

The Alabama Historical Radio Society Newsletter

Alabama Historical Radio Society
SUPERFLUX

February 2015



NOTE FROM PRESIDENT TOM

This year is moving right along. We are getting several new members each week, and traffic at the Shop is picking up. There are a few more Radio Doctors (Radiologists) working in the Shop. We have had folks ride around looking for our Shop. Most find it. Some don't. The Shop is located at the Northeast corner of Rev. Abraham Woods, Jr. Blvd. and North 18th Street in Birmingham, Alabama. It is a one-level, ex-bank-branch-building. There are no signs on the building to identify our Society, so only when you see this sign inside the back door, do you know you are at the right place.



Upcoming Club Events

- **Legends of Broadcast**
Thursday, April 23, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. meeting at the Shop. Lunch included.
- **AHRS Swap Meet** April 25, 7 a.m.-1 p.m. at Shop parking lot.
- **Ham Fests:**
 - Orlando, FL Feb 13-15
 - Dalton, GA Feb 28
 - Birmingham, AL Mar 7-8
 - Mobile, AL Apr 11
 - Dayton, OH May 15-17
 - Huntsville, AL Aug 15-16
 - Helena, AL Oct TBA
 - Stone Mtn., GA Nov 7-8
 - Two Boat Anchor Ham Fests: Dadeville, AL Apr 4 and Oct 3.
- **Antique Radio Events**
 - Southeastern Antique Radio Society (SARS) Winter Swap Meet, Marietta, GA, Feb 21, 7 a.m.-Sellers only, 8 a.m. - Doors open.
 - Music City Vintage Radio Club has three swap meets each year, a Spring Meet sometime in April, a Summer Meet in July and a Fall Meet in October. Dates TBA.

As usual, when you start recognizing the good work folks do, someone is invariably missed. While Ken Smith has donated many things to the Society, he was given credit for donating the digital multimeters in last month's Newsletter. Actually, Gene Samples donated the digital multimeters. Not saying that they look alike, but...Thanks, Gene!



Digital multimeters donated by Gene Samples (One was given to each radio class member.)

As traffic picks up at the Shop, more things get done. In preparation for the upcoming Birmingham Ham Fest on March 7 and 8, Johnny Outland is cleaning pieces of Heathkit test gear that will be displayed on our tables at the Ham Fest. In addition to our Heathkit display, there will be antique radios, televisions, military and amateur radio gear on display. Also, there will be items for sale including sw radios, am/fm radios, test gear and miscellaneous stuff we have accumulated over the last year. Again this year, we will conduct a Forum about AHRS, local radio history and some really outstanding radio restorations done by our members. And there will be a door prize for one of our attendees.



Johnny Outland cleaning Heathkit test equipment for Ham Fest

The following pictures show some of our Radio Interns working together:



Maurice Hill and Willie Henderson putting the final touches on Willie's Philco Radio/Phonograph.



Ray Giles, Maurice Lovelady showing Jimmy Roberts a possible problem with his radio.

From time to time, our members are featured in activities for other similar organizations. Member Don Keith is one such member who has made a name for himself in the literary world. The following announcement is further proof of his popularity. We are proud to have Don as an active member of our Society.

Announcement

Don Keith, a member of the Alabama Historical Radio Society and the Birmingham Amateur Radio Club was featured in the announcement below, which was published in the weekly newsletter from the American Radio Relay League (ARRL).



Author Don Keith, N4KC

March Issue of *The American Legion Magazine* to Feature Amateur Radio

Amateur Radio will be featured in the March 2015 issue of *The American Legion Magazine*. The article, by best-selling author Don Keith, N4KC, will explain how ham radio remains exciting, important, and relevant, even after more than a century in existence and changes in technology. The article will also talk about the American Legion Amateur Radio Club (TALARC) -- home to club station K9TAL at American Legion Headquarters in Indianapolis, which sponsors regular operating events. It also will explain how the American Legion is integrating Amateur Radio into its organization and for its members, how members can become licensed, and perhaps establish a club station at an American Legion post.

The Legion has an agreement with the Department of Homeland Security to provide assistance during emergencies, and Keith's article will discuss how Amateur Radio meshes with that effort. Keith has written more than 2 dozen books, including *Riding the Shortwaves: Exploring The Magic of Amateur Radio*, *Firing Point* -- a submarine thriller -- and *Wizard of the Wind*, which includes a ham as a key character. He has also written extensively about World War II history.

Thanks to *The ARRL Letter*, January 29, 2015.

