The Jersey Broadcaster

NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW JERSEY ANTIQUE RADIO CLUB



August 1999



MEETING/ ACTIVITY NOTES

Reported by Marsha Simkin and Mary Beeferman

With apologies to Noel Coward, July 31st was proof enough that mad dogs, Englishmen and radio collectors go out in the mid-day sun...especially if its to attend an NJARC swapmeet! The potential of another 100 degree day or the change in the traffic pattern off the New Jersey Turnpike did not deter over 50 vendors (occupying 60 tables) from attending our Hightstown meet. Early morning clouds did ward off the wrath of old Sol until at least 10:00 AM, but by 12:01 (qualifying us for a position in the mad dog category), most people began to pack it in.

With a few expected exceptions, the meet went quite smoothly. Thanks again to all our volunteers, especially those who rearranged a few of the orphan tables. A sudden change in plans to defer the \$2.00 admission fee (we'll discuss this at the next meeting), helped further reduce logistics problems. Nor did anyone seem to mind crossing the bridge to Mom's restaurant to get a snack or drink (the owner forbids outside food vendors)...most, however, anticipated the hot weather and brought their own.

From the pictures in this month's *Broadcaster*, you'll find that there were a few interesting items, but for the most

part, the lack of early gear was very obvious. Your author picked up a "cute" one-tube receiver manufactured by the Prima ("King of the Air") Radio Corporation of New York City and a Daven 3-S resistance-coupled amplifier in its original box, including instructions and Daven tubes. I'm still researching the Prima so any information regarding

MEETING NOTICE

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The next meeting of the NJARC will take place on Friday, August 13th at 7:30 PM in the Grace Lutheran Church, corner of Route 33 and Main Street in Freehold. Contact Marv Beeferman at 609-693-9430 or Phil Vourtsis at 732-446-2427 for directions. President Phil Vourtsis will offer a report on the results of July's swapmeet. Ben Tongue, this month's technical session preserter, will offer a talk on determining the effective impedance of a specific pair of headphones for a specific person by combining the effects of hearing acuity at low sound levels and phone impedance.

"circa" and advertising references would be appreciated.

The club has a full menu of events in the upcoming months and member participation is welcome. The Raritan Valley Community College - North Branch (Sommerville/Whitehouse vicinity) radio exhibit is now scheduled for the fall and is being chaired by Jon Butz



President Phil Vourtsis, Mr. 45, admires Bernard Gindoff's latest handiwork.

Fiscina. Jon would appreciate any assistance offered and can be reached at 908-782-8587. An address by Nikola Tesla's grand nephew has been arranged for the October meeting by Dave Sica and an all-day radio troubleshooting seminar is planned for a weekend during October. We'll also need help with the InfoAge kickoff radio exhibit which is also

scheduled for October at Camp Evans.

President Phil Vourtsis was presented with another of Bernard Gindoff's unique creations and unique titles - "Mr. 45." Unfortunately, the *Broadcaster's* cover photos don't do our little be-spectacled friend much justice, but there he stands at his workbench, with a 45 RPM record as its base, putting the final finishing touches

to another successful restoration. The resemblance to Phil is uncanny, especially in the eyes and ears.

Guest Nick Dominico gave the club a short presentation on the research material, advertising and memorabilia available at the Camden Historical Society (Park and Euclid) that was preserved following the closing of RCA's Camden site. He also noted that a large percentage of the material that the Historical Society could not accept went to the Hadley Museum and Library in Wilmington Delaware. Nick told us that a large majority of the material still remains uncataloged; wouldn't InfoAge be a prime final destination for this piece of New Jersey's radio history?

In a prelude to our upcoming radio repair seminar, Al Klase presented a review of the basics for successful troubleshooting. Al pointed out the differences between restoration, alignment and troubleshooting, emphasizing that alignment was often not necessary and "don't try to tune junk!" He also took us through the major steps in the process.

