

THE WAY WE WERE

The event headliner makes his way down Georgetown's Main Street during the annual Santa Claus parade in 1955. The building behind Santa is now home to Trendos Interiors. This year marks the 200th anniversary of the founding of Halton Hills (Esquensing township).

EHS photo



OPINION

CONNIE FRANCIS ON THE SATELLITE, 3 TIMES IN 1 DAY?

PARENTS' MUSIC NOW THERAPEUTIC, WRITES TED BROWN



TED BROWN
Column

As the Christmas season stealthily descends upon us, the music around us becomes considerably more festive.

Some radio stations like CHFI really get on the holiday music bandwagon early, firing up the Christmas tunes in early November.

I feel CHFI's Christmas music might be a smidge earlier than my liking, but there are times it can be a calming influence while driving in the car.

I have a Sirius Satellite receiver in my truck, which is commercial-free. The first of December I was driving to town and decided to search for some Christmas music on the satellite.

After surfing up and down the tuning knob, I came across the Hallmark Channel, which features traditional Christmas tunes, as well as voice-overs by actors from Hallmark movies we see in the weeks leading up to Christmas, talking about their Christmas customs, warm fuzzy stories and some seasonal music.

While driving to town last week with the seasonal tunes pouring out of my satellite, I heard "I'll Be Home for Christmas" sung by Connie Francis.

It occurred to me that I'd heard Connie Francis a

couple times earlier that day, one time singing "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," and another time, "Winter Wonderland."

As I listened, I really couldn't recall hearing Connie Francis on any radio or satellite receiver in decades.

Now I'm sure most people under 40 reading this column probably don't even know who Connie Francis is (for the record, she was a singer/actress during the 1940s and 1950s, a well-known entertainer from my parents' generation).

As I drove around that day, I started to mentally note the other artists featured on the Hallmark Channel.

Every year, there are the regulars, and we hear Bing Crosby and Nat King

Cole singing their seasonal favourites like "White Christmas" and "The Christmas Song" countless times on the airwaves.

But I noted others were showing up on the Hallmark Channel, like Frank Sinatra, Johnny Mathis, gospel singer Mahalia Jackson, Rosemary Clooney (George's mom), Dean Martin and Doris Day (who recorded one of the earlier "Baby, It's Cold Outside" renditions), and dozens of other vocalists that today's generation probably wouldn't even recognize.

There were some later artists in the mix, too, like Brenda Lee, Perry Como and we can't forget Elvis with "Blue Christmas."

As the days rolled by, every time I went for a drive, I found myself listening to that channel

pretty much exclusively.

It's interesting how one's attitude can change with age.

Geez, not that many years ago I wouldn't even admit that I was listening to music from the 40s and 50s.

If I'd turned on the radio and was greeted by that genre of music, I probably would have likely changed the dial in seconds.

But now I'm finding that while listening to that era of music, I suddenly rediscover those wonderful Christmas songs I grew up with, which were played on the radio and television when I was a little boy.

It was a simpler, innocent time, when the world around us was safe and predictable.

It was the music my sisters and I heard on our scratchy old record player,

before we hung up our stockings and headed up to bed on Christmas Eve, shivering with anticipation of the wonderful things that we hoped Santa would deliver in the night.

And now, I find hearing that music takes me back to that much simpler time. I tell you, it's downright therapeutic.

As Christmas arrives this year, I plan to play that music and close my eyes - and for a brief moment, be able to once again enjoy a quiet, simpler time, like when we were kids.

The Sidekick joins me in wishing one and all a wonderful Christmas and holiday season.

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