



OSCILLATOR

The Official Newsletter of the DVHRC

Vol. 8, No. 6, September, 2001

DVHRC and Kutztown...Perfect Together

The Kutztown Report by Dave Snellman

The Kutztown Radio Meet took place on August 18th at Renninger's. DVHRC had a very noticeable presence there that day. The club had a table set-up with tubes for sale as well as discounted radio books. Charlie Class and Fred Saul held the fort at the table for most of the morning. The new Collector's Guide to Antique Radios - 5th edition sold out quickly.

Quite a few vendors were located under the cover of the second pavilion. Too many items to list here, but I can say there was really a variety of things for sale. Battery sets, and nicely restored "tombstones" and "cathedrals" were available. Vintage audio equipment was there for those audiophiles among us. A very nice AK model 55 in a Kiel table was for sale. (If I only had the room.)

The weather was perfect. The site was great. The folks at Renninger's were very helpful. They provided a sound system for the auction, electric to test recent purchases, and a golf cart for Lewie to collect donations for the auction.

Cont. page 2

Inside the Oscillator

Publishers page.....	2
Editors notes, classified ads.....	3
Website of the Month.....	4
Plaskon by Mike Koste.....	5
Plaskon con't.....	6
Airwaves Timeline.....	7
Business cards.....	8

CROSLEY
RADIO APPARATUS
Better.
Costs Less
Making distance
records everywhere



Champion Zenith's Majestic Crosley wins Westminster Dog Show

Story on page K9

*Newsletter of the
Delaware Valley Historic Radio Club
P.O. Box 847
Havertown, PA 19083*

The Oscillator is published monthly by members of the non-profit DVHRC. Its purpose is to provide a forum to educate, inform members 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 discs should be in Word and jpg formats.

Unless copyrighted by the author, material in this publication is available for non-profit reproduction for non-profit use.

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 of equipment referred to.

To join DVHRC dues are \$15 per year. The membership year runs January - December. Please mail to the club P.O. box above. Meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm in the Telford Community Building, Telford, PA.

DVHRC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dave Abramson
Pete Grave
Lewie Newhard
Bill Overbeck
Ted Sowirka

FOUNDING PRESIDENT

Jay Daveler

OFFICERS

President: Bill Overbeck
Vice-president: Dave Abramson
Treasurer: Mike Tannenbaum
Secretary: Dave Snellman

OSCILLATOR EDITOR

Dave Abramson

CONTRIBUTIONS AND ADS

DVHRC Editor
1649 Yellow Springs Rd
Chester Springs, PA 19425
610-827-9757 phone/fax
dabm@worldnet.att.net
(deadline is the 20th of each month)

Material submitted is subject to acceptance and editing by the editor. A full page article is approximately 400 words. Printed photos may be submitted for scanning. JPG files should be under 100K.

Around 10:45 we began setting up for the auction. The proceeds from the auction go to the DVHRC treasury. We had a good turnout for help at this year's auction. I'd like to thank all those individuals who made donations to the auction. I'd also like to extend thanks to the auction crew. Pete Grave was our auctioneer - as usual. Dave Abramson, Ted Sowirka, and Lowell Schultz were the merchandise movers. Yours truly, Dave Snellman served as clerk.

As the auction ended and the dust cleared, the DVHRC treasury was increased by a little over \$300.00 thanks to the auction.

All in all, a fun day for all.



"I can always sell it on eBay"



"Radiola IV? Right here. How many?"

