



Journal of the
**CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL
 RADIO SOCIETY**





FROM THE BIRTHPLACE OF BROADCASTING
CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL RADIO SOCIETY
 HOME OF THE BAY AREA RADIO MUSEUM & HALL OF FAME

The California Historical Radio Society (CHRS), is a non-profit educational corporation chartered in the State of California. CHRS was formed in 1974 to promote the restoration and preservation of early radio and broadcasting. Our goal is to enable the exchange of ideas and information on the history of radio, particularly in the West, with emphasis on collecting, preserving, and displaying early equipment, literature, and programs. Yearly membership is \$30.

CHRS Museum in Alameda

CHRS has been fortunate to through the generosity of its donors to purchase a home for the CHRS museum and education center. It is located at 2152 Central Avenue. The building was built in 1900 as a telephone exchange.

CHRS volunteers are actively restoring the building to make it optimal for use. Our goal is to create an environment to share our knowledge and love of radio and enable us to create an appreciation and understanding for a new generation of antique radio collectors and historians.



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Front Cover: **Front cover of the *Wireless News* shipboard news booklet, Painting by C. B. Norton, 1926**
Image from the Bart Lee collection

Rear Cover: CHRS 2014 Awards and Bay Area Radio Hall of Fame 2014 Inductees.

From the Editor

Once again I’ve had the pleasure of working with very generous and capable contributors. I want to thank Bart Lee, Mike Adams, Tom Albrecht, Walter Hayden, Len Shapiro, Scott Scheidt, and Steve Kushman.

And again I will make my request. I am always in need of quality content related to broadcast radio, ham radio, and television. If you have something to contribute, I urge you to let me know. I am especially interested in technical content. It can be of two types, a narrow topic in depth or a more broad topic with less depth.

It is my desire to continue to improve this journal and provide you with relevant high-quality content. To do this I need your constructive comments. And if you would like to contribute an article in a future issue, please let me know.

Richard Watts, [jrchr@comcast.net](mailto:jrchrs@comcast.net)



From The President

by Steve Kushman

As I write this message I continue to marvel at the continued success of our favorite Historical Radio Society. When asked about CHRS I tell people, "It's All Good." And it really is. Almost all of our efforts have been rewarded. Our most successful accomplishment has been the acquisition of 2152 Central Avenue in Alameda, CHRS Radio Central. After 40 years in existence CHRS became a legitimate historical organization that truly controls our own destiny by purchasing a permanent home. It was do to the generosity of our members, supporters and volunteers that helped us seal our future as one of the premier vintage radio organizations in the country. April 23, 2015 is 1 year that CHRS has owned Radio Central. We are having cake and a toast to celebrate on April 25th. Please come by and join us for Radio Central's 1st Birthday.

Our Radio Central fund raising continues. We have been pleasantly surprised by the fulfillment of our funding requests. We would like to acknowledge and thank the Yasme Foundation, a philanthropic division of the ARRL, for donating \$9,500 towards the completion of the Maxwell Communications Research Library and the pre-1920 Archives / CHRS Radioana Archives. The Maxwell Library is near completion and re-shelving should begin soon.

Compact mobile storage will help us organize the thousands of artifacts at Radio Central. It makes efficient use of the limited space we have in Radio Central. Tom Bonomo spearheaded a challenge to raise \$32,000 for this system by donating \$5,000. Jon Winchell stepped up with \$10,000, Dave Sauer, Tom Nelson and Scott Robinson each chipped in \$5,000 and Bart Lee & Judy Mears filled out the last \$2,000. Thanks to you all! This type of giving is so important to CHRS' continued success and we are so lucky and thankful to have such passionate and generous members. The compact mobile storage system is on schedule to be installed early May.

Our new 12' x 32' metal accessory building to be used as our woodworking shop is being funded from our general building fund. To help it get going, Gilles Vrignaud, Denny Monticelli and Philip Monego each chipped in \$1,000. Thank you gentlemen! The new concrete pad has been poured and our building will be delivered shortly. The new building will be assembled by our volunteers.

Not only monetary donations are important. Our CHRS Real Estate attorney, Barrie Cowan, has secured CHRS' Charitable Exemption from the CA Franchise Tax Board, excusing us from property taxes. Yea! This will save us thousands of dollars per year. Barrie donated his time and efforts to CHRS and we could not be more grateful. Thank you Barrie!

Things involving CHRS just seem to fall into place. Last year our Bay Area Radio Hall Of Fame Executive Committee agreed that KPEN would be the Legendary Station for 2015. (Only the Executive Committee knew this information until this year). Coincidentally, also last year, Gary Gielow discovered and introduced himself to CHRS. Gary along with James Gabbert built and put KPEN on the air. Gary told us he had just finished a new book about the history of this pioneering FM station. He also told us there was no distributor for "The Story of KPEN." Gary was so impressed by CHRS and our efforts to preserve radio and radio history, he decided to give the book to us and make CHRS the sole distributor. And 100% of the proceeds benefit CHRS. Our thanks go out to Gary for his support. The book is \$23.95 including shipping. To order just visit either the CHRS or BARM web sites.

CHRS and BARHOF are pleased to have historic KPEN 101.3 FM, Atherton / San Francisco, as BARHOF Legendary Station for 2015. KPEN's history is straight from the movies. Two Stanford students, James Gabbert and Gary Gielow, said "Let's build our own radio station." They did and started broadcasting in 1957 from a 120-year-old adobe hut. This is a great story about entrepreneurship, innovation and a passion for radio. KPEN was a station of firsts and the two Stanford kids succeeded beyond their wildest dreams. Historic KPEN later became KIOI and paved the way for the powerhouse known as K101. For more history and audio clips from KPEN visit our BARM site. On Wednesday, June 17th please join CHRS and the Bay Area Broadcast Legends as we feature the induction of KPEN into BARHOF as part of the Legends Spring Luncheon. Location and details TBA.

Don't forget, voting is open for the 2015 Class of the Bay Area Radio Hall Of Fame. Be sure to vote for your favorite Bay Area radio broadcasters. To vote, visit either our CHRS or BARM web sites. Voting ends on July 10th and the results will be announced at Radio Day By The Bay on July 25th. Inductions will be on September 19th in a celebration of 10 years of BARHOF in conjunction with the Broadcast Legends. Location and details TBA.

CHRS Radio Day By The Bay 2015 – LIVE! in Alameda is on July 25th. Save the Date. This is our 10th year of producing a large annual fund raising event. Again we will use Radio Central and the historic Kofman Auditorium. KCBS' Stan Bunger, BARHOF Class of 2010, will be our MC. And Peter Finch, BARHOF Class of 2014, will be our auctioneer. See page 34 for more details.

We should all be very proud to be part of CHRS. A giant Thank You, to all the volunteers that make CHRS simply one of the finest organizations of its kind. We hope to become the West Coast center of record for all things... Radio!

I appreciate your comments and suggestions. Please do not hesitate to call.

Best Regards, Steve (415) 203-2747



CHRS Central Valley Chapter News

by Scott Scheidt, photos by Mick Daniels

Christmas & Awards Luncheon: The annual Central Valley Chapter (CVC) Christmas & Awards Luncheon was held December 16th. Awards for winners of the annual radio restoration contest were presented. Mick Daniels won first place for his restoration of a Telex T5 and Mike Biddison won second place for his restoration of a Glorytone 27.

Classes: The weekly radio theory and radio repair classes plus the monthly cabinet restoration class continue.

For more information plus meeting times and locations, visit the CVC website at <http://www.cvantiqueradio.com/>.



Mick Daniels receives First Place.



The CVC Christmas Luncheon was held in the hanger for the Central Valley Squadron of the Commemorative Air Force located in Modesto.

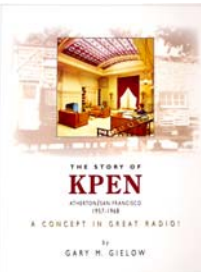


Mike Biddison receives Second Place.

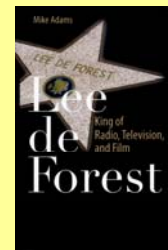
CHRS Publications Now Available

NEW

The Story of KPEN: A Concept in Great Radio! CHRS member and Broadcast Legend Gary Gielow has written a new book chronicling the tales of two young men from Stanford, he and James Gabbert, who brought Stereo and new ideas to the FM radio band in the late 1950s and 1960s. This book is the definitive history of KPEN 101.3 FM, the 2015 BARHOF Legendary Station. 100% of the proceeds benefit CHRS. Available in the Museum Store or on the website.



Also available in the museum store



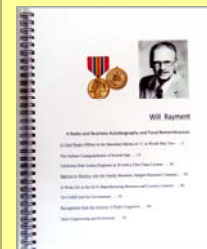
Lee de Forest



Bay Area Radio



Behind the Front Panel: The Design and Development of 1920's Radio by David Rutland has been re-mastered by Richard Watts for CHRS. With emphasis on radio technology, Rutland describes the development of 1920s tubes and radio circuitry designs by De Forest, Marconi, and other inventors and manufacturers. A classic! Buy at Amazon.



Will Rayment



KSAN Jive 95 CD

Radio Central Renovation Update

by Walter Hayden

Kitchen Renovation: The renovation of the kitchen has been completed. Robert & Reina Swart donated the stove, counter tops, table, plus pots and pans; Walter Hayden donated the upper cabinets. The floor tile was replaced and the kitchen was re painted.

Library Renovation: The room has been reconfigured from two small rooms to one long room, the floor was coated in epoxy, and the walls have been sheet rocked and textured. Electrical wiring for the lighting has been installed and the ceiling tile has been repaired. All that remains is to complete the lighting installation, paint, and install the bookcases.

Sump Pump Upgrade: Since the water table in Alameda is so high, a sump pump system has always been needed in the building to prevent the incursion of ground-water seepage. Sump pumps in the two downstairs locations have been upgraded. Also controls and alarms have been added to provide fail-over redundancy and telephone notifications when out-of-bound events occur.

Electrical Upgrade: Kevin Payne has been continuing the upgrade of the electrical system. He has completed the electrical work in the Kitchen, Library, and Sump Pump system. CHRS has passed its second electrical inspection.

Rear Fence Relocation: After a recent survey contracted by CHRS, the rear fence was found to be three feet inside CHRS property. In coordination with the very cooperative neighbor who is affected, CHRS volunteers removed an old chain link fence and removed the neighbors wooden fence and reconstructed it on the property line with new posts. CHRS benefited in regaining the added 3 feet and the neighbors now have a much stronger, more well-built fence.

Shed: The fence relocation has enabled the shed to be located three feet further to the rear of the lot improving shed set back requirements. The shed will extend along most of the rear and will provide much needed storage and workspace. Permits have been acquired and work will begin soon starting with the concrete pad followed by the shed installation.

Mobile Storage: Funds have been donated for the purchase of the storage system. Recently completed structural testing indicates that the floor is of sufficient strength. Tom Bonomo is now scheduling installation which should occur within eight weeks. This will provide much needed storage and enable relief of considerable congestion. ◇



Original exterior front elevation of 2152 Central Ave.



Kitchen renovation by Robert Swart and Walter Hayden.

“The Wireless News”

By Bart Lee, K6VK © 2014

A century ago, every big ship provided its passengers *The Wireless News* every day. (Passenger ships do so to this day, via satellite and with full-page images). The graphic on the cover of this journal is the cover of a 36 page 1927 booklet published aboard ship by the company Amalgamated Wireless Australasia, LTD (from the author’s collection). A painting, by one C. B. Norton (1926), of the vessel that published *The Wireless News*, *RMS Makura*, graces the cover. The *RMS Makura* was on its way to San Francisco from Sydney via Tahiti. The last pages of the booklet provide the news of the day, copied from one or more shore stations paragraph by paragraph by the vessel’s wireless operators. The book is otherwise a full passenger list, advertisements and detail about ports and shipboard events.



An internal advertisement in the *RMS Makura* booklet.



This is the logo on the daily news sheets within the booklet.

The Australian Victoria Museum holds another *The Wireless News* in its collections:

“Souvenir Edition ‘the Wireless News’ published for the Australian Commonwealth Line of Steamers, specifically the *TSS Jervis Bay*. The date referred to within the magazine is 7 April 1928 when the ship passed Gibraltar. The front cover is blue with a color image of a steamer. The cover is annotated with ‘AG Maclaurin.’

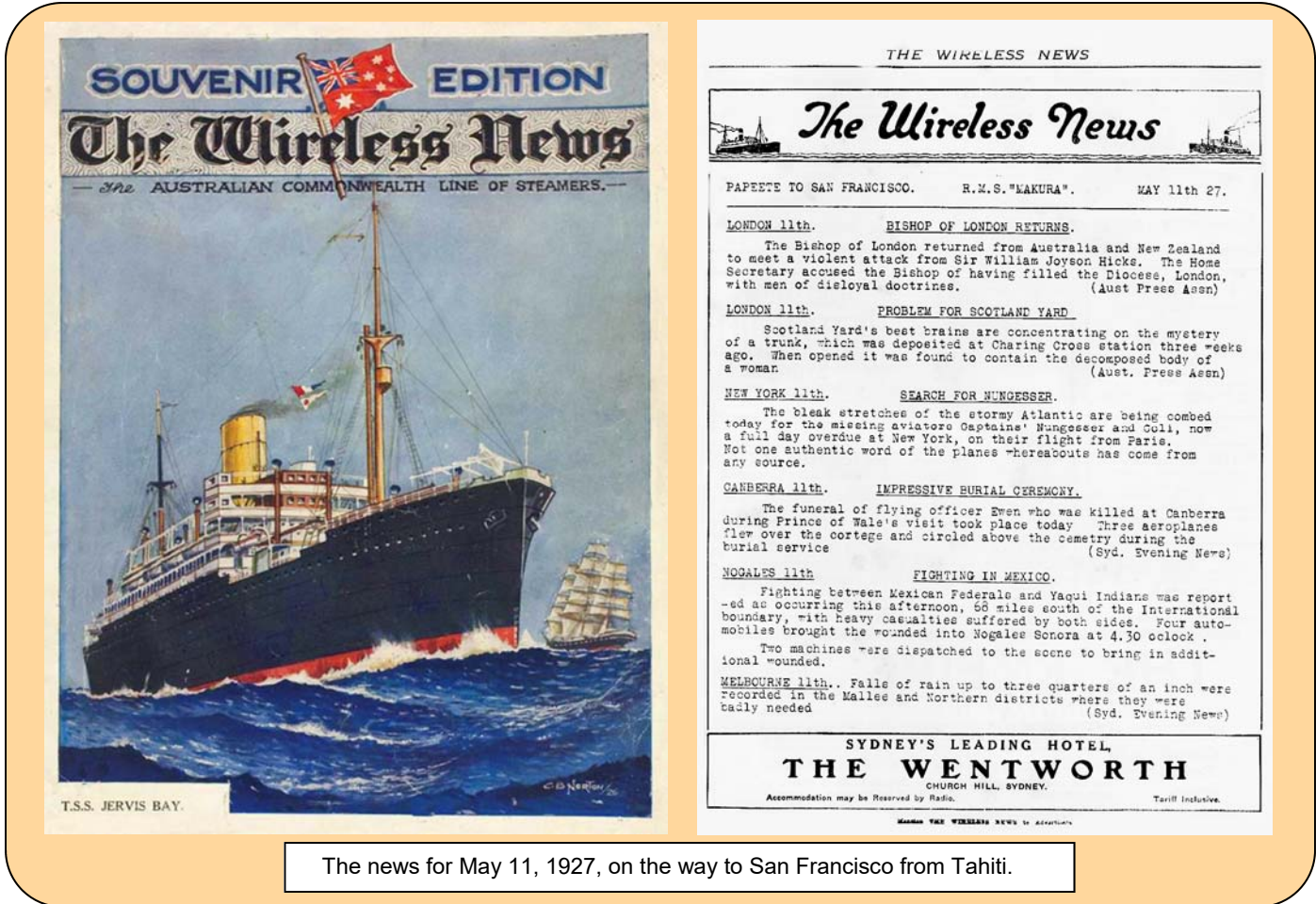
“The magazine includes images of ship interiors, port points of interest, activities’ results, passenger list, and page of signatures from other passengers.”

