

The Jersey Broadcaster

NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW JERSEY ANTIQUE RADIO CLUB

May 2001

Volume 7 Issue 5



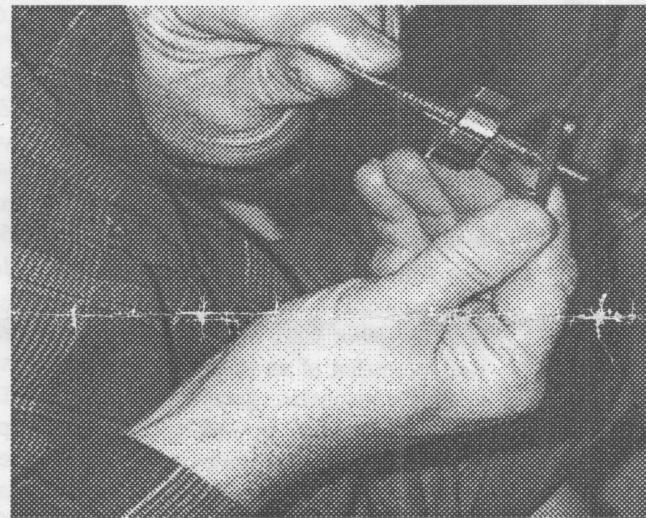
MEETING/ ACTIVITY NOTES

Reported by Marv Beeferman

NJARC's May meeting was well-attended and old business was dispensed with quickly by President Phil Vourtsis. We enjoyed a surprise visit by past President Jim Whartenby who updated us on his radio collecting adventures in Arkansas and progress on establishing a permanent home for his collection.

Ray Chase gave us a report on his and Joe Bentrovato's radio history presentation at Summit New Jersey's Old Guard meeting and his observations are offered in this month's *Broadcaster*. Ray also gave us an an InfoAge update where restoration work is still continuing. However, some specifics are taking shape. It was announced on April 14th (with an official press announcement to follow) that, based on a gift from the New Jersey Broadcasters Association, plans are being formulated to return the National Broadcasters Hall of Fame to Camp Evans. In its original form when it was located in an old bank building in Freehold from 1977 to 1984, the museum contained a unique collection of artifacts, exhibits, displays, recordings (close to 45,000 radio shows), films and memorabilia (vintage radios, microphones, photographs, etc.) which portrayed the history of broadcasting and broadcasting celebrities.

During its residence in Freehold, member Mark Mittleman was associated with the museum and its curator Fred Shay and founder Art Shreiber. For new members who are not familiar with the InfoAge project and NJARC's connection, information may be found at www.infoage.org.



A uniquely designed rheostat? The innards of some rare vacuum tube? Read on...

these instruments of joy and pleasure can have a way of taking over an environment originally intended for human habitability (with perhaps some accommodation for a dog or cat). Jon said jokingly that you could use his present house as a basis for comparison to appease your spouse's con-

cerns over radio overpopulation..."look honey, it doesn't look half as bad as our place!"

The membership viewed a 10-minute video provided by Rich Weingarten which he recorded from the Home and Garden show featuring Steve Kushman's (California Historical Radio Society) radio collection. Although somewhat basic, the video provided a good overview of a comprehensive collection covering crystal to deco and would make a worthwhile introductory medium for introducing non-collectors to the hobby.

The main event of the evening was another enthusiastically received "show-and-tell" session with photos of some of the examples shown on the pages that follow. I always like to give credit to those members who took the time to contribute:

- Al Klase showed a newly acquired Federal field intensity meter which measures signal strength and coverage. The unit is basically a superhet receiver with a loop antenna using vibrator-driven 6 volt metal tubes.

Frank Feczko displayed a Philco 46-350, 6-tube superhet receiver from

THE JERSEY BROADCASTER is the newsletter of the New Jersey Antique Radio Club (NJARC) which is dedicated to preserving the history and enhancing the knowledge of radio and related disciplines. Dues are \$15 per year and meetings are held the second Friday of each month at the Grace Lutheran Church, corner of Route 33 and Main Street in Freehold N.J. The Editor or NJARC is not liable for any other use of the contents of this publication.

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1946 which took second place in category D of our recent broadcast band DX contest.