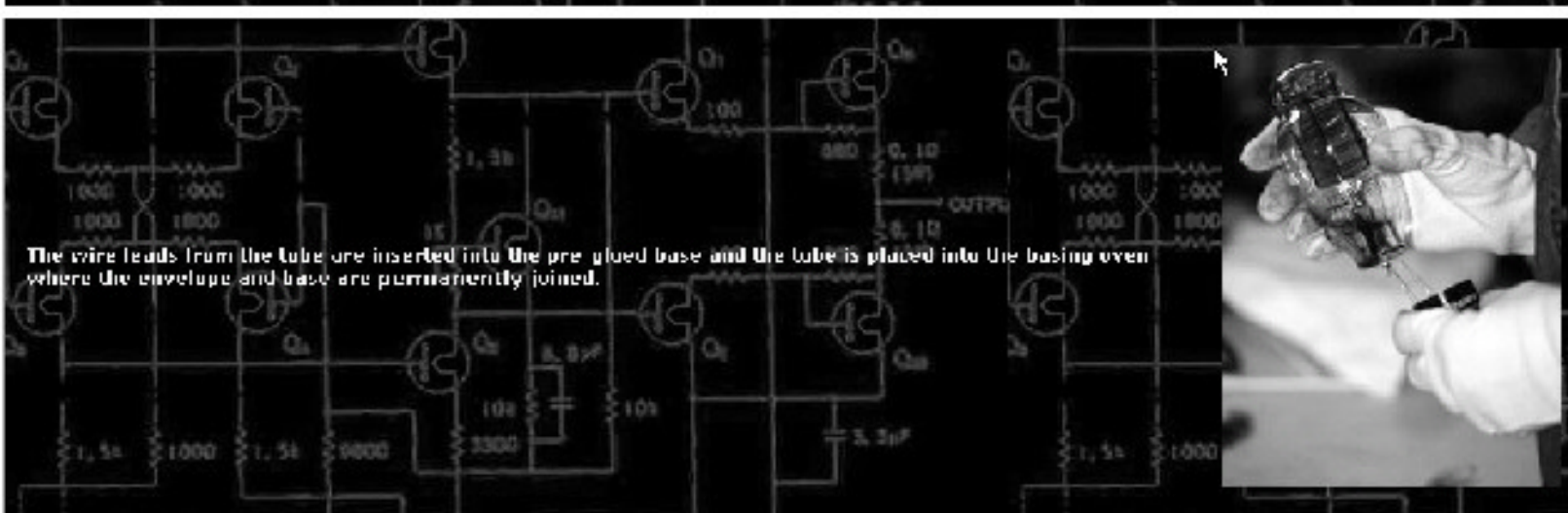
Website of the Month



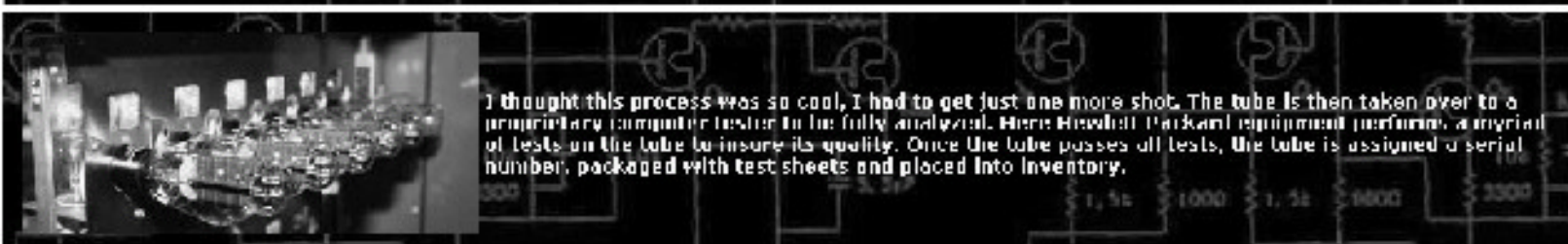
With the permission of Electron Valve, a fascinating tour of the Western Electric tube plant in Kansas City, now producing 300-B's. A complete production tour, pricing, and list of tubes to come is on the site.



The process of assembling the many parts of the tube then begins. The grid is wound using one of the original winders built in 1943. This particular unit was made by RCA for Western Electric.



The wire leads from the tube are inserted into the pre-glued base and the tube is placed into the basing oven where the envelope and base are permanently joined.



I thought this process was so cool, I had to get just one more shot. The tube is then taken over to a proprietary computer tester to be fully analyzed. Here Hewlett Packard equipment performs a myriad of tests on the tube to insure its quality. Once the tube passes all tests, the tube is assigned a serial number, packaged with test sheets and placed into inventory.

This site can be seen at;

<http://www.electron-valve.com/weco/westrex/westrex1.html>

PLASKON: THE OTHER PHENOLIC RESIN

By Mike Koste

DVHRC Oscillator, September, 2001

There have always been two or three white plaskon radios in my collection. But it wasn't until the recent addition of a 1948 Emerson Model 561 in that creamy ivory finish that sparked my interest in learning more about bakelite's caucasian cousin. Dr. Leo Baekeland's mixture of carbolic acid and formaldehyde was patented in 1910 and made him and Bakelite Corporation millions of dollars, selling his moldable resin primarily to manufacturers of electrical and automobile insulators and heavy industrial products. One of bakelite's primary drawbacks at the time was the limited range of colors the formula could produce.

