn when they're attacked—you've got to tighten up, you've got to market and you've got to co-op any uniqueness that your competitor might have. If they're playing 10 in a row and you're playing nine in a row, well by God, you better play 10 in a row, too. They're nothing more than just classic symbols of what's necessary when you have a head to head competitor."

KBCO has truly defined and set the Denver market up for the eclectic rock taste it now has. KBCO can definitely be credited for making Denver, Colorado, a great radio town. If you look at some of the other stations in Denver, none of them really live up to that classic image of what defines their format. They're all a little bit eclectic in their own way. The people of Denver have KBCO to thank for that. And KBCO has Mike O'Connor and Dave Benson to thank for that. And O'Connor and Benson have Scott, Ginger, Oz, Keefer and all the other unsung *true* heroes to thank for that. KBCO lives! ✦



WE ARE TRACY CHAPMAN
OLD 97'S
ALANA DAVIS
PHISH
THIRD EYE BLIND

WE ARE BJÖRK
WEEN
NATALIE MERCHANT
JACKSON BROWNE
ZIGGY MARLEY
& THE MELODY MAKERS

WE ARE BILLY BRAGG
LINDA RONSTADT
THE CURE
NANCI GRIFFITH
THE DOORS
THE EAGLES

ELEKTRA ENTERTAINMENT GROUP **WE ARE KBCO.**



SCOTT ARBOUGH

Heritage, Loyalty And Diversity

By JOHN SCHOENBERGER

When you mention the name Scott Arbough, it's almost synonymous with KBCO. He joined the station very early on as an on-air personality and has been closely associated with KBCO's immensely popular Studio C performances for years. Its only fitting now that the new KBCO, which owes so much of its astounding success to the foundation laid down by the old, original KBCO, has Arbough as its Program Director, leading the station forward into a new decade and century.

Join me as we discuss the heritage aspects of the station and then explore what makes KBCO tick today.

Was Studio C always a live segment?

"In the beginning we didn't run the Studio C Sessions live, unless we had somebody big come through. For the most part we were doing these as taped segments that would run at night as a special program. It was something different to do at night and people started getting into it. They'd hear the show at night and occasionally we'd play songs on the air during regular dayparts and people would start requesting it. It wasn't really until the summer of 1992 when we realized there was an opportunity here to do a charity CD. We printed 4,500 copies of *KBCO Studio C*



Volume 1 and released it in the summer of 1992. We're now ready to release Volume 12.

"In the beginning we just went straight to 2-track, but we eventually bought a multi-track recording facility for the room, which used to be the AM air studio. This allowed us to produce higher-quality recordings. Studio A was the control room, Studio B was the newsroom and Studio C was what the old AM studio was called. And that's how Studio C got its name."

Was the key having the right equipment to get quality recordings so you could turn them around to produce a CD?

"I wouldn't say that it was actually thought through in those terms. The studio was upgraded, and therefore, it

led to higher-quality recordings, which led to producing a CD and to the *KBCO Studio C* CD Series."

Another key benchmark event for the station is the Kinetic Sculpture Challenge. How did that promotion come together? Was that something that was happening in the market and you guys decided to become part of?

"No, that was something Dave Rahn—now from SBR—came up with. At the time he was the Promotion Director and he had heard of this Kinetic Challenge thing that was happening out in Northern California. The first one we actually did was a race that began at a small town about nine miles north of Boulder and ended in Boulder. Eventually it became an event that happened at the reservoir.

"It's a lifestyle-oriented promotion because Boulder has always been the home of bicycle racers and runners. This is, sort of, a summer bicycle race, with bicycles

turned into unique sculptures that can travel on land and water. Then in the winter we do the Cardboard Derby. It's basically wintertime kinetics, where we go up to one of the major ski areas and invite people to make these crafts out of cardboard and they race them down the snow-covered hill."

What are some of the other key benchmarks, other than concerts, that the station is involved with?

"KBCO has always been very active in lifestyle events. Back in the early to mid-'80s we were doing a number of bicycle races like the Coors Classic and the Red Zinger Bicycle Classic, and we're still involved in a lot of running races and those kinds of lifestyle things. We also do fireworks on



the Fourth of July for the city of Boulder, we do holiday concerts and we do live broadcasts from Red Rocks. We're lucky to have Red Rocks here because bands love to come and play there."

Just from the physical beauty of the place, you've got to imagine that most artists are inspired to play their best show, too.

"Yeah. I know Neil Young is getting ready to release a DVD that was recorded this summer up there. And U2 did their famous video there, as well. I think a lot of artists look forward to playing Red Rocks. You always hear that when they're in Studio C; artists will say, 'Yeah, we can hardly wait. Someday we're gonna come back and we're gonna be playing Red Rocks.' Those kinds of comments are real common."

How would you say the musical stance of the station has evolved over the years? It's never really been dramatic, but there certainly has been an evolution.

"I'd say it's been constantly evolving. When the station launched in 1977, the Colorado sound of artists like Richie Furay, Stephen Stills, Joe Walsh and Firefall was very big. Those artists began to give way to what was progressive at the time, the blues-based Bonnie Raitt music and Jackson Browne stuff of the early '80s. During the early MTV days, KBCO was involved with playing artists like Flock Of Seagulls, but then the station evolved to include the music of bands like Talking Heads and U2. In fact, 'BCO was on the forefront of being a new-music station back when those bands were seen as new music. Then there was a period of time when New Age and the Windham Hill stuff was part of what we played, so it's always evolved with an open-minded attitude toward music. We've always tried to be open to what was happening in the marketplace, as well as in musical trends. But there was a period of time when we kind of lost focus and became a broad-based, more acoustic radio station at a time when the styles of music were actually moving in the other direction. KBCO then fell short of what its potential was."

Right, and by then you had many other signals in the marketplace that were chipping away at different areas of the station, too.

"Yeah. At the same time the guys at SBR, Dave Rahn and John Bradley, along with a host

of our heritage talent, including Ginger Havlat and our old Program Director, Doug Clifton, moved over to The Peak [KXPK] and we were left without any clear leadership or clear focus. So Noble hired Mike O'Connor to come in here and completely change everything about this station. But luckily, he saw the potential of the station's heritage and refocused us. Eventually we were able to fight off what was a very, very serious threat from The Peak.

"I think the station's been really cognizant of how to keep growing with the younger listeners, while keeping the older P1s satisfied. We have learned that you can give a lot more credit to the older audience for new music than most people think. Our listeners, and radio listeners in general that listen to this kind of radio, are actually receptive to new music. Dave Benson was really good at teaching me how to re-envision what the station's future would be. The goal was to find that delicate balance so we could become a #1 18-34 station, a #1 25-54 station and even #1 12+. That's where KBCO has been over the last couple of years. And that's because we've really tapped the heritage, the loyalty and the diversity of the radio station."

During Benson's tenure and during your programming tenure as well, you will pick and choose certain artists that are new for your market and latch on to them, develop them and make them your own. When you do add an artist, you give them a fair shot.

"We understand that the power of the music we play is what draws the listeners in, so we're very careful to make sure the music we play is the *right* music. That's not to say that we don't make mistakes, so you've got to be careful on the music you play. When you're adding an Eric Clapton and a Beck record, you've gotta understand that there's a lot of music in between that you're gonna have to *not* add, in order to make room for creating the familiarity for the stuff that you're alone on in the marketplace."

And what's popular, in terms of current releases, dictates where your library sits at any given time?

"The way we break down the music here may be kind of surprising when you really look at it. KBCO has really been an early '90s-based radio station. So I wouldn't say that we adjust the Gold that much, we just carefully schedule it in a way that balances out the new music to give the right flavor—

or what I like to call, 'the quarter-hour promise.' Which is basically, every quarter-hour I try to do all the different things that I'm promising my audience that I will do. But we don't focus so much on the Gold library in respect to the current music of today. That's done through research. The Gold library is the backbone; that's the thing that you have to build the radio station on and the foundation of the station has to stay pretty constant."

What is the balance of your airstaff? I know Ginger Havlat had left, as you mentioned, but you were able to woo her back.

"Yeah, Ginger was gone for three years, but she's very popular in the Denver market and also very committed to good radio. As The Peak started to come apart, I think it was very bold of her to return to the station. A lot of people wouldn't make that decision. This is where her audience was and she came home. We have Bret Saunders, who has a very successful morning show here that's trending #1 25-54—and even scored two #1 25-54 books when we had Howard Stern in the market—and a very successful Lewis & Floorwax classic rock morning show. Bret's been very much a part of the success we now enjoy. There's a lot of really big morning shows here and Bret's become one of them. I can't stress how difficult it is to get a successful morning show in the Triple-A world. The morning show here was built and envisioned originally by Dave Benson and has grown into a real big success story for our marketplace and our station. So I give big kudos to Dave and Bret for that."

Yeah, because you have to have personality in there, but at the same time, music needs to be a big part of it, as well.

"Music is a very big part of it, but also the personality and the way that the whole thing meshes together. So Bret's on in the morning—he's followed by Ginger. Ginger, by the way, consistently scores #1 in all three demos: 18-34, 25-54 and 12+. She's always #1 in her slot and outperforms the station. It's at-work listening. She's a very popular midday host, and the music that 'BCO plays is perfect for the at-work listener. We're very careful to make sure that any music that we've chosen is carefully dayparted to keep the middays in the heritage of what our successes are. Oz Medina is up next; he's best known for his work at 91X [XTRA] in San Diego.

continued

"We really have a small staff of people that's assigned to specific tasks. I think if you wear too many hats, you get a lot of work done half way. If you have people that know what their appointed duties are, you accomplish quality work. And that's part of what KBCO's success is."

Oz's been here about seven years and he's enjoyed great success, too. Then our Music Director, Keefer, who came to us from Missouri this past year, is doing nights."

Do the jocks go in and cut all of their breaks in the studio via computer, or are they live on the air?