<http://museumvictoria.com.au/collections/items/1125171/magazine-the-wireless-news-the-wireless-press-1928>).

Note in the image below that the cover is another C. B. Norton nautical painting. He also painted in a three-masted clipper ship to the port side of the *Jervis Bay*, which must have been quite a sight as late as 1928. “AG Maclaurin” is likely the name of the passenger who saved the issue. The left side post bindings are likely original, inasmuch as the souvenir booklet of the RMS *Makura*'s is similarly bound.

The *SS Makura* cover runs a footer: AN OCEAN NEWSPAPER PUBLISHED ON BOARD BY AMALGAMATED WIRELESS (AUSTRALASIA) LTD, SYDNEY. The paper sources the news items to the Australian Press Association and the Sydney Evening Post, even on the Papeete to San Francisco leg of the voyage.

State of the art vacuum tube transmitters of the day sent the “press” received and distributed in these editions of *The Wireless News* through the ether. Before and to some extent after World War One, spark signals carried the news and all the other traffic (with an occasional Federal arc joining in).



The news for May 11, 1927, on the way to San Francisco from Tahiti.

Maritime interests, just after the turn of the last century, quickly adopted wireless telegraphy for distress signaling (“CQD” then “SOS”), and for management purposes. The Marconi company staffed the wireless operations and leased the equipment to the vessel owners. In 1903 Marconi made a deal with the Cunard Lines to send news every day to be distributed to passengers, the first regular Wireless News, according to David Barlow, G3PLE, the curator of the Cornwall (UK) Lizard Marconi Wireless Station. Such news originated with the leading London newspapers and press associations and much of it got across the Atlantic by cable and then wireless and radio.

Barlow writes about the Marconi high power station at Poldhu in Cornwall, the source of the three dots transatlantic signals:

“I have heard it said that Poldhu was only an experimental and development station and was not involved in commercial activities. This was not the case as in 1903 the Marconi Company came to an agreement with

Cunard to send the Cunard Daily Bulletin from Poldhu and Glace Bay [Canada] daily. The background to this and to the relationship between Poldhu and the [British] Admiralty makes interesting reading.

“The first idea for a ships newspaper came from Marconi himself while returning from New York on board the *SS St. Paul* in 1899. The ship received news of the progress of the Boer War and this was printed and handed out to passengers at \$1 a time in the form of the *Transatlantic Times*. The money went to charity.

“In October 1903 the first ship’s daily newspaper was published on board the *SS Lucania*. This may well have been sent from Poldhu because an agreement had been reached with the Cunard Company that the Cunard Daily Bulletin would be sent from Poldhu and Glace Bay in an attempt to cover the Atlantic Ocean. As the same material was sent from Glace Bay it was probably sent to them in the form of a cable message.

“By 1910 it is known that from one AM for 45 minutes Poldhu was sending *Ocean News*, the nightly news bulletin. This is known because the Poldhu signal jammed the SOS between the Lizard station and the *SS Minnehaha*. The log of the Lizard Station also indicates that Poldhu also sent out a weather report or forecast for merchant ships. The callsign used was ZZ.

“Poldhu was used for sending ships’ newspapers because of its high power and significantly greater range than the Coast Stations such as the Lizard. It should also be noted that this traffic was sent at night to take advantage of night effect.

“In 1901 the Marconi Company came to an agreement with the [British] Admiralty to put wireless on board Royal Navy ships and set up coast stations to receive signals from the ships. They selected the Isles of Scilly ‘Telegraph Tower’ for one of these Shore Stations. They had hub stations in major locations such as Gibraltar and Malta with a central station called Whitehall Wireless. In 1911 this was moved to the Admiralty.

“On 4 August 1914 the German Army crossed the Belgian border and Britain were guarantors of Belgian neutrality. ... The most powerful Wireless Station was located at Poldhu in South West Cornwall. Poldhu would send out news and weather bulletins to merchant ships on a daily basis. The Admiralty sent an OHMS [On His Majesty’s Service] message to Poldhu that was broadcast using the callsign ZZ that they used for communicating with merchant and passenger ships. *** ”

(From: Poldhu – ZZ GB100ZZ, by David Barlow, G3PLE, Curator, Lizard Wireless Station, Polhu Amateur Radio Club, G B 2 G M, *Newsletter* 80, June 2, 2014, p. 11 ff. See also <http://www.lizardwireless.org/>). For details re the *SS St. Paul* in 1899, see Degna Marconi, *MY FATHER MARCONI* (1962) at p. 83.

Circa 1912, station KPH in what is now Daly City, California sent out “press” every morning at 00:30 hours, from the San Francisco newspapers, which shipboard operators in the Pacific would turn into the *Ocean Wireless News*. If a ship’s radioman did not get all the detail, he could get fill-ins from other ships, according to Richard Johnstone, who went to work as a young wireless operator in 1912 (and who much later served as a principal of the Society of Wireless Pioneers).

Johnstone wrote, many years later:

“The daily press aboard ship was just as important and exciting as the arrival of the daily train in a small town. Press was sent by station KPH at 12:30 every morning. All ships copied the press. If you missed a portion, it was always possible to get a fill-in from some other ship, sooner or later. On passenger ships the news was mimeographed on an insert sheet, placed in a magazine section called the ‘OCEAN WIRELESS NEWS’ and sold for ten cents a copy. The wireless company supplied the mimeograph, ink, stencils, magazine section, and the inserts. A different magazine section was used each day. This section contained advertisements from merchants on the Pacific Coast, Hawaiian Islands, Australia and the Orient. A good profitable source of income for the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Co. Besides they received half of the proceeds of the ten cents per copy obtained by selling the paper aboard ship. Multiply this by thousands of passengers and hundreds of ships and it was good business.

“However, the ship’s operators had requested consideration as to a more possible equal division of the profits, and they were right. However, action was under consideration, and also under a slow bell. Some of the boys improvised a method of duplicating inserts to bolster their share of the profit, without the approval of the

Marconi Company and the increase was never granted. If your ship was to sell 300 papers, the amount to turn in to the wireless company was fifteen dollars. The other fifteen dollars was divided between the two operators making their total salary for the month \$47.50. Apparently everything was in favor of the Marconi Co.”

(From *MY SAN FRANCISCO STORY OF THE “WATERFRONT AND THE WIRELESS”* by Commander Richard Johnstone, U. S. N. R. (Retired) (1965) at p. 50.)

Only one or possibly two recordings of the Morse code spark signals of a press broadcast are known to exist. The California Historical Radio Society distributed a 1915 audio recording of a wireless telegraphy press message to ships at sea from the *New York Herald* station WHB. The late Jim Maxwell, W6CF, (then W6CFC) commented on it:

“Copying WHB as Recorded by Charles Apgar, 2MN, in 1915; by James A. Maxwell, W6CFC, Redwood Estates, CA.

“The latest CHRS tape, Vol. 13 No.1, is a very interesting tape. The transcriptions were not all that easy to understand at times, but considering their age and the state of recording technology 50 to 70 years back, they are in remarkably good condition.

“Here’s the text of the WHB transmission:

MNY K BT INVESTIGATION SHOWS MISSING BANK CLERK HENRY BRADLEY MERCHANTS NATL BANK SHORT HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND PLAYED RACES PLUNGED STOX

“Note:

1. This Morse was hand sent.
2. The recoding starts in the middle of a transmission. It isn’t clear what was going on prior to the BT (pause). MNY is a common abbreviation for ‘many’ and K is an invitation to transmit. It is possible that this represents a fragment of a conversation between the operators prior to going on with the news. The entire transmission seems somewhat informal - note the use of the abbreviation NATL for National, and STOX probably for STOCKS.
3. In the word MERCHANTS the two letters CH were sent using the Morse sequence ‘----’ (four dashes). This is not commonly used these days except among Spanish speaking operators.
4. The word PLUNGED is actually somewhat ambiguous. The manual sending was good throughout, with a slight swing, but easy to copy. But when the letter G was followed by a very brief hesitation and either a long dot (E) or a short dash (T). The possibilities are thus GE, GT, Q or Z, resulting in the four possible words PLUNGED, PLUNGTD, PLUNGD, or PLUNZD. Only PLUNGED makes and sense here, referring to ‘Plunging’ (investing heavily) into the stock market or stocks plunging in value.
5. There was another character following STOX, but it faded into the noise at the end of the transmission. “

“Overall, It seems as if a report was being given of a missing bank clerk who had been playing the races and the stock market. Too bad we don't have more information on it. Someone with access to back issues of the New York Times (the SF Public Library has them going many years back on microfilm) could probably put together a very interesting story.”

(From the *Journal of the California Historical Radio Society*. The correct callsign WHB is emended. The audio recording comes from the archives of the Antique Wireless Association in New York, part of an NBC 1934 interview with Charles Apgar.)

Professor Noah Arceneaux has written extensively about the *New York Herald* wireless station:

“Station WHB *** the [New York] *Herald* established a permanent station in 1909. *** The station, known first as OHX, broadcast news twice a day, with each transmission lasting approximately fifteen to twenty minutes, and claimed that its signal extended 1,500 miles. Following the Radio Act of 1912, the government began to assign call letters to stations, and WHB became the new moniker. (The H did not stand for the *Herald*, however, as other New York stations were also assigned call letters that began with the WH prefix.)

“A book on wireless telegraphy published in 1912 contains two photos of the *Herald* station. One shows an unnamed operator inside the control room; another shows the exterior of the station, located at the Battery, the southern tip of Manhattan. Two massive horizontal antennas dominate the skyline. The book provides no additional information on the *Herald*, though one paragraph addresses the general phenomenon of press-wireless stations:

‘Several enterprising newspapers have recognized the value of wireless telegraphy in collecting shipping news and have installed outfits for the assistance of their reporting bureau. This innovation in modern journalism has quickly developed into a useful feature of those publications who have seen fit to adopt it. When the baseball season is under way every steamship within calling distance wants the latest baseball scores or sporting results.’”

(From Noah Arceneaux, *News on the Air: The New York Herald, Newspapers, and Wireless Telegraphy, 1899–1917*, in *American Journalism*, vol. 30, no. 2, pps. 160–181 at p. 174 (2013)).

The newspapers wanted to hear from ships about to come into port. The *San Francisco Chronicle* employed wireless for this purpose, “the shipping news,” using a spark station *circa* 1910 with the call letters “CH.” The United Wireless Company then Marconi station KPH soon became the main such station. The ships wanted to hear from ports of call and homeports if feasible about the news of the day, financial ups and downs and sporting events. (The only other possible recording of a wireless broadcast *circa* 1910 seems to be about a San Francisco boxing match, unearthed by David Ring, N1EA).

Adventist World Radio recently put out an article on ships’ wireless newspapers:

“Radio newspapers aboard ship. In the very early years, there was a ship newspaper with the title ‘Aerogram.’ In 1915, due to commercial buy-outs in the United States, the name was changed to ‘Ocean Wireless News’ and this was made available to many ships plying the coastal passenger trade along the eastern seaboard of North America.

“In those days, a cover was printed on land, often in color and with lots of advertising, and this was made available in bulk to ships equipped with a wireless receiver and some form of printing press. The inside section of the ship newspaper was compiled from up to date reports received on the wireless equipment, it was inserted into the color cover, and the newspaper was sold to passengers.

“A 1925 version of the ‘Ocean Wireless News’ features a color cover, drawn by an artist and showing passengers and crew making ready to depart at the beginning of a voyage. This particular edition was distributed on board the *SS Manchuria* which was built in Camden New Jersey in 1904 and at the time, it was in passenger service with the Panama Pacific Company in the Americas.

“Another example of a ship newspaper was a daily edition of ‘The Wireless News’ on board the ship ‘Makura,’ sailing across the Pacific. This ship was built in Glasgow Scotland and it was operated by the Union Steamship Company of New Zealand. The outer cover of this paper, in an issue dated in 1923, shows a photo of another vessel plying the Pacific, the ‘Niagara.’ [*The Wireless News* of the *RMS Makura* opens this note].

“The Canadian Pacific Company operated a large fleet of passenger and cargo vessels across both the Atlantic and the Pacific. The same name, the ‘Wireless Press,’ was used for all of their shipboard newspapers regardless of the ship and its service area. For example, the *SS Montcalm* was in the Atlantic passenger service and the ‘Duchess of Richmond’ was a cruise ship that voyaged to many destinations; and the name of their shipboard newspapers in both cases, was ‘Wireless Press.’

“The issue of ‘Wireless Press’ for Tuesday April 6, 1937 shows that the ‘Duchess of Richmond’ was on a Christian World Cruise. The single sheet newspaper, derived again from radio reports, gives an inside view to world events at the time. Among these 1937 news events are the following:-

- The weather in London is foggy, and the temperature was just 41 degrees.
- The Earl of Clarendon arrived in London at the end of a six year term as governor of South Africa.
- The Crown Prince of Hedjaz, Emir Sand, has just concluded a state visit to Baghdad.
- Two minutes of silence was observed in Dublin for members of the Irish Brigade killed in Spain.
- New Delhi reports heavy rains in the North West Frontier and the border regions of Afghanistan.
- Federal Securities are sold on the open market in the United States at 3% below par.
- An airplane is taking off for a record flight from Tokyo to London.

“The Cunard Line was well known in earlier years for at least three of its mighty, luxurious passenger vessels; the ‘Britannic,’ the ‘Olympic,’ and the ill-fated ‘Titanic.’ Another passenger liner operated by Cunard was the ‘Alauna,’ built in Glasgow in 1925 and plying across the Atlantic. A 1926 edition of their shipboard newspaper shows the title as ‘Wireless News Sheet.’ The outer cover advertises three of their more famous ships, the ‘Aquitania,’ the ‘Berengaria,’ and the ‘Mauretania.’

“Lesser known ship lines also issued daily newspapers aboard ship, such as for example, two of the companies with cargo and passenger ships in Alaskan waters. The Pacific Steamship Company operated the ‘Dorothy Alexander’ and a 1931 edition of their ship newspaper, the ‘Daily Radio News,’ shows that it was a duplicated version produced on a typewriter. The masthead, printed in blue, states, ‘The World’s News by Radio.’

“The Alaska Steamship Company operated several ships in Alaskan waters, including the ‘Northwestern’ and the ‘Victoria.’ Both ships produced their own newspapers, though the title was the same in both cases: ‘Radio News.’

“The list of ship newspapers produced from news transmitted in Morse Code by wireless and in voice by radio is almost endless. We could mention the ‘Doric,’ operated by the White Star Line, based in Liverpool England. Their newspaper was titled, ‘Latest Wireless News.’ The Grace Line ships operated in the waters of Latin America and they had a company format for their newspaper which included a full sized black and white photo on the front cover. For example, a 1938 cover shows part of the Panama Canal, and a 1939 cover shows native dancing in Peru.

“The Japanese line of luxury passenger ships owned and operated by NYK during the 1930s, also issued their own shipboard newspapers. These ships, such as the ‘Chichibu,’ the ‘Asama’ & the ‘Tatsuta,’ plied the passenger trade across the Pacific, and the cover of their radio-based newspaper was printed in Japanese, though the inner contents was in both Japanese and English. All of their ships used the same cover and the same format, though the contents varied, according to the information received by radio from Japan.”

