

Telecommunications Class Busy With 1959 Pelicana

By CHARLES WOODHOUSE

Around the world more than seven times in less than one second! Fabulous? Of course, it's fabulous, but it's true that your voice on radio waves travels with the speed of light at about 186,000 miles a second. Just as fabulous is the use to which radio and television waves are put in the fields of educational and commercial radio. But this is just part of the story of telecommunications at Klamath Union High School.

Telecommunications means communication by electronic means — by radio, television, recorder, public address, and inter-communication. To adapt speech to these different methods of transmission is the chief objective of the course in telecommunications.

In 1941 radio programs at the high school were begun as a part of a course in journalism and news reporting. Each issue of the Klamath Krater every two weeks was followed by a five-minute late news summary on Radio Station KFJL. This program was called "The Pelican Reporter." After about a year, these programs were discontinued, and for quite some time there was no organized broadcasting at the high school.

Later on a series of experimental programs was launched as a pilot project at the University of Washington with the idea of bringing community and school closer together. Out of these trial broadcasts in which Seattle school students took part came the basic idea for a series of radio pro-

grams which were first introduced in Klamath Falls in 1944. The name for such a series was not selected for some time, but since the programs suggested a type of "Americana," a cross-section of the community for this area, a more local name was needed. As the pelican is the popular bird of the Klamath Basin, the name of "Pelicana" was coined and has been used ever since. For a number of years radio speech students worked after school for no credit, and it wasn't until 1945 that a class was established for this work.

For many years Pelicana ran as a variety series on KFJL, featuring news one week, panel discussions the next, then music, and so on, each type of program rotating for listener interest. Every Pelicana began with a surprise opening and signed off with a pelican egg. Typical opening: First Speaker, "Turn off that radio!" Second Speaker, "But it's time for Pelicana." First Speaker, "I said turn that radio off." Second Speaker, "But, why?" First Speaker, "Because I have a better radio for Pelicana. Here it is: turn it on." A customary pelican egg sign-off went like this: "Before we say good night, here's a pelican egg that's just been laid. If you are suffering from falling hair, and want something to keep it in, get a cardboard box." This is strictly original homespun "humor."

At the end of a series of Pelicana in the spring, the public was invited to a special half-hour broadcast at the small studio

which would accommodate only about 30 people. In time, the number of guests increased, so the final programs were moved to the Pine Grove Room of the Willard Hotel, adjacent to the studio. As the crowd grew, these performances were moved to the old auditorium at the high school, then to Pelican Court where a direct line connected to the studio.

As a weekly series Pelicana was eventually replaced by other programs, "Around Town," "Musical Memos," and "Main Street," but the annual Pelicana show was retained as an overall project of the telecommunications students. Year by year Pelicana grew to a 90-minute spectacle of talent. When the annual production was moved to Mills auditorium in 1950 it was found that many were being turned away. So for the last four years Pelicana has featured two performances the same eve-

ning. This plan was adopted in view of the difficulty of assembling the cast and technical equipment for two nights and the unavailability of the auditorium for more than one night.

More than an annual stage show, Pelicana is an all-student project supervised by the Script and Microphone Guild. What is the guild? It comprises those radio-television students who have proven their worth by maintaining a grade point average in all subjects of 2.5 or better and who continues with individual projects after completing the course. It is not a club for there are no fees of any kind; it promises nothing but a chance to do individual broadcasting, writing, and announcing work for which the members receive no academic credit. From the guild ranks many have gone into the broadcasting profession as announcers, station managers, and specialty people in radio and television, and still others are using their telecom skills in the fields of entertainment, auctioneering, ministry, and other professions.

To prepare a Pelicana show requires several months of planning and organizing—search for talent, financing, publicity, and correspondence. Usually, two auditions to select talent are held at which local business people and radio-television personnel choose the best acts, not so much for professional performance as for all-round appeal. In other words, everybody, young and old, has a chance to appear in Pelicana. Registration and scheduling the au-

ditions alone represent much work, but the real job comes later when the actual arrangement of stage equipment and the running sequence of the program must be mapped out. Also, technical equipment — lighting, public address, and recording (30 minutes of the program is featured on a delayed broadcast) must be set up and tested. On the big night, performers must be registered at roll call and lined up on the call board according to appearance on the program, and after their performance on the first show, they must be assembled again for the second show.

Each performance usually brings a capacity audience so that traffic and parking must be handled quickly and efficiently, particularly to avoid a traffic tie-up with the departing first-show audience and the arriving second-performance spectators. The Exchange Club of Klamath Falls has sponsored Pelicana for many years, and its members take over many important jobs: traffic control, house management, and finance. Even the members' wives help out wherever needed. Since no admission charge is made for Pelicana, money for expenses is secured through individual business firm subscriptions which assure merchants of newspaper, program and radio advertising. The annual budget of Pelicana is about \$300 of which about \$125 goes for newspaper advertising, \$110 for printed souvenir programs, and the balance for staging, lights, and

(Continued on Page 3)

THE COVER
Symbolic of the activities of the telecommunications group at KUHS is this shot of a microphone superimposed over a bulletin board of the radio class. Students in this Classification will present Pelicana this year on April 10.



IN THESE SPECIAL BOOTHS students in the telecommunications class at KUHS can practice before the mikes in privacy while their delivery is checked in a separate room. Much analysis goes into each finished per-

formance and the booths are well filled during the working hours. Here students read for not only voice fluency but also for accuracy.