THE JERSEY BROADCASTER, published a minimum of ten times each year, 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 with special emphasis on contributions made by the state of New Jersey. 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 buying and selling transactions or for any other use of the contents of this publication.

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with topics such as stages, finding the bad stage, signal sources ("don't underestimate the utility of a screwdriver as a signal source"), signal indicators, demodulator probes, test points and finding voltage information and also provided the specifics of troubleshooting the plate, screen and grid circuits and power supply.

The September (that's next month folks) meeting will feature our show-andtell session. With an entire month to prepare, we'll be expecting some real "oooher's" and "aaaher's



"Mr. 45" at work.

JOHN MULLIN

Marriage Broker for Two Technologies

The following article is based on an item written by Nick Ravo that appeared in the "New York Times" of June 23, 1999.

John T. Mullin, who recently died at the age of 85, played a major role in bringing broadcasting and the record industry together in the late 1940's with magnetic audiotape technology. An electrical engineer, Mr. Mullin became interested in magnetic audiotape when he was a lieutenant with the United States Army Signal Corps in England in 1943. He heard, inexplicably, what sounded like live classical music, free of clicks and scratches, coming 24 hours a day from a German radio station. After the war ended, Mr. Mullin was sent to Paris, where he discovered two German magnetophones, high-fidelity magnetic audiotape recorders. He then brought the machines to the United States, where he and a colleague, William A. Palmer, improved them. In 1946, their creation was the first machine in the United States to produce a master tape that turned into "Songs by Merv Griffin."

The masters from which records were produced had until then been made by recording directly onto an acetate disk, which made editing almost impossible. Bing Crosby was so impressed with the quality of the tape's sound and, especially, the ability to edit recordings, that he backed Mr. Mullin and Mr. Palmer financially. In 1947, Crosby, who hated live performances, used the technology to record his show on the ABC network, "Philco Radio Time." It was the first coast-to-coast commercial broadcast using magnetic tape instead of a live performance.

Mr. Mullin and Mr. Palmer also used the ability to edit audiotape for less artistic purposes. For Crosby's show, at the singer's behest, they made some of the first laugh tracks. Using scissors and tape, the pair added applause and laughter to tapes of live performances that didn't inspire enough audience reaction or that weren't really live at all.

About the same time, Mr. Mullin and Mr. Palmer, working with the Ampex Corporation, made the first commercial audiotape recorder, called the Model 200. In 1951, Mr. Mullin and another engineer, Wayne R. Johnson, working again with Crosby Enterprises, also developed a prototype of the video camera, which they called "the filmless camera."

Besides working with Crosby Enterprises and Ampex, Mr. Mullin spent 28 years at the 3M Company, which bought Crosby's electronics company in 1956, as the head of its Mincom division.

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People went bananas over this Western Electric 7A amplifier.



A nice turnout



Another breadboard makes it debut.



Hmm...if I throw out the dishwasher and refrigerator, I'm sure I can fit this baby in.



One happy (and sweaty) camper.

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MORE ON SCHICKERLING

By Ludwell Sibley

The following article appeared in Vol. 1, No. 1 (February 1999) of the "Tube Collector," the bulletin of the Tube Collectors Association. Selected not only for its local flavor, it also represents some of the unique material that is found in this bi-monthly publication. Annual dues is \$20.00 and can be sent to PO Box 1181, Medford, OR 97501.

One of the more enigmatic tube makers of the '20s was Schickerling, which claimed to have begun tube production in 1921 (perhaps RCA's patentdodging enforcement agents) and lasted long enough to make Type 27s. The company had a couple of odd features in its tubes, apparently in hope of beating the patent problem, but also as a "unique selling proposition." These included a horizontal construction with weird stacked triangular plates and, later, a "stabilizing" electrode claimed to be similar to a screen grid but not wired-out through the base. The tubes carried a triangular logo with the letters "T V T."

