

# The Jersey Broadcaster

NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW JERSEY ANTIQUE RADIO CLUB

June 2005

Volume 11 Issue 6



## MEETING/ ACTIVITY NOTES

**Reported by Richard Lee**

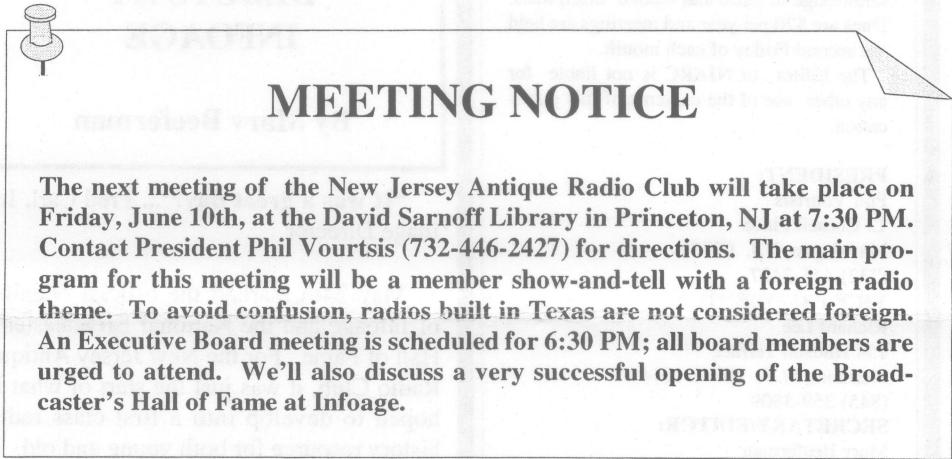
*Thanks to VP Richard Lee for the thorough notes he took at the May meeting...Ed.*

Because of the pending DVHRC swap meet at Kutztown, our NJARC meeting was moved back to the first Friday in May. We do hope no one showed up for a meeting on May 13th!

President Phil Vourtsis, opened the meeting with old business. The Trenton Computer Fest, went well - 150 NJARC flyers were given out. Sal Brisindi reported that the repair clinic was busy but productive. The next repair clinic will be July 16th at the Sarnoff Library. Ray Chase reported about the IEEE exhibit and how it was well received by the public and employees. Ray displayed an interesting find. What looked to be an experimental receiver, turned out to be a radio made by Wheeler Co. It may be the earliest receiver to have AVC! The set is destined for Infoage.

New business issues concerned the 70th anniversary broadcast from Armstrong's Alpine Tower on the 11th and 12th of June. Steve Hemphill will be transmitting some historic programs from his rebuilt GE Phasitron. The "Old FM" frequency, 42.8 MHz, is to be resurrected via special permission from the FCC. Technical Coordinator, Al Klase, gave a timely talk on how you CAN-NOT use your fire/police scanners to receive this broadcast.

FM transmission for ordinary broadcasting of music is called "wide-band" FM. The transmission used for police and fire company communications is called "narrow-band" FM. The listed frequency of an FM transmitter is its frequency with no



modulation applied, and is called its "center" or "resting" frequency. Modulation causes this frequency to deviate from center. The amount of deviation is dependent on volume - the louder the sound, the farther from center the frequency deviates. The number of times it deviates is determined by the frequency of the sound.

and monitors) receive a wide-band signal, part of the signal is not accepted by the receiver. Above a certain volume, the signal is simply "cut off" or "clipped." When the audio signal is clipped, it causes a harsh erratic sound. Only the softest sounds can be heard.

Dave Sica, the NJARC website coordinator, began his video presentation with a vintage film on the making of 78rpm phonograph records. A lot more complicated than one imagined! He continued with an abridged edition of his video saga, Documenting the 2005 Early Television Foundation Convention in Hilliard, Ohio (see this month's *Broadcaster*).

V. P. Richard Lee reported on the July 30th NJARC swapmeet. He stated that the size of the P.A.L. facility in Parsippany will result in the need for more volunteers than at Hazlet. He also said that he, and Dave Sica, were coordinating an advertisement campaign for the swap meet.

We had a large end-of-meeting auction of Ham/Radio "stuff" donated by member Tom Provost, who said "none of this goes back home with me!"... And nothing did.

Hope you all had a great Memorial Day. NJARC member Rob Flory reports that he was at the USS New Jersey with his US Navy TBX W.W.II portable set. He set up to allow visitors to talk to the ship on 3885 KHz AM.



