



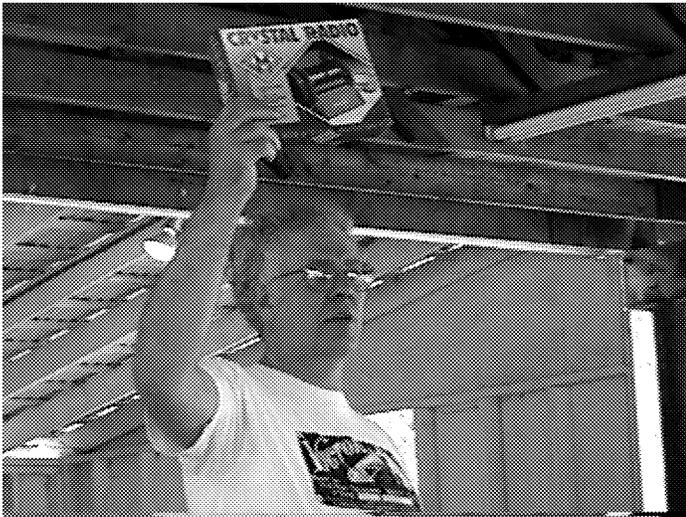
Celebrating 100 years of radio!

OSCILLATOR

DELAWARE VALLEY HISTORIC RADIO

The Official Newsletter of the DVHRC

Vol. 6, No. 7, July 1998



Would you buy a used radio from this man?
See page 7

DVHRC wows hams

Several of our members attended the July 2nd meeting of the Warminster Amateur Radio Club. Don Richter and Ted Sowirka provide a well received presentation on antique radio collecting. A good time was had by all, and a couple of prospective new DVHRC members were identified.

Inside the Oscillator:

- Marconi on Rathlin Island: An Oscillator exclusive.
- Eveready restoration by Alton DuBois
- More picnic pictures

JUNE MEETING

A report by Scoop Sibley

June's meeting, at the Telford Community Building, showed the new site to be something of a winner: easy to find, lots of parking, and a friendly right-size facility. As a result, Treasurer Kern was encouraged to sign up for long-term use of this location.

President Overbeck commented on the imminent scarcity of three club figures: Jim Whartenby of NJARC (moving to North Carolina), Mike Koste (with a new job in New Jersey), and Ludwell Sibley (moving to Oregon).

In Al Klase's absence, Sibley pointed out the need to provide him with liberal amounts of material for the Oscillator. Klase is running a higher-tech operation than the last editor - can scan photos, take stories via email, etc., and welcomes contributions from members who haven't considered submitting material before. Dan Lubczanski mentioned having the ability to provide pictures of European radios in his collection, an idea that was received warmly. Al's, er, callsign is skywaves@bw.webex.net, and his home page is <http://www.webex.net/~skywaves/home.htm>. For his regular address and phone, see the masthead page.

Continued on page 3

This Month's Meeting

The meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 14, at 7:30 PM at the Telford Community Building on Hamlin Ave.

Starting this month, we will break the tradition of not having a July meeting. We are also instituting a new tradition: Theme Auctions. This month's theme is PAPER. So bring out your books manuals, magazines, etc. Normal auction items will be accepted as well, but please try to support the theme.

The End.
THE OSCILLATOR

Newsletter of the
Delaware Valley Historic Radio Club
Post Office Box 41031,
Philadelphia, PA 19127

The *Oscillator* is published monthly by members of the non-profit DVHRC. Its purpose is to provide a forum to educate, inform, entertain, and communicate with collectors and preservers of vintage radio technology.

We welcome and solicit information relating to radio history or collecting. Submissions should be carefully researched, typed and accompanied with clear photographs or diagrams. Material on-disc (3-1/2" DOS/Win95) is particularly welcome.

Unless copyrighted by the author, material in this publication is available for attributed reproduction for nonprofit purposes. (For convenience, the editor can supply copy on-disc.)

Personal views, opinions and technical advice offered in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the members, officers or Board of Directors of the DVHRC, nor is the organization responsible for any buying or selling transaction incurred.

To join: DVHRC dues is \$10 per year. The membership year runs January-through-December. Please mail to the club PO box above.

Meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month at 7:30 PM

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A HEARTFELT ADIOS

from Mike Koste

In an era when life expectancy of a broadcast professional is twenty four months or less, I find myself fortunate to have defeated the odds by maintaining the same professional address for ten years. Regretfully, finding another Philadelphia radio station to assume responsibility for my financial well being was not in the cards, forcing me to take my expertise elsewhere.

My shingle now hangs at WVNJ (1160 AM) in Teaneck, New Jersey. As much as I'd like to consider the distance commutable, it clearly isn't. (Face it...when you're accustomed to driving eight o nine thousand miles a year and you're suddenly faced with mileage of a thousand a week and four hours a day, adjustments have to be made.)

It is for that reason, I've been forced to tender my resignation from the DVHRC Board of Directors and duties as Club Secretary.

My wife Pat is remaining with her position in Philadelphia and is going to meet me half way, agreeing to relocate to Central Jersey to such a location that permits her to train into the city and cut my travel time in half.

Although I'll be nearer to Jersey Club functions, don't think I'll turn my back on all the great friendships I forged through the DVHRC. Even though I was a member of both organizations from their infancies, I hold no exclusive allegiance to either group. I like to think of myself as "Pro-Radio" as opposed to "Pro-Club". It is for that reason I supported the joint picnic last month and will continue to support events and programs of both clubs. I encourage all of you to do the same.

So you won't be seeing me every second Tuesday of the month anymore, but I'll do my best to stay in touch through the pages of from time to time. And just in case our paths don't cross in person anytime in the near future, should you encounter a familiar face with an even more familiar baseball cap reading "Memphis Radio Police & Fire," at a radio meet or elsewhere, don't forget to say howdy. And should your travels ever bring you to Bergen or Passaic Counties, don't fail to dial us up.

I'll truly miss each and every one of you.

A thirty year radio broadcast veteran, Mike Koste is one of the thirteen original members of the DVHRC, founded the DVHRC Oscillator, organized numerous club swapmeets, served one term as club President, three years on the DVHRC Board and more years than he cares to remember as Membership Minister and Club Secretary.

Coming Events

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| July 10 | NJARC meeting, Freehold, NJ, 7:30PM |
| July 12 | Hamfest, Sussex County, NJ |
| July 14 | DVHRC meeting 7:30 PM. |
| July 26 | Hamfest, Timonium, MD |

Radio 100 years ago



Marconi, circa 1898, with typical equipment. From right to left: 10-inch spark coil with plain gap. Key, also serving as high-voltage transmit-receive switch. Morse inker, output was to paper tape. The black box contains the secret parts: coherer and tapper, sensitive relay, and batteries.

This is the first in a series of articles to celebrate the 100 anniversaries of passing radio milestones. I found a vague reference to a Marconi operation on Rathlin Island at the northern end of Ireland in the Summer of 1898.. Rathlin commands a view of the Northern Channel between Ireland and Scotland. A search of the World Wide Web lead to Gary Gray's Unofficial Rathlin Homepage. E-mail correspondence with Mr. Gray resulted in his report printed below. Then a few days later he sent another E-mail telling me about another web page run by a very small school on Rathlin. This page yielded a very nice report by twelve-year-old Granuaile Cecil. Her report not only gives us some insight into the Rathlin operation, but also provides a very helpful review of Marconi's life. - Ed.

Marconi on Rathlin

by Gary Gray

A Lloyd's Signal Station was established a few years before 1898 near the Altacarry lighthouse on Rathlin to report on shipping movements. Lloyd's were unhappy with the delay in getting messages from the Station so they brought in Marconi to try setting up a wireless telegraphy system between Rathlin

and the mainland. He sent Kemp, his assistant, to Ballycastle, Co Antrim in June 1898. Eventually radio communications were set up between Altacarry and a receiver at White Lodge, Ballycastle. Marconi arrived on Rathlin on Sept 1, 1898. The system was dismantled by the Post Office who introduced their own system but this was superseded when the Marconi Company were asked to run the service in 1905. The only evidence of the station is a few concrete blocks in the ground near the lighthouse.

An interesting footnote to this is that a young man called Edward Edwin Glanville fell to his death while assisting in Marconi's radio work on Rathlin in 1898. He was educated at Trinity College, Dublin and was 25years old.

