

CKDU goes mainstream

By Ellen Reynolds

Some of CKDU Radio's employees are complaining that with the purchase of a commercial news wire service, the station is moving away from its alternative mandate into the mainstream media.

Broadcast News (BN) is a radio wire service similar to Canadian Press (CP), which provides up-to-date news for most commercial radio stations.

Currently, CKDU has several reporters and uses stories from local and national newspapers, giving the stories alternative priorities.

I've used this stuff (BN) before and I think it's a bad idea. It's just as good for CKDU to go through the Globe and Mail to find stories," says Andrew Jones, the sta-

tion's production manager. "We should cover alternative stories, not use extensive coverage of the national news. We should expand on stories usually buried in newspapers on page 17."

Station manager Mark MacLeod says the purchase of BN is an attempt "to take ourselves more seriously. I think it (BN) is shit but we need something."

BN will cost CKDU \$300 to \$400 per month, and a minimum one-year contract must be signed. The station receives approximately 50 per cent of its funding from student fees and the rest from sponsorships (ads), a funding drive, and government grants.

The station has recently acquired its own computer and printer. There are nine full-time

employees, three grant positions and approximately 200 volunteers.

Jones thinks the money spent on BN could be put to better use. "I think our financial priorities are a little scrambled. We need to focus a little tighter on technical equipment."

Connie Clarke, producer of the Evening Affair, agrees more money should be allocated to technical equipment, and doesn't think BN is a good idea either. She also has a problem with the process of reaching the decision. Clarke says the proposal to buy BN was still under discussion when the contract was signed and sent. "I question how this decision was made. Policies should have been drawn up. The decision was made by very few," she says.

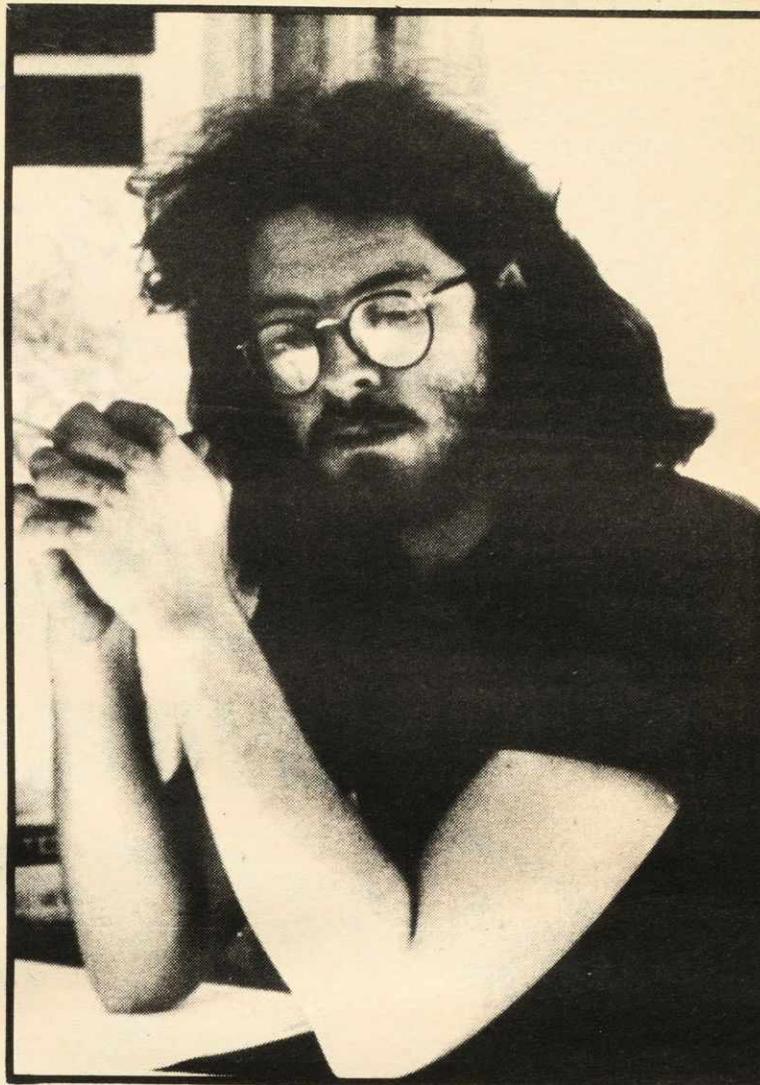


PHOTO: ROBYN ATWELL

The contract for Broadcast News has been signed and sent.

Youth are Vandertilammed

VANCOUVER (CUP) — Welfare is a dirty word in B.C.'s government ranks.

The B.C. Supreme Court recently ruled the Vander Zalm government had violated the Charter of Rights and Freedoms by giving less to welfare recipients under 26 than to others.

But instead of the expected across-the-board increase, the B.C. government cut welfare rates to those over 26 by \$7 a month.

B.C.'s unemployment rate is among the country's highest at almost 12 per cent. Roughly 8 per cent of B.C.'s unemployed hold post-secondary degrees, and about 12 per cent are returning students.

