

SOUND WAVES

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VRPS Fall 2021



From the President

I am excited as I write this column. We are moving forward with our annual convention...I hope that excites you as well. Yep, I can believe some of you...if not all of you, will have some apprehension. So here is how I would tell you to handle the situation. Come with your mask...or, don't wear a mask. Get vaccinated...or, don't get vaccinated. Stand six feet apart...or not. I want you to come...it's been too long. We will be trying to make this as normal a convention as is possible...even though I already know it will be anything

but completely normal. The key to our success, maybe not the only key, but a big one, is don't be critical of someone else's approach to handling this Covid thingie. All of us walk a path in life and can only be sure that no two people walk an identical path. Someone once had similar thoughts but referenced the shoes they were wearing. We did not choose this Covid, but we can be assured we have all been impacted...and not all the same way. Think about it.

Now, off my pulpit and into the meat of this coming convention. Last year we wanted to celebrate 100 years of broadcasting...but you know how that ended. We have good news and bad news and even better news. The bad news is last year, 2020, was the 100th anniversary of KDKA broadcasting in Pittsburgh. The good news is this year, 2021, is the 100th anniversary of a local Dallas station, WRR, going on the air. The even better news is that we have formatted this year's convention theme so that we encompass all of the stations who began broadcasting in 1920 and 1921; a winner all around.

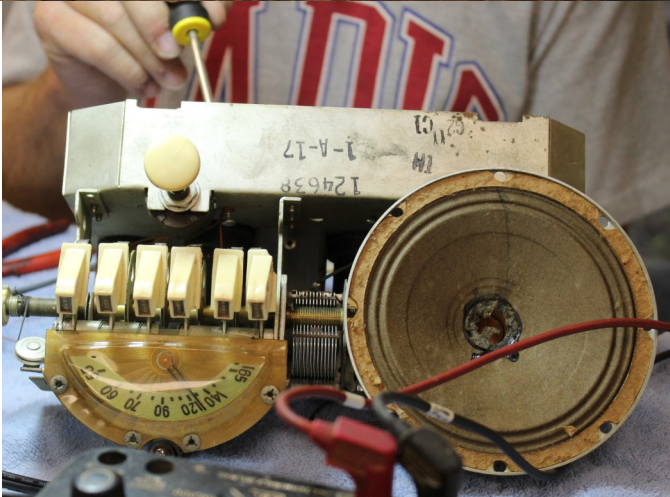
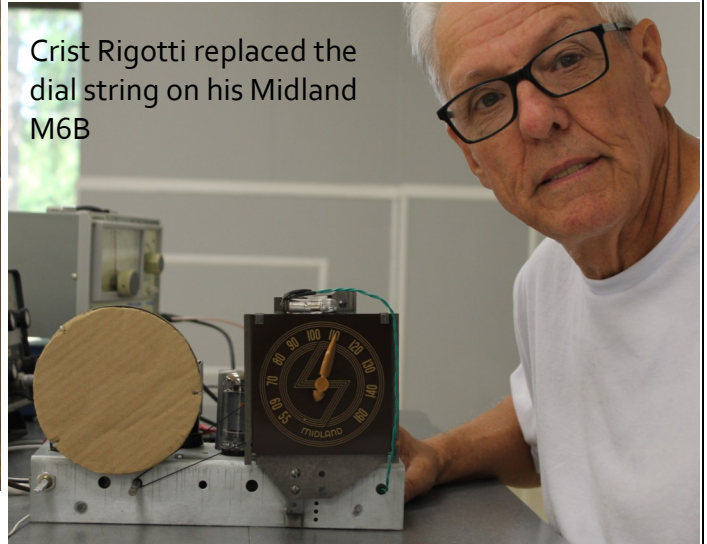
So knock off the dust on those prime radios and microphones and let's show them off in the contest. Bring stuff for the auction...come ready to have a good time and renew old acquaintances. See you in Plano!!