The sacred writings of

Tyne (the Saga) barely touch on this company; Stokes (70 Years of Radio Tubes and Valves) reproduces a Schickerling ad and a tube or two; and Tube Lore has a list of 13 tube types from this firm. However, the best available word on this brand is an article by Alan Douglas in the Old Timer's Bulletin (June 1986). Douglas had severe doubts that the company's wacky tubes actually performed. He tried one of their TVT-200s in a healthy regenerative receiver and "could barely hear anything could get no hint of regeneration." However, by the time the company was

doing 27s, its construction technique was standard.

Schickerling tubes are rare collectibles today. One gets the impression that this was just another quasi-bootleg tube maker from Newark: their factory was at 313 Halsey St., then later at 401-407 Mulberry St. (Scoop's Rule: every third basement in Newark in the '20s was a source of either bootleg tubes or bootleg liquor.)

But there's fresh information. Tube collector Paul Weidenschilling has come up with some sales material from Schickerling, ca. 1933, claiming that the company had been around since 1898 and, like many other early tube makers, had been a light-bulb manufacturer. At that

Television Tubes Morelite Helex Incandescent Lamps Polarair Motorless Electric Refrigerators 8 in 1 Automatic Electric Safety Fuses Automatic Cloth Cutting Marker No-Glare Auto Lamps Automatic Electric Water Heater **Electric Appliances**

Apparently their incandescent ultraviolet lamps used fused quartz for the bulb material, thus passing UV light that is normally lost.

Paul also supplements the Tube Lore list with an ad from Radio in the Home, Feb. 192-5, listing the following adders:

> 5-V, 1/10 Amp, Standard Base S-100 Detector S-900 Amplifier S-2000 Det.-Amp. 5-V 1/4 Amp., Standard Base S-2500 Det.-Amp.

Schickerling seems to have had some thing of a patchwork distribution system for its products: one ad refers to mail-order sales and to sales through the "Rudolph Wurlitzer Company's 46 stores"; another solicits walkin business directly from the factory.

In the late '20s the company advertised its radio tubes on billboards and via the weekly "Schickerling

point they were relocated in Boonton, NJ, in a two-story brick building (recently torn down to build a McDonald's.). A sampling of its claimed product line (with some internal duplications) included:

Ultra-Violet Sun Lamps

Automatic Ultra-Violet Aquarium Heater for Tropical Fish

Ultra-Violet Water Purifiers

Ultra-Violet Water and Air Cooling Apparatus

Ultra-Violet Surgical and Dental Supplies Radio Tubes

Crystal Gazers" program on the WEAF (later, NBC Red) network.

The later fate of the company (by then, titled Schickerling Industries and Schickerling Electric Products, Inc.) is unknown; the company is absent from the 1941 Industrial Directory of New Jersey. It's not mentioned in any of the existing histories of electronics in the Boonton area, and was probably just another victim of the Depression.



The following article appeared in the "New York Times" **METRO** section for November 29, 1998.

Darlington Castle was like a lover. Donald A. Lehman thought he could change: He coveted it despite its obvious flaws.

The elegant turn-of-the-century stone mansion, with its long, winding drive, oak paneled drawing rooms and view clear to the World Trade Center, seems to sit on the top of the earth. But the castle also has a working radio tower mounted on its roof and an iron-clad lease that insures it will remain there until 2006.

Mr. Lehman, who owns an alarm company, and his wife, Barbara, a retired chemistry teacher, bought Darlington Castle and more than 30 acres of hillside for \$1.5 million in 1993, substantially less than similar houses in the area cost. In this town of old money, new celebrity and sprawling estates 40 miles north of midtown Manhattan, there were few other takers for a house with a 20-foot antenna that broadcasts 1,500 watts of "smooth jazz" 24 hours a day to northern Westchester.

"All I could think about was the house," said Mr. Lehman, who first visited it in 1983 when he tried to sell the previous owners an alarm from his company, Attack Cat Security. "It was my dream house. The minute I saw it, I said, 'I want this house'".

