

A voter's information guide

SUB regulars share Tuft's feelings. In several inform surveys, the campus' only regular CKDU listeners were overwhelmingly against current programming and only a few thought FM might be different. "You can't turn them off," said one student. "You're at their mercy," she added as she plugged in her Walkman.

"Under FM, people will be able to turn us off," said Programming Director Eric Taylor. "They can listen to us when they want to," he said.

On the financial side, CKDU will need \$78,593 worth of new equipment, and \$17,859 for CRTC hearing expenses, taxes and a contingency fund. The budget for the first year of operation will be \$79,963, with expected revenues of \$82,300.

The \$96,452 capital expenditure (78,593+17,859) will be borrowed from Student Union at 10 per cent interest per annum over 5 years. In the \$79,963 annual budget, \$25,445 is earmarked for loan payments.

In the first 5 years of operation these finances would be under the control of the DSU Treasurer for CKDU-FM. The DSU Treasurer is also one of two DSU representatives on the eight member CKDU Board of Governors. The Board (acting as the monitoring body) would also include two CKDU staff representatives, two community representatives, one media representative and the CKDU Station Manager.

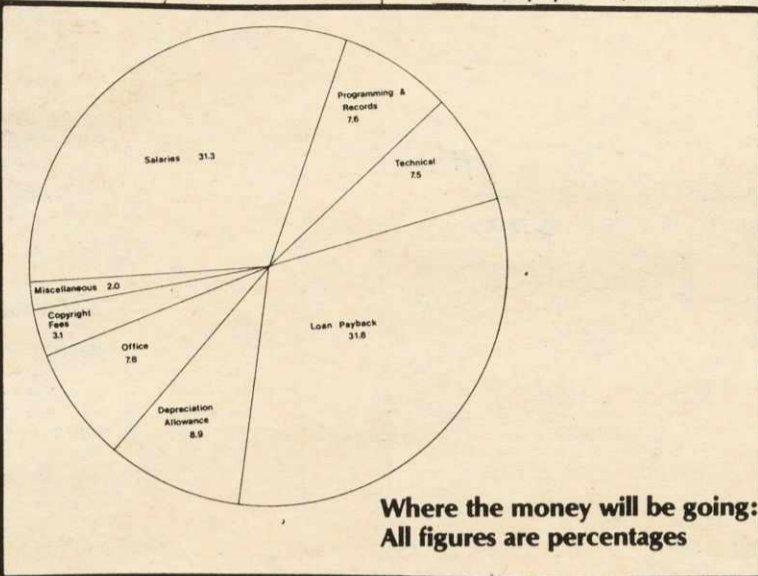
Dal Radio began in 1964, based in the A&A Building. It maintained a low profile and moved into the newly-completed SUB in 1969.

In 1972, Dal Radio began to think about FM. At that time Halifax had only one FM station, CHFX-FM, which played country music. Suggestions were made about filling the vacuum with good entertainment à la campus radio. The idea went so far as a referendum, which Dal Radio lost.

By 1975 Dal Radio became CKDU, and the FM issue was raised once more. At the time, CKDU's priorities were getting Carrier Wave broadcasting into

Howe Hall, Shireff Hall and Fenwick Place. In September 1965 this was "still in the test stage." (Carrier wave broadcasting means sending the 610-AM signal through a building's power lines,

the idea and said a \$2 increase in student fees would cover costs. In December, Council wasn't sure what its position was and Wile was riding them about the station's equipment, which was



with a range of only a few feet outside the building.) By early 1976 they knew that the system had problems. Shireff Hall never did get the signal and it was too poor to listen to in Howe Hall and Fenwick.

As far as programming went, the big event was the creation of Theater of the Ear, which became the station's first regular program. One of the cast was a man named Michael Wile.

However, recession hit Student Council in 1977 and CKDU suffered: the post of Programming Director was cut and council pocketed the \$10,260 salary. Recession also created a time of crisis in the CKDU hierarchy and Wile became Station Manager in 1977. He then began to organize the station. By 1979, he had a budget of \$11,000 with only \$7,000 coming from Council. More people wanted to work at the station than there were jobs for them.

