

SOUND WAVES

Published quarterly by The Vintage Radio & Phonograph Society, Inc. www.vrps.org

VRPS Fall 2022



FROM THE PRESIDENT

While the calendar says we are now entering the autumn time of the year, the thermometer says summer is not yet willing to let go...at least completely. That being said, I think we are surely beginning to turn the corner on what has been an oppressive summer heat.

Our September swap meet seemed almost normal again. It was good to see so many out...buying,

selling, and trading. We even conducted a donation auction, something we have not done in 2 years.

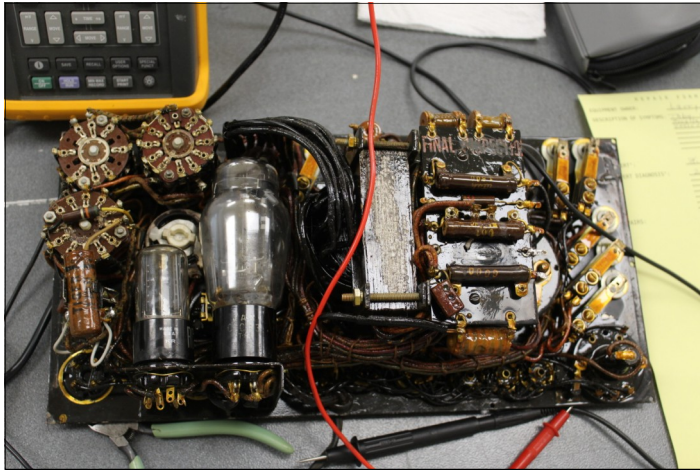
It's that time again - The Vintage Radio and Phonograph Society, Inc. will be hosting our 48th annual convention in November. Doesn't that make you want to dance!! It surely does me! I look forward to this event every year. Some of you folks live outside my normal driving area, so this annual gathering is a really nice opportunity for like-minded folks to gather and swap stories of rare finds and, even better, to sell items surplus to our collection.

You may have heard that we lost our host hotel that we were planning to use this year (was that cheering that I just heard?). They gave us a week's notice that we would not be able to use the hotel! While the timing could have been a bit better, we, and from your comments you as well, were not happy with the facility over the last 3 years. A search team was put in place, and they immediately went into action looking for a fully qualified host hotel...that we could afford.

Make your plans to attend this year's convention and see if you do not agree that this hotel, the Double Tree Inn in Richardson, will be a homerun for all of us. You will find convention details and registration info elsewhere in this SoundWaves. We need you to attend the convention in November. That means all of the convention. We need you to be a participant in the contest, seller at the auction, buyer at the auction, and attend the banquet. Doing all of these will continue to make us a strong and vibrant society promoting all aspects of radio collecting. I look forward to seeing your registration come to my mailbox.

-- Jim

MEETING NOTES FROM THE JULY 16TH REPAIR SESSION



Larry Lindsey's tube tester

Although attendance at the July 16, 2022 repair session meeting was light, all enjoyed socializing and eating doughnuts and coffee. Four pieces of equipment were brought in for diagnosis and troubleshooting.

Larry Lindsey brought in a military tube tester model I-177 for troubleshooting. The symptoms were that the meter would not indicate, though the meter movement seemed to be OK. Billy Smith assumed the role of expert and began diagnosis. He found several burnt power resistors, some of which were precision tolerance. It is a little strange to find burnt resistors in a tube tester. One possibility would be attempting to test a power amplifier tube with shorts in it. Tubes should always be checked for shorts before performing any other tests. Since no suitable replacements were on hand, Billy took the tester home for further work.