(From AWR/Wavescan via Adrian Peterson, posted at <http://mt-shortwave.blogspot.com/2010/07/radio-newspapers-aboard-ship.html>)

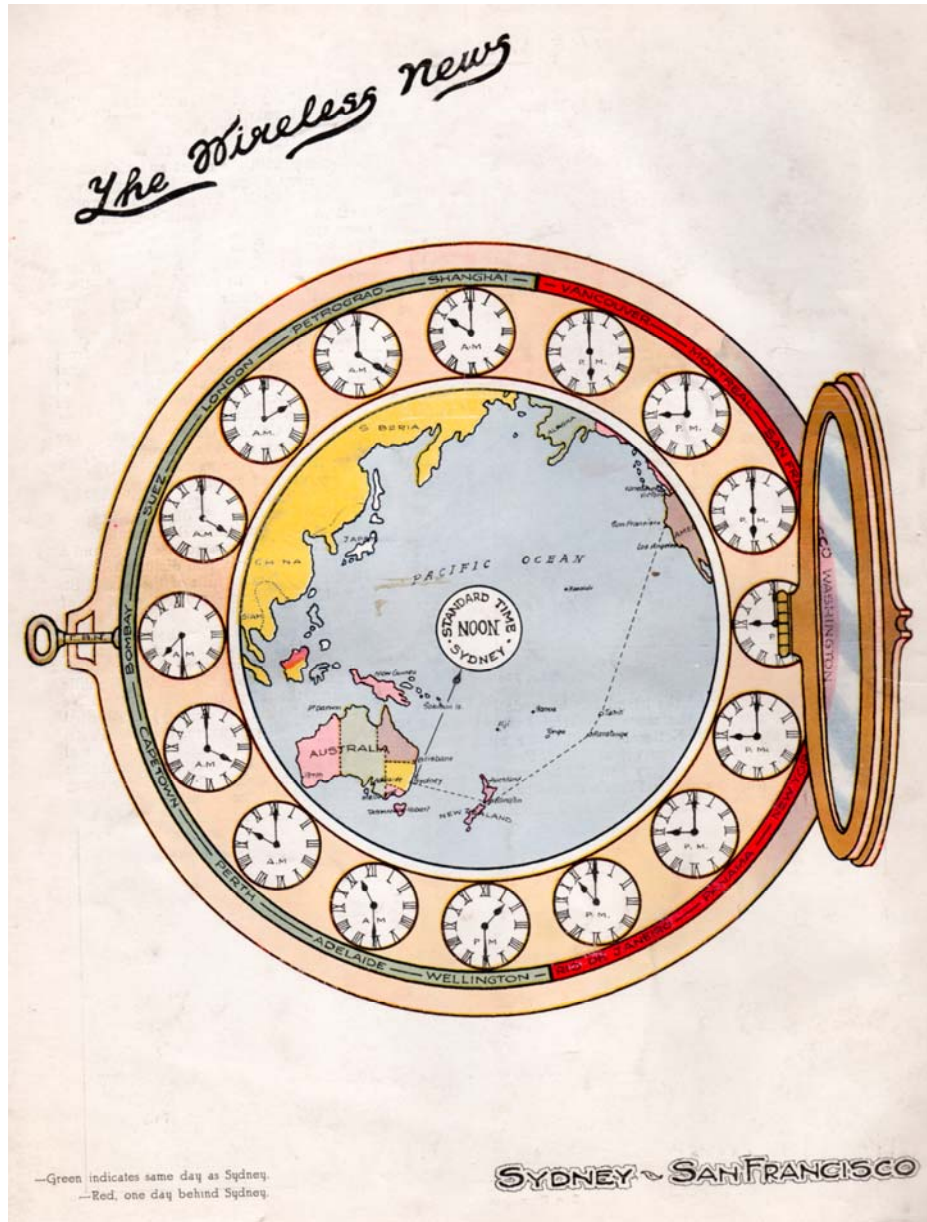
The Wireless News entered popular culture in fiction as well.

“THE LAST VOYAGE [by the English author Alfred Noyce, 1930] begins at night in mid-Atlantic, where an ocean liner, ‘a great ship like a lighted city,’ is battling through a raging storm. A little girl is mortally ill. The ship’s surgeon prepares to operate, but with little hope of success, for the case is complicated and he is no specialist. Luckily, the captain knows from the wireless news that a top specialist from Johns Hopkins is on another liner 400 miles away – within wireless range. The ship’s surgeon will be able to consult him, and stay in touch with him throughout the operation. Suddenly, the little girl’s chances of survival are much improved. ... (From the article about Alfred Noyce in Wikipedia).

The very phrase “the wireless news” came to stand for new knowledge of the events of the day, the only immediate source for which was the radio or in British parlance, the wireless. A more full newspaper report of important events came only with the next dawn.

A Conclusion: Radio and the News of the Day Strengthened Each Other.

From the first wireless transmission in America (in San Francisco in 1899 from the *Lightship 70* announcing the return of the troopship *USS Sherman*) radio communications and journalism have quickly informed the world of events world-wide. From its earliest day to the present, radio has also informed otherwise isolated seafarers and passengers of events at home and abroad. Radio and News are a natural marriage.



Back Cover, *RMS Makura Wireless News*, 1927.

About the Author

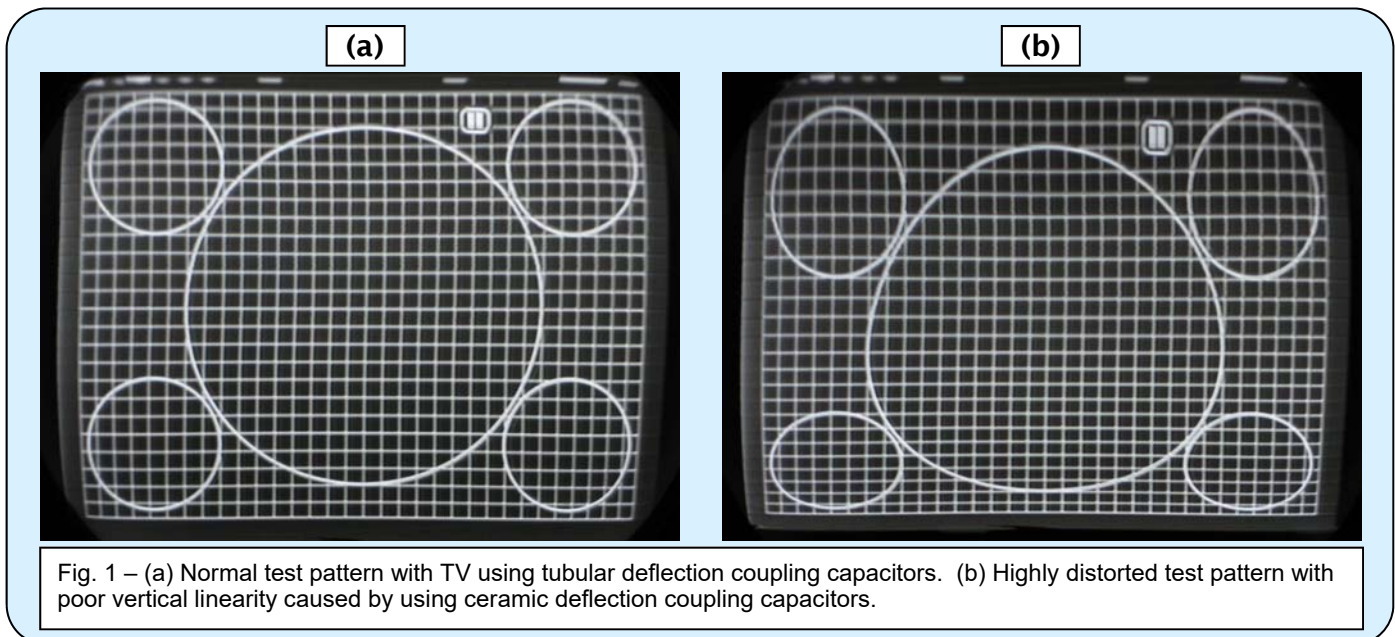
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Voltage-Dependent Capacitance in Ceramic Disk Capacitors

By Thomas Albrecht

In restoration of antique electronics, ceramic disk capacitors are usually viewed as well-behaved components. They seem to last forever and are not known for unusual technical characteristics (other than temperature drift for certain types). There is one application, however, where ceramic capacitors often perform surprisingly poorly. In early TV sets with cathode ray tubes (CRTs) that use electrostatic deflection plates (similar to oscilloscope tubes), there are high voltage tubular capacitors that couple the deflection signals from the horizontal and vertical sweep systems to the deflection plates of the CRT. The deflection plates are biased at the same voltage as the CRT anode, which is typically 5 kV in these types of early TVs, so the coupling capacitors are typically rated at 6 kV DC, with values between .001 and .05 μF . The original tubular capacitors almost always need to be replaced due to high leakage current.

Finding 6 kV rated capacitors takes a bit of a search, and the first type of capacitors one might find may be ceramic disk capacitors. Upon installing them, however, one often finds that the vertical linearity of the TV is very poor, as shown in Fig. 1(b). If 6 kV tubular capacitors are used instead, the set functions normally, as shown in Fig. 1(a). What's wrong with ceramic disk capacitors in this application?



The problem turns out to be voltage-dependent capacitance. The capacitance value can change – sometimes very drastically – depending on the amount of DC bias across the capacitor. In fact, for some types of ceramic disk capacitors, the capacitance may fall to less than 30% of the nominal value if the full rated working voltage of the capacitor is applied across it.

To measure this effect, the test circuit shown in Fig. 2 was constructed. Capacitance is measured by a Sprague TO-6A eye-tube capacitance meter. Instead of connecting just a single capacitor across its test terminals as one would usually do, two identical capacitors are connected in series between the test terminals. Normally, this would simply result in a reading of half the capacitance of each individual capacitor, following the normal rules for capacitors in series. The reason for using two capacitors in series is so that a bias voltage can be applied at the center junction of the two capacitors, leaving both terminals of the capacitance meter at a safe low voltage. The bias voltage is applied through a 10 megohm resistor, so that the impedance of this connection is high enough not to significantly disturb the capacitance

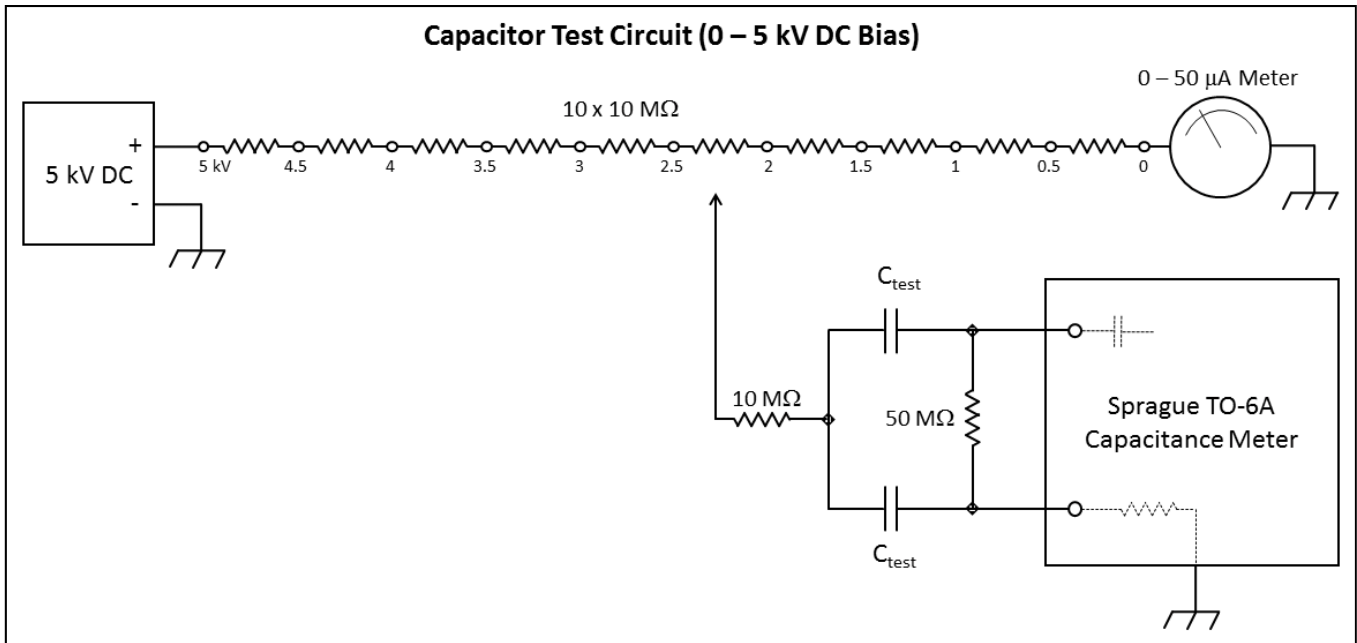


Fig. 2 – Test circuit for applying a high DC bias voltage across capacitors during capacitance measurement.

measurement. A 50 megohm resistor is also placed across the two terminals, to ensure that both input terminals are at ground potential (one terminal is DC grounded through the circuitry of the meter, while the other terminal has an input capacitor, which would allow that terminal to float otherwise).

A suitable high voltage supply was provided by using the CRT anode supply of an early TV. Its output was adjusted to exactly 5 kV by adjusting the AC line voltage feeding the set with a variac. A chain of ten 10 megohm resistors in series serves as a voltage divider, allowing the bias voltage on the capacitors under test to be adjusted in 500 V increments up to 5 kV. A microammeter is used to measure the high voltage (it reads 50 μ A when the supply is 5 kV) and to make sure there is no unexpected leakage current through the test capacitors (if so, the meter reading would deviate from the expected 50 μ A).

