

## A Community Tunes In on Education

H. B. McCARTY

"IT IS WITH REGRET that I must say farewell to my radio friends at WHA. We are leaving for our former home in another state. . . . It has been a happy five years of listening to your station, and I will miss so many good things that have been a real help to me. . . ."

This was the valedictory of a small-town housewife, after five years of "going to college at home by radio."

"I will miss Prof. Buck and his wonderful literature course," she wrote. "I will miss Prof. Ogg on The Far East . . . and Psychology by Dr. Cameron. I would enjoy a repeat of the whole course . . . and I must not forget American Government and Following Congress and Campus Visitors. . . ."

For this faithful listener, the dream of an early president had come true: "I hope that some day the campus of our University will be extended to the boundaries of our state." Among this listener's radio friends are some of the University's best scholars and teachers, some of its most distinguished visitors. Her town of 1600

at the border of the state has become a college town, and with deep regret she leaves it.

In much the same way throughout the state many communities have become college communities, for the Wisconsin College of the Air makes every home within listening range a potential classroom. History, psychology, literature, government, international relations—these are the courses offered, and these are the courses heard by people of all kinds. "Yeah, sure, I get that guy all the time. He's plenty OK!" says a filling station attendant, referring to a history lecturer. "Changed my lunch hour," reports a high school janitor, "so now I can listen to that psychology course at 11 o'clock." "Our study club meets regularly to discuss the literature broadcasts," reads a note in distinctive handwriting on embossed stationery.

### *College for Everyone*

For all these people, the plain and the sophisticated, the schooled and the unschooled, the University radio station presents a variety of broadcasts planned to sift truth, to spread information, to build understanding—to develop wisdom. "A well-informed and responsible citizenry being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to have and to use the means of radio communication shall not be infringed by law or by administrative regulation," declares a formal statement by the State Radio Council, proclaiming the importance of education on the air.

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*You may tune in Station WHA—the University of Wisconsin broadcasting outlet in Madison—for almost anything from Spanish lessons to timely pasture tips. The WHA College of the Air brings into the home courses conducted by University professors in history, government, current affairs, and music. Home and agricultural interests are served through the Farm Program and the Homemakers' Hour—broadcasts planned and produced by the University's College of Agriculture. H. B. McCarty, director of the Division of Radio Education at the University, describes in this article WHA's aims and activities as an audio aid to community learning.*

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(Courtesy of the University of Wisconsin)

#### WHA goes to the field for on-the-spot reports.

Directed towards the development of "a well-informed and responsible citizenry," the Wisconsin College of the Air is currently offering, among other features, a course by the 1944 Pulitzer prize-winning historian, Prof. Merle Curti, on the Social and Intellectual History of the United States. Such background study is essential, of course, to a full understanding of contemporary affairs. And for a study of contemporary affairs themselves, there are a number of radio courses: Following Congress, dramatic re-enactments of Congressional debate and discussion; Latin-American Problems, interpreted by a native Chilean; Books of Today, reviewed and evaluated by faculty scholars; and a series of special timeliness, Community Planning, presented by Prof. John M. Gaus, political scientist and distinguished authority on local government.

Understanding in other fields is furthered by a course in literature, broadcast direct from the classroom of the chair-

man of the English department, and by a study of *Our Children*, presented by a group of specialists under the University Committee on Child Development. And, for students of foreign language, a faculty group gives dramatizations in French, based on the experiences of American soldiers in France.

These are all study courses of the Wisconsin College of the Air. But they constitute, by no means, the complete service of State Station WHA; they occupy only one-tenth of the total broadcast schedule.

#### *To the Schools and the Farms*

Directed also towards the cultivation of informed citizenship and successful community living are other programs in great number and variety. "My, how I will miss the School of the Air!" wrote our friend in her farewell note. She means she will miss the radio lessons in nature and conservation by Ranger Mac (Wakelin Mc-

Neel), 1943 winner of the George Foster Peabody award for excellence in radio education; she will miss the primary grade programs on school, home, and community conduct; she will miss Prof. Gordon's inspirational singing lessons; she will miss many school broadcasts. But 115,000 children will not miss them. They will be listening in 3000 schools throughout the state—in 34 per cent of the rural schools and 62 per cent of the state graded schools.

Thousands of farmers, too, will be listening—to programs especially built for them. Daily throughout the year they hear timely information and news on a wide range of agricultural topics. They get reports of research findings and guidance from specialists in the various phases of

farm activity, many of the broadcasts coming direct from the experimental fields and testing laboratories.

Homemakers, likewise, have their special daily program, which gives specific help on consumer problems, nutrition, clothing, housing, home management, and child development, with particular attention to youth centers, garden clubs, and other community projects.

The list is incomplete—there's the Labor Program, the Political Forum, the PTA study course on guiding the citizens of tomorrow, and a host of others. And throughout the broadcast service runs the theme: a campus extended to the borders of the state . . . a well-informed and responsible citizenry . . . the security of a free state.

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