

The Final Moments of CBL on 740.

By Scott Fybush

In June, 62 years of radio history came to a close in a small white building at the end of a dead-end road in the tiny hamlet of Homby, Ontario. The Canadian Broadcasting Corp. has been converting many of its AM operations to FM, and this spring marked the end of the line for Toronto flagship CBL on 740. As an inveterate CBC listener and radio junkie, I had to make the trip from Rochester to Toronto for the occasion. I arrived on Friday afternoon, June 18, the last day of regular programming on the 740 frequency. It had been 14 months since I had traveled to Toronto for the inauguration of CBL's replacement, CBLA on 99.1 FM.

The Historic Plant

When the FM signed on, the occasion was marked by a huge open house at the CBC Broadcast Center in downtown Toronto, complete with fireworks, live broadcasts, studio tours, even souvenir shirts. This time around, it was just me, a friend and the engineers—a lot of engineers, as it happened. When we pulled up at the building on Eighth Line Road, more than a half-dozen engineers were working on one of CBL's two identical Continental 317 transmitters, trying to fix a problem that was keeping that unit off the air. The good news was that retired engineer Rod Hulman had time to show us around the facility.

The Homby plant was built in 1937, when CBL (then at 840 kHz) became the CBC's Toronto flagship station. The 650-foot vertical tower at the site was, for some years, the tallest structure in Canada, and the transmitter site itself became a tourist attraction in the years leading up to World War II.

As a result, the building was designed to accommodate visitors, who watched the transmitter operators from a viewing platform just inside the door to the transmitter room. The Art Deco door and steel-railed platform are still there, but today's visitor sees a different transmitter room. The old console is gone, as are the Northern Electric transmitters that once walled in two sides of the room. Today, there are the two Continentals for CBL off to the left, two more identical transmitters for French-language CJBC (860) straight ahead, and in front several rows of glass block. When this site was new, Hulman tells us, the entire wall was glass. After taking some photos of the transmitter room, we head downstairs, past the generator room, towards the basement. That's where a Cold War-era fallout shelter holds a small studio, and where the last words to be uttered on CBL will be heard in just over a day's time.

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Contributions of information for future issues is always welcomed. We can be contacted by E mailing us at nydxa@hotmail.com

Moving On

Right now, though, we're headed back outside and out to the tower. The current tower, Hilman tells us, was put up just a decade ago to replace the 1937 stick. The new tower is just 18 inches on each side, about half the size of the old one (the base of which still sits on the lawn outside the transmitter building)

At its base sit not one, but three, tuning buildings: the original, a later version that proved unsatisfactory, and the current one, where the CBL and CJBC signals are combined and sent out to the antenna—at least for the moment.

Our tour completed, we drive away from Homby listening to the CBL signal, complete with frequent interruptions reminding us that CBC Radio One will move to



99.1 FM for good in just a few hours. Later that night, we visit some fellow aircheck

collectors in nearby Georgetown. then head back to Horn by around 11:30 to hear what will happen at midnight. Midnight comes and goes with no change to the CBL signal. But a few minutes later, when the CBC hourly news ends and the FM side returns to the second hour of "That Time of the Night", CBL slips into a non-stop loop advising listeners where to tune on the FM dial to find the Radio One signal.

Saddened, we pull out of the transmitter driveway, out to Trafalgar Road, and over to Tim Horton's for donuts.

The Final Minutes

The next day, as the loop plays on, we distract ourselves by heading into downtown Toronto and taking in a Blue Jays game. From our seats in the top deck of SkyDome, we note that in addition to being able to hear the Jays game on four stations (CKCL 570, CJRN 710, CHAM 820 and CHLM 1050), we can't hear the CBLA FM signal very well. That's because we're looking right up at all the other FM's on the CN tower, while CBLA's directional signal emanates from First Canadian Place a few blocks away. CBL still comes in just fine, albeit with nothing but that loop playing on and on. After dinner, it's back out to Hornby, this time to find a transmitter site full of people. The CBC has invited all its current and former transmitter engineers to be at Hornby for the occasion, and 10 of them are there. The middle of the transmitter room now sports a table filled with food and drink. The time is almost at hand. As the 1937 clock ticks off a half-hour remaining, engineer Tom Holden and Philip Savage, of the CRC communications department, head downstairs to the studio. Meantime, we remain upstairs, telling various CBC engineers just why it is that we can't hear 99.1 in Rochester ("You see, we have this 50 kilowatt local FM on 98.9").

