

News Department Report – January 2008

The News Department was very active in the Fall semester. We conducted roughly 60 interviews with people locally, nationally and internationally. These were then re-aired during the Mid-day Reports to ensure maximum exposure. Craig has connected the phone in the studio to the production room console, making it easier for us to pre-record interviews by phone, which has been especially useful for interviewees who call us long-distance. The majority of these interviews were recorded for a program on Wednesday afternoon, and for the Wednesday morning show, which was broadcast live from the University Centre Food Court. The morning show host has since found full-time employment and has had to give up this program, so I'm in the process of trying to find someone else to host the show.

The Mid-day report has expanded to a one-hour format, from 45 minutes. Again, this has allowed us to fit more local content into the program, and ensures that the work of the volunteers gets maximum exposure, as does the cause of the interviewee.

In October, the method by which we get news from the Canadian Press changed. Our feed used to come from "The Telegram" which relocated to the Village Mall. The Canadian Press gave us access to their website, and MUNSU gave us one of their computers to access it. The change-over to the new method has been fairly smooth, and it actually allows us to save paper due to the fact that announcers can pick and choose which stories they want to read. This is especially notable with the weather. We used to have to print off the weather for the entire island just to get the forecast for St. John's.

Our coverage of the Memorial University Seahawks has gone extremely well. Soccer games at King George V field presented some interesting situations that we had to work around. My original idea of using a tarp to protect announcers from the elements was a remarkable failure, as wind prevented us from even being able to set it up in a trial run. As a result, we decided to use a car, parked on the edge of the field, as a broadcast booth. Cables had to run from the office to give us access to the phone lines, and a long extension cord ran from the electrical room to provide power. The people working at the field were also less than co-operative. The broadcasts, however sounded very good, and I'm sure as the announcers gain experience, the games will only sound better. We started basketball coverage in November, which was much easier in that we didn't have to worry about protection from the elements, and the people at the Works are very supportive. We are broadcasting wirelessly from the Field House through my laptop, and so far it has sounded fantastic. There is much more action in basketball, so the announcers did a much better job with their coverage.

There has been a certain degree of discontent among volunteers whose programs are being pre-empted by Seahawks games. I have done what I can in order to avoid this – the schedule was posted in late August and again in December so that people scheduling their programs could avoid these slots if they didn't want to be pre-empted. Five different

volunteers have had their programs affected by Seahawks broadcasts. The most inconvenienced of these had half of their show pre-empted twice in November, and will lose half of one show in each of January and February. Asking a volunteer to give up a total of two hours each semester for these broadcasts does not seem unreasonable to me. I feel that broadcasting these games is a valuable service to the university community, and an excellent opportunity to promote CHMR.

Now that we can broadcast through the MUN network from anywhere there is wireless internet access, I hope that we can do more remote broadcasts on campus to promote CHMR to students. For the most part we have been restricted to broadcasting anywhere there is ready access to a phone line. This has been useful for broadcasting MUNSU Board Meetings, special events in the Breezeway (such as the wrestling match between James Farrell and Dr. Lily Walker), and the morning show, but now we can go pretty much anywhere on campus. For example, we produced a live broadcast of Winter Orientation from the third floor of the University Centre.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Earle
News Director