

MEET AND AUCTION REPORT

Antique Wireless Association Conference and Auction Report Rochester, New York — August 20-23, 2008

REPORTED BY RAY CHASE WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM LARRY BABCOCK,
JOHN V. TERREY, AND THE AWA - WEB EDITION

The 47th AWA conference was held August 20-23, 2008, at the RIT Conference Center, Rochester, New York. Registration began on Wednesday from 3 P.M. to 7 P.M., and though vendors could park in the flea market area, selling was not permitted until the grand opening on Thursday morning. In contrast to the rainy preceding year, the weather was good, and there was a generally relaxed atmosphere as old friends met to trade radio stories and enhance their collections. They also had the opportunity to encourage new interest in radio collecting, as the event was advertised to nonmembers and at least 20 responded to the offer. Registrants totaled 402, down from 496 last year.

Of course the decline in attendance is an ongoing con-



A Pye Model M78F entered in the old equipment contest by Richard Brewster won first place in the International Radio Category. According to historian Jonathan Hill in his book "Radio Radio," the set was manufactured in 1948 and sported Pye's sunrise fret motif (without the usual clouds) on its speaker grille. Unfortunately, the public saw the design as the Japanese flag, and the sets were withdrawn.



Like bees around honey, a swarm of collectors forms around a late arrival of estate items.

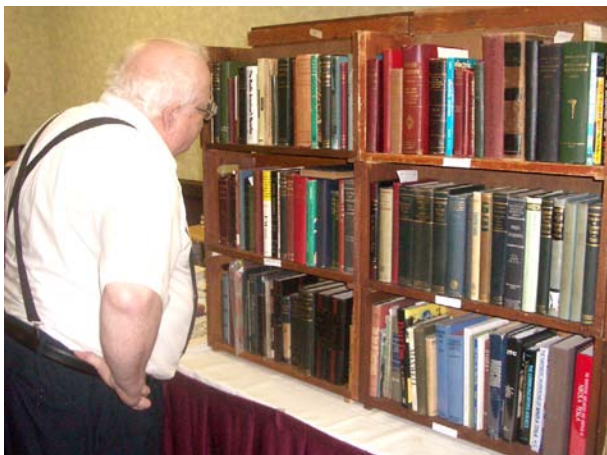
cern. Looking back to the year 2000 when attendance was 981, we realize that many factors have been at work here — the Internet, the recent economy, and the aging radio collecting population. Nevertheless, it is obvious that all of us interested in preserving radio history need to do more outreach to new and younger collectors.

Hats off to AWA for beginning that process by opening the meet to nonmembers this year in the interest of staying viable and finding new blood to keep the hobby alive. For many years, other organizations have welcomed the general public for a single admission fee and found it to be a profitable way to go. Wider advertising of this policy in future years should allow AWA to reap similar rewards.

Another step in the right direction was moving the meet closer to the weekend by starting on Thursday rather than Wednesday. The next good move in the interest of flea market business and generally larger participation would be a Friday to Sunday schedule.

Your editor's personal count of dealers in the flea market as of midday Thursday was 66; but later, Greg Farmer gave me his count of 88. Again looking back over the years, this number is down. I do not have the dealer number for 2006, but Greg reported 120 for 2007. For 2005, I have 115, and for 2004, 123. The peak was 225 in 1997. Obviously, the Internet (and lack of new faces) is taking its toll. However, sellers this year seemed generally happy with sales.

One exception might be the booksellers who were relegated to back rooms instead of the open court of past years. Though this was a quieter atmosphere, the negative exposure meant less traffic and low-



A potential customer peruses Frank Bequaert's offerings at the book fair.

er sales. Naturally, they hope for a return to the open court next year.