With just a few minutes left, we go down to the studio where Sava sits waiting for the end. The loop nears its end, plays again, and finally Holden pots up the mic and Savage begins reading:

"This is CRC Radio One, broadcasting from the Hornby transmitter at 740 AM. In the Toronto area, we now move to 99.1 FM, with additional frequencies throughout Southern Ontario. This transmitter has served the community well since 1937, and at 740AM since 1941. This is the end of an era in Canadian broadcasting history. Signing off now from CBL. adieu."

In the meantime, we've sprinted back upstairs, where Savage's announcement is playing over the loudspeaker in the transmitter room. As he reads the final "adieu," engineer Art Slade has his hand poised on the "high voltage" button on transmitter 2. Slade is the veteran of the group, having worked at Hornby from 1956 until 1990. Around him, the engineers click their cameras as he reaches for the button, presses it, and 740 goes silent.

Silence on 740

Once Savage and Holden have returned from the basement, the toasts begin, to the new 99.1 and the departed 740. The group of engineers poses for photos in front of the equipment rack. The list of those attending is compiled, photocopied and distributed with copies of the script for the final announcement. As we prepare to leave, we see transmitter engineer Roberto Vissani making the final entries into the cbl transmitter log, and this, too is dutifully photocopied and passed around to all in attendance. We dub a copy of the final moments (we were rolling tape in the car, the only ones at the site to do so, it seems) and are presented with two parting gifts: a tube from the site's junk bin and the CD from which that loop was playing all day.

It's a long drive back home to Rochester, made all the more strange by the silence on 740. There's DX there, strange stations from North Carolina and Texas and Florida (and who knows, Cambridge?) that were usually buried under CBL - but I'm not ready to tackle it yet, for some reason.

We reach the border crossing just after 2 in the morning, to find a surly customs agent who barely bats an eyelid at our explanation of the trip. Perhaps he's listening to the Sabres lose the Stanley Cup just minutes before, or maybe he's always that way. In any event we're waved through for the final 90 minutes of our trip.

Somewhere around Batavia the last remnants of the 99.1 signal are lost below the hash from WBBF on Rochester on 98.9. When the sun rises in Rochester the next morning, there'll be no listenable CBC signal for the first time in 62 years.

"The end of an era" in Canadian broadcasting? Absolutely. But it's also the end of an era in upstate NY radio listening. No longer a local, the CBC is now a DX signal here, caught on the skywave from Windsor or Moncton at night, or on FM from Kingston when the tropics are up, or on Real Audio with all those other distant, exotic outposts of civilized radio - but never again to be a local preset at the start of the AM dial. Adieu, indeed.

Scott Fybush is a reporter for the "R News" cable channel in Rochester, NY. Once the skywave kicks up at night he's the editor and publisher of North East RadioWatch," which can be found on line at <http://www.bostonradio.org> Scott was also a contributor to "Spectrum", the weekly radio program aired on WWCR, originally produced by Dave Marthouse, N2AAM.

LISTEN TO THE LAST MOMENTS of CBL!
<http://www.bostonradio.org/radio/whatsnew.html>
 If you have Real Audio, I suggest you take a moment a visit this URL. Click on the link for "lower bandwidth audio" and relive a piece of radio history. To some readers they may not feel the impact of the loss of CBL. To the medium wave DX'er this was the loss of a piece of history, for many the loss of one of their first DX stations!

TRUNK TRACKERS - USING "SIZE CODE" S1 TO IGNORE STATUS BITS

I saw some postings about using "S6" for this, but I think this is a better way.

If you take the decimal (Type II) Trunk Tracker ID and convert to binary, there are sixteen bits. The last (least significant) four bits are unnecessarily used by the Trunk Tracker in differentiating talk groups, to the great consternation of most of us. Old news, but here's how to bypass them properly:

(I apologize if this gets too deep)

We want to break up (parse) the sixteen bits in a different manner so that TT will ignore the last four. Look at a Type I system: it has Block, Fleet, Subfleet, and Unit ID. The TT only scans by Block, Fleet and Subfleet -- the Unit ID is ignored. So we want to set up a system where the last four bits are defined as Unit ID. Four bits is sixteen IDs, which is a "Size S-1" in Uniden terms.

In the S-1 parsing, the first three bits are the Block, the next seven are the Fleet, the next two the Subfleet, and the last four are Unit ID. The "Fleets" and "Subfleets" will have no bearing on the actual using agencies, like they would on a real Type I system, they're just arbitrary numbers that we can use in programming.

