

The
Call Letter

of the Northwest Vintage Radio Society

Vol. 23

August 1997

No. 8

The Cover Image Is Not Available

In print since 1974

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 \$15.00 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 members the *Call Letter* has continued to be a publication that both informs members of the society’s business and that has supported 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 Buena Vista Club House at 16th & Jackson Streets 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 shows, and radio sales which are advertised in the *Call Letter* and are held in and around Portland.

Society Officers:

President	Jerry Talbott	(503) 649-6717
Vice President	Tony Hauser	(503) 629-4836
Treasurer	Ed Charman	(503) 654-7387
Secretary	Dan Howard	(503) 761-7799
Board member at large	Greg Bonn	(503) 642-5097
<i>Call Letter</i> Editor	Rick Walton	(503) 284-5648

The Society’s address is:
The Northwest Vintage Radio Society
Post Office Box 82379
Portland, Oregon 97282-0379

August 1997

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Editor, Rick Walton, (503) 284-5648, rwalton@mtsi.com	

Call Letter Deadline
20th of the month
prior to publication.

There is no August meeting of the NWVRS. The next meeting of the NWVRS will be September 13 at the Dixie Clubhouse in Oregon City. Bring your horn speakers for the monthly feature.

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 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

This August issue of the Call Letter is being wrapped up early this time (mid-July) so that I can take some vacation time with my family. I'll be visiting my wife's family in Minnesota, and I hope that my trip this time will be as successful as when I was last there in 1994. I came back from there having paid only a little too much for a working A-K Model L horn speaker.

Unfortunately my vacation makes it impossible to attend Speed's last swap meet. I'll be looking for some reports to run in the Call Letter from those of you who attend.

In "Remembering Radio" Dick Karman contributes "The Democrats Meet", the fourth installment of Don Moore's 5-part series on early radio. Mike is taking a month or two off, but will return "to the shack" sometime in the Fall.

Take note of the PSARA Swap Meet announcement. Gordon Phillips kindly gave me one of their fliers and I'm happy to publish it.

1997 NWVRS Calendar of Events

- SEPTEMBER 13:** Display of horn speakers (no paper cones).
- OCTOBER 11:** Display of 1950's tube or transistor portable radios
- OCTOBER 18-19:** Display at the Northwest Car Collector's show
- NOVEMBER 1:** Fall swap meet (location to be determined)
- NOVEMBER 8:** Nomination of 1998 officers
Display of battery sets and crystal sets
- DECEMBER 13:** Election of 1998 officers and Christmas party



by Tom James, from the July, 1977 Call Letter

Toat's Coulee Carl

*It was an ancient Philco,
That sang beside the chair,
And the old man adored it,
As a child, his teddy-bear.*

*'Twas comfort in the evening
Clean up 'til he'd retire.
'Twas company in the morning,
When he 'rose to build a fire.*

*He turned it on at noon-time,
A rest from toil, and loam.
And then on every Sunday,
He went to church — at home.*

*He'd bought the set in '30,
And in nineteen sixty-two,
Lighting hit the aerial,
And the Philco finally blew!*

*'Twas only two days later,
That the old man passed away —
The service was very simple,
He'd wanted it "that-a-way."*

*Old Carl's been gone for year now,
But at the end of a summer's day
You may hear him down the coulee
Making his "Phantom-Philco" play.*

Remembering Radio

by Dick Karman

The 1924 Radio Election

(Part 4 of a 5 part series on early radio)

By Don Moore

A Slow Start

During the Democratic Convention, the campaign gained a Third Party candidate, as Progressive Robert LaFollette announced his independent candidacy. Then the campaign quieted down. As was the custom of the day, it took six weeks before any of the candidates made official acceptance speeches. Visiting his hometown of Clarksburg, WVA, John Davis was the first to make his acceptance speech on August 11, with a speech broadcast on 13 stations, mainly in the south. A violent downpour severely hampered the quality of the outdoor broadcast, although Davis continued to give his speech in the rain. A few days later, on August 14, Coolidge's acceptance speech from Washington aired on 15 stations as far west as Kansas City and was heard by an estimated 25 million listeners.

