The Call Letter

May 2015
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Next Meeting: May 9th, 2015

The Call Letter has been continuously in print since 1974

The Northwest Vintage Radio Society

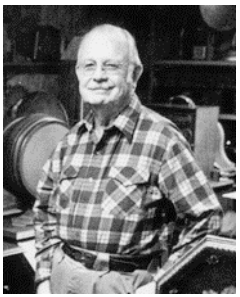
Post Office Box 82379
Portland, Oregon 97282-0379

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 $25.00, due on January 1st of each year.

The Call Letter has been a monthly publication since 1974. The Call Letter has continued to informs members of the society's business and that supports the hobby of collecting, preserving, and restoring vintage radios.

Society meetings are held the second Saturday of each month at the Abernethy Grange Hall at 15745 S. Harley Ave. in Oregon City, Oregon. They convene at or about 10 AM for the purpose of displaying radios, conducting Society business, and exchanging information. Guests are welcome at all Society meetings and functions (except board meetings).



With each issue of the Call Letter, we remember Jim Mason, a charter member of the society who remained active until his death in 1999. A generous bequest from Jim's estate ensures the continued publication of the Call Letter.

The Northwest Vintage Radio Society is seeking a member who is willing to serve as **Call Letter Editor**. There is training available for the role and reposnsibilities of the position. There is a backup available to relieve the editor's responsibilities for two months of the year. Please contact any of the board members below to volunteer.

Society Officers for 2015:

President	Mike McCrow (503)730-4639	tranny53@frontier.com
Vice-president	Bryon Toon (503) 266-5527	
Treasurer	Ed Tompkins (503) 573-3895	edtomp@Q.com
Recording Secy	Liles Garcia (503) 649-9288	landn2@frontier.com
Corresponding Sec'y	Pat Kagi (503) 694-6149	kagi.pat@con-way.com
Board member at large	Mark Moore (503)286-5224	mark@pdxhistory.com
Librarian	Damon Vandehey (503)459-1777	

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On the Cover- A snapshot of the Spring Show and Sale.

May Monthly Feature:

Radios whose cabinets are made of non-wood or plastic. Example; paper, leather, metal, glass etc. Frame-work or base platform construction made of wood is ok, but the finished exterior must be made of materials other than wood or plastic.

Note from the Layout guy – Submissions!

Thanks to you who have contributed. Sonny has been doing a swell job of rounding up Call Letter submissions, but we have no Editor. So the layout guy has more stories and material than there is room available. Stories about vintage TVs, historic documents, and tech tips, as well as leads to stories about art deco radios and advice from George all did not make this month's issue. I'll look forward to someone who wants to make those decisions for future editions taking the job of editor soon.

From the President

Hello members.

I just wanted to say thanks to everyone for all the help and time invested to make our last swap/sale a great success. Our spring and fall shows take a great deal of effort by many of you.

Also in July we will have the Speed Feldshaw memorial picnic and swap meet. These events along with the trash bash, Christmas party, and tech talks, just to name a few, require people to step up and give time, effort, and the use of organizational skills to get the ball rolling, and make sure it stays on course. The rewards are only the satisfaction of knowing that you have helped our society and its members enjoy these functions. Often times this can be the best reward. In short, our society wouldn't be what it is without people making this effort. When you become a volunteer, be it board member or someone that takes out the trash, it's like you become a member of a club within a club. Working together with others for the good of the club is rewarding and can even be fun.

If you think you would like to become a member of this inside club, we are in need. As I'm sure you all know, we would like for someone to become our ***Call Letter*** editor. Right now Sonny Clutter has graciously stepped up to fill in until a permanent editor is in place. It is easy to not be concerned about this, and figure that Sonny has now assumed the role. I'm as guilty of this as anyone. Sonny has not taken the position.

The skills and the amount of effort to be editor are not that great. All that is required is a little organizational and some time each month. Becoming our society's editor would be very rewarding and might even be a little fun.

