

CTV SHAKEUP LEAVES BATON OUT AS A SHAREHOLDER

The CTV Television Network has dramatically changed its ownership structure — and Baton Broadcasting no longer is a shareholder.

CTV has announced that five of its eight existing shareholders agreed to pump \$20 million into the company — plagued in recent years by boardroom bickering.

Vancouver-based WIC Western International Communications, Maclean Hunter's CFCN Communications of Calgary and Montreal's CFCE Inc. will each hold 30% of CTV and contribute \$6 million each under the new arrangement. Electrohome Ltd. of Kitchener and Moffat Communications of Winnipeg will each inject \$1 million for separate five per cent stakes.

Baton, CHUM Ltd. and Newfoundland Broadcasting Ltd. dropped out as

shareholders, but will remain affiliates. They will sell air time to the network, but will not have any power in internal operations.

Baton had pushed to buy out the other shareholders, or assume a majority position, in an effort to settle a continuing dispute over voting power. Under the old system each shareholder had one vote, no matter how many stations they owned. The network needed unanimous support from all shareholders on major issues, which often led to an impasse.

The idea of a smaller group of shareholders with no one single player in control is said to have caused Baton, one of CTV's founders, to drop out. Baton had been the largest player in CTV, owning 11 of the 25 CTV affiliates, including flagship CFTO-TV Toronto.

But Baton's Doug Bassett said that, pending CRTC approval of the new partnership arrangement, "viewer's won't notice much difference."

"It will be business as usual. We're still fiercely part of CTV as affiliates, but not as owners," Bassett said. "We're players, but it's an arms-length relationship."

Although CTV President John Cassaday was hopeful the deal could be concluded by the end of February, he admitted it could drag on until the end of the summer.

The network will use the \$20 million for a strategic plan which could include a headline news specialty channel, and for developing program production for other broadcasters.

UNIQUE ARRANGEMENT TO SAVE QUEBEC STATIONS

Radiomutuel and Telemédia plan to put two radio stations in Chicoutimi and Jonquière under one management roof.

The agreement is designed to ensure the survival of private AM stations in the Saguenay region, about 200 kilometres north of Quebec City, the radio networks said.

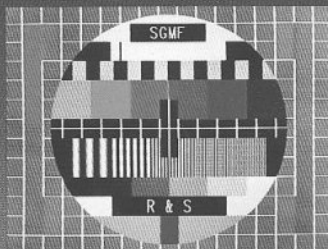
CJMT Chicoutimi and CKRS Jonquière will continue to have separate programming to service their local markets. A new company has been created to administer the two stations.

"The financial difficulties AM radio stations have had to cope with in the past few years are well known," said Paul-Emile Beaulne, Radiomutuel executive vice-president. "The industry must face the challenge of finding new solutions to keep radio stations on the air."

Although the two stations will be affiliated with different networks (CJMT with Telemédia and CKRS with Radiomutuel), a single management will administer the two stations. And the newsrooms will be combined, making it one of the largest news services in the Saguenay region.

The newsroom's primary function will be to serve CKRS and CJMT, but it will also act as a regional newsroom, feeding both networks.

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TWO NEWFOUNDLAND STATIONS SHUT DOWN

Two stations of Newfoundland's Q-Radio network have shut down.

NewCap Broadcasting Ltd. Vice-President Jim MacLeod said CKXJ Grand Bank and CFIQ Harbour Grace were closed due to economics and five staff were offered severance packages.

"Each of these stations has been losing significant amounts of money for many years," MacLeod said. "It's been over 15 years since Grand Bank was profitable and Harbour Grace has never been profitable."

MacLeod said he doubted either town would ever again have local radio service. "It takes a certain amount of business activity to support a radio station and, unfortunately, that level of activity is just not there," he said.

NewCap owns 16 radio stations, including five others in Newfoundland. NewCap is a division of Newfoundland Capital Corp., which reported a \$23.2-million deficit in 1990, including a \$10.1-million operating loss, and recently closed its Sunday newspaper in

St. John's.

HELP ON THE WAY FOR BORDER FM STATIONS

Canadians living in cities close to the U.S. border may soon hear more American music and more hits on their FM radio stations.

The CRTC says the rules governing FM stations in border markets will be more flexible. It said it's prepared to ease regulations on Canadian content, on the amount of hit music played, on the number of times a song can be repeated, and on the amount of spoken-word content, including news.

A CRTC spokesperson also said stations in small markets — those that have less than 100,000 population — and have been unprofitable for five years will also be granted more flexibility, but only for repeats and hit music.

FM radio stations in Windsor, Ont. have been given special status since 1985, having to air only 15 per cent Canadian content as opposed to 30 per cent for FM stations in other markets.

The commission said it's now prepared to grant other border markets —

defined as those that have been unprofitable for five years and where 20 per cent of people tune to U.S. stations — the same treatment as Windsor.

