

Mike Adams and His Eclectic Radio Collection



Mike Adams hosted the 1985 PBS series “Radio Collector.” In the series Mike takes his camera to a Hollywood thrift shop, buys a beat up Silvertone model 41 console. Throughout the show, Mike restores the electronics and another fellow tackles the cabinet. The Silvertone console featured above is the completed piece. The series can be seen on the CHRS website at <http://www.californiahistoricalradio.com/collectors/radio-collector-video-series/> Mike’s radio collection can be seen in the photos that follow.



Above is a shot of Mike's home office radio collection. Behind, there is a sliding door which enters a rear deck looking out over the Santa Cruz Mountains. In the corner next to the door is a fireplace. Mike has lived here with his wife Barbara and children for about 30 years. He took the Highway 17 bus to San Jose State before retirement in 2013. When the family moved in Mike had custom shelves made for the radios, books, lamps, TVs, etc. He has written seven books at the table in the foreground, using everything from a big 8086 pre-windows clone to a modern Mac. He can look out and see the redwoods.



On the top shelf is a group of 1940s portable sets. Below that is an AK Breadboard, and below that an early tube tester. Adjacent, radio and camera books along fight for space. Unseen, to the right, are more small radios, juvenile fiction books, camera books, and sheet music. Below this are several hundred LPs, a turntable, preamp and tube amps (twin mono Dynaco MK4) fed into JBL speakers Mike bought in the mid-1960s (D-130, OC3).



The side wall that is partly seen in the first image shows a bit of everything. You can see small TVs (he has about 10), cathedrals, a row of TLR cameras, some microphones. Mike has not bought anything new for many years – like many collectors, he is out of room. Adding cameras and the juvenile series he writes about consumes even more space.



Mike's collection includes Speed Graphic press cameras. The original design of the Star Wars light saber was modeled after the long chrome flash unit next to the speaker.



Above are two Scotts that were given to Mike. Both have all perfect chrome, and are complete but without their cabinets. He had a local woodworker make this open shelf display unit. At the top is a mid-30s Philharmonic and beneath it is a mid-40s 800b. Beneath those are power supplies and amplifiers. The bottom shelf holds a woofer and 2 tweeters for the Philharmonic, and a coaxial for the 800b. This cabinet, which is open on all sides, shows off the quality of the radios. Both sets work.



Musical instruments are another component of Mike's collection. Above is a pristine 1950s Hammond B-3 organ. He also has a matching Leslie and the original Hammond speaker. On the Hammond's bench is a Yamaha DX-7, a pioneering digital synthesizer.