Thanks to all who volunteer,

Mike McCrow, President

SPRING SWAP/SALE REPORT

By Charlie Kent, Swap and Sale Coordinator

With the Lombard Eagles location Spring Swap/Sale completed, I thought I'd make some observations and thank the crew of volunteers. Without their help an event of this size would not have been possible.

- The Banner advertising our show went up more than two weeks before the event. The morning of the sale KGW aired our information on TV. Thanks goes to Mike McCrow for keeping after them. Jerry Hertel took surveys from a cross-section of attendees. See more on the response on page 12.
- The onsite ATM was seen in use. Both hall floors were stripped and waxed the week of the swap/sale. The men's restroom was renovated the week prior. The Eagles made tasty food available for sale, serving breakfast and lunch.
- The Hunkerdyne and banner were on the front stage.
- I could not have done this without the help of; Sonny Clutter for creating the flyer that he does each time. Blake Dietze printed flyers as well as Tom Hoskins and Liles

Garcia. Tom was also security from 7-8 am, along with Rick Ryan. James Harper graciously carted one gentleman's console in and out again as part of his helping with the auction. Pat Kagi brought his popcorn and snow cone machines again and did the vending of both. Pat put the event on our website and Craig's List. Facebook was covered by Mark Moore.

- Brian Toon helped with takedown and is once again the keeper of the massively heavy Hunkerdyne and the speaker that took up so much space in my basement.
- Our praiseworthy volunteers included Bob Walters, Dave Vrooman, Liles Garcia, Russie and Lori Ofria for setup and take down. Ed Tompkins (auction), Warren and Karen Bergh (staying to the end), Jerry Hertel (membership and surveys), Keith Perry (setup), Bruce Bauer (took some photos), Larry Corea (vintage tech. museum) for renting two tables for a nice display.

A special thanks to Swap Co-coordinator Rick Ryan for all of his help in set up, take down, planning, helping me rent tables, using him as a sounding board and being a good friend!

Spy Radio

By Chris Butler

My frequent research into the many facets of our hobby has led me down a variety of paths. One of them most recently is the intersection of World War II and radio. We are all familiar with the Signal Corp. and of course the all-encompassing "boat anchor" line of receivers, transmitters and transceivers. But what caught my eye was the existence of various types of clandestine or "spy" radios. After research I knew I had to build replicas of a couple of the models. My first attempt was a replica of a "canteen radio," while the second was the Whaddon Mk. VII "Paraset" radio.

Before going any further, I must make clear the majority of the following information is a summation of the work of Hiroki "Hiro" Kata, AH6CY, from an article first appearing in Electric Radio in the November, 2012 issue. All credit is due him and all errors in interpretation are mine.

In the Pacific theater at the beginning of WWII, the Allies were pushed back on their heels by the Japanese, especially in the Philippines. Many soldiers and civilians were taken captive and were interred in POW camps, one of which was Cabanatuan, where Lt. William D. Gibson was held. Lt. Gibson had come into possession of a 1-tube regenerative radio, having a dud tube, from Capt. Russell J. Hutchison, who had built the radio inside a GI canteen from scrap parts smuggled into the camp.

Lt. Gibson substituted the bad tube and restored operation. The radio/canteen hung in its web pouch from the end of his bed, with the Japanese being none the wiser. A wire antenna was fashioned and intertwined with a clothes line, hiding it from view, and headphones hidden elsewhere in the camp. The prisoners operated the radio from a battery in the hospital building, listening at night to various stations from Saigon, Tokyo and even San Francisco! As you can imagine they were not listening to Glen Miller's greatest hits, but rather seeking information as to the Allies' progress. The intent was to break out of the camp if the Allies were

close, and to not allow the Japanese to exterminate them during their retreat. Indeed on 30 January 1945 the camp was raided (The Great Raid) and the prisoners liberated, but the radio was lost.

Radios existed in many of the camps. Parts were manufactured or obtained by different methods. Initially, when the prisoners were first sent to the camps, many of the parts were smuggled in, hidden in their clothing. However, once these parts ran out, other methods were needed. One account by former POW James Hildebrand tells of prisoners being summoned to fix Japanese radios. They would remove certain parts and say they were broken, and the Japanese would supply new ones without confiscating the old "broken" parts.

