

*The*

# *Call Letter*

April 2004  
Vol. 30 No. 4



In Memory of Wilbur J. Jerman  
A silent key March 17, 2004

---

Nearly 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
Call Letter Editor Pro Tem, Dick Karman . . . . .	(503) 288-8800
Librarian John Bucholtz . . . . .	(360) 693-7135

The Society's address is:

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

---

April 2004  
Table of Contents

---

Meeting Announcement . . . . .	3
NWVRS Meeting Minutes . . . . .	4
Looking Back - with Pete Young . . . . .	6
Special Report on The Spring Trash Bash . . . . .	8
A Beaverton Radio Display . . . . .	8
NWVRS Spring Swap Meet Information . . . . .	9
Wilbur J. Jerman . . . . .	9
Portland Radio History (Of Mics and Men) . . . . .	12
Voila' (acquisitions) . . . . .	13
From the Editor . . . . .	13
NWVRS 2004 Calendar of Events . . . . .	14
NWVRS Swap Shop . . . . .	15

---

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

---

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.

---

The next meeting is on April 10, 2004.

---

Our Program theme for the April meeting is Electric table phonographs - It can be a wind up phonograph, but the sound reproduction or amplification has to be electronic. - Let's see what you've got in your collection.

---

April Call Letter Deadline: March 30, 2004.

---

Send a list of your acquisitions to Sonny.

Send Swap Shop **Wanted** or **For Sale** lists to Cliff.

## Meeting Minutes

---

President Cliff Tuttle called the March 13, 2004 meeting of the Northwest Vintage Radio Society to order at 10:00 AM.

There is a correction in the minutes from the last meeting: In the Leads and Needs section of the minutes, Bob Lee has some VT67 tubes instead of VT37 tubes for sale. The minutes of the February meeting were approved as corrected.

Mark Parthemer, Phil LeVelle, and Jan Pierce attended as guests today. Welcome to all of our guests!! Members gave our guests a round of applause.

There were 46 members and guests at our meeting today. Ed Charman gave the Treasurer's report, and it was approved.

Members welcomed Dick Bixler back from his recent surgery with a round of applause. Dick told the group that Don Iverson's wife, Florence, is in the hospital with a heart condition.

Dick Karman asked members for any memories from early club days to be used for some articles in the *Call Letter*.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Sounds of Nostalgia- Jerry Talbott told the group that the Sounds of Nostalgia was a successful show this year.

Club Email Group- Rick Walton said that our club will be leaving the Topica email group. He is looking for a new email group that will work better for us. If anyone knows of a good group email provider please let Cliff know.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Club Budget- Members discussed some of the ways that our club could possibly save money, and also create some more money for our club. Some of the ideas mentioned were: emailing the Call Letter, increase coffee and donut prices, increase swap meet table prices, and hand out the Call Letter in person at meetings.

Swap Meet- Please call Tony Hauser to reserve a table for our May Swap Meet.

Annual Club Exhibit- George Kirkwood discussed an annual club exhibit with awards for various categories.

Future Trash Bashes - Cliff asked members if there was any interest in having more "Trash Bashes". There was some interest.

### **TECH TALK-**

George Kirkwood described a technique that he uses to give some transformer-coupled battery sets better sound quality. He disconnects the low side of the coupling transformer on the grid side and adds a paralleled 1 Megohm resistor and a .01 uf capacitor in series with the low side of the coupling transformer. This provides the amplifier tube some additional grid leak bias and allows it to operate in a more linear portion of its characteristic curves.

### **TODAY'S SPECIAL ACTIVITY - SPRING TRASH BASH**

Cliff brought a trailer for anybody to put in radio-related items that they no longer want and would like to send to the dump. Anybody wanting any of the items could have them for free. Cliff's trailer was pretty full at the end of the meeting, and members picked up items that they could use.

### **LEADS AND NEEDS -**

Dave Wise needs a thermostat switch for a Weller WTCP soldering iron. Mark Parthemer needs someone to repair a Seeberg V200D jukebox.

