

1050 CHUM 40TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

CANADA'S COMMUNICATIONS MAGAZINE

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■ **ON THE COVER:** (left to right)
Jim Waters, Allan Waters and Fred Sherratt
take a stroll down memory lane at 1331
Yonge Street. Photography by Anthony Bliss.

BROADCASTER®

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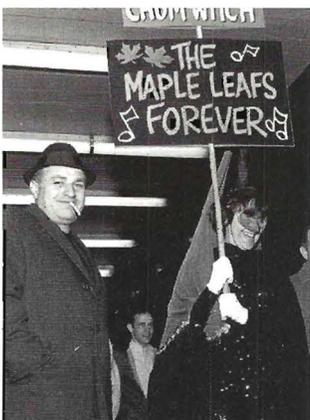
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Interview with Allan Waters

Allan Waters recalls how over 40 years ago, he decided to quit working in the patent medicine business to start operating CHUM, a local radio station. Waters describes how he made broadcasting history by transforming CHUM into something no one else had dared do in Canada -- a 24 hour a day Rock & Roll station.

John Bugailiskis: Until 1954 you were involved in the patent medicine business with a company called Adrem Pharmaceuticals. The owner, Jack Q. Part decided to sell off pieces of his business and asked you what you wanted. Your first choice was not the radio station he also owned, but the patent medicine business. Can you explain how you jumped from medicine to music?

Allan Waters: The company was falling on hard times and so I expressed the view that I wanted to own something from the company. I wanted the patent medicine company, but the owner said he wanted to keep that himself and instead offered me the radio station. I said, sure.

J.B.: But it was three years later, when you decided to go with a rock 'n' roll format for that station.

A.W.: When I took over the station, it was sunrise to sunset only. I knew that I had to get the station to air 24 hours a day and it took about three years to get to that day. I started looking at the Top 40 format at the same time.

J.B.: When you became a station owner in 1954, you didn't have much previous experience in radio. What made you decide that rock 'n' roll was something worth trying and that it was going to work, instead of playing it safe and sticking with the original format?

A.W.: Well, the format was gaining popularity in the United States. I talked to a lot of people down there and they sent me some tape. The market in Canada seemed right so I went with it.

J.B.: Was it decided then that that rock 'n' roll was something you wanted, or did you spend the three years planning to get it up to where you wanted it?

A.W.: No. It was three years of trying to keep my head above water. We did anything we had to do to make money at the time. My primary goal over the three years was to move the transmitter from north of Toronto to south of Toronto.

J.B.: So the transmitter change was completed by 1957?

A.W.: Yes.

J.B.: By how much did you increase your reception area by moving the transmitter?

A.W.: Initially, we went with 5000 watts. It was better, but not much. What it gave us was a greater coverage area. We went from 5000 to 10,000 watts, then finally up to 50,000 watts which allowed us to compete with the other radio stations.

J.B.: In 1957 when you went to rock 'n' roll, a lot of people must have thought that you were crazy. Did you ever have doubts in the beginning?

A.W.: Oh, I had lots of doubts. Particularly, when the advertising community didn't accept it. People have asked me how fast the business grew when we went to rock & roll. Well, it didn't. It took two to three years before the national advertisers were interested in us. We had to educate them to our way of programming, which wasn't easy. They didn't like the sound of Top 40 which was new and unproven.



**Allan Waters,
president and
founder of
CHUM Ltd.**

J.B.: What caused them to change their minds? Was it an effort on your sales team's part to convince them? How did you get over that?

A.W.: The fact that our audience kept growing. So, they had to pay attention to that. We were consistent, we didn't budge. We had a lot of people telling us what to change, but we didn't change. We stayed true to the Top 40 format.

J.B.: What kind of strategy were you following when you first went to the rock 'n' roll format?

A.W.: As far as the format went, we played Top 40. And, we had good talent. They were very supportive of what we were trying to do and they did it well.

J.B.: Were the employees that were there in 1954 the same employees that were there when it changed to rock 'n' roll? You didn't bring anyone in from outside?

A.W.: No. They were the same.

J.B.: Did that surprise you that they were able to make the transition fairly smoothly?

A.W.: Yes. But they all worked hard and they were determined to make the format work.

J.B.: As we go through the sixties and into the seventies, CHUM becomes one of the most prominent stations in North America. During that time is there one special event or promotion you remember?

A.W.: There are a number of promotions. The Elvis Presley contest was by far one of the biggest. He was new but it was shocking to me how greatly accepted he was already.

J.B.: What were your feelings when CHUM, a Top 40 station for nearly 30 years, changed to an oldies format in 1989?

A.W.: Radio has to adjust to what's happening in the market place. It's the way of any business.

J.B.: Do you think that AM radio still has a future?

A.W.: Yes, I do. Certainly with the arrival of digital radio which will make for better radio signals, AM Radio will be able to compete directly with all other stations in the market place.

J.B.: Do you see 1050 CHUM changing its format back to Top 40?

A.W.: I honestly can't answer that. I think it depends on what is going on in the marketplace at that time. As you know 1050 CHUM has stayed with music, and we have done well with it.

J.B.: Is there anything else you want to add about your time there at CHUM with regards to the station?

A.W.: I think that the one thing I would like to impress upon your readers is that CHUM was not built by Allan Waters alone. I think it is very important that people understand a lot of great, talented people contributed to the success of CHUM. While a lot of these people have moved on to other places over the years, some of them have come back to CHUM. A lot of them tell me CHUM is like their home. I want to emphasize that CHUM was not built by just one person. It was built by a lot of dedicated and talented broadcasters.



Interview with Jim Waters

The president of CHUM Group Radio reflects on how 1050 CHUM has changed since the early 1970s when he first began working for his dad's station as a summer student.

John Bugailiskis: What has it been like working for a radio station that your dad created 40 years ago?

Jim Waters: I have always considered myself extremely fortunate to be in the position that I am in. It is certainly all thanks to my father. However, one of the things which dad did with my brother, Ron and I, was get our feet wet by having Ron work in television and myself at CHUM radio during the summers.

One of my early memories (1971) was being an operator in the control room at CHUM, and running the board for some of the biggest names that have ever worked in Canadian radio. For instance, I operated for Roger Ashby on the all-night show around 26 years ago. He of course, is now the morning man for CHUM FM. Roger and I used to have an absolute riot together. I also operated for Jay Nelson, Chuck McCoy, Tom Rivers – all of whom are great, great talents. I also worked in all the different departments. I wrote some copy, spent some time in the traffic department and worked in sales. I think this was all a master plan of dad, to make sure that I knew how a radio station operated at different levels.

I sold in Vancouver at CFUN for a couple of years in the seventies. I went from Vancouver to Kingston where I became an owner/operator of CKLC/CKLC-FM (now CFLY.) I ran the operation for four years and returned to CHUM Toronto in 1979.

When I came back, all of a sudden, I was in charge of people like Jay Nelson, who used to tell me to wash his car when he pulled into the driveway of my parents home when he came to visit them. The irony was that I was now telling, or at least attempting to tell, Jay Nelson what to do. The tables had turned.

JB: Can you mention some other memorable moments you had at 1050 CHUM in the seventies and eighties?

JW: Some of the events that happened

back then were things like the Bay City Rollers coming here and virtually shutting down Yonge Street. But, some of the antics that happened between the announcers were really quite bizarre. For instance, a guy reading news in the middle of the night and somebody coming in behind him and lighting his copy on fire. Also, someone substituting blank copy behind the news copy which they had put in the booth before they got in there, so, they get two stories into the news and then all of a sudden, there is no copy – all blank! Goofy things like this were happening all the time, but in the middle of all that, we had some of the best radio going on here. For instance, contests such as Don't Say Hello, Say I Listen To CHUM! is still one of the



Jim Waters,
president, CHUM Group
Radio

most memorable radio promotions of all time.

