

*The*

# *Call Letter*

September 2000  
Vol. 26 — No. 9



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Celebrating **25** years in print!

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# 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 society members, the *Call Letter* has continued to be a publication that 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 (except July and August) 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).

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 for 2000:

President	Charles Kent	(503) 281-9335
Vice-President	George Kirkwood	(503) 648-4809
Treasurer	Ed Charman	(503) 654-7387
Secretary	Liles Garcia	(503) 649-9288
Board member at large	Dave Rutland	(541) 929-4498
<i>Call Letter</i> Editor	Rick Walton	(503) 284-5648
Librarian	John Bucholtz	(360) 693-7135

The Society’s address is:

The Northwest Vintage Radio Society  
Post Office Box 82379  
Portland, Oregon 97282-0379



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**On the cover:** The set pictured on the cover is a Graybar 340 receiving set. This picture was scanned from the owners manual that came with the set. The 340 is an AC powered superheterodyne set that uses nine tubes (seven 227s, one 171, and one 280). The chassis is a Radiola 62. Your editor found this set at an estate sale eight or nine years ago and added it to his collection.

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**Call Letter Deadline: 10 days prior  
to meeting day.**

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**The next meeting is on September 9.  
This month only, the meeting will be held upstairs in the  
Grange Hall.  
The monthly feature is:  
Your favorite radio!  
Tailgate swap meet starts at 8:30!**

**Visit our web site at <http://nwvrs.org>.**

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.

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## From the Editor

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by Call Letter Editor, Rick Walton

Things are about to pick up for the club with the resumption of monthly meetings on September 9th. We'll be meeting upstairs this month instead of in the basement area as usual. There is a wedding reception planned for the downstairs area in the afternoon and the decorators need time to prepare the room, so the officers consented to use the upstairs hall for our meeting.

This is a skinny little issue of the *Call Letter*, mostly because I've been gone and haven't had time to gather as much stuff. Sonny Clutter has provided a really good article on proper packing for radios, and he's also compiled another list for Voilá. I've continued the Summer re-runs with another archive edition of Mike Parker's "In the Shack."

I hear that in a couple of weeks there will be another of the radio sales at Henry's Radio Service at 226 NW 3rd in Portland. I also hear that the owners will be handling the sale and that prices will be slashed.

I'm just back from three weeks of vacation with over 5000 miles rolled up on the car's odometer. I stuck my nose in antique and second-hand stores all the way from here to Wisconsin and back. That includes the visit to Monk's in Pipestone, Minnesota, that I talked about in last month's column (well, actually two visits, neither of which got me a radio). I did find a funky old clock there that might have the right motor to repair the Bendix clock radio I bought a few months back. The sad news at Monk's was that they almost closed down because they thought they had a buyer for the place, but the deal fell through, and it sounds like they're still looking for a buyer. By the time we got back to Portland, my kids would roll their eyes and groan when they heard the word "antique." I did buy some NOS loctal tubes at a store in Dodgeville, Wisconsin for two bucks apiece. In that same store I saw a complete Magnavox horn speaker with an asking price of \$125, I think. I didn't bring it home. I did find a radio (see Voilá for this month) a bit closer to home in Pomeroy, Washington (several miles east of Walla Walla). Pomeroy is a neat little farming community that has several antique and junk stores on the main street through town. I saw one nice old Philco low-boy console (I couldn't see the model number but it is early thirties) in one store, and a 1937 Philco console in another store. A couple of those stores also had old, really old, TVs.

Well, that's enough of my rambling. It's been a great Summer, and there's plenty to keep us busy this fall.

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## NWVRS 2000 Calendar of Events

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You'll note that the Fall Swap Meet is missing from the calendar. It seems that the scheduling of the NG Armory has been transferred to another person, and our reservation got lost in the transition. Information about when (and where) the Swap Meet will take place should be available at the September meeting, and in the next issue of the *Call Letter*.