Fig. 3 shows the types of capacitors which were tested in this arrangement. The first two are 6 kV tubular capacitors with polymer dielectric, of the type recommended for replacing deflection coupling capacitors in electrostatic TVs. Fig. 3(c) is

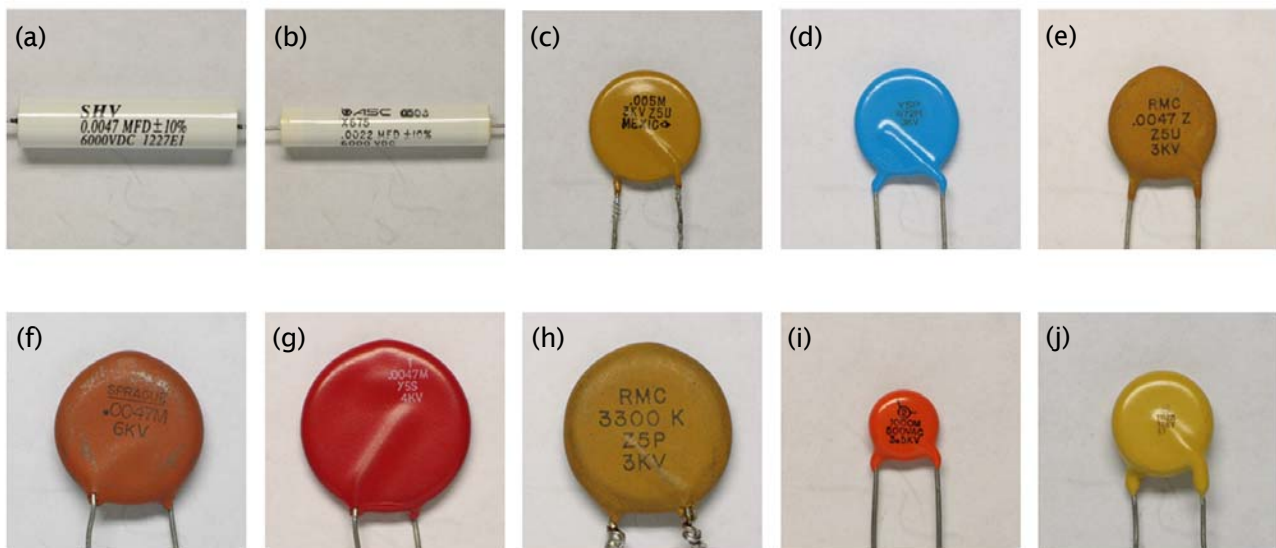


Fig. 3 – Types of capacitors used in this study. (a) SHV brand tubular, 4700 pF, 6 kV. (b) ASC brand tubular, 2200 pF, 6 kV. (c) Z5U ceramic, 5000 pF, 3 kV. (d) Y5P ceramic, 4700 pF, 3 kV. (e) Z5U ceramic, 4700 pF, 3 kV. (f) Unknown ceramic, 4700 pF, 6 kV. (g) Y5S ceramic, 4700 pF, 4 kV. (h) Z5P ceramic, 3300 pF, 3 kV. (i) Unknown ceramic, 1000 pF, 3.5 kV. (j) Unknown ceramic, 1000 pF, 10 kV.

the type of ceramic capacitor that produced the poor scan linearity shown in Fig. 1(b). The letters “Z5U” on this capacitor and that shown in Fig. 3(e) indicate the allowed temperature range and the temperature stability of the capacitance -- in this case a range of 10C to 85C, with a maximum temperature change of +22% / -56% over this range. Poor temperature stability tends to go hand in hand with a large dependence of capacitance on voltage. Fig. 3(d) with its “Y5P” designation has a broader temperature range (-30C to 85 C) and tighter temperature dependence ($\pm 10\%$). “Y5S” in Fig. 3(g) indicates -30C to 85C with $\pm 22\%$ variation. “Z5P” in Fig. 3(h) indicates 10C to 85C with $\pm 10\%$ variation. The dielectric properties for the capacitors in Figs. 3(f, i, and j) are unknown.

Fig. 4 shows the somewhat surprising test results for the capacitors shown in Fig. 3. Each type of capacitor was tested at voltages between zero and its rated maximum. While none of the capacitors tested showed truly stable capacitance over the voltage range tested, both tubular capacitors were well behaved, with modest increase in capacitance as voltage was increased. The ceramic capacitors, however, showed quite a variety of behaviors. Most striking is the huge drop in capacitance for capacitors with the very common Z5U rating. Both had less than 30% of their nominal value when the full rated working voltage was applied across the capacitor. This is why some ceramic capacitors give poor vertical scan linearity in electrostatically deflected TV sets – the capacitor is behaving like a capacitor with far less than its expected value. Adding additional ceramic capacitors in parallel solves the problem, bringing the value back to what is needed.

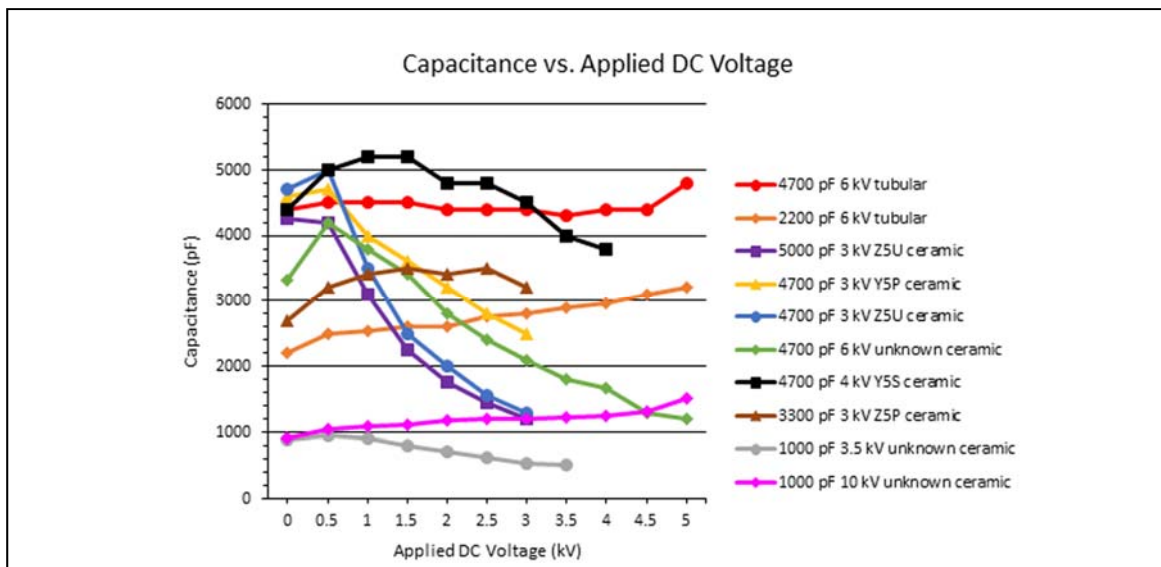


Fig. 4 – Plots of capacitance versus applied DC bias voltage for each of the capacitors shown in Fig. 3. The legend lists the capacitors in the same order they are shown in Fig. 3. All capacitance values have been doubled from the actual reading on the Sprague TO-6A, to correct for the use of two capacitors in series.

While most of the ceramic disk capacitors showed substantial capacitance loss at high bias voltage, not all did. One example – shown in Fig. 3(j) with unknown type of ceramic dielectric – showed modestly increasing capacitance with voltage, similar to tubular capacitors. The capacitor shown in Fig. 3(h) had a fairly stable capacitance, with a modest hump between zero and the rated voltage. It is interesting to note that several capacitors showed capacitance that increased with applied voltage over the lower part of the voltage range, with falling capacitance in the higher part of the range.

In conclusion, ceramic capacitors cannot be counted on to have their rated capacitance in circuits where a large DC bias is applied across the capacitor. In many types of circuits, this is of little or no consequence, but there are important exceptions. It should also be noted that voltage-dependent capacitance can cause distortion of AC signals, if the amplitude of the signal is a significant fraction of the rated voltage of the capacitor, and if the capacitor is in a circuit where its capacitive reactance results in a large AC voltage drop across the capacitor. In most signal coupling applications, this will not happen, but in certain circuits like oscillators and filters (or tone control circuits), it is a possibility, and may cause distortion of the wave shape.

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Reading Communication Themed Juvenile Fiction, 1900–1930

By Mike Adams

Long time CHRS members will recognize the name Jim Maxwell and his amateur radio call W6CF. The station, its license, and Jim's giant communications library is now installed at the CHRS radio museum in Alameda. Because of the dedication of CHRS members and volunteers, the library has been reborn and the station remains on the air as a tribute to Jim. The survival of the library was entirely funded by the Yasme Foundation, a group dedicated to Amateur Radio. I am honored to connect the legacy of Jim Maxwell to my current research. Jim was my neighbor in the Santa Cruz Mountains, and beginning in 1990, I was borrowing his very complete collection of juvenile radio-themed books for my early research into this area, first leading to a multi-part series in *Antique Radio Classified*. Jim helped interest me in and guide me toward my research in this area.

READING COMMUNICATIONS THEMED JUVENILE FICTION, 1900-1930

Tom Swift, the Radio Boys, the Wireless Boys, the Motion Picture Boys, the Electrical Boy, the Radio Girls, and many, many more. If you were a young person in the first half of the 20th century, there was a very good chance that you read some or all of these books. Imagine 1910, and no broadcast radio, no Internet, no social media, nothing to connect you to the outside world but print. Your entire life would be local and largely constructed around home, school, church and community. In your spare time you could read about your hobbies, you could even purchase wireless and electrical parts from the Electro-Importing catalogue, through the mail all the way from New York City. You could make your own crystal set, just like the characters in the books. Often your interest began with these books and continued into adult life and a career in wireless.

I am beginning a project to read and analyze a selected group of juvenile fiction primarily written between 1900 and 1930. So far I have read more than 80 books written for young boys and girls, all with themes that relate to electrical communication. And while I say 1900 to 1930, there are some important early volumes that related directly to the basis of all communications devices that followed, electricity itself. Before the wired telegraph and telephone, before wireless and radio, before the movies, there needed to be electricity. And while the number of juvenile publications on these topics declined after 1930, there are at least a dozen volumes published in the 1930s and 1940s that I will also read and analyze. This article is an overview of the books and writers in this genre, some of my thinking as I developed this project, how I work as a writer, and some examples of how these books may have influenced the young reader.

In addition to the help and influence provided by Jim Maxwell, I want to acknowledge several others who I rely on for present day guidance. First is one of the original juvenile fiction researchers, Chris Sterling of George Washington University. Professor Sterling wrote the original bibliography listing of communications-themed books, and has always supported my research. James Keeline is an expert on the Stratemeyer Syndicate and a series book researcher and author, and has provided guidance in this work and access to rare volumes. Some of the images from Hugo Gernsback's *Radio News* and Electro-Importing era are from a book by Professor Franz Pichler. And Joe Knight loaned me his collection of books with the dust jackets to scan for this project. Through a library search I identified and obtained



Electro-Importing Company Catalogue cover.



Sample of books.

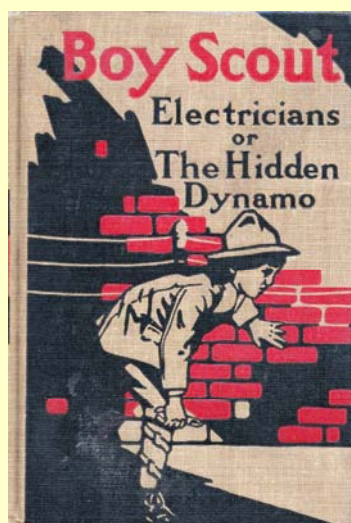
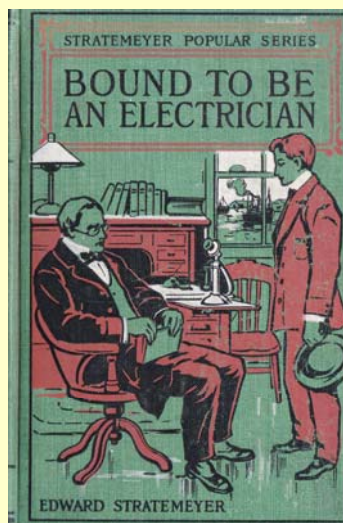
dozens of lists of juvenile fiction series and single volumes, and these have been important in the identification and categorization of the material for this project.

THE AUTHOR

I began my interest in these stories 23 year ago when I wrote an article for Antique Radio Classified called, *Will the Real Radio Boys Please Stand Up?* This was a simple comparison of the two major radio boys series from the 1920s, and that article was serialized in 4 issues over a two year period. Twenty three years and several books and TV projects later, I resurrected this subject as a topic for a talk at the annual Antique Wireless Association conference. But the more I began to gather and organize and read these books, the more I realized that there was more, lots more, beyond a single presentation. I thought about my recent de Forest research and publication and realized that I might be gathering enough material to have many live presentations, several articles in journals, a Web site, a video, and finally a book. Because I have written and had published five books already, I fell into a predictable system that leads to this outcome: I looked at the scope of this project, I began to think in terms of a table of contents and a bibliography, I located and organized research materials and books, and I began to read books and write chapters in draft.

My usual method is to write a complete draft from an outline, then go back and clean it up. In this case my outline is more or less chronological, from electricity to wireless to silent film to radiotelephone and broadcasting to sound movies and television. I found a method that worked for this undertaking, the primary task being to read lots of books and analyze them as stories in a social-economic-cultural context. I found that the most comfortable way to do this was to use my iPad air as a very portable word processor, that way I could write in various rooms and places, my burden would be light, and I wouldn't be tied to a laptop. I transferred the tablet text into my MacPro and began to assemble draft chapters. Quickly I found myself with over 200,000 words and 300 pages, the result of reading and writing about 80 plus books. I have tentatively titled the book: *What the Boys and Girls Knew: Reading Communications-Themed Juvenile fiction, 1900-1930*. But that will change. I am writing for the *AWA Review* another article based on the Radio Boys and Radio Girls chapters and I will call this one: "Radio in 1922: What the Boys and Girls Knew." 1922 was an important year in radio, the middle of the evolution of radio from coded messages in wartime to a radio in every home that spoke and sang and entertained. So already there are interesting spinoffs from this body of knowledge.

So except for one small detail, that is the way I work as a writer. That small detail is the lack of a publisher. Normally, I am an insecure academic. I have a contract and a deadline, I have an editor with a publication process, so I know the major outcome. This time I started writing and only recently have I began to think about who might publish this yet-to-be-completed book. I considered first the company that published my Charles Herrold book, McFarland, known for many books on popular culture. The problem, as I saw it and as it related to the Herrold book was that they price it too high. At \$50, the Herrold book was just not important enough to tempt many buyers. I think their high price reflects sales to libraries, but also I think they believe that if the price is high enough they can recoup their investment quickly. This allows them to take chances on a subject like Charles Herrold. McFarland would be a good fit for this book.



Sample covers of books or inside images .

I also considered my experience with Springer Science, the publisher of my de Forest book. They are a highly professional outfit, a giant worldwide company, and their design of my de Forest cover was a work of art. I told them in the beginning of my concern for price, and they priced it very fairly. The only disadvantage of Springer is that their market is very esoteric science and industry, and the de Forest book was never really marketed to important areas like technical film history and biography. My colleague Don Godfrey has just had published by the University of Illinois Press his book on television pioneer C. Francis Jenkins, but even Amazon is charging \$50 for this well-researched biography. Like Charles Herrold, Jenkins is not that well known, and in my opinion the price is just too high. A reality check: My San Jose State University Library now has a policy of only buying e-books when they are available. Part of the giant California State University system, this is not good news for writers of dead tree format books.

Finally, I thought about the self-publishing route, now part of CHRS through Amazon CreateSpace publishing. In the old days, self-publishing was looked down upon, especially in my field of higher education. Even today a professor would not likely be considered for promotion and tenure with a self-published book. This may be changing rapidly, as the traditional model of writer-to-bookstore publishing is in trouble, and the look of an Amazon-published book is just like all the other presses, all printed on demand using a Mazda Miata-sized device. No longer is a self made book a mimeographed and stapled work that screams home made. Besides, if your book is listed on Amazon, it is a “real” book, and that is what counts. The problem with the Amazon route is that there is not a dedicated marketing person who will promote it world-wide, get it into the hands of reviewers, and sponsor book signings. I still have not decided what to do.

