



ARCI NEWS

www.antique-radios.org

Affiliated AWA
Antique Wireless Association 

Volume 35, Issue 5
October 2016



RADIOFEST 2016 PICTURES INSIDE

UPCOMING OUTDOOR MEET OCTOBER 2, 2016

AMERICAN LEGION HALL
570 South Gary Avenue, Carol Stream, IL

October 2, 2016
7AM – 11AM

Business Meeting 9:30 am

Boy Scout Pancake Breakfast / Free Coffee, Juice & Cookies
50/50 Cash Drawing Raffle



2016 ARCI MEET SCHEDULE

October 2, 2016	7AM-11AM Outdoor Swap Meet Business Mtg./Officer Election 10AM	American Legion Hall Carol Stream, IL (See Map)
December 11, 2016	7AM-11AM Indoor Swap Meet Business Meeting 10AM	American Legion Hall Carol Stream, IL (See Map)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It is really hard to believe that fall is already here and *Radiofest 2016* has come and gone. And, what a great *Radiofest* it was! Our new venue was nothing short of fantastic, and our hotel accommodations were a huge upgrade over last year. Our seller registrations were up over 9% compared with 2015 and the main auction bottom line was the second highest ever. It was, as always, a jam-packed event, and I know that even those who stayed for the entire duration could not possibly have experienced every part of it. But now you can read all about it right here! This month's *ARCI NEWS* features individual, detailed articles covering every aspect of *Radiofest 2016*, including the main auction, ham station, RCA display, and equipment contest. So, take a little time to sit back, relax, and read all about what actually happened at our premier ARCI event!

It goes without saying that pulling off a complex event like *Radiofest 2016* was no small feat. Yet, as has been true for many years prior, a highly dedicated group of volunteers stepped up to the plate and "hit a home run." These volunteers hail from all over the country and belong to a variety of different radio clubs. Without their valuable contribution of time, talent and energy, *Radiofest*, as we know it, would simply not be possible. And this is something that every ARCI member should never take for granted. So once again, I want to take this opportunity to thank each and every *Radiofest* volunteer for your help and support in making *Radiofest 2016* one of the very best ever!

Please remember to mark your calendars for our next ARCI meet and business meeting, scheduled on October 2nd at the American Legion Hall in Carol Stream. This will be our last outdoor meet of the year (weather permitting), but keep in mind that we can always move the festivities indoors should a little rain come our way. We will hold our usual swap meet starting at 7AM, and our friends at the American Legion Hall will be selling coffee and breakfast items. And, don't forget about the donation auction. I have it on pretty good authority that there will be some very interesting items on display and awaiting your bids!

See You At The Next Meet,
John Stone
ARCI PRESIDENT



IMPORTANT UPCOMING BUSINESS MEETING OCTOBER 2, 2016

Every October, ARCI reviews its results from *Radiofest* and begins to conceive of planning for 2017. Please join us for our annual business meeting at 9:30am on October 2, 2016.

The meeting will also include a discussion about officer elections that will be held at the December Meet. John Stone has completed his term as President and wishes to step down. We are actively seeking a new ARCI President, and we welcome all volunteers to consider running for office. The role of President has markedly changed over the years. *ARCI NEWS*, the website, and speaking programs at *Radiofest*, the *Radiofest* Old Equipment Contest and *Radiofest* Special Display are primarily managed by returning volunteers. The *Radiofest* Auction is now primarily managed by the Wisconsin Antique Radio Club, Inc. (WARCI). Most of the volunteers return annually, and the use of a walking iPad video system to view the auction items has totally eliminated the need for significant audio-visual support staff and equipment and the need for staff to carry auction items. Relocation of *Radiofest* to the Shriners' facility this year, and our return in 2017, means that the President's job in 2017 will be much easier. Many of the individual services that we used to separately manage and provide have now been incorporated into the Shriners' contract or eliminated. This means the role of the President is now much more automated with better support. We commend John Stone for the significant effort he made in relocating *Radiofest* twice in the past few years. His work has left ARCI in a very good position for future years.

But, we still need new volunteers to preserve the vitality and initiative of one of the best radio collecting clubs in the country. **WE NEED YOU!!!** ARCI is your club!! Please plan to participate and lend a hand! See you at the meeting!!



ARCI SELLING A ZENITH STRATOSPHERE

By Art Bilski

FOR SALE: ZENITH STRATOSPHERE



The Antique Radio Club of Illinois (ARCI) is assisting the owner and is facilitating the sale of a rare and beautiful Zenith Stratosphere.

This radio has been in the family for 30+ years and has prominently been displayed in the living room. The owner was a serious collector and the family has decided it is time to pass the radio on to someone else who will appreciate it.

The pictures do not do the radio justice. The electronics were restored by the late Dave Johnson who was known for the quality of his work.

Questions and serious inquiries will be initially handled by ARCI. Final negotiations will be conducted with the owner and potential buyer.

Questions can be emailed to clubinfo@antique-radios.org Please put the word Stratosphere in your subject line to that any email does not get filtered as spam.

You may also call the club at 630-739-1060 between the hours of 9 am and 8 pm CST. If no one answers, please leave your name and number and your call will be returned as soon as possible and in the order received.

The radio is currently located in the western suburbs of Chicago.



TERMS OF SALE

Successful buyer is responsible to arranging pick up and transport of the radio. The current owner is not in a position to assist with any moving.

A \$2,500 deposit is requested within 5 days of a negotiated sale price. This amount is non-refundable. The balance of the funds are due within 30 days unless other arrangements are agreed upon. All funds must be in the form of a certified check, money order or cash.



RADIO DETAILS

We will let pictures say more than we can with words. See <http://www.antique-radios.org/Stratosphere.pdf> for complete coverage and photos. Additional details follow below.

- The serial number on the main chassis is 754043.
- The serial number on the power chassis is 756046.
- This is the 43rd Stratosphere produced in the first batch of 100.
- The radio was moved for the first time in years and at the time of the pictures we did not attempt to dust the chassis.
- The radio appears complete and original.
- What we are showing are pictures taken with and without flash to be able to show every detail.
- High Resolution pictures are available since these are in a PDF.
- The cat is included.
- Asking price is \$75,000 or best offer.