"Our jocks are live from 5am until 7pm, Monday-Friday. We do utilize the Prophet system, as all the Clear Channel stations do. On the weekends we're live middays with our main talents, but the rest is all voice-tracked, as are nights. We don't use jocks for the overnights. I do a Studio C show on Sunday morning and my morning-show producer Ron Bostwick does a softer Sunday Sunrise program. Our production team of Jonathan Hanst and Alec Berger host weekend shows and do vacation fill-ins. But other than that, that's all the voices of the station."

Are there any key syndicated shows that you guys run on a weekly basis?

"We do two syndicated shows. One is E-Town, which is recorded just a few blocks from here at the Boulder Theatre, and the other is the Blues From The Red Rooster Lounge, which is a blues show that is actually recorded here as well. So those two syndicated shows are done locally, and therefore, make sense for us."

When Dave Benson moved on and you moved into the programmer's role, what kind of adjustments did you have to make in your daily routine at the radio station?

"Well, Dave and I worked very closely together when he was here and that's one of the things that made Dave such a great Program Director. He was very involved with running the station...with the help of his staff. So a lot of what I've been doing since I've taken over are things that I've already had my hands on anyway. But the administrative aspect of the job—the problem-solving, planning, promotional, budgeting—all of those things have been new to me. It's like finding a whole new room in a house that you've been in for 16 years. It's been really great for me."

"We really have a small staff of people that's assigned to specific tasks. I think if you wear too many hats, you get a lot of work done halfway. If you have people that know what their appointed duties are, you accomplish quality work. And that's part of what KBCO's success is."

You're also fortunate in that you have your own sales staff. I would imagine that's a group of people that have been with the station a long time, truly understand KBCO and are able to go out there and sell it because they're speaking about the station from their hearts.

"That's very true, and I think that it works. If you're out there selling seven different radio stations, I don't think you can ever have a true goal or true focus. KBCO's sales department has been very successful at spreading the word of the success of KBCO, both locally and nationally."

How have you adjusted to working with the other Clear Channel stations, which at one time you were competing with? Obviously that started to come down before you were Program Director, but at the same time, you were intimately involved with many aspects of the station. It must have been kind of weird sitting down with the guys that are from other stations in the market that you were always trying to stick it to.

"It seems to have worked out really well. The focus of our local Clear Channel cluster has been to combine the efforts, yet let the stations stand-alone. With KBCO, The Fox [KRFX] and KBPI, for example, we all have our mission statements and we all know what we're doing. We work together on some promotions, on marketing and on the behind-the-scenes things, but yet there's still enough room for each station to have its own identity. And I think that's healthy. There's a competitive spirit, but it's all well thought out. I don't think that KBCO is in the world of The Fox too much, and The Fox certainly isn't in the world of KBCO. KBPI is much harder and shares little with KBCO. KTCL and KBCO work together in a lot of different ways to fend off competition, and yet both the stations have their own personality and their unique audiences."

You have a lot of immigrants in the Denver marketplace now. Is that top of mind for you in terms of choosing music for the station?

"It's not so much in the choosing of the music, but it certainly is for the potential of the radio station's audience. The largest group of people moving into Denver is

in the 25-54 target demo of my radio station. Denver is growing at such a pace that my target audience is becoming a larger percentage of the Denver population. And therefore my potential for growth continues to expand every day."

So, there's still plenty of room to groove, so to speak.

"Always growing the cume, you know? Forward-thinking people tend to move to places where they'll improve their lifestyle. Colorado and Denver happen to be perceived as having a good lifestyle. There's a lot of companies moving here that are bringing good-paying jobs, and therefore, you get a lot of forward-thinking, progressive people that are interested in the lifestyle things that KBCO has always stood for. That's just an ever-growing opportunity for me, so we're definitely happy about the growth of Colorado as it relates to our opportunities."

What do you consider as the key aspects for KBCO's longevity in the market?

"When people ask me what it is that makes KBCO so successful, I like to point towards things like heritage, loyalty and diversity; those are the three things that make a successful radio station. KBCO is constantly trying to find ways through the music, through the marketing and through everything else we do to try to service those ideals. If we didn't have a loyal listener base, we wouldn't have the successes we have, because we're still basically a niche format."

"At the same time, we'd like to try to make sure that we're living up to the promise of World Class Rock, which means a little bit of everything—a mile wide and an inch deep. We make sure that the music we choose on add day fits that criteria. It's always tempting to go overboard, but the hardest thing about programming a station like this is the music you *don't* play. You've got to be careful not to choose the latest song by an artist that you've always embraced just because it is that artist. If you've got a successful song from a heritage artist that's one thing, but if the artist doesn't provide you with a song that fits the criteria, you can't give in to the temptation and just jump on it. But you've also got to keep your eyes open for that great song from an artist that no one knows. It's that balance between what is the successful sure-thing and what is the next-best thing, I think, that makes the real difference."



Blackbird Records

salutes

KBCO

Look for
new music from...

Cowboy Mouth,

Cecilia,

Everything,

7th House,

Angry Salad,

Bell Book & Candle

...and many more.



The Blackbird Recording Company
185 Franklin Street. 6th Floor. New York, NY 10013
212.226.5379 www.blackbirdusa.com



DON HOWE

Keeping The Proper Distance

BY JOHN SCHOENBERGER

KBCO, along with the Denver market as a whole, got into the consolidation game early, first with Noble, then Jacor and now Clear Channel. The station's current GM, Don Howe, came in by way of one of those acquisitions, and he quickly realized that the best thing for KBCO was to leave it alone as much as possible.

Howe understands the special relationship the station has with its listeners and, if anything, is trying to take some of those qualities and translate it to the four other FM properties he oversees in the market.

In the new reality of radio ownership, there are clusters or families of stations in individual markets and there are a number of people that share duties for all the radio stations.

"That's right. Nearly all of our staff multi-tasks at their primary station, as well as having cross-station responsibilities"

Are you VP/GM for all of the Clear Channel stations in Denver/Boulder?

"I am for the five FM stations—KBCO, KBPI, KTCL, The Fox [KRFX] and KISS FM. Four of them are Rock-based and pretty exclusive in their formats. So there's lots of testosterone here, but with the new KISS FM we're also going to bring female listeners to the party."

This is the new reality for radio now, although your market had a taste of it early with Jacor.

"Jacor announced the Noble deal the day the Telecommunications Bill passed and subsequently Lee Larsen, our AM GM



here, and I were two of the first managers challenged with figuring out how to strategically operate eight stations in one market."

So, at one time, the knee-jerk reaction would be to do anything that you possibly could to stick it to the competition. All of a sudden, the "competition" is all in the same boardroom.

"You get past most of that stuff pretty quickly when Randy Michaels explains his consolidation expectations. Essentially, we approached consolidation with an open mind—a willingness to identify new strategies—and then took the strongest parts of each operation and merged them into new and improved ones. Our first LMA with KAZY back in 1992 enabled us to

strategically disable a third Rock competitor to a point of near-surrender. A year later we purchased that station [KBPI], combined the best assets from both stations and moved it to the stronger KAZY frequency at 106.7. What we had moving forward was a stronger Rock station with one less format competitor.

"If there weren't some greater advantages to consolidation, there wouldn't be any real reason to own multiple radio stations in a given market. All of this has been a work in progress and continues to be with more partners joining in, such as SFX. With KBCO's unique intellectual properties the goal was to get in there and learn and assist, but not dilute any of the station's momentum."

It was probably more like, "How can we lend you our muscle?"

"Which we did. KBCO was emerging from its most difficult position in its history with The Peak [KXPK], which a couple of years prior to our involvement—with key 'BCO staff in tow—tried to wrestle 'BCO's position away from them."

And made a hell of a splash at first.

"They did! Their strategy was to take a lot of the assets from KBCO and start anew as The Peak. KBCO got very close to self-implosion there for a while, but Mike O'Connor came on board and convinced them to hold the course, rebuild KBCO and reinforce its heritage."

I think his real strong point was discovering the things that KBCO had entrenched in the market and how to make them bigger.

"Mike deserves a lot of credit for having been the person to say, 'Wait, let's not blow this up and put Howard Stern on and do something crazy. Let's

"If you could make a wish list of what you would want in a radio station—what it would look and sound like, how strong the staff would be and how well the staff would work together—it would be KBCO."

dig in, catch our breath and recognize what we have to work with.' Mike was then asked to seg over to The Fox when we handed the KBCO reigns to Dave Benson. Six months later The Peak was on a respirator and finally went in to a Howard Stern-led, hard-edged Rock position against KBPI. They abandoned that fight last month and put on an '80s Gold format. So The Peak has reinvented itself no less than three times now and we're ready for the next round!"

It's one thing when you can see a hole or weakness in a market and you bring on a new signal or format and aggressively attack with it. It's another thing to build it into something that has longevity.

"That is the goal with every radio station we operate, but obviously that's not the results you get every time; this is evidenced by our recent switch from a Jazz format to KISS FM on our 95.7 dial position. We gave KHIH every opportunity to grow, but it was never supported by the Arbitron results. KBCO is the antithesis of that. Its listeners are so passionate about the station, the personalities and benchmark promotions, that they consistently vote for the favorite station each quarter."

Of course, that's because you gave it that big giant globe that you see at every event!

"That's our very recognizable World Class inflatable! Julie Smith, our Promotion Director, has to blow that thing up each time. World Class lungs on that girl!"

Do you feel KBCO's benchmark events are what gives the station the power it has in the marketplace?

"It certainly is a *big* part of it. I can tell you that, regarding our other stations, it's an objective from them to try to get that same level of..."

Expectancy?

"Definitely. It's such a part of the texture of 'BCO. When you see Kinetics, Cardboard Derby and Studio C for example—if you've ever been to any of

those events—you'd recognize their contribution to the overall product. Nobody has anything like it in this marketplace. If you could make a wish list of what you would want in a radio station—what it would look and sound like, how strong the staff would be and how well the staff would work together—it would be KBCO."

