

STREET CRACKS



Home again: Ed Kelly has gone full circle with his radio career, starting across the border in Canada and slowly working his way back to the U.S.

Ed Kelly has Windsor start, Detroit finish

BY BOB SADLER
SPECIAL WRITER

Proving the old adage that things can indeed come full circle, Ed Kelly considers himself at home.

A Windsor, Ont., native, Kelly has bounced around Canada and the United States, leading a charmed radio life. Armed with an arsenal of voices few can match and the ability to write airwave friendly comedy, Kelly now finds himself teamed with Ken Calvert for the morning shift at WLLZ-FM in Farmington Hills.

Given where he has ended up, it is ironic that the place where Kelly got his first radio break was also a place known as "Wheels" — a Windsor roller rink. Kelly had been working there as a disc jockey when CKWW, a small 500-watt station in town, happened to be doing a live remote broadcast. The program director spotted him and asked him if he was interested in working at the station.

Initially, the self-proclaimed "blue collar kid" chickened out at the opportunity, preferring a job at a local General Motors plant. But about a year later, he ran into the program director again — and this time decided to give it a go. His first shift, on a weekend at three in the morning, was not particularly memorable.

"It was like me and my Mom listening," Kelly said. Continually passed over when more appealing shifts opened up, Kelly ended up doing the overnight show for three years. He then made a jump not normally made in radio — a job in Sarnia doing a morning show. There was no looking back.

After bouncing around some Canadian markets during the mid-'80s, Kelly was hired as a writer and performer by the American Comedy Network in New York City in 1988. ACN is the preeminent supplier of pre-produced radio comedy bits, parody songs and celebrity impressions in the country, feeding material to morning shows in more than 300 markets.

Thanks in part to fax machines, digital audio tape and overnight delivery services, Kelly is still employed by ACN as a principle performer, in addition to his current position at WLLZ. Therefore, morning commuters in cities all over the United States have the opportunity to enjoy Kelly's stalwart impressions of Eddie Murphy, Tom Brokaw, Regis Philbin, David Lee Roth and others.

Brought back to the Detroit/Windsor area from the Hartford market by CKLW-AM, Kelly admits that he was ready to try his hand at the talk format after seeing the successes of larger-than-life personalities like Howard Stern and Rush Limbaugh.

However, a contract annuity at CKLW suddenly gave Kelly the opportunity to look for a new position. His agent had possibilities in New York and Los Angeles — but Ken Calvert and WLLZ were also interested. Calvert made numerous one-on-one calls to Kelly to convince him, and chemistry began to develop.

"The key to success in this business is finding the right partner," Kelly said. "I am the gimmick. Some partners don't like to share that spotlight. Ken Calvert is what we in the business call a prime quarterback. He's able to draw the best out of other people."

"I've been on a quest for 12 years to find this guy, and he found me." And so, Calvert and Kelly have become a team. Expectations at the station are high that the duo will raise WLLZ's sagging fortunes of late, which were brought about by a combination of factors — including bad publicity surround Calvert's January move to the morning slot and the exiling of long-time J.J. and the Morning Crew (Jim Johnson and George Baler).

See KELLY, 9A

Cruise has its stars and more



Cruising the Detroit River can have its wild side. So discovered a boatload of women who were entertained by the sounds of Go West and the revealing show by "The Boys from Venice Beach."

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO
STAFF WRITER

So far, you could say saxophone player Dave Koz's summer tour has been filled with wine, women and song.

"On the west coast, I've played mostly wineries. People sit and drink wine and I play," Koz said. In the Midwest, however, Koz played radio station Q95's fourth annual "Cruise For Women Only" along the Detroit River.

"I can safely say it's the first time I've ever followed a strip act," said Koz on the deck of the "River Gambler" as it drifted past downtown Windsor.

Koz's three-song set was sandwiched between male strippers from "The Boys from Venice Beach" and "Seduction," and the English pop band Go West.

Koz, who recently released the album "Lucky Man," felt up to par with his album's title.

"We've all done a lot of shows, but this is just a party. Plus, with 600 women, you can't do much wrong," he said with a smile.

The cruise on Thursday, Aug. 5,

teams of male strippers. Long after they were on the stage, their legacy continued. When station personalities Kevin O'Neill and Mark "Doc" Andrews came on stage to introduce the acts, the contest winners screamed for them to take their clothes off. One woman offered O'Neill \$10. Koz, dressed in all black except for a green suit coat, responded by letting an audience member take his suit coat off him. After all, he couldn't do it himself.

"It's hard to play and disrobe at the same time," he said.

During the cruise, the women were separated into two groups. Half were sent to the lower deck of the boat where they saw performances by Koz, who performs the new theme to "General Hospital," the strippers, and Go West. Upstairs, Ashford signed autographs along Judson Mills from "As The World Turns" and pop star Daryl Hall as a local band played. After the show downstairs was over, the groups switched places.

Between sets, Go West frontmen — Peter Cox and Richard Drummie — hung out on the deck overlooking the Detroit and Windsor skylines. The group flew in from England to do this show. Although they enjoyed the cruise, Cox is looking forward to playing in the United States with a full band. Space limitations only allowed for the groups to sing with a backup tape.

