

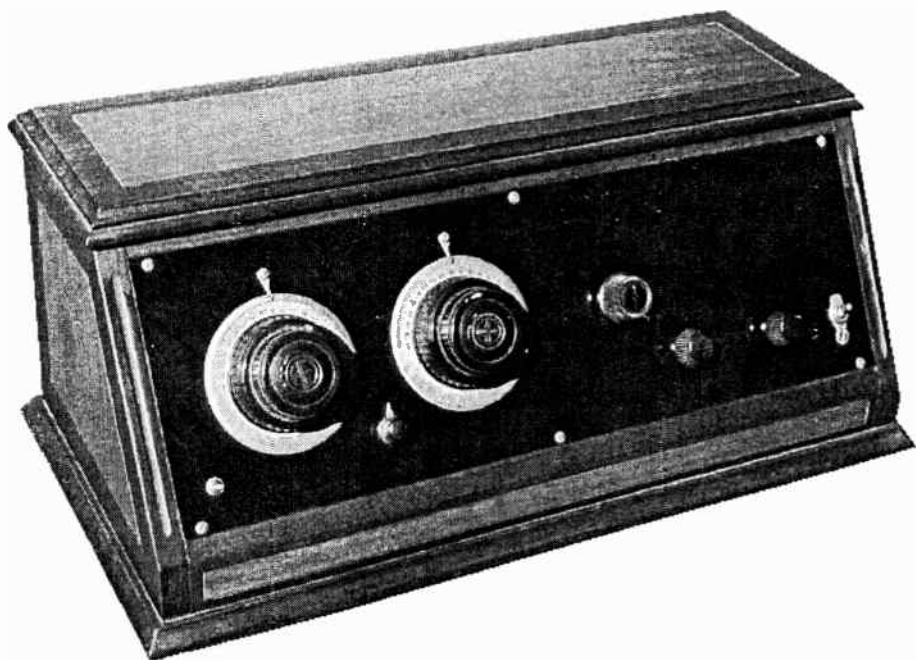


Vol. 28

Summer 1999

No.2

NICHOLSON



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New Augusta, Indiana**



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IHRS Museum Curator

Bulletin Deadlines. News, Articles & RadioAds, 2/15, 5/15, 8/15, 11/15

The INDIANA HISTORICAL RADIO SOCIETY is a non-profit organization founded in 1971. Annual membership dues are \$10.00, which includes the quarterly IHRS BULLETIN. RadioAds are free to all members. Please include a S.A.S.E. when requesting information.

Coming Events

IHRS Northern Indiana Summer Meet

Saturday, August 28, 1999

Note that this date differs from one previously announced in a previous edition of the "Bulletin" so, make the change on your calendar and **BE THERE !**

Regular Location, High Dive Park Pavilion, 500 East Beardsley Ave., Elkhart, Indiana. Registration: 8:30AM, \$5.00 per member/family.

SCHEDULE: 8:30AM, Swap & Sell in the East parking lot. Others, please park in front or West side of the Pavilion. Guest welcome! Coffee and rolls for the early birds.

9:30AM Enter Contest items for Popular Vote.

Categories are:

1. CRYSTAL SETS, and Passive Receivers
2. Tube Sets, any year
3. Transistor sets, any kind
4. Novelty Radios, tube or transistor sets
5. Your Favorite Radio, or Communications Item, (Speakers, Microphones, Short Wave Converters, etc.)

10:00AM Bring items for the "Silent Auction" to the inside table. A 10% donation is expected from the seller for expenses.

11:50AM SILENT AUCTION CLOSES: Buyers please contact sellers.

12:00 NOON, CARRY-IN DINNER. Bring a dish, desert, rolls, etc. and your Table Service. Plates and silver will be provided for guests

12:30PM VOTE FOR ONE ITEM EACH IN THE

(see next page)

COMING EVENTS - continued

5 CONTEST CATEGORIES

1:00PM Contest Awards and IHRS Business Meeting

1:30PM Swap Meet continues on the lot. For more information: CONTACT: Terry Garl, (219) 679-4280, (e-mail IHRfSELK98@AOL.COM), or Ross Smith, 1133 Strong Ave., Elkhart, IN 46514 Phone (219) 295-7770.

IHRS FALL FOLIAGE MEET, Saturday, Oct. 2nd, 1999, 7AM to ????

Riley Park, Greenfield, Indiana, on Apple St about 1/4 mile east of State Route 9 and 1 block north of U.S. 40.

Swap Meet and Equipment Contest details forthcoming.

Contact: Alex Whitaker, (317) 535-4174 or Mike Clark, (317) 738-4649.

IHRS WINTER MEET. Saturday, February 19, 2000 * Note that this is a different date than what was posted in the last "Bulletin". Re-mark your calendars accordingly.

Holiday Inn Southeast, 5120 Victory Lane at Emerson Road exit off of I-465. * 7:30AM till ????. Details forthcoming. * = Due to DOT construction which closes the exits off of I-465. you can go to I-65 Southbound and proceed to the Southport Rd. exit. Turn left, (east) onto Southport Rd. and then turn left (north) on Emerson Ave. which is on the east side of the I-65 crossover. If you are coming northbound on I-65, note that you will turn right at that Southport Road exit and then turn left onto Emerson Ave.. Proceed north to the Holiday Inn
(see next page)

Coming Events, Continued

which will be on your right side as you come within sight of the I-465 exit.

Contact: Mike Clark, (317) 738-4649 or Alex Whitaker, (317) 535-4174).

IHRS/AWA 29TH ANNUAL REGIONAL SPRING FLING RADIO FESTIVAL.

Thurs., 6/8, Fri. 6/9, and Saturday 6/10, 2000 *
Same great location as last year. Signature Inn
East, Washington St. (U.S. 40) @ I-465.

Details forthcoming. * see "Comment From the
Editor".

It would seem that when Radio Meets are being planned, one needs to be in contact with DOT, and the Weather Man.

