

Jim Klobuchar



For the past 24 hours I have been under heavy tranquilizers and anti-twitch ointments, the only known remedies for prolonged exposure to radio station U-100 for a man born just before the stock market crashed.

My shakes having receded, I am now in condition to act as the honorary bosun's mate of the Lake Calhoun Navy in tomorrow's annual Paddle for People canoe safari in behalf of people who are mentally retarded.

If you are unoccupied tomorrow morning, incidentally, I insist you join. You don't have to own a canoe. We have agents who can furnish them. If you have one, bring it. Also bring some cash commitments from friends, lovers or neighborhood slugabeds with guilt syndromes. It is a picnic and a floating fantasy, 15 miles through the lake chain where you can pretend you are either a red-capped voyageur or Cleopatra on the Nile.

The canoeathon and my electronic convulsions from U-100 are related. To recruit more canoeists this year, we enlisted rock station WYOO to coax its commotion-loving young listeners to Calhoun's white sands at 8 a.m. tomorrow.

THE STATION describes itself — with praiseworthy restraint — as Super U, or Super U-100. It has a civic conscience, in addition to demoralizing noise levels. I have therefore been introduced the past few days to a menagerie of apoplectic DJs and sounds that may very well foretell an invasion of the earth by tone-deaf Venusians.

They are the kind of sounds you would get if you took the Anvil Chorus from *Il Trovatore*, put it on 16 tracks, revved it up to orbital speed and then matched it against a passing freight train to see which would win.

"How do you do it?" I asked Jo Jo Gunne, a stumpy young man in a white T-shirt and denims who is the nighttime curator of all this tumult. "How can you stand here in this little booth surrounded by these amplifying monsters and really believe you can outshout the music."

JO JO GUNNE responded by lifting his voice from somewhere between his navel and his groin. It emerged through tightened throat muscles that seemed to impart that endearing blend of panic and euphoria so admired among rock DJs.

"It's an art you learn out of desperation," Jo Jo Gunne said in modest acknowledgement of his craft.

I tried to conceal my naivete here but could not resist asking how rock radio played and talked in the kind of idiom that would not be allowed in the men's rooms on Lower Hennepin Av., or the ladies' rooms for all I know.

JARRED BY U-100, HE GOES CANOEING

"We do it for survival," Jo Jo Gunne explained. "If we didn't, some other station would. We have competitors now, of course. If we didn't play 'Disco Lady' once an hour or so, we'd have a mutiny on our hands."

"Disco Lady" is to U-100 what Maynard Speece's sly domestic stories from the smokehouse are to WCCO, a cultural trademark. When you can hear the lyrics they relate the pelvic thrashings of a discoltheque dancer, but they seem interchangeable with a longshoreman's manual on how to make love.

"**DO YOU BLUSH** to put some of this on," I asked one Sheryl Holm, a 22-year-old graduate of Minneapolis Edison who is advertised as the only woman DJ on rock radio in the Twin Cities.

Ms. Holm does not come before the public as Ms. Holm. After her discovery by U-100's Rob Sherwood, the two of them sat down to decide by what name she should be merchandised.

"He thought Kincaid would be a memorable and dramatic last name," Ms. Holm said. "For a first name I wanted something a little masculine to give me a little edge, a few more inches, a little more ground in my competition with male DJs. I liked Zack and Benjie."

"He looked out the window and decided I was a Mesa, which is table in Spanish. I don't feel like a table. I don't feel like a Mesa. But I'm now Mesa Kincaid, also known as 'the fox that rocks.' Why should I blush to play that kind of music? We deal with excitement. I'm tall, blonde and gorgeous. It's a beautiful world. We try to get our listeners to feel the same way."

"Don't you feel self-conscious calling yourself gorgeous," I asked.

"Why stifle the truth?" she asked.

Doo-be-doo-be-doo.