



# OSCILLATOR

DELAWARE VALLEY HISTORIC RADIO CLUB

The Official Newsletter of the DVHRC

Editor: Ludwell Sibley

Vol. 4 No. 3, March 1996

## THE MONTHLY PREZ

Bill Overbeck

The February meeting was a success (see below), with an awards presentation and the usual interesting auction. The high point of the month was the acceptance of all those nominated for the Tech Committee. This promises to be a good year of programs. Wishing you all "happy hunting" and successful restorations . . .

## CLUB NOTES

Mike Koste

We've all gotten pretty punchy. Two months since the Christmas party, with little or no human contact with Outside The Antique Radio World. The Blizzard. Then more snow. Cabin Fever's an ugly thing. We've all been there, done that.

And ABE DIEHL grew a beard. True story. He didn't have anything better to do.

No surprise, our February meeting was a much-needed change for all. NED BORGER whittled down footage of his Dearborn visit into a 40-minute, two-part home video. Opting for the first half, we enjoyed a look around the Henry Ford Museum, including parts of the permanent radio exhibit. We'll view the auction half at a future meeting. Incidentally, Ned was nice enough to make a copy available through the club library. DAVE ABRAMSON shared a snapshot of our "Name That Homebrew" specimen. He doesn't know if it works, think's it's of 1923 vintage, and the two '01-As check OK. Your expertise is requested at our March meeting when our independent panel of experts (you) will help identify the circuit, name the component manufacturers, and admire or reject the craftsmanship. Our goal is to make it play. But we're getting ahead of ourselves.

Incoming President BILL OVERBECK acknowledged the rapid deployment of our new Tech Committee consisting of LEWIS NEHWARD, JIM AMICI, NED BORGER and TED SOWIRKA. Club Librarian/Tube Curator CHARLIE CLASS was greeted by a generous member donation of two grocery bags full of assorted tubes. Contact Charlie if you have contributions for the Tube Program or the club's reference library.

From our "You-Read-It-Here-First" Department: On June 2nd, DVHRC Vice President TONY MOLETTIERE will be putting his extensive collection of vintage radios and jukeboxes on public display in hope of establishing a permanent Museum of Musical Memories in Souderton, PA. Stay tuned to the *Oscillator* for more information.

### UPCOMING MEETINGS

Tuesday, March 12 and April 9, 7:30 PM, at North Penn Amusements, 113 Main St. (PA Rte. 113), Souderton.

### JOINING THE CLUB

Just send \$10 to DVHRC, Box 41031, Philadelphia, PA 19127-0031.

### ADS & SUCH

Please send ads, articles, etc., to Ludwell Sibley, 44 E. Main St., Flemington, NJ 08822, (908) 782-4894.

The second edition of MARTY & SUE BUNIS' transistor-radio guide will be out soon. A show of hands indicated a bulk purchase for club members is a distinct possibility. Thanks to all members

**DVHRC '95 members: If this space doesn't hold a new membership card, and if you didn't get one earlier in the year, now's a "last chance" to mail a check for \$10 to DVHRC at PO Box 41031, Philadelphia, PA 19127-0031.**

## ON THE HORIZON

- To March 23:** Dilks exhibit, Atlantic County Library, Mays Landing, NJ, M-Th 9-9; F-S 9-5 (see below).  
**March 16** NJARC indoor swapmeet, Hightstown, NJ (see below).  
**March 17** York Springfest, Dover Fire Hall, Rte. 921 (Canal St.), 1 bk. E of Rte 74 (Main St.), 8AM. (see QST).  
**March 22-23** AWA Spring Meet, Charlotte NC (see A. R. C. or OTB).  
**March 24** DVRA Hamfest, Trenton State Coll., Rte. 31 ca. 1 mi. S of I-95 (see QST).  
**March 30** PARS Spring Fever, Washington PA (see A. R. C.).  
**March 30-31** Greater Baltimore Hamboree, Timonium (MD) Fairgrounds, 8 AM.  
**April 20** DVHRC swapmeet at Downingtown radio auction (see below).  
**May 5** Warminster ARC Hamfest '96, Wrightstown (details next month).  
**June 14-16** MAARC RADIOACTIVITY, Timonium, MD.

who renewed their club dues in a timely manner. We'd also like to welcome HARRY HAMALAK of Middletown, Delaware, who joined the club at our February meeting. The new "fit-in-your-wallet" membership cards are in. (By the way, DVHRC's DAVE NUSS did the printing. Keep it in the family and contact Dave for your next printing project, at (610) 353-8828.) The Flea Market Committee reports its plan to have a swapmeet to the Downingtown Farmer's Market (see below) . . . plenty of space, food and facilities on the premises, a built-in crowd, Turnpike-accessible site, and a tie-in with a radio auction scheduled for the same location. Stay tuned!

