



July 2013



### ***NOTE FROM PRESIDENT TOM***

Hello, All!!

With summer upon us, folks are vacationing and not thinking old radios. We still have had some quality work days with fewer folks. On July 4, while attending an annual barbecue/rummage sale event, I ran into a friend I had worked with at the Power Company. I mentioned to him that I had been looking for old radios and novelty radios, but did not find any. He mentioned that he had some old sound equipment that he needed to get repaired so he could sell it. I invited him to the Society workday the following Saturday. He showed up with a Marrantz 7C preamp and a Thorens 124 turntable, and Mack White, who helped teach the Turntable/Audio Clinic last month, helped him with each item. Mack soon had the turntable “turning” and checked out and made a list of things needed to get it in salable condition. Mack looked over the preamp and noted that the black beauties needed to be replaced to get it back to spec. It worked, so it could be sold as is. The eBay value of these two items is currently north of \$5,000. Oh, my friend joined and is our newest paid-up member!

Gene Samples has taken on the repair of our Emerson AX235 Catalin radio. He has it looking great! New tubes, knobs, back and front louvers have been ordered and will help restore the radio to its original condition. We will have some before and after pictures in the August Newsletter.

Last week, a crew of strong volunteers manhandled three six-foot-tall equipment racks into the Society shop. These racks contained older, General Radio frequency and modulation measuring test gear, similar to the gear that Claude Gray used in the 40's and 50's to check radio station signals. The Society plans to tune-up this gear, make one rack for the Society radio studio display and one rack to sell. Our marketing committee believes that we can get a healthy donation for this second rack. Some volunteers are needed to help tune-up this equipment.

In this issue, there is a before and after story by member Ron Studdard on his Atwater-Kent 60C. Ron's story may start out a little strange, but it shows a personal part of Ron and, I think, adds to the story. It could have been edited down, but it would lose some of its “flavor.” I have asked several members to write about their shops or some interesting aspect of their radio hobby. Every member who has a story to tell (and most do) is encouraged to write one (or more) with pictures (if you have them). And, again, make it personal in some way.

Your Society has received an invitation from Richard Watts, editor of the Journal of the California Historical Radio Society (CHRS), to begin sharing articles that each society publishes. We will be discussing this further. A current issue of their Journal is available for review at our shop. Pay special attention to the eleven-page article on Basic Wood Radio Cabinet Refinishing by Eric Stenberg. We are going to have to step up our game to create articles of this caliber.

You may remember that our Society has a standing pledge of \$1,000 to CHRS to help them purchase the historic KRE building in Berkeley, CA. They have experienced some difficulty in acquiring the building from its new owners. They have raised, in cash and pledges, over \$693,000 in their effort to purchase the building. More later.

Robert continues with another radio repair article. His next classes are July 13 and August 3. Dee continues his old radio adventures in this issue.

Steven has been selling Society golf shirts for the past several months. If you want a nice looking shirt for a good price, contact Steven soon, as he is phasing out this project.

SEE YOU AT THE SHOP!!

*Tom Killian*

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### **OLD TIME RADIO BITS**

Hello Folks!

One of my favorite actors who was heard all over the radio in the 40's and 50's was Joseph Kerns. It's hard to find a radio show that didn't use Joe Kerns at least one time. He had a unique voice, so he was easily recognized. He was born in 1907 in Salt Lake City, Utah. He graduated from the University of Utah with a degree in music. He liked to play the pipe organ and later built his house around a 26-rank Wurlitzer theatre organ. Funny, I always wanted a theatre organ in my house, but I had two strikes against me, no money and no talent. But, that is a story for another time.



Here he is with the cast of "Dennis the Menace". He died of a brain hemorrhage not long after this was taken at age 55. After his death, Gale Gordon replaced him as Mr. Wilson on the Dennis the Menace show. I'll do a story on Mr. Gordon at a later date.

From 1942 to 1962, folks in radio land enjoyed "radio's outstanding theater of thrills." If you are 60 or older, I'm sure you remember that line. It was part of the intro for one of the most popular radio shows, "Suspense." For much of the show's run, Joe Kerns was the announcer and in the early days was known as "The Man in Black." He also enjoyed working with some of the radio "sitcoms," such as the "Jack Benny Show," "The Burns and Allan Show," and "Our Miss Brooks" (played the school superintendent). Mr. Kerns was on countless other radio shows, too many to mention in this article, but one of his more unusual parts was playing the door knob on "Alice in Wonderland." If you want to hear Joseph Kerns in one of his earlier radio jobs, here is a link to "The Cinnamon Bear" children's show in which he played "Crazy Quilt," the dragon. He would have been around 31-years-old at the time.

