



# IARCHS

Iowa Antique Radio Club and Historical Society

## IARCHS NEWS – Fall 2007

### From the Editor

I hope you enjoy the fall issue of our club newsletter. We have a reminder on the upcoming fall Power Show near Waukee, excellent articles on reforming electrolytic capacitors, the Lum and Abner radio show, a mystery device and classifieds!

Unfortunately there is also an obituary of a fellow club member and radio enthusiast. I attended the Hamfest in Cedar Rapids hoping to get a club meeting in.

Unfortunately I didn't find any club members present. I did however thoroughly enjoy the Hamfest and came home with several good finds such as 3 isolation transformers for \$4.00 apiece. I also scored

numerous free items as the day wore on. I saved a moldy reel-to-reel tape deck from the landfill – or at least the speakers, tubes and transformer! I also purchased an unusual Zenith portable plastic tube set that intrigued me. Thanks to Dave Perkins, Curtis Lutz, and Sherry Cowden for supplying information and articles. **I still need material.** It's very difficult to put together a newsletter without material. I invite you to share some repair information, tips, pictures, stories – whatever you have. Email your contribution to me at [vtaudio@hotmail.com](mailto:vtaudio@hotmail.com) or mail it to me at 2626 NW 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Ankeny, IA 50023.

*Dwight Baker*

## **Fall Power Show September 29th**

Dave Perkins reported the reminder that we have a show scheduled for Saturday September 29 at the Hawkeye Antique Acres grounds just outside of Waukee coming up. We can set up on Friday the 28th, and the main show will be on the 29th. Even though this is a scaled back power show, help is needed to set up and staff a display of radios and to promote our club. Many people have commented on how much they enjoyed the display. Please contact Dave or myself if you can help out.

<http://www.centralhawkeye.org/powershow.php>

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## **Website Back Up and Running**

A reminder that our website is back up and online. The new address is:

<http://www.iowa-antique-radio-club.com>

I still need to get the newsletters for this year to Dave so he can add them to the archive.

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## **LeRoy Koder**

Fellow collector and radio enthusiast LeRoy Koder died last month. I met LeRoy at a hamfest in Des Moines several years ago. A copy of his obituary has been included. The bottom part of the obituary reads Kavanagh House on 56<sup>th</sup> (in Des Moines).

### **LEROY KODER**

Des Moines



LeRoy Koder, 74, died on Wednesday, August 8, 2007 at Kavanagh House on 56th. Funeral services will be held 2 p.m. Sun-

day, August 12, 2007 at Hamilton's Funeral Home, 605 Lyon Street. Burial will follow at Peoria Cemetery near Maxwell. Visitation will be one hour prior to the service.

LeRoy was born May 5, 1933 to Walter and Garnett Koder in Des Moines. He married Maxine Oxley on August 25, 1960 in Las Vegas and was an owner/television repairman for All TV. LeRoy was on the Board of the Des Moines Ham Radio Club, DMRAA, 3900 Club in Sioux City, the Arkansas Phone Net, and the ARES. He served in the Army in Germany and was an avid reader.

LeRoy is survived by his wife, Maxine; sisters, Anita Garner of Des Moines, Carol Carmen of Apache Junction, AZ, and Ellen (Carole) Mabier of Florida; brother, David (Jan) Koder of Clive; aunt and uncle, David and Louise Miller of Des Moines; several nieces and nephews; and a host of beloved friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sister, Linda Jacoway; and a son.

Memorial contributions may be given to Kavanagh House on 56th.

## Collector Corner

Dwight Baker

What is it??



A friend donated this item to my collection that he found in an old car he bought. It's quite intriguing. Approximately 5x5x5 inches in an aluminum case, the label reads: Auto-Magic transmitter. Model Super-T. Manufactured by the United States Motor Company in Oshkosh Wisconsin. 6V 3.5 amps. The front has 3 porcelain insulators with a heavy gauge wire soldered to the terminals on the end of the insulators. A plug in on the side has 2 loose wires. There is a hanger on the back that looks like it connects to a bracket.

Lifting the lid reveals 1 12AT7 tube, a transformer, a vibrator, a metal capacitor, and a 4 prong plug in device that is labeled Modulator. There is an adjustment trimmer labeled Carrier.