JB: Is radio still a fun medium to be in? Obviously it has become more corporate, and, we have statistics that indicate over half of AM stations are losing money. Given all that, is it still a medium worth investing in?

JW: Yes it is. Is it still fun? Absolutely! I can't wait to get in here every day! Something different happens all the time. We have, I believe, the best

broadcasting people in Canada working throughout our chain, from Vancouver to Halifax. I love visiting our other stations and working with them.

As far as our AM stations are concerned, yes, it is difficult. We are trying different things such as bringing talk radio through our network. However, the greatest challenge is still here at 1331 Yonge Street because we are still playing music on the AM band. We are the only music station on AM in Toronto that still exists and we are holding our

own with good revenue and good ratings - in fact, we have stayed just over a three share in the last couple of books. The first BBM trending information



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shows us a little up from there. That is a great accomplishment. Let us not forget, that 1050 CHUM is where this company started – it was 1050 CHUM alone, that dad bought. There is a special spirit in here for 1050 CHUM that keeps us all pretty focused - we want it to continue to do well.

JB: You were talking about the real heated wars in 1979 with the FM stations. How do you compare that to today, given that you have gone to the “Oldies” format? What has changed?

JW: In 1979, we tried a few different things with CHUM because we knew that FM was beginning to make a significant impact. At one point, our music was almost as alternative on 1050 CHUM as it was on CFNY. I remember back then, the program director for CFNY called us up and said, Man, you guys sound as good as we do. However, it was difficult because that kind of music wasn't expected to be played on an AM radio station. The people who would gravitate to that kind of music were already converted to the stereo, technical sound of FM.

We tried a number of ideas back then, but, none of them made a great impact. We were fluctuating, just trying to hold our own. This is what prompted us to intensely research the market in the middle 1980's.

We started to research the market and it became pretty clear that we couldn't continue to live on 1050 CHUM with basically, a teen and young adult audience, because there weren't enough dollars being spent on that demographic to support the costs of running a radio station. Our research told us that we could finish third or fourth in the 25 to 54 demographic on 1050 CHUM and make more revenue than staying with the 18 to 24 demographic. That was in 1986, when we made our first switch to the Favourites of Yesterday and Today. Our first change started out pretty well, as far as ratings were concerned, and they started to dip a little bit. Our music tests showed that, of the music we were playing, the Oldies songs continually scored the highest. It was suggested that maybe we should test the Oldies format in Toronto. Our research people said they had never seen such a huge opportunity for Oldies anywhere.

Considering 1050 CHUM's history in Toronto and the fact that this station had made these Oldies hits it made total sense to go Oldies. In 1989 that is where we ended up and that is where we have been since. The people that love Oldies are there no matter what happens, as long as you are playing the music for them. It has done well for us, despite huge competition from FM stations.

JB: So you still see yourself competing with FM?

JW: Well, with regard to ratings, you always are. Fred Sher-

ratt, our executive vice-president and chief operating officer for CHUM Ltd., put it best when he said that the great thing that we were able to do here in the late eighties, was to hand the number one mantle from our AM station to our FM here in Toronto while retaining the same call letters, CHUM. CHUM FM took over the more contemporary music, whereas, 1050 CHUM moved into oldies which was a natural progression for the station.

JB: What was the atmosphere like in the station when you announced you were dropping your top 40 format and went to the favourites format in 1986?

JW: It was a day I will never forget here. There was a silence in the corridors because people knew something was coming. They didn't know what, because we wanted to camouflage it as best we could to prevent another station jumping us to the format switch. When we announced it to our announcers, it was just shock, total shock, because we had been playing Top 40 since 1957 and 30 years later, we flip to another format. It was devastating to everyone and it was a very difficult decision for us to make because our heritage had always been

for 1050 CHUM to play the hits.

JB: You see a lot of people holding on to AM licenses for stations that are obviously losing money. Do you see them holding onto it because they share your belief that AM is still valuable, or do you think they are waiting for digital radio to save them?

JW: What you are asking me here is to put my Duff Roman hat on (CHUM's vice-president, industry affairs). AM will be classed as a digital frequency, and if you close it up, that is one less digital position you are going to get. Despite digital, this company was built on AM radio and we have no intention of throwing in the towel on any of our AM stations.

JB: Out of all the events and personalities, what memory sticks in your mind as your favourite so far at 1050?

JW: A very significant memory for me will always be the last day that Jay Nelson was on 1050 CHUM. When I think about 1050 CHUM, I think of Al Boliska and Jay Nelson, because they are the two great morning men that really made the radio station what it is today. They are the two legendary guys that kicked off the day for many years. Jay was an incredible man who did incredible things on the CHUM morning show for 17 years. I was standing at the back of the control room that day when he did his last show, and seeing the people who came by the radio station to thank him for what he had done on the air for all those years, the entertainment he provided, seeing that was quite an incredible memory. I guess that and the switch in 1986 are two of the most memorable moments that I have of my time here.

“I have always considered myself extremely fortunate to be in the position that I am in”

New morning anchor keeps CHUM's morning show alive

By Sonya Felix

It's a sweltering June morning and 1050 CHUM's morning deejay is coming up with funny names for ice cream treats to drop into what he calls the "ding ding thing." With input from producer Doug Kirkwood and traffic announcer Nanci Krant, Russ McCloud has worked out a running gag for listeners based around the idea of a CHUM Ice Cream Truck. "What about nutty butty?" he asks Krant, who shares the chat every morning in the small radio studio. "How about whizzard—that's one, or did I use that yesterday?" When the spot comes for Kirkwood to insert the ice cream jingle, Russ's booming voice takes over the mic. "Hey everybody, here's the ice cream truck! (*Ding, ding, ding*) It's so

hot here in Toronto, I think I'll just fill it up with ice cold lemonade!"

This good natured silliness is part of what that makes CHUM's new AM morning show work these days—a combination of trivia, kookiness and witticisms delivered in a warm and friendly style, all mixed in with Brian Henderson's news reports, traffic from Krant and "Oldies" tunes originally recorded in the 50s, 60s and 70s.

As the only AM station in Toronto still playing music, CHUM's morning show is somewhat of an anomaly on the dial, but the combination of music, talk and information has a loyal audience. About 400,000 people tune in each day, an even split of men and women 35 years old and up, old enough to relate

to McCloud and Krant's chatter about kids and cutting the grass, and old enough to feel nostalgic about the AM sound of the original recordings from their youth.

The oldies format was a controversial move when adopted by CHUM in the fall of 1989. Yet, eight years later Brad Jones, assistant program director, says going to oldies music saved the station. After decades of dominating the airwaves as a "hit" radio station (in 1977 there were 1.4 million listeners), by 1986 the audience had dwindled to 200,000.

Searching for something to draw listeners back to CHUM, the station "began a 'faves' format which did OK for a while and then dried up," recalls

MAY 27, 1957

The earth shook. And rattled. And rolled.

*Then came forth a sound,
the likes of which had never been heard
by any of the city inhabitants.*

*They came in multitudes to listen
and soon the fame of this new wonder
spread far and wide.*

It made you move.

It made you laugh. It made you cry.

It had a name.

CHUM

FORTY YEARS LATER, YOU STILL AMAZE US ALL.
CONGRATULATIONS FROM ALL YOUR FANS AT HYPN.