PROPOSED REGS FOR COMMUNITY STATIONS

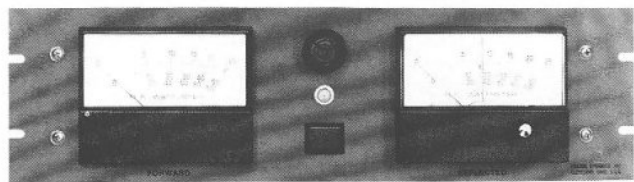
The CRTC proposes to keep the advertising lid on Type-B community and campus radio stations in competitive markets.

While the proposals would restrict Type B stations to an average of four ad minutes per hour, up to eight minutes will be considered for ethnic programs. The ad limit would be lifted for Type A stations operating alone in a market.

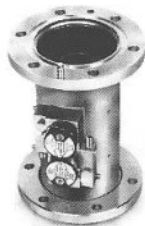
The commission, in announcing its proposed new policy for community and campus stations, also proposes to retain the repeat factor of 10 for non-Canadian musical selections and proposes to set a Spoken Word level higher than that for private stations.

The CRTC, in its public notice, said the primary purpose of community stations is to provide alternative programming not generally heard on commercial stations or the CBC.

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CBC Engineering has produced a digitally-generated compact disc that offers a variety of stereo reference signals for audio testing. Included on the disc are studio reference signals, network tests, subjective material and leader tones.

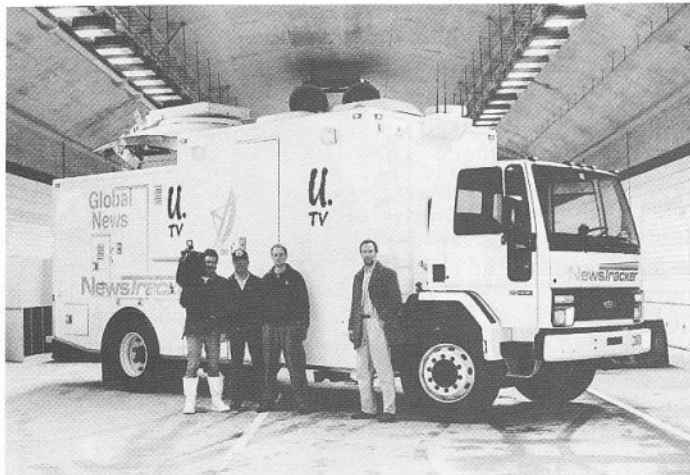
The test signals are said to be accurate to within 0.01 dB with respect to levels and to within 0.01 Hz with respect to frequency. The same signals are recorded on both channels on most cuts so either can be used for monophonic tests. The cuts are short, but the CBC says that they can be repeated indefinitely using the "auto repeat" in a CD player.

The disc, identified as CBCCD1-91, costs \$70 (plus taxes) from CBC Engineering.

—BT

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stations in the news



CKVU-TV Vancouver has introduced its new Satellite News Gathering truck, the self-contained Ford CF7000 uses a single 300 watt MCL transmitter and a 2.4m Andrew antenna. It has complete audio, video and RF monitoring and distribution, Betacam editing and a five station RTS intercom and IFB. The station plans to use its "Newstracker" to enable both newscasts and sports-casts to originate from the scene of major events around Vancouver, the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island.

—CKVU-TV photo

FINALLY, SOME GOOD NEWS FOR BROADCASTERS

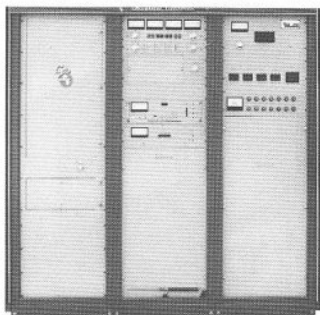
Has the downturn in the economy bottomed out? Is the broadcast industry looking at a financial turnaround in fiscal 1992?

Although it may be too early to tell, there are some encouraging signs. Consider:

- Baton Broadcasting, which recorded its biggest loss in its history last fiscal year, has reported a significant improvement in the latest quarter. Baton says it had a profit of \$4.27 million in the three months ended Nov. 30, a jump of 16.7 per cent from the same period in 1990. However, the company warned that it expected economic uncertainty to keep pressure on profit margins for the remainder of the year.
- Winnipeg-based CanWest Global Communications said its profits

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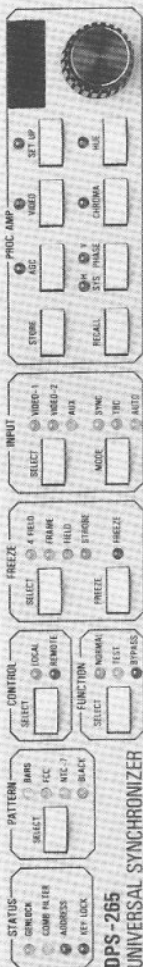
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climbed to \$6.7 million in the first quarter, a 23 per cent increase from \$5.4 million in the same period a year before.

