

Southeastern Antique Radio Society

President's Message

Hello all. Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Lee Baker, and I am the newly elected President of the Southeastern Antique Radio Society for 2025. I am honored to have been elected to this important role. Since joining SARS in 2022, my knowledge of the antique radio world has grown exponentially. I came into the club just wanting to restore an old radio. Now, along with the club's other officers, I am helping to lead this organization of talented, knowledgeable, and engaged radio enthusiasts.

As with ham radio, the antique radio hobby is at a crossroads. Current technology is constantly changing. This is good for consumers. We can engage, communicate, and enjoy media in ways inconceivable to the fathers of radio engineering. But there is a flip side. Much of this new technology is disposable. The micro-miniaturization of electronics makes it impossible to repair or modify items. Retailers known for parts favored by amateur technologists have gone the way of the Ford Edsel. You know the names: Radio Shack, Layfette, Allied Radio, and Heathkit.

Now, don't get me wrong. I love my iPhone, PC, iTunes, digital streaming music, and 55-inch OLED TV with high-end theater audio. But as technology evolves for the better, we MUST never forget and always honor the technology that brought us here. We have quantum computers now, but we went to the moon with slide rules.

SARS and its members have a mission: to keep pioneering radio technology protected and relevant and to prevent it from becoming just a footnote.

I view my role as honoring the generations that invented and enjoyed this technology and being a torchbearer to engage with the younger generations, helping them learn and appreciate the technology that came before them.

My DNA loves how the old and new come together. You've probably read that vinyl records are the latest fad, making them the younger generation's new love. According to Official Charts, 2024 marked the 17th consecutive year of growth for vinyl album sales, with 6.7 million units being the highest total in three decades. What's more, sales of physical albums across all formats (vinyl, CD, cassette, etc.) have increased year-on-year for the first time since 1994, rising from 300,000 copies to 17.4 million.

And it is not just music media but also equipment. eBay sells cassette decks and 8-track players, and mid-century audio gear is getting crazy resale prices.

While we in SARS love the old stuff, we are not ignorant of current tech. We rely increasingly on modern tools to educate, communicate, and promote.

At the end of 2023, I drove the launch of our first Facebook site, providing a channel to expose our community to who and what we are. We enhanced our website and launched a YouTube channel, allowing club members and technology-interested people to experience our meetings at a time and location that benefits them. We also moved our bi-annual swap meetings to a new and engaging location.

Social media is essential for connecting with our local community and other antique radio enthusiasts. Our club and personal social media channels drive connections and foster relationships.

SARS is here to honor and preserve past technology, make it accessible to a new generation, use the latest tools to connect generations, and show that what's old is new again.

Lee

Lee's Bio

LRB Communications

- Corporate Communications Manager
 - FIRSTKEY HOMES
 - BAE Systems, Inc
 - Editas Medicine, Inc.
 - PAREXEL, Inc.

THE COCA-COLA COMPANY

- Director, Internal Communications
- Senior Manager, Internal Communications
- Manager, Internal Communications

HOME DEPOT

- Senior Manager, Associate Communications - IT
- Manager, Associate Communications – IT
- Manager, Communication Planning
- Communication Planner
- Video Graphics Coordinator/Artist

CIRCUIT CITY

- Manager, Internal Communications

FLORIDA POWER & LIGHT

- Video Graphic Artist

WTVX-TV CHANNEL 34 (CBS)

- Television Production – broadcast director, master control, audio, lighting, editing, studio, and portable field camera work

Graduated with an associate degree in electronic engineering from Indian River State College in Ft. Pierce, FL

Hobbies:

Ham radio

Musician

- Drums, guitar, bass guitar, violin, cello, upright bass, trumpet, saxophone, harmonica, piano

Antique radios

Civil War history

Personal:

Married

Two children, four step-children

Three grandchildren

Four cats

Favorite bands

The Beach Boys

Jimmy Buffett

There are too many others to mention