



# BROADCASTING A LOVE OF MUSIC



Paul Glavin DJs his weekly radio show, "Eargasm!" on Nashville's WXNA-FM.

**"Music is the road sign to any direction I've taken in life,"** Nashville, TN Branch 4 member **Paul Glavin** said. "There were times I was just eating raw vegetables so I could buy a record."

In his early years, he became a fanatical record collector of "garage rock," a category of music described as a "raw and energetic style of rock 'n' roll."

"Before I knew it, I had a world-class collection," he said. "I wanted to [listen to] that type of music, but I found it wasn't that easy to find [on the radio]. We were tired of listening to what they were playing on the radio. I wanted to share this nonsense with the world."

After graduating from high school in Massachusetts, Glavin attended the Northeast Broadcasting School in Boston and then worked at a number of local radio stations, starting as a copywriter for radio commercials.

"The more you know how to do, the better your chances of staying employed," he explained. Glavin worked in radio on and off from 1980 to 1993 in the North Shore, MA, and Boston areas. "I may have had the first garage rock show in the country" at Boston's WZLX-FM, he said.

AM radio DJs from the 1950s and '60s inspired him to "keep this music alive to people," Glavin said. With his extensive record collection, he started selling and trading records in the late 1980s through magazines and then, after the advent of the internet, online, using the name "Eargasm." It had a "funny connotation" and it sold records, he said.

He was "on the cusp of a bohemian lifestyle," he says. After working odd jobs for years—as an artist, occasionally submitting comics to Marvel; in the steel industry; in warehouses; and in music, including spinning records at punk-rock night clubs in Boston—Glavin looked to the Postal Service for a more practical career option. He began as a mail handler in 1988 and switched to the letter carrier craft in 1991.

The carrier transferred from Boston to Nashville 15 years ago after reconnecting with his now-wife, Sandra. They had dated as teens but had gone their separate ways. Glavin had received a letter from someone at a Boston-area university, but didn't open it because he thought it was a request for money. His daughter from a previous marriage, Megan, finally said to him, "You should open this up." It was a letter from Sandra.

"Within three years, we were married," he said.

She lived in Nashville. "It was a good fit every way around," Glavin said of his move. "It's a great music city." He's since gotten to know a lot of local musicians.

Fast-forward to spring of 2016. Two friends he calls "progressive thinkers" approached Glavin, who by then was Branch 4 vice president and a full-time Tennessee District Dispute Resolution Team member, and told him that they were creating a new listener-supported, freeform community radio station in Nashville from the ground up. They thought the carrier would be a perfect show host and his wife encouraged





him, so after some initial uncertainty he agreed.

"I could bring my record collection to the station," he said. "We are playing and saying whatever we want within FCC [Federal Communications Commission] constraints. It kind of brings you back to the beginning of radio again."

He adopted "Eargasm" as both the name of his show and his DJ name. "It seemed logical," he said. They started broadcasting in June of that year on WXNA-FM.

"I play all kinds of rare stuff—lots of it you can't even find on YouTube," Glavin says of his show. "I try to figure out a playlist that, when people hear it, they say, 'that's Eargasm.'"

Some of his favorite music to play is from Bruce Springsteen's early band the Castiles, the Real Kids, the Trashmen, the Sonics and Screamin' Jay Hawkins. It's not uncommon for the carrier to play Japanese, Icelandic and South American artists. His tastes are eclectic.

Glavin said that garage rock "comes off very goofy" and that people think it's "knuckle-headed teens playing in garages," but he loves its authenticity. He said there's a lot of use of Auto-Tune, a device that corrects out-of-tune vocals, going on with today's pop music. "Rock 'n' roll was better when you didn't have to be pretty," he said.

He bills his two-hour show as "an uncompromising full-throttle rock-and-roll train ride down perilous and seldom-journeyed tracks of low-fi and high-energy musical mayhem."

"I get a lot of cold calls at the end of the two hours, saying, 'What was that?'" Glavin said with a laugh.

He added that the biggest compliment he could receive about his once-

a-week show is hearing, "As soon as you turn it on, you know what you're getting."

The one place he receives little feedback from is postal co-workers, though a few do know about his show. Glavin loved delivering mail, but never listened to music while on his route—so he could be fully aware of his surroundings.

He's used his spot at the radio station to begin to form a partnership with Second Harvest food bank in Nashville. WXNA plans to do public service announcements for the Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger food drive starting this year.

"The community-based radio station is a big deal," he said. "Local people and musicians are proactive in helping out there." WXNA also is volunteer-based and completely dependent on donations, he added.

Glavin said he's asked frequently to DJ and host events, though he mostly turns down such requests. "I'll do events here and there," he said, including providing a soundtrack to a recent book-signing for *Shake Your Hips: The Excello Records Story*. He also provided archival photos from his collection for the event.

"There's a lot you can do outside the post office and letter carrier duties," Glavin said, adding that dabbling in hobbies is great "rehearsal for retirement."

For now, the carrier is happy sharing his love for garage rock by spinning his records for his show, which can be streamed at [wxnafm.org](http://wxnafm.org) on Wednesdays from 5 to 7 p.m. Central Time. "I want somebody to hear [Eargasm] and say, 'I wouldn't hear that show anywhere else,'" he said. **PR**

Below: An advertisement for Glavin's "Eargasm!" program

Bottom: Glavin at the WXNA studios

