

RADIO CONTROVERSY : BOTH SIDES OF THE RECORD

CLAHANE CHALLENGES COUNCIL

Voices from the Living Dead

Part I
An Open Letter to the Students of Dalhousie

Dal Radio as we knew it, is dead. The Dalhousie Student Union has taken it upon themselves to stick their fingers in yet another pie, one they don't even know the flavour of. We offer up our most hopeful prayers that they don't get burnt. It is an acknowledged fact that in the last few years Dal Radio, (that infamous noise box that emits fair and sometimes foul sounds from the ceiling of the S.U.B.), has been on a one way road, and that road is all downhill. As one of the older members the decision of council to close radio's doors is a painful one for me to handle. The manner in which it was done is even harder to accept.

It was informally discussed amongst non-radio members of council that the motion be presented and the station manager Doug Wavrock was notified of the decision to present the motion half an hour before the council meeting at which it was presented. It was conveniently forgotten by council that radio is not a dictatorship, rather it is governed by an Operations committee, elected by the radio staff. In typical council consideration the operations committee was not even informed.

Radio is planning to expand broadcast into the field of carrier current, which is a weak signal affair that will be able to be picked up on an AM band in certain areas of campus (notably the residences). The reason council gives for the shutdown of radio is a valid one, the reorganization of the structure of radio administration, as the lack of any organization, or hope of it, was obvious in the late Dal Radio. It is my opinion that most of the reorganization could have and should have been done in summer months, but be that as it may, it had to be done eventually.

My major beef is not the motives council has expressed in wanting to close down

radio but the total lack of consideration that has been shown for the members who have put in time and effort there in the past. There is yet to be made an explanation of the acts of council to the former members, and I feel that they deserve at least this much consideration. The council committee to look into radio leaves one dubious that any old radio members will even get the chance to air their suggestions or views on what is wrong with the present system. The aforementioned committee, comprised of the Student Union President, Dan O'Connor; the Communications Secretary, Stan Beshunsky-Smith; the Technical Director, Fred Mattocks; an independant council member and ex-radio member, Chris Hart; and finally the Station Manager, Doug Wavrock; has decided that it would make matters simpler if they dismissed all former staff, so as of now I am an ex-radio, along with numerous other members who have been with the station for periods up to four years. Those who wish to remain with radio will have to reapply when council finally deems it advisable to reopen. I have been informed by usually reliable sources that all applicants will be retested on the boards before they can resume their programming. As well as this little pleasantry, the closing down of radio and the locking of the doors to 420 have totally disrupted any semblance of a training program for new members, and thus weakened the entire organization.

It takes time to train inexperienced people to operate the control boards, and allow them to practice until they are qualified to use the equipment, and the closing of radio has eliminated the time completely. I don't have any idea how this committee of student councils is going to find time, when they reopen radio, to screen and train new applicants, retest former members, and go over air at the same time. Even if they had time, they don't have the

qualified staff to undertake such a chore. They have eliminated the previously trained members of the staff by dismissing them, and of the committee of council there are only three people who know how to work the equipment, and only two that know how to train. They have succeeded in alienating the interested new staffers by making it impossible to be trained, they have alienated the old staff by not even having the consideration to explain the reasons behind the decision to them, and they have the gall to tell me when I ask what they intend to do about it that the members of the old staff will be back if they have any interest.

