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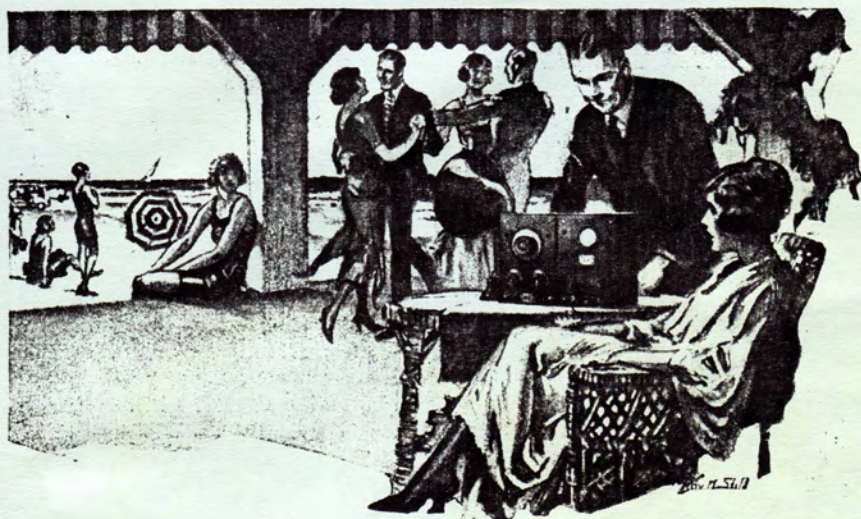
Call Letter

of the Northwest Vintage Radio Society

Vol. 24

July 1998

No. 7



For Summer Sport
- Radiola RC

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 of 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.

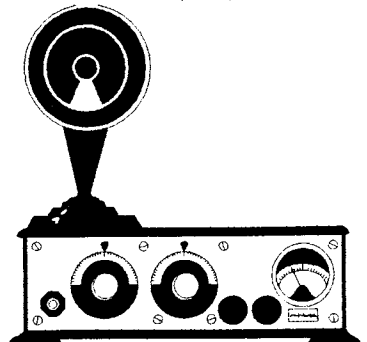
Society meetings are held the second Saturday of each month (except July and August) at the Buena Vista Club House at 16th & Jackson Streets in Oregon City, Oregon. They convene at or about 10 AM for the purpose of displaying radios, conducting Society business, and exchanging information. Guests are welcome at all Society meetings and functions (except board meetings).

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

Society Officers:

President	David Rutland	(541) 929-4498
Vice-President	George Kirkwood	(503) 648-4809
Treasurer	Ed Charman	(503) 654-7387
Secretary	Liles Garcia	(503) 649-9288
Board member at large	Jerry Talbott	(503) 649-6717
<i>Call Letter</i> Editor	Rick Walton	(503) 284-5648
Librarian	Tony Hauser	(503) 629-4836

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



July 1998

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On the cover: The weather is warm and it's an ideal time to get out of doors. This Radiola RC ad from 1923 makes just that pitch to the reader. The text of the ad promotes the use of the Radiola RC at the beach, in the deep woods and around the campfire — “. . . bring in music from cities a thousand miles away.”

**Call Letter Deadline
25th of the month
prior to publication.**

**It's Summertime! No July or August meeting! See you at
the next regular meeting on September 12 in the Buena
Vista Club House.**

**Visit the NWVRS web site at:
<http://www.peak.org/~wren/nvrs.html>.**

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

Summer is here, the kids are out of school, and the NWVRS is in recess until September.

Well, we finally managed to publish the Membership Roster and, as usual, mistakes and errors crept in. So we've included a couple of pages this month of corrections and additions to the roster. I foresee this as a regular feature as members change addresses, alert me to more errors, and as new members join.

In this issue appears the first of a series of articles by Padgett Peterson about the history and dating of Zenith radios. Padgett is a frequent and knowledgeable contributor to the internet news group "rec.antiques.radio+phono," which is devoted to discussions and trading of vintage radios and phonos. The articles reprinted here come from Padgett's web site at <http://www2.gdi.net/~padgett/index.htm>, and are used with his generous consent.

Mike Parker is back "In the Shack" with an article about the Miraco R-3 that he displayed at the June meeting. There's a picture of Mike's radio in the photo section.

I'll be on family vacation the last two weeks in July, so if you need to contact me about a roster change or Swap Shop ad, please do so before July 19 or after July 31 if you can't leave mail or e-mail.