Baekeland's patent expired in 1927 and was acquired by The Catalin Corporation, who managed to address the tinting question by modifying the ingredients and the method in which the resin was cast. Unlike bakelite's five primary colors, all variations of brown or black, the new Catalin mixture added fifteen more. Add the ability to mix colors to produce the now-familiar marbelized effect, the schemes and combinations of hues became endless. Pressed into bracelets, handles for kitchen utensils and gadgets, the consumer's love affair with this versatile and cheerfully colored material was instantaneuous.

This development set the stage for another variation in Dr. Leo's concoction: *Polychlorotrifluoroethylene*.

The Toledo Scale Company was looking for a suitable material for it's line of baby scales. It had to be lightweight, it had to be durable, and it had to be white. Due to the unstable nature of Catalin's product, their mix of white didn't stay that way for long. In fact, most of the famous butterscotch colored Fada "bullet" radios you see were originally ivory colored. In 1931, researchers at Toledo Scale found the near-perfect solution when they combined urea, another resin, with cellulose fiber. The result was dubbed Plaskon.

Radio manufacturers had been using bakelite since the 1920's, mostly for panels, knobs and insulators. However, within ten years, the radio began to transform itself from household appliance to object d'art. Molded cases of bakelite, Catalin and Plaskon gave industrial designers like Norman Bel Geddes, Raymond Loewy, and Walter Dorwin Teague carte blanche to take radio design where it had never been before. The results of their efforts to this day remain striking.

During the Depression, the use of these new plastics by radio manufacturers proved to be far more economical than using wood. The popularity of the medium, despite the gloomy financial condition of the nation, made more and more families multi-radio households. Inexpensive bakelite table sets began to appear in bedrooms and kitchens while the large console remained the focal point of the living room. Brown bakelite approximated the look of wood, the ivory and pastel shades of plaskon provided a less ominous appearance, and brightly polished Catalin provided an air of opulence. The new colors and shapes of these compact sets made it possible to match any décor.

Perhaps the most highly prized Plaskon sets from this period are the monolithic Air King radios. Designed by Harold van Doren and manufactured from 1934-36, the "Skyscrapers" were available in white, as well as red, lavender and lime green, and more closely resembled the work of an architect than a cabinetmaker. But Air King wasn't alone. Plaskon radios were also produced by Fada, Emerson, General Electric, Belmont and many others. The white Plaskon version of a bakelite model was usually sold at additional cost. Likewise, my Emerson 561 is today worth more than it's bakelite counterpart.

Despite all the positives these materials had, an equal number of negatives have surfaced over the years. For starters, bakelite cannot be repaired. If it's broken, cracked or chipped, so it will remain. Catalin, along with the discoloration problem mentioned earlier, is also on the next-to-impossible-to-repair list. Plaskon has it's own peculiarity: Stress cracks. In reality, these fine lines aren't caused by abuse, but by the completion of the curing process. Like Catalin, Plaskon is never totally "set", remaining partially liquid. Once the moisture is gone, the surface develops voids, much like a dried creek bed. Most stress cracks are ignored by collectors, since they are pretty much the norm on a Plaskon radio.

Plaskon continued,

Although there's no known cure for filling these voids, there is a way to make them less noticeable. In reality, that stress crack is nearly invisible. What makes it profound is nothing but dirt. I suggest using a cotton swab moistened with Clorox bleach. (Your editor is a big fan of Tilex). Moving in the direction of the crack, rub the swab gently into the line. You'll be surprised to see how dirty the Q-Tip gets with very minimal effort. Even more amazing, the blemish will nearly disappear.

Much like the old radios we all love, you don't run into a lot of new products made of Plaskon anymore. However, there's apparently still some high-tech interest in the product. According to the NASA Materiel Home Page, Plaskon, aka Farboset, is described as "an epoxy resin with silica filler, manufactured by Farboil Corporation and is a registered trademark of Amoco (British Petroleum)".

