Daytime Radio Programming
for the Homemaker
1926-1956

By Morleen Getz Rouse

Long imprisoned within the four walls of her kitchen, as were millions of her sisters in suburban cottages and city apartments, she drifted through her traditional historic role, remaining prosaically at home and living through the old monotony of caring for husband, house, and family. Allowed to vote for the first time only six years before, the average woman of 1926 still did all her own work, confined in a colorless, dreary, unelectrified kitchen—confined not merely physically, but mentally. Her contacts each day with those outside her home circle were necessarily brief and hurried. The very nature of her work confined and encompassed her, never for an instant allowing her to escape from its burden. In a day in which almost all foods were prepared in the kitchen from scratch, and in which the wash was boiled and most clothing still handmade, the average American woman was too busy to reach out for new contacts or, in fact, to feel the need for them. With an unconscious philosophic acceptance, she took life as she found it, but not without the toll of an unexpressed dissatisfaction. But then came the housewife’s electronic liberator: radio.

Though the description above might be considered melodramatic, the daily demands on the typical American homemaker in the 1920’s were anything but glamorous. Lacking the many timesaving appliances and luxuries we have available in the 1970’s, the housewife and mother in the 1920’s was literally the “chief cook and bottle washer.” Of course there was a great deal of pride in surveying a counterfull of newly canned tomatoes in Mason Jars. But the homemaker’s life in the 1920’s B.R. (before radio) lacked one very important element that became so abundant once radio, and later television, arrived in her home—that element was companionship.

This paper provides an overview of that programming which was directed at the homemaker from 1926-1956. It categorizes those programs which served as companion, teacher, wet nurse and friend to millions of women throughout America during the daytime hours. Overall, the programs were not very sophisticated when judged by contemporary standards, but then, radio as a whole was not very sophisticated. Radio was an infant, teething successfully on celebrities of the day, with boundless energy and enthusiasm, and a homey intimacy non-existent in any other entertainment medium.

In most categories, several show titles are provided and one show is featured. The programs highlighted were chosen because they are representative of the category, not because they were necessarily the most enduring, popular or financially successful.

The sources consulted for this article include broadcasting trade
journals, popular magazines of the different periods, broadcast texts, homemaker's journals, Procter & Gamble archive materials, tapes and discs of early radio shows, radio and television entertainment guides, and related literature. Too often the impression is created that the only programs broadcast in radio's infancy were such successful hits as "Amos 'n' Andy", "Easy Aces", "The Goldbergs", "Lum and Abner" and "Lowell Thomas and the News." In competition with, and supplementing these network radio hits, were shows designed to meet the specialized needs of the American homemaker. In the early years of radio there was an air of experimentation with programming. What direction the medium would take had not been firmly established. Some early pioneers saw radio as the greatest possible teacher, capable of educating the masses.

However, early in the development of broadcasting in this country the decision was made that the new medium should operate competitively in the marketplace of free enterprise. With this decision, the profit motive became the most important element in measuring a station's or a network's success or failure and in determining program types and content.

Experimentation in radio programming for the homemaker during the 1920's and 1930's took several forms, most notably shows to entertain, shows to teach, shows to help raise children, shows that offered conversation, and shows on cooking and shopping. But, soap operas were the most successful, with more than fifty on the air by the late 1930's. There is probably no advertiser more closely associated with the soap opera than Procter & Gamble. Its involvement with programming for the homemaker goes back as far as 1923, and includes such shows as "Ruth Turner's Washing Talks" for Chipso, and "Mrs. Reilly" for Ivory soap. On the theory that women at home enjoyed dulcet, friendly voices, P & G originated "Mrs. Blake's Radio Column" in 1931. Broadcast five mornings a week, a different friend of Mrs. Blake's hosted the show each day for a different P & G product: Emily Post for Camay, Mrs. Reilly for Ivory, "Sisters of the Skillet" for Crisco (two days), and a monologist on the fifth day.

