

RADIO HISTORY IS ALIVE AND WELL IN JERSEY

RADIO SOMEWHERE

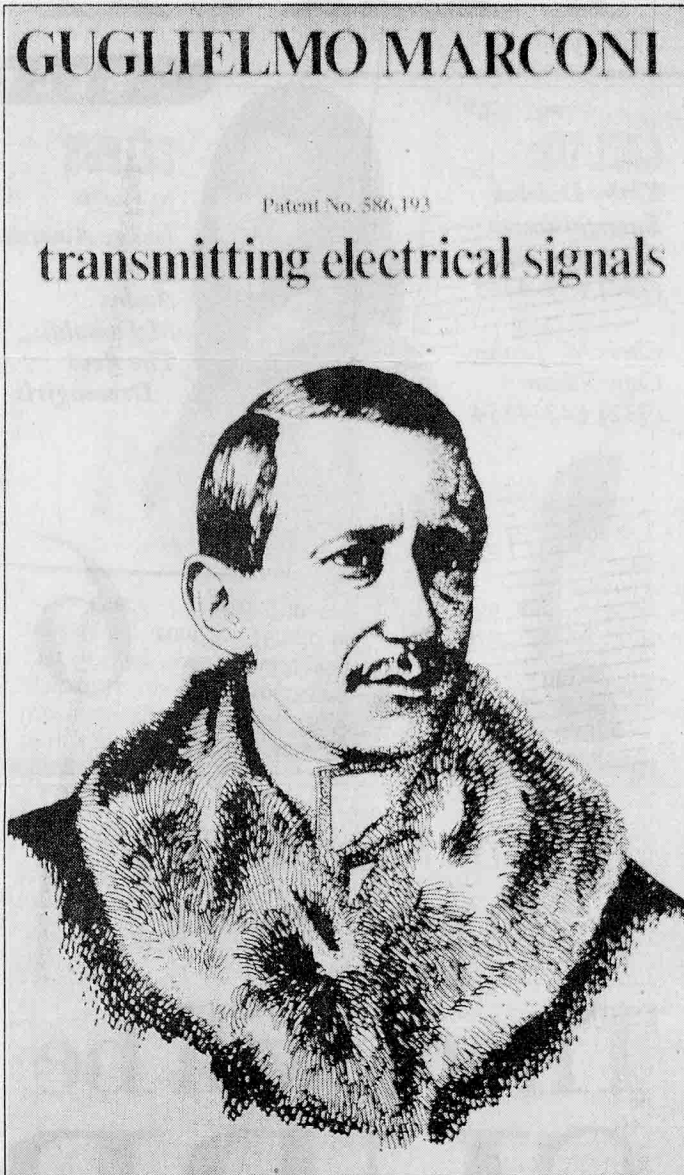
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Even in these days of wireless iPods and laptop computers, the notion of sending a perceptible sound from Nova Scotia clear across the Atlantic Ocean to England over nothing but air seems pretty amazing.

But that, in fact, is what Marchese Guglielmo Marconi — now considered (despite Nikola Tesla's patent) the father of radio — and his two assistants, George Stevens Kemp and P.W. Paget, did — something scientists of the day had said was impossible. To start, they sent the letter S, via Morse Code, sailing 2,000 miles across a storm-tossed Atlantic on a bitter cold Friday in December 1901.

But Marconi's wireless feats already were known to New Jersey by late 1899, when the 25-year-old performed a live radio remote of the New York Yacht Club's America's Cup race from a bluff in the Highlands. Imagine the excitement surrounding the contenders: the Shamrock, owned by Sir Thomas Lipton — the one with the tea company — and the Columbia, which belonged to American banker J.P. Morgan.

With his wireless telegraphy the talk of Europe, including his contribution of the first mobile naval wireless signaling system for the Italian Navy, Marconi accepted the invitation



Learn all about radio pioneer Marchese Guglielmo Marconi at the Marconi complex in Wall.

from the New York Herald to broadcast the race with confidence. As the race progressed that day, Marconi's device sent reports fed from the Herald of other events happening at sea

— an accident, a lost ship found — underscoring the vital role Marconi's device could serve on commercial and naval vessels.

The New Jersey Antique Radio Club and InfoAge are both based at the site of Marconi's original facilities at the "Belmar Station," what is now Camp Evans, in Wall. The museum offers hours of wow for anyone remotely interested in radio waves, the development of radar, combat missions, early telephone communications or spy stories.

Marconi began the enclave on a tract of the Woolley farm in 1913, along the south side of the Shark River, and settled there his American Marconi Wireless Company.

Radio club meetings

The radio club meets on the second Friday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the David Sarnoff Library, off Route 1 in Princeton. The Sarnoff Library also has a museum. For those who can't make it to the meetings, the group has started video streaming the meetings over the Internet.

The club also holds small radio swap meets several times a year, where radio buffs can

pick through an antique radio flea market and attend an auction.

Broadcasters Hall of Fame

InfoAge runs a Science/History Learning Center at the Marconi complex, which is open to the public from 1 to 4 p.m. Sundays. The Broadcasters Hall of Fame and hotel also are open during this time. A visit to www.infoage.org will provide updates on events and schedules.

The limited hours are a reflection of the center's limited funding for staff, a situation InfoAge and other interested groups — including amateur radio clubs, military museums, antique radio and wireless clubs — are trying to rectify by seeking grants, donations and offering annual and lifetime memberships.

InfoAge members get a newsletter, The InfoAge Marconigraph, free admission and discounts on events, National Broadcasters Hall of Fame induction and a haunted hotel tour.

Marconi conducted numerous experiments, as did a host of fellow scientists on the site, making history by helping to develop radar, electronics, meteorology and related sciences. The Navy took over control of the station under orders from President Woodrow Wilson during World War I.

The camp has survived a series of changes, including being split from Fort Monmouth as part of the 1990 Base Realignment and Closure Act. The InfoAge Learning Center was established in 1998 primarily to preserve the site as a Science-History Center for generations to come.

Noteworthy dates

On March 2 at Camp Evans, the public can check in on the New Jersey Historical Divers Association's (NJHDA) Museum Expansion Project from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

International Marconi Day is April 26. The museum, which is at 2201 Marconi Road, will open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. with no admission fee.

For information on InfoAge and its programs, call director Fred Carl at (732) 280-3000 or e-mail fred-carl@infoage.org.

Maureen Nevin Duffy created and hosted "Asbury Radio — The Radio Voice of Asbury Park," a weekly public affairs talk show on WYGG-FM, for more than six years.

Send your ideas for Radio Somewhere or comments to AsburyRadio@aol.com or 3 Deal Lake Court, Asbury Park, NJ 07712.