

The

Call Letter

July, 2004
Vol. 30 — No. 7



Almost 30 years in print!

The Northwest Vintage Radio Society

The Northwest Vintage Radio Society is a non-profit historical society incorporated in the State of Oregon. Since 1974 the Society has been dedicated to the preservation and enjoyment of "Vintage radio" and wireless equipment.

Membership in the Society is open to all who are actively interested in historic preservation. The dues are \$20.00 for domestic membership, due on January 1st of each year (prorated quarterly).

The *Call Letter* has been a monthly publication since 1974. It was originated with the founder, Bob Bilbie, and our first president, Harley Perkins. Through several editors and with the assistance of numerous society members, the *Call Letter* has continued to be a publication that informs members of the society's business and that supports the hobby of collecting, preserving, and restoring vintage radios.

Society meetings are held the second Saturday of each month (except July and August) at the Abernethy Grange Hall at 15745 S. Harley Ave. in Oregon City, Oregon. They convene at or about 10 AM for the purpose of displaying radios, conducting Society business, and exchanging information. Guests are welcome at all Society meetings and functions (except board meetings).

Other Society functions include guest speakers, auctions, radio show, and radio sales which are advertised in the *Call Letter* and are held in and around Portland.

Society Officers for 2004:

| | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| President | Cliff Tuttle | (503) 666-7005 |
| Vice-President | George Kirkwood | (503) 648-4809 |
| Treasurer | Ed Charman | (503) 654-7387 |
| Secretary | Tony Hauser | (503) 397-0074 |
| Board member at large | Wendy Johnson-Kent | (503) 281-9335 |
| <i>Call Letter</i> Editor | Rick Walton | (503) 284-5648 |
| Librarian | John Bucholtz | (360) 693-7135 |

The Society's address is:

The Northwest Vintage Radio Society
Post Office Box 82379
Portland, Oregon 97282-0379



July 2004

Table of Contents

From the Editor.....2

NWVRS 2004 Calendar of Events2

Northwest Vintage Radio Society Meeting Minutes3

Looking Back: Remembering Bob Bilbie6

Photo Display7

More Photos!8

Voilà ...new and recent finds by NVRS members9

A Silent Key: Dr. John Nelson9

Restoration DVD Review10

Play It Again Sam.....11

Swap Shop12

On the cover: This collection of plastic and bakelite sets comes from a greeting card sent to your editor by his sister-in-law, who knows his disease! The card is copyrighted by John Evans Design of Plano, Texas, www.johndesign.com.

The next meeting is on September 11, 2004.

We're in our Summer Break!

September Feature:

Stay tuned! More to come.

Visit our web site at <http://nwvrs.org>.

August Call Letter Deadline: August 3, 2004.

The *Call Letter* is the official publication of the Northwest Vintage Radio Society. Circulation is limited to the membership and guests of the Society. The Society is not responsible for the material contributed for publication, nor the quality, timeliness, or accuracy of the items or services offered for sale in the SWAP SHOP. By common agreement of the board of directors, the buyer assumes all responsibility for the satisfaction of any transaction.

From the Editor

by *Call Letter* Editor, Rick Walton

July is the first month of our Summer hiatus until we gather again in September to resume the year's activities. Despite our time off, there is plenty going on as you can see in the calendar. Of especial interest is the Radio Equipment Flea Market at the American Museum of Radio in Bellingham.

Whatever you do, don't lose last month's Call Letter. As pointed out in the meeting minutes, it is a special, collectible issue. You'll not likely get another one like it (I hope). If you hadn't noticed, the Call Letter last month was a little smaller than usual. Its weight exceeded the ounce the Postal Service allows us for mailing with a single first-class stamp, because it was a full-size issue with all 16 pages and the cover was of heavier stock. To get the weight down, Gordon Phillips took them back home and trimmed them. It took three tries before they fell to the allowed weight.