- Ben Tongue exhibited a lab prototype of the Blonder-Tongue BVD 44 UHF converter. This broadband TV amplifier covered channels 2-13, was tunnel-diode based and operated from a 1-1/2 volt "D" cell. The unit was first enclosed in a metal case because of the high cost of a plastic case and was discontinued when GE stopped supplying tunnel diodes.
- Steve Walko showed a 1946 Bendix 526C. Although relatively common, its color combinations of green and black as well as its shape are striking in Catalin radio design.
- Dave Sica displayed and talked about a figurine of Saint Clare who is considered the patron saint of television (her patronage also includes telegraphs, telephones and television writers). The fact that she is sometimes pictured holding a monstrance (a vessel in which the Host is held) is not related to this patronage. One story relates that toward the end of her life, when she was too ill to attend mass, an image of the service would display on the wall of her cell. In another story, in 1958, Pope Pius XII, realizing the power of television, made Clare its patron Saint because of a vision she had in bed one Christmas Eve where she witnessed mass and the manger scene.
- Bob Allerton provided an interesting story concerning his friend and Freehold neighbor Carl McDurmey who was somewhat of an inventor. Prior to Carl's invention, generators used on bicycles for powering lights would often blow out bulbs or not illuminate them if the rider went too fast or not enough voltage was available at low speed to power the lamp. Carl invented a generator with a floating armature where spring tension would allow the armature to move in and out of the fixed field as speed varied and thus provide a relatively constant output. He received \$10,000 for the patent and two cents as royalties on each unit sold. Carl went on to form the "Make-a Lite" company where he also offered a
- Richard Brill talked about his Deutscher Kleinempfänger or "Peoples Set" radio which was produced by a conglomerate of radio manufacturers in 1938. With its centralized Eagle-clasping Swastika emblem and Swastika marked tubes, it was constructed to receive only stations within the Fatherland, and is now known after Hitler's Propaganda Minister as the Goebbels Schnauze ("Big Mouth"). Richard noted that 10 million were produced and sold for \$3 to non-party members; party members received them free. Richard also noted that BBC broadcasts were intercepted and retransmitted through Berlin in a modified format and an owner faced dire consequences if his radio was found to be modified.
- Walter Jacobsen showed an Airline radio that was originally priced at \$75. But after being in the type of "fire sale" we are all too familiar with, the price came down: "Does it work?" "Don't know...let me plug it in." "Wow....look at all that smoke!" "Ten dollars...as is."
- Steve Goulart described a pair of Zenith shortwave sets; a Zenith Universal model 6G601 "Clipper" portable with a serial number below 1000 and a 1956 Trans-Oceanic model B-600 which he bought as-is for \$30.
- Jon Butz Fiscina displayed the well-known Zenith upside-down chassis radio and a Majestic Electric Radio sign.
- Did you know that Robert Flory passed the radio telephone operator's exam in his younger years? It's true, and he has the license to prove it.
- George Shields described a recently acquired 1933 Mende Bakelite set which he noted as "very desirable" because of its lighted, "propeller scale" dial. This regenerative radio, providing LW, MW and SW reception, used positive feedback through its 2nd RF stage for better tuning. George also showed a handbook which provided the location, wattage and technical aspects of German ra-

spring-powered flashlight that would run for 10 minutes per winding.

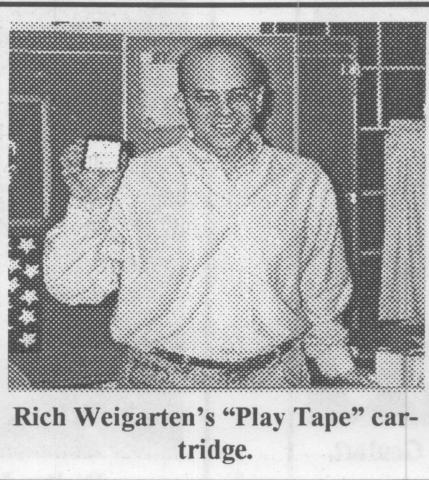
dio stations of this era. Considering the greater power output of some of these stations (100 - 125 kw), George noted that U.S. radios required a more sensitive front end to receive the lower power transmissions of this country.