I have asked members to write short stories about themselves for possible use in the Newsletter. I know that this is dangerous, but the delete button is my friend. One member that has been in the world a short time, compared to most of us, has accomplished so much to date, that he has few limits for the future. He recently visited one of our founding members and viewed fifty-plus years of radio collection. He spent five hours there and left with a primitive computer (he collects old computers). For his ninth grade English class, he wrote about "The Summer of Radio," dated September 23, 2009. It could also be called, "How I Met the Alabama Historical Radio Society." This is his story (edited for length):

MEMBERS' REFLECTIONS

After a long and tiring 10th grade year, I was ready for summer. I knew this summer would be special; I had one thing in mind: find an antique radio and restore it. It seemed a simple project, but little did I know where this decision would take me.

I love perusing my local antique shops. It doesn't matter if I buy anything or not; just seeing all the antiques inside the store is almost equivalent to touring a museum or even travelling back in time. One of my regular antique shops had, in rather poor condition, a Zenith TransOceanic H500 radio from the early '50's. I decide it would be my first radio restoration. I take it to the counter and purchase it.

I love working with electronics. My dad was an electrical engineer and taught me a lot of what I know, especially the practical aspects like Ohm's Law and how to solder. I've been holding a soldering iron since I was 8 or so. I have my own Simpson 260-volt-ohm-milliamp-meter, a Tektronix 465 oscilloscope, an HP frequency counter, and enough test equipment to diagnose numerous problems, just as a doctor would with a stethoscope and reflex hammer.

After removing the electronic chassis from the radio's small cabinet, I examine the rat's nest of wires and electrical components under the chassis, and the numerous vacuum tubes on top. I did my research before buying the TransOceanic: there happens to be a very rare vacuum tube called the 1L6 that is used in very few radios, including the H500, but thankfully it is still there.

I decide to plug it in since everything looks okay. Nothing...no lights, no glow emanating from the filaments inside the vacuum tubes, and no noise from the deteriorating speaker cone. It figures; we are talking about a radio almost 60 years old that probably hasn't seen much maintenance in its lifetime.

So where does one start to debug a non-functioning radio? Finally, after probing with my Simpson, I notice that there is an open wire-wound resistor interrupting the current. Now where do I find another one of these?

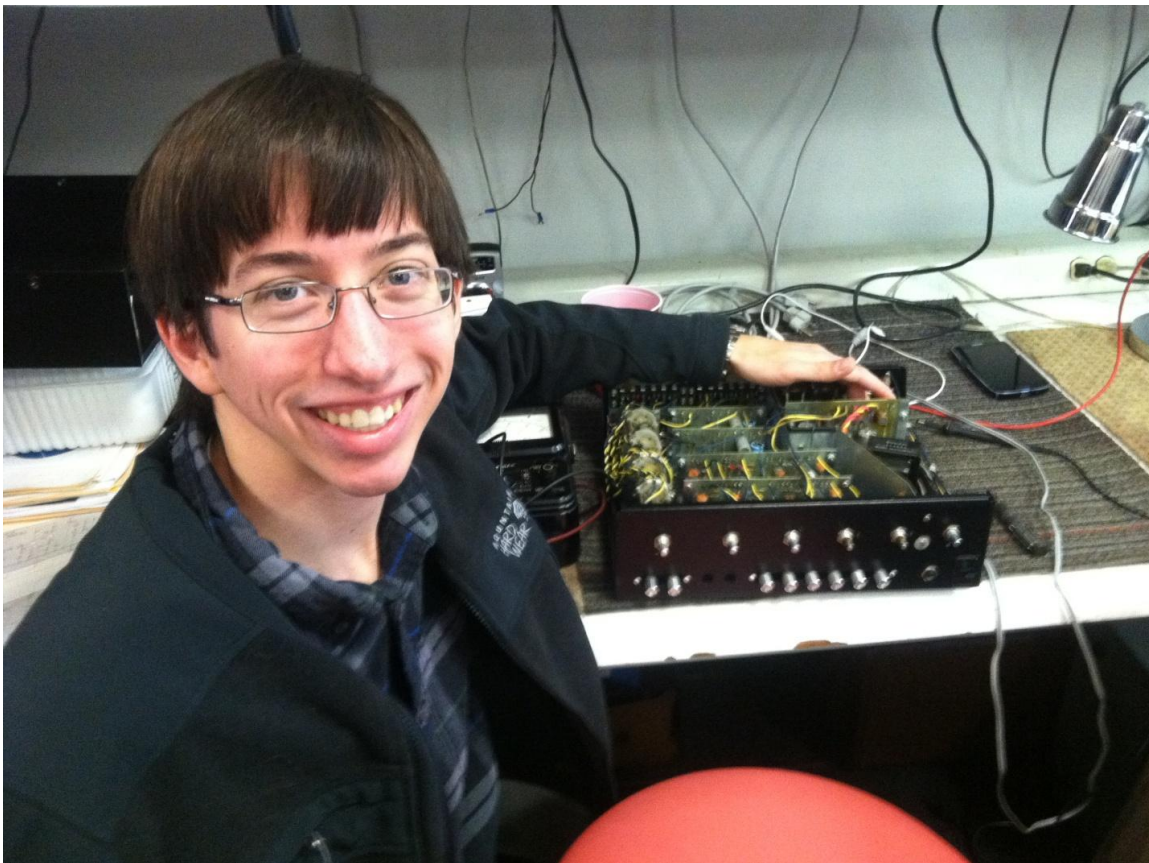
We happen to have two good electronic parts stores in downtown Birmingham: Ack Electronics (Editor: Ack closed in 2014) and Forbes Distributing Co. What Ack doesn't stock generally can be found at Forbes down the street. I've been to Ack many times, and although they are rather expensive, they are a local business with a friendly and very helpful staff. I bring the chassis in and show the man at the counter the part I need. He's concerned that it's not the problem, though I assure him it is. Instead of getting the part and making some profit, he gives me the telephone number of the president of the Alabama Historical Radio Society (AHRs).

