

Some of the best Stay-at-Home reading in vintage Radio



2020 Virus Edition #2

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The front cover graphic is from a 1925 Magnavox speaker advertisement. It couldn't be more appropriate for a Stay-athome time like this. This issue is FREE. Share it and pass it around. Show people what fun old radio can be!

The Bald Letter is the work of Dick Karman who is solely

responsible for its content. He would welcome your comments, complaints and corrections. <u>dick@karmans.net</u>

We're all at-risk and many of us are "over-60" so let's read a little bit, enjoy memories of the last 80 years, and look forward to 20 more. Special thanks to Dan Howard, Doug Davee, members of the California Historic Radio Society, and members of the Puget Sound Antique Radio Association for helping out.

Stay Tuned. If I live through this two weeks, we'll do this again. And if I don't, well, "Greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world."

1 John 4:4 [DK]

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The Reproducer Supreme

April 20, 2020



QUARANTINE SHOW AND TELL*

From Doug Davee as told to Dick Karman



I caught up with Doug Davee the other day. He says hello to all the fellows that he used to see at the Oregon City, and Seattle meetings and swap meets.

Displayed here is his Ware Neutrodyne looking just like it was in 2010 when he brought it to Portland to show it off. He's had it on his long list to "restore" but like so many of us, he hasn't gotten around to it.

His radios have taken a back seat lately because his interests have shifted to restoring old cars. Doug says he spends most of his free time at the WAAAM or Western Antique Aeroplane

and Automobile Museum in Hood River, where our old friend Rudy Zavarich used to spend his Tuesdays.

Doug's Ware radio is the Model TU. The batteries and the horn speaker are self-contained in the cabinet which was made of walnut and mahogany. When new it was advertised for \$150.



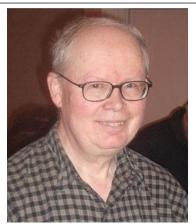
*Show and Tell is an unregistered trade mark of the grade school teachers of America and used without permission

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE FREED-EISEMANN RADIO CORPORATION

Condensed from *Radio Manufacturers of the 1920s* by Alan Douglas, Sonoran Publishers (June 1, 1995)

In 1921 Joseph Freed had formed the Radio Manufacturing Company in New York City. According to Alan Douglas' history Freed's "best seller" was the Marvel Crystal Set. In January 1922, seeking capital to expand, Freed partnered with his brother Arthur's employer, Alexander Eisemann. Together they formed the Freed-Eisemann Radio Corporation. They more than quadrupled their output and profit (and their distributorships) by July of that year. The Marvel Crystal set was still their best sellers

In August of 1922, the Wireless Specialty Apparatus Company who had joined up with RCA, GE, AT&T, and Westinghouse (along with several other small patent holders), tried to flex their muscles. They claimed that anyone who used a crystal detector was infringing on their patent rights. They threatened legal action against anyone who manufactured, sold or serviced a radio using a crystal detector that was not licenses by Specialty Wireless Apparatus. This aggressive action,



Alan Scott Douglas Sept 1, '43 – Nov 16, '15

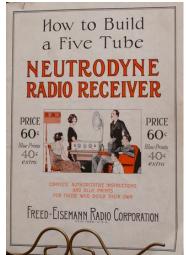
Alan Douglas was the author of several books. Most notable among them were the three paper-back volumes "Radio Manufacturers of the 1920s." He had a love, for not only the facts of history, but also the art. In the books the advertising art is featured as well as the artistry of the sets, the cases, the circuitry, and the design. This love was displayed in his collection too

which is documented fully in Douglas' fine three-volume work *Radio Manufacturers of the 1920s*, partially accomplished its intended purpose: it scared away most of the competition.

Freed-Eisemann was one of the crystal set manufacturers to push back and fight this egregious attempt to turn public opinion against everyone except the Wireless Specialty Apparatus Company. With Freed-Eisemann in the lead, the group that opposed the widespread propaganda took the name "The Independent Radio Manufacturers Incorporated (IRM)." A member company of IRM had in its employ Alan Hazeltine, an electrical engineer and physicist who had applied for a patent on a circuit which was later known as the neutrodyne circuit. This circuit made the crystal detector obsolete.

Freed-Eisemann, Steven's Institute of Technology (where Hazeltine was employed), and Frank Andrea (later known as FAD Andrea), were the primary ones to capitalize on the neutrodyne circuit in 1923. Freed-Eisemann alone increased its profits 100 fold in that single year. But patent royalties again played a big part. Looking for a loophole in the patent royalties agreement, Freed-Eisemann planned to pay the agreed upon 6% royalty on the cost of the neutrodyne circuit, not 6% on the cost of the entire radio which contained the circuit. Freed-Eisemann lost in court and had to pay Hazeltine the entire amount, cutting deeply into the profits.