- And, Montreal's CFCF Inc. reported a first-quarter profit of \$2.8 million — compared with a of \$7.1 million loss during the same period a year earlier — following a major cost-cutting program.

The star of CFCF's turnaround was its French-language television network, Television Quatre Saisons Inc., which recorded its first profit — \$479,000 before taxes — since going on the air more than five years ago. CFCF's first quarter showing a year-earlier included a pretax loss of \$8.3 million at Quatre Saisons. The turnaround came despite a drop in revenue of 8.4 per cent to just under \$44 million, with most of that coming at Quatre Saisons.

As a result of its cost-cutting efforts, CFCF says it no longer is looking a bringing in an outside investor but, instead, is considering a number of options to restructure its financing.

CRTC TO LOOK AT QUEBEC TV

What is being regarded as a critical point in the future of French-language television stations in Quebec will begin to unfold in Montreal March 23. That's when the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission will begin public hearings into licence renewals of the stations.

The commission admitted in its hearing notice that the television scene in Quebec has been completely transformed since its last round of licence renewals. It said that French-language television, like other broadcasting sectors, is going through difficult times with private stations showing major operating losses and the public sector undergoing substantial budget cutbacks.

And it admitted that part of the problem is fragmentation of the audience as a result of licensing of more television services.

The commission advised renewal applicants that it would examine each licensee's plan and strategies for the seven-year period beginning September, 1992 to meet what it called "the new market conditions".

CHANGES AT FAWCETT; RED DEER STATIONS HELP SOVIETS

Fawcett Broadcasting Ltd.'s **Sunset Country Radio** has announced management changes at its three AM and six AM repeater stations in north-western Ontario with the retirement of **Gordon McBride** as station manager at CFOB Fort Frances. Replacing the 40-year broadcast veteran is **Scott Fawcett**, who leaves his post as manager of CJRL Kenora to become CFOB's VP sales and GM. **Hugh Syrja**, CFDR Dryden manager, takes over as station manager at CJRL Kenora with **Bruce Walchuk** being promoted to manage CFDR. All are longtime employees of Sunset.

The Soviet national hockey team left the Alberta Cup competition in Red Deer, Alta., with fond memories of local stations **CKGY/CIZZ-FM**. The team lost \$1,630 when thieves broke into their hotel rooms Dec. 26 while they were playing in the tournament. The two stations spearheaded a two-day fundraiser that netted over \$4,000, for the Soviet team and the local minor hockey association.

CORRECTION: *FMedia!* publisher Bruce Elving writes to correct the item *U.S. FM on Solar Power* (BT, Nov/Dec/91), which originated with *Radio World*.

"KTAO (Taos, New Mexico) is not 50,000 watts, but 1050 watts, at an EHAAT of 861 meters, which gives it the equivalent of 50,000 watts at 150 meters (52 km primary). To achieve its 1050 watts, all the solar panels would have to do is generate 250 watts. That, times a gain of five (minus line losses) will give the 1050 watts — which could be achieved with a 10-bay antenna with horizontal and vertical polarizations.

"The new KRBK 99.9 Taos is also supposed to have the same power and height, so it is possible those solar panels will do double duty for two stations — in that case maybe coughing up 500 watts.

"The ending should say the new site requires only 1 kw for the equivalent of 50 kw ERP."

Jerry Fairbridge



TALK RADIO IS SPREADING

Westcom's CHQR Calgary made its move back to talk late last month. Western World's CJCA Edmonton went 24-hour talk this month. There could be a sports-talker shortly and at least one more news-talk station in the next year.

Most broadcasters shudder at the words talk radio because of the expense. But in an age of fragmentation, look at the ratings of CJOB Winnipeg, CKNW Vancouver, CJCA Edmonton and CFRB Toronto. And, because of the expense, it's not easy for others to jump on the bandwagon.

Finally, satellite delivery can help make talk more viable.

With CKO's demise, you might wonder about that. Yet say you'd started with successful local operations and linked them for efficiency, but only where it worked. And say you'd

had some freedom to change the mix if necessary. And say you weren't forced to subsidize money-losing stations. In other words, if you could get away from the regulator's rigidity and concentrate on developing something viable.

Westcom is well positioned to succeed at talk. Now Canadian Radio Networks is hoping to profit from the trend with a syndicated talk show.

