

2nd set of tapes  
Reminiscing in W Central MN.

# 1019

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① Florence Hedberg -

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Q: This is Reminiscing in West Central Minnesota a KMRS Saturday new feature. Today on reminiscing we're talking with Florence Hedberg of Morris KMRS radio. Morris and Florence this is the 20th anniversary of KMRS this week, and I bet you a lot of people who were around here have forgotten when the radio first started and some of the things that ~~happened~~ went on before we actually did get on the air. What's the history of why the Hedberg family decided to get into the radio business? <sup>about</sup>

Well it all dates back to about 1954. Paul was ~~a~~ very interested. He had his Ham Radio and he built this with a little help from his buddy and he was so interested in radio. ~~xx~~ We had thought of buying a ~~new~~ paper and they were checking through a trade paper, Cliff and Paul to find ~~a~~ one that was for sale. ~~xxxx~~ There was an add down in the corner that said, "Maybe some of you editors who are interested in newspaper ~~xxx~~ should consider radio and Paul said, "That's what we want!". And it didn't take much to convince Cliff, because he was very interested in that too.

Q: Now that Cliff and Paul were very interested in radio, how about you? Did you have any hesitation that that might be a hard thing to get into?

No, I ~~●~~ really was thrilled. I thought this would be great. I really never was worried, but I didn't have the big responsibility ~~with~~ either. But I thought it would be a real challenge.

Q: To go on for the first time it took a lot of planning and quite a few months. What ~~was~~ was the planning process in getting a license to go on the ~~air~~ air? First you had to get a frequency. Wasn't it?

Yes, we had to get a frequency. We had <sup>d</sup> to get an engineer first of all. Somebody in St. Paul, I don't know where he ~~was~~ was <sup>at</sup> the state office, recommended someone in Washington so we got our frequency. We got him looking for a frequency. And first he wasn't sure he could even find one, so in the mean time we were looking for a newspaper too and then Cliff ~~xxxx~~ said, "So if we find a frequency then we'll forget all about this paper. He got word the next day that he had ~~xxx~~ found ~~a~~ 15.70 and they weren't too thrilled about that, but that was the only one he could find because of course, this was a Mexican frequency. Signing ~~xxxxx~~ off at Sundown and signing on at sunrise.

Q: You suggested "Get your foot in the door".

Right. The engineer said " Why don't you take it; get your foot in the door,"

Q: So you got the frequency and then you decided already that Morris would be the area. Why did you decide on Morris, Minnesota on the place to locate?

Well, we got out a map of Minnesota actually and also a list of radio stations. This area was the only area in the state that didn't have a radio station. Morris, we decided, was a growing, very progressive community, and of sufficient size ~~xxx~~ so we just decided to go ahead with Morris.

Q: At that time ~~xx~~ there was no idea that a branch of the University would be located here?

No idea at all. I remember seeing though after we been here ~~after~~ a year or two; seeing a little booklet, I think it was put out by the; printed by Clinton Gay, and it told all the reasons why Morris should have a University. And I was very impressed with that booklet but never dreamed that it would happen.

Q: Well, after you chose a town, you got the frequency, you had to chose a sight to locate the radio station. How did you happen to decide on this spot on Hwy. 28?

It wasn't easy. We drove around. I remember coming to Morris in the early fall; in fact, one time we were here, they were having a homecoming parade and we drove around town. It seemed that ~~Hwy~~ going around Hwy. 28 was the last place we went to and we were so happy to discover a swampy area and the engineer that was with us said, "That is perfect." And luckily it was available.

Q: A lot of people don't understand why a swampy area is a good place for an antenna. You think ~~you~~ it should be the highest spot ~~xxxxxxx~~ on top of a hill; but there's a reason for that.

There's a much better; I really don't understand it; but ~~the~~ said we should have a swampy low area. And we were lucky to find it.

Q: It's a better ground, is the way they explained to me. Well, then you finally got on the air back in September 16, 1956. I would imagine that people around this ~~W~~ west central area had some different ideas to whether we needed a radio station; ~~xxx~~ to whether one would succeed. What was the different actions of the people?