Speaking of DOT and the construction that we almost encountered at the June meet, I had been visiting the lot to the east of the Signature Inn which we used for our sales in past years, to make sure everything was OK and to start the painting of the assigned numbers on the spots to be used. Imagine my surprise when I found a lot of construction equipment, trucks and other things that would have been in the way. I began reviewing our proposed parking area, and where possible, painting some numbers when I was questioned by security as to what was going on. I explained the problem and our needs to the man. He called Gerald Adkins, the project Superintendent who came right over. After relating the situation and our possible plight, he said he would see to it that another parking area would be arranged on the other side of I-465 and that they would install the new fence and clear the lot for us. Our cheers for Gerald Adkins and the Berns Construction Co. for their spirit of community support.



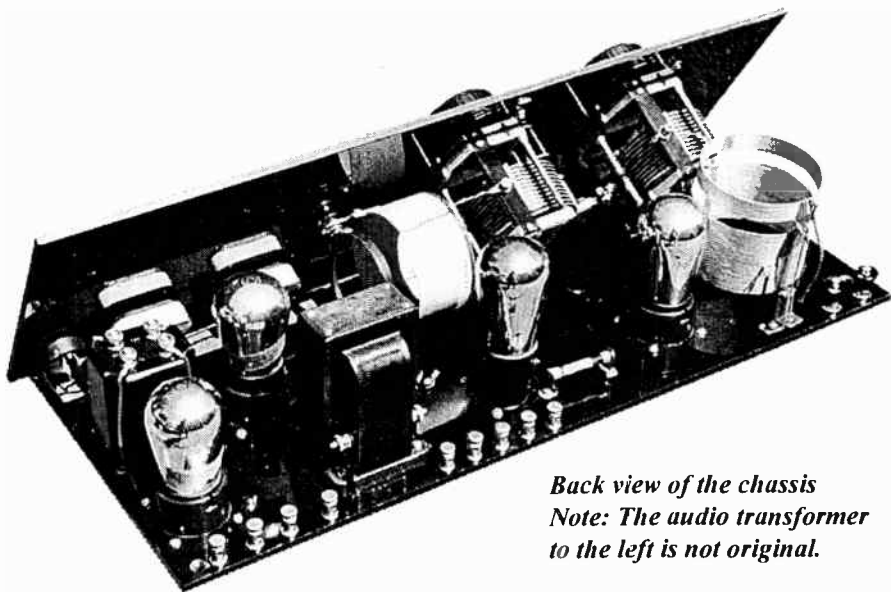
The Nicholson

by Michael Feldt

Twenty years ago, IHRS member Fred Prohl was out on a weekend visiting the various antique shops north of Indianapolis when he happened to stop by at a shop in the small town of Westfield. There, to his delight, he found a two dial battery radio from the mid 1920s for sale and bought it. That radio turned out to become one of the most interesting radios in Fred's collection. The radio is called the "Nicholson". It was manufactured by the Nicholson Experimental Laboratories of New Augusta, Indiana. New Augusta is a tiny town located on the north-west side of Marion county, just on the outer edge of Indianapolis. New Augusta consists of three turn of the century store fronts, a church, a lumberyard and a smattering of old clapboard houses, all of which are clustered on a four block by four block area. New Augusta may hold the record for being the smallest community in Indiana to have manufactured and marketed a radio.

The Nicholson is a fairly standard regenerative receiver incorporating four UX-201A tubes. It has a tuned RF stage and a tuned detector stage with adjustable regeneration, which is followed by two transformer coupled audio stages. All of the components consist of high quality brand names such as the Bremer-Tully condensers, Accuratune dials, Allen-Bradley potentiometers and Rauland-Lyric audio transformers. The cabinet, believed to be locally made, is

made of solid oak in a two tone finish, showing the quality of craftsmanship equal to or better than cabinets found on most national brand radios of that day and age. The required voltages are stamped into the wood on the inside rear of the cabinet.

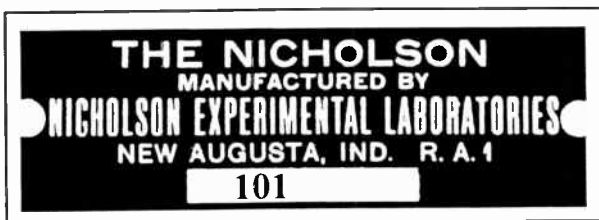


*Back view of the chassis
Note: The audio transformer
to the left is not original.*

The Nicholson's serial number is of particular interest. Inside of the cabinet, mounted in the rear, is the identification plate with the radio's name, manufacturer, and the serial number 101

which suggests that this was the 101st radio made. More

likely, it identifies this radio as the being the first one produced. It was not uncommon for a manufacturer of that time to start a serial number with a double, triple, or a larger



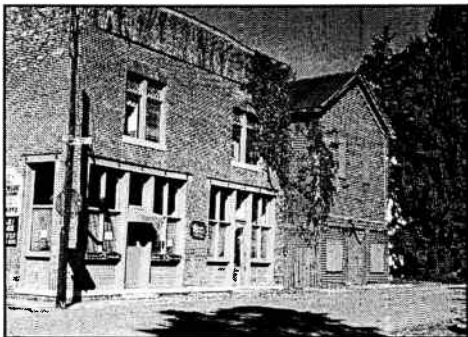
Identification plate.

digit such as 101 or 1001. This was to give the false illusion that a company's production was larger than what it actually was. If this radio was the first one produced, it might explain why it survives to this day. Theory is, that being the first radio made, it was held back from sale and used as a demo unit. The owner of the company probably kept it in his family until the Westfield antique shop, more than likely, acquired it through an estate auction. Today this is the only Nicholson known to exist.

The Nicholson Experimental Laboratories was undoubtedly a small company with only a few employees at best with a total production output of probably no more than 100 radios. The New Augusta area was a limited market for the Nicholson. Some Nicholsons were most likely sold in the Indianapolis market, but usually a small town manufacturer of the 1920s would sell its product locally. No advertisements or documentation about the company have been found despite extensive searching through government sources and libraries. The only information that has turned up was found some years ago when Fred Prohl interviewed a few of the New Augusta locals. Fred was informed that the Nicholson Experimental Laboratories was located on the second floor of one of New Augusta's merchant buildings, but this has yet to be confirmed.

