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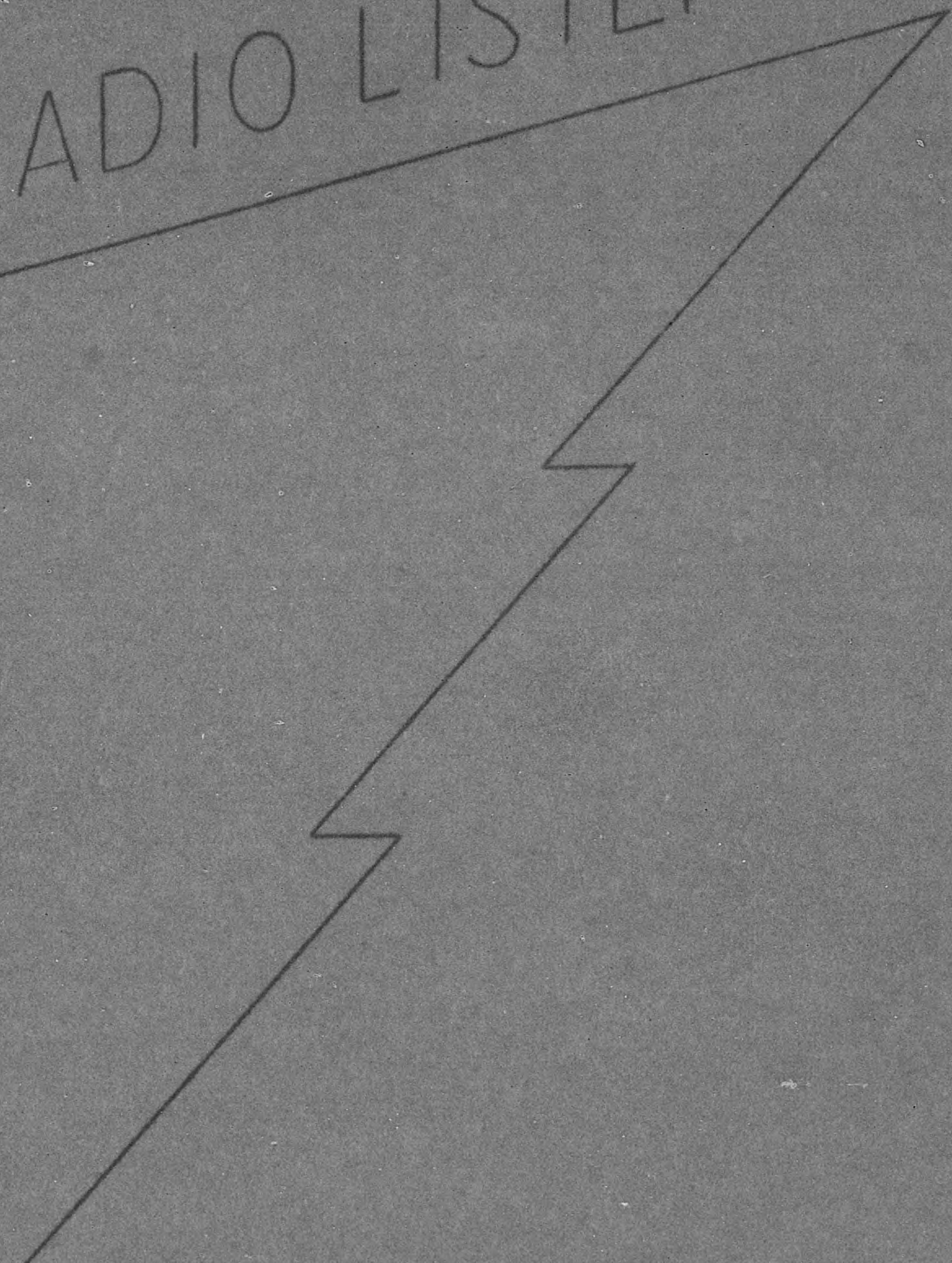
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A Guide to
RADIO LISTENING



WISCONSIN JOINT COMMITTEE ON

BETTER RADIO LISTENING

RADIO LISTENING
a help to evaluating radio programs

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Assembled by Leslie Spence, Chairman of the
Committee on Education, Wisconsin Joint Committee

for BETTER RADIO LISTENING

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RADIO NEWS
SUGGESTIONS FOR JUDGING IT

prepared by Miss Leslie Spence,
Chairman of Education,
Wisconsin Joint Committee for Radio Listening

Why judge news the radio gives? Why not listen to just any news reporter? any news commentator? They differ in the amount of information they give; in conclusions, too. Yet we listeners are likely to regard what they say as fact, and on the basis of their reports to form our opinions, support causes, or work against wrongs.

"In a free country," President Truman has said, "the voice of the people must be heard." And it will be heard. Yet nothing but disappointment and disaster is ahead, if the people have let themselves be misinformed.

Ralph Ingersoll, editor of "PM", says: "The success of any group of people in solving their common problems depends on at least two things: first, their knowledge and understanding of the problems to be solved; and, second, their intelligence, judgment and character in meeting them.

"The essence of a democracy is the belief that the intelligence, judgment, and character of the majority of the people will produce a better and more satisfying solution to their problems than any permanent leader or group of leaders can achieve. But the people of a democracy can only thus function wisely and for their own best interests, if they are continuously supplied with accurate factual knowledge of the world they live in."

"Accurate, factual knowledge." That listeners can depend on getting, only if they know it when they hear it -- and if they want it. One can train oneself to recognize it. The following suggestions may be helpful to those who want to recognize it. First:

A NOTE ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REPORTERS AND COMMENTATORS

Except for local items, news reports come to most radio stations from the Associated Press, the United Press, or the International News Service, all of them reputable news-gathering agencies. Since the newscaster reads what the teletype furnishes him, he will be moderately accurate and fairly concise.

THE NEWSCASTER is, nevertheless, important to the quality of the report because:

1. HE CHOOSES the items from an abundance of material:

the important	OR	the trivial
a good authority	OR	the uninformed
world-wide events	OR	local happenings
impartial views	OR	partial views

HE ARRANGES items; thus he can:

present truth
clarify truth

distort truth
imply what is false

HE EXPRESSES BY HIS VOICE:

pride
elation
surprise
disgust
suspicion

OR, HE KEEPS HIS VOICE:

level
objective
reasonable
matter-of-fact
unemotional

If the newscaster's delivery is calm and rather level, he does not distract attention from the facts, and he does not influence the reader's judgment by his voice, alone.

NEWS REPORTS

It is impossible to name even a fraction of the good reporters. We call attention, however, to reports from world capitals:

The World Today WBBM, 7:00 a.m. 5:45 p.m., except Sunday;

News of the World WIBA, 7:00 a.m.; WMAQ, 6:15 p.m., Mon.-Fri.

News unaccompanied by advertising: WHA, WILL, WSUI, WOI.

NEWS COMMENTATORS

The news commentator's function is different from that of the newscaster. The commentator discusses the news in order to make it more understandable. At least that is supposed to be his object. He tells of historical facts which shed light on the news, or facts of economics or political science. Therefore he must be very well informed. In giving this additional knowledge, he clarifies the issues and also interprets them. Because he interprets, the commentator who deserves the listener's trust will be honest, balanced, and courageous. His character, plus the adequacy of his background, is much more important to the listener than is the time of day when he is heard. Better a good commentator at a poor time than a poor commentator at any time.

A few excellent commentators are named below:

Elmer Davis, Tu., Wed. 7:15 p.m. WENR
H.V. Kaltenborn, M-F. 6:45 p.m. WMAQ
Clifton Utley, Sun. 10:00 p.m. WBBM
Lyman Bryson, Sun. 12:30 p.m. WBBM

Raymond Swing, M-Th. 6:15 WCFL
Edw. R. Murrow, Sun. 12:45 WBBM
Wm. Shirer, Sun. 4:45 WBBM
E. Tomlinson, Sat. 12:45 WMAQ

THE CRITERION: ACCURACY

All commentators make occasional slips. One mistake, if slight, should not condemn a commentator; but several within the course of a few months would class him as undependable.

SOME FOES OF ACCURACY1. EXAGGERATION

of fears (of ill health, unemployment; of other nations, classes) of complacency ("We're the biggest, noblest, most generous," etc.) of points of conflict (enlarging small disagreements to seem important because struggle catches public interest) of merits or defects (making all black or all white). The following excerpt from Representative Walter Judd illustrates this point:

"Madame Chiang came to this country and she captured American imagination as few foreigners ever had, and certainly as no Asiatic ever had. Our estimate of the Chinese soared still higher-- too high. To hear many Americans talk, including commentators and columnists, practically every Chinese was wholly selfless in his devotion to his country, patriotically sacrificing everything for freedom and his nation's welfare, and so forth. We who had lived there were concerned, and Chinese leaders were even more disturbed, because we and they knew that it was not a true picture of the situation in China or in any country, and that over-idealization would inevitably lead to a swing-back into over-disillusionment. We are in the midst of that swing-back now. Those who a year ago could hardly find words good enough with which to describe our Chinese allies, now can hardly find words bad enough. To hear them talk now, all Chinese are lazy, are crooks, and grafters, are obstructionists, antiforeign, hopelessly inefficient, split up into political factions interested more in preserving themselves than in defeating Japan, expecting us to do all the fighting, and so forth, and so forth. Between those two extremes, where is the truth?"

2. SWEEPING GENERALIZATIONS (many of which are not true)

Take the statement that all the citizens of a country have the same qualities. That shows lack of observation. Look at Americans. They differ. So do Chinese, Canadians, Russians, etc. Consider:

"All Brazilians are unselfish (or selfish)."

"Lawyers are Dishonest."

"Beauty is the key to success."

If you say, "Some Brazilians are selfish," or "Sometimes Brazilians are selfish," that is accurate. Not all generalizations are inaccurate. For instance, "Babies have unknown possibilities," is true.

3. ONE-SIDEDNESS

In controversial issues, different points of view should be presented. In a broadcast of March 12, 1945, WMAQ, Clifton Utley brought out the importance of showing both sides of a question:

"I am moved to undertake this discussion [freedom of the press-- for whom?] by the reporting of last week's Detroit sessions of the special Senate sub-committee investigation of war production problems. Investigation producing problems in the automobile industry, the committee heard, among other things, a lengthy attack on labor's production attitude by George Romney, who, in his capacity as managing director of the automotive council for war production, represented the management viewpoint. On the same day, R.J. Thomas, President of the United States Automobile Workers, issued a statement

attacking what he termed the concern of management with seeking war profits as a major factor in depressing war production in automotive plants. At the same time Thomas defended the record of labor.

"Now the next morning, the most widely circulated Chicago newspaper gave a full column on the front page, and much more on the inside to Romney's statement running down labor's record, and specifically to Romney's charges that because of Labor's attitude, war production in automotive plants was 25 to 50 per cent under what it might otherwise be.

"Now I'm not objecting to this. As a matter of fact, I thought that Romney made a pretty damning case against labor in the automotive industry, and that it was the duty of any newspaper to give it full reporting and good position.