Sonny Clutter knows about an old gentleman that has a house full of old radios. He says that there could possibly be from 500 to 1,000 radios in the house. Get up to date information on this from our club's email list.

Blake Deitz has some dial string if anyone needs some.

Ray Vanderzanden has an RCA Electrola-Radiola Model 9-25 radio-phonograph console for sale.

### **PROGRAM TOPIC-**

The program topic for today was: Radio Parts and Accessories. Members showed and discussed the items that they brought. The Program Topic for the April meeting is: Electric Table Phonographs.

Minutes submitted by Liles Garcia for Tony Hauser, Secretary

---

## Looking Back

---

### On where we started

By Charter Member Pete Young

The year was 1974 when I casually looked through the radio section of the Oregonian advertisements, and I saw *Vintage Radios For Sale, several makes and models*. I answered this ad and asked what makes and model he had, expecting AM/FM consoles etc. To my surprise, he answered, "Atwater Kent, Philco, Majestic, what are you looking for?" I couldn't believe it. Within minutes I was in my car headed for Oregon City.

When I arrived I introduced myself as Pete Young. My host introduced himself as Bob Bilby, and his wife Sandy. He offered me a cup of coffee and seat. After a long chat regarding my interests and old radios, I purchased a couple of sets. I thought the price a little steep, but once I saw them I just had to have them.

I bought a Stromberg Carlson "Treasure Chest" (for lack of a better name), complete with power supply. This beautiful 1926 piece had brass handles on either end, presumably for two people to lift, since it weighed a ton. I said it looked like the most interesting set I could own. Later My wife said it looked like a coffin. (There's a picture on page 206 of Vintage Radio)

The other set I bought was an Atwater Kent console with an NRA stamp on the chassis. No, not the National Rifle Association, but rather the National Recovery Act. Before I left Bob & Sandy's home there was a lot of talk about the interest in old radios. Bob said if I wanted to stop by again maybe we could form a club, if I was interested.

It was arranged that we (that is basically those who bought radios from that fateful ad) reconvene at Bob's house on a given date. The years have erased the names of everyone there, but I remember Harley Perkins, and about five others beside myself and the Bilbys. Harley volunteered to be the first president, I

volunteered to be vice president, Sandy became the secretary, and Bob was the treasurer.

Bob & Sandy were responsible for getting the Buena Vista Club House at 16th and Jackson streets in Oregon City for our meetings. The club house in those days was the site for everything. First we had swap meets among ourselves, later we invited the public. This latter step started our first membership boom, and the club began to roll. The only heat in the club house was a wood stove, and since our winter meetings were mighty cold each of us would bring a log or some fire wood to heat the place. It could get quite comfortable looking out the frosty windows at the Oregon weather outside. [There will be more about the clubhouse in the near future.]

One day I got a call from a fellow named Tom James. He was looking to sell some tubes. I first offered to tell the members, but later in the conversation invited to come out to a meeting. Rather than try to explain where the club house was, I picked him up and took him. Although Tom wasn't at the first meeting, he was close.

Tom is no longer with us, but his contributions to the Society as we know it today live on in his poems in old *Call Letters*, and in the mascot radio set that is our logo (which Tom built).

The story of how we got to use the Club House, and how wives were pretty important is for another day. Suffice it to say that the society has a long and honorable heritage. I encourage other long-time members to relate some of their memories and experiences.

Please send memories or stories about the first 30 years of our society to Dick Karman at [dick@karmans.net](mailto:dick@karmans.net) or mail them to Dick at 2515 NE 37th Ave., Portland, OR 97212.

We'll be compiling a memories book next January. Contribute now and help the *Call Letter* and have your story and name in the 30th anniversary book.

