



# The Oscillator

*"ALL THE ELECTRONS THAT ARE FIT TO FLOW . . ."*

The Official Newsletter of the DVHRC

Volume 16, No. 7 March 2009

## DVHRC Event Schedule

Monthly Meeting - March 10 7:30pm  
Telford CC  
Spirit of the Airwaves Players Old-Time Radio Show (DVHRC co-sponsor) - March 12, 2009 7:30pm  
Southern Lehigh Public Library, Center Valley, PA  
Monthly Meeting - April 14, 2009 7:30pm Telford CC  
Kutztown Radio Show XX - Friday, May 8 and Saturday May 9  
North Penn Community Day - Sunday, May 16

## The remote control "Radicon Bus" from the 50's

During the sixties, I was working for the RCA Distributor and Special Products Group which was part of the Tube Division located in Harrison, NJ.



My job was designer of service type electronic test equipment that we sold thru more than 900 Tube Dealers around the world.

The equipment we designed was manufactured by companies outside of RCA. One such company was Molded Insulation (later named VIZ)

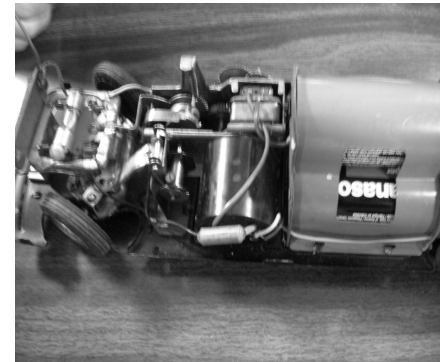
located in the Germantown section of Philadelphia. When a problem occurred in manufacturing, I would visit the factory with our field quality control inspectors.

During one such visit, after lunch strolling along the avenue, an after Christmas sale at a Woolworth 5 and 10 caught my eye. Inside, there was a table piled high with boxes of non-working toy buses marked down to \$5.00. I bought one out of curiosity.

That night, I took it apart, soldered a broken wire which restored it to operation. This Japanese-made toy used no tubes or solid state devices.



The transmitter, housed in a metal box, used 3 D cells and had a 14 inch insulated whip antenna. The Bus also used 3 D cells. On top of the Bus was a pin jack into which fitted a wire whip antenna also 14 inches long. The instruction book indicated a 10 foot control range. By tuning the transmitter and receiver, I was able to increase operating range to 30 feet.



Now comes the interesting part. The transmitter is a low powered spark transmitter. The receiver uses a Branley Coherer developed by Edouard Branley about 1890.

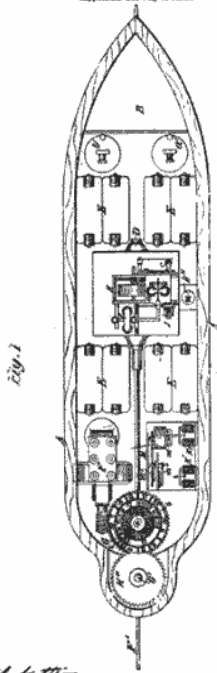
A coherer looks like a Buss fuse - a glass tube about a quarter inch in diameter, one inch long with wire leads at each end. The inside is partially filled with metal filings of silver and nickel.

When the filings are loose, the DC resistance through it is high. When subjected to a radio signal, the filings stick together and the resistance drops drastically. The Coherer is wired to a sensitive meter relay which closed a circuit and started a motor.

This motor - thru gears, cams and levers - performs various functions. I will call this assembly a servo. First a switch closes and the rear wheels start to turn. Next the cam and lever turn the front wheels to the left. Finally, the filings in the Coherer tube have to be loosened. The coherer is mounted on a piece of fiber which is suspended by four springs. The servo has a lever that taps the edge of the fiber board causing the filings to de-cohere. For each transmitted pulse, the servo goes thru its act for straight

ahead, turn right, go straight and stop.

