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Radio News and Stories from Canada's Arctic Region

Radio on film in Fort McPherson

by Daron Letts
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TETLIT'ZHEH/FORT MCPHERSON - Social messaging media like Facebook and Twitter keep a lot of Northerners in touch with family and friends. In Fort MacPherson, an old fashioned form of technology brings residents together in much the same way.

Inuvik-born filmmaker Dennis Allen focused his lens on the community's popular CBQM radio station.

He wrote and directed a one-hour National Film Board (NFB) documentary that explores radio's role in listeners' lives.

"It's about how the radio station acts as a moccasin telegraph 2009 and how the community utilizes that radio station to communicate with one another," Allen said. "It's a form of instant communication like Yahoo Messenger. The radio station weaves everything together because it's communicating people's thoughts and their ideas and their wishes and their actions to one another. It's a thread that runs through all their lives."

Allen and a three-person NFB film crew visited the community four times between December, 2007, and July, 2008. They observed the daily drama at the station over the eight-month period. The unconventional documentary does not include staged interviews, just footage of people engaged in the station's real-life operations.

"It's a slice of life film," Allen said. "We followed our characters at the station, at home, on the land and at work."

Familiar faces in the film include popular on-air personalities such as RCMP officer and part-time radio host Peter Froyland and Rev. Sue Oliver, who hosted Heaven Help Me, a regular program through which she shared bible stories and other wisdom before moving to Edmonton last October.

Storytelling is a big part of the station's programming. Neil Colin, known as the Mouth of the Peel because he has a cabin at the mouth of the Peel river and loves to talk, is an elder and master storyteller who uses the radio as his stage.

Old-time country music and fiddle tunes play every day by request. Not surprisingly, there is lots of music in Allen's film.

"It's a type of music you don't hear anymore anywhere else on the radio," Allen said. "You're not going to hear Britney Spears or Brad Paisley or any of those top 40 artists. The music is raw and emotional. The more raw and emotional it is, the more pleasure listeners get out of it."

The TI'oondig Healing Society, the hamlet office and various government departments use the airwaves to keep residents informed. Bingo fundraisers air three times a week in support of various community events and groups. Bertha Francis, Emma Roberts and lots of other dedicated listeners often contribute local news items, as well.

Robert Alexie shares news in Gwich'in and English from time to time. The band council gives updates on Monday mornings. On Tuesday mornings Winnie Greenland reads news from the Wellness Centre followed by information from the RCMP. School announcements are on Wednesdays and the Healing Society has a show on Thursdays. The Wellness Centre's show runs on Fridays and on Saturday

mornings Annie Koe and Brenda Peterson take dedications and music requests. Gospel and hymns air on Sundays.

"I go on once in a while to entertain and share information," said Mary Teya.

Teya used to host a Thursday evening call-in show and a weekly wellness program for the Health Centre before she retired in 1996. Now she fills in occasionally on long weekends or when someone can't make a shift. She filled in for Louisa Kay last Wednesday.

During the station's annual November anniversary show, Teya, Joanne Snowshoe and Hannah Alexie tell humorous stories and take calls from listeners wishing the station a happy birthday.

"CBQM is a very special place," Teya said. "It's all done voluntarily. Nobody gets paid. I really would like to encourage people, especially young people, to continue to keep CBQM going, because when CBQM is not on it's really quiet. I really feel that people should get on board and carry it on. It really keeps people happy. That's what CBQM is all about."

Volunteers with the CBQM Radio Society have run the station since it first launched in 1981. The broadcast reaches beyond Caribou River and Tsiigehtchic on a clear day.

"People out on the land look forward to listening to CBQM," said society board member Hazel Nerysoo. "It's good for all the people in the bush, especially in the spring during breakup. The community really relies on the station. It's the way they get their messages out and it's the way they know what's going on. If there's a death or a tragic event in the community we'll get a radio program together to raise money for the family."

Nerysoo said the community looks forward to seeing the finished documentary.

"It's one way of putting a spotlight on our community," she said.

The documentary is complete, however Allen is in the final stage of licensing the music featured in the

film. He expects to debut the film in Fort McPherson in June or July.

The documentary will tour the Canadian film festival circuit this fall, with screenings in Vancouver, Edmonton and Halifax.

