

Students Say It's Fun . . .

Radio News Writing Offers Actual Program Experience

By RODNEY MORRISON

Want to be a radio news writer? Eight journalism students taking radio news writing this term are getting a first-hand preview of the radio news world, and they'll tell you it's quite an experience.

Although the course doesn't guarantee immediate employment or anything quite so spectacular, it does offer practical, on-the-job training in writing and editing local and regional news for radio presentation.

Working with Ray V. Johnson, class instructor, and Jack Billings, an Oregon graduate and KUGN news editor, class members work at the station on a team basis, writing a five-minute local and regional news program five days a week, through Friday.

VOICES RECORDED

This is in addition to regular class work, including a one-hour lecture each week and a two-hour lab session. In lab, students get a chance to hear their own voices, since they prepare news broadcasts and record them on a wire recorder.

Several students had previous radio experience, but the change from newspaper to radio news style was tricky at first, say the

neophytes. Informality common to radio news writing is the big difference, although more freedom is allowed in sentence structure and punctuation.

IT'S INTERESTING

Once you get the knack of it, they claim, radio news writing is more interesting and challenging than pounding out similar copy for a newspaper.

Since only eight students are taking the course, one person has to write the newscast alone two nights a week, while teams of two work the other three nights.

Although Billings can and does write additional copy if needed to fill, most of the newscasts are entirely student-written.

NEWS SOURCES

Actual news-gathering and writing begins two hours before air time. Beat coverage from phone calls, rewrites from previous news programs, and local stories from the radio wire and police radio provides the copy.

Approximately 500 to 700 words, or 50 to 60 "lines" of copy are required to fill a five-minute broadcast, allowing time for commercials.

Various news sources are tapped for possible stories. The teletype printer is checked for useable local

or regional items and phone calls are made to seven or eight news contacts in the Eugene-Springfield area. These include local fire stations, the state police, ambulance services, the coroner's office, and the weather bureau.

DAILY WEATHER STORY

The weather man always has a daily story, used as the opening item on each program. Depending on the day, a few stories are gleaned from other phone calls, and the copy pile begins to grow.

One student writes stories obtained from telephone contacts, while the other does rewrite from previous programs and news releases. Items used on other broadcasts are rewritten from a fresh angle, adding new information if possible.

The wire is checked right up to air time, to catch important late stories or bulletins.

Billings, who does two additional 15-minute news shows daily, edits the copy, arranges stories in order of importance and interest, and reads the newscast.

Writers of each script get a thrill when the red "on the air" sign goes on, and the show's underway. They think it's better than reading their own by-lined story in a newspaper.

Portland, Berkeley to Hear Band

The University marching band will be on hand for the Portland game Saturday, reports Band Director J. H. Stehn.

The 70 member group will be led by Phil Green, drum major, and Sharon Ord and Dixie Reynolds, drum majorettes. The band plans to

make the trip to Berkeley for the Oregon-Cal game, Nov. 12, in two chartered buses.

En route to California they will play in high school auditoriums and at street concerts in Reedsport, North Bend, Coos Bay, Coquille, and Bandon, Stehn said.

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Sewage Disposal Plant

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mittees and boards; of small-minded thinking of certain individuals? Has that stopped us? Or has it been from real obstacles placed in the path of progress?

In the years between 1938 and the first days of the war, communities began accumulating funds for this disposal system. When the war came, it knocked many things in the head, including the work on the plant. After the war, the excuse was that "we have to pull ourselves together before anything can be started." Now they excuse themselves with "Cities are still growing. Eugene is growing out. Let's wait until we see how big it will get, and then we'll get an adequate system. If we build now, it may be too small."

'Do the Job Now'

The State Sanitation Department for many years has been saying, "Let's go. Let's work. Let's build." The head of that department, in 1947 declared, "Cities are progressing now, but don't wait too long. The jobs must be done now; if we want sewage treatment facilities badly enough, we can get them."

In the late '30's, and early '40's,

the Eugene water board then merely attached an extra 25 cents to the citizens' water bills, and that went into the "kitty." In 1947, it was raised to \$1, and has remained that way since.

Now the people of this area are just like any other ordinary human beings. They have been paying and paying, because they have faith in the city leaders that soon, something will be done.

It is like a little child who sees a beautiful white cake in a bakery window, and, while thinking of his family besides himself, he decides to buy it. What a feast he could have with that big white cake! So he pays for it, little, by little, by little. And when the great day comes and he takes it out of the window, he finds out that it was cardboard all along. I sincerely hope that these 71,500 citizens will find their "cake" more than "cardboard."

Bill Wolf, in the 1949 Feb. issue of "Sport's Afield", expounded on the condition of many rivers in the nation, "running sores," he called them. And among those "running sores" was the Willamette River. He claims that this magnificent river is an open sewer and a state shame. He warns too, that there has already been one serious epidemic due to this pollution. (Typhoid Fever raged in all the river towns in 1903).

I wish that the councils, the boards, the mayors, and the city managers would not keep forgetting that water is a precious thing. In our state, the Willamette is used not only to float logs, for power, water the land, support fish life, and carry ships into port, and out to sea, but also for drinking purposes.

Using the Willamette as a garbage dump is a lazy and disgraceful way of community living.

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