- Rich Weingarten brought in some 2-track tape players from 1967 which utilized "Play Tape" cartridges of 8 to 24 minutes duration. The cartridges sold for \$1 to \$3 and their players ran from \$19.95 to \$29.95. With cross-talk and azimuth problems, fidelity was poor and the product quickly went the same way as the 8-track system.
- Phil Vourtsis showed a 1949 45-console player (the first year for 45 RPM records) which used RCA's "Golden Throat" radio. The beautifully restored piece holds fond memories for Phil; originally found as a basket case in Englishtown, the piece was restored to its original luster under the guidance and patience of NJARC founder Tony Flanagan.

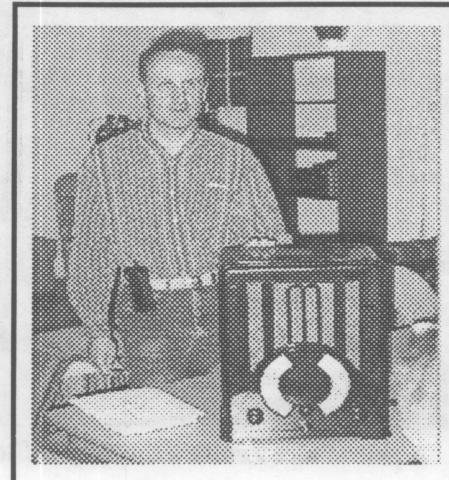
Although an occasional drizzle dampened some spirits in the early hours, the sun eventually took hold and provided a pleasant ending to our April swapmeet. Some 45 vendors took part in the activities which went rather smoothly with the help of four transceivers that the club recently acquired. A club table manned by Marty Friedman and stocked with some goodies by John Dilks brought in some extra revenue for the club. Thanks to all the following volunteers (and even those who couldn't make it) for their support: Richard Lee, Ray Chase, Marty Friedman, Jeff Kammen, Dave Snellman, Sal Brisindri, Randy Gill, Phil Vourtsis and Mario Volpe.

Your editor recently received a card from Richard Brill who attended England's annual Radio Exposition. Richard said that London is expensive but his suite at the Langham Hilton was "super". He will be returning with a "few unusual radios" and perhaps some interesting stories from one of the countries where it all began.

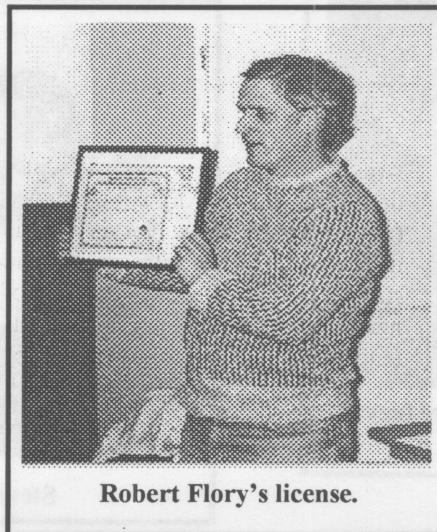
"Last Issue" stickers accompany this month's *Broadcaster* for members with unpaid dues. Please contact Marsha Simkin (609-660-8160) if you feel this is in error.



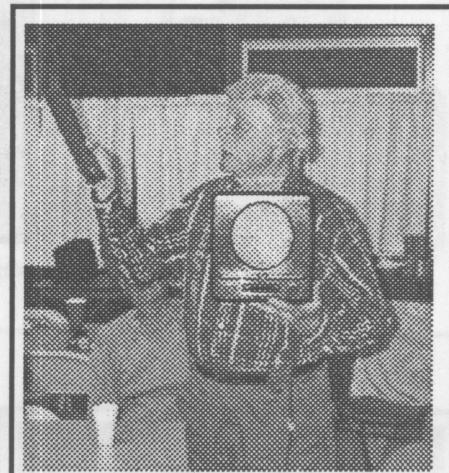
Rich Weigarten's "Play Tape" cartridge.



George Shield's 1933 Mende.