Operation Nunaliut comes to a close

Kassina Ryder

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EUREKA - Operation Nunaliut patrollers returned to the Fort Eureka military base on April 17 after nearly three weeks of patrolling Ellesmere Island and Axel Heiberg Island.

Patrols of Rangers and military personnel left from Fort Eureka beginning on April 4 and travelled along the eastern coast of Ellesmere Island and circumnavigated Axel Heiberg Island to gain knowledge and test equipment for future operations in the High Arctic.

This year's operation included a number of firsts, including using radar imaging to determine ice conditions and including search and rescue technicians with the patrols.

"They came up here as an exchange to be part of the patrols," said Maj. Luc Chang, commanding officer for the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group. "It was also a good way for us to increase the safety levels of those patrols by adding an expert in terms of medical and first aid."

During the operation, a Ranger had to be evacuated and sent to hospital in Ottawa following an accident with his snowmobile.

"We had one air medevac, an accident (with) one of the Rangers with his snowmobile," Chang said. "He was air medevaced, taken care of properly, everything went extremely well with the medevac plan that we had put in place."

Another first was to test a GPS system to track the
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met over the years and I miss you all.

Ivan LeMesurier

Happy anniversary, cfyk, from Ivan LeMesurier, first announcer on cfyk dec 14 1958. see its as cold as it was that day. Im still on their after cbc retirement in 92. on cjnu now early mornings again, im listening now to your stream, makes me homesick. fond memories and good friends, mind you we had about 500 listners .all the best Ivan aka, Lee Major.

Dorothy Amos (Allen), Inuvik,NT

I was about 6or7 I remember going to CBC with my Uncle Daniel Rogers and watching him work through a booth and can hear him in the hallway and wonder how he did that, and was always my dream to be like him. (RIP Uncle) Happy Anniversary CBC Dorothy

Patrick Monaghan, Vancouver

At the age of 15, CBC/CFYK took the time to nurture and well as mentor students interested in broadcasting including me.

Before me was the wonderful story and beginning of a career in broadcasting of Dustin (Dusty) Hornby. When the Hornby family moved south, I took over for the 4pm block, the first 20 minutes was for children, followed by "Teen Beat".

At 17 I was hired part-time while I continued through school. My best times were when "Teen Beat" ran for the 55 minutes from 16:05 to 17:00. I also took over the Friday and Saturday night shows for many years with breaks for broadcasting school in Calgary. I also worked Arctic Winter Games in Yellowknife and Whitehorse as a T/A. Hosted things like the Canada Day CBC Street Dances, etc. My last time working full-time for CBC North ended in 1980.

Such a flood of memories. A couple of years back I sent along pics of me working a Saturday night, playing requests, spinning tunes from the top 100. It was a wonderful experience. I'm not sure how to get at least one of those pics posted for the celebration? Hope everyone that has passed through the doors of CFYK over the decades, and the other stations "along the network" and now into television production are doing well, full of love, life and hope, and of course like myself, proud of our contribution to entertainment, information, news and public affairs broadcasting in the North!

Wyatt Tremblay, Whitehorse

One of my fondest memories of growing up in Haines Junction in the 70s, is of Barbara Frum and As it Happens explaining the mysteries of the Outside world while my sisters and I did the evening dishes.

CBC North was and still is an integral part of my day. I often conjure up political cartoon ideas while listening to the news and topical discussions on the various local and national shows. Congratulations on making it this far. May there be fifty more years.

Ted Wood

Happy 50th CBC North. I retired from the CBC after 33 1/3 years, like the old lps we spun at one time. I said at that time that I was very fortunate to have been a part of the growth of CBC North (then the Northern Service). To this day I continually meet friends, new and old, who have had that 'joy of the north' and proud to talk about it. Names like Dusty Hornby who was the child announcer on the PM Children's Show, Wally Firth, Joe Tobie, Val Wake and so on. I was very fortunate to have worked with them at CFYK. All of us were there to welcome television to the YK area, talk about shortwave days while we enjoyed the new technology available to us. And, in WH, I fondly remember Wee Willie, Cal, Terry, Kevin and so many others. Our son Clayton was born in Yellowknife, daughter Tanya welcomed in Whitehorse. Our niece Cathy, now living in Dawson City, welcomed me back to the north recently, to Whitehorse and Dawson City and what a time that was. In recent times I had hosted a 50 Plus program on campus radio in Saint John. I always drew attention to my time with the CBC, and especially the North. Again, Happy 50th.....may our links continue for a long time to come. Please forgive me if I can't name all the great friends we met while in the north, you're not forgotten