In this month's issue we have another of the Looking Back stories from Dick Karman, this time an unvarnished look at club founder, Bob Bilbie. Dave Wise has provided another restoration story for Play It Again, Sam!, and we collectors keep bragging about our finds in Voila. There are pictures of the clock radios displayed at the last meeting (thanks to Dave Brown), and some snapshots of John Bucholtz' radio sale, which he claims went very well. Finally, there is a review of a radio restoration video that I received from Bret Menashe of Bret's Old Radios.

Have a great Summer!

NWVRS 2004 Calendar of Events

- July 16-18** Glacier-Waterton International Peace Park Hamfest July 18-20, 2003, East Glacier, MT.
<http://www.gwhamfest.org>
- July 16-18** Pacific Northwest DX Convention, Seattle, WA. Western Washington DX Club <http://www.wwdxc.org/2004conv.htm>, Willamette Valley DX Club <http://www.wvdx.org>
- July 17-18** Radio Equipment **Flea Market** at the American Museum of Radio in Bellingham, Washington. Selling duplicate radios, parts, tubes, gizmos, and devices, with proceeds going to the museum.
- July 18** PSARA monthly meeting 12 noon, Shoreline Historical Museum, Seattle, WA. Informal parking lot swap meet prior to meeting.

- August 14** Hamfest, Radio Club of Tacoma, Spanaway, WA
<http://www.w7dk.org>
- September 11** NWVRS monthly meeting 10 am; tailgate swap 8:30.
- October 9** NWVRS Fall Swap/Sale at Salvation Army Rose Center.
- November 13** NWVRS monthly meeting 10 am; tailgate swap 8:30.
Nomination of officers for 2005.
- December 11** NWVRS monthly meeting 10 am; tailgate swap 8:30.
Election of officers for 2005. Annual Holiday Party!

Northwest Vintage Radio Society Meeting Minutes

Dave Wise for Tony Hauser, NWVRS Secretary

Only two officers present (Cliff Tuttle and George Kirkwood) so there was no official board.

Guests/New members: - Carl Whitchurch, returning member (dropped in mid-1980s)

No changes proposed to the April minutes.

Kudos to Gordon Phillips for special "rare, collectible" Call Letter, undersized to get under 1oz mailing weight.

Treasurer's report:

Ended April with \$265 balance
\$856 in
\$600 out
Ended May with \$525 balance
Jim Mason principal \cong \$30500

Librarian's Report

None.

Editor's Report

None

Announcement:

John Bucholtz is selling off about 150 project-grade radios at his home in Vancouver next Saturday.

Discussion

Swap Meet (Tony Hauser not present):

Cliff: Low cost, only \$200 rent + 156 advertising.

Special deal on rent because of \$100 charge coming up on Xmas party.

Bill Meloy: Phonograph people at next one?

Cliff: Why not, seemed to work out. Looks like we're not going to use the upstairs floor. (Several remarks "Just as well, it's a lot of trouble".)

Bill: Attendance?

George Kirkwood: I sold to a few nonmembers. Did better in years past when the meet was held at the old High School, probably due to its proximity to some antique stores.

John Bucholtz: I did well.

Dick Bixler: How about other organizations besides Phono? (Might be better to expand into the lunch room than upstairs.)

Jerry Talbott: The audio people?

Someone else: Novelty radio club?

Good & Welfare

Dick Bosch: Sonny Clutter says he's doing well, cancer contained and not spreading.

Jeff Martin: Regrets and envy about move to Hawaii. Cliff will get his address for continued Call Letter mailing.

Ronald Reagan and Ray Charles: RIP.

Old Business

September Meeting:

1. Proposed dues increase. Official vote in January.

2. Electronic Call Letter. Cliff solicits volunteers to receive in lieu of paper version. Issue deferred to Rick Walton due to issues with individualized e-mailing.

Joe Beseda: We can afford to mail the darn thing!

Dick Bixler: Ditto.

Dick Dielschneider: Quarterly instead of monthly?

Bill Colvin: I'm not a computer guy and I really look forward to the paper version.