CHQR's move was like putting a new station on air, said Rick Lewis, who moved from Edmonton's CJCA to become PD. Dave Rutherford co-hosts the 9 a.m. to noon show with Sharon Edwards. Dan Willmott was hired to do mornings with commentaries from Jim Davies of *The Calgary Sun*. Terry Moore moved from CKNW for the 12.30 to 3 p.m. show. Marty Lawrence continues his 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. afternoon drive. From 6.15 to 7.30 is *Prime Time Sports* hosted

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- CKMW RADIO 1570 - MORDEN/WINKLER, MB
- CHOO RADIO 1390 - AJAX/OSHAWA, ON
- CJSN RADIO 1490 - SHAUNAVON, SK

by **Mark Stephen**. QR picks up CKNW Vancouver's **Philip Till** show from the Western Information Network from 7.30 - 9 p.m., followed by **Susan Booker** with a local open-line show. At 11 p.m., QR continues with *Network Replay*, old-time dramas and comedies. **Kevin Rich** became an investigative reporter dedicated to the talk shows.

Later, look for an uplink out of Calgary to enable Westcom stations to link up with the push of a button when necessary. Finally, you will have heard about the \$2-million CHQR deal with the Calgary Stampeders. The CFL must be rubbing its hands in anticipation of a battle between CFRN and CJCA for the Edmonton Eskimos.

New PD **Peter Weissbach** has made big changes at CJCA: **Scott Baldwin** came on as assistant PD; **Bryn Griffiths** is doing the morning show with **Robin Allen** on news; **Gord Whitehead** moved to swing host; **Bill Matheson** retired from the *Bill and Bill Show*, but **Bill Jackson** stays; and **Bryan Hall**, master of the neighborly one-sided sports chat, is forever, I hope. There are also ongoing newsroom changes.

Says **Ted Farr**, PD of CJOB Winnipeg, the trick of talk is to catch listeners when they grow out of six-in-a-row FM and become news junkies. You do that by not becoming staid and complacent, he says. Also, you have to dominate sport as well as news. OB's **Peter Warren** has a 9 a.m. average quarter audience of 75,000. According to Ted, a lot of them are there at 7 a.m. for OB's all-information morning show. Ted's now PD of classic rock CJKR-FM as well as of OB; **Eric Weston** wanted to concentrate on-air and is doing afternoon drive.

Also in Winnipeg, Moffat President **Randy Moffat** moved fast in appointing **Vaughn Tozer** to succeed **Ken Clark** as VP & GM of CKY-TV Winnipeg. **Vaughn**, a New Brunswick native, also remains in charge of Winnipeg Videon, another Moffat company.

What Radio Does Best

I'm late, but there's always next Christmas so I'm going to tell you about a show run annually by CJIB Vernon and hosted by its president, GM and talk show host, **Patrick Nicol**. It's called *Christmas Around The World*.

Patrick's daily *Talkback* show draws an audience through the Okanagan and north through the Cariboo. *Christmas Around The World* is his Christmas *Talkback*. This is how it works.

CJIB asks listeners to provide the names of loved ones around the world. Some names are of Vernon people living overseas, some are long-lost relatives. Some will have visited; some may not have been heard from for years. Sometimes Patrick locates Rotary exchange students.

A day or two before the show CJIB tries to connect up with the people named, or at least the person in the household who understands English the best, and that's not always easy.

Having done the groundwork, CJIB calls back during program time (in Japan a family set its alarm for 3 a.m.). First come personal messages. Then Patrick asks about Christmas in the foreign land. In this is the appeal to general listeners — hearing what Christmas is like in Australia or Austria, Slovenia or South Africa. For example, says Patrick, we take convenience stores for granted. A woman in Tanta, Egypt told him: "If I don't make bread today, there is no bread."

Last Christmas Patrick ran four *Christmas Around the World* shows with four people on each show. It took days trying to

reach a serviceman on a Canadian ship in the Persian Gulf. His family hadn't heard from him for years. Finally CJIB faxed the ship. The serviceman called right on time during the show. The man's mother wrote a touching letter of thanks to Patrick, one of many he receives.

The show isn't just for friends and family of the people Patrick talks to. "People come up to me and say, gee, that was interesting," said Patrick. "People care about others around the world."

For his final show, Patrick tries to get the best of his guests through the year, those who can capture the meaning of Christmas. Last Christmas his final show was titled *A Life of Faith* and he talked to Mother Mary Angelica of Birmingham, Alabama, who started the Catholic Word Television Network. Another year he had B.C. Lt.-Gov. **David Lam**.

"It's what radio does best," says Patrick, "Relating in a real sense. They'll never be able to do that in any other medium."