--Jim

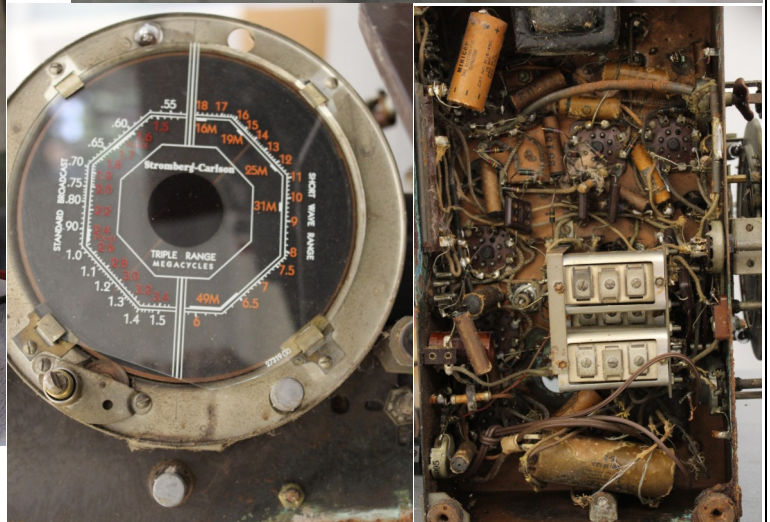
Jimmy Conner replaced "phantom" replaced parts in this Motorola 61 for success.



Crist Rigotti replaced the dial string on his Midland M6B



Ron Carroll's Belmont not making any sound -- got a signal after finding a cold solder joint.

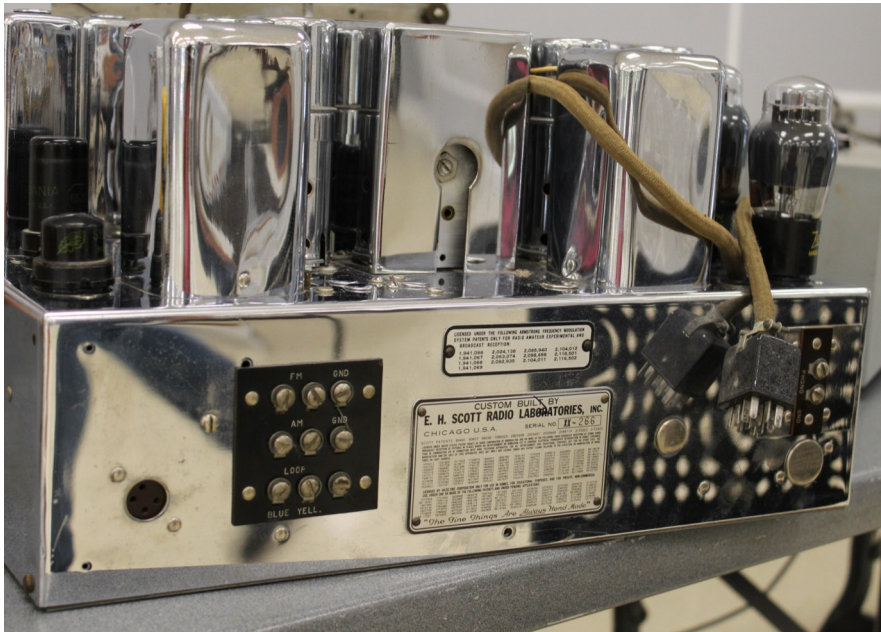


Richard Shanks brought in a Stromberg Carlson for advice.

July 2021 Repair Session

Eric Kirst brought in a 30's International Radio built inside a USL battery case.