The homemaker-oriented programs that followed in the 1940's and early 1950's were very similar to those offered in the 20's and 30's. There were improvements in talent techniques and technology, but the content remained essentially the same as that in previous decades. As the profit motive became most important, and as TV began to challenge radio's existence in the late 1940's and early 1950's, radio went through a major transition period. Radio began using music extensively. Of course there had always been music on radio, but in the early 1950's there was more and more music of the recorded variety and less of everything else: talk, comedy, drama, games and quizzes. As radio experienced the transition, homemakers began turning to TV. But from 1926 through the early 1950's, network, regional and local radio provided the homemaker with the following programs created for her very special needs.

The Shows That Did Everything: "Housekeeper's Chat", "The Heinz Magazine of the Air"
Women Radio Pioneers

From 1926 through 1944—for almost nineteen years, for fifteen minutes a day, for five days each week, on more than one hundred radio stations (both network and independent) in America—Aunt Sammy was there. A welcomed guest in the homes of her five million listeners, this radio personality offered advice on what to feed the family for dinner, how to clean house most efficiently, how to fix a leaky faucet, how to sew a dress, and how to raise both vegetables and babies. She was modern, well-informed and had a keen sense of humor. Her roots, however, were traditionally small-town and conservative. She guided the American housewife through the grim realities of the 1930's and the consumer through the fraudulent and mischievous advertising of a naive age. She wrote the best American cookbook of her day, a book unrivaled in popularity until The Joy of Cooking appeared later in the decade. "Housekeeper's Chat" featuring Aunt Sammy (Uncle Sam's wife!) was a creation of the U.S. Agriculture Department. In 1926 the Department created the Office of Information headed by Milton Eisenhower. The Office began a radio service which produced programs targeted to the farmer's needs: pest control, temperature information, scientific breakthroughs, market reports, etc. Aunt Sammy was the official radio representative of the U.S. Bureau of Home Economics, and went on the air in 1926 to provide entertainment and information to the farmer's wife.

In the fifteen minutes that followed, fifty women—standing before fifty primitive microphones in fifty radio studios across the country, and reading fifty identical scripts prepared by the Department of Agriculture's Radio Service—were transformed into fifty Aunt Sammies. Taking on every possible local pattern of speech and regional accent, 'Aunt Sammy,' in that first broadcast long ago, recited a stanza of doggerel verse, told several jokes, explained how to select and care for linoleum for the kitchen floor, directed how to roast wienies the modern way, how to use vinegar left over from a jar of pickles, and how to put up cucumber relish, defined what a vitamin was, enumerated the five foods essential to the daily diet, listed 'what foods should be taken from dishes with the fingers,' and ended by offering the menu for the day—meat loaf with brown gravy, scalloped potatoes, carrots or beets, fresh sliced tomatoes, and lemon jelly dessert.

Joining Aunt Sammy were such regular supporting characters as Uncle Ebenezer, a crusty old relative; Billy, Aunt Sammy's six-year-old nephew; the Next-Door Neighbor, her nosy but warmhearted friend; Lettie, her car; the sweet-but-naive newlywed from down-the-street who could not bear to beat an egg for fear of hurting it; the Recipe Lady and the Menu Specialist; Finicky Florine and Percy DeWallington Waffle, fussy eaters who drove their mother mad; and WRB, the plant and garden specialist. The challenging years of the Depression put Aunt Sammy and her cast of characters to work teaching the desperate poor to stay alive on grain products and milk and those merely poor how to save and use every scrap for a nourishing meal; encouraging those who could to return to the soil and to preserve the fruits of the earth as had their ancestors before them; endorsing the use and reuse of every stitch, of every piece of cloth, so that nothing was wasted and everything saved; inner tubes for rubber aprons, goldenrod for dye, used fats for homemade soap.
In its early years on the air, "Housekeeper's Chat" ended with a segment entitled "Questions Women are Asking." Typical examples were "Should children have tea and coffee?" (No), "Is garlic eaten by respectable people?" (Yes), "What kind of sleeves are most becoming on a stout woman?" (The loosely fitted long sleeve is the most becoming for fleshy arms), and "My well water stinks. What shall I do?" (Boil it). This was not the first radio program utilizing the question/answer format, nor was it the last. Regardless of the economic, social and intellectual level of the listener, if she is a homemaker, her main concerns will be the same as her sisters across the nation: to take care of her family and home. As long as people need to know how to remove lipstick stains, how to refinish a piece of furniture, and how to make chicken dumplings as light as their mother's, there will always be an audience for the question/answer format.