More Christmas Items

Just before Christmas, B.C. transit equipped a Victoria bus with antlers, a giant red nose and a driver wearing a Santa suit. Then C-FAX Victoria's **Barry Bowman** took his morning show on the road — on the bus — with meteorologist **Blane Coulcher**... **Barry** and wife **Deborah** are new parents of **Jessica**. Before the birth, **Barry** invited listeners to predict whether it would be a boy or girl by sending in pink or blue booties. After the birth they selected a winner and donated the rest of the booties for distribution to needy children. The winner got a getaway to a Vancouver Island resort... **Grant Ainsley**, ND at CKRA-FM Edmonton, says Christmas will never be the same after his third child and second daughter weighed in at 4 a.m. Dec. 25 at seven pounds six ounces. He and wife **Deborah** named the baby **Emily Noelle**... CKDM Dauphin stripped a mobile van to make room then put announcer **Todd Sainsbury** on top of it, in mid-winter, to broadcast live from outside a donut outlet until the van was filled with things for the Salvation Army to distribute to the needy. **Todd** was ready to stay there for 24 hours if necessary, but the van filled in less than eight with toys, food and clothing. To publicize radio's strength, especially in supporting worthy causes, and to say thanks to contributors, **GM Linus Westberg** put ads in several local papers.

MD Matthew McBride of CKZZ — 295.3FM Vancouver — was in charge of the dance station's debut album on the independent label, Poolwest Records. It featured unsigned Vancouver talent singing mainly original dance-oriented Christmas music. The 350 albums distributed sold out in eight days. At sister station CISL, **Marty Forbes** has left the PD slot... You may have heard CHRX Vancouver's popular morning co-host **Rochelle (Rocket) Dentry** died on Boxing Day. She was 29 and had learned a year previously that she had cancer. Through treatment, she continued to co-host with **Joe Leary** until last fall. She left a husband and two sons. Said **ND Tom Mark**: "She was all round just a wonderful woman. We got a lot of sympathy calls from listeners when she died." On mornings at CHRX now is the (**Russ**) **Hamilton** and (**Glen**) **Lamont** show... In the continuing tough Vancouver market, CHRX promotions manager **Pam Seale** is gone and **Jim Goddard** is now doing weekend news... Long-time CFA Victoria staffer **Alan Perry** succeeded **Ed McKenzie** as ND. He's continuing his beat work while **Drew Snider** does the morning news. I hear Ed's family was relieved to discover dad's not just a myth... →

Back to Edmonton, where **Don Thomas** succeeded **Peter Senchuk** as interim president of Alberta Educational Communications Corp., taking with him his sign — *Old age and treachery will overcome youth and skill*. At an age where most managers are retiring (over 39), Don just needed a new challenge. **Jackie Rollans**, who gave him the old-age-and-treachery sign, succeeded him as acting GM of CKUA Access Radio Network. **Seb Sabourin** is supervising programming... **Doug Kryzanowski** is now looking after Edmonton and part of the U.S. for Seacoast Sound of Victoria, working out of Lethbridge. **Ken Truhn** moved from CFGP Grande Prairie to Doug's former position as sales manager of CKRD Red Deer. Seacoast Sound appointed **Ross Parks**, based in Halifax, to look after the Maritimes and U.S. Northeast. Seacoast is taking over the world — it's put its first six jingles into the U.K. and is working on a new ID package for FM Kyoto in Japan... **Jim Lemiski** replaced **Dave Rozak** as sports director at CHQT Edmonton. Incidentally, CHQT is the only Canadian radio station authorized to carry **Leeza Gibbons' Entertainment Tonight** show. For the rest of the story, ask **PD Ed Mason**... As an unusual contest prize, an Edmonton woman won a week-long billboard posting from MG 1200 St. Albert. After some thought, she donated it to Amnesty International... At CKCK Regina, **Saul Jacobson** has been looking after PD duties as well as the afternoon drive since **Franc Capozzolo** left after introducing an all-odds format.

When students are involved in the courts, there's a huge impact on their schools, especially in small communities and even more especially when the crime is murder. In Altona, Man., a student was charged with the murder of another and

attempted murder of a third. About 100 students and parents were subpoenaed. The school authorities knew there'd be rumor and gossip. They decided the best way to handle it was to provide the facts. Thus they asked their radio station, CFAM, to fax a story each day — a factual, non-sensational report. It was read as the school day started. It worked so well that when an adult and student were charged with murdering a student at another school in the area, two schools again asked CFAM for daily reports. That's how **Brad Quiring** found himself covering the Bridgett Grenier trial for CFAM, a wire service and two schools.

A Different WAB Convention

The WAB board, seeking people who haven't attended recently, is making this year's convention cheaper, easier to reach, more productive, and demanding less time away from work. Its theme is *The World is Different*.

The convention will be held at Kananaskis, 90 minutes from Calgary airport. It can be cheaper to fly on Saturday, so registration is June 6. Communications Minister Perrin Beatty and CRTC Chairman Keith Spicer should be there. Lou Tice, whom I featured last September, has confirmed he'll talk.

Meetings and golf are planned so delegates could leave before the final dinner and lose only one work day. Or you could go on to the Banff Television Festival which starts June 8. Organisers are offering a bus to the festival.

WAB President **Fred Filthaut** figures delegates will save about \$300 in hotel bills. The convention is at the Kananaskis Lodge/Hotel and there's a third accommodation alternative in Best Western's Kananaskis Inn.

