

The Jersey Broadcaster

NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW JERSEY ANTIQUE RADIO CLUB

October 2000

Volume 6 Issue 10



MEETING/ ACTIVITY NOTES

Reported by Marv Beeferman

Before discussing the events of September's meeting, I'm pleased to report that the September 23rd swapmeet at the Hightstown Country Club was another success. With the prospect of rain lingering in the shadows, over forty vendors and 100 buyers still managed to bring a little "radio sunshine" to an otherwise gloomy Saturday. Some vendors did justifiably question what appeared to be a light turnout, but our \$2 "parking" fee kept tabs on admissions (we probably missed another 10 or so who breezed by our attendants). What needs to be remembered is that 100 buyers and 50 tables fill up the inside hall to bursting; spread these out in the outside area and attendance does not look as formidable.

Thanks to our support team is well-deserved. President Phil Vourtsis helped your editor with table assignments on Friday and lightened this task significantly. We later paid a visit to a Freehold amateur radio operator and loaded up on some communication gear that he requested the club to sell and which added a little "spice" to the meet. Gary D'Amico and Tom Provost were instrumental in setting asking prices and watching over sales. As usual, early support from Richard Lee (who drives from Long Island) was a lifesaver in handling the early morning traffic. The baton was passed to Marty Friedman for later arrivals. Treasurer Sal Brisindi took on the job of collecting table fees which took another burden off my shoulders. Finally, Pete Grave did another great job conducting our walk-around-auction.

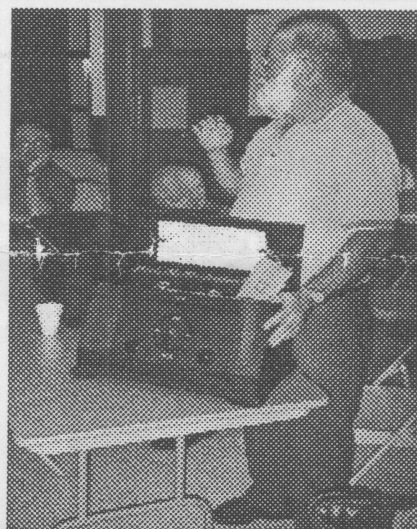
The September regular meeting was preceded by a Board meeting where, among other issues that were discussed, methods to foster more of a volunteer spirit from our membership was a major topic. It



MEETING NOTICE

The next meeting of the NJARC will take place on Friday, October 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. The evening's technical session will be a presentation by John Ruccolo on the National HRO family of short-wave receivers. If you are planning to bring any radios to the October 21st Repair Clinic, please ensure to notify Al Klase of their make and model numbers so he can do a little advanced planning. Al can be reached at (908)-782-4829 or on the net at skywaves@bw.webex.net.

was decided to offer the use of one or two "club" tables to those members who volunteer for swapmeet duty. The intent is not to take the place of a regular full table purchase but to give volunteers some free space to sell a few items in appreciation of their support.



John Dilks describes his Trenton-made Kelso battery set at September's show-and-tell.

Since your editor did not attend this year's AWA conference in Rochester, reports are second-hand. Exchanges at our September meeting seemed subdued in

light of the excitement generated on the AWA web site prior to the conference. Observations made by members at the DVHRC meeting and reported in the October *Oscillator* seemed a little more spirited, especially with regard to the potential effect of E-bay on future major meets: "Vendors on E-bay are selling a broad range of stuff from estates and there are lots of first-time unsophisticated buyers." "Rochester is and always has been a 'wholesale' event." "Most of the quality radios are tied up in existing collections." "The hobby can absorb all this stuff easily." "All the hot stuff happened on Monday." "The good items appreciate, while the ordinary stuff remains stationary."

Our show-and-tell session was lively as usual. Frank Feczko was kind enough to display his 2nd place old equipment contest winner at Rochester. This 1934 Crosley highboy was discovered about 10 years ago in his grandfather's attic. John Dilks displayed a well-preserved local product, a Kelso Radio battery set made in Trenton, NJ with coils encased in bakelite. Jon Butz Fiscina described some European sets found in a Texas antique store including a 1929 British "Columbia" battery set with its tone control located directly on the speaker and a lazy Susan type base so the radio could be rotated for best reception. Phil Vourtsis showed a Concord radio/45-phono combination dis-

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 buying and selling transactions or for any other use of the contents of this publication.