Like everything else, however, Aunt Sammy and her friends were eventually replaced by other personalities that provided help, encouragement and companionship to the American homemaker.


Typical of the talk/variety radio program was "Don McNeill's Breakfast Club" which obviously knew what the homemaker wanted since it experienced a successful thirty-five year run on radio (June 1933 to December 1968). Originating from studios in Chicago for the NBC Blue Network (later ABC) Don McNeill and his cohorts delivered puns, prayers, and plain corn to millions of listeners each day.

Though no breakfast or any other kind of food is served during the 'Breakfast Club,' the show unwinds with the unrehearsed informality of a typical household breakfast—also with an impressive disregard for formal broadcasting practices. McNeill gaily swings from a sales talk about refrigerators to prayers and poetry, from chatting with elderly ladies from the audience to kidding the pretty singer Peggy Taylor about her numerous boyfriends. In between he trades jokes with comedian Sam Cowling and acts as amiable straight man to 'Aunt Fanny,' (played by Fran Allison) a gossipy rural relation addicted to endless conversations on the party line.

As important to the program as the comic and light features were its serious segments. "Memory Time" was that reminiscent time when McNeill read nostalgic verse sent in by listeners; "Inspiration Time" was devoted to brief inspirational vignettes; and "The Sunshine Shower" was McNeill's morning request for his listeners to write notes of cheer to the inmates of a hospital, an orphanage, or a home for the elderly.

A little later in the program comes 'Prayer Time.' The studio lights are dimmed, the orchestra plays a few soft strains of a hymn, and McNeill requests that both his studio and radio audience bow their heads and pray 'each in his own words... each in his own way... for a world united in peace.' 'Prayer Time' was conceived as a comfort for families with sons in the service during World War II. But in 1946 more than 100,000 letter writers persuaded McNeill to continue it. Members of Alcoholic Anonymous have written him that they use 'Prayer Time' to help stay on the wagon. A woman with five children wrote him that she had decided to give her husband the
divorce he wanted until she heard McNeill offer a prayer one morning for broken families. This changed her mind and soon afterward the family was reunited.8

Whereas Aunt Sammy was the wise and kind aunt-next-door dispensing recipes, stories and helpful hints, Don McNeill was the family man next-door described by the American Broadcasting Company as “righteous, God-fearing, orthodox in every way, he is not at all slick and could never be a sharpie.”9

One-On-One Heart-To-Heart Show: “Mary Margaret McBride”, “Elsa Maxwell’s Party Line”, “Kate Smith Chats”

There were shows directed to the homemaker that were historically more important, sophisticated, and successful than the Mary Margaret McBride Show, but there was no performer better able to carry a show almost totally by herself and who had more devoted listeners, than Mary Margaret McBride. She was so beloved and trusted by her listeners that Printer’s Ink, a highly-respected business journal of the day, referred to McBride as “perhaps the most outstanding example of reliance upon the word of a human being in the commercial field.” Movie-Radio Guide called her “Lady Number One of the Air”10

Mary Margaret McBride came to radio after making a name for herself in print journalism. But by 1932, magazines could no longer pay her accustomed rates and she was forced to look elsewhere for work. She auditioned for a housewife chat show on WOR in New York and won. Her air name in 1934 was Martha Deane. The show was tightly structured and she was given a fixed set of ideas for the program. The station tried to present Martha Deane (Mary Margaret McBride) as a wise old grandmother. This did not feel right to McBride so during a live broadcast she confessed to her audience, “I am not a grandmother at all, and I have no grandchildren, and from now on I intend to talk about myself.”11 And that she did for many years to come. In 1940 she left WOR and appeared exclusively over CBS on a fifteen-minute program. This shortened format (on WOR her show ran forty-five minutes), however, was frustrating to her. She claimed it induced oral claustrophobia, so she accepted an offer from NBC to join it on WEAF for a forty-five minute show for airing at 1:00 pm EST.