So I organized the books I was going to read into chapters, and I decided that topic and date order would make the most sense. I started with a small number of books written in the 1890s which had themes of electricity and the communications technology that evolved out of wires, batteries, bells, electromagnets, buzzers, dynamos, and light bulbs. This was a period in history just a decade after the Edison light bulb and the wiring of a few neighborhoods in the major cities. The use of electricity in these books was very hobby-oriented, but often promoting a career in an electrical area. Related to electricity was the wired telegraph and telephone, with some of these stories being popular before the turn of the 20th century, then continued into its first decade. It was right around 1910 that two other forms of media began to be popular enough to find their way into juvenile fiction. Wireless telegraphy and the movies were the themes of a least a dozen series, and the content was both the operation and use and the technical basis for wireless and film. You had young heroes who built and understood the physics behind the wireless, but mostly you had operators who saved victims of sinking ships. In film you had content with very specific information about lenses and f-stops, and you had young girls who became actors. By 1920 there was radio broadcasting, and while some of what the Radio Boys and Girls promoted was programming for an audience, there was still the use of the radiotelephone to catch bad guys. I also selected a group of single titles published in the 1930s and 1940s. But the “golden age” of juvenile fiction was probably 1900-1930. See all the titles read in the bibliography. (1)

METHODOLOGY

There are many ways to read a work of juvenile fiction. One is for pure escape and enjoyment, the way most young people would. The other is to look at how the story can be “read” in the context of a world of one hundred plus years ago. How do our characters interact with authority, what is their social and economic position? What are the values presented? Are the characters well-developed, do they self-examine their lives? How is technology used? Are the descriptions of wireless, radio and camera devices accurate? Does the book promote a career? The methodology used will be that of reading each book and reacting to a the story, the content, and character. Then conclusions will be drawn about each volume and the totality of a series. I have looked at each story from all points of reference: science, humanities, social sciences, art, literature.

I wanted to make my book about books informative, credible, but most of all entertaining. With the exception of solid research and accurate citations, I did not want to follow the overly-objective tone of the academic book. I will have some examples later in this article. And from where do these volumes come? I have a large personal collection, but some of the important books I wanted to read are either not available as book anymore, or they are in libraries and can be checked out. Many of these volumes have been scanned by Google Books or the Gutenberg.org site, so I can read them online. I don't need to own them, just to read them and scan the covers and other visuals if possible.

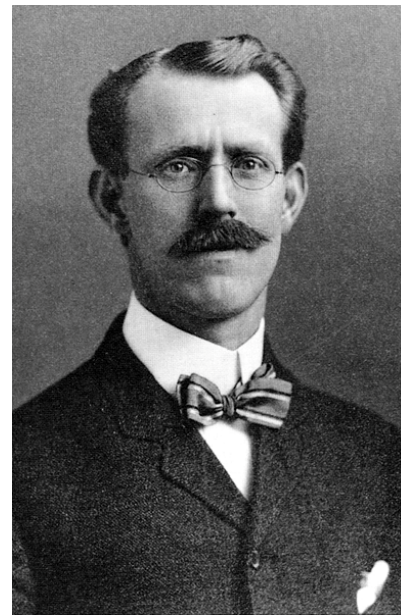
THE WRITERS

Who writes this stuff? Much of it comes from the Edward Stratemeyer Syndicate, a literary organization founded about 1906 by a juvenile fiction writer from New Jersey. Stratemeyer, 1862-1930, grew up in the east, and as a small boy began writing and submitting short stories for the magazine format publications that young people were reading in the 19th century. The story goes that in 1889 Stratemeyer sold one of his first stories, written while he was working in his father's tobacco shop, and for it he received a large sum of \$75. According to a Web inflation calculator that is \$1,890.00 in 2014 dollars. (2) His father was so impressed, it was said that he encouraged young Edward to write more of them. Stratemeyer worked for a time as an editor for the famous Horatio Alger Jr., and he continued to write stories and the dime novels popular in the era. It is said that Alger, on his deathbed in 1899, summoned Stratemeyer and asked him to finish some of his stories, many of which were in basic outline form. I have read for purposes of this project an Alger story about a telegraph boy and a pre-1900 book by Stratemeyer on telegraph. (3)

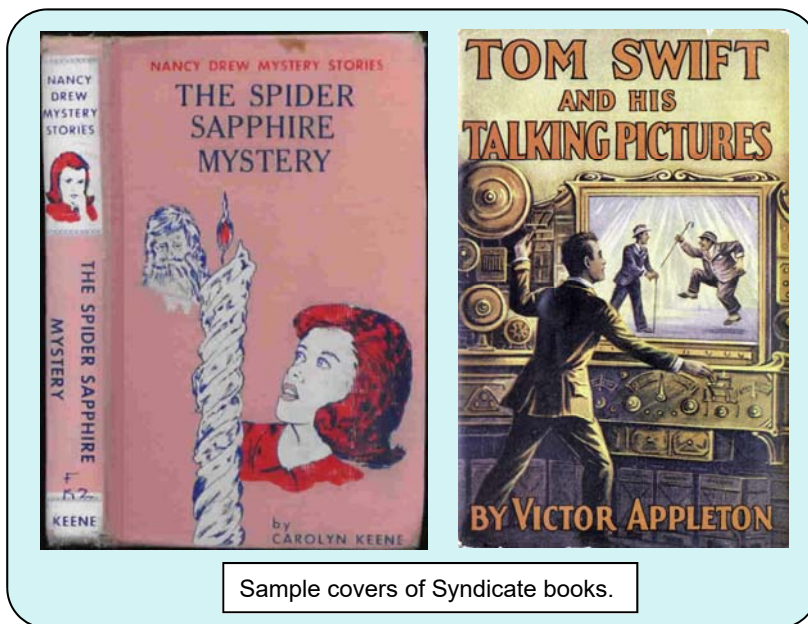
Stratemeyer found himself overwhelmed with work in the early years of the new century, and it was said that he had so many ideas for books and series that there was no way he could complete them all. This led to his formula and his company, the Stratemeyer Literary Syndicate. The way he saw it was that since he had the ideas for characters, plot and series, he could hire contract writers to actually write the complete books, assign them a pseudonym or "house name," and the Syndicate would retain control of the work. He advertised for writers, sent them a one page outline, explained the format of the book, and paid between them \$50 and \$150 per book. He specified that it had to be written in 30 days and consist of around 210 pages. Every character, every dramatic moment, every plot twist was specified. The Syndicate was responsible for an incredible 1400 books written by 100 different ghost writers under 75 pseudonyms, and at least 125 different series. You know them well: Tom Swift, The Chapman Radio Boys, Nancy Drew, The Hardy Boys, The Bobbsey Twins, The Rover Boys and many more. Stratemeyer died in 1930 and his Syndicate was taken over by his two daughters.

It was said that Stratemeyer took advantage of something that did not exist until the 20th century – adolescence. From writer Bruce Watson: "When Stratemeyer himself was a mere boy, children did not have time to be teenagers. By age 13, the harsh economics of an industrialized America turned most of them into instant adults, working, striving, having children themselves. But by 1900, social consciousness and prosperity were beginning to prolong childhood, creating a new stage of life – adolescence." (4) "As his gift to juveniles, Stratemeyer created the super teen. These wide-awake boys and girls drove cars, flew airplanes, performed Houdini escapes, even quoted Shakespeare. Orphaned or under the care of a single parent who was always out of town, Stratemeyer's super teens enjoyed unbridled freedom." (5)

His formula would seem to be all good – he promoted wholesome values, his characters did not drink, smoke or kiss girls. Good always triumphed over evil in the end. No Stratemeyer hero ever killed anyone, in fact the violence was all cartoon-like, a punch in the nose, a push into the mud. Nevertheless the librarians and Boy Scouts were against these books. From a 1905 Library Journal:

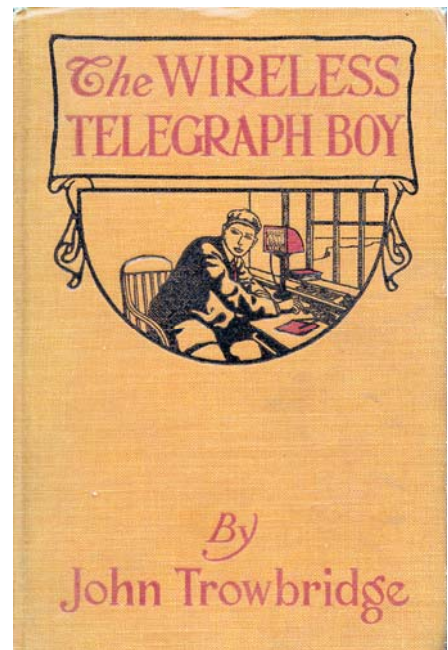


Edward Stratemeyer.

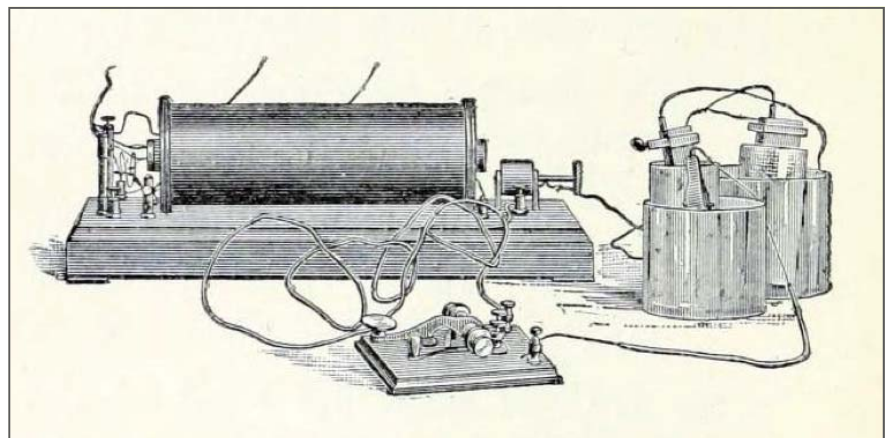


“Shall the libraries resist the flood and stand for a better and purer literature and art for children, or shall they 'meet the demands of the people' by gratifying a low and lowering taste.” And, “The cheap works of fiction pervert taste. They defraud the future man or woman by capturing and enslaving the young imagination. Wild fancies and exaggerations supplant aspirations for that which ennobles and exalts.” (6) And from a 1914 article by Boy Scout Librarian Franklin Mathews: “A child intoxicated with Tom Swift would be not only intolerable, but permanently warped by an over stimulated imagination.” (7) The Scout Librarian did sell his own version of what he believed were proper reading so I sense a conflict of interest. All these rants sold more boys books. But also, when you read 80 plus books as I have, you begin to see a clearer perspective. Many of these stories have what today would be termed the old-fashioned values of honesty, charity, and hard-work.

There was a group of educated and enlightened juvenile fiction writers who did not write under the Syndicate formula. Some of these were experienced novelists, others were newspaper reporters who wrote juvenile fiction in their spare time. One of the most interesting was Harvard physics professor John Trowbridge, author of three juvenile books between 1890 and 1908. *Electrical Boy*, *Three Boys on an Electrical Boat*, and *The Story of a Wireless Boy*, were as you might imagine educational in their presentation of technical subjects. Like a Syndicate book, they also imparted good values, clean living, honesty and civility. But while some of the Syndicate stories were less than accurate in their description of technology, a Trowbridge book had the imprimatur of a Harvard education. Said to be the legacy of Trowbridge, “It was his function to bring Harvard over from its old habit of set lectures, demonstrations, and strict textbook instruction, to the new habit of laboratory practice, research, and constructive thought.” (8) Apparently before that the laboratories were reserved only for professors. Imagine. In my analysis I have attempted where possible to get as much information about the writers of these books as possible. In addition to journalists and professors I was able to identify a college dean and several men with divinity degrees.



Trowbridge sample cover.



Visual from a Trowbridge book.

WIRED COMMUNICATION

In the first category of analysis, Wired Communication, I read the eight books listed in the bibliography. (9) These are dated from 1891 to 1913 and are about non-communication uses of electricity, and telephone and telegraph using wires. There are details of battery construction, how dynamos work, the use of electricity to electrify a steel fence to keep criminals confined until the police get there, and there is the pre-NSA practice of wiretapping to intercept the bad guys, all of this done by young people, often not supervised by adults. All of the stories in this chapter depend on wire. As you read these early stories you get a sense of the “gee-whiz” aspect of a simple storage battery and buzzer, the same excitement that would appear again and again as I moved through wireless, radiotelephone, motion pictures and broadcasting.

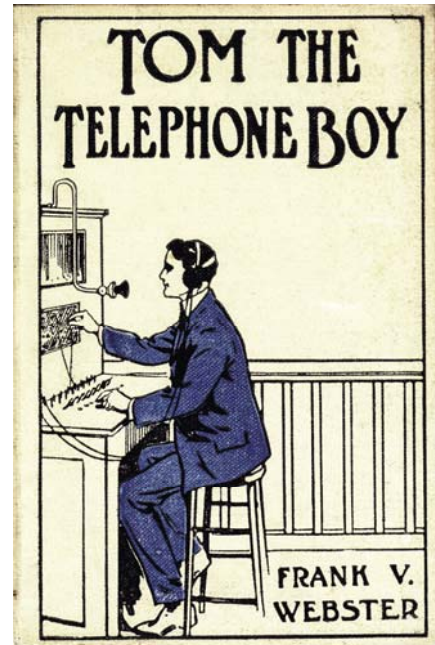
Tom the Telephone Boy, Frank Webster, 1909, is a Syndicate book although not part of a larger series. There are two parallel stories in this volume, one of them Tom’s ongoing search for a job and the second, his concern over the treatment by family of a retired physician named Dr. Spiderkins. While a Syndicate book, there is more character develop-

ment than in the typical Stratemeyer story. While we know little about the personal characteristics of Tom, we know he is a teenager, his father is dead, and so he is supporting his mother and aunt by working part time in a bookstore. He is a good boy. While in the bookstore one day he meets a Dr. Spiderkins to whom he sells books and he offers to deliver them to his house. At that large mansion he suspects right away that something is not right, as the aged physician seems to be mistreated and bullied by two relatives who share his large house. It is obvious that the doctor has money. It is also obvious that he has some form of Alzheimer's. But Tom's temporary book store job ends and he finds himself on the street looking for a way to make money and support his family. In reading books in the 1900 to 1930 range, the family situations seemed to move from the Horatio Alger street orphan type to the airplane flying super-rich Radio Boys of the 1920s. Tom, while not an orphan is very poor and he will perform something very Republican, he will pull himself up by his bootstraps.

He meets an old friend, Charlie, who works as a telephone operator for a stock broker firm who suggests that he will teach Tom the "trade," defined as the operation of the switchboard. He is allowed to do this nights after the firm is closed. This is not a story of electricity, but: "Charley initiated Tom into the mysteries of the plugs, the weighted cords, the switches, cams, and the push buttons that constitute a private exchange." (10) This is not a story of technology, not one that will lead to a technical vocation, but one of operation of a switchboard in a medium-sized office. Some kids would be excited by this. Once he has completed the informal apprenticeship with his friend, he obtains a job operating the switchboard at a law firm. He has caught on quickly and he is praised by the head lawyer for doing a good job. He suggests that Tom read law books in his spare time and learn the law. This almost never happens. Today a telephone operator could never expect to be a lawyer without college and law school. In 1909 the author is trying to imply that with hard work anything is possible, but this is a bit far fetched.

Tom continues to keep in touch with Spiderkins, and he becomes convinced that the evil relatives living in his house may be trying to steal his money and house using legal means. He knows this because of several big coincidences. One of them is that the evil relative shows up one day to consult with one of the lawyers in the firm. This lawyer has seen Tom at the Doctor's house and actively tries to get him fired from his telephone job, but the head lawyer likes Tom and actually confides in him that he is suspicious of the lawyer in question. Already Tom has been accorded a tremendous amount of trust for a teen aged telephone boy, but we know the bad guys from the good and it is OK. This is really a simple story of black and white values.

While on duty one day Tom uses his switchboard to listen in on the bad lawyer and learns of the plan to defraud his friend the doctor. He tells the good lawyer, the bad lawyer is caught with the evidence, the doctor's fortune is saved, and in spite of numerous rights violations, Tom and the good lawyer are judge, jury and executioner. The bad lawyer goes to jail. For saving his fortune Tom is rewarded by the Doctor with cash, four years of college tuition, and he lives happily ever after. By the way, earlier in the story he met a girl who is a switchboard operator in an adjacent office, and they too live happily ever after. Yes, there was the implication that hard work and an honest face will allow anyone to rise up through several levels of social class, and this points out one of the fallacies of some of these stories: With a good attitude, good timing, hard work and luck, you'll make it to the top. Not often true then, not at all today.