## WE'RE ON OUR WAY!

Here, we are concerned with volume, and the amount of deviation. A wide-band receiver is able to receive and use the full frequency deviation [as per FCC rules] that comes from the transmitter. Narrow-band transmission and reception is designed for much less frequency deviation. When a narrow-band receivers (scanners

**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 \$20 per year and meetings are held the second Friday of each month.

The Editor or NJARC is not liable for any other use of the contents of this publication.

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## NATIONAL BROADCASTER'S HALL OF FAME DEBUTS AT INFOAGE

By Marv Beeferman

**"It was a great day!"... Fred Carl, Infoage Director**

May 24th marked the official opening of Infoage and the National Broadcaster's Hall of Fame. For the New Jersey Antique Radio Club, it was just the start of what is hoped to develop into a first class radio history resource for both young and old. It also brings to reality a long time dream of the club's founder and former President, Tony Flanagan; I can picture him approving our efforts with his typical "thanks guys" grin.

Because of the devotion and time of a core of club members, the cottage was in great shape to greet Tuesday's visitors. The dining room contained material from the birth of wireless through the 1920's anchored by a pre-WW1 amateur station, the beginning's of an early tube display, a hands-on crystal set demo and a working AK20 three-dialer with horn speaker and documentation. The living room was dedicated to the Golden Age (30's and 40's) with examples provided by Phil Vourtsis and a good-playing 1936 GE tombstone on loan from N3FRQ. There's also a ham-modified Signal Corps BC-348 that is tough enough to let people fool with and "turn the dials."

Another room was set up by Al Klase to provide hands-on demonstrations of radio fundamentals. Al and Peggy Reynolds were also instrumental in installing an outdoor active antenna connected to a multi-set coupler which can accommodate 32 radios via individual CATV-style cables. A local signal from a CD player is fed into this "cable-radio" system on 1330 KHz.

The walls were decorated with colorful posters and pictures to fill in some of the open spaces. Marsha Simkin was instrumental in providing curtains to give the cottage a vintage look. The work that Marsha did on the bathroom decorations (window curtain and shower curtain with a

miniature radio pattern) was described by Fred Carl as "icing on the cake."

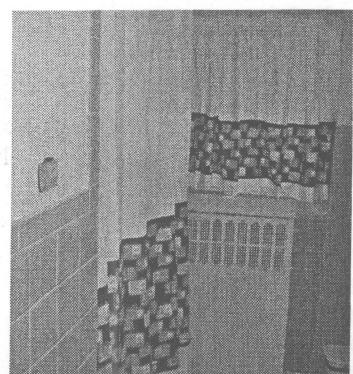
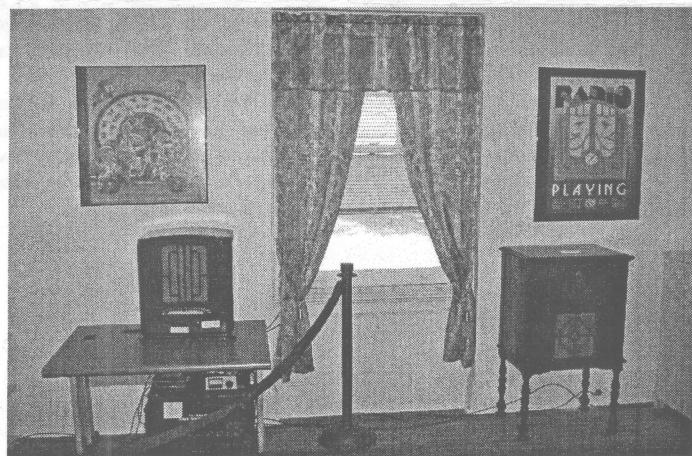
A first-hand account of the opening was provided by NJARC Trustee Ray Chase:

"Yesterday, cottage #2 at Infoage was officially opened and I for one was impressed at the crowd that turned out. I counted over 30 entries in the guest book and enjoyed talking with many of the guests. Many club members have been involved in this endeavor but my personal thanks go to Al Klase who organized and set up the technical aspects of the displays and to Marsha Simkin who, as the Martha Stewart of the club, did a fabulous job sprucing up the interior. We have just started to make use of the NBHF artifacts and there is much more to be done, but we are off to a fine start thanks to the participation of many members. I urge all of you who have not seen the results to try to make arrangements to do so...you will be impressed with the progress."