Towards the end of 1979, Wile had a detailed programming schedule out and was beginning an aggressive drive towards CKDU going FM. He announced

bought second-hand in 1969 and was wearing out.

Council announced a plebiscite to determine public support for CKDU would be held in February, 1980. A plebiscite is a good indication of public feeling but any conclusions drawn from it are not binding on Council. Referendums are binding.

The Yes campaign for CKDU-FM won, with 60% of the votes; 28.6 per cent voted to maintain the station as it was; and 11.4 per cent wanted to dismantle it. Council announced it would hold a referendum on expanding CKDU's facilities with the idea of going FM, and Trans Canada Corporate Services (TransCan) was hired to produce a report.

The TransCan report came out on 4 November, 1980 and contained three models of an FM-type station at three levels of expenditure. It also suggested student fees be raised \$5-\$6.

The report was pulled by its authors on 20 November, 1980 for "updating." By January, 1981 Wile said the report was "lacking."

At this point, Council had decided the referendum would

be held on 11 -12 March and a highly effective "no" campaign began to develop.

Headed by three former members of the DSU executive, the "no" campaign cashed in on bad feelings Wile had generated and the shoddiness of the TransCan report's information. To outline their case and provide general student sympathy, the "no" campaign used pamphlets and phrases like "The \$200,000 Gamble."

Wile's programming tended to be mostly classical and closed to suggestions. The response from the majority of the students was negative.

With a simple majority needed to win, 64% of the voting students went against that FM proposal. The following week, Council padlocked the CKDU offices to prevent "malicious vandalism" to equipment while Michael Wile called their attitude "childish and unfounded."

The following month, 9 April, 1981, Council voted to cut all funds to CKDU—the "kiss of death" for a student society. On 13 April, 1981, support for the station emerged and a General Meeting of the DSU was held which overturned the earlier decision. It was decided that CKDU would be left in a holding pattern for the time being.

On 26 March, 1981 it was learned that DSU President Gord Owen was on the Board of Directors for TransCan until January 1981. He claimed there was no conflict of interest because he "was paid no money." He said that the TransCan report was so undetailed that the CRTC could not have used it and that several important technical details were left out.

In September, 1981 the prospect of CKDU-FM was once again raised from the dead and work started. The first major change was a radical alteration in programming. The basic idea was more variety in less time. New Station Manager Neil Erskine began the slow climb up the ladder again.

In a letter to the Gazette of 8 October, 1981, Danny Walsh,

General Manager of Canadian Freeline News, said that his company and another had tried to buy out CKDU from Council after the "kiss of death" episode and had been turned down. The policy of Walsh & Co. was to turn CKDU into a "business" proposition and to make an offer to Council in the following year. The deal was that the business would be solely owned, etc. by Walsh & Co. in five years.

Student Council came through with a \$12,500 operating budget for last year and DSU Treasurer Kevin Feindel came through with the suggestion that CKDU close for a few years to build up some money, then try to make it.

So the story is CKDU is once again risking the future of the station in an attempt to become an independent alternative radio voice. Should CKDU lose by a majority vote, there will be a further referendum in February to determine the future existence of the station.

The media in Halifax are supportive of the idea of CKDU-FM. Barry Horne, the Programming Director at C100, is on the Board of Directors of CKDU as Media Representative. Walter Labucki, Chief Engineer at C100, will supervise the installation of equipment.

Over the past summer, CKDU Station Manager Keith Tufts and DSU Treasurer Shawn Houlihan toured several student FM radio stations to compare notes on equipment and budgets.

According to their findings, the first year operating budget for CKDU-FM is reasonable. CKCU at Carleton University in Ottawa is widely claimed to be the best radio station in Canada, and has an annual budget of \$224,749. On the other end of the financial spectrum, the University of New Brunswick's FM radio station, CHSR, has an annual budget of \$53,856, and has a potential audience of 60,000.

Tufts said, "The hardest thing about stations going to FM is getting the mandate to do it."

CKDU history seems to bear him out.

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