

The

# Call Letter

of the Northwest Vintage Radio Society

Vol. 23

October 1997

No. 10

## RADIO SWAP MEET

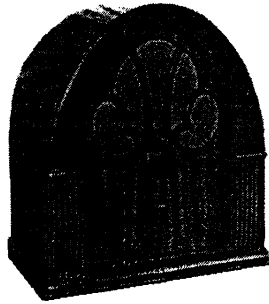
Hillsboro Armory  
Washington Co.  
Fairgrounds  
Hillsboro, Oregon

Admission: \$2.00

Saturday

November 1, 1997

9 A.M. - 2 P.M.



\* Antique Radios \*

Vintage Audio \* Vacuum Tubes

Sponsored by:

**The Northwest Vintage  
Radio Society**

for more info call: Myron White 503-629-5513

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## The Northwest Vintage Radio Society

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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

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# October 1997

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The *CALL LETTER*

Editor, Rick Walton, (503) 284-5648, [rwalton@teleport.com](mailto:rwalton@teleport.com)

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### **Call Letter Deadline**

**20th of the month**

**prior to publication.**

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The next meeting of the NWVRS will be October 11  
at the Buena Vista Clubhouse in Oregon City.  
Monthly feature: '50's tube or transistor portables.

Visit the NWVRS website at:  
**<http://www.artdeco.com/nvrs>**

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.

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# From the Editor

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by *Call Letter* Editor, Rick Walton

As we enter into this new year of society activity, it seems an appropriate time to extend a welcome to all the new members who've come aboard during the past year. It is our hope that your membership in the society will be of value to you as a collector, and a source of friendship and enjoyment.

The club roster and directory was mailed with the *Call Letter* last month. Hopefully all but the most recently joined members are listed and received their roster.

If you haven't already checked the Contents page, please note that I've finally figured out where we meet. I've been corrected before but sometimes I'm kinda slow! Thanks to all who pointed out my error.

Another error pointed out to me was the listing in the calendar of the Northwest Car Collectors Show dates. This month's calendar lists the correct dates, which conflict with our monthly meeting, unfortunately. We can expect a smaller than usual attendance on the 11th. President Jerry Talbott will be one of those at the car show.

In this issue I've included (with the author's permission) an article on refinishing '30's radios by Alan Voorhees. I became aware of it through the Internet newsgroup *rec.antiques.radio+phono*. Also in this issue we welcome the return of Mike Parker and *In the Shack*. Mike fills us in on a part of his vacation.

One comment about the meeting minutes: since the meeting, Jerry has been in touch with the current manager of the website, Adam Schoolsky, who has subsequently been in touch with me. Consequently, I'm not sure that the society is still looking for a new website manager. I've sent Adam electronic files of the June through September issues of the *Call Letter*. Perhaps we'll see some updates to the site soon.

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# Meeting Minutes

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Submitted by Secretary Dan Howard

The September 13th meeting of the NW Vintage Radio Society was called to order by President Jerry Talbott at 10:00 am.

The treasurer's report was made and accepted.

## **Old Business**

The discussion of new library acquisitions was continued.

## **New Business**

The society is looking for a new website manager. Both Myron White and David Rutland are currently under consideration for the position.

Jerry authorized society Treasurer Ed Charman to renew the rent on the Buena Vista Club House for another year.

A local charitable trust wants to acquire a radio (RCA, Stromberg-Carlson, or Motorola). Contact Jerry Talbott for details.

