



Iowa Antique Radio Club and Historical Society

**IARCHS NEWS – Fall 2011**

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

## President's Message

Hello out there in radio land.

**Club Opportunities!:** As mentioned last time, our current Treasurer, Tom Zenisek, is resigning. We certainly appreciate his years of service as Treasurer, Annual Auction Chair and club meeting host. Key Treasurer duties are collecting dues, maintaining the membership Excel database, and the club Treasurer's report. Auction Chair and meeting host is not required but was appreciated. Tom took these duties on freely and I hope in that spirit we get another willing volunteer to keep the club vital. I would also add thanks to our Secretary and Newsletter producer Dwight Baker. We should rotate these positions thru the membership, not only to avoid burnout, but to allow new ideas and new energy. I would add the Presidents position as open to "new blood" and is, perhaps, the least demanding. So unleash your own potential and volunteer! We can recycle/swap some positions, but new volunteers will keep the club vital. Contact me or any officer to discuss service.

**Fall Meeting:** I think a Fall club meeting would be helpful and necessary to examine the prospect of continuing the annual May auction and, of course, time for the usual bull session and repair pointers. A central location like Cedar Rapids has worked great

but any similar location would be fine. I'd offer my place, but Dubuque is a long haul for many. The Heartland club uses a library meeting room. We generally meet on a Saturday mid day and would probably do that again. November 19th or December 3<sup>rd</sup> looks good for my schedule. I'm looking for some good input. Contact me if you are interested in attending, any location suggestions and which date would work best for you. I will keep those interested updated by email.

**Phish scam:** Got this email recently:

*Subject: A Zenith model 811 deco tombstone from 1935 model year for donation*

*Dear Sir,*

*I want to find out if you will be willing to accept a A Zenith model 811 deco tombstone from 1935 model year??? the radio is still in good working condition, I have pictures, if you are interested i can send them, for you to take a look of it.*

*waiting*

*Alpha*

This has already been debunked. I think my email address was pulled off of ARC club links, which had just been updated. Phishing has reached the antique radio hobby!

**Radio Repair DVD Set:** A membership benefit courtesy of Curt Lutz of Oklahoma and the Heartland Radio Club (HLARA). Curt has made his 8 DVD set on vacuum tube radio repair available for copying without restriction (freeware). There is a wealth of information, probably over 20 hrs of instruction. The set appears to require a DVD player in your computer and Windows Media Player or equivalent. They don't play on the DVD player attached to your TV. I am attempting to compile a "Table of Contents" and document folder for the handouts. I think I have a volunteer to takeover handling copy requests, but until then, I can make a few more sets, \$15 plus \$2 shipping will help cover costs and provide Curt with a small honorarium.

Don't forget, we need new blood for Treasurer or any club office or function. We are nothing without our volunteers! As always, keep me posted with your thoughts and ideas for the club.

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## **From The Editor**

This fall newsletter is a few weeks late and I do apologize for that. A heavy workload and a few other commitments have cut into the time to devote to the newsletter. I also didn't have much in the way of contributions until last month. Thanks to Bob Elbert and Curtis Lutz for their contributions. We need articles to keep this newsletter interesting and timely! If you can write, or take a picture, or have an ad to contribute – we need you. Nearly everyone has something they can contribute – whether it's stories, helpful tips, service and restoration ideas, what your favorite radio is and why, how you got involved in collecting, history, anything related to radio – send it in. It doesn't have to be professional. **Please contribute items for your newsletter!** I invite you to share 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

## Yet another Old Diamond in the Rough Saga

as exaggerated by Bob Elbert

It was a dark and stormy night and I was in the Windy City. ....No... no it wasn't. Actually it was mid-day and my wife, daughter, and granddaughters were down for naps. The perfect time for me to escape to the Gurnee Mills Antique Mall in Gurnee, IL, one of my favorite haunts while visiting my daughter's family.

I usually see 5 or 6 old radios while cruising their mall aisles scanning the booths for rectangular box shaped items. I was getting dizzy whipping my head around trying to scan the contents of each vendor spot wasting no time, missing few strides. I was nearly through the store and hadn't yet been tempted by any of the overpriced offerings I had seen so far when I caught a turquoise blob in my peripheral vision. Could it be? Could that this brush-painted turquoise set really be one of those old Zenith 5R312's and not some kind of reproduction with a tape player on the side?



Upon closer examination it certainly was. The price tag had \$90 on it. I would have to ask for a discount I thought. But first I was not sure about this relic. The paint was very thick. The dial cover was hopeless and the back was missing and the knobs were not in good shape. I just couldn't tell if there might be major cracks or blemishes under all that thick turquoise paint. I would really have been tempted to remove the chassis if I had a screw driver in my pocket but that would have been a bad confrontation when they saw me on their closed circuit cameras. I could almost hear it... "Code 3 in aisle 5"!