The NBHF opening was not the only event of the day. At 3 PM, visitors were invited to move east on Marconi Road to the Project Diana/TIROS site for hands-on science demonstrations under the historic satellite tracking antenna. The site hosted the National Science Center Mobile Discovery Center (MDC). Housed in an 18-wheeler, the mobile center travels across the country, presenting programs designed to show young people that studying science and math is fun as well as essential to their future. The program used numerous physical science demonstrations (including a Van De Graff generator, Plasma Ball and Tesla coils) to actively engage students in the learning process.

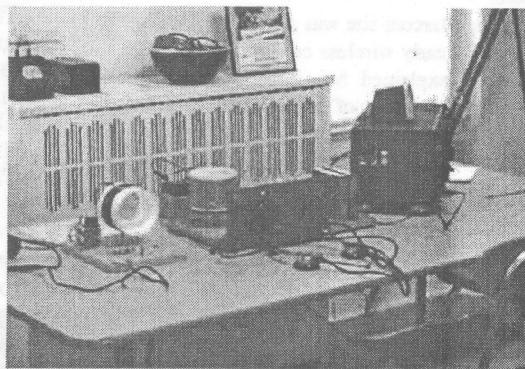
Other students were shown how communications and electronics have progressed in the last 100 years with wireless demonstrations by members of the Ocean-Monmouth Amateur Radio Club. Infoage volunteers also showed students a piece of the ENIAC computer, core memories from 1970, early integrated circuits, a NASA Apollo flight computer, and how engineers keep making computers faster and less expensive.

A great first step, but there is much more to do and we could use your help. Even 8 hours a year would be appreciated - that's close to 1500 club manhours!



LEFT: Marsha Simkin's radio-themed bathroom ensemble.

RIGHT: Al "Klasenstein's" radio laboratory.



# Radio museum opens at former site of Camp Evans

By Mike Gray

A museum dedicated to the history of radio opened on the grounds of Camp Evans on Tuesday afternoon, when the National Broadcasters Hall of Fame Radio History Collection opened at 1 p.m.

Located in the Marconi Station Engineer's Cottage on the grounds of the 190-acre site, a former military research facility, the exhibit is part of the InfoAge Learning Science-History Center.

The exhibits displayed within the three-room museum trace the development of radio, starting with a working telegraph and ending with a collection of antique radios from the 1920's to 1940's.

The history of radio is covered in one room with models, reproductions and informative placards which describe keynote figures in radio history, including Alexander Graham Bell and Heinrich Hertz. Guglielmo Marconi's contributions are also featured, prominently, in the exhibits.

Al Klase, a member of the New Jersey Antique Radio Club, was on-hand to give an informative history lesson on the development of modern radio.

"From Morse, Bell, and Hertz, Marconi gets inspired, and used the Hertz principle to make the wireless telegraph," said Mr. Klase, referring to Mr. Hertz's discovery of electromagnetic radiation and building a machine that produced radio waves in 1888. Capitalizing on Mr. Hertz's discoveries, Mr. Marconi's development of the practical wireless telegraph system came the eventual development of radio.

"This Marconi site was a receiver site for early wireless communications," explained Mr. Klase. "It had 300 kilowatts of power, and

was from broadcasts of the transatlantic circuit, starting in New Brunswick, going to Wales, and back here [to the Marconi site], it became very important during World War I for communications."

"He helped shape the world we live in," he added.

Among other features of the developmental history section of the museum is a working crystal radio set and a display of a pre-World War I amateur radio broadcast "station", which tooks up only a few feet of shelf space.

In the other section of the museum featured vintage radios from the 1920's to 1940's, also known as the "golden age" of radio. Phil Vourtsis, president of the New Jersey Antique Radio Club,

explained some of the finer points of the radios on display.

"Most of the radios were brown and made of either wood or bakelite," explained Mr. Vourtsis.

A visit to the museum gives a good representation to the style of America in the early 20th century, as both the materials used and aesthetic composition the radios were designed in are representative of Art Deco, a popular style during that period in American history.

Among classic radios on display are a Philco model, which Mr. Vourtsis explained was one of the most popular radio manufacturers of the 1930s and 1940s, and the Zenith TransOceanic, a complicated portable radio made out of bakelite and in the same approximate

size and shape of an accordian case.