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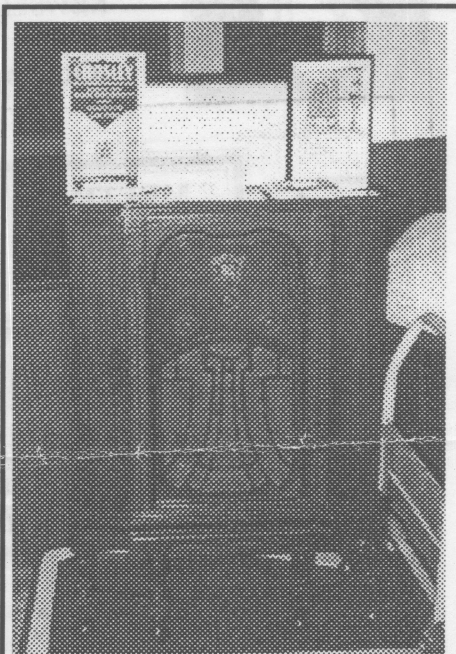
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guised in a miniature folding door cabinet and a 1955 Slideamatic single-play record player which never gained much popularity. Your editor displayed a Kantronics "Field Day 2" which displays RTTY, ASCII and Morse code on a digital display when connected to either a receiver or key.

Donations by Issac Blonder of a Midwest Radio, a GE art deco radio, a Precision tube tester and other items formed the basis for another mini-auction. Issac has donated many such items to the club in the past and the resulting sales have not only added to our treasury in support of recent and future club activities but have added a little "color" to each meeting.

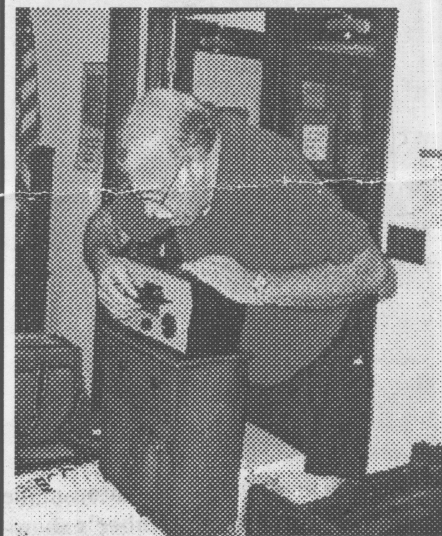
In closing, remember that our next repair clinic is scheduled for October 21st at the Grace Lutheran Church in Freehold. Technical Coordinator Al Klase would **GREATLY** appreciate it if you could contact him with the make and model number of the item you are considering bringing. This will help him do some advanced planning with regard to schematics, test equipment, etc. Please contact Al at (908)-782-4829 or on the net at skywaves@bw.webex.net.



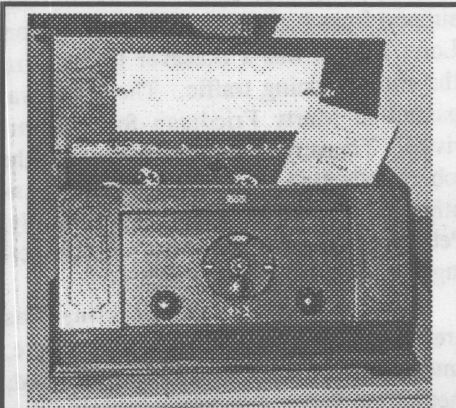
Frank Feczko took 2nd Place for this Crosley display at Rochester.



Jon Butz Fiscina exhibits a nice trio of European sets found in an antique dealership in Texas.



Phil Vourtsis demonstrates the operation of a "Slideamatic" 45 player. The player sits on a Concord radio/phono combination in a miniature console cabinet



A closer view of John Dilk's Kelso.