Today, New Augusta has retained most of its small town character despite having been encircled by the city of Indianapolis. It's surrounded by fast growing subdivisions, shopping malls, fast food restaurants, and Park 100, a large industrial park. Yet, when a person walks the streets of New Augusta, he has the feeling of stepping back in time; to a time of quiet streets, front porches and the corner grocer. That person would expect to find on the edge of the

town, farmland stretching out as far as the eye can see, rather than the reality of the 5:00 rush hour traffic. New Augusta is truly one of Indianapolis's best kept secrets and hopefully will remain that way.



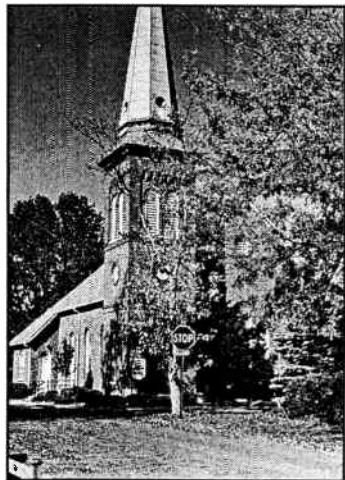
Downtown New Augusta comprises primarily of these two buildings. The Nicholson Experimental Laboratories was supposedly located on the second floor of the corner building.

This house is a fine example of the type of houses that are to be found in New Augusta.



New Augusta's old train depot. A train that serves the Park 100 area passes through twice a day.

New Augusta's only church, the Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church, was built in 1880.



1999 SPRING FLING CONTEST WINNERS

Fred Prohl

Class One - Battery Radios of the 20"s

FIRST PLACE

John Jones - ***Crosley Trirdyn The 1123 Newport***

John's display included excellent advertising and circuitry documentation.

SECOND PLACE

Andy Shultz - ***Atwater Kent model AK10C Breadboard***

Class Two - AC Wood Table Radios or the 30's (with handle).

no entries

Class Three - Displays, Advertising Material

FIRST PLACE

Chuck Saxton - ***Atwater Kent advertising sign.***

Excellent condition, original framing.

(Atwater Kent Precision Radio - Per Aspera Ad Astra)

SECOND PLACE

Wanda Collier - ***Nipper Sculpture***

The display included documentation describing the commission by RCA to sculpt Nipper using current technology.

Class Four - Transistor Radios up to 196

FIRST PLACE

Fred Prohl - ***PeeWee Pocket Radio***

Display included original packaging and documentation.

SECOND PLACE

Scott Beard - ***Three Emerson 888's***

Displayed were the "Black Pioneer," "Red Explorer," and the "Turquoise."

Class Five - Indiana Made Radio

FIRST PLACE and ***BEST OF SHOW!***

Michael Feldt - ***The Showers Consola***

The display included two Showers battery radios and extensive historical documentation of Showers Manufacturing.

SECOND PLACE

Don Wrigley - ***Scien-tifco Tubeless Radio***, Indianapolis, Indiana
Display included original packaging and documentation.

Class Six - Amateur Radio, Ham Equipment to 1950

no entries

The photos and captions on the next 5 pages were supplied by Michael Feldt.

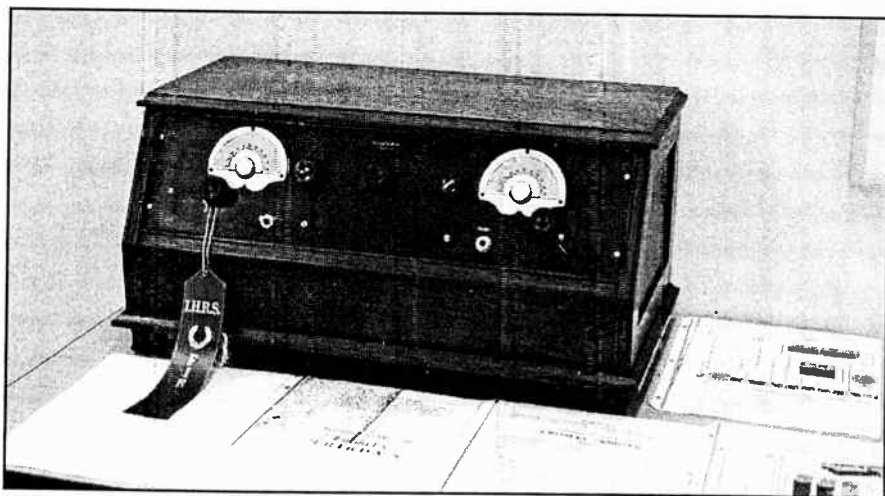
The Indiana Historical Radio Society couldn't have asked for better weather when they held their Spring meet at the Signature Inn in June. Despite a noticeable decline in attendance this year, the quality of items that was for sale was not compromised. Here are some snapshots of some of the vendors who braved the beautiful sunny weather.

Michael Feldt



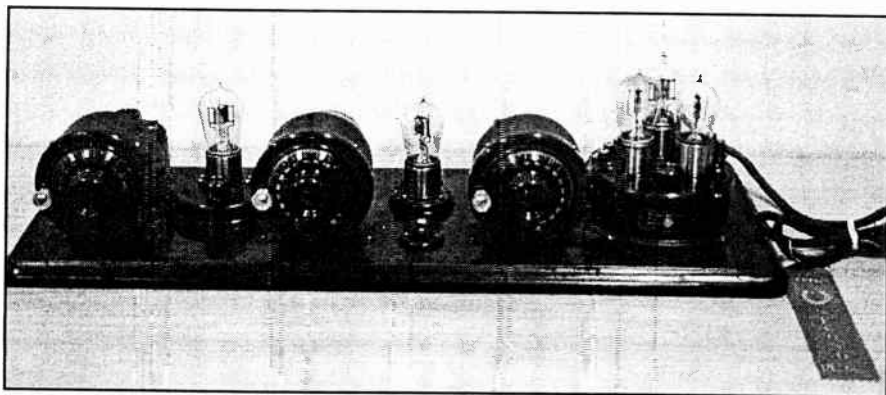
Hope to see you at the IHRS
Spring meet in the year 2000.