McCloud's idea of sounding normal is still a powerful, high energy chat fest. But it's nowhere near as wild and crazy as the days when several hosts vied with each other for mic time during what came to be known as "zoo" morning shows.

Jones. "We should have gone to oldies then but we went to light rock and that was a disaster. The only thing left was to go to oldies."

Although the rise in listeners hasn't been dramatic—going up, then down, then stagnating—the station is still committed to oldies. "We're in the process of reviving it," says Jones. "I believe there's still life in the format yet."

And new life is what CHUM had in mind when the "new" morning show with Russ McCloud began in January of this year. Not only is it the only AM morning show playing music, but it's the only live show CHUM still has.

After 10 am, the station's broadcasts are automated with news and traffic read over prerecorded music. "The average listener doesn't know we're automated," says Jones. Letting staff go was a cost-cutting measure that couldn't be avoided if the station was to survive and hold onto a share of a market that's splintering into smaller and smaller pieces.

Even though it's committed to a live morning show, the station decided to drop the previous show's three-host format which included Bob Magee, Samantha Houston and Robbie Evans. Jones says it was sad to see such talented people leave, but the downsizing didn't only save money—it also made more room for the oldies music which is the main draw for the show in the first place. "The average listener wanted to hear more music," says Jones.

For the past six months, listeners have had more music, from six songs per hour during the three host show to eight to nine songs with McCloud. But, there's still the talk, and maybe just enough since the number of listeners has grown slightly since January.

"We offer the kind of material that appeals to the demographics of our listeners," says McCloud, who comes originally from Prince George, B.C. and has worked at CHUM since 1984. Both in their forties, he and cohort Nanci Krant are much like their average listener—they grew up listening to AM radio and love CHUM. With the heritage station situation these days, it was a boost to see the exuberance of the thousands of fans at the 40th Anniversary street dance held in front of the station in May. "People were coming up and asking for autographs," says Krant. "I've worked at CHUM for 25 years and I still thought that was amazing."

She and McCloud started working together on afternoons in 1993 and are comfortable yakking away to listeners about their families and their lives, what they did on the weekend and how bad their allergies are today.

"We basically just talk about ourselves," says McCloud. "I live in the burbs and have kids just like our listeners. We reflect what they're like and they relate to us."

Although the show isn't scripted in the sense of being written, McCloud does come in every morning prepared

with a "hot sheet" of ideas, facts, trivia and themes to cover during the four and a half hour show. He meets with program director Brad Phillips once a week to go over ideas and with Brad Jones for half an hour after each show to discuss the next day's broadcast. He then spends three to four hours at home compiling tidbits of information, trivia he gets from surfing the internet and slice of life observations. "I look for things to hit like Gay Pride Day and the Queen's Plate, the price of gas and visual images like side streets slick with leaves," he says. "It's made to look like it's done cold, but it's not."

After six months hosting the morning show, McCloud's grasp of the audience is obvious in the ease of his rapport, whether one-on-one with phone-in callers or broadcasting live over the mic. He didn't always feel this comfortable so early in the day. Before joining the 5:30 am to 10 a.m. show, he had the afternoon rock'n'roll show where he was known for his loud, screaming style. Early morning listeners didn't want that intensity and McCloud had to work at toning down. "At first I felt what I was doing was contrived," he says, "but now it's just a matter of sounding normal."

McCloud's idea of sounding normal is still a powerful, high energy chat fest. But it's nowhere near as wild and crazy as the days when several hosts vied with each other for mic time during what came to be known as "zoo" morning shows. And he acknowledges his style is quite different from previous host Bob Magee's. "Russ came into the morning show already a known personality," says Kirkwood who, after nine years at CHUM, has seen morning shows come and go. "But, it's not like he was a cork shoved into a dam to plug a leak. Our ratings have gone up and that's quite an accomplishment."

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CHUM DJs remember

By M.G. Stevens

Most Canadians know Harvey Kirck. Many may not know that he was, for a brief period of time in 1952, a DJ at 1050 CHUM. This was when the station was still a day-timer, and before Allan Waters bought the station from one Jack Q. Part, of patent medicine fame. Kirck remembers how Waters began turning the station from its daytime roots into the powerhouse it would become. "Allan was the kind of man that inspired loyalty. He was a nice man that everyone wanted to see succeed. I think that most people at that time put in the kind of effort they did because they were working for Waters — not the station," says Kirck, who moved to doing morning news around that time (1953) and stayed until 1960, when he moved to television at Channel 11 in Hamilton.

"In those early years, it was tough for a new station to get established" remembers Kirck, "With CFRB established, and the newspapers having such a hold on news-gathering, it was tough to create attention — until Waters brought Al Slight from Edmonton. Slight was a combination of promoter and programmer and definitely created the early excitement and success of the station."

The now semi-retired Kirck recalls working with the "very funny" Al Boliska, and a newsroom that, at first, got very little attention: "We did about two to three minutes an hour and didn't have the staff to do much street work, so we worked the phones a lot, stole from the papers and CFRB, along with the police radio". "But towards 1960, Waters began adding to the newsroom, people like Bill Drylie (from the Toronto Star) and Earle Bradford. Then, when the station moved to Yonge St, the newsroom was moved to the streetfront and began to develop its own image."

Kirck also recalls doing his news shift from the editorial room of the Toronto Telegram, and getting their reporters on the air as soon as they came through the door with a hot story. "I don't think the newspaper people took us very seriously at the time."

Most people's strongest memories of CHUM are from its heyday in Top 40 Radio, and Mike Cooper is no exception. Cooper joined the staff at CHUM before his broadcasting class at Mohawk College graduated in 1972.

"I got a job at CFGO in Ottawa right out of school and was there less than a year before Bob Wood called," recalls Cooper. "And my first memory of Wood was sitting across from him, thinking, 'Jeez, I bet you have to be of drinking age to work here.' So when he asked me my age, which was, I think 19, I said:

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everyone at

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Mercury PolyGram AM 1050 ISLAND MOTOWN London PHILIPS Verve PolyGram

Um....21. And he says, 'So what year were you born?' And there I am, trying like mad to do bad math in my head. But if he knew, he never let on."

Cooper started in overnights, quickly moving through swing into evenings. "One thing I really remember were the Americans who seemed to pretty much own the daytime slots at CHUM in those days. People like Terry Steele, Scott Carpenter, and of course, Jay Nelson. In fact, one of Cooper's most vivid memories was meeting his idol, Nelson, for the first time: "My first all-night show, and I'm waiting for Nelson to come in to start at 6 a.m. He finally rolls in at 6:05, and I'm trying to think of what to say. So, I squeak out "Hi, Jay, I'm Mike Cooper, and I've always been a big fan..." to which he says - nothing. Then, he looks my way, as if I had said nothing, and says, "Were you the dickhead that was on when I was coming in?" I'm feeling like my heart stopped, when he adds, "Boy, do you suck!" If it hadn't been for everybody in the news-room losing their minds laughing, I never would have known it was how Nelson liked to greet all of the new guys."

Who knows, perhaps it was the Nelson prank that led to Cooper's most notorious moment at CHUM — perhaps the most notorious in Canadian radio.

It took Cooper about a year to get to evenings, and about another year to get comfortable enough to tell a few people around the station, on March 31, 1974, that he had something planned for that night. "I wanted to do an April Fools thing, and the only way I could pull it off was to have it happen at midnight on April 1st. So on the show that evening, a 'stalker' — my producer — began calling, telling me, on the air, how much he hated my show. By the last hour, things had escalated to the point that the caller was

threatening to come down and shoot me, to which I replied, 'Sure, come on down, I could use a shot right about now.' So, just at midnight, there's this commotion, shots ring out, followed by about 10 seconds of dead air — which was 10 eternities on CHUM."