FALL SWAPMEET



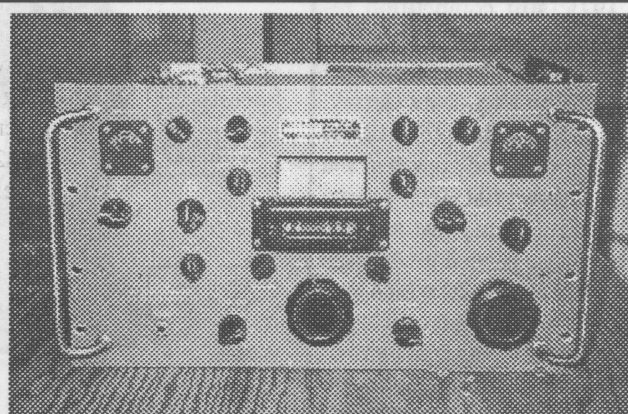
An interesting item captures the interest of club member Tom Provost.



TV or not TV - that is the question!



Gary D'Amico sets prices on some great communications gear



Three of these R-390s, in excellent condition, were sold.



Another great job by Pete Grave conducting the walk-around auction.



Steve Sideroff and Richard Brill await their customer's pleasure.

THE THOMPSON MINUET RECEIVER MODEL R-81

By Marv Beeferman

Have a favorite radio? Share it with the club...a couple of words, a couple of pictures, and your on your way!...Ed

Normally, the major factor in determining a radio's rarity, other than not being able to find its schematic in *Riders*, is age. However, other contributing elements, some good and some bad, may also raise a radio to this status. The Thompson model R-81 "Minuet" is such an example, making this recent acquisition one of my favorites.

In 1925, stiff competition resulted in poor sales for the R.E. Thompson Manufacturing Company of Jersey City, New Jersey. With its radios selling for \$125 to \$150, they were no match for a Freshman three-dial TRF selling for \$60 and working just as well. They were also rivaled by Atwater Kent's \$100 model 20 which was backed by extensive advertising, a solid reputation and a strong dealer network. Thompson's unsold inventory was accumulating.

Out of desperation to bring something different to the market, Thompson created the Minuet with a cone speaker and neutrodyne radio combined in the same cabinet. The extra space behind the cone increased its base output, and Thompson even got a patent for this design, described in sales literature as "the famous Thompson Tone, never before found in a dry battery set." Tuning was accomplished by a clever tuning handle that moved around the periphery of the cone inside an adjacent circular scale. Unfortunately, with a \$125 price tag (without tubes or batteries), mid 1926 inventory climbed to 7,300 units. This was Thompson's last model before the company disappeared in 1927.

The Minuet is based on a standard neutrodyne design with a tube complement of four UX-199s and one UX-120 for audio

output (mine came with a 299). Battery requirements (all fortunately marked with original tags) are 135, 90 and 45 Vdc for the B supply, -4.5 Vdc for bias and 3 Vdc for the filaments. All sockets are rigidly mounted except for the detector which floats on a shock absorber material similar to cork. The unique single-knob tuning has its limitations. Although the ganged tuning condensers track closely enough for local reception, two inner trimmer capacitors or "compensator" controls are provided to fine tune the 1st and 3rd RF stages. Outer detector and amplifier rheostats are used to adjust gain and sensitivity and keep oscillation and distortion under control.

tambour-type cabinet finished in dark brown mahogany with dimensions of 21 inches high, 18 inches wide and 10 inches deep. Weight, with batteries, is approximately 40 pounds. The relationship of the radio's "minuet" namesake (a slow, stately dance with very small steps) was hard to discern. The set is advertised with a push-pull battery switch but my model has a keylock switch with a gold finish.