"But it was significant that the reply statement of Thomas, the automobile union workers' president, got no space on the front page and mighty little on the inside, and if one statement was news, the other certainly was equally, for both were part of one picture-- part of one story."

Mr. Utley himself furnishes a good example of the fairness of giving both (or all) points of view. Broadcasting, October 6, 1945, he said:

"Let's try to look at it from the Russian viewpoint for a moment. In the first place, we have been asking that we be dealt a hand in Balkan arrangements-- right next door to Russia. Yet we have been pretty effectively logging the manger where Japan is concerned.... The Russians proposed a four power control commission to rule Japan, apparently a commission something like the group that rules Germany, but with this difference--in the Japanese case the Russians suggested that the commission always have an American Commander-in-Chief. Notwithstanding, our response to this suggestion has been frosty in the extreme. That may seem perfectly justified to us, because we did most of the fighting to beat Japan. All I'm suggesting is that it may seem less reasonable to the Russians, and particularly that it may not seem reasonable that we are making direct demands as to what should be done in regard to the Balkan nations, whereas we rule the roost, and openly plan to continue to do so, where Japan is concerned."

THE LISTENER NEEDS A COMPLETE PICTURE
IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS.

Now, countries, which till recently have been working for themselves alone, are pledged to work together for the good of mankind. We find now that we need to know what effects our actions have on other nations and what effects their actions have on us; and we need to know which commentators give us this kind of news.

The war was still on when Edward Tomlinson said, August 11, 1945, over WMAQ:

"Brazil has furnished us with a half dozen strategic minerals and metals without which we could not have fought a modern war. The raw material which made possible radar and many of the newest gadgets for planes and battleships comes from the giant southern Republic.

"Without the copper and nitrates of Chile, the tin of Bolivia, the oil of Venezuela and Colombia, for our own and allied countries, victory would not have come so quickly. An editorial in the British Oil Journal of London declares that without the oil of Venezuela the British Navy could not have put to sea, and the Royal Air Force would have remained on the ground."

And in the same broadcast:

"The Swedes are going to build merchant ships for the Argentines, and supply the southern republic with steel, oil well and heavy manufactured necessities, but I have it upon good authority that we are already shutting down on supplying them with replacements and spare parts for the upkeep of their small naval and military establishments, which we encouraged them to build during the war. Meantime our British Allies are demonstrating airplanes and other such equipment in Brazil and several of the countries. Representatives of Chile, now in this country, have made it known that if we can't supply them with much needed equipment for their armed forces, which have helped to guard the long Pacific Coast Line of South America since Pearl Harbor, they will be compelled to buy from our competitors."

This adds up to a great number of up-to-date facts, facts that we need to know.

THE TRUTH, THE WHOLE TRUTH, AND NOTHING BUT --

Do we listeners want it? Even when it hurts our pride? Herbert Agar, editor of the Louisville Courier, says:

The truth which makes men free is for the most part the truth which men prefer not to hear.... The public, except during rare bursts of reformism, does not like a daily reminder of the most troublesome problems on its doorstep. Yet it is through such reminders that the press can help the public to live up to the duties of citizenship."

IT TAKES COURAGE,

for commentators to tell us the disagreeable truths we listeners shrink from hearing. That means that the commentators who do give us a well balanced and fairly complete picture, whether we like the news or not, need the encouragement of those listeners who believe it is essential to the well-being of our republic and the world that we have such news. We should write our commendation to the station over which we hear them.

ARRANGEMENT OF FACTS

Placing facts beside each other often implies a connection between them. Thus:

"The streets were crowded on December 20. John Groh lost his purse."

This arrangement implies that John lost his purse on the crowded streets, partly because they were crowded. If John lost his purse while skating, or left it in the basement at home, the impression given by the arrangement of the two facts is dishonest.

Sometimes the reporter is not content to give a false impression by juxtaposition alone. He distorts truth by actual statement that a connection exists. This item appeared some years ago in a Chicago paper:

"Timed to lend the greatest possible support to the waning communist CIO movement in the United States, three Russian fliers were speeding tonight toward Oakland, California, goal of their 6000 mile, non-stop flight from Moscow."

The facts are these: the CIO was not waning; it was not started by communists; the flight had no connection with the CIO. Making that false connection renders the account sensational as well as untrue. Such sensationalism is more difficult to detect over the radio than in print, for we hear it only once and are less likely to question its truth.

A CLEAR PICTURE

Especially in these days of multiplied relationships, the listener wants the truth presented to him clearly.

Some commentators lack clearness through not taking pains; others, through intention. They want to lead people along a path they have in mind; they know that confused people are easily led.

Archibald McLeish, Librarian of Congress, says, "The systematic use of the press to meet the issue by confusing the issue, and to answer the adversary by befouling him is an invention of our time Its end and aim is to produce intellectual perplexity-- the emotional disorder, the doubt of truth, the distrust of all declarations of principles, all standards of decency."

SOME METHODS OF CONFUSING ISSUES

1. to bring out one fact of small importance while ignoring real issues, treat it as important, and hang dire consequences on it.
2. to rouse passion, suspicion, and self-interest, and thus to obstruct by a small, selfish view the vision of the whole situation; also to substitute emotion for reasoning.
3. to tell only part of the truth.

A partial quotation often gives a meaning exactly opposite to that which the whole quotation would give.

If there are three important facts and we know only one of them, we may act unwisely, become discouraged, be easily led.

TWO METHODS OF CLARIFYING THOUGHTPRESENTATION OF THE PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVE

The commentator should not leave the listener wondering what the other possibility is. If you buy a home, you will have these privileges and obligations. BUT if you don't, you will have these other privileges and obligations. On the basis of such clear alternatives, the average person can make clear decisions.

Recently in a broadcast Clifton Utley considered one of the arguments against international inspection of the atomic bomb-- that the inspection can not be 100 per cent perfect. No, he admitted; but if it is only 80 per cent perfect, probably no nation will run a four to five chance of being caught violating the agreement. The Alternative to accepting international inspection is the probability of no inspection at all, and the consequent secret manufacture of the bombs. (Thought, not words, of C. Utley, Jan. 12, 1946, 10:15 CST, WHAM)

If there is no alternative, it is often best to say so, as Rod Holmgren did, November 1, 1945, WCFL:

"We no longer live in a world in which we can afford to think in terms of preparedness for war. There's no alternative-- we've just got to think in terms of preparedness for peace. There are many things which make this true. And the one that's easiest to understand is the atomic bomb."

Note whether an alternative is true. Or is there a third possibility?

ANALYSIS:

divides the whole into its parts
to show their relative importance; their working relationship;
to show cause-- why it brings, or would bring, such a result.

Do your favorite commentators not only present facts, but show relationships between them by analysis? Present TRUE alternatives?

PREJUDICES

- TO DISCOVER OUR OWN PREJUDICES OR A NEWS COMMENTATOR'S, ask:
1. What fact, or facts, support the conclusion?
 2. Are they important (affect many people deeply)?
 3. Has he shown clearly the relation between the facts and the conclusion? Did they (or would they) produce such a result?

Other help on this subject is to be found on the mimeographed sheets:

Propaganda, George C. Allez-----	.02
Background of Some Commentators, Miss Attilio Gordon-----	.02
A Study of Broadcasts, a manual-*****-----	.03
Let's Learn to Listen, a booklet, p.19; p.5 -----	.25

Address: Mrs. N.W. Madding, 143 N. Hancock, Madison, Wisconsin.

EXTRA SHEET
HELPS IN JUDGING THE WORTH OF NEWS COMMENTATORS

Character is as important as background in news commentators. Some companions are worth listening to when they speak; some commentators, too. Let's notice them in the same way.

Your companions may say:

FLATTERY

"You've got punch."

"You're on the ball."

BOASTING

"Me-- I'm always right."

NAME CALLING

"Teacher's pet."

BOOSTING SPEAKER'S PRESTIGE

"I know something you don't know."

"I told you so."

PREJUDICE

"He's from across the tracks and doesn't count."

ROUSING LISTENER'S HATEFULNESS

"He doesn't care what happens to you."

"He called you dirty names."

"He's trying to steal your stuff."

"He's hard to get on with."

OTHER QUALITIES

Wordiness (a big mouth saying nothing)

Lying

Too much imagination.

Exaggeration

A commentator may say:

"The American way," (by implication the best way.) (bravo!)

"American genius"; "home of the The American soldier gives gum to children; the enemy loots."

"Communist."

"He's a Wop."

"My secret sources of information."

"I prophesied this six months ago."

"The British feel superior; have no sense of humor."

"Some nations are our friends only for what they can get out of us."

"Chiang Kai-Shek didn't appreciate our soldiers."

"England want some of our trade."

"Russia won't be friends."

--- A year ago Heater told dramatically of a submarine sailing from Germany to Argentina with the chief Nazis aboard. His last sentence was, "This didn't happen, but it might have." Some listeners would have tuned out before the last sentence.

One could make quite a list of commentators' remarks that correspond with those of companions.

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PROPAGANDA

Professor George C. Allez, Director, Library School, U. W.
(Condensation of the BROADCAST ON BROADCASTS, Nov. 8, 9:15, WHA)
A program of Better Radio Listening.

What is propaganda?

There are many definitions of propaganda.

Institute of Propaganda Analysis says:

"As generally understood, propaganda is an expression of opinion, or action by individuals or groups deliberately designed to influence opinion or actions of other individuals or groups with reference to predetermined ends."

This is a broad, comprehensive definition intended, perhaps, to be all inclusive and also somewhat academic.

Time does not permit a discussion of propaganda in all its ramifications and so to reduce it to something somewhat more tangible I prefer to think of it as an attempt to influence people through their emotions rather than through their reason or intellect.

Probably we should confine the discussion today to the kind of propaganda which stirs an emotional reaction that is not necessarily justified in the light of facts.

Propaganda is a powerful weapon because of its emotional appeal.

I believe that it was Cooley who said, "People think slowly and with difficulty but react emotionally with the speed of light."

How does propaganda operate?

There are many techniques or devices some of which have been pretty well classified, each designed to appeal to some human emotion such as fear, hate, love, sympathy, etc.

Can you tell us some of these devices and perhaps give some examples of how they are used?

One of the best known list of these techniques or devices is that which was set up some years ago by the Institute of Propaganda Analysis. They listed seven.

The first is the name calling device -- used to make us form judgment without examining the evidence on which it is based.

Here the propagandist appeals to fear or hate by giving bad names to people. Throughout history, thousands have been oppressed - tortured - put to death through its use -- Joan of Arc - Copernicus - Galileo.

Today's bad names --

Fascist - demagogue - dictator - Red - financial oligarch - Communist - muckraker - economic royalist - rabble rouser. Before the war - war-monger - fifth columnist - appeaser - isolationist - and some specially coined ones such as crackpot - globolony - sentimental idealist - dreamer, and ad infinitum.

Call a man a bad name and the emotional reaction comes with the speed of light, associating the man with the bad name regardless of any factual basis for any such association.

The second of these is the Glittering Generalities device. This is just the opposite of the name calling device in that here the propagandist identifies his program by virtue words.

Right to work
Social justice
100% Americanism
Free competitive system
Hitler used this in his
Glorious peasant state
Strength through joy

Apply good words to the thing you want people to believe in, with the hope that their emotional response to the ideals suggested by the good words will carry over to their program.

