



July 2016



NOTE FROM PRESIDENT TOM

Hello, All!

The new fiscal year began on July 1, following the election of officers at the Annual Meeting held on June 27. The newly elected officers are all incumbents to these offices:

- President - Tom Killian
Vice-President - Steven Westbrook
Treasurer - Don Letchman
Recording Secretary - Mike Woodruff

There were no new Board members elected; however, the Board elected Dave Cisco as Chairman of the Board, a position allowed by the By-Laws, but not filled in past years.

This team, with the experience of many years of service, will continue to guide the Society in a positive direction, growing to meet the challenges of the New Year and beyond.

For those of you who have been to the Shop or use its facilities regularly, the Shop is our most important asset, outside of the dozens of antique radios we own. The work benches, the tube room, coil winding bench, the library, the working AM radio DJ booth, general meeting space, the broadcast exhibit area, the hundreds of radios, test equipment and historical radio oddities on display, the ham radio station, all have helped us meet the objectives set out when we became a 501c3 organization in 1989. It is where we come to learn about radio history, to repair old radios for ourselves and our supporters, to hold regular meetings with informative programs, to lead tours for the general public who still have a memory of grandfather's old radio (the one in the attic for 50 years) or who don't know what an old radio looks like and to enjoy the fellowship of like-minded members and guests.

That is why your support of the leadership team and the Society will be critical in the coming months. We must consolidate our stored items and eliminate those items which

Upcoming Club Events
2016 Hamfests
Cullman, AL Hamfest, July 23, 2016, 8 a.m. to noon
Nashville/Lebanon, TN HamQuest, July 30, 2016 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Huntsville Hamfest, August 20-21 (setup August 19, 2016)
Pensacola, FL Hamfest, September 24, 2016,
Chattanooga, TN Hamfest, October 22, 2016
Stone Mountain, GA Hamfest, November 5-6, 2016
Montgomery, AL Hamfest, November 19, 2016

are no longer of value or are duplicates. This can be done through sales at hamfests, Society auctions, donations to other radio groups and maybe even a trip to the scrap yard, as we made last year. We must reduce our footprint. So there will be some work parties this Fall, in addition to our regular work days, to make us leaner.

The Society applied for and received a grant about 10 years ago, but has not done any formal fundraising like so many other non-profits do. We rely on membership dues, donations and the generous help of our members and friends to cover our monthly expenses. The Board will be studying the various methods of raising money to cover possible new expenses associated with our Society. If you have any ideas, bring them to the Board's attention.

In the meantime, members continue to repair old radios, mentor other members and enjoy fellowship, with the members coming to the Shop on Tuesday and Saturday mornings. Some pictures are in order:



Frank Parker shows off a Truetone radio he restored for his mailman, who dropped it off with the mail.



An Emerson radio restored by Tom Hayes. Note the unique speaker cover.



Members sorting through donated radio parts during a Tuesday workday



This small Nipper was found by my wife in a box stored in the attic. She got it as a child, along with a live dog named Nipper she won in a contest in Tennessee in the early 1950's. The small Nipper is displayed in one of our novelty radio cabinets.

Our radio classes are continued to be taught by Jim Rogers while our regular instructor, Robert Frye, is taking a break. Jim started the July class with a discussion about time and different calendars. His time discussion led to discussing the time settings of an oscilloscope to read certain curves while checking radio circuits. Jim does a great job and we are thankful to have him teaching the class.



Jim Rogers teaching the importance of time when using an oscilloscope.

Schools continue to choose our Museum and Shop for tours to teach younger students the history of old radios. The tours also remind those older teachers and chaperones of the radios they listened to growing up. A large group from Clay Community School recently toured the Shop and Museum.



The Clay Community School tour group on the front steps of the Shop.



Steven Westbrook and Don Letchman lead part of the group through the Museum.



The Museum tour starts in the Atrium with Steven Westbrook and Dave Cisco giving a brief history of radio.



DJ Jim Cawthon explains how an old radio station works.

The next radio class will be on August 6, at the Shop in Birmingham beginning at 9 a.m. Jim Rogers will continue circuit analysis using an oscilloscope.

The next regular Monday night meeting will be on July 25 at the Shop in Birmingham beginning at 7 p.m. We plan to open about 50 more boxes from the Hails' donation. That will leave about 30 boxes yet to open. Come see what interesting things show up and enjoy some fellowship! See you there!

