

Broadcasting school in Mount Joy

Ever dream of becoming a disc jockey? How about a TV announcer?

If you're really interested in broadcasting work, you need look no farther than Mount Joy — there's a school here that teaches all the fundamentals needed to get a variety of TV, radio, and cable TV jobs.

The Ra-O-Vision school, located in the offices across from Cross Roads Church on Donegal Springs Road, holds classes both afternoons and evenings. All the equipment needed to run a radio or TV station is there — cameras, video monitors, turntables, microphones, lights. Students at the school learn by doing, putting on mock news shows, programs, and ads. Each student learns many aspects of broadcasting, including writing and handling electronic gear.

The school was started in 1974 by Joe Grazan, with the help of his family and 27 years in radio and TV.

The school is a decidedly family affair: One of Joe's sons, Joe Jr., teaches electronic gear control; his wife, Kathy, is the receptionist-secretary.

Two other of Joe Grazan's sons are enrolled as students in the school.

Joe Grazan's first job in broadcasting was as a staff announcer at WCPA in Clearfield. Liking the work, he went to broadcasting school in Pittsburgh and then worked at various stations in that area.

Up to 1962 he was an announcer, but in that year he returned to this area to work at WORK (now WZIX) in York, and was given tasks in sales and management as well as announcing.

This seems to have been a turning point in Joe Grazan's life. He was soon a full-fledged entrepreneur, owning shares in radio stations and starting cable TV stations.

Joe is proud of his cable TV station idea, which allowed programming for a very local area. "To be honest, it was a tremendous innovation," he says.

One of his programs on the cable TV was basically a radio disc jockey show — except the viewers could see as well as hear the jockey.

Later Joe got into more complex programs, covering local sports and personalities, a leasing a channel for full-time programming.

While continuing to develop the cable TV format, Joe decided that a broadcasting school was needed in the area, and started on after several years of planning the curriculum and making arrangements. Ra-O-Vision was the result, with the first classes given in 1974 in E-town, where Joe lives. The school moved to Mount Joy a year ago.

Joe starts his students doing hands-on practice right away. "Only about 10% of our class time is devoted to lecture," he says.

After starting on ad writing and broadcasting, students move into disc



When the Times arrived at Ra-O-Vision last week, a communications class from E-town College was learning how to run a TV news show. [Most evening students at the school work at day jobs, hoping to change sometime after graduation.] Photo above shows Joe Grazan, right, explaining the equipment to student Vicky Munger. The back of Doug Palaskey's head is visible at left.



In the foreground, Dottie King and Tom Galloway take care of the off-camera voicing and music for the mock news broadcast.



Brian Aucker, center, is on-camera. Art Dent and Evelyn Johnson await their turns to announce the news.

jockeying, then TV. They may work on a specialty after they have mastered the basics: for example, there are 5 distinct categories of disc jockeys, according to Joe. They are Rock, Country and Western, Religious, Classical, and "Middle of the Road." Joe claims that he can turn most people into employable announcers. He does reject applicants who are not highly motivated or who have a speech impediment.

Reading problems can be overcome if not severe. Ra-O-Vision places about 70% of its graduates in entry-level broadcasting jobs. This ratio will increase in future years, he believes, due to changes in the industry. Cable TV programming, aimed at a small area, will continue to grow. The FCC already requires local origination for some cable companies, and is likely to

require it of more. If the FCC does stiffen its rules, a great number of jobs will be created. Joe also mentioned a new TV set, developed by the Jananese, that can bring in up to 1000 TV stations out of the ether. He said this new TV would probably be on the market in a few years, and that it would greatly increase TV competition, thus creating a demand for more and better personnel.

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