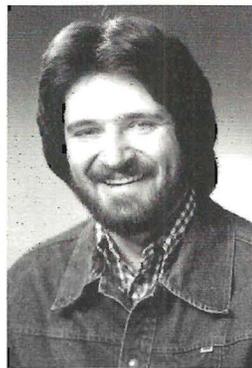
By the time Cooper said "APRIL FOOLS!" someone had already called the police. Yonge St was cordoned off, the SWAT team arrived, and Cooper was in deep trouble. "The thing I remember most was being in Wood's office the next morning, with a couple of very serious police officers, and Wood, also very serious, telling them that although he understood the gravity of the situation, the fact remained that nobody was hurt, and they were likely to become part of Toronto history. In the end, Wood talked them out of a charge of public nuisance and told me to go home for a few days — and to take April 1st off every year from then on." Today, Cooper does mornings at 97.3 EZ Rock in Toronto, even on April 1st.

TSN's Jim Van Horne came to CHUM about the same time as Cooper, in 1972, and became the swing announcer. "I had been in radio for about two years and was at CHAM in Hamilton when I got the call to go to CHUM," recalls Van Horne, who grew up in Toronto, and considered working at CHUM the very most he could hope for in radio. Although he too remembers feeling shut out of daytime slots by the Americans, his shift allowed him plenty of daytime action when the prime-time guys were away. "I remember my very first daytime shift when I gave away a Corvette. It was a '72 Stingray, and callers had to identify the car's exact location from a series of clues. I didn't even know the correct answer, although the producer did, so when I took the first call, and the person said 'the car is at so-and-so in Louisiana' my producer's jaw drops. Obviously, they didn't expect anyone to get the answer so soon." Another personal memory for Van Horne was winning the Billboard Personality of the Year award in 1973. "At that time, Billboard was still the bible for radio, and I was the only Canadian to win the award, so that will always stand out for me"

During Van Horne's eight-year run at CHUM, he remembers Bob Wood's programming style as being a large part of his development as a performer. "Wood was

tough but fair. If you gave 100 per cent to the job, you got his respect." Van Horne recalls jock meetings where all the on-air staff was gathered, and Wood would pull a tape of one of their shows out and they would all have to critique it. "Imagine it. Me with a few years in the business, having to critique Jay Nelson's show. Or, the tension when those guys were about to do the same to one of my tapes. And it's not like we could opt out — there was no choice in the matter, we all had to say something."

Although Van Horne, an avid sports fan, moved on to do television sports after his time at CHUM, he still remembers a few of the larger-than-life personalities of CHUM, Dick Smyth among them. "I recall bumping into Smyth on my first day in the building. This short, mustachioed fellow, speaking with Smyth's



Jim Van Horne

voice — it didn't add up, since I was sure that Smyth must be well over six feet tall." And, the night that Smyth was interviewing someone from the mental health industry, when a workman was making a bit too much noise. "So Dick comes out of the studio he was in to tell this fellow making the hammering noise that he was doing an interview and could use a few minutes of quiet. A few minutes later, the work-

man starts up again, so out comes Dick, this time telling him a bit more forcefully that he needed some quiet. Back into the interview and again more construction noise. This time Dick comes out in full flame — screaming, cursing this fellow inside out. Then, feeling he had gotten his point across, calmly goes back in to the studio to finish his interview with the mental health people."

Dick Smyth, now mostly retired at 63 and enjoying the view up in Muskoka, makes no apologies for his bombastic ways. "Heck, it was the fights that made radio a fun place to work!" bellows Smyth. "If you ask me, that's what's been lost in radio today — the larger than life characters — everybody's so bloody bland, nobody has the guts to take chances anymore — too afraid to get sued!" This, from a man that routinely put in 16 hour days at CHUM, and worked more than 16 years for Allan Waters without a contract. "He (Waters) was tough but fair, the kind of man that you could do a deal with on a handshake — which I did."

Smyth, who started his radio career in

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Cornwall, Ont., came to CHUM in 1969 after a stint at "The BIG 8" — CKLW, Windsor. "That was before all that sensational stuff," says Smyth, who recalls being the only news director in Toronto at that time who didn't come from the newspapers. "I remember hearing CFRB at the time, begin a newscast with The Toronto Star reports which as far as I'm concerned is bloody crap!"

Smyth went on to build a strong team in CHUM's newsroom, and still has many fond memories of people like Fred Sherratt, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of CHUM Limited, who he still considers one of the best broadcasters of all time. And, of course, the late Jay Nelson whom Smyth worked with for some 12 years. "Yeah, Jay was one of a kind. I remember I used to smoke a pipe at the time, so one day Jay puts some marijuana in with my pipe tobacco." Smyth recalls having one of his better shifts that day.

Or the time Smyth was in the middle of a newscast and began hearing a hissing sound. Turns out Nelson was pumping helium into the news booth — unfortunately, for listeners, not fast enough to affect Smyth's authoritative presentation. Of course, Smyth had ample opportunity to get back at Nelson. "Jay had a habit of coming into the newsroom to try out his bits. There were eight or nine of us in the newsroom in those days, and I got everybody to keep an absolutely straight face every time Nelson would try out one of his bits — which were hilarious — but he never knew that from us" says Smyth, with a chuckle.

For such a serious newsman, Smyth loved a good April Fool's gag. "The same year Cooper pulled his prank, I went with a story that the TTC was having a sale on used subway tokens," remembers Smyth. "And normally, that would have been the end of it, but because of what Cooper did, I got into s-t too."

Although Smyth recalls very little effect from the "pot-in-the-tobacco" incident, there was that day, every year, when Air Lingus would ply the morning crew with Irish Coffee. "St. Patrick's day shows were always special."

And finally, Smyth remembers that there was always construction work going on at CHUM. "It never ended. After a while, the place started to look more like



Dick Smyth, CHUM's news commentator, is best known for his controversial commentaries and fiery temper.

an insurance company than a radio station" Smyth said, and signed off.

From the Internet, where he has positioned himself, along with doing evenings at a Country station in Washington, DC, one of those "Americans," Scott Carpenter writes, "I think the biggest difference in Canadian radio vs U.S. is the fact that the CRTC protects stations from full competition. That has had a mixed effect as far as I can see, but has certainly benefitted employees. In the U.S. radio personalities are

nothing more than fully expendable pieces of meat. Another difference was that, at CHUM, the air staff enjoyed an almost superstar status. It was very different from what I was used to, believe me!"

And what of his memories during that time between 1971 and 1977. "Most of my memories have to do with the people rather than events. One event that comes to mind, however, was the Graffiti Parade & Greasers Ball that was held at Nathan

Phillips Square. Bob Wood and I were shooting the breeze wondering what would happen if we held a parade for all the people who still owned their customized cars from the 50's. We figured a handful would show. Thousands did, and packed a parade route which stretched from a suburban shopping centre all the way to town. The concert at the square was jammed with people crammed in like sardines!" The CHUM Starsign promotion was another. CFTR had started a button promotion tied in with McDonalds. Bob Wood felt we could do one better, so he came up with the concept of 12 different buttons corresponding to astrological signs. They were distributed at special kiosks all over town staffed by models from the Thorton agency. Millions were distributed, and we completely inundated CFTR's promotion.

