Student Reader Research Poll Reveals High Interest in Daily

By Larry Stephenson, '48
O. U. Journalism Junior

Even George Gallup would have been favorably impressed had he watched the operation of the Reader Research Poll, conducted by a news editing class of the School of Journalism. Results of the poll indicated that 72 per cent of the student body reads the Oklahoma Daily, student publication.

For many months student writers and editors have discussed the results of their long hours of work on the Daily, and have wondered how appreciative their reading public was of their efforts to make the Daily the best college newspaper in the U.S.A.

As a means of determining how thoroughly the Daily is read, the class decided to conduct a poll on the campus. In order that the findings of the poll could be considered representative of the entire student body, it was necessary to draft a scientific chart of the student body, making a numerical breakdown within colleges according to classification, and within classes on the basis of veterans or non-veterans. The final breakdown was according to sex.

From this chart the class was able to determine exactly how many of each category were to be interviewed in taking a 2 per cent poll. A total of 198 people were to be interviewed as representative of the near 10,000 enrollment.

The next step in taking the poll was the construction of pertinent questions. It was decided that only five general questions would be asked. The first four were questions directed toward determining if the persons being queried had read the principal news story, editorial, society story and sports story of the day, and if they liked the manner and style in which these stories were written. Question five asked the interviewee which was his favorite story of the day.

On the day the poll was to be taken, enough copies of that day's Daily were marked in a manner indicating the principal story in the four categories listed above—news, editorials, society and sports, so that each interviewer might have a copy. Each article in the paper was also numbered so that the poll-caster could indicate his favorite story by number.

So as to give the student body ample time to read the paper, which is delivered before 6 a.m., no one was polled before 1 p.m. Thirteen of the 17 students in the class conducting the poll were assigned definite runs to make and specific categories of students to contact. The other four students participating in the poll taking remained at the Press Building and compiled the results as they came in. Before midnight all contacts had been made and the 198 mimeographed questionnaires were completed.

When completed the results showed that 72 per cent of the student body had read that issue of the Daily. Of those who had read the paper, 62 per cent had read the lead news story of the day, a story about the suspension of the campus chapter of American Veterans Committee for one week.

The leading editorial of the day (Lacking: One Post Office), an editorial by Taffy Williams attacking the moving of the post office from the Union to Woodrow Wilson center, was read by 51 per cent of the readers. On the sports page a story about the scheduled boxing match between the Sooner boxing team and the Oklahoma City Southside Athletic team occupied number one play and was read by 41 per cent of the Daily readers. The society had 30 per cent readership on its top story (Billye June Stone Will Marry Scoufis).

Those reading the sports story approved 95 per cent of the manner and style in which it was written. The lead news story had 84 per cent approval, the society story 79 per cent approval and the editorial 89 per cent approval.

Choosing of a letter to the editor as the favorite story of the day was a shot in the arm to that section of the paper. Editors have always been a little skeptical about allotting much space to letters. The letter chosen was (White Defends Cindy, Lashes at Vets). A few days before the poll was taken, Mrs. Cindy Cook DeVoe had written a letter to the editor condemning the age-old taboo on men's sending corsages to coeds. Following several letters taking issue with Mrs. DeVoe, letters from veterans approaching the subject from the standpoint of limitations on $65 a month being among them, Dick White answered with a letter concerning with Mrs. DeVoe's ideas, and attacking the viewpoint of what he termed "these cry-baby veterans."

By the time the Reader Research Poll was taken, so many maneuvers had been introduced in the bitter battle of flowers that the readers considered White's letter as number one story of the day with 24 per cent of those indicating a preference listing it as their choice.

Second in popularity at 12 per cent was (Bench-warming With Bryan), a sports column in which Sports Editor Lyman Bryan daily presents an informal resume of sports news. The leading news story (A.V.C. Suspends for One Week) rated third with 10 per cent.

Results of the poll, together with pictures and charts, are being bound by the editing class and will be presented to the School of Journalism Library to be used by future classes interested in conducting reader research polls.

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We’re a ‘cinch’ to win first prize,” predicts “Ubangi” Margaret Matthews (second from left), whose official residence is in Oklahoma City, to fellow “Ubangi” Gordon Hillhouse (extreme left) of Anant – Oklahoma, that at a recent campus costume party held by Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity. Others of this international set include “Boucan” Frank Hager, Elk City; debonair “Dutchman” John Denbo, Claremore; “Dutchgirl” Jane Ann Bullock, Picher; “Cowgirl” Ruth Lili Bridge, Enid, and “Redskin” Howard Holmes, Oklahoma City. Margaret’s prophecy was “on the bean” – and Gordon won first prize as “best dressed” couple at the party.

