

Good FM a must

Radio potential not utilized

by Ken MacDougall

Is Dalhousie University a sufficiently unifying force to the 7000-plus students that go here? Do we actually feel any tie with the university once classes are over for the day and we return to our homes to begin evening study, or whatever students do when they go home?

The university itself does not make one feel part of the community. An out-of-town student feels alienated in their first few weeks here, until he or she either finds friends or psyches themselves into accepting the loneliness that they will invariably feel throughout their stay at Dal. So how do you draw the university community together?

Obviously, campus events contribute to the over-all adaptation picture. Yet there can, and should be, much more for the student on campus. In the next few weeks some possibilities of enlarging community spirit will be explored, and ideas suggested on how the student can profit from the experience of Halifax.

This week: Community Radio.

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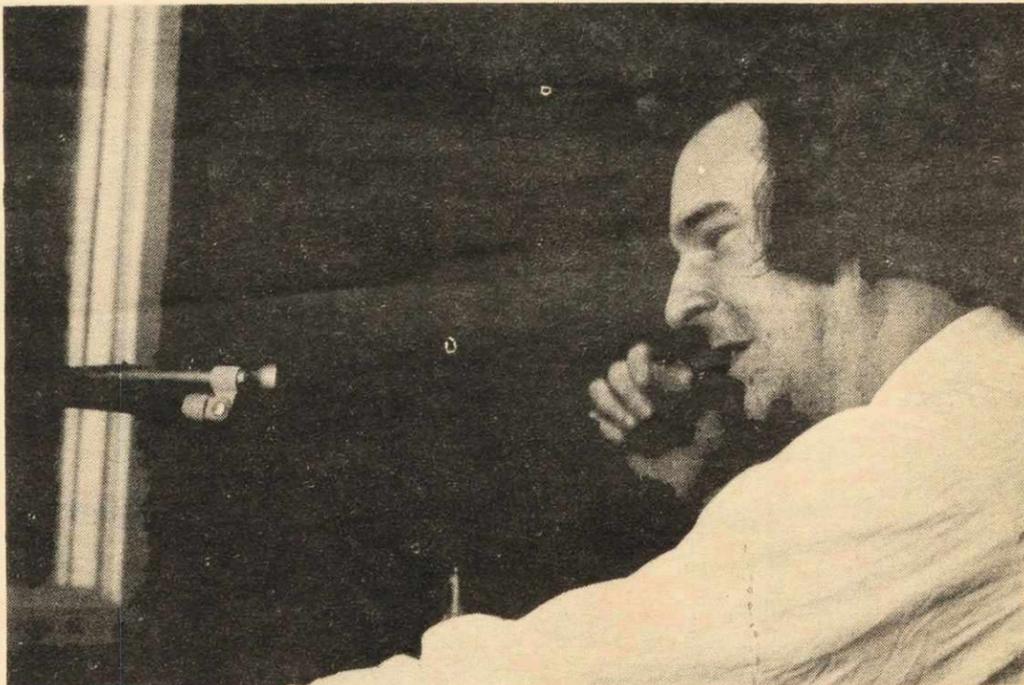
Halifax radio is either pure bubble-gum or appeals to the religious freaks and war-years

set; it is either Southern U.S. style sensationalistic, or hard-sell money-making.

It seems that there is not one DJ on the local pop stations, CJCH or CHNS, who is allowed to play music to his or her own particular mood. While talking to one of the local DJ's about the type of music played, some typical practices of pop radio were unfurled. The hits are programmed in advance and must be played. LP selections are limited to two per hour, due to time and advertising cut requirements. CJCH and CHNS attempt some form of programme play-off against one another, but it is CFDR that commands the largest audiences.

If you enjoy off-beat music, forget it. The record industry sits on most of the new, interesting albums, preferring to feed the tenny-talent tunes to Halifax.

