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Continuing the tradition in the 90s

The fall of 1958 was just like many other autumns on the campus of the University of New Brunswick. Students were busy with academic and other pursuits, and Barry Yoell was no different. Barry was a sophomore on campus, living in LBR, and a member of the Student Representative Council.

Like many students Barry wanted to see the big city. A Maritimer, he never ventured very far west as a young man, but his curiosity got the better of him. When an invitation came from the Canadian Association of University Broadcasters to attend a conference at the University of Toronto, the SRC was stumped. There was no radio group on campus. Why should they attend?

But Barry was interested - more in Toronto than radio - and he managed to convince a group of his housemates in LBR that he should be sponsored to check out the situation. The majority of the SRC was controlled by LBR members, so Barry got to see the big lights. The conference was aimed at convincing the CBC that they should carry a national weekly program produced for and by students. The CBC turned this proposal down. Barry, however, remained determined to see something happen.

When Barry returned from Toronto in October of 1959, he decided that he had better do something to justify his trip. He put an ad in the Brunswickan inciting anyone interested in radio broadcasting to a meeting. To Barry's surprise, an enthusiastic group of students showed up, and the discussions soon turned to establishing an "over the air" broadcast

facility.

Investigation proved the FM broadcasting would not be feasible right away for a number of reasons, including the complicated legal process required and a lack of financial and personnel resources available to the club. At this point the society almost folded even before it began.

Subsequently meetings explored other methods of broadcasting, including carrier current and closed circuit. It was discovered that carrier current would involve a DOT license, so the group began focusing efforts on a closed circuit system reaching every residence room, the Student Centre, and various lounges on campus.

In the spring of 1960, letters looking for support were sent to many companies. Upon returning to campus in the fall, the Radio Society was called by the SRC staff to come and remove the large amount of equipment that had accumulated in their offices during the summer. Over \$700 worth of equipment, including a tape recorder, an amplifier, a microphone, an equipment rack, two power supplies, and a jack panel had been donated by several companies.

As word of the equipment spread, interest in the project grew. The group was reformed and Barry was named the first Director of the UNB Radio Society. After determining that FM broadcasting was, at least for the time being, out of reach, the group focused their energies on an alternative.

But where to begin. The answer was to come from 3000 miles away, where UBC Radio (now our sister station CTR FM) had experienced many of the same growing

pains.

In early January a reply to a query arrived from Vancouver, where UBC Radio was in the process of setting up a closed circuit system. It involved wiring the residences with a network of speakers through which students would be able to access the station. Three weeks later the organization had a constitution, a \$1,000 budget, and Senate approval for a 12 foot x 12 foot studio in the basement of Memorial Hall.

Assistance also came from the professional broadcasters in town, CFNB Radio, who contributed two turntables to the Radio Society as well as expertise through seminars and workshops on the operation of a radio station. The Biology Society donated a mascot alligator.

In March of 1960 the "Drew Report" on Radio UNB was released. It showed strong support for a campus radio station featuring show and popular music. Western and rock'n roll were hotly opposed. Jazz and classical had a considerable following and the consensus indicated that the main desire was "music to study by". Whatever happened, at least one Radio UNB DJ would prove popular. One bobby-soxer drew a big heart on her poll with the words "I like Barry" inside.

Student meets alternative radio: dynamo

Monday 7:45 a.m. . . In the kitchen.
"Don't want to be late for class again. It's snowing, wonder if schools closed? Let's turn on the radio . . . hey, neat music . . . not like anything else I've heard on the radio before. And the announcer seems almost like a real person. I wonder what station this is? Oh well . . . gotta run, classes are still on."

Campus radio has existed in Fredericton for over thirty one years. In the early days, it was little more than a large stereo, with speakers in rooms in residence and the Student Centre. In 1961, Barry Yoell and a small group of students began student broadcasting from studios in the basement of Memorial Hall. They provided about 25 hours a week of programming for students in residence, but more importantly, they had a vision. . . Student FM broadcasting from the campus. It would be twenty years later before that dream would be realized.