<http://www.myoldradio.com/include/popup.php?id=7731>

That's all for now, meet me in the parlor in front of the old Philco.

*Dee Haynes*

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## **ATWATER KENT RADIO RESTORATION**

By Ron Studdard

About the radio--It is a 1929 Atwater Kent Screen Grid Electro-Dynamic SP-1 Model 60c in a Star Piano (TX) cabinet. The retail price for the 60c version was \$151 less tubes (\$12.00 was the upgrade from the 55c).

My dad collects most anything old, but has always had an interest in old radios (with no knowledge of repairing them) and old-time radio shows. In my early years out of college and having limited disposable income, I used to make regular trips to thrift stores, antique stores and trade days looking for items that I might be able to refinish and use as furniture or decoration. I enjoyed reviving old items that needed a little TLC to bring them back to life and give them purpose again.

I purchased the radio in the early 1990s from a local thrift store. I don't remember how much I paid, but \$35 seems about right. I moved out of town in 1997 for a brief time and stored the radio, along with several other items, (not knowing anything about it) in my dad's old garage until last August 2012.

After watching several TV episodes of American Pickers, and peaking my curiosity, I wondered if I had anything of value stored at my dad's. Thanks to the great resource library - the internet, I determined most of the items stored were not of any significant value, but this radio looked old and had a nice cabinet. So, after relocating it from Gadsden to home, I did some research and discovered that this was once a Cadillac type radio of its time.



**Atwater Kent before Restoration**

I remembered there was a historical radio society in the area that I had discovered several years ago due to my dad's interests. I decided to contact AHRS about repairing the radio. I was thinking if they could repair the radio chassis, maybe I could restore the cabinet myself. So, on a Saturday in late August, I brought the radio down to the shop, and they talked me into joining and assisting/learning with the repair.

That was the beginning of about a six-month journey on a part-time basis - being that I work during the week and have limited free time. I brought the cabinet, chassis and speaker. The cabinet was mostly intact, but the finish was all but gone; a few curved pieces of the leg spindles were missing; and the top had stains and areas with missing veneer. Marvin gave me some great info on stripping and staining the cabinet and repairing the veneer. Dee helped repair the speaker wiring and connections. Dwight, Maurice, Dave, Joe, Tom and several others provided a lot of help with the restoration of the chassis. I speculate that the chassis made at least a dozen or more trips to the shop weighing in at 40-plus pounds! Also, I did a good bit of research on the internet, primarily the antique radio repair forum and <http://www.atwaterkent.info> for new schematics and parts list.

The first real task I learned to do was how to test the tubes. I think this was the beginning of a new era (or hobby). Here is a brief list of the repairs on the chassis and speaker:

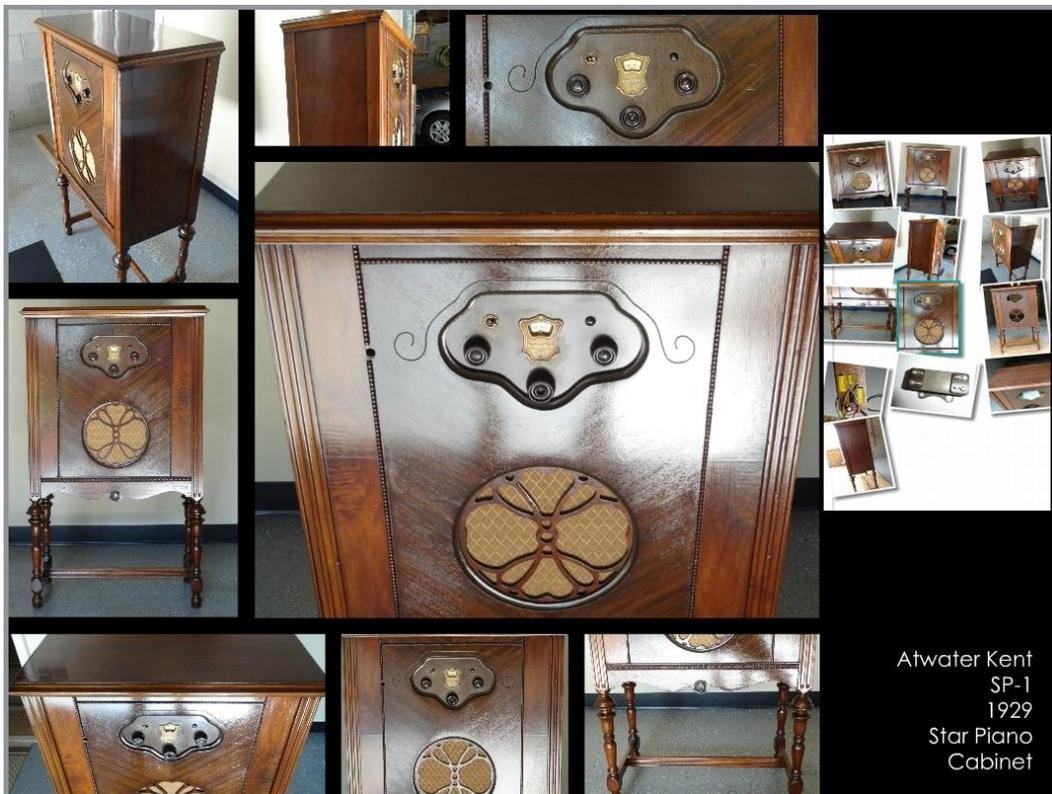
- Small tears on the speaker cone
- Speaker wires and connections
- Tubular resistors
- Replaced the rubber grip around the tuning knob
- Shrink tubing around the power transformer wires
- Capacitors in the small tubs underneath the chassis were repacked
- Capacitors in the metal box on top of the chassis were replaced using perforated board to mount the new capacitors
- Replaced the interstage/output transformer box with an original. An attempt to remove the old transformers from the tar failed. I do have info on what to use as replacements if new transformers are needed.
- Thorough cleaning