Tom and the Telephone Boy cover.

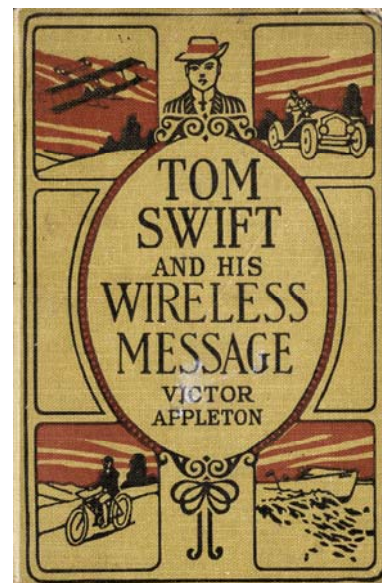


Tom the Telephone Boy at his switchboard.

WIRELESS COMMUNICATION

Tom Swift and his Wireless Message by Victor Appleton, 1910, is also a Syndicate offering, but the Swift stories use of technology can best be described as science fantasy. This story uses wireless to save people, a fairly typical story line in most of the wireless-themed juveniles, and most involve boats and water. Tom Swift is introduced as the son of a famous but aged inventor, and in 40 volumes between 1910 and 1941, he invented everything related to media, autos, airships, submarines and more. These were very formulaic, and as was true with the majority of the Syndicate series, each story began with high drama in the first paragraph and did not let up much until the end. Tom is a young man of undermined age who pretty stays the same age throughout the series, and like many heroes of these books we do not know his inner thoughts, dreams, or worries, as he is too busy saving everyone. He is a bit of a cardboard character. As in all of the output of the Syndicate, these books emphasize story over character.

This one starts out with the visit of a man who is trying to create an airship, a combination of airplane and dirigible, and he needs Tom's help to get off the ground. Tom, who lives in central New York, agrees to visit him at his shop in Pennsylvania. After a few weeks the ship is ready for a test, and so Tom and his sidekick pals become airborne and the device is pronounced successful. But somewhere over New Jersey a storm comes up and blows them out over the Atlantic, hundreds of miles from anywhere recognizable, and this goes on for several days. Note that in the original preparations for this test flight enough sandwiches are packed for a week, just in case. Eventually the little ship can't take it anymore and the storm causes them to crash on a deserted island, and it appears that the little crew is doomed.



Tom Swift cover



Tom Swift on Earthquake Island.

To add a sense of time running out, it seems the island is prone to big earthquakes, and with each shaking the crew becomes increasingly worried. They decide to explore the island, and in one of the biggest coincidences of 1910, on the other side of the island is a wrecked ship and two of the passengers are the parents of Tom's long time platonic girlfriend Mary. So of course our hero has to save himself, his crew, and his girlfriend's parents. He will get many points for this if it works out. Now finally enter wireless. Tom believes that if he can build a wireless set from the parts of his wrecked airship he might be able to send a message and get rescued. This part is almost plausible, as he finds plenty of wire for an antenna from the wires used to support the wings of the craft. This he strings up in a tree. The ship has a dynamo and batteries which he can use to create a spark, and from the ship's internal telephone he has an earpiece. There is no mention of a detector, but he can transmit the C.Q.D. and he does this tirelessly for days, weeks.

Meanwhile the earthquakes become more frequent and just as the island is about to fall into the sea, his message is received and all are saved. This is how all of these stories from the Stratemeyer authors end. After all the hero has to live for the next volume in the series. There are a number of wireless books and for this analysis I selected about half Syndicate and half independent authors. There are noticeable differences. In the Swifts and other Syndicate series, there is a simplistic main

character who is never fully defined. We do not know age, hair color, height, weight, hobbies, or any internal characteristics. Many are orphans living with a relative. He is always all man, all hero, and the way the story is plotted he never has time to pause and reflect. There is adventure but the violence is cartoon-like, always fists and clubs but never with knives or guns.

On the other hand some of the non-Syndicate author's characters shoot real guns at people, and in *Bert Wilson, Wireless Operator*, when faced with hostile natives in the jungle, Bert Wilson and his companions kill many of them on their own

land! In the end they use wireless to kill hundreds of Chinese pirates by electrocution. Both this and the Swift volumes are aimed at the same age reader. Bert Wilson, however, is well defined as a college student in physics who operates the school's wireless station. We know much about his inner thoughts as he takes advantage of a summer internship aboard a large liner bound for China. He is the wireless operator, and he is a bit of a hero, but he knows he has to return to college in the fall. Tom Swift is a full time hero. Tom Swift is story-driven, while Bert Wilson and others are more character-driven.

MOTION PICTURES

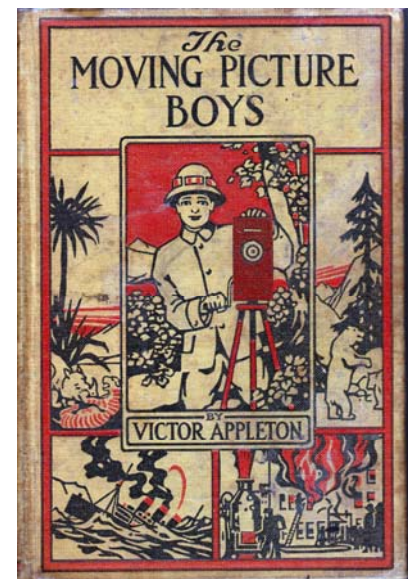
The Moving Picture Boys, by Victor Appleton, 1913, is a Stratemeyer creation, using as the author's name the same house name used for the Tom Swift series. This is an obvious ploy to take advantage of the wildly popular Swift series by implying the same author and thus create added visibility and hopefully improve sales. The subtitle of this first in the series is "Filming a Great City," and basically these boys are low income orphans plucked straight from the farm, given cameras and put in the middle of New York City to film fires, subway wrecks, bridge jumpers, etc. In future volumes they will go to Africa and Hollywood. This is a tale of being in the right place at the right time, as while hanging around the barnyard they happen upon a director filming a scene and he asks them if they want to come to New York and learn the film business. He has an idea for a new service he calls the filmed newspaper, really what we would call the newsreel. Remember that film was just in its infancy, and while a popular form of entertainment by 1910, it was also experimental, with short 10 and 20 minute films rather than features, and silent although with piano accompaniment. In this first of the Moving Picture Boys series we can see that the plan is to have the boys travel to exotic locations and film seldom seen visuals to show in the theatres before the main feature. Even the cover implies these locations.

In an attempt to educate these farm boys the camera, it is explained: "The moving picture camera is in a way like all other cameras, in that it provides for the focusing of an image or picture on a celluloid film, made very sensitive to light. Only in a moving picture camera there is a long, narrow ribbon of film, that passes behind the lens, being moved in a series of jerks by mechanism worked by a handle. A shutter opens and closes, and every time it opens it makes a picture on the little square of film that, for a fraction of a second, halts behind the lens. Thus an exposure is made, and when you have a lot of them on a continuous reel of film, you have the beginning of a moving picture." (11) That is a perfect explanation of the technology of a film camera. He goes on to explain how that negative from the camera is "printed" onto a positive, scenes cut together and sent to theatres. He even explains "persistence of vision," that biological characteristic of the human eye-brain system: "About 16 pictures are shown every second, and they go so fast, one being whisked out of our vision before the image of the other has quite faded from our brain, that we actually see the pictures move as in real life." (12) This is a college class lecture in Intro to Film 100. In this first volume of the moving picture boys series, the reader is getting a good basic grounding in the technical background of film making. And too, unlike some juvenile stories, this information is detailed and accurate, enough explanation for readers of all ages.

This first volume I would characterize as having an obvious career focus. There is more knowledge about film technology than you might get in a college course. Because the boys are unpaid interns, or apprentices, they are taken under the wing of the producer who discovered them, and they learn everything from camera to editing. They learn about focus, depth of field, film speed, sprocket holes, film stock, persistence of vision, processing, and editing. Had I read it, this one book might have been the one that started me on my own film career. Then with this introductory knowledge, the boys are sent out on assign-



Bert Wilson cover.



Moving Picture Boys cover.

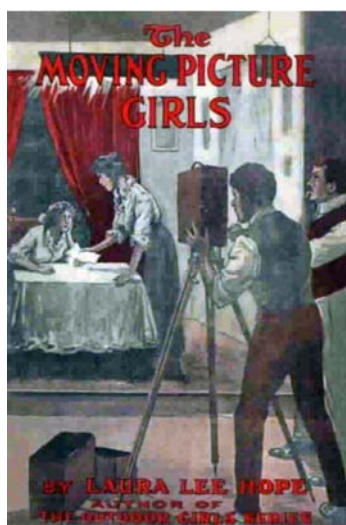
ment in New York where they film fires, a jumper off the Brooklyn Bridge, a building collapse, and they rush the footage back to the lab where it is processed and edited and duplicated and sent out to theatres. This is just like it used to be in television news when film rather than video was the recording medium.

And while there are heroes and villains and adventure, there is no real story, just the boys becoming proficient in their new art. This first volume is the obvious set up to the series, and in the future they will find themselves in the jungles of darkest Africa, out into the wild west with Indians, and all of the other stereotyped venues where excitement can occur. There are at least four motion picture series, all from the Syndicate, all between 1913 and 1921. While the Moving Picture Boys are cameramen and seek adventure while filming newsreels, the Motion Picture Chums are theatre owners and they bid on and try to get the most entertaining films for exhibition. The Moving Picture Girls are actors, and their adventures occur on location while filming dramatic photoplays. So all the film business is pretty well covered from documentary cameramen, to dramatic actors to exhibition in the theatres. There is also a Motion Picture Comrades series, and these boys make films in exotic locations like the original series of boys.



Jump of the bridge being filmed.

The moving picture boys and girls weren't the only ones interested in the first entertainment medium of the 20th century, the movies. There were several motion picture-themed and camera-focused volumes from the most popular series of all, Tom Swift, who was the subject of 38 volumes between 1910 and 1935. Swift was one of the most popular series from the Syndicate, and this 1912 look at the movie camera pre-dates the syndicate's release of their multiple movie series for boys and girls by several years. In juvenile fiction series, Tom Swift was the one with which all the others were compared. First, it's *Tom Swift and his Wizard Camera*, or Thrilling Adventures While Taking Moving Pictures, by Victor Appleton, 1912.

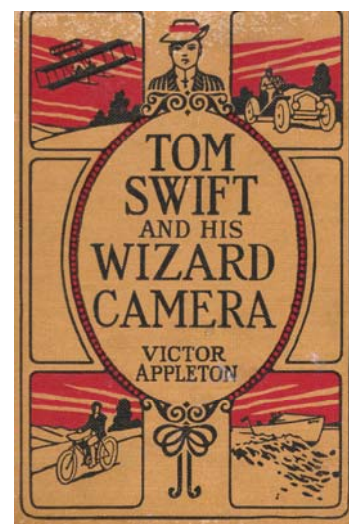


The Moving Picture Girls cover.

In this Swift volume Tom invents a camera, albeit a very special one, and of course he uses it in the service of the great adventures that made this series number one with young people. This story opens with a strange visitor to the Swift lab, described as “a short, stout, fussy little man, wearing a flaming red tie.” (13) Already we do not want to like him, and he is impatient, demanding to see our hero. His name is James Period and he is a promoter: “I'm in the moving picture business, I'm the biggest moving picture man in the world. I make all the best films. Every one of them has my picture on the end of the film.” (14) Reluctantly Tom agrees to make an electric motion picture camera for Mr. Period of the moving

picture company. At the time of this writing it was true that most movie cameras were of the hand crank and governor type, so an electric camera was needed. These stories follow a fairly predictable format, first the discussion of an invention coupled with adventure, in this case Tom will make a wizard camera and fly to exotic locales to film. But first, there is usually an enemy that enters the story, sometimes just out of jealousy that Tom is so good and pure, and other times it is industrial spying.

But what about this camera? “It's got to be a specially fast one, and one that can take pictures from a long distance. Electricity is the thing to use.” (15) There is some technical confusion at this early point in the story - the idea that electricity can somehow allow one to take pictures from far away. There is no mention here of the telephoto lens, rare on any camera of that era, but the use of electricity in 1912 film cameras was limited to the motor that moves the film past the shutter. But this is Tom Swift and this story could be moving into real science fantasy! Read on. Quick-



Tom Swift cover.

ly the plan is revealed and it is simple and even plausible and possible, of course it doesn't matter in the end. The "electricity" is from a storage battery and here is the how and why: "The storage battery, which would be inside the camera, would operate it automatically. That is, the camera could be set up in any place, in the jungle, or on the desert, it could be left alone, and it would take pictures without any one being near it." (16) OK, it would work, a camera and a timer. But you want to ask, "Tom is that all you got?"

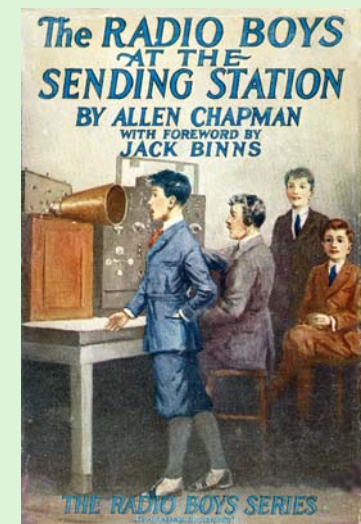
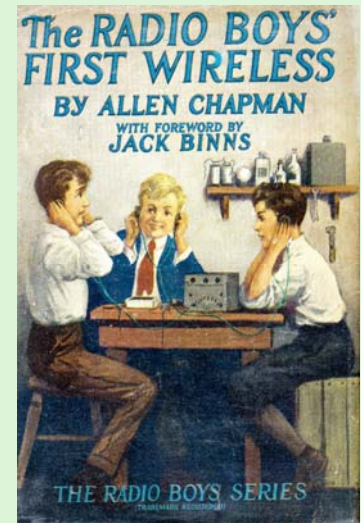
THE RADIO BOYS

Most CHRS readers are more familiar with the Radio Boys than those of electricity, film and wireless. There were more series and books using the Radio Boys name in addition to the best known Chapman and Breckenridge series. I have read and analyzed all thirteen volumes of the Syndicate's Radio Boys, books said to be written by Allen Chapman, really a house name. Chapman was in reality two writers, with most of the series done by J. W. Duffield, who also wrote under his own name, *Bert Wilson, Wireless Operator*, 1913, and *The Radio Boys Under the Sea*, 1923. The other "Chapman" was Howard Garris who wrote most of the Tom Swift volumes. The other popular series was written by Gerald Breckenridge, a real person, who at the time of his Radio Boys series was the editor of a New York City newspaper. He wrote ten volumes. There were a few unrelated Radio Boys books, the above-mentioned Duffield number, and Frank Honeywell's *The Radio Boys in the Secret Service*, 1922, and Wayne Whipple and S. F. Aaron, *Radio Boys Loyalty*, also 1922. The two major Radio Boys series also began in 1922. (17) In this shorter article I want to introduce one each of the Chapman and Breckenridge books, as they are the best known.

