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SECTION

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SECTION B, THE HERALD, Wednesday, May 6, 1987 - Page 1

HE'S ON THE AIR

A captain of the airwaves

By ANI FEDERIAN
Herald Staff

Being outrageous, controversial and personal are okay when Ross Carlin, disc jockey on country music station CFGM goes on the air.

"Of course, you pay for it too," the slim 32-year-old confessed. Not only does he pay for it in the ratings, but also in phone calls jamming the lines.

"We have an average 30,000 listeners, so if you make a mistake, they let you know about it real fast," Ross said.

One of the biggest boners the Limehouse resident made still haunts him to this day. Not a country music fan until leaving the rock stations to do the 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. shift at Richmond Hill's CFGM, Ross relied a lot of a book of biographies of country stars.

One day it tripped him up while introducing some tunes by Marty Robbins, the Elvis Presley of country music. Ross told listeners how Marty Robbins likes to watch Wonder Woman on TV, and was probably doing that right now.

Before he knew it, the lines were jammed. The country singer had died two years earlier of a massive heart attack. The book of biographies was five years old.

"That's probably the biggest boner in my career. It was pretty embarrassing. They still kid me about that one," he said.

Another time, more recently, Ross was interviewing an attractive singer, and asked her about her love life. If she had a boyfriend and planned on marriage etc. It wasn't till afterwards he learned she was a lesbian.



Along with catching his mistakes, listeners keep him on his toes when it comes to his on air performance each day. Ross can never tell the same joke twice, and he has to come up with new comedy routines every day.

The disc jockey spends an hour each day reading newspapers, and magazines in preparation for his show. "You're in this by yourself for four hours. It doesn't sound like much, but four hours on the air is equivalent to eight hours hard labor," Ross said.

Eating on his shift is hard to do, and going to the bathroom is trickier still. There are speakers in the bathroom so disc jockeys know when a song is nearing its end. It's not unusual for Ross to come running out with his pants around his ankles, he said.

The father of two has been in the radio business since he was 17 and got his first on air job at Blind River. He earned \$300 a month and lived in a funeral home.

Over the years, Ross Carlin has worked his way up, going to stations in Elmhurst, Huntsville, Timmons, Woodstock, London, Penikese, Vancoona, Toronto, Oshawa and Brampton. He's worked at about 13 stations in his 15 year career.

"Most of the time I left on my own accord; once in a while I was fired," Ross said.

He calls himself an old 32, and said people are surprised when they meet the body that goes with the radio voice.

"Since I have a deep voice, people think I'm about 200 pounds, and look like George-the-steel or Tom Selleck," he chuckled.

Because his show is full of personal tidbits about his wife Sandra, one-year old daughter Becky or 2½-year old son Ben, Ross finds he's a friend to people he's never met before. They chat him up and know about Ben's teeth coming in or that the cat died, while he doesn't know anything about them.

"My gimmick is totally the human interest stories. I have a fairly cynical show and poke fun at a lot of people, places and things," Ross said.

Listener response is what makes his job exciting, he said. "You feel good about anking people happier," Ross said.

Because he's there every day talking to people, they feel he's their friend and will often call to share their grief or their happiness with Ross. They think they can call him up and chat for 25 minutes while they're having a cup of tea and smoke.

Before coming to CFGM, Ross was a disc jockey weekends with Toronto's CKY, and before that with CPUN, the top rock station in Vancouver, British Columbia.

"I was never a country fan I thought it was all crying whiney music," Ross said. He's changed his mind since, and says there are country bands nowadays as good as rock or contemporary bands.

The disc jockey anticipates there'll be another big wave of country music across the country. The wave now includes a lot of closet country music fans - doctors and lawyers who are embarrassed to say they like country, Ross said.

In Toronto, radio is going through a panic, and has become very wimpy, with stations afraid of offending listeners, Ross said. Competition between stations is keen and the disc jockey is constantly switching stations to hear what other disc jockeys are saying and playing. "There's not one show that I like what they're doing right now," Ross said. "It's a pretty sad time in radio."

