



February 2014



NOTE FROM PRESIDENT TOM

Hello, All!!!

This year is moving right along and our work opportunities continue to increase. The Console from h... was completed and picked up by its owner last week. One of the complaints was that radio stations were hard to receive, and the background noise level was high. This puzzled me as he lived on a mountain top near downtown and should have been able to pick up many stations. While I worked on this radio, I had it connected to the Shop's outside long wire antenna. I was always able to pick up many local stations and on SW, I was able to pick up several foreign stations.

When the owner picked up his radio, I had it hooked to 50' of stranded, insulated wire stretched out on the Shop floor, with no ground. The reception was poor, similar to what he was getting at home when he brought it in. I rolled the radio to a workbench and connected the Shop long wire and ground to the radio. Viola!! Great signal reception. The customer was then aware of the need for a good antenna and a ground. I gave him a copy of antenna installation instructions from a 1936 Sears console owner's manual (thank you, Russ!). The instructions were for a long wire antenna, including connection of a solid ground to the water pipes. I say all of this to say that if you are having reception problems, check your antenna, especially the antenna ground. If you get calls from a friend or someone with reception problems, give them this advice, and it may save a trip to the Shop.

We are getting excited about attending the Old Time Radio Show on February 22 at the Virginia Samford Theater as a part of our 25th Anniversary celebration. Hope to see you there!

The Birmingham Ham Fest will be on March 1 and 2 at the Zamora Temple in Irondale, and we will be there with historical radio displays, items for sale and a military display including a WWII communications vehicle (outside the building).

Robert's next radio class will be on Saturday, March 8, at 9:00 a.m. at the Shop. This is the second Saturday since the Birmingham Ham Fest is on the first Saturday, March 1.

Our next nightly meeting is on Monday, February 24, at 7:00 p.m. There will be a Board meeting at 6:00 p.m. before the regular meeting. We will discuss the upcoming Ham Fest. I hope to see you there!

So long until next time!

President Tom

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RESTORATION OF RAP RADIO

By Mike Lord

The RAP radio was found over at the Annex two years ago when the Society was cleaning out older units and floor models that were junk and taking up space. Steven Westbrook and I were walking out when he noted this old piece sitting atop a floor model. It was a filthy mess and of no interest to me. Steven challenged me and said "you can fix that one." Ok. Well, it sat on my cellar floor for two years.



Original RAP radio chassis

When I finally got around to it, I realized it was a pretty good design with two RF stages and a chrome chassis. The problem was there was no model number on it. The only ID was R.A.P., made in London, England. I finally found a site with a picture and short description. Another site wanted big bucks for a schematic. With the help of another Society member, I was able to get the copy of the schematic.

The unit is unique in that there are three sub-chassis bolted together. The purchaser could order three variations of the radio, based on bolting the separate sub-chassis together. It's a six-band unit tuning from long wave to 30mc.

There were several major problems. The speaker coil was open, and the field coil was shorted. All of the filter caps were nearly completely shorted; the band switch turret was filthy; and several of the contacts were bent out of place. Lastly, there were only two of the knobs remaining. With the help of Tom Hayes, new knobs were molded. After pulling the turret out and redoing it completely, I then replaced all of the filter caps, and replaced some of the burnt wiring. (Previous problems?) I next stripped the chassis and cleaned the chrome and washed the variable tuning cap. Inspection of the IF cans revealed several broken wires. After that I got it working, however, I kept hearing a popping sound, but was unable to pin that down. I replaced all caps and resistors that were out of tolerance (all but three). The popping continued intermittently. Tubes were ok. I brought the power up and let it play for several days. At the same time, I began the process of re-veneering the cabinet.



Old veneer



New veneer

When the cabinet was complete, I installed the radio chassis. I turned it on and let it play. After 24 hours, I was doing something else, when I noticed a massive volume of smoke pouring out. Turned it off and inspected. The power transformer was burned to a crisp. I found that the original wiring had a fuse in the B+ line, but no fuse on the transformer input! The B+ fuse never blew. Fortunately, I had an exact replacement transformer. I wired it in, rewired the power supply completely, and rechecked all of the filter caps. I plugged it in and all was well. No more popping sound. The unit works great! Not much selectivity, but the RF section is hot. I can easily copy stations all through the Midwest and up the East Coast. Farthest west has been Dallas. Take note of the dial--very unique--typical for a European radio.