What are some of the other devices?

Well, the third in their list is the transfer device, by which the propagandist carries over the authority sanction and prestige of something we respect or revere to that which he wishes us to believe.

Cross - of the Christian church
Flag
Boy Scout
Nurse
Uncle Sam
Poster and no third term

Funniest was the time John L. Lewis was talking before a labor group and someone dropped the flag with the sickle and hammer down over his head.

When the British stated on the radio that on such and such an hour and date the Bismarck was sunk, that wasn't propaganda. That was a statement of fact; but when they played "Britannia Rules the Waves" right after it, that was propaganda.

Probably the Plain Folks device is the most amusing. It is used mostly in election campaigns. Here the propagandist tries to make himself appear as one of us. Just common folks. He has -

Front porch campaigns
Pictures of the family
Attends county picnics
Pitches hay
Cuts wood
Wears Indian bonnets
Kisses babies
Goes fishing

One should raise the question as to whether the ability to pitch hay, cut wood, and wear Indian bonnets indicates qualifications for the Presidency of the United States. These do carry weight, however, and I have a tendency myself to think that a man who loves to fish is a "bit of all right."

The fourth device is one of the most common and most obvious: The Testimonial device used to get us to accept anything from a cigarette to a program of national policy.

This is what I call one of The great American rackets.

Athletes - writers - actors - society women subscribe to cigarettes, creams and lotions, Wheaties, tooth paste, and many of them never used these products.

Probably the most vicious of these devices is the card-stacking device. Here the propagandist stacks the cards against the truth.

Resorts to lies - censorship - distortion - omission of parts of quotations.

Such statements as --

Lend-lease provoked the attack on us
Economic sanctions against Japan caused Pearl Harbor
Russia will betray us
England will fight to the last American

In the last election campaign, in an effort to discredit Roosevelt's preparation for war, General Marshall was quoted as saying the country was only 25% prepared for war.

What General Marshall said was -

"The United States, being a peace-loving nation, has for its peace time policy the maintaining of an army 25% of a war time basis, prepared to expand it to full time war basis when necessary. We know where the men and supplies are coming from to expand to war time basis."

The best of these seven is the Band wagon device.

Here the propagandist plays up the human desire to be on the winning side.

Follow the crowd - Everybody's doing it - Don't throw your vote away - Vote for our candidate, He's going to win anyway.

The Germans used it in Norway, singing "Roll out the Barrel."

I usually add two other devices to this group.

We would be interested in hearing what these are.

Well, one is the device of Ridicule. To refuse to take an issue seriously is to kill it. To arouse amusement over someone's efforts in behalf of a cause is to weaken their stand.

Tammany was defeated through the use of cartoons.

Everyone, I believe, will recall the ridicule through cartoons that was heaped upon the prohibitionists - the women suffragettes - the brain trust, and others.

And, finally, what is perhaps one of the worst types of propaganda is Self propaganda -- Self-rationalization in terms of personal security, prejudice, or expediency.

The very human tendency to think of every question in terms of how it will affect us as an individual rather than the real merits of the issue as to its lasting effects on society.

This type of self-propaganda is evidenced on both sides of labor disputes.

Its opposite is intellectual honesty.

Question: What do you think is the answer to all of this?

One might ask ourselves this question: -

Has our general educational system brought the average of our people to the point along the road in thinking where they are easy prey and easily susceptible to propaganda?

If so, then our continuing educational problem is to try in our schools, colleges, universities, and libraries to think more and think honestly. What America needs today is intellectual honesty in its thinking.

A little learning is a dangerous thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring:
There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
And drinking largely sobers us again.

BACKGROUND OF SOME NEWS COMMENTATORS

(summary of a broadcast on Broadcasts, Nov. 29, 1945, WHA)

Miss Otilia Gordon, of the Madison Public Library

The Association of Radio News Broadcasters has set up as one criterion of good newscasting: that material used on broadcasts should reflect painstaking accuracy and good taste, with no sensationalism. Such a standard would eliminate from serious consideration that group of commentators who deal largely in gossip, hearsay, and personal opinions. It would also eliminate that small group of commentators who tend toward sensationalism, create domestic suspicion, and are on the air mainly to attract attention to themselves.

Some news analysts do meet these requirements. For one, H.V. KALTENBORN, well known as the Dean of Radio News Commentators, a native of Wisconsin, born in Milwaukee. In common with many commentators, he has had wide experience in newspaper work, having been with the Brooklyn Eagle for twenty years, first as reporter, then as editorial writer and commentator. He covered the Spanish-American war for Milwaukee newspapers, writing his material in both English and German. He gained wide knowledge of Europe in his travels. For two years he was a traveling salesman in France. He is a Phi Beta Kappa from Harvard University. He was once tutor to Vincent Astor. In 1922 he became radio's first news analyst, but it was not until the crisis in Munich in 1938 that he gained world popularity. His knowledge of world affairs is extensive, so much so that he is the only one of the commentators who regularly broadcasts without script.

RAYMOND SWING stands high on the list of authoritative commentators. He was born in Cortland, New York, and received his college training at Oberlin College, Ohio. His experience varies from that of Examiner for the War Labor Board in the first World War, to that of Executive Director of Wall Street Journal. Then he was foreign correspondent for eight years for the New York Evening Post. In 1935 he became news commentator on American Affairs for the British Broadcasting Corporation. He was also for a time a member of the board of editors of Nation. Unlike Kaltenborn, Swing prepares careful scripts. Because of their excellence Swing's scripts are sought for permanent deposit in the Library of Congress. Swing also broadcasts by shortwave a weekly quarter hour program on American affairs to the British Dominions. This gives him the largest international audience of any news expert.

ELMER DAVIS is noted for his accuracy. Born in Aurora, Indiana, he received two college degrees from Franklin College, and later went to Oxford, England, on a Rhodes Scholarship. He taught in Indiana. He was for a time an editorial writer for Adventure Magazine. He has been a reporter, correspondent, and editorial writer for the New York Times; and a novelist. He won fame while substituting for Kaltenborn. He is scholarly. His reporting is noted for its clarity and accuracy.

WILLIAM L. SHIRER, born in Chicago, spent his youth in Iowa. He graduated from Coe College and was for a time reporter for the Cedar Rapids Republic. Shirer's newspaper work took him to Paris, where he worked for the Chicago Tribune. From 1929-1932 Shirer was chief of the Tribune's Central European Bureau. Later he joined

Universal News Service as Berlin correspondent. Through his Berlin reports, Shirer came to public attention. He wrote his famous Berlin Diary. Shirer's calm and accurate radio reporting have won for him many listeners.

JOHN W. VANDERCOOK has lived in or traveled in some 75 different countries of the world. He was born in London, but was reared in the United States. He went to Yale, but did not finish his work there. He aspired to be an actor -- in vain. He worked on the Columbus Citizen and on newspapers in Baltimore and Washington, D.C. He traveled extensively into the interior of Dutch Guiana, Haiti, Liberia, Africa and along the southern coast of New Guinea. He also traveled in the Solomon and the Fiji Islands. When global war broke, Vandercook was a logical choice for a news commentator.

JOSEPH C. HARSCH was for many years foreign correspondent for the Christian Science Monitor. Born in Toledo, Ohio, he received his B.A. degree from Williams College. He also has a college degree from Cambridge University, England. He was first assigned to Rome, then to Berlin to cover the war in the early years. He has written an excellent book, Pattern of Conquest. Harsch's news commentary is careful, unspectacular, and often shrewdly prophetic. He gained widespread fame for his on-the-spot reporting of the attack on Pearl Harbor. He was also in Java when the Japanese invasion began there, and in Australia when the first American troops disembarked, and on the spot to see MacArthur's return to Australia from Bataan.

LISA SERGIO has a weekly program Monday mornings on the American Broadcasting Company, "One Woman's Opinion." She is Italian; was born in Rome. She speaks five languages fluently. Her career began as editor of the Italian Mail. Later her shortwave broadcasts of news items made her famous throughout Europe. After arriving in America, she announced for the Metropolitan Opera and other programs. In March, 1939, a New York station first carried her American news program. For this program she won the New Jersey Women's Press Club Radio Award. Then she began her present program, which is still popular.

IN SUMMARY-- It is noteworthy that most of the better commentators have had considerable formal education. Most of them have also had wide newspaper experience, and have traveled widely, both in this country and abroad and know the people and the countries about which they report. And foremost, all of them are men of stability and character. This is reflected in their work.

Then too, I think that the listener has certain responsibilities to the commentator. Each listener is a critic, and as such should be wary of news broadcasters whose material is too personal and too highly opinionated. Each listener should listen to several of the better commentators in helping himself to formulate his thinking about important issues. And each of us who listens should make full use of the commentators' superior knowledge of the world.

DRAMATIZED INFORMATION

The impulse to take information straight, unwarped, unsugared, is sound. Drama appeals to the emotions; information appeals to the reason and should do so.

In December, 1945, when war between Chinese communists and the Kuomintang seemed imminent and United States aviators were "flying the hump" from India to Chungking, a dramatized news item placed one of our flyers over the Himalayas. There radio contact failed and the plane faltered and fell. Even the mechanical details of this fictitious accident were faulty. "A phoney," flyers of experience called it. But the really powerful harm was in giving the American people the impression that hundreds of our soldiers were being lost in taking ammunition to one side in a civil war. Though this was not true, the dramatization, with its memorable emotional climax, will have made the fictitious hero represent many men who flew the Hump, at least in the memory of the public.

Dramatized information can be used to fan prejudice, hate, etc. A battle between the Japanese and the Americans for a bridge was given thus in one dramatized report:

An American soldier leaves the protection of a bush and runs for the bridge. A Japanese, from a bush across the stream, shoots him down. A huge American radio audience hears him groan, feels with him, and calls for vengeance. To the public vengeance then seems justified, desirable. It does not think how the scene would have been dramatized, had a Japanese run for the bridge, and an American shot him.

Much better, a straight report, if possible: "The Anomiji bridge was taken with the loss of ___ men. The enemy lost ___."

In dramatization of facts, too, the listener has to be on guard against unauthentic emotions which may be given to characters who represent real people. Sometimes a character is made to laugh at the suffering of others. The radio audience understandably abominates that character. But actually, did the real person laugh? Sometimes we find, much later, that he helped the unfortunate. If so, only a few people ever know it. A whole nation believes him cruel -- because a studio production man imagined him to be so.

A character talking with a foreign accent sneers. The audience gets the impression that all Czechs or Italians, etc., are scornful, supercilious. Many listeners have never seen a Czech or an Italian, and for them this dramatization is the whole truth about the Czechs.

DRAMATIZED HISTORY

There is less danger of being misled emotionally in the dramatization of history than in the dramatization of current news and personalities.

(over)

PROGRAMS OF FUN

Humor. Everyone likes it. Yet some radio PROGRAMS OF FUN leave the listener apathetic. Why? What may the listener have expected that he did not get?