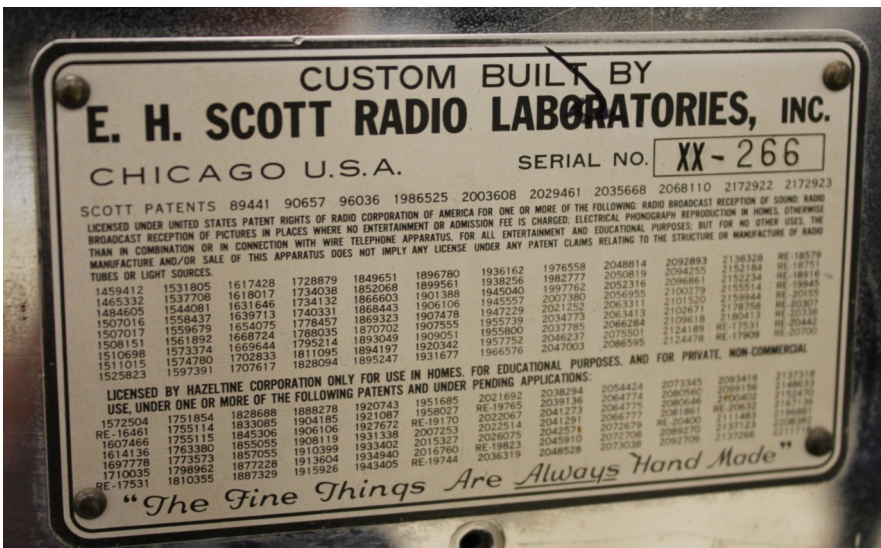




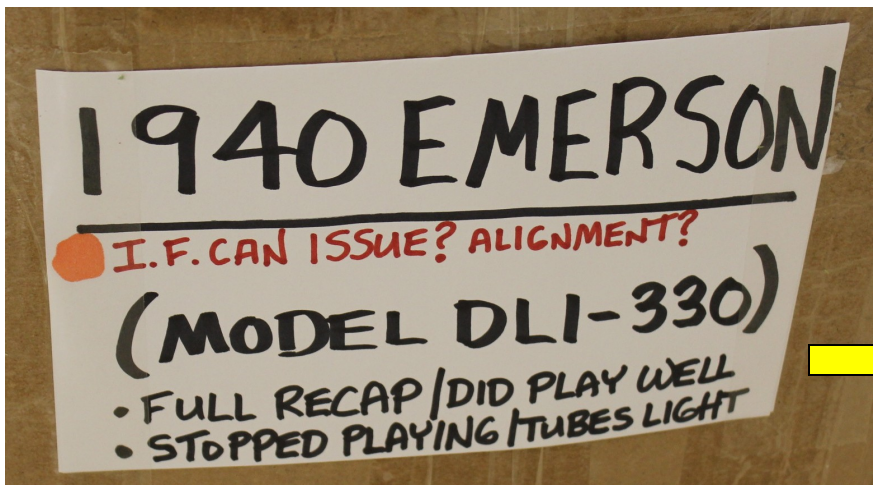
Larry Lindsey brought in the shiny Scott for testing.

Caitlyn modeling

her vintage radio t-shirt.



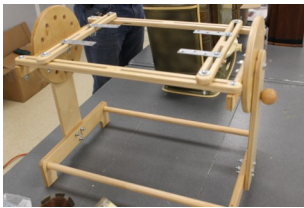
Walt Zaleski repaired his Emerson.



Notes from the August 21, 2021 Meeting

Jim Sargent opened our second in-person meeting back in our old meeting place in Irving, TX - the first one was our Repair Session in July. Turnout was very good. The entrance to the facility had been changed since last year to a driveway directly off Senter Street, with a prominent sign posted at the entrance. Jim announced that we will still try to have our annual convention in Plano this November. He said that the Houston club's convention has been postponed to next March. He also mentioned that his upcoming auction on September 25th will include a rare Zenith Stratosphere.