Although the Lehmans knew what they were getting into, they now complain that Kenny G has become the soundtrack to their lives and that the station, WZZN at 106.3 FM, comes through on every channel on the radio dial, meddles with their television reception, interrupts their fax machine and interferes with their business equipment. Mr. Lehman attributes his headaches to microwave radiation from the tower and the couple say the tower is ill-maintained, causing their roof to leak and bathroom ceiling to collapse.

The station owners see things differently. "His claims range from false to largely exaggerated," said Robert F. Davis, the lawyer for WZZN, which is owned by Westchester Radio L.L. C.

"Our client, to buy some peace, has made many offers to accommodate him," Mr. Davis said. The station has installed cable television in 5 of the house's 17 rooms and pays the bill for the service (about \$100 a month). The station has given the Lehmans two interference-free radios, two digital answering machines and offered to pay half the cost of a new roof. The station is obligated to pay about \$5,000 a year in rent. It has offered to increase the rent to \$18,000, Mr. Davis said, and to install cable television in the threebedroom pool house. "And by the way," Mr. Davis said, "he paid \$1.5 million for a house that's probably worth 6 or 7 million."

Yet the Lehmans are determined to be rid of the antenna. They have been arrested once for tampering with the transmitting equipment. They have paid a \$12,000 settlement to the radio company and lost two court cases and an appeal to the Federal Communications Commission to get rid of the antenna. A State Supreme Court judge issued an injunction this summer to prevent them from touching the equipment. They have been through four sets of lawyers; the last ones resigned a few weeks ago, after the Lehmans let it be known that they planned to tear the antenna down.

"I'll represent myself," Mr. Lehman said. "I'm doing it my way, It's time to have a Boston Tea Party."

The battle seems to be just another chapter in their home's colorful history. Charles F. Darlington, Jr., an economist and diplomat whose father built Darlington Castle in 1904, fell upon hard times in 1966. Neighbors say he lost all his money in a bad investment. To generate enough income to keep the drafty castle in the family, he sold property and granted a 40-year lease to Martin Stone for the tower.

Mr. Stone, who died in June, was the producer to "Howdy Doody" and a pioneer in community radio. A lawyer by training, he drafted a lease that has remained valid even though the castle has changed ownership twice and the radio station has changed ownership four times. "It was a lease that was so one-sided that no one but a desperate man would sign it," Mr. Lehman said.

It turned the house into a white elephant.

"A lot of buyers came to see it but nobody wanted that house," said Sally Siano, a real estate agent in Bedford Hills who remembered when the house went on the market in the early 1990's for more than \$5 million. "Every client I ever brought there would not even consider living in it because of the electric fields and their concern for their health," she said.

Joy Schieffelin and her late husband, William Jay Schieffelin 3d, a wine and spirit importer, bought Darlington Castle in 1975. Like Mr. Lehman, Mr. Schieffelin was enamored with the castle and its views. All the static that came through their television, radios, and stereo could not persuade Mr. Schieffelin to move, his wife said, though she was never comfortable there.

"The lease was absolutely tight," Mrs. Schieffelin said sadly. "There was nothing we could do about it. I don't know why we stayed there except my husband loved that castle."

Mrs. Schieffelin was friendly with Mr. Lehman, who regularly serviced her security alarm. She knew how much Mr. Lehman wanted the house and said that she warned him before he bought the property that the lease was unbreakable.

"He said, 'Don't worry, I'll get rid of that antenna,' "Mrs. Schieffelin recalled in a telephone conversation. "I said, 'No, you won't', and he said, 'Oh yes, I will.'"





MEMBER PROFILE:

John Dilks

The following was edited from an article on "Wireless Day" at the Tuckerton Historical Society...Ed

John H. Dilks is a ham with a mission. His passion for wireless radio has brought him out of his basement, out of a staticfilled daze of too many hours plugged into K2TQN, his own amateur station, and onto the blue highways of nostalgia, where he tours his Mobile Radio Museum, an RV stuffed with ham memories.