VARIETY

Lack of variety bores many listeners. Comedians know this. So, into a thirty-minute program, many of them introduce music or a character with a queer voice, odd manners, and a story quite detached from the rest of the program. Such extraneous kinds of variety are not necessary; for humor has many facets. One reason for the listener's dissatisfaction may be the patchiness of the program.

The Listener's EXPECTATIONS of Comic Action Affect His Pleasure.

Many comic effects are based on the expectation of the listener. He feels like laughing if his comic expectation is fulfilled-- if, for instance, the character in the skit actually trips over the stretched string. The listener laughs, too, at his own surprise when his expectation is unfulfilled. The character who has made four dull remarks about the weather, and from whom he expects nothing but commonplaces, makes a penetrating observation. Surprise!

IGNORANCE on the Part of Fictitious Characters, as a Source of VARIETY

The unknowingness, or ignorance, on the part of some of the characters in the program is a source of many of these gratifications and surprises. To take a crude example, a man in a skit does not see a rafter and hits his head against it. Again he rushes up, too fast to think about it, and knocks it again. Then he comes along thinking about something else and hits his head a third time. A fourth time he knocks it because of great excitement.

While the result in each of these cases is the same, and the cause each time was not knowing AT THAT SECOND that the rafter was there, the effect on the audience is different because the man seems more to blame in some instances.

IGNORANCE AS FAULTS

Many kinds of mirth-provoking ignorance are due to fundamental lacks (or faults) in the character. He is impractical, or too trusting, and so buys non-existent property. Or he is too suspicious, and he misses a desirable partnership. Or he is demanding and full of pride, and so ostracizes himself from the friendships he craves.

IGNORANCE of Matters of Common Knowledge

The audience feels pleasantly superior, when watching a man's clumsiness in threading a needle; or hearing a boy stammer when he asks a girl to dance; or seeing a person traveling on a streamliner away from his destination.

IGNORANCE of Matters of Common Knowledge, resulting from:

POOR ESTIMATE OF VALUES:

Underestimate of: an adversary's muscle,
the little wife's will power,
a rival's brains;

Overestimate of: one's own popularity, charm, etc.

IGNORANCE of the Tools of Communication:

of grammar, pronunciation, and correct meanings of words or of idiomatic or slang expressions or of allusions. Some script writers who lack inventiveness overuse these means of comic effect.

"I drug in the log that I brung from the crik, by Gosh!"

(Not very funny. But then--)

Made-up words -- miscombebbulate; happify.

Colloquial expressions: "I got misery in my bones."

Mispronunciation: onnery. It may also be an unconscious pun, like Billy Burke's high biscuits for hibiscus. The conscious mispronunciation of words in puns is not, of course, based on ignorance. It is intentional wit, as are some twists of familiar expressions: "Listen. You squeeze it -- which, spelled backward-- is unpronuncable."

But "I like Mozart. I almost met him the other night," is again fun based on ignorance, ignorance which surprises the listener.

EXAGGERATION, another Facet of Variety

The "tall tale" is sometimes spoken of as characteristic American humor. Let's hope that this estimate of our humor is incorrect. For it easily becomes monotonous; and it, together with the practical joke, is the favorite humor of rather dull people.

"The snow was so deep that the cow had to be jacked up to be milked." "It was so cold that a man saw the notes he had just whistled freeze and hang in the air before him." Two or three like this are funny enough. But a dozen!

An exaggeration of an exaggeration adds liveliness to a tale:

"I measured a small Arkansas sweet potato. It was thirteen feet, two inches long."

"No, not possibly."

"Yes, and a litter of thirteen pigs fed on it all summer."

CHARACTERS add Variety

THE TYPICAL CHARACTER is usually made by draining out of any character all but one quality or habit. He becomes a caricature, the butt of frequent jokes: The mother-in-law; Even the wife ("What if my wife should find out!" The fat man who eats candy and peanuts incessantly and says, every few minutes, "When do we eat?" The destitute man who says, "Something will turn up." The absent-minded lover. The typical bruiser. The typical ladies' man. The typical coward. And so on.

WARNING

Notice who and what are the butts of jokes. Comedians, eager to please, find it easy to make fun of something that people are prejudiced against. They get an easy laugh, but strengthen a harmful prejudice. We must be on our guard against it.

REPETITION IN JOKES involving Typical Characters

has a cumulative effect, so that the second time the fat man says, "When do we eat?" it is funnier than it was the first time; and the fourth time it is uproarious. If a braggart comes on the program, the audience expects him to brag, and is more amused every time he brags -- to a certain point, the point of satiation. Beyond that, the audience becomes quickly bored.

THE SURPRISE OF INCONGRUITY

From a typical character, one expects predictable behavior. So, by making such a character do the unexpected, the script writer introduces surprise. When the enraged bruiser ejaculates, "By my grandmother's moustache!" we laugh in surprise; or when a dainty lady lights a long black cigar; or when a hale, bluff character addresses a precise person of good taste over-familiarly or patronizingly. He welcomes to his home, for instance, Mrs. Stair, a social leader whom he has never seen before: "'Lo, Ally. You'll do okay. Make yourself comfy."

ILL-NATURED LAUGHTER OF THE JEALOUS

The laugh of the below-average audience at the welcome just quoted is also partly due to its jealousy of any person of cultural attainments. Seeing such a person put in his place gives such an audience a depraved sense of satisfaction. When we laugh at people with large vocabularies, our laughter is partly the result of our grudge against them, because we have been too lazy to acquire such a vocabulary ourselves.

Making fun of scientific terms, or musical terms, or of learning in general, is part of the same self-justifying impulse. Most people find it easier to make fun of what they don't understand than to try to understand it.

COMEDY OF SITUATION

confronts characters with an arresting set of circumstances or brings them face to face with people they most want to avoid. Its possibilities of variety and surprise are endless.

WITH ALL THESE MEANS OF GETTING VARIETY IT SEEMS HARDLY NECESSARY
to introduce music into a half hour of fun.

QUALITY

While surprise and gratified expectation account for many a laugh, the qualities of the characters themselves are responsible for the quality of the comedy. The feelings of the characters, their intentions toward others, pervade the whole action. Are they well-wishing and thoughtful? or self-serving and cruel?

The physical discomfort of someone who falls into a washtub full of dirty water is the same as though he had been pushed into it. But the quality, the spirit, of the episode is different. One is a blunder; the other, an unkind act.

There is often the same difference between telling a joke on oneself and telling a joke on someone else. Here are two episodes

told by T.Z.Koo, one of Chiang Kai-Shek's advisers:

"When I reached the age of eleven, my elders got together with my mother and said, 'Now our boy is old enough to have a girl-- to be betrothed.' So they went ahead, found a girl, whom I have never seen, and arranged a betrothal for me. My mother was good enough to tell me that such a thing had been done for me."

"We (Chinese) are very polite as individuals toward each other. When two Chinese gentlemen come before a door, they don't just barge through the door as quickly as they can. One of us will stand aside and bow and say, 'Please, you go through the door first.' My courtesy to him. Then he will stand aside and bow and say, 'No, Mr. Koo, you go through the door first.' And sometimes it would take us two or three minutes to get through the door."

One must only try to tell these stories as a joke on Mr. Koo or on the Chinese people to notice the difference it would make in quality.

Some comedians tell jokes only on themselves, and so preserve an attitude of good humor. Intention to embarrass is absent, as it is in the conversation of a very young child. The child's question may be as embarrassing as the same question asked by an adult; but the quality is different. The child had not planned the embarrassment. This difference in quality, based on the nature and intentions of the characters in the skit, furnishes the script writer a copious source of further variety.

CLEAN FUN

How do we get from producers the kind of humor the whole family can listen to together with pleasure? By listening to that kind. By telling friends where it is to be found. By writing sponsors and giving the clean fun as one reason for liking that program. By getting friends to write such letters. Do these things, and clean programs will multiply.

GOOD TASTE

This vague term means that its possessor, having observed the best in art, in human behavior, etc., is able to distinguish almost instantly the best from the second best, the third best, the only fair, and the downright shoddy.

For instance, one program paid the expenses of transporting a soldier home and kept his entire family in ignorance of his discharge and return SO THAT a country-wide radio audience might listen at the keyhole of that little home at his return -- prying into affections and agitation that were none of their business. Parading private affections for public display is in bad taste. So are a good many other things. The discriminating listener protests infringements of good taste. He wants humor, not bad taste.

SPONTANEITY

Fun can be planned. But the listener enjoys especially the fun that pops out on the spur of the minute. So, though most radio programs of fun are carefully written, the attempt is made to have them appear spontaneous. Those parts of some fun programs which are truly spontaneous require a quick wit and steady nerves. Otherwise the repartee may not be witty; or it may be barbed and should have been left unsaid.

VOICE; SOUNDS

In a radio program, the listener gets all his information through his ears. And so some kinds of comic effect which are used on the legitimate stage are emphasized. In the theater the listener uses his ears and his eyes. In hearing a radio program, he uses his ears only. He hears a voice. It is a meek voice, saying, "I'll let them know who is boss."

He hears a whistle. It is the approaching whistle of a man who can prove that the braggart now spinning a gusty yarn, is lying.

The contribution of voice and sound, when the hearer is unaided by seeing, is a study in itself.

SUMMARY AND EXAMPLE

The discriminating listener is hardly likely to be disappointed at the end of a program of fun-- if it has been full of variety, friendly in quality, clean in content, and inoffensive to good taste.

To illustrate the great variety in a good comic program, and at the risk of spoiling a charming half-hour of entertainment, this summary is presented of Billy Burke's show of Jan. 12, 1946, WBBM. Probably not a fourth of the jokes are reported here, and most of the words are not verbatim. It is only a summary.

Billy Burke, a charming, wise, but sometimes confused maiden lady, her bachelor brother, a lawyer called Julius, and Daisy, the cook, constitute the household.

Miss Burke went out to buy a small dog, and has returned with a great Dane from the pound. Julius disapproves. He has troubles enough, he thinks, without a dog. He has to try a case before a judge who is antagonistic to him. He mourns that he can't win the suit.

"Never mind," says Billy. "When I get money, I'll get you a suit."

"Don't be supercilious."

Billy is delighted. "Usually you say I'm silly. But tonight you say I'm SUPER--cilious."

He says she must get rid of the dog; then he leaves the house.

Billy tells Daisy to make a bed for the dog under the stove. Daisy remarks that the stove would have to be raised so high that she'd be coking from a step-ladder.

She calls the dog a dinosaur. Billy confuses the term with Dinah Shore.

A young boy, former owner of the dog, calls to see him, and shows the utter obedience of the dog. At "Treat" the dog stops in his forward rush. The boy turns out to be the son of the judge. Billy and the judge hatch a plot to prove to the judge that the dog is necessary to watch the judge's house.

In the planning, Billy says, "We need a burglar."

"Where can we get one?" asks the boy.

"At the Post Office. I saw a sign in the Post Office that said, 'Man Wanted for Burglary.'"

Billy, in persuading Julius to pretend to be the burglar, cooes, "Sometimes I think you have more brains than both of us."

He finally is convinced and declares, "I'll put a handkerchief over my nose -- a snood on my snoot."

