

The Call Letter

of the Northwest Vintage Radio Society

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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

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

Call Letter Deadline

20th of the month

prior to publication.

There is no July meeting of the NWVRS. The next meeting of the NWVRS will be September 13 at the Dixie Clubhouse in Oregon City. Bring your horn speakers for the monthly feature.

Speed Feldschau will be hosting a tailgate swap meet in his yard in Keizer, OR on July 26. RSVP to Speed at (503) 309-3928.

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

As you can see from the calendar below, there isn't just a whole lot going on in the way of club activities before we meet again in September. One change to the calendar is Speed Feldschau's tailgate swap meet on July 26. Check the Swap Shop for details.

In this issue Mike Parker is with us again "In the Shack" discussing the characteristics and history of the "Ubiquitous 27." In "Remembering Radio" Dick Karman contributes "The Democrats Meet", the third installment of Don Moore's 5-part series on early radio.

My apologies to Gordon Phillips and all his helpers who were ready to fold and staple last month's *Call Letter* but were left with nothing to do because I, in a truly boneheaded move, totally forgot to pick them up from the printer and deliver them to Gordon's. Gordon graciously forgave me, but I want to publicly offer my apology.

Speaking of Gordon, don't miss his "for sale" ad in the Swap Shop. I've seen a good bit of Gordon's collection and believe me, it's worth giving Gordon a call. It's great to know Gordon will remain active in the society, even if he plans to sell his collection.

1997 NWVRS Calendar of Events

- SEPTEMBER 13:** Display of horn speakers (no paper cones).
- 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

Meeting Minutes

by Dan Howard, Secretary

The June 14th meeting of the NW Vintage Radio Society was called to order by President Jerry Talbott at 10:00 am with 26 members in attendance.

The last meeting was the May swap meet so there were no minutes to approve. The treasurer's report was reviewed and approved.

Good and Welfare

None reported.

Old Business

The May swap at the armory had a high level of participation both in terms of table sales and attendance. Members made positive comments about the building layout, ease of access, and proximity to the parking lot. We have tentative plans to hold the November swap there as well. An invitation will be extended to the other clubs to share the space with us again.

The books that were ordered for the library have arrived. If you wish to borrow books, ask Tony Hauser, the society librarian, to bring the title that you need to the next meeting.

Due to lack of interest and logistics problems we will not be showing radios at the 1997 Concours d'Elegance.

Dave Rutland is still taking orders for society name badges.

New Business

Speed Feldschau will be hosting a tailgate swap meet on July 26th in his yard. RSVP so that he can plan his space and get directional signs placed if necessary.

Members displayed a variety of art deco radios from all eras. The September show topic will be horn speakers (speakers that use an exponential horn rather than a paper cone for amplification).

Leads and Needs were given.

The June meeting was adjourned at 11:00 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Howard

Secretary



THE UBIQUITOUS 27

Of all the old time radio tubes we all know and love, I think that my favorite just might be the good old type 27 triode!

Why?....well, the real old ones (UY-227) and variants of that number, look a lot like the UX-201A battery set triode that they replaced. They have a globe or balloon shaped envelope, they can be found in blue glass, if made by ARCTURUS. They look good and authentic in a radio of that vintage and give off a healthy glow when they are working...more about that, later.

They are also very plentiful and not very costly to buy, especially the ST, (Shoulder top) version, known simply as the "27" after 1932. In the years of the 27, or "life span", which I am guessing to be from 1927 to 1935, excluding "replacement" tubes made years later, much more than a million must have been made!

But here is something odd... Is it just a coincidence, or did RCA designate it the number 27 because of the year it was introduced? This does not hold true for the 24A, which was not introduced in 1924. It may apply to the 26 and the 30 but given the large variety of tube type numbers this would never hold and perhaps I am just playing a little "guessing game!"

It is interesting to note the progression of tube designation numbers from the 1920's when they were UY-227 if made by RCA,

that company having an exclusive on the letter “U” for some reason, and the letter “Y” designating a 5 pin base. Other manufacturers used their own letter such as the SY-227 by SYLVANIA or NY-227 by NATIONAL UNION. This system continued until around 1930 when the letters were dropped and the tube was known as a -227 or a ‘227 or simply a 227. By 1932, when the ST type envelope was introduced, a two digit system was started and the tube was simply a 27. 1932 seems to have been a real watershed year for radio tubes. Many new types with multi-functional capabilities, variations in filament voltages and multi-element types such as the pentode were introduced, all products of much research and all of this in the middle of a gripping depression. About this time the new number-letter-number tube type designation was initiated. Thus a 2A3 was a 2.6 volt, amplifier tube with 3 elements, etc.