So after mulling over my find for several minutes rolling it around in my hands, taking off my glasses and inspecting every part of the radio I set it back down and continued through the store bookmarking that dealers location in my mind while I finished my tour. Finding nothing else to compare I headed back to the Turquoise Zenith. At least it was easy to spot again. I picked it up and took it to the front counter and asked if they could contact the dealer with an offer. To my amazement they called the vendor and he was agreeable to my \$65 offer. I was anxious to get it home and take it apart.

I took a few pictures first as standard procedure for my restorations. I removed the chassis and began really looking at the hidden areas and could not find any cracks or problems. I began applying CitriStrip paint remover and after about 20 minutes as it melted down the turquoise paint I began to see an ivory color underneath the turquoise. I thought maybe it might be a factory ivory coat of paint but it was yet another layer of owner-applied paint on the old set. After about 3 or 4

applications of the paint stripper I began to see a nice bare bakelite finish underneath.



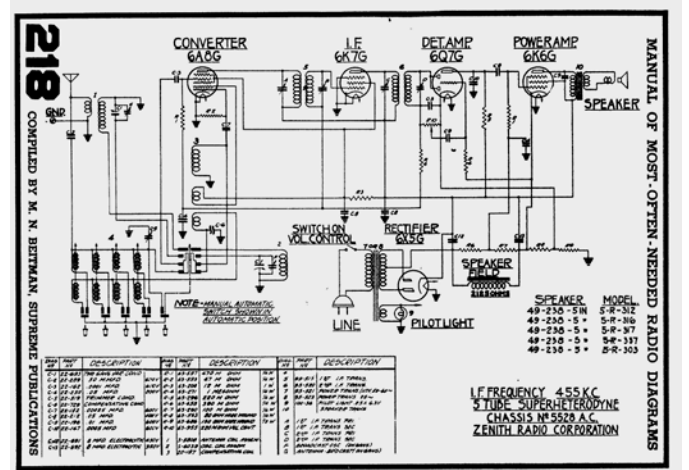
After meticulously removing 95 % of the paint using a plastic putty knife, nylon brush and rags I took it to the garden hose and worked the last of the paint out of the nooks and crannies.



I let it dry and then I inspected the case and noticed a rough 3 inch area along the curved backside on the top that looked like maybe someone had hit it with sander or something but then had second thoughts. It was very noticeable and ruined the cosmetics of the set. But sitting down with it for a couple of sessions with some Novus Scratch Remover #3 I was able to buff out the scuffed look and bring a shine to it. So now I knew the outer case was in really nice condition.



There was just enough of that speaker frame (for lack of the proper term) to be able to make a template for making another one out of some 3/16 in wood stock I got from Hobby Lobby. I used a Dremel tool attachment to cut the speaker hole.



I then turned my attention to the underside of the chassis. Keep in mind that I am not much of an electronics technician. I'm more of a remover and replacer and sometimes I have problems with the replacer part. If that doesn't bring a project back to life then I have to ask for help. I replaced all the capacitors and the two filter caps. Then I tested all of the resistors and replaced 3 or 4 that were out of tolerance. Checking all of the tubes revealed they were all still good. I buffed the grid caps with a small wire brush and used a small round file to clean the tube sockets. I then sprayed some electronic

contact cleaner into sockets and blew them out with an air gun and reinstalled the tubes. I replaced the antenna wire with some vintage looking brown cloth-covered wire. After getting this far in a restoration I get excited about what the new caps and resistors have done to revive a set. Now for the big test. I replaced the power cord with an extension cord purchased from the Dollar Store. I plugged it into my isolated power supply, turned it on and slowly brought it up to 110 volts listening and looking for anything unusual like smoke and watching the tubes to see if they are glowing. After getting it up to full power and leaving it turned on for a while I start turning the dial searching for some reception. There is not much noise from the set and I am getting disappointed. I start messing with the volume control, touching and pushing on the tubes, tapping things here and there, (all advanced trouble shooting techniques) but there is no reception. Dejected I turned the set off and got on with my life's other duties muttering to myself and thinking this will have to be a two-part restoration story. I have another whole month before the next exciting Newsletter to figure this one out. I will need every minute.

## **END PART ONE....**

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Here's an interesting link for those of you with an internet connection:

<http://www.childhoodradios.com/Videos.html>

This is a fascinating video on the manufacture process for a Regency TR-1 transistor radio. Thanks to Bob Elbert for providing the link.