References: www.jet.uu.nl/ams/xroads/bal/
www.decoradios.com
www.deco-echos.com

1931 RCA Television Test Pattern



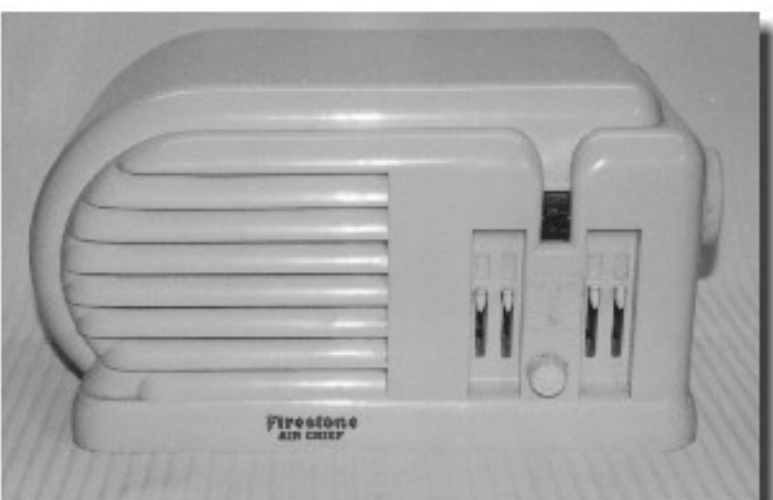
Engineers determined that the 3rd line down was readable and the diagonal bars in the second group at the top were clear-cut. Along the right hand border are a group of circles to test for distortion, which, if present, some of the circles would appear elliptical. (Courtesy of Peter Yanczer)



DeWald JD 519 - 1947



GE H500 - 1939



Firestone R-320 (Belmont) - 1939

Radios and photos courtesy Mike Koste

AIRWAVES

"This Month in Radio History"



TIMELINE

Compiled by Mike Koste

SEPTEMBER 7, 1922 The first paid radio commercial airs on WHAP, New York, promoting new apartments offered by Queensboro Corporation.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1927 RCA introduces the Radiola 17, the first AC powered radio.

SEPTEMBER 2, 1927 The first lamp hood hits off a Radiola 17.

SEPTEMBER 18, 1927 The Columbia Broadcasting System goes on the air with sixteen affiliates.

SEPTEMBER 7, 1929 Still considered the greatest radio show for youngsters ever created, "Let's Pretend" begins its 25 year run on CBS.

SEPTEMBER 30, 1930 Initial radio broadcast of the western classic, "Dustl Valley Days."

SEPTEMBER 13, 1931 Vaudeville superstar, Eddie Cantor, takes over "The Chase and Sanborn Hour" on NBC.

SEPTEMBER 25, 1933 "The Tom Mix Straight Shooters" premieres on NBC.

SEPTEMBER 14, 1934 Ask the man who owns one: The musical variety show "The Paulson Hour" premieres on the Blue Network.

SEPTEMBER 28, 1934 The Quality Group, later MBS, organizes WOR, New York, WGN, Chicago, WLW, Cincinnati and WKYC as the third radio network.

SEPTEMBER 10, 1935 Spinach is absent when "Popeye the Sailor" is first heard on NBC (Whisper was the sponsor).

SEPTEMBER 15, 1936 Mutual Broadcasting System begins a drive to go nationwide by signing up five new midwest affiliates. In Great Britain, TV transmission tests begin, alternately using the Baird and EMI Marconi systems.

SEPTEMBER 15, 1937 Chicago radio stations begin daytime broadcasts of lessons as an infantile parabolic epidemic closes schools.

SEPTEMBER 5, 1938 NBC broadcasts the first episode of the potential daytime soap opera, "Life Can Be Beautiful."

SEPTEMBER 26, 1939 Wire jackpots of \$1000, "Par-O-Gold" becomes the first "big money" radio game show.

SEPTEMBER 15, 1940 To carry out the new North American Regional Broadcasting Agreement, the FCC orders frequency changes for 777 stations in the U.S. by March '41. Two weeks later, the quiz show "Double or Nothing" joins the Mutual Sunday night lineup.

SEPTEMBER 16, 1941 Following five years as resident hick on Bing Crosby's kempt program, "The Arkansas Traveler," Bob Burns gets his own show on CBS.

SEPTEMBER 13, 1943 General Dwight Eisenhower takes to the air to announce Italy's surrender.

