

## ST. LAWRENCE COLLEGE

# Rural Worker Program Withdrawn

by Staff Reporter, Janet Robson

For the past 20 months North Leeds has been the arena of an experiment in community education. "The Rural Worker Program" was designed to fulfill St. Lawrence College's mandate as a community college. The program is to fold as of July 31 in spite of the fact that it has been, by all accounts, a success.

### What did we have?

Most readers are aware of the work of our Rural Worker, Sue Chamberlain. Working out of the College's small office at Newboro, Sue has been active in helping local people organize workshops and seminars. Recent examples are the Solar Energy and Local Government seminars.

The Rural Worker Program has given North Leeds residents access to career counselling and vocational advices and has offered local opportunities for employment training. One of Sue's most important roles has been provision of help to community groups. Groups which benefit from the Rural Worker Program include Rideau Crafts, Lakeland Players, Senior Citizens, the Leeds China Painting Guild and the North Leeds Lantern.

The Rural Worker has been an important resource for local people, often directing them to the appropriate social or health agency. Thus, she helps co-ordinate local services. Many agencies have found the College's office a useful point of exchange. This includes Public Health, Children's Aid, ARC Industries, Community and Social Services, OPP and VON.

The Rural Worker's Newboro office has served a vital function in North Leeds. The VON has been able to share the office, something it could not afford on its own. The office provides a meeting place for community groups. Most important, the office gives St. Lawrence College a presence in the area. It is easily accessible without long distance calls and red tape.

### What are we getting?

St. Lawrence College is in the midst of a massive reorganization. Unlike Kingston, Brockville campus has decided to replace its Rural Worker Program. Three "brokers" will be hired out of the Brockville campus. The Continuing Education Department will no longer exist.

The brokers are to serve Leeds and Grenville, including the City of Brockville. One will likely be assigned to Leeds. The brokers' role is to identify needs in the community and turn ideas over to the relevant academic department. The department will "identify its ability to respond" and be responsible for designing and delivering a program. The Broker will not have a program budget; everything will have to go through an academic department in order to be carried out. It will be up to the new Chairman of the new Student Community Services Department whether or not the College will retain its office at Newboro.

### North Leeds Loses.

The withdrawal of the Rural Worker will mean a lower level of service for North Leeds. The new Broker will not be as accessible. He or she will serve a large area and will be powerless to put on programs. The effectiveness of the new program will depend on the flexibility of the academic departments to respond to the Broker's requests. Many rural educational needs don't fit neatly into one Department - for example, which department would we turn to for advice about forming a dairyman's club or a local newspaper?

Under the new Broker system, rural residents can expect a greater time lag between any idea and its implementation. Ray Smith, current Chairman of Continuing Education, admits, "There is no question that with Sue in the area the turn around time is faster." Mr. Smith hopes "exactly the same interpersonal relationship should be able to take place..." between area residents and the new broker, as we have had with the resident rural worker. Area resident Mary Warren has some doubts, "Losing Sue Chamberlain will be detrimental to many; it will leave a vacuum. There is and always has been a barrier between rural residents and Brockville campus. Rural people just won't make that long distance phone call."

### Financial Reasons Cited.

While the College hesitates to admit that the withdrawal of the Rural Worker Program will cripple their effectiveness in the area, Ray Smith concedes "We just don't have the money to provide that high a level of service." The total cost of the Rural Worker Program is \$25,000/year. The Newboro office and part-time secretary would cost under \$2,500/yr.

Although Mr. Smith says that in his opinion, the ideal would be to place rural workers throughout Leeds & Grenville, the funds are not available. The College has attempted to "work out a system that gives as much service as possible within the dollars." Evidently, St. Lawrence College at Brockville has not allocated sufficient funds for service to rural areas.



St. Lawrence College's Newboro Office, home of the Rural Worker Program.

## SOIL TESTING SERVICE

SPEND A DOLLAR—SAVE A LOT

(Ministry of Agric. & Food)

You may be wasting money on fertilizers if nothing has been done to determine the actual needs of your soil.

A soil test is a small worthwhile investment, says Theo Blom, of the Ont. Ministry of Agric. & Food.

"For a fee of one dollar per sample, the soil testing lab at the University of Guelph will check levels of phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium and soil pH, and recommend fertilizer requirements."

Special boxes for soil samples are provided by the Department of Land Resource Science at the University of Guelph and by county agricultural offices.

Mr. Blom recommends taking 4 or 5 samples from various parts of the garden. These samples should be well mixed before being sent to Guelph.

If separate, widely spaced plots are to be cultivated, a sample should be taken from each plot. Fees must be included with soil samples.

"Advise the laboratory of specific problems you have encountered with previous crops, if they appear to be related to soil quality. If sufficient information is provided regarding intended crops, specific recommendations will be made."

...COMING SOON:

- Bedding Plants -  
(Grown the organic way)

- \*) Vegetables
- \*) Many Herbs
- \*) Comfrey plants

**South Lake Farm**

On Hwy # 32  
2½ miles south of Hwy # 15.

If you would like to show your concern about the withdrawal of the Rural Worker Program and its representative Sue Chamberlain in North Leeds, please sign below and return this slip to:

Rideau Crafts,  
P.O. Box 22,  
Portland, Ontario.

Rideau Crafts will be sending all the slips to the College with a note saying the undersigned protest the withdrawal of the Rural Worker Program.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

If you are interested in having a discussion with the administration of St. Lawrence College at a meeting in our area, check here

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