

The
Call Letter

of the Northwest Vintage Radio Society

Vol. 23

June 1997

No. 6

The Cover Image Is Not Available

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 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

June 1997

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The *CALL LETTER*

Editor, Rick Walton, (503) 284-5648, rwalton@mtsi.com

Call Letter Deadline
20th of the month
prior to publication.

The June meeting of the NWVRS will convene June 14 at the Dixie Clubhouse, 16th and Jackson Streets in Oregon City. Bring your Art Deco radios for display!

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

Here we are in the month of June. School is almost out (my kids can't wait!), and we in the NWVRS will meet on June 14 for the last time before our Summer break. The *Call Letter* will not be taking a break, however.

This issue of the *Call Letter* is a little slim since my month of May was quite taken up with varied activities. There are no meeting minutes because the Swap Meet took the place of our regular meeting. I have compiled a report on the Swap Meet from conversations I had with Myron White and Ed Charman. Also in this issue is Mike Parker's monthly article, and the second in a five part series on early radio contributed by Dick Karman. My thanks go again to Dick for his help in setting up the picture for Mike's article and producing another fine cover.

Don't forget the monthly feature at the meeting will be Art Deco radios. Bring yours to display to the club.

1997 NWVRS Calendar of Events

- JUNE 14:** Display of art deco radios
- JUNE 29:** Display at the Concourse d'Elegance automobile show in Forest Grove
- SEPTEMBER 13:** Member presentation (topic to be determined)
- OCTOBER 11:** Display of 1950's tube or transistor portable radios
- OCTOBER 18-19:** Display at the Northwest Car Collector's show
- NOVEMBER 1:** Fall swap meet (location to be determined)
- NOVEMBER 8:** Nomination of 1998 officers
Display of battery sets and crystal sets
- DECEMBER 13:** Election of 1998 officers and Christmas party

Swap Meet Report

by Rick Walton

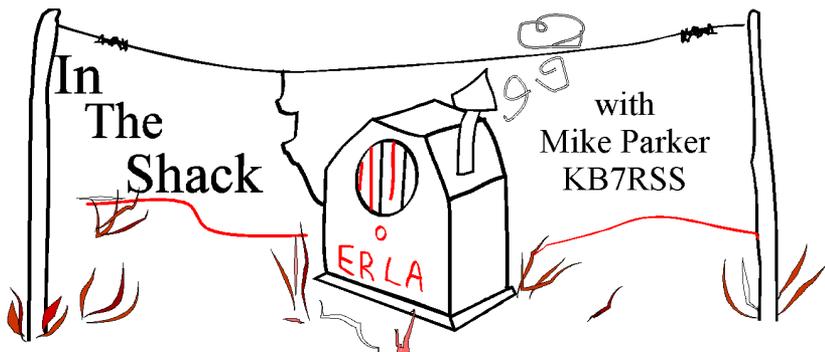
On Saturday, May 10th, the Society held a combined Spring Swap meet with the Portland Amateur Radio club at the Hillsboro National Guard Armory. Myron White, who coordinated the event, proclaimed it a real success. There were 307 paying attendees, which does not include club members who were admitted free.

Myron reported that all the tables were sold, and that people were lined up to get them. NWVRS had 38 tables, Portland Amateur Radio Club had about 28 tables, and the Oregon Triode Society had 6 or 8 tables.

In addition to all the activity inside the Armory, there was a fair amount of buying and selling taking place in the parking lot. The close proximity of the parking lot to the building and the beautiful weather made for brisk tailgate trade.

Ed Charman reported that quite a number of members with unpaid dues visited his table to pay their dues and collect their *May Call Letter*. Ed also reported that a few new members were added to the rolls.

Unlike other recent swap meets, the Society was able to set up tables on Friday night prior to the swap meet. According to Myron, this worked very well, making the set up a lot more fun. It turned the set up into a relaxed social event, and allowed a less hectic opening in the morning.



COSMOPOLITAN PHUSIFORMER

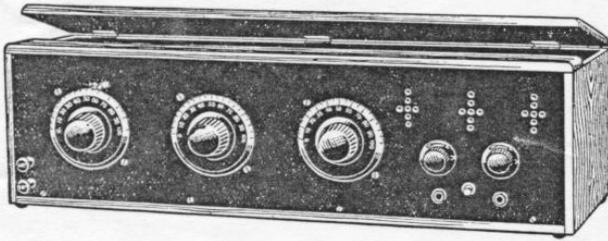
Sorry! It was just the funniest vintage radio name that I could come up with, at the moment! But really, it was the legitimate name of a company in that era of "Heaven knows...anything goes", the 1920's.