My guess is that this is a transmitter for a garage door opener. I didn't find any leads online. Any other opinions?

*Dwight Baker*

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## RECONDITIONING ALUMINUM ELECTROLYTIC CAPACITORS

Curtis A. Lutz

Purveyors of old radios have often collected parts for old radios, some of us literally thousands of parts, including transformers, coils, resistors and **capacitors**. In my New Old Stock parts boxes are several hundred capacitors in aluminum cans, mostly the type that were designed to mount from the top of the chassis, either directly to the metal chassis, or, on a phenolic wafer, if the outside of the aluminum can needed to be isolated from the chassis.

Since these NOS electrolytic capacitors were manufactured two to six decades ago (most of those I still have in stock were probably produced in the 1950s through the 1970s), they have been stored long enough to have seriously deteriorated.

When an aluminum electrolytic capacitor is stored for an extended period of time, especially at elevated temperatures, the internal resistance (or dielectric resistance) may drop to the point where the value of the DC leakage current, at rated voltage, may exceed the value specified for that particular capacitor. Most capacitor analyzers check two things -- value of capacitance and leakage of the capacitor under test, so, if you have one of these capacitor testers, you should be able to check most any old capacitor for each of these two factors. Try testing a few of these old aluminum-cased electrolytics, to see how they look, both for

capacitance and for leakage; chances are, these old caps will test with very high leakage, and most of us simply trash them.

I use an expensive Sencore LC-102 Capacitance/Inductance Analyzer, and can testify that, it rejects almost every one of these old aluminum electrolytics, for excessive leakage, or, for ESR (Equivalent Series Resistance) -- **or both!**

### HOW TO RESTORE THESE CAPACITORS:

Most of these NOS Capacitors can be restored and reformed, to lower the leakage to around the original specs, by the following procedure:

First, you will need to have a few current-limiting resistors, plus a DC power source that can supply an adjustable, metered (verifiable) operating voltage, for re-forming the capacitors after an oven warming process.

1. To start the reconditioning process, pick a quantity of capacitors, say three to six, that all have the same working voltage rating, such as 450 Volts (or 350 or 150, etc.); these can be of various values of capacitance, but should have the same voltage ratings.

2. Next, pre-heat the capacitors in an oven to 185 degrees Fahrenheit [+85 C (+ or - 5 degrees C)] for 4 hours (+ or - 0.5 hour). I recommend that the capacitors be arranged on their sides on a metal rack near the center of the oven, and that each capacitor be turned over after one half the bake time, or at about 2 hours into the bake.

3. Remove the capacitors from the oven and immediately apply 110% of the rated DC voltage in a circuit arranged as shown in figure 1 below; in other words, if you are re-forming a capacitor that has a working

voltage rating of 450 Volts, you need to apply approximately 495 Volts to that capacitor, through the 25,000 Ohm current limiting resistor, of course. Each capacitor (or each section of any multi-section capacitor) must have it's own current-limiting resistor; if you are reconditioning three single-section caps plus two dual-section caps, you would need a total of seven current-limiting resistors. The voltage should be applied for 2 hours.

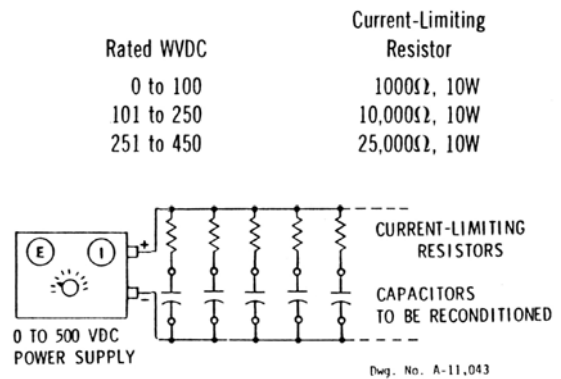


Figure 1

The value of the series current-limiting resistors should be according to the following table:

Rated WVDC	Current-Limiting Resistor
0 to 100	1000 Ohms, 10 Watt
101 to 250	10,000 Ohms, 10 Watt
251 to 450	25,000 Ohms, 10 Watt

4. Immediately before the end of the reconditioning period, measure the voltage across each capacitor and note any

capacitor(s) whose voltage level is less than 1.05 times it's specified rated DC voltage. At this point, if a capacitor or section of any of the capacitors has not reached the 105 percent voltage spec, that particular capacitor still has excessive leakage and should be discarded, but not until you have completed the remaining step . . .

