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Here's What's Open for You in TV

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Here's What's Open for

You may have your finger in a video pie someday.
You'll show homemakers how to make a tempting meal,
raise children, improve home lighting or sew a fine seam.

by Barbara Short

TELEVISION cameras are focused on the trained home economist. TV stations all over the nation are producing or planning for programs appealing to the American homemaker. This means that you may have your finger in a video pie some day, either as the woman in an apron whipping up a soufflé in front of the cameras, or as the program director, script writer, or production manager's assistant.

TV is enthusiastically welcoming the home economist's services. Some stations have two or more home economists conducting fashion shows, sewing clinics, cooking schools and demonstrations for their viewers. Many women already have their feet in the exciting door of television.

Let's see what TV pioneers do and what they have to say concerning this fascinating field.

"Good evening," says Mrs. Dione Lucas, star of CBS television shows. "Tonight I am going to make minestra, lobster bisque and fruit tarts."

Dressed in a striped cotton dress, Mrs. Lucas stands in a shiny white kitchen. She works rapidly on an enormous wooden table in the center of the room. As cooking star of television in the New York area, Mrs. Lucas has an international reputation as a cook, has written cookbooks and runs a cooking school.

"I think that most women are pretty good, plain cooks," she says. "I like to give them a dash of gourmet cooking—something to brighten menus."

However Mrs. Lucas is not a television star just because of her intriguing recipes. She handles tools with the skill of a surgeon, and, in spite of the speed required by the show, she rarely fumbles.

The Home Service Bureau of the Consolidated Gas Electric Light and Power Company of Baltimore conducts weekly programs in their new demonstration kitchen at station WMAR-TV. Three trained lecture-demonstrators handle the work. Each show requires two participants, the main demonstrator and someone to assist her with preparation.

Programs are based on a complete meal. The menu is given at the beginning of the program, and as many

foods are prepared as program time allows. The number may vary from a single dish to the complete meal. For instance, a breakfast of orange juice, scrambled eggs, sausages, hot cross buns and coffee was completed by the end of one show.

The home economist gives a summary of the menu while viewers look at a picture of the dishes prepared on the program arranged on a large black tray. The audience may write or telephone for the menu and necessary recipes.

Two cameras are focused on the lecture-demonstrator at all times. Two small, red lights on top of the camera taking the picture are the signal for her to play up to that camera. Since the cameras are equipped with four different lenses, the demonstrator never knows whether a full length picture or a close-up of her hands is being taken.

Need Different Techniques

Florence J. Neely, home service director for the company, finds that a different technique must be used for a television audience. She explains that the close-up lens of a camera can focus only on a small area, and wide motion may throw the object out of camera range. The demonstrator must handle equipment and foods so that her hands are not between the object and the camera.

Large garnishes must be used, for small things do not show up. Food, dishes, uniforms and makeup must be chosen carefully, because contrasts depend on intensity of color.

Noise is always a problem. The demonstrator must be careful not to hit equipment together or crumble waxed paper or aluminum foil. Applying moleskin to the bottoms of dishes and utensils reduces contact noises.

Not all shows are live. Films are less expensive and give producers the opportunity to work toward perfection. Designed to appeal to homemakers who sew is "Pattern Magic With Wool," a series of television announcements devoted to home sewing. It has

You in TV



been filmed jointly by the McCall Corporation and the Wool Bureau.

The film is divided into ten sequences of 40 seconds each, and is so designed that it may be used as separate spot announcements or in its entirety. The series offers visual information on tailoring, detailing, choosing cut patterns, and selecting suitable wool fabric for home sewing fashions. Selected fashion-right fabrics and cartoons illustrate wool's versatility.

WOI-TV Under Way

Louie L. Lewis, chief engineer of WOI, says that television will get under way this winter at Iowa State. Many films of home economics demonstrations will be used at first, since they can be televised with less equipment than live shows.

When the station has bought TV cameras and has adequate studios and properties, home economics programs will come into their own here. Lewis contemplates televising students working in the Institution Tearoom kitchen and perhaps in the demonstration laboratories at first. WOI television will give students valuable training in the video field.

TV station WEWS, Cleveland, has recently added to its props a greenhouse, a grocery store, a style salon, a living room set and a complete modern kitchen. Programs starting at 2:30 include "Party Fare," "Mrs. Fixit," "Child Care," "Kitchen Clinic," "Guest Chef," "Your Own Home," and "Homemakers Exchange."

Alice Weston, who has had journalistic and broadcasting experience, conducts cooking demonstrations on an hour-long show, "Alice Weston and Ophelia." Mrs. Ophelia Dudley Steed, Mrs. Weston's assistant, is one of the first Negroes to sign a contract for a daily telecast.

Tips from Miss Madden

Miss Faith Madden, of the Department of Household Equipment, plans to include discussions on television demonstration work in the demonstration techniques course which she teaches.

Hands that know how are very important, according to Miss Madden, because television photography demands show-how demonstrations. Foods must have definite sizes and shapes, which means that creamed dishes and casseroles are out. Miss Madden points out that homemakers like demonstrations where emphasis is placed on what is being done for 15 to 30 seconds without a running dialogue.

The demonstrator's personality must fit and harmonize with the district in which she is demonstrating. Miss Madden points to the person with a radiant expressive personality, distinct features and a sincere smile as the successful TV demonstrator where personality and appearance are concerned.

Miss Madden also points out the great responsibilities of the staff behind the scenes. It's up to persons working on the production end of the show to afford the demonstrator every chance for success. Demand is great for persons with a background of home economics and a complete understanding of video's limitations, plus capacities to work with program planning, script writing and actual program production.

Personality Important

Gladys Price, home service supervisor of the Southern California Gas Company, who has appeared on television shows in Los Angeles, says, "I believe that the home economist who would be on television must have a definite personality which can be caught by the television camera. As I see it, the gal must not disillusion her audience with her appearance; she must not lecture; and she must be conscious that she is actually walking into the living room of her listeners."

"Advance preparation is important," Miss Price points out. "Facilities in most studios are primitive, and it is impossible in a 15 or 30 minute program to measure flour, or send out for equipment which has been forgotten."

Corris Guy, star of "Tricks and Treats," a weekly show of the Paramount television station, KTLA, Los Angeles, says that TV demands a unique technique—a flair for the dramatic, yet an understanding of the great need for simplicity of presentation and manner.

KDYL-TV, Salt Lake City, is currently carrying a half-hour program sponsored by the Utah Power and Light Company called "Better Living Electrically." A home economist from the company gives cooking demonstrations from an all-electric kitchen in the station's television studio. Also included on the program are demonstrations of the proper use and care of home appliances.