

# Fall 2005 Newsletter

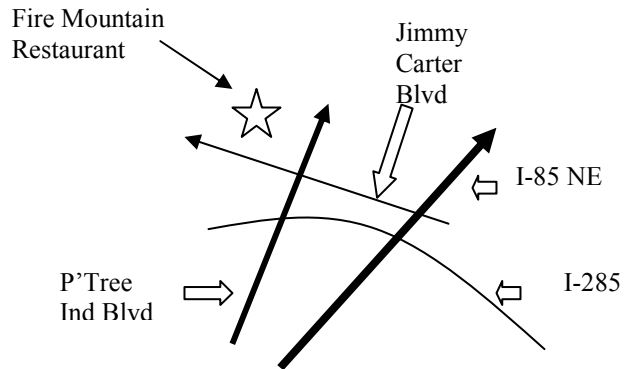
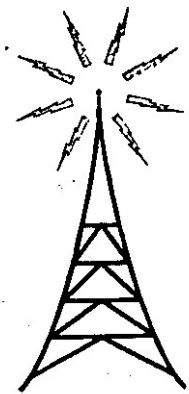
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**JOIN SARS!** Dues are \$12 per calendar year. Join after June 30 and dues are pro-rated to \$6.00 for the remainder of the year. Send payment to the SARS address above.

## SUPPORT YOUR CLUB!

The Southeastern Antique Radio Society meets on the second Monday of each month at Fire Mountain Restaurant, 7045 Jimmy Carter Blvd. Norcross, GA 30093. Meetings start at approximately 6:30 PM. Most attendees arrive early and eat before the meeting. In addition to club business, meetings have a "Show and Tell" session where members bring in items to display and discuss. All are encouraged to participate in this activity. See the monthly schedule elsewhere in the newsletter and the map below.

**ANNUAL DUES ARE NOW PAYABLE! ONLY \$12! JOIN OR RENEW TODAY!**



## SARS RADIO CLUB

### Fall BULLETIN

**October, 2005**

Check out our website!

<http://www.sarsradio.com>

## GENERAL INFO

Southeast Antique Radio Society  
113 Laurel Ridge Drive  
Alpharetta, GA 30004



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## **Club Officers:**

President: Richard Rodgers  
Vice President: Les Cane  
Publicity & Membership: Bob Niven  
Secretary: Gary Beale  
Treasurer: Tom Knutson  
Newsletter Editor: Mark Palmquist

## **Next Swap Meet- March 4, 2006**

Magnolia Antiques SuperMall  
Cumming, GA  
8:00 A.M.

Check <http://www.sarsradio.com> for details

## **Next Meeting: Monday, Nov 14, 2005**

Fire Mountain Restaurant Norcross 6:30 pm  
Discussion Topic: TBA  
Show & Tell: "Oddball Stuff"

# **SMALL TOWN -BIG RADIO**

**By Don Kennedy**

## **Recollections of a 1,000-watt independent a half-century ago.**

The date was 25 May 1948 when WBVP in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania signed on, the call letters selected to represent their location in Beaver Valley, Pennsylvania about 30 miles northwest of Pittsburgh. They later came to mean "We Boost Valley Progress," a promise fulfilled by the owners, three men from Pittsburgh who had been involved in WWSW in that city. Scores of new radio stations were established in the years following WWII, as wartime electronic production turned again to civilian control boards and transmitters with radio moving into lower population areas previously served only by adjoining big city stations. It was a heady time for young people to get into the business; the need for people to operate those new stations opened up hundreds of positions across the nation previously only available in larger markets.

The year before WBVP signed on, I had been working at an older established newspaper-owned station in a suburb of Youngstown, Ohio, a station that had been on the air since 1937. It was equipped with classic Western Electric 23C boards and birdcage and salt-shaker mics in multiple studios with perfect acoustics and solid soundproofing. Each of the two record studios was equipped with three Presto turntables, the gain ridden by engineers in one of three control rooms through the double-paned window. The 78s and transcriptions for selected programs were played by turntable operators. It was then, a vast change to go to work for the new WBVP located in a third story walkup where announcers operated the single Raytheon board and played their own records on two RCA 16 inch turntables with two arms each, one for 78s and lateral transcriptions and one for vertical transcriptions. Sound proofing was minimal, with the two teletype machines barely muted through the single-walled control room/studio and the exhaust fan from the bar on the street level rumbling in the background when the fire escape door was opened on hot nights. A single RCA 77 hung from the ceiling, a 44 was in the other room for extended newscasts, sports and commentaries. Basic equipment and minimal surroundings, but what wonderful programming came from there!