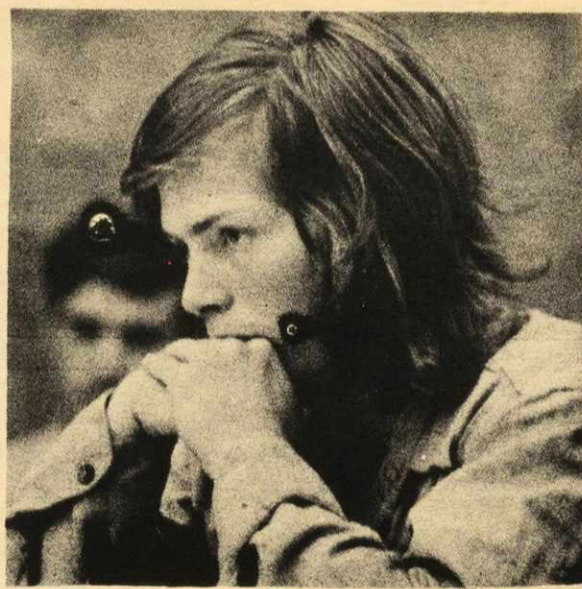
Student council has, I feel, displayed it's regular lack of conscience. When I pointed out that radio is an organization with rights of their own I was informed that as council is in charge of all extra-curricular activities (excepting Sports) and that they have the right to do as they please with radio. So, any of you out there who rely on council for your financial support remember that old Boy Scout motto, "Be Prepared". You might find your waking up one day that your organization doesn't exist anymore, and if it does, that you're no longer a part of it!

Part II
When I brought the matter up for discussion at the most recent Council meeting, they ceased with the rape of radio and proceeded to dispose of the body. When the matter came up before council a number of concerned ex-radio members (eight to be exact) were in attendance to pay their respects at the funeral. The discussion opened with the reading of part one of this article, the major points of which were, when summarized:

- (1) Lack of council to notify the governing body of radio, Operations
- (2) Lack of consideration in informing former members of the reasons



Ex-Radio's at the funeral



Tom Clahane

- behind council's action.
- (3) The disruption of training of new members by the locking of radio
- (4) The dismissal of old staff members
- (5) The removal of facilities from old members by locking radio

In reply, it was explained to the former members of radio that the Operations committee no longer existed, it would have been too difficult to notify them, and that actually the station manager was the technical head responsible to council, and therefore it was felt sufficient to inform him (half an hour prior to the meeting) and to ignore the Operations committee and the rights that radio had invested in them. Radio was also told that in

a week or so, when council's committee had reached a certain point in their discussions, ex-radio's would be informed as to what was going on. In reply to the disruption of the training schedule radio was informed that the committee was developing a new training program which would train new members in all aspects of radio, not only technical ones, and therefore it was wiser to suspend training completely until such a system could be decided upon. It takes a minimum of twenty hours to thoroughly train a person to technically operate the equipment.

At the time this is being written, (Sunday Oct. 6) radio has been closed for one week, and the two boards have not been used. It was my suggestion that while Council was setting up it's new organization and radio is not on the air that the boards be used to

their best advantage to train new members. With the exception of Gord Mackea council seemed to totally miss this suggestion. At this point it was moved and passed by Council that discussion end. When I pointed out that I had yet other points to present, it was ignored, and I was voted to silence. Having thus completed the rape, council disposed of the body, and went on to other business.

For my part in the entire sordid affair, I was accused of waging a personal vendetta against council, and that my sole purpose in bringing up the matter was to "stir up shit". I feel this is typical council reaction to anyone who strongly disagrees with the heavy-handed and sometimes simple minded way in which council tries to railroad favorable (TO itself) issues.

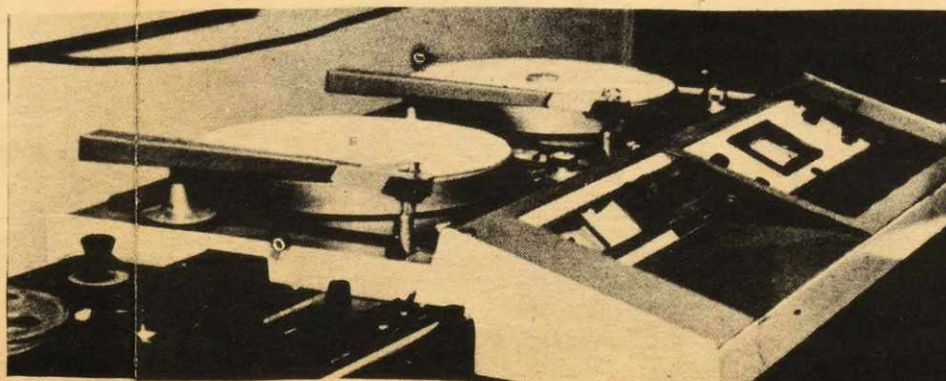
I agree that radio needs reorganization, and that it has gone downhill in the past few years. I hold that this is basically because in the past council has made improper decisions regarding the choice of station manager, decisions that went against the feelings of the radio staff