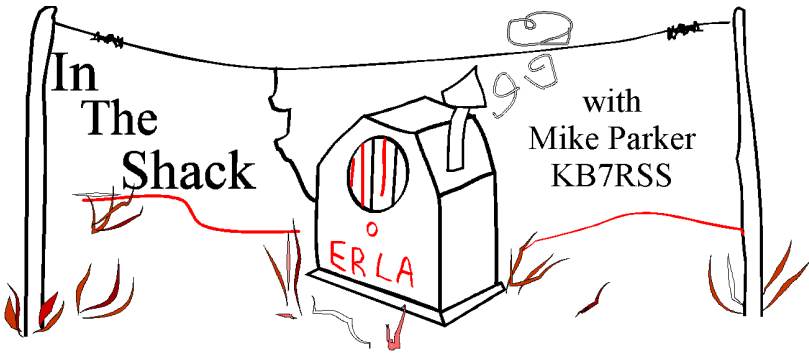
The September meeting featured a display of horn speakers. During the meeting, the proud owners were given the opportunity to share information on their displays.

## **Good and Welfare**

A new member, Lloyd Harris, was introduced. Lloyd Godsey is planning a move to the warmer climes of Phoenix, AZ.

The meeting was adjourned a 10:48 am.

Recorded by Dick Howard.



## My Vacation Radio

Every year, in September, my wife and I go on a vacation. We love the ocean and usually go to the coast somewhere. Naturally, since we are both into browsing the local “junque” shops where we are staying, I end up with an old RADIO of some kind...I just can't help it!

This year, we vacationed on the Northern California coast and visited the shops in the Old Town area of Eureka, California. There are many interesting places to go, but one shop in particular that I would like to bring to the radio hobbyist's attention. It is called, “Old Town Antiques,” located at 318 F St., (corner of 3rd and F) in Eureka.

The shop is unusual because a full window, facing the sidewalk is devoted to early radiomania. Older radios from the late 20's to the 40's are on display and some are elevated, affording a good view of all of them. On the bottom shelf, against the window is an array of early tubes, some blue glass types and other small parts, earphones, microphones, etc. The display is very well arranged and has a look to it like nothing has been touched for 10 years or so.

Inside the store, more radios, phonographs, telephones, insulators and other indescribable old electrical items abound. Numerous porcelain signs from yesteryear of all subjects decorate the walls. Old books, records, fixtures and piles of flotsam and jetsam stacked toward the ceiling with narrow aisles between them, complete the picture.

The owner, a young fellow named Gary Krela, can be found behind a large U shaped glass display counter at the front of the store. The counter contains many small items on display and piles of this and that surround the counter in the rear and to one side, making the people near seem small in comparison. Talking with Gary, I discovered that he likes old radios and likes to find them and tinker with them but is not a “collector” and does not belong to any radio clubs. His interest in them, however does create the well-displayed area mentioned above.

When I was a kid about 9, I had to have an old “round top radio.” I whined and hinted about it until one day, Dad came home with a round top radio. It was a genuine GE model E-61 Cathedral. It went immediately into my bedroom and got connected to my outdoor crystal set longwire antenna. This 6 tube superhet, with one Short Wave band and a small slide rule dial glowing a brilliant yellow, (new for 1936), was my companion for years. As time went on, I very stupidly “tore into it,” and managed to totally disassemble the chassis, throwing it away and the parts into various boxes, some of which I still have today, if I could only find them! The cabinet remained unscathed, and although somewhat scuffed up, I managed to refinish it around 1991.

The General Electric Model E-61 is kind of a radio of conjecture, that being the question; “Is it a Cathedral or a Tombstone?” The arch top is rather flat on top but not enough of an area to emulate a typical Tombstone. The arch is graceful but not pointed like many earlier Cathedrals. I have seen the E-61 listed in various ads as either type. I tend to call it a Cathedral, because it is shaped exactly like the earlier model Jax and Zaney-Gill Cathedrals, which are always referred to as Cathedrals.

This is all leading up to the fact that when I was in the above mentioned store in Eureka, I gazed up onto a shelf of radios and there sat a GE Model E-61! Upon closer examination, I found that it had a chassis, with the usual amount of coastal rust on board. It had the original speaker, one knob, all of the tubes, the dial lens was perfect and the cabinet was good but distorted in shape somewhat, a product of years of damp coastal moisture. The owner would not sell me the chassis alone. I don't blame him. The price wanted was not excessive, but I would have liked to pay even less. The

thrill of finding another E-61 was worth it and even more, I had just purchased my 1997 vacation radio!