Finally, we hear from Bob Wood himself, who, in his 17 years as the program director of CHUM, was the helmsman for much of its legendary success.

Bob Wood was the guiding light there. He had one special skill that very few today possess. He had an uncanny ability to find just the right air talent at just the

Elvis has NOT left the building

Thank you (very much) for bringing
rock'n'roll to Canada
and keeping it alive
for 40 years.

Congratulations 1050 CHUM
from your partners on Queen Street

CHUM
TELEVISION



The night of the first concert, Margaret Trudeau showed up, and subsequently spent the next several days hanging out with the Stones at the Harbour Castle Hilton. Her presence attracted a frenzy with the international press, which caused the Stones to return to New York until things calmed down

right time, and he was a phenomenal coach of talent. Of course, the fact that he had near autonomy in selecting those people might have had something to do with it.

"I fondly remember my days at CHUM. Terry Steele was my best friend, a day hasn't gone by when I haven't thought of him. We really were a family there, we worked, partied and nursed some huge hangovers together.

"The best part, though, is the knowledge that we really did something special. Something that is akin to impossible today. We helped create a legend and, in doing so, became something of legends ourselves."

Although Wood came to CHUM from CHLO in St. Catharines in 1968, his notions of radio were formed listening to CKY and CFRW in Winnipeg. "At the time there were a lot of Americans there, incredible talents, and I got the idea, which I was able to implement at CHUM, that I wanted to hire a morning talent for every shift. Heavy on personality, especially Top 40 personality, of which there were very few Canadians available with at that time," recalls Wood, who, while staffing many of his prime shifts with Americans, was always willing to work with talented Canadians — Cooper, and Van Horne among many. In fact, Wood tells the story of J.D. Roberts, now the heir-apparent to Dan Rather at CBS. "JD came to me one day, frustrated with his night-time shift, and said he wanted to break into daytime," remembers Wood. "I had to tell him that as good as he was, he would have to knock one of the daytime guys out with his presentation if he ever expected to get into prime-time. In the end, I asked him what his real goals were. He said that he wanted to get a daytime slot, and then move into television. I suggested that perhaps he would be happier moving directly into television, and called the people at CITY-TV, who happened to have an opening, and J.D. got his wish."

With so many years in such a key position, Wood wanted a few days to recall his memories, and wanted to make sure to not leave anyone out. To that end, he wrote to me about many of the on-air staff, as well as many of the behind-the-scenes people that, unfortunately, avail-

able space does not allow for, but be assured, if you were at CHUM between 1968 and 1985, you were included in the many pages of memories submitted by Wood for this article.

About Wood's own programming philosophy, he says, "The most precious thing I've found is camaraderie among the people, nothing can take its place. And beyond that, the constant tuning-up of the presentation." Which led to the previously mentioned air-check sessions. In fact, Wood one day heard about something called listener lines, where the station's signal could be fed to a secret phone number, allowing him to listen from anywhere. "One day, soon after I had the listener line installed, I went to the Caribbean on vacation. Right after settling in I called the line and heard Tom Rivers transgress the format three times within 15 minutes. At that time, Rivers and I had an unspoken agreement where I would set the rules, and he would break them — we both knew it, but when I called him up, from the Caribbean, and told him that I knew what he was doing, he never knew what to think after that."

As one might expect, some of the promotional successes from those days would enter the list of memories. Like the time Wood got a call from the Rolling Stones management. "The Rolling Stones were planning to record a new album, which they wanted to do before a live audience. We received a call from the Stones' management asking if we would be interested in supplying the audience for three to four recording sessions at the El Mocambo. Of course we accepted the offer and proceeded to give away private invitations to people who wrote the most convincing letter as to why they should be invited to an evening with the Rolling Stones.

"The night of the first concert, Margaret Trudeau showed up, and subsequently spent the next several days hanging out with the Stones at the Harbour Castle Hilton. Her presence attracted a frenzy with the international press, which caused the Stones to return to New York until things calmed down. Margaret followed them to New York. The Prime Minister's Office had no idea where she was, and called us asking if we could help locate her. We managed to do so through

members of the Stones management team, and RCMP officers subsequently travelled to New York to escort Margaret back to Ottawa."

In an overview comment, Wood adds: "The magic of CHUM in those days will probably never be duplicated. The culture of the time was focused on youth. CHUM was the centre of the youth culture, and the station was staffed by a large number of young people who made the halls sing with energy and vitality. Above all, Mr. Waters was no shrinking violet in terms of his commitment to contemporary music. CHUM's success, after all, was predicated on Top 40 music, so there was no lack of commitment to the format, and CHUM's role at the centre of the popular culture universe."

Wood remains convinced that the key to the station's success was the calibre of people it attracted. Names that will always be a part of the legend of the radio industry, including some that didn't make the grade at the time. "One of the deejays we interviewed for a position with the station was Howard Stern. We decided to pass on him because, frankly, in those days, he just wasn't good enough."

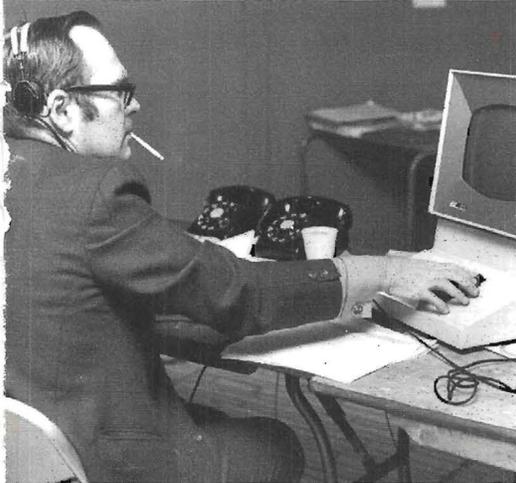
And what of the industry today? Wood sees the industry "becoming too regimented, taking personalities and making them 'robots in the studio.'" He doesn't hear any more of the pervasive production values that gave radio its captivating sound, and most of all, a lack of "theatre of the mind." He sees cross-media ownership as one of the contributors to this situation with the profitability of other forms of media taking more and more resources from a once vibrant medium.

And tomorrow? Wood is hopeful that with the continuing fragmentation of television, radio can rise up to return to its mass-media stature.

While most of the subjects for this article echoed the same sentiments as Wood, it is certainly refreshing to hear such a note of hope from one of the people that made radio great. Let's all hope there are more exciting memories to come. Happy 40th, CHUM! **B**

M.G. Stevens writes from Vancouver and can be contacted at (604) 735-5766 or, by e-mail, at mgsmedia@imag.net.

CHUM
moments



"I kind of regret some of the temper tantrums I used to throw. But I'm much more mellow now."

Dick Smyth, news.

The following quotes are from CHUM's 40th Anniversary Special which aired on City-TV on May 28. The show was produced by Rob Richards and Denis O'Neil. Supervising producer, Marcia Martin and executive producer Jim Waters.

CONGRATULATIONS TO
 CHUM RADIO AND THEIR
 ENGINEERING STAFF
 FOR KEEPING THE
 PLACE ROCKIN'
 FOR 40 YEARS

1050 chum

KEEP ROCKIN'

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 COMMUNICATIONS LIMITED

We make studios happen.

"CHUM's weekly Hit Parade" available every Saturday at your favourite Record Bar.

CHUM's Hit Parade compiled according to Record and Sheet Music Sales, Cash Machine Operations and Radio Phones as determined by the CHUM weekly survey.

