

Are you old school?

by Stephen Hopkins

I am a child of the 80's. That is what I prefer to be called. The 90's can do without me. Grunge isn't here to stay, fashion is fickle and "Generation X" is a myth created by some over-40 writer trying to figure out why people wear flannel in the summer.

When I got home from school, I played Atari 2600. I spent hours playing Pitfall or Combat or Breakout or Frogger. I never did beat Asteroids.

I watched Scooby-Doo. Daphne was a goddess, and I thought Shaggy was smoking something synthetic in the back of the Mystery Machine. I HATED SCRAPPY.

I would sleep over at friend's houses on the weekends. We played army with G.I. Joe figures, and I set up galactic wars between Autobots and Decepticons. We never beat Rubik's cube, unless you count taking off the stickers.



I got up on Saturday mornings at 6 a.m. to watch bad Hanna-Barbera cartoons like "The Snorks", "Jabberjaw", "Captain Caveman", and "SpaceGhost". In between I would watch SchoolHouse Rock (I'm just a bill, yes I'm only a bill...).

On Friday night, Daisy Duke was my future wife. Did your Dad turn into the "Incredible Hulk" when he got upset?

At the movies the Nerds got revenge on the Alpha Betas by teaming up with the Omega Mu's. I watched Indiana Jones save the Ark of Covenant. I wondered what Yoda meant when he said, "No, there is another".

Ronald Reagan was cool. Gorbachev was the guy who built a McDonalds in Moscow.

My family took vacations to South Florida and collected

"Bring back the wonder we knew long ago..."



-Red Fraggile

Muppet Movie Glasses along the way (We had the whole set). My siblings and I fought in the back seat. At the hotel, we found creative uses for Connect Four pieces.

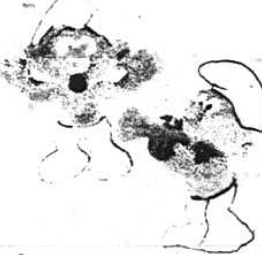
I listened to John Cougar Mellencamp sing about Pink Houses and Jack & Diane. Boy George bewildered me. I was a "Wild Boy for Duran Duran. MTV actually played music videos. Nickelodeon played "You Can't Do That on Television". HBO showed Mike Tyson pummel everybody except Robin Givens.

I drank Dr Pepper. I'm a Pepper, you're a Pepper, wouldn't you like to be a Pepper too? Shasta was for losers. Tab was a laboratory accident. Capri Sun was a social statement. Orange Juice wasn't just for breakfast anymore. Bacon moved over for something leaner. My mom put a thousand Little Debbie snack cakes in my Charlie Brown lunchbox and out world was the backyard and it was all you needed.

With your pink portable tape player, Debbie Gibson sang backup to you. Everyone wanted a skirt like the material girl and a glove like Micheal Jackson.



Today we are the ones who sing along with Bruce Springsteen and the Bangles perfectly and have no idea why. We recite lines from Ghostbusters and still look to the Goonies for a Great Adventure.



We flip through T V stations and stop at the A-Team and Knight Rider and Fame and laugh with the Cosby Show and Family Ties. "What you talkin' about Willis?"

We held strong affection for the Muppets and Gummy Bears. Why did they take the Smurfs off the air? After School Specials were about cigarettes and stepfamilies. Aren't the Power Rangers just Voltran reincarnated?

We are the ones who read Nancy Drew, the Hardy Boys, the Bobbsey Twins, Beverly Cleary and Judy Blume.

Friendship bracelets were ties you couldn't break and friendship pins went on shoes. Pegged jeans were in, and so were unit belts, layered socks, jean jackets, and JAMS.

The 80's may have made us idealistic, but it's that idealism that will push us and be passed to our children-the children of the 21st Century.

We had neighborhoods where in the day we could play kick-the-can, "guns", and all of the things

that made us "Grown-up". There was always that one field that could be used for baseball, football, or just a place to hang out. That was my field of dreams, Mr. Costner.

At night we would play flashlight tag, and we could trick-or-treat at night without the fear of being killed.

We loved the orange race-track.... that was until our mother realized she could smack us with them. We collected Cabbage Patch Kids, and their ugly offspring Garbage Pail Kids.

We collected football and baseball cards, but it was because we wanted to be the first in the neighborhood to have the complete set.

The back door was always open and Mom served only the red Kool-Aid to the neighborhood kids. You never drank the New Coke.

Entertainment was cheap and lasted for hours. All you needed to be a princess was high heels and an apron. The Sit'n/spin always made you dizzy, but never made you stop. Pogo balls were dangerous weapons, and Chinese jump ropes never failed to trip someone. In your underwear you were Wonder Woman, Spiderman, or R2D2. In your treehouse, you were king.

Did you know the president was shot? Did you see the Challenger explode or feed a homeless man? We forgot Vietnam and watched Tiananmen Square on CNN. We didn't start the fire, Billy Joel did.

In the 80's we redefined the American Dream, and those years defined us. We are the generation in between strife, facing strife, and turning our backs.

We played with He-Man and Skelator. Going to get a Happy Meal on Saturday with Mom or Dad was worth waiting the other six days of the week.

Was Green Lantern the coolest superhero or Superman? "Wonder-twin powers activate!" "Hey, my mom will take if your mom picks up!"

This is what growing up in the 80's was all about! So if you are reading this and it ALL hits home, then you do indeed have the heritage of a generation.

You're an 80's child if...

*You wore a banana clip or one of those slap-on wrist bands.

*You were upset when She-Ra, Princess of Power and He-Man got cancelled.

*You have seen at least 10 episodes of Fraggile Rock.

*You wanted to be a Goonie... "Goonies never say die."

*You know all the words to "Ice ice baby."

*You can still rap to "Fresh Prince of Bel Air."

*You were led to believe that by the year 2000 we would all be living on the moon.

*My Little Pony, Gummy Bears, Strawberry Shortcake, PinWheel with Molly the Mole, Double Dare, and The Smurfs are familiar to you.

*You know what a Doozer is.

*You had WonderWoman or Superman underoos.

*You fell victim to 80's fashion: big hair, spandex, or stone-washed jeans.

*You own any cassettes.

*You knew what Willis was "talkin' bout."

*You carried your lunch in Gremlins or an ET lunchbox.