- September 9** Regular monthly meeting at 10:00 am. Monthly feature: your favorite radio. Will be held upstairs in the Abernethy Grange Hall this month only.
- October 14** Regular monthly meeting.
- November 11** Regular monthly meeting.
- December 9** Regular monthly meeting.

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## Tips on packing that radio for safe shipping

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by Sonny Clutter

I'm sure many of you have received that long awaited set you purchased on eBay or from an ad in ARC and what a disappointment when you open the box and the set is in pieces. I would say this happens all too often because few sellers know how to pack for safe shipping. It's amazing that some feel all you have to do is use a little bubble wrap, throw it in a box, and it will arrive safely. I also send these instructions to those shipping an item to me. Here's the way I pack a radio to insure safe UPS or USPS transit. In more than 25 years of shipping radios, I have never had one damaged in shipping.

Chassis preparation: first I make sure the speaker and chassis have all their screws and bolts in place and are secure. Then take some news print or packing paper, take single sheets and crumple it up loosely and carefully stuff around all the tubes and fill the inside of the cabinet with this crumpled paper taking care not to place pressure on the speaker cone. If it's vulnerable, place a thick piece of paper around the center to prevent the paper from pressing against the cone (some speakers are fairly well protected with the framework). Take the line cord and wrap it with paper and stuff it inside the case to get it out of the way.

Prepare the radio: When you are done the inside of the case should be full, this prevents the tubes from bouncing out of their sockets and being damaged plus it puts an equalizing pressure on the inside of the cabinet. Next place the radio in a plastic bag and seal it up, this keeps packing debris and moisture from getting into the radio (as sometimes a package may get wet). Now cut and place a piece of cardboard over the speaker grill area to prevent damage to the grill work, cloth and speaker and tape it in place.

Appropriate first box: Find an appropriate sized box for the radio to fit loosely in. Float the set face down in this box with crumpled news print or some kind of soft packing material (I do not recommend bubble wrap) that will absorb shock when the set is dropped or tossed (and believe me it will be during shipping). Maintain at least an area of 1 1/2 - 2 inches of packing on all sides. mark the box so you know where the face of the radio is.

Second box: Now find another box and float the first box (face down) inside with a minimum of 2" of loose packing material on all sides such as Styrofoam peanuts or crumpled news print. News print crumpled to the tennis ball size is great packing material as it absorbs impact real well. Don't wrap in bubble wrap as this seems a good way to pack but it transfers the force of an impact to the radio, the idea is to have plenty of give so an impact will be absorbed by the packing material.

Note: If the set is large or heavy, make sure you use a double walled heavy duty box for the outer box. I will often use glue to make sure the flaps are secure and double tape the corners so that an impact will not burst the box. The idea of the outer box is to protect the inner box from damage, if the radio is packed properly in the inner box, it could be shipped in that box alone, that is if it were not dropped or thrown. If you pack the radio as recommended, the outer box can be severely damaged and the radio will survive.

Visit my Vintage Radio site @ <http://www.radiolaguy.com> <http://www.radiolaguy.com>

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## Roster Corrections

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If your club roster listing is in error as published in the July *Call Letter*, or if you want to add to or change any part of your listing, please contact me, Rick Walton, with your corrections.

Slight address change:

**Schmidt, Tom**

**R**

1730 Franklin Avenue

Astoria, OR 97103-3511



*Editor's note: This is an archive edition of "In the Shack" from the January, 1998, Call Letter.*

## Air Cell Ozarka

At the Dec. 1997 Christmas party and club meeting, Speed Feldschau had a 1928 OZARKA Model 89 Battery Set on display. A merry time was had by all at this event and some excellent radios were on display as usual, as at any of our meetings. But this particular OZARKA radio and the metal and "plaster cast" horn speaker with ornate stand that accompanied it was quite a sensation and both, seldom seen items. An inspection of the apparatus, especially inside the cabinet, told quite a story about what kind of modifications were made to keep a radio operating on batteries in let's say, the early 30's.

