



In This Issue:

- Experimental Radio WEXP Debate
- Mr. Charlie In Big City R&B Magazine
- Broadcast Job Openings in Vermont
- "This Week at the FCC" by WBK Law



Experimental Radio Debutes in Champlain Valley

Experimental Radio **WEXP ♪ 102.9 FM**

As an experiment, WEXP, a new station on 102.9 FM has announced they will be playing eight genres that aren't available on local radio in the greater Burlington area.

"Radio used to be block programmed like television, with different shows at different times of the day and week," says station owner Dennis Jackson. Jackson is a small radio group owner and former broadcaster at Burlington's 14/WDOT. On television, he portrayed the "Magrums Man" in commercials for the late Church Street department store. "So we had the idea to work with well-known local radio personalities and experiment with 'pop-up' programming to offer kinds of music that aren't available elsewhere," he says.

Weekday mornings, Russ Kinsley hosts "The Album Station," playing free-form album rock from the Musicheads.net studio in Middlebury. Kinsley began his career on WRUV and was the founder of "The Wizard" WIZN. He also helped to originate the FM channels that became "95 Triple X" and WTNN. Later, he was part of the original "Experience" WEXP (now WKOL), and with Diane Desmond also programmed WKLZ, WCLX, and WZXP. Kinsley was inducted into the

VAB Hall Of Fame in 2005.

"Country Joe" Loverro programmed WDOT as Burlington's "Country Giant" to the #1 rated position in the 1980's. He plays Classic "Old School" Country music during weekdays and all day Sunday. Joe also hosts "Friday Night Gold," his long-running retro oldies show. WEXP will carry the show from sister station WRIP in the "Great Northern Catskills."

RJ Potter and George Goldring were once rivals at WDOT and WVMT in the heyday of Top 40 radio in Burlington. Together in the afternoon, they co-host a mix of Pop Hits, Big Bands, and "Great American Standards." Potter also hosted a show featuring Big Bands and crooners on WJOY. "It's like the 'Make Believe Ballroom' we used to listen to at night on WNEW(AM) out of New York," he recalls.

In the evening, the station features relaxing instrumental versions of popular songs in a "Beautiful Music" format. Later at night, it experiments with "Groove Salad," playing ambient "mood music" programmed from San Francisco.

All day Saturday, "The Squid" pops up with a mix that leans toward rhythmic oldies, R&B and soul. Saturday evenings are devoted to vintage Modern Jazz.

Jackson says it's an experiment "We'd like to get an idea of what might catch on with radio listeners looking for something different. Meanwhile, we're having some fun with it. In the end, we hope to attract interest and find someone who would like to take over the radio station and make it their own so I can retire," he says. "You can't touch a small home in Burlington for what it will sell for, so it's ideal for a solo entrepreneur who wants to get into radio."

WEXP operates with 6,000 Watts overlooking the Champlain Valley from a hilltop in Westport, NY. It's signal at 102.9 FM reaches from south of Middlebury to the Canadian border.

Mr. Charlie In Big City Rhythm & Blues Magazine



Photo: Laura Carbone

Charlie Frazier

WIZN Vermont Radio Interview

By LAURA CARBONE

I have worked for WIZN, which is a commercial radio station in Burlington, Vermont, broadcasting at 106.7FM terrestrially since its inception in 1983. Its 50,000-watt signal covers northern Vermont and New York and reaches into southern Quebec. We also stream at www.wizn.com in the continental US.

I began doing radio in Burlington in 1977 at The University of Vermont's WRUV. They were short-handed, so a

call went out to the general public to help fill slots and raise funds. As the station was non-commercial, we came up with the idea of having local businesses sponsor shows, which continues to this day. In those days, you had to go to FCC Headquarters in Boston, Massachusetts, and take a test for a third-class license to prove you at least knew the basics about modulation, meters and levels, etc. Today, you literally just have to sign an application, and you have a license! I took the test, and the instructor told

us to go next door to Faneuil Hall, a large outdoor market, and wait for the test results. While walking down a long aisle of vendors, I thought I heard a familiar voice in the next row. To both our astonishment, my mother and aunt

made the trip from my hometown of Hoosick Falls, NY, not knowing I'd be there! Talk about serendipity, I knew right then I'd passed the test.

About five years later, in 1983, some of my fellow DJs there were starting WIZN, a commercial station based in Burlington, so I hopped on board, and am still enjoying the ride to this day. My specialty show, Blues For Breakfast, started in 1991, running on Sunday mornings 9-11 EST. My handle, "Mr. Charlie," is from a Grateful Dead song on "Europe '72." In 2015, I was the recipient of a Keeping The Blues Alive award from the Blues Foundation in Memphis, TN for commercial radio. I can be reached at mrcharlie@gmail.com or on Facebook at the "Mr. Charlie's Blues Radio" page.

I follow the same template for most of my shows, starting off with new music, then Blues Birthdays, which is my favorite part, as lots of great artists are no longer with us or haven't put out new music in a while. Then I'll do The Blues Concert Calendar to spotlight local jams and events, and regional and national acts coming to the area, to keep people informed of what's happening. I also eulogize recent passings and try to vary what I play between acoustic/electric, fast/slow, and new/old. I have to bring a box of CDs in for shows, so most planning is done at home, as there is no library at the station to pull from, with all the classic rock we play the rest of the

Photo: Stephen Borden Photography



week being on AudioVault. Old school. My collection is nearing 32,000 CDs (and I still have all my vinyl and cassettes). If people call in or email me requests, I'll bring the relevant CDs with me the following Sunday.