The only time you are apt to hear blues or acid rock is on the overnight show of CJCH, and occasionally Jimi Mack (who recently departed from CHNS) got a few tunes in. Even when you finally hear these tunes, they lose their mood or feeling when introduced by hyper disc jocks, or followed by off-mood gummy sounds and fast-pace



Dal Radio's Henderson: MUSIC WITH FEELING.

dick kennedy / dal photo

advertising.

However, this article didn't start out to be a criticism of the local media, but an exploration into promoting Dal community spirit.

So how about an FM radio station, licensed and operated by the present group of Dal Radio?

According to D. Ray Pierce, Director of Dal Radio, such a

project would require from ten to twelve months of training for Dal's announcers and personnel. This training is necessary to bring Dal Radio staff to a credible level; a level where they would be doing the students a service.

"Whether we are non-profit or not, the radio station would still be in competition with the local stations," Pierce stated.

Currently the CRTC will not license university stations, so other possible methods of Dal Radio reaching the community are being explored.

Dal Radio is establishing agreements with some local radio stations to broadcast certain programmes for free, in return for "services rendered". This avoids union hassles with the powerful ACTRA Guild, to which all paid performers in Canada must belong.

Carrier current, a method of broadcasting on AM radio through the use of low current to carry the station to a small area (usually no more than a mile from the source) is another possibility. However it's illegal, and Dal Radio, a \$100,000 operation could conceivably have their equipment confiscated for daring to indulge in such activity. A policy statement on carrier current is expected from the CRTC in March.

By far the most promising possibility has been the recent invitation extended to Dal Radio by Halifax Cable Television to broadcast over an "open" channel. This means that the station would be incorporated into the programming of Halifax Cable TV, and original shows produced by Dal Radio staff could be heard in your home (if you subscribed to cable television).

For this to take place, Halifax

Cable makes application to the CRTC to carry Dal Radio programmes; Dal Radio, in turn, requests that their services be distributed by cable. If the radio station should decide to make application for FM broadcasting privileges at some later date, then only a supplemental application is made to the CRTC. Furthermore, Dal Radio would not have to give up their broadcasting privileges on cable.

In the meantime CBC and CJCH are interested in using Dal Radio public affairs programmes, and a formal step is being made to provide useful material to such interested parties. As usual, there aren't enough interested people around, although there certainly are enough interesting ideas.

If student participation and student-controlled projects are part of the answer of making this university a workable, well-respected (although not necessarily orthodox) part of the Halifax community, then a university radio station could well provide one of the levers to bring us together.

An open letter to the Halifax broadcast industry

Dear Sirs:

It has recently been brought to my immediate attention that there is a considerable lack of classical music broadcasting in this area.

One of my major complaints is that there is no classical CBC-FM radio station. The one FM station in this area broadcasts mainly country and western music, and it is of poor quality. I question why it is necessary for listeners in Halifax to be subjected to such a narrow range of music. The local CBC-AM station does transmit classical music, but at scattered hours and interspersed with other forms of programming.

I am becoming tired of turning on my radio and finding that, of the four stations which are picked up on the local AM band, two broadcast pop, one broadcasts easy listening, and the fourth is likely to be carrying a talk show. Heaven forbid a fan of serious classical music having to listen to country 'n' western.

So, where does that leave the more classically minded listener?

It is obvious that we are receiving second-best consideration, and this should not be the case. There is a need for an FM radio station in this area which will broadcast classical music. Until this is done, the broadcasting industry has indeed failed a large portion of its audience.

The need for this service is particularly evident among those people who cannot afford to channel large amounts of money into building a record library. The lending services of records in the city are limited, and tend to be of poor quality, since the chances of the records being scratched are considerable. One Sunday afternoon a week there is a free concert, if you are lucky, but this is hardly sufficient.

Perhaps it is time to consider the audience, rather than the trend of pushing pop music for a quick profit.

Yours sincerely,
Alison Manzer

NEXT WEEK:

**The SUB
Student
Centre
or
convenient
hangout?**