

# THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI BULLETIN

VOLUME 25, NUMBER 26

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JOURNALISM SERIES, NO. 30

Robert S. Mann

## Women and the Newspaper

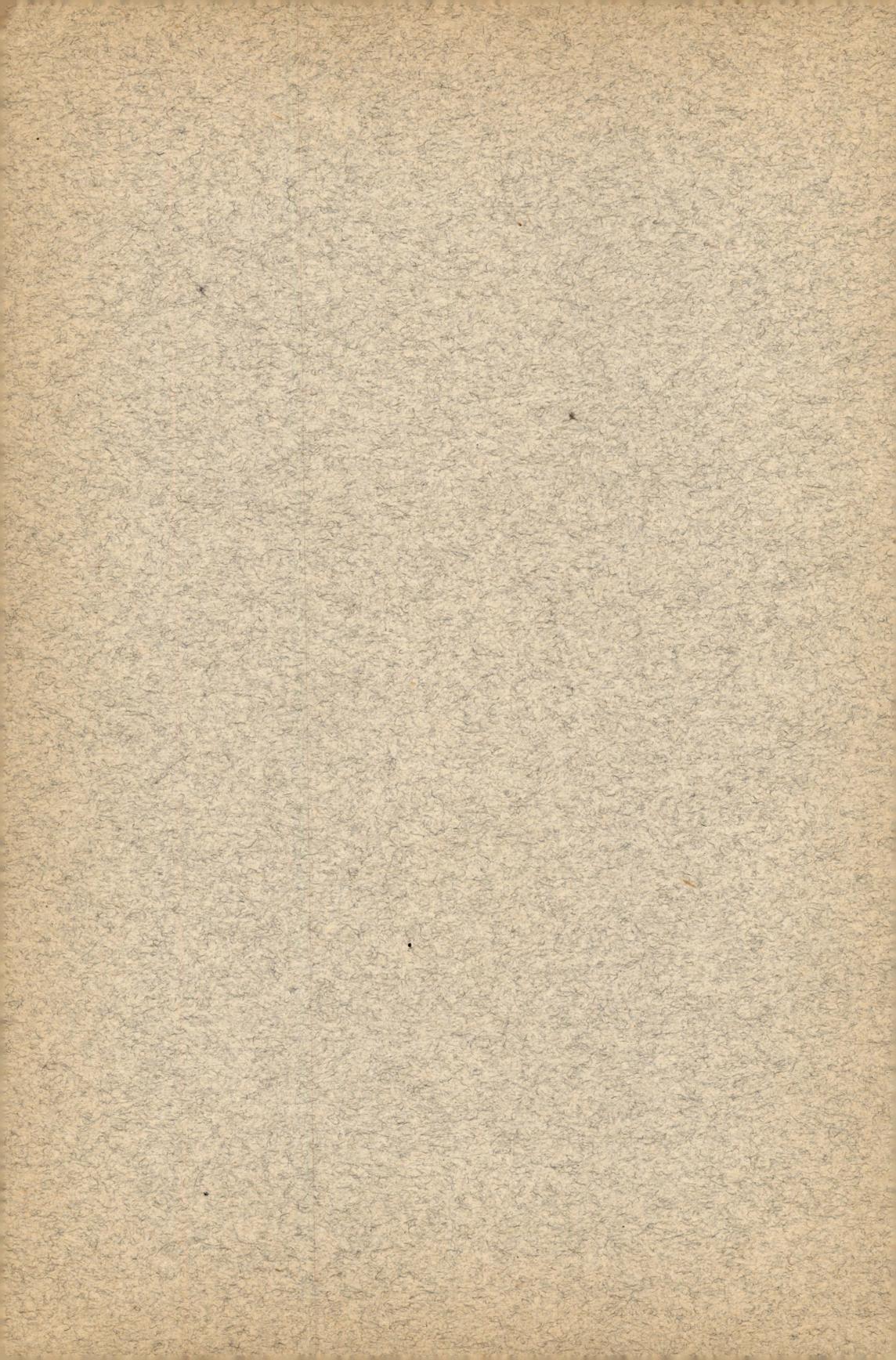
From Addresses and Discussions by Women Editors, Feature Writers, Advertising Experts and Women Readers at the Fifteenth Annual Journalism Week with Introduction by Sara L. Lockwood, Assistant Professor of Journalism.



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ISSUED THREE TIMES MONTHLY; ENTERED AS SECOND-CLASS MATTER AT THE  
POSTOFFICE AT COLUMBIA, MISSOURI—2,500

September 10, 1924



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## *Introduction*

Country journalism, metropolitan newspaper work, writing of special articles, column writing, editing of women's pages and writing for children are but a few of the many phases of journalistic work in which American women have proved their ability. Addresses and discussions on these phases and on opportunities for women in advertising and in other departments of the newspaper work, made at the University of Missouri during Journalism Week (May 12-17, 1924) showed not only that women have accomplished much in these fields but that new opportunities are continually opening.

"The newspaper woman," says Mrs. Marie F. Weekes of Norfolk, Neb., a successful county editor, "comes in constant close relationship with public questions and with the needs of humanity. Here is no place for dwarfed imagination, stunted power or neutral personality. Here is no place for negative goodness. She must have courage and initiative. She must be progressive. There is work for her to do and she must do it.

"Newspaper work demands accurate knowledge, a sense of obligation, special training, clear vision, honesty with one's self, an abandonment of the call of what is termed society, the absence of sex-consciousness, plenty of balance (called common sense), true culture, moral courage and a burning desire to make good."

Women with such assets are welcomed into journalism. Almost from the beginning they have had something to do with journalism. Now and then among the pioneer newspaper men appeared pioneer women editors, reporters and feature writers. Freaks, perhaps, these earliest women journalists. At least they usually were regarded as leaning toward masculinity, radicalism and fanaticism, as being cranks on some particular subject. Gradually, as more women wedged their way in, they were accepted more calmly and naturally. However, it was not until the World War that feminine assets and talents came into prominence generally. When young, energetic and enthusiastic men were no longer available country and metropolitan papers alike began, slowly at first, then clamorously, to call in women to keep the newspapers going. Many old, conservative papers whose policy had been anti-feminine so far as their staffs were concerned, grudgingly accepted women's work, gradually employed more women in more varied capacities—then began suggesting new fields for their women writers to try. It became an experiment with the editors and they found that women logically could get a great deal of news, edit many departments, and serve in various newspaper capacities as well as men and sometimes better than men.