in general. Not that this is to hold anything against the people who made these decisions, because I am sure they made the decision that appeared wisest to them, but I question the reason that allows three people who know nothing of radio to be in a position to make such a decision. It seems to me that the radio staff would be much better qualified to make such a decision, as at least they are familiar with the duties and personalities involved.

I hope the council committee can come up with a sound reorganization for radio, and no doubt they will, as they appear to be a dedicated and informed group. I question, however, the audacity of council to close a discussion before all the points have been brought to

light, the lack of consideration they have shown to both those people who have been involved in the past, and those who have expressed interest in becoming involved in the future, and council's apparent lack of conscience.

Sincerely
Tom Clahane



COUNCIL DEFENDS ACTION

On the Road Again (Eventually)

Money has been allocated and studies in preparation for Dal Radio to have carrier current broadcasting. It would be received on A.M. radios in Howe Hall, Shirreff Hall and Fenwick Towers.

Before carrier current broadcasting can begin, Dal Radio must receive a license from the CRTC (Canadian Radio-Television Commission). This involves meeting the CRTC's requirements in terms of Canadian content and over-all quality.

In granting a carrier current license to the U.P.E.I. Student Union, the Commission stated again that student stations are expected "to reflect the interests and activities of the total university or college community in which they operate; to schedule a consistently high proportion of Canadian material; and, above all, to promote innovative programming which will explore and enlarge student interests".

The Student Union Executive saw little or no evidence that Dal Radio was moving towards the achievement of the standards necessary to receive a carrier current license. A review of the station's history indicated that for at least two years several factors have combined to destroy almost any chance of internal reform.

The Executive recommended, and the Council agreed, that a clean break should be made with the past problems at the station. Therefore, the Council established a temporary committee to restructure the station and to administer it for one month.

The committee is composed of Station Manager, Doug Wavrock; Technical Services Director, Fred Mattocks; and Science rep., Chris Hart, all of whom have considerable experience in radio, especially student radio. There is also President Dan O'Connor and Communications Secretary, Stan Beshunsky-Smith, both of whom have some experience in student radio and a fair amount of experience in other media.

To help make a clean break, and to enable it to build up a decent station, the committee made two decisions. One was that the station be closed until a suitable structure and personnel were ready for broadcasting to begin with improved quality. The other was that no one would be considered as a member of Dal Radio until accepted as such after applying. This actually operates to remove seniority and to permit the committee to develop means for finding and training those who may have become members of Dal Radio during a time when standards were not maintained as they should be.

The committee is working as quickly as possible to prepare a new, solid structure for Dal Radio. It is meeting daily, and will issue an interim report within a few days. Its meetings are open to observers, and if asked the committee will meet with former and prospective Radio members to discuss its report, and further reports.

The committee hopes to phase itself out of existence as soon as possible, so that

Radio can once again function with normal autonomy. However, it would rather spend a few extra days making sure that the new station will be a good one, than rush things and risk unnecessary problems.

The committee is meeting daily, and more should be heard from it soon. It hopes that broadcasting can resume well before the end of October, but the work done indicates all too well that the job is larger than was expected.

by Dan O'Connor
President, Dalhousie Student Union



Dan O'Connor

DAL RADIO MEETING

To discuss new structure.
Council Chambers,
SUB, Tues. Oct. 15, 8.00 p.m.
All interested are welcome.