Class 1: Battery Radios of the 1920s



First Place

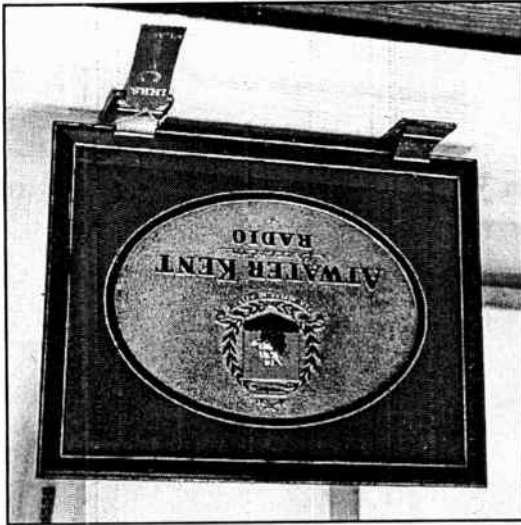
**John Jones: Crosley Trirdyne 1123 Newport
Excellant advertising and circurtry documentation.**



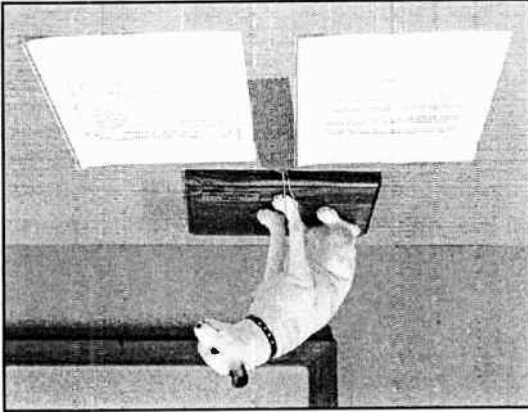
Second Place

Andy Shultz: Atwater Kent 10C breadboard

Class 3: Displays, Advertising Material



First Place
Chuck Saxton: Atwater Kent advertising sign.



Second Place
Wards Follower: Hipper Sculpture
The display included the original documentation describing the commission by RTH to sculpt using current technology.

Class 4: Transistor Radios up to 1960



First Place

Fred Prohl: PeeWee Pocket Radio

Display included original packing and documentation.

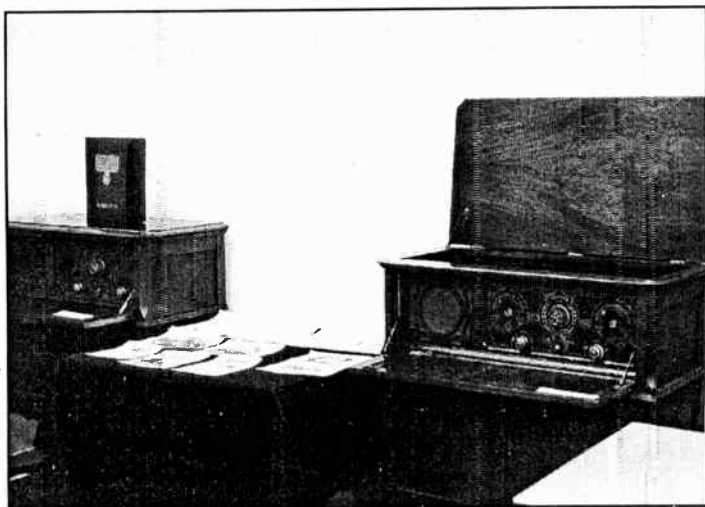


Second Place

Scott Beal: Three Emerson 888s

Displayed were the "Black Pioneer, Red Explorer" and the "Turquoise".

Class 5: Indiana Made Radios



First Place

Michael Feldt: Showers "Consola" and "Future", Bloomington, Ind.
The display included two Showers battery radios and extensive historical documentation of Showers manufacturing.



Second Place

Don Wrigley: Scientific Tubless Radio, Indianapolis, Ind.
Display included original packaging and documentation.

IHRS OLD EQUIPMENT CONTEST

Fred Prohl

(editor's note, Fred felt that there are many of the members who have joined since the earlier days who perhaps have not been aware of the objectives in holding such events. What you will see here is some important background information which may help to prepare you to enter and win.)

Each meeting of the IHRS provides an opportunity for member to showcase a radio or radio related items for others to appreciate and admire.

The categories (or classes) for the Old Equipment Contests range from the earliest wireless equipment to more recent transistor radios. Contest possibilities include 1920's battery radios, 1930's table radios, My Favorite Radio, plastic cased radios, cathedral radios of a specific manufacturer, home built radios, working radios, radio advertising, radio speakers, and a multitude of other categories. Contest categories are announced in the "Bulletin" or a special mailing well in advance of the meeting.

Traditionally there are two methods of determining contest winners.

Popular Vote. The Popular Vote method of selecting first and second place winners of an Old Equipment Contest gives all meeting attendees a chance to vote for their favorite radio. Appearance of the radio entry carries a lot of weight in the voting. Radios and displays that gleam from a quality restoration or are unique and eye catching appeal to the voter. Historical significance, and documentation do influence the popular vote as was shown by the Elkhart, 1998 winners where a Marconi Coherer replica, and operating Aerials won first place ribbons.

Criteria Judging. Criteria judging involves a team of judges awarding first and second place ribbons to contest entries based on four sets of judging guidelines. Each judge completes a ballot for each entry in the contest and submits the ballot for tally. (If a judge has an entry in the contest, that judge will not participate in the judging of the category in which he or she is entered,) The judge records on the ballot a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 with 5 as the highest rating for each of the following four criteria:

1. Historical significance

- * Contribution to the art
- * Contribution to social history
- * Possession by a "radio great"
- * Special Circumstances in contestants' family history
- * Does the entry contribute to the study of communication ?

