



DJs Max Leinwand ("The Mighty Maximizer"), left, Scott Peacock ("DJ Bird"), Susan McCann ("Malibu Sue"), rocker Al Jourgensen (of the group Ministry) and program director Denis McNamara at WLIR studios in Hempstead in the mid-1980s. The station is the subject of a Showtime documentary by Plainview native Ellen Goldfarb.

a legend in record time

Documentary recalls LI radio station's vibrant life and the way the music died

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The legend of WLIR, the small but influential Hempstead radio station that helped bring British new wave to America in the '80s, is about to grow much bigger. "New Wave: Dare to Be Different," Plainview native Ellen Goldfarb's documentary about the station's rise and eventual fall in 1987, because of a licensing dispute with the FCC, will get a national audience, starting Friday at 8 p.m. on Showtime. "It was great to see how the New York crowd reacted to it — it's about their home," says Goldfarb, who premiered the movie at last year's Tribeca Film Festival. "But in other places, people were cheering along. ... There was a woman from

'New Wave: Dare to Be Different'

WHEN | WHERE Premieres at 8 p.m. Friday on Showtime and starting Saturday on Showtime on Demand
 INFO dtbdthemovie.com

St. Petersburg who came up to me and said, 'I didn't grow up on Long Island, but I wish I did.'"

FROM STATION TO SCREEN

"New Wave: Dare to Be Different" chronicles the era when Long Island, not New York City, had the coolest radio station. In one telling clip, Duran Duran's Nick Rhodes talks about the British rockers' first trip to New York and the



Susan McCann with Morrissey at WLIR in the early 1980s. Supposedly, she was the only person the singer-songwriter would allow to interview him.

angst they felt about seeing the Manhattan skyline they dreamed about get smaller because they were on their way to Hempstead. "[Program director] Denis McNamara at WLIR had a real vision," Rhodes says. "That was the thing that changed radio — the vision." McNamara, who is semi-retired from radio and lives in Northport, says he has been surprised by the response to the documentary. "I've just been knocked out by the way people respond," says McNamara, who still has a weekly radio show on WUSB at 10 a.m. Fridays. "There's just so many people thanking us."

BIG LOCAL REACTION

For him, it has put a happy ending on a traumatic part of his career. "When it ended, we felt like failures," McNamara says. "We never knew the impact we had with the listeners or even the artists. We were just fighting against all odds and working never to let on how hard it was behind the scenes. Now, we can look back with a great sense of pride." Larry "The Duck" Dunn, WLIR's music director, said he got emotional watching the documentary and seeing how the station affected its listeners' lives. "It really was the quality of the audience that made it work," said Dunn, now a DJ on SiriusXM's First Wave channel. "We would never have been able to generate that kind of excitement without them. I remember being in a tuxedo in the parking lot of a Taco Bell in Massapequa on New Year's Eve and asking people to show up. And they did. They are an important part of the story, and Ellen captured it."

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THEY WILL 'DARE'

Director Ellen Goldfarb plans more projects connected to "Dare to Be Different":
DVD The documentary DVD will include never-before-seen interviews and other bonus features. Release expected late summer.
BOOK The companion book will include transcripts of all the interviews and a collection of photos from the station's history.
SOUNDTRACK Not only does Goldfarb plan to collect the great '80s music from the movie, but also the new song Joan Jett wrote for the movie.

Goldfarb says the documentary, which was written by her brother, Jay Reiss, who also co-wrote the Broadway musical "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee," is built around a great underdog tale. "It's a David and Goliath story," she says. "It's heartwarming and endearing to see the story of a group of people who made something happen. If they didn't, music may not have happened the way it did."