SEPTEMBER 17, 1945 The short-lived Associated Broadcasting Corporation establishes the fifth national radio network.

SEPTEMBER 8, 1946 Frances Langford and Don Ameche bow as radio's first dysfunctional couple, "The Bickersons."

SEPTEMBER 29, 1946 Phil Harris and Alice Faye star in "The Fitch Bandwagon". In addition, the sign-on of Allentown's WKAP pushes the number of AM radio stations in the U.S. over 1000.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1947 RCA discloses complete technical data of their new receiver to assist other manufacturers in production of TV sets.

SEPTEMBER 13, 1947 Philadelphia's WFIL-TV (now WPVI) signs-on.

SEPTEMBER 10, 1948 WHOL, Allentown signs on at 1600 kHz.

SEPTEMBER 18, 1950 Running concurrently on television, the intergalactic kiddy adventure show "Space Patrol" airs on Mutual radio.

SEPTEMBER 12, 1952 KPFT, Portland, Oregon goes on the air as the first commercial UHF TV station in the U.S.

SEPTEMBER 5, 1955 Claiming interference from the U.S., Havana broadcaster suggests that there be made an all UHF city.

SEPTEMBER 4, 1958 Philadelphia's WFIL-FM signs on at 92.5 mHz, now WXTU.

SEPTEMBER 17, 1962 The FCC proposes that any TV sets made after 4/30/64 be equipped with VHF and UHF.

SEPTEMBER 21, 1965 Westinghouse station KYW, Philadelphia goes "all news, all the time".





The Kutztown Radio Store

AT RENNINGER'S ANTIQUE MART KUTZTOWN, PA

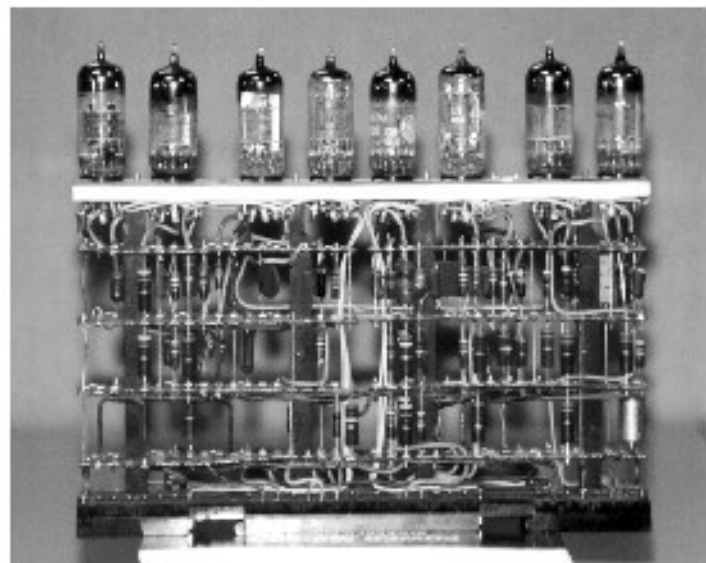
Open Saturdays, 8:30-4

Sales and Repair
of antique radios



Buying old radios
and related parts

Bob - (610) 253-3261 bparvin@aol.com
Lewie - (610) 262-3255 lewaille@aol.com
Dale - (610) 262-1807 tubenet@webtv.net



(215) 540-8055 FAX 540 8327
www.agtannenbaum.com

A.G. TANNENBAUM
ELECTRONIC SERVICE DATA & PARTS

Alice - WA2BTB
Mike - K2BN

P.O. BOX 386
AMBLER, PA 19002

THE KUTZTOWN RADIO STORE

AT RENNINGER'S ANTIQUE MART KUTZTOWN, PA

Open Saturdays, 8:30-4:00 P.M.

Complete Radio Cabinet Restoration and Refinishing
Minor Veneer Repairs Decals Replaced Metal Polishing
Grill Cloth Replacement Tables to Consoles

Est. on Site only 4-6 weeks delivery

Original Finish Restored When Salvageable

Lewie - 610-262-3255

Lewaille@aol.com

VISIT THE DVHRC WEBSITE AT:
<http://pw2.netcom.com/~firstake/dvhrc>.



OSCILLATOR

1649 Yellow Springs Rd.

Chester Springs, PA 19425