"It's great to come out and meet all the people. In all honesty though, we'd rather be playing fully live. Logistics dictate it's easier in such a small area to use a DAT," Cox said.

"We travel with 12 musicians. It gets expensive for the American company (EMI Music) to bring everyone over here," he added.

The group played its three recent hits "Tell Me," "King of Wishful Thinking" from the "Pretty Woman" soundtrack, and "Faithful." In full shows, Go West also includes in its set older hits like "We Close Our Eyes" and "Don't Look Down."

Koz played three songs as well: "Castle of Dreams," the General Hospital theme "Faces of the Heart," and "You Make Me Smile." The latter of which described exactly how Koz felt when, during the second set, it was sometimes hard for him to fight back his shy grin as the women screamed for him.

"You definitely make me smile."



Good show: Singers Peter Cox (top photo, left) and Richard Drummie of Go West provided the musical interlude, while "The Boys from Venice Beach" turned up the heat for the Women's Only Cruise.



Blind Melon offers its fans diversity

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO
STAFF WRITER

Brad Smith and Shannon Hoon have suffered the repercussions of being rock stars. When their band Blind Melon is on the road, they're forced to go out of town to get in a good game of pool.

"Lead singer" Shannon and I are vicious pool players," said bassist Smith via telephone from a Cincinnati, Ohio, hotel room.

"We bet money and everything. We have to go far away (from the venue) to get serious about pool. Everyone wants to meet us now."

A year ago this time Blind Melon was touting to prepare for the September 1992 release of its self-titled debut. Those spots included dates

with "120 Minutes Tour" (Public Image Limited, Live and Big Audio Dynamite II) and Soundgarden. Tonight, the group will be reunited with Soundgarden when both bands open for Neil Young at Pine Knob Music Theatre.

"When we first went on tour with that band, the first two shows I was going, 'Huh? English rock relived in the '90s.' But I ended up freaking out over that band," said Smith with his Southern-tinged accent.

Smith said bands that slowly get attention — like Blind Melon and Soundgarden — are long-lasting talents.

See BLIND MELON, 9A



Blind Melon: Shannon Hoon (left), Brad Smith, Christopher Thorn, Glen Graham and Rogers Stevens will open for Neil Young and Soundgarden at Pine Knob Music Theatre Aug. 16.

Monday, Aug. 16
NELL YOUNG
With Soundgarden and Blind Melon at Pine Knob Music Theatre, 1-75 and Sashabaw Road, Clarkston. (rock) 377-0100

Tuesday, Aug. 17
THE KINKS
With Aimee Mann, former lead singer of 'Til Tuesday, at Pine Knob Music Theatre, 1-75 and Sashabaw Road, Clarkston. (rock) 377-0100

LARRYXZ ALLIEN'S NOVELTY SHOP
With G.I.W. at Blind Pig, 206-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. 996-8555

2 BUCKARMS FROM EARTH
The Gracie, 33318 Grand River, Farmington. (acoustic rock) 615-9181

JOE HENDERSON
Performs as part of the Ann Arbor Blues and

IN CONCERT

Jazz Festival at the Michigan Theater, Ann Arbor. (blues) 668-8397

SAL D'AGNILLO
Alcatraz Saloon, Keego Harbor. (acoustic rock) 692-1119

SEATTLE BOYS VIDEO APPRECIATION NIGHT
3-D, 1815 N. Main St., Royal Oak. (pop/rock) 589-3344

Wednesday, Aug. 18
FRED PERKER AND THE CAT'S MEOW BAND
With Norman Focle at Pine Knob Music Theatre, 1-75 and Sashabaw Road, Clarkston. (children's entertainment) 377-0100

BOOKMAN KEEPERS
The Ark, 637 1/2 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 761-1800

TWO IGUANAS FROM EARTH
Auld's, 5755 Cass, Detroit. (acoustic rock) 832-2355

SOMETHING WILD
Blind Pig, 206-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. 996-8555

DROPPING NAMES
Gayle's Chocolates, Royal Oak. (rock) 398-0001

WALTER WHITE AND IP-UHU
Maggie's Theatre Cafe, 22618 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. 544-3030

GURU'S JAZZMAZZ
Performs with A.J. Croce, Steve Ferguson &

The Midwest Creole Ensemble, Sonny Sharrock, Madcat & Kane, and Big Dave and the Ultrasonics at Gallup Park, Ann Arbor, as part of the Ann Arbor Blues and Jazz Festival. (eclectic) 669-6301

ETTA JAMES
Michigan Theater, Ann Arbor. (blues) 668-8397

TARBOGS
Performs during a live broadcast on 89X with The Mind at the Ritz, 1015 and Gratiot. (alternative rock) 759-6204

SAL D'AGNILLO
Alcatraz Saloon, Keego Harbor. (acoustic rock) 692-1119

BIG BLOCK
With Jameson Juice at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. (alternative rock) 961-MELT

See IN CONCERT, 9A