For the cabinet:

- Stripped the old finish lacquer thinner and steel wool pads
- Repaired 2 sections of missing veneer on the top with new veneer
- Used a steam iron to pull out some dents in the wood on the front

- The legs have spindles and the larger sections are actually a rectangular box shape with curved pieces glued on. I glued 2 or 3 pieces back on that I had found. Two were still missing. I discovered a product called quick wood to build and mold a base and form the curve sections. I drilled small holes in the leg and glued small pieces of wooden kabob sticks to help hold the molded section in place. I used an outer coating of wood filler mixed with a dark brown acrylic paint to coat the outside of the base - it helped with matching the dark stain of the rest of the legs.
- Painted the dark trim sections around the chassis and speaker areas
- Replaced the grill cloth
- Stained the outside using artists' oils mixed with thinner - recommended by Marvin
- For the final coating, I decided to experiment with a product called Waterlox tung oil finish. It is an option to polyurethane and is water resistant. The original finish goes on as a high gloss, but tones down to about a 55% gloss over a 3-6 month period.

I am still new at learning how to repair radios. Looking back, I can now see all the things I have learned and that I have a long way to go. It has been a great experience, and I want to thank everyone who has helped with the project. It feels good to see a little piece of history return to its glory.



Atwater Kent  
SP-1  
1929  
Star Piano  
Cabinet

Atwater Kent After Restoration

## ***RADIO REPAIR AND TROUBLE SHOOTING YOUR RADIO***

By Robert Frye

Know your work shop:

- 1) Lighting
- 2) Soldering station
- 3) Fan and Air Condition
- 4) AC Motors
- 5) Anything plugged into the AC sources

If you are working on a radio that has noise or a hum (not a filter hum), the following can help you locate the source. Noise can come from many locations. First, turn off your lights in your shop (this could correct all you noise problem). The reason for this writing - I was working on a radio with noise a couple of months ago. I had checked everything I could think of (my wife called me to come in for lunch). As I was walking out of the shop with the radio on, I switched off the overhead light in my shop. As soon as I switched off the light, the noise stopped (needless to say, lunch was much better). With my 50 years working on radios, I could not believe I had overlooked this.

But let's take this a few more steps. Let's say you have a radio and turning out your lights did not correct your problem. Look around before doing any more work; ask yourself, "What do I have plugged into my AC source?" Yes, a soldering iron - this could be inducting noise -unplug it. This had no effect - still noise.

Next step, push your wires close to the chassis - even separate your wires. This is common in the RF section - the higher the frequency, the more problems you can have with noise. So, when working in this section, you should keep the wires and component leads as short as possible. Well, this has no effect either.

Next step, and the most overlooked problem, check to see if tube shields are on the tube that came from the manufacturer with them on. If they are not, replace them. These are added because of noise and interference from other tubes and components. Also, when replacing, after checking a tube that has a shield on it, be sure to put the shield back on. In this case, if it did not correct the noise problem, taking this one more step, check your tubes one tube at a time. Tubes can cause noise by intermitting elements of the tube. Now you found the problem on today's lesson.

Stay tuned for the next troubleshooting article.

