

The
Call Letter

of the Northwest Vintage Radio Society

Vol. 23

September 1997

No. 9

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

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September 1997

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The *CALL LETTER*

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

Call Letter Deadline

20th of the month

prior to publication.

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.

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

Good grief! The summer seems over much too quickly. In just a few days we'll celebrate Labor Day, school will start (much to my kids' chagrin), and it will be time for the NWVRS to resume monthly meetings following the summer hiatus. I look forward to seeing many of you at that meeting.

In this issue Dan Howard ponders the question "Does it work?" and we finish the series on early radio contributed by Dick Karman. Dick also appears in these pages with another "Wandering on the Web" article.

The Swap Shop is unchanged this month – I haven't heard anything new from you lately. I hope that isn't due to the change in my e-mail address (see page 1). I wasn't getting e-mail from mid-July through mid-August. And don't miss the ham swap meet coming up at the Pay-n-Pak location in North Portland. Thanks to Dan Howard for alerting me to that.

As I mentioned in last month's issue, I made a trip to Minnesota. Minnesota was hot, it was muggy, the mosquitoes were vicious, it smelled of corn and hogs, and it yielded up two radios for my collection. If, for some reason, you happen to pass through Pipestone, Minnesota, be sure to stop at Monk's Antique and Secondhand Store. I was there on a Monday, and it seems a whole bunch of radios had gone out over the previous weekend.

Ham Swap Meet

The Hoodview Amateur Radio Club is sponsoring a swap meet September 20 from 9 am to 5 pm at the Pay-n-Pak location on N. Vancouver. Admission is \$6. For information about reserving a table, call 272-8349.

1997 NWVRS Calendar of Events

- SEPTEMBER 13:** Display of horn speakers (no paper cones).
- SEPTEMBER 20:** Ham Radio Swap Meet. Hoodview Amateur Radio Club.
- 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



Mike is taking a month or two off, but will return "to the shack" sometime in the Fall.



Wandering on the Web

by Dick Karman

I searched for vintage radio and sometimes get some pretty off-the-wall sites. I wandered this month across <http://connix.com/~harry>. This site on the surface looks a pretty diverse. It has its fill of political activism and “free speech” but it also is a nice gateway to a vintage radio site known as Skywaves.

Skywaves - <http://connix.com/~harry/radio.htm> & <http://connix.com/~harry/radio2.htm>

On Skywaves page two there is an impressive array of WWW links to other sites as well as some very nice reprints of stories and technical information. Among the technical info images is the first standard color code for battery radio power leads, from a 1924 issue of Radio Broadcast magazine.

From Harry’s site I wandered over to Don Adamson’s page. He has developed an esthetically delightful page strictly dedicated to old radio. I can see why it gets great reviews from other pages. His galleries are divided into five main areas: 1920s & 1930s, 1940s, 1950s & 1960s, Transistors, and Related Items. He also has a nice want ads page and as expected his WANTEDs outweigh his FOR SALES. <http://members.aol.com/djadamson/arp.html> Enjoy your visit to the Antique Radio Page. There is a lot to do here, so click away and have fun!

Lastly, I looked at the site belonging to Mr. Kim Smith of Virginia Beach, VA. (E-mail: Smith3721@aol.com - Or - radiosmith@juno.com)

His articles are enjoyable and are well documented with Jpeg images. The story about Variacs on that will appear in the CALL LETTER came from his site (used by permission).

Does It Work?

by Dan Howard

Does it work? Those must be three of the most commonly spoken words at our vintage radio swaps. Perhaps its a way to start a conversation. Perhaps it is a means of establishing a bargaining position. Or perhaps it is a legitimate inquiry.

I almost always answer, "I don't know, I haven't plugged it in." And most of the time I really haven't.

Like many of us, I know that most sets can eventually be restored "someday." However, I have transistor sets to listen to at home. So, unless a set is really special to me and I am going to take the time to clean it up, safely test it, and restore it, I don't plug 'em in.

Last Fall, I picked up an especially interesting early Arvin metal set. Yes, I was guilty. I asked if it worked. And yes, he didn't know. And you know, I still don't know if it works.

However, after opening it up this evening I know a few reasons why it might not.

You may recall Arvin's amusing little habit of grounding one side of the line cord to the chassis on its AC-DC sets. And, you may already have experienced what can happen when a set with a metal cabinet is so configured. But this set was customized by a prior owner in ways that make it even more entertaining.

I was pleased to see that the Arvin had its original metal back still in place when I picked it up. This evening I pulled the chassis to restring the set's dial cord (you can do this without unscrewing the back from the chassis on this set). Wow, look at those long screws that last fellow used when reattaching the back! Why, they go clean through the back apron of the chassis! In fact, one went right on into a paper bypass condenser! The other two went right on through and touched tube pins! Somehow, I don't think that this "120 vold inverse-bypass-recirculation-feedback circuit was factory.

So, you ask me if a set works some time, and I tell you that I don't know 'cause I haven't plugged it in, I hope that you'll understand why.

Remembering Radio

by Dick Karman

The 1924 Radio Election

(Last of a 5 part series on early radio)

By Don Moore

The Significance of 1924

When the 1924 campaign began, no one knew what radio would be worth as a weapon in the campaign warchest. For millions to hear the voices of the candidates was unique - it couldn't be duplicated in silent movies or newspapers. Many in both parties questioned how they could know if there was an audience listening and if their message was reaching them. By the end of the campaign, these questions and more were answered. It was clear that radio had improved politics and furthermore politics had improved radio.