The Marconi Connection

By Granuaile Cecil

P7 Rathlin Home Tuition Unit.

I'm writing this because it is coming up to the 100th anniversary of the first radio news broadcast; which was sent out from my island home, Rathlin. And this summer, I'm looking forward to a visit from Elettra, the youngest daughter of Marconi developer of radio. Elettra is around 68 years of age.

Guglielmo Marconi was born in 1874, to wealthy parents, Annie and Guiseppe Marconi. Annie was a strong willed Irish aristocrat. Guiseppe was an Italian land owner.

When Marconi was three he went to England, because his older brother, Alfonso, was attending school there. Marconi learnt English for two years, but when he was five he went back to Italy, which caused difficulties as Marconi had forgotten Italian. This was probably the start of Marconi's problems at school.

At 13 years old he failed to qualify for the Italian Naval Academy, so he had to go to Leghorn Technical Institute, where he learned physics and chemistry. At the L.T.I. he met a retired telegraph operator who was half blind. Marconi read to him and in turn was taught Morse code. This would be important to him in later life.

When Marconi was 20 years old, while holidaying in the German Alps, he heard about Hertz's (the man who proved radio waves existed) death. Thinking about Hertz made Marconi try wireless telegraphy, and since he was still young, he had drive; in other words he had a good chance.

Undeterred by his past failures, at his home, Marconi asked his mother if he could use the empty attic space for experiments; his would be the start of success.

Even though Marconi hadn't done too well at anything he had tried, he still had determination. His father of course loved him, but wasn't proud of his past failures, and I think Marconi achieved what he did to prove his father wrong.

Marconi wasn't like other people who studied radio waves. He wanted to make them more useful to other people. What Marconi was trying to do was to increase the distance that radio signals traveled.

Then the Branly coherer was invented, by Oliver Lodge. The Branly coherer was used for picking up signals more effectively than Hertz's method. Marconi perfected the coherer making it more powerful.

Marconi was successfully able to show his mother, toward the end of 1894, that he could sound a buzzer on one side of the room by pressing a button on the other side, with no wires connecting.

Over time he tried harder and soon was able to send a message over a kilometer. Now Marconi knew he needed help and money. Marconi's father, Guiseppe, said he could get help from the Italian government, but he failed. Annie knew wealthy and important people in England, who agreed to help. So in February 1896 Marconi traveled with his mother to England.

In London he filed a patent for his invention. In July 1896 Marconi gave a demonstration of his magnificent invention to William Preece, who was chief engineer of the G.P.O. in London. I'm sure Mr Preece was surprised and impressed, as were many onlookers.

In 1897 Marconi achieved another first by sending a message across the Bristol Channel.

In 1898, Marconi was asked, by Lloyds Of London, to transmit messages from Rathlin Island to Ballycastle. The messages were to be sent from the East Lighthouse on Rathlin to White Lodge in Ballycastle. The messages were to inform on ships passing through the Rathlin Sound.

Marconi's top assistant, Kemp, was sent to Rathlin to set this up. Kemp was helped by a Mr John Cecil; my great grandfather.

It was a success and on September 1st Marconi visited Rathlin to see how things were going. He was only 24 years old when he did this.

Marconi lived for a long time after and developed his own family. Although he was famous in Victorian times he lived well into this century.

In 1937 Marconi died in Rome

A modest proposal....

October 1999 will mark the 100th anniversary of one of the earliest radio operations in the United States. Marconi, on board the sea-going steamer Grand Duchess, radioed reports of the America's Cup races to receiving apparatus installed at the Highlands lighthouse on the northern New Jersey coast.

I think it would be appropriate to organize a commemoration of this historic event. The imagination runs wild. Imagine installing a spark transmitter, complete with 10-inch Rumkoff coil and plain spark gap, on a vintage boat and actually communicating with a coherer receiver at the twin lights! The amount of publicity this could generate for the antique radio community would surely make the effort worthwhile. Of course, we might have to make some allowances for practical and legal reasons, but I don't think we'd end up using two cellphones.

Any takers? Please contact the editor.