Rear View of R.A.P. Radio after Restoration



Mike Lord with his restored R.A.P. Radio

Mike is one of your Board Members and is on the Shop Committee. He does outstanding restoration work, as seen here. He is a regular contributor to your Newsletter and routinely helps less knowledgeable members with their radio repair.



OLD TIME RADIO BITS

Well, folks, I guess I'm in a rut, but I'm back to listening to Vic and Sade. My middle name must be "Mundane," because I enjoy shows like Vic and Sade. It was a 15-minute show about absolutely nothing. It was squeezed in with all the daytime soap operas. I guess that's why I didn't listen to it as a kid. I was too busy playing outside.

There were three characters: Victor Gook, his wife Sade, and their son, Rush. It reminds me of how things were back when I was a kid. Vic was chief accountant with the Consolidated Kitchenware Company Plant, Number Fourteen. He was also exalted "Big Dipper" of the Drowsy Venus Chapter of the Sacred Stars of the Milky Way. Sade was your typical housewife, and she usually ran things in the Gook house. She was a member in good standing in the Thimble Club and enjoyed collecting dish rags, which she kept neatly in the bottom drawer of the buffet. Rush, 14 years old, enjoyed the friendship of about a half dozen guys in the neighborhood. There were Bluetooth Johnson, Smelly Clark, Rotten Davis, and a few others. Nicer Scott was his next door neighbor and deadly enemy. "The next time I see Nicer Scott, I'm gonna paste him one upside the head," Rush would say. He enjoyed watching the fat man play handball at the "Y," or playing with his friends at Tapman's vacant lot.

You may think, how can you enjoy such a dull show, but I'm hooked on it. Written by Paul Rhymer, it was probably one of the best radio shows of the 1940's. It was just chit chat about this, that, and the other thing with few sound effects. It was like being a fly on the wall in "the little house halfway up in the next block." The show was set on Virginia Ave. in a small Midwest town. With a little listening, I was able to pin the town down to Bloomington, Illinois. The Gooks were to visit friends in Chenoa, IL, which was 20 miles away. There were other names dropped and with a little reasoning, it would have to be Bloomington.

I am forever enchanted with the internet. Most young people these days just take it with a grain of salt, but folks like me in their senior years, who used to use an encyclopedia or a Webster's dictionary understand what I mean. Listening to these old radio shows is just a click of a mouse away. Suppose you can't remember a show, but you remember a phrase from the show. Just try typing it into a search engine and poof, there's the show. For example, just type "taint funny McGee" in a good search engine and find Fibber McGee and Molly. Here's another one--type in "you could have knocked me over with a fender," and you'll find "The Easy Aces." (That's fender not feather).

Who out there remembers Tom Mix? Did you know he had a radio show? While reading about him, I discovered that he had a show called "Tom Mix Ralston Straight Shooters." It was a children's program and was on the air from 1939 to around 1950. There are 30 episodes available for listening at the following web site:

<https://archive.org/details/TomMixRalstonStraightShooters>

Gosh! I need to get a life. OK, maybe right after this next episode of Vic and Sade!

Dee Haynes

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MEETING TIMES

We meet every Saturday (unless a Holiday weekend) at 09:00 AM, at the one-story AHRS Shop at the corner of 8th Avenue North and 18th Street (1801 8th Avenue North, Birmingham, AL 35203). Use the rear (Southeast) entrance.

Also, we have opened the Shop on Tuesdays at 09:00 AM until around 11:30 AM when we go to Marilyn's Deli and Dog for lunch next door. Note that parking can be a problem on Tuesdays because it is a business day and the lot is usually filled, so you may have to find street parking occasionally.

We meet on the fourth Monday night of each month, too, at 7:00 PM. Please come join us!

FREE ELECTRONICS CLASSES

One more great benefit from becoming a member of AHRS--free Electronic classes!

Classes are taught the first Saturday of each month (except when something special is taking place, then we agree on what Saturday).

We start from the beginning Ohms Law, inductors, resistor and Capacitors color codes, as well as what each component does within the radio circuits. We also teach how to use test equipment used in the repairing of radio. We teach troubleshooting radio troubles, as well as how to read a radio diagram. There are coil winding classes, and one-on-one repair help.

Come join these classes.



DUES! DUES! DUES!

Membership dues are \$25 a year, payable beginning in January. If you have questions about your dues, you can contact John Outland at 205-354-5258. **Dues can be mailed to AHRS @ P.O. Box 131418, Birmingham AL 35213.**

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