1998 NWVRS Calendar of Events

- August 15** 7th Annual Ham Radio, Computer, and Electronic Equipment Swap Meet, 9:00 AM -- 3:00 PM, Cowlitz County Expo Center (Fairgrounds), Longview, Washington. Admission \$3.00
- September 12** Regular meeting. Monthly feature: Tombstones.
- October 10** Regular meeting.
- October 31** Fall Swap Meet. National Guard Armory, Washington Co. Fairgrounds, Hillsboro, Oregon.

Meeting Minutes for June

by Liles Garcia, Secretary

The June 13, 1998 meeting of the North West Vintage Radio Society was called to order by President Dave Rutland at approximately 10:00 AM. There were 36 members present.

New Business

Membership Roster--Club members complimented Rick Walton on the new Membership Roster that we all recently received. Please send Rick any additions and/or corrections, and he will update the Membership Roster whenever necessary.

Swap Meet--Club members gave Myron White a round of applause for his work in coordinating our last swap meet. Our next Swap Meet will be on October 31 at the Hillsboro Armory.

Program For September

Everyone remember that we will not be meeting during July and August. The display program for the September meeting will be tombstone radios. One rule of thumb that was offered at the meeting is that a tombstone radio has a flat top.

Leads and Needs

Liles Garcia mentioned an old TV set that was in the front window of an antique store in Newberg.

The program for our meeting was pre-1925 battery sets. Members showed and discussed the radios that they brought.

The meeting was adjourned.

TEMPLE
TEMPLETON



Radio

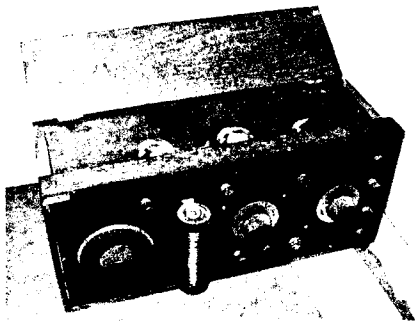
© 1929 T. C.

"THE SWITCHBOARD OF A NATION"

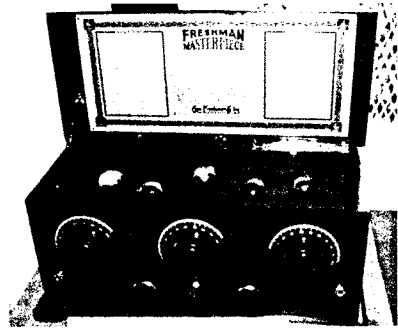
Photos from the June Meeting

Photography by Rick Walton

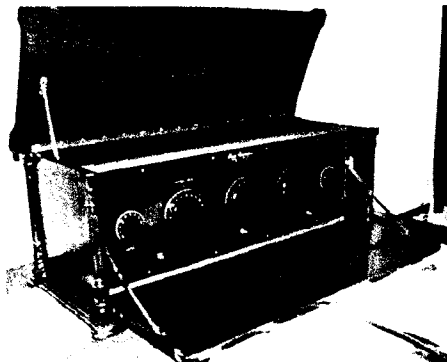
These are the “blackface” Bakelite-front sets brought in for the monthly program feature. My apologies to Art Redman whose Blair 11 I didn’t get a picture of. Thanks to all the members who brought in their sets and shared them with us.