Larry Lindsey presented the SMITR award that had been on hand since September last year. He then posed a question for the meeting attendees to win the new award. The question was: "Who was the first chief engineer to work for Thomas Edison?" Many members popped up with "Nikola Tesla" - who famously quit Edison, when Edison refused to pay a promised award of \$50,000. No one knew the answer, and everyone was surprised to learn that it was 31-year old Henry Ford



Walt Zaleski started off our show-and-tell program demonstrating a very useful fixture for holding a chassis in any position convenient for access to your particular repair operation. He said that Bob Quinn, a member of the Oklahoma club, had pointed him to fellow club member Steve Strong, who custom-builds these work stands to order. He makes them in different sizes, depending on your needs. They are configurable in many ways, to accommodate different types and shapes of chassis'. Walt had mounted a radio chassis as an example and demonstrated the versatility of the stand.



Caitlyn Zaleski discussed her project that utilized her Nintendo Mario Maker. The result is an emulation of the WWV and WWVB universal-time signals broadcast from Fort Collins, Colorado since 1919. She created a program that sends a signal to a Bluetooth speaker, producing an audio signal like the ones you hear on short-wave radio. (The Fort Collins time signal can also be heard by telephone at 303-499-7111). On the air, the signals are transmitted at frequencies 2.5, 5, 10, 15, 20, and (experimental) 25 megahertz.

Author's Note: I and other members listened to the very first WWV time signal that included a 61-second minute. This "interpolative" second (as pointed out by Mike McCarty) is used to correct our solar time to account for very small changes in Earth's rotation rate.



Billy Smith showed us a small clock radio which had a bad clock and speaker. Removing the old filter cap made space for a power supply for a quartz clockworks replacing the original. Increased space was also provided by a new permanent magnet speaker in place of the original one, which had a field coil. He added a power supply for the clock by making use of a USB phone-charging adapter with a dropping resistor. He showed the process he used for making a new round dial for an early Crosley radio. He started with a similar dial purchased from Radio-Daze by scanning it, scaling it, and printing it on transparent overhead projector material, then sandwiching it between polycarbonate sheets to provide protection and rigidity. In similar fashion, he also made a slide-rule type dial for a Minerva-brand radio that had been stripped of all its wiring.

Ron Carroll said that he generally buys radios that cost between \$2 and \$20. He uses the EZ-OFF brand oven cleaner to very effectively strip cabinets of any kind of finish. He makes dials and re-caps all sets, recommending his source for all types of caps – Sal's Capacitor, in New Jersey. He shared business cards from Sal's. Ron does 3-D printing, making push-pins to hold backs on radio cabinets, and other things. He said that Lowes sells a Masonite-like material that is ideal for making new backs – it is smooth on both sides. He plans to cut backs with his laser cutter.



Mark Blackwood showed his two very stylish foreign-made radios that look very much alike, overall, except for color and some decorative and front panel details. He showed that the chassis are completely different, one being vertically mounted. They both use miniature tubes. He explained that the brown model, made around '50 or '51, is the original French brand and design. It has a horizontally sliding knob that selects any of its 5 bands. The other radio is red and is a Russian model that was made from the fall of 1952 up to 1959, in red, green or grey. The power supply on one of them was miswired.



George Potter showed a long box which appears to contain a WWI or WWII military test kit for lead-acid batteries – made in Toledo, Ohio. The box contains a number of glass hydrometer floats and a device for holding them and getting samples of battery acid. The floats may have been tailored for different battery types, for measurement of the state of charge of each battery cell. There was also a stick of sealant which apparently could be applied to battery cells.



Dave Seymour showed early crystal detectors, including a DeForest model, and discussed their various provisions for adjustment. He tested them with an ohmmeter, comparing their performance with the famous 1N34. None performed as well, but were adequate for their time and purpose. Dave found an interesting capacitor in a Radak TRAGO regenerative/amplifier combo. It had a cover labeling it as a 250 pf cap, but it measured differently. He took it apart and discovered that it is an assembly of several sheets of copper and mica that can be stacked different ways to choose different values of capacitance – up to 5 layers. Flipping the “250”-labeled cover over, it displayed the label “BUILD-UP CONDENSER”.



