

SOUND WAVES

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VRPS Winter 2025



From the President

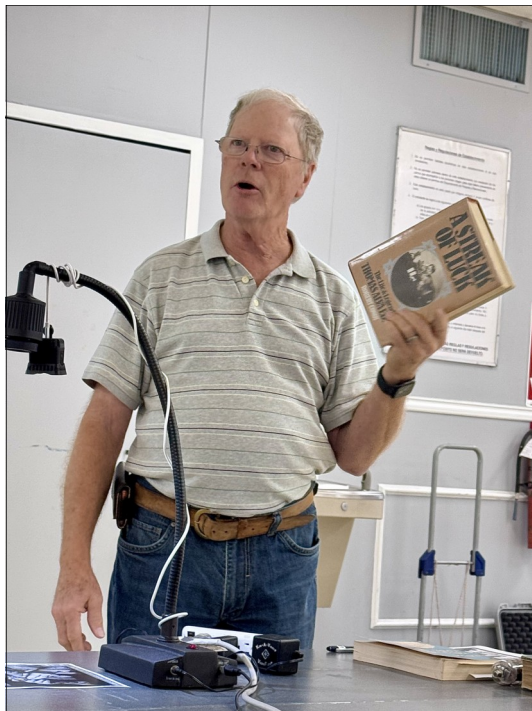
Happy New Year to each of you. As we start our next 50 years, I had one quick reflection back to something that I saw happen several times in the first 50. Tell me if you remember the following scenario: a new member walks through the front door at a meeting or swap meet showing amazement and wonder at the concept that first, there were others like himself who were stirred by the prospect of finding an old radio and, better yet, figuring out how to make it work again. I saw this happen numerous times over the years. I appreciate those of you

who have been in a knowledgeable and timely position to be able to offer assistance to that novice member. As we move forward into 2025 and beyond, that scenario is very likely to be repeated over and over again. It is hard to deny that we are an aging collector group and the knowledge we have, whether from education or experience or both, needs to be shared with the collector coming behind us. Coming they are -- we had 10 new collectors join our ranks in 2024. Assuming we continue to grow at that same rate for 5 years and keep half of those as active collectors, those 30, fairly new collectors, will be the foundation of our organization in 10 years. We need to be preparing for the future of our hobby by continuing freely and willingly to share our time and expertise.

It is also noteworthy to mention that Frank Cooper, an early 1975 charter member of the VRPS, passed away recently. Some of our members, who are also members of the Houston Vintage Radio Association (HVRA), will recognize that, in 1979 Frank was also a founding member of the HVRA. I am not sure what words will be put on Frank's tombstone, but helping to start two long-serving and active antique radio clubs is not a bad start. Both clubs owe a debt of gratitude to Frank Cooper.

See you at a VRPS event in 2025!

--Jim



10-19-24 Meeting Notes by Mark Walden

Larry Lindsey stepped up with his famous SGTR question:

Q - Albert Einstein won the Nobel Prize because of what?

A - by Mike Grimes - for his work on theoretical physics, especially for his discovery of the law of the photoelectric effect.

Jim Sargent began his talk on the “Early development of the vacuum tube” with a subtitle “Scientist, Liars, and Frauds”.

Quickly showing modern tubes and then putting them down, he reiterated that it's the tube evolution he wants to talk about, starting with Lee de Forest. Jim has a 1947 January edition of Radio Craft, which was the 40th anniversary of the vacuum tube, and in it, Lee de Forest is given credit for being the father of radio and its inventor. But it didn't start with him, it actually started with Thomas Alva Edison. Thomas Edison observed the Edison Effect, a phenomenon where a dark spot appeared on a platinum plate, but he didn't understand its cause. Despite not knowing the cause, he recognized the potential of the effect and patented

it in 1884, demonstrating his business acumen. Edison's meticulous journal keeping and detailed notes were crucial in documenting his observations and ideas, showcasing his scientific approach.

The Edison Effect wasn't used again until J. Ambrose Fleming, an Englishman, developed a diode in 1904, which was a crucial component for rectifying electric waves. Fleming used a tangent galvanometer to measure the current flow through the diode, observing rectification.