When the men came back from the war they did not find their places usurped, but they did find a new policy prevailing—a policy which meant that women would work beside men in the newspaper office and in every department of journalism. They had won their place through good service—and they are in journalism to stay because they have a distinct service to render to the public.

Mrs. Weekes, whose address is given in this volume, represents the country press. Perhaps it is here more than any place else in journalism that women can best serve. The country editor is indeed an influence and a personage in the community. The woman editor has need of business ability and thorough knowledge of the mechanical process of publishing as well as a keen sense of news values and the ability to make and keep friends. The country

newspaper is a social, educational, business link which holds the community itself together and keeps that community in touch with the rest of the world.

Mrs. Weekes believes the country newspaper is a splendid place for the young woman to start into journalism.

"She can," says Mrs. Weekes, "obtain more technical training, get a wide variety of experience and excellent material for news and feature stories in the country field. She can get in touch with the entire works. And, usually, the country newspaper pays good salaries."

Mrs. Florence Riddick Boys emphasizes the opportunity for women who specialize their work. Mrs. Boys edits the woman's page of her husband's paper, *The Plymouth (Ind.) Pilot*, and syndicates this material which goes out to hundreds of newspapers throughout the United States. Thus, through the syndicate, her field of services is greatly enlarged.

Syndicating, of course, need not be confined to woman's page material. There are many American women writers who are selling their articles to syndicates, or, like Mrs. Boys, syndicating their own material—material that varies from features of every sort to jokes and fashions and editorials.

The addresses given here make no attempt to cover all the opportunities for women writers. Writing special interviews and features for Sunday magazine sections and periodicals; conducting children's pages or writing for children's magazines; political writing; conducting newspaper columns; organizing and keeping in workable order a newspaper library; writing for or editing trade publications; teaching journalism in high schools or colleges—all of these things were brought out in discussions as offering opportunities for women journalists.

The advertising field, too, offers to women interesting and varied phases of work: opportunities on the newspaper advertising staff, with advertising agencies, on periodicals, with large retail and wholesale firms, manufacturers, as publicity experts for individuals and corporations, etc. Mrs. Faith G. Sharratt discusses such opportunities.

There are women who write and women who read. Both groups have increased their numbers in recent years. In journalism's earliest days women paid little attention to newspapers. Today probably as many women as men pay attention to these publications. And the woman reader has really a great influence, for editors everywhere are making up their papers to please her, employing experts to find out what she wants and then to give her that information or help in the columns of the daily press. So long as women have read newspapers, they have had this influence to a certain extent. With equal suffrage their influence increased because editors realize that now women want political news as well as civic, educational, and business information—not forgetting the social news and the household helps and the feature column that they continue to like.

Because of this bearing on the newspapers themselves, what women wish from the newspaper is important to those who edit and write for the press. Mrs. W. K. James of St. Joseph, prominent for many years in national, state and local women's club work as well as in cultural and civic development in this state, interested intensely in rural community service and in whatever women need throughout the country, is a person well fitted to talk from the layman's standpoint on what women want from the newspapers. Mrs. Elias R. Michael of St. Louis is equally fitted to discuss such a subject. Her service

on the St. Louis Board of Education and her interest in child welfare, in civic and women's club work have given her an insight into what women wish most from the newspapers.

Women, then, have a goodly share of responsibility in making American journalism what it should be. As editors, writers and readers their ideals, desires and services will always have much influence. It is for them to decide whether that influence will be for the better.

Sara L. Lockwood



MRS. MARIE WEEKES, *editor of the  
Norfolk (Neb.) Press.*

*Journalism as a Career for Women*

BY MRS. MARIE WEEKES

*Editor, The Norfolk Press, Norfolk, Neb.*

I don't know very much about journalism as a career for women. It sounds both formal and formidable to me and I have never found anything formal or formidable about editing and publishing a country newspaper. I am rounding out my twentieth year in a newspaper office but my work there while absorbingly interesting has never appealed to me as a career. It is just a part of my life—a big, wonderful part that has fit in comfortably with my love of home, my idea of rendering useful service to those about me. I can only imagine how it would feel to have one's painting awarded a place in the Paris salon and I have never yet experienced the thrill of opening an envelope to find a check for a thousand dollars for an accepted short story but I know what it is to wait eagerly for the first copy of the paper off the press; for the perusal of the columns filled with one's own stories; the satisfaction there is, too, in the finished product with the always-implied promise "and next week's issue will be better yet."

And what compensation it is for one's labors when some good mother calls to say the story about her boy away in college is fine and thanks you as only a mother can! How gratifying it is to have the orator of the day commend you for the best report of his speech and to perhaps find, years after you had written it, a treasured clipping of some obituary, wedding, commencement or other story from your paper still giving happiness to some member of your reader family who has never spoken of it but who classes you among the real friends because of your little tribute to a loved one.

My father wanted me to be a boy. I wanted to be an editor. I wasn't born to my father's wish but he loved me anyway and in the twelve short years he lived imbued me with much of his own idealism. Sitting at the kitchen table at night in the little farm home where I spent my childhood years he taught me to read from the weekly newspaper and from its columns my mother read to us by the light of a kerosene lamp the current events and the political news of the time. I dreamed then of the day when I too might send forth a newspaper to those lonely farm homes that would keep families like ours informed, happy and inspired to better living; when I might burn the midnight oil while preparing wonderful editorials that must warm the readers into a new appreciation of their responsibility as American citizens.

Is it woman's idealism we need in our newspapers? It is well known that the underlying urge of all idealism is religious. In women born with the true newspaper spirit we find an exaltation, a mysticism, an imagination not unlike that which fired the soul of Joan of Arc. Only a woman can undertake to do that which is utterly revolutionary, apparently impractical. And it is John Boyle O'Riley who says: "The dreamer lives forever while the toiler dies in a day." Thomas Jefferson was a dreamer. He saw a people bowed beneath oppression and he visioned a self-governing nation in which every citizen would be a sovereign. He put his vision upon paper and for almost two centuries multitudes have been building to that plan. Can any newspaper woman or man ask for more than the opportunity to labor faithfully with the rest of the multitude to build this temple of human freedom to such size that all the people of the world may find shelter under its roof-tree?