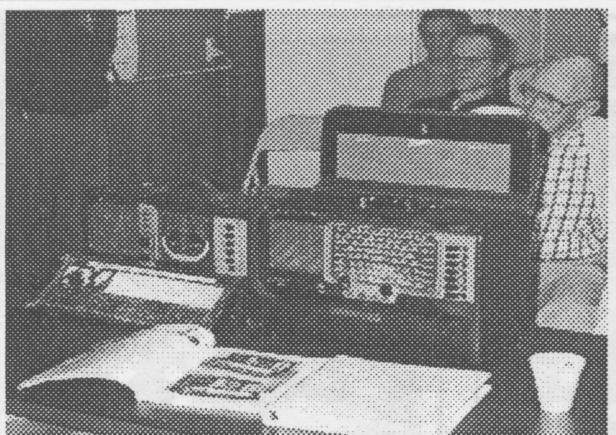
Robert Flory's license.



Jon Butz Fiscina's Majestic sign.



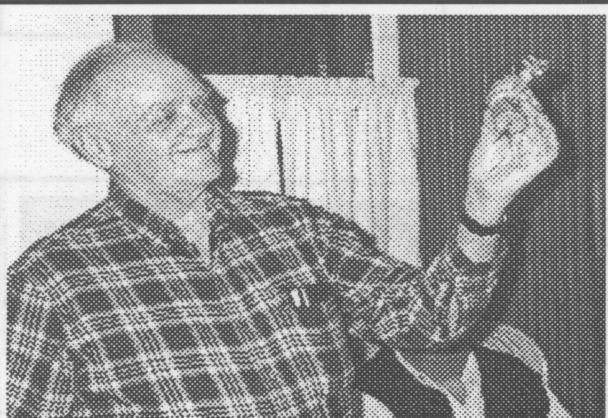
Richard Brill's Deutscher Kleinempfänger.



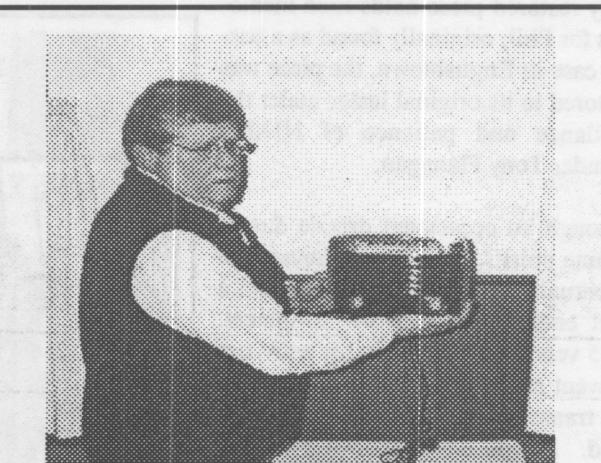
A pair of nice Zenith's courtesy of Steve Goulart.



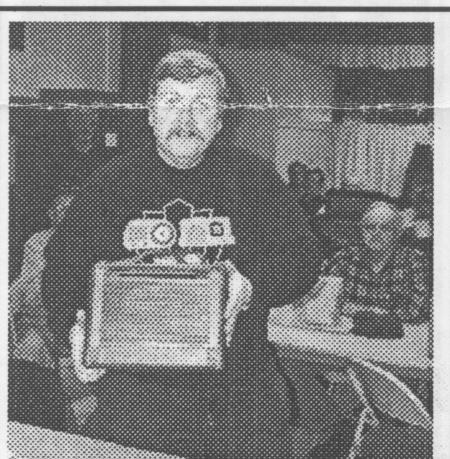
Walter Jacobsen's "fire sale" Airline.



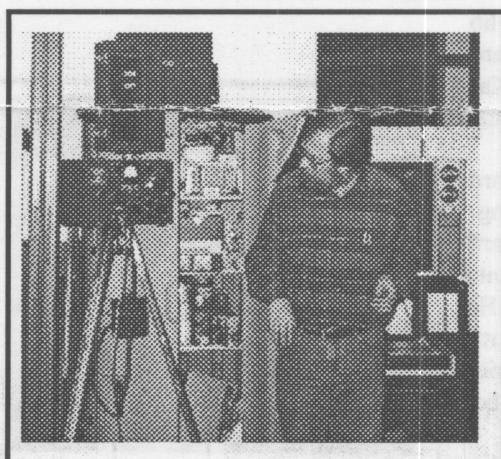
An inventor's reality - a floating armature bicycle generator.