It's certainly an example of one that works.

"It's the cream of the crop—it really is. And it's been a pleasure to be associated with that radio station, to help with programming where I could and to provide whatever was needed to keep KBCO in the position that it's in. Working with Benson was nothing but positive. When he left it was so great to be able to hand the reigns over to Scott Arbough. It was such a no-brainer to do that.

"He hasn't missed a beat. Scott is well respected by his staff, the record industry and his fellow programmers, and is doing a bang-up job for us. It's also great to work with Bret Saunders, Ginger [Havlat], Oz [Medina] and, now, Keefer, who has really filled a gap for us in assisting Scott and doing nights. And Julie Smith is the hardest working staff person we have and is always raising the bar in how to successfully and creatively promote a radio station."

The big talk in the last few years has been generating difference sources of revenue—non-traditional and off-air. Those are the kind of events that build a foundation for that kind of income, aren't they?

"No doubt. With Kinetics, for example, we've been able to add different features to that event, which create additional revenue streams and bring in new sponsors. By adding Race Around The Res and the Pancake Breakfast, for example, to the event, we've enhanced the whole experience, as well as the profitability of it."

The station started to stick its toe into concert promoting a few years back. With the new structure with Clear

Channel and SFX, I would imagine that's an area that may be reinvented a little bit.

"We have a concert division that we started four years ago and we're seeing our best year ever. We've produced over 60 shows this year alone and KBCO is certainly fertile ground for doing more. We've also done more with KBPI and KTCL in the recent past, and KISS FM has tons of concert upside. We'll also be able to partner with many of the SFX shows that come to town and find more synergies as a company for them. But we're keeping our own concert division in place, because it serves the needs of our radio stations specifically."

Do you have one sales staff for all the stations or do you have individual teams for each of the stations?

"We have eight separate sales staffs here—one for each radio station."

Obviously, you can package certain clients to more than one signal, right?

"We're coordinating our effort on every piece of business. We explore the potential with the advertiser, so they can exploit as many Clear Channel assets as they want to better fulfill their marketing objectives. The sales staffs here have formed a culture that goes back many years. They understand the upsides to cooperative selling and pursue it fully."

So, one way to look at it is, "Oh, they own the market now. You have no choice, either you go to them or you go nowhere." But the reality is that the service you're providing to the client is better than what he was getting before.

"If we're doing our job right then the client will always come out ahead. It's a matter of understanding the customer's needs and then packaging together the various Clear Channel assets that maximizes their goals and their business relationship with us."

It's been said that radio's goal is not to take money out of the pocket of your radio competition, but rather, from

continued



"As we continue around the learning curve of managing multiple media assets in our markets, you can expect to see increasing revenue shares for our company. The value to advertisers in aggregating their business with us is too real to ignore."

other media in the marketplace. Do you feel that's a fair statement, and have you made significant gains there?

"It's fertile ground, to say the least! The significant gains in revenue growth over the past couple of years have not necessarily come at the expense of newspaper. Our best statement as to how much we perceive an upside from newspaper advertisers, though, is our recent hiring of the *Rocky Mountain News* VP of Marketing and New Media to become our Director of New Business. Denver's two papers recently merged operations and with that will come higher advertising rates. This is the best possible time to exploit this vulnerability, and to add a person of this caliber to our team will surely bring us new success in converting print advertisers to radio advertisers."

Do you think it's unique to your market? Or is that a national trend?

"Pursuing newspaper and NTR dollars is a national trend and definitely is a directive of Clear Channel. As we continue around the learning curve of managing multiple media assets in our markets, you can expect to see increasing revenue shares for our company. The value to advertisers in aggregating their business with us is too real to ignore."

Right. I know it's a little early to make a real call on this, but when I was up in San Francisco at the NAB Convention, I went to the session where they had the one-on-one Q&A with Clear Channel CEO Lowry Mays. The question that was basically presented to him was, "How the hell can you keep control of all of that stuff? How are you going to manage all of it?" And his answer was as long as you've got good people within each of those markets or groups, and you give them the tools they need and you stay out of their way, then it'll work locally and spread out to the company at large. Do your initial signals say that to you? "Absolutely. Clear Channel doesn't have a 'boiler plate' or 'blueprint' to hand down to the markets. It's a real

bottom-up approach. They're asking all of us to forget about the old ways of doing business, take some intelligent risks, learn from the exercise and walk away with something more tangible than we had yesterday...and then share it with the rest of the company. It's at our level that these synergies will unveil themselves. We all left the Clear Channel Manager's Meetings in Miami this past September with a new momentum and a greater sense of urgency to work together. The 'what ifs' were explored throughout the meetings and continue to keep us up at night!"

So, to a certain extent, it's finding better ways to do what radio has always done. What are some things, if any, that are new and totally innovative and not something that radio would traditionally do?

"Mention another station's call letters on your station...or promote another station's event. Radio management has grown up and matured and we now realize the amount of waste associated with thinking only vertically. There's no limit to the promotional value we provide from one station to the next, or to our Internet sites, thus reducing our spending on other mediums to reach our listeners."

You mentioned the Internet, among many other things. It's a tremendous way to build a database, isn't it?

"In Denver, we're doing 4,000,000 Web views a month just on our FM radio stations. We do weekly E-mails to 140,000 listeners providing valuable incentives, contests and other ways to be a resource to them. It also lends itself to a lot of programs that we can offer our clients for marketing their needs. Every day we try to come up with new ways to integrate all of this. It's a big focus right now and we're beginning to generate significant revenue growth from our efforts."

Do you have any thought or fears about the imminent satellite radio revolution?

"No. I have gotten pretty familiar with XM Satellite Radio. I think there will be

a market for satellite radio and that it will be a successful venture. There are even things that terrestrial radio can do to help promote it without fearing for our own existence and well-being. I still think the foundation of what we have is very solid. Satellite radio will be another interesting component to that, but I don't think it signals the end of anything by any means."

I guess the main argument to firm up your own shores is your locality in that marketplace. You've got the pulse of what's going on in your city.

"I think that's something that's always been a factor of any successful radio station. Given the profit technology and the digital platforms that are out there, the objective is not to make every radio station sound alike, but to make it sound better—to give it bigger legs and provide all the locality that makes radio so successful."

Certainly, in terms of a station being its own entity and not a cookie-cutter, KBCO is probably the ultimate example of that. Yet with all of Clear Channel's acquisitions now, there are only four or five Adult Rock stations within the group at this point, which is probably much fewer than any other type of format. Has there been any talk at all about taking that model and moving it into some other markets?

"Not so much, because KBCO is so unique and indigenous to Colorado. KBCO's roots are in Boulder and its success is not easily duplicated. Otherwise, we'd be the first ones in line to do it in other markets!"

"Furthermore, I would say that KBCO is a successful team effort. Each employee is a very integral component to the overall success and feel of that radio station. Having that kind of team is special."

I think they live, eat and breathe its message.

"Like I said earlier, they are the fabric of KBCO. It's not big-time wrestling with this staff. No smoke and mirrors here. They are the real thing." ★



KBCO - WORLD CLASS ROCK

Thank you Scott, Keefer & the entire KBCO staff for years of breaking World Class artists like Shawn Mullins, Five For Fighting and many more!

XO-
Trina

Top 5: Label Appreciation
Power Rotation: Respectability
Most Promising: Artist Development
2-1 #: Quality Vs. Quantity Radio

A SONG THAT STAYS WITH YOU.

everywhere i go SHAWN MULLINS

the first single from the new album BENEATH THE VELVET SUN
the follow-up to the platinum SOUL'S CORE

FIVE FOR FIGHTING EASY TONIGHT

The first single from their Aware/Columbia Records
debut album "America Town."

ALBUM AVAILABLE NATIONWIDE NOW.

Lyrics & Music by John Ondrasik
Produced by Gregg Mathersberg
Mixed by Jack Joseph-Pol
Management: Jim Grant for JPM
Executive Producers: Ryan Lefebvre, Gregg Mathersberg
Working Little Big Man

www.fiveforfighting.com
www.columbiarecords.com
www.awarerecords.com

AWARE
RECORDS
"Aware" Columbia and Reg. U.S. Pat. & Tm. Off.
Marca Registrada © 2000 Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

Single Produced by Shawn Mullins and Julian Raymond



Management: Russell Carter Artist Management www.shawnmullins.com www.columbiarecords.com
"Columbia" and Reg. U.S. Pat. & Tm. Off. Marca Registrada. © 2000 Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

WBH

JULIE SMITH

The Creative Art Of KBCO Promotions

BY JON PETERSON

How would you like to go to work every day in Santa's Rocky Mountain workshop with a crew of creative radio elves and give away presents? And not just at Christmas time, but five or six times a year. We're not talking about gift-wrapped Pocket Fishermen, Veg-A-Matics, polka-dot ties, or Hai Karate here. KBCO Promotions Director Julie Smith gives away trips around the globe, payment-free leases on a mountain home with an SUV in the garage, even free imported beer for a year!

Julie's been playing Mrs. Claus in that capacity since May of 1997. Prior to KBCO, Smith was crosstown at SBR, working on their charity CDs. Smith's other radio jobs in promotions departments included stints at WDRE and WMMR, both in Philadelphia. "Oh my God! Playing Mrs. Santa was the reason I got into radio. I graduated from Drexel University with a degree in Design And Merchandising, and after graduating, I went into WMMR for an information interview. While I sat there, I saw the promotion director call a winner to tell them they had won a VCR or something. And, I thought, 'Hey, that must be the coolest job in the world; to call up people and make them happy.'"