The old 227’s are quite peculiar in some respects. The heater element in particular, was slow to warm up. I have a 1928 BRUNSWICK 5NO superhet, which is really a RCA RADIOLA 60 clone, which uses no less than seven type 227’s and a -71A. I have timed it with a stopwatch from switch on until full audio power — 52 seconds....almost a minute! The element construction on the earlier 27 looks rather primitive and one can see the mesh or screen of the cathode around the heater element. An actual insulator tube was employed between the heater element and the cathode and this is credited as the reason for the slow warm up. There are two levels of filament brightness with these: either a dull orange glow or a full brightness like a light bulb. I still can’t tell if this is particular to the tube brand, or it’s age or condition. Some of the earlier 27 ST types exhibit this symptom also. The later 27, using the improved, conventional element construction, glows with a very predictable uniformity and warm up time is noticeably faster.

Although the 27 was developed as a general purpose triode, it was used ubiquitously as a detector tube in radios using the type 26 for RF and amplification because the 26, with it’s directly heated high current low voltage filament, did not make a good detector tube due to high AC hum levels. The type 27 was such a success as a detector that even up into the early 30’s, receivers using the new screen grid pentodes still used the lowly 27 triode as a detector tube. Based on this usage, the type 56 tube was developed and was really a 27 with a higher plate voltage limit and a higher plate current rating.

From 1933 on, the gradual demise of the 2.5 volt filament radio had occurred and 6.3 volts became the standard filament voltage. The 27 was simply replaced with the type 37 triode rated at 6.3 volts, using the familiar 5 pin base. After 1935, when the octal tube base was developed, the 6C5 triode became the octal base equivalent of the old type 27 tube.

The 5 pin base, as used on the type 27 tube, was not missed much by anyone after the advent of the octal tube base. The 5 pin base scheme was probably the most cursed tube pin arrangement on the planet. If you have ever had to reach into the back of a radio cabinet, filled with transformers and IF cans and replace a 5 pin tube located in the far front corner behind the tuning condenser, after spinning the tube around a few times and hoping the pins line up.....well, you have now had your stress test!

Have a great summer and I will QSO you sometime this fall, IN THE SHACK.

Speed's Tailgate Swap

E-mail from Speed Feldschau

To the membership,

This year will be the last radio meet at SPEED'S . The format will be the same as in the past, Date , July 26. Taco feed before installing the radio signs along the roads. This takes place in the evening before the meet. We have plenty of room to park RV's so come on down the night before. I-5 to exit 263, West to River Rd, South to Clearlake Rd., West to O'Neil rd, Left to 7455. Tailgate sales. We would like to hear from the early birds, so call 503-390-3928. E-mail feldrad@open.org



by Tom James, from the July, 1977 Call Letter

Toat's Coulee Carl

*It was an ancient Philco,
That sang beside the chair,
And the old man adored it,
As a child, his teddy-bear.*

*'Twas comfort in the evening
Clean up 'til he'd retire.
'Twas company in the morning,
When he 'rose to build a fire.*

*He turned it on at noon-time,
A rest from toil, and loam.
And then on every Sunday,
He went to church — at home.*

*He'd bought the set in '30,
And in nineteen sixty-two,
Lighting hit the aerial,
And the Philco finally blew!*

*'Twas only two days later,
That the old man passed away —
The service was very simple,
He'd wanted it "that-a-way."*

*Old Carl's been gone for year now,
But at the end of a summer's day
You may hear him down the coulee
Making his "Phantom-Philco" play.*

Remembering Radio

by Dick Karman

Editor's note: The last sentence in Part 2 of this series was garbled in production. Here is that last sentence:

“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).

The Democrats Meet

(Part 3 of a 5 part series on early radio)

By Don Moore

A few days later, on June 24,[1924] the 1446 delegates of the Democratic convention met in Madison Square Garden in New York City. Not only was this larger than the Republican convention, it promised to be a real battle as there was no clear front runner. In fact, the convention was to drag out to be the longest in the nation's history. Again, AT&T's WEA and Graham McNamee were there, this time with 17 other stations in their network, as were WJZ/WGY and Major White, for a total of twenty stations. The broadcasters set up their microphones and glass booths on the stage as they had for the Republican convention. The Democrats knew their party was divided and ready for a fight. Concerned with how the nation would view the party, the Democratic National Committee kept a censor on stage by the radio microphones. An agreement with the stations allowed the censor to cut the microphone at any time (although it was not done).

The main part of the convention, starting with Senator Pat Harrison's keynote speech, was postponed to 7:30 p.m. because of better nighttime radio reception. More speeches followed, but the convention's most memorable radio speech was given by a young New Yorker, Franklin D. Roosevelt, who nominated New York Governor Al Smith. Roosevelt was praised for having a great radio voice. The worst performance was given by 64-year-old William Jennings Bryan, the Democratic candidate in 1896, 1900, and 1908.

A renowned orator of the old tradition, Bryan was used to wandering around the stage. He wouldn't stay inside the railings by the microphone and lost his radio audience for most of his speech.

Finally, after some lengthy platform fights, the first ballot was taken. As expected, California's William McAdoo came in first with 431 1/2 votes, followed by New York's Al Smith with 241 votes. Various others were far behind, including little known John Davis with 31 votes. No one was close to winning and there was little chance for a compromise. Of the two main candidates, McAdoo was a Protestant and a strong supporter of Prohibition while Smith was Catholic and favored an end to Prohibition. Other delegates controlled smaller regional delegations and were not willing to turn over their votes without getting something in return. Many supported neither McAdoo nor Smith.