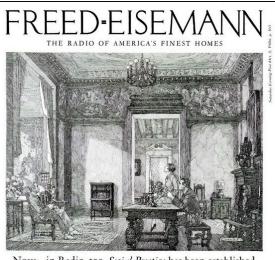
By the end of 1924, competition was on course to fall the Freed-Eisemann giant. Charles Freshman introduced his \$60 Masterpiece and Atwater-Kent introduced his Model 20 for about \$100. Within a year Freed-Eisemann was overstocked and undercapitalized. They were selling radio sets at a loss. In 1925, they sold more than 10,000 of their neutrodyne sets to Gimble's department store chain at below factory cost. Nearing the end of that year they had retooled to build TRF radios to get out from under



the Hazeltine patent royalties. By the end of the year they had to lay off 1,200 employees.

For a year or more they subsisted on manufacturing major household appliances. The booming economy of the 20s made this partially profitable, and they were able to subcontract some of it out.

In their radio business there were difficulties in their Model 10 TRF in 1927. To maintain



Now-in Radio, too, Social Prestige has been established

credibility they were forced to go back to manufacturing Nuetrodyne sets which worked exceedingly well. With the moderate success of their Model NR60, radio sales continued to climb into 1928 when they introduced the model NR80.

In October of 1929 the remaining members of both the Freed and the Eisemann families decided to sell the company to Clarence Earl. By now Earl had taken controlling interest of the Charles Freshman Company. Upon completion of the transaction, Earl changed the Freshman line to Earl Radio and manufactured the same chassis for Earl Radios and Freed-Eisemann radios. Thousands of radios in both lines were sold. Freed-Eisemanns were still the "upper-crust" of radios although they had the same chassis that a Freshman console had 18 months earlier, and Earl radios were affordable to the masses. Millions of dollars were made until the stock market crashed. By November of 1929 nobody was buying radios. And dealers weren't making payments on the radios they had purchased.

Earl Radio Corporation went into receivership on November 22, 1929. Freed-Eisemann went into receivership on December 10, 1929. All assets were sold at auction July 30, 1930.

BLACK THREAD AND FORD COILS

By Pete Petersen PSARA, WY7Z Silent Key

In my old neighborhood, Gene and Kenny were my close friends when we were in the fourth and fifth grades. Gene lived on a corner and I lived two houses up from him. One day we decided to put up a string and a tin can telephone between our two houses. Empty tin cans and spools of heavy black thread were quickly provided by mothers who were happy to supply whatever might keep us out of mischief. The lady that lived in the intervening house gave us permission to put our telephone line across her back yard and through her tree after we promised not to fall and break our necks.

It took many tries and much broken thread before the telephone was a success. Volume was adequate, as I recall, in spite of the thread being supported in improbable ways and rubbing against tree limbs.

We tried without success to put up a second line between Gene's and Kenny's houses. Their houses were separated by a broad avenue with a grassy median (wide enough to play football on) and the distance between their houses was too great. Once we succeeded in stringing a thread between their two houses but it sagged so low that a passing truck took it away. Some other method was needed.

I don't remember whose idea it was, but a wireless system was proposed, using a Ford Model T spark coils. Ford coils were marvelous things, housed in a nicely joined wood case with a vibrating current-interrupter on one end. They produce a voltage high enough to make a blue spark jump across a half inch gap. By asking around the neighborhood we found several men who gave us old coils which they no longer needed.

Batteries were free also. Service stations were happy to give away batteries that would no longer start a car but had enough power for our purpose.

The transmitters we built were simplicity itself; a Ford coil, a homemade spark gap, wires for aerial and ground, and a switch to turn the battery on and off. Of course we knew nothing about amateur radio, licensing, transmitting frequencies, Morse code, or the other niceties.

Being completely untuned, these transmitters properly covered the entire radio frequency spectrum. That was good in a way because a broadcast receiver, tuned to any frequency would receive our signals.

Fortunately there was no television to interfere with then and we never heard any complaints about interfering with radio broadcasts.

The latter was probably because this was a working class neighborhood where radios were usually operated by the man of the house after dinner when we were doing homework or were in bed.

With our family receiver dials set anywhere to hear the buzz of our transmitters we communicated with something similar to Morse code. Kenny was one beep, Gene, two beeps, and I, three beeps. Various combinations of long and short beeps meant let's play ball, go to the movies, or many other pastimes.

