

Local radio station hoping to restore sense of pride in national anthem

By Paula Brown

If you're a radio lover living in Orangeville, you might have recognized the familiar instrumental tune of Canada's patriotic soundtrack playing out through your speakers. Queued with the music and commercials, the familiar beat of 'O Canada' plays before the noon news goes out each and every day.

Playing the national anthem preceding the 12 o'clock news is all part of a test pilot that myFM started in mid-June, Regional Manager Rob Mise told the Citizen.

'It kind of occurred to me that here at myFM we're proud of the country we live in. It's the greatest country in the world and it seems to me that our country, and even our county here in Dufferin, can really rally around the fact of taking two minutes of our broadcast day to remind everybody about the national anthem,' said Mr. Mise.

While playing the anthem at the peak listening time on the local radio station is new to Orangeville, the concept of it is not. A video commissioned by the National Film Board in 1976 to commemorate that year's Summer Olympics, held in Montreal, titled 'With Glowing Hearts' shows a depiction of Canada with shots of icy nowhere, sprawling wheat fields, and costal waves ' in the background the familiar tune of the national anthem plays out ' then the screen cuts out and the news is done for the day.

'It's really nothing new. Canadian radio and TV stations, especially back in the 50s, 60s, and 70s played the national anthem,' said Mr. Mise. 'If it was 6 a.m. or at the end of the broadcast day they would play the national anthem.'

In addition to seeing it as a patriotic reminder, myFM also sees it as a salute to the men and women serving in the Canadian forces, as well as to first responders.

'We think it's great,' said Barry Kimber, military veteran and President of the Orangeville Legion. 'I know hearing the national anthem is a great feeling for all of us who have served our country.'

With it now around a month in since its debut on the radio, Mr. Mise says the feedback and response from listeners and locals has been positive.

Veronica Cvet, owner of the Broadway-based store Reader's Choices, said she sees no harm in the anthem playing before the noon news and later suggested it would be a cool feature to have different people singing it.

Still in the early stages of its introduction the Orangeville station continues to act as a tester, but there are hopes to extend the idea to the other stations in the myFM group, with Mr. Mise saying there is a good chance that it will roll out into the other markets in the next year or so.

Future considerations for the ode to Canada include different versions and local singers.

'We want to kind of start our own little local tradition and we want it to become the fabric of the radio station and I think we're well on our way for that,' said Mr. Mise 'We will play it until the audience tells us to stop playing.'