(see next page)

IHRS OLD EQUIPMENT CONTEST - continued

- * Does the entry enhance the image of our Society and membership?

2. Uniqueness and rarity

- * Few of a kind versus production run (uniqueness)
- * Number surviving (rarity)
- * Original use and value

Does this entry amplify/illustrate/elucidate a phase of radio not commonly known today?

3. Quality of restoration

- * Cleaning, external, internal
- * Craftmanship of repair, mechanical/electrical
- * Conformance to original design (factory models)
- * Restoration and original construction (home brews)
- * Parts substitution or rebuilding
- * Finish: cabinet, parts, wiring, insulation, connections
- * Has the entrant done a craftsmanlike job in preparing for the show?
- * [Super finish does not earn extra points, no points are lost for the depravation of age alone.]

4. Supporting and illustrative documentation

- * instruction books, service notes, production documents
- * Construction date, plans for kits
- * Original constructor's plans or sketches (for home brews)
- * Use of material found in publications of the time
- * Has the entrant gone to the extra effort of collecting and displaying the documentation that enhances the entry?
- * Does the illustrative material add significance to the entry?
- * Would the supporting documentation be competitive by itself?

Traditionally the IHRS Spring Meeting Old Equipment Contest uses the Criteria Judging method. The winter, summer and fall meetings use the popular vote to determine the prize winners.

The working receiver contest (or working speaker contest) is a fun event that, depending on the meeting organizers, may use a team of judges or audience approval for selecting a winner. If plans proceed as scheduled, the next working receiver contest will be at Greenfield in the fall, (10/2)

(see next page)

IHRS OLD EQUIPMENT CONTEST- continued

Plan now to enter the contest at one of our next meetings, - better yet, plan to enter one of your "pride and joys" at each of the IHRS meets. The reward is showing off a piece of your collection and possibly getting a ribbon to add to your display.

Fred Prohl

(Note that Fred is a past officer in the club having served as president and also editor and is currently our Secretary. We are pleased to have him living once again in Indiana. He will be coming aboard in the role of Co-Editor and certainly has been an asset to our club. Bob O'Friel).

IMPORTANT NOTICE!!

As was noted elsewhere in this issue, a computer crash lost many files, the most destructive of which lost the section we call "RADIOADS". Due to constraints of time, the only two ads that appear this time are recent entries that came in after the system shutdown/loss. We regret this but assure you that the next edition is in the preparation stage and the "Radioads" will be included.

Thank you for your patience.

(editor's note)

The article, "Eliminating The Line Cord Resistor" by Ed Dupart, had been promised for this edition, (per the Spring #1 Bulletin on page 24). Ed did a fine job of getting his material to me in a timely manner. However, at this point we are facing a space/time challenge. It has over 6 pages and will appear in the next "Bulletin". Stay tuned!

The Indiana Historical Radio Society Website

Fred Prohl

<http://home.att.net~indianahistoricalradio>

March 15, 1999 was the debut of the IHRS Web Site. Titled Indiana Historical Radio, the internet location is designed to continue the long standing IHRS goal of "Preservation for Posterity"- preserving historical radio for future generations. The Web Site currently consists of several "pages" of information. When an individual accesses the Indiana Historical Radio location, the first page is a list of options. With a click of the mouse, the viewer selects what to read next. The first page is as follows:

INDIANA HISTORICAL RADIO

Indiana Historical Radio is documented, preserved and displayed by radio collectors and historians. Pulled together by the Indiana Historical Radio Society, 300 plus antique radio enthusiasts enjoy an avocation of seeking out, documenting and restoring vintage radios. Interested in Historical Radio? Select (click on) any of the following underlined topics to explore Radio History:

- * **THE INDIANA HISTORICAL RADIO SOCIETY (IHRS)**
Twenty eight years of dedication to the preservation of early radio
- * **THE INDIANA HISTORICAL RADIO SOCIETY 1999 MEETING SCHEDULE**
- * **THE INDIANA HISTORICAL RADIO MUSEUM**
This popular museum provides an outstanding display of radio history
- * **A REVIEW OF INDIANA HISTORICAL RADIO**
The Showers Consola. A review of a recent IHRS Bulletin article
- * **THE ANTIQUE WIRELESS ASSOCIATION**
The National (World) renowned antique radio organization
- * **THE ANTIQUE RADIO CLASSIFIED**
A national publication providing links to over 250 antique radio web pages

The last two selections are "links" to other Web Sites. The Antique Radio Classified (ARC) provides IHRS as a link from their list of other Historical
(see next page)

Radio Web Sites. Recently the ARC has published a series of articles related to Internet access. Written by Laura Katz, the basics of Internet access is described as well as detailed instructions on searching the Internet.

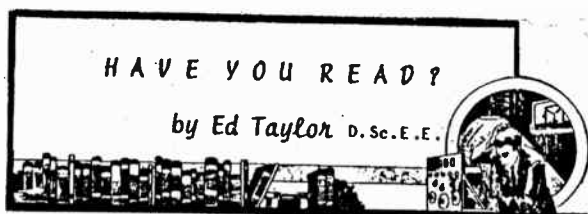
The IHRS Web Site is a beginning. It will be continually updated with IHRS activity. Also expect to see the Indiana Historical Radio Museum and A Review of Indiana Historical Radio pages grow - specifically with pictures.

If you do not have Internet access from home, most libraries provide access. When you check with your librarian, be prepared to provide the Web Site address: <http://home.att.net/~indianahistoricalradio/>

Fred Prohl

Contact Fred Prohl, (812) 988-1761 or e-mail indianahistoricalradio@worldnet.att.net with comments related to the IHRS Web Site.