Randy James brought in an Atwater Kent model 84, which he suspected of consuming excess power. Randy had already recapped the set and replaced the out of tolerance resistors, and the radio played, but some wires coming out of the power transformer were discolored. Mike Grimes took up the challenge. He connected the radio to the AC supply through a dim bulb device and an AC ammeter, and turned it on. All seemed well, so the dim bulb was bypassed, and the current draw was found to be reasonable for such a radio. Careful examination of the suspect wires found no damage. It is not uncommon for wire insulation to darken over many years, and Mike believed that this was the cause for the appearance of the wires. After a short antenna was attached, the radio

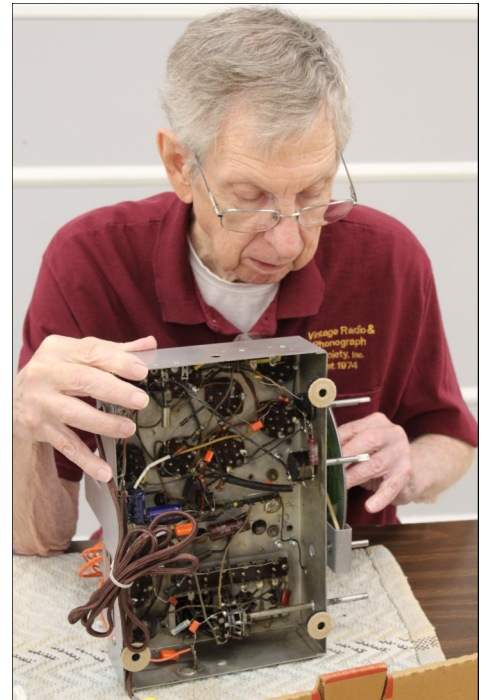
showed adequate sensitivity and selectivity, so Randy took it back home, reassured.

Walt Zaleski brought in an RCA model 1-X-591, sometimes called The Waterfall, which he suspected of having the dreaded "silver mica disease". The symptoms were that when the set was

turned on, after warming up for a few moments, it sounded as though there were a thunderstorm nearby, with loud crashing sounds coming from the speaker, even though the weather was clear. Mike

McCarty agreed to take the set on as his project, and powered it up, using an isolation transformer and dim bulb. The power draw seemed appropriate, so

the dim bulb was bypassed and the set allowed to warm up. After a couple of minutes of operation, the sounds characteristic of silver mica disease commenced. In the mid to late 1940s radios were



Randy James' Atwater Kent



Keith McManus' Federal

manufactured with the capacitors used for tuning the intermediate frequency (IF) transformers made on a single piece of mica. One of these is connected to B+ and the other to either the grid of an IF amplifier or plate of a detector tube. Either way, any leakage of current from one side to the other results in tiny sparks causing sounds exactly like those caused by the giant sparks we call lightning. Mike disconnected the first IF transformer (coupling the converter to the IF amplifier) from B+, verifying that the second IF transformer (coupling the IF amplifier to the detector) had the disease. It is more difficult to isolate and diagnose the first IF transformer, though it is likely that it also has the problem. Walt took the set home, intending to find replacement IF transformers.

Keith McManus brought in a Federal model 110 battery operated radio using '01A tubes for initial check out, to make sure it wouldn't suffer any damage when powered. Since this radio requires a specialized source of power, he also brought along a power supply for the set. Roland Gooch took the reins, and prior to applying any power to the radio, prudently decided to verify that the power supply was appropriate to power the radio, not wishing to damage the expensive tubes. Roland quickly ascertained that the B+ voltages were appropriate, but the 5V filament supply was not. Closer examination revealed that the voltage divider in the power supply for the 5V portion was only capable of supplying about 50 mA. This would be appropriate for the high efficiency portable tubes like the 1A7 or 1R5, but not for the '01A tubes, which require 1/4 amp apiece. The transformer in the power supply was capable of the required current, and Roland volunteered to redesign the filament supply and upgrade it to use a modern voltage regulator capable of high current. Since the power supply was inadequate, the Federal radio was not powered, but a thorough visual examination and meter measurements with the radio unpowered revealed no problems, and it is believed that the radio will play when the power supply is upgraded. For an interesting write up on the specialty power supply, see the article by Keith following.