Tuesday 7:40 p.m. . . In bedroom.
"Studying is getting me down . . . must take a break. Let's try that station I listened to yesterday. What's this? Folk music . . . Is this the same station I listened to yesterday. It can't be! And besides . . . who would play folk on the radio? Humm . . . it is pretty good stuff . . . and so much different from those same old tunes on commercial radio. So that's the call letters. . . CHSR FM."

In 1981, CHSR went on the air, broadcasting to Fredericton and Oromocto for the first time at 97.9

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the FM dial. It was an exciting time . . . alternative radio hits Atlantic Canada. Right away it was a big success. Listeners were talking about that new station on the dial programmed totally by volunteers.

Thursday 1:25 p.m. . . sitting down next to friend for Arts 1000 class.

"I went home for lunch today. Kraft dinner again! Hey, I heard this radio station again today. Some people were talking about vegetarianism on a program called the 'Lunchbox'. I didn't know that humans were, by nature, herbivores. Heck, I didn't even know what a herbivore was. That station is really interesting."

Today, CHSR remains Fredericton's alternative! What is alternative radio? It is volunteer based, non profit, cutting edge radio. Unlike other stations, it has no specific format. CHSR FM broadcasts 142 hours a week of music and spoken word programming, in six different languages. It's radio that stays ahead of the rest, both in music and information. From classical to punk, sports to gay rights issues, you'll hear it all on CHSR FM.

Friday, 1:45 p.m. . . taking a break in the cafeteria.

"Glad I brought my walkman today. Let's tune into that station again . . . what was that number again . . . oh, yeah, 97.9! Wonder what's on today. WHOA!!!! Metal . . . on Friday afternoons? Wow, blow my mind. Just the stuff I need to get cranked for the weekend. But I just can't figure out how they make money to survive. I rarely hear any commercials."

Alternative Music and Information . . . that's what CHSR FM is all about. And alternative doesn't mean bad. Sinead O'Conner, U2, The Tragically Hip, INXS, and many other commercially successful groups owe their initial exposure to alternative radio like CHSR FM. And we're breaking new artists and styles all the time. Tomorrow's stars are on campus radio today!

And the information programming is important too! It's information without the corporate controlled interests attached. We're able to give you information and programming that just isn't available anywhere else. Shows produced by people who have something to say. We put the "public" on the public airwaves!

Saturday 9:30 a.m. . . oh, what a hangover!

Radio remains one of the most powerful means of communication and entertainment in the world today. That UNB has its own radio station, well equipped and run by student and non-student volunteers, is a credit to the campus. UNB provides the Fredericton community with an invaluable service. In reality, CHSR has the potential to provide some of the most interesting and innovative programming on radio in this city. Most of the commercial stations in the region are constrained by budgetary considerations and policy values to travel on the tried and proven path. At the same time, a non-profit organization like CBC is hampered by policy and production values which limit the extent to which its workers are allowed to experiment. Creativity is, therefore, deprived of an environment in which failure is not seen as anathema. CHSR is one of the few places in which such creativity may be exploited. It is this exploitation of creativity that characterizes the station today. CHSR presents the listener with a

wide variety of programming as well as a broad range of music that is unavailable in any other place in the city. If someone wanted to appreciate the extent to which Fredericton is inhabited by people of many different races, political leanings and cultures, they should look to CHSR for evidence. The station is the only media outlet that consistently reflects this diversity. CHSR's importance to the student body has less to do with what they can "get" from it, and more to do with what they are giving to the community of Fredericton. There should be pride in a station that is concerned with bridging the gap between the University and the rest of the community. To fail to appreciate this role is to accept death and myopia. The more CHSR re-acquaints itself with this role, and presents these values to the student community at this university, the greater their impact in the community will be. There is still so much left to be done. Do it.