Philco and Miss America



John Okolowicz, who has written extensively on the industrial-design aspects of entertainment receivers, gave an informal but excellent talk on Philco's late-'50s line of radios and TV sets, especially the Predicta family. The Predicta line was an unreliable product with hot-chassis circuitry, a commercial failure, yet a symbol of "modern" design that pops up frequently today. He showed present-day print advertising to emphasize this point. Using a video of excerpts from TV

coverage of the 1958 and 1959 Miss America pageants (edited by Ted Sowirka), John pointed out features of the promotional campaign for this line.



The TV coverage showed Douglas Edwards narrating the pageant and Nelson Case delivering a hard sell on the Philco commercials, which were staged live (this was before the videotape era!). Featured themes, honoring the work of "Philco scientists," were "TV today for the world of tomorrow" and "Where it's 1965 today" (Pete Grave pointed out the latter as being analogous to the Chrysler claim in 1957 of "Suddenly it's 1960").

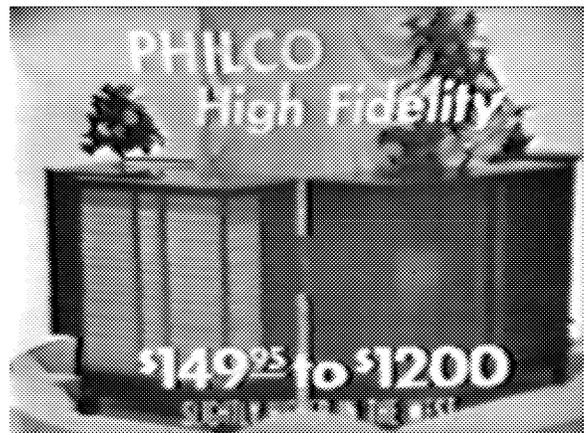
Other products promoted in the pageant coverage were the forgotten "Fidelitron" hi-fi speaker (a push-pull electrostatic type) and the "Slender Seventeener" portable TV. The video showed a slightly built model carrying the latter effortlessly up a stairway. John brought in a Seventeener of his own, which was visibly more of a lifting load than the one carried in the commercial.



Also promoted in the 1959 pageant show was the Safari battery-portable TV, a solid-state innovation at the time (breathlessly stated as "The wonders of science are endless"). The commercial spots included each year's freshly crowned Miss America receiving a pair of Philco TV on-cameras, in a near-swoon.



Some late-'50s "list" prices for Predictas are of interest: table-model, \$259.95; pedestal ("gas-pump"): \$299.95; tandem, \$329.95. The Slender Seventeener listed for \$179.95. The Safari cost \$249.95, battery not included. (These prices can be roughly quadrupled to convert to \$1998.)



Today there is an active collector market in Predictas of all types, including the vanishingly rare "room divider" model and the French, Italian, and German pre-Predictas that appeared a couple of years earlier - not to mention the quasi-reproduction modern version. Club members like Lewie Newhard, Mike Tannenbaum, and Dave Abramson are familiar with this line of sets, having fixed a few, and contributed to the general discussion. TV dealer-historian Dave Weddington was pointed out as currently writing a book on the Predicta.

All in all, John's talk was a real success.

Restoring an Eveready

By Alton A Bubo, Jr.

Several months ago, I was nosing around in an old antique shop and I spotted an Art Deco radio cabinet. Checking it out, I found the case was a cast aluminum tub with a complete radio in it. The top was missing. It had all the tubes except the 80. It had a sign on it for \$35.00. I asked him where the top was and he said it had been missing and he didn't know anything about it. He said that I could have it for \$25.00. Sold

It was kind of heavy for an 80 year old but the adrenalin helped. After getting it home and checking it further, I found that the primary of the power transformer was open. Oh, boy I bought a dead one. I sent for the diagram anyway and took the transformer out of the separate power supply and audio chassis. I chipped off the tar, after freezing the body. The cold tar breaks easier that way. I found the primary was totally burned including the secondary. I suspect someone put it on a DC 110 v. line.