5. At the conclusion of the reconditioning period, turn off the power supply and **short circuit the output of the power supply**, to cause the discharge of the capacitor(s) through the current-limiting resistors. NOTE: Be certain to place this short at the output of the power supply, as this will discharge the capacitor(s) through the current-limiting resistors.

6. Now remove and discard any capacitor(s) that fail to meet the requirements of Paragraph 4. Also, discard any capacitors that show evidence of electrolyte leakage or a ruptured pressure vent.

7. Keep the capacitor(s) at room temperature, with no voltage applied, for approximately 24 hours. After this room-temperature period, it is a good idea to retest the capacitors for value and leakage with a capacitor tester or analyzer.

### REGARDING NON-POLARIZED CAPACITORS:

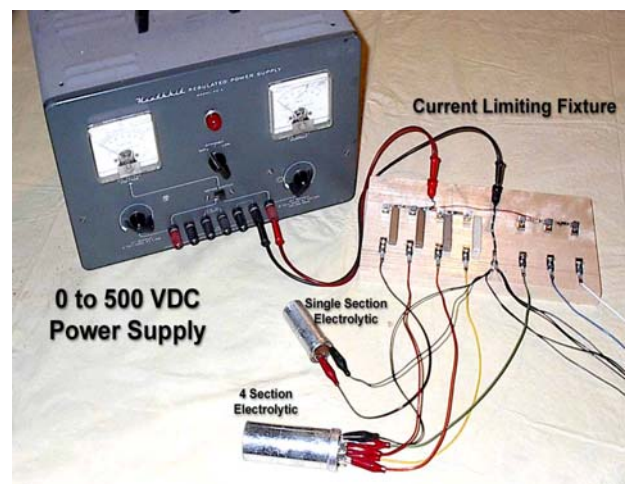
*Non-polarized capacitors will require the procedures in paragraph 1 through 6 to be repeated. At this time, the supply voltage must be applied in the opposite direction. This is followed by the DC leakage current measurement in each direction.*

### SUGGESTION:

1. You will need a power supply that can provide the 110% voltage requirements for various reforming needs outlined above. I

see power supplies of this type frequently listed on eBay. If you should get one that is not working properly, they are usually not too difficult to repair, as long as the internal power transformer is still OK. If you need help with this part, do not hesitate to contact the author.

2. When performing the voltage reform procedure, especially for two to six or more capacitors simultaneously, it is a lot easier if you construct a board to hold up to six or eight of the current-limiting resistors; if you plan to do this more than once, it might be easiest to build this test jig per the following picture. The test jig I built has fahnestock clips for inserting up to seven resistors, allowing easy interchange of sets of the 1000, 10000 or 25000 Ohm resistors. The use of small alligator clips attached to the ends of both the common and the "hot" output leads makes it easy to connect the capacitors to the current-limiting fixture. As shown below, the jig now has one single-section capacitor and one four-section capacitor connected (note that only four of the current-limiting resistors are shown in the photo).



Some commonly-available capacitor testers include the EICO Model 950/950B, and there are several others, such as Heathkit, Knight, Conar, Jackson, Leader, Hickok,

plus more expensive units made by SencoreHewlett-Packard, Hitachi, Tektronix and other professional test equipment manufacturers.

Ref: Sprague Electric Company Application Note #3499.1

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## *Remembering Broadcast* by Sherry Cowden

### **Lum and Abner**

Our next door neighbors, Ken and Nona Smith, are the best neighbors in Guthrie, Oklahoma. If they don't see us out in the yard for awhile, they call to make sure we are all right. They always show up at our door just before Christmas with a plate of homemade cookies and candies, and they call us in spring when they sight the first purple martin. And, every two or three days, Nona leaves the last few issues of the Guthrie News Leader on our front porch swing. Two weeks ago she added some back issues of a magazine I had never heard of before – The Ozarks Mountaineer. It had been years since I had been to the Ozarks, and I spent several happy hours reading the charming and homey articles. I read about the Civilian Conservation Corps that built the Arkansas State Parks in the 1930s. A reader had contributed pictures and reminiscences about coming to the Fayetteville, Arkansas Town Square as a child every Saturday in the 1940s. And there were yummy recipes for utilizing honey in making creamy bacon salad dressing, roasted onions, and applesauce cookies.