(Editor's note:ARC has also had some recent articles such as the 4 part "To WebTV or Not to WebTV" by Dick Desjarlais, that have addressed the topic of getting on the the Internet from a layman's perspective. In addition, John Terrey, the editor, has provided Updates. It is hard to imagine someone in our hobby not being a subscriber to "Antique Radio Classified". You can only access their Web Site to be able to read their ads on the Internet by having a subscription which provides you with your own "log-on" ID and password.)



Behind the Front Panel

by: David Rutland

1994

Here's a book that gives the story of the design and development of 1920's radios. The answers of what goes on "behind the front panel":

How do all those shiny tubes and pretty components work?

Why did the old engineers use so many different circuits?

What was the role of men like Armstrong, Fleming, De Forest,

Marconi, Alexanderson, Hazeltine and others?

How did RCA's patents lead to the design of new circuits?

Why did the triode dominate radio design for over 10 years?

Who invented the Neutrodyne, Superdyne, Technidyne, Isofarad,

Counterphase, Syncrophase and the Superheterodyne?

When did the first "one knob" radios appear?

These and many other questions are answered in a fascinating story using photographs and simple illustrations that can be understood by anyone having an elementary knowledge of electricity.

The author's extensive research has provided many amusing and anecdotal quotations from 1920's popular and technical magazines.

159 PAGE PAPERBACK

40 Illustrations

25 Photographs

75 References

Glossary and Index

as well as citing 45 different manufacturers of the period.

From Crystal Sets to Eight Tube Superhets

ISBN #1-885391-00-5

The Indiana Historical Radio Society

Museum Report

Marcella Schultz

Attendance continues to be good, (have you been there yet???) and as evidenced by the newspaper clipping, Ligonier is aware of the draw. A hoedown was held in May at "Daniel's Ligonier Cafe". Merchants donated raffle items and country music was played. Over \$500 was raised with the money going toward our current matching fund drive at the Noble County Community Foundation. Marcella and Fred have just found out that under a new Indiana law, the museum will be exempt from property tax after this year. Currently, it runs \$800 per year so this will be quite a savings. (Maybe this will enable a purchase of a Scott or similar radio).



There aren't many Ethiopian cowboys in Ligonier but this one was spotted recently. It's Daniel, host of the radio museum fundraiser at his cafe in downtown Ligonier.



This cute little cowpoke is Jeanelle Schultz of Ligonier, who helped out at the recent fundraiser for the Indiana Historic Radio Museum.

The Radio Museum recently had some special visitors.

Comments From The Editor

Summer has arrived and heat now seems to be the biggest enemy of the Radio Meets. Right now, I want to give you the latest report on Alex and Terri Whitaker and the baby.

They have faced many challenges including a round of pneumonia for little Jessica Lynn along the way. Her weight hovered around the 2 pound mark during this stage. The good news now is that Jessica is between the 5 and 6 pound mark and she is expected to be able to come home within two weeks. I know that Terri and Alex have appreciated your cards, flowers and prayers. Alex has been going directly from work to the hospital every day so he has not been able to write the "Message From The President" column for this issue but I will echo his thoughts on the status of the club and other matters,

We believe that attendance at all the clubs meets are down. I noticed this at our June event as well as the ones staged by Cincinnati at Florence, KY, and the big 4 day meet in Elgin, Illinois by ARCI. All had provided good publicity and had the advantage of good weather. In discussing this problem, one of our officers commented that the really "Good" items seemed to be missing at the shows and that what was being brought in for sale were of the "clean out the closet" variety. I can't state that that is true in all cases because I was able to purchase a beautiful Philco 17RX chairside with its separate speaker and I saw some nice Zeniths around. Yet, items such as these seem to be there by exception.

Another factor is the lack of interest by a few of the dealers. They will leave their table of wares unattended and be gone for great lengths of time. At Elgin, for example, I heard dealers being paged with the statement that there were customers waiting to buy items. At one event, I passed by a table and saw an item of interest but the dealer wasn't there. About 45 minutes later, I returned and the dealer had closed up and left, a matter of almost 4 hours before the day was over.

There seems to be a common thread of thought that a 3 or 4 day meet is too long. I agree with that concept and, at this point, I suspect that our big June meet for this coming year will last for only 2 days. The show opening will take place the first day with registration and the flea market sales. That first day could end up with the Registration and setup of the items for the Contests. The 2nd day would see further registrations for the late comers and continuation of sales. The contest judging could take place allowing the results to be announced at the Awards Banquet that evening. The Auctions have not done well and we need your inputs as to whether these should be continued as well as the other points mentioned above. This is your club and your suggestions are vital.

The club will be seeking someone to "Chair" next year's 29th IHRS/AWA annual "Spring Fling" Radio Festival. We have been able to secure the 8th, 9th and, as a carryover in case it is needed, the 10th of June in the year 2000 and we will need volunteers for that event as well. I'll cover the meets referred to earlier in another part of the "Bulletin" but, in view of the previous sentence, I was overwhelmed with the numbers of volunteers working the Elgin/ARCI show.

I should comment on the volunteers that did show up to help at this year's Festival. George Freeman did yeoman's duty at setup and especially at Registration. He managed to canvass and recruit many membership renewals as well as getting the dealer spaces assigned. Fred Prohl helped in those areas as well as policing the lots to make sure all were registered and in their proper spaces. Ruth Clark was there right from the beginning at Registration and stayed on to the very end along with my wife, Carol. Herman Gross sent out almost 70 press releases to the TV and Radio Stations as well as to the newspapers and that took a lot of effort. Through his efforts, The Indianapolis Star and News listed the show. John Jones from Anderson brought his nice projector and speakers as well as some good films to provide entertainment for the Thursday night session in the Meeting room at the Signature Inn. There were others that stepped in from time to time to lend their assistance and I am sorry that I don't remember all of your names but I do appreciate all that was done. My thanks are very understated but are heartfelt.

Another matter to be considered is the fact that we will be holding the annual election of officers at our Fall Meet which takes place on Saturday, October 2nd at the usual location in Greenfield. We encourage any of you so inclined to serve as one of the club officers to step up and be recognized. Contact George Freeman, or Fred Prohl or any of the current officers listed on page 2 of this "Bulletin" to let them know you would be available.

