



January 2017



NOTE FROM PRESIDENT TOM

Hello, All!

Our new fiscal year is now the calendar year, so we begin 2017 on January 1. With the approval of the revised By-Laws, the first order of business is to elect a new Board of Directors, three for a one-year term, three for a two-year term and three for a three-year term, for a total of nine Board members. A Nomination Committee of five members was selected in October by the current, at that time, Board of Directors, to find candidates for the new Board. The Nomination Committee included Dave Cisco, John Outland, Steven Westbrook, Don Letchman and Dave Johnson. The Nomination Committee submitted the following names, subject to election, for these new Board positions:

Dave Johnson (3), Ray Giles (2), Tom Killian (3), Dave Cisco (1), John Outland (1), Charles McCrary (1), Willie Henderson (2), Julian Brook (3), Jim Cawthon (2)

The election will be held at the January 23 Monday night meeting at the Shop. Nominations from the floor will be taken prior to the election. The business meeting will begin at 6 p.m., including the election, followed by an interesting program by Dave Cisco about early radio in Birmingham. Dave and our founder, Don Kresge, looked for years for historical information about this subject. They found sketchy information then. In the past month, the last-known living relative of one early radio pioneer sent the Society an e-mail about historical radio in Birmingham, including articles, pictures and documents never seen before involving their family. These items include things that Dave and Don had searched for 25 years ago. Dave will have compiled most of the information by the 23rd, and it should be an historical eye opener. Come learn some rare history.

Also, at this meeting, a Fluke Model 77, in fine working condition, will be given away as a door prize to one lucky attendee. You must be present to win; void where prohibited by law. Bottom line, please come participate in and support your Society.

The Society's annual Christmas Party was held at the Shop on December 29 and was attended by at least 55 members and guests. Included in the group were Margaret and Robert Frye, Bill Shepherd and his daughter, Sharon Hargett, and John Truitt, all long-time members. Brendan Lovelady entertained on his keyboard during the meal. Kyle

Owen provided accordion music at the end of the evening. Good food and fellowship were enjoyed by all. Some pictures follow:



Members and guests enjoying a good meal.



Members and guests eating in the Library.



Ed Boutwell, Steven Westbrook and Mike Woodruff enjoying the Party.



More members and guests enjoying the meal.



Bill Shepherd and his daughter, Sharon Hargett, enjoying the meal.



Long-time member John Truitt with empty plate thinking about dessert.



Rob Curry and Larry Knighton enjoy their meal where they can.



Member Kyle Owen entertains the group with Christmas carols and classical music on his accordion.



Robert Frye up talking to Ron Hall as the group enjoys the food and fellowship.

The Don Kresge Memorial Radio Museum is housed in the Atrium of the Alabama Power Company Headquarters building in Birmingham. Due to roof leaks, the Museum needed some relocation and adjustments and the following pictures come from that process. Some of you will never personally view the Museum, and this is a good opportunity to show some of the radios in the Museum. I do not have a list of the make and model of each radio displayed. I really took the pictures to help return the radios to their previous locations. In the future, I will do a better job of showing the Museum, complete with the radio information. By the way, we are always looking for donations of museum quality radios for our displays. Several members helped move and clean each radio. The total time to do everything was about six hours.



Radios from the 40's and 50's



Radios from the 30's and 40's with a tube display at the right.



On the second shelf from the top is the Superflex radio made in Birmingham, AL.



Some of the earliest radios made.



Information about the Radio Manufacturing Company that made the Superflex Radio in Birmingham.



These are radios that would have been used to pick up the Alabama Power Company radio station, WSY, in the 20's.



Information on WSY, one of the first commercial radio stations to broadcast in Alabama, including pictures of the studio, antenna and the Power Company's Dixieland Band.





Early Atwater Kent radio with horn speaker.





Steven Westbrook and Don Letchman putting the radios back in the display case.



Steven and Don half-way through the radio placement.



Steven after the work is done and the display cases are relocked.

Due to inclement weather, the Radio Class scheduled for January 7 was rescheduled to the following Saturday, January 14, at 9 a.m. at the Shop. Class instructor, Jim Rogers, will discuss amplifier circuits and detector circuits in radios. He will have some handouts for the class for these subjects. Also, additional information can be found in your ARRL Handbook. The Society has recently received a donation of ARRL Handbooks, so class members who do not have a handbook can get one. See me on class day for a Handbook.

The February Radio Class is scheduled for February 4, beginning at 9 a.m. at the Shop. The rescheduling of the Radio Class has forced the rescheduling of the Radio Auction from the 14th to Saturday, January 21, at 10 a.m. The Auction will take place at the Shop. There will be a good selection of radios and stuff for your consideration. Come support your Society!

The next General Membership meeting will be Monday night, January 23, at the Shop beginning at 6 p.m. This will be the election of Board of Director members, and it is important that you attend and vote. I mentioned this earlier in this Newsletter and I wanted to reiterate it. See you there!

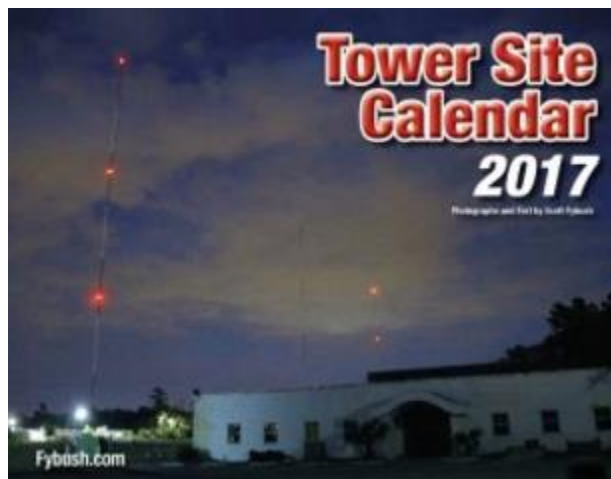
Thank you for your continued support of the Alabama Historical Radio Society!

President Tom

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Member M. D. Smith who, along with his family, has a long history in radio and TV ownership and broadcasting, sent a photo of the 2017 Tower Site Calendar and where to get one. He states "If you have ever been in Broadcast Engineering, this is the calendar for you." He gave the following website information: www.fybush.com/shop and <https://www.fybush.com/item/2017-tower-site-calendar/>



See you soon!



OLD TIME RADIO BITS

In Memory of Courtney Hayden

During the first week of this year, Birmingham lost one of its own. On January 6, Courtney Hayden passed from this world. I did not personally know him, yet in many ways I did know him. I knew him as an on-air personality on Rock 99 and Kicks 106. I knew him from his articles in Birmingham's alternative newspapers. And I knew him from my dear friend Ed Boutwell.

I knew him to be a great writer. I knew of his great wit and his passion for what he believed in. I knew him to be a great businessman, as Boutwell Studios continued to flourish even after Ed sold the business.

It is best left to those who did know him, to tell you what they knew. Don Keith knew and worked with Courtney and has posted an article on his blog. Please take the time to read it [here](#). David McElroy has also written an article. Please take the time to read it [here](#). Lastly JH Daniel of **Birmingham Now** has also written a short article. Please take the time to read it [here](#). Each of these authors can tell a story much better than I ever can.

However, I am going to let Courtney's words paint a picture of his work. **The following article is printed with permission from the Editor of Weld for Birmingham:** (<http://weldbham.com>). It deals with what else – Birmingham Radio. Please take the time to ready and enjoy the contribution by one of Birmingham's best.

Superheterodyne Stars

Secrets of Birmingham radio are revealed Thursday at Vulcan.

Thursday afternoon, just south of Vulcan's anvil, a group of guys will gather to do what they do best, which is talk, about a subject that depends upon such, which is broadcasting. It is part of a delightful series, organized by Philip Ratliff and the crew at Vulcan Park and Museum, called "Birmingham Revealed," giving folks inside stuff on the city wherein they dwell.

The specific topic Thursday is “The Golden Age of Birmingham Broadcasting: Radio Edition,” following up on a successful panel mounted last year on television, which featured famous faces from the Magic City’s cathode ray tube era. With radio, the faces will be less famous than the voices, but it will be interesting to hear their take on what made that medium golden.

The theme of the one-hour discussion is community, suggesting that radio had the power then, as the Internet does today, to bring groups of people together for common purpose. It’s a valid notion, as panel members Bob Freidman and Shelley Stewart can explain, in the context of 1963, when Civil Rights organizers relied on messages passed on by urban radio to help coordinate political actions. (If that chapter in history intrigues you, Bob has his own seminar on the role of radio in the Civil Rights Movement next month at the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute.)

However, radio was more than that to Birmingham. That’s my take, anyway, and since I’ll be on the panel Thursday to expound for at least three minutes on that perspective, I might as well practice here. (Besides clarifying my thinking, it’ll save you an admission fee.)

You can tell from looking at an antique radio that the medium was intended for community. As the fantastic concept of voices flying through the air into homes became reality, radio sets were designed as furniture for the living room, around which the whole family could gather to be entertained.

By 1929, there were three stations in Birmingham — WBRC, WAPI, and WKBC, which would eventually become WSGN — and because there were comparatively few stations on the air throughout the country at the time, our three could be picked up in other cities by listeners whose sets had good antennae. That meant Birmingham pop culture was exported far and wide, for despite the network shows each carried, the bulk of the programming on our local stations was based on local performers. In those days before it was permissible to spin records on the air, programmers created blocks of time for area musicians to perform live, so songs that were sung in a studio in the Tutwiler Hotel might wind up getting fan mail from Goose Bay, Labrador.

Even before the FCC mandated that radio stations must allocate a percentage of their broadcast time to public service, smart station owners realized that local people would listen if their station aired programs of interest to them. Thus originated hugely popular segments devoted to funeral home announcements, roll calls of the sick and shut-in and, anticipating craigslist, the “Swap Shop of the Air.” Cornball? In the context of our media-besotted present, sure, but back in that day, hearing the names of people you knew on the magic radio box was powerful ju-ju indeed.

After World War II, personalities came to dominate local radio, and perhaps the biggest was Joe Rumore, broadcasting on the 50,000-watt blowtorch that was WVOK. Joe eschewed the mannered modulations of most radio announcers to speak to his audience in a down-home conversational manner that made him, incidentally, one of the most effective pitchmen on radio. Other stations latched on to marquee names such as Ron Carney, Tommy Charles, Doug Layton and Joe's brother, Duke. As Top 40 made its way into the marketplace, even mild-mannered announcers like Neal Miller and Bill Bolen became personalities through their association with the hit records of the moment.

Believe it or otherwise, the pop culture of the '60s created its own kind of community, refining the sense of mass teen identity that arose out of Elvis and rock 'n' roll in the '50s. Elvis had brought black sensibilities into popular music, but in Top 40 formats, soul records could be played without differentiation alongside pop records, creating a music mix scarcely imaginable back when the only place you could hear black music was on black-oriented stations, such as WBCO or WJLD.

Growing up among a teen counterculture meant staying tuned to radio, in that age before MTV and Internet. In Birmingham, WSGN's Jim Taber, Steve Norris and Dave Roddy competed with WVOK's Johnny Davis and Dan Brennan, as well as WAQY's Layton and Charles for the hearts and minds of teen listeners. Into the Seventies, the competition broadened with WERC joining the fray, featuring Jim Christian and Coyote J. Calhoun.

This doesn't even account for the community-engaging FM band, first represented on WJLN-FM with the pioneering "underground" broadcasts of Father Tree, later joined by WERC-FM, WAPI-FM, and, later still, Kicks 106 and Rock 99, under whose aegis Greg Bass and I put in some quality time in the 80s and 90s.

Despite my purported expert opinion, I don't know exactly which years constitute the golden age for Birmingham's airwaves. I have a feeling it depends on which years you were listening to it intensively.

Radio doesn't exist anymore, at least not in the community-bestrident manner of that so-called golden age. Corporations control practically all the bandwidth in Birmingham, and their commitment to maximizing profits has resulted in downsizing, homogenization, voice tracking, repurposing and lots of other practices that have diminished the audience's interest in their product.

So, never mind what I said earlier. Spend the ten bucks to come up to Vulcan Thursday, and listen to the actual voices of Shelley and Doug and other luminaries of a more idiosyncratic age in Birmingham radio.

Another decided benefit of attending over just reading about it: the cash bar opens at 5:30 p.m.

<http://weldbham.com/blog/2013/02/21/superheterodyne-stars/>

Rest in Peace Courtney.

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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2017 Hamfest and Swap Meet Schedule (for AL, GA, TN and MS)

01/14/2017 TechFest 2017

Location: Lawrenceville, GA

Website: <http://www.techfest.info>

01/21/2017 Georgia ARES Convention

Location: Forsyth, GA

Website: <http://gaares.org>

01/27/2017 Mississippi State Convention (Capital City Hamfest)

Location: Jackson, MS

Website: <http://msham.org>

02/18/2017 Southeastern Antique Radio Society

Location: Jim R. Miller Park, Marietta, GA

Website: <http://sarsradio.com>

02/25/2017 Dalton Hamfest

Location: Dalton, GA

Website:

w4drc.webstarts.com/hamfestintro.html

3/03/2017 Alabama Section Convention

Location: Birmingham, AL

Website: <http://www.w4cue.com>

03/18/2017 The Great Southern Hamfest

Location: Thomasville, GA

Website:

[http://www.thomasvilleamateurradioclub.co
m](http://www.thomasvilleamateurradioclub.com)

03/25/2017 Ides of March Hamfest

Location: Union City, TN

Website: <http://www.reelfootarc.com>

04/29/2017 CARS Swapmeet Hamfest

Location: Pooler, GA

Website: <http://coastalamateurradiosociety.net/>

06/03/2017 Atlanta Hamfestival

Location: Marietta, GA

Website: <http://atlantahamfest.com>

06/17/2017 Knoxville Hamfest & Electronics Exhibition

Location: Knoxville, TN

Website: <http://www.w4bbb.org>

11/11/2017 Montgomery Amateur Radio Club Hamfest 2017

Location: Montgomery, AL

Website:

<http://www.w4ap.org/news/Hamfest.htm>