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Looking at the pictures of the mountains and piney woods, and the ads for the Dulcimer Shoppe and Dick's Oldtime 5 & 10 cent store, set the stage. I turned a page and started reading an article titled "The General Store's Greek Chorus Commented On Life" (an excerpt has the store's front porch sitters remarking on city folks speeding by: "Them city people got no respect for children or dogs"). I knew then what radio program this month's article should be about – *Lum and Abner* and their Jot 'Em Down Store.

The two-man team that created, wrote, and for many years played all the characters on *Lum and Abner*, really were born and raised in small towns in the Ozarks, but were not true hillbillies like their characters. Chester "Chet" Lauck (Lum) was born in 1902 in Aleene, Arkansas, and Norris "Tuffy" Goff (Abner) was born in 1906 a few miles away in Cove, Arkansas. Within a few years, both families had moved to Mena, Arkansas. In a 1979 interview, Chet Lauck recalled meeting Tuffy Goff (nicknamed for standing up to older boys) at a birthday party when he was nine and Tuffy was five. They continued to encounter one another, and despite the age difference, became good friends. By high school their shared comic sensibilities led them to work up some comedy skits, doing blackface routines, which were popular at the time, and mimicking local characters. Both boys' fathers were successful businessmen, and Goff worked at his dad's grocery business and Lauck at his father's lumberyard.

After high school the boys went away to college, at first to the University of Arkansas, but Lauck eventually moved to Chicago to finish his education, and Goff transferred to an Oklahoma school. After graduation, they both returned to Mena and married their high school sweethearts. Now responsible young men, Goff went to work for his father as secretary of his grocery

company, and Lauck became an auto finance company manager. They continued to fool around with their comedy bits, entertaining at area events. Becoming fairly well known locally, they were asked to audition for a flood relief benefit at a radio station in Hot Springs. At the last minute they decided to ditch their blackface act when they realized they were one of many similar acts waiting to perform. Instead they improvised a routine of two old country store philosophers. Lauck remembered that “we had messed around with them a little bit just for our own amusement. So we went on the air not knowing what we were going to talk about: we ad-libbed it. Just before we went on the air [the announcer] said, ‘By the way, what’s the name of your act?’ We hadn’t even thought about a name – we hadn’t been calling each other by name. And I said, ‘Well, I’ll be Lum Edwards [later to be pronounced Eddards],’ and Tuffy said, ‘I’ll be Abner Peabody.’” They made their radio debut on April 26, 1931.

The spur of the moment act was well received. Lauck said, “People wrote a lot of fan mail – I think just to let you know they had a radio.” The station (KTHS) asked them to do a weekly quarter hour show on Sundays. Later, the station manager arranged an audition for NBC in Chicago, and they were signed to a 13-week contract as a summer replacement. Quaker Oats was their first sponsor. The pair had to “temporarily” suspend their lives back in Mena, a hiatus that was to last for the rest of their lives. “We were more surprised than anybody else when it [the show] went on for twenty-four and a half years,” Lauck commented, “I don’t know whether [my old job] is still open or not!”

Lum and Abner were the cornpone philosophical proprietors of a general store in the fictitious Ozark town of Pine Ridge, Arkansas. Abner was a whiner prone to excitability, with a tendency for gambling

and falling for con schemes. Although calmer and more prudent, Lum fell for his share of slick deals, too. Although he generally came up with a solution for any problem, it wasn’t always a good one. The show’s store needed a name, so a contest was held, with a prize of \$500. The name Lauck and Goff selected was the Jot Them Down Store. Unfortunately, several listeners submitted that name. One person had sent in a variation, “The Jot ‘Em Down Store,” so in order to save themselves several thousand dollars, they made that entry the winner. The name came from the honor system of payment, whereby customers wrote down their purchases and signed their names on a pad hanging by the front door of the store. Later they expanded the name to the Jot ‘Em Down Store and Library.

