

1943

Iowa Homemaker On Review

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Recommended Citation

The Iowa Homemaker (1943) "Iowa Homemaker On Review," *The Iowa Homemaker*: Vol. 23 : No. 6 , Article 8.
Available at: <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol23/iss6/8>

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Present staff members of the Iowa Homemaker plan and produce their magazine in an office of their own in the Collegiate Press Building

Iowa Homemaker On Review

ONE can't be too sure, looking back more than twenty years, just when the wish for a magazine of their own came to the minds of the home economics editors of the *Iowa Agriculturist*. By the winter of 1920, plans, action and enthusiasm were all going strong and in the same direction towards a magazine representing the Division of Home Economics just as the *Agriculturist* and the *Engineer* were representing the divisions of Agriculture and Engineering.

At the time the *Homemaker* was established we considered ours the largest school of home economics in the world; we had a growing number of home economics students whose courses in journalism were providing excellent training in writing home economics news and the page or two allowed us in the *Iowa Agriculturist* were insufficient. We could fill the whole of that magazine every month if we had a chance.

"Bess" Storm and Gwen Watts placed their dream before Prof. F. W. Beckman, then head of the Journalism Department; Catherine MacKay, dean of Home Economics, and Dr. R. A. Pearson, president of Iowa State. These fine, wise people helped to clarify the many questions which quite naturally arose. Could enough high-grade material be produced to publish a magazine every month? Would advertisers patronize its columns so it could be self-supporting? Could five hundred people be persuaded to subscribe to a magazine which did not exist?

By the time school closed in June, 1920, these bothersome questions had been settled and it was definitely understood that the following fall a publication board would be appointed to determine the name and policies of the proposed magazine. It was a long summer for the two dreamers, but fall came and the publication board was created with instructions to name and determine the policies of the proposed magazine, the subscription and advertising rates, the size of the magazine and the appointment of the business and editorial staffs. Also, there was the matter of financing the venture until it became self-supporting.

The publication board named Elizabeth Storm of Adel, editor; Gwendolyn Watts of Mason City, associate editor; Jessie McCorkindale of Odebolt, business

manager; and Eloise Parsons of Ames, circulation manager. The Home Economics Club generously offered a loan of \$500 and with that the newly appointed staff of *The Iowa Homemaker* set to work to produce "a magazine for homemakers from a homemakers' school."

The editorial job of preparing the copy for the first issue was minor compared to selling advertising space and subscriptions to a magazine without existence, as yet. A great deal of credit must be given to the two managers who sold the advertising and the 500 subscriptions enabling the first issue to go to press, assured of an income and a reception. The first issue was scheduled to come out in February, but after much delay, many mistakes and a great deal of worry it was a dark, rainy day in April, 1921, when the editor received the first few copies directly from the printer, held them tightly under her arm as she rode the street car from the Tribune Publishing Company in Ames to the campus and delivered, personally and proudly, Volume 1 Number 1 of *The Iowa Homemaker* to Professor Beckman, Dean MacKay and President Pearson.

It takes a certain amount of physical "props" to make any dream come true, as the *Homemaker* staff discovered. The one drawer in the desk of the editor of the *Agriculturist*, which had served his home economics editor, held the copy for the first issue of the *Iowa Homemaker*, and when it was apparent that more space was needed, the "Ag" staff offered floor space in their office and use of their typewriter if the *Homemaker* staff would furnish its own desk. Since there was no income, because there was no magazine, the *Homemaker* staff appealed for a desk. It was learned that there was an old desk in the basement of Science Building, long discarded by the Zoology Department, and that the *Homemaker* staff might have it, if they wanted it. They did want it, and scrubbed and scoured is to remove the last trace of the mortal remains of innumerable angle worms. That humble desk served the editorial and business staffs for many years and moved with the "Ag" office to new quarters in Agricultural Annex in 1930. The Press Building, built in 1940, provided the *Homemaker* with a room of her own.