

OOPS! YOUR GAP IS SHOWING

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been old enough to join the 1976 Soweto student uprising. The same applies to the Vietnam war and Xer Americans. Yet the Xers grew up in the shadow of these events, sensing that, "something had gone wrong".

This sense of alienation was reinforced by a feeling of abandonment. It was their mothers who rebelled against staying at home to bake when they could be out making money of their own and swept into the workplace, leaving their children behind. In America they were known as the "latchkey" kids, because they let themselves in after school. As they grew older in both South Africa and around the world, they moseyed off down to the ever increasing number of shopping malls, their jeans hanging down their backsides, looking for entertainment.

It's this generation who first felt the effects of the divorce boom as their economically liberated mothers were freer than probably any other women in history to leave unhappy or abusive relationships.

It is the echo of the Silent generation's sad childhood, for many of them were teenagers when Aids hit the media spotlight. They came into their own with the Dotcom boom when some, like Mark Shuttleworth, made millions working from their garages. Sadly, the bubble burst and many of them, even in their late 20s, moved back home, to the despair of their parents.

Today, they're busy redefining the military mode workplaces they inherited from their grandparents. They are the children of the IT revolution which has made it possible to work on the beach, at home, in a car park, nearly anywhere on the planet. Not for them the physical constraints of a desk and a building, or army-like time keeping.

They move jobs every two to three years, attracting the "mac job" label. Any potential sense of loyalty to "the firm" was scotched as they saw their hardworking Boomer parents retrenched and devastated as companies downsized worldwide.

They're demanding a balanced working life that gives them time to spend with their children, time they feel they were denied as kids. Some high-profile Xers include Mark Shuttleworth, Lance Armstrong, David Beckham, Prince William.

The Born Free or Millennial generation (because they are the first school-leavers in this new millennium) has, generally speaking, not suffered from apartheid laws that specified where their parents could live, eat, sit, attend school and university, marry and even die. Many of them have little idea of what apartheid did to everybody in South Africa, and that's the way they like it. "Get over it," they tell their parents.

Many of the black Born Frees have walked away from their culture and traditions, some cannot speak their parents' mother tongue. They don't know the Struggle heroes' names and couldn't be bothered to turn out for the vote many of their parents and grandparents died for the right to have.

Their white generational cohorts are much the same, unable to name Struggle heroes beyond Nelson Mandela and indifferent, as their worldwide counterparts often are, to current politics.

Indeed, you are lucky to get them to lift their eyes from cellphones or computer and video screens for long enough to pose the question. For this generation has grown up surrounded by digital media and has never known a household without cellphones, computers or laptops.

They are spoilt, cosseted, the echo of the Hero generation. Their parents hover over them in a style known as "helicopter parenting" which is not entirely misplaced in



A defining moment for everybody, regardless of generation: hijacked United Airlines Flight 175 flies towards New York's World Trade Centre's south tower as the north tower burns on September 11 2001

PHOTOGRAPH: SEAN ADAIR, REUTERS

an era of baby rape and child abductions.

This irritates them immensely, almost as much as their Boomer parents' inability to cope with the latest cellphone or upgraded Windows program. No wonder they regard themselves as smarter than their parents, whom they regard as out of control. A typical Born Free child will often scold a parent for not listening attentively while she explains how Mixit works.

It echoes a comment made by Margaret Mead, the anthropologist who was probably the first person in modern sociology to identify generational theory. "In the past, there were always some elders who knew more than any children in terms of their experience in having grown up within a cultural system. Today there are none," she wrote presciently about 40 years ago.

The Born Frees, as their name suggests, will resist being stuck in an office even more than the Xers. Cubicle farms are a thing of the past, due to new technology.

This generation expects to be listened to. A Boomer, 60, said: "We wanted what they want. We just felt we couldn't ask." Born Frees have the confidence to ask without being regarded as cheeky. They're also

highly principled and community oriented, determined to save whales and the planet.

Their heroes include Angelina Jolie, Greenpeace, Prince Harry, Bono, Brad Pitt, Drew Barrymore.

The next time your Silent generation grandmother gathers birthday present wrappings to use again, or your status symbol-obsessed Boomer father insists on keeping his top-of-the-range BMW in spite of having been retrenched yet again and unable to meet his repayments, you'll understand them better.

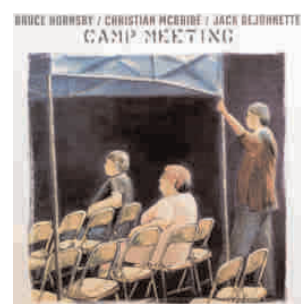
And when your Gen Xer son turns down a CEO position in favour of "quality of life" at home or your Born Free, 13, daughter demands her own bedroom and a laptop "like now, Mom" you'll have some insight into why this makes you feel so upset. It's the generation gap.

□ Sue Grant-Marshall has co-authored two best-selling books, *Mind the Gap* and *Mind over Money*, published by Penguin Books. She is also a professional speaker on *Generations @ War - How to Win it*. She can be contacted on 011-783-0058 or e-mail: sgrantmarsh@icon.co.za

All that Jazz



BRIAN HOUGH



Happy campers

Bruce Hornsby – *Camp Meeting*

Piano, bass and drums. Isn't that the composition of all good standard trios? Bruce Hornsby (piano), Christian McBride (bass) and Jack DeJohnette (drums) have a ball on *Camp Meeting*, a Sony-BMG release.

Hornsby was born on November 23 1954 in Williamsburg, Virginia, and this multi-talented artist is known for his song writing, singing and accordion and piano playing. He has a travelling band, Bruce Hornsby & The Noise Makers, for live shows; Ricky Scaggs joins in bluegrass performances and records with this trio.

McBride toured South Africa recently with Pat Metheny, and his name pops up regularly as the bassist of choice on many CDs. He is regarded as the most exciting bass player since Ray Brown. He was born on May 31 1972 in Philadelphia. He moved to New York and studied at the Julliard School of Music, later touring with Roy Hargrove, and then with Freddie Hubbard.

DeJohnette is a drummer's drummer. Born in Chicago on August 9 1942, his discography is so immense he now has his own label. He studied classical piano from the age of four for 10 years before taking to the drums. Before setting out on his own he made a name for himself with the Charles Lloyd Quartet.

This album is straight-ahead, modern jazz that has 11 tracks, most of them very popular; and some are Hornsby's compositions: *Questions and Answers*; *Charlie, Woody and You*; *Solar*; *Death and the Flower*; *Camp Meeting*; *Giant Steps*; *Celia*; *We'll Be Together Again*; *Stacked Mary Possum*; *Straight, No Chaser* and *Un Poco Loco/Chant Song*.

The Goethe-Institut and H'art Musik is launching a new jazz initiative in Johannesburg on February 3 – a first Sunday of every month get together at 3.30pm at the Goethe-Institut, 119 Jan Smuts Avenue. Pops Mohamed is the featured artist, refreshments are available and a donation would be appreciated. Phone Kathy on 084-965-3949 for more information.

Competition: Send entries to brianhoughcompetitions@yahoo.com, or fax to 011-622-1519. Please send one entry only and include delivery addresses and contact numbers. The competition closes at noon on Wednesday. There are 10 CDs to be won.

Question: In the article, who plays bluegrass music?

□ Contact Brian with news, views and venues on 083-262-2333, or e-mail him at brian@hough.co.za