John A. Glusman writes "some prisoners scrounged copper, acid from a truck's battery and zinc from trouser buttons to fashion a battery. Resistors were made from string covered in cinnamon bark, while capacitors were made from foil, paper and coconut oil." Tubes were smuggled in (under penalty of death!) or stolen from the Japanese. Power came from batteries to mains.

My own endeavor had me taking a 1943 GI canteen and cutting out a section below the protruding weld lip, about 2/3 of the body. I used this piece as my "chassis" and after acquiring the appropriate parts (thank you George and Blake!), set out on

construction. Schematics are available on the internet, and some great info came from the Signal Corps:

The outcome. I used a mixture of old and new parts, trying to stay with old on top and new underneath the chassis. A variety of tubes can be used, chiefly the 12SK7 and 6SK7, or a 6J7 (with some wiring changes). I used a 12SK7, mounting it perpendicular to the chassis. Others have mounted it parallel, having the end go up inside the neck of the canteen – there's no right or wrong. I ran wires for both filament and plate to a ¼" female jack on the bottom of the canteen, the male end to my power supply. Others have put it out the side or actually through the mouth.

After completing construction – the moment of truth! I inserted headphones, attached my power supply and antenna, put the headphones on, AND – nothing. No stations were to be heard. I went over my wiring, and eventually Blake pointed out I had mis-wired the antenna variable tuning cap, basically shorting it to ground. FYI, this cap needs to be isolated from the chassis!

Corrections made, preparations repeated, headphones on, AND – that pleasant squeal of regeneration and a station coming in! WWV at 5 Mc. I found I could only tune from about 4.5 Mc to 6.5 Mc. Some turns were removed from the coil and tuning expanded. I am still experimenting, but I have read of others who can tune from 3.5 Mc to 7.5 Mc. There is both chassis and hand capacitance which I am trying to mitigate as well.

In conclusion, I am amazed at the knowledge and ingenuity displayed by these and so many others, to construct something so useful under the harshest of conditions with the simplest of means. I hope this inspires you to also "give it a try" and wonder at their achievement.

Resources:

Electric Radio, "Two Clandestine Radios of World War II," Hiroki "Hiro" Kata, AH6CY, November, 2012

Signal Corps: The Outcome (Mid-1943 through 1945), Thompson, George Rayner and Dixie R. Harris
http://www.n6cc.com/canteen-radio-receiver
http://www.skywaves.ar88.net/SPY/canteen_detail.htm
http://www.zerobeat.net/qrp/powradio.html

Remembering:

Estate Saling with Don Iverson

By Dan Howard

I'm convinced than Don Iverson had a special gift when it came to finding radios; maybe a kind of "nose" for locating the good stuff. And, if you ever saw his fine collections of telegraph keys, tubes, crystal sets, and radios, they certainly stood as a testimony to his exception skill (and many years of looking). Don's gift was very admirable, but there was a certain wistfulness, if not outright jealousy, that came when you would spot Don's white hat weaving through a crowded flea market or estate sale, knowing that once again he was a step ahead of you and the best you were going to do that day was to pick up Don's leftovers. That's the way it went for me for the first 10+ years that I knew Don.

Fate found the two of us standing on the moist lawn of an estate sale in the predawn hours. Each of us had seen the ad in the Oregonian the night before and arrived while it was still dark to put our names on the signup sheet hoping to be first radio collector in the door. Reality set in early that day when I saw that Don was number 5 and I had number 6 (once again, a step behind Don). We had hours to kill before the sale opened. I spent part of it parked across the street, working on my homework for night school. He spent some of it with his cigar in his van. And we spent a lot of it together, shooting the breeze while the crowd gradually built.

As the opening grew nigh, all of us assembled in a somewhat orderly bunch on the porch and down the walk according to our numbers. The estate sale helper made it clear that only a few would be allowed in at a time, but Don and I would be among the lucky ones in that first batch. Then came that fateful moment when the front door opened and we surged in. But, wait! A split-entry house! Just inside the front door we were faced with two sets of stairs. Go left and the stairs lead you up to the main floor and the finished attic beyond. Go right, and the stairs lead you down to the basement. The ad in the paper had clearly mentioned antique radios. And, with the competition nipping

at his heals, this was clearly a make-it or break-it decision for Don. Less-so for me….