This system lasted less than a year. Gene and his family moved away first, and Kenny's family left a few months later. I never saw or heard from Gene and Kenny again. I still have my Ford coil and spark gap though, I can be set up to answer in minutes.

Your editor thoroughly enjoys these stories of days gone by. He still has his Ford coil from 65 years ago, and he still has the parts he scavenged from a B-17 parts pile around McCord Air Force Base, from which he thought he'd build his own "bomber radio." (Never did) Pete Peterson was a Navy aviation radioman in WW II and after. He and Hue Miller were friends in the PSARA days and exchanged many stories. Pete gave your editor this story and others in the 1990s. As editor, I enjoy sharing them again.



THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MIC

By Dick Karman

For those who choose to hear vintage sounds from their vintage radios, I direct your attention once again to the internet, but not to the download, make your own playlist and reload method.

An AM radio station in the Olympia, Washington area plays a vintage play list, just about as eclectic as your vintage radio collection. He plays Big Band Swing, Dixieland, Blues, a smattering of Rock and Roll, a fair representation of the 1920s and 30s, (an occasional piano roll) and an all-around easy-listening, ever changing kaleidoscope of music that came out of our radios between 1940 and 1970s. When I spoke to the proprietor about what he plays, he said "I play what I like" and that about sums it up. He doesn't like heavy metal, and he leans a little bit toward musical movie sound tracks and popular music that might be classified as novelty or humorous.

If you live in the Tumwater, Olympia area, his spot on the dial is 680 AM and he is dawn-to-dusk with a decent daytime coverage.

For the rest of us, KBRD streams on the internet 24 hours a day. You do have to download a client (Tune-in [™]) and it injects commercials to help pay the bills. (Or you can pay for the Premium Tune-in[™] for commercial free listening.) I sometimes record a couple hours, edit out the commercials and put it on playback. As often as not, I feed my transmitter direct from the stream and let it play out of one or more of my AM sets.

I didn't mention that KBRD is a community supported station. The owner doesn't "beg" too often, but I donate every year, and if you like his efforts, you might give a little too. The only spots that he airs are for the local food banks, the humane society, and "*support this station*." So that's the other side of the Mic this time -





READERS WRITE !

Thanks for your positive response to the first issue of the *Bald Letter*. Your emails of encouragement hastened the completion of this issue, and provided ideas for the next issue.

I received a copy of and quite enjoyed the *Bald Letter*. It was very informative and has a little bit of everything in it. Nicely done! - J.R., Seattle

I have just finished reading the inaugural issue of the *Bald Letter* and have found it thoroughly enjoyable. Thank you for doing something special for all of us who are trying to stay indoors as much as possible these days. I excitedly look forward to your next issue! – A. H. Oregon

You did a great job with the *Bald Letter* - I really enjoyed it. – D. H. Portland

Like everything else you do, it was done well. – S.G., Vancouver

Very cool. The Edison article reminded me of the can of powdered graphite that was always kicking around the shop. . . . and provoked memories of my dad's crystal set. P.K. Tacoma

Little bits of encouragement like these make the to-do list worth it. And many of you know that list includes all my own story sourcing, copy editing, public relations, graphics acquisition and sizing, historical research, story writing, page layout, finding and using volunteer proofreaders, and computer wizardry. (I throw the last one in because that is what my older sister calls it when I can make her computer to do something that she can't get it to do. It is required for e-letter editors. :-)

April 20, 2020



EDITORIALLY SPEAKING-

By Editor Dick Karman

It looks like this stay at home situation may continue for a while and since I made a commitment to use my publishing 'talents' to entertain for the duration, I will continue the *Bald Letter* 'for the duration.' Thus I owe you some explanations.

First, the title: The *Bald Letter* is a play on words. It is not the Call Letter of the Portland club. This is the *Bald Letter*. It is for those of us who like historical material and have time on our hands. It will give you a few minutes of fun without worrying about the title. You see the editor is follicle-ly challenged.

Second, the contributors: If you are reading from far away you won't know people like Cliff Tuttle (collector on the Oregon Coast) or Doug Davee (from the Columbia River Gorge) or John Cushing (from Oregon's high desert). Some you should know, like Sonny Clutter (check out the Radiolaguy on the web), or Blake Dietze (an electrical engineer and excellent vintage radio repair technician from Vancouver, WA).

When the time comes I will certainly introduce you to those who have done research for history articles like Dan Howard. And I'll try to give a small introduction to those contributors who have passed away. And from time to time I will forget to mention folks who have helped out. Please forgive me.