The Phusiformer was a radio that was actually named after one of its components. The actual Phusiformer was nothing more than a fully enclosed RF tuning unit, of the inductance type, complete with the shaft, mounting screws, and a 4 inch full vision dial. It was a molded Bakelite case, 2 inches thick by 4 inches square, with 4 binding posts. Especially designed for the ease of constructing a 5 tube Tuned Radio Frequency receiver, the compact Phusiformer contained the inductively coupled primary with the secondary RF coils and the variable condenser in one unit.

Each unit was good for one stage and the standard 5 tube kit used a conventional grid leak detector stage coupled to 2 conventional audio transformers in the usual TRF manner. One could say it was an early attempt at modular construction. I have not heard the name Phusiformer pronounced but I assume it sounds like "fuse", otherwise it would be a "Fuzziformer" and not as technical of a name to impress your friends with, while they were gloating over their new AK or Freed-Eisemann radio!

The Cosmopolitan Phusiformer Co., located at 15 W. 18th St., New York City, was obviously named for nothing more than its very cosmopolitan New York location but appears to be the primary distributor of this product in that area. In 1924 it is listed as having one receiver of the RF circuit type. In 1925, it has 2, 3 -dial TRF type receivers, one at \$59 and one at \$66. It does not show whether they are

Parts for 5-Tube Phusiformer Set



2A880—Complete set of parts, including high grade cabinet\$41.75

The easiest 5 tube set to build. Very selective. Brings in distant stations with loud speaker volume and purest tones. Has two stages of tuned radio frequency amplification, detector and two stages audio amplification. The Phusiformer is a device that has greatly simplified and improved circuits employing tuned radio frequency amplification and make it very easy to assemble the parts and make the few connections.

Phusiformers are enclosed in moulded cases, each containing a variable condenser and a radio frequency tuning unit, which is so constructed that it is impossible for the vacuum tubes to "oscillate." There are no squeaks or howls, and the voice and music come in clear with natural tones. As this is an extremely selective set you will not be bothered by interference from other stations.

The two stages of perfectly balanced radio frequency amplification intensify the signals before they are received by the detector tube, and are responsible for the amazing distance over which this set will operate satisfactorily. The two stages of audio frequency further amplify the signals without distortion so that a loud speaker may be used on distant stations.

The following best grade parts are included in the set:

- 1—7x26x3-16 drilled bakelite panel
- 1—Brown mahogany finish cabinet
- 3—Phusiformers with dials
- 2—Rheostats with dials
- 5—Standard tube bakelite sockets
- 2—Jacks
- 2—Fixed condensers
- 2—Audio transformers
- 1—Grid leak condenser
- 1—Base board
- 1—Battery switch
- 7—Binding posts
- Connecting wire and screws
- Complete instruction booklet.

No batteries, tubes or other accessories included. A screw driver, pliers and soldering iron are all the tools needed.

All sets of parts are supplied for use with standard 201A type tubes. If other style tubes are to be used please so specify on your order so we can supply proper parts for tubes you intend using.

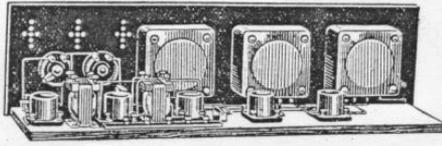
PHUSIFORMER

A546—Each\$6.85



A new device especially designed for tuned radio frequency circuits. Consists of primary and secondary inductively coupled coils connected with variable condenser, all enclosed in moulded case with binding posts.

Dial on shaft of condenser. Size 4 1/2 in. square, 2 in. thick. Three units occupy small space and can be used to make up a very efficient 5 tube set at low cost.



Rear view of Phusiformer set showing simplicity of wiring. The Phusiformers make easy and speedy assembly.

Prices on This Page Are Prepaid East of the Rocky Mountains

kits or factory built sets. No other years are listed for this company. I am seeking information on who was behind this company and concept but knowledge is scarce at this time. Anybody out there own or have seen one?

The 1925 catalog of The Barawick Co. of Chicago, a well known radio distributing house of the time, has a full page advertisement showing an assembled Phusiformer 3-dial kit receiver with cabinet for \$41.75. A copy of this ad is shown on the next page.

A good view of the construction behind the panel is shown with the 3 Phusiformers mounted in place. A close up of one Phusiformer is shown and could be purchased for a mere \$6.85. A screw driver, pliers and a soldering iron were all the tools claimed needed for assembling the kit. The ad claims that the Phusiformer is so constructed that it is impossible for the vacuum tubes to oscillate, that it is very selective and brings in distant stations with loud speaker volume and the purest tone. Where have I heard that before?