The government claims the cuts were necessary to cover the \$4.5 million needed to equalize payments for those under 26. But a coalition of anti-poverty groups says the government's actions are part of a concerted campaign against "employable" singles and couples.

"It's basically an attack against employables," said Susan Harris, a worker at the Downtown East-side Residents' Association, and VP of the National Anti-Poverty Organization.

At present in Nova Scotia, single parents under the age of 19 do not receive any social assistance from the Nova Scotia government in many parts of the province. Recently, however, social services minister Edmund Morris said he would extend benefits to this group.

The NDP recently condemned the provincial government over this matter, which is against the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, at their last provincial convention.

Harris said the government's claim that the cuts are needed to cover the \$4.5 million shortfall shows its true priorities.

"Them saying they don't have that money is a lie," she said. "They have millions and millions to spend on the Coquihalla (highway project)."

It was recently announced that overspending on the megaproject, still under construction, has hit the \$1 billion mark.

"It's a political question. There's nothing economical about it," she said.

End Legislated Poverty (ELP), a coalition of anti-poverty groups, has launched a letter-writing appeal campaign to both provincial and federal governments.

The letter is being handed out in food bank line-ups throughout the Lower Mainland. Over 100 letters have been sent in so far, and a 100-signature petition was handed to B.C. Social Services and Housing minister Claude Richmond when he met recently with low-income people in Vancouver.

"I would say to students, 'get off your ass,'" said Harris. "Don't use the individualistic approach — use your anger. We all benefit if we all get ahead," she said.

The maximum amount available to a single "employable" on GAIN is \$384 a month, or \$12.80 a day.

A study by the B.C. Social Planning and Research Council, titled "Regaining Dignity", says single people on welfare need a \$275 increase just to meet basic needs.

Welfare rates have been frozen over the last five years, while inflation has exceeded 20 per cent, and the lifting of a seven per cent maximum rent increase has boosted rents three to four times.

"The young, native people, the handicapped, single parents are all told (by the government), 'stop your bellyaching, we're taking care of you'. That's bullshit," said Gary Colley, a coordinator

at the Vancouver Unemployment Action Centre.

The ministry has also announced this summer that it will save \$50 million when certain welfare recipients are required to pick up their checks at the welfare office instead of receiving it through the mail this fall.

Swanson said the ministry also plans to divert 150 workers at an institution for the mentally disabled being phased out into welfare caseloads.

The decision, she said, is linked to the ministry's overall plan for reorganization, which includes dividing welfare recipients into two categories: "active" and "maintenance", or employable and unemployable.

MUMS

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mothers face in dealing with the Social Service Department.

"It's completely arbitrary," she says.

"They're cutting back without us knowing about it. The rules and benefits are always changing."

To combat these problems, Dacey says MUMS will now try to change the system from within. She says the group will cut back on speeches and protests to concentrate on proposing ways to improve the social system.

"It's not enough to say we want a change. You've got to show how changes can be brought about."

Dacey says MUMS is also shifting its attack from housing to property.

"Mothers don't have enough to

Student vote threatened

VANCOUVER (CUP) — A New Democratic party member of the British Columbia legislature has introduced a private members' bill to safeguard provincial voting rights for students and other non-traditional voters.

The bill would preserve the right to vote on election day by allowing those people already registered in another riding to re-register in the riding of their residence, said MLA Gordon Hanson.

"We believe that anyone should be able to (register to vote) on election day," he said.

The bill stands in opposition to Social Credit Bill 28, which would eliminate election day registrations.

Several other community groups are protesting the Socred bill, as it would deny voting rights to transient groups like the poor.

According to the End Legislated Poverty Coalition, over 157,000 people voted in the last B.C. election.

Hanson said many students would be disenfranchised by Social Credit proposals to eliminate 'section 80' voting.

He said election day registration is especially important to students because they change

their place of residence more often than most.

"Students have a lot to lose under the Socreds' (election) plans," said Hanson. "It's a very dangerous bill."

Hanson's bill also proposes to lower the provincial voting age from 19 to 18. "It's discrimination to stop 18-year-olds from voting," he said, adding that 18-year-olds "should be full citizens".

Hanson said the Socred proposal is aimed at weakening the NDP vote. "The Socreds' bill is a plasticine document designed to keep the government in power," he said. "People are losing votes and the right to change their government."

In Nova Scotia, students from the province are eligible to vote either at their home constituency or at their place of residence after a set period of time.

Out-of-province students must have six months' residency in order to vote. But a section of the voting rights bill states that where someone goes away with the intention to come back, they are eligible to vote, which allowed some second- and third-year students to vote in Nova Scotia elections.

eat, enough to live on, on top of housing," Dacey says.

Dacey, who says she was beaten by her former husband, admits she is often reluctant to tell battered women to leave their husbands.

"If I had known what I would experience in the year after I left my husband, I would have stayed with him," she says.

"The violence would happen only every second day, but I live in poverty every day."