

W["]HER["]

MEMPHIS' NEWEST RADIO STATION

In October of last year, radio station WHER successfully completed its first year of operation—which indicates that Memphis area listeners like what they hear from this latest addition to the broadcasting fraternity. Station WHER is a one-kilo-watt daytime operation, broadcasting on a frequency of 1430 kc, with well-equipped studios located in a large modernistic motel close to the heart of downtown Memphis.

Although the novelty of an all-girl station was enough to tempt many people to turn to 1430 on the dial, only a good solid programming format has kept them there. The combination of effective programming and excellent technical facilities has resulted in an outstanding new radio station in Memphis.

Programming

Since the programs are "keyed to women", Sam Phillips, General Manager and part owner of the station, felt that a woman could convey to other women, household hints, etc., better than a man—hence an all-girl station. Active direction of the station's operations is handled by Dotty Abbott, Assistant Manager and Program Director. She also opens the day accenting bright music from six to nine a.m., and closes it with jazz and slow music from four until sunset. The station features easy to listen to popular music (strong on instrumentals) with some jazz for contrast. WHER has yet to play a rock 'n' roll or hillbilly record, which seems paradoxical since Mr. Phillips is the owner of the Memphis Recording Co., the Sun Record label and a developer of the new rock 'n' roll music.

News is given at four minutes before every hour and much emphasis is placed on local news events. Local happenings are covered not only in newscasts, but on special broadcasts as well.

Like any new station, WHER was slow in getting sponsors. As you might expect

with an all-feminine staff, beauty parlors, dress shops and cosmetic firms were quick to advertise. However, the station did not waste any time proving that it could also sell automobiles and real estate. They have produced results for such unusual sponsors as an auto body repair shop and a company selling motor parts.

Local interviews are very important to WHER and as yet no public service announcement has ever been turned down. All interviews are brief but comprehensive—informal yet to the point. Musical backgrounds are often used on recorded spots and WHER's singing jingles (produced and recorded by the staff) are much in demand, not only on all of the stations in Memphis but in other cities as well.

One interesting fact about WHER's move into the crowded Memphis market is that the station has succeeded in developing *new accounts* for radio. At this time WHER is 80 per cent commercial.

The Staff

The girls here run their own control boards, select their own music and record transmitter readings. They write, produce and record all of their own commercials and use a simple selling technique on the air. Spots are cut on 45 rpm records—not on tape, the feeling being that records are easier to handle. No affectation or know-it-all attitude is employed—there is no such thing as a "woman announcer" approach to announcing. The management of WHER feels that their announcers can be effective on-air "salesmen" if they talk to their audience in the same voice and with the same enthusiasm and sincerity that they would use over the back fence.

Six of the girls have their own program with emphasis on some particular subject of interest to housewives. Only the two "saleswomen" don't go on the air. Each girl selects her own records from the ever-growing record library. The accent is on variety with no jarring changes from one

selection to another. A smooth continuity of programming is strived for with a minimum of DJ chatter. Not over two records are ever played without some commentary in the selections. The commentary never takes the form of adverse music criticism of a selection.

One of the biggest on-the-air problems are the baseball scores. There is something terrifying about them for some mysterious reason. Although the girls understand the UP code, and know by consulting a chart which team is in which league—they can't seem to make the scores sound believable. It is possible that the winning and losing teams may be announced, but the thought that a winning pitcher might be named, or that the number of hits and errors would also be given is completely beyond the realm of possibility. One of the girls summed it up perfectly while conducting an afternoon disc jockey show. "Well," she said to her startled listeners, "I feel real reckless today. I think I'll read some baseball scores."

The station is decorated in a very disconcerting, albeit attractive, feminine manner. As the visitor enters the lobby, he is confronted with a white, tufted leather, reception desk partially encircled by green plants. The mingling scent of perfumes greets you as you walk in the door. Every door has some unusual name on it such as: "doll dell" for the studio; "playroom A and B" on the control rooms; "girl Friday" on Miss Abbott's door.