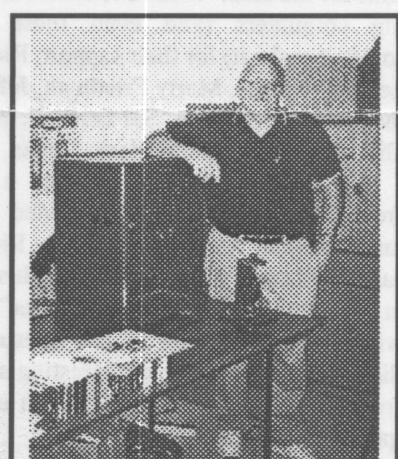
Steve Walko's Bendix 526C.



Frank Fecko's Philco 46-350

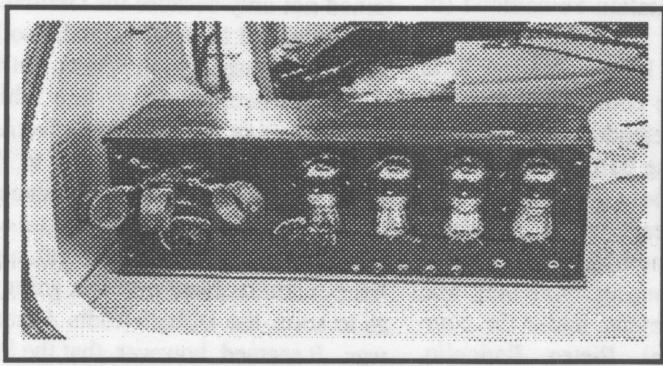
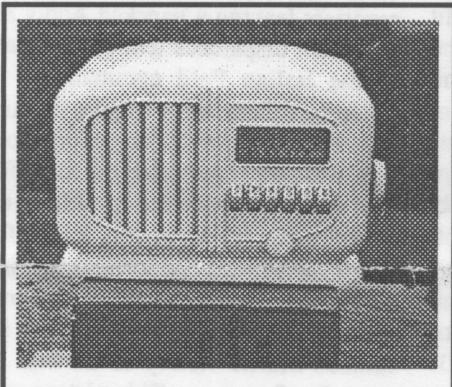
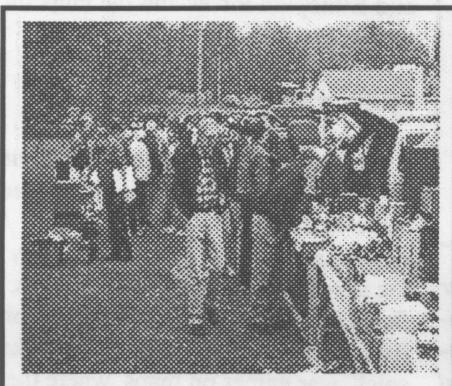


Al Klase describes a recently acquired Federal field intensity meter.



Phil Vourtsis completed this 45-RPM phono/radio console restoration with the help of NJARC founder Tony Flanagan.

OUR SPRING SWAPMEET



OLD GUARD MEETS OLD RADIOS

By Ray Chase

On Tuesday morning, April 3rd, Joe Bentrovato and myself conducted a presentation on the development of radio and radio broadcasting before the "Old Guard" of Summit NJ which meets at the New Providence Municipal Building. The Old Guard is a 70 year-old organization of retired men that meets every week. The average age of the group is over 70 and attendance is over 100 each week. Attendance for the radio presentation was 109 and several guests showed up as a result of local newspaper coverage. The group is exceptional in that most members are retired professional and business men.

When I was first requested to do this presentation, I was told that the group has a dress code and all attendees were required to wear a coat and tie to the meeting. This presented no problem to me and when I asked Joe Bentrovato to assist me, as he has done several times in the past, I mentioned the dress code. Joe's response was "I'll dress as Ronald McDonald if it will help promote the club,"...how's that for dedication!

Prior to the official start of the meeting, we set up a display of sets from various vintages...an RC, Radiola IIIA, Atwater Kent 20 with horn speaker along with appropriate storage and B battery displays, a Victoreen kit superhet, a Philco 90 cathedral, a 40's portable radio, some sample radio books and hand-outs of club literature. We also brought in a nice deco 1938 Sparton wood console which was working and through which we played tapes of old radio shows. Prior to the meeting, there was much interest in the display and many reminiscences of individual experiences with radio.