No editor has the right to say "we must give the people what they want to read." Ours is a profession, not a mere business. We are not dealers in shelf commodities. We are above the plane of hucksters and peddlers. We must give these readers better things than they want because we want them to become better men and women than they are. We represent one of the most powerful agencies in American public life. We preach to people who never enter a church. We teach folks who were denied the opportunity of school and university. We make the mental food upon which men's and women's souls are fed and healed. It is our duty to lead and accept the responsibilities of leadership. It is our duty to make our readers' interests broader, their world wider, their tastes appreciative of the finer things in life. Make these readers think. Unless our newspapers do this our dreams of democracy will never be realized. Unlimited publicity of the right kind is the life blood of a people's government.

I like to think of Benjamin Franklin who served his country in the capacity of inventor, publisher, statesman, yet who chose to sign himself simply "printer." I like to think of Benjamin Franklin, printer, and the splendid fight he made for American ideals. It was he who marked the trail and lighted the beacons along the progress of the world.

Professor Danihy, dean of journalism at the Marquette University, Milwaukee, says: "The readers of newspapers are the ruling class in a free country. They are to a great extent too busy to seek the lessons of life in the living; the editor is an expert in his way. This ruling class, the common people, for the common people are the ruling class even if they fail so often to exercise their sovereignty, call on the editor, just as the heads of a great corporation call upon the heads of the purchasing department, the production department, the sales department, to give them data regarding the proposed ventures; and from the study of the reports determine to undertake or abandon the project. Let us fix this firmly in our minds: The public, the citizens, the man in the office, the shop, the factory, the store, have it in their power to direct the activities of the country, to control its destinies, to determine its character. And this public is the employer, the real boss of the editorial writer, standing above and behind the managing editor, the publisher, the corporation. The public may be, at times, a very easy boss, lax in asserting its authority, thus leaving the door open to all kinds of abuses. But this in no way excuses the employe."

Charles Harger says in the April issue of Scribner's: "The country editor has in his hands a powerful lever. Perhaps he is too busy just now to use it but if, when the final form of the rural paper is established and it is determined whether or not the city journal is to dominate the rural field, whether the paper or magazine of national circulation is to make local publications' existence precarious—a condition that is exceedingly unlikely because of their inability to fill the very human need of home news—there beckons a larger service for the community and for the broader understandings in social betterment. The old motto 'We are here to stay' yet stands at the masthead of the country editors' ship—in truth if not in printed phrase. The period of readjustment through which the rural press is passing will in the end make it more powerful than ever in its history—where shall the press the peoples' rights maintain, unawed by influence and unbribed by gain."

Henry Ford has well said that life gives gifts to the people by wrapping them up in men and sending them forth. Then nothing is given the newspaper

man or woman for his or her own use but as embodied gifts for those they serve.

The work of spiritualizing the nation, the changing of its mind, is the special work for newspaper women who, because of their opportunity to make for information, for opinions, must be held accountable if that is not done.

To the active, original woman mind this work has a peculiar charm and fascination. Women as a rule do not take to the sciences. Statistics are to us rather cold-blooded things, but the mother-heart quickly sees the possibilities in the awkward, rough-cheeked country lad to whom a line of recognition in the home paper may be the means of awakening a soul with possibilities of an emancipator of a race. A bit of a poem with just the right message may make a difference no one can gauge in a young girl's life.

The newspaper woman comes in constant close relationship with public questions and with the needs of humanity. Here is no place for dwarfed imagination, stunted power or neutral personality. Here is no place for negative goodness. She must have courage, initiative. She must be progressive. There is work for her to do and she must do it.

Newspaper work demands accurate knowledge, a sense of obligation, special training, clear vision, honesty with one's self, an abandonment of the call of what is termed society, the absence of sex-consciousness, plenty of balance (called common sense), true culture, moral courage and a burning desire to make good.

The time is here when the newspaper must by full publicity lead in the matter of open discussion of every question affecting American public life. Monarchies live by suppression. Democracies grow and flourish with free speech, free press and free assembly. We must re-establish the American forum. Our newspapers must chronicle the facts as we see them. We must not only tell the news but interpret it. In America the government is the people—you and I and the rest of us. Its weakness is our weakness, its strength is our strength. We must have pitiless publicity. We must have open covenant openly arrived at. Women cherish these principles. They suffer little from heredity partisanship and precedents hold few terrors for them. It is because of this that I dare dream of the day when newspapers will nourish minds, build souls and move hearts; when culture rather than profit will be their aim.

The newspaper woman is not an innovation, at least not in Nebraska. She is to be found in the business office, in the editor's chair, she is in the advertising department. She is frequently a reporter, a printer, a collector. She feeds presses and printers with equal ease and success. She is to be found in the country offices and in the city shops. I believe all of you agree with me that in the main more women read and heed newspapers than men, especially the advertising columns. Then do we not need woman psychology in the preparation of our ad copy? And who so well as a woman knows woman's ways? Again, in the choosing and editing of features for newspapers which are to be read by women it is but natural that women reporters, women editors will know best what will please, what is needed. The newspaper of the future must be more than a mere announcer of facts. The radio does that work now. The newspaper must teach, perhaps even preach a bit if it is to survive and prosper. It has a sacred trust and to the newspaper woman who holds that trust not lightly, other women less privileged will look for information, for inspiration in their obligations of citizenship. Into thousands of little homes goes the newspaper with its cheering, strengthening messages, with its whole-

some, clean news, its information about governmental things at home and abroad.

The women of the world are fast coming into their own. A decade ago it was rare to find a woman in public life with the exception of school teachers. Newspaper women were seldom heard of—their work often being credited to men. The World War and the granting of equal suffrage changed all that and women are now being recognized as leaders in business, politics, the professions. In none of these is there more opportunity for women than in journalism. I would not tell young women to foreswear love and marriage and abandon the idea of home and babies to enter journalism. No, indeed. Women's first call is the home. Newspapering has its appeal but not sufficiently to blot out love, home and the things these stand for. I do not know about daily newspapers and the city newspaper shops but in the country towns there is plenty of room for clever, willing girls who want to apply what they have learned in schools of journalism. Our Nebraska officers are constantly calling for trained help. The girl who can prepare her ad copy and sell it will find editors eagerly bidding for her service. There is no field of activity more promising than that of newspaper advertising and especially that which deals with women's wants. The large agencies, I am told, are eager for women who will be able to write copy with the woman's point of view. I am not going into detail in the matter of opportunity in the mechanical and business ends of country newspapering but that opportunity is there and is knocking at the woman's door. It lies with her if she wants to hear it, to open the door and make use of what she finds awaiting her.

