MEETING NOTICE

The next meeting of the NJARC will take place on Friday, April 11th, at 7:30 PM at the David Sarnoff Library in Princeton, NJ. Contact President Phil Vourtsis at (732)-446-2427 or visit us at http://www.njarc.org for directions. The April meeting will feature awards to the winners of the club’s 2008 Broadcast Band DX contest and judging of entries for our Homebrew Radio Contest. If you are a homebrew contestant, don’t forget to bring your entry to the April meeting. Some additional surprises may also surface.

MEETING/ACTIVITY NOTES

Reported by Marv Beeferman

MAY MEETING UPDATE

In order to avoid a conflict with the Kutztown swapmeet (see ad in this month’s Broadcaster), the MAY NJARC meeting will be held on Friday, May 16th instead of the 9th.

Last month’s meeting featured a well-attended auction of a diverse gathering of electronic collectables, test equipment and components. Thanks to all who helped move, assemble and auction a large amount of items; the process went very efficiently. Although the majority of feedback was quite positive, some members, justifiably so, suggested that the club could have managed time a little better to avoid getting out of the meeting too late. This input will be taken to heart by your Board with a promise to do better in the future.

We were also treated to an engaging video produced by club webmaster Dave Sica. Dave felt that many club members have not even been to InfoAge, and, of those who have, very few have seen the inside of the "H" buildings. Dave said that he had no real idea of the full scale of the complex until he gave himself a little walking tour of the complex. He compressed over 20 minutes of his walk-through into a 3-minute, fast motion video tour with a musical accompaniment. Dave even created a little animated "key" to show the "traveler's" location in the overall layout.

On March 19th, Ray Chase, Al Klase and Harry Klancer participated in the New Jersey Historical Society’s "Lunch Times are Past Times" program. This program is presented for the benefit of those in Newark area who wish to combine their lunch time with learning about New Jersey history. The club’s presentation included displays of vintage radios from our InfoAge museum and Power Point images and audio clips of famous radio events played through the displayed radios. Photos can be found in this month’s Broadcaster.

This month’s Broadcaster also included an article on the Sparton model 409 mirrored radio. This radio, along with many other sets, tapes, books and miscellaneous items were donated to the InfoAge radio museum by Mr. Donald H. Rohrbaugh and Roy D. Miller, Jr. of Hackensack NJ and Tamaqua, PA. Ray Chase and Harry Klancer, who championed this effort, will need some help in April to recover the rest of the sets (mostly consoles).

The club is still taking reservations for our April swapmeet; the PAL center in Parsippany is filling up quickly. We’ve also set the date of our Summer Swapmeet at InfoAge for July 26th; more on this later.

NJARC Executive Board elections will take place during the June meeting, and nominations will continue to be accepted at the April and May meetings. You must be a paid member for 2008 to nominate a candidate or to vote. At present, we have nominations for President (Richard Lee), Vice President (Harry Klancer) and a third Trustee (Ray Chase). Note that the outgoing President (Phil Vourtsis) takes the place of our first trustee and the second will be appointed by our new President. Remaining positions will be continued to be filled by our present officers (if no new nominations are received) but we absolutely need replacements for our Treasurer and David Sarnoff Library Sergeant-at-Arms.

Although not a requirement, in the past, some of our nominees have provided a short statement to the Broadcaster summarizing their thoughts on the club’s future and how they plan to implement their agenda.

The election will be conducted by secret ballot and each position and nominee will be listed. Even if there is no nomination for a position that will be filled by the present office holder, that office holder will still be listed on the ballot and needs to be voted for.
WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH COLLECTING?
Edited by Marv Beeferman

The following article is based on the piece "Amass Appeal" by Richard Rubin that appeared in the March/April 2008 edition of the AARP magazine...Ed.

Did you ever wonder what started you on the road to collecting antique radios? Are you driven by and share similar impulses with coin collectors, stamp collectors, streetcar transfer collectors or even mustard collectors? In the March/April 2008 edition of AARP, Richard Rubin tries to answer this question in an article he calls "Amass Appeal." However, rather than answering the question "Why do people collect?" - a question that he admits may never be able to be answered satisfactorily - Rubin feels that a more reasonable question would be "Why do people collect that?"

Rubin says that on the surface, in the world of collecting, it may appear that irrationality reigns supreme:

"It could even be said that collecting is, itself, an irrational act. Why would any rational person want to have a bunch of stamps sitting around that he or she is never going to use? Coins that will never be spent? Radios that take up much more space than, and don't work nearly as well as, something you could buy almost anywhere for a few dollars? Old seltzer bottles that will never again hold seltzer? Faded maps that are hopelessly out of date? Phonographs that won't play 45s or LPs, much less CDs?"