In the meantime, I'll see you wherever Radios live.

Bob O'Friel
25

"ADVENTURE TIME WITH LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE"

A RICH INDIANA TREASURE

by

George A. Freeman

The most vivid memory I have of Radio Orphan Annie was NBC Network announcer Pierre Andre's commercials for "Ovaltine". Andre made the milk supplement sound far better than it actually was. He made it sound so tasty his salivary glands were squirting. Shirley Bell, who played Annie for nine-and-a-half of its 10 year radio run, said, "I never drank 'Ovaltine'. I wasn't particularly fond of the malt taste"⁽¹⁾. Each of Pierre Andre's commercials was a compelling message to buy some, and buy some more RIGHT AWAY. In my first radio announcer job in 1954, I was delighted when my boss complimented me on my ability to deliver radio commercials live-on-the-air. New Castle, PA program director, Harry Reith, said I delivered a commercial as one would play a musical instrument. He likened my delivery to playing a wide tonal range with a variety of interpretation. My \$40 a week first broadcast "success" in 1954 had much to do with my 1930's exposure to excellent oral interpreters like Pierre Andre. I listened to them attentively, learning all I could. I grew up in Youngstown, Ohio listening not only to local stations but also to KDKA, Pittsburgh and WTAM, Cleveland. Both stations, 60 miles away, carried NBC Blue and/or Red Network programs and were staffed with top local professionals. I had excellent role models.

Radio's Orphan Annie was based on the newspaper comic strip penned by Harold Gray. Born in Kankakee, IL, his boyhood was spent on a Lafayette, Indiana farm. In fact, Harold Gray graduated from Purdue.

Starting out at the Chicago Tribune as a club reporter, he soon came under the tutelage of the highest paid comic strip artist of the time, Sidney Smith, creator of the cartoon "Andy Gump". It wasn't long before Harold Gray's career as a cartoonist was launched and he would earn millions at the craft.

Gray's "Orphan Annie" story lines back in the colorful cartoon section reflected the big black and white headlines of the newspaper's front page. Gray not only drew inspiration from current events, he

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"Little Orphan Annie" cont'd

used the cartoon strip to comment upon events of the day. He was an arch-conservative (2) and this put him at odds with the Franklin Delano Roosevelt administration. His publisher, the Chicago Tribune, was also at odds with FDR policies. Thus, the medium became the message.

The radio show, on the other hand, didn't dare get into this sort of commentary. Since it was written by a different writer, Frank Dahm, employed by Chicago radio station WGN, story lines were benign. Dahm added an important character to the Radio Orphan Annie who did not exist in the Gray comic strip. That was Joe Corntassie, (a Hoosier inspired name?), Annie's constant companion. Jazz singer Mel Torme started in show business as a radio child actor playing Joe Corntassie. Torme died in his 80's at the time the IHRS Indianapolis radio meet was in progress last June.

"Adventure Time with Little Orphan Annie" was heard each weekday from 5:45 until 6:00PM east coast time. A radio listener poll taken in 1937 found *Orphan Annie* to be tops among kids between kids between the ages of five and eight, and a close second to the *Lone Ranger* among the nine-to-14 set. (3)

By 1940, the sponsor felt a higher tech show was in order and Annie was really orphaned when the show was terminated. In its place, *Captain Midnight*. It didn't matter to star, Shirley Bell. She moved right over to the Captain's cast. A New York version limped along with Annie in a subordinate role to an aviator called Captain Sparks. (New sponsor, Quaker Puffed Wheat Sparkles), but the show didn't catch on and was dead by 1943.

Collecting Orphan Annie

As collectors, we can be alert to many opportunities for *Orphan Annie* collectables. The radio show's sponsor, Ovaltine, issued 75 different radio premiums. A couple of books on radio premiums will yield many pictures of these. In the author's library are six pages of *Orphan Annie* premiums in the "*Illustrated Radio Premium catalog and Price Guide*" by Tom Tumbusch, (TOMART PUBLICATIONS, P.O. BOX 292102, DAYTON, OHIO, 45429, 1989). Another eleven pages in narrative and price guides plus pics are found in "*RADIO & TV PREMIUMS*" by Jim Harmon, (Krause Publications; 700 E. State St., Iola, WI, 54990-0001, 1997). These radio premiums are from the first "Little Orphan Period. Their values can be as high as hundreds of dollars.

(see next page)

Most are quite a bit less.

There's another category of "Little Orphan Annie" and "Annie" (a) collectibles that can often be documented in a variety of sources outside the vintage radio hobby. The author has a heavy gauge silver steel range/oven. It's 5" wide X 4" high. This would have been a toy for a little girl back in the 30's or 40's. On the back above the range is a decal depicting Annie and her big, orange dog. There's a "Better Little Book dated 1948 from Whitman Publishing titled "Little Orphan Annie In The Thieves Den". Also from Whitman, these two "Big Little Books"; "Little Orphan Annie and Sandy" dated 1933, and "Little Orphan Annie and Chizzler" dated 1935. The author has the front page of the October 29, 1933 funnies section of the Dayton, (Ohio) Journal. I've framed and matted the entire page. It features an episode of "Chizzler and Annie" plus a second strip by Harold Gray entitled "Maw Green", plus a third Harold Gray entry, an "Ovalltline" comic strip. Then there's an "Annie Hi Bounce Ball" (a) from Imperial Toy Corp., Los Angeles, and an "Annie" lunch box from Alladin Industries of Nashville, Tennessee. This shows Annie and Daddy Warbucks dancing just like in the movie, "Annie". Daddy was played by Albert Finney. There's a large, clear collector glass tumbler sold or given away by one of the fast food franchisers, "Swensen's depicting Annie (a) and Sandy.