So when the Tuckerton Historical Society put on its "Wireless Day" celebration earlier this month, Dilks was there. Members of the Old Barney Radio Club, which is based in Tuckerton, were participating in a worldwide radio event commemorating the life and work of Roberto Clemens Galletti di Cadilhac, an Italian pioneer of wireless telegraphy. They had set up an amateur station for the day inside the Giffordtown Schoolhouse Museum, and had cranked up their trailer antenna in the back yard.

Dilks parked his mobile museum, filled with dull, black boxes - what he called "home brew" radios - and shiny glass tubes on the lawn of the Giffordtown Museum, right by what remains of the base of the old Tuckerton wireless tower. A curious object, the base looks like an oversized badminton shuttlecock. It was part of a ball-and-socket swivel that allowed the structure to sway in high winds, as much as seven feet at the top.

The Giffordtown Museum houses the largest collection of Tuckerton Wireless memorabilia - 18-inch-wide, circular glass insulators, miniature Christmas treeshaped ceramic insulators, photos of workers installing the wireless, and a miniature model of the tower made by a schoolboy in the 1960s,

Dilks and his ilk were in their glory. Members of the Old Barney Radio Club came and visited in his trailer throughout the day. Seemingly left in a technological time warp, amateur radio buffs are a closely knit lot.

Painted on the outside of Dilk's trailer is the slogan "Long live amateur radio!"

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"I wanted to have a museum at home, but that didn't go over well with my family, so I decided this was the way to go," he explained. From his home in Egg Harbor Township, Dilks travels almost every weekend to a radio event.

Dilks bought his first old radio in 1950 when he was a youngster. Now he has dozens. The amiable amateur supplied answers to all who asked about his collection of wirelesses from the era between world wars. All the hams in these days had to know Morse code "sadly, a dying art," said Dilks.

The term ham? "I think it was a carryover from the theater where ham



meant an actor overacting - but nobody knows for sure." (Editor: According to "Morris Dictionary of Word and Phrase Origins," it's an abbreviation of "amateur.")

Music of the '20s and '30s wafted through the trailer, music Dilks had downloaded off the Internet. "You know the excitement generated today around the Internet and e-mailing?" he asked. "Well, that's the kind of excitement that was around radio. It was the Internet of its day. A lot of people didn't have telephones. Even getting a piece of news from the next town was a big thing.

People would build radios for their neighbors."

His first exhibit is a reconstructed amateur station from the 1930s featuring the radio log, desk and chair of Earl G. Abbot, who ran a station from his house in Manahawkin.

"He was quite a character," said Dilks. "He liked to be called the Earl of Manahawkin - 'This is W2FTT, the Earl of Manahawkin.' He repaired radios and helped new hams get started."

After making radio contact, hams would swap calling cards through the mail. Abbott's collection lines the wall above his radio.

"You could also write to radio stations and they would send cards," Dilks said. "There were contests to see how many you could get and from how many places. It's still done today."

Dilks collects New Jersey cards. He has one from station W2HHM in Tuckerton where Dr. L.R. Carmona was a ham in 1935. "Old-timers come in and see the card and say, 'I knew him - I was his buddy' "said Dilks. He plans to do a book with the cards, with each page dedicated to each ham radio operator in New Jersey. "I want to perpetuate these memories."

When a ham tired of listening to the world through his earphones, he could hook the radio up to an amplifier. The first amplifiers were horns, like the ones used as hearing aids. Dilks has one. "I've seen old amplifiers made out of wooden bowls. They took the earphone receiver and attached it to a big mixing bowl and used it as a speaker."

Radios at this time didn't have plugs. They screwed into a lightbulb socket, usually in the ceiling, said Dilks.

"In the cities, guys used to throw a wire over the trolley line to get free electricity for their radios."

Dilks' father also fell in love with radio when he was a boy.

"He had a muskrat trap line that he checked before and after school; the money he earned helped to supplement the family income, but his father let him save up for a radio tube he wanted."

"My father worked one entire week to buy one radio tube," said Dilks. "Well, he got it and burnt it up in a flash."