Another major project on the planning table is to publish a DVHRC Directory. Not only will it include all members' names, addresses, and phone numbers; it will also be cross-referenced so you know whom to call for parts, repairs, restoration services, and collecting interests. Watch for an in depth questionnaire to help us formulate a data base in a future edition of the *Oscillator*.

### MISSING IN ACTION?

Mike Koste

The club is currently in the process of purging names and addresses of current or former DVHRC members we haven't heard from in 18 months or more. If you know any of these collectors personally, why not drop them a line and let them know their participation in club activities is missed? Otherwise, we'll have to put "them" on the curb with the other remnants of Spring cleaning.

#26 Otis Airhart	#52 Mark Kenworthy	#49 Chris Neapolitan
#47 George Altemus	#72 Dean Kratz	#32 Richard Purvis
#84 Jim Atkinson	#91 John Krick	#31 Patrick Shannon
#85 George Bell	#92 Lee Levan	#51 Terry Skelton
#80 Robert Bendesky	#93 Bill Lynsky	#70 Mike Spack
#62 Joe Candidi	#46 Ron Malickson	#100 Joe Spevak
#41 Ted Deptula	#29 Greg Manson	#18 Angie Walsh
#23 Robert Finkel	#21 Charles Markofsky	#48 Robert Warren
#24 Michael Harla	#78 Joe Mayk	
#55 Ken Kelly	#60 Jason Neill	

### NJARC MEET - MARCH 16

The New Jersey club will hold its Spring swapmeet, both indoors and possibly with some daring individuals selling outside. Hours: 8 AM - 1 PM; vendor setup at 7 AM. Location: the Hightstown Country Club, near Exit 8 of the NJ Turnpike and just off Route 33. From the Turnpike, go east on Rte. 33 about 200 yards (past "Mom's Peppermill" restaurant); continue ¼ mile to the first jughandle, and come back west. At the first traffic light, bear right onto Monmouth St., then 300 yards to the Country Club on the left. Rates to sellers: indoors, \$20 per table (\$5 discount); outdoors: \$15 per table (\$3 discount). Lots of parking, \$2 fee. Contacts: Marv Beeferman, 908-693-9430, or Richard Brill, 908-679-8026.

### DVHRC MEET - APRIL 20

DVHRC will conduct its next outdoors swapmeet at the Downingtown Farmers' Market, beginning at 7 AM. This is in immediate proximity to the next Smith Auction Co. radio sale, which will start at 10 AM. Spaces (bring your own table) are \$15 each, reserved in advance. Make checks payable to the Delaware Valley Historic Radio Club, to: Dave Abramson, 1649 Yellow Spring Rd., Chester Springs, PA 19425, (610) 827-9757. More details next month.

### (About) READERS' COMMENTS

To the writer of the recent anonymous "letter to the editor": it's perfectly normal practice to print letters with "name withheld by request," but I like knowing whom I'm dealing with. Will be happy to fill you in with further background on your subject; please contact me! - Ed.

### WANT ADS

Free exposure for your desired or excess stuff! Unless requested otherwise, we'll run each ad for two months, and will send ads to NJARC's *Jersey Broadcaster* for double coverage.

**WANTED:** Philmore #400 "Sky Rover" crystal set; NIB a plus. Emerson 790B in black, blue, or red. Frank Feczko, (201) 437-6895 (3/4-96)

**FOR SALE:** Thousands of DX QSL cards dating back to the 1930s - Russians, etc. 20 cents each, or less in quantity. Gene Reynolds, W3EAN, 53 Marple Rd., Havertown, PA 19041. (3-4/96)

**FOR SALE:** "Radio USA" mike-style radio, 16" tall, AM-FM ("Radio USA lights when mike is on), \$35. Novelty radios: red racing car, AM-FM with clock in sun roof, \$20; Simplex 1912 car, AM, \$20; 1828 locomotive, AM, \$20; Ferrari red car, AM-FM, \$25; Ferrari white or black car, \$20. many other unusual novelty radios from '50s, '60s, etc. Prices include postage and insurance! All NIB, listed in Bunis/Breed. Richard Brill, PO Box 5367, Old Bridge, NJ 08857, (908) 679-8026; fax -8524. (3/4-96)

