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: CASE STUDY No. 1157 :

A PROFITABLE PROGRAM FOR REACHING THE WOMEN PUBLIC

Women today wield a tremendous amount of economic, social, and political power and, in any truly comprehensive public relations program, are recognized as an important special public.

A good example of such an effort comes, not illogically, from a bank headed by a dynamic woman. It's the Trenton Trust Company (TT), Trenton, N. J., whose Chairman of the Board is Mrs. Mary G. Roebling, one of the nation's most PR-oriented bankers.

In searching for ways in which TT could offer women beyond-the-call-of-duty services, it was discovered that their clubs (PTA, church, patriotic, social, etc.) were having difficulty in building programs which would attract good attendance at meetings and encourage members to participate in community service work. TT decided to help such organizations in its area to find solutions to this problem.

The vehicle through which the assistance was to be given is the Service Center for Women's Clubs and Organizations, headquartered at the bank and headed by Irene M. Berglund, Director of TT's Marketing Department's Women's Division. Club programs and needs were analyzed. News media were studied for timely subjects and information about speaker's bureaus was collected.

The next step was to announce the material's availability at TT. This was first done through the two dailies in the area. Then, with the aid of the Greater Trenton Chamber of Commerce and the public library, a list of women's groups was compiled. A registration card was sent to each with a letter addressed to "Dear Club President." This described the new service, stated that the reference file contained material on 55 subjects and would be "continuous in growth," and suggested that Mrs. Berglund be called for an appointment to discuss programs and speakers. (The groups are asked to re-register each year.)

Next, a sixteen-member Advisory Board was established. (Its chairman is a former President of the New Jersey Federation of Women's Clubs.) The fifteen other members were chosen from among officers of "the most active and influential clubs." It was agreed that each would serve until the next election of her club's officers, at which time she or a successor would be selected. Quarterly luncheon meetings are held at Mrs. Roebling's town house (next door to the bank) during which clubs' community events (including TT-sponsored activities) are discussed and planned.

A folder announcing the "Service Center for Women's Organizations, a Community-wide Service by TT," was prepared. It listed the Board members

and carried an invitation from Mrs. Roebling and TT's President, Neil G. Greensides, to make use of the Service's facilities. It further revealed that the bank's "attractive and pleasant Community Room," which seats 40, could be reserved, by telephone, for committee meetings and that "publicity spots for your club's events could be arranged on TT's daily radio newscast" . . . The folder is updated annually.

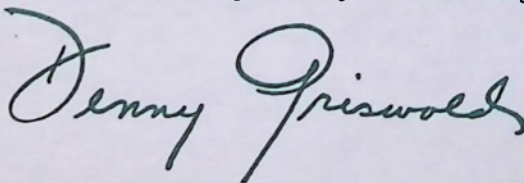
Each spring a "Program Sampling Day" is staged. Representatives of all Center-registered clubs are invited by letter to assemble at 10 a.m. and meet persons who have programs to offer. The session continues through a sandwich luncheon (which costs the participants \$1.50), ending at 2:30 p.m.

During the period there are 24 presentations. This year, for example, the women heard from: the New Jersey Bankers Association, Mercer County Community College, and Trenton Evening Times about their speaker's bureaus; experts in puppetry, nature walks, etiquette, and Japanese flower arranging; an army officer on "Visits to Our Service Men"; a Project Hope director (about its goodwill-creating hospital ship); and others. Every presentation is limited to five minutes. There is a printed program listing the name and address of each speaker and his or her subject and it provides space for note-taking. On the back appears a dissertation on the "care and feeding of speakers." It is suggested that in their contacts with speakers the club-women can do "a fine PR job." Reminders: treat them courteously; suggest a topic and time limit; offer to pay travel expenses; "sound (and feel, if possible) thrilled to have the privilege of presenting the speaker"; follow up with an appreciative note which encloses payment (if any) as agreed in advance and copies of resulting publicity. This, the program concludes, will make the speaker "a center of influence to spread the word about your fine club."

Each club season, which starts in the fall, is inaugurated with a formal-dress buffet supper to which only club presidents are invited. The hostesses are the Center's Board Chairman and Mrs. Roebling and the event is staged at the latter's home. A prominent woman (e.g., Mrs. Norman Vincent Peale; Mrs. Mary Dublin Keyserling, U. S. Dept. of Labor; Antonina Uccello, Mayor of Hartford, Conn.) addresses the group. Publicity in the area has been generous, with most media stating that the affair was given "in honor of TT's Service Center for Women's Organizations and for the advisory board of community leaders by which it is governed." Some 200 club presidents attended this year's supper.

There have been other events, too, to which club representatives were invited. TT's Women's Division has held a dinner in recognition of the Women's Division of the Trenton Chapter of the American Institute of Banking and staged a "Minicourse for the Organization Woman," a four-hour workshop co-sponsored by Mercer County Community College. (At the latter event, Don Bagin, Associate Professor of Communications and Co-Ordinator of College Relations at Glassboro State College, addressed more than 300 women and was given wide media coverage of his talk on publicity.)

Since the Center was established in 1966, nearly 200 clubs (more than 45,000 members) have received assistance in planning programs and special events. "And," reports Mrs. Berglund, "the publicity is constantly growing."



Editor