After reading Roland K. Jennings restoration piece "The Thompson Minuet Neutrodyne" in *Antique Radio Classified* (Vol. 14, #2, Feb. 1997), it was discovered that some design variations existed between original and later production runs. My example more closely resembles

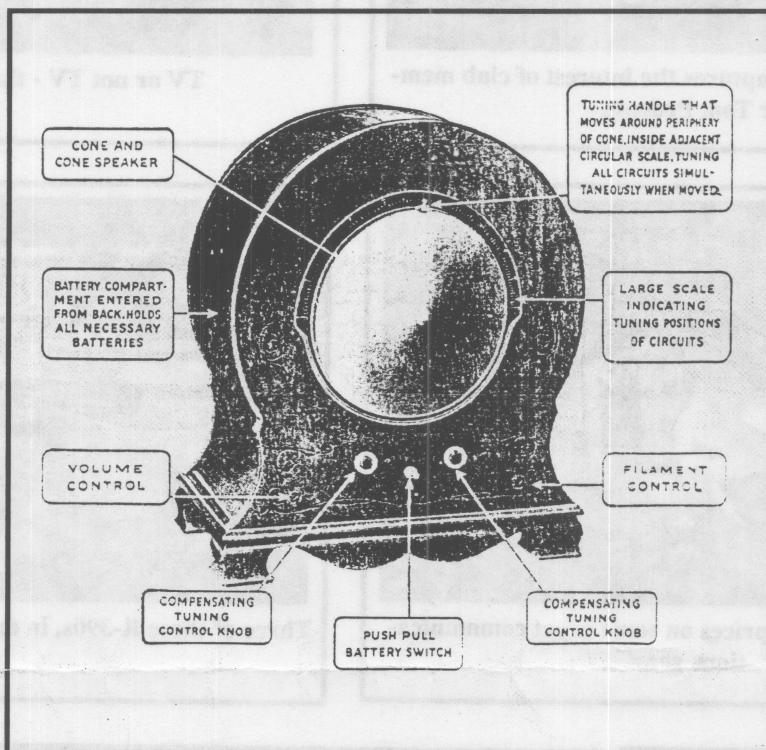
that described in *Popular Radio* of March 1926 and *Radio News* of January 1926. Roland's example has a tube complement of 4 CX301As and 1 CX112A and all tube sockets are floating as compared to the single floating and 4 rigid sockets of my set. In addition, his chassis and tubes are completely surrounded by metal shielding where mine has none.

I opened this article with a discussion of rarity. In the case of the Minuet, a last gasp effort to save Thompson from the fate of hundreds of radio companies of the 1920s resulted in a very unique set and provided a positive component of

the rarity equation. Unfortunately, unique designs alone do not sell radios; poor sales, a negative in most equations, became a positive in this case in making the Minuet difficult to find.

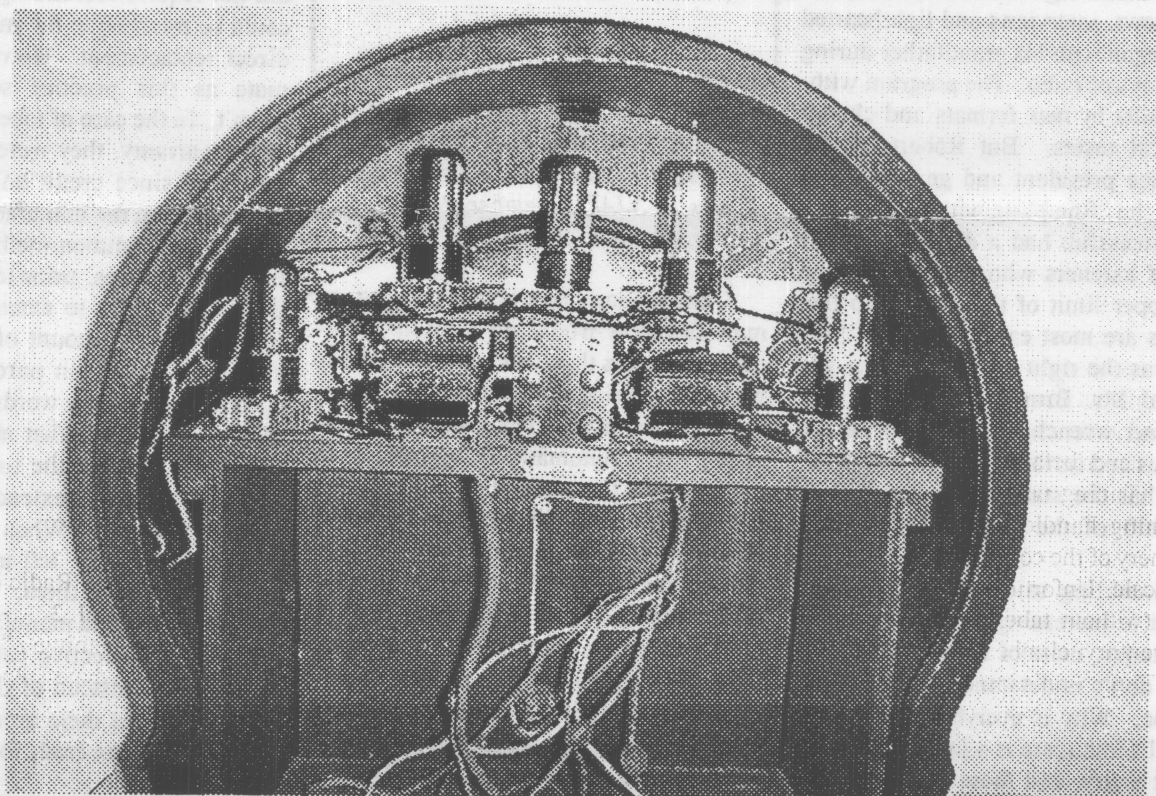
References:

1. Alan Douglas, "Radio Manufacturer's of the 1920's." Vol. 3.
2. Roland K. Jennings, "The Thompson 'Minuet' Neutrodyne," *ARC* (Volume 14, February 1997)
3. Thompson Radio Apparatus, 1925



The only component of my model that isn't original is the speaker cone which has a variegated brown color which nicely complements the darker cabinet. Design is similar to the Crosley Musicone which depends on variations in plate current through a 2,000-ohm coil to produce vibrations necessary to excite the speaker cone; volume is significant. Replacement cones for the Minuet are typical since the cone is mounted in such a manner that the apex extends beyond the front of the cabinet making it an easy target for the unwary.

The chassis and battery compartment is enclosed in what is described as a



GAMBLING SWITCHED OFF AFTER 75 YEARS

The following is based on information published in The New York Times METRO section and the Daily News for Tuesday, September 12, 2000 ...Ed.

Seventy-five years of radio history came to an abrupt and stunning end on September 11, 2000 when John R. Gambling, the third generation of his family to host the "Rambling with Gambling" morning show on WOR, announced he had been fired. "Rambling with Gambling" went into the Guinness Book of World Records in 1989 when it marked its 20,000th show. John R. calculated it finished with 23,616. The show's cancellation prompted an outpouring of calls and e-mail messages from listeners upset at the passing of an institution in New York radio. The morning program started by Mr. Gambling's grandfather, John B. Gambling, in 1925 and later presided over by his father, offered a low-key and amiable alternative to more provocative radio fare.

Since taking over the show as co-host in 1985, Mr. Gambling had continued the tradition of news, interviews and lighthearted talk that began with his grandfather during the early days of radio. The program withstood assaults by new formats and changing musical tastes. But Robert Bruno, WOR's vice president and general manager, said the "Rambling with Gambling," though successful, had a disproportionate number of listeners who were older than 54, the upper limit of the age group that advertisers are most eager to reach. "We knew it was the right decision for the station," said Mr. Bruno, "no matter how painful and wrenching it would be for John, for us and certainly for our listeners." He said that the station had heard from about 2,000 of the program's unhappy fans.

Mr. Gambling said he offered something that is increasingly rare. "Most of radio is angry, most of broadcasting," he said. "I don't understand it. It doesn't need to be. Why is everybody so angry? I'm not. I think there is a huge population that's not angry, and those are the people

who listen to me."

Radio industry analysts said most talk shows drew an older audience. "I don't think that younger people find them that relevant to their lives," said Thom Moon, director of research and development at Duncan's American Radio, a Cincinnati company. He said that advertisers prefer to reach younger listeners because the "are convinced that once you hit 50, you never change your brand of anything."