3. Proposed annual radio competition. George Kirkwood: based on Seattle's; hold at Xmas party to increase interest Need committee to propose categories. Enter one item per category, as many categories as you want. Judged by expert in each category. Judges can't enter in their category.

Dick Bixler: Categories from AWA list?

George Kirkwood: Too big but might be useful for ideas.

Cliff: We need to get going on this if we're going to do it. We also need to keep it short so as not to annoy the spouses.

George Kirkwood: Need something to sweeten the deal.

Gordon P: I know - us single men!

Someone: Entry fee per radio?

George Kirkwood: Maybe, but don't want to deter entries.

Someone: Propose "People's Choice" category to balance the other ones, which are weighted towards technical excellence.

John Bucholtz: "Ladies' Choice".

Cliff: We'll nail all this down at the September meeting.

George Kirkwood: E-mail me with ideas during the summer, too.

Feature: Clock Radios.

1. Pat Kagi: Green Arvin 8571. Refinished in water-based rattle can, came out great. Sort of matte rather than gloss.
2. Roger Brown: White Arvin P747. Got it from ebay but had the same model as a kid. Chassis mounted at an angle. Battery powered - one "F" cell + 67.5V Not automatic, just a radio with a clock in it.
3. Bill Meloy: Wood Motorola 62CW (1953). Beautiful big, clean, clock face, gold roman numerals on brown wood. Got it for \$5 at a Salem g-sale.
4. Sonny Clutter: Coronado 35RA40 in Ivory Urea. Pretty, sort of fluorescent green clock face with gold numbers.
Regal C527A. Mid-50's, got it at the Sandy Barr flea market back when it was worth going)
5. George Kirkwood: Philco 51 (early 30's). Wood, early-american mantel clock style, looks like the top part of a grandfather clock. TRF radio with top-firing speaker Not automatic, just a clock with a radio in it. Paid too much for it at the Seattle semi-national clock convention
6. Bob Campbell 1931 Crosley 124 "Playtime" grandfather clock radio 54 pounds. Two speakers, 9" and 7". Non-self-starting Hammond clock. Not automatic, just a clock with a radio in it. Got it for \$90 at a barn sale, the only sale his friend Joe missed that day. Joe had a fit!

Remarks from Sonny: Bulova made an automatic clock-radio in 1931, way before Telechron/GE. (He's referring to the June Call Letter article on "The First Clock Radio".)

George Kirkwood: Hammond made clocks before they made organs. Uses a pure synchronous motor, which can't start by itself.

Leads & Needs

None

Fall Feature

Proposals solicited

George Kirkwood: Domestic oddball-brand pre-1950 battery sets.

Looking Back: Remembering Bob Bilbie

By Dick Karman

Bob Bilbie is the originator of the NW Vintage Radio Society. Bob Bilbie said in an interview with the Oregonian that his interest in vintage radio gear caused him so much enjoyment that he wanted to know how many others shared his hobby. In November of 1974, he posted a classified ad inviting people with his same interests to meet at his house. Bob got quite a surprise. He heard from several who couldn't come but voiced an interest. Among those who did gather were Jerry Irwin and Harley Perkins. By their second meeting five folks decided to start the Society. Included in that number were Bob's wife Sandy and Ron Moran. It has been reported that by the 3rd meeting Pete Young had joined the number.

Bob is looked on as both a blessing and a curse to the society. He was gung ho when it came to getting the word out. His name appeared in a few Oregonian articles and he did radio interviews. He was outspoken in his opinions about where the organization should go. Bob must be given the credit for the running start that the Society got. He wrote a year-end newsletter article stating his dream was to have a NW vintage radio museum.

In December of 1975 Bob Bilbie and Bob Campbell were nominated for the position of president for the coming year. (Harley Perkins had served as our first president.) The membership overwhelmingly supported Bob Campbell, but the secret ballots came back in favor of Bilbie. Bob Campbell questioned the ballot counting, but graciously conceded the race to Bilbie. This and other storm clouds caused an unexpected change in the Society officers in May, 1976.