But why, asks Rubin? Why do people collect things, things that they don't actually need but command much more than their fair share of space, time and treasure? It's a question, Rubin believes, has both no answer and too many answers to count. He cites that scientists have speculated the existence of a "collecting gene"; as someone who grew up in a family where everyone collects. Some collectors and armchair anthropologists speculate that collecting is a modern expression of our ancient instinct as hunters-gatherers to, well, "hunt and gather."

Both theories have some merit, but also some flaws, and they don't seem to satisfy an answer to the basic question. Perhaps the answer lies in Rubin's own collecting genesis tale? Since it's about radios, it might interest us all.

"It begins on a spring afternoon in 1975, when I walked past an appliance-repair shop in my suburban New York hometown and saw, sitting in the picture window, an old radio, the kind with vacuum tubes and grille cloth, older than television, older even than my parents."

"Immediately, the old set caught my eye. But my curiosity, my attraction, had nothing to do with technology or design. You see, I was only eight years old at the time and hadn't quite mastered electron theory yet; I figured that old-time radios received old-time radio programs. And I had a keen interest in hearing these programs, because my father, who was not ordinarily a sentimental man, recalled them with great fondness. He never tired of telling me about Gangbusters and Fibber McGee and The Goldbergs and Amos 'n' Andy, or of asserting with perfect confidence that television was just garbage in comparison. Now, I perceived a chance to see (or hear) for myself."

"I told my mother about my desire to own an old radio, leaving out the part about listening to old-time radio programs. My mother, ever supportive, took me down to Queens to see her father, who descended into his cellar and emerged carrying a large wooden box: a 1936 RCA Model 5T, the old family table radio from my mother's childhood. Its tall wooden case looked a bit scratched up but still very dignified.
"We got home late that night, and I was sent straight to bed. But I was too excited to sleep; all I could think about was the possibility of catching Orson Welles’s "The War of the Worlds" broadcast. Maybe I would hear Bobby Thomson’s "shot heard ‘round the world" homer. Maybe even...the crash of the Hindenburg. Oh, the humanity!"

"Finally, it was morning. I raced downstairs to plug in the radio. The switch crackled when I turned it on; the dial lit up and glowed softly, as if it were shyly introducing itself to me. After a few seconds, the tubes started glowing and humming in a comfortable way. The pleasantly mild burning smell that emitted was, I imagined, the smell of history. I was filled with childish glee."

"But as I turned the dial and closed in on the sound of words, the resonant male voice I heard was not that of The Shadow or The Green Hornet or Henry Higgins or Jack Armstrong the All-American Boy."

"It was...Don Imus."

"Yet, disillusioned as I was, I didn’t throw out that RCA Model 5-T or ask my mother to give it back to my grandfather. I kept it. I still have it, in fact; it sits today atop a bookshelf in my living room, surrounded by other such sets, part of a collection that continues to grow some 30 years later. In the end, it seems, it didn’t matter what voice came out of that old radio. I loved it anyway."

"That, you see, is the real reason that people collect things: because they love them. It doesn’t matter why, if they even know why; it doesn’t matter if these things are obsolete or ungainly or ugly, that they cost far too much and take up a ridiculous amount of space and serve absolutely no practical purpose whatsoever."

"In love, as in collecting, irrationality reigns supreme."

In an attempt not to defend collecting, Rubin argues that it needs no defense. He says that some believe that the era of the collector may be passing, but in Rubin’s eyes, collecting is not embattled or beleaguered. "...for now, at least, the hobby - or habit, or lifestyle, or compulsion, or pathology, or sacred mission - of collecting something, anything, is very much alive."

"Here is beveled midnight blue mirror glass modeled in a rhythmic, modern design enriched with touches of silver glints and ebony black. It is a magnificent, artistic coalition of contour and colors...a worthy successor to the widely accepted Spartan Bluebird model...a radio thoughtfully designed to harmonize with all interiors, whether modern or traditional. Truly an original and imaginative gift whose beauty and character are too elusive to be trapped in words."

In concept, the 409 does have the appearance of a miniaturized Bluebird 506. It consists of an inclined, "midnight blue" mirror (which also came in "peach") with the electronics housed in a rear, gray flock finish cabinet that is hidden from the viewer. The mirror is seven-sided with beveled edges with a cutout for the speaker. Two, black-lacquer feet support the mirror. The radio is surprisingly small...12" wide by 7.5 " high by 5" deep. It was meant to sit on an unattached mirrored base of the same color, but only a few of these bases have survived. Unfortunately, the example at the museum is missing its base.

The cabinet encloses a 4tube, superheterodyne receiver together with a ballast tube and resistance line cord. The tube lineup is as follows: 6A8GT (mixer/LO), 6J7GT (2nd detector), 2SL6GT (power output), 25Z6GT (rectifier) and BK3AJ (ballast). The line cord and ballast tube are in series with the tube filaments and the speaker is electro-magnetic dynamic (moving coil with field excitation coil). Spartan recommended the use of a 50’, 25-50’ high antenna.