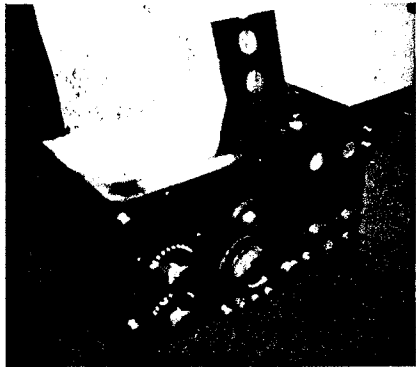
Miraco R-3 - Mike Parker



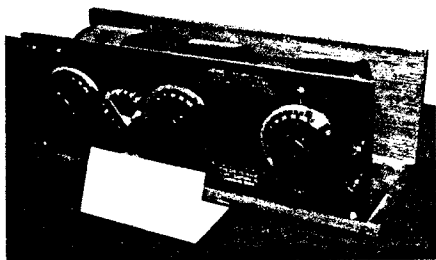
Freshman - Lloyd Harris



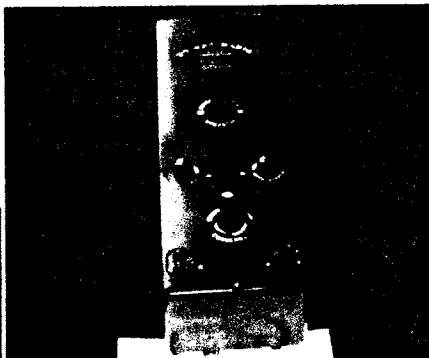
1924 Freed-Eisemann NR-6 - Dave Rutland



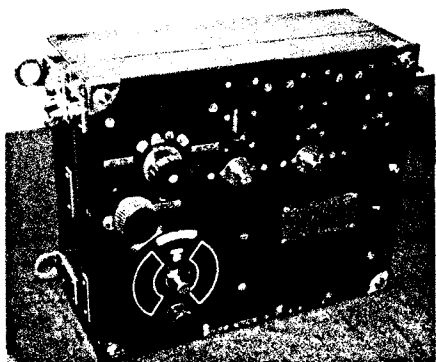
Federal DX58 - Dan Howard



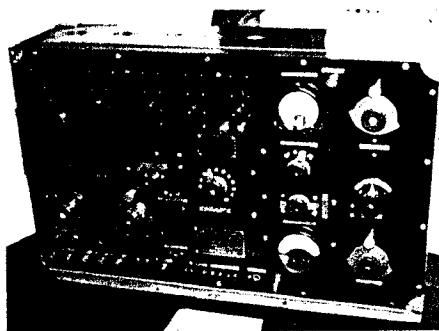
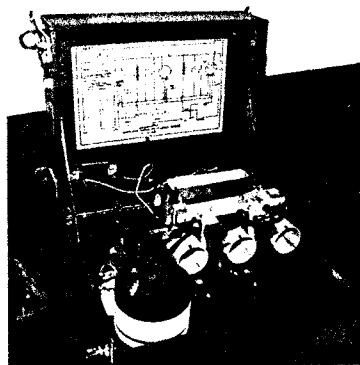
Clapp-Eastham - Sonny Clutter



"Pocket Radio" - Jim Mason



Army Signal Corps Airplane Receiving Set SCR-59 by Western Electric - Ray Nelson



1918 Western Electric BC-15A Military Transceiver - Jerry Talbott



Zenith Model Number Index & History, 1919-1929

by Padgett Peterson

*Editor's note: This is the first in a series of articles by Padgett Peterson, a fellow collector who lives in Florida. Padgett generously granted me permission to print these articles, which appear on his web site at www.gdi.net/~padgett/index.htm. Padgett did considerable research into the history of Zenith models, especially the Trans-Oceanics, the results of which first were posted to the *rec.antiques.radio+phono* Internet news group. These articles are copyrighted 1996 by Padgett Peterson.*

In the beginning there were two friends: R.H.G. Mathews of Chicago and Karl Hassel of Pennsylvania who had met at the Great Lakes Training Center while in the Navy during WWI. Following discharge they opened the Chicago Radio Laboratory to follow their passion for wireless.

Not a garage industry for they had no garage at first, early radios were assembled on Mathews kitchen table. Their station name - 9ZN - led to the name Z-Nith. Their receivers and transmitters had one major difference to separate them from others produced on kitchen tables around the world in those years, they were extremely well made, partly a result of their military training And partly an innate desire for quality.

In 1920, the friends made one very important acquisition that would set them apart from the bulk of the other would-be manufacturers: a license to utilize the patent on Regeneration granted to Major Edwin Armstrong that was a quantum improvement in wireless.

Enter Commander Eugene MacDonald. On New Year's Eve, 1920, he was at a garage to pick up his car. He was already wealthy for automotive dealings before WWI. Hearing a radio playing in the shop, he became interested which lead to the discovery of the boys in their transmitter shack, their possession of an Armstrong license (the fact that the license was for amateur use only did not slow the Commander down, little did.

In short order Z-Nith became Zenith and all everyone could do was to try to keep up with the Commander.

The early period (1920-1924) were primarily devoted to manufacturing radios as fast as they could. With names like "Amplifigon" and "Paragon" model numbers were descriptive of function and were essentially built to order.