The word "personality" like that of "service" has been overworked yet personality has its part in newspaper making. And I believe women will bring it to the newspaper and to good effect. Men pride themselves on their simplicity in dress, their uniformity of style of clothing and they find women's slavery to fashion and love for fads inspiration for many a cartoon and bit of humor. Did you ever stop to think that it is a woman's desire to preserve her personality that prompts her to find a different hat, to want a gown unlike that of any of her friends? Sometimes while reading the scores of newspapers that come to the exchange table and finding so much of uniformity, so little that is different, I wish for more women with their love of individual personality in those newspaper offices.

Sometimes, too, when I read the crime and sensational news that spreads itself through some newspapers I wish for these editors the imagination of the woman who could see herself at the bedside of the victim of the poison tablet; who would remember that the boy in police court is another mother's son; who would give the girl another chance because she knows that if she were her girl she would want for her that other chance to make good—to go and sin no more. "Sob stuff" the boys sometimes call it, and yet of things like these much of life is made. And that reminds me that it was Marjorie B. Peacock, junior girl student in the University of California, who recently won out over twenty contestants, mostly men, in an analysis of journalistic ethics. She received first place with her editorial essay on "Truth and The Press" in which she said in part:

"Truth, in philosophic sense, should seldom be suppressed, for real truth is a beacon which all too rarely glimmers forth in our murky, modern world. But truth, merely in the sense of fact, is often at the root of the noxious yellow journalism which pollutes the press as it is at the root of the worth-while news

article. Partial truth, pierced with a barbed insinuation, has ruined many a man, and not even the whole truth is warranted if it in no way concerns the public and can give it nothing of value. Public interest should be public property, and the guilty, and even the innocent, should if necessary, be forced to suffer for the public good, but private affairs should be respected and suppressed if they in any way injure the persons connected with them. An editor should have as his standard something higher than a mere catering to the morbid human desire for sensation and scandal."

President Coolidge recently said in an address before the Associated Press that "one newspaper is better than many criminal laws". I believe the greatest need in the world today is education. The press has it in its power to bring a millenium of peace, good will and prosperity upon the earth. We want editors and publishers with vision; editors and publishers who will make their journals vital forces in their communities, not mere chronicles of inconsequential facts. I think the day is past for the Bingville Bugle type of newspaper. It is being replaced by a more informative, dignified and inspired newspaper that will speak with authority, that will assume leadership and will lend its part to the building of a more alert and a more intelligent citizenship.

And frankly I know of no profession open to either men or women that offers so great a field for service to our country and our fellow-kind as that of journalism—country newspapering. There is a real field for clean, wholesome, different newspapers, newspapers with high purpose—ideals of citizenship. In Nebraska we have many splendid newspapers but none that I know quite reach the vision their owners hold for them. We who are owners of these newspapers look to the schools of jouranlism to train men and women who will help us bring our newspapers to the pinnacle of our expectations in ideals, ethics, principles, standards, guidance, conduct and prosperity.

Was it Saint Simon who said "to educate a woman is to found a school?" Women journalists needs must add to the educational value of newspapers.

Will women stress the idealistic too much? Is the newspaper a practical business with no place for idealism? We will let the editor of the Fourth Estate answer for the newspaper people, men and women:

"Is the ideal we have been studying too lofty? Yes. Can we ever hope to arrive at it? No. But oh, the glory of the struggle! God help the man who has a task that he can do perfectly. He is a man without ideals, without imagination, without ambition. Ideals mean something always beyond the highest accomplishment, something we can approach but never reach. Ideals rule the world even while the world cynically derides them. No, we never shall be perfect in our calling; but let us thank God that our calling is so high that the pursuit of it, through praise and blame, in sickness and in health, calls on the best that is in us and that the pursuit itself is our glory and our reward exceeding great."



MRS. FLORENCE RIDDICK BOYS, *woman's page editor of the Plymouth (Ind.) Pilot, and publisher of a syndicated woman's page.*

*The Woman's Page*

BY MRS. FLORENCE RIDDICK BOYS

*Woman's Editor, The Pilot, Plymouth, Ind., and  
Editor of Woman's Page Syndicate.*

My woman's page was begun for my husband's paper. Finding that it was copied by other papers over the state, it occurred to us that it would be a good scheme to make of it a service. I got up a sample sheet of my copy, with information about it on the back, and sent this with a short letter calling attention to it, to 2500 publishers over the United States and Canada. It is my practice to send out such soliciting letters each three or four months. In return I get an average of about one patron for each 200 solicited.

I will confess that I am not a great success at selling my own work, having a feeling of delicacy about press-agenting myself, and soliciting business from friends or relatives. My greatest patronage comes from strangers. I have never given the business end a fair try out. The money return is my least concern. I love the work, and the motive I have is the big end of the game. However, the work does pay, as a by-product, since I have learned to do it easily and love it intensely.

My rewards are: a feeling that I am really helping the women of my generation, a spiritual thrill of satisfaction, many pleasant associations with women and with editors, some reputation which I am human enough to enjoy and about \$10 a day above expenses for each day that I actually work at it. My expenses are about \$730 a year. For almost the same expense, I could supply twice as many papers, but have been too busy with other things to push the business end right, though I am always hoping that I shall do it later.

It would probably be difficult, if not impossible, for a woman to make a good living on it alone. It is a good side-line for the wife or daughter of an editor.

Collections are good and editors are a pleasant class of people to deal with. A few do not pay. I have found out that new papers are the more likely to fail and so discontinue the service. To keep up the list one has to keep up the soliciting. Papers who once know the service rarely stop except for three reasons: very hard up; discontinue; or there comes a new managing editor "who knows not Joseph." If I can get them to take it once, they are pretty sure to keep on.

Women are still pioneers in public life. As they become more active outside the home, they are making their influence felt with editors and there is a greater demand for woman-copy. I used to dread competition of other woman's pages, but I have learned to welcome all. A woman's page in one paper demands that the competitor do something. We have not only to write material good enough to interest women, but we have to get by the editors. We have to make them realize that there is a demand for such copy, thus cultivating a field for our writing as well as doing it well.