A replica of a Spartan model radio, a 1930s radio made out of glass, is also on display. Explained Mr. Vourtsis, an original model of this radio goes for \$5,000 in the market.

The museum is also home to a collection of antique microphones, as part of a National Broadcasters Hall of Fame [NBHF] exhibit.

"We were asked to be the curators of the NBHF microphones," explained Mr. Vourtsis, "along with the antique radios."

The radio museum is part of what the InfoAge Science-History Learning Center hopes to develop into a much larger information facility at Camp Evans.

## Camp Evans coming alive

Over the past decade, Camp Evans — the former headquarters of the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Co. of America and the Army's center of radar development during World War II — has fallen into disrepair. But new signs of life on the site offer hope that the camp's important role in U.S. history won't be forgotten.

Part of the property in Wall is being developed as a museum highlighting the history of technology. Where better to learn about it than a place so much of it was developed?

Last week, the public and some area students got a sneak peak at the Infoage Science-History Center's planned hands-on science exhibits, displays on the evolution of computers, its National Broadcasters Hall of Fame and NASA education center. The Army donated 17 acres — with a promise of 20 more — to the center.

Infoage is the brainchild of Wall resident Fred Carl, a computer programmer and former science teacher. He and about 30 volunteers are working to rehabilitate buildings on the 190-acre site, hoping to someday rival the Liberty Science Center in Jersey City.

They've got their work cut out for them. Much of the 100,000 square feet of building space at Fort Monmouth Evans Area, shut down following a 1993 Base Realignment and Closure plan, is dilapidated. But their vision is clear — they hope to open the center in five to seven years. Costs are estimated at up to \$5 million.

The camp is showing other signs of life, with New Jersey Coastal Communiversity using part of the property for classes and Wall's Little League fields on another.

Success of the Infoage center should provide the strong surge of activity needed to revitalize the entire property. But it needs community support, including donations of office supplies, chairs and tables, books on Camp Evans, obsolete computer equipment and money. Anyone interested in helping may call 732-280-3000.

## WHILE YOU WERE AT KUTZTOWN

By Richard Lee

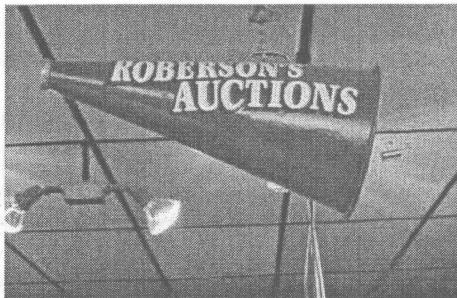
When NJARC VP Richard Lee sent me this article, I fell in love with it. I too was debating the choice between Kutztown and an upstate New York auction. What an opportunity! With the area wolves circling for the kill in Pennsylvania, I would have the Roberson auction all to myself. But again, a last minute commitment got in the way and I missed both. Luckily, Richard did make it to New York and was rewarded with...well, we'll let Richard take it from here. Ed

Being in a supervisory position, I am not able to "Just say No" when it comes to having to work overtime. Consequently, not until Friday afternoon, May 13th, did I know I had to work on Saturday! So much for a trip to Kutztown! But I did remember Ray Chase telling me that there was a radio auction, concurrent with Kutztown, near where I live. Well, "near me" turned out to be 60 miles northwest, at the Roberson's Auction house in Pine Bush, NY

Leaving after work, I traveled up the New York State Thruway to the "quick-way", Route 17 exiting at Route 302. When I passed through a small town called Bullville, I knew I was out in the sticks. And yes, I saw both cows and bulls!

I arrived at the auction with just enough time to run around with my VOM, inspecting and testing a variety of horns, speakers and tube lots. The 60 lots of radio-related items were from the estate of a local collector, J.H. Rauner, of Ellenville, NY. Included in the auction were early homebrews, 3 dialers, (Zenith, Crosley and Atwater Kent), Radiola II's and III's, a small number of plastics, 7 early tube box lots and a very nice AK-9 breadboard. All radios contained tubes, and spot checks with the meter showed good filaments!

Roberson's Auction House is a typical old country barn building. Approximately 80 chairs were surrounded by antique furnishings waiting to be auctioned off after the radio lots. The radio items were sitting front and center, making for easy viewing.