Bob, as the newsletter editor, did not always think before he wrote. For one thing, he repeatedly misspelled Joey Tompkins's name, prompting Joey to publicly tell Bob to get the "H" out (of his name, that is). In April 1976 Bob made a very disparaging remark about "Californians" coming up and "stealing" our radios. Considering that the Society was getting a lot of attention from all over the west coast, this was not thought of as good public relations. Tom James, who took over as President (when Bob & Sandy Bilbie suddenly left the society in May) made a public apology to our California members in the June 1976 Call Letter.

In May of 1976 with skeletons in the closet, Bob resigned from his post as president, left the society and left the state. Sandy and Bob cited health and stress as the reason and were literally gone before most of the membership knew what happened. Some members with understanding and grace reported that Bob and Sandy came from "rural America" and knew little to nothing about leading a historical non-profit society (which hoped to become a corporation). They were reportedly, in over their heads and decided to leave. This view definitely gives Bob the benefit of the doubt on one of the darker sides of our society. Members through the years have reported "Bilbie sightings" from time to time, but as far as I know Bob has never returned to the organization that started at his kitchen table.

Some may debate that the Bilbies were healthy for the NW Vintage Radio Society, but it can said without fear of contradiction that without the Bilbies, the society would have never been started.

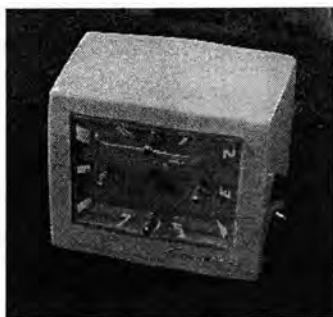
Photo Display

Photos by Dave Brown

Thanks to all who displayed their clock radios at the June meeting.



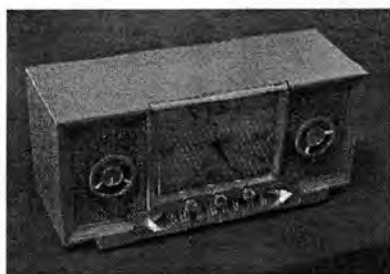
Crosley 124
Bob Campbell



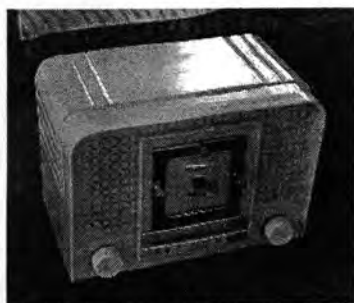
Coronado
Sonny Clutter



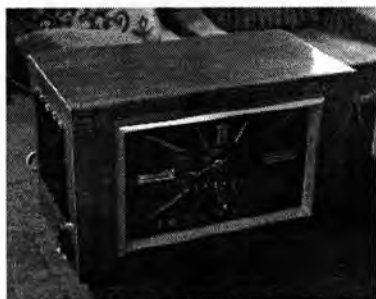
Philco 51
George Kirkwood



Arvin
Pat Kagi



Regal C527L
Sonny Clutter



Motorola 62CW
Bill Meloy



Arvin
Roger Brown

More Photos!

Photos by Rick Walton

Here are a few shots taken about mid-day at John Bucholtz' radio sale on June 19.



Voilà

...new and recent finds by NVRS members

Compiled by Sonny Clutter

David Wise: Conar Signal Tracer (forgot the model, sorry)
Packard Bell wood two-band table model, number unknown.
Philco 45C "Butterfly"
Wales 6-transistor pocket radio
RCA "Strato-World" multiband portable
Tektronix 180-S1 Time Mark Generator

Vance Daberko: Nine consoles: Freed 55, Radiola 48, Philco 40-190 & 47-1230, Admiral 4207-A10, a Stromberg-Carlson (a two chassis, six-leg lowboy not sure what model) and a cabinet that had a Fisher TA-500 mono receiver in it. If anyone has an interest in one or more of these units, please contact me. Now I need more space! @fast-mail.fm) 541-753-3356

Sonny Clutter: Zenith 12-S-568 console
Crosley 181 "Dual Sixty"
Gilfillan GN-1 (a somewhat scarce mid 20's battery set)
Falck "Advance" a "peak top" or "pyramid" style "tombstone" from 1930.