Representative of the 1920-21 period were identifiers such as PR-1 ("Portable" Receiver), MBR-2 (Motor Boat Receiver), and TR-1 (Time

Receiver - for setting clocks). Several had "Audion" in their name to demonstrate their use of DeForest's Audion tubes (much like the "Intel Inside" logos of today). For 1921, the MacDonal influence began to show as "Z-Nith Long Distance Radio Apparatus".

For 1922, concentration on receivers as "Apparatus" was dropped and the mainstay Zenith began with the 1-R and presumably superior 2-R (at least it cost a third more) "Zenith Long Distance Radio Receiver" and the 1-M, 2-M, and 3-M amplifiers being most promoted.

This continued for 1923-1924 with the introduction of the 3-R and 4-R receives, the higher numbers obviously indication superiority over the earlier models.

1924 was significant in that it also offered what Zenith called "The World's First Portable Radio", ignoring Maj. Armstrong's wedding gift to his wife in 1923 and the "OperaRadio" of the same year. There is some basis to the claim since the Zenith was wholly self contained and could be carried while operating - no assembly necessary. What is not mentioned is that according to contemporary accounts, over half of these first portables were returned as "unsatisfactory".

With the Roman numerals of 1925, Zenith started on a ten-year-long search for a meaningful set of model numbers that would permit its salesmen to be able to assist customers without making it too obvious that there was a Plan. Gone were the regeneratives as all chassis were now "NOT Regenerative". The consumer market was attacked with a vengeance as styled cabinets were promoted equally with technical specifications.

"Deluxe" models with a price tag to match were not the right stuff even for the Roaring Twenties as a consumer items and so the model VII was to be the sole profitable carryover from a line that included the first "Chinese" model. Notable is that these were the first of the one dial radios and that the "Spanish" model listed for two thousand five hundred 1925 dollars (they were bigger).

More reasonably priced were the "Super-Zenith" models VII, VIII, and X all on the same two-dial, six tube TRF chassis.

For the 1926 season, Roman numerals became Arabic again as the "Super-Zenith" Model VII became the mainstay model 7. Battery sets were supplanted by line powered ones through use of the Zenith battery eliminator option. In addition, the 7 could be ordered as the model 27 which included AC power supply and 2 (count them) gas rectifier tubes valued at \$6.00 each! (other tubes were optional).

"DeLuxe" ten tube models were continued to be offered though it is likely that these were mainly unsold 1925 chassis.

Optional accessories for the two dial model 7 included a soinet base, a console base for the model 7 with loudspeaker and battery compartment, or a console base for the 27 having two loudspeakers.

“No Batteries” was a major selling point though contingency plans were expressed with a bracketed notice that “Where no electric current is available super Zeniths may be purchased for use with storage batteries.” and the sales of the 27 proved the public was ready. Good thing because Zenith in 1926 nearly went bankrupt.

In 1927, Zenith stuck with the same proven models (27, 28,29) and with the signing of a patent agreement with RCA, “NOT Regenerative” was admitted to mean “Tuned Radio Frequency”

Probably a good thing since Judge Bodine was inclined to a way of thinking very favorable to RCA - one manufacturer was found to infringe on the patent simply because their circuit could fail in a manner that would cause oscillation even though it would never do so in designed use.

Following the buying trends of the public, the 1927 mainstay was the model 17 and where previous “7”s had been designed for use as either battery or mains powered, the 17 was solely AC.

For late 1927-1928 (model years had not yet officially appeared so listings were for year manufactured despite the fact that new models were typically offered in the August-November time frame - later these would be called “1928’s”), numerical model numbers began to make some sense: Models 11 & 12 shared the basic chassis and the addition of a loudspeaker created the model 14. Model 15 was a plain box having 8 tubes with a loop antenna and companion 16 had an ornate cabinet. Adding an E suffix meant that the set could be operated with ac instead of batteries and the 16EP was ac with a powered speaker. Model 17E included a gas rectifier but the spinet base was \$20 additional. Big news for the 18E was calibration in both kc and meters (but the tuning range was expressed as 105-550 meters - essentially 545 kc-2.8 Mc

All together, mixing and matching suffixes on the 11, 12, 14, 15, 16,17 & 18 resulted in sixteen “different” models for 1927-1928. 11-14 shared a common six tube (all working) battery chassis. Models 15 & 16 were eight tube while 17 & 18 reverted to a six tube chassis but were AC only

Single knob tuning was further perfected as Zenith boasted of “four Zenith condensers permanently balanced on one shaft”. Non- console models were basically variations on a coffin theme (model 11 boasted a 6 inch longer cabinet than the model 12). Styling for the masses was definitely coming as the \$180 model 14 claimed “When (doors are) closed, there is no indication that the cabinet contains a radio set.”