CHUM'S TOP TEN: week of MAY 27, 1957

TITLE	ARTIST	NO. OF WEEKS ON CHART
1. All Shook Up	Elvis Presley	1
2. Love Letters in the Sand	Pat Boone	1
3. I Like Your Kind of Love	Andy Williams	1
4. Bye Bye Love	Evelyn Brothers	1
5. Start Mevin' (in My Direction)	Sol Mimeo	1
6. Dark Moon	Gale Storm	1
7. A White Sport Coat	Marty Robbins	1
8. Fabulous	Charlie Gracie	1
9. Girl With the Golden Sails	Ferry Corou	1
10. You Tonight, Josephine	Johnnie Ray	1

FOLLOWING FORTY:

11. Little Biscuits	24. Wonderful Wonderful	38. After School
12. Come Go With Me	25. Ropin' It	39. Little White Lies
13. Why Baby Why?	26. Young Blood	40. One For My Baby
14. Gave	27. Valley of Tears	41. Rock Your Little Body to Sleep
15. Round and Round	28. Knight Train	42. Mergins
16. School Day	29. Manana	43. Name Guitar
17. Hungry	30. I'm Sicker With You	44. Flip Top
18. In Love	31. Love is a Golden Ring	45. Jim Dandy Got Married
19. The Yellow	32. The Spang	46. Bonanza
20. Bitterly	33. Empty Arms	47. Flipside of Love
21. Mama Took A Spoon	34. Teen-Age Crush	48. I Just Don't Know
22. Your Heart	35. Lucille	49. Moxie Gleece
23. One In The Bushy	36. My Love Song	50. Gonna Go Right Down
	37. Lucille Ray	And Write Myself A Letter

Dial 1050 - CHUM - for Hit Parade music. 24 hours a day - News Bulletins as they happen - Newscasts hourly at 5 minutes to the hour.

All pictures by Neil Newton, pictures of street party courtesy of CHUM.

The CHUM chart was the longest running hit record chart in North America. Considered the weekly bible of the industry, it ran from May 27, 1957 to June 6, 1986 or 1,512 consecutive weeks.



The Chummingbirds, made up of CHUM DJs, was another highly successful CHUM promotion at the CNE. From left to right: Mike Darrow, Bob McAdorey, Garry Ferrier, John Spragge.

"We had one singer [Mike Darrow] and three buffoons."

John Spragge, DJ, on his work with the music group the Chummingbirds.

"I went through the station one night, when there weren't many people around and threw out every record that wasn't a top 40 one. So when the DJs came in they only had 40 records."

Allan Waters, president CHUM Ltd., describing CHUM's launch as Top 40 station on May 27, 1957.



Mike Darrow, DJ, sits it out for five days in a car perched on a high pole. The promotion was for an automobile dealer. During his time in the car, Darrow's wife gave birth to their child.

Congratulations Old Chum

Thanks for the memories.
Thanks for the music.
Rock On.

Happy 40th Birthday from all your friends at

the  ay

"Jay Nelson, was probably the last great star of Toronto radio."

Brian Henderson, news.



"Jungle" Jay Nelson thrilled 1050 CHUM listeners from 1963 to 1981. Nelson was recognized by the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland, Ohio, for his contributions to the music industry. Nelson passed away in 1994 in Toronto.



The CHUM witch made her debut in the spring of 1964. The idea came from the CHUM news department, who believed the Toronto Maple Leafs needed a witch who could put spells on the opposing team's players. The plan appeared to work as the Leafs won the Stanley Cup that year.

"Mike spent five days in a car as a promotion for an automobile dealership.

And while he was up there his wife gave birth to a child and Mike couldn't get down out of the car.

So our promotions manager, Allen Farrell, went to the hospital to sit with Mike's wife. And everyone thought that was Mike Darrow until Mike Darrow showed up and then nobody could figure out who the hell the husband was."

Bob Laine, DJ

**Congratulations
on 40 years of
innovative
broadcasting.**

chum



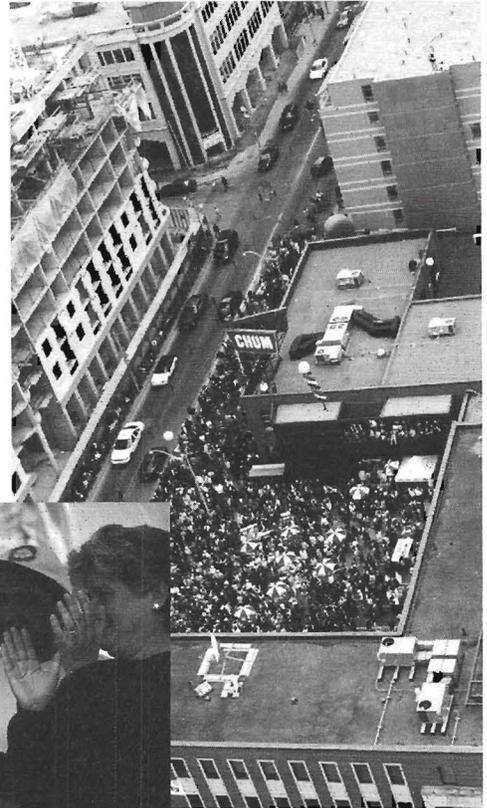
**Royal Bank takes
pride in
being Chum's bank
from the very beginning.**

"Then you did another six hour shift meeting the folks and signing autographs. And it was so hot and the CNE dust would get into your pores.

You were miserable but you always had to smile. You would be fined \$10 if you were caught not smiling. And they actually had a plain clothes 'smile' cop lurking in the crowd. I'm not kidding you."

Bob McAdorey, DJ,
describing a typical shift out of the CHUM trailer at the CNE

Party time! Mayor Barbara Hall presents Allan Waters with a special 40th anniversary plaque (below). Thousands of 1050 CHUM fans jammed around the the CHUM building at 1331 Yonge Street on May 25 to celebrate 1050 CHUM's 40th anniversary. The day featured free concerts and food for everyone.



WKS	TV	WEEK STARTING	FEBRUARY 24, 1979	ISSUE	1132	WKS
1	1	Do Ya Think I'm Sexy?	Red Stewart	WEA	10	
2	2	Fire	The Blues Brothers	WEA	7	
3	3	Send Man	The Blues Brothers	WEA	5	
4	4	TRAGEDY	The Bluebelles	WEA	3	
5	5	Something In The Night	Barry Manilow	Capitol	6	
6	6	Y.M.C.A.	Wilson Pickett	Polygram	10	
7	7	Le Freak	Chic	WEA	12	
8	8	Rock Me	Free Sam Cooke	WEA	12	
9	9	Keep It's A Warm	Red Simpson	MCA	6	
10	10	A Little More Love	Clara Newsum-John	MCA	4	
11	11	Don't Stop	Don't Stop	WEA	4	
12	12	Sweetener	Earth Wind & Fire	CBS	8	
13	13	Shake It	Sam McCracken	A&P	5	
14	14	My Life	Ray J	CBS	18	
15	15	Lady	Lady	Capitol	8	
16	16	Late Love	Niaura River Band	WEA	11	
17	17	Write A Good Believe	Niaura River Band	WEA	5	
18	18	Song On The Radio	Al Stewart	Capitol	3	
19	19	A Little Lovin' (When The Doctor Sleeps)	The Doobie Brothers	WEA	11	
20	20	Knockout	Red Simpson	Polygram	9	
21	21	Just Paid To Look Again	Anna Murray	Capitol	4	
22	22	Rockin' Roll City	Gary Adams	CBS	4	
23	23	(Bridge Over Troubled Water) Dances' Shoes	Clayton Kopp	WEA	3	
24	24	The Line	Clayton Kopp	CBS	12	
25	25	Heaven Knows	Diana Summer	Polygram	1	
26	26	Oh! Baby Baby	Linda Ronstadt	WEA	12	
27	27	Whisper In Life	Gino Vannelli	A&P	2	
28	28	Surfing On Waves	Gino Vannelli	Polygram	1	
29	29	Shining The Night Through	Dr. Hook	Capitol	10	
30	30	Some Times I Think Of You	The Statens	Capitol	1	