THE RADIOFEST 2016 REPORT

By John Stone

HUGE SUCCESS AT RADIOFEST 2016

The week or so before *Radiofest* is always a busy one for the ARCI *Radiofest* team, filled with follow-up phone calls to vendors, emails back and forth with each other, last minute changes, and the inevitable “one thing we completely forgot about.” This year was no exception. But, taken as a whole, *Radiofest 2016* came together more smoothly than last year, which was a great relief to all involved (especially me). Much of the credit certainly has to go to our wonderful hosts, the Medinah Shriners, with their highly professional banquet staff, and their total dedication to helping us pull off a fully successful meet. The quality of the facility and its employees was second to none, making our jobs that much easier and less stressful.

My first task of the day early Friday morning was to pick up the AV equipment from the rental facility. This included our high lumen HD video projector for the auction, and the powered PA speaker setup for the parking lot. From there it was off to the Medinah Shriners to get started with setup. I arrived at around 10 AM to a beautifully sunny and warm day. First up was the parking lot setup, making sure that our rental items were delivered and set up in the proper locations. The lot was perfect for our needs, with large amounts of available space and the ability to easily control traffic moving in and out. The lot itself had smooth and



unbroken pavement with well-marked parking spaces, a huge improvement over last year. By early afternoon, our tent and porta-potty had both been delivered and correctly placed. Now it was just a matter of chalk marking about 150 spaces so sellers could know where to park. Thanks to a few early arriving volunteers, our chalking task came off quickly and without a hitch. And, many thanks to our sellers for not driving stakes and screws into the pavement. This was a requirement for maintaining the excellent condition of the parking lot and for returning to the Medinah Shriners next year.

Next, I moved indoors to check out the progress for setup of our Friday evening main auction. I immediately realized that the space looked a whole lot smaller than I had remembered when I had first booked it months before. Of course, it was empty at that time, and now there were 120 chairs and a bunch of tables in there! With all the auction items due to come in that evening, it was pretty clear that we needed more space. Luckily, nobody was using the adjacent ballroom



space that evening, so the Shriners graciously came to our rescue by opening up the movable wall on the west end of our space and providing us with the additional space we needed. Problem solved, and just in the nick of time! By 2 PM we were already beginning to see the arrival of sellers eager to bring in their goods. Nick Tillich our auction coordinator was busy setting up the registration tables and computers, and the lines were already beginning to form. So things looked very promising on the auction front.

Meanwhile, back outside in the swap meet lot, the first group of sellers was already arriving to claim their spaces while the skies above were becoming ever more ominous. The rain forecasts for the week had been all over the map, shifting from 20% to 60% to 40% and back to 20%. In other words, the weather service had no clue. But there was no question that things were going to get wet quickly. Worse still, these “scattered storms” had a history of dropping copious amounts of rain, sometimes as much as 3



inches an hour. And rain it did, with the first storm casualty wiping out our fancy chalking job to number the seller spaces. All of it was washed away in a matter of minutes.

Thankfully, the bulk of our Friday activities would be indoors and out of the rain, but we did not take into account the impact of the storms on Chicago area roadways. Auction attendees were streaming in, and with them, reports of absolutely horrible traffic

jams and flooding. It was clear we were going to get off to a late start and with the sheer number of items arriving, it would be a long night. We finally decided to close auction check-in a full hour later than scheduled, thus delaying the auction start until about 7:15 PM. The final auction item fell under the gavel at around 11:30pm. Find out a lot more about the *Radiofest* 2016 auction in the separate *ARCI NEWS* article “About The Auction” in this issue.

Saturday morning dawned cool and cloudy, but with no rain in the forecast. It appeared we had “dodged yet another bullet!” Looking out of my hotel room window at 5:30 AM, I could already see the beginnings of activity in the swap meet lot. So I quickly made my way over to the swap meet lot to begin my first task of the day, which was to put down some new chalk numbers on the seller spaces, to replace the ones that were washed away by Friday’s storm. About 40 minutes later, I had managed to mark every other spot, and by this time, sellers and buyers were now streaming in at a pretty decent pace.



The swap meet area was busy for the better part of the morning. This year I took the time to walk the swap meet and greet the sellers. Most of them seemed pretty happy with the level of activity and virtually everyone gave a positive review of the new facility. Around 8 AM, the friendly folks at the Shriners set up a concession stand with coffee and donuts. Many bleary-eyed attendees were glad to oblige. Later on in the morning, the Shriners switched the concession stand to lunch service, selling hamburgers, brats, chips and drinks. I observed a pretty brisk amount of business going on at the stand between 11AM and 1 PM. We were really grateful to the Shriners for providing us with this great service, since the only other options were either at the hotel restaurant, or off premises.



The comments I heard from both sellers and buyers at the swap meet were overwhelmingly positive. As previously mentioned, the Shriners facility received a unanimous “thumbs up.” Accessibility was great, parking was ample and close by, restrooms were easily accessed, and the food concession was a big hit. Some comments had been made, especially in online forums, that the swap meet was smaller this year than last, as evidenced by the larger number of empty spots in the lot. Of course, looks can be deceiving, especially when you move your event to a completely new venue. In fact, the Shriners lot had virtually double the number of available spaces compared with the Burr Ridge Quality Inn. A quick look at the official numbers tells the real story: This year, we sold 135 selling spaces, compared with 126 spaces last year: a 9% increase.

This year's speaker programs were held in Room B at the Shriners facility. This is a classroom style space with room for about 60 people, making it an ideal venue for all of our presentations. Reports from attendees were overwhelmingly positive and attendance averaged about 40 per presentation, a healthy turnout. Our five individual presentations covered a diverse range of topics, from microphones to vintage audio, from power supplies to antennas. And of course, our first annual Bill Ross Memorial Ham Radio Forum carried on the tradition of Bill's many past forums, being both highly enjoyable and informative.



