

THE PLAIN DEALER

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# PANORAMA

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SATURDAY, MARCH 22, 1986

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PD/MARVIN M. GREENE

He may be the governor — but he is also a father, so Dick Celeste got Cleveland rock singer Eric Carmen to sign six of Carmen's records for his kids.

# Even the governor was rockin'

By JOHN DeWITT

STAFF WRITER

If Alan Freed was, as someone said, watching from On High yesterday at noon, he must have been amazed at the spectacle he saw on Public Square.

There was the governor of Ohio doing the boogie-woogie with a U.S. congresswoman.

There was the business and corporate elite of Cleveland gathered to pay homage to him and to celebrate the 34th birthday of the Moon Dog Coronation Ball that nearly caused a riot on the same day in 1952.

There were several thousand Clevelanders, oblivious to freezing temperatures, disdainful of party labels and Cleveland jokes and vocally in love with rock 'n' roll and with the idea of bringing the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame and Museum to Cleveland.

The event was the beginning of the Rock 'n' Roll Birthday Celebration, which ran all night last night at over a dozen local clubs and night spots, and which featured special programming on radio and television and special events at Public Square and Playhouse Square.

A local band called Wild Horses warmed up the crowd in front of Terminal Tower with old Elvis Presley standards like "Blue Suede Shoes." By

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the time they got around to the Rolling Stones' "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction" and the Kingsmen's "Louie, Louie," the crowd was swaying and swinging.

As an airplane hired by radio station WMMS-FM/100.7 pulled a sign wishing rock 'n' roll a happy birthday overhead, Gov. Richard F. Celeste and Rep. Mary Rose Oakar, D-20, of Cleveland did what may or may not have been the Twist on stage. The crowd howled like Moon Dogs.

Growth Association President Bill Bryant said the afternoon and evening of birthday partying was "another message that we want the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland."

Bryant said the first message was the 660,000 signatures on petitions

Clevelanders delivered to the Hall of Fame directors in New York.

The second was the response to a USA Today telephone poll that swamped the efforts of other cities throughout the country.

Yesterday's birthday party again focused the trustees' eyes on Cleveland, said Mike Benz, vice president of the Growth Association, who has been directing the effort to land the Hall of Fame. Benz said each of the trustees had been sent birthday baskets to remind them of the day's significance. "They know what we're doing here," he said.

Celeste told the crowd the Rock 'n' Roll hall would "do for Cleveland what the Country Music Hall of Fame has done for Nashville and will bring people from all over the world here."

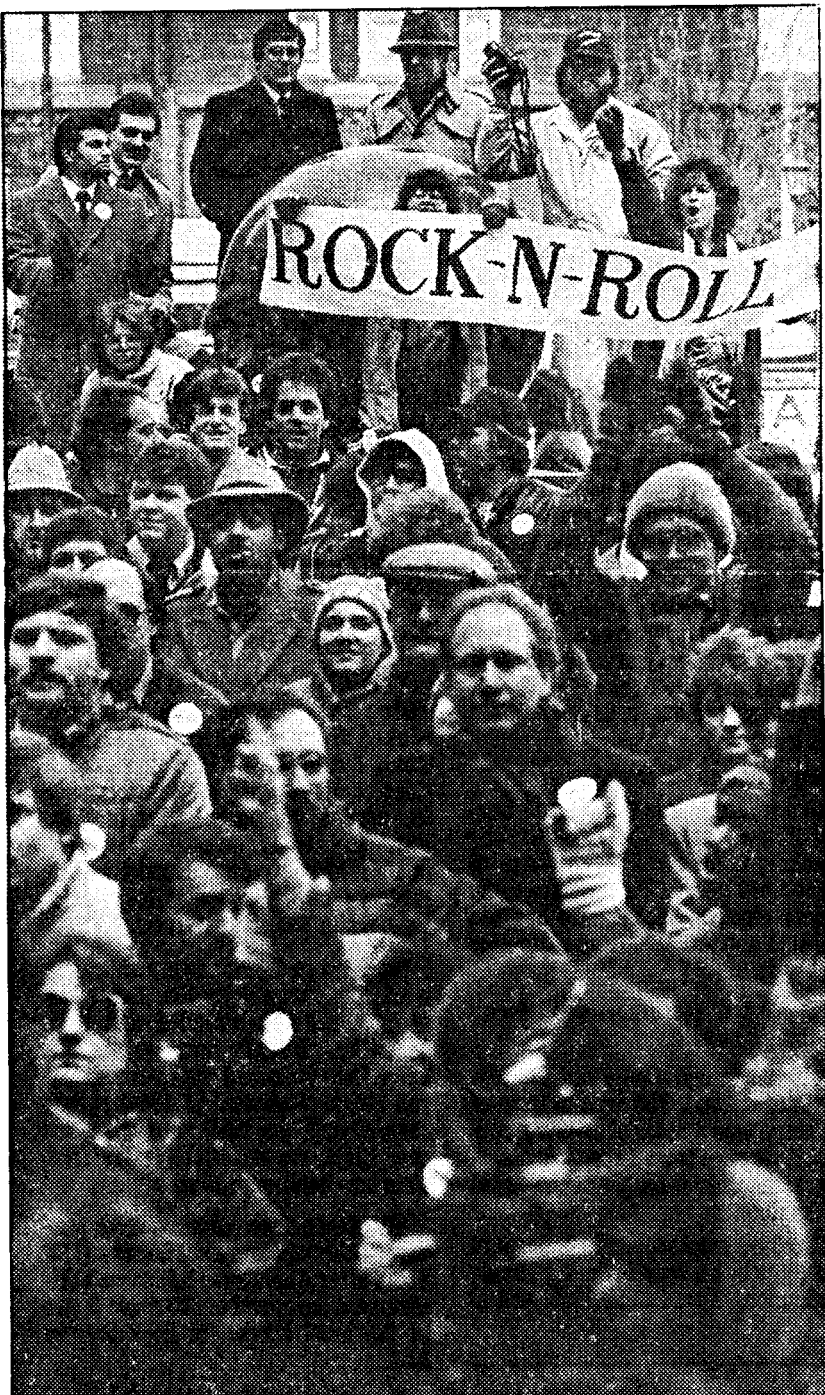
Then, unable to resist the plug for the Cleveland State University Vikings basketball team, Celeste said the party would carry the message that Cleveland is "No. 1 in rock 'n' roll all the way to the Meadowlands in New Jersey."

