

# CKDU station manager moving on

BY MARCUS LOPES

*For Jo-Ann Citrigno, there's no such thing as a 'typical' day in the office.*



Van Berkel has worked quite closely with Citrigno because of Citrigno's interest in current affairs, and this has helped to foster a closer relationship between them.

"I've learned a lot more about the station and a lot of it's due to her explaining... like processes, CRTC regulations," said van Berkel.

When Citrigno first started as CKDU's station manager, she didn't arrive with any specific ideas about the direction in which she wanted to take the station, but she got some pretty quick — elimination of CKDU's debt owed to the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU); fuller participation by volunteers in the day-to-day operation of the station; and, a regularized training program for volunteers.

It was through Citrigno's efforts, as well as those of CKDU's board of directors and the 1993 DSU Treasurer Frasier Matte, that CKDU paid off that debt.

"She was instrumental in setting up the finances in such a way that we were not only breaking even, we were saving enough money so we could pay off a substantial debt," said Joanne Merriam, a volunteer at CKDU for the past three-and-a-half years.

Steve MacIsaac, the program director at CKDU, said Citrigno has really focused on making the volunteers the emphasis of the station rather than the paid staff.

"We still haven't succeeded in a number of ways," said MacIsaac. "We still have lots of room for improvement and we're still learning as we go along, but it's one of the greatest things I've seen Jo-Ann bring [to CKDU]."

Merriam explained that volunteers have more of a say than they once did because CKDU is not as hierarchical as it once was.

"Jo-Ann is good at generating interest among volunteers and letting them know that you can come in and do your radio show and do your 10 hours of volunteering time, but it's a lot more satisfying if you get involved with the management."

Citrigno believes she's worked hard to make everyone feel that they have an equal say, and in trying to escape the idea of her, the station manager, as some sort of boss.

"We all have some sort of responsibility," said Citrigno. "We have to share in the decision-making."

And Citrigno's belief of a

shared responsibility in the decision-making process was evident as CKDU responded to a complaint made to the Canadian Radio Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) regarding the station's All Day All Gay programming in July 1993, which led to CKDU's licence restrictions. One stipulation of the CRTC decision 94-106 is that sexually explicit material can be broadcast only between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m.

Citrigno recalled how the CRTC expected her, as station manager, to speak on behalf of the society. This process went through a number of stages where Citrigno and others spoke to the press. There were staff as well as board discussions.

"Then we eventually decided that the issue was so important that it could only be decided by the membership," said Citrigno. "But that happened over weeks — it wasn't clear at the beginning."

Anthony Blackmore, a volunteer at CKDU for the past two-and-a-half years, said Citrigno dealt with the CRTC extremely well and was instrumental in keeping the volunteers, board of directors, and staff together.

"Her involvement at that time was crucial," said Blackmore. "She helped us look at the options."

When it comes to consensus-based decision-making, MacIsaac said Citrigno made the effort to put the theory that so many espoused into practice.

Citrigno has worked with MacIsaac and the previous program director on articulating a training process for the volunteers to show them how they can fit into CKDU. She said the program director has done most of the work on this, but she's been very supportive to make that happen.

She added that they're just trying to make the process clearer, to ensure that every volunteer gets the same training and obtains enough of a background with the intention that they have confidence to participate fully, not just do their shows and go home.

"[The] more they understand how they fit into the station means that they will go to meetings and hopefully contribute their opinions and affect policy, and not just be a passive volunteer," said Citrigno.

Blackmore explained how when he first started at CKDU, it was all quite confusing. He said Citrigno always took the time to say hello and ask him how things were going.

"She always made room to interact with volunteers," he said.

Van Berkel also said Citrigno is very concerned about knowing people — everyone who is involved in CKDU — and it's always the exception when she doesn't know someone.

**C**ITRIGNO'S NEED to know the volunteers can be explained by the fact that she, and the rest of the staff, are at CKDU because of the volunteers.

"If we only had people who just came in to do their show and left, our jobs would be really dry, really functionary," said Citrigno. "It's because many of the volunteers want this to be a volunteer-run station that it becomes an exciting place to work. When you have a lot of different ideas and creative ways to go forward in whatever direction, then that's

when it becomes vibrant — you have an interest in being here."

MacIsaac said Citrigno has defined her role as station manager a lot more during the past few years, and that's been something she's been fighting for. He added that she's been trying to figure out exactly what the station manager is supposed to do and should be doing, as opposed to just a catch-all position.

For Citrigno, the station manager's job is to keep things together and to facilitate the volunteers and the other staff so they can do their job. When she first started, the job description was in her mind, that of a manager responsible for employees, legal issues, and to talking to the public. As she got to know people at CKDU, she discovered that there was a real will to change the hierarchical nature of the society.

Citrigno admitted that this kind of change hasn't been easy because there aren't many models to follow.

"I think it's tricky for a volunteer-run organization because you need leadership and that's where it gets hard," said Citrigno. "Sometimes I've felt like if I did things a certain way, then I was trying to be a boss and other times, if I didn't do things a certain way, I wasn't being a leader."

But whatever has come Citrigno's way as CKDU's station manager, she's accepting the kindness that people are showing towards her as positive feedback; that she's been good at some things.

She would have liked to have been better at fund-raising due to CKDU's tight financial position. Even though she admits that the situation could have been handled differently in good and bad ways,

*"She's kept things well organized. [She's brought to CKDU] an ability for the different aspects of the station, to work together and to keep the station together."*

—ANTHONY BLACKMORE, CKDU VOLUNTEER

she's satisfied with the outcome of the CRTC experience because she and others made it possible for the membership to participate in such a serious decision. That makes Citrigno feel that she did something that is hopefully good for the station.

Van Berkel is angered sometimes when people at CKDU give too much and she thinks Citrigno has done that.

"Sometimes I think we lose our boundary between ourselves and the role that we're doing," said van Berkel. "And I think in a way that's not there because she is pulling away, recognizing that she's done this job long enough."

Citrigno said she's getting burned out and that it takes a lot of energy to work at CKDU.

"I think it's relevant for people at Dal to know that places like CKDU have a really hard time with money," said Citrigno. "It's hard for the staff to stay because the salaries are bad, and there's not a lot people can do about that...but I do intend, as long as I am in or near Halifax, to be a volunteer, so I'm not leaving leaving."

*"She seems to be really good at putting herself in other people's places and seeing where they're coming from. She was always really helpful, really friendly. She's a pretty good friend. I'm going to miss her when she leaves."*

—JOANNE MERRIAM, CKDU PROGRAMMER

Citrigno, originally from Ontario, has been the station manager at CKDU 97.5 FM since October, 1992. She has resigned as station manager, but over the last couple of years, Citrigno has left her mark on CKDU.

"She's been a real mentor," said Lis van Berkel, the current affairs director at CKDU. "A mentor in terms of dealing with the hierarchy and trying to get rid of that."