*The Mechanism*

Every Monday morning I mail out to each patron a copy sheet containing forty-five inches of copy. I use first class postage to be certain it arrives. At the end of each month I send each a statement of \$3 due. I do not use mats since these are expensive, are likely to break in mailing, and many

editors prefer copy. I find I must follow the job through personally,—have the copy handed in on Thursday, read the proof, make the dummy, see the last revise, and get it off in the mail.

It is strange that all classes of publications use my woman's page copy, from the smallest to the largest, weeklies, semi-weeklies, dailies, semi-monthlies, and monthlies. I had the thrill of buying a metropolitan paper as I entered New York City and finding in it two articles I had written. My pages are used from Newfoundland to California, and from Vancouver to Florida.

If patrons wish it, I furnish an electro heading, which costs me \$1.50 each. For my weekly copy sheet, I use good paper, cut of a size to be economical. I had to find out by experience how much copy to furnish. In a desire to be generous, I first supplied too much, but it was a deterrent, overstocking or discouraging my customers. In order to make out my dummy for the printer, I had to learn how much typewritten copy would make an inch of printed matter, also I had to learn to write heads, counting letters. It is wise to furnish extra fillers and "shorts" to help in the make-up.

#### *The Editorial End*

I cannot remember when I did not want to write, and try it. My training has been in college, and as teacher, wife, mother, club woman, civic worker, and in business and politics. As the wife of an editor I have been much about a newspaper office and have filled in at almost all of its jobs in turn, thus gaining an acquaintance with what a newspaper can use to advantage.

If I were to presume to advise other woman's page editors, I should say: Live, be rich in common experience; know, love, and help people; know Mother Goose, Alice in Wonderland, Aesop's Fables, Grim's Fairy Tales, mythology, and the Bible, for allusions. Know housekeeping, children, clubs, women. Write full of the experience of life, the more the better. Do not strain, but write as you talk, as neighbors chat over the back fence; but usefully, as you would advise your younger sister.

Formerly I wasted a lot of energy sighing for genius, as Jacob wrestled with the angel. One could tackle such a job as dish-washing or reporting, but how could one produce creative work. I supposed it must be brilliant, but finally, I came to realize that what the editor wants is to employ someone to work for him, conscientiously, interestingly, if wittily and brilliantly so much the better, but helpfully at all events. Only begin. The product will be better than you think. "The gods send thread for the web begun."

I want my copy to be full of sweetness and light, that it will not leave a bad taste in the mouth. I will not play up the seamy side of life nor cynical nor pessimistic.

The copy can be scholarly, something educated women will enjoy, worthwhile thoughts and news from which all women can learn something, above commonplaceness and the frivolous and wishy-washy. People enjoy a certain amount of solid reading matter, if interestingly put. Do not be afraid to write for intellectual women. Many women are intellectual and others enjoy that kind of reading, too.

The writing should be interesting, homey, strong, human, cheery, and decent. Pessimism, the seamy side, cynicism and hate are taboo. Do not use jokes which have a sting or reflection on womankind, as the mother-in-law joke, or those implying that women talk too much. Avoid preachy matter,

propaganda, wrangling, low grade drivel, "heart-problems", love triangles, political arguments, and extremism, hobbies and fads.

There must be something on the page to please every type of woman: the home, the business and the club woman, and the young, the middle aged, and the elderly. Nine women out of ten are just "Mrs. Average Smith," a woman of about 35-55, and she is not a type, but a combination of all those types. She is housekeeper, wife, mother, business woman, club woman, reformer, and always looking out for new ideas. She is not a "high-brow," not a moss-back. She wants good stuff for her reading matter and she recognizes and appreciates it when she gets it.

Material for copy may be gleaned from many sources. Like an octopus, I go about continually feeling for new ideas. I find it in trips through stores, in a vast fund of family life, experiences of neighbors, listening in at woman conversations, in government bulletins, in books and magazines. One must study much, but there is scarcely anything which touches one woman's life which may not be made to contribute to the interest or profit of others.

In a filing cabinet, classified as an encyclopaedia, I have material on every possible topic which concerns woman. I take a score or more of publications. I glance over and file and classify the matter in these, and when I want to study up a subject, I have a dozen or more articles on it.

#### *The Need For a Woman's Page*

The editor would not think of labelling his paper, "For Men Only"; yet 90 per cent of the newspaper writers are men. Most of the material in the papers is for men. It was a former practice for men to write the woman features. No one thinks women could successfully write the men features. Neither can men successfully write woman features.

Ads in a paper with a woman's page are worth more to advertisers since women buy seven-eighths of the goods bought over the counter. A home paper is worth more than a street paper, and to get and keep a paper in the home one must appeal to the woman reader.

The woman's page makes the paper a trade paper for woman, the housewife. People always prize their trade paper.

People want more from a newspaper than mere news. They expect joy, entertainment, inspiration, breadth of view, opinions, intellectual food, practical helps, ideals. To many people the newspaper is their only reading matter. A woman's page in your paper will give it a high tone. It will mark you as a man who is progressive and awake to women's needs. It will attract attention to your paper.

In the following cases, a woman's page is especially valuable:

1. If you have raised the price of your paper and want to keep it up, or if you want to raise it and must add to its value to do so.
2. If you have a tempting field and want to keep competitors out. In that case you must fill the whole field and give the best possible paper.
3. As a bait for ads. Play up that value to advertisers. They may not realize that value unless you make it clear to them, but they will see it if you do.
4. In making a circulation drive, it adds to attractiveness and makes a talking point.
5. If you want the satisfaction of feeling that your paper is helpful to the homes of your community.



MRS. W. K. JAMES, of St. Joseph,  
Mo., prominent in civic, educa-  
tional and club work.

*What Women Wish From the Newspapers*

BY MRS. W. K. JAMES,  
*St. Joseph, Mo.*

After I was asked to talk on "What Women Want from the Newspapers" I immediately began looking about for women whose opinions I could get. On the interurban car to town I met the daughter of a former newspaper man. Of course I pounced upon her, told her she was just the person I wanted, and what did she want from the newspapers? She looked at me calmly, it was not at all the exciting proposition to her that it was to me, and said in the most gently detached manner, that she did not want anything. She never read them. Her father had been a newspaper man, and he did not let her. Naturally that was when she was a child, but she had formed the habit.