In Lincoln, Democratic VP contender Charles Bryan spoke from the University of Nebraska stadium on August 18. KFKX, Hastings, Nebraska; WOAW, Omaha; WMAQ, Chicago; and the local university station carried the speech. Republican VP Charles Dawes spoke the following day from Evanston, Illinois over most of the stations that broadcast the Republican convention. The real campaign wasn't kicked off until Labor Day, when all the candidates spoke on the radio. The most notable Labor Day speech was LaFollette's, which was the first political speech given in a radio studio without a live audience.

John Davis started his campaign with a traditional railroad journey from September 6-17 through western and midwestern cities. Radio, however, was planned for as his car was wired with microphones, loudspeakers, and jacks to make it easy for local

stations to plug in and carry his speeches. The center of the campaign was New York City, where the Democrats paid WJZ to set up a studio in a window in downtown Manhattan so that passersby could see their officials speaking over the air. The Democrats even held a contest, awarding a radio as the prize for the best statement as to why Davis should be elected president.

As an independent, LaFollette didn't have the funding of the two major party candidates and worried about the cost of buying radio time. He soon changed his mind as his speeches carried by radio brought in enough extra contributions to more than cover the cost. For example, a speech in Sioux Falls, SD carried on WOAW, Omaha, netted \$900. LaFollette's first major appearance, at Madison Square Garden, was carried over WEAJ. He lost ten minutes of air time when it took the crowd that long to quiet down after his introduction, but his campaign took in ten times more in contributions than the radio time cost.

In October LaFollette launched a railroad campaign tour of the Midwest. Like Davis, he spoke at radio stations along the way, and actually took along a throat specialist to keep his voice in good order. On October 13, he spoke from Kansas City over a network of Missouri, Oklahoma, and Kansas stations. Two days later, on October 15, LaFollette was denied use of WHO in Des Moines, causing one of the most controversial incidents of the campaign. LaFollette charged that business monopoly interests were keeping him off the air. WHO, however, pointed out that LaFollette's staff had not arranged for the air time three weeks in advance, as required. The station's Republican owners were able to offer evidence of how they had enforced this rule against members of their own party, and allowed Democrats who had given the required advance notice to speak. LaFollette continued to criticize the radio monopoly, but his criticism failed to hold up after October 29 when he gave a harsh speech about General Electric over GE's WGY in Schenectady. GE didn't interfere and after that LaFollette let the issue drop.

Coolidge, on the other hand, followed the strategy of Democratic loser William McAdoo and stayed at home in Washington, just giving occasional speeches via radio. Even so, Coolidge was on the air more than either Davis or LaFollette. Radio seemed to be a perfect medium for Coolidge, who was generally acknowledged as a good radio speaker, even by

Democrats. His shrill Vermont twang, often an irritation when listening to him in person, disappeared over the air. Davis' clear sonorous voice was muffled on the radio.

Shortwave Used

Through mid-1924, shortwave was still seen as an inconsistent novelty even by engineers, and few believed it could ever be used reliably for daytime long-distance broadcasting. Despite that Westinghouse continued to experiment with SW and by October was ready to demonstrate its progress. On October 11, the H.J. Heinz Company of Pittsburgh celebrated its 55th anniversary. Ten thousand employees sat down in 65 banquet halls across the US and Great Britain. President Coolidge was the featured speaker - from Washington D.C. The president's speech was carried by landline to KDKA then broadcast over shortwave. Other Westinghouse stations in Chicago, Hastings, and Springfield, MA relayed it off the air over their transmitters. This was the first time such a broadcast had been attempted, and millions in the Americas and Europe are believed to have heard it.

While the Republicans kept vice-presidential candidate Charles Dawes on the air every night through election day, Coolidge made only two more speeches before the election. The first was as a guest speaker at the United States Chamber of Commerce Convention in Washington D.C. on October 23, 1924. AT&T lined up 22 stations in the greatest connection of stations by landwire to date, with WEAJ; WJAR Providence; WEEL, Boston; WCAE, Pittsburg; WGY; WGN, Chicago; KSD, St Louis; WOAW; WCAP; WMAF, South Dartmouth; WGR, Buffalo; WDBH Worcester; WSAI, Cincinnati; WOC, Davenport; WDAF, Kansas City; KLZ, Denver; KLX Oakland; KFI and KHJ Los Angeles; KPO San Francisco; KFOA, Seattle and KGW, Portland.