"Country" Lou Roberson, was strictly business; the auction started right on time, and there was no more inspecting allowed. You had to be registered with the clerk, and a 12% buyers fee and sales tax were added to your winning bid.

The good news is that there are many more radio collectors out there than I thought. The bad news is that they didn't ALL go to Kutztown - and they were bidding against me! The auction moved quickly; all 60 lots were hammered down in just an hour. The bidding was furious on a few items, and there were no bargains to be had. The AK-9, with brass base and tipped tubes, went for \$2,240. A box lot of about 20 n.o.s. and pulled Western Electric 205 tennis ball tubes ended at \$4,480! I was happy to walk away with a cute one tube (CX 300A) regen. homebrew in a cabinet plus a pristine AK-49 with good tubes.

As I was checking-out, the clerk informed me that this was the only radio auction Robersons has ever held. At that moment, I knew there would never be a reason for me to travel through Bullville again!

## NBC's FIRST NIGHT "ON THE AIR"

By Ben Gross

This article, published in the April 25th Daily News, was sent to me by Richard Lee. It features an excerpt from a Ben Gross memoir "I Looked and I Listened" and gives an account of NBC's first night on the air. Ben Gross, sometimes referred to as the dean of American radio columnists, started covering radio for the Daily News in 1925, before there were networks and before there was much in the way of programming...Ed.

The Waldorf-Astoria's marble corridors and its elegant Peacock Alley echoed with tense chatter that evening. Crowds, eager for a glimpse of celebrities, surged behind the police lines at Fifth Avenue and 34th Street. They applauded as famous political figures, giants of industry and stars of the entertainment world emerged from their limousines to witness the birth of network broadcasting on the night of Nov. 15, 1926. The word had spread that those in attendance would behold "the inauguration of a new epoch in American life," an innovation that might eventually "affect the thoughts and the habits of millions of Americans."

Even the cynical among the reporters present had premonitions of great events to come. One of them sitting beside me remarked: "Maybe our stories tonight might turn into history. You know, like the stuff of the guys who covered Morse's first telegram, or the Wright brothers at Kitty Hawk."

Perhaps he too had been impressed by the advertisement in New York newspapers during the preceding September, which announced that the Radio Corporation of America had purchased WEAF, New York, from the American Telephone and Telegraph Company for one million dollars and the station would be incorporated as The National Broadcasting Company. The latter, it was explained, would broadcast programs not only through WEAF but also would make these available to outlets throughout the country. The ad emphasized that the time was ripe for such a venture, as already five million homes in the United States were equipped with radios and some twenty-one million homes "remain to be supplied."

RCA at that time was the largest distributor of radio receivers in the world, handling the entire output of General Electric and Westinghouse. It, of course, also was engaged in broadcasting on a limited scale. As for WEAF, it had served AT&T well in its efforts to develop programming, but this gigantic corporation soon found that such activities placed it in the entertainment field. Its sedate executives resented this; they wanted to get on with their essential business, which was communications. So they were more than happy to conclude this deal with RCA, un

*Continued on page 7...)*

## NJARC PREVIEWS TV CONVENTION VIDEO

By Dave Sica

At the May NJARC meeting, member Dave Sica presented a preview of his forthcoming video of the 2005 Early Television Convention. This is the third annual get-together of early television collectors, held at the Early Television Museum in Hilliard, Ohio.

Dave's PowerPoint recap of the event included photos from the event and a "sneak peek" at some of the video coverage. This world premier presentation of the video was seen first and exclusively by members of the New Jersey Antique Radio Club, months in advance of its official release.

The video, actually just a few unedited excerpts of John Trenouth's presentation, exemplified the breadth and depth of the world-class presentations showcased at the convention. Trenouth covered the story of the competition to develop the first practical television system between John Logie Baird's mechanical television and EMI's all-electronic system. The outcome of the tests, conducted in 1935 would determine which system the BBC would adopt. Far from a dry historical retrospective, Trenouth's presentation left the club members "rolling on the floor laughing" as he described the travails of that unsung first generation of camera operators as they braved buzz saw-like spinning discs, scalding hot equipment, poisonous fumes rising from steaming vats of chemicals and the careful dance they had to do to avoid exposed high voltage electrodes. Aah, for the good old days!

Several club members attended the event which was held during the last weekend of May. The theme for 2005 was "TV Outside of the United States." Formerly a two-day affair, the convention was slightly expanded this year to include a social evening on Friday in addition to the Saturday and Sunday presentations. Presenters and attendees came from not just all over the country, but from all around the world.