I used to do live interviews, but too many people dropped F-bombs and curse words, so I've mostly phased them out. Notable interviews I've done include Johnny Winter, Bill Payne of Little Feat, Derek Trucks, Johnny Rawls and John Mayall, along with local artists that have new blues CDs out. I also emcee events for The Vermont Blues Society (which I co-founded) and shows that WIZN sponsors.

Getting so many CDs a week/month, through all the contacts I've cultivated, I don't have much time to listen to the radio. When I do it's usually Deep Tracks or Bluesville on SiriusXM.

My favorite part of being a DJ is when friends or total strangers approach me and say "I listen every week," or "Thanks for turning me on to so much great music," or "I hadn't heard that song in years, it brought back such great memories." I try to play blues from all over the world, there is so much great music out there. Most bands I contact through my reading or listening are kind enough to send me CDs. My radio heroes are Bill Wax, who has shared much advice with me when we see each other, Earle Bailey on SiriusXM's Deep Tracks, or the recently departed Jim Ladd, for whom Tom Petty wrote "The Last DJ": "There goes the last DJ, who plays what he wants to play and says what he wants to say; there goes your freedom of choice, there goes the last human voice," which is my mantra and a blessing I am able to do such.

My band Blues For Breakfast, which came before the radio show, plays all over New England and New York, and focuses on the bluesy side of the Grateful Dead, Dylan and other classic rockers, with some originals thrown in. Burlington is definitely lacking in blues venues and fans, but Higher Ground and Nectar's, the infamous home of Phish, have regional/national blues acts spo-

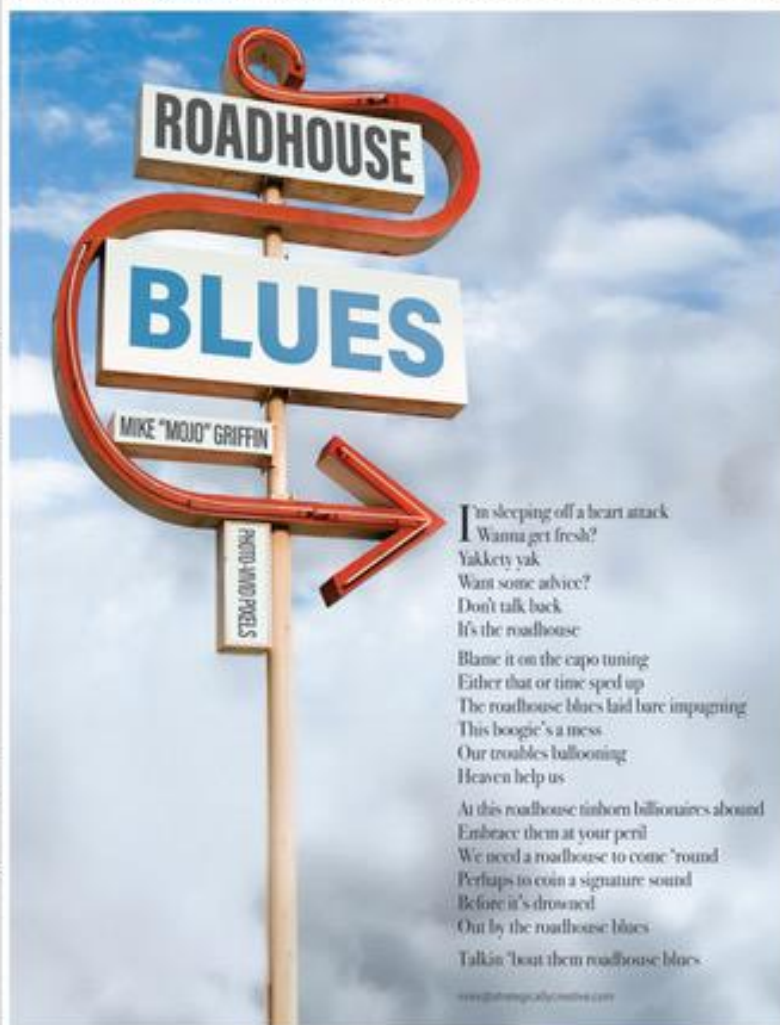
radically, and a ferry ride across Lake Champlain gets us to Laura Carbone's "Plattsburg Blues & Jazz Series," which has been presenting fantastic acts for about a decade now. We often wonder how a town with one-tenth the population of Burlington can get ten times more people for a blues show.

My favorite festival has to be The White Mountain Blues & Boogie Festival every August in Thornton, New Hampshire, and

I love all the jamming on Beale Street in Memphis before and after the Blues Music Awards in Memphis in May. And the obligatory trips to Clarksdale, Mississippi for their post-BMA fest, which includes visits to Ground Zero, Red's, the Crossroads and other historic venues.

Blues On!!!!
"Mr. Charlie" Frazier / WIZN / Blues For Breakfast/The Dimmer Triplets

815 Sherman Hollow Road
Huntington, Vermont 05462
802-434-4947
mrcharlie@gmail.net
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Broadcast Job Openings Around Vermont



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[News Producer, Senior Sales Account Executive, Junior Sales Account Executive, Sports Anchor/Reporter, Digital Content](#)

[Specialist, National Sales Manager, Account Executive,](#)
[Local News Anchor/Reporter](#)

[Producer, Graphic Artist, Multimedia](#)
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This Week at the FCC



Every week, the attorneys at [Wilkinson Barker Knauer, LLP](#) in Washington D.C. provide a summary of the regulatory and legal actions of significance to broadcasters within the FCC. They also provide links to information about how these actions may affect your operations. Read this week's summary as well as summaries from past weeks at:

vermontbroadcasters.org/this-week-at-the-fcc

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