Immediately across the hall from Room B was The Music Room. We used this large space to hold our combined old equipment contest and our special RCA display. Dave Bart again stepped up to the plate to set up a really impressive display of rare and unusual RCA artifacts, while Jeff Aulik



concentrated on the equipment contest. We have lots more detailed info for you on both of these *Radiofest* 2016 events, contained in separate articles in this issue of the *ARCI NEWS*. You can also check out some of the great contest and display photos in these pages, as well as on our ARCI web site, www.antique-radios.org.

Our annual Carl & Karol Knipfel Awards Banquet commenced at 5:30 PM in the East Medinah Ballroom, with 72 total in attendance. After a long and occasionally stressful day, it was time to settle in for an evening of great food and drink, pleasant conversation, awards for individual member efforts, and finally, a little bit of fun. The Medinah Shriners prepared an excellent meal of chicken and steak for the group, and served it buffet style. Mike Molloy, the Shriners' banquet facility manager gave us an interesting presentation on the mission of the Shriners' organization, their charity work, childrens' hospitals, and other activities. This was followed by the presentation of awards for individual *Radiofest* volunteers and presentation of our annual Volunteer Of The Year Award. The evening closed with a very



entertaining (and funny) performance by the popular Chicago area performance group: The Windy City Harmonica Trio.

Sunday morning greeted us with sunny and mild weather, and parking lot activity began to stir at around 7 AM. The buyer and seller turnout was, as expected, much smaller than the day before. There was still enough activity, however, to make for an enjoyable Sunday morning swap meet. I walked the lot a few times myself and managed to pick up some parts that I needed for upcoming repairs along with an impulse purchase of an old Webster Chicago wire recorder for \$10. I just couldn't pass it up...I had the same one when I was a kid.



At 9:30 sharp, Tom Kleinschmidt commenced with our *Radiofest 2016* Donation Auction, with a respectable group of eager buyers in attendance. The auction pile had already swelled substantially from the previous day's contributions, but then a gentleman drove up with a carload of plastic AA5 sets of every imaginable brand and style. I did not count them myself, but to my eyes there had to be at least 50 or more. Tom spent the next hour or so skillfully working his way through the entire collection of "stuff" ultimately finding homes for nearly all of it. By the time he was finished, there was little left for the recycling company to remove, other than some old wood cabinets, cardboard boxes, and a few miscellaneous pieces of trash. Between items sold on Saturday and auctioned off on Sunday, the sale of donated items added an impressive \$1,190 to the club's bottom line. Our sincerest thanks to Tom for a job really well done!

FIVE CLUBS MADE THE DIFFERENCE

Radiofest continues to have a national reach and typically attracts international participants. Our attendees this year included people from across the country. *Radiofest* is truly the product of five major clubs and volunteers that span New York to California. We thank each of these organizations and all our volunteers for their tremendous hard work!!



The Medinah Ballroom was the location for our *Radiofest 2016* auction. This is a very large space that can be subdivided into three individual rooms, with the middle section being the largest of the three. Our initial plan was to hold the auction in one of the two smaller end rooms, but upon further consideration, we realized that this space might be too small. So the Medinah staff suggested we move the auction to the large middle space. By around 4 PM on Friday, we were already finding ourselves literally bursting at the seams with people and items coming in for the auction. Knowing there was still a lot more to come, our catering coordinator Joanna Karpinsky offered to open up a movable wall for one of the two smaller rooms, thus adding another third or so to the space we already had. We were very fortunate to have this extra space made available to us, and we ultimately ended up filling every available square foot of it with auction items.

You may recall that last year we tried a new approach to AV at the auction. In an effort to save some money while improving our ability to provide better close-up videos, we dispensed with our professional AV arrangement and set up the projection system for the auction by ourselves. This setup comprised an Ipad, used as the video camera, connected wirelessly to the video projector through a private wi-fi network and an Apple TV adapter. This arrangement worked out quite nicely last year, so we decided to try it again. And once again, it was a great success. We had good wireless coverage throughout the room with HD quality video projected from a 5000 lumen projector. We plan on improving this setup for next year's auction, experimenting with different camera apps and perhaps adding some portable lighting to help illuminate radios placed in the darker parts of the room.

We also brought back the very popular food and drink concessions that were first introduced last year. This year, the concession was placed right in the ballroom, making it easier than ever to purchase refreshments during the course of the auction without missing a beat.

So, how did we do? Very well, in fact, with the statistics below confirming that this was one of our best auctions ever. 145 persons participated this year, an 18.8% increase from the 122 participants last year. We had 55 persons who consigned lots, up from 54 last year and up 68 from 2014. We had 262 lots consigned, up from 200 last year, down from 324 in 2014.

196 of the 262 lots consigned this year sold. The total sales were \$32,900, which was up from \$24,705 last year, \$37,783 in 2014, \$26,480 in 2013, \$25,300 in 2012, and \$16,400 in 2011. The sales total makes this our second largest auction ever!

The average sale price was \$167.85. There were 66 no-sale lots this year, a no-sale rate of 25.2%, up from 21.5% last year.

Here's the specific data for auction sales, and details for the top 15 lots by selling price:

Auction Results	Lots Sold
Hammer Price >= \$500	14
Hammer Price \$250 - \$499	26
Hammer Price \$100 - \$249	48
Hammer Price \$50 - \$99	47
Hammer Price < \$50	61
Totals	196

[No Sale Lots 66]

Totals: Lots Sold/Auctioned & Avg. Price 196/262 \$32,900

15 Top Priced Lots (Hammer Price)	Price
BARCO EMT 981	\$1,800
Marantz 10B Tuner	\$1,500
Quad II Amp Pair	\$1,200
WW2 German Wehrmacht Field Radio WR-1	\$775
Paragon RA-10 DA-2	\$750
Washington Navy Yard SE-1385	\$750
Majestic Charlie McCarthy	\$675
Hickok 539B Tube Tester	\$650
RCA 66X8 Red Catalin Tuna Boat	\$600
AVO CT160	\$600
EH Scott Allwave 15	\$550
Zenith Neon Clock	\$525
Airline 62-197	\$525
Bendix Green/Black Catalin Radio	\$500
SME Tonearm and Parts	\$450

Special thanks go out to all of our wonderful and dedicated auction volunteers. There's no way we could have accomplished any of this without you!

