

Perth and District Historical Society

Perth and District Historical Society - News Release – May 2026

The Perth and District Historical Society: May 21, 2026 Meeting: A Visit to the Musical Memory of Our Youth

The Perth & District Historical Society's meeting for May 21, 2026, goes into a new direction from that of both March and April. This time we go down memory lane taking many of us to the teenage years. Those were the days and those were some of the performers of early rock and roll as was experienced through the media of the day – radio – for a visit with Gord Atkinson.

Our guest for the night is Peter Atkinson, the son of the legendary CFRA/CFMO radio personality, Gord Atkinson. Peter, currently living in Kanata with his wife of 30 years, and son, was born and raised in Ottawa. He enjoyed a 35-year career in education, predominately with the Ottawa Catholic School Board, as a teacher, principal and superintendent of schools. After retiring, amongst other retirement pursuits, he wrote and published a book on his father's early days in Ottawa area radio. This book, "Gord Atkinson: Ottawa's Oldest Teenager – The Campus Years (1954 to 1967)" is the basis for our presentation.

The presentation covers Gord's 14-year career with CFRA from February 1954 to the summer of 1967. During that time of profound change in the world of popular music and entertainment, Gord, through his programmes Campus Corner, Campus Club and Showbill, met, interviewed and befriended many of the stars including Tony Bennett, The Four Aces, Connie Francis, Buddy Holly, Petula Clark, Johnny Cash and Elvis Presley. A passionate promoter of local talent, Gord was also instrumental in helping to launch the careers of Ottawa-born stars such as Paul Anka and Rich Little.

In addition to many pictures from Gord's private collection and funny and unusual anecdotes from the era, Peter's presentation features three videos of Gord in conversation with Paul Anka, Rich Little and Elvis Presley.

It is noted that while not included with the pop music theme for this talk, Gord was also a patron of the film world, meeting and befriending numerous stars such as Fred Astaire, Frank Sinatra, Bob Hope and Bing Crosby.

The Perth and District Historical Society is dedicated to learning about and popularising our history and is a forum for discussion and celebration of our area's rich culture and heritage. The meetings are held the third Thursday of the month and are open to the public at 7:30 pm at the Royal Canadian Legion, Perth-Upon-Tay, Branch 244, home of the Hall of Remembrance, 26 Beckwith St. E. in Perth. The usual "Toonie Fee" applies for each meeting. For information, contact Ellen Dean at 613-264-8362. Our website at www.perthhs.org has additional information about us and items of interest related to Perth and district.

Article submitted by the Perth and District Historical Society