**Instructor – Robert Frye**

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## **AHRS POLO SHIRTS FOR SALE**



Last Call (for now) on purchasing AHRS Polo shirts. If you are interested, please email me with your size and the number of shirts you wish to order. My email address is [spwestbro@bellsouth.net](mailto:spwestbro@bellsouth.net)

Steven Westbrook



### **LOGITECH SQUEEZEBOX RADIO (Wi-Fi Internet Radio)**

By Patsy and Tom Desaulniers

Tom Killian asked us to write a column about our new Logitech Squeezebox Radio. First of all, it is very fitting that I edit the AHRS Newsletter; I have had a radio at my bedside since I was about 10 years old. My first radio was an aqua and white Truetone that plugged in the wall. I had it for years, and then my parents bought the Western Auto Store in Clarksville, Arkansas. Having the entire selection of their radios from which to choose was a sensory overload. As I remember, I had several transistor radios as each became the newest "hot" item.

When I travel, a radio is always packed in my suitcase, and if it is ever forgotten, I buy a cheap radio to tide me over until I get back home. So, as you can see, I am definitely a radioaholic. My last radio before the Squeezebox Radio was a Sony ICF 5500W, which has given me faithful service for over 35 years. We have mused as to how much longer the dial cord tuner would last, because it is run its entire length many times during most nights.

When my husband Tom made his request last month for a radio that would pick up stations over our Internet connection, it seemed too good to be true. My favorite station is WWL in New Orleans, but it would fade in and out, leaving entirely about 6 a.m. Now, I listen to WWL when I go to bed and begin my mornings with Rick and Bubba on WZZK in Birmingham, Alabama. They come in as clearly as they did when we lived in Birmingham.

While my Logitech is strictly used for radio programming, you can use it to create and manage playlists, play your personal music library, access apps to find and play music services, podcasts, newsfeeds, etc. I already have an XM radio, but this radio will also access those stations.

Well, I know my husband Tom is anxious to explain the more technical aspects of the Logitech, so I will let him add his input next.

Hmmmm. Well, I don't think I can add much in the way of how it works, technically. I like to listen to WSM, the Grand Ole Opry station in Nashville. But due to propagation problems, especially in the summer, that is not always possible. So, I got on the internet and found their UL where WSM streams audio. One evening I got to thinking how cool it would be if some company made a "radio" that was actually a little computer that all it did was go to web sites and stream audio from radio stations that you could program into it.

I asked that question in this newsletter two months ago and Dee immediately told me that it was in fact already being done, and he had one.

I got on eBay and found a really nice one for about half of the going NEW price. It came in within a few days and the rest is history. I got major "points" with Patsy, and she loves it. It programs from the "tuning" knob much like the newer ham radios do with their menu systems. The audio is great, never fades, and there is, of course, no static during storms. Plus it will do all sorts of other web things that we haven't figured out yet. How cool is that???

There is only one thing that I do not quite have figured out yet. Patsy uses a pillow speaker to listen at night and the output from the earphone jack is at a much lower level than one would expect from it. They must have somehow reduced the output power to the earphone jack so one cannot blow the earphones or hurt their hearing. Figuring that out is a project for another day and, of course, Logitech customer service is completely clueless about that piece of info.



Jack Bryant is recovering nicely! He was at the Shop this past week looking good!

## ***MEETING TIMES***

We meet every Saturday (unless a Holiday weekend) at 09:00 AM, at the one-story AHRS Shop at the corner of 8th Avenue North and 18<sup>th</sup> Street (1801 8th Avenue North, Birmingham, AL 35203). Use the rear (Southeast) entrance.

Also, we have opened the Shop on Tuesdays at 09:00 AM until around 11:30 AM when we go to Marilyn's Deli and Dog for lunch next door. Note that parking can be a problem on Tuesdays because it is a business day and the lot is usually filled, so you may have to find street parking occasionally.

**We meet on the fourth Monday night of each month, too, at 7:00 PM. Please come join us!**

## ***FREE ELECTRONICS CLASSES***

One more great benefit from becoming a member of AHRS--free Electronic classes!

Classes are taught the first Saturday of each month (except when something special is taking place, then we agree on what Saturday).

We start from the beginning Ohms Law, inductors, resistor and Capacitors color codes, as well as what each component does within the radio circuits. We also teach how to use test equipment used in the repairing of radio. We teach troubleshooting radio troubles, as well as how to read a radio diagram. There are coil winding classes, and one-on-one repair help.

Come join these classes.



### **Dues are Due**

Membership dues are \$25 a year, payable beginning in January. If you have questions about your dues, you can contact John Outland at 205-354-5258. **Dues can be mailed to AHRIS @ P.O. Box 131418, Birmingham AL 35213.**

### ***WHO TO CONTACT***

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