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Sun, November 9, 2003

## Getting the Edge back

By [JIM SLOTEK](#), TORONTO SUN

he point will be lost on those -- and this includes much of the media -- who still use the phrase to pigeonhole people under 30. But the very concept of Generation X is now more than a quarter-century old. Gen Xers these days are people who should have their prostates checked regularly. (And how do you ID a Boomer? Depends ... ba-dum-bum!). We've since been followed by "Generation Why?," "Generation Huh?" and "Generation Whatever," all of whom will know soon enough how it feels to be mocked by smartass kids. It's against this demographic backdrop that CFNY celebrates its 25th anniversary this week -- one year after the Church of Boomer-dom, Q-107, celebrated its own.

And it's only when the two anniversaries are placed side by side that I end up choosing sides. For as much as I love The Who, The Stones and Zep, my early Toronto experience was better represented by the station that first played The Clash and The Jam and is hosting a party at the Government/Kool Haus Wednesday featuring reunions of Rough Trade, Martha And The Muffins, Images In Vogue and The Spoons.

My second day in town, a just-arrived college freshman from Thunder Bay, I saw the Diodes at Larry's Hideaway. I saw the Viletones on a few occasions at the Edge. I could lie and say I attended the Last Pogo at the Horseshoe, but I did have friends who were there.

My loyalty to the station was clinched the night my friend Rob phoned around to see if anybody would play Iggy Pop. Only 'NY would (the people at



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CHUM-FM were particularly snotty).

Since CFNY (which is tangentially what has become The Edge 102.1) was a 10-watt station in Brampton that broadcast from atop a Meccano set in the Halton Hills, it had the added romance of being hard to get.

Though all of us played with wire hangers to improve the signal, my theory was that the clarity increased with the number of people in the room with dental fillings. Either that, or it was necessary to have a good tailwind blowing from Brampton to push the signal along.

"I think Radio Shack did very well by us," then station-manager David Marsden says of the gizmos people attached to their receivers. "When I went out there, the station had 12 listeners, not because it wasn't good, but because that's all the people who could receive it."

Punk and New Wave, the genre that eventually gave us the aforementioned Clash as well as U2, The Talking Heads and The Police, was a marginal format on which to base a station. "But here we were in a little ramshackle yellow house on Main St. in Brampton with no tools to work with," Marsden says. "I reasoned that in that situation, you do not do what everyone else does."

"When we started, there was KROQ in L.A. and CFNY in Toronto playing that format. We were told continually by other deejays and programmers 'Nobody wants to listen to what you're playing. Why do you play that junk?'"

"Today, that junk is a staple on stations that say 'We play want.' The Clash and The Jam, they were considered real edge, outlandish nasty people. But now you hear The Cl Jays games, and at the mall they're playing Elvis Costello

It was a personality-driven station, from Pete And Geets v about the traffic on "Mister and Mrs.-auga Road," to ex-Li Skip Prokop's Christian Rock show Rock And A Hard Pla asleep Sundays to Styper, Petra and The Daniel Band).

"I remember Ted Woloshyn (now CFRB's morning man)a show atop the Bulova Tower at the CNE," Marsden says. Ted, he's very afraid of heights, and he'd be up there eve from fear. There's another guy used to do The Eclectic Sp Sundays, his name was Brad McNally and he was a very He'd spend an hour talking about masking and he did exp where he ran secret messages to see if people could hea

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very, very inventive radio."

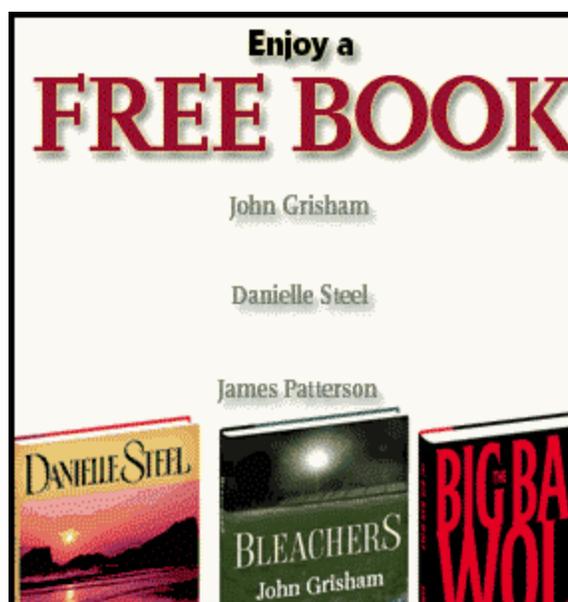
Several incarnations later (Marsden left in the late '80s, a after 'NY finally started broadcasting from the CN Tower), owned seat-of-its-pants station is a corporate entity playin rock. But things are cordial between the Corus-owned 10: guys celebrating down at the waterfront.

Among the old names on hand: Liz Janik, Live Earl Jive, Headley Jones, Pete and Geets, Maie Pauts, Ivar Hamiltc Alan Cross and more.

"This isn't about saying our radio was better than radio to Marsden, who had a stint recently programming FLOW at heard these days Thursday and Friday nights on Oshawa 94.9 FM.

Still, I suggest, kids now would probably not go to such le a radio station. "In terms of teenagers, yes," he agrees, "I been lost to radio. But this is a celebration of when we we and a time that we each continue to carry with us."

For more on the CFNY reunion, click on to <http://spiritofra index.asp>.



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