On a dark night, Billy, Julius, and the dog go down the alley and, back of the judge's house, are met by the boy. Julius then sneaks toward the judge's house. The son sicks the dog on Julius; then calls "Treat" before the dog hurts him. Roused by the commotion, the judge comes out with a gun. Julius, unmasked, is very uncomfortable.

Billy reproaches him: "To think you should turn out to be a juvenile delinquent -- and at your age!"

Julius sputters, "I'm being framed."

Billy: "O good. Put your hand in your coat, like Napoleon."

The judge, noticing that Julius carries a toy pistol, sees through the plot; and likes him for helping the boy. The judge also sees that he needs a good watch dog. All are happy.

Against a background of Julius' barking like the dog, and quasi-fear of the dog, there is considerable variety: puns, exaggerated exaggeration, mispronunciation, faulty logic, comedy of situation. The spirit is gay and kindly.

TO DISCRIMINATING LISTENERS

It pays to notice:

- whether a program of fun has variety of humor;
- whether the humor is on the physical or mental level;
- whether it is boisterous or restrained in manner;
- whether a streak of meanness activates the characters;
- whether it is clean and shows good taste.

The monotonous, noisy program takes little effort, comparatively, to think up. Then why should an audience tolerate it?

LETTER WRITING SUGGESTIONS
FOR RADIO LISTENERS

by

(Miss) Leslie Spence
Chairman, Committee on Education
State Joint Committee on Better Radio Listening

"The opera's back on the air! I should write somebody to express my appreciation."

I wonder how many similar urges and good intentions fall by the way because they're trailed so closely by "To whom shall I write?--the local station? the network? Maybe it's the sponsor... Oh well, I don't suppose one person's opinion means very much anyway--and there are dozens of other letters I ought to write."

In the first place let's get straight on that "one person's opinion." Your opinion is very important. And if it's expressed well and in the right direction it can bear weight and bring results. Witness the letters quoted on following pages. The question, then, is--what must you know in order to express your opinion well and in the right direction? Here are some suggestions:

Follow up the urge immediately. WRITE!

When you hear a program you feel is excellent or could be excellent with a few changes, write a letter. Remember, the air waves belong to you. If you wish them used for good radio programs it's up to you to let broadcasters know you appreciate and demand good radio programs.

Address your letter to the station or sponsor responsible.

You don't know who's responsible? Then write the station over which you heard the program and ask that your letter be forwarded to the proper person or agency. In any case address the envelope to the station so its managers may know of your interest.

Be definite.

A vague expression of approval is better than nothing, but your opinion will be more valued if you tell specifically what is good about the broadcast and what, if anything, is poor.

SOME DON'TS

Don't presume to tell how the program should be managed. You're writing to people experienced in the presentation of radio broadcasts. Avoid: "Do it this way," "The best course is..." "We will not tolerate..." etc.

Don't call names; at least, don't call names unless you can cite examples. Watch such adjectives as ridiculous, boring, rabid, facistic, deplorable. They're too strong and too vague unless definitely illustrated with quotes from the broadcast.

Don't forget to praise what is good.

Don't waste time writing about a program that's hopelessly poor.

Don't wisecrack, especially at the expense of the program.

SOME DO'S

Show your sincerity by adopting an attitude of helpful criticism rather than one of fault-finding.

Be personal. This is your opinion and needs no apology for being so.

Be appreciative of the good in the program.

Show that you are aware and understanding of the producer's difficulties (if you are).

Be specific in stating what you like or don't like, and why.

Be direct in your complaint or suggested improvement.

Be particular about the physical form of your letter. Abbreviations, smudges or general lack of neatness will introduce you as careless and indiscriminating and, consequently, less worthy of consideration.

LETTERS, GOOD AND BAD

By writing a letter about a radio program you hope to influence somebody to keep a good program on the air, to put one on, or to improve an established program. Would this letter accomplish your aim?

Gentlemen:

Your program is lousy. What does your Mr. J.R.S. Smith think he's doing? He's a half-baked potato, a dummy that doesn't know enough to be dumb. He's just a blithering radical. Take him off the air. Get something hot and get your station some listeners.

Disgustedly,

If you were manager of a radio station, what would be your reaction to that letter? It's vague, name-calling, unbalanced, bossy. Would it influence you to change the program concerned?

Here's another letter:

Gentlemen:

"Religion in the News" which I hear over WMAQ at 8:45 Sunday mornings is a nice program. I like it. It is good to have a program like that on the air. Thank you for it.

Sincerely,

The letter is appreciative and somewhat personal. It gives the title of the program, the time and station--all good points. There its excellence ends. The first three sentences all say the same thing, and the approval they register is vague. Why does the writer like "Religion in the News?" Because it reports the activities of a variety of religious bodies? Because it discusses topics of world importance? Because it thinks of world unity on the basis of religious principles? How much more valuable his judgment would be as a guide to the planners of the program if he had been specific!

It took little thought to write this letter. To set down three or four reasons for liking the program might take real thought but would be worth it.

The writer might easily have been more personal. For instance, "I was turning the dials and heard a man saying, 'Many Japanese Christians have remained true to their faith.' I've listened to every 'Religion in the News' broadcast since that; so has my family."

What's the value of that "newsy" friendly approach? Certainly the broadcaster isn't going to insert the line about Japanese Christians into every future broadcast in the hope of garnering more family listening units. No--but because of that letter and of others like it, he'll have an understanding of his audience that'll make him a better broadcaster; and he will have received support of the type of material he's presenting on the air.

Letters that have changed programs:

The influence on program planners of an accumulation of letters in the same vein is of course unquestionable. Sometimes, too, a single thoughtful, helpful letter, by presenting a stimulus or reinforcement to the thought of the program planners, can itself bring about change. For illustrations, we asked three radio stations for examples of letters that had changed programs, or might easily have changed them. One station reported receiving no constructive letters in years; another promised the letters later when less pressed for time. So the letters reproduced here we owe to the kindness of WHA.

January 14, 1943

Marginal
Analysis

Program supervisor would pass on a new program.

"One of many" is true, and implies contact and discussion with others.

Personal reference to own home.

Definite information on listening hours.

Appreciative.

DEFINITE suggestions:

1. Man reader and why.
Two names.
2. Names of books.
3. Use of sound effects.

Method of influencing children's choice of programs-- pointing out unreasonable plot, impossible situation.

Mr. Walter Krulevitch
Program Supervisor, WHA
Madison, Wisconsin

Dear Mr. Krulevitch:

I am one of many mothers quite concerned about children's programs. I feel that the objectionable programs, plus Superman type of comic books plus the war, will have a very serious effect upon the emotional development of our children. I solved the comic book problem in my own home by subscribing to three or four recommended comics, with the understanding that the children buy war stamps with the dimes they would otherwise use for bad comics. It has worked out most satisfactorily, although I have had to sacrifice one of my favorite magazines to finance the deal.

I can't do that with radio programs because there are no good ones to substitute for the poor ones. I think a child's most important listening hours are from five until seven. Until five he usually plays out of doors or is at some outside activity, such as Scout work or music lessons.

I realize that WHA is carrying more programs for children than other stations on the air; however, I would appreciate a suggestion from you about an idea I presented at a city-wide radio committee meeting a short time ago. I suggested that a good man reader like Jerry Bartell or Ben Park, your present reader, read a good rousing book of adventure such as "Treasure Island," "Robinson Crusoe," "Huckleberry Finn," "Tom Sawyer," "Kidnapped," etc. perhaps with sound effects that are so dear to the heart of a child. I think a man reader is a very important part of this program. All day our children are under the supervision of a woman teacher, then they come home to their mothers, and often to a music lesson usually under the supervision of a woman, which added together make too much woman in their young lives. Can't you imagine the pick-up a two-fisted he-man program gives them?

I try to point out to my children the inconsistencies of the inferior radio programs; for instance, when weights were tied to the body of Bill Drummond, he was thrown into the river but the weights weren't quite heavy enough. He didn't sink; nevertheless he succeeded in diving to the bottom of the river and came up with two water-soaked bootleg tires which were the evidence he needed to convict the enemy, etc. etc. I try to show them that the government would never allow adolescent

What the children say

Bettys and Joyces to hunt spies in dangerous enemy territory in the name of the Secret Squadron. But they retaliate by saying there is nothing else to listen to, which is all too true.

Reason for writing.

I am quite sure that most children could be encouraged to turn to better programs if suitable programs were available at that hour. Our committee chairman advised us that nothing would be done about children's programs unless the parents took the initiative; consequently I am writing you for suggestions.

Very truly yours,

(Result of that letter: Problem discussed in WHA staff meeting, late-afternoon time cleared for a children's program called "Adventure Stories," with Ben Park reading good books for children aged approximately 10 to 14. First book: "Treasure Island.")

Note the specific features of the following letters and make your own marginal comments:

Gentlemen:

I wonder if the announcer in his Program Preview (7:58 A.M.) could not always (he does sometimes) mention the "Campus Visitor" to be interviewed at 10:30. I would have given much to hear all of Father Coleman's remarks this morning, but as it happened was not near the radio until he had almost finished. Please give us an idea who is to be interviewed.

Incidentally, many thanks for reading (1:00 P.M.) something more worthwhile than the stories or novels usually read, and of which there is a plethora on other stations.

"Thanks for listening."

(Result: The "Campus Visitor" is now announced in the Program Preview.)

Dear Sirs:

(The first paragraph names six WHA programs enjoyed by the writer.)

These are my contributions to your Happiness and Light Department, in other words, my orchids to you. But--I also have an item for your Complaint Department, and here it is:

WHY, OH WHY, SOMEWHERE IN YOUR DAILY BROADCAST SCHEDULE, CAN YOU NOT FIND A PLACE FOR AT LEAST ONE CLASSROOM LECTURE???????

I know you had classroom broadcasts during the summer session, and how greatly I did appreciate them--those daily jaunts into the realms of Music Appreciation and European History. All the more reason why you should continue the good work during the school year--you'd have more listeners over a longer period of time.

(Omitted: a paragraph which lists some WHA programs that might go off to make room for the lectures.)

I'm sure there are many State Station listeners who will agree with the views herein expressed. I hope you will forgive my verbosity. I had no intention of being harsh when the bug hit me to write this letter...

You still offer the best on the air during daytime listening hours that there is in the whole state, and I would appreciate being entered on your mailing list.

Sincerely yours,

(Result: Two or three series of lectures each semester are now broadcast by WHA.)

A number of other changes have resulted in the WHA schedule from letters of listeners; for instance, five minutes instead of three are now given to the morning weather report; the book and author are announced at the end of "A Chapter a Day;" the theme music for "Fun Time" was changed; and so on.

Letters of Appreciation:

Apart from influencing changes in radio programs, a letter-writing listener can play a part in maintaining a satisfactory status quo. The tendency, when things go along smoothly and pleasantly, is to accept them without a comment as a matter of course. So it is with quality radio programs of long standing. But they should not be taken for granted. An occasional letter of appreciation is a vote for continuance of quality. Following is a sample letter of this sort received by WHA:

Gentlemen:

This office is one of machine designers who for the past several years have found it possible to combine business with pleasure, good radio listening.

