

RADIO NEWS

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RELEASE:

Immediately

MADISON--In 1951 more than 500,000 grade school children were registered listeners to Wisconsin School of the Air broadcasts heard each week in their classrooms around the state. A goodly number, and yet there were still two areas of the state which were unable to pick up the State Station in-school programs because they were too far away from state radio transmitters.

When the School of the Air begins its broadcasts this fall, two new state-owned educational radio stations, WHHI, Highland, and WHSA, Brule, will open doors in northwestern and southwestern Wisconsin classrooms to special teachers in music, art, nature study, and other elementary school subjects.

Schools unable to afford teachers in many of these specialized fields will be able to add the School of the Air courses to their curricula with the purchase and use of an FM radio receiver. Inexpensive sets for classroom use are made by many radio manufacturers of FM receivers.

Today these classroom radio receivers are considered standard equipment in the schoolroom, but 21 years ago very few schools had radio sets.

It was in 1931 that H. B. McCarty, the newly appointed director of WHA, the University of Wisconsin broadcasting station, decided that radio could render a valuable service to schools. That autumn the Wisconsin School of the Air began broadcasting.

Now, two decades later, Prof. McCarty is firmly convinced that radio is a most potent aid to education. Through letters from county superintendents, elementary teachers, parents, and the pupils themselves, School of the Air personnel

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have discovered just what the in-school broadcasts have come to mean to listeners and to teachers.

Wisconsin School of the Air broadcasts are designed to supplement work done by the teachers--to add something which the teacher alone would have difficulty in providing.

Some of the programs fit into prescribed state courses of study. Others take new approaches to subject matter fields. Often these are so attractive that teachers build their entire semester's or year's work around them.

Each year 10 courses are broadcast. Some are varied from year to year; others continue according to needs indicated by teachers. Broadcasts vary in length from 15 minutes to half an hour, depending upon the nature of the program and age level of the listeners. All programs are designed for grade school use.

Programs on the high school level were broadcast for a time, but the inflexibility of class schedules on that level prevented constant use by a large number of schools. Many high school teachers do make use of other state station programs by taping them and playing them back to their classes at their own discretion.

Teacher's manuals are provided for the elementary school broadcasts to enable advance planning to be made by the teacher for each of the series of programs. For one of the music programs conducted by Prof. E. B. Gordon, a songbook is made available to the children.

Prof. Gordon has been broadcasting his "Journeys in Music Land" program since the start of the School of the Air in 1931 and still ranks a favorite with listeners. Records kept for the past fifteen years indicate that he has taught more than 800,000 school children to sing songs which they can enjoy throughout their lives. He teaches songs by such masters as Brahms, Mozart, and Handel, folk songs and standard music which has survived the test of time. In 1951 more than 90,000 children were registered by their teachers as listeners to his program.

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Art is a subject which is usually thought of as requiring visual stimuli to be successful. "Let's Draw," beginning its 17th year on the air this fall under the supervision of James A. Schwalbach, stimulates creative expression through music, drama, and story. It is built on the basic principles of elementary drawing and applies these principles to many subjects. Different media are explained and used as the course proceeds.

Conservation is another program which has been popular with children. This year, his 20th on the air, Ranger Mac, (Wakelin McNeel) will visit schoolrooms via radio to help teachers and pupils interpret the life about them seen in nature. Well known for planting the idea of the school forest, Ranger Mac takes his listeners on field trips throughout the state as they hear his program.

Literature, news of the week, science, and health series are also adapted for different age levels. There's even a "Rhythm and Games" activity program for primary grades. Mrs. Fannie Steve has been conducting this program since 1931 when the School of the Air began. Included are new games, rhythmic, folk dances, and pantomimes. The broadcasts help to develop muscular co-ordination, poise, rhythm sense, and the ability to follow directions. Activities of this listening period carry over onto the playground and into the homes.

Such in-school broadcasting, pioneered in Wisconsin, now has spread to other states. And some city school systems and county departments have set up their own broadcasting stations.

This fall Wisconsin's two state-owned AM stations and eight educational FM stations will carry Wisconsin School of the Air broadcasts to classrooms throughout the state.

They are:

WHA-AM, Madison; and WLBL, Auburndale; the State Radio Council FM network stations WHA-FM, Madison; WHAD, Delafield; WHKW, Chilton; WHRM, Rib Mountain State Park; WHWC, Colfax; WHLA, West Salem; WHHL, Highland; and WHSA, Brule region in northwestern Wisconsin.