1939

Women on the Air

Jeanne Beckner
Iowa State College

Follow this and additional works at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker

Part of the Home Economics Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol19/iss8/6
MODERN women, ever seeking new careers to conquer, are now competing with male rivals for radio glory.

Several people on the Iowa State campus are experienced in journalism and radio work. They all stress the vast opportunities open to hard working, talented young women. Betty Wells, of the college library staff, gives book reviews and reads over WOI. She says that the outlook is optimistic for the graduate with a major in technical journalism who is interested in radio work. New ideas are at a high premium, however, and the work is difficult and exacting.

If one plans to broadcast she must seriously consider the quality and possibilities of her voice. Betty Wells, a member of the college library staff who reads over WOI, says prospects for positions in radio journalism are good.

In radio writing one can't depend on direct personality contact. She has to write with the idea of getting her words across to anyone and everyone. One must feel the pulse of the audience. Lines should have more "meat" in them than those written for the stage. 

One great danger is "over-writing." There is a sense of elevation in radio writing. It is possible to write up or down. Many radio writers write down to their audiences—why? To make a living! There was never a time when people needed to have writing elevated more than at the present.

The common problem of salary has turned many a talented journalist away from her chosen position. It is up to her to put her best into her writing and not gauge returns by the size of the pay check. Many graduates have to have their Utopian ears knocked down! They graduate thinking the world is literally waiting for them and their journalistic abilities.

W. I. Griffith, director of WOI, stresses the importance of having something to write about before attempting radio scripts. Since accuracy is just as important in radio as in print, a writer must be well informed on her topic before beginning a script.

Mrs. Julia Kiene, a recent visitor on the campus, who is director of the Home Economics Division of Westinghouse Electric Company at Mansfield, Ohio, expressed the sentiments of her daughter, who does radio work. Her daughter recently changed from radio speech work to script writing, believing there would be more opportunities for her as a script writer.

Mrs. Eleanor Wilkins, in charge of WOI's Homemaker Half-Hour, insists that if one is majoring in journalism, she must have background subjects. Often there is the mistaken idea that journalism is the only prerequisite to radio writing.

Mrs. Zenobia Ness, past editor of the Homemaker Half-Hour, also emphasized the importance of having something definite to write about. You may know how to write, but what good is that if you don't have anything in particular to say?

Mrs. Ness has had "something to say" for a number of years. A few well-known people who did their first broadcasting under her are Beth Bailey McLean, Marcia Griffin, who is now "Prudence Penny" for the Detroit Times, and Helen Watts Schreiber, who is on WHO for the Hoxie Fruit Company.

"Spoken writing," as radio talk is characterized, demands a technique of its own different from writing for print or speaking before an audience. A few colleges are giving courses in radio writing and broadcasting. For the most part, home economists are called upon to give radio talks without benefit of formal instruction or even the friendly advice of an experienced broadcaster. With hundreds of young women struggling to develop radio writing and broadcasting, training and willingness to work count much.