My formal talk took about 40 minutes and was very well-received. There were numerous questions and comments and the moderator had to cut it off after about 20 minutes of questions. Clearly the audience was well-informed and was very attentive. A good time was had by all.

RADIO'S NEW VENTURE - THE ITALO-ETHIOPIAN WAR

Edited by Marv Beeferman

The following article is based on "War of the Words" by Tom Kneitel which appeared in the July 1985 edition of Popular Communications and was suggested by NJARC Vice President Richard Lee.

Almost forgotten in the aftermath of WWII, which was to follow upon its heels, the Italo-Ethiopian War must be viewed in retrospect as being a proving ground, not only for communications technology but also for a shortwave war of words that was eventually taken up by the rest of the world. It became the basis for much of what is still heard today on the international broadcast bands.

The Italo-Ethiopian War

The Italo-Ethiopian War was fought between Italy and Ethiopia in 1935 and 1936. Italy's dictator, Benito Mussolini, began the war in order to gain a source of raw materials for Italian industry. More importantly, he hoped to turn the attention of Italians away from growing problems within Italy. After various attempts by the League of Nations to bring about a peaceful settlement of border problems between Ethiopia and Italian Somaliland had failed, war broke out in October 1935 when Italian forces invaded from Eritrea (in the north) and Italian Somaliland (in the south).

The mechanized Italian army had little opposition from the poorly equipped and trained Ethiopian defenders. Village after village fell under the Italian invasion and Italian bombs made a shambles of the flimsy communities. After a valiant struggle for seven months, Emperor Haile Selasse fled the country. On May 5th, 1936, the Italian forces, under the command of Marshal Pietro Badoglio, marched into Addis Ababa and Mussolini annexed Ethiopia to Italy and proclaimed

the king of Italy as emperor. Five years later the Italians were defeated by British and Ethiopian forces and the emperor returned to the throne.

Military Communications

At the beginning of the 20th Century, an army moved blindly, until its feelers came into contact with the enemy. And, when scouts found the enemy, they had the job of getting back with the news. Officers worked out "problems of visibility" from contour maps and played "kriegspiel" war games on maps, where they set up the enemy's forces when the umpire told them that the enemy was in sight.

It is true that field telegraphs had been invented; but they tied the army down with miles of wire and, when the wire ran out (as it did with the Russians at Tannenburg in 1914), the army broke apart. Radio was only in its infancy in WW I and put to limited use. But in 1935, for the first time in history, there was a mechanical army equipped with two-way communications for its aircraft, vehicles and various detachments. A general could know in minutes what his scouts were able to sight. American newspaper reporters leaving a wrecked Addis Ababa sent back dispatches telling of the ability of the Italian field commanders using portable transceivers to give instant orders to specific units no matter how far they were separated from the main forces. The reporters marveled at radio's use in coordinating the advancing Italian forces.

In WWI, the importance of a well functioning communications system was impressively demonstrated in 1914 by the famous Marne victory of General Joffre over the Germans. This victory was attained not only because the Germans had over-extended themselves and also had a defective transportation system, but due to their communications system which at that time wasn't functioning effectively.

The Ethiopians attempted to mimic Joffre's tactics, permitting the enemy (as did Joffre) to freely advance to and occupy important points and then breaking their lines of communication, even going so far as to sever the Djibuti-Addis Ababa railway. It seemed, however, that the Italians had also learned from the Marne battle and were careful not to be strung out



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without immediately setting up their radio communications. Nothing the Ethiopians could do proved effective in severing radio communications.

The efficacy of two-way radio communications during war had been proven and would, from that point on, take its place in history.

The War of Words

Like most European nations, Italy had established international shortwave broadcasting facilities by the early 1930's. Italy's main station on shortwave was 12RO, an experimental transmitter which (in late 1934) was operating on 5550, 5725, 6070, 6970, 9630, and 9780 kHz. The station had some English programming beamed to the United States as well as programs in other languages beamed to various areas of the world.