An irreverent thirty-some year old named Arnold Felsher did the morning show with the requisite time, temperature and news reports, but also with occasional phone cans in a time over a half century ago when broadcasters were required to insert a tone every twenty seconds to let the caller know the call was being aired. One memorable such time was when Felsher phoned Dave Garroway, the host of the then new TODAY show on NBC-TV, who was less than happy when he discovered the call wasn't a news report, but simply an on-air prank. It was, indeed, informal but everyone listened to find out what was going to happen next, for Arnold had his finger on the pulse of the community, knew everyone in government and entertainment, never hesitating to reveal the latest inside information.

The program director was Chuck Wilson, who did the quarter-hour sponsored news at noon and in a matter of fact way presented the Billboard charted records for the after school teen crowd (and adults, too) on Wilson's Wax Works from 4 to 6 PM each weekday. Chuck was also the play-by-play announcer for key high school and Geneva College football games each week, plus high school basketball, assisted by color commentator George Allen, himself a skilled play-by-play man. After daytime Pittsburgh Pirate baseball games, Chuck would do the scores of all the other Major League games from a series of score sheets, kept inning by inning complete with pitching changes as taken from the Western Union sports ticker. After night games, I would do the major league score update, carefully keeping the score sheets to the moment. On football weekends, the college football scores.

would follow the game using two announcers, accompanied by the fight songs of key colleges over which the scores were read; they came from that same Western Union ticker tape quarter by quarter and TD by TD, with the final stories from AP or UP. There was an immediacy and excitement to the resulting air sound

George Allen, who worked days, did the half-hour birth report from the local hospitals at 10 each morning, then he and Ernie Kline (who was later to become Lt. Governor of Pennsylvania) traded programs until Wilson did his afternoon hit show. Alan Boal, who was an excellent announcer, was also fluent in Spanish. Working the 3 to 10 PM shift, he did an occasional fifteen minute 3 PM Spanish language music show. On Friday afternoons once a week chief engineer Bill Hines, who was a classical music aficionado, would announce an hour with carefully annotated twelve inch 78s presented in semi-formal style.

Felsher, the morning man, would come in to do the 6 PM fifteen-minute news to provide change-of-voice following Wilson's Wax Works. I worked from 5 PM to Midnight six nights a week trading off programs with Boal until ten when a personality show tritely titled Don Of Rhythm presented taped interviews with the day's pop music stars recorded after midnight or on my Thursday off on my personal tape recorder at Pittsburgh area ballrooms and clubs. Nat Cole, Harry James, Tommy Dorsey, Les Brown, June Christy, Vaughn Monroe, Gene Krupa, Benny Goodman; dozens of musical personalities of that time and their records were heard in that 25 minute slot. Daytime announcer and weekend color man George Allen would come in for a highly professional presentation of the fifteen minute 11 PM news, then it was time for the "Day Is Done" dream show with slushy instrumentals, a bit of softly presented poetry and romantic vocals until midnight. A five minute locally produced newscast was presented every couple of hours throughout the day.

The city council meetings were broadcast "live" as were parades and meetings of general interest. Remotes included a fifteen-minute feed by a Hammond Organ player at a local club, a polka band performed on the weekend-air from another club, hosted by Alan Boal. Every Saturday morning was devoted to an amateur hour from the auditorium of the Carnegie Library, attracting musicians and singers from a thirty mile radius.

There's the danger of the glowing memory syndrome here. Having said that, please keep in mind that all this was over a half-century ago before carts, cassettes or even reel tape for the first several years of WBVP's existence. There was no network except for Pittsburgh Pirate games, no satellite feeds, no CDs, no computers, no electric typewriters, no copiers, no solid-state circuitry, no sophisticated devices to increase effective loudness, no mic pre-amps with gates, compression and equalization just compelling local programming. I recall walking down the street on a warm summer day and hearing WBVP's programming coming out of nearly every house; so vital and personality-filled was the content.

The WBVP experience proved to me that programming is the key to success in broadcasting, and appealing and eager talent is the key to commanding programming. We sometimes forget with access to the most sophisticated audio studios with endless space on the hard-drive and the latest editing program, with multi-thousand dollar microphones and top drawer digital boards, with voice-tracking facilities and access to instant playback talent is still needed to attract an audience. Production values are so much easier to achieve today, but frequently today's on-air product is over-produced, sublimating the talent to rapid-fire sound, simply because it can be done.