The WAB has streamlined its mailing list. If you haven't received anything, call the WAB office or Fred at STV Regina.

The deadline for entry forms and fees for the Banff festival is March 17. The festival runs June 7 - 13, with the apt theme *Survival in the Global Village*.

A Valentine promotion suggested by **Kevin Hilgers** of CJWW Saskatoon, the only person who offers me funny stuff: The love and lust weekend. Offer two prize packages. The love includes a standard room and supper, limo etc. The lust package is individual cab rides to a motel, meals from room service or delivered from a nearby fast food outlet, maybe even dark glasses and trench coats. Did he dare to run it? Does Bryan Adams love the CRTC?

At the last CAB convention, Rogers President and CEO **Tony Viner** speculated about a future when a licensee might have many digital programming services with common administration, engineering, sales and even news. You might have heard that something similar has happened already in the Saguenay where CJMT Chicoutimi and CKRS Jonquiere were threatened with closure. Radiomutuel and Telemidia, competing networks, wish to bring the AM stations under one roof with single management, a combined newsroom serving and being served by two networks, and separate programming. Each company has a half interest in the new one. The deal is due to go into effect later this year if the CRTC approves Radiomutuel's purchase of CKRS, whose owners had intended to close it. It's a first in Canada.

What's going on at your place . . . who got promoted, who left, etc. Send it to me c/o Broadcast News Ltd., 305 Cornerpoint, 10179-105th Street, Edmonton, Alta., T5J 1E2, (403) 428-6490; or fax it to me at (403) 428-0663.

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Atlantic Airwaves

by Sandra Porteous



Sad news from the Q-Radio network — two of the Newfoundland stations will close. CKXJ Grand Bank and CFIQ Harbour Grace were victims of the sluggish economy, according to **Jim MacLeod**, a NewCap VP based in Dartmouth. MacLeod said both stations were losing money and it's difficult for smaller stations to compete against the larger operations in St. John's. NewCap still owns five stations in Newfoundland. They all appear healthy, although CJYQ-FM St. John's has laid off five employees... OZ-FM St. John's held a benefit concert for Newfoundland musician **Brian MacLeod**, suffering from a rare form of cancer. According to station staff, over \$7,000 was raised to help pay for MacLeod's treatment... **Kathy Hicks** joined CJYQ/CKIX-FM St. John's as news director, a position she had held at sister station CHTN Charlottetown. It's a homecoming gig for Kathy, a native Newfoundlander, who replaced **Brendon McCarthy**. In other station news: **Ken Conden**, back to Halifax as chief engineer at CFDR/Q104-FM, was replaced by **Randy Strilec**; and **Darlene Butler** was named Employee of the Month...

John Wedlake has been appointed news director at CHTN Charlottetown. He comes to the station after four years as a legislative reporter and a stint as a news reporter/reader at a

Maclean Hunter radio station... CBC's *Information Morning* in Halifax has made some major changes. **John Hancock** is the new sports journalist, after working in Montreal for the past 10 years, and **Kelly Ryan** moved from MITV as a writer/broadcaster... A recent co-production between CBC News for New Brunswick and Radio Canada's *Ce Soir* looked at language tensions. The one-hour bilingual forum — moderated by CBC's **Terry Sequin** and Radio Canada's **Yvon Michaud** — brought together 18 New Brunswickers from both sides... A group of 10 CBC employees who had passed the 25-year mark were honored at a luncheon in Halifax recently. The event was hosted by **Bill Donovan**, and each guest was given a photo showing them 25 years younger... CBC Moncton's Open House was a big hit, again. More than 500 listeners showed up. The event was tied in with a local food drive... The CBC program *Land and Sea* is up and running again, thanks in part to loyal fans who were determined the show not die. The new unit includes **Joan MacKinnon** as senior producer, **Peter Verner** as field producer and **Chris Gallagher** as research assistant. **Gerry Whelan** joins the show on a four-month leave of absence from CBC Radio; **Neil Stairs** handles New Brunswick stories and **Sara Fraser** those from P.E.I....

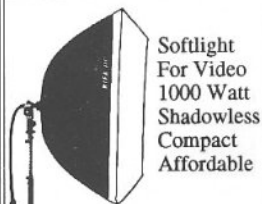
MITV is hiring new staff. A recent addition is **John O'Brien**, who is assistant news editor at the Burnside, N.S., station. He brings years of experience as press secretary to former Premier John Buchanan... **Al Hollingsworth** can now be seen on MITV's *Point/Counterpoint* with **Alex J. Walling**... *In Search of Evelyn Garbary*, a 53-minute documentary, has been approved for broadcast on MITV later this season. It was produced and directed by **David Sheehan** of Acadia University. The production features **Bill Carr**, a former student of Garbary's. Sheehan also worked on CBC's *The Sweetest Spring*, which was shot in Holland in 1990.