Built like Kate Smith, with an air of innocence and an Ozark accent, Mary Margaret McBride shared adventures of the stomach and the mind. She told her public what she had been doing, reading, thinking and then while dispensing wholesome thoughts and recipes, interviewed guests and sneaked in commercials. Her guests ranged from such celebrated people as Jimmy Durante and Sally Rand to politicians, Swiss bell ringers, trapeze artists and the Brooklyn electrician who built a robot out of ordinary electric fuses. Her ability to sell her sponsor’s products was unmatched. Never one to agree to a new advertiser before personally testing the product, she had twelve faithful sponsors each paying $150 in 1944 for the privilege of being mentioned five days a week on her show. Her ability to work in the product’s name and benefits was clever to say the least.
Last night those lovely ladies at Sea Girt told me what they do with the Mix... and do you know out in Flatbush where it's all hard water, well Dif washing powder is remarkable just remarkable, and I told Stella that the Smith's Split Peas are so warming to the insides, Frances was wiping the silverware with Noxon, of course... (to her announcer) What About O.D. 30? That beautiful unbelievable deodorant! Do you need to get rid of any bad smells around the house, Vincent?... and of course those beans baked in open pots all day yum until each bean is perfection.¹²

One of Miss McBride's distinctive trademarks was consuming her sponsor's products on the air while she discussed them. Her theory was that she could better describe their goodness while actually eating.

She must have been right since her listenership totalled between five and ten million daily. In celebration of her tenth anniversary on radio she was given a party in Madison Square Garden, filling the place to capacity. Her theme song was "Beautiful Lady," and the homemakers across America must have thought the theme fit Mary Margaret McBride to a tee.
Kate Smith was the most popular woman broadcaster in the history of radio.
Raising The Children: “Parents Magazine of the Air” and “Two A.M. Feeding”

Made available on radio through syndication was a series entitled “Parents Magazine of the Air,” which was produced in close cooperation with the editors of Parent's Magazine. The magazine was designed for parents, teachers, and their organizations. Contributors included doctors of education and child welfare authorities. Heading the roster of regular talent on the radio show were Clayton “Bud” Collyer as master of ceremonies; Betty Green, fashion editor and national authority on infant's and children's wear; Maxine Livingston, family home editor of Parent's Magazine; and Cecily Brownstron, food editor and authority on child feeding. In a promotional sheet, the program was described as follows:

It dramatizes such vital 'Parent's Magazine' columns as 'Out of the Mouths of Babes', 'Where Do You Come From Baby Dear,' etc. The appeal is directed to all mothers...expectant, and mothers of children from one day to 16 years...who do most of the buying for the home. The sponsor is assured of its real service to parents. Guest parents appear on many programs, such as Jean Hersholt, Jay Jostyn (famed as Mr. District Attorney) and many more. Dramatized advice by baby experts includes talks by advisory editors of 'Parent's Magazine,' and the foremost authorities...an authoritative source of information on the endless problems which confront every mother.13

“Parent Magazine of the Air” was broadcast in 1944 and 1945.

Supposedly, the first program concerned with the newborn and his or her parents was called “Two A.M. Feeding,” a fifteen-minute segment of the longer “Milkman’s Matinee,” which in 1954 ran from midnight till early morning six nights a week. Hosted by disc jockey, Art Ford, “Two A.M. Feeding” gave tips on baby psychology, played wake-up records at the beginning of the show to rouse the youngster and his parents, gave a soothing commercial or two on an appropriate product, amused the adult audience with chitchat, and played lullaby music when 2:15 A.M. approached, to rock the child of to sleep.14

The Specific Skill Show: “Let’s Make a Dress”

“Let’s Make a Dress” grew out of a series of twenty-five weekly three-minute talks developed for use on a show called “Woman’s Hour,” which was carried on seven radio stations in 1943. The war was on and conservation of clothing was of utmost importance. It was urgent to get timely ideas to all homemakers. “Let’s Make a Dress” was an experiment to further test the possibilities of teaching a technical subject through radio. It was offered as a fifteen-minute program twice weekly on the Cornell University radio station, WHCU, beginning September 29, 1944. Each broadcast was planned to teach certain sewing fundamentals, to stimulate homemakers to activity, and to anticipate coming lessons. The show served as an extension course and the 1300 women enrolled were provided a copy of “Sewing Aids,” a set of four booklets rich with illustrative sketches and explanatory notes related to sewing problems.