The original show ran as a daily 15-minute serial. Events moved slowly in Pine Ridge; episodes could take all week or even several weeks to play out. Gerald Nachman, in “Raised on Radio,” comments that the shows were about nothing and a half-hour show could be squeezed out of a busted pencil. For the first nine years Goff and Lauck did everything, including the sound effects. They wrote the scripts the morning before each afternoon show and left several minutes free for ad-libbing. Because they did separate live shows for east and west coasts, each show was a bit different. They also created and performed all the characters. Lauck played dumb handyman Cedric Weehunt, cranky ancient Grandpappy Spears (who delighted in beating Abner at checkers), and weasely tough guy Snake Hogan. Goff was wimpy Mousy Gray, shy Squire Skimp, and cantankerous Doc Miller. Some of these visitors to the Jot ‘Em Down were based on exaggerated versions of real-life people Goff and Lauck had grown up around. Goff played the character of Dick Huddleston, postmaster and owner of a rival store in Pine Ridge. He was based on a real Dick

Huddleston who was a storeowner and community leader in the town of Waters, near Mena. In 1936, in an act of Congress celebrating the show's fifth anniversary, Waters officially changed its name to Pine Ridge. If you go there today, you can visit the Lum and Abner Museum and Jot 'Em Down Store.

In 1940, when the boys went to Hollywood to make their first motion picture (there would be seven) and no longer had the time to handle all the chores, Roswell Rogers came in to lend a hand with the writing. Other writers were added later. Over time Andy Devine (Mose Muich, the barber), Cliff Arquette, Dink Trout, and Clarence Hartzell (Ben Withers) helped lighten the acting load. Female characters, such as Abner's wife Lys-beth and Lum's girl friend Evalena, had often been spoken about but never heard from. Veteran actresses Zazu Pitts and Edna Best would eventually represent the distaff side. Sybil Bock, who composed the "Evalena" theme song, provided organ accompaniment until 1949 when Opie Cates' Orchestra took over the musical routines.

Second only in longevity to *Amos and Andy*, over its 24-year tenure the show appeared on the NBC, CBS, Blue, ABC and Mutual networks. Quaker Oats, Ford Motor Company, Frigidaire, General Foods, Horlick's Malted Milk, Alka-Seltzer, and General Motors were the various sponsors. In different incarnations it ran in 15-minute and 30-minute versions, and in daily, once-a-week, three-a-week, and four-a-week formats. A pilot television show was made, but Goff's health could not stand up to the rigorous new medium. After over 5,000 live performances, the final *Lum and Abner* radio broadcast was May 15, 1953.

Over the next few years, the team made several TV and public appearances. Norris "Tuffy" Goff (Abner) continued to live in

California until his death on June 12, 1978. Chester "Chet" Lauck (Lum) eventually moved back to Arkansas; he passed away on February 21, 1980. In a speech to the Arkansas legislature in 1951, Lauck said: "For twenty years we've tried to depict good, clean, down-to-earth, wholesome American life as we know it...through these characters of Lum and Abner. We hope that to those in the small towns, it is like a visit with old friends...to those in the city, a pleasant departure like going home again. We hope that it's the kind of life that those who know, don't want to forget; and those who don't would like to know."

As Lum would say, "Eee, doggies! Ever cloud has its silver fillin'."

References: *Tune In Yesterday*, J. Dunning, 1976; *Raised on Radio*, G. Nachman, 1998; *The Great Radio Comedians*, J. Harmon, 1970; *Radio's Golden Years*, V. Terrace, 1981; *The 60 Greatest Old-Time Radio Shows of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, audio cassettes, selected by Walter Cronkite, 1999.