THE SIMPLE SMALL TOWN WORLD

The Stratemeyer Radio Boys Series, was introduced with five "breeder" volumes all dated and released in 1922. Breeder was a publishing term meaning to get more than one volume of a series onto the store shelves, the idea being that if a boy liked volume one, he wouldn't have to wait for the next few. By then the publisher would know whether or not a series was successful. This boys series would go onto to yield 13 volumes, which would make it the most popular of all the Radio and Wireless Boys series. The first volume, *The Radio Boys First Wireless*, was a hobby-focused, build a radio and listen-in story, and the second volume switched from listening to the sending station. Compared with other similar series, these boys were middle class and lived in a small but fictitious town in upstate New York. They had to work hard, and they may have done well in college and career, but these boys remained 16 years old for the duration of the series, 1922-1930. The main author, Duffield, was an educated man, an 1882 graduate of New York's Colgate College and Colgate Seminary, 1884, the latter likely provided an inspiration for one of the recurring adult characters in the Radio Boys series, the minister and radio expert, Dr. Dale. These Radio Boys never missed church on Sunday! And the author's ministerial background may also explain the emphasis on charity in these stories. These Chapman boys aid the blind and crippled and poor in a number of volumes.

Here is how this Radio Boys series was promoted or positioned: "A new series for boys giving full details of radio work, both in sending and receiving, showing how small amateur sets can be made and operated, and how some boys got a lot of fun and adventure out of what they did." (Chapman Inner dust jacket) So while this



Dust Jackets of first three Chapman Radio Boys.

is a hobby series, there are adventures connected with each radio moment. And it is also promised that Jack Binns will introduce each volume with a short foreword, and for this initial volume he lauds the contribution of the boy experimenters, naming Armstrong and Edison, telling how both began in their home laboratories. He also understands that in this year, 1922, there is an explosion in radio interest: "It is very appropriate at this moment when radio has taken the country by storm, and aroused an enthusiasm never before equaled, that the possibilities for boys in this art should be brought out in the interesting and readable manner shown in the first book of this series." (18) But this first Syndicate Radio Boys volume, *The Radio Boys First Wireless, or Winning the Pemberton Prize*, starts with a small problem. While the dust jacket indicates there is a Pemberton Prize, in the title of the book itself it reads, "or Winning the Ferberton Prize." Which is it?

We are introduced to the boys as they leave school, although it is not said which grade they attend. There are four boys, Bob Layton, Joe Atwood, Jimmy Plummer who is described as a fat boy and Herb Fennington. They are making plans to attend a radio event later that evening, described as a lecture about radio construction. Bob tells of one of radio's wonders: "My dad was reading in the paper the other night about a man in New Jersey who was talking to a friend nearby and told him he was going to play a phonograph record for him. A man over in Scotland, over three thousand miles away, heard every word and said he heard the music of the phonograph too." (19) Let's look at this. First, it was back in 1912, 10 years earlier, that San Jose radiotelephone experimenter Charles Herrold was the topic of a newspaper story about young boys playing music for their friends from his wireless school. So the idea of amateurs playing phonograph music was not a new thing at all. But the other problem was the licensing issue, and in 1922 the government was trying to sort out who received a commercial license and could play music for an audience, and who was the amateur and on what wavelength would he or she use, and the amateur would be restricted to two-way communication only, not the broadcast of entertainment. So already some of this first volume seems a bit out of date.

The radio content in this series is in the form of a lecture from the local pastor and radio expert, Dr. Dale, who in almost every book drops in and describes another use of radio. Much of these talks are in the form of "Radio in the News," probably lifted from *Radio News* and other periodicals and daily newspapers. Dale invites them to come to his parsonage to listen to the radio, described as a box-like contrivance: "It had a number of polished knobs and dials and several groups of wires that seemed to lead in or out of the instrument. Connected with it was a horn as was common enough in the early days of the phonograph." (20) It is assumed that this story will have more useful technical information, but for now there is the comparison with the phonograph, and that device used to be called a "talking machine." The pastor approaches the radio with some reverence and begins to explain what he is about to do: "I'm going to give you a little idea of what the wireless telephone can do." (21) The excitement in the room was palpable: "The boys watched him breathlessly as he handled two of the knobs at the side of the box." (22) This is like a magic show, as Pastor Dale tuned in several stations for the boys to listen to, and all were impressed. But there is still not much radio of substance happening here.

Dr. Dale begins to explain the very basis of radio beginning with Edison and electricity, "Nobody knows what electricity is, we only know that it is a wonderful fluid and that the ether is full of it." (23) This is not exactly accurate information, but he goes on to describe waves like throwing a pebble in the water and watching the ripple spread. His lecture moves to Hertz, then to the radiotelephone: "The whole principle of the wireless telephone is based on the fact that sound can be transformed into electricity and then can be transformed back into sound again." (24) This is fundamentally correct, and it seems as if the author here is trying to oversimplify radio for a young audience, in this case the 15-16 year old Radio Boys. Dale suggest that the best way to learn is for the boys to build their own, and to assist them he has set up a shop in his garage and he will hold weekly classes. This is a good hobby volume for the beginner.

Saturday arrives and Dr. Dale holds forth with his radio construction class. He tells the boys the first thing they need is one hundred twenty five feet of wire for an antenna, and that should be connected to a high place, like a barn roof. Next he describes the detector as he picked up a piece of crystal and a bronze wire: "When this wire comes in contact with this bit of crystal the mysterious waves become audible vibrations." (25) Again, he seems to oversimplify, although he is correct about the crystal and the wire that is called a cat's whisker. But the waves are not mysterious, and what the crystal does is rectify, that is it converts the radio frequency waves into audio frequency waves or vibrations. But his way of explaining is correct if overly basic. He then describes the final piece, a hand wound coil of wire with sliders use to tune in the station. One thing he adds to the construction of the coil is important: "You will notice that the wire is covered

with cotton except for this little strip of wire extending lengthwise where I've scraped the cotton off with sandpaper so as to accommodate the sliding contacts." (26) This is an important step left out of many of these radio stories, so the reverend gets a gold star. The basic radio is simplified and described as needing antenna, crystal, coil. He forgot earphones.

In the next chapter the earphones are connected. Dale then explains something that may be accurate in a non-technical way: "But as the electrical vibrations, if left alone, would have a good deal of trouble in passing through the telephone receiver (headset), we must have a condenser to help them out." (27) He explains how to make one using a piece of mica, a dielectric, and gluing a piece of foil to each side, and placing it in series with the set and earphone. So far this volume has had the most detailed and basic description of the beginners crystal radio. The Radio Girls also built a set, but you could not easily replicate it just by reading the story. With the Radio Boys you can almost visualize it in your mind's eye. This series is the one radio hobbyists have been waiting for. The adult tutor here, Pastor Dale, now explains that most of what was used to receive radio can be found around the house, the two exceptions being the piece of crystal and the telephone headset. He has just described and helped the boys build a five dollar radio. In today's dollars that would be about \$67.36, and that is a lot of cash for a 15 year old.



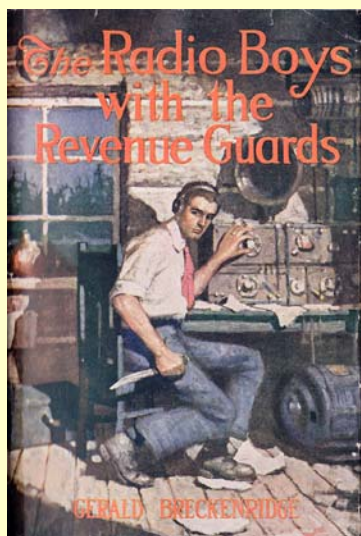
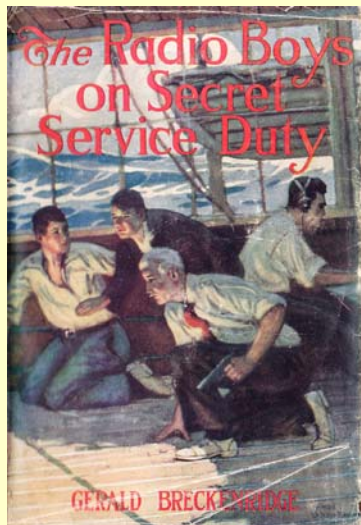
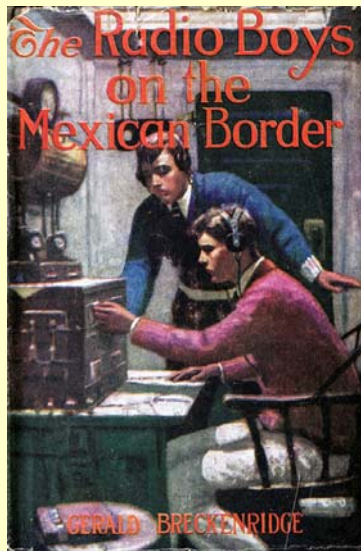
Basic crystal set homemade coil.

In this first of thirteen volumes the story of radio construction and reward is told, a minor mystery is solved, and the boys are introduced as good, clean living, upstanding citizens. They are like a combination of the Boy Scouts, "thrifty, brave, clean and reverent," and Sunday School kids. So far the series has presented very basic technical information, but after all it is just about the construction of the first radio, the crystal set. There will be more technology in the next story, *The Radio Boys on Ocean Point*. When radio hobbyists today talk about their collections of vintage radios and print material, there are two of the latter that seem to be in every collection: the Radio News magazines of the 1920s and 1930s, and this Radio Boys series. (28) There will be tubes and horn speakers in the next installment.

There is obviously much more to this story and in my "book version" every one of the thirteen stories will be analyzed in detail. There was also a companion Syndicate series introduced in 1922 under the title Radio Girls. This series yielded only four volumes, the three "breeders" in 1922, and a final one in 1924. This series was very similar to the boys, in fact the first three of each series had the same three content themes: one, "listening in," and two, "at the sending station," and three, the story line that is almost universal in all of these stories, the use of radio or wireless for "rescue at sea." The girls series was likely a failure. And what about the question that I always ask and try to answer: From where does this author get his radio knowledge? Series book expert James Keeline sent me a copy of a letter written to Syndicate head Stratemeyer from one of the Radio Boys authors, Howard Garis in 1929. He is asked to write (and he did) that final Radio Boys volume: "About the radio story. Frankly I know very little about the technical side of it, though I am familiar with broadcasting from the studio end and have done lots of it. But if you want a story with a lot of correct, technical details about tubes, circuits and so on I'm afraid I couldn't do it. It would have to be exact to the last detail or we would get tripped up, and while we can get by in a Tom Swift with new inventions, with something already established I would not want to take a chance." (29)

THE 1% RADIO BOYS

The Radio Boys series by Gerald Breckenridge was very well written and at a level that could be appreciated by the adult reader as well as the young person. These three radio boys lived in a mansion on the ocean in Long Island, they had yachts, airplanes, and all the money they could use for radios and radio parts. They lived in and visited places with real names. Their families were easily among the 0.1% socio-economically speaking. Unlike the Chapman boys, these three aged appropriately throughout the series (with one glaring exception to be revealed in the book) and all graduated from Yale with one of the boys ending up married. Overall, this series was better written than the Chapman series, and the character development of the boys, non-existent in Chapman, was very detailed in this series. These boys began their



Dust covers of the first three Radio Boys series.

adventures in Mexico, went to Peru, then Africa, Alaska, and in general were world travelers but only during summer vacations. The radio content in this series was somewhat thin, with the use of radio primarily for emergency communication for life saving. This was not a technical hobby series like that of Chapman.

The Breckenridge Radio Boys series numbered ten volumes, and their publication dates were a bit erratic. While both the Chapman and the Breckenridge series each had five books dated 1922, there the similarity ends. After 1922, Chapman's were published about one a year until 1929. Following 1922, the Breckenridge titles were dated 1923, 1924, 1925 and 1931. Two things can be concluded about these odd release dates. First, Breckenridge was an independent writer and so he would have been able to write when he wanted, although if his first five were selling, there was some pressure for new volumes. The Chapman/Syndicate series were one a year, regular, following the discipline of the Stratemeyer. Second, it might have been that Breckenridge tired of the series after his final volume in 1925, found more interesting things to write about, but then suddenly in 1931 he felt he had a final volume, and maybe he needed the money. His career in journalism was not a stable one, with many jobs and much jumping around.

From the rear cover announcement titled "Burt's Radio Boys Series," publisher A. L. Burt writes: "These stories are written by a man familiar with Radio development in its every phase and who is also a born storyteller. Each volume is a story of clean-cut adventure, a galloping narrative that will hold anybody, young or old, until the last chapter." (cover) This implies that author Gerald Breckenridge did know something about radio, and that these stories have relevance beyond the juvenile reader. There is a great deal known about Breckenridge. His full name was Gerald Breckenridge Breitigam, born in Lancaster PA in 1889, and was listed in the 1907 freshman class of his hometown university, Franklin and Marshall College. (30)

In August, 1964, Gerald Breckenridge Breitigam died in Richmond, VA, age 75. His obituary stated he began his writing career at the Kansas City Star and ended it as a writer-publicist for RKO studios in Hollywood, from which he retired in 1945. (GBB Papers) But the answer to the question about how he got his radio knowledge was not in his papers, but it can be assumed that as a reporter he well understood the research process. The only time he seemed to get close to radio was the WJZ airing of his Radio Boys program, so it can be expected that he knew his way around the broadcast sending stations of 1922, and he had likely met an engineer or two.

Concurrent with the Syndicate Radio Boys and Radio Girls, the five Breckenridge introductory stories were also released under the 1922 date. In this initial volume the author provides two additions to the text of the story. First, he provides an author foreword, and then he tells the reader in words and pictures how to construct a basic crystal set. His first story, *The Radio Boys on the Mexican Border*, follows by one year a story in the New York Times in which Breckenridge is interviewed about immigration from Mexico. This issue was alive nearly one hundred years ago, and in the interview, Breckenridge says he favored immigration because "Mexicans are very good workers" and that the "Braceros were good for the economy." Several of this author's Radio Boys stories were centered in Mexico and he always treats the citizens there favora-

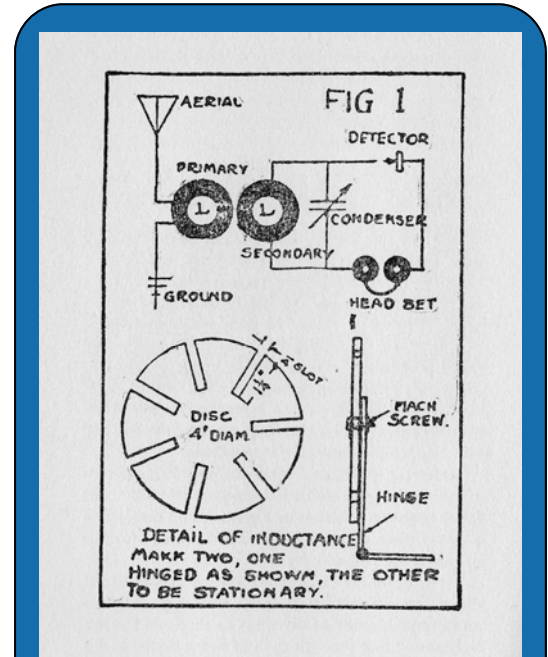
bly. You will find that this series differs in many ways from that of the Syndicate, partly because this series is free of the restraints of the Stratemeyer formula, and partly because Breckenridge is an excellent story-teller who adds a bit of his personality and experience into these tales. Better story and characters but less radio.

