

THE PRO LINE



Over the Radio Waves

February, 1996

- *Martinvale WI in Eastern Ontario hosts a community fund raiser which nets \$3,200.*
- *Bob Johnston tells the story of Adelaide Hoodless on the anniversary of her death.*

March, 1996

- *James Gordon sings his newest song, "We Are the WI," on Hometown Tunes.*

May, 1996

- *Owen Sound WI disbands. The younger women in the area think "WI is a silly social thing where you make jam!"*

Good news, bad news – you can hear it daily by turning on your radio. The message is brief; it lets you continue your daily routine; it keeps you informed.

The Canadian Association of Broadcasters says the average Canadian devotes about 22 hours per week to radio. Of the 800 radio stations in Canada, 175 are located in Ontario. Are you aware of WI's involvement in radio broadcasting - past, present and future?

In New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, the radio program "The News and Views of the Women's Institutes" is in its thirtieth year. Ellen McLean, former President of the Associated Country Women of the World, hosted the first program in January, 1966. She con-

tinues to be the voice of the Women's Institutes of Nova Scotia today.

Ellen McLean explains the beginning of the program. "A committee, appointed by the District Executive, approached the management of our local radio station, CKEC New Glasgow. We discussed with them what we wanted to do and why, and also that we understood that the station, under CRTC (Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission) regulations, had to allocate a certain amount of time to community service broadcasts, and asked them if we might have some of that time. The CKEC management was receptive to our request."

For five minutes each week, listeners hear topics which are relevant to Women's Institute aims and objectives. They are as diverse as the organization itself – programs, projects and WI events of interest to the listening audience. It may be Federated Women's Institutes of Canada (FWIC) issues, information about the societies of the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW), or United Nations concerns. "I have agricultural awareness programs and nutrition month, farm safety week, [and] 4-H week are all part of the themes I use," McLean states.

The original idea for a radio show came from Prince Edward Island Women's Institutes. They had had a weekly program on CFCY Charlottetown since 1948. The first hostess, Helen Herring, had 15 minutes once a week. Now the program airs five days a week for 2 minutes on both CFCY and CJRW Summerside.

Herring, in an article she wrote in *Through the Years, Part 2*, states that "during the years 1947-1978, radio has proved a popular method of disseminating information, announcing Institute activities, and providing an educational medium for Women's Institute members in Prince Edward Island."

Karen Craig, Liaison Officer of Prince Edward Island WI, states that the information covers WI related material, such as notices of

workshops, seminars and conventions. It also includes upcoming events of interest to the public at large and sometimes topics of interest, such as dealing with stress and effective communication. She continues, "How effective it has been in promoting WI work is difficult to answer. No evaluation has ever been done. Yet we know a number of people listen in, especially men who call in frequently to get further information on a topic they heard that interested them. Also, with the program aired for nearly 50 years, we plan to keep it going."

At the August Provincial Board meeting, Board Directors decided to promote the Women's Institute via radio. They voted to advertise the WI on radio via prepared promotional public service announcements.

Or, you can go one step further. A committee can go to the station manager and suggest the idea of a WI program.

- Items interesting enough to be printed are potential radio news.
- Open-line shows look for interesting topics and people. Send a representative knowledgeable about the WI and its projects to project the WI image.
- Consider a panel, interview or debate.
- Contact the program director with a newsworthy event. Provide background material. Public service announcements need to be clear, brief and typed to be easily read.
- Appreciate: a thank you letter keeps you welcome.

Some newspapers in Ontario now have regular Women's Institute columns, weekly or monthly. Why not a radio show? Are you ready to accept the challenge?

Mary Janes is the Public Relations Officer for the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario. She can be reached at 6868 Egremont Rd., RR 8, Watford ON NOM 2S0. Phone: (519)786-5511, Fax: (519)786-5511 (phone first).

TIMELY TWEEDSMUIR TIPS

By Marcie Johnston

Each Branch should have a Tweedsmuir History Book for their own Branch history. I encourage each Branch to take pictures of guest speakers at their meetings for inclusion in their Tweedsmuir Book, and be sure to include the details (name, proper title, topic) in a caption. Each monthly meeting warrants this sort of documentation.

All Branch Tweedsmuir Books should include the following: the yearly slate of officers; autobiographies of all members as per the Tweedsmuir History Manual; and, photocopies of all media articles. Tweedsmuir Histories should also include sections about your local community or Institute area (items about the 4-H, Junior Farmers, local births, deaths, weddings, and community activities that the WI is involved in, could be included).

Tips:

- always use acid-free paper
- never write on the back of a photograph; always use POST ITS

- have gloves available for anyone wishing to use your Tweedsmuir History
- microfilm and photocopy all History Books before they are lost to fire, humidity, water or theft
- store all Tweedsmuir in a dry room
- conduct oral history interviews amongst the seniors in your community, before it is too late
- organize "Remember When..." events for young audiences in your community

Marcie Johnston is the Provincial Tweedsmuir History Curator. She can be reached at RR 4, Listowel ON N4W 3G9, Phone: (519)291-2949.