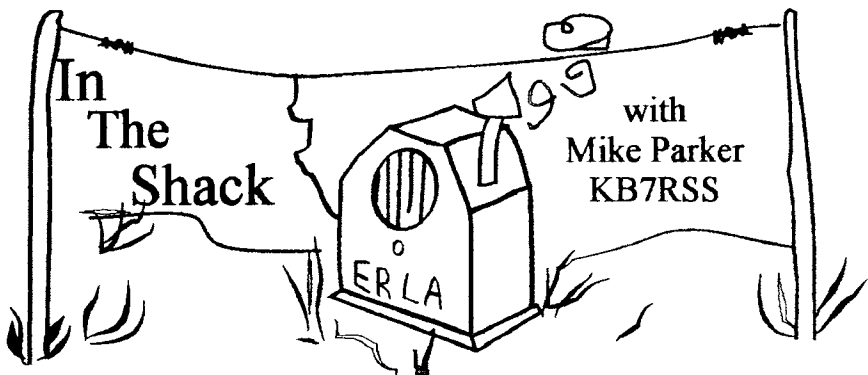
Having used the 20s in 1927, teens in 1928, Zenith skipped to the "30"s for the six tube chassis of 1929 with models 31-35 suffixes A (mechanical remote tuner), P (powered speaker), and X (seven tube chassis). Model 39 came in mid-year as was common in those days and was the top-of-the-line.

Running out of 30s, Zenith moved to the 40s while still in 1929 with the midyear introduction of the 41 & 42 (June). As a result, models for the 1930 lineup would begin with the fifties.

Thus in the space of 1926-1929 Zeniths went from multi-dial regenerative battery sets to two knobs to one knob tuning TRF's that pretended not to be radios & preferred not to use batteries.

Still at the Iron street plant and farming out cabinet work, Dickens St. and "The Big Black Dial" was soon to come.





In the Shack

It's A Miraco

At the June NWVRS meeting, we had quite an interesting display of "black faced" or Bakelite panel battery radios. At this point, I would like to say that the Board is doing a fine job this year of keeping the meetings interesting and people can't seem to wait for the "Show & Tell" to begin! All this without a contest of any sort. I feel good enough about just displaying a collectible for others to see for it's educational value without having to win something. But, I don't really expect others to feel this way. I have enjoyed our contests in the past and our club auctions were always a big hit...sometimes to the old pocketbook!



From the shack, I dug out a totally unrestored 1924 -25 Miraco R-3 that I have been "staring at" ever since I acquired it in 1990, and I brought it to the display*. This particular model battery set was made by the Midwest Radio Co., of Cincinnati, Ohio. The Midwest company was somewhat of a pioneer in radio receiver sales, especially in mail order, offering their first set in 1920. Midwest was founded by A.G. Hoffman, the one key person in the Midwest company throughout it's existence.

Midwest went on to fair success with it's Ultra 5 3dial TRF, offered with an illustrated Gold on Bakelite front panel in ~26 and ~27. The 1-dial Unitune was a runaway seller until AC sets became standard.

* See a picture of the Miraco that Mike describes in this article on page 4.

Midwest languished and somehow survived the Depression and by 1937 was making elaborate high-end radio sets with many tubes, multiple bands, a tuning eye, excellent audio quality and other fine features not unlike the competition such as Scott or Zenith, but for far less cost. This practice continued until the late 40's' when the Midwest company became occupied with television production and named their product after Hoffman. I still remember the Hoffman "Easy-Vision" TV. The company ceased production around 1955.

But. I am straying from the point of this article. The Miraco R-3 is a 3-tube Reflex radio. It was never the main attraction in any of their many ads and was portrayed as a low cost alternative, along with the 1 tube model R. Since it has the wire connecting posts and a clip in coil mounted on the front panel, the design was decidedly old fashioned by the 1924-25 season. It was pictured as perhaps a second radio for the family, something extra for the kid whose father had enough money to buy a Miraco Ultra 5 at the same time. At just over \$25 it was a pretty fair bargain, as were all of the Miraco prices. The R-3's resemblance to the Crosley 51 or 52 series low cost sets was more than a coincidence and one wonders what Midwest was up to, making radios in the same town and in the shadow of the giant Crosley Corp. facilities. I can't see the Miraco R-3 as a family living room radio, but perhaps set up in a service station or an old country general store. It was that kind of radio.