An interesting example of a modified Spartan 409 is described by a collector at TubeRadioLand.com:

"After purchasing this radio, I discovered that the original tubes had been replaced with a 35Z5GT, 50L6GT, 12A8GT and a 12J7GT, all having 0.15A filaments; the originals had 0.3A filaments. It turns out that this was a neat idea, since the substitution allowed the troublesome resistive line-cord to be disconnected, a definite safety enhancement! Other than filament characteristics, these two tube sets are interchangeable without any circuit modifications other than the bypassing of the potentially dangerous line cord and the removal of one connection from the socket of the 35Z5GT. Furthermore, for
the vintage radio purists, the original configuration may be quickly restored by replacing the original tube types and re-connecting both the line cord (which is still present) and the wire to the rectifier socket.”

“It is interesting to note that the tubes now in this set were not available until a year or two after this radio was manufactured, once the "all-American Five" lineup had been established. Had they been available at the time of manufacture, it's highly likely these would have been used in preference to the original types.”

Of course, the museum’s 409 will remain as-is. But hopefully, some time in the future, it will take its place as a central feature of a proposed exhibit of “designer radios.” Finally, for the question that I will probably be dogged by this month if it is left out of this article...at the 2000 Michigan Antique Radio Club's "extravaganza," a Sparton 409 sold at auction for $1400. You can take it from there.

A "neat" way to eliminate the 409’s original resistance line cord. The original tube lineup of 6A8GT, 6J7GT, 25L6GT and 25Z6GT has been changed to a 12A8GT, 12J7GT, 50L6GT and 35Z5GT with only one tube socket modification required. The museum’s 409 "Sparton" tube lineup will remain "original."
The February "Broadcaster" carried two articles that got me thinking. In the January Repair Clinic story, Phil Vourtsis talked about the restoration of his Victor International table radio. Phil said that following recapping, some resistor replacements and "IF tweaking," he could never obtain adequate speaker volume. He then borrowed an 8-ohm PM (Permanent Magnet) speaker, jumpered it across the radio’s electrodynamic speaker's voice coil, but still could not get volume to improve. Never one to give up, Phil got the radio home and jumpered in a 4 ohm PM speaker; volume was now load and room-filling. With a little experimentation, Phil also found that the lower the speaker impedance, the louder the volume from the PM speaker.

In a second article, we talked about electrodynamic speaker fundamentals and performing some operability tests on the speaker system for a Grunow 470 table radio. I don't want to go into too much detail, but an electrodynamic speaker system is comprised as follows:

- A field coil is wound on a center pole-piece that is part of the speaker assembly. DC current creates a strong magnetic field to operate the speaker.
- The field coil is used as a filter choke in the radio’s power supply, which gives it a high hum component.
- To reduce hum, a buck coil (consisting of a few turns of wire) is wound on the speaker's pole-piece and stationary to the field coil; it's connected in series with the speaker's voice coil.

In a way, Phil was blessed with low volume; this meant that his speaker system was fully operable and didn't require replacement. Shorted voice coils are rare, but shorted field coils are not uncommon with a subsequent reduction in volume. Whatever the case, improved volume from a 4 ohm PM speaker (approximately 2-3 ohms in resistance) in parallel with an original voice coil of about 2.5 ohms guarantees good volume from the PM speaker. But what if there's no speaker output? Does the same replacement scenario apply?

Unless a reliable substitute can be obtained from some junker, repairing open field or voice coils can get a bit intensive. However, when a PM replacement is considered, it gets a little more complicated than Phil's simple fix; you'll have to consider power supply ramifications. As stated above, an electrodynamic speaker's field coil is also used as a filter choke in the radio’s power supply in addition to dropping about 100 volts. With no field coil in the PM speaker, you'll have to deal with this extra voltage and also provide necessary filtering.

Unfortunately, the DC resistance of a field coil (typically 800 to 2000 ohms) is much higher than the DC resistance of a filter choke. Therefore, the field coil substitute will require both inductance and resistance in series, with total DC resistance being more critical than the value of the choke to avoid too high or too low of a plate voltage. Any choke of about 8 or 10 Henries (with a DC resistance of about 150 ohms) will do as long as it can handle power supply current. Subtract the resistance of the choke from the field coil resistance (shown on most schematics) to obtain the value of the required series resistor.

Consideration must now be given to the power rating of the resistor. Let's assume that a 1500 ohm resistor is used to replace a field coil with 70 mA of B+ current flowing through it. Squaring the current and multiplying by 1500 ohms gives us 7.35 watts. At least a 10 watt resistor should be used, with 15 watts being even better. Since the resistor will run rather warm, it should be mounted so that the generated heat will not affect other components.