After talking to the president about the AHRs and the weekly Saturday meetings, I persuade my dad to take me the following weekend. Saturday couldn't come fast enough.

One of the central locations of the AHRs is in a small Alabama Power building in Huffman. I enter through the back door and immediately I spy an old floor-standing console radio next to an open door. I hear several people chatting inside. As I enter this next threshold, my jaw is dragging the ground; I see more antique radios on 5 or 6 huge shelves than I have seen in my entire life! I ask one of the gentlemen there if he could point out Dave (Cisco), the president. I introduce myself and then get the official tour from the president himself. He shows me their extensive library containing radio books, manuals, magazines, etc., two laboratories for fixing radios, a "tube room" filled with boxes of vintage vacuum tubes, and a back storage room very similar to the main room, with maybe four shelves. So this is what I have been missing all of this time!

Now, more than a year later, I have successfully repaired several radios (the TransOceanic still needs some cosmetic work, but it does play), acquired more radios and related electronics than my parents would permit, and, most importantly, learned about the basics of radio, as well as, tips and tricks for repairing them. And to think that one small purchase of a radio at an antique shop would have lead to a successful and very thrilling adventure at "the radio club."

Update to 2015: He has been a member of the Society since his first visit in 2009. He graduated from Auburn with a degree in Computer Engineering and is working on his Masters at Auburn. He is a "ham" and continues to repair old radios. His picture is below.



Kyle Owen at the Shop last month.

As mentioned in the January Newsletter, the Society now owns the Zenith Transoceanic Radio display that has been in our Shop for several years sans the Zenith Radio neon sign. Dee Haynes arranged with a local sign maker to have one built. Dee has mounted the neon sign on a blackboard using small wooden standoffs, and the sign now resides where the original sign did at the center of the display. Thanks to Dee for making this happen.



Dee with the new sign (Note: The Bomber and Clipper radios are missing under the sign.)

At our January Monday night meeting, Dee Haynes presented a program on the making of a Philco radio. It was a YouTube video, which can be accessed on the internet. In the picture from the meeting, it is hard to see, but showed the complexity of construction and the use of assembly line techniques for early radio manufacturing.



Dee's Philco video at the January Monday night meeting.

In Robert's January radio class, seven similar model Zenith radios were given to seven of the dozen students. The other students already had radios to work on. Robert taught basic radio construction and analysis and will continue to teach schematic analysis of these radios and breakdown the various sections in the radio and possible problems that may occur in each section in the class on February 7.

Robert's next radio class will be on March 14, the second Saturday of the month. The first Saturday is the Birmingham Ham Fest, so we will move the class to the second Saturday. Class starts at 9 a.m. at the Shop in Birmingham, AL.

UPCOMING AHRS EVENTS



Editors Note:

You will notice a change in the format of the newsletter this month. If you like it, we will continue to use it; if not, we can return to the old format. There is a brief description of Upcoming Club Events on the first page, which I will try to keep updated as I receive new information each month. I am including Tom's additional description of these events below.