I guess I am still straying from the point. Those of you that saw the Miraco at the meeting could see the 74 years of grime and tobacco on the set. (I have contributed some of this, myself). For those of you who didn't see it, I can only describe it as grungy and unrestored but very complete. The plain wooden case with the lift top has definitely lost it's luster, the wood is rough and dry like an old berry crate! When I had it in operation, it mixed the strong broadcast stations. I am told that this is typical of a Reflex circuit radio, where the audio signal is routed back through the detector tube, making that tube do double duty. There is nothing like hearing KEX and KBNP at the same time!

OK, I'll get to the point. My dilemma is simply this: What should I do with it? Should I leave it alone and keep it as-is, or should I clean it up and refinish the cabinet? Should I "monkey around" with it and maybe destroy it's originality and value. Or, should I just leave well enough alone. I tend to think that I should just leave it alone but it's ugly!

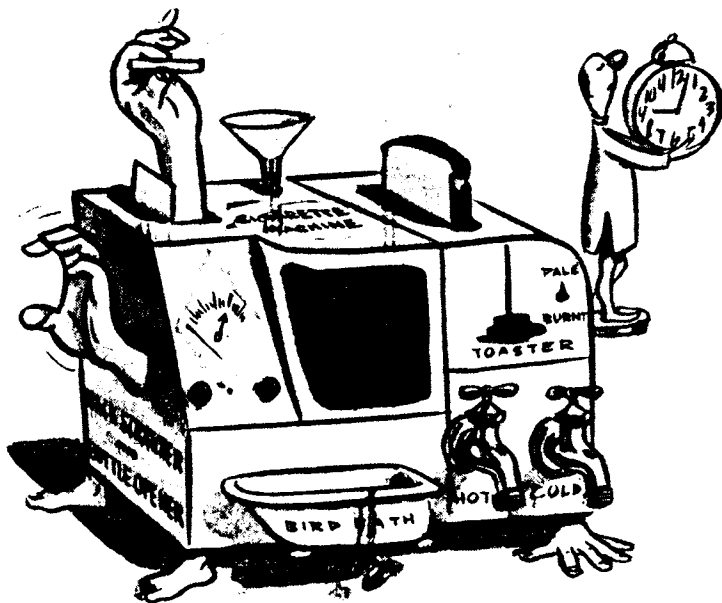
You, dear reader can help me with this decision. If you feel like it, just drop me a line or call, I am in the new roster. Or, I will welcome any suggestions when we are together at the next meeting. I really would like to see the set all fixed up but I may not be capable of doing it the right way and end up less satisfied with it than I am now.

As for Midwest's reputation for reliability, it is fun to read the many testimonials given in their ads during the 20's, one is from Oregon and I wonder how many of those grand claims of getting stations "Coast to Coast" were just made up. Midwest did offer a 30 day free trial.....or you don't buy it! Were they really good radios? I think so just because everything was generally of good quality in those days but at this point, I must quote a friend, Bill Hayes of Portland, an old time radio repairman for years. He says; "It's a Miraco if it works"!

Have a great Summer and I will QSO you in September..... IN THE SHACK.

Reference;

Book; RADIO MANUFACTURERS OF THE 1920's, Vol. 2, Alan Douglas



Can your radio do all this?
From a 1945 ad for Olympic Radio Line.

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.

BUY, SELL, TRADE and RESTORE: Contact me for quality restoration service on most pre-1960 electronics. I also buy and sell early radios, TV's, tubes, parts and related items. I'll buy one item or a whole collection.

VISIT MY WEB SITE: <<http://www.radiolaguy.com>> or e-mail:

<sonny@radiolaguy.com>

Thanks, Sonny Clutter, phone (360) 834-5741

WANTED: The Crystal Radio Guy wants crystal sets and toy germanium diode radios. Buy outright, or trade for other radios. Galen (503) 231-9708.

WANTED: **Pre-WWII Zenith wooden or plastic knobs. Dick Dielschneider, 246-1062.

WANTED: *1) PM Speaker for a Transoceanic 7G605 Bomber, and of course, the famous front lid. (Fat Chance!)