--Mike McCarty

THE PRIZE OF MY RADIO COLLECTION

By Keith McManus

In late June of 1970 after a string of personal misfortunes I experienced, my father surprised me by announcing that he would drive me to St. Francisville, Louisiana to see a radio collection that I had heard about. From my home in Natchez, Mississippi this was a 160-mile round trip which was quite a journey at that time. I was 18 years old and didn't own a car of my own and a trip like this cost a lot of money. I accepted my father's offer and on Saturday June 27th, 1970, we drove to the Cottage Plantation in St. Francisville, Louisiana. When we arrived, I saw a sign that said "Admission \$3.00 per person" and I was sure we would turn back but was surprised when my father agreed to pay it. I told the tour guide I had heard there was an antique radio collection on site and asked could I skip the tour and just see that. She led us to a building behind the main plantation. I walked in and saw the most amazing collection of radios I have ever seen. There were sets made by

Marconi, DeForest audion detectors with original 1908 DeForest audion tubes and much more. I didn't know at the time that this was the private collection of J.E. Brown – Zenith Radio Corp, Vice President of Engineering. As I was telling my father about various sets in the collection, an old man introduced himself and was none other than J.E. Brown himself. He told my father that everything I told him about these radios was correct and was surprised that a young man from a small town in Mississippi had any knowledge of this subject. I explained to him that I collected old magazines and technical publications and they had been my source of information. He was amazed to find that I had five 1920s radios in my father's car including a Zenith Super 8. He asked me how I powered these battery-operated sets. I explained that our house backed up to a railroad switching yard and I got 6-volt car batteries from the railroad scrap yard for A-voltages. I also used 22 ½ volt B batteries (which were used in remote railroad switches at the time) and finally I used lantern batteries for C voltages.

He seemed really pleased that someone my age was interested in these old radios. I was surprised and delighted when a few weeks after our visit I was notified that I had a package at the bus station from someone in Chicago. It turned out that Mr. Brown had had a power supply made to help me in operating my old radios. He said it was one of a kind and would provide all of the battery voltages necessary to run my old sets. There was no charge and nothing was expected in return. It was completely unexpected and was the nicest gift I had received in my life at that point. I kept it for over 50 years before bringing it to the most recent fix-it session for VRPS held in Irving, Texas. Mr. Roland Gooch was going to use it to fire up and test a Federal 110 radio that I had brought to the event. In checking the power supply, Mr. Gooch had discovered that a voltage divider had failed and the A voltage was much higher than acceptable. He also checked out the Federal 110 and even though we couldn't power it up it



should have been working ok. Mr. Gooch has since made arrangements to upgrade and repair this prized possession of mine. I have been collecting radios for 56 years and have met many great people in this hobby during this time. I so much appreciate all of the help I have received from members of the VRPS and the AWA throughout these many years.

CATS ON RADIOS: CAT'S PRIZE RADIOS





PICTURES FROM THE SEPTEMBER 17TH SWAP MEET



News Flash! New, better venue for the Annual Convention Nov. 18, 19, 20.

View updates on VRPS.org

AUGUST 20TH OLDEN YEAR MUSEUM TOUR

From the website: about the museum;
Website: <https://www.oldenyear.com>

“Olden Year Museum houses a rare collection of over 500 musical instruments that took almost 4 decades to assemble. This vintage collection showcases music boxes, hurdy-gurdy organs, classic phonographs, a fairground calliope, orchestrions, nickelodeons, and early jukeboxes. On premises is The Clock Tower, a Horz mechanism built in Germany in the 1860s. This tower clock is operational and visible at ground level, the only one of its kind in the World.”

An article in the Fort Worth Weekly describes the restoration of the clock tower:

<https://www.fwweekly.com/2017/06/28/our-time-has-come/>



Above: Thibouville-Lamy Two Figure Automato
Circa 1865 twenty key barrel organ with two automaton monkey musicians

Left: Cylinder Phonographs

A large selection of Thomas Edison models and contemporaries from the turn of the century.

Below: VRPS Members enjoying tour.



Above - Original hand painted Morning Glory
phonograph horns.

WBAP 820 WBAP 820 WBAP 820

100 YEARS OF WBAP - BEGINNINGS

The first radio broadcasting station in Fort Worth was WPA, founded in 1922 by Leonard Withington, owner and editor of the *Fort Worth Record*. WPA was abandoned in 1923 when William Randolph Hearst bought the *Record*.

