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CFIS is radio for the people

Sean Farrell

Oct 20, 2016 9:06 PM



Every day they keep coming and going.

Marching up, and then back down the stairs leading to and from the radio station located above my office at Studio 2880. Some of them stop I



nervousness on their way in. On their way out, a sense of accomplishment and relief.

So who are these people?

I'll tell you. It's a veritable "who's who" of Prince George. And they come here to be on-air guests at one of Prince George's most fascinating community assets, CFIS 93.1 Community Radio station.

CFIS is the love child of Reg Feyer and a group of like-minded individuals who have had a life-long passion for and involvement in radio broadcast. The organization was founded in 2004 and first went on air in 2007.

There were two things that formed the genesis of the station. The first was the reality that commercial radio stations are continuously reformatting their programs to suit a younger demographic. The second was the model of a successful launch of a community radio station in Mackenzie.

Reg and his group believed there should be something on air that is purposefully designed for the people who grew up in the region, rather than a format that is always evolving towards appealing to a younger generation. There was also the recognition that economic pressures in the radio broadcast industry created a push towards automation, a by-product being the creation of a niche market for local content and personalities.

It's filling this niche that drives the steady stream of local civic leaders, business folks, sports personalities, politicians, artists and everyday citizens up the stairs to the second floor of our building.

I sat down with Reg recently, and we talked about the role that the community radio station plays in the lives of local residents on a daily basis.

The main focal point of the station on an entertainment level is to play the music that people grew up listening to and provide local information on what's going on in the community. That is key.

Their talk shows have developed organically out of what people want to hear and know about. The station draws local citizens as both hosts and guests. And everyone has a message that they want to get out.

There are general talk shows every weekday at 9 a.m., but there are also topic-based shows such as Health First on Monday at 1 p.m. which explores alternative and natural health remedies, and Seniors Moment on Tuesdays at

1 p.m. which explores issues and topics of interest to local seniors.

Reg and I chatted about relevance and authenticity when it comes to local organizations that spring from a local idea or need. For a radio station like CFIS, it really comes down to locally grown talent and content.

CFIS has a lineup of shows that have thrived for years, such as Blues Underground on Saturday at 2 p.m. followed by Cam's Greaser Garage - a rockabilly show - at 4 p.m. There is also Fiddle Fest on Wednesday at 6 p.m. which is tied in with the Old Time Fiddlers here in Prince George, and ColdSnap Radio on Thursday at 1 p.m. which broadcasts music from artists presented at the ColdSnap Festival.

I asked Reg how people can get involved with their community radio station.

There is always an open call for on-air guests, plus plenty of opportunities to get involved in the behind-the-scenes efforts needed to keep a volunteer-run radio station on air seven days per week. CFIS also likes to get out into the community, even broadcasting live at events such as Studio Fair, fast approaching on Nov. 4-6.

And for those with big opinions, there is always Radio Roundtable every Friday morning. Very much a current affairs show, it is always looking for vibrant, entertaining folks with a unique take on what's happening around town and in the world.

I was curious to know more about opportunities for the business community, given that the radio station has such a diverse and dedicated ✕

The advertising opportunities that exist with CFIS might be one of the best kept secrets in town, and should be noted by businesses who are interested in marketing to a mature customer-base.

I'm continuously impressed by the number of amazing things that happen here at Studio 2880. And now I've come to learn that not only is our campus a home to many amazing artisans and cultural organizations, it is also a profound incubator for local ideas, information and opinions.

I hope you consider getting involved with CFIS and if you are interested in doing so, feel free to email cfisfm@yahoo.ca or visit www.cfisfm.ca.

Have a great weekend and remember to support your local arts and culture community.

Sean Farrell is Executive Director of the Prince George & District Community Arts Council/Studio 2880.

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