Val Wake, Port Macquarie, NSW, Australia

I learnt more about broadcasting in my four years at CFYK, 1969 to 1973 than I have anywhere else. I've even written a book about it. Congratulations to all concerned The North is always near to my heart. Right at the moment is 35c here. I would like to salute White Frazer who might not be the flavour of the month in some quarters but he showed a remarkable energy and dedication to duty when he worked for me in Yellowknife. We had some good times and some bad times together Whit and I. I will never forget when

Nabet decided to organise a picket line outside the station in the middle of winter. Whit, bless his cotton socks, was reporting from Fort Simpson. It was left to be me alone to decide if I should cross the picket line. I did but once I had written the bulletin I left it where it was. I doubt if it ever got to air. There was no strike fund for Canadian Wire Services people in the north. Whatever happened to Peter Radcliffe? Harold Brown, Gordon Fredericks et al. It seems like it was yesterday. There are few typos in the book for which I apologise. It's dedicated to Nellie.

All the best in 2009

Val Wake

It was nice of Ted Wood to mention me in his salute to CFYK on its 50th anniversary. I remember CFYK well, so well that I wrote a book about it. I was the CBC News editor based in Yellowknife from 1969 to 1973. I was the first such appointment in the north. The previous CBC News appointments were summer relief people. Prior to my arrival news gathering was done mostly by the announcers. People like Brian North and Steve Hook. Brian did a lot of work covering the Commissioner's tours. When I moved to Yellowknife it was my responsibility. When Whit Fraser joined me from Frobisher Bay we got a bit ambitious and produced a half hour week day news show called The Territories Today. We built a real rod for our backs with this one. There were times when we had difficulty filling it. But somehow we always did. I introduced a current affairs series titled Directions which ran for a couple of years and got a few awards. I remember my time in the north with great fondness. It taught me a lot. Some of it I have tried to recall in my novel White Bird Black Bird which is not about me but an entirely fictitious character who might at time sound like me. None of the characters are based on real people, least of all the Commissioner, but readers will be able to recognise a lot about the story.

All the best with your anniversary. Keep up the good work.

Graham Cock

From December 1974-June 1984 I worked at the Inuvik General Hospital. Thanks to CBC manager Joe Novak, I was offered a unique opportunity to work free-lance and present over 25 radio music-documentary programs on Oldies Rock 'N' Roll music broadcast on CHAK from 1979-1983. I wrote the radio

scripts, supplied the music, announced, and helped co-produce the programs. I shared some of my programs with staff announcers: Dave Kellett, Craig Mackie, Dave Allman, Willie Gordon, and Les Carpenter. I have all of the broadcast reel-to-reel tapes dubbed onto my cassette tapes, and they are now all preserved on music CDs. I enjoyed my brief stint working with the staff. Thanks for the long-lasting memories I still have today whenever I listen to one of my programs. Thank-you to CBC for allowing me my dream of a lifetime. Cheers for another 50 Years!!

Hector Williams, Vancouver

I began work for the Northern Service as a 16 year old volunteer in 1961 at CHFC Fort Churchill and was hired as a summer replacement in 1963 and 1964 as well as filling in occasionally in December when I was home from university. It was a great job that was always full of interest and for the time very well paid--the munificent sum of \$2.50 an hour. Our station is no more, alas, but its most distinguished alumnus, Peter Mansbridge, will keep its memory green for many years to come.

William Hepburn

We watched CBC North in the 1980's on the world's most northern TV station at the time, Channel 9 Eureka, NWT (now Nunavut), a weather station, broadcasting with 1 watt of power! It was our only TV station and lifeline to the south. We often fed audio of CBC's The National through the telephone to feed an FM station at CFS Alert which had no live TV.