Studio/Control Rooms

WHER has fairly elaborate equipment facilities—boasting two complete control rooms. Each control room is equipped with a BC-2B Audio Console, two 77-DX Polydirectional Microphones, two BQ-2A Turntables and a wall speaker housing for a LC-1A Speaker Mechanism. The audio consolettes are hooked up through a relay arrangement to permit turning over program control from one control room to the other. Since the BC-2B on the air has "priority," switching is done from the "on-air" audio consolette. Each consolette at



FIG. 1. Dotty Abbott, Assistant Manager and Program Director of WHER, also has her own morning and afternoon shows.



FIG. 2. Continuity Director at WHER is Dot Fisher shown here at the BC-2B Audio Console in Control Room A.



FIG. 3. Complete equipment facilities in Control Room A include a BC-2B Console, two BQ-2A Turntables and two equipment racks.

WHER handles the two BQ-2A Turntable inputs, four microphone inputs, a tape input and a remote input. The station has two BN-2A Remote Amplifiers which are available for use on remote pickups.

The music studio, just opposite Control Room A, has two microphones which are tied into the BC-2B Console in each control room. The input transformers of both of the audio console are connected in series. Masonite perforated tile walls, acoustic tile ceilings and rubber tile floors in the studio and both control rooms provide good sound absorption and freedom from resonances.

Control Room A, measuring approximately 10 by 10 ft, is shown in Fig. 2, and Control Room B (6 by 8 ft) can be seen in Fig. 5. Note the standard music rack which is mounted on top of the console. This provides a convenient support

for script material, thus removing the inevitable clutter of papers which would otherwise result. The circular object on the wall above the turntables in Control Room A is a large red light which goes on when a Conelrad alert is called. Station WMC is the key Conelrad station in Memphis.

Two equipment racks complete the technical facilities in Control Room A. One rack contains the equipment for remote control of the transmitter. The rack equipment consists of a remote metering and control unit, a percentage modulation meter and a VU meter. A receiver for off-air pickup monitoring and a patch panel are also included in this rack. The other rack contains the Conelrad alert receiver, tape input selector switches and power supplies. The sound engineering planning and compact arrangement of facilities at WHER have thus resulted in an installation where operating ease has reached an optimum.

