

January 2015



NOTE FROM PRESIDENT TOM

Hello, All!

It is a new year and good things are coming! Before we look at 2015, let's look back at 2014. What a great year for the Society! Membership has grown steadily, meaning more folks interested in the restoration of old radios are finding us and choosing to help keep our Society strong and vibrant.

Our Christmas party was on December 29 and great food and fellowship was had by all! I have included some pictures.



Part of the 60-plus attendees including John Truitt and his wife



Ed, Willie, Bob, Kyle, Dee and Irene, the Tates and the Smiths



The head table with Robert and Margaret Frye, Bill Shepherd and his daughter, the Murphrees, the Halls, the Olsons and the Letchmans. Note the roaring fire in the background.

There was a lot of preparation for the Party. Thank you to all who helped make the Party a success! Here Treasurer, Don Letchman, is cleaning display case glass.



Don cleaning up for the Party

Donations reached new highs, growing our radio collection, our test equipment, the library and providing items to raise money through donations. Some donations are pictured on the following pages.



Part of Reggie Olson's donation



More of Reggie's donation, which included over 40 pieces of Heathkit test equipment

January 10, was our first radio class day in 2015 and what a class it was. Through a donation of seven similar Zenith AM/FM radios, dating back to 1948, seven class members were able to work on similar radios as a group, and Robert took them through the basics of working on a radio for the first time.

Most interesting was Robert's instruction to "familiarize yourself with the radio." Look it over, checking controls, dial action, rear connections, especially the power cord. If the power cord is deteriorated, cut it off. Normally, there is a break midway through the class, but no one took a break. Everyone was consumed with their radio. Several seasoned members helped the newer members. and the mentoring was great!

Robert reviewed the radio schematic beginning at the power plug and moving through the filament string and the power supply circuit. He reviewed the action of the power supply capacitors and how to troubleshoot them. He covered continuity checks in the filament string. The next class on February 7 will pick up after the power supply and move through the RF/IF and audio circuits. I have included some pictures showing the class working on their radios. Ed Boutwell videotaped much of the class for an archival record on our training programs. Each class member was given a new volt ohm meter donated by member Ken Smith. The class uses the meters to test their radio circuits as directed by Robert.



Radio class (note Ed videotaping the class)

While Robert was teaching radio repair in the main room, over a dozen other members were in the workshop area, working on radios, discussing radio issues and several more reading in the library, and others looking over the recent donations. It was one of the best attended radio class/workdays I have seen in a while. I hope it continues! I have a picture of the members in the workshop area.



Crowded workshop area - Maurice, Brendan, Dave, Don, Bill, John, Mike, Tom, Randall, Jimmy and Gene

The Society has purchased the Zenith Trans Oceanic radio collection that is on display at the Shop from member, Joel Tillman, who has loaned us these 14 radios for the past three years. They are a hit for everyone who tours our Shop. We thank Joel for allowing us to display his radios and his willingness to sell them as a group. He did take the neon Zenith Radio sign, and we are working to have a new one made.

We were honored to loan several pieces of equipment to a film company that is shooting the movie, "Woodlawn," in our city. The movie is set in the early seventies and centers around a football game played at Legion Field in Birmingham. There is a scene in the press box which required several older audio mixers, which we had in our Broadcast Display. The Alabama Historical Radio Society will receive mention in the movie credits for providing this equipment. I have pictures of these mixers, so you can look for them in the movie (assuming that part does not hit the cutting room floor).





One of the most unusual radios we are working on was a donation from a local family. It is a Gulbranson secretary console from the 1930's. A team of radio doctors, including Dave Johnson, Bill Shepherd, Don Letchman and Dee Haynes, have been working on it with great results. It was playing music this morning and sounded great! Just a little bit more work, and it will be ready for display.



Bill Shepherd and Don Letchman working on the Gulbranson

As we move into 2015, we will be preparing for the Birmingham Ham Fest on March 7 and 8, the Legends of Broadcasts on April 23, our Spring Swap Meet TBA and several other events during 2015. We especially want to attend the antique radio swap meets in Atlanta and Nashville this year. We will continue to welcome new members who want to help us preserve old radios and equipment.

Our next Monday night meeting will be on January 26, at 7 p.m. at the Shop in Birmingham. We will have a special program by Dee Haynes. Come join us for a good program and fellowship! There will be a Board meeting at 6 p.m. prior to the regular meeting. See you there!

Robert's next Radio Class is on February 7, at 9 a.m. at the Shop. Come learn how to work on old radios!