**WANTED:** Phonograph-related items - top dollar paid immediately for Vogue Picture Records, wax-cylinder records, needle tins, Nipper, record cleaners, puzzles, advertising mirrors, pins, phonograph toys, posters, original advertising from Edison and Victor. Thanks! Bernie Seinberg, 714 Moredon Rd., Meadowbrook, PA 19046-1907, (215) 886-6124. (3-4/96)

**FOR SALE:** 1958 Grundig model M1 SO US "Musical Instrument." AM-FM-SW lowboy console. Varied light wood cabinet has stereo phono with separate amp. for second channel. Works well, looks good. First \$20 takes it. Marty Friedman, (908) 238-1047 (eves.) (2-3/96)

**FOR SALE:** Entire lot of 6,000 tubes, N. I. O. B. All must go! Call or write for list. J. J. Papovich, 53 Magnolia Ave., Pitman, NJ 08071, (609) 582-8279. (2-3/96)

**WANTED:** Power supply for Hammarlund "Super-Pro" military receiver BC-779-B, BC-794-B, or BC-1104-C. Power supply units identified as RA-74-C, RA-84-B, or RA-94-A. Ted Sowirka, 517 Baeder Rd., Jenkintown, PA 19046, (215) 886-0982. (2-3/96)

**FOR SALE:** The DVHRC tube program offers clean, tested, boxed tubes at very reasonable prices with availability at any club meeting. Proceeds go to the club. About 295 types are currently in stock. Of course, donations of radio-type tubes in any condition are welcome. See Charlie Class at any monthly meeting to obtain or donate tubes.

**FOR SALE:** Booklet of 64 pages describes Federal Tel. & Tel's radio operation from the beginning in 1921 to its demise in 1929. Over 60 illustrations, including pictures of early Federal RF and audio amps, all early radios, and many Federal parts. The article and NFWA presentation by Dick Schamberger, Federal expert, are included. All Federal models are listed with the year/month introduced, price new, and brief description. Buffalo's first broadcast station, Federal's WGR, is covered. There are two pages of references for more info. This is more about Federal than exists in any other spot! Good-quality printing. Send \$4.95 + 1.00 S & H to Larry Babcock, 8095 Centre Ln., East Amherst, NY 14051.

**FOOD & DRINK:** a good place to join fellow collectors for dinner before meetings is the Hillside Tavern, half a block uphill from the meeting site.

684 Forman Road  
Building 'B'  
Souderton, PA 18964

(215) 721-3990



Deborah S. Froshour  
Proprietor

BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

Antique Radios & Phonographs  
Buy - Sell - Repair

Frank A. Johnson  
FAIRLESS HILLS, PA  
(215) 943-8295

# AIRWAVES



# TIMELINE

"This Month in Radio History"

Compiled by Mike Koste

**March 2, 1953** ABC drops historic WJZ-AM/FM/TV call signs in favor of WABC-AM/FM/TV.

**March 3, 1949** WFLN-FM, Phila., signs on, now on 95.7 MHz with 50 kW @ 500' above "average terrain."

**March 14, 1940** The Sun Oil Company becomes TV's first regularly scheduled advertiser, agreeing to sponsor Lowell Thomas' newscast on NBC's experimental station W2XBS.

**March 14, 1955** 65 million viewers see Mary Martin fly as "Peter Pan" on NBC.

**March 15, 1932** CBS, NBC and WOR go to 'round-the-clock operations to cover the Lindbergh kidnapping. United Telephone, Western Union, Postal Telegraph, and NJ Bell scramble to find enough wire facilities out of tiny Flemington, NJ to satisfy demands of the press services and radio networks.

**March 15, 1933** The largest radio audience in US history tunes in to hear FDR's speech on reopening the banks.

**March 15, 1948** Philadelphia's WCAU-TV signs-on.

**March 18, 1922** Strawbridge & Clothier's WFI signs-on, sharing time on 560 kHz with Lit Brothers' WLIT. The

two stations finally merge in Feb. 1935, resulting in WFIL.

**March 19, 1928** Network debut of "Amos & Andy."

**March 22, 1965** Westinghouse's WINS, New York inaugurates "all news" format.

**March 23, 1942** The War Department's Office of Censorship bans any mention of weather condition during baseball broadcasts.

**March 24, 1935** "Major Bowes and His Original Amateur Hour" premieres on NBC.

**March 24, 1947** Since their system is not fully compatible with black and white telecasts, the FCC denies CBS's petition for commercial color TV operations.

**March 28, 1954** The Institute of Radio Engineers Convention in New York witnesses a demonstration of the first transistorized radio receiver. (Rumor has it that Overbeck was seen in the back of the room smacking his lips.)