I think some people thought we were really sticking our necks out but a lot of people said; oh, ~~xxxxx~~ they were happy, finally Morris is going to have a radio station. One man in particular, I remember, said I was really surprised, I though you were going to build a TV ~~xxxxxxx~~ station.

Q: Lots of different reactions. Well, ever since we did go on the ~~xxx~~ air you've had an active ~~x~~ part in the operation of the station, acting as treasurer and writing checks and this type of thing. But there's been some other times where I suppose you didn't expect to be working and I know for a fact that blizzards were one of those occations. Many times when the announcers just couldn't get ~~xx~~ out here, you were manning the telephones.

That did happen a number of times, yes. That I came down to answer the telephone and I remember one Sunday, we had gotten very well organized with Neil, over the phone with Cliff doing the announcing. And Bob Gordon walked in and we couldn't believe our eyes; we couldn't see how he ~~xxxxx~~ ever could make out here but he had walked the whole way. And afterward we were talking about it, and he ~~x~~ said, "You know you really ~~xxx~~ looked ~~difficult~~ ~~xxxxx~~ disappointed when I walked in the door." But we were just so surprised.

Q: And of course, on a blizzard day, the radio station is the business place around.

That's right it really is.

Q: Well, another area concerning blizzards is that we're not only a radio station but t you've had to kind of had to put up kind of a ~~xxxxxxx~~ restaurant and hotel on occasions when the employees couldn't get home, because of bad weather.

Yes, that happened a number of times, where we've had announcers staying overnight and meals. I remember one having to serve 3 meals and I was getting pretty low on food.

It's always interesting out here; there's lots of things happening.

That's right. ~~xxxx~~ It's an interesting life.

Q: Well, I know there have been a lot of changes and know of course, with the new FM on, people are listening ~~in~~ for the stereo sound but sometime there used to be a lot of live music when the station first ~~was~~ went on the ~~xxx~~ air.

Well, there was that first year because it ~~was~~ was such a novelty. I remember people from the West Central School came out and gave a proram every week. They were under the direction of John Anderson, who was in charge of music out there.

Moreeff played

Q: And I heard a story about Max ~~Moreff~~, when he ~~played~~ live ~~music~~ on KMRS.

He came up to the front door. In fact, in those early days, I had a lot of people coming to my front door, thinking that was the radio station. Of course, it didn't take Cliff long to arrange him to be on the air, and play at our piano; it was quite a concert.

Q: The piano is upstairs ~~xxxx~~ and all the controls are downstairs. How did they arrange that?

Well, between Cliff and Jim ~~xxxx~~ Bowman, they strung a wire up through the window and we got on the air.

Q: Well, with FM now, we're kind of starting kind of a brand new era at KMRS radio. How was it that we were so fortunate ~~that~~ the starting ~~date~~ for the FM would be the same ~~for~~ the AM.

Well, this is something that Paul had planned for a long time and it didn't look ~~xx~~ like it was going to happen. But he just kept persisted and kept calling the FM, you know the Federal Communications; and he wouldn't give up he said we were going to go on the September 16 and he didn't get word to go on until 10:00 in the morning of that day, but it happened.

Q: So we look to the future of KMRS AM & FM and I'm sure ~~xxxx~~ that there will be a lot of changes and new things to come in the future too. Well, Florence, there's always one question I end up these interviews with and that's when I ask the interviewee their age.

Well, as long as we've been reminiscing about KMRS I will tell you KMRS's age. It's 20 years old.

Thank you very much. ~~We~~'ve been talking to Florence Hedberg of Morris on ~~RE~~miniscing in West Central Minnesota a Saturday KMRS news feature.

Frank Krafska

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This is Reminiscing in West Central Minnesota a Saturday KMRS news feature. Today we're talking with Frank Krafska of Barrett and Frank, how long have you been in Barrett?

~~xxxx~~ 55 years.

Q: And we did you come from before Barrett?

I come from Minneapolis down here from the achool from Minneapolis, Barber School.

Q: Okay, so you arrived in Barrett and you were going to be what; the new barber in town or did you go into partnership with somebody?