Avoiding hot-button topics, the Gambling show was comfortable and non-threatening, said Mr. Taylor, the newsletter editor. "It was like your favorite pair of shoes," he said. He said that WOR was taking a risk that it will alienate loyal listeners without picking up new ones. "People are saying variations of, 'My mom called me today in tears'," he said.

Mr. Gambling said he was already talking to other potential employers and hoped to be back on the air shortly. Meanwhile, he said, he would establish a Web site to keep in touch with his listeners and pursue other business interests.

REBRANDED TUBES

The basis for the following article appeared as "The Tube Racket" in the July 1956 issue of Radio & Television News. Thanks to NJARC member Richard Lee for suggesting it....Ed.

Until the early part of 1955, most tube manufacturers would give credit or replace bad tubes that were within warranty without requiring the worn tubes to be returned to the plant. The district sales division would automatically approve such credits with the understanding that the distributor would destroy the bad tubes. However, many such tubes were not destroyed and offered the opportunity for some enterprising individuals to cash in on the industry's good nature. This "tube racket," brought to light in the mid 1950s, had been going on for a long time and was costing tube manufacturers a great deal of money.

The "racket" consisted of obtaining faulty receiving tubes and returning them to the manufacturer for new tubes. The tubes were then sold to service dealers at 70% off list price. Worn-out tubes were cleaned up, the old warranty code date removed (and, in many cases, the tube manufacturer's label) and a new code date and label were placed on the tube. This allowed the tube to be returned to the company for replacement under the warranty agreement.

Most of the equipment used to rebrand tubes was obtained through impeccable sources when the counterfeiters passed themselves off as salesmen for legitimate electronic companies. Engraver's proofs of the various trademarks and code designations used by the tube manufacturer were transformed into rubber stamps. Ink was applied to a glass plate, rolled smooth and then the rubber stamp was applied to it. The unbranded tube base was rolled along the rubber stamp to pick up the counterfeit label.

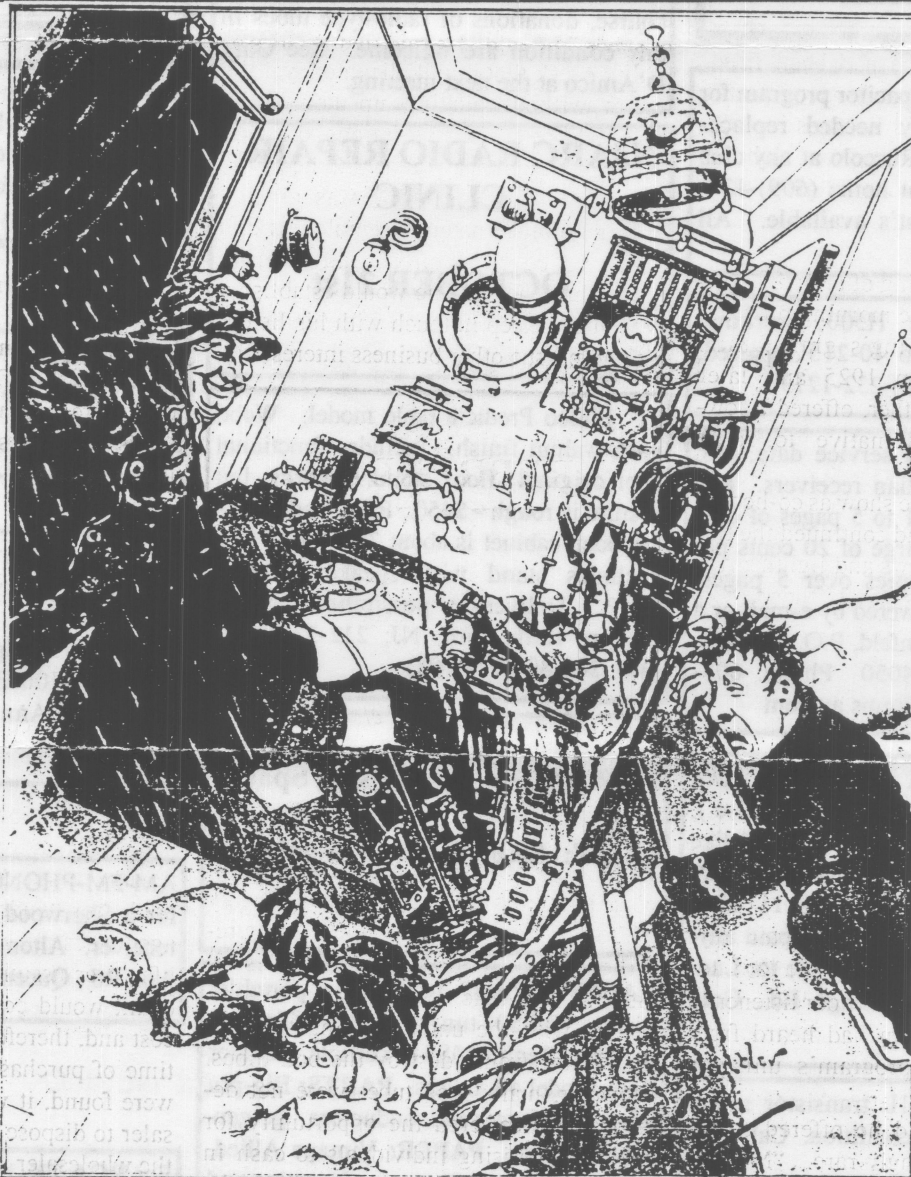
The most important aspect of the scheme was the fact that used or defective tubes were available for transformation at prices as low as two or three cents per tube. Actually, some of the bad tubes were within the warranty period. These did not require rebranding and obviously could be returned to the manufacturer for direct replacement. However, as legitimate as this practice sounds, it still wasn't. In the case of tubes that were still under warranty, they were required to be destroyed since credit had already been obtained from the manufacturer.