Days passed and ballot after ballot was taken. With each ballot the state of Alabama was called on to vote first. This drew national attention back to the political drama in New York as Alabama's spokesman, ex-governor Jim Brandon, drawled out "Alabama casts 24 votes for Underwood" (an Alabaman senator) each time. By the fifteenth ballot the spectators in the galleries picked up the cry and repeated it along with the governor. Soon, the delegates joined and each ballot began with the convention hall chanting in unison "Alabama casts 24 votes for Underwood." Across the country, millions of people gathered around radios joined in too. As it was repeated over and over, "Alabama casts 24 votes for Underwood" became a national joke and a symbol of a political party too divided to choose a candidate.

The balloting did come to an end with an unusual ticket of Wall Street lawyer John Davis and Nebraska Populist Charles Bryan ... on the 103rd ballot after fifteen days. By this time, the Democratic party had made itself look like a vaudeville sideshow. Still, the nation listened attentively to their political leaders. At Sing-Sing prison in upstate New York, loudspeakers were set up allowing the prisoners to listen in as a special treat on July 4. In New York City, one cab driver got extra business by putting a radio and two headsets in his car. In many ways, radio's infancy was clearly evident. No station today would think of airing dead air, yet when a Christian Science Minister asked the delegates to pray silently for a few minutes, the radio stations did just that. When the praying

stopped, more than a few listeners who hadn't been paying close attention were up on their roofs trying to adjust their aerials to get the signal back in.

Two national heroes did emerge from the convention; Senator Thomas Walsh who did an admirable job of presiding over the unruly convention, and Graham McNamee for colorful descriptions of the convention. McNamee, who later commented that the 1924 Democratic convention was one of his most vivid experiences, lost 8 pounds while confined to the little glass booth. WJZ/WGY's Major White also did an excellent job of announcing a difficult convention, but was heard by far fewer people than McNamee.

When the conventions finished, station managers saw their public service obligation over too. If they were going to continue carrying political speeches, someone had to pay for the time - logically the political parties. The parties agreed, setting up 1924 as a true "radio election". This was easy when a speech was carried over one local station, however, because no set networks existed at the time, complex negotiations had to be completed before broadcasts linking multiple stations. Landline rental to link stations also added to the cost. An hour on one station might cost \$500, but an hour over six or seven stations could easily cost \$5000 or more.

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Watch next month for part four.

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.

PSARA Swap Meet

From Gordon Phillips

Antique Radio Swap Meet, Sunday, August 17, 1997, 9 am to 1 pm, at Shore line Museum parking lot. North 175 and Linden, Ave, N. Seattle. One block west of Aurora Ave. or one mile west of I-5 exit 176. Sponsored by the Puget Sound Antique Radio Association.

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: Age and health are catching up to me. For this reason and plans to sell my house, I am selling my radio and phonograph collection. I will still be active in the NWVRS. My Sams folders and my set of Rider's from #1 to and including #22. If interested call me. Gordon Phillips, 234-3517.

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: **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.

WANTED: I would like to speak with any veterans or others who have information about the military radio service. I am doing research on military radio hardware and would appreciate talking to anyone who can tell me about military part numbers or who might have books or manuals that would help answer my questions. Dan Howard
761-7799

WANTED: I would like to look through copies of "Radio's Master" parts books as part of my radio research. If you have a spare copy, would like to trade, or would let me borrow your copy, I would appreciate it.
Dan Howard 761-7799

WANTED: Harvey Wells R9, Meissner Traffic Master or #7502 Receiver - will pay UPS to Blaine, Washington. Call Collect: Bruce C. E. Russell, 370 N. Hythe, Burnaby, B.C. V5B 1G5 at 604-298-1038 or 604-299-1116 or packet VE7HII @ VE7VBS or E-Mail - ERussel@croftonhouse.bc.ca

Leads:

Lloyd Godsey is working with Rodda paint to have a gallon (24 spray cans) of paint custom color-matched to the glossy blue-gray for Hallicrafters S-20R and similar receivers. The cost is \$5.39 per can. About half the cans are spoken for, but if you are interested in a can or two, contact Lloyd at 256-2042.

You are invited.....

If you have an interest in radio antenna hardware or telegraph insulators, you are invited to participate in a tailgate swap meet on August 9th. Hundreds of insulators will be on display, for sale, and/or for trade. Call Dan Howard at 761-7799 for info.

Old tubes (30s-60s), parts, test equipment, TVs (mostly 60 & 70s) & some ham gear.

Call: Francis Perry, Portland, OR, 289-4155

Needs:

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

Northwest Vintage Radio Society Workup/Info Sheet

Date _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Acquisitions: _____

For Sale/Trade: _____

Wanted Items: _____

Leads: _____

Suggestions: _____