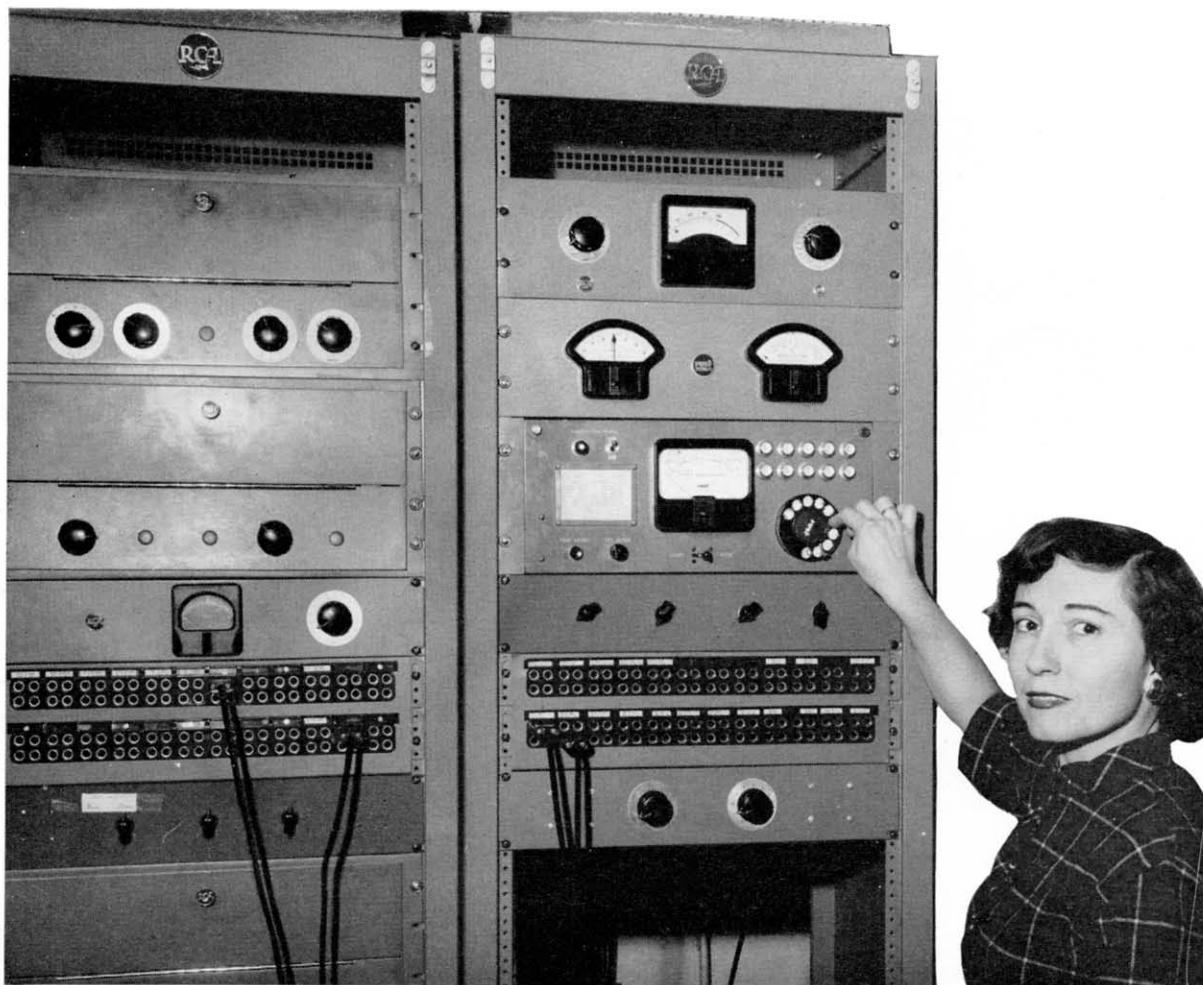


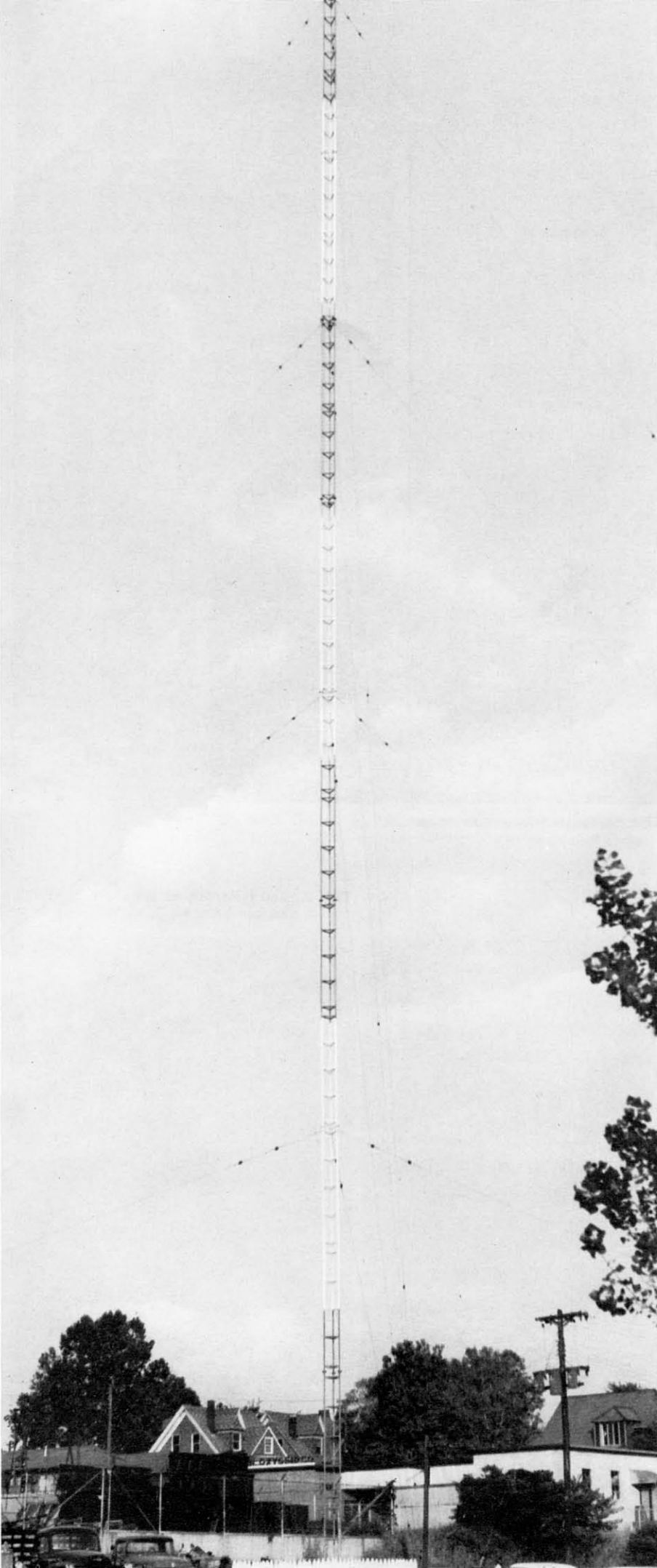
FIG. 4. Transmitter readings are checked by Becky Phillips on the remote system control unit in Control Room A.