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

The ARCI Volunteer of the Year Award was created to recognize individuals who, through their efforts, have made significant contributions to the organization in support of our avocation, our club and its activities. This year's Volunteer of the Year Award went to Tom Kleinschmidt for his incredible service to ARCI managing the donation auctions, developing the *Radiofest* Speaker Programs, and assisting John Stone in revamping and modernizing ARCI's administration. Tom is a former ARCI President from many years ago and has continued to support the club. His many hours in these efforts are greatly appreciated by everyone. We want to give Tom a well deserved and very special Thank You on behalf of everyone at ARCI for your years of continued service and your many generous contributions to the club and to *Radiofest*.



John Stone, ARCI President, and Tom Kleinschmidt, Volunteer of the Year.

WA9RCI ON THE AIR AT RADIOFEST

Our Vintage Ham Station for 2016 was once again set up at a new location that had a few uncertainties, especially regarding the usual problem of antennas – which ultimately proved not to be a problem after all. Steve Muchow, K9AKS, brought out his trusty 10-80 Meter vertical again this year, and we planted it on the grassy area adjacent to our canopy which worked out well. The two meter FM vertical was stuck on a pipe lashed to one of the canopy’s legs, and that was fine as well.

Ron Grams, WB9IMR, brought a beautiful 1960s vintage Gonset G-76 with matching AC power supply for the AM station, as well as a nice Heathkit SA-2040 roller inductor antenna tuner. For SSB (Single-Sideband) transmission, we used a Kenwood TS-830s transceiver from the ham shack of Jim Novak, WA9FIH. Jim also supplied a vintage Kenwood two meter FM rig.



*Ron Grams at the Radiofest 2016 Ham Station.
(See the related Gonset article in News From the Hamshack.)*



ANTIQUe RADIO CLUB OF ILLINOIS
RADIOFEST 2016



WA9RCI

QTH: Medinah Shriners Center
Addison Illinois DuPage County Grid EN51

Operation on July 30, 2016 on HF using a Gonset G-76 on AM and a Kenwood TS-830S on SSB; VHF FM using a Kenwood TM-621A with vertical antennas.

Confirming QSO with _____ UTC _____ Freq _____ Mode _____

QSL to 2335 South 2nd Avenue, North Riverside IL 60546-1308. Tnx & 73

ARCIL's New QSL Card.

This was the first time that our new WA9RCI club call was put on the air, and besides the Chicagoland area QSOs made via two meter FM, we did manage to work out fairly well on the HF bands also, despite noisy conditions due to the nearby stormy weather.

It was great to have Dale Svetanoff, WA9ENA come in from Iowa to work with us this year. Thanks also to Chris Farley, KC9IEQ, and Keith Schreiter, N9QDS, for their assistance with the station.

OTHER AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Each year, ARCI tries to thank all those who contributed to the success of the club. It takes the efforts of many people to make our club function. We graciously and gratefully recognize these individuals annually at each *Radiofest* during the Carolyn Knipfel Banquet. On behalf of the ARCI Board of Directors and the membership, congratulations to everyone for their many contributions in achieving a very successful year for ARCI and an outstanding *Radiofest 2016!*







RADIOFEST WINNER'S CIRCLE EQUIPMENT CONTEST WINNERS

Radiofest held its annual Old Equipment Contest in August under the direction of Jeff Aulik and Barry Janov. Many great entries were submitted and quite a few rare items were on display. Congratulations to everyone on all the fine entries, and of course, congratulations to the winners!!

Dr. Ralph Muchow Best of Show Award & People's Choice Award

Robert Sands, DeForest D10 with Case and Antenna

People's Choice Award

Michael Feldt, 1925 Hatfield Superhet (operating)

Chairman's Award

Jay Volke, Magnavox "Stanford" Speaker in Original Crate

Best Historical Display Award

Geoff Bourne, Pilot Super Wasp Display

Radios Pre-1930

- 1st - Michael Feldt, 1925 Hatfield Superhet (operating)
- 2nd - Robert Sands, DeForest D10 with Case and Antenna
- 3rd - Tom Burgess, Pericaud (French)

Radios 1930-WWII (1945)

- 1st - Geoff Bourne, Pilot Super Wasp Display

Radios Post-WWII (>1945)

- 1st - John Reinicke, Hallicrafters S38 with Chromed Cabinet

Advertising and Premiums

- 1st - Jay Volke, Philco Christmas Display
- 2nd - Dale Boyce, Illuminated RCA Logo Neon Lamp
- 3rd - David and Julia Bart, Submarine Alert Advertising Display

Catalin and Rare Plastic Radios

- 1st - Harvey Mattel, Emerson 744B

Transistor and Novelty Radios

- 1st - Robert Sands, Brush "Bug" Crystal Set
- 2nd - Jim Novak, Zenith RF42 in Original Box with Factory Literature
- 3rd - Jeff Aulik, Windsor "Boy's Radio," NOS, Orig. Box with Access.