Julie makes plenty of folks happy in her transplanted Rocky Mountain home. She's found chemistry, not just with the KBCO loyal listeners,



but also with the station's creative staff in Boulder, nestled high above Mike's Camera Shop. "The creative staffs in programming and promotion are all in Boulder, separated away from the Clear Channel sales staff in Denver. This physical division helps to keep us focused on the real interests and lifestyles of our listeners, and *their* needs. It helps us to creatively refine our on-air product by making our listeners happy first and foremost."

That tightly knit team in Boulder has been doing astonishingly creative and grandiose promotions and contests for over two decades, but Julie, PD Scott Arbough, and the recently retired Marketing Director for Clear Channel, Kate Culligan, fully realize that the Denver/Boulder market dynamics are always in flux, and that they can't rest on their previous campaign successes. "The challenge of it is to never be too

comfortable and complacent," said Smith. "Our ratings have been so good for the last couple years, but that doesn't mean we can coast on our laurels or heritage. It would be real easy to get cocky and think that something's always worked in the past. But nobody here is cocky. Everybody realizes that, at the drop of a hat, something crazy could happen in the market and we could all go down the toilet. The creative challenge is to always be working hard, improving things and tweaking old promotions. That keeps us all down to earth, honest and humble and that's a fun environment to be in."

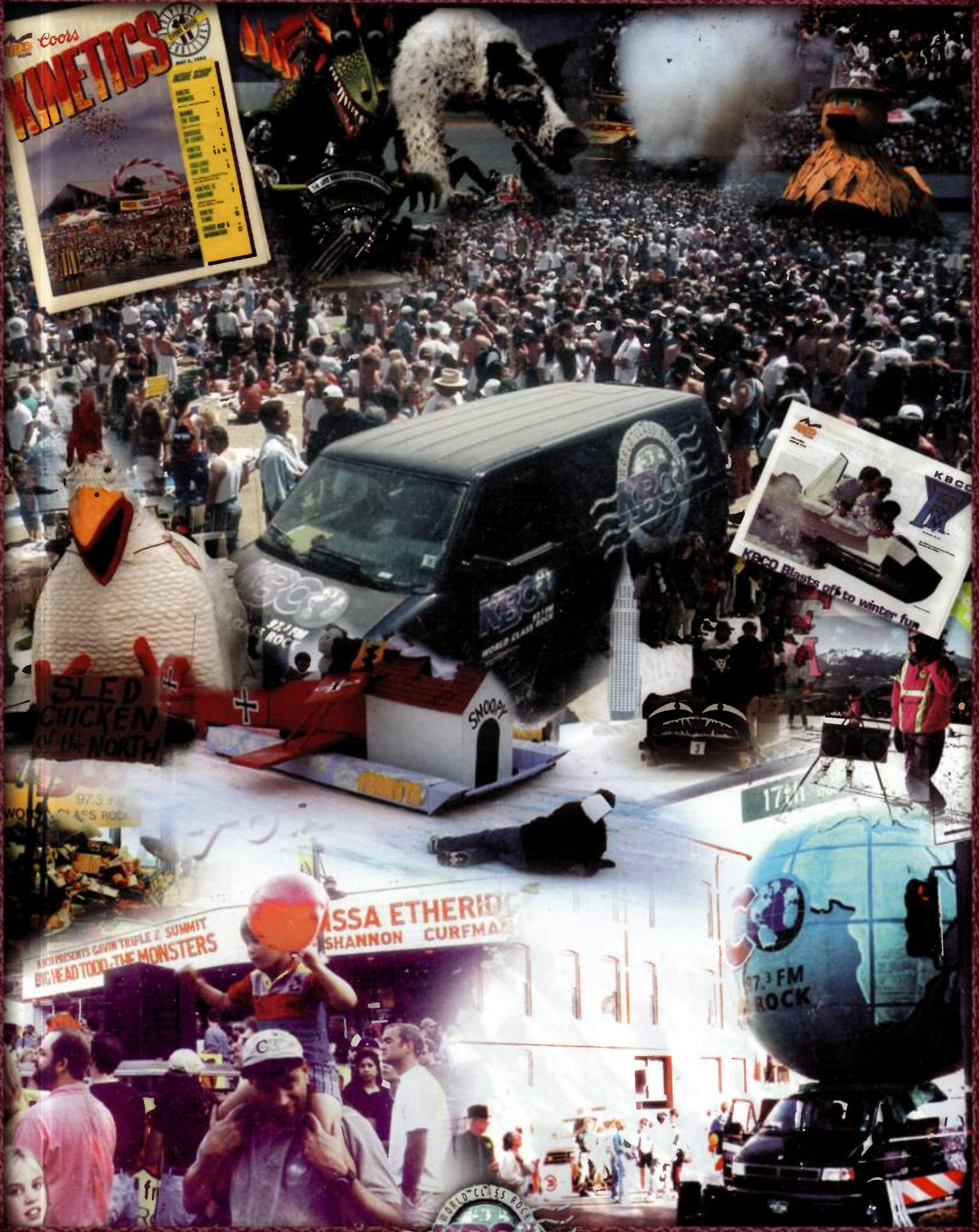
Smith has the luxury of working in that creative environment with an experienced street team led by her Promotions Assistant, Josh Keesy. "I feel very fortunate that I don't have to burn myself out by going in the van to the clubs every night. All that on-site stuff is handled expertly by Josh and that really helps me to focus on the long- and short-term tasks associated with major event planning."

Julie's main responsibility involves careful planning and attention to details. "I'm not always the creator of the promotions; most of KBCO's promotional events have been on the books for decades. What I do is *produce* the events. Our studio production guy, Jonathan Hanst, makes it come alive on the air, but I get the ball rolling, dealing with the lawyers, vendors, contractors, police and the various in-house and hired production staffs."

While this article was being written, Smith had just given away a house... literally! KBCO's brand-new fall promotion was a **Mountain House Giveaway**. According to Smith, getting a new promotion off the ground in "year one" is incredibly labor intensive. "I tried to secure a lease on a

continued







"The people who come to our events are incredibly loyal and honest and fun to be around. Everybody who works here at the station is just like a listener; we're all the same type of people and that translates into an honest interaction on just about every level."

house for a year directly from ski resorts and other corporate means, but as it turned out, I ended up leasing a house directly from a private owner in a classified ad." The bill? A whopping \$33,000! But for KBCO and Clear Channel, this aggressive promotional strategy, and willingness to hand over large sums of front-money, pays off in many multiples in ratings over the long term.

According to Smith, "This was a two-month-long promotion where we sent out a direct-mail piece with great photos of the home that a listener could win for a year. There were only two ways to win the house. One was to go to *kbcocom* and become a KBCO Interactive member, which is our listener loyalty club. Then you'd look for your name among the five that we'd pick daily. If your name was on the list and you E-mailed us back the same day, then you were qualified. The only other way to qualify was to respond to our Artist Of The Day feature. If you were the ninth caller when you heard us play that featured artist, then you'd also be qualified."

KBCO also traded out for additional prizes, and made Laura Stoffel of Greeley, CO, a very happy lady, as she won not only a free lease on a home for a

year, but also an SUV lease, lift tickets to all the area ski resorts, new ski equipment and free beer for a year from New Castle. But Ms. Stoffel won't be the only winner. Between the enormous amount of interactive traffic driven to the KBCO Web site, combined with the benefits of a forced listening on-air promotion, Scott and Julie are confident that their Fall Book will be spectacular.

For the rest of the year, Smith and Arbough's promotional dance card is filled up with tried-and-true ideas that have become legendary and often duplicated in the Adult Rock world. The oldest 'BCO promotional event is also the one which has helped define the Boulder station's active lifestyle image and relationship with its fun loving, quirky audience.

The Kinetics Sculpture Challenge has been held the first Saturday of March for the past 21 years. According to Smith, this annual "rites of spring" promotion is "the kind of event that could only happen in Boulder—the land of the slightly crazy.

"It's a competition of human-powered amphibious crafts made up of bicycle parts, wheels and other junk. The contestants race through mud, land and water across the Boulder Reservoir. We kick it off the week before with a parade near the Pearl Street Mall, featuring all of these ridiculous looking vehicles to get the press interested, so they'll come out and cover the craziness the following weekend."

Amidst this Monty Python-styled decathlon, about 25,000 people cheer on the 30 crafts. "They race all together, being powered by crews of two to 20. The largest crews on these things don't necessarily win and being fastest is just one aspect of it. Other categories include sculpture, design, costumes and one for the silliest spirit. And while the crafts are racing, bands like Cracker, Los Lobos, Crash Test Dummies and Shannon Curfman have kept the more musically minded entertained. This is our big vendor event where we sell a lot of booth space. It's kind of reminiscent of Lollapalooza with all the food, music, hippy arts and crafts vendors."

continued





amy correia *carnival love*

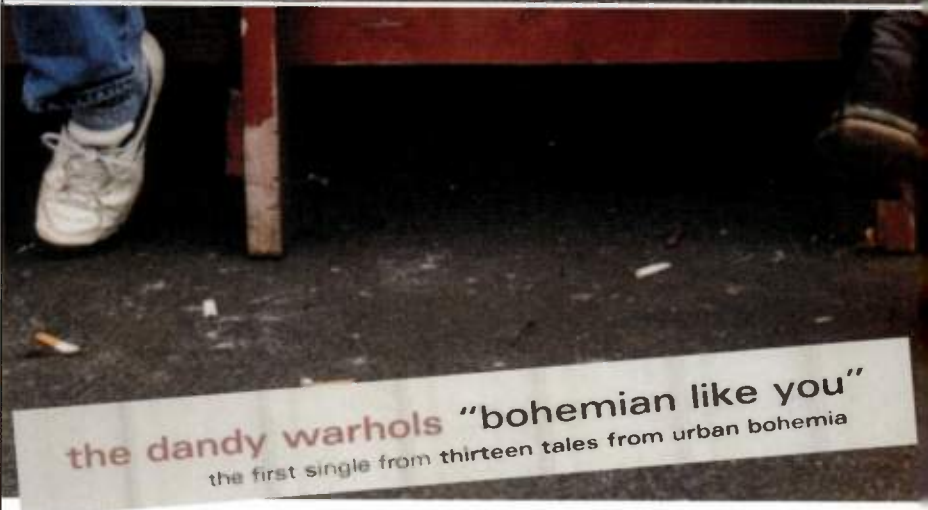
Amy Correia

"Life Is Beautiful"

from the album

Carnival Love

IMPACTING JANUARY 15, 2001



the dandy warhols "bohemian like you"
the first single from thirteen tales from urban bohemia

Thanks to Bohemians Like KBCO from
Capitol Records for leading the way on
another Top 10 *totallyadult* success!