Oakar blasted critics of rock music. "I get a little tired when I hear the doomsayers talk about the evils of rock music," she said to enthusiastic cheers.

"We don't want to hear the negativism," she said, recalling that it was rock musicians who spearheaded aid to starving Africans with LiveAid, aid to American farmers with FarmAid, and who have been active in anti-apartheid efforts with such songs as "Ain't Gonna Play Sun City."

A highlight of the opening ceremony was the unveiling of a bronze plaque honoring Alan Freed as the Father of Rock 'n' Roll. The plaque will be placed at the site of the old WJW radio studios on Euclid Ave. in Playhouse Square. Freed was one of the first 15 inducted into the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame.

The last thing Freed, who died 20 years ago, could have seen yesterday was a giant birthday cake, complete with sparklers. Then the whole crowd sang Happy Birthday to rock 'n' roll and the band played on.



PD/DAVID I. ANDERSEN

**The crowd rallies for rock 'n' roll — and Cleveland, the home of it all.**

## ROCK NOTES

A couple of bundled-up business types said they had the perfect oldie-but-goodie for the noontime ceremonies on Public Square — but couldn't decide if Democratic Gov. Richard F. Celeste or Republican Mayor George V. Voinovich should sing it: "It's My Party and I'll Cry If I Want To."

Not exactly what Lesley Gore had in mind back in 1963.

■ As had been expected — and hoped by organizers — last night's celebration attracted attention outside of Cleveland. Keith Karakul of the Growth Association said media coverage included an ABC News crew for "World News Tonight," the New York Times and newspaper and TV reporters from Cincinnati, Dayton and Toledo, as well as wire service reporters and stringers for such publications as Variety, USA Today and the music magazines Performance and Creem. CBS Evening News wrapped up its Thursday telecast with a five-minute piece on the rock 'n' roll extravaganza and the Vikings CSU-phoria. The Today show yesterday also touted the going-ons.

■ Alan Freed's brother, David,

said he would have loved to come in for the festivities but couldn't get a plane in time from his vacation at Sanibel Island, Fla. What would Alan Freed have thought about this? "In his day, the people were after him with warrants; and now they're making him a folk hero. I think Alan would just have smiled." Peter Hastings, now the official photographer of the Cleveland Orchestra, had photographed the original Moon Dog concert at the old Arena. He apparently decided once was enough, and didn't make it to Moon Dog II last night.

■ It was sheer exuberance last night — crowds going down to the Flats for the fireworks, tooting horns and waving their fists, shouting rock 'n' roll belongs in Cleveland.

■ Matter of priorities: Bill Haley's "Rock Around the Clock" got wider local play than presidential addresses do when it was broadcast yesterday at 7:58 p.m. Participating stations included WHK, WBEA, WDMT, WGAR, WGCL, WLTF, WMJI, WMMS and WZAK on radio and WCLQ, WEWS, WJW, WKYC and WOIO television.