

The History of St. Augustine's Radio Station: CJAS

The Lower North Shore, until recently, was a very isolated place. The villages were isolated from each other and the Lower North Shore as a whole was isolated from the rest of the world. In 1983 when talks first began about setting up a radio station it was very exciting. There were many roadblocks on the path to getting the radio station. There were budget cuts that put a damper on the process. In 1984, a small group of local people from St. Augustine began talking seriously about finding the necessary funding that would allow them to establish a radio station. The radio station incorporated on June 5, 1984 but the first broadcast wasn't until November 1987. The government made a deal with St. Augustine that if they could raise \$5,000.00 of their own they would donate \$50,000.00 towards the radio station. Taking the idea from the radio station in Blanc Sablon, it was decided that if they could get the necessary hook-ups they would host a radiothon. Since Mother's Day was just around the corner, it would be the perfect occasion to have a radiothon. People would be able to call and request to hear a song for a donation of their choice of amount or they could pay to challenge somebody to go and sing live on the air. In the end, \$5,570.00 was raised. The government kept up their end of the bargain and in the spring of 1986, they were given \$90,000.00 and the go ahead to start the building. After finding a place to call home for the radio station and following all government procedures, it was in November 1987 that the first broadcast from CJAS went live. The first staff at the radio station were as follows; Barry Cormier who was a musician, his brother Sylvain Cormier who was also a musician, Marcella Fequet was a student, Claudine Lespes was a teacher and Robert Finn was a

supervisor. After the first broadcast, it didn't take long before it was clear that the radio station became the center of the town. It drew the whole town closer, and after going through all the trouble to get the radio station, the town had a sense of accomplishment because it showed them that if they all pull together, they could achieve many things. With constant support and volunteers, the radio station is still up and running today and it has proven time and time again how valuable it is to our town.

By: Jenna Shattler
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