

# RADIO GETS INTO THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT

By MAUREEN NEVIN DUFFY  
Correspondent

Like everything else this time of year, there is a limit to how much Christmas music one can safely tolerate. Setting that limit is the job of the station program director.

At Neptune's The Breeze (107.1 and 99.7), that job falls to Mike Fitzgerald, director of programming for Press Communications. Fitzgerald takes a philosophical view of holiday radio critics.

"People can't get enough of their favorites, and a little is too much of what they don't like. But we play a wider variety of holiday songs. Our library is the largest, with 3,000 different titles versus three or four hundred at most stations. And we like to bring in the older favorites, songs by Bing Crosby and (Frank) Sinatra."

Still, the station has a strict limit on holiday tunes during the week. This year, the station played four hours of holiday songs interspersed during one week, five hours the following, for a gradual buildup. But the station lets loose on the themed weekends with continuous holiday music. Christmas will be the "Home for the Holidays Weekend."



Terrie Carr

Fitzgerald, who also co-hosts the "Mike & Dianne Show" with Dianne De Oliveira from 5:30-10 a.m. weekdays, says the station also ran a Web poll to find out which singers are its listeners' favorite holiday artists.

Terrie Carr is Fitzgerald's counterpart, doing the alternative-rock programming for sister stations G Rock (106.3 and 106.5).

"We'll be playing nonstop holiday favorites from 3 p.m. Christmas Eve until midnight Christmas Day, in a mixture of

country and pop, and Christmas classics," says Carr.

It's also a good season for live remotes. Casey and Ray of New Jersey 101.5 (WKXW-FM) were scheduled to do a show, "Save Santa 1," on Friday at the Patriots Theater at the War Memorial in Trenton to spread Christmas cheer in person.

On Dec. 31, Carr will pair up with station personality Matt Murray of Seaside Heights for a New Wave New Year's Party from 9 p.m. until 1 a.m. In a twist, Carr and Murray will be playing selections that are "listener-driven," says Carr. Listeners have voted in a "G-Poll" from a database of selections posted on the station's Web site, [www.grockradio.com](http://www.grockradio.com).

"So we won't know (the play list) until we see the results of the poll," says Carr.

But the base visitors select from contains '80s titles.

"A lot of early MTV," says Carr, "The Smiths, B52s, Depeche Mode — our fans live in a YouTube, MySpace kind of world. Our uniqueness of brand is really to be very listener driven."

WJZZ-FM (100.1) also intends its music to be used for holiday functions, trimming the tree, wrapping the presents, says program director Jeff Rafter.