In early 1986, Dad had been asked by an estate sale manager to come evaluate the estate of a lesser-known Portland wireless pioneer. I didn't go along. But, oh the stories he brought back of rare tubes and spark radio equipment from the earliest days of radio. Vague promises had been made during the first visit of opportunities to buy some or all of the radios in exchange for his help. But weeks went by and nothing was heard. Finally, Dad was told to just watch for an ad in the paper – some thanks. Dad was still working days at the time, but I had mornings free while I attended school in the evenings. So, for weeks and weeks we kept an eye on the estate sale ads, just waiting for the listing to appear.

And, there I was, with my Boy Scout back pack, and a few dollars in my pocket, following Don into the house, just hoping that he'd make the "right" choice. When it became clear that I would be going to the sale and the first day, and Dad wouldn't get to go, he'd spent time describing the house in-detail, telling me of where he'd seen specific items of interest to us both. Clearly, from Don's perspective, odds were better going upstairs with two-floors of shopping, instead of downstairs, with just one. So, it was with great relief, that I watched the back of Don's hat as he charged up stairs, and I slipped away to go down.

I'm told that sale managers often try to "clean things up" so that items are arranged logically for customers. Of course that can be a lot of work. Thank goodness for lazy estate sale managers! The rotary spark wheel, the rare tubes, and other goodies were right there waiting for me at the bottom of the stairs where Dad said that he'd seen them. To be fair, there really wasn't a wrong choice that day. The house was full of great items. OK. In hind sight, that back pack may have been a wrong choice – I shudder to think about me unceremoniously loading tubes and radio hardware into that bag as fast as I could. But nothing broke. And true to form, it seemed like just moments before Don showed up at my elbow to scope out the basement and get his share.

We both did very well that Friday. But that day will go down in my mind as the first, and probably only, time that I ever got there ahead of Don.

Tips and Tangled Cords *No. 3*

IF Transformers #1 by Blake Dietze

IF Transformers. When they work, they're fine. There are far too many issues to cover in just one column, so I'm going to divide them into several articles. In this installment I'm going to cover the IF coils found in superhetrodyne radios from the 1930's and 1940's. These are typically in metal cans mounted topside on the chassis and usually have screw adjustments on top or on the side. There are several failure modes that can occur:

- Trim caps get dirty, corroded, or worse.
- Connection of coils can fail.
- One or more of the coils can be open.
- Breaks in the connecting wire insulation can short out to the chassis.

Dirty trimmers caps can short out if the dust is conductive. The conductive dust and debris can collect around the base of the trimmer (often out of site) shorting out the trimmer causing the resonant point of that side of the IF transformer to shift or short. You may be able to adjust the trimmer, but it may not peak properly. A thorough cleaning with a toothbrush and contact cleaner once disassembled usually corrects this problem. Use caution when brushing the trimmers, the mica wafers can easily be damaged by the toothbrush or even a blast of compressed air.

Measure the resistance of both sides of the coil to ensure the coils are not open, if they are, start with a good inspection of the IF transformer itself. If the break is visible, and in a place where it can easily be addressed, fix it. If the break is not obvious and you have a suitable replacement, that may be your best bet.

If you don't have a replacement handy, or your unlucky enough to have a radio with an oddball IF frequency, there is still hope. A handy little trick is to replace the defective winding with a

capacitor and resistor. If the primary is open, which is the most likely to fail since it's carrying high voltage to the plate of the previous tube, you can replace the open winding with a capacitor and resistor as shown in figure 1.