Note that Uniden claims S-1 has 128 Fleets, but their operating guide only shows two digits for displaying the Fleet. The radio actually displays and uses three-digit Fleets just fine, from 000-0 up to 7127-3.

The following pseudo-code can be used to convert from decimal (Type II) IDs to S-1 values. The vertical bar character (|) indicates concatenation. The "if then else" construction is used to insert a leading zero for Fleet values below ten, to match the TT display. if (int(mod([TalkGrpID],8192)/64)>9) then

```
str(int([TalkGrpID]/8192)) |
str(int(mod([TalkGrpID],8192)/64))
```

```
|"-"|str(int( mod( ([TalkGrpID]/16), 4)))
```

else

```
str(int([TalkGrpID]/8192))|"0"|
str(int(mod([TalkGrpID],8192)/64))
```

"-|str(int(mod(([TalkGrpID]/16), 4)))

There is, of course, a catch: you have to reprogram the scanner. For whatever reason, when you load a Type I identifier into the 235, it stores it with the "ignored" bits set to "1111". In other words, you could load all 16 variations of your talk group into memory in "E2" mode, but only one of those would work when you changed to "E1/S1".

If you have the Type II value in memory, and change the setup from "E2" to "E1", you'll see the correct Type I ident, but it won't work. If you enter the same Type I ident in the next slot, then change the scanner back to "E2", the second channel will be 15 (decimal) higher than the original.

To work around this, you can either add 15 to all your Type II idents ahead of time, or just change to "E1", then go through every channel and re-enter the Type I value exactly as it appears. Good luck,

Flash

SCHWANINGER & ASSOCIATES

<http://www.sa-lawyers.net/index.html>

Welcome to our home page. Schwaninger & Associates is a law firm located in Washington, D.C. that represents persons and companies before the Federal Communications Commission. Our approach to practicing law is simple -- we try to help clients define and reach goals in a way that won't break the bank

WDW FREQUENCIES

<http://pages.prodigy.net/hounddog/disnywld.html>

Going to Walt Disney World, check out this page for up to date frequencies. More on this will follow as I'll be visiting in October.

THE BROADCAST BAND CORNER

NRC '99 - The 1999 NRC convention will be held at the Holiday Inn, Bridgeport WV on Sept 3-6, 1999. Reservations 1-304-842-5411, \$70.95 for two double bed room, no limit on how many in a room. Convention Registration - \$35. Host is William Swiger, One Casey Ln, Bridgeport WV 26330, 304-842-4635.

RADIO FEST 1999 - Celebrating 25 Years of Radio Fun The Ontario DX Association invites

radio enthusiasts of all interests and all levels to join us for Radio Fest 99. Following on the success of our first Radio Fest event in 1998, this will be one of the major radio listeners event of the year. Radio Fest 99 will also celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Ontario DX Association, Canada's largest radio listeners' club.

Dates: Friday, September 24 to Sunday, September 26 Location: Ramada Inn & Convention Centre, Oakville, Ontario (located at Queen Elizabeth Way and Trafalgar Road)

Theme: "Celebrating 25 Years of Radio Fun". Radio Fest 99 will reminisce about the origins of the Ontario DX Association, the DX hobby 25 years ago, and we'll also look to the future of DXing and broadcasting.

DS49 - FREQUENCY INVERSION VOICE DESCRAMBLER/SCRAMBLER

<http://hometown.aol.com/ctpds49/index.html>

The DS49 is a frequency inversion voice descrambler/scrambler and is guaranteed to descramble standard frequency inversion schemes used in new cordless telephones as well as some public service/industrial communication systems. It also descrambles variable split band frequency inversion schemes! The DS49 descrambles all standard schemes using 3300, 3500, and 3750 HZ plus speech inversion using non standard pilot tones! It is adjustable from 2.4 to 4.7 KHZ.

The DS49-CU1 is a stand alone self contained unit that plugs right into the extension speaker or earphone jack. It has a built in speaker and an AC adapter is provided.

For all models other than the DS49-CU1 and DS49-CU2, only four quick solder connections to any receiver are needed and a +12 VDC power source inside the radio is required. The DS49 circuit board measures approx 1.95" x 2.6" and fits easily into most mobile/base scanners!

DS49-CU1 stand alone self contained unit -- \$89.95

DS49-CU2 -- Self contained portable unit --- \$99.95

DS49 KIT -- \$39.95

DS49 KIT WITH EXTERNAL CONTROLS -- \$46.95

DS49 WIRED AND TESTED -- \$59.95

DS49 WIRED AND TESTED WITH EXTERNAL CONTROLS -- \$69.95

ACTIVE HURRICANE FREQUENCIES!