Another common method of handling in-warranty tubes, prior to 1955, was for the manufacturer to extend to wholesale tube buyers a discount of 5% in lieu of credit for "duds" on purchases of packaged tubes. In other words, the tube manufacturer assumed that about a 5% discount would cover the tube replacement cost and, therefore, extended credit at the time of purchase. When defective tubes were found, it was left up to the wholesaler to dispose of them. This saved both the wholesaler and manufacturer the costs of handling defective tubes. But many wholesalers, instead of disposing of the duds, often had them around the store in a convenient spot ready for sale to a counterfeiter.

Another potential source for rebranders were "seconds," that is, tubes which did not come up to specifications at the time of production. However, these tubes were destroyed in the plant (although rebranders made attempts to obtain them) and were kept from being a source of supply.

After 1955, major manufacturers took definitive steps to stem the rebranding tide. To keep worn or defective tubes out of the hands of rebranders, General Electric, Sylvania and many others initiated a tube-for-tube replacement plan. Under this plan, the wholesaler was required to send back to the manufacturer any defective tube covered by a warranty. The manufacturer then gave the wholesaler a new tube in exchange and the duds were destroyed. Sylvania went as far as offering a \$1000 reward "for information leading to the arrest and conviction of an individual or company fraudulently branding tubes with the Sylvania name." Philco offered to buy old tubes for five cents each.

Rebranded tubes were sometimes confused with surplus tubes which were obtained from electronic equipment manufacturers who had gone out of business, changed the design of their equipment or had an overrun. These tubes, in good condition, were resold far below list price since they were obtained at extremely low cost.



AN OPERATOR'S FIRST TASTE OF BAD WEATHER.

QUARTERMASTER: "The Capt'n wants to know if yer've got Poldhu yet, sir?"

(Wireless World, March 1914)



CONNECTIONS

Free exposure for buyers and sellers! Unless requested otherwise, each ad will run for two months in both the *Jersey Broadcaster* and the *Delaware Valley Oscillator*. All buying and selling transactions are the responsibility of the parties involved.

FOR SALE

Check out NJARC's capacitor program for those most commonly needed replacements. Contact John Ruccolo at any club meeting or call him at home (609)-426-4568 to find out what's available. All proceeds go to the club.