A power resistor alone (without a series choke) that matches the resistance of the field coil might be also considered. However, extra filter capacitance may have to be added to keep power supply hum within acceptable limits and this might involve a little extra experimentation.

Some complications exist if field coil resistance is not shown on a radio’s schematic. However, its calculation is relatively simple. First, determine the voltage drop across the coil by noting the voltage at its connection points and determining the difference. Then, using a tube manual, determine the total current drawn by the radio tube’s compliment (excluding the rectifier) by adding together each tube’s I_T. By using ohm’s law, the field coil resistance can be calculated. For example, typical values of an 80 volt coil drop and a total current of 60 mA will determine a field coil of about 1300 ohms. Of course, current values found in tube manuals are typical values and the actual current drawn for each tube can vary depending on how the set is designed; some adjustment of the final resistance may be required to get plate voltages in specification. Using a power resistor with a variable tap would work great in this type of application.

With the field coil replaced by either a resistor or resistor/choke combination, a PM speaker can now be used to replace the electrodynamic one. If the radio’s output transformer is mounted on the original speaker, it must be removed and either mounted on the replacement speaker or on the chassis and wired to the new speaker.

References:

This information was compiled from various internet sources that include nostal-giaair.com, tubesandmore.com, radioe-mebered.org and ppinyot.com
March Auction Highlights

Auctioneer Al Klase takes bids for a Zenith Transoceanic with the aid of VP Richard Lee.

Ray and Edith Chase assumed the recording duties.

Consoles were abundant.

Turnout was heavy.

Your editor went home with this empty RCA tube caddy.

This Baldwin speaker sold for $25.

A nice AK goes on the block.

Something for everyone.

One of the offerings of test equipment with Japanese dial markings.

This Stewart Warner 325 sold for $60.
On March 19th, Ray Chase, Al Klase and Harry Klancer presented an "Oldies but Goodies" program at the New Jersey Historical Society in Newark. This program was part of a lunchtime series of presentations dedicated to New Jersey Radio History which included InfoAge's Fred Carl's "Sending the Right Signals" and Rich Phoenix's (New Jersey Radio Museum) "Theatre of the Mind." Ray Chase reported an interesting side note to his presentation; the organizer of the series was not aware of the extensive number of "firsts" and memorable radio and TV historical events that had taken place in our state. As members of a club dedicated to the preservation of New Jersey radio, TV and entertainment electronic history, we should all be very proud in playing an important part in advancing public education in these areas through club events and our museum at InfoAge.

Kutztown Spring 2008 Antique Radio Meet

Renninger’s Antiques and Farmers Market
740 Noble Street, Kutztown, PA
Friday, May 9, Noon - ?
Saturday, May 10, 7am – 4pm
Sponsored by Renninger’s Antiques and Farmers Market
Hosted by the Delaware Valley Historic Radio Club (DVHRC)

Special Announcement!
Richard Estes, well-known radio auctioneer, will be holding a quality radio auction Friday evening. A limited number of quality consignments will be accepted. This is in addition to the Saturday afternoon general auction.

• Renninger’s is located between Allentown and Reading, PA just off Rt. 222 •
• Rain or shine • Meet held under pavilion •
• 2nd pavilion available for overflow – make reservations early!! •
• Free Parking • Free Admission • Free overnight camping. •

To reserve a table, contact Renninger’s, Mon-Thurs (570) 365-0104, Fri-Sat (610) 683-6848. Reserve early!!
For more information on the show or information about consigning items in the Friday night auction, contact Stan Saeger (seagers@ptd.net, 610-957-5340) or Dave Abramson (dabramson@phililies.com, 610-827-9757).
For discounted hotel accommodations, contact the Allentown West Hilton Gardens, 610-398-8686. There are a limited number of rooms at the discounted rate, so register early. Be sure to mention the Kutztown Antique Radio Meet to receive the discounted rate.
New Jersey Antique Radio Club's
Spring Swap Meet

Parsippany PAL Building
Smith Field
Route 46 & 33 Baldwin Road
Parsippany, New Jersey 07054

Saturday, April 19, 2008

Walk around auction starts at 11:30 am.
Bring in your attic treasures for free appraisal!

Expert Antique Radio Repair Available.
Refreshments Available.
Easy ground level access.

(70) 8 ft. Tables
$20.00 for members
$25.00 for non-members

Reserved Additional Tables $15.00
At the Door $20.00

Open to the Public
(8:00 am to 1:00 pm)
Vendor Set-Up at 7:00 am

$5.00 ENTRANCE FEE
CLUB DONATION

FOR DIRECTIONS
VISIT OUR WEBSITE: WWW.NJARC.ORG
OR MAPQUEST.
(33 Baldwin Rd., Parsippany, NJ 07054)

Vendors Make Your Reservations Now!
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