The second station in Fort Worth was WBAP, supposedly named by Herbert Hoover, who was secretary of commerce at the time. He told Harold Hough, circulation manager of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, that the call letters should stand for "We Bring A Program".

Amon G. Carter, owner and publisher of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, told Hough, "If this radio thing is going to be a menace to newspapers, maybe we better own the 'menace'". When asked Hough how much it would cost, Hough said, "Well, we can get the transmitter for \$200, and it shouldn't cost more than \$50 to set it up".

Hough found a home-built transmitter, packed in an old tomato box, constructed as a hobby by W.E. Branch, who was to become the radio technician at WBAP. Branch installed it in the office of the newspaper's co-owner, who was conveniently out of town at the time. On May 2, 1922, WBAP was licensed to broadcast at 10 watts on 360 meters. The antenna was strung across the street to the Fort Worth Club building.

In those days, announcers signed off programs with just their initials--full names were not given. Hough signed off with the letters "HH". When letters came in, asking who "HH" was, the reply was "the Hired Hand up from the boiler room." The Hired Hand was one of the most popular announcers in the early days of WBAP--he told stories and rang a cowbell.

Listen to the WBAP cowbell at

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/SD7r3DdJm2s>

One night, when Carter walked in while Hough was announcing, Hough said, "Why don't you make a speech, Mr. Carter?" Carter did and next day the station received a postcard from a woman in Mineral Wells, saying that the speech came in fine. From then on, the radio station received



preferential treatment. WBAP increased power to 500 watts on October 13, 1932 and changed frequencies to 400 meters and 485 meters for weather reports. On May 12, 1923, the power increased to 1,500 watts on 630 kilocycles. By 1928 the radio studio increased in size until it occupied half of the second floor.

From the beginning, WBAP brought many innovations in programming. In the first years, it broadcast reports from livestock, grain, and cotton exchanges, using telephone lines. Church services and news and weather forecasts became standard. Programs included musical request shows, bedtime stories for children, and even fire calls, at times.

Just months after WBAP went on the air, it broadcast a play-by-play description of the game between the Fort Worth Panthers and the Wichita Falls Spudders. At the time, announcers did not describe games as they were being played. To accomplish this feat, WBAP stationed one man at the event and another at the studio.

A *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* article described the broadcast: "The play-by-play broadcast was sent into an ordinary telephone transmitter and carried over more than 8,000 feet of iron telephone wire to the set at the *Star-Telegram* building. In order to cut out the noise of the fans as much as possible when plays were announced, a cardboard tube was fitted over the phone, and a small megaphone was inverted on this tube. A handkerchief was stuffed into the megaphone to prevent distortion of the voice by resonance."

And of course, WBAP was the first television station in Texas, broadcasting a speech by President Harry Truman on September 27, 1948.

For more details, consult Schroeder's book below, beginning page 30.

Source: Schroeder, Richard. *Texas Signs on : The Early Days of Radio and Television*. College Station: Texas A



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MONTHLY MEETING PROGRAMS 2022

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, 1000 Senter Rd. Maps are located on the WEB site, www.VRPS.org EVENTS page. Programs start at 2pm. unless otherwise noted. Call us if you get lost: 972-898-7251 or 972-742-8085.

Programs are subject to change, contingent on scheduling conflicts. As always, your suggestions for programs/content are welcome. I need volunteers to organize other programs, so consider presenting a program yourself. Call anytime or send an email: **Larry Lindsey email: pipilindsey@att.net -telephone: 817-312-8761..**

- OCTOBER 15TH - SENTER EAST -2 PM -- TELEVISION HISTORY IN A NUTSHELL WITH KIRT EHRLICH
- NOVEMBER 18, 19, 20TH -- VRPS ANNUAL CONVENTION AT THE DOUBLETREE HOTEL IN RICHARDSON
- DECEMBER 3RD -- SENTER EAT -- NOON-5PM --- ANNUAL VRPS CHRISTMAS PARTY