Essentially, it seemed to be done in a rather half-hearted manner. The station did offer QSL cards, but they weren't very attractive and, what's worse, the operators of 12RO (E.I.A.R., which stood for Ente Italiano Audizioni Radiofoniche) in Rome were indifferent to answering reception reports. In a DX magazine of the day, one listener noted that in 1932 he had sent a report to 12RO. After waiting for two months for a QSL, he wrote again. Still no answer. In all, he wrote no less than nine letters, which included return postage. Each was written after an interval of about a month until his anger reached the boiling point.

Finally, he wrote a letter to Premier Benito Mussolini, explaining that nine letters had been sent to his government-run station without any reply. Moreover, many other listeners were also fed up with the station's discourteous indifference.

Five months later he received a QSL card mailed to him by the Italian Consul General in New York, extending great regret for the delay. By that time, most listeners had blacklisted 12RO and ceased to even bother requesting their QSL card.

This is mentioned to bring out the contrast with 12RO's activities and attitudes commencing in late 1934 when the border skirmishes began with Ethiopia. By this time, with the Ethiopians complaining to the League of Nations, Mussolini obviously realized that 12RO could be used as an ef-

fective tool to explain his position and curry popular support from the nations of the world.

In an effort to build the popularity of 12RO with the world's listeners, the plain looking Italian language QSL was scrapped. A sharp new QSL, was made up with a beautiful Art Deco motif, and it was in English!. Moreover, Mussolini hired an English-speaking correspondent to promptly respond to all letters from listeners. Listeners quickly responded to 12RO's new-found friendliness and were eager to tune in to the station, which offered lengthy explanations to the world seeking to justify the Italian military actions along the Ethiopian border. Many new frequencies were added and transmitter power was increased.

Ethiopia, on the other hand, had no shortwave broadcasting stations. Emperor Haile Selasse did, however, hastily establish several stations at Akaki (on the outskirts of Addis Ababa) for the primary purpose of accommodating many war correspondents wanting to send communiqués to their news services.

Selasse soon added many additional frequencies to his "Imperial Ethiopian Radio Stations," not only to use for point-to-point operations, but also for impromptu direct broadcasts to the world's listeners. These transmissions consisted of highly emotional pleas for military, medical, and other aid from the outside world. His people were suffering from the terrors of war, and they were starving. Interestingly, despite the fact that Selasse's transmitters were not broadcasting stations in the true sense of the term (nor were they operating on international broadcasting frequencies), the Ethiopians issued QSL cards. Selasse was copying the Italians!

For the Ethiopians, the broadcasts produced little in the way of a world audience and even less along the lines of assistance. 12RO had powerful transmitters (at one time 12RO was claiming 120 kW), sophisticated beam antennas, fortified with a large staff of professional wordsmiths. The Imperial Ethiopian Radio Stations were on offbeat "ute" frequencies, had a simple antenna system, a puny 3.5 kW transmitter, and a staff consisting entirely of technicians ill-prepared to compete with the barrage of profession-

ally prepared propaganda oratory being sent out by the Italian station. Moreover, the Italians were monitoring the Ethiopian stations and, while they permitted the war dispatches to go through, many of the appeals for aid were zapped by the Italians in one of the earliest instances of deliberate broadcast jamming. And, perhaps, in the final analysis, the world itself (only 15 years after the "war to end all wars" and coping with the worldwide financial panic and economic depression that began in 1929) simply wasn't very interested in the plight of a remote African kingdom whose existence or non-existence made little difference.

Fact was that, if anything, Ethiopia - with its funny little emperor and ragtag army - was a laughing stock to much of the world. Newspapers were filled with facetious Haile Selasse caricatures and he was mentioned in several novelty songs (for instance, "A Shanty In Old Shanty town").

As insignificant a thread as the Italo-Ethiopian war seems now, in the complex fabric of world events woven since the mid-1930's, it was this incident that gave two-way radio communications its first real proving ground in war. Furthermore, this war (and the Spanish Civil War that began in 1936) blazed the way for the use of international broadcasting as a powerful tool for the dissemination of propaganda, persuasion, politics, and psychological warfare - an intense war of words between the world's nations. It's a war that once begun, has never ended.



"BUT WHERE'S THE REMOTE?"

NOTE: Since no new advertising was received this month, CONNECTIONS will not appear in this issue.