It's all mine



Shaun Eadie, 9, of Park Public School has a number of pet rocks he's willing to show to the public. He was one of many exhibitors at his school last Wednesday night display.

ing his science fair project. Also held that night at the school was a draw to raise money for playground equipment and a book fair (Herald photo)

Mother's Day fundraiser

Some mothers will be working the day before Mother's Day.

At the Acton Y, a Mother's Day sale is being held to raise money for the Y-sponsored parent and tot program. The sale is May 9 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Money is required to buy paint and other supplies to complete renovations for a new program area. The old Mason meeting hall at the Y building is being refurbished for use by the parent-tot program, which previously met downstairs.

On sale will be some donations from local merchants for bargain prices along with door prizes, a plant table, books and other used goods. In the basement there will be a children's activity area with games and a tea room for adults.

The former Mason meeting hall has been cleaned up and safety ladders and new windows have been added. A small cupboard was moved to make the area bigger, said Donald Vonk, one of two program co-ordinators.

The room is scheduled to open in June or July. The mothers will appreciate the one big room because it's easier to keep an eye on their children said Ms. Vonk.

The parent-tot program is offered Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 10:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. It is a drop-in format so that mothers and their children can come when they like and there is no fee.

The program is for pre-schoolers who are able to use a wide variety of equipment such as slides, ride-up toys and a sandbox. It's an opportunity for children to socialize with other children and a chance for mothers who are newcomers to the area to meet new friends and collect information about babysitters and other services.

At least 40 families use the service on a regular basis, said Ms. Vonk. You can't leave your children at the drop-in so the program doesn't suit everyone, she said.

Wendy Stephens is the other co-ordinator of the program.

Pinegrove euvre

NORVAL-The final Pinegrove euvre was held last Monday. Winners were Kay McMillan, Flossie Reed, Marg Davidson, Jean Brander, Harold Reed, Claude McLaughlin. The winners were Pearl Burt, Marg Davidson, Muriel Miller and Kay McMillan.

The voice of CFGM: deep, friendly, familiar

When you meet him, there's something ever so familiar about him, and it has nothing to do with the gray leather tie, black striped shirt, blue jeans or velcro strapped runners.

It's his voice. It's deep, friendly and familiar. It's the voice of Ross Carlin, disc jockey on CFGM, 1320 on the AM dial.

For the past five years, Ross has been living in Limehouse, on a half acre lot that backs onto the Bruce Trail. Born in Toronto and raised in apartment buildings, he loves the difference.

"Limehouse is a real nice community. You've got your general store and a real country feeling here," Ross said. "I never had that because I was raised in Toronto and my hope was elevators and garbage chutes for 16 years."

He says Limehouse residents are much friendlier and there's even a lady down the street who calls herself "grandma" to the Carlin's two youngsters.

"I'm always borrowing tools and bothering my neighbours for all sorts of things," Ross said.

The house originally on his property has been torn down now that Ross built a new cedar house with a whirlpool, a spa and woodstove. "It's a small place with a lot of luxuries," he said.

Although you can pick up the CFGM signal in the Georgetown area, it's not very strong, Ross says. Come September, when the station will be changing its frequency to 610, area residents should be able to get a better reception. The change will be a major move for the AM station, increasing listener potential from 220,000 to 3.8 million, says Ross.

He anticipates he'll be a disc jockey for a long time yet. Management jobs in radio don't appeal to him.

"It's better to be high-priced help than low-priced management in my motto," Ross said.

He's been program director and discovered it wasn't for him. "I was always geared to entertaining rather than paper work," Ross said. "My mom used to say, 'You'll be a salesman', and that's what I am now. I'm selling myself."

When he's not working, what does Ross Carlin enjoy listening to? Definitely not operas, some classical, rhythm and blues by black artist Robert Gray, some of the new country stars like T. Graham Brown, Hank (Williams) Junior, Judds and the Trio album and some heavy rock like George's Satellites.