Patrick Jankowiac showed a WWII radio altimeter set, designated APN-1. It was used to display altitude above the ground on the aircraft instrument panel and to provide a signal to an autopilot for automatically maintaining altitude. The unit is quite large and heavy, and was used only on large aircraft. In addition to the main unit, Pat owns two complimentary instruments – one being the pilot’s instrument-panel altitude display and the other a panel unit that lets him set a minimum altitude warning value. Pat discussed the working principles of the system, pointing out that it is not a radar device, which uses echoes, but makes use of an FM phase comparison scheme. The frequency modulation is provided by a capacitor having a moving plate driven by a moving coil, in the same manner as a loudspeaker. There are two antennas – one for transmitting and one for receiving. He has one antenna, but he lacks the AT-505 unit, and he hopes someone can steer him to one.



Jim Sargent asked if anyone knew the original name for the VRPS: it was the SWVRPS and was change in '77 or '78 to VRPS. Jim showed his Grebe CR-18 Special, a 1926 short-wave set for 10 to 180 meters wavelength. It covers just below the broadcast band at the low end. The original issue had two tubes, but the “Special” model has 3 tubes, allowing it to drive a speaker. The set uses plug-in coils for coverage of the different wavelengths, a tuning set and an “oscillator” set. Jim was missing one of these sets and decided to purchase a replica custom made set to complete his radio. Jim also showed some very early electrical meters, including a “Wood” brand moving-vane ammeter. The patent date is Oct 8, 1889.



The author [Bill McKeown] showed a 1933 Grunow chrome-grill wood table model radio. It was bought at one of the club auctions a few years ago, but was restored only recently. Radio Attic has a photo of this radio model, with its original, correct and rare knobs. This radio uses a 6F7 pentode/triode as the second one in its unusual tube lineup. The triode is used as the oscillator tube, but the first tube, a 78, serves as the mixer, having its cathode returned to ground through an oscillator coil secondary winding. After completely re-capping it, the resistor line-cord filament ballast was eliminated by installing 5 Mfd and 3.3 Mfd 250 volt film capacitors in parallel inside the gutted-out metal can that originally contained the electrolytic filter caps. Powering it up for the first time, you could get only WBAP to leak through by touching the first I.F. tube cap. The oscillator coil secondary winding was open. It had suffered the serious corrosion problem commonly found wherever the manufacturer used cellulose acetate (Scotch) tape to insulate a winding that is placed over the outside of an inner coil. (Philco radios, such as the model 90, often have this problem). The oscillator coil had to be removed from its housing and re-wound, being very careful to keep the location and number of turns of wire the same as original. The performance and alignment were successful, with good dial tracking. The cabinet was completely stripped and re-finished, including all of the black accents. The grill cloth was still good and was re-used. A photo of the re-wound coil was shown to the group. Some tips on winding coils were given as part of the presentation.



Ed Janssen showed a very unusual Sparton Cathedral style radio manufactured with a metal cabinet. He bought it on e-Bay.

--Bill McKeown



Meet Your Board of Directors -- Dave Seymour

Collects: Mainly early battery radios

Favorite radio: Diamond T Super Special

First and latest radio: 1941 Zenith table radio; Atwater Kent Model 2

Joined the club in early 2015

A relatively new collector (at least compared to many of the members), Dave has always been interested in electronics. He worked for many years at Texas Instruments and a good portion of that at the Central Research Laboratory, the division that developed much of TI's new technology. He designed the first IC's for the Minuteman Missile and later developed a single chip AM radio. He has other connections that interested him in electronics and history. His wife's father was the first Zenith dealer in Denton County, in Denton Square. Family lore tells of people bringing lawn chairs to watch TV through the windows of the store in the early days.