Rick Walton: GE Model 50 clock radio (from John Bucholtz' sale)
Westinghouse Model H-161 AM-FM tube set, an estate sale find.

A Silent Key: Dr. John Nelson

The Society received notice from Andrea Brown that her father, Dr. John Nelson of Longview, Washington, passed away on September 21, 2003.

Dr. Nelson has been an honorary recipient of the *Call Letter* since he attended the May, 1999, club meeting after seeing a feature on antique radios in the *Oregonian*. At that time he spoke to the club, telling of his acquaintance with the late "Tech" Sloat, a member of our club, and describing his own collection of radios, a few of which he had brought with him. He also presented a video tape of Tech's collection to the club.

Restoration DVD Review

by Rick Walton

Back in May I received a request by e-mail from Bret Menashe of Bret's Old Radios (www.bretsoldradios.com) to review his recently released video, *Antique Radio Restoration Vol. 2*. I agreed to do that, and just a few days later I received a demonstration copy of the DVD. The video is available in VHS and DVD format, and Bret informs me that there is a discount available if you buy both Vol. 1 and Vol. 2.

The video is a little over two hours total viewing time, but it is broken up into eight sections plus an introduction that starts with the usual FBI warning, goes on to safety cautions and warnings, then Bret introduces himself and the topics to be covered, which are:

- Tube Diagrams — covers rectifier and amplifier tubes, covering briefly the action of the tube elements.
- 3 Fundamental Principles — discusses resistance, capacitance, and inductance.
- Power Supplies — covers transformer versus series sets, with most of the discussion explaining how the series heater string works.
- Heater String Resistance — discusses ballasts and resistance line cords, and then concentrates on methods for getting around the resistance line cord. This one I personally found most interesting.
- The Super HetroDyne — explains frequency heterodyning and how it applies to most radios.
- Diagrams & Schematics — begins with a discussion of the superheterodyne radio at the block diagram, then takes a more detailed look at the radio stage-by-stage.
- Coils & Windings — steps through techniques for troubleshooting problems in IF can, field coils, etc.
- Alignment — explains what set alignment is a goes through ways to align a set: with and without a signal generator.

The label on the video claims that it covers intermediate to advanced troubleshooting, which I would call an overstatement. In reality, the material ranges from basic to intermediate at best. The purist or engineer will cringe a few times at some descriptions that aren't quite accurate, such as the opening statement about tubes: "A tube is a device that generates an electric current." Ouch! Of larger concern is material that



Bret glosses over. Although I was able to understand all the material by filling the gaps with my own knowledge, I'm not sure a novice would understand the concept he's trying to present. Transformer operation is a case in point. The relationship of the voltage output to the turns ratio primary-to-secondary is not clearly stated, but comes out in pieces during the discussion. The current relationship wasn't mentioned that I remember. Another missing item is a discussion of AGC circuits and their effect on radio performance.

Despite its shortcomings the material covered is generally a good basic understanding of tube electronics, especially as they are used in old radios, and should be interesting and educational to someone with little previous electronics background and new to troubleshooting old radios. The explanations simplify the electronics involved, and help the beginner get going. The video is not everything you need, but it is a good start.

You can find ordering information *and* a streaming 2-minute preview of the video at www.bretsoldradios.com, or e-mail bretsoldradios@att.net. The postal address is Bret's Old Radios, P.O. Box 51671, Denton, TX 76206.

Play It Again Sam

by Dave Wise

Philco model 18

This 1933-ish cathedral is a good all-round design. Although the tuning shaft is situated exactly where it could make a rubber or metal friction drive, it uses dial cord instead, the thick stuff that seems to last forever, going around a large pulley for that easy, non-slip feel. It uses two triode-connected 42s for output and has a rich, full tone. They're driven by another triode-connected 42. Why? Because the 75 1st audio (wired for switchable bass boost) has such high plate resistance it's not suited to drive a transformer. It uses Philco's distinctive zero-parallax "arrow of light" dial, and a shadow tuning indicator. And so on. They weren't scrimping.