In town I went to the monthly luncheon of the St. Joseph Federation of Women's Clubs. It happened to be in charge of the Press and Publicity Department, so I was sure of sympathetic interest. I asked every one of the 300 or 400 women there what she wanted from the newspapers. Not to tell me at the moment, all at once. It is only when two or three women who know each other very well and like each other very much and have not seen each other for a long time that they can talk at once and all understand everything the others are saying. It was Saturday and I asked them to devote their Sunday meditations to the subject and write me on Monday morning.

After the luncheon I went to a meeting of the Democratic Women's Club and made the same request. One woman I happened to meet in the hall, a very sweet, serious-eyed, very young woman, I stopped to try to impress upon her the importance of helping me to give you some really valuable information. She could not understand just what I wanted, and at last said, "But what has this to do with politics?" Her whole mind was given to the one, new, absorbing subject. She was going to learn about it; she was going to vote for the right things and the right men, she was going to do her duty to her country or die in the attempt.

But I really did get some opinions after a while.

May I tell you first of a few changes women would like to have made? They would like a toning down of some of the headlines and to have some of the news taken off of the first page. If the accounts of crime and scandal could be put in a less conspicuous place and announced with less alluring enthusiasm women think it would be a decided improvement. When I was a small child we were in Virginia City being shown the sights of the town. Our guide, an old man, a relic of a former generation, pointed to a signboard that extended across the pavement and told us, with evident enjoyment, that seven men had been hung on it at one time. It had been a thrilling and probably necessary episode in frontier life but do you not think there is an unnecessary amount of the spirit of "seven men hung on one signboard" about the headlines of some of our daily papers? Have we not passed a little beyond that stage of evolution? When we have to hang men in these days we do it with a little more seemly reserve. You will say that crime and scandal are news; people want the news and must have it. But this sort of news is not a thing to be rejoiced over, to be gladly and conspicuously proclaimed; it is not an honor to the American people. Tell it if you must, but do, for the sake of the women who

must see their children reading the papers, tone down the headlines, take it off of the first page, and if possible, put it in a corner.

Another change women would like to see is in some of the pictures on the comic page. Not all of them, some of them are delightful, but there are many they do not care for. It is not because they have no sense of humor, as some of you men are thinking, but they dislike the coarseness, the ugliness, the whole spirit of the pictures. Give us all the fun and laughter that you can but a little higher grade than some we have now. You may say you can not go over the heads of your audience. That is absolutely true. You have to keep within a range that they will understand. but when the 6-year-old child knows only his alphabet we do not say we will never give him anything but the alphabet to read. Do you think that would be reasonable, or that he would develop very quickly? But that is what is done with the comic page. We know that we are all learning and growing, mind and soul, as long as we live and the growth depends upon the knowledge, of all kinds, that comes in our way, and the newspapers are one of the great educational factors of the times. People love to be amused. They will remember an idea that comes with a laugh long after they have forgotten a seriously-given lesson. When the 6-year-old child has learned his letters we do not give him a history of the universe, we teach him to spell cat and dog. We do not ask for anything exalted on the funny page. Just drop out the pictures that come below the cat and dog stage and bye and bye when everyone has grown up to that we will ask for another change. Very much women like good cartoons. They like funny stories, not everyone that they find in the papers, but very many of them. And they love "Little Benny." I know families where every member religiously keeps his or her eyes away from the particular spot where Little Benny is to be found until the whole group can hear his adventures read aloud and all enjoy them together.

One point upon which many women agree is in asking for a column where there is a clear, brief record of the most important events of the day. Some papers have this, but not all. Many women could read it when they had time for nothing else. Superficial and unsatisfactory, of course, but far better than nothing.

Another thing they want is to be told both sides of the question. During the exciting days just before the election in St. Joseph, one of the papers gave a column to each political party, and every morning you could read, side by side, the qualifications of the various candidates and the planks of the platforms upon which they stood. This appealed tremendously to the women, and they want other subjects treated in the same way. Above everything else very seriously, very earnestly, they want the truth. I do not mean that they think the papers are unreliable, or tell them what is false, but only a partial view of a question is given, which is misleading. Do you remember when we put blinders on our horses? We all have blinders on the eyes of our minds. Some can see only straight before them. Some blinders flop to one side, some to the other, but they are always there. Now all of these perfectly truthful people who write for the papers, see different things and each one is a part of the truth. If it is politics or religion, science or any other subject of importance where authorities disagree, give us parallel columns, or their equivalent, as clear and concise as you can make them. To illustrate the thing we want you to avoid: A short time ago a man whose position commanded attention made some very decided statements on a much discussed subject.

He was answered by an equally eminent man who did not agree with him. Soon after this crossing of swords an editorial in a Missouri paper quoted very fully from the first speaker. No allusion was made to the fact that his arguments had been effectively met, and the impression given was that he had expressed opinions which were not questioned and which would be naturally accepted. It is very probable that is exactly what the editor thought. It was truth as he saw it, but we want both sides.

Of course we realize that when the paper is the organ of a political party and presenting its party measures, it is entirely different. There we have the different papers each giving a side, which answers our purpose. But even here we want you to remember that we have not the experience which helps you to interpret much which is puzzling to us. You were born into one or other of the political parties and you grew up in it and take it as a matter of course. Possibly you have changed from one to the other but if you have, it only means that you think differently on some points, from your father. The business of politics, political procedure is just the same. You are familiar with the whole ground, whether you care to do much or little. Your feet instinctively find the smooth places and slip over the rough ones, but it is not so with women. It is all so puzzlingly new. There is a little winding path at home, that leads down a steep hill, under the trees, to the river. I can run up and down it on the darkest night now but when we first went to the farm I could hardly climb it in broad daylight. That is exactly the way a woman feels when she thinks about politics. There is always something just ahead that she is sure she can't climb over or a place that she is sure she will fall down. Unless there happens to be an omniscient man within reach she turns to the newspapers. Women want simply-written articles about the measures advocated by the different parties and to know what the reasonable and probable result would be if they became laws. They want to know about the men who run for office. What are their qualifications, from experience and training, to fill the places for which they ask. They do not want just praise of the men, but definite information which will help them to decide.