There are at least three plastic novelty *Annie (a)* radios. One is the "Annie Sing Along" (*Collector's Guide to Novelty Radios*, Bunis & Breed, Collector Books, Paducah, KY (Schroeder) 1995, Plate 345, page 130). A second is found in book II by Bunis and Breed, 1999, Plate 464, page 147. And third is my favorite, (*Collecting Transistor Novelty Radios*, Robert F. Breed, L.W. Book Sales, P.O. Box 69; Gas City, IN 46933, 1990, Plate 60, page 37 called "Annie And Sandy". At this writing, values of these three radios do not exceed \$50.00 each and usually can be found for less than \$50. All three plastic radios are from the period we'll call "The Second Coming of Annie".

(a) The Second Coming of Annie

Annie has now out-lived her creator, and is still going in her 75th year at this writing late in 1999. Annie never aged beyond her eleven years. Harold Gray was mortal. He died at the age of 74 during the spring of 1968. He was born in 1924 just as the first superhet radios

just as the first superhet radios were coming off the line. There were attempts to re-cycle some of his strips. Since they were so topical, they proved to be too dated and did not stand up well in subsequent years. The former artist of the comic strip "Mary Worth" was finally settled upon as the man who could step into Gray's footsteps and the re-done "Annie" appears today in such markets as Detroit.

There is a reason why the strip is now called "Annie". That is due to the Broadway play, "Annie" which opened in 1977. A small group of daring risk takers put the show together and, with a lot of luck, made it a success. President Jimmy Carter had a big role in this coming about. For his inauguration festivities, he requested the then unknown play to be performed for him and his guests. That got the show the attention it needed as it continued to emerge from near oblivion. The play's success led to a movie which was also a hit. The newspaper cartoon was revived, in 1979, employing the former creator of the cartoon strip, "On Stage", Leonard Starr. Starr adapted the Broadway show/movie logo of Annie and Sandy and earlier references to "Little Orphan...." disappeared.

Among the remainders of the show and movie that are still with us, are the lingering melody and lyrics of the song "Tomorrow", the Children's mixed drink look-alike "Orphan Annie" (grenadine and orange juice), and the musical still playing in venues as close as your local high school stage today.

If you have more information about this radio collectable category, please contact the author:

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(1)= Smith, B., "The History of Little Orphan Annie" (New York: Ballantine Books, 1982) pg. 42.

(2)= Ibid. pg. 2.

(3)= Ibid. pg. 42. (copyright, 1999, WIKI, Inc.)

N.B.

The copy of the sheet music and other details will appear in the next issue, per editor.

Meetings Reviewed Here!

Bob O’Friel

As stated elsewhere in this “Bulletin”, the attendance is down at the shows and I am very concerned. Our June 3rd, 4th, and 5th, Regional “Spring Fling” event had the advantages of: a) good weather, b) comfortable, clean surroundings with a lot that had been really cleaned up which offered better spaces, and, c) many good friends who came to buy, sell or demonstrate the old radios and associated material. Surprisingly, the “Awards Banquet” was well attended despite the lower turnout and many people told us they come for that more than anything. That still doesn’t solve the need for more dealers and, in their behalf, more customers. I noticed that by Friday, many dealers had left. We did enjoy seeing so many old friends and missed the “regulars” that were away on special trips, or like Carolyn Knipfel, were recovering from surgery. (By the way, she is recovering very nicely and appreciates everyone’s interest.) Marilyn Johnston is also undergoing similar challenges. When we arrived in Florence Kentucky we became aware of a similar situation as to lower numbers. The one factor that is a part of all of these shows is the fact that some excellent programs were set up. Ross Smith is to be congratulated for his “service seminar” which provided a lot of helpful information to the IHRS members. We felt that we learned a lot at the CARS club Florence KY show June 25th when we attended the excellent presentation put on by Jim Cross on the evolution of vacuum tubes and their numbering systems. Of course, the trip over to the Gray Museum also made it worthwhile. The big show in Elgin also had a sparser attendance. Perhaps there were numbers who felt that with the loss of the open field next to the Motel that had been used by ARCI for years was detrimental. Not so! We enjoyed the Zenith display along with the Tom Kleinschmidt presentation on the 3 Premium Radios. The visit to Ralph Muchow’s fabulous museum worked out well along with the history of Telegraph Keys and demonstrations very nicely mastered by Derek Cohn all had their rewards. John Williams, a career radio announcer (at WGN?) had some fascinating stories on “AM radio programming, Past, Present, and Future” as his part of the program. His arrival at the ARCI event was delayed by a News Story he was working on, (in person at the site), of a cat that had entered a furnace pipe while construction was going on and the cat had become trapped. All turned out well but I fear that few remained for the 4th day of this festival. ARCI topped off the show with a group of actors who re-created old radio shows at the Carolyn Knipfel Awards Banquet Thursday night. Let’s not lose these Events. Please BE THERE!

RADIOADS

As was mentioned on page 18, it was not possible to reconstruct and print all of the ads that were lost on the "computer crash" and only the 2 which just arrived are listed at this time. We will have a full lineup of ads for the next issue. These ads are free to IHRS members. Please limit them to 100 words. Unless we are advised otherwise, we will run ads for two issues. The exception would be where services, etc. are being listed. Please send your ads to the editor at the address shown on page 2.

Wanted: Looking for any Skylark, Imperial, LePilot, and Lyradion battery radios of the 1920's. Also seeking any Wilson and Fairbanks-Morse radios of the 1930's. If anyone has information or literature on these Indiana brand radios or if you have nice examples of these radios that I can use in illustrating future articles, please contact me.

Michael Feldt, 12035 Somerset Way East, Carmel, IN 46033
Phone: (317) 844-0635 e-mail: feldtm@iquest.net

For Sale: Scott 23 tube Imperial, chassis mint, cabinet excellent, plays great, w/manual - \$2,500 or BO. Sorry, pickup only. Don Johnston, 3621 E. 700N, Windfall, IN, 46076
Phone: (765) 945-7735



Treasures on display, IHRS/AWA "Spring Fling", June 3rd - 5th, 1999