Anyway. This set marks a turning point for me. For the first time, I replaced worn-out parts that I myself installed, 30 years before.

In the mid-1970s, when my passion for "old junk" became known to my electronics teachers at Benson High School, they gave me a desk full of caps. During the next week, I stayed late, gleefully running them through the lab's Sprague TO-5. (It was never the same :) One of the successes was a pair of new-in-box Aerovox 8uF 500V wet electrolytics. They formed up just great.

I'd been hanging around an old guy who'd retired from radio repairing (Dave White, in north Portland), and one day he gave me two radios and some tubes. I pedaled my 10-speed home as fast as I dared, with the Philco tied to the newspaper rack. When I found that the two big caps sticking up out of the chassis were open, I knew just what I wanted to put in their place: the yellow-and-black

Aero's. After that, and a few paper caps (even then I sort of knew certain ones should be replaced), the set worked fine, and I played it now and then for years.

The other day I got the urge to run it again, but I approached it with my cautious external power supply technique. It was nearly a dead short, and I traced it to the "bumblebees". This time they didn't form, although I ran them for days. Finally I gave up, and although they still look as nice as ever, the real work's being done by a couple of Nichicons zip-tied into a corner underneath.

Swap Shop

FOR SALE: Thousands of tubes, hundreds of radio parts, panels, meters, surplus, etc. R5-D3 electronic surplus, Bob Lee, 9770 S.E. Stanley Ave., Milwaukie, OR 97222, (503) 513-0410

FOR SALE: **Riders Volumes 1 thru 21. \$300.00 The first 5 are individual volumes. Contact Speed Feldschau.

FOR SALE: 12-volt power supply, possibly generic or home-brew, \$10. Damon Vandehey, 503-259-9129.

FOR SALE: Tube caddy, full of tubes including 24A, 27 balloon, 41, three 45's, 77, 83, five 616's, some 6v6's, plus many more. \$100. Damon Vandehey. 502-259-9129

Radio Service

These members have indicated they are willing to perform radio repairs:

Roger Brown – (503) 693-6089

Blake Dietze – (360) 944-7172, wb6jhh@ix.netcom.com

Tony Ranft – (360) 944-8489 or ranft@saw.net – General repairs.

Dave Wise – (503) 293-7835, david_wise@phoenix.com

If you are willing to repair radios, give your name, phone and/or e-mail, and any comments to the *Call Letter* editor.

The Northwest Vintage Radio Society is not responsible in any disputes arising from services provided by members listed here. By common agreement of the board of directors, the buyer assumes all responsibility for the satisfaction of any transaction.

Leads and Needs

Speed Feldschau needs the dial bezel for a Zenith 12-U-158. Someone at the swap meet told Speed he had one, but Speed cannot remember who that was.

Questions about restoration of vintage radio? Visit radiolaguy's web site often for this information plus lots of other interesting displays, photo's, virtual museum plus lots of other information on vintage radio and television. Oh, yes, there are items for sale as well and NVRS members get a substantial discount on most of these items. Thank You, Sonny the Radiola Guy
Visit my vintage radio web site: <http://www.radiolaguy.com>

Member Information

Just in case we don't have your most current member information, please take the time to send the information requested on this form.

Name*:

Mailing Address*:

City, State, ZIP*:

Ham Call Sign:

E-mail:

Phone:

Collecting Interest (e.g. Battery sets, consoles, clock radios, etc.):

*Information we must have to be able to send you your Call Letter. The rest is optional, but we hope you'll share it with other club members.

Mail this sheet (or something like it) to Rick Walton at the society's mailing address:

The Northwest Vintage Radio Society

Post Office Box 82379

Portland, Oregon 97282-0379

or e-mail the information to rwalton@easystreet.com.