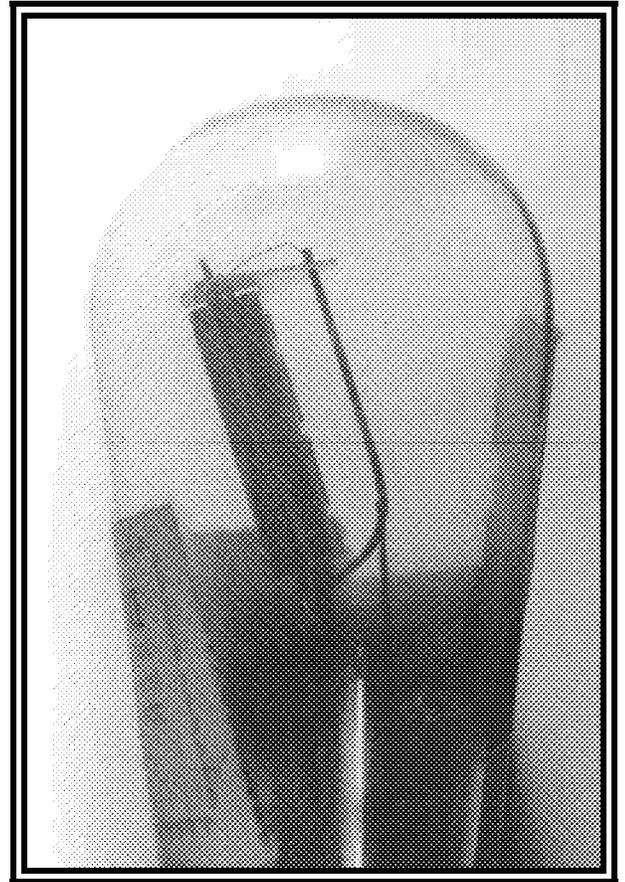
I called my favorite supplier and described the Eveready models 1, 2, 3. He recommended a Steinite transformer for \$15.00, the last one he had. It fit the original housing beautifully.

The original filters checked O.K. The power supply and audio unit was connected to the main chassis by a pin jack, making it easier to work on without the entire chassis. Now it works fine.

The interesting thing about the set is that one of the #26 tubes had the elements at about a five degree angle, but it still works O. K.

Later, I noticed an ad from a fellow in California for a #2 Eveready speaker. On calling him, he told me that the speaker went with the #2 radio. I bought the speaker, which was also a cast aluminum octagonal shaped case with a cone speaker. He told me it needed work. He was right. I restored the cone and cleaned the movement. Both look great now as a combination. He also told me it was produced by National Carbon Company under the name Eveready and was only produced between 1928 and 1930.

Is this set rare? I'm still looking for the lid that goes with it, which was also a cast aluminum affair that was very nicely shaped in Art Deco style.



Picnic pictures

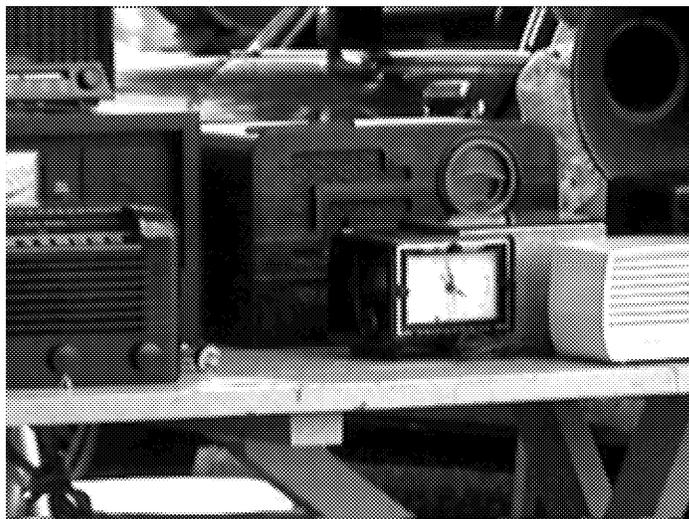
The joint DVHRC-NJARC picnic was held June 20th at the Elk's Lodge near Clinton, NJ. The weather was great, and we all enjoyed it. The turnout was perhaps a little light.



Or perhaps you'd sooner buy a used radio from this man.



Stalking the swap meet.



A going away present for NJARC president Jim Whartenby



"CQ DX" on an RS-6 "spy" radio. Nothing Heard!



**Your pictures can appear here. Send them
to the Oscillator.**

FIRST CLASS MAIL

**DVHRC
Box 41031
Philadelphia, PA 19127-0031**



**Yes Virginia, there is a July
Meeting!**