At last, I now had a chance to put back all of the stupid things I had done to my GE E-61 Cathedral, when I was a youngster! Who knows, I may even find 3 knobs and the dial cord pulleys. Somewhere, IN THE SHACK, is that old box of parts!

QSO you next time.....IN THE SHACK

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## Wandering on the Web

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by Dick Karman

I took a few minutes looking for foreign web sites featuring vintage radios. As usual, I started at the site of Phil Nelson (<http://www.accessone.com/~philn/>). Phil's site is always bookmarked in my browser.

The most popular UK site that I look at was Peter Foden's "Vintage Radio Daze" at <http://web.ukonline.co.uk/p.foden/index.htm>

I have visited Peter's pages before, but he has some new writers and it's well worth the trip. One of the contributors is Steve Harris who has done a great job with some research on British radios:

McMichael 135



“The firm of McMichael Radio, based in Slough, was established in the early 1920s by Leslie McMichael, in collaboration with design engineer Ben Hesketh. (Until the late 30s, sets carried the initials M-H, which stood for McMichael-Hesketh.) Their sets were very solidly engineered, and made to a high standard. . . .”

That's just a taste of his writing about the McMichael. He also tells of the early PYE, “that is the Albatross of which I speak, is one of the Rising Sun series of sets made by Pye of Cambridge in the early 30s. . . .”

From Steve's writing I wondered into the “On The Air” - The Broadcasting Museum and Vintage Sound Shop at

**[http://web.ukonline.co.uk/p.foden/chester/ota\\_tour.htm](http://web.ukonline.co.uk/p.foden/chester/ota_tour.htm)**

It is one of the several virtual tours that Peter has on his site.

Phil and Peter both have great links and keep them current. One of the newest is that of Malcolm F. Bennett G3UKL, “Purveyor and Collector of Vintage and Antique Radios/Radiograms, Service Data, Valves (Tubes), Components and Related Items, plus Full Restoration and Repairs Service on all types of valve equipment.” Mr. Bennett's site features a detailed list of other radio enthusiasts in the United Kingdom; a true storehouse of knowledge.

**<http://www.valve.demon.co.uk/index.htm>**

Stumble into Malcolm's site and just follow some of his links. They're great.

So much for this month. See you next time.



by Tom James, from the October, 1977 *Call Letter*

### *Dirty Words*

*I answered an ad the other day;  
Antique radios for sale, it said.  
The address was some ways away,  
But that wasn't the factor to dread.*

*I hit the freeway, wind at my tail,  
Fourteen miles, then a two lane pike,  
Four more miles on a Clackamas trail  
And I wound up smack on a dike.*

*A modest house was nestled there,  
And a rustic type answered my call.  
He said visitors were awful rare,  
With the washboard roads, and all.*

*He led me inside to his "shop";  
There a wonderland opened up!  
I hadn't seen such a radio crop  
Since CROSLY had his PUP!*

*SPARTAN, and CLARIONS, and R.C.A.s,  
MID-WESTS, PILOTS, and CROWNS —  
Just as in their maiden days,  
When owned by Johnson or Brown.*

*I spotted a long hidden FORD'S;  
I'd been many years on its trail!  
When I heard those "THREE DIRTY WORDS":  
"That'un right thar's NOT FOR SALE!"*

