Western Michigan University Newsletter, October 1961

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WMUK-FM, Western Michigan University’s owned and operated radio station has been, since 1951, the University’s only link with the broadcast world. It has served faithfully over the past eleven years both the community and the University, rightfully claiming for itself the title “educational voice of Western Michigan University.”

Although it is still the sole link with the community, WMUK-FM is no longer alone in the field of broadcasting at Western. Last February, educational television came to our campus, and this fall MPATI made its first appearance.

The roving eye of television which has caught, if not commanded the attention of this generation of students, has given Western Michigan University an unique challenge and opportunity in the decade ahead.

The challenge is to take this unusual communication channel and turn it into a useful teaching tool.

Last February Western, with the aid of several grants, took its first giant step into the complex world of television through two courses taught over a closed-circuit line.

A survey of the first courses taught over television showed that 67 per cent of the American Government students found the TV lecture sessions better than the regular courses. Forty-nine per cent of the Humanities students also found TV instruction better. Eighty per cent of the American Government students thought the television sessions were well prepared and clear. Sixty per cent of the Humanities students listed TV lectures over normal classes in regard to preparation and clarity. A composite of the two classes showed that seventy-two per cent of the students thought the television lectures were generally interesting and stimulating.

The students listed many advantages in the TV classroom. Among them were that classes were available to a larger number of students. They also felt more ground was covered in less time and that there was a better use of audio-visual aids. In general, most of the students felt televised instruction was superior to normal classes.

Western’s venture into classroom TV was not a haphazard arrangement. Seven years elapsed from Western’s first interest in ETV until June of 1959 when the dean of the School of Graduate Studies was assigned the responsibility to determine Western’s role in educational television.
Conferences were held with representatives of the Joint Council on Educational Television, Educational TV Center, National Association of Educational Broadcasters, and the Detroit Educational Television Foundation. Long range plans were organized and in February of 1960 the State Board of Education approved Western's step into TV.

With the long range plans designed and approved the next step was the establishment of facilities. Closed-circuit television received the first attention. A committee, chaired by Dr. Robert Limpus was set up to develop a teaching program that would make effective use of the closed-circuit system.

Building space was the first problem confronting the committee on TV instruction. This was solved with the selection of a part of Waldo Library first floor to be used as temporary studios. Glen Bishop, chief engineer of WMUK, designed the new studios. Classrooms, especially equipped with TV monitors to receive the taped programs, were obtained in a series of rooms on the main floor of the Administration building and other areas.

Western's educational television program also received a financial boost with two Ford Foundation grants totaling $58,000. From the Fetzer Broadcasting Company came the large contribution of $40,000 worth of equipment, including two camera chains. The Brunswick Corporation and WOOD-TV also gave equipment for Western's new studios.

Operating under extreme press of time, limited staff members and equipment, WMU turned its first television cameras on in February, 1961, for classes in American Government and Humanities. Duane Starcher took over the assignment of the studio's producer-director, assisted by two engineers and eight part-time student helpers.

Now in its second semester of operation, the closed-circuit television classes have reached four. Foundations of Western Civilization and General Literature joined the initial two programs and Garrard MacLeod, chief announcer for WMUK, assumed the duties of the second television director.

Beyond the obvious changes that educational television has made on the face of Western's campus the whole approach of student-teacher relationship has experienced a facelift. Instructors have found that TV classes require more preparation, longer hours spent in research, and more use of visual aids. Television also demands that the instructor prepare thoroughly and organize well.

John Woods, pioneer Humanities instructor on ETV at Western, feels television classrooms have been very successful. "I miss most," states Woods, "the feedback of the students while delivering the lecture, but find TV instruction most stimulating and rewarding."

Students, even without the observing eye of the professor, find that the TV class is one full period of instruction. Gone are the opening jokes, comments on the current sport, or happenings on campus. In their place is an uninterrupted lecture that requires the attention of each individual. There is no chance for something to be repeated, or opportunity to distract or divert the instructor from the main theme of his topic.

A second phase of television at WMU goes under the title Midwest Program on Airborne Television Instruction, better known as MPATI. In this capacity Western serves as Southwestern Michigan regional resource center. It is one of twenty such resource centers in the Midwest and acts as the liaison agency for Southwestern Michigan schools with the sponsoring agencies. Martin Cohen, station manager of WMUK, is MPATI area coordinator.

