



Gord James comes home

When I was 14 my buddies all wanted to be famous sports heroes or rock stars. I wanted to be Gord James.

My obsession with radio came to me, like most of us, at an early age—eight to be exact. By the time I was 10 and living in Southern Ontario I knew exactly which jocks sounded great, and by 14 there was no one better to my ears than Gord James.

Gord James is one of the few yeoman of an era in Top 40 and rock radio that many view as the halcyon days of radio's sound. He's still doing it—and doing it every bit as well as he ever has.

The latest incarnation of the Gord James Experience is at Hamilton's new Vinyl 95.3, a place that feels right to him because the geography that surrounds the broadcast studios is literally home.

Gord went to high school at Saltfleet in Stoney Creek (now part of Hamilton) and did the WKRP town-to-town, up-and-down the dial thing in his first few years, including stops in Cambridge, London, Cornwall and Kitchener before landing at CKOC, Hamilton's home of the BIG 500 Countdown in the early '70s.

In 1974, the now legendary J. Robert Wood interviewed Gord for an opening at CHUM-FM, free form at the time. But it was the "cool" station, 1050 CHUM, where Gord wanted to be.

"Thank you for coming in and goodbye" was the response he remembers.

"I realized how much I had to pull up my boot straps to hang with those guys," he recalls. James was talking about the big voices such as John Majhor, Terry Steele, Jim Van Horne, Mike Holland, Roger Ashby and Bob Magee. (Magee now holds down the morning drive slot at Vinyl 95.3, helping give that station a definite CHUM flavour that works perfectly.)

But it wasn't long before James landed a gig at CHUM-AM doing all-nights and filling in on day shifts now and then. By 1978 CHUM-FM was being programmed by a young upstart named Ross Davies and he wanted Gord to come over to the FM side of the building. That eventually happened, too, with weekends, afternoons and, in 1983, as morning host along with Rick Hodge.

"There are so many memories" said James.

"One really stands out.

I was filling in for Roger Ashby. As we were doing our birthday feature on air, it was mentioned that it was my birthday and all of sudden a lot of people gathered by the door and started singing Happy Birthday. I heard two younger singing voices through my headset and realized that Tom Jokic, our producer, had patched in two of my three children, Rachel and Kevin, from a cell phone and they were singing their hearts out, out of tempo and out of tune with the rest of the group and I thought that sounded even better because of it."

The sound is what matters to Gord James. And he says the fun has not gone out of it. And sitting chatting with him is

like pulling into a filling station for positive energy.

Vinyl PD Derm Carnduff says that getting Gord on board at Vinyl was a no brainer.

"Gord's name came to mind pretty quickly. His heritage as a Toronto radio personality would give us instant credibility, but ultimately his talent made Gord one of our top candidates," said Carnduff.

"His knowledge of the music, his wit and dedication serve his audience extremely well and the radio station as whole," Carnduff said. "And, oh yeah, he's got an okay set of pipes too."

"The saying at CHUM used to be 'let's have some fun'," remembers Gord.

I ask him if he's still having fun?

"There's no question that I'd do it all over again," Gord responded, "only this time I'd be tempted to break a few more rules."


Now that's the spirit of a true rock jock shining on after nearly 40 years of connecting with all of us!



Jamie West is CEO of Westpro Media Inc. broadcast consultants and creative content suppliers. He may be reached by e-mail at www.westpromedia.com or at 905-541-0127.

DTL **PJF-24 Prewired Jackfield**

DAV TRONICS



These prewired jackfield assemblies look and work great. They install quickly and easily, and they cost less than a plain (bare) jackfield, but save you lots of time!

- twenty-four 0.25" TRS jacks
- all primary and normal contacts are prewired to AMP CHAMP connectors at the back
- standard 1.75" x 19" layout

S.W. DAVIS **Broadcast Technical Services Limited**
Tel: (604) 255-2200 • Email: dan@broadcasttechnical.com