**March 29, 1954** RCA begins production of its first 15-inch color TV . . . it sells for around \$1000.

**March 31, 1941** A wholesale switch of AM radio frequencies in compliance with the Havana Treaty goes off without a hitch.


## "NOW WE'VE SEEN IT ALL" DEPARTMENT

"Galena Restorer ; The unique product able to prolong the detecting qualities of a good galena. Sold at a reduced price." Or so it appears to go - translators skilled in Catalán are scarce around here. This old-time ad addressed to the crystal-set user was recently reprinted in the *Boletín A. C. A. R.* of the Associació Cultural

Amics de Radio from Barcelona. Of course, detector lore has it that galena does oxidize, and that a freshly broken surface works best. So maybe this stuff helped. . .

MADE IN PHILADELPHIA

REGENERADOR DE LA GALENA




L'únic producte capaç de perllongar les qualitats detectores d'una bona galena  
Es ven a un preu reduïdíssim

AGENTS EXCLUSIUS PER A LA VENDA:

ESTABLIMENTS "RADIO - LOT"

Passeig de Sant Joan, 17 - BARCELONA



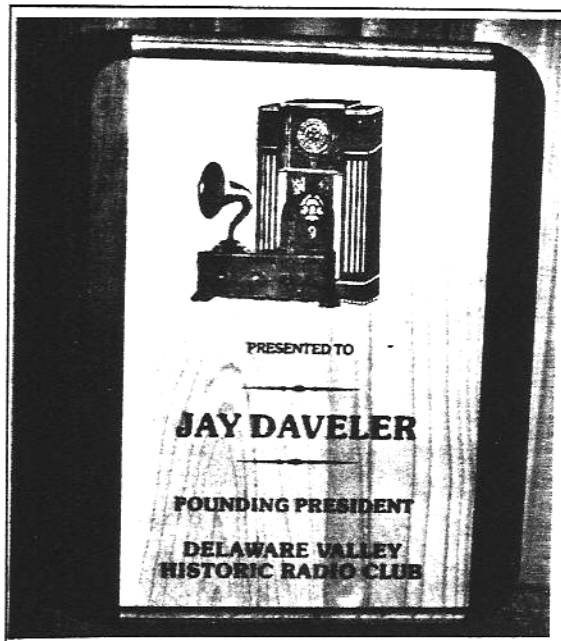
## 50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE ENIAC

Almost missed this one: We are at the 50th anniversary of the Electronic Numerical Integrator and Calculator, a project begun in wartime at the Moore School of the University of Pennsylvania. This was the U. S.' first electronic computer . . . probably not the world's first, given 1944-45 British efforts at cryptographic computing, but close

enough. This machine was originally intended to compute firing tables for Army artillery - replacing rooms full of humans grinding out numbers on Comptometers. ENIAC used some 17,600 vacuum tubes, with massive air conditioning to keep them cool, and was programmed by patch cords. It had an input-output speed of 8000 digits a *minute* - painfully slow in modern terms but flashingly fast compared to the earlier Bell Labs all-relay computers that used teletype tape for I/O. The University soon after built a follow-on computer called EDVAC (Electronic Discrete Variable Automatic Computer).

A civilian spinoff from ENIAC was the Eckert-Mauchly Computer Corporation, designer of the famed Univac computer of the early '50s and eventually a division of Remington-Rand. Dr. Mauchly operated a computer consulting firm for some years after the Univac work; all of this was in various suburbs of Philadelphia. Meanwhile, the ENIAC was eventually moved to the Aberdeen Proving Ground, from whence bits of it have found their way into the Smithsonian.

Ex-presidents Mike Koste and Jay Daveler with appreciation plaques presented at the Feb. meeting by new president Overbeck.  
*Abramson photo*



## READER COMMENTS

Alton DuBois

[Re Mike Koste's "Airwaves Timeline" item last month on 16" TV screens]: I remember those 16AP4 metal kinescopes from when I was servicing TV sets for RCA. Even when the set was shut off, the retained charge was still there for a while. I got a few shocks on the knuckles while reaching in for tubes.

One customer complained about a strong smell in the TV. The reason was that a mouse got into the set and came into contact with the kine and got killed. Another time, a customer complained of a knocking sound in her TV. Investigation showed that a service ticket was tied on the high-voltage terminal. As the voltage built up on the dust, the card was attracted to the metal cabinet. When it hit, it caused the knock; discharged, it dropped back to repeat the cycle.

In later years, the shell of a discarded kine was used in many a backyard as a charcoal cooker, hung from a metal frame!