Lee de Forest was working on a detector for radio using a Bunsen burner and electrodes to measure current flow in open air. Edison's involvement with him through a crony at a conference led to De Forest's interest in radio. De Forest experimented with a Fleming valve in November 1905 and incorporated a third element in January 1906. He patented a device with a grid between the filament and plate, allowing controlled electron flow. De Forest didn't understand the scientific principles behind his invention, despite its functionality. He conducted scientific studies and analysis, leading to the invention of the triode vacuum tube. De Forest also lost a lawsuit against the Marconi company in 1915 over the invention of the diode, which was actually Fleming's invention.

H.W. McCandless, a light bulb manufacturer, produced early vacuum tubes under contract with De Forest. Early vacuum tubes, like the one from McCandless, resembled light bulbs in size and design, with a filament-like structure inside.

The first vacuum tube ad appeared in September 1909, three years after its patent in 1906. Vacuum tubes were available for purchase in 1909, with some being given away for experimentation. From 1909 to 1913, a total of 44,022 vacuum tubes were produced.

During the 1906-1909 timeframe, Cecil Hudson experimented with titanium filaments, suggesting that if the tungsten filament could be coated in tantalum paste, the performance would improve. Hudson developed a method to coat filaments, improving their lifespan, brightness, and adhesion, leading to better electron emission.

The vacuum tube market experienced significant growth in the early 1910s, with increasing production and sales mainly driven by government contracts, primarily for military applications.

De Forest observed that some tubes, despite being manufactured the same way, performed better than others, leading to the creation of “S” and “X” tubes, and to different pricing based on strength. A customer complained about delayed delivery of strong detectors, to which De Forest explained the manufacturing process. Each detector was individually tested on a galvanometer to determine its strength, unlike a “dimming” approach where a sample would be tested. The color coding of vacuum tube components, with red for the plate and green for the grid, originated from de Forest’s early development and is still used today.

The “Welsh Peanut tube” was designed to resemble a smaller tube but lacked the functionality of a genuine vacuum tube. Introduced in 1923, this “gridless triode” was an attempt to bypass the De Forest grid patent by positioning the control electrode outside the glass envelope of the tube. Some tubes were marked as the “Welsh Relay Radion” by Radio Research Guild, a company with a chief engineer named Donnelly, who was known for being a skilled engineer and a fraud.

Jim pointed out that many of the scams, improvements, and developments were made possible by the ease of raising capital for entrepreneurs in the radio industry during the 1920s as a lot of people wanted to get in on the fast-growing emerging technology.

A lot of group questions and discussion ensued as a lot of engineers were in attendance, but unfortunately, we are out of space. Meeting over.



Note: The Project Audion article on page 8 by Larry Groebe--It was Larry’s group, the Generic Radio Workshop, that presented the Sky King script for the 2023 Convention banquet entertainment.



Pictures from the Convention by Mark Walden



The Usual Suspects (Volunteers)



