

How Charle Vasar Became Sandy Bennett

Like the second sons in the European tales of yore, Charle Vasar left the house of her parents at the age of 18 and set off into the world to seek her fortune. She found lodging with cheap rent that also provided free workouts: first stepping over the homeless man sleeping in the doorway, she toned her gluts; then proceeding to the dumpster she pressed weights using a stick to open the lid; there she practiced Zumba by dodging her four legged rat “instructors” as they lunged out of the garbage at her.

It was living on the corner of 32nd and Lorain in Cleveland that allowed her to meet Cristobal Santiago who had hosted the Puerto Rican show on Cleveland’s Nationality Radio station and who inspired Charle to pursue a radio career.

She enrolled in broadcast school and landed her first job halfway through—a two hour drive from the rest of her life—no deterrent for a twenty year old. Weekdays were spent at her fulltime job and night classes and weekends were spent at WOSE in Port Clinton. After her Saturday evening show she retired to the unheated, extra production studio to grab some sleep on her army cot and cozy winter weight sleeping bag, then up and at ’em early Sunday morning to board operate the church shows. Amazingly, this only fueled Charle’s passion for being on the air.

After graduating from the Ohio School of Broadcast Technique, she heard that it was raining black gold and opportunity way south, so she tore herself away from her beloved Cleveland and trotted down to Texas.

She worked at KBAT, then KOZA where she was quickly promoted to Afternoon Drive Disc Jockey and Production Director. Mostly left to her own devices she had fun with the show. One time she had the evening jock pose as a florist delivery man to show up multiple times during her Valentine’s show. She would pretend to open the attached love note from sexy leading men like Clint Eastwood, only to have the delivery guy ask her for payment, exposing her ploy. By the end of the day, the entire front office was filled with actual flowers sent by listeners not wanting poor Charle to spend Valentine’s day lonely.

While there, she won three Addy Awards for her copywriting and production. Since all good things must come to an end, the station was sold, and Charle jumped ship for greener pastures at KOSA-TV and a part-time morning show gig as the weather girl. She went from there to Media Concepts Advertising to work

as an ad agency Account Executive. After six years in West Texas, she picked up a bit of a drawl and a longing to return home.

Arriving in Cleveland in one piece, minus most worldly possessions after two car accidents on the trip up, and unemployed, she found work answering phones at WMJI, then back on the air at WCPZ in Sandusky. From there she became part of the crew that would take WNWV, *The Wave* from no jocks to a station with a staff of D.J.'s. She hosted "Cleveland After Dark" and when that gig abruptly ended, she found herself working a number of part-time jobs – Air Talent at WGAR both at the station and as a Traffic Reporter, a mobile D.J. working weddings and parties, a Friday night bar D.J. in Berea, WKYC-TV behind the scenes and Singing Telegrams for Tasteful Tellies. It was in this chaotic time that WMJI was sold and they were getting ready to "clean house." She interviewed for an Air Talent position in the afternoon and went home to catch a nap. Grabbing the phone from a dead sleep, she heard a now familiar voice with a thick Boston accent, John Gorman, the Program Director at Majic 105.7. He revealed that she got the job and they wanted her to start that night. They wanted to change her name to Sandy, Sandy Bennett. If she thought of a better last name in the next couple of hours, let him know, otherwise she was now Sandy Bennett. Her initial reaction was "call me anything you want, just don't call me working five part time jobs to make ends meet."

This was the birth of Sandy Bennett and a successful run at WMJI. It was a golden opportunity to work with some of the best in the business. As time passed and the radio industry became more corporate with layoffs every year to accommodate budget constraints, Sandy's job was to be eliminated. She was lucky to find a position doing a request show at the Jammin Oldies station in the historic old Halle Building downtown Cleveland. That job lasted about 6 months before they were sold and changed formats. The staff was called in for what is affectionately referred to as a "blood bath" – employee after employee goes into the boss's office nervous and comes out without a job. She bounced back to Majic, this time hosting the Seventies at Seven Request Show and the Majic Music Magazine.

Sandy had been putting out feelers for a better opportunity, when out of the blue she got a call from Chuck Knight, the Program Director at WSNY, Sunny 95 in Columbus, Ohio. She landed the job working mid-days at the heritage Adult Contemporary Station. Her number one ratings and her recent Middy Award for an endorsement campaign that she created were no match for the failing economy. In 2007 the country was on the precipice of the great recession and she

was a casualty of the station's cut backs. She went from there to a couple of different morning shows in Lima, and then moved to Toledo, Ohio to help launch a brand new station - 107.7, The Wolf.

Following more lay-offs, she is now happily exploring ways to create a mutually beneficial relationship between terrestrial radio and the new technologies like the internet.