## ONE-MAN SHOW AT MAYS LANDING

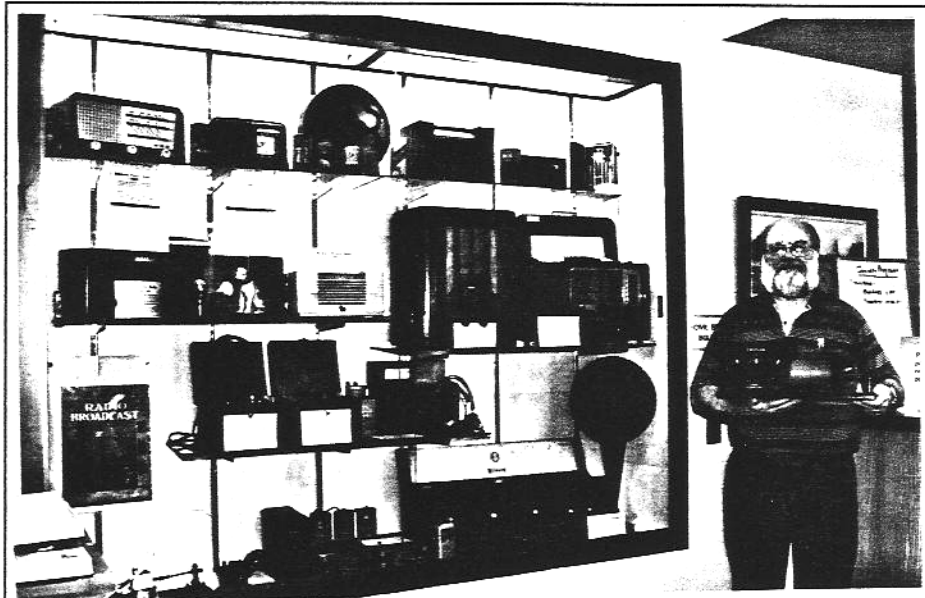
We've seen in the last couple of years how DVHRC members (Dave Abramson, Frank Hagenbuch, Dan Schwartzman) have gotten "good press" for radio collecting by being featured in their local general or antiques newspapers. Here's an example of a different approach, followed by NJARC's John Dilks: an exhibit at the local library. Modern libraries tend to have lighted display cases in high-traffic areas, for use by arrangement. John got access to two cases for a two-month time slot. One contains radios having historic and/or nostalgic appeal. The other shows off a few more radio items, plus a colorful selection of 1929-35 radio magazines (this *is* in a library, after all!).

Dilks got *Antique Radio Classified* to run a notice ("Radios Our Grandparents Listened To") to build interest. The re-

sult has been a lot of favorable interest (and a couple of collecting leads).

John reports a couple of lessons-learned that may be useful. The prospective exhibitor should check for adequate shelf clearance - free from brackets and the like - before trying to place the display items. There is also the issue of security: on inspecting, he found that not all display cases are theftproof, so really rare material belongs elsewhere. Items should be identified clearly by individual cards; this adds informative value and interest.

We'll probably see a follow-up article in A. R. C. For now, this library medium is a widely available means of entertaining and informing the public. It's a sort of individual version of the displays that the Mid-Atlantic club has put on in shopping malls. Librarians like to rotate their displays, so will probably welcome proposals from local collectors.