There are many radio related events on the calendar this year. Several involve our Society. The first is the Legends of Broadcast meeting on Thursday, April 23, beginning at 9 a.m. until about 1 p.m. at the Shop. Lunch is included for the attendees. This is our fifth Legends event, with each one having a variety of past and current radio and television personalities who come for fellowship with their peers and a good meal. We have made video tapes and audio tapes of several of these meetings and will show clips from those past meetings, including comments from the late Joe Langston.

Another Society event is the AHRS Swap Meet on April 25, from 7 a.m. until about 1 p.m. at the Shop parking lot. Vendor spaces are free and will be inside the parking lot fence. There will be light refreshments, Shop tours and a door prize. There will be more information on these events as we move closer to the event dates.

Other Events: **Ham Fests:** Orlando, FL - February 13 - 15; Dalton, GA - February 28; Birmingham, AL - March 7 - 8; Mobile, AL - April 11; Dayton, Ohio - May 15 - 17; Huntsville, AL - August 15 - 16; Helena, AL - October TBA; Stone Mtn., GA - November 7 - 8; Two Boat Anchor Ham Fests: Dadeville, AL - April 4 and October 3.

Antique Radio Events: Southeastern Antique Radio Society (SARS) Winter Swap Meet, February 21, 7 a.m. - Sellers only, 8 a.m. - Doors open, Jim Miller Park, 2245 Callaway Road - Bldg. B, Marietta, GA. Tables are available for a fee. General admission is free. Light refreshments will be available. Event is indoors, rain or shine. See www.sarsradio.com for more information.

The Music City Vintage Radio Club has three swap meets each year, a Spring Meet sometime in April, a Summer Meet in July and a Fall Meet in October. I cannot find any information about these events for 2015 on their web site. If you have any information on these events, please contact me.

There may be other antique radio events in the area, but SARS and Music City are the ones we generally try to attend. If you know of an event I missed, please send me the information and I will include it in the next Newsletter.

The next Monday night meeting will be on February 23, beginning at 7 p.m. There will be a Board meeting at 6 p.m. There will be a preview of the Forum Program, which will be presented at the Birmingham Ham Fest on March 7. Come enjoy the fellowship! See you there!

President Tom

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Leon Belasco

OLD TIME RADIO BITS

Hello Folks!

Who was Pegon Zellschmidt?

The following is from Wikipedia:

“Leon Belasco (11 October 1902 – 1 June 1988), born **Leonid Simeonovich Berlatsky**, was a Russian-American musician and actor who had a 60-year career in film and television from the 1920s to the 1980s, appearing in more than 100 films.

Born in Odessa, Ukraine, Belasco attended St. Joseph College in Yokohama, Japan, and trained as a musician in Japan and Manchuria. For several years he appeared as the first violinist with the Tokyo Symphony.

When his family moved to California, Belasco found occasional work in Hollywood. He made his film debut in 1926 in the silent film *The Best People*. To supplement his income, he played the violin. Later he formed his own band, which mainly performed in hotels in and around New York City. The Andrews Sisters were introduced through his band.

Wikipedia talks about Mr. Belasco's film and television career, but does not mention radio, so, I'll tell you about Pegon Zellschmidt. As most of you know, I avoid TV and spend most of my time reading or listening to my favorite old radio shows. As it turns out, Pegon Zellschmidt was a comedic sidekick character on the spy thriller radio show, "The Man Called X."

I'm sure you're all thrilled to learn about Leon Belasco? If not maybe you will enjoy hearing a little from his orchestra, "Leon Belasco and Hotel St. Moritz Orchestra."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U5rtxYYIvVM>

FYI, near the beginning of the YouTube video, you'll see what seems to be a charcoal sketch of Mr. Belasco sending "Best Wishes" to Dee. I wasn't born till 9 years later, so guess that wasn't me.

Now, if you would like to hear the antics of Pegon Zellschmidt, tune in to "The Man Called X," starring Herbert Marshall as Ken Thurston and Leon Belasco as Pegon Zellschmidt.

Click the link below and then click the "play" button on the dark gray window on the right side of the page.

<https://archive.org/details/ManCalledX19510622Vienna>

Dee Haynes

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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). 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!

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.**

Need Radios??

Larry Knighton, a member, is selling his radio collection. He has many cathedrals, tombstones, wooden table radios. consoles and plastic radios. All are in good shape and have been kept in his house (no barn finds or dirt dobber radios here).

Attached are several photographs for review. If you are interested in the radios please contact member Dee Haynes at (205) 841-4630 or k4hfx1@charter.net

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