WRH

"The Internet has been a great new tool in reaching our listeners. It brings the listeners to us."

Another legendary event, similar in scope and wacky tradition, is the KBCO Cardboard Derby. With the amount of corporate fear in the past decade over insurance costs, lawsuits and liability, KBCO still goes out on a limb for its listeners, as many of them slide down a ski slope in outlandish cardboard sleds for the station. "Before I got here, we had some broken arms and legs," said Smith. "Now we try to de-emphasize speed by having other categories that include costumes, humor, spirit and stopping on a dime."

The annual event takes place on February 10 at Arapahoe Basin Ski Resort. It is a crazy affair in which KBCO listeners slide down the ski slope on about 200 crafts constructed of only cardboard, duct tape and string. "They drag their craft up the hill and ride them down two crafts at a time. Last year, the highlight was a 40-foot craft of King Kong climbing the Empire State Building."

Other folks come out with the same sled every year. "We have a 'Dukes Of Hazard' sled all done up like the General Lee, with the riders dressed up as Daisy, Bo and Luke Duke. We always get an SS Minnow craft, complete with the 'Gilligan's Island' characters. And the year of the Clinton scandal we got a few cigar-shaped sleds and a few other things more disgusting than that. It's on a slope a bit bigger than the bunny hill, groomed with a few bumps in it. Some of these crafts fall apart and fly into millions of pieces."

Other events that Smith produces include the annual art contest to design the cover of the latest KBCO Studio C CD, a World Class Adventures spring book flyaway promotion and their mammoth summertime World Class Rockfest. The annual two-day event is held at the Winterpark Ski Resort and draws 10,000 people daily. Last year, the stellar lineup included Barenaked Ladies, Natalie Merchant, Shawn Mullins, Wilco, Guster, Keb' Mo' and the Kenny Wayne Shepherd Band.

Although these events have a built-in loyalty factor and market heritage, Smith and Arbough keep refining their promotions by adding new features to the events that help keep them fresh. "With Kinetics, we just added a 5K run that benefited Boulder County AIDS Project," mentions Smith. "And the Internet has been a great new tool in reaching our listeners. Sure, we still set up tents and booths on the streets to attract listeners, but having them also sign up online has made it a lot easier for all...and much more interactive. It brings the listeners to us."

Smith believes that part of KBCO's success in connecting with their target audience revolves around the fact that the staff has the exact same lifestyle and musical interests as their listeners. "The people who come to our events are incredibly loyal and honest and fun to be around. I'm glad I don't work for a radio station where I'd have to go, 'Uh, yuck. Those are our listeners?'"

Those are our listeners? "Everybody who works here at the station is just like a listener; we're all the same type of people and that translates into an honest interaction on just about every level."

And that honest interaction between the KBCO station staff and listeners has helped to create the same result for the last two decades...plenty of wild and wildly successful events and promotions! 🐾



CONGRATULATIONS STAFF!!!

The Denver-Boulder "Book" is out.

You said it could be done.

And you did it.

*First in Adults 18-34**

*First in Adults 18-49**

*First in Adults 25-49**

*First in Men 18-34**

*First in Men 18-49**

*First in Men 18-49**

*First in Men 25-34**

*First in Men 25-49**

*First in Women 18-34**

#2 in Adults 18+

First in my book any time.

Bob Greenlee

Bob Greenlee, President KBCO AM/FM

97.3 FM • 1190 AM

KBCO

BOULDER

M

Represented Nationally
by Masla Radio

H

Consulted by
Jhan Hiber & Associates

*Winter, 1985 ARBITRON Monday - Sunday 6AM - Midnight. Subject to limitations inherent in reporting and methodology.



TOP 5

KBCO Albums – The First 15 Years

1977

- 1 Karla Bonoff
Karla Bonoff
- 2 Fleetwood Mac
Rumours
- 3 Dan Fogelberg
Netherlands
- 4 Linda Ronstadt
Simple Dreams
- 5 Jackson Browne
The Pretender

1978

- 1 The Rolling Stones
Some Girls
- 2 Jackson Browne
Running On Empty
- 3 Neil Young
Comes A Time
- 4 Van Morrison
Wavelength
- 5 Dan Fogelberg & Tim Weisberg
Twin Sons Of Different Mothers

1979

- 1 Rickie Lee Jones
Rickie Lee Jones
- 2 Fleetwood Mac
Tusk
- 3 Supertramp
Breakfast In America
- 4 Eagles
The Long Run
- 5 Led Zeppelin
In Through The Out Door

1980

- 1 Bruce Springsteen & The E Street Band
The River
- 2 The Rolling Stones
Emotional Rescue
- 3 Pink Floyd
The Wall
- 4 Stevie Wonder
Hotter Than July
- 5 Jackson Browne
Hold Out

1981

- 1 The Rolling Stones
Tattoo You
- 2 The Police
Ghost In The Machine
- 3 Stevie Nicks
Bella Donna
- 4 Phil Collins
Face Value
- 5 Dan Fogelberg
The Innocent Age

1982

- 1 Joe Jackson
Night And Day
- 2 Men At Work
Business As Usual
- 3 Dire Straits
Love Over Gold
- 4 The Stray Cats
Built For Speed
- 5 The Police
Ghost In The Machine

1983

- 1 The Police
Synchronicity
- 2 Michael Jackson
Thriller
- 3 David Bowie
Let's Dance
- 4 Talking Heads
Speaking In Tongues
- 5 U2
War

1984

- 1 Bruce Springsteen & The E Street Band
Born In The U.S.A.
- 2 Prince
Purple Rain
- 3 Tina Turner
Private Dancer
- 4 The Cars
Heartbeat City
- 5 U2
The Unforgettable Fire

1985

- 1 Dire Straits
Brothers In Arms
- 2 Talking Heads
Little Creatures
- 3 Sade
Diamond Life
- 4 Sting
Dream Of The Blue Turtles
- 5 Eurythmics
Be Yourself Tonight

1986

- 1 Peter Gabriel
So
- 2 Steve Winwood
Back In The High Life
- 3 Paul Simon
Graceland
- 4 Bruce Hornsby & The Range
The Way It Is
- 5 Talking Heads
True Stories

1987

- 1 U2
The Joshua Tree
- 2 Grateful Dead
In The Dark
- 3 Robbie Robertson
Robbie Robertson
- 4 Fleetwood Mac
Tango In The Night
- 5 John Mellencamp
The Lonesome Jubilee

1988

- 1 Tracy Chapman
Tracy Chapman
- 2 The Traveling Wilburys
Traveling Wilburys, Vol. 1
- 3 U2
Rattle And Hum
- 4 Little Feat
Let It Roll
- 5 Midnight Oil
Diesel And Dust

1989

- 1 Tom Petty
Full Moon Fever
- 2 Don Henley
The End Of The Innocence
- 3 The Rolling Stones
Steel Wheels
- 4 Fine Young Cannibals
The Raw And The Cooked
- 5 Bonnie Raitt
Nick Of Time

1990

- 1 World Party
Goodbye Jumbo
- 2 Eric Clapton
Journeyman
- 3 Chris Rea
The Road To Hell
- 4 Vaughan Brothers
Family Style
- 5 John Hiatt
Stolen Moments

1991

- 1 Crowded House
Woodface
- 2 Bonnie Raitt
Luck Of The Draw
- 3 R.E.M.
Out Of Time
- 4 Dire Straits
On Every Street
- 5 Marc Cohn
Marc Cohn





WHEREAS:

KBCO 97.3 has been broadcasting World Class Rock for over 20 years introducing to the citizens of Denver musical artists as varied as U2, Big Head Todd and the Monsters and Melissa Ethridge as well as many others; and,

WHEREAS:

KBCO has donated thousands of dollars to organizations such as Colorado Aids Project, Boulder County Aids Project, Leukemia Society, Volunteers of America, Boulder County Safehouse, Emergency Family Assistance Association and the American Red Cross; and,

WHEREAS:

KBCO has raised awareness about the preservation of the environment, AIDS education, physical fitness and equal rights for all; and,

WHEREAS:

KBCO has hosted hundreds of Colorado events such as KINETICS, CARDBOARD DERBY and concerts, providing citizens with entertainment that they can enjoy year after year; and

WHEREAS:

While other radio stations come and go, KBCO has remained a constant companion for listeners since 1977;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WELLINGTON E. WEBB, MAYOR of the City and County of Denver, Colorado, by virtue of the authority vested in me, do hereby officially proclaim Thursday, November 6, 1997 as

KBCO 97.3 20TH ANNIVERSARY DAY
In the City and County of Denver

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the official seal of the City and County of Denver to be affixed this Thursday, November 6, 1997.

Wellington E. Webb
MAYOR



BRET SAUNDERS

Weekday Mornings, 5:30-10am

If there ever was a perfect morning host for KBCO and the Denver/Boulder market these days, it's got to be Bret Saunders. He's a man who can talk with passion and intelligence about everything from conspiracy theories in the Florida election results to naming the worst song on The Kinks' second album. Bret Saunders is not just an entertaining and engaging morning show host, he's also a breath of fresh air with his innovative, almost "high road" approach to the mornings in general.