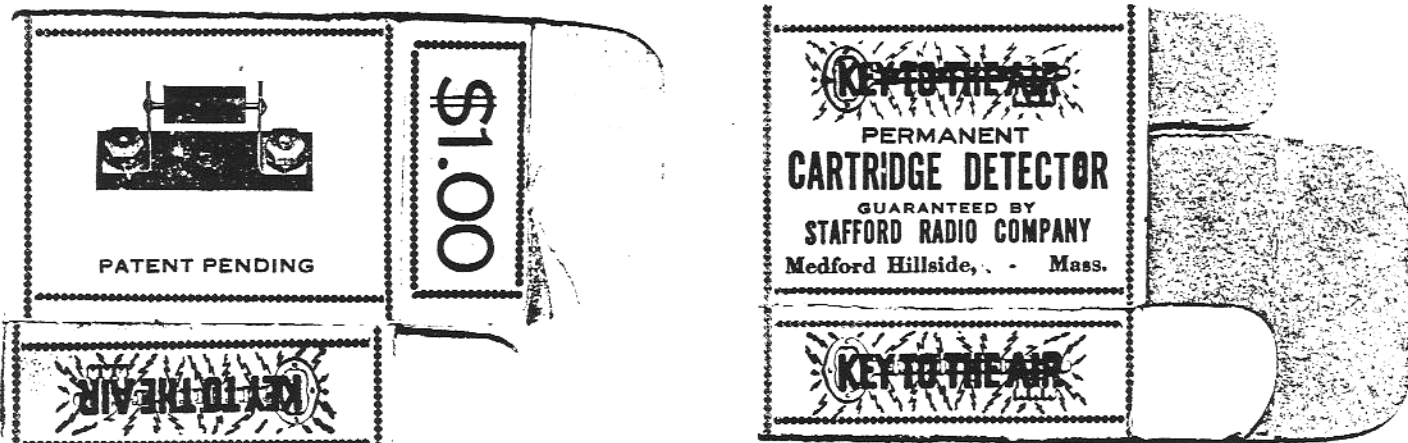


John holding a loose coupler. In the case are the following items. Top row: English Philco, RCA bakelite AC-DC, Crosley speaker, three Emersons, GM portable. Second row: RCA '41 table set, RCA "Nipper" piggy (doggy?) bank, Radio Boys books, a Remler "Scottie," an RCA '37 tombstone, and a Zenith Trans-Oceanic. Third row: a cover from *Radio Broadcast*, an Aeriola Senior and AC amplifier, and a Crosley 51. Bottom: oldie batteries and a battery eliminator, a Thompson neurodyne, and an RCA UZ-1325 speaker.

### "KEY TO THE AIR" - ANOTHER OBSCURE MANUFACTURER

Alton DuBois, Jr.

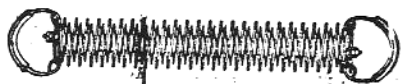
I bought this little cartridge detector in an antique shop. Copies of the paper work were with it, and the box unfolded for copying. The illustration of the cage antenna is interesting.



*Maurice Sievers' Crystal Clear, Vol. 2, lists the Stafford Radio Co. as offering the "Key to the Air" detector in 1925 (only), and confirms the \$1 price. The company's location in Medford Hills, MA suggests a connection with American Radio and Research (AMRAD), and the year is not long after AMRAD faded out. The "Junior" receiver, for only a dollar more than the detector, looks like one of those affairs where the user tunes the set by sliding a metal shorting shunt over the coil, thus changing its inductance. The little "Neuflex" one-tube radio, with its hung-on coils, has a charming primitivism reminiscent of the German Loewe one-tuber. Anybody ever see one of these?! - Ed.*



# RADIO PRODUCTS



U. S. Pat. No. 1,495,537. Other Patents Pending

## Indoor Cage Type Antenna

This is the original and patented double helix indoor cage type antenna designed to afford the necessary collecting area within a convenient space.

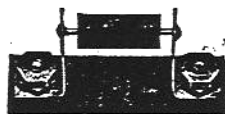
The Indoor Cage reduces static and code interference and at the same time gives many times the volume of a loop.

### A PRACTICAL ANTENNA FOR SUMMER RECEPTION

Being scientifically constructed to bring in distant stations with good volume at all times and especially during the Summer when an outside antenna will often bring in nothing but static and local interference, it is therefore, a satisfactory antenna equipment for Summer reception. Also, it is portable, easily installed and pleasing in appearance.

PRICE, \$2.00

## Permanent Cartridge Detector



The Key to the Air Detector is easily and quickly installed in any receiver where a crystal is used for a detector, and is fully guaranteed to give a clear and loud signal. In many cities this Detector puts the local stations on the loud speaker.

Recommended for summer reception. Not affected by static charges.

PRICE, \$1.00

This Guarantee Backs Every Key to the Air Product

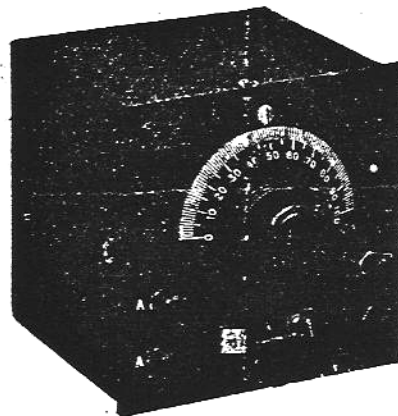


## GROUND CLAMP

The Key to the Air Ground Clamp is designed for Radio Ground. It is made of strong wide phosphor bronze strap, and on its inner surface are hundreds of needle points that are forced into the pipe and make an efficient contact absolutely certain. It cannot slip or fail. It is not necessary to have file or sandpaper to clean pipe. It cleans itself.

PRICE 150 EACH

All items at your dealers or sent postpaid on receipt of price.