Women want good and varied editorials. The broader interest which comes with their larger part in the activities of the country makes them realize the need of greatly increased knowledge. The women who have plenty of time for reading and study are comparatively few. Nine-tenths of them are busy with work at home or in the occupation by which they support themselves and perhaps others. Now in addition to knowing these occupations, they must know something of social and economic matters for we are learning to realize the interdependence of all of the community for its welfare and happiness. They must learn something of the government of the town, the state, the nation; and for what and for whom to vote and why they should do it and what the result will be. How are they going to find out? Again they turn to the newspapers. One paper I know had a series of articles, a clearly written one each day, taking up the different departments, one after the other. Men could not see the use of it but it was just what the women wanted. Won't you sometimes have the woman in mind when you write? Remember how new it all is to her and write plainly and simply so that she will surely understand. You need not think that if you write in this way for her it will fail to interest other people. Once I was at a national convention where there were wonderful speakers but there were two who stood head and shoulders above the rest, they were in an entirely different class. One was a minister with an inter-

national reputation, the other was a girl who had been taken out of the gutters of New York and had gone back to work among the women she had left. And we said what can it be that these two have in common? And we knew that they had grown beyond the little, petty, confusing things of life, they had reached the place where they were perfectly simple. They spoke straight from their soul to yours and a tremendous power drove home every word.

Think of the woman when you are writing and very clearly, simply, give her the truth, as many sides of it as a clear sighted, trained mind can see.

Thoughtful women, especially in the country, are much disturbed about the poor schools in many parts of the state. How can they be improved? The women believe that the newspapers can help. Take the fate of the County Unit Bill for instance. Many people worked hard and faithfully to spread the knowledge of what it meant and the advantages that would be possible under it, and yet it failed. In the towns you can bring large groups together and talk to them. You can reach a large proportion of the community. But in the country you may have meetings that seem large but there will be numberless little houses over the county where no echo of the meeting will ever come. And there is something even harder to contend with than the scattered dwellings; it is the rural attitude of mind. People in the cities are continually confronted with new ideas, and learn to adjust themselves to change, but not in the country. I live in the country and I know country people, so, probably, do many of you. They never grasp a new idea at once. They are accustomed to going on with their work year after year with little change and seeing no greater change in their neighbors. Someone buys a new piece of machinery. They look it over and discuss it. After it has been tried thoroughly and proved to do the work of several men, saving time and labor, someone else will venture to get one and by and by no one can farm without it, but it has taken time to accustom them to it. The County Unit was defeated by the county people—the very ones it would have helped—because it was new to them and they did not understand it. There are constantly articles in the papers about better farm methods, better stock, better home building, better cooking, better clothes. All of these are good but the women want more about better training for the boys and girls and better country schools. There are many women in the country who, more than anything else, want the papers to wage war against ignorance and for better rural education. Suppose from the close of one legislature to the beginning of the next the papers had been sending into country homes stories of what could be done by country schools.

Suppose the story of Mrs. Harvy's school near Kirksville should be told all over the state. You probably know, but there are many who do not, that Missouri has the banner country school in the United States. That a Missouri woman took the most unpromising school she could find and made it a model which experts were glad to copy. That they sent for Mrs. Harvy to come east to teach others interested in rural education how to accomplish what she had done, which had never been done so well before. You probably know that the daughter of Dr. Dewey, the head of the School of Education of the University of Chicago came to Mrs. Harvy, studied her methods and wrote a book to tell all who cared to read, what could be done with a rural school. Do you newspaper women know of any other woman in Missouri who has done so much to bring honor to her state? There are other schools in all parts of the state that are doing good work. Tell about them. Ask people in different counties to send you stories and pass them around from one part of the state to another

Remember that the future of Missouri depends on the training of the boys and girls of today and so many of them are country children. I wish I knew how to plead for the women, for the country woman and her child. The dream of her life is to give him the education he needs for a fair chance in the world, and she is so utterly helpless. The newspapers can tell about the possibilities of education in the country till the people grow accustomed to the thought of it. If this had been done before the days of the County Unit Bill and if, when it was presented, the newspapers had said here is your opportunity, through this you can give your children what the town children are having, can give your children an even start in life with the children of the town, they would have understood and that story would have had a different ending.

Will you be good enough to remember that there are six things women want from the newspapers—

1. A less conspicuous and attractive presentation of crime and scandal.
2. A higher tone to the comic page.
3. A fair statement of both sides of disputed questions, religious, political, scientific, or any others of importance.
4. Clear, definite information on political subjects.
5. Clear, simple, thoughtful editorials on all subjects of public interest.
6. Untiring efforts to make country people understand the importance and the possibility of good rural schools.

A large share of these things the papers are now giving. We are very grateful for them, very appreciative, and eagerly ask for more.



MRS. ELIAS R. MICHAEL, *member of  
the St. Louis Board of Education.*

*What Women Wish From the Newspaper*

BY MRS. ELIAS R. MICHAEL,  
*St. Louis*

Who but an unsuspecting amateur would rush in where the sophisticated professional would fear to tread? Having rushed in, I understand better the managing editor's problems. After consulting about half a dozen women of college, business, political and home interests, I extend to him my profound sympathy. His trials are told no doubt truthfully in Chester T. Growell's sketch in the *New Republic*, 'My Daughter, Oh My Daughter.' This managing editor was still so absurdly young and so absurdly confident of satisfying every one, even irate parents of 12-year-old daughters for whose sweetness and light all news must be so variously sifted and censored. After years of vain effort, he concluded: it must have been letters from irate parents that prompted Charles Lamb, when asked—how he liked children—to reply, "Boiled."

Since my inquiry, I can appreciate why newspapers have had to reachcut so frantically to serve a public of every age, appetite and taste—and, this oftentimes to their own undoing, as evidenced in the fact that in 1920, ".....84 newspapers consolidated; 82 per cent of the newspapers in the country were mortgaged, and over 1300 newspapers in the same year alone died." (*Uni. of Mo. Bul. Vol. 24, No. 15, Aug. 1, 1923, page 17*).

There is no wish that I can make to you who have made journalism your life's study, that has not, I imagine, already been tried and found wanting. Nevertheless, I have ventured to formulate a few of the wishes upon which these women all agreed.

