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New Careers in Home Economics---

Make Mine Radio

Behind-the-scene activities of home economics in radio are described by Lora Stone Graul, '46, an assistant in the National Broadcasting Company's new Home Economics Department.

HOME economics, which is relatively new to the business world, is in an infantile state of development in the field of radio. Today less than one-third of the radio stations in this country have directors of home economics. Many of those are not home economics graduates. It has been during the last 3 years that the National Broadcasting Company has had a home economist on its staff, and she came in virtually through the back door.

Jane Tiffany Wagner, B.S. '27, and Home Economics Director of NBC, came to the network first as Director of Women's War Activities. When the end of the war was in sight, she realized that groundwork for an approach to a homemaking program had been laid, that she had become thoroughly acquainted with NBC routine and that now she could approach the management with her idea.

It took some persuasion to convince radio executives that home economics had a valid place in the

already existing University of the Air series which, at the time, included programs devoted to literature, music and government. Her talking point was "Homemaking as an Art" rather than "Home Economics as a Trade."

Home Is What You Make It is evidence of the fact that she won her point. For more than 2 years this program has exhibited all the characteristics of a good show. It has a fine station acceptance and a good rating.

The actual weekly half-hour broadcast requires approximately 155 to 160 hours of work on the part of all those concerned with its ultimate airing. In addition, there are a large number of letters from listeners each week which must be answered. There is also a series of handbooks written by outstanding authorities especially for Home Is What You Make It, which have been made available at cost. And there is always that underlying awareness of the necessity to maintain and better the current rating which is the scale by which radio programs are ultimately judged.

ONLY in the last few years has radio cast a comparatively favorable eye at programs which are educational. Even though Public Service has been part of network programming for a number of years, it has been particularly wary of anything which smacks of the academic. Now the ice is well broken, and Home Is What You Make It has succeeded in taking home economics broadcasting up the ladder a few more rungs.

Many of the directors of homemaking programs have previously been singers, actresses or writers. They bring to radio a vibrant voice, personal warmth or writing ability, but they are not trained home economists. When the home economist can add these virtues to her technical training she will *really* have something to offer radio. But until she can remember to incorporate in her own personality all that her training embodies, she will have difficulty in attaining her goal because radio thrives on human appeal and a sincere approach.

There are many types of program possibilities open to her: the straight interview, commercial sponsorship programs, dramatic presentations, the daytime serial and the documentary form such as Home Is What You Make It.

Miss Wagner frequently offers this advice to the student interested in radio: "Aim high, develop your ingenuity but be content to start at the beginning in a small way with a small station. Be prepared to sell yourself and your ideas because radio has not yet begun looking for you."

And to all home economists she adds, "Keep the human touch, for only in this way can you fulfill your responsibility, which is to show all homemakers that home is what you make it."



Jane Tiffany Wagner, '27, is Home Economics Director of NBC and one of the first woman promoters of home economics in radio.