Each host at WBVP imbued his programs with his personality and his own selection of music. Thus, each program had a distinct flavor and approach, delineating it from others as numerically selected survey-driven music selections never could. The host was involved in the program moment-by-moment, passing that involvement onto the listener. Voice-tracked announcements of pre-selected limited playlists cannot duplicate that personal involvement. Today, it seems only talk shows offer this same kind of personality projection and listener involvement.

The legacy of those early days has been passed on to the current operation of WBVP. Several owners later, the station still has predominately local programming and a staff of two dozen full and part-time employees. Listeners hear Geneva College football, high school games and extensive local news reports combined with network news. Only evenings, overnights and parts of the weekend defer to satellite feeds. Oh, and there's one other part of that legacy. A full-time knowledgeable receptionist who's been there a dozen years answers the phone, a phone with the same last four digits as in the beginning. WBVP is, in that smaller market, still one of the great radio stations of the nation.



**Random Radio Pix**

# REFORM SCHOOL

## Or “How to protect the environment by restoring 60 year-old filter capacitors” By Marty Reynolds

Here's a little blurb on electrolytic capacitors. And how in many cases they can be recovered through the simplest of procedures. And there's a surprise ending where recovery setup can be employed to get an initial stab at set recovery. If your old radio hums when you plug it in chances are the filter capacitors have gone bad. Sometimes they can be fixed using a procedure similar to what was used to “form” them when they were manufactured. Doing this 60 years later is called “reforming”.

An electrolyte is a conducting fluid. Or a vacuum cleaner. Wait, that's an Electrolux.

Electrolytic capacitors are generally made from a pair of stacked foil sheets. Each are covered with an electrolyte-soaked paste. Of all things the paste turns out to be semi-conducting. You read that right but it came years before transistors. The electrolyte is, I think, is a sodium penathol derivative. Or was that sodium hydroxide?

At any rate the paste-basis electrolyte was used in ancient electrolytic rectifiers of the "jam jar variety." Do not try 'jam jar' rectifiers at home.

So in practice the foil-paste-foil-paste sandwich is all curled up like a jelly roll. Then it is subject to a current-limited 'formation voltage' to bring the capacitor to ratings. The paste mixture & foil 'plate area' determine the working voltage and capacity. These parameters are manufacturer's trade secrets.

Then it's sealed, signed, and delivered. You may try this last step at home

Now if the seal remains intact, these things will last forever. But if they leak & 'dry out,' you can see it because the paste will ooze leaving a dusty white residue. The leakage problem was probably 1st licked in the late 30s with Mallory Twist-lock "FP type" product. Some of these made back in WW2 still meet specs.

But over time the 'formation' aspect of the capacitor will depart & bringing same back is the subject of most interest to our bunch. Here's what I do. I've an old power transformer that's about 500 VAC-CT on it's HV winding. I take one winding & ground it to the negative lead of capacitor at hand. The other lead I run thru a 1N4007 diode & then a through a 20K ohm 10W wirewound resistor. The resistor is the current limiter. If you are working on a radio with a transformer chances are the caps are 450 volt variety. Connect the full secondary to the cap and diode. For AC/DC radios of the All American 5 type connect the center tap and one end of the secondary. This will reduce the DC voltage fed to the capacitor under test.

Next the transformer gets plugged in & I leave for a while, returning with voltmeter in hand. If voltage rises to the cap's rating, I pronounce the word "voila." That's French for voltage or something. Next I discharge cap & take the ohm meter & check capacity by twitching leads back and forth across the subject. If they're something like the twitchicity of a known cap, I say "voila" a second time & employ the baby.

## Practical use Example

Let's take a sample 50s set which I'll call a "Philo" 59P10. It's a later AC-DC (meaning there is no power transformer) & clearly has a vertical can-type electrolytic (filter) cap. Nice candidate.

So I remove chassis & look for chalky stuff under that filter. Discovering none, one would find screen grid of one output tube & connect 20K resistor in gimcrack above. Your tube book will show that if this is a KT66, you want pin 4. Other lead goes to filter can. Then you plug in transformer & walk away WITHOUT any line power to the "Philo". Upon return, you check if voltage has risen to ratings & if it has, you cry "viola" one. But you don't check capacity, you do this digression. You now see if audio coupler OK by seeing if there is juice on that KT66 control grid which is pin 5. If there was, set would draw too much current when run & attendant bad things would happen (such as overloading the power transformer or making the plates of the nice expensive KT66 output tube glow red). [In general, *always* replace the coupling capacitor going to the control grid of the output tube(s) (Ed).]