We have long listened to the fine recorded music programs and would appreciate the bulletins on them for as long as they continue to be available. The courses in the Appreciation of Music, broadcast last spring, were well attended, although only a part of our small force has been able to draft a course through Quartets of Mozart and Haydn.

The other University courses are regularly on our listening schedule...Almost all of the programs of the State Station find all or part of our group interested... The bulletins available on any of the University lectures, music programs, etc. will always be welcome at this office.

Broadcasters appreciate honest, considerate criticism.

The director of WHA has kindly permitted us to include here two letters he wrote, as a listener, to broadcasters, and the replies he received. The first, dated November 20, 1945, went to Miss Helen Mack, Producer of "A Date with Judy," National Broadcasting Company, Hollywood, California.

Dear Miss Mack:

Please disregard the letterhead. I'm writing not as a radio director who's been in this game since 1923 but as just a listener, a guy with fairly ordinary tastes when listening in my own living room.

"A Date With Judy" has been one of the bright spots in a schedule of limited listening at home, but last night it wasn't. It was cheap and vulgar, in my judgment. And I think I know why. I believe it's because the actor who does Melvin Foster plays to his studio audience. He does it all the time -- he milks every line -- he overworks that nervous, heartless laugh -- he times every sound and grimace he makes for the studio audience. And last night there was a particularly offensive fellow right in front of the audience mike -- a loud man with a shallow, raucous laugh which he turned on and off as if at a signal.

I felt that Foster and the fellow with the humorless laugh made the show sound cheap and common. As a matter of fact, the leer in Foster's voice as he told of his joy in judging the beauty contest -- "dimples in all the right places," etc. -- sounded just plain vulgar. I suspect that Foster would like to be a Frank Morgan and a master of the double meaning, but that kind of stuff doesn't belong on the "Judy" show, does it?

It's a temptation, of course, to play up to the studio audience, but I've seen a lot of those folks who go milling about from one free studio show to another, and their reactions under those conditions are not representative of the listening situation in millions of living rooms, I'm sure.

Here's hoping you can keep the "Judy" show fresh and clean. And now, along with the brick, let me toss a bouquet for the top all-around production job you do,

Sincerely yours,

To that, Miss Mack replied:

Dear Mr. McCarty:

I appreciated your letter. I mean that with all my heart. Constructive criticism is something one rarely gets out here and I want to thank you most sincerely for it.

The second letter follows:

November 21, 1945

Advertising Manager
Cavalcade of America
The Du Pont Company
Wilmington, Delaware

Dear Sir:

Please disregard the letterhead. I'm writing not as a radio director but as just a listener whose schedule of limited home listening frequently includes "Cavalcade."

Why do you require the star of your show to come back after the performance and read the plug for next week's show? In my judgment, it cheapens the program. It spoils the illusion of character the star has built, and it weakens the plug. Witness Signe Hasso's fumbling efforts last Monday night! The program announcer or the "institutional" voice could do the job a lot better.

There is so much of restraint and good taste about your show that it pains me to hear that one inartistic feature.

Cordially yours,

P.S. There was some especially good writing in that script on November 19, and I liked the performance of Elliott Lewis immensely.

Mr. McCarty's letter was answered on November 29 by the Assistant Director of Advertising for Du Pont, as follows:

Dear Mr. McCarty:

Thank you for your comments on Cavalcade and particularly for your cogent criticism of the device of calling upon the star to make a curtain speech "plugging" the coming attraction.

From your experience I am sure you recognize this as an effort to hold listeners after the curtain has been dropped and also to permit our contiguous stars to publicly express whatever camaraderie exists between them.

In the past we have given this assignment to various people etc. (Paragraph on techniques omitted).

However, we are by no means wedded to this device. Your letter has served to remind us that we should again review the method of handling our next week's announcement.

It is particularly helpful to receive an honest statement of reaction from an attentive listener and your interest in Cavalcade is appreciated.

Very truly yours,

WHEN TO WRITE TO THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

When the program or issue involved is of great importance and it has not been possible to exert an influence through the local station, network personnel, or sponsor, it is proper and advisable to consult the Federal Communications Commission.

The FCC exists, among other reasons, for the purpose of supervising the use made of the radio frequencies. Every radio station operates on a license from the Commission, a license which must be renewed every three years. As one of the provisions of that license, the station agrees to operate "in the public interest, convenience and necessity," and if it fails in that agreement, the FCC is justified in refusing to renew the station's license. Therefore, it is important for the Commission to know how the public is served, and it is to the listener's advantage to inform the Commission when he has a considerable and legitimate complaint to register.

If the following letter had not been written, the Federal Communications Commission would not have known of the case described or have been able to act on it.

April 8, 1945

The Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C.

Gentlemen:

We turn to you for advice.

The Madison station, WIBA (NBC affiliate), has carried the Metropolitan Opera, from its first nation-wide broadcast through its change to the Blue Network and the adoption of the Texas Company as sponsor.

This fall, two weeks before the first Metropolitan broadcast, we heard that the Blue Network had not asked WIBA to carry the Opera. The Committee on Better Listening wrote to the Blue, explaining that WCFL, Chicago, is not heard in Madison during daylight hours. The network replied that arrangements were still pending, and it hoped Madison would be able to hear opera.

Three weeks later, when the first opera broadcast of the season had not been heard in Madison, the Committee wrote to the advertising department of the Texas Company about it. A week later, December 13, the committee sent a wire to the Texas Company. We got not a word of response -- and no opera. WCFL is not heard in Madison. Only about half of our radios get WROK, Rockford, or the nearest Iowa Blue station, and reception from these is interrupted every five or ten minutes by our local police calls.

The local station was willing to carry the opera. The network was tentative but friendly. So it must be the sponsor that has deprived people in this vicinity of broadcasts of the opera. And people feel deprived. Ratings show a large audience for opera here. It has been a great source of enjoyment to the people and of education and enchantment for the children. Madison and the country around it think opera broadcasts are part of a good life.

We want opera. The question now is: What next should be done that this area may have opera next season. Will you advise us?

Sincerely,

Chairman, State Joint Committee
for Better Radio Listening

Note: This letter was written about an important program, and presented a case with no loopholes. It stated facts accurately and unemotionally.

As a result, the Commission required information from the network, sponsor, and station. In a long correspondence, an agreement was reached. This year listeners in Madison and vicinity are again enjoying opera broadcasts, for the programs are now carried by WIBA.

L S
January 10, 1946

ARE YOU DEAF?

A deaf man cups his hand behind his ear. He knows that if he misses some points he may get the wrong idea -- become confused. A radio listener, even though nothing is wrong with his ears, or with his brain, either -- may make mistakes as unfortunate and absurd as the deaf man's. It is possible for such a listener to be misinformed by the same broadcast that informs his neighbor. Many small but important details may not have registered with one listener, but have passed by him unnoticed. Their absence from his mind makes his picture queer, false; throws it out of focus, distorts it. So he is likely to start false rumors, and never to have his opinion thoroughly respected.

He has not learned to listen. By listening to the radio with definite points in mind, however, he can train himself.

The following pages contain an outline for a short period of training in discriminating listening. It follows these headings;

Facts in the News;

- the number told within a given time
- their importance
- their accuracy
- proportion of time given to each
- authority behind each
- inclusiveness (all important phases mentioned)
- interpretation of them
- arrangement of them
- analysis of them
- emphasis on them
- prejudice regarding them
 - on the part of the newscaster, commentator
 - on the part of the listener
- temptations to inferior ways of handling them

Radio Drama

Dramatized Information

Radio Interview

Music

Forum

Programs of Fun

Quiz Programs

Books on the Air

A Schedule of Balanced Listening

Writing Letters to Sponsors of Radio Programs

A Guide to a
STUDY OF BROADCASTS

prepared by Miss Leslie Spence, Chairman, Committee on Education,
WISCONSIN JOINT COMMITTEE ON BETTER RADIO LISTENING,
Mrs. C.H.Bonsack, President.

DOES IT MATTER WHAT WE LISTEN TO? DOES RADIO EDUCATE US?

Q. What is EDUCATION?

A. The sum of what a person, a nation, etc. learns.

Q. That's broad. Then isn't education sometimes false?

A. Often.

Q. Well, then, can't it be dangerous?

A. It is dangerous -- unless people are equipped to distinguish the true from the false.

Q. Then isn't radio dangerous, with its various opinions, its sting of ridicule, and its frequent emotionalism?

A. Yes. Unless people can and do discriminate.

Q. If radio audiences aren't discriminating, isn't the nation in danger?

A. A democracy rests on the intelligent, moral decisions of her people. If the citizens have not learned to disentangle the true from the false, the moral from the immoral, a democracy has no solid foundation.

Q. Then Schools should teach discrimination in radio programs?

A. What people listen to educates them well or ill. Ninety percent of American homes have radios. During a year, a child listens more hours to the radio than he spends annually in school. If he chooses wisely, and listens intelligently, radio can enrich his life.

In the following pages is a brief list of exercises in listening to news, drama, dramatized information, music, forums, comedies, quiz programs. The adult can administer it to himself; the teacher in high school or eighth grade can follow it in a six-week course or use it as an outline of weekly oral topics.

Supplementary material, listed below, may be obtained from Mrs. N.W.Madding, 143 N.Hancock Street, Madison:

<u>Mimeographed Material</u> (total, 15¢)	
<u>A Study of Broadcasts (this guide)</u>	3¢
<u>Radio News, a discussion</u>	3¢
<u>Propaganda in the News, Geo.C.Allez</u>	2¢
<u>Background of Some Commentators, A.Gordon</u>	2¢
<u>Dramatized Information; Programs of Fun</u>	3¢
<u>A Questionnaire on Radio Listening</u>	3¢

<u>Booklet</u>	
<u>Let's Learn to Listen</u>	25¢

NEWS

Are you an intelligent listener to news? It comes into almost all homes, but often leaves various, conflicting impressions. The average listener does not notice whether the newscaster says, "This happened," or "This is alleged to have happened." He does not realize that some foreign capitals are noted as nests of rumors, while others have reliable sources of information.

Many other important things he does not notice--the distinction, for instance, between newscasters and news commentators. The newscaster reports news. The commentator interprets; by his comments he tries to make the implications of the news understood. The newscaster and the news commentator cannot be compared on some points: the number of items (the newscaster will have more) or interpretation (the newscaster will have none.) They can be compared, however, on the importance and accuracy of their news.

It is a very stupid listener who concludes that, since news is made up of facts, one newscaster (or news commentator) is as good as another. He needs to notice the speaker's handling of facts:

1. Facts in the news

- a. Number of them
- b. Importance (how many people affected? how deeply affected?)
- c. Accuracy (check later with a good weekly magazine, such as The United States News)

SUGGESTION FOR DISCRIMINATING:

Listen to a good newscaster; then, on the same day, to one not so good; also to a good commentator and a poor one. Notice and jot down all the facts each uses. Ten facts in one report, as against five in another, does not necessarily mean that the first one is superior. Most of the ten may be trivial, or the significant details may be omitted. But other things being equal, the listener gets twice as much for his time from one than he gets from the other.

Accuracy of statements is worth checking over a period of several weeks, till one has established the dependability of a few newscasters and commentators.