The young Dilks got the radio bug

from his father. "I sat with him for fours hours one day and listened to Denmark, England, South America, North America -I was hooked."

"King Hussein was a very active amateur radio operator," said Dilks. "He enjoyed talking on the air. If you heard the call letters JA1, you knew it was the king. He didn't like it if people started calling him 'Your Highness' over the air. He would sign off at that point and come back on later. He just wanted to be a ham; he wanted to relate on a personal level, not an official one"

"Barry Goldwater was also big into ham radio. If I were at a function, I could go up to him and say, 'I'm John K2TQN,' and we would start talking ham radio."

Dilks' best work as a radio operator was during the Vietnam War as part of the US Air Force MARS program that linked soldiers with their families.

"I used to run phone patches to their homes," said Dilks. "I would get the radio signal from Vietnam, and hook up to the lines. I had to monitor the calls to make sure the signal was good. I heard some very moving transcripts. Wives would be having problems receiving military checks; they couldn't support their families. In those cases I would call the Red Cross in their area and ask them to look into this family. Anonymously.

"I spent lots of hours doing it. At home I would take written messages and put them out over the evening net, a certain frequency for a local network.

"I felt very fortunate to do this. You knew that with each call, this could be the last contact the soldier might have with his family.

"The philosophy of the amateur radio enthusiast has always been to help each other. Helpful in emergencies, we send messages around the world.

"That will never change. This is what we do."

Jerry Simkin, who shares a common interest in radio memorabilia, dropped by. "A lot of products had radio in their names because there was such a craze," said Simkin. "There was Radio Orange Juice, Radio Coffee ..."

"I have an ice bag called the Wireless Ice Bag," put in Dilks. "Obviously it had nothing to do with radios. But advertisers found that people would buy a product with

the word wireless or radio in it."

"I collect sheet music, too" said Simkin. "There were dozens of songs written. One in particular, 'I Wish There Was a Wireless to Heaven,' is very sad; the lyrics are sad, as is the picture of a little girl wearing headphones, trying to contact her deceased father."

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Dilks' rarest radio set is a Sargent, made before World War II. "It was the last model the company made. Most were bought by the government and sent to China prior to World War II to aid them in their fight against the Japanese."

The radios used in World War II were plug-in units and were interchangeable within the branches of service. "You could take one out of a tank and plug it into an airplane."

For years after the war, these sets could be found cheaply in Army/Navy surplus shops. "You can't find one now," said Simkin.

Both men wonder where the next generation of ham radio operators will get their sets. Do-it-yourself sets used to be a staple advertisement in many magazines, but no more.

And they can see the demise of something else in the demise of the kit manufacturers: the end of tinkering.

"It's a different age," said Dilks.

"It's like cars - you used to be able to pop the hood and work on it, but now it's all solid state stuff," said Simkin.

"Most kids don't even own a soldering gun!" said Dilks.

PLEASE SIGN OUR

Good to know that people are caring about past radio science.

Reminds me of the past and to look in the attic for my 30s short wave radio.

Super... I own a Transoceanic and still listen to SW today.

Would like to see more.

Takes us back when.

Wonderful reminders.

Tell me more...where club headquarters?

They brought a smile to my face.

Brought back our childhood.

WOW!

Good show ... Thank you!

Better than my basement.

FANTASTIC!

Nostalgic.

Expected to see more examples of older radios.

Inspiring!

Add me to your mailing list.

Nice collection...well exhibited.

Wonderful! Enjoyed it!

All units very nicely restored.

Thanks for the exhibit.

exhibit sponsored by the NJARC were asked to write their comments in a guest book placed next to the exhibit. Besides the expected superlatives like great, welldone, interesting, etc. here are some of the more appreciated ones:

Impressive reminder of an era so many have never seen.

GUEST BOOK Guests at the Morris County Library radio

> I thought I would never get to say this, but because of the limited space in this issue, the For Sale/Wanted section, "CONNEC-TIONS," was dropped for this issue. It will be back in the September Broadcaster.

Ed.