No. 613,809  
H. TESLA.  
METHOD OF AND APPARATUS FOR CONTROLLING MECHANISM OF MOVING VESSELS OR VEHICLES.  
(Application filed Feb. 7, 1896.)  
6 Sheets—Sheet 1.



Witnesses:  
Raphael Artin  
George Schuff.

Inventor  
N. Tesla

In 1898, Nicola Tesla demonstrated a model boat remotely controlled in the same manner. (See picture from the patent above). Marconi patented his wireless system in 1897 which consisted of high power spark transmitters onboard seagoing vessels. They remained in use until the early twenties.

A spark transmitter generates broad band signals capable of wiping out the entire AM broadcast band. Vacuum tubes doomed spark by changing the way communications were performed.

- Ted Sowirka

## DVHRC to Co-sponsor Live Radio Drama

On Thursday, March 12th at 7:30pm, the DVHRC, along with the Southern Lehigh Public Library, will co-sponsor the "*Spirit of the Airwaves Players*", a local group that re-enacts old time radio shows complete with commercials, jingles and period music.



The DVHRC will be on-hand to introduce the group, stream period music through a few antique radios and provide information about the club. Stop by for a night of radio-related entertainment. Admission is free.

The Southern Lehigh Public library is located at 3200 Preston Lane in Center Valley, PA. Directions can be found at [www.solehipl.org](http://www.solehipl.org).

## February Meeting Recap

The regular meeting of the DVHRC was held on Tuesday evening February 10th at the Telford Community Center. The meeting started out with the usual call for new members and the business report.

The club treasury stood at \$5006.36 at the start of the meeting. A few checks were written to pay for expenses and some additional dues money came in, so the balance has already changed.

Upcoming events were reviewed, including:

- "Spirit of the Airwaves" (see separate article)
- Kutztown Radio Show – May 8 and 9, 2009 – Renninger's, Noble Street, Kutztown, PA. We have confirmation that Richard Estes will be there for the Friday evening auction.
- Saturday, May 16, North Wales Community Day – the club is planning to set up a table at this event.

By the meeting, all members should have received a new membership directory. As expected there were some errors and omissions. The directory was passed around that night

so members could make changes and corrections. Any other changes can be sent to the club's PO Box or emailed to Stan Saeger or myself.

Mike Koste and Dave Dean took a road trip to Southern Delaware to check into a potential estate the club was contacted about. Neither Mike nor Dave thought the stuff was worth involving the club. Mike did score some old Allied Radio and Lafayette catalogs that were auctioned off that night.

We went on to the presentations, or "Show and Tell." Stan Saeger showed a nice trick to make "Dog-Bone" style resistors. These were found in early radios and have since been replaced by carbon resistors.

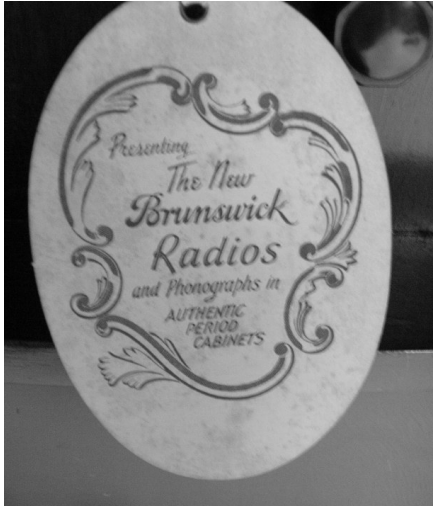
By placing a new style carbon resistor in a small piece of plastic tubing, one can fashion a fairly decent replacement. Once the leads are in place, the ends of the tubing can be filled with glue from a hot-glue gun. They can be painted and the appropriate identifying dots can be added. Simple to do and your vintage set looks original.