The election of 1924 was never really a contest. The country was prosperous and there was little doubt that Coolidge would win.

Even though millions of Americans tuned in speeches and other election broadcasting, it is unlikely that radio changed many votes. The medium was still too unrefined for that. Coolidge's warm greeting to his father during his final speech probably won more votes than any political pronouncements by any of the candidates. Gleason Archer wrote that "The effect of the election on radio was more important than the effect of radio on the election results!" Radio was, however, credited with focusing people on the election and bringing out a huge number of voters.

In a sense, radio 'grew up' with the 1924 presidential election. Although some experimenting with networking had begun, at the beginning of 1924, AT&T thought it was technically impossible to interconnect stations coast-to-coast with long distance telephone lines. By the end of the year, it was a common occurrence. This, combined with increased revenue from the political broadcasts, encouraged AT&T to continue development of its networking between WEAJ and other stations in the Northeast and Midwest, the forerunner of the NBC network. Westinghouse used the election to explore the uses of shortwave, both in the Heinz broadcast and in using its shortwave station KFKX in Hastings, Nebraska to relay programs to the Pacific Coast. Obviously, these advancements would have come in time, but the 1924 campaign gave broadcasting the impetus to try them out sooner. In the short run, money was most important. For their presidential campaigns, the Democratic party spent \$40,000 on radio and the Republicans \$50,000. This doesn't include LaFollette's independent candidacy nor many state and local races across the country. The amounts may seem tiny today, but the money kept stations afloat in a fledgling industry.

Even if radio didn't change votes, it did change politics and campaigning, especially speechmaking. It quickly became evident that the old style of the ranting word-artist wouldn't work on radio and that a new breed of political orator was being born. As *The Saturday Evening Post* noted, the old style of "a good personality, a musical voice, a power of dramatic gesture have served to cover up baldness of thought and limping phraseology" (Archer). While politicians might get by with "baldness of thought" with live audiences due to the excitement of the event, their charm didn't work on the radio where the listener was focused only on the speaker's message. Candidates had to speak clearly, intelligently,

and sensibly. Furthermore, excited 'fire and brimstone' type speeches were often unintelligible on the radio; a warmer personal style came across much better. Several observers noted that young Franklin Roosevelt, who although not a candidate had made several speeches for the Democrats, had a perfect radio personality. When he spoke, listeners felt as if Roosevelt had dropped in at their parlor for an informal chat.

While before candidates spoke mainly to the party faithful, they now had to tailor their speeches more for the undecided, and even the opposition. The audience for political speeches had changed. Because radio audiences did not feel as if they had to show signs of support for the speaker, the audience became not only bigger, but more heterogeneous. Undecided and opposing voters, who might not be comfortable attending a rally, could easily tune in at home. Sometimes it was even enjoyable to listen to the opposing side, at least in the eyes of *The New Republic*, "At the radio one can make faces at the speaker, call him bad names, or ... indulge in vehement refutation to one's heart's content, all without discomod[ing] the rest of the audience in the least or feeling the slightest embarrassment" ("Electioneering...").

Politicians now knew that voters simply had to turn on the radio to listen to a speech. While a voter might be too shy to walk out in the middle of a long, boring speech, there was nothing to prevent him from reaching over and turning off the radio. Long speeches wouldn't do, except for special occasions. Strong, brief speeches with the main point up front became the rule.

Finally, with so many listeners focusing so intently on a speaker's message, truthfulness became very important. Fredrick Hicks, a regional director for the Republican National Committee, acknowledged that when candidates thought about how they were addressing hundreds of thousands of listeners, they became "conscious of the importance of delivering messages free from boastful predictions and demagogic utterances . . . radio would skewer the insincere" (Clark). LaFollette agreed that candidates were no longer willing to twist facts which they knew would be quickly received by millions via radio.

Not everyone agreed that radio was a positive force in elections. Some felt that radio did not adequately portray the excitement of a

campaign, although for many it was as close as they would ever get. The “El Paso Times” wrote that people were really more interested in the shape of a candidate's ears and how his nose wrinkled when he laughed at his own jokes, which wasn't conveyed by radio. Others agreed that the lack of facial expressions was a drawback for radio broadcasting.

Some looked forward to the future. *The New Republic* commented “It remains a question how long the political use of radio will be merely as a transmitter of the direct campaign utterances of candidates . . . We may then expect bedtime stories burbling with anecdotes of some candidate's boyhood, tenors expanding on his favorite lullaby, radio orchestras playing his special march directly after the Star Spangled Banner, even the voice of his aged mother now and then quavering out a tribute” (Barnard).”

The New York Times thought that future candidates might be chosen as to whether they were “radiogenic . . . or even photogenic.” Losing candidate John Davis agreed, “Ultimately a candidate may be chosen for two things - first, that he films well, and second, that he has a good radio voice.” Perhaps *The New Republic* was the most farsighted when it wrote, “Ultimately a form of hokum will be devised that can be counted on to captivate the radio listener” (Electioneering ...).

Radio may not have been so much a participant as a spectator in the 1924 election, but it did become an important political weapon and set the stage for an even greater role in the 1928 election.

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WANTED: **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.

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

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