GENERAL ACTIVITIES

The Wednesday night "Mixer" with cash bar and hors d'oeuvres was followed by a seminar given by Tom Perera and Russ Kleinman on "Wireless in World War I and World War II Submarines and the Enigma." On Thursday Bob Murray presented "Radios Made in Canada in the 1920s," which attracted the many Canadians who attend this event. Bob who is

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Merrill Bancroft entered the pair of TECLA sets shown in the upper photo, the Model 50D on the left and the Model 50A amplifier on the right. Included in his extensive display was the publicity photograph, shown in the lower photo. The smaller sets in the middle of the photo appear similar to the Models 50D and 50A. TECLA was founded in 1897 by inventor Thomas E. Clark in Detroit, Michigan.

(AWA 2008 Conference, continued)
from Vancouver, BC, shared information from his new book, *Early Development of Radio in Canada*.

In all, eleven seminars were presented, covering a wide range of subjects from radar to amateur radio, telegraph, mechanical television, pre-1912 apparatus, and restoration. Even European radios were covered by Bengt Svensson who came from Sweden for the 23rd time to this annual conference.

Bengt's presentation tied in with the old equipment contest theme which was international radio. The idea was to encourage sharing information about the radios of other countries, and the display categories included South and Central America, Europe, Canada, Asia, Africa, and Australia.

Bob Lozier can always be relied on to supply interesting European sets. This time he brought along no fewer than three Polish sets. Three seemed to be the magic number, as Geoffrey Bourne also displayed three early European sets — an AFRA RE-10 battery set, a Bundept 3-valve set, and a Siemens AC set.

Rich Brewster's 1948 Pye Model M78F battery portable from England was an eye-catcher. This extremely rare set has an interesting history with its Japanese flag design, so unpopular after the war, that it was recalled and destroyed in a bonfire at the Pye factory.

There were many outstanding entries in the Standard category. Merrill Bancroft's nice TECLA display included two rare items — a 1-tube receiver and a 2-tube amplifier. There were also photos of the Thomas E. Clark Co. TECLA factory in Detroit.

In addition, Merrill showed an unusual tuner and amplifier from the Campbell Company of Lynn, Massachusetts. This company also made quack medical equipment.

A display of Atlantic Cable items relating to the 150th anniversary was a blue-ribbon entry by David and Julia Bart. The Doron Bros. radio products of 1911-1922 entered by Charles Stinger made another blue-ribbon display winner. In all, attendees were treated to an exhibit of outstanding items.

Many attendees always look forward to a visit to the museum, and this year was no exception. An additional attraction was to go out to the location of the new 15,000 square foot multibuilding campus which will ultimately also house the museum. Currently, the new library



This battery-operated Hotspot 14 is a rare item. A 14-tube superhet with two meters for monitoring tube filament voltages, it is an impressive set. It sold for \$500. The top photo is an inside peek at the Hotspot 14, showing the fourteen Type 199 tubes and the set's tidy component layout.

is almost completely furnished, and the huge job of cataloging and photographing the museum collection is underway.

On Friday night, the annual Awards Banquet was greatly enjoyed by 104 attendees. The highlight of the evening was an excellent slide presentation and talk by Eric Wenaas about his experiences in writing his highly regarded book *Radiola — The Golden Age of RCA, 1919-1929*.

THE AUCTION

As usual, Richard Estes ably conducted the auction assisted by his brother John, and Bob Dobush, all from Ohio. The regular crew of AWA members, who do a fine job, also clerked and moved goods throughout the sale. The format started with the tube sale at 9:00 A.M., on to books and paper goods at 10:15, and finally to general equipment at 11:10. The auction concluded at 3:35 P.M., and the sale total was a bit over \$28,000.

According to our auction reporter Ray Chase, this AWA auction was an interesting affair. The separate Ham/communications equipment auc-

tion was combined with the general auction several years ago, and the result is that some interesting communications and military equipment now shows up in the general auction. Also of interest was quite an assortment of foreign radio/telegraph items, probably brought by the European and Canadian participants.