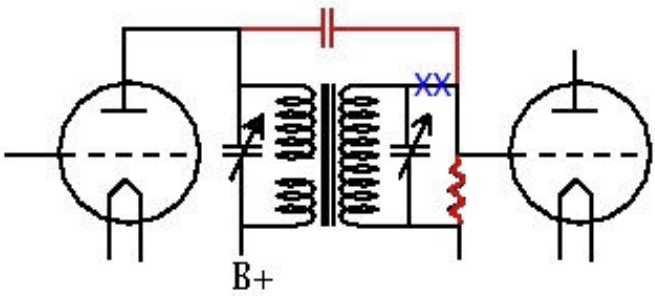

Figure 1. Replacing an Open Winding

By replacing the open winding on the primary (left side) with a capacitor around 150pF to 250pF (.00015uF to .00025uF) the signal can still pass to the grid of the next tube while allowing B+ to flow to the plate of the previous tube. You'll need a load resistor as shown in the figure of about 100KOhms and you will need to open the connection between the grid of the tube and the top of the secondary coil as shown in the diagram. You will only be able to peak one of the two trim caps and there will be some loss of signal strength, but this trick will work for most of the radios you'll encounter. The same trick can be used on audio transformers, but I'll save that for a later column. In the next column, I'll cover IF transformers of the late forties through the sixties, their unique issues, and how to address them.

That's it for this time; "happy hunting" and "keep 'em playing".

Show & Sale Attendees Survey

By Jerry Hertel

We conducted the first (in many years) survey to obtain feedback from people attending last month's Radio Show/Sale.

More than 40 people (mostly non-members) filled out a short, 5 question survey sheet, as they left the event. A few people, who I did not know as members, also participated in providing feedback.

Questions asked were: 1) How did they hear about the event? 2) From where or how far did they travel to attend? 3) Had they attended previously? 4) What did they like most about the event? and 5) Did they want to see something improved?

Some key "take-aways" from their answers are:

- 50-50 mix of first time vs. repeat attendees
- A dozen people traveled 50 miles or more, to attend.
- Most people heard of the event via "word of mouth" (friends, members, & Bob Lee); the internet was a distant second and Craig's List was a close third...
- Selection and seller friendliness/willingness to share information were the strongest "likes". Location was favorable, too.
- The majority said no improvement was necessary, but there were a few suggestions that should be considered. (E.g. better map/directions from I-5, to find location)

A summary of the data and the complete raw data is available for any member who would like to see it.

Hopefully the survey information will be useful in helping to make each future sale, even better.

Vintage Radio as a computer speaker

By Robert Stephens

I have a confession to make. I have belonged to the NWVRS for 6 years, but only own 2 tube radios. I have one in my home office and one next to my desk at work. The radio at work is a beautiful Bendix 526A that was restored for me by Sonny Clutter. It plays really well and is a great conversation piece with customers. I have limited desk space and do not have computer speakers connected to my computer. One day while wishing I could listen to a video on YouTube and looking at my radio, I started to think about how I could use my Bendix radio as my computer speaker.

I didn't want to modify the radio or run any wires into it, so I started researching what it would take to broadcast AM from my desktop computer into the antenna of my AM radio. I wanted something that was legal, low powered and wouldn't interrupt other electronics at my workplace. I found that a popular option was to build a radio transmitter kit for about $100 from www.sstran.com. This kit gets good reviews online and supposedly has good sound quality.

I wanted something that was already built and working. A quick search on eBay came up with an AM transmitter already assembled that would broadcast up to 6 feet away for about $65. I received the unit in about a week. I hooked it up to the audio output of the soundcard on my computer and ran the output wire near the Bendix radio. The unit broadcasts at about 1400 kc and has a trim pot to adjust it if this is too close to an existing radio station. After moving the output wire around and fine-tuning the radio, I was getting the sound from my computer broadcasting into the radio.

My department head's desk is behind mine. He was a little skeptical of my mini broadcasting setup at first. He has reached a level of acceptance when he realized how cool it was to hear the sound of my computer coming through my vintage radio. I use the transmitter to listen to work-related videos and sometimes I listen to the Beach Boys station I created on Pandora for a little work day fun. As my favorite teacher used to say, all play and no work makes Johnny very stupid and all work and no play makes Johnny very boring!

...it's always

a Sunny Day at...

KKOV AM 1550