He is also interested in stereo and Hi Fi. In the 1980's he noticed that there were British speakers that used plastic cones with great performance. As a side venture, he designed the first US 8" plastic cone speaker (using a wooden mold and a vacuum cleaner to form the cone!) and went into business with a friend. They had success for a while, but Klipsch knew a great thing when they saw it and soon had their own version. As we all know, it's tough for the startup against a bigger competitor. As a design engineer, he can't help but develop things. He redesigned an AK speaker, replacing the field coil with permanent magnets.

His journey (to radio collecting) started when he was cleaning out his brother-in-law's house. There he found a 1941 Zenith table radio like the one he listened to growing up. He started thinking about collecting, and he soon met Dick Morgan (AKA the "Radio Man," whose building Jim Sargent once used for his auctions.) Dick connected Dave with VRPS. He formed a friendship with Mike Grimes (another TI alumni) and soon was collecting Atwater Kent radios. Dave and Mike are well respected for their radio knowledge. The largest attendance (pre-COVID) club meeting that I have attended in the past four years was a presentation of restoration techniques that Dave and Mike gave.

Dave gravitates towards battery radios. He concentrates on the electronic repairs and restorations, and likes to make a radio look like new. His most recent project is a 1926 TRF battery radio, the Diamond T Super Special (an Indiana radio). He bought it near his hometown at an antique store in Illinois. You can see his discussion of the radio in the March Zoom meeting recording on the VRPS web site starting at the 29-minute mark. As you might guess with his design background, Dave does a good characterization of the radio performance. I'm jealous of the test equipment he has.

His wife and her dad love antique furniture, another connection to vintage radios.

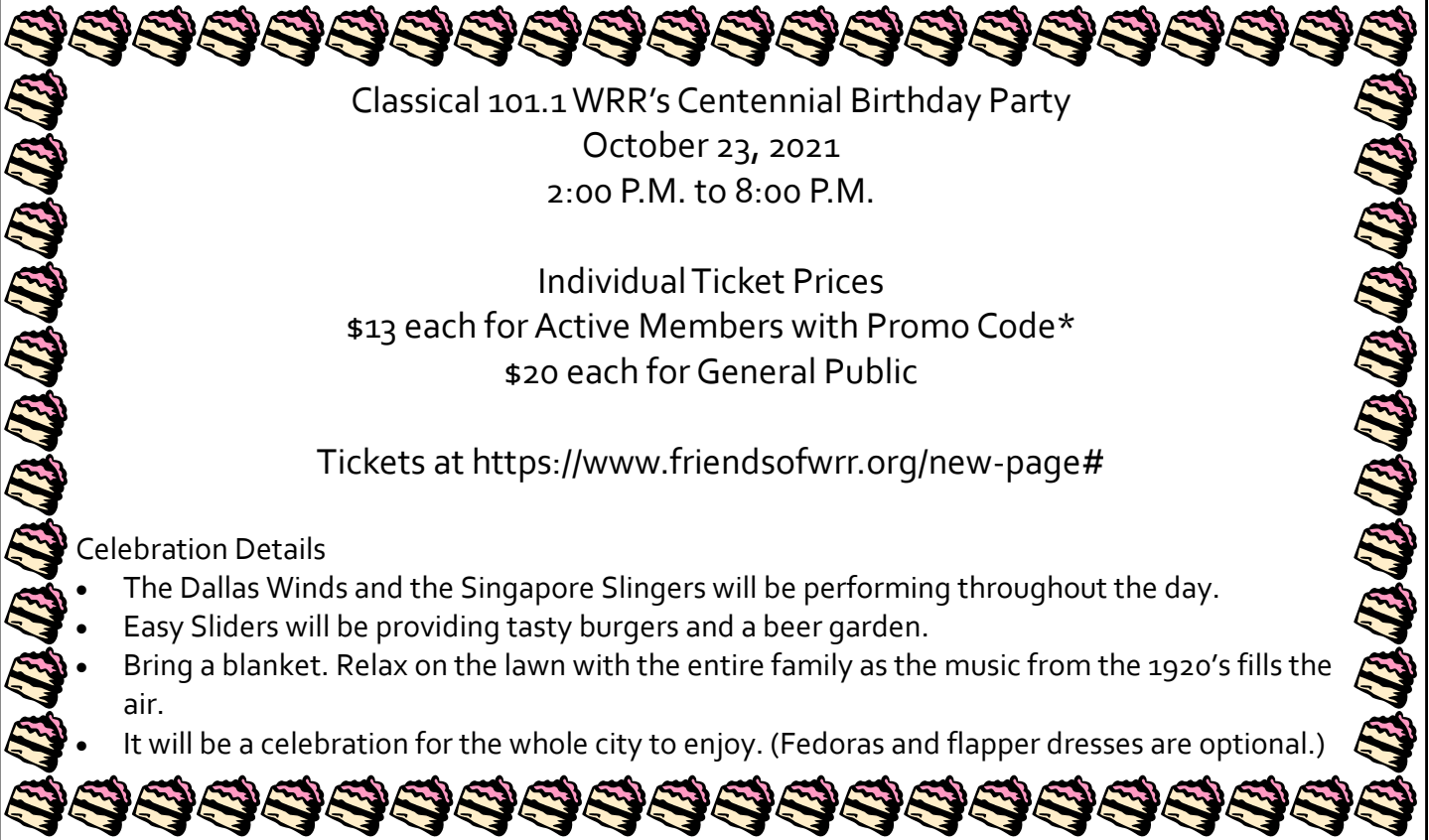
He is married to the lovely Ann Pomykal, who you may see at the occasional VRPS event. Dave and Ann have 6 children and 11 grandchildren. As a soccer fan, I was interested to learn that Paxton Pomykal is her grandson. Paxton is at the beginning of his professional soccer career with FC Dallas and has already been called up for the US Men's National Team. I love watching him play. And to prove that it is a small world, it turns out that Dave and I know quite a few people at Texas Instruments, a company where I also once worked.