03357.0 FAX Pictures from NAM Norfolk (continuous)
03407.0 USB National Hurricane Center air-gnd "ALPHA"
04271.0 FAX Pictures from CFH Halifax (continuous)
04426.0 USB USCG wx NMN Portsmouth (0400 0530 1000)
04724.0 USB Hurricane hunter acft - GHFS
05211.0 USB SHARES - FEMA National Emergency Coordination Net (night pri)
05562.0 USB National Hurricane Center air-gnd "BRAVO"
05610.0 USB National Hurricane Center air-gnd "CHARLIE"
06496.4 FAX Pictures from CFH Halifax (continuous)
06501.0 USB USCG wx NMN Portsmouth (0400 0530 1000 1130 1600 2200 2330)
06673.0 USB National Hurricane Center air-gnd "DELTA"
06739.0 USB Hurricane hunter acft - GHFS guarded by MacDill & Ascension
07507.0 USB USN/USCG hurricane net (pri)
07508.5 USB FAA Caribbean hurricane net
08764.0 USB USCG wx NMN Portsmouth (0400 0530 1000 1130 1600 1730 2200 2300)
08876.0 USB National Hurricane Center air-gnd "ECHO"
08968.0 USB Hurricane hunter acft - GHFS
08992.0 USB Hurricane hunter acft - GHFS guarded by MacDill & Ascension
09380.0 USB USN/USCG hurricane net (sec)
10015.0 USB National Hurricane Center air-gnd "FOXTROT"
10493.0 USB SHARES - FEMA National Emergency Coordination Net (day pri)
10536.0 FAX Pictures from CFH Halifax (continuous)
10865.0 FAX Pictures from NAM Norfolk (continuous)
11175.0 USB Hurricane hunter acft - GHFS guarded by MacDill & Ascension
13089.0 USB USCG wx NMN Portsmouth (1130 1600 1730 2200 2330)
13200.0 USB Hurricane hunter acft - GHFS
13267.0 USB National Hurricane Center air-gnd "GOLF"
13510.0 USB Pictures from CFH Halifax (1000-2200)
15016.0 USB Hurricane hunter acft - GHFS guarded by MacDill & Ascension
17314.0 USB USCG wx from NMN Portsmouth (1730)
17901.0 USB National Hurricane Center air-gnd "HOTEL"
17976.0 USB Hurricane hunter acft - GHFS
21937.0 USB National Hurricane Center air-gnd "INDIA"

The **URBAN DX'ER** would like to welcome

Wally - KA2WCB

Dave Marshall

Todd Gillson - K2ATF

Stevie Cat - FDNY

NEW RS SCANNERS

<http://members.aol.com/TrunkRadio/>

Last issue we mentioned the three new Trunking scanners Radio Shack announced. The URL above has pictures!

AIRNAV v3.1

<ftp://ftp.funet.fi/pub/mirrors/ftp.cdrom.com/pub/simtelnet/win95/ham/an31a1.zip>

AirNav is a program that allows you to experience the thrills of being a flight controller using real time flight data off the Internet. Version 3.1 adds in ACARS decoding. Someone sent me the URL above where it can be downloaded. The program requires certain "codes" to activate it. Down load it and we may get lucky with the codes in the near future. In the interim, check out program details at <http://www.airnavsystems.com/>

ORANGE, NJ FD

Orange, NJ is now operating on 501.2525 MHz, pl 94.8.

Orange has commenced also using the standard "300" radio signals, similar to those in use in Newark, Edison and Irvington, NJ's. I do not have a copy of the "300" radio signals. Anyone have a list of these codes.

Regards,
Joe Walc
Engine270@aol.com

VERONA NJ UPDATE

It appears that Verona, NJ (Essex County) PD and FD have switched over to a new system a few weeks ago. Initial reports stated that they were using an EDACS system but listening to the four frequencies in use it doesn't sound like EDACS, nor anything else I recognize. If anyone has any information please E mail us.

Frequencies: 470.300, 471.000, 471.1500, 471.2000 (plus 3.0 Mhz offset for mobiles).
Note that if you're close to NYC the intermod can get in the way due to the neighboring frequencies. The old frequencies (now dead) 472.4625 PD and 33.7800 FD.

The Urban DX'er would like to thank all those who contributed to this months issue!

Charlie - N2NOV, "R", KC2AYC, Rod - N2RVM, Roger Elowitz, K2JAS, Scott Fybush