## De Luxe Radio Receiver

RICH IN GENERAL EXTERIOR APPEARANCE  
SMOOTH MECHANICAL ACTION  
VERY SHARP TUNING

The Detector is the standard Key to the Air Permanent Detector, always set and ready to receive. (No catwhiskers.) This Detector is used on all Key to the Air Receivers.

This Receiver is Guaranteed complete in every detail and ready to receive. Nothing has been left out. It is equipped with phone and antenna condensers. All parts and materials used are of the highest quality manufactured.

PRICE, \$5.00

## Junior Radio Receiver



This is our most popular receiver. Many thousands are now giving satisfaction. Simple and easy to install and tune. This remarkable receiver, though equipped with a guaranteed Key to the Air Detector, with green crackle Duco finish tuner and green silk coil, sells for

Set Complete ..... \$2.00

Detector Cartridge Alone ... .90



# NEUFLEX RECEIVER

## PERFECT TONE DUALITY

While the Neuflex covers the entire range of receiving possibility from local reception in phones to loud speaker operation, it is the quality of the received signal that is its outstanding feature.

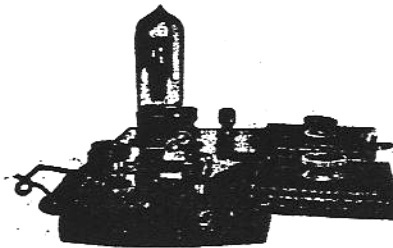
## TRUE REPRODUCTION

Neuflex amplification gives you the program *exactly* as it is put on the air without suppressing or emphasizing either high or low notes. The importance of this is not fully realized until you hear it perform.

## LOUD SPEAKING RECEPTION

While the volume may be advanced to loud speaker reception on moderate local signals, it can not squawk or oscillate at any wave length or setting.

## Amplifies Without Changing a note or a cadence



## Positively Operates Loud Speaker on Local Broadcasting Stations

## CRYSTAL RECEPTION

In addition, this receiver may be used without the tube, or batteries on local stations by plugging the phones into the separate jacks provided.

## BEAUTIFUL APPEARANCE

In appearance the cabinet and tuning slides are finished with Duco Green Crackle, a finish that is both durable and beautiful. The coils are green silk insulated. The panel is black Pyradiolin.

## A REAL PORTABLE RECEIVER

The Neuflex is a real portable receiver, weighing less than two pounds exclusive of batteries.

The one-tube set, including special detector cartridge and all battery connections lists at

**\$6.50**



## FIXED CONDENSER TYPE 1640



All point Pressure Interlocking Clamp

.00001	\$ .30
.00005	.30
.0001	.30
.00025	.30
.0005	.30
.001	.35
.0015	.35

Capacities and Prices

.002	.35
.0025	.35
.003	.40
.004	.50
.005	.60
.006	.65
.0075	.75

Grid Mounting adjustable and interchangeable on all capacities.

.01	\$ .85
.0125	1.00
.015	1.25
.02	1.50
.025	2.00
.03	2.50

Grid Leak Mounting 5c

Key to the Air Fixed Condensers, Type 1640, have the interlocking all point pressure clamp (patent pending). This clamp maintains the capacity accurately and also prevents the minute movements of the element that cause fixed condensers noises. The entire surface is under pressure from the clamping members. The soldering terminals are one piece with the clamp.

Mica, foil, and bakelite are of the highest grade. Perfected assembly and inspection methods insure accurate capacities as marked.

Key to the Air Fixed Condensers are guaranteed accurate, guaranteed mechanically and electrically, and guaranteed to hold their capacity under all conditions.



## THOSE A B C GRADES OF VACUUM TUBES

Austin Lescaboura

Radio Engineering, Sept. 1929

The practice of some vacuum tube manufacturers to market their normal rejects under different brand names is to be deplored. The individual manufacturer indulging in such practice, quite as well as the industry at large, is the loser, and if this point were better appreciated, the practice would soon cease.

Of course no manufacturer enjoys the high shrinkage to which vacuum tube production is subject. The rejection of anywhere from 5 to 50 per cent of the tubes produced is at once cruel and costly. Indeed, more than any other factor, the high percentage of rejections in honest tube production makes for high production costs. Nevertheless, just as a farmer must separate the good apples from the bad, so must the honest vacuum tube manufacturer distinguish between good tubes and bad tubes. There is no middle ground.

We maintain - and this view is based on what we have

seen in some tube plants - that unless the policy of the tube manufacturer is to turn out good tubes only, that manufacturer is not building for the future. In plants where the A B C system of grading is employed, the personnel is not very much concerned about turning out as many grade A tubes as possible. In other plants, where the tube is either good or it is discarded, the personnel is compelled to concentrate on good tubes. There is positively no salvage, as in the case of the plants selling B and C grades. We have come across instances where tube manufacturers ship out their production as A grade, and those returned as off-standard are again shipped out as B grade, while those returned as worthless are once more shipped out as C grade.