2024 VRPS Awards Saturday November 16, 2024

#1 CRYSTAL RADIOS PRE 1940



1st Place: Marconi Shortwave Tuner – Bob Botto

#1 CRYSTAL RADIOS PRE 1940



2nd Place: Heliophone – David Moore

#2 NON-RADIO ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT Pre 1940



1st Place: Roche Electro-Machine – David Moore

#2 NON-RADIO ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT Pre 1940



2nd Place: Arcade Shock Machine – David Moore

#3 AC TABLE TRANSFORMER RADIOS PRE WWII



TIE 1st Place: Freed-Eisemann Radio & Speaker – Keith McManus

#3 AC TABLE TRANSFORMER RADIOS PRE WWII



TIE 1st Place: TempoTune Radio – Bob Slagle

#3 AC TABLE TRANSFORMER RADIOS PRE WWII



2nd Place: Truetone D-119B – Dutch Uselton

#4 AC/DC NON-TRANSFORMER RADIOS PRE 1960



TIE 1st Place: Silver Round Radio – Bob Slagle

#4 AC/DC NON-TRANSFORMER RADIOS PRE 1960



TIE 1st Place: Crosley Radio Display – David Spivey

#4 AC/DC NON-TRANSFORMER RADIOS PRE 1960



2nd Place: Kadette Radios – Jon Stanley

#5 TRANSISTOR RADIOS PRE 1965



1st Place: Bulova Radio in box – Bob Slagle

#5 TRANSISTOR RADIOS PRE 1965



2nd Place: Lafayette Radio in box – Ron Schneider

#6 ELECTRICAL PHONOGRAPHS & RELATED ACCESSORIES PRE 1950



1st Place: Columbia Cylinder Player – George Potter

#7 WIND-UP ACOUSTICAL PHONOGRAPHS & RELATED ACCESSORIES



2nd Place: Pathé Phonograph – Richard Shanks

No Entries

2024 VRPS Awards Saturday November 16, 2024

• #8 NOVELTY RADIOS TUBE, TRANSISTOR, OR HYBRID



1st Place: Coke Bottle Radio Bob Slagle

• #8 NOVELTY RADIOS TUBE, TRANSISTOR, OR HYBRID



2nd Place: Smurf Radios & Acc. – Mary Caruth

#10 TEST EQUIPMENT PRE 1950



1st Place: Confidence Tube Tester – Tom Burgess

#11 TABLE TOP ART DECO RADIOS
(INCLUDES CATALIN, CHROME FRONT, OTHERS)



1st Place: Zenith 835 w/extra Chassis – David Cox

#11 TABLE TOP ART DECO RADIOS
(INCLUDES CATALIN, CHROME FRONT, OTHERS)



2nd Place: G.E. K-53 M Radio – Richard Shanks

#12 BATTERY RADIOS PRE 1928



1st Place: ERLA Radio & Speaker – Keith McManus

#12 BATTERY RADIOS PRE 1928



2nd Place: King Cole Radio – Bill McKeown

#13 FOREIGN TUBE RADIOS



1st Place: Telefunken Gavotte – Keith McManus

#13 FOREIGN TUBE RADIOS



2nd Place: Philips 436 AN -- Eloy Heras

#14 MICROPHONES



1st Place: RCA 44A CBS Microphone – Frank Haecker

#14 MICROPHONES



2nd Place: Western Electric Boom Microphone – Jim Collings

#15 LOUDSPEAKERS & HEADPHONES



1st Place: SeaTone Shell Speaker – Tom Burgess

#15 LOUDSPEAKERS & HEADPHONES



2nd Place: Brandes Headphones -- George Potter

#16 OPEN CATEGORY (RADIO RELATED ITEMS NOT BELONGING IN OTHER CATEGORIES)



1st Place: Zenith 12S-267 Console – Fred Taylor

#16 OPEN CATEGORY (RADIO RELATED ITEMS NOT BELONGING IN OTHER CATEGORIES)



2nd Place: Christmas at the Grand Olde Opry – Phyllis Huckaby

2024 VRPS Awards Saturday November 16, 2024

Best of Show



Marconi Shortwave Tuner – Bob Botto

Best Restoration



Philips 436 AN – Eloy Heras

First Time Contestant



AM Stereo Receiver – Margaret Bryant

Peoples' Choice Award



1951 Crosleys – David Spivey

Founders' Award



J.H. Bunnell Miniature Radio Sounder with a Secret Sounder – Tom Burgess

VRPS Christmas Party



PROJECT AUDION ARTICLE FOR VRPS - LARRY GROEBE / DECEMBER 2024

Some people restore old radios. And some of us restore old radio programming.

That's the idea behind Project Audion, which for the past five years has been recording classic radio dramas and "broadcasting" them online each month. Comedians like Jack Benny and detectives like Philip Marlowe are being heard in new performances thanks to scores of talented vocal artists across the country.

You can blame it on the pandemic. As a longtime local vintage radio aficionado and occasional recreator of audio drama since the days of Bill Bragg's Texas Broadcast Museum, I was part of a cast for an audio drama being performed for live local audiences in March of 2020. Prior to our second night's performance, the cast was pulled aside and told it would also be our last - that our performance space was being closed effective immediately due to the rapidly-spreading COVID virus. Fear of public gatherings kept much of the audience away for that final show, but the play went ahead anyway.

In a moment of desperate inspiration, one of the cast members balanced an iPhone on top of a ladder several rows back, and streamed the performance live on Facebook. That night, more people saw the show virtually than in the theatre, and on the drive home it got me thinking. Why couldn't actors gather together without an audience and send out radio shows online, like they used to? If everyone was going to be staying home, folks might want something to listen to. A camera could capture the cast and crew in action from the studio for visual interest. This was the seed from which Project Audion was born.

I started pursuing the idea. Finding old scripts was no problem - for years I have hosted a website called "The Generic Radio Workshop" which is a repository of vintage radio scripts and transcripts. It became clear that COVID was keeping us all at home, so the concept of getting local actors together in a studio was replaced with the idea of meeting virtually, using one of the promising teleconferencing apps like Zoom. That opened up the possibility of using vocal talent from across the country - and I had ready access to folks who had written the Generic Radio Workshop over the years sharing their love for the audio medium. We soon had a cast, selected a script, and worked through the technical challenges of performing together from our isolated locations. The first show was completed in May 2020 and we've been at it ever since, with over 60 programs now recorded and available.