2) Electrodynamic speaker for a Philco 39-30. It is 6 inch round, and has a field coil resistance of 2750 ohms.

3) Audio Interstage Transformer for GE A-82 or A-87.

Call Myron White at (503) 629-5513.

WANTED: Ch. 9 and 17 plug-in crystals for CB radio. Audio tubes: 7591 (2) and EL34 (2). Have tubes to trade. Jerry Talbott, (503-649-6717).

FOR SALE: **Full set of Rider's manuals, Vol. 1-23. Best offer. Glen Bricker, (541) 942-3717.

FOR SALE: **1942 unusual Zenith 12H691 chairside radio-phono. Shutter dial. BC-SW-Old FM. Knobs OK. Mike Parker, (503) 235-7187, for details.

FOR SALE: **1924 Sonora Sonoradio crank phonograph with Ware 3-tube neutrodyne radio. Working condition. Has side-by-side Queen Anne floor cabinet. Call Mike Parker, (503) 235-7187, for details.




FOR SALE: *1926 Radiola 62, excellent condition except the stretcher base is gone. \$150. Various telegraph keys - different kinds and prices. Call for details. 2 aircraft receivers. Call for details - price negotiable. Charlie Kent, (503) 281-9335.

FOR SALE: *1928 Zenith model 39A console. An ornate and rare five star radio. \$600.00 or best offer. Contact: Gary at (360)573-8889

Leads And Needs




Speed Feldschau *still* has a Scott 800B for sale, \$200.

Roster Corrections/Additions






†Burgoyne, Howard
3910 Poseidon Ct.
West Linn, OR 97068
(503) 650-3828

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

*Forsberg, Chuck
10255 NW Old Cornelius Road
Portland, OR 97231
(503) 614-9206
1935-'38 sets
caf@omen.com

R



*Fulton, Mike
4715 SW 209th Avenue
Aloha, OR 97007
(503) 649-9374
General collector

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‡Sibley, Ludwell
102 McDonough Road
Gold Hill, Oregon 97525-9626
(541) 855-5207

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† Address correction.

‡ New address.

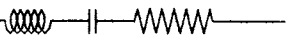


** Bill Meloy

1846 SW 8th Drive
Gresham, OR 97080
(503) 667-8109

Prewar AC-DC BC band radios

R



‡ Bruno Miazgowicz

2122 NE 158th Avenue
Portland, OR 97230
(503) 253-5645

Pre-WWII receivers

R



*Talbot, Jerry

1440 S.W. 239th Ave.
Hillsboro, OR 97123
(503) 649-6717

1920's-1970's general interest including
TV's, microphones, tube/transistors, literature.

PTL@worldaccessnet.com

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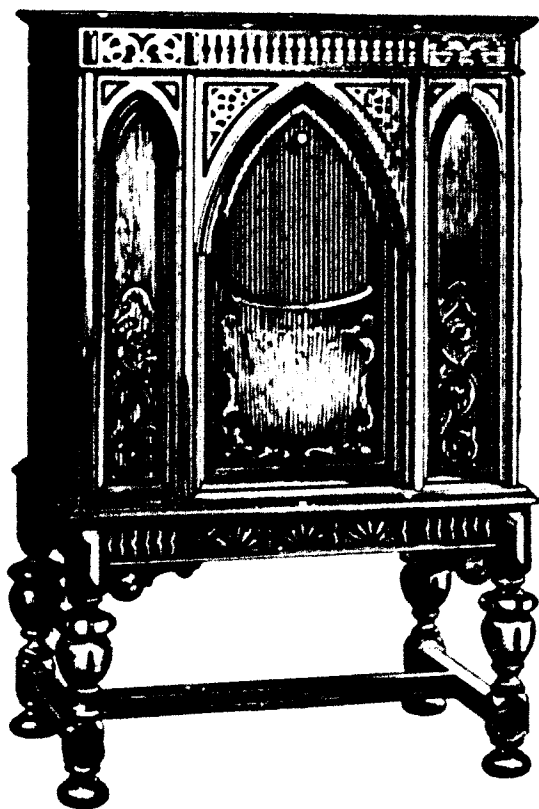


† David C. Vaughn

2640 NW Robinia
Portland, OR 97229
(503) 574-2825

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** New member.



The Abbey, \$165 with tubes

From a 1931 ad for the General Motors Radio, a 10-tube Improved Super Heterodyne housed in "one of eight authentically designed, custom-built" cabinets.