---

## A Special Report The Spring Trash Bash

---

By Cliff Tuttle

At our March meeting, we tried out a new event we dubbed the "Spring Trash Bash". We brought in a flat trailer (2 foot sides) and invited everyone to dig through their garages and spare bedrooms, and storage buildings, and bring in their true junk.

The idea was to allow others to dig through it, and take home what they wanted, the rest would be taken to the land fill. (See March *Call Letter*) It seems the "trash bash" was successful. While we did end up with a trailer full, the amount hauled home by members had to be three or four times that amount, all to live another day (ok, so we may see it again at some future 'bash').

It was a cash flow success as well. There were \$42.50 in donations. After the trailer rental (\$29.95) we have \$12.55 for the club. It would have cost a bit more, but Bob Lee (R5D3) agreed to take the trailer full to recycle (saving the Metro Disposal fees). Thanks Bob, you are a great guy! We really abused you this time.

From the sounds of things, people seemed to like the event. If so, perhaps we should do it every year or two?

---

## A Radio Display

---

Member Jerry Talbot brought out a fine display of his personal collection for a church luncheon at Beaverton Baptist Church March 25. Jerry's show of radios and radio equipment promoted the hobby and introduced about 85 folks to the NW Vintage Radio Society.

The entertainment for the day was reenactments of old radio shows like Gunsmoke, Dragnet and Fibber McGee and Molly. Reenactments are a hobby of Dick Karman who directs the shows and produces events such as this under the name **Reliving Radio**.



---

## Swap Meet Tables Available

---

by Tony Hauser, Swap Meet Coordinator

Tables are now available for the upcoming Spring NWVRS Swapmeet on Saturday, May 8th, 2004 at the Salvation Army Rose Center. The Rose Center is located at NE 18th Ave. & Sandy Blvd. in Portland, Oregon.

Doors open Friday at about 5:00pm for loading and set-up until 7:00pm. Doors open Saturday at 7:00am and the Swap Meet will be open to the public from 9:00am to 1:00pm. Once again we will be holding our auction at 1:00pm to benefit the Society.

Each table can be rented for \$15. Of course, admission is free! As always, I will be in need of as many volunteers as I can get to help with set-up (starting at 3:00pm Friday) and teardown (immediately following the Swap Meet on Saturday).

To volunteer or rent a table please call, Tony Hauser, at (503) 397-0074 or email me at [abhauser@aol.com](mailto:abhauser@aol.com). We'll see you there!

---

## Portland Radio History Passing Away

---

In memory of

Wilbur Jeffery Jerman,  
June 11, 1901, March 17, 2004

In June of 1901 a new life came into a new century. It was the dawn of a new age. Famous people were born in 1901: Clark Gable, Linus Pauling, Louis Armstrong, Ed Sullivan, Walt Disney, and Marlene Dietrich. And famous people were passing away: Queen Elizabeth, Giuseppe Verdi (composer), Benjamin Harrison (23rd U.S. President), President McKinley (assassinated).

Wilbur Jerman was born in Brownsville, Oregon and not aware of other deaths and births. He spent most of his time growing up in Silverton, Oregon, the hub of commerce for the surrounding agricultural area. But for Wilbur it was a place of experimentation. In 1911 Wilbur built his own wireless sending set. It was his first in a long line of transmitters.

With World War I in the wings, Wilbur found himself working in Portland at Stubbs Electric Company. Stubbs, like all other electric companies, found a new market in radio technology. Stubbs had government contracts for transmitters used by the US Forest Service, and Wilbur built at least one of them. Before Wilbur reached his 20th birthday he was in charge of building transmitters for merchant vessels which were being outfitted for World War I in the Portland shipyards.

In his young career at Stubbs Electric Company, Wilbur was responsible for the construction of eleven radio stations throughout the Pacific Northwest, and Western Canada. One of those stations was KQY owned and operated by Stubbs Electric at 75 Sixth Street in Portland.

