

SOUTH PEEL'S PEOPLE

SPW
Apr. 17
1968

By TOM SLATER
Staff Reporter

APPLEWOOD — He is quiet, soft-spoken, seems slightly shy, builds model railway sets, does lots of carpentry and cabinet making and — oh yes — “Here’s Canada’s Voice of Racing — Daryl Wells.”

Anyone who listens to radio, watches television or goes to the race track has heard that famous, familiar nasal twang announce, “They’re at the post — and they’re off.”

Daryl Wells, 45, has been involved with radio and horse racing since he was a boy in Victoria, British Columbia.

“My family was always interested in horses and racing,” he recalled. “Some families can sit around and talk about hockey or football. We were interested in racing so that’s what we discussed.”

Wells spends six days a week at the race track during the 196-day season. He prepares radio programs for pre-race airing as well as writing out choices for one of the Toronto newspapers. He also goes on the air during the races with summaries of each run.

“I work for the CBC whenever there is a big race in Canada,” said Wells. “I take care of the calling of the race and discuss the race for the viewers.”

Wells got into radio work when he was still going to high school in Victoria. “At that time I had two real interests,” he said, “the theatre and radio work. Once I had a chance to be manager of a Famous Players Theatre in Toronto, but I ended up in radio in-

stead.”

After returning from overseas in 1945, where he had been with the First Army Signals Corps, Wells enrolled in the radio course at Ryerson Institute of Technology in Toronto.

“I was at Ryerson for just a month when I took a radio audition. I got a job with CHML in Hamilton and I have been in radio work ever since,” he said.

“During those first few years I did everything you could think of at the station,” Wells said laughing. “From announcer to librarian to traffic manager, promotion manager and office boy.”

“I had to do all those things,” he said thoughtfully. “That was the proper groundwork for the profession. If you become a good jack-of-all-trades, you make yourself indispensable.”

In 1954 Wells joined CHCH television in Hamilton as sports director. “I think I did the first teenage dance party show on that station,” he said, “and the thing is still running.”

Two years later the Jockey Club opened the New Woodbine race track. “The opening was offered to me,” said Wells, “and I took it because I felt that was what I could do best of all.

“I felt that if I specialized in one particular sport,” he continued, “I would eventually be more successful.”

He has been employed by the Jockey Club ever since as race-caller.

“I think more people would

get into racing if they could write off their losses,” he said. “Racing needs more of the middle-class businessmen. If losses could be written off as they are in the United States you might find a lot more of these people in the sport.”

Wells laughed and shook his head when asked if he ever bet on the races.

“You can’t bet when you go every day,” he said. “If I was going to bet I would want to be absolutely serious about it. The real race fan goes to bet on every race. I just couldn’t afford that.”

Wells insists that racing is actually just a hobby with him. He has many other interests outside of horses and he pursues them with equal vigor.

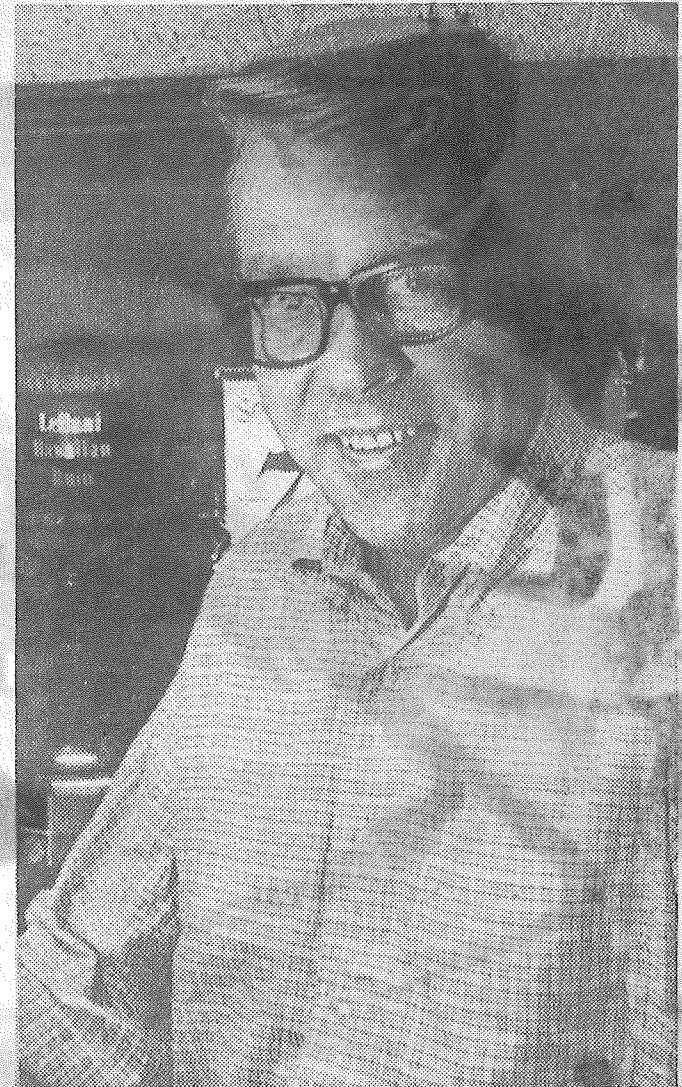
“I play squash every day at the health club,” he said, “and I work out all the time. Once I let myself go pretty badly, but I think I’m pretty fit now.”

He has also built a phenomenal model railway system. The unit, with all the tracks, trains and gadgets, takes up most of the area of one room.

“Working with the model train set is very relaxing,” he said as he adjusted one of the switches. “The big thing is trying to figure the whole thing out. There is real satisfaction in working out the problems and getting everything to run properly.”

But most of all Daryl Well’s day is his time spent at the race track. “I like the atmosphere,” he said, “it isn’t just a job, it becomes a part of you at all times.”

He lives with his wife Mary



Staff Photo

DARYL WELLS

and their two children, Daryl Jay, eight, and Wendy, four, on Sunnycove Drive in Applewood.

“We like it here,” he said, “it’s handy to all the Ontario tracks and I can get to Hamilton for the television work.”

PEEL COUNTY BIOGRAPHY

APR 17 1968 SPW WELLS, DARYL