While the Chapman series used wireless legend Jack Binns to write the foreword, Breckenridge writes his own beginning: "The development of radiotelephony is still in its infancy at this of writing in 1922. And yet it has made great strides that were undreamed of in 1918." (31) He correctly identifies the years between the end of WWI and the beginning of the decade of the 1920s as one of major advances in the technology, from code to voice, from amateur to licensed broadcasting. And with the future unknown he takes a guess at what radio may become and tells his readers: "When you boys read this the problems of control of the air will have been simplified to some extent. Yet at the beginning of 1922 they were simply chaotic" (32) He refers here to the assignment of two frequencies that had to be shared, often grudgingly and haphazardly, by a growing number of entertainment-focused radio stations seeking an unknown but evolving audience.

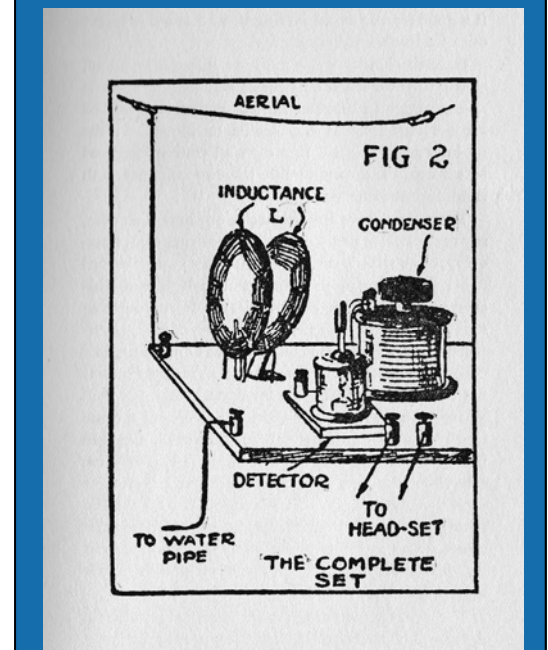
While it is not exactly known where Breckenridge got his radio knowledge, as a journalist he obviously knew where to go and how to get information, as he was the editor in 1922 of the New York Globe. That same year his Radio Boys stories were broadcast over a major station, WJZ in Newark, so he was writing this series while sitting in the middle of the East Coast radio boom, seeing it as a professional observer. Following his foreword, he offers a five page illustrated "Directions for installing an amateur radio receiving telephone." Reading this today, you can see how the terminology was not all that clear, and his "receiving telephone" would just be called a "radio" a few years later. He begins with this premise: "In order that the boy interested in radio telephony may construct his own receiving set, the Author herein will describe the construction of a small, cheap set which almost any lad handy at mechanics can build." (33)

It is expected that a reader of this book would want to start this way, so he'll have a radio to listen to between reading chapters, an early example of multimedia. He is predicting what the boy will need to better understand the mysteries of radio. In the author's papers there is a story of how his pilot son was missing and presumed dead in the early years of WWII, so he may have had a young boy at home with which to share ideas. I say may have, because Breckenridge had a number of wives and a less than stable home life. But to return to construction, he is very specific as he takes his young reader through every possible step: "Referring to figure 1 let us examine first the construction of the receiving inductance marked 'L.' The latter is shown in detail in figure 2, and consists of a heavy piece of cardboard. The back of an ordinary writing pad will do." (34) He is leaving nothing to chance, even suggesting how to use common items found in the home. He explains how to use a compass and pencil to create the coil form shown in the drawing, then he tells the boy to go to the hardware store and get no. 24 covered wire.

He continues: "For the detector, it is better to purchase a good make of galena detector at any radio supply store." (35) He talks about each part and refers the boy builder to the drawings, and explains how to tune in stations: "Once the sensitive spot on your detector is found, slowly turn



Breckenridge drawing of figures 1 from his construction tips.



Breckenridge drawing 2 of radio devices from front of book.

the knob on your condenser and at some spot you should be able to pick up signals of some sort, either of radiophone or spark.” (36) This is exactly how to build the beginning crystal set that many boys have used as their first radio: “Such a set should be constructed at a minimum of cost and may later, after you have become familiar with the operation of radio appliances, easily be converted into a set of much greater range by the use of a vacuum tube detector and may even, by slight changes, be given the much desired regenerative effects.” (37) His description of how to improve upon the crystal set by adding a tube in place of the crystal is over-simplified, and his suggestion of the use of regeneration will require many more components, advanced knowledge and quite a bit more cash. Still he is not wrong in this description.

The text of the story begins as the Radio Boys have already built a radiotelephone station and have received their licenses to send as amateurs. The Chapman boys started in book one building the simple crystal set, and didn't get licensed until the fourth or fifth story. So the Breckenridge boys hit the literary ground running with advanced knowledge. Two of the boys, Bob Temple and Frank Merrick, are on their Long Island coast station waiting for a radio message from Jack Hampton. These Radio Boys are also older than Chapman's at eighteen and nineteen, instead of fifteen and sixteen. Also different from the earlier group, these boys are all from wealthy families and live on estates on the ocean at the far tip of Long Island. Their fathers believe that no sum of money is too great in the search of scientific knowledge: “Such indulgence required considerable sums of money, but the men believed the boys were worth it.” (38) These boys had been students at Harrington Hall Military Academy and all will attend Yale. So the class differences between the Chapman and the Breckenridge boys couldn't be any greater.

Their long range plans for summer vacation is to fly their plane to the Southwest, to Texas and New Mexico, as the elder Hampton, Jack's father, is there on oil business. The boys will build a powerful radio station there so Mr. Hampton can talk to his offices in New York. These are not poor kids who have to sell newspapers in order to purchase a coil of wire. They have an airplane! There is an adult role model here and it's Jack's father who has already built a powerful station and has received a special government license to use the 1,800 meter wave length, very long waves, almost audio! These frequencies were allocated experimentally in 1917 for merchant marine and fisheries: “1800 meters for general public business, provided they communicate with stations of their country, and provided that 1,800 meter communication did not interfere with any other radio communication.” (39) This appears to be a pre-war allocation, several months before the United States entered the Great War. Obviously, Hampton is well-schooled in radio, and while a business tycoon by profession, he has both tutored and funded his son and his radio boys pals. Thanks, dad.

Frank and Bob in New York finally receive Jack who is 2000 miles away in New Mexico, and he tells them: “Put that band piece on the talking machine. You know the one I like so well. I can't think of its name. I'll tune to it.” (40) The idea that a person with a ham license could play music over the air in 1922 did not last long, if it was ever legal. But in these very early days of radio, there was little regulation and confusion which would not be officially sorted out until 1927 when a new radio agency was formed and the control of radio was removed from the Commerce Department. But this is fiction and these boys are of the 1%. Once radio communication as established Jack tells the others that there is a problem with Mexican bandits interfering with his dad's business there. Suddenly, there is a crash over the radio, and Jack does not answer. He is 2,000 miles away. This adventure is just beginning, and so far the reader has only been shown the use of radio for long distance communications. The Chapman boys spent an entire book fighting bullies with fists while listening in on their crystal sets. In one chapter the Breckenridge boys talk cross-country, hear a cry for help, and one of their number faces armed intruders. They would fly to assist but their airplane has been stolen! Stay Tuned.

SUMMARY AND PERSPECTIVE

I have surely learned enough for an entire book by reading and commenting on these 80 plus volumes. The perspective gained by understanding through juvenile fiction the evolution from the condenser to the wired telephone and telegraph to spark and radiotelephone to broadcasting between 1900 and 1930 fascinated me. The early 1890s works describing wire, bells, buzzers and batteries seem awfully naïve compared with, say, the 1925 Breckenridge Radio Boys when Jack invents television. I would like to say that I have read all of these books so you don't have to, but I don't believe that. I want you to read as many of these as you can and if the writer is doing his job, you will be transported back one hundred years or more and you will then know as I do, “what the boys and girls knew.”

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THE RADIO BOYS, AND THE BRECKENRIDGE 1%

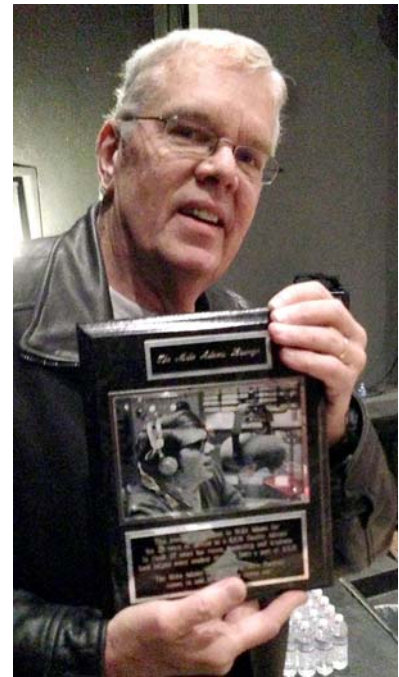
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About the Author

Mike Adams has been a radio personality and a film maker. Currently he is professor emeritus of radio, television, and film at San Jose State University, where he has been a department chair and the Associate Dean of the College of Humanities and the Arts. In addition to his work at San Jose State, Adams continues to teach classes at the Shanghai Theatre Academy School of Television and Film. As a researcher and writer of broadcast and early technology history, he created two award-winning documentaries for PBS, the Emmy-nominated "Radio Collector," and "Broadcasting's Forgotten Father." Mike is the Board Chair of the California Historical Radio Society. For his service to historical radio research and publication he received the AWA Houck Award, the SCARS President's Award, the TCA Stokes Award, the Ralph Batcher Award from the Radio Club of America, and he was named a CHRS History Fellow. He has had published numerous articles and five books, including Charles Herrold, Inventor of Radio Broadcasting, 2003, McFarland, and Lee de Forest, King of Radio, Television, and Film, Springer Science, 2012.



Mike receiving the plaque that names the KSJS-FM announcer's lounge after him, 2014. Mike was the faculty advisor of the station for 26 years.

The CHRS annual auction, massive flea market, live radio play, and orchestral performance is coming soon. Save the date!

A large, stylized poster for "Radio Day By The Bay 2015". The central graphic is a large, light blue radio dial with a gold border. The dial has a volume knob on the left and a frequency dial on the right. The text "LIVE! In Alameda" is written in gold across the top of the dial. Below that, a small black silhouette of a dog is visible. The date "JULY 25 2015" and time "8 AM - 3 PM" are printed in gold. At the bottom of the dial, it says "A BENEFIT FOR:". The background of the poster is dark green with a gold border. At the bottom, there are logos for "THE CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL RADIO SOCIETY", "THE SOCIETY OF WIRELESS PIONEERS", "REMLER", "THE BAY AREA RADIO MUSEUM", and "THE BAY AREA RADIO HALL OF FAME".

Bay Area Radio Hall of Fame—2014 Inductees

Edited from Len Shapiro's Bay Area Radio 2014 Inductee Summaries

Bob Lazich — Bob's broadcasting career covered more than 50 years of which 30 were spent at KNBC/R. He arrived in San Francisco in 1965 as a news writer. Then after a couple of months began on-the-air coverage. In addition to radio, Bob also did two NBC net nightly newscasts for seven years before they moved all operations to NYC. Bob is a long time member of the Broadcast Legends.

Peter Finch — Peter has spent 25 years on Bay Area radio highlighted by his 18-year run as News Director at KFOG. Peter featured his "Fog Files" news feature on the KFOG morning show and now continues the concept with "Finch Files" on KGO. Peter majored in Broadcast Communications at San Francisco State University and then earned a Master's Degree from the University of Colorado in Journalism and Mass Communication. Peter, who is also a playwright, is currently anchoring the KGO Evening news.

Sam Van Zandt — A 30+ year Bay Area broadcasting veteran, he holds down the morning show on KBAY in San Jose with his co-host Lissa Kreisler. He graduated from San Jose State majoring in Broadcasting. Sam's career includes spots on KYA, Star101, KNEW-KSAN, KCBS – FM and KFRC. Recently, Sam was given a lifetime achievement award for 30 years service to the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

Celeste Perry — She is currently the Midday host at KOSF (103.7) and the evening host at KOFY TV. Celeste began her career at KQMQ Honolulu in 1979 while attending the University of Hawaii. In 1982 Celeste moved to San Francisco and since then has worked at 560 KSFO, 93.3 KYA, Young Country, Smooth Jazz KKSF, 106.9 KFRC and 103.7 The Band.

JoAnne Wallace — A Stanford graduate, she joined KQED Public Radio as General Manager in 1990, then became Vice President and GM of Radio in 1996 and now has added duties of supervising programming for KQED TV and KTEH TV. Under Wallace, KQED has developed into one of the most listened to public radio news and public affairs services in the nation. Wallace has been recognized with an American Women's in Radio and Television Award (Golden Gate chapter) and Public Radio News Directors Leo C. Lee award.

Ed Cavagnaro — He has directed the KCBS all news machine for the past 25 years. Ed, a Bay Area native and UC Berkeley graduate, joined KCBS in 1977 and soon became an editor. He was named KCBS Director of News and Programming in 1988. In 1990, Ed supervised the KCBS transition from a mostly-news station to the Bay Area's only all-news station. Under Ed's leadership the station has consistently ranked among the top Bay Area radio stations, and now is heard on both 740 AM and 106.9 FM. Since 2010, KCBS has been the number one rated station in the Bay Area, the fourth largest radio market in the country.

Steve Bitker — Steve, a Cal grad, has held down the morning sports anchor position on KCBS since 1991. Before coming to KCBS, he started in Fresno and also spent three years in Japan serving as news/sports anchor for the JCTV, Japan's only English TV station. Steve has also authored a book titled "The Original San Francisco Giants." Steve has won numerous sports broadcasting awards, from the Associated Press, the Northern California Radio-Television News Directors Association and the Peninsula Press Club.

Norman Davis — He came to the Bay Area in 1958 from Spokane to work at KOBV, the first rock station in the Bay Area. Under the name Lucky Logan, Davis moved to KYA from 1959 to 1965 and helped make that station a dominant force in the market. He would later help another station score big when he joined the KSAN-Jive 95 staff from 1972-78. Norman has also worked at KSFO, KTIM, KMPX, KKCX and KOFY.

Bill Ruck — He started his engineering career 42 years ago at KUSF as Chief engineer. He would go on to work at KJAZ, KALW, NPR-West, and Susquehanna Broadcasting for 21 years (KFOG, KNBR, KSAN and KTCT) as Engineer Manager. Since 2007 Bill has been working with the Maritime Radio Historical Society maintaining historic radio equipment at former RCA Coastal Marine Station KPH, now part of Pt. Reyes National Seashore. Bill attended UC Berkeley, US Navy AV Class "A" school and John A. O'Connell School in San Francisco.

KSAN Jive 95 — The BARHOF Legendary Station for 2014 and the first Legendary FM station. KSAN Jive 95 was founded by radio legend Tom "Big Daddy" Donahue in May of 1968 shortly after the famous San Francisco Summer of Love, and the escalation of the Vietnam War. The 10-year period of KSAN Jive 95 from 1968 to 1978 was pivotal in the formation of many new concepts and ideas not only about radio, but also about the culture of the time. Tom Donahue led a motley crew of radio pioneers who brought a new sound to the airways of free form radio, long cuts, new artists and no holds barred commentary. ◇



Norman Leal
'Doc' Herrold Award



2014 Awards



Seth Arp
Volunteer of the Year



Peter Finch



Class of 2014



Celeste Perry



Steve Bitker



KSAN Jive 95 Bay Area Radio Hall Of Fame
2014 Legendary Station



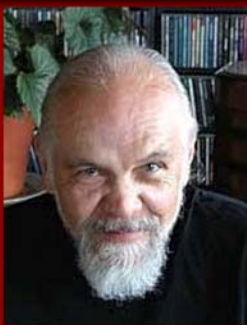
Bill Ruck



Sam Van Zandt



JoAnne Wallace



Norman Davis



Bob Lazich



Ed Cavagnaro