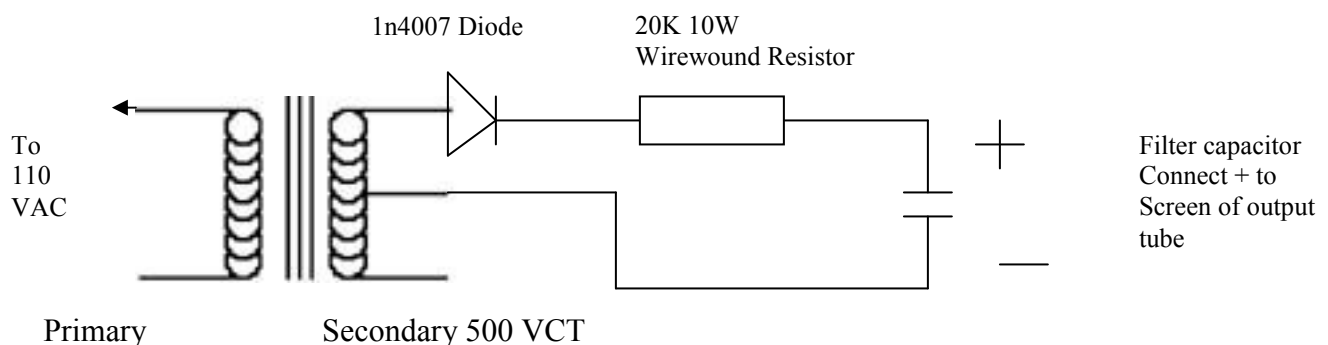
So let's say voltage OK & nothing on audio-out control grid. Now the great moment, you plug it in\* & try to get Jerry Springer. If no hum, capacitor also met "mfd ratings."

This example procedure assumed a superheterodyne. It had you apply B+ to output tube screen avoiding possibility of going across low voltage cathode bypass that might have been in the filter can. If the radio has a plug going to a field coil speaker be sure the speaker is plugged in so that the second HV filter capacitor is also reformed.

But these assumptions aren't too restrictive & illustrate a principle.

Hope this soaked in & helps you avoid what's become an expected performance of "bringing long-unused set up slow" on a variac. What's wrong there is the subject set's rectifier won't conduct 'til you hit something like 90% of line voltage. This sudden conduction transition may wreck things. It certainly won't reform an electrolytic.

But then you may trust your variac info source since "he's always done it that way." No further comments on this. Drawing below shows how to make an HV DC source from a power transformer. **Caution: Dangerous AC and DC voltage present when plugged in. Make all connections to radio before plugging in transformer. Unplug transformer before removing test wires from filter cap.**



Hookup shown using center tap of power transformer for reduced voltage in AC/DC Radio caps.  
Use full secondary of power transformer if filter cap is 350-450 WVDC type.

## Upcoming Radio Events

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Nov 5-6 2005	Lawrenceville GA Hamfest	Gwinnett Co Fairgrounds,	<a href="http://www.totr-radio.org">http://www.totr-radio.org</a>
Nov 14 2005	SARS Monthly Meeting 6:30	Norcross Fire Mountain Café	<a href="http://www.sarsradio.com">http://www.sarsradio.com</a>
Feb 25, 2006	Dalton Hamfest	Dalton Ga	<a href="http://www.arrl.org">http://www.arrl.org</a>
March 4, 2006	SARS Winter Meet	Magnolia Mall Cumming GA	<a href="http://www.sarsradio.com">http://www.sarsradio.com</a>

### SARS Meeting Dates for 2005 & 2006 - Mark Your Calendars!

<b>Dec 12 2005</b>	<b>F to P Radios (Fada etc.)</b>	<b>TBA</b>	<b>TBA</b>
<b>Jan 9 2006</b>	<b>TBA</b>	<b>TBA</b>	<b>TBA</b>
<b>Feb 13 2006</b>	<b>TBA</b>	<b>TBA</b>	<b>TBA</b>
<b>Mar 13 2006</b>	<b>TBA</b>	<b>TBA</b>	<b>TBA</b>

### Directions to Magnolia Antique SuperMall 131 Merchant's Square Cumming, GA for Mar 4, 2006 Winter Swap Meet 8:00 A.M.

<http://www.antiquesupermall.com/directions.htm>

Directions from Atlanta: Traveling Georgia 400N take the Cumming exit #14, veer right at end of exit traveling West on Hwy. 20 over the bridge to the 3rd. red light (Hwy. 9) make a left on Hwy.9 and we are located just past the next light on the right. Load-in is around the back of the mall. The swap meet will be held in a hall at the rear of the Mall.