OZARKA was one of the more prolific "Sales Backed" radio companies during the 20's and early 30's. You ordered your OZARKA from a local door to door sales demonstrator, not in a store on a showroom floor. The OZARKA company and it's sales "drummers" were both fiercely territorial about their service areas and tended to cover many rural areas, thereby demonstrating their battery sets to many farmers who lived beyond the power lines. OZARKA was founded in 1922 by one J. Matheson Bell, of Chicago, a former merchandising manager for Montgomery Ward. Bell started the "Ozarka Plan", a sales and service program conducted by mail order to the local "factory representative" who was expected to buy the sets individually and sell them by home demonstration. The buyer also could rely on this person, always a local individual of good community standing, to service the set exclusively. The OZARKA Company kept track of its representatives and prospective customers by county names to identify the territories served. Bell claimed that he could teach the plan best to a man who previously knew nothing about radio and therefore had nothing to "unlearn"! The plan worked very well and by 1927 OZARKA had over 4400 local representatives. The company was somewhat innovative and made a good product. They offered a portable as early as May 1924 and had a self-contained horn speaker radio in early 1925. The company actually gained in business every year, up into and including the first couple of Depression years (VIKING), but mysteriously folded in 1932.

At the meeting, looking into Speed's OZARKA 89, I noticed two interesting things. First of all, I asked him if he found it locally and he said yes. The set just looked like it had been out on a farm since 1932 and then maybe, put in storage for many years untouched. Second of all, everything that had been done to the set inside looked like it was done many years ago. This included a modification that I would like to mention. Originally the set was designed for battery operation on the usual 5-volt filament system using type 201-A tubes. However, this radio contained all type 30 triodes with a type 31 power amplifier triode for the final audio stage. These 2-volt tubes were introduced around 1930, for battery sets using the new "Air Cell" battery rated at 2.5 volts. Judging from the amount of "crud" on the type 30's in Speed's set, this conversion was probably done back in this period of time. It was a very logical conversion. After all, the radio just needed 4 prong triodes - it cared not what the filament voltage needed to be. The Air Cell battery was extremely trouble free compared to dry cells, which were always running down, or to a bulky, messy 6-volt battery. It could be called a very typical conversion of the time and I suspect this was done to many older battery sets still in use in the 1930's.

What is an "Air Cell"? This revolutionary design was a product of considerable research to get a trouble free, constant voltage, filament battery. The battery used oxygen in the surrounding air as a depolarizer instead of the manganese oxide paste used to depolarize ordinary dry cells. A newly developed porous carbon plate extracted oxygen from the atmosphere and combined the new oxygen with hydrogen on a zinc electrode to form water inside the cell. This water then combined with a sodium hydroxide or caustic soda electrolyte that was pre-installed in the battery. The Air Cell was kept tightly sealed until put into use, providing a very fresh battery when opened. The internal resistance was kept to a minimum by this process and the battery, rated at 2.5 volts new, would never fall below 2 volts, the rating of the type 30 tube, until just before discharge. The cell would then suffocate by losing it's ability to suck in oxygen. After that, you tossed it. The Air Cell was said to provide 0.25 amperes for 2400 hours and supply an almost constant voltage until it expired. The cost was claimed to be half that of equivalent dry cells for a given radio set. The constant voltage feature was designed to take out the "guesswork" and wrong voltage problems associated with filament rheostats. New battery radios were built, just for Air Cells. Eveready used the name Air Cell, others used "1 Year A Battery".

Today, the real challenge would be to find an Air Cell that had never been used, break open the seals and see how well it worked! Speed decided at the meeting that he was going to keep the OZARKA after all. If you find a new Air Cell...give Speed a call...give ME a call! You must be in a time warp!

QSO you next time.... IN THE SHACK

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

1. Book, RADIO MANUFACTURERS OF THE 1920'S, Vol. 2, Alan Douglas, 1989, Vestal Press, Vestal, NY: Ozarka Information.
2. Book, RADIO PHYSICS COURSE, 2nd Edition, Alfred A. Ghirardi, 1933, Radio & Technical Publishing Co., New York, NY: Air Cell Battery Information.