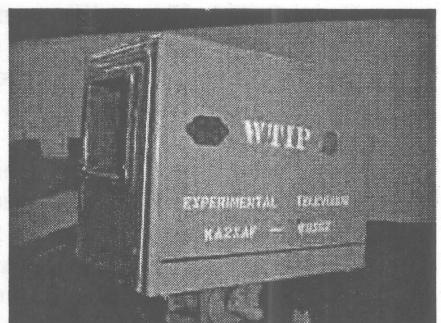
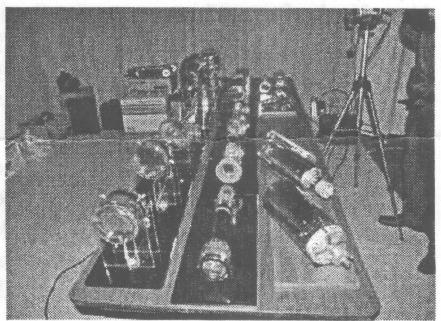
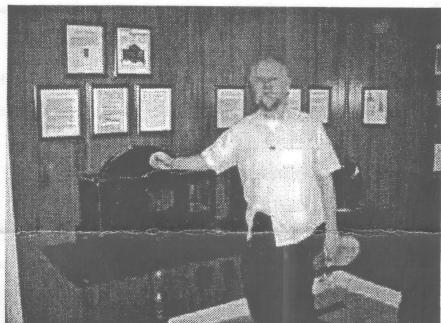
The knowledge base was extensive as exemplified by the following presentations:

- Alexandra Palace and the birth of BBC television 1936 to 1939, presented by John Trenouth, Head of Television, National Museum of Photography, Film & Television, UK
- A 441 line mechanical scanner "for people, film and slides" and magnetic tape sound recording used in German television from 1938 to 1945, presented by Gerhard Bauer
- The history of television development in Italy, 1926-1939, presented by Robert Lozier.
- Adding Sight to Sound in Stalin's Russia: RCA and the Transfer of Television Technology to the Soviet Union, presented by Alex Magoun.
- Dot Sequential Color, presented by David Carlstrom.
- 100 years of Test Patterns & China Dolls, presented by Pete Fasciano.
- Demonstration of a 32 Line Scanning Disk and 60 Line Mirror Screw, by Peter Yanczer.
- Demonstration of a State of the Art TV Standards Converter for obsolete television standards, by Darryl Hock.
- A display of TV Camera tubes and their development, by Dave Johnson.

Once again, Dave will be producing a DVD set of the full program of presentations, which will be available from the Early Television Museum. The Early Television Museum is normally open on weekends and can be visited on the web at [www.earlytelevision.org](http://www.earlytelevision.org).

Even if you're not a rabid early television collector (and apparently the 96 attendees at the convention constituted the vast majority of the worldwide members of this admittedly fringe fraternity), this was a highly enjoyable presentation for anyone even peripherally interested in the subject. If the "sneak peek" was any indication, the full DVD will be well worth reviewing when it comes out. And if you are even a half-serious collector, you might want to block out your vacation schedule now to include the 2006 Early Television Convention next spring.

## THE CAMERA'S EYE



## W2XMN RIDES AGAIN!

By Al Klase

Operating under special temporary authority (STA) from the FCC, Major Armstrong's original FM transmitter site will take to the airwaves on Saturday, June 11, with a special broadcast commemorating 70 years of FM broadcasting. The broadcast, produced by WFDU-FM, will start at 12 noon on a frequency of 42.8MHz. This is the first time that broadcasting has taken place in the old FM band, 42-50MC, since the 1950's.

The 250-watt transmitter, based on the legendary GE Phasitron tube, and the FCC arrangements, are the work of Steve Hemphill, WA3ZAE. The transmitting antenna is located at the 400-foot level of the Armstrong tower in Alpine, NJ. During recent testing, high quality signals were received near Flemington, NJ, a distance of 58 miles, using a 1941 Meissner tuner and a half-wave vertical antenna. The signal was also monitored in Brooklyn, NY by Owen Gerboth (KC2NXH).

While a broadband, 300KHz receiver is need for full fidelity, you will be able to hear and ID the station using narrower-

*(Gross...continued)*

der the provisions of which NBC leased AT&T long lines exclusively for the transmission of programs from city to city.