Ted Ferber, a new member from Dublin, PA remembered last

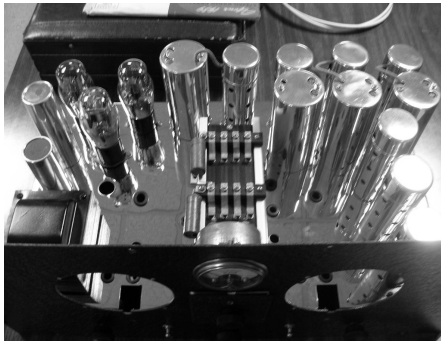


month's show and tell where Mike Koste brought in a nicely framed piece of sheet music – "Mr. Radio Man." This time Ted brought in the record and a wind-up player to play it on! We had the treat of listening to some vintage music on some vintage equipment.

Dave Dean brought in a nice restored set. A 1937 model 16-69 in a Brunswick cabinet.



Chuck Azzalina brought in a "restoration in progress" – a fairly rare communications set from the 1930's. It's a Postal from 1934-1935 that uses plug-in coils. The



set has a chrome chassis which Chuck had re-chromed. According to Moore's Communications Receivers, the company only produced two models in the '30's.

Our last item for the night was a continuation of last month's by Ted Sowirka. In January, Ted "teased" us with a red metal toy bus from the 1960's. He said we'd have to wait to learn how it worked. See Ted's write-up elsewhere in this edition.



- Lew Newhard makes a point to Chuck Azzalina and Mike Koste

The usual auction followed. That's all for this edition. - *Dave Snellman*

### **DVHRC at North Penn Community Day**

The DVHRC will have a table at the North Wales Community Day on May 16, 2009. Details are still being worked out. If you would like to help, contact Frank Krider, Dave Abramson or Mike Koste.

### **Call for Submissions**

How can you help to make the Oscillator a better newsletter for the club? The answer is simple - submit an article, old advertising or photos.

Submissions can be emailed to saegers@ptd.net.

### **Corrections and Additions to the DVHRC Membership Directory**

#### **Corrections**

Charles Adams – add callsign K3HKZ, add email cadams1214@aol.com

John Ianieri – add phone 215-350-1285, add email anythingneat@gmail.com

David Kent – correct phone is 610-918-4691, correct email is dpaulkent@aol.com

John Macera – Devon Ave, not Deven

Walter Peters – email is wpeters143@msn.com, not wpeters142

Monty Purviance – correct phone is 610-691-1826

Fred Saul – correct email is fsantiqueradio@dejazzd.com

Ted Sowirka – add email w3syn@hotmail.com

Paul Weidenschilling – add phone 973-334-1680

#### **Additions**

Ted Ferber  
P. O. Box 209  
Dublin, PA 18917  
215-933-9467  
tferbe@gmail.com

John P. Schlacter  
412 Friendship St  
Philadelphia, PA 19111-3908  
215-745-4320

### **Back Issues of The Oscillator wanted**

We are in the process of trying to get a complete, (or as complete as possible), archive of *The Oscillator*.

The oldest one on hand is June 1998, which is Volume 6, Issue 6, indicating the first issues appeared in 1993.

If you have copies of the missing issues listed below, please send electronic copies to saegers@ptd.net, or drop off paper copies at a meeting.

#### **Missing Issues:**

- 1993 - All
- 1994 - All
- 1995 - All
- 1996 - All
- 1997 - All
- 1998 - Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May
- 2000 - Dec
- 2001 - Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun
- 2005 - Sep
- 2006 - Apr
- 2007 - Mar, Jun, Jul, Aug, Oct
- 2008 - July, Oct

Delaware Valley Historic Radio Club  
PO Box 5053  
New Britain, PA 18901  
www.dvhrc.info

**Estes Auctions**  
 *Specializing in Vintage Radios*

Burbank, OH  
330-769-4992

*The Kutztown Radio Store*  
**AT RENNINGER'S ANTIQUE MART KUTZTOWN, PA**  
Open Saturdays, 8:30-4  
Sales and Repair of antique radios  Buying old radios and related parts  
**Lewie- (610) 262-3255 lewallie@aol.com**  
**Dale- (610) 262-1807 tubenet@webtv.net**

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**moppat@comcast.net 734-20-RADIO 10am-9pm**  
**253 Blanche St., Plymouth, MI 48170**