Good newscasters are so numerous that a list of them is unnecessary. Names of some excellent commentators follow:

Elmer Davis, Tues., Wed. 7:15 p.m. WLS	R.Swing, M-Th 6:15 WCFL
H.V.Kaltenborn, M-F 6:45 p.m. WMAQ	Wm.Shirer, Sun.4:15 WBBM
Clifton Utley, Sun. 10:00 p.m. WBBM	Edw.Tomlinson, Sat.12:45
Lyman Bryson, Sun. 12:30 p.m. WBBM	WMAQ

2. Facts in the News, cont.

- d. Proportion of time given to each
(The more important items should have more time.)
- e. Authority behind them,

SUGGESTION FOR DISCRIMINATING:

List the items and the time spent on each by a newscaster or commentator. Did the most important get the most time? Notice whether quotations, if any, are from someone with special knowledge, or from just anybody.

3. Facts in the News, cont.

f. Inclusiveness of them

1. in a series of discussions (All outstanding questions should be discussed by any commentator on general news, who is a worthy leader of thought, and not a popularity-seeker who follows the people and is always on the popular side as estimated by popularity polls.)
2. in subjects involving causes and effects (All important causes should be given; all important effects should be told; World-wide effects as well as effects on our country. Both sides of a controversial subject.)

Examples

A recent poll of our Army of Occupation in Germany showed a regrettable percentage of racial prejudice. A news commentator stated that the poll showed the effect on our troops of fraternizing with the Germans. No allusion was made to our pre-war racial prejudices, that still, in a democracy, disfranchise and bar from work great numbers of our population. His omission of this fact makes his statement misleading, almost ridiculous.

The war ended. Rationing of food ended. The effect, as stated on the radio, would be: The American people, (already among the best nourished in the world) would be better nourished, fatter, more content. Effect, not stated: Many people in many countries would die of starvation. A grave omission. Whose fault? The fault of those who did not insist that news reporters give a complete picture.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCRIMINATING:

List the really important subjects in the news. List on another page the subjects discussed by two commentators, in five consecutive broadcasts; Also the approximate time devoted to the more important subjects. Are all important topics discussed? given appropriate time? Do you think of important causes or effects that were not mentioned? Is the commentator always on the side the popular polls show is popular? Or is he honest and stimulating?

4. Facts in the News, cont.

g. Correct interpretation of them

The value of the interpretation depends on the knowledge and character of the commentator. Everybody should know the background of any commentator he listens to regularly, because

the commentator gives opinions. If the commentator has had years of study and travel, his opinion is worth more than the average person's, and we are not wasting our time listening to him--at least, not if he is honest--and brave.

(Three discussions of NEWS are mimeographed, and LET'S LEARN TO LISTEN also contains a revealing discussion of it.)

SUGGESTION FOR DISCRIMINATING:

Listen to an excellent commentator and to some other; and take notes on their handling of the same facts. Compare what you find out about their knowledge of economics, political science, and the culture of different countries, with their broadcasts.

5. Facts in the News, cont.

h. Arrangement of them (see also LET'S LEARN TO LISTEN, p. 20)

Honesty

in intention (no planned distortion of facts by juxtaposition.)

in inference ("John and George worked in the shop. John is honest." Here arrangement implies that George is not honest. Such a sneak attack defies libel laws because no one stated that George was dishonest.)

SUGGESTION FOR DISCRIMINATING:

Note carefully (name of newscaster, station, date, time, and exact words, if possible, and the connection with his subject) any instances of dishonesty in newscasters or commentators.

6. Facts in the News, cont.

i. Analysis of them. It should show clearly:

the sequence of events

the connection between them, or lack of connection

(Careless presentation or intentional bemuddlement leaves listeners with a baffled sense of futility.)

SUGGESTION FOR DISCRIMINATING:

Take careful notes on a good commentator. Be able to show how he backs a general statement with facts (well authenticated) and shows their relationship.

7. Facts in the News, cont.

j. Emphasis on them. Emphasis makes a fact seem important; makes it easy to remember. The emphasis given a fact should, then, be in proportion to its actual importance.

Means of emphasis are many. Among them:

1. proportion of time given each item

2. tone; inflection (showing enthusiasm, indifference, etc.)

3. stress on words ("He believed it." "He believed it.")

4. pause ("He believed it.")
5. changed tempo (to show excitement, grief, surprise, etc.)
6. withholding important news to create suspense
7. epigram ("Truth is indivisible.")
8. contrast of things; incongruity ("A bear at the ball.")
9. contrast of ideas ("Not who's right, but what's right.")
10. comparison ("a ragbag of a man.")
11. picture ("A moment of confusion, yelling, running about.")
12. Words
 - weight (preponderance, Gargantuan)
 - liveliness (flit, rush, flop)
 - repetition ("all alike defending them, all alike secure,")
 - emotion-evoking power (home, our flag, rat)
 - rhyme ("lock and stock")
 - imitation of the sound described (murmur, crack)
 - repetition of vowel sounds ("howl and growl")
 - repetition of consonant sounds ("bright brittle banter.")

SUGGESTION FOR DISCRIMINATING:

Jot down devices of emphasis you notice in two commentators. Were the facts as important and worthy to be remembered as the emphasis indicates? Have you examples of unwarranted emphasis?

8. Facts in the News. cont.

- k. Prejudice and News Commentators. A good commentator tries at all times to present fairly all pertinent facts, regardless of his personal slant. He has a right to state his opinion, but should state also, and fairly, conflicting opinions. Mere ridicule or scorn of opposing views shows him bankrupt. He must produce facts.
To expose anyone's prejudice, hold it up to the facts.

SUGGESTION FOR DISCRIMINATING: Is your commentator prejudiced?

1. Does he assert, and then have no evidence?
2. Does he ask you to believe a statement only because he is often right (so he says)?
3. Does he build himself up as an authority? If so, keep a list of his predictions in a notebook.
 - a. Are they things any well read person could guess?
 - b. How many of the remainder turn out to be correct?
4. Does he sway you by tone and inflection alone, without facts?

9. Facts in the News. cont.

1. Prejudice and Listeners to the News

To expose one's own prejudices and overcome them:

1. Listen willingly to others' views, hoping to learn;
2. List the facts supporting your original belief; the others;
3. Decide which issue is most important (affects most people most deeply) and join the battle for it.

SUGGESTION FOR DISCRIMINATING:

Think of one subject of importance on which you are prejudiced. Where did you look for opposing opinions? Did you write them down? Think of them? Have they modified your opinion? In what way? What broadcast may help you?

10. Facts in the News, cont.

- m. Temptations of Newscasters and Commentators. For temptations not already discussed, see LET'S LEARN TO LISTEN, and the mimeographed discussions: "Propaganda;" "Radio News."

SUGGESTION FOR DISCRIMINATING:

Contrast a good commentator with a poor one on the basis of whether they yield to these temptations. Make note of your evidence--date, exact words, if possible.

DRAMA

In the main, drama seeks to interest, to create suspense, and to arouse emotion; and to these ends uses setting, characters, and ~~plot--especially~~ plot; for emotional climax is essential to most types of drama. This emotional climax should be unforced, a natural outcome of circumstances and characters.

Characters are important, too, inasmuch as interaction of personalities helps the author to build emotional intensity. The hero and heroine should seem real. The average human being tends to identify himself with one or the other or both, to experience and feel with the hero or heroine, and thus to be "carried along" to the emotional climax.

In certain types of comedy (especially in satiric types such as farce, the comedy of manners, etc.) "typical" characters are used intentionally. A woman may be a combination of qualities and habits that shoppers have--may be a typical shopper, not a real person. Or a doctor may be made up of the foibles of doctors, so that he may be ridiculed as "the doctor," all doctors. He is not a person with individual quirks.

Dramas in which typical characters are not intended often have them because of the author's lack of ability. It is easy to assemble qualities, make a caricature; difficult to make a man.

11. The Weekly One-Episode Serial

Some radio serials attempt only one episode in each performance. This permits a probable plot. The run-of-the-mill daytime serial, which in fifteen minutes must develop one emotional climax and then on the heels of it begin another, cannot seem natural. Life is not so rapid a succession of emotional climaxes.

Daytime serials have a number of self-pitying heroines.
Does that indicate that American women are sniveling weaklings?

SUGGESTION FOR LISTENING:

Listen to "A Date With Judy," Tues. 7:30 p.m. WMAQ
"Mayor of our Town," Sat. 7:30 p.m. WBBM
"The Baxters," Sat. 1:30, WMAQ - WIBA

Compare one of these with any other drama for:

Subject: Will the subject interest many people?

Characters:

How Many?

What Kind of People are the main characters:

Strong? boastful? resourceful? bossy? self-assertive?

How Do You Know what kind of people they are:

By their actions?

By their way of speaking?

By what others say about them?

Are the Characters individuals or types? (a particular mother or ten-year-old? or any mother or ten-year-old?)

Are the Characters natural? (act as your family and friends would in similar circumstances?)

Plot: What obstacles obstruct the main characters?

12. Romantic Drama, as exemplified by the fairy tale

We can learn about drama from a dramatized fairy story. How can a story be true to life, yet tell of an unreal world? The writer lays down conditions of setting and character. These conditions remain the same unless a change is explained. Fairies do not act like giants, for example, or porcupines like jellyfish. The characters, however unusual, must remain true to themselves, and act as such creatures would in such circumstances.

SUGGESTION FOR LISTENING:

Listen to "Let's Pretend" Sat. 10:05 a.m. WBBM.

Are plot and characters "natural" (in accordance with the setting, circumstances, and characters described in the play?)

Does the quaint, formal language help to give an out-of-this-world effect?

Do the typical characters contribute to the fairy-tale atmosphere more than real individuals would?

13. Varied, often realistic modern drama, as seen in Lux Radio Theater.

SUGGESTION FOR DISCRIMINATING:

Listen to Lux Theater, Mon. 8:00 p.m. WBBM

Plot: Is the action probable?

Emotional climaxes: How many? Too many for the time?

Subject: Worth presenting?

Characters: Natural? Worth taking time to know?

Tricks of getting suspense: Sound followed by silence?
Others?

14. SUGGESTION: a comparison and summarizing of radio plays you have heard.

Set down definite details under these headings:

1. Naturalness of character and plot
2. Attitude of main characters: considerate? selfish? tricky? proud? honest? domineering? democratic? etc.
3. Setting: produced by sound effects; by what people say.
4. Unity of tone (tone of happiness, foreboding, light wit; brutality, etc.) is obtained by unity of:

Music	
Setting	Comment on how each
Narrator	contributes to the
Plot	atmosphere of the
Characters	whole, or detracts
Dialogue	from it.

5. Humor: Does it grow out of the situation? Is it lugged in?
6. What, if anything, did you learn from the plays of: life (what courage consists in? the tongue's power? etc.) human relations? by-lines of information, such as science, mechanics, cultures of other nations, biography, etc.

DRAMATIZED INFORMATION

Dramatized information has become popular because it is easy to take. The listener should always remember, however, that he is likely to be "carried along" by a strong emotional appeal, and that he will probably identify himself with the main character. Neither tendency will help the listener to keep his reason dominant, as it should when he is receiving information.