While a few high prices were realized, in general, there were a lot of bargains here. Maybe the low prices were a result of the soft economy or the declining attendance at this convention. At the same time, there was a larger than usual number of "no-sale" items.

A total of 329 lots were offered for sale, and 42 of them could not make reserves set by the consignors or could not draw a bid. This is 13 percent of the total, and many of the reserves were not wildly unreasonable. Ray expressed regret that he didn't have more funds available and/or room to carry the stuff home.

The top-priced item was a German lab demonstration coherer and decoherer set that brought a price of \$2,300. Another rare item was a Hotspot 14-tube battery superhet in great shape that went for a very reasonable \$500.

There were several good box lots of tubes selling for up to \$600, but they are not included in the listing because of the mixture of tube types.

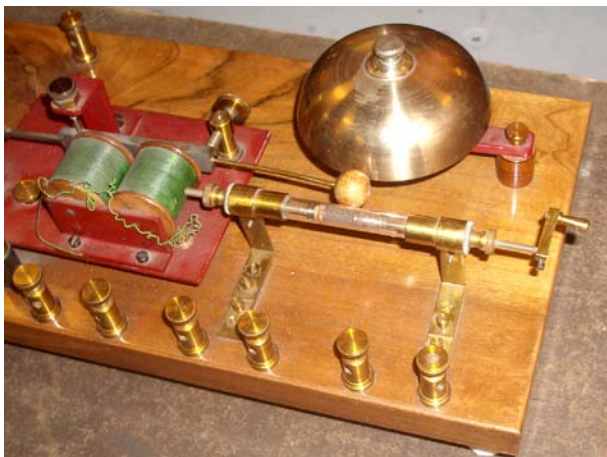
Plans are already underway for the 2009 AWA Conference, August 20-23. Be sure to mark your calendars.

Abbreviations used in the auction listing: e=excellent, vg=very good, g=good, f=fair, p=poor, unk=unknown condition, N.O.S.=new old stock, wk=working, nwk=not working, WT=with tubes, NT=no tubes, BB=brass based, TT=tipped tube, PS=power supply, PB=push buttons, SW=shortwave, WE=Western Electric. All prices have been rounded down to the dollar. Some low cost items and items in poor condition or non-specific descriptions are omitted.

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A few of the Canadian contingent — left to right, Michael Chabat, Daniel Labelle, and Robert Vandelaclouk look over an old radio magazine.



A German-made coherer demonstration set, a nicely executed device that sold for \$2,300. The top photo shows a close-up of the coherer itself, the glass tube, center of photo, and the bell/tapper mechanism. When a radio signal is received, the metal filings inside the glass tube "cohere" or stick together. This action completes a DC circuit, which, via a sensitive relay seen on the left of the lower photo, rings the bell and taps the glass tube. The tapping shakes the metal filings loose, breaking the DC circuit, and the detector is ready for the next radio signal.

See print version of A.R.C. for complete auction listing. Photo Credits: Ray Chase, John Terrey, Bobby Lyman.

(Antique Wireless Association (AWA), P.O. Box 421, Bloomfield, NY 14460. AWA publishes the "AWA Journal" quarterly Dues are \$25 (USA), \$30 elsewhere. It holds an annual conference and regional meets and supports a museum. www.antiquewireless.org)

Ray Chase has been a radio enthusiast and a collector of many types of radios for years. Currently, he specializes in World War II electronics equipment, as well as early battery superheterodynes. He also has an extensive collection of radio documentation and ephemera.

A warning: Auction prices are not current values. Our selection of auction items is not necessarily complete. A listing such as this cannot adequately include the condition of cabinets, chassis, transformers, tubes, the operating status of the set, and the inclusion of incorrect, restored or replica components, etc. Auction prices are the result of the excitement of the auction process, the skill of the auctioneer and the specific interests of the participants. Nevertheless, auction prices serve as useful references and as another element in the value determining process. The possibility of error always exists, and if we are notified, corrections will be reported.