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



by Tom James, from the June, 1978 Call Letter

That's Life

*I get word of a radio find,
And it turns out to be
A beautiful plastic job---:
An Airline, fifty three!*

*My friend, on the other hand,
Walks into a store nearby
And finds an autographed copy of
The Radio Boys and the Spy!*

*I admire his acuity,
Vision, persistence, and pluck,
But still I cry to high Heaven
That there ain't no justice in luck!*

Remembering Radio

by Dick Karman

The 1924 Radio Election

(Part 2 of a 5 part series on early radio)

By Don Moore

Radio Develops

KDKA [in 1920] launched a revolution in communications and soon dozens of broadcasting stations were licensed around the country. Thousands and then millions of Americans purchased receiving sets. KDKA continued to break political ground. In 1921, candidates for municipal elections were given the opportunity to speak on the station. This was followed a year later when Pennsylvania elected a governor and a senator. Stations in other cities also saw broadcasting speeches by local politicians at election time as a civic responsibility. President Harding began making occasional radio speeches. A November 5, 1921, speech by Harding inaugurated a new high-power RCA transmitter and was heard on every continent. After Harding's sudden death in 1923, President Calvin Coolidge continued to speak on the radio. Not all politicians were receptive, however. When a microphone was placed in front of former Secretary of State Elihu Root, he exclaimed "Take that away. I can talk to a Democrat, but I cannot speak into a dead thing." (Clark)

As the 1924 presidential elections approached, everyone began to think of radio. Politicians talked so much about using it that stations were afraid they would be deluged with requests for speech time. Political committees were set up to manage requests for air time and see that the best speakers were given preference. In March, Owen Young, chairman of the Board of Directors for General Electric and RCA proclaimed "No citizen of this great country need say that he has not heard the pronouncements of the presidential candidates of the two great parties" (Barnard). *New Republic* magazine predicted that the upcoming campaign would be mainly

fought by radio. *Nation* agreed, editorializing that 1924 would be looked back on as "the radio year", but thought that by 1928 the broadcasting fad would be over. William McAdoo, the most likely Democratic candidate, went as far as to apply for a license to set up a station at his home in Los Angeles. His plans were to do most of his campaigning by radio from his living room!

Convention Time

The three-day Republican convention in Cleveland started the campaign off on June 10. To broadcast the convention, AT&T used special wires to put together a loose network of sixteen stations in twelve cities, headed by its WEAJ in New York and WCAP in Washington. Never before had such a linkup been attempted, and it was a major test of both engineering and programming skill. With colorful ace announcer Graham McNamee presiding, AT&T offered an attractive but expensive package to radio stations around the country. The biggest expense was rental of AT&T lines, which the receiving stations had to pay for. Although AT&T offered line rental at cost as a public service, it was still too expensive for many stations, especially more distant ones. Stations in Los Angeles and San Francisco both said no, and Kansas City was the farthest west to receive line service. However, Westinghouse's KFKX in Hastings, Nebraska picked up the broadcasts and relayed them via short-wave to the West Coast, for rebroadcast by KGO in Oakland.

No one was quite sure of exactly how much programming the stations would receive from the conventions. Station schedules had to be flexible, so most booked soloists and readings so they could easily switch back and forth to Cleveland. Hopes, however, were high for the broadcast, as in this AT&T publicity statement . . .

"This will be the first occasion that a program will be supplied continuously to twelve cities, enabling stations at these points to broadcast such features of the Convention as they desire to make available to their respective radio audiences . . . An announcer will be in constant attendance with concise and vivid descriptions of the events taking place in the Convention Hall and explanations of the significance of what is going on. The announcer will introduce the various speakers so that the entire matter will be an interesting broadcasting program" (Archer)."

The convention took place in a 16,000 seat auditorium with a stage in the center, a pipe organ to the right, and a band to the left.

WEAF erected a glass booth on the stage with a table, chair, paper, telephone, headphones & signal light board. Two microphones were placed in the booth (one a spare), and one each by the organ, band and speaker. Politicians, however, were not used to speaking into a stationary radio mic; they normally paced back and forth across the stage. To keep the speakers from wandering, a railing was erected around the microphone. McNamee controlled his own mic; the others were switched in from a control room behind the platform. An assistant was always stationed near the speaker's spot to pass along to McNamee observations that he couldn't see. Others throughout the hall also telephoned in reports.

