

David's Input On The History SARS:

THE EARLY HISTORY OF SARS

By David Martin 6-10-2013

In January of 1991, Charlie Pierce, Paul Squires (the only other radio collector we mutually knew aside from Homer Henrioud (Rest In Peace), thusly invited) and David Martin held a short meeting in David's home to explore the possibility of starting an antique radio club in the Atlanta area. Among other things, club names were discussed in the meeting. Paul decided that he didn't want to be a part of forming a club, citing it would be to much work and that the officers always do 90% of the work and the members only 10% (*Sound familiar?!), but stated he'd like to just be a member only if we got it started. So Paul politely bowed out and left the meeting. For weeks Charlie and I proceeded to make grand plans for starting a radio club on our own. We discussed names and we liked Southeast Antique Radio Society the best, thought about abbreviating it to SEARS, but didn't want the confusion between the club and the well known retailer, so we settled on SARS.*

We decided the best way to attract potential members and introduce the new SARS club would be to have a real swap meet. We notified the newspapers and every publication that would insert the club formation notice for free along with our first swap meet information (March 9, 1991 & Sewell Park in Marietta). We "designed" a one-page flier on an Apple IIe computer, made copies and posted them at every conspicuous place that allowed such things. We were able to secure and reserve, through the Marietta Parks& Recreation Department, a large parking lot area within Sewell Park. So, we were all set!

Things remembered about the first few SARS swap meets at Sewell Park:

- The first meet came off without a hitch and many interested members joined at that meet... Good meet, lots and lots of old radios and great fellowship. As I recall, it was at this very first meet, as Charlie and I**

were soliciting new members and handing out SARS membership applications, that Bill Moore, a seasoned radio collector from Alabama, had just arrived and was given an application, as he spotted a late attendee pulling into the parking lot, headed to that car and as the man opened his trunk, Bill spotted a nice Zenith Walton set and bought it for less than \$100. Having landed THE FIND of the day, Bill proceeded to quickly load the Walton into his car and immediately drove back to Huntsville, skipping the rest of the swap meet. Our meet had barely been going for 30 minutes at this point.

- At our second or third swap meet at Sewell Park, very late on Friday afternoon before the meet the next day, the Marietta Parks & Recreation Department called me, informing us we couldn't hold our already approved meet in their park because of a conflicting softball game. I immediately got on the phone and called Winn Dixie corporate offices and got us temporary permission to hold the meet in the parking lot of their recently closed store, which was just across the entrance to Sewell Park. We worked it out... Another good meet!

- We scheduled another swap meet at Sewell Park on March 13, 1993. As I recall, winter storm warnings had been posted for all of North Georgia for the night before and for that weekend, but Atlanta only had possibilities of flurries in that weather forecast. That Friday night, as I put out street signs around the Marietta area about the swap meet, it was in the mid 50's and raining... Neither Charlie nor myself believed it would snow, and proceeded as such with high hopes for another great meet. As most of you may recall, it DID snow! Charlie was able to make it to

Sewell Park in his 4WD Bronco and I came in an Aerostar van... barely getting there by 7AM! A collector from South Carolina, Joel Milford, showed up with his wife and was the only other collector in attendance! Charlie and I headed back to my house and attempted to eat 5 dozen Krispy Crème doughnuts, stay warm and watched the snow fall (we got 22" in my yard that day – what a horrific snow storm!). Yep, we rescheduled that meet! A fun note – Don Patterson from Augusta, came up the night before the swap meet and stayed with Paul Squires in Acworth. I believe Don had to stay with Paul for several days before the roads opened up so he could go back home in Augusta, GA.

As I recall, our first official meeting location was at a Shoney's restaurant on Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, just north of I-285. We used their meeting room AND we held a mini-tailgate swap meet in their parking lot prior to every club meeting. It was a great idea, but soon we all were looking at the same old radios each time and we dropped that part of the meeting after a while. We held our meetings at this Shoney's until they closed without previous warning to us (we found out they were closed when we showed up and they were completely boarded up). This was the point that we began using the facilities at Piccadilly's Cafeteria on Jimmy Carter Boulevard.

For the first few years of the club, Charlie and I took turns at it's Presidency, Treasurer, publicity directors, etc., even doing several roles at the once until such time that we handed over the baton to others members interested in leading and directing in it's future. It's been great fun and certainly a worthwhile adventure! The rest is history guys! THE SARS CLUB IS NOW 22 YEARS OLD! Lets make sure we celebrate our 25th anniversary in 2016!

David Martin, K4DLM

Charlie's Input On The History SARS:

The best I can remember on starting the club. Can't exactly remember there year <1990 but I remember that I had been to several swap meets in my early collecting years and thought that it would be nice if Atlanta had a Antique Radio Club of our own. There had been some other attempts by other people to have small swap meets in the area, but never to actually start an organized club. Thru my collecting radio hobby I had met several people over the years. David Martin, Paul Squires, Larry Fleegle, Don Patterson, and others. I was talking to David Martin one day and mentioned about starting a club. He was interested and so it goes. The best I can remember after calling as many people as we could, we all got together at a Shoney's and discussed forming a Club. Some wanted to name the Club SEARS but we decided on naming it S.A.R.S. We would meet monthly at Shoney's and have mini trunk swap meets in the parking lot. I believe David Martin was elected First President of the Club. I think I was Vice President and maybe Treasurer at the same time. I know I had held President, Vice President and Treasurer over different times. My memory is real foggy remembering exact details. About a year later we started a news letter mailing. I believe Barry Ethridge was our first news letter editor. The first real swap meet we had was at Sewell Park in Marietta. I will try and see if I have any old news letters that might give more details.

Charles Pierce, WA4XF