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# Voilà

*...new and recent finds by NVRs members*

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by Sonny Clutter

**Ron Hershey**, just added a **Philco 14LZX “lazy X”** made in 1932-33, a **Heraldryne** battery set made by Brenard Mfg. Co of Iowa City IA. plus a **Airline 62-131** shouldered tombstone made in 1935.

**Neil McKie**, found 60 - 70 feet of new **Andrews LDF4-50A Helix** for \$40 and a **Motorola 460 MHz base station** for \$10.00. These were found at the Sierra Nevada Amateur Radio Society Hamfest / Swap-meet in Reno Nevada a few days this month.

**Sonny Clutter**, a rare **“GRACO” model TA-2**, 3 tube regenerative battery set made by “Grays Harbor Radio co.”, Aberdeen, WA. I just finished restoration of this neat little set although I’ve actually had it for a few years but it was in poor condition. It is now a permanent part of my collection. Pictures will be posted on my “Show and Tell” page soon. If any of you have any info on this radio or company, I would appreciate hearing from you.

**Rick Walton**: a **Philco PT-12**, wooden case, 1939? Found in an antique store in Pomeroy, Washington. From an antique store in Dodgeville, Wisconsin, three tubes: two **Arcturus** loctal tubes, 7C6 and 7Y4, and a **National Union** octal 1H5.

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## Swap Shop

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**FOR SALE**: Thousands of tubes, hundreds of radio parts, panels, meters, surplus, etc. R5-D3 electronic surplus, Bob Lee, 9770 S.E. Stanley Ave., Milwaukie, OR 97222, (503) 774-6560

**BUY, SELL, & TRADE**: Vintage Radio, Early Television and Hi-Fi.

Wanted: Tubes, Parts and whatever you might have related to early radio & TV. Visit my web-site at: < <http://www.radiolaguy.com> > or e-mail me at: < [sonny@radiolaguy.com](mailto: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:** \* I bought a junker basket-case Radiola 18 from my barber and restored it. When he saw and heard the finished gem he had to have it back, so we made a trade that involved a lot of haircuts. However, unbeknownst to me, my wife had gotten attached to it and its fancy 100A speaker and was unpleasantly surprised by the missing radio. So, to patch things up, I bought a Radiola 17 from Charlie Kent at the May Swap Meet. All it needs are cabinet parts: the two small brass escutcheons and the lid prop. Can anyone help me to find parts, a junk cabinet, or a whole non-working set? Gordon Ormsby, Corvallis, gormsby@trixiseng.com, 541-753-6398

**FOR SALE:** \*\*A small collection of vintage radios belonging to Bill Bietelspach, a friend of Jerry Talbott's:  
1932 Philco Grandfather Clock radio, 70 chassis.\$500  
1947 Philco 47-1227, console radio / phono. \$150  
1927 Kolster AC console Model 6J. \$200  
1940 Zenith console, Model 10S464. \$300  
1931 Crosley console, Model 124. \$150  
1936 RCA 5T tombstone.\$150  
1928 AK 40 (2) both for \$125  
1924 AK 20 (short version) \$100  
1925 AK 20 (long version) \$100  
Please do not call until after June 12th. Ask for Bill at 503-648-0237.

**FOR SALE:** Cabinet for a Silvertone Table-R/P, Model No. 7210. It has the record player with the crank and it winds up and turns fine. No radio included. Looking for an offer.  
I also have a wood battery box w/o lid for the Voltamp Battery No. 12 "Champion". The label is still attached. Contact Larry Beaver at 503-669-0358.

## Leads and Needs

Radiolaguy's web page is full of lots of information on early radio, TV and also provides lots of links to other valuable info resources relating to the radio collecting hobby; it's not just a "for sale" site. Be sure and visit the site often. One of the services offered is pictures and information on the entire RCA "Radiola" line from 1921 to 1931 and my "show and tell" page.