AT&T & WEAf weren't alone in broadcasting the convention. Rival New York City station WJZ sent their star announcer, Major J. Andrew White. He was also carried on WGY of Schenectady. At the time, AT&T felt it had exclusive domain over broadcasting based on certain patents it owned, and AT&T had let it be known that no one else should assist in network broadcasting not involving AT&T lines. AT&T, of course, wasn't about to rent lines to WJZ in competition with their WEAf network. WJZ and WGY arranged a special line through Western Union, without telling Western Union its true use.

There was no contest at the convention - it was Coolidge all the way, which made coverage easy and allowed the broadcasters to focus on perfecting their work. Interest in an otherwise boring convention was maintained by supporters of Progressive Senator Robert LaFollette of Wisconsin, who fought to put liberal planks into the party platform. Their failure led to LaFollette launching an independent candidacy shortly afterwards. Overall, though, the process was so easy that Will Rogers remarked that the convention could have been done by postcard.

Still, convention broadcasting became a national drama as some stations not carrying the convention shut down to avoid interfering with nearby stations broadcasting it. Around the country schools closed so that students could listen, radio demonstration rooms in department stores were packed with people, and sales of radios sets hit record levels. For the first time, the American people were able to look in on a national political convention. "Millions of radio listeners sat before their loudspeakers or listened with earphones - thrilled or enraged depending upon their political faith, by what they heard" (Archer).

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<http://www.mcrest.edu/~moore/patepluma.html>.

Watch next month for part three.

Endnotes:

Archer, Gleason L. "Conventions, Campaigns, and Kilocycles in 1924: The First Political Broadcasts". *Journal of Broadcasting*. Spring, 1960: 110-118.

Barnard, Eunice Fuller. "Radio Politics". *The New Republic*. March 19, 1924: 91-93.

Chester, Edward A. *Radio, Television and American Politics*. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1969.

Clark, David G. "Radio in Presidential Campaigns: The Early Years (1924-1932)". *Journal of Broadcasting* : 229-238.

Electioneering On the Air. *The New Republic*. September 3, 1924: 8-9.

Politics By Radio. *Nation*. January 2, 1924: 5.

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.

*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

*FOR SALE: **Complete Instructions for Adjusting All Philco Radio Receivers*, a reproduction of a 1934 Philco Service Department publication. \$3.50 postpaid. Pete Petersen, 5214 120th Ave. SE, Bellevue, WA 98006.

*FOR SALE: **86 radios, battery and AC.* For information, call Bud. (503) 538-3548

FOR SALE: *Motorola Television, circa 1952, small console, Model #17K5. \$25 negotiable. Dick Karman, 2515 NE 37th Avenue, Portland, OR 97212, 503-288-8800.

FOR SALE or Trade: *Over 400 78's (records) in excellent condition. \$1 each or will trade for radios. Records are of Glenn Miller, Tommy & Jimmy Dorsey, Sammy Kaye, Tex Beneke, Eddy Howard, etc. Also Bing Crosby, Margaret Whiting, Dinah Shore, etc. Contact Howard Burgoyne, West Linn, OR, (503) 650-3828.

WANTED: **Base (with driver) for horn speaker. Also restorable cabinet for Philco Model 90 cathedral. Contact Glen Bricker, (541) 942-3717.

WANTED: *Zenith Trans-Oceanic G-500 (must be complete and in good+ condition).

Round Telechron clock as used in many GE and Zenith clock radios. I need one with good glass and no broken knob shafts. I would also be interested in a junker clock radio with a good clock or glass only. I also need a 119-24(?) electrolytic (non-working is fine) to cosmetically restore an Airline 62-4-25 chassis.

I am looking for a fully functional, AM/FM tube clock radio for daily use. I will consider any model or brand.

Doug Van Cleve 648-9633 (home) or DougVC@aol.com

WANTED: *A Vintage microphone. Early SHURE's or RCA's will trade radios too. Dick Karman, 2515 NE 37th Avenue, Portland, OR 97212, 503-288-8800.

Needs:

*Gordon Phillips was contacted about repairing a wire recorder. Anyone interested should contact Gordon.

**Speed Feldschau needs pushbuttons for a Belmont.

**Gordon Phillips needs a thumbwheel dial for a repwood set. (contact Gordon for the make of the set).

**Myron White needs parts for a "Bomber" style Zenith Transoceanic.

**A neighbor of Mike Parker's is looking for parts for a Sparton console.

**Josh Carter is looking for a Hallicrafter's Civil Patrol set.

Northwest Vintage Radio Society Workup/Info Sheet

Date _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Acquisitions: _____

For Sale/Trade: _____

Wanted Items: _____

Leads: _____

Suggestions: _____