Project Audion shows start by selecting script. As a collector of vintage radio scripts (which are, after all, smaller and easier to store than vintage tube radios) I've acquired hundreds of scripts of "Golden Age of Radio" shows from the famous to the obscure. It's a revelation to realize just how much "content" was created for broadcast in the 20th century, and how the vast majority of it no longer survives in recorded form. Project Audion often chooses a script that hasn't been heard in eight decades.

Actually, some scripts have NEVER been heard before, because they are newly-written for us. Among the people who have discovered Audion are several writers. Robert L. Mills, for instance, is a lively octogenarian in California who used to write professionally for Bob Hope. Now he writes for Project Audion, crafting brand-new episodes of Jack Benny and Fibber McGee that have all the laughs and comic timing of the shows he grew up listening to.

Next we select a cast. I now have scores of talented voice actors across the US, Canada, and even England - some professional, some amateur - to draw upon. Each show mixes Audion veterans with newer voices, and one of my great delights is putting these people together and hearing what comes of it. What often comes of it is that everyone appreciates the varied talents, and people soon go off together to work on

new projects. Project Audion has been responsible for cross-pollinating many different audio theatre projects.

Next, the hunt begins for sound effects and music. Although we perform via Zoom, we otherwise try to apply the classic techniques that made old time radio what it was. We "transcribe" each show as a live performance, with as many sounds performed live as possible (And one camera captures what the sound guy goes through). All-important music cues are sourced from the original shows where possible, augmented by production music library recordings that can go back 90 years. We even managed a live organ on one episode. And much like the shows from the 1940s and 1950s, keeping things "Live" keeps things simple - our cast meets just three times - once to read through the script, once to rehearse properly, and once to record. Like the magic of live theatre, what happens in performance, happens.

At this point I'll confess to a little modern manipulation. Classic radio dramas typically put the cast in a acoustically-ideal studio sharing a couple very expensive ribbon microphones. Our cast is spread across the country in unique home studios, and the raw recording reflects those varied sound qualities. Fortunately, Zoom allows us to create separate audio tracks for each performer, so in post-production I can correct volume levels, equalization, reverb and more to make the sound track more unified. I can even add a touch of record scratch, filtering, or distortion to make the sound more authentically match shows from decades ago. This is when we enhance the raw Zoom video recording to provide a more interesting visual for the audience. Each cast member is still in their own Zoom square, but backgrounds and other video manipulations that make this one radio show worth watching.

Finally, I record an on-screen welcome which comments on and leads into the performance, and just a few days after the recording session, the new show is ready to premiere as an audio podcast, but also on Project Audion's YouTube channel (youtube.com/@ProjectAudion). Each show is a new adventure, and each has found new audience members who discover to their delight than some of the newest audio dramas are also some of the oldest - the classic shows brought back to life by the dedicated and enthusiastic volunteer voices of Project Audion.

—Larry Groebe



Project Audion: Classic Audio Dramas for Modern... Larry Groebe

★ 5.0 (3) · DRAMA · UPDATED MONTHLY

Network Radio of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s - the precursor to today's podcasting - was a golden era for Audio Theatre. Project Audion selects the most interesting examples of th **MORE**

[Project Audion: Classic Audio Dramas for Modern Times Podcast - Apple Podcasts](#)

NEWS FLASH: NEWS FLASH: NEWS FLASH: NEWS FLASH: NEWS FLASH:

HVRA 2025 Convention

March 27-30
Houston Marriott Westchase
2900 Briarpark Dr. Houston TX 77042

This Year's Convention Theme is "Stewart Warner"

<http://hvra.org/index.php/2025-annual-convention/>

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SOUND WAVES

MONTHLY MEETING PROGRAMS 2025

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, 1000 Senter Road; 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 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@tx.rr.com telephone: 817-312-8761..**

- JANUARY 18TH -- 8 AM - NOON --GARDEN & ARTS --TRAVELS WITH RICK WILKINS TO STOCK A MUSEUM: RADIOS AND PHONOGRAPHS AND UNIQUE ITEMS.
- FEBRUARY 15TH --1 PM - 4 PM - GARDEN & ARTS -- TBD
- MARCH 15TH -- 8AM -4PM --SENER EAST -- SPRING AUCTION