He was at KTCL Denver doing mornings for three and a half years when Dave Benson spotted him at a party in 1997. "Dave had been looking for a new morning show host and I just serendipitously bumped into him; we both started talking about jazz, which we are both passionate about. I even write about jazz in *The Denver Post*. Anyway, we started talking about books, authors and movies, and before I knew it, I was over here doing AM drive."

Benson had an idea about how to retool the morning show that wasn't shock based, but instead utilized an approach that was intelligent, entertaining and even humorous—but not in a locker-room humor way. "We went after not just interviewing rock musicians, but also political figures and authors. I think it was a really big risk in hiring me and taking this approach, but in the first few years at least, it has really paid off."

One of his first big morning campaigns involved trying to get Denver and Boulder-based cable operators to start carrying "South Park." "We had some rallies, I interviewed Matt Stone and Trey Parker, and got a lot of publicity out of it. That was a nice, high profile thing that got my very first Arbitron book off to a good start."

But as a proud almost-graduate of Colorado State, Eastern Michigan and the University of New Hampshire, Bret is probably even more proud of the intellectual side of things that they do in the mornings. "Sure, it's fun to do silly things like 'South Park,' but I also get to interview folks like Ralph Nader, which I did a few weeks back. Last week, I interviewed Dave Barry, and I have



"I really think of the cohost as being our listeners on the telephone."

Tuesdays With Morrie author Mitch Albom coming on the show tomorrow."

Bret Saunders is able to attract a wide range of listeners due, in part, to his own incredibly wide range of tastes and interests. Whether it's a pop cultural question about the name of the dog on "Petticoat Junction" or something about politics or physics, Bret can talk the talk and walk the walk. Every morning at 6:30, there's the Much Too Early For A Question Question and at 8:30 there's a film trivia question, which usually revolves around a weeklong theme. Just recently Bret did election movie sound byte audio trivia.

Then, of course, there's music. Interviews with musicians promoting their new CDs, like Mark Knopfler or Jakob Dylan, are common, but so is audience interaction. Wednesday mornings at 7:30, Bret transforms himself into The Sage of World Class Rock (à la Carson's "Karnac The Great"), taking unfiltered rock trivia questions from the audience. "I'm surely lucky, but sometimes I'll go through an hour's worth of phone calls before I get one wrong."

Bret considers his audience, in fact, to be his on-air cohosts or professional partners. "We don't really have a sidekick cohost, although we do have a newsperson, Robbyn Hart, who I can interact with during top of the hour newsbreaks. I really think of the cohost as being our listeners on the telephone. We do what I call a 'stealth-talk radio show' on KBCO in the mornings. People who would never call a talk show feel compelled to do so. They like the music—and I do manage to play about eight songs an hour—but they also hear the direction of the conversation and somehow feel the need to start dialing up the station to express their opinions."

Saunders feels that's what's wonderful about KBCO and the Adult Rock format in general. "We can draw from the incredible diversity of the audience. So many other formats are so demo-specific or age specific, but we approach it in a cross-generational, yet focused, manner. I mean, I have 14-year-old kids from Columbine who listen and phone in, along with middle-age podiatrists. There is a complex attraction for different ages and races and it's all a natural by-product of our approach to the format and how we package it, not to mention the diverse nature of the music that we play."

Right before the recent presidential elections, Saunders had a group of Republicans who called in and told him how much they loved the show, even though he admits to being pretty openly liberal. "When you see how well we do with all these demos, males and females 50-50 across a wide age range, Democrats, Republicans and anarchists, then it's really exciting for me, because we always get these fascinating differences of opinion. The audience knows that they have a place to come to, not just for the music, but where they feel confident that they'll hear all points of view reflected through the course of the morning. You mix that up with the diverse, solid music and the station becomes this one-stop shopping center for the busy professional, literate teenager and other people from across many walks of life."

Bret Saunders' #1 ratings have proven that he's onto something very special in his unique approach to entertaining and subversively educating the masses. Now if we could only figure out a way to clone him! ✨





KBCO

**Congratulations to KBCO's long wonderful
history of Adult Rock. It's a pleasure to
work with you and we look forward to
many more years of great success.**

**Harry Levy
Rene Magallon**

**Levitation Entertainment
10850 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 710 Los Angeles, CA 90024
310.470.3220**

GINGER HAVLAT

Weekdays, 10am-2pm

Ginger Havlat's been at KBCO in one capacity or another for 16 years. She's done brief stints at KXPX (The Peak) and KFML in Denver, but the bulk of her radio career has been at KBCO. Over the years, Havlat's been on-air on both sides of the dial, AM and FM, and she's also been in managerial roles as Music Director and Assistant Program Director. But now, she's streamlined her duties to concentrate on her on-air work and communicating directly with the KBCO audience.

Ginger's passionate about connecting with those listeners in every way possible. "When I answer the phones, I do so with the purpose to make a connection. So in the studio, I think it's important to have a very friendly voice on the other end. I answer my own phones. I can't tell you how rewarding it is when I answer the phone and they go, 'How's it going, Ginger?'"

Havlat's also the unofficial 'director of listener relations' on the Internet. "I take charge of the general E-mail we get and I answer most of it myself. People want to know what a song was, or why we're doing something, so I take the time and give them a dignified response. The long-term goodwill and word-of-mouth station referrals and mentions to friends are immeasurable!"

Ginger also takes that commitment to audience interaction a step further by having quarterly outings with groups of contest winners. "One of the things that I love to do is our Theatre Night promotion. When I give away theatre tickets to a show, it's not an anonymous thing. I'll go out to a show with a group of about 20 winners—we'll go for a drink beforehand and then go to the theater together. I just recently went to



"I still really love what I'm doing. I'm more relaxed now than I've ever been."

dinner with a group of winners and then we all went to the ballet to see 'Cinderella.'"

Reflecting back on her long tenure at KBCO, Ginger is almost giddy with enthusiasm. "They wanted a female and Dennis Constantine heard something in my voice or style. He hired me on New Year's Eve in 1981, and we went out to celebrate by him

taking me to a vegetarian restaurant and I thought, 'It's all falling into place now!' When I got home I called my best friend and said, 'Guess what?' She was so afraid I was going to tell her that I was hired at IBM." Cookie-cutter factories of the mainstream just ain't the Ginger way.

Havlat's enthusiasm is also boundless when asked about her favorite interview of all time. "Paul McCartney played at Folsom Field in '93, and we were the only station given an interview...and I was sweating bullets all day. But the second he walked in and shook my hand, all nerves just went away. He was the nicest man and he even made me blush towards the end. When I was given the sign to start wrapping it up, he said, 'Now, I got a question for you. Why do they call you Ginger, when you're not? Look at that red hair of yours!' And we all just chuckled when I said that my parents just made it up. When I got back, Scott Arbough said, 'Paul was flirting with you!' even though he wasn't really. It was something I'll never forget."

A charmer to Beatle Paul and everyone who hears her friendly voice, gets her E-mail or goes out for an evening of theatre, Ginger's key to success is her natural, infectious personality and positive approach to living. "I still really love what I'm doing. I'm more relaxed now than I've ever been. I came back to BCO as a DJ first, this time. I don't want to be a music director; I don't want to get involved in the politics. I just want to play the music and talk to the listeners and have fun. Every day there's a new challenge, a different interview in Studio C and another special memory. And in comparing things now to back in the early '80s, the faces may be different, but the similarity is that we still have the most amazing team. I generally look forward to coming in here and seeing these people and working with them." ✨



The Twelve Days Of Christmas

Brightly

The musical score is written for guitar and piano. The guitar part is in the key of F major (one flat) and 4/4 time. The piano part is in the same key and time. The guitar part starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The piano part starts with a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. The tempo is marked 'Brightly'. The score includes guitar chords: F, Gm7, F, C, F, Bb, F, and C7. The piano part includes a dynamic marking 'p' (piano) and a fermata over a note in the bass line.

On The 12th Day Of Christmas My Indies Got For Me:

- 12 Drummers Drumming (in studio)*
- 11 Signed Guitars*
- 10 Neutral Shows (nobody's perfect)*
- 9 Upward Trends*
- 8 Station Concerts*
- 7 Artists' Liners*
- 6 Meet 'N' Greet's*
- 5 Golden Plaques*
- 4 Book Promotions*
- 3 Flyaways*
- 2 Timebuys and*
- A Partridge In A Palm Tree*
(in Mexico)



Happy Holidays

from everyone at Michele Clark Promotion

818.223.8888

OZ MEDINA

Weekdays, 3-7pm

Oz Medina has been skipping down the Rock & Roll Yellow Brick Road for quite some time. He started at KPAS El Paso in 1978 and has since done lengthy stints at KZOK Seattle, KLBJ Austin, KQAK San Francisco, KZEW Dallas, 91X San Diego and KROQ Los Angeles. Indeed, the rock & roll DJ in Harry Chapin's "WOLD" would be proud!

But the yellow brick road finally led our radio wizard to the land of Oz and the Mecca of Boulder in 1993—and he didn't even need Dorothy to click her heels three times to get there. "I worked for Noble Broadcasting in San Diego, who also owned KBCO at the time, so they hipped me to the opening here. When I arrived for the interview, I got in the rental car and turned on the station. The first thing I heard was "The Heart Of Saturday Night" by Tom Waits, and I thought, "That's it. I think I'm staying." Staying in one place for very long was something new for Oz, even from the moment of birth. The son of an Army Officer stationed in Korea, Oz's mom was living in Zaragosa, Mexico, while pregnant with him. She ferried him across the border to be born at a military base in El Paso, then took him back to Mexico a few hours later.