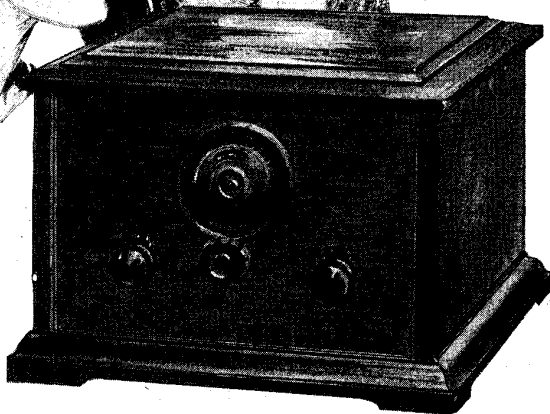
The Literary Digest for October 23, 1926

# MAGNAVOX

SINGLE DIAL Radio



*Junior Model:*  
\$85 without  
accessories. Beautiful  
mahogany cabinet.  
Standard Magnavox  
5-tube circuit



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# Restoring 1930's Finishes

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by Alan Vorhees

[www.antiqueradios.com](http://www.antiqueradios.com)

The hard part about refinishing a wood radio so that it has an original type of finish is wading through the many choices in the paint store. Radios had lacquer finishes (except for a few, mostly in the 20s, that had shellac finishes), so lacquer is the finish to use. Don't use varnishes, polyurethane, tung oil or Danish oil finishes. They won't look right on a period piece.

## **Safety Precautions:**

- Remember when working with refinishing chemicals, solvents and finishes that these products must be handled carefully. Read and follow label warnings and instructions.
- Use refinishing chemicals outside if possible. If used inside, make sure there is adequate ventilation.
- When using solvents and spray finishes wear a respirator with replaceable filter cartridges (not just a dust mask). Chemical resistant rubber gloves (not dishwashing gloves) and eye protection should be used when using chemical strippers. Wear a dust mask when sanding.
- Most refinishing products are highly inflammable. Don't use them near open flames or appliances with pilot lights. Dispose of solvent laden rags in water to prevent the chance of combustion.

## **Basic Materials:**

(Available at paint or hardware stores)

Naphtha (can use mineral spirits)	#0000 steel wool
Gel-type paint remover	"Disposable" bristle brush
Hamster bedding (from pet store)	Lacquer thinner
Denatured alcohol	Paste wood filler
Burlap or other coarse fabric	#220 silicone carbide sandpaper

#400 wet/dry sandpaper	Tack rag
White (clear) shellac	Good quality brush
Oil based stain(s)	Lacquer toner spray(s)(*see below)
Gloss spray Lacquer(*see below)	2 blocks of wood wrapped with felt
Pumice	Lemon or butcher block oil
Rottenstone	Car wax or paste wax

\*Available in the Bay Area at Bay City Paint Co. 2279 Market St., San Francisco; Other areas call Liberon/Star Finishing Supplies at 707-877-3570 for information.

Here's how to do it: Stripping a finish off an old set is usually quite quick. The easiest method for most people is to use a chemical stripper. I would suggest using a gel stripper, such as Citristrip, which can remain wet (and therefore working) for a couple of days.

Apply it liberally over the old finish using a cheap “disposable” brush. Let the stripper alone to do its work. When the finish starts to come up, grab a handful of wood chips (hamster bedding from a pet store) and scrub off the finish. The chips will absorb the stripper and the dissolved finish. Don't forget to wear protective gloves.

Then make a 50/50 mix of denatured alcohol and lacquer thinner and wash off any finish and stripper residue with the mixture using #0000 steel wool to apply it. Use some fresh chips to dry up any of the mixture from the surface. You now have a clean wood surface.

Some woods have an “open pore” grain structure. Walnut, mahogany, and oak are such woods. To obtain a smooth finish it is best to fill the pores level with the wood surface. A paste wood filler is made for this purpose.

The filler can be colored with a little oil-based stain, if needed. Apply the filler to the wood and rub it into the pores. Let it start to set up and remove the excess with a coarse cloth across the grain, then let it set overnight.

The next day sand the surface lightly with #220 silicone carbide sandpaper. Make sure any film of filler that might have been left on the surface is removed. Wipe it down with a tack rag to remove stray dust particles.