chum albums

1	1	Sports Illustrated	That One Guy	Polygram	3
2	2	Stones' Back Home Part	Bob Dylan	WEA	10
3	3	SONE SHINE	Bob Dylan	WEA	17
4	4	Goodbye For Of Good	Bob Dylan	WEA	5
5	5	Barbra Streisand's Greatest Hits Volume 2	Barbra Streisand	CBS	12
6	6	Don't Stop (When The Doctor Sleeps)	The Doobie Brothers	CBS	11
7	7	Coastline	Barry Manilow	Capitol	12
8	8	Hot Out Of Hell	Sam McCracken	CBS	12
9	9	Live And More	Diana Summer	Polygram	6
10	10	Jack	Jack	WEA	12
11	11	Energy	The Pointer Sisters	WEA	1
12	12	Country Heat	Clara Newsum-John	MCA	1
13	13	Allison By Allison	The Doobie Brothers	WEA	1
14	14	One Stride	One Stride	Polygram	1

A 1979 1050 CHUM chart

"Anybody who is working in a radio station in Canada today, that plays Rock 'n' Roll records or some day might, you owe your life to Allan Waters. He's the guy in 1957 who put his money on the line, his entrepreneurial spirit, decided to play real life Monopoly, move those players around the board, and go with Rock 'n' Roll."

John Spragge, DJ

1050 chum
Congratulations
on 40 years
of Seeing Trends
and Setting Them.



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In the beginning...

In the beginning, there was CHUM. For young people growing up in Toronto during the 50's, 60's and 70's, 1050 CHUM was something of a religion. One that defined pop music and pop culture. For many of us there is a certain reverence for the songs that are interwoven with memories of the era. There was an energy, innocence and enthusiasm that has given way to more cynical times. As Bob Seger once said, "I wish I didn't know now what I didn't know then." On a tough day, it's easy to feel like that.

In 1957 Allan Waters launched hit radio in Canada with the debut of CHUM. It is difficult to estimate the full impact of the station's influence in the years that followed. For Canadian artists, making the hallowed CHUM Chart meant that their careers were taking off. Listeners enthusiastically picked up their free copies of the chart at record stores. Even after all these years, those same charts are prized collector's items: icons that map out the memories of our youth. For fun, check out the charts on CHUM's searchable web site



By David Bray

(www.1050chum.com.)

The station consistently drew a large, diverse and loyal audience. The baby boom generation, comprising a significant percentage of the overall population, were reaching adolescence and tuning in to the station for the soundtrack to their youth. DJ's like Jungle Jay Nelson (who is currently being hon-

oured in Cleveland's Rock and Roll Hall of Fame) were household names. Clients lined up for promotional considerations and airtime.

By the late 1970's and the 1980's, the FM band made a dramatic impact on AM. Transistor radios gave way to boom boxes and car stereo systems. Classic rock and New Wave emerged as viable music formats. Young listeners tended to be audiophiles who preferred FM stereo with its increased fidelity and frequency range. CHUM finally came to a crossroads. In 1986, it was time to grow up.

Ultimately, the rationale for moving to an oldies format was financial in nature. The baby boom bulge in the population could still be counted on for the station's financial wellbeing. Now that they had grown older, give them the music of their youth on the station that they remembered fondly. This 35-54 demo with high discretionary income is attractive to advertisers. This audience will tune to a mono signal in order to hear the songs they love. The hit restriction on the FM band prevented the oldies format from cropping up there. In fact, the new CRTC ruling continues to protect oldies AM stations by limiting the hits songs released prior to 1981 that FM plays.

CHUM, along with CHUM-FM, remains the company's flagship station in Canada. CHUM is one of the few financially viable music-based stations remaining on the AM band in Canada's major markets. The strong trend on that band has been toward talk, following the U.S. lead. CHUM Ltd. itself has been developing a syndicated talk network. Still, its flagship station continues to crank out the tunes, presenting a unique alternative to Toronto's overcrowded talk on AM.

From the outset, the Waters team (Allan and son Jim) displayed a distinctive approach to sales. While other stations were volume driven, giving preferential rates to larger customers, CHUM remained very sympathetic to smaller clients, feeling that they too

1050 chum

Cancom Entertainment Group and its President, Paul Armstrong, wish to congratulate Allan Waters and CHUM on 40 years of broadcast service.

Paul Armstrong spent many years enjoying the CHUM presentation, (his late father Jim, and his uncle Wes were both executives at CHUM for many years).

Paul's father held Allan Waters in highest esteem, and the success of his organization is testament to his business acumen and his fair and concerned attitude to those who worked for him.

CANCOM

Entertainment Group



were valued and deserved the same rates as the big boys. The Waters also felt that their product was worth a certain amount regardless of the client's target demo, and as such were reluctant to cut outrageous deals. Lastly, the Waters' pride in each of their properties was exemplified by the fact that both the AM and FM were strongly promoted and sold in a standalone fashion as opposed to following the combo approach adopted by other broadcasters.

On the national sales side, CHUM has maintained, as Tim Steele put it, "a great working partnership" for 30 years with Major Market Broadcasters.

MMB was formed in 1967, with Allan Waters purchasing a 15 per cent share, which he maintains to this day. National rep shops have come and gone. Consolidation has swept a good many of them aside, but MMB keeps rolling along, currently representing about 80 stations across Canada.

The current approach to sales is dramatically different from days gone by when we bought and sold spots. Straight GRPs are about to go the way of the dinosaur. Simple demo runs are not sufficient to give you a sales edge in an era when everyone has their own computer. Reps must be knowledgeable about the format, attuned to promotional considerations, and well versed in the qualitative/lifestyle data that better defines a station's audience and its ability to strategically target a client's consumer.

What does the future hold for 1050 CHUM? It is impossible to speculate. Digital will, over the next decade, change the playing field. CRTC deregulation will also impact on market complexions. Why worry about tomorrow today while we're having so much fun remembering yesterday?

I have to admit, it is a little difficult to be objective about CHUM's early history. Given that this venerable station is celebrating its 40th birthday, I prefer to reflect on fond memories. Now, if I can only remember where I put my collection of old CHUM Charts... **B**

David Bray is senior vice-president, creative director of RadioWorks Inc.— Canada's full service radio ad agency/radio consultants. Feel free to forward your thoughts/inquiries. He can be reached at: Phone: (416) 469-4645 Fax: (416)469-4798 E-mail: dhb@passport.ca

CHUM counting on DAB to take them into the new millenium

By Brad Fortner

It's 3:10 p.m. on a weekday afternoon in Toronto and CHUM AM announcer Charlie O'Brien is hard at work. While his afternoon program is going to air, he's recording the voice elements for CHUM's popular "Sixties At Six" program. With the aid of a computer assisted radio system his voice is being recorded onto a hard drive. The system, which allows Charlie to time-shift his work and later enjoy the fine summer evening, is the same system that allows 1050 CHUM, Canada's original flagship Rock 'n' Roll station, to remain profitable and position itself for a digital future, while playing music on AM radio.