The news that women wish in matters local, national, international, political and educational affairs is the same as men desire—news gathered the world over—of dependable authority and integrity—news that is not only true as it goes, but is the whole truth. (This is a high ideal, but you have asked me what women WISH.) Women are seeking to be fully and correctly informed so that their opinions may carry just weight. For the accuracy of their information, they are more dependent upon newspapers than are men, who are downtown all day with opportunities to exchange ideas on current events with men of various interests, many of them in more or less active touch with affairs. Because women are so dependent for their information upon the press, the newspaper that wishes to retain their support should furnish unbiased information upon which they can base their opinions with confidence. Too many of our important newspapers today are bound by commercial or partisan influences so that fearless expression and adequate support of right and truth are denied them. On all sides I hear, however, that the schools of journalism are doing much to change this unfortunate condition by instilling in young journalist's minds high regard for their profession, and their obligation to the public whose confidence is their most valuable asset. Today the woman who wishes to judge fairly on any important issue—as taxes, prohibition, Russia or Japan—must search through several dailies and one or two digests and then frequently draw her conclusions from contradictory reports. Should not a newspaper be an open forum for impartial report; and discussion in the news columns and the editorial page alone be the place to develop the interpretation and individual opinion of the editors?

If women need help from the newspapers in forming their own opinions on public affairs, they need help still more in their serious task of educating their children. Schools can do only their part, but the molding of character and creating of a good citizen are to a greater extent dependent upon the influences in the home. Today, parts at least of the newspaper are read in the home by every child capable of reading. Only too often do we find news so stated in the papers as to suggest wrong notions to the young and to stimulate harmful tendencies. As an example: I have questioned the wisdom of bringing unnecessary scorn and derision upon public officials for merely political ends. Newspapers must accept a part of the blame for our loss of reverence for those in authority and also for our disrespect for law and order. President Coolidge said in his message of May 10, broadcast through the country, "The press must help to strengthen and improve the home." The women join President Coolidge in asking newspaper men to use their tremendous power to aid and not hinder the work which we have to do in rearing our children.

And, our interest in children and their education suggests another way in which newspapers could cooperate with more energy and understanding. Communities take too little active and wholesome part in the problems of the school and school board elections. For the betterment of education the interest of the public must be continuously stimulated and there is no agency comparable to the newspaper in arousing public discussion and promoting valuable forward-looking educational movements.

Having wished for this help—this, together with all the valuable material assembled in the voluminous papers of today—how, Oh, how, can we find it unless you provide an index and summary to guide us? Then, too, busy women wish for a more constructive organization of news material, grouped somewhat according to subject. Newspaper reading would then be less of a strain upon time and tired eyes and nerves. Would it be impossible or impractical to publish local, national, and foreign news in distinguishable sections just as we now have "funnies", sport and financial pages? What a delight it would be to know where to turn among the 20 or 30 pages for the news that most interest us. Then, as to individual articles—the main thought is frequently lost in having to pursue it over too many pages—hidden between "ads."

May I make one more suggestion for city newspapers, and strange to say, I think this one may have practical value. Through the "Help and Situation Wanted" columns newspapers could be a great agency of social service and could perhaps also increase their number of grateful supporters, by intelligent advice. If there were a sympathetic, keen, trained social worker included among the members of this staff, one who could give intelligent advice when requested to the applicant for a job, her service would be far-reaching. Frequently, the applicant needs advice on how to write ads, advice about the positions that have been advertised, especially those for which he may be best suited. Humanize this department, if possible, by making it somewhat of a vocational information and guidance bureau. Existing employment agencies can not and do not care to reach the numbers that apply to the newspapers through the want columns. I am encouraged to make this suggestion because I have read in Mr. Yost's recent book, "The Principles of Journalism" that while "the first essential of a newspaper is that it be saleable.....", it has become a necessary agency of public welfare." The telephone "ad" from the corner drug store will continue, but *your service* at the office to the "stranger

within our gates" and to the frequently bewildered human being seeking appropriate employment would be immeasurably increased.

Women refuse to look upon newspapers as mere commercial enterprises and advertising mediums. They place upon the newspapers a large responsibility as perhaps the most important agency of "*public welfare and for private information.*"

The newspaper is unquestionably the biggest continuation school of the Nation and does more to mold public opinion and public action than any other institution. Therefore, let the newspaper look well to the course of study it offers to the public.



MRS. FAITH G. SHARRATT, *advertising manager, John Taylor Dry Goods Co., Kansas City, Mo.*

## *Opportunities for Women in Advertising*

BY MRS. FAITH G. SHARRATT

*Advertising Manager, John Taylor Dry Goods Co., Kansas City, Mo.*

There is no position in the world today that is more suited to women than advertising, or the publicity work connected with advertising.

Because of her intuition woman is able to put her finger on the selling point. She can go to the heart of the thing. Eighty-five per cent of the buying is done by women—so it is not at all queer that women should advertise. But they have found their place in advertising through hard work, and they retain their place through hard work.

Two of the largest fields in retail advertising are in the woman's speciality shop and the retail store. Other forms of retail advertising include women's millinery, automobiles and music shops. Women naturally are fitted to understand the music problem, and the importance of music in the home. Women have also gained prominence in the advertising departments of men's furnishing stores.

Women have entered the field of financial advertising and many are in charge of women's departments in banks. In Chicago a woman is doing important work in one of the largest departments of a bank—that of personal solicitation.

Many advertising agencies are opening departments with women in charge. Women are better able to understand fields in which women generally are interested; and frequently women clients like best to deal with women agents believing that more attention will be paid to details and that there will be better understanding and sympathy.

A number of women have specialized agencies of their own. Many of them work in household lines; they test out recipes and household appliances, then write out their own copy advertising these. There are also agencies specializing in the handling of fashion information, in fashion news and copy for some of the biggest firms in the country. There are foreign fashion editors or advertising women who have headquarters in Paris, Berlin and other fashion centers. This sort of work, of course, takes style intuition as the writers must be able to distinguish between styles and fads.

Women are successful in general publicity and news agencies which handle and report conventions; put over bond issues; handle publicity in raising money for hospitals, civic projects and charity drives.

Women are editing house organs, store magazines and leaflets that are sent out to customers. They gather news about how goods are selling or not selling. They do a lot along the line of gathering local facts, getting good-will publicity, and making sales over the telephone.

The letter shop business is a new line taken up by women. It is similar to general publicity work for here they write letters for campaigns, for business firms, etc. Women are in many instances planning all such work and carrying on the letter-writing systematically and successfully.

Advertising comes as a step to something higher. Good advertising women have to be good merchandising women and good saleswomen. Some of the best have gone from advertising to sales-manager and many who have had their training in advertising now direct establishments. Then, too, the woman who has done advertising is in a position to manage her own business—to establish herself and build up a good business of her own.