Third, the publication: I try very hard to make everything that I do the quality I'd like to have for myself. I hope you'll find it to your liking too. If there is some way I can improve: complaints, suggestions, or ideas, drop me an email. Or if you have a history story or a radio mystery you'd like help solving, send it my way, I'll put it out there too. *I Love a Mystery*!

dick@karmans.net

OLD RADIO SHOW QUIZ

Soap Operas

- 1. What was Elsie BeeBe?
- 2. Who had the title role in *Ma Perkins*?
- 3. In what show was the Barbour Family of San Francisco?
- 4. Who found romance after 35?
- 5. What show featured Ellen Brown and her marriage?
- 6. Who played Mother Moran in 1930s Today's Children?

Detective Shows

- 1. The gourmet detectives who preferred horticulture to crime fighting, but always solved his cases.
- 2. Who played the sophisticated detective Richard Diamond?
- 3. Who were the co-stars in Bold Venture set in Havana, Cuba?
- 4. What Detective was billed as the "tracer of lost persons?"
- 5. Who played Harry Lime on the radio counterpart to the movie?

Comedy

- 1. Who played the Maxwell Roadster on Jack Benny Program?
- 2. Who played the impish 7 year old we knew as Baby Snooks?
- 3. Who never did show up at Duffy's Tavern, despite promises to the contrary?
- 4. Who lived and worked in the small imaginary town of Pine Ridge, Arkansas?
- 5. Who ran for president on the "Surprise Party" ticket (1940)?

(answers on page 19 courtesy of Reliving Radio)

April 20, 2020

WIND YOUR OWN LOW-LOSS COILS

By Alfred P. Lane

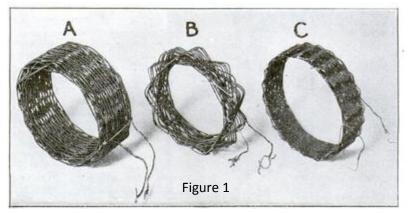
From Popular Science Monthly, January 1925

Five cents' worth of 20-penny nails [in 1925], a piece of board, a No 12 twist drill, and a supply of wire are all the supplies you need to make your own low-loss coils. And such coils, of the basket-weave type, often will greatly improve a radio receiving set. This is particularly true if the coils now in your set are wound on heavy cores or if the wire itself has *been* coated with shellac or other insulating compound.

No fixed dimensions are required for low-lose coils to give the best results, and this lack of limitation in size helps the home constructor, for it is often desirable to make the coil of some special dimension to fit the design of the receiver you make.

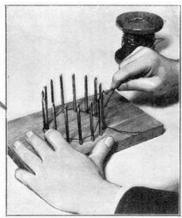
In starting the winding of a coil, first you must decide on the diameter, bearing in mind that as a rule it is not advisable to make the coil too small.

Coil A in. Fig. 1 was wound around 15 nails set in a 4 in diameter. The circle was drawn on a seven-eighth-inch board and 15 equally-spaced holes were drilled with a No, 12 twist drill on the circumference of circle. In drilling the holes be careful to hold the drill in a vertical position otherwise the nails, when pushed through the board, will slant.



Nail diameters vary considerably, and since it is necessary to have them fit tightly in the holes, you probably will have discard several nails out of a hand because they are so large that they cannot be pushed through the holes, or so small that they wabble around.

After you have fitted the nails in the board, you are ready to start winding. The rule may be stated simply: Around two, skip two. Figure 2 shows the first turn around the nails. Continue winding in the same fashion until you have the number of turns you need, Remember that basket-weave coils require more turns for the same wavelength range than



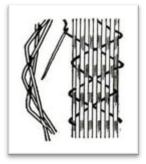
ordinary coils because the basket weave design reduces the internal capacity of the coil.

When the winding is finished, make a turn around a nail with the wire and cut it off, being sure to have enough on the end to make connections. Now tie the coil at a number of points with thread or string passed down and back through the openings in the coil. A short pierce of wire with an end bent or a crochet needle will make this easy to do.

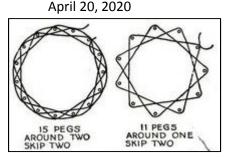
It is possible now to pull the whole coil off the nails, but it is better to pull out the nails, one at a time, with a pair of plyers.

Otherwise you will be almost sure to bend the coil out of shape or scrape the insulation from the wire.

After all but a few of the nails have been pulled out, you will find that the coil can be lifted from the remainder of them. The next step is to fasten the coil permanently with Silk thread. A good way to do this is to use a long needle and sew the thread back and forth, as shown in Fig 4.