If all that sounds unusual, Oz's entire early years are shrouded in mythology and mystery, as illustrated in his on-line KBCO bio: "His family traveled all over the Southwest United States, because Oz Sr. was one of the few remaining wranglers brave enough to track and capture the wild Havelina Pigs that terrorized American border towns. Havelinas, the ferocious fighting pigs, took the lives of two uncles and his grandfather, the famous Donde Es Oz. After seeing his father cornered and head-butted by a vicious Havelina, Oz decided to break with family tradition and get into radio." Fact or fiction, the guy's nothing if not damn entertaining.



Although Oz continued with his wanderlust from the womb and through-out his teen years, he did manage to sit still long enough for some great station jobs of two to four years in length. "You see, I never worked at a station that had this much great diversity in the music, except maybe KLBJ in Austin during the early days—since they played so many Texas artists. So I always keep moving around, searching for my dream gig. I think I finally found it. Let me illustrate my point with music. I remember one set that I did recently where I played Patsy Cline's 'Walking After Midnight' into Stevie Ray Vaughan's 'Riviera Paradise' into Otis Redding's 'Dock Of The Bay' and nobody in management blinked an eye. How can a DJ ask for more? Musical heaven, mountain majesty and no Havelina pigs to butt heads with, except maybe a few ex-PDs."

Another aspect of the job that appeals to Oz is the interaction with the KBCO audience on air. "KBCO has been here for 23 years, so our audience has grown up with the station. It's hard to always see it when you are in the middle of it, but it's clear that the audience has never gotten passive. When I do the My Three Songs segment or any other audience participation bit, the level of excitement, whether it's zany or intelligent in nature, has never been greater."

"I never worked at a station that had this much great diversity in the music, except maybe KGSR in Austin."

Interacting with the audience on the phones might be a gas for Oz, but the highlights—for a guy whose personal musical tastes are eclectic enough to include Miles Davis, Frank Sinatra and Vicente Fernandez—are the Studio C sessions of his shift. "It's amazing the folks that we've gotten into that room. Just to sit in there with Lyle Lovett and 15 of his band members or with Daniel Lanois, Willie Nelson and Emmylou Harris was simply amazing. Or when Bryan Ferry came in with all these beautiful women playing violins, harps and flutes, and recreated that signature textural sound of his. It just blows my mind when I stop to think about it."

The closing line from Oz's online bio perhaps says it all: "When you listen to Oz, you're hearing more than a voice. You're hearing the spirit of a wanderer. Enjoy him while you can!" 🐾



They Deliver



Still Bringing the Best Music to Radio



NEW YORK Sean Coakley

68 South Moger Avenue Mt. Kisco, NY 10549
tel: (914) 241-3669 fax: (914) 241-3601
email: coakley@bestweb.net

BOSTON

Leslie Rouffé

176 Sherman Road Chestnut Hill, MA 02467
tel: (617) 469-9943 fax: (617) 469-6829
email: l.rouffe@worldnet.att.net

KEEFER

Music Director/Air Personality (7pm-midnight)

Most of us in the Adult Rock world got to know Keefer in his previous life as PD at KBXR Springfield, Missouri. Just about everybody thought he was nuts to leave a PD gig and come out to Boulder as a weekender in 1999, but his faith in himself and desire to do anything to join the KBCO family has been well worth it. Within a few months, he was quickly promoted to weekday evenings and was also named Music Director last July.

Keefer admits that a few months after moving to Boulder, simple survival had to be his first priority. "I pretty much drained every dime I owned in just moving out here. So I ended up working the twilight shift at UPS on the loading docks. I was anywhere from 10 to 20 years older than the guys around me, and it was bone-crushing work for *them*, but it did get me into pretty amazing shape. In a way, it was inspirational, proving to myself I still had the discipline to do hard physical work like that."

As a weekday dock loader and a weekend air personality for KBCO, Keefer gradually worked his way to full-time status at 'BCO by doing occasional weekday fill-in work. "I hung around a lot and I just kept my mouth shut, observed and absorbed. In a way, it was kind of a welcome reprise from four years of having an extremely full plate at KBXR. In hindsight, I was pretty burned out, so coming here and slowly, but surely, learning and making gradual inroads here, were just what the doctor ordered. In a way, it was great to take a breather and come back to radio as a jock again."

But Keefer had to do more than keep his mouth shut. He also had to show the right combination of personality and humility to be accepted by his bosses and coworkers. "When I first came here and started talking to Dave Benson and Scott Arbough, it was like, 'Look, we have faith that you can do this job, but it's a close-knit family here. We work hard and play hard.'



"Everything I've done in my life has been pretty much geared to getting to KBCO and trying to do the best on-air radio work of my life."

Their only concern was introducing someone new into the mix, and I think I have fit in real well, although Scott does tease me sometimes with stuff like, 'We've never had a hillbilly on the staff before.' Although I prefer the term 'enlightened rogue,' I guess I can live with the hillbilly label. It's an easygoing crew here. They just didn't want anyone coming in bringing any attitude or ego...and fortunately, I have very little of either."

What Keefer does have is a great personality and sense of humor. When asked, "What sealed the deal in you getting hired?" he said, "I have pictures of important people with farm animals." Then when asked, "What do you do for a hobby?" he replied, "Drinking, smoking, reading Charles Bukowski and casual gunplay."

He can not only crack jokes and engage his evening audience with the cocktail gift of gab, but he also brings a wealth of radio managerial experience to KBCO. In addition to having been mentored by Benson, Tom Fricke and the SBR staff while at KBXR, Keefer has served as Music Director at WLRW Champaign and WYMG Springfield, in addition to air personality duties at WVRV St. Louis.

Even though he's enjoyed his two-year hiatus from radio management, Keefer admits that he's thrilled to be back in a music programming capacity. "Everything I've done in my life has been pretty much geared to getting to KBCO and trying to do the best on-air radio work of my life. The fact that I also get to be MD now is just icing on the cake. Programming music on KBCO is just like at any successful Triple-A station—doing it in a fashion that attracts the largest possible audience, but at the same time, retains those unique qualities that makes the station seem left-of-center and special."

But there is one important difference. Now Keefer gets to do it full time at KBCO. Not to mention, he still gets to entertain his old second-shift dock-loading friends at UPS. Except this time, he's doing it on the radio. ✪



Like the finest wine...

Sophisticated

Impeccable

Stylish

Balanced...

Artistic

Complex

Pure genius...

*The best quality rock
that lingers through
to the finish...*

*Congratulations
on your success from
Outsource Music.*



Michael Ehrenberg
510.530.8262

outsourcemusic@earthlink.net

Jesse Barnett
914.381.2977

promoboy@aol.com



RON BOSTWICK

Weekdays, Morning Show Producer Sundays, Host of The Sunday Sunrise Show

Despite having a job that forces him to get up at 3:30 in the morning six days a week, Ron Bostwick is a happy camper. He is on a radio "cloud nine" and he freely admits it.

"It's easy for me to speak well of this place. I've wanted to work here since I first came to Colorado in 1988; it's truly a dream come true. A lot of people in this business have to go through five or six stations before they find their dream gig, yet with me it's only been two—KFMU in Steamboat Springs and here. I'm still pinching myself. I've died and gone to Heaven."

Prior to his Rocky Mountain arrival, Bostwick graduated from Emerson College in Boston with a Communications degree and worked in sales at radio stations in Worcester and Cape Cod. When he got laid off from a Boston film company, he moved out to Colorado to be closer to a woman he was dating. Our Bean Town boy must have needed some solitude, as well; he got a job as a winter caretaker on an isolated 1,000-acre ranch. Hope she didn't end up like Shelly Duvall. "Here'ssssss Ronny!"

Having to drive 12 miles to make a phone call, Bostwick needed a communication fix. He talked his way into his first post-college on-air gig at KFMU in Steamboat Springs, eventually working on-air in every daypart, as well as in the promotions department.

When Bostwick heard that Nick Forster at E-Town was looking for a Talent Booker, he got the hankering to come down to Boulder and hone his craft in a national arena, where he worked for two years. "After I got the E-Town gig, I came over to meet Scott Arbough and Dave Benson. When I was introduced to Scott, he asked if I wanted a part-time air shift. After I said, 'Hell, yes!' he said, 'But do you suck?'"

Bostwick got that Saturday night shift and apparently didn't suck. In fact, the sum total of all his media experiences seemed to be lining up with the stars, as



"It's easy for me to speak well of this place. I've wanted to work here since I first came to Colorado in 1988; it's truly a dream come true."

he was soon offered a full-time job as Morning Show Producer. "At E-town, I got to know all the record reps, artist managers and artists themselves. One of the things Benson said was that I had the ability to get people on the phone. That's what I did at E-town and what I do here. I get folks like Al Sharpton on the phone, Ralph Nader, and so on. It's very much like a sales job; it's finding the decision maker. It's a 'never say die' attitude; just find a way to get the job done. And that's what's needed at 'BCO. The place needs to run in fifth gear all the time."

The fact that he was an all-round utility infielder who could do just about anything didn't hurt matters either. "Scott wanted someone who could do air shift substitutions, news in the morning, some engineering and production, all of which made me a real good fit for their needs."

Being an ex-granola-crunching, acoustic hippy from E-Town also entered into the equation. KBCO's weekend needs changed and Scott offered Ron on-air hosting duties for The Sunday Sunrise Show. According to Bostwick, "It's unique to the station. The variety of artists that you hear on 'BCO during the week is there. It's the softer side of Sting, Springsteen and artists like that, plus folks we don't play as often during the week like Nick Drake, Randy Newman, Tom Waits and maybe some deep Joni Mitchell or Van Morrison."

Bostwick loves the energy and work ethic of his colleagues. "Everyone is just consumed with doing his or her best work possible and is constantly improving. Bret Saunders is probably the best on-air host I've ever heard. I know how good he is with stuff I hand him and how he so effortlessly runs with it. Ginger is just so in love with her work, Oz is the perfect laid-back midday guy and Keefer's numbers have been through the roof. We all just love what we do, and that's the feeling here. It's like summer camp to us!" ✨





MEMO

November 22, 2000

Dear Andrea & Danny,

The ratings came in for Denver. KBCO is, for all intent and purpose, #1 12+ and 25-54 yet again. Now could you please stop f*cking with them by trying to give everything to KALC?