Speakers

- 1st - Jay Volke, Magnavox "Stanford" in Original Crate

Vacuum Tube Audio

- 1st - John Reinicke, EICO HF-12

Made in the Midwest

- 1st - John Reinicke, Knight 83YX751 AM Tuner

Open Category

- 1st - David and Julia Bart, Railroad Hour Premium Display
- 2nd - David McCartney, Homebrew Stearman Crystal Radio
- 3rd - Tom Burgess, UTT Williams Loop

RADIOFEST SPECIAL DISPLAY RADIO CORPORATION OF AMERICA (RCA)

This year there Radiofest hosted a wonderful display about the Radio Corporation of America. Some of the historic items included:

- Antenna guy wire strain insulators from the first commercial antenna structure built in the U.S. – Marconi Wireless Telegraph’s Wellfleet Station (MA), 1901
- Original dealer store display of RCA Nipper and RCA Victor chair
- 1939 RCA Iconoscope Television Camera from the World’s Fair
- RCA Laboratories memorabilia
- 1926 Christmas season advertising
- TV and radio service advertising and awards
- First two RCA portable radios
- Original David Sarnoff awards and banquet invitations and letters
- Marconi and RCA Worldwide Wireless signs and memorabilia
- Original oil painting of RCA’s first President, Edward Jilian Nally
- Original RCA Victor lighted signage, 1940s
- Marconi of America incorporation documents: stock promotions, certificates and broadsides
- 1939 RCA Sound Control Studio set for children
- RCA Radiolas: RC-RADA, I (ER753A), II (AR800), AR1145, V, 24, 26, 44 (AR594), Aeriola, 60, 140
- RZC375W Radio with Braille markings, for AM-FM-VHF and UHF TV Sound, 1970

Many items had documentation, including newspaper or magazine articles and original equipment instructions and photos.

The following people also brought their own items for display: David and Julia Bart, Geoff Bourne, Rudy Hecker, Barry Janov, Joe Knight, Jim and Felicia Kreuzer, Jim Novak and Charles Wright. Thank you to all who participated in putting together this outstanding commemorative display. Additional photos are available on the ARCI website at www.antique-radios.org.





THE HISTORY ZONE

An Occasional Column on Topics

By David Bart

DAVID SARNOFF

David Sarnoff (1891-1971) pioneered American radio and television leading the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) in various capacities from shortly after its founding in 1919 until his retirement in 1970. He ruled over an ever-growing telecommunications and consumer electronics empire that included both RCA and NBC, as RCA became one of the largest companies in the world. He was named a Reserve Brigadier General of the Signal Corps in 1945 and was widely known as “The General”. He is credited with Sarnoff’s law, which states that the value of a broadcast network is proportional to the number of viewers.

EARLY LIFE

Sarnoff was born to a Jewish family in Uzlyany, a small town in Belarus. His father emigrated to the U.S. and raised funds to bring the family. Sarnoff spent much of his early childhood in a cheder (or yeshiva) studying and memorizing the Torah. He immigrated with his mother and three brothers and one sister to New York City in 1900, where he helped support his family by selling newspapers before and after his classes at the Educational Alliance. In 1906 his father became incapacitated by tuberculosis, and at age 15 Sarnoff went to work to support the family. He had planned to pursue a full-time career in the newspaper business, but a chance encounter led to a position as an office boy at the Commercial Cable Company. When his superior refused him paid leave for Rosh Hashanah, he joined the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of America on September 30, 1906, and started a career of over 60 years in electronic communications.

MARCONI WIRELESS TELEGRAPH COMPANY OF AMERICA

Beginning in 1906 and over the next 13 years Sarnoff rose from office boy to commercial manager, learning about the technology and the business of electronic communications on the job and in libraries. He also served at Marconi stations on ships and posts on Siasconset, Nantucket and the New York Wanamaker Department Store. In 1911, he installed and operated the wireless equipment on a ship hunting seals off Newfoundland and Labrador, and used the technology to relay the first remote medical diagnosis from the ship’s doctor to a radio operator at Belle Isle with an infected tooth. The following year, he led two other operators at the Wanamaker station in an effort to confirm the fate of the Titanic. Sarnoff later exaggerated his role as the sole hero who stayed by his telegraph key for three days to receive information on the Titanic’s survivors. The event began on a Sunday, when the store would have been closed. Some researchers question whether Sarnoff was at the telegraph key at all. By the time of the Titanic disaster in 1912, Sarnoff was a manager of the telegraphers.

Over the next two years Sarnoff earned promotions to chief inspector and contracts manager as revenues swelled after Congress passed legislation mandating continuous staffing of commercial shipboard radio stations. That same year Marconi won a patent suit that gave it the coastal stations of the United Wireless Telegraph Company. Sarnoff also demonstrated the first use of radio on a railroad line, the Lackawanna Railroad Company's link between Binghamton, New York, and Scranton, Pennsylvania; and permitted and observed Edwin Armstrong's demonstration of his regenerative receiver at the Marconi station at Belmar, New Jersey. Sarnoff used H. J. Round's hydrogen arc transmitter to demonstrate the broadcast of music from the New York Wanamaker station. This demonstration and the AT&T demonstrations in 1915 of long-distance wireless telephony inspired the first of many memos to his superiors on applications of current and future radio technologies. Sometime late in 1915 or in 1916 he proposed to the company's president, Edward J. Nally, that the company develop a "radio music box" for the "amateur" market of radio enthusiasts. Nally deferred on the proposal because of the expanded volume of business during World War I. Throughout the war years, Sarnoff remained Marconi's Commercial Manager, including oversight of the company's factory in Roselle Park, New Jersey.



David Sarnoff, 1922.

RADIO CORPORATION OF AMERICA

Unlike many who were involved with early radio communications, viewing radio as point-to-point, Sarnoff saw the potential of radio as point-to-mass. One person (the broadcaster) could speak to many (the listeners). When Owen D. Young of the General Electric Company arranged the purchase of American Marconi and turned it into the Radio Corporation of America, a radio patent monopoly, Sarnoff revived his proposal in a lengthy memo on the company's business and prospects. His superiors again ignored him, but he contributed to the rising postwar radio boom by helping arrange for the broadcast of a heavyweight boxing match between Jack Dempsey and Georges Carpentier in July 1921. Up to 300,000 people heard the fight, and demand for home radio equipment bloomed that winter. By spring 1922, Sarnoff's prediction of popular demand for broadcasting had come true, and over the next eighteen months, he gained in stature and influence.



Sarnoff with Albert Einstein, Steinmetz and other noted scientists and engineers on a tour of the RCA wireless station in Brunswick, New Jersey in 1921.