A most unfortunate state of affairs, this situation, but we firmly believe that it will cure itself in time.

*A month later, the newly formed National Union Radio Corporation claimed "Ending of Low Grade Tube Sales Is Predicted." Two months later (Nov. 1929), Sylvania was proudly advertising "The Shrinkage is Junked." The other small manufacturers' ads were maintaining "radio silence" on this issue. (Arcturus, for one, would have had a hard time selling its rejects anonymously, as it was using distinctive blue glass at the time.) Lately, tube researcher Jim Cross has discovered that the Van Horne Tube Company sold its best production through Musselman; vended its "good" tubes under its own name; and disposed of the rejects to another company to be sold under the "Air Scout" label. And Cunningham apparently got a reputation for quality in the '20s by distributing GE- and Westinghouse-made tubes only after testing them and rejecting the losers. GE approached the problem of "almost-good-enough" tubes a different way: as of 1929, it stamped them "SECOND" and sold them through the employee store in Schenectady at low prices. One collector has a UX-200A, UX-210, UY-224, UY-227, CX-301A, and CX-380 - all GE seconds stamped this way. RCA weighed in much later - via the RCA Radio and Television Service News of July-Aug. 1953 - with the claim that "It is a basic RCA policy to sell only one quality of tube - that is, top quality! Any tubes which we produce which fail to meet such standards are destroyed at our factories . . ."*

*It all goes to show what a wild, uncontrolled process was involved in tube manufacture before the mid-'30s. Up to about 1940, the big-line makers went to great lengths to staple or rivet their cartons closed to keep others from packing low-grade or counterfeit tubes in salvaged cartons.*

*The counterpart to off-grade tubes at the factory was aftermarket rebranding. When a veritable flood of military surplus tubes opened up after WW II, the rebranders were on hand - I've talked to a former employee of such a firm. An ex-military tube could be had with any desired brand identification, including that of a set manufacturer. (That's why you rarely see late-'40s All-American Five sets with military-branded tubes, even though there was an ocean of 12SA7s and 12SK7s in surplus.) Rebranding as such was not necessarily harmful: military tubes had to pass the tough MIL-E-1A quality requirements that did not apply to civilian production. If, however, the rebrander included a new date code, thus opening up a fresh guarantee interval, then a fraud occurred against the named manufacturer.*

*When do-it-yourself television repair opened up a whole new demand for cut-rate tubes in the '50s, we had two new market forces. In urban areas, there was apparently a substantial traffic in repackaged used tubes - servicemens' discards - being fraudulently sold as new. And there arose dealers in clearly marked "used or seconds" tubes. Most of these were probably from legitimate manufacturers' overstocks, "distressed merchandise," shop closings, etc., but some were losers. I recently got some 76s and other '30s types that had been rebranded and reboxed in the '50s, obvious "pulls" that hadn't been cleaned too carefully. Most tested OK, but four went right into the trash as having hopelessly deficient emission.*

*More on tube chicanery next month. - Ed.*

REMEMBER TELETYPES?

**"QUICK BROWN FOX" SUPERSEDED**

Anybody who once worked at a radio station or other site having a "five-level" teletype machine may remember the test message that used to come over now and then:

THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPED OVER THE LAZY DOGS BACK  
1234567890!@#\$%&\*,.  
RYRYRYRYRYRYRYRYRYRY  
NEW YORK TESTING

or variations on that theme. The traditional "Fox" test sentence contains all the letters of the alphabet, and is thus handy for "foxing out" troubles in old-style teletype printers and typewriters. The better known

NOW IS THE TIME FOR ALL GOOD MEN TO COME TO THE AID OF THE PARTY  
is OK for practice in typing class, but it hardly exercises all the letters. But "Fox" is not the fastest possible test: counting spaces, it uses up 43 letters. By contrast,

JOHN QUICKLY EXTEMPORIZED FIVE TOW BAGS  
is nice smooth copy at 39 letters. A more poetic (and efficient) set is  
HOW QUICKLY DAFT JUMPING ZEBRAS VEX

(35). The most terse one known is

WALTZ NYMPH FOR QUICK JIGS VEX BUD  
(only 34 letters), although it's not great flowing English prose. But it's too late to change: teletypes are history - you see 'em, even once-prestigious Model 33s, forlornly displayed at hamfests with signs saying "FREE.!" - LAS

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