

# Lisa Brozini flying high in TV weather.

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Republican Staff

Getting a job in broadcasting — any job — is no easy feat these days. But to get a job in broadcasting in New York — and at age 21 — is really spectacular.

That is exactly what Agawam native Lisa Brozini has done. She is the new weekend weather forecaster at WNEW-TV 5 in New York.

Lisa began her job this month, after being selected from more than 300 applicants nationwide. According to WNEW executive producer Paul Smirnoff, she was chosen because "she knows what she's doing, she's comfortable on camera, she's attractive, and she knows weather."

Lisa's duties in New York include compiling weather reports from various services, writing a script, drawing a map, and reading the report live on air.

Lisa was previously the weekend weathercaster for Channel 22 in Springfield, but left the position because of differences with the management. At that time, she used the stage name 'Liz Benson.'

Before that, she was a disc jockey for radio stations WAQY and WARE.

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Lisa read about the weathercaster opening at WNEW in the newspaper. She immediately sent them her most glamorous photograph, a custom tape in which she talks about herself, and a tape of one of her weather shows. A week later she was flown to New York for an on-air audition.

It was two and a half months before she heard again from the station again. At that time, she was offered a one-month probationary position. The station paid her airfare to New York each week, and put her up in one of the city's finest hotels.

Convinced that Lisa was the right person for the job, they negotiated an agreement with her.

She commutes to New York on the weekends, and spends the rest of the week doing free-lance work in Springfield. She hopes to begin teaching a couple of days a week at the Connecticut School of Broadcasting in Farmington, Conn., and down the road, she would like to have her own broadcasting school "so I can help young talent like myself who have high goals or talent. I know what it's like to be have high hopes. To a lot of people I was just a dreamer."

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Dick Robinson, founder and president of the Connecticut School of Broadcasting and a former Springfield radio personality, termed Lisa's new opportunity "a great success story."

"She displayed real potential when she was student here," Robinson said, adding, "we tell all our students to work in smaller markets first to gain experience, but we have a number of graduates who have made it into major markets. We are very proud of Lisa."

"She will also be a welcome addition to our staff," Robinson said. "Many graduates have come back to teach or lecture at the school."

Lisa's entrance into broadcasting was actually an offshoot from a lifelong desire to be an actress or a model. "I think broadcasting is an avenue of performing. You've got a lot of exposure. A lot of people see you," said Lisa, in an interview in her Springfield apartment.

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Following graduation from high school, Lisa enrolled in a three-month course at the



Republican Photo by Vincent S. D'Addario

Lisa Brozini, 21, of Springfield, is on her way to the big time as a weekend weather forecaster at a New York City television station.

Connecticut School of Broadcasting. "That's where I learned the fundamentals," she says. "I learned how to present myself and how to do commercials."

Her introduction to the job market was marred by what she terms "a rude awakening to sexual discrimination and harassment."

"I was 18 when I got my first job as a radio D.J. and I was the only woman," Lisa recalls. "It didn't faze me too much that I would be dealing with men all day long because I felt I could talk to them. After all, men had always been nicer to me than women."

What she didn't expect was the resentment she would receive as the only woman disc jockey. "The men said the only reason I got the job was because I was female. They said I had no talent. But I knew that if I wasn't good, the station wouldn't have hired me."

In addition to the attacks on her professional style, she had to put up with dirty jokes and frequent propositions. "I was a pretty female who got sex jokes all day long — and at 18, I wasn't strong enough to say 'Why don't you go straight to hell' like I would now. It really was a strange experience, right out of high school."

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Looking back on the experience, Lisa contends that her co-workers "probably felt threatened by my determination and talent." A similar situation happened to her in school, she said, when classmates made fun of her aspirations to become an actress.

"They couldn't handle that I had such high hopes," she says. "Classmates teased me for wearing the fashionable clothes. Friends called me a 'dreamer' for saying I



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wanted to be an actress. Eventually I withdrew socially, which only made matters worse, for then 'conceited' was added to the taunts.

"If you're pretty and you're withdrawn, you're automatically considered stuck-up. But I was just shy . . ."

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Lisa's enthusiasm for performing continued, despite these put-downs.

Confident in her own ability, she learned how to market herself. She believes her strongest asset is her voice, developed through years of singing lessons. She also believes the poise and confidence she developed through modeling and acting classes as a teen-ager comes across both in job interviews and on camera.

While being a weather forecaster "was the furthest thing from my mind when I went into broadcasting," she believes it is an appropriate outlet for her talent.

"It's a position where I have some flexibility and some exposure. I find it's a very good starting point for my career."

While she enjoys live productions, "being on camera is not everything," says Lisa. "I don't get a real high watching myself on TV. For me, the real outlet is in performing. There's a real satisfaction to being as good as I can possibly be."

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Even so, Lisa said she makes a point to watch a tape of each show "to see what I did wrong. I'm my own worst critic. But I won't get any better if I say 'Gee, aren't I great!'"

Often, she said, an editor will go over a tape with her, and make recommendations. "I really appreciate this," says Lisa. "And I

don't get offended at all when they point out a mistake. I don't have an ego problem. I know that if someone wants me to be shot from another angle, for example, it's for my own good."

Lisa has noticed a difference in the news market in New York. "New Yorkers want their weather reports very simple, very direct. It's a more conservative audience and you have to play to it." Thus, she said, she wears more conservative clothes, and makes her script as concise as possible.

Even though the New York audience is considerably larger than the Springfield audience, she finds she is more comfortable on camera there. "When I worked locally," said Lisa, "everyone I knew was watching me. In New York, the audience is made up of strangers."

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Although she has no background in meteorology, she does not feel that will be a problem. "Even though I can't actually forecast the weather by myself, I can compile the information from the services and explain it to the public. And I have an edge: I have personality. How many meteorologists have personality?"

While TV media is generally conceived of as a glamorous occupation, Lisa said, "It is and it isn't."

"In a lot of markets, broadcasters are as much a celebrity as anyone," she says. "People who watch you every night on the news, begin to feel as if you're a part of them — their best friend."

"People come up to me all the time, for example, and say 'Aren't you our weather-girl? It's really incredible how you become a part of their life. People you don't even know will come up and kiss you.'"

Sometimes, she said, she even gets fan mail. "One woman wrote that she thought I was very pretty and wore nice clothes. She said I gave her incentive. I thought that was really nice. I had an aunt I looked up to as a role model, and it makes me feel good that I can do the same for someone else."

On the other hand, she says, "People at home don't know what goes on behind the scenes."

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Though an average weather report is only about two minutes in duration, there is about four-and-a-half hours of preparation that goes into it.

"Even a minor change in routine can upset everything," says Lisa. "Normally I draw my (weather) map and then put on my make-up. But one night, I did my make-up first — and I forgot to draw the map."

"So I walked on the set at 10:15 — just 10 minutes before air time — and the map was completely blank! So I frantically drew the map and finished up just in time to compose myself for a second before being cued. Then, I got my signal, looked directly into the teleprompter — and it was blank!"

"In my rush to finish the map I had forgotten to key-in all the current statistics which had come in at 10 p.m. And since the facts were rolling on a screen, beside me, I had to do the whole thing from memory."

"You know what? No one even noticed. But I was still a wreck after the show. It was the worst experience of my life."

And while a New York broadcasting job pays handsomely, in smaller markets like Springfield, Lisa says, "I could have been making more money flipping hamburgers."