In 1925, RCA purchased its first radio station (WEAF, New York) and launched the National Broadcasting Company (NBC), the first radio network in America. Four years later, Sarnoff became president of RCA. NBC had by that time split into two networks, the Red and the Blue. The Blue Network later became ABC Radio. Sarnoff was sometimes inaccurately referred to later in his career as the founder of both RCA and NBC, but he was in fact neither. Sarnoff was instrumental in building and establishing the AM broadcasting radio business which became the preeminent public radio standard for the majority of the 20th century. This was until FM broadcasting radio re-emerged in the 1960s, despite Sarnoff's efforts to suppress it (following FM's initial appearance and disappearance during the 1930s and 1940s).

RKO

Sarnoff negotiated successful contracts to form Radio-Keith-Orpheum (RKO), a film production and distribution company. Essential elements in that new company were RCA, the Film Booking Offices of America (FBO), and the Keith-Albee-Orpheum (KAO) theater chain.

EARLY HISTORY OF TELEVISION

When Sarnoff was put in charge of radio broadcasting at RCA, he soon recognized the potential for television that could combine motion pictures with electronic transmission. Schemes for television had long been proposed (well before World War I) but with no practical outcome. Sarnoff was determined to lead his company in pioneering the medium and met with Westinghouse engineer Vladimir Zworykin in 1928. At the time Zworykin was attempting to develop an all-electronic television system at Westinghouse, but with little success. Zworykin had visited the laboratory of the inventor Philo T. Farnsworth, who had developed an Image Dissector, part of a system that could enable a working television. Zworykin was sufficiently impressed with Farnsworth's invention that he had his team at Westinghouse make several copies of the device for experimentation.

Zworykin pitched the concept to Sarnoff, claiming a viable television system could be realized in two years with a mere \$100,000 investment. Sarnoff funded Zworykin's research, most likely well-aware that Zworykin was underestimating the scope of investment or the research effort required. Seven years later, in late 1935, Zworykin's photograph appeared on the cover of the trade journal *Electronics*, holding an early RCA photomultiplier prototype. The photomultiplier, subject of intensive research at RCA and in Leningrad, Russia, would become an essential component within sensitive television cameras. On April 24, 1936, RCA demonstrated to the press a working iconoscope camera tube and kinescope receiver display tube (an early cathode ray tube), two key components of all-electronic television. The final cost of the enterprise was approximately \$50 million. On the road to success RCA engaged in a legal battle with Farnsworth, who had been granted patents in 1930 for his solution to broadcasting moving pictures. Despite Sarnoff's efforts to prove that he was the inventor of the television, he was ordered to pay Farnsworth \$1,000,000 in royalties, a small price to settle the dispute for an invention that would profoundly revolutionize the world.

In 1929, Sarnoff engineered the purchase of the Victor Talking Machine Company, the nation's largest manufacturer of records and phonographs, merging radio-phonograph production at Victor's large manufacturing facility in Camden, New Jersey.

Sarnoff became president of RCA on January 3, 1930, succeeding General James Harbord. On May 30 the company was involved in an antitrust case concerning the original radio patent pool. Sarnoff negotiated an outcome where RCA was no longer partly owned by Westinghouse and General Electric, giving him final authority over the company's affairs.



Sarnoff at the 1939 New York World's Fair announcing, "Now ... we add sight to sound."

Initially, the Great Depression caused RCA to cut costs, but Zworykin's project was protected. After nine years of Zworykin's hard work, Sarnoff's determination, and legal battles with Farnsworth, they had a commercial system ready to launch. Finally, in April 1939, regularly scheduled, electronic television in America was initiated by RCA under the name of NBC. The first television broadcast was the dedication of the RCA pavilion at the 1939 New York World's Fairgrounds which was introduced by Sarnoff himself. On April 30, opening day ceremonies at The World's Fair were telecast in the medium's first major production, featuring a speech by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the first U.S. President to appear on television. These telecasts were seen only in New York City and the immediate vicinity, since NBC television had only one station at the time, W2XBS Channel 1, now WNBC Channel 4. The broadcast was seen by an estimated 1,000 viewers from the roughly 200 televisions sets which existed in the New York City area at the time.

Although the standard approved by the National Television System Committee (the NTSC) in 1941 differed from RCA's standard, RCA quickly became the market leader of manufactured sets, and NBC became the first television network in the U.S., connecting their New York City station to stations in Philadelphia and Schenectady for occasional programs in the early 1940s. Meanwhile, a system developed by EMI based on Russian research and Zworykin's work was adopted in Britain, and the BBC had a regular television service from 1936 onwards. However, World War II halted further dynamic growth of early television.

WORLD WAR II

At the onset of WWII, Sarnoff served on General Eisenhower's communications staff, arranging expanded radio circuits for NBC to transmit news from the invasion of France in June 1944. In France, Sarnoff arranged for the restoration of the Radio France station in Paris that the Germans destroyed and oversaw the construction of a radio transmitter powerful enough to reach all of the allied forces in Europe, called Radio Free Europe. In recognition of his achievements, Sarnoff received the Legion of Merit on October 11, 1944 and the Brigadier General's star in December 1945. The star, which he proudly and frequently wore, was buried with him.



Sarnoff receiving his brigadier general's star from Major General Harry C. Ingles, Chief Signal Officer of the US Army.

Sarnoff anticipated that post-war America would need an international radio voice explaining its policies and positions. In 1943, he tried to influence Secretary of State Cordell Hull to include radio broadcasting in post-war planning. In 1947, he successfully lobbied Secretary of State George Marshall to expand the roles of Radio Free Europe and Voice of America.

