Man Alive host started in Quinte region as journalist

BY BECKY POCOCK
SUMMER PIONEER STAFF

Sept 27/01 p. 12

Buying back his farm in Trenton in 1972, Roy Bonisteel was ready to settle down and get away from the fast-paced life he was leading while on the popular TV program Man Alive.

Beginning his career as a print journalist, Bonisteel started working for The Intelligencer and moved on to work for the Trentonian newspaper. During that time, he also witnessed a plane crash at the air base in Trenton and was subsequently interviewed about what he saw. Coincidentally the manager at the Belleville radio station was following the story and heard Bonisteel's voice. Liking what he heard, he asked Bonisteel to work for him as a broadcaster at the Belleville radio station.

Those were the early years. Then in 1967 Bonisteel became the host of a program that was to become one of the most respected and watched current affairs productions in Canadian broadcasting history.

Man Alive touched people's hearts and the show received a massive response from viewers. The aucience was given the opportunity to understand people on a human level. The show discussed current social and religious issues.

Man Alive gave Bonisteel the chance to talk to some of the world's most interesting, respected and inspiring people.

Sondra Diamond told a story of having cerebral palsy. People said her life wasn't worth living, they said she was less than human, and measured her by their own standards, said Bonisteel.

Her struggles to be treated with respect touched the audience, making them aware that people living with handicaps are human, with human feelings. The difference between her and another is the compromise she makes with how she lives and gets around. The show received the largest response and won many awards.

Bonisteel, always interested in the stories people have to tell, had a way of making them feel at ease by asking questions that would elicit interesting responses.

Noticing that he had not seen Mother Teresa smile while on one