In 1926, with John Egan as a partner, Wilbur J Jerman used his initials and applied for a station license for KWJJ. It had a daytime power of 250 watts (and broadcast only part time). But it was in those early years that KWJJ became the *Voice of Broadway*, because the transmitter and studios (if you could call them that) were in an upstairs room in the Broadway Theater. The antenna went from the transmitter on the theater roof over many buildings to the the roof of the Congress hotel, almost 3 blocks away.

In 1928 Wilbur had heard that some experimenters were trying to broadcast pictures over radio waves. In December of that year Wilbur obtained experimental call letters W7XAO and was licensed to broadcast television. Wilbur desired to broadcast the picture on the short wave band, and the audio over KWJJ. He hoped to make this experimental license into a commercial venture by using the projector in the Broadway Theater to project his "radio pictures." An article in the *Oregon Journal* later reported that he was giving up on the project as impractical.

In about 1938 KWJJ moved into its own building at SW 6th and Salmon and increased its power to 1,000 watts and its rating to Full Time. The JJ building was equipped with commercial recording studios and housed the Pacific Radio Advertising Service. PRAS was one of the first such agencies on the west coast. Wilbur never

stopped building transmitters. In 1938-39 he built and licensed KPRA, the first FM station in Portland.

Wilbur was a successful businessman and lived in the city. His home was in Northeast Portland on the Alameda Ridge. When the government was assigning the new FM band, Wilbur's prominent role in Portland broadcasting was repaid by his first choice of 99.5 FM, where it remains to this day. (The AM station was sold off in the 1960s.)

The world kept moving and Wilbur managed KWJJ and several other ventures through World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam war. He had his hand in radio until his unofficial retirement in the late 1970s. Considering his background in Silverton, Wilbur had been in broadcasting for over 65 years.

Wilbur always had a love of radio. He met often with a group of broadcast pioneers known as "Marconi's Cronies." He was also a guest speaker at an NWVRS meeting. His memories of the earlier days were colorful and gave us food for thought.

In June of 2001 a group of close friends were invited to celebrate Wilbur's 100th birthday. Rudy Zvarich was among those attending. Rudy and everyone else was entertained by Wilbur's stories about early broadcasting in Portland.

When Wilbur died on March 17, 2004, it marked the passing of last of the original broadcast pioneers in the Portland area and perhaps in the Pacific Northwest. Those of us who had the pleasure to get to know him, will miss his pleasant smile, his stories, his anecdotes and the history of over half a decade in Radio.

**Footnote:** For many years KWJJ stayed on the same frequency with the same call letters. After degeulation in the 1990s KWJJ was bought up. But like grandfather's clock (that refused to run after grandfather died) it could be said that Wilbur refused to pass on while his initials were still on the air in Portland. Only a few weeks before his passing the owners of KWJJ decided to change the station ID of FM 99.5 from KWJJ to "the Wolf." KWJJ left the airwaves.

---

## Portland Radio Broadcast History

---

**Learn more** - An interesting and entertaining book was written in 1951 by Jane Woodfin. It told stories about radio broadcasting in Portland, Oregon in the early years. The fictional call letters of the station were KUKU, but the stories in the book relate to KWJJ. There are tales of carbon button microphones needing periodically to be shaken to free up the carbon crystals. It also contains one of Wilbur Jermen's favorite stories about flushing audio hookup wires down toilets (to be retrieved at another location) to avoid paying the telephone companies exorbitant rates for Radio Remote hook ups. These stories are both endearing and are documented as being fairly accurate. Although long out of print - If you can find a copy, buy "*Of Mics, and Men*" (Mcgraw-Hill 1951).



**Running radio remote audio lines through the sewer system.**

---

# Voila'

new or recent acquisitions by our members

---

## Liles Garcia:

- Hallicrafters SX-130 Communications Receiver
- Hallicrafters S-53A Communications Receiver

## Vance Daberko:

- Hallicrafters S-53 and what looks like the matching transmitter, a model HT- 18. Both are in very nice condition.