Glenna Kells

Congratulations CBC! I was in Inuvik in late 70's and fondly remember the weekly broadcast of Uncle Tony's General Store - presented by Dennis Cichelly - former Post Master, Coroner, Judge and, along with CBC station manager Joe Novak - coach of the Lioness Baseball team! "Uncle Tony" brought us bluegrass, fiddle music, country music and whatever else was laying around the studio. I grew up in the Ottawa Valley where Mac Beattie was king - "Uncle Tony" made home seem not so far away.... Thank you Joe & CBC for providing that opportunity.

Barry Kelsey

Yipes! Fifty years ago this summer I got my first real radio job at CFGB Goose Bay. Pass the Geritol. I worked there and up and down the coast of Labrador

(as well as starting CFFB Frobisher Bay in 1961) until 1963. Later I spent two years at CFYK Yellowknife at the time it became capital of the NWT. A total of about six northern years in my 13 year CBC career.

See the old CBC Northern Service Newsletter NORTHWORDS Volume four, Number two, March/April 1981, p. 13, for a picture of this writer with Announcer/Operators Shirley Lesage and Vi Wilson outside CFFB's studio in 1961. And I'm here if anyone wants to talk about some of the Northern Service's beginnings, before my brains turn to stone.

An old northern friend, Peter Jull, (Resolute Bay, Yellowknife) who now lives in Australia and who keeps up better than I do, asked on-line today if I'm part of the CBC Northern Service's 50th. I hadn't even thought of it let alone heard about it. So if anyone wants to get in touch, I'll be happy to talk.

At Goose Bay, Labrador in July 1959, Sheldon O'Connell hired me, a slightly experienced 19 year old, to be an announcer-operator. I was there until 1963 when CBC Ottawa called. The studio was at the back of the liquor warehouse on the RCAF Base. News from outside was rebroadcast from shortwave. Network programs were on a two week tape delay. We did sock hops, news, variety shows and even a bit of programming in the local First Nations languages (Montagnais and Inuktitut).

Someone got us the first Nagra portable tape recorder the CBC ever had and I got to travel the Labrador coast with it, recording great stuff that's probably all gone. Anyone else remember the visit of Helge Ingstaad and his family, by schooner, in 1960 on their search for Vinland (Norse archaeological sites)? CBC Northern Service covered it.

And Frobisher in 1961? Inuit people were moving into town off the land, setting up in nearby Ikaluit, so we started the station the very first day with one-third of our schedule in their language. And the pattern continued....

And Yellowknife!!! Years before 'Late Nights On Air', in 1966/67 CFYK its network and the local newspaper, News of the North, campaigned to have the federal government name Yellowknife the NWT Capital as part of Canada's Centennial celebrations. It had been Ottawa for years. And we won! Hell of a story. Etc., etc., etc.

Ah, those were the days, fondly remembered.

Marvin Peterson

As a DOT Radio Operator in Inuvik in 1973/74 it

was our responsibility when on the graveyard shift at Inuvik Aeradio to do the weather forecast on tape for CHAK for rebroadcast after the 6 AM news. This usually worked except when the radio personality of the morning slept in and then would phone up with a groggy voice at 6:15 and say "Could you do the forecast live this morning"? Of course by this time every pilot in the country wanted you on the phone to take his flight plan or was standing at the counter and the Edmonton Weather Office was waiting for their stuff!

Our other CBC related task was to monitor Radio Canada International broadcasts on shortwave for various things and record the info.

The CBC was a big part of our lives in the time we lived in Inuvik and hopefully will be for a long time!

BROADCASTS IN ENGLISH A09 / BDXC WEB SITE UPDATES

The A09 (Summer 2009) edition of Broadcasts in English has just been published by the British DX Club. Copies were despatched yesterday to club members and everyone else who ordered it in advance. As usual this 32-page booklet lists all the various external and domestic broadcasts in English which can be heard on shortwave in a handy hour-by-hour format, along with frequencies and transmitter site details. It also includes a guide to external services in English which are available on the internet.

See <http://www.bdx.org.uk> - Home Page for ordering details.

The various frequency guides which are maintained by Tony Rogers on the BDXC web site have also now been updated for May 2009:

- *Africa on Shortwave
- *Middle & Near East on Shortwave
- *South Asia on the Tropical Bands
- *UK on Shortwave
(BDXC-UK, dxldyg via DXLD)