MPATI is an experimental program, financed by foundation and industrial grants, and has its headquarters at Purdue University. In operation it is a "school-in-the-sky." Each school day one of two converted DC6AB passenger planes takes off from the Purdue University airport, reaches an altitude of 23,000 feet over the town of Montpelier, Indiana. It then begins a three-hour orbit, flying in a 20-mile diameter circle while sending a TV signal to five million students.
The school-in-the-sky is not aimed at replacing the regular classrooms, but rather to act as a supplement. The system is for the class to watch the monitor for twenty or thirty minutes and then have the teacher take over and conduct follow-up instruction.

In this way small school systems can benefit from a variety of 128 lessons in 28 different courses from first-grade to college level, each taught by one of the nation's best qualified TV instructors.

Western has been very active in this program, conducting workshops on the instructional uses of television to help schools and teachers in Southwestern Michigan in their use of lessons and courses presented on MPATI.

WMU's own campus school was equipped with a Philco gift of twelve 23-inch classroom receivers and has been receiving airborne programs since the first of the school year. Brunswick has also given the University a model classroom to use in this experiment.

The third phase of broadcasting at Western is the oldest arm of the system. WMUK-FM, formerly WMCR-FM, has been in operation since April, 1951. WMUK-FM, located at 102.1 on the FM dial, is a noncommercial educational outlet with 36,000 watts ERP and a coverage of about fifty miles.

Recently Martin Cohen, MPATI coordinator for Western, took over the duties of acting station manager. Glen Bishop, who installed the first transmitting equipment and has been with the station ever since, is chief engineer. Garrard MacLeod, who doubles as television director of the new closed-circuit television system, is chief announcer.

Its audiences range from Grand Rapids on the north to northern Indiana on the south, Battle Creek to the east and Lake Michigan communities on the west. The broadcasting day is from 3:00 P.M. to 11:15 P.M., Sunday through Friday. Music is the center of the daily programming. Transcribed programs come from such sources as National Association of Educational Broadcasters, British Broadcasting Corporation, American Chemical Society, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, French Broadcasting System, and the Broadcasting Foundation of America. WMU faculty members often appear on the station as well as distinguished guests visiting on campus. Recently WMUK received two awards for

John Pruis Named Presidential Aide, Summer Director

Dr. John J. Pruis, a 1947 graduate, has been appointed assistant to the president for the University.

Dr. Pruis taught in the campus school one year following graduation, earned advanced degrees in speech at Northwestern University, and returned to the faculty in 1955 as an associate professor of speech, after having taught at Iowa State Teachers College and Southern Illinois University.

In addition to his teaching duties, he has also served as director of the summer session, assistant dean of the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences in 1960, and was chairman of the inaugural committee for President James W. Miller last spring.

While continuing to teach one class during the present semester, Dr. Pruis in the future will direct the summer session and will work closely with President Miller and the two vice presidents.

English professor Charles Smith's program, Under the Spreading Metaphor. John Freund and Arnold Nelson of Western also received a grant-in-aid from the NAEB for their program, We Mean to Say. WMUK also features daily news and participates each week in offerings of a Michigan educational network including similar stations at the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, and Wayne State University.

WMUK this year will feature taped re-broadcasts of lectures delivered on campus. Plans are also underway to involve the station in more University activities through a series of remote broadcasts.

Closed-circuit educational television, Midwest Program on Airborne Television Instruction, and WMUK Radio then make up the broadcasting world at Western Michigan University.
Winifred MacFee, Education Library Head, Succumbs

Mrs. Winifred Congdon MacFee, director of the Educational Service Library of the School of Education from 1942 until her retirement last June, died Oct. 31 at Berrien Springs.

A WMU graduate, she had dedicated herself for 19 years to the task of providing the best available curriculum library to students in education. During her period of service the collection was improved and expanded greatly and larger quarters were obtained.

She had begun her teaching in Allegan County, and later taught in Otsego, Jackson, Allegan and Kalamazoo before moving to the campus.

Mrs. MacFee was an indefatigable traveler and found great pleasure in bringing the story of her interesting jaunts to her friends.

She was also interested in many community activities, belonging to several local organizations, and was an active member of the First Church of Christ, Scientist.

Mesick Lost to Physics Faculty

An alumnus and veteran teacher who came to Western following retirement from the Kalamazoo public schools, Roy O. Mesick, passed away Oct. 18 in Kalamazoo.

He had joined the physics faculty in 1959, and would have retired next June. A 1927 graduate of Western, he became head of the science department of Kalamazoo Central high school that year. His prior teaching had been in Allegan County, Bellaire high school and St. Joseph high school.

While at Central high school he was honored by the University's Faculty Science club as the “outstanding science teacher in Southwestern Michigan.”

Besides his wife, Mr. Mesick leaves two daughters, Mrs. Martha Meininger and Mrs. Mary Higgins.