The Cooking Show: “The Mystery Chef,” “Morning Market Basket,”
Daytime Radio Programming

“Our Daily Food,” “Crisco Cooking Talks,” “Betty Crocker,” and “Mary Lee Taylor”

Perhaps the longest running, most successful type of informational program directed at the homemaker was the cooking show. As early as 1923 the cadenced voice of WEAF announcer, Graham McNamee, introduced a woman who read mouth-watering recipes to her listeners. How successful that program would be, could not be determined, but the sponsor, Procter and Gamble’s Crisco, became a devoted fan of radio. Procter and Gamble continued with radio by inventing a “Radio Homemaker’s Club” to get a steady following. The Club members heard Ida Bailey Allen, of cookbook fame, give Monday morning chats about this, that and Crisco.15

Another early, quarter-hour food program for the homemaker was NBC’s “Our Daily Food.” Sponsored by A&P stores, the series was a discussion of recipes, food possibilities and menus with special features on how to make hot chocolate, how a grape juice factory functioned and how to start a school lunch program. The series ran until 1932.16

“The Mystery Chef” premiered in 1930, appealing to the Depression audience as Aunt Sammy had, teaching them how to save money on meals. The show lasted ten years, then took a year hiatus and returned to the Blue Network in 1941 as a new program five afternoons a week. “The Mystery Chef” concentrated on beating the soaring food prices with special emphasis on meat rationing.

His first broadcast... included a recipe for a meat dish which would serve six people for less than $1—a casserole, made of layers of chopped beef, fried eggplant, and tomatoes, and served with mashed potatoes. He cooked a full three-course dinner... for six hungry food company executives. It included soup, meat, two vegetables, potatoes, hot biscuits with butter and dessert—and cost only 21.1 cents per person.17

The television viewer of later years has been treated to similar cooking feats by such well-known culinary artists as The Galloping Gourmet and Julia Childs, queen of cooking. Each had his or her own distinct personality which helped to keep the listener/viewer interested even when the recipe did not. Although there are no regular cooking shows on either network radio or network television in 1978, viewers are occasionally treated to a new way of preparing a dish on one of the many syndicated talk/variety shows such as “Dinah,” “Mike Douglas,” and “Merv Griffin.”

OTHERS:
The Fix-It With Frills Show: “The Wife Saver,” “Household Hints,” “Mr. Fix-it,” “Household Advisor”

Making its debut on the NBC Blue network in 1932, “The Wife Saver” was a one-man comic shortcut to housework. Typical of the style of Allen Prescott, the host, was this hint.

Sometimes one simply can’t help splattering grease on the kitchen wallpaper.... Make a thick paste of starch, add water, and put it on the spots generously.... If you peek, you sort of spoil the whole thing. So what you do is wait... until it dries, then brush it off and the spots will be gone. I
wish they'd think of something like that for freckles. I don't get them, but I have to look at the people who do. (18)

Like most successful homemaker shows, "The Wife Saver" received many helpful hints from its listeners. Based on his show scripts and the letters he received, Prescott wrote two books, *Aunt Harriet's Household Hints* and *The Wife Saver's Candy Recipes*.