Suddenly, all of us in the Grand Ballroom were called to attention by a blare of trumpets. The clock on the balcony indicated exactly 8:05 p.m., and a few minutes later NBC President Merlin H. Aylesworth began to speak. The inaugural program would be carried by twenty-four stations, he said: "Think of it! Ten or maybe even twelve million persons may be hearing what takes place in this ballroom tonight!" A murmur swept the audience.

Then, the entertainment went on the air.

Even today, when the public is accustomed to "million dollar shows," it would be difficult to equal that premier program. It was a four-and-a-half-hour presentation offering among its all-star acts two "remote control" features which created sensations. Mary Garden, the glamorous diva of the

band equipment. WA2XMN was clearly readable on a military PRC-77 transceiver. Even a short wire (5.5 feet is a quarter wavelength) was usable at the author's location.

Even if you don't have a 42MHz set, WFDU will be carrying the transmission on 89.1MHz, and provide streaming audio on the World-Wide Web. Information and interesting links are available at <http://wa2xm.net>. Real-time reception reports may be directed to [wa2xm@ar88.net](mailto:wa2xm@ar88.net).



opera, was heard singing from Chicago a group of numbers including "Annie Laurie," "Open Thy Blue Eyes," and Little Gray Home in the West." Will Rogers faced a microphone in Independence, Kansas, drawling a humorous monologue, "Fifteen Minutes with a Diplomat," during the course of which he mimicked President Calvin Coolidge so perfectly that many listeners believed they were hearing Cal himself.

Among the other items on that gala inaugural were the New York Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Dr. Walter Damrosch; the New York Oratorio Society; Harold Bauer, concert pianist; Cesare Sodero's grand-and light-opera ensembles; Edwin Franko Goldman's band; Tito Ruffo, Metropolitan Opera star; the comedy team of Weber and Fields; and the dance orchestras of Vincent Lopez, Ben Bernie from the Roosevelt Hotel Grill, George Olsen from the Hotel Pennsylvania and Ben A. Rolfe from the Palais d'Or.

By the time the program signed off at 12:35 a.m., the Waldorf-Astoria audience was amazed. I can still hear a stout dowager's remark to her husband as we filed from the ballroom: "My dear, I had no idea! We simply must get one of these radios the first thing tomorrow!"

Even so, the professional critics had some reservations. I, for example, remarked in my column that Mary Garden's songs were occasionally marred by a "whistling sound," and some erudite fellow writing in the New York Times doubted that "even the most advanced type of engineering could surmount every obstacle to perfect rendition from a distance."

According to some reports, the show had cost NBC fifty thousand dollars. "Hereafter, however, advertising will pay for the elaborate broadcasts we plan to present," Aylesworth told me. And, he added, these "elaborate broadcasts" would achieve one of the main objectives of network operation - the sale of more receiving sets. The quality of the programs would insure the success of radio in America, he believed, and he quoted David Sarnoff: "The richest man cannot buy for himself what the poorest man gets free by radio."

But there were still doubting Thomases. "A great show," Joe Weber told me after the first night, "but I don't know if it can last. Who'd take radio against the theater or the movies, even if it is free?"





## New Jersey Antique Radio Club's Summer Swap Meet

New Location

Parsippany PAL building, Smith Field

Rt. 46 & 33 Baldwin Rd. Parsippany, N.J. 07054

Saturday, July 30<sup>th</sup> 2005

8:am to 1:pm open to the public- vendor set-up at 7:am

Easy access ground level hall with 70 -8ft. tables

Table costs are \$15 for members and \$20 for non-members

Make your reservations NOW by contacting: President-  
Phil Vourtsis 13 Cornell Pl., Manalapan, N.J. 07726 [732-  
446-2427] or [pvourtsis@att.com](mailto:pvourtsis@att.com), Editor Marv Beeferman,  
2265 Emeralda Park Dr. Forked River, N.J.

08731[609-693-9430] or [mbeeferman@cs.com](mailto:mbeeferman@cs.com)  
Vice-President, Richard Lee [845-359-3809] or

[Radiorich@prodigy.net](mailto:Radiorich@prodigy.net)

There is a \$5 entrance club donation.

For directions follow the map, visit our club  
website; [www.njarc.org](http://www.njarc.org) or "mapquest" 33 Baldwin Rd.  
Parsippany, N.J. 07054