The number of nails is not really fixed at 15. You can use a larger or a smaller number provided you choose a number that will result in the staggering of the turns of wire so that a symmetrical winding can be made. Also you do



not have to stick to the formula, around two; skip two. Another way is to go around one and skip two.

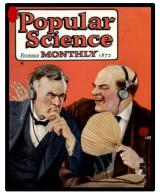
Coil A in Fig 1 [above] was wound by the first method of No. 16 double silk-covered wire, while coils B and C were wound by the second method. The correct number of nails for one system of winding does not always work with the other, but it is a simple matter to draw the circle first on a piece of paper and go around, the proposed number of nails with a pencil line, and you will quickly see whether the winding comes out right or not.

Coil B was wound around 11 nails with No. 18 wire, while coil C was wound around 22 nails, using No. 22 wire. This last coil is plenty strong enough to use as an inductance with only a clamp to hold it in place.

Aside from the fact that basket-weave coils have extremely low losses, they have other points of advantage. They are so rigid that it is easy to make two coils, one larger than the other, and mount one inside the other as a radio-frequency transformer, or to arrange matters so that the smaller one can be rotated. The latter scheme will result in a variocoupler or variometer of high efficiency.

Soldering taps to a basket-weave coil at almost any point is easy for the spacing of the wire is such that it is necessary only to scrape the insulation off where it is to be tapped.

Popular Science Monthly from the 1920s represents a great view of radio technology from the early days of wireless (almost a century ago). Please note that any errors in transcription from this personal copy are purely the fault of the editor. Thanks for understanding.



Bv





Dan Howard, NW Vintage Radio Society

It might be incorrect to label this an "All American Five" Radio since it is apparently made in Mexico. A decal on the chassis says "Electronica General De Mexico." – which literally translates General Electric of Mexico. Not much has been included in books or on the Internet about EGM radios and particularly about this round radio.

Others have inquired about the radio and its origin. The pictures on the next page belong to Mr. Dennis Smith and were posted on his DETROLA Site <u>http://detrola.tripod.com/index-2.html</u>.

Most of us know the tube line-up for an AA5 is 12SA7, 12SK7, 12SQ7, 35Z5, 50L6. They are all there.

Perhaps someone will be able to solve some mysteries. The round metal top, chrome finish, and emerald-green wooden base make the EGM very distinctive. The cabinet is 12" wide, 4" deep, and just over 10" tall, I've found no other markings.



This has a different speaker grill and is from Dennis Smith's DETROLA Site <u>http://detrola.tripod.com/index-2.html</u>.



The back of the EGM (courtesy of Dennis Smith)

For our intrepid radio detectives, Mr. Smith describes his radio, "The only label on the chassis is the tiny logo in Spanish on the rear of the chassis. There are no manufacturer's codes or part numbers on anything. The tubes are all American made and unknown if any are original, the two oldest ones are an RCA dated pre-WW2 and a GE from 1946. The wax caps had no markings except the value and voltage in English. The Jensen EM speaker was installed by a previous owner. Other components like the IF cans are slightly different in physical construction than the ones used in AA5's, but obviously copied by EGM from American parts. The two screws sticking out of the phenolic insulator on the back of the chassis are the Antenna and Oscillator trimmers. The [circuit] is identical to the standard AA5, but this radio was dangerous [in] the way it was built. One side of the line is directly connected to the chassis, and it is nearly impossible to assemble the chassis to the metal cabinet so that it does not touch. There must not have been a Mexican equivalent of the UL at that time."

Dan says "I would love to have more information on the set. Part of the base may be missing on mine and I would like to restore it someday."

[Editor – Below is from an Internet forum, posted by a lady looking for information on a "Mystery" radio, 4 years ago.]



Contact her through Antiqueradios.com "info on EGM radio"



Parker collection (circa 2008)

Soaps Answers:

1 L.C. B. B. Life Can Be Beautiful / 2 Virginia Payne / 3 One Man's Family / 4 Romance of Helen Trent / 5 Young Widder Brown / 6 the writer, Irna Phillips

Detective Answers:

1 Nero Wolfe / 2 Dick Powell / 3 Humphrey Bogart & Lauren Bacall / 4 Mr. Keene / 5 Orson Welles

Comedy answers:

1 Mel Blanc / 2 Fanny Bryce / 3 the owner, Duffy / 4 Lum and Abner / 5 Gracie Allen

Answers are validated with Harry Castleman and Walter Podrazik book 505 Radio Questions your friends can't answers (1983) Walker and Co.

[End of *Bald Letter* April 20, 2020 issue]