As the campaign began drawing to a close, the Republicans took the radio game very seriously. For the final two weeks before the election, they bought all the time on two stations, WAHG, Richmond Hill, Long Island and WHBF, Providence, RI. With programming originating from Republican offices in Manhattan, Republican politicians spoke morning, noon and night from October 21 to election day. Party committee chairman John Q. Tilson referred to this step as "the last word in effective radio campaigning" (Weeks), but one might wonder how many besides diehard

Republicans listened in to speeches with titles like “The Vicissitudes of a Practical Politician” and “The Foundation of the Constitution.”

For a grand finale, the Republicans set up three big radio rallies. The first, on October 29, brought together several major speakers on WJZ and six other stations. The following night they put together a “Midnight Theatrical Revue” of political speeches and entertainment with stars including Al Jolson and Elsie Ferguson. Running from 11:30 p.m. to 2:00 a.m., this was also carried on WJZ and several other stations. Finally, on the Saturday night before the election, WEAF and sixteen other broadcasters carried a huge rally of speeches and music from New York’s Metropolitan Opera House.

The Davis campaign wound down on November 1 with big speeches from Carnegie Hall by Davis and New York Governor Al Smith carried by WJZ; WCAE, Pittsburgh; WMC, Memphis; WRC, Washington; WTAS, Elgin, IL; and WHAS, Louisville. Davis’s final speech at 9:15 p.m. on election eve, November 3rd, originated from WEAF and was carried by WCAP, WGY, KDKA, KFKX, KSD, WMC, and WGN, and on shortwave from Hastings to the west coast.

Coolidge’s final speech was on a record 26 stations, coast-to-coast. It was estimated that his audience was the largest in history to listen to one man speak. To ensure there would be no interruptions on the west coast due to line damage, AT&T stationed several hundred servicemen along their lines through the Rockies. Coolidge’s speech was non-partisan; he simply urged citizens to vote, then finished, “To my father, who is listening in my old home in Vermont, and to my other invisible audience, I say ‘good night’.” Many listeners remembered the personal warmth of his ending.

Americans went to the polls the next day, and the following evening almost every station in the country carried election returns in some form, with an estimated twenty million people tuning in. Many stations received the national results from the wire services and made other arrangements for state and local offices. UPI was hooked up to 32 stations, and many smaller stations listened in to these then rebroadcast the figures. Music and variety programs usually filled in the gaps between reports. WLW in Cincinnati interspersed the returns with a comedy program. WEAF headed a 26 station hookup with the “National Radio Exposition Frolic”, mixing election returns in a variety program hosted by Eddie Cantor

with Will Rogers. WJZ and WGY once again hooked up, this time with WRC, foiling AT&T by surreptitiously using the landlines of the Postal Telegraph Company. The results were also heard throughout the nation and overseas via KDKA's shortwave transmitter. It was quickly obvious that Coolidge, as expected, had won in a landslide. Most stations signed off by 1:00 a.m., although a few such as KDKA stayed on as late as 4:00 a.m. The United States' first 'radio election' was over.

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Watch next month for the final installment.