Thanks.

Your Adult Alternative Department

VOICES FROM

Ex-Staffers Remember

Just as folks like Scott Arbough and Ginger Havlat provide continuity and great insight into the musical nature and evolution from the inside of KBCO, an equally unique perspective comes from those who got out of the building and the Denver market all together.

Moving on in their careers to different stations—some in different states—the following people interviewed here provided some remarkable memories of a station that broke the rules and reinvented Album-Oriented Radio at a much-needed time.

While most of Rock Radio was stagnating as we entered the late-'70s and early-'80s homogenous era of corporate rock, the adventurous programming strategies and family atmosphere at KBCO forever influenced the lives of these individuals.

IRA GORDON

1983—Weekender
1985-1989—10pm-2am
1991-1993—Creative Services Director
and Morning Show Host

CURRENT POSITION:
Program Director, KBAC Santa Fe

"Early on, it was just a Boulder station. I was managing a record store in nearby Aurora and I got a job at KBCO working part time on weekends. It was just the hippy radio station in Boulder where you had to wait until somebody died to get a shift. The problem was, nobody left! There was a very tight family atmosphere. You certainly didn't mind going in to work and it was such a joy. In fact, my wife used to be so jealous because she hated her job.

"I was a Program Director before I got to KBCO, but I sure had become a better PD by the time I left. It was mainly because of the perfect mix of people on the team—Dennis Constantine was the wilder, more ethereal type and John Bradley had his feet more firmly planted in radio basics—the combination of their two sensibilities was the key to the success of the radio station. We weren't too hip for the room and yet we did take chances and expose music to people that they couldn't get anywhere else.

"I loved the way we broke rules. Dennis and John took normal lifestyle promotions and put a KBCO twist on them so they came out totally different and unique to the market. I think Dennis came up with the idea of something called Cassette Weekends, where the music sets would last 45 minutes. They all would be a theme or a history of a group or something. The idea was that people would be taping the music and could flip their cassettes over during the commercials.

"Another thing we did was called Select-A-Set weekends. Listeners would come up with their own three-song sets. All weekend long we would play these sets of music and people would tune in hoping to hear their set of songs. If you heard your own set, you called in and that qualified you for some huge grand prize.

"In other words, the whole vibe of the station was thinking outside the box. I mean, that's an overused phrase now, but boy, back then it wasn't...that's the way John and Dennis thought. They had certain radio rules that they knew about, and just broke them in a very creative way that still upheld the essence of the underlying fundamentals."

RICHARD RAY

1976-1992—Various shifts: Evenings,
10am-2pm, 9am-noon

CURRENT POSITION:
Classical Public Radio Network, Denver

"When John Bradley came in, he shaved off all those people that you didn't really need, people who were playing stuff like Keith Jarrett. The power went up and the whole thing just snowballed.

"We had the luxury of establishing ourselves as a 'trustworthy' place. In many respects, I really do feel that it was Public Radio sensibilities on top of a Commercial Radio presentation. In other words, listeners realized that we were in it for the long haul. We didn't ever talk down to the audience. We didn't do anything that was shallow. We were there for the music.

"As the station's sound and musical programming evolve, what we did was to keep our same sensibilities. The DJs didn't change, and you could trust the people on the air, but we kept our relevance as musical trends evolved. We started off with this 'Colorado sound' and we evolved into something different as the new wave thing caught on.

"John used to always say, 'We mostly give them what they want, and a little of what they need.' So those musical edges continued where you always knew that at least two or three songs an hour would be something that only KBCO would play. By so firmly establishing the sound of the station, you knew for sure that you were never going to hear Journey or Styx. As you got into the mid-'80s, you knew that you were going to still hear U2 and Springsteen, but you wouldn't hear whatever the 'crap of the month' was. You were still going to get the best music with integrity, whether familiar or unfamiliar.

"Looking back on it, I feel really privileged to have been part of one of the last great family-run, music-oriented, people-centered, passion-filled broadcast organizations in the country. There's never going to be anything quite like that again. I don't want to get too damn nostalgic, but for that period of time, to be a part of the incredible talent that was in that place for such a long period of time...I mean, on the personal side, I had a 16-year gig and got to raise my family in the middle of a Rocky Mountain paradise. How great was that?"

M THE PAST

Music and Magic of KBCO

PETER FINCH

1984-1992—Morning News Host

CURRENT POSITION:
News Director and Morning Co-host,
KFOG San Francisco

"I got my foot in the door there in an unusual way. I covered the 1984 Democratic National Convention for KMEL [San Francisco] and farmed it out to six other rock stations around the country for extra bucks...and KBCO was one of them. Gary Hart was a Senator from Colorado running for president and got involved in the Donna Rice sex scandal, so there was an obvious angle for KBCO. KMEL soon changed format and KBCO was looking for a new newscaster, so they must have liked the stuff I had just done for them. Dennis Constantine and John Bradley hired me as an afternoon news guy, but shortly after I got there, their needs switched to mornings.

"Dennis was the AM jock at the time, so he and I became a morning team for eight years. To do the kind of detailed news I was asked to do at KBCO was great; it was like doing NPR-styled news on a Rock station. The owner, Bob Greenlee, was a city councilman at the time, so he had a huge commitment to local news—and news in general. In 1985, they sent me to Nicaragua for a few weeks to follow a local group that had gone down there to build a school. Later, they sent me to the 1988 Republican Convention in New Orleans and I got to cover the Broncos during their Super Bowl years.

"Almost the entire time I was at KBCO there were at least two full-time news people, and part-time stringers as well. It was pretty much a labor of love. We were all young and into it; it was just so much fun to grab the tape recorder and go out into the field. Being so close to Denver, where the state capitol is, we also covered all the state news at the Governor's weekly press conferences.

"What made it unique—and what still makes it unique—is the music, but it's also the whole Boulder/Denver lifestyle-vibe. Dennis and John firmly believed that the station should be much more than just a music jukebox and that's how I worked myself into the fabric of the station and the community. I realized that news done on KBCO couldn't be too dry and that it had to reinforce the format. We knew the audience was well educated, so we didn't need to talk down to them. Boulder's a liberal college town, so I would choose stories that I knew would be of great interest to the progressive community. It was a great chance to be creative and have a lot of fun with the news."

KENNY WEISSBERG

1977—Sunday Night Host of
"Hot Off The Press"

CURRENT POSITION:
Host of Music Without Boundaries, KXST San Diego.
Promoter of Humphrey's Concerts By The Bay

"I was at KRNW when Bob Greenlee bought the station and changed the call letters to KBCO in 1977. On KRNW, we would play Coltrane or Miles Davis into Cream and Traffic. I was the token-free former leftover from the original station kept onboard to appease the fans of the old station. Dennis Constantine put me on Sunday nights from six until midnight for a specialty show and I was put there clearly to be creative and program something different. It was the dawning of the punk rock era and I embraced it. I played The Sex Pistols, Graham Parker and The Clash, while they were playing the 'Boulder Sound' of Dan Fogelberg and Firefall.

"My show was 75 percent music intensive and about 25 percent interview. I interviewed everyone from Bill Murray and Elvis Costello to Tom Waits and Allen Ginsberg. It was the continuation of free-form, based on my musical knowledge and my contacts and relationships with musicians and artistic people in the Denver/Boulder area.

"I also did a feature that I remember fondly called The KBCO Communal Bathtub—it was literally 'The Dating Game' of radio. I'd take a call from a woman and she would tell a little about herself and then she would interview three potential dates on the other phone lines. It got to be such a popular feature of the show that I eventually started to hate it.

"I left KBCO after about a year and a half because I had the opportunity to manage and start up KGNU, Boulder's first NPR station in 1978, but I remain thankful to Dennis and the staff for letting me do my own thing. Dennis gave me all the room I could have possibly wanted to experiment and be wildly creative."

PAUL MARSZALEK

1990—Overnights

CURRENT POSITION:
VP Programming at VH1

"It was really just a cameo. I was a PD at WMAD in Madison, Wisconsin, and on weekends I was driving down to Chicago to do weekends for WXRT. I was probably in over my head as PD at WMAD, and John Bradley convinced me that the best way to get to the next level was to get into a larger organization that had some success under its belt. He thought that I could learn through participating and observing in that kind of an atmosphere. And he was certainly right.

"There was such a great team. You don't get that opportunity very often, and when you do, you certainly remember it. The management style was very inclusive. As an organization, everybody could participate on almost any level that they wanted to, it really bred a work ethic where people wanted to come in and do great work.

"I remember the music meetings being especially fun. You had John, Dennis, Doug Clifton and anyone else who was eager to learn that would just show up. Everybody kicked back and talked about music, really getting excited about trying to break new records and bust out cool, emerging artists. Everyone's input was valued. We all had our individual passions and fought for this artist or that genre, but the team effort and collective wisdom overrode it in a positive way. Everybody was fine with the final musical add decisions that evolved because we were all part of the process in a meaningful way.

"Dennis and John were the perfect programming team together. Dennis was extremely creative and very much wanting to push the envelope and John would say, 'Alright, but let's only push it so far.' He had a very good sense of how far you could take an idea and still make it commercially viable, so I learned a great deal about the need for creative balance.

"After about 11 months at KBCO, Norm Winer offered me the opportunity to come back to 'XRT as Music Director, so it all worked out as I had hoped. But working at KBCO was one of those really special jobs in radio and I was fortunate to have participated in some great moments at the tail end of the station's first 'golden era.' ★

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM
GRANDADDY

"ALAN PARSONS IN
A WINTER WONDERLAND"



ON YOUR DESK
NOW FOR AIRPLAY!