Ross Carlin also likes swinging a bat, which he does on the Hemax team in Limehouse, and skiing with the Caledon Ski Club team in Cheltenham.

The rest of his time is spent on family-oriented activities such as going to the zoo or to parks on the weekend.

Although Ross admits to owning a pair of cowboy boots, they haven't seen much action on his feet. The two times he's worn them, he admits to falling down in them both times.

Chicken barbeque

20th annual chicken barbeque May 23 from 4-8 p.m. at the Huttonville Community School.

Old fashioned entertainment, Maple Lodge Chicken, home-made salads and pies are featured. For tickets phone 455-1519 or go to the Apple Factory or Dunlop Insurance.

NORVAL-Norval United Church members are preparing for their

For MS

Wear a carnation

Multiple Sclerosis Society volunteers are saying "make a donation wear a carnation" as they launch the annual Carnation Day campaign in Georgetown this week.

The volunteers will be offering the carnations to the public on street corners, shopping malls and Zellers May 9.

Campaign chairperson Rev. Daquano says the unit hopes to raise \$2000 locally to help support medical research and patient services programs. The national goal is \$2 million. Rev. urged all residents to support the campaign by buying a carnation or a bouquet for Mother's Day.

Multiple sclerosis is a potentially

crippling disease of the central nervous system affecting an estimated 50,000 Canadians. It is the most common neurological disease striking people between the ages of 20 and 40. As yet, there is no way to prevent the disease, and no cure, though various treatments are sometimes effective in controlling certain symptoms.

Carnations may be pre-ordered at a cost of \$15 a dozen from members of the North Halton M.S. Unit, or you may show your support by purchasing a carnation on Saturday.

To pre-order your carnations, contact Rev. Daquano at 877-8756.

In the hills

Sleepytime

"Sleepytime" at Halton Hills Public Libraries begins its Spring and Summer season May 6, 7, 7:30 p.m. in the Acton and Georgetown Libraries. Children ages 3 to 6 are welcome to participate in stories, songs, games and films. Registration is not required. For further information call the Acton or Georgetown Libraries at 833-0311 or 877-2681.

La Leche meets

La Leche League of Acton invites all women interested in breastfeeding information to its series of monthly meetings. Discussions include the latest medical research as well as personal experiences. Other services include telephone counselling and a lending library of books on pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, childcare and nutrition.

The advantages of breastfeeding will be discussed at the next meeting at the Acton Social Services Centre on Willow Street N. on Monday, May 11 at 7:30 p.m. Nursing babies are always welcome. For further information call 878-4742.

Film on 'power'

The Dobson films continue May 7 at 8 p.m. at Holy Cross Church. This film, second in the series, deals with the meaning of "power" in parenting and discusses areas of conflict in marriage and other adult relationships. Dr. Dobson also offers practical help in dealing with these problems. Everyone is welcome. Admission is free.

Teachers meet

There will be a meeting of the Peel Halton North Ontario Association Superannuated Women Teachers, May 12 at Hillcrest United Church, Trafalgar Road and No. 5 Sideroad. Pay provincial fees and social hour 11 a.m. and a catered hot luncheon 12 noon. There will be a travel log on China by Helen Johnson.

Safety memo

A safety memo is being circulated by concerned parents in some parts of Georgetown about a tattoo dangerous to children.

Called Blue Star, the tattoo is impregnated with LSD. The brightly colored paper tabs have pictures of cartoon and comic book characters on them.

The paper tattoos have been reportedly found in Windsor, Port Huron and one case in Chatham.

Last week, the Halton Regional Police issued a press release alerting newspapers of the tattoo. An article appeared in the April 22 edition of The Herald.

Nurses' role

The Halton Regional Health Department's cable television series will be showing Role of the Community Health Nurse during the month of May. Residents are asked to check local listings for dates and times.

The show is produced and hosted by Patricia Else, Health Promotion Co-ordinator.

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