In a jar, mix one part shellac to five parts of denatured alcohol to make a thin “sealer” coat. Paint a coat of the thinned shellac over the wood surfaces of your radio and let it dry (it will only take a few minutes). This shellac coat seals the surface and allows the stain to cover more evenly.

Run you hand over the wood. You'll feel some slight bumps. Sand lightly with #400 sandpaper just to remove those bumps--and be careful not to sand through the wood at the edges.

Apply the appropriate stain to the wood with a brush or paper towel. Let it set a few minutes and wipe the excess off with paper towels. Let the stain dry overnight.

The next day apply another sealer coat. Let it dry. Tack rag again. If the color is right, go on to the next step, otherwise you can apply a second coat of stain, either the same color or another as needed, then add another sealer coat, sand, and tack rag. It's important to add the shellac coat in between the layers of stain, otherwise the solvent in the new layer of stain will start to dissolve the lower coat and you will be wiping that away along with the excess new stain. You can also use spray cans of lacquer toner (with sealer coats in between) to even out colors in different pieces of wood (this is what most manufacturers did).

Once you get the color right, give the surface one last sealer coat, sand, and tack rag, and you're ready for the finish.

Spray lacquer is somewhat difficult to find, but was the finish used on almost every wood radio made. The hardest finish is obtained with gloss lacquer. It is best to use the gloss, even if you don't want a really shiny finish, as you can control the level of shine in the last steps.

Spray even coats of lacquer on the radio, letting each coat dry completely, and then sanding lightly with the #400 paper and tack ragging. Again watch out for the edges. You probably will need to apply three or four coats (more if you didn't fill the grain of any open pore woods).

After the last coat, wet the surface with a little water sand again with the #400 paper--just enough to give an over all dull look. Then

buff the surface with #0000 steel wool until you get a more even dull appearance.

Wet the surface with some soapy water, sprinkle some pumice (an abrasive) on and rub the finish with a block of wood wrapped with a couple layers of felt for flat surfaces or a pad of cloth for rounded surfaces. This will give the lacquer a semi-gloss finish.

If you want a glossier finish, repeat the process using lemon oil or butcher block oil, rottenstone (a really fine abrasive) and a clean felt wrapped block.

Lastly, apply a thin coat of wax. Pre-softened car wax is easy to use, or use paste wax (add a splash of naphtha to liquefy the wax and make it easier to apply). Buff the wax to a shine.

Reprinted with permission of the author. Visit his web site, *Antique Radios Online*, at **[http:// www.antiqueradios.com](http://www.antiqueradios.com)**.

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# Swap Shop

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*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

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## 1997 NWVRS Calendar of Events

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- OCTOBER 11:** Display of 1950's tube or transistor portable radios
- OCTOBER 11-12:** Display at the Northwest Car Collector's show
- NOVEMBER 1:** Fall swap meet (see the flyer on p. 12)
- NOVEMBER 8:** Nomination of 1998 officers  
Display of battery sets and crystal sets
- DECEMBER 13:** Election of 1998 officers and Christmas party





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Swap Meet Next Month

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# RADIO

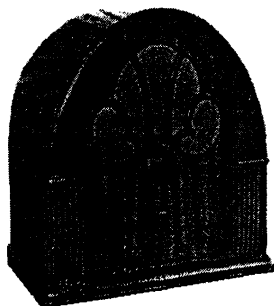
## SWAP MEET

**Hillsboro Armory  
Washington Co.  
Fairgrounds**

Hillsboro, Oregon

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Admission: \$2.00



**Saturday**

**November 1, 1997**

**9 A.M. - 2 P.M.**

**\* Antique Radios \***  
**Vintage Audio \* Vacuum Tubes**

Sponsored by:

**The Northwest Vintage  
Radio Society**

for more info call: Myron White 503-629-5513

# FREED- EISEMANN

THE RADIO OF AMERICA'S FINEST HOMES