POST-WAR TELEVISION

After the war, monochrome TV production began in earnest. Color TV was the next major development, and NBC once again won the battle. CBS had their electro-mechanical color television system

approved by the FCC on October 10, 1950; however, Sarnoff filed an unsuccessful suit in U.S. District Court to suspend that ruling. Subsequently he made an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court which eventually upheld the FCC decision. Sarnoff's tenacity and determination to win the "Color War" pushed his engineers to perfect an all-electronic color television system that used a signal that could be received on existing monochrome sets. CBS was now unable to take advantage of the color market, due to lack of manufacturing capability. Its TVs also cost three times more than monochrome sets. A few days after CBS had its color premiere on June 14, 1951, RCA demonstrated a fully functional all-electronic color TV system and became the leading manufacturer of color TV sets in the U.S. Color TV production was suspended in October 1951 for the duration of the Korean War. As more people bought monochrome sets, it was increasingly unlikely that CBS could achieve any success with its incompatible system. The NTSC was reformed and recommended a system virtually identical to RCA's in August 1952. On December 17, 1953 the FCC approved RCA's system as the new standard.

LATER YEARS

In 1959 Sarnoff was a member of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund panel to report on U.S. foreign policy. As a member of that panel and in a subsequent essay published in Life as part of its "The National Purpose" series, he was critical of the U.S. tentative approach to fighting the political and psychological warfare produced by Soviet-led international Communism against the West. He strongly advocated an aggressive, multi-faceted fight in the ideological and political realms with a determination to decisively win the Cold War. Sarnoff retired in 1970, at the age of 79, and died the following year, aged 80.

FAMILY LIFE

David and Lizette Sarnoff married on July 4, 1917. They had three sons: Robert W. Sarnoff,[16] Edward Sarnoff, and Thomas W. Sarnoff. Robert succeeded his father as RCA's Chairman in 1971; and the youngest of these sons, Thomas, became NBC West Coast President. He is interred in a mausoleum featuring a stained-glass vacuum tube in Kensico Cemetery in Valhalla, New York. Although a cousin's sympathetic biography earned Sarnoff's approval, there is not yet an objective, scholarly biography—one which documents its sources and draws on multiple archives.

HONORS & AWARDS

- 1938 Honorary degree Doctor of Commercial Science from Oglethorpe University
- 1944 Legion of Merit from the United States Army, 1944
- 1951 Knight of the Cross of Lorraine (France)
- 1951 Companion of the Resistance (France)
- 1955 The Hundred Year Association of New York's Gold Medal Award
- 1975 Junior Achievement US Business Hall of Fame
- 1953 National Assoc. of Broadcasters Hall of Fame Distinguished Service Award in 1953
- 1984 Television Hall of Fame in 1984
- 1989 Radio Hall of Fame in 1989
- 2014 New Jersey Hall of Fame

SOURCES

- Wikipedia at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Sarnoff.
- Bilby, Kenneth. (1986). *The General: David Sarnoff and the Rise of the Communications Industry*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Dreher, Carl. (1977). *Sarnoff: An American Success*, New York: New York Times Book Company.
- Lewis, Tom. (1991). *Empire of the Air: The Men Who Made Radio*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Lyons, Eugene. (1966). *David Sarnoff: A Biography*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Sarnoff, David. (1968). *Looking Ahead: The Papers of David Sarnoff*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Schwartz, Evan I. (2002). *The Last Lone Inventor: A Tale of Genius, Deceit, and the Birth of Television*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Sobel, Robert. (1984). *RCA*. New York: Stein and Day.
- Gutterman, Leon. (1968). The Wisdom Society for the Advancement of Knowledge, Learning and Research in Education (1968). *The Wisdom of Sarnoff and The World of RCA*.
- Woolley, Scott. (2016). *The Network: The Battle for the Airwaves and the Birth of the Communications*. Age New York: Harper Collins.



Sarnoff with the first RCA videotape recorder in 1954.

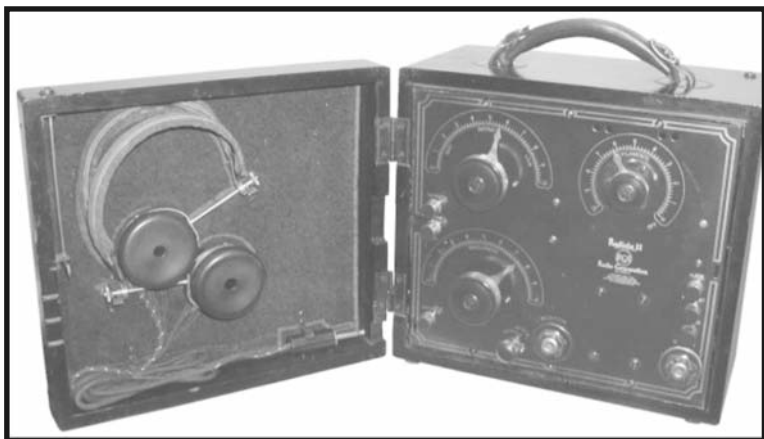
COLLECTOR'S CORNER

An Occasional Column on Radio Collecting

By David Bart

RCA RADIOLA II PORTABLE RADIO, 1923

Announced in December, 1922 but not sold till late January 1923 or nationally advertised until June 1923 due to a shortage of UV199 tubes. RCA's Radiola II (AR-800), made by General Electric, was the first truly self contained portable radio produced by RCA. The radio had an attractive case, but it still had no speaker or antenna. The total production run was 9,594, and the price was \$97.50 (equivalent to \$2,014 today) which included a pair of *Brandes* headsets, 2- UV199 tubes and a set of batteries. The customer only needed an antenna to listen. The radio used a TRF with reaction (regenerative) circuit with 1 AF stage requiring a set of dry batteries: 2 x 22.5 volt and 2 x 4.5 volt. One of the promotions stated: *"With even with an improvised antenna it will pick good, big distances-clearly. And over short distances, it will operate a loudspeaker."*



These Men. I give the secret of
Camp Radiola's Success. V. 1

Now for Camp with the new Portable Radiola! (Radiola II)

HERE'S a Radiola you can pick up and trot off with! In a cabinet that holds the headset, the tubes, and all the batteries. With a handle to carry it by. Think of taking your Radiola with you—tuning in almost anywhere, at any time, on half the country's broadcast programs.