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## **Firestone S-7426-2 Restoration**

Dwight Baker



I just might win a prize for the slowest restoration of a radio. At least I did make some progress this summer and fall with the cabinet work. I got the veneer for the top, front, and sides glued on. Yeah! The veneer on the front piece however was a different grain pattern than the top and upper front. It was a walnut burl. Of course, I didn't have any walnut burl in my supply of scrap veneer. A quick check of the local home centers revealed a very poor selection, so I went to the Woodsmith Store on Hickman road in Des Moines. I was helped by a very knowledgeable salesperson that really seemed to know his veneers. They had a large selection of paper-backed and adhesive-backed veneers in large quantities for very large sums of money. I explained what I was working on and the size of veneer that I needed and he showed me the selection of loose pieces they had which were much smaller in quantity, and a much lower cost. In fact, they had a great assortment of what I thought was very

reasonably priced veneer, I found several possible grain patterns, but settled on one that had a good amount of light and dark contrasts, with an interesting burl pattern. We got into a discussion of the various methods of attaching veneer, and he offered advice on a unique method that they seemed to think worked quite well. It was one that I was not aware of. The procedure is to evenly coat both pieces of wood with Titebond III glue and let it dry completely. Then you put the veneer where you want it and iron it on with a very hot iron. He said that it worked great. There were several advantages. 1). It's easier to control and attach since you have time to actually place the veneer where you want it. 2). If you make a mistake, you can reheat and remove it. 3). It seems to work better than other methods for brittle veneer. In the past I've tried the standard glue method, the pressure sensitive adhesive, contact cement, and spray adhesive. While they all work, they all have their disadvantages. Since I hadn't heard of, or tried this method before, I mentioned it to a couple of woodworking buddies to see if they had heard of this method. They had not, but all thought it sounded interesting. I decided to give it a try. Normally, I would test a new process on a scrap of wood, but I decided to just go ahead and try it out on the front veneer. What's the worst thing that could happen? I selected a location on the veneer where the burl pattern would most closely match the original veneer and I cut the pieces of veneer slightly larger than the backing panel (the face frame). The veneer was matched so the seam is down the middle. This will give a symmetrical burl pattern on the front. Their recommended method of applying the glue was with a small roller. I didn't have one handy so I

decided to use a paint brush. I squeezed a large ribbon of glue on the veneer and proceeded to evenly brush it over the entire piece. After a minute or two, the veneer began to curl up. I grabbed an old transformer for weight and placed it on the far edge to flatten it out a bit. I ended up getting several old transformers as I needed one on each end of each veneer piece. The face backing went much better as it did not curl. I let the glue dry overnight and after examining it, I decided that I needed a second coat. I don't know if it did or not, it seemed like it had soaked quite a bit into the wood and was pretty thin. I applied a second coat and let it dry overnight.



Here you can see the booked veneer pieces and the scrap piece of floor underlayment plywood with the Titebond III glue applied to both pieces and fully dried. I got out my shop iron (which I inherited from my wife after the sprayer quit) and put the setting on high (5 out of 6). While it was heating up, I put a couple of pencil marks on the face for a reference for the veneer and laid one piece of veneer over the backing. I then placed the iron directly on the veneer and allowed it to

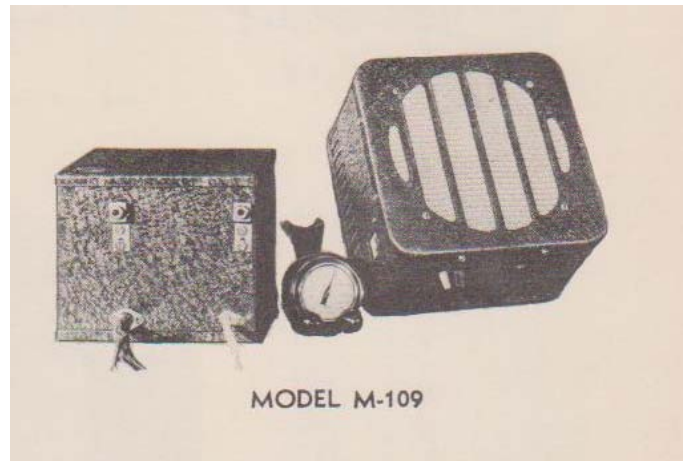
heat up enough to bond. It didn't take very long – less than 10 seconds. I ironed the entire piece and then placed the second sheet of veneer on the backing and did the same with that. The result was fantastic! The veneer is tightly glued and is completely flat! I think it looks great! If you are doing veneer work – try this method out. I really like it.



### A few RCA sets from 1935



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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.