Friends and family of **Bonnie Purdy** gathered at her funeral in Toronto recently to pay their respects. Purdy worked at CJCH-TV Halifax and was an editor at the *Dartmouth Free Press*. She went on to stints with *The Globe and Mail* and several Maclean Hunter affiliates. She leaves behind husband Allan Purdy... Atlantic regional filmmakers now are featured on Vision TV's *Curious Eye* series, among them short films and documentaries by directors **Glenn Walton**, **Mark Simkins** and **Fred Hollingshurst**. Series host **Dodi Robb's** career included working as director of the CBC's Maritime region... Halifax *Daily News* columnist **Arnie Patterson** is passing out praise again, this time awarding one of the spots on his Ten Best Dressed list to **Tony Beech**, the popular host of Sun-FM's weekend *Tony Beech Show*. Last year Maritime Broadcasting's **Merv Russel** won the top spot, proving Arnie still likes the look of radio folk.

Sandra Porteous welcomes your news for Atlantic Airwaves. Write to her at 15 Lyons Ave., Halifax, N.S., B3P 1H6, or phone (902) 479-3158.

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Circle Reader Service #235

Canada's First Digital Optimod Installed In Winnipeg

by N. Paul East and Don Trueman

On October 21, 1991, CKXL — the first Francophone community FM radio station serving Winnipeg and southeastern Manitoba — signed on the air. It signed on using the first digital Optimod in Canada.

La Radio Communautaire du Manitoba was issued a licence for 91.1 Mhz. As Winnipeg has an active channel 6 television station (CBC-TV), the CKXL transmitter was necessarily co-located with the TV transmitter in Starbuck, Man. CBC-FM (98.3 Mhz) is also at this site, so CKXL uses a Kathrein Combiner to share the CBC-FM panel antenna. Licensed power is 58 kW ERP at about 200 meters AGL; coverage is excellent.

CKXL Winnipeg, a non-profit organization, had a limited capital start-up budget so equipment was specified accordingly. All design decisions were tempered with the knowledge that after sign-on all equipment budgets are at least 60 dB down. It was felt that an advanced approach to the on-air systems design was necessary for this community station to keep pace with larger private stations.

Within this framework CKXL's technical director and Sound Broadcasting managed to design two complete digital studios (on-air and production) with the new digital Orban 8200 Optimod as the centrepiece. There are an increasing number of digital processors now available, some of which were also considered; for example, the Lazer/Prizm product from Gentner and the DigiMod hybrid analog/digital processor (which is designed to be installed in the frame of an Orban 8100) from California Digital Audio Systems.

Most music at CKXL is on CD, with rural community contributors supplying programming on DAT and cassette. A digital computer storage system is used for producing and airing all spots and promos.

From the studios the air signal is sent down conditioned phone lines to a 155m condominium building in the region. In the elevator room on

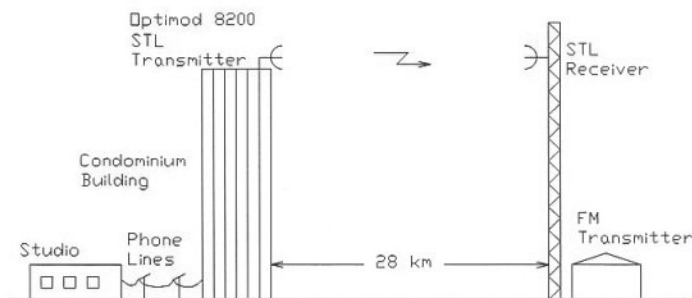


Figure 1: The signal chain for CKXL-FM Winnipeg.

the roof of this building is the digital Optimod and the 950 Mhz STL transmitter, which makes the 28 km hop to the Starbuck transmitter site (see Figure 1).

Orban recommends positioning the Optimod at the transmitter site and connecting it to the baseband input of the exciter through a short length of co-axial cable. This is the optimum technique to prevent destroying the carefully-controlled waveform peaks. However, we installed the Optimod at the STL head-end and fed a composite signal straight through to the FM exciter baseband input. We felt that a carefully set-up composite STL, with a constant frequency response and group delay, would not noticeably deteriorate the signal yet would save the cost of the stereo encoder/decoder units for the STL.

The digital Optimod comes in two

different models, both of which provide the basic functions of an audio processor (ie: correct operator level errors, program equalization and over-modulation limiting). The 8200/U2S is the base model with a two-band processing structure; the more costly 8200/U3S has a multi-band processing structure. Orban literature suggests the two-band processor be used for easy listening and adult contemporary stations.