--Mark Blackwood



What are we looking at?





Classical 101.1 WRR's Centennial Birthday Party
October 23, 2021
2:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M.

Individual Ticket Prices
\$13 each for Active Members with Promo Code*
\$20 each for General Public

Tickets at <https://www.friendsofwrr.org/new-page#>

Celebration Details

- The Dallas Winds and the Singapore Slingers will be performing throughout the day.
- Easy Sliders will be providing tasty burgers and a beer garden.
- Bring a blanket. Relax on the lawn with the entire family as the music from the 1920's fills the air.
- It will be a celebration for the whole city to enjoy. (Fedoras and flapper dresses are optional.)

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MONTHLY MEETING PROGRAMS 2021

NOTE: Programs will be held at various locations in Irving, Texas. Make note of the location as they may change from time to time. Senter East, 228 Chamberlain St.; or Garden and Arts, 906 S Senter Rd. Maps are located on the WEB site, www.VRPS.org EVENTS page. Programs start at 2pm. unless otherwise noted. Call us on the cell tellie if you get lost: 972-898-7251 or 972-742-8085.

- **OCTOBER 16, 2021 TOPIC: HUGO GERNSBACK - BRING YOUR RELATED ITEMS - SENTER EAST BUILDING - 2 PM**
- **NOVEMBER 19--21 - ANNUAL CONVENTION; COMFORT INN EAST, PLANO, TX**
- **DECEMBER 11 - ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY - GARDEN & ARTS BUILDING - 1 PM**

Programs are subject to change, contingent on scheduling conflicts. As always, your suggestions for programs/ content are welcome. If the programs do not fit your needs and you want something different, let me know. I need volunteers to organize other programs, so consider presenting a program yourself. Call anytime or send an email: **Larry Lindsey email: pipilindsey@tx.rr.com telephone: 817-312-8761..**