Women on Women Show: "Women in the Making of America," "Gallant American Women"

A show that would make contemporary feminists proud, "Women in the Making of America," was a project of the Federal Radio Theatre, and debuted on NBC in 1939 as a thirteen-week series. Created by Eva vom Baur Hansl, and written by Jane Ashman, the dramatic series presented a history of the American woman's condition and the women's movement.19

The Husband And Wife Show:

"Tex and Jinx," "Breakfast with Dorothy and Dick," "The Fitzgeralds," and "Meet the Menjous" were four of the more popular husband-and-wife shows on radio. During the 1940s the American homemaker could have her breakfast or clean her house while listening to these famous couples. Ed and Pegeen Fitzgerald were the first team to take to the airwaves, but were soon followed by the others. The shows had several things in common: spontaneous chatter, topics ranging from current events to fashion, and the intimacy created by broadcasting the programs from the celebrities' homes. What distinguished the shows from one another was the style and personality of couples, ranging from Dick Kollmar and Dorothy Killgallen with their urbane sophistication, to Ed and Pegeen Fitzgerald who conversed in a familiar, folksy style.

The Domestic Problem Show: "The American Woman's Jury"

A somewhat offbeat woman's show was presented in 1944 by the Mutual network. The show entitled "The American Woman's Jury" was a three-way parlay of courtroom drama, confession, and the endless domestic problems of the soap operas. The problems came out of the mailbag. One problem is chosen for each program and presented to the jury, which makes its decision after hearing the arguments of attorneys (one male, one female) for both sides of the question. The juries (a fresh one for each show) are chosen from Boston's women's clubs. No two-time divorcees or multi-widowed women are allowed.20

The master mind of the series was George Simpson who claimed to be constantly surprised with the jury's verdicts and the letters sent by listeners. One specific decision which bothered him occurred in the case of a wife whose husband admitted that he loved another woman but wanted her to stay with him while he pursued his new affair. She asked the jury what to do. They voted unanimously in favor of her staying on. Trying to explain the verdicts on the program, Simpson stated: "That's the damnation of women, security is all they're after. As long as they have it, that's all they

If the women/homemaker is only after security, then how does one explain the incredible insecurity that has been served up daily, hourly, to the minute on the various soap operas that have provided the bulk of both radio and television daytime programming since 1933?

A great deal has been written analyzing the soap opera: who listens to them and why? how does listening to soap operas affect the audience? and what does and does not work in creating a successful soap? An advertising executive in 1940 suggested the following formula for what makes a successful soap.

The daytime radio formula is based on four cornerstones. First, simple, understandable characters not too far removed from the average—the kind of person about who the average housewife, if she cannot say 'there but for the grace of God, go I' can at least feel that she recognizes and understands. Second, simple, understandable situations. Third, a woman as the central and dominant character, the one who shapes the action of the story and moves it along. Fourth, a philosophy exemplified by the conduct of the leading character, such as 'the meek shall inherit the earth;' 'virtue is its own reward,' and other equally familiar adages which have influenced hundreds of thousands of people for many years.

Max Wylie, noted producer, director, writer, took a more cynical posture in analyzing the soap opera listener.

...women of the daytime audiences have physical and psychic problems that they themselves cannot understand, and cannot solve. Being physical, they feel the thrust of these problems; being poor, they cannot buy remedies in the form of doctors, new clothes, or fancy coiffures; being unanalytical, they cannot figure out what is really the matter with them; and being inarticulate, they cannot explain their problem even if they know what it is. The radio soap opera—as does the TV serial today—presented more difficult and complicated problems than those vexing the listener. Or it kept them away from their problems.

But what does the social scientist suggest are the reasons the homemaker and others listen to the soap operas? In 1941, Herta Herzog published her findings in *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*. The article "On Borrowed Experience: An Analysis of Listening to Daytime Sketches" was based on personal interviews obtained between 1939 and 1941 with one hundred women living in Greater New York. The women were from various age and income groups. All listened to at least two programs daily, some twenty-two. Following is a summary of Ms. Herzog's findings.