With on-air music programming being the hallmark of CHUM AM, it has greatly overshadowed the technological leadership that this station has played in the development of radio in Canada. Over its four decades the organization has built its favorable business position by taking some carefully considered risks around changes in both its

market and the technology it employs to produce radio. To this day, station owner Allan Waters says his moment of glory came when CHUM, originally a daytime-only radio station, got the go-ahead to run around the clock.

Since those early days the CHUM organization has been aggressive in adapting new technologies and new methods of delivery to its radio audience. For example, today you can find 1050 CHUM being delivered on cable FM in the Toronto area. CHUM FM, a sister station to CHUM AM, which operates out of the same Yonge Street building, was one of the original five broadcasting outlets to sign on to use the CN Tower as a transmission site. CHUM was the first station in the Toronto market to broadcast in AM stereo and was one of the pioneering stations who participated in the recent Toronto Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) trial.

The origins of CHUM radio date back to 1944 when its letters of patent

Happy Anniversary CHUM!

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Today at CHUM AM, only the weekday morning show goes live to air. From 10 a.m. through to the next day's morning show, all the programming is played back off of the RCS hard drives with the exception of live news, traffic and weather reports

were first issued. CHUM's format change to "Rock 'n' Roll" coincided with the relocation of its transmitter site to Toronto Island in 1957. The station acquired a 24-hour licence and started transmitting around the clock in an era when most radio stations signed off at midnight. The station issued its first legendary CHUM chart on May 27th, 1957 and it's this anniversary that CHUM now celebrates.

As CHUM's prowess in programming increased in the early 1960's, Allan Waters decided to invest in increasing CHUM's transmission power. In 1964 the station upgraded to 50,000 watts and started transmitting from its current site in Clarkston, Ont. This moved CHUM from a Toronto area radio station to an outlet that reached most of the population of Ontario and many of the major American cities on the Eastern seaboard.

For Bruce Carnegie, CHUM's Chief Engineer, the technology employed by CHUM has changed dramatically over the years. "In today's world it's hard to remember where radio was 30 years ago." As Top 40 radio reached its zenith in the 1960's and 1970's, CHUM's plant was a manual operation based on mechanical and tube technology, and Carnegie's department spent most of their time servicing those devices and changing tubes. "Cooling the plant and keeping the tube based systems operational was one of the engineering challenges. Tubes weren't very reliable and as such you ended up with a lot of staff to replace them. Today, with the exception of the FM transmitter, you'd be hard pressed to find a tube anywhere at CHUM."

As the 1970's and 1980's progressed, transistors, which replaced tubes, gave way to the integrated circuit and as an adjunct computer technology started to appear. By the 1970's, tape cartridges had replaced 45 RPM records for on air playback and later compact discs would appear.

In the 1990's AM radio has faced increased competition for both the

radio listener and the advertising dollar. The improved sound quality of FM radio and the fact that advertisers have more places than ever to put their ads has changed the business. The increased competition for advertising has meant a wholesale change in the business of radio. For 1050 CHUM, an AM station that continues to play music, this has meant focusing on its core audience and as such has adopted the "oldies" format. For the technical side, it has meant adopting a computer assisted system that allows the station to streamline its operation and make the most of its existing employees. The key for CHUM was the selection of a system that would allow them to do radio the way they always had, without sacrifices to the on-air sound that is their hallmark.

"Three years ago we visited NAB searching for the ideal system," Carnegie explained. "As a follow up we experimented with many approaches including satellite but they just didn't work for us." Eventually CHUM ended up choosing an RCS (Radio Computing Services) system to assist both its Toronto AM and FM stations. "The programming department found the system was able to deliver the on-air content in the manner that they were accustomed, and it offered the features and efficiencies that the station's management required to make the initial investment."

The RCS system, by its very nature, changes the way a radio station operates. "All our music, commercials and pre-recorded announcer elements are delivered to air from the systems hard drives," explains Carnegie. "We have two 54-gigabyte hard drives for on-air playback. That includes 9,000 minutes of music for CHUM. There was a noticeable improvement in sound quality for the station when we switched to hard drive playback. The RCS system delivers amazingly clean radio."

The RCS system streamlines much of the radio station's operation. Based on the daily log generated by the traffic and programming departments, the

RCS system continually plays each element to air automatically stopping for live announcements, newscasts, traffic and weather reports. When a live segment is completed, the announcer hits a key and the RCS system continues delivering material until it's programmed to stop for another live segment. As the day progresses, the RCS system keeps a log of exactly what made it to air so advertisers can be accurately billed.

The RCS system's ability to time-shift announcers has dramatically changed the way the station operates. Time-shifting means that all of an announcer's shift can be pre-recorded. And because the RCS system is hard drive based, it means the shift need not be recorded in real time. For the announcers, recording their show is a simple process. By pressing the enter key once, the RCS system starts playing the last 10 seconds of the commercial or song leading up to the announcer's segment. By pressing the enter key a second time the microphone becomes live and the announcer can begin voicing the segment. A third hit of the enter key starts the next element, such as a song. And the fourth key terminates the announcers segment from recording. The recorded element is automatically ready for on-air playback and will play exactly as recorded in relation to the other elements. If the announcer is not satisfied with their work they can re-record the segment until they are satisfied. Because announcers do not have to sit through every song and commercial in real-time, they can record an entire four-hour shift, in as little as a half an hour.

"The fact that we can time-shift shows means that we can attract talent to our station who may not be interested in staying up all night to voice over music," adds Carnegie. To keep CHUM's programming contemporary the vast majority of voicing is recorded within a few hours of going to air. In the case of the overnight program, Marc Chambers, the show's host, starts

voicing it in early evening and usually has it wrapped up by 9:00 p.m. Today at CHUM, only the weekday morning show goes live to air. From 10:00 a.m. through to the next day's morning show, which begins at 5:30 a.m., all the programming is played back off of the RCS hard drives with the exception of live news, traffic and weather reports.

In the past five years CHUM has invested heavily in computer technology. Today the station has adopted computer technology throughout the entire plant. The news department subscribes to Broadcast News and employs its computer system, while just about every employee has a computer or laptop on their desk. Even the production department has moved away from much of the mechanical and tape based technology that lines its walls. Almost all of CHUM's commercials are produced on a Protools workstation, while many of the externally produced commercials arrive digitally to CHUM's hard drive network via ISDN lines.

The RCS system, along with its other computer systems installed at CHUM have provided the foundation on which CHUM is basing much of its future, digital radio. "Where we're going next is digital radio," comments Carnegie. "Currently DAB is being turned on all over the world. Despite the reluctance of the Americans, the Japanese are already building and equipping cars with the new digital receivers for markets in Germany and Great Britain. With full time transmission starting in the Toronto area as early as this fall, CHUM plans to be broadcasting as Canadians begin to choose digital receivers." As with many of AM radio's past advances, CHUM is heavily involved with the development of digital radio and has invested in its development. Today, the CHUM organization has taken a leadership position in



CHUM is heavily involved in the development of digital radio

promoting the implementation of DAB nationwide.

"The bottom line reality (when it

implementation will put 1050 CHUM on a better footing against competition from FM. **B**

comes to digital transmission) is that we already produce CHUM digitally at CD quality and because we purchased high quality stereo boards with our move to AM stereo, our signal to noise is within 2db of what a CD currently produces. We have a line of sight to the CN Tower DAB transmitter site and we can establish a digital link via microwave or by fibre optic cable," Carnegie noted. Digital radio is higher quality than that of FM and its

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