PSARA Swap Meet

ANTIQUE RADIO SWAP MEET

Sunday, August 17, 1997
9 AM to 1 PM

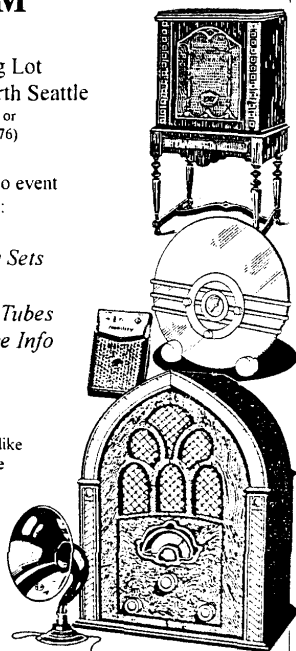
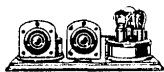
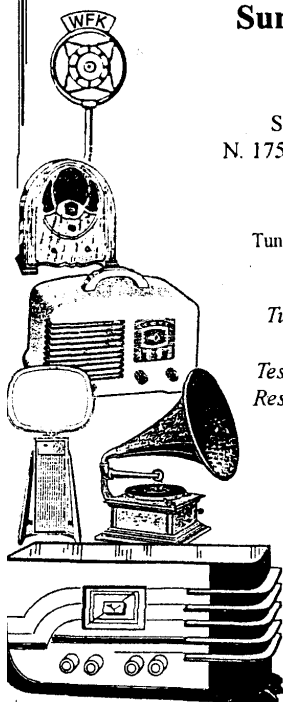
Shoreline Museum Parking Lot
N. 175th & Linden Avenue, North Seattle
(One block west of Aurora Avenue, or
one mile west of Interstate 5, Exit 176)

Tune in to the largest vintage radio event
in the Northwest, featuring:

*Tube, Transistor & Novelty Sets
Deco Plastics • TV's
Test Equipment • Parts • Tubes
Restoration & Repair Service Info*

FREE ADMISSION

Collectors, hobbyists and sellers alike
are invited to buy, sell and trade
old radios and related gear.
Bring a table or tailgate.
Plenty of parking.



A community event sponsored by the
PUGET SOUND ANTIQUE RADIO ASSOCIATION
P. O. Box 125 Snohomish, WA 98291 (425) 747-1323 or (360) 568-2698

Swap Shop

FOR SALE: Thousands of tubes, hundreds of radio parts, panels, meters, surplus, etc. R5-D3 electronic surplus, Bob Lee, 6111 SE 82nd Ave., Portland, OR, (503) 774-6560.

*RESTORATION/REPAIR SERVICES OFFERED***

Quality repairs and restoration services now offered on vintage Radio, TV, Hi-Fi, & other pre-60's electronic equipment. Some small parts fabrication and location services of vintage items also offered.

Phone: Sonny Clutter, (360) 834-5741

WANTED: *Age and health are catching up to me. For this reason and plans to sell my house, I am selling my radio and phonograph collection. I will still be active in the NWVRS. My Sams folders and my set of Rider's from #1 to and including #22. If interested call me. Gordon Phillips, 234-3517.

WANTED: *I would like to speak with any veterans or others who have information about the military radio service. I am doing research on military radio hardware and would appreciate talking to anyone who can tell me about military part numbers or who might have books or manuals that would help answer my questions. Dan Howard 761-7799

WANTED: *I would like to look through copies of "Radio's Master" parts books as part of my radio research. If you have a spare copy, would like to trade, or would let me borrow your copy, I would appreciate it. Dan Howard 761-7799

WANTED: *Harvey Wells R9, Meissner Traffic Master or #7502 Receiver - will pay UPS to Blaine, Washington. Call Collect: Bruce C. E. Russell, 370 N. Hythe, Burnaby, B.C. V5B 1G5 at 604-298-1038 or 604-299-1116 or packet VE7HII @ VE7VBS or E-Mail - ERussel@croftonhouse.bc.ca

Leads:

*Lloyd Godsey is working with Rodda paint to have a gallon (24 spray cans) of paint custom color-matched to the glossy blue-gray for Hallicrafters S-20R and similar receivers. The cost is \$5.39 per can. About half the cans are spoken for, but if you are interested in a can or two, contact Lloyd at 256-2042.

You are invited.....

If you have an interest in radio antenna hardware or telegraph insulators, you are invited to participate in a tailgate swap meet on

August 9th. Hundreds of insulators will be on display, for sale, and/or for trade. Call Dan Howard at 761-7799 for info.

Northwest Vintage Radio Society Workup/Info Sheet

Date _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Acquisitions: _____

For Sale/Trade: _____

Wanted Items: _____

Leads: _____

Suggestions: _____