FIG. 5. Control Room B is located right next to Control Room A and also contains a BC-2B Console and two turntables.



FIG. 6. Kathy Hartley, at the piano in WHER's studio, also has her own DJ show.





Transmitter Site

The 1-kw AM remotely controlled BTA-1M Transmitter is located in a much more conventional setting—a small brick building in northeast Memphis (see Fig. 8) about three miles from the studios. A rack in the transmitter building holds the remote control switching unit and all the metering facilities necessary to check transmitter performance. These include carrier level and percentage modulation meters as well as indication of decibels of gain reduction and cycles of frequency deviation. Figure 9 shows W. D. Cousar of the Memphis Recording Co., who maintains all the equipment at the transmitter and studios.

The nondirectional, series-excited $\frac{1}{4}$ -wave antenna is of uniform cross-section. Each of the three guy anchors support the 173-ft Stainless tower at four points. A ground system of 120 radials (No. 10 wire) of 150-ft long, buried copper wire is used in conjunction with a 48 by 48 ft copper ground screen. A BPA-11A/B Antenna Tuning Unit at the tower base houses the antenna-tuning and line terminating components for matching the antenna to the coaxial transmission line.

Remote Control System

The control unit for the remote system is located in one of the equipment racks in Control Room A at the studios, while the switching unit is situated at the transmitter installation. Basically, it is a dc system using a standard dial telephone principle. Two circuits, consisting of telephone pairs, are employed from the control unit to the switching unit. One circuit is a metering circuit for checking readings of filament line voltage, final stage plate voltage and current as well as antenna current. The other circuit is used for control purposes for final stage tuning, output power control and turning filament and plate power on and off.

Conclusion

From smooth running technical facilities to good solid programming, the success story being written at *WHER* has been watched with considerable interest. To quote Dotty Abbott, "We are not trying to prove that we can get along in a world without men. We are simply trying to prove that when a group of women make up their collective minds that they are going to do something successfully, no force on earth can keep them from it." The story of *WHER* in the crowded Memphis market seems to bear her out.

FIG. 7. A 173-ft tower serves as *WHER*'s nondirectional, series-excited $\frac{1}{4}$ wave antenna.



FIG. 8. Transmitter building contains a remotely controlled RCA B1A-1M AM Transmitter.

FIG. 9. W. D. Cousar, who maintains all equipment at WHER, checks readings at switching unit of remote control system in transmitter building.



FIG. 10. Maximum output is 1100 watts to compensate for transmission line and antenna tuning equipment losses.

