Wee Listeners Join Radio Fans

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**Wee Listeners**
**Join Radio Fans**

by Lee Ann Smiley

Do you remember the times you climbed on Mother's knee to hear her begin "Once upon a time?" Today, youngsters of pre-school age gather around the radio to hear their favorite stories read by the "Storybook Lady" each morning at 11 o'clock.

In reality the "Storybook Lady" is Prof. Edith Sunderlin, of the Department of Child Development, who interprets stories for her audience on WOI's "The Children's Corner."

"The Children's Corner," explains Miss Sunderlin, "is presented at a time when children need to rest before the lunch hour."

During the first half of the 15 minute program, recordings of 5 or 10 minute stories read by Miss Sunderlin are featured. The selections are chosen from her library of 160 recordings. During the last half of the program simple classical records are played.

Through her experience as supervisor of nursery school teaching at Iowa State, Miss Sunderlin is qualified to make the correct selections for reading. She knows children like short stories because they cannot sit still long. Their favorite stories are usually about Mother, Daddy, animals, cars, trucks and other children. They like stories that make them laugh or ones in which they may join in the reading.

Interprets Sounds

"The secret of story-telling," Miss Sunderlin explains, "lies in learning to interpret the sounds, words, feelings and personal characteristics of the story to the listeners. In radio one has only the voice to hold the attention of your audience, so it is necessary to express with your voice the meaning behind each word."

She always greets the children with a cheery "Hello, everybody," and then ends the program by

"Hear the dog barking—" asks the Storybook Lady as pre-school children listen with expressions of wonder, doubt or absorbed interest. The children prefer stories which make them laugh.
saying, "That's all for now, good-bye." Although the children can't see her, parents report that the children like to answer her greetings.

"The Children's Corner" was first presented by Miss Sunderlin as a weekly feature of the Department of Child Development on the Homemakers' Half-hour over WOI in 1940. Her stories were so well received that in April, 1940, a 15-minute program called "From the Storybook" was featured three times a week. One year later in July, a 15-minute program of musical recordings for the children was broadcast following "From the Storybook." A combination of these two programs in September, 1942, formed the present "The Children's Corner."

"The main purpose of telling stories is to have children enjoy them. I never want to lose sight of this objective," states Miss Sunderlin. "The letters I receive are very gratifying. Parents listen to my stories so they may tell them to their children who were unable to hear them."

Musical Favorites

"The Children's Corner" is the only known program planned for pre-school children. It is heard, however, by children in the primary grades, who weren't able to hear these tales in their pre-school years.

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