President Tom

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OLD TIME RADIO BITS

Anyone who has lived an appreciable amount of time in The South knows about *The Grand Ole Opry*. Most everyone knows that it originates in Nashville and is broadcast on WSM, 650 kHz, on Saturday night. But not everyone knows that it is the longest running show in radio history. It began in 1925 on WSM as a hillbilly show, had a stint with NBC from 1939-1957, and since then has continued on WSM, becoming a country music institution.

George Dewey Hay, one of the originators of *The National Barn Dance* (see the June issue of the newsletter), loved the simple mountain life that he discovered in the Ozarks as a child. Inherent in this way of life was the music known as hillbilly music. When Hay left *The National Barn Dance* to become program director at WSM, he began a program which showcased this particular form of music. His first guest was “Uncle” Jimmy Thompson, an 83 year-old who had fought in the Civil War. He played the fiddle and had never been beat in a fiddling competition. While some people complained about the music, Hay stuck with the format and the rest is history.

John Dunning in *The Encyclopedia of Old-Time Radio* best describes the phenomenon:

“Soon mountain men and farmers began swarming into the studio on Saturday nights, bringing ancient stringed instruments and unwritten songs handed down through generations. They came on foot, on mules, in wagons, and by truck. Their earthy ballads were of unknown age and origin, with titles like Greenback Dollar, Brown's Ferry Blues, and Rabbit in a Flea Patch. None could read music. They scraped and sawed away by ear, producing the closest thing to pure musical Americana ever heard on the air.”

But how did this program end up with its name? Again from John Dunning:

"The show got its name in 1927. It had been scheduled to immediately follow an NBC network feed from New York, the highbrow *Music Appreciation Hour with Dr. Walter Damrosch*. On this night, Damrosch closed with a musical railroad theme, and by one account ended with these words: "While we do not believe there is a place in the classics for realism, this work so depicts the onrush of the locomotive that I have decided to include it in this program of grand opera." Hay reportedly replied, as his show went on, "From here on out, folks, it will be nothing but realism of the realest kind. You've been up in the clouds with grand opera: now get down to earth with us in a shindig of grand ole opry!"

Obviously the name stuck and became a major part of Americana.

One might think that the longest running show in broadcast history, with over 4,500 broadcasts, would be overwhelmed with copies of the old shows. Unfortunately, that is not the case. The largest collection that I could find was at archive.org. There are about 200 shows, mostly from the NBC broadcasts. The first part of the collection can be found by clicking [here](#). I encourage you to at least listen to the first NBC broadcast of October 14, 1939, to get an idea of the roots of the show – even though it had been on the air for 14 years at this point. Note the Birmingham, Alabama, reference at the 10:30 point of the broadcast. The second part of the collection can be found [here](#). There are a few other broadcasts that can be found by searching for *The Grand Ole Opry* at archive.org. All of these shows provide an insight into the country music genre that is an inherent part of our southern culture.

Until we meet again in the theatre of the mind...

Larry Lokey

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SATURDAY MEETINGS

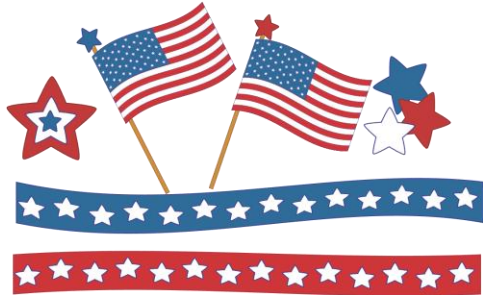
We meet every Saturday (unless a Holiday weekend) at 9:00 a.m., at the one-story AHRS Shop at the corner of 8th Avenue North and 18th Street, (1801 8th Avenue North, Birmingham, AL 35203). Birmingham, AL 35203). Use the rear (Southeast) entrance.

SHOP ON TUESDAYS

The Shop is open on Tuesdays at 9:00 a.m. until around 11:30 a.m. when we go to Marilyn's Deli and Dog for lunch next door. Note that parking can be a problem on Tuesdays, so you may have to find street parking occasionally.

REGULAR MEETINGS

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



DUES INFORMATION

Membership dues are \$25 a year, payable beginning in January. If you have questions about your dues, you can contact Don Letchman at 205-967-8557. **Dues can be mailed to AHRS @ P.O. Box 131418, Birmingham AL 35213.**

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!

Who to Contact

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