1. The contents of their (interviewees) favorite stories boiled down to a formula, getting into trouble and out again.
2. The listeners studied did not experience the sketches as fictitious or imaginary. They took them as reality and listened to them in terms of their own personal problems.
3. The more complex the listener's troubles were, or the less able she was to cope with them, the more programs she seemed to listen to.
4. The stories appealed to the listeners' insecurity and provided them in one way or another with
remedies of a substitute character. This occurred in three types of reactions.

a. Listening to the stories offered an emotional release. Several respondents liked the sketches because they gave them a chance to let themselves go, to release the anxiety stored up in them. A chance to cry. A number of listeners said they felt a sense of relief in knowing that other people had their troubles too. Misery loves company.

b. Listening to the stories allowed for a wishful remodelling of the listener's drudgery. Some used the programs to inject into their lives elements which they admittedly missed in real life. Other listeners used the stories to revive things that were past and gone, and associated with a more pleasant time in the interviewee's life. A great number of the women used the stories to compensate for specific personal failures such as a happy marriage. A few of the better educated among the respondents disclaimed any personal interest in the stories and said they listened for entertainment. These persons bet on outcomes as a means of feeling superior.

c. Listening provided an ideology and recipe for adjustment. A number of respondents claimed that the stories had filled their empty lives with content. The mere fact that something was scheduled to occur every day provided an element of adventure in their daily routine. Many explained that they like listening because the stories taught them what to do or how to behave. Listening not only provided the listener with formulas for behavior in various situations, it also gave them sets of explanations with which they might appraise happenings.

The soap opera helped the housewife time her day. Typically, she might sit down to her second cup of coffee with "Betty and Bob," wash the breakfast dishes to "Judy and Jane," pick up the living room through "Our Gal Sunday," and start lunch with "Helen Trent." Then, she might start the kids back to school with "Vic and Sade," scrub the kitchen floor to "Road to Life," make out the grocery list to "Right to Happiness," and start peeling potatoes for supper with "Just Plain Bill."

Although this article has been devoted to radio programming for the homemaker, this writer felt that it might be interesting to take a brief look at one of the more popular, early TV programs targeted at the homemaker, "The Home Show" with Arlene Francis. Debuting on the NBC network on March 1, 1954, the show provided a format much like many of the popular women's magazines on the newsstands. "The Home Show" covered such fields as family affairs, fashions, beauty, interior decorating, architecture, gardening, child care, and related subjects. A complete script for the July 26, 1954 telecast of "The Home Show" is included in Irving Settel's Top TV Shows of the Year. Of course the added dimension of video allowed for and encouraged such visual program segments as a fashion show, a travelog on a family in Italy, and a filmed feature on how to play badminton. But the other segments of the show replicated those segments heard on radio for thirty years: a cooking class, news from Washington and a book review. Hugh Downs, the announcer, promised that tomorrow the show would feature "Fish as Pets with Jim Moran...News from Washington...HOME's cooking school...Vacation by Car...Paris Boutique...and Chef Phillip."

Although they were on television, none of these topics which Downs introduced, was substantially different than those predecessors on radio. For, while television did add a new dimension to broadcast programming, it certainly did not change, in any major way, the content of that programming.
Throughout its history, broadcasting has always provided certain programs for women. As we have seen, radio programs for the homemaker provided a vital element of companionship while at the same time they fulfilled some of her educational, informational and emotional needs. The homemaker of 1936 was considerably different from the contemporary woman. For while the former was proud of her function, and enjoyed the status and respect that came from being a homemaker, the later has almost been forced to deny that role. Nevertheless, there are millions of women who still enjoy the basic duties and responsibilities of being a homemaker. To them it is a noble and important profession. The broadcast media, which served them by fulfilling their needs in radio's "golden age," to a certain extent has now abandoned them. Only soap operas and a few talk shows aimed specifically at women remain. They, like the butter churn and the ice cream social, are the last vestiges of a need that was once crucially important, but now seems to have been sadly forgotten.

Notes

4Ibid., p. xv.
5Ibid., p. xxix.
6Ibid., p. xvi.
8Ibid., p.25.
11Ibid., p. 51.
12Ibid., p. 52.
13Frederic W. Ziv Archive, Cincinnati, Ohio, File Number 0600-001.
15Lief, It Floats, p. 152.
19Dunning, Tune in Yesterday, p.652.
20"American Woman's Jury," Time 43 (June 12, 1944), p.94.
21Ibid.
22Hubbell Robinson, "The Housewife is the Doctor," Journal of Home Economics (December, 1940), 669.

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