



Broadcast News

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PRESIDENT'S PAGE

By Jim Collings

Here it is time for another President's Column, already. I hope that everyone and their families are safe after the recent tornados, and that the severe storm season is finished for this year.

The June meeting coming up is an important one, as we will be holding our annual election of officers. As far as I know, all the current officers are agreeable to serve another term in service to our club. We should be appreciative of their work in keeping the club going, and our events running smoothly. But, if anyone new would like to run for one of the offices, I feel they can be accommodated.

For June's meeting topic we will pick up where we left off on radio manufacturers from letters of the alphabet. We had "M" in March, so this month we will have "N", "O", and "P". Let's skip Philco and use it as a meeting topic by itself in the future. Brands that I can think of are National, Olympic, Ozarka, Paragon, Parmak, Packard Bell, Paramount, Philmore, and others. It will give me a chance to bring my collection of early Adams-Morgan made, Paragon sets. Also, as always, you can bring anything of radio interest to show the members. I've been saving an interesting Trans-Portable set to bring to a meeting. The meeting is on Saturday, June 11th at the Hometown Buffet at NW Expressway near 63rd Street, with the meeting starting at 7 PM, and dinner before that, about 6 PM.

Don't forget the Summer Sizzler! This is the Tulsa club's annual swap meet and contest. It will be held at the same location as previous years at the Broken Arrow Church of Christ. The date is June 25th, starting at 8 AM in the morning. I've always enjoyed this event! It is similar to our April meet with an ongoing swap meet, contest, and auction at the end. Check out their website at HLARA.org for more info, or I will have data at our meeting. See you at our June meeting!

Report for the OKVRC Meeting of May 14th 2011

Spring is here in Oklahoma, with all of its beauty and unpredictability. But it was a fine, warm, and not-too-windy Saturday evening as about twenty or so members, spouses and guests gathered at the Hometown Buffet here in Oklahoma City for our usual monthly meeting.

Club members and guests began arriving before 6:00 PM to enjoy dinner, and we were all well fed by 7:00 PM when Club President Jim Collings called the meeting to order. Jim told us of some upcoming radio events, including the VPRS meet in Irving, Texas and the annual "Summer

Sizzler” show in Broken Arrow on June 25th, hosted by our sister club in Tulsa. I went last year, it was lots of fun and I would encourage any OKVRC members who can to go. To add to the pleasure, drive Route 66 to get there! That’s what I did; it’s a beautiful drive this time of year.

Tonight’s topic was Kennedy radios. To most people the name “Kennedy” brings up images of the well-known political clan from Massachusetts. But long before Joseph Kennedy Sr. began grooming his sons for high office, another Kennedy was busy on the west coast turning out some of the finest (and most collectable) radios of the early 1920’s. Colin Bruce Kennedy was born in 1885 in Ontario, Canada, of Scottish immigrant parents. As a youth he learned telegraphy working at a telegraph station in the local drugstore. Over time, he rose to be an operator at wireless telegraph stations operated by the Canadian government. He later moved to the United States, and by the time he was in his mid-twenties he was an engineer in the research laboratory of the Federal Telegraph Company at Palo Alto, California. Today, Palo Alto is in the middle of Silicon Valley, and is the home of many high tech companies including Hewlett-Packard and Facebook. Few people realize that “high tech” goes back almost one hundred years there, largely due to the presence of Stanford University. Colin Kennedy also operated one of the first radio stations in the area, 6XAC. By 1919 he went into business with Leonard Fuller of Federal, setting up shop in San Francisco. At first he sold components and receivers primarily to fellow amateurs, but soon demand exploded as more of the general public wanted a radio. Kennedy’s success caught the eye of nearby Wagner Electric, which bought the company and moved production to their home offices in St. Louis, Missouri. By 1926 the radio craze had subsided and the market was glutted. The Kennedy Company, now bankrupt, was saved by investment from the Studebaker Company. Production resumed in 1928 in St Louis, and later in South Bend, Indiana. But this revival too was short lived. The company failed in 1933, a victim of the Great Depression. Colin Kennedy was working for the U.S. Army Signal Corps at the time of his death in 1942.

Club President Jim Collings has one of the most impressive Kennedy collections you will ever see, and he was kind enough to bring in practically all of it. We got to see the both the San Francisco (early) and St Louis (later) versions of the sets Kennedy made in his first years of operation. Jim displayed two versions of the Type 110 Universal Receiver (175-25,000 meters), also of the Type 220 Intermediate Receiver (175-3100 meters), and the Type 281 Short Wave (175-620 meters). All of these receivers were one-tube, standard for the era, and Jim also had the matching two-tube Type 525 amplifiers. These early Kennedys are a marvel of sophistication with their complex array of knobs and controls, and are beautiful to look at. Jim also warned potential collectors of early Kennedy receivers to watch out for units that have been modified in the past, especially with additional controls or jacks added to the front panels. Such “upgrades”, commonly done by users of that era, can significantly reduce value.

By 1923-1924 the typical radio buyer was a non-techie who wanted an easy to use radio that could pick up the broadcast band only. Kennedy responded with a series of simplified receivers, many with attractive slant fronts through which the tubes stuck out. We got to see the three-tube Model 5 and four-tube Model 6, both regenerative sets. Kennedy clung to the regenerative sets longer than most manufacturers, but bowed to progress in late 1924, finally bringing out TRF sets. Jim brought a nice example of the Model XV five-tube TRF receiver.