## Dave Brown:

- 1939 General Radio & Television Model 534 "Grand Piano" in excellent condition. It just needs an original prop to hold the top up.

## Rudy Zvarich:

- I acquired a Tek 585 scope

## Sonny Clutter:

- A beautiful bright red Motorola "Pixie", a 1954 subminiature tube coat pocket portable radio.

Sonny, the RadiolaGuy

---

## From the Editor, pro tem

---

By Dick Karman

I count it a great honor to be asked to help out with the *Call Letter*. (I last had the editor's job in 1996.) Rudy Zvarich helped with the notice about Wilbur Jerman. Sonny compiled the Voila'. Cliff went the extra mile to get the mailing labels. And Charter member Pete Young vicariously brings you this month's *Looking Back* memories. I appreciate everybody's willingness to help and it is a pleasure to work with you all.

Sorry! Some of the graphics are a little blurred and I don't have photo pages this month, but we have a lot of information and nostalgia.

---

## NWVRS 2004 Calendar of Events

---

- April 10 NWVRS monthly meeting 10 am; tailgate swap 8:30.
- April 17 Yakima Amateur Radio Club W7AQ Hamfest 2004 Selah Civic Center, Selah, WA. <http://eagle.ykm.com/~W7aq/hamfest.html>
- April 24 Hamfest, Snake River ARC, Caldwell, ID Contact: Ralston .Scotty. Scott, W5RWS 208-466-3155
- **May 8 NWVRS Spring Swap/Radio Sale at Salvation Army Rose Center on Sandy Blvd.**
- May 10 Hamfest, Stanwood-Camano ARC, Stanwood, WA.
- June 12 NWVRS monthly meeting 10 am; tailgate swap 8:30.
- June 18-20 SEA\*PAC, Northwestern Division Convention, Seaside, OR Oregon Tualatin Valley ARC <http://www.seapac.org>
- July 16-18 Glacier-Waterton International Peace Park Hamfest
- July 18-20, 2003, East Glacier, MT. <http://www.gwhamfest.org>
- TBA Pacific Northwest DX Convention, Portland, OR. Wil-lamette Valley DX Club <http://www.wvdx.org>
- 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!

---

## 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 : 1925 Federal 141 battery set, with 6 good 01A's-\$350 - 1934 Midwest 16-34, large 16 tube table set with 4-45's output-\$250 - Jerry Talbott : Phone 503-538-4041(Newberg, non-toll for most of Portland area) email (vinradio@easystreet.com) more information.
- FOR SALE: variety of radios at <http://radiogalerykent.com>. Charlie Kent
- FOR SALE: I am clearing my entire inventory of radio test equipment, parts, related materials that would be useful to those restoring antique radio gear. Some items available are: numerous power transformers; coupling transformers; resistors; some tubes; miscellaneous amplifiers and chassis; etc. I will let the whole bag go for \$150.00. I am always negotiable. It appears we will be moving and there is no place for all of this collection. I will take my five most liked collectibles with me. John Otterstedt, johott38@aol.com, 503-244-6571 (home), 503-318-4203 (cell).
- WANTED: \*SAMS auto radio manuals AR7, AR8, AR10 - AR14. Also, Riders Perpetual Manuals 15 - 22. Ken.Seymour@comcast.net or 503-642-9115.
- WANTED: An audio output transformer for RCA 54B1 personal portable. It matches the 3V4 to the 10 ohm speaker voice coil. Rudy Z. 503-255-2227
- Radio Service  
These members are willing to perform radio repairs:  
Roger Brown . (503) 693-6089  
Blake Dietze . (360) 944-7172, wb6jhj@ix.netcom.com  
Tony Ranft . (360) 944-8489 or ranft@saw.net .  
Dave Wise . (503) 293-7835, david\_wise@phoenix.com

If you are willing to repair radios, give your name, phone and/or e-mail, 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: Questions about restoration of vintage radio? Visit radiolaguy's web site often for this information plus lots of other interesting displays, photos, 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>