**Roll Call—**

Sigrid Floren, Jr., ’46aw, Oklahoma City; R. W. Sullivan, ’46aw, Norman, economics instructor; Dr. E. D. Phelps, member of the Law School faculty, and Albert Sharpe, senior law student, were initiated into the Order of the Coif, highest honor, by Dr. E. D. Phelps, member of the Law School.

W. S. Sullivan, ’46aw, Tulsa, is now teaching in the Journalism School, Oklahoma City.

Billie I. Reynolds is working in the Navy Research Laboratories, where his duties are to take care of all assignment of officers.

Marlene Hamilton, ’46aw, Muskogee, has been appointed secretary of the modern languages department, effective November 15. Since her graduation last spring Miss Hamilton has been employed by the veterans administration.

**PARK-BERT:** Joan Park, ’46aw, Oklahoma City, and A. Leon Bert, Jr., ’46aw, Artesia, New Mexico, were married August 30 in Oklahoma City. Mrs. Bert attended Monite College, Godfrey, Illinois, and is a member of Chi Omega Sorority at the University. She is also a member of Beta Sigma Phi, U.A.B., Y.W.C.A. cabinet and Women’s Athletic association. Mr. Bert is a student majoring in journalism. He is a member of the University’s Kappa Kappa Fraternity.

**Nannie Flo Allen** (’36aw, is now on the speech and English faculty of Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee.

Mrs. Vera Jo Young Woolbright, ’46aw, is now teaching English and speech at Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee. Mr. Woolbright, ’46aw, is now a ministerial student at Shawnee.

**BETT-McBEAN:** Married last August 9 in the First Baptist Church of Oklahoma City were Miss Joan Hubbard, ’46aw, and Royce Bryan McBean, Jr., of Mr. and Mrs. C. B. Means, Ardmore. The daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Dan W. Hubbard, Oklahoma City, Mrs. Means was a member of Phi Delta Sorority while attending Oklahoma University.

A daughter born to Mr. Rex Irwin, ’46aw, and Mrs. Irwin November 18 has been named Stephanie Lee, the proud parents have announced. Their home is at 504 S. Broadway, Oklahoma City.

**BERRY-POTTER:** Mr. and Mrs. Harold E. Long have established a home in Tuttle following their marriage last July 21 in the First Baptist Church of Oklahoma City. The couple is at home in Shawnee where Mr. Norman is employed at the University.

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**FITCH-SMITH:** Married August 30 in Oklahoma City was Miss Jane Jenner, ’46aw, Oklahoma City, and Mr. Thomas Edward Smith, Ada, Oklahoma. Mrs. Jenner is a pre-law student at the University.

**JENNER-SMITH:** Nelda Marie Jenner, ’46aw, Ada, Oklahoma, became the bride of Thomas Edward Smith, Oklahoma City, in August in Paris, Texas. The couple are at home in Bowling Green where they are attending Western Kentucky college as juniors. She is studying industrial education and he is majoring in education.

**KARCHMER-SCHUSTER:** Sylvia Marian Karchmer, ’46aw, Denton, Texas, became the bride of Walter Schuster, Los Angeles, California, August 31 in Houston, Texas. Mrs. Schuster is a graduate of Texas State College for Women, Denton and is a member of Sigma Delta Tau and Kappa Delta fraternity. The couple has established a home in Austin, Texas, where they are enrolled at the University.

**LIDDE-PHILLIPS:** Margery Lidde, ’46aw, Tulsa, and B. Cochran Phillips, ’46aw, Chickasha, were married recently in Tulsa. Mrs. Phillips is a member of Chi Omega Sorority at the University. Mr. Phillips is a member of Alpha Kappa Lambda Delta, honorary freshman fraternity for women. Mrs. Phillips is a pre-law student at the University.

**SWEET-HENSLEY:** Jane Lee Sweet, ’45aw, Oklahoma City, July 1 in Liberal, Kansas. Mrs. Hensley is a member of Alpha Lambda Delta, honorary freshman fraternity for women. Mr. Hensley is a pre-law student at the University.

**CULP-STANLEY:** Doris Ellen Culp, ’44aw, Duncan, became the bride of Howard George Stanley, ’46aw, Oklahoma City, October 6 in Duncan. Mrs. Stanley was initiated with Alpha Chi Omega Sorority at the University. She is also a graduate of Gulf Park College, Gulfport, Mississippi. Mr. Stanley received his commission as an ensign in the Naval Reserve at the University.

**McBRIDE-SMITH:** Joan McBridge, ’45aw, Oklahoma City, became the bride of Glenn Houston Smyth, Ada, in August in Oklahoma City. Mrs. Smyth attended Central State College. The couple is at home in Oklahoma City.

**Irwin—** Charlie Lane, ’46aw, Tulsa, is now serving as principal of elementary school in Muskogee.

**Phillips—** Margaret Scott, ’46aw, Paul Valley, is now teaching in the Tuscon, Arizona, public schools.

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