Kennedy also made some of the earliest “portable” radios, but unlike the later Zenith and Radiola models, they were not completely self-contained. Jim brought in two Model 311 portables, on a one-tube, and one with a two-tube amplifier added in the headphone compartment. We also got to see a rare Type 111 three-tube portable in a leatherette case. What a great collection!

We wrapped up the evening with the usual donation auction. A fifties Zenith Bakelite table radio and a late-forties Philco Bakelite farm table radio fetched \$5 each. Most other items went for a buck or two. A partial Victrola cabinet, two restorable consoles, two boxes of assorted parts, a box of empty tube cartons, a Sony Walkman, a computer router, and a few other odds and ends went to new homes.

Thanks to everyone who came, and special thanks to Jim for bringing in his phenomenal collection of early Kennedy receivers. See you next month! Jim Tyrrell, Secretary





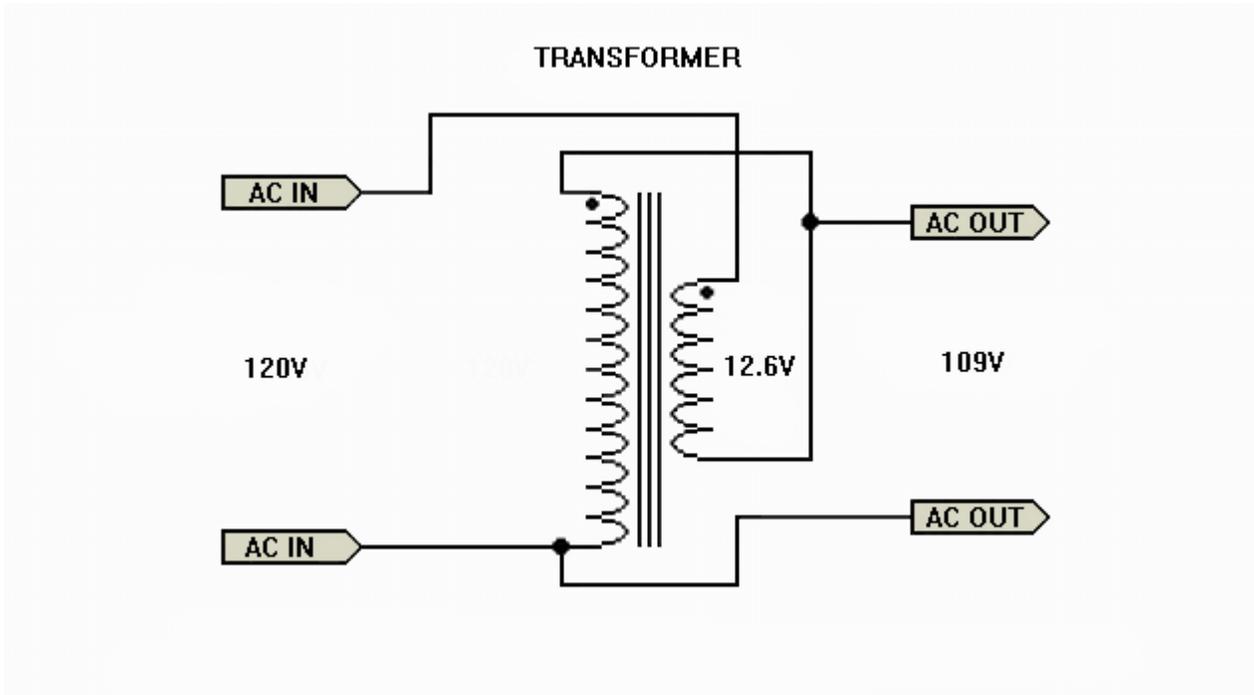






TIP OF THE MONTH

Protect those expensive transformer powered sets by installing an auto-transformer configuration using a Radio Shack 12.6 volt, 3 amp filament transformer wired in conjunction with the existing set's power transformer to reduce the input voltage nearer to the original 110 volts required.



The Oklahoma Vintage Radio Collectors (OKVRC) publishes the Broadcast News monthly for the presentation of historical information and enjoyment of club members and friends. Articles on subjects of interest to radio collectors, news of club activities, and restoration information are always welcome. Articles should be sent to the Broadcast News Editor, c/o OKVRC, PO BOX 50625, Midwest City, OK 73140-5625 or e-mailed RXRADIO@AOL.COM. Unless otherwise noted, articles can be reprinted freely, as long as proper credit and reference is given. Electronic copy of articles can be obtained from the editor of Broadcast News.

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- WANTED:** 1946 Philco, model 46-420, complete, unrestored (doesn't have to be working, but no cracks or broken areas in the case). John Reynolds @ jhreynolds8787@yahoo.com
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- WANTED:** Briggs & Stratton (BASCO) radio items: Crystal radio, tube sockets, A-B-C power supplies, boxed parts, radio advertising and promotional items. Dale Boyce (414)353-0734 or radioman@wi.rr.com
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- FOR SALE:** Magnet wire sizes 10 ga to 40 ga. Coaxial cables and antenna wire. Mike LaPuzza, Clear Signal Products, Inc. 405-745-9473 email: wire@coaxman.com
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