15. Dramatized History

Listening to dramatized history is usually safer than listening to dramatized current news, because time has given us some perspective for viewing events of a century ago.

SUGGESTION FOR DISCRIMINATING:

Listen to "Cavalcade of America" Mon. 7:00 p.m. WMAQ, WIBA. Because we should learn from history, it is essential that a one-sided view be avoided, and that dramatization of it be accurate in feeling as well as in events. So check it for events and spirit; and for nobility or meanness of action.

Some disks of Cavalcade of America are available. They may be had for a price from Dupont Nemours. A group would enjoy playing and then discussing them.

16. Dialogue

Dialogue, though used in drama, is not necessarily dramatic. Several radio programs use its liveliness without developing dramatic situations. This is especially true in some programs about science.

SUGGESTION FOR LISTENING:

Listen to: "Human Adventure," Wed., 7:00 p.m. WGN, or
"Adventures in Science," Mon. 3:45 p.m. WHA

Does the dramatization make the facts clear? memorable?

RADIO TALKS

17. The Talk

In a talk, information is given straight out. It isn't dressed up to look like Santa Claus. No candy canes serve as reward for staying with the speaker. The talk is offered for what it is: a talk, a report, a travelogue, a lecture.

"In view of the many exciting and obviously entertaining programs to be heard at the same time, doesn't it seem the most foolish bravery to offer in competition--an undisguised talk?"

That questioner has forgotten how breathlessly exciting new information can be. Many people take a chance on the speaker's being able to give that excitement with interest.

SUGGESTION FOR LISTENING:

Listen to: "Distinguished Guests" Sun. 1:30 p.m. WGN
Ivan Bryson, Sun. 12:30 p.m. WBBM
"The Novel" Mon., Wed., Fri. 11:00 a.m. WHA

List in detail what you learned. Was it interesting?

RADIO INTERVIEWS

18. The Interview

Its value depends in part on the interviewer. He should be brief but not curt, and should ask important questions. If the answer is not clear, he should draw out clarifying information.

The person interviewed is the heart of the program. If he has a lively mind and tongue and gets a chance to talk, the program will be good.

When both the interviewed and the interviewer are excellent, the program should give as much information as a good talk, the main headings being high-lighted by the questions, and atmosphere of easy informality enveloping the whole. All interviews are not, however, perfect.

SUGGESTION FOR DISCRIMINATING:

List in detail what you learn from:

"Doctors Talk it Over" Tues., 8:30 p.m. WENR, or
"Campus Visitors" Tues., Thurs., 10:30 a.m. WHA, or
"State Department Program" Sat., 6:00 p.m. WMAQ, WIBA

Compare it with a good talk.

MUSIC

19. Opera

One girl in her teens called opera "Saturday Enchantment." As a child she had begun listening to opera. The next winter she read a simple book that gave the stories of operas; then a book with some musical phrases in it; and finally a book of librettos. And so opera became more and more alive for her, a world she entered Saturday afternoons.

In the same way anyone can cultivate a taste for opera. The following three books would form a good basis:

The Victor Book of Opera, Chas. O'Connell (has stories, pictures)
Stories of the Great Operas and their Composers, Ernest Newman
Blakiston Co., Philadelphia (has stories, snatches of airs.)
The Authentic Librettos of the Italian Operas (11)
of Wagner Operas (10)
of French and German Operas (12)
(has words of foreign language and English; some music)

SUGGESTION FOR LISTENING:

During the week, read about the opera of the coming Saturday, (WIBA, WCFL 1:00 p.m.) On Saturday note names of principal singers and which parts they sing, as well as the scenes and the action. As soon as possible after hearing the opera, discuss especially the songs you enjoyed most and the scenes you were best able to imagine; also any difficulty in understanding the plot or the emotional language of the music. Most operas are written in a foreign language. Milton Cross tells the story. The music fits it. Can you hum or whistle one of the airs you did not know before?

Read and listen in the same way to three more operas. Then discuss opera again.

20. The Soloist is judged by:

the clearness and fulness of his tone,
the precision of his execution,
the expression of his emotion or philosophy;
the accompanying orchestra by:
the blending of all into one whole,
the support of the artist, without drowning him out.

SUGGESTION FOR LISTENING:

Listen to: "The Telephone Hour" Mon. 8:00 p.m. WMAQ, WTMJ,
WIBA
"The Voice of Firestone" same stations, Mon.
7:30 p.m.

What do you know about the composer of the main selection?
What do you know about the artist? his concert engagements?

21. The Symphony

It is worth listening to attentively. If you dislike the selection that is being played, turn off the radio. In twenty or thirty minutes the orchestra may be playing something you will not want to miss.

A book such as the "Victor Book of the Symphony" may be helpful. By asking for it anyone can get "Symphony Notes," an occasional publication for the NBC Symphony Orchestra. Address: "Symphony Notes," 32nd Floor, International Building, New York 20.

Listening to records of symphonies, or to parts of them, stimulates musical growth. Three symphonies are analyzed in LET'S LEARN TO LISTEN.

SUGGESTION FOR DISCRIMINATING:

Listen to: the New York Philharmonic, Sun. 2:00 p.m. WBBM OR
the NBC Orchestra, WMAQ, Sun. 4:00 p.m. OR
the Ford Sunday Evening Hour, Sun. 7:00 p.m. WENR

Think what it is you like: the melody? the harmony? the rhythm? solo voices or instruments?

22. Opera Again

SUGGESTION: Be ready to discuss four operas: the stories; the singers who took the principal roles; places where music fitted emotion especially well.

FORUMS

23. Forums are designed to furnish the most important opinions on a subject, with reasons for the opinions. Therefore the speakers, renowned for the information and integrity and earnestness, should be invited to express their opinions strongly, courteously. The moderator helps the forum to achieve its purpose by his own brevity, by drawing out pertinent information, and by giving the speakers approximately equal chance to talk.

SUGGESTION FOR DISCRIMINATING:

Listen to "Town Meeting," Thurs., 7:30-8:30.. Make note of speakers and their points.

1. Were the speakers competent to have an opinion?

2. Were two sides equally presented?
3. Were questions from the floor to the point?
4. Are you better able than you were to make up your mind on the issue?
5. Will you read any additional article on the subject?

24. SUGGESTION OF OTHER FORUMS FOR LISTENING:
- | | |
|---|----|
| "People's Platform," Sat., 5:15, p.m. WBBM, | OR |
| "Chicago Round Table," Sun. 1:30 p.m. WMAQ | OR |
| "Northwestern Reviewing Stand," Sun. 10:30 a.m. WGN | |

Compare it with "Town Meeting" for effectiveness.

25. Programs of Fun

Programs with great variety of wit are too quick for the dull mind; just as slow, repetitious programs displaying only one type of humor (composed altogether of tall tales, for instance) bore the quick mind. Being bored by a monotonous fun program is nothing to be ashamed of. In fact, the kind of fun this nation enjoys may be as good a national intelligence test as we have.

SUGGESTION FOR DISCRIMINATION:

Prepare to report on a fun program. Notice the different levels of comedy:

1. Slapstick comedy is on a physical level--throwing custard pie into someone's face, for example. Is it possible on the radio? Is it successful?
2. A familiar weakness, or circumstance (Fibber's closet, etc.) How much repetition to enhance fun? Too much repetition brings boredom.
3. Irony, satire.
4. Tell joke on self instead of on others.
5. Urbane humor, plus wit ("Information Please," good example)

QUIZ PROGRAMS

26. Quiz Programs

One important element in the success of the straight quiz program is delight in human conversation: its quickness or slowness, the words used--in short, the manner of it. So the choice of a quiz program depends almost as much on the manners of the listener as on his brains.

A naturally courteous person is not likely to admire masters of ceremonies who yell at their victims, or patronize them, or pretend to be sorry for them when they are not, or overpraise a woman's beauty and so on. Nor will a pun or a giggle seem adequate response.

SUGGESTION FOR DISCRIMINATING:

The popularity of "Information, Please," "Quiz Kids," "So You Think you Know Music" and other quizzes where participants are above average in intelligence, speaks well for America's listeners. In one of these programs find some reasons for its popularity. What makes the difference:

1. The manner (and manners) of the Master of Ceremonies: Loud? Patronizing? Pleasantly amusing?
 2. Types of questions: too easy? too difficult?
 3. Types of answers: interesting? pitiful?
-

BOOKS ON THE AIR

27. Dramatized books proved popular last year. Nevertheless such programs were shoved toward midnight and almost total eclipse.

Book Reviews. The best reviews stir us to get the book and read it. Reviews are rightfully popular. This year, WHA lists three:

Book Buyers' Guide, Mon. 10:30

Books of Today, Tues. 2:00

It Is Later than You Think, Fri. 3:30

WLBL lists: Books and Authors, Tues. 3:15

Books Read. This is a form of abridging books that permits dishwashing to go forward at the same time. For that reason and others the books chosen for reading are pleasant, companionable books.

SUGGESTION FOR LISTENING:

List ten good books appropriate for dramatization. Listen to a review. How does the reviewer lure the listener to read the book? How much is told of the author?

28.

PROGRAMS THAT ARE NOT ON THE AIR

What do you want to find out about? Can radio make an interesting program out of the information you want? List several such desires. Show in detail how one of them can be made a successful broadcast.

29.

A BALANCED LISTENING SCHEDULE

The habit of listening to only one or two kinds of broadcasts has narrowed many a listener. The listener can avoid stagnation by making a schedule for himself and seeing that most types of radio programs are on it.

A preliminary plan might look like this:

1 hour, symphony	1 hour, drama and fun
1½ hours, news	½ hour, forum
2½ hours, soloists	½ hour, talks, interviews
singers	½ hour, dramatized information
½ hour, quiz	1 hour, miscellaneous

9½ hours a week; one hour and twenty minutes a day.

Next the listener would chose programs, and write them down:

The World Today	daily	5:45	WBBM	Total 1½ hours
NBC Symphony	Sun.	4:00	WMAQ	1 hour

SUGGESTION: Make a well-balanced schedule for your listening time.

30.

LETTER WRITING

Every citizen has a personal responsibility to make radio programs as good as possible. He should write the sponsor or the station responsible, when he is grateful, has thought of an improvement, or can suggest a new idea for a program.

SUGGESTION: A fitting conclusion to a study of radio programs is writing a letter to sponsor or station. "Letter-Writing Suggestions for Radio Listeners" would be helpful.

Material from these sheets may be copied, with appropriate acknowledgments, if such copies are distributed free.

BETTER RADIO LISTENING

A chance to be frank
about
RADIO PROGRAMS

NAME _____ CLASS _____ DATE _____ AGE _____

1. My ten favorite
radio programs are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

2. If all programs but one were taken off the air, I would want
that one to be _____

3. The musical programs I enjoy most are:

4. These radio programs have helped me in my school work:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

5. I (have seen) (have not seen) GOOD LISTENING, a monthly list
of good radio programs:

6. I have discovered these good broadcasts in the last four weeks:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

LISTEN REGULARLY.
Yes () No ()
Yes () No ()
Yes () No ()
Yes () No ()

7. I discuss some broadcasts with my parents:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

I will tell briefly of one of these interesting conversations: