



## The Alabama Historical Radio Society Newsletter

March 2018

### NOTE FROM PRESIDENT DAVE

Several events have taken place in March, including the Birmingham HamFest held on March 2 and 3. The Society had 10 tables displaying clandestine radios, a cipher machine, antique radios including the recently purchased G & F Searchlight radio and selling surplus gear, books and magazines to the public to raise some money for the Society.

A Forum on Clandestine Radios of World War II was presented by members Mike Lord and Rick Curl. It was well attended by 42 interested hams. Thanks to Max Maxfield for the use of the rare NEMA cypher machine in the Forum and on display at our booth. There will be more on the HamFest in the April Newsletter.

The Eighth Annual Legends of Broadcast event will be on April 19, beginning at 10 a.m. at the Shop in Birmingham. There will be more on this in the April Newsletter.

Also, in the April Newsletter, several radio restoration projects will be featured, highlighting the long-time family memories of these radios and excitement of having them play again.

Finally, the Society lost a valued founding member several weeks ago when Marvin "Bill" Shepherd passed away. The remainder of this newsletter will be filled with stories and pictures of Marvin as we look back on his many contributions to our success.

Thanks for all you do to support our Society!

*President Dave*

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## THE LIFE OF MARVIN "BILL" SHEPHERD

MARVIN "Bill" SHEPHERD--FEBRUARY 24, 1924 -- FEBRUARY 15, 2018



Society President Robert Fry alongside Marvin Shepherd with some donated clock radios. Both proud founding members of the Alabama Historical Radio Society in 1989.







Marvin with founding member Don Kresge with the radio display at the Alabama Theatre. Marvin's restored Superflex radio is proudly shown in the center of the display.



Marvin standing by another one of his outstanding radio restorations at the Alabama Theatre.



**Marvin took pride in all of his restored radios.**



**Marvin modified this coil winding machine to meet his production requirements.**





**Charles McCrary, President of Alabama Power Company, thanking Marvin Shepherd for the professional restoration work on Charles' RCA Radiola 60, behind them in the picture.**



**Group picture with Charles McCrary, Dave Cisco, Marvin Shepherd and Tom Killian flanking the restored RCA Radiola 60.**



NEWS STAFF/TAMARA MOORE

Marvin Shepherd of Tarrant works on restoration of an old radio at a workshop of the Alabama Historical Radio Society in Huffman.

## Early days of radio on display

### Museum moves to Alabama Power building

By THOMAS SPENCER  
News staff writer

The antique radios on display at the Alabama Historical Radio Society's new downtown museum look both curiously quaint and strikingly modern.

A 1927 Superflex radio, manufactured in Birmingham's Norwood neighborhood, is etched to appear as if the curtains on a stage have parted to reveal the 20th century's new home for theater.

"This was made by the Radio Products Corporation and is the only one in existence, as far as we know," said David Casco, the society's president. The Superflex radio is about the size of a computer tower and its still-working receiver, at the time it was in use, would have been able to tune in broadcasts from around the country, a dramatic shrinking of the globe that has continued into today's Internet age.

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This Superflex radio was made by Ernest House in Birmingham's Norwood neighborhood. It is one of the radios on display at the radio museum at Alabama Power's headquarters.

#### RADIO MUSEUM

- **What:** Alabama Historical Radio Society museum.
- **Where:** Alabama Power Building, 600 North 18th St., Birmingham
- **When:** Open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays

► **If you go:** Enter by going to the reception desk or call Alabama Power Co. archivist Bill Therpe, 257-2067, to arrange a visit.

► **Information:** Visitors also are welcome at the Alabama Radio Society's weekly workshops in Huffman. For times and directions, go to the Society's Web site at [www.alabamahistoricalradiosociety.org/](http://www.alabamahistoricalradiosociety.org/)



**Marvin enjoyed the fellowship at the Society Christmas parties along with his daughter, Sharon Hargett, and joined by Robert and Margaret Fry.**



**Marvin enjoyed helping other members with their radio restoration projects such as new member, Don Letchman.**





Marvin enjoyed participating in Society events such as this Swap Meet held at the Shop in Birmingham. Members Ron Hall, Dave Johnson and Ray Giles look on.



Marvin liked to attend radio classes to offer his knowledge. He and member Maurice Lovelady listen to a class presentation.





**Marvin was well versed in coil winding and he is showing Herman Vogel how it is done.**



**Two close friends, Claude Gray and Marvin Shepherd, working on an Edison cylinder player. Both are now silent key.**



**Marvin at the Nursing Home after a nasty fall at home.**



**Marvin at rest. I am reminded of the gorilla that said "Sometimes I sits and thinks and sometimes I just sits." It was great having Marvin at the Shop, sitting or not!**





**Marvin and his daughter, Sharon Hargett, at another Society Christmas party.**



**Marvin showing Dee Haynes how to repair an old speaker.**



When I included this picture in a previous Newsletter, I noted the amount of brain power working on what must have been a special problem. Marvin Shepherd and Tom Hayes, two of the most knowledgeable restoration experts in the Society. Tom must carry the weight for both of them now.



Dave Cisco and Marvin enjoying some fellowship at the Shop



## **Founding member, Dave Cisco, shares a memory or two of his time with Marvin:**

I first met Marvin in 1989 when we were forming the AHRS. Marvin was working at Alagasco in communications. Celeste and I were invited to visit Marvin and Alice at their home. I was very impressed with his many restorations, particularly his pump organ, player piano and many guns. His work shops were very impressive where he could make almost anything.

Marvin loaned or brought many of his restored radios to our displays at the Birmingham HamFest. They arrived in custom-made perfect fitting boxes.

I worked closely with Marvin on the restoration of our Scott Philharmonic radio and learned a lot (normally Marvin did his work at home, but the Scott was too big). I went with Marvin to look at the coil winder at Hank Brazeal's house when we decided to buy it for AHRS. Then I watched as Marvin tweaked it to perfection.

Marvin's last project for us was a Zenith chairside radio which he restored mostly at home and brought in looking beautiful. It is on display at the Shop.

Marvin's BC348 radio transistoration was truly a work of art. Also, he converted a Zenith transoceanic tube radio to transistors before Zenith did.

Marvin's clock stories and WWII stories will live on in my memories of Marvin for the rest of my life. He will be missed!

### ***Dave Cisco***

As other stories come in about Marvin, I will add them to the newsletters.

The April Newsletter will have more standard content regarding shop work, radio class, fourth Monday night programs and whatever germane subject matter you send in that the other members might enjoy and/or learn from.

Also, Old Time Radio will be back on the dial next month.

We salute Marvin "Bill" Shepherd as a veteran, a father, a husband, a mentor and a friend.

We will miss you!

### ***Tom***