President Tom

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OLD TIME RADIO BITS

Hello Folks!

The Swing Era of music existed from the mid 1930's to the mid 1940's, which happens to coincide with the heyday of what we now refer to as Old Time Radio. It is probably no accident that many of the most popular bands of that time became well known from their live performances being broadcast on radio. Benny Goodman is generally considered the first big name in swing music, but the bestselling recording artist was Glenn Miller – a musician, arranger, and composer. The last two areas were Miller's strengths and the qualities that made him famous.

Glenn Miller and his Orchestra was actually an overnight success, and the key ingredient to this success was radio. John Dunning in his book, *On the Air: The Encyclopedia of Old-Time Radio*, explains it best: "Glenn Miller had formed his orchestra in 1937, but had no notable success until an engagement at the Glen Island Casino brought him to the NBC microphone. Soon he was doing eight or ten broadcasts a week. By 1940 he had signed with Chesterfield for a quarter-hour nightly run on CBS. This priceless exposure booted his career at a record pace until he was the nation's top orchestra."

Miller went on to host two radio shows, *Chesterfield Time* (also known as *Moonlight Serenade*) and *Sunset Serenade*, as well as being featured on another - *Glenn Miller's Music*. However, when the United States entered World War II, he wanted to entertain the fighting men in Europe. He gave up a career in which he made \$15,000 to \$20,000 per week and enlisted to lead a modern Army band. An interesting aspect for our club is detailed in the Wikipedia article on Glenn Miller - "At first placed in the United States Army, Miller was transferred to the Army Air Force. Captain Glenn Miller served initially as assistant special services officer for the Army Air Forces Southeast Training Center at Maxwell Field, Montgomery, Alabama, in December 1942. He played trombone with the Rhythmaires, a 15-piece dance band, in both Montgomery and in service clubs and recreation halls on Maxwell. Miller also appeared on both WAPI (Birmingham, Alabama) and WSFA radio (Montgomery), promoting the activities of civil service women aircraft mechanics employed at Maxwell."

While in the Army Air Force, he hosted a popular weekly show – "*I Sustain the Wings*". In the summer of 1944, Miller took his 50-piece AAF Band to England to entertain the troops. While there he recorded many shows that were used by the Office of War Information as propaganda tools. However, his main impact was on the men in uniform and providing them a slice of home.

On December 15, 1944 (seventy years ago last month), United States Army Air Force Major Glenn Miller boarded a single engine UC-64 Norseman airplane, took off from England bound for France, and was never seen again. However, the distinctive Glenn Miller sound continues to this day.

Fortunately for OTR enthusiasts, as well as Swing Era enthusiasts, many of the radio shows featuring the Glenn Miller Orchestra were preserved not only by collectors but by Miller himself. So much exists that over the years several shows have been produced that feature his radio broadcasts. Two of the shows are highlighted below. These are two one-hour shows, recorded in 1985 and 1986, as part of the *Golden Age of Radio* series. They are based on the Miller radio broadcasts and are well worth the time spent listening to them.

- The first hour from the beginning of his popularity to the time he entered the Army can be found [here](#).
- The second hour deals with his shows during his military career and can be found [here](#).

I guess the question comes up, why do people to this day still care about Glenn Miller? For me it is a connection to my father. Daddy was a fan, being a teenager when Miller was at the height of his success. He introduced me to Glenn Miller music when I was just a kid and that interest has remained throughout the years. Glenn Miller's recordings have been remastered for the digital age and are readily available from sites such as Amazon. Also if anyone is interested, I have several shows from the series listed herein. Unfortunately they have not been completely cataloged and verified (listening to each show takes a while), but I will be glad to share whatever I have with

anyone who might be interested. Just drop me an email or see me at a club meeting, and I will get them to you.

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

Larry Lokey

larry@otronmp3.com

[Website - otronmp3.com](http://otronmp3.com)

LAST CALL FOR AHRS SHIRTS

This is your last call to be included in the current ordering of AHRS shirts. Please advise Steven Westbrook of your size by email if you wish to purchase a shirt and then mail a check to: Steven Westbrook, 205 West Linwood Drive, Birmingham, Alabama 35209.

The shop who makes the shirts has quoted the following prices for Port Authority shirts:

"On the polo style K420 with the antique radio logo sewn is \$30 thru AXL. Add \$1.50 for 2X , \$2.50 for 3X, \$3.50 for 4X."

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 Don Letchman at 205-967-8557. **Dues can be mailed to AHRs @ P.O. Box 131418, Birmingham AL 35213.**

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