Zenith TransOceanic H500; working. Would like my Philco 40-215 repaired. Larry Hellebrandt, (908)-232-1213

Radio schematics and service data, US, Australian and Canadian receivers. #10 S.A.S.E. + \$2.50 for 1 to 5 pages of data per model; a copy charge of 20 cents per page is added for copies over 5 pages. (Questions/quotes answered by e-mail or a S.A.S.E.) Steve Rosenfeld, P.O. Box 418, Manahawkin, N.J. 08050 Phone: 609-597-2201; srosenfeld@ems.att.com

New index to AWA publications (*Old Timer's Bulletin*, *AWA Review*, misc.), 1960 through Aug. 1999. Formatted like the earlier version but with new "Author" section. Has 63 pages, 8-1/2" X 11" size. Gives 7000+ citations. \$12 postpaid anywhere. Make check/MO payable to: Ludwell Sibley, 102 McDonough Rd., Gold Hill, OR 97525.

Heathkit model XR-1L transistor radio. Working and in good condition. Call Clifford, (201)-641-3968

Andrea console entertainment center (1950), very nice condition. "I'll take almost anything for it." Douglas Eldridge, (973)-674-8194

Atwater Kent 60 with F-4A speaker; Emerson B5 wooden table model. Gary Gade, (908)-654-6109

Emerson catalin model BT245 (green); no cracks, works. Nick, (973)-305-4861

The NJARC tube program offers clean, tested, boxed tubes at very reasonable prices with availability at any club meeting (no dealers, please...not for resale). Proceeds go to the club. Of course, donations of radio-type tubes in any condition are welcome. See Gary D'Amico at the next meeting.

NJARC RADIO REPAIR CLINIC

OCTOBER 21st

21" Philco Predicta table model. Wood with walnut finish. Includes functional (not original) floor stand. Works, but picture is rough - \$450. RCA Radiola 18 (wooden cabinet is about 30" x 9" x 9"). Includes stand with speaker; works: \$150. Delivery a possibility. Bruce Knapp, Rutherford, NJ; 212-337-0077 (W) 201-804-9259 (H)

FOR SALE: Advertising Space

COST: \$0.00 for club members.

RADIOS: Regal 747 4-tube portable, Fisher FM-80 tuner, Philco "Tropic" portable, Zenith 10S549 console, Atwater Kent Model 40, others. **PARTS:** Big-pin tubes, vintage semiconductors, geiger-counter parts. **PAPER:** Vintage Allied, Lafayette, etc. catalogs, service notes and vintage manuals - list available. John Rohr, 348 Farm Lane, North Wales, Pa., (215)-661-1134. FAX-(215)-661-2910. jaxrohr@netreach.net

Lyric model 60-66 by All-American Mohawk, 3-gang TRF uses 120 VAC. Works fine. With 7 tubes: 2-226, 1-326, 2-227, 1-71A and 1-80. Has face panel to fit into a cabinet. Asking \$50. Large 40 amp variac, G.R. Type 50A, 115 VAC in, 0-135 VAC out, 13" dia. with 7" handwheel, 85 lbs., asking \$25. Both items pickup only. Harry Kundrat, (908)-665-1873.

WANTED

Crystals for my Viking II transmitter. Not sure of style, but pin diameter is about 0.093" and spacing just under 1/2 inch. Looking for 1800-1850 and 3500-3550. Rob Flory, 609-466-4217.

Information on "Lang" radios: literature, pictures, pricing, etc. Charles J Dreitleio, 515 Elizabeth St., New Milford, NJ 07646 (201)-384-3862

Information, circuit diagram, and purpose of the following set: 30-50 MC FM monitor, Knight model KG-220 by Allied Radio, Chicago, service number 8343111-610003-6N. Alton A. Dubois Jr., Peggy Ann Rd., Queensbury, NY 12804

AM-FM-PHONO-AUX selector switch for a Sherwood Model S-7650CP stereo receiver. Alton A. Dubois, Jr., 67 Peggy Ann Rd., Queensbury, NY 12804

For RCA TK-11 camera restoration: oak field tripod (Mitchell?), chrome script "television." chrome 1.1" RCA logos, viewfinder hood and old network logo panels. Dave Abramson, (610)-827-9757, dtatv@worldnet.att.com.