Websites:

[www.users.aristotle.net/~russjohn/lumabn.html](http://www.users.aristotle.net/~russjohn/lumabn.html);

[www.lum-abner.com/](http://www.lum-abner.com/);

[home.inu.net/stemple/Page1.html](http://home.inu.net/stemple/Page1.html);

Quotes from Chet Lauck were taken from a 1979 interview that can be located at website

[www.compedit.com/lum\\_and\\_abner.htm](http://www.compedit.com/lum_and_abner.htm)

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## Classifieds:

Ad Policy: Ads up to 100 words in length may be submitted by IARCHS Members and are free of charge. You may request your ad run up to 3 issues, if you don't specify it will run one issue, you may resubmit your ad. Submit your ads by mail or e-mail to the editor. Issue Deadlines: February 1, May 1, August 1, and November 1

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**FOR SALE:** RUBBER U-CHANNEL FOR USE ON DIAL GLASS FOR ZENITH, PHILCO, AND MANY OTHERS INCLUDING SLIDE RULE GLASS DIAL SCALES HAVING RUBBER ON ENDS. ONLY \$1.25 PER FT., OR 10-FT. FOR \$10.00 POSTPAID. HAVE LARGE SUPPLY OF TRANSFORMERS, DUAL 117 VOLT PRIMARIES, 48-VOLT CT SECONDARY, ONE PRIMARY CAN BE USED AS A SECONDARY SO THESE ARE SUITABLE FOR BUILDING MULTI-VOLTAGE POWER SUPPLIES TO OPERATE EARLY BATTERY RADIOS (SCHEMATICS WITH PARTS LISTS AVAILABLE); ALSO MAY BE USED AS A RUGGED ISOLATION TRANSFORMER AND/OR FOR BUILDING VARIAC/ISOLATION TRANSFORMER BENCH SUPPLY. TRANSFORMER WEIGHT IS 7-LBS, PRICE IS: \$12.00 EACH, PLUS SHIPPING. CONTACT: **CURT LUTZ, 1021 N. HICKORY PLACE, BROKEN ARROW, OK 74012, (918) 251-4915; [OLDERADIOS@CS.COM](mailto:OLDERADIOS@CS.COM)**

**FOR SALE:** TRANSISTOR RADIOS – ALL KINDS. SHIRT POCKET AND NOVELTY. CONTACT: **TED SCHEIDEGGER, 13605 W. MONTANNA AVE., NEW BERLIN, WI 53151. (262) 786-5824**

**FOR SALE:** MISCELLANEOUS RADIOS. PICTURES LOCATED AT: [WWW.VTAUDIO.FREESERVERS.COM/RHUNTER.HTM](http://WWW.VTAUDIO.FREESERVERS.COM/RHUNTER.HTM)  
**ROB HUNTER, 707 34TH PL., WEST DES MOINES, IA 50265. (515) 225-1248**  
[RH2CYCLE@HOTMAIL.COM](mailto:RH2CYCLE@HOTMAIL.COM)

**WANTED:** TELESCOPING ANTENNA FOR ZENITH TRANSOCEANIC 8G005. JUNK TUBE-TYPE AMPLIFIERS OR GUITAR AMPS. ANY CONDITION. CHEAP.  
**DWIGHT BAKER, 2626 NW 17TH STREET, ANKENY, IOWA, 50023. 515 965-0999 (BEFORE 9:00 PM)**  
**EMAIL: [VTAUDIO@HOTMAIL.COM](mailto:VTAUDIO@HOTMAIL.COM)**

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IARCHS is an informal not for profit club whose purpose statement (as given in the club by-laws) is:

- 1) To provide an organization for collectors and historians of wireless, radio, television and other similar items.
- 2) To promote acquisition and preservation of biographical, technical and historical data, through the collecting of radios, stories, photographs, literature and other related items, particularly with respect to the inventors and early radio pioneers of Iowa.
- 3) To educate and enrich the public knowledge about the historical and cultural significance of radio by means of lectures, discussions, publications, workshops, displays and presentations.
- 4) To encourage and assist individuals in their preservation and restoration of radio and television related items to a condition consistent with the original intent of their manufacturer.
- 5) To create and foster an interest in radio history.

The IARCHS News newsletter is published and distributed (more or less) quarterly to all members of record and to similar clubs and organizations at their request.

On the cover is a 1924 Freshman Masterpiece. Using a power supply from Antique Electronic Supply, the radio still works.