Now for camp life with a Radiola! Music at the evening campfire. Baseball scores. Songs, news, talks, going with you wherever you go. Throw an insulated wire over a tree, and you are ready to listen in to far-away cities. Radiola II is a powerful receiver with two tubes. The secret of its smallness is the new Radiotron UV-199, that operates on ordinary little flashlight batteries!

One thing that will impress the family is the fine appearance of the set for home use, when you take off cover and handle. It's a portable receiver—but, first of all, it's a fine receiver, and a sensitive one.

"There's a Radiola for every purse"
at the source Radio or Electrical Store

Radiola Portable
Representative carries two tubes
—radiotron receiver and one
tube of audio amplification
—all batteries and a pair of head
earphones. \$97.50

Two in handle—and more in
—radiotron receiver, two
—radio tubes for
—power. Radiola also
—operates on the
—batteries, needs one
—flashlight battery
—through a lead
—connector.

Send for the free
booklet
Radiolas from \$25
to \$125. Write for
the booklet that
tells all about 'em.

RADIO CORPORATION OF AMERICA
Dept. 2082, Address office nearest you.
Name and the nearest Radio Shack.

RCA
This symbol
of quality is
your protection.

Sales Department
111 Broadway
New York

District Sales Office
413 California Street
Chicago, Illinois
San Francisco, California

Radiola

MADE IN U.S.A.

NEWS FROM THE HAMSHACK

By Jim Novak, WA9FIH

GONSET'S G-76 80-6 METER AM/CW TRANSCEIVER

Each year when we assemble the ham radio station for *Radiofest*, we look for interesting and hopefully unusual equipment that not only displays nicely but also functions well. This year we were fortunate to have Ron Grams, WB9IMR volunteer the use of his Gonset G-76 transceiver and matching power supply for operating AM on the HF ham bands. (See related article on WA9RCA On the Air at *Radiofest*.)

Gonset was best known for their series of VHF Communicator radios, popular in the 1950s and early 1960s for either mobile or home base station use, since they had built in power supplies for both 110 VAC and 6/12 VDC. But the company also made several pieces of equipment covering the HF (80 through 10 Meter) ham bands, including the chrome plated G-66 and G-77 transmitter and receiver, and later, the G-76 which was offered with separate AC and DC power supplies.

The G-76 covers 80 through 6 Meters and is called a transceiver, but the large main tuning dial only controls the receiver; a transmit VFO (variable-frequency oscillator) is tucked into the lower right corner of the front panel, and must be adjusted by the user to match the receive frequency after activating a “spot” switch which turns on the transmit oscillator. Hopefully, a mobile operator would have pulled over to the curb before attempting this (distracted driving?!). Since the VFO frequency has to be multiplied six times for the 50 MHz (6 Meter) band, crystal control for the transmitter was used exclusively on that band, eliminating the inherent problems with drifting and “touchy” zero-beating.



Gonset G-76.

The G-76 used a 6DQ5 final RF amplifier tube running about 100 Watts input on Phone, 120 Watts on CW. It was modulated by a pair of 6DQ6s. It was also capable of receiving, but not transmitting, on Single-Sideband (SSB) phone.

Although band conditions were up to par due to storms in the area, we did manage to make several out of state contacts with the G-76, including with the Midwest Classic Radio Net Saturday morning on 3885 Khz.





BUSINESS CARD ADS

We invite all of our members to scan and send in your business card to be included in *ARCI NEWS*. For \$80 your card will appear in the next 6 issues! Your card will be seen by approximately 400 people per issue and up to 1,000 people at Radiofest where we make additional copies of *ARCI NEWS* available at no charge. If interested, please scan your card and send it to jbart1964@gmail.com and mail a check for \$80 to Rudy Hecker, ARCI Treasurer, 127 Weymouth Court, Schaumburg, IL 60193. Thank you all for your continued support of ARCI!!!

Just Radios

Capacitors & Resistors for Tube Radios

David and Babylyn Cantelon
6 Ferncrest Gate, Scarborough
Ontario, Canada, M1W 1C2

www.justradios.com
justradios@yahoo.com
(416) 502-9128

CLUBING AROUND

ANTIQUÉ WIRELESS ASSOCIATION

The AWA will hold its annual membership and board meetings on Sun., Nov. 1 in the Conference Center (across the street from the museum) at the AWA's Antique Wireless Museum complex at 6925 Routes 5 & 20 (intersection with Rt. 444) in Bloomfield, NY. All members are welcome. The AWA, our national affiliate, publishes the AWA Journal and the AWA Review. Dues are \$35 per year. For more information, please see www.antiquewireless.org.

WISCONSIN ANTIQUE RADIO CLUB, INC.

The next WARCI meeting will take place Sun., Nov 6 at "The Terminal", located at 5917 South Howell Street in Milwaukee near the airport from 7AM-11AM. For information see www.warci.org.

NORTHLAND ANTIQUE RADIO CLUB

NARC's annual fall indoor swap meet will be held on Sun., Sept. 25 at the Pavek Museum of Broadcasting; 3517 Raleigh Ave., St. Louis Park, Minnesota. The NARC Fall Indoor Swap Meet will be Nov. 7. For information, please see <http://www.northlandantiqueradioclub.com/index.shtml>.

MICHIGAN ANTIQUE RADIO CLUB

MARC's Vintage Electronics Expo will be held January 28, 2017 at the Costick Center in Farmington Hills, Michigan. For more information on the schedule for MARC's Vintage Electronics Expo please see <http://michiganantiqueradio.org/events/>.

INDIANA HISTORICAL RADIO SOCIETY

The IHRS Fall Foliage Meet will be on Oct. 1 at 8:00am at the Riley Park Shelter, Greenfield, Indiana. (One block north of US40 on Apple Street.) For more information please see <http://www.indianahistoricalradio.org/ihrsched.htm>.





ARCI NEWS

Antique Radio Club of Illinois

PO Box 1139

LaGrange Park, IL 60562