The multi-band 8200/U3S was installed at CKXL and is the processor discussed here. (Note: At this time the digital Optimod arrives with version 0.90E of the control software. All important functions are implemented in this beta release, however some functions such as besel null tone and noise reduction will not be included until version 1.00 of the software. We have been assured by Orban that all users will receive free

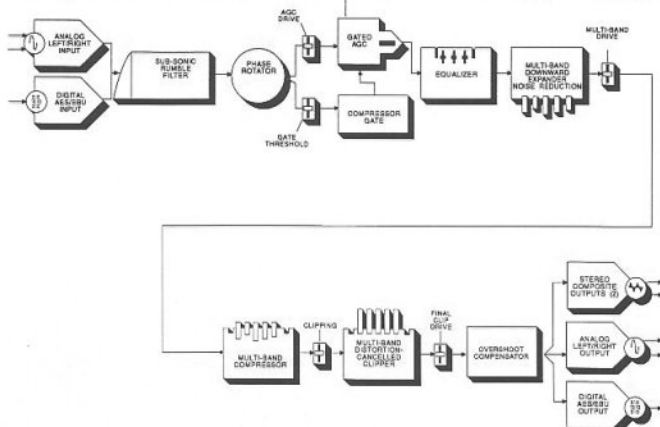


Figure 2: Simplified block diagram of the Multi-band structure.

(courtesy Orban manual)

software updates.)

The digital Optimod uses three Motorola 56001 digital signal processing (DSP) chips to perform all equalization, compression, gating and limiting of the signal. The DSP56001 is an extremely powerful computer optimized for real time analysis and processing of audio frequency waveforms. By performing the processing in the digital domain Orban realizes significant improvements in signal-to-noise ratio, harmonic distortion and flexibility.

The 8200 is shipped with 14 factory preset formats — Orban spent many years working with acoustic experts designing these suggested processor settings. The options range from contemporary hit radio through country, jazz, oldies, MOR and talk. Selecting one of the pre-programmed processing structures, then modifying it to the station's particular needs, allows effective tailoring of the on-air sound.

The Optimod gives the user control over every stage of the processing structure. A simplified block diagram

(extracted from the manual) of the multi-band structure is presented in Figure 2.

After the sub-sonic filter is the phase rotator, which reduces the natural asymmetry of voice programming in order to maximize loudness.

Next in the signal path is the automatic gain control (AGC), equalizer and multi-band compressor. Combining the AGC speed setting with the amount of multi-band compression will produce any desired sound. For example, a light or slow AGC setting with moderate compression will produce a very natural re-equalized sound. Using a moderate AGC level combined with heavier compression and a faster multi-band release time will create a very dense and loud sound. The sound the station wants will be found by balancing these two settings.

The multi-band equalizer allows adjustment of the bass, presence and high bands.

The signal finally moves through the multi-band clipper and the final output clipper. The multi-band clipper setting must be balanced with the multi-band compressor release time in order to prevent excessive distortion while maintaining loudness. The extremely sensitive final clipper drive can also be used for final adjustments in the distortion/loudness trade-off.

Effectively Shapes Sound

Sound Broadcasting has worked with many different audio processors, ranging from AM mono and stereo through to the last generation of analog FM processing; none have provided the ability to shape and design an on-air sound as effectively as the Optimod 8200. Consequently,

it is also possible to over-process and destroy the sound of a station. The large number of options in setting multi-band drive and release times, combined with the ability to set the input levels for the multi-band clipper and the final output clipper, mean a cautious and experienced ear must be used. Many hours need to be spent listening to the variety of programming the station airs in order to be ensure the optimum setup of the 8200.

CKXL does not easily fit into any one of the pre-programmed options, so we used the contemporary hit radio selection as a starting point. Setting the multi-band release time to medium-fast provided a "high-energy" sound without the listener-fatiguing effects of extremely high density. The equalizer was used to boost the bass band to compensate for the telephone lines into the Optimod. The resulting sound of CKXL is clear and open while easily achieving the loudness required to be competitive in the Winnipeg market.

The Optimod 8200 offers some features new to the commercial radio processing market, such as remote control of all functions using an IBM PC compatible computer. This feature, as well as the internal clock, allows the 8200 to change processing structures at certain times to accommodate out-of-format programming such as a live concert or sporting event.

Another advance is the inclusion of digital (AES/EBU data standard) input and output ports. These stereo data streams mean that the 8200 will be capable of communicating with digital studios and STLs using the same data protocol.

While digital audio broadcasting (DAB) is still five years (or more) away, it may soon be possible to digitally link the studios directly into the IPA of your transmitter by using the digital output of the Optimod, a data compressor/modulator unit for the STL system and a digital exciter. The key is having all three major devices (processor, STL and exciter) use the same communications protocol. Moseley and Harris, among others, are reported committed to the AES/EBU digital data standard.

Implementing a digital link from the studio door to the inside of the exciter would yield an appreciable improvement in transparency and noise floor of the signal. With some work the first steps towards digital radio may not be as far away